



Ralph Hengel
Volunteer Firefighter of the Month
by the Groveland Fire Department

At the Groveland Fire Department our team is made up of three groups of people: full-time staff, volunteers, and reserve or part-time firefighters. This month a volunteer firefighter, Ralph Hengel, was nominated by his peers to be the firefighter of the month.

For the past seven years Ralph Hengel has been consistently and diligently volunteering to help the Groveland firefighters. When asked to describe Hengel one of the firefighters said: “Ralph responds to a lot of calls on his own time and brings a good attitude to the team environment.” Another firefighter stated: “Ralph in one word, ‘participation’. If there is a call he shows up at the station ready to help.”

After retiring from making and repairing furniture Hengel moved to a rural area outside of Groveland where he continues to use his talents and experience. He has taken on many projects around the Fire Station such as refurbishing the day room table and refinishing the sign in front of the station and the front door of the firehouse. You may have seen Firefighter Hengel’s smiling face at the Chili Cook-off during the 49er Festival. For the past several years both Hengel and his wife Marcy have been great supporters of that event.

Firefighter Hengel is not a stranger to hard work. Living in a natural wooded setting made him realize the importance of defensible space. In fact he stays fit by working his 8.5 acre property the hard way – not relying on power tools but on his own muscle to keep his property clear. Preventing fire on his own property led to his interest in the Groveland Fire Department. Firefighter Hengel states simply: “If firefighters would help fight a fire on my property I wanted to get involved and help fight fires too.”

Firefighter Hengel is a great example of a volunteer with no previous firefighting experience who got involved because he wanted to help. He has put in the many hours of training necessary to volunteer and he keeps up on that training by attending the bi-monthly and special instructional sessions given by the Fire Department. Firefighter Ralph Hengel’s consistency and dedication have made him a welcome fixture at the Groveland Fire Department.