



THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **September 23, 2022**

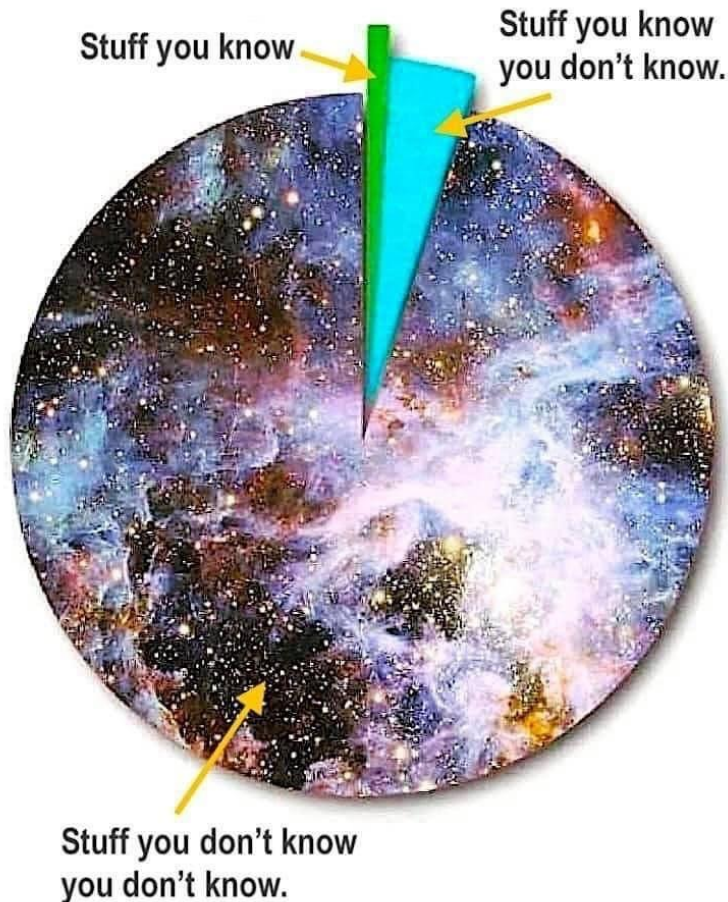
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"Few of us are as good as we think we are;
none of us are as good as we can be."

— Tom Selleck

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The Chief's Desk

I am back and better than ever! Which is apparently frightening for some in the office. I'm happy to report that my back surgery went well with just some discomfort at the surgical site. It kinda feels like someone cut through my muscles and ground on some bone from L3-L5. That said, the pain that I had been in for nearly 2 years is gone.

Between having the RA under control for now, and the back surgery I feel like a fog has lifted. It is amazing the impact that lack of sleep and pain can have on a person's mind and body. I know Dave discussed some of that last week when he filled in for me writing *The Review*.

Because I am only a little over a week post-surgery, my mobility is somewhat limited. However, I have been in the office this week catching up on bothering people and other stuff. It's a bit uncomfortable to drive, so I basically drive to the office and home. If you've seen me in the office, you may have noticed that I am not in my normal office attire. That said, I think the Snoopy T-shirt and compression sock fashion will catch on in no time 😊

I know I am not the only one who has been struggling with pain whether it's a back issue or otherwise. As far as back surgeries go, I am currently one of three of our folks who recently had work done and we have the potential for at least one additional. This profession, and our lack of willingness to listen to our bodies, can definitely take a toll. But I personally think it's well worth the aches and pains when I look back at all the people I have been able to help throughout my 29 years in emergency services.

We will have several staff out of the office this next week for accreditation training. Once we complete the training we'll regroup and establish an appropriate time frame for us to file with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) as an agency seeking accreditation. Chief Parra will serve as our accreditation manager for this process. Our intent is to rotate the accreditation manager position between battalion chiefs in the future. Just one more reason for you to consider promoting 😊

As a result of some of our social media posts regarding Proposition 310, as well as some of the information out in our communities, we've received a number of questions/comments specific to our area. To that end, staff has created a two-page fact sheet along with a one-page bullet point sheet to assist in providing answers to the frequently asked questions/comments. There is nothing in our documents or on our website that is meant to suggest how a person should vote. Folks are asking about how agencies like ours are funded, so we are providing the information. The documents are attached to this week's email for your review.

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Upcoming Events:

Sept 26-28: Accreditation training in Peoria
Sept 26: Board Meeting
Sept 28: RA Dr Appointment
Sept 29: Chiefs Interviews
Sept 30: Chiefs Interviews

Board Meeting:

Sept 26: Administration
CAFMA – 1700-1830

Status of Current Firefighter Hiring Process

By: Chief Freitag

By all accounts, this firefighter hiring process has been one of the more successful processes we've run. As many of you know, we dropped the Firefighter 1 and 2 requirements opting instead to run our own academy. This meant a shift from firefighter testing to a different form of test. We chose the Wonderlic online test which was recommended by Scottsdale FD and Northwest FD. The test is different than using the National Test Network (NTN). While I don't know enough to walk you through a side by side comparison, I can tell you that one of the main differences is that applicants do not have to pay to take the Wonderlic. Applicants through NTN must pay \$200.

The Wonderlic measures three behavioral areas: cognitive, motivation, and personality. Once an applicant submits their completed application, we send them a link to the Wonderlic. They then have two weeks to complete the test. Test results are sent directly to our HR folks, and feedback is sent directly from Wonderlic back to the applicant.

In addition to changing our approach to testing, we engaged Tech Services and our social media genius to ensure we reached a wider audience. Jonah was able to optimize search engines to drive potential applicants to our website. Kathy organized high quality social media content and timed it in such a way that it attracted the most attention. The team put together some very professional looking handouts, and we blanketed every firefighter hiring website we could find.

We ended up with 78 applicants and 54 completed applications. Of those, 31 scored well enough on the Wonderlic to be invited for an initial interview. Applicants from out of state were allowed to participate via ZOOM. Of the 31, the panel is sending 14 forward to the Chief's interviews which will take place on September 29 and 30 next week.

In addition to the other changes, we also made some adjustments in how we approach our interview panel. Human Resources carefully selected the questions that would be asked by the panel, and then provided training for our panelists. Rather than having four operations personnel on the panel, we have three operations personnel and one non-ops person along with Lacie. Feedback this week from the panel has been really good regarding the training, panel make-up, and quality of applicants. As of this writing, the panel feels the results of the Wonderlic test have been in line with the applicants they've interviewed.

Ultimately, we have more applicants, more completed applications, and the potential for a larger pool of hireable candidates. While we're not done yet, from what we have seen so far, this process has been a success.

Health & Wellness Updates

By: HR Manager Patty Murphey

As I pondered the content of this month's article, I was reminded that September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. I had already written an entire article on another subject, but once this came to my attention, I knew this was what I needed to share. Suicide and suicide prevention can be difficult to talk about due to the stigma that still surrounds it; however, having the right resources and information can

potentially save a life. One of my good friends from high school lost her husband to suicide and I support her, and all who suffer, by participating in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention walk each year. I know this issue has touched many of you reading this as well. If you or someone you know is struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts, please reach out.

Here is a list of resources:

National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988.

Start Moving On: [Start Moving On CAFMA](#) 928-910-5145

EAP Program: 833-955-3386

Peer Support Group: [Firestrong](#)

Patty Murphey, HR Manager

Cell: 928-910-9856

Chief's Desk Continued

Please remember, when we are in uniform, we cannot under any circumstances encourage someone to vote for or against a ballot initiative. We can provide factual information only. This is also why we direct folks to our website and not the Proposition 310 or the PFFA website for further information. Our website does include information under our Frequently Asked Questions section regarding how Fire Districts are funded, the impact of Prop 117, and how the growth we see in the area does not necessarily equate to significant funding increases.

Chief Tharp and I were talking with Susanne about this topic Tuesday this week. He pointed out that it can take up to 1400 new homes to generate the revenue of one significant commercial property. Depending on the value of a new home, the taxes generated annually may be enough to fuel one of our engines a couple of times or cover toilet paper for a couple of months. To that end, the number of new residential rooftops does not equate to a financial windfall for our agency. In fact, we are required to provide services to all those new homes, and businesses, for two years before receiving any monies from property taxes.

Additionally, Fire Districts do not have "home rule", so we have no way to ensure development pays for development, e.g. we cannot assess impact fees. When significant residential or even commercial development drives our call volume to the point of requiring an expansion of services, we must figure out how to fund the new personnel, equipment, and station. No impact fees mean we must increase property taxes and seek permission for general obligation bonds to cover our costs.

As I have mentioned before, our data indicates that we are down one 24-hour engine. Under our current funding structure, it will take four years of incremental tax increases to be able to hire the personnel we need to staff the engine. This does not include the purchase of the engine or construction of a station. In today's market, we are looking at a minimum of \$6 - \$8 million for construction of just a basic fire station. The engines we purchased for around \$500,000 just a few years ago are now pushing \$850,000 to \$900,000.

With all that said, how far behind will we be four years from now when we can finally put the engine in service that we need today? Will the community approve the general obligation bonds needed to build the station/stations to house the engine and personnel? As I mentioned, because development is not required to pay for development, the financial responsibility for hiring personnel, purchase of equipment, and building of infrastructure falls 100% on the shoulders of our residents as part of their property tax bill.

It is interesting to me the perception folks have of their property tax bill related to the fire district versus the reality of what it takes to run our day-to-day operations. Coming from Missouri, I can tell you I paid more for less. And I know many of the folks moving here from out of state also paid a far greater amount for fire protection than they pay here.

This does not mean that we want property taxes to increase dramatically. Rather, having a diversified revenue portfolio is basic business 101. However, that is not how fire districts are funded in Arizona. A diversified portfolio would help control property tax rates moving forward and allow us to meet the increased demand for services.

The question for our voters is simple: How do you want to fund emergency services in our community? Should property owners shoulder the entire burden for everyone who utilizes our services or should everyone who uses the service pay a share? Should development pay for development, or should taxpayers shoulder the entire burden for infrastructure needs created by development? The development question is not part of Proposition 310, but I do believe it is a valid question.

Until next week, keep up the great work you all do!
