

News Release

District's Consolidation Complete

The consolidation of the Beaver Valley Fire District and the Whispering Pines Fire District is complete as of July 1, 2017 and they became the Water Wheel Fire & Medical District. This effort began most recently in May of 2016 when the Board of the Beaver Valley Fire District approached the Board of the Whispering Pines Fire District with a request to consider consolidating the two Fire Districts into one entity. Over the past couple decades the possibility of merger or consolidation had been discussed several times but just never gained enough momentum to come to fruition. Well this time for various reasons it was finally a success.

The Water Wheel Fire & Medical District is currently operated by the same administrative staff and same Governing Board from the Whispering Pines Fire District. The administrative offices of the District are located at Fire Station 71 in Whispering Pines, which is manned 24/7 by emergency response personnel. The current Board serves until the general election cycle in 2018 when three of the five Board members terms are up for election. At that point any registered voter that resides within the boundaries of the District can run for a position on the Governing Board of the Fire District. Once elected they serve a four year term. They may be re-elected or if unopposed in the general election they may be re-appointed to a position on the Board by action of the Gila County Board of Supervisors.

Through this consolidation the District is now comprised of Beaver Valley, Whispering Pines, Geronimo Estates, Elusive Acres, Verde Glen, Cowan Ranch, Rim Trail, Washington Park, Bonita Creek, Cold Springs Ranch, Camp Geronimo, and Shadow Rim Ranch. There are 5 fire stations with 13 apparatus. Stations and equipment are strategically located in Beaver Valley, Whispering Pines, Geronimo Estates, Rim Trail and Bonita Creek. The District currently has an ISO Property Protection Class (PPC) ranging from a 5 to a 9-10. We have an aggressive plan in place to continue to improve the PPC throughout the District. Over the past 3 years the District has improved the PPC for more than 50% of the properties from a 9-10 to a 5, which has equated to reductions in home owners insurance for some property owners. Be sure to check with your insurance company to be sure they are aware of the improved PPC and call the FD to see if you are affected by the improved PPC. This could save you some money on your insurance.

The Fire District Board has voted to keep the tax rate of the District the same for the next fiscal year. That tax rate is \$3.15 per \$100 of LPV assessed valuation. Despite the increase in overall net income to the District following the consolidation the tax rate was kept the same to help offset the additional operating costs of insurance, utilities, and vehicle maintenance to get all former BVFD apparatus into compliance. As we move forward there is a possibility of seeing a reduction in the tax rate in the future, but it will depend upon the needs of the District to continue to provide efficient emergency services to all the property owners of the District.

Ron Sattelman

Fire Chief/Paramedic

Water Wheel Fire & Medical District