



RISTWATCH

RCVFD Quarterly Newsletter P. O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512 Issue No. 115 July 2025

Letter from the President

Rist Canyon VOLUNTEER Fire Department.

This is the exact same title I used for last year's summer edition of the Ristwatch.

Once again, I am highlighting the fact that this Department runs on 100% volunteer energy. All of our responders, both fire and medical, volunteer their time and talents so we can respond when needed. Our upcoming Mountain Festival includes thousands of volunteer hours to raise money to fund our Department. We also have the volunteers who make up the Board, who clean, who inventory and maintain equipment and buildings. But equally important are those who volunteer their hard-earned money to pay the bills. Our annual budget of over \$100,000.00 requires a lot of volunteer donations.

My request to you is to VOLUNTEER, whether it is time, talent, money, or all three. We need your help. Because as I said, we are 100% volunteer powered.

Moving on to our 50th anniversary and Mountain Festival, we will have special 50th anniversary mementos for purchase at both the Mountain Festival (the first Saturday in September) and at our annual meeting (the first Saturday in November). This year's annual meeting will have food catered in, so we hope to see a lot of our friends and neighbors at both events. Come rain or shine, both events are always full of fun and camaraderie.

Neil Faber
President - 2025

RIST CANYON MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL

10AM-4PM
RAIN OR SHINE!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2025



ARTISAN VENDORS
LIVE MUSIC



KIDS ACTIVITIES
RCVFD MERCH
FOOD TRUCKS
PLANT SALE
BAKE SALE
CAR SHOW

SILENT AUCTION
BOOK SALE



 **Meet the
Firefighters**

**11835
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ACROSS FROM FIRE
STATION 1



**Free
Admission**



**BENEFITING THE RIST CANYON
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

[HTTPS://FESTIVAL.RCVFD.ORG](https://festival.rcvfd.org)

 **RCMOUNTAINFEST**

Letter from the Vice President

Are you old enough to remember the weekly “TV Guide”? This letter will be your “Ristwatch Guide” for parts of this issue. Given my age (75), I wonder how many pages the printed TV Guide I remember from the 1950s would be these days with all the streaming channels included?



I think this issue of Ristwatch will have:

- (a) A story about the meeting and possibilities of a new Fire Station in the Buckhorn general area that was held on May 10 of this year.
- (b) A note from Karen Salaz with information about the upcoming RCVFD 50th anniversary celebration. Karen has read all the Ristwatch issues that she can find!
- (c) This issue also has an old Ristwatch article that Karen found doing her 50th celebration research. Bob Gann wrote ten years ago about some of the reasons why RCVFD is so essential. Bob was a member of RCVFD from 1986 to 2015 and served as Chief of RCVFD from about 1992 to 2015. Please be sure to read this article about “So what would happen if you had an emergency and RCVFD was not there?”
- (d) There are many articles about the upcoming RCVFD Mountain Festival fundraiser events to be held on Saturday, September 6, 2025, 10am to 4pm. Please see festival.rcvfd.org for more information. I hope you will attend. Last year, we had over 135 neighbors who enjoyed coming together to host about 3,200 people for the day and raise over \$34,000 profit for RCVFD.
- (e) Please help make this year’s RCVFD Festival great! There are some ways you can help even for just an hour: weeks before the Festival, days before, day of, or takedown after. Please see the Festival webpage festival.rcvfd.org for the Signup Genius link. The Festival is a fun social event where you get to know your neighbors and help the fire department, which is there for your emergencies, 24/7.



Bob Gann



Please contact me with questions. See you at the next newsletter – same bat time, same bat channel (you can Google it 😊).

H. J. Siegel | RCVFD Board of Directors Vice President
HJ@computer.org

RECAP: Meeting to Discuss Possible Buckhorn Fire Station

A meeting to discuss the potential for a Buckhorn Fire Station was held on May 10, 2025. The meeting was MC'd by Chief Mark Neuroth, and there were close to 60 people that showed up for the informational meeting on the discussion of building a fire station in Buckhorn Canyon. Many RCVFD board members attended and were able to give additional thoughts to the process of what it would take to build such a station. We would like to thank everyone who attended the meeting, and the questions and ideas brought up by you attendees is greatly appreciated.



Chief Neuroth started the meeting by giving a history of the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department. This year of 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the Department. It started with the understanding that there needed to be a local emergency service because of the distance the residents of the Canyon were too distant from Fort Collins and response times were too long to provide the help that was needed. So, many of these residents called a meeting like the one we had this May. A handful of those attending that initial meeting made the decision to volunteer and get the basic training they would need to provide emergency response. Thus, the RCVFD became a recognized fire department — and later a non-profit — relying on donations of material and financial assets. As the number of emergencies grew, more equipment and training were required. Eventually, Station ONE was designed and built. This, of course, required greater financial outlay from the residences and businesses and even grants from various foundations.

This brings us to the present-day need for a fire station with equipment in the Buckhorn. Presently, RCVFD personnel respond to our area (Buckhorn). But the distance of those who respond takes longer than what is ideal. To justify the building of a new fire station in the Buckhorn and equipping it with trucks and such, we in the Buckhorn need to be those volunteers, get the necessary training, and start responding to the emergencies in our canyon. We talked about the “Golden Hour” of response — practically speaking, the first hour is going to deliver the best lifesaving response to the one(s) having their need met. The Department will train those who volunteer, and, as the responses

continued on next page

RECAP: Meeting to Discuss Possible Buckhorn Fire Station

increase, whether there is a need for a new station will become more apparent.

Finally, there is a landowner who is willing to sell some property for such a station. Larimer County Planning and Building Department have many hoops to jump through before we could build. The process will take probably two years, and most of it will be in fulfilling all their requirements. The actual building out of the station would probably take about six months, including land excavation and development, construction, and, finally, bringing in the equipment that would be housed there.

If we genuinely desire a safer community, it will require us to participate, get trained, and respond to emergencies that will inevitably occur. Thank you all for your attendance and interest.

Submitted by Dean Yoder

Reprinted with permission from Bob Gann

So What Would Happen If You Had An Emergency And RCVFD Was Not There?

Well – it kind of depends on the type of an emergency.

WILDLAND FIRE: By law in Colorado, wildland fire is the responsibility of either (1) the County Sheriff or (2) a recognized special tax district – a fire protection district (FPD). RCVFD is not a FPD, so legally in our area, the Sheriff is responsible for wildland fire. That means RCVFD is actually working for the Larimer County Sheriff on wildland fires, and we have a recognized agreement with the Sheriff's department to that effect.

If there was no RCVFD, then wildland fire response would fall to Larimer County Emergency Services (LCES). Larimer County Emergency Services is a fantastic organization, and I have the highest regard for them. In fact, Larimer County is recognized as a county where the various emergency agencies work well together, and I attribute that, in large part, to LCES. However, LCES covers the entire county. By the nature of it, RCVFD will typically have resources at the fire much more quickly than LCES could.

"If there was no RCVFD, fewer resources would be at wildland fires and would take longer to get there. So, while there is an agency that can respond, that agency actually relies on RCVFD to provide response, and in many cases, we handle the entire call."

STRUCTURE or NON-WILDLAND FIRE: Who would respond to non-wildland fires in RCVFD's area? The simple answer is nobody. In reality, I expect that LCES would request the nearest fire department to respond in a mutual aid capacity once we had confirmation of an actual fire. Of course, given our area, our rough roads and other factors, that response would not be particularly effective.

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Rist Canyon Mountain Festival



*Celebrating 50 Years of
Community Support*

**Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department
2025 Mountain Festival**

**Saturday, Sept. 6, 2025, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
11835 Rist Canyon Rd., Bellvue, CO 80512**

The 2025 Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department (RCVFD) Mountain Festival will celebrate the department's 50th anniversary with a full day's lineup of live music and activities for the entire family. Special events, displays, and commemorative items will celebrate the department's 50-year history. All proceeds benefit the department, a 501(c)3 entity. This year's musical entertainment, presented in partnership with the Bohemian Foundation, includes Choice City Trio, Liz Barnez, AKA (Also Known As), and Wendy Woo.

"Our residents and visitors depend on volunteer firefighters year-round in all types of emergency situations. Sharing our 50-year milestone at the Mountain Festival provides us the chance to both recognize and thank our dedicated, hardworking firefighters and the community that supports them," says RCVFD Chief Mark Neuroth.

Come rain or shine, the festival will feature a gigantic used book sale, large silent auction, bake sale, plant sale, firefighter dunk tank, craft and art vendors, food trucks, large-covered dining area in front of the music venue, car show, and a 2025 RCVFD commemorative t-shirt booth. Admission, parking, tractor-pulled hayride shuttle to/from the parking area (handicapped parking available), musical entertainment, large kid's activity area, farm animals, educational booths and demonstrations, and ice cream all are free of charge.

For more information visit www.festival.RCVFD.org or follow us on Facebook.com/RCMountainFest.

Submitted by Karen Salaz



Rist Canyon Mountain Festival Leadership Team



Top row: Shannon Phelps, Patti Clutter, James Clutter, Karen Salaz, H.J. Siegel, Diane McCarthy, Mark McCracken, Allan Dunlop, Josef Dvorak, Darcy Budge, Sandy Deraney-Reilly, Lucy Corro.

Bottom row: Carolyn Stanley, Debbie Faber, Pam Thomas, Janet Siegel, Debbie Benson, Lauren Lee.

We always want more people to join our fun and friendly RCVFD Mountain Festival fundraising leadership team. Most of the “Friends of the Festival” leaders are in the photo above from our June 29, 2025 Gathering. Contact HJ@computer.org to find out more.

RCVFD First Responder Challenge Coins. In recognition of the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department’s 50th Anniversary, a commemorative challenge coin has been produced. Challenge coins represent a tradition of recognition, camaraderie, and commemoration within the first responder community. The challenge coin concept began in the military, with records of their use dating as far back as Ancient Rome. In modern times, the challenge coin gained popularity after World War I, when a downed pilot could prove his identity by producing his unit’s coin. Over time, soldiers were rewarded for their achievements with coins as a token of their bravery. Many veterans serve as first responders, which is thought to be how the tradition was adopted into civilian emergency services. The RCVFD coins (see bottom right of page 6 for image of front of coin) are 1.75-inch diameter, enameled metal that will be sold at the RCVFD Mountain Festival on Sept. 6 for \$10 each. We hope you will join the tradition by purchasing the coins. All proceeds benefit the RCVFD.

Rist Canyon Mountain Festival

FESTIVAL MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT. The Rist Canyon Mountain Festival returns on September 6th this year featuring once again Wendy Woo, the Liz Barnez Band, AKA (Also Known As), and the Choice City Trio, providing free entertainment all day.

Wendy Woo and her Band have been part of the Colorado music scene for three decades. They bring rich harmonies with a fusion of originals and nostalgic covers. Wendy Woo is a resident of Loveland, CO. She is a singer/songwriter who plays electric and acoustic guitars and is known for her unique "Slap Tap" acoustic guitar work. She has recorded more than 100 original songs that span a genres including folk, blues, funk, rock, and pop.



Liz Barnez and her band bring an eclectic style of guitar playing and songwriting to the stage. Their music incorporates elements of Folk, New Orleans Rhythm and Blues, Jazz, Country, and a hint of Pop. Growing up in the French Quarter of New Orleans, Louisiana, Liz began her musical career in the Bourbon Street clubs. She mixes Funk with Gospel, Soul, and Dixieland music. She has created a signature "Acoustic Swamp Rock" style. She brought her music to Colorado Stages in the late 80's and hasn't slowed down since.

AKA (Also Known As) has been part of the Northern Colorado music scene since 1996 when they played as Prairie Dog Companion at New West Fest in Fort Collins. They play an eclectic brand of Americana music they call "City and Western." With influences from Bakersfield to Cajun Louisiana and from Nashville Newgrass to Memphis Rock-A-Billy, they are a six-piece band with a wide range of musical instruments and powerful vocals.

The Choice City Trio features riveting vocals by area resident, Alan Anderson. He sings alongside an acoustic 12-string guitarist and an electric bass and percussionist. They feature original songs plus a variety of traditional favorites. They emphasize community connection through a unique method of musical storytelling.

Sandy Deraney-Reilly
Musical Entertainment Chair

Rist Canyon Mountain Festival

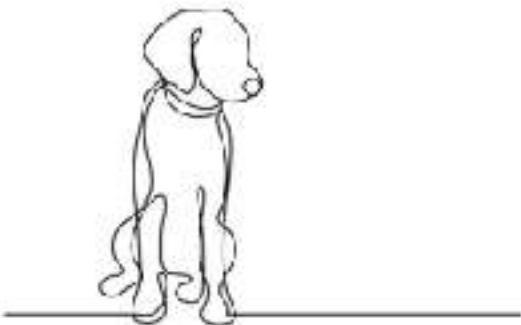
SILENT AUCTION. Please join us at the RCVFD Mountain Festival Silent Auction on September 6th! As always, there will be a large collection of excellent auction items donated by your favorite local businesses, our neighbors, and others who would like to contribute to



our Fire Department. Would you buy tickets to movies, museums, buffalo train rides (and a buffalo head); items from breweries, restaurants, hardware stores, hobby stores; artwork from our own Sanderosa Gallery; fine jewelry, or a giant backyard grill? Camping gear, whitewater trips, lots of great tools, and lots of great gift cards? Last year we had all of those items and more, over 300 of them!

This year our donations so far include some interesting ones: a large hand-built loom from a local weaver, a big Greco/Minoan/Cowboy urn from a local potter, whitewater rafting, BBQ, tours, gift cards, jewelry, and artwork. And, we hope, another emotional support chicken. We need all of you to be among those kind, generous, resourceful people who find or donate these awesome items. Most of our best-selling items have come from your donations, big and small. We LOVE the unique items you have donated over the years! We would be very happy to include any items you would like to donate or that you can persuade others to donate. If you'd buy it, others would very likely do the same.

To donate, suggest donations, or help collect and sell donations, please contact us at SILENTAUCTION@RCVFD.ORG, or call Janet Siegel at (970) 231-7877. With your help, the list of items will grow fast. Please check our website festival.rcvfd.org/silentauction to see what's new. And, of course, we will see you on September 6 for the Festival!



PETS. We appreciate and thank you for your four legged furry family members to be on a leash at all times, if attending the festival with you.

We will have a couple of dog water bowls around the festival grounds, but please ensure your pet has access to water, and please do not leave them in a vehicle in case the weather becomes too hot.

Rist Canyon Mountain Festival

VENDOR BOOTHS. We have a full house of vendors attending the festival this year! Stroll up and down several aisles to browse and shop the many new and returning vendors. Enjoy a vibrant mix of artisan jewelry, woodcrafts, metal art, original art, pottery, handmade items, yummys like Palisade peaches, local honey, dipped pretzels, and hot sauces to name a few. Don't miss out on the opportunity to discover local craftsmanship. Cash and credit card sales available.

We are at full capacity for this year but welcome prospective vendors to apply next year. The application for our September 2026 festival will reopen mid February of 2026.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT AND EDUCATIONAL BOOTHS. Come join us in the non-profit and educational area. There will be over 20 non-profits, various Larimer County organizations, and many emergency vehicles. For additional information or if you have a non-profit interested in joining us, contact Trisha at tajohnLMT@gmail.com.

KID'S ACTIVITIES. Bring the whole family to our Kid's Area and enjoy a variety of activities while supporting our local fire department. Some of the FREE activities include calf roping, games, farm animals and BUBBLES! Hope to see you there!

BAKE SALE TENT. Community bakers! Start your ovens, pick out your favorite apron, and gather those ingredients! It's almost time to donate those tasty baked goods for the bake sale. PIES are our very popular big-ticket item, and we sell it by the slice or whole pie. Cookies, bars, brownies, muffins, breads, and cinnamon rolls, that people could eat at the festival for less money, have been very popular, too. Items that do not require refrigeration are best. Please package items in sellable amounts (e.g., 2-4 cookies, ½ dozen cookies, 1 dozen cookies) and list high allergen ingredients. Donations can be delivered starting at 7:30 AM on the day of the festival and anytime thereafter that day. If you have large quantities, or if walking on rough surfaces is difficult, please come before the festival begins (10 AM), so that you can drive up to the bake tent. Upon arrival, notify the gate attendants of your needs, and they will assist you through the identified traffic plan. Once the festival has begun, you will need to park and walk to the bake sale tent.

Baking not quite your thing, but want to help? Volunteer for an hour or two at the bake sale tent. It's a lot of fun! All proceeds benefit the RCVFD. If you have suggestions, questions, or would like to volunteer at the base sale tent, please feel free to contact me.

Darcy Budge | Bake Sale Chair
505-977-9895 (cell) | Darcy_arlene@gmail.com

Rist Canyon Mountain Festival

BOOK TENT NEWS

We already have a ton of book donations for the RCVFD Mountain Festival! We'll literally have thousands of books! Be sure to stop by the Book Tent and shop for cheap books from a huge assortment of fiction, non-fiction, kids' books, special collections, vintage books, audio books, DVDs, CDs, vinyl albums, puzzles and games. There's something for everyone! All proceeds from the book sales go 100% to the RCVFD.

Special thanks to Kristen Michaels and Eric Schaveland, whose generous book donations filled about 40% of our storage Conex, and to the many community members who have dropped off books in our donation boxes. Your donations make the Book Tent a success!

For those who still want to donate books, please drop them off anytime at the drop boxes located in front of Fire House Station # 1 (located at 11835 Rist Canyon Road), the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ near the Bellvue Post Office, Laporte Hardware Store, and Laporte Pizza. We can also pick up books at your location if needed.

The Book Tent needs help from a lot of volunteers before, during, and after the festival. If you have an hour or two, please consider volunteering. Here are some ways you can help:

Wednesday, September 3rd, 6:00pm: Help move boxes to the book tent and carry them to the tables. Lots of strong folks will make this a much easier and faster job.

Thursday, September 4th, 9:00am—2:00pm: Come anytime and stay for an hour or more and help us shuffle boxes around on the tables for selling, organize boxes, and put up signs.

Friday, September 5th, 9:30am—2:00pm: Come anytime and stay for an hour or more and help us to set up cashier tables and small tent canopies and to organize the tent.

Saturday, September 6th, FESTIVAL Day 8:00am—4:00pm: Help cashier, hand out shopping bags, move books, and let volunteers have a break and lunch.

Sunday, September 7th, 9:30am—12:00pm: Help move boxes of books that did not sell onto pallets for removal from the festival grounds.

Many hands make light work for everyone!

If you have any questions, please contact Patti Clutter, Chair (clutterp28@gmail.com, 858-248-6328), Carolyn Stanley, Co-Chair (cloud9sewing@gmail.com, 970-221-2024), or Kathy Cox, Co-Chair (kathyc228@yahoo.com, 970-472-1972).

Patti Clutter
Book Tent Chair



RCVFD Monthly Meeting Schedule

Operations —1st Wednesdays (6-7 PM)

Fire Training—2nd Wednesdays (7-9:30 PM)

Board Meeting—3rd Wednesdays (6-8 PM)

Medical Training—4th Wednesdays (7-9 PM)

Ops, Fire, and Medical Trainings are at Firehouse #1 at 11835 Rist Canyon Road. Board meetings are held at Firehouse #1, or on Zoom if necessary. All Rist Canyon area residents are welcome to attend. Around the first of each month, RCVFD sends out a Community Alert with the deadline to request a copy of the agenda. If you would like to receive the agenda, please email your name, email address, and phone number to the RCVFD Board Secretary at secretary@rcvfd.org. Please note that the agenda will arrive one to two days before the scheduled meeting. To sign up for Community Alerts, visit RCVFD.org.

So What Would Happen If You Had An Emergency And RCVFD Was Not There?

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"RCVFD is it. RCVFD is the agency that has taken on the task of responding to structure, vehicle, and other fires in our area. No other agency has that role."

MEDICAL and RESCUE CALLS INCLUDING CAR ACCIDENTS (MVA's):

Like structural / other fire calls, there is no other agency tasked with this response. RCVFD is the primary medical response agency for our area, as well as the primary rescue agency. It is true that Poudre Valley and Thompson Valley Ambulance services respond to our area, but, in fact, they are not legally required to do so (there is no contract with the county, something that is actually being addressed at this time). So, in the absence of RCVFD, if you called for help, you'd get an ambulance from town.

OTHER EMERGENCIES: RCVFD is an all hazards department – we respond to all emergencies, ranging from floods (as we all well know) to hazmat spills to road problems.

In short, RCVFD is the emergency response agency for our area. If RCVFD did not exist, when you called for help, no other agency would be clearly tasked with responding. Neighboring agencies would respond as able, but they would be responding from distance, perhaps with limited equipment and without the knowledge of the area.

Reprinted with permission from Bob Gann

Notes from Your Area Representatives

The Upper Buckhorn is doing great! Summer has arrived in the mountains, bringing a beautiful display of wildflowers and what seems to be fewer hummingbirds than usual. We've been cleaning and refilling our feeders regularly but have noticed a decline in visitors this season. I've been helping out at the ranger station and always enjoy when neighbors stop by for a chat. In June, the county did some work on the roads, making for a much smoother drive up the pass. Just a heads-up—keep an eye out for campers and cyclists along the way!

Erica Michel - Upper Buckhorn



Photo credit: Tim Stratman



Photo credit: Tim Stratman



I'm sure I sound like a broken record, but this spring has been remarkable. We've had steady rains along the Stove Prairie corridor, leading to an absolutely beautiful wildflower season. The deep purples of the larkspur to the pale blue of the various mountain bells have brought an awesome palette of colors to the hillsides. Don't even get me started on the spiderwort and wild geraniums. The blanket of yellows from all of the different sunflowers is amazing. The wild irises are always a welcome sight and the blooming cacti have put on quite a show.

We may have discovered a hookless cactus on the property. There's a nice article ([fws.gov](https://www.fws.gov)) about how the hookless cactus made a recovery in our awesome state and is no longer on the endangered list. Each of the six springs we've been here has seemed to top the previous one with an incredible display. I hope everyone has opportunities to enjoy nature's bounty. Hopefully this bodes well for a colorful fall. Only time will tell.

Tim Stratman - Stove Prairie

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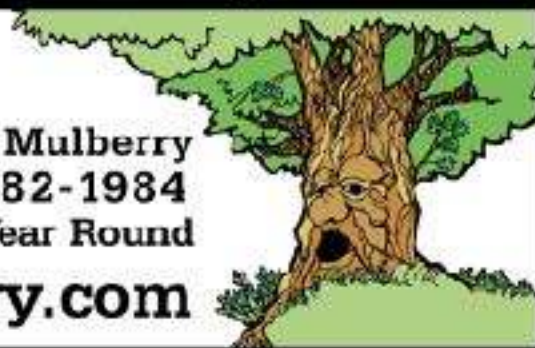


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Notes from Your Area Representatives, *cont'd from pg 13*

During the months of May and June the lower Buckhorn has seen plenty of precipitation. Buckhorn Creek has enjoyed high water levels from about mid May until about mid June. I've noticed quite a bit of silt and small river rock moving downstream, some of it being deposited in the noticeably deeper sections. This has leveled out much of the creek's pool areas. I think it must be one of the reasons that we don't see much fishing in our creek. The water isn't typically deep enough to support many fish.

But the entire Canyon has greened up substantially this spring and the foothills are wonderfully green with new growth. The birds have returned in abundance as well. I hope all who live up here are enjoying the beautiful creation we get to see every day. It is a privilege indeed to live here in Colorado, especially in these foothills.

Dean Yoder
Lower Buckhorn Area Representative

Summer is here, and so far all is peaceful along the main Rist Canyon Road corridor. As summer sounds go, I feel the hummingbirds have been fewer this season. I've hardly had to refill my hummingbird feeders. I'll keep my thoughts positive that we've had a good wildflower season rather than feel the decline in population is a result of predation caused by cats, climate change, and habitat loss in areas these hummers migrate to for the winter. Thank you to all who are keeping the high grasses on their property cut down where possible. The hot and dry days will be here soon, and tall grasses left unattended present a fire hazard concern. Wishing you all good times for the rest of summer, and I look forward to joining in the upcoming celebration of RCVFD's 50 years of service at the RCVFD Mountain Festival on September 6th.

Debbie Benson
Rist Canyon Area Representative



We had a wonderful wet spring and all the wildflowers are out. Hoping you can get out and enjoy them. The RCVFD is still giving out free property signs and Chimex sticks. I will continue to suggest you have helicopter insurance. \$61,000 is nothing to have to deal with. I am here to help. Just contact me with questions or concerns.

Carolyn Stanley
Davis Ranch Area Representative

This fawn was born in the middle of Davis Ranch Road.

Photo credit: Lisa Stultz

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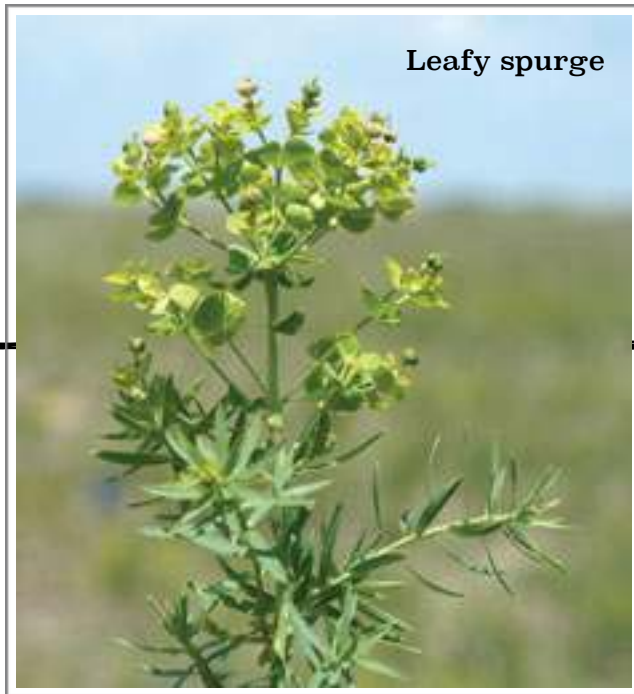
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Notes from Your Area Representatives, cont'd from pg 15

Happy Summer Everyone: While you're out walking around, you will likely see *Euphorbia esula*. Commonly known as *leafy spurge*, this plant is considered the worst noxious weed problem in Fort Collins and much of Larimer County, including Rist Canyon. I've noticed it growing along the roads and onto our properties for many years. It must be handled with gloves as when you pull it or handle it its milky juice inside is not good for most animals and not at all for humans.

According to Colorado State University Extension: "*Leafy spurge has an extensive root system that is abundant in the top foot of soil. It may grow 15 feet deep or more. Roots contain substantial nutrient reserves that allow the weed to recover from stress, including control efforts. Many vegetative buds along roots grow into new shoots. This contributes to its persistence and spread.*"

One thing I've done to try to eliminate this scourge in our area is to cut off the flowers just as they are blooming. It seemed to work for a couple of years, but this year it seems to have expanded to make up for lost time. Due to its deep roots, one must be diligent in getting rid of it. CSU Extension continues: "*Each flowering shoot produces an average of 140 seeds. Seeds are expelled up to 15 feet when capsules dry. They are viable up to eight years in soil. Leafy spurge is difficult to manage and can recover from almost any control effort. Therefore, a management scheme that combines control methods over four to five years is recommended. Even after that time, monitor infestations for recurrence and adopt a maintenance program.*"



Leafy spurge

To learn more about how to manage this noxious weed, you can follow this link:

<https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/natural-resources/leafy-spurge-3-107/>

Happy Summer!

Louise Creager
Your Stratton Park Representative

Submissions to the Ristwatch

Submissions of written work or photographs are welcome and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please send submissions to the Ristwatch Editor at ristwatch@rcvfd.org.

The Ristwatch reserves the right to edit, refuse, reject, or cancel any article or ad at any time. We base this decision on our responsibility to our readers. We will not knowingly print any article or ad that is misleading or untruthful. Articles submitted to the Ristwatch are a representation of the author and not necessarily an endorsement by the RCVFD.

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Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department 50th Anniversary

This article is the first in a series of installments reflecting on the history of the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department, in honor of its 50th anniversary year.

Evolution of
equipment
logos over
the years



The Early Years: Pre-1975-1980.

Prior to the formation of the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department (RCVFD), neighbors in the Rist Canyon-Stove Prairie area ran to the house next-door to yell for help. Later, a phone tree was organized to quickly reach more people. This however, had limited capabilities because the high expense of phone installation and service limited the number of households with phones. Next, neighbors began organizing to help in emergency situations. Caches of firefighting tools were stored throughout the community, and fire wardens organized neighbors to fight wildfires that threatened the area. Equipment was minimal. A very basic training course was established to show resident volunteers how to avoid injury and more effectively fight wildfires.

In 1975, the Rist Canyon-Stove Prairie area had reached a critical juncture. A greater number of forest fires were annually occurring in the area (eight per year), more than in any other Larimer County region. Added to this, the fire potential was worsening because of the increasing population (residents and tourist) and growing severity of pine bark-beetle infestations.

At that time the Rist Canyon-Stove Prairie area was not located within any fire protection district. None of the surrounding departments were obligated to fight structural fires in the area. Pursuant to state law, the Larimer County Sheriff's Office had, and still maintains, jurisdiction over wildland fires. The county sheriff is the fire marshal for a county and has responsibility for wildland fires on non-incorporated private lands in that county. If there is a formal fire district, which RCVFD is not a fire district, the sheriff has responsibility. The closest fire department is dispatched regardless of an area's coverage area or ownership. In the event of a fire in a federal- or Bureau of Land Management-designated area, the federal fire service at times may respond without local assistance. Larimer County operates under the nearest available resource protocol for fires.

continued on next page

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RCVFD 50th Anniversary, continued

continued from previous page

The first organizational meeting was held on April 12, 1975. Some 75 residents and land owners responded to an invitation from Ted Bania (an area resident and retired state forester) and Mark Horvat (state district forester) to form a volunteer fire department. Horvat advised those in attendance that if they established a volunteer fire department, the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) would provide an indefinite loan of a 1947 Army surplus 2½ ton, 1,000-gallon 6x6, GMC REO, pumper truck in excellent operating condition. (This vehicle would remain in use until the 1990s when it was replaced by a vintage Korean War vehicle.)

This truck was part of a program (that continues today) managed by Division of Fire Prevention and Control in Fort Collins. Surplus federal military equipment is refurbished and outfitted to fire service specifications and provided at little or no cost to departments.

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RCVFD 50th Anniversary, continued



1947 Army surplus pumper truck

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The truck would be at the department's disposal for fire-fighting purposes, subject to the following stipulations. The department would be required to provide:

- a. A sturdy, heated building to house the truck;
- b. Liability insurance and upkeep on the truck, including gasoline and oil;
- c. Training and certification of personnel prior to being permitted to operate the truck;
- d. The required fire-fighting equipment, as designated by the forest service, such as hoses, nozzles, tool cache, and accessories; and
- e. Agree that the truck could be called away temporarily to another Larimer County fire.

By the conclusion of the meeting, those present were overwhelmingly in favor of forming a volunteer fire department and endorsed the development of plans to move forward. Preliminary bylaws and the response coverage area were agreed upon. Sixteen attendees responded to the call to form an organizing committee. This committee created six subcommittees: incorporation and by-laws; boundary and membership; building; equipment and training; communications; and finance/fundraising.

At the next meeting (held May 16), officers were elected, and the foundation for RCVFD had been laid. Newly elected President Steven Cox called for volunteer firefighters with the following, "If you're over 18, in reasonably good health, either male or female, and interested in joining or helping our fire crews, please contact one of the department officers."

By August, about 20 people had volunteered and weekly training sessions were underway. Also, that summer, the volunteers and local residents were spending weekends doing wildfire mitigation, cutting standing dead timber that Colorado National Guard volunteers hauled to Fort Collins to be sold.

As quickly as October of that year, the volunteer firefighter's training was put into action at a house fire in Stratton Park caused by a natural gas refrigerator explosion. The house was destroyed; however, the fire did not spread past the single structure, which was a big win.

Building A Foundation.

This early group of individuals understood from the beginning they were embarking on a venture that would be impactful for generations to come and it would not be easy. On June 2,

continued on next page

RCVFD 50th Anniversary, continued

continued from previous page

1975, the RCVFD was officially incorporated in the State of Colorado as a 504 non-profit corporation. This designation allowed the newly created volunteer fire or ambulance corporation to accept tax deductible donations.

The department would ultimately be a group of dedicated individuals and community supporters whose purpose was to work together to extinguish and prevent fires, both wildland and structural, within the area defined for the RCVFD (38 square mile area; more than 24,000 acres) northwest of Fort Collins.

Funding.

Early on, organizers made the conscious effort to build an independent, donation-supported organization thus making it more effective, efficient, and committed to its constituents rather than acting through a state-governed tax district.

The organizing committee proposed that, initially, each property owner (approximately just over 300 at the time) donate an average of \$25-\$30. Then, priority needs for the upcoming fire season could be met. Thereafter, an average donation of \$10 per year would “keep the department alive.” The bylaws stated that general membership in the RCVFD was granted with a minimum annual contribution of \$10 per household. They hoped to average \$20 per membership. Two types of memberships were designated. These were *active* (trained and certified as firefighters) or *general*. Dues/donations were set at \$10 per family. Being a 504 non-profit corporation, the donors became the voting members of the corporation. By November 1975, general membership was 107 family units. Within this group, 23 individuals indicated they wanted to be firefighters.

Initial funding estimates were highly dependent upon volunteer labor, specifically for building the requisite Station No. 1. Materials for the proposed Station No. 1 were estimated to be \$7,000. It quickly became apparent that fundraising opportunities and events would be critical to sustain essential financial support. The first two fundraisers were a benefit dance at the American Legion Hall and a couple’s box supper.

Since the initial formation of the RCVFD, a significant amount of fire-fighting equipment had been acquired. Some was donated by the forest service, some by companies with interests in the area, and some purchased with federal matching funds. The initial equipment included a three-axle-drive, 1,000-gallon pumper truck including the hoses, nozzles, and hand tools to equip the truck; two caches of fire-fighting tools; an air breather kit; a two-way radio unit; and 3,000-gallon water tank to be installed at Station No. 1.

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RCVFD 50th Anniversary, continued

continued from page 23



1975 groundbreaking ceremony

Fire Station No. 1.

After studying a map of the newly formed 38 square mile district, Lowell Johnson's ranch was located in the middle of the area. To his dismay, in order to donate three-tenths of an acre of land for the station, Larimer County was requiring him to, among other steps, install curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. With a resident's pro-bono legal help, the station was eventually approved sans these improvements.



Grading for Station 1

The department qualified for a long-term, low interest Farmers Home Administration (FHA) loan enabling the station to move forward. RCVFD promised to pay to the order of the United States of America, acting through the FHA, United States Department of Agriculture \$10,000 plus five percent interest. It was signed by Stephen Cox, Oct. 8, 1976 and was paid in full on Nov. 19, 1998. The 244th Engineering Construction Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve, dug out the hill for the station. Harold Laughlin was the project construction engineer along with an all-volunteer labor force. The building was finished by late fall of 1976.



Station 1, fall 1976

Firefighters.

Early firefighters received minimal training. What they did receive was focused strictly on fighting wildfires with little regard to structural fires, rescue, or medical emergencies. Trucks were wildland focused with no structural fire equipment. Early firefighters had no protective gear, fighting fires in blue jeans and cotton shirts.

Equipment.

The RCVFD fleet was initially based upon World War II vintage military trucks converted to fire trucks. The first being the 1947 Army surplus pumper truck from the CSFS.

continued on next page

RCVFD 50th Anniversary, continued

continued from previous page

Nona Tyeyer, Larimer County Commissioner, was instrumental in getting Larimer County to donate three Jeep M 715 5/4 Korean War Army trucks after the 1976 floods. In 1978 Firefighter Martin "Marty" Roubal converted the three jeeps into two usable 250-gallon pumper vehicles. AT&T donated a 1972 Chevy van. The fleet was growing.

In 1976 the department applied for federal matching-funds assistance to obtain a number of slip-on pumper units to be placed in the four-wheel-drive pickup trucks of active members. These were quick-reaction units, which were pre-positioned in various critical locations around the area during the height of fire season.

Early Fundraising.

In what would become an annual tradition, the first Mountain Festival was held in 1979. In years prior, several individual activities had been scheduled throughout the summer. In 1979, Sunday, September 2 was selected as the single day for all fund-raising efforts. The goal was to organize a festival day at which multiple activities would be offered. Nearly \$1,000 was raised to go toward Station No. 1 and equipment costs.



Inaugural 1979 Mountain Festival

Early on the festival expanded into the meadow adjacent to Station No. 1. The festival owes deep gratitude to Bob and Dorothy Stringer (Gail Michaud's parents) who started the tradition of allowing the festival to be held in their meadow. Gratefully, Gail and Gene Michaud have continued that tradition. The meadow adjacent to Station No. 1 has, since the very early years, been the perfect location for the annual fundraiser.

These first festivals included a diverse variety of activities including turkey shoots (with both black powder and .22-caliber rifle competitions), Indian dancers from the Taos Pueblo in New Mexico, bake-off, log-splitting contest, greased pig and chicken chases, bingo, beer and Kool-Aid chug-a-lugs, logging contests, arts and crafts sales, aerobic challenge biathlon,

continued on page 27

STOVE PRAIRIE ELEMENTARY



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The students of Stove Prairie worked hard, and celebrated with many end of year activities including a field trip to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Game Fest at CLP, a Talent Show, and finally graduation! They all worked hard and had a great year. Have a wonderful summer Stove Prairie Stallions!



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We are also looking for silent auction donations! This is a huge fundraiser for the school and provides unique enrichments for all our students. Thanks for considering!

RCVFD 50th Anniversary, continued

continued from page 25

Nona logging events, throwing and pitching skills contests, horse shoe challenges, cow chip bingo, Latvian fish bowl, antique market, squirrel market, chili suppers, raffles, one- and three-mile runs, Rist Canyon hill climb bike race, flea market, rummage and yard sales, dances, poker runs, Rist Canyon cookbooks, bike races, off road safari, 10K run, and Jack Russell Terrier races.

Submitted by Karen Salaz

A very special *Thank You* to everyone involved in compiling this 50-year history.

Watch the upcoming issues of the Ristwatch for the continuing history of the RCVFD.



1979 Mountain Festival greased pig contest, Coloradoan



Early Mountain Festival Shuttle

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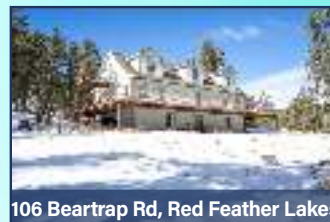
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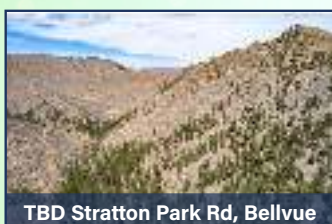
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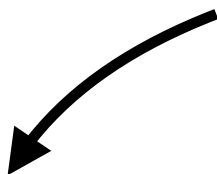
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