



# The Sunshine Fire Protection District Newsletter

## Letter from the Chief By Michael Schmitt

Dear Sunshine Residents,

There are a number of topics that I will be writing about in this newsletter. It is the end of August at the time of writing this. Our fire season is still here for a couple of months at least and I hope that everyone has been active in keeping their driveways cleared and maintained, mitigation done, grasses cut and your family prepared as is necessary when living in the wildland-urban interface. Fire Mitigation often is mistaken as a thing you do once and then not worry about for a few years. I have that conversation more often than I should. Instead, fire mitigation is something that needs to be done every year to maintain it. If you are new to the district or haven't done so please contact Abby Silver with Wildfire Partners for a free consultation.

Access continues to be a problem on some of our district driveways. We can't do much about the slope or the

width of existing driveways, but trees and branches need to be cleared to allow our larger engines and an ambulance to get to your house. We will not damage our trucks when access hasn't been taken care of.

**As of August 30, 2021,  
SFPD has responded to  
61 calls.**

Medical – 11

Structural, car, & wildland  
fire/smoke reports – 7

Vehicle & bike accident – 10

Hazmat including CO2 - 1

Other - 3

Canceled en route - 29

Last year's evacuation of our district stirred a lot of emotions and left many of our residents with questions. I have reached out to the Boulder Office of Disaster Management to coordinate a town hall type event to answer our

resident's questions and to explain the process of how an evacuation is done and why it is crucial for the optimal outcome of the emergency.

We hope to send an email out in late September to see if there is interest, and to schedule it soon after to be conducted via Zoom due to the pandemic.

We are still waiting for our new truck to be built. Not just when the fire truck portion of this otherwise commercial truck will be built but even when the chassis itself will be built by Freightliner. The pandemic has affected the supply chain for just about everything as you know, and currently, there are not enough semiconductors to build the chassis for our truck and it has been delayed to be built later in the year.

**Continued on Page 2**

## Letter from the Chief - Cont

By Michael Schmitt

We have had a number of new firefighters join in the past year, ten to be exact including two junior firefighters. Some of you may have noticed that there is a lot more driver training than there used to be. With that many new members, we have around 400hrs of driver training alone to complete with most of that in the district. We have had expenses this year related to new firefighter gear and repair of existing gear and equipment that far surpassed what we have had to spend in previous years. The continued service and dedication of our volunteers (not just firefighters) is the reason why we continue to grow, adapt and improve as a result.

It was a very sad day for the department and the community when Aaron Beltz passed away. Not only was Aaron a really gifted mechanic but he was also a friend to many and a very interesting person to talk to. Aaron always wanted to volunteer his time to the department because, as he said it, he really appreciated what we do for the community so by using his mechanical skills he can return the favor. Well, Aaron, we really appreciate what you always did for us, working on aging equipment and putting up with firefighter "mechanical work" that you had to witness and endure. Thank you for everything you did for us.

We have two new Deputy Fire Marshals that were hired earlier in the year from within the department. Michael Johnson will become Fire Marshal when Bruce Honeyman steps down in April of 2022 after 20+ years as Marshal and Paul Hourihan will remain Deputy Fire Marshal at that time. The amount of work it takes to work through permits and SPRs as well as deal with the County and State requirements made it necessary to spread the work across two sets of shoulders. Michael and Paul have been certified firefighters and have been

with the district for 6 and 5 years now, respectively. And knowing both well I can tell you that I couldn't be happier to have both take on these positions. They have both been sworn in by the SFPD board and myself in the spring and are already working with Bruce to learn the ropes of the job.

Bruce Honeyman has done a tremendous amount of work for the district in his time as Marshal (while also being a firefighter and medical responder) and I cannot thank him enough on behalf of the district. He isn't gone yet but has certainly deserved to move on next year. He has made the district a better place and as a personal friend, I can tell you that it will be a loss when he steps down. Thank you, Bruce. And thank you to Paul and Michael for stepping up.

Winter is coming. Please make sure that you have not only prepared your home for the cold temperatures but also your car(s). Ideally, you have a winter roadside emergency kit in addition to winter tires and a traction device (Autosock, tire chain or cable system) in your car as well as additional clothing and footwear. I myself have picked up stranded drivers on more than one occasion in a winter storm and in more cases than not were the driver and passengers very much unprepared for the conditions outside. Also, remember what you do to some of your visitors from town. If they come to your house in the afternoon when it is still nice and sunny and you send them home in the evening after a few hours of snow falling it is better to invite them to stay or to encourage them to leave before the (usually predicted) snowfalls.

Michael Schmitt - Chief, Sunshine FPD

## CWPP Committee Update - By Abby Silver

### Fall chipping is coming soon:

Fall chipping will be taking place from October 25-29. Please see the email from our Sunshine Fire communications with details. Please contact Abby directly at [abberoo@msn.com](mailto:abberoo@msn.com) (vs replying to that email) to sign up.

### Emergency Water Supply

We are very excited that the community cistern at 1462 County Road 83 has been completely installed. The disturbed area will be re-seeded with a native grass seed mix in the fall for spring germination.

Also, a big thanks to Henry Ballard and Josh Schoenfeld for finishing the siding on the shed at the hydrant below Station 1. Nice work guys!

### Hazard Trees Project

We will continue to identify hazard trees. These are dead or leaning trees that could potentially fall across a public roadway, impeding egress/ingress. If you feel you have such a tree on your property, please contact Abby ([abberoo@msn.com](mailto:abberoo@msn.com)). The removal will be almost entirely subsidized by the district (90% with a 10% homeowner contribution.)

**Save the Date for Chipping:**

**October 25-29**

### We're not out of the woods yet!

We've been blessed this year with a relatively cool and wet summer. It's easy to forget that last year both fires in Boulder County actually started in October. So don't let your guard down! We're actually most likely heading into the driest time of year. And of course, fall is when leaves and pine needles come down in abundance. With those thoughts in mind, here are a few things you can do these next few months to promote wildfire safety:

- Rake and bag leaves and pine needles if they begin to accumulate against your house siding or in the first few feet around your house.
- Keep your firewood at least 30 feet from your house. That means not on or under your deck!
- Do a final round of weed whacking around your house. Grass should be under 6 inches tall, especially as it dries out.
- Cut back the dead/dry flowers from your yard.
- Fill gaps, cracks, and bird/wasp holes that may have appeared in your siding over the course of the summer. As a bonus, this could make your house less drafty this winter.

Thanks as ever for being part of this amazing community and for doing your part to keep us all as safe as possible from wildfire danger.

CWPP Committee Chair: [abberoo@msn.com](mailto:abberoo@msn.com)

### Please Call 911

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

## Sunshine FPD Board News

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

Fall greetings!

We began planning for an in-person at a Community Fest this fall but with the COVID cases increasing even among those vaccinated, the board reluctantly put those plans on hold for now. We look forward to gathering together as a community as soon as we can do so safely.

### Some recent updates:

- CR 83 Community Fire Cistern is now fully operational with all fire connections in place and ~18,000 gallons in the tank. Thanks to the many volunteers that showed up to help with traffic control during the delivery of the tank and the help with getting the tank into position. The cistern is one of several projects funded by Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) tax revenue.
- The district received several grants for wildfire risk mitigation and equipment. These include almost \$23,000 from a Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant for the shaded fuel break along the driveway at 3701 SCD. Also, the district was partially awarded a grant for \$5,300 towards the purchase of a mobile radio and handheld radios for the new engine. Many thanks to Alan Kirton for all his work preparing and submitting grant proposals.
- Delivery of the New Rosenbauer Engine is anticipated later this year! The engine meets both the requirements of a Type 1 structural pumper and a Type 3 off-road, wildland, fire-fighting vehicle. It will be a great fit for our district.

As always, we are grateful to the people who volunteer their time to the district. Thanks to the Officers, Firefighters and EMTs who dedicate their time and energy for training and responding 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; and to Linda Molyneaux and Jen Lansky for fund-raising.

Please consider helping out the district! There is a lot of work required to keep the district going other than being a first responder. Your skills are needed to:

- Lend a hand to move forward one of many CWPP – Community Wildfire Protection Planning – projects. There are many types of projects and tasks.
- Grant writing and grant administration. In any given year there are multiple CWPP and fire department grants that the district can apply to. Grant income has become an integral part of the district's revenue. Reach out to any board member for more information and to volunteer!

**Continued on page 5**

## Sunshine FPD Board News - Continued

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

We are also extremely grateful for the financial support the district receives through fundraising. Your contributions help to fund equipment and training for all the dedicated firefighters who take their time for intensive training and willingness to help their neighbors responding to emergencies. Please consider donating again this year.

**JOIN US** any 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Station One for monthly **Board Meetings**. We're meeting in person with masks for now and everyone is welcome. The Sunshine website provides access to the board meeting minutes and Treasurer's reports. Feel free to contact a board member if you have any questions or concerns about what's happening in the district.

### \* Boulder County's Emergency Alert Notification System \*

This system allows residents of Boulder County to be notified of emergency situations including mandatory evacuations notices in a variety of ways including on their cell phone, home, and work phones and by text messaging and e-mail. You will receive time-sensitive messages for your chosen locations such as home, work, school, and family. YOU pick where, you pick how.

To register for these alerts or to validate your existing account please go to:

**[www.boco911alert.com](http://www.boco911alert.com)**

### Cistern being delivered and installed at Country Road 83



## Fire Marshal's Report - By Bruce Honeyman and Michael Johnson

### **Welcome to Michael Johnson and Paul Hourihan**

When Joyce and I moved to Sunshine in 1993, like many people we had little knowledge of emergency services in unincorporated Boulder County. In the Fall of 1995, Joyce and I attended our first Community Fest. We knew that it was a fundraiser for the fire department but little beyond that. Of course, we quickly learned that the fire department was made up of our neighbors and that there were volunteer needs galore. I remember Eric Bader telling me that the next training was to be in the 'burn building', whatever that was, and that I could try out the department. I also remember that the only bunker gear available was for someone much smaller than I and that the boots looked like the old Buccaneer boots with leather going up to my thigh. I was sold and, as they say, the rest is history. As Joyce has remarked many times, joining the fire department was the best thing we did for our social life in Sunshine Canyon. In those days, all three of our engines were packed into Station #1 and putting the engines away after a call was a test of engine driving skills. I remember Steve Waltman remarking that we are better at driving in reverse than forward.

Not too much longer after I joined the department, Jim Birch, the Sunshine Fire Marshal, decided to retire. Give Jim the credit for starting Sunshine on our cistern development plan—we now have over 200,000 gal. of District cisterns placed around Sunshine. With Jim retiring, SFPD needed someone to pick up the ball and I thought that it would be a great way to get to know the district. I'll say! I would never have thought that I would be in the Fire Marshal business for 25 years.

I wrote about my experience as Fire Marshal in a newsletter several issues ago and I won't delve into that here except to say that the job as Fire Marshal has markedly evolved over the last 2 plus decades. When I started, we were pretty much at the whim of the County. One of my underlying principles when evaluating new developments is the safety of our first responders; it's the primary driver of my outlook. It's a version of the 'put your mask on first before helping others' when getting flying safety instructions.

If we can't get to your home safely then we can't help you. One of my biggest struggles over the years has been dealing with

County development ideas and standards that hinder what we believe are safe conditions (e.g., driveway width) for responding.

And, to be perfectly honest, we sometimes run up against District resident push-back on access and water requirement that we feel are needed. As such, a big part of the Fire Marshal's job is discussion and education. We try not to just say, 'this is what we want; we need to say why because, as trite as it may sound, safety is everyone's job. That said, I think that it is a fair assessment to state that time and again we have confronted the County & Commissioners on responder safety versus County development, the Commissioners while thanking us for our service, have ruled against us. As development in the foothills continues, and as sites become more problematic for development, this issue - safety versus development expediency - will remain our Chief and Fire Marshal's primary headache.

As this is my last newsletter, I want to end on a positive note because, overwhelmingly, being Fire Marshal in Sunshine has

**Continued on Page 7**



**\*\*\*IMPORTANT WINTER SAFETY NOTICE\*\*\***

- The ONLY proper method of disposing of ashes and coals is to put them in a metal container with a lid that is designed for that task, then drown them with water.
- The ONLY way to know if they are cool is if you can put your hand in the coals/ashes, all the way to the bottom, without your hand getting hot.

**Fire Marshal's Report by Bruce Honeyman and Michael Johnson - Continued**

been a wonderful experience. At one point, I believe that I knew everyone in the District! And, in spite of my complaints above, I think that we have an overall good relationship with the County. The fire department is the best that it has ever been! It's robust and filled with enthusiastic volunteers. Chief Schmitt has done a remarkable job at heading the department and I hope that all of you reading this recognize how lucky you are to have him as Chief.

The Chief and Fire Marshal are partners in the 'fire protection' aspect of the department. Chief Schmitt has found great new partners in Michael Johnson, who will take over from me as Fire Marshal in April 2022, and Paul Hourihan, who will remain as Deputy Fire Marshal. They will do an excellent job at helping to protect SFPD!

And thank you for your kindness and support!!

Hello, District residents (Michael writing)! I moved to Sunshine Canyon and the District in 2015. Though new to Colorado, a couple of years in the Sierra Nevadas gave me a taste for mountain living and the tight community

bonds that develop. Shortly after arriving, curiosity about emergency services and particularly the fire department led me to a long conversation with Steve Waltman, Sunshine Fire Chief at the time. One thing led to another and shortly after that, I joined SFPD.

It's a privilege to serve this community with such a dedicated group of volunteers. Earlier this year, our Chief Michael Schmitt asked if Paul and I would consider stepping into the role of Fire Marshal. Bruce has so ably done this job that it's going to take three of us to replace him (the third being a good amount of help from Chief Schmitt)! We agreed. One thing I've taken from my conversations with Bruce is his unwavering focus and attention to safety, especially in the unique and challenging mountain environment. This view is the foundation for a template around which I plan to interact with residents, the Fire Department, and the County. I'm excited about moving forward in this role and sincerely hope that someday I too will know everyone 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>



**FireFighter, Eric Bader, advising at the yearly wildland refresher**



**Joint Department Stabilization training**

### **Sunshine Fire Protection District Community Fest & Fundraiser**

Due to concerns over COVID-19, SFPD does not think that an in-person event would be in the best interest of the community. We all look forward to a fabulous community gather once it is safe. Therefore, an online Fundraiser is being launched on October 1st via Sunshine Communications. -

Help stock the soon to arrive new fire truck

To donate go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/sunshine-FPD-2021>

or mail a check made out to SFPD to Station #1, 311 County Road 83, Boulder CO 80302.

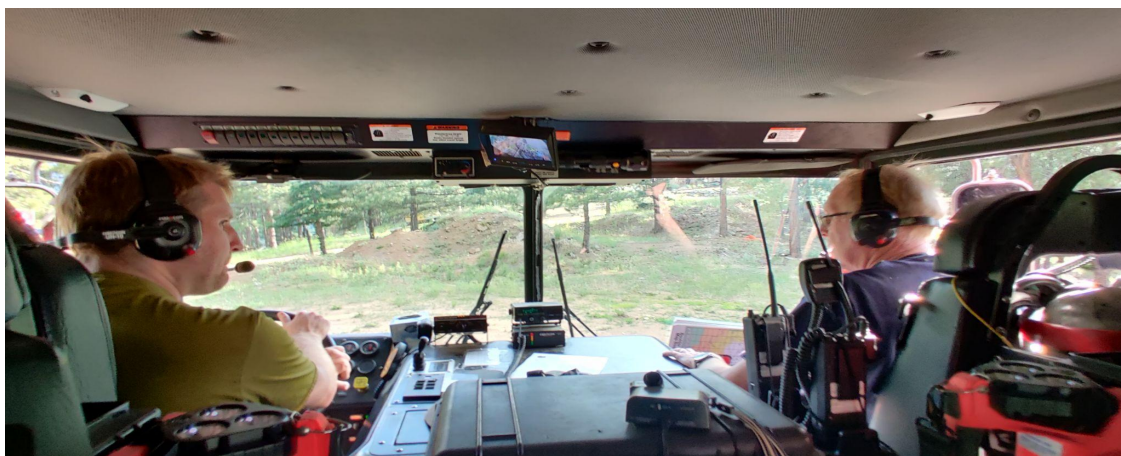
Help us upgrade our medical equipment and buy additional defibrillator

If you have any questions, please contact Linda Molyneux at [linda.molyneux@gmail.com](mailto:linda.molyneux@gmail.com) or Cathy Schoenfeld [cathyschoenfeld@yahoo.com](mailto:cathyschoenfeld@yahoo.com)

Help fund the purchase of safety equipment for our new firefighters

Back by popular demand:  
T-shirt & Sweatshirt incentives

Help our new firefighters become trained & keep our current firefighters up to date



**Two generations of SFPD firefighters - Alex and Bruce Honeyman**



**SFPD OFFICERS**

Chief - Michael Schmitt  
(303)246-4519  
chief@sunshine-fpd.org

Deputy Chief - Henry Ballard  
(303) 449-8619  
deputy-chief@sunshine-fpd.org

Fire Marshal -  
Michael Johnson- (775) 790-2662  
[marshal@sunshine-fpd.org](mailto:marshal@sunshine-fpd.org)

Deputy Fire Marshal -  
Paul Hourihan -(303) 551-3443  
pthourihan@gmail.com

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President - Alan Kirton  
ajkirton@ionsky.com

Treasure - Dan Fischer  
fischer\_dp@outlook.com

Cathy Schoenfeld  
cathyshoenfeld@yahoo.com

Dick Smith  
recjsmith@aol.com

Jean Gatz  
jeangatza@yahoo.com

**COMMUNITY WILDFIRE  
PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP)  
COMMITTEE**

CWPP Chair - Abby Silver  
(303) 442-1253  
abberoo@msn.com

**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](mailto:sfpd.don.dick@gmail.com). & [chief@sunshine-fpd.org](mailto:chief@sunshine-fpd.org). Also, please contact **BOTH** emails whenever there is a change to your email address so that we have updated information.

**SFPD's Website:**  
[www.sunshine-fpd.org](http://www.sunshine-fpd.org)

SFPD Phone #  
303.786.7731

**Are you ready to Volunteer for SFPD?**

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

**Calendar****Oct:**

- 7 Medical Training 6 -9 PM
- 9 Practical Training 8:30-12 PM
- 12 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 PM @ station #1
- 28 Classroom Training TBD 7 to 10 PM

**Nov:**

- 3 Medical Training 6 -9 PM
- 9 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 PM @ station #1
- 13 Practical training 8:30 AM-12 PM @ Training Center

**Dec:**

- 2 Medical Training 6 -9 PM
- 11 Practical Training: 8:30 AM - 12 PM
- 14 SFPD Board Meeting 7:30 PM @ Station 1

Comments or suggestions for next newsletter contact:  
Jennifer Lansky at 303.442.2709 or [jen@lansky.cc](mailto:jen@lansky.cc)