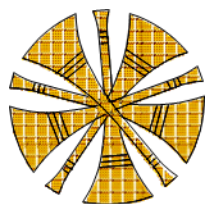


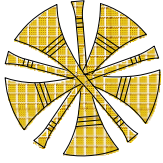


HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT

2018



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FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION OF HUMBOLDT COUNTY

President Justin McDonald
Vice President Dale Unea
Treasurer Ray Stonebarger
Secretary Rich Grissom

P.O. Box 7014
Eureka, CA 95502-7014

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Humboldt
825 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Supervisors,

As the new President of the Fire Chiefs' Association of Humboldt County (HCFA), I wanted to provide the Board with a few highlights from 2018.

Collaboration is underway with law enforcement on active shooter protocol for county wide response. As you are aware, this topic has become extremely important both county and nationwide and it is crucial that all areas of public safety work together in our efforts for training and planning for an active shooter situation.

Following a rather unfortunate house fire in an area not covered by any fire services, communications began with the CAO and Supervisors Fennell and Wilson for the development of a comprehensive strategy to annex unprotected areas into fire districts. Humboldt County has a great deal of rural property owners who may or may not be aware that they are living in areas not covered by any fire agency and it is not until tragedy strikes that such situations are discovered. Events of this type are a misfortune for both the homeowner or patient and the agencies that respond to out of area to help. Unprotected area homeowners do not pay taxes that cover the services provided by agencies that do respond, therefore an expensive response of staff and fire apparatus, falls directly to the agencies responding. Fighting fires or assisting a patient is expensive and not responding because the incident is out of the area or district of emergency personnel, is simply not a good answer. By developing a solution for these unprotected response areas, we all will eventually benefit.

As is the practice of the agencies we represent, the HCFA has begun to develop a strategic plan. It is our hope that the document will help guide the county fire service through the present and into the future.

Disastrous wildfires continued to haunt our state again this past year. Many of the HCFA represented agencies sent volunteers and paid personnel to assist in the fires. For weeks on end, local firefighters provided aid and support during the Mendocino Complex fires, the Camp Fire in Butte County and also provided local station coverage for CAL FIRE.

Finally, I would like to offer thanks for the continued support of the Board and the sales tax revenue provided by Measure Z and its renewed counterpart, Measure O. The fire service has received \$5.9 million from the tax and our community's fire services have benefited greatly. Agencies have received funding for personal protective gear, fire trucks, hose, a portable training tower, buildings to house equipment, and payment of dispatch fees. Our county is protected by over 40 fire agencies, most of them being rural volunteer departments or special districts. These funds help supplement our ever-strained budgets with items that are essential for firefighting and rescue EMS services that protect all Humboldt County residents.

Sincerely,

Justin McDonald
President - HCFA

In Memory



When a man becomes a fireman his greatest act of bravery has been accomplished.

What he does after that is all in the line of work.

Edward F. Crocker

“CHIEF BOB”
Fire Chief Robert Somerville
Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department
1932-2018

Chief Bob joined the department in 1961, serving for 37 years – 16 as Fire Chief, retiring in 1998. That same year he was announced as the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year.

Chief Bob was a 40+ year member of the Fortuna Rodeo Association and former Grand Marshall of the Rodeo Parade.

Chief Bob was originally in Company 1, transferring to Company 5 as a charter member in 1967. As Chief, he drove our very first command rig purchased by the fire district. Chief Bob was also responsible for purchasing Fortuna’s first ever type 1 fire apparatus – the old #6 Beck Engine in 1989. The Chief retired from the fire service upon completion of Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department headquarters on Fortuna Boulevard, otherwise known as Station 1.



“BOOM BOOM”
Jeffrey Happ
Firefighter / Engineer Co. #1
Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department
1956 – 2018

Jeff joined the fire department in 1980 as a member of Co. 1, retiring in 2010 after 30 years of service. Jeff was a truck driver and mechanic by trade, which played a role in his excellent engineering capability. Jeff had great attendance to fire/rescue calls, meetings and drills and was probably the best bingo caller we ever had.

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Acronyms

ALS	Advanced Life Support
ARFF	Aircraft Rescue Firefighting
AFFF	Aqueous Film-Forming Foam
AED	Automated External Defibrillator
BLS	Basic Life Support
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
CSD	Community Services District
CAFS	Compressed Air Foam System
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch
EMS	Emergency Medical Service
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
EMT-I	Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate
FFP	Federal Fire Policy
FPD	Fire Protection District
GPM	Gallons per minute
LAFCo	Local Agency Formation Committee
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
OES	Office of Emergency Services
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SCBA	Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
TRT	Technical Rescue Team
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
VFC	Volunteer Fire Company
VFD	Volunteer Fire Department

2018 Annual Report Introduction

This report documents the level of fire and emergency response services available to the residents of Humboldt County in 2018. The results will support the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association (HCFCFA) and its associated chapters as they work to enhance coordination, communication, and standardization among fire and emergency services providers throughout the county. This report, published annually, includes department-level response statistics provided by the local, state, and federal fire service as well as details about emergency medical services, technical rescue, and disaster response groups. A summary is provided on the role played by the fire chiefs' associations in Humboldt County followed by a page dedicated to each local service provider, organized by Humboldt County Supervisorial District.

Humboldt County's large and rural nature presents several inherent challenges for emergency response. Many roads are in poor condition, are too narrow for emergency response vehicles, or provide no alternate means of ingress/egress; the terrain is rugged and response to remote areas can be slow-going. A lack of cellular reception and internet access can make emergency response that much more difficult. These infrastructural challenges are set in the context of the wildland-urban interface where rural homesteads, often lacking in adequate defensible space, abut large swaths of forest- and grassland that can carry an ignition into communities or into the wildlands beyond. Within this challenging landscape, fire service providers strive to meet the needs of their respective communities while working to overcome their own organizational challenges – many of which are detailed in the following pages of this report.

Reading through these pages, some common themes emerge: the high cost of insurance and workers' compensation, ever-increasing mandatory requirements and standards, a lack of capital for the replacement of safety equipment, barriers to seamless coordination and communication, and access to appropriate levels of training. Above all, volunteer recruitment and retention stands out as the most prominent issue facing many departments. A shrinking roster of firefighters makes it difficult to maintain current levels of service. Some departments have for years, provided service to areas outside of their district boundary to areas lacking any sort of dedicated fire service. This is commonly referred to as "goodwill service", as the responding fire agency is under no obligation to provide service to those areas and receives no compensation, other than donations.

None of these challenges will be easily overcome, but over the past year, the HCFCFA and its associated chapters have made steady progress. Discussions are underway to create new fire districts in some areas and expand the boundaries of existing districts in others; the HCFCFA is working closely with the county and property owners to ensure these changes are backed by a sustainable source of revenue. The HCFCFA is also developing a Strategic Plan that will include a shared vision for the future state of the organization and articulate key initiatives that will help guide the achievement of organizational goals. Increasing the capacity of the HCFCFA will help the organization play a positive role in addressing many of the department-specific challenges detailed above. The Public Safety/Essential Services Measure was renewed by the voters to provide continued funding for these services through a half-cent sales tax. In the last year, this funding has been put to good use toward fire station construction, fire hydrant repairs, safety equipment, and more.

After 2018, "The Big One" no longer only applies to earthquakes. Between the Camp Fire, the Carr Fire, and the Mendocino Complex Fire, it was a devastating year for many of Humboldt's neighboring counties and a wake-up call for many here in Humboldt. Despite the many challenges before them, Humboldt County fire and emergency responders are working as hard as ever to prepare themselves, their equipment, and their communities for the next fire season.

Fire Service Map Introduction

The map on the following page illustrates where and what type of local fire protection is provided throughout Humboldt County. The special districts that deliver fire services are identified in the map legend as “District” and are shown on the map in green. These districts were formed to provide services within a specific jurisdictional boundary and are supported by revenue from a combination of taxes, fees, grants 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.

There are still many areas outside the boundaries of an established district that receive fire protection from district resources. This type of uncompensated service, often referred to as “goodwill service”, is identified in the map legend as “District Response Area” and is shown on the map in yellow. 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. Thanks to funding from the Public Safety/Essential Services sales tax, services have been supported for the large out-of-district area between the Blue Lake, Willow Creek, and Kneeland fire protection districts. It is not known for how much longer that support will last.

Department vs. Company

In this Report, with a few exceptions, fire service providers associated with a special district are labeled “Volunteer Fire Department”, meaning they receive some tax or fee revenue gathered from within a mapped boundary. Those that do not receive tax revenue and are funded primarily through fundraisers and donations are labeled “Volunteer Fire Company”.

Many areas outside the boundaries of an established district receive fire protection from a volunteer fire company that is not affiliated with a district. These volunteer fire companies receive no tax revenue and for that reason are identified on the map legend as “Non-Tax” and are illustrated on the map in orange. 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 Organizations

Local Fire Organization

- District
- District Response Area
- Non-District Response Area
- Tribal

"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.

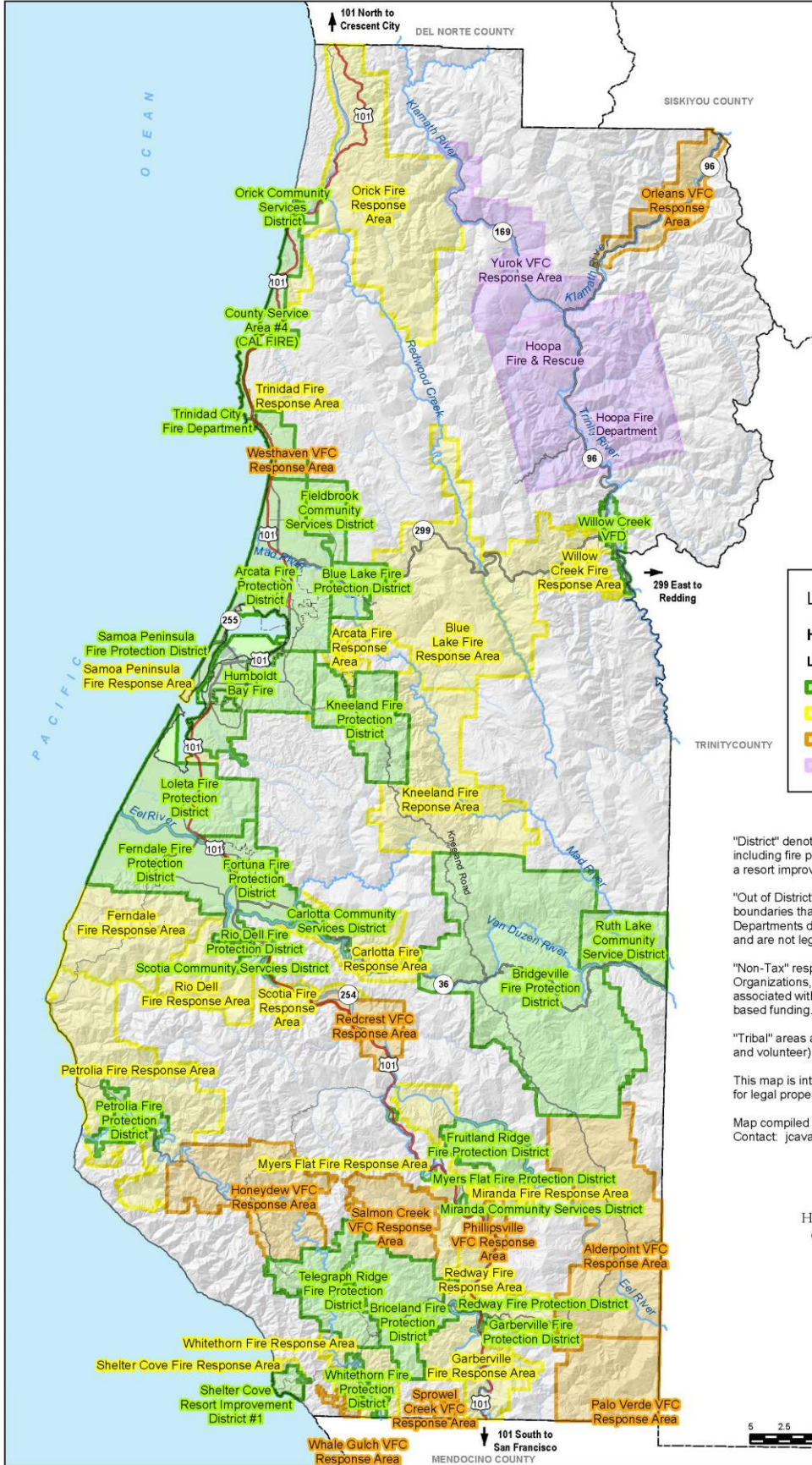
"Out of District" response areas are areas outside of district boundaries that fire departments currently respond to. Fire Departments do not receive funding for "Out of District" areas and are not legally obligated to respond.

"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.

"Tribal" areas are served by volunteer or combination (paid and volunteer) departments under tribal leadership.

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 July 2019.
Contact: jcavalli1@co.humboldt.ca.us



Incident Response Summary

The following page provides graphic illustrations of types of responses provided during the 2018 calendar year. There are two pie charts—one for local agencies and one for state and federal agencies—which illustrate total 2018 fire service responses with percentages for each recorded category. It is interesting to note that, for local agency fire service calls, **49 percent** were medical emergency dispatches. This underscores the fact that most of the local fire departments and companies provide “all-risk” protection which includes much more than fire response.

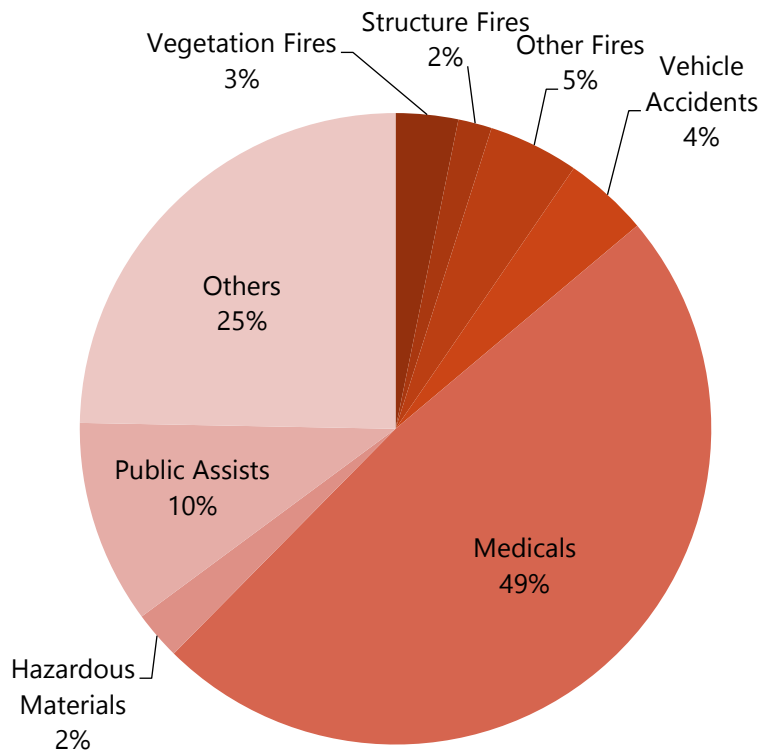
Volunteer hours contributed by all local service providers is also summarized by various categories including time spent responding to incidents, training, maintaining equipment and facilities, and fundraising. A total of 119,190 volunteer hours were reported in 2018. This is likely an underestimate of what is actually contributed by the hundreds of volunteers who support the network of active local fire departments, fire companies, and technical rescue groups in Humboldt County.

Volunteer Hours	
Humboldt County Fire and Technical Rescue Services	
Incidents	39,051
Training	46,005
Volunteer Ride Along	1,971
Maintenance	12,352
Fundraising	19,811
Total Hours	119,190

Please note: These data, and the incident response data included with each of the department’s individual pages, were sourced from the CAL FIRE CAD (computer-aided dispatch) system and from the departments themselves. The authors of this report put their best effort into synthesizing and filtering the data to get the best picture of the demand placed on Humboldt County fire organizations. However, due to the nature of the available data, the incident responses reported may over- or underestimate actual department responses in some cases.



2018 Local Agency Incident Responses



2018 State & Federal Agency Incident Responses

