

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Increased response times are critical—  
vote yes on Measure 15-220**

For those of us who live and own businesses in the Applegate Valley, the renewal of the Applegate Valley Fire District levy is especially important.

At present, response times for medical or other emergencies are too long. As a result, many of us have found it difficult to renew fire insurance in this wildfire-prone area. Response times and the availability of response crews are key criteria that insurance companies use in deciding whether to cover a given property.

Measure 15-220 will renew the levy and add only 20 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. This increase will benefit all of us because the district will be able to add supporting staff and thus shorten emergency response times.

Many businesses and residents of Jackson and Josephine counties are supporting this measure (see the Friends of Applegate Fire District ad in this issue of the *Applegater* for a partial list of supporters).

And please join us in voting *yes* on Measure 15-220.

Sincerely,

Ted and Mary Warrick

Wooldridge Creek Winery and Vineyard

**Vote yes on Measure 15-220**

On a warm, windy day in August came the call that everyone dreads: a fast-moving grass fire was rapidly approaching Missouri Flats homes and nearby dry oak forest. Engines were immediately dispatched for the roughly 20-minute drive from the Applegate Valley Fire District headquarters in Ruch, where, historically, the district's sole response crew has been based. But that day, for the first time in district history—thanks to a recent grant—there was a second (full-time 24/7) crew on duty at Station 51 in Applegate. Because of their central location in Applegate, nearer to the western portion of the district, this crew arrived in less than 10 minutes—just in time to stop the fire from catching the nearby oak forest. A real catastrophe was averted, thanks to the shortened response time.

In addition to responding to fires, this new, second crew provides essential and timely medical emergency response needed for the great majority of calls to the Applegate Valley Fire District.

While this story underscores the value of a second response crew at Station 51, it is important to understand that the grant that funds this crew is *for only three years*. Measure 15-220 will support the balance of the costs to make sure that we have ongoing paid staff in this central location. To protect our community, please vote *yes* on Measure 15-220!

Liza Crosse

Member, Friends of the Applegate Fire District

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**Williams community pulls  
together to fund new library**

BY DIANA COOGLE

As the *Applegater* looks to the community for financial support at this time of year, we take heart from the experience of the New Williams Library Project to build a new library in Williams. Residents responded with enthusiasm and generosity to the request for donations, raising \$140,000 and proving what can be done through community responses.

The library opened its door on October 7 with ribbon-cutting, speeches, and tours of the building and grounds.

After more than four decades with only a tiny building for a library that had neither running water nor restrooms, Williams now has a building with 1,000 square feet of library use and a designated children's area—as well as the usually-taken-for-granted restrooms and running water. There is more room for books and updated technology.

Sara Katz, a Josephine Community Library Foundation board member, a Williams resident, and a generous donor to the project, says, "Libraries are the heart of a community. So I couldn't be more thrilled about our new library in its perfect location, between the General Store, the Grange, and the Sugarloaf Community Center, only a short walk from Williams Elementary School."

To be exact, the new library is at 20140 Williams Highway.

The *Applegater*, too, is at the heart of our community. Like Williams community members pouring in funds for their library, residents all over the Applegate are poised to shower funds onto the *Applegater* these next two months.

Just as individual donations didn't carry the whole financial burden of building a new library, neither does the *Applegater* depend solely on individual donors. The New Williams Library Project received help from Josephine County's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act), the Four-Way Community Foundation, and the Oregon Community Foundation, among others, and for the *Applegater*, NewsMatch, a program of the Independent News Network, matches each donation during November and December, doubling the impact of each.

The *Applegater*, of course, also receives the support of numerous businesses that advertise in the paper. If you, in turn, support them in addition to donating to the *Applegater*, the whole community benefits. Just ask the Williams librarians.

Diana Coogle  
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**COVER PHOTO**

of a colorful dogwood tree shot by Linda Kappen in her Applegate backyard.

*Happy Thanksgiving!*

**OPINION**

**A yes on Measure 15-220  
will provide essential emergency  
services in the Applegate Valley**

BY JULIE BARRY, BABETTE RAPP, AND THOMAS CROSSE

As representatives of three volunteer organizations that support the operations of the Applegate Valley Fire District (AVFD), we want to send a unified and wholehearted message about the importance of Measure 15-220. If approved by the voters on November 7, Measure 15-220 will provide essential funding to support the necessary staffing, facilities, equipment, and programs of AVFD. Please help us help—vote *yes* on Measure 15-220!

**Yes vote**

Your *yes* vote on Measure 15-220 will provide substantial community benefits and address critical concerns within the fire district, including:

- Reduce response times to AVFD's western neighborhoods, including North Applegate, Kubli, Thompson Creek, and Humbug Creek Roads.
- Build staffing capacity to respond to overlapping calls.
- Reestablish a strong fire prevention and education program focusing on assisting community members with protection of homes and property, providing local expertise, pursuing grant funds for homeowners, chipper programs, stewardship programs in local schools, and more.
- Strengthen the volunteer program to continually improve AVFD services.
- Ensure that AVFD keeps pace with rising costs of staffing, facilities maintenance and equipment, and modern technology and communications.

The Applegate Valley Fire District is facing several key challenges. Historically, AVFD has had one staffed response crew, located at its headquarters in Ruch. This location on the eastern side of the district results in long response times to the western portions of the district. In addition, shifts in demographics have resulted in a substantial reduction in volunteers, adding to the workload of AVFD's limited paid staff. In the past five

years, not only have call volumes increased by 25 percent, but also approximately 20 percent of calls are overlapping, meaning that when you call for help, there is a one-in-five chance that responders are already out on a call. Because of these compounding responsibilities, the over-taxed staff has been forced to reduce important fire prevention and community assistance programs.

Thanks to the efforts of AVFD's board and Chief Chris Wolfard, your tax dollars are being stretched with the aggressive pursuit of grant funding. A recent grant has provided student staffing to support a response crew at Station 51/Applegate, but these funds end after three years. Another three-year grant from the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office added two firefighters and partial funding for a new Fire Prevention Coordinator/Fire Marshal. Measure 15-220 will provide the funds to match these grants, continue staffing at Station 51, and sustain essential prevention programs throughout the next five years.

**No vote**

Unfortunately, a *no* vote would result in reduced services, including:

- Cuts to paid staff and reduced financial capacity to match state grant funds for supplemental staff.
- Reduced response to medical and fire emergencies.
- Increased response times.
- Substantially reduced fire prevention and preparedness programs.

Please join us in voting *yes* on Measure 15-220 to sustain excellent emergency services in the Applegate Valley.

Julie Barry, Board Member

Applegate Valley Fire District

Babette Rapp, President

Friends of the Applegate Fire District

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Thomas Crosse, President

Applegate Volunteer

Firefighters Association

**\* REMEMBER TO VOTE BY NOVEMBER 7 \***

