

AVFD thanks you—your support makes a difference!

BY AISHA MAYERS

We are deeply grateful that the recent levy for the Applegate Valley Fire District (AVFD) passed, thanks to the overwhelming support of our community. Your resounding vote of confidence means more than words can express.

We have taken significant steps to enhance our readiness and response capabilities as we prepare for the upcoming fire season.

The passing of this levy is not just a bureaucratic formality;

it's a lifeline for our operations and, ultimately, for the safety and well-being of everyone in the Applegate Valley. Without this vital support from the community, we would not have the resources necessary to upstaff our stations for the summer in our ongoing efforts to protect lives, property, and natural resources from the threat of wildfires.

Station 53 in Ruch will be staffed with a minimum of three firefighting personnel, and Station 51 in Applegate with a minimum of two, which will help ensure quicker response times and more effective firefighting efforts during critical periods of heightened fire risk.

We are thrilled to announce significant progress on our grant-writing, thanks to the dedication and hard work of our team. These grants represent valuable opportunities to enhance our capabilities, improve our services, and strengthen our ability to keep the Applegate Valley safe.

One of our most notable achievements is securing funds for equipment upgrades, such as new fire helmets and wildland fire shelters. These upgrades are essential for our personnel to perform their duties safely and effectively.

Grants awarded

We've made strides in securing grants for training and professional development programs. AVFD is partnering with Mercy Flights, a grant recipient, to build and fund the Southern Oregon Emergency Medical



See page 12 for more upcoming AVFD events.

Services Apprenticeship Program. This program assists college students with obtaining real-life work experience through employment and education assistance. These initiatives are integral to ensuring that our firefighters remain highly skilled and prepared to handle a wide range of situations with expertise and confidence.

We also received a grant from the Oregon State Fire Marshal that allowed us to hire a full-time fire marshal, Brian Mulhollen. This has enabled us to implement innovative wildfire prevention and mitigation projects, including fuels reduction, vegetation management, and community-outreach initiatives aimed at raising awareness about wildfire risk and promoting proactive measures to reduce it. By taking a proactive approach to wildfire prevention, we can help safeguard lives, property, and natural resources in the Applegate Valley.

As we continue to pursue additional grant opportunities, we remain dedicated to leveraging every available resource to enhance the resiliency and preparedness of AVFD.

Join us!

AVFD is seeking dedicated individuals to join our team. If you're passionate about serving your community, protecting lives, and making a difference, we want to hear from you. Whether you're an experienced firefighter or are looking to start your journey in emergency services, or are interested in the prevention aspect, we offer comprehensive training and support. Join us in our mission to ensure the safety and well-being of the Applegate Valley. Together, we can make a meaningful impact and forge lasting connections. Contact us today to learn more about how you can become part of the AVFD family.

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■ APPLAGATE FIRE AWARDS

Continued from page 1

Student Firefighter of the Year:

Carson Roeloffs

Volunteers of the Year: Jason Schonhoff and William Schmidt

Hall of Flame: Jack Lynch (see photo)

Length of Service Awards:

- Ryan Burns—5 years
- Josh Howell—5 years
- Forest Bohall—10 years
- Jack Lynch—20 years (see photo)
- Chris Wolfard—20 years

EMS (Emergency Medical Service)

Award: William Schmidt

Rookie of the Year:

Thomas Crosse

Firefighter of the Year:

Kane Gunther

Mary Ziegler Family of the Year Award:

Firefighter Jack Lynch's wife Marcella Lynch and family

2023/2024 EMS Achievements:

- Josh Carson
- Evan Jackson
- Brandi McCarthy
- Justin Rainey
- Zeph Robertson
- Zach Wright

Chief's Award: Babette Rapp



Firefighter Jack Lynch was inducted into the Applegate Valley Fire Department Hall of Flame, the most prestigious form of recognition given, for his two decades of service, including the hundreds of alarms he answered, the hundreds of drills he conducted, and for his continued service to the citizens of the Applegate Valley.

Congratulations to all!



Williams Fire Department Support Team and firefighters at the annual Chili Cook-off and Firefighter Appreciation Day held on May 4.

■ WILLIAMS FIRE AWARDS

Continued from page 1

Judges from the community included Pastor Josh Walker, representing Williams Community Church; Laurie Nerat, representing American Legion Post #50; Jessie Spero, representing Williams Grange; Williams Elementary School Principal Steve Fuller; and Bill Ertl from the Williams Fire Department Board of Directors. To score, judges used five criteria: color, texture, aroma, taste, and heat/bite, with scores ranging from one to five (highest).

Principal Fuller tallied up the final scores: Devin Brennan won first place with a score of 100, and Jasmine Williams won second place with 96. Each contestant was presented with a swag bag of various chili-related gifts, and Devin also received a Williams Chili Cook-off apron to wear at the regionals.

Later, at the awards ceremony, members of the Williams support team and Lieutenant Oskar Sundell presented each of the 15 firefighters with a certificate describing their rank, training, and years on the force. Firefighters present to receive awards at the ceremony were:

- Lieutenant Oskar Sundell
- Fire Marshall Jon Scaroni
- Firefighter Jennifer Vetter, who also serves as financial manager
- Firefighter Devin Brennan, who also received an award as first contact at a recent Marble Gulch 911 call
- Ash Martell, community relations coordinator
- Firefighter Jacob Bivins
- Firefighter recruit Jake Manning
- Firefighter recruit Liz Dunlap
- Firefighter recruit Ben Brian
- Firefighter recruit Jasmine Williams

Firefighters unable to attend were Interim Chief Nicco Holt, firefighters KC Welch and Heather Sundell, and firefighter recruits Jesse Johnstone and Charles HooperLee.



Chili Cook-off judges, from left to right: Laurie Nerat, Steve Fuller, Bill Ertl, Pastor Josh, and Jesse Spero. Photo: Ash Martell.



Chili Cook-off contestants, from left to right: Jasmine Williams, Devin Brennan, Jon Scaroni, Jake Manning, and Ash Martell. Photo: Karen Rogers.

The support team presented each firefighter with a Channellock 87 Rescue Tool, which is great for vehicle rescues—it is capable of easily cutting through battery cables and soft metal, prying open windows, and opening or closing gas safety valves and hose couplings up to five inches.

Williams Fire Department Support Team worked hard to put together this year's chili cook-off. The team provided all the extra chili and three different types of cornbread, served the contestants' chili to attendees for \$5 a bowl or \$5 for a platter of chili samples, and helped with the ceremony, setup, and cleanup. Support team members present were President Belinda Northrup, Vice President Ash Martell, Secretary Karen Rogers, and members-at-large Wanda Olson, Judy Grimsby, Allison Cleveland, Erika Mussack, Scotty Kaiser, and William Bourne.

Karen Rogers, Secretary
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