



Oak Creek Grade

Volunteer Fire Department

Business Plan



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INTRODUCTION

Oak Creek Grade Volunteer Fire Department at its current state is a 501(c)(3) registered department, but known as a fire brigade, neighbors helping neighbors. The new leadership has the vision of the department being a well-trained, properly equipped department that can safely and effectively protect our community. The department is committed to establishing training and response standards that align with industry best practices as outlined in National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments. To accomplish this goal, there needs to be buy-in by the members of the department, as well as the community we serve.

We are proposing the following changes:

- That all responders must meet the basic minimum standards before they can operate on the emergency scene. These standards currently include six classes, but as the department reaches this milestone, other relevant classes will be added to enhance the safety and response capabilities.
- Responders must have the necessary tools and clothing before being placed in a hazardous situation.
- Responders must have their own fire shelter and be fully qualified based on NWCG wildland firefighting standards (S-130/S-190) before working a wildland fire in an official capacity, including training on an actual fire with a qualified trainer.
- The department will need to acquire a piece of land and the funds to build a structure that can house the apparatus and equipment needed by the department.

As the department meets these critical benchmarks, it will become a recognized fire department within Fremont County. The increased standards will also make establishing mutual aid agreements more appealing to neighboring jurisdictions.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oak Creek Grade Volunteer Fire Department is committed to providing safe, effective emergency response services to wildland fires that threaten our community, to provide limited defensive structural firefighting, and first responder medical response to life-threatening injuries and illnesses. The fire chief and assistant fire chief are working to develop a properly trained and equipped group of citizens that can safely increase the level of protection to our community and potentially reduce the insurance liability of our residents.

The three stated responses are described as follows:

Wildland Firefighting: The department will train and equip to provide initial attack wildland firefighting response. This is often sufficient to mitigate the risk if enough responders can get on scene in a timely manner. This response will have a goal of stopping the wildland fire from leaving the property of origin, protecting structures in the fire's path, and calling for assistance through Fremont and/or Custer County.

Defensive Structural Firefighting: The department is a volunteer department in a small community which limits the personnel and equipment available for structural firefighting. To safely fight an interior, offensive structure fire, NFPA standards require a minimum of fifteen firefighters on scene with full personnel protective equipment. This includes full bunker gear, self-contained breathing apparatus, a continuous water supply, and several fire engines. This is not a realistic expectation for a small volunteer fire department. However, the department can safely and effectively provide defensive firefighting capabilities. A defensive structural fire response means that the firefighters fight the fire from the outside. Many fires can still be extinguished, and property damage reduced with this method, but not always. Safety is paramount in all firefighting operations and sometimes property is lost, but the goal of defensive firefighting is to protect lives and keep the fire from extending beyond the building of origin.

First Responder Medical Response: The department does not have full-time firefighters available 24/7. This limits the level of emergency medical response the department can provide. The training required for advanced response such as emergency medical technician and paramedic response takes several months to two years to acquire, making it difficult to be provided by an all-volunteer department of our size. While there may be a few emergency-medical technicians in the department, the department cannot currently deliver this level of service on a regular basis. It is a goal of the department to be able to deliver first responder medical response to true emergencies. These would include cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, and severe traumatic injuries. This level of response will not be available immediately, as it

requires additional training and equipment. When developed, the response will provide a bridge until American Medical Response, Flight for Life, or a neighboring transport agency can arrive.

Each of the above responses requires buy-in from current members or the department, future members, and the community.

What can you do as a community member? One of the most important things you can do for yourself, your home, and the community as a whole is to make sure your property is prepared for a wildland fire, which includes following the principles established by the National Fire Protection Association Firewise program. This program guides the homeowner to creating defensible spaces around their homes to allow firefighters to safely conduct the work of protecting the home. Fire department representatives can assist with this assessment, if you are interested. Additionally, residents can help financially as the department needs to update antiquated equipment, provide appropriate training, and house the apparatus.

In closing, we are committed to making it safer to live and play in our community, but this goal will require our community to come together to make it a reality.

(COPY)Signature on file in original document

Fire Chief

(COPY)Signature on file in original document

Rick Madrigal, Assistant Fire Chief

2. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

- **Department Summary:** The Oak Creek Grade Volunteer Fire Department is in the process of improving the response capabilities to the community. With increasing fire danger and insurance costs, there is a tremendous need for a fire department to serve our community at a higher level. Partnership with Fremont County and Custer County Sheriffs and Fire Departments, along with Emergency Management would be very beneficial to our community. We are confident that the vast majority of the Oak Creek Grade Community would agree that we need a properly trained and equipped fire department. With the new, fully staffed Board of Directors, a new Safety Officer, and new Assistant Fire Chief, we are well on our way to success.
- **Mission statement:** This department will be a fully functioning, recognized Wildland Fire Department that we can all be proud of and stand behind.
- **Department history:** Oak Creek Grade Volunteer Fire Department was originally formed by Audrey and Jack Slater, as they saw a need to assist the mountain community in the event of a fire. Jack handed the reigns over to Ray, then Jeff became the Assistant Fire Chief. We all are thankful for their services.
- **Markets and services:** This department will fill a void, once we are recognized as a fire department for both Fremont County and Custer County Official Agencies, including their fire departments and Sheriff Offices, by having the ability to provide our community with immediate aid by responding with Wildland Firefighting and medical aid. We would have the ability to deliver immediate responses, while waiting for the partnering emergency responders to arrive.
- **Operational structure:** The department currently has filled the following positions: Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Crew Chief, Safety Officer, and a fully staffed Board of Directors with a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and four untitled board members.
- **Financial goals:** To bring the department to the appropriate level for a rural, volunteer fire department, there are needed “startup costs” which will be acquired through donations and potential future grants. The estimated total cost of this startup cost is approximately \$50,000.

3. DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

Today, the department has a few vehicles that we own as a department. We have the original two brush trucks, the green one that holds 250 gallons of water that Kevin Cowan drives that needs repairs, it over revs and then tries to die out at the worst time. The red brush truck that Ray Swota drives, with Chip assisting him, runs well and it holds 250 gallons of water. We own Bigfoot now that holds 1000 gallons of water, and Rick Madrigal will be driving that truck, and it currently has an issue with the lights and siren and had a bad water pump. The Engine labeled T1 is still being worked on and progress is being made in getting it to hold 1000 gallons of water, but it runs great. We own one more truck that was given to us by the City of Florence that needs some gear work, and a few air leaks fixed, and it will hold 750 gallons of water. Each repair runs a minimum of \$500-\$1000 on average.

We have a fully staffed Board of Directors including a President, Treasurer, and Secretary along with 4 others that are unlabeled members. A crew of 12 volunteers that are mentally prepared to help our mountain in the event of a wildland fire, but with no personal protective equipment, tools, or proper training to be successful in containing a wildland fire and/or structures that may be in its path.

The department currently has a “handshake deal” with Wet Mountain VFD, which leaves individuals with doubt. Once Oak Creek Grade Volunteer Fire Department is a recognized fire department, we can request and obtain a formal, written “mutual aid agreement” giving Wet Mountain VFD the legal authority, and assurance that they will come to our aid, when help is needed. We, in turn, will also assist them, if our services are needed over the county line into Custer County. Once fully trained and equipped, the possibility exists that there could be other mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire agencies.

After all members are fully trained to current standards, and after we have been recognized as a fire department, we will be able to obtain our own emergency radio frequency, receive government grants and donations (e.g., new trucks, training, and equipment) and the ability to keep our equipment maintained and in good running condition. We will be the fire department that is needed by our community and one of which we can all be proud.

Currently there are several steps to obtaining emergency assistance. Once we are recognized with Fremont County Dispatch, in the event of an emergency, a community member would dial 911 and our community fire department will be immediately dispatched by the Fremont County Dispatch center, with all the necessary information, in real time.

The department has been working diligently with all the above agencies, receiving guidance as to what we need to do to be successful. We are proud to announce that we have a diverse staff that has expertise in wildland firefighting and medical response. With continued training,

we are confident that we can bring the entire crew up to speed and assure you that we will be prepared when future wildland fires occur in our community.

Although we are all volunteers, we will be requiring that all members begin documenting training attendance, incident response, and completing appropriate incident reports, which will allow for required state and national reporting, to analyze response data and use it for future training needs and department records.

How We Respond to Emergencies

Currently, when there is a fire incident, we call 911, then we call our emergency hotline. Unfortunately, our emergency hotline doesn't always work correctly; therefore, everyone is told to call the Assistant Fire Chief, so I can begin gathering and mobilizing my crew.

We currently have a few trucks that require some maintenance. Our crew members do not have the correct wildland firefighting gear to be successful in containing a wildland fire. With this plan, I am going to change all that. When I am finished implementing everything, we will have the essentials to be successful. We will have the following procedures in place:

- **Dial 911, and Fremont County Dispatch will notify us in real time as the event occurs, ensuring we are better prepared when we show up on scene**
- **A fully trained staff**
- **A fully and properly clothed staff**
- **All the necessary tools to be successful.**
- **Reliable radio communications with both citizens and government officials**
- **A building we can officially call our department**
- **Support from Fremont County and Custer County officials**

4. OPERATING PLAN

Our future will include recruiting volunteer members from across the community to ensure we are adequately staffed. Each volunteer must meet the minimum training requirements, as well as meeting the staff structure guidelines, required of a recognized fire department, and keeping up on all required reports and training to meet the required standards. We will designate a group of individuals who will be tasked with ensuring we meet the requirements to continue receiving grants. The grant process is extremely competitive which will mean that we will need continued community support through donations.

- From the beginning, we have, and always will be, a wildland firefighting department, however, our goal in the future is to be recognized as a properly trained and equipped volunteer fire department.
- Dial 911 and we will be notified in real time of every incident as it happens, ensuring we are better prepared.
- We will continue to be a 100% voluntary fire department that will rely on community and corporate donations and grants.
- With this recognition, we will be able to afford the safe and effective firefighting apparatus and equipment, keeping the responders and the community safer.
- The Oak Creek Grade Community will benefit greatly through this recognition. We will be a community that everyone would be proud to live in. The mountain will be a much safer place to live.
- We will have a building that we can call the fire department to keep our vehicles safe from the elements of our inclement weather patterns, and ready to deploy.
- We will distribute enough water throughout the community, to ensure we significantly increase our chances of being successful in fire containment.

5. FINANCIAL PLAN

In the beginning, we will rely exclusively on community and corporate donations. The state and federal grant cycles typically start in January and July each year and can take up to a year to get the results. The grants also typically require a department to meet certain training standards before being eligible. These are the types of things the department leadership will be working on immediately. The financial plan will be a living document, that will be updated annually to keep the community informed. Our success will be dependent on community members financially supporting the department. At first, this may sound a little overwhelming; however, in order to meet our goals, we need to get started in our new direction, and on the right foot.

- **Projected start-up costs:** \$49,809.70
- **Communications upgrade:** BTECH GMRS-RPT50 50W GMRS Repeater, Plug-and-Play: Features smart duplexer (All 8 Repeater Pairs), intuitive user interface, versatile power options, and built-in auto ID using MCW Morse code. Modulated continuous wave (MCW) is Morse code telegraphy transmitted using an audio tone to modulate a carrier wave. Continuous wave (CW), by contrast, does not use a subcarrier, so there is no emission at all between Morse code symbols. This GMRS repeater will be able to let us use our handheld radios with a greater distance. If I am not mistaken, we would all have to program in the specific access tone, but this would eliminate any unwanted chatter. The cost for these is \$1,499.99, and I would like to set one at the highest point possible and one on the furthest outer side of our response zone, making our communications virtually seamless. Total cost before shipping cost is \$2,999.98
- **Water storage upgrade:** I would like to have 12,000 gallons of water stored. I have the two 1,000 gallons water tanks and John Carper has some that he has offered to let us use if needed. Leaving me with a need for nine more 1,000-gallon tanks, I found some online for \$804 each totaling \$7,236
- **Wildland Firefighter gear:** \$3,309 per person to get fully geared up to effectively fight a wildland fire, and for 12 people it is going to cost us \$39,708
 - **Tools we need (\$487 per person):** Shovel \$87, Pulaski Axe \$29.55, Fire Rake \$66, McLeod \$68, Pick Shovel \$132, Swatter \$104
 - **Fire Shelter each:** \$746
 - **Training fire shelter each:** \$311

- **Wildland Firefighter Clothing (\$1,765 per person):** Gloves \$134, Boots \$351, Pants: COAXSHER Fire Pants Forest Green, NOMEX IIIA \$386, Helmet: Bullard Full Brim Wildland Helmet \$84, Wildland Fire Shirt \$250, Wildland Fire coat \$560.
- All prices are from Grainger's web site for an example of cost and as a department, during the purchase process, we will shop around and will make sure every dollar goes as far as it can

6. CONCLUSION

By this time next year, the Oak Creek Grade Volunteer Fire Department will have better communications, and fully trained volunteers with all the proper tools and knowledge on how to use them. All our vehicles will be well maintained and ready for use. We will be ready to start the process of becoming a recognized fire department. In the next five years we should be able to look at becoming a fire prevention district

Breakdown of Costs			
Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
BTECH GMRS-RPT50 50W GMRS Repeater	\$1,499.99	2	\$2,999.98
1000 Gallon vertical water storage tank(Tank Depot part #1000VTFWB)	\$804	9	\$7,236
COUNCIL TOOL Fire Shovel: Shovel, Shovel, Wood, 4.1 lb Head Wt, 4.5 ft Overall Lg Item 12N166	\$86.34	12	\$1,036.08
WESTWARD Pulaski Axe: Pulaski Axe, Pulaski, Wood, 3.8 lb Head Wt, 3 ft Overall Lg Item 20C889	\$29.55	12	\$354.60
NUPLA Fire Rake: Rake, Fire Rake, Fiberglass, 1.94 lb Head Wt, 5 ft Overall Lg Item 2LTC4	\$65.77	12	\$789.24

Breakdown of Costs			
Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
NUPLA Hoe/Rake Combination Tool: Rake, <u>McLeod</u>, Fiberglass, 3.2 lb Head Wt, 4 ft Overall Lg Item 2LTC2	\$67.32	12	\$807.84
COUNCIL TOOL Shovel/Pick Combination Tool: Shovel, Pick Shovel, Wood, 1.4 lb Head Wt Item 9KE02	\$131.13	12	\$1,573.56
NUPLA Fire Beater/Swatter: Swatter, Swatter, Fiberglass, 3.52 lb Head Wt, 5 ft Overall Lg Item 2LTC3	\$103.66	12	\$1,243.92
ANCHOR INDUSTRIES Fire Shelter: Forest Fire Shelter, Large, Blue Case with Silver Tent Item 9AN11	\$743.53	12	\$8,946.36
ANCHOR INDUSTRIES Training Fire Shelter: Training Fire Shelter, Large, Orange Case with Orange Tent Item 9NMX0	\$311	1	\$311
SHELBY Firefighters Gloves:	\$133.66	12	\$1,603.92

Breakdown of Costs			
Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Proximity/Wildland, Elastic, 2XL, Brushed Pigskin Leather, 1 PR Item 13P914			
THOROGOOD BOOTS EMS/Wildland, Style Number 804-6379	\$350.79	12	\$4,209.48
COAXSHER Fire Pants: 39 in to 42 in Fits Waist Size, 34 in Inseam, Forest Green, NOMEX IIIA Item 12R496	\$385.02	12	\$4,620.24
Bullard Full Brim Wildland Helmet SKU# FH911HR-BK	\$83.52	12	\$1,002.24
COAXSHER Wildland Fire Shirt: Yellow, Tecasafe Plus Item 39EM22	\$245.38	12	\$2,944.56
VERIDIAN Wildland Coat: 2XL, 54 in Fits Chest Size, Yellow, Nomex Item 20UM98	\$559.14	12	\$6,709.68
Vehicle maintenance	\$3,421	Combined	\$3,421
Total			\$49,809.70