

Check It Out, Hondo VFD Has A Website!

As many in our district know, we have been working on www.hondovfd.org

A little more than a year ago Hondo Member Michael Schippling created the backbone for our website. Since then we have been filling the pages with pictures, stories, and other information for our community. And now, it's ready!

See a map of our district, a calendar with our weekly trainings, and **now you can to make donations securely online via PayPal!** Make sure to bookmark us and keep checking back for updates. Special thanks to Studio X for hosting our website, as well as John Calef, Jonathan Cohen and Michael Schippling for all their hard work.

—David Silver
Fire Fighter/EMT-B



Click here to make a secure donation online!

Please Support Our Annual Fund Drive Oct. 24!

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HONDO VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
P.O. BOX 5622
SANTA FE, NM 87502
Serving residents along I-25, Old Santa Fe Trail and Old Pecos Trail from the City limits to Canoncito at Apache Canyon.



HONDO ALARUM

HONDO VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE NEWSLETTER Fall/Winter 2009



MEET YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT Shown above are some of the people who respond to your calls. From left, front row: Zach Buzzell, Tom Chilton, Hersch Wilson, Ed Hoessler, Mike Ellington. 2nd row: Nate Murray, Michael Shippling, Khadija Montoya, Andy Reeves, Terry Protheroe. Back row: Adam Stively, Mark Lerma, Wayne Corcoran, Woody Ellenwood, Chris Blea, Bruce Wollens, Evan Rees, Duane Dearborn, Bobb Barnes, Charles Becvarik, Bob Jones. Not shown: John McTasney, Peggy Hesch, David Silver, Jonathan Cohen, Zeb Turner, John Calef, Faith Applewhite, Paul Kelly, Whitney Chase, Brennan Gibbs, Rose Miller, Mike Walz, Rich Fahey, Gary Boal, Rob Desatoff, Seth Kaufman, Billy Van Herp.

Do you sometimes wonder how you got into some unusual or unexpected situation? As a little kid I never gave a thought to being a fireman (or an astronaut or a doctor). But things changed in the summer of 2002 when I moved from the city of Santa Fe out to the county.

Each time I drove to the new house I went past Hondo Station 1. One Saturday morning I stopped by to see if these firemen wanted a four-drawer file cabinet that I no longer needed. A very tall, friendly guy, Chief Jed Dean, said "No, we really don't need a file cabinet, but we want you as a volunteer." Who

could say no to a welcome like that? I showed up at Hondo the next week.

FROM THE CHIEF

Over the last seven years I have seen many others join the ranks of Hondo. Some stayed for a year or two, then graduated from school and moved on to college or a job. Some were so drawn to emergency work that



Tom Chilton

it became their new career and they left Hondo for a full time job with the county or the city fire department. Some who arrived more than 20 years ago are still responding to their Hondo pagers.

We have congratulated members as they got married or became new parents. And we have draped black bunting across a fire truck in preparation for a memorial service for one of our own. Hondo is like a tiny town of 40 people, always planning and always changing.

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FROM THE CHIEF *continued from page 1*

What draws people to do this kind of work? It is hard to imagine getting much response to a truthful solicitation, like this:

Wanted:

What draws people to do this kind of work? It is hard to imagine getting much response to a truthful solicitation, like this:

Volunteers for the local Fire Department

Salary: None

Reimbursements: Some

Hours of operation: Unpredictable, but no less than any time, day or night

Total time required per week:

Number of hours that your spouse can barely tolerate X 2

Work environment: Frequently noisy, smoky and wet; applicants need to have a high tolerance for diesel exhaust fumes.

Protective clothing provided:

Large quantities of used, bulky clothing that almost fits

Language skills required:

Applicants must be able to understand instructions transmitted via static-filled radios while standing 10 feet from an

operating chain saw.

Management skills required:

Applicants must be able to maintain a calm demeanor when faced with stumbling drunks, crying children, panicked parents, growling dogs and bureaucrats with an insatiable need to request more paperwork.

Analytical skills required:

Applicants must be able to look at flames and smoke pouring out of a burning house and conclude that the most rational course of action is to go inside.

Physical agility requirements

Applicants must be able to rapidly jump over a highway guardrail to avoid deranged motorists who have just mowed down a dozen traffic cones.

Driving skills required:

Applicants must be able to turn around a 22-ton fire truck at night in a driveway designed for a Prius.

Visual acuity skills required:

Applicants must be able to find and read house numerals artfully painted on a rock located behind a three-foot tall chamisa.

OK, forget the want ad. It's probably

better that new members discover these things slowly.

Why have I stayed at Hondo? Start with big challenges, friendships forged in fire (literally) and new skills. Throw in some flashing red lights, loud sirens, and free burritos. Add being tearfully thanked by strangers you will never see again. That's enough for me to stay.

Then there was that beautiful Saturday morning when a bunch of us were washing the big red trucks. I stepped back and looked at the sudsy buckets, the long handle brushes and water being sprayed everywhere possible. I listened to the laughter and the storytelling. It then occurred to me that in almost every small town in this country, at that same moment, volunteer fire fighters were at their station washing their big red trucks, getting ready for the next emergency in their community. I realized that I was part of a truly great American tradition that dates back to the first volunteer fire company formed by Benjamin Franklin.

So when I was recently asked if I would be the new Chief, I thought, who could say no to a question like that?

Auxiliary Seeks New Members

We recognize that not everyone can participate in actual fire fighting or the

One Morning, Many Thanks

While we really, really appreciate monetary contributions to HVFD, we also greatly appreciate folks who give us their time. Can you help us? On Saturday, October 24, meet us at 8 a.m. at Station 1 on Seton Village Road. Eat a breakfast burrito, don a complimentary T-shirt, pick up some packets and choose a section of our district to canvass. From 9 to noon, go with a team mate to knock on doors, give out information and pick up donations. Then feel great for helping your fire department so that we can help our community. You'll be glad you did!

delivery of emergency medical services to the community on a 24-7 basis. But there are many tasks done "behind the scenes" by non-fire fighter members of the Hondo Auxiliary, and we can always use more members.

The Auxiliary is a dedicated group of men and women who support the activities in numerous ways that are essential to the continued success of the department. Although the public rarely meets us "behind the scenes" members, we are proud to be a part of the department and proud to be able to contribute in assisting the fire fighters in their duties as emergency respondents.

Auxiliary responsibilities include: the publication of the *Alarum* newsletter twice a year, produced by Ruth Johnson; our July 4th picnic is coordinated by Germaine Chappel; mail is collected from the post office by Fran Martone; dona-

tions are deposited and supplies are purchased by Betty Watson; the annual Fund Drive is under the leadership of Martina Ellington and Christi Chilton; Marcy Litzenberg sends out our thank-you notes and T-shirts maintains our donor data base. We are all involved in "REHAB" which is delivering food and beverages to Hondo VFD fire fighters when an emergency situation is lasts an extended period of time.

The Auxiliary was formed in 1994, with Tom Claffey as the first Chairman. Since then our district has grown and more responsibilities have been taken on by the auxillary. This, of course, means we need new members. Please consider becoming a part of this organization: We really need you!

If you would like to join, or have some questions, please call Betty Watson at 982-1663.

A Word To The Wise (or how to avoid having us make an emergency call to your house)

As days grow shorter and nights cooler, it's time to review a few very obvious and basic fire prevention tips.

1. **Clean your chimney or have it cleaned.** Creosote build-up can, and frequently does, catch fire and that chimney fire frequently will spread into the walls and ceiling of the home.
 2. **Use a metal container to hold ashes** from the fireplace, not a paper bag! Keep the container away from walls and other flammable substances. We frequently find that the ashes you think are old and cold are still quite hot and can ignite, especially if exposed to a breeze.
 3. **Electric space heaters should always be placed away from anything that could catch fire**, e.g. curtains, bed spreads or sheets, clothing and the like.
 4. Periodically **have your furnace serviced by a licensed heating contractor.** Blockage will impair the efficiency of your unit and may result in carbon monoxide build up. This is odorless, colorless and can quickly result in death!
 5. Install and then regularly check the **batteries on both smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.** The beginning and end of daylight savings time is a good way to remember to change the batteries. A \$2.00 battery could very well save a life.
 6. **Do not overload extension cords.** Too many plugs have caused many a fire that could easily have been avoided.
 7. **Check your outside lighting sconces** and clean out any bird nest material. Last year Hondo responded to a fire in a sconce that started simply from the heat of the bulb.
 8. Take a few minutes and **develop an escape plan** from various places in your home. Fire spreads rapidly and injuries and even death can be avoided with a little foresight, preparation and practice.
- Thanks for supporting the Hondo Fire Department, and be assured that if you need us we will be there for you.

—Paul Kelly

Alarmed and Alert for Carbon Monoxide

As fire fighters and EMT's, we are equipped to handle carbon monoxide and its dangers. Proper equipment and testers keep us safe in dangerous situations. But what are the dangers in everyday household environments? What can you do to keep your family safe?

CO (carbon monoxide), is undetectable. It is odorless, tasteless, colorless and very toxic. It is produced from incomplete burning of a fossil fuel or organic matter such as propane, natural gas or wood. In every day life these fuels are used in heaters, water heaters, stoves and ovens, fireplaces and your car. Careful control of these devices can eliminate the risk of CO. Here are some things you can do to be safe:

- Have your furnace, boiler, and hot water heater serviced annually by a licensed heating contractor. Make sure he checks for CO and system problems such as leaks and proper combustion. Have him check filters, venting and exhaust (in to and out of your home). Get a full inspection report from the contractor and ask questions about anything you don't fully understand.
- Never use a furnace or boiler mechanical room for storage: it is a fire hazard and the space it takes up deprives the unit of needed oxygen.
- Inspect and service your fireplace. Have the chimney cleaned and checked regularly. If you burn a lot of wood, do this more often.
- Never keep your car running in the garage. It is very easy to get overcome with CO in an enclosed area. Always pull the car out of the garage so that CO can escape to atmosphere.
- Never heat your home with the oven. Prolonged use of ovens can cause problems. If you are cooking for a long period of time, try to vent the house often and have the unit checked at the exhaust for CO. Most ovens are vented into the home, so turn the exhaust fan on when in use.
- Install and use carbon monoxide detectors. **THIS IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO.** Make sure the batteries are new and check the expiration date. If it does not have an expiration date and you don't know how old it is, replace it! Place the unit in a central location, up high, near sleeping areas. If yours is a large home, use more than one

unit. Make sure the unit is clean. Wipe the unit and vacuum it with a brush attachment. A plug-in unit with a digital readout can give you information on the level of CO when the unit goes off. Usually units will start to alarm at 50 parts per million (ppm). **GET AN ALARM.**

Signs and symptom of CO are headache, nausea, sick with flu like symptoms, unable to function properly. Low levels of CO, around 50 PPM will cause headache and nausea. Levels above 50 PPM cause extreme sickness and death. If you feel these symptoms and are exposed to CO get out of the house into fresh air and call 911. If you feel faint or sick and can't make it outside, drop to the ground and crawl out. CO is lighter than air so the levels may be lower at ground level and this can give you a couple of seconds to escape. CO replaces oxygen in the bloodstream and is takes time to clear out. After CO exposure, medical attention is essential, so always get checked out.

Prevention and early detection of high CO levels is important in avoiding disaster. Keep yourself alarmed and alert and no one gets hurt.

—Mark Lerma
Fire Fighter EMT



Fire fighter John McTasney explains various tools on Rescue 1 to new trainees Billy Van Herp and Duane Dearborn at a routine Saturday morning duty section.

How to Support HVFD

Send tax-deductible contributions to:
Hondo Volunteer Fire & Rescue
P. O. Box 5622
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502
We are a 501(c)(3) organization

When Drunks Are Driving

Just after midnight on Sunday, June 28th of this year, one very intoxicated driver crashed into the side of a small car on Old Las Vegas Highway. Inside that car were five young teenagers. Four of them died.

A dozen Hondo fire fighters responded to the scene. Our jobs were clear:

- Immediately block the highway so that we could safely do our work.
- Determine the medical condition of each person involved in the collision.
- Request that a medical helicopter be launched.
- Remove the only surviving teenager from the small car and transport her to the incoming helicopter.
- Wait for the police to take measurements and photographs.
- Cut away the crushed car doors so that we could remove the bodies of the deceased.

Memories of these tasks do not rest lightly on the soul. They burrow in. Those of us who were there that night knew that for the next few weeks images of what we had seen would come unannounced into our mind – while we were trying to sleep or beginning to wake, or when we drove that familiar stretch of highway.

All of Old Las Vegas Highway and 17 miles of Interstate 25 are in the Hondo Fire District. This is the third time in less than four years that three or more young people have died together in a car on these roads. What each of us does with these terrible memories and how we choose to get past them is usually unspoken and private. After this last tragedy I chose to write – for my own healing and for any others that might be touched by these words.



The calling

*We came from all directions
to a long stretch of road
where no one ever stops.*

*From great red trucks
with tall white lights
we could see what we feared.*

*For one there was hope
and together we worked
to keep her here with the living.*

*For four
neither our tools nor our tears
could change what had happened.*

*Into four perfect faces
we said goodbye
for those whose nightmare would soon begin.*

*In silence each child was moved
as a mother moves a baby
she doesn't want to wake.*

*As the sun rose into overcast skies
we returned to our homes
reminded once again of the honor and the horror
of this, our quiet calling.*

Tom Chilton
June 28, 2009

Training Together for the Big Ones

Hondo Volunteer Fire Department successfully hosted a regional training event in June. All the fire department districts in the Eastern Region of Santa Fe County (Hondo, Eldorado, Galisteo and Glorieta) were invited to attend an exercise designed to help us get even better at how we respond to motor vehicle accidents.

Departments within the Eastern Region provide support to each at house fires, large brush fires and complicated motor vehicle accidents. As a result, departments

must do more than maintain a high level of proficiency. We must take every opportunity to promote strong working relationships between the departments.

Districts from the Eastern Region gathered on the last Saturday in June for the training. Those in attendance were then assigned to work in groups that included fire fighters and officers from different departments. Then the groups were asked to complete tasks specific to how we respond to motor vehicle accidents, from

scene stabilization to patient extrication.

As the training came to a close, everyone gathered together for a review. The event demonstrated our ability to work together efficiently and effectively. We all agreed that joint training like this should occur several times a year.

Within 12 hours of this training, Eldorado Fire Department assisted Hondo at the tragic, multiple-fatality accident on Old Las Vegas Highway.

—John Calef



Hondo volunteer fire fighters regularly practice motor vehicle extrication techniques.

Motor Vehicle Accidents are a common Hondo challenge. For many reasons, cars often seem to roll over and come to rest “rubber side up.” What is most amazing is that the occupants often “self-extricate,” so that when we get on scene they are wandering around, just a little dazed and confused. Occasionally, the vehicle is reluctant to give up its occupants. This is where our Rescue 1, a really big tool truck, comes in.

Rescue 1 has: both tethered and portable hydraulic cutter/spreaders (the “jaws of life”); an air chisel for cutting through sheet metal; carbide-tipped saws for metal and concrete; high pressure air bags for lifting things like overturned vehicles. There are big boxes of “cribbing” (blocks and wedges) and a number of heavy duty adjustable struts to assist with stabilizing a vehicle. Plus just about every useful hand tool imaginable.

At a motor vehicle accident scene, our first problem is controlling other traffic so we can work safely. Often we have to shut down the Interstate or a major surface road.

The next issue we face is that the car may be on its side or roof, perhaps tilted up onto some other vehicle, or has overturned end-over-end in a ditch. For our safety, and to protect victims from

further injury, we have to make sure the vehicle stays in one place. Then we can proceed to dismantle the car in order to extricate the victims.

At a recent training we started with a vehicle on its side. We used the air chisel to cut holes in the front and rear of the body into which we inserted struts. The struts were tied together

Rollover!

with ratchet straps forming two stressed triangles. This ensured that the car would remain rotated at 90 degrees. We pried open the hood and cut the battery cable to reduce fire hazards and deactivate any lurking air bags (newer vehicles have so many that victim survival rates are rising rapidly, but so is the danger to rescuers who trigger one accidentally).

Once the vehicle was stable, the rear window was broken out. (On a real scene, this allows an EMT in full bunker gear to squirm into the cabin to care for victims; they would be covered with a tarp to protect them from flying glass.) We then practiced the next step which is to break out all the other windows and saw through the windshield with a really wicked glass saw.

With the glass gone, we started roof removal. We hoped the practice car's air-bag pyrotechnics and/or compressed gas cylinders were fully deactivated because next we cut the door pillars — the posts that hold up the roof. Getting through three posts on the upper side of the car took less than a minute with our big hydraulic cutter. Then we found we could just bend the roof down without unduly disturbing the “patient.” The whole thing took about five minutes.

When we take off the doors it's a little harder...

After all the glass breaking and post cutting we got access to the door hinges by removing part of the fender. Then we used our hydraulic tools to separate the hinges. The real problem was the “Ralph Nader Pin” at the other end of the door. The Nader Pin keeps the door closed in many more collisions than the non-Nader pin used to; however, it is hardened steel and does not easily bend. Like air bags, it saves a lives but makes our job a little harder.

But how cool is it to be able to disassemble an entire vehicle in five or ten minutes, eh?

—Michael Schippling



H1N1 Flu Answers and Advice

With the confirmation H1N1 Flu in New Mexico, we at Hondo want to address some of the most frequently asked questions about H1N1.

What is H1N1 (“swine flu”)?

This virus was originally referred to as “swine flu” because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. It was first detected in the United States in April 2009.

Is it contagious?

Yes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

How does the virus spread?

Mainly from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing by people with the virus. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something (a surface or object) with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

What are the signs and symptoms?

They include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting.

How does novel H1N1 flu compare to seasonal flu in terms of severity and infection rates?

With seasonal flu, seasons vary in terms of timing, duration and severity and can cause mild to severe illness, and at times lead to death. Since the H1N1 flu outbreak, the CDC began working with states to collect, compile and analyze information. The CDC supports the conclusion that novel H1N1 flu has caused greater disease burden in people younger than 25 than older people. At this time, there are few deaths reported in people older than 64. However, previously recognized high risk medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, suppressed immune systems, heart disease, kidney disease, neurocognitive and neuromuscular disorders appear to be associated with increased risk of complications from H1N1 virus.

Everyday steps to protect yourself:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw it in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or

mouth. Germs spread this way.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

Emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

We hope this information helps us move safely through this flu season with as little transmission as possible. Remember, viruses can be avoided.

—Peggy Hesch

In addition to being an active member of HVFD, Peggy works with the Department of Health, Emergency Response Division, she is a Emergency Medical Systems Program Manager and a Paramedic. Read more at <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1FLU/>



Why We Need Your Donation

A lot has changed since Hondo Fire and Rescue was created back in 1974. During the first three years there was no fire house. The department had no emergency medical technicians, or a heavy rescue vehicle to use during motor vehicle accidents. Dispatchers called fire fighter's homes when there was a call. The phone would ring one continuous ring at every fire fighters home at once. When everyone was on the line, the operator would give the details of the call.

Today there are 15 paramedics and EMTs on our roster. There are two firehouses in the district, and fire fighters carry mobile radios with them. We also now have an ambulance and a heavy rescue truck, which compliment our fire and brush trucks. Our fire fighters have state of the art bunker gear

to protect them from smoke, heat and flame. The department also has self-contained breathing apparatus, which is a different version of SCUBA technology you might be more familiar with. Our breathing apparatus provides breathable air in hostile environments.

We're very lucky to have our equipment. In 2008 Hondo Fire and Rescue responded to 540 calls. While some days were clearly busier than others, this averages out to one to two calls every day. Some might be surprised to hear about the diversity of calls we responded to. We were sent to 209 situations in 2008 that required strictly emergency medical services. We were also sent to 112 motor vehicle accidents. We provided mutual aide to other departments on 45 different occasions, and went to 20 fires.

Because the community depends on us, we are required to maintain a high level of training and ensure we have the right equipment. But the department also depends on the community. Money we receive as donations are the only funds we have complete control over. This is money we use to purchase bunker gear, pay for trainings, and order tools. These types of purchases are essential in order for us to be able to do our jobs.

On October 24 fire fighters, the HVFD Auxiliary and other community volunteers will be canvassing the district asking for your support. Please give what you're comfortable donating. Not only will you be investing in the fire department, you'll be investing in your community.

Thank you.

—John Calef

How We Use Your Donation

How do we spend your donation? A lot of people are asking that question to politicians, financial executives, retirement fund managers and spouses. I'm compelled, as treasurer, to let you know where our neighbors' tax deductible donations to Hondo Fire and Rescue's 501-C-3 account have been spent. This account allows Hondo Fire and Rescue to serve its constituents and motorists traveling on our section of I-25 by putting the money where it can have a direct impact. These are not our only expenses and the 501-C-3 account is not our only source of funding. It is not subject to the scrutiny of our other state and county funding sources. I'll use the coffee-can-and-100-pennies approach to explain where the money goes. (Percentages change annually; this example is based on 2008.)

- Out of every dollar donation:
 - 23¢ for office supplies, food and drinks (during and after responding to calls, fire fighters need bottled water, Gatorade, and high-energy foods to keep going)
 - 19¢ for maintenance of our fire equipment and facilities
 - 14¢ for our annual awards dinner and recognition awards to our volunteers
 - 13¢ for fund drive expenses, including two *Alarum* newsletter mailings and our annual 4th of July Picnic
 - 10¢ for fire fighting equipment, including new and replacement equipment
 - 8¢ for uniforms
 - 7¢ for training aides, including the junk cars that we use extrication training
 - 3¢ for postage
 - 2¢ for education fees including main-

taining our refresher course fees
 1¢ for administrative fees directly associated with the 501-C-3 and our CPA
 It takes care of our volunteers that train every Tuesday and Saturday by having water and refreshments available for rehabilitation. It ensures that our trucks are outfitted with current equipment and that equipment is maintained in good working order. It allows our officers to recognize the efforts of the fire fighters during a monthly lunch and annual awards dinner. It keeps our fire, rescue, and medical training relevant with current material. It pays for medical refresher courses, which keeps individual licenses up to date. The 501-C-3 funds help to make us a stand-out district in Santa Fe County Fire Department.

—John McTasney