

# Mosier Fire Log

June 2011

## CALL SUMMARY

	June	YTD	06/10	10 YTD	06/09	09 YTD
MEDICAL:	8	31	3	20	7	29
FIRE:	3	8	1	9	1	10

## SELECTED CALL DETAILS

On June 9, Mosier Fire was paged to a fully involved house fire on Hood River Road. All occupants were reported safely outside the building, with flames showing from all four sides of the house. Our first unit was on scene in eight minutes and began directing a coordinated response which ultimately employed eleven Mosier firefighters, five more from Pine Grove along with their Chief Greg Borton, and two firefighters from Oregon Department of Forestry.

The house was clearly a total loss from the start. Large pine and fir trees adjacent to the house were torching, with flames reaching at least one hundred feet in the air. We went to work saving outbuildings and putting out spot fires from embers falling as much as one thousand feet away from the main fire. The largest of those spot fires reached approximately twenty feet in diameter, spreading mainly in [rabbit-foot clover](#), and burning patches of ceanothus and poison oak – grasses were not burning to any appreciable degree. The same area was burned in the Microwave Fire a year and a half ago, and fuels are still fairly light. We were very lucky that this fire happened on a virtually windless day, between two of the windiest days of the month.

Sadly, the homeowner lost a lifetime of possessions – a home, household goods and supplies, wallet, clothing, equipment, tools, artwork, photos and heirlooms, and peace of mind heading into the eighth decade of life. As of the end of June, Gordy is well situated as far as temporary housing (at least until cold weather sets in), clothes, food, water and power. His main need is a replacement house, which will take some help financially and otherwise. Friends and loved ones are holding a benefit musical gathering on **Sunday, July 17, from 4-7PM** at The Pines tasting room at Second and State Street in Hood River. Special musical guests arranged by Sqrll Music. **Donations** may also be sent via check made out to Gordon Withrow, c/o Panorama Lodge, PO Box 1587, Hood River, OR 97031. Gordy sends heartfelt thanks to those who have already pitched in.

The cause of this fire will remain undetermined because of the extent of destruction. Gordy's best guess is that it was something electrical, possibly a wiring fault in the 120-year-old farm house, or an overloaded extension cord. This is a sad but useful

reminder that in general electrical fires are preventable. Be sure to have your wiring inspected if you have circuits which trip often or which go out without tripping a breaker, non-working outlets, flickering lights, sounds in walls when switches are thrown, or any other indication of problems, however small. Avoid using extension cords, and, if you use extension cords be sure not to overload them and to discontinue use at the first sign of any warmth in the cord, and NEVER plug a power strip into an extension cord.

Also, not to sound like a broken record, this fire would likely have been put out by a single sprinkler head. If you are building or remodeling, please consider the value of everything you own and the people you love, as compared to the modest cost of a sprinkler system. Call Chief Appleton at 541-478-3333 with questions about fire sprinklers, or any other matter.

The other fire calls this month were one smoke investigation which turned out to be a controlled burn nearly twenty miles outside our Fire District, and a false alarm at Mosier Community School due to construction work.

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Mosier had two rather serious medical calls in June. On June 6 we intercepted an 82-year-old man complaining of leg pain with no apparent injury. We kept him as comfortable as possible while doing a detailed assessment, and waited for paramedics before attempting to move him. He died in an air ambulance less than an hour later from a cause which had not clearly manifested under our care despite our having assessed for it.

On June 27 we were on scene in one minute to a 74-year-old woman complaining of difficulty breathing. She presented with life-threatening signs which we were able to reverse and stabilize during the eight to ten minutes before Hood River's ambulance arrived.

In both of these cases, the training and equipment we have acquired as EMT-Basics really paid off. More generally, we continue to respond quickly, averaging about three minutes this month, and effectively, with at least two EMT's and as many as five EMT's, and well-trained non-EMT's who are quite adept at guiding Hood River's ambulance to hard-to-find addresses, and assisting on complex medical scenes.

Other medical calls in June: an intentional overdose of prescription medication, two calls to unknown illness in cars on I-84 which turned out to be wild goose chases, seizure in an elderly non-resident woman, a complaint of flu-like symptoms which were most likely self-induced, and chest pain in a patient we have seen before for other reasons.

**BRUSH CLEARING PARTY** Saturday, July 9 from 9:30 AM to noon. Meet at the parking area just south of the freeway overpass on Hwy 30.