

THE ALPINE SUN SHOPPER – August 6, 2009
Tattered Tidbits: Alpine Historical Society

HISTORY OF THE ALPINE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Before Alpine had its own Fire Department, the community depended on volunteers and the U.S. Department of Forestry to help put out fires.

In 1948 a group of determined men put together a volunteer Fire Department. The people involved in forming it were John Sheedy, John Jones, Sr. and Arthur Pratt. The AFPD was all volunteers until 1969. The first paid fire fighter was Dale Bennett. He was Fire Chief from 1969 to 1973. Before Alpine had a Volunteer Fire Department, most homes and structures that caught fire were destroyed.

A bond issue was presented in 1957 to the people of Alpine. They figured it would cost \$18,000 to build and equip a Fire Department. The bond passed six to one. The district was officially recognized by the State of California as a Fire Protection District on December 19, 1957.

The first fire station in Alpine was built on the land where the Youth Center was located. They secured a 99 year lease agreement for \$1 a year. The new station had space for four fire trucks. When Rio San Diego Water came to Alpine in July 1962, fire hydrants were installed. Before fire hydrants, the fire trucks had to carry water to the fires.

In 1974 there was a contest opened to the students at Alpine Union School (now Alpine Elementary) and Chapparell Middle School (now Joan MacQueen). The AFPD was looking for a new motto. Jerry Cowett won with the motto, "PRIDE IN SERVING YOU." He received a prize of \$25.

In 2006 a state-of-the-art fire station was built on Tavern Road in Alpine. It provides the latest in equipment. The total budget for the station, including land purchase, was \$5,049,976.26. It consists of 13,150 square feet. The space where the fire engines are parked is 5000 square feet. The rest of the building is office space and living area.

The AFPD has a total of three fire engines. There are two type 1 engines. One is their everyday normal engine. The other, which looks just like it, is their reserve engine. The reserve engine is used when the front line engine is down for maintenance. They also have one type 3 engine. This is their brush engine and is smaller than the type 1. It is designed for vegetation fires.

There have been three destructive fires in Alpine: The Laguna Fire in 1970, the Viejas Fire in 2001 and the Cedar Fire in 2003.

The areas covered by the AFPD are Alpine proper from Interstate 8 at Dunbar to Interstate 8 at East Willows; Harbison Canyon Road down to Galloway Valley Road; Japatul Road and Dehesa to the south; Peutz Valley on the North and all the roads and areas in between. They also have aid agreements with neighboring agencies and do respond there as well, such as Lakeside and Viejas.

The AFPD employs 18 people: a Fire Chief; a Division Chief; three Captains; three Engineers; one Firefighter EMT; five Firefighter/Paramedics; a Fire Marshall; a Fire Inspector; a Finance Officer/Administrator and an administrative assistant.

We are very fortunate to have these brave firefighters right here in Alpine.

By Carlette Anderson



Old Fire Station in 1957. Located at 1834 Tavern Road.