

UPCOMING
EVENTS

- April 12 Regular Session Board Meeting 7:00pm— Headquarters
- April 13 JCMOFA Board Meeting 7:00 pm— Station 5

**April
TRAININGS
ICS**

- 5:** Station 6 7pm
- 7:** Stations 2,3,9 at Station 3 7pm
- 14:** Station 4 7pm
- 19:** Stations 7 & 8 at Station 7 7pm
- 21:** Station 5 7pm
- 26:** Station 1 7pm
- 28:** Station 10 7pm

**OTHER
TRAININGS/
MEETINGS**

- 2:** Make-up Training at HQ 8am & 10am
- 16:** Recruit Training at HQ 8am

District Dispatch

A publication of the Johnson County Fire Protection District

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APRIL 2011

Thawing and Rain... Considerations for Natural Cover Fires

Each spring we touch on this very important topic, but it always appears to bear repeating. With the onset of warmer temperatures we tend to see our citizens out an about a bit more regularly. Many of them take the early spring warmth as an opportunity to clean up around their property in preparation of a rebirth of natural vegetation. As they start this process the easiest way to clear an area and make it ready for the coming growth is to simply start it on fire and let it burn away. While often beneficial to the soil and an effective way of combating or controlling certain unwanted vegetation species the process of improper burning can often lead to a call for help from us.

When the call for help is raised we are all more than willing to respond and do so with regulated haste to offer our assistance. While this action is commendable and for the most part goes off without any major hitches there are those occasions when we simply don't "see the whole picture" or get a little ahead of ourselves during our response. Often when we do get ahead of ourselves, particularly during the spring thaw and rain events, we end up with one or more vehicles stuck. Sometimes the stuck vehicles are located in fields, but other times they end up in someone's finished lawn.

Most property owners are fairly understanding and realize we were there to help them and take the ruts we leave behind in stride. However, there is a rising number of people who do take exception to the damage we do while on a fire scene. Those people that take exception are not bashful about contacting the District and demanding the damage be repaired or that they receive compensation for the damage. Aside from the damage we may do a second issue arises because the equipment is "out of service" until a friendly tractor owner can be found or a tow truck can arrive and remove the lodged vehicle. Potential damage to the vehicle, either

during the sticking process or during the removal is a second issue that can have even more devastating consequences.

Now in the path of truthfulness I will be the first to admit I have personally stuck a truck or two over the length of my career and I am sure many of you have also. One of the important lessons that come from sticking the trucks is learning to slow down and properly access the area that you may be driving in. Is it really as solid as you think and what affect did the spreading fire have on the ground surface? Another valuable lesson to be learned is that natural cover fires can actually be contained and suppressed by use of fire swatters (beaters), rakes, blowers, Indian pumps or other hand tools. For many years fires were fought using only hand tools and at last check none of those "early" fires are still burning today. Although riding on the truck may be more comfortable and often allows a "faster" attack on the fire the reality is that vehicles cannot always and possibly should not always go in all areas. I am sure the last thing any of us wants is to burn up a truck while it is stuck in the path of the spreading fire.

On those occasions where a vehicle can be taken off road and directly to the fire line safely keep in mind that the use of the hand tools is still a necessary process. As the vehicle moves along the line knocking down the larger spread of the fire those people with hand tools are required to follow-up the vehicle making sure the fire line is clear and taking care of the hot spots to prevent the fire from re-igniting and causing additional damage or work.

So the next time you respond to a natural cover fire take an extra moment and map out your strategy, access the ground surface, consider hand tool deployment and above all keep yourself and then your equipment safe. Enjoy the Spring and all your outdoor activities!

Procedure Reminder...

Controlled Burns...Demolition...Can I or Can't I?

While not an official District policy it is important from time to time to review the expectations we have when our citizens or even our members contemplate having controlled burns. These burns may come in many forms including annual open field burns, CRP allowed burning, other prescribed burning, trash disposal, demolition or construction waste burns and no doubt many others. This type of burning needs to be done in accordance with Missouri open burning regulations. We have a copy of quick facts about burning available on our website and there should be copies available in each station, if not contact the administrative office to obtain a copy.

Generally burns involving vegetation are allowable, but the District does not participate in or conduct these controlled burns for our citizens. Vegetation burns should be done when conditions are not favorable for rapid spreading of the fire, which often leads to it getting out of control. Household trash is also a generally allowable burn, but there are some regulations that affect this type of burn so check the fact sheet. Demolition and construction waste is generally in violation of the regulations, but on occasion a permit has been granted by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) if the owner makes the proper contacts. Under NO circumstances should a District member "authorize" burning that is regulated or prohibited under Missouri regulations. If there is a question or any doubt about the legality of the burn then it is best for the property owner to contact DNR for advice. If you "authorize" a burn you place yourself and the District in a potentially costly position if the burn violates the regulations and fines are assessed. If you or someone you know is going to perform a permitted burn please remember to have the dispatch center notified before the burn starts and after it is concluded to help avoid unnecessary responses.



3/15/11
Stations 9, 3 and 10
work to extinguish a
structure fire in the
900 block of
SW 13 Hwy

*"If you don't have
time to do it right,
when will you have
time to do it over?"*

John Wooden

3/26/11
Recruit Firefighters
complete live burn
exercises at WFD's burn
trailer



Did You Know???



The District now offers direct deposit for your monthly and/or quarterly reimbursement checks? This service is available for a small fee of \$1.25 per check. Just stop by the office to fill out an authorization form and get your check as soon as they are completed...no more waiting!



BRIDGE REPLACEMENT ADVISORY



E Hwy over Walnut Creek beginning April 4 for
approx. two months.

50 Hwy over Butchers Creek beginning April 11 for
approx. two months.

E Hwy over Blackjack Creek beginning April 25 for
approx. one month.

