



MOSQUITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
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Chief's Report
December 2020-January 2021

Summary: We are now prepared for winter storms, along with snow and ice in the higher elevations of the District. Slippery conditions could lead to an increase in vehicle accidents. Increased use of heating equipment, fireplaces and woodstoves are a leading cause of fires and carbon monoxide incidents during the cold season. Residents should use caution and reduce risk by inspecting/servicing equipment, changing heater filters, cleaning chimney/wood stove flues and maintaining a safe distance from portable heaters to combustible materials. Residents should also check their smoke detectors and make sure it has a fresh battery. Our residents should always feel free to contact us for additional safety information and/or a home inspection.

Early December saw a dramatic increase in escape control burns (low humidity and winds). In the late afternoon of 12/9, we experienced two wildland fires within an hour of each other. A rapid response by our crews and Cal Fire prevented a home from being damaged on Wildflower Ct. Two days later our crews quickly contained a wildland fire in the early morning hours behind a residence on Log Cabin Lane. While crews were at the Log Cabin incident, our Support personnel (a few houses from the main incident) discovered a fire in debris waiting for the garbage truck to pick up. This was caused by fireplace ashes being placed with combustible household garbage. The response to these incidents, and prevention of further property damage affirms the great value of our District personnel. We must continue to improve our programs, equipment, training to support and expand our personnel, especially community-based volunteers.

Calls for Service: December 4- December 31

Fires: 5 (Control burn escape, debris, vegetation)

Medical: 1

Public Assist: 1

OES Type 6 Update: We are expecting to receive the OES contract this month. Depending on when the contract needs to be returned, to get the engine, I will present it at the January 28th meeting or schedule a special meeting.

Fire Safe Council: Through the excellent efforts of the Mosquito Fire Safe Council, our community has received the designation of Fire Wise Community through the National Fire Protection Association. This is a very important achievement because the criteria requires a systematic approach to organizing and implementing a Firewise mitigation plan (vegetation management, structural hardening, safe practices on a community-wide level) for the community. The result is coordinated fuel reduction and working closely with homeowners to make improvements to reduce structural loss from a wildland fire. The designation is also significant because insurance companies recognize the level of coordination and community interaction that it

takes to meet the NFPA's criteria. A certificate of proof of our Firewise Community designation may be required by an insurance company, to continue a policy in jeopardy of cancellation, or to reduce the policy rate. Certification copies are available at the fire station or through the Mosquito Fire Safe Council.

Fire Station:

There is a tree (Blue Oak) in front driveway of the station, which is in poor health and needs to be removed. I requested an arborist report to verify the health of the tree and recommendations for treatment. There was previous damage to the base of the tree, which there is now a fist sized hole and rot deep into the base of the tree. Both large branches from the trunk are also rotting and stressed. One of the branches will eventually bring down the ATT telephone line which runs alongside Rock Creek Rd. The arborist has initially recommended removal and will examine all aspects of the tree's health in a detailed report. I will be in contact with a local tree company, who sometimes parks equipment at the fire station lot, to remove the tree and grind the stump. Cold patch asphalt would then be added to the open area. The tree also presents a visual hazard for the fire engine and water tender leaving the station. No action will be taken without full review and recommendation of the arborist and in communication with the County regarding oak removal. I will also discuss the situation with our representative at ATT regarding the hazard to their communication lines.

Grant Update:

I will be preparing a recruitment and hiring plan for a new grant coordinator for our FEMA SAFER Recruitment and Retention Grant (\$700,000). The position will be a 20 hour per week paid employee of the District, reimbursed through the Grant. The focus of the position will be to coordinate various aspects of the grants, but also to develop a training plan and organize/lead/train volunteers. I also expect this position to be company officer-level, able to work shifts when needed, respond to emergency incidents and be an active part of our staff. I will have more information and a plan for the Board's January 28th meeting.

Personnel Update:

Due to the increased concern about Covid exposure combined with the Governor's stay at home orders, Tuesday night training has been temporarily postponed. We look forward to continuing training as soon as the orders are lifted or modified. Emergency response staff vaccinations will be available in early January.

The Volunteer Firefighter Academy will begin January 9th and continue each Wednesday night and all-day Saturday, through May 2021. There are 22 recruits representing Georgetown, Garden Valley and ourselves. We have six volunteers from our District, who will be attending. Several of our current staff will assist with training during the academy. Recruits will receive training in first aid/CPR all in addition to all aspects of structural and wildland firefighting. There will be live structural burn training as a final component of the academy. The recruits will be ready for the 2021 wildfire season with their basic training certifications. Each will receive additional training and mentoring through the District.

Captain Ryan Purves has returned to duty and is completing the final stages of his paramedic certification testing. I am working with the medical JPA to form an agreement with them for the part time staffing of a paramedic engine. This will allow Ryan to function as a certified paramedic when he is on shift Monday-Friday 8am-4pm. We are also adding a paid part-time Fire Captain to our staff, who is also a certified paramedic.

Georgetown/Garden Valley/Pioneer/Mosquito Joint Operations Agreement (JOA):

Besides working closely together on the volunteer fire academy, the Chief's met on 12/22 to discuss the progress of our agreement and our joint operational issues. MFPD personnel living in the Georgetown/Garden Valley can respond to Georgetown and Garden Valley major incidents, when available. There continues to be a great deal of communication and support among our Districts. Our Covid response protocol, supplies and representation to the County are jointly discussed and represented together.

Support & Radio Group:

The Support Group was invaluable to our operations at the series of wildland fires, last month. They continue to use and test the new auxiliary radio system. When the system was established, we knew most of the District had coverage, but not all. The Log Cabin area was a place at the upper area of the District which the radio system was not as strong. We are in the process of adding a second radio repeater to clear up those weak areas. The value of the radio system is significant for the Support Group. They will continue to use and test they system. Eventually the radio network will be integrated into a community neighborhood assistance//support program (CERT).

The radio group is made up of community volunteers with many years of experience with radio system installation, maintenance, repair 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 newly established radio system.

We would like to continue 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.

The District is seeking volunteers of all types. If you have the desire to contribute your skills and talents to help your community, we have a place for you.

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. 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