



Alameda County Fire Department

January 2021 | Issue 1



Message from the Fire Chief

I am happy to present the first community newsletter of 2021 from the Alameda County Fire Department (ACFD). It is our goal to keep the community informed and updated with regular newsletters.

I joined ACFD in August 2020, following the start of the third largest wildfire in California's history, the SCU (Santa Clara Ranger Unit) Lightning Complex Fire. Department personnel were completely committed in every aspect of responding to extreme fire conditions in Alameda County and adjacent Bay Area communities, providing mutual aid support to fires throughout the State and staffing additional resources to ensure public safety to our residents. Alameda County Firefighters demonstrated courage, tenacity, and dedication throughout the extraordinary 2020 fire season. It is an honor and a privilege to serve the community and residents along the members of the ACFD.

I have tremendous excitement for this upcoming year. I would like to thank Alameda County residents for supporting the Fire Safety Bond which will allow us to invest in our aging and outdated fire stations. Thank you very much. We also recently broke ground on a new state of the art Training Center in Dublin. And, the 2021 Firefighter Recruit Academy will kick-off this Spring, with a diverse group of individuals full of passion for the fire service and who embody our mission to provide the highest level of service to our communities.

Thank you for reading our first of many community newsletters. Subscribe to for future Department communications [here](#).

*Stay safe and be well,
William "Willie" McDonald, Fire Chief*

December Retirements

Lorelei Wade

Benefits Coordinator Lorelei Wade retired after 23 amazing years. Ms. Wade began her career with ACFD in 1997, through consolidation with Dougherty Regional Fire Authority. Over the years, she has supported Payroll, Training and Benefits, assisting approximately 450 active and 300 retired members with various benefits-related matters in recent years. Ms. Wade has always provided outstanding customer service and support to employees.



Robert Petersen

Battalion Chief Rob Petersen officially retired on December 29. Chief Petersen dedicated 29 years to the fire service and to the Alameda County citizens, beginning his career in 1991 with Eden Consolidated Fire District. Chief Petersen served Battalion 7, running incident command to the communities of Union City and Newark, coaching and mentoring members, and contributing to the growth and wellbeing of the Department. Video [link](#).



Ken Thomey

Engineer Ken Thomey started in 1989 with the Castro Valley Fire Department. Engineer Thomey served 31 years, most recently at Station 23 in Cherryland. He safely spent his final tour, concluding on December 22, reminiscing and sharing stories.



Jim Derickson

Engineer Jim Derickson began in 1993 with Eden Consolidated Fire District. Engineer Derickson served 27 years, most recently at Station 13 in San Leandro. His final tour concluded on December 22 after a longtime fulfillment of public service.



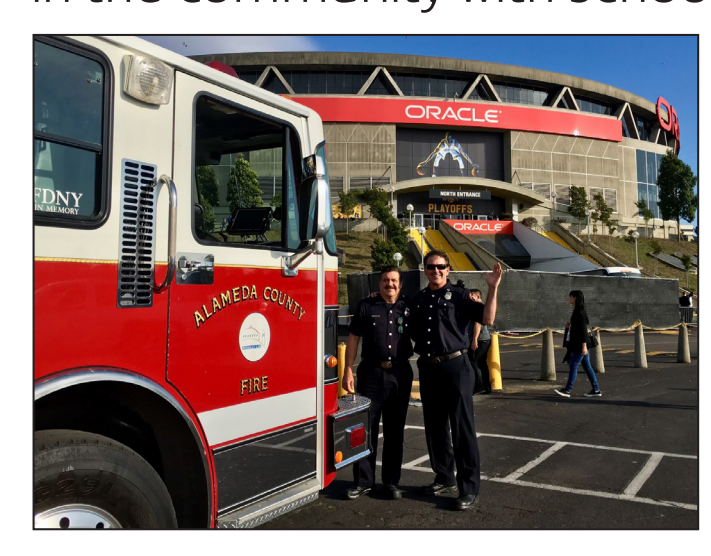
Mark Garcia

Captain Mark Garcia began his career with the Castro Valley Fire Department on May 1, 1990, serving a total of 32.5 years, most recently assigned to Station 19. Captain Garcia was on the HawMat team and deployed to several out of county assignments, including the Jesusita Fire and the Witch Creek Fire where he met President Bush. He was also very active in the community with schools and public education, pancake breakfasts, CPR and neighborhood preparedness.



Jeff Graham

Captain Jeff Graham began his career in the City of Union City on April 1, 1987. Captain Graham climbed the ranks as a Firefighter, Fire Engineer, Captain and Battalion Chief (Union City). He was instrumental as the Lead Training Captain for many ACFD academies and completed more than 32 years in the fire service.



"Thank you for your tremendous dedication to the Alameda County Fire Department. We wish you a healthy and happy retirement."
- Chief Willie



COVID-19

Alameda County Public Health Department continues to work closely with other Bay Area Public Health Departments and the state to track COVID-19 and provide important information to the community. The ACFD shares information on social media and in person to encourage stopping the surge through avoiding gatherings, staying at home, and only going out for essential activities, wearing a mask and keeping six feet away from others. Chief Willie McDonald and several members of the ACFD lead by example receiving the first of two COVID-19 vaccine injections beginning in mid-December. Video [link](#).



Contract Extensions Approved

On December 15, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, who serves as the ACFD Board of Directors, unanimously approved two 5-year contracts with 5-year extensions for ACFD services provided to the Cities of Newark and Union City.



Retiring Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty joined the Department and Alameda County General Services Agency on December 16 to celebrate the groundbreaking of the Department's new Regional Training Center located adjacent to the existing Fire Station 17 on Gleason Road in Dublin. The new facility will replace the Department's currently 50+ year old site for a safer and more upgraded training center in order to ensure our firefighters have the ability to prepare for real-life emergency scenarios. The Center will also provide for collaborative training exercises for seamless regional incident response. Video [link](#).

Making Dreams – Awesome Austin

ACFD is celebrating life with special members of our community. In the latest “Making Dreams: Awesome Austin” is recognized. Austin is a 14-year-old Castro Valley resident who is battling leukemia for the second time. He was admitted to the hospital for a bone marrow transplant and remained in the hospital through Christmas. On December 5, ACFD Station 25, the Pink Heals of Solano County and CHP led a parade in honor of Austin which included some early Christmas presents personally delivered by Santa. Video [link](#).



Measure X

On December 1, the Alameda County Registrar of Voters certified the results of the 2020 election. Voters in Alameda County's unincorporated communities adopted Measure X, the Fire Safety Bond. Measure X authorizes the Department to issue bonds to repair, upgrade, and replace outdated fire stations in order to maintain fire and emergency medical services in the unincorporated communities of Ashland, Castro Valley Cherryland, Livermore, San Lorenzo and Sunol.

Inadequate funding and aging facilities, including two stations over 50 years old and two over 70 years old, have forced the Alameda County Fire Department to consolidate and close a fire station. Measure X will upgrade existing fire stations and equipment in unincorporated Alameda County communities that rely on the emergency medical lifesaving services, fast 911 response, wildfire protection and disaster response services provided by Alameda County firefighters in local stations.

Measure X includes Independent Citizens Oversight, independent audits, and provides that no money can be spent on salaries, benefits, or pensions of Fire Department employees. By law, all funds are required to be spent locally. For more information about Measure X, visit acgov.org/fire/MeasureX.



Alameda County Regional Emergency Communications Center (ACRECC) officially launched its text to 9-1-1 campaign. Mobile users now have the ability to send text messages to 9-1-1, allowing deaf, hearing and speech impaired residents, or those in situations where it is too dangerous to make a voice call to 9-1-1, a potentially lifesaving option.

“Call if you can -- text if you can't” is the slogan developed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), adopted by several California jurisdictions. ACRECC is now equipped to receive and respond to mobile phone SMS Text to 9-1-1 messages, joining other dispatch centers across the state. View important information about the program [here](#).

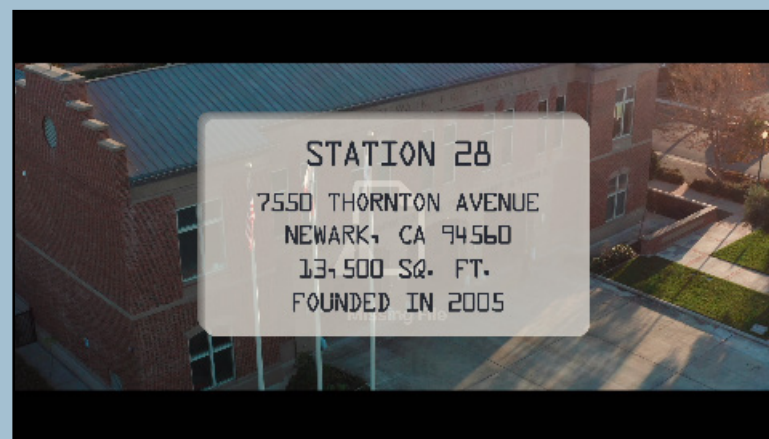
Castro Valley Rotary and Aurora Catering Donate Meals

On December 8, the Castro Valley Rotary helped feed over 31 ACFD firefighters in unincorporated Alameda County. The rotary help raised over \$1,000 and partnered with Aurora Catering, who wanted to show their appreciation for the firefighter's hard work during the 2020 wildfire season and COVID-19 pandemic.



Station 28 Virtual Tour in Spanish

ACFD is working toward providing more information in Spanish to our Spanish speaking community. We released our first virtual station tour in Spanish, debuting Station 28 located in the City of Newark. Video [link](#).



Fire Extinguisher Safety

ACFD had received requests from local businesses to provide fire extinguisher safety training but the COVID-19 pandemic has created constraints. We also received a message from a mom who caught her little girl on camera going over the important fire extinguisher steps, “PASS”, and decided an informational video was the solution. Video [link](#).

Annual Holiday Toy Program

The Alameda County Firefighter's Local 55 teamed up with the Department to collect toys for Alameda County children and teens in need. Thousands of toys and \$14,000 were collected and provided to Alameda County Non-profits who distributed them to families in need during the holiday season, and will continue to do so throughout the year. A special thanks from all of us to you for your generous contributions. Links to [Viola Blythe](#) and [Emery](#) videos.



Dedicated to Service

Eighteen years ago, Paul Jameson met now retired Captain Don Duncan during a visit to a fire station in 2002. Paul shared the photo of this visit and a story on how it inspired a career in public service. Paul is moving to Arizona to be a 911 dispatcher and credits the interaction for this life choice. To commemorate the move, the two met again and remade the photo.



Newark Flu Shot Clinic

On December 5, 2020, members of the Department, including Division Chief Ryan Nishimoto, Battalion Chief Randall West, and Reserve Firefighters, and the Newark Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) supported a free flu shot clinic at the Newark Silliman Center.



Earthquake Warning California

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) invites Californians and visitors to join the Earthquake Warning California's “Don't Get Caught Off Guard” earthquake early warning awareness campaign. Earthquake Warning California promotes essential emergency resources to help Californians stay safe in the event of an earthquake. It is the nation's first statewide earthquake warning system and includes no-cost resources:

Earthquake Warning California resources include:

- Information about constructing an emergency plan
- How to protect yourself and your family before, during and after an earthquake
- Android Earthquake Alerts developed in partnership with Cal OES and USGS
- The MyShake App — a smartphone app developed in partnership with Cal OES and UC Berkeley that can provide users with a few seconds of notification that shaking is about to occur
- Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) — free notifications delivered to cell phones in emergency situations
- Information for business sectors to plan for life-saving actions in the event of an alert, such as safely slowing mass transit systems, powering down equipment, or bringing elevators to an emergency stop
- Links to the California Integrated Seismic Network Partners for additional technical and system information

For more information visit earthquake.ca.gov or email earthquakeinfo@caloes.ca.gov.



Calls for Service



December 31: At 11:39 am, ACFD with the support of Livermore–Pleasanton Fire Department, Livermore Police Department, and CHP responded to a solo vehicle collision. A single patient crashed and rolled a Jeep on Altamont Pass Road and Greenville Road. The patient was transported in stable condition but suffered significant injuries. Video [link](#).



December 12: Firefighters were dispatched to a single-family home on Palomares Road in Castro Valley on reports of a chimney fire. The fire extended into the attic. Fire sprinklers and ACFD crews quickly knocked down the fire preventing it from spreading into the rest of the home.



On December 17, 2020, Engine 8 and Engine 20 responded to a head on

December 17: There was a head on collision involving two vehicles on Patterson Pass Road East of Cross Road. One of the two vehicles rolled on to its side. One patient was transported by ground ambulance, and a second patient was extricated and airlifted to the hospital. Video [link](#).



December 25: On Christmas Day, crews responded to reports of an RV fully engulfed in flames in San Lorenzo. One person was transported to the hospital with minor injuries after escaping from the fire.



December 29: ACFD responded to Carnegie motorcycle park for one adult who went over a 50 foot embankment with moderate injuries. Crews safely placed the patient in a stokes basket and used a rope system to haul the patient back up. With assistance from park, the patient was transported to the landing zone where Con Air 2 stood by. Great collaboration between Carnegie SVRA staff, San Joaquin AMR, Contra Costa County Fire and ACFD units. The patient was recovered, transferred and en route within 40 minutes of time of dispatch. Video [link](#).

During the month of December 2020, Alameda County Fire Department (ACFD) responded to a total of 3,603 calls for service.

ACFD Suppression – December 2020		
All Other Call Types (Misc)	320	8.88%
Cancellations / False Alarms	678	18.82%
EMS / Rescue	2,513	69.75%
Fires – Not in a Structure	74	2.05%
Structure Fire	12	0.33%
Vegetation Fire Responses	6	0.17%
Total	3,603	100%

During the year 2020, ACFD responded to a total of 42,016 calls for service.

ACFD Suppression – Calendar Year 2020		
All Other Call Types (Misc)	3,812	9.07%
Cancellations / False Alarms	8,831	21.02%
EMS / Rescue	27,900	66.40%
Fires – Not in a Structure	1,088	2.59%
Structure Fire	128	0.30%
Vegetation Fire Responses	258	0.61%
Total	42,016	100%

During the month of December 2020, Alameda County Regional Emergency Communications Center (ACRECC) received a total of 18,918 calls for service.

ACRECC December 2020		
EMS & Rescue	17,159	90.70%
Public Service	554	2.93%
Misc. Types (i.e. Alarms)	904	4.78%
Fires – All Other Types	156	0.82%
Structure Fire	123	0.65%
HazMat	22	0.12%
Total	18,918	100%

During the year 2020, ACRECC received a total of 218,137 calls for service.

ACRECC Calendar Year 2020		
EMS & Rescue	196,432	90.05%
Public Service	10,519	4.82%
Misc. Types (i.e. Alarms)	6,807	3.12%
Fires – All Other Types	2,844	1.30%
Structure Fire	1,219	0.56%
HazMat	316	0.14%
Total	218,137	100%

During the months of October through December 2020, Fire Prevention processed a total of 2597 plan checks and inspections.

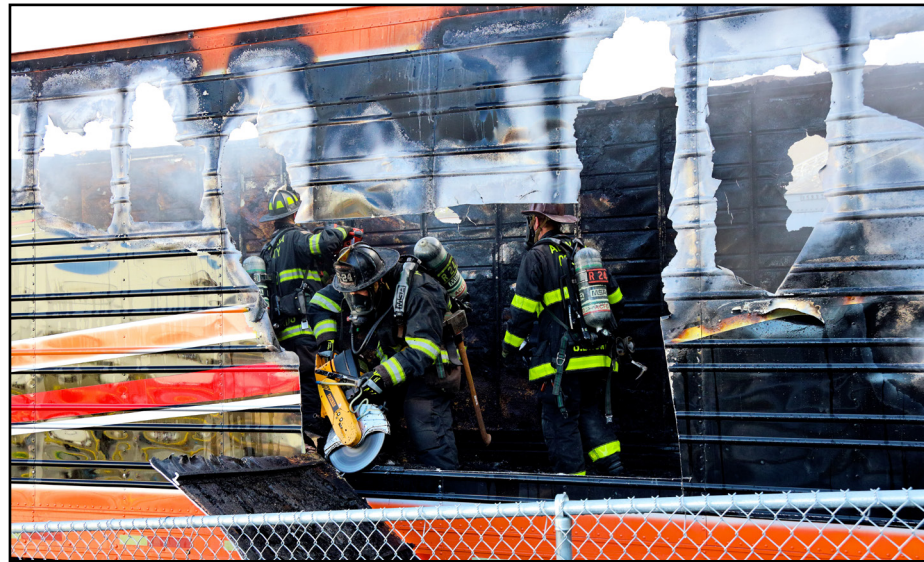
Fire Prevention 4th Quarter 2020		
<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Plan Checks</i>	<i>Inspections</i>
Alameda County	233	188
City of Dublin	114	423
City of Emeryville	57	149
City of Newark	77	478
City of San Leandro	142	307
City of Union City	38	391
Total	661	1936



December 30: ACFD Firefighters and Dublin Police Services responded to a red tail hawk tangled in kite string and stuck in a tree. Firefighters arrived on the scene and performed a unique exercise called an auditorium raise to access the hawk. The firefighter helped cut the kite string with a pike pole which freed the hawk who safely flew away. Video [link](#).



December 9: On Bartlett Avenue in San Lorenzo, crews quickly knocked down a dryer fire, preventing it from extending into the attic and living areas.



December 14: A big rig backed into a loading dock became fully involved at Alvarado Niles Road and Central Avenue in Union City. The fire did not extend into the building. Video [link](#).



December 23: ACFD collaborated with Dublin Police Services, providing a full hazardous materials operation in response to an unknown contaminant at Fallon Middle School. After an extensive search of the school, no hazardous chemicals or materials were located, and the area was deemed safe for re-entry.

During the year 2020, General Services closed out 2049 repair orders for 44 agencies.

General Services	
Apparatus	1728
Building & Grounds	321



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