



Chief's Report

Chief Eric M. Smith



The second quarter of 2010 proved to be another challenging period for EFD and the City as a whole. The challenges ranged from the current and future budget woes, to that of developing and implementing a number of regional partnerships in the areas of Technical Rescue, Mutual Aid, and Hazardous Materials response. At the same time, we continued to work toward minimizing the budget-related anxiety of our young staff. The uncertainty of these times weighs heavily on us all, especially our newer and more vulnerable employees.

At the beginning of the second quarter, we concentrated on finalizing our employee group(s) participation in the newly formed Multi-Agency Technical Rescue Team. The team, a partnership between Eureka, Humboldt, and Arcata Fire, is the culmination of an eight year effort to bring specialized technical rescue capabilities to the North Coast Region. We have developed a cadre of nearly twenty responders and obtained a specialized rescue trailer via a grant from Cal-EMA. The trailer will provide the basic equipment and space from which the team will work during a rescue operation. The team has specialized training to deal with emergencies resulting from natural and man-made disasters including earthquakes, trench or confined space rescues, and over-the-bank rescues. Much of the credit for keeping the rescue team formation on track goes to a few members of the team; specifically EFD members Kent Hulbert, Nathan Baxley, and Chris Jelinek.

During the quarter, EFD was able to make some headway in the restructuring or reducing its role within the Hazardous Materials Response Team. Working in partnership with the Haz Mat JPA, a preliminary multi-agency responder configuration was identified. This new format allows responders from other agencies to join the team and to participate as "certified" Hazardous Material technicians or specialists. In doing so, the team should be able to reduce its dependence upon EFD as the sole hazardous material responders with the option to call upon trained responders located throughout the two-county region.

Administration staff worked with the Samoa Peninsula Fire Department in formalizing a response format for Mutual Aid responses to their district. For some time now, SPFD has struggled to maintain an effective

volunteer firefighting base and has been dependent upon Arcata Fire to assist them. For a short period of time, EFD and HFD #1 have agreed to respond one engine each to specific incidents with the SPFD district. Incidents such as structure or vehicle fires will receive a multi-agency response from the participating mutual aid departments, thus ensuring that no one single mutual aid agency is carrying the brunt of the assistance. During this short period, it is expected that SPFD will be able to shore up their volunteer program and begin to recover their response capabilities without additional assistance from mutual aid agencies.

In closing, I have heard it stated that the difficult times we currently face are just a temporary upward spike in budget pressures and demands, and that they will eventually subside. And while this may come to pass at some point, I envision that the fire service will not see a subsidence in the demands and pressure to do more with less. As a matter of fact, I see the challenges growing even more as the fire protection system as we know it today is under tremendous strain. I am concerned that it is close to, and at some point soon will, collapse. The recent ladder truck and fire station plumbing system failures are just two symptoms of this impending problem. As I observe the debate continue about water and sewer system infrastructure needs, I often wonder why we have been so unsuccessful in educating the public and council about our needs related to facilities, apparatus, and equipment. The challenge of providing services to the public with our infrastructure inadequacies only adds to the stress of our personnel who provide those services. However, even in times such as these, there are any number of instances that remind me daily of the great group of people working here at the city who "plug holes" in the failing dike every day. From our great mechanics at the City's shop, to facilities maintenance staff, to our IT staff, all working with limited resources to ensure that we, EFD, is able to fulfill its mission - the protection of our community. So, when times are tough and overwhelming, pause for a moment and look around at those who support you and the community as a whole; they are the people who will get us through these difficult times.

Sincerely, Chief Smith

The Operations Division, often referred to as “fire suppression,” is the largest program within the Fire Department. Suppression personnel respond to fires, medical emergencies, water and land based rescues, hazardous material incidents, and related calls for service, emergency and non-emergency. Suppression personnel also assist in the Prevention program through code enforcement building inspections, business and multi-occupancy residential structures and fire education efforts.

This division is the most visible side or “face” of the fire department, but what makes up this part of the department? The part of the fire department that most people think of when they think “FIRE” are the big red fire engines they see on the streets. This is part of the Operations Division. Eureka Fire Department utilizes three staffed fire stations within our community. The Headquarters station or “HQ” is located at 6th and C Streets. The common directions given to find it are “across from the Denny’s parking lot.” Headquarters houses our downtown Engine 8115, a 2002 Pierce. Also responding from HQ is our 1994 Pierce 100 foot Aerial Ladder Truck. HQ houses a reserve engine that is put in service when other engines require maintenance, during major emergencies, and some wildland fire assignments. We also house our state assigned Cal-EMA fire engine, the Regional Hazardous Materials response vehicles, and a technical rescue trailer. Also located at HQ is our Administrative Staff and offices, and the Prevention Bureau. This is the location to go for most services related to the fire department.



Our next station is Station 3, which is located at West Henderson and Ocean. This station and Station 4 were both built and occupied in 1957. This station is staffed with three fire personnel, and houses a 2006 Pierce fire engine, Engine 8113. Both 8113 and 8115 are 2,000 gallon per minute pumpers. For many, 2,000 gallons is a hard number to visualize. Think of a one gallon milk or water jug in your refrigerator. Each of these engines is capable of pumping 2,000 of those one gallon containers through the pump of the fire engine each minute! Also housed at Station 3 is our 1977 85 foot Sutphen reserve fire truck. If you look into the front

window of Station 3 you will not see the truck parked there, as it is currently pressed into front line service at HQ while our main ladder truck is receiving repairs for a replacement motor.

Station 4, located at Myrtle and Cousins is our third staffed fire station. This station houses a 1991 Pierce fire engine, Engine 8114. It also houses a reserve 1991 Pierce fire engine that is used just like the reserve at HQ. These engines will pump 1,500 gallons of water; remember that previous milk/water jug example. Both engines were purchased at the same time, and both saw frontline service at Stations 3 and 4. While having two engines purchased at the same time allows familiarity for fire personnel and mechanics, it causes problems further down the road as those engines age and wear, and makes replacement of the apparatus a significant financial challenge. Station 4 was expanded through a coordinated project with the Humboldt Regional Occupational Program Building Trades class in 2003. The station added the space for an additional bedroom, and existing space was transformed into individual sleeping dorms. This was a quality of life improvement that provided privacy, and as such was a step toward the future, as we anticipate a workforce that continues to diversify.



People sometimes ask questions of us while we are at meetings or out in the field. One question that I have received asks why Eureka Fire Department engines are red in color, but a yellow fire engine arrived at my house in the City of Eureka? The answer is all about service to the public. A number of years ago, Eureka Fire Department and our neighboring agency, Humboldt #1 Fire Protection District, signed an agreement for Automatic Aid. This agreement was in many cases a sort of “boundary drop.” It provided that the two agencies would work together, sending the closest engine regardless of jurisdiction. Residents in Lumbar Hills or in the Washington School area will often see a yellow fire engine from the closer Humboldt stations, while residents in some of Myrtle town and the south part of Eureka outside the city limits will see a red engine. Additionally, both departments respond together to structure fires, extrications, and other major calls. Both departments also

cover for each other when one engine may be on a call, or have to go out of their respective district to take care of business. Fire engines provide coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the greater Eureka area.

Another common question comes up during business inspections, where we are asked why it takes three firefighters and a big red engine to conduct these inspections? There are a number of reasons why a full engine company conducts these walk through inspections. First and foremost is that we have to be ready to respond at all times whenever an emergency call is received. We would not be able to provide a timely response if the fire engine was back at the station. The activity also provides the crew with the ability to see the business in a non-emergency setting. It makes our jobs easier if we have a basic understanding of floor plan and layout before we go to a fire or other emergency, rather than trying to learn the layout under zero visibility smoke conditions. Further, it gives our personnel a chance to point out issues that they might see that could be safety hazards; how often do we see something in our everyday life that we simply get used to and no longer recognize as a possible hazard? Having three fresh sets of eyes allows us to advise the property owner or tenant of the issue. Finally, the interaction allows our personnel and the business owners and public to get to know each other a little bit better.

This has been a short introduction to the Eureka Fire Department’s fire stations and fire apparatus. I hope it has been informative and helpful in understanding who and where we are. In the coming quarters, you will continue to see a blend of information from our various collateral duties that fall under the Operations Division, current events within the Operations Division, and continued background into our operation. As always, if you have questions don’t hesitate to call or stop by.

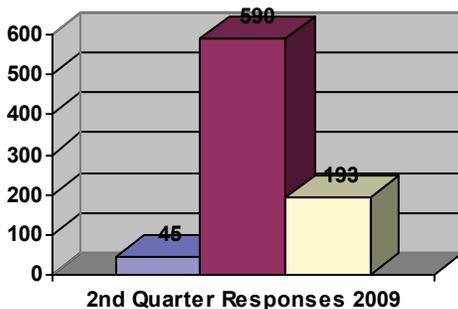
Bill Gillespie

Incident Activity

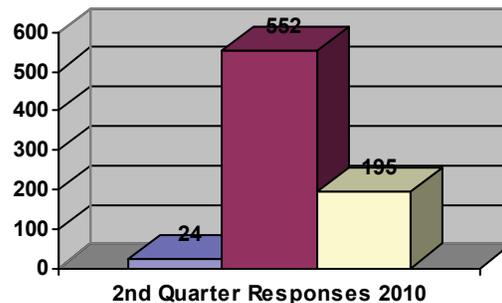
During the quarter, EFD responded to a total of 771 calls for service. Fire calls represented 24 calls, 11 of which were listed as structures. One of those fires was a fatal fire, where an adult male perished. Overall estimated dollar loss from structural fires was \$240,800 for the quarter. Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Incidents, including minor and major medical aids, traffic collisions, extrications and rescues, and lift assist calls accounted for 552 incidents. All other calls for service accounted for 195 responses.

As you can see, our call volume for the second quarter 2010 is very similar to the same period from 2009, with the exception that our overall fire number is down for the period in 2010. These figures come from Firehouse data provided for the quarter.

**2nd Quarter Response Statistics
FY 2009-2010 Comparison**



■ Fires ■ Medical □ Other Incidents



■ Fires ■ Medical □ Other Incidents

Technical Rescue

Captain II Kent Hulbert

Collateral Duties

- Apparatus**
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**
- Equipment**
 - Hand Tools
- Facilities**
 - Buildings & Grounds
- Hose/Nozzles**
- Hydrants**
 - Testing & Data
- Infectious Disease Control**
- Maps/GIS**
- Monitoring Equipment**
- Personal Protective Equipment**
- Power Equipment**
- Radios/Pagers**
- Respiratory Protection Program**
 - Air Compressor
 - SCBA
- Safety**
 - Fire Department
- Target Hazard**
 - Sprinklered Buildings
 - Knox Boxes & Keys
- Technical Rescue**
- Training**
- Volunteers**
- Wildland**

Humboldt County is no stranger to the effects of the weather and the unpredictable nature of earthquakes and other natural disasters. Past events have at times isolated the North Coast, hindering timely assistance from other areas of the state due to damaging or flooding roadways, leaving local first responders to manage challenging events.

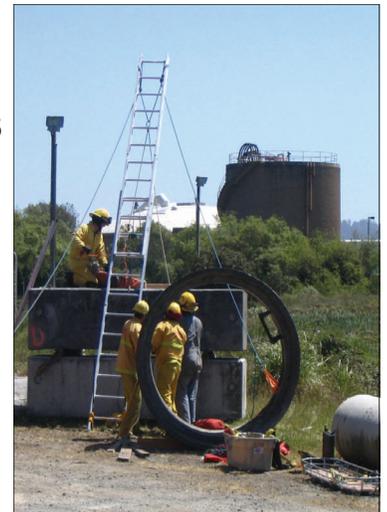
After September 11th 2001, the Homeland Security concept was brought abruptly to the forefront by the tragic events of the World Trade Center bombing. It was found that the ability of fire departments, law enforcement, and medical services personnel to manage and respond to large scale technical events was severely taxed.

Homeland Security has a wide ranging focus; for the fire service it has meant funding for equipment and training for events that have a potential for loss of life and destruction of infrastructure. In the past, such events would have been handled on the fly using techniques that may not keep pace with newer equipment or building construction changes. Some of the heavy rescue concepts in use today were built on military findings after WW II. The difference today is that the first responder has a better grasp of the challenges that a large scale event can provide because of the focused training and equipment available.

The state homeland security agency expressed interest in focusing funding and training toward the technical rescue aspect of the fire service with the eventual goal of providing dedicated equipment to cities or regions throughout the state. Then Office of Emergency Service (OES, now Cal-EMA) was given the task of providing 16 trailer based type 2 medium caches of rescue equipment in addition to upgrading the existing fleet of 120 OES fire engines to light rescues. These assets would be available locally, regionally or state wide by mutual aid or assistance for hire similar to the wildland fire agreement that Cal-EMA administers.

While this technical rescue concept was evolving, the local region was funded through grants for a series of basic rescue systems classes. These classes were held at the joint Hilfiker Regional Training site. Over the last 5 years more than 100 students have gone through a Rescue Systems 1 class offered locally. Additionally, Cal-EMA committed to provide one of the previously mentioned type 2 trailers locally. With that trailer and equipment came the additional training requirement of Rescue Systems 2 and Trench Rescue. As the Hilfiker site is not yet able to support the Rescue Systems 2 training, a partnership has been forged with Novato Fire Department, and 19 local students have attended class at the Novato Training site.

After Cal-EMA notified the Eureka Fire Department that a Type 2 trailer was being dedicated to be placed in our local area, the concept of a local technical rescue team was proposed based on a regional concept. Eureka Fire Department realized early that training for 18 to 24 members was unrealistic and it posed huge staffing issues for a single department. The decision was made to poll our partner agencies around the Humboldt Bay area for interest. After several conceptual meetings Eureka, Humboldt Fire District #1 and Arcata Fire Department came together as stakeholders to provide staffing, training, and additional equipment to support the Type 2 rescue trailer. The trailer was accepted from



California Emergency Management Agency (CAL EMA) by Humboldt Fire District #1 with the understanding that the training requirements will be met within 1 year.

Currently, the training component has just finished with the first 2 trench rescue classes. The trench rescue training is the last component of the required training to meet the CAL- EMA requirements.

The regional team has been established with 24 members from 3 departments and has adopted the Humboldt Urban Search and Rescue (HUSAR) name. Six of those members sit on an operations committee that is overseen by an executive committee consisting of the Fire Chiefs of the three stakeholder departments. Quarterly training drills are key to maintenance of skills, and the first of those was completed in June. Operationally the team could be utilized now even though CAL-EMA terms gave the team until May 2011 to complete training



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Future plans are in the process, but some of the obvious needs for HUSAR include recruitment and retention of team members from the three stakeholder departments, as well as including potential membership from other interested parties including northern Humboldt County fire agencies and public works agencies. The process of “typing” the team through CAL-EMA provides assurance that HUSAR has completed training and has the equipment that is required. Other plans center on the expansion of the training and training equipment capabilities of the Hilfiker training site to be able to provide quality, affordable continued training to the region.

With the continued support of the State, County of Humboldt, Humboldt Office of Emergency Services, Humboldt Fire Chiefs, County Training Officers, Humboldt Regional Occupational Program, the City of Eureka public works and fire department, Humboldt Fire District, Arcata Fire District, and private industry, HUSAR has developed from a concept into a reality.

Volunteers Jim and Margaret Stevens recognized at the May 4th City Council Meeting



Sequoia Hose Company No 6 and the 1928 American Lafrance

Jim & Margaret Stevens were recognized as Eureka Fire Department's 2008 and 2009 Volunteers of the Year. The couple has worked tirelessly on the restoration of Sequoia Hose Company No. 6, one of Eureka's *retired* fire stations located at 1766 J Street. Sequoia 6 houses a late 1800's hose cart, the 1864 Torrent Engine No. 1 and the 1928 American Lafrance Engine, along with antique photos and fire department logs and records.

Jim and Margaret's fundraising efforts have included an annual rummage and baked goods sale, booths at the Fourth of July Festival and the annual Fire Department

Open house. Those funds along with donations have provided Sequoia 6 with a new roof, new gutters, working heaters and a security alarm system. Future projects include exterior paint, a new foundation, new windows and eventually, to return the building to its original appearance.



Eric Smith, Jim Stevens, Jeff Leonard, Margaret Stevens

Two important administrative projects were completed at the end of this quarter relative to the close out of the fiscal year.

With the start of the new fiscal year the program's goals and objectives were reviewed and updated. These goals will be used to direct the bureau's activities over the next fiscal year and measure our results.

The update of the fee schedule included an overhaul of several of our billing and fee procedures, particularly in the area of plan review and new project development. New fire sprinkler systems, for example, require several different inspections. This fee schedule includes cost recovery for new project inspections.

Development of Captain II Laidlaw continued this quarter. Ed attended a residential sprinkler class at the Wharfinger building and a residential care home class at 3030 L. Ed and Captain 2 Emmons are regularly working together on plan review and other prevention related activities.

Property: Enforcement / Abatement Issues

The most significant recent issue related to abatement, and City services in general, is the departure of our City Attorney Sheryl Shaffner. Sheryl has been a tremendous resource for our City providing inspirational leadership for our City Improvement Team, code enforcement, and as a resource for our legal needs. I found her to be dedicated and professional and a pleasure to work with.

The abatement case at 315 C street has been inactive this quarter. There was a status re-inspection at 117/119 5th as it continues to work its way through the court system. Warrant inspections were conducted at 833 H and 1624 Sunny.

The City's first use of receiverships was used at 1506 McCullens and 1805 2nd. The process was used to demolish the fire damaged structure at 1506 McCullens and action to demolish the building at 1805 2nd is in progress.

Property / Development Issues

The re-opening of the Eureka Inn was a significant event for our community. The Fire Prevention Bureau was involved with insuring adequate fire and life safety measures were in place including functioning fire sprinklers and alarm systems.



The College of the Redwoods has two major projects going. A new Student Services building is currently under construction in the field below the dorms. This construction impacts access to the campus and we're working with C/R and project staff to minimize and mitigate these impacts.

The college is planning two additional buildings scheduled for construction next year. These buildings will be located inside the current campus and have significant impacts on access and fire protection systems. We are currently in the review process for this project.

Construction continues at St. Joseph's hospital. Final grade, roadway and flatwork is scheduled for the next couple of months.

Investigations

The most significant investigation of the quarter was the residential fatality fire at 1805 2nd on May 26th. The labor-intensive cause and origin investigation required mutual aid for on-scene assistance and follow up is still ongoing.



There were investigations of possible incendiary fires at a garage fire on Hillsdale Street (Butler / Lynch) and a utility trailer (Goodlive).

A sprinkler activation at the Multiple Assistance Center extinguished what could have been a significant fire in the laundry room.

Public Education and Events

Five public education sessions on fire extinguishers, home and workplace safety, and disaster preparedness were conducted.

Other Issues

The contract issue of plan review at College of the Redwoods has apparently been resolved; at least at the department level.

Our responsibility as "Authority with Jurisdiction" at "I" occupancies between us and the State Fire Marshal's office has also been resolved.

Rusty Goodlive

Fire Prevention Program

Captain II Chris Emmons

The Eureka Fire Department is comprised of two divisions, Suppression and Prevention. The most visible aspect of the agency is the Suppression Division. That is the branch of the department that has the big red trucks, sirens, and is noticed mostly during high profile emergency incidents. What the public is less aware of is the Fire Prevention Bureau. The FPB is staffed by two full-time fire officers and a part time inspector.

Asst. Chief Goodlive is the Fire Marshal and oversees the activities of the bureau. The technical aspect of the bureau falls to Fire Captain II Chris Emmons. He has many duties that fall under the responsibility of the Fire Prevention Bureau. Besides being a firefighter and command officer first, Chris's responsibilities include management of the Fire Inspection program that the Engine Companies are assigned to perform on a monthly basis. He also is the coordinator for the department's fire cause and origin investigators and is a lead investigator himself. Chris is a department liaison to the Humboldt County Fire/Arson Investigation Unit and responds to other agencies to assist with investigations.

Much of Chris's time is spent in the office performing plan reviews on projects submitted by developers. He is looking for the fire and life safety issues that keep the public safe in the different occupancies throughout our city. Upon completion of a plan review, Chris sometimes conducts site visits and consultations at the request of the developer or contractor to help mitigate issues with the project to ensure that it meets required building and fire code standards.

When the project is completed, Capt. II Emmons performs a final inspection, in partnership with the Building Department, to certify that the fire and life safety codes are all met to allow the location to be occupied. These inspections may include inspection and testing of building and life safety features such as exits, to technical systems such as fire alarms and sprinkler systems. The "engineering" aspect of the FPB is highly technical and requires 160 hours of additional training to become a certified Fire Prevention Officer.

Code Enforcement is an aspect of the department's FPB that Chris doesn't take lightly as he is charged with ensuring the safety of the public through enforcement of building, fire, criminal, and health and safety codes. He is a member of the City's Community Improvement Team which is comprised of other members from departments in the city structure such as Building, Community Development, Engineering, Public Works, and the Police Departments. They meet routinely to discuss and inspect properties that have become threats to the safety of the community because of the rundown condition and structurally unsafe buildings. Through various avenues, the Fire Prevention Bureau, along with the other members of the CIT, aid in mitigation of the hazards. Many times the occupants receive help from outside agencies that the occupant would not have known was available.

Public Education is another facet of the Fire Prevention Bureau. Chris is frequently requested to do public presentations regarding, fire and life safety, home safety, disaster preparedness, and live fire demonstrations with the use of fire extinguishers. The FPB is committed to spreading the message of safety throughout the community and does this through various public functions, private classes, and general question and answer presentations.

A method of relaying the public safety messages is through the department Information Officer. The Fire Prevention Captain II serves as the Information Officer for the department. Capt. II Emmons has served as an Information Officer on a California Incident Management Team and has brought the skills and knowledge gained from those experiences back to the city. Chris is frequently seen on television, heard on the radio, or read in the paper informing the community of various aspects of the happenings in the fire service. Most recently Capt. II Emmons lead the effort of constructing information briefing packets for Governor Schwarzenegger when he visited the Northcoast to survey damage from the January 9th Earthquake. Chris's experience with the Incident Management Team and the staff from the Fire, Community Development, Building, Engineering, and Redevelopment Departments allowed the city to produce a professional looking document that was informative and catalogued the events of the city in a short amount time.

Although the Fire Prevention Bureau activities are rarely high profile like fires or rescues, the responsibilities and tasks that the FPB perform ensure the safety of the members of our historical community. If you have a question, give Chris a call at the Fire Department. He enjoys spreading the safety messages throughout the community.

2010 SECOND QUARTER INCIDENTS

Reporting Period
April - June 2010

Legend

	Medical Emergency	481
	Fire	26
	Other Service	259
	Total incidents	766

Fatalities- 1

