



OREGON OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

# THE GATED WYE

## MARCH 2023



## FIRE SERVICE PAYS RESPECTS TO FALLEN

In February, the Oregon fire service lost two members. Greg Backstrom, a volunteer firefighter with Jefferson Fire, passed away on February 2 and Firefighter Brandon Norbury of Gresham Fire died during training on February 3.

Both were dedicated to serving their communities and were honored and remembered at memorial services.

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### OSFM'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## BRANDON NORBURY REMEMBERED DURING MEMORIAL SERVICE

Oregon laid Gresham Firefighter Brandon Norbury to rest, who died in the line of duty on February 3. Brandon suffered cardiac arrest during a training session.

Brandon was a lifelong servant to his country and community. After serving his country for eight years as a Navy Seal, Brandon went on to serve with the Gresham Police Department for seven years and then with Gresham Fire Department for 15 years. Brandon's last assignment was at Station 31 in Rockwood where he proudly served the community

"This is a difficult time for our Gresham firefighters. We truly appreciate the support from our community members and the Oregon fire service. Brandon devoted his entire life to public service," Gresham Fire Chief Scott Lewis said. "This is a tremendous loss."

Norbury was honored at a memorial service on February 15 at East Hill Church in Gresham. Fire service from across the state attended the service. The streets leading to the church were lined with people who paid their respects as a procession took place.







## HONORING JEFFERSON FIREFIGHTER GREG BACKSTROM

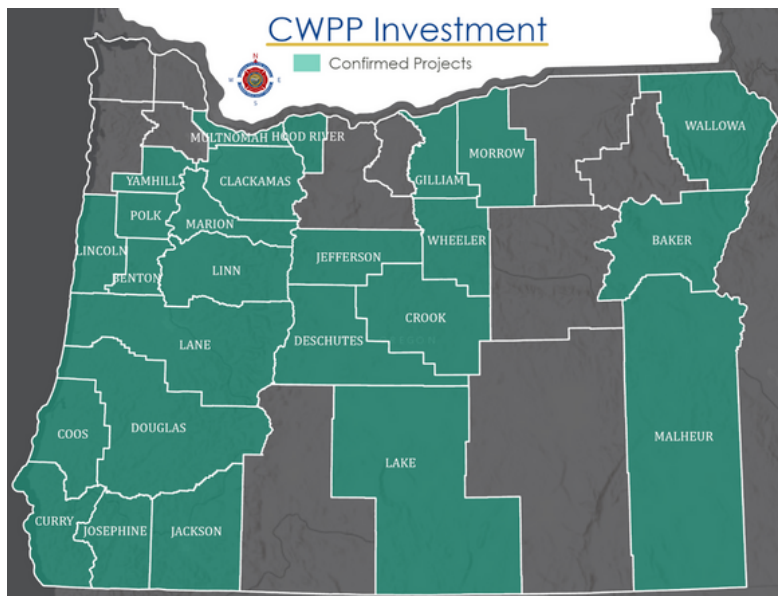
On February 2, the Jefferson Fire District announced that firefighter/EMR Greg Backstrom passed away. Greg lived to serve his community and made the decision to continue saving lives, even after his passing, by being an organ donor.

After Greg's passing, many of his colleagues were on hand to pay their last respects to Greg as they participated in his Honor Walk (Hero Walk) at Salem Hospital.

Greg was a volunteer firefighter/EMR for the Jefferson Fire District as well as the Scio Fire District. He also served for Mt. Angel and Silverton Fire Districts prior. Greg was a kind and caring father who adored his 8-year-old daughter and his family immensely.

Greg could always be found at the fire station with a big smile on his face, ready to help in whatever capacity was needed. He will be greatly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing and working with him. Please keep his family, friends, and fellow firefighters in your thoughts and prayers as they grieve.





## THE OSFM INVESTS \$2.7 MILLION IN WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION PROJECTS

The OSFM announced in February a \$2.7 million investment in wildfire risk reduction projects across Oregon. The strategic one-time investment was made at the local and county levels through community wildfire protection plans (CWPP).

Projects will happen in 25 CWPP planning areas located in Baker, Benton, Clackamas, Coos, Crook, Curry, Deschutes, Douglas, Gilliam, Hood River, Jackson, Jefferson, Josephine, Lake, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Malheur, Marion, Morrow, Multnomah, Polk, Wallowa, Wheeler, and Yamhill counties.

Projects include promoting wildfire-specific community risk reduction efforts, community education, defensible space projects, home assessments, media campaigns, signage, fuel mitigation programs, and grant funds.

One of the projects is in Morrow County, which will receive money to help landowners with defensible space projects and educate community members about best practices. Project managers plan to host yard debris pick-up events and help with defensible space work.

"We are happy to have the money to implement our planned work," Heppner Fire and Rescue Chief Steve Rhea said. "Projects all over the state are worthy of this funding, and we appreciate the investment and the attention from the OSFM in rural communities."

The OSFM's fire risk reduction specialists worked with local CWPP planning groups to determine where funding was needed. This selection process was based on actionable projects, underserved communities, and the risk of fire in or near communities.

The funds are part of the OSFM's Fire Adapted Oregon initiative, available because of Senate Bill 762.

To learn more about wildfire risk reduction and response investments, visit the agency's [Grants](#) and [Investments in Action](#) pages.





# Grants

## OSFM SEES CONTINUED SUCCESS WITH GRANTS PROGRAM

Nearly a year after the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) launched a new grant program aimed at reducing the risk of wildfire and boosting capacity to respond to wildfires, the agency is excited to share two of the grants will return in 2023 and others are in development.

In 2021, roughly \$80 million was allocated to the OSFM by the Oregon legislature through Senate Bill 762.

Throughout 2022, the OSFM saw a steady interest in the grants offered through the program. This year, the OSFM will launch a new 2023 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant and a Wildland-Urban Interface 2.0 Grant.

The OSFM grants team is developing a defensible space incentive program for Oregonians, set to launch sometime in 2023.

Along with a robust grants program, the OSFM has been working with the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon to develop customized investment strategies to meet each nation's needs.

Above outlines the grants the OSFM offered in 2022 and next steps as the agency works to strengthen Oregon's resiliency and response to wildfire.

### **WUI Readiness Grant**

Closed, complete

### **Defensible Space Incentive Grant**

Closed, complete

### **2022 Wildfire Staffing Seasonal Staffing Grant**

Closed, complete

### **Engine Program**

Closed, selection committee meeting in March, April award announcements

### **Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant**

Closed, April award announcement

### **Oregon Fire Service Capacity Program**

Closed, April award announcement

## COMING SOON

### **2023 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant**

In development, expected April/May launch

### **Wildland-Urban Interface 2.0 Grant**

In development, tentative launch fall 2023



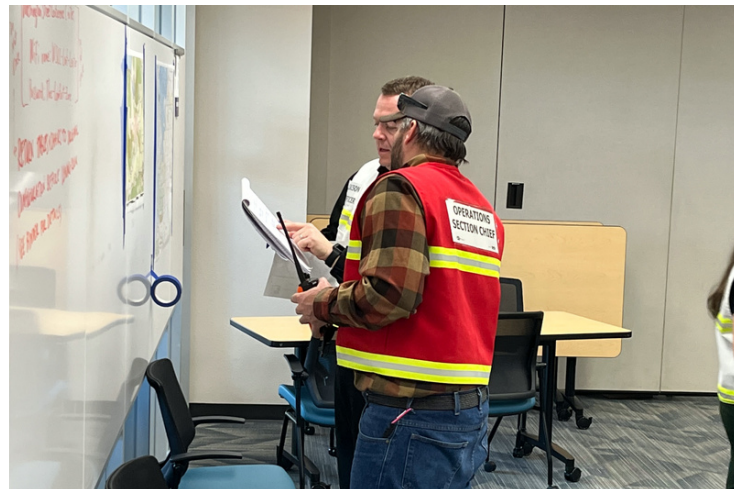
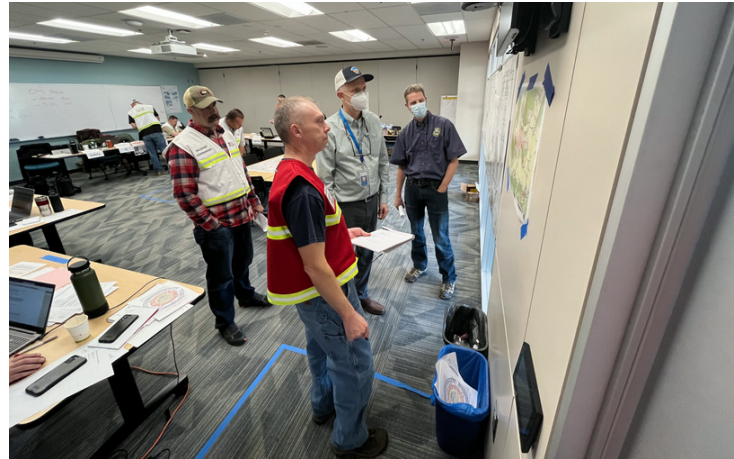
# OSFM IMT MEMBERS TAKE PART IN S-420 COURSE IN HILLSBORO

Some of the OSFM's incident management team members and other fire service members were put to the test in February as part of the S-420 course in Hillsboro. Those who participated had a chance to hone their skills for responding to and managing a disaster like a wildfire.

On Thursday of the weeklong course, a simulation was held. The four incident management teams worked through a wildfire scenario and faced twists, turns, and challenges. The goal was to help prepare students for real-life situations and to know precisely how to handle complex tasks when lives and property may be in danger.

The week-long class was held in Hillsboro and sponsored by the Washington County Training Association. It was supported by DPSST, Oregon Department of Forestry, Forest Grove Fire & Rescue, Clackamas Fire, and our office.

We want to thank our partners for putting on such a great training.



## STEPHANIE TRIERWEILER JOINS THE OSFM

Stephanie Trierweiler joined our team as a new administrative specialist in the Analytics and Intelligence Unit.

Stephanie grew up in Southern Oregon and around the fire service. Her dad is a retired firefighter, and she is married to a firefighter and chief. She and her husband Jim have four kids and two grandchildren they love to spend time with. They spend a lot of time with family going camping and snowmobiling.

Previously, Stephanie was with METCOM 911 as a dispatcher. She has the passion for public safety and serving the community.







# OREGON REGIONAL HAZMAT TEAMS TRAIN IN PORTLAND

Several of the Regional Hazardous Material Emergency Response Teams (RHMERT) took part in a drill with the Oregon National Guard's 102nd Civil Support Team in Portland.

Participants worked through a scenario involving an illegal drug laboratory and potentially toxic substances. The training included a mix of hands-on and classroom learning. The crews practiced hazard mitigation, field analysis, learned how to operate specialized equipment, and reinforced proper use and decontamination of personal protective equipment (PPE).

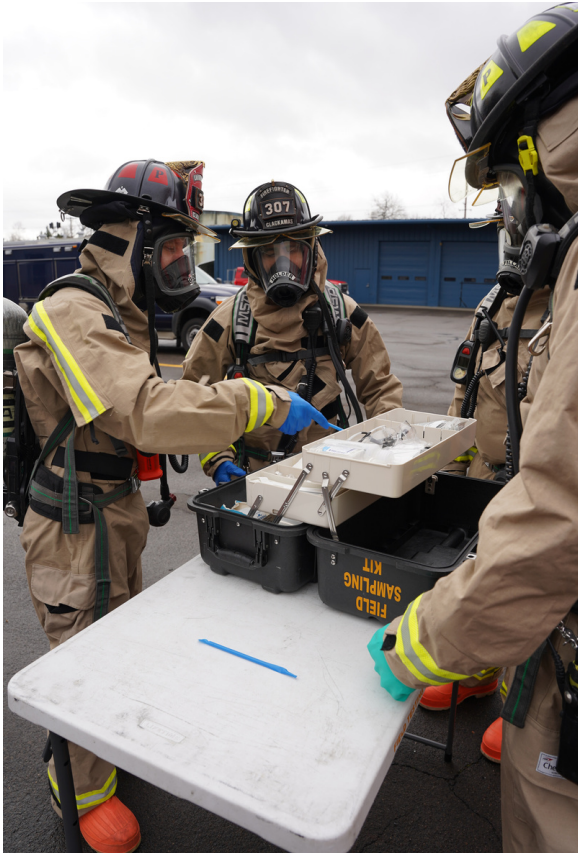
The 102nd Civil Support Team assists civil authorities at domestic sites when requested, practicing agency coordination ahead of time with the OSFM's regional hazmat teams through simulated, real-world scenarios is critical to successful outcomes during real emergencies.

Region 9 Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue, Region 7 Portland Fire & Rescue Bureau, Region 3 Gresham-Multnomah County, Region 10 Hermiston Fire and Emergency Services, and Region 11 Astoria Fire Department participated.

In 2022, RHMERT responded to 46 incidents, Tualatin Valley 10, Hermiston nine, Gresham/Multnomah four, Portland three, and Astoria two.

There are 13 hazmat response teams across Oregon. RHMERT is a partnership between the OSFM, the Oregon fire service, and industry, where shared resources created a program that is both economical and successful. **SEE PHOTOS ON PAGE 8.**









## FOCUS ON YOUTH FIRE SAFETY

In March, the OSFM is focused on youth fire safety, highlighting important messages often forgotten when we talk about fire safety. While practicing a home fire escape, understanding that fire is a tool for adults and not a toy for kids is extremely important. Below are some important things to keep in mind and pass along to youngsters.

Remember to call 911 only during an emergency. Calling 911 when there is no emergency could cause others to not get the help they need. It can also put firefighters in danger needlessly.

### WHEN THE 911 DISPATCHER ANSWERS THE PHONE, TELL THEM:

- The type of emergency
- Your name
- The location you are calling from
- The telephone number from where you are calling
- Stay on the telephone until the dispatcher tells you to hang up

### TIPS FOR YOUR FAMILY HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN:

- Make a home escape plan if you don't already have one.
- Draw a map of each level of your home.
- Show all doors and windows.
- Practice the plan with everyone in your household, including visitors.
- Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Make sure someone will help them.
- Teach your children how to escape on their own in case you cannot help them.
- Make sure they can open windows, remove screens, and unlock doors.
- Have a plan for everyone in your home, especially those who have a disability.
- Know at least two ways out of every room if possible.
- Make sure all doors and windows that lead outside can open.
- Identify where smoke alarms are at in your home.
- When you practice your home escape plan, test your smoke alarms.



# NOMINATIONS FOR SPARKY AWARDS NOW BEING ACCEPTED



The Office of State Fire Marshal is accepting nominations for the 2022 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 3. Please submit your nomination form with an explanation and examples of your nominee's achievements. [Nomination forms can be found here.](#)

For more information, email [OSFM.PublicAffairs@osp.oregon.gov](mailto:OSFM.PublicAffairs@osp.oregon.gov)

## BREE MOSGROVE JOINS THE OSFM

Bree Mosgrove joined the OSFM on February 7 as the technical support for our new business division.

For the past eight years, Bree served as a radiologist assistant and supervisor at a local radiology clinic and has an associate degree in criminal justice.

Bree is the mom of a 3-year-old boy with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a disease where bones easily break. She's made it her mission to spread awareness and teach others about her son's rare disease.

Bree is an Oregon native and loves to spend her free time at the beach or the lake with her family. She enjoys camping, paddle boarding, and riding at the dunes.





## CODES CORNER

### FOCUS ON E-BIKE SAFETY

Electric-powered bicycles, coined as e-bikes, gained popularity over the last decade across the country and in Oregon. E-bikes are grouped with several electric-powered devices known as light electric vehicles (LEV). With the increased popularity of LEV, there's been a notable rise in fire incidents from lithium-ion batteries.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, the fire hazard associated with e-bikes is damaged or defective lithium-ion batteries; they can overheat, catch fire, or explode. Lithium-ion batteries emit toxic gases during a fire, and burn extremely hot, contributing to the rapid growth of these fires. Across the nation, lithium-ion fires are catastrophic and fatal.

Common signs of a lithium-ion battery problem are:

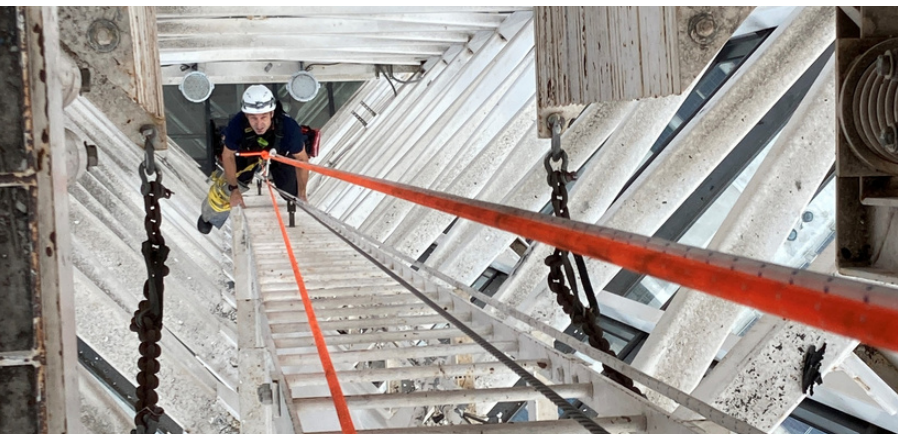
- The battery emits an unusual odor
- Color or shape change
- Too much heat
- The battery is smoking or not holding a charge

Fires involving lithium batteries should be thoroughly investigated and the cause and origin are documented accurately. The data will help identify the fire problem and mitigate the hazards through fire code development and public education.

## NFPA SAFETY TIPS

- Only purchase and use devices, batteries, and charging equipment listed by a nationally recognized testing lab and labeled accordingly.
- Always follow manufacturer instructions.
- Only use the battery and the charger that were designed for and came with the device.
- Do not keep charging the device or device battery after it is fully charged.
- Only charge one device or device battery at a time to prevent overloading the circuit.
- Keep batteries at room temperature when possible. Do not charge them at temperatures below 32°F (0°C) or above 105°F (40°C).
- Do not store batteries in direct sunlight or inside a hot vehicle and keep them away from children and liquids.
- Store e-bikes, e-scooters, and batteries away from exit doors and any item that can get hot or catch fire.
- Repairs should only be performed by a professional qualified professional.
- Do not put lithium-ion batteries in the trash; recycling is the best option. Take batteries to a battery recycling location or contact your local waste department for disposal instructions.





## **FROM THE INTERNET: TO THE PDX SPIRES**

Portland Fire and Rescue took to the skyline of Portland, the spires of the Oregon Convention Center, for a training exercise. The agency says any location within the city of Portland, high or low, hidden or in plain sight, is a possible site for an emergency, and they need to be ready.

In these photos, their technical rescue team is practicing contacting an individual at the top inside of the spires and bringing them down to safety. Ropes, knots, cables, straps, and packaging devices are part of these exercises. [Check out their post here.](#)

## **FROM THE INTERNET: WORKING TOGETHER**

Astoria firefighters got together with local Clatsop County firefighters to train.

The departments say this type of training is essential as many local fire departments all work together at significant incidents. By training as one, they understand how to work together at these larger, more complex incidents. [Check out the post here!](#)







## DATES ANNOUNCED FOR OFCA SPRING CONFERENCE

The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (OFCA) announced the dates for the upcoming spring conference. The conference will take place April 26 – 28, 2023 at the Riverhouse on the Deschutes in Bend.

Join fire chiefs and chief officers from across the state for 2.5 days of training, updates from important fire organizations, connection with fire service partners, and networking.

For fire service members with financial needs living outside of a 50-mile radius of the conference center, the Oregon Fire Chiefs Foundation generously awards scholarships to help cover the cost of registration and lodging. To start the process, view the scholarship application form by clicking [here](#).

For registration and additional information about the conference, check out [OFCA's Annual Conference page](#).



### WADE GIBSON JOINS THE OSFM

Wade Gibson joined the OSFM as the deputy state fire marshal for Hood River, Sherman, and Wasco counties.

Wade was raised in Central Oregon and began his career with Redmond Fire in 1997 as a firefighter. He spent the last 25 years there, leaving as a deputy fire marshal. He graduated from Central Oregon Community College with an associate degree in emergency medical services and is currently enrolled in Columbia Southern University, working towards his bachelor's degree in fire investigation. He is a Certified NFPA Fire Investigator, NFPA Fire Inspector I and II, NAFI Fire and Explosion Investigator, along with many other certifications. He's been involved with complex hazardous materials incidents involving the FBI, fatal structure fires, complex motor vehicle accidents with technical rescue, and more. Wade has been married for two years to his wife Nona, and they are both excited to be part of the OSFM family.



# OSFM CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

## COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION RESEARCH ANALYST

Are you able to use data to tell engaging and insightful stories for non-technical audiences? Do you have experience collecting data and using data analysis to drive decisions within an agency or company? This might be the career for you!

## APPLICATION ARCHITECT – LEAD WORK (ISS7)

Are you skilled in designing and implementing new applications? Do you feel at ease using a wide variety of technological applications and platforms? Do you have an interest in integrating new technology with legacy solutions? Do you feel confident communicating these changes with others? This might be the career for you.

## SYSTEM ARCHITECT - LEAD WORK (ISS7)

Do you have advanced technical knowledge of Information Technology (IT) services? Do you get excited about designing and creating new IT infrastructures? Are you skilled in network architecture and configuring applications? Join our team.

## DATA ARCHITECT (ISS7)

This position will help pave the way for new data architecture while collaborating with a brand-new IT team. Do you have experience developing, using, and administering SQL servers? Do you enjoy researching and implementing new technologies? Apply today.

## Contact Us

Have an idea for a story or subject you would like to know more about?

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