

AVALON FIRE / RESCUE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 1

November 2011

Fire Commissioners Meeting held the first and third Monday of each month at the North Station located at 5408 Mulat Road, Milton, FL. 7 PM. Please attend and see your tax dollars at work.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

To get an application to volunteer you can:

- Go to our Web Site at www.avfire.com to download application and bring by the Station 1.
- Come by Station 1 for application.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

- THE AVALON FIRE RESCUE NEWSLETTER IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS AND CITIZENS. BACK ISSUES ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.AVFIRE.COM.

Message from the Fire Chief Sid Wiggins

I am the Fire Chief of Avalon Fire Rescue and have been with the Fire Department since 1988 as a Volunteer Fire Fighter until 2009 when I was hired as the only paid Fire Fighter in our Department. Since 2004 and the devastation left by Hurricane Ivan, our annual operating budget has decreased significantly each year due to our continued tax base reduction. This reduction is a direct result of the decrease in overall home values, construction of new homes, and the abandonment of homes destroyed by Ivan in our district which has reduced the amount of fire taxes collected each year. Many folks think we are a paid department, but we are not. We operate with approximately 12-15 full time Volunteers (who receive no pay for their services) and continue to seek good/dedicated volunteers within our district. We have an outstanding group of volunteers but it has become increasingly more difficult to provide day time coverage due to volunteers having full time day jobs.

On August 9, 2011 the Avalon Fire Rescue Fire Department underwent an ISO (Insurance Services Office) review, the most intense scrutiny any fire department, paid or volunteer, can experience. About 10 years ago the ISO graded our fire department. We are currently rated a Class 5 in the North end and a 9 in the South end (primarily due to poor water supply) which is one of the best ratings a Volunteer station has in Santa Rosa County. Since our last audit, we have made many changes and improvements and we are hoping to retain or better our rating. Final Results/Ratings won't be known for many months.

Most citizens don't know what the ISO is, what it stands for, or even what a good rating can do for them?

On the next page, we have provided you with important information on how these ratings are determined and what these ratings mean to you and your Insurance costs.



"The Beast" 1965 Brush Truck

This Deuce and a half was donated to Avalon Fire Rescue from the Midway Fire Dept in 2010. A Forestry grant was obtained to purchase a 500 gallon Skid Load assembly unit to replace the old tank. Several of our talented volunteers spent many hours removing the old tank and replacing with the new Skid Load assembly unit along with equipping the truck with Wildland Firefighting equipment.

This Truck has been used in many Brush fires since it was put into service including the BIG fire on Del Monte Street earlier this year.

Avalon Fire Rescue - 3 Year (YTD Call Volumes)

	2009	2010	2011*
Structure Fires	7	12	11
Vehicle Fires	18	6	16
Grass/Woods/Trash Fires	38	39	35
MVA	95	155	105
Medical	301	308	253
Water Emergencies	8	7	2
Others (Power Lines/Gas Leaks, etc)	66	48	40
Mutual Aid (Other Fire Dept Calls)	102	111	105
Total	635	686	567*

***Current YTD Totals thru Sept 2011**

ISO and how the overall Fire Department rating affects your insurance costs and risks

The ISO stands for Insurance Services Office and is an independent organization that serves insurance companies, fire departments, insurance regulators, and others by providing information about risk. ISO's expert field staff visits communities around the country to collect information about their fire departments, their fire alarm and communications systems, and their water supplies. ISO analyzes the information and assigns a Public Protection Classification – a number from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents exemplary fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire-suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria.

The majority of homeowners carry insurance on their property. That insurance premium is based on the protection rating that the fire department receives from the ISO. With no fire protection coverage at all the protection rating is a Class 10. A Class 9 rating will generally save the average homeowner around \$150 annually, a class 5 will generally save you an estimated additional \$200 annually.

The Fire Department will be graded more than any other agency. **Fifty percent** of the overall score is based on the fire department. We are graded on equipment we carry on the trucks, the age, type and quantity of that equipment. They require certain equipment that is not even required by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. We will be graded on training. Firefighters are required to have **262** hours of training initially with ongoing training annually. Other factors are Pre-Fire plans on commercial buildings within our coverage area. Every commercial building must have a pre-fire plan conducted annually by the fire department and used in training as well. The fire department will also be graded on equipment responding to a fire related emergency on the initial alarm. What this means is that as many fire trucks responding on the first calls the better the grading. "Fire departments often respond to mutual aid calls from neighboring departments, and we have now implemented 'automatic aid' which puts more trucks responding quicker. Lastly, the fire department will be graded on manpower responding to fire related emergencies. National studies have found that 13 is the optimum number of needed firefighters on the scene of a given structure fire, however, in rural settings, fire departments may need upwards of 20-25 firefighters on scene. **Forty percent** of the overall score is based on the community's water supply. Fire hydrants are necessary for fire protection! You don't need them for water to your house, but if your house is burning, you've got to have a fire hydrant somewhere.... Size of water mains, as well as booster pumping stations and reserve tanks will be looked at by the ISO auditor. Fire departments are required to carry

1200' of supply hose that connects to the fire hydrants that can supply arriving fire trucks with water to combat fires. If you don't live within 1000' of a fire hydrant then fire departments must carry, or shuttle water from the hydrant to the fire. The remaining **Ten percent** is based on how well the fire department receives and is dispatched to fire alarms via the "911" County Emergency system

BUDGET SUMMARY AVALON FIRE RESCUE DISTRICT FISCAL YEAR 2009 – 2010 **7.8% LESS THAN PRIOR YEAR'S TOTAL OPERATION EXPENDITURE** Millage – 1.0 Mills

Income:
Total Income \$305,500

Expenses:
Total Expenses \$305,500

FISCAL YEAR 2010 – 2011 **5.35% LESS THAN PRIOR YEAR'S TOTAL OPERATION EXPENDITURE**

Income:
Total Income \$289,144

Expenses:
Total Expenses \$289,144

FISCAL YEAR 2011 – 2012 **3.1% LESS THAN PRIOR YEAR'S TOTAL OPERATION EXPENDITURE**

Income:
Total Income \$278,165

Expenses:
Total Expenses \$278,165

IN THE LAST 3 YEARS, TOTAL INCOME HAS DECREASED BY APPROXIMATELY 10.18%

Our next Newsletter is scheduled to be published in February 2012 – Topics to include Special District Funding differences between MSBU (Other Santa Rosa County Fire Department funding) and Costs of Paid Firefighting Personnel Statistics.

Calendar of Events
November/December - 2011

Sunday, November 6th

Daylight Savings Time Ends

*Remember to set your clocks back one hour, AND change your batteries in all smoke alarms.
(Smoke Alarms DO SAVE LIVES!!)

Tuesday, November 8th

Avalon Beach Homeowners Assn Meeting- 7:00 pm

Friday, November 11th

Veterans Day

Bernath Place Homeowners Assn Meeting- 7:00 pm

Saturday, Dec 17th and Sunday, Dec 18th

Santa on Fire Trucks in the Neighborhoods