

IT'S GETTING DARK SOONER

Here's something to think pretty seriously about - if you had a medical emergency and needed our paramedics and the ambulance to get to you quickly, could we find you?

Our Idyllwild Fire Volunteer Company makes reflective address number signs. For a donation of just \$20 for a single-sided or \$25 for one that can be seen from two directions - double-sided - you can get one that is white on green or white on brown and either vertical or horizontal.

Just stop in the station during business hours and order one. They're usually ready for you to install in a week or so.



See how easy it is to find this house!

DID YOU KNOW?

Idyllwild Fire requires a Special Event Permit for things like outdoor weddings & receptions, street festivals, community BBQ's or Chili Cook-offs, or outdoor music concerts or festivals that involve 50 or more people. Even if held on private property, these events present potential fire or medical emergencies and need to be approved by the Fire Chief prior to your event taking place.

Call the Department (951.659.2153) for fees & more information.



Idyllwild Fire Department News
Published Quarterly, Not Taxpayer Funded

ISSUE 4

OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 2015

FIRE! Lessons From The Fireline
By Paramedic Captain Mark Lamont

Fire Season 2015 was an enormous reminder of just how essential being prepared really is. Preparation for these events is dynamic and far reaching. Being ready for these catastrophic incidents is a responsibility that we all share and all must take seriously. I have the privilege of working for the citizens of Idyllwild in my position as a Fire Captain/Paramedic at the Idyllwild Fire Protection District. I am also blessed with the opportunity of being a member of Southern California Incident Management Team-1 as a Division Group Supervisor.

So Cal Team-1, like other incident management teams, is responsible for the overall management, containment, suppression and rehab of fire incidents throughout the nation. Team-1 benefits greatly from its extremely experienced and knowledgeable personnel. Norm Walker, former IFPD Fire Chief and retired Division Chief of the San Jacinto Ranger District, USFS, is the Incident Commander for So Cal Team-1. Chris Fogle, currently a Battalion Chief on the San Jacinto Ranger District, USFS, is Incident Commander Trainee of So Cal Team-1. It is important to note as a significant benefit that both of these highly skilled, professional, and seasoned Incident Commanders are also Idyllwild residents.

If you haven't yet had the opportunity to read the recent Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council Newsletter article by Norm Walker, entitled "Fire Season 2015", I would urge you to do so. The information shared within this article is spot on and reinforces the fact that fire abatement is an ongoing and year round responsibility.

In addition to property owners being diligent with abatement and doing their part, fire service agencies must be equally diligent in their state of readiness. Being ready for these events is a responsibility that your local Fire Department takes extremely seriously. In addition to ongoing Fire Prevention, Education and Personnel Training Programs in structural firefighting and Emergency Medical response, the Idyllwild Fire Protection District requires all of its emergency responders to maintain ongoing and annual recertification in didactic and hands-on wildland fire behavior, strategies, and tactics, and other training as required to meet the requirements found within our assistance agreement with the State and Federal Fire Agencies.

The 2015 Fire Season demonstrates just how vital the Mutual Aid component of our fire service here in Idyllwild truly is. No fire agency, regardless of size can singlehandedly manage, suppress, and rehab every fire event that will eventually affect or threaten their own community.

(Continued on page 3)



Happy Holidays!





**Do you know the most common symptoms of stroke?
Do you know what to do?
See what IFPD's Paramedics have to say!**



Stroke!

Know the warning signs for possible stroke and act FAST:

Face - does one side of the person's face droop?

Arms - when the person raises both arms, does one arm start to drop?

Speech - is their speech slurred?

Time - *is critical*

DO NOT WAIT!

If any of these symptoms are present,

Call 9-1-1 immediately!



Winter Note

by **Rhonda Andrewson**,
IFPD Commission Secretary

As we approach a predicted heavy El Nino winter season our household has started stocking up on basic supplies. Don and I have additional family members living with us and this has greatly changed our priorities. We have tripled our water, canned and dry goods, and pet supplies. Don takes prescription medications so he's doubling that supply and we both have extra sets of eye glasses. Our home is all electric, so should the power be out for a substantial period we have a two burner Coleman stove with plenty of back up propane bottles and our propane BBQ is still set up on our patio with full propane tanks. We have several LED candles, flashlights, batteries, lots of extra blankets, and winter clothing. We just recently added three cords of wood to our stock.

Don has done a water diversion in our yard to aid in the potential heavy rains and melting snow. We remembered to winterize our water pipes. Additionally, we're keeping an eye on our propane tank as the calls to the propane companies will greatly increase when the weather drops in - this applies to our vehicles, as well.

(Continued on page 4)

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ & ¢¢¢¢¢ by Nancy Layton, IFPD Commission Treasurer



IFPD Commission Treasurer, Nancy Layton, reviews the financial progress to date.



We've begun receiving payments for reimbursement of our expenses on the many Campaign Fires that our personnel responded to throughout California during the 2015 Fire Season. This means that the paperwork is being approved and that the money is in the pipeline and heading our way. Keep in mind that we've already paid out all of those expenses associated with our participation in mutual aid this year. These expenses include payroll, personal protective gear, and apparatus and equipment repair and maintenance costs, so these reimbursement payments will assist us in keeping our services rolling throughout the year.

Since returning from my trip for the CSDA (California Special Districts Association) Annual Conference, I've been busy attending a variety of meetings and workshops, all intended to further our working knowledge as Commissioners and provide networking with other elected officials and emergency management leaders. Whenever I have the opportunity to share the "Idyllwild Fire Story", I like to do so.

We are rolling toward the middle of our fiscal year. Our financials are in good shape considering that we don't see our first big tax payment until the end of December. We asked for a tax advance of \$350,000 this year, with the expectations of increased Riverside County Dispatch fees and continued legal costs the Fire District has encountered. Rest assured we are working hard to contain costs in all expense areas.

Speaking of expenses, I'd like to dispel any notion that our personnel are overpaid. Your career professionals took a pay cut in 2011 and have yet to see a single penny of that restored to their wages. Also, Chief Reitz has adamantly refused to take any of the scheduled pay increases within his contract until his people see their pay restored to 2011 levels. Clearly, they don't stay with the IFPD because of the high pay!

As to the IFPD having a Captain who earns over \$150,000 a year, let's put this into perspective. This Captain responds to most in-District call-backs while off duty and responds all year to Campaign Fires as a member of Norm Walker's fire management team. In addition to his regular schedule of 240 hours per month, this year he also has worked over 2080 overtime hours. Nearly half (over 800) of those O/T hours were spent on Mutual Aid fires for which the District gets reimbursed. The balance is vacation and sick time coverage for the other Captains and for other call-backs. Consider that much time away from home, missing many family moments all while he's putting his life on the line for you and for complete strangers. Consider also, that if this Captain were to accept one of the many job opportunities from other fire agencies, his base salary would be at least 30% higher than what he's paid here. Seems to me he earns every penny we pay him.

Remember, friends, your fire department IS its personnel. Those big, costly vehicles sitting in the bay are useless without trained professionals to safely and effectively operate them.

Fire! (continued from page 1)

Understanding this, Federal, State, and Local Fire officials engage in agreements which benefit all parties to the agreements. These Mutual Aid Agreements are continuously evaluated, adjusted, and updated to ensure the best possible delivery of fire suppression services. I have been asked on numerous occasions, "Why does the Idyllwild Fire Protection District engage its personnel and equipment on fires that are nowhere near Idyllwild?" The simplest answer to this question is that you give assistance in order to receive assistance.

One of the most devastating fires of the 2013 Fire Season was the Mountain Fire right here at our back door. During the Mountain Fire, the Mutual Aid system was implemented and a Federal Fire Management Team managed, suppressed, and rehabbed that fire, utilizing equipment and personnel from several different fire agencies under these Mutual Aid agreements.

Under our Mutual Aid Agreement, 100% of the costs IFPD incurs in providing these assistance services outside the District are fully reimbursed to the IFPD. You, as a taxpayer do not pay any additional District taxes for the personnel, equipment, and supplies we provide through these agreements.

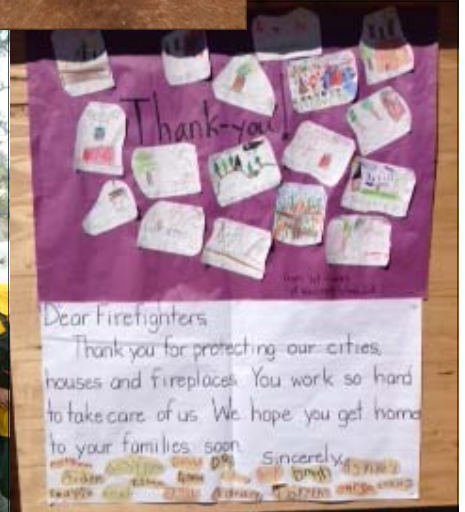
Here at the Idyllwild Fire Protection District we look at these requests for assistance as yet another opportunity to train our personnel in our ongoing effort to ensure they are better equipped, experienced, and prepared to engage fires that hit us right here at home. I can attest first hand to what enormous training and learning opportunities these assignments are, having been personally engaged on active fires over 800 hours during 2015, as well as in past years.

Other crew members of your Idyllwild Fire Protection District logged 2015 campaign fire hours between 900 and 1128, hours for the various fires they worked on. I cannot stress enough how significant this hands-on, on-the-job training is in building experienced, knowledgeable, and professional Firefighters.

We hope that our severe drought will soon come to an end. The short term outlook, however, for recovery of fuels that have become insect-infected or that have died completely will take more than a single year of El Niño weather to improve their fuel moisture levels. With that in mind, we pledge to remain diligent in our prevention, education, training, and ongoing experience. We join Norm Walker in asking you to continue maintaining safe and effective clearances. Your health, safety and security in your mountain homes is always our first priority.



Photos from the Firelines!

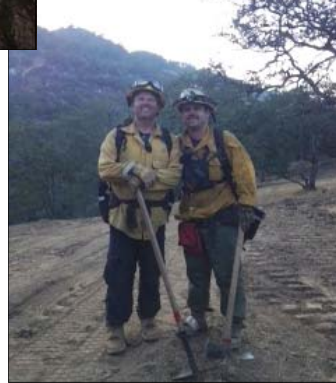


Need we say more?



Community Service - a vital part of our Mission!

BELOW & RIGHT - Cap Alan Lott and crew engage Idyllwild youngsters in Story Time at the Idyllwild Public Library. The "boys in blue" love these public service opportunities.



"Thank you for recruiting and employing such an excellent group of firefighters. Captain Adam Rodriguez, Engineer Jim Lamont, Firefighter Nelson Escovar, and Firefighter Rusty Bray were great representatives of the standards and training you hold in your organization. I appreciate their hard work and effort during our stint on this strike team."

Riverside City Fire, Battalion Chief, Tony Perna in a letter regarding the Calaveras County Fire to IFPD Fire Chief, Patrick Reitz Sept 29, 2015



BELOW - IFPD crew, led by Capt Jack Peckham, use the aerial ladder

truck to assist Ken Dahleen with taking down the Summer Concert stage super-structure, getting in some valuable aerial truck operations training in the process.



RIGHT - Our intrepid newsletter editor, Engineer Paramedic Adam Rodriguez took time to shoot photos for this issue while leading IFPD's strike team.



BELOW - Capt. Mark Lamont (R), and Firefighter/Engineer Bob Clark (L), accept a donated chainsaw from Idyllwild resident Rick Foster, who no longer needed it.



LEFT - Hannah Stillely, 9, of Riverside, made a FireHouse Diarama from a shoe box while visiting her Idyllwild grandparents. Capt. Alan Lott (front-L), Engineer Paramedic Jim Lamont (R), and Reserves Trent Garrison & Dane Smith examine the



IFPD Open House 2015

Winter Note (continued from page 2)

Being prepared at home helps everyone! We are a very strong, self-sufficient community. Our fire personnel, fire chief, paramedics, and EMT's are exceptional. We are blessed with trained partners in Mountain Disaster Preparedness (MDP), Mountain Community Patrol (MCP), and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The Mile High Radio Club (MHRC) provides impeccable communications assistance. Our community's resilience got us through many challenges and together, helping one another, we'll weather this El Nino season.

May each and every one of you be abundantly blessed and enjoy a peaceful, love filled holiday season.

How can I help
my town be safe
this Holiday
Season?



Holiday Message from Idyllwild Fire Protection District Fire Chief, Patrick Reitz



It's that time of year again - time for the hustle & bustle of the holidays, as well as longer nights and shorter days and challenging weather and road conditions. I'd like to offer some thoughts on how you can be safe and secure this Holiday Season.

EL NINO

Much has been said about the potential effects of the El Nino that has developed in the Pacific Ocean. Are you ready for what could come as a result of the El Nino? There is the possibility of a great deal of rain and at our elevations that rain could be in the form of heavy, wet snow. Here on the Hill that could mean rushing water, mud, rock and debris slides, falling tree branches and whole trees themselves, downed power lines, and damaged roads. You need to be prepared for the possibility of long power outages and reduced ability to get up and down the mountain. This means that if you do not already have supplies laid in, you may not be able to get them when an emergency strikes.

PREPAREDNESS

Mountain Disaster Preparedness (MDP) has been helping the Hill get prepared for years. Have you been listening? Have you taken action to actually get ready? Don't be one of those people who think that it can't happen to them or that someone will always be there to help them when disaster strikes. Help yourself & get prepared now! The American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are just two of the many web sites available to help you. Both have information available, including supply lists on their web sites, which are linked to one another.

FIREPLACE & WOODSTOVE SAFETY

With cold weather here that could last into April, more of you are using wood stoves and fireplaces. Remember to regularly clean and inspect the chimneys and stovepipes. Do not burn trash, wrapping paper, or your Christmas tree once you are done with it. **DO NOT DUMP ASHES ON THE GROUND OR INTO NON-METAL CONTAINERS! DO NOT KEEP DISPOSED ASHES IN THE HOUSE OR ON A WOOD DECK!** Even a small, hot coal can start a house or forest fire.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

If you have not yet purchased and installed a Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detector, do so – NOW! It could save your life – it did mine. I had a plugged screen that caused furnace exhaust to back-up into the house. The smoke detector never sounded. Why? Because it wasn't smoky – the house was full of CO. With a 99.4% accuracy rating, this is not an alarm sounding because someone burnt some toast - CO Detectors don't work like that. There is a problem that could be life threatening and you need to respond appropriately.

If your CO detector activates, evacuate the building and call 9-1-1!

VEHICLE & DRIVING SAFETY

Remember to clean off your car windows, lights and turn signals, *all of them*, of frost and snow - **before you drive!** I am always amazed at how many people can't see because they did not clean off their car windows. Get a good ice scraper, a good pair of windshield wipers, and have your car's defroster system in good working order. Make sure that *all* of your lights, exterior & interior, work correctly. Use your turn signals – **before you turn** - to avoid rear-end collisions and receiving annoying honking and hand gestures from other drivers.

This time of year is it important to also have extra food, water, blankets, flashlights, etc. in the car as well for winter travel. Do not forget to carry chains or cable chains when driving in the mountains, and know how to use them correctly. Practice in your driveway **before** you need to use them.



SPECIAL HOLIDAY REMINDERS

Remember this holiday season to keep all combustibles away from heat sources and use only UL approved lights, adapters, and cords. Do not overload adapters and cords. And if you drink, do so in moderation and **always** have a designated driver. Ask any of our firefighters how many traffic collisions they respond to that involve drinking and driving. This time of year with the many parties and family gatherings people attend and with potentially slick roads, the chance of having an alcohol-related accident rises dramatically. Don't become another statistic, please!

GIVE!

While there is a lot going on this time of year, please do not forget those less fortunate. The District is a partner in the Spark of Love Toy Drive and encourages all to drop off a new or gently used toy at IFPD or in one of the collection boxes around town so that those children in need can also have a Merry Christmas!

BE INFORMED

If you live here, work here, play here, pay taxes here, are a visitor staying a while or are just passing through, then you are one of the many folks the Idyllwild Fire Protection District Board, Staff, Volunteers, and I, myself, are serving. You have a stake in all that takes place that may affect the operation and delivery of services from the IFPD. Remember - rumors, innuendoes, quotes taken out of context, & mis-information abound. If you want to know what is happening with your Fire District, I would encourage you to contact me and/or the Board members with your questions, comments, concerns, and ideas. I would further encourage you to attend the Board meetings of the IFPD and assist us in making this a better place for all. Why? Because the IFPD conducts its business in public, and it's my job to ensure that you, the public, get the facts about what your Fire District is doing with your tax dollars.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you need non-emergency transport by ambulance, you can request IFPD to transfer you by ambulance?

And, you do not need to be a resident of Idyllwild or even in Idyllwild to request IFPD for this service. IFPD can help you with ambulance transport to and from the hospital, skilled nursing facility, rehab center, or assisted living facility. We can even take you door-to-door for doctor visits when you are not ambulatory. Costs can usually be paid by your medical insurer for these trips, if required by your doctor.

Contact IFPD to learn more - **951-659-2153**

Patrick Reitz



IFPD's Organizational Structure

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS - elected biennially, serve 4 years. Sets policy and oversees the work of the Fire Chief.

FIRE CHIEF - supervises the work of the personnel and implements policy as established by the Board. In charge of Operations and Administration for the District.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - Chief's Assistant & Board Recorder, responsible for administrative work of the District.

SHIFT CAPTAINS - responsible for responses to calls for fire and medical emergencies and medical transports. Supervise the work and training of subordinate staff. IFPD Shift Captains must be paramedic certified.

ENGINEERS - responsible for maintenance of all apparatus and equipment. Must be EMT or paramedic certified. Supervise subordinate staff.

FIREFIGHTERS - responsible for fire suppression and EMS-related duties during emergency response calls. Must be EMT or paramedic certified. At this time, all but one are Paramedics, with that person currently studying for his Paramedic certification.

RESERVES - one Reserve works each day, to make up a full 4-person crew. Reserves must be EMT certified and complete their FF1 (Firefighter-1) certification within 18 months of hire. Reserves have many of the same responsibilities as their Career counterparts and are welcome to apply and test for open Career positions.

VOLUNTEERS - Idyllwild Volunteer Fire Company 621 and the IFPD Auxiliary volunteers support the District with various projects, including emergency staffing and phone coverage, administrative assistance, and fundraising.

View From The Top by Jerry Buchanan, IFPD Commission President

Do You Get What You Pay For?

From time to time we all hear or read statements that may seem plausible, however, when put under today's information microscope, they just don't meet the truth test. One such recent statement was that Idyllwild residents "don't get what you pay for" from IFPD.

The *truth* is that for a budget of \$1,689,000 the community of Idyllwild is provided with quick response, full emergency services that include fire protection and medical aid 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, including ambulance transport. This service is provided by highly trained personnel who provide paramedic and fire services at all hours of the day and night.

Over 30 years ago, the Board of IFPD recognized that the majority of IFPD calls are medical in nature. As a result, the Department organized itself with constant staffing of 3 shifts of 4 personnel that provides coverage of at least 2 Paramedics and 2 EMT's every day, 24 hours a day. Currently all but one of the Department's full time career staff, are paramedics.

Who do you want taking you down the Hill on an hour-long ride in the back of an ambulance when your having a heart attack, stroke or seri-

ously broken bone? I want the most qualified and caring professionals available, don't you? Our career staff are trained to operate all of our equipment. And, we have two 4-wheel-drive ambulances that can roll at the same time, when needed, and a third in reserve.

The County's REMS (Emergency Medical Services) Directors have on more than one occasion noted that IFPD has the best overall response times in the County. The Department responds to every call with the equipment and personnel necessary to provide the needed services. The Department is self-sufficient and, because of its staffing, is able to handle the vast majority of calls without outside aid. However, because we understand that we cannot operate in a vacuum, we do work closely with other State and Local authorities to better serve the Hill.

When we have a fire, Cal Fire is available to assist, just as we are for them when called. For example, this year, we provided equipment and personnel to assist in a number of major fires throughout the state. These mutual aid assignments help to keep our personnel sharp and well trained. Our crews get very good reviews when working side by side with outside agencies.

Closer to home, we continue to provide back-up coverage for CalFire and AMR, as they do for us. Although we are called on to back them up for much more often than they are to back us up.

But, back to the original contention

of whether our taxpayer citizens get what they pay for with Idyllwild Fire Protection District. We currently accomplish all I've described here through our base property tax rate, a parcel tax of \$65 a year, and funds collected for ambulance transports. The base tax rates fall under Prop 13 and the parcel tax has not had an increase in 10 years.

Because of the extremely tight budget, firefighter salaries and benefits were reduced 4 years ago and have still not been increased. Our salary's are currently 35% below the average of other fire departments in the County, not including Riverside County Fire / Cal Fire for which we're still trying to validate current numbers.

The District struggles every year with funding the necessary services you ask for. IFPD's budget is usually near the bottom of the scale, when compared with others in the county and beyond. IFPD continues to provide excellent services with well trained personnel at a low cost. I, for one, believe that we get great value for each taxpayer dollar we receive. However, the cost of the providing these services continues to increase and very soon we taxpayers will need to pay more to maintain this level of outstanding service. In the meantime, I am thankful for all Idyllwild Fire Protection District gives us, which allows many of us to continue living healthy, safe lives on the Hill.

Introducing...

... our newest probationary Firefighter/Paramedic, Eddie Apodaca. Eddie first came to IFPD through the paramedic college internship program. The Idyllwild Fire Protection District provides college students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience while finishing the academic portions of school in preparation for becoming a licensed paramedic. "I immediately liked this place," Eddie recalls about his first trips reporting for duty in Idyllwild, "and I felt extremely fortunate to be being trained by such highly skilled and experienced professionals."

Eddie was not new to the Fire Service, either. He spent eight years working as a firefighter on an engine and on the Del Rosa Hotshot crew with the United States Forest Service. While Eddie was finishing his paramedic internship, he began to see a potential future in Idyllwild. "As my experience broadened and I began meeting the people of Idyllwild, I thought how fortunate I would be to someday serve this community." Due to his paramedic capabilities as well as his firefighting experience, Eddie was a prime candidate for the Reserve program at the IFPD and was hired as such shortly after completing his Paramedic internship in May, 2014.

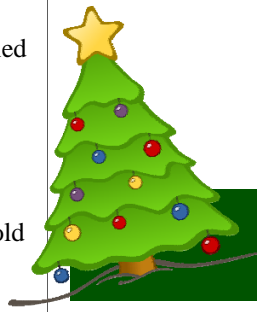
Eddie's dreams of being a firefighter started as a curious five year old living in Irvine watching fire trucks speed by with their lights blazing and sirens wailing. His curiosity turned into a calling while he was helping family and neighbors evacuate their homes during the 2003 Old Fire that burned over 90,000 acres through the mountains of San Bernardino. That fire destroyed 993 homes and caused six deaths. Eddie recalls, "After that experience, I realized this was the career I wanted."

As a Reserve, he applied for a full time Firefighter/Paramedic position that became available here at the beginning of this year and was hired into the Career Firefighter ranks. He's nearly finished working through his one-year probationary period as a new Firefighter/Paramedic for IFPD. "My favorite part about working for the IFPD is the strong sense of family and the people of this community who are so friendly and supportive." Eddie is still in awe at times. "People here feel secure with us and often call directly for help. For non-emergency calls that's nice and a quality you don't get with other fire departments. We do want them to dial 9-1-1 for emergencies, though."

Firefighter/Paramedic Eddie Apodaca is 38 years old and currently lives in Corona, CA with his wife, Aubrey, and two young sons, Eddie Jr. and Evan. "I feel that all the years I spent fighting wildland fires gave me a good foundation to effectively serve this mountain community of Idyllwild. I am proud to be part of the IFPD and hope to have the pleasure and absolute honor of serving you for many years to come."



Firefighter Paramedic Eddie Apodaca



Who Do You Call?

by Fire Chief Patrick Reitz

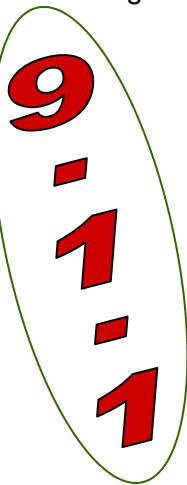
When you have an emergency, the only number you should call is 9-1-1! Calling any other number can delay getting the help you need.

Q: Why not call the Fire Station direct or go there if you're having medical emergency or need to report another kind of emergency?

A: While the Idyllwild Fire Station is staffed 24-hours a day, 365 days a year, **it is possible that the personnel are not in the station** to answer the phone or door at the moment you call or go there. Then you'd now have to make another phone call and wait additional time for the units to be dispatched. Minutes count! **Seconds may count!**

IFPD cares about you, your health, and well-being.

If you are reporting an emergency – call 9-1-1!!



If you have suggestions on how we can improve the IFPD newsletter, have an idea for a story you think would be interesting to our readers, or would like to donate to the fund that pays for it, contact the Editor at adamrodriguez@idyllwildfire.com

STATION LOCATED AT: 54160 Maranatha Dr,
Idyllwild
(cross streets - Lower Pine Crest & Hwy 243)

BUSINESS OFFICE: 951-659-2153

FIRE CHIEF: Patrick Reitz
chief@idyllwildfire.com

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Sherry Ann Wayne
sherry@idyllwildfire.com

WEBSITE: www.idyllwildfire.com

EMERGENCIES: CALL 9-1-1

Idyllwild Fire Protection District is a **California Special District**, governed by a Board of (5) five elected Commissioners. The **Commission meets monthly**, on the 4th Tuesday at 1:00pm in the Training/Conference Room at the Idyllwild Fire Station. The **Standing Finance Committee** regularly meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 2:00 PM at the Fire Station. The **agendas** for both the Commission and Standing Committees' regular meetings are **posted on our website and on the bulletin board** just outside the front door of the Fire Station. **Minutes and reports are available** following each meeting. The **public is welcome** at these meetings to listen and learn about the management of your local Fire Department and offer brief comments on the proceedings.