



OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THE GATED WYE

AUGUST 2024



JULY WILDFIRES PROMPT MASSIVE RESPONSE

July saw an unprecedented start to the summer wildfire season. The Oregon State Fire Marshal was part of a massive effort to protect communities from the devastating impacts.

With hundreds of firefighters, engines, and support from neighboring states, they worked tirelessly to keep us safe. Learn about the fires they tackled and the partnerships that made it possible.

[Read more on page 2.](#)

OSFM'S MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

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OSFM RESPONDS TO SEVEN CONFLAGRATIONS IN JULY

Wildfires presented quite a challenge across Oregon as dry conditions, lightning, and strong gusty winds plagued the state. The Oregon fire service rose to the occasion mobilizing over two and a half dozen task forces to help protect life and property. The state saw four mega fires which grew to more than 100,000 acres in July. Since the first fire sparked, the Oregon State Fire Marshal has been working hard to protect communities and limit the damage. The Emergency Conflagration Act, which allows the OSFM to call in help from fire services across Oregon, was used eight times in July.

The OSFM is part of a team effort, working with the Oregon Department of Forestry, tribal agencies, and local and federal partners to fight and protect communities wildfires. This teamwork helps make sure our response is strong and effective.

In July, the agency called in nearly 500 firefighters, roughly 145 fire engines, and 32 water tenders to help protect communities. The Emergency Conflagration Act was invoked for the following fires:

- Battle Mountain Complex
- Durkee
- Boneyard
- Pilot Rock
- Lone Rock
- Falls
- Cow Valley
- Larch Creek

Continued on page 3.



OSFM RESPONDS TO SEVEN CONFLAGRATIONS IN JULY

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

The OSFM also mobilized resources through its Immediate Response tool to the following fires in July:

- Cow Valley
- Lone Rock
- Bodenhamer Road
- Pilot Rock
- Durkee
- Battle Mountain Complex
- Grant Road
- Microwave
- Milton Freewater
- Courtrock

Because of the stress on the Oregon Fire Mutual Aid System and the tremendous response from the fire service, the OSFM requested and received help from Washington, California, Utah, and Idaho. These resources were requested through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.

As of July 31, there were 117 active fires burning in Oregon, and 1,226,387.15 acres were burned. The hard work of the OSFM and its partners has been crucial in reducing the impact of these fires and keeping communities safe.

We are grateful for the dedication and hard work of all the firefighters and agencies involved. The OSFM remains committed to protecting lives, property, and the environment from wildfires. Working together will be key to overcoming the ongoing wildfire challenges in our state.



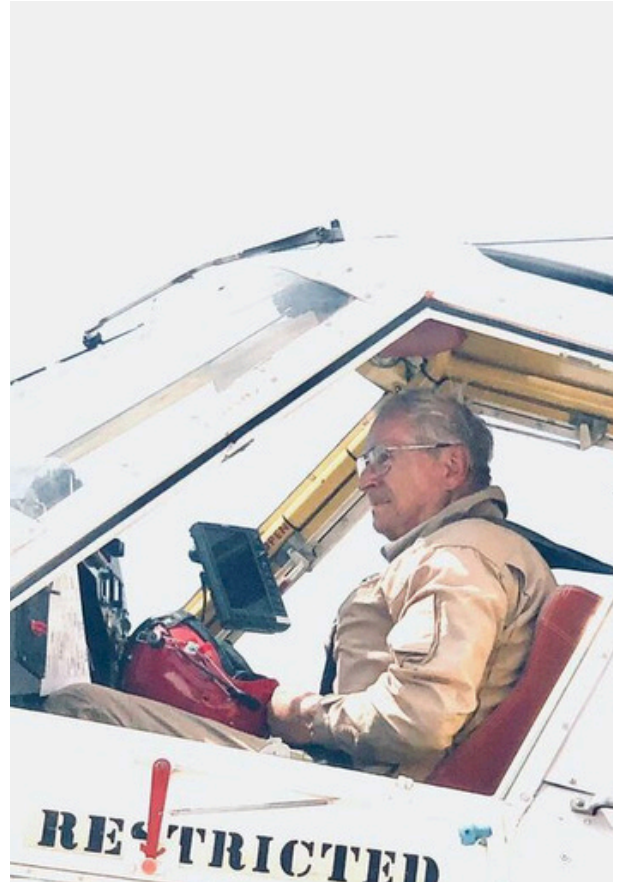
NATION MOURNS FALLEN AIR TANKER PILOT

The structural and wildland firefighting community is mourning the loss of one of their own. The Grant County Sheriff has confirmed that single engine air tanker pilot James Bailey Maxwell, 74, died while working in the vicinity of the Falls Fire on July 25, 2024, in Northwest Oregon.

James was an experienced pilot who spent 54 years of his life flying. He logged approximately 24,000 hours of flight time. He is survived by and will be missed by family members in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

Oregon Governor Tina Kotek ordered that flags be flown at half-staff to honor Maxwell.

The Maxwell family and firefighters are grateful for the support being expressed throughout the community and online. Services have not been announced at this time and the family asks for privacy while they mourn.



HOME HARDENING, DEFENSIBLE SPACE HELP FIREFIGHTERS **PROTECT** HOMES



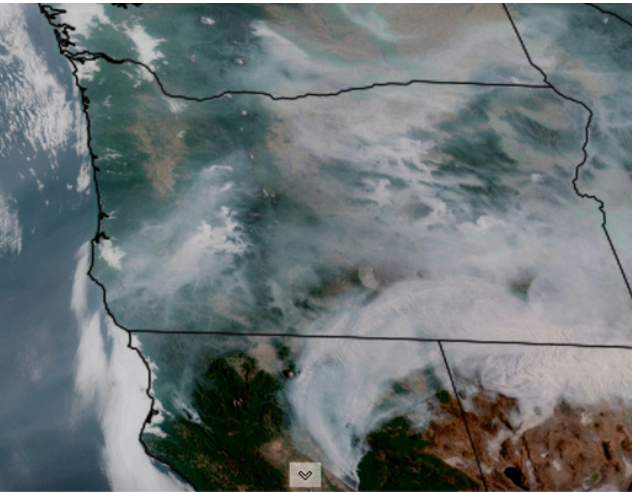
Amid this chaos of the wildfires that were burning across Oregon in July, a true story of heroism, teamwork, and community resiliency. As the winds kicked up on the evening of July 22 on the Boneyard Fire in Grant County, several Oregon State Fire Marshal structural task forces, local ranchers, the Oregon Department of Forestry, and contract firefighters would be in a battle to save several homes near Monument, Oregon.

The afternoon wind stirred up a wall of flames, several feet high, that marched towards homes west of town. Firefighters report trees igniting like torches, the flame front pushed by howling 30-mile-per-hour winds. The fire ripping, a daunting task faced these seasoned crews, the odds not in their favor. As the flames rushed forward the firefight came to within just feet of a few of these homes. These firefighters helped by work those who live here had done to become a Firewise community, creating defensible space and hardening their homes.

Those on the line say if these homeowners hadn't come together and taken the steps to become a Firewise Community and prepared for wildfires and if these firefighting crews weren't there, those homes wouldn't be standing today. This preparation made all the difference, enabling firefighters to successfully defend these homes. Only a barn wall suffered minor damage.

This story from the Boneyard Fire highlights the power of preparation and teamwork. It shows that when communities and emergency responders unite, they can conquer even the fiercest of challenges. The dedication and bravery of everyone involved are a testament to the indomitable spirit of Oregon's firefighting community and those who call this place home.

Learn more about [defensible space here](#).



FIRE LINE PHOTOS



PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH ON THE FIRE LINES

The importance of mental health for our Oregon fire service heroes cannot be overstated, especially as they battle wildfires this summer. Probie and Barney, dedicated therapy dogs from First Responder Therapy Dogs, have been on the front lines offering much-needed comfort and support.

Guided by their amazing handler, OSFM Assistant Chief Deputy Amber Cross, Probie and Barney have been making a difference in the lives of our firefighters, helping them stay strong and resilient.

Thank you to all our fire service members and the incredible support teams behind them. Your well-being is our priority! Thank you, Amber, Probie, and Barney for the work you do!





STAFFING GRANT SEEING SUCCESS

The Oregon State Fire Marshal is excited to share a few success stories from the 2024 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant. This grant provided funding to 191 local fire agencies in Oregon, allowing them to hire additional firefighters. These extra hands have been crucial in responding to wildfires quickly and keeping them small, away from our communities.

One great example of how this grant has helped is with the Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD). Here are two incidents that show the difference more firefighters can make:

- On July 17, IVFD and the ODF Southwest Oregon District responded to a vehicle fire on Martin Road. The car was fully on fire and started burning the nearby brush. Thanks to the additional firefighters funded by the staffing grant, the ODF quickly controlled the brush fire while IVFD put out the car fire. All fires were quickly extinguished and cleaned up.
- In another incident, IVFD, ODF Southwest Oregon District, and the Josephine County Sheriff's Office responded to a car fire at the intersection of Dead End and Oregon Street. The fire spread to blackberry bushes and nearby brush. With the extra firefighters from the staffing grant, the fire was put out quickly and the area was cleaned up. This fast response prevented a larger wildfire.

These examples show how the 2024 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant is helping local fire agencies respond to fires more effectively. By adding more firefighters, we can better protect our communities and natural areas from wildfires.

Learn more about the [2024 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant here](#).

NEW ENGINES RESPOND TO OREGON WILDFIRES

Check it out! As the wildfire season roared to life in July, new engines from the OSFM's Engine Program were on the fire line. Several recipient agencies including Corbett, Sublimity, and South Gilliam County, sent the new apparatus out. In July, the new Winston-Dillard water tender was out in the wild! The agency did some wildland training with the Roseburg Fire Department and other local agencies.

These apparatus are part of the OSFM's Engine Program to help modernize the Oregon structural fire service and give these agencies the tools they need to better serve their communities. Learn more about the program [here](#).



SANTIAM CANYON HOSTS FIREFIGHTER BBQ



In early July, some of the OSFM staff met with local fire agencies in the Santiam Canyon at their BBQ lunch hosted by Sublimity Fire District.

It was a fantastic opportunity for agencies to connect, get familiar with equipment, and meet firefighters hired through the OSFM 2024 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant.

This gathering is the perfect way to ensure seamless collaboration and preparedness for mutual aid calls during the wildfire season. Thanks for having us!

STATE FIRE MARSHAL MEETS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

Last month, State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple attended a virtual town hall meeting with Congresswoman Val Hoyle to talk about the importance of wildfire issues and work resulting from the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission report.

Chief Ruiz-Temple also supported Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici's efforts to help prepare for and fight wildfires. The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology has approved two new measures to help tackle wildfires, led by Congresswoman Bonamici.



1. The first measure requires NASA to follow recommendations from the national commission report. The report details policy suggestions for handling wildfires, including prevention, management during fires, and recovery.
2. The second measure establishes a new NASA project called FireSense, focused on using advanced science, data, and technology to improve how wildfire management. It includes supporting research and development for better wildfire strategies, helping people access these new resources, and enhancing research for all stages of wildfires, from prevention to recovery.

These measures use cutting-edge technology to protect communities, improve firefighter safety, and better respond to wildfires. The bill moved to the House floor for further consideration. [Read the news release here.](#)

SB 762 REPORT TO BE RELEASED IN AUGUST



SENATE BILL 762
BIANNUAL REPORT
AUGUST 2024



This month, the OSFM will release the biannual Senate Bill 762 report to the legislature. The OSFM is required to submit this report every six months outlining the important work our agency is doing with Senate Bill 762 funds. Highlights of this report include the \$6 million Wildfire Season Staffing Grant, \$3 million apprenticeship program investment, \$25 million Engine Program, 2024 fire season stats and expenses to date, and information about our Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Unit and their work supporting local communities become more wildfire resilient. You can find the report [here](#).

OSFM WILDFIRE INVESTIGATIONS BY THE NUMBERS

The Oregon State Fire Marshal investigates fires of all types in Oregon, including wildfires. The Oregon Department of Forestry conducts wildfire investigations on ODF-protected lands. Tribal and federal protected lands are investigated by the appropriate federal agency having jurisdiction. When a fire happens outside of those jurisdictions, the OSFM works with the local fire agency to determine if they have capacity to investigate. If they don't the capacity, a deputy state fire marshal will conduct the investigation.

Summer has been busy for deputies. From June 1 to July 31, they conducted 18 wildfire investigations. Ten were found to be human caused. Most are still under investigation.



RUIZ-TEMPLE ELECTED TO NASFM BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The 34th Annual Fire Prevention and Safety Symposium was hosted by the National Association of State Fire Marshals in Kansas City, Missouri. Oregon State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple was elected to the board of directors for the organization.

The National Association of State Fire Marshals' mission is to protect human life, property, and the environment from fire and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of state fire marshals' operations.

Chief Ruiz-Temple will serve in this position for a two-year term.

GET COMFORTABLE WITH **DEFENSIBLE SPACE.**



FIVE SUMMER PROJECTS TO CREATE **DEFENSIBLE SPACE:**

- 1** **Remove** leaves, pine needles, and other debris from the roof, gutters, and on and under the deck.
- 2** **Trim** tall plants and bushes growing directly under your eaves.
- 3** **Trim** trees and bushes to make sure they have adequate space from your home and other vegetation.
- 4** **Remove** dead and combustible plants and mulch, especially within the first several feet from the home. Replace with decorative rock or gravel.
- 5** **Cover** exterior attic vents, soffit vents, and areas below decks and patios with 1/8" metal wire mesh.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO
GET A **FREE ASSESSMENT.**



FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY SERVICES DIVISION UPDATE

Prevention is the cornerstone of our agency. Our largest division, fire and life safety, works hard to prevent fires and other incidents. After a fire, our deputy state fire marshals investigate the cause of fires to help prevent future fires.

Here is a snapshot of the work this division accomplished in July. From healthcare facilities to your home's defensible space, our team is here to keep Oregon safe.



- 149** TECHNICAL SERVICE REQUESTS
- 30** PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS
- 9** ABOVEGROUND STORAGE TANK PLAN REVIEWS

TRAINING & EDUCATION



- 49** NEW WORKDAY LEARNERS
- 30** DEPUTIES ATTENDED WILDLAND INVESTIGATION COURSE

HEALTHCARE



- 23** CMS HEALTHCARE SURVEYS
- 25** HEALTHCARE FACILITY PLAN REVIEWS

INVESTIGATIONS & INSPECTIONS



- 52** FIRE INVESTIGATIONS
- 247** FIRE/LIFE SAFETY INSPECTIONS
- 86** FACILITY LICENSE INSPECTIONS
- 48** STATE PROPERTY FACILITY INSPECTIONS

DEFENSIBLE SPACE



- 196** ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED
- 85** BY THE OSFM

OFMAS SUPPORT



- 5** DSFMS DEPLOYED TO WILDFIRES
- 14** AOC SHIFTS
- 3** DRIVE TEAM DEPLOYMENTS

BY THE NUMBERS



CODES CORNER

EMERGENCY LIGHT INSPECTION AND TESTING

Common to nearly all inspections we conduct is the need to evaluate the maintenance of required aisle, corridor, and exit emergency lighting. For new construction, egress illumination requirements are in Oregon Fire Code Section 1008.2.

Emergency power comes in three forms: on-site emergency generators, external battery systems (called Uninterruptible Power Supplies), or unit equipment, commonly called emergency lights or bug-eyes. The inspection, testing, and maintenance for generators and UPSs are found in NFPA 110 and NFPA 111. ITM for the unit equipment, with internal batteries similar to smaller buildings, is exempt from the NFPA requirements and instead found in Oregon Fire Code Section 1032.10.

Section 1032.10.1 contains the first of two requirements, a monthly “activation test” to ensure that all emergency lights are operational. The purpose is similar to the monthly inspection of portable fire extinguishers, ensuring the unit is unobstructed, functional, and in good repair.

This activation test is easy if the lights are self-diagnostic because the owner simply visualizes the unit and the status light which usually flashes a fault code. Without this feature, the circuit breaker supplying power to the unit(s) will need to be shut off for 30 seconds to ensure the batteries are serviceable and all bulbs are good. ICC does not recommend the use of the unit test button for the monthly test because this does not allow a check of the operation of the internal transfer switch.



The second requirement in this section is the annual power test found in Section 1032.10.2. It is performed the same way as the monthly test, but the time is extended from 30 seconds to 90 minutes (the length of a typical power outage) to ensure that the batteries can still provide the brightness required under Section 1008.3.5. Because 90 minutes is really the standard for new batteries it seems reasonable that you would not ask an owner to replace batteries until they reach 60 minutes which is consistent with Section 1104.5.1 for buildings not constructed to a building code. This is important because unlike FACP batteries, which are always supervised for a low charge and replaced every 5 years, E-lights rely solely on this test for their battery condition. Average floor illumination levels can decline from 1.0 to .6 footcandles by the end of the annual test.

While many of us like to spot check these lights and exit signs during an inspection, ultimately you are only looking for the records indicating these two tests were completed per Section 109.3 and making sure any problems identified have been corrected.

A question often asked of deputies is if egress lights on an emergency circuit still require an internal battery backup. According to NFPA 70, Article 700.12, the answer is yes, if that other emergency power source is not available within 10 seconds.

RILEY DUNAGAN JOINS THE OSFM

Riley Dunagan joined the OSFM as a procurement and contract specialist 2. He has a bachelor's degree Portland State University and recently obtained his Oregon Procurement Basic Certification through DAS procurement.

He joins us from the Oregon Youth Authority, where he was a procurement and contract specialist. Riley managed complex architect and engineering contracts and was the lead liaison between OYA and DAS procurement for capital construction projects.

Riley grew up in Oregon and lives in Salem with his partner and their Shih Tzu, Sherman. In his free time, he enjoys hiking, camping, and racing motocross around the Northwest.





REVIVING OREGON LEPCS

A lingering effect of COVID-19 is that statewide, LEPCs have gone dormant. LEPCs are statutorily created local committees that collaborate to plan for releases of the worst hazardous chemicals at stationary facilities. The LEPC creates a countywide plan that is then practiced and fine-tuned. The hope is that the plan will never be needed, but if it is, everyone will know what they should do. To help end the dormancy, staff from regulatory services hosted three LEPC 101 workshops.

LEPC 101 sessions were held in Roseburg, Redmond, and Beaverton. A total of 46 people from regulated industry, local government, and community groups participated. Participants learned about LEPC legal requirements and responsibilities. They were given basic information on how to create, fund, and recruit new members. Lastly, they were introduced to CHS Manager as a tool to help them know what facilities and chemicals are in their community.

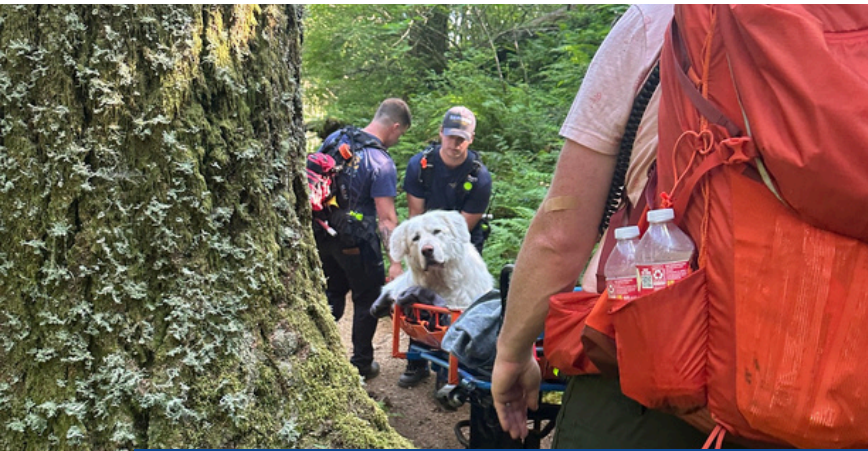
The impact of these sessions was immediate as attendees started setting up meetings to start new LEPCs. As a direct result of these sessions, efforts are underway in Lane, Hood River, Tillamook, Marion, Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson counties to revitalize dormant LEPCs.



PLEASE WELCOME SYDNEY MASSINGALE TO THE OSFM

Sydney Massingale joins the OSFM from a private sector procurement team where she spent four years building her skills. She started in Central Oregon, was raised in Aumsville, and currently lives in Salem. She lives with her 4-year-old daughter and her rescue Goldendoodle Archie. She and her daughter love swimming and going on walkies (hikes) up at Silver Falls or Minto Brown Island Park.

She aspires to go to Scotland to enjoy the adorable highland cows, culture, and history of the country.



FROM THE INTERNET

Several local fire agencies including Cannon Beach, Hamlet, Gearhart, and Seaside helped to rescue a 160-pound great Pyrenees hiking with its owners near Saddle Mountain in July. The dog's paws were raw and cut from the rough terrain and it refused to keep walking. You can [read more about the rescue here.](#)

FIXING UP THE PAST

Engine 1170 is back in quarters! In July, Gaston Fire's our beloved 1938 Ford, the first real "fire engine" for the department, made its triumphant return to Station 11. Loved by many, it served as a full-service fire engine for years and later participated in musters and parades. The agency says it is grateful to the Oregon Fire Service Museum and the Tillamook Air Museum for taking care of 1170 for more than a decade. Now, volunteers at Station 11 plan to make some fixes. Gaston Fire hopes to have 1170 ready for the Wapato Parade and Car Show on August 17.



JOIN THE OSFM **SMOKE ALARM** INSTALLATION PROGRAM



Is your agency interested in joining the OSFM's Smoke Alarm Installation Program? The program provides smoke alarms to Oregon fire agencies to install in homes that do not have them.

There are several opportunities to learn more about the program during free webinars. Participants will learn about program eligibility and requirements, smoke alarms and installation information, project planning and ideas, and safety materials available to order. The one-hour live webinar training is required for fire agencies to participate in the program.

Click the dates below to register.

August 22, 2024

September 26, 2024



CONTACT US

Have a story idea or something you would like to know more about?

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