



# District 6 DISPATCH

Serving the upper Methow Valley from Gold Creek to Lost River - FALL 2019

## From a Responder's Point of View

### Volunteer Firefighter Bill McAdow

Fire calls seem to often occur at inopportune times. Being a father of a 3 year old and a 1 year old, there is never really a good time. If a fire call comes across my pager it is likely to be when I am trying to help my wife either feed the kids or get them to sleep. As soon as my wife hears the pager tone she immediately gives me an unpleasant look. I try to assure her that it will probably be a false alarm and I'll be home shortly. She continues to snarl as I hustle to get some appropriate clothing on. I only live about a block away from the station so I quickstep over and hope that plenty of other volunteers are also on their way to the



fire hall. I'm fortunate to be able to get there quickly and get my gear on. Once several firefighters arrive it gets quite cramped in the Winthrop station. Once there are enough people to staff a truck we load up and head to the incident. It may be a structure or wild land fire or it may be a vehicle accident. Some calls are quick others can last for hours. I try to send my wife updates via text message if I will be at an incident for extended hours. Long calls can be stressful for loved ones.

Once we return to the station there is often a lot of work remaining in cleaning gear and reloading apparatus.

Volunteering as a firefighter is a big time commitment. I really enjoy doing it but have had to step back a bit on responding to calls since having kids. That is why it is so important to have many volunteers as not everyone is able to respond to every call.

### Division Chief Keith Comstock

There is a lot to consider when the "tones go off". My job is with the fire district, so whether I'm repairing equipment in Carlton or training in Mazama - I also need to be ready to respond *immediately*. The paid staff coordinates daily locations and projects to maintain good coverage throughout the district. We use rapid communication about which officer heads to the scene while the other officers



respond to stations to make sure all the necessary vehicles arrive on scene. Volunteers cannot always leave their work, families and lives at a moments notice - so its critical to be ready to confirm a location or grab an engine as part of my response. In the event of wildland fire, there is often vague location information that may require more than one mobile command unit. Typically, closest responding chief responds direct to confirm report and begin response coordination.

When the emergency is dispatched, I must be ready to respond, no matter what time it is or where I am at that moment. If I'm lucky enough to be home, my first consideration is family. I usually have no idea if the call will be a quick turn around or an "all-nighter". I need to make sure that all-is-well on the home front before heading out to insure I will keep my focus on the task at hand. Will I need to go directly to the scene or head to a station that needs a driver for an engine? Do I have information about the location?

Every call is different but we all try for the same outcome - Protect the lives of our firefighters and our community.



## Letter from the Chief

The Betti Foundation’s approval of a \$1.8 million grant for our Fire District to implement a “Firefighter Vocational Training Program” will benefit not only firefighters but also the community. The Betti foundation believes that infrastructure is critical for a successful vocational program and is willing to donate towards the living and training portion of the future fire station. The funds would provide for rooms that are highlighted on our floorplan located at [www.okanogancountyfd6.com/newstationinfo.html](http://www.okanogancountyfd6.com/newstationinfo.html), a 2-acre training area for drills and year-around driving course as well as up-to-date training materials. It would also provide facilities for volunteers to stay “on-site” and allow for faster response. An additional \$500,000 endowment would generate proceeds to maintain these improvements and programs into the future.

The fire district appreciates the opportunity that the foundations is providing and looks forward to an opportunity to make it successful. Our district will need the support of the voters to make this opportunity happen. The Grant and all its funding hinge on voter approval for a new District Fire Station.

*Chief Cody Acord*

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