



Chief's Reports

To: Board of Directors
From: Steve Simons, Fire Chief
Date: November 4, 2019

Meeks Bay/El Dorado County:

As we have discussed at the last couple of meetings, the US Forest Service is having some significant challenges with their west shore facilities. Discussions have been favorable regarding the possibility of leasing Meeks Bay Station 62 in Tahoma. Currently, we are having legal counsel review draft documents that we hope to present for consideration at the next Board meeting. Hopefully, this will allow the Forest Service to maintain an important presence on the West Shore during Fire Season.

County Supervisor Sue Novasel had to cancel the Town Hall meeting scheduled for last week, but she and I hope to schedule another one in the next few weeks.

As I sat down to write this report, I realized that it will likely be my last as Chief of Operations and Fire Chief for this fine District. I have enjoyed spending time with Chief Leighton over the last few weeks and I am honored that he chose to come work here. I believe he will be an excellent addition and will serve the District very well. Chief Leighton has an impressive background and lots of experience to draw from. He has stepped in and very quickly become part of the family.

It seems like a my career started just a few days ago, and in reality, the last 28 years have gone by very quickly. I am extremely proud of the growth and evolutions in this department and our region over the last several years, and I couldn't ask for better co-workers and colleges. All of our personnel, from the newest firefighter and fire prevention officer on up, bring the very best to work with them every day. Everyone works hard to provide the best service with the limited resources available to us. We all work hard to make a difference in other people's lives and it shows.

I really appreciate all of the opportunities afforded to me throughout my career. I have learned an incredible amount and have been truly blessed. I am proud of many of the things we have done and projects we have completed, but I also realize that there is still so much more that needs to be done. I have great confidence that all of these things that lie ahead will continue to be done in proper NTF/MBF style.

Operations:

While we have had a surprisingly light fire season throughout the west so far this year, fire season is not over yet. Currently we have two full strike teams of engines from our Operational Area assigned to the Kincaid Fire in Sonoma, and we are working on another to send to a new fire in Southern California. The District has five people assigned with an Engine and Fireline Paramedic to the Kincaid Fire and another four headed to Ventura County. These fires are being driven by strong fall winds and have caused significant damage.

Major parts of 37 northern California counties have been affected by Public Safety Power Shut-offs for the last several days. Earlier this week these power outages impacted almost 3,000,000 people. While the daylight hours are shorter and much cooler up here at the lake, we must remember that we are not out of

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danger until we have significant wetting rains. Just three years ago in mid-October, the Emerald Fire just south of Emerald Bay threatened homes in the Cascade Properties, and that same night, many homes on the west side of Washoe Valley were lost due to a fire driven by high winds ahead of a strong cold front.

As summer came to an end this last month, our call volume dropped considerably. Recently, crews were able to knock down a structure fire apparently caused by a bear break-in. Resources committed included Meeks Bay, North Tahoe, CalFire, Lake Valley, and South Lake Tahoe. Additionally, crews have been busy with fall projects such as hydrant maintenance, ladder testing, and getting our facilities and apparatus ready for winter.

Fleet/Facilities:

Mechanic Joe Parle has completed three years of outstanding service with the District and has finished course work required for the next step in his career. Joe worked on several projects and presented these projects to a promotional panel last week in a final step required for promotion to Fire Mechanic II/III. Congratulations Joe! Job well done. Now on to the seasonal tire swaps, and getting everything ready for winter. Additionally at the shop, the new controlled substance lockers are in and being installed. This should help streamline our mandatory recording and accountability. With the installation of the new lockers, the new ambulance should be going into service soon. We will then be taking an older ambulance out of service and bringing a request to the Board to surplus.

The Station 53 remodel project is still moving along. Recently, Tim has been doing much of the work himself, the tile floor installation is kind of a one person job, and it also prevents other trades from doing much until it is set. Cabinets are going in, and we are still hopeful that we will be able to move crews back in, in the next few weeks.

XTB Tahoe Basin Operational Area:

Chiefs Sommers (North Lake Tahoe Fire), Bailey (Northstar Fire), and Riley (Squaw Valley Fire) have been getting a workout filling resource requests the last few weeks as they have been covering me while I have been working on several housing-related projects off duty.

Keep up the good work! Be Nice! Be Safe!! Have Fun! And get the job Done!!

Meetings and Assignments:

- North Tahoe, Meeks Bay, and Alpine Meadows Board meetings
- El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association
- Lake Tahoe Regional Chiefs Association
- Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators
- Executive and Command staff meetings
- Meet with USFS TMU
- Fleet/Facilities meetings
- National Weather Service conference calls
- Placer County Board of Supervisors
- Placer County Short Term Rental meetings
- Placer County TOT CAP Committee
- First Tuesday Breakfast meeting
- Cover Fire Chief's vacation

North Tahoe Fire: *(Fire Chief Schwartz)*

North Tahoe Fire as an organization and a family are preparing for significant change as two of our most senior officers move into the next season of their lives. After serving their communities for nearly three



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decades, North Tahoe Fire's Division Chiefs Conradson and Simons will retire from public service on November 22 and December 1, respectively. To ensure continuity of leadership to our personnel and continuity of services to our customers, my primary focus has been on succession plan implementations. Hence, a series of personnel decisions beginning in September:

- ▶ Memo # 19-42 Division Chief Simons retirement
- ▶ Memo # 19-43 Division Chief Steve Leighton appointment
- ▶ Memo # 19-48 Division Chief Conradson retirement
- ▶ Memo # 19-50 Engineer Frey appointment
- ▶ Memo # 19-52 Division Chief Steve McNamara provisional appointment
- ▶ Memo # 19-53 Battalion Chief Scott Sedgwick provisional appointment
- ▶ Memo # 19-54 Captain Paul Moen provisional appointment
- ▶ Memo # 19-55 Engineer Paramedic Clyde Rust reinstatement.

In addition to the personnel memorandums related to attrition above, I approved several more employment actions this past month:

- ▶ Memo # 19-57 Fire Prevention Officer Talina Sky appointment
- ▶ Memo # 19-59 Firefighter Paramedic Gustafson qualified to work out of class as an Engineer
- ▶ Memo # 19-60 Firefighter Rau qualified to work out of class as an Engineer
- ▶ Memo # 19-63 Mechanic II/III Joe Parle appointment
- ▶ Memo# 19-64 Fire Prevention Officer II David Rodriguez appointment

Please join me in congratulating all these folks for accomplishing these milestones in their careers and for their personal contributions to the District ongoing mission success.

Fire Responses: Until now, the 2019 Fire Season has been generally less voracious than 2017 and 2018, with fewer out-of-county responses. National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Predictive Services has continued to forecast a later than normal fire season, continuing into November and December. This past month, we have had a few out-of-area overhead assignments including Engineer/Paramedic Scott Worl's assignment as a Fire Line Medic to the Caples Incident. However, as I'm writing this report, the District is sending NTF Brush 54 along with 14 other Lake Tahoe Basin Regional resources to assist CalFire at the Kincade Incident in Sonoma, California, as this fire has double in size in the past two days and the valley areas are under both a Red Flag Warning and a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS).

Local fire activity has been moderate. Cooler temperatures, shorter days, and increasing humidity have kept local fire danger adjective ratings moderate. However, we see a seasonal increase of structure fires as people fire up their heating appliances. The District recommends that homeowners have their appliances checked regularly, chimneys cleaned at least annually, and that all vents remain unobstructed. Last week the Districts responded to a structure fire in the Meeks Bay area. The first arriving units (Engine 61 and Medic 61) made a rapid offensive interior attack keeping the fire to the room of origin. While the fire is still under investigation, there were reports of heavy bear activities in the area. Homeowners in bear-prone areas need to make sure their homes are properly secured and trash is stored correctly.

There exists a small sub-season to fall within the Tahoe Basin known mostly to firefighters and foresters as "burn-season". Burn season is that sliver of time after our first snow fall and before winter really sets in. Characteristics of burn season include shorter days, cooler temperatures, increased humidity levels, some

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moisture or snow on the ground, and, yes; the smell of smoke in the air. CAL FIRE has **NOT** yet lifted our area's Burn Ban. It is likely that it will be lifted some time in November, which allows homeowners to obtain a burn permit and, under safe conditions, burn allowable forest debris, including pine needles and small slash. People wishing to obtain permits or to burn with existing permits should check the Districts' websites and social media outlets. Professional land management agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, California and Nevada state parks, and lands within the local fire districts around the lake have begun pile burning and prescribed fire treatments. These prescribed understory burns are essential to our forest's health, and when conducted within Wildland Urban Interface zones, reduces our community's susceptibility to a catastrophic wildfire. Time and again as wildfires burn into treated areas, they lay down and become more extinguishable. Local examples include the 2016 Emerald Fire and the 2007 Washoe and Angora Fires.

Smoke in the air. For many of us the smell of smoke in the air raises angst over our personal susceptibility to wildfires within our community made worse, of course, coming on the heels of the wind-driven fire storms of October. To assist you with identifying prescribed fire activities, local fire cooperators place roadside signage during prescribed fire activities and post these activities on a single public web site: Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team. Residents with health concerns related to smoke and who wish to be advised of prevention activities planned in their neighborhoods can also register at this same site. Regardless, if you have concerns or see specific smoke or fires, call 9-1-1 and report it. The District has materials available to assist residents and visitors prepare for wildfires and evacuations. Concern about evacuations continues to be a topic of great interest within the community. While evacuation is primarily the Sheriff's Office's jurisdictional issue, the Fire District continues to be an involved partner with the county. Improving our evacuation plans is a continuing process but also requires some personal responsibility. The steps necessary for people to prepare are available on our website and Cal Fire's Ready-for-wildfire web page.

Three separate public safety issues have recently arisen: short-term rental inspections, tourism impacts on fire service delivery, and the need for enhanced marine-based fire and hazmat capabilities in support of marine-based pyrotechnical displays. While each of these are separate issues, they are intertwined as they effect the safety and emergency services provided to our citizens, visitors within Placer County. I would like to thank Supervisor Gustafson for taking a lead role for the county on these issues and bringing together the best team to work through these concerns with the District's Executive Team. I have had several good meetings with stakeholders with more scheduled soon. I will update the Board on these issues during our Board meeting and will continue to do so until they are resolved.

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

Program Updates:

- ▶ Transition from Chief Conradson complete 10/29/19
- ▶ On going stakeholder meetings (CATT, Water purveyors, TTUSD)
- ▶ Short term rental inspections
- ▶ Alternate means of protection document
- ▶ TTUSD Facilities
- ▶ Third party plan review & consulting
- ▶ Assembly Bill 68 and Senate Bill 13 - Accessory Dwelling Units
- ▶ California Solar Mandate



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Staff Changes:

- ▶ David Rodriguez promoted to Fire Prevention Officer II
- ▶ Talina Sky promoted to Fire Prevention Officer I
- ▶ Chris McMaster's last day 11/22/19

Compliance Reports:

- ▶ AB 1205/Company Inspections

Meetings:

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| ▶ 10/15 | Tahoe Network Fire Adapted Communities | South Lake Tahoe, CA |
| ▶ 10/17 | El Dorado County Fire Prevention Officers | Diamond Springs, CA |
| ▶ 10/21 | CATT Local Government Affairs Committee | Truckee, CA |
| ▶ 10/31 | TTUSD Facilities Meeting | Truckee, CA |

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



Over the last two months, we have had a lot of things happening in Training. We hosted a three-week Engineers Academy. The academy took place in Carson City. We had seven firefighters that participated in the academy. I would like to congratulate Firefighters Gustafson and Rau for completing the requirements to work out of class as Engineers. All of our Engineers helped with the academy. I would like to thank Captains Beatie and Moen for being the lead instructors for the Engineers Academy.

Currently, we are working with the school district in providing CPR classes for District employees. We hosted two classes for employees over the last two months. We will be hosting another set of classes in the Spring of 2020. In addition, Engineer Gilley will be providing infrequent skills training this November.

The annual bloodborne pathogens class is set for November. In addition to the class, we will offer TB testing and an option for personnel to get their flu shot. The flu shot is open to all personnel.

Engineers Meadows and Perhacs will be going around to each shift to provide a Low Angle Rope Rescue Operations (LARRO) refresher class.

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

Our Station 53 remodel project has been in progress for several months now and the end is in sight. The following items are in progress or will be in the coming weeks: kitchen cabinet installation, countertops, finish plumbing trim, tile grout, trim and baseboard paint, carpet installation, appliance installation, two small concrete repairs, finish lighting, install shower doors, radio and IT installations. Next year, we will be looking to paint the exterior. We are in the home stretch! In the meantime, the Facilities Division continues

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to address repair and maintenance needs throughout the District. We are also preparing for winter maintenance projects and snow removal needs.

As a result of the priority-driven budget process for this fiscal year, we have been able to move forward with the purchase of two replacement Firefighter Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) packs to begin the process of replacing our aging inventory of RIC Packs carried on each Type One Engine in the District. Each pack costs approximately \$2,500 and has a service life of 15 years. In addition, we are able to purchase two spare SCBA bottles to better inventory the District with an adequate supply of bottles. In recent years, we have had less than an adequate supply of extra bottles in inventory to meet the needs of incidents.

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

It is an honor to be your new A Shift Battalion Chief of EMS. We are all fortunate that Chief McNamara, and Chief Conradson before him, built such a strong EMS program. I look forward to the challenge of continuing their work.

Last month, most of my attention was focused on A shift Firefighters, Engineers, and Captains. Although my EMS responsibilities are integral to North Tahoe Fire, my first priority is to our station crews. Making sure we are a hard-working, effective, safe, and cohesive team is my priority.

One of the projects EMS has been working on is replacing our controlled substance security and accountability procedures. We have purchased new NarcBoxes that will be installed in our ALS transporting and non-transporting apparatus. These will allow real-time monitoring of storage, administration, inventory control, and tracking of our controlled substances. We hope to have these installed and everyone trained on our new system by the end of this week.

You may recall from the September meeting the discussion about the Stryker Power Gurneys. We expect these to be delivered the week of November 18. I look forward to demonstrating these to you during our December meeting.

Public Information: *(PIO Holland)*

Notable Events:

September and October continued to be busy months for prevention and outreach activities. We continued outreach efforts with HOAs, hosted a Kings Beach Block Party with Tahoe Resource Conservation District (RCD) and our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and held a Spanish-speaking outreach event at the Boys and Girls Club with Tahoe RCD and Placer County Sheriff. We held assemblies with the schools for Fire Prevention Week, and hosted a number of station tours.

TRPA rolled out a plan to leverage residential allotments in order to incentivize the counties in the Basin to create ordinances to manage the complaints and compatibility issues resulting from Short-Term Rentals (STRs). Over 60% of the STRs in all of Placer County are in our service area, so I've attended a whirlwind of meetings at TRPA, Placer County Townhall meetings, and meetings with County staff to ensure our interests are heard. The public has been very vocal and passionate about the issue, and the County will be bringing a draft ordinance to the Placer BOS meeting on November 5.



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North Tahoe Resort Association held a number of townhalls and other presentations with the introduction of a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), which would levy an assessment on all tourism-related businesses in the area. The assessments will be used to fund the Resort Association's contract, with a focus on increasing tourism during the shoulder seasons. I spoke at every presentation and townhall to request that fire receive a portion of any new tax or assessment related to tourism to offset its impacts. We have been shut out of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) funding because safety isn't in the County's Tourism Master Plan, so we continue to pursue access to TBID funding.

We are working on another round of TOT grant applications. With the suspension on marine-based pyrotechnic displays after the Labor Day Fireworks fire, we've received quite a bit of support from the public for TOT to fund a fire boat. Applications are due this week, and recommendations are expected to be made by the end of the year.

Special Events:

- Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows Evacuation Drills
- 9/11 Bell Ceremony
- Fire Prevention Week
- Lake Tahoe TV Interviews
- TNFAC Neighborhood Leader Orientation
- KB Spanish Speaking Outreach
- Tahoe City Rotary
- Annual Pre-Winter OES Meeting
- National EMS Memorial Bike Ride



Community Meetings and Events:

- King's Beach Block Party
- STR Ordinance Townhall
- El Dorado County Townhall - Novasel
- NTPUD Utility Rate Open House
- Dollar Point Wildfire Committee
- Chateaux Chamonix HOA
- Carnelian Woods HOA
- River Run Condo HOA
- Kings Run HOA



Meetings Attended:

- Multiple TBID Townhalls
- Coffee with Supervisor Gustafson
- TRPA Meetings - STR Ordinance
- Placer County BOS Meetings
- Placer County Firesafe Alliance
- Fire Public Information Team (Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team)
- Capital Projects Advisory Committee



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North Tahoe Municipal Advisory Council
Alpine Meadows Firewise Assessment
First Tuesday Breakfast Club
TFFT Subgrant Committee on Outreach
CERT



Forest Fuels: (Coordinator Horntvedt)

SNPLMA 16 - TNFAC:

Talina Sky and Chris McMaster are still out in the neighborhoods performing Defensible Space Inspections, giving our community members education on how to make their property ready for fire, education on ember ignition, home hardening, and emergency preparedness.

- ▶ 2250+ Defensible Space Inspections completed this Season (2300+ Prevention Total)
- ▶ 800+ Requests for Free Curbside Chipping this Season (chipping closed October 12th)
- ▶ Community Outreach - Promoting Firewise Communities - Kings Beach outreach block party and Spanish event

FEMA - HFR on CTC Lots:

Phase II is under contract and will treat 281 parcels for a total of 51.82 acres from HWY 267 to Tahoe City. Contractor will begin this fall and finish Phase II in the spring.

SNPLMA 16 - PTEIR:

Ascent Environmental, Inc. (Ascent) was selected as the Phase II contractor for the Lake Tahoe PTEIR. We are excited to continue the momentum from Phase I, which generated the PTEIR Strategy Report, into Phase II with Ascent as they develop a draft and final PTEIR. Ascent submitted an Admin Draft PTEIR to the core



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team, and the core team will be reviewing and providing comments over the next month to incorporate prior to submitting the Admin Draft to the public for public comment.

- ▶ 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, 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 - HFR & Wildfire Prevention:

I have been using available geodatabase sets to identify landowners that are at high risk for catastrophic wildfire and will be looking to engage these landowners for implementation of fuel reduction treatments. I have met onsite with Tamarack Mutual Water Co. representatives to propose implementing a 700-1000' shaded fuel break along Hwy. 89 uphill of the "Ring Roads". The current approach is to engage CTC, Tamarack, Rubicon, and a few other adjoining property owners in order to implement an all-ownership fuel break that would tie in to previously treated USFS lands.

SNPLMA 15 - CWPP Implementation:

NLTFPD's Rifle Peak hand crew began performing hand-thin and pile style treatment in mid-June and has completed 70 acres of initial entry hand-thin work. NTPUD's 55-acre Gentry property that is north of Hwy. 267 in Tahoe Vista is completed, and the crew is continuing their hand-thin work through the remainder of this season within the North Tahoe Regional Park.

