



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



Date: March 11, 2021
To: Meeks Bay Fire Board of Directors
From: Steve Leighton, Fire Chief
Subject: Board Report March 2021

On behalf of all members and residents of the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District, it is an honor to serve as your Fire Chief.

February stayed busy for the District, and we're happy for March to bring us a bit of snow. However, the National Weather Service is predicting below average winter precipitation combined with drier than normal soils contributing to well below normal runoff forecasts for the 2021 snowmelt season. With that said, we are all hoping for a "Miracle March" that will bring us a big storm or two.

The Division Chief applications have closed and we are currently reviewing them. Our new academy graduates are making great progress, and have moved into the TAP 3 of the process. This means that they can work as stand-alone paramedics while still being supervised by our experienced paramedics. While one door closes another opens. We recently had an employee leave for another agency resulting in us being able to provide an opportunity for full-time employment to our seasonal Defensible Space Inspector Sarah Gley. Sarah will be a great asset to our Fire and Life Safety Division. In addition, we are currently in the recruitment process for two new Defensible Space Inspectors and are keeping close tabs on the process.

Our operations staff continues to stay busy with training, conducting live fire training with Southwest Gas in Truckee, Ice Rescue Training in Olympic Valley, Tahoe Truckee Regional Rescue Team Training with CHP Helicopter H-20, as well as, the daily assigned training activities. During the month of February our operations staff responded to 31 calls in the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District area. Districtwide our personnel responded to 211 calls for service with 41 patients being transported to area hospitals. We did have a significant call for service in Meeks Bay, where crews arrived to find high levels of Carbon Monoxide (CO) in a residence caused by a malfunctioning heating unit. Crews alleviated the hazard and transported two individuals to the hospital. I'm proud of the service our members provide and they are always looking for ways to improve what we are doing.

In an effort to fund the District's needs without creating a financial burden for our constituents, staff is always looking for funding opportunities through grants. In the past month the district has submitted three grants to FEMA, totaling over a million dollars, to include safety equipment, additional staffing and a Community Risk Assessment. If successful, these awards will assist us in our efforts to increase staffing and provide for employee safety while focusing on our risk reduction efforts. Those efforts include updating the District's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan with Placer County, as a necessary effort to secure future grant opportunities. I personally would like to thank our grant team for their dedication and effort in accomplishing the task of preparing the grants for submission.

Additional grant information is that we are in receipt of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 18 Recommendation, which funds hazardous fuels reduction efforts. Our request for \$2.7M for "Defense Zone of the Wildland-Urban Interface on the California side of the Lake Tahoe



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Basin, within North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts” is in the top five priority list, and we are pleased to report the request is recommended to be funded in full. Unfortunately, Fire Adapted Communities (FAC), which is an integral piece to our community-wide efforts, was only recommended at 50% funding. Our Forest Fuels Coordinator will be working with the Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs to develop a letter of support to the executive committee during the 45-day comment period in an effort for reconsideration to fund at 100%. I’m positively optimistic that our efforts will be successful to be able to continue to complete Defensible Space projects in our district.

As stated in previous updates, over 90% of our members have received their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Our staff is doing well and continues to follow the safety directives as they have since the beginning of the pandemic. We are in the process of updating our directives while following the Center for Disease Control guidelines (CDC), to allow our members a path to return to normal district activities. In addition, we continue to play a key role in assisting Tahoe Forest Hospital in delivering the COVID-19 vaccine to community members. The COVID-19 vaccination efforts are underway in every region of the state, with the fire service playing key roles in working to maximize outcomes of these efforts.

In closing, I’m pleased to report that we are in the process of updating Meeks Bay Fire’s Station Alerting System. This is a budgeted improvement project that has been implemented at other fire stations in the Tahoe region. Some of the work has been previously done by installing new antennas. We will be working diligently with Placer County’s Information Technology Division to purchase and install the remaining equipment needed to complete this project.

Meetings and Assignments:

- North Tahoe, Meeks Bay, and Alpine Meadows Board Meetings
- Eastern JPA Chiefs Meeting
- Lake Tahoe Regional Chiefs Association
- Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators
- Executive and Command staff Meetings
- Fleet Services Update Meetings
- National Weather Service conference calls
- Meeks Bay Stakeholder Restoration Project Meeting
- XTB Operational Area Coordinator Meetings and Duty Chief
- Labor Management L3729 Meeting
- Bi-State Dispatch Meeting
- Tahoe Conservancy Meeting
- Eldorado and Placer County Public Health COVID Vaccine Meeting
- Lake Tahoe Community College Fire Science Committee Meeting
- Fire District Association of California Board Member Meeting
- El Dorado LAFCO Meeting
- Placer County LAFCO Meeting
- Placer County Breakfast Club Meeting
- Truckee FD Division Chief Exam Proctor
- Eldorado County Fire Chiefs Meeting
- Employee Exit Interview
- Employee Evaluations
- Command Staff and L3729 Joint Pre-Wildland Season Meeting