



San Miguel Consolidated Fire Protection District

www.smgfire.org

(619) 670-0500

Augie Ghio, Fire Chief was introduced and spoke to the community regarding procedures and fielded questions and concerns.

The Fire District, as with many government entities have been greatly affected by the economy since much of its revenue comes from property taxes. Since many property owners have had their property tax reevaluated and reassessed, the previous year's 7.26% growth has been reduced to 2.01%. Future cuts are also expected from this lost revenue. This does not affect Crest and Bostonia areas quite as significantly since we have a specified fire assessment tax that assures that all monies collected from the Crest and Bostonia area are used only within the region. Under the terms of the consolidation with Mt Miguel, a committee is being formed to review and present the community with information regarding the budget and its expenditures and which will be shared with the community in the next newsletter.

A Crest resident asked about the possibility of additional funding through Prop. 172. Fire Chief Ghio stated that there was never any expectation that the fire departments would receive funding under this bill. He was hopeful, however, that Prop A would have provided additional funding for fire safety but it failed by 3%. The District will continue to identify fiscal solutions to the economic challenges it is faced with.

Inspections are in progress for over 350 business and multi-family dwellings (apartments and condos) in our area. This obviously affects the Bostonia area much more than Crest since we have few businesses and multi-family dwellings.

The Burn Permit process has been revised to make it less of a hassle for our residents.

Notice: Burn Permits will be issued by Fire Suppression Personnel in the Crest area. To apply for a permit, please call the San Miguel Fire District's main office number 619.670-0500. Because of a special tax already paid by Crest residents, we will not charge a fee for burn permits issued in the Crest area. District residents in other parts of the San Miguel Fire District are subject to burn permit fees.

Chief Ghio answered questions and concerns regarding weed abatement and explained inquiries should be directed to Fire Marshal, Marsha Larsen (mlarsen@smgfire.org or at (619) 660-5356). Inspection and enforcement is contracted out to Fire Preventative Services. The process for weed abatement includes 1) Inspection, 2) If abatement is necessary a 30 Day written notice is posted and certification by letter after 10 days. A San Miguel Fire inspector looks at each property at this time. 3) If the property is not taken care of, the contract company, Fire Prevention Service will do the work and bill the resident and possibly lien the property for payment if payment is not made by the property owner.

Several members of the Crest community expressed dissatisfaction over the way the Fire Prevention Services has handled abatement issues. They felt the communication was lacking and were unable to make personal contact during the process. They felt abatement by this service was exorbitantly priced and sometimes not necessary. Residents asked that the Fire District look into these matters.

Residents were encouraged to visit the San Miguel website at www.smgfire.org and to attend fire board meetings which are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm at 2850 Via Orange Way, Spring Valley 91978-1746. Agendas and Board Minutes can be found on the website.

A Note from the San Miguel Fire District

By Augio Ghio, Fire Chief

The Family that makes up the San Miguel Fire District wishes you and your family a happy, warm and SAFE New Year! As energy costs reach record highs, many East County residents >>will turn to portable electric space heaters and wood-, pellet- coal or kerosene-burning stoves, and other non-traditional heating sources to defray costs. With the increase in use comes an increase in fire risk. We encourage you to use caution when using alternative heating equipment this winter.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), nearly half of all home-heating fires occur during the winter months. On average, NFPA research show that heating equipment is involved in roughly 70,000 reported U.S. home structure fires, with associated loss of more than 600 civilian deaths, almost 1,600