



# THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **November 11, 2022**

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“We are not a team because we work together. We are a team because we respect, trust and care for each other.”

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## The Chief's Desk

Let's discuss the elephant in the room. We're struggling to staff in Operations, and it's creating mandatory overtime. There, I said it, we're currently mandating that folks stay at work after the completion of their shift. We all know that we must keep the engines rolling out of the stations to provide services, but that doesn't make mandatory overtime any easier on you or your families.

Why the staffing shortage? There are several reasons. First, we've had several people leave over the last year for a variety of reasons. There have been some early retirements, one left to work as a contract medic, another to be a park ranger, one person left because the 24-hour shift didn't work for his family, etc. The bottom line is that we have a lot of vacant positions.

We didn't expect to have to run a hiring process or academy this year, yet here we are. Even when we first started talking about hiring, we only needed five positions. By the time we hired, we needed ten and we're still looking at number 11. The Academy started Monday this week; however, graduation at this point is not scheduled until February. We have people in the pipeline, but the pipeline will not produce what we need for at least three more months. Once the new recruits are done and on the engines, we'll see some relief.

In addition to the vacancies, we've six or seven out on injury, and unfortunately, none of the injuries or illnesses have been minor. We're dealing with multiple back surgeries, a hip replacement, and now a member going through cancer treatment. We will start to see some of these folks back on the line in a month or so, but that does not help you all today.

What's great is that this is all happening during 'sickness' season. Yep, colds, flu, COVID – you name it, they're active this time of year, so we have a lot of people calling in sick. If you've called out because you've been sick and have a fever, thank you for taking sick time! That is exactly why it exists.

However, we know there are some sick call outs where the individual is not necessarily sick. That is not why you have sick time, and we need you to come in to work. When a person uses sick time needlessly, they help create the mandatory overtime situations that everyone is complaining about. We'd ask that you not do that.

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### **Upcoming Events:**

Nov 14: Policy Committee,  
Meet new board member for  
coffee, Meeting with Prescott  
FD

Nov 15: Senior staff meet,  
AFCA/AFDA education  
committee

Nov 16: PVEDF Board Meeting,  
CAFMA/Prescott Command  
Staff Meeting, record podcast

Nov 17: Meet with community  
partners

### **Board Meeting:**

Nov 28: Administration  
CVFD – 1600-1630  
CYFD – 1630-1700  
CAFMA – 1700-1830

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## **Firefighters: Meteor may have caused fire that destroyed Calif. Home**

By: Noah Goldberg

MOONEY FLAT, Calif. — A meteor that shot across the Northern California sky Friday night may have caused a fire that burned a home to the ground in Nevada County, firefighters said.

Fire crews responded to reports of a structure fire on a cattle ranch around 7:30 p.m., about the same time that residents in the area reported seeing a bright light tearing through the sky, said Penn Valley Fire District Capt. Clayton Thomas.

No one was injured but a family's dog, Tug, was killed, along with several rabbits, fire officials said.

"There was even a video of someone who saw that light and drove to where they thought it had fallen and they pulled up to where the fire was," Thomas said. "They thought that was about where they'd seen the light fall."

It took firefighters about an hour and a half to battle the blaze.

Firefighters on the scene were approached by members of the public who reported that they believed the fire was connected to the meteor shower. Numerous residents posted video of the fireball in the sky to social media.

"I heard a big bang, I started to smell smoke and I went onto my porch and it was completely engulfed in flames," homeowner Dustin Procita said in an interview with [KCRA](#). "They said it was a meteor."

Thomas said the department is investigating whether the fire was caused by the meteor, but no official determinations are expected for weeks. He said that about 1,500 meteors that connect with Earth hit land per year and that most of those land in unoccupied areas.

[firerescue1.com](http://firerescue1.com)

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## **Veterans Day History**

By: Ho Lin

Veterans Day gives Americans the opportunity to celebrate the bravery and sacrifice of all U.S. veterans. However, most Americans confuse this holiday with Memorial Day, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

What's more, some Americans don't know why we commemorate our veterans on Nov. 11. It's imperative that all Americans know the history of Veterans Day so that we can honor our former service members properly.

History of Veterans Day

Veterans Day, formerly known as Armistice Day, was originally set as a U.S. legal holiday to honor the end of World War I, which officially took place on Nov. 11, 1918. In legislation that was passed in 1938, Nov. 11 was "dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be hereafter celebrated and known as 'Armistice Day.'" As such, this new legal holiday honored World War I veterans.

In 1954, after having been through both World War II and the Korean War, the 83rd U.S. Congress -- at the urging of veterans service organizations -- amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation on June 1, 1954, Nov. 11 became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

[military.com](http://military.com)

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## **Chief's Desk Continued**

We've been discussing what steps we need to take to curb some of the mandatory holdovers. The only way to do that is to have people at work who are scheduled to be here. We may have to pull back on training leave until we get more folks back on the engines. We just turned down a two-person medic team assignment on a wildland fire because of our staffing challenges. Fortunately, we're going into the holidays, so the number of training opportunities are very limited.

The downside of this is that on top of vacancies, injuries, sickness season, and frustration with mandatory overtime, we're getting into the thick of holiday season. Nobody wants mandatory overtime during the holidays. We understand the frustration and concern, but we still have to staff the engines.

We've talked with Prescott FD and we do have an agreement that we can work together on staffing, if either agency has people available. This has been done in the past with some success, but both agencies are feeling the staffing pinch at the moment.

There have been some questions about shutting down Engine 540 and dispersing the crew. In our opinion, shutting down E540 is no different than closing a station. We do not want to close a station unless it is absolutely necessary. On occasion we do have to shut down E540 due to a lack of staffing; it doesn't happen often, but it has happened. That said, we do not mandatorily hold anyone over when we lack a full crew for E540. When the engine is taken out of service, we've typically taken the remaining crew members and put them on the Rescues to help reduce some of the other strain and stress on the system. Just recently, the crew ran a shift on a Rescue and acted as an ARU as well. This allowed us to reduce some of the workload by having one unit respond to non-critical incidents.

Ultimately, we will not shut down a station unless it is absolutely necessary, and that includes the 40hr engine.

We hope to avoid these types of issues in the future by working to add additional Operations personnel over the next few years. Yes, we need to add another engine and that's part of the plan, but we also need additional staffing for the current engines. Our hope was that the voters would approve Prop 310, allowing us to diversify our revenue stream which would help us control property tax rates.

Unfortunately, it appears the voters would prefer that our funding come directly from property taxes.

To that end, to increase staffing over current numbers to 38 per shift and add another engine we will have to increase the property tax rates. At this point, we have two possible recommendations for the Board. The first is to put in for a SAFER Grant to hire 20 new firefighters. This would give us what we need to increase current staffing numbers and add an additional 24-hour engine. The grant covers partial salaries for three years so we would be able to incrementally increase our tax rate to cover the costs.

If we do not receive the grant, then we would recommend increasing the rate over three years allowing us to hire five in year one, seven in year two, and eight in year three. There are other positions needed in Non-Ops as well, so there will be additional costs related to those positions.

We need to take steps to avoid the staffing issues we're experiencing today, and we need to add an engine to meet demand. The question for the voters through Prop 310 was, "How do you want to fund the additional personnel and resources needed for us to operate?" It seems the answer is through property taxes.

I want to thank you all for your patience as we work through a very trying time related to staffing. We hear and understand your frustration. Hopefully, we can make it through the next few months while we wait for some of our folks to heal, and for our Academy recruits to graduate.

Life is full of challenges just waiting to be turned into opportunity. We don't know why things happen the way they do, but in my experience, it generally works out for the better in the end. So, we will push forward and make margaritas out of lemons 😊

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