

2021 Annual Report

TULARE COUNTY **FIRE**



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

It is my sincere honor and privilege to serve the residents of Tulare County as your Fire Chief. I work with over 200 of the best trained and dedicated fire service professionals in the industry. Together, we provide high quality fire suppression, prevention, and emergency medical services to 442,000 residents in a 4,839 square mile response area. Over the last 14 years the Tulare County Fire Department has grown into a full service, all risk Fire Department that continues to provide outstanding customer service in a rapidly changing environment.

The last year has been a blur of activity for the Fire Department. The continuation of the COVID pandemic, two of the largest wildfires in Tulare County history, fulfilling many strike team orders through mutual aid agreements throughout the state, the co-location of TCFD/TCSO Dispatch Center, continuing our work on tree mortality projects, and working on several administrative projects and grant applications. Our employees have shown true dedication over the past year while giving all of their attention to these matters and maintaining our commitment to providing the County's residents with first class emergency services.

On September 9, 2021, there was a significant lighting storm in Tulare County. On September 10, 2021, two fires were discovered in Sequoia National Park as a result of the storm. The two fires merged and became known as the KNP Complex. There were no structure losses or civilian injuries during the fire which burned a total of 88,307 acres. Many resources were placed on crews to protect life and property including the communities of Three Rivers, Badger, Eshom Valley, and Heartland. At the same time as the KNP Complex, the Windy Fire was also ignited during the lighting storm on the Tule River Indian Reservation. There were 14 structures lost with no civilian injuries during the fire. The fire burned a total of 97,528 acres. Crews were deployed to protect the many communities impacted by the fire including Camp Nelson, Ponderosa, Camp Whitsett, Johnsondale, Pine Flat, Sugarloaf Village and Panorama Heights. The Department has not worked on two major incidents of this nature within the County lines at the same time. It was very difficult and taxing work for all the employees and crews involved. The Emergency Operations Center was in full swing with both incidents for over a month.

While the Department, along with many other County departments, was committed to the KNP Complex and Windy Fire, we were also focused on completing five tree mortality projects throughout the County. The Department also provided assistance during the year for multiple out of county responses to help with other fires within the state. Even with all of these emergencies, the Department maintained focus on our on-going COVID response.

The Department was able to complete the Apparatus Lease Purchase Program for 11 new apparatus totaling \$8.2 million. Barring any supply chain issues, the Department will receive the apparatus over the next sixteen (16) months. These new apparatus will give us the much needed upgrade in our equipment, some of which was over 30 years old and was becoming too costly to continue to repair.

The TCFD/TCSO Dispatch Co-Location Project was in full swing and we are nearing the completion date. The new Dispatch Center will have "state of the art" communication and technology upgrades to allow both departments to continue providing quality service and dedication to the County.

Another big project in full swing with the Department is the remodel of Station 21, Terra Bella. As the apparatus get larger in size to accommodate more items and offer more support to our communities, remodels of some existing infrastructure is a necessity to accommodate the larger apparatus.

I am extremely proud of our Department and the way that our employees rose to the many challenges during 2021. Our employees continue to put our community members first and to provide exemplary service.

Sincerely,
Charlie Norman
Fire Chief



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrative Officer for their ongoing support.

Tulare County Supervisors



From Left: Amy Shuklian, District 3;
Eddie Valero, District 4; Dennis Townsend, District 5;
Pete Vander Poel III, District 2; Larry Micari, District 1.



County Administrative Officer
Jason Britt

MISSION STATEMENT

The Tulare County Fire Department is committed to providing leadership, coordination and customer based service through fire prevention, suppression, and emergency medical services.

CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY
RESPECT
LOYALTY
TEAMWORK
COMPASSION

VISION

We are committed to excellence through professionalism and trustworthiness achieved through our daily operations. We will continue to expand our public service delivery model through innovative and fiscally-responsible practices. We will strive to offer our workforce the best opportunities available for training and education to further enhance the public service we provide.



Rescue of
two dogs
from a
ponding
basin.

HISTORY

The Tulare County Fire Department (TCFD) was established on July 1, 2007. Prior to 2007, the County of Tulare contracted with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, know today as CAL FIRE, to provide fire protection for the County. Through the agreement, CAL FIRE provided personnel to staff the Counties fire apparatus and fire stations as well as administrative staff to manage the Department.

The current Fire Chief was appointed by the Board of Supervisors in January 2016 and is the Department's third Chief. The Department's original Command Staff included three Division Chiefs as well as the Fire Chief. The Department embraced field operations and reduced the Division Chief positions to two during the economic recession. A third Division Chief was added to the Department's Command Staff in November 2018. The Department currently has an Operations, Training and Professional Standards division.

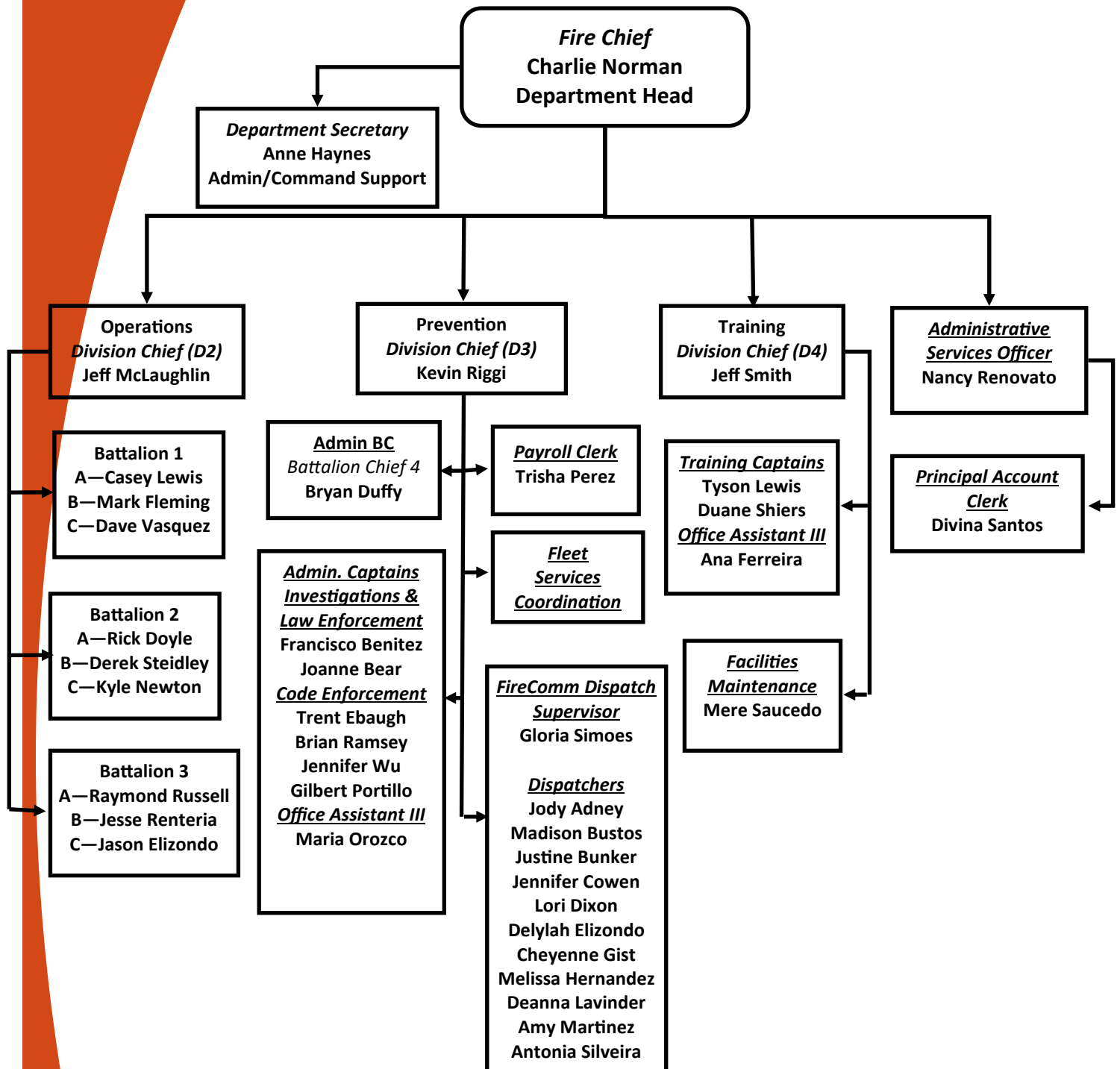


The Department's fire stations were originally staffed with one person. Paid Call Fire Fighters, who later became classified as Extra Help Fire Fighters, supplement staffing. Today, the Department staffs six of its stations with two personnel on each shift and continues to utilize and recruit Extra Help Fire Fighters to provide staffing on emergency incidents.

The Department moved its headquarters from its original location in Farmersville, CA, to 835 S. Akers St. in Visalia, CA in September 2017. The Tulare County Emergency Operations Center is located in the Fire Department Headquarters which is next to the Tulare County Sheriff's Department. The co-location of the County's emergency services allows for collaboration between the three Departments to improve services for the residents of the County.



Organizational Chart

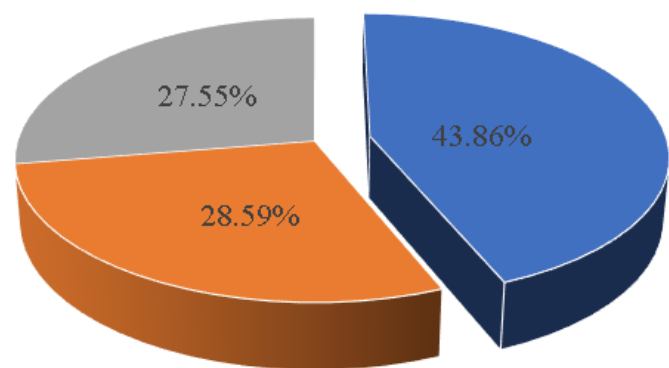


Updated with staffing current
through 1/2/2022

North Battalion



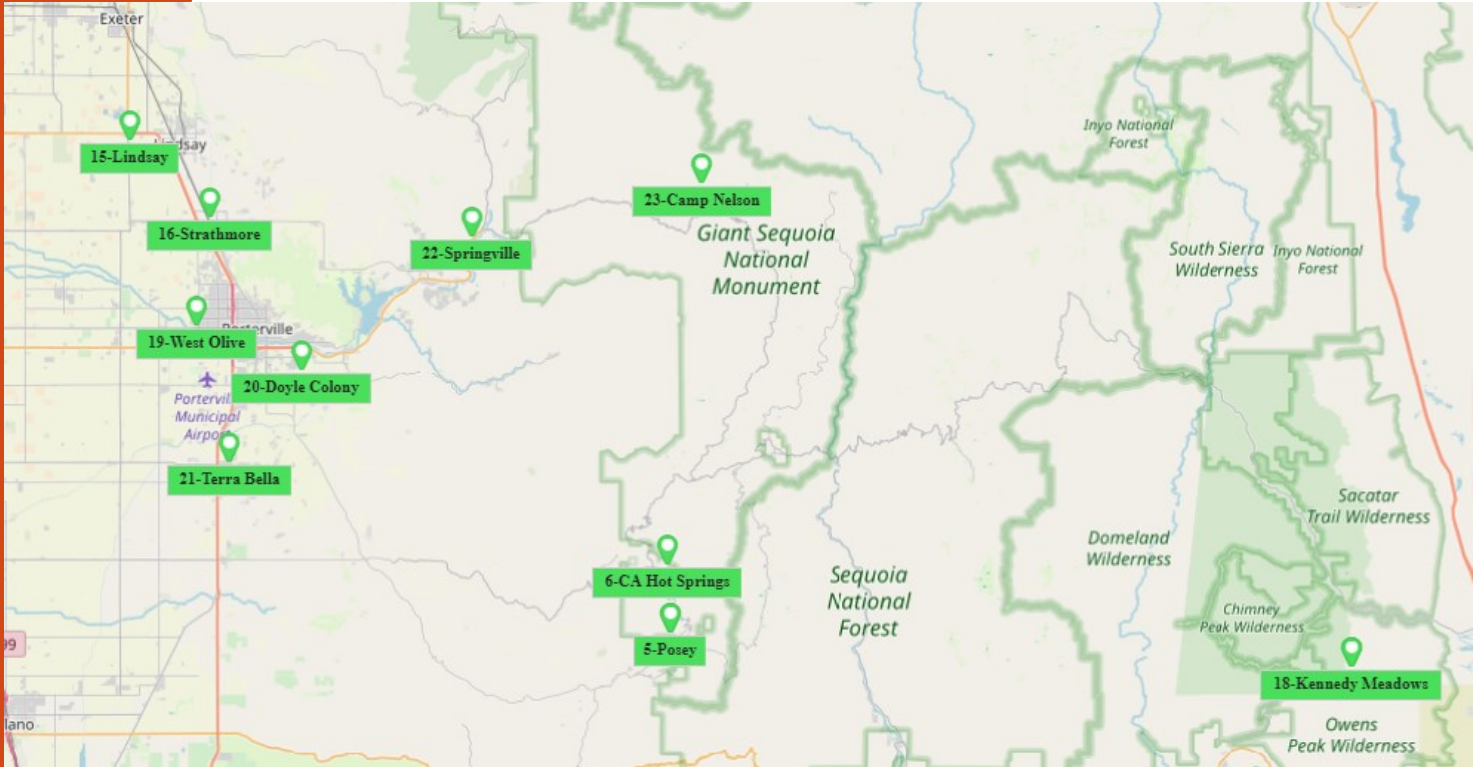
North Battalion has a total of 9 stations.



■ North Battalion ■ East Battalion ■ West Battalion

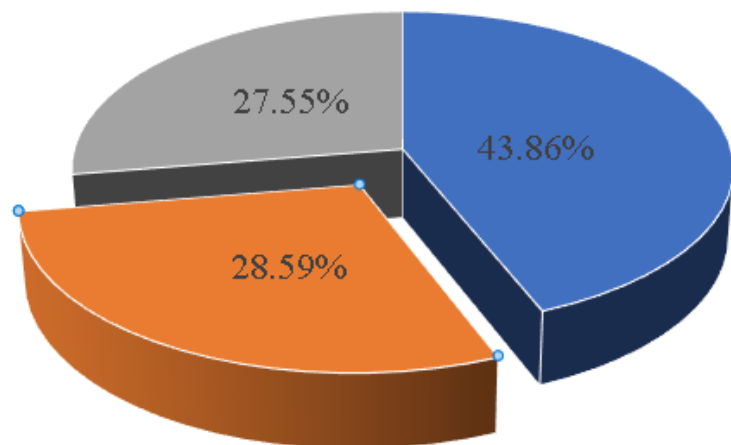
North Battalion accounted for 43.86% of our calls for service.

East Battalion



East Battalion has a total of 10 stations.

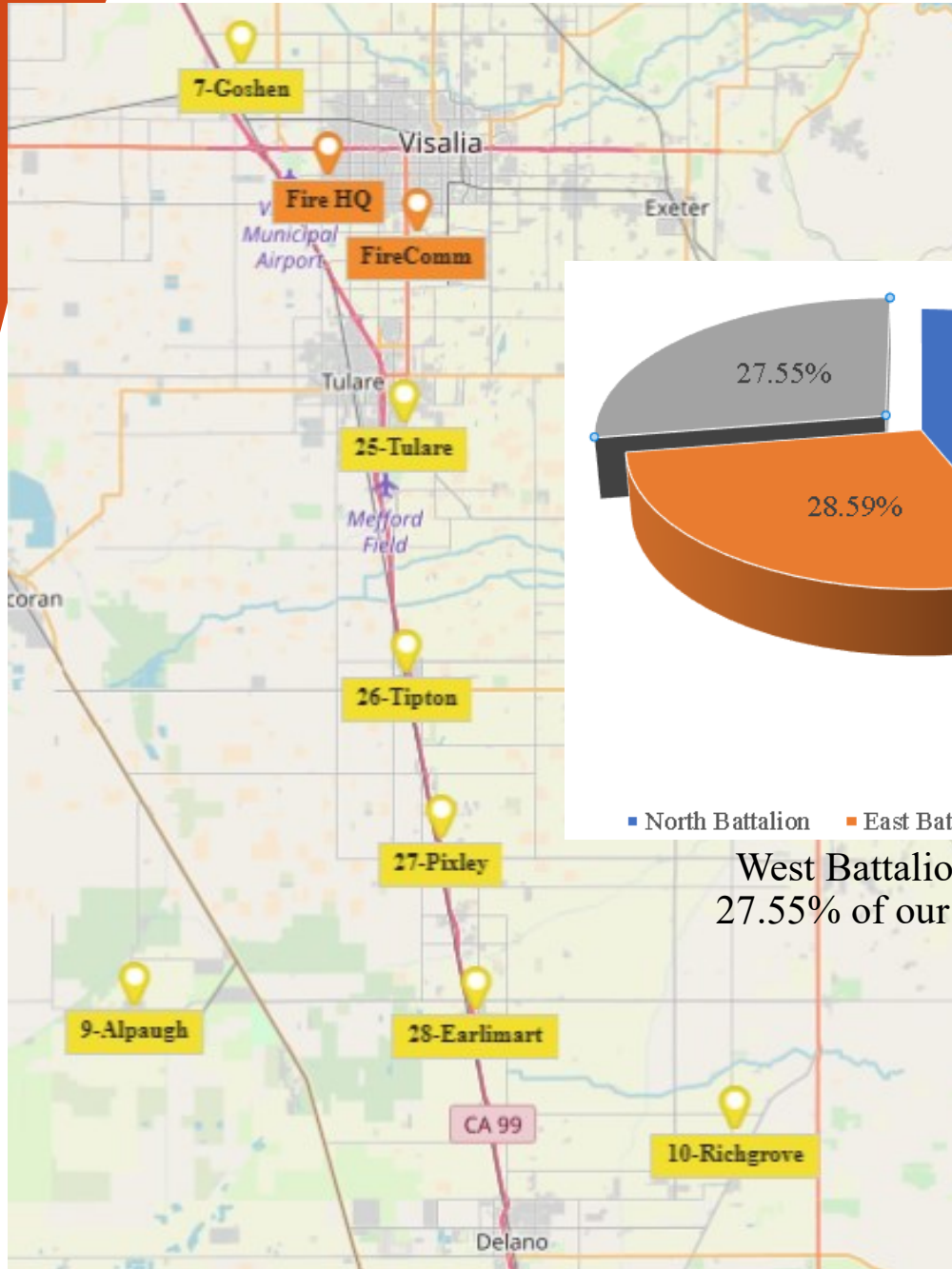
1 station is a community volunteer station.



■ North Battalion ■ East Battalion ■ West Battalion

East Battalion accounted for 28.59% of our calls for service.

West Battalion



■ North Battalion ■ East Battalion ■ West Battalion

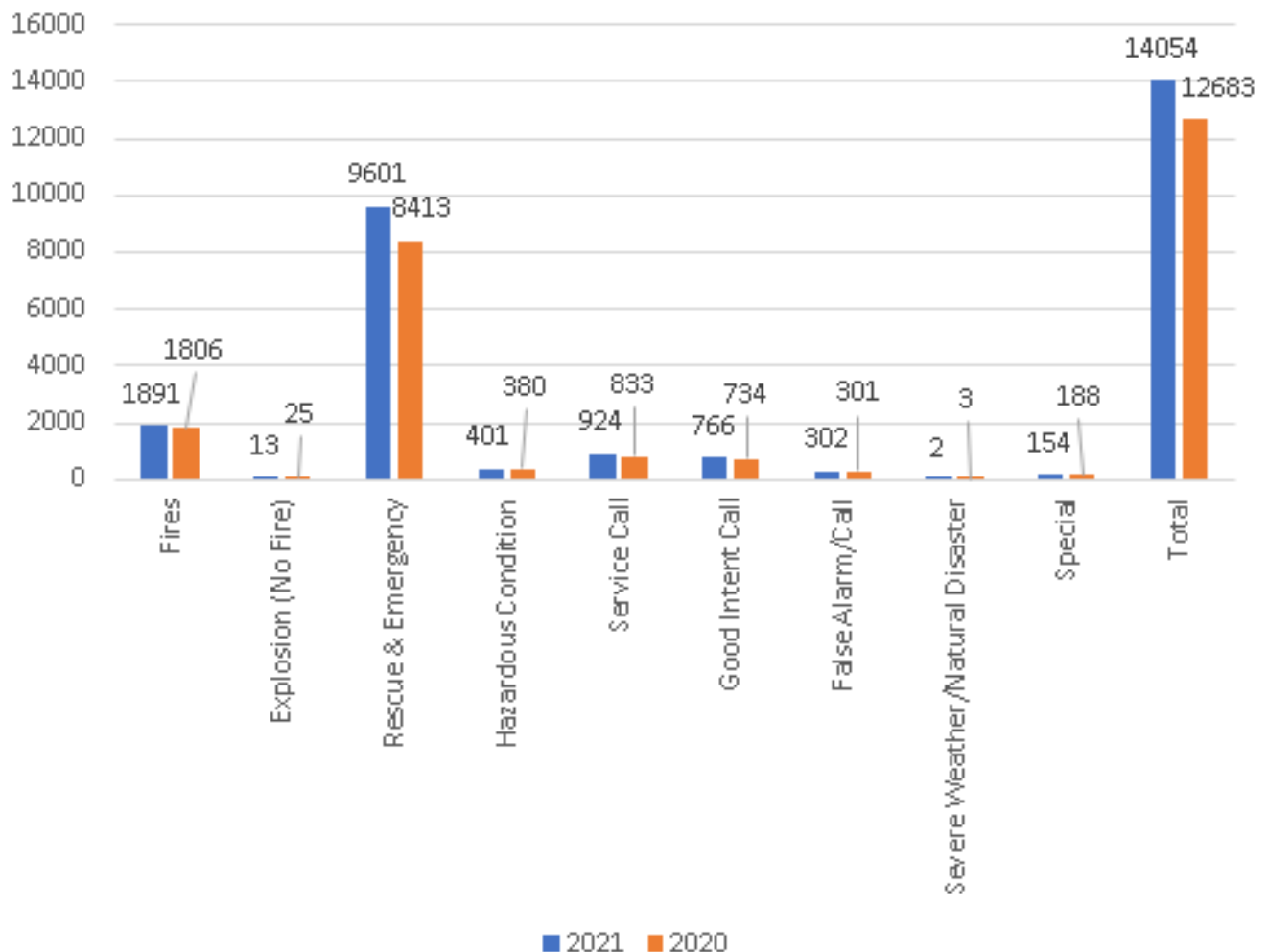
West Battalion accounted for 27.55% of our calls for service.

West Battalion has a total of 7 stations.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

Grants

- ♦ **FEMA COVID Grant**—\$38,000 granted for COVID PPE and supplies
 - ♦ **RFC Grant**—\$40,000 for fire shelters
- ♦ **Homeland Security Grant**—\$51,000 for swift water dual band water proof radios
 - ♦ **CAL FIRE CCI Grants**— Fuel reduction projects for:
 - ♦ North Fork-\$389,371
 - ♦ Mineral King-\$265,870



In 2021 we completed the purchase and delivery of two Type III engines, and 7 Battalion Chief vehicles. We also complete the purchasing process for two Type I engines, two Type III engines, one 110' aerial, one swift water vehicle, and 7 additional command vehicles. In addition to these purchases the apparatus lease purchase program was completed and will be providing 11 additional apparatus in the next 16 months.

PREVENTION UPDATE

Public Outreach:

Total Events: 38
Est. Attendees: 15,384

Events included station tours, local events, and HQ events. Due to COVID-19 we had less events than we usually do during a typical year.



Hometown Heroes—Visalia



Veterans Day Parade—Porterville

**Illegal Fireworks Enforcement—
Approx. 700 lbs. recovered**



National Night Out—Exeter



Tulare County Fair Parade

PREVENTION UPDATE



Three Rivers Fire Safe Council Fair

FireComm Calls for Service

Fire Alarms	72
False Alarms	483
Public Service Assists	354
Fires	2149
Medical Aids	8485
Vehicle Accidents	1976
COVID Related	665
Public Hazard	328
Hazardous Materials	19
Burn Complaints	239
Other	373
Other Agency Assists	1048
Flooding	36
Swift Water Rescues	12
Technical Rescues	14
Total	16253

FireComm also provides dispatch service for the Tule River Reservation, Woodlake Fire Service and Farmersville City Fire Department.

Inspections

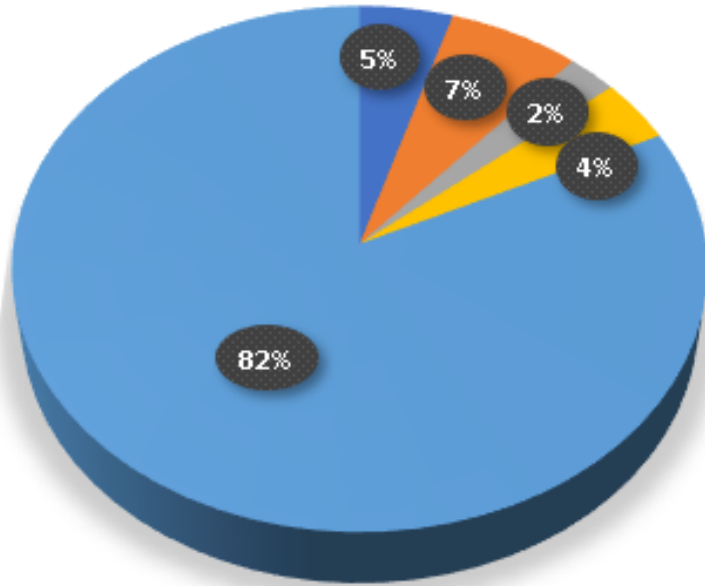
Type	Total #per occupancy type	Inspections Completed	% Completed
Education*	107	104	97.20%
Hotel/Motel*	42	40	95.24%
Apartments*	97	93	95.88%
Care Facility*	9	5	55.56%
Jails, Detention*	9	8	88.89%

*State Mandated Inspections

A large majority of the state mandated inspections were completed. Due to COVID and closed businesses, all other inspections were unable to be completed.

TRAINING UPDATE

2021 Total Training Hours: 21,511



- Driver Training
- Facility Training
- Hazardous Materials Training
- Officer Training
- Company Training



Battalion 3—CHP H40

S390



TRAINING UPDATE

Academy 20:

- Interviewed 18 FAE candidates
- Hired 8 candidates



EH Firefighter Interviews

		2020	2021
Interview Process	Total Applications*	221	170
	Selected to Interview	59	23
	Interviewed	40	19
Hiring Process	Candidates Selected	40	19
	Failed Background	24	5
	Total Hired	7	8

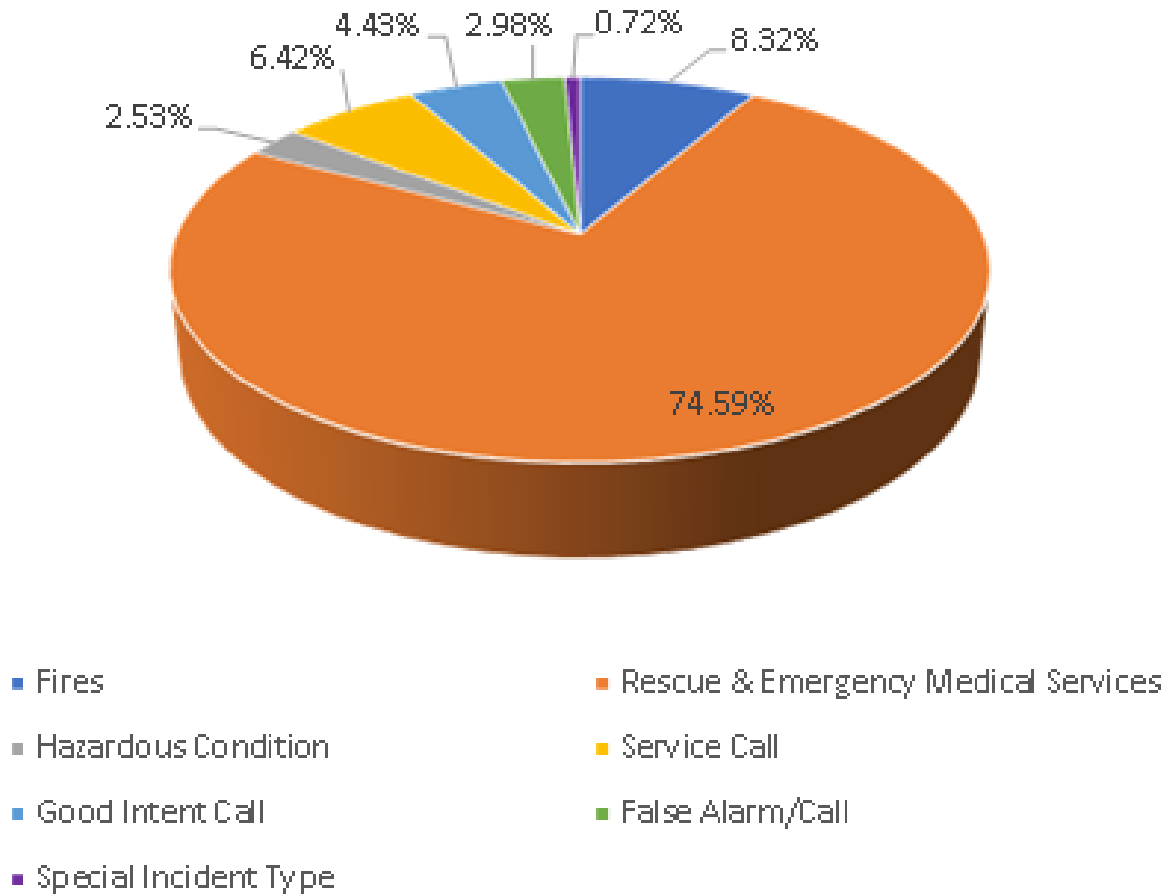
	2020	2021
% Hired from Selected	17.50%	42.11%
% Hired from Total Applicants	3.17%	4.71%

In 2021, 42.11% of the candidates chosen were hired. This is an increase from the prior year of 24.61%.

Also in 2021, 4.71% of the candidates that applied were hired. This is an increase from the prior year of 1.54%.

*Due to COVID, the EH Academy for 2020 and 2021 was postponed to start in 2022.

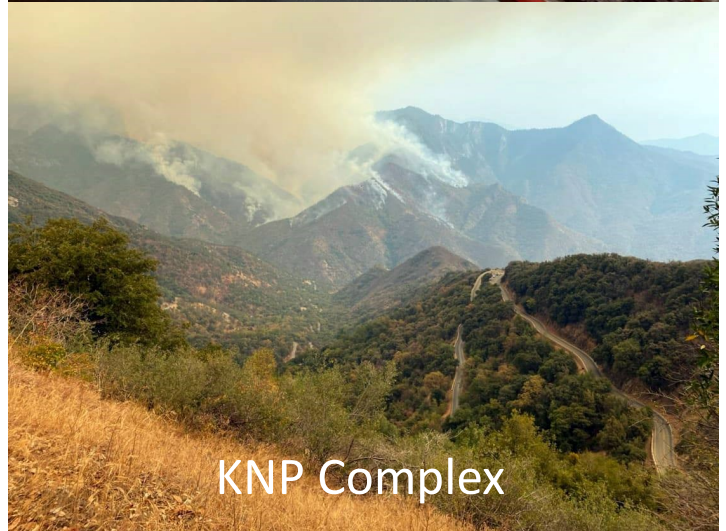
Incident Breakdown



In 2021, the Department started responding to priority 3 calls again, which had been stopped due to COVID concerns. This resulted in an almost 10% increase in Rescue & Emergency Medical Services calls from the prior year, 2020.

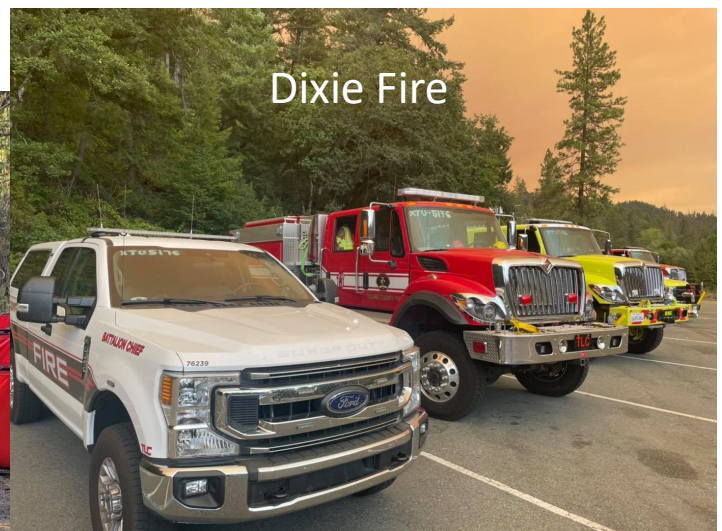
Local Incidents

- HAZMAT—Highway 99
- Honolulu Street—3 commercial structures damaged
- Mountain Fire—135 acres
- Success Fire—800 acres
- Nettle Fire—1,265 acres
- Lewis Hill Fire—350 acres
- Main Fire—384 acres
- Walkers Fire—8,777 acres
- G Street Fire—3 residential structures damaged
- HAZMAT—Laspina
- Park Fire—100 acres
- HAZMAT—Delano
- WC Wood Industries—2 football field sized piles of wood debris
- KNP Complex—88,307 acres
- Windy Fire—97,528 acres



California Fire Service Mutual Assistance

Incident	Counties	Acres Burned	Fatalities	Injuries	Structures Destroyed/ Damaged
Alisal	Santa Barbara	16,970			12
Antelope	Siskiyou	145,632			22
Bekwourth Complex	Plumas	105,670			171
Caldor	El Dorado, Amador, Alpine	221,835		5	1084
Chaparral	Riverside, San Diego	1,427			3
Dixie	Butte, Plumas, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama	963,309	1	3	1424
French	Kern	26,535	1		55
Monument	Trinity	223,124			55
River	Nevada, Placer	2,619		4	163
River	Mariposa, Madera	9,656			14
River	River Complex	199,359			124
Salt	Shasta	12,660			43
South	San Bernardino	819			18



Promotions



Division Chief
Kevin Riggi

Battalion Chief
Kyle Newton

Captain
Michael LaCoss



BC Newton



Cpt. LaCoss

Lieutenant
Senteno Aguerria
Jason Blankinship
Justin Elizondo
Alex Gong
Scott Miranda
Guillermo Mungia
Ramiro Tapia
Derek Vanderstoel



Lt. Aguerria

Administrative Services Officer III
Nancy Renovato



Lt. Blankinship



Lt. Elizondo



Lt. Gong



Lt. Miranda



Lt. Mungia



Lt. Tapia



Lt. Vanderstoel



Nancy Renovato

New Hires and Retirements

New Hires



Trent Ebaugh—Fire Inspector



Jennifer Wu—Fire Inspector

Retirements



Lieutenant Robb Hubbard

F&E Academy 20



From left to right: Shawn Trocke, Wyatt Figueira, Alex Martinez, Guillermo Munguia, Andre Rosacia, Damon Noe



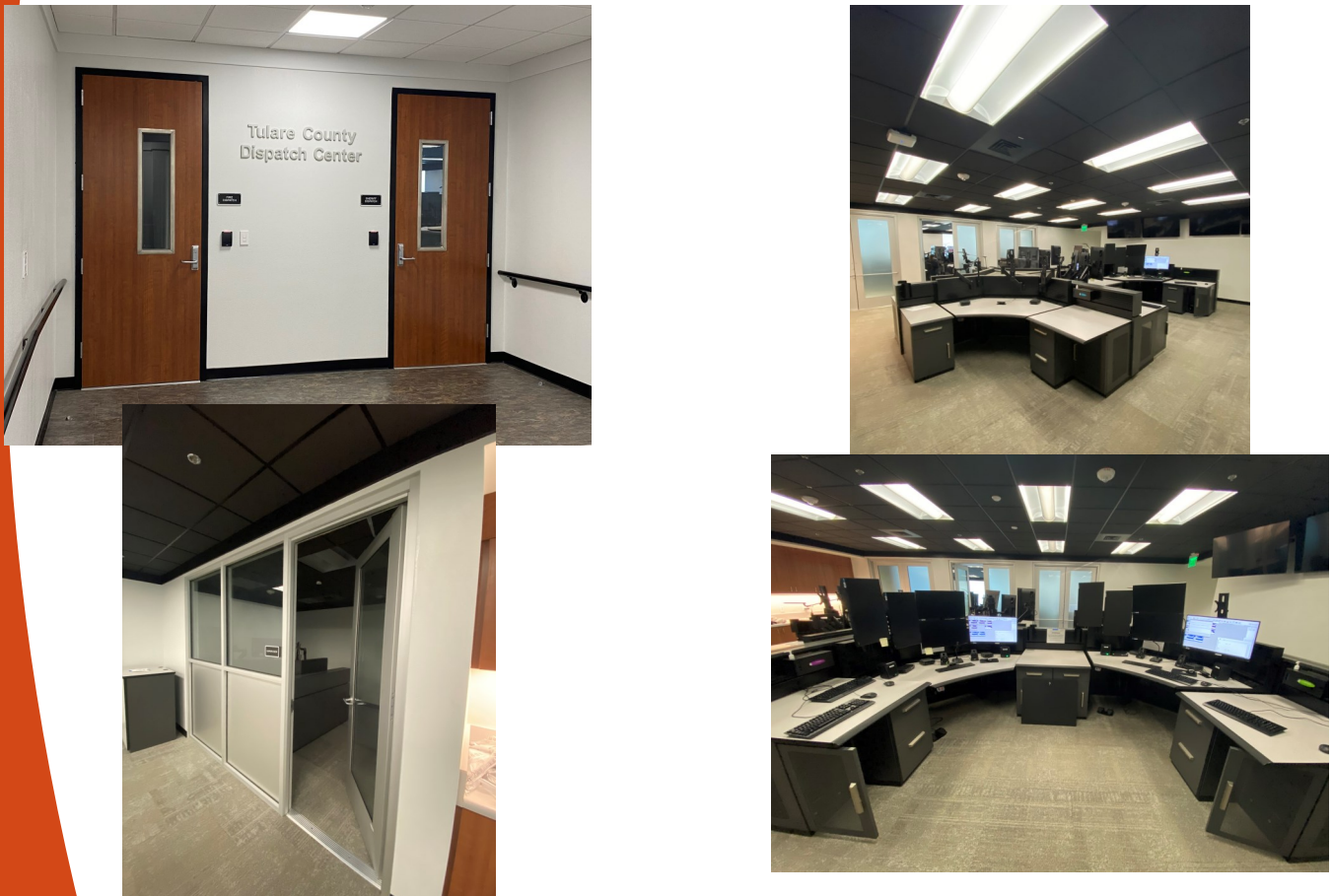
Dispatch New Building

The new co-located TCFD/TCSO Dispatch Center will be opening in early-mid 2022.

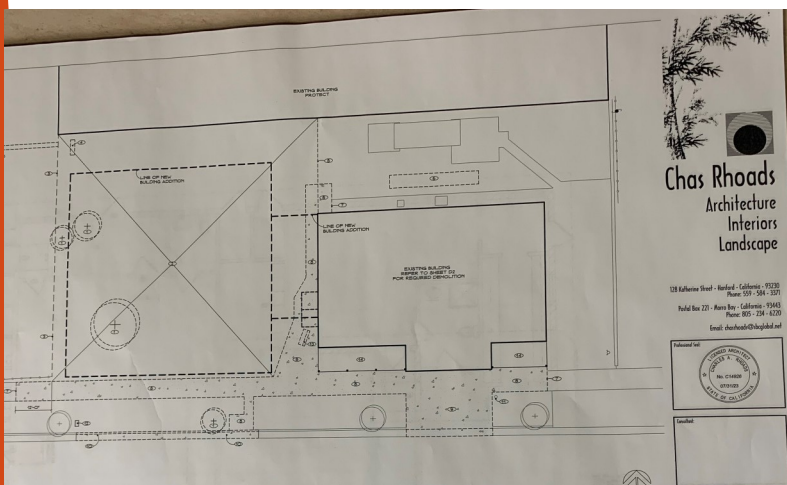
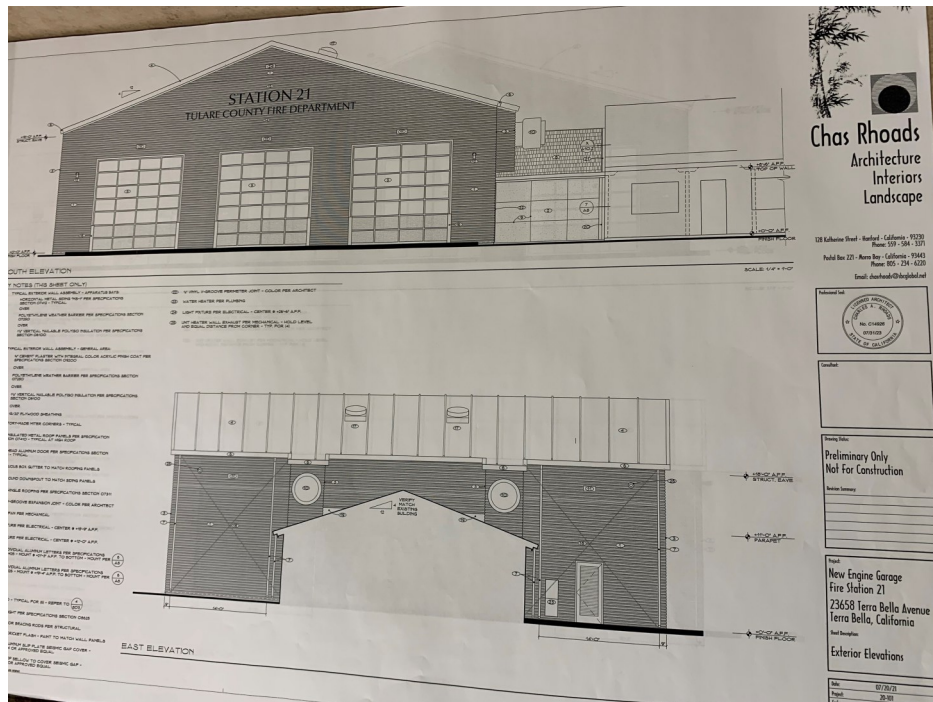
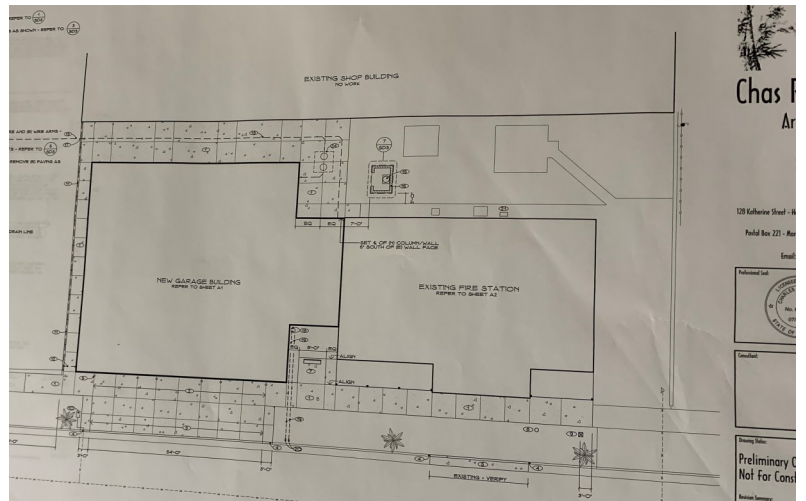
Current Location



New Location



Station 21, Terra Bella Remodel

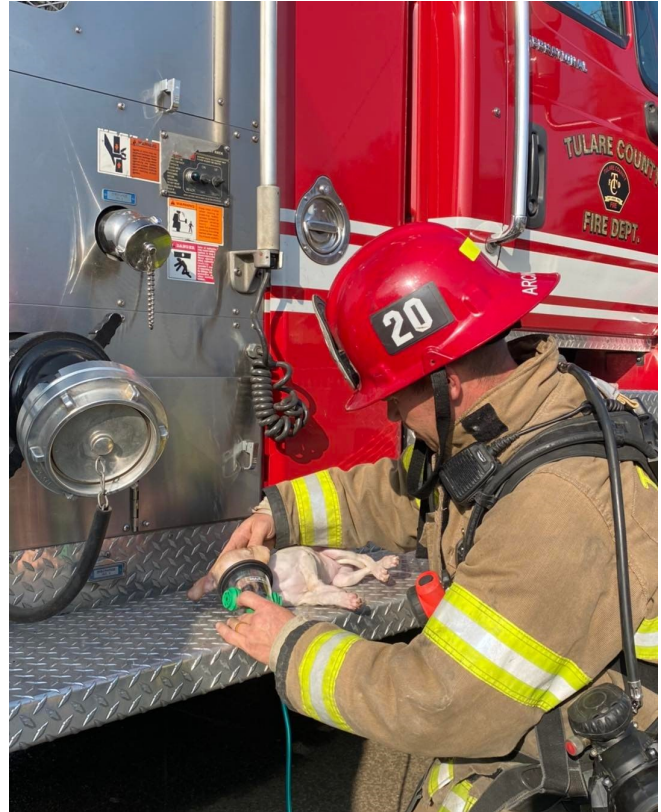


New Equipment

Thirty (30) sets of oxygen masks specifically designed for animals was received by TCFD. The donation came from the Emma Zen Foundation. The estimated cost of each kit is \$75.00 and includes: 3 sizes of Pet Oxygen Masks, 3 lengths of oxygen tubing, a First Aid and Pet CPR booklet with a link to a training video, a laminated data card for quick reference, and a carrying case. Training tools have also provided from the Foundation to assist with training TCFD personnel.



Pet Oxygen
Mask Kits



Two (2) new Type 3 Fire Engines from Emergency Vehicle Group and Spartan Fire. Type 3 Fire Engines are commonly referred to as Wildland Engines and are specifically designed to assist in fighting fires in the mountain areas, but are also designed to handle all type of emergencies. These 2 new Wildland Engines already have numbers and have been assigned to Springville Station #22 and Alpaugh Station #9.



Tree Mortality

- The crew returned with 20 members in 2021
- Oak Valley Crew 8 completed the Heartland project
 - Trees Removed:
 - Sugar Loaf 6,800 trees
 - Parker Pass 2,200 trees
 - Johnsondale 7,600 trees

Heartland—Before and After



Crew Boss:
Rafael Torres (FT)
Crew:
Fernando Aguila-Ramirez
Nedda Bakhtminoo (R)
Bransen Berry
Angel Chambers (R)
Oscar Cibrian (R)
Jonathan Collazo
Jacob Donald
Esteban Infante
Kenneth James
Luis Melendez
Luis Nunez
Kyle Pinedo (FT)
Jose Porras (R)
Daniel Ramos (R)
James Rawson (FT)
Jacob Razo
Marisol Santillan
Allan Williamson
Zane Wilson

R=Returning Crew Member
FT = Hired for Full Time



Fuels Crew Pack Test

Community Events



A Combat Veteran's Hope



Girls Empowerment Camp—Fresno



Read Across America—Virtually held on YouTube



Fire Trucks and Food Trucks



Bottled Water Delivery—
Teviston Well Failure



Make a Difference Day

Recognition



Three Rivers Heroes Celebration:
Chief Charlie Norman, John Hanggi, Bryan Marsh, Jose Helo, Marcus Delon, Jason Blankinship,
Lucas Alves, Blake Glazebrook, Scott Miranda, Raymond Russell, Chris Ellorin



Grant Jackson—Visalia Knights of Columbus



Jared Arciniega—Porterville Exchange Club



Amy Martinez—Dispatcher of the Year



Duane Shiers—TCFD Employee of the Year

Community Thank Yous



Savemart

Monte Vista—Porterville



KNP Complex

