



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Storm Smith, PIO, 503-681-6273, 503-615-6666 PIO pager



(Community Volunteer Hangs Up His Helmet)

When Earl Cutler decided to become a volunteer in 1975, he applied, was accepted, and responded to his first fire one day later. Times have changed. Firefighters have to go through extensive training and drills before they ever go to a fire. And, Earl Cutler has changed, too. He has decided it is time to devote more time to home and family. After 35-years of volunteering at Hillsboro Fire and Rescue, the 54-year old Cutler has hung up his helmet.

“Back then, volunteers comprised the majority of first responders in Hillsboro,” said Cutler of his early years. “Now, there are paid crews doing what we used to do.” Cutler became a driving force in the Hillsboro volunteer firefighters and attained the rank of battalion chief, serving in that capacity for nearly 20 years. For the past few years, he has been a training lieutenant.

“I have worked with and trained some of the best firefighters who are now leaders in many metro Portland-area fire departments,” he said. “And, I’ve worked with great people who are now serving in other departments from Alaska to Boston.”

Cutler’s greatest challenge as a volunteer firefighter has been do work his regular job in communications at Metro West Ambulance and keep up with the training and education that have been continually evolving in the fire industry his whole career. Cutler said, “These days there are more aspects to learn such as fire science, engineering, tactics and most importantly, safety. It’s all about education and teamwork.” He points to the volunteers he is leaving behind, many of whom have undergraduate degrees and some with masters’ degrees who simply want to give back to their community through volunteer service. Others are volunteering to prepare themselves for a career in the fire service.

“They have to meet the same standards as paid firefighters since our customers don’t distinguish between paid and volunteer firefighters,” Cutler added. After missing many of his children’s birthdays and numerous Christmas mornings, Earl Cutler has hung up his helmet because of an illness in his family. “Also, it’s time,” he added. He will let his legacy of skilled volunteers in Hillsboro carry the load into the future.

For fire and life safety information or details on volunteering at Hillsboro Fire and Rescue, visit: www.ci.hillsboro.or.us/fire or call 503-681-6166.

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Photo Caption: