

Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade Fire Brigade News – December 2015

Where to start! There is so much going on as usual.... I'll go back to last month, where after our Sunday training on the 22nd, Ventana brought over a whole turkey dinner, practically from "soup to nuts" as they say. The guys thought it was so wonderful and such a treat with pecan pie and whipped cream for dessert, yum! Everything was just delicious and they enjoyed every bite, thank you Catherine and the Ventana chefs!!

We don't have fire training in December so there is a little bit of a break, but we did have our usual two rescue trainings and a day long auto extrication exercise. Unfortunately it poured rain almost the entire day and everyone got soaked, realistic I guess, as we never know when we will need to use the jaws, rain or shine.

December is also the month for our annual Christmas dinner which Nepenthe again generously offered to host. It was wonderful as always, and such a special way to end the long year. We hand out our annual awards at this dinner, acknowledging special members dedication and response. We start with our Engine Company of the year award, which this year went to E7831 with Steve Graham as Captain. The crew had a really busy year. We had our Rookie of the Year award go to Trey Kropp, our new member who has progressed so far during his short time with us. Volunteer of the Year went to Jim Betts, well deserved after a number of years of excellent participation and call response. Marcus Foster was awarded the Chiefs Award, this goes to anyone who is not a "regular" volunteer, IE, it could go to a Board member or dispatcher. This was the nineteenth year we have handed out this award, it was started so we could acknowledge the Officers or other people who are key to helping the Brigade but don't necessarily respond to incidents. The dinner itself was of course just as tasty as could be, thank you so much Kirk and Holly for giving all of us such a wonderful evening. Our web master, Dan Gearhart, will be putting up pictures from the evening's festivities and the individual award letters on our web site, www.bigsurfire.org.

After the fiasco of losing all the phones, internet, and our capability of being paged out and talking on the radio, the County has completed a backup system so if our repeater goes down like last time we can switch to the backup system and still be able to receive our pages and communicate with Fire Comm, our dispatch center in Salinas. The County picked up half the cost and the Sheriff's department and the Fire Brigade split the other half.

On a non-Brigade related topic, we will all miss seeing Ray Ortega's smiling face alongside the road. After many, many years with Cal Trans, (I don't have the exact number, over 30?) he has finally retired, taking with him a wealth of knowledge about our Highway One. Happy retirement Ray!

As I mentioned in my annual letter that we will help rescue your cats, we had a dog rescue last month. We received the report of a person over the side down by JPB, turns out it was actually a dog. Our rescue team responded and just like they would do with a human, set up their systems and went over the cliff and brought the medium size dog up safe and sound!

Lastly, I don't think I have reminded everyone about cleaning your chimneys, with all our wonderful winter cold weather I'm sure all of you are having fires in your fireplaces and wood stoves.

Happy New Year to all of you, from all of us!!

Martha Karstens
Chief