

#### MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

I am proud to present the Tuolumne County Fire Department's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. As the fire environment has rapidly changed over the last several years throughout the County and State of California, the focus on fire preparedness and community resilience has taken a well-deserved front seat. As the County of Tuolumne and the Tuolumne County Fire Department (TCFD) take hold of the environmental changes and future growth in the County, I consider this Strategic Plan to be one of the most important documents ever produced by the Department because it will serve as our guide to create the optimal TCFD starting now and moving into the future.

This plan has been years in the making and is a collaborative effort between Department staff and County leaders and is the Department's guide to accomplishing our organizational vision to maintain the Tuolumne County Fire Department as a leader in public safety throughout the county.

Our key priorities focus on stabilizing the current financial and operational needs of the TCFD, improving service delivery in a safe and efficient manner, implementing advanced technologies, employing sound budgeting practices, enhancing our leadership on a personal and professional level, and also to guide the TCFD into the future in not only meeting the growing demands of the community, but planning ahead for the future on a firm framework.

Fire and life safety are a community effort. To be successful we must build on our broad community support and focus it to strengthen our community relationships to improve our preparedness and enhance resiliency during emergency events. Over the last several years we have maximized our recruitment and retention efforts for volunteer firefighters with the aid of FEMA SAFER grants. We have increased our community presence by implementing strategies designed to maximize our fire prevention and education to not just recruit volunteer firefighters, but also to engage the community towards a better understanding of all the things their fire department does. We've done this by increasing our presence at community events, on multiple platforms using social media, and engagement of elected officials and leaders throughout the county. By improving our Fire Prevention Bureau services and adopting a pro-active fire code and life safety inspection program, we will attract and support new businesses as we assist in revitalizing the local economy and ensure our commercial partners continue to provide a safe commercial experience for their employees, the public, and emergency responders.

This Strategic Plan will encourage county leaders and elected officials to prioritize funding of fire service programs and initiatives while outlining how the community as a whole will benefit from the increased level of service we know is fundamental to the



protection of the society. As we continue to face difficult fiscal problems and other issues confronting the Department and the County in general; it would be very easy for us to maintain a reactionary posture and not plan for the future. That approach has proved wholly unsuccessful, and, in the face of these challenges, it is more important than ever for us to take a proactive approach to planning and preparedness.

Our personnel are the most valuable asset of our Department. Through our collective efforts we will achieve the vision described in this 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. This Plan will help the Department focus on our mission, vision, core values, primary goals and objectives. As a living document, the Strategic Plan will be adaptable and responsive to change during the next five years as we plan for the future ahead.

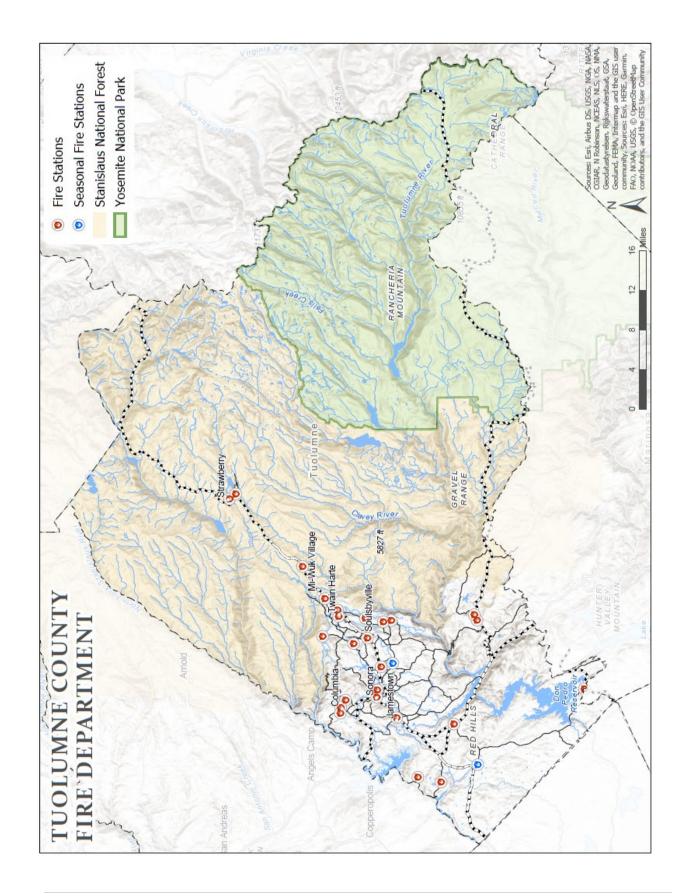
The Strategic Plan establishes the framework for our continued success. It will be up to all of us to get there. I look forward to working with the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors, Tuolumne County staff, TCFD employees, cooperating agencies, and the community as we implement this Plan.

Nick Casci

Unit Chief/Fire Chief

CAL FIRE Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit Tuolumne County Fire Department







#### **BACKGROUND**

The history of fire protection in Tuolumne County originates, like much of California, around the time of the historic gold rush. Several volunteer companies were formed in the 1850's around the county to provide fire protection near the commercial and residential areas. Fire protection continued through the late twenties when the California Division of Forestry (CDF) was formulated after a reorganization of State government. The CDF was formed to protect the State's watersheds and private timberlands and each county was assigned a State Forest Ranger to oversee firefighting and timber harvesting operations. The formation of the CDF provided the first paid fire protection for much of



California's rural mountain areas and was the beginning of a long-term and beneficial working relationship between the County of Tuolumne and the State of California.

In 1930 CDF and Tuolumne County both contributed to the purchase of a CDF fire engine that was stationed on Stockton Street in Sonora. The engine responded to wildland and structure fires year-round and often was the only fire engine to

respond. Over the next twenty years the level of fire protection in Tuolumne County changed very little until the 1950's when a second CDF fire engine was staffed for non-fire season response in the Groveland area. A third fire engine was added in 1961 for the Twain Harte area and eastern reaches along State Highway 108. In the 1960's several of the County's communities began establishing locally controlled volunteer fire departments, many utilizing surplus CDF equipment. Training for these departments was provided by a County funded CDF employee.

In 1972, CDF, in cooperation with Tuolumne County, completed a study of rural fire protection in the County. The report recommended that the Board of Supervisors create

a County Fire Department with a single appointed and overall administrator and to adopt a long-range plan. The report offered that CDF was the most cost-effective manager of a new County Fire Department.

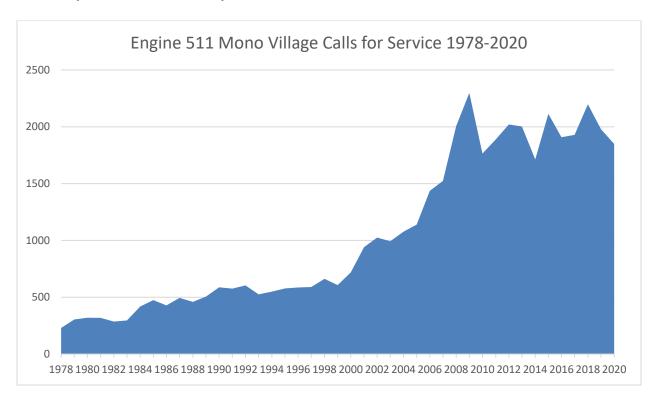
The County opted not to enter into an agreement with CDF but instead commissioned a study to determine how the County could create its own independent County Fire Department. The report,





completed in December 1973 by Columbia College Fire Chief Jack Amundsen, called for an expansion of the existing fire districts to encompass the rest of the County. Citing the inability to create a unified lack of direction from the fire districts as well as variable taxation rates, the Board of Supervisors decided to instead contract with CDF for rural fire protection. On March 7, 1974 voters passed the Rural Fire Tax and the Tuolumne County Fire Department was created. Since 1974 Tuolumne County and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) have enjoyed a cooperative relationship to serve the fire protection needs of Tuolumne County.

In March of 1977 TCFD Mono Village Station 51 was staffed. The first full calendar year, 1978, Engine 511 responded to 230 calls for service. In 2020, over 40 years later, E511 responded to 1,829 incidents with only two personnel on duty each day while the population of the county has nearly doubled. Also, while the call volume has increased dramatically, the primary concern is the size and complexity of modern-day emergency incidents. While good fire prevention and code enforcement will keep the fire loss low, the fire calls we do respond to burn hotter and quicker than they did over 40 years ago, requiring multiple engine companies and overhead staff to safely mitigate the emergencies. Add to that the increased complexity and incident management requirements, it's easy to realize that additional career positions and staffed stations are necessary to ensure the ability to meet our mission, vision, and core values.





In 2012, in a cooperative agreement between the County of Tuolumne and the Jamestown Fire Protection District, Jamestown Station 76 was staffed by permanently funded CAL FIRE employees, initially through a FEMA SAFER grant, and continued to be funded through the agreement between the three agencies. This location added a much-needed staffed engine company to address the increasing call volume in the western end of the county. The goal from the 1992 Tuolumne County Fire Department Stabilization Plan suggested that when a volunteer station reached over 300 incidents per year the County should consider career staffing with the volunteers at that location.

While several of the other local agencies have added career staffing since that time and automatic and mutual aid plans are in place, we recognize that the threshold of 300 will vary by location. It is our goal, instead of only a number, to utilize a combination of the recommendations of the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1720, the Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments, and the needs of the greater community, as a goal throughout the TCFD jurisdiction. That goal is reflected below:

Table 4.3.2	Staffing	and R	esponse	Time
				3.50

Demand Zone <sup>a</sup>	Demographics	Minimum Staff to Respond <sup>b</sup>	Response Time (minutes) <sup>c</sup>	Meets Objective (%)
Urban area	>1000 people/mi <sup>2</sup>	15	9	90
Suburban area	500–1000 people/mi <sup>2</sup>	10	10	80
Rural area	<500 people/mi <sup>2</sup>	6	14	80
Remote area	Travel distance ≥ 8 mi	4	Directly dependent on travel distance	90
Special risks	Determined by AHJ	Determined by AHJ based on risk	Determined by AHJ	90

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup>A jurisdiction can have more than one demand zone.

Two combinations career/volunteer and 10 all-volunteer TCFD fire stations are located strategically throughout the county:

Mono Village Station 51 (6 career / 6 volunteers) 1,829 incidents in 2020 Ponderosa Hills Station 53 (3 volunteers) 288 incidents Long Barn Station 54 (no volunteers) 91 incidents



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>b</sup>Minimum staffing includes members responding from the AHJs department and automatic aid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>c</sup>Response time begins upon completion of the dispatch notification and ends at the time interval shown in the table.

Pinecrest Station 55 (6 volunteers) 192 incidents
Mono Vista Station 56 (6 volunteers) 929 incidents
Crystal Falls Station 57 (no volunteers) 501 incidents
Cedar Ridge Station 58 (16 volunteers) 223 incidents
Chinese Camp Station 61 (1 volunteer) 358 incidents
Smith Station (above Groveland – no volunteers) calls absorbed by other stations
Don Pedro Station 64 / Blanchard CAL FIRE (3 volunteers) 166 incidents
Jamestown Station 76 (5 career / 2 volunteers) 1,550 incidents
Columbia College Station 79 (6 student firefighters) 618 incidents
Resident Volunteer Firefighters (6)
Firefighter Explorers (less than 18 years old – 6)

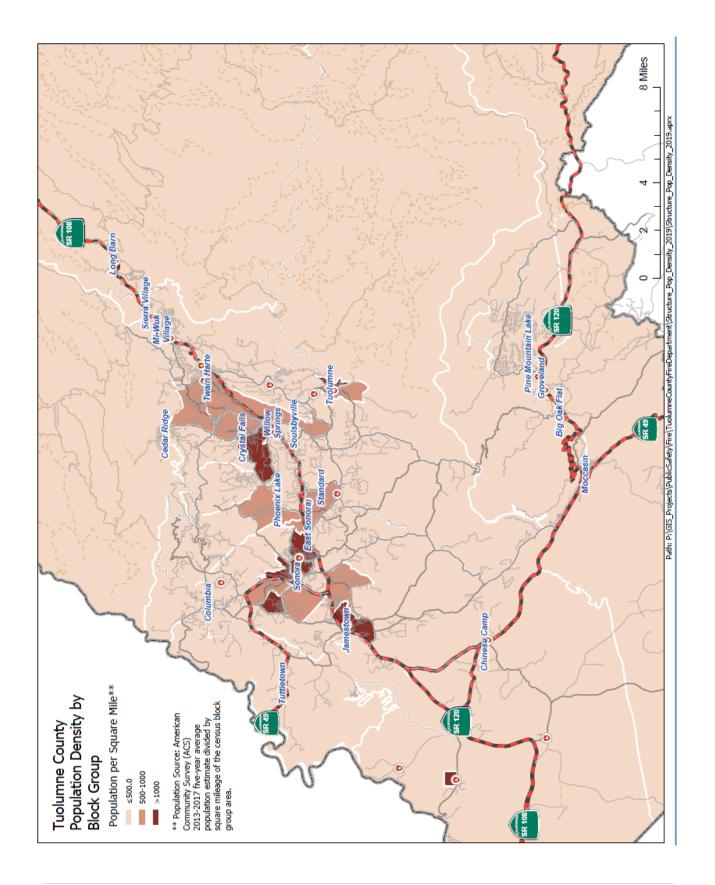
Based on the goals of NFPA 1720, we will evaluate the fire station locations regarding travel times, population and staffing levels to determine if our fire stations are in the right areas for the most effective responses. Also, several of these stations currently need to be staffed based on the high call volume and complexity of incidents, and we are developing a plan to staff several other fire stations as we move into the future.

Through what's commonly known as an Amador Agreement, another form of cooperative fire protection agreement allowed through the Public Resources Code, Tuolumne County contracts with CAL FIRE to provide fire protection for when CAL FIRE is out of declared "fire season." The County provides funding to staff the Twain Harte CAL FIRE Station, Groveland CAL FIRE Station, and through a shared agreement with Mariposa County, provides for services at the Blanchard CAL FIRE Station (TCFD Station 64).

The County of Tuolumne and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection enjoy a relationship that extends back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Since 1974, that relationship has become a close bond through the cooperative agreement for fire protection and emergency response to over 7,000 incidents each year providing service to the 2,200 square miles and over 55,000 residents and many hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.













#### **MISSION**

The Tuolumne County Fire Department preserves life and property, promotes public safety and fosters economic growth through a commitment to prevention, preparedness, response and recovery as an all-risk emergency responder and leader in our community.

#### **VISION**

The Tuolumne County Fire Department will provide exceptional service to the communities in all aspects of fire prevention, fire protection and emergency response throughout Tuolumne County.



#### **CORE VALUES**

There are several core values of the Tuolumne County Fire Department:

<u>Service</u>: Ours is an unwavering call to protect and serve. We seek out and value the input and opinions of members at all levels of the organization. We work as a team to cooperate locally and regionally to improve service to the public. We believe that members have a responsibility to mentor others.

<u>Honor:</u> We value the public's trust. We believe that every action reflects on all the members of the Department, both past and present. We are a fire department family. We are committed and accountable to each other. We are dedicated to reflecting and respecting diversity throughout our organization.

<u>Innovation:</u> We are committed to seeking out effective methods and progressive thinking toward change.

<u>Communication</u>: We believe communication is essential to the cohesiveness and performance of our organization. We are committed to providing effective and responsive means of communication throughout the organization and community.

<u>Dedication</u>: We are committed to the objectives of our mission. We maintain a constant state of readiness to meet all threats and challenges, traditional and emerging.



#### STRATEGIC GOALS

The foundation of the Tuolumne County Fire Department's Strategic Plan is based on strategic goals designed to meet the challenges associated with providing an emergency response delivery system that not only makes up for current deficiencies but also evolves to meet changes in its demographics, society, economy, and climate. Our Department is making some limited progress in areas such as; volunteer recruitment and retention, personal protective clothing replacement, tool replacement, and community outreach and education. However, the bulk of the progress is due to one-time funds through grants sought out and administered by staff, variable reimbursement from State and Federal firefighting agreements, and special allocations by the Board of Supervisors. With the expiration of several of those grants and without proper funding, there will likely be a decline of volunteer firefighter emergency responses that will result in a loss or reduction of emergency services in Tuolumne County's jurisdiction. Reductions may impact the Department's ability to maintain its current Insurance Service Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification. The ISO classification is one of the tools used by insurance companies when assigning insurance rates to the communities of Tuolumne County for residential and commercial structures.

The strategic goals of this plan are tied directly to our mission statement with the goal to meet the current needs and setting the future direction of the Tuolumne County Fire Department. The following goals were identified with these things in mind.

Stabilize funding to maintain an appropriate level of service

Increase operational efficiency

Provide exceptional public safety and emergency service

Strengthen community relationships and enhance community resilience



## GOAL: STABILIZE FUNDING TO MAINTAIN AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF SERVICE

### Objective: Analyze current funding allocations to ensure budget efficiencies

The first step in determining the need for additional funds starts with analyzing current and historical budget expenses to ensure funds are being spent appropriately. This involves a line item budget review to ensure that our budget is being utilized to its utmost efficiency. Knowing where every dollar is spent allows the Department to expand or scale down its service level based on funding and through this analysis TCFD can reallocate dollars to address priorities. Unfortunately, as expenses continue to outpace revenue, the gap in funding essential services is widening and the funds for non-mandated services the public expects and supplies the staff need to do their work are

dwindling.

The TCFD will also continue to monitor fixed facilities and equipment to identify surplus items. A study will be conducted to determine if we have the right number and type and right location of fire engines and stations throughout the community. We expect to identify a few items that may be able to be liquidated. This includes fire engines, snowmobiles, unnecessary or unused fire stations and other equipment. By declaring surplus and liquidated, this will reduce



the overall cost and eliminate maintenance and replacement costs for the TCFD. This process of evaluation will be conducted on regular intervals.

#### Objective: Seek out additional sustained revenue

Property tax allocations have proved to be wholly insufficient to fund the fire department. Grant funds and state/federal fire reimbursements are used to supplant department needs and are widely variable. This item used in the base budget does not provide stability or security in funding due to inconsistency and fluctuations of activity. To best serve the public with a well and adequately funded Fire Department, a more sustainable funding source should be secured.



In the fiscal year 2019/2020 budget meetings, staff was given direction to develop several additional funding mechanisms. For the TCFD, these include developing commercial impact mitigation fees, a proactive fire code and life safety inspection program, and false fire alarm fees. As these new programs are developed, we expect to see a minor increase in revenue which will not be sufficient to meet the increasing needs of the community.

We will work with the Board of Supervisors, County staff, and the community at large to secure appropriate funding to address the current deficiencies by progressive thinking, conservative budgeting, and extensive outreach and education. If we fail to secure the stabilized funding sources, this will ultimately result in a reduction of services and an inability to meet the increasing demands of the County.

#### Objective: Search out alternative funding sources

TCFD has been successful in recent years securing grant funding to support a variety of the Department's programs. Most notably, the Department was able to secure The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant in 2012 to temporarily staff an engine in Jamestown and another grant in 2013 for Volunteer Recruitment and Retention. The Jamestown engine staffing was fully funded by the County at the end of the grant period. In fiscal year 2018/19, the staff continued to seek

out grants and were successful in obtaining approximately \$300,000 in grant funds through a variety of opportunities and in FY 2019/20 another \$574,000 has been awarded. Grant applications will continue to be a priority for the TCFD, and we will apply for as many applicable grants as possible for personal protective equipment, rescue equipment, communications, fleet vehicles, staffing, and nearly every other operating and expense line item.



The TCFD will continue to keep fire engines available to all the forest agencies through established agreements for utilization and reimbursement. The reimbursement amount over the last ten years has varied between \$29,000 and \$747,000 per year, and we will continue to lobby that these funds should be used to fund one-time expenses such as fleet replacement or rescue equipment replacement. These reimbursements serve a valuable contribution for one-time expenditures; however, they are not stable enough to depend on for long-term funding.



#### Objective: Foster relationships with cooperators and

#### stakeholders

In 2019 the 2016 Tuolumne County Fire Service Providers Automatic Aid Agreement was amended to include all the fire service providers in the County. The purpose for this is to send the right resource in the shortest amount of time while respecting jurisdictional boundaries. These agreements exemplify a basic tenant of the fire service of the closest resource concept. Also, working together decreases response times, increases fire ground staffing and efficiency, and overall cooperative fire protection services, which aids in large emergency incident preparation. By being a party to such agreements, the Department can move closer to meet NFPA 1720 standards of staffing levels to emergency incidents in specified periods of time.

There are also other long-standing agreements in place with CAL FIRE and other forest agencies and with the California Office of Emergency Services, with Mariposa County



Stanislaus County Fire Department, resources, Pinecrest Permittees Association, and a multitude of other agreements. These cooperative relationships are essential providing the best level of service in a rural county such as ours. TCFD will continue to place a high priority on maintaining and improving the relationships we currently enjoy continuing to seek out new opportunities to collaborate and coordinate to best serve the greater community.

#### **GOAL: INCREASE OPERATIONAL EFFICENCY**

# Objective: Utilize and analyze data to implement and capitalize on advanced technologies

Technology and data are critical tools in the fire service. We will strive to stay abreast of modern technologies to address today's challenges, but also to look ahead towards and plan for the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century challenges that will very soon be facing the TCFD. It is vital that in order to maintain optimal, effective emergency and administrative operations, improved communications, targeted training, and creative thinking will foster more effective and innovative delivery methods. The technology is available to improve



outcomes, identify problems, and pursue solutions. Additionally, we see the need for a systems approach to data and sharing of information between fire agencies throughout the county. Data and proper analysis enable smarter planning and decision-making to improve community health and safety. The use of data to make better informed decisions is transforming, and will continue to transform, fire departments as they serve their communities.

Most programs utilized by the fire service are web based, stored in the cloud or utilize cellular technology. The County's move to Office 365 in 2019 and the release of all functions will greatly enhance our ability to keep the public safe. Cloud based preincident fire plans for commercial occupancies, fire inspection reports, and other available technology are needed to assist our firefighters to be more effective and efficient on the scene. Other programs provide the use for moving maps, live tracking of all resources assigned to an incident, CAL OES' Situation Awareness and Collaboration Tool (SCOUT), and remote status of County volunteer availability.



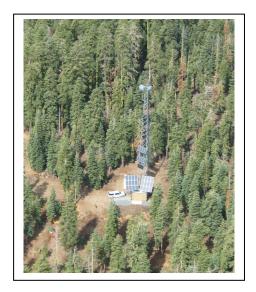
In 2019, Navistar Corporation and Peterson Caterpillar of San Leandro helped TCFD move leaps and bounds ahead in our fleet maintenance program by donating a new Panasonic Toughbook CF54 laptop computer with the programs necessary to diagnose and repair the TCFD fleet. This helps us in our continuous goal to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Recently, 4G tablets were procured for the two TCFD career engines and fire inspectors from grant monies. These vital pieces of equipment allow not only mapping to emergencies from information provided directly by the Emergency Command Center's Computer Aided Dispatching text alerts, but also allow inspectors to remotely access forms and guidance documents for on the scene application, and allow staff to utilize a multitude of available Apps such as the U.S. Dept. of Transportation Emergency Response Guidebook for hazardous materials incident mitigation, wildland and structural firefighting safety, and various other vital programs.

# Objective: Enhance communication infrastructure in the Department's command and control dispatching system



The use of Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL) in conjunction with cloud-based servers and support software is currently used by CAL FIRE and will be a goal of the department to install on the TCFD fleet. This program would allow staff to receive critical response information from CAD through mobile data computers. It allows responders to more effectively manage emergency incidents using up to the minute information inputted by the ECC, GIS data, frequency information, and having AVL ensures the closest, most appropriate fire resources are dispatched to all incidents.



Current mobile and handheld radio communications devices will soon be outdated and unsupported by the industry at large. Grants will be sought, but ultimately funds need to be secured to replace all existing communications devices.

With new technology in cellular apps, it is now possible for volunteers to acknowledge a page out for emergencies via cellular app, allowing the ECC and responding chief officers to see how many responders are responding to calls. These types of response systems create a more efficient use of available resources. We will continue to work towards utilization of applications to more efficiently and timely track volunteer responders.

The county communication infrastructure in largely supported by CAL FIRE. Through the years the County added Tuolumne Command and several permanent mountain top repeaters throughout the county to help command and control of incidents. Currently staff are working towards installing a permanent mountain top repeater on Moccasin Peak and additional sites will continue to be sought out. Additionally, through a Homeland Security Grant, funds have been set aside in 2019 to purchase four portable repeaters to enhance emergency communications during disasters throughout Tuolumne County. To further enhance communications, staff will continue to work with CAL FIRE to introduce tone-shortening to reduce the amount of air-time needed to dispatch incidents nearly in half.

## GOAL: PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICE



The TCFD's primary goal is to deliver exceptional services through a commitment to prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts and to work towards the goal of meeting NFPA Standard 1720.

#### Objective: Fund a fulltime, career-staffed north county fire station

Roughly 50,000 of the 55,000 residents whom TCFD serves, reside in the Northern portion This area is largely composed of commercial, industrial, of Tuolumne County. residential, railroad, and highway uses, including Highway 108, 120, and Highway 49. Industrial properties within TCFD's county protection area include an active lumber mill, Sierra Pacific Industries and Ultra Power; Several hydro-power plant and water facilities including the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Hetch Hetchy Water and Power Moccasin power plant and distribution systems, United States Bureau of Reclamation New Melones Hydropower Plant, and several other hydro-power plant facilities along the Stanislaus River. The county has three large bulk propane facilities, JS West, Campora, and Suburban Propane. Additionally, there are numerous primary schools and secondary public schools, including Sonora, Columbia, Jamestown, Bellview, Summerville, Curtis Creek, Soulsbyville, Chinese Camp, and Tenaya elementary schools. The county has several high schools including Tioga, Sonora and Summerville High Schools. There are many mixed commercial developments on the Highway 108 corridor, Mono Way and Camage Industrial Park, Junction Shopping Center, Best Western, Inns of California, and Sonora Inn.

Station 56 Mono Vista fire station is located along Highway 108 between Twain Harte and Station 51 Mono Village. This location is a prime location in terms of providing assistance in all directions including into TCFD Station 57 Crystal Falls and towards TCFD Station 58 Cedar Ridge area, but also to the west towards Sonora, and to the east up the Highway 108 corridor into Twain Harte, Mi Wuk, Long Barn,



Pinecrest and further east, and to the south into Tuolumne and Standard.

In 2020, there were 929 incidents dispatched in Station 56's response area. Volunteers respond to about half of the incidents in this area, and as a result, a career staffed engine is always dispatched. Depending on location, either Station 51, Twain Harte CAL FIRE, or Twain Harte Community Services District respond, resulting in a longer response time.



A new fully funded career staffed fire station at Station 56 Mono Vista is a priority for TCFD to ensure we are providing the best service to our community members. We believe a joint TCFD/Tuolumne County Ambulance station would best serve the community by reducing response times and adding additional depth to meet our mission.

#### Objective: Fund a fulltime, career-staffed south county fire station

The closest staffed engine company to the County jurisdiction in the greater Groveland area is a Groveland Community Services District funded fire engine. The closest county funded engine to the entire Highway 120 corridor responds out of Jamestown. In 2018, over 450,000 vehicles entered the Yosemite National Park Big Oak Flat entrance. In addition to the increased traffic, year-round resorts have been built and additional resorts are being considered that will increase potential life and property loss from fire if not properly mitigated. Mitigation of any future developments need to include addressing the service gaps in the area and a staffed fire station needs to be established in the area between Groveland and the National Park boundary along the Highway 120 corridor.

#### Objective: Increase response percentage of volunteer staff

It is extremely difficult for Volunteer Firefighters to meet the minimum training and activity standards for TCFD due to the high demands. This fact, despite recruitment efforts, represents a continued decline in volunteer responses due in part to changes in our society, economy and the overall demographics of the citizens who become new volunteers. Previously, the Department has made attempts to reverse the overall eroding responses of volunteers by instituting the Volunteer Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP), focusing recruitment and retention on



increasing volunteer numbers, and recently increasing the Volunteer Resident Response Pay Stipend. Although these were positive steps to preserve our volunteer staff, it is simply not enough of an incentive to recruit nor retain new volunteers.

Staff are currently developing a change in strategy that will honor our history of volunteerism and will include a changed focus of recruiting volunteers that are career fire service minded individuals and providing educational incentives to retain them. The Department's current recruitment focus must not only be centered on the community volunteer, but also the recruitment of those individuals who are interested in the fire



service as a fulltime career. We will look to add greater incentives and entry-level programs so that TCFD Volunteer Firefighters obtain the necessary training, education and skills to find permanent employment within the fire service.

#### Objective: Build a new fire station in or near the community of

#### Jamestown

Jamestown Fire Protection District allocates its property tax revenue to the county to provide fire protection to the District and through that cooperative agreement the fire station is staffed full time through the cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE. The engine company averages 1,700 calls per year over the last several years. The engine is housed in a Quonset Hut obtained through a federal property surplus program several decades

ago. The living quarters for the crew is in a separate construction type trailer that was a temporary solution more than ten years ago. A permanent home for the Jamestown fire engine needs to be established as soon as possible. Again, to best serve the community, we believe a joint fire station with the Tuolumne County Ambulance would be most effective and would move the Ambulance out the leased facility on South Forest Road.



#### Objective: Pursue funding for direct supervision of Countyfunded career personnel

Since the initial staffing of the first paid fire station funded by the County and CAL FIRE in 1977, line personnel have been supervised by CAL FIRE funded Battalion Chiefs. When the agreement was entered, E511 only responded to 230 calls their first year. Since that time, not only has the County added an additional career staffed fire station, but the call volume for those two stations is over 3,600 incidents per year. This requires a significant commitment of time and effort from the state-funded Battalion Chiefs to manage personnel, respond to the significant increase in emergencies, but also respond to the community's demand for their time. The Battalion Chief's job with CAL FIRE has also experienced a paradigm shift back to its origins of more fuels management projects and greater responses out of the county to combat the increasingly damaging fires throughout the state.



To address the significant increased workload for the state-funded Battalion Chiefs from the demands of TCFD from the significant increase in calls and personnel management, TCFD should fund direct line supervision of TCFD funded personnel. This will allow increased interactions with the community and increase the safety and morale of personnel.

## Objective: Pursue funding for an aerial fire apparatus for Tuolumne County

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) recommends a ladder company in response districts

encompassing five or more buildings that are three stories or 35 feet or more in height, or with five buildings that have a needed fire flow greater than 3,500 gallons per minute, or any combination of these criteria. These criteria are inclusive of those buildings protected by an automatic sprinkler system. Tuolumne County meets these criteria with the previously mentioned schools, hotels, retail and industrial buildings.



Tuolumne County would benefit from a "quint" style aerial apparatus for its various functionality reasons. A quintuple combination pumper, or "quint", is a fire service apparatus that serves the dual purpose of an engine and a ladder truck. Not only will this apparatus meet the ISO criteria, but will also serve as a heavy rescue for Highway 108, 120 and Highway 49.

## Objective: Fund and implement the apparatus replacement program to maintain or improve the current ISO classification

The need to replace the outdated fleet of fire engines, water tenders, and utility vehicles has been well discussed over the previous years. The Board of Supervisors began to address the problem by allocating funds to replace a type one fire engine in fiscal year 2019/20. However, with the average age of the fleet at 23 years, with many fire apparatus past recommended replacement by the NFPA, much more needs to be done. A stepped approach of replacing 3-4 apparatus a year would replace the fleet within 10 years and cost about 10 million dollars during that period. A fleet replacement plan has been developed that will allow for a more strategic and timely replacement plan to carry the



TCFD into the future. Staff will continue to work with the Board of Supervisors and the community to fund the replacement and allocation in the most strategic manner.



The fire apparatus and water tenders are critical to our minimum ISO Classification within the Department in each of the County's communities. Ensuring the Department is providing these minimums and re-allocating excess resources is critical to maintaining the overall budget efficiency plan. To help ensure that, it will be the practice of the TCFD to rotate its vehicles to maintain a balance of mileage between stations with varying activity levels. Finally, analyzing the

placement of apparatus will ensure even distribution throughout the County thus increasing the overall level of service provided.

# Objective: Fund and implement the specialized equipment replacement program

The TCFD provides and maintains a variety of specialized fire and rescue equipment such as: Hydraulic Rescue Tools like spreaders ("Jaws of Life"), cutters, pneumatic rescue equipment such as air lifting bags, rope rescue equipment, vehicle stabilization equipment, self-contained breathing apparatus, and several different gas-powered pieces of equipment like rescue saws, positive pressure ventilation fans, and many more pieces of equipment.



Though the TCFD was awarded a significant grant of \$554,091 through FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant in 2019 to fill an urgent need to replace soon to be outdated self-contained breathing apparatus, there are several existing plans that need to be funded and implemented to ensure the safety and effectiveness of all specialized equipment carried on fire apparatus. Even though we received the grant for the SCBAs, they will all need to be replaced in 15 years. Not setting aside funds today and going forward planning for replacement will result in continued desperate reliance on unguaranteed funds.



# GOAL: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Objective: Increase access to TCFD services and build stronger relationships with the community

The safety and livelihoods of the public is enhanced when education, prevention, and preparedness information is widely available. To encourage this, TCFD will utilize online forums and public events to keep the public fire safety education and prevention message easily accessible. We will increase education, planning, and preparedness information for the public in preparation for emergencies, large and small, and will make every effort to participate in community events when able to do so.

As part of our continuing goal to reduce costs and improve efficiencies, we'll continue to work with staff to streamline administrative processes such as the permit process, fire code and life safety inspections, code compliance inspections, etc., and strive to make available through the utilization of technology online.

Another way to achieve this goal is to make information regarding the overall health and status of the department easily accessible to the public and elected officials by preparing and presenting monthly activity reports to the Board of Supervisors and making available through the media and online forums.





#### Objective: Support community resilience efforts and support fire

#### and life safety education

We will continue to support the formation of FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) throughout the County. The CERT program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their areas and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations. Through CERT, the capabilities to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters is built and enhanced.



We believe another important way to build and strengthen community relationships is to work towards providing hands-only CPR, AED, and Stop the Bleed training throughout the community in partnership with our close partners, Tuolumne County Ambulance, and the Tuolumne County Public Health Department. We're working to develop programs to teach the short but vital classes in high schools, for County department staff, and at large community events.

# Objective: Enhance fire prevention through commercial fire code and life safety inspections, data collection and education

TCFD is developing a proactive commercial fire code and life safety inspection program based on the California Fire Code and NFPA 1730, the Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations, for adoption by the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors. We believe that by doing so, the TCFD will not only make for a safer commercial experience for the public, employees, employers, and public safety, but will also enhance commercial opportunities throughout the County by reducing losses from fire and increasing the overall commercial/retail experience.



We're also strengthening data and evidence collection and will continue to analyze factual circumstances surrounding all residential and commercial structure fires to identify trends or circumstances to help prevent future fires. We'll work toward completing an evaluation of interagency shared technology and systems to improve inspection and fire cause data collection. This will include our commitment to continue to pursue a joint Fire Investigation Unit between not only CAL FIRE and TCFD, but also to once again include local law enforcement and the local prosecutor's offices.



#### **CONCLUSION**

Government's fundamental responsibility is to protect the public. To fill the need for protection of the community from fire, disaster, and emergency, the communities depend on the fire department as the first line of defense. Some may look at government as they do a business, but fire departments are vastly different than business. We are not competing for a corner on a market, we are trying to save lives and property. We should not be competing for dollars but instead working collaboratively to achieve a *level of service* that our communities deserve. Like your heart, fire departments cannot be

replaced if they fail; there are competitors to fill the void. When it comes to disaster response, the fire department is the community's first and only option. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in the National Infrastructure Protection Plan, identifies fire departments as critical infrastructure. The DHS suggests methodical process to ensure long term survival by building robust and redundant systems. With the extraordinary efforts of staff, we will utilize this document as the framework so that we can pursue a vision of



the best, most cost-effective fire protection in Tuolumne County that respects our history but also builds upon what we currently have, with a goal of a robust and redundant system. Your lives and the lives of generations depend on what we do here, today, and in the months ahead.





We cannot think of the fire department as a business. On a global scale, the state and federal governments depend on local fire departments as critical infrastructure and critical to national security. We must financially support the fire department like our lives depend on it, because they do. We must carefully study the options, have community input on what level of service they want, determine a cost, and then follow through with passing measures to support your fire department now and into the future.

The Tuolumne County Fire Department 2021-2025 Strategic Plan details the Department's strategic

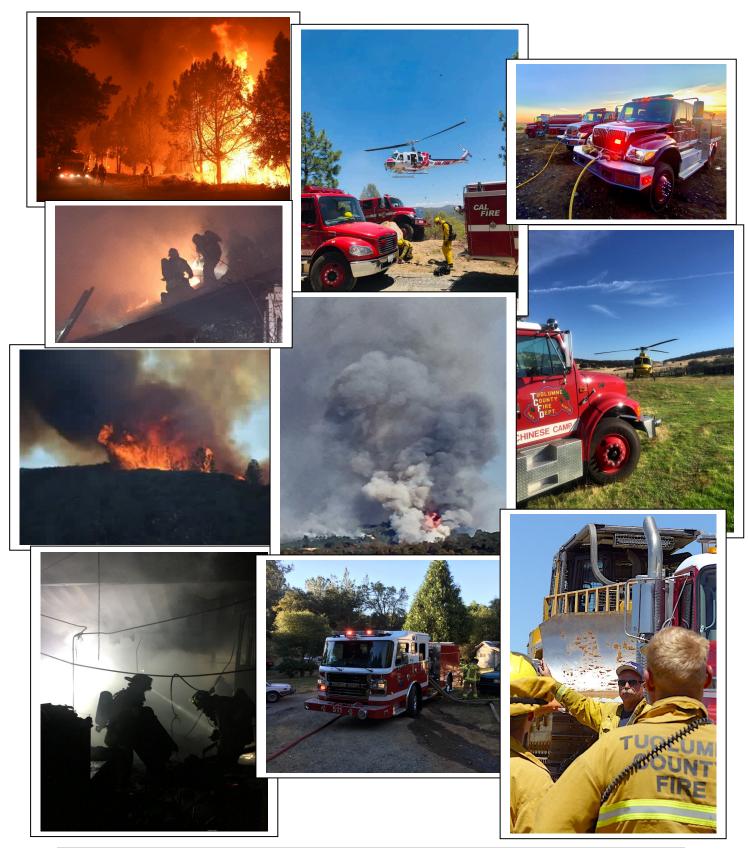
goals and objectives to guide the decisions made in response to challenges and threats facing the level of emergency services provided to the citizens of Tuolumne County over the next five years and beyond.

This 2021-2025 Strategic Plan is a dynamic document that is responsive to change and will adapt as we face the current challenges head on and put ourselves in a position for emerging challenges in the years ahead. The Department's chief officers are responsible for reviewing the Plan on an annual basis, assessing the progress, and making recommendations to the Chief.











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