

OPINION

Reducing response times, and staffing Station 51

BY CAREY CHAPUT AND DAVID DOBBS

This community has known about the decline in fire department volunteers for decades. We have seen the articles in the *Applegater* and fire district newsletters offering exceptional training for anyone available to serve the district. Volunteers are no longer coming forward.

At the same time, call volumes have increased by 25 percent since the last levy. Steps need to be taken to ensure that efficient, reliable emergency services can be provided.

We are in support of the upcoming fire district levy, which, in part, will staff Fire Station 51 on North Applegate Road with trained personnel. This centralized location serves the entire district, and, most importantly, it decreases the emergency response times for the west end—from Applegate to Provolt, especially in the areas of Crystal Drive, North Applegate Road, Thompson Creek Road, Kubli Road, Missouri Flat Road, and Humbug Creek Road. (See chart below.) Having a second manned station and two response teams will benefit everyone in the fire district, especially during overlapping response calls, which happened in 21 percent of calls in 2023 to date.

The levy approved in 2018 provided housing at this centralized station. Renewal of the levy, if approved by voters, will now provide the support to ensure staff is available and ready to respond 24/7 to our medical and fire emergencies. The time has come for paid staff, combined

with volunteers, to be the backbone of our emergency services.

Our community is a network of people helping people. Generations have carried the weight of volunteering services as firefighters, board members, budget committee members, and Friends of Applegate Fire District members. These community volunteers provide generous service, some for decades.

In times of emergencies, there is reassurance that comes from recognizing a neighbor's face. This community needs to support the people who are making decisions and have our best interests in mind. The fire district board has requested \$1.25 per \$1,000 of assessed value to provide the exemplary emergency services we can rely on. The board knows the needs and how to provide them. Let's support their decision and vote for the 20-cent increase to provide these essential services.

According to national standards, fire victims need to be removed in the first six to ten minutes. Survival rates decrease seven to ten percent for every minute a heart attack goes without defibrillation. It is clear why staffing Station 51 is important.

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Driving times to the western portion of Applegate Valley Fire District (determined using Google maps)

| To | From Station 53 Ruch | From Station 51 Applegate | Time saved by having staff at Station 51 |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Crystal Drive and Highway 238 | 17 miles 21 minutes | 8.9 miles 11 minutes | 10 minutes |
| 10,000 North Applegate Road | 17 miles 24 minutes | 8.3 miles 13 minutes | 11 minutes |
| Mile Post 10 Thompson Creek Road | 20 miles 30 minutes | 12 miles 20 minutes | 10 minutes |
| Provolt/Highway 238 | 13 miles 17 minutes | 4.6 miles 6 minutes | 11 minutes |
| Kubli Road @ Missouri Flat Road | 15 miles 21 minutes | 6.1 miles 10 minutes | 11 minutes |
| Top of Humbug Creek Road | 12 miles 19 minutes | 5.5 miles 12 minutes | 7 minutes |

OPINION PIECES AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Opinion pieces. Limited to 500 words; no images. Opinion pieces submitted by the same person will not be run consecutively. Responses to previously published opinion pieces will not be published. Must include publishable contact information (phone number and/or email address).

Letters. Limited to 200 words; must be signed, with a full street address or PO Box and phone number. Only the writer's name and hometown will be published.

Anonymous letters and opinion pieces, reprinted articles, press releases, and political campaign articles will not be published. Individual letters and opinion pieces may or may not be published. All submissions will be edited for grammar and length.

Email opinion pieces and letters to gater@applegater.org or mail to *Applegater*, Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530.

NEWS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Hello (to a new board member) and farewell (to an editorial committee member)

BY DIANA COOGLE

I am delighted to introduce to you our newest board member, Crystie Hawkins.

Crystie had some interesting answers when we asked her why she wanted to be on the board of the *Applegater*. She said that (1) she is very community-oriented and likes to promote local efforts; (2) the *Applegater* has a special place in her heart; (3) she likes what the *Applegater* does and is and feels she already has an inside view from her father, David Dobbs, our treasurer; and (4) she would like to understand, on a first-hand basis, how a 501(c)(3) organization works. She has been on the board of a 501(c)(7), the Silverton Indoor Park, and has had experience with fundraising for them, but looks forward to learning more about our kind of nonprofit and to helping us with fundraising as well.

On our side, we feel fortunate to have Crystie because she is social-media savvy and will become our social media manager, overseeing Facebook and Instagram, the *Applegater* website, and possibly additional sites. Social media is the focus of her for-profit business (with her husband), so she is astute about Facebook's algorithms and how the *Applegater* can benefit from them. She will head a "social media committee," comprised of Jeanette LeTourneux, Barbara Holiday, and anyone else interested.

It seems like there's a good-bye to go with every hello. We are sorry that Sandy Shaffer has resigned from the *Applegater's* editorial committee. Sandy brought her insightful comments and editing sharpness to that committee for many years. We will miss her sorely. Fortunately, she has promised to continue writing for the paper from time to time. Her articles about fire preparedness and the fire department have been a mainstay for our reporting on issues of that kind.

So now there's an opening on the editorial committee. Maybe you who are reading this would like to fill it. It isn't a big time commitment, and it is a good way to be involved with the *Applegater*. If you're curious, ask me about details. I'll be glad to fill you in.

I want to take this opportunity to remind you that November is the beginning of our NewsMatch fund drive, when your donations are doubled. NewsMatch, thanks to your generous responses, has put us on more solid financial footing, but that is only as good as your donations allow. Be on your toes for November 1, and keep those donations flowing in from then till the end of the year.

But don't worry. We'll remind you again closer to the time.

Happy fall to you all.

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