



# Humboldt Bay Fire Fire Wire Quarterly Newsletter

HBF represents the cooperative consolidation efforts between Humboldt Fire District and the Eureka Fire Department

Committed to Community Service  
through Leadership, Vision, and  
Integrity

Volume 3, Issue 4

July 2012

## Fire Chief's Corner

by Chief Ken Woods

This month I wanted to provide you with an update on our ongoing work towards consolidation of the Eureka Fire Department and Humboldt Fire Protection District. In late May our consultant "Citygate" gave a report to the full City Council and HFD Board regarding the feasibility of consolidation. "Citygate" has been performing consolidation studies throughout the state for a number of years and is recognized as the lead authority on such consolidations.

10 being "consolidation makes the most sense" and a 1 being "don't consolidate", they stated that we are between a 9 and a 10. They also acknowledged that the 2 departments are already saving money by sharing a Chief and a Training Officer and merging the remaining 2 separate admin teams of each department into 1 would "reduce overlap and improve effectiveness and efficiency while not only achieving modest savings, but also reallocating current funds to the most beneficial positions".

The study consisted of analyzing various components of each organization including demographics, staffing, stations, costs, revenue, industry staffing standards and models. They then reviewed the costs and impacts associated with merging the 2 departments into one. Based on their analysis they determined several key findings and recommendations, the first of which was that full consolidation makes sense and is beneficial to both communities. In fact when asked, on a scale of 1 to 10, with

They recommend that the next step towards full consolidation should be to fully merge fire HQ functions via a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). Doing so "would be the best long term way to communicate over management and cost sharing issues".

Now with third party validation of our ongoing efforts toward consolidation and a road map on how we should proceed, we will be moving to implement these recommendations and merge our



HBF Fire Chief Ken Woods

admin staffs into 1 that's more efficient. Some of the immediate benefits I see from combining the admin staff would be an increased focus and emphasis on emergency planning and preparedness. As events have shown, we are susceptible to earthquakes and tsunami and having comprehensive and realistic plans in place before these events happen will go a long way in ensuring the future safety of our community.

A second benefit would be the combining of our prevention staff and programs where employees would be versed in both City and County regulations and their respective differences but therefore

able to provide a higher level of assistance to our customers. Combining prevention programs would ensure that a focused message is being presented concerning trends and needs and therefore resulting education and information can be communicated and conveyed with one clear voice. Finally, merging the 2 staffs would create greater redundancy and less compartmentalization of our resources.

These are just a few of the benefits that could be realized with the consolidating of our admin staffs. We will be working to create a JPA and keep you informed of our progress. It was very encouraging to hear that our consolidation efforts are on the right track and are showing immediate benefits and in the end will bring a higher level of service to our community than ever before.

## Inside this issue of the Wire....

<i>Advanced Life Support Program Update</i>	1
<i>Humboldt Bay Fire Dispatch</i>	2
<i>In Focus: Prevention Vol. Jenny Williamson</i>	3
<i>Anniversaries, Promotions, and New Hires</i>	3
<i>HBF Officers Attend Strike Team Leader Training</i>	3
<i>Second Quarter 2012 Incident Statis-</i>	4

## Advanced Life Support Program Update

by Captain Tim Citro

The Paramedic program for Humboldt Bay Fire's South Battalion has been operating since Nov. 2011. The program began with 4 full time employees, 1 volunteer employee and an additional employee who was enrolled in the training program. Since that time, we have increased the number to 5 full time employees and another employee completing his training by Nov. of this year. Within 1 year of the programs inception, the South Battalion of HBF will have a Paramedic assigned to each engine in service on a daily

basis.

The training to become a Paramedic averages 2 years and consists over 1600 hours of training including over 1000 hours of classroom, 240 hours of clinical rotations in the hospital and 480 hours of field internship on an Ambulance under a Field Training Officer (FTO). During the program, students are constantly evaluated with written and practical examinations, skills assessments and during the field internship each patient contact is evaluat-

ed by the FTO. Once the student passes the internship portion of the training, the student must pass a written and practical examination administered by the National Registry of Paramedics. Only after the student successfully completes all of these steps, they become licensed Paramedics and now must be approved by North Coast Emergency Medical Services (NCEMS) and HBF to be employed as Paramedics.

It is important to note that these employees completed their training off duty at minimal cost to the Dept. In fact, 3 of the original Paramedics were already licensed, but could not function as Paramedics until the Dept. was accredited by NCEMS as an approved ALS provider.

Over the past 8 months, our Paramedics have provided the highest level of pre-hospital care and utilized their skills frequently prior to the arrival of the Ambulance. (Continued on page 4)



# Redwood Capital Bank

*Our interest is YOU*  
redwoodcapitalbank.com

MEMBER FDIC EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER



HBF's First Paramedics



## Humboldt Bay Fire Dispatch

by Dispatcher Karina Gianola



### Dispatcher Crnich on duty at the comm. center

When you call 911, have you ever wondered who answers? Where is that voice on the other end of the line coming from? Why is the voice asking so many questions, instead of sending help? As a Communications Dispatcher for Humboldt Bay Fire (HBF), I'm one of those voices. I talk to people all day long - often during some of the most frightening, confusing, or stressful moments of their lives. Something I've noticed, and that everyone in the dispatch center has come across, is that ordinary citizens aren't quite sure what to expect when calling 911. When people call to report a loved one having a heart attack, or that their house is burning, all they know is they need help and they need help now! And in the heat of the moment, it can be hard to understand why the person on the other end of the line is asking so many questions. There may be confusion about what kind of help is coming, and whether they will be using lights and sirens to get there.

Those of us who answer 911 in Eureka are based out of a communications center within the Eureka Police Department. Our center runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and is always staffed by at least two dispatchers. We are both a fire/medical and a police dispatch center, so

we handle a wide range of calls. As HBF, we handle all fire and medical calls within the city limits of Eureka, and greater Eureka area.

Fire and medical dispatching starts when a citizen calls into the dispatch center, either on an emergency or non-emergency line. Sometimes, this means a flood of 911 callers reporting a house fire, or someone trapped in a vehicle after a collision. Or it might be a frantic mother phoning because her child is having a seizure, or elderly person phoning because they have fallen and need help getting up, or a passing motorist who smells smoke in the area but can't find where it's coming from.

No matter what kind of call it is, or how urgent, our first priority is to find out where we need to send help. That way we can get help on the way almost immediately, even if the line gets disconnected or the caller isn't able to answer any additional questions. The computer system in our dispatch center is set up to recognize business names and intersections, too, so we don't have to have a specific address if the caller doesn't know it. We are also trained to know the area geography, so if a caller doesn't know where they are, we can often help them figure it out by using landmarks.

After we figure out where to send units, we need to know why we are sending them. Is there a fire? Is someone having a medical emergency? Do police also need to respond? If callers are reporting a fire, we need to know what is burning, whether flames are seen, and if the fire is a danger of spreading to any other structures or objects. If it is a structure on fire, we want to know if anyone is inside, and if they are able to get out. If they are unable to get out, we notify the responding fire units so they can prepare for a rescue.

Our dispatchers are certified emergency medical dispatchers through

the National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch (NAEMD). We handle calls for medical emergencies in a very specific way. When a caller is reporting a medical, every question we ask is read verbatim from a set of medical cards. These cards are part of the NAEMD Priority Dispatch system, which helps us to assist callers with everything from controlling bleeding to giving CPR, all over the phone. The first several questions are the same regardless of whether the caller is reporting a toothache or an amputated limb. We always need to know the address and phone number, the nature of the medical problem, and whether the patient is conscious and breathing. In an emergency, these questions might seem unnecessary or time consuming, but they truly do help streamline the call-taking and dispatching process.

As I mentioned before, there is often a lot of confusion about what to expect when calling an emergency dispatch center. One of the most common misconceptions is that we automatically get your phone number and address when you call. This isn't necessarily true. Yes, if you call 911 from a landline, both your address and phone number will show on our computer screen. But if you call from a cell phone, we don't receive the exact location you're calling from. We sometimes get GPS coordinates that can give us the general vicinity of where the call came from. Other times, we won't get any location information. And if you call on a non-emergency line, we generally don't even receive the phone number you're calling from. So when we ask for the location of your emergency, it truly is essential information for us.

Another common misunderstanding is that while dispatchers are asking questions on the phone, it delays them from sending help. This definitely seems like it would be true, but it actually isn't. As dispatchers, we pride ourselves on being able to multitask and do a lot of things at once. So while we are asking you questions, we are also typing all the information you give us into our computer, and dispatching the fire

units on the radio to your emergency. We try and reassure callers that help is on the way, but we know it can be frustrating when you're being asked questions but you don't see or hear any help arriving.

We are a busy agency. In 2011, we received 25,724 9-1-1 calls. Of those calls, 20,508 were answered by a dispatcher while 3,451 were "911 hang ups" requiring a call back from a dispatcher. We dispatched 47,558 police and fire/medical calls for service, and took in 42,891 self-initiated calls by police and fire field units. Although we try and get help to everyone who calls, sometimes we just can't respond. For example, send a police or fire unit to let people into a locked residence or vehicle simply as a courtesy. On the other hand, if there is a baby locked in the car, or food cooking on the stove, we would always respond due to the possible dangers of those situations. Another instance we don't generally respond to is when we receive calls from citizens for cats stuck in trees. If a cat can get up on its own, it can generally get down on its own, too.

Our dispatchers work in 12 hour shifts, generally for three or four days each week. Currently, the dispatch center is not fully staffed. If you're interested in applying for a position as a dispatcher, our department is currently hiring. You can visit the City of Eureka website at [www.ci.eureka.ca.gov](http://www.ci.eureka.ca.gov) and fill out an online application. You can also pick up an application at Eureka City Hall at 531 K Street in Eureka.



**PAULI-HARBOUR**  
INSURANCE SERVICES INC.  
HEALTH & LIFE

Jeff Pauli — CA Lic. #0E27883

2145 Myrtle Avenue • Eureka, California 95501  
office: 707 444-3434 • 707 443-5611 • fax: 707 443-9158  
[jeff@ahealthagent.com](mailto:jeff@ahealthagent.com) • [www.ahealthagent.com](http://www.ahealthagent.com)

**Humboldt Firefighters Local 1770**



Want to remind all households to check their smoke detectors on a regular basis and change the batteries at least twice a year!

**Smoke Detectors Save Lives!!!**

**NVB**  
North Valley Bank

Eureka (2 locations), Crescent City, Ferndale, Garberville, McKinleyville and Willits

[www.NOVB.com](http://www.NOVB.com) • Member FDIC



## Firefighter in Focus: Prevention Volunteer Jenny Williamson

I was born in Sacramento and raised in the small rural town of Wilton. I started my career in the fire service as a Volunteer Firefighter/ EMT with the Wilton Volunteer Fire Protection Dist. While working with WVFPD, I performed regular firefighting duties as well as EMS. I was also given the opportunity to help with public education and fire investigation. At the same time, I attended California State University, Sacramento. When I graduated, I received my Bachelor's degree in Fire Service Management.

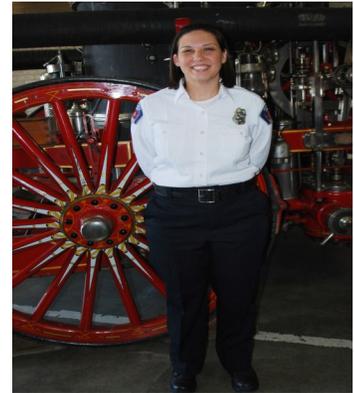
After I graduated, I went to work for Sacramento City Fire Department as a Fire Prevention Officer. Working for SFD is where I got my start in prevention. I would perform many different types of inspections such as school, day-care, adult care facility, and assembly "night club". After I was

promoted to Prevention Officer II, I was moved to our new construction division where I performed inspections on fire suppression systems and fire alarm systems. I also had the opportunity to help coordinate and teach in our departments first Prevention Officer's Academy. After a few years, I moved to Eugene, Oregon where I became a Deputy Fire Marshal with Eugene Fire & EMS. I continued doing business, school and code complaint inspections. I also performed fire inspections at the fraternity and sorority houses along with coordinating and teaching at the fire safety academy for the Greek Housing. I performed site plan reviews as well as fire investigations. Later, I moved to Redmond, Oregon and worked with Redmond Fire & Rescue as a Deputy Fire Marshal where I performed the same duties and worked with the Central Oregon Cooperative in

their public education programs and juvenile fire setter programs.

After a few years, I changed my career path and began a full time position as a Client Associate with Williamson Financial Group here in Eureka. Still wanting to be part of the fire service and fulfill my passion for prevention I asked to volunteer with Humboldt Bay Fire in their prevention bureau. I assist and coordinate public education programs for children and older adults such as the "Remembering When" program for the Senior Resource center. I am an instructor for the community CPR classes, and soon I will be assisting on fire investigations. I am also a CERT instructor for the HSU extended education Regional Training Institute, and I am currently working on becoming an instructor for CR for their Fire Technology program.

I'm very excited about the opportunity to work with Humboldt Bay Fire. My



**Humboldt Bay Fire Prevention Volunteer Jenny Williamson at the HBF badge pinning ceremony in May .**

experience so far has been absolutely wonderful and I look forward to helping the Department as well as the community it serves.

## Humboldt Bay Fire Anniversaries, Promotions, Retirements and New Hires

**New Hires:**

HBF welcomes Firefighters Ryan Booth, Brett Egbert (April) and Matt Dennis (May) to our fire family.

**Promotions:**

Firefighter John Goodman promotes to Engineer (May 2012)

**Anniversaries:**

Secretary Jan Gillespie—33 Years (May)

Secretary Kathi Hendricks—18 Years (May)

Capt. Mitchell Mills and Eng. Ben Miller-7 Years

Capt. Nick Launius and Eng. Trevor Morris-6 Years (May)

Eng. Kevin Stokes and Vol. Eddie Blevins-5 Years (Apr. & May 2007)

Eng. John Goodman-4 Years (June)

**Capt.=Captain Eng.=Engineer  
F.F.=Firefighter Vol.=Volunteer**

### HBF Officers Attend Strike Team Leader Class

by Captain II Chris Emmons

During April, 4 fire officers from Humboldt Bay Fire attended a class in Eureka which will prepare them for leading "Strike Teams" and "Task Forces" of apparatus and personnel at major incidents. Historically the position of Strike Team Leader is most commonly used during wildland incidents. However this class was to certify the officers in an "All Risk" capacity. Events the officers could respond to may include wildland and urban interface fires, urban search and rescue, swiftwater and flood incidents, and multi-casualty incidents.

Cal Fire Ops. Chief Fred Flores and Cal-EMA Chief Marvin Howard co-instructed the class with students from Southern Humboldt to Westhaven. Topics covered in the class included admin. and supervision of the team, risk management, tactical considerations, and

safety.

These fire officers now must initiate and complete, within 5 years, a nationally recognized task book under the direct supervision of a previously certified Strike Team Leader. Some of the tasks required must be done while assigned to an incident while others can be done in training and in the classroom setting.

HBF personnel have participated at the state level as staff on apparatus and overhead personnel on state and federal incidents such as fires, however, this cert. will allow them to coordinate strike teams and task forces of engines, urban search and rescue crews, and flood fighting crews. A strike team of engines is 5 like engines comprised of the same number of personnel and common communications with a leader. A task force



is 5 resources that have communications but most likely are not alike and have a leader. For instance a task force may be comprised of 3 engines, a water tender, and a bulldozer. A strike team would be 5 identically typed fire engines.

Historically HBF has rarely had the opportunity to serve in the role of Strike Team Leader, but with this training, our state partners at Cal Fire have committed to assisting our

personnel in completing the task book and gaining valuable experience otherwise not seen in our area. It isn't just the tactical considerations, but also the administrative, logistical and political areas that will be bolstered by the training and response opportunities.

**SIX RIVERS COMMUNICATIONS**

**RAY DANIELS**  
Owner  
FCC Lic PG-11SD-1615  
CA LIC #956079

**MOTOROLA**  
Authorized Two-Way  
Radio Dealer

**Radio Shack**

4060 Broadway  
Eureka, CA 95503  
(707) 443-4448  
FAX (707) 443-3797



Humboldt Bay Fire  
3455 Harris St.  
Eureka, CA 95503

**Humboldt Fire District Headquarters Station**  
3455 Harris St.  
Eureka, CA 95503  
(707) 445-4900

**Eureka Fire Department Headquarters Station**  
533 C St.  
Eureka, CA 95501  
(707) 441-4000

This newsletter is made possible by the paid advertisements within. If you'd like to see your ad in future newsletters, contact HBF Battalion Chief Reynolds at (707) 445-4900 or at wreynolds@hfd1.org

**Advanced Security Systems**

Complete home and commercial Security, Fire, & Medical Alarm Systems, including Surveillance.



443-6366 • [www.advancedsecurity.us](http://www.advancedsecurity.us)

CA License No: ACO2883

**newlifeserviceco.**  
GENERAL CONTRACTOR CA LIC #437846

*Specializing in Fire, Water & Storm Damage Restoration*

*Mold & Asbestos Remediation*

**444-8222**

[www.nlsco.com](http://www.nlsco.com)



## HBF 2nd Quarter 2012 Statistics

For the second quarter of 2012 here are the incident response statistics:

**1,283** total responses including (but not limited to):

**13** structure fires resulting in **\$454,080** in losses  
**8** vehicle fires  
**8** vegetation fires  
**10** refuse /



miscellaneous fires  
**825** medical aid responses  
**2** rescue/extrication responses

**35** hazardous condition responses  
**146** miscellaneous calls for service  
**124** cancelled responses  
**32** false fire alarms  
**2** unauthorized burn investigations

For more information phone (707) 441-4000 or (707) 445-4900.

## Advanced Life Support Program Update (from page 1)

work in conjunction with the Ambulance Paramedics to provide the best care possible to patients in the field and have also assisted with patient care during transport to the hospital. This level of patient care has become the new normal for the dept..

As our medic engines continue to respond to calls our goal is to continue to provide the highest level of pre-hospital medical care and improve our service into the future. This includes training our Paramedics with new skills that are approved, acquiring new and modern equipment through grant funding and

working more closely and more efficiently with the Ambulance and Hospital. Future goals also include the training of more of our Firefighters to become Paramedics and expand Paramedic engine companies into the North Battalion. Since 65% of our calls for service are medical, the ability for our Paramedics to provide ALS care prior to the arrival of the Ambulance and to continue to assist with patient care throughout the incident has become the new standard of patient care for HBF. This demonstrates our commitment to Customer Service.