



# THE TAOS NEWS

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## Taos Canyon fire substation will help homeowners

Volunteer fire district eyes spring opening

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**The Rio**

**Fernando Fire District substation, located near Shady Brook, is currently under construction and is planned to be done by late spring.**

A new substation for the Rio Fernando Volunteer Fire District is just a few months away from opening, completing a long-held vision and creating new insurance opportunities for homeowners in the narrow canyon between Taos and Angel Fire.

The substation is currently under construction in Taos Canyon along U.S. 64, about 5 miles east of the mouth of the canyon at the intersection of State Road

585 and Kit Carson Road. “It’s been a long time coming,” said Russ Driskell, the chief of the Rio Fernando Volunteer Fire District. Building the substation has been a topic of conversation for nearly the entire time he’s been chief: 23 years.

He said the substation could be finished by late April, but noted that unlike last year’s dry winter, “there’s actually snow for a change,” meaning construction could take longer.

Once completed, the 4-bay firehouse will include a meeting room for trainings, bathrooms and ample storage on the second floor.

The new building will not replace the main station, located a little more than 10 miles from the mouth of the canyon, but it will help with fire response in Taos Canyon and brings the volunteer department into better compliance with national fire protection standards.

“We are really excited about our new firehouse in Taos Canyon for a number of reasons,” said Shelley Loveless, president of the Rio Fernando Fire Department and vice president of the Taos Canyon Neighborhood Association, in an email.

“Having a firehouse within five miles of the homes in the lower west part of Taos Canyon will not only help lower our ISO [Insurance Service Office] rating, but will provide faster response time in protecting the residents who live there, the Carson [National] Forest campgrounds, hiking trails, and the many visitors who use these areas,” Loveless said.

“The majority of our firefighters live on the west (lower) area of Taos Canyon and/or work in town, so the new location will also reduce response time. The only road between Taos and Angel Fire is U.S. 64, a narrow, curvy road prone to many accidents that completely block the road. Having two firehouses with apparatus at both ends of Taos Canyon will make Taos Canyon safer,” she said.

Driskell said the lower ISO rating, a better designation, could work out to \$22,000 more in state allocations for the department each year.

Between purchasing the property for the new firehouse and building it, the total cost is “just under” \$1 million, he said. One of the limiting factors in buying property for the project are national standards that require 300 feet of visibility in both directions of the firehouse driveway.

The Rio Fernando Fire District is approximately 15 miles long, from the mouth of the canyon to the top of Palo Flechado Pass on the line between Taos and Colfax counties. The fire department has 12 volunteers on the roster but is always looking for new recruits. Visit, [rffd.org](http://rffd.org) for more information.