

Spring 2009

HUNTINGTON LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



Letter from the Chief—Brother Chris

Thanks to generous people!

While the economy has seen better days, the Huntington Lake Fire Department continues to be blessed with very generous supporters. In addition to all of you who make sacrifices to make sure we have the money we need to operate, there are several groups of people at the Lake that regularly make significant donations of time, talent, goods and services.

The annual pancake breakfast, conducted for us by the Huntington Lake Association, is a wonder to behold. Glenn Johnson and his crew of 30 or so volunteers work miracles to bring our community together, serve great food and to raise much needed funding. These outstanding people scour the County every year to gather donations of food and goods to make this event the success that it is!

Lakeshore, Rancheria, and “The Condo” Water Company continually give without counting the cost to support the department. Lakeshore donates the dance hall every year for the Annual Pancake Breakfast and even closes their own restaurant to contribute to the success of the event. Additionally, Lakeshore provides this wonderful gathering space for public meetings and department training. Whenever we have asked Lakeshore to help with parts, labor, or equipment they always answer with a hearty Yes!

Rancheria Enterprises has donated the service for our engine 262 and the water tender as well as providing parts, good and services for maintaining the apparatus or fire house at no charge. This last summer, they donated a slip to dock the fireboat and spent many hours working to make it suitable for our

unique needs. In addition to all their work they provide fuel to the department at a reduced cost and in winter make sure that snow is removed from the firehouse to assure our quick response to emergencies.

Huntington Pines Mutual Water Company is the entity that first built our main firehouse and continues to maintain the structure and provide the heat and power to operate it. We could not be in business as a fire department serving the entire lake if they did not provide this.

Please join me in thanking these generous people next time you see them!

Our Water Tender is here!

Southern California Edison is in the final stages of obtaining their new license to operate the Big Creek project, and will soon send us their donation of \$100,000 towards the purchase of a new tender. Due to the forecast of another extremely dry summer, a significant expected

Special points of interest:

- *Get ready for a Dry summer!*
- *We are getting grants*
- *July 5 is Pancake Breakfast*

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We are winning grants from new sources.

Chief's Note (cont.)

increased in price next year the increase of sales, our Board of Directors authorized the purchase of the new water this winter. We actually made the purchase on the 30th of April to save the 1% increase in sales tax! It will be in service by June 1st.

This purchase completes our planned update of apparatus well ahead of schedule due to major grants, extraordinary gifts, and hundreds of modest gifts for the rescue (R62), the Structure Engine (E62) and now the Water Tender (WT62). I am continually grateful and amazed at what we have done together to reduce pain, suffering, and loss for the people of Huntington Lake!

Get "Fire Safe" early this season!

California is in its third year of drought and fire authorities are already discussing when to begin restrictions on burning. Your clean up efforts should include the "regular clearance" and this year we ask

that you also include brush and dry limbs/ twigs from the trees and any ladder fuels from the trees around your property. Remember that fire can burn both up and down hill so clearing "dead and down" and ladder fuels above your cabin is also important.

Operations

We are very aware of the financial conditions that are affecting everyone and know that you are challenged to help many charities. Thank you for keeping our little fire department at the top of your priorities. Without your gifts, which pay for *operations* we can not continue to provide our high level of service.

The Department is working hard to control costs, and to obtain grants and gifts to keep the recommended donation level the same, while at the same time maintaining fire and rescue services you can be proud of. Here are some of the things that we have

done since our last newsletter to improve our service by using "outside" funding.

The Fireboat:

Thanks to the US Navy, the Blue and Gold Fleet in San Francisco and the US Forest Service, we now have a Fire Boat at no cost to the Department. It is docked and maintained at Rancheria Marina and is used for responses to on-water emergencies (boating accidents, etc) access to parts of the lake that do not have roads. It is also the base for underwater searches (an event that has occurred for too frequently the last two years. This year we will be adding a donated pump and deck gun for fighting fires close to the shore. We are also investigating pumping water out of the lake to firefighters on shore.

New Breathing Apparatus (SCBA'S)

We received a \$55,000 grant from FEMA to replace all of our Breathing apparatus and to install an

Chief's Note (cont.)



Benefits at no direct cost!

air fill station to refill both firefighting air tanks and SCUBA tanks for underwater rescues.

Oxygen Refill station:

We also finalized an arrangement with American Ambulance of Fresno to provide an oxygen tank refilling capability. They pay for all of the oxygen we use. As you might imagine we use a great deal of medical oxygen on our responses throughout the year. We now are able to provide mutual aid to all fire and rescue personnel requiring oxygen refill in this part of the Sierra.

Thermal Imaging Camera

We received a \$15,000 grant from Fireman's Fund for a Thermal Imaging Camera. This phenomenal device allows us to locate people in the dark on the lake or in the forest based on the heat given off by their body.

This will greatly assist us in finding people in trouble on the lake at night and those lost and/or injured in the woods.

Mid-Lake Station

We now have the use of a new storage building built by Camp LaSalle for storage of one of our new apparatus. In the summer, this will function as a "mid-lake fire station" actively staffed by Brothers Jack and Chris and Explorers (young people training in fire and medical emergencies). In the winter, we will store our Water Tender in this location. This building was pay for by the Camp and three families who donated money to camp to help make this possible.

This year FEMA grant

Finally, we are actively pursuing another

FEMA grant for safe Personal Protective Equipment (PPE: firefighting coats, pants, helmets, etc.) for all of our volunteers. Our current PPE has been donated by fire departments and most of it is 15 to 20 years old and is well out of compliance! We have used this in the past because that is all we had, but we feel we are obligated to provide protection to our firefighters at a level comparable to the paid firefighters (typically CDF) with whom they work side by side. We generally receive high praise from the Battalion Chiefs that review our operations, but last summer they did observe some of our people working an illegal fire near a cabin in sub-standard Protective equipment.

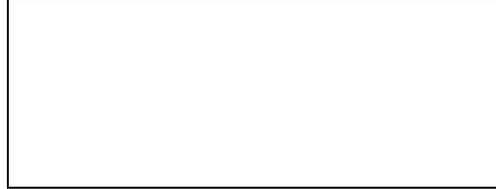
Brother Chris

Mark your Calendars: July 5!

Mark your calendars for Sunday July 5 for the Annual Huntington Lake Pancake Breakfast spon-

sored by the Huntington Lake Association to benefit the Huntington Lake Volunteer Fire Depart-

ment. Think of this time as a target date to do your own fire prevention checklist:



- 1) Is my property cleared of fire fuels?
- 2) Are the batteries in my smoke detectors good?
- 3) Are my fire extinguishers fully charged and within validity period?
- 4) Has my chimney been cleaned within the last 5 years?

Board of Directors Note

Overall, our Fire Department finances are solid and we have adopted a very conservative approach for investment of cash balances and funding future activities so that we conserve our cash. Last summer we were lucky in that the number of calls was down. This helped control our direct operating cost. Additionally, with the

newer apparatus in use, unplanned maintenance was very low.

One decision we made last year was difficult, but necessary for financial reasons. One of our firefighters had spent almost a year in formal education to become a paramedic for the department. This was followed by 2 ½ months of practical training in hospitals and another three months on an ambulance as a paramedic intern. It was clear by then that he would pass the National Exam and be ready to begin work for us as a Paramedic. We then investigated all of the administrative details that would need to be created or changed to support this significantly expanded scope of practice. When we discovered the cost of medical malpractice insurance to cover this scope of practice was over

\$100,000 per year we had to tell him to stop. This was simply out of the question for us. As a result, we now have a VERY well trained EMT who can only add to the quality of the continuing medical training all of our personnel receive.

We have made the transition from using the Huntington Lake Association, our long time partner, as our collection agent to direct contact and it has worked. Our overall participation by residents is up significantly and our major donor support has continued. We recognize that the current economic situation is difficult for us all and strongly encourage all of our community members to continue their much needed support of the department.