



# OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

# THE GATED WYE

## FEBRUARY 2024



## WILDFIRE INVESTMENTS PAYING DIVIDENDS

This month, the Oregon State Fire Marshal is highlighting the great work that has been accomplished through its Community Wildfire Risk Reduction grants and strategic investments made across the state.

These projects have spurred community engagement and helped Oregon move in the direction of being more fire-adapted.

**[READ MORE ON PG. 2](#)**

### OSFM'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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# OSFM WILDFIRE INVESTMENTS HELPING COMMUNITIES

## OSFM LAUNCHES STORY MAP TO HIGHLIGHT WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION PROJECTS

We are thrilled to announce the launch of a compelling story map that showcases the remarkable successes of the Oregon State Fire Marshal's community wildfire risk reduction grants and investments. These initiatives, made possible by 2021's Senate Bill 762, have proven to be instrumental in enhancing wildfire resilience across the state.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal's unwavering commitment to wildfire resilience has yielded significant achievements through the implementation of community wildfire risk reduction grants and investments. Thanks to an innovative funding approach, communities throughout the state have been empowered to develop local solutions, reducing the growing threat of wildfires.

Among the triumphs are 22 Community Wildfire Protection Plan investments totaling more than \$2.6 million and 106 Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant projects amounting to \$18 million. These funds were strategically used to foster collaboration and empower communities in the face of increasing wildfire risks.

### PROTECT WHAT WE LOVE

A look at the OSFM-funded wildfire risk reduction projects across Oregon.

John Hendricks  
January 22, 2024



**FOR PRINTED VERSIONS OF THE  
NEWSLETTER SCAN THE QR CODE TO CHECK  
OUT THE STORY MAP.**

**DIGITAL READERS CAN [CLICK THE BUTTON BELOW.](#)**

**[CLICK TO VIEW THE OSFM STORY MAP](#)**



## SUCCESS STORIES SHOWCASING COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INITIATIVES

One notable success story comes from Sweet Home Fire, which launched its Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Program in August 2023. This initiative, supported by the Oregon State Fire Marshal, enhanced community safety and reduced wildfire risks by offering free defensible space assessments.



Courtesy: Sweet Home Fire

The program's efficacy was demonstrated on August 10, 2023, when firefighters successfully contained the fifth fire in six weeks near the old mill property on 24th Avenue.



Similarly, the city of Jacksonville leveraged the Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant to undertake a significant project in Forest Park. Collaborating with Grayback Forestry, the city created substantial fuel breaks along the eastern ridge of the park to mitigate wildfire risk. The community-wide impact is evident along popular trails, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives in safeguarding public spaces.



Courtesy: Grayback Forestry

### EXPLORE SUCCESSES IN THE STORY MAP

These success stories highlight the tangible benefits of the community wildfire risk reduction grants, showcasing the effectiveness of local solutions in boosting wildfire resilience. As we celebrate these achievements, the Oregon State Fire Marshal is exploring ways to ensure the sustainability and expansion of these crucial programs, safeguarding communities across the state from the ever-present threat of wildfires.

To delve into the details of these inspiring stories and learn more about the Oregon State Fire Marshal's community wildfire risk reduction efforts, we invite you to explore the recently produced story map. Discover how these initiatives are making a real difference and contributing to the safety and resilience of communities throughout Oregon.



## LEBANON FIRE DISTRICT

# WINTER STORMS SLAM OREGON OREGON FIRE SERVICE RESPONDS



January tested the resilience of Oregonians as the state was hit with frigid temperatures, freezing rain, snow, and strong east winds. Governor Tina Kotek declared a state of emergency because of the storm. This winter weather kept the Oregon fire service extremely busy battling the elements to keep communities safe. Across the state, firefighters were on the front lines responding to emergencies with unwavering dedication.

The Portland metro area was hit particularly hard by the storm. Portland Fire & Rescue was in relentless battle against freezing temperatures and treacherous icy conditions. They worked through an onslaught of emergencies from fire calls to falls and burst pipes. Firefighters on the east side of the metro area were also challenged. In the Columbia River Gorge, blizzard conditions and freezing rain challenged first responders.

In Corvallis, the fire department was inundated with calls, running a staggering 73 calls within a 24-hour period. Despite the thaw beginning, new challenges arose with fire alarm activations, broken pipes, and power outages caused by falling trees and limbs.

Sweet Home's firefighters were similarly taxed with a whopping 114 calls for service in just 24 hours. Downed trees and power lines littered the landscape, posing hazards to those navigating the icy terrain. The community was urged to exercise caution and patience as responders worked tirelessly to clear roadways and restore safety.

Lebanon Fire Department exemplified resilience, handling a total of 96 calls during the storm's peak. With 44 calls in a single day, their firefighters were nothing short of heroic, tackling fires, medical emergencies, and helping neighboring districts with mutual aid requests. Their commitment to service is a beacon of hope in challenging times.

In Bend, crews geared up for the cold, chaining up engines to navigate snow-covered streets effectively. Central Oregon firefighters were kept busy as the snow was measured in feet in places, then the region was hit by freezing rain.

As Oregonians weathered the storm, let's salute the bravery and selflessness of our fire service personnel. Their dedication reminds us that even in the darkest of times, there are always heroes among us, ready to answer the call of duty.

**[CHECK OUT THE PICTURES ON PAGE 5.](#)**





# PHOTOS FROM THE FRONT LINE



THE GATED WYE | FEBRUARY 2024





# OREGON ENGINE PROGRAM ROLLING FORWARD

The OSFM Engine Program will soon see delivery of the first engines to the state. The type 3 engines will arrive first. They are coming from the Rosenbauer facility in Spokane, Washington. The engines will be delivered to the OSFM's headquarters and from there, Engine Program staff will work with the recipient agency for pick up.

The OSFM hosted a webinar on January 24 to give updates on the program and what delivery day will look like. Recipients were also given a look at the new [Engine Program webpage](#) with resources for recipients like equipment inventory, guidelines, and other documents.

As of January 18, 61 of 76 agencies submitted the required information. Agencies that have not submitted insurance, vector logo, and/or IGA, please email them as soon as possible to [EngineProgram@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:EngineProgram@osfm.oregon.gov).

Here is the updated timeline for apparatus delivery. The following dates are estimates as of January 2024 and are subject to change:

- Type 3 - ETA January - June 2024
- Tender - ETA March - July 2024
- Type 6 - ETA June - October 2024

Across Oregon, 76 local fire agencies will receive either a type 3 or 6 engine or tactical tender. The \$25 million program is funded through Senate Bill 762 and will modernize and boost Oregon's firefighting capabilities.



# WILDFIRE SEASON **STAFFING GRANT** RETURNING IN 2024

The OSFM is excited to share the wildfire season staffing grant is returning for 2024. The agency is eager to continue to build on the successes of the past two years of the grant.

The application period for the 2024 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant will open on March 1, 2024.

This grant program has proven successful and demonstrated that increased staff allows local fire agencies to respond more quickly to fires and stop them before they have a chance to impact communities. The OSFM is repeating the same general criteria and process for the 2024 grant cycle.

Under the guidelines, agencies with annual property tax income of less than \$2 million will be eligible to receive up to \$35,000 in funding, mirroring the allocation from last year. This funding will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis, prioritizing smaller agencies.

While larger agencies may apply for the grant, funding will be contingent upon the availability of remaining funds after the grant application period closes and prioritized agencies are funded. The OSFM estimates the grant will fund between 170 to 190 local fire agencies, depending on the number of applicants.

**The application period for the grant will open March 1 and close on March 22.**

To assist agencies through the application process, the OSFM will host four webinars. These sessions will offer valuable insights into the grant requirements and how to complete the application successfully. The details are still being worked out and will be announced soon.

The 2024 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant is part of the OSFM's Response Ready Oregon initiative. It proactively gives local fire agencies the tools and resources to better protect their communities. Through collaboration and strategic investments, the OSFM remains committed to enhancing wildfire preparedness and resilience for the benefit of all Oregonians.



# GET COMFORTABLE WITH **DEFENSIBLE SPACE.**



## **FIVE WINTER AND SPRING 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 SIGN UP FOR  
A **FREE DEFENSIBLE ASSESSMENT.**





# HAZMAT HIGHLIGHT:

## MEDFORD WRAPS UP REFRESHER TRAINING

Sometimes first responders are sent to calls involving hazardous materials. Training ahead of time is a critical component of knowing what to do in these types of emergencies.

The Medford Fire Department and Jackson County Fire District 3 completed some refresher training in January.

The training focus was the initial actions they take at a hazmat emergency scene. This included everything from personal and public safety during the incident, identifying the chemical product involved, mitigating and stopping the release of the hazmat product, and medical treatment of exposed patients.

A couple of practice scenarios the team focused on were victim rescue resulting from hazmat spills or accidents and decontamination of people who may have been exposed and emergency responders.

This training is important because of the extreme life safety risk potential at a hazmat emergency incident. Keeping people safe is the top priority.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal oversees the state's hazardous materials response program. The Regional Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Teams are spread throughout the state. There are 12 teams ready to go if they are needed. The OSFM partners with the Oregon fire service to make this program possible. [Learn more about it here.](#)



# FEBRUARY **SB 762** REPORT RELEASED

This month, our agency released 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, 2023 fire season stats and expenses, and information about our Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Unit and their work supporting local communities become more wildfire resilient.

You can read [the report here](#).

## HAZMAT BY RAIL REPORT **RELEASED**

In 2015, Governor Kate Brown signed legislation relating to the safe transport of hazardous materials by rail. This changed Oregon Revised Statutes 453.307 to 453.414 relating to the safe transport of hazardous materials by directing the Oregon State Fire Marshal to coordinate training, preparedness, and response planning activities to focus on oil or hazardous materials spills or releases during rail transport.

This law mandates the OSFM adopt by administrative rule (837-120-0520) a plan for the coordinated response to oil or hazardous material spills or releases during rail transport, identify response resources (existing and needed), and coordinate training for emergency responders.

The report, prepared by the OSFM for the Oregon legislature, highlights activities completed in 2023 for emergency planning and training and community outreach activities. It also summarizes the OSFM's resource coordination, information-sharing activities, and plans for the coming year. [A copy of the full report is available on the OSFM website.](#)



2023 ANNUAL REPORT  
**HAZMAT BY RAIL  
PROGRAM**  
DECEMBER // 2023





# THE **BRIGHT IDEA** IS FIRE SAFETY IN FEBRUARY

In February, the OSFM is focused on promoting electrical fire safety. Each year in Oregon, firefighters are called to home fires sparked by an electrical issue. There are simple things Oregonians can do to reduce their risk and increase their safety from an electrical fire.

- Avoid pinching cords between walls and furniture.
- Do not run electrical cords under carpets or across doorways.
- Avoid electrical overload. Consider having an electrician install additional wall outlets where you need them and add a breaker if needed.
- Electrical work should be done by a qualified professional.
- Read the manufacturer's instructions before operating any electrical or heating equipment or appliances.
- Replace items (appliances) with cracked or damaged electrical cords, broken plugs, or loose connections.
- Plug appliances (portable space heaters, refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, etc.) directly into a wall outlet and never into a power strip or extension cord.
- Extension cords are for temporary use only.
- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home (including the basement), inside each bedroom, and in the hallway outside each bedroom.
- Make sure you have working carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home with bedrooms, inside each bedroom, and in the hallway outside each bedroom.

[Oregon fire service: order educational resources here](#)



# 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 free one-hour live webinar training is required for fire agencies who wish to participate in the program. Click the dates to register.

[February 22, 2024](#)

[March 28, 2024](#)

[April 25, 2024](#)

The Oregon State Fire Marshal is accepting nominations for the 2024 Golden and Silver Sparky Awards.

The Golden Sparky recognizes a fire service member or fire agency for outstanding fire prevention or public safety education achievement. The Silver Sparky recognizes a civilian or civilian agency for outstanding achievement in fire prevention or public safety education.

Nominations are open until April 1. Please submit your completed Sparky nomination form with an explanation and examples of your nominee's achievements.

To nominate someone, fill out and submit the form on the [OSFM's website](#).



## NOMINATE TODAY FOR **GOLD** AND **SILVER** SPARKY AWARD





# CODES CORNER

## **"BIG BOX" AISLE MAINTENANCE**

Engine oil for lawn mowers stored on a shelf in a big box home improvement store outside of Oregon leaked, causing a chemical reaction when it contacted nearby pool chemicals. The resulting fire activated 22 sprinklers, caused \$4 million in damage and 58 people were treated for smoke inhalation from the toxic mix. All 160 occupants in the store escaped, but these warehouse-type retail facilities with high-piled combustible storage, high-hazard commodities, open to the public, and often with assembly space type occupancy numbers, can still be dangerous.

Maintaining the approved clear aisle width in these stores is critical. This keeps combustible piles separated from each other and ensures occupant egress is maintained all the way to the exits.

Where ESFR (early suppression fast response) or in-rack sprinklers are not used, the required 96 inch (8-foot) clear aisle width is commonly diminished when restocking or removing merchandise. It can also be reduced by the long-term use of wing stacks, or the small cardboard stands displaying products. Oregon Fire Code Section 3205.5 addresses both concerns.

The OFC states that when store staff use portable stairs or ladders on wheels to stock or remove products, a minimum of 24 inches in the aisle must be kept. When hydraulically powered equipment or forklifts are used, a minimum of 44 inches must be maintained. When not being used, all these devices must be kept in a location that does not reduce the approved aisle width.

New to the 2022 Oregon Fire Code is an exception to the existing aisle width maintenance requirements. Section 3205.5 now allows merchandise displays, freestanding or on a pallet, so long as they are not more than 4 feet high in total height and still allow for at least 48 inches of clear aisle width.

These displays need to be amid racks that are no more than 12 feet deep and protected by certain large orifice, extended coverage sprinklers listed specifically for storage occupancies designed for high-challenge fires. These design requirements come from NFPA 13 criteria for large retail stores. The requirements were created after extensive full-scale testing to make sure wing stack displays are within the capabilities of the ceiling-only fire sprinklers.

Fire inspectors should be mindful of the challenges associated with these types of stores. Products range from indoor lumber yards and paint thinners to pesticides and overhead boxes tightly wrapped in plastic. The aisles are often congested with heavy carts pushed by shoppers only familiar with the doors at the front of the store. Store managers take advantage of nearly all available space for retail staging, and it can be difficult to assess if approved storage racks or fire protection systems have been altered. An understanding of the fire and life safety requirements of the Oregon Fire Code can help.

# TODD RASKA PROMOTED TO CR2K PROGRAM MANAGER

After a competitive recruitment process, Community Right to Know (CR2K) Program Coordinator Todd Raska has been promoted to CR2K program manager. This is the first time in 15 years the program will have a dedicated manager position.

Todd has been in government and public service most of his career including being a volunteer firefighter, working for the Marion County Sheriff's office as deputy, working for ODOT in motor carrier enforcement, and the OSFM for the past seven years.



Todd started with the OSFM as CR2K compliance specialist before his promotion to program coordinator two years ago. Todd has served in our Agency Operations Center, drive team, and recently on an incident management team.

# HARSHITHA BARRI JOINS OSFM ANALYTICS & INTELLIGENCE UNIT



Harshitha Barri joined the OSFM's Analytics & Intelligence Unit as an operations and policy analyst.

She will provide analytical support to programs in the education and regulatory services divisions and contribute to a wide range of exciting research projects. Harshitha has a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in machine learning and AI engineering.

She thoroughly enjoys the world of machine learning and data analytics and is eager to help the OSFM become more data driven. Outside of work, she enjoys cooking, spending time with loved ones, traveling, and exploring new places, which is perfect as she is new to Oregon.





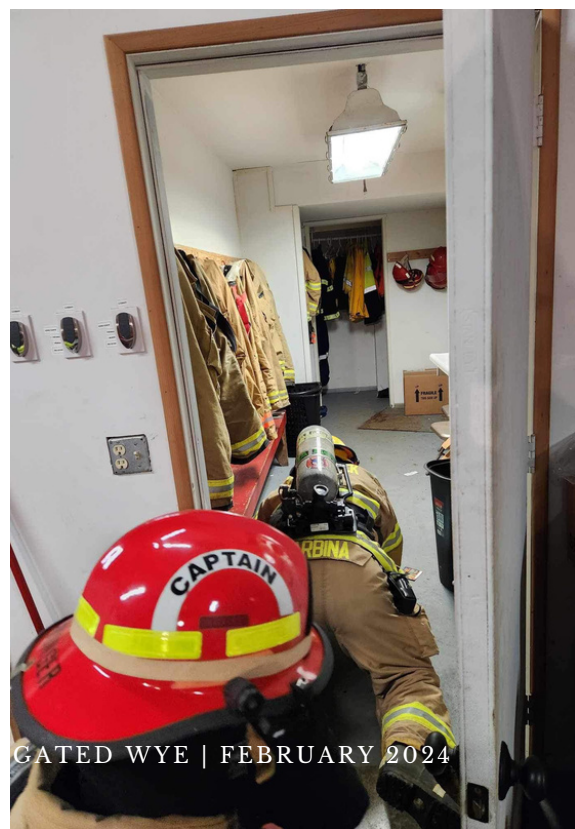
## FROM THE **INTERNET**

In January, the Corvallis Fire Department responded to a Southwest Corvallis apartment fire, quickly escalating to a second alarm. Crews aggressively tackled the blaze, conducting searches and ventilating the attic.

During the operation, firefighters rescued a cat from a hidden space, gave the cat oxygen, then returned it to its owners. [Check out their post here.](#)

## **SEARCH TRAINING**

Seal Rock took part in some valuable training, freshening up on their search skills in January. These skills are important for searching for people and assessing fire conditions. These firefighters learned the value and how to quickly search structures. They practiced in low to no visibility to find victims and remove them. [Check out more pictures here.](#)





## Contact Us

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

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