



P.O. Box 634
Albion, CA 95410

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In the Line of Fire

ARE YOU PREPARED?

A message from the ALRFPD Board President

Hopefully the Kincaid and Paradise fires have concentrated your mind on fire safety. Do you have an escape route planned? Go-bags with essentials like clothing, medication, important documents, and food for your pets are a must. Do you have an agreed upon meet up point? We have information in this newsletter about a new Fire Safe Committee which will help our community plan for fires and disasters like this.

What we've learned from these two fires is that survival depends upon preparedness, similar to the Kincaid fire versus no plan like the Paradise fire. Recent blackouts in our area caught our coastal region flatfooted—I'm sure many of you witnessed incredibly long lines at gas stations, and attempts to purchase gas cans and generators.

We've learned from these two episodes that bad things can *and will* happen in our community and it is up to each and every one of us to prepare.

At this moment, the single greatest risk we face is not clearing at least 100 feet of defensible space around our homes (both rented and owned), and clearing our roadsides (private or County) of brush that limits traffic flow and hinders access for firefighters.

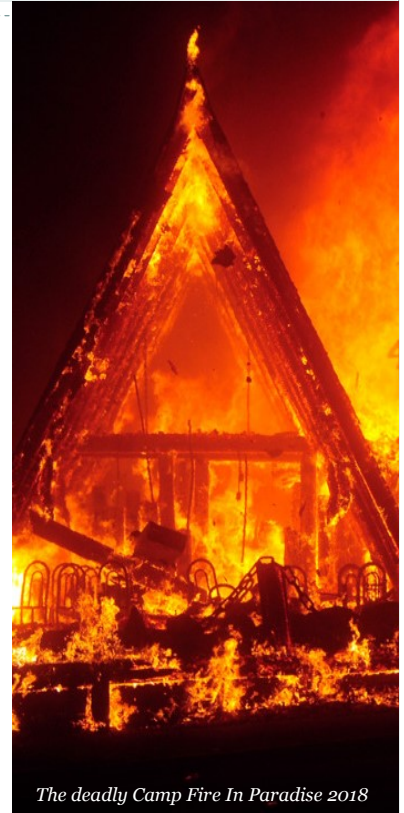
Equally important is to get to know your neighbors and for all of us to watch over and help each other. No government can legislate and enforce these measures effectively; it is up to us.

As I mentioned in our last issue, and you may have noticed, we have begun work on remodeling our Station 810 in the village of Albion. We've located a contractor to raise the roof so we can accommodate the size of our newest rescue and get it protected from the weather. Work is scheduled to be complete before year end, and will allow our rescue to be housed in a central location for both fire response and insurance purposes.

In the meantime, when considering your year end giving, we hope you will consider supporting your local volunteer firefighters and EMS teams with a donation to help us purchase the gear, apparatus and items necessary so they can focus on saving lives and property.

With gratitude,

Chuck Greenberg, President
Albion-Little River Fire Protection District Board of Directors



The deadly Camp Fire In Paradise 2018

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DID YOU KNOW...

That the Albion-Little River Fire Station 810 located behind the grocery store at 33900 West Street in Albion is a relay station for Further Reach, an internet service provider based in Manchester, CA.

The addition of this relay now makes Further Reach internet service available to our community and surrounding areas. Visit their website at furtherreach.net for more information.



CHIEF'S CORNER

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who came to our first community meeting on Fire and Disaster Preparedness. I would also like to thank our volunteer firefighters who assisted with set up and answering questions, our fire auxiliary for providing tasty refreshments, and to Wendy Meyer for providing printed materials and an abundance of clipboards.

For those who were unable to make the meeting, its purpose was to compile resources and concerns from the community, and to start a conversation on how to better prepare ourselves in the event of fire or other large disaster.

We've received a huge response and already members of the community, several large landowners, and Mendocino Redwood Company have come forward to offer resources, skills, equipment, property access and knowledge to help the effort.

We're just starting to digest all the information we gathered at this meeting. As we do this I want to encourage

everyone to reach out to your neighbors and inform them of what their community and neighbors are doing, and encourage their participation. The very first step to creating a plan is awareness and communication.

There were many great ideas brought to the table at this meeting and in particular, I really liked the idea of our distinct neighborhoods being broken into pods with one leader and point of contact. This type of setup will allow us to create our own district-wide communication tree. I'd like to identify more individuals interested in a leadership role, as we put together our follow-up email in the next few weeks.

It's at once exciting and inspiring to see our community working together towards making us all safer from disaster or fire. We hope that day will never come, but we'll be ready if it does.

I have heartfelt gratitude for the members of this tiny hamlet by the sea called Albion-Little River. Thank you! I look forward to working with you all.

Insurance non-renewals grew by more than 10% in seven counties last year

WHAT IS AN ISO RATING AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

ISO stands for Insurance Services Office (ISO), which is an independent, for-profit organization. It scores fire departments on how they are doing against its organizational standards to determine property insurance costs.

The ISO conducts a field survey and scores Fire Departments across four key areas: Emergency Communications Systems, Fire Department Resources, Water Supply and Community Risk Reduction.

Not all of the responsibility for this score falls on the fire department. This score is a community ranking and scores can be improved (and insurance costs reduced) with strong community involvement in Emergency Preparedness.

PROPERTY INSURANCE, WILDFIRES AND NON-RENEWALS

Fire devastation and destruction in California over recent years has demonstrated the severe economic and emotional impact these incidents can wreak on communities. At a recent ALRFPD Board of Directors meeting, our Fire Chief Michael Rees discussed the many calls he received from local residents who had lost their homeowners insurance.

And homeowner's insurance non-renewal is a growing reality. According to The California Department of Insurance, non-renewals are growing in response to wildfire risk by more than 10% over last year in seven counties.

Generally speaking, insurance companies measure risk by using a software with a predetermined algorithm to gauge the risk that you may file a claim against your policy. These algorithms are based on key indicators and measured against a data set to weigh risk. They then balance the insurance company's profitability with your potential need to use the policy. Other factors figure in, such as incidence of disasters in your area, property location, and ISO ratings (also referred to as a fire score or Public Protection Classification, a score from 1 to 10 that indicates how well-protected your community is by the fire department).

California homeowners who have lost their insurance because they live in or adjacent to a wildfire area and have been turned down by other carriers are being forced to obtain insurance through The California Fair Plan Property Association, which provides insurance only as a last resort. But these policies don't cover everything and usually additional, separate policies are needed. It's a big expense and hard to budget - especially when

(Cont'd—see INSURANCE—pg. 3)

REASONS TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER...

When you become a volunteer firefighter for the Albion-Little River Fire Protection District, you'll be surprised to find that there's a lot more to it than fighting fires. As a matter of fact, there's a job for everyone. We have volunteers from ages 18 to 80!

Still not convinced?

For those interested in the nitty gritty of firefighting, we definitely need folks to learn how to extinguish fires. But we also need medical technicians, scribes to document what happens at a scene, folks to direct traffic, and mechanics to help our fire engines and other apparatus stay well maintained. Ever wonder why fire trucks are so shiny? Because there are people to help clean and detail our vehicles.

Do you prefer outside work? We have lawns to mow and grounds to keep.



Maybe you're more inclined to work on the administrative side of the department. Our Administrative Assistant could always use office support—filing, shredding, organizing.

If your energy is more on the creative side, we're always looking for new fundraising ideas and events. Help us make them come to life!

We have a wonderful Auxiliary who is always looking for fresh ideas and ways to improve and support our Fire Department. Perhaps that could be providing refreshment and goodies for community meetings. Enjoy volunteering at our annual Barbeque? Those are the folks who put it on.

Have a skill set on an entirely different level that you feel may benefit the organization? Let us know and we'll make it happen. Call us at (707) 937-4022 or email: office@albionfire.com

“We have volunteers from ages 18 to 80.”

CRV REDEMPTION PROGRAM

by *Debbi Wolfe*

Several years ago, after seeing all the empty water bottles littering the ground after a fire training, I decided to collect them and other redeemable containers and turn them in for cash to benefit the fire department. I started small (from April to June 2015 the revenue totaled \$1,200), but gradually spread the word and increased both interest and participation. In the 4 and a half years this program has run, the department has benefitted by over \$10,000!

Redeeming various containers takes them out of the waste stream and cleans up our local roads where containers land. In addition, it's easy for anyone to contribute toward supporting our local department and firefighters.

Redeemable containers include aluminum beverage cans (soft drink/beer), glass bottles (beer, juice kombucha) and plastic bottles (both individual and larger containers for water and juice).

All containers **MUST** show a label that says CRV or CA REDEMPTION or they are not acceptable. Glass and plastic bottles must have tops removed, however the lids can be included in the bag. Items **NOT** acceptable include plastic milk jugs, wine bottles, other glass containers than those listed above or anything that does not say CRV on the label. Sort redeemables by type (i.e., do not mix aluminum with plastic).

I collect once a month in both Little River and Albion at each fire station and post signs on Hwy 1 and on the Mendocino Community Listserv several days in advance. If you're interested in participating in the Redemption Program, have questions about when and where collections occur or what type of materials are acceptable please contact me directly at debbi.wolfe@gmail.com or call (707) 937-1848.

INSURANCE (cont'd from page 2)

living on a retirement income or minimum wage job.

But on Thursday, December 6, California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara issued a mandatory one-year moratorium on insurance companies non-renewing policyholders - his action the result of SB824, a bill he authored last year as State Senator to give temporary relief to residents living near a declared wildland disaster. Although the law took effect last January, this is the first time it has been invoked. The mandatory one-year moratorium covers 800,000 homes in ZIP codes adjacent to recent wildfire disasters under SB 824, also known as the Wildfire Safety and Recovery Act.

There's much more to the law than this, and homeowners can read about the moratorium as well as find a link to affected zip codes at: <http://www.insurance.ca.gov/0400-news/0100-press-releases/2019/release092-19.cfm>

Those who believe they have been dropped improperly by their insurers can file a complaint online at www.insurance.ca.gov or call 800-927-4357.

FIRE/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING—DECEMBER 10, 2019



The Albion-Little River Fire Protection District hosted an Emergency Preparedness community meeting at the Albion School on Tuesday, December 10.

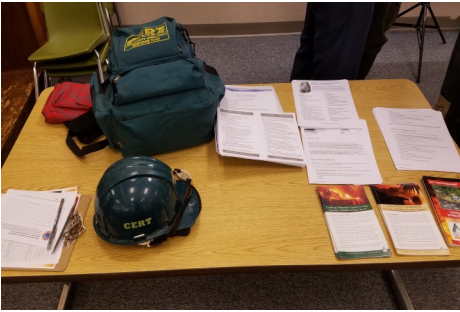
Led by Fire Chief Michael Rees, the purpose of the meeting was to hear the community's questions and concerns about fire danger and to encourage their involvement in organizing the three Ridge communities for evacuation in the event of a fire or other disaster.

Approximately 60 people attended and offered many good ideas. There was a definite "can do" spirit in the room as hands shot up with concerns and suggestions.

Lea Christensen, a new ALRFPD board member, hosted a table focused on CERT training. Jennifer Kreger, MD from Mendocino Coast Healthcare District was on hand to discuss her district's new Hubs and Routes Program. This will identify and map via GIS all area resources available in the event of a disaster when health care services are cut off.

ALRFPD's Auxiliary provided refreshments and snacks.

If you were unable to attend the meeting but are interested in participating in a community-led Fire Safe Council, please email us at office@albionfire.com.



HELP US FIND YOU IN AN EMERGENCY

When it's dark and you need us, we need to be able to find you. ALRFPD recommends that all properties be identified with reflective address signs.

The address signs we recommend (pictured below) are available from SmartSign (smartsign.com) under the heading Property Signs/911 Address Signs. Our preference is for the sign to be horizontal rather than vertical, and the background color is up to you. We recommend the 6" x 18" sign with no additional text (Model K-3342).

For those who want, but can't afford signs, you may be eligible for financial assistance. Contact Debbi Wolfe at debbi@albionfire.com.



WE'RE RAISING THE ROOF!

Construction to upgrade ALRFPD Station 810 (located behind the Albion Grocery Store in Albion Village) began in early December, to accommodate our newer and larger Fire Truck 8130. Despite the wet weather, the job is on schedule to complete in January 2020.



The construction was approved by the ALRFPD Board and involves removing existing trusses except for the rafter and adding new, larger rafters and bolted connections. Truss modifications will be completed prior to Christmas.

The next step in this process will involve modifying the garage opening by replacing the existing door with a taller roll-up door and repairing the existing foundation and walls.

Construction is being supervised by Lee Welty, a professional engineer and board treasurer.



Lea Christensen, Ph.D.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

The Albion-Little River Fire Protection District welcomed Lea Christensen, Ph.D. to the board of directors in November.

Lea holds a Ph.D. in psychology and has extensive experience working in private practice, correctional facilities, school districts, police, sheriff and fire departments and community based organizations. She is a retired U.S. Air Force Captain, has written numerous publications and has taught many university courses from U.C. Davis to Alliant University.

Lea is highly active in Mendocino area communities, and is also currently serving as treasurer of the Community Center of Mendocino's board of directors. She is part of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and has extensive grant writing experience. Lea lives in Little River.

“...his improvements and advancements will benefit everyone in the district for a long time to come”

...Alan Taeger, retired Board Financial Officer

A FIRE DISTRICT FRIEND

Long time board member and former firefighter Michael Issel retired from the ALRFPD Board of Directors on October 1.

“I can't say enough about how deeply Mike investigated and mulled over everything he did for the district,” said retired Board Financial Officer Alan Taeger, when interviewed about his colleague's many accomplishments.



Michael Issel

The short list includes:

1. Helping to streamline and professionalize district meeting procedures and recording keeping, including creating and staffing the district office.
2. Specifying and shepherding procurement of a state of the art Type One fire engine custom designed for ALRFPD .
3. Singlehandedly researched, discovered and pursued lease/purchase financing for the aforementioned engine, allowing the district to maintain its operating capital while paying over time.
4. Tirelessly worked to create a way to house all of the district's equipment properly and safely.
5. Pursued the purchase of Station 810 property with intense fervor and incredible detail when the opportunity arose, and refused to let the deal fail. (*Note: this was the third attempt to purchase this property by the district over a 30 year timespan.*)

“It may have driven some of us to distraction from time to time,” said Taeger, “but he produced improvements and advancements that will benefit everyone in the district for a long time to come.”

“Michael's guidance has been invaluable to our district,” said Chuck Greenberg, Board President, “and the board wants to thank him for all that he has done for the district across the years. We are deeply appreciative and wish him the best.”

OUR WISH LIST

Help Protect Your Local Firefighters and EMS Teams...

A year end donation from you can help us:

...with firefighting gear such as helmets, turnout pants and jackets, self-contained breathing apparatus, gloves, boots and personal alert safety systems.

...with firefighting equipment (including vehicles and medical equipment for vehicles).

...with EMT equipment (including vehicles and medical equipment for vehicles).

...with continuing education fees for training sessions.

...with improvements and funding towards a new central station to meet the current and future needs of our emergency providers.

...with your time, to plan and assist in year-round fund-raising, grant writing, newsletter articles, community education and office help.

...So they can focus on saving lives and property.

Please consider donating today! You can mail your donation to:

Albion-Little River Fire Protection District
P.O. Box 634
Albion, CA 95410

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MEET OUR FAMILY



Laurie Starr

Laurie Starr joined the Albion-Little River Fire Department in December 2017 because she knows one thing about herself—her passion is helping others.

Originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico, Laurie has lived on the Mendocino coast for a little over 10 years, but in the Albion district for the past four years. She passed her certification test for Emergency Medical Technician in June of this year, and is officially on the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians.

She believes she's found her true calling through the fire department working as an EMT, and would love to find employment with an ambulance service using her newly obtained skills. Laurie is currently signed up to attend the 2020 Chief's Academy beginning in January.

Laurie loves the small town atmosphere of Albion, even though she says, "I used to consider myself a city girl." Her hobbies include playing Ultimate Frisbee on Big River Beach in Mendocino every Sunday, running, and mountain biking on Mendocino coast trails.

OUR TEAM

The Albion-Little River Fire Protection District's mission is to provide the personnel and resources necessary for protection of life and property in the Albion and Little River communities against threats from structural and wildland fires, medical emergencies, hazardous material releases, and disasters, natural or man-made.

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