

Fire Brigade News March 2014

Our Volunteer Firefighter class is going very well! We are close to midway through and have only had one person drop out. Everyone is doing such a great job and they are very enthusiastic, I have high hopes for them! We are still training on the structure fire section of the course where they all have to wear the heavy turn outs, unfortunately our weather has been pretty warm and it is really hot under all those pounds of gear. Due to the number of students we needed a second instructor so we have been having our FB Captains assist the lead instructor. This is working out well as the students can get to know the Captain on the engine they will ultimately be assigned to.

We are also finishing up recerting our FB medical members; this is done every two years for most of us. We have to be checked off on our skills and those of us that are EMTs need to have 24 hours of CEs to turn into the County.

Burn season is still going and if we get the expected rain it may continue until the end of April. I still recommend doing as much burning as you can because it could end sooner. You only have (possibly) one more month. I noticed that for today, Sunday the 23rd, the burn message at the 800 # did not get updated; unfortunately I didn't notice it until late in the day. If this happens you can try calling some of the Cal Fire stations listed in the phone book. They should have the burn status. We have still been getting a number of smoke check calls, so please make sure and let your neighbors know you are burning.

There was a control burn that got away over in the Salinas valley due to wind this week. Our poor hills have at best a tinge of green, very sad.... We can still hope for late rains. I am waiting to see if we get a showing of poppies in any of the burned areas, probably not enough rain. I did just hear last night that there might possibly be up to 2 inches of rain this week in the Santa Cruz area, if we got even a little of that it would be great. And there is the rumor of maybe more next week!

Our new water tender is in the process of being built, it takes quite a while to complete. We are hoping to have it done by June and maybe break it in and put it through its paces over at our Hunter Liggett wildland school.

I am off to a radio meeting in Chualar early tomorrow morning; the frequencies are changing again including the one we get paged out on. This requires quite a balancing act on our part, Jess programs all our spare radios and pagers ahead of time with the new frequencies then the day of the changeover we try and get as many Brigade members as possible to come by the station to swap out their radios and pagers. We also had to order up new cables and programs for the computer he uses to do the programming, as all the ones we had burned up, including the special computer he used, in the fire.

The entire month of March seems to be one big spring break anymore, and with the number of cars and people down here that is sure evident. It was looking like summer in the back country parking lot and with all the cars lined up along both sides of the road from the MAF to the St. Park. The Pine ridge trail must be like a freeway. Fortunately our area has remained pretty quiet for calls.

We are getting some green showing on Pfeiffer Ridge, lots of weeds, but it looks like the yuccas are making a comeback.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for our 40th anniversary BBQ on June 14th!!! And we still have our commemorative calendars available for sale!

Martha Karstens
Chief