

Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade

Fire Brigade News – January 2015

Happy New Year to all! We seem to have gone from what had to be one of the wettest months on record, December, to one of the driest this month. It looks like we may not get any rain at all this month according to the weather man. Are we going to be going into a drought and another disastrous fire season? Only time will tell. We have not had too many burn days, with the way the weather has been lately either. We have been trying to do some burning up on the ridge and get rid of more of last year's fire debris. Everyone should probably burn while they can in case the burn season gets shut down before the usual time at the end of April.

I forgot to put in my last month's article that we did a day long auto extrication class here at the firehouse. We had three cars to use all our extrication tools on and which ultimately got destroyed, (the cars not the tools) and had a good turn out from the Fire Brigade members. Matt Harris did an excellent job instructing everyone on the proper use of the tools as well as hauling the car "carcasses" back to town after the class. Fortunately we don't need to use the Jaws very often but in case we do need them we have to be trained and ready to go.

We received a regional FEMA grant along with Salinas and Seaside for new SCBAs and in February we will start getting fit tested for the masks. Most people wear a medium size and we keep them in the engines, but for those people with larger or smaller faces, they get issued one just for themselves. The masks alone cost \$400 each. We have just submitted a request to be part of another regional FEMA grant for highway safety equipment.

Every two years our policy requires us to hold elections for Board members and appoint fire Officers. We just finished conducting our elections and appointments and I am happy to report everyone agreed to stay on our Board for another two years. Our Board members are myself as Chief, Frank Pinney, Dick Ravich, John Handy, Bob Sayre, Mary Trotter and Victor Pavloff. The Officers were appointed and approved by the Board and they are Steve Graham as Captain E7831, the engine at the firehouse, station #1. Jon Knight, Captain E7852, the engine located at the South Coast center, Station #2. Matt Harris, Captain E7854, the engine that is stationed at the Cal Trans Willow Springs yard, station #4, Marcus Foster, Lieutenant of E7831 and Jeannie Alexander our Medical Captain. I am equally delighted with the Officers agreeing to continue on, it means a lot to have their level of expertise and knowledge.

We are going to try and do a First Responder class in the next month or two here at the firehouse. It is a 60 hour class that teaches the same skills as an EMT but with only about a third of the lecture portion. If we need to fill more seats to make it a go we will open it up to the community.

I tally up the end of year statistics each year; and we ended 2014 with our highest number of calls ever, 306! Now out of those 306 calls, 50 of them were alarms, and none of them were actual fires. 35 of the 50 were from the businesses and 15 were residential alarms. Another number from our total was 15 smoke checks we were dispatched to, all of them residential and again none were fires. We had 130 medical calls, 50 vehicle accidents, 11 fires, 12 rescues and 103 "others".

We also just took a pit crew CPR class, a new concept, similar to the race crews changing tires on race cars; medical personnel assume a position around the patient for their care. While it works better in town where FF have assigned seats in an engine we can make it work down here where most times we all arrive on scene by POV.

We still need members in our South coast area so if you live down there and are interested joining the Fire Brigade please contact us!

Martha Karstens
Chief