



ARCATA-EUREKA AIRPORT TERMINAL
McKINLEYVILLE
FAX 839-3596

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

C O U N T Y O F H U M B O L D T

MAILING ADDRESS: 1106 SECOND STREET, EUREKA, CA 95501-0579
AREA CODE 707

PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING
SECOND & L ST., EUREKA
FAX 445-7409

CLARK COMPLEX
HARRIS & H ST., EUREKA
FAX 445-7388

AVIATION 839-5401

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Media Release

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CONTACT:

Cybelle Immitt, Humboldt County Public Works, Natural Resources Planning Division, (707) 268-3736, cimmitt@co.humboldt.ca.us

Lon Winburn, Presedent of the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association (707) 725-5021, lwinburn@fortunafire.com or by calling.

It's Wildfire Season! Learn More About the Firefighters Defending Your Community with the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association's 2012 Fire Services Annual Report!

Humboldt County, California – On Tuesday, July 9 2013 the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association presented their 2012 annual report to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association President, Lon Winburn provided an overview of the report and expressed the desire to continue working closely with all partners to improve the level of fire service for all Humboldt County communities. Board members expressed gratitude for the dedication of the fire service and commended firefighters, especially the volunteers, for their capable service.

The Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association's Annual Report is developed collaboratively by members of the Chiefs Association, the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council, and Cal Fire. Communities in Humboldt County are served by over 40 separate fire protection agencies, including fire protection districts, volunteer fire departments and companies, as well as fire stations staffed by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). Collectively, the firefighters within these agencies work tirelessly, devoting many hours to protecting Humboldt's communities, homes, and landscapes from loss from fire.

The Annual Report is a valuable resource residents can use to familiarize themselves with the fire services supporting their community. The Fire Chiefs Annual Report can be used as a directory, listing all the fire departments in the county by supervisorial district. Each fire department is represented by its own page, which includes a brief description of the department and its capabilities, its contact information, the fire chief's name, and a summary of the year's number of incident responses, volunteer hours, and personnel. The 2012 Annual Report also includes pages devoted to the emergency medical services, technical rescue groups, and disaster response groups within Humboldt County, as well as information about the three Fire Chiefs Associations in the area.

Each year, the President of the Fire Chiefs Association includes a letter written to the Board of Supervisors, which summarizes the year's activities, challenges, and accomplishments. This letter, along with an overall tally of the "Total Volunteer Hours for Humboldt County Fire and Technical Rescue Services" emphasizes the exceptional hard work and distinguished dedication of Humboldt County's firefighters and technical rescue responders, most of whom volunteer their time and energy without pay. In addition to incident response, many volunteer hours are devoted to extensive training for incidents, maintaining equipment, and raising funds for their respective departments. In 2012, the firefighters and technical rescue responders of Humboldt County contributed **102,021 hours** of volunteer services.

The Annual Report contains a map that depicts which fire departments within a given response area are financially supported by a district, which departments are "non-tax," meaning they operate solely on donations, fundraising, and volunteer work, and which areas of the county are "out of district," meaning they rely on the "goodwill service" of neighboring departments. This map reveals that many areas of the county are "out of district" and many more are "non-tax."

This reality emphasizes the crucial need for communities to support their local fire departments, both financially and through volunteering. All departments, regardless of size, struggle with maintaining the number of firefighters necessary to operate safely and efficiently on the fire-ground. The training element on its own is a huge undertaking, and demands more than most are willing to commit. Furthermore, it should be clearly understood that the new "SRA Fire Prevention Fee" DOES NOT provide assistance to local fire departments. These firefighters still rely heavily on the support of their surrounding communities.

According to the Lon Winburn, the President of the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association, "The Fire Service in Humboldt County and the communities we serve rely heavily on our volunteer firefighters. We urge you to consider: supporting your community, saving a life, making a difference. These are just a few of the ultimate rewards of becoming a volunteer with your local fire department."

The Fire Chiefs Association's Annual Report for 2012 and prior years are available to view online. Access the Fire Safe Council/Wildfire Planning link on the Natural Resources Planning home page and look under "Quick Links": <http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/natural-resources/>

If you have questions contact Cybelle Immitt of the Humboldt County Public Works, Natural Resources Planning Division at cimmitt@co.humboldt.ca.us or Lon Winburn, President of the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association at lwinburn@fortunafire.com or by calling 725-5021.











**Humboldt County
Fire Chiefs'
Association**

2012 Annual Report

COVER PAGE INCIDENT: FAIRHAVEN FIRE

The photographs on the cover page were taken during the Fairhaven Fire in November, 2012. Shortly before three o'clock in the morning on November 1st, several fire crews responded to a massive structure fire blazing in the Fairhaven Industrial Complex, located in Samoa.

The fire, which began in an outbuilding, spread to a 250,000 square foot warehouse and carried the potential to wreak serious destruction on the area. Fire Chief, Ken Woods, of Humboldt Bay Fire was present throughout the incident and described it as a "career fire" for all agencies involved, meaning that the fire was so large that it demanded the collaboration and resources of all the County's fire protection services. A total of sixteen separate fire agencies responded to the incident, including: Arcata Fire Protection District (FPD), Blue Lake Fire FPD, CAL FIRE, Crescent City Fire, Ferndale FPD, Fieldbrook Volunteer Fire Department (VFD), Fortuna FPD, Humboldt Bay Fire, Humboldt Bay Port Authority, Loleta FPD, Miranda VFD, Redway FPD, Rio Dell FPD, Samoa Peninsula FPD, Scotia VFD, and Westhaven VFD. Several fire engines, including pumpers, aerial trucks, as well as a fireboat were necessary to fight the blaze. Additionally, the Salvation Army was present, supporting firefighters by providing food and coffee.

As a result of the effective cooperation and mutual aid executed during this fire event, firefighters responding to the incident were able to bring the Fairhaven Fire to a successful conclusion. Within approximately seven hours, firefighters had contained the blaze and saved 75 percent of the building, without any injuries or loss of life. The rapid response to and successful outcome of such an enormous fire event demonstrates the value and importance of the robust cooperative capabilities among Humboldt County's fire service organizations.

Source information for cover page photographs:

Top: Humboldt Sentinel. (November 1, 2012.) "Samoa's Burning Inferno." Available at HumboldtSentinel.com

Middle-left: Times Standard. (November 1, 2012.) "Third Update: Three businesses damaged in early morning Samoa Fire." Available at Times-Standard.com

Middle-right: Humboldt Sentinel. (November 1, 2012.) "Samoa's Burning Inferno." Available at HumboldtSentinel.com

Bottom: Lost Coast Outpost. (November 1, 2012.) "Major Fire in the Eureka Area." Available at LostCoastOutpost.com

To: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

An overview of the Humboldt County Fire Service of 2012;

An incredible year for the Humboldt County Fire Service! will likely be said in future reflections on the year 2012. We have witnessed the finalization of the formation of two new fire protection districts, Bridgeville and Briceland. In 2011, we saw the Fire Chief positions for both Humboldt Fire District #1 and Eureka Fire Departments become one, followed in 2012 by the consolidation of the two departments into one, Humboldt Bay Fire. This was a truly monumental step.

We also witnessed, sadly but with great gratitude, the retirement of Chief John McFarland. John, a friend, mentor, and leader to all of us here in the fire service, not only in Humboldt County but Del Norte as well, will be missed but will forever have an influence on the direction of the Local Fire Service.

District formations, annexations of areas currently outside any jurisdictional boundaries, and consolidations will continue to be goals which the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association (HCFCA) will support and strive for. In order for the fire service in Humboldt County to move forward and realize these goals, it is currently and will be into the foreseeable future, absolutely critical to have assistance from County Planning and the Fire Safe Council, with the cooperation and support of the Board of Supervisors. The ultimate goal of the HCFCA is to provide the best emergency response possible to all of our communities, from the more densely populated cities, to the rural property owners.

The recent Fairhaven Fire was a true testimony to the immensely improved working relationship within the fire service throughout the county and beyond. It was through the development of aid agreements and a positive spirit of cooperation that we witnessed an event of great magnitude be successfully mitigated with minimal property loss, no injuries, and no loss of life. Bringing together the number of agencies that responded, from as far away as Crescent City to the north and Redway to the south, in such short notice was nothing short of amazing.

For the immediate future, the HCFCFA will continue to move forward with strategies that will ultimately improve the response and mitigation capabilities of all county fire agencies. Included and in process is the upgrade of the County Fire Net communications system, which is owned by the HCFCFA and primarily operated through the Emergency Command Center at Cal-Fire Headquarters in Fortuna. With the assistance of grant funding through FEMA and matching funds supported by all fire departments in the county, we will soon have replaced our antiquated system of repeaters and console dispatching equipment with new state of the art technology. This equipment will immensely improve our communications ability and move us into the 21st century.

In development and soon to be a reality is an Incident Management Support Team, comprised of members of the fire service from various departments within the county that have the expertise to assist any jurisdiction in the management of a major event. We are continuing the development and promotion of countywide policies and procedures, training standards, and cooperative agreements and are committed to the constant improvement of our interoperability.

We sincerely appreciate the support and consideration we receive from you, our Board of Supervisors.

Lon Winburn

President, HCFCFA

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL FIRE SERVICES THROUGHOUT HUMBOLDT COUNTY

The map on the next page provides a geographic illustration of where and what type of local fire protection is provided throughout Humboldt County. The majority of local fire service providers in the county are associated with a special district. The special districts that provide fire services, including fire protection districts, community services districts, a county service area, and a resort improvement district are identified in the map legend as "District." These districts were formed to provide services within a specific jurisdictional boundary and are supported by revenue from a combination of taxes, fees, and fundraising. Many of these jurisdictional boundaries were created as far back as the 1930's. Since that time, neighborhoods, scattered subdivisions, and rural residential development have emerged outside of district boundaries. This newer development requires year-round fire protection and emergency services, which it receives in a variety of ways.

Some areas outside the boundaries of an established district receive fire protection from district resources responding outside of their jurisdictional areas. This type of service is identified in the map legend as "Out of District" and is often referred to as "goodwill service." District fire departments provide service to these areas even though they are under no obligation to do so and receive no compensation for their service, other than donations. This practice can put a strain on already limited resources. Furthermore, property owners within the district may question why the services funded through their taxes are benefiting out of district residents, particularly if they pay a special tax or benefit assessment specifically for fire protection.

Many areas outside the boundaries of an established district receive fire protection from a fire company that is not affiliated with a district. These fire companies receive no tax revenue and for that reason are identified on the map legend as "Non-Tax". The survival of these fire companies depends on revenue generated from community donations, fundraisers, and grants. Some communities are more supportive of their local fire companies than others and support can fluctuate dramatically depending on local economic conditions.

Humboldt County

Local Fire Protection



Legend

Humboldt County Fire Departments

Local Fire Organization

■ District

■ Out of District

■ Non-Tax

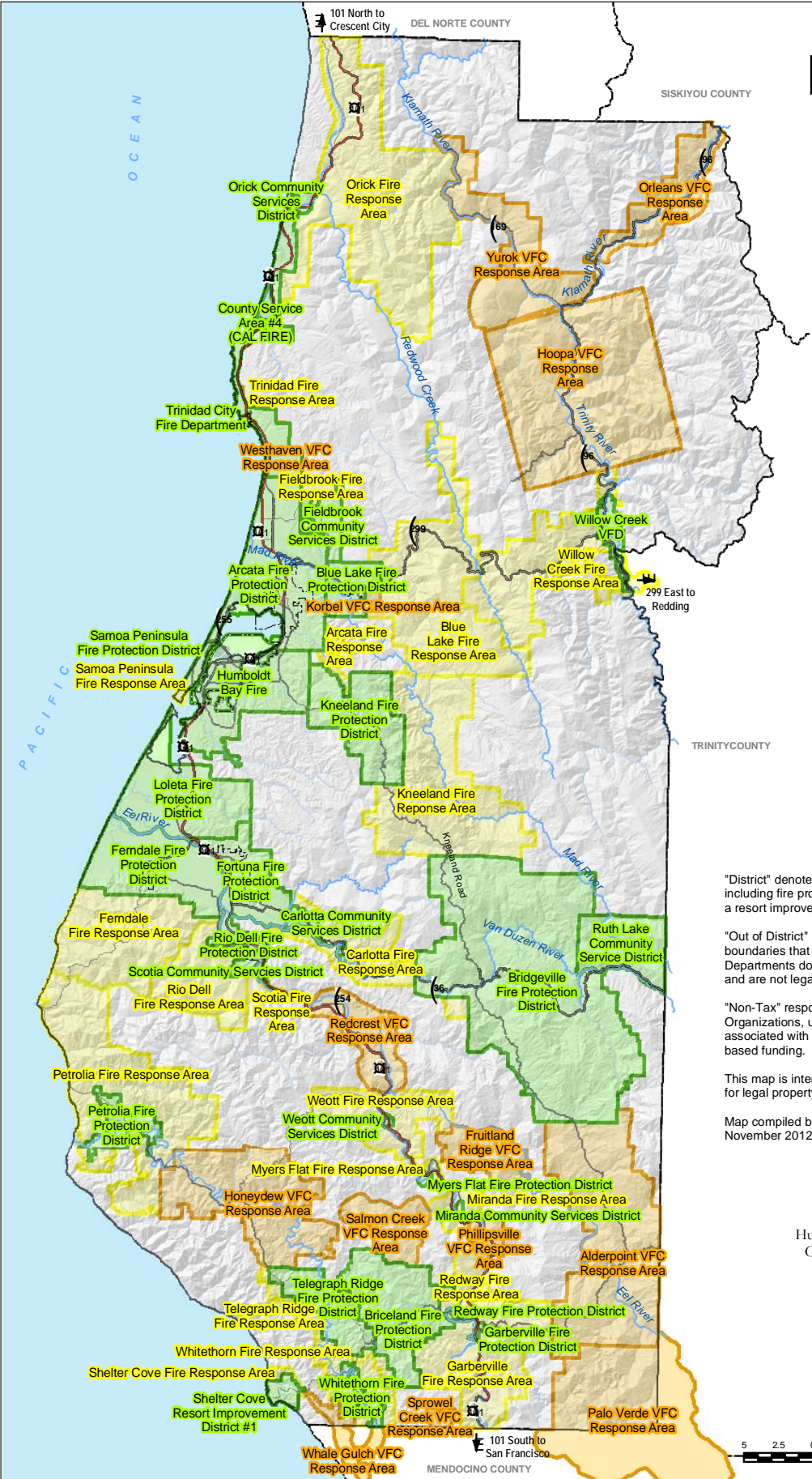
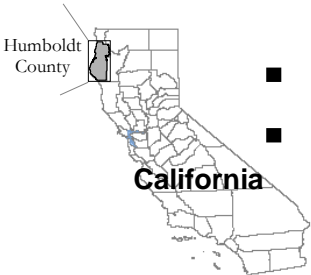
"District" denotes all special districts that provide fire service, including fire protection districts, community services districts, a resort improvement district, and a county service area.

"Out of District" response areas are areas outside of district boundaries that fire departments currently respond to. Fire Departments do not receive funding for "Out of District" areas and are not legally obligated to respond.

"Non-Tax" response areas are covered by Non-Governmental Organizations, usually Volunteer Fire Companies (VFC) not associated with a district. Such organizations do not receive tax based funding.

This map is intended for planning purposes only and is not intended for legal property boundary determinations or precise measurement.

Map compiled by County of Humboldt
November 2012. Contact: jvondohlen@co.humboldt.ca.us



Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Working Together

Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association

President: Lon Winburn

Phone: 707-499-2490

Email: lwinburn@fortunafire.com

Vice President: Ken Woods

Phone: 707-441-4017

Email: kwoods@ci.eureka.ca.gov

Meetings: *The Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association meets from 7:00p.m. to 9:00p.m. on the 4th Wednesday of each month at various locations throughout the county.*



The Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association (Fire Chiefs) works hard to improve the level of service throughout the county through increased coordination, communication, standardization, and support. At their monthly meetings, the group receives regular reports from fire instructors/training and fire prevention officers, fire/arson investigation, Cal EMA, CAL FIRE, County OES, North Coast EMS, the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (HCFSC), and others as available. These meetings provide a venue for sharing information about training, prevention, standards, legislation, grant writing, and new initiatives and innovations.

The Fire Chiefs coordinate and sustain several programs and innovations that work together to support an ever-increasing level of fire service in Humboldt County. In order to provide quick and adequate response to fires, The Fire Chiefs developed and maintain a countywide mutual aid agreement in the form of a memorandum of understanding (MOU). The MOU was made and entered into by and between all local fire service providers in the county as well as CAL FIRE. It states that the equipment, facilities, and trained personnel of each fire department are available to the other participants in the agreement on an as requested basis, which allows for a quick, decisive dispatch of resources.

Another initiative of the Fire Chiefs is to ensure that each local fire service provider uses a standardized numbering system to identify each of their units of apparatus. The assigned number identifies what region of the county the unit comes from, what department it belongs to, and what type of unit it is. This clear identification of resources facilitates accurate dispatching and efficient operational control of resources on scene, and eliminates the possibility of duplicate engine numbers.

The Fire Chiefs is in the process of developing the Humboldt County Incident Support Team, which will help standardize and increase the efficiency of incident response and management countywide. The team, composed of individuals from multiple agencies, is being trained in the *Incident Command System* and roles are being assigned based on the necessary overhead positions. This team will be available to any fire service organization to call upon during a large emergency to assist with communication, coordination, and decision making.

In November, 2012, Humboldt Bay Fire Chief Ken Woods was awarded the 2012 Ronny Jack Coleman Fire Chief of the Year award at the California Fire Chiefs Association Annual Conference. The award recognizes Chief Woods's many years of multifaceted service as well as his role in uniting Humboldt No. 1 FPD and Eureka City Fire Department under Humboldt Bay Fire. The California Fire Chiefs Association states that, throughout his service, "Chief Woods has proven to be a model of fire service leadership, at all times displaying the unsurpassed character and integrity necessary to be a leader both within the fire service and the community at large."

Southern Humboldt Fire Chiefs Association

President: Mike Lake

Phone: 707-599-7188

Email: chief@yahoo.com

Vice President: Lou Iglesias

Phone: 707-223-0211

Email: dogwood62@att.net

Meetings: *The Southern Humboldt Fire Chiefs Association meets at 5:00pm on the 4th Monday of every month at the CAL FIRE Station in Garberville. A meal is shared at 5:00pm and the meeting agenda begins at 6:00pm.*



The Southern Humboldt Fire Chiefs Association (SHFCA) is a venue for fire departments and community organizations in Southern Humboldt to collaborate for preparedness. The SHFCA is a chapter of the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association, a 501(c)3, and comprises firefighters from all the departments and companies in the Southern Humboldt region.

The initial purpose of the SHFCA was to provide a stronger voice for fire departments to bring more training opportunities to the southern part of the county, increase communication between local departments and with CAL FIRE, and to create a stronger fire department identification and numbering system. Successful implementation of those goals over the last 15 years has

grown the SHFCA to include representatives from the Southern Humboldt Fire Safe Council, the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council, the Red Cross, the Southern Humboldt Emergency Preparedness Team (SHEPT), the County Radio Dispatch Co-op, CAL-EMA, Humboldt County OES, and other emergency preparedness groups.

The SHFCA sponsors the Southern Humboldt Technical Rescue Team. The Team is comprised of firefighters from the local departments who specialize in rope, water, and wilderness rescue. Team members are highly dedicated firefighters who train and respond to rescues in addition to the normal training and duties of their respective fire departments.

The SHFCA recognizes that Southern Humboldt communities need to be informed about the issues surrounding wildfires, structure fires, emergencies, and disaster management. One of the tools used to inform the public is the "Burning Issues" fire and rescue radio talk show on KMUD FM radio. This show provides the SHFCA an opportunity to voice information to the public about training, prevention, standards, legislation, grant writing, and new initiatives and innovations. The fifth Sunday of any month with five Sundays, 1:30 to 3:00.

Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs Association

Ben Fleek, Bridgeville FPD: 707-777-3424; **Carol Brownfield**, Carlotta CSD: 707-768-1714;
John Broadstock, Scotia VFD: 707-845-2995; **Ken Nielson**, Loleta FPD: 707-733-5407;
Lon Winburn, Fortuna FPD: 707-725-5021; **Shane Wilson**, Rio Dell FPD: 707-764-3329;
Tom Grinsell, Ferndale FPD: 707-768-9909;



Left: Eel River Valley; source: www.lostcoastoutpost.com

Right: Eel River Valley Fire Academy

The Fire Chiefs of the Eel River Valley Fire Departments meet quarterly to discuss and improve emergency response and training within the Eel River Valley and along Highway 36, east to Bridgeville. These discussions and planning sessions have led to various auto-aid agreements, communications plans, and fire pre-planning throughout the area.

The Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs group, representing seven fire departments (Scotia, Rio Dell, Ferndale, Loleta, Fortuna, Carlotta and Bridgeville), is responsible for the development and direction of the Eel River Valley Technical Resource Team. All departments utilize the Eel River Valley Fire Academy, a 72-hour basic firefighting course, to accomplish entry level firefighter training for new members.

The goal of the Eel River Valley Fire Chiefs is to improve and streamline administrative and operational objectives with the primary objective being interoperability throughout the immediate area.

**Total Volunteer Hours for
Humboldt County
Fire and Technical Rescue
Services**

Incidents

28,183

Training

45,150

Maintenance

7,526

Fundraising

21,162

Total Hours

102,021

