



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



Date: September 18, 2023
To: Meeks Bay Fire Board of Directors
From: Steve Leighton, Fire Chief
Subject: September 2023

The rains we received this summer have been a welcome break from our typical fire season. As you all will recall, the last few summers have been filled with smoke in the Tahoe Basin. Not to mention we've had to deal with several fires threatening our area including precautionary evacuations. The Caldor and Mosquito Fires seem to be in our ancient history, but we need to continue to be diligent in our efforts to prepare for the what if's. The National Interagency Fire Centers Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook rank the region as "Below Average" through September, with a predicted return to "Normal" from October into December. The combination of factors to declare an end to fire season has not yet been met, and it's important for the public to remain prepared for all emergencies as we enter National Preparedness Month. The Maui tragedy, resulting in 115 confirmed fatalities with 53 individuals still unaccounted for, is a stark reminder to always remain vigilant to the potential for disaster. The similarity in heavily populated areas with limited egress that in many ways mirrors our own challenges. This leads to the importance of investing in and participating in drills, exercises, and other prevention efforts that our utility companies and first responders in the Tahoe region continually partner on.

The Lake Tahoe Summit was held in August at the North Tahoe Events Center. This year's event was hosted by U.S. Senator Alex Padilla and included speakers from the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Nevada Governor Joe Lombardo, U.S. Senators Catherine Cortez Masto and Jackie Rosen of Nevada, and U.S. Representatives John Garamendi and Kevin Kiley of California. The keynote speaker for the event was House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi. The event and planning leading up to it were excellent opportunities to network and share information about our district needs with decision makers who have an interest in advocating for Tahoe-focused initiatives. I personally had the opportunity to meet with Senator Padilla the day before the Summit to discuss North Tahoe Fire District's needs. My message or ask from his office was two-fold. First, I explained the importance of a reliable water system for fire suppression. Second, I explained that no matter how good the water system is, we need Firefighters to be able to use the water. I encouraged him to support the SAFER Grant to staff more Firefighters in our district. After our meeting, I received a call from his Chief of Staff and have been in contact with him since. Hopefully our efforts will prove successful. On another note: Master Mechanic Parle and Assistant Mechanic Baumgartner had the antique Seagrave fire engine on display for the event, which received a good amount of attention from those in attendance.

Call volume remained high through July, making it our second busiest on record. However, August returned to somewhat normal allowing us a break for an all-hands-on deck firefighter testing effort. I'm pleased to announce that thanks to those efforts, we made conditional offers of employment to four new recruits: Lateral Firefighter/Paramedics Michael Schoenborn and Samuel Grosnick, who will begin a five-to-ten-day academy on September 25, 2023, and Entry-Level Firefighter/Paramedics Rebecca Lewis and Austin Vickers, who began a 16-week academy in Carson City on September 11, 2023. These firefighters were recruited because of upward movement within the existing ranks, and I'm pleased to announce several appointments as our

crews continually develop and progress through their careers in service to our community. Captain Sheppard has accepted a provisional appointment to Battalion Chief. This opening was created by the upcoming retirement of Battalion Chief Lagano. Chief Lagano will remain on payroll utilizing accrued vacation/sick leave for approximately 6-7 months or until sometime in May of 2024. Chief Sheppard will assume the command of “C” Shift. Engineer/Paramedic Stemmler has accepted a temporary appointment to fill a Captain position and Firefighter/Paramedic Rau has accepted a temporary appointment to Engineer. Both the Captain and Engineer positions are on “C” Shift. So, they both will be assigned there. Firefighter/Paramedic Bartow has been temporarily assigned to the fire academy in Carson City on a 40-hour assignment to assist our new firefighters as they attend the academy.

Last but certainly not least, I want to thank Director of Finance and Administration Kim Eason for her efforts with our Priority Based Budget Process. We held our annual meeting the first week of August and this process will be conglomerated at our meeting this month. I’m super proud of Director Eason and her team as they navigated our challenging at times budget process.

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
- Executive and Command Staff Meetings
- Labor Management L3729 Meeting
- Eldorado County Fire Chiefs Meeting
- Eldorado County Board of Supervisors Meetings
- Placer County Board of Supervisors Meetings
- Breakfast Club Meeting
- Eldorado and Placer LAFCO Meetings
- Meetings with our District Attorneys regarding District business
- Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators Meeting
- Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team Multi-Agency Coordination Group Meeting
- Fire Districts Association of California Meeting
- Meeting w/ELDO CO Supervisor Brooke Laine
- Tahoe Area Managers Meeting
- Eastern Placer County Unified Command Staff Meeting
- L3729 Labor Negotiations Meeting
- California Special Districts Association Video Shoot Planning Meeting
- Meeting El Dorado County Executive Staff
- Fire and Law Enforcement-Evacuation of Lake Tahoe Basin Meeting
- Doug Martin Bell Service Memorial
- CSDA Public Service Announcement Meeting

MBFPD RESPONSE CALLS - MONTHLY COMPARISON

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
2023	6	12	7	14	21	25	37	23				
2022	24	11	15	9	12	21	18	14	11	7	3	8
2021	12	31	18	17	15	38	52	44	19	27	20	30
2020	23	12	9	9	14	30	54	50	28	22	16	11
2019	13	17	18	15	21	10	37	33	25	14	13	23

