Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District

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**MAY 2025**

**CHIEF’S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Reporting Period:** May 2025 **Date Presented:** May 28, 2025 **Prepared by:** Chief Baker

**1. GENERAL OVERVIEW**

As I begin my role as Fire Chief, I want to thank everyone for their patience and support. I’m working hard to learn the job, get to know the community, and balance the day-to-day operations with the administrative responsibilities of the department.

Over the past few weeks, I’ve been meeting with **city officials, school staff, mutual aid partners, dispatch**, and others to build strong working relationships. I also toured the prison facility to better understand our response needs there.

At the same time, I’ve started a **“spring cleaning” effort across our stations** to help identify what equipment we have, what we need, and what can be improved. This will help us be better prepared moving forward.

I’m also reviewing:

* Our **apparatus and fleet**
* **Station conditions**
* **Training programs and scheduling**
* **Equipment and supplies**
* **Staffing levels and personnel needs**

I’m looking into a possible **reorganization of the department** to improve how we operate. The goal is to create a clearer chain of command and align our structure with best practices to help us be more effective and efficient.

Another priority is **recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters**. I’m reviewing our current application and training process to make it more welcoming and easier to navigate. Volunteers are a critical part of our team, and we want to do everything we can to support them and encourage more people to get involved.

Recently, our team was recognized at the **Umatilla Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet** for their excellent work during a **Mother’s Day CPR save**. It was a proud moment that showed the skill and dedication of our firefighters.

There is still a lot to do, but I’m excited about the direction we’re heading and proud to be part of this department. Thank you again for your continued support.

**2. GRANTS & ACQUISITIONS**

The department continues to make strong progress in securing outside funding to support our staffing, equipment, and operational goals.

We were recently awarded the **Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) Staffing Grant**, which will allow us to hire **four seasonal firefighters** on a **stipend basis of $250 per day**. This compensation structure is fully authorized and aligned with the grant guidelines, providing critical support during our busiest operational period.

We have also received funding through the **Amazon Community Grant**. While we are still finalizing spending priorities, we are focusing on high-impact department needs, including:

* **IT system upgrades**
* A **new ice machine** for rehab and station use
* **More efficient apparatus coolers**
* **Additional wildland equipment**
* And potentially a **new heart monitor**

I am also **researching alternative funding sources specifically for the heart monitor** due to its high cost. While the Amazon grant will absolutely be used in alignment with its intended objectives, we are taking a **strategic pause** to ensure every dollar is spent in the most effective and sustainable way.

We are currently participating in the **OSFM Smoke Alarm Installation Program**, with **mandatory reporting due in the coming weeks**. I am still working to obtain clear budget and program guidelines to ensure full compliance and effective implementation.

In addition to these active programs, I am currently working on a **FEMA SAFER Recruitment and Retention Grant** application. This grant would provide **100% federal funding over four years** to support and grow our volunteer program. Unlike the OSFM Staffing Grant—which uses a titrated funding model and is not self-sustaining—this SAFER opportunity would be a much stronger fit once **Amazon property tax revenue** is fully online to meet long-term matching and sustainability requirements.

Finally, I want to share that I am actively **researching more local and statewide grant opportunities** that can support our mission. I would also like to **thank Board Member Darla** for her continued efforts in identifying and sharing potential funding opportunities. It is encouraging to see a board member so engaged in helping us pursue resources that benefit the district and the community.

**3. TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS**

Our crews continue to prioritize training and readiness while maintaining operational coverage. Recent highlights include:

* **FF Posey** successfully **recertified in Firefighter I** and is now able to cover shifts independently
* **Senior FF Harris** provided outstanding mentorship and support during Posey’s recertification process
* Senior FF Harris is also nearly complete with the Dept **Annual RT-130 Wildland Refresher**
* **Resident Intern Paige** passed her **National Registry EMT exam** – congratulations on this major achievement!
* One firefighter is currently completing **ICS-300 and Crew Boss training**
* **Each shift** is completing **mandatory skills evaluations** in preparation for a busy fire season
* Daily training continues with **1–3 hours per shift**, including joint drills with firefighter interns
* **Senior FF Harris** continues to lead our compliance work with **DPSST**, ensuring we exceed state standards

Thank you to all crews for your continued commitment to training and operational excellence.

**4. FACILITIES**

Our **facilities Committee has officially met**, and I have made it a priority to **organize both Station 11 (McNary) and Station 12 (Downtown)** to better assess and understand the current and future needs of the department.

* Once the organization process is complete, a **list of needed repairs and improvements** will be developed and addressed in phases.
* **Ongoing pest control issues**, primarily involving **mice and spiders**, will be tackled through improved organization to reduce harborage areas and through **more thorough and regular cleaning** practices.
* **A-Shift successfully repaired the man door at Station 12**, which had not been shutting properly, thank you for taking initiative.
* Plans are in progress to **install an ice machine at Station 11**, which will support proper rehab and cooling for our firefighters during incidents and high-temperature operations.

These efforts are part of a larger commitment to ensuring our facilities are safe, clean, functional, and supportive of daily operations and emergency response.

**5. FLEET MAINTENANCE & READINESS**

Our apparatus fleet continues to be evaluated and maintained to ensure reliability and readiness. Current updates include:

* **Engine 12** remains **out of service** awaiting a critical part, with an estimated **4-week delay** for arrival and installation.
* **Brush 11** is at the body shop with **good progress** being made. An **inspection is scheduled for Friday**, with anticipated completion the following week.
* **Engine 11** is fully operational but has several **minor maintenance issues**:
  + Tank level gauge not reading accurately
  + Intermittent check engine light
  + Intermittent mechanical siren  
    These issues will be addressed **once Engine 12 returns to service**.
* **Brush 14** has been relocated to **Station 12 (Downtown)** and is currently being **evaluated** to determine if it is a long-term fit for the department’s needs.
* **Hose and ladder testing has been completed** successfully, with certifications good for another year.
  + **Five lengths of hose were removed from service** during testing due to failure or damage.
  + We will begin **annual hose purchasing** to maintain a healthy rotation and are also pursuing **grant funding** for a full hose replacement initiative.

Maintaining a dependable fleet remains a top priority, and we appreciate the crews' efforts in supporting inspections, repairs, and operational readiness.

**6. REGIONAL UPDATES**

We continue to strengthen partnerships and improve coordination with regional agencies and stakeholders. Recent efforts include:

* **Met with Umatilla County Fire District 1** to address ongoing **dispatch concerns** and improve communication across agencies.
* Working collaboratively with Fire District 1 to **develop a joint training plan** utilizing the **Hermiston Fire Tower** for interagency drills.
* Participated in **planning meetings** for upcoming community events, including **Landing Days** and **Rock the Locks**.
* Completed a **tour of the Two Rivers Correctional Institution (TRCI)**. This visit has already led to improved coordination, and we have a **joint all-hands training drill scheduled for September** with TRCI staff.

These efforts reflect our continued commitment to building strong relationships and ensuring seamless response with our regional partners.

**7. STATEWIDE COORDINATION**

Efforts to align with state standards and best practices are ongoing:

* The **RT-130 Wildland Fire Refresher** is nearly complete, ensuring our personnel are properly trained and prepared for the upcoming fire season. This annual training is a statewide standard and essential for readiness.
* **Senior Firefighter Harris has submitted my certifications and qualifications to the State of Oregon** for **reciprocity and formal recognition**. This process can be lengthy, as the state works to evaluate out-of-state credentials and align them with Oregon’s training standards.

**8. PERSONNEL & MEMBERSHIP**

We continue to focus on supporting our current members while actively recruiting to strengthen our team:

* **Firefighter Enyon** is currently on **parental leave** and is expected to **return on June 16th**.
* **Firefighter Posey** has successfully **completed his reinstatement certifications** and is now fully operational.
* We are **actively recruiting for Resident Intern positions**. Interest has been strong, and we are currently working through the selection and onboarding process.
* **Five new volunteer applicants** have been notified, including **one lateral transfer from Umatilla County Fire District 1**. We are hopeful these candidates will bring much-needed support to our volunteer ranks.
* **Four Seasonal Firefighters have been hired** under the OSFM Staffing Grant. They will begin the **week of June 16th** and serve through **October 15th**, or as needed operationally.
  + The seasonal firefighters will be assigned to **A, B, and C shifts**, with **one roving position**.
  + This is a **stipend-based position at $250 per 24-hour shift**, in accordance with the grant guidelines.

**Current Staffing:**

* 1 Fire Chief (FTE)
* 1 Admin Assistant (FTE)
* 3 Senior Firefighters (FTE)
* 4 Firefighters (FTE)
* 4 Seasonal Firefighters (June 16th)
* 3 Resident Interns (RI)
* 0 Active Volunteers

**9. INCIDENT SUMMARY – APRIL 2025**

**Report to be provided at July Meeting**

**10. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EVENTS**

* **Landing Days** (June 23) – planning in full swing
* **Rock the Locks** – coordination ongoing

**11. SHIFT UPDATES**

**A Shift – Senior Firefighter Seth Gorham**

* **Events:** Elementary school visit, McNary Heights student outreach, Chamber of Commerce dinner
* **Training:** RT-130, EMS skills, driving/operator training, FF1 skills, district familiarization, report writing
* **Special Projects:** Continued deep cleaning, walk-through of new UHS building, preparing SRT gear order, compiled list for new rehab coolers
* **Notable Incident:** FF Gorham, FF Sokk, and FF/Intern Gonzalez responded to a cardiac arrest on 5/11—**successful CPR/code save**
* **Emergency Calls:** 17 EMS, 1 Fire (Illegal Burn)

**B Shift – Senior Firefighter Jordy McCracken**

* **Mutual Aid:** 4 responses including Benton County (5/12, 5/25) and UCFD1
* **Training:** Donning/doffing, hose deployments, ladders, hydrants, RT-130, ICS-300, Engine Boss, rescue drags
* **Event:** Elementary school walk-through
* **Issue:** Delayed mutual aid response due to overlapping wildland incident

**C Shift – Senior Firefighter Ray Harris**

* **Time Off:** FF Ray – 72 hrs (new baby); FF Titus & FF Jacob – no time off
* **Training:** RT-130, EMS protocols, FF1/DPSST skills, apparatus familiarization
* **Special Tasks:**
  + **Harris:** DPSST coordination, training records, OSFM mobilization planning, OTFTA meeting
  + **Posey:** Passed FF1 certification
* **Mutual Aid:** None
* **Prevention:** No new pre-fire plans

### **12. Annual Requirements Update**

The following is a summary of current annual testing and service life requirements for key equipment and apparatus:

**SCBA & Breathing Air Systems**

* **SCBA Fit Testing:** **Pending/Overdue**
* **SCBA Flow Testing:** Completed **01/2025**, next due **01/2026**
* **SCBA Units (2018 Models):** 15-year service life, due for replacement in **2033**
* **SCBA Bottle Hydro Testing:** Last completed **04/2024**, next due **04/2029**
* **Cascade System Testing:** Completed **01/2025**, next due **01/2026**

**Hose & Extinguishers**

* **Annual Hose Testing:** Completed **05/2025**, next due **05/2026**
* **Fire Extinguishers:** Testing records need confirmation—**dates currently unknown**

**PPE & Specialty Equipment**

* **Structural Turnouts:** 10-year service/shelf life
* **Swift Water Rescue Gear:** 10-year service life

**Apparatus Service Life (per NFPA Standards)**

* **Frontline Service Life:** 15 years
* **Total Service Life:** 25 years

| **Apparatus** | **Year** | **Remove from Frontline** | **Remove from Service** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Engine 11** | 2018 | 2033 | 2043 |
| **Engine 12** | 2016 | 2031 | 2041 |
| **WT 11** | OSFM | N/A | N/A |
| **WT 12** | 2013 | 2028 | 2038 |
| **Brush 11** | 2019 | 2034 | 2044 |
| **Brush 12** | 2018 | 2033 | 2043 |
| **Brush 13** | 2003 | Removed | 2028 |
| **Chief 10** | 2018 | N/A | 2033 |
| **Squad 11** | 2011 | N/A | 2026 |
| **Boat 11** | 2003 | N/A | 2033 (30-yr best practice) |

These timelines and standards help us maintain operational readiness and plan for strategic replacements and upgrades. We are continuing to track and verify all outstanding testing records to ensure full compliance.

**CLOSING REMARKS**

Thank you to all our personnel for your hard work and dedication. We’re making steady progress on training, equipment, staffing, and community partnerships.

I also want to thank the Board for your continued support as we work to strengthen the department and meet the needs of those we serve.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Chief Baker**  
Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District #1