



From our family to yours.

Vol 1415  
Issue 1

# Idyllwild Fire Department News

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July, August, Sept 2014

## 1st ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOUNTAIN FIRE

On this 1st Anniversary of the Mountain Fire that raged over 30,000 acres and threatened Idyllwild, forcing the town to evacuate last July, we want you to know what our Commissioners, Fire Chief, and Staff have been up to since then. So, please, pour yourself another cup of coffee or glass of iced tea and relax as you read.



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### VIEW FROM THE TOP

By Jerry Buchanan, President,  
IFPD Board of Commissioners

Contrary to what you may have been reading there are great things happening in and around the District.

- In the month of May, 2014 IFPD responded to 76 calls throughout Idyllwild and the surrounding area.
- 60 of those calls were for Medical aid (47 in Idyllwild, 5 in Pine Cove, 8 in other areas).
- 39 patients were transported to 5 area hospitals.
- The responses were all within the prescribed times with no patient complaints.
- The District also responded to a structure fire and 2 wildfires during May.

IFPD is governed by an elected Board of 5 Commissioners who meet every month on the second Tuesday at 6:00 PM at the Fire Department. The members of the Board receive no pay or benefits. Everyone is invited to attend the meetings and has an opportunity to speak. The Department posts the agenda prior to every meeting, on the bulletin board outside the station door and on [www.idyllwildfire.com](http://www.idyllwildfire.com) website.

The IFPD Board is committed to carrying out what effective Special District boards are elected to do:

- Set policy
- Hire and evaluate the Fire Chief, who is the CEO and responsible for providing adequate training and for evaluating the staff
- Approve and monitor the budget
- Approve expenditures

The Board has been diligent in these duties.

Numerous policies have been written. Good people have been hired in key positions and are doing their jobs. Expenditures have been curtailed (thank the firefighters for agreeing in 2011 to a 9% pay cut, that has not yet been reinstated) and the District is living within its means. Committees have been established that better involve the community and donations are providing for remodeling of the Fire Station and reaching out to Community.

Want to know more?

**Come to the meetings and learn for yourself.**

### INTRODUCING!

#### Captain Alan Lott

By Barry Zander

With 25 years as a member of the Idyllwild Fire Department, Fire Captain Alan Lott has been part of positive changes that enable the trained firefighters and paramedics to better administer to the needs of our community. With an increase in staffing over the years from two to four, he appreciates the department's ability to now handle up to three EMT calls at a time, which does happen (with backup from outside agencies if needed beyond that).

Having more personnel available at fires means better and faster operations. There is also more time spent on prevention.

Lott's firefighting and EMT experience goes back 35 years, and includes teaching his craft at area community colleges and paramedic academies. He gained experience, first as a volunteer in Riverside and then as a reserve staffer with Cathedral City. He came to Idyllwild as a reservist in 1989, rising over the years to the rank of Shift Captain



What he finds unique about working on the Hill is the relationship with the people he's ministering to in an emergency. "I like helping the community," he said, "and I find it gratifying when they know me by my first name.

"It's not like that in other places," he added.

### REMINDER REGARDING BBQ GRILLS

Idyllwild Fire does not permit outdoor charcoal or wood-fired grills, fire pits, or fireplaces within its service areas. We also require you to have a current permit for a propane grill. There is no charge for the permit. Simply come in to the Idyllwild Fire Station during normal business hours and request a Barbeque Permit.

**IFPD Normal Business Hours: 9:00 - 5:00**

### FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

By Patrick Reitz, IFPD Fire Chief

**Welcome to our new & long-overdue newsletter!** Thanks to the donors who make it possible, as no tax dollars have been spent to bring this to you. Also, thanks to Nancy Layton, our start-up editor for her patience, guidance, and pulling it all together.

A **HUGE thank you** to all of you who made **Phase 1 of the fire station remodel** possible! And thank you to all of you that came out for the Community Open House at the Fire Station.

**You're Invited** - The Idyllwild Volunteer Fire Company is hosting a "**County Western BBQ & Dance**", Saturday, Aug. 30<sup>th</sup>, 4p-9p at the Fire Station.

**WANTED** - Volunteer Responders to join the **Idyllwild Volunteer Fire Company and IFPD**. No pay, long hours, but consider the benefits - good people, good times, good training and knowing that you are making a difference in **your Community!** You need not be a resident to apply.

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Here's your quarterly information letter from the Members of the Idyllwild Fire Protection District.  
**We welcome your feedback!**

Remember, IFPD's Board of Commissioners meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM in the Idyllwild Fire Station Training / Conference Room.



## SUMMER TRAVEL SAFETY

By Adam Rodriquez, Paramedic/Firefighter

As we know, no place on the planet is completely free from safety risks. But gaining understanding about what you can do to prevent some of these risks and specific threats at your destination can go a long way toward keeping you safe and your trip enjoyable and to avoid having it turn into a nightmare.

### Preparing to Travel:

- ◆ Leave a copy of your itinerary with a trusted family member or friend
- ◆ If you are driving, make sure your vehicle is in good working order
- ◆ Bring enough prescription medication to last the trip as well some extra
- ◆ Leave valuables such as expensive jewelry at home
- ◆ Label your bags and luggage with your name and phone number

### During Your Trip:

- ◆ If traveling internationally, check to see if you or your children need additional vaccinations and learn what health precautions you should follow.
- ◆ Bring traveler's checks, one or two credit cards, and a small amount of cash
- ◆ Wash hands frequently and use anti-bacterial gel to prevent illness especially in airports, airplanes, public restrooms, taxi cabs, etc.

## Special Concerns About Children:

- ◆ All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat until 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the car safety seat manufacturer.
- ◆ Never place a rear-facing car safety seat in the front seat of a vehicle that has an airbag

### When you arrive:

- ◆ Pay attention to your surroundings
- ◆ Stay in well-lit and well-traveled places
- ◆ Locate the nearest police & fire department and hospital or clinic
- ◆ Upon arrival at your hotel room, find the nearest fire exits, fire alarms, fire extinguisher or hose
- ◆ Ask hotel staff about safety and security policies
- ◆ Keep your hotel door locked at all times and meet visitors other than close friends or family in the hotel lobby or other public space
- ◆ Do not approach or contact stray pets or other animals as they may be carrying rabies or other infections
- ◆ Drink plenty of cool, non-alcoholic beverages, especially water
- ◆ Protect your face and head from the sun with a wide-brimmed hat, and wear light-colored clothing to reflect sunlight
- ◆ Stay out of the midday sun during peak hours between 10am and 4pm. If you can't avoid being in the sun, use effective sunscreen

For more information on travel safety information visit [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) or [www.nc.cdc.gov](http://www.nc.cdc.gov)

**Have a fun summer and be safe out there!**

## MEMORIES OF THE MOUNTAIN FIRE

By Mark Lamont, Captain, Paramedic, Training Officer

I recall a deep feeling of helplessness, having no gear and no way for me to fight the embers lighting spot fires all around me as I waited at Keenwild Station for Volunteer Fire Company member Jim Kutch to bring me my protective equipment from the Idyllwild Fire Station. I was off duty when the fire broke out, but USFS Battalion Chief Chris Fogle told me I had better get engaged quickly and that my mission was to keep the fire south and out of Idyllwild.

I had two CalFire hand crews from Oak Glenn who engaged the fireline and scratched a line from the highway up to just below the Keenwild helipad as quickly as possible. As we crested the ridge we could see that the fire had swept ahead and was making a run toward Apple Canyon. I ran up to the helipad to look just as both USFS Battalion Chiefs Fogle and Espinoza arrived.

Their plan to keep the fire out of Coldwater Drainage and to bust in some control line up to May Valley Road, told me that we were in for a long, hard firefight. Soon I was given two USFS Hot Shot crews, two brush engines, and two water tenders to add to the hand crews. 120 well trained firefighters set out to hold the line and keep the fire out of Idyllwild.

As the sun peeked over the ridge next morning, we came out onto May Valley Road. I could finally sigh in relief. All of our personnel were accounted for and safe and we met our objective. For the next several days I worked on many different Divisions (areas) of the Fire and was released from the Mountain Fire Incident on July 24<sup>th</sup>, ten days after I arrived. Today, driving highway 243 toward Idyllwild, I'm reminded by the scars in the landscape along the road, just exactly what was at stake for our community and for all the courageous firefighters that afternoon, **just one year ago.**

## HOW TO CONTACT IDYLLWILD FIRE

### Normal business hours:

9:00 - 5:00, Mon - Fri  
(BBQ permits can be obtained on weekends)

### EMERGENCIES:

Dial 9-1-1

### BUSINESS TELEPHONE:

951.659.2153

### EMAIL:

Admin Asst Sherry Edwards  
[sherry@idyllwildfire.com](mailto:sherry@idyllwildfire.com)

Fire Chief Patrick Reitz  
[chief@idyllwildfire.com](mailto:chief@idyllwildfire.com)

### WEBSITE:

[www.idyllwildfire.com](http://www.idyllwildfire.com) (public documents, meeting schedules, personnel information, posted as available)

### TO REQUEST COPIES OF PUBLIC

**DOCUMENTS:** Contact either Chief Reitz or Admin Assistant Sherry Edwards.