



# RISTWATCH

RCVFD Quarterly Newsletter P. O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512 Issue No. 117 January 2026

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## Letter from the President

### Rist Canyon VOLUNTEER Fire Department.

We are in the holiday season of another successful year for RCVFD. Thousands of hours of volunteer time have made this possible. From the fire and medical responders, the officers of the department, the board of directors, the Book Bees, the Friends of the Festival and everyone who maintains equipment and stocks. But none of that can happen without those who volunteer their hard-earned money to keep our budget in the black.

This year we have a special need for a new Grants Committee Chair. Our previous chair, Jocelyn Wolf, did a fantastic job and, with the help of the Grants Committee members, was able to land hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants. These grants are often for specific things, like SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) equipment for firefighters, infrared cameras to detect hot spots, and similar equipment. Jocelyn did a fantastic job of

organizing the Grants Committee, so you will be taking over a well-established group and operation. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a detailed list of what this job entails. Please consider taking on this vital role for RCVFD.

We are looking forward to 2026 knowing that this community faithfully supports RCVFD. Last year we were able to purchase and equip a replacement tanker engine. In the last few months, this new vehicle has been vital in responding to a structure fire in the Buckhorn area and an unauthorized bonfire in the Davis Ranch area. Please help us keep these upgrades coming so that we can protect you and your property when the time comes.

**Neil Faber**  
**President - 2026**

# Chief's Report

## Greetings from Chief Neuroth

Hi RCVFD Community,

2025 has been a year of growth for our department, not just in numbers but in a technical aspect such as training, experience, and community involvement.

Our roster of Firefighters stands at 40 at the end of the year. We have four (4) new EMT's (Emergency Medical Technicians) and one (1) new EMR (Emergency Medical Responder). We have another class starting this month with four responders studying to become EMR's and one to become an EMT. With approximately 75-80% of our calls being medical, this will enhance our medical response during all times of the day.

We have a professional firefighter from PFA conducting our fire training. This gives us a higher degree of knowledge and experience for our firefighters. We will continue to train for wildland fires and be prepared year-round. By the time this Ristwatch edition comes out we may still have dry conditions. We retired one of our tenders (large water capacity engines) for a newer truck that will carry 1,250 gallons of water.

The Mountain Festival was a huge success, bringing together many aspects of our great community, Firefighters, Festival volunteers, Craftsman, Bakers, Sponsors, and many others who contribute their time and money. We had one structure fire this year that may have been caused by a chimney fire. We were able to keep the fire from turning into a wildland incident, but sadly, the home was a total loss.

We recommend that people have an annual chimney inspection. We give out a free

Chimfex fire extinguisher to anyone that asks. Please contact anyone on the department and we will get them to you.

Thank you, Community; together we will continue to make RCVFD better.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Mark Neuroth, Chief**  
**Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department**  
**P.O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512**  
**[chief@rcvfd.org](mailto:chief@rcvfd.org)**

## Letter from the Vice President

Please mark your calendars for next year's Annual RCVFD Mountain Festival: Saturday, September 12, 2026. The Festivals raise funds for the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department, about \$30,000 last year. It was an enjoyable day with about 3,500 happy attendees.

**Here are some good and fun ways you can please join in to help the Festival and the RCVFD.**

**Bake Sale:** Community bakers! Please start setting aside all those new, favorite baked goods recipes in preparation for the 2026 Bake Sale. Let's make this year the best one yet! Any questions - email Darcy Budge at [[darcy\\_arlene@hotmail.com](mailto:darcy_arlene@hotmail.com)].

**Book Sale:** We collect books, DVDs, CDs, puzzles, games, and vinyl albums all year long for the Mountain Festival. This winter, please review your collections and consider donating some of your items to benefit the RCVFD. Drop off boxes are in front of RCVFD Station #1 (located at 11835 Rist Canyon Road) and on the front porch of the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ near the Bellvue Post Office. If you have a large donation, we can pick it up. Please call, text, or email Patti Clutter at 858-248-6328 or [[clutterp28@gmail.com](mailto:clutterp28@gmail.com)].

**Food Trucks:** The Mountain Festival is growing in attendance, and with that, we need to grow our food truck services. With that in mind, we plan to add four or five new food options to the lineup. We also want to add a co-chair to this committee who can help with finding new vendors and overall management of the activity. For more information about selling or being a co-chair, please contact Bridget Tisthammer [[bridgetht@me.com](mailto:bridgetht@me.com)].

**Mountain Vehicle Show:** If you have a classic car or an off-road crawler with stories to share, please consider exhibiting in our Mountain Vehicle Show. There will be multiple categories of prizes awarded. If you're interested in entering a vehicle or helping with the organization, please reach out to Josef Dvorak, at 970-631-4789 or [[Vehicle\\_Show@DvorakHome.com](mailto:Vehicle_Show@DvorakHome.com)].

**\*\*\*Parking\*\*\*:** We desperately need a pair of Parking Co-chairs for the responsibility of general parking at the RCVFD Mountain Festival. Our prior chair, who has done this of many years, is retiring from this position and is ready, willing, and able to train a pair of Co-chairs to takeover for him. We have a set of written guidelines, in addition to verbal advice, to ease learning the job. The Co-chairs will need a team of people to rotate on and off all day, with typically about five people at any time. The current Festival leadership team can assist you with recruiting these folks. Please contact H.J. Siegel with questions, [[HJ@computer.org](mailto:HJ@computer.org)].

**Plant Sale:** Time to get your green thumb on and start your transplants now for sale at the plant booth at the RCVFD Festival on September 12th. All sizes and species are welcome. Bring your beautiful starts to the Plant Booth on the morning of the Festival. All plant sale proceeds support our Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department. For any questions, please contact the Plant Sale chairs Dean Yoder [[aooe1987@msn.com](mailto:aooe1987@msn.com)] or Roger Dev [[devroger@yahoo.com](mailto:devroger@yahoo.com)].

*continued on page 4*

## Letter from the Vice President

*Continued from page 3*

**Silent Auction:** We always welcome help with soliciting and donations. You can help by soliciting items from businesses you visit or by donating products and services that we can include in this large, eclectic Silent Auction. We sell gift cards, camping gear, gadgets, tools, tours, classes, jewelry, antiques, art — everything! If you'd buy it, we'll sell it! If you will consider helping, please call or text Janet Siegel at 970-231-7877 or email [SilentAuction@RCVFD.org](mailto:SilentAuction@RCVFD.org).

**Sponsorships:** Festival sponsorships may become a more important support for the RCVFD this year as grants are likely to be less available. Please contact your employer and companies you interact with to provide sponsoring. If you would like James, the sponsorships chair, to go with you or supply sponsorship forms, please contact James Clutter at clutterj11@gmail.com or 970-657-5254.

Thanks! We look forward to your help!

**H. J. Siegel**  
**Mountain Festival Coordinator**  
**RCVFD Board of Directors Vice President**  
[HJ@computer.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://RCVFD.org).

# Volunteer Opportunity: Grants Committee Chair

The Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department is seeking a new Grants Committee Chair to help continue an important and successful program that directly supports our firefighters and community.

Over the past three years, the RCVFD Grants Committee has secured approximately \$200,000 in grant funding and donated equipment. These funds have helped provide updated firefighter safety gear, thermal imaging cameras, an extrication tool, and resources for our wildfire mitigation assessment program, among many other critical needs. This work has had a tangible impact on firefighter safety, operational capability, and community preparedness.

The Grants Committee Chair plays a coordinating and leadership role, helping identify opportunities and guiding applications from start to finish. This is a volunteer position, but one with meaningful outcomes and strong institutional support.

Key responsibilities include:

- Identifying grant opportunities and contacting program managers when clarification is needed.
- Working with the Fire Chief and officers to identify needs that may be addressed through grants.
- Coordinating with the Grants Committee to prepare and submit applications by deadline.
- Sending thank-you letters and required follow-up reports to granting agencies.
- Working with the Treasurer and Operations to order awarded equipment.
- Meeting with the Grants Committee every 1–2 months.
- Submitting a brief monthly summary of grant activity to the RCVFD Board.

To support a smooth transition, the committee has three years of past grant applications and materials available as references. In addition, the previous Grants Committee Chair has volunteered to mentor and train the new Chair, providing guidance on all aspects of the role.

This position is well-suited for someone who is organized, communicative, and interested in supporting emergency services through behind-the-scenes work. Prior grant-writing experience is helpful but not required. Curiosity, reliability, and a willingness to learn go a long way.

If you are interested in contributing to the safety and resilience of Rist Canyon in a concrete and lasting way, please consider stepping into this role. For more information or to express interest, contact the RCVFD Board or Fire Chief.

Your time and skills can make a real difference.





## Help Build a Resilient Rist Canyon



### Wildfire Partner Program Now Accepting Assessment Requests

RCVFD now has trained Wildfire Partner Program (WPP) Ambassadors ready to offer voluntary home assessments designed to help you identify and prioritize practical projects that can improve the chances of your home withstanding a wildfire.

These assessments are free, confidential, actionable, and focused on clear, achievable steps you can take at your own pace.

To learn more or to request a Wildfire Home Ignition Zone Assessment for your home, please visit our website at:

**[rcvfd.org/emergency-preparedness/home-assessments](https://rcvfd.org/emergency-preparedness/home-assessments)**

Working together, we can strengthen our community's readiness and help keep Rist Canyon safer and more resilient in the face of wildfire.

## Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Update

The original 2010 CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) is now outdated, so a core team—representing RCVFD, Larimer County Emergency Services, Colorado State Forest Service, and the US Forest Service—has begun the process of revising and updating the plan. Community involvement will be a central part of this effort. In early 2026, residents, road associations, and other interested stakeholders will be invited to share their input. Please watch for outreach opportunities as we hope to hear from as many community members as possible.

### What is a CWPP and why does it matter?

A CWPP identifies local wildfire risks and outlines a prioritized set of actions our community can take to reduce those risks. It is designed for a broad audience, offering guidance for property owners, providing essential information to emergency responders, and serving as a key document that helps both the RCVFD and residents qualify for wildfire mitigation grants. To learn more about CWPPs and view plans from nearby communities, visit: [<https://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/community-wildfire-protection-plans>]

Questions? Contact the RCVFD CWPP Team: [cwpp@rcvfd.org](mailto:cwpp@rcvfd.org)

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## Structure Fires — What Can You Do, What Can RCVFD Do?

Wintertime tends to be the season where we get more structure fires. What can you do to help reduce the chance of a structure fire happening in your home – and how can you help improve the odds of your home surviving if one happens?

First, let's discuss the capabilities of the RCVFD in the context of structure fires. We are a volunteer fire department – so when a page goes off, responders jump out of bed, leave their work, run out on dinner,... Then we rush to get suited up, head to a station and get a fire truck and respond to the call – which may still be a long way off. As a result, we obviously don't have four-minute response time like folks in town. The only way to improve response time is for more residents to join the department and build our network of responders.

We have no fire hydrants, so all the water we have to fight a fire is on our trucks, plus what we can draft from nearby ponds. For a structure fire – unless it is caught very early – the less than 5,000 gallons we have total on all our trucks is insufficient to extinguish the fire. Usually, we have to focus on just keeping the fire contained to the structure itself and not allow it to become a wildfire and spread to adjacent homes. Note that on all structure fires we get backed up by either Poudre Fire Authority or Loveland Fire Department (depending on where the fire is located) – they bring trucks with additional water, but even that won't extinguish a house fire once it has gotten involved.

Structure fire smoke is very toxic and carcinogenic. To conduct a direct attack, SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) is required, which means there needs to be sufficient responders on scene to have two in/two out (for safety of the responders). RCVFD has employed this tactic on a handful of fires, but because of the time required to get that many responders on scene, the fire is usually too involved to use that tactic.

When we roll up on a structure fire, we are trained and equipped but we also know we have limitations on what we can do safely. So, what can you do? First, note that there is more info on the [rcvfd.org](http://rcvfd.org) webpage under “emergency preparedness”.

- Fire prevention — try to prevent fires in the first place; clean your chimney regularly; dispose of your ashes in a steel can with a lid.
- Early warning — catch it early; smoke detectors (test them & change batteries regularly)
- Tools for small fires — **Chimfex** (chimney fire extinguishers) - RCVFD gives them away for free. Put the Chimfex near your stove (where you can find it quickly). Know the signs of a chimney fire and know how to use your Chimfex to help quench the fire. **Fire extinguisher** – mount one next to every exit door so you can attempt to put out the fire and then exit if necessary. Check the dates on the ones you have; make sure they will work when you need them. **Metal or glass lids** to cover the top of any pan that might catch fire. Never throw water on a grease fire!

Finally – even if it is a small fire and you think you have it out, call 911. We can come and check that the fire didn't extend to other parts of your home (for example, we have thermal imaging cameras so can see if there is fire behind a wall). There is never a fee for a fire call and it is better to be safe than sorry. We all need to take responsibility to prevent fires and help us keep our community safe.

**Carol Dollard – Assistant Chief RCVFD**

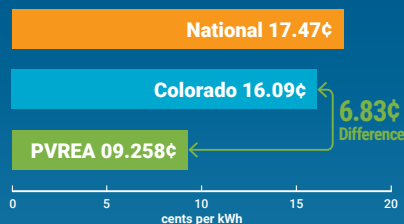


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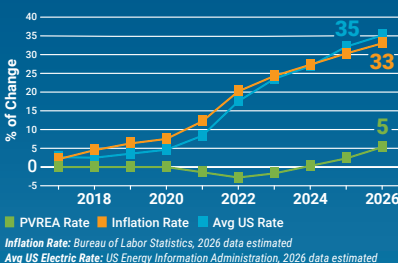
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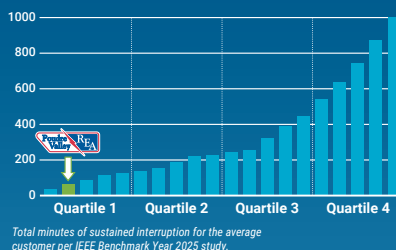
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# Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department History

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

## Catastrophic Events Forever Change Lives: 2011-2024

National events had direct impacts on the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department (RCVFD). An outgrowth of the 9/11 attacks required that RCVFD conform to national standard incident management systems for command and control. Existing areas required expanded training and new areas were added. These would include structural and wildland fire, basic life and medical emergency support, hazardous material, crash incidents, radio protocols, equipment and vehicle training, record keeping, and interagency cooperation.

## Unthinkable Forest Fires

In 2003 the department was involved in producing a National Fire Department Association fire wise video. Fire in the Urban Interface "a plan to survive " is available online at <https://youtu.be/3bpB8WqiWx4?si=-LLlZm3MHg7Mg-94>. The project was produced by Sean and Larry Monesson. Nearly a decade later the High Park Fire became an example of the urban interface conflict depicted in the video.

It is hard to fathom a small volunteer fire department such as the RCVFD would be called upon to fight four catastrophic wildfires within its coverage boundaries within nine years. RCVFD emergency responders did just that fighting the four major named fire events in the department's 50-year history. Each of these took place between 2011-2020. They were the Crystal Fire in 2011, High Park Fire in 2012, Cameron Peak Fire in 2020, and the Lewstone Fire in 2020. In addition, the department was busy for weeks when the entire Rist Canyon area experienced catastrophic flooding in 2013.

Crystal Fire: April 3-6, 2011, a fire on Crystal Mountain burned 2,940 acres destroying 15 of our neighbor's homes. This fire, which was human caused, started on Crystal Mountain southwest of the Buckhorn Canyon. The fire was nearly contained on initial attack, but was fanned by a sudden nighttime windstorm with winds reaching more than 70 miles per hour. The homes destroyed were caught up as the fire blew up in a matter of minutes. Because the wind struck in the middle of the night, it was a critical life-threatening situation. The Crystal Fire was the first major named fire in the RCVFD 30 plus year history.

High Park Fire: On June 9, 2012, a lightning strike fire in the Buckhorn Canyon became the wind driven inferno known as the High Park Fire. High Park burned for nearly three weeks and eventually claimed 87,284 acres, destroyed 259 homes and countless other buildings, and tragically took one life. Working alongside more than 2,000 firefighters from across the country, 30 RCVFD firefighters put in nearly 5,000 volunteer hours to help contain the fire. Residents of the area were evacuated for weeks – finally returning home on June 28th. The fire destroyed approximately one-fourth of the homes in our community. Years later, our community is still recovering – showing a determination and effort that is truly amazing.

*text continued on page 17  
relevant photos on adjacent page (page 11)*

# Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department History



RCVFD emergency responders pay tribute to 9/11 responders and victims.



2011 Crystal Fire



High Park Fire June 12, 2012. The first hours as the fire crossed Stove Prairie racing toward Ford Hill.



These are some of the RCVFD emergency responders who worked the High Park Fire. This photo was taken ~10 days into the fire. Most of the responders had not slept more than a few hours a night (if at all). At the time of this photo, at least seven had already lost their homes in the fire, yet they were there with the rest of their team working the blaze.



## Notes from Your Area Representatives



**Photo credit: Carolyn Stanley**

On 12/12, a post was made to invite people to a bonfire at 7 PM. If you don't remember, the wind had been blowing all week with high wind warnings. They said in the post to respect property and pick up after yourself. 911 was called. A neighbor told me the fire was 32' long and 20' wide. As dry as it has been, this whole area could have been burnt. The fire department showed up a short time after the call and put the fire out. Some of the fire fighters stayed on the scene to make sure the fire did not flare back up. They were burning 16" logs in this pile. The person who did this received a citation from the sheriff's department. The land owner hired them to clean up the property but did not tell them to do the bonfire. There was no burn permit issued and the ground was bare. There is to be 3" to 4" of snow on the ground before even thinking about burning.

We appreciate the fire department's quick response. If not for them, we would not be able to enjoy the Christmas tree lights on Whale Rock. .

**Carolyn Stanley — Davis Ranch**

Is it winter yet? With the unseasonably warm weather and lack of snow, it certainly doesn't feel like it. We were able to get up before Thanksgiving to harvest our holiday trees—without snowshoes or drifts in sight! This year I volunteered with the U.S. Forest Service, helping with Christmas tree patrol in our area, and it was wonderful to see so many families out with permits, searching for the perfect tree.

Winter is typically a quieter season in the canyon, with lighter traffic and seasonal closures now in place. Side trails are closed, as well as Moody Hill and Pennock Pass. Keep an eye out for moose and elk during this time of year, as they tend to linger in the area and will soon begin shedding their antlers.

Road conditions can change quickly as winter weather rolls in, but for now, the roads remain clear and safe for travel.

**Erica Michel — Upper Buckhorn**



**Photo credit: Erica Michel**

# Houseplants

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

Lower Buckhorn residences. It has overall been an extremely dry and warm fall this year. On several occasions there have been full days that brought huge winds to our area. Also, there have been many notices put out by the National Weather Service and NOAA. Our own property has experienced damaged gable end flashing being ripped from the fasteners that held it to our roof. Most likely these patterns in our weather have been caused by the very warm weather we've experienced. The high and low pressure systems that are exhibited across North America are the principle cause for these terrific winds. As I understand it, higher pressure areas are drawn to the lower pressure zones. What exacerbates this are the numerous wildfires that we've had over the last two decades. Our ridge tops that were once covered with trees are practically barren now so there is little to stop the winds or slow them down.

Sadly, in November we had a structure fire just to the South of Ohana Ranch. Fortunately, our fire department stopped the fire at the house so that it didn't spread to a wildfire. A cause has not been published for the fire and the structure was a total loss. This should encourage us all to make safety checks of our own properties on an annual basis and to complete safety maintenance. I wish each of you a very happy New Year. .

**Dean Yoder — Lower Buckhorn**

Snow - Snow - Snow - Where did you Go??? As I write this, it is Christmas Eve and not a flake of snow to be found. If you've been diligent last fall and cut down trees, especially after the crazy winds we had, please be sure to have your Larimer County Permit. You can get one free at our web site - <https://rcvfd.org/community-information/slash-burning>. Also, at least the required minimum 3-4 inches of snow (I personally prefer at least 6".) You will find all the information you need to safely burn your piles as well as who to contact on the day you plan to burn.

As the cold days come and go, if you are waiting for after the New Year to go on a Snow Bird Holiday, here are a few things to think about to safely prepare your home before you leave in the cold days ahead: Turn off your water at the main breaker. This will ensure if there are any broken pipes upon your return that you won't find a swimming pool in your house. Never turn your heat off! Always leave your thermostat to the recommended 50-55 Degrees. If you know it will be very cold while you are gone, the suggested temperature is 60°. In addition, open the cupboards under your sink to add a little extra warmth there from the home's ambient temperature. Make sure your propane tanks are full. For a little extra safety, add timers to a few lights in the house, have one start and stop at a certain time, and one or two others to give the home that lived-in look. Unplug unnecessary appliances, such as toasters, televisions, and coffee makers. And above all - Have a Great Time!

**Louise Creager — Stratton Park**

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

Wishing all in our community a...



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Debbie Benson — Rist Canyon

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### RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, continued from page 11

The High Park fire was at that time the third largest fire in state history. It was one of the milestone events triggering Colorado to invest in advanced fire technology. Colorado now leads the nation in this regard. Now retired RCVFD Chief Robert Gann continues to participate in advanced technology for public safety as the Deputy Director for Research and Science at the Colorado Center of Excellence for Advanced Technology Ariel Fire Fighting.

After High Park, RCVFD then Chief Gann was awarded the first ever Wildland Safety Exemplary Service Award by the National Fire Protection Association.

September 2013 Floods: In September 2013, the Colorado Front Range experienced an extended upslope storm that dumped 14.6 inches of rain over the course of several days at RCVFD Station 1 and even higher totals further south. This storm caused a 500- to 1,000-year flood event that destroyed roads and properties up and down the Colorado Front Range. There were lives lost in Boulder County, but fortunately none in Larimer County. Because of the devastation from the High Park fire the previous year, the rain caused mudslides that damaged many homes and closed the roads in the canyon multiple times. Of the three roads serving the Rist Canyon area, only Rist Canyon Road survived and it was severely damaged. County Road 44H from the mouth of the Buckhorn Canyon to Masonville was closed for more than a year.

*continued on page 18*



# RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, continued

*continued from page 17*

Cameron Peak Fire: On Aug. 13, 2020, this fire started in the Cameron Peak campground in the Poudre Canyon – 30 miles from RCVFD territory. However, it proved to be a difficult fire to contain during hot, dry, windy weather. RCVFD worked with homeowners to try and prepare for the potential of the fire entering our area. Residents of the area were evacuated on three separate occasions during this fire as wind drove the fire south and east. Unfortunately, on October 13, high winds pushed the fire into the Buckhorn Canyon and Crystal Mountain area destroying dozens of our neighbor's homes. The fire continued to burn for months and was not officially contained until Dec. 2, 2020. This fire is the largest fire in Colorado history at 208,663 acres.

Lewstone Fire: The fire burned 165 acres from Aug. 22-25, 2020. During the Cameron Peak Fire, a slurry bomber pilot heading to Fort Collins for refueling, noted a smoke plume in the Lewstone Creek drainage on the ridge at the eastern edge of Rist Canyon. Resources were quickly diverted to contain and eventually extinguish the fire. Many Rist Canyon residents were evacuated, but the quick discovery and containment of the fire resulted in no homes lost.

## **In the Interim**

Beyond fighting fires, the business of operating a volunteer fire department and responding to day-to-day calls needed to be handled.

In April 2014 RCVFD transitioned from its 504 nonprofit corporation designation to become a 501c3 nonprofit organization to make it easier for corporate sponsors to donate and to improve eligibility for some grants. The advantage of this change was immediate and significant. As a result of the High Park Fire, RCVFD received significant donations. The department chose to invest that money into rebuilding Station 1 to accommodate the growing needs of the department and community. The old station was demolished, and the new station was built in the summer of 2013. It included five larger bays to better fit the trucks and gear. A second floor was also added that included a large training room and office/storage space.

Volunteers played a key role in the building project. The photo on page 19 (right) shows a group of hardy individuals braved the cold to build the exterior deck to the upstairs entrance to Station 1 on March 2, 2014. This was the last step toward finalizing the building project. Not pictured is photographer Carol Dollard.

The original Station 4 (Whale Rock), which was burned in the High Park Fire, was replaced in 2014. The Rocky Mountain Masonry Institute, and a group of contractors, designers and builders helped to rebuild Station 4. An even more significant investment in time and effort came from RCVFD volunteers. The concrete block building was rebuilt with two bays and a water cistern inside the station.

The Rist Canyon Mountain Festival experienced another evolutionary change in 2018. HJ Siegel, mentored by long-time volunteer Richard Lund, formed the Friends of the Festival. The group has met monthly through the years organizing the community event. The festival provides free live music presented on-stage in front of a large covered viewing tent, firefighter demonstrations, kid's

*continued on page 20*



## RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, photo gallery



RCVFD emergency responders assess damage near the intersection of Buckhorn Road and Ohana Way, one of the many areas where the flood waters destroyed roadways.



The inferno known as Cameron Peak Fire burned for months.



The hardy individuals who braved the cold to build the exterior deck to the upstairs entrance to Station 1 on March 2, 2014.



New Station 1

The Rocky Mountain Masonry Institute, and a group of contractors, designers and builders helped to rebuild Station 4. An even more significant investment in time and effort came from RCVFD volunteers. The concrete block building was rebuilt with two bays and a water cistern inside the station.



## RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, continued

*continued from page 18*

activity area, nonprofit booths, car show, tractor shuttle to and from the parking lot, and the ever popular-free ice cream combine to create a festive atmosphere. The festival also features used books, plants, baked goods, and t-shirt sales; a firefighter dunk tank; and food trucks. The annual event serves three important goals. It raises funds for the fire department and brings the community together working toward a shared purpose. Nonresident attendees are also shown that these scenic mountain areas are communities where people live and work.



### **Updating and Expanding Resources**

As the number and severity of emergency situations rose annually through this period, the needs of the department also grew. Providing responders with proper safety gear and equipment was always crucial so as advanced technologies became more available in these areas providing better protection and tools for responders was critical. Acquiring and maintaining equipment capable of navigating rough terrain is much different than in urban areas. As wildland equipment improved, acquiring it was and remains important. Responders also needed to be trained to meet the growing variety of situations they would potentially encounter. By 2024, operation of the department only minutely resembled the early years of the organization, yet the dedication of those involved remained steadfast.

To meet the growing demands, during this era the department's fleet also grew, then to 12 vehicles. Of note was a 2001 Chevy (R-8) donated to the RCVFD from the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority in 2017. It technically is a rescue vehicle. The department added a small tank and pump, as well as hand-tools. It is one of the primary response vehicles staged at firefighters' houses. It currently lives in Paradise Park to provide better coverage for that area. R8 is primarily used for quicker initial response on the west side of the RCVFD territory and to improve communications. Truck radios are more powerful than handheld devices.

Another important addition was a 1997 International truck (E313) housed in Station 1. This is a Type 3 truck, meaning it carries more water (750 gallons) and has a more powerful pump than a brush truck. Type 3 engines are generally used for delivering water to a fire line, often shuttling between a pond and a portable tank so that firefighters can use the water more continuously. Type 3 engines have the most powerful pump specifications, so if water is being pushed uphill, E313 might sit on-site and do that work.

*continued on page 22*



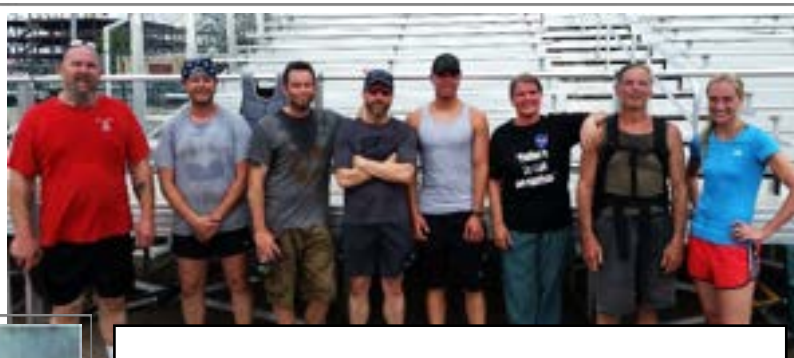
## RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, photo gallery



Above, RCVFD EMTs demonstrate emergency care at the 2023 festival. At right, an early photo of belly dancers performing on the festival's main stage in contrast with the 2024 Mountain Festival immediately below.



Rist Canyon Mountain Festival Live Music Stage



2017 physical fitness pack test participants



Cameron Peak Fire burning in Stringtown Gulch August 2020



January 2021 Mark McCracken, on left, with unidentified responder



Phil Benstein, from left, Pedro Boscan, and Juana Jackson fighting the Cameron Peak Fire near the ranger station in Buckhorn Canyon in 2020.

## RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, continued

*continued from page 20*

In years when there were no major fires, RCVFD responses were typically more than 75 percent medical or motor vehicle accidents (MVAs). Thus, the need for a second ambulance became a priority, one was added in 2023 to enhance patient care. Ambulances are now stationed on both sides of Ford Hill. RCVFD ambulances allow responders to get to patients quickly and start providing care. RCVFD does not transport patients unless the terrain is impossible for UC Health or Thompson Valley ambulances to arrive at the scene and then the transport is only to a waiting ambulance. For seriously injured or very sick patients, we often utilize air ambulances. Helicopters can make the trip to area hospitals in a matter of minutes whereas ground ambulance can be more than an hour. Note that individuals are not charged for an ambulance or helicopter call unless they actually use the service. A person may refuse transport if conscious and coherent. If transport involves ambulance transport by UC Health, Thompson Valley, or air ambulance, charges will be incurred. All residents are highly encouraged to purchase AirMedCare Network coverage ([AirMedCareNetwork.com](http://AirMedCareNetwork.com)) which covers costs of the air ambulance if not already covered by their health insurance.

*Note:* The next issue of the Ristwatch will bring the community up-to-date in where the RCVFD is today as it rounds out the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary spanning from June 2, 1975-June 2, 2026.

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



**Lewstone fire crew August 2020**



**January 2021 responder group photo.**



## RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, photo gallery





## RCVFD 50th Anniversary History, photo gallery



# STOVE PRAIRIE ELEMENTARY



## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



### KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Stove Prairie is a PSD school, and School of Choice is an option for attendance if we are outside of your neighborhood school!

### Teacher Spotlight: Mrs. Z Stove's K/1 Teacher

Mrs. Zawadzki grew up in Fort Collins, and attended PSD schools Kindergarten-Graduation! She attended CSU and received her Bachelors in Human Development and Family Studies with an Early Childhood Education licensure, she later obtained her Masters in Elementary Literacy from Walden University. She has been in the Mountain Schools for over 10 YEARS, since 2014!



Mrs. Z says, "What I love most about teaching is getting to know all of the wonderful humans that walk through the door. I love watching them grow in all of the different ways they do- academically, socially, and emotionally. The small community of Stove Prairie feels extra special in that my interactions and investments in these kiddos continues well beyond when they leave my classroom!"



### UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

Online Registration is OPEN NOW!

Kindergarten Orientation with Mrs. Z:  
March 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:45

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your child must be 5 years old by October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026



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**122 Elk Way, Drake**

- ~ 6.08 Acres
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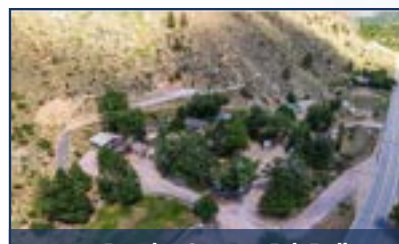
**102 Spruce Mountain Dr, Drake**

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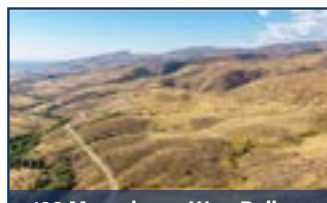
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to Facebook and ask them to donate! Your fire department thanks you!

## 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](mailto:ristwatch@rcvfd.org).

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



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Standring, Carolyn  
Stanley, Randall & Carolyn  
Starkweather, Tim & Mary  
Staubs, James & Peggy  
Stephens, Jon & Susanne  
Stewart, Ian & Elisha  
Stove Prairie Comm. Church  
Stowe, Kathy & F.M. Wile  
Stratman, Thomas & Charlene





**2025 Annual Drive: Budget \$126,350 - 2025 Annual Drive YTD \$107,350**

## **Building a Better Tomorrow**

Stringtown Gulch Road Assoc  
Swindler, Lee & Sheri  
Talarico, Ronald & Nanette  
Taylor, Leisa  
Thomas, David & Pamela  
Tisserat, Ned & Jan Leach  
Tisthammer, Thomas & Bridget  
Toplyn, Ron & Cathy  
Tracy, Robert  
Villa Veile Fund, The  
Weiler, Richard & Patricia  
Weixelman, Gary  
Wernsman, Robert & Kathy  
Wieder, Carl  
Willauer, David & Diane  
Williams, Barbara & Heather  
Wilson, Thomas  
Wing, Tom & Lynn  
Wolf, Jeff & Donna  
Wolf Roofing  
Wood, Chuck & Kathleen  
Workman, Kim



Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department  
P. O. Box 2  
Bellvue, CO 80512  
[www.rcvfd.org](http://www.rcvfd.org)

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**RCVFD Area Representatives**

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Upper Buckhorn	Erica Michel	970/222-1795
Davis Ranch	Carolyn Stanley	970/221-2024
Rist Canyon	Debbie Benson	720/999-3003
Stove Prairie	Tim Stratman	970/484-2821
Stratton Park	Louise Creager	970/217-6843
Whale Rock	Roger Dev	970/658-0360

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your mailing address,  
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312/244-0976.