



Chief's Reports

To: Board of Directors
From: Steve Simons, Fire Chief
Date: May 17, 2019

Meeks Bay/El Dorado County:

I have attended meetings in Placerville a couple times this last month. I was asked to come down to a Board of Supervisors meeting where they were discussing a Fire Service Ad Hoc committee report from the Deputy County Administrative Officer. I was asked to speak to the Meeks Bay/North Tahoe service contract and the Alternative Governance Study completed last year. All of the County Supervisors were very complimentary of our progress and our agreement, and they encouraged us to finalize official unification as soon as possible. They also made it clear that they would like to see similar agreements and progress with other agencies on the west side of the county.

While down at the County offices, I spoke with Elections Department officials on our current Board vacancies. I asked for clarification on procedures and time lines for filling vacancies. Shawn has done a lot of work on this already, and she has placed ads in the local paper soliciting interested parties to submit a letter of interest and current resume for consideration at our May Board meeting.

While we still have not received any determination on our insurance claim for the water damage in Shawn's office at Station 61, the crews have made some temporary repairs and turned the office into a bedroom to accommodate the increase in staffing during the 53 remodel project. Having Shawn at headquarters every day has been a great help. She is currently managing the Division Chief testing process in addition to her regular duties.

Finally, I have begun work on the spring newsletter with Shawn and Erin's help.

Operations:

April has been a busy month of preparation. We have been preparing for the annual awards ceremony, the Station 53 remodel, our joint board meeting, and review of the two studies completed last year. We have also started preparing for the rapidly approaching wildland season and summer in general.

I have recently met with PCSO Lieutenants Baxter and Long to discuss emergency preparedness issues and plans for our communities. We are both working with community leaders to help promote and improve communications related to emergency incidents and public safety. PCSO will be participating in the panel discussions following the *Wilder than Wild* film screenings coming up next month.

I have been over to the west side of the Sierra a couple times this last month to meet with Grass Valley Dispatch. I dropped off some treats and flowers for Dispatcher Appreciation week on my way to some El Dorado County meetings, and I had a very productive meeting where I worked through all of our response plans with the dispatch battalion chief and his staff, bringing those more in line with industry standards in our region.

Additionally, I have been meeting with the Lake Valley Operations Chief, as well as local dispatch centers, in

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an effort to finalize new and improved response plans for the Emerald Bay area. These discussions have been very productive, and we will hopefully have plans and agreements in place for this upcoming season. As a follow up to these meetings, we were able to get the Lake Valley and North Tahoe Battalion Chiefs together for lunch following our annual strike team leader refresher to discuss improved joint operations.

Fleet/Facilities:

According to plan, we shut down Station 53 early on May 1. We have relocated personnel and apparatus to other stations for the next two to three months. Meeks Bay station staffing has increased from two to four personnel per day. The engine and ambulance will both be staffed to cover the southern half of the west shore. Additional personnel will also be assigned to Station 51 to help cover the northern half. Our computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system will find and send the closest resources to any call in the area.

Tim and his assistants and subcontractors have made incredible progress on this project in just a few short days. All of the cabinets and drywall had been removed by the end of the first day. Subcontractors were already hard at work, and much of the demolition was accomplished by some of our off-duty personnel. We are excited to see this project moving forward and hope to be able to move crews back in by early July. Thanks also to Division Chief Conradson and the Prevention staff for helping with plan review and processing.

Just prior to starting the 53 remodel, Tim, with the help of the Prevention staff, was able to finish reconfiguration of the Prevention and Forest Fuels offices. PIO Erin and Forest Fuels Coordinator Eric have moved into the old radio room to make room for additional seasonal Defensible Space Inspectors expected to start in the next couple of weeks.

Joe and his assistants have begun the annual spring tire swap project. They have also been servicing all of the brush engines to get them ready for fire season. We have moved Engine 53 to the shop to get some work done on it while the station is closed. As that work is completed, we will be able to swap other engines in for service and projects. Next, we will be bringing the chipper units back up the hill from winter storage.

XTB Tahoe Basin Operational Area:

We have completed all three Annual Strike Team Leader and Overhead refresher classes for our operational area, and are in the process of finalizing qualified and trainee lists. As we complete and publish these lists and rotation schedules, we will complete some updates and improvements to our regional chiefs website as well. PIO Erin Holland and BCs Smith and Whisler have been helping with this project.

Meetings:

- Executive and Command Staff meetings
- Joint MEK/NTF Board meeting / SOC and Alternative Governance study review
- North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Board meetings
- El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association
- Lake Tahoe Regional Chiefs Association
- Multi-Agency Coordination meeting
- Operations Team meeting
- Fleet/Facilities meetings
- Awards Ceremony planning meetings
- Terrorism Liaison Officer training



North Tahoe Fire: *(Fire Chief Schwartz)*

Fire Season and Operational Outlook:

The 2019 fire season forecast, after a severe winter this year which left us a considerable upper elevation snow pack, finished with six atmospheric river storms in March which in turn helped to increase the snow pack to 200% of normal. The late season precipitation, along with recent rains, has produced an above-normal grass crop capable of carrying fire in all fuel types.

The current long-range weather forecast, albeit premature, shows no favorable precipitation trends and an early possibility of thunderstorms. Locally, our fire season may start later than average, but could run longer as we saw in both 2017 and 2018 fire seasons. Typically, here in the Basin, our local fire season runs from early June through mid-October. An additional concern is the historical trend of big fire seasons following big winters. With 2017-2018 already the biggest fire seasons on record, 2019 may be on new ground. I'm writing this report in Chico, as I'm preparing to participate in a California State Board of Forestry tour of the Camp Fire that destroyed much of the town of Paradise and surrounding communities of Magalia and Concow in Butte County. The tour is being led by the Cal FIRE Butte County Unit Chief who was the Paradise Fire Chief during the Camp Fire. There are many similarities between Paradise and our District, and staff is working to see what post-incident information is applicable here. See the USA Today and Sacramento Bee article from April 11, 2019 and our response in the attached links: Is Tahoe Paradise?:

(<https://www.kpbs.org/news/2019/apr/10/california-races-predict-which-town-could-be-next-/>);

and The Districts' Response:

(https://yubanet.com/regional/north-tahoe-and-meeks-bay-fire-protection-districts-the-mcclatchy-analysis-and-destined-to-burn-series-the-rest-of-the-story/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Yubanet+%28YubaNet.com+Headlines%29%20and%20https://kingsbeachcenter.com/).

Preparations for this fire season are underway at every level. Contracts and operating plans are being updated by Operations. Annual firefighter wildfire training is being conducted with all personnel and Incident Qualification Cards (Red Cards) are being issued to capable personnel.

Strike Team Leaders, Overhead personnel, and Chiefs receive their annual CAL OES training. Administrative staff is updating our CAL OES annual salary survey and administrative rates. All the while our fleet mechanic is servicing our apparatus to ensure operational readiness. CAL FIRE engine 2380 has re-occupied Station 55 in Carnelian Bay beginning May 13, and throughout the fire season, and we welcome them back into the District. Having a state engine compliments our local responses while adding an additional level of fire protection to the region. Likely the best news going into fire season is that we received our new HME Type III brush truck last July, and we are planning to be at full-staffing and mission ready.

Legislative Update:

April 2-5 2019 I attended and presented at the Fire District Association of California's annual conference and membership meeting. This has always been the most vital meeting for the District. It is where I have access to legal, legislative, operational updates, and regulatory changes that Directly affect our District. My session was titled "Strategies for Managing Unfunded Actuarial Pension Liabilities". The session was full with over 100 attendees interested in the many ways North Tahoe Fire has effectively managed this financial threat. Things are also heating up in Sacramento as over 167 new bills related to fire districts are working their way through committees. May is the peak of legislative season, and Captain Scott Sedgwick will accompany me for our annual CSDA legislative update and visits May 21-22, 2019.

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Prevention Activities:

The 2019 building season is in full swing, and there is an unprecedented number of complex residential and commercial projects underway. Defensible space inspections and curbside chipping requests are also on the up tick along with many of our large forest fuels treatment projects.

Finally, the District had a terrific annual Awards Banquet on May 3, 2019, and I thank the Board for their support of this event and recognize the hard work from our entire staff that made this year's banquet such a success.

During the past month, the Fire Chief (designee*) represented the Districts at the following external meetings and events:

- 4/2-5 FDAC Meeting
- 4/8 Home ignition WUI Class
- 4/9 Lake Tahoe West Team Executive Meeting
- 4/10 ASCWD Board Meeting
- 4/11 Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team meeting
- 4/15 Join NTF/MBF Board Meeting
- 4/16 Annual XTB Overhead personnel refresher
- 4/17 NTF Board Meeting
- 4/18 LTRFCA and MAC Meetings
- 4/22 Presenter at NV/NT Fire Adapted Communities Conference
- 4/23 Presented at Placer County Board of Supervisors
- 4/24 MBF Board Meeting
- 4/25 SLT Fire Chief Hiring Board
- 4/26 Vacation

Fire & Life Safety Division: *(Division Chief Conradson)*

The engine companies started inspections for hotel/motels and condominium complexes in April. These are mandatory inspections and an annual report will be provided to the Board next month on the District's performance. Rick Schnoor assisted with these types of inspections earlier in the year before he retired from the District. We now rely on the engine company inspection program to meet this state mandate.

Fire and Life Safety staff attended training on NFPA standards for exiting. This was timely training as we are addressing lodging establishments in the District that do not have adequate exiting.

We have been getting several requests for Vacation Home Rentals (VHR) inspections in Meeks Bay. This is required for the permitting process for VHR's in El Dorado County.

There has been an increase in plan submittals as the building season is starting. Prevention staff has participated in several pre-development meetings and spend a considerable amount of time answering questions for architects, engineers, and builders. The majority of projects has difficulty in meeting the requirements for access, water for firefighting, and building in setbacks and has been seeking guidance on alternatives to meet code requirements.



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Staff has had several meetings with CATT to discuss the problems associated with their desire to build homes and restrained due to the lack of hydrants or insufficient water for firefighting. There are large areas in our Districts with insufficient water and in some cases no hydrants. Building in these areas makes it extremely difficult for our firefighters in the event of a structure fire which was the case with the recent fire in Carnelian Bay. District staff has been working with the CATT committee to help find alternate means of protection as a solution to this problem, and they will be making a presentation to the Board at this next meeting.

Training & Safety Division: *(Battalion Chief Whisler)*

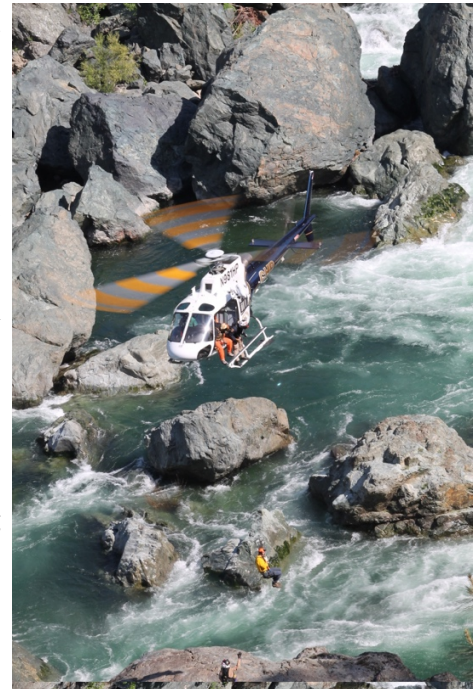
Special Drills, Classes, Events:

Captain Lagano, Engineer Wagner and I participated in a joint agency training involving CHP's helicopter. We worked with them as they trained new crews on the ins and outs of hoisting.

The District has completed its annual Ice Rescue training. This year, we worked with Squaw Valley Fire Department as a joint training. I would like to thank Engineer Meadows, Firefighter Frey, and Firefighter Baumgardner for providing the training.

The District has completed its annual Confined Space Training with both North Tahoe and Tahoe City PUDS. The training took place at National Avenue and Onyx Street. I would like to thank Captain Sheppard, and Engineers Meadows, Perhaps, and Wagner for providing the training.

The crews have begun their annual RT-130 training. RT-130 training is a required training for Wildland firefighters every spring prior to Wildland fire season. This year we will continue with the PACK test, which is a federal standard to measure a person's agility. He or she will have to walk three miles wearing a 45-pound pack in under 46 minutes.



Safety & Logistics Division: *(Battalion Chief Smith)*

Greetings Directors. As I am on vacation this week (sort of) I am writing my report while in Austin, Texas. What a great city in the heart of the Lonestar State. Yesterday, I was privileged to spend the day with members of the Austin Fire Department UAS Program. They are on the very cutting edge of this technology, and I gained a lot of valuable information for our program and established some very positive collaborative relationships for the future of our program.

I am very pleased to report that the Station 53 remodel project is well underway as of April 30. Tim Schrader, our Facilities Coordinator, is managing the many aspects of this project involving compliance reviews, trades, and materials acquisition. Tim has been working closely with Placer County, TRPA, and our own Prevention staff to ensure compliance with all applicable standards. I have attached three photos of the very early stages

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of demolition taken on May 1 for your review. I am happy to answer any questions the Board may have regarding the remodel project or other facility maintenance and repair matters.

In spite of all the snow that is still in our area, preparations are well under way for what we expect will be another busy vegetation fire season. Due to the amounts of snow still present and on-going occurrence of avalanches in the area, we have delayed removing our winter rescue gear for several weeks beyond our normal time frame, but it should be coming off the apparatus very soon.

With the recent retirement of Captain Goldstone, it has left a large void in various areas that I and others are responsible for, and I have been busy recruiting individuals to fill some the voids left behind. Captain Beatie and Engineer Moen have graciously stepped up to help in these areas of responsibility that Jeff filled in the past. Thank you to both Naman and Paul!

Next month, our Districts and Truckee Fire are co-hosting (in conjunction with SkyFire Consulting) a two-day UAS Skills Camp. We anticipate that public agencies throughout Northern California will attend this educational event.

The Districts recently received three RAM ventilation fans via a collaborative effort between the Districts and the two firefighters Associations. One was purchased with suppression equipment funds, one by the Meeks Bay Firefighters Association, and one by the North Tahoe Firefighters Association. The Boards are being asked at their meeting to accept the units purchased by the Associations as donations to the Districts. I hope to purchase additional units in the coming years to completely inventory our type one engine fleet. These fans are powered by lithium ion batteries instead of internal combustion engines and as such do not produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide while conducting ventilation operations on incidents, and they operate at reduced noise levels.

April and May have been busy months for me preparing all aspects of the Logistics and Safety Division budgets. Our needs continue to outweigh available resources in many areas.

Station 53 demolition:

