# Tuolumne County Fire Department Monthly Activity Report



October 2020

## **Tuolumne County Fire Department**

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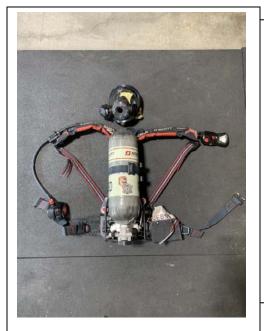
18440 Striker Ct., Sonora, CA 95370

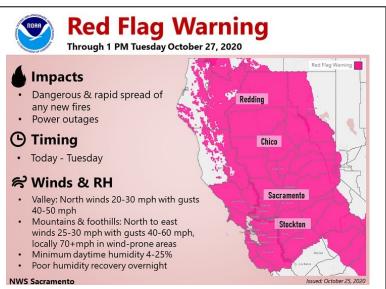
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## **MONTH IN REVIEW**

#### October 2020

Tuolumne County Fire Department is recruiting for Volunteer Firefighter, Volunteer Water Tender Operator, and Volunteer Emergency Medical Responders. Call Training Captain Nick Shawkey at 209-352-2595 for information. The training classes are open to all fire agencies in the County and begin in January 2021 following all COVID precautions.

Fire season continued at a historic pace. By the end of October, more than 4,194,148 acres have burned in California on more than 9,170 wildfires. Tragically, there have been 31 confirmed fatalities from these fires and 10,488 structures damaged or destroyed this year. This includes five of the top ten largest fires in California history occurring since August. The large fire threat continued in October with multiple Red Flag Warnings occurring throughout the month, including public safety power shutoffs

Top 20 Largest California Wildfires							
	FIRE NAME (CAUSE)	DATE	COUNTY	ACRES	STRUCTURES	DEATHS	
1	AUGUST COMPLEX (Under Investigation)*	August 2020	Mendocino, Humboldt, Trinity, Tehama, Glenn, Lake, & Colusa	1,032,649	935	1	
2	MENDOCINO COMPLEX (Under Investigation)	July 2018	Colusa, Lake, Mendocino & Glenn	459,123	280	1	
3	SCU LIGHTNING COMPLEX (Under Investigation)*	August 2020	Stanislaus, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, & San Joaquin	396,624	222	0	
4	CREEK FIRE (Under Investigation)*	September 2020	Fresno & Madera	377,693	853	0	
5	LNU LIGHTNING COMPLEX (Under Investigation)*	August 2020	Sonoma, Lake, Napa, Yolo & Solano	363,220	1,491	6	
6	NORTH COMPLEX (Under Investigation)*	August 2020	Butte, Plumas & Yuba	318,930	2,352	15	
7	THOMAS (Powerlines)	December 2017	Ventura & Santa Barbara	281,893	1,063	2	
8	CEDAR (Human Related)	October 2003	San Diego	273,246	2,820	15	
9	RUSH (Lightning)	August 2012	Lassen	271,911 CA / 43,666 NV	0	0	
10	RIM (Human Related)	August 2013	Tuolumne	257,314	112	0	

that affected residents throughout most of the County. Fortunately, none of the fires that started in Tuolumne County this month escaped the initial attack forces. Remember, even with the shortening daylight hours and colder weather, fuels are still critically dry and will remain so until significant wetting rains occur. Even after the rains, a little bit of wind can dry out the light flashy fuels enough to spread an uncontrolled wildfire. We must remain vigilant year-round.

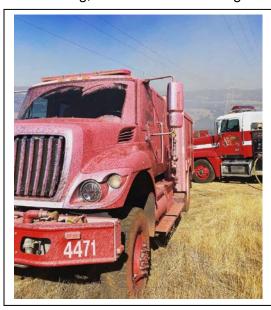
Over the last 18 months, staff have worked tirelessly with Groveland Community Services District (GCSD) personnel to compose and submit a grant for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) to replace the current SCBAs held by TCFD, Jamestown Fire Protection District (in agreement with Tuolumne County), and GCSD. The FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) was approved to obtain new SCBAs to replace the current SCBAs that are near to the mandated end of their service life. This fall the SCBAs were delivered to TCFD Station 51 Mono Village and firefighters sorted and applied

individual tracking and identification tags to each SCBA and air cylinder. The SCBA allows fire fighters to breathe clean air while operating in environments that are Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH). These IDLH environments are typical of structure fires, vehicle fires, hazardous material releases, and carbon monoxide filled structures. As firefighters continue to be fit-tested and trained on these new pieces of specialized equipment, the SCBAs will be placed into service throughout the County.

An important note on SCBAs and other pieces of specialized equipment; had this FEMA AFG not been awarded, the County would have needed to allocate an additional \$550,000 out of the General Fund to replace the SCBAs as their end of life is 12/31/2020. With insufficient revenue each year, no funds have been set aside for an aged emergency vehicle fleet, worn out specialized equipment, or badly needed facilities repairs. Moving forward, and planning for the future, we need to take actions now to increase and stabilize revenue for the Fire Fund and set aside appropriate funds each year for specialized equipment, facilities, apparatus, and plan for additional staffing, so we're not balancing the

needs of the Department with our fingers crossed for one time funds from grants or an under-funded General Fund.

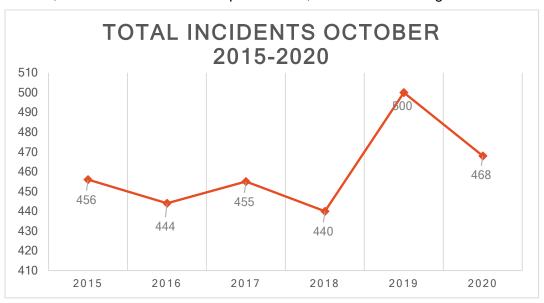
CAL FIRE Tuolumne Calaveras Firefighter Crew 2 came to Station 51 for an overview of Engine 511 and the Schedule A programs in Tuolumne County, which includes Mono Village Station 51, Jamestown Station 76, and Groveland CSD Station 78. The crew is a new addition to the CAL FIRE TCU team and was introduced to the extensive roles and responsibilities of station personnel, the specialized tools and equipment carried on Type 1 fire engines, and capabilities of the Schedule A program.



As mentioned, wildfire season remained in full swing with many small fires occurring throughout the county and several periods of severe, even extreme, fire weather. All the fuels (timber, brush and grass components) are ready to burn. Please ensure you're doing your part in the fight against wildfire and ensure your properties have defensible space. For more information on how you can do that check out <a href="https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1162/Wildfire-Preparedness">www.readyforwildfire.org</a> and <a href="https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1162/Wildfire-Preparedness">https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1162/Wildfire-Preparedness</a>. While you're on the County website, make sure you sign up for Everbridge, Tuolumne County's emergency notification program at <a href="https://member.everbridge.net/1332612387832200/login">https://member.everbridge.net/1332612387832200/login</a>.

In October there were a total of 468 incidents in TCFD jurisdiction compared to 500 in 2019 and a slight increase from the five-year average of 461 incidents. Of the 468 incidents in October 2020, there were

328 medical aids, 53 fires, 10 hazardous materials/fire menace standby, and 77 other incidents in TCFD jurisdiction. Between January 1 and October 31, 2020 there have been 4,590 incidents in TCFD jurisdiction compared to 4,923 incidents during that period in 2019. Calculating incidents in and outside TCFD jurisdiction, TCFD resources have responded to 5,672 incidents throughout the area.



## **TCFD Station Responses**

Station 51 Mono Village Fire Station responded to 125 incidents in the month of October including 85 medical calls which included 13 vehicle collisions (of which one required extrication), 14 public assists, 10 fires, 11 false alarms, and 5 other incidents. 111 incidents were within their primary response area and 14 were not. Volunteers responded to 18 of the 125 incidents and through the Tuolumne County Automatic Aid Agreement, aid was given to one agency nine times and received by three agencies six times.

Station 76 Jamestown Fire Station responded to 134 incidents in October including 90 medical aids which included 15 vehicle collisions (of which 2 were pin-ins), 19 public assists, 10 fires, 7 smokechecks, 5 false alarms, and three calls to land an air ambulance. Of the 134 incidents 102 were within their primary response area and 32 were not. Volunteers responded to no incidents. Automatic aid was given to one agency ten times and received from one agency six times. Station 76 responded to one residential care facility eight times.

## **Tuolumne County Fire Department Station Incident Responses**

Mono Village Station 51 (6 career / 6 volunteers) 152 incidents

Ponderosa Hills Station 53 (1 volunteer) 5 incidents

Long Barn Station 54 (<u>0 volunteers</u>) incidents absorbed by other stations

Pinecrest Station 55 (6 volunteers) 22 incidents

Mono Vista Station 56 (6 volunteers) 71 incidents

Crystal Falls Station 57 (<u>0 Volunteers</u>) Incidents absorbed by other stations

Cedar Ridge Station 58 (12 volunteers) 26 incidents

Chinese Camp Station 61 (1 volunteer) 28 incidents

Smith Station Station 63 (<u>0 Volunteers</u>) Incidents absorbed by other stations

Don Pedro Station 64 (3 volunteers) 10 incidents

Jamestown Station 76 (5 career / 3 volunteers) 138 incidents

Columbia College Station 79 (6 student firefighters) 55 incidents

\*\*Incident totals include incidents that were within the station's primary response area, not necessarily that station responded due to commitment to other incidents or another engine was close-by\*\*

## **Tuolumne County CAL FIRE Station Incident Response Information**

Blanchard CAL FIRE Station - 44 incidents
Twain Harte CAL FIRE Station - 89 incidents
Groveland CAL FIRE Station - 37 incidents
Standard CAL FIRE Station - 57 incidents
Green Springs CAL FIRE Station - 75 incidents

## **Significant Incidents**

#### October 2, 2020 - Landing Zone, Outpost LZ

Firefighters responded to the Outpost Landing Zone (LZ) in Soulsbyville to secure the predesignated LZ for an air ambulance. When assigned to a landing zone, firefighters clear the area of debris that can damage the helicopter and secure the zone of the public and other hazards. The air ambulance landed



safely and transported the critically injured patient to a trauma center.

#### October 4, 2020 - Vegetation Fire - Mono Way

Firefighters responded to reports of a fire behind the Dodge Dealership on Mono Way. Upon arrival, the fire was barely visible and due to limited access, several hundred feet of hose was deployed to make an effective attack on the fire. Firefighters utilized hand tools and a 5-gallon back pump to stop the uphill flank of the fire and slow extension the fire progressing into a homeless encampment. The fire was contained to .26 acres.

Firefighters responded to a structure fire on Serrano Road. The fire started in vegetation and was kept to ¼ of an acre. The fire destroyed two recreational campers, one vehicle, and an outbuilding. Aggressive fire suppression by the first arriving engine company extinguished the fire that was threatening one residence.

#### October 17, 2020 – Vegetation Fire, Eagle Ridge Drive

Firefighters responded to a vegetation fire at a green waste disposal facility. Fire crews found a large compost pile nearly 30' high and 100' x 100' in size with fire in the middle. Fire crews worked with employees of the facility to move the burning material, separating it from the unburned material, and extinguishing it, preventing any spread to the wildland.

## October 18, 2020 – Vehicle Collision, Highway 108 at Sullivan Creek Overpass

Firefighters responded to a motorcycle down with a patient in critical condition. Fire engines blocked west bound traffic to protect the scene while the patient was packaged for transport by ground ambulance. The patient was flown out of Jamestown to a trauma center.



#### October 20, 2020 – Vegetation Fire, Eagle Ridge Drive

Firefighters responded a second time in three days to a fire at a green waste disposal facility. This time, when firefighters had arrived, the fire was in a new pile and had spread into the adjoining vegetation. Over the last year, firefighters have responded several times to this same location for similar fires. Heavy equipment, vast amounts of water and a significant amount of firefighter time are needed to extinguish these preventable fires. Tuolumne County Code Enforcement Officers and TCFD Fire Prevention Bureau personnel are taking actions to ensure these fires are prevented, and, if combustion occurs, that proper actions are taken by staff.

#### October 23, 2020 - Vehicle Collision with Extrication, Highway 49 x Sims Road

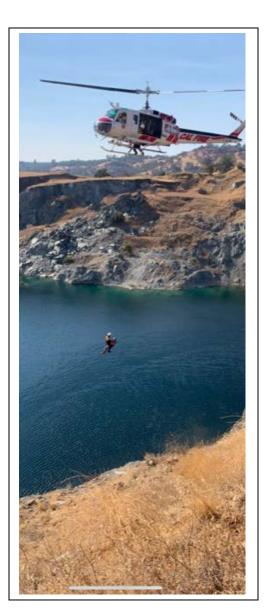
Upon arrival at scene firefighters found one patient was in critical condition and trapped in the vehicle. Basic life support was initiated inside the vehicle while other firefighters used the Jaws of Life to extricate the patient from the vehicle. The patient was transferred to a waiting ambulance crew that began advanced life support and transported the patient to a landing zone where the air ambulance transferred them to a valley trauma center. Total extrication time approximately 5 minutes.

Firefighters responded to a skilled nursing facility with CPR in progress. The engine companies, ambulance, and facility staff were able to regain the patient's breathing and pulse using an automated external defibrillator, chest compressions, and rescue breathing. The patient was transported to Adventist Health of Sonora for further treatment.

#### October 25, 2020, Medical Aid with CPR, Mark Trail

The arriving rescuers found a family member performing CPR on the patient. After rescuers assumed care of the patient, an automated external defibrillator, chest compressions, and rescue breathing were used to restore cardiopulmonary function in the patient. The patient was transported to Adventist Health of Sonora for further treatment.

October 26, 2020 – MCI Vehicle Collision with Extrication, Phoenix Lake Road x Paseo de los Portales Crews arrived at a vehicle collision between two vehicles. Due to the seriousness of the injuries and



number of patients, a Multi-Casualty Incident (MCI) was declared. Additional fire and ambulance crews were dispatched and several air ambulances as well. Firefighters used vehicle extrication equipment to free a trapped patient, packaged patients for transport to trauma centers, and coordinated 2 separate landing zones for the air ambulances. There were 6 patients total. 4 patients were transported by air ambulance to a trauma center, 1 patient by ground ambulance, and, sadly, 1 patient succumbed to injuries at scene.

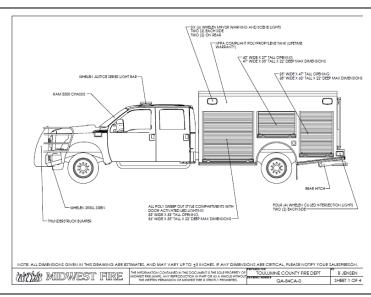
October 29, 2020 – Medical Aid & Hoist Rescue, Harvard Mine CAL FIRE Columbia Air Attack Base (CAAB) Copter 404 (C404) was dispatched for an air rescue at the Harvard Mine site west of Jamestown. The incident was for an elderly male suffering from fatigue and dehydration on a rock bench in the mine pit. C404 contacted fire crews that were with the patient and had provided initial basic life support. It was determined an attended screamer suit would be the most suitable option. A screamer suit is a one-piece harness the patient gets into to be hoisted into the helicopter and one of several options the rescue crews utilize based on conditions of the patient. The rescuer and patient were extracted in a single hover then

landed a short distance from the scene to transfer care to awaiting ambulance. C404 lifted and returned to CAAB.

#### **Fleet**

With funds approved by the Board of Supervisors from the County General Fund, TCFD is moving forward with the purchase of a mobile breathing support unit. The current breathing support is a 1998

Ford F550 with over 155,000 miles and has been mechanically out of service since June due to a blown engine, transmission, and suspension, among other significant issues. A mobile breathing support unit carries large stored pressurized air cylinders, a compressor to fill the bottles, rescue and medical gear and will be stationed at TCFD Station 79 Columbia College. The unit responds to every structure fire in the County.



#### **Prevention/Education**

Firefighters are finding new ways to return to providing much need fire prevention and education to the public. Several events this month occurred that allowed them to provide important reminders. On October 16, firefighters provided a virtual fire station tour for Jamestown Elementary School kindergarten classes. Two separate classes participated virtually with staff that provided fire safety

reminders and a live virtual tour of the fire station. On October 17, fire crews participated in the Jamestown 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Sidewalk Sale, and on October 26<sup>th</sup>, crews participated in the Career Day for Columbia College's Fire Academy at the City of Sonora fire station.

Despite COVID restrictions, Fire Investigators/Inspectors were able to conduct 28 site inspections during the month and 20 plans reviews. Building and planning continues on a good pace and are remaining at pre-COVID levels.



Social media continues to provide a great opportunity to spread the fire prevention/education message and keep the community informed on events occurring within County Fire's jurisdiction. If you haven't already, follow us:



## **Training**

Training is an constant in the daily life of a firefighter. Always looking to learn new things and practice skills as if their life depends on it, because it does. This month firefighters trained on a variety of different types of incidents responded to including: fires (residential and commercial structure, wildland, passenger and commercial vehicle, etc...), hazardous materials, technical rescue (rope rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue, urban search and rescue, swift water rescue, etc...), overcoming equipment and appliance malfunction, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents and auto extrication, severe weather and natural disasters, and aircraft emergencies, just to name a few.



A battalion's training topic this month was Vertical Ventilation. Vertical Ventilation, is an aggressive tactic utilized during structure fires to release super-heated gas and create a more survivable environment for trapped victims and more tenable for firefighters entering the structure. The operation involves using chainsaws, hand tools, and ladders to cut holes in a roof without cutting structural members. This creates an exit for heat and smoke. During the drill, firefighters utilized an elevated training prop that simulates a roof. Firefighters practiced how to safely traverse a roof, identify structural members, chainsaw cut sequences, and hazards and fire behavior associated with the operation.

One of the trainings that firefighters attend in the first few years of their career, is FI-210 Wildland Fire Investigation Course. This course covers wildland fire origin and cause determination and has components in the classroom and in the field. The course covers topics such as identifying a variety of ignition sources, micro and macro indicators of fire progression, and fire behavior.

## **Tuolumne County Fire Department Muster Association**

The TCFD Muster Association is a benevolent non-profit organization that receives donations to support the firefighters of the TCFD in need and supports firefighters in obtaining additional training. The TCFD Muster Association is proud to offer "We Support TCFD" t-shirts in children's and adult sizes and Tuolumne Co. FD Richardson snapback hats for a donation. Children's shirts have been reduced to \$10 and adult sizes are \$15. Hats are \$20 and both items are pictured below and can be ordered from <a href="mailto:TCFDMuster@gmail.com">TCFDMuster@gmail.com</a> or by calling 209-533-5118.



















