



# SUNSTITES-PEARCE FIRE DISTRICT

SERVING RESIDENTS OF THE SUNSITES-PEARCE FIRE DISTRICT,  
AND NEIGHBORING COCHISE COUNTY

Mailing Address: PO Box 507, 105 TRACY ROAD PEARCE, AZ 85625

PHONE: (520) 826-3645 FAX: (520) 826-3586

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## Fire Chief's Report for September 15, 2020

1. **EMS Calls= 40**
  - A. In District Calls= 23
  - B. Out of District Calls= 17
  - C. Number of Patients Transported= 28 (plus one by HCI and 2 by Elfrida)
  - D. Number of Patients Flown Out= 1
  - E. Number of Patient Refusals =9
  - F. Number of Mutual Aid Given Calls= 1 (HCI for I10 MCI)
  - G. Number of Mutual Aid Received Calls= 5 (HCI-1, Elfrida 4)
  - H. Number of Dead on Arrival Calls= 0
  
2. **Fire, Service and Good intent Calls = 24**
  - A. In District Calls= 12
  - B. Out of District Call= 12
  - C. Wildland Fires = 8 (Porch Light, Rock Creek, Sixty Six Peak, Dove, Salt, Griffin, CA North Complex, CA August Complex)
  - D. Structure Fires= 0
  - E. Car Fires= 1 (Union Pacific)
  - F. Hazardous Materials= 2 (Sunsites and Kansas Settlement)
  - G. Good Intent= 4
  - H. Service Calls=9
  - I. Mutual Aid Given Calls=0
  - J. Mutual Aid Received Calls= 0
  - K. Prescribed burns=0
  - L. Motor Vehicle Crashes= 3 (I-10 one and Hwy 191-two)

**Total Fire and EMS Calls year to date are 495. Total calls since 0800 August 18, 2020 are 64.**

### Training:

1. Fire training: On duty crews have been completing on shift training. These sessions included: regular service checks of apparatus and equipment, and physical fitness training.
2. EMS training: On duty crews completed on shift training. These activities included: regular checks of ambulances, EMS supplies, equipment, and medications; continued review of standing orders and report writing best

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practices. We held one group EMS session with our staff and instructors from Air Evac, covering sepsis and resuscitation.

3. We will continue to provide access to virtual training opportunities, and some small group training activities where prudent and possible. Our training budget remains curtailed as part of addressing the overall annual budget shortfall.
4. We have suspended controlled burn activity due to air quality concerns, fire safety concerns, and budget shortfall.

## **Wildland:**

1. We currently have one engine and one utility vehicle assigned to fires in California. We have had a total of 8 wildland assignments since the last meeting. We have a total of \$45,727.12 in open bills with Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM).

## **Out of District Services:**

1. We currently have a balance of \$60,180.00 for the outstanding services that have been provided outside of the district boundaries since 2013. Of the out of district services provided, eight incidents, with a total of \$20,401.43 are in collections. Total unpaid balance that is not in collections is \$39,778.57.

## **Emergency Medical Services:**

July total billings were \$39,006.38. August total billings were \$47,207.25. September billings to date are \$22,807.29.

## **Hazardous Materials:**

1. We responded to one carbon monoxide alarm in Sunsites and one natural gas leak in Kansas Settlement.

## **Maintenance**

1. P-30 received one new tire to replace one with sidewall damage.

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## Communication:

1. Cochise County Health Department: Please visit the County website for daily Covid-19 updates (<https://covid-cochisehealth.hub.arcgis.com/>).

Active case numbers in Cochise County continue to decrease. We continue to have several active cases in Sunsites, so everyone is urged to continue taking precautions like handwashing, social distancing, wearing masks, avoiding crowds, and staying home when sick. We expect another surge in cases to begin next month.

The National Guard is planning a free testing clinic at the Sunsites Community Center on September 20, 3pm to 7pm. Gathering community testing data is an important part of identifying outbreaks when they are small, and keeping them contained, so if you can participate, please do.

Cochise County is also planning on several community flu vaccine clinics in October. Procedures for these clinics will be used as models for when we have a Covid-19 vaccine available. It is important to keep the number of flu cases as small as possible, because contracting any respiratory illness makes you disposed to contracting other respiratory illnesses, and increases your chance of dying young.

2. Grants:

-100 Club: submitted for the \$6000/100% for two turnout sets approved last meeting.

-Firehouse Subs: submitted for the grant request for \$30,000/ 100% for UTV, with accessories and retrofit modifications, approved at the last meeting.

-Leary Foundation: application process is still in development, with letter of intent submitted for \$25,000/100% for extrication equipment; approved at the last meeting.

-Gary Sinise Foundation: new grant request to duplicate Firehouse Subs grant if unfunded, or to develop a secondary replacement grant. This submission is on the agenda tonight.

-Legacy Foundation for Southern Arizona: new request for turnout extractor; updated request for previously denied grant to Legacy; duplicates previous grant to Pascua Yaqui; this grant is on the agenda for tonight.

-Ak-chin grant follow-up: still waiting for ship date for remainder of defibrillators due the second week of September.

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-AFG grant follow-up: for Wildland Type 3 Engine and radios; currently in award cycle, but no word yet.  
-Gila River follow-up: received letter that process is delayed while they assess impact of pandemic on their casino revenues.

3. Local Emergency Planning Committee report: No new information; next meeting in October.
4. Cochise County Fire Association/ Cochise EMS Association reports: A virtual meeting was held on August 26, 2020. The next meeting will be September 23/virtual meeting.
5. Treasurer's Office: We are continuing to receive assistance from the Treasurer's office for analysis regarding our line-of-credit and income shortfall. We did not finish the year out of our line of credit by June 30, and converted \$144,790.86 to a registered warrant account with Cochise County. Looking ahead, our success in limiting growth in the registered warrant will depend on the rate of Noridian payments, the availability of additional wildland extended assignments, and continued reductions in payroll and maintenance. As of this morning, the registered warrant was at \$236,976.27, an increase of \$16,388.77 since the last meeting.
6. Payroll reduction: We have reached a payroll reduction agreement with operations staff that remains in effect, and reduces base wages by approximately 20%. Nevertheless, payroll remains higher than usual due to peak wildland season assignments.
7. FEMA/ AZ DEMA: We have submitted RFP to FEMA for reimbursement for COVID-19 response related expenses, including the mobile triage shelter set up at the Northern Cochise Community Hospital. We are continuing to seek reimbursement.
8. Medicare- On July 2 Noridian Healthcare Solutions approved our application as an ambulance service supplier effective back to May 1, 2020. We have directed our billing service to re-submit bills from May and June, and moving forward. Since the last meeting we have received notice of approval of some Medicare bills, but that money has not come to our account and has been kept by Medicare as payment on the money they say we owe them from 2013 to 2017. Our attorney has sent a letter to the debt collector requesting a stop to the debt collection while the issue is still in court.

On July 13, Judge Collins handed down a decision from United States District Court that granted in part our motion. The Court has remanded this case to the Administrative Law Judge for

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a limited evidentiary hearing on the advice that Noridian gave the Fire District that it could terminate its business relationship with Chief Steinberg concerning the Medicare application, how that termination worked, and whether the District's billing privileges should be reinstated on this basis.

We do not yet have a court date for the next hearing by the Administrative Law Judge assigned to the case. Our attorney has received attorney communication from CMS to the effect that they would be interested in discussing a settlement offer, if the District made the first offer. This matter is to be discussed in executive session tonight.

9. Surplus Wheelchair van- We have removed lettering from the van, taken photos, and are in the process of preparing a listing on [publicsurplus.com](http://publicsurplus.com).

10. Surplus SUV – this vehicle has received more use on out-of-district wildland assignments than I had foreseen, and has not been listed for sale. The long-term plan still includes selling off older vehicles as part of our budget right-sizing process. But I may have been premature in designating this vehicle, and may ask the Board to re-consider its status at a future meeting.

11. Audit- we are continuing to participate in the audit process with Walker & Armstrong, and have been providing them with documents and phone interviews.

12. Staffing- I have added open postings for part-time employees. My plan is to increase the number of certified employees with local residences available for local fires, to increase the number of employees available for out-of-area assignments, and to be able to flex staffing levels up without expending overtime costs. We have interviewed two applicants, and extended one offer, and one tentative offer depending on successful completion of required training. We have fielded several other inquiries, but have not received additional applications

13. Subscriptions – I provided one publicity letter to Sunsites Community Association for posting on its website to advertise the fire service subscriptions offered by the fire district.

14. Introduce employees on shift.

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