

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Oct. 21

# Wescott will participate in world competition

By Nancy Wilkins

At the Oct. 21 Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) Board of Directors meeting, Fire Chief Vinny Burns and Assistant Fire Chief Scott Ridings with Directors Harland Baker, John Fredell, and Bo McAllister announced that firefighters will participate in a world competition, reminded residents to call their homeowners insurance company to see if insurance rates can be lowered, announced plans to mitigate 350 acres in El Paso County, and tweaked the draft budget for 2015.

### Challenge tests physical strength

Eighteen firefighters from DWFPD will compete Nov. 4-8 at the Scott Fire Fighter Combat Challenge in Phoenix. Named for the Scott breathing apparatus, firefighters will

compete over a timed course being tested in skills such as dragging hoses, chopping, hoisting, life rescue, and climbing. Ridings said it is a good competition and that the district last participated in the same contest two or three years ago. Firefighters from other countries, such as England and Canada, will also participate. ESPN is expected to cover the event. Ridings said Restoration Logistics, Classic Cones, and 511 Tactical are sponsoring the team. For more information, see [www.firefighterchallenge.com](http://www.firefighterchallenge.com)

### Residents may get lower insurance rates

Ridings reminded people to contact their homeowners' insurance agent to see if they can lower their insurance rates based on a new ISO rating. DWFPD went from an

ISO rating 5 to a 3 for areas with hydrants, and Ridings said a drop in two numbers is almost unheard of. The ISO rate for areas without fire hydrants also was reduced slightly. A new ISO rating for Wescott occurs about every ten years. The lower ISO rating is considered a benefit for district residents.

### Fire mitigation spans 350 acres

DWFPD will be clearing an area of about 350 acres along the Highway 83 corridor and the southern boundary of High Forest Ranch for fire mitigation. Ridings reported he is using a GPS locator to help determine the area to be mitigated. He said the department has received two grants: one from the Colorado Department of Natural Resources for \$90,000 and the other for \$257,000 from the Colorado Healthy Forest Restoration Act. The mitigation is to be completed in about the middle of next year.

When Fire Chief Vinny Burns thanked Ridings for the fire mitigation work he has been doing, Ridings received a thankful round of applause from the audience.

### Department run report

In September 2013, the district received 168 calls. In September this year, Ridings reported 215 calls. The majority of calls were for emergency medical services. Ridings also reported two "hazardous" calls. Ridings said a hazardous call could be a short circuit that creates heat but doesn't escalate into a fire.

### Financial report

Administrative Assistant Stacey Popovich gave the financial report for Sept. 30: Peoples National Bank, \$41,711; PNP Colorado Peak Fund, \$180,077; Colorado Trust, \$439,405; and Wells Fargo Public Trust, \$777,126, for a total of \$1.4 million.

### Wildland deployment compensation

Wescott should receive about \$98,593 as compensation for deploying firefighters to California. The firefighters received valuable training on how to protect national forests. The compensation should cover the deployment costs for salaries, travel expenses, vehicle maintenance costs, and provide additional income to the district.

### Fine tuning the 2015 draft budget

Noticing large electricity costs for Station 2, Popovich made several calls to Mountain View Electric Association (MVEA). Subsequently, the fire station will now be billed in a lower demand category resulting in about a \$2,000 savings to the district in 2015. The electric company will also credit the district for two months. Under the lower rates, Popovich expects a decrease of \$250 each month. Popovich, referring to the electricity costs, said "We thought there was something off with our electrical." Popovich also said an additional fax line has been disconnected, saving the district about \$500 a year.

Ridings said the district will look at various plans for a lower insurance rate for workers compensation. Ridings said the firefighters attend safety classes every year and have gone a few years without a workers comp incident. The current compensation rate with the existing insurance is expected to increase about 20 percent in 2015, prompting Ridings to search for lower rates.

Both the decrease in electric costs and the current rate of workers compensation will be reflected in the new dollar amount in the draft budget for 2015. Popovich also updated the draft budget line items from MVEA electricity and natural gas company Black Hills Energy to

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