

PORTAL RESCUE NEWS

January 2018

Portal Rescue, Inc., P.O. Box 16331, Portal, AZ 85632

Tel: (520) 558-2206; Emergency Calls Only: 911

www.Portalrescue.com

President's Report

Bill Wilbur

Another year passes into history and with it, we commend the Portal Rescue volunteers who have worked so hard to support our community.

Many thanks to David Newton our Fire Chief and Jackie Lewis our Treasurer. While Jackie is on leave, thanks to Rick Beno for stepping in to assume the Treasurer duties. A special thanks to Morgan Jackson for her dedicated efforts as Chairman of the successful donation drive and continuing thanks to Chris Wilbur for coordinating the annual February "Soup's On!" (previously known as the Soup Kitchen). Thanks also to Jennifer Racicot for her efforts with the annual November Chief's Lunch. And, not to be forgotten, Barbara Miller for her continued calendar maintenance and fund raising efforts.

Ray Mendez assumed the office of Vice President and brought a new focus to the Portal Rescue Board. Tamara Lawson was elected secretary, replacing Terri Farley and John Yerger moved from Member-at-Large to become the new EMT Chief, replacing Jerry Racicot. Susanne Apitz was elected Member-At-Large.

A footnote here: The Soup Kitchen name was changed because folks outside the community thought we were feeding the needy in a soup kitchen, so they didn't attend. We hope this will make the purpose clear. Be sure to check this year's "Soup's On!" raffle for some very special prizes by some unique artists.

Tonight, as I write this, there are only three firefighters and one EMT available for service. Why so few? One reason is the Christmas holiday with many visiting family, some working away from home and illness accounting for the rest. 2018 won't be any easier with the retirement of EMTs Susanne Apitz, Joe Meenach and Donna Meenach. Many thanks to them for their dedicated service.

Years ago, Portal Rescue had over 24 trained EMTs available to work between Portal and Rodeo. That number diminished through lack of participation, no equipment available, costs of maintaining EMT certification and conflicts in training requirements between Cochise and Hidalgo counties. At the lowest

point, according to Delane Blondeau, there were only two Portal Rescue EMTs. Our EMT Chief reminded me today that we currently have only three EMTs available.

Volunteering does not mean you have to live in the area full-time. When you are here, you can help. It's necessary for an organization to have sufficient volunteers (both Fire and EMT) to support the community. It is difficult to maintain a trained staff in a small community. Portal Rescue will take any help we can get. So, please, even if you are only available part time, consider volunteering.

We look forward to 2018 with the beginning of the Firewise program, the continued support from the community, as well as the valuable efforts of the Portal Rescue volunteers. Please note that Firewise is independent from Portal Rescue but we will support it however possible. To the New Year!

Portal Rescue Board of Directors

(Current until March 2018 elections)

Bill Wilbur, President
Ray Mendez, Vice President
Tamara Lawson, Secretary
Jackie Lewis, Treasurer
John Yerger, EMS Chief
David Newton, Fire Chief
Susan Apitz, Member-at-Large



2017 Fire Chief's Report

David Newton

It was an average year for Portal Fire with eight fire calls. Two were lightning starts, while the other six were related to humans (two escapes from open burning, county mower, a wind downed power line, etc.)

The June 5th fire in downtown Portal consumed at least one shed in addition to 2.6 acres of brush adjacent to homes. **Fires in Portal are actually pretty common and I fully support local homeowner's recent efforts to make their property and community more Firewise.**

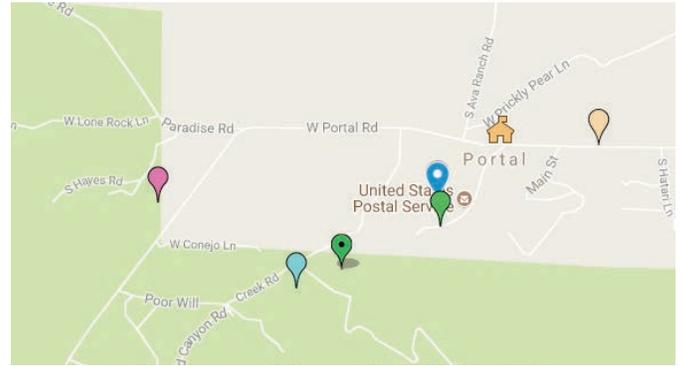
Local Training: Annual fireline refresher, tender operations and drafting, foam operations, wildland drills, and short-staffed operations.

Special Training: One additional firefighter qualified as a Rope Rescue Technician and another re-qualified at that level. Two firefighters were able to participate in a prescribed burn south of Sierra Vista.

Thank you for your support.

Fire Fighter Roster

Shane Burchfield	Jennifer Racicot
Lee Dyal	Jerry Racicot
Jeff Gee	Larry Rivers
Tim Lawson	Lance Shultis
Rolf Koford	Bob Walton
David Newton, Chief	John Yerger



“Downtown” Portal fires 2008–2017.

“Downtown” Portal Fires – a Recent History

David Newton

Six fires have occurred within 0.7 mile of the Portal Post Office in the last ten years.

- 21 May 2008 – Started by power lines + high wind - 1 acre.
- 26 Oct 2011 – Shed and vehicles destroyed. Spread to wildland was prevented.
- 27 May 2012 – Spark from tool started ½ acre wildfire.
- 16 Oct 2014 – Fire on shoulder of Portal Road, started by burning rubber from a flat on a tractor trailer that had come over Onion Saddle – 0.1 acre.
- 4 Feb 2016 – Embers from a burn pile escape. **Snow on ground nearby** -0.1 acre.
- 5 June 2017 – Origin at a shed. Spread to 2.6 acres.

Portal Rescue’s fires for the last 10 years can be seen at in the accompanying graphic and at goo.gl/maps/GM8fp



Newsletter compiled and edited by Patricia Espenak with assistance from Jackie Lewis and IT & page layout support by Fred Espenak — Printed and folded by Office Max, Prescott, AZ

EMS Report

John Yerger

I was voted in as EMS Chief in November, so this is my first newsletter as Chief. I'd like to thank the EMTs for their vote of confidence, and I appreciate all the support I've received so far. The position requires a great deal of time and dedication, but it is an honor to be able to serve in this capacity.

2017 was a busier year than most, with 26 medical calls. Looking at the statistics, it is sobering to realize how often we have the bare minimum number of EMTs available at any given time to provide an effective response. Without enough of our own EMTs to answer the call, community members must wait for EMTs from Douglas, which can easily quadruple the amount of time one must wait for emergency medical care. Every Portal Rescue EMT is a critical member of the team, and we are eager to expand that team to better provide for the community. If you or someone you know has ever considered signing on, there's no time like the present! It is often difficult to organize a certification class for a small group, but we are currently exploring online options and other creative means of certifying a new class of EMTs. Rest assured that you will have the full support of this team if you are able to join us.

A brief note to residents that if you must call 911 from a cell phone, please remind the dispatcher that Portal Rescue is your closest resource. Cell phone calls are routed through New Mexico even if you are in Arizona, which can be confusing for everyone.

Another reminder: if you do not yet have an **air ambulance membership**, please consider it. We live in a beautiful but remote area, and **one-third of our patients must be transported by helicopter** to advanced medical care. See the *Medical Helicopter Membership* article on this page for further information.

By purchasing the three memberships listed, you are all but certain to receive air transport in an emergency with ZERO out-of-pocket cost. When compared with a potential bill for tens of thousands of dollars, \$190 - \$240 seems well worth the upfront expense.

Thanks again to our volunteer EMTs – know that you are highly valued! And thanks again to our community supporters – without you, Portal Rescue would not exist.

EMT Roster

Susanne Apitz	Jennifer Racicot
E.T. Collinsworth	Jerry Racicot
Joan Galanis	Barbara Roth
Tim Lawson	John Yerger, EMS Chief
Jackie Lewis	



Medical Helicopter Membership

WHY? In an emergency you may be flown to the most appropriate hospital. Your medical insurance might not cover the entire cost of the helicopter transport.

WHICH COMPANY? We recommend that you invest in all 3 memberships because Portal Rescue cannot request a specific helicopter transport.

HOW MUCH? You can invest in all 3 memberships for less than \$190 - \$240 per year for your family.

EXAMPLE: In 2014 a patient was flown to Tucson. Cost was \$49,999. Insurance paid \$45,000. The family had considered membership in company A but company B responded. Had memberships been purchased in all companies the patient would have paid \$0.

The \$4,999 not covered in the example above would have covered the cost of family memberships for 25 years.

AirMedCare (LifeLine/Air Evac):
www.mtcmembership.com or 1-855-771-1355

Omni Advantage:
Covers Air Methods (formerly Life Net) and Native Air
www.airmethods.com/airmethodsadvantage/membership-plans or 1-855-877-2518

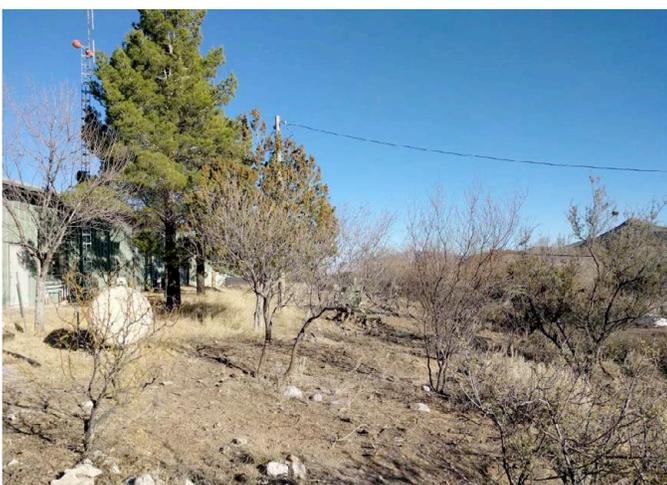
PhiCare:
Two memberships: lower cost if you have insurance
www.phicare.com/states/arizona.join.shtml
or 1-888-435-9744

RCO Roster

Suzanne Apitz	Jackie Lewis
Rick Beno	Rolf Koford
Bonnie Bowen	Bill Wilbur
Dinah Davidson	



BEFORE



AFTER

In Good Hands

Kate Kackleman

November 7 was a nice fall day with plenty of sunshine and no wind. We got up at 6 am, I fed the dogs and started breakfast.

Then Bud came into the kitchen looking stilted and said in a slurred voice “I think I am having a stroke”. I was momentarily stunned, but managed to get him to sit down amid protests. Then we went through the “testing” routine.

I remembered the ‘lopsided smiles’ and the ‘stick out your tongue’ to see if it is more or less straight. I totally forgot about raising arms, but I was sure he was correct with his diagnosis.

As some of you will recall, November 7 was one of the days that Verizon was ‘down’. We were out of luck on cell phone coverage – my phone is AT&T and his is Verizon. Nada!

Fortunately, our landline was functioning, but I could not reach Portal Rescue. I did reach Hidalgo County emergency and requested that they contact Portal Rescue. All this took about 30 minutes. At 6:41 am, I received a call that EMTs were on the way and so was the ambulance. The helicopter was in the air and the landing site was being secured. Bud would be taken to TMC. Wow! As I hung up the EMTs arrived.

They were working on “vitals” and background info when the ambulance came. Within minutes, Bud had walked to the vehicle, was loaded, and it left to rendezvous with the helicopter, which was now clearly audible flying south through the valley. It landed at the intersection of State Line Road and Portal Road, about a mile from our house and soon took off for the trip to Tucson. Bud was admitted to St. Joseph’s at about 8:50 am, examined and had a CT scan shortly after 9 am.

Meanwhile, I began the drive to Tucson, stopping in Willcox for fuel and map settings. I checked my cell phone and found that Bud was being delivered to St. Joe’s and not TMC. Extremely helpful, particularly for one who is not a city person and had no clue as to the location of either place.

Thanks to the incredible efficiency of Portal Rescue, things are looking quite positive for recovery. Time is important and the PR group is very well practiced.

Here are a few suggestions so that you, the potential patient advocate, are up to snuff:

Try to keep at least a half a tank of fuel in your vehicle of choice.

Keep your land line.

Know the location of health documents and insurance.

La Quinta Inn-Tucson East, is less than half a mile from St. Joe’s and is a-okay should you need to spend the night.

Firewise: Brush Clearing for Fire Safety

A big thanks to the Douglas Hand Crew for making the Portal Rescue station compliant with Firewise principles. Although the crew went above and beyond the minimum requirements for wildland fire safety, a visit to the fire station should show that an adequate buffer can be achieved while still leaving mature vegetation for aesthetics and wildlife habitat. Note: if you drive by in the next few weeks, you may see piles of brush remaining until the crew can repair their chipper to disperse what’s left.





David Newton being lowered down in Garden Canyon.



Jerry Racicot being hauled up while tending a Stokes basket.

Rope Rescue Training

David Newton

In October 2017 two Portal Rescue members traveled to Sierra Vista to take the six day Technical Rope Rescue – Technician Level course held by the Fry Fire Department. Our training locations were Carr Canyon in the Coronado National Forest and Garden Canyon on Fort Huachuca. I was especially impressed by the Garden Canyon site, which featured a high sheer cliff of sturdy limestone.

Technical rope rescue is similar to recreational climbing, but there are fundamental differences that involve special techniques and equipment.

For example ropes – a recreational rope is designed to stretch and absorb the shock of a short fall, while a rescue rope is thicker, stronger, and does not stretch. This is because rescue techniques never allow a fall and we'll have more than one person on a rope. The carabiners and accessory ropes are designed to support the weight of victim, rescuer, and equipment. A "G" rated rescue carabiner could be rated for about 15,000 pounds, while a recreational carabiner might be only good for 5,400 pounds. Rescue harnesses are the full body type, enabling us to work upside down securely.

The rope rescue process turned out to be more time consuming than I had anticipated. Careful selection and building of anchor points, getting it all tied off right, making sure multiple ropes don't interfere with one another, and final checking by a designated safety person, all take time. It also takes more than two people. In a rescue situation here, we'd likely get down to the person and secure them and provide first aid. Then we'd wait for additional trained personnel to arrive.

I enjoyed taking the class and look forward to more training opportunities.

COOKS NEEDED!

“Soup’s On!”

Portal Rescue fundraiser is coming!

February 19, 20 and 21

The 22nd annual “Soup’s On!” (formerly “Soup Kitchen”) will be held February 19, 20 and 21. If you can cook a soup, stew, or anything that can be served in a bowl, call Chris Wilbur at 558-5858 or email cinaz06@vtc.net. Also needed are breads and desserts.

If you can work on any of these dates, call or email Chris as well. She will try to schedule your work day on the same day as your food donation.

Portal Rescue Annual Meeting

Wednesday, March 21, 2018
Portal Rescue Classroom

5:30 pm Community Potluck
6:30 pm Business Meeting

- Nominate and vote for board members
 - 2017 in review
 - What's new for 2018
 - Meet our new EMTs

HEALTH DAY

(date to be announced)

**LEARN CCC (Continuous Chest Compressions)
STROKE AWARENESS
HELICOPTER MEMBERSHIP INFO
EMS RESPONSE TO New Mexico
MEET NEW EMTS**

Other topics are welcome. Please contact Susanne Apitz with your ideas at dyal777@gmail.com.

Treasurer's Report 2018

Jackie Lewis

- Expenses came in under budget.
- Donations for 2017 totaled \$30,210.66
- The full Treasure's Report will be given at the **Annual Meeting**.

Your away-from-home Treasurer, Jackie Lewis

Cell Phones & 911

What happens when you make a 911 call from the Portal area on your cell phone? The call is answered by the Hidalgo County Dispatch. You need to let them know that you are in Portal and request them to contact the Cochise County Sheriff's Department. Please also remind them that you need Portal Rescue to respond.



Portal Rescue from above.

Heart Attacks and Helicopters

Mary Lacey

Jon and I had just finished unpacking and settling in to be full-time residents of Portal, when we got a nasty surprise. Jon was having a heart attack.

It started with some pressure in his throat and a feeling of nausea. He'd had those symptoms before when riding his bicycle. Francis was in the clinic, so we headed that way. Once there, Jon began vomiting and Francis decided to call 911. It was the Friday before the Labor Day and no EMTs from Portal Rescue were available, so the Douglas ambulance was called. Their plan was to take him to Douglas, but on the way, they decided to order the helicopter. By the time I got to Douglas, he was in the air on the way to Tucson. The cardiologist discovered a completely plugged artery and put in a stent.

We were very lucky to have Francis available, because Jon's symptoms did not seem like a heart attack to us. There was no pain anywhere and the nausea could have been from many sources. So, don't hesitate to call 911.

Also, get helicopter insurance. All three. We thought we were in good health and wouldn't need it, but we did purchase it from two companies. I was told that the cost of that ride was \$49,000, and the cost of helicopter insurance is minimal in comparison, and covers everyone in the family. We only had two companies and were lucky the right helicopter came, but we've since subscribed to the third one.

This episode in our lives has turned out fine, but could have been tragic. Remember, if you're uncertain, call 911. The EMTs are trained to make the tough decisions. Also, did I mention, be sure to buy helicopter insurance! We live a long way from medical care and it's an essential part of enjoying this wonderful community.

LOCATOR BOOK

If you are new to the area we encourage you to fill out a locator page. Your address as well as directions to your home can help us get to you faster during an emergency. All information is confidential. The form can be downloaded from: www.portalrescue.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/PortalRescue-Locator-Form.pdf

Please mail it to: **Portal Rescue, PO Box 16331, Portal, AZ 85632**. Contact Jackie Lewis if you have any questions (Phone: 558-2287, email: winjac12@vtc.net).

2018 Donor List

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Rosie Turner
Wayne Morrow

DONATIONS IN HONOR OF:

Barry & Laura Fagan
Rene Blondeau

We thank individuals and businesses for their donations of food, raffle items and time working the annual fundraiser.

Thank you for bringing your aluminum cans to the Post Office to be recycled and to Pete Miller for collecting them and driving to the recycle center.

Thank you to individuals and businesses that donate time and product to help keep the station clean and comfortable.

We apologize if anyone has been omitted. Please let us know so it can be corrected.

**Portal Rescue
P.O. Box 16331
Portal, AZ 85632**

Yes, I want to help support Portal Rescue

Here's my tax-deductable* donation of:

**Please consult your tax advisor.*

< \$80	\$80	\$150	\$300	\$500	\$1000
Donor	Friend	Patron	Sponsor	Benefactor	Steward

Please make checks payable to ***PORTAL RESCUE, Inc.***

Mail to: ***Portal Rescue Inc, P.O. Box 16331 Portal, AZ 85632***

Name: _____

I wish to remain anonymous. (Please circle: Yes or No)

Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Email Address: _____
(for meetings and announcements<)

"SOUPS ON!"
SOUP KITCHEN RAFFLE PRIZES -
TICKETS \$1.00 ea.

- ___#1 TWO FREE NIGHTS at CAVE CREEK RANCH for 2 people
Donated by Reed Peters
 - ___#2 ORIGINAL OIL PAINTING "Study For Grassland".
Painted and donated by Crystal Forman Brown
 - ___#3 TWO \$50 GIFT CERTIFICATES to Valley Mercantile in Animas.
Donated by Bill and Chris Wilbur
 - ___#4 COPPER BRACELET WITH TURQUOISE, WOVEN NECKLACE AND
EARRINGS *Donated by Joanne Julian*
 - ___#5 MATA ORTIZ POTTERY (5" tall and 5" across) by Efren Ledezma
Three dimensional lizards, black and white. Hand-formed not turned
(stand included) *Donated by Joe and Anne Morris*
 - ___#6 DAVE UTTERBACK PRINT "Barred Owl" (print is 8.5x12, matted
14x18) *Donated by Gerry Hernbrode*
 - ___#7 TWO ECLIPSE PHOTOGRAPHS, Photographed and donated by Fred
Espenak, (both are 8.5x11, framed 10.5x13 inches)
Print 1: Second Contact Baily's Beads, Print 2: Detailed Corona of 2017
 - ___#8 \$100.00 GIFT CERTIFICATE *from Chiricahua Desert Museum*
 - ___#9 \$100 of AZ Scratch LOTTERY TICKETS
 - ___#10 CAT or DOG EXAM & VACCINATION (2 prizes)
Donated by Dr. Michael John of High Desert Vet Service
 - ___#11 LET'S EAT OUT *includes 6 meals*
Breakfast for 2 at Rodeo Café, Lunch for 2 at Portal Café &
Dinner for 2 at Rodeo Tavern
 - ___#12 SILVER ANTIQUE BOLO TIE *Donated by Fritz and Gayle Jandry*
- ___ TICKETS PURCHASED@\$1.00 ea. = Total \$_____

Indicate how many tickets you want for each prize above. Make check payable to **Portal Rescue** and **MAIL** this form & your check to C. Wilbur, 11999 Wrangler Rd., Portal, AZ 85632. We will fill out your tickets, mail your stubs and phone you when you win.

Name _____
Address _____ Phone _____
