

Fire Brigade News
July 2013

There have been changes in the radio frequencies that we are using. The County has been working towards everyone going digital, along with the rest of the Country, for years. The project, NGEN, short for Next Generation, is mandated for First Responders to have their radio equipment narrow banded. After decades of being on our "own" separate frequency, (actually Sheriff's yellow tone), we are now sharing the same radio frequency with most of the other fire departments in Monterey County. So in King City, Castroville and other cities across the County, they hear us and we hear them. Fortunately we only get our page tones on our pagers, not everyone else's. However, if you turn on the radio you will hear often times nonstop chatter from the rest of the fire departments responding to calls. It is quite different for us as we only shared yellow tone with the SO. Now we share the frequency with many others and sometimes need to wait to get out on the air. The calls and protocol for the departments in town really haven't changed that much. We are still a novelty for the guys in town to listen too; they never really knew what we were up to down here. Now they hear it all, including when we make mistakes!! When I go to meetings in town they say, hey we heard you doing this or that, you guys get all the "good" calls down there:)

We had Cal Star (helicopter) come down for training this month. We went down to the field next to Sand Dollar where they landed. We practiced proper landing procedures, including making sure the "LZ" landing zone, was safe for them to land. This includes making sure people, vehicles and even animals are out of the LZ. At the Post Ranch LZ there are often times turkeys in the area which we notify the pilots about. We looked at their helicopter, a relatively new one, and reviewed loading patients, which now get loaded in the rear of the helo. Just a reminder that you can get a membership to Cal Star, where, if you are transported you will not get billed for the cost. It is \$45 a year for the membership and well worth it if you have to use their services. You can call them at 1-800-207-5433.

I just got an email notice regarding USFS restricting all campfires in the forest including in designated campsites. You may use propane stoves in them. This restriction will continue until the end of fire season. They had a fire over in the Tassajara area and fortunately it stayed over there! As everyone can see, it is tinder dry over here and in the rest of the state. I have enjoyed having what I call "my friend the fog" in lately. What perfect weather!

Our big news is that we have decided to go ahead and place an order for our new water tender!! While we are still raising funds, the building process can take up to 8 months so we wanted to get going and make sure we had it by our next fire season. Very exciting!!

I am starting the countdown already for our 40th anniversary Muster for next year, save the date, June 14th, 2014.

Martha Karstens
Chief