

PORTAL RESCUE NEWS

January 2021

Portal Rescue, Inc., P.O. Box 16331, Portal, AZ 85632

Tel: (520) 558-2206; Emergency Calls Only: 911

www.Portalrescue.com

President's Report

Cary Booth

Some key accomplishments from 2020.

- Ambulance bay garage door installation improvements and repairs.
- Rodent control operations for the classroom and ambulance bay building.
- Lighting upgrades in the classroom.
- Portal Rescue joined the new Cochise county emergency response program called SEACOM
- Revised Portal Rescue Bylaws were adopted.
- Restoration of the sink and counter in the ambulance bay.
- New fire truck Brush 236 was equipped and put into service.
- Battery backup has been installed for powering operationally critical devices in case of a power outage.
- Hearing loop installed.
- Hosted five blood drives

I'd like to send out a huge thank you to each and every volunteer who has selflessly contributed time and resources to Portal Rescue in 2020 in support of their community. Without such volunteers, lives and homes and other property would have been lost. Equipment would not have been in proper operating condition, when it was critical. We would have a facility for community use, falling into disrepair! THANK YOU!

And also, a huge thank you to community members who have supported us financially, either with monetary donations or material goods for maintenance and improvements. In addition to the usual cost for insurance and utilities, financial support is used for training, maintenance, equipment upgrades, and facilities improvements. Training is critical for keeping current with the evolution of knowledge as well as bringing new volunteers on board. Without your support, our volunteers would be dwindling in numbers and ill

equipped to provide the life saving services they are trained to provide. THANK YOU!

I consider it a privilege to serve in an organization with such selfless volunteers, that provides so many valuable services to the community.

Portal Rescue Board of Directors

Cary Booth – President

Victor Shawe – Vice President

Dinah Davidson – Secretary

Ali Morse – Treasurer (Mar. – Sept.)

Susanne Apitz – Treasurer (Oct. – Mar.)

Jackie Lewis – EMS Chief

David Newton – Fire Chief

Carolyn Nordstrom – Active Member at Large



From the Editor

Pat Espenak

This year has been unusual in so many ways, but as you will see in the following pages, Portal Rescue has soldiered on through it all. Even in an ordinary year, those contributions are mostly unseen by members of our community—this year they were even less visible. So take a moment to read about what these dedicated volunteers do, under all kinds of conditions, to keep us safe.

"Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering 'It will be happier.'" - Alfred, Lord Tennyson



"EMT of the Year 2020"

The "Not So New" EMT becomes an "Old Timer" – Barbara Roth

Two years ago Carolyn Nordstrom decided, after much local encouragement, to become an EMT for Portal Rescue. She trained in New Mexico with Jared Fraile, Animas, and David Whipple, Lordsburg, the best instructors in this hemisphere (according to Carolyn) and started with zest in her new role of saving lives across defined borders. At the time, I was the closest, and sometimes the only EMT available, so Carolyn and I began responding to 911 calls together and became trusted partners and good friends, or, as we refer to ourselves, the Golden Squad.

After each call we reviewed what we learned and discussed how to improve. Carolyn's good nature and energy helped through those long hours of ambulance checks and case discussions. She has a great sense of humor and appreciates the comic situations we sometimes encounter. Best of all, she understands my jokes and even laughs with me! We work hard and also jest, which is necessary to process the heart wrenching situations we sometimes encounter.

I would like to suggest Carolyn as EMT of the year 2020. She went on the most calls, helped with ambulance maintenance, and is incredibly supportive to everyone—the new and old EMTs, the fire fighters, and virtually anyone she meets. I am grateful she introduced me to the Animas EMT community, who are a very welcoming bunch. She is a master of compliments and is unrivaled for getting information from people. Her history sections on the reports are extensive and trustworthy. Often she extends care past and beyond calls.

I appreciate my time with Carolyn and I hope for many successful runs this year with our trusted ambulance, matching its age related problems with the Golden Squad. I trust her even when she tells me I should drive faster on a pitch black night. The adrenaline never fails to kick in on a run, because we never know what to expect.

Looking for the right way to describe Carolyn, I found this:

Enthusiastic people feel passionate about life, about knowledge, and about work. They do everything with a good attitude and good energy. They get satisfaction from what they do because they enjoy it.

It fits Carolyn to a T.

2021 Fire Chief's Report — David Newton

In early 2019 we purchased a 2008 F450 crew cab truck to replace a brush truck (1989 F350) purchased in 2010 which had become unreliable. This year we finished its' outfitting and added an external fuel tank for the pump, to reduce mucking around with the vehicle's fuel system.

The F450 is 4WD, easily handles the weight of the pump unit, came with a winch, and has lots of cabinet space for equipment. The extra seating is nice, and we used it at the November 2020 Price Canyon fire, but the extra length does make it less nimble. This is a good replacement for the older truck and we look forward to using it for many years. Many thanks to Lee Dyal, Lance Shultis, and Henry Essary who did much of the work.

In terms of fire calls, 2020 was average. No structure fires – yea! The first fire of the year was a lightning strike around 11pm on July 14th up in Paradise, which blackened 7.6 acres. Then there was a roadside fire across from trash corner on Halloween. And lastly a three-acre fire in late November down off Price Canyon Road, which was human caused.

Local training: We nearly eliminated our classroom training this year, opting for practice on the dozens of things we do outside anyway. Helicopter dip-site setup, vehicle operations, bee incident, short handed operations, traffic management, radio scanning + pager operation, signal mirrors and vehicle winching.

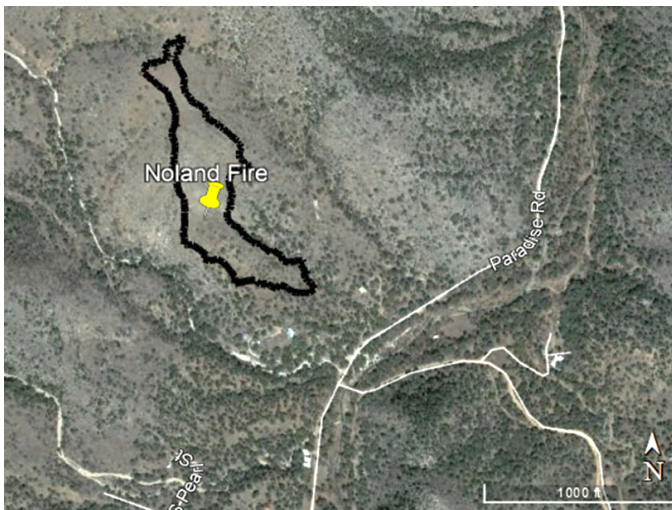
Outside Training: This was limited in 2020, but we did have one firefighter complete basic training at the Arizona Wildfire Academy in Prescott during March.

Fire Fighter Roster

Matthew Arambula	David Newton – Chief
Ed Castellion	Larry Rivers
Eric Desfachelles	Victor Shawe
Alina Downer	Lance Shultis
Lee Dyal	Aaron Smith
Henry Essary	Andrew Waser
Jeff Gee	John Yerger
Rolf Koford	

Portal Rescue Drivers

Shane Burchfield	Rolf Koford
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Fire In Paradise (The Noland Fire)

David Newton

Just before 11pm on July 14, 2020 a resident of Paradise saw a lightning strike start a fire on the hillside about 1/3 mile north of his residence. He called 911. County dispatchers sent alert tones to our radios and our response began. Resident and EMT Jackie Lewis alerted all current households in Paradise (it helps that there were only four) and scouted out the best access for our trucks, which were enroute.

Brush 8 with Victor Shawe and Alina Downer arrived first and radioed a sizeup (location, size, behavior, and threats) to myself and Brush 236, which arrived shortly thereafter, with Lee Dyal and Andrew Waser. They used backpack pumps on the hotspots of the flank, backing downhill toward some vacant residences. By the time I arrived in Tender 1, fire activity had decreased markedly.

We explored for a better observation location, but found nothing more advantageous. Light sprinkles of rain brought up the humidity and fire activity continued to decrease, so I sent home Tender 1 and Brush 8 at about 4am. Victor and I patrolled the flank towards Paradise through the night, cooling down hotspots and ember sources. The perimeter was walked at dawn. Command was transferred to the US Forest Service at about 8am when they arrived on scene.

Engine crews from Arizona State Forestry and the US Forest Service continued to mop up the fire for two days. The official name of the fire was Noland and burned 7.6 acres, about 95 percent of which was private land, with the remainder on Federal land. My thanks to the four firefighters and radio operators and Jackie Lewis who responded that night.



“Conductor” of the Portal Rescue “Orchestra” – Jackie Lewis and Dinah Davidson

Bonnie Bowen and her husband, Rolf Koford moved to Portal in 2014. In May 2015, Bonnie joined Portal Rescue as a Radio Operator. At that time, there were a very small number of ROs near the station, and it was invaluable to have Bonnie join our team. Rolf became a Fire Fighter soon after, so he could drive the Rescue Vehicle for the EMTs. Bonnie brought her extraordinary focus and organizational skills to Portal Rescue.

Since emergency calls can come at any time, day or night, weekend or holiday, we depend on Bonnie, who gets up and out of the house and to the station with a clear head and a smile in her voice and on her face. Her positive energy is crucial for a successful call.

Once in the RO office, Bonnie digs in—often monitoring two phones and two radio channels, as she coordinates communication between Portal Rescue personnel and Douglas Fire and Lifeline medics. She gives directions in areas where roads aren’t marked. She contacts Fire Fighters for additional resources to move a patient, block a road or set up a landing zone. Bonnie has set up a landing zone herself, while monitoring communications, when no one else was available.

Bonnie’s five years of experience have given her a foundation that she uses to anticipate the needs of Portal Rescue members in the field. She has found ways to work around a break in communication by setting up relays and phone calls. Bonnie excels in thinking “on her feet” about every conceivable (and inconceivable) eventuality, and is indispensable to Portal Rescue’s operations.

She is constantly improving the Radio Operators’ strategies for emergency response. Her input in the call reviews helps Portal Rescue improve communications. She will track down a problem and find a solution.

Thank you, Bonnie, for all you do on behalf of our organization and the community. Portal Rescue would not be the same without you.



The Price Canyon Fire — An unseasonal wild land fire – *Rolf Koford*

Around here, most wildfires occur in late spring or early summer, before the monsoons. Dead and dormant grass and other herbaceous cover provide fine fuel. With windy days and warmer temperatures drying out the fuel, any spark can ignite it. Unusual weather patterns can result in dry fuel at other seasons, and the “nonsoon” of 2020 was a good example. It set the stage for a post-Thanksgiving fire near Price Canyon Road.

When Portal Rescue received the call on November 28, seven firefighters sprang into action. One had just returned from an Oregon vacation. Another was back after a summer away working with a different wild land fire crew. Carolyn, Dinah and Bonnie made phone calls to contact firefighters and Susanne provided radio coordination from her house, which was closer to the fire scene than the fire station. Firefighters responded to the scene with two brush trucks and Tender 1.



The fire was in bunchgrass and desert scrub. Luckily, it covered only three acres and was creeping slowly west. County officials were on the scene along with some locals. One of them had graded an existing two-track road, eliminating the grass between the tracks and forming a firebreak along a third of the periphery of the fire. The other may have been the ranch owner. We learned later, the fire was started by a .22 bullet—perhaps a youngster had been plinking.

The Incident Commander, John Yerger, sent brush trucks along the periphery to douse the flames. We had to exercise caution because of scattered metal debris and barbed wire. Once the perimeter was secure, we turned to mopping up. Much of the bunchgrass was smoldering and difficult to extinguish. The brush trucks refilled repeatedly from the tender, which holds 20 times as much water as the trucks. Night fell and we continued working with headlamps. Finally, with temperatures dropping and only a few interior smokers visible, we left the scene.



We topped off the water tanks in all vehicles before calling it a day. John returned the next day to make sure the fire was out and two firefighters pressure-washed a very sooty hose, getting everything ready for the next call. It was gratifying to be able to help our southern neighbors.



Fighting the Price Canyon Fire



Why I became an EMT – Michele Lanan

Like so many, when the pandemic hit I felt helpless and depressed because it seemed like there was nothing I could do, except stay home as much as possible. But gaining EMT training and volunteering with Portal Rescue was something proactive and useful that I could do for others in my community.

I've been in several truly dangerous situations in the past and I tend to stay calm and organized when dealing with emergencies. I also had the experience of helping a dear friend as she battled a lengthy and fatal illness. This allowed me to consider the ins and outs of our medical system and how a little kindness and extra attention can sometimes mean the difference between life and death for a patient.

My career has taken me to work in places where medical help is distant or even nonexistent. My previous job at Deep Springs College was so remote that most employees and students were given an 80-hour Wilderness First Responder course. I absolutely loved it, both because the training allowed me to help those around me when they were sick or injured, and because the process of deducing the problem and resolving it appealed to me as a scientist. I was thrilled to have that training and it came in handy more than a few times. Ever since, I have wanted to get my EMT certification, but my career made it difficult to find the time.

When the pandemic shut down the research station in 2020, I realized this was my chance to finally become an EMT. I was nervous about the possibility of being exposed to the virus at the in-person portions of the class in Sierra Vista and Douglas, but decided that the benefit of adding another person to the Portal Rescue team outweighed the risks.

I am excited to join Portal Rescue and start going on EMT calls. Thanks to Alina Downer for her help with studying and practicing for exams, and for being willing to take this class with me and share all the driving. I'm also grateful for all the additional training and practice provided by Jackie Lewis, Carolyn Nordstrom, Barbara Roth, and David Newton, which proved essential.

EMS Chief Report – Jackie Lewis

With 33 tone-outs this year for medical assistance, Portal Rescue (PR) EMTs were kept quite busy. I should say, TWO EMTs. Carolyn Nordstrom and Barbara Roth covered the majority of those calls. Carolyn was on more than 80% of the AZ calls and Barbara more than 60%. They are both NM certified and attended many calls in Hidalgo County as well. The experience they gained by being dually certified has brought benefits to both departments. They shared their experiences with current EMTs and assisted in practice/training sessions for EMT students, Alina Downer and Michele Lanan. Both Alina and Michele are now EMTs with Portal Rescue. Please get to know them.

ET Collinsworth and John Yerger bring many years of experience to the department. Both work as EMTs during wild land fires and are certified in multiple states. We are always thankful when they are home and able to assist. ET also helped Alina and Michele prepare for their practical exams

In 2020 Portal Rescue responded to 66 calls, including Trauma, Medical, Ground Transport and Air Transport, so a week without a call is unusual. We grow together as we work together. We look forward to building strong working relationships with our EMTs.

While PR EMTs attempt to coordinate "away" times, there are still occasions when no EMTs are available. With the addition of our two new EMTs, this situation should improve.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank several Firefighters for assisting with EMT calls. They have driven Rescue 4, assisted with patient lifts, prepared landing zones and aided with patient transfers. Thank you! David Newton, Rolf Koford, Victor Shawe, Lee Dyal, Alina Downer and Jeff Gee. Your presence and assistance made it possible for EMTs to more fully focus on the patient.

If you would like to become an EMT please look into attending the certification classes held at Cochise College. PR may be able to sponsor a class in the future if there are at least 10-12 people interested in becoming EMTs. Please contact Jackie Lewis if you would like more information. 520-558-2287

EMTS

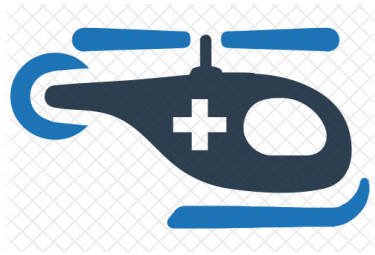
ET Collinsworth
Alina Downer
Michele Lanan
Jackie Lewis

Carolyn Nordstrom
Barbara Roth
John Yerger

Radio Operators

Susanne Apitz
Bonnie Bowen
Dinah Davidson

Jackie Lewis
Linda Wadsworth
Bill Wilbur



Major Upgrade to Portal Rescue Station—Our Own Helipad!

Dinah Davidson

Portal Rescue will soon have its own helipad, and the motivation for this investment is safety. Fully one third of recent patient transport events have been via air evacuation, and yet helicopters cannot take off and land safely on gravel or on dry soils, where dust clouds can result. In the past, we have had to rely on firefighters, day and night, to wet down the landing zone with water from a tender. This is not a long-term solution.

With donated help from local residents, Vice-President Victor Shawe is overseeing this project, on which work will begin on February 1. The helipad will be 30' wide x 46' long and 5.5" thick, and require 30 yds of concrete, with washed drain rock as backfill around it. A new sidewalk, running from the front of the fire garage to the helipad, will facilitate patient transport by gurney from the rescue vehicle. Together with needed rebar and miscellaneous materials, expenditures are estimated at ~\$8,000. We have approached local suppliers for donations toward the cost of materials, and we are grateful to many generous donors for stepping up during the past difficult year, especially after COVID forced cancellation of our 2021 fundraiser. Thank you!

Medical Helicopter Memberships

(reproduced from 2020 newsletter)

LifeLine/Air Evac:

Nancy E. J. Tucker 928-294-9023

Nancy.Tucker@AirMedCareNetwork.com

PhiCare:

www.phicares.com/states/arizona.join.shtml

or 1-888-435-9744

Reflections of a Portal Rescue EMT

Barbara Roth

You never know when it will happen, but suddenly out of nowhere, the radio starts didldidinging, which means there is a 911 call placed in the Portal area. As an EMT, first you are happy that you had the radio with you in the garden or at a neighbor's, instead of leaving it on the kitchen table. Then you run home and put on the appropriate uniform, while other members of the team are calling Douglas to get detailed information. When the fire bar rings, available team members answer and decide who is doing Radio Communication and who is going on the call. Carolyn and I usually arrive at the ambulance at the same time, and off we go to comfort and treat someone in need.

Last year Carolyn and I often drove together. Active and present EMTs were down to three and the two of us had the good fortune to be on most of the calls, which gave us more experience and self-confidence. The adrenaline rush of a call and not knowing what we will find, definitely makes being an EMT exciting and rewarding. Best Christmas news of the year: we got two more talented EMTs, Alina and Michelle, so next year will be more easily covered.

Portal Rescue is so lucky to have a well-trained and enthusiastic team: fire fighters to extinguish blazes, drivers for the ambulance, volunteers to prepare the helicopter landing site, those who help with lifting and carrying patients and much more. Equally important are the many hours dedicated by the RO staff. Without them, a Portal Rescue response would be impossible. No ambulance run or helicopter evacuation could happen without those who relay information, while EMTs, out in the "nowhere", are tending to the patient.

After all is done and the patient is on the way to advanced care, the ambulance can come home to its bay again. Then comes the joy of driving back at normal speed, adrenaline dissipating, reflecting how good it feels to be part of the Portal Rescue team, feeling relief and gratitude that everything went so well.

Our community is the backbone of Portal Rescue through donations of money and time and work. Taking care of the cost is a huge part of keeping it alive, including expenditures for insurance, continuing education trainings, constant maintenance of buildings and whatever can go wrong with trucks.

Also replacement of the pillows, blankets, and masks left with the patient when care is transferred to Douglas Ambulance or the helicopter crew, medical supplies and batteries, so many things, big and small. And not least, the priceless time volunteers dedicate to keep Portal Rescue afloat, but what an awesome job!

Thank you for making Portal such a wonderful place!

Crucial COVID-19 Vaccine News

John Yerger

As an active EMT, I found myself in the first round of those eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Since a substantial portion of the population isn't participating in the public health measures that would drop cases to near zero, I see widespread vaccination as one of the only paths we have to end the pandemic. Still, I was concerned about how rapid the vaccine development seemed, so I did some research. Though I don't have anything close to the expertise of the folks at the FDA, I do have a strong background in biology. Reading most of the 54 page FDA briefing document from Moderna made me feel comfortable enough that they had reached the appropriate conclusion: the known and potential benefits of the vaccine outweigh the known and potential risks of it. (See: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144434/download>).

I scheduled and received the Moderna vaccine. I experienced moderate soreness at the injection site, similar to what I experienced with the annual flu vaccine, for about 48 hours. I had no other side effects, although symptoms such as fatigue, fever and chills for a day or two aren't typically experienced until after the second dose. And while I won't receive full benefit until about 7 days after the second dose, I already feel better just knowing that I'm less likely to contract Covid-19 from any of the patients I may encounter.

I'm in excellent health and great physical shape. Although it's a slight possibility, I'm not concerned about dying from Covid-19. What concerns me more than anything is being asymptomatic and inadvertently passing on the disease to someone with a compromised immune system or underlying conditions, perhaps one of my patients. I'm also worried about the 1 in 10 chance of becoming a "long-hauler," with debilitating health issues, maybe for the rest of my life, leaving me unable to provide for my family. If I had a 1 in 10 chance of bricks falling on my head walking next to city buildings, I'd probably take the bus, wear a helmet, or do anything but walk too close to buildings unprotected. Fortunately, all I have to do to beat these odds is get a second shot, keep wearing a mask in public spaces, physically distance myself from others, and wash & sanitize hands and surfaces – until everyone else has the vaccine, and then IT'S OVER. Sounds ok to me.

The timeline for receiving a vaccine can be found in the graphic on the back of the Donor insert.

The **Cochise County Coronavirus Response Hub** has the latest information:

covid-cochisehealth.hub.arcgis.com/pages/vaccines

Treasurer's Report

Susanne Apitz

Below is the 2020 financial report as of 1/1/2021, rounded to the nearest dollar.

INCOME

Category	Budgeted	Actual
Donations	30,000	43,356
Fire Income	0	1,464
Fundraising	8,000	5,864
Grants	600	859
Interest	2,500	2,873
MIsc. Income	0	62
Rent	600	50
Rainy Day Draw*	1,350	0
Totals	43,050	54,527

* Rainy Day Draw is the amount needed to balance the income budget with the expense budget. We did not need to draw from our secondary account.

EXPENSES

Category	Budgeted	Actual
Chief's Meetings	500	20
Dues	250	280
EMS Supplies and Equip	3,000	3,377
EMS Training	4,000	30
Fire Pay	0	0
Fire Supplies & Equip	3,000	1,809
Fire Training	2,000	0
Fundraising Exp	500	1,077
Insurance	12,000	10,486
Legal	500	158
Misc. Expenses	500	100
Office Expense	1,000	1,748
Radio Ops	800	1,629
Structure Maint	3,000	1,627
Utilities	4,000	3,368
Vehicle Ops	6,000	2,118
Brush 6	2,000	3,131
Totals	43,050	30,957

We are \$12,093 under projected budget expenses and \$11,477 over projected income, giving us a \$23,570 surplus for 2020. Thanks to all who have donated so generously!

We expect a considerable loss of revenue in 2021, since there will be no "Soup's On" Fundraiser. Fire and EMT training expenses will increase in 2021, as most training in 2020 was cancelled due to Covid and the cost of training the new EMT's has not yet been paid. The new helipad construction will also be a major expense. The surplus from 2020 will be used to offset these additional costs.

**Portal Rescue
P.O. Box 16331
Portal, AZ 85632**

Yes, I want to help support Portal Rescue

Here's my tax-deductable* donation of:

*Please consult your tax advisor.

< \$80	\$80	\$150	\$300	\$500	\$1500
Donor	Friend	Patron	Sponsor	Benefactor	Steward

Please make checks payable to ***PORTAL RESCUE, Inc.***

Mail to: ***Portal Rescue Inc, P.O. Box 16331 Portal, AZ 85632***

Name: _____

I wish to remain anonymous. (Please circle: Yes or No)

Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Email Address: _____
(for meetings and announcements<)