

# Aspendell South Fork Volunteer Fire Department

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

## NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2020

First and foremost, we hope that this finds you, your family and friends healthy and weathering the covid-19 crisis well. We know that this is a complex and difficult time and we genuinely appreciate your attention to this update and invitation to continue to support the ASFVFD if you can. Your donations really have made a positive difference to our mountain communities.

### Fuel Reduction and Fire Protection Steps

As you have probably observed, the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have completed a substantial amount of fuel reduction in the Bishop Creek drainage, though more work needs to be completed. To complement this significant effort, we strongly recommend that you take two important steps to protect your homes and those of your neighbors. First, **create defensible space around your home** by clearing vegetation, picking up pine needles, etc. There are yard clearing services available if you are unable to tackle this on your own. One such service is operated by Gabe Norman, who does much snow removal work in Aspendell during the winter season ([aspendellsnow@gmail.com](mailto:aspendellsnow@gmail.com); 760-258-6923). Second, take steps to **ensure that the street number of your home is clearly marked and easily visible** to first responders. These steps can make all the difference in rapid and effective emergency response!

The other very important action that you can take to protect your family and friends is to sign up, if you have not done so already, to receive emergency alerts via the [sign up for the Inyo county](https://www.inyosheriff.org/code-red-mobile-alert/) phone Red Alert system at <https://www.inyosheriff.org/code-red-mobile-alert/>.

### Volunteers Training and Activities

In light of covid-19 and the need to protect our volunteers and other community members, our volunteer training moved temporarily to virtual exercises, using videos to refresh our knowledge of wildland firefighting practices and procedures, and online courses for First Aid/CPR/AED refresher training and recertification. In mid-May, we resumed our in-the-field training, maintaining separation among our volunteers and using masks. We remain vigilant to assure safe conditions and will modify our training program accordingly.

The ASFVFD was able to acquire small numbers of N95 masks, gloves, gowns and goggles to protect all concerned in the event of an emergency call-out. At the advice of our resident professional firefighter, Brian Nix, we are employing a response strategy employed by Brian's Fire Department to assess and address the possibility of covid-19 exposure. This preparation served the volunteers and community well in two recent call-outs (fortunately, one a false alarm).

### Emergency Generator Project

As we advised you in our fall newsletter, the ASFVFD is in the process of installing an emergency generator at the Aspendell firehouse to address Public Safety Power Shutdowns (PSPS) by Southern California Edison if warranted by wind, precipitation or other conditions. Plans for the installation, which entail some minor construction, are awaiting approval by Inyo County. Construction is expected to proceed expeditiously once approval is granted.

ASFVFD volunteers are participating in meetings held periodically by SCE to provide updated information on SCE's efforts to prevent wildland fires as the result of their facilities and operations. SCE's efforts are impressive. SCE has two websites of potential interest: [sce.com/wildfire](http://sce.com/wildfire) (which describes SCE's fire prevention programs, including PSPS), and [sce.com/be-prepared](http://sce.com/be-prepared) (which provides recommendations for fire preparedness).

## **Caretaker Activities**

As we reported previously, the ASFVFD's new contract caretaker is Brian Nix, who is ably assisted, under Brian's direction and employment, by Cheryl Nix and Jeff Simpson. The caretaker responsibilities include maintaining fire engine readiness. They have been doing an excellent job and are a great asset to the ASFVFD!

## **ASFVFD Critical Needs**

Equipment oversight by Brian, Cheryl and Jeff, who also serve as ASFVFD volunteers, and operational experience by all the volunteers, demonstrate that the ASFVFD has both short and long-term needs, for which we must solicit your help: **(1) Fire Engine maintenance.** To date, the ASFVFD has been able to rely on community members and generous assistance from one of the Bishop VFD volunteers (a skilled mechanic) to help to maintain and improve the ASFVFD engine. However, given the age of the engine (1981), maintenance issues are appearing that will likely require the services of a professional mechanic. **We hasten to add that the engine is functional at the present time.** We believe that **~\$5,000** should be allotted as an emergency fund for present and future maintenance. Volunteer mechanical assistance will continue to be sought to the extent feasible and fair; **(2) SCBAs.** In 2015, the ASFVFD acquired 4 surplus Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs). The SCBAs are currently functional and are maintained professionally on an annual basis. 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. The annual maintenance of the SCBAs, expected in August, may also demonstrate that replacement is warranted. Acquiring new oxygen bottles would alleviate the certification and refill issue. The Bishop VFD, now in the process of replacing their own SCBAs, estimates that each new SCBA unit would cost ~\$6500. The ASFVFD should purchase at least 4 new units to replace the existing units (**total cost ~\$26,000**); **(3) Replacement/Additional Fire Engine.** Through the efforts of Roy Harthorn, Past President of the ASFVFD, the ASFVFD was able to obtain a great deal on our current engine (\$7,000). As noted above, the engine is beginning to show signs of its age. We believe it would be prudent to begin to accrue funds for ultimate replacement of this engine, or to supplement this engine with another. Note that the engine's insured value is \$50,000. The deal that Roy obtained was exceptional.

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

## **Financial Statement**

The ASFVFD fiscal year ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>, and a final financial statement will be posted to the [asfvfd.org](http://asfvfd.org) site soon thereafter. An interim report is available at this site. Briefly, the ASFVFD

began the 2019-2020 fiscal year with ~\$24,465. Expenses from July 1-April 30 were ~\$23,204 and donations received totaled \$29,741. Projected expenses to the end of the fiscal year are \$9,332 (PPE, hoses, nozzles, etc). The projected balance at the end of the fiscal year is ~\$22,000.

**Your Support:** We are very much aware of the many demands on your resources under the present 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](mailto: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.

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**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 \$\_\_\_ 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)

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