

HONDO ALARUM

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Hondo stayed busy through the end of 2008 and started 2009 without missing a beat. We responded to 532 total calls last year, including more than a few chimney fires. It's important to have the chimney from your fireplace or wood-burning stove cleaned and inspected often. If you haven't had this done in a while, now is a good time to avoid the fall rush.



Seth Gleiman

After more than 20 years in the department we were sad to say goodbye to our longtime Secretary and Treasurer, Laurie Wilson. She joined Hondo as a firefighter and EMT and later transitioned to the less demanding, but no less important, role and has dutifully taken meeting minutes and monitored our accounts with grace and professionalism. Thank you Laurie for your service to both Hondo and the Hondo community.

At our annual awards banquet in February, Firefighter/EMTP/Lieutenant Evan Rees was awarded Member of the Year for 2008. Firefighters Michael Schippling and John McTasney both were awarded Trainee of the Year and Marcy Litzenberg was awarded Auxiliary Member of the year. All four of them exemplify the dedication and sacrifice that makes Hondo great.

We participated in several new live-fire trainings in 2008 to give our firefighters more hands-on experience including vehicle and structure fire suppression. We

are now using chemical smoke generators to obscure our vision so that training scenarios are more realistic. This allows us to use tools such as our thermal imaging camera (see story, page 3). We keep training on the basics and aim to provide the best service on each and every call.

Our rescue team trainings are being coordinated by fire fighter John Calef who brings new energy and insight to this important role.

Many members of the Hondo EMS team are gearing up to become CPR instructors so we can once again provide community CPR training.

We are also patiently awaiting the delivery of our new med unit.

The Hondo Wildland Fire team is preparing for another busy season and wants you to be safe this summer. Remember that open burning requires a permit — you can pick one up at Station 1 on Tuesday evenings or Saturday mornings.

Also, please be sure you know exactly what to do when you hear sirens while driving. We depend on you to help us get on scene safely and quickly.

Officers for 2009 are: Chief Seth Gleiman, Assistant Chief Tom Chilton, Fire Captain Adam Stively, EMS Captain Greg Hesch, Captain Bruce Wollens, Lieutenants Mike Walz, Evan Rees and Khadija Montoya.

Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions about becoming a volunteer, obtaining a burn permit, or to schedule a free wildland home assessment. You are welcome to stop by Station 1 any Saturday morning for a cup of coffee, a tour of the Station and a close-up view of our apparatus. Each Hondo firefighter is eager to talk with you about the benefits of volunteering with Hondo.

Finally, it is with profound sadness that I announce my retirement from the department. I have been lucky to serve as chief for the last two-and-a-half years. I have learned much during my time here and have no doubt that I am leaving Hondo poised for the future. Hondo is blessed with great people who care as much about each other as they do for our community. I will sincerely miss being a part of such an amazing organization.

Stay safe!

**Please join Hondo Volunteer Fire Dept.,
Sparky the Fire Dog & Smokey Bear**



**at our Annual Picnic
Saturday, July 4th
Noon to 3:00 pm
Station 1,
Seton Village Road**

**This free event is our way
of saying "thank you" to
the community for the
great support you give
HVFD throughout the year.**

Super Tools of the Trade: Thermal Imaging Camera

There are many things firemen do that don't happen outside the world of emergency services. For example, on a typical day, most folks simply have no need to cut off the door of a car or cut a hole in a roof with an industrial-strength chain saw. Most folks will ever use a GPS to tell a pilot where to land a helicopter on the interstate. In the fire fighter's world, doing unusual things is routine.

One of the most important tools we use is a thermal imaging camera or TIC ("tick"). It looks like a large video camera, with a lens on one end and a video screen on the other. With it we have superman-like abilities to see what no mortal can see. The TIC sees no color, no highlights or shadows. It only sees heat: what's cold, what's warm, what's hot. It is so sensitive that if you press your hand against a wall for a few seconds, then walk away, the

TIC will show a bright handprint shape where your palm and fingers raised the surface temperature of the wall of few degrees. Here are some of the things we do with this amazing tool.

At the scene of a nighttime motor vehicle accident we look for passengers who may have been in the car when it crashed. They may have climbed out of the car, then collapsed in deep brush as they wandered to get help. The TIC will look right through the cool chamisa and see the much warmer shape of a person.

If a small child is lost in the woods we can easily scan the trees, shrubs and hillside. Though we may be near enough to be seen and heard, small children will often hide and remain silent, fearing the army of strangers who noisily sweep through the woods calling their name.

Besides being able to see in the dark

the TIC can see through thick smoke. When a house catches fire, the smoke inside can be so thick that your gloved hand is not visible when it is inches from your facemask. Quickly finding an unconscious resident or a trapped firefighter in these conditions would be impossible without a TIC.

Even when no one is missing, lost or injured we can put the TIC to work. It can see inside walls. A bright spot on the video screen could mean that something is burning within a wall, or that an electrical connection is overheating.

In spite of all this sophisticated technology, some things remain easy to understand: Fire trucks are big because they carry lots of water, hose and tools.

Some kids grew up to be fire fighters because they watched so many episodes of Superman.

—Tom Chilton, Assistant Chief

Our Training Never Ends (and that's a good thing!)

The Hondo Fire & Rescue district includes almost 20 miles of interstate highway and several busy intersections.

This means that department members must maintain a high level of proficiency in response to motor vehicle accidents. We must be prepared to deal with any type of emergency situation on our roads.

Our training schedule is designed to train new members while challenging existing members and reinforcing their skills. Topics covered throughout the year include: basic tool operation, vehicle construction and supplemental restraint systems.

New members are gaining an understanding of our standard operating guidelines while gaining hands-on experience under the supervision of seasoned firefighters. Experienced firefighters have multiple opportunities throughout the year to practice skills such as extrication of patients

from Railrunner train cars, mass casualty incidents, and working with helicopter teams who fly patients to trauma centers.

We are excited to be planning a competition with other local fire departments on extricating patients from vehicles — with the idea of challenging ourselves and others to develop better skills.

Hondo fire fighters work very hard to maintain our reputation for how we respond to motor vehicle accidents and other emergencies on our roads. Our training events ensure that everyone has a chance to learn and practice the basics while challenging our members to grow.

We're always looking for new members and no experience is necessary. Stop by Station 1 on Tuesday night or Saturday morning to learn more!

—John Calef
Firefighter/Rescue Team Coordinator



Public CPR Training to Resume

The Hondo Emergency Medical Services team is once again able to provide a very important service: public CPR training. It is well known that bystander CPR is very important in the survivability of people who suffer sudden cardiac arrest, so we are delighted to once again become a resource for this type of training.

We recently purchased the necessary materials and we will be training a new cadre of CPR instructors this summer. We are looking forward to conducting the first public CPR training this fall.

Thank you for making this possible! Donations from people like you are being used to fund this training.

Please look for information about upcoming classes at Station 1 on Seton Village Road and in the next issue of the *Alarum*.

—Greg Hesch
EMS Captain

2009 Wildland Fire Season Is Here!

Hondo Fire and Rescue, in conjunction with much of the rest of the State of New Mexico, is preparing for an early and possibly substantial fire season in 2009. Winter precipitation was fairly light and upper elevation snowpack levels were below average. Most of the lower elevations of New Mexico have already begun a dry out period, leaving abundant fuels ready to burn.

This situation has already resulted in an early brush fire season in Santa Fe County, with numerous fires popping up in late February. Hondo participates in wildland fire on several fronts, the first and most important being the protection of the people and property in our district. The second is, as a resource for state and national agencies, we may be called up to be part of a large response to a significant wildland fire incident. In those cases Hondo often sends a small team of three

or four personnel and a county fire truck to participate in suppression activities.



While the explanation of Hondo's work in these out-of-district fires is fairly detailed, the benefits are easier to understand. Hondo personnel recruited to a large fire learn tactics, practice skills and are compensated for the work by the agency requesting assistance. Hondo appa

ratus used also gets paid a "salary," which goes directly into Hondo's budget to benefit our district. So in the end, we get invaluable experience for Hondo personnel, and dollars flowing into our own district's fire protection accounts.

What is your role in all of this? There are several things you can do using fire safely this spring and summer and paying attention to the county's permitting process for burning weeds and slash. A continued dry spell will likely result in a complete outdoor burning ban again this year. Take steps now to minimize the possibility that your home and landscape will be part of a fire. Many Hondo residents have done a phenomenal job of removing excess fuels from their property thereby contributing to the overall solution. If you'd like to learn how more, please call us at 988-9999. Please be careful and be safe.

—Adam Stively Fire Captain/
Wildland Team Coordinator

Please Give Us a Brake & Pull Over!

Believe it or not, the National Fire Protection Association states that the majority of fire apparatus wrecks occur during daylight hours and on dry roads.

Why? Some drivers don't care and refuse to pull over, but the much bigger problem is people who are just not paying attention. They are listening to the radio, talking on the phone, eating, talking, etc. They do not see us!

Cars are more and more sound proof and if drivers are not paying attention to their mirrors and what's going on around them, they are not aware that they need to get out of the way.

If you see or hear an emergency vehicle, what should you do?

Safely pull over to the side of the road and let the fire truck or ambulance pass.

If you are stopped at an intersection and hear the siren or horn coming through the cross street, please remain where you are, even if the traffic light is green. Even with the siren wailing, emergency vehicle drivers never assume other drivers hear the siren.

Here are a few reasons why we appreciate it if you either stop or pull over.

A big red truck's stopping distance. That is how are the vehicle travels from the time the driver realizes the need to stop and when the apparatus actually stops.

An emergency vehicle traveling over 50 mph may outrun the effective range of its siren. A siren operating on an emergency vehicle moving at 40 mph can project 300 feet in front of the vehicle. At a speed of 60 mph, however, the siren is audible only at 12 feet. So please be aware of emergency vehicles around our district.

Our fire engine is much bigger than your car, our tanker is slower to stop, and we may be headed to your house!

College Student/ Fire Fighter

Nobody in the school library seems to understand when the pager shrieks and voices crackle over the radio. The librarian's look makes it abundantly clear she most definitely does not understand.

As soon as I reach the station, however, everyone there understands: the little jolt of adrenaline, the drop-everything-and-leave mentality and the ineffable reasons why we sacrifice our time, sleep and sometimes relationships to care for strangers.

Being a volunteer firefighter and a college student seems to be much the same as being a volunteer firefighter and any other occupation. We all depart unique situations, our various lives, but we arrive at a destination where we find ourselves challenged and fulfilled as a group.

The spectrum of lives we lead combined with the camaraderie of the department offers each of us the opportunity to learn from each other in a richer sense than we could as casual acquaintances. Being a student helps me see how we learn from each other. Being a firefighter allows me to share this insight with my fellows.

—Nate Murray

Probationary Firefighter & NREMT-B

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

Serving residents
along I-25,
Old Santa Fe Trail
and
Old Pecos Trail
from the City limits
to
Cahonito at
Apache Canyon.

HONDO VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT
P.O. BOX 5622
SANTA FE, NM 87502



Join us July 4 for our Annual Picnic!

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New Ambulance On The Way!

As many in our district know, we have been working on raising funds for a new ambulance. The wait is OVER!

Those living in the Hondo district can look forward to a brand new ambulance appearing sometime in December! After a long bid and evaluation process, we have finally ordered a 2009 Horton Ambulance, custom made to our specifications.

The Horton will be similar to our existing Med 1, but with many improvements. Horton is considered the “Cadillac” of all ambulances, made to exacting standards of safety and functionality. Because of that, virtually all the units they sell are built-to-suit. The new Hondo rig is no exception, with many hours put in by Chief Gleiman and myself in order to customize it to suit our particular needs.

Starting with a heavier chassis, a Ford F450 4WD, the unit will continue to have the all-wheel drive needed to access our particular geographically diverse fire district. As many of you living in the mountains know, access can be limited if vehicles are too large – especially during adverse climate conditions. Our new rig has a higher ground clearance than our current med unit and will be just as agile.

We also have configured the interior and exterior cabinets to better store the increasing number of items that we need to perform our duties. As the scope of practice expands for emergency medicine, so does the amount of equipment needed to perform those skills. The new rig has room to spare for holding the numerous pieces of equipment needed.

As reported in previous *Alarum* editions, Hondo successfully obtained an EMS grant for just over half of the new ambulance purchase. This is great news for all of you who support us with your charitable donations, which we appreciate more than we can express.

Without your continued support, this new rig would have been a virtually impossible goal, and we sincerely thank you for your gracious generosity.

So this winter you can look forward to seeing our new med unit — with its distinctive white and red “Z” striping — serving your fire district with professionalism and compassion.

—Evan Rees
Lieutenant/Paramedic