

**Aspendell South Fork Volunteer Fire Department**  
Tax ID #61-1730953, a 501(c)(3) tax exempt charitable non-profit organization  
[www.asfvfd.org](http://www.asfvfd.org)

SPRING NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2017

As you are aware, the 2016-2017 Sierra Nevada winter season snow and rainfall was record breaking. While we continue to have some winter weather, the Spring thaw is well underway in both South Fork and Aspendell communities. Out of doors training and projects are also resuming. We want to report on those activities and, once again, solicit your very generous and much-needed support.

**Finances/Growth/Challenges:** With the growth of our volunteer roster and associated training activities, our expenses have also dramatically increased due to workers compensation insurance (2x what they were 2 years ago, despite no accidents or claims) and protective gear requirements for new volunteers. Cumulatively, these are signs of a successful program that is simply experiencing growing pains. Please read on for information on what your volunteers are spending time and your money training for and equipping themselves to do on your behalf. Also, what your board has accomplished with regard to the availability and reduced cost of your property insurance.

**Great NEWS!!! : ISO – AMWC/Alpine/South Fork Insurance Rating Review - Results**

With training and equipment information and records supplied by your volunteers and the South Fork and Aspendell water companies, the Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) recently completed its analysis of the structural fire suppression delivery system in the “Aspendell Fire Protection Suppression Area”, which the ASFVFD Board has mapped as the Aspendell and South Fork communities (Mountain View Estates Mutual Water Company and both Aspendell water companies). Based on that analysis, ISO has placed our communities in a Public Protection Classification (PPC) of 6/6x (where a “1” is the highest level of protection and a “10” is the rating where no fire protection is provided). The dual classification assigned to us reflects areas that are either within 1000’ (a “6”) or outside 1000’ (a “6X”) of a fire hydrant. ISO is an independent company that provides insurance companies, fire departments and others information concerning fire risk. ***Absent the existence of the ASFVFD, our communities would have an ISO rating of “10” and insurance would be costly, limited to high deductibles or simply unavailable.*** The new ratings will take effect as of May 1, 2017. Please call your insurance agent to advise them of this important news. The PPC Summary Report will be posted at the ASFVFD website: [www.asfvfd.org](http://www.asfvfd.org)

**ASFVFD Training:** Our volunteers began training with “new” SCBAs donated to us by the Big Pine Volunteer Fire Department (VFD). Once proficient with donning these SCBAs and their use, we will participate in “live fire” exercises at the Bishop VFD training facility. The Chief of the Bishop VFD, Ray Seguire, is providing advice concerning appropriate hose lay scenarios, etc. We will continue to take advantage of the time that Ray can afford us, given his expertise. The ASFVFD volunteers will also be refreshing our First Aid/CPR skills, in part using the advanced CPR training facilities at the Northern Inyo Hospital. Finally, our volunteers spent time training in avalanche rescue and a considerable number of hours digging out buried fire hydrants. This was a herculean task but important in being able to respond to a fire or emergency year round. We expect to coordinate with the water companies to install hydrant markers to make the locations of the hydrants noticeable to firefighters and road clearing crews. Ideally, this will simplify the clearing task for next winter.

**Caretaker Apartment Status; Firehouse Roof Repair:**

The Caretaker apartment program has been temporarily delayed due to a variety of unforeseen expenses, other budget priorities and the difficulty in finding/keeping on site qualified and affordable contractors. The number of Inyo and Mono County building permits being issued are at all time record numbers due to both the improved economy and the Paradise-Swall Meadow fires that not long ago destroyed more than 30 homes. In addition, record breaking snow has caused wide spread damage to homes and businesses and has even damaged the roof of the firehouse and a home in Aspendell. Engineering calculations and plans are complete for the firehouse repairs and will be underway as soon as night time temperatures will allow our fire engine to be housed out of doors while the ceiling and overhead door is removed and compromised roof rafters are replaced or reinforced and the ceiling and door are replaced or reinstalled.

**Financial and Volunteer Support Needed:**

While we continue to explore opportunities to apply for grant assistance to support the ASFVFD, we are finding that these sources are very limited and highly competitive.

***WE NEED YOU! Your ongoing generosity is critical to our continued success.*** The ASFVFD has both ***ongoing expenses*** (monthly rent, SCE and LPG utilities, auto/liability/workers compensation insurance and vehicle maintenance, etc.) and ***needed individual expenditures*** for personal protective clothing and equipment for our volunteer firefighters. When asked how often your contributions should be, our hope is for all community members to contribute at least once a year and if at all possible, twice a year, particularly while we are facing the added expenses of completing capital and maintenance projects and mitigating the damaging effects of snow and weather.

*It is important for all residents/property owners to understand that we are completely independent from and do not receive any financial support from taxes or fees from any other organization or public agency, including your water company.*

We have enclosed a supporting membership donor stub and a self-stamped envelope to simplify the donation process. Checks can be made out to the ASFVFD and mailed to us at 111 Columbine Drive, Bishop, CA 93514. We offer our most sincere thanks in advance.

P.S. Some have suggested that it might be simpler for all concerned if we offered an online payment option, such as PayPal. Please indicate your interest in such an option by marking the appropriate check box on the payment stub enclosed.

**Volunteers are also needed**, particularly in a support role, e.g, building/equipment maintenance, snow removal, auto mechanics, fund-raising, etc. If you have skills you would like to offer, please email us at [asfra@asfra.net](mailto:asfra@asfra.net). We also welcome your comments and recommendations.

With our sincere thanks, the ASFVFD Board of Directors:

Secretary, Joanne Schneider, Past Treasurer and now Member-at-large, Mike Johnston, Vice President, Michael McBeth, President, Roy Harthorn, & Past President, Joe Hart, and, most importantly, from your year-round and seasonal volunteer fire fighters.