

PORTAL RESCUE NEWS

Number 4 October 1990

Editor & Publisher - Robert J. Morse

FIRE DEPARTMENT FORMED

The most significant development in Portal Rescue this year has been the organization of a fire function. After a February public meeting which expressed strong support for the idea of a fire department we proceeded with the necessary negotiations and paperwork.

Through an agreement with the Arizona State Land Department we obtained the use of a combination wildland/structural fire truck (600 gals., 250 gpm) and a \$1,500 Rural Community Fire Protection matching fund grant. These funds were used to train firemen, organize the department and equip the truck.

Tremendous response to a community-wide fund drive resulted in slightly over \$3,300 raised for the fire function. After matching the grant funds used to equip the truck, and paying operating expenses, insurance being by far the major item—and receiving some income from State Land fires, a balance of \$2,000 remains for future expenses.

We operate under a cooperative agreement with the State Land Department which has responsibility for fire suppression on all state lands and all private lands outside fire districts. Under this agreement Portal Rescue is paid, and individual firemen are paid, for responding to fires outside the immediate Portal/Paradise area. If we owned the truck, these payments could cover all expenses and subsidize local fire protection. Since we do not own a truck at this

time, our payments from the state do not fully cover expenses but the present arrangement does give us personnel and equipment for local fire protection. We are not paid for, and do not charge for, fire protection inside our local area. ■

BY-LAW CHANGES

The growth of Portal Rescue over the years and the attendant increase in net worth and cash flow and the need to be ever responsive to the expressed needs of the community caused us to review our organizational structure early this year.

At the annual meeting held in March Portal Rescue adopted a revision to the By-Laws which set up parallel Emergency Medical and Fire departments and also provided for a Board of Governors to run the affairs of the Corporation. The Board consists of 3 members representing the EMS function, 3 representing the Fire function and 3 people from the community at large.

At the subsequent election the Board members elected were René Blondeau, Lynn Concagh, Eugene Deiss, Bob Fagan, Russ Griffiths, Kay Muma, Debbie Rothpletz, Helen Snyder and Barney Tomberlin. René Blondeau was elected President, Helen Snyder Vice President, Debbie Rothpletz Treasurer and Kay Muma Secretary. These officers are elected by the Board. Russ Griffiths was elected EMS Chief and Barney Tomberlin Fire Chief. The chiefs are elected by the membership. ■

FIRE FIGHTER TRAINING

A total of 15 people took the 20 hour training course for certification as Wildland Fire Fighter. This certification is required to become a member of the Portal Rescue Fire Division. These courses were given by State Land in Willcox in April and by the Forest Service at Rucker in June.

We presently are not trained or equipped to fight structural fires (inside burning structures) but our truck and the equipment it carries can be very effective in protecting buildings. With additional training and a small amount of additional equipment we should be able, in time, to meet the standards of the rating organization that sets fire insurance classifications in Arizona. If we were able to move from our present Class 10 to Class 9 it would mean some reduction in insurance costs for all of us. We are now studying exactly what is required to do this and setting up our continuing training program to meet the standards as soon as possible. ■

DONATED EQUIPMENT

We are presently very well equipped with the tools of the trade; hose, nozzles, fittings, hand tools etc. due to the generosity of the Denton, Texas and Monrovia, California Fire Departments, the Arizona State Land Department and the Forest Service. Donated items include over $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of hose, a wide variety of nozzles and fittings, several extinguishers and 10 sets of wildland fire hand tools. The value of this material is conservatively estimated at over \$6,500. The donations from Denton and Monrovia were due to contacts Barney Tomberlin had with former associates there. ■

FIRE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY

Despite a late start and delays in receiving our truck, Portal Rescue has responded to 8 fires through September. Two of these were in downtown Portal, one behind the Post Office started by wind-caused shorting of the power lines and one near the Fin Russell residence caused by lightning. Six calls were responses to State Land fires. The largest of these was the Sulphur Fire just northeast of Sulphur Draw which burned several hundred acres. The state fires resulted in payments of \$2,608 in Portal firefighter wages and allowances and in payments of \$484 to the Fire account and \$145 to the EMS account for vehicle usage allowances.

State Land Department has commended our work this year and they are particularly pleased that we have saved them considerable money. Formerly they had to call on the Elfrida Fire Department for fires in this area and this was much more costly to them. ■

1990 EMS ACTIVITY

In the first three quarters of 1990 we have responded to 22 emergency medical calls. Ten of these were trauma incidents and ten were medical problems. Of these calls, 11 resulted in transportation of the patient to a hospital.

Earlier this year we added some additional oxygen equipment and upgraded our backboards with a second modern tapered board to replace an antiquated one we obtained second hand in 1980. In our request to Department of Health Services (our funding source) for the 1990-91 fiscal year we have asked for money to improve our paging system, obtain an additional resuscitator and add a scoop stretcher to our equipment.

NEW EMT CLASS

The fifth (since 1980) 120 hour EMT training course provided by Cochise College in Portal started on October 3. There are nine new students enrolled and three EMTs are taking the course as a refresher. Portal Rescue is providing financial aid to some students to help them cover the substantial financial burden (over \$300) of taking the course. We look forward to a number of new EMTs to strengthen our forces when the course and the subsequent state exam are finished in the spring. ▪

ADVANCED EMT TRAINING

Two of our EMTs, Russ Griffiths and Debbie Rothpletz, are now taking a course given in Willcox which will, on completion, certify them as Intermediate Emergency Medical Technician. This will qualify them to do intubations, give IV's and administer certain medicines and in general greatly expand the level of emergency medical service available to the community. Their training involves 300 hours of classroom work and well over 100 hours of work in emergency rooms and on ambulances. Their personal sacrifice in making the considerable investment of time and effort required to take the course is to be commended. We wish them success! ▪

HAZ MAT CLASS

On August 22, Mr. Chuck Hammel of the Mt. Lemmon Fire Department presented an 8 hour course on proper response to Hazardous Material Incidents to 9 members of Portal Rescue and 4 other members of the community. His emphasis was on recognition of possible hazards and on safety for the responder and the general public.

Locally, our most likely HazMat incident would involve individual gasoline storage tanks. All such tanks

should be electrically grounded and trenched to contain the full content of the tank in case of a spill. Does your tank meet these requirements? If you need help or advice on this or any other possible hazard call Portal Rescue at 558-2223.

RECYCLING PAYS

Every saturday morning there is a box at the Post Office to collect your aluminum cans for recycling with the proceeds going to Portal Rescue. Bill Willy has been faithfully handling the project; the collection, the stomping, the bagging and the hauling to Tucson. His work has paid off to the tune of \$236.44 for the first eight months of the year. This is a project that deserves the support of everyone in the community. It's a painless way to help the environment and help your local volunteer fire and EMS services. ▪

VEHICLE GARAGING PROBLEM

One of the points in our cooperative agreement with the state by which we obtained the fire truck was the understanding that we would provide garaging to protect the truck from the elements and most particularly freezing temperatures. It is also necessary to protect the hose on the truck from rain which will deteriorate it. For these reasons and also to shelter our rescue vehicle and store our growing body of equipment, we have been exploring a variety of approaches to a solution.

In most basic terms, we need a building, centrally located, to shelter two vehicles and equipment. The building must be economical to build and maintain and be designed with provision for expansion. Ideally the building might serve other functions. These might include a variety of community services such as a meeting hall with greater capacity and facilities than the present school building,

an expanded library facility, a polling place etc.

Much time and effort has been spent on efforts to obtain financial help from various sources. On October 5 we learned that one of these requests paid off. Valley National Bank will give us \$1,000 toward our building.

Other possible sources of grants are being investigated and may produce help in the future but the major funding must come, as it has in the past, from our local efforts. ▪

BUILDING PLANS

We have obtained a commitment of a gift of land for a building site from Bill and Mary Willy on the northwest corner of their property. Building plans are in the early formative stage. We are studying our minimum needs and what is available to meet these needs within our financial constraints. One thing that we are looking at carefully is the need to have any present construction economically expandable in the future.

We are thinking in terms of a multi-purpose building of approximately 1,000 sq. ft. In addition to serving the needs of Portal Rescue we anticipate that even the minimum building now being considered will be able to serve as a community meeting place with more space and facilities than the present library building. In the future it might be expanded to a dedicated community building with full facilities.

The problem, of course is money. We are counting on considerable volunteer labor but even so the cost is going to be in the \$8,000 - \$10,000 range—a very substantial sum for Portal. You will be hearing more on this in the near future. ▪

BOARD MEETINGS

At the first meeting of the newly structured and elected Board on March 20 job assignments were made and policy established on subsidies for continuing education. Plans were made for a "second response" capability to handle possible Forest Service requests for EMS standby on major fires. A visitor to the meeting expressed concerns about the addition of a fire function. Several hypothetical objections, primarily in the area of liability, Federal agency intervention, and the possibility of detrimental actions by a board not wholly controlled by EMTs, were raised. It was decided to postpone further action until these questions could be investigated.

The President contacted a host of people who might have information on the questions raised. His March 31 memo to the Board presented his findings. In summary, he found that there was universal agreement that we could expect no problems as long as we operated within our stated purpose and within our training and certification.

At the June 19 meeting there was further discussion of the EMT class scheduled to start in the fall, of the vehicle garaging problem and of formalization of policies and procedures.

The September 20 meeting adopted policies for handling the financial affairs of the Corporation. An office of Controller was established responsible for complete financial records and procedures were established to insure that all necessary steps in the handling of funds are followed. The Fire department was strengthened by the addition of two lieutenants jointly responsible for equipment readiness and training and a clerk responsible for records. ▪

PORTAL RESCUE

Continuing Education Classes Schedule

Saturday - 27 Oct. - 2 PM - Library

FIRE - Familiarization with our Truck - Basic Hose Lays & Water Usage
- Communications

Saturday - 3 Nov. - 2 PM - Library

EMS - Field Exercise - A simulated ??

Tuesday - 20 Nov. - 7:30 PM - Library

FIRE - Fire Line Safety - Extrication Review - Basic Hydraulics

Tuesday - 4 Dec. - 7 PM - Library

EMS - What's Coming - IEMT's in Portal
Debbie & Russ on their IEMT Course

Saturday - 12 Jan. - 2 PM - Library

FIRE - Practice Drill - Lay Hose and Squirt Water! - Safely

Saturday - 9 February - 2 PM - Library

FIRE - Building a Fire Line - Sticking Together - Communications
-Fire Safety
