



Humboldt Bay Fire Joint Powers Authority

First Quarter 2016 (January– March)
E-Newsletter

Our Mission:

*Committed to
community service
through leadership,
vision, and integrity.*

Fire Chief's Message

Chief Bill Gillespie



Welcome to the first quarterly newsletter of 2016. This is my first article as Fire Chief for Humboldt Bay Fire following the retirement of Fire Chief Ken Woods earlier in the quarter. Chief Woods provided leadership and vision over the past years that helped Humboldt Bay Fire move from being a consolidation dream to a consolidated department reality. The men and women of Humboldt Bay Fire wish Chief Woods all the best in his next post-retirement adventure.

I am much honored and deeply humbled to be tasked with leading Humboldt Bay Fire forward. Humboldt Bay Fire is a team made up of dedicated fire service professionals who take very seriously their primary role of providing emergency and non-emergency incident response. Our team is serious about our mission of being “Committed to community service through leadership, vision, and integrity” as we provide customer service to the residents and visitors of our community. We understand that for many in our community, their first contact with their fire department may come in a time of crisis or emergency, when they could potentially be having their absolute worst day. Our goal in these situations is to provide professional, competent, effective and efficient service to help address the issue or emergency, and to do so with empathy, compassion, and respect for those we are assisting.

Humboldt Bay Fire continues to explore ways to deliver our service to an ever changing community need. As you know, this past year our community has endured tough economic times; our department has felt the same struggle. Humboldt Bay Fire looked “outside the box” of our normal response mode, and explored the use of a two person staffed “squad” to still allow coverage of five staffed response apparatus. Five units are vital to our response configuration, as major calls such as a structure fire or explosion receive four fire department response units, with the fifth unit providing coverage to the balance of the greater Eureka area during the call. With only four units staffed, all available response units become committed to the incident, and Humboldt Bay Fire must rely on our neighboring departments to provide coverage, with Eureka essentially uncovered for 10-20 minutes depending upon neighbor department availability.

The squad does not carry water, hose, or ladders, but responds to all calls ranging from medical calls to structure fires to provide emergency fire personnel on scene. Working cooperatively with Humboldt Bay Firefighters Local #652, the department placed the two person squad in service, first at Station 1 during October and November, 2015, then at Station 4 during December, 2015 and January, 2016. The goal was to measure the effectiveness of a two person response vehicle from the two locations, identify strengths and limitations, and response times. Since the beginning of February, Humboldt Bay Fire has staffed Station 4 on an intermittent basis with either a three person fire engine or a two person squad as staffing allowed. On those days when staffing has not allowed coverage of a fifth unit, Station 4 has been “browned out” and unstaffed, with adjoining stations covering calls. This will continue through the end of the current fiscal year. It is our goal to staff five units in the coming fiscal year with Station 4 open beginning July 1, and our proposed budget for 2016-17 so far works to support this goal, which in turn supports the goal of providing the best service and protection we can to our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to go forward as Fire Chief at Humboldt Bay Fire. I look forward to serving our department and the greater Eureka area going forward.



Trash and Weed Abatement

Battalion Chief Chris Emmons

As many people know, California is prone to wildfire in many of its areas. Although it is still winter, grass and brush will burn. We are not as likely to see large grass or brush fires in our area this time of year as the humidity is typically too high; what is likely is that it creates access problems for public safety, potential for damage from wind storms, and it is a violation of the California Code of Regulations Fire Code to maintain a property with combustible waste material.

California Fire Code, Chapter 3 - Precautions Against Fire, Section 301, identifies that no person shall permit any fire hazard to exist on premises under their control, or fail to take immediate action to abate a fire hazard when requested to do so by the enforcing agency. The section goes on to define what a "fire hazard" is. A "fire hazard" is a condition that will increase or may cause an increase of fire to a greater degree than customarily recognized as normal by persons in the public service of preventing, suppressing or extinguishing fire: or which may obstruct, delay, or hinder response. In other words, tall grass, overgrown brush, trees with limbs too low can hinder emergency vehicles from accessing locations and deploying equipment in a timely fashion in the event of an emergency.

Not only do we receive calls about overgrown vegetation at Humboldt Bay Fire, we also respond to calls about accumulation of trash and waste materials. Trash and waste materials are not only a fire concern but a health concern. Piles of trash or waste attract vermin which can carry disease. If you have locations that are of concern within the Humboldt Bay Fire Authority response area, please give us a call at 441-4000. The information we need to evaluate if a hazard exists is, location of the hazard and the type of hazard being reported (vegetation, trash, debris, access) .

After receiving a report of a hazard, we will respond to determine if there is a hazard as defined by the fire code and issue a case number to begin the process of abating the issue. The abatement process can take up to several months to complete through the administrative steps that are required. It is our intent to work with the property owner but also achieve compliance to ensure a safe community.

If you have any questions or would like to report a trash or weed issue, please contact Humboldt Bay Fire at 441-4000.



Response Statistics

Structure Fire/Explosion	16
Vehicle Fire	2
Rubbish/Vegetation Fire	27
Medical Aid Response	936
Extrication/Water Rescue	5
Animal Rescue	0
Haz Mat/Combustible Spill	13
Other Hazards Response	44
Other/Service Call/False Alarm	526
First Quarter Total	1,587
2016 YTD Total	1,587

Anniversaries & Retirements

Anniversaries:
 Volunteer Fire Support Greg Jernigan, 32 yrs (March)
 Fire Chief Bill Gillespie, 20 yrs (March)
 Battalion Chief Chris Jelinek, 20 yrs (March)
 Captain/Paramedic Tim Citro, 16 yrs (February)
 Captain Anna Gillespie, 16 yrs (February)
 Captain James Flynn, 13 yrs (January)
 Engineer Colin Beddow, 13 yrs (January)
 Firefighter Jason Campillo, 13 yrs (January)
 Captain Bret Banducci, 11 yrs (January)
 Engineer Ray Marchi, 9 yrs (February)
 Firefighter Brandon Johnson, 7 yrs (January)
 Firefighter/Paramedic Craig Whitbeck, 6 yrs (January)
 Engineer Brett Christensen, 5 yrs (March)
 Firefighter David Terry, 5 yrs (March)
 Firefighter Eric Gatti, 3 yrs, (January)
 Executive Secretary Jenna Harris, 2 yr (February)

Retirements:
 P.J. Lynch, 15yrs (February)

CPR Classes (707) 441-4000

CPR and AED for Adults, Children, and Infants \$30
 April 12, 2016, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
 April 26, 2016, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
 May 10, 2016, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
 May 24, 2016, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
 June 14, 2016, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
 June 28, 2016, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

CPR, AED, and First Aid for Adults \$60
 April 9, 2016, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 June 11, 2016, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.





Humboldt Bay Fire has recently promoted two of its members to new positions

Tony Freeman was promoted to the position of Fire Captain on February 1, 2016. Tony has been with the department for the past 9 years. He has previously held the position of Firefighter, and Engineer. Tony received the Firefighter of the Year award in 2012. In addition to his regular job duties, Tony serves as a CPR Instructor and USAR team member with Humboldt Bay Fire. Tony is the President of Humboldt Bay Firefighters Local #652.

William "Bill" Gillespie was promoted to the position of Fire Chief on April 4, 2016. Bill has been with the department for the past 20 years, originally with Eureka Fire Department starting in 1996, and now with Humboldt Bay Fire Joint Powers Authority following consolidation. Bill has worked up through the ranks, having held the position of Firefighter, Engineer, Captain, Captain II, and Assistant Chief as both the Fire Marshal and Operations Chief. Bill also held the position of Interim Fire Chief from November, 2010 to September, 2011, and again most recently in February and March 2016. Bill previously worked with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (now CALFIRE) in the Humboldt/Del Norte ranger unit, beginning as a Firefighter in 1987, and promoted to Fire Apparatus Engineer in the Madera, Mariposa, Merced Ranger Unit in 1994. During this time Bill also served with the Loleta Volunteer Fire Department. Bill has served as a fire investigator, a fire prevention officer, and brings considerable experience in fire department administration, operations, and fire suppression.



Fire Captain Tony Freeman with his wife Katy



Fire Chief Bill Gillespie with his wife Jan



Firefighter In Focus

Rookie Firefighters

Mike Tyson

Mike Tyson is the fifth generation of his family to be born and raised here in Eureka. He and his wife Christine have a one year old son named Jameson. He went to Chico State where he received a degree in Construction Management and for the last 12 years has been working in the construction industry. He got his start in the fire service as a volunteer with Humboldt Bay Fire for two years. In his off time he enjoys hunting, fishing and spending time with his family.

Kameron Waters

Kameron Waters was born September 1987 to parents Ron and Cheryl. He is one of four children, siblings Amanda, Terrin, and Cody. He grew up in Eureka and graduated in 2005 from Eureka High School. From there he went to College of the Redwoods where he earned his AA degree. He met his wife Jammie in 2009 and they were married in 2011. They now have 2 children Aiden and Isabella and bought their first home in Eureka in 2014. He started volunteering with Humboldt #1 Fire Protection District in 2010 and has been a volunteer since. In his spare time he enjoys wood working and spending time with his family.

Adam Bumgardner

Adam Bumgardner was born in Glendora, CA. After graduating high school in 1998, he moved to Monterey to attend Cal State University Monterey Bay, graduating with a Bachelor's degree in English in 2002. In the summer of 2003, Adam was hired onto an engine on the Six Rivers National Forest at Mad River. He fell in love with hard work in the outdoors and spent the next 12 summers chasing fires around the western states and Alaska. In Oct, 2011 Adam and his wife Jenny were married and in Jan 2013, their son Grant was born. A baby girl is due this coming June. Adam is humbled and excited for the privilege to serve the community he loves.



Pictured left to right: Firefighter Mike Tyson, Firefighter Kameron Waters and Firefighter Adam Bumgardner. On 2/15/2016 these firefighter recruits started a six week fire training academy which consisted of training in EMS, hazmat, live fire training, rescue and firefighting techniques. Congratulations!!



Dispatcher In Focus

Bri



Brianna is the newest member of the Eureka Police and Humboldt Bay Fire dispatching team. Brianna, or Bri as we know her, has been a dispatcher for 3 years, and we have had the pleasure of her joining the Humboldt Bay Fire Department and Eureka Police Department dispatch team 8 months ago.

Bri was born and raised in Humboldt County, attending Eureka Senior High School and Humboldt State University, where she played on the Women's Soccer team. In her spare time, Bri enjoys weight lifting, traveling, cooking and eating, playing soccer and reading. She has had the opportunity to travel to Paris, London, Ireland, New Zealand, and Bali. She spent 2 years living in Australia before returning to Humboldt County to start her career as a dispatcher. What Bri likes best about dispatching is that there is something new every day and the reason she became a dispatcher was to be a part of a positive change in her community.

When asked what advice she has for anyone interested in dispatching as a career she says one should learn to like coffee, always be cognizant of officer and firefighter safety and not to take things personally.

Welcome Bri, we look forward to many successful years of you being on our dispatch team.

Promotion Ceremony Held March 25th 2016



Pictured above:

JPA Board Member Melinda Ciarabellini presenting the Oath of Office to Humboldt Bay Fire personnel who have recently received promotions as well as swearing in our three new firefighters!

Congratulations! Thank you for your dedication and service to Humboldt Bay Fire!



**BOOM!!!****Battalion Chief Chris Jelinek**

Marijuana presence within our community seems ubiquitous. Whether due to its cultural and economic influences, the environmental and neighborhood impacts of outdoor and indoor cultivation, or through many individuals' use of various available THC-infused products it is hard to argue that marijuana does not have an impact on our community. You may be aware that marijuana contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical mainly responsible for marijuana's psychological effects. Though THC content found within Humboldt County marijuana bud varies with each strain, a range of 15 – 25% THC content is not uncommon. In recent years a new method of extracting THC has emerged, known as butane hash oil (BHO). In this process butane gas is used in a solvent-extraction process to dissolve THC resins and then concentrate them as the butane evaporates off. The resultant cannabis concentrates, commonly referred to as shatter, honey, or wax are between 60 and 95% pure THC.

This manufacturing process, particularly when done indoors, is highly dangerous. Butane, the same substance used to fill cigarette lighters, is highly flammable. It is heavier than air and in its vapor-state can travel considerable distances to an ignition source (open flame or electric motors are the most common). Once gases ignite the flames may violently flash back to the original extraction lab, resulting in an explosion with and often times a structural fire.

Unfortunately Humboldt Bay Fire has responded to and witnessed the appalling consequences of numerous BHO-related explosions. Frequently these explosions and subsequent fires cause major structural damage including damaged sheetrock, shattered windows, doors blown completely out of their jambs, load-bearing walls displaced from foundations, and roofs blown off of supporting walls. More often than not these fires cause serious burn and blast injuries to BHO lab operators. In addition, innocent bystanders, including children, have been burned or otherwise seriously injured as BHO-related fires spread.



Shed heavily damaged in a BHO-caused explosion

BHO labs present serious hazards to firefighters and community members. Firefighters responding to these incidents report high intensity fires which are difficult to extinguish. Blast damage makes fire travel into concealed spaces such as walls and the attic more likely. The presence stored butane (commonly multiple cases of butane canisters) make secondary explosions a possibility. Most critically, structural collapse due these explosions is a serious concern. As an organization we have to weigh the risk of serious injury or death to our firefighters working inside these compromised buildings against the potential lives and property we could save by aggressively fighting these fires. In an effort to balance these two issues we have modified our response procedures. If indicators of a hash oil extraction lab are present (e.g. structural blast damage and presence of butane canisters or cylinders) we will no longer attack these fires by sending personnel inside of the damaged structure. Instead we will assume a "defensive" position and attack the fire from the exterior, using window and door openings to spray water for fire extinguishment. We will continue to aggressively protect nearby homes and other buildings which could potentially catch fire due to spread from the originating hash lab. In addition, we will continue to perform searches of these buildings to rescue injured or trapped occupants. If a BHO lab explosion occurs in apartments or other multi-family dwellings we will focus our efforts on protecting other attached living units and detached surrounding properties.

If you suspect BHO extraction is occurring in your neighborhood, contact Eureka Police Department or Humboldt County Sheriff Department for follow up.

