

Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade Fire Brigade News – March 2015

Here is some good news! Cal Fire will be able to send down some of their personnel to do the LE100 inspections around your homes and businesses. This is the state required 100 foot clearance and your defensible area to make your homes safe! This is due to your SRA fees finally trickling down enough to be able to pay for the inspections. They hope to start by mid-April. They will begin by looking at the businesses and then move on to assessing your homes. We will put the word out ahead of time and give areas notice when they might be coming by. They will be accompanied by a Fire Brigade member or a CERT member. This is good for the Brigade and CERT for area familiarity and good for home and business owners to be getting some services for their fees. They have a form they use and will assess your clearing and can answer any questions you may have. They will come back to see what progress you have made, but I have been assured there will be no fines if you don't do your clearing. I am excited about this; we will be getting the benefit of their expertise in helping with the ongoing concern of fire clearance and will help to make your homes more fire safe!

We have gotten our new SCBAs, (self-contained breathing apparatus) from a FEMA grant. Our new air station which will fill the new bottles will be getting here in the next few weeks. Then we will be able to start our training with the new equipment. As always the new equipment seems lighter weight and more user friendly.

The progress is continuing in the effort to have our year round resident Deputy. They will be making the final decision probably this month on who will be coming down. State Parks has been very helpful with working with the Sheriff's department to try and find housing.

I should have put this in last month's article when the time changed, it is the time of year to change the batteries in any smoke detector or CO monitors you may have. A few inexpensive batteries could save your life!

You may have noticed the mastication project the USFS did up at the Brazil (Funt) ranch on the East side of the highway. I think it looks wonderful! They also did some mowing on the north/west side of the road. It looks great to see grass instead of the thick sage brush.

Hard to believe but burn season will be ending next month, April 30th. This is provided it is not ended sooner like it has on occasion due to the weather. So better get out there and do your clearing, perhaps the Cal Fire inspections will get you motivated. If you can't burn there are options like chipping you can do or have done. We have had nowhere near the usual number of people burning this year, I'm not quite sure what that means, everyone has their clearing already done?? Wouldn't that be nice! So far I have issued 65 burn permits.

I watched a two hour show on Dateline (NBC) about the 2003 Cedar fires and the other fires in the San Diego area. It was very well done as told by some of the survivors as they shared their stories of survival, or not in some cases. It was a stark reminder of what we went through in the Pfeiffer fire and at times a little difficult to watch. We were extremely fortunate to not have any fatalities. Again, do your part in having your defensible space!!!

Martha Karstens
Chief