



# MESCAL-J6 FIRE DISTRICT

448 N. Warren Rd. Benson, AZ 85602

Phone (520)586-4690 Fax (520)586-8598

Fire Chief Report

March 2025

Presented at April 2025 Board Meeting

Incidents as of 3/31/2025: 47 total; fire (5); EMS (30); other (12). Mutual aid received -2 given -1. Total for 2025 – 131 ; 2024-127– up 4 calls.

Hazard Mitigation Collections: \$2300 collected in and deposited since the last Board meeting. Poaaiwce Twelve calls still in cue with over \$14K still working on. **\$18,000 collected FY2025. Compared: FY2024-\$873.00**

Apparatus:

Wrote CDS grant for two frontline EMS/Rescue vehicles with appropriate equipment. These trucks would be amongst those utilized for different rescues and EMS. This month alone we were dispatched at least 4 times to Happy Valley for either reported medical or actual rescues/injury accidents Frontline Pumper: \$13,000 total cost for rebuilding of motor.

We have at least two water supplies secured N of the railroad tracks. We have Love's to E and our well to W. Mr V. from J-6/Red Hawk has graciously allowed use of the hydrant S of I-10, so we are better than before with regards to a bit of redundancy.

Projects:

Repeater: The repeater issue is moving forward. We will be completing a test of coverage in early May. Based on this, and what the cost/benefit ratio looks like between how much it improves our coverage vs what TEP would be charging us per year, further decisions will be made. We will, if determined that we move forward have to do a FCC test to determine if our wavelengths would interfere with anyone else's From there, we would begin the process of moving repeater. Bluespan has agreed to provide cables and an antenna, effectively reducing MJ6FD costs by a minimum of \$10K.

Mobile radios: Checked for SWR and we found two were blown...one in Chief vehicle and the other on BR171. Ordered new for brush truck and will be putting in reserve into chief vehicle.

Helipad: Thank you to board member Nervik for his work on the helipad. The last steps were electrical, required lighting and signage. Project is complete. I will be sending SSVEC an official memo of what projects we would like to accomplish with the remaining \$6K out of the original \$10K grant.

Strategic plan: Done and out to printer. 50 copies to be distributed. The plan is to also put it online and goal is to try to have two external stakeholders' meetings to discuss and inform.



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We have been working with board member Nervik to donate old airpicks to Caborca, Mexico. A donation spreadsheet was created, necessary paperwork done and Mr. Nervik will be taking donated airpicks to his contact. All appropriate paperwork, hold-harmless documentation, etc will be done. Also, we will be looking to donate our useable old WL clothing.

We have a new Mission Statement, again taking the external and internal stakeholders' thoughts into high consideration it now reads:

***"Our mission is to protect life and property while enhancing the well-being of those we serve through strength, integrity and relentless commitment."***

Our motto is: *"Serving with relentless commitment"*

Activities:

New programs on Facebook site:

Firefighter 3- a caricature to help deliver education with the outcome that people remember: "These Three Things", which is usually what people can come away with that will stick in memory.

Chiefly Speaking- a way to communicate when the Fire Chief has a message.

Coming soon: "DID YOU KNOW?"- This program will help deliver education surrounding the district such as DID YOU KNOW that we ran 600 calls for service last year? Etc...

We will be standing up our Instagram site soon and possibly a YouTube channel.

All the above are designed to assist in improving External Stakeholder Communications, which is one of the 6 main areas of our strategic plan.

Attended CCEMS/CCFCA meetings. Chief Buonacorsi from Palominas is retiring. New officers elected. We are hosting the next meetings on 3/26.

I will be attending ASDA/CC training on budgeting, cash flow management, etc in April. I am hoping to raise my level of knowledge in this area as we begin to create what will be the first budget this board and Fire Chief have created.



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Capt Olander and I have met online twice for the 'onboarding' of the new ESO reporting platform. This move should have occurred last year but was not completed. ESO bought out ER, which is our current EMS/FIRE/Other calls documentation software. It also houses all our history on each apparatus, training records, etc. A contract was originally signed in '23, with that year being \$0 cost, this year moving to 50% or approx. \$3200, and now we are due to pay the regular subscription rate of \$6400. We have reviewed what the system does for us and must recommend that we continue at this time. We have a lot of data in the system to assist us with making decisions, we must have the ability to upload into NFIRS (soon to convert to NERIS), as well as NEMSIS, which are the two main national databases for fire and ems responses, and ESO does it automatically for us. We keep track of ALL dept training that is done (not just Lexipol). Lexipol only keeps track of what is taught in Lexipol, and we do so much more as well as training that is relevant to our district and our mutual aid partners. The board voted last month to move to ERInsurance. This module in Lexipol is now included free and we are not losing it by having two systems. However, we will need to do our best to get up to speed on policies/procedures we wish to glean out of Lexipol before June 25, when it would be due to renew that part of their platform, to the tune of about \$4000. If we can get it done, we can save that money also.

I had a lengthy meeting with Elizabeth from MAC and we went over budget concerns. It appears all is tracking well and concerns raised do not appear to be a factor. The influx of tax dollars as compared with expenses coming due, do not always line up directly. We are meeting weekly now until the end of fiscal to ensure we are on top of subject. We rely on our professionals that have lots of letters after their names to be up to speed and date of current, best practices. They are continuously receiving education and training in their respective fields the same as our FF do.

I attended a webinar about website accessibility. It was hosted by AASD, which you will remember we were a founding member of. The subject matter was the Federal Mandate within the ADA laws, set to take effect April 27. It was STRONGLY suggested that no one sit on their hands with this one. It is about making sure that those who are hard of seeing or blind be able to access all documents Districts put on their websites. Documents will need to be "remediated" by types of software to ensure this is done, done correctly and within the new laws. We will begin looking into this and it will become part of our strategic plan moving forward. Currently there are no grants fitting this work, but it's possible there will be some moving forward. It can be pricey to hire a company to do it, with figures such as \$1K/mo plus \$6-7/per pg remediated. Much more to come on this. We will be watching CO as they are the 'guinea pig' state for roll out in next month or so.

Mr. Temple, Mr Nervik and I have been working on the roll out of the Zoom platform. I took a tutorial, and feel a bit more comfortable. However, if we are going to set up Zoom for our meetings, it will take a bit of work, as it cannot be a board member who runs it at the meeting. It must be someone who has requisite knowledge and is strictly focused on making sure attendees are taken care of. We have two individuals who have stepped up to assist in this area: Tamara and Jasmine. They will be taking care of



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the in-meeting issues. Utilization of Zoom was passed and is in the Dec minutes and it has been purchased (\$160/yr). We just need this final, but important step, and we'll be able to make it happen. It is our goal to have it in place for the April meeting provided we find an individual capable and acceptable.

Capt Olander and I met with Cheryl from GIS concerning properties on our southwest and northwest areas who have not been updated in the Pima County GIS system, causing "pinging" back and forth between SEACOM, Benson Dispatch and Pima County dispatch. This can and has resulted in delayed dispatch times. We have agreed to what we already have had in place and now since all the fire chief are on the same set of music, it is our hope that PC GIS will update these ESBs in their dispatching criteria, reducing this potential delayed time to emergency assistance.

Mr. Temple and I have met with Victoria who assists with our website and now I have ability to send basic messages in case of urgent or emergent need. We also set the refresh to 5 min so it can post the three most recent messages. These and the potential Nextdoor app will bring our residents more immediate information to help ensure they know of and how to respond in the event of a more major emergency.

## Grant Activities

GOHS grant is in. The cycle closed on Mar 7, 2025. We are asking for lighter, electrically driven extrication equipment. There are numerous benefits to this including: reduced weight, resulting in one person being able to carry and potentially operate, resulting in decreased chance of back or other injuries. More power in spreaders and cutters, potentially decreasing extrication time, which in turn decreases time to surgical care, which then leads to very impactful results in patient outcomes as it pertains to the "Golden Hour". We are trying for RAMs and air bags, both of which our current ones are not reliable and are heavy, cumbersome and one person cannot move without risk of injury. Spoke with GOHS, will hear on award no earlier than September.

NVFC-Nutella Grant written for 6- scene lights. The number one statistical injury on the emergency scene is sprains and strains. To reduce the potential for these injuries, we have written for the lighter extrication tools, and also these light, but powerful lights, which will illuminate the scene and allow personnel to see better where they are stepping, setting up gear, etc. It is estimated that a single serious FF back injury can now be expected to cost over \$250K. Because our personnel on scene are limited in numbers, having this type of equipment is a good risk reduction addition. These lights will also operate on the same batteries that our extrication tools do, making it more efficient as well.

I've also written to be one of 140 fire departments/districts across the country to receive all the fixings for a pancake breakfast. We'll see if we win.....



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DFFM (wildland) grant has been received and is being set up in spreadsheet, issued to personnel and a specific file created for all items pertaining. This is a matching grant and if awarded, we will match \$2700, sometime in mid-April.

The AFG grant has been submitted, but all grants are on hold due to DOGE activity. We wrote for structural PPE to replace those going out of timed service in 2025. We are hopeful this will be awarded, and our match will be in the \$700 range.

We will then again *consider* writing for the SAFER grant, asking to fund most likely between 3-6 personnel IF it reopens.

We will be looking to write (if opened) a Fire Prevention and Safety grant (FPS) to conduct a CRA-SOC. This stands for Community Risk Assessment-Standards of Cover. It results in a document that plays together with a Strategic Plan. WE WILL ONLY BE DOING THIS IF WE GET A GRANT. It will cost approximately \$12K. It would be a huge tool to be able to make data-driven decisions. More to come....

I attended two grant seminars put on by Senators Kelley and Gallegos' offices. I will be meeting with their staff to see if our needs can meet the grant rules, etc.

I have had a meeting with Lisa Ritter from Rescue Me Wellness, Inc, a provider of FF health programs. I am expecting a packet on costs soon. Finally, I am working with GTFF on assistance for physicals and cancer screening for our FF. At this point I do not have any firm numbers, costs or what would be expected of MJ6FD. It is critical that we move in this direction for our personnel's health and well-being. How often, which portions of a 1582 physical, etc still need discussed. More to come.....

I instructed (gratis) an Incident Safety Officer course on March 18 &19. Captain Olander attended. All indications are that the course was well received.

END