



MESCAL-J6 FIRE DISTRICT

448 N. Warren Rd. Benson, AZ 85602

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

Fire Chief Report

June 2025

Presented at July 2025 Board Meeting

Incidents 6/1- 6/30/25: 54 total 16 fire; 27 ems; 11 other. Mutual aid: given-4, received-2
Total for 2025 – 323; 2024-264– **up 59 calls. 20% increase.**

Fires: The number of brush fires has decreased. I have been instructed to tell people to call either 911 or 88-crime to report. We are doing all the things we can to prep for these incidents. We are all a TEAM and must work together, BUT....in the same direction so we don't jeopardize any investigation. Also, although I know it's a very fearful incident, please make sure you, (public) are not putting yourself in a dangerous position. I know it is hard, but please, be careful...we care about you and don't want you to be injured.

Hazard Mitigation Collections: May was \$820 and June was \$2,452.80. Eighteen calls are still in cue with 2 more entered yesterday... over \$15K still working on.

Apparatus: Util truck \$495 for flywheel, small vehicles and equipment receiving semi-annual inspection, oil/lube/etc windshield wipers, etc.

Projects: Strategic Plan Rollout: Continue to begin to work with individuals to sit on committees. Right now we have a fundraising committee, an operations communications committee, and an external communications committee. If you are interested in serving or know of someone who would like to, please have them contact me.

IT: Just about complete on all major IT issues. We are now officially mescalj6fd.gov and will be saving up to \$300-\$500/mo on Godaddy. It's been a wild ride but between Brian Molina (TY Soni!), Mr. Temple and a shout out to Jasmine Wise, it's all going to just get better from here. We are officially a .gov on the website as well. Soon, we will be working to get some of Soni's material up on site.

Repeater: Meeting 6/11/25 to entertain all possible tower solutions. Great discussion on several topics including utilization of newer green radios once reprogrammed. Huge shout out to Mr Zappia, Mr. Merlin, Grant Fuller, Mike Nervik, Chris from Bluespan and Capt Olander for all the great info sharing. It appears we are all rowing in same direction and that good things are going to come from this Strategic Plan Group (Operations Communications), under the SP pillar of Operational Readiness. An additional study done by Grant Fuller and Mr. Zappia, reveals donated repeater will be good for parts in case frontline has issues. Continue to work with TEP to figure out what boxes need to be checked if we decide to move to Haystack. More testing is being done to get as much accurate data as possible. Also (new) radios being reprogrammed and the next level down also.



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This should allow every ff to have a radio which is crucial for safety. It was decided to wait until more info is available before scheduling another meeting as we are awaiting results from TEP personnel.

Activities:

Mr. Temple and I met with BOS Antenori, good meeting, was able to explain our short and long-term visions by reviewing the strategic plan. Sent \$5000 grant to him, which if successful we will use to purchase new fire hose that is much needed.

Mr. Nervik and I presented a formal framed letter of thanks signed by all board members to the Chairman of the board and the top official of the SSVEC regular board meeting. We have permission to utilize the remaining monies in the grant for other projects as deemed necessary. I will be working closely with Ms Gray moving forward. We gave a brief PPT presentation, followed by the framed letter. It was very well received, and we continue to create deeper relationships with our external stakeholders.

Issue with Work Comp providers. The state changed law and it is skyrocketing costs. Lona and I are in close contact. We are reworking schedules to accommodate as much as possible and keep as many people "regularly" scheduled to avoid moving into Volunteer criteria. We no longer have any Volunteer FF. They are all now "Reserve FF". This means we have to work them in a regular schedule and be able to prove that on a monthly audit basis. We can have "non-combat" volunteers, but we have to make sure they are doing NOTHING related to being a FF. The definition of volunteer is anyone who does not work a regular schedule.

This has the potential to be devastating to the entire fire service that uses volunteers. If you EVEN have anything remote to do on scene, like driving water truck to scene, or you take air bottles back to station to refill, or doing repairs on apparatus, we will be charged as if you were a full-fledged FF, and we must claim over \$36K/yr in salary minimum for each person. This raises the workman's compensation levels dramatically, as WC premiums are based on total payroll. There was some kind of failure of communication, which has led to there being no time to budget for ahead of time. We have worked a new schedule which abides by minimum wage law, the new WC law, and stays within our budget. We will continue to refine it, but as of now, it will actually reduce payroll throughout the year. We will have our FT FF at station 24/7/365 as requested by external stakeholders, but will also be utilizing our reserve FFs to assist during peak hours.

This means we will have to be very selective when it comes to bringing on more people. This nearly tripled our bill, but working the new schedule will help. It looks like we will be receiving around \$2000 refund as now that we've worked the schedule so everyone is working regular hours, we were able to move out of the 8411 WC category to the 7710 WC category.

As we had a new hiring process in the works, and we lost two reserve FF due to their primary Fire Agencies no longer allowing them to work at other agencies, we conducted a testing process. We had three candidates and two have accepted the positions. This will not impact the current costing as it's a two for two swap.



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Coming soon: "DID YOU KNOW?" - This program will help deliver education surrounding the district such as DID YOU KNOW that we ran 600 calls for service last year? Etc... Hoping for a running ticker-tape type presentation toward bottom of screen first page of website. We'll see if we can make it happen.

We have stood up our Instagram as well as NextDoor.

All the above are designed to assist in improving External Stakeholder Communications, which is one of the 6 main areas of our strategic plan.

We still own .net, .org. and still .com so no matter what suffix someone uses, it will be pointed to .gov

Potential to gain free and delivered single wide for either occupation or prop. Working on costs associated with this to determine efficacy.

Grant Activities:

GOHS- this will be decided in Oct

HRFSA- wrote for two pickup trucks, fully loaded with EMS, rescue and other safety equipment. This will improve safety, ensure we have at least one truck in service and have capabilities to get back into tight spaces with new ATV rescue. GREAT NEWS! WE'VE MADE IT PASSED THE INITIAL CUT! NO GUARA NTEES, BUT IT'S A GREAT START! Update: We have now made it through and are part of the bill the Senators and Congressmen are requesting be funded! One more step forward! Decisions not likely till December, 2025.

Nutella- Emergency Scene Lighting to enhance the safety of our crews on scenes where lighting is poor. This will reduce the potential for sprains, strains and other injuries that are the most common on these types of calls.

AFG- Suppression helmets, boots, gloves

SAFER- we cannot afford to write for it due to matching %.



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100 Club- AED's

FPS- writing for community risk reduction evaluation, \$11,650. We will not do it unless we get grant.

Home Depot- will write for more tools that will be compatible with our 20v systems for rescue tools, etc.

Railroad- Phone tag with their rep, but contact will be definitely be made.

Water grant? Looking into this. Waiting to see what other people can bring to table in way of a grant.

Once new FY hits will be engaging FundingNavigator to begin assisting us in finding grants to build the new station. The goal is education this year with taxpayers, finding and purchasing land, and begin writing grants. We are trying to do everything we can to do this without using district operating and/or reserve accounts.

Mr. Law, Mr. Temple, Capt Olander, FF Peralta and I toured a piece of land hosted by the owner. This location is perfect for our plan of a community center with a fire station attached. This then led to the individual taking me to a meeting amongst some developers and The Honorable Lupe Diaz, Arizona House of Representatives. It was very productive, and I have several phone numbers now to call with regard to potential funding opportunities.