



MESCAL-J6 FIRE DISTRICT

448 N. Warren Rd. Benson, AZ 85602

Phone (520)586-4690 Fax (520)586-8598

Fire Chief Report

December 2024

Presented at January 2025 Board Meeting

Incidents: 42 total; fire (13); EMS (21); other (9). Mutual aid received -1; given -1.

Total for 2024 – 586 ; 2023-527– up 59 calls. **This represents a 11% increase.**

Hazard Mitigation Collections: \$1111.20 collected in and deposited since the last Board meeting. Just over \$12K still working on. Two more calls uploaded.

Apparatus:

Approximately \$6100 to get large tender up to a “maintenance” level, instead of a “repair” level. Chief’s car back from prison. Very nice job done. Next up is regular maintenance items like shocks, fixing door latch, windshield wipers, etc.

Smaller vehicle lube, oil, and filter are being done by staff to save money.

Gas powered exhaust fan fixed.

Small generator being taken in to determine cost to fix/viability. We will be writing a Homeland Security grant for a larger generator, capable of powering much more in the event of a HS issue, so members of the public could be sheltered if necessary. This will be one major area of concern as we move forward at looking at building a station.

Airpack facepiece testing was conducted, most now fitted.

Helipad and Repeater: We will be writing a 100 Club grant for 5 mobile repeaters, one for each frontline apparatus. It appears placing mobile repeaters into vehicles will assist in the problem, however, it won’t fix it. Our communications functions on a “line of site” model. When that is lost, there’s not much you can do except place repeater in more advantageous position, or place mobile repeaters in the vehicles and try to get “a vehicle” to stage at higher than area working to use them to boost signal to handheld. Before we can say we are being fiscally responsible by placing a repeater on Haystack, we will be conducting tests and developing a map to assist in our decisions. One bid is for 2700/vehicle, still waiting on bid from Motorola. This is an important piece, however, because of all the dips and valleys, especially on I-10. We need to conduct our own tests along our response area, not just our district area. This testing is needing rescheduling because we need 4-wheel drive capable vehicle to get to site, so now that Chief’s car is back from prison, once minor repairs are done, we can set a date to do testing..



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After that, we can assess where the trouble spots are and then will be able to determine what areas will be potentially improved by Haystack. We pretty much know we will not be able to cover every nook and cranny, but this will give our crews vital information, so comm plans and SOG's can be created.

Helipad fencing, done, next is lighting. Apparently, lights will take until Mar 2 to get here. We will see exactly how much of the grant money is left and ask the grantor for permission to utilize it in another area that is approved by them.

The external stakeholders' meetings were held on January 15, 1330 and 1830. We had a great turnout and the facilitators were impressed that so many folks showed for a district our size. Input was very good and eventually, we will be sharing all this information in a physical document.

We have had our first internal meeting for strategic plan. It went very well. 3-4 more meetings to a final product. Items will be shared when appropriate.

I have begun looking into our personnel work model. First though, I want to thank every single person who has ever volunteered in any capacity for our district. I will be considering "support" positions as a way to allow people to volunteer in a series of different roles. This will most likely be at least an objective under one of our pillars we will be creating in the strategic plan process. I will be looking at all aspects of our employment process. Everything from applications, records storage, and minimum requirements to the use of different types of personnel such as: non-firefighter support volunteers, full-time paid, position titles, part-time paid and certification-based pay ideas are just some of the topics we will cover. I have been in touch with other fire chiefs regarding their utilization of personnel to get additional working knowledge. I have some ideas moving forward that we need to vett out to see if they merit further consideration. More to come on this AFTER strategic plan is completed.

I have passed my EMT national test and am now officially certified through Arizona Department of EMS. My next step is to take the national paramedic exam. I am going to give myself a bit of time to study so I can pass first go round. We have the cage built to lock up our drug box, etc. We will be doing the same in Chief's vehicle once (God willing) I pass the test and am certified. This will give us an important piece as we strive to bring a higher level of care to our residents and those we serve.

I have worked with our ambulance provider HCI supervisors to help assist us in "standing up" our paramedic program. They are helping us with the initial equipment outlay so we don't have to take it out of our budget.

Kudos to Mattress Firm for their very kind donation and delivery of two Sealy twin XL mattresses.



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I had a meeting with Doctor Chad Lewis, MD. He is our specific medical director. He grew up in Southern AZ and returned to the area to work with IMD and their team of doctors. He is an extremely respected and yet a very approachable, down-to-earth person who is very interested in assisting us in continuing to deliver a high quality and level of care to our residents. He will be making a face-to-face trip down in Q1 2025 to meet with our providers. He believes it's important to meet in person with the folks under his direction. We will be doing what we can to have it at a time that most of our providers can get this face time with him. Also, if possible, I am trying to work this out on the same day as our board meeting, so the board and our residents can meet him in person.

PRR- YTD since tracking began in Aug = \$2587.49

I have received the initial boundary mapping. Our response area is about 3-4 X our paid taxation district area. We will be working now to fill in some roads, boundary-named lines, etc. The goal is to have a nearly 100% accurate map to post on our upcoming new website and a printed version at admin and station.

The district-owned water tender that was being stored north of the railroad tracks has been taken out of service. An inspection by our board chair (who owns water tenders and understands their mechanics), determined it was not in a safe enough condition where it could pass an NFPA serviceable condition evaluation. We attempt to have all our vehicles in this level of serviceable condition. One of the jobs of a fire chief is risk-management. I take this very seriously, and when people who know more than I do about a subject say something is not safe for our district, its residents and/or our personnel, I must take their opinion at the highest level—at least until further evaluation can happen. The consensus at this point is that we will be either saving it, so we can show need to a grant process as we write for a new tender or we may auction it off, as any repairs would be too costly to receive enough benefit back from the truck. The district must be extremely careful to ensure our equipment is as safe as possible so the operators as well as the public are not put in a potentially negative position. We will be endeavoring to work with certified Emergency Vehicle Technicians (where needed and/or required) to ensure this safety level is met. This is what is called for in NFPA 1901, the standard for apparatus. This is a national fire service consensus standard that we make effort to be in alignment with.

I have been working on finding a more cost-effective annual pump test, and a big thank you goes out to Chief Savage and Fry Fire District who has graciously offered to conduct our pump testing. This is a big deal in that it must be done by a certified Emergency Vehicle Technician. His organization has hired one and we are blessed they are willing to assist us. This should above all, reduce our time out of service for our trucks, which apparently has been as great as 3-4 weeks using other vendors. It should also save us money. Again, a big thank you to FFD.



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We have begun our dispersal of free smoke detectors, donated by the AZ Burn Foundation. Will also be getting detectors that "shake the bed" for those hard of hearing. I sent out a holiday message for posting on website that explains the program. Residents can email info@mescalj6fd.com to request we come place one in there home. We will be conducting our smoke detector in fall of 2025.

Also available are residential lock boxes. This is a program in which the owner gives the firefighters a key and we lock it in the box and the box is affixed to a solid object like a water pipe near the entrance of the residence. NO ONE has access to the box, including the owner. These are designed to be used in the event we must make emergency entrance to a residence, be it for fire, or a medical emergency where the resident cannot make it to the door. We always endeavor to cause the least amount of damage to a property when we must make emergency access, and this is a good way for the residents to ensure we don't have to do unnecessary damage.

We have received our official .gov approval. We have been beginning to move our website over to IMD's bandwidth. Thanks to Mr. Temple for his assistance as we has a degree in computer science and understands the vernacular. We hope to get this migrated over completely by end February. It is a time-consuming process to migrate everything over once it's set up and we pick a format.

No news on our Gary Sinese Foundation grant for 7 AED's and all accompanying equipment. Hopefully soon. Only time will tell how our needs stack up against others.

GOHS grant is being written. Will be asking for lighter, electrically driven extrication equipment. There are numerous benefits to this including: lighter, resulting in one person being able to carry and potentially operate, resulting in decrease in back or other injury. More power in spreaders and cutters, potentially decreasing extrication time, which in turn decreases time to surgical care, which then leads to very impactful results in patient outcomes as it pertains to the "Golden Hour". We are trying for RAMs and air bags, both of which our current ones are not reliable and are heavy, cumbersome and one person cannot move without risk of injury. New would be lighter but stronger.

Our DFFM (wildland) grant has been submitted. We wrote for new basic PPE, ie: helmets, shirts, pants, and gloves for each member. Ours were frayed, tattered, torn and out of date.

The AFG grant has been submitted. We wrote for structural PPE to replace those going out of timed service in 2025. We are hopeful this will be awarded and our match will be in the \$700 range.

We will then again *consider* writing for the SAFER grant, asking to fund most likely between 3-6 personnel.

Since the meeting where we heard from Joel Rudick on potential coverage for employee health, there have been conversations to clear up any misunderstanding regarding costing, coverage, etc. We will be looking at it again in February. More information is needed prior to making any decisions to be brought



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to the board. Also, the above-mentioned coverages for catastrophic injury, etc, may play into that. We want to be sure that we aren't duplicating coverages, and we are sure that every dollar is going to the right place before committing to anything. Again, more to come....

Also looking into alternative insurance carriers to assure we are maximizing our dollars to coverage balance, and at the same time, looking at additional coverage that is included that could protect our employees in the event of a catastrophic injury or worse. The individual assisting us with this will be in our area in the coming month and we will be meeting to go over specifics.

I will be instructing (gratis) an Incident Safety Officer course in March, and we will be sending at least one person to that.

END