



Chief's Reports

To: Board of Directors
From: Steve Simons, Fire Chief
Date: January 14, 2019

2018 Year in Review:

Unfortunately, I started out 2018 by talking about our response to the Thomas Fire which became the biggest fire in California history, and then I closed out the year discussing the Camp Fire which rapidly became the most destructive and deadliest fire in California history. North Tahoe and Meeks Bay provided as much help as we possibly could to major incidents throughout the west again this year. Our units and personnel responded to 22 Out-of-District assignments totaling roughly 250 days. Some of these assignments took us as far away as Washington and Oregon. Personnel worked very hard and learned a great deal on these assignments. The gross billings for these assignments will likely be well over \$900,000. The lessons learned will hopefully be invaluable to our personnel and our District.

We finished off what was becoming one of the driest winters on record with a near record "Miracle March" that brought almost nine feet of new snow to close out the season. The late season snow disappeared quickly, and we were headed right back into fire season. Just prior to fire season, we participated with numerous allied agencies in a very large scale, bi-state, wildland preparedness drill, testing law enforcement, fire service, emergency managers, and the community with a real time response and full-scale evacuation/shelter-in-place drill.

The District, in partnership again this year with the Sierra State Parks Foundation, presented the 50th annual 4th of July Pancake Breakfast. Once again, the Hacker Family was a huge part of the event's success.

Last year brought several new personnel to our family, including Firefighters Rice, Sacci, and Wible, as well as our new Facilities Coordinator Tim Schrader, PIO Erin Holland, and Forest Fuels Coordinator Eric Horntvedt. With all positions filled, thoughtful budgeting and good communications with our labor association, we were able to raise required firefighter staffing to a minimum of 12 personnel every day to staff our five primary stations.

We spent a lot of time this last year working with our consultants on the development and presentation of two very important studies that will help lead the Districts into the future. Both studies revealed and documented the good work everyone is doing for the communities we serve and naturally honed in on areas where we can continue to improve. One goal for this coming year is to dig in and work towards improving identified weaknesses.

Our Training, Safety, and EMS Battalion Chiefs worked hard throughout the year with their crews and overseeing all areas of responsibility. We have begun to train and equip our personnel to deal with active assailant situations hoping we will never have to use that training anywhere in our region. We have developed and implemented the region's first unmanned aerial vehicle program with full FAA approvals and certifications. We responded to almost 2,200 calls for service over the last 12 months. One hundred ninety-five (195) of those calls were in December alone, with about 80 (41%) occurring between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

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Fleet/Facilities:

An impressive amount of new and updated equipment was brought into the Districts in 2018, through successful regional grants with neighboring agencies. We were able to replace aging and outdated radios and 30-40 year old extrication tools that struggled to break through modern vehicle construction. Both of these grants totaled over a half million federal grant dollars returned to the Truckee/North Tahoe region.

Careful budget management also allowed us to replace a 27-year-old mini-pumper with a new, highly capable, brush engine. We also purchased a new ambulance to remain on a prudent replacement schedule, and up-fitted four new command rigs to finally replace some aging vehicles with well over 100,000 miles each. All vehicles and equipment that have been replaced were surplused to other very worthy agencies that will squeeze the very last bits of useful life out of them over the next few years.

Our Mechanic, Joe Parle, has done an outstanding job taking over fleet maintenance responsibilities and updating and reorganizing the shop. He and his shop assistants work together well to maintain our fleet of nearly 70 vehicles. This last fall, Facilities was able to replace the heating systems at the shop that were more than 50 years old. Next, we will hopefully paint the interior, replace flooring, and replace the well-aged front door.

At North Tahoe Fire Board direction, BC Smith, Tim Schrader, and I have been working hard to develop a plan to address long overdue improvements to Station 53 to better accommodate our full-time professional firefighters. Currently, two to three male and female firefighters work out of a one bedroom, one bathroom station with less than 700 square feet of living/working space. Our plan will hopefully nearly double that living space to about 1,200 square feet with another bedroom, bathroom, and a training/dayroom that is separate from the office/kitchen/dining area. We are looking forward to getting this project up and running as soon as possible.

XTB Tahoe Basin Operational Area:

Fire season brought several Red Flag warnings with a few reaching a new designation of "Particularly Dangerous Situations." In addition to conducting and coordinating annual Peer Review and Strike Team Leader refresher classes, we were able to send out 16 Strike Teams, approximately 25 Overhead assignments, and additional single resources. We were also able to bring some of the very first pre-positioned resources into the Basin to help cover our area during serious Red Flag Warning - PDS time periods. Fortunately, they did not need to engage during those stressful days and nights.

I would like to thank all of our personnel, the Chief, and our Boards of Directors for a great 2018, and I look forward to another great year in 2019.

Meetings and Assignments:

- North Tahoe, Meeks Bay, and Alpine Board meetings
- El Dorado County Chiefs meeting
- Executive and Command Staff meetings
- Operations Team meeting
- Fleet/Facilities meetings
- Winter Sports Injury Symposium
- Critical Incident Stress Management training
- Apparatus and equipment meetings
- Pre-Attack Plan meetings
- Homeland Security threat assessment meeting
- Station 52 Verizon Cell site project meeting



North Tahoe Fire: *(Fire Chief Schwartz)*

Mother Nature provided a great wintery backdrop for our holiday period, including a white Christmas, and our December call volume was up slightly from last year's. Our year-end total was 2182, down from our all-time high of 2536 set last year following "stormagedon." This time of the year, the District normally sees an alarming increase in structure fires. Many of these fires are avoidable, and we urge residents and visitors to exercise caution when using solid fuel heating furnaces such as wood stoves and fireplaces. No matter how cool the ashes may seem, dispose of all ashes in an appropriate metal can as they provide a latent source of fire ignition. Improperly operating heating appliances can be a source of carbon monoxide, which is a colorless, odorless, and toxic gas. Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector and smoke detectors in your home; it's smart, it's safer, it's the right thing to do; and it's the law. And don't forget to have your furnaces, chimneys, and vents checked and cleaned annually, keeping the openings free of snow, ice, and other obstructions.

As you review this month's staff reports, it will become obvious that each Division of the District has been busy. The Director and Chiefs have worked together diligently this past year to ensure we are a better, stronger, and more resilient organization that delivers value-added services effectively to our communities.

- The Operations Division is more robust and efficient as demonstrated by the latest two fire responses: Tahoe Sands and Goldstein fires.
- The Fire and Life Safety Division (Prevention Bureau) is more knowledgeable and capable to meet ever increasing demands for planning, reviews, and inspections. The Forest Fuels and Public Information team have raised the bar on D-Space, forestry, communications, and public educational programs.
- The Administrative Division has increased proficiency in all aspects of its responsibilities, providing accurate accounting to the Divisions and payroll to our personnel all while providing excellent customer service in a friendly manner, whether it be internally to personnel or externally to our community customers.
- Training has reached a new high, meeting stringent CICC standards and the regional technical rescues team which we participate has gained national recognition. This highly skilled, elite team frequently works with CHP helicopters to perform complex rescues.
- Logistics and Safety is working hard to ensure our facilities are maintained which received a boost by adding a coordinator to the team. The District's UAS program is a leader in drone utilization for public safety. It was recently awarded a Homeland Security Grant for its third drone, a larger and more specialized aircraft. Next month, this division is deploying A.L.I.C.E training to prepare for active violence. This training is directed towards workforce safety. Finally, despite many months of challenging weather last year, the District had one of our safest years on record as noted by our SDRMA zero-claims letter.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is one of our most utilized programs and has once again taken a leadership role in pre-hospital care. Recently, the EMS team worked with SSV to adopt newer and innovative treatment techniques (TXA, I-Gel Airways, Quick Clot agents) and lifesaving medications (Ketamine) into our treatment modalities. Speaking of innovation, the Information Technology (IT) team has provided us safe and reliable networks, great computers, and systems that deliver vital information right where and when it is needed. Most recently, IT moved key District personnel onto First Net, the first public safety broadband network in the country. This network promises to take public safety communications into its next generation. Their reports this month are packed full of these and many other exciting and innovative achievements.
- Safety, Facilities, and IT are all aware of the various and constant threats to the Districts' physical and virtual assets. Following some recent events, they continue to evaluate our defenses and bolstered the Districts' resiliency.

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2018 has been a great year for North Tahoe Fire and Meeks Bay Fire, and we are ending the year stronger than ever. As we approach the new year, it's a good time to look back over the last 12 months and take stock of some of our successes. In October of 2017, we responded to, and were dismayed, by the devastation that the Tubbs-Atlas and Nuns fires left in Napa Sonoma County and Santa Rosa. Then in December, we responded to the Thomas Fire in Ventura County which became the state's largest wildfire. Unfortunately, the November 2018, Camp Fire, exceeded the Thomas Fire to become the state's worst wildfire in history. We sent a record number of engines and overhead personnel to the Camp Fire all the while keeping our fire stations staffed and communities safe. This would not have been possible without support from everyone. This includes support from our Boards of Directors, Operations, Prevention, Administration, CERT, Fleet, and facilities. For the last several years, each fire season has exceeded the previous in terms of length, severity, and loss of property and lives. I am proud of our selfless responses to these state disasters and have tried to do my part as well. We will need to continue to work within our communities, planning and forestry branches, legislative leaders, and with our state and federal fire partners in order to change this awful tide of tragedies before it strikes closer to home.

2018 came with many successes to celebrate, accomplishments worth noting, and certainly losses to mourn:

- The Districts' selfless response to the Camp Fire as noted above.
- NTF and MBF responded with engines or overhead personnel to 12 out-of-county fires.
- Supported two OES pre-positioned strike teams.
- Staffed a Cal FIRE NEU station in support of the August cover assignments.
- Two new lateral Firefighter Paramedics, Michael Sacci and Brett Wible, joined the family.
- The District hired its first full-time Facilities Coordinator, Dan Goddard, who later moved on; however, in his place Tim Schrader assumed the Facilities Coordinator position and is doing a terrific job. We are pleased to have him join us as well.
- Two of our most dedicated and beloved firefighters chose 2018 as their last year serving within our ranks; Rick Armas served since 1976 and Rick Schnoor since 1986.
- Some of our other family members have also moved on this past year, Beth Kenna left for the Nevada Division of Wildlife and Mike Vollmer to the Nevada Division of Forestry. Every one of these folks touched our organization, and we are a better organization because of them.
- To fill these two positions, we were fortunate to have two exceptional people join our team.
 - Public Information Officer Erin Holland; and
 - Forest Fuel Coordinator Eric Horntvedt.
- The Districts completed two large studies this year and continue to finish our Strategic planning:
 - Standard of Coverage (SOC); and
 - Performance Review and Examination of Alternative Governance Models.
- We successfully closed out our FEMA SAFER grants which enabled us to reach our current staffing levels.
- The District was a recipient of a FEMA AFG grant for new e-powered extrication equipment.
- We also successfully passed five-year Mitigation fee studies for North Tahoe and Alpine Meadows.
- We passed a balanced budget and are nearing completion of our annual audit.
- Our out-sourced A/P Clerk Beth Miller retired, and we have brought this important function in-house.
- We completed IBN with a five-year contract between the District and the NTPFA.
- The fire service had a successful legislative year which included D-RISK funding for pre-positioned strike teams.
- The District took delivery of several new apparatus: a Dodge\Braun Ambulance, HME Type III Brush Engine, and two Command vehicles.
- Our aviation, UAS-drone program, took to full flight this year with many newly-trained pilots and several deployments.



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- The Regional rope-rescue team ramped up its training and had many deployments and successful rescues deploying from CHP helicopters and stand-alone.
- The District's EMS Division added cutting-edge treatments (TXA, Pelvic Binders, I-Gel airways, Clotting factors etc.), piloting programs, and leading the industry.
- Prevention reviewed and completed a record number of plan checks and inspections closing out our busiest building season on record.
- The District co-hosted with North Lake Tahoe Fire a very successful bi-state evacuation drill in Brockway (CA), and Crystal Bay (NV).
- Utilizing a combination of tactics including rapid response plans of closest forces suppression resources, District codes, ordinances, fire restrictions, D-Space inspections, forestry work, and Red-Flag staffing patterns, we were able to keep our communities safe throughout this fire season. It takes a whole organization and a region working together to keep our communities safe.
- Engineer Telfer received the Sierra Sun's Gold award for Best Firefighter.
- Director Russ Potts received the Sierra Sun's Bronze award for Best Elected Official; appropriate as he retired after 27 years of selfless service.
- In August, 2018, the District co-hosted and participated in the funeral for Fire Chief Duane Whitelaw (ret.). Once again, our amazing staff rose to this somber occasion to produce a flawless memorial honoring Chief Whitelaw (ret.) and his family.

As previously stated, the District received FEMA AFG grant funds for new extrication equipment, replacing 40-year old "Jaws of Life." This new equipment arrived last month and was on the engines for less than three days when it was used in a serious head-on collision following a high-speed pursuit of a stolen SUV. The tools and firefighters performed exceptionally well, freeing two patients who were subsequently transported to Renown Medical Center in Reno. Grants continue to provide an important funding stream to the District by returning local taxpayer dollars back to the District.



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December was generally light on meetings due to the celebration of various holidays. Besides attending our regular local government Board of Directors meetings, I attended the Placer Board of Supervisors meeting in Auburn, a California Fire Districts Association Board meeting in Sacramento, and a Lake Tahoe West Partnership executive collaborators meeting with the USFS and TRPA. For the next several months, I will be focusing on legislative issues, spending time in Sacramento advocating on behalf of the Districts.

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

The District hosted a workshop with CATT (Contractors Association of Truckee Tahoe) to inform the building community of the changes that will affect the 2019 building season. The meeting was well attended, and we received a lot of positive feedback. We discussed the mitigation and cost recovery fees along with the concurrent plan review with Placer County. There was also much discussion on hydrant and fire flow requirements and the options they have to meet those requirements.

FPO Ransdell and I met with Interwest for plan review services and subsequently finalized an agreement. This will help with keeping up with the increase in the demand for plan reviews as well as large and complicated projects.

Staff has been working on updating our Cost Recovery Ordinance for Prevention-related services. It has been several years since they have been adjusted, and the ordinance will be on the agenda for introduction in January.

With the help of our PIO, we updated information on the Public Private Partnership and the Fire Flow Initiative. They both contribute to the District's ability to provide water for fire suppression in underserved areas but differ in being considered as a charitable contribution. The Fire Flow Initiative is an in lieu program to meet requirements, and the Public Private Partnership is a donation to support the District, increasing our capabilities using additional water tenders and fire boats.

We attended the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club and presented information on the Public Private Partnership. The presentation focused on the need for fire boat operations and the benefits it will provide to the public on over half of Lake Tahoe's shoreline.

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

Special Drills, Classes, Events:

CICCS and Red Cards - In July 2018, CICCS (California Incident Command Certification System) and NWCG (National Wildfire Coordinating Group) implemented numerous changes. Beginning this summer, all personnel will be required to attend S-290 for any overhead assignment position. This includes Fire Line Paramedic and REMS positions (the online version will not be accepted). Additionally, all overhead positions must attend an annual Strike Team Leader (STL)/Overhead refresher. This is a mandated class.

Bi-annual SCBA - Cal/OSHA mandates that we have documented bi-annual SCBA drills.

Harassment Training - We have completed our harassment training. State law requires all employees to complete one hour of training each year, and supervisors need to complete a two-hour class.

CPR - The District will be working in conjunction with TTUSD on providing classes for District employees each spring and fall. The District is also looking into providing community CPR twice a year.



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Hazmat FRO (First Responder-Operational) Refresher - Captain Gomez and Captain Mulkey will be conducting our annual FRO training during the month of February.

REMS Refresher - The District will be hosting three, one-day REMS refresher classes in the late spring.

Live Fire Multi-Company Drill - A live fire multi-company drill has been scheduled for each shift in April. The goal is to have each shift spend about five hours at the Carson City Burn room. The scenarios will be run as a real-life incident.

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 Test, and Blood Draw. All tests will be completed at one of the District's stations. Wellness testing is tentatively scheduled for April.

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

The Facilities Division staff continues to conduct ongoing maintenance and repair activities throughout both districts. The following are some items I want to bring to your attention:

In recent years, fire districts in the region have experienced various, and an increasing number of incidents related to theft of district property and threats to employees. Our fire districts have policies in place that address security and safety in the workplace. We have strived to build a culture of safety in the workplace at all times. With the support of Chief Schwartz, Engineer Dave Telfer has been working with the ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) Training Institute to bring active shooter response training to all District employees and Board members in the coming months. This training is utilized nationwide in businesses, schools, healthcare facilities, government facilities, and other places of assembly to train employees on how to respond to an active shooter threat. The District will be entering into a one year contract for training services from the Institute. We will evaluate the results of the program at the end of the contract period to determine what level of commitment the District desires going forward.

In late December, Tim Schrader met with a representative from the Central California Intelligence Center based in Sacramento. This agency offers free threat assessments to government agency fixed facilities. After an initial meeting, we agreed to move forward with a District-wide threat assessment to our facilities. They visited each station in both North Tahoe and Meeks Bay districts and we will be receiving a comprehensive assessment from them in the coming weeks. This assessment should further guide the District in addressing vulnerabilities related to our facilities infrastructure and staff.

As you are aware, both districts were recent recipients of new Hurst Edraulic technology automobile extrication tools through a regional Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) awarded to North Tahoe, Northstar, and Truckee Fire Departments. These tools were placed into service last week on District apparatus and have already been used on vehicle accidents requiring patient extrication. These new tools replace our old inventory of hydraulically-powered tools -- some of which were placed into



Old tools taken out of service.

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New tools placed into service.

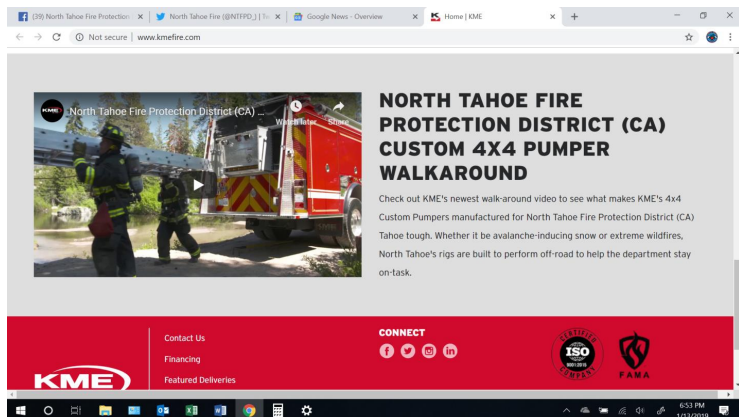
service in 1978 (40 years of service life). I have included pictures of the older tools taken out of service (see above) and some of the new tools (to the left). I would like to give special thanks to Captain Naman Beatie and the rest of the grant team for their relentless pursuit of this grant through three previous denials before being approved in the fourth attempt.

Four other District UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) pilots and I were invited to attend a UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System) skills class in Winters, California on December 19 and 20. We learned a lot about this emerging technology and what it offers to the fire service. I am confident that our program is one of the premiere programs in the region and our capabilities will be significantly enhanced in the coming years from the work we have done to date.

Public Information: (PIO Erin Holland)

Notable Events:

Dec. 3: KME highlighted North Tahoe's custom pumper on their website and on YouTube.



Dec. 1-5: Coordinated messaging with Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team to notify the public of prescribed burning.
Dec. 5: Gas leak in Carnelian Bay caused by snow removal equipment rupturing a 2-way main.





We thanked President Potts for 27 years of service and Vice President Baffone for 5 years.



- Dec. 6: Placer County Fire Safe Alliance Meeting and Grant Coordination Meeting, Auburn
- Dec. 7: Engine 52: Christmas Tree Lighting at North Tahoe Event Center
- Dec. 10: Business Gives Back Community Panel and Sierra Nevada College
- Dec. 11: SB 929 - The Brown Act Webinar for website requirements

December CERT Meeting and Christmas Party



- Dec. 14: 508 Compliance Workshop, Carson City
- Dec. 18: Hosted December's Fire PIT Meeting at the Fairview Community Center
- Dec. 20: Emergency Preparedness Community Forum Planning Meeting
- Dec. 21: Sierra Sun Chief's Corner: Resolve to be Ready

In 2019, we ask you to #ResolveToBeReady!



SIERRASUN.COM
Chief's Corner: In 2019, Resolve to be Ready
 As we consider setting New Year's Resolutions for 2019, North Tahoe Fire...

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Dec. 25: Merry Christmas!

Dec. 26: Launch of the North Tahoe Partnership Fund and Fire Flow Initiative Campaign



Dec. 31: Winter Parking Safety Messaging





Forest Fuels and Defensible Space: *(Forest Fuels Coordinator Eric Horntvedt)*

Winter is here and defensible space inspection requests are at seasonal lows. I have continued to receive calls from residents who have been issued a "Notice of Non-renewal" from their insurance company, and I will continue to work with these homeowners bringing their property into complete compliance with defensible space, and provide them with the correct Insurance Services data to take back to their insurance company to leverage all mitigation efforts in support of maintaining effective insurance.

PTEIR:

I have been working hard on the Phase II Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR) and completed it in time to allow it to go to LVFPD's Board for approval on January 9, 2019. The RFP was approved and flown the next day to a long list of previously identified Environmental Firms, posted online, and will be in the newspaper. I will be working diligently during the RFP process, ensuring we get this RFP distributed to any and all environmental firms that we can find, corresponding to inquiries/questions on this project, coordinating with other agencies to set up bid package opening/review, and commencing interviews of selected firms by the end of February. We are hoping to have a firm selected and commence services on this PTEIR document come March 2019. 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 Lake Tahoe.

FEMA- CTC Lots- Phase I:

The contractor was able to get through 20% of the project, completing fuels reduction treatments on 21 CTC lots for a total of about 5 acres in the Kings Beach grid. Work will pick back up once the snow melts.

Alpine Sierra Subdivision:

Reviewed and evaluated the Forest Management and Fuel Reduction Plan (FMFRP) as well as conducting a site visit to evaluate fuel loading and accuracies in the FMFRP in preparation for the January 10, Alpine Sierra Subdivision Entitlement Hearing. Reported in support of the FMFRP, and included additional forest-fuels mitigation measures that NTFPD will require on the project. Chief Schwartz, Chief Conradson, and I all spoke as a collective force that provided technical and professional fire service opinions in support of the project.