



Volunteer recruiting and retention

BY CHRIS WOLFORD

I am often asked how we are doing as far as the number of current volunteers. My usual quick response is, "Oh, we could use a little more help."

It's not an easy question to answer because there are many variables to consider. We have seven fire stations. Some are doing well...some not so well. Take, for example, Station 6 on Kubli Road. Right now, we have five volunteers assigned; most are available day and night. This is the best roster for this station in its 20-year history. Station 5, at the top of Jacksonville Hill, on the other hand, is at its lowest number of volunteers ever, with only two volunteers assigned to it. That means that Station 5 is having great difficulty responding to calls in its area. Usually, calls are being covered by our Headquarters Station in Ruch with assistance from the City of Jacksonville Fire Department.

The other two stations with the greatest need right now are Stations 1 (North Applegate Road) and 4 (Water Gap Road). These two are a high priority for us for three reasons:

1. Most volunteers assigned to these stations have full-time jobs that preclude them from responding to emergencies during daylight hours. This also puts a tremendous load on those who are available to respond.

2. These stations are strategically located at intersections of busy roads and relatively densely populated areas within our district.

3. Several of our most senior volunteers have retired from these stations.

So I ask you, the reader of the *Applegater*, to either consider volunteering or talk to someone you know about becoming a volunteer. You may not be cut out for firefighting, but you probably have a family member, friend, or neighbor who is.

One of the first and most common questions we are asked about volunteering is, "How much training is involved in becoming a volunteer firefighter?" Well, we would like to say it's short and easy. However, the reality is that you will need to put in quite a few challenging hours.

Volunteer academy

The volunteer academy, which usually starts in early January and runs into February, consists of reading, some lectures, videos, and a lot of hands-on training. Classes are held on eight consecutive weekends for convenience. Subject areas cover structural firefighting and hazardous materials. Most students find the high-level teaching ability of our fire instructors surprising and always look forward to the hands-on training.

Again, please consider volunteering with us. We are certain you will learn new skills and make new friends. If that isn't enough in itself, don't forget that as a firefighter, you will be putting yourself in a position to help your neighbors and friends. You may even find yourself in a position to save the life of one of your own family members.

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Some seniors find a new way to support the *Applegater*

BY TOM CARSTENS

Senior Applegaters over 70½ who have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) know they have to take a required minimum distribution (RMD) from that account every year. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) mandates this so they can finally get their hands on that tax money that was deferred when the taxpayer was younger. The amount is set annually by the IRS according to a formula based on age and account balance. Since the RMD counts as income, IRA account holders are liable for the extra tax bill.

But hey! Did you know that you can avoid paying this extra tax altogether simply by re-routing your RMD to your favorite 501(c)(3) nonprofit or charity... like the *Applegater*? Since the amount of your contribution reduces your adjusted gross income (by reducing taxable IRA distributions), it might also keep you out of a higher tax bracket. You must get this done by December 31—so there's still time.

The benefit also gives you the flexibility to (1) split the RMD between multiple nonprofits and (2) donate any portion of the RMD as you see fit. But . . . any amount you decide to keep will be counted as income.

Example. Let's say you have an RMD of \$3,000 for 2019. You don't need the entire amount, so you decide to have \$1,500 sent to the *Applegater* (excellent choice!) and another \$500 to another

Applegate nonprofit (also good). You keep the remaining \$1,000, which you will list as income on your tax form. You fly to the Bahamas for some well-deserved beach time...or maybe you help with the hurricane cleanup.

The catch is that you can't make the contribution yourself. You must notify your IRA account managers and have them send checks directly to your favorite charities. They know how to do this if you give them the addresses, identification numbers, and proof of 501(c)(3) status.

So...all you have left to do is tell your IRA account manager to mail the RMD check directly to:

Applegater Newsmagazine
PO Box 14
Jacksonville OR 97530
Tom Carstens • 541-846-1025

Note 1: To obtain proof of the Applegater's nonprofit status, check Publication 78 on the IRS website at irs.gov/charities-nonprofits/tax-exempt-organization-search, then search for "Applegate Valley Community Newspaper" or ID "26-2062663."

Note 2: Richard Brewster, CPA, PC, of Medford, fact-checked this article and gave it a thumbs-up. Please note, however, that this information is generic only. Please contact a tax professional, certified public accountant, or financial advisor for guidance in regard to your individual tax situation.

Don't miss the FOTAS Donation Drop-off Party!

BY LAURA AHEARN

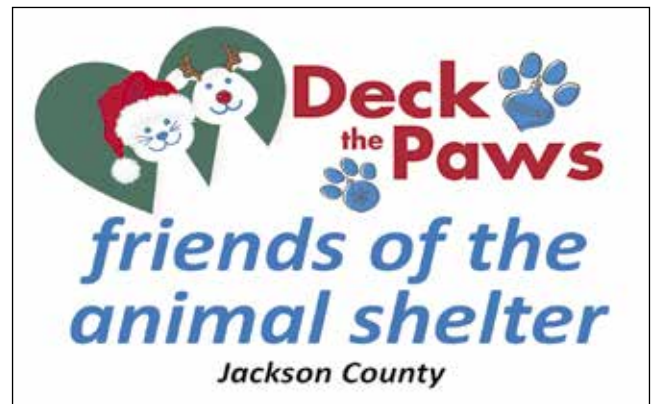
Friends of the Animal Shelter (FOTAS) has had a busy 2019 in the Applegate Valley.

Seventh graders at Ruch Outdoor Community School toured the shelter in February and were among the very first donors of handmade goods for the upcoming Deck the Paws Holiday Fair.

FOTAS collaborated with McKee Bridge Historical Society to stage "Doggy World" in June and participated in the Applegate Valley Neighborhood Festival to provide information on animal welfare, an array of colorful merchandise, and paw-print tattoos. FOTAS donated gift collections for dog and cat lovers for the recent *Applegater* fundraiser and displayed a photo gallery of shelter dogs at Ruch Country Store.

Most importantly, every single day, FOTAS volunteers cared for animals in the shelter that came from Applegate Valley. Yes, there are *always* animals from the Applegate in the Jackson County shelter that have been surrendered, confiscated, trapped, abandoned, or picked up as strays. In fact, at one point this fall, a full 25 percent of the 32 dogs in the intake zone came from Applegate Valley. FOTAS is committed to caring for them in the shelter and finding new homes for all.

Here is an easy, fun way to support FOTAS and our community's animals: Make and donate gifts or décor items or baked goodies for Deck the Paws Holiday Fair. Maybe gingerbread dog houses or kitten-face cupcakes? A favorite recipe that has been handed down in your family? Handcrafted ornaments, birdhouses, pet



sweaters, a painting—whatever your skill or hobby, let it shine!

Bring your contributions to the Donation Drop-off Party at Ruch Library on Wednesday, December 4, from 3 - 5 pm and you'll receive a thank-you "Doggy Dollar" or "Kitten Kash" to spend at the fair. You can also bring fresh evergreens, holly trimmings, or mistletoe and help create wreaths and garlands to sell at the fair. Any pet food, toys, or supplies you can donate will go toward gift bags for pet owners who need some extra support this holiday season.

Deck the Paws Holiday Fair will be held on Saturday, December 7, from noon - 4 pm at the Phoenix Plaza Civic Center, 220 N. Main Street, Phoenix. Admission is free. In addition to thousands of gift items, we'll have family and pet portraits with Santa Paws and the Cat-Elf. You'll get a matted 5" x 7" glossy photo at the fair, plus electronic files of all five photos taken during your sitting. (Please note that pets are allowed inside the Civic Center in the photo area only.) Enjoy an affordable lunch of hot soup, cocoa, and cider, and find the purr-fect gifts for the animal lovers on your list. Visit fotas.org/deck-the-paws for more information.

Laura Ahearn
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Photo, left: Some colorful items donated by Applegate residents.
Photo, right: FOTAS has gifts for pony fans!

20th annual
Pacifica Winter Fest
Art & Music
Sat. Dec. 7th, 10AM-4PM
35 local artists
high quality hand-made: wood * jewelry * wool
ceramics * knitting * leather * clothing * wreaths
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Delicious FOOD & treats
KIDS: make keep-sake photo & ornament
14615 Water Gap, Williams
*** 541-846-1100 ***
www.pacificagarden.org * also on facebook