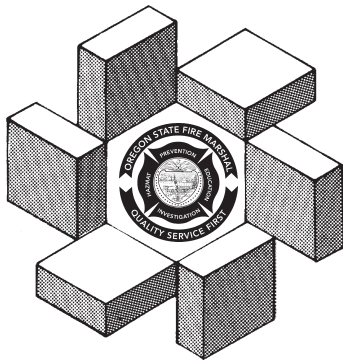


# NET.WORKS

a monthly  
bulletin  
featuring  
juvenile  
firesetter  
intervention  
network  
activities  
from around  
the state



Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal  
Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program  
May 2007

## Notable retirements

Lois Rieke from La Grande Fire Department and Stu Nagel from Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue are retiring after many years of service and success with juvenile firesetter intervention in Oregon. We thought we'd take some time to ask them a few questions about their successes and what they would like to see in the future.

For nearly half of her 27 year career with La Grande Fire Department, Lois Rieke has been involved in the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention program. Since the development of the 10J reporting form in 1999, Lois has contributed data to OSFM on more than 35 youths. She retires in May.



**Networks:** Since Union County does not have an official Firesetter Intervention Network, can you explain the organization for handling troubled youths with fire setting behavior?

**Lois Rieke:** Every county District Attorney is mandated by Oregon law to develop a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) to staff cases of child abuse. Union County allowed the La Grande Fire Department to become a team member along with all law enforcement agencies, the Department of Human Services, juvenile department, Grande Ronde hospital, children's counseling services, domestic violence services, school district principals and counselors, and county parole & probation. The MDT functions as Union County's Juvenile Firesetter Network. We hold regular meetings to discuss issues with children and troubled youth. If a youth exhibits firesetting behavior, they are referred to the fire department as part of their treatment. By the same token, if I am made aware of a firesetting youth, I bring it to the attention of the MDT where they may be able to take action based on the youth's past behavior.

Through involvement with the MDT, the La Grande Fire Department was instrumental in assisting with developing guidelines regarding the care of children removed from homes containing methamphetamine laboratories.

**Networks:** What are some of the biggest changes in intervention or treatment you have seen during your tenure?

**Rieke:** More intervention cases are coming to me from court mandates. Years ago, interventions were mostly brought to us by parents. Plus, school reporting has caught on. Administrators and educators are understanding the need to report every fire, every time. Also, through my involvement with the MDT, firesetter questions were added to the interview process at the child abuse assessment center.

**Networks:** Do you see increased reporting as one of your biggest accomplishments?

**Rieke:** Absolutely. I'm very proud of the work by everyone in the La Grande Fire Department in bringing the schools on board with fire reporting. The department

has been very successful educating school teachers about the dangers of kids bringing lighters to school. Just as a knife or a gun can be used as a weapon, so can a lighter. I have been privileged to travel with the MDT, offering information and training on mandatory reporting of fires in schools and linking firesetting and animal abuse to the potential of child abuse.

My biggest accomplishment is the link between the La Grande Fire Department and other agencies providing services to children.

**Networks:** What would you like to see in the future?

**Rieke:** I would like to see the school districts become more involved in fire safety education. If you ask them now, 'What do you do for fire safety education?' their response is 'Well, we do fire drills.' This needs to change. I want them to make use of the state developed curriculum that's available to them for free.

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Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue Fire Marshal Stu Nagel has been working with youth since the beginning of his career 29 years ago. Since development of the 10J reporting form in 1999, he has submitted data on 34 youths to OSFM. He retires in May.



**Networks:** You've played a big role in developing the Wasco County Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Network, now that you are retiring, how do you feel about the state of the network?

**Stu Nagel:** I think the state of the Wasco County JFIN is great. We have excellent resources that are well connected. We have relationships with the district attorney, city, county and state police, mental health advocates, juvenile justice department and local schools. All of these folks have played a role in developing an effective network.

**Networks:** What is the biggest change you've seen regarding firesetter intervention and treatment in Wasco County?

**Nagel:** Incident reporting has increased dramatically. The stigma that existed to report firesetting activity by children is gone. A big change is that officials and parents now look at juvenile firesetting in a more serious light. Parents are less embarrassed to talk about their child's firesetting behavior and we're getting great support in the reporting area from schools.

**Networks:** What do you feel is the biggest accomplishment by the Wasco network during your tenure?

**Nagel:** It would have to be the strength of the network itself. We have great relationships with all the players involved to see that juveniles with firesetting issues are directed in the right path for treatment.

**Networks:** What would you like to see happen in the future as far as the Network goals are concerned?

**Nagel:** More data. I would like to see better documentation on youths with firesetting behavior. If we can develop a history of activity or misbehavior early on then we can intervene at an earlier stage to prevent something tragic from occurring. I'd also like to see schools work with children at an earlier age in order to develop their sense of responsibility. Children need to realize very early on, they have a responsibility to be fire smart.

**Save this date!**

## Upcoming training

Cultivating Partnerships 2  
September 17 & 18, 2007,  
Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel  
Portland, Oregon

Hosted by the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, the Fire Safe Children and Families Program and the Oregon Burn Center, this series of seminars is designed for anyone involved with juveniles and fire.

Seminar topics include:

- Bullying and firesetters,
- Treating siblings of firesetters,
- Court mandated intervention programs,
- *Juvenile with Fire* screening tool,
- Working with special needs youth,
- Intervention programs for Spanish speaking youth and families,
- Burn Camp-what's it all about?

For more information and to register, contact Kirsten Balding at [kbalding@lhs.org](mailto:kbalding@lhs.org) or 503-413-2810.