



MOSQUITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
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Chief's Report
July-August 2020

Summary: This was a busy time of transition with many projects in progress. We have done some additional organizing with staff assignments to oversee and coordinate the many things we are doing. Grant management and revenue/expense tracking is a top priority currently in development. We are fortunate to have significant current grants and several grant applications pending. These grants are extremely helpful for our operations and to our community, especially in these tight budget times. Over the next few months, we hope to see additional personnel join us through our recruitment efforts. There are exciting training opportunities on the horizon which will attract talented men and women who want to be a part of our team. We are already seeing positive results from the efforts which have been moving forward for many months.

On Sunday 8/2 at 6:20pm Engine 275 with a crew of four, led by B/C Mark Schwegler, left on a strike team with four other fire districts assigned to the Apple Fire in Riverside County. The engines arrived at basecamp on 8/3 at 3:30am. The Strike Team remained in staging most of the day 8/3 and was sent to the Stagecoach Fire near Lake Isabella in Kern County. At the time of this report the Strike Team was assigned to the fire and actively working. Two of our SSD personnel are assigned to the Stagecoach Fire, Annmarie Carlson (Finance Section Chief) and Jim Eckroth (Facilities Unit Leader).

There are a surprising number of projects in currently in progress, too many to detail. The following are the highlights of the major things we are working on:

Calls for Service: July 1-August 5:

Fires: 2 (Assist to Cal Fire- Petersen Incident- Coloma; Strike Team to Riverside County- Apple Incident)

Medical: 10

Public Assist: 3

Smoke Investigation: 2

SSD Deployments: 3 (Mile Post 21 & Stagecoach Fires- Redding staging for lightning event)

Fire Season Preparedness: We were reminded that fire season is upon us with the closure of the Mosquito Bridge for repairs. We issued a press release about the closure leaving only Rock Creek Road for travel in and out and reminded the community what they should do to prepare for fire and possible evacuation. The primary issue is the hazard and possible delays caused by vehicles leaving Rock Creek Road while responding fire engines and bulldozers make their way in. Swansboro Airport is the designated temporary refuge area where residents will be directed during an evacuation. On Saturday 8/1, District Support Group personnel (15) conducted an exercise of newly developed evacuation procedures (reviewed and approved by Sheriff's Office-Emergency Services). This involved setting up several road closures to direct residents to the airport, staffing

two access gates into the airport, deploying signs and testing the radio system. The exercise was a success and produced important information which will help the Group deploy quickly and efficiently.

Grant Update:

The FEMA SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) 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. There are several aspects of the grant including the remodel of the District's website, marketing volunteer opportunities in the community and outside the area, encouraging fire station staffing and response with stipend pay and stipend pay per call, funding for specialized training classes, purchase of safety gear/uniforms, and tuition for firefighter/EMT academies. We are preparing to launch a greater outreach to attract applicants. The stipend pay program will be extended to our current volunteers for station staffing and making themselves available in the District to respond to emergency calls. We are actively training our current younger volunteers for firefighting and other emergency operations. Over the next month we will strengthen our station internet capability and develop partnerships with other fire districts for more training opportunities. The grant will fund a replacement digital display sign at the fire station and possibly other community signage to attract volunteers from the community and display helpful community information.

50/50 Grant: A partnership with Cal Fire to purchase wildland safety gear. This grant is closed, which allowed the purchase of \$12,000 of wildland safety gear. We are submitting now for reimbursement of the Cal Fire portion (\$6,000), which will return to the District's budget for other important purchases.

Jenny Jones: This was a private grant for \$10,000 for the purchase of wildland safety gear. The equipment was purchased, and the grant is closed.

CSFA: A generous grant from the California State Firefighters Association which purchased \$25,000 of structural firefighting coats and pants. The gear has arrived, and the grant is closed.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (Medical monitors): This is a regional grant which was just approved through the County's medical Joint Powers Authority (JPA). This grant has been submitted and is expected to be funded. The District is slated to receive two advanced Zoll heart monitors 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 thank the Rescue Fire District and Captain Joel Warman for their coordination of this grant for numerous fire districts.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (Paramedic Training): This grant provides \$172,000 for paramedic training and associated expenses. Captain Ryan Purves and Volunteer Firefighter Evan Alexander are currently receiving training. The grant not only pays for the training program but also for shift coverage expense to replace an employee while he is in training.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (Radios): Similar to the regional grant for heart monitors, this is a regional grant in application and pending for mobile, portable radios and pagers. The grant is in coordination with the Georgetown and Pioneer Fire Districts. Our District has requested 11 mobile radios, 24 portable radios and an unspecified number of pagers with a matching fund amount of approximately \$6,900.

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (Breathing Apparatus): Regional grant in application for 21 breathing apparatus and air masks. This grant is in coordination with the Garden Valley Fire District. The cost of the equipment for the district is \$60,000 with a matching fund amount of \$6,000.

Personnel Update:

Volunteer Firefighters: We have four active volunteer firefighters who are in training. Through our SAFER Grant we are able now to provide stipend pay for shift coverage and responding to emergency incidents. Our goal is to staff four to five nights per week at the station and we should be able to accomplish that soon with three of the volunteers. Recruitment for additional volunteer firefighters is in progress. We have two additional experienced volunteer firefighters for a total of five firefighters who are community based. We will be restoring Tuesday night training in the near future, incorporating the Support Group for trainings as well. The Support Group will also provide firefighter rehabilitation (“rehab”) support for any trainings which create a level of physical exertion like an emergency incident.

Support Group: The Support Group (15 members) participated in a training exercise on 8/1 which tested our procedures during a fire with evacuation. There are six separate road checkpoints to prevent vehicles from leaving out Rock Creek Rd and down to the Mosquito Bridge. Residents would be guided to the temporary refuge area at the Airport pending an organized removal of residents from the area by the Sheriff’s Office. The exercise was a success. We learned a great deal how to deploy efficiently. The Group is evaluating a list of needs, including additional road closure material we can borrow from the County. We also tested our portable radios, which worked fine between the checkpoints, the fire station and the airport. The Support Group, following the SOP guidelines, were able to provide basic medical support to residents using Squad 75 and members of the Group with medical experience. Overall, an excellent job by the Support Group which again proves their value to the District.

The Support Group is also developing a rehabilitation (Rehab) program to assist fatigued firefighters. The rehab function, developed by the Support Group, will be extended to fire incidents, other incidents and training sessions which require a high level of sustained physical exertion. Besides providing a cooling or warming area and refreshments, the Group would provide basic medical monitoring for the firefighters at scene, identifying individuals who can return to duty or need be further treated/transported by paramedics. The Group is designing this new program to comply with the NFPA 1584 standard for this important function. A special thank you to Dawn Buhnerkempe for bringing forward her extensive medical experience and for the generosity of both Bill and Dawn. It is truly an amazing and appreciated gift to District personnel and others who may become depleted during an incident or training.

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.

Paid Staff: We are in the process of adding two persons qualified to work part time shifts. Currently we have three Captains, one of which is full time, and two firefighter/engineers. The two new personnel are both firefighters with other departments and we expect both to be also able to fill Captain shifts, when needed, within the next six months. Captain Ryan Purves is currently engaged in his clinical training for paramedic followed by field training on a paramedic ambulance. Our Paramedic Training Grant is reimbursing the District

for shift pay to fill Ryan's vacant shifts Monday-Friday. Based on his schedule and hours at the hospital, Ryan returns to work a 9-hour shift at the Station once every two weeks.

Explorers: A Fire Explorer program is an important outreach for a fire district which cares about its community and youth. The current program needs to be remodeled and presented to the Board as soon as possible. There are open questions about age range and insurance coverage. Chris Dillender and Todd Hern are leading the program development. I will provide more information about this as it becomes available.

Personnel Assignments: There are important assignments for personnel overseeing various aspects of our operations. They are as follows:

Operations and Safety Officer: Mark Schwegler

Training: Mike Walters

Facilities: Ryan Purves

Apparatus & Equipment: Jeff Schwegler, Devin Hern & Brian Morris

EMS: Ryan Purves & Evan Alexander

SAFER Grant: Dion Nugent

PIO: Lauren Ono

Wireless/Internet/Tech: Dion Nugent

Safety Support (SSD): Sam Marouk

Support Group: Trent Williams

Comms/Radios: Jeff Schwegler

Explorers: Chris Dillender & Todd Hern

Training: Basic training and firefighter evolutions happen most days with volunteer firefighters and paid staff. Tuesday night training will be instituted to bridge training and communication issues between day and night responses. The incorporation of the Support Group into Tuesday night and other training will enhance their integration into our response operations.

We are scheduling forceable entry training with Georgetown FD this month. We are looking at other possibilities regarding joint training with other Fire Districts and will update the Board as information becomes available. On the Board's August meeting agenda is the consideration of an agreement between our District, Georgetown FD and Garden Valley FD. Garden Valley has approved the agreement and the Georgetown FD Board will be reviewing it at roughly the same time our Board will. The agreement can enhance training opportunities for our staff and will be helpful in attracting new volunteer firefighters. I recommend moving forward with the agreement with the understanding that the District is not bound by it. The agreement can be modified or terminated at any time by any of the Districts (Staff report and draft agreement agenda item attached to Board packet).

Emergency Medical Responder (EMR): Mark Schwegler is obtaining County certification for teaching this important medical training to improve our level of response, by providing adequate personnel to the scene of medical emergencies. Combined with increased capability of automatic defibrillators and trained personnel, especially from the Support Group, we can improve our medical response staffing. The County is requiring the course to be 80 hours in length. We are working on the logistics of how best to proceed. We would like to cultivate additional instructors from the community and expand the number of interested people who would like to be trained to assist others when needed. It is my hope that this process would cultivate additional people in the community who have medical expertise and would like to be a part of the response network.

Apparatus & Equipment:

Cal Fire Inspections: Cal Fire has offered for no charge to conduct a detailed mechanical inspection of our vehicle inventory (including review of our documentation). Engine 275 was inspected recently; the rest will occur when schedules permit. The inspection of Engine 275 and Water Tender 75 will allow us to be hired cover for Cal Fire stations in EDC under their hired equipment program. This opportunity is similar in structure and pay to our current participation with out of county strike teams. I am also interested in obtaining a quote from Cal Fire for them to perform our repairs and preventative maintenance, at least on our front-line engines and water tender. A quote can only be obtained from Cal Fire if a detailed inspection occurs first. This is beneficial to us as the District does have well maintained equipment, but we will receive an independent expert evaluation of apparatus condition for no charge. We also need consistent, expert preventative maintenance and repair program, which we do not current have. The regular mechanic the District has used is retiring and current way we approach apparatus maintenance is not consistent. I will continue to report back to the Board with progress on this important issue.

OES Type 6 Fire Engine: The State of California Office of Emergency Services-Fire Rescue Branch has ordered almost 80 brand new Type 6 fire engines for distribution to fire agencies around the state. This engine is built on a smaller chassis like Squad 75 but with tool compartments, water tank, hose and pump. It has a smaller frame with four-wheel drive, which allows the engine to maneuver in tight places to access areas where conventional fire engines cannot. The design and capability of the fire engine is very well suited for the Mosquito community. The truck can be operated without any special drivers licensing and comes fully equipped, including the latest battery powered vehicle extrication equipment.

I have drafted a letter of interest to OES Fire Chief Brian Marshall. To receive an OES engine (Georgetown has a Type 1 OES engine), a fire agency must draft a letter of interest and if granted, must comply with a temporary vehicle transfer agreement between the District and State OES. The District would agree to house/maintain the vehicle in good working order and provide adequately trained staffing to deploy at the request of the State. The State would provide repairs over \$100 and generally take care of most maintenance issues including tires, batteries, pump, chassis, motor, radios, etc. When deployed to an incident, State OES covers all repairs and maintenance including fuel. We believe the acquisition of one of these engines would be a tremendous benefit to the District and would provide a training platform to attract firefighters. I would like to review and discuss the basics of the transfer agreement with the Board at the September meeting. It would give us an opportunity to discuss the details of agreement before the engine is offered to us, which I fully expect will happen. When the final agreement is drafted the Board will have a greater sense of understanding and can decide accordingly. I will provide photos, truck specifications and a draft agreement for discussion next month. I would like to thank SSD Division Chief Sam Marouk for bringing forward this excellent opportunity.

This concludes my report for now. 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 still ahead, and we will remain vigilant. I appreciate the great support we receive from the Community and its commitment to being prepared.

Jack Rosevear, Chief