

Aspendell South Fork Volunteer Fire Department

Tax ID #61-1730953, a 501(c)(3) tax exempt charitable non-profit organization

NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2020

As we approach a New Year, we sincerely hope that you and yours are well. We know that this is a very fraught time and we are particularly grateful for your support of the ASFVFD. Please know that your donations really do make a difference for our mountain communities. We wish you all safe and joyous holidays!

1. The winter season is upon us at last, and fireplaces/stoves are in use. Please review and remind your family and friends of the following practices for the **Proper Disposal of Ashes and Fire Hydrant Snow Clearance**. Please remember to have your fireplaces/stoves inspected and cleaned before winter use. Proper disposal of ashes is also critical. ***Please*** remember to **TREAT ALL ASHES AND COALS AS HOT**. Store ashes and partially burned pieces of wood in a ***covered metal container*** for several days before disposal so that you are certain that the material is cold and that no embers remain. **Do not use a combustible container**, and do not place combustible items in the container. **Do not place ashes in an available dumpster unless and until you are certain that they are cold. The best option would be to leave them in a covered metal container until summer!** *Please convey this information to family and friends* who may use your home. Please see the asfvfd.org web site for a notice you can print and post in your home. This is a vital fire safety practice.
2. **CO monitors and maintenance:** With increasing furnace and fireplace/stove use, please be sure that your CO monitors are in place and maintained. The following links provide more detailed information concerning CO monitor installation and appropriate responses in the event you suspect a CO issue in your home.
<https://www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm>;
<https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/SmokeAlarmWhyWhereandWhichCPSCPub559RevisedJuly2016PostReview.pdf>
3. **Hydrant Access:** Regarding hydrant access, structure fires are equally likely during the winter and summer seasons, so it is important to maintain access to fire hydrants year-round. If you see snow (or a vehicle) obstructing a fire hydrant, your help clearing it would be greatly appreciated. Please also see the Inyo County letter at www.asfvfd.org/snow-removal.pdf . In the event of a structure fire, your efforts may make the difference in whether your own or your neighbor's home can be saved!

Volunteers Training and Activities

Our volunteers continue to train regularly, with the potential for covid-19 exposure well in mind. We have expert guidance from Brian Nix, a professional firefighter and resident of Aspendell. With Brian's help, we continue to expand our knowledge of and proficiency in firefighting techniques and practices. We are also taking steps to improve our communications capabilities with other response agencies, including the Bishop Volunteer Fire Department, CalFire and the US Forest Service. We were able to obtain, at no cost, a salvage radio through the Bishop VFD. Installation of that radio on the engine is in progress, thanks to the hard work of David Woody. This will enable us to communicate and coordinate with other response agencies in an

emergency. As a reminder, the ASFVFD is not a professional firefighting organization. Rather, our volunteers act as Good Samaritans, seeking to provide immediate response as we await assistance from professional responders, including the local ambulance service (Symons). With your support, ASFVFD volunteers have made a positive difference.

Caretaker Activities

In addition to his volunteer training efforts, Brian serves as the ASFVFD's contract caretaker. Brian is now very ably assisted, under Brian's direction and employment, by Jen Paludi. The caretaker responsibilities include maintaining fire engine and equipment readiness. Though Jen has been with us only a short time, she has taken on and learned the caretaker responsibilities quickly and effectively. Her initiative and efforts have greatly facilitated our focus on our volunteer training program. Jen is a wonderful asset to the ASFVFD!

ASFVFD Critical Needs

As you know, the ASFVFD has both short and long-term needs, for which we must solicit your financial assistance: **(1) CO/multiple gas detector:** The ASFVFD currently has a basic, single gas monitor (calibrated for CO), and volunteers are trained in CO-related response. This device delivers a low level and high level alarm at set CO levels, but does not enable volunteers to determine the source of any emissions. Our goal is to improve our response capabilities by the acquisition of a more sensitive and informative monitor that would enable us to determine levels of gases and locate the source(s). The estimated cost of this monitor and associated supplies is \$3500; **(2) SCBAs.** In 2015, the ASFVFD acquired 4 surplus Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs). The SCBAs were serviced in August and are currently functional. However, the oxygen bottles are outdated and we will be unable to certify them for refills in the next year. We are looking for used bottles that are in good condition and have remaining shelf life. However, we believe it would be prudent to budget for new SCBA units, including new oxygen bottles. New SCBAs would enable the ASFVFD to maintain compatibility with the SCBAs of other volunteer fire departments that may be called to assist in an emergency. Acquiring new oxygen bottles would alleviate the certification and refill issue. The Bishop VFD recently replaced their own SCBAS for about \$6500 each. The ASFVFD should purchase at least 4 new units to replace the existing units **(total cost ~\$26,000)**; **(3) Replacement/Additional Fire Engine.** As we reported in the June 2020 newsletter, our fire engine (1981) is aging and the need for increasing outside professional repair is anticipated. As suggested in June, we have set aside a portion of your generous donations in reserve for emergency use (e.g., engine maintenance) and we have begun to accrue a part of your generous donations to support the ultimate replacement of the ASFVFD engine, or to supplement this engine with another. The engine's insured value is \$50,000. Your ongoing financial support would be welcomed to augment these reserves.

The donation form below offers the selection of one of these needs for your donation, if desired.

Financial Statement

The ASFVFD fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30th. As of July 1, 2020, the ASFVFD had \$21,614.95 on balance in the ASFVFD account. (The final financial statement for FY2019 is posted at the asfvfd.org website.) As stated above, we have allocated a portion of the funds to be used for engine maintenance/emergencies (\$5,000) and for future engine acquisition (\$5,000).

Your Support: We are very much aware of the many demands on your resources under the ongoing covid-19 circumstances and would be most appreciative of your generous donation. The success of the ASFVFD depends on your ongoing, generous support. As we have reported in the past, we have "routine" expenditures (rent, utilities, insurance, etc.). As noted above, we have also identified some "critical needs" that need your support. We have attached a supporting membership donor stub and enclosed an envelope to simplify the donation process. Checks can be made out to the ASFVFD and mailed to us at 111 Columbine Drive, Bishop, CA 93514. **We offer our most sincere thanks in advance.** *We'd like to acknowledge those thanks publicly; if you are willing to be identified as a contributor, please initial the "yes" blank on the donation form. Otherwise, please initial the "no" blank.*

Volunteers Still Needed: We still need volunteer firefighters, particularly in the South Fork area. We also need volunteers engaged in administrative, committee, fundraising, grant solicitations, and web page design activities. If you have ideas for fundraisers or especially if you are willing to help to set-up/oversee such an event, please email us at asfvfd@asfvfd.org. If you have other skills you would like to offer, again, please email us. We also welcome your comments and recommendations.

With our sincere thanks, the ASFVFD Board of Directors: President Joanne Schneider, Vice President Steve Silcott, Treasurer David Woody, Secretary Michael McBeth, Member-at-Large Carl Jarecky, Past President Roy Harthorn.

***** detach here *****

Donations: Checks can be made out to the **Aspendell South Fork Volunteer Fire Dept.** and sent to us at 111 Columbine Drive, Bishop, CA 93514. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Thank you!

\$75___ \$100___ \$200___ \$500___ Other \$___ CO+ Monitor and supplies___ Engine

Fund (Maintenance/Purchase) ___ SCBAs \$___

Name: _____ Address: _____

Aspendell – South Fork Address: _____

I am willing to be listed as a contributor to the ASFVFD in mailings to the community: **Yes** ___ **No** ___ (the amount will not be identified)
(initial either yes or no)

I am interested in volunteering in the support of ASFVFD (please note expertise)
