

The Bagpiper

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Reporting Freeman's news since 2009

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Brushfire ravages Freeman community

By Myra Crosby
Staff Writer

Over 5,700 acres were lost to a raging fire this week, and 10 homes were lost at last report. The fire began on Sunday, August 21 at 2:45 pm, when a tree branch caused a powerline to go down on Yale Road, sending sparks and causing a blaze which spread from Fire District 3 to Fire District 8 in under an hour. By 3:55 pm, the fire was uncontrollable and homes were being destroyed.

A red flag warning had been issued days before, which gave local firefighters a chance to prepare, including adding an extra brush fire unit in FD #8. Despite the precautions taken, the fire remained at 0% containment for over a day.

As of August 24, the fires were about 50% contained, and 33 miles of fire lines had been plowed with the cooperation of local farmers and firefighters.

Chief Bruce Halloway of FD #3 commented on the importance of the fire lines—"a plow in front [of the fire] helps us have a chance to catch it."



Courtesy Chad Goldsmith

Alum Greg Emtman works quickly to plow a fireline Sunday, August 21 to try and control the fires burning in the Valleyford area.

Why did the fire grow to the proportions it did? Jon Fox, an incident meteorologist, stated at the August 23 Freeman Community meeting that July has had very little rain—only two days have had enough rain to be measured. Furthermore, temperatures had been in the 90s, and humidity was low—around 10% for the month. These conditions make it very easy for a fire to begin, and the 20 – 30 mph winds that day helped fires to spread by providing oxygen and sending smoldering debris far away.

Jon Fox also warned of dangerous conditions on Saturday, August 27—just as on Sunday, temperatures were predicted at 80 degrees or higher, a humidity of 20% or lower, and a cold front that could create powerful 20+ mph winds to spread the fire. In preparation for these dangerous conditions, Chief Tony Nielsen of FD #8 added addi-

tional crews to the area.

Good news is on the way, however—in the next two weeks, temperatures are expected to fall below average, and humidity is expected to rise. This will not only decrease the chance of new fires occurring, but will make containment and extinguishment easier for any fires still burning at that time.

Help is still needed for those who have been displaced by the fire-- if you wish to volunteer, call the hotline 211.

The Bagpiper Staff 2016-2017

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Did you know that Dorothy was swept away to the Land of OZ on August 25th in the year 1939?

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Over the last week, the Freeman community has come together to fight the fire tearing through its fields, and protect one another's houses, animals and property. Thanks to the tireless work of our farmers to plow firelines and help put out fires where they've found them, and the aide of our policemen, our local firefighters and those who have answered the call to help from outside of the Freeman area, many homes and properties have been saved and the fires have been contained and decreased. There is not enough thanks for all who have given of themselves to keep this tragedy from becoming worse. Thank you Freeman Community! Here are a few pictures of the week's events.



Courtesy of Maddie Keebler



Courtesy of Stephanie Sather



Courtesy of Tina Steiger



Courtesy of Chad Goldsmith



Courtesy of Chad Goldsmith

Local farmers take to the fields between Elder Rd and Darknell Rd. to create firelines, helping to stop the fires from spreading further through the Valleyford area.



Courtesy of Sarah Scott



Courtesy of Janet Crosby



Courtesy of Kally Petterson



Courtesy of Brent Crosby



Courtesy of Chrissy Rasmussen



Courtesy of Julie Houtari



Courtesy of Kayla Figler



Courtesy of Mo Rinker

Community provides for families' fire losses

By Savannah Sousa
Staff Writer

Donations flood in for the families that lost everything in the Yale Road fire. Currently, the district is aware of 8 families who have lost their homes.

The Freeman community has really stepped up to the plate to provide the necessary items for these families to help out what they've gone through. Casey Freter and SheriAnn Reidt set up the donation station at FES.

Donation collection has been moved from the Freeman Elementary School

to the Freeman Store. You can drop off donations at any time during store hours. Currently, furniture donations are not being accepted.

People have brought in clothes, food, toys for kids, toiletries, gift cards, and much more.

The most needed items at the time are men's and women's clothing, toilet paper, paper towels, school supplies, and toiletries, the essentials of everyday life.

Gift cards are greatly appreciated as well. Each family has a secured envelope where the ladies have been dividing up the cards evenly.

VISA gift cards are greatly appreciated because then the family can choose where to spend. However, Lowes and Walmart gift cards are great, too.

Just a reminder that if you are going to donate please make sure that the items are new or gently used. We want to make sure that these families are getting items that they can use for a long time or until they can buy more.

To see an updated list of needs as well as news updates on the fires, subscribe to the Freeman Community Page on Facebook!

Banner Bank Donations

By Annie Keebler

Banner Bank is setting up a Valleyford Community Fire Fund for those who would rather donate cash to the families as they work to recover long term! Please feel free to contact myself with any donations (869-4258) or visit Banner Bank in Rockford! (or I am sure any Banner Bank) This should be up and running today! The community is so grateful for everyone! Thank you for being such great people!

Donations can be mailed to Banner Bank, FBO Valleyford Community Fire Fund, Box 79, Rockford WA 99030.



Courtesy of Janet Crosby



Courtesy of Tina Steiger

Freeman: You are invited to a potluck/appreciation dinner!

When: Thursday Sept. 1, 2016

Where: Freeman Football field

Time: Please bring food between 4:45 - 5:00. Dinner will be served at 5:30, following the National Anthem and grace!

Ending time: 8:30ish! It is a school night and it does start getting dark and cooler about then!

RSVP: www.rsvplink.com/love by noon on Wednesday.

What do you bring:

If your last name starts with the following letter, please bring: **A-D**— a cooler with drinks (water, Gatorade, pop), **E-H**— a side dish/casserole, **I-L**— a salad chips, **M-Q**— a fruit or veggie tray and finally, **R-Z**— please bring dessert! :) Burgers and Hot Dogs will be provided! *If you have lost your house in the fire, please don't bring anything! Come and enjoy a good meal with family and friends!*

***Please make sure to bring serving utensils AND please make sure all of your stuff has your name (and maybe a number) on it! We are counting on everyone (or close to everyone) to RSVP so we have a general idea of how many people will be there, but we are expecting a LARGE group so please make your servings, generous! :)

Couple other things!

1) You can stand and eat, sit in the bleachers or feel free to bring lawn chairs if you'd like! 2) Andy Coumont will be bringing his DJ equipment for just general music or dancing if anyone chooses to do that. 3) It has started cooling off so bring warm clothes too!



Courtesy of Stephanie Sather

Thank you to all of the firemen, farmers and police officers who helped keep the Freeman Community safe during the Yale Fire.