

# **BEULAH FIRE PROTECTION AND AMBULANCE DISTRICT: OVERVIEW**

By Steve Douglas, District President and Board of Directors Chairman  
May 27, 2010 – May 24, 2018

## **HISTORY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The background information I am providing here is very limited. I look forward to having people with a personal and family history of providing fire and emergency medical service to the Beulah Community share that, including stories and photos. This overview is a work in progress.

The Beulah community formed the Beulah Valley Volunteer Fire Department in 1949. I am sure folks fought fires in the area before that, but forming the department was an important step towards doing that better. Likewise, it formed the Beulah Volunteer First Aid Service in 1978, recognizing that the nearest hospitals and ambulance services were in Pueblo, and providing initial medical care in the Beulah Valley could make a difference. The collective goal of both services was to save lives and property, and to protect the environment. That has not changed; we continue to have those same goals. Almost everything else has changed though, including our population, the number of homes we have to protect, our need for emergency medical help, where we work, how much we donate (money and time as volunteers), lessons learned from real-world emergencies, regulations, technology, expenses, forest health (overgrown and unhealthy) and even the weather (it has gotten drier in the past 70 years). Beulah's volunteer emergency medical and fire responders witnessed those changes, saw that they could not go on relying on donations to cover expenses and asked you, the taxpayers to support those essential emergency services with your property taxes. Good folks continue to volunteer their time and talent to do the work, but they (we) still need help to cover the expenses.

### **FIRE**

According to file documents, the Beulah Valley Volunteer Fire Department (BVVFD) was founded in 1949 and incorporated in 1963. Ray Traeber was its first Chief, followed by Stanton Hiatt, Darrell Clarke, Brad Donley, Ron Jones and Steve Belport, i.e. six Chiefs over a period of 63 years. Its first fire engine was a 1948 pickup truck that towed a trailer with a water tank and pump. The first station was in the basement of the Ritchie Store (on Grand Avenue, near the Traeber Store). It was replaced by a new station, built in 1955 on the corner of Grand and Pennsylvania Avenues on land donated by Mr. Littell, with an addition built in 1976 on land donated by Bill Graham. Up until late 2018, that station was known as Station 1. Station 2 was built in 2007 at 5051 Waterbarrel Road on land donated by the Thompson Ranch.



**Ward Stryker with Beulah's first fire engine ... a 1948 pickup truck, towing a trailer with a water tank and pump.**



**Phase 1 of the original Station 1 in 1955. Pictured are Westley "Dutch" Klipfel, Albert Oster and Ray Traeber**

This was an all-volunteer department, funded entirely by donations and grants. It typically had 15-20 volunteers that responded to an average of 20 fires/year, as well as maintaining the Department's equipment and facilities. Over the 63 years of its existence, the Department changed its boundaries and added services to meet the growing need of the community. By 1987 its response area extended west to the Custer County line, south and east to areas at or near the Rye Fire Protection District, north to CO Highway 96 and almost all the way northeast to the City of Pueblo on CO Highway 78. It was a very large area with about 1,000 residential and commercial buildings, most of which were in the Beulah Valley. The area served was based on non-binding decisions, rather than contracts, other legal agreements or formal boundaries. By 1994 BVVFD began to shrink its response area, recognizing its limited resources compared to increased development pressures. In 2004, Red Creek Fire and Rescue (also all volunteer) was formed to serve an area changing due to new rural subdivisions in what had been the northwest quadrant of Beulah Fire's response area, reducing that response area from 169 to 131 square miles. Beulah's fire response area stayed that size until January 1, 2013.

These fine folks didn't just respond to fires; they also served the community during winter storms, floods, drought and other naturally occurring emergencies. Young men and women often followed their parents, aunts and uncles into volunteer service to the Beulah community. Friends followed friends. New friendships were made. Some volunteered for 30-40 years!



**Beulah Fire Volunteers at Station 1 (early 70's): from left to right ... Skip Donley, Ray Traeber, Bob Griggs, Purd Manire, Stanton Hiatt, Mitch Hiatt, Darrell Clarke and Mark Hiatt. SOURCE – Beulah Historical Society**

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE (EMS)

When I began to gather background material for this summary of the history of emergency medical service in the Beulah area, I found that I needed to start with people that were part of that history, and I am still doing that. I first turned to Carol Kyte (one of the first emergency medical volunteers) and then to Greta Hanson Mauer, the daughter of Dr. Charles and Diane Hanson. While doing research at the Pueblo Library, Greta found two articles (dated February 10, 1978 and March 13, 1979) from the *Pueblo Chieftain* that provided details about the beginnings of the Beulah Valley First Aid Service (FAS). I have drawn extensively from those two articles. The 1978-2004 Roster of responders, presidents and advisors was found in the *Beulah EMS Photo Album #2*.

As the Beulah community grew, the need for local emergency medical response was recognized by many. Specifically, in 1976 Ray Youngren (a respected local rancher and Beulah Postmaster) was also chairman of the Beulah Valley Steering Committee, an advisory group to the Pueblo Regional Planning Commission. The Steering Committee “voiced concern about the lack of adequate first aid and ambulance service to Beulah and appointed an ambulance committee headed by Dr. Charles Hanson, leading to the formation of the FAS and purchase of the second-hand but never used 1977 Dodge Medicruiser.” That process included recruiting and training volunteers; fund raising; and meeting operational and legal requirements. The initial cost totaled \$20,750, i.e. \$16,500 for the ambulance, \$3,500 for radios and pagers, and \$750 for first-aid gear. Pueblo County provided a total of \$12,000 in revenue sharing funds in 1978 and 1979, to be used towards the purchase of the ambulance and communications equipment. An additional \$6,000 was raised by the community “with activities like a buffalo dinner, a pig raffle, dances, pie sales and doughnut sales” in the first year or two. The difference between the funding that was available the first year and the \$20,750 start-up cost was “financed through a bank, with the loan co-signed by four of the individuals involved”. It is unclear from the *Chieftain* articles exactly how much the loan was for (probably at least \$10,000) or who those four individuals were that co-signed for it.



**Beulah's first ambulance – a 1977 4WD Dodge Medicruiser**

FAS negotiated an interesting arrangement with Pueblo County to cover insurance and vehicle maintenance. Under that agreement, “the county will hold title to the ambulance so it can be included in the county’s vehicle fleet policy with comprehensive liability coverage and provide all the FAS emergency medical technicians with maximum coverage under Colorado Workman’s Compensation Insurance.” The 1978 *Chieftain* article goes on to state that “The unit will be designated as a sheriff’s department vehicle permanently assigned to the Beulah area but it will be maintained and repaired when necessary at the county shops in Pueblo.” That agreement represents a fine example of cooperative problem solving.

The response area identified by FAS was bounded by Highway 96, Bergeman Road, Burnt Mill Road and the Pueblo-Custer County line. It corresponded to the Beulah School, telephone and mail districts, and was very similar to the area covered by the Beulah Valley Volunteer Fire Department. FAS was dispatched through the Pueblo County Sheriff’s Office, receiving requests for medical help via calls to 911, from “everyone in the area, residents and non-residents alike.” The FAS policy at the time was to not charge for its services, but rather to rely on contributions from those served. It would call for assistance from commercial ambulance services when necessary, with those services being charged to those served. In essence, the agreement between Pueblo County and the Beulah Community was a win-win for both.

What was needed to take this process from a good idea to something that actually worked was a group of volunteers that were willing to get trained, organized and serve the community as emergency medical responders. As Carol Kyte recalls, the idea came from Charlie Hanson, Bob Boyer and Ray Youngren, who started the necessary paperwork and fund raising. Hal Murray led the effort to put on the first class to certify 13 EMTs for the Beulah Community. Those certified through the class were Bob Boyer, Ray Youngren, Yvonne Youngren, Diane Hanson, Carol Kyte, Skip Donley, Sam Ready, Billy Jo Hiatt, Judy Kreusch, Jimmy Armstrong and others. Meetings, reports, training sessions, and emergency room volunteer time at St. Mary Corwin and Parkview Hospitals followed in the next several months. According to the *Chieftain*, the inauguration of FAS was celebrated at an open house at the Beulah Elementary School on Sunday, **February 12, 1978**. Eleven more EMT’s (including Corky Outhier, Julie Gray and Kristi Kyte) were added in June 1978, bringing the total to 24 volunteer emergency medical responders. Charlie Hanson served as the team’s medical director. Carol Kyte and Diane Hanson each served as the team’s president in the early years.

When you look at the names of those first involved in the ambulance service, they were ranchers, teachers, a railroad worker, physicians, nurses, dentists, a pharmacist, relatives of those involved with Beulah Fire and others. They were a fine cross section of the Beulah Community. They did a lot more than just hand out band aids. Their early calls for service included heart attacks, strokes, rock climbing accidents, a fatal vehicular accident and a mass casualty accident involving a bus on 12-Mile, which needed mutual aid from several agencies. The need for a local emergency medical response capability in Beulah was real. Over time, the agency’s name was changed from Beulah Volunteer First Aid Service (BVFAS

or FAS) to Beulah Emergency Medical Service (BEMS), but the mission remained the same. These volunteers served the community and saved lives.

## **BEULAH VOLUNTEER FIRST-AID SERVICE/BEULAH EMS ROSTER 1978-2004:**

SOURCE: BEULAH EMS PHOTO ALBUM #2 with additions by Carol Kyte

EMTs or FIRST RESPONDERS listed in alphabetical order and identifying original 1978 members (\*) and presidents (P):

Sue (Wagner) Allen*	Jimmy Armstrong*	Alan Bergemann
Loretta Bergin	Bob Boyer*	Kelly Brown
Jaime Brown	Linda Conley	Mike Conley
Skip Donley*	Sally Duncan (P)	Belinda Fox
Clara Floyd	Elsa Frost (P)	Julie Gray
Lynne Greenberg (P)	Kathy Griggs	Cheryl Hanratty
Diane Hanson* (P)	B.J. Hiatt*	Carla (Jackson) Howard
Dennis Jackson	Richard Jantz (P)	Kevin Kagey
Kay Keating*	Dave Klipfel	Judy Kreusch*
Phil Krigel	Carol Kyte* (P)	Kristi Kyte
Kathy Luzardo	Dee Mauger	Jean McConnell*
Marilyn McCorkle	Brenna McCracken	Pat Mc Kone
Jim McLaughlin*	Dana Moore	Richard Morgan
Anne Moulton (P)	Bill Moulton (P)	Galen Murray
Hal Murray*	Frank Nemick	Corky Outhier (P)
Alan Pitts	Bonnie Portlock	Patty (Freeman) Randlett
Lawrence Ray	Sam Ready * (P)	Sharon Ruff
Patti Serfling (P)	Tony Serfling	Laura Shifflet
Pat Stanifer	Margie Stjernholm	Kurt Thompson
Sheila Thurman	Ted Thurman	Kris Tone
Lori Truby	Mary (Hopkins) Twinem (P)	Gus Veltri
Warren Willis	Charlie Winger	Ray Youngren*
Yvonne Youngren*		



EDUCATIONAL ADVISOR: Hal Murray

PHYSICIAN ADVISORS, listed in order of service 1978-2004:

- |                    |                  |                   |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Charlie Hanson* | 2. Mike Panuska  | 3. Paul Snodderly |
| 4. Sherri King     | 5. Robert Maisel | 6. Shaun Gogarty  |
| 7. Mike Nerenberg  |                  |                   |



**FAS volunteer responders (around 1978): Left to right, bottom row ... Brenna McCracken, ?, Carla Veltri Jackson, Mary Twinem; middle row ... Corky Outhier, Elsa Frost, Diane Hanson, B. J. Hiatt, Jimmy Armstrong; and back row ... ?, Carol Kyte, Hal Murray, Richard Jantz, Dennis Jackson and Lynne Greenberg. (Help is needed to identify the people shown as “?”.)**

## **TRANSITION TO A SPECIAL DISTRICT**

Both the Fire Department and the First Aid Service were run completely by volunteers and funded by donations and occasional grants until 2008. The November 2007 election resulted in the Beulah Ambulance District being formed, with a mill levy approved and a Board of Directors elected. BVVFD chose to not join the District at that time. The Ambulance District Board hired a full-time EMS coordinator (Dawn Young) who was to organize, oversee and respond as part of the otherwise all-volunteer agency, so it would be able to function, often without the aid of services coming 25 miles away from Pueblo.

The ever rising cost of equipment and upkeep, increased regulation, increased expectations by the community, training requirements and challenges associated with volunteer recruitment and retention began to take its toll on the Beulah Valley Volunteer Fire Department. A major drop in the stock market in 2008 made the situation even worse, cutting into interest income from investments that the Department had carefully managed. In 2011, the Department formed a citizen group to explore the possibility of merging the Fire and EMS operations into one organization that would be supported by tax-based revenue. They approached the Beulah Ambulance District Board with that concept. Options were explored, public meetings were held, decisions were made and plans were developed. In May of 2012, two vacancies on the five-person Beulah Ambulance District Board of Directors were filled by members (Bob Thompson and Jerry Wahl) of the existing Fire Department Board, to aid the transition process by broadening the District Board's perspective and better establishing a partnership between the two services.

In July of 2012, the Beulah Ambulance District formally amended its Service Plan to include the provision of fire suppression services, provided that voters approved a mill levy increase to support these additional services in the upcoming November election. The 2012 amended Service Plan also made reference to the need to build a new central fire/ambulance station. It was understood at the time that the mill levy increase would not be sufficient to build the new facility in a timely manner, and that funds to do so would need to be raised through grants, foundations, savings, donations, and other means, as necessary. In November of 2012, by a two to one margin, voters approved an increase in the mill levy to support such a merger, and the Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District (District) was formed. That merger of services was implemented in January, 2013. Today, the District employs one full-time fire chief (Bryan Ware) and is staffed by 24 volunteers, most of which are cross trained in fire and EMS.

The District provides fire and EMS services to a 111 square mile area and protects an estimated population of 2,104 residents, most of which live here year-round. It also provides services to those who visit the District as motorists and participants in a variety of private and community events. That area includes all of Beulah Fire's response area as of 2012, except for 20 square miles on the District's north and east fringe.

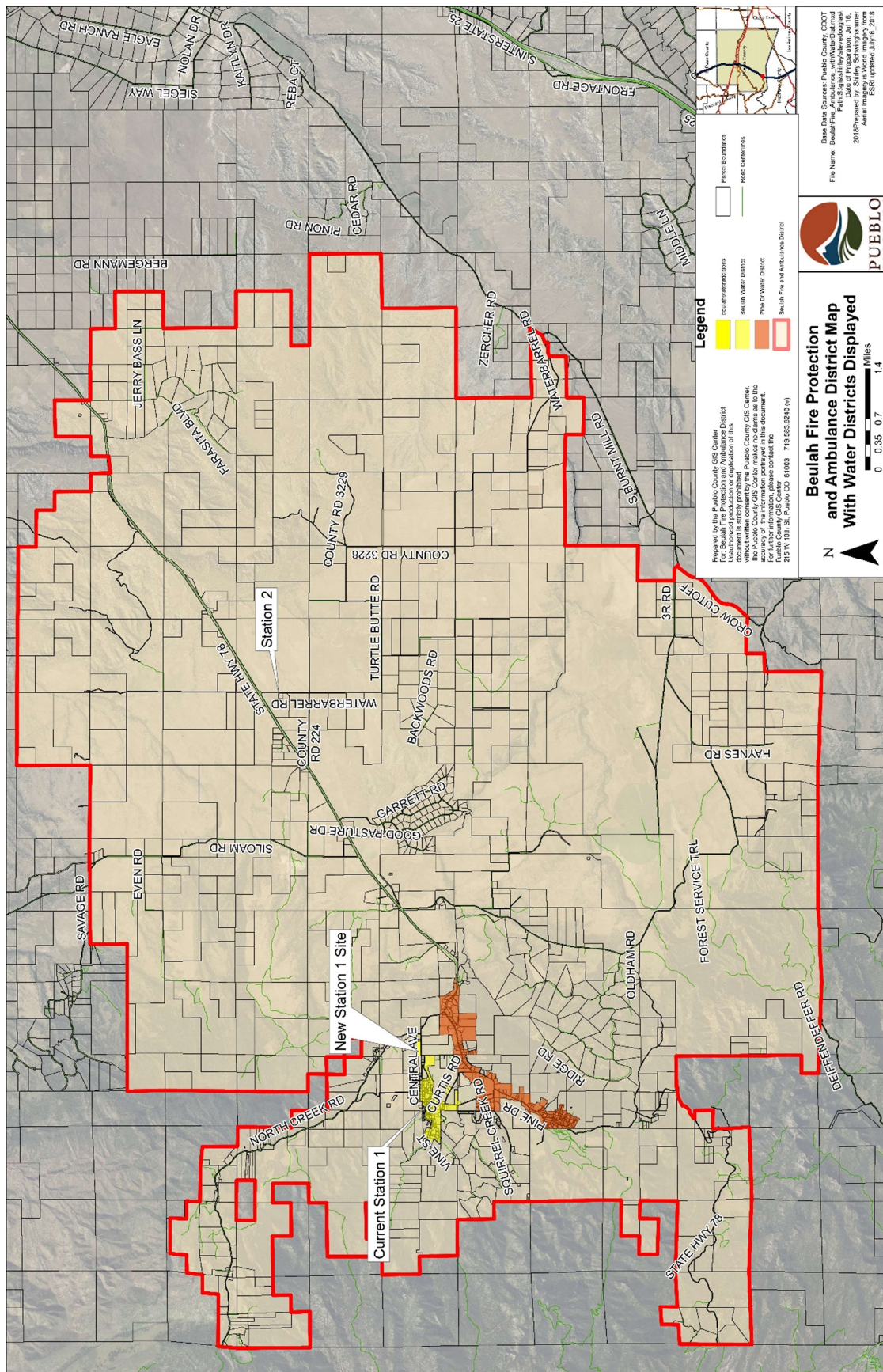


I am proud to say that in the 5 years since we merged fire and ambulance services, forming the Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District (District), with your help we have addressed and overcome many of the challenges faced by BVVFD and BEMS. To name a few: (1) we have re-built the volunteer base and have 23 responders (including Chief Ware), 16 of which are cross-trained as fire and medical responders, all meeting national standards; (2) we have equipped those responders with personal protective equipment that not only meets national standards, but helps ensure that they go home safe and healthy after a response; (3) we have added supplies, tools and equipment to our response vehicles, bringing them up to national standards; (4) we have repaired, replaced or retired five fire trucks and one ambulance to meet national standards; (5) in addition to property tax and other revenues, by mid-2018 we had funded many of these expenses with \$289,831 in grant money, \$87,922 in private donations and \$43,380 from the Auxiliary that was formed in 2014 with the sole purpose of raising funds to help the District; (6) because of those improvements in personnel training and equipment, we have had the rating by the Insurance Standards Office (ISO) for that portion of the District with ready access to fire hydrants drop from 6 to 4, which could collectively translate to \$65,000/year in reduced insurance premiums for approximately 1/3 of the homes in the District; (7) we pay our volunteers a small stipend for being on call and responding to emergencies (in reality, it barely covers their automobile gas expenses); and (8) we have accomplished these tasks while responding to an increasing number of calls for service (158 calls in 2013 compared to 225 calls in 2018, with a current peak of 230 calls in 2016 which included the Beulah Hill and Junkins Fires). In short, we have met most of the concerns raised by BEMS in 2007 and BVVFD in 2012.

## **SPECIAL DISTRICT**

### **FORMATION**

The Beulah Ambulance District (later re-named the Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District) is a Special District, i.e. a formal political sub-division of the State of Colorado, created pursuant to Title 32 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. It was created and later amended in formal elections conducted by the Pueblo County Clerk and Recorder, in accordance with State law. Citizens eligible to vote in those elections own land and/or reside within the formal boundaries of the District. Those boundaries defining the area served are illustrated on the District Map. The District was officially created by decree of the 10<sup>th</sup> District Court of Colorado on November 16, 2007. The District then developed its *By-Laws* (adopted May 21, 2009), and *Policies, Procedures and Rules of Conduct* for its Board of Directors (BOD), which were adopted December 10, 2009. Those documents are reviewed and updated by the BOD as needed.



## **ELECTIONS**

Elections held to date associated with the District are as follow:

- 2007 – District formed, mill levy (7.0) adopted, basic TABOR limitations exempted and Board of Directors elected. The District began doing business in January 2008.
- 2012 – Added fire protection to services provided, mill levy increased by 6.5, for a total of 13.5 mills. The District began providing fire protection in January 2013.
- 2016 – Fire station funding (Issue 5E) provided through property tax increase (approx. 9.0 mills, to generate up to \$118,078/year to repay a fire station loan) and removal of remaining TABOR restrictions (allows receipt of large grants – Issue 5F)
- 2010 to present in even-numbered years - self-nomination of District resident/voters to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors (BOD), following State regulations and procedures. If the self-nomination process isn't successful in filling vacant Board seats, a formal election would be held in May, as needed.
- 2008 to present - every two years ... BOD elects officers from its members, which then serve 2-year terms as President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary ... and more recently the 5<sup>th</sup> Board Member serves as the Fund Raising Coordinator

The District Board of Directors consists of five members, with terms staggered with the goal of having no more than three seats coming up for election at a time. To accommodate that, occasionally the elected term is two years, but it is typically four years.

The Colorado Special District Act includes term limits for District Board members, i.e. eligible voters in the District can only serve on the Board of Directors for two consecutive 4-year terms. They can serve more than 8 consecutive years on the Board, if they initially are appointed to fill an unexpired portion of an out-going Board member's term. An eligible voter and previously term-limited Board member can be returned to the Board after being off it for at least one election cycle. Term limits can be lifted from the District with a majority vote of the electorate in a formal election.

## **SERVICE PLAN and AREA SERVED**

State law requires Special Districts to have a Service Plan that has been approved by the Board of County Commissioners, following a public comment period and public meeting. That plan outlines the purpose of the district, services to be provided, the area and population to be served, assets to be owned by the district, a financial plan, funding sources, proposed budget, proposed indebtedness, personnel and other associated information. The District's initial service plan was approved by the Pueblo Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

April 11, 2007. The revised service plan, including fire service and changing the District's name to the Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District was approved by the BOCC July 10, 2012.

The area served under both the original and revised service plan is the 111 square mile portion of Pueblo County illustrated on the District map. There is an additional 20 square mile area outside the District service area, but within the area previously served by BVVFD in which the District currently offers annual contracts for fire service only (no EMS). The District decided to not include contract EMS service to that area because of its remoteness relative to its stations. It is believed that commercial ambulance response to that area can be achieved from Pueblo as fast or faster than from the District's stations. The commercial ground ambulance service currently covering Pueblo County is American Medical Response (AMR). Air ambulance service is provided by Flight-For-Life. The District has agreements with both services to help insure that mutual aid is available in support of routine operations or mass casualty events.

Fire contracts are offered to properties with residential structures in that 20 square mile area mentioned above. The contract rate was initially determined by the District to be equal to 6.5 mills (the fire service share of the mill levy) calculated against the assessed valuation of the property. This was increased to 10.5 mills in 2017, to reflect a share of the additional 9 mills levied to pay the loan for construction of the new fire station. This offer of contract service reflects concerns raised by the community and BVVFD, as we were discussing merging fire and EMS services in 2012. Those properties in the 20 square mile area are covered by the Pueblo County Sheriff with respect to wildland fires, but not structural fires. Participation in the contract is optional. If too few owners opt to contract for that service, the District retains the option to discontinue it in the future.

## FUNDING

District expenses are funded with a combination of tax, grant and EMS billing income, as well as cash donations. Expenses are reduced by volunteer services for response, training, maintenance, fund raising and management. In 1992, Colorado voters approved the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, a constitutional amendment designed to restrain growth in government. It took the acronym **TABOR**. In its 2007 and 2012 elections, District voters chose to remove funding limitations imposed by TABOR, basically allowing the District to retain all of its available tax revenue and to potentially receive large grants from the State.

The **Gallagher Amendment** was adopted in 1982 when Colorado voters approved the measure. The Gallagher Amendment divides the state's total property tax burden between residential and nonresidential (commercial) property. According to the Amendment, 45% of the total amount of state property tax collected must come from residential property, and 55% of the property tax collected must come from commercial property. Further, the Amendment mandates that the assessment rate for commercial property, which is responsible for 55% of the total state property tax burden, be fixed at 29%. The residential rate, on the other hand, is

annually adjusted to hold the 45/55 split constant. The result in areas like our District (a political subdivision of the State) with minimal commercial property is that when the State revises the rates residential properties are taxed downward to compensate for an increase of residential vs commercial property, our property tax revenue goes down. We have no way to change that formula, we just have to accept the results.

Property tax revenue is a function of two variables, i.e., the assessed valuation of real property in the District and the voter-approved mill levy applied to that property. The assessed valuation of property within the District in 2017 was \$13,672,413, as determined by the Pueblo County Assessor. The District's general mill levy is 13.5, with an additional 9.0 (approximate) dedicated to repaying the fire station construction loan. The District also receives tax revenue from its share of the Specific Ownership Tax collected in Pueblo County as a function of automobile sales.

As mentioned above, in 2017 the District received a loan to provide funding to build the new fire station and associated water line, in accordance with ballot language approved by District voters November 8, 2016. The specifics of that loan are as follow:

1. Lender – The Bank of the San Juans
2. Loan Amount (Principle) = \$1,988,314 (maximum authorized = \$2,000,000)
3. Interest Rate = 3.25% FIXED (maximum authorized = 3.25%)
4. Loan duration = 25 years (or less with early payment)
5. Total principle and interest = \$2,951,950 (maximum approved = \$2,951,967)
6. Annual Payment = \$118,078 (maximum authorized = \$118,078)
7. Annual Payment due date = August 1<sup>st</sup>, with the first payment made in 2018.
8. Early payments may be made with no penalties, with said payments going to decrease the principle amount owed. Those payments will not reduce the amount owed each year. They will result in the note being paid off sooner if they collectively equal or exceed the amount of the annual payment; otherwise they will reduce the final payment.

The District charges for emergency medical services involving patient transport to a hospital, in a qualified fashion. If the person receiving service is a property owner or renter within the District, we bill their insurer (including, but not limited to Medicare) for services rendered, but we do not bill the person for deductibles or co-pays. This provision extends to family members living within the District. Patients that are not property owners or residents in the District are billed for the full amount of the service, including out-of-pocket expenses. Our billing rates are consistent with the industry and our region.

The District routinely applies for and often receives grant funding from a variety of private, corporate, state and federal sources. These are all competitive grants with their own goals, specifications and levels of potential funding. We have received grant support for responder training, equipment and facility construction. Grants are not always funded on the first try,



such as our requests to purchase vehicles and to construct the new central station, but we will refine an application and reapply, when possible.

Donations to the District take the form of cash, land, equipment, operating supplies and work. Cash donations have been received by the District to buy specific equipment (personal protective equipment, tools, a used brush truck, etc.), assist with the fire station construction project and for general expenses. They range from a few to thousands of dollars. They are all welcome and are put to good use. It is also possible for a person to name the District in his or her will, with either a specific project in mind or in a non-specific manner. Land has also been donated. The sites for BVVFD Stations 1 and 2 were donated by members of the Beulah community (Mr. Little, Bill Graham and the Thompson Family). That property was then transferred to the District by BVVFD in 2013. Land for the District's new central station was donated by the Dick and Lee Sellers Family. Lastly, we should never lose sight of the value of the countless hours of work donated to the community by fine folks to build and maintain our facilities and equipment, and then to use it in response to routine and not-so-routine emergencies.

For perspective, the District's 2018 budget totalled \$470,321. The revenue in support of that budget comes from property tax for general expenses (40%), property tax for the fire station loan (25%), Specific Ownership Tax (2%), EMS Billing (9%), contracts & donations (2%) and grants (22%). The actual amounts from yearly tax revenues are relatively consistent. EMS billing revenue is a little less consistent, being a function of the number of responses and transports. Revenue from donations and grants fluctuate the most, year to year. The district retains cash reserves, adding to them when it can and drawing from them when it must. In any case, by law, the District is prohibited from deficit spending; although it may enter into loan agreements such as that for the fire station. We pay our bills.

## **PERSONNEL**

The District's personnel is organized under three groups, i.e. Responders, Auxiliary and Board of Directors. The responders are led by the District's Fire Chief, Bryan Ware; its only full-time paid employee. The Chief is a qualified fire, EMS and hazardous materials incident responder and supervisor, as well as having office, grantsmanship, public information and other skills. There are currently 22 volunteer responders under the Chief's management, 15 of which are cross-trained for both fire and EMS, 3 are EMS only and 4 are fire only. Chief Ware is a cross-trained firefighter/paramedic. Five of the cross-trained responders also serve as officers, with two being Captains and three being Lieutenants. Those officers are qualified to lead training and responses. They also have other areas of responsibility, such as wildland fire mitigation, station maintenance, EMS oversight, hazardous materials committee, public education, etc. Two responders are on call at all times, to ensure a rapid and qualified response to either fire or medical emergencies. (The "on-call" status is shared by all responders, with each signing up for shifts each month.) Other responders are available to assist as needed. The District is in the process of creating another category of



volunteers, that being Support Services. That group will consist of people that are not expected to be emergency responders, but will help with routine maintenance tasks in and around both Station 1 and 2. Volunteer recruitment, training and retention is an on-going challenge. As such, we are always looking for new volunteers.



**Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District first responders at the official groundbreaking for the new Station 1 on August 11, 2017: from left to right ... Mike Smith, Naomi Blake, Nathan Anderson, Jared Knisley, Bryan Ware, Nichole Richardson, Jennah Laraque, Amber Reiman, Ken Montoya, Kyle Levar, Sue Bacon and Ben Lehrer.**

The District's Auxiliary is a volunteer group that was organized in 2014, with the sole purpose of raising funds and providing service to the District. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, with a Board of Directors and Trustees. It has already proven to be an essential part of the District's overall effort to serve the community.

The District's Board of Directors (BOD) consists of five elected, registered voters of the District, typically serving four-year terms. They are responsible for a wide range of fiscal and policy decisions on behalf of the District. They each have specific duties to perform as part of

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

***(BEULAH AMBULANCE DISTRICT 2007-2012 followed by  
BEULAH FIRE PROTECTION AND AMBULANCE DISTRICT 2013-PRESENT)***

<b><u>MEMBER</u></b>	<b><u>OFFICE HELD</u></b>	<b><u>YEAR</u></b>
Teresa Pellecchia	---	2007-2008
Larry Walter, M.D.	President & Chairman	2008-2010
Gay Davis Miller	Vice President & Secretary	2008-2010
Judy (Satterfield) Lietz	Board Member – no office	2008-2012
Carol Wright	Vice President (2010-2012)	2008-2012
Anne Moulton	Secretary	2010-2014
Bill Croley	Treasurer	2009-2010
Barring Coughlin	Treasurer	2009-2010
Ruth Ann Amey	Treasurer (2010-2012)	2009-2012
Steven Douglas	President & Chairman	2010-2018
Jerry Wahl	Vice President	2012-2013
Travis Allee	Treasurer	2012-2014
Bob Thompson	Fund Raising Coordinator	2012-Present
Patrick Stanifer	Vice President	2013-2016
Kim Toman	Secretary	2014-Present
Joni Smith	Treasurer	2015-Present
Stephen McLaughlin	Vice President	2016-Present
John Levar	President & Chairman	2018-Present

their roles as chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer and fund raising coordinator. All serve as spokespersons for the District. They volunteer their time and talents to do so. Although each board member is entitled to a stipend of \$50/regular meeting, most have chosen to waive that fee and have it utilized for other District expenses, most often for costs associated with annual volunteer responder recognition and appreciation. The District President & BOD Chair is identified as the Fire Chief's supervisor.

What is described here generally follows a chain of command, involving the Board of Directors, Fire Chief, Captains, Lieutenants and other Responders. What is also involved is the property owners and residents of the District, and a sub-set of that group, the voters. It is that group that decided to form and fund the community's fire protection and emergency medical services. Service between the District and the community goes both ways, with each needing the support of the other.

## **FACILITIES**

Part of the process of transferring fire protection responsibilities from the Beulah Valley Volunteer Fire Department to the Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District included transferring ownership of the two fire stations owned by BVVFD to the District. That was done at the beginning of 2013. Those stations were Station 1 at 8898 Grand Avenue and Station 2 at 5051 Waterbarrel Road.

Station 1 was on a small parcel of land at the intersection of Grand and Pennsylvania Avenues in Beulah. It had four truck bays, a small work area, limited area for equipment storage and no indoor plumbing. It served the community well for decades, but its size was no longer adequate to house modern structural fire-fighting equipment. The bays are too low and are not long enough. Expanding them was not a realistic option.

Station 2 is on a three-acre parcel of land, with adequate room for outdoor training, equipment storage and building expansion, if needed. It has three ample bays, good height, room for equipment storage and maintenance, as well a bathroom. It has an on-site water well and septic system. It is in good condition and should serve the District for decades to come.

Through December of 2018, the District rented a small office for administrative use. It utilized the Beulah Community Center for Board and public meetings. It also stored one ambulance in a heated garage at the Beulah School and additional equipment, supplies and records in Chief Ware's garage. Training was conducted at the stations, in the field and at the Community Center.

The need for a new station was identified in 2012, before the District took over fire protection responsibilities from BVVFD. Detailed planning for the new station began in 2015. The new central fire station is designed to consolidate uses previously at the original Station 1, the rented office, the garage at the Beulah School and the Beulah Community Center. It also

eliminated the need to store equipment and supplies in the Chief's personal garage, which he did at no charge to the District.

The new 12,700 square foot station has eight truck bays (4 wide x 2 deep), facilities for equipment storage and maintenance, as well as spaces for office, training, meeting and crew needs. It is on a six acre parcel in the central portion of the Beulah Valley, with good road and utility access, in an area that is not prone to wildland fires or flash flooding. That property was officially donated to the District by the Dick and Lee Sellers Family on October 10, 2016 (during the Beulah Hill Fire).



On November 8, 2016, voters gave their approval for the District to borrow up to \$2 million to build the new station and associated water line. On August 1, 2017, the District entered into a loan agreement with the Bank of the San Juans that provided \$1,988,314 for the project. Excavation of the building site began on August 18, 2017, based on geotechnical testing and site plans developed for the District by F&D International. We went out to bid for station and water line construction a few months later. The station construction project was awarded to H.E. Whitlock in March, 2018 and the water line construction project was awarded to Backhoe Services the next month. The water line was completed in July. Construction of the station was completed December 20, 2018. The original Station 1 was sold December 21, 2018, with most of the proceeds of that sale going towards the new station's construction.



Overall project costs for the new station currently equal **\$2,714,025**, including \$424,027 for a water line extension to connect to the Beulah Water Works District. Of that total, \$1,988,314 is funded by the loan from the Bank of the San Juans, \$340,500 is from grants, \$330,211 is from donations (cash, property and labor) and District savings, and the remaining \$55,000 is from the sale of the original Station 1. The initial cost estimate for this project in 2016 was \$3,740,892. In response to funding challenges (lack of large grants), some line-item cost overruns and increases due to inflation, we revised the plans a number of times to keep the project in line with available funds. Our general contractor, H.E. Whitlock was extremely helpful in terms of managing those costs while building a facility that we can be proud of.

The District has been operating out of the new station since December 20<sup>th</sup>, even though we have been busy properly stowing equipment and supplies moved from the original Station 1, Station 2, the ambulance garage, the rented office and Chief Ware's garage. We are also putting the finishing touches on technology upgrades at the new station. The District will hold the official Grand Opening of the new Station 1 on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, with an open house and station tours for all interested parties on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and again on January 26<sup>th</sup>. It is a wonderful facility!



**Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District – Central Station (new Station 1) at 8675 Central Avenue, Beulah, Colorado**

## EQUIPMENT

The District's vehicle inventory is as follows:

Type		Water Tank Size	Notes
<b>Engines</b>			
	Type		
431	1	500 Gallons	4WD
432	1	750 Gallons	4WD
471	3	500 Gallons	2WD
<b>Tenders</b>			
491	2	1250 Gallons	2WD with 2100 gallon portable pond
<b>Brush</b>			
461	6	250 Gallons	4WD
462	6	300 Gallons	4WD
<b>Rescue</b>			
481		450 Gallons	Pump, Class A Foam, generator, extrication equipment and 1-Wheel Rescue Cart
<b>Command / Resource</b>			
401			Command Vehicle
<b>Medical</b>			
411			Advanced Life Support
412			Advanced Life Support
<b>Specialty</b>			
Mass Casualty Incident Kit			MCI Tarps MCI Supplies (15 patients)
Resource Trailer			(2) 1200 gal portable ponds, tools & Rehab resources
482			4 Seated 4 Wheel Drive "side-by-side"
UAV Drone			With Thermal Imaging



As with other emergency response agencies, the District relies on two-way radios for communication between the Communications Center and other responders. The technology supporting that radio communications has evolved over the past 70+ years, as have the regulations associated with it. Mobile radios (in vehicles), portable radios (carried by responders) and communications centers (hubs that support responders in the field) are all served by infrastructure consisting of transmitters and radio towers ... to vastly simplify this description of a complicated system.

Through 2007, the District and the rest of Pueblo County relied on an analog radio system using UHF and VHF radio frequencies. Large increases in public safety radio use nationwide eventually made the analog system ineffective, especially during major disasters such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005. A solution was to move to digital radio technology. Changes in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations essentially required emergency response agencies to move to that technology. State and Federal grant funding was obtained to assist in that very expensive change, which involved all the radios and infrastructure in the communications system.

In the years 2007-2009, Pueblo and Pueblo County received over \$12 million in state and federal grant funds to transform its public safety radio system from analog to digital, integrating it with Colorado's Digital Trunked Radio System. That included funds to build five new radio towers (including the one in our District on 12-Mile), equip both the city and county's communications centers, and provide mobile and portable radios to all local emergency response agencies (fire, law, medical and public works). That included 24 portables and 2 mobile radios for Beulah EMS, and 25 portables, 7 mobiles and one base station for BVVFD. The value of those radios was \$ 100,500. In 2016-2017, Pueblo and Pueblo County again received federal funds (Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program) to replace those radios. The District was provided 9 mobile and 30 portable radios in the process, with a value of \$115,500. This has enabled emergency response agencies serving the community to be part of a state-wide and state-of-the-art public safety radio network for the past 10-years and for many years in the future, with very little capital investment. It is unknown at this time what the next generation of communications technology (or federal regulation) will entail, cost or even when it will take place. The District also owns a few portable VHF radios to facilitate communications with U.S. Forest Service personnel during major wildland fires.

## **RESPONSES**

As mentioned above, all emergency dispatch for the District is through the Pueblo County Sheriff's Communications Center, which also dispatches for all other local emergency services in Pueblo County, except for those within the city of Pueblo which are dispatched through its communications center. State and federal resources in Pueblo County are dispatched through their own communications centers. The public can report emergencies to the Sheriff's Communications Center by dialing "911". It can also place administrative (non-emergency) calls to the Center by dialing 719-583-6250. Reverse 911 calls come to all published land lines serving properties within District from the Center. Cell phones that have

been registered with the Center will also receive those reverse 911 calls. District residents can register their cell phones by going to the Pueblo County Sheriff's Office website, selecting the "Emergency Telephone Notification" tab on the home page, and then selecting "Register Now" as a county resident. That will take you to the Swift 911 Portal, which will ask you to enter or create a username and password to continue. The registration form will then ask for your main phone number. It is actually asking for your cell phone number. If you have a land line, that number is already in the 911 database.

The following table summarizes the fire and EMS emergency response history for the District since its inception, including fire response information from BVVFD for 2008-2011:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>EMS</u>	<u>(TRANSPORTS)</u>	<u>FIRE/RESCUE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
2008*	61	(0)	28	89
2009	80	(0)	24	104
2010	79	(46)	21	100
2011	132	(80)	20	152
2012	131	(82)	N/A	131
2013**	81	(53)	77	158
2014	114	(73)	70	184
2015	153	(117)	63(17 with EMS)	199
2016	138	(103)	111(19 with EMS)	230
2017	133	(99)	84 (9 with EMS)	208
2018	133	(93)	92	225
<hr/>				
TOTALS	1,235	746	497	1,780

*\*The District began providing emergency medical services January 1, 2008. Prior to that date, emergency medical services were provided to the community by Beulah EMS, in combination with commercial ambulance services. Transport was still being provided by commercial ambulance in 2008 and 2009, i.e., the District transferred its patients to an AMR ambulance, waiting enroute to Pueblo along Highway 78. AMR then transported the patient to the appropriate hospital, providing advanced life support (ALS) along the way. The District began transporting patients to the hospital in 2010, reflecting its increased capabilities.*

*\*\* The District began providing fire protection services January 1, 2013. Prior to that date, fire protection was provided to the community by the Beulah Valley Volunteer Fire Department.*

There have also been emergencies that were large enough to be considered disasters for the area, i.e., they required outside assistance to respond to and/or recover from the event. They are as follow:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1947	– Squirrel Creek Flash Flood ... destroyed the historic Squirrel Creek Road between the Beulah Valley and Colorado Highway 165. 12-Mile was built to replace it as access to and from the Beulah Valley.
2002	– Drought ... resulted in the community water supplies (Beulah Water Works District and Pine Drive Water District) having no water. Water was hauled from Pueblo for 61 days in the summer of 2002 to serve the Beulah Valley.
2005	– Mason Gulch Fire (started July 6 <sup>th</sup> by lightening)... burned 11,716 acres of forest in Custer and Pueblo County, but no residential structures were lost and none of the 831 responders (peak day staffing) or citizens were seriously injured.
2007	– Beulah Area Flash Flood (August 1 <sup>st</sup> caused by heavy rain over the Mason Gulch Fire burn scar) ... resulting in the 18' diameter culvert under Highway 78 West being washed out at Beulah Hill, taking the highway with it. Other public roads and private accesses were also damaged. This was estimated to be a 125-year flood event.
2016	– Beulah Hill Fire (started October 3 <sup>rd</sup> by highway maintenance operations on a RED FLAG day) ... burned 5,232 acres of forest and grassland in Pueblo County (all in our District), including 8 homes that were destroyed. None of the 300+ responders or hundreds of affected citizens were seriously injured.
2016	– Junkins Fire (started October 17 <sup>th</sup> by high wind blowing a metal shed over a power line, igniting grass) ... burned 17,809 acres of forest in Custer and Pueblo County (some in our District). No homes in Pueblo County were lost, but several were in Custer County. None of the 900+ responders or hundreds of affected citizens were seriously injured.
2017	– Flash Flood (May 10 <sup>th</sup> ) ... caused by heavy regional rain over all drainages in the District and eastern Custer County, including the Beulah Hill Fire and Junkins Fire burn scars. Public roads, private accesses, bridges and culverts were damaged.

We have a pretty good understanding of what hazards confront our community. We prepare for them as best as possible by recruiting good personnel, training them and providing appropriate equipment, within the limits of our budget and the willingness of good people to

volunteer. We also actively participate with other emergency response agencies in Pueblo County through mutual aid. An equally important piece of that puzzle involves public education and participation before, during and after emergencies occur. Beyond that, the best we can all do is be alert and respond appropriately as events unfold.

## **AGREEMENTS**

The District is a partner in a number of agreements, ranging from verbal “hand shake” agreements to formal Intergovernmental Agreements, Mutual Aid Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding. Those agreements involve other fire, emergency medical, law enforcement and public works agencies, as well as schools. They span all levels of government and may include the private sector. Our newest agreement (signed in May 2018) was actually over 30 years in the making. It is the All-Hazards Mutual Aid Agreement with most local government emergency response agencies in Pueblo County. It has its foundation in a 1984 Mutual Aid Agreement for Hazardous Materials Incident Response, a number of surrogate agreements (such as the Annual Fire Operations Plan) and a lot of handshakes. It is based on the understanding that all agencies and jurisdictions will face emergencies that require more personnel and resources to respond to and recover from than they have by themselves, in spite of how big they are. It recognizes that we need to help each other when necessary. It also recognizes that we each need to prepare for those responses with proper staffing, training and equipment; following common standards that enable us to come together as a well-managed team using the Incident Command System (ICS). Doing those things saves lives and property. In our District we only need to look to the past three years to see how that works. The initial response to the Beulah Hill and Junkins Fires in 2016 and the associated flash flood in 2017 saw significant help coming to our community from a dozen agencies and hundreds of responders from elsewhere in Pueblo County. It made a difference, just as the additional assistance from other agencies from Colorado and beyond did, but mutual aid was here and working for us within the first hour or two, when every minute counted. It also helps greatly to have a community that is educated and prepared to do their part when emergencies occur, even when that means knowing when to pack up and leave ... helping us to save lives all around.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

There are a number of things that Special Districts like ours are required to do by the State of Colorado. They include having a formal Service Plan; holding elections to form the district, choose directors and set mill levies; conducting regular public meetings with agendas and minutes; having a budget; and having independent audits performed. They require the filing of a Transparency Notice that lists where the District Office is, who the Directors are, what offices they hold, when their terms are up, who our attorney is, where and when meetings are to be held, and even where the notices of those meetings are to be posted (no less than 72

hours prior to the meeting). The Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) insures that the public has reasonable access to most of the District's records.

The District takes care to comply with each of these requirements. Records are available for viewing at our office and many are also made available on-line at our website, which is at [www.beulahfireambulance.org](http://www.beulahfireambulance.org). We also produce an annual Newsletter in the first quarter of each year, which is mailed directly to each residence and property owner in the District. It describes major items from the past year and plans for the next. It is also available on our website, along with details about our Board of Directors, Chief and volunteers, our activities, meeting minutes, Policies, By-Laws, the current fire danger and much more. We also conduct a number of meetings and trainings for the general public that are hazard or emergency-specific, ranging from hazard mitigation and emergency notification and evacuation to CPR and bicycle safety. We especially look forward to using the training/meeting room in our new Station 1 to provide public information and education. This is all in support of our commitment to partner with the Community to provide essential services in a timely and appropriate manner. We take pride in building on Beulah's 70-year history of providing emergency service to the Community.

#### Sources:

1. BVVFD History 1949-2011 (5 page report), POWERPOINT presentation 2012 and review by Gary Kyte
2. BEMS – *Pueblo Chieftain* articles (1978 & 1979), information in *Beulah EMS Photo Albums # 1 & 2*, and recollections of Carol Kyte and others
3. BFP&AD files (Policies, By-Laws, meeting minutes, equipment lists, response summary, etc.)
4. Steve Douglas' personal files, including Pueblo County Emergency Management files

FIRST DRAFT: July 12, 2018

REVISED: January 28, 2019