SPCFPD Leadership Reins Change Hands

Stanley Steps Down, Felton Steps Up

Gene Stanley, long-time Chief of the Southern Park County Fire Protection District (SPCFPD), stepped down effective March 31, 2012. He will continue as a volunteer with the Department, will manage the district’s wildland fire program, and continue to serve in his appointed position as chairman of the Park County E911 Authority Board and as a fire investigator for Park County. Stanley will be succeeded as Chief by Deputy Chief Don Felton. Felton assumed his new duties on April 1.

“I’ve been a first responder for 40 years,” explained Stanley, “and have put a lot of personal projects and interests on the back burner, especially during the last five years.” Stanley has served District as Chief twice. Seventeen years ago, he took over the District for seven years. During that first term Station #1 was completed and two additional stations were built and put into service, training was improved, and performance standards improved dramatically, increasing the efficiency of fire and medical emergency response to District residents.

After that term, Stanley became active nationally in emergency response to wildland fires and other major emergencies. Stanley spent six months in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Five years ago, Stanley was asked to return to the District and he agreed. “I’m proud of the professionalism of our volunteers. It was an honor to lead this group of people and I’ll be proud to continue to work side by side with them. As Chief I assumed the role as Incident Commander during our emergency responses.” Now I can get back to working in emergency medical response,” something he says he has always loved.

“Gene Stanley has served this District with exceptional ability,” said SPCFPD Board Chairman Sam Calanni. “He has inspired talented volunteers to join the Department and kept them motivated. We are extremely pleased to have a new chief who has already demonstrated his abilities within the department and we expect a smooth transition.”

Calanni and the District Board will be conducting a search for a new Deputy Chief. Until one is found, Stanley will be volunteering to cover the Chief’s duties on Felton’s days off. “The District’s commitment to full-time professional coverage in the Fire Chief’s position remains unchanged, and we will select a new Deputy Chief as soon as we find the right candidate,” says Calanni.

Don Felton, along with his wife, Barbara, are longtime residents of the district. Don has been taking extensive emergency response training for several years that have prepared him for his new position. He has also had lots of leadership experience in the military (he was a Sargent Major), in the National Guard and as a civilian government contractor at the U.S. Air Force Academy. “I have ideas and plans about the direction I would like to see the district take in the future, “says Felton,” but I have to admit I’m a little anxious about taking the reins from Gene. His shoes are not going to be easy to fill.”

-Flip Boettcher in the Fairplay Flume
From the Chief...

Well, what can I say it is the end of an era. Chief Stanley has been the District Fire Chief longer than most of us can remember. He has played a large part in the development of this department and bringing it to the professional level it is today. I have some very large shoes to fill, and with the help of the community and the volunteers we have now, I hope to be able to continue where Chief Stanley left off. Over the past years I have learned a great deal from Chief Stanley and I’m hoping that will make for a smooth transition for our fire department and the district.

So, with that in mind, I feel that fire prevention is the best defense against fires. We can catch and put out most small fires that start in our district. But the real factor is not to have fire at all, and it can start with you, the home owner. Just by doing a few small things in and around your home you can possibly save your home from being destroyed by a wildfire. They say that it is not a matter of if, but a matter of when a wildfire will strike your area.

I would like to start by having some community meetings both at the fire station and at your homeowners meetings to talk about how to best prepare and protect your home from fire. With a little work and preplanning, we as a community can better prepare ourselves for wildfires. So, I hope to meet all or most of you in the future, and I look forward to serving as your fire chief.

Don Felton
Fire Chief
SPCFPD

From the (retired) Chief ...

As you read this article I will have already stepped down as Chief of our fire department. I was either fire or medical chief for seventeen years in the Guffey community. Those years have been extremely rewarding for me as I watched this fire department grow from a very basic department into one of high professionalism. This was accomplished by the great support from you within the area and from the many high quality volunteers who have stepped forward over the years and selflessly provided numerous hours, days, months and years to the service of our citizens in their time of emergency care needs. Thank you for the opportunity to have been a part of the development of these services.

All this was also accomplished through the dedicated services of our elected Fire Board members. And during our numerous extended incidents our auxiliary members have come to our aid many times when we could not get home for rehab, food and drinks. Your hard work is appreciated.

A volunteer fire department cannot succeed without the kind of strong community backing I received. I know our new Chief Don Felton can count on your continued support.

I am not leaving the Department entirely, just stepping down from the Chief’s position. I will continue to volunteer my services to the Department, and will be assisting the District as Liaison Officer and Wildland Fire Coordinator. I am also continuing in my role as Park County E911 Authority Chairman and Fire Investigator for the Park County Sheriff’s Office. I also will continue to deploy nationally on the large Federal incidents as an incident management team member. As you can see, although I’m retiring, I’ll still be staying very busy. Thanks again everyone.

Gene Stanley

Felton already experienced with workings of SPCFPD

Don Felton, who took over as Chief of SPCFPD on April 1, has plenty of experience with the fire district. Felton has been with the fire department for six years as a firefighter and medical technician. In fact, the transition from Chief Gene Stanley’s administration is working just as was intended when the district’s board of directors created the position of Deputy Chief and appointed Felton to it in 2009. The board wanted a smooth transition, according to board chairman, Sam Calanni, to ensure the district’s 240 square miles would be protected 24/7. “We are extremely pleased to have a new chief who has already demonstrated his abilities within the department,” said Calanni, and the board will now conduct a search for a new Deputy Chief to continue the depth of leadership the district has enjoyed for the last two years.” Until that Deputy Chief has been hired, former Chief Gene Stanley has volunteered to fill the position of Acting Chief on Felton’s weekly days off.

Felton’s plans for the department include upholding the high standards set by Stanley and implementing some ideas of

-Flip Boettcher contributed to this report
Who Wins, Who Loses...
Why do some houses survive a wildfire, while others are destroyed?

Research findings prove that house survival during wildfire is not random, miraculous, or “dumb luck.”

Rather, it is how the house is built, the characteristics of the adjacent vegetation and other fuels, and routine maintenance that often determine which homes burn and which survive.

These types of actions are called “pre-fire” activities and they can save your life as well as your property.

Pre-fire activities are actions completed before a wildfire occurs which improve the survivability of people and the home.

The “winners” will be the people who implement pre-fire activities.

Did You Know?
Firefighters often refer to ornamental junipers as “little green gas cans?” During a wildfire involving homes, embers can smolder undetected under ornamental junipers. The junipers can then ignite and burn intensely after firefighters have left your property. Planting ornamental junipers next to your house is never a good idea. Keep these "little green gas cans" at least 30 feet from the house or replace them with low-growing deciduous shrubs, herbaceous flowers, rock mulches, and hard surfaces.

The good news is that you can get all the information you need to make your home, property and animals less vulnerable to wildfire by attending the

Wildfire Property Assessment Workshop
Fire Station #1
Saturday, June 2nd
10 a.m. –12 noon
Be ready to share your questions.

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Volunteer Spotlight:

Gene Stanley: Man with a Past (or) Maybe You Knew All This Stuff But I Didn’t by Rita Baysinger, SPCFPD Information Officer

On April 1, 2012, Gene Stanley woke up and was no longer the Park County District 9 Fire Chief. The same thing happened to him ten years ago. But it didn’t take. Five years after stepping down as the SPCFPD Chief the last time, he was asked to come back. He was, at that time, long past the age when most sensible people retire to a life of leisure and self-indulgence. But that just isn’t who Gene Stanley is.

I always think of Gene Stanley when I see a commercial now running on TV that shows a “mature” motorcycle driver who announces to the camera, “I’ve lived my whole life full out!” He’s got nothing on Gene.

Gene took his first adventurous excursion when he was 15. Enthralled with John Wayne war movies, he thought “the world needs me.” So, he lied about his age, joined the Army, and headed for the Korean War. His mother, back home in Omaha, had no idea where he had gone. Once in Korea, with the war going “full bore,” he and a partner regularly inserted themselves behind enemy lines to bring back intelligence. The missions, he says, were bloody and dangerous. “Hmmm, this isn’t at all like a John Wayne movie,” he remembers thinking. But before he had a chance to get wounded or killed, one of his friends (Gene suspects) told his mother where he was. She “blew the whistle” on him and “they couldn’t get me out of there fast enough.”

He finished his military obligation after graduating from the University of Nebraska with a degree in Design Engineering. There was no war going on at that time, but he remembers sitting on the tarmac at Offutt AFB
Gene Stanley: Man with a Past continued from page 4

in Omaha, ready to go to Cuba during the ’13 Days in May’ of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Gene’s interests and talents took him in many directions during his life, none of them boring. He learned to play some pretty good guitar and played with Conway Twitty’s band on a national tour. He turned down an offer from Twitty to open for him because his interests were keyed in on driving and building race cars and engines. At age 20, when he was driving late-model stock cars for Plymouth, he was invited to meet with the car company’s engineers to give them suggestions on how it easier.” The pair also have a long history running the annual Pikes Peak event. Gene has done it 15 times, Kim 13. He still runs five miles every morning.

These are just some of the many sides of Gene Stanley, none of which even touch his 40 year commitment to fire and emergency medicine. He was introduced to emergency medicine by a group of mountain climber/physicians in Colorado. And there’s his career in volunteer firefighting, as a Fire Chief, and in national Incident Management response. Oh, and don’t forget building, along with Kim, their ‘earthship’ dream home perched on their south-facing mountain property. “It’s time to get that house finished,” he says, “after all these years.”

Gene says he still picks up his guitar every once in a while. I’ve heard rumors that he used to sing and play on occasion down at the Freshwater...before he got so busy. And he admits that more than one person has mistaken him for Willie Nelson. Who knows? Maybe he IS Willy Nelson. I wouldn’t put it past him. Would you?

Gene Stanley summits Mt. McKinley. He has climbed all but three of Colorado’s 14ers.

As a design engineer in Omaha, he and his business partner (his partner designed and Gene made them work) created custom lighting fixtures for clients as diverse as an architect who was remodeling Buckingham Palace, for the Rockefeller Family and Jacqueline Onassis. They designed and installed a 28-story tall chandelier in a 30-story atrium in a new Hyatt Hotel.

Another passion was mountaineering. While still working in Omaha, Gene came out to Colorado about once a month to ‘bag 14ers’ with the Colorado Mountain Club. He climbed Mt. Ranier with famed mountaineer Lou Whittacker. As a result of Whittacker’s recommendation, he was invited to join an expedition to climb Mt. McKinley. Gene and 13 others made the summit. He also ‘bagged’ a few other peaks, like the Matterhorn and Mt. Blanc.

Along the way he participated in the design and construction of a replica of a Curtiss P6-E Hawk, the last open cockpit biplane that the US Army Air Corps used for a fighter. It’s in the permanent collection of the Experimental Aircraft Association Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. “It flew, but not much, it was pretty much a Hanger Queen, as they’re called, worth several million dollars.”

It was mountain climbing that brought Gene together with his wife, Kim. And they decided they were tired of commuting to the high country and moved to Colorado. Together they have run the Grand Canyon from rim to rim “three times, always starting from the North Rim, because it’s higher and that makes...
Southern Park County Fire Protection District will host their 14th Annual Independence Day Celebration at Station #1 in Guffey.

Traditional events for the 4-day event will be an Ice Cream Social, Fire Prevention Handouts, a Silent Auction, Vendor Booths, Bear Control Information and Yard Sale. A special attraction ONLY on Wednesday, July 4th, will be a presentation by HawkQuest, an educational Colorado non-profit that makes eagles, hawks, owls and falcons available close-up to educate audiences about raptors and their place in the environment.

Vendor booths will be 10'x10' and a donation of $25 per booth will go to support the Fire Fighters. Vendor booths will be 10'x10' and a donation of $25 per booth will go to support the Fire Fighters.

For more information on booths, please call Doug at 719-479-2282 or email him at piketraders@hotmail.com or call Dave Tilton or Susan Geiger at 719-479-2205. If you need items to be picked up, let them know.

The 4th of July Celebration is the major fundraising event of the year for the Auxiliary.

About 17 years ago I went with the Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services group from Denver to help out on the Buffalo Creek Fire. It was the first of many times I slept in or near a fire house. That began a long association with rural fire departments which has taught me that one of the centers of community life in rural areas is the fire house.

A few years later I was working on a mobile kitchen in front of the Lake George firehouse during the Hayman Fire. I spent three weeks there as people and supplies flooded in to help the people displaced by the monstrous fire.

The tables in the firehouse were stacked with donated clothing and household goods for the evacuees and things the firefighters needed: lip balm, socks, neck scarves, Band-Aids, mole skin, sun screen and other personal items. The firehouse was open day and night for the three weeks I was there, the center of a community impacted by an almost unthinkable crisis. My husband eventually brought down our RV so I could sleep next to the firehouse instead of making a round trip of over two

For a Common Cause: What is at the Heart of Community by Rita Baysinger SPCFPD

Community means different things to different people, depending on where they live, where they grew up, and even on their personalities.

I have almost always lived in a big city: Denver. When I was ten, I visited Antonito, my mother’s home town in southern Colorado, a place most people only know now because it is at one end of the Cumbres-Toltec Railroad running between Chama, New Mexico and Antonito.

The experience was exhilarating for this little kid who had lived most of her life on Denver’s Capitol Hill, the most urban of urban environments in the state at that time. Fields and haystacks, barns and empty roads were a novelty. I remember how everyone knew everyone else. I had relatives everywhere.

Even though I was a stranger in this town, I remember feeling very much like I belonged there. I felt welcome in this community by virtue of my family ties.

Join your friends below in the SPCFPD Auxiliary

Rita and Dave Baysinger Jan Breslin
Sandra and Dale Cox Don Felton
Karen Frerich Susan Geiger, Secretary
 Deb Hotovey and Jim Ivey Hope Juda
 Ellen Kremkus Joan LePage
Larry LePage Diane and Bernie Mann
Kathy Mikesell and Doug Schellenger
Vonne and Bruce Mohr Jane and Bill Pate
Judy Quick, Treasurer Randy Quick
Elaine and Don Rocksted Doris Schoepf
Linda and Harry Stanley Davis Tilton, President
Nancy Vasquez

The Lake George Fire House, June, 2002, during the Hayman Fire which hosted the Salvation Army Mobile Kitchen.

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hours each way every day. “Of course,” said Dutch, the Fire Chief, “just park it over there.”

Once again, I felt like I belonged, not because I had relatives there, but because we were all working for a common cause, trying to save a community from disaster.

If you’ve never been inside Firehouse #1 in Guffey, what are you waiting for? The people who spend at least part of their time there every month are your neighbors (maybe even family members). They are there to make sure that when you or those you love need help, because of an accident, medical or fire emergency, someone is there to answer the phone; that well-trained people are ready to respond. Not everyone who volunteers for the SPCFPD needs to climb on a truck or into the ambulance when a call comes in. Your neighbors who do that will tell you it’s a great feeling to be able to do that, and that they got some great and interesting training to prepare them for their volunteer jobs. There are as many ways to help SPCFPD as there are people in this far-flung district.

The area around Guffey will never be a city, which is why most of you probably moved here. It will always be a community, however, more of a community, in fact, than I have ever been a part of living in the city. In a community, people care about each other and where they live, no matter how far it is to the next house. Come by the fire house. In addition to the smell of tires and diesel, you’ll catch a whiff of that unmistakable element I’ve recognized in every fire house I’ve ever been in: community.

by Rita Baysinger

It’s the Code of the West: be neighborly, be a part of this great community.

VOLUNTEER for the Southern Park County Fire Protection District.

There’s a job that needs doing and it might not get done without you. Give the firehouse a call: 689-9497. There’s training almost every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. Stop by, bring a friend. It’s a known fact that volunteers are the happiest people in the world!

2nd Annual Firefighter Appreciation Dinner

by Flip Boettcher

The Bull Moose Restaurant and Bar was packed for the 2nd annual Firefighter Appreciation dinner held on Tuesday, January 17 and sponsored by the SPCFPD board of directors.

This year’s Firefighter of the Year award, was given to Jim Yoder, Chief Engineer of the department, for his many, many hours of mechanical work and maintenance in his own shop and at the fire station in keeping the department response vehicles in excellent running condition, and for responding on emergency calls.

After a great dinner, Sam Calanni, chairman of the board of directors, said the dinner was given in appreciation for all the hours the department volunteers put in for training and education to serve the district in emergencies.

Don Felton, Deputy Chief, then gave out “Years of Service” pins to all the volunteers. Chief Gene Stanley and Major Larry LePage had the highest number of years with 16 years each. Captain Flip Boettcher received a pin for fifty years of service. Captains Randy and Donna West each received a fourteen year pin and Major Joan LePage received a ten year pin.

Stanley then gave out awards to the volunteers who had responded to the most calls during the year, and both LePages, Jim Ivey and Don Rocksted all received plaques. Rita Baysinger, PIO (public information officer) for the department, received a plaque from Stanley for her work on the department semi-annual newsletter.

The Volunteer of the Year award was then presented to Yoder.

The socializing was fun and a good time seemed to be had by all.

by Flip Boettcher
Snips and Snaps...
From the Guffey Holiday Potluck

Twas the night of December 17th, and all through the Bull Moose, every one was moving, and eating, and having a really great time!

The Pancakes are Sizzling, The Sun is Shining, And All’s Right with the World

Who’s that in the kitchen? (l to r) Doris Schoepf, Susan Geiger, Emily Mason and manhandling the spatula, Davis Tilton.

On Saturday, February 11th, at the SPCFPD station in Guffey, from 8am to 12 noon, the fire department auxiliary sponsored their free, 2nd Annual Heart Healthy Pancake Breakfast. February is National Heart Health month.

No one is really sure how many people attended the breakfast, but according to auxiliary treasurer Susan Geiger, the auxiliary went through 23 dozen eggs and that’s a lot of eggs. Mathematically speaking, that is 12 X 23 = 276 eggs divided by approximately 3 eggs per person, or one large scoop = about 92 people attending the breakfast.

A big thank you goes to those chickens who laid all those eggs which were donated by chicken owners Kathy Mikesell, firefighter and auxiliary member and Doug Schellenger, auxiliary member.

Geiger wants to thank all the volunteers who helped including, but not limited to, Barb Felton, auxiliary member who made the blueberry pancake and waffle topping, Elaine Rocksted auxiliary member, who flipped all the pancakes, Emily Mason who helped crack, stir and cook all those 23 dozen eggs, Doris Schoepf and Judy Quick who did clean-up as well as anyone we missed.

A big thank you goes to Scott Elmore, firefighter, for his secret recipe waffles and Davis Tilton, auxiliary president, for his pancakes, and also a thank you to fire department board member Amy Mason for her donation of delicious fresh fruit.

Fire department EMTs Jan Breslin and Donavon Johnson gave free blood pressure, heart rate and blood oxygen levels as well as a glucose test...

“EMT’s Jan Breslin and Donavon Johnson gave free blood pressure, heart rate and blood oxygen levels as well as a glucose test...”

Visions of cupcakes, cookies, and sweets galore danced in their heads.

Santa left SPCFPD volunteers their own personalized coffee cups.

Photo and Story by Flip Boettcher
Even before springtime set in, district firefighters started preparing for the possibility of fighting wildland fires this summer. Every qualified wildland firefighter must pass an annual Fireline Refresher course designed to get them up to speed on how to keep themselves safe while keeping people and property safe in the event of a wildfire.

At SPCFPD, on February 18, Aaron Mandel conducted the classroom portion, and then the class moved outside for a timed exercise getting into practice fire shelters. New-generation fire shelters provide increased protection from radiant and convective heat in wildland firefighter entrapment situations and are always carried as part of their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

A real shelter has two layers. The outer layer is aluminum foil bonded to woven silica cloth. The foil reflects radiant heat and the silica material slows the passage of heat to the inside of the shelter. An inner layer of aluminum foil laminated to fiberglass prevents heat from re-radiating to the person inside the shelter. When these layers are sewn together, the air gap between them offers further insulation. A shelter is not a guarantee of survival, and, as every firefighter is told, is not an alternative for safe firefighting practices.

"A shelter is not a guarantee of survival...and is not an alternative for safe firefighting practices."

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Before doing any outside burning check www.guffeyfire.net for burn bans in effect. Bans are also posted at Station #1, 1745 CR 102, the Guffey Community Center and Library, Rita’s Place, the Freshwater, at CR 88, mm1, CR 59 at Ranger Station Rd, CR 102 at the county border and SH 9 mm33. Burn Ban Status is also available by calling 719-689-9479. IGNORING A BURN BAN CAN RESULT IN A $1,000 FINE!
Watch for a profile of a randomly selected sponsor from this newsletter in the fall issue of the FireHouse Dispatch!

THANK YOU!!

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www.guffeyfire.net

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Yes! I am interested in becoming a volunteer for the SPCFPD. I am interested in being:

☐ a Firefighter ☐ an EMT ☐ an Auxiliary Member ☐ a Board Member

My Name: _________________________________ Phone: ________________

Address: __________________________________ E-Mail: ______________

I have the following experience which would be beneficial to the District: ________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

After completing this form, cut it out and return it to: Chief Don Felton, SPCFPD, PO Box 11, Guffey, CO 80820-0011