



SUNSTITES-PEARCE FIRE DISTRICT

SERVING RESIDENTS OF THE SUNSTITES-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

Fire Chief's Report for November 16, 2021

1. EMS Calls=32
 - A. In District Calls=18
 - B. Out of District Calls= 14
 - C. Number of Patients Transported= 25 (SPFD-25)
 - D. Number of Patients Flown Out=0
 - E. Number of Patient Refusals =5
 - F. Number of Mutual Aid Given Calls= 0
 - G. Number of Mutual Aid Received Calls=0
 - H. Number of Deceased at scene Calls=2

2. Fire, Service and Good intent Calls = 18
 - A. In District Calls= 11
 - B. Out of District Call= 7
 - C. Wildland Fires =1 (Banning- Bisbee)
 - D. Structure Fires=0
 - E. Car Fires= 1 (private)
 - F. Hazardous Materials= 0
 - G. Good Intent/ false alarm=3
 - H. Service Calls=12
 - I. Rescue/extrication=0
 - J. Mutual Aid Given Calls=1 (HCI-1 standby)
 - K. Mutual Aid Received Calls= 0
 - L. Prescribed burns=0
 - M. Motor Vehicle Crashes= 3-(all on Hwy 191)

Total Fire and EMS Calls 2021 year to date are 582. Total calls since October 19 are 50.

Training:

1. Fire training: We are planning a joint program with San Simon FD for basic wildland training, tentative for November 20.
2. EMS training: We held one group EMS session with our staff and outreach representatives from Air Evac, covering medication calculations and respiratory treatments. Staff also attended a multi-day virtual training hosted at Sierra Vista Fire and Medical.

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Wildland:

1. We have no apparatus assigned out of area. We have a total of \$20,492.26 in open bills with Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) submitted in October and November.

Out of District Services:

1. We currently have a balance of \$61,135.19 for the outstanding services that have been provided outside of the district boundaries since 2015. 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 \$40,733.43.

Emergency Medical Services:

Total billings since July 1 are \$170,393.33, with \$55,053.54 received. We are averaging 24 billable transports per month.

This month we wrote off \$607,492.56 in previous Medicare billing from prior to May 2020. As a result, the over 120 days ambulance accounts receivable will show a dramatic decrease.

Hazardous Materials and Technical Rescue:

1. Captain Garner participated in the quarterly County team drill on November 5 at Fry Fire District.
2. We are assisting Douglas FD with integrating some of their employees into the County TRT program.

Maintenance

1. No major repairs this month.

Communications:

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

Cochise County is still adding 300-400 new cases every week.

Vaccines are available to everyone five years old and up. As of November 15, Cochise County has vaccinated with at least one dose 75,448 people, about 57.7% of the population.

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2. Grants/ follow-up.
Changes since the last meeting include:
 - Received award from Pascua Yaqui Tribe for wildland firefighting packs (\$4,000); we are waiting for one final pack delivery to complete that order.
 - Received award from Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation for wildland/ medical response UTV and trailer (\$28,430.40); purchase order has been placed with delivery around January 1. We also are arranging related operator safety training for January.
 - Submitted application to Leary Firefighter Foundation for new vehicle extrication equipment (\$14,500); they have advised that their decision process is being extended due to the large number of applicants.
 - On September 12, Cochise County Board of Supervisors accepted on our behalf a grant from the Gila River Indian Community in the amount of \$88,919.00 for purchase of a new Type 6 wildland engine. We have encountered an obstacle with the chassis order; Ram has announced that they will not be filling any government contract 5500 series vehicles in 2022; staff is researching what other options may be available.
 - Ak-Chin Indian Community has notified us of their grant reward to us for \$198,132 for purchase of a new ambulance; accepting this award is on our agenda tonight and on the Board of Supervisors agenda for November 30; disbursement is expected for January 2022.
3. Treasurer's Office: We are continuing to receive assistance from the Treasurer's office regarding our line-of-credit and income shortfall. Currently our registered warrants are at 0, and we have enough funds in the M & O to pay off the Noridian / Medicare debt. Our ability to avoid future use of registered warrants will depend on the success in limiting payroll and other expenses, and the continuing increase of ambulance revenue.
4. Medicare- On November 5, Theresa Pachel at Noridian advised us of an updated amount of \$103,029.10 still owed to Noridian for excess payments and interest. Payoff of this debt is on tonight's agenda.
5. Surplus equipment follow-up:
We have identified Sunnyside Fire District as a recommended destination for certain of our older firefighting gear, and as a conduit for donation of certain other gear to volunteer agencies in Mexico. This donation is on the agenda tonight.
6. Staffing- No changes this month. We still have one open fulltime paramedic position.

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7. Community events/ support:

- We participated in the Halloween trunk-o-treat event at the Sunsites VFW on October 31.
- we provided first responder standby services at the Amerind Foundation on October 23.
- The October 21 fire prevention visit to Ash Creek was postponed, with date to be determined.
- Voters approved renewal of the property tax assessment supporting the Northern Cochise Community Hospital District. This vote was important for the hospital's financial stability, and for supporting critical operations and maintenance.

8. Policy review follow-up:

- I still anticipate a need for the Board to consider implementing a District policy mandating Covid-19 vaccinations for employees. Such a mandate is complicated by wide-spread resistance by most of our employees. Additionally, federal rulemaking on this matter is complicated by document complexity, as well as several court challenges and stays.

On November 5 CMS published an interim final rule requiring mandatory vaccines for most Medicare and Medicaid certified providers. This rule does not clearly include or exclude EMS ambulance services; it does have a 60-day comment period which may clarify the intent. Additionally, a broader federal directive applies to all federal employees and contractors, and I am not aware of any clarification as to how that requirement applies to cooperators, both for reimbursement for wildland assignments, and for distribution of federal grants. Finally, on November 5, OSHA released an Emergency Temporary Standard requiring a vaccination or testing option for employers with greater than 100 employees; this ETS was suspended by US Court of Appeals on November 12.

The Fire District, along with other fire and EMS agencies nationally, remains under the provisions of the COVID-19 Healthcare ETS that OSHA issued in June, and updated most recently in November. This ETS does not have a vaccination mandate, but it does specify various procedures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, including rules about masking, cleaning, isolating and quarantining, and it encourages vaccination of employees.

This issue is on the agenda tonight for Board discussion.

9. Cash flow projection summary (estimated November)–

Payable: \$182,000

Receivable: \$187,600

Current (today) registered warrants: \$0

End of November registered warrants projected: \$0.

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Receivables are higher due to the Gila River grant award and November tax collections. Payables are higher due to the VFIS insurance premium and Noridian payoff.

Looking ahead to December, we can predict an average month for expenses, and posting of the remainder of the fall tax collection cycle.

Looking to last year, on 10/31/2020 the registered warrant was \$153,657. On November 30 it was \$5,826. We do not anticipate any need for using registered warrants for the remainder of the quarter. But it is important to remember that approximately \$119,000 of the M & O account is restricted to awarded grant expenditures.

11. Pension Board: We still have one vacancy for a community member who is not an employee or board member. Also, new state legislation signed this year is requiring additional training for pension board members effective beginning of 2022.

12. Audit- Walker & Armstrong Staff have completed the audit. It is on tonight's agenda.

13. Cochise County Fire Station Alerting Project- We are participating in grant development for a county-wide project that will upgrade the technology used to communicate 911 information from the SEACOM dispatch center to the various fire agencies. This project may take several years, and will be on a future agenda as more specific information is available.

14. *Introduce employees on shift.*