

# Fisher's Peak Fire Protection District

June 17, 2001

*Written byCarolynn Johnson*

I am sitting here on the back of a brush truck at the southern-most end of Owen Baldwin Parkway with Mary Jo Shelton watching a wildfire that is burning in New Mexico. As I sit here, I am wondering if all of you in our Santa Fe Trail Ranch Community know about our Fire District. I'm thinking maybe you don't, so I will tell you about it.

We are a group of volunteers who fight fires in our community. "Our community" consists of about 44,350 acres covering the area from the New Mexico border on the South to Exit 18 on the North, part of the Crazy French Ranch and all the area in between, excluding the City of Trinidad. We have 25 volunteers from New Mexico to Stonewall, including 14 volunteers from the Santa Fe Trail Ranch. Most of our Santa Fe Trail Ranch volunteers hold a "red card" which allows us to fight fires when the Federal government takes over a fire, either because of the location or difficulty level.

As MaryJo and I sit here, our Captain, Buddie Curro, along with Will Potter, Captain Rich Babnick and David McDonald is scouting the fire that began in Hobbs Canyon in New Mexico on Saturday and has all of on the Ranch on an evacuation alert. Rick Johnson is checking evacuation routes on the Ranch, and Mike Shelton is waiting with MaryJo and me for further instruction. Our local celebrity is Eddie Gieske who is known throughout the area as the "Dispatcher with the great voice!"

I mentioned that 14 of our residents are volunteer fire fighters. They are Gene Downs and Will Potter who are also on the Board of the Fisher's Peak Fire Protection District, Paul Montoya, Ed Hockett, Lazaro Martinez, Bob Santoro, Rick Johnson, Francie Purswell, MaryJo and Mike Shelton, Chuck Austin, Eddie Gieske, Dennis Scott, and me. Besides those of us from Santa Fe Trail Ranch we fight with the local community people including Debbie and Marty Coca (Trinidad), Rich Babnick (Trinidad), Bob Philbin (Trinidad Lake Ranches), Dave McDonald (Folsom, NM), Dave Guara (Trinidad), Assistant Chief Gale Pettee (Trinidad Lake Ranches), Leon Plank (Stonewall), Rodney Perrine (Crazy French), Eric Guadagnoli (Trinidad) and, of course, our Chief, Buddie Curro (Starkville). Our main fire station is in Starkville. We train twice a month and are required to qualify for wildfire duty annually.

As I mentioned, we are a totally volunteer group. We receive only a small amount from your taxes and rely mostly on fund raising for our revenue. We recently have acquired an old brush truck, a gift from San Isabel Electric, and we have two other brush trucks outfitted for wildland fires. Your kind donations last year enabled us to purchase a real fire truck with hook and ladder that is mostly used for structure fires. We only recently received phone service and have purchased a water tap that will enable us to put bathrooms in the Starkville location.

On the fire we are watching today, we had many non-firefighters that helped us out. Many of the ladies made sandwiches for dinner last night. Our neighbors brought us breakfast this morning with lots and lots of coffee, and the Red Cross brought us lunch. During all this commotion, one resident contacted some local contractors and they brought over their bulldozers and water tanks in case the New Mexico fire crossed the state line and landed in the Santa Fe Trail Ranch. I have not mentioned any names here because there were so many Ranch residents that helped I am afraid I will miss one. Suffice it to say that these unnamed neighbors made a significant contribution to our fire fighting efforts.

It takes a lot of fire fighters and community resources to fight a wildland fire. Thank you to all of you who helped. It takes a lot of people to create a community, and we certainly have a wonderful community in the Santa Fe Trail Ranch.

If you are interested in joining the Fisher's Peak Fire Protection District as a volunteer, we would love to hear from you. You can e-mail me at [carico@activematrix.net](mailto:carico@activematrix.net) or you can talk to any of the volunteers. We will be happy to tell you what an honor it is to protect our community.