



MOSQUITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
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Chief's Report
September-October 2020

Highlights:

This is the most destructive fire season in California history. The most critical time of any fire season is now upon us (October). The number and size of current fires have seriously depleted available resources, fire engines, hand crews and aircraft. It is important that we remain vigilant and for residents to continue to be fire safe, including being packed up prepared to quickly leave. Check the District's web site for further information on preparedness and evacuation planning.

On Tuesday 9/8 we experienced our first Public Safety Power Shutdown (PSPS). Fortunately, the power was restored the following afternoon and the predicted winds did not materialize. We appreciate PG&E quickly conducting their aerial system safety check and restoring power. During the shutdown, the Support Group staffed the fire station and assisted residents who called the station with questions. At 11:15am the Fork Fire originated and after growing for several hours, created concern in the Community. A portion of the Georgetown community was evacuated. There was already considerable smoke in our area and many residents called the Fire Station seeking information. It was difficult to obtain information about the fire and direction of travel. Very few fire suppression resources were available, including aircraft. Again, it was fortunate that the predicted winds did not materialize, or the fire may have threatened our community. At the time of this report the Fork Fire was 1,700 acres and 70% contained.

Nine Support personnel staffed the Fire Station at various times to assist with phone calls coming into the station and responded to several resident requests for assistance with generators. Many thanks to Trent Williams and the Support Group for their excellent efforts assisting the Fire District and our residents.

The second PSPS shutdown began in the early evening of Sunday 9/27. While planning for the event, Director Pico made a request to contact ATT regarding the installation of generators at their switch stations to prevent telephone failure after the system's batteries go dead. I was able to contact the El Dorado County government representative, Bryant Milesi, to explain our situation. Bryant went to work with an ATT network team. The result was the installation of generators at key locations in the system which serve our area. This is an important first step to having our community prioritized when power outages occur, whether planned or unplanned. Maintaining telephones and connectivity is important for our community and to maintain communications in the event of an emergency. Thank you to Director Pico for highlighting this issue to get the ball rolling.

Fortunately power was restored by mid afternoon Monday 9/28. Support staff assisted with telephones at the Fire Station and assisted a resident getting her generator started.

On the evening of September 15th we conducted a drill at the Catfish Lake to test our capability to draft water from the lake and supply water tenders. The Support Group responded with the drafting pump (Pump 75) and was able to obtain a continuous water supply to two three-inch hose lines. In the event of an actual fire, Pump 75 would refill water tenders in rotating fashion. This exercise was important because the Buckboard Road area has limited water supply and efficient water tender operations are a critical component of our firefighting capability. The Support Group also tested and exercised their incident rehabilitation capability by deploying Squad 75 and their equipment.

A special thank you to Trent Williams, Chiefs Hern, Schwegler and Chaloux for organizing the drill. We appreciate the Support Group and their great participation. We will continue to train for water tender refill operations and increase our efficiency with this important function.

We have conducted vehicle service (oil change, filters, etc) and complete inspections on all light duty vehicles, including Squad 75. Engine 75 and Water Tender 75 are the last two District vehicles needing service and brake inspections (will occur within the next two weeks). We are rebuilding our preventative maintenance program and documentation. Currently the fleet is in very good condition despite its age. Hopefully, the next addition to the fleet will be the new OES Type 6.

The Board previously approved the surplus sale of District equipment, including Water Tender 375, old Pump 75, non-functioning floto pumps, extrication tool. Per Policy 1.09, a legal notice of the surplus sale (viewing and sealed bids) was posted in the Mountain Democrat for five days (9/21-25). Water Tender 375 sold for the highest of two received bids- \$5500.00. There were no offers for the remaining equipment and will attempt to find interested buyers on Facebook Marketplace and our social media resources.

The Safety Support Division (SSD) deployed five overhead personnel to different incidents around the State this month. Because of the shortage of overhead personnel, SSD personnel are deployed for a longer period and redeploying faster, often with just a day or two rest. We appreciate the dedication and professionalism these experienced personnel bring to critical incidents, representing our District and Community.

There are many projects currently in progress. The following are the highlights of the major items we are working on:

Calls for Service: September 3-October 1:

Fires: 0

Medical: 3

Vehicle Accident: 1

Public Assist: 5

SSD Deployments: 5 (Creek, Dolan, Bobcat)

Grant Update:

The FEMA SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response-**REVIEW**) grant is in the first year of a four-year grant totaling \$700,000. The focus of this grant is to assist the District improve its level of service and staffing by recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters.

The current priority projects for this grant are the website creation and design, MS Office 365 platform access and the Fire Station sign replacement. Chief Nugent will be updating the Board with progress on these important items, including a contract with the selected vendor (Website) and vendor/design options for the Station sign.

One component of the grant is the Stipend Pay Program. We now have an incentive program in place (started in July) which volunteer firefighters are paid a stipend for fire station shift coverage response to incidents (pay per call). The funds paid by the District to the volunteers are reimbursed through the Grant.

We are bringing in several new volunteers in which their entry costs (physical, livescan, personal protective gear, uniform, training) is reimbursed to the District through the grant.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (**Medical monitors-UPDATE**): This is a regional grant which was recently approved through the Rescue Fire District and County's medical Joint Powers Authority (JPA). The District will receive two advanced Zoll heart monitor/AEDs and a Lucas compression device which does effective CPR beyond what responders can do alone. The value of the equipment is estimated at \$98,000. There is a matching fund requirement of approximately \$8,000 with the trade-in of our existing monitors. We expect to receive the CPR device this November and the monitors by February 2021.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (**Paramedic Training-UPDATE**): This grant provides \$172,000 for paramedic training and associated expenses. Captain Ryan Purves and Volunteer Firefighter Evan Alexander are currently receiving training. Captain Purves is doing well with his field internship with AMR Ambulance in Placer County. Firefighter Alexander is going through his field internship with an ambulance company in the Stockton area. We are currently in planning and discussion with an AFG grant representative to provide funding for our Firefighter Brian Morris to also attend paramedic school beginning in 2021. The staff we have sponsored for this training are excellent and talented individuals who will save lives and represent the District well. We are proud of each of them.

We will be participating in the Harvest Day event at Finnon Lake on 10/17. Apparatus and personnel will be present to meet the public, discuss fire safety issues, offer demonstrations and safety tips, recruit new volunteers, support and firefighting.

Personnel Update:

Volunteer Firefighters: Firefighters Devin Hern and Greyson Dillender have been training and responding to emergency incidents with the Garden Valley Fire District. Recently both firefighters assisted in staffing Garden Valley Engine 351 which provided coverage for Cal Fire Stations. We are proud of their representation of the District and the training they are receiving.

We expect to participate in a joint volunteer fire academy beginning January 6th, hosted by the Georgetown Fire District. The academy would train one weeknight and each Saturday for twelve weeks. We have one interested community-based volunteer so far and will recruit for more soon. Our current volunteers will also be encouraged to attend. We will also provide training support for the academy.

Tuesday night training will resume on October 13 at 6pm. The training focus will be ladder skills. I will confer with staff regarding frequency of training and creation of a training calendar with various topics. We will plan training evolutions, which include the Support Group and what their role will be at various incidents. We have

a Standard Operating Procedure, reviewed by the Board last meeting, which will provide firefighter rehabilitation function during specific training operations which requires that function to be present.

I am pleased to announce that Floyd Baumgartner will be joining the District as a Volunteer Engineer primarily responsible for the response and operation of Water Tender 75. Floyd has years of prior experience with the District as a firefighter, engineer and mechanic. Floyd, who lives close to the station, will be a great addition to our staff and gives us a needed capability to rapidly deploy the water tender to fires.

Support Group: The Support Group is always excellent, strongly assisting us with responses and other projects. As stated previously the Group staffed the fire station and provided community assistance for two recent PSPS power shutdowns. The Group participated in a test of their capability to provide water supply for water tender refill operations. This is a very important component of our overall firefighting capability. The Group's next monthly training date is Saturday October 3rd.

We would like to cultivate more interest in the Support Group program from interested members of the community with specialized training and capabilities (medical, IT, web site design, heavy equipment, mechanic, tree removal, etc). With our SAFER Grant marketing for volunteer firefighters we will also incorporate Support Group recruitment into our outreach.

Radio Group (New): The radio group was formed to develop an auxiliary communications system which can be used for alternate communications when needed. Fire tactical channels provide inadequate coverage in the community due to terrain. In the event of an evacuation, winter storm, supporting an emergency incident, special event or any other District activity, the system can be used to communicate between the fire station and personnel in the field. An ACS system would also be used to communicate with neighborhoods regarding needs and conditions, in the event of telephone communications failure, for a future CERT program.

On September 26th the radio group performed a test of the district, to determine radio coverage and blind spots of a potential system. It was determined that more than 90% of the District can be covered with a radio system with a repeater located at the Fire Station. The testing was done by transmitting from the Fire Station to volunteers of the radio group at different locations around the community. The primary dead spots were identified to be in the eastern area of the District. The group will make recommendations about the system configuration and frequencies. Our goal is to have the system on-line for the first winter storm and refine it during the winter and spring. The system would also be used and tested for the hopeful community evacuation drill in the spring and ready to go for next fire season. It would not be difficult or expensive to add portable or base radios into system to be used by all levels of volunteers, in coordination with the District.

The radio group is made up of community volunteers with many years of experience with radio system installation, maintenance, and use. Some equipment, installation and maintenance will be donated to reduce the overall cost to the District, which will be minimal. There is also an effort to reach out to HAM radio operators in the community. The HAM network would be a backup to the established radio system being considered.

We are in the planning process for upcoming winter storms with SCPOA Maintenance Director Kevin Birks. SCPOA now has a snowplow available for rapid response to assist us with access to residents needing assistance and for emergency incidents. Fire District personnel will also be assisting Kevin and County DOT with road clearing operations, whenever needed, to maintain emergency vehicle access.

In participation with the Community Engagement Committee (Strategic Plan) I have submitted a Chief's welcome message and District overview summary to be a part of a new resident welcome package.

We continue to make progress with siting an emergency water tank in the Buckboard Road area. It is my hope to have installation details confirmed within the next few weeks. We will continue to assess and determine the best location for the other two tanks.

OES Type 6 Contract Questions: There were several questions which were brought forward during the Board's discussion and conceptual approval of an agreement with State OES to obtain a new Type 6 engine. The question of providing annual vehicle insurance to cover the engine per contract requirements was estimated by our broker to be \$572 annually. The broker advised the cost may change somewhat after the vehicle's VIN number is entered into their system. The other pending question about specific annual testing was submitted to our OES Chief Officer representative. Due to fire deployment, he has yet to answer the question.

This concludes my report. I will continue to update our projects and report progress. There are some exciting months ahead as we develop these programs and attract new people to the District. The worst of fire season is ahead, and we remain vigilant. There will be upcoming periods of Red Flag fire conditions and more PG&E planned power outages. I appreciate the great support we receive from the Community and its commitment to being prepared. If you have any questions or suggestions, please call me at the fire station (626-9017) or email me at jrosevear@mfpd.us.

Jack Rosevear, Chief