



Chief's Reports

To: Board of Directors
From: Steve Simons, Fire Chief
Date: March 20, 2019

Meeks Bay Fire:

Operations:

Most of the District has received well over 20 feet of snow in the last several weeks. This has added significant complexities to usually routine calls, not to mention the more complex calls, of which we have had several. Crews responded to four significant structure fires in the last four weeks. Numerous carbon monoxide calls, gas leaks, calls for public assistance, allied agency assistance, vehicle accidents, avalanches, medical aids, and numerous other alarms, and patient transfers. All of our personnel and cooperating neighbors have kept each other safe, and covered for each other when things were getting really busy.

Cooperating agencies such as CalTrans, Placer and El Dorado County Public Works, Liberty Energy, CHP, Sheriffs, and others have been in the thick of these storms as well, doing the very best job they can to keep the roads open and the lights on. These conditions are especially hazardous to all of these personnel and thankfully, there have not been any serious issues. Spring is on it's way, and thankfully this weekend will be sunny and warm.

Fleet/Facilities:

Joe and Tim, along with other members of the District such as Scott Baumgardner, Chris May and others, have spent countless hours clearing snow around the stations, helping to clear snow off of the roofs of several stations. Stations have been suffering under the load too, and Tim and the crews have been busy dealing with roof leaks, electrical issues, heating problems, and other minor issues. We have hired contractors to reduce the snow load on the roof of the Homewood station. This Station is 57 years old, and we have only had a handful of winters that have caused us to take these measures to clear the snow on that station. Tim has been boarding up some of the most vulnerable windows at our stations to protect from snow and ice hazards.

Joe has been working hard to keep all of the rigs on the road considering the extra challenges of deep and endless snow. Crews have been doing a good job of notifying the shop about problems before they develop into bigger issues. The main hydraulic motor for our big snow blower at Station 51 failed during the middle of the non-stop snow. Joe and Chris May worked very hard and were able to get it back in service quickly and even perform some good, very low cost, performance upgrades! Thank you very much!

One of our Subarus has been out of service for almost two months since we purchased it, so we are now in the process of pursuing a replacement or refund through the Lemon law acts. More to come.

Tim continues to work on the 53 remodel project. We have recently received updated plans, and he is working with subcontractors on details and scheduling. We are still planning to start work next month.

XTB Tahoe Basin Operational Area:

Thanks to North Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Ryan Sommers and Squaw Valley Fire Chief Allen Riley for covering XTB duties while I was gone. The annual peer review application process is well underway. Annual wildland refresher classes start next month! (Even with 20 feet of snow on the ground. :)

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Finally, Thanks to the Chiefs, Kim, and all for doing a great job, keeping each other safe, and picking up my duties while I enjoyed some time off with my wife!



North Tahoe Fire: *(Fire Chief Schwartz)*

Operations:

March has roared in like a lion, but it is always great to have some snow during SnowFest. Our weather partners at NOAA show the Pacific storm-gates are open, and winter weather is likely to continue through the middle of the month at which time we hope to see a warming trend. As we proceed into the months of spring, each snow storm pushes back the start to our local fire season here in the Basin and subsequently narrows our window of wildfire vulnerability.

Most notable this month are the Districts' sharp increase in winter-related calls for service. We responded to five structure fires of which four of these calls were working structure fires: Tahoe Sands, Tahoma Lodge, Snowflake, Belleview, and a furnace electrical fire. All of our neighboring agencies assisted by providing fire apparatus, firefighters, station coverage, and fire investigative assistance. This winter's excessive snowpack and severe weather have added a level of difficulty to fire suppression activities. Buried fire hydrants presented additional water supply challenges for firefighters on each of these incidents. The District has over 1,500 hydrants within our jurisdiction. In between emergency responses and other responsibilities, emergency crews dig out hydrants. On severe winters like this year's, we focus on keeping "key hydrants" clear. These are strong hydrants with good access where our water tenders can fill and shuttle water to the fire attack engines at the scene. For the fires last month, we used a combination of engine(s) tank water, water tenders, and locating and digging out hydrants. With a break in the weather on Friday, March 1, the District reached out to our Cal FIRE partners at the



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Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit for assistance. Unit Chief Brian Estes provided two Wildfire Hand Crews to work alongside District personnel with our loader to clear all of the District's key hydrants in a single day. We are grateful for their assistance, and the Fire District provided meals, administrative, and logistic necessities. This program has great future potential, and we hope to involve our water purveyors in future endeavors. Additionally, emergency responses to carbon monoxide and flammable gas leaks and alarms (propane and natural gas) have also seen a corresponding increase during this winter weather period. As you would expect, vehicle accidents, falls, and snow/ice-related trauma are also pervasive.

On March 2, the District hosted its annual SnowFest Pancake Breakfast at Station 51 despite the relentless snow; hence the name "SnowFest". The turnout appeared consistent with previous years. I heard many great comments from the public, both about the food and our organization. The support from all of the branches of our fire service family was overwhelming. Organized by NTFA, we had help from career, part-time, retired, administrative, fleet, CEIT/CERT, and our women's auxiliary personnel. Despite the fresh snow, North Tahoe Fire and Meeks Bay Fire had engines and other apparatus in the parade. I want to thank everyone involved for making it a great public event.

This month, the District completed both a lateral Firefighter Paramedic recruitment and an entry level Firefighter Paramedic recruitment. This year, both processes were conducted in-house and were very successful -- producing two candidate lists. These lists will be used to fill future firefighter vacancies. While we haven't had any Firefighter Paramedic vacancies for a while, we are forecasting several vacancies this coming year. Many members of the organization participated in these processes; however, it would not have been successful without Division Chief Simons and Battalion Chief Whisler's commitment and leadership. An individual candidate's level of training and experience may necessitate participation in a firefighter academy prior to being assigned to shift work.

The Administrative Division continues to perform at a very high level and both internal and external customers appreciate their kindness.

Fire and Life Safety continues to review numerous projects, residential, commercial, and forest fuels while also working to complete our required school, business, and miscellaneous commercial/industrial inspections. This year's SnowFest fireworks show Friday night was very successful. Division Chief Conradson and the Prevention Officers ensured that a safe and beautiful show went off without a hitch. Also noteworthy, as I'm writing this report, is my attendance along with our Fire Prevention staff, March 11-15 at CFPI's Fire Prevention Officers Workshop in Buellton, California ("Fire Code Camp") where we are receiving education, certifications, and preparations for the 2019 fire code adoption cycle.

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

- 2/5 Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club*
- 2/8 Alpine Board Meeting
- 2/14 Placer County Flood Meeting
- 2/20 NTF Board Meeting

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

The SnowFest fireworks show went very well. This was the first time the Tahoe City golf course was used to launch the fireworks. It was safer and a much easier site to work in compared to the barge operations during the winter months. Last year, the show had to be postponed due to safety concerns over the weather that included large

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wind waves and too much ice and snow on the decks. Those are not a concern when utilizing the new location at the golf course.

New legislation has been passed that will require us to report to the Board of Directors of our progress on completing mandatory inspections of schools and hotels/motels. Fire and Life Safety staff will be providing the information in the form of a resolution around the time of the budget preparation in accordance with the new Health and Safety Code requirement.

Fire and Life Safety staff continue to participate in meetings for the new code adoptions. Significant progress has been made in determining needed modifications to the District's current Fire Code so we will be ready to move forward when the new State codes are published.

I met with a representative from CA-TT to discuss the problem of building in areas with insufficient water. The purpose of the meeting was to try to identify mitigation measures that could be applied more consistently so builders would know what to expect when there is not enough water to support fire flow.

Staff attended several pre-development meetings for both commercial and residential projects that are anticipated to start this spring. One of them was for the Tahoe City Lodge project. We were informed that all of the issues that have delayed that project to date have been resolved, and they anticipate starting demolition of the site in May.

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

Training and Technical Rescue:

Testing - The District hosted a Lateral Firefighter/Paramedic test and an entry level Firefighter/Paramedic test. I would like to thank Captain Sedgwick, Captain Lagano, Captain Sheppard, Engineer Perhacs, Engineer Wagner, Engineer Meadows, Firefighter C. Smith, Firefighter Gustafson, Firefighter Gilley, and Firefighter Boyd for proctoring the test. We have established two great lists. Below is the ranking:

Lateral Firefighter/Paramedic

Stephanie Lockhart
Eugene Justus
Christopher Bartow

Entry Level Firefighter

Kylie Daniels
Ashley Jennings
Trevor Hall
Kyle Garcia

Probationary Firefighters - Firefighter Sacci and Firefighter Wible have completed their probation. They were both hired as Lateral Firefighter/Paramedics. With the completion of probation, both Firefighters are C Step Firefighters.

Multi-Company Training - The District sent an Engine crew to Carson City Fire for multi-company training. Tahoe Douglas, Carson City, and Truckee Meadows Fire Departments participated in the training. Captain Sedgwick, Engineer Meadows, Engineer Moen, and Engineer Braziel participated in the training and brought back some great ideas for our personnel.

Wellness Program - We will be using Arc Health for our wellness program this year in addition to TFH. For this year's program, we will be providing: General Medical Examination, Audiogram, Vision Testing, Treadmill Stress



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Test, and Blood Draw. All tests will be completed at one of the District's stations. Wellness testing is tentatively scheduled for April. I hope to have the exact dates soon.

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

The Facilities Division staff continues to conduct ongoing repair and maintenance activities throughout both districts as needed. I can answer any questions the Board may have regarding specific projects or any questions related to the Facilities Coordinator's Board report. I have included the latest Facilities Coordinator staff update below for your review of current activities.

Station 61:

- ▶ The dishwasher suffered a power surge during a recent power outage, which caused the control board to fail. Parts are on order, but unfortunately they are 2-3 weeks out. A surge protector will be added to this circuit to prevent further issues.
- ▶ For anyone who was not aware, an electrical panel is located behind the shift calendar in the kitchen area of 61. (That was a frustrating find).
- ▶ Recently, between one of the many snowstorms, Shawn's office began to have a water leak coming from the ceiling. After further investigation, it appears the cause was a large ice damn on the roof and potentially some damaged roofing. The affected drywall has since been removed from the office and electricity to this room powered off. Carpet will also be removed soon.
- ▶ Shawn is currently working from 51. Repairs on the roof area of 61 will have to wait until spring/summer when the snow has finally melted so repairs can be done properly. Thank you to the duty crew that removed the snow from the roof and side of the building.

Station 62:

- ▶ Everything appears in good shape.
- ▶ Joe and Tim did some snow removal to the front door area.

Tim is currently in the process of adding "Ring" doorbell systems to all of the District's stations. These can be monitored by the duty crew through the duty crew laptop and iPad. The reasons for this are security and ensuring the safety of those answering the door after hours.

February and March of this winter have been especially challenging for the Facilities staff as we have struggled to keep up with the weather-related demands. We have incurred weather-related damages to most of the stations over the last several storm cycles. Tim hopes that as we progress through March things will calm down.

Emergency Medical Services Division: *(Battalion Chief McNamara)*

Ambulance Billing

- Wittman Enterprises
 - Net Receipts FY 18/19 \$774,713.62
 - February Net Collections \$122,293.69
 - February fee based on 4.95% of Net Collections \$ 6,053.54

Compliance Reports

- Sierra Sacramento Valley EMS Response Time Compliance Report

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- Sierra Sacramento Valley EMS 911 Transport Provider Report
- S-SV EMS Regional EMS Focus Audit - 2019 Q1 Advanced Airways

Education and Program updates

- New Stryker Gurney deployed allowing a standardized fleet
- S-SV Regional EMS Update Training
- Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows Ski Patrol Training

Meetings

- 3/13 - After Action Review with PCSO-Boatworks Mall Shooting

Public Information: (PIO Holland)

Notable Events:

Feb. 2-5: Substantial storms with messaging for weather updates, travel conditions and hard road closures around the basin.



Feb. 5: First Tuesday Breakfast Club - Canceled due to weather. Issued press release warning of Snow Immersion Suffocation Hazards and Avalanche Dangers.

Feb. 7: Met with Tahoe Network/Placer County Network of Fire Adapted Communities to discuss their first viewing of Wilder than Wild



Feb. 8: Met with Alpine Meadows HOA to discuss the process required to reinstate their community's Fire Wise designation through the National Fire Protection Association.

Feb. 12: CERT Meeting - Scott Baumgardner presented training on Ice Rescue.

Feb. 13: Began #AdoptAHydrant2019 Campaign, pushed information on flooding, sand bags, and hazard snow.

Feb. 14: Hosted the CAL FIRE Outreach Campaign Subcommittee Meeting

Feb. 15: Substantial storms with safety messaging for holiday weekend weather updates, travel conditions and hard road closures on I-80, SR 267 and Mt. Rose Hwy.

Feb. 16: Boatworks Mall Homicide





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Feb. 19: Posted video with safety messaging showing the lack of visibility from the weekend's blizzard conditions, courtesy of Captain Hopwood. Received roughly 35,000 impressions on Twitter and 11,000 views on Facebook, and was reposted by partners such as CalTrans, CHP, PCSO, and Truckee-Tahoe Transportation District.

Feb. 21: Placer County Fire Safe Alliance Meeting (Auburn) Placer County Tree Mortality Task Force Meeting (Auburn)

Feb. 25: Issued press release on snow hazards, falling icicles, gas leaks, evacuation of Tahoe Lake Elementary due to gas leak, followed by safety messaging video filmed by PCSO on propane safety.



Feb. 26: Structure fire at Tahoma Lodge:

Feb. 26: Fire PIT Meeting (SLT)

Forest Fuels & Defensible Space: *(Fuels Coordinator Horntvedt)*

SNPLMA 16 - PTEIR: As Project Manager, I lead the charge during the RFP process. We have reviewed and selected a firm to carry out Phase II of The Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR). Following approval from Lake Valley Fire's Board, we will notify the environmental firm and begin the contracting process.

- All agencies that conduct vegetation management on the California side of Lake Tahoe will benefit from this Programmatic report as it will streamline environmental planning/permitting on commercial and noncommercial timber harvesting/fuels reduction projects. The project-by-project review process that has been used to comply with NEPA, CEQA, Fire Program Analysis (FPA), TRPA, LRWQCB, and other regulatory requirements has led to inefficiencies, delays, excess costs, and inconsistencies in project planning. We are excited to keep our momentum moving forward with this project, as completion will allow accelerated implementation of fuels reduction projects by resource managers in the Defense zone of the WUI on the California side of the basin.

SNPLMA 16 - Fire Adaptive Community (FAC) - Defensible Space Inspector (DSI) Position: Applications for the seasonal Defensible Space Inspector position are due by March 25. We will be selecting candidates shortly thereafter and Prevention staff will be conducting interviews on April 10.

SNPLMA 16 - HFR & Wildfire Prevention: I have been using available geo-database sets to identify properties that are at high risk for catastrophic wildfire and will be looking to engage these landowners and work to combine fuel reduction treatments.