

**BEULAH FIRE PROTECTION
& AMBULANCE DISTRICT**

**REPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY 2015**

P.O. Box 826
8870 Grand Ave Suite A
Beulah CO 81023

We're on the Web and Facebook!
www.beulahfireambulance.org



Emergency - Call 911

Statistics

EMS

Total EMS Responses: 114
Total Transported: 73

Types of Calls

Traumatic Incidents	25
Medical Incidents	89
Difficulty Breathing	9
Chest Pain	10
Cardiac Arrest	1
Deceased	3
Stroke	2

FIRE

Total Fire Responses: 70

Types of Calls

Structure Fires	1
Wildland Fires	10
False Calls / Smoke Scares	25
Rescue Calls	17
Service Calls	8
Utility Problem	8
Other / Stand By	1

All of our member's donate many hours of their lives to protect yours. We appreciate everything that our members do for us and they appreciate the continued support that our community shows.

Beulah Fire Protection & Ambulance District Board

- President Steve Douglas (Term Expiring 2018)**
- Vice-President Patrick Stanifer (Term Expiring 2016)**
- Secretary Kim Toman (Term Expiring 2018)**
- Member Joni Smith (Term Expiring 2016)**
- Fundraising Coordinator/Acting Treasurer Robert Thompson (Term Expiring 2018)**

The Beulah Fire Protection & Ambulance District

Report to The Community 2015

President's Letter - Steve Douglas

The Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District (District) just had its second anniversary as a combined fire and ambulance service provider. In this newsletter, Chief Bryan Ware reports on details of that 2014 work. For example, our EMS responses increased 40% compared to 2013, still they were handled in a timely and professional manner by Chief Ware and our fine volunteers. There is also information about District finances, fund raising and various community services. I will focus on a few fire and finance related activities, challenges and opportunities.

Our first year (2013) as a combined fire and EMS service provider was challenging financially and in other ways. The year that just ended brought other financial challenges; of which some were anticipated and some were not. We knew we would have a drop in property tax revenue due to lowered assessed valuation. That equated to nearly \$9,000 less in revenue for the year. That was not a surprise. We cut the proposed budget accordingly and we expect the same situation in 2015, but it still gives us a challenge. What was a surprise was an \$11,000 drop in EMS billing income, in spite of a 40% increase in EMS calls for the year. (More calls means higher operating expenses, regardless of billing revenue.) Most of that reduction is artificial due to a change in accounting practices (going from a cash to accrual basis, which is discussed further in the Treasurer's Report). In reviewing EMS billing revenue we found that 17% of patients transported by us to local hospitals in 2014 were uninsured. That by itself resulted in at least \$6,000 less revenue for the year. That is significant, in part because we only bill for medical responses that result in patient transport. As you recall, the District policy is to not bill our residents directly for services provided to them; relying instead on insurance payments in their behalf. Our feeling is that District residents and property owners already pay for service through property taxes and should not be charged any additional fees ... even if they are uninsured. We believe that is a good policy in concept, but the number of uninsured patients is significant in terms of lost revenue, which impacts our ability to serve all residents and properties in the district. If that situation continues through 2015, we may need to rethink the policy. Another surprise came in the form of a single mechanical breakdown of our best pumper; one that we need to keep in service. It cost over \$10,000 to fix, i.e. double what our entire equipment maintenance budget was for the year. Upon review, we don't believe the damage occurred recently (on our watch or even that of Beulah Fire's), but once detected it needed to be fixed. That's just a reality that comes with having old equipment that has had three or even four owners and many more operators. Long story short, we found ourselves in a position where we needed to draw from District reserves (savings) to balance the budget. Even though we were able to put some year-end savings (\$7,115) back into reserves, the net for the year was a \$10,529 reduction in our reserves. At year's end, those reserves equaled \$75,352, of which we need to keep at least \$50,000 to make sure we have funds to cover operating expenses early each year while we wait for new property tax revenue to come in. Things should be better in 2016, but first we need to get through 2015, and we will.

On a positive note, an Auxiliary was formed in 2014 to assist the District in fund raising, especially for capital (non-operational) expenses. This is in keeping with discussions we had with the community in 2012 about combining fire and EMS, the proposed budget and associated mill levy. We knew then that the proposed mill levy should help us save money to provide matching dollars for grants that we may receive for replacing fire equipment and building a new station, but it wouldn't come close to providing funds to purchase those things outright. The Auxiliary is helping us move forward with fund raising. Donations are important, whether they are large or small. Some of those come through fund-raising events and some are through individual gifts. For example, the fine used tender (water hauler) we purchased in 2013 was with funds remaining from a bequest by Jimmy Armstrong to Beulah Fire. Also in 2013, a district resident donated \$2,000 to specifically purchase a winch for one of our brush trucks. Under certain circumstances, that winch can be of critical value. In 2014, another district resident donated \$17,100 to purchase a good used Type 3 brush truck, which can be especially useful in protecting structures from wildland fire. This year, another district resident has expressed interest in donating an excellent piece of property for a new fire station, to replace Station 1, our rented office space and garage space loaned by School District 70. Owning that parcel will improve the District's ability to compete for grants to build the facility. Those are all examples of donations that really benefit the District, whether they amount to a few dollars or thousands of dollars. They are needed for us to move forward.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the continued need for wildland fire hazard mitigation around many of the homes and along driveways and roadways in the District. The hard reality is that we have homes and entire neighborhoods that would not currently survive a major, wind-driven fire like the Mason Gulch Fire in 2005. That is regardless of how good a job firefighters do. Such an event would likely also do major damage to the watershed we rely on. The District will continue its public education efforts regarding wildfire hazard mitigation. We will look for grant opportunities to reduce mitigation costs. But, the real work and expense falls to all of us that live and own property in the District. Let's work together to reduce the fire hazard and better protect our property and the environment we so enjoy.

Lastly, I want take this opportunity to thank our volunteers for their fine service to the community. We couldn't do this job without them. Thank you all ... volunteers, residents and property owners alike. Have a safe and enjoyable new year.

Treasurer’s Report

The District has historically utilized a Cash Basis Accounting system and fiscal year from January 1st through December 31st. During 2014 we had a full audit conducted on the 2013 District budget, in which auditors utilized an Accrual Accounting procedure that looks at income and expenses from November – October of each year. EMS billing revenue, tax revenue and many expenses are not constant month to month, so changing the period monitored changes the line-item values reported over a 12-month period. For example, when the 2014 budget was adjusted to reflect an accrual account it resulted in lower revenue reported from EMS billing than what was originally projected and actually received in the calendar year. For consistency sake, the 2015 budget will be back to utilizing Cash Basis Accounting and our standard fiscal year.

Income		Expenses	
Pueblo County Income Tax	\$ 163,918	Professional Expenses	\$ 12,350
Specific Ownership Tax	\$ 11,116	Department Expenses & Supply	\$ 67,200
EMS Billing	\$ 22,262	Vehicle Repair & Maintenance	\$ 19,853
Fire Contracts	\$ 1,690	Administration	\$ 101,588
Cash Donations	\$ 24,062	Insurance	\$ 16,048
Investment Income	\$ 55	Office Expenses	\$ 23,510
Grant Income	\$ 15,373	Public Outreach	\$ 1,465
Transfer - Prior Reserve Funds	\$ 17,644	Capital & Contingency Reserve	\$ 6,991
		Money returned to Savings	\$ 7,115

The District has an opportunity to earn credit with MarGas through their Community Incentive Program. For each gallon of propane that is purchased by homeowners from MarGas throughout our community, the District can earn credits towards our propane cost. All you need to do is send us a copy of your propane bills throughout the year and we will complete the necessary paperwork, so we can save money towards heating the fire stations.

Beulah Fire Auxiliary

The Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District Auxiliary was established and approved as a 501 (c) 3 organization in 2014. Our mission is to assist the Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District personnel. We endeavor through fund raising efforts, educational programs and participation in community activities, to foster a positive image, and build a strong foundation for the future of Beulah and its residents.

The Auxiliary formed a Food Committee comprised of approximately 30 local supporters who bake and cook for the volunteers. They provide food for large scale emergencies such as wildfires, large structure fires, or other catastrophic events, as well as meals for training and events.

Through the combined efforts of the board, volunteers, and the support of the community we were able to raise \$12,993 through donations and three main fundraising events the Taste of Beulah- \$793, Community Yard Sale-\$ 4,700 and the Cowboy poetry-\$ 7,500. These funds helped purchase a Cascade System, removal of a home used for training, a generator and the purchase of PPE for two personal.

The Board sends a huge “Thank you” to everyone who has helped or contributed in any way.

Community Health Outreach

We are always looking for new ways to serve your health care and safety needs. If you have suggestions or ideas please let us know.

We will be hosting a Community Health Fair Day on Thursday, **May 7, 2015**. The Health Fair will run from 9:00 am—Noon and is a free health screening. No need to schedule ahead of time, you can just show up during the time frame. A donated TV will be raffled off among those who participate.

Community Health Screening Topics:

Blood Pressure Check Body Mass Index Fitness Test

Blood Sugar Check Cardiovascular Risk Assessment

Please fast for 1 hour before if you are getting a Blood Sugar check.

**Community Blood Drives by Bonfils
Saturday, June 6, 2015**

Chief’s Report

The Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District once again had a very eventful year that was comprised by the joining of new members, the creation of the Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District Auxiliary, and the securing of funds for a truck replacement and the addition of essential equipment for District operations. During 2014 the District had 3 new members join the agency bringing the total number of responders to 31 who strive to protect and serve our community to the best of their abilities. These members spent a combined 2,242 hours of training to increase their capabilities. One of the larger trainings that we hosted this past year was a live structure fire session that included ventilation, search and rescue, and interior fire attack training that was made possible through the generous donation of a home by a family in Beulah. Although this type of training is not one we would be able to host annually, it certainly provided valuable real life training that many of our members had never experienced before. Responders from the Rye Fire Protection District and the Pueblo County Sheriff’s Emergency Services Bureau also participated in the training.

The District continued to work with property owners and insurance companies to conduct wildland fuel and defensible space inspections on properties throughout our District. Since the beginning of this project the District has conducted 78 home site inspections and has helped identify mitigate hazardous fuels for the homeowner on their properties. We have seen a significant improvement on many of your properties because of your efforts to reduce the wildland fuel around your homes. This is an ongoing project. If you would like to have your property evaluated for wildland fire mitigation suggestions, please contact our office to schedule a site visit.

During 2014 we retired a 1963 Structural Engine that no longer was able to pass the necessary pumping test and a 1973 Brush Truck that had mechanical issues that had been determined to be too costly for repair. A donation that was made to the District in the amount of \$17,100 from a District resident to purchase a Type 3 Wildland Fire Engine out of California. This 1992 truck is in great condition and will serve our community for many years to come. It will be utilized not only for wildland incidents but for structural fires as well. A grant from FEMA in the amount of \$27,000 was awarded to our agency for the installation of a cascade system which will allow our agency to refill firefighter air tanks in District, saving us the time and money to travel to neighboring fire departments to complete that same task. The Lowes Foundation also awarded the District \$23,142 to cover the costs associated with the installation of a well, cistern, septic system and bathroom at Station 2. It also covered the costs of constructing a search facility inside an existing cargo trailer; allowing our members and other fire departments in the area to perfect their search and rescue techniques needed for structural firefighting.

One of the major projects as we move forward into 2015-2016 will be the design, funding and construction of a new fire station to house the necessary equipment and ultimately allow the District to function more efficiently. As firefighter technology and abilities have grown over the years so has the size of apparatuses utilized to fight fire. The average size of a fire truck in the 1950’s when Beulah Fire Station 1 was built was 18 feet in length x 6 1/2 feet in height while the average size of a fire truck today is 32 feet in length and 12 feet in height. Station 1 has the capability to hold 4 apparatus with a maximum length of 28 feet and a maximum height of 9 1/2 feet, due to garage door sizes. These details bring out the first major issue that we are faced with today; new structural fire trucks will not fit in the current Station 1. The second major issue we are faced with is the District currently has equipment stored throughout four locations (2 fire stations, central office and ambulance garage) which makes it hard to keep a timely use of those items. The District created a 5 member committee (Fire Chief, 1 citizen, 1 Board Member, and a 2 firefighters) in 2013 to determine the needs of the District, create a plan to meet those needs, and finally to manage the project through completion. As we move forward with this project we will rely on the community for input and ideas. We always welcome suggestions on how to effectively and efficiently complete this very necessary project.

For many years the District has hosted community meetings to help each of our citizens and visitors prepare when an evacuation is needed due to an emergency in our area, such as the Mason Gulch fire in 2005. We are currently meeting with Pueblo County Officials to organize a voluntary evacuation drill for the Beulah Community in the late spring of 2015. This drill will serve as a test of the emergency communication system, responder capacities, evacuation center capabilities, and you the citizen’s ability to ensure that you are prepared for a “real” emergency. We will have upcoming public meetings to discuss this drill in more detail once we are able to get the specifics set. Again, this drill would be completely voluntary and would be a one day event. **This should help serve as a reminder for all of you to make sure you have an evacuation kit prepared for when a real evacuation order is issued.**

**The Beulah Fire Protection & Ambulance Board meets on the 4th Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm at the District Office located at 8870 Grand Ave.
November and December meetings are combined, with the date TBA.**