



Photo by Linda Kappen

Answering the call: Your community, your fire district

BY FIRE CHIEF CHRIS WOLFARD

In the heart of the Applegate, where neighbors still wave as they pass and the landscape is both breathtaking and unpredictable, the Applegate Fire District has long stood as a symbol of local strength and service. For decades, we've responded to fires, medical emergencies, rescues, and vehicle crashes—often in the most remote reaches of our community.

We're proud of that legacy. But like many rural fire districts across the country, we find ourselves at a crossroads.

Our coverage area spans almost 200 square miles. To protect a community this widespread, we rely on multiple stations, each strategically placed to keep response times down and service levels



high. Those stations are stocked with equipment, training, and readiness. What they also need, what they've always needed, is community members willing to serve.

Some stations are busier than others. In some areas, it's become harder to keep resources rolling from nearby. And when fewer people are available locally, calls take longer to respond to, workloads shift to other crews, and some tough decisions start looming a little closer.

The good news? That future isn't written yet. We can still shape it—together.

You don't need a background in emergency services. You don't need to be an athlete or an adrenaline junkie. What

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2025 Applegate Valley Fire District awardees. Photo: Liza Crosse.

Applegate Valley Fire District Annual Awards

BY LIZA CROSSE

On March 21, 2025, the Applegate Valley Fire District and the Friends of the Applegate Fire District came together for a joyous celebration—the annual Awards Banquet, hosted by the Friends of the Applegate Fire District. This yearly gathering is an opportunity to acknowledge accomplishments and excellent performance by staff members, students, volunteers, and apprentices.

Swearing-in of new firefighters

The Applegate Fire District sponsors a remarkable number of students through the Firefighter 1 program at Rogue Community College and the Rogue Interagency Training Association. We celebrated the following new graduates and wish them well as they pursue their careers:

- Mark Astry
- Aiden Bland
- Jonah Michael
- Joaquin Barragan
- Gavin Brayman
- Alex McGlasson
- Hunter Krouse
- Elizabeth Dunlap
- Ramiro Silva
- Alessandro Acevedo

Length of Service Awards

Five years: McKenzie Turnbull, Lauren Fischer, Carson Roeloffs.

Friends of the Applegate Fire District Award for outstanding volunteer service to the district

Pat and Candy Courtney

Brian—Brush Hook Award to acknowledge outstanding partners who support the fire district mission in fuel reduction

Janelle Dunlevy and Nate Gehres, Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council

Alex McGlasson, Applegate Fire, Fuels Specialist

Rookie Firefighters of the Year

- Sam Thompson
- Kevin Lakin

Students of the Year

- Sam Thompson
- Carter McDougall

Emergency Medical Service Award

Thomas Crosse

2024 Emergency Medical Service Achievements

This award recognizes students, apprentices, and staff members who completed additional EMS training, such as EMT or paramedic licenses, to better assist our community in medical emergencies.

- Jonah Michael
- Ramiro Silva
- Carter McDougall
- Sam Thompson
- Thomas Crosse
- Carson Roeloffs
- Kevin Lakin
- Alessandro Acevedo

Volunteer Firefighter of the Year

Justin Rainey

Mary Ziegler Family Member of the Year

John Jackson

Marc Chaput Spirit Award

Arthur Johnson

Firefighter of the Year

Chris Partida

Officer of the Year

Mitch Kuntz

Hall of Flame

William Schmidt

Liza Crosse

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A fresh new start for the Upper Applegate Grange

BY ALLIE PARKIN

The Upper Applegate Grange was officially chartered in 1936 in a vertical-log building near McKee Bridge. After this building burned down in September 1955, members worked hard to build the current Grange, which officially opened in June 1957. Membership began dwindling at some point, and the organization officially closed its doors, possibly in the late 1990s or early 2000s.

There was a brief revival from 2012 to 2016, which was followed by several years of dormancy. Recently, the Upper Applegate Grange received an official charter, signed by the National Grange Master, recognizing Upper Applegate Grange #839 as an official, legal Grange once again. We are excited to display our Charter Certificate in the hall.

As I write this article, the Upper Applegate Grange has been officially reorganized for almost eight months. It took a lot of work to make the building usable again, as it had been sitting empty for several years. We found some mice, a



Thanks to volunteers, the Applegate Grange got a new coat of paint. Photo: Allie Parkin.

few bats, and a couple of lizard residents, who were calling the Grange home. After our initial deep clean, we held our first event in September 2024—a rummage sale made possible by your amazing donations, which really helped us get off the ground. Since then, we've hosted several events and the building is now available for rent through our event scheduler, Rebecca Maddox.

The Grange community has been working hard these last several months with outdoor cleanup, backroom organizing, and addressing building needs. Last winter's upgraded heating system has made

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