



The Sunshine Fire Protection District Newsletter

Letter from the Chief By Michael Schmitt

Dear Sunshine Residents,

2020 has been a strange year for every single one of us. There are not that many occasions when every person is affected by an event in one way or another. I think I speak for all of us when I say that it will be great when we can move on from the current pandemic, whenever that may be. We had to take several precautions and expenses to prepare for this to ensure that our firefighters are safe during medical emergencies and are not exposed to each other whenever possible. Station 2 remains closed to the public for this reason, while station 1 is now open again for board meetings, training, and resident visits.

We have been making good progress in creating water supply in our district, primarily in the form of cisterns at residences, but also with community cisterns. Most of that work is done by Alan Kirton and Abby Silver, whom many of you

know. Next time you see him, please give a shout out, as it takes a lot of time to get these projects done. And by the time the currently planned projects of cisterns, and even a hydrant are completed, the district will be much better off. Alan and also Abby Silver are both people that truly make the district a better place with their work through the CWPP and are the type of dedicated people that everybody benefits from, even if they don't

As of September 1, 2020, SFPD has responded to 58 calls.

Medical – 19
Structural, car, & wildland
fire/smoke reports – 8
Vehicle & bike accident – 7
Hazmat including CO2 - 3
Other - 3
Cancelled enroute - 18

know it. Well, now, you do. Speaking of water supply. I would like to remind everyone that if you have a cistern on your property that was part of a site plan review, that it not only has to be kept full in perpetuity, it also has to be accessible and pull outs at the cistern and along the driveway cannot be blocked. We also continue to notice trees and branches leaning into driveways that are blocking access to your home. I had mentioned this in the last newsletter, and I can only urge everyone to maintain their driveways as well as their house numbers at the driveway. If you are unsure and would like us to come by with a truck to see if it does fit, let me know.

As many of you know, we are purchasing a new fire truck. 4502, our old 1979 GMC 7000,

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CWPP Committee Update - By Abby Silver

With smoke in the air, hot dry conditions, and fires burning across the West, wildfire mitigation has probably been on everyone's minds this summer. This Labor Day weekend also marks the 10th anniversary of the Fourmile Fire. Let's all remember that despite cooler temperatures and a little rain, our fuels are drier than typical and continued vigilance is important. So, keep after your grass, rake pine needles and cones that fall within 3-5 feet of your house, and keep an eye on the fire restrictions in the County and across the state. I'm so grateful to live in a community that takes wildfire risk seriously; thanks to each of you for all you do to help keep us all as safe and prepared as we can be! And to all the firefighters – SFPD, county, state, and from around the world – that are helping to fight wildfires across the Western US: I know I speak for many residents in saying that we are grateful and proud of you all! -Abby Silver

New Community Cistern – Coming Soon!

The SFPD has recently submitted a Limited Impact Special Use Review application to Boulder County for the installation of a 20,000 gallon community fire cistern to be located at 1462 County Rd. 83. The cistern will consist of a single fiberglass tank that is 10' in diameter and 35' long.

The cistern will be installed at the rear of an existing parking area on County Rd. 83, located southwest of the driveway to 1462. This location will put most of the houses on the upper part of County Rd. 83 within

1000' of the cistern, which will allow the fire department to set up a pumper relay so that water from the cistern can be applied directly to a structure fire. And of course, it will also be a valuable resource in the event of a wildfire.

A public hearing with the Boulder County Commissioners is scheduled for Oct. 20th. We are hopeful that the public hearing will be waived so that we may receive an early approval of the application. Depending on timing, we will either proceed with the installation of the cistern in the fall of 2020 or we may need to delay until the spring of 2021.

Thanks go out to Jon and Andrea Lin of 1462 CR 83 for providing an easement to SFPD for the installation of the cistern.

UPDATE: Shaded Fuel Break Along Shared Drive at 3701 Sunshine Canyon:

The tree marking is complete and the work has begun on our latest Shaded Fuel Break project. This 18-acre fuel break along a shared paved driveway will be 300 feet wide by 2600 feet long, and ties into existing work in both lower Sunshine and upper Poorman. 50% of the funding will be provided by a CO State Wildfire Risk Mitigation grant. We hope that the work will be completed this year.

Fall Chipping:

Fall chipping will take place during the week of Oct 19-23. Please have your slash staged appropriately and ready to go by 8am on October 19th. Contact Abby (abberoo@msn.com) with questions and to sign up. There will be an email with more details about how and where to stage slash etc., plus several reminders coming to an inbox near you over the next few weeks.

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Save the Date:

Fall Community Chipping - Oct 19-23

CWPP Committee Update - By Abby Silver - Continued from Page 2**Hazard Trees:**

Eric Bader (Boulder Tree Service) continues to help guarantee uninterrupted access to our community roadways by removing hazard trees. These are trees that have died and could potentially fall across a roadway. Eric has an eagle eye for noticing these trees, but that doesn't mean you can't keep your own eyes peeled. If you see a tree you think could be a problem, please contact abberoo@msn.com. SFPD will pay 90% of the cost of cutting and disposing of the tree with the homeowner responsible for the remainder.

Burn Permits:

As fall approaches, keep in mind that you will need a burn permit if you intend to burn slash. Obviously, it's a bit early to be lighting fires, but not too soon to prepare by pulling a permit. Permits are good for a calendar year, so you'll need a 2020 permit to burn this fall and will need to renew if you don't get to it until 2021. Apply and read about the process/rules at <https://www.bouldercounty.org/safety/fire/burn-permits/>. Spoiler alert: there will need to be snow on the ground before you can burn.

CWPP Committee Chair: abberoo@msn.com

Fire Safety Brochure for Out of Town Visitors Available

Let's get the word out regarding appropriate practices in our community! Shoot Abby an email if you'd like more of these abberoo@msn.com.



Abby showing off some slash waiting to be chipped.



Letter from the Chief - Continued

By Michael Schmitt

is well past its reliable service life and is lacking several features that make new firetrucks so much better and more capable than when 4502 was built. If you want to use the phrase "limping it along" for a vehicle, 4502 would be a fitting example. It has served us quite well, but we are happy that there was an agreement between everyone involved that we need to replace it. I will spare you the details of what goes into planning and specifying a truck, but the new truck will be the "icing on the cake" to the district just like 4502 was when Chief Doug Young purchased it at the time. It will be a much better match to our existing 4501 truck, and those two will work together quite nicely.

We have a little bit over a year to plan how to use every cubic inch of that truck and its cabinet space. Since we are not a large City department with millions to spend, we cannot have trucks for each task. Our trucks need to be hybrid trucks with various capabilities and equipment onboard. A City department has a fleet of trucks that are designed specifically for wildfires. They also have a fleet for structure fires and for hazmat and technical rescue. So knowing where things will go ahead of time goes a long way to make sure that the truck has everything on it that we need. Fire trucks are built to order, every department has its own specific needs, and we cannot wait to get this one in service.

We have until the fall of 2021, when the new truck will be delivered, to create a driver/operator curriculum. We started a new and more involved driver training program a few years ago, and each firefighter gets trained individually on each truck. Driving our top-heavy trucks is one of the most dangerous things we do and we take that very seriously.

In a small community like Sunshine, there are always people and residents that are just so crucial when running a fire department (a Chief and Deputy Chief

cannot run it alone, neither can a board). We have retired some board members this year as their terms were up, and we have gained some new ones. Jim Peacock, Sam Mishkin, and Gene Fischer have left the board of directors of the department. I cannot emphasize enough of how much their work and dedication for years is appreciated. Sure, there are times of disagreement between the operational side of the department that is represented by the Chief and Deputy Chief, and the board. Historically that is just the nature of it. In any good relationship, there are disagreements. Thankfully those times have a very short shelf life and are not carried on, and ultimately everyone is just passionate about the department and the community. Thank you, Jim, Sam, and Gene, for the time you have given, and thank you to your families as well for letting you do that.

Our new board members are Richard Smith, Cathy Shoenfeld, and Dan Fischer! They have already had their first challenge of how to run board meetings and ensuring consistency in the times of Covid-19. Welcome, Dick, Cathy, and Dan, and thank you for volunteering your time.

We have two buildings, station 1 at 311 County Road 83 and station 2 at 5880 Sunshine Canyon Drive. There are a variety of issues that come up and need repair or improvement, and one volunteer that I have shamefully neglected to express my appreciation for is Jim Paschis. Jim is not only a resident in the district. He is also not only the guy that is always willing to help the department repair and build things to improve responder and resident safety with his "if you do it, do it right the first time" attitude.

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Letter from the Chief - Continued

By Michael Schmitt

The sand barrels at the stations were built by him, and as a result, I don't think I will slip on the ice again and hit my head on the pavement (thanks to a helmet, all turned out okay aside from a good headache). He is also one of the people that I have personally known the longest in the US and has taught me many things in the 20+ years that I have known him. Thank you, Jim.

Currently, we have a fundraiser on GoFundMe (see <https://www.gofundme.com/f/sunshine-FPD-2020> for status and details). Sadly we were not able to plan a community fest this year. The fest is organized as a fundraiser for the fire department, but it does a lot more than that. Many of you meet each other that way for the first time, and we see friendships build every year. Thanks to all those who made this a success!

I mentioned above that we will be working on our new driver curriculum for the new truck. One may ask, "where do you practice?". That is not as easy as it sounds. We want to practice where it is safe, and we do challenge our firefighters to be the best drivers they can be. Part of the exercises includes cone courses. Drivers need to be able to drive through serpentine courses, hammerheads, gauge the width and length of a truck correctly (and at night), among a myriad of other exercises. And ideally, that is done in a flat area. We can go to the Boulder Regional Fire Training Center, which is located at the Boulder Reservoir. That means that our engines and firefighters are 35-45 minutes from the station (indeed, firetrucks do not move fast). This would make training our firefighters very difficult, if not impossible, to the extent that we want to train them. One of the largest and flattest areas we have is on the property of The Starhouse. A number of

years ago, we asked if we could do a training there, and The Starhouse has been very supportive of the department since, and they frequently accommodate us on short notice. The property also has the only landing zone for medical helicopters on a 1 1/2 mile stretch of Sunshine Canyon. You never know when you need a landing zone for a medical emergency, but when you do know that you need it, the difference of driving up a driveway to then transport a patient by helicopter or taking a patient by ambulance can create a very different outcome. Thank you, David and Lila, Jim, and Vera and Timothy, as well as everyone else that is involved in supporting us in our mission at The Starhouse.

One other location that we frequently use for driver training is County Road 85, in the 6300 block of Sunshine Canyon. One of the tasks that firefighters have to get signed off on is to take the truck to the very bottom of that road. Then turn off the backup camera in the trucks that have one, and drive in reverse the entire length (just under 1 mile) up to Sunshine Canyon on their own, only with a spotter present for safety as the road is quite narrow, particularly at the bottom. We sometimes get waved at by the residents living along this road, and I wanted to shout out to you all to thank you. It is another essential place for our practices, and while traffic is very limited there, backing a firetruck is certainly not a quick task.

We have some new firefighters! David Begleiter and John Newton have gone through the process of joining the department. They both bring a unique skill, and I have full confidence that they will be great firefighters

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Letter from the Chief Fire - Continued

By Michael Schmitt

for our department.

We also have a new junior firefighter, Samantha Lansky. As someone that I have seen with her brother Jack only a couple of days after they were born, this was a very happy occasion for me. Thank you, David, John, and Samantha, for joining the department!

Don Dick has been organizing the community email and our important Sunshine Community Directory for a while now. Usually, at the end of the year, a lot of data has to be accumulated in order to create this directory, which helps residents connect (for fun, a loose dog or horse, or the rather common “hey, there is a lion in your tree!”) and that has helped us in the past too. Please provide Don with the updated information

when he makes the announcement for the new directory. And thank you, Don, for running this program for the district.

If you are not on the email list that Don manages, which is for important community-related updates, and not on the urgent fire department list that is managed by Deputy Chief Ballard, Marshall Honeyman, and myself, let us know. It hardly constitutes spam as we only send an average of ten emails per year for each, and every email should be of interest to you as a resident.

Have a safe fall and winter.

Chief Michael Schmitt



Fire Fighters Marc and Ethan Koehler



Pump Training

Sunshine FPD Board News**Alan Kirton – Chair, Dan Fischer – Treasurer, Jean Gatza – Secretary, Cathy Shoenfeld, Dick Smith**

Please welcome the three new members of the board who joined in May. They are Cathy Shoenfeld, Dan Fischer and Dick Smith. Dan Fischer has taken on the role of Treasurer for the district.

I'm sure that everyone is feeling the effects of what seems to be a year of never ending challenges. For most of the spring and summer, the board held virtual meetings to maintain social distancing. For the last two months, we have held in person meetings at Station 1 – with the doors open, masks on and everyone sitting at the far ends of tables spaced around the station. Lately, all of us have had to deal with smelling and seeing smoke that reminds us too much of 2010. The last few days of rain have helped wash some of that away. Maybe we will be in for a pleasant fall.

The district has signed a contract with Rosenbauer Minnesota, LLC for the purchase of a new fire engine built along the specifications of their Timberwolf Wildland Urban Interface engine. The engine meets both the requirements of a Type 1 structural pumper and a Type 3 off-road, wildland, fire-fighting vehicle. It will fit the needs of the district very well. The purchase is the culmination of over 18 months of work by the Apparatus Committee made up of Chief Michael Schmitt, Deputy Chief Henry Ballard, Fire Marshall Bruce Honeyman and Eric Bader. Many thanks go out to them for their hard work of comparing fire engines from many different manufactures and pulling together the specifications for the purchase.

One of the projects we have focused on this year is a community fire cistern on County Rd 83. SFPD has filed a Limited Impact Special Use Review application with Boulder County to install a 20,000 gallon cistern at 1462

County Rd. 83. More details on this project are provided in the CWPP section of the newsletter.

This newsletter also contains information regarding a ballot issue that the board has submitted for the November election. The ballot issue is meant to stabilize the district's General Fund, which is the part of the district's mill levy that pays for the fire department's ongoing expenses of utilities, maintenance, training, purchase of firefighter PPE and the leasing costs associated with the purchase of fire engines. Special Districts in Colorado have struggled because of funding issues caused by the Gallagher Amendment, which in concert with TABOR, has been steadily decreasing the residential assessment rate and therefore reducing districts' revenue from property taxes. For many districts this has come to a head in 2020. Because of the economic downturn, the Gallagher Amendment is projected to decrease the residential assessment rate by 17.8%. Please take the time to read the information provided in the newsletter and vote in the upcoming election.

As always, we are grateful to the people who volunteer their time to the district. Thanks to the Officers, Firefighters and EMTs who respond to emergencies in Sunshine and surrounding districts; to the Board Members; to Abby Silver for being the Chair of the CWPP Committee and running many of the district's mitigation projects; to Jen Lansky for publishing the newsletter and pulling together the district's emergency call statistics; to Eric Bader for managing the sunshine-fpd.org web site; to Don Dick for managing the Sunshine communications.

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Fire Marshal's Report - By Bruce Honeyman - Continued

‘Why are they not here yet?’

The impetus for this Newsletter article is a conversation that I had last week with Bret Gibson, the chief of the Four Mile Fire Protection District. As many of you know, we have an auto aid agreement with Four Mile fire as we do with several other districts. The focus of this particular conversation was response times, that is, how long it takes for resources from our departments to get to an emergency scene after we receive a tone to respond. By ‘resources’ I mean personnel, equipment suited to the task, and management overhead for large incidents. The complex relationship that we have with other fire districts means that, depending on the emergency, we can have resources arriving from various places over a relatively wide band of time. In particular, Chief Gibson and I were talking about water resources and how to consider the amount of on-site storage we should require a new residence to install. But, the water resources issue is a substantial issue and a topic that I will spend some time on for the next Newsletter. Here I want to focus on response time, what it means and how we try to manage it.

When someone dials 911 there is an expectation on the part of the caller

that help will arrive within just a few minutes. Is this expectation reasonable? For those new to rural living, that expectation is based on a notion of the response of city departments to emergencies, which they assume is rapid. Chief Schmitt told me recently that he has had conversations with Sunshine Fire District residents who mistakenly believe that the City of Boulder Fire Department serves Sunshine. On the other hand, long-time residents of rural areas understand that geographical constraints and the nature of the volunteer fire service (e.g., no staffing of the fire stations) can lead to delayed responses. What is the reality? Let’s look at the City of Boulder’s fire department to help understand how emergency responses work. Many fire districts, particularly city departments, keep statistics on response times. Fire response is the length of time it takes from when the dispatcher first picks up the call and says, ‘What’s your emergency’ to when the resources arrive on scene. As simple as that sounds, there are many moving parts required to achieve the desired result. Here are some definitions / steps:

‘Alarm handling’: the time from

the reception of the call at the 911 center to the time of dispatch to the responding agencies, i.e., the ‘tone’.

‘Turnout time’: the time it takes the responders to don protective gear and to begin responding with the appropriate vehicle / equipment once they get the tone. In our case, it includes the time to get to the station.

‘Travel time’: the time it takes from vehicle rollout to arrival on scene.

‘Effective Response Force (ERF) total time’: the time it takes for sufficient resources for the task at hand to arrive on scene. This one is a bit more complicated.

Sunshine Fire is dispatched through the Sheriff’s Department / County paging system; it dispatches 26 fire departments in the County. As you can imagine, there is a wide variation in responses to 911 calls in the fire districts throughout the County and there is not (that I could easily find) a compendium of mountain district response data. However, the City of Boulder

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Fire Marshal's Report by Bruce Honeyman - Continued

keeps metrics on these four response attributes and I'll refer to them as I discuss Sunshine's response times.

Alarm handling: The City of Boulder data shows a pretty consistent average alarm handling time of 3 minutes. 'Yikes' you must be thinking. But, here are some of the things that are happening before the dispatcher can send out a tone to the responders. First, the dispatcher needs to understand the nature of the problem. This often means communicating with distraught individuals and / or (particularly in incidences in the foothills) of ascertaining where exactly the incident is taking place. It's not uncommon for us to be dispatched to the wrong address! Second, the County dispatcher needs to actually send out a dispatch tone to the appropriate districts. Here, again on occasion, the wrong district gets toned out. Because we don't occupy the stations on a continuous basis, Sunshine firefighters (as do the other mountain districts) carry pagers that are activated when we get notified. This system also poses some problems. We have two types of pagers: a 'voice' pager and a digital pager. The voice pager is tripped when the dispatcher sends out a tone and those of us with voice pagers get to hear the dispatcher as he or she describes the incident. The digital pager provides the same information but on a screen. Obviously, the dispatcher needs to take time keying in the information. A substantial problem is that the digital pages sometimes come out a minute or two after the voice pager is activated. This is a constant frustration that the mountain districts have with the way the dispatching system is set up—it is, in many of our opinions, heavily oriented toward city needs. Dispatch states that the primary paging system is voice but many mountain firefighters

carry only the digital pagers (again another topic for longer discussion).

Turnout time: When we get a tone we are usually not at a station. We could be anywhere and doing a variety of things. Imagine being awakened at 3 A.M. while you're in R.E.M sleep. I, myself, have walked in more than a few walls while trying to get going at that time of night. Typically, a Sunshine officer will respond to a tone via radio letting dispatch know that Sunshine has received the emergency tone and is headed to the station. This lets other firefighters who are monitoring the situation know that a response is in progress. Sunshine also has a dedicated tactical frequency that we use to communicate among the responding firefighters. If Dispatch doesn't hear from a district in about 4 minutes they send out a second tone. We want to avoid that! City of Boulder firefighters are usually either at the station or in their trucks and yet the average turnout time for the city is 2 minutes. Rural firefighters need to stop what they are doing, get to their vehicles, drive to the station and then don the appropriate protective gear. The Firefighter 1 (structure firefighter) skills book allows 1 minute for firefighters to don the protective turnout gear. Typically, the first firefighters to the station don their gear and then pull the appropriate truck out of the station to await other firefighters. For most Sunshine firefighters (see the medical response exception later in this article), the turnout time will be longer than 2 minutes. We don't have data on turnout time for Sunshine but I would guess that most early response firefighters could get to the station within 5 minutes.

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Fire Marshal's Report by Bruce Honeyman - Continued

First arrival travel time: This is pretty obvious and clearly, depending on the nature of the call and location, can take substantial time. Typically, the first arriving resource will provide an arrival report. The report may contain the actual address of the incident and an eyes-on-assessment of what is taking place. Dispatch has around 30 pre-programmed incident types that are keyed into the dispatch notification. For example, one is 'roll over' for a vehicle and another 'unknown if injury accident'. There is not a dispatch 'bin' for 'car sitting on the side of the road'. The first arriving resource (it could be a firefighter in his or her privately owned vehicle, POV in firefighter parlance, or an engine) should provide some clarity on the situation. For the City of Boulder, the average first arrival travel time is about 5 ¼ minutes but it varies dramatically on the time of year, among other factors. In the case of Sunshine, I use a travel rate of 2 minutes per mile (30 mph) for an engine responding to an incident when I do resource arrival calculations. We can go a bit faster on Sunshine Canyon Drive than 30 mph but we move much slower on CR 83; long driveways are a different beast.

Effective Response Force (ERF) time: What? This means the time it takes for the resources necessary to address the incident to arrive on scene. In the case of the City of Boulder, the average ERF time is 3 ½ minutes longer than the first arrival travel time. For the City of Boulder, the average ERF for 2019 was 11.5 minutes.

What is an example of the difference between the first arrival time and ERF for our district? Consider this scenario: A tone goes out for Sunshine to respond to a structure fire (Alarm handling: 3 min.). Firefighters start

responding to Station #2. The first crew is assembled and in the appropriate engine (Turnout time: 5 min). If the address of the suspected structure fire is between the home of a responding officer and the station, the officer may go to the address and provide an assessment: 'no smoke or flames visible', 'flames visible on second story, occupants out of the house', etc. In this case of an officer responding POV, the turnout time and arrival time combined for this officer might be 5 minutes. Such arrival information could be crucial in helping the firefighters plan the response including what type of resources are needed. However, a lone firefighter arriving POV won't be able to do much for extinguishing the fire. We still need an ERF. My estimate is that, for perhaps 90% of the District, an engine can arrive within 5 minutes of leaving the station. Often we have enough personnel to operate two engines within the 5 minute turnout time I described above but it depends on the time of day, weather conditions and so on. At this point, using some reasonable time estimates, the total elapsed time from the 911 call receipt by the dispatcher to the arrival of a Sunshine engine is 13 minutes: we're at 10 minutes after the tones go out. Of course, things can take much longer but this analysis gives you an idea of what to expect.

What constitutes an ERF is heavily dependent on the nature of the call. If the fire is small (e.g., part of a kitchen), the first arriving engine (and maybe the corresponding first response time) might be sufficient to extinguish the fire, maybe even with just a fire extinguisher. If the fire is substantial and can't be

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Fire Marshal's Report by Bruce Honeyman - Continued

knocked down by the first arriving engine then the incident needs additional engines and water tenders to supply water, and far more personnel on scene. A substantial structure fire can easily use 15 – 20 firefighters or more. Additionally, setting up an effective water distribution network takes time: engines need to be positioned, hoses laid and the water tender relay established and managed. If there are suspected occupants remaining in the house, firefighter entry teams and rapid intervention teams (RIT) are needed to do search and rescue. It's important to note that an ERF doesn't mean that all parts need to be in place all at once but that the system is effectively managed so that there is continuous application of the response that is needed. This is one reason why we are increasingly requiring large on-site water supplies for difficult to access homes. A single attack engine with a large pump, such as 4501, can do a lot of fire suppression when connected to a 10,000 gal. cistern and can be an effective response force while waiting for additional resources to assemble.

Medical response:

As with most fire departments, the majority of calls are medical in nature. Sunshine Fire is a basic life support (BLS) agency. We can do perhaps 90% of emergency medical field procedures (stopping bleeding, CPR and administer a minimal set of drugs) but we can't intubate or administer more advanced drugs. That is the provenance of advanced life support (ALS) such as provided by American Medical Response (AMR), the County's ALS partner. A number of District residents have commented over the years on Sunshine's relatively rapid medical response. We achieve the good medical response time because the District's 4 EMTs are allowed to respond directly to an incident rather than going to

Station #2 to get an engine. EMTs carry well-stocked 'jump kits' in their vehicles, including defibrillators. Additionally, these EMTs live in different parts of the District thereby making for shortened response travel times. However, as I mentioned, Sunshine is a BLS agency and we do not transport patients. For that we rely on AMR and, in some rare cases, air medical transport. AMR's response is generally good but, depending on the time of year (e.g., road conditions) and other County medical activities, AMR's response can be substantially delayed. Thus, while our first medical contact with a patient is often rapid and effective, completing the medical event relies on our partnership with AMR.

What can you do to help us?

Consider all of the moving parts in response that I described above. First, if you call 911, be as clear as you can about where you are and the nature of the emergency. I know that this can be extremely difficult if you are part of the incident. Boulder County has reverse 911 so if you are calling from a landline it will tag your address. However, a cell phone is not useful in this capacity. If you are calling from the road try to be as precise as you can be as to the location of the incident. If possible, please stay at the scene to help guide us to the location. On many occasions we get people who call dispatch who just 'drove by' the scene. This can be problematic and cause response delays.

Second, make sure our access to your property is clear and that the green address markers are in good repair, and visible. If you have time, move vehicles

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Fire Marshal's Report by Bruce Honeyman - Continued

out of the way. If you have a turnaround at your house, keep it clear. Backing down a driveway is much slower. If you have pullouts, make sure that they are clear and at the full specified dimensions. If you were required to have pullouts and turnarounds as part of site plan review, the infrastructure needs to be kept as originally approved by the County and us in perpetuity.

Third, if you are not involved in an incident, stay away. Emergency scenes can be a dangerous place. We're all

curious about what is happening but coming up to first responders and asking questions are a huge distraction and put everyone at added risk. You can help in the response by not impeding responders.

So, the next time you call 911 or hear sirens, think about the chain of events that is taking place to get emergency help to you or a neighbor and remember that we are doing everything we can to get to you, your love one, or the incident quickly and safely.

Please Call 911

If you need emergency assistance or come upon an emergency, please call "911". This is the most efficient way to get emergency response to the scene. Calling a SFPD firefighter directly can delay emergency response.

Sunshine FPD Board News - Continued

Alan Kirton – Chair, Dan Fischer – Treasurer, Jean Gatza – Secretary, Cathy Shoenfeld, Dick Smith

Lastly, a group of people have been working on alternative plans for this year's Community FEST and have also been instrumental in setting up the GoFundMe site for the district and in leading the fundraising effort. This group has included Jean Gatza and Cathy Shoenfeld from the board as well as Linda Molyneux, Steve Spencer, Jen Lansky, Jane Sanders, Beth Byerlein, and Aimee Mishkin. While the plans for the community get together are still being worked out the fund raising effort has exceeded its goal thanks to the generosity of the

Sunshine community.

As a reminder, board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month, at 7:30 in Station number 1 at 311 County Rd 83. Community participation in these meetings is welcomed and encouraged. The Sunshine website provides access to the board meeting minutes and Treasurer's reports. Feel free to contact board members if you have any questions or concerns about what's happening in the district.

Are you planning to burn slash this winter?

If so you need two burn permits, one from the county and one from SFPD.

Boulder County Permit information: <https://www.bouldercounty.org/safety/fire/burn-permits/>

SFPD Permit: <http://www.sunshine-fpd.org/downloads/Slash-burn-permit-v4.pdf>

SFPD slash pile building & burning tips: <http://www.sunshine-fpd.org/about/Burning-Slash-Piles.cfm>

2020 Ballot Issue

Sunshine property owners will see the following issue on their ballot in November:

SUNSHINE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BALLOT ISSUE - GALLAGHER REVENUE STABILIZATION
SHALL SUNSHINE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BE AUTHORIZED TO INCREASE OR DECREASE ITS CURRENT AND ALL FUTURE GENERAL MILL LEVIES ONLY IF, ON OR AFTER NOVEMBER 3, 2020, THERE ARE CHANGES IN THE METHOD OF CALCULATING ASSESSED VALUATION, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO A CHANGE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF ACTUAL VALUATION USED TO DETERMINE RESIDENTIAL ASSESSED VALUATION DUE TO ARTICLE X SECTION 3 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION (COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE GALLAGHER AMENDMENT), SO THAT, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE ACTUAL TAX REVENUES GENERATED BY SUCH MILL LEVIES ARE THE SAME AS THE ACTUAL TAX REVENUES THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN GENERATED HAD SUCH CHANGES NOT OCCURRED?

This ballot issue is not meant to raise taxes. It is meant to keep the District's General Fund tax revenue stable in the face of projected reductions in the residential assessment rate due to the COVID 19 economic downturn and the Gallagher Amendment. The residents in Lefthand and Four Mile Protection Districts passed similar ballot issues in the 2018/2019 elections because the increase in property values in their districts were not keeping pace with the decrease in the residential assessment rate. Below is a detailed explanation of this ballot issue.

As a primer for those not familiar with how property taxes are calculated:

Property Valuation x Assessment Rate = Assessed Value

Assessed Value x Mill Levy = Property Tax

Assessment Rates vary based on type of property:

Residential – 7.15%, floating rate, calculated every two years based on the provisions of the Gallagher Amendment. Due to TABOR, the residential assessment rate can only go down, it cannot be raised without a ballot referendum

Nonresidential - 29%, business and vacant land, fixed by state law

Oil and Gas - 87.5%, fixed by state law

Current Mill Levies for Sunshine Residents

Sunshine residents currently pay a property tax mill levy of 83.872 mills. Of that, 12.04 mills (14.4%) go to the Sunshine Fire Protection District. The remaining 71.832 mills go to Boulder County and the Boulder Valley School District.

The Sunshine Fire Protection District (SFPD) depends on the property tax as its primary source of income. The 12.04 mills levy is made up of two distinct levies. 8.48 mills go to SFPD's General Fund which supports all of the fire department assets, equipment and activities. An additional 3.56 mills are dedicated to Community Wildfire Protection including wildfire mitigation projects and community fire cisterns. The two levies are projected to generate \$105,000 and \$44,500 respectively in the 2020 budget year. The property tax revenues are supplemented with donations and grants.

Effect of Gallagher Amendment

The Gallagher Amendment requires a state wide, 45%-55% split of the total property tax revenue between

2020 Ballot Issue

residential and non-residential/oil and gas properties. The current Residential Assessment Rate (RAR), set in 2019, is 7.15%. Due to the Gallagher Amendment, it is projected that the RAR will decrease to 5.88% in 2021 because of the downturn of the Colorado economy due to COVID 19 and its dire effects on business output and the oil and gas industries. This represents a 17.8% drop in the RAR.

Given the District's split between residential vs non-residential property, the 17.8% drop in the RAR would result in a 15% decrease in SFPD's tax revenue for taxes collected for 2021.

Proposed Ballot Issue

Because of this significant revenue drop in an already tight budget, the Board has taken the action to introduce a ballot issue in the November election to shield the District from the effects of Gallagher. It does this by authorizing the Board to raise the General Fund mill levy to compensate for tax revenue lost because of the lowering the RAR from its current value of 7.15%.

The proposed ballot issue has been written so that it will only affect the General Fund mill levy of 8.48 mills. The reasoning is that the fire department mill levy must support the ongoing expenses of utilities, maintenance, purchase of firefighter PPE and the leasing costs associated with the purchase of fire engines. As such, the district depends on a stable, ongoing revenue stream from property taxes. By contrast, the 3.56 mill levy for fire mitigation covers expenses that can be tailored to fit the available funding on a year-to-year basis.

Effect of Ballot Issue

As an example, if the ballot issue passed and if, as projected, the RAR dropped to 5.88% then the Board would be authorized to raise the General Fund mill levy from 8.48 to 9.93 mills to keep the General Fund tax revenue equal to what it would have been had the RAR remained at 7.15%. SFPD's 3.56 mills levy as well as the levies supporting Boulder County and Boulder Valley School District would be unaffected. SFPD's total mill levy would increase from 12.04 mills to 13.49 mills, a 12% increase. Assuming there was no change to the Boulder County or BVSD mill levies, the total mill levy that Sunshine residents pay would increase from 83.872 mills to 85.322 mills, a 1.73% increase. Assuming there was no property value increase, resident's Assessed Value would drop 17.8% due to the decrease in RAR and total property taxes would be reduced by 16.3%.

In the interest of transparency, in the example above, owners of non-residential property in the district (i.e. vacant land) would see the SFPD portion of their property taxes increase by 12% and their total property taxes increase by 1.73%. This would be due to the increased mill levy and the fact that the non-residential assessment rate is fixed at 29%. Also, in the example above and without the ballot issue being passed, residents would have seen their property taxes reduced by 17.8%, equal to the decrease in the residential assessment rate.

Related State Ballot Issue

There is also a state-wide ballot issue on the November ballot to eliminate the Gallagher Amendment. If the voters approve that issue then Senate Bill 223 would place a moratorium on changing the ratio of valuation for assessment for any class of property. Should this issue pass the residential assessment rate would remain at 7.15% and the General Fund mill levy would remain at 8.48 mills. However, in recent years similar ballot issues have failed.

Questions: If you have questions or comments, you may contact the board at directors@sunshine-fpd.org.

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**District Resident Email Group
and**

Fire Department Notices

If you are NOT receiving email from either or both the Sunshine community email group as well as the Sunshine Fire Department email group (which is only used by the Chief and Officers for emergency or important notifications) please email **BOTH** sfpd.don.dick@gmail.com. & chief@sunshine-fpd.org. Also, please contact **BOTH** emails whenever there is a change to your email address so that we have updated information.

**Please Welcome
our Newest SFPD
Firefighters:**

David Begleiter
John Newton

Samantha Lansky
(Junior FF)

Are you ready to Volunteer for SFPD?

We are always looking for dedicated individuals to become FireFighters, station cleaners and organizers, event managers/support, and equipment managers. Please contact Michael Schmitt at chief@sunshine-fpd.org if interested.

Calendar**Oct:**

- 7 Medical Training - 6-9 Four Mile
- 10 Practical Training - Four mile 8:30-12 PM
- 13 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ station #1
- 22 Classroom Training TBD 7 to 10 PM

Nov:

- 4 Medical Training 6 -9 @ station #1
- 10 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ station #1
- 14 Live burn/hose training 8:30 AM-12 PM @ Training Center

Dec:

- 2 Medical Training 6 -9 @ Four Mile
- 8 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. @ Station 1
- 12 Practical Training: Car Fire 8:30 AM - 12 PM

Comments or suggestions for next newsletter contact:
Jennifer Lansky at 303.442.2709 or jen@lansky.cc