



NORTHERN SONOMA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

PROTECTING WINE COUNTRY FOR OVER 100 YEARS

20975 Geyserville Avenue • Post Office Box 217 • Geyserville, CA 95441 • (707) 857- 4373

WE ARE NOW THE NORTHERN SONOMA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

The Geyserville Fire Protection District and Knights Valley Volunteer Fire Company have joined together and are now one fire district that covers from the top of Mt. St. Helena to west of Lake Sonoma, serving the Dry Creek Valley, Geyserville, Alexander Valley, Knights Valley and Franz Valley. This is the first step in our “Vision” to become a regional model for community based fire and emergency services agencies serving rural areas.

We specialize in rural fire and emergency services. We believe each resident should know at least one fire fighter by name. We prioritize prevention and preparedness. Fire and emergency services is not about waiting for the next emergency, it is about working together to PREVENT the emergency, being PREPARED when an emergency does occur, then initiating a sustainable appropriate RESPONSE with appropriate DECISION MAKING during the emergency based on awareness, education, and empowerment. The District has adopted the Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE) model for individual and community preparedness which is a grass roots effort based upon neighbors helping neighbors.

We are working with other fire agencies to build a network of COPE communities. **We believe that what we do before the next emergency, in preparedness, is more important than what we do during the emergency.**



2019– FROM FLOOD TO FIRE

2019 was a unique year. We experienced two extremes; significant flooding at the end of February and the largest wildland fire in (recorded) Sonoma County history at the end of October. Both these types of dynamic large scale events will happen again and we need to prepare.

PLEASE CONTACT US

Our goal is that you know at least one fire fighter by name

FACTS ABOUT US

Protects over 275 Square miles

Responds to over 600 emergencies a year

FIRE STATIONS

Geyserville
20975 Geyserville Ave

Alexander Valley
6571 Highway 128

Dry Creek Valley
3970 Dry Creek Rd

Franz/Knights Valley
16850 Spencer Ln

INCREASED DISTRICT FUNDING

The District is funded by a small percentage (.034%) of property taxes, totaling approximately \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 19/20 for our 275 square mile jurisdiction. The Geyserville Volunteer Firefighters' Association is a non-profit organization that solicits donations and coordinates fundraisers that benefit the District raising approximately \$100,000 each year. The District is one of a few districts in Sonoma County that does not have a "special tax." The District sees three methods to increase our funding which will allow us to increase and enhance the level of services we provide while maintaining our independence as a District.

- 1) Annexation of adjacent areas: Property taxes from areas such as The Geysers, Fitch Mountain, and southern Dry Creek Valley (Sotoyome) allocated for fire and emergency services are utilized in other portions of the county (see map on outside cover). The District plans to secure these funds for use in Northern Sonoma County to maintain contracts for service with Healdsburg City and Cloverdale Fire Protection District, and enhance our fire prevention and preparedness efforts.
- 2) Special tax: The District is planning to ask District residents to approve a special tax based upon the use of their property (residential, commercial, undeveloped, etc). This special tax will remain local and be used for fire fighter staffing focused on prevention efforts including the funding of a fuel reduction crew.
- 3) Countywide sale tax: The County of Sonoma will be asking voters to approve a half cent sales tax increase on the March 2020 ballot to fund fire and emergency services. The District could potentially receive between 1 - 2% of this funding for increased fire fighter staffing and a new fire station near Highway 128 and Chalk Hill Road. These funds will be controlled by the County of Sonoma and not controlled by the District.

ROADSIDE CLEARANCE "Success Story"

Firefighters were able to take advantage of the completed roadside clearance along Coyote Ridge Road to stop the northern spread of the Kincade Fire. As the fire approached Coyote Ridge Road on the morning of Thursday, October 24, 2019, firefighters from outside the area joined Northern Sonoma County firefighters to protect residences and ignite



fires to consume vegetation in front of the Kincade Fire. Northern Sonoma County firefighters were familiar with Coyote Ridge Road and the work that had been performed. This kept the fire from spreading closer to other residences in, and around, The Vineyard Club. Firefighters would not have otherwise had the time to limb up trees and reduce the vegetation along Coyote Ridge Road and may not have chosen Coyote Ridge Road to "make a stand" against the Kincade Fire. We are committed to continuing to partner with landowners to modify and reduce vegetation including chipping, assisting with burn piles, and consulting on other projects. We will continue to perform defensible space inspections. This will help reduce future vegetation fires' intensity and losses.

GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS

The District has been awarded two grants from CAL FIRE's Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grant Program. The two grants provide for chipper staffing to perform fuel modification and reduction along roads to reduce ignitions, fire intensity, and to provide for evacuations and emergency vehicle access during a wildland fire. The two grants are described below and we hope these projects will build momentum towards a permanent fuel reduction program and additional grant funded work.



BEFORE PHOTO—GEYSERVILLE ROADSIDE CLEARANCE

Geyserville Roadside Clearance: Reduction of the horizontal continuity and vertical arrangement of vegetation up to 30 feet along both sides of 42 miles of the following designated roads: The Vineyard Club roads, Fox Ridge Road, Pocket Ranch Road, Ridge Oaks Road, Coyote Ridge Road, Rossi Road, Breezewood Road, Rossi Road, Tzabaco Creek Road, O'Brien Road, Maacama Ridge Road, Brack Road, Big Ridge Road, Chemise Road, Shania Way, Koch Road, Mountain View Ranch Road, and Bradford Mountain Road. The completion date is January 1, 2022.



AFTER PHOTO—GEYSERVILLE ROADSIDE CLEARANCE

Lake Sonoma Watershed Fire Prevention Project: Reduction of the horizontal continuity and vertical arrangement of vegetation up to 30 feet along both sides of 30 miles of the following Sonoma County public roads: Stewarts Point – Skaggs Springs Road (within the District's boundary), Old Skaggs Springs Road, and Rockpile Road. The Project also funds defensible space inspections, 8 demonstration defensible space projects, and 8 community workshops focusing on defensible space, structural ignitability, and other preparedness topics. The District is partnering with FireSafe Sonoma, Sonoma Water, UC Extension, and The Center for Social and Environmental Stewardship to complete this work. The completion date is January 1, 2022.

FUTURE PROJECTS

The District is researching and considering the following future fuel reduction projects:

- Establishment of strategic fire breaks along roads and/or ridges
- Forest management
- Hazardous tree removal near structures
- Partnering on prescribed burning

HELP US HELP YOU

- Create defensible space
- Get involved with COPE
- Mark your address
- Learn basic first aid and CPR
- Learn how to use a fire extinguisher
- Maintain your smoke detector and carbon monoxide alarm

NEW ENGINE

Welcome to the newest addition of the fleet! This Type I (structural) fire engine arrived in November. This engine was custom built by Toyne at a cost of approximately \$520,000. We expect to be responding with this engine within the next month. This engine joins our existing fleet of 3 Type III (wildland) engines, Type I (structure) engine, rescue squad, and water tender.





The Geyserville Volunteer Firefighters' Association
 Association
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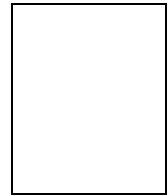
Upcoming Events:

BLOOD DRIVE
 JANUARY 10, 2020
 GEYSERVILLE FIRE STATION

STEELHEAD FESTIVAL
 FEBRUARY 8, 2020
 LAKE SONOMA

WINE COUNTRY TO THE RESCUE
 JULY 18, 2020
 TRENTADUE WINERY

GVFA
 PO Box 1042
 Geyserville CA



This newsletter is a collaboration between the Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District and the Geyserville Volunteer Firefighters' Association. It is published annually in the Fall. It is intended to provide information to the community about news and events as it relates to the Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District. If you are receiving this newsletter then our records show one of the following: You live within the Fire District, you own property within the Fire District, or you have donated money to the GVFA. If you think that you have received this newsletter in error or would like to be removed from our mailing list please contact us at (707) 857 - 4373 (GFPD).

