



Plumas Eureka Fire Department Fire Chief's Report

For December 6, 2017

By Tom Forster

Personnel: Julie Cassou has applied and will be accepted into membership as a firefighter this month. She is a retired RN/Mobile Intensive Care Nurse who is also a Graeagle firefighter like Luke – she'll be a dual volunteer. She will be helpful with our EMS program especially. For example, she's been coordinated joint supply ordering, and shots for both FD firefighters for years. Welcome to Julie.

Training: Tom is serving as Lead Instructor of a State Fire Training 16-hour Basic Pump Operations course through the Chief's Association on December 2 & 3 in Quincy. Quincy Chief Robbie Cassou is also instructing. John Sea and Ryan Nowling from PEFD are participating.

Tom is also currently planning for two days of winter, ice and river rescue training over the winter, also through the Chiefs Association.

Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant: We were awarded our 2nd request in October, and are awaiting details of the overall award. This is a 50% grant for protective clothing, both wildland and structural. Acceptance will require a board resolution.

Firewise Community & Cal Fire Inspections: We are awaiting the summary from Cal Fire of the completed community inspections.

FD and CSD Insurance: No recent progress, but we intend to work on this over the winter. We have not made any decisions, and are in the process of studying the pros and cons of changes with future help from Michael Peters.

Plumas County Fire Chiefs Association (PCFCA): As Secretary/Treasurer, Tom is coordinating the annual PCFCA year-end meeting in Graeagle on Saturday, December 9, with recognition awards and a BBQ lunch. Board members & PEFD members are welcome to attend part or all of the meeting, at the Graeagle Fire Station from 9:00am-1:30pm. Awards, followed by lunch starts at approx. 11:30am.

Minerva 5 Incident, Quincy: Tom is still working on the accounting and billing for the mutual aid coverage we provided, through the State and USFS. We are not sure yet if a “portal to portal” resolution from the board was submitted to the State during Chief Castagnetti’s tenure. The State office that processes the claims has been overwhelmed with the recent fires, and payment can take up to 12-18 months. A request has been made but no response yet.

Having an agreement means the equipment and personnel are reimbursed from time of dispatch to time of return. Not having one means reimbursement only covers the actual hours worked, which would be roughly 50% less due to the 12-hour shifts assigned, and rest/food/sleep time.

If we do not have an agreement, we’ll do a board resolution and submit it for any future responses, but it can’t be retroactive. Once on file it serves indefinitely for any future responses.

We do want to pay our responders for their time before the end of the calendar year, at the state base rate of \$20.69 per

hour. This is the agreed upon standard with other FD's. Once we determine if a 'portal to portal' exists or not we'll proceed, and then await reimbursement.

Protective Clothing (PPE) Storage in Station: Thanks to Rich Machado and his son for their work on adding plywood covers to the back of two of our rolling PPE storage racks. This allows the full covers to be properly used to help prevent the accumulation of diesel exhaust dust on the protective clothing, to address cancer risk concerns.

Fire Apparatus Maintenance: Thanks go to John Sea for coordinating the replacement of the front tires and wheels on Engine 9178 – the tread is almost at minimum legal level, and they are older than 10 years. We will be budgeting for replacement of the rear tires and wheels in the next budget cycle. Wheel replacement is necessary due to the need to shift to tubeless tires. All three of our pumping fire engines are roughly 30 years old.

Inventories are being completed for all of our fire apparatus, and Heather is helping with the final documentation that includes photographs. They will be used in our ongoing maintenance program.

Sprinkler System Grant Application: Tom is in the early stages of working with an outside grant writer on the possibility of submitting for a FEMA grant to retrofit a fire sprinkler system in the fire house, as has been previously discussed with the board. Not certain, but tentatively planning on a submittal in the next annual round of Assistance to Firefighter (AFG) grants which have not yet been announced by FEMA as far as timing due to the federal budgeting process. They will most likely have a 30-day application period this winter.

This would be an approx. \$75-100k project, including a 4" water line extension from the middle of Lundy to the office side of the building. If awarded, the grant would cover 95% of the cost, with a 5% match. We have previously received three AFG grants that Tom submitted for and managed over the past 12 years, with several submittals also being declined. We have received over \$125k of AFG grants for a variety of equipment, including our self-contained breathing apparatus, large diameter fire hose, scene lighting, radios, tools, and a \$10k thermal imaging camera.

Fires Shows West and Fire Training Symposium Fresno: Tom was asked to and volunteered to serve on a fire chiefs panel at the recent Fire Shows West Conference in Reno. He also volunteered to facilitate the annual 5-day Chief Officers Leadership Symposium held as part of the California Fire Chiefs Association Training Symposium, held each November in Fresno. There were no costs to the FD.