Visalia Fire Department

JANUARY 2010

VISALIA FIRE STATION LOCATIONS

Fire Station 51
309 S Johnson

Fire Station 52
2224 W Monte Vista

Fire Station 53
9500 W Airport Drive

Fire Station 54
440 W Ferguson

Fire Station 55
6921 W Ferguson

Fire Station 56
1968 S Lovers Lane

FIRE ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Mark R. Nelson
Fire Chief

Doyle Sewell
Battalion Chief

Danny Wristen
Battalion Chief

Charlie Norman
Battalion Chief

Fire Chief's Corner

The January Newsletter will be focusing on Training. I have asked our Training Officer, Captain Darrin Hughes, to provide an overview of our new training facility as well as the training programs being offered.

On January 16th, I attended the Knights of Columbus "Firefighter of the Year Dinner". Captain Lovero, Engineer Colbert and Firefighter/Paramedic Branch were honored for saving the life of a 2 year old child who had drowned in a swimming pool incident. Congratulations to our folks for doing a great job and making a positive difference in our community

Our administrative staff has been very busy working on the new 2 year budget cycle. This is time consuming process, but we are on track and meeting required deadlines.

Lastly, we have been processing Firefighter/Paramedic candidates through the final components in the testing process. We have selected two individuals to move forward in the background, medical and Livescan process. This process should be completed by the end of February.

Thank you,
Chief Nelson

Emergency Preparedness

During the month of January, the Visalia Fire Department met with Rich Stover (Emergency Preparedness Consultant) to begin the process of developing a plan for failure of the Terminus Dam. We reviewed several existing plans from other agencies and will schedule planning meetings with other local agencies. This process will result in a EOC drill in May to build upon our December drill and test our response plan for dam failure. The month of January was a wet one, as a series of large winter storms impacted our region for nearly one week. In response to these storms, several meetings were held with fire, police and public works. We discussed preparedness and response plans for these storms. The Emergency Operation Center was set up, but not officially opened, to assist in monitoring the series of storms. We issued a press release and placed sand and sandbags at several locations throughout Visalia. We did see several inches of rain from the storms, but we did not have any large incidents as a result of the storms.

Operations

During the month of January, the Visalia Fire Department Operations Division responded to 825 calls for service, with a current average of 792 calls per month. For Press Release information please go to www.ci.visalia.ca.us and click on Fire Department.

FIRES		**26**
Building, In a Building, or In a Mobile Home	6	
Vehicles / Equipment	9	
Grass, Vegetation, Brush	2	
Trash, Rubbish, Dumpster, Other	9	
RUPTURE / EXPLOSION		**1**
EMS / RESCUE		**525**
EMS Call, Medical Assist	495	
Vehicle Accident w/Injuries, Vehicle/Pedestrian	30	
Extrication or Rescue from Vehicle, Building, Other	0	
HAZARDOUS CONDITION		**80**
SERVICE CALL / PUBLIC ASSIST		**37**
GOOD INTENT		**131**
FALSE CALL / OTHER		**25**
SEVERE WEATHER		**0**
TOTAL		**825**

Significant Incident

Residential Structure Fire

On January 12, 2010, the Visalia Fire Department responded to a residential structure fire at 827 S. Regina. Upon arrival, fire personnel found a single story family residence, with smoke showing. During the investigation, fire personnel found a fire had started in a garbage can along side the structure and had spread to the residence. A neighbor was using a garden hose to help extinguish the fire. The fire had spread into the attic space of the residence, but was quickly contained by fire personnel. The residence at 835 S Regina also suffered minor damage to the outside of the structure. The cause of the fire was discarded ashes from the fireplace, that had been placed in the garbage can. There were no injuries associated with the fire and damage was estimated at $20,000. Visalia residents should remember not to dispose of any type of ashes into garbage cans until they are thoroughly extinguished.

Terrorism Liaison Officer

The Terrorism Liaison Officer program was initiated by the Fire Chief during the Fall of 2009. Captain Joe Goforth and Firefighter/Paramedic Karl Kassner were designated as TLO's for the department. We researched the requirements of the position and began the certification process. Personnel attended the TLO eight hour basic course in December 2009. This certified our two folks as TLO's with the Sacramento Regional Terrorism Threat Assessment Center, now referred to as the Central California Intelligence Center. We have attended several other courses related to this position. As TLO's, we will participate in gathering information that pertains to possible criminal/terrorist activities in our area. This information will be forwarded to the CCIC for evaluation. During the month of January, FF/PM Kassner attended the Agri-Terrorism Awareness course.

Prevention

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
Weed Abatement													
Complaints Received	2												2
Self Abatements	0												0
Department Abatements	1												1
No Action Taken	3												3
Pending	29												29
Property Maintenance													
Complaints Received	13												13
Self Abatements	1												1
Department Abatements	2												2
No Action Taken	5												5
Pending	37												37
Inspections													
Staff													
Life Safety Inspections	25												25
Follow up inspections	56												56
Engine Companies													
Life Safety Inspections	236												236
Follow up inspections													

Public Education

The Visalia Fire Department completed a total of 14 public Education sessions. This service was provided to approximately 101 Visalia citizens.

The Public Education Program's focus is to education our community on fire safety. Our firefighters visit elementary schools and after school programs weekly. Scheduled tours of the fire stations are also an important aspect of Public Education.

To schedule a visit to your school or tour please
call 559-713-4266

Training

FIRE TRAINING FACILITY

On April 1, 2009, the Visalia Fire Department moved into the new Fire Station 55 located on 6921 W. Ferguson Ave. In addition, this facility provides a 6,800 square foot "State-of-the-Art" training facility, with a 2,700 square feet classroom. The training facility and fire station were designed by RRM Architectural Designers and built by BJ Perch Construction Company. The training facility is used to train firefighting techniques, rescue practices, vehicle extrication as well as other fire related disciplines. The training facility has a drafting pit with a 20,000 gallon underground reservoir tank (which recycles the water used by the apparatus) to test fire pumps on the fire apparatus. This procedure is performed annually.

The main training building is similar to a large commercial type structure with an open area for storage or classroom type training. Within the building, a three-story stairwell is present with a wet standpipe system that leads up to the roof area. Located on the roof are two ventilation props to simulate the specialized technique of removing smoke from a structure involved with fire. The first and second floors of the training building have multiple rooms which have 16 smoke machines located throughout the building to be used for search and rescue drills. The rooms contain furniture to teach firefighters orientation and searching for possible victims in a smoked filled environment. This training technique, by using their sense of feeling or with the use of thermal imaging cameras, teaches the firefighters how to interpret different objects through smoke and heat. Inside two of the rooms are computerized propane fueled live fire props. In a downstairs room, there is a steel stove/oven fire prop and in an upstairs room there is a steel bed fire prop. In the upstairs hallway, is a rollover fire prop, which simulates fire rolling above the firefighters who would be extending fire hose in order to reach the seat of the fire. On the outside of the training building, a propane fueled dumpster fire prop is in place to train firefighters in techniques of approach and extinguishment of these type of fires.

The classroom has a small kitchenette and seating for 40 students. This building has not only been used by Visalia Fire Personnel for training classes, but also for various groups needing class and meeting space. Some of the various groups that have utilized the classroom for their meetings have been:

- Visalia Department Heads Group
- Tulare/Kings Police Chiefs Association
- Tulare/Kings Fire Training Officers
- Visalia Ditches and Waterways Committee
- Visalia City Planning Department
- Visalia Police Department
- Measure T Audit meeting opened to the public

Various classes have also been held in the classroom open to the outside which have drawn students from all over the area. In September 2009, the Visalia Fire Department started hosting Level 2 Fire Officer classes instructed by the Industrial Emergency Council. In December and January, Visalia hosted two week-long S-290 (Wildland Intermediate Fire Behavior) classes instructed by Emergency Management Consultants. In conjunction with the Visalia Police Department's SWAT Team and International Training Resources, have held two classes utilizing the classroom and the training facility to train officers from over the Central Valley in basic and advanced SWAT techniques.

Training

In January, Visalia Fire hosted a two-day Critical Incident Stress Management course instructed by the California Fire Training Authority. Not only are these classes beneficial to our employees and outside students, but they have been able to generate funds back into our local economy by utilizing our facility. The Visalia Fire Department Training Division utilizes a tax revenue tracking form that is completed by each student prior to the completion of each course. The form records expenses that apply to each student or instructor for hotels, food, gas, and any other expenses incurred during their training.

In January 2010, the Visalia Fire Department utilized the training facility to cross train Lindsey Public Safety Officers in different live fire situations and fire fighting techniques. Lindsey Police Department personnel, were required to be cross-trained as firefighters to assist in improving emergency operations within their community.

The Visalia Fire Department Administration has recently completed a new "User Agreement" for the Training Facility. The agreement has various fees associated with the different areas of use. This agreement will help recuperate facility costs and also generate funds to stimulate the local economy. Along with this form, there is a "Facility Use Agreement and Release of Liability" form that participants will complete prior to utilizing the facility. In order to conduct live fire training at this facility a new Standard Operating Guideline was created which adheres to the National Fire Protection Association 1403 for live fire procedures. Nineteen fire department personnel were trained to operate the live fire props by the manufacturer Fireblast and are the only individuals that can operate the facility in live fire situations to maintain all safety standards.

The Visalia Fire Department recently entered into its first User Agreement with the College of the Sequoias for the 2010 spring semester which will utilize the facility to assist in training students enrolled in the Firefighter 1 Academy and various Fire Technology courses.

CALIFORNIA FIREFIGHTER JOINT APPRENTICE COMMITTEE

In another area of the Training Division, the Visalia Fire Department has been involved as a participating fire department of the California Fire Fighter Joint Apprentice Committee (CFFJAC) since 2006. This program allows the fire department to receive reimbursement funds from the State of California for all probationary employees based on their hours of training in their new position. Currently, the fire department has 26 employees that generate funds for a period of three years or 216 hours of training that is approved by the CFFJAC Committee. Additionally, we have the ability to utilized these funds on various training needs that are agreed upon by an internal Sub-JAC Committee which include both Management and Labor members.

TRAINING OFFICER

In April 2009, the new position of Training Officer was created in conjunction with the Visalia Municipal Airport after Fire Station 53 was closed and the crews were relocated to the new Fire Station 55 (Ferguson & Shirk). Besides scheduling and performing the departmental training the Training Officer is also responsible for covering the aircraft standbys for Great Lakes flights that arrive and depart during the day Monday through Friday. The crews at Fire Station 55 also assist in handling the aircraft standbys. Captain Darrin Hughes is the currently serving as the Department's Training Officer.