



The Connection



Future of the Fire Department Up for Vote

On Tuesday, November 17th, voters who live in the unincorporated areas of Santa Fe County will head to the polls to decide the fate of the fire department's County Fire Protection Excise Tax. The ¼% gross receipts tax (which amounts to .25 cents on a 100.00 transaction) is imposed on all non-medical and non-food transactions in the unincorporated areas of Santa Fe County. The tax can only be used for the purchase of fire equipment, apparatus and fire stations and operating expenses. The monies derived from this tax cannot be used for salaries or benefits for paid or volunteer personnel. Specifically for our department the tax has been and will be used primarily to fund the Apparatus Replacement Program via a Revenue Bond.

As most everyone in the fire department knows the department has been without a Revenue Bond for the last eight years because the tax was due to sunset on December 31st, 2008. Without the revenue source to payoff the Revenue Bond the department has been unable to replace aged fire apparatus. As a result the average age of the department's fleet has climbed to over 13 years of age after being reduced to an average of 11 years from what was (in the late 1990's) an over 20+ fleet age when the program started. In a nutshell we're headed the wrong direction with our department's critical apparatus needs, not to mention our countywide equipment and station needs.

While it would be inappropriate to publicly campaign for the renewal of the tax it is possible to educate anyone and everyone who is a potential voter in the November election about the tax and its importance to the department. I would encourage you to do so and to encourage those voters in the unincorporated areas of the county to vote on November 17th.

Our essential mission and number one priority is to provide compassionate, high quality emergency services to the people of Santa Fe County.

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Special Election Consolidated Precincts

Agua Fria Comm. Center = Precincts 31, 66, 67, 80
 Capshaw Middle School = Precincts 37, 54, 81
 El Rancho Comm. Center = Precinct 5
 Elk's BPOE 460 Lodge = Precincts 48, 55
 Galisteo Comm. Center = Precinct 17
 Gonzales Elementary = Precinct 11
 La Cienega Comm. Center = Precincts 12, 62
 Pojoaque Middle School = Precincts 59, 60
 Santa Fe County Fair Bldg. = Precincts 38, 56, 78
 South Mountain Elementary = Precincts 15, 16
 Stanley Comm. Center = Precinct 19
 Tesuque Elementary = Precincts 7, 8
 Turquoise Trail Elementary = Precincts 14, 70

Benny J Chavez Center = Precincts 3, 4
 Edgewood Elementary = Precincts 18, 73, 84, 85
 Eldorado Elementary = Precincts 63, 65, 69, 71
 Fort Marcy Complex = Precincts 9, 10
 Glorieta Fire Station = Precinct 57
 Hondo Fire Station #2 = Precincts 13, 68
 Nambe Headstart = Precincts 23, 61, 87
 San Ildefonso Pueblo = Precinct 40
 Sombrillo Elementary = Precincts 1, 2, 79
 St. Joseph's Parish Hall = Precinct 72
 Sweeney Elementary = Precincts 64, 75, 86
 Tesuque Pueblo Intergen. Center = Precinct 6
 Unity Church of Santa Fe = Precincts 82, 83

SANTA FE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICTS UTILIZING



EMERGENCY REPORTING

New Mexico State Fire Marshal and New Mexico EMS Bureau require electronic reporting to gather statistical information for fire and EMS events in support of annual funding for fire districts. This reporting is currently gathered through National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and New Mexico Emergency Medical Services Tracking and Reporting System (NMEMSTARS), respectively, and Santa Fe County reports utilizing the compliant software program Emergency Reporting (ER).

Although ER has been in place for a couple of years, we have not yet utilized it to the full extent and purposes for which it was purchased. It is a very valuable tool that can be used for statistical gathering such as numbers and types of fires to prepare justification for building code changes, fire prevention education topics, and training. It can be used to justify changes in response configurations and protocols. Decisions for increasing staffing and upgrading equipment can be supported.

Santa Fe County is facing some budgetary shortfalls and the Chief is managing the department budget as frugally as possible without impacting personnel and district members. Critical to managing the budget is ensuring that each district receives EMS funding from the state. That funding is tied to proper recordkeeping, meaning that all members will now enter all fire and EMS events on ER for the district in which the call takes place. In other words, the Regional Crew will enter ER and EMS/Patient Care Report (PCR) for the district to which they respond. They must remember to enter the responding volunteers. The districts will need to enter ER and EMS/PCRs if the Regional Crews do not respond, they transport a patient or they respond as mutual aid to another district.

Because written PCRs are no longer accepted by the State, narratives must now be typed into the PCR and not scanned. You can use the paper reports for notes but not as PCRs. Cardiac monitor tracings will still be scanned as part of the PCR. Following the entering of all data elements remember to print the PCR and attach all applicable billing documents or refusals and forward to Administration for billing purposes.

The Chief is aware of the significant frustrations encountered with ER and continues to be focused on the acquisition of an alternative data collection system in the future if necessary. Such acquisition, of course, is highly dependent upon available resources. Direction has been given to proceed with the ER-CAD interface solution and other internal steps that could improve the use of ER by department personnel, including newly developed software that will save all entered information on a computer until it can be uploaded to ER. This should prevent the uplink problem we are currently experiencing that results in dumped information.

We are committed to your success in using ER. County IT is working to build the interface with CAD so the dispatch information and times will automatically export to ER.

Please review the instruction sheets on www.sfcfire.net or contact me to get a copy. ER may be frustrating but be assured that once you have entered some reports and navigated through the screens; you will get more proficient in its use.

If you have any questions, please call Bett Clark at 992-3080.



Apparatus Safety & Lessons Learned

By: Deputy Chief Dave Sperling

In August 2009, a responding Phoenix Fire Department engine company (E910) was involved in a crash where, among others, the Fire Captain was very seriously injured. She was ejected from the apparatus during the crash. She was not wearing a seatbelt. Fortunately, Captain Rezzonico is doing well and is expected to recover from her injuries.

But the accident once again brings to light one of the true hazards of emergency response, a hazard that is present every time you step into a vehicle, whether you are responding or returning from a call. After stress and overexertion, vehicle crashes caused the most firefighter fatalities in 2008 according to the United States Fire Administration. Nationwide, twenty-eight firefighters died last year as a result of crashes, including 14 deaths in an aircraft crash. Eight of the non-aircraft deaths involved the firefighter's personal vehicle and six deaths occurred while firefighters were responding in engines, tankers and ambulances. Interestingly, no seatbelt was used in 8 of the 11 cases where seatbelts were available. Of the eight firefighters not wearing seatbelts, six were fully ejected from their vehicles.

So perhaps Captain Rezzonico was lucky. She was ejected from her engine but not killed. But her failure to wear a seatbelt as required wasn't the only issue revealed in a Phoenix Fire Department investigation of the crash. The Driver/Engineer of E910 did not stop at the red light on the west side of the intersection where the crash occurred, nor did he clear all south and northbound lanes before proceeding (they were going against the red light). And this incident occurred in a Department - Phoenix - that rightfully prides itself on its superior training and safety programs. If it can happen in Phoenix, it can surely happen in any department. And unfortunately it does.

So what are the lessons here? They're nothing new. They're the same lessons repeated year in and year out, but all too often not heeded. All apparatus must stop before going through controlled intersections. All members must be belted in before their vehicle moves. And all Officers – career and volunteer - must set the example and insure that everyone follows that example, no exceptions.

And in case you haven't checked in a while, the Santa Fe County Fire Department standard for emergency vehicle operations (Standards Manual, Section 900, Article 6) is very clear.

All personnel are required to use seat belts while operating or riding in any county owned or controlled vehicle.

Vehicles shall be operated in a manner that provides for the safety of all persons and property. Safe arrival shall always have priority over unnecessary speed and reckless driving.

During emergency response, emergency vehicle operators of fire department vehicles shall bring the vehicle to a complete stop under any of the following circumstances.

- a. When directed by a law enforcement officer
- b. Red traffic lights
- c. Stop signs
- d. Negative right-of-way intersections
- e. Blind intersections
- f. When the Emergency Vehicle Operator (EVO) cannot account for all lanes of traffic in an intersection.

The EVO shall proceed through intersections only when the EVO can account for all lanes of traffic in the intersection.

- g. When other intersection hazards are present
- h. When encountering a stopped school bus with flashing warning lights.



So please remember: it's a requirement to always buckle up and drive with due regard for our personal safety, and the safety of our crew and the public. Otherwise we've forgotten the tragic lessons experienced by Captain Rezzonico and so many other brother and sister firefighters and fire departments. Let's not risk repeating those lessons here.



EMS Update



New Mexico Emergency Medical Systems Bureau



Dear Colleagues,

I hope this finds you all doing well.

As the summer draws quickly to an end, it is hard to believe that it is time for yet another licensure renewal period to begin. **This year, the EMS Bureau is making a change in what you are required to submit with your renewal packet**, with the hopes of reducing your mailing costs and the amount of waste generated.

As you know, the Licensure Rule (7.27.2.10 NMAC) requires that all licensure levels must complete a set number of Continuing Education (CE) hours in order to renew a license. In the past, we have required the originals and/or copies of all of your CE certificates to document your completion of this requirement. **Beginning with this renewal cycle, for the CE requirement only, we are asking that you simply list your EMS Bureau approved CE classes and associated information on the Continuing Education Documentation Form.** This form is available on our website, along with the renewal application.

The following specific documentation must continue to be submitted:

- Application for renewal
- Approved and valid CPR certification
- An EMS Bureau approved refresher course certificate, or the blueprinted CE equivalents appropriate for your level. **If submitting CE equivalents, you must submit the original CE certificates in lieu of the refresher certificate. Listing CE equivalents for a refresher on the documentation form discussed above will not suffice.**
- For Paramedics, an approved and valid advanced cardiac life support certification.
- All of the standard fees and required signatures

The EMS Bureau will be auditing 10 – 20% of the applications we receive. If an individual is selected for an audit, the individual must provide the original and/or copies of the CE certificates listed on the submitted documentation form. Anyone who has provided fraudulent information is subject to discipline per Licensing Rule (7.27.2.13 G(2) NMAC).

If an individual from an EMS service has provided fraudulent information, all of the individuals at that service will be subject to an audit of their renewal application documentation as well.

We believe that this change will allow for a more efficient licensure renewal period.

Thank you for your dedication to our profession. Be safe!

Sincerely,
Kyle L. Thornton
EMS Bureau Chief





Tesuque "Wet-Down" & Retirement Celebration

On Sunday, September 27th, 2009 the Tesuque Fire District celebrated the addition of a new apparatus bay to their station by hosting a "Wet-Down" and dedicating the bay to longtime volunteer and recent retiree **Jimmy Griego**.



Jimmy was a founding member of the district in July 1971 and chose to retire in January 2009 with more than 38 years of dedicated service. Throughout his years in the district Jimmy was always eager to help out the newer members and share his wealth of knowledge. **District Chief J.D. Damron** presented Jimmy with a bronzed helmet shield bearing his call # 529, and a plaque was posted at the station to commemorate the event. Congratulations Jimmy and THANK YOU for the past 38 + years!!!



Volunteers to Rescue **A letter to the Editor of The New Mexican 8-27-09**

I recently had to call the fire department when my motor home inexplicably caught fire. The Tesuque Volunteer Fire Department responded, and I could not have been more impressed. They arrived promptly, were professional and efficient. They put the fire out quickly, saving trees and our house. They couldn't have been more polite and courteous. We in the Tano Road area are very fortunate to have such a dedicated and competent volunteer fire department serving us. Richard R. Keeffe – Santa Fe

Happenings

2009 Health & Safety Safari - Family Fun Day

By: Donna Morris

On September 26th 2009 Sparky the Fire Dog and the Snorkel participated in the Health & Safety Safari and Family Fun Day



sponsored by the Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center. Sparky posed for pictures and greeted over 100 children at this event, many who come back year after year just to see Sparky! I was told that this



event hosted over 1,000 people from the Santa Fe area and the surrounding communities. Sparky had a great time handing out fire safety information and he even spent some time with Smokey Bear and Elvis! A big "THANK YOU" to Fire Protection Specialist **Tim Gilmore** from our Fire Prevention Office and **Freddy Velazquez** from the La Cienega Fire District for helping out at this event.



Back In My Day

By: Tim Gilmore
Fire Prevention

Each year in the United States, Fire Prevention Week is observed during the week in October which marks the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire. While Chicago Burned, 1200 Persons Perished 250 Miles Away

The evening of October 7 1871, might well be termed the most tragic time in American fire history. The story of the Great Chicago Fire, started when Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over a lantern, is well known. Much of Chicago was leveled, with around 300 persons losing their lives. But a lesser known fire that began at the very same time took the lives of 1200 people—more than four times the death toll in Chicago!

The pine forests surrounding the little town of Peshtigo, population about 1700, in Wisconsin's North Woods were dry. As in Chicago, no rain had fallen for over three months, and a strong wind was blowing through the trees. The day before, the local newspaper had declared, "Unless we have rain soon, a conflagration may destroy this town." Unfortunately, what the newspaper had feared indeed came to pass the next day.

At the same time fire alarm box 342 was struck in Chicago, 250 miles to the north an ominous red glow over the forest sent chills of terror into the hearts of Peshtigo residents, most of whom were doomed to perish within the hour. One of the survivors wrote:

In less than five minutes there was fire everywhere. The atmosphere quickly grew unbearably warm, and the town was enveloped by a rush of air as though it were issuing from a blast furnace. The wind lifted the roofs off houses, toppled chimneys and showered the town with hot sand and live coals. The cries of the men, women and children were scarcely audible above the rumble of exploding gas and crashing timber. People were numb with terror, seeing nothing but fire overhead and all around them.

The only fire engine in Peshtigo, a hand operated pumper, was overwhelmed, and bucket brigade members soon fled the onrushing tongues of flame. Hundreds of crazed residents were running and milling about in panic, but they could not outrun the flames. Only those who jumped into the now warm water of the Peshtigo River or sought refuge along its marshy east bank survived. Within an hour every building in Peshtigo was leveled, as were the buildings in several other nearby towns and on some 400 farms.

Although word of the Chicago fire soon reached the nation by telegraph, it was not until three days later that news of the Peshtigo fire got even as far as the state capital at Madison. Relief trains, ready to be sent to Chicago from Madison, were immediately diverted to Peshtigo.

Today the Peshtigo Fire Museum stands as a tribute to those who lost their lives in the most destructive forest fire in history. By a strange coincidence, this fire and the Chicago fire, two of the worst fire disasters of all time in our nation's history, occurred just 250 miles from each other, and at the very same time.

This article adapted from "Firefighting Lore" by W. Fred Conway.





What's the wildland crew up to? Tons of cutting and chipping down in Edgewood, assisting with several wildland courses and fighting fire in the Gila and Arizona. We've collaborated with County Open Space and the Association of Counties on our fuels projects in Apache Ridge and Edgewood with a lot of success.

Besides all that, the wildland crew has also individually assessed almost 1500 homes in high, very high and extreme hazard areas of the county. Each home is left with information on defensible space and wildfire educational materials.

Some of these brief assessments result in the homeowners calling us for a more thorough assessment. Others result in us being able to speak to the homeowner at the time we are there to answer questions and listen to their concerns and comments. Overall the response from the public has been positive. One of the many comments we hear is, "It's good to see you out here". Most folks don't have any contact with the fire department other than emergencies and seem to be pretty happy that we are out there doing this.

The assessments also sometimes result in community meetings. Once finished with a particular community, we prepare maps and booklets explaining what we did, what we found, and suggestions for mitigating properties. Property owners are also able to view their individual assessments online on our website (<http://www.sfcfire-wildland.com/>). It's in its draft stage now, being refined and improved, but so far we've received good feedback.



Winter Weather Preparedness

By: Assistant Chief Kimmet Holland

Cold weather temperatures are here and it is just a matter of time until we get snowfall. All weather predictions are forecasting colder and wetter winter months. The district members in the higher elevations are already awaking to frost covered windshields. This is also the time of year that we experience an increase in structure fire responses.

It is time for cold weather preparations.

- Review uniform specifications and regulations. Get ready with your warm gear including under garments. Dress in layers. There can be a ten to twenty degree temperature difference between the lower and higher elevations.
- Inspect your personal protective equipment (Bunker Gear). It may have been a while since you last had to pull it out of your gear bag or locker. Ensure you have all the components and that they meet NFPA requirements: Coat, Pants with suspenders, Nomex Hood, Helmet with face shield, Gloves, Boots, Facepiece, ID Tags.
- Check status and fit of snow chains. Now is the time to practice fitting them to your apparatus.
- Prepare compartments for keeping IV fluids warm in cold weather. Check with EMS Division if you are not sure how to store medications and fluids to keep them from freezing.
- Rehab after fires. You can still get dehydrated during arduous physical activity of firefighting. Remember that when you remove that sweaty bunker coat in the cold weather you can get hypothermic quickly. Stay refreshed, rehydrated and rotate tasks.
- Maintain personal vehicles so you have reliable transportation during cold weather. Maintain fluid levels especially oil and anti-freeze. Don't let your fuel tank level drop below ¼ to ensure you have fuel for pre-warming and defrosting.
- Check propane levels and order delivery if needed. Check firewood and pellets for stove use.

Santa Fe County Fire Department
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Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508-8501

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The Connection

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EMT Refresher Reminder

By: Captain Mike Mestas

Yes. It's that time of the year again! The EMS Training Division has already been in contact with some of the Districts about Continuing Education and EMS training. Please don't wait to the last minute to get your CE's completed.

Most of the Districts have been very proactive in meeting the necessary requirements. Good job!

EMT Combo Refreshers for First Responders, EMT Basic, EMT Intermediates combined have been held throughout the various regions within the County with one remaining opportunity. Please contact Lt. Ivey to reserve your spot in the class. Preference will be given to those members requiring the class for licensure renewal. All other SFCFD members are welcome to attend subject to classroom size and resource availability.

LAST CHANCE!

November 13, 14, 15 West – Admin Lt. Ivey 505-470-1485

** This is a Friday (7-10); Saturday (9-5); Sunday (9-5) or until completed*

**Please contact Lt. Ivey to reserve a spot and to determine the class size expected.*

*Preference will be given to those needing the class to renew their EMT
license March of 2010!*

2009 Fall Paramedic Refresher: To be held at SF Community College

November 2, 3, 4, 5 Eve Kwiatkowski 505-428-1820

For any additional information, please contact me at County Administration
EMS Training Division. 505-992-3075 or email: mmestas@co.santa-fe.nm.us

