

## Keeping our eyes on the prize

Black smoke was visible to the patrons enjoying breakfast on a quiet mid-July morning at the Colorado Cherry Company, and the threatening cloud was immediately concerning to all. A fire had started in a neighborhood barn and storage shed, and was rapidly moving to the house and surrounding areas. Within minutes of it being reported, members of the Pinewood Springs Fire Protection District (PSFPD) arrived on the scene, contained the barn fire, saved the home, and extinguished several spreading spot fires.

It was another successful weekday morning for the volunteer firefighters committed to protecting our community and the US 36 corridor. It was another family served and another home saved.



The Pinewood Springs Fire Department operates out of a fire station lacking adequate space for keeping our responding units mission-ready. Tight operating conditions prevent our firefighters

and paramedics from providing the quickest, safest responses to the variety of emergencies (fire, vehicle accidents, community health) that regularly arise.

"Putting our gear back in service, cleaning, rolling, loading hoses, refilling foam tanks and maintaining tools and equipment for mission-readiness is difficult or impossible with our current conditions," explains Assistant Chief Andy Lucas.

In addition to the space issue, the building is old and requires significant maintenance. Think of the building as equipment – like a fire truck. Fire trucks often need maintenance and sometimes need to be upgraded. Our last fire apparatus upgrade was in 2000. The building was last upgraded in the 70's. We need an improved fire station – hence the continued push to raise funds through community support and grant application efforts.

The 20 Pinewood Springs firefighters donate, on average, 7 hours each week in support of our community. They train, maintain equipment, and risk their lives for no pay. They are our family and friends. We should provide them a building that allows them to effectively train, maintain the equipment, prep/clean-up gear for service, and maintain a state of readiness.

In the 50+ years since the fire station was built, our community has grown from 123 residents to about a thousand. In addition, vehicle traffic between Lyons and Estes Park has increased to

over 2.2 million per year. And with our aging community, service needs continue to grow and change. Remember the 2013 flood? Few would argue that the flood demonstrated that our fire station was barely adequate as the community focal point during that disaster. Imagine if this type of calamity occurred during a cold-weather month. A new fire station and community center will help our dedicated volunteers protect our community now and into the future.

Over the past 8 months, the Project's Design and Construction Committee has anguished over coming up with the best building improvement approach, considering the fire department and community needs (vs. wants). Our architect estimates the cost for remodeling the building (vs. all new) and providing additional vehicle space at \$750,000. This is significantly less than other comparable fire departments in the area have recently spent (for example, Jamestown and Lyons).

For Pinewood Springs, \$750,000 is a lot of money. But the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) offers a grant that will provide up to half the money we need. So doing the math, take the \$750,000, divide it by half (from DOLA), subtract the \$200,000 we have on-hand and we need to borrow \$200,000 (we'll borrow a little more than we need for building construction to ensure we don't completely drain department cash-on-hand for emergencies or fallback). The fire district doesn't have money on-hand to cover payments. As a result, we're coming to you – the community – with this fall's election to affirm our request for 3.5 mills to pay for the fire station / community center improvement. The impact to a PS homeowner that has a valuation of say, \$400,000 would be a little over \$100 per year.

While we originally hoped to avoid increasing the mill levy, DOLA has made it clear that with our current mill levy rate below the state average, it needs to be increased before DOLA will match our funds. This is a signal DOLA requires that we have ongoing "skin in the game" to justify the DOLA match.

We'll discuss the project and the election further in this newsletter in months to come. We'll also discuss this at the upcoming Cookbook Launch and Community Celebration September 12. If you have questions, contact John Bologna at (303) 823-5534 or [john.bologna@pinewoodspringsfire.org](mailto:john.bologna@pinewoodspringsfire.org). We would love to hear from you.

Your continued support is how our community will continue to keep itself safe and prepared for whatever the future brings.

### PROJECT FUNDING STATUS – SEPT 2015

**\$193,212.79** (↑ \$1,357.15 since Aug 2015)

## Valuing our volunteers

We all recognize the contributions made by those who volunteer to serve our community. But if we saw them on the street, would we recognize them? To make sure we do, Springboard will profile a different community volunteer each month.

### Troy Valente, Firefighter/Paramedic



Since moving to Pinewood Springs in 2011, Troy Valente has literally been taking his work home with him. He's a full-time firefighter and paramedic with Greeley Fire and Rescue – which runs just shy of 14,000 calls per year – and still makes time to volunteer with the PS Fire Protection District.

"I can't in good conscious be in the profession full time, live right next to the fire station, and not help my community," he explains. "It really is that simple."

In Greeley, where he's been a paid professional since 2004, Troy's duties can expand beyond his job title as he regularly fills in as an engine operator/driver and Lieutenant. In addition to his firefighting position, Troy is also a contract educator with Medtronic – a medical technology and services company – and a part-time professional drummer.

"What I love about being a firefighter is actually making a difference every once in a while," he says. "Most of what I do is very benign and what I call 'social work.' That can wear on you. However, when you actually make a significant difference in a life – that is what keeps me going."

Born and raised in California, Troy came to Colorado in 2001 and lived in Evans and Greeley before making the move to Pinewood with his wife Barbara, a neo-natal ICU nurse in Boulder, and their children Jordan, 12, and Kayla, 11. They fell in love with

Pinewood Springs while visiting Barbara's sister and her husband, Chris and Mike Odell, who live at the end of Kiowa Road. Troy describes himself as a typical Colorado outdoor enthusiast with a love of music, hiking, camping, backpacking, and skiing.

His most vivid memory of the 2013 flood is a positive one: "I was lead medical for the flood. Even being a paid guy for 10 years, working alongside the community and the volunteers was one of the proudest moments in my entire career. I have never felt so alive as a responder," he says. "Without being too negative, there are many things about a paid fire department that are VERY disheartening. However, the spirit of a volunteer is contagious in a way that is synergistic."

## SAVE THE DATE – Pig Roast September 12!

The *Pinewood Springs Is Still Cookin'* cookbook launch and Community Celebration Pig Roast/Potluck will be held Saturday, September 12 from 4 pm to 7pm at the Fire Station.

It is also the day you may **PICK UP & PAY FOR** your pre-ordered cookbooks. A limited number of copies will be for sale at this event but these Heirloom Cookbooks will sell out **FAST!** Payment must be cash or check only. Please arrange for a friend or neighbor to pick up your cookbook(s) on September 12 if you cannot be there. Copies of "The Road Home" flood book will also be on sale. If you have questions, please contact us at [recipe@pinewoodspringsfire.org](mailto:recipe@pinewoodspringsfire.org)

The event is being hosted by the Pinewood Springs Brigade – along with generous support from the Fire Board, our local firefighters, the PSPOA, and many others. All proceeds from the cookbook will go towards the new Fire Station and Community Center Project.

Thank You, The Brigade

## Ways to donate to the Project Fund

There are several ways you can make financial contributions to support the Fire Station & Community Center Project:

1. Drop a check (no cash, please!) in the water payment drop box at the Fire Station
2. Use a credit card to donate through the flood book website at [www.coloradofloodbook.org/fire-station-community-center/](http://www.coloradofloodbook.org/fire-station-community-center/)
3. Via PayPal through the Fire Protection District website at [www.pinewoodspringsfire.org/new-fire-station-fund-raising/](http://www.pinewoodspringsfire.org/new-fire-station-fund-raising/)
4. Become a monthly donor by picking up a Donation and Pledge Form at the fire station or the Colorado Cherry Company, filling it out, and dropping it in the water payment drop box