



# FULLY INVOLVED

## ADAIR RURAL FIRE & RESCUE

Newsletter Winter 2021



Proudly serving your Adair Village and Soap Creek Valley neighborhoods since 1974.

**Run Numbers.** ARF&R was called 179 times in 2020.

### 43 FIRE CALLS

- Structure
- Fire Alarm
- Smoke/Oder Investigation
- Wildland & All County Responses

### 136 MEDICAL CALLS

- Including Motor Vehicle Collisions

### Thank you for Your Service!

Four valuable members of the Department moved away or retired from their volunteer firefighting careers.

- Pam Musil
- Eric Lindgren
- Leanne Allen (Geyer)
- Jesse Jones

You are all Greatly Missed.

### Visit us on Facebook



### Meet the Chief

My name is Aaron C. Harris and I have been your Fire Chief since July 2019. I have been married to Kate for 16 years & together we have three children, Marcus (7), Lillian (5), and Camden (2). We live out in Soap Creek Valley with our furry companion, Pete the Cat.

I started firefighting at an early age. When I was fourteen, I started to participate with the Adair Rural Fire and Rescue (ARF&R) department. I entered my first structure fire at sixteen, which was a training burn, and my father was my instructor. After high school, I joined the Navy as a Hospital Corpsman and spent seven years on Active Duty. In the Navy is where I first became an EMT, and I spent most of my time with the Marine Corps providing medical care. I left the Navy to come home and start a career in firefighting.

When I returned, I started volunteering again with ARF&R. During this time, I applied and became a Resident Intern Firefighter at Corvallis' newly established Station 6. While living at Station 6, I continued to participate with ARF&R, I enrolled in the Fire Science program at Chemeketa Community College and continued to serve in the Navy Reserves. While at Chemeketa I earned my Associates degrees in Fire Science and Paramedic Technology.

After the events of 9/11, I was recalled to Active-Duty Service with the Navy and was sent to Iraq in 2003 with Marine Corps Infantry. After returning from Iraq, I married Kate and we left Oregon to begin her Active-Duty service in the Air Force. It was during Kate's military time that I went back to school and became a Registered Nurse.

My first job in nursing was at the University of Oklahoma Medical Center, at the Level 1 Trauma Center Emergency Department (ED). From there we moved to Anchorage, Alaska, where I continued my work in the Emergency Department and even helped to start the first-ever Pediatric ED in Alaska. A few years later and with both of us being done with the military life, we came home to Adair Village in 2014.

Upon returning, I got a job at Samaritan Albany Hospital's Emergency Department and started back with the Fire Department. Soon I was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant/EMS Coordinator. Several years later, my father decided it was time to end his tenure as Fire Chief and was able to mentor me after I was selected as Fire Chief Intern. To be honest he has always been a mentor for me. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 I became the Fire Chief of ARF&R.

During my time as Fire Chief, we have experienced some interesting times. Currently we have 15 active members: me, 3 Captains, 2 Lieutenants, 2 Apparatus Operators, and 8 fire fighters. Of these we have 6 EMTs and 9 EMRs. Ideally, the department would be fully staffed with 25 active members. We have two stations, the main station in Adair Village and the Substation out in Soap Creek Valley. Currently we have 2 fire engines, 3 brush rigs, 1 water tender, 1 rescue, and 2 staff vehicles.

As always, we are constantly looking for new people to join our Fire Department. So, if you are interested, please send me an email at aaron@adair-rural-fire.com, call me at 541-990-8953, or show up to a Drill at the Main Station in Adair on Wednesday nights at 7pm.



Marcus, Kate, Lillian, Aaron & Camden Harris (L-R)

### 2020 Wildfire Season Response

The 2020 wildfire season was devastating across the country including for many Oregonians. Fortunately, the Adair Rural Fire & Rescue District did not have any wildland incidents, but the department provided mutual aid support to four fires outside the district boundaries.

The first was an 08/09/20 water tender response to a field and woodland fire on Tarter Road in SW Polk Co. On 09/14/20 Adair assisted the Albany Fire Dept. with a small natural cover fire in North Albany. The evening of Labor Day, downed power lines ignited a fire in a narrow canyon-like section of Highway 34 near the town of Alsea. The same high winds, low humidity and extremely low fuel moistures that rapidly spread other fires throughout Oregon made this a serious situation. Quick all county and regional response from the following organizations were able

to stop the fire at just 2 Acres: Adair RF&R, Benton Co Sheriff's Dept, Blodgett-Summit FD, Central Coast FD, Hoskins-Kings Valley FD, Monroe FD, Miller Timber, Philomath FD, Oregon Dept of Forestry, ODOT, Seal Rock FD and Starker Forest. The final incident of the season occurred on 09/09/20 when Adair sent a unit to the 2,552-acre Echo Mountain Complex fire just east of Lincoln City. Adair worked overnight protecting structures and containing wildfire.

Firefighting resource management is a balance of helping our mutual aid partners while keeping adequate resources at home to be prepared for local demand. Adair is proud to help our neighboring communities, just as they would help us in a time of need.



## Community Life Saving Award

I have heard Teachers described as a lot of things: educators, mentors, role-models just to name a few but I would like to add HERO and LIFE SAVER to this distinguished list. On Thursday November 19, 2020, the school day started out as any other at Santiam Christian school. My 4th grade daughter Colbie Chase was off to school and I took for granted that it very well could have been the last time I saw her. She was eating lunch in her classroom with friends under the supervision of her Teacher Mrs. Huxman. She was having a great time eating and laughing when she suddenly started choking on a piece of food and turning purple. A piece of food was lodged in her throat. Her teacher Mrs. Huxman, without skipping a beat, responded swiftly and gave her the Heimlich maneuver. This was witnessed by the entire 4th grade class. It immediately worked and she was able to recover quickly. I got a call from the Principal, Mr. Belloni, letting me know that a real emergency occurred at school but that Colbie was now fine and playing at recess. Mrs. Huxman said she was so thankful she knew what to do and did not hesitate.



Santiam Christian's Mrs. Huxman and Colbie Chase

Mrs. Huxman did not panic and had confidence in her response which resulted in her saving my daughter's life. For that, my entire family is so grateful and thanks God for her swift and calm reaction to the situation that could have ended very differently. Colbie Chase has recovered and we all recognize Mrs. Huxman for the Superhero she is. I am impressed that she took her CPR and First Aid training seriously and demonstrated it on that day. Teachers are not just instructors and I wish she could be recognized for the many roles she plays including Life Saver. Mrs. Huxman is an excellent representative of the many amazing Superheroes we have at Santiam Christian School.

Thank you, The Chase Family

## Flue Fires - Tips from a Firefighter



I hope everyone is doing well in the new year. I wanted to take a little bit of time to talk about flue fires, which affect over 25,000 homes per year in the US.

Simply defined, a flue is a passage to exhaust gases from an appliance to the outside and comes in forms of a pipe, duct or a chimney. So essentially a chimney is a type of flue. The most important thing to understand about flue fires is they are preventable. Neglecting an actively used flue can cause creosote build-up leading to a dangerous fire. Annual maintenance on your fireplace or wood stove as well as your flue will reduce the risk of a fire. The average chimney sweep charges \$100 - \$200 for cleaning services. If you prefer not to hire a professional and want to clean the flue yourself, cleaning kits can be borrowed from our department (541 745-7212). Another important preventive tip is making sure you have a cap on your flue. As Oregonians we love our trees, but they can cause problems from time to time. They drop leaves and needles in the fall that can easily get into flue, dry out, and become fuel for escaping embers in the flue. Flue fires are extremely dangerous because they have the potential of warping metal, cracking masonry, and spreading from the flue to other parts of your house such as the attic. At my house, annual flue cleaning is done in the spring. If you have a hard time remembering to schedule service like I do, use daylight savings time as a reminder to schedule your annual cleaning and change the batteries in your smoke detectors.

What should you do if you suspect a flue fire? First and most importantly, get everyone out of the house, a fire can double in

size in less than a minute. Remember to practice fire safety with your family members and make sure everyone knows your rally point. Next, Call 911! Getting out of the house is important, but do not forget to call 911. Do not hesitate to call, even the slightest concern that you have a flue fire should be investigated, it is better to be safe than sorry.

What you can expect when we arrive. When we arrive, the first thing we are going to do is ask if you and your family are out safe. Life safety is our highest priority. Someone might also ask you, "What seems to be the concern?" especially if there is not obvious fire activity. You may have already told the 911 dispatcher the problem and we know it can be frustrating repeating things, but this assures us we have not missed any details. We will likely use tools, such as thermal imaging cameras to help us detect if there is a fire or if it has spread. We will also use ladders to access the roof, inspect the flue and extinguish the fire. I want you to know that we are your neighbors, and we will do everything we can to prevent further damage to your home such as laying tarps down throughout your house to prevent us from tracking mud or covering furniture, so it does not get wet or damaged.

So, remember: 1) schedule an annual cleaning of your stove/fireplace and flue. 2) preventive maintenance significantly reduces the chances of a flue fire. 3) have a plan in case there is a fire in your house or on your property and 4) if there is an emergency, do not forget to call 911. Understand that Adair Fire and Rescue is a volunteer department made up of your neighbors and we care deeply about you, your family, and our community.

Kyle W Anderson Engineer/EMT

**Desire to Serve - Courage to Act - Ability to Perform**

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