



RISTWATCH

RCVFD Quarterly Newsletter P. O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512 Issue No. 116 October 2025

Letter from the President

Rist Canyon VOLUNTEER Fire Department.

Isn't fall here in the Rist Canyon, Stove Prairie, and Buckhorn areas just wonderful? We enjoy wonderful scenery, warm days, cool nights, and great neighbors. We also enjoy the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department, keeping us and our property safe for 50 years.

We have 30 or so firefighters and medical responders. We had 160 volunteers who helped with this year's mountain festival. We have stations, vehicles, and equipment. What are we constantly in need of? Well money, of course.

We have all seen the cost of goods dramatically rise this year. And we are sensitive to how this is likely straining your household budget. But RCVFD is also having to bear the inflation. So please,

consider donating to our 100% donation and volunteer fire department.

Consider the fact that RCVFD has never asked anyone to pay for an emergency response. Consider the fact that RCVFD can get you or your family member a ride on a flight for life helicopter for a mere \$75 per year, instead of \$20,000 or more. Consider the fact that without RCVFD, none of us would likely be able to get affordable homeowner's insurance and thus enjoy fall in these mountains. Then, please donate to RCVFD.

Join us at our annual meeting on Saturday, November 8th for friendship, an update about the Department, and a catered meal being served by Gelato & aMore. Details are in this newsletter.

**Neil Faber
President - 2025**

Chief's Report

Greetings from Chief Neuroth

Hi All,

It's been a busy spring and summer for Rist Canyon VFD. We had 5 responders go through an EMR (Emergency Medical Responder) and EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) class that we sponsored in conjunction with UC Health and Thompson Valley EMS (Emergency Medical Services). We now have 4 more EMTs and 1 EMR, which almost doubles our medical responders. Congratulations to them for the many weeks of study and Saturdays spent at Thompson Valley for skills practice.

Our grants team has been hard at work procuring for us a number of new pieces of equipment. First, we now have a new battery-operated extrication tool, which will make us more efficient in cases where we need to get a patient quickly out of a vehicle. We also now have a wheeled Stokes basket for back country rescue or for bringing a patient down a snowy driveway when vehicle access is impossible.

We have recently hired a retired PFA (Poudre Fire Authority) firefighter to come and teach us some of the skills the professional firefighters have and to increase the knowledge base that our responders need.

And of course, there is the Mountain Festival, which you will hear more about in this newsletter. I just want to say Thank You to all the volunteers that put in many hours to make that day one of the best we've had. It was a good day and a great encouragement to the responders to see the community support for what we do. I've said it before and will keep saying it, I'm proud to be Chief of Rist Canyon VFD, where the community support is solid and the responders are top notch.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Neuroth, Chief
Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department
P.O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512
chief@rcvfd.org

Letter from the Vice President

2025 RCVFD Mountain Festival: Another Success!

The annual RCVFD Mountain Festival was successful again! The Festival was held on Saturday, September 6, 2025, to raise funds for the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department. It was a fun day and raised lots of money for RCVFD. We are still calculating the profit for RCVFD because there are some expenses to come in and a few silent auction items outstanding. We plan to announce the final amount of profit at the RCVFD Annual Meeting at 1pm on Saturday, November 8, 2025, at Stove Prairie Ranch, west of Stove Prairie School on Old Flowers Road. This year's annual luncheon will be catered. Based on the information we have now, I am estimating we made over \$30,000 profit for the fire department!

There were about 3,500 happy attendees. About 160 neighbor volunteers worked together to make the Festival happen; most are listed in this newsletter. This event brought neighbors together to renew old friendships, build new friendships, inform people about the activities of RCVFD, and raise money for our fire department.

This year's Festival featured a huge used book sale selling over 4,500 books from about 20,000 offered for sale; a wonderful silent auction selling over 220 (so far) items from about 320 items offered for sale; a delicious bake sale selling over 85 homemade pies plus six tables of smaller items (e.g., cookies, breads, brownies, muffins); a plant sale with over 200 plants sold; a great RCVFD Festival merchandise sale, where we sold over 280 T-shirts and 90 hoodies, as well as almost 50 RCVFD "coins" (medallions); 46 booths (some "double" booths) with artisans and other vendors; over 30 non-profit educational booths; outstanding live musical entertainment by four local bands; an old-fashioned dunk tank; a firefighter demonstration; a display of our fire trucks; a car show with classics and "dirt" cars; 60 gallons of free ice cream in a variety of flavors; food trucks; and a kids' area with lots of different activities, games, and farm animals. In addition, we had 37 generous groups, businesses, and individuals supporting the Festival as sponsors! The presentation at the RCVFD Annual Meeting (at 1pm on Saturday, November 8, 2025) will provide more information and show photographs of the event.

continued on page 4



Rist Canyon Mountain Festival Leadership Team



Top row: Carolyn Stanley, H.J. Siegel, Darcy Budge, James Clutter, Trisha Johnston, Diane McCarthy, Josef Dvorak, Nancy Diefenderfer, Patti Clutter, Molly McLean, Shannon Phelps.

Bottom row: Neil Faber, Debbie Faber, Pam Thomas, Janet Siegel, Sandy Deraney-Reilly, Karen Salaz, Debbie Benson, Lucy Corro, Lauren Lee.

Continued from page 3

Please mark your calendars for next year's Festival: Saturday, September 12, 2026. To join the amazing Festival team, please contact H.J. Siegel, Festival Coordinator. A photo of 20 members of our leadership team at our August 2025 gathering is shown above.

There are lots of ways to help make the Festival possible in the months before, days before, during, and after the Festival. We happily welcome new members to the "Friends of the Festival" leadership team! Joining is a great way to meet your neighbors, make new friends, become involved in the community, and support your volunteer firefighters. We look forward to another year for the fire department and the Festival.

H. J. Siegel
Mountain Festival Coordinator
RCVFD Board of Directors Vice President
HJ@computer.org

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.

RCVFD Annual Meeting

You are cordially invited to the
Stove Prairie RANCH
Saturday, November 8th, 2025
1 — 4 PM

Join us at the scenic Stove Prairie RANCH for a lunch-time CATERED meal, the Fire Department's Annual Meeting, and celebration of RCVFD's 50th Anniversary.

1-2 PM: CATERED lunch and socializing. (NO potluck)

2-4 PM: Business meeting, including reports from the RCVFD fire chief, board president, treasurer, and the festival chair; and election of the Board of Directors.



All Area Residents
are encouraged to
attend!

Please RSVP to
rsvp@rcvfd.org

Rist Canyon Mountain Festival Volunteers

Thank You to the Community Volunteers Who Made
the 2025 RCVFD Mountain Festival a Success!

Most of the 2025 RCVFD Mountain Festival activities and the names of most of the volunteers who participated in those activities are listed below. A big thanks to the about 160 community volunteers who worked together so about 3,500 people could come together for a fun day, learn about RCVFD, and raise money for RCVFD supplies and equipment.

For information about how you can join our great team of volunteers, please contact me, H.J. Siegel, Mountain Festival Coordinator, HJ@computer.org.

- **Announcer:** Neil Faber.
- **Bake Sale:** Darcy Budge, Chair; Alison Hagedorn, Brad Schnee, Bridget Tisthammer, Carol Dollard, Carolyn Stanley, Casey, Cheryl Neuroth, Cynthia Tipton, Dana Stewart, Deborah Cheuvront, Diane McCarthy, Diane Schwartz, Eileen Cordsen, Ellison Tipton, George Rosander, Gretchen Long, Henry, Jennifer Cluett, Jason Dulliver, Josie, Judy Jones, Karen Salaz, Kathy Norman, Maggie Schleppy, Melanie Bevers, Miriam Neergaard, Molly Budge, Pat Rosander, Paula Rosenberg, Rob Budge, Robert Edwards, Robin Edwards, Sammy Staggs, Sarah Rowan, Sean Orner, Suzanne O'Donnell, Terri Tracy, Tiffany Link, Trisha Johnston, Wendy Schleppy, Will McArthur. Additionally, a huge thank you to anyone I may have missed who generously donated baked goods for the sale.
- **Book Sale:** Patti Clutter, Chair; Carolyn Stanley and Kathy Cox, Co-Chairs; Aire Hartwig, Barb Monesson, Beth Corbitt, Betsy Bartel, Bridget Tisthammer, Casey, Cindy Sherman, Clay Cox, Corey Stewart, Dana Stewart, Darcy Budge, Debbie Benson, Debbie Faber, Diane McCarthy, Eve Ege, Eric Schaveland, Erica Michel, Gabrielle Borin, Gene Morenko, George Rosander, Gisele Garrity, Gretchen Long, Harry Bates, Henry, H.J. Siegel, Hunter Squibb, Isaac Bermudez, Jack Johnston, James Clutter, Janet Siegel, Jeff Brack, Jeff Elsner, Jennifer Stratman, Jessie Ceplecha, Joanne Fallert, Jocelyn Wolf, Josie, Juana Jackson, Karen Salaz, Kim Workman, Kristen Michaels, Lana Olsson, Larry Monesson, Linda Dellmar, Linda Squibb, Lucy Corro, Luke Walker, Lyle Benson, Marcy Gray, Mia Lauenroth, Mike Salaz, Mike Wilkins, Molly, Molly McLean, Mourine Weaver, Neil Faber, Paige Hogan, Pam Thomas, Pat Carey, Pat Rosander, Patty Ringer, Pete Sherman, Randy Hediger, Ray Goedl, Rick Keller, Rob Budge, Rob Orner, Roger Dev, Scott Hogan, Sean Orner, Shannon Phelps, Shayne Magstadt, Susan Weaver, Tanner Squibb, Tanya Shenk, Tiffany Link, Tim Jackson, Tim Stratman, Tricia Ramos, Trisha Johnston, Vicki Bailey, Vivian Burke, William McArthur, and all the people that dropped off books at the donation boxes for the Book Sale.
- **Canine Hospitality Stations:** Molly McLean.
- **Community Volunteers Sign-Up List:** Trisha Johnston.
- **Craft/Vendor Booths:** Debbie Benson, Chair; Shannon Phelps, Kelly Wrighton, Kya Sparks, Jill Smith.
- **Credit Card Reader Attachments:** Diane McCarthy.
- **Dunk Tank:** Trisha Johnston, Chair; Amelia Lauenroth, Brett Johnston, Diane McCarthy, Juana Jackson, Lucy Corro.
- **Electricity:** James Clutter.
- **Entertainment:** Sandy Deraney-Reilly, Chair; Randy Hediger (Stage Construction), Brett Johnston (Stairs Builder), Shaped Music (Sound Company), Fish Carpenter (Sound Engineer), Sherwood Dunlop (Sound Assistant), Randy Reilly; Bands: AKA (Also Known As), Choice City Trio, Liz Barnez Band, Wendy W oo Band.
- **Facilities** (e.g., tents, tables, chairs, potties): Shannon Phelps
- **Festival Coordinator:** H.J. Siegel.

Rist Canyon Mountain Festival Volunteers

Thank You to the Community Volunteers Who Made
the 2025 RCVFD Mountain Festival a Success!

- **Field Layout:** Shannon Phelps, Chair; Debbie Benson, Gisele Garrity, Larry Monesson, Molly McLean, Tricia Ramos, Trisha Johnston.
- **Field Provider:** Gail and Gene Michaud.
- **Food Trucks:** Bridget Tisthammer.
- **Graphic Designer:** Lauren Lee.
- **Ice Cream:** Ice Cream: Nancy Diefenderfer, Chair; Carla Schmidt, Daniel Diefenderfer, Jordan Hawks, Kayla Schmidt, Landan Hawks, Louise Creager, Moby Wile, Randy Kliner, Sarah Jenkner, members of the American Legion Post 2000, Loveland, CO.
- **Kids' Activities:** Trisha Johnston, Chair; Josie Link, Tiffany Link.
- **Mentor:** Richard Lund.
- **Non-Profit and Educational Booths:** Trisha Johnston, Chair; Julie Fowler, Shannon Phelps.
- **Parking Areas Setup:** Jeff Elsner, Chair.
- **Parking Control Day of Festival:** John Benshoff, Chair.
- **Permit:** Bridget Tisthammer.
- **Photographer:** Erica Michel.
- **Plant Sale:** Kimberley Carr, Chair; Gabrielle Borin, Jen Wright, Lori Schleber, Roger Dev.
- **Publicity – Posters:** Lauren Lee.
- **Publicity – Press Releases and Ads for Newspapers, Radio:** Karen Salaz.
- **Publicity – Social Media:** Debbie Faber.
- **RCVFD Fire Trucks:** Lucy Corro, Chair; Firefighters.
- **RCVFD Firefighter Demonstrations:** Mark Neuroth, Chair; Karen Steadman and Jocelyn Wolf, Co-Chairs, Calne Snyder, Hunter Chipman, Hunter Squibb, Lyle Benson, Mike Wilkins, Tricia Ramos.
- **RCVFD Firefighters who worked on Festival activities:** Lucy Corro, Chair; Abbas Hamid, Amelia Lauenroth, Calne Snyder, Carol Dollard, Darcy Budge, Debbie Benson, Erica Michel, H.J. Siegel, Hunter Chipman, Hunter Squibb, Jack Johnston, Jeff Brack, Jeff Elsner, Jeff Stark, Jesse Ceplecha, Jocelyn Wolf, John Benshoof, Juana Jackson, Karen Steadman, Kim Workman, Larry Monesson, Lyle Benson, Mark McCracken, Mark Neuroth, Mike Wilkins, Nick Kedzuf, Pedro Boscan, Ruben Arrieta, Shayne Magstadt, Tricia Ramos.
- **Road Signs:** Randy Hediger.
- **Shuttle Tractor Drivers:** Brett Johnston, Joshua Neufeldt.
- **Shuttle Trailer:** Neil Faber.
- **Silent Auction:** Janet Siegel, Chair; Pam Thomas, Co-Chair; Brian Miller, Carolyn Stanley, David Thomas, Debbie Benson, Debbie Faber, Diane McCarthy, Erica Michel, Gretchen Long, H.J. Siegel, James Clutter, Karen Salaz, Kathy Cox, Lyle Benson, Marcy Gray, Melissa Thomas, Mike Salaz, Nancy Diefenderfer, Pedro Boscan, Randy Hediger, Shannon Phelps, Trisha Johnston.
- **Sponsorships:** James Clutter Chair; Bridget Tisthammer, Carolyn Stanley, Diane McCarthy, H.J. Siegel, Karen Salaz, Lauren Lee, Louise Creager, Nancy Diefenderfer, Neil Faber, Sandy Deraney-Reilly, Sarah Rowan, Shannon Phelps, Trisha Johnston.
- **T-Shirts:** Lauren Lee, Sarah Rowan, Co-Chairs; Jennifer Thomas, Tammy Rowan.
- **Treasurer:** Diane McCarthy; Assistant Treasurer: Melanie Bevers.
- **Vehicle Show:** Josef Dvorak, Chair; Gene Morenko.
- **Wi-Fi:** Mark McCracken, Chair; Abbas Hamid.

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Thanks to all of you who joined us at this year's festival! Our sponsors alone helped us raise \$27,351.50. Thanks also to all of our volunteers, firefighters and board members who put in countless hours! All proceeds benefit the RCVFD and help protect our community!

Rist Canyon History

This article is the second 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



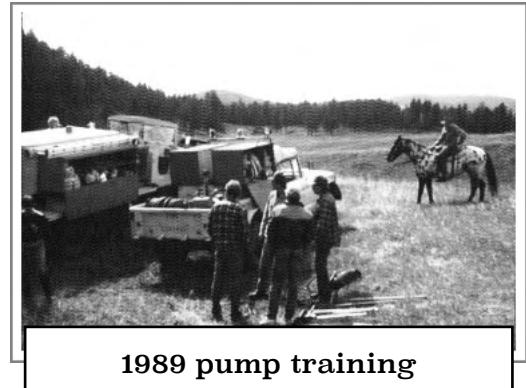
RCVFD prepares for and enters the 21st century: 1981-2011

The year 1981 was a pivotal year in shaping the future of the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department (RCVFD). Major events transpired that in looking back would set the department on the trajectory for where it is today.

In 1981 the Larimer County Sheriff requested the department add to its priorities protecting structure fires. Having originally been established, and having responders trained to only fight wildland fires, this ultimately would become a significant topic of discussion in the evolution of the department. At the time, the limitations of resources, training, and equipment dictated that structure fire response remain "we will do the best we can." The implications for adding structure fire capabilities, however, were further escalated as simultaneously the area was at the height of the pine bark-beetle epidemic.

That same year, the U.S. Forest Service asked RCVFD to enter into a contract to provide personnel and equipment in the event of fires on adjacent federal lands. A small, independent, all-volunteer fire department taking this leap forward was monumental.

During this time also, the Larimer County commissioners and sheriff's department were pressuring RCVFD to become a fire protection district. The board and community members remained highly resistant to the tax assessments and mill levies that becoming a fire protection district would require. In 1982, the pressure was serious enough that residents of Middle Buckhorn Canyon went to the RCVFD Board saying they did not want the department to even voluntarily respond to fires in their area. At the time the Buckhorn was not within the official coverage region of the RCVFD; however, the department was providing coverage.



1989 pump training

continued on page 18

Notes from Your Area Representatives

We had a great festival this year. Everyone was enjoying all the artist booths. You could see a sea of red bags from the book tent in the crowd.

We still offer free house signs and Chimex sticks. I requested more brochures from the Helicopter insurance company. We are happy to supply them to you if you would like one.

Your local reps are here to help you so feel free to contact them. Have a great fall.

Carolyn Stanley — Davis Ranch

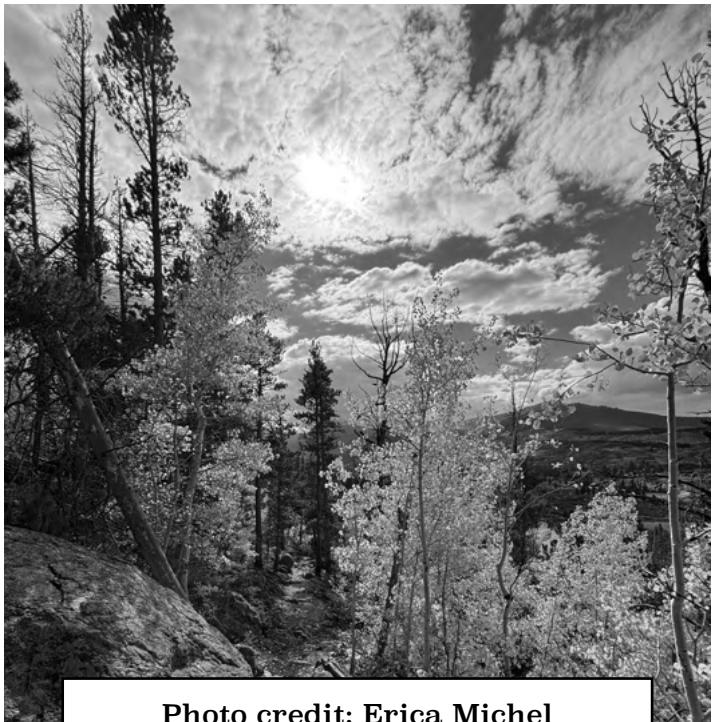


Photo credit: Erica Michel

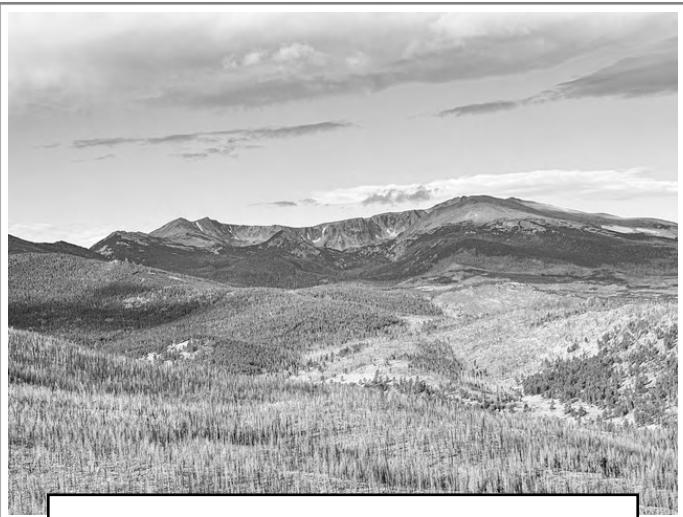


Photo credit: Erica Michel



Summer has now given way to autumn in the Upper Buckhorn. The leaves have made their annual shift from deep green to brilliant shades of yellow, orange, and red. Bears are more active as they prepare for winter, and the roads have received their annual maintenance, making them ready for the changing season.

This fall, I took a trip to Pingree Park and hiked the trail to Denny's Point, where the colorful foliage was on full display. The trail, which begins at the CSU Mountain Campus, offers a moderate hike with rewarding views.

For those planning a visit, Pennock Pass will remain open until December, weather permitting, providing convenient access to the area.

Erica Michel — Upper Buckhorn

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Notes from Your Area Representatives, *cont'd from pg 10*

I haven't seen many autumns like the one we're experiencing this year. It seems that by mid-August the local climate flipped a switch, and what had been a relatively dry summer turned into a comfortable and wetter season. Our own meadow looked pretty dry as usual, and then fairly regular rains started appearing and turned our mowed meadow into a greening pasture. The nights cooled off rather nicely even getting into the 50-degree temps. It's been quite lovely. On the 13th of September we had the annual marathon race that started bright and early around the Ohana Ranch. By the way, there is a closing on this Ranch at the end of the month and we'll have new neighbors. Otherwise, it has been a very quiet end to summer. There have been a number of County dump type trucks making multiple trips every day to further up the Canyon so be attentive to the traffic.

I hope all of our Buckhorn neighbors have enjoyed this weather because it makes for lovely outdoor pastimes and the threat of wildfires has been greatly diminished. Hip, hip hooray for that.

Dean Yoder — Lower Buckhorn

This year's Fire Department Fair was more than a day of rides, food, and music — it was a quiet reminder of what community can be at its best. As I walked among the booths, I couldn't help but notice that everyone was smiling. Neighbors greeted one another, kids ran past with sticky fingers and candy grins, and there was not a trace of negativity anywhere.

In a time when it's easy to focus on division and discord, the fair was a living proof that shared spaces can still bring us together. For one bright afternoon, every political persuasion, every background, every story was present — and none of it mattered except that we were all there, together, under the same sunny sky.



Poem: "Fair Day"

*The flags all waved, the fire trucks shone,
The children's laughter set the tone.
The world's loud quarrels slipped away,
And hope came out to play that day.*

Roger Dev — Whale Rock

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Notes from Your Area Representatives, cont'd from pg 12

Hi Folks - With Leaf Peeping in full swing as I write this, fall will soon turn into winter. With that in mind, new birds are coming in to visit us. On the front range, think bald eagles, rosy finches, and in our area nuthatches and grosbeaks. If you are like myself and so many other people, you might want to invite them to your home. Food, water and cover are most important in winter. Be sure to have water. Just because there is snow on the ground don't forget these winter needs. Many of our creeks have dried up, and ponds may be frozen over. Putting out a pan of clean water every day will help birds in their search.

Black oiled sunflower seeds is great food for most; otherwise, check with your local bird store for many yummy treats. Be sure to clean your bird feeders at least every other week. According to Audubon - Empty all old feed first. Yes, bleach is safe at 1 part bleach to 9

parts water. Soak for 15 minutes. Rinse thoroughly and dry. Instead of just having a wood feeder, I add a metal cake pan so I can clean them easily in the dishwasher. Also, please keep the lights out at night as birds can get confused when migrating. If you like having the lights on, think of timed lights, off by 9, or having motion lights on. You'll save on that electric bill too! As you drive through our mountain roads, take a moment to stop and listen for new birds. At the bottom of Rist Canyon I was astonished at the variety of birds I found. There even used to be a three toed woodpecker. I'm a big fan of the ... Shhh it's a secret. Picture is at my hummingbird feeder of *woodpeckeris impersonatus*. What are your favorite birds?



Photo credit: Louise Creager

Louise Creager — Stratton Park

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Notes from Your Area Representatives, cont'd from pg 14

A shout out of thanks and appreciation to my neighbors - Gene and Gail Michaud! Their willingness and generosity to allow RCVFD use of their meadow every September for the annual RC Mountain Festival is greatly appreciated. The annual festival is a huge lift that wouldn't happen without the great support we get from community volunteers and the residents of Rist Canyon.

For neighbors who drive by the firehouse on Rist Canyon Rd (known to some of us as "Station 1"), you'll notice a celebration banner hanging outside above the bay doors that we will keep up through June 2026 in recognition and celebration of the fire department's 50th year. Hope to see you all at the upcoming annual community meeting this November 8th at the Stove Prairie Ranch.

Debbie Benson — Rist Canyon

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RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, continued

Continued from page 9

An ongoing public controversy in 1982 was that the Mountain Bell Phone Company refused to install a public telephone at Station 1 at an affordable cost. Sheriff Jim Black, presenting testimony at a Public Utilities Commission hearing noted, "The lack of a telephone in Rist Canyon for reporting emergencies 'is a significant problem.'" A semi-public phone, ringing only to the sheriff's office, would cost \$315 to install and \$76 monthly. This would have been a significant expenditure for the department given its budget at the time.



1943 Ford WW II vehicle. From left
Gene Michaud, Jon Stephens, Jim
McDonald, and Bob Gann.
Coloradoan

In the 1980s, the fleet of vehicles was continuing to grow with the addition of an International Travel All donated by Bob Cunningham, a Korean War vintage 1943 Ford Bomb Service Truck, and a GMC Reo replaced by WWII version (E412). Interestingly, E411 was only recently retired and replaced.

New recruits at the time, who still today remain as active responders, are Carol Dollard, Larry Monesson, and Kim Workman. Each has made, and continues to make, significant contributions in leadership and support positions for the department.

During the next decade, the RCVFD continued its early transition into the department as we know it today. The foundation established in 1975 would be expanded with the founding principles still intact: building an independent, donation-supported organization making it more effective, efficient, and committed to its constituents rather than acting through a state-governed tax district. The department would also remain highly dependent upon volunteer labor, strong community involvement, and donations.

In 1990 Steve Cox donated a 1943 Ford World War II U.S. Navy heavy-duty, 4-wheel-drive bomb service vehicle with a crane whose chassis was converted into the department's newest pumper (No. 43). The vehicle was officially known as a "Navy bomb service truck," also known as a Burma truck, that originally was used to load bombs on aircraft carriers in WWII. It had only 3,000 miles on the odometer, making it a reliable workhorse. A 750-gallon water tank was installed on the chassis along with other emergency response equipment.

In 1990, RCVFD joined Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority (LETA), a 911 governing body and political subdivision of the state of Colorado. LETA was created through an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that established it as a separate legal entity. The coun-

continued on next page

Here's My Card

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RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, continued

Continued from previous page

-ties, cities, towns, hospital and health services districts, fire authorities, fire protection districts, and Colorado State University, who signed LETA's IGA, made LETA responsible for the installation, administration, management, operation, maintenance, upgrading, and enhancements of emergency telephone service and emergency notification service within LETA's jurisdiction. This jurisdiction encompasses Larimer and Jackson counties.

In 1991 a pivotal election also took place. Robert "Bob" Gann was elected as the RCVFD fire chief. Bob was able to build upon the strong foundation established by his predecessor's 15-plus years of hard work and dedication to move the department forward. He was adamant that firefighters have the training and tools necessary to transition the department into the 21st century. Bob went on to serve 30 years in the department, 22 years as the chief.

A major milestone for the department was reached on March 1, 1992. This is when RCVFD trained volunteers first responded to a medical emergency. Adding basic life services to the department's response capabilities was controversial at the time with Larry Monesson leading

continued on page 21

STOVE PRAIRIE ELEMENTARY



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



WELCOME TO A NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

We hope all in our community had the opportunity to join us at the annual Fall Festival!

From the Principal, Mr. SCHACHT

We are off to a wonderful start this school year! It has been inspiring to see our classrooms filled with energy, excitement, and eager learners. I continue to be impressed by the dedication and passion of our teachers, who bring such creativity and care to their work each day. Thanks to their thoughtful preparation and your support, our first weeks have been smooth and successful.



We've placed a strong emphasis on building classroom communities, setting clear routines, and creating a positive foundation for the months ahead.



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RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, continued

Continued from page 19

the movement. He also would become RCVFD's first fully certified medical officer. Intensive training began in 1991. This began what is now considered one of the core emergency services of the department.



Above, early crew transport vehicle. Below, E641 donated by Anheuser Busch.



seldom been seen thereafter. He is still on Engine E641 housed at the Whale Rock Station, a vehicle generously donated by Anheuser Busch.

With the now expanded medical response responsibilities, improved notification capabilities became a growing priority. Through the years, RCVFD responders have experienced firsthand the advances in paging technology. The initial paging was based on the Larimer County Dispatch (sheriff's office) setting off a small number of "radio pagers". These emitted a tone followed by dispatch announcing in a scratchy, barely understandable voice describing the emergency. Volunteers then called a phone tree (party lines were the norm at the time). Later phone pagers were added – little beepers that would show a phone number. The responders with a beeper would call dispatch to receive the information.



Wilbur Ritch and Chuck Andre, Buckhorn Fire, Coloradoan

Today, medical services are rendered by emergency responders who are willing and fully certified. In recent years, department responses have been more than 75% medical related in years when there were no major fires.

The first quick response transport (QRT) vehicle was an International-Travel-All previously used for crew transport. A QRT is used to transport individuals to the nearest available advanced medical care. This typically is a helicopter or advanced life support ambulance. The Travel-All was used as a QRT until 1996 when it was replaced by an Emergency Medical Services grant-funded Chevrolet Suburban.

In 1992 residents were introduced to a little character created as the department's mascot. "Risty" popped up in various locations from 1992-1995, although he has



Risty

continued on page 23

What's Happening in Your Neighborhood?



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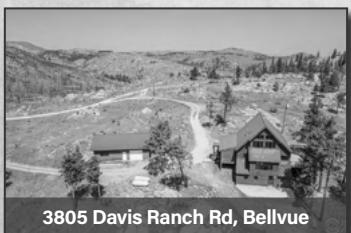
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0 TBD Pine Acres, Bellvue

- ~ 10 Acres
- Top of the world views from N. end of Horsetooth Reservoir



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- ~ 4.93 Acres
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TBD Stratton Park Rd, Bellvue

- ~ 35-39 Acres
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RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, continued

Continued from page 21

The next step was RCVFD Volunteer Chuck Andre building a custom recorder installed in the basement of the sheriff's office. That recorder was triggered by a voice pager and recorded the scratchy message. RCVFD volunteers then called and listened to that recording.

RCVFD has often led volunteer fire departments in the region in adopting new equipment and approaches. It became the first volunteer department in the county to upgrade to the digital pagers in 1993. However, it took some time for RCVFD to purchase enough pagers for everyone. Eventually with the purchase of 16 new digital pagers, it tied all primary responders into the new emerging countywide digital system. That system, combined with cell-phone based paging is still in use today.

The Enhanced 911* (E911) emergency reporting system was not implemented in Larimer County until 1995 and RCVFD was ready. When the county implemented E911, RCVFD firefighters went to every house to check that dispatch was receiving the correct address location from the phone. The project took several weeks and hundreds of volunteer hours.

It was during this time that RCVFD embarked on discussions to enlarge its coverage area. Acting on a combination of residents' requests and heightened recognition of Larimer County's response profile being "nearest available resource," RCVFD would now officially be responding in an expanded area. As the department was not a tax district, the extension simply required a by-law change. The move made sense as the extension had informally been discussed for a number of years. The enlarged coverage area was then identified as including Rist Canyon, Stove Prairie, and the Buckhorn (7-8 miles up Buckhorn Canyon), as well as providing mutual aid in conjunction with other local emergency response agencies for an additional 70 square miles of adjacent lands. The RCVFD's 1975 wildland response area had officially grown from the original 24,000 acres.

On June 4, 1994, the revised RCVFD by-laws coverage area was redefined as a 51 square mile fire response area nested within a larger 76 square mile medical response area. The RCVFD's actual operational footprint would be significantly larger. The primary response area encompassed approximately 105 square miles for both fire and medical calls, reflecting the full extent of where the department would routinely respond within the community. This expanded footprint went beyond the by-law boundaries due to practical service realities and was further supplemented by an additional 70 square miles of mutual aid area, making the effective coverage closer to 175 square miles.



Early responders

continued on page 25



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RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, continued

Continued from page 23

Mountain Festival Art Auction

In 1994 (until 2016) the RCVFD Mountain Festival took on a new identity. Area residents Richard Schmid, a well-known artist and author, along with his wife Nancy Guzik, suggested the department try reaching outside our mountain community for funding and an art auction was born. Richard donated, and recruited other artists to donate, fine art for an auction to be held in conjunction with the festival. Richard recruited the artists for the first few years, but it was then up to the festival art committee to stay in contact with the original recruits and enlist new artists. The committee eventually acquired more than 140 artists from across the country. Some submitted works every year, others now and again.

The committee used the art auction to redefine the festival, putting in countless hours to make it a reality. Those leading the effort were Jon and Sue Stephens, Wes and Nicki Rutt, Chuck and Carol Miller, Bonnie Shetler, LaVonne Ewing, MaryAnn Martin, and Charlie Bogusz who would meet a few weeks after the last auction and began planning the following year's event. It took much of the year to recruit artists, organize volunteers, receive art from all over the country, develop and revise procedures, design and produce catalogs, and stage marketing events. It was the consistent hard work of more than 90 community volunteers through many years that kept it a successful fundraiser for so long.

Proceeds from those festivals and auctions turned the financial corner for the RCVFD. The extra revenue provided a significant boost for the department at a time when it was trying to grow at a pace fast enough to keep up with the growing number of residents and visitors in the area. The original festival concept continued as a way to draw the community together; however, the addition of the art auction enabled the department to acquire the funding needed to adequately equip the department.



Emergency responders at Station 1, 1995
Coloradoan

Fire Stations

With all these developments in the early 1990s, the RCVFD needed to reprioritize to meet the community's expanding needs. The department had outgrown Station 1. In 1994 three bays were added. Charles Cox planned, designed, and headed up construction for the expansion. Once again, legions of dedicated volunteers stepped up to help reduce the cost of the endeavor.

continued on page 27



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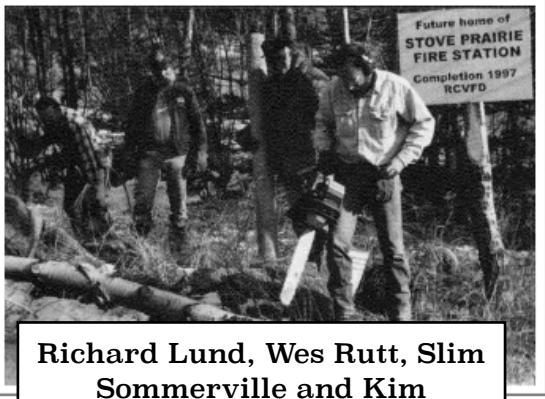
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RCVFD 50th Anniversary, continued

Continued from page 25

In the 1990s, Station No. 2 was a temporary, seasonal station in Bob and Merle Cunningham's barn on Davis Ranch Road. The small garage was unheated; thus, water had to be drained each fall. This station was only operational for a few years.



Richard Lund, Wes Rutt, Slim Sommerville and Kim Workman preparing for Station 3

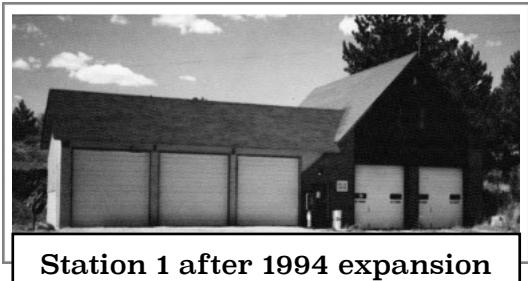


Station 3 completed in 1998

Type 6, 1992 GMC 1 ton, was donated by Anheuser Busch (E641 pictured previously with Risty). A FEMA grant provided a Chevy Suburban QRT vehicle (M11). A second Colorado type 4 GMC 6x6 and second modern type 6x were purchased new by the department. These vehicles remain in service today.

January 1, 2000 to April 2, 2011

Y2K ushered in not only a new century, but also a new era for RCVFD. Kicking off the year, responders were ready to act with a special operation plan in place should the ominous Y2K bug strike. Crews were on call forgoing any celebrations that night. Three emergency communications centers were established along with amateur radio services arranged. Residents were encouraged to celebrate responsibly, including staying home.



Station 1 after 1994 expansion

In 1998, Station No.

3 became operational located at 17457 Rist Canyon Road on the west side of Ford Hill. The land for the station was donated by John Mugler, Jr. and Mary Lewallen Pesko. Bob Cunningham and Gene Michaud provided key leadership roles in the construction of the station. Whale Rock Station No. 4 was originally built in 1995 on property donated by Ronald Kerr. The building project was headed by Larry Monesson. Unfortunately, that structure was destroyed in the 2012 High Park Fire. All that remained was the original 1995 dedication plaque.

With the fire station expansion and newly built stations, there was a significant growth in the RCVFD's fleet. The first modern



Original Station 4 dedication plaque

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RCVFD 50th Anniversary, continued

Continued from page 27

The new century also saw the department adding significant safety components and responder skills. These included improved evacuation planning, mapping, global positioning system (GPS), and expansion of structural and wildland fire capabilities.

Evacuation planning was conducted to identify routes for the Whale Rock, Buckhorn, Stratton Park, and the Davis Ranch areas. The department also worked with Larimer County to develop and acquire updated mapping in the response area and GPS equipment was purchased. These relationships and resources would later prove to be invaluable when the High Park Fire raged through the region in 2012.

A U.S. Fire Association Fire Act grant enabled the department to purchase nearly \$100,000 in modern personal protective equipment (PPE). This allowed the department to obtain new, unused PPE for the first time. It also was the first time firefighters were provided full sets of wildland firefighting gear. These additions significantly raised the caliber of response RCVFD was capable of providing when responding to structure and other types of fires.

The first year the department was able to acquire the training necessary to receive a hazardous material certification through the State Hazmat Certification program was in 2001. The program was designed to ensure responders were appropriately trained to recognize hazardous material conditions, take appropriate protective measures such as evacuations. The training is not intended to train responders how to mitigate hazardous materials, but rather to identify the issue and bring in the appropriate resources.

RCVFD was an early adopter of CAFS (Compressed Air Foam System) technologies designed for both structure and wildfire usage. CAFS systems multiply the effect of water by five to 10 times i.e. 500 gallons of water + CAFS is as effective as 2,500-5,000 gallons of plain water. This technology continues to be an important resource today.

Historically, Rist Canyon roads were identified with fire route numbers assigned by the RCFVD to aid in responding to emergencies. In 2006 the Larimer County Rural Address Improvement Program renamed most of the roads and put up the signs we see today. These designations do not imply that a road is public or that people can treat it any differently than any other road, private or public. Except in an emergency, RCVFD may use any road provided if the road is believed to be critical in that emergency.

Also In 2006, the department acquired its first Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) through a grant to enhance fire detection capabilities. The camera allows firefighters to inspect areas of suspected heat, such as fire behind a wall or locate hot spots in wildfires. It can also be used to locate people who may have been thrown or walked away from an accident. (In 2025, RCVFD secured a grant to add three new TIC devices).

Continued on page 31



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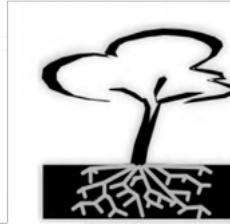
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RCVFD 50th Anniversary, continued

Continued from page 29

In 2010 the RCVFD Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was published. The purpose of the plan was to formalize and coordinate efforts, ongoing and proposed, to help the community prepare for wildland fires and mitigate the effects. A second purpose was to act as a strategy that allows the department to pursue funding and grants related to wildland fire activities – and to fit in with ongoing activities in neighboring areas. (The full plan is available on the department's website at https://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/documents/RistCanyon_CWPP.pdf, last updated May 2010. The Department is currently seeking volunteers to help update this plan. If interested, please contact Jocelyn Wolf or Carol Dollard.)



Top Row From left, Bob Gann, Chuck Andre, Wes Rutt, Tom VanVelsen, Larry Monesson, & Joe Babiarz; **bottom left** Kim Workman & Jon Stevens. The aluminum helmets were cast-offs from the Forest Service. Larry recalls that, “when on fires with other crews and there was lightning no one would stand near us.”

RCVFD reached a significant milestone in 2011. This was the first year the number of volunteer firefighters reached 30 individuals. The achievement meant the department now had three 10-person crews.

The fleet of vehicles also continued to expand with the addition of a Ford F550 Type 6 truck and two GMC 5500 Type 6x compressed air foam system trucks, all purchased new. The department purchased a used International Type 3x truck from the Larimer County Sheriff's Office still in service (E313) just in time for the High Park Fire.

These three decades ushered in fire station expansions, adoption of advanced technology, specialized training availability, the ability to provide emergency medical services, and a significantly expanded response area. These milestones provided a foundation to help prepare the RCVFD for the then unforeseen catastrophic events that were on the horizon.

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.

Note: The RCVFD was officially created on June 2, 1975. In recognition of this date, the Ristwatch will publish two more history segments in the 12-month period ending in June 2026. After the fourth segment, a compiled history will be available at RCVFD.org that also includes additional information and photos.

Submitted by Karen Salaz



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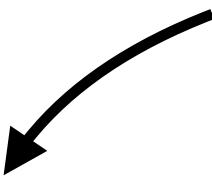
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Submissions to the Ristwatch

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.

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important
to the health of our
RCVFD!
THANK YOU!**

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