



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



Date: April 5, 2023
To: Meeks Bay Fire Board of Directors
From: Steve Leighton, Fire Chief
Subject: April 2023

2023 has not been for the faint of heart. To date, the region has experienced eleven atmospheric rivers (rivers in the sky) and its first blizzard in recent history. Interstate 80 experienced more road closures than in recent years or in recent memory. With the weather so severe, I decided to close the administrative offices for three days. In addition, our March board meeting was cancelled. These unprecedented times once again required me as your Fire Chief to make some decisions. I gathered our district leadership and counsel to work through several details and scenarios to ensure that we were prepared for any type of situation that we might be confronted with essentially developing an Incident Action Plan (IAP). My first and foremost goal is to protect our employees and the public from harm, and I believe we were successful during these extraordinary times. Our region has been under a declared state of emergency often since the beginning of the year due to storm severity, and the district is currently seeking federal assistance to accommodate for storm damages sustained to the district property and equipment.

Despite the barrage of storms, our staff continues to serve this community with passion responding to a new February record of 276 calls for service district wide. Our members responded to a surge in calls for gas leaks and other snow-related emergencies. One call of significance was for an explosion in a Kings Beach residence that literally blew the doors off the structure resulting in two structures being red tagged for structural damage. I'm extremely proud that our members have been responding to these incidents during pouring snow in less than favorable conditions to do their job and while assisting our residents and visitors.

Most days our duty crews have worked tirelessly keeping the stations clear of snow in between calls. And from what I've observed, not a small task. A big shout out to Mechanic Parle and Facilities Coordinator Beckman for putting in a substantial amount of time ensuring our district facilities and equipment are ready to go. Our crew members also maintain a list of fire hydrants throughout our district in between storms that are critical to our operations. This requires our crews to go out there and ensure that those critical hydrants are accessible during emergency operations.

On February 24-26 our staff participated in the AUDI FIS Ski World Cup in Olympic Valley. We were the sole ambulance provider for the event and provided additional personnel as part of the Rescue Task Force Team.

All our avalanche rescue training over the last few years has proven beneficial, as we were the primary response agency for the recent avalanche response call we received in Olympic Valley in the last few weeks.



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Three people were rescued without harm and Division Chief Whisler was the Incident Commander throughout the incident. This incident was not in our jurisdiction or authority of responsibility. However, I want to recognize Chief Whisler for a job well done!

Meetings and Assignments:

- North Tahoe, Meeks Bay, and Alpine Meadows Board Meetings
- Eastern Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Chiefs Meeting
- Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association Meeting
- Fire District Association of California Annual Conference
- Executive and Command Staff Meetings
- Labor Management L3729 Meeting
- Eldorado County Fire Chiefs Meeting
- Eldorado County Board of Supervisors Meeting
- Placer County Board of Supervisors Meeting
- Breakfast Club Meeting
- Eldorado and Placer LAFCO Meetings
- Meetings with District Attorneys
- Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators Meeting
- Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team Multi-Agency Coordination Group Meeting
- North Tahoe Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
- California Special Districts Association (CSDA) Emergency Preparedness Summit
- Snowfest Pancake Breakfast and Parade
- Lateral Firefighter/Paramedic Interviews
- World Cup Palisades Planning Meeting
- SAFER Grant Overview Meeting
- Eldorado County EMS System Evaluation Stakeholder Meeting
- Lake Tahoe Community College Fire Science Advisory Meeting
- Tahoe Basin Area Plan Meeting
- Standards of Cover, Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan Meeting
- Kings Beach Western Approach Project Meeting