

ROSCOE, THE FIRE
DOG'S SAFETY
TIP OF THE DAY:

Woof! Hey, there neighbors.

I know you love your fireplaces and woodstoves in the winter. But do you know how to safely dispose of the ashes when you clean them out?

ALWAYS put them in non-flammable containers such as a covered metal pail, trash can or barrel. **NEVER** use plastic, cardboard, or paper containers, even if you think your ashes are cold. **NEVER** store them inside or on a flammable surface, such as a wooden deck. Take them to the Transfer Station (aka the dump) and put into the dumpster provided there specially for that purpose.

Woof! Woof! Woof!

Thank you for staying fire safe and keeping our town and mountain so beautiful for all to enjoy!



ISSUE 2

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, 2014

Idyllwild Fire Department News

Published Quarterly, Not Taxpayer Funded

Idyllwild Fire Dept Says "Thank you!"

The appreciation and strong support of Hill communities for the Idyllwild Fire Department was in evidence on Sunday July 20th, when hundreds of locals and visitors to the Hill showed up for an Open House at the fire station. The event recognized the 1-Year Anniversary of the Mountain Fire and to honor the donors and sponsors who are making a major remodel of the Idyllwild fire station possible.

Members of the **Rotary Club** grilled hot dogs and the **Rotary Anns** supplied desserts. Adding to the welcoming feast were area restaurants **Café Aroma, The Gastro-nome, La Casita, Mountain Center Café and Mile High Café**. Musicians **John King, Elaine Latimer and Bill Shepherd** provided the music.

A Very Special Thank You to Sheila Zacker. Sheila is a local real estate broker with Idyllwild Realty. While working the phones during the Mountain Fire, she saw firsthand the many deficiencies in the Fire Station building. More

importantly, she decided to do something about it. Sheila took the bull by the horns and raised donations, twisted vendors arms, pleaded for volunteers and saw completion of the 1st phase of the remodel project in a year. All this while continuing to run her Real Estate business and serve her clients. Sheila fits the mold of the many dedicated volunteers in this community and proves that **one person, with a can do attitude, can make a difference.**

The open house marked completion of Phase I which included an entirely new kitchen, new flooring, new beds in the dorm and more. Donations came from both locally and off the Hill and included materials and labor. Idyllwild personnel supplied the rest of the work during both their duty time and personal time off. Generous contributions from local residents have provided an important donation fund to keep the project moving. Work has been done to beautify the front of the building by the **Idyllwild Garden Club and Lily Rock Nursery.**

By their attendance at the July

Open House, Idyllwild folks and those from neighboring communities showed their appreciation for the **heroic efforts of all firefighters**, including those from Idyllwild Fire, Riverside County, the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies, who worked relentlessly to limit the damage to the mountain and literally saved Idyllwild from disaster in July, 2013. Firefighters from agencies involved in the efforts attended the gathering, along with **Riverside County Third District Supervisor Jeff Stone.**

Since Sheila Zacker began her campaign for donations, \$37,000 was raised for the first phase of the remodel. Donations are now being accepted for Phase II of the work, which will address woeful inadequacies in the rest of the living quarters for crews, renovation of the front office and Chief's office. Every dollar counts and is much appreciated. Two small firefighter boots sit on the front counter collecting donations from people who drop in to say, **"Thank you!"** and **"Well done!"** to the Idyllwild Fire Department personnel.



Hundreds turn out to show their appreciation to IFPD and other emergency personnel.

Idyllwild Fire, USFS, and CalFire/Riverside Co Fire personnel. In center, Idyllwild Fire Chief Patrick Reitz and Sheila Zacker.





Do you know the acronym, P-A-S-S? If not, better read what Roscoe has to say.

Roscoe, The Fire Dog, Speaks

My boss, Idyllwild Fire Chief Patrick Reitz, says everyone in his District needs to know how to use a fire extinguisher. I agree. So, here's what he told me to tell you.

First, buy good quality ABC extinguishers. Those little cheapies that you can buy for a couple bucks won't do you much good if you really need to put out a typical, small household fire.

Second, mount the extinguishers in locations away

from the direct heat/fire source and near an exit door. Having one on the wall near your bedroom door isn't a bad idea, either.

Third, know how to use it!

The list to the right describes the basic principles of smart fire extinguisher use. For more information you can call the fire station to find out when the next class on Small Fire Safety and Suppression will be held, then sign up for it and come.

P - Pull the safety pin out

A - Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire, NOT the top

S - Squeeze the trigger to release the agent

S - Sweep the nozzle back and forth across the base of the fire.

DON'T turn your back on the fire. Slowly and carefully back away, watching to be sure it is out.

LEARN NOT TO BURN!

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ & ¢¢¢¢¢ (Dollars & Sense) by Nancy Layton, IFPD Commission Treasurer

IFPD Commission Treasurer, Nancy Layton, reviews the financial progress to date.



Folks in our Communities care about the fiscal soundness of the District. People in and around Idyllwild want the Idyllwild Fire Department to remain a vital force for safety and have shown overwhelming support for the work we're doing to keep it that way. Here's my update.

I recently attended the CSDA (California Small District Association) State Conference in Palm Springs. During one breakout session, I was quite surprised to learn that our Board action last March appointing two members of the Community at Large and an Alternate to serve as members of the Standing Finance Committee is quite unusual for Special Districts. Seems including community members in such a committee is simply not frequently done. In response to questions from other session attendees about this, I had only good things to say about the inclusion of our three Committee members, Chris Davis, Sue Weisbart, and alternate, Calvin Gogerty. They each bring a different life and work experience and valuable perspective to bear on the work of the Committee.

As to our current financial position, we are in much better shape than when I first was hired as the District Bookkeeper in February, 2011. That year we needed an advance on our Property Tax payments of \$450,000. In 2012 we reduced that to \$425,000 and our 2013 request dropped to \$400,000. This year we only needed to ask for an advance of \$300,000, confident that our other revenues and control of expenditures during the first 5-6 months of the 2014-2015 year would carry us through until we receive our first large tax payment in December. These advances are very normal for entities that rely on Property Taxes for a major portion of their revenue streams, since counties typically don't start issuing payments to the various entities within their jurisdictions until about mid-year.

Our 2014-2015 budget is in place. Staff provided a Preliminary Budget in May, which the Board accepted and directed the Finance Committee to go to work to refine it. We put in hours of work in Committee meetings and doing our own homework, including going back to staff for additional information and opinions, to produce a Budget we could confidently recommend to the full Board for approval as a Final Budget for 2014-2015. Required by law to have a Final Budget in place by the end of September, the Board unanimously passed the District's Budget at our September 9th meeting.

An ad hoc subcommittee is working on researching best options for refinancing two existing long-term debts and funding a series of major purchases over the next 2-3 years, starting with a new ambulance. The vast majority of our emergency calls are medical and

(Continued on page 4)

9-1-1

Who Do You Call? by Fire Chief Patrick Reitz

When you have an emergency, who do you call?

The only number you should be calling is **9-1-1!** Calling any other number just delays getting the help you need.

Why shouldn't you go to the Fire Station if you're having medical emergency or need to report another kind of emergency?

While the Idyllwild Fire Station is staffed 24-hours a day, 365 days a year, it is possible that the personnel are not in the station to answer the phone or door at the moment you call or go there. If so, you now have to make another phone call or pick up the emergency phone at the front of the fire station and wait additional time for the units to be dispatched. Minutes count! **Moments count!**

IFPD cares about you, your health and well-being.

If you are reporting an emergency – call 9-1-1!!

Can We Find You? by all the IFPD responders

Now that you have **called 9-1-1 for an emergency**, can the responders find you?

Do you have your address posted at the street? Can it be seen from a distance? From both directions? At night?

If you share a driveway, do you have your address at the street and directly in front of the house – yes, that means two (2) address signs. While legally, you are required to have an address sign that is of contrasting colors and posted on the structure, the best way to assure you will be found by responders in the fastest possible way is to have a reflective address sign posted at the road at the end of the driveway. Emergencies happen day or night and in all kinds of weather. Think about how dark night is here on the Hill. Most of our streets are not lit by street lights and most homes don't have lighted address signs visible from the street. Your reflective sign(s) may save your life or that of your loved one some dark night.

Maybe you have seen the reflective green and white or brown and white address signs around the Hill and wondered where to get them? You can order them through the Idyllwild Fire Department. They are made of sign-grade aluminum & meet DOT standards for reflectivity. The Volunteer Fire Company numbers them, it takes about two (2) weeks to get them back to you and costs \$20 or \$25 depending on the style you order. These signs are available to residents and non-residents.

If you don't have one, **please** consider ordering one soon. **Help us find you!**

KNOX-Box Access by the IFPD Fire Marshall

The District promotes the Knox-Box controlled key access system. What does this mean to you? It means that for the cost of the lock box, pad lock or key switch, the fire department will be able to access your gate and/or building without damaging or destroying whatever it is we need to get through at the time – if you are not able or available to let us in. This is particularly good if you are an absentee property owner, maintain locked gates, or may be physically unable to allow us access. It is safer than leaving a key under the mat, virtually tamper-proof, and cheap insurance. It is also for **emergency use only by the Fire District!**

More details & applications are available by contacting the Fire District office (951-659-2153).

IDYLLWILD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

STATION LOCATED AT: 54160 Maranatha Dr,
MAILING ADDRESS: PO Box 656
Idyllwild, CA 92549-0656

EMERGENCIES: CALL 9-1-1

BUSINESS OFFICE: 951-659-2153

CHIEF Patrick Reitz: chief@idyllwildfire.com

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Sherry Edwards:
sherry@idyllwildfire.com

WEBSITE: www.idyllwildfire.com

Idyllwild Fire Protection District is a California Special District, governed by a Board of (5) five elected Commissioners. The Commission meets monthly, usually on the 4th Tuesday at 1:00pm in the Training/Conference Room at the Idyllwild Fire Station. The Standing Finance Committee regularly meets on the 3rd Tuesday at 2:00 PM at the Fire Station. The agenda for both the Commission and Standing Committees' regular meetings are posted on the bulletin board just outside the front door of the Fire Station. The public is welcome at these meetings to listen and learn about the managements of your local Fire Department and offer brief comments on the proceedings.

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since our constituents have supported the continuing ambulance transport service we provide, having safe, reliable medical transport equipment is paramount. Staff have provided technical guidelines and priorities for these purchases and we're doing the legwork to find financing that the Finance Committee can recommend to the Board. Good, low interest loans and leases are available from several sources serving Special Districts throughout California and we're talking to all of them to determine best terms available to us.

We believe we'll have a preliminary report to bring to the Board at the October Board meeting on the 28th, showing the priorities and projected costs and timelines for this financing project. The subcommittee still has a bit of research work to do to bring that to fruition, but we're close. I, myself, had the opportunity to talk with several financing reps while at the CSDA Conference and have passed those contacts on to the subcommittee members, Calvin Gogerty and Sue Weisbart.

Chief Reitz tells me that we're moving forward with testing and interviewing for the open staff positions. We've been utilizing Reserves. Limited Term staff, and existing Career personnel working in Acting capacities to fill the gaps, but we now need to make more permanent staffing changes. The good news in all of this is that we appear to be right on target with our overall personnel costs. These new hires, which were already part of the budget calculation provided to the Board in the preliminary 2014-2015 budget.

Come to our Commission and Finance Committee meetings to learn more about how we plan to spend your tax dollars!

Board of Commissioners meets 4th Tuesday, 1:00 PM, IFPD Training/Conference Room

Standing Finance Committee meeting 3rd Tuesday, 2:00 PM, IFPD Training/Conference Room



And, lastly, from The Chief...

- | In our small community, gossip, rumors, statements taken out of context, and mis-information abound.
- | This newsletter provides official information from the District, as does the District's web site. If you want to see and hear for yourself what's being discussed, attend the District Board meetings, or call me or come into the District office. The Board, including any Standing Committees, conducts its business in public. These meetings are open to all.
- | You can come into the office and request a copy of our current budget or our response to the latest Grand Jury Report. Reasonable Public Records Requests are always welcome. Minutes or documents from a previous Board meeting? No problem!
- | My job is to ensure that you, our constituents, get the truth about what your Fire District is doing, especially when it comes to spending your tax dollars. I take that responsibility seriously!

IFPD's Organizational Structure

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS - elected bi-annually. Sets policy and oversees the work of the Fire Chief.

FIRE CHIEF - supervises the work of the personnel and implements policy as established by the Board. In charge of Operations for the District.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - Chief's Assistant, Board Recording Secretary, responsible for overall administrative work of the District.

SHIFT CAPTAINS - supervise the work, including training, of their respective crews. Responsible for all emergency call responses and medical transports. At IFPD Shift Captains must be paramedics.

CAREER ENGINEERS & FIREFIGHTERS - responsible for all emergency call responses, equipment maintenance, training appropriate to their position. Many of IFPD's line personnel are also paramedics.

RESERVES - at least one Reserve works each shift, to make a full 4-person crew. Reserves are paid on a per-shift basis and have the same responsibilities as their Career counterparts. The Reserves comprise a pool of known potential candidates who are welcome to apply and test for open Career positions.

VOLUNTEERS - Both the Idyllwild Volunteer Fire Company and the IFPD Auxiliary volunteers support the District with various projects, including emergency personnel and phone coverage, administrative assistance, and fundraising events.

"We treat every day as if we're in a campaign."
- Chief Patrick Reitz, as stated to IFPD personnel.

View From The Top by Jerry Buchanan, IFPD Commission President

As a commissioner I am frequently asked, where do our dollars go and are they wasted?

I will attempt to answer the question this way. Our property tax revenues and the other income we receive along with the District's expenditures are closely monitored and independently audited every year. The money is spent to serve and protect the residents of the District and surrounding communities. The costs seem high because you need and pay for protection 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Fire Station is staffed so that when you make a call day or night IFPD can and will respond with excellent times. Our staffing is set so that while we are responding to your call we also have the ability to respond to another call. This really becomes a big deal when you are the second or third call.

Through August of this year we have responded to 512 requests for service. Only 13 of those calls were for actual fires, 442 were medical re-

sponses and 260 of those were transported to 11 different hospitals with the majority going to Hemet or Eisenhower. Of the 442 people treated, 230 came from Idyllwild, 34 from Pine Cove, 118 were visitors, and 60 were Undetermined. Those 118 visitors could have been your friends and relatives up for the weekend or customers frequenting your business.

We bill for medical treatments and ambulance rides, however, because many of those who are treated and transported do not have any insurance and no ability to pay or are on plans such as Medicare or MediCal that seriously discount their reimbursement rates *the District collects only about 40% of the cost of the services provided.*

These services cost nearly \$1.8 million of which \$1.2 million will come from our taxes. The rest comes from charges for services, which includes \$179,000 from the County and CSA 38 for ambulance services for Pine Cove and the nearby area. Because we provide services (as opposed to a product), nearly 78% of this budget (\$1.3 million) will go for salaries

and benefits for our 9 career firefighters/paramedics, the Chief and a part-time administrative assistant. The rest (22%) goes to pay for equipment, maintenance and supplies.

Yes, it's a lot of money. However, it's the least expensive option for the services provided, as compared to many other fire departments. The firefighters gave back 9% of their salary two years ago and have still not seen any of it returned. Salary surveys show that we are among the lowest paying departments in the area.

The good news for you is that even through the tough times the District has experienced, you continue to be served by professional, competent crews who provide the highest quality service available. We Commissioners and the personnel of the Department all work hard to spend the tax dollars we receive wisely. **We invite you to participate in our monthly Commission meetings and learn for yourself**

Introducing...

...Firefighter/Paramedic Greg Minor. Greg has served as a crew member with Idyllwild Fire for eight years. He started as a Reserve for a year, then as a Limited Term (LT) firefighter, then was hired as a Career Firefighter. But Greg's burning desire to be a firefighter goes all the way back to Kindergarten. In his later school years, he worked with the Santa Fe Springs Explorers.

Greg's ties to Idyllwild go back to his childhood, as well. His family had a second home here and he spent long summer days here learning to love mountain life. It bothers him when he hears people say they think that because he and other firefighters who don't live here in town they are just in it for a job. Greg cites his family ties here and his conviction that his work as a paramedic is the most important thing he can be doing, career-wise, with his life. "I can give a lot more as a paramedic. You have to constantly be thinking 'what's best for this person?' You have to ask that question every time."

Greg has served in the Idyllwild Fire Department under six different Chiefs. He has experienced a lot of change within the department. He holds fast to his conviction that his judgment calls must be based on "how I'd want to be treated, how I'd want my family member to be treated, and how I've been taught to treat people. At the end of the day, it's not about how much I'm paid, it's about how I feel about the job I'm doing."

For that little boy who dreamed about someday being a firefighter, has he realized that dream? "Definitely, yes." And, now he dreams about "being a fire chief someday."



Firefighter/paramedic Greg Minor



Duncan Bravo (center) along with his mother, Frederica Fernando (right) recently stopped into the Fire Station to thank all those who helped save Duncan from his Sudden Cardiac Arrest while filming an advertisement in the area in February. Immediate, high quality CPR from bystanders coupled with a rapid EMS response and ambulance transport to the hospital are credited with saving Duncan's life. Both Duncan and his mother, Frederica encourage everyone to learn CPR – it works!

PSRT STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EODM Retail

*****ECRWSS****
Local
Postal Customer



Here comes the material from Lowes



Staff worked on installing new cabinets and other items as they had time on & off duty.



New flooring going down (L) and new washer / dryer going in (R).

The bay was full of people at the July Open House.

