



Chief's Report

To: Board of Directors
From: Michael Schwartz, Fire Chief
Date: February 14, 2020

Unseasonably dry and warm weather persisted throughout the month of January, leaving a diminishing snow pack, especially below 8000 feet. While we are just halfway through winter, long-term forecasts show a continued dry pattern which leads to concerns of another early and long fire season. This past weekend we saw fire restrictions being implemented along the Western slope of the Sierra.

In January I was elected by my peers to serve as the Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association President for 2020. My regional focus during this term is to shore-up the Aid to Fire Agreement, the 1955' federal act upon which all of our interstate mutual aid agreements are based. In 2019 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest service developed differing interpretations of this agreement which is now interfering with how we cooperate across state boundaries, and locally on the Sierra Front, and our ability to participate on federal Incident Management Teams.

Both District audits are now complete and have been sent to the State Controller's office. After a fair amount of work by Shawn Crawford, the County and the two Districts have reconciled overdue payments from past months' VHR inspections.

Now that Station 53 is back open and firefighter staffing has returned to normal, the question arose; once the permanent repairs are completed at Station 61, whether Meeks Bay Business Manager, Shawn Crawford, should return to the Meeks Bay office or continue to operate out of Station 51. During the past six-plus months we leveraged many opportunities for increased efficiencies having her work at Station 51. She is a valuable member of our teams and is able to participate within our administrative team and team meetings; she has access to all six Chiefs; and is able to provide direct support to the Fire Chief. Correspondingly, she is able to get quick answers to questions and support from us as well. Since other services such as Prevention, Forest Fuels and Operations are based out of Station 51, El Dorado County residents have found it convenient to have her available as a one stop shop. Additionally, Shawn has informed the District that she will likely retire next year. We are in the process of setting up a succession plan for Shawn, with respect to her Meeks Bay Fire administrative duties and El Dorado County processes. President Miller and I met on this issue and decided, due to efficiency, customer service and team work, she should remain at Station 51. Her old office can be remodeled to support Meeks Bay Fire's records storage and as a conference room. The conference room can accommodate meeting with Meeks Bay, in El Dorado County, at a constituent or agency's request.

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Grass Valley Dispatch approached me regarding the numbers 51 and 52 sounding extremely similar to the numbers 61 and 62 when said over the radio. When apparatus, particularly 51 and 61, are both responding to emergencies, the similarities have caused confusion for dispatch and other responding equipment. After consultation with Board President Miller, and experimenting with work arounds such as “Meeks Bay” Engine Six-One, both were unacceptable to the Command Center as unallowable within in their communications plan. It’s important to remember that Grass Valley Dispatches over 60,000 calls per year for 38 agencies, and even small variations in protocol are improper. President Miller and I agreed that as a safety issue, and per Grass Valley’s request, we would consider changing station identifier numbers from 61 and 62 to 67 and 68 respectively.

This month, training included Ice-Rescue. All the crews have rotated through intensive, in-water training. Ice-Rescues pose one of our greatest, low frequency, high risk rescues.

This past year, as a result of some retirements, we have promoted a handful of new Captains and Engineers. This new group of leaders are dedicated to readiness and we have seen a noticeable increase to multicompny training which includes a focus on basic firefighting skills; our bread and butter. Following these promotions, the District has an open until filled, lateral firefighter paramedic recruitment in progress, and plans to hold an entry level firefighter recruitment in spring.

The Operations Division has been extremely busy with high-acuity calls, often times high-acuity patients are diverted to specialty care in Reno, NV, which extends our transport times. Our new staffing arrangement has allowed us to meet these increased demands. Our Medial Director Dr. Jowers has conducted several internal and external case reviews on some of these challenging calls. Both El Dorado County EMS and Sierra Sacramento Valley EMS, our two Local Emergency Medical Authorities (LEMSA), have been providing us guidance related to the spread of this new, highly contagious Novel Corona Virus. Current precautions are similar to those for other air-borne viruses and crews have recently revisited those protocols. Depending on the spread rate in the United States, we may see new dispatch protocols deployed similar to those used during the 2019 H5N1 “Bird Flu” epidemic.

With the Retirement of Battalion Chief Greg Smith, Sarah Lagano has accepted this position and is assuming many of his previous duties. However, Air Operations (UAS) have been shifted to our EMS Battalion Chief and Facilities to the Fire and Life Safety Division Chief.

Regardless of being out of building season, plans continue to come in and staff has been able to review them quickly. New project pre-development meetings have been on the rise, which leads us to believe we can expect another robust construction period. This is also the time of year when our Fire Prevention Inspectors receive their annual training and code updates. Defensible space Inspections and chipping have ceased for the winter and we released our seasonal inspector. Our Forest Fuels Coordinator remains busy planning for next year’s projects and activities. Much his focus in on the West Shore Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), Programmatic Timber Environmental



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Impact Report (PTEIR), and the Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership. These two landscape-level environmental planning documents are being developed to increase our pace and scale of treating 70,000, high-hazard acres on the West Shore as identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

Important Memorandums and Attachments:

- Memo #20-02 Engineers List
- Memo #20-03 BC Smith Retirement
- Memo #20-06 Appointment to Battalion Chief Sarah Lagano
- Memo #20-08 Appointment of Curtis Smith to Engineer
- Response reports and graphs (*will be available at the meeting*)

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

- 12/2 Maritime Museum multi-agency purchase meeting
- 1/2 El Dorado County Chief Change of Command Ceremony
- 1/7 North Lake Tahoe Resort Association (NLTRA) Breakfast Club
- 1/8 Dollar Creek Crossing Meeting
- 1/9 North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council (NTRAC) and Supervisor Gustafson
- 1/10 Alpine Springs County Water District (ASCWD) Board Meeting
- 1/13 Placer BAE Consulting group
- 1/15 Meeks Bay Fire Board Meeting
- 1/16 Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Assoc.
- 1/22 El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Assoc.
- 1/27 Grass Valley Emergency Command Center (ECC)-Dispatch Meeting
- 1/28 North Tahoe Fire Board Meeting
- 1/28 US Forest Service Meeting Re: Mutual Aid Agreements



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



Memorandum

#20-02

To: All Personnel

From: Michael Schwartz, Fire Chief

Re: 2020 Engineer List

Date: January 23, 2020

I would like to personally thank all of the candidates for their interest and participation in the recent promotional examination process for the position of Engineer. All candidates put forth a significant effort into preparing for and participating within this process and hopefully gained some insight into the position.

Please join me in congratulating the two candidates who successfully completed this process with rankings as follows:

1. Curtis Smith
2. Erik Gustafson

This promotional list may remain valid for up to two years from today's date and may be extended at the discretion of the Fire Chief. In accordance with District Rules and Regulations and the Staffing and Overtime Policy, successful candidates are eligible to Work-Out-of-Class. Please join me in congratulating them for an outstanding effort.



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



MEMORANDUM

#20-03

To: All Personnel

From: Michael Schwartz, Fire Chief

Re: Retirement of Battalion Chief Greg Smith

Date: January 24, 2020

Battalion Chief Greg Smith has informed the District of his intent to retire as of February 26, 2020. Greg started with the District as a Firefighter/EMT on February 15, 1992. During his 28-year career, he rose through the ranks. He was promoted to Captain on August 1, 1999, and then to Battalion Chief on January 7, 2017. Prior to joining North Tahoe Fire, he served with Truckee Fire from March 1989 to February 1992.

He has held many important collateral duties, which include overhead assignments, haz-mat technician/specialist, supervisor of the Safety Committee, air operations, and facilities. Greg's dedication and commitment to our District has made it a safer work environment. He is most proud of creating a state-of-the-art air operations system.

Please join me in congratulating Greg on an excellent career with the District, and wish him and his wife, Diana, all the best in his retirement.



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



Memorandum

#20-06

To: All Personnel

From: Michael Schwartz, Fire Chief

Re: Sarah Lagano – Provisional Battalion Chief Appointment

Date: February 6, 2020

Congratulations to Sarah Lagano for accepting the provisional appointment for Battalion Chief.

After careful consideration, it is my pleasure to offer Captain Lagano a provisional appointment to Battalion Chief. Sarah began her career with the District on July 21, 2007 and promoted to Captain in January 2016.

Sarah has accepted this new position effective February 15, 2020 and will be taking command of C-Shift. She will be assuming the duties and responsibilities of Safety and Logistics Chief for the District.

In accordance with District Rules and Regulations, Sections 2. 19. e. and 10.D.3, this provisional period will be subject to probation and will count as time in grade with the corresponding promotional anniversary date change. Upon successful completion of the provisional and probationary period, Sarah's new anniversary date is expected to be February 15 each year.

Please join me in welcoming and congratulating Chief Lagano!



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



Memorandum

#20-08

To: All Personnel

From: Michael Schwartz, Fire Chief

Re: Engineer – Provisional Engineer Appointment

Date: February 13, 2020

Congratulations to Curtis Smith for successful completion of all aspects of the recent promotional examination for Engineer.

After careful consideration, it is my pleasure to offer Engineer Smith a provisional appointment to Engineer, Curtis began his career with the District on January 4, 2016 having served for Mono County Paramedic Fire Rescue for nine-years. He has been working out of class as an Engineer since December 18, 2019.

Curtis has accepted this new position effective February 15, 2020 and will remain on B-Shift.

In accordance with District Rules and Regulations, Sections 2. 19. e. and 10.D.3, this provisional period will be subject to probation and will count as time in grade with the corresponding promotional anniversary date change. Upon successful completion of the provisional and probationary period, Curtis' new anniversary date is expected to be February 15 each year.

Please join me in welcoming and congratulating Engineer Smith!