

ONE FIRE!

February 2009



"OLDE STAGE" AND "NEVA ROAD" WILDFIRES IGNITE ON JANUARY 7th



Photo by Ian Guthrie

The Call: Our BMFPD volunteers were called out in full strength, joining 56 other fire departments, law enforcement agencies, emergency service groups, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and private businesses to fight the "Olde Stage" and "Neva Road" wildfires, which burned more than 3000 acres in Boulder County on January 7-9. The fires claimed one home and at least three substantial outbuildings. Two firefighters and one police officer suffered minor injuries.



Courtesy of 9NEWS



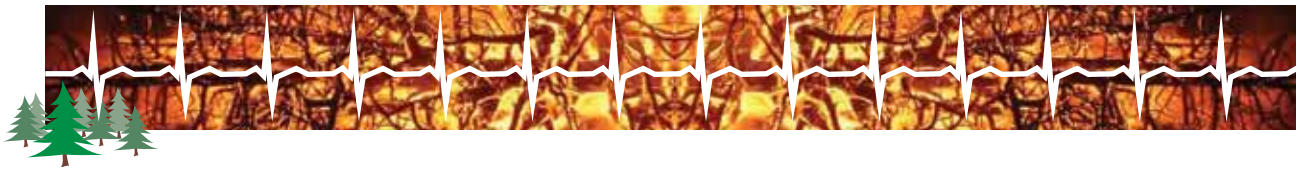
Courtesy of 9NEWS

The Cause: Investigators determined that the "Neva Road" fire was caused by a downed power line that fell on a wire fence, energizing the fence, and causing arcing and sparking which ignited a house and outbuilding at 7202 North 45th Street (at the intersection of North 45th Street and Neva Road). The house and an outbuilding were destroyed by the fire.



Photo by Ian Guthrie

Investigators from the Sheriff's Office and Xcel Energy determined Tuesday, January 13th, that the Olde Stage fire was caused by a cable line that was blown into contact with a power line, creating an arc that showered the ground with sparks, igniting the fire. The event was witnessed by an area resident who notified the Sheriff's Communications Center of the fact and warned that the fire was spreading rapidly upslope with the gusting winds. The Olde Stage fire, the larger of the two blazes, burned over 2500 acres and claimed two barns and damaged several homes. Gusting, 65+mph Chinook winds rapidly spread the fire and whipped it into an inferno, spreading live embers that started new fires.



The Evac: When the fires threatened, residents of more than 500 homes on the north side of Boulder County were ordered to leave. Authorities said more than 11,000 homes had been alerted to the fire by telephone calls, but not all of those households were told to leave. Emergency shelters were set up in Niwot High School and Centennial Middle School. Animals from several horse ranches and llama ranches were moved to the Boulder County Fairgrounds and Sombrero Ranch.

The Fight: Boulder Sheriff Joe Pelle said, “It was darn near impossible, during height of the wind, to physically fight the fire. The effort to suppress this wildfire once the winds died down. . . was exhausting and downright heroic.”

The Cure: The fire crews were kept busy day and night in an effort to control and extinguish the blaze. Their training, their leadership, and their strength—collective and individual—really proved their worth in successfully battling these fires, which were 100% contained Thursday at 8 p.m., and later controlled after remaining stump fires and hot spots were extinguished late Friday.

The BMFPD Team: The BMFPD turned out in full strength to fight these fires. The firefighters included, Tom Akins, Greg Anderson, Kirk Bach, Matt Baris, Chief John Benson, Barry Binns, Rob Bozeman, Andrew Churnside, Adam Davis, Bob de Haas, Jim Eyster, Tim Farrell, Katy Fassett, Nina Griffin, Greg Huckabee, Bert Johansen, Dave Kabal, Carl Loven, Steve Lynn, Marcia McHaffie, Matt McHaffie, Jeff Miller, Paul Munding, Bob Olliver, Mike Palamara, Melanie Pray, Kevin Reed, Shawn Roberts, Param Singh, Diana Waddell, Stacy Wade and Josh Witt.



Photo by Ian Guthrie



Photo by David Kabal



Courtesy of 9NEWS



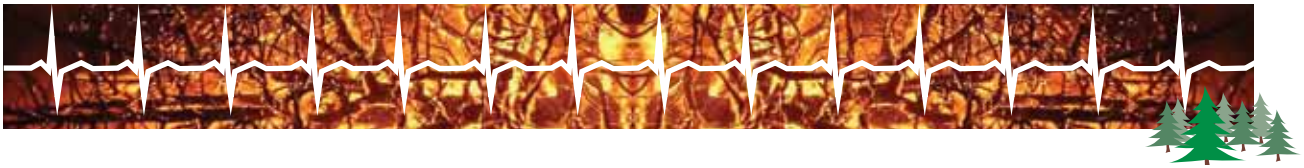
Courtesy of 9NEWS



Photo by David Kabal



Photo by Ian Guthrie



QUOTES OF NOTE ON THE OLDE STAGE FIRE:

Bob de Haas:

Those houses with fire mitigation made it easier to defend them, so if you haven't done any mitigation around your home, please do!

The level of expertise and ability of the Boulder Mountain Fire Department (your fire department) has risen such that back-burning techniques could safely be used to keep the fire away from the homes by burning up what little fuels there were around the homes. Back burning also was used to keep the fire away from the road so that the fire didn't jump Olde Stage and burn through our community.

It was a long night, but the nicest part was, come morning, we could see that we had accomplished what needed to be done, and no homes along Olde Stage were lost. It was a much different ending from the 1990 Olde Stage fire where numerous homes were lost to the fire.

Param Singh (email to firefighters Shawn Roberts & Bob de Haas):

I think you and Bob did a really great job. Two things stick out for me:

The first is when 4304 had reloaded with water and had come on the grass fire at the edge of the road with embers flying across. By the time I got out of the suburban and reached the hose line you two already had water on the fire. That was the fastest deployment I have ever seen. My guess would be it took about 30-40 seconds.

The second is the back and forth with a supervisor from a metropolitan district. He must have thought we were nuts—first dowsing what looked like, to him, a benign little fire in a slash pile. (A few minutes later it had really been smoking and sending embers whipping across Olde Stage to the west side.) A little while later he drives by and you are trying to light the same slash pile. (Did that because it was a huge pile that would have burned forever, it was right by the road and the wind had died down.) It probably confirms his opinion of mountain fire districts!

Bob's experience really helped keeping things in perspective, both when he was worried (early on) and later when there seemed to be a better handle on things. It is a good thing that the supervisor did not hear some of Bob's colorful comments.

What I will probably remember is not keeping an eye on the gauge when filling and having an impressive water fountain shoot out of 4304. Good water pressure!

Tom Akins (email to BMFPD):

A note of thanks from myself and on behalf of the Chief. We really appreciate the effort shown yesterday (and this morning) by all. I was going to say especially those on standby at the station, but listening to our guys and gals on the radio at 0400 this morning, I'm not sure who got the better deal. All reports have been nothing but complimentary. Good job!

Paul Munding (Tom Akins and BMFPD staff):

I would like to add a couple of kudos on my own as well:

Greg Huckabee and Andrew Churnside did a fantastic job in staging - tracking, and assigning out groups of engines all night long...watching them orchestrate many different types of apparatus from various departments was quite impressive.... Outstanding work!

To the crew I was with on engines 4344 and 4352 – Dave, Stacy, Adam, and Mike—thank you for the adventure...from defending the house on US 36 to staking out another house for several hours in the wee hours of Thursday morning...to the lines that Adam and Mike lit and worked on.... Well done!

Steve Lynn (email to BMFPD):

I just woke up after working 32 out of the last 48 hours and wanted to thank everyone who helped save my house. Especially Andrew and Lily. Andrew really took a bullet when I was forced to leave him behind to be staging manager. In my defense the IC ordered me to leave someone behind and based on the reports I hear, I picked the right person for the job as I could hear him on the radio all night long orchestrating engines like a real virtuoso.

Things got hot for Lily and me in structure defense on Olde Stage and supporting burning operations on Point of the Pines. I think it got so hot because Adam and Mike from the mit crew were so busy setting things on fire over the hill on US 36 (just kidding). When we went to burn my back yard I sure appreciated having all the water from you guys on the tenders (Bob, Shawn, Param, Nina, Paul, Jim, and the rest). Thanks for sticking it out all night. We really needed water when we needed it.

Also, thanks to whoever parked the engine in my driveway and triaged my house. They did a fine job as my house is still here.

The chief really came through with the back burning strategy that saved almost everything. I am not sure they could have managed the firing operations without his skilled and experienced advice. Of course, he had his hand on the drip torch quite a bit also, as even chiefs have got to have a little fun once in awhile.

Thanks to limbing up of the few trees last year, I have only lost a lot of mountain mahogany brush, which I am well rid of. My hillside should look really nice and green next spring. The mitigation of my property is complete for now. There is no doubt that mitigation saved a lot of these homes, including mine!

Andrew Churnside (email to Steve and Liz Lynn):

I appreciate all the kind words that everyone has expressed. I would like to personally thank Greg Huckabee who deserves just as much praise (if not MORE) than myself. I literally could not have done it without him! I was happy to see his face when he showed up and his ability to keep notes far surpassed my own and allowed me time to think.

Steve, good thing your house didn't burn, you'd have had to resign!



BMFPD Staff:

Tom Akins
Greg Anderson
Kirk Bach
Matt Baris
John Benson
Barry Binns
Grant Blue
Rob Bozeman
Andrew Churnside
John Covele
Adam Davis
Bob de Haas
Jim Eyster
Tim Farrell
Katy Fassett
Nina Griffin
Don Hassler
Bruce Hertelendy
Greg Huckabee
Bert Johansen
Dave Kabal
Scott Kohla
Elizabeth Korevaar
Gail Loveman
Carl Loven
Steve Lynn
Laura McConnell
Marcia McHaffie
Matt McHaffie
Jeff Miller
Paul Munding
Bob Olliver
Mike Palamara
Earl Perry
Melanie (Lilly) Pray
Kevin Reed
Shawn Roberts
Param Singh
R.J. Smith
Diana Waddell
Stacy Wade
Josh Witt

ALERT!

VOIP, CELL PHONES AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION NOTICES

By John Benson

After researching and talking with Boulder County Sheriffs Communications Supervisors regarding VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), the final conclusion is that Comcast and all other subscribers who utilize VoIP (i.e., Vonage, VoIP.com, Phone Power, etc.) will not receive an emergency call back or an emergency evacuation notice. The technology is not in place to provide this important and much needed function at this time.

If you have one of the following services, you will **not** receive emergency call backs or emergency evacuation notices:

- Comcast's Digital Voice (phone services through cable)
- Modem based VoIP
- Cell phones

Comcast does provide 911 emergency service, which is basically if you dial 911 you will be connected to an emergency 911 center to take your emergency call but that is the only function.

I strongly suggest that anyone subscribing to Comcast or other VoIP offered services, contact the company and urge the companies to find the technology and make it available. By hearing from the masses, we may be able to persuade, fast track and incorporate the technology for our protection. (In the meantime, arrange for a neighbor to advise you of any reverse 911 communications).

If you have any questions regarding this article, please feel free to contact me at (303) 440-0235 or by email at chief@bouldermountainfire.org. Let's ensure the protection and safety of our communities.

A BIG THANK YOU

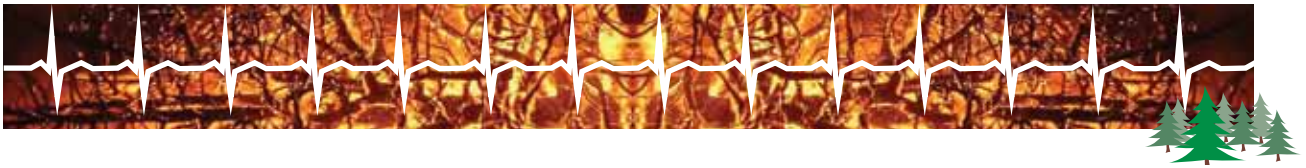
By John Benson

Last year the Boulder Mountain Fire Protection District received numerous donations from the citizens of our district, from outside residents, and from businesses. These donations came in the form of goods and services and cash. I would like to thank these individuals:

*Richard Lirtzman
William McDonald
Bruce Hertelendy
Mr. & Mrs. Ramsdell
Mr. & Mrs. Collareno
Mr. & Mrs. Lee
Mr. & Mrs. Betts
Mr. & Mrs. Bradley, Vicki Kahl
Barbara McHenry
Thomas Sebekos & Laura Burkhart*

On behalf of the BMFPD staff we greatly appreciate and thank you for your continued support of the Boulder Mountain Fire Protection District.

*Willy Wriggers
C. Maclaren
Mr. & Mrs. Berger
Andreas Pecher & Louise Laemmlen
Ryan Baumgarter
Charles Swilpa
Mail Graphics Arrowhead Awards
ABC Engraving
John Bauer
Precision Industrial Contractors*



EMERGENCY EVACUATION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AND DO

By John Benson

Here is the scenario: there is an out of control wildfire in our District. The winds are blowing fiercely, temperatures are high and there is no moisture on the ground. Is this a scenario that we could be facing? The answer is YES. Just look at the Olde Stage Fire, which just occurred on January 7, 2009.

During the event at least three emergency call backs were issued, commonly known as a mandatory evacuation for areas immediately adjacent to the fire. I was absolutely shocked to learn that a number of residents refused to leave their homes while the fire was at its greatest potential for injury and destruction.

In most wildfire situations an incident commander will call a mandatory evacuation of the area closest to the fire; subsequently the commander may call for additional evacuations based on the complexity of the fire. The complexity of the fire may include current or predicted weather, (i.e., wind, temperatures, relative humidity), topography, fuels, accesses, and density of residences in a given area.

What do you do as a homeowner if you receive an evacuation notice? Here are a few tips.

- **Please heed the evacuation notice and leave immediately.** If you choose to stay behind and not evacuate, this puts added stress on the emergency responders trying to fight the fire. Firefighters have been killed because homeowners refused to leave homes. The firefighters and emergency responders do not have time to stand and plead with residents when a fire is heading in their direction.
- Leave the area immediately. **Do not** stop to spectate; the road system can become clogged very quickly with residents leaving their homes and emergency equipment responding to the incident. One accident can cause major disruption to the traffic system.
- Once you have evacuated the area you will not be allowed back into the fire area until the incident commander and emergency responders feel the situation is safe to do so. **Do not** try and sneak back in through back roads or hike back into your residence. The last thing that an emergency worker wants is to find someone dead because they failed to obey the evacuation.
- During a wildfire incident, the roads will be shut down to all non-responders and equipment. What this means for you as a homeowner is better peace of mind, knowing that the affected areas will be patrolled by law enforcement officers. This greatly reduces the likelihood of looting and vandalism. If

you choose to stay and not evacuate, there is a strong chance that law enforcement and firefighters will not make it back to your location, especially if the fire is ragging out of control and the fire fighting forces are being overrun by the fire conditions. This scenario has been played out in many fires across the United States.

What can you do in advance (as in, RIGHT NOW)?

Create a list of important items ahead of time and keep it in a handy place. Think about your own personal situation and what your personal needs are. By using this list, you can have these items packed and ready to go at a moment's notice.

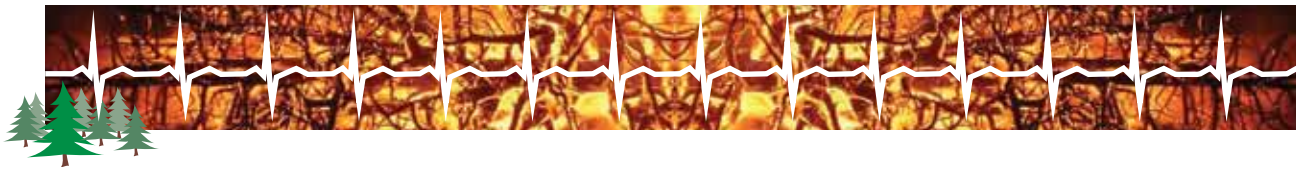
Possible items for the list:

- Medications
- Eyeglasses or contacts
- A few changes of clothing
- Toiletries
- Cash
- Safety deposit box keys
- Family photos
- Pets with carriers/leashes and food
- Computer hard drives
- Cell phone(s)
- Car and house keys
- Important documents: including birth certificates, passports, financial papers, insurance forms, mortgage papers, auto pink slips, banking-account numbers, vital medical prescriptions, and any savings bonds or certificates
- Address book or phone numbers for your insurance agent, mortgage lender, doctor, family and friends

Keep an evacuation map in a handy location.

Set a meeting place outside of the district where you and your family can meet during an evacuation, should you be separated.

The emergency responders will do everything possible to provide for your safety, but as a homeowner you must do your part to help keep yourself and our responders from incurring undo harm and making an already dangerous situation worse. The last thing I want to do as a Fire Chief is go to a funeral for one of our responders or homeowners. "We can always replace a structure, but we cannot replace a life."



2008 BMFPD AWARDS

At the festive 2008 December Christmas dinner meeting, the following very deserving individuals were singled out for the 2008 BMFPD Awards:

FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR	MEDIC OF THE YEAR	ROOKIE OF THE YEAR	ENGINEER OF THE YEAR	TRUCK MANAGER OF THE YEAR
				
<i>Bob Olliver</i>	<i>Nina Griffin</i>	<i>Kevin Reed</i>	<i>Paul Munding</i>	<i>Shawn Roberts</i>

SIGNIFICANT EFFORT RECOGNITION AWARDS

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Tom Akins | For his work with the rookies, cisterns, office support, the new door at Station 2 and his work on the department handbook, SOGs and engineering notes |
| Barry Binns | For bringing order to the communications equipment, for the drafting and construction work on Stations 1 & 2 |
| Grant Blue | For his work on the department handbook, SOGs and engineering notes and assistant chief duties |
| Andrew Churnside | For his efforts as the training officer including taking the lead on creating the material for our fire academy |
| Tim Farrell | For Station 2 and 3 management, new door at Station 2 and work with the Rookie program |
| David Kabal | For his work on developing and maintaining our web site |
| Gail Loveman | For her work on the department handbook, SOGs and engineering notes, 3rd Arm Liaison |
| Marcia McHaffie | For stepping up to take the Medical team and her efforts as our Safety Officer. |
| Earl Perry | For his work on Station 1 |

CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD

Steve Lynn

FIRST RESPONDER RECOGNITION

Tim Farrell	Katy Fassett
Dave Kabal	Gail Loveman
Kevin Reed	Param Singh
Stacy Wade	

DEPARTMENT STANDARDS RECOGNITION AWARDS

The following members made their minimum level of training, call response, and vehicle familiarization for 2008:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tom Akins | Greg Anderson |
| Matt Baris | Barry Binns |
| Grant Blue | Rob Bozeman |
| Andrew Churnside | John Covele |
| Tim Farrell | Katy Fassett |
| Don Hassler | Bruce Hertelendy |
| Gail Loveman | Marcia McHaffie |
| Matt McHaffie | Bob Olliver |
| Earl Perry | Melanie Pray |
| Kevin Reed | Shawn Roberts |
| Param Singh | Stacy Wade |

RECOGNITION OF MITIGATION CREW

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Rob Bozeman | Adam Davis |
| Jeff Miller | Mike Palamara |
| John Benson | |

ENGINEER AWARDS

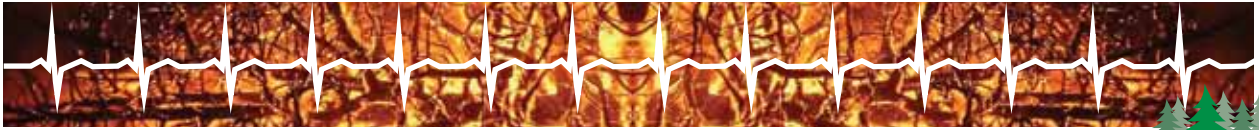
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| Kirk Bach | Andrew Churnside |
| Gail Loveman | Shawn Roberts |

SERVICE YEAR AWARDS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bob Olliver — 10 years | Nina Griffin — 5 years |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|

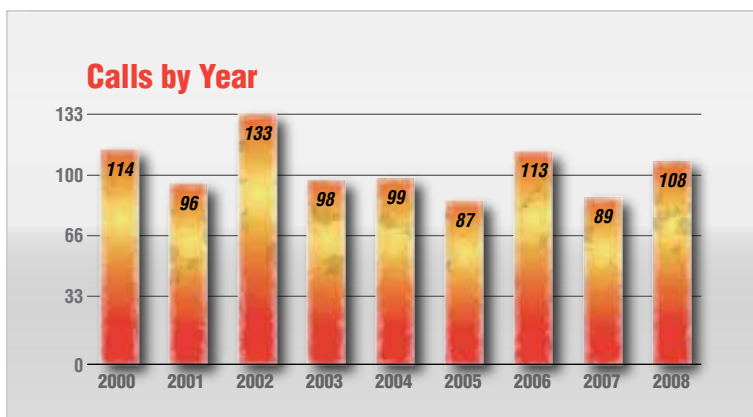
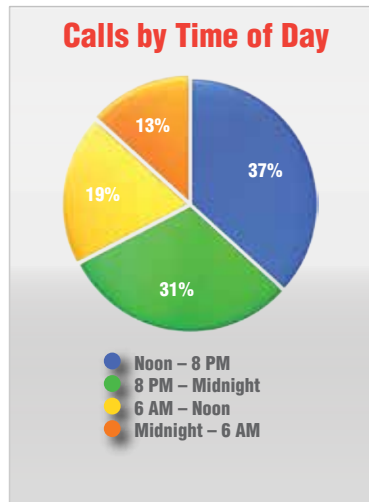
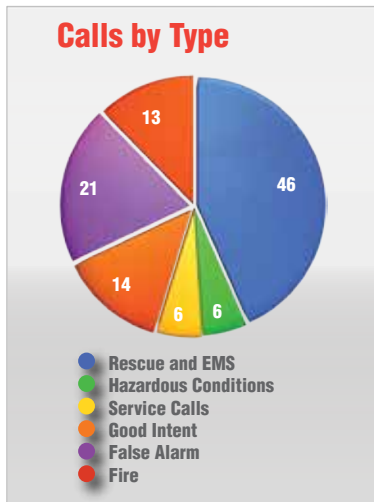
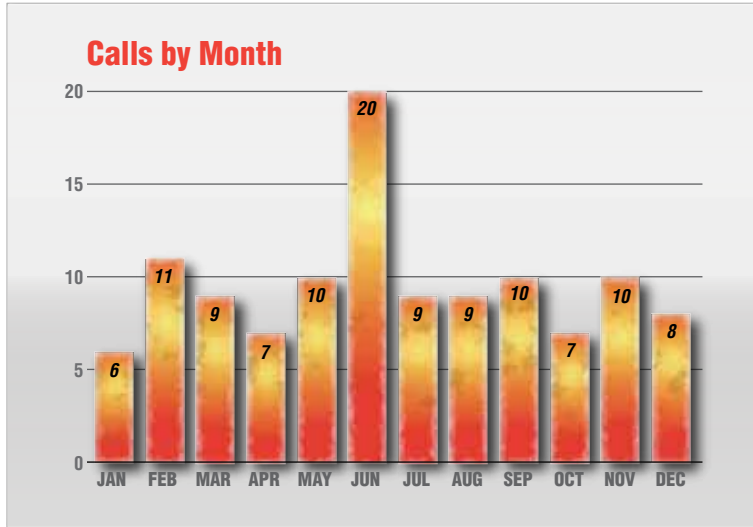
RETIREES

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Bob de Haas | 20 years of service
(Bob remains with us as a Retired Reserve Member) |
| R.J. Smith | 20 years of service
(R.J. remains with us as a Retired Reserve Member) |
| Kent Hansen | 19 years of service |



2008 BY THE NUMBERS

By John Benson, Fire Chief



BMFPD Officers:

- John Benson**
Chief
- Grant Blue**
Assistant Chief
- Tom Akins**
Captain
- Kirk Bach**
Captain
- Marcia McHaffie**
Captain / Medical / Safety
- Greg Huckabee**
Training
- Shawn Roberts**
Apparatus
- Steve Lynn**
Wildland / Mitigation
- Tim Farrell**
PPE / SCBA
- Bob Olliver**
Stations
- Barry Binns**
Communications
- Tom Akins**
ISO / Water Supply

BMFPD Board:

- Eric Ramberg**
- Rob Clark**
- Linda Kuhn**
- Robert Loveman**
- Chris Blue**
- Maryanne Kurtinaitis**
- Jim Eyster**

OnFire!

- Evie Gray**
Editor
- Bob Olliver**
Design and Production

Articles without by-lines were compiled by the editor

CLOSE CALL

by Evie Gray

Our wonderful BMFPD and other fire crews saved the day when they fought, contained, and extinguished a raging wildfire January 7-9. Our crews' success can be credited to their extensive training, quality leadership, and their own inherent abilities.

The photo above shows how close the fire's path (shown by the darkened burned areas) came to several homes on Olde Stage Road. Our volunteer firefighters saved these homes and dozens of others. Their job was made easier by the homeowner's mitigation work done in advance, but fighting the fire cannot have been easy in the relentless gale force winds. The homeowners, their neighbors, and the entire mountain community are all extremely grateful for the work of these dedicated volunteers.

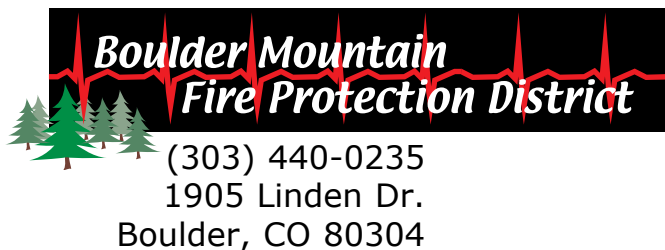


Photo by Bob Olliver

CALL FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

The BMFPD is currently seeking new volunteers to assist in a variety of capacities in its fire fighting mission. If you would like to be part of this highly trained and honored department,

then you are invited to contact John Benson at (303) 440-0235 or by email at chief@bouldermountainfire.org.



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