

MEMORIES OF THE SUN CITIES



SUN CITY HAD DROUGHT IN FIRE HYDRANTS

One of a series on the history of
Sun City and Sun City West, Arizona

Sun Cities Area Historical Society
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SUN CITY HAD DROUGHT IN FIRE HYDRANTS

Although fire hydrants are usually provided in planned communities, it was not until 1965 that anyone thought to consider them for Sun City.

In June, 1965, H. K. Mulcahy, a local homeowner, noted that homeowners within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant could have insurance adjustments of their houses, saving \$6 to \$13 a year on insurance.

After learning from the water company that a hydrant could be installed for \$675, Mulcahy talked to his neighbors about the feasibility of raising enough money to install hydrants. Other homeowners expressed concern and he started collecting \$10 from those interested. By July 1, enough money had been raised to purchase one hydrant and the first one was installed at 107th Avenue and Sun City Boulevard.

Hydrants didn't become a real issue until October 21, 1965, when an editorial in the News-Sun criticized the Sun City Home Owners Association for its inability to get fire hydrants installed throughout the community. Then things began to happen.

On December 2, a resident writing humorously for his dog, had this letter printed in the News-Sun: "The past six months or so there has been considerable agitation going around here regarding the purchase and installing of fire hydrants. Maybe it means that we dogs may soon get to enjoy this thoughtful addition to the landscape."

Evidently community wide sentiment began to take effect. On December 23, just in time for Christmas, the water company let a contract for 48 hydrants. The company would make the installation at no cost and Mr. Mulcahy was refunded \$675.

By July, 1966, hydrants were installed in all of Sun City.

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1997 Prepared by Albert B. Foster

Fire board rejects drug tests

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY — The Sun City Fire District Board has said "no" to mandatory drug testing for employees and board members.

Board Vice Chairman George Lange at Tuesday's board meeting proposed requiring testing of board members. He had asked for the testing of the 44 fire operations personnel at a special meeting Dec. 9.

"I believe the Sun City Fire District Board should submit to drug tests as an example for other Sun City groups and surrounding areas," Lange said. "Fighting drugs must be done on the home front."

But Lange's proposals were not supported by the other four board members.

Chairman Cyril Rengel said he does not believe that mandatory drug testing would help the department.

"The best way to handle drugs is to hire people who are experts in detecting changes in behavior," Rengel said.

Board member B. Paul Saunders said he would not mind taking a drug test, but he thinks it would be a "waste of money" because some drugs are not detected if they are not used for a period of time.

Board member Brayton Willis told fellow board members to observe his actions from day to day, and if they believe he's on drugs, he will pay for a test. If the test is negative, he will bill the board, he said.

"I don't think I've ever observed anyone on the board or in the fire department that was suspicious of using drugs," Willis said.

Youngtown Chief of Public Safety Michael Branham told the Sun City board that mandatory drug testing is not done in many police and fire departments — except for newly hired employees — because of the cost involved. Youngtown contracts with the Sun City Fire District to provide fire protection.

"Mandatory drug testing puts everyone in a bad light," Branham said.

In the Sun City Fire District, newly hired employees are tested for drugs, and if employees are involved in an accident with another vehicle, a drug test is conducted, said Steve Morrow, Sun
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FIRE

From Page 1

City Fire District assistant chief.

An employee suspected of having a drug or alcohol problem, is asked to submit to testing, Sun City Fire District Chief James Sebert said.

In one case, an employee was suspected of having alcohol problems and was fired after refusing to participate in counseling, Sebert said.

Board members said they want the fire district to become more involved in the national Red Ribbon Campaign, which is held in October. Schools, public safety departments and community groups have anti-drug activities during Red Ribbon Week.

An anti-drug message is pro-

vided to the estimated 1,000 schoolchildren that visit Sun City fire stations each year, fire officials say,

Rural/Metro Corp., which provides fire service to Sun City West, Litchfield Park, Scottsdale and other Arizona communities, has a policy allowing mandatory drug testing on a random basis for its 1,700 employees, but it has not been implemented since 1986, said Marc Terrill, Rural/Metro personnel director.

The company does drug testing before hiring employees and if an employee has been involved in a vehicle accident or demonstrates suspicious behavior.

"We don't test to be punitive.

We do it to help people," Terrill said. "We provide substance abuse rehabilitation."

In other business, the fire district board did not act on Lange's proposal to have volunteers instead of fire district employees install smoke detectors in homes.

Lange said he believes money could be saved by having volunteers provide this service.

However, other board members and Sebert said installation of smoke detectors by fire department employees is a good public relations program. Firefighters offer to inspect the homes for potential hazards while they are installing the detectors, and most residents consent to the service.

Firefighters face changing role

MISNOMER?: Maybe departments should be renamed to reflect what they do most — emergency response

GINGER SCOTT-EIDEN and TAMARA LEITNER
DAILY NEWS-SUN

They save birds from chimneys, administer child immunizations, replace batteries in smoke detectors, chase away swarms of angry bees.

And sometimes they fight fires.

With the number of fires and fire deaths at a record low, firefighters are more apt to spend their time at medical emergencies, special rescues, hazardous material calls and false alarms, rather than battling blazes.

"Those are some of the things we've been doing for a while," said Sun City Fire Chief Jim Sebert.

Sebert said he couldn't say for sure whether the number of fires in the Sun Cities was at an all-time low, but he said the severity of fires isn't as costly as it has been in years past.

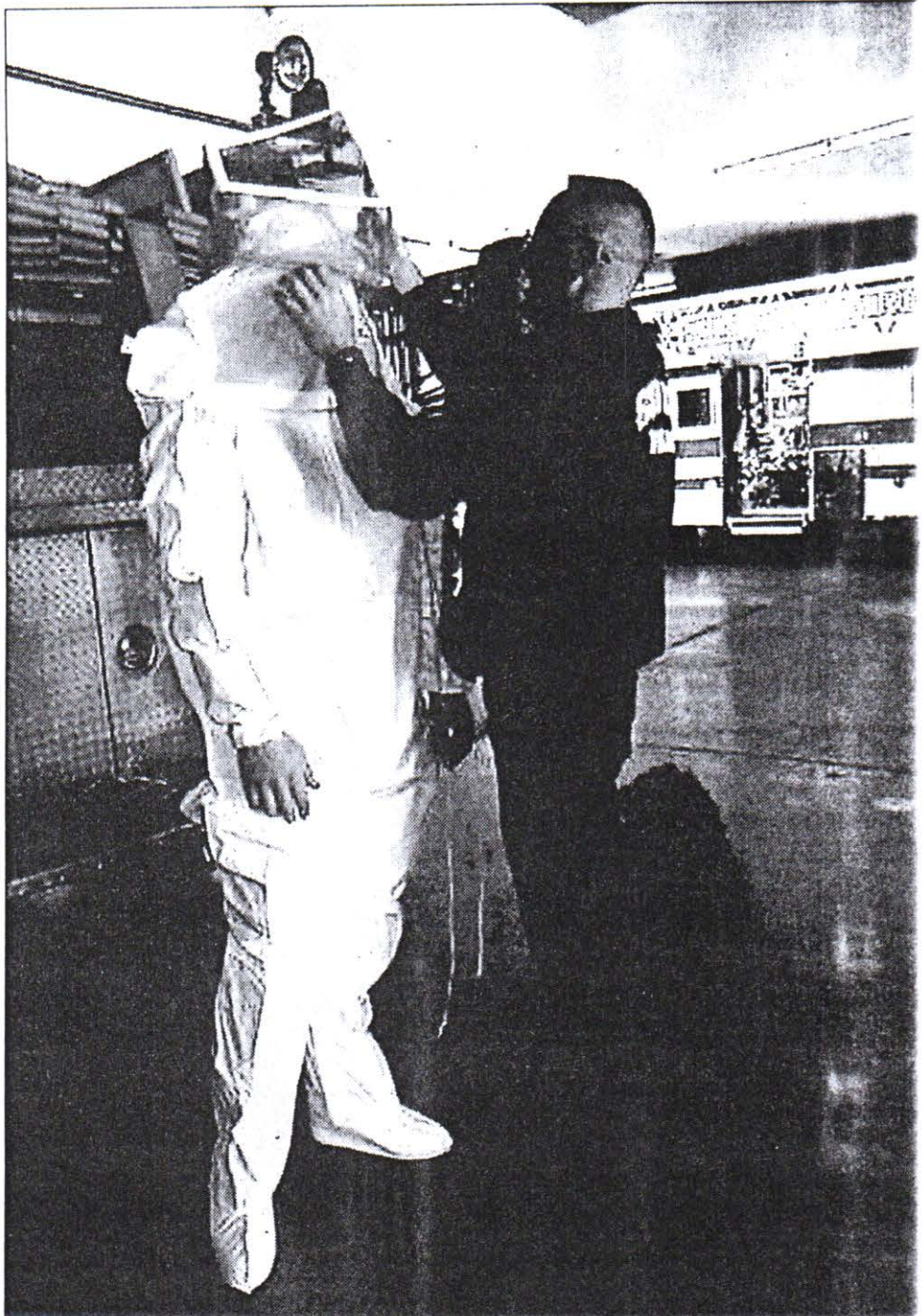
"The severity and dollar loss is way down," Sebert said. "It really started a downturn about 15 years ago when things like smoke detectors became a common installation."

In the last 20 years, the number of fires in the United States has dropped almost in half, from 3.3 million in 1977 to 1.8 million in 1998, according to statistics from the National Fire Protection Association.

Sebert said it's regular practice for Sun City firefighters to remove snakes from people's homes and yards or release a sparrow from someone's vent pipe.

"All of our trucks carry snake poles," he said.

Some of the other non-traditional duties of the department include assisting in bee attacks, vacuuming water from a flooded home or simply giving a lost resident directions to the recreation



MOLLIE J. HOPKES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Dave Evans helps Pat Frey into a protective bee suit at Fire Station 1. The two firefighters and their comrades in the Sun Cities rarely fight fires anymore. Most of the time they respond to medical emergencies, give flu shots, take blood pressure readings, provide counseling and remove snakes and foam swarming bees.

center or post office, Sebert said.

"It's amazing what kind of phone call the fire department can help with in a

time of need," he said.

Fire officials attribute much of the decline in serious fires to smoke

OVER

With the number of fires and fire deaths at a record low, firefighters are more apt to spend their time at medical emergencies, special rescues, hazardous material calls and false alarms, rather than battling blazes.

detectors, public education and better engineering of buildings and sprinkler systems.

"Basically, when you think about it we're putting ourselves out of business," said Chandler Fire Captain Dan Couch. "We're making buildings more and more safe. And, of course, the sprinkler ordinances are getting more aggressive."

Scottsdale averages one or two structure fires a year and less than two deaths from fire per year, which is lower than the national average for a city of 200,000 people.

This may be the result of Scottsdale's innovative sprinkler ordinance. In the early 1970s, the city began using sprinklers to protect large structures. By 1986 Scottsdale was alone when it passed a sprinkler ordinance mandating that all buildings, including single-family homes, have sprinklers in every room. This includes even the smallest rooms from a bathroom to a church confessional.

Scottsdale is the only Valley city to currently enforce this ordinance.

Mesa also is trying to pass an ordinance that would make sprinklers mandatory in all homes built after May 2000. The effort, however, is catching flak from the Southeast Valley Association of Realtors.

"I think there will be a day in the United States — hopefully before I pass away — where there will never ever be a death or injury in a home due to a fire," said Mesa Fire Battalion Chief Gil Damiani. "I would like to think that is going to happen someday. Maybe the fire department is misnamed. Maybe we should be called the emergency department because of what we do. We don't just do fires."

Emergency medical calls dominate 60 to 80 percent of a Valley firefighter's time.

Sebert said about a third of the calls in the Sun Cities are for medical

problems, which is similar to neighboring cities Glendale and Peoria. The difference between medical calls in the Sun Cities and other Valley areas are that a high percentage of the Sun Cities' calls are life-threatening, he said.

"We have heart attacks and strokes in the Sun Cities," Sebert said. "Where as in cities like Peoria and Glendale they have a lot of kids falling and breaking their arms."

Authorities said one of the biggest changes between fire departments' medical services now and 20 years ago is the level of care.

"In the past, the fire department's role was more of the first responder medical service. You would do the basics," then pass the patient off, said Steve Randall, Rural/Metro assistant fire chief.

"It could be frustrating in the old days when we had to wait for a paramedic to get there. There was only so much we could do if we got there first."

Now many firefighters also are paramedics.

"There's a lot more life-saving efforts that can take place right on the scene, rather than just rushing them to the hospital," Randall said.

While the demand for multi-skilled firefighters has increased, the dangers of being a firefighter have also changed.

Twenty years ago, firefighters wouldn't think of leaving the station without their rubber boots.

Now, most don't leave the station without their rubber gloves.

"They wear gloves on every call," Couch said. "Twenty years ago there were no gloves to be had. That was something that no one even thought about. You had blood everywhere."

The role of firefighters continues to change from fighting fires to being more community oriented. But they aren't worried about becoming a dying breed.

"I'm not worried about job security because there will always be a need for what we do," Damiani said.

Sun City rates on rise

District adds firefighters

By GINGER SCOTT-EIDEN
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun Citians began paying for more firefighters and additional safety equipment Thursday when a 9.22 percent increase in the cost of fire and medical protection kicked into effect in the Sun City Fire District.

The district board of directors last week approved a \$5.1 million budget, a more than \$400,000 increase over last year. Sun Citians will know how

much their individual assessments will go up when the Maricopa County Assessor's Office establishes the tax rate in August, a spokesman for the board said.

Last year, Sun Citians paid about \$1.67 per \$100 of secondary valuation, which would be about \$167 for someone who owns a \$100,000 house.

Included in the budget are proposed personnel costs of \$4,243,823 — about \$400,000 more than last year's.

The board also added six

Rate increases

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| SC Fire | 9.22 % |
| Cox Cable | 16 % |

firefighters in this year's budget, said Rev. Irvin Mitchell, board president.

Last year, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration

See Fire district, A5

More channels to watch

By STACY MANN PEARSON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun City cable subscribers will have 34 more television stations to watch — and pay for — this month as Cox Communications adds channels and raises its price.

The beefed-up service, 75 total channels, will cost subscribers an additional \$5.38 per month, bringing the total monthly cost to \$33.40 for Cox's premium service.

New channels will include the Golf

Channel, Home and Garden Television, Turner Classic Movies and the History channel, among other additions.

"We believe they will be very happy with the service," said Bruce Smith, Cox director of media relations.

Smith said Cox service is separated into three tiers, Basic, Expanded and Expanded Plus.

The channel changes and price hike

See Channels in, A5

From A1

mandated an increase in staff so that each crew would have two firefighters inside and two outside a building, Mitchell said.

The department also added a training officer, said Mitchell, who has organized training programs with other area departments such as Peoria, Glendale and Luke Air Force Base.

There is a planned 2 percent cost of living adjustment for all employees as well as wage adjustments for paramedics and engineers, he said.

"Our paramedics were at the

bottom of the scale compared to other area departments," Mitchell said. "We brought them up to the middle of the pay scale. We want to recognize the people who are staying with us."

Also planned is a 28 percent increase in spending on new equipment.

The department is purchasing 40 new air packs for their firefighters. The department has spent about \$8,000 over the last year in repairing old air packs, Mitchell said.

"That was a major piece of equipment that we went looking for," he said. "A firefighter could die without one."

From A1

only effect the Expanded and Expanded plus subscribers in Sun City. Basic service customers will not be affected.

The roughly 1,300 Sun City customers will have access to the new channels by Aug. 25. Work began in north Sun City June 9. The pricing plan takes effect the first billing cycle after the service is added.

Customers were sent notices about the change of service and a list of the additional channels in June. "TV Guide" subscribers will also receive the guide that includes the new channels.

Customers with programmable televisions might have to reprogram their sets to view the new stations, but Smith said most televisions have built-in directions, and owners can consult their manuals for additional help.

"It's a real easy thing to do," Smith said. "If they have a programmable television, the information should be in the monitor that will allow the viewing of the additional channels."

- SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT — JUNE 30-JULY 6, 1999

Sun City Fire District budget adopted

\$5.15 million budget represents 9.22 percent increase

by MIKE RUSSO
Independent Newspapers

The cost of fire protection and emergency medical services for Sun City residents is going to rise 9.22 percent in fiscal year 1999-2000, which starts July 1.

A budget of \$5,152,623 was approved last week by the Sun City Fire District board of directors.

The budget represents a more

than \$400,000 increase over last year's \$4,717,645.

The five-member Fire District board unanimously approved the budget with no objection from any audience member. Board President, the Rev. Irvin Mitchell, also mentioned he had received no letters or telephone calls of objection to the budget.

Several factors contributed to the higher budget, noted Rev. Mitchell.

A major contributing factor is personnel costs.

Proposed personnel costs have jumped from \$3,834,545 this year to \$4,243,823, or 10.67 percent. That includes higher insurance premiums for employees, according to Rev. Mitchell.

A 2 percent cost of living adjustment is planned for all employees, Rev. Mitchell explained. In addition, wages are going to be elevated

for paramedics and engineers.

"We brought the wages of the paramedics up to levels comparable with other fire departments across the Valley, and we raised engineers to the middle part of the pay scale," Rev. Mitchell said.

"We are giving the engineers a raise," Rev. Mitchell said. "We are not at the top of the salary scale, we are in the middle. They had been at the bottom of the pay scale."

If the budget is approved, paramedics will have their compensation bumped up from \$360 monthly to \$400.

That resulted in an increase of \$43,917.78 for the year.

Also, last year's OSHA-mandated manpower increase will be effective for the entire year. The new

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hires were not paid full wages last year while in training, Rev. Mitchell explained.

Expenditures for new equipment will rise a planned 28.38 percent, going from \$74,000 to \$95,000.

Three items comprise most of the increased new equipment expenditure, Rev. Mitchell noted.

The largest equipment expenditure will be a lease/purchase agreement to acquire 40 new air packs.

The contract calls for an expenditure of \$155,000 over three years, Chief James Sebert noted.

The department had originally planned to forestall the purchase for two years but expenditures in excess of \$8,000 since November to repair air packs led to the decision to make the acquisition now.

The purchase will also include some additional air tanks and some equipment to maintain the air packs, according to Chief Sebert.

"The Arizona heat is extremely tough on neoprene (the material used in the air pack seals)," Chief Sebert said. "We had hoped to get two more years out of the existing air packs, but it didn't work out."

Turnout gear will also be replaced in the coming year.

"We had been replacing fifteen sets of turnout gear per year," Rev. Mitchell explained. "This year we are going to replace twenty sets at a cost of \$1,350 each," resulting in a \$6,750 increase.

Also six pro/pac foam proportioners will be purchased at a total cost of \$5,910.

The budget also reflects rising fuel costs.

Sun City residents will know how much their individual assessments will go up when the Maricopa County Assessor's Office establishes the tax rate in August.

This year, Sun City residents paid \$1.6786 per \$100 of secondary

SC Fire board elects officers

By TINA SCHADE
DAILY NEWS-SUN

There was a changing of the guard Tuesday at the monthly meeting of the Sun City Fire Board.

Six-year board member and fire district chaplain Irv Mitchell was elected by the board to fill the chairman post once occupied by Paul Saunders.

Saunders stepped down after a four-year stint as chairman and a total of eight years on the board.

Since Saunders joined the board in 1990, the Sun City Fire District has undergone many changes.

The district updated equipment and remodeled its stations. The firefighters established a union and received higher pay.

Saunders is a former state fire marshal and former Phoenix firefighter.

"It's been a wonderful career and this caps it out being out here," Saunders said.

Mitchell agreed, calling Saunders an institution in Arizona.

"He was Mr. Fire. There's no way you can follow in those kinds of footsteps," he said.

While the shoes may be difficult to fill, Mitchell, who is also a chaplain for Glendale and Phoenix fire departments, said he is hoping to use his ties with the surrounding fire departments to strengthen Sun City service.

As chaplain, Mitchell explains to fire victims what the firefighters are doing and sometimes acts as the district's public information officer.

Along with electing new officers, the board swore in long-time fire district volunteer, Tom Stroozas, Jr. Stroozas who drew 11,173 votes, or 47.73 percent in the Nov. 3 election, was elected as treasurer.

Brayton Willis was re-elected as the board's clerk, a position he has maintained for the last 14 years.

Gerald Goyner was elected to the vice-chairman position.

Cyril Rengel was re-elected to the fire board Nov. 3, drawing 12,798 or 51.89 percent of the votes.

MAY 27-JUNE 2, 1998 — SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT —

Sun City Fire Department offers residents free smoke detectors

Program available through donations of three groups

By MIKE RUSSO
Independent Newspapers

The Sun City Fire Department is moving toward its goal of having a properly functioning smoke detector in every residence in the community with an assist from Del Webb, Citizens Utilities and the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City.

Through the generosity of the three groups, the fire department was able to purchase 300 smoke detectors which are being provided at no charge to Sun City and Youngtown residents. The fire department serves both communities.

"People just need to contact the

fire department (974-2321)," explained Capt. Tim Van Scoter, vice president of the United Sun Cities Fire Fighters Association. "We go to the home and assess their needs.

"We want to use these 300 smoke detectors for people who don't have one now or who feel their present unit is inadequate," he continued.

Capt. Van Scoter explained that homes in Sun City's first phase of development were not equipped with smoke detectors, as was the case some of the residence in Phase II.

Additionally, some of the older homes have smoke detectors that

no longer function properly.

"A lot of the original electric detectors no longer function due to age or the technology of 25 years ago was not as advanced as it is today," he said.

"Our goal is to get an operating smoke detector in every house in the community," Capt. Van Scoter said.

The fire department has been assisting residents with the installation of smoke detectors for several years, providing them at cost, \$15. "However, because of the generosity of Del Webb, the Posse and Citizens Utilities, we received

enough funding to purchase the 300 smoke detectors," the captain said.

"This has been a popular program over the years," Capt. Van Scoter said. "We are now trying to accelerate the program already in place."

The units, installed by on-duty firefighters, are equipped with a battery that will last 10 years, Capt. Van Scoter noted.

"The Sun City firefighters strive to provide more than just emergency services," said Hank Oleson, president of the Firefighters Association. "We work to inform, educate and assist our customers in any way we can. One of these free smoke detectors may save someone's life, which is the goal of our firefighters."

"We are happy to be involved in such a worthwhile program," said Bob Bushner, Del Webb coordinator, public & community relations.

Fire Chief James Sebert praised Del Webb for its continued commitment to the community. "Even though Del Webb is finished building in the community, they are still involved," he said.

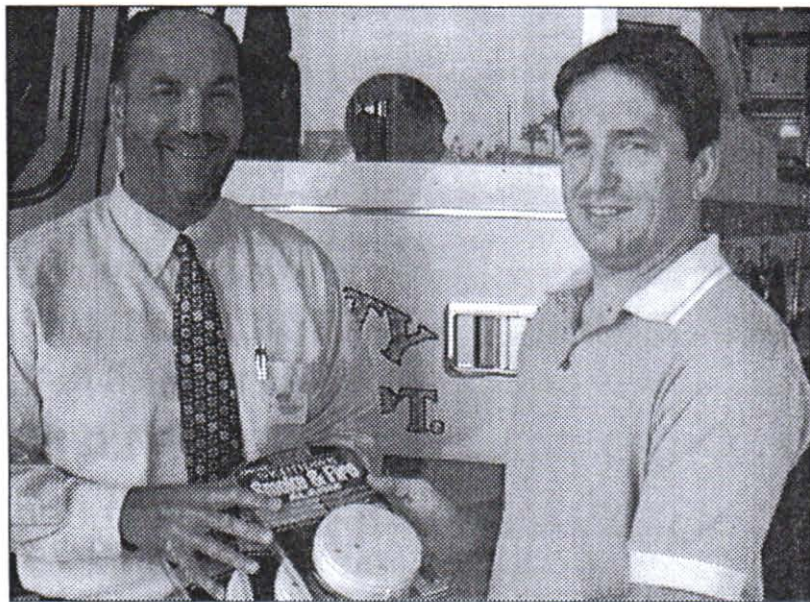


Photo by MIKE RUSSO/Independent Newspapers

Bob Bushner (left), Del Webb's coordinator of public & community relations, and Capt. Tim Van Scoter, vice president of the United Sun Cities Fire Fighters Association, Local 3573, display some of the 300 smoke detectors to be installed at cost in residences in Sun City and Youngtown. The detectors were purchased with funds donated by Del Webb, Citizens Utilities and the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City.

Fire budget increases by \$570,000

OSHA compliance means 6 more firefighters

By DAVID MILLER
Staff writer

You can't fight the federal government.

At least, not when it comes to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Not that the Sun City Fire District really wants to contest OSHA's new mandate.

Still, OSHA's decree has put the district in something of a bind. And it's significantly affected the department's just-released budget, to the tune of more than \$500,000.

On Tuesday, the Sun City Fire Board released budget figures for 1988-99. Coming in at \$4,717,645, the proposed figure was \$569,899 more than the previous year.

Officials blamed a recent OSHA ruling stating that four firefighters must be on hand before crews rush into burning buildings. Sun City firefighters now travel in crews of four. But when vacations or sickness whittle down numbers, missing members aren't always replaced.

The OSHA ruling, with its October deadline, changes that. Now, crews must have four people on hand before tackling a burning home. And that means the hiring of six more firefighters.

"It's a pretty sizeable amount," said board member Brayton Willis of the budget increase. "But it's some-

thing we have no control over."

Other increases came from a 2 percent cost-of-living hike and other miscellaneous costs. For example, no elections were held within the district last year, and no funds were spent for them. With an election slated this year, however, about \$10,000 will be needed for county balloting.

Also, costs for medical supplies and other equipment went up, said the Rev. Irvin S. Mitchell, board treasurer. And a new battalion chief is being hired.

Still, Mitchell called the budget comparable to that of Sun City West. "And they have about 25,000 people while we have 40,000. So I think we've done pretty well with our budget."

Tax revenue for the coming year is

estimated to be \$3,964,434; a county assistance tax is expected to bring in \$300,000.

Charges for service to Youngtown and the Sun Cities RV Park should net \$228,211. And paramedic service revenues should garner \$235,000, for a grand total of \$4,717,645.

In the expenses column, personnel costs are expected to total \$3,834,545. Operations costs will be \$372,000, with administration and other charges adding \$186,100 to the tab.

Contingencies and capital reserves will run about \$350,000.

The public will have several weeks to comment on the budget. Formal adoption will be during a meeting at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 23, in Fire Station 131, 17017 N. 99th Ave.

For information, call 974-4977.

Work starts on Sun City fire station

11-7-87

Added space to house emergency operations

By Brent Whiting

The Arizona Republic

SUN CITY — Construction began Monday on what officials described as much-needed elbow room at the main station of the Sun City Fire Department, 17017 N. 99th Ave.

The project, which includes 2,650 square feet of new space and the renovation of 725 square feet of existing space, will spruce up a structure that was completed in 1972, Fire Chief James Sebert said.

"We have files stacked from floor to ceiling, and we have even utilized the attic space in the building for record storage," Sebert said. "Clearly, we are very proud to be moving forward with this project. It has been a long time coming."

Paul Saunders, chairman of the Sun City Fire District board, said four years of planning and budgeting has allowed the five-member board to come up with the \$392,724 that is needed for the project.

"For several years the administrative staff has been operating in crowded conditions in a space that was not originally designed for the purpose it is being used for today," Saunders said.

The project will add administrative office space, new restroom and sleeping quarters, and an operations center that will serve the area during times of flooding, severe storms, power outages or other emergencies.

It also will provide amenities for disabled people, bringing the station into compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, as mandated by federal lawmakers in the 1990 civil-rights law.

Reliance Build Inc., a Phoenix firm, is the contractor. The work is expected to be done by March 30.

Sun City Fire Board adopts '97-'98 budget

Accepts three-year insurance contract

By KATY BORNHOFEN
Independent Newspapers

The Sun City Fire District adopted its 1997-98 budget July 8, giving property owners a 4 cent break in their tax rate.

The fire tax rate dropped from last year's 1.44 per \$100 of secondary assessed valuation to 1.40 this year.

The new rate amounts to about \$112.55 in fire district taxes for a Sun Citian owning an \$80,000 home.

This year's budget totals \$4,147,746, up from last year's \$3,807,072.

Sun City continues to have one of the lowest tax rates in the state when compared to other districts of its size, says board member Brayton Willis.

There are 153 fire districts in the state, Mr. Willis says. Twenty of those districts, including Sun City, have budgets exceeding \$1 million. Of those, Sun City has the third lowest tax rate, following Fountain Hills and Sun City West, he says.

In other business:

- The board voted to accept a \$34,120 quote for insurance coverage from VFIS. That rate will hold for three years, says Fire Chief Jim Sebert.

In return for the three-year commitment, VFIS reduced its original quote of \$44,563, which the district is currently paying for the final year of a three-year contract.

The reduction of more than

\$10,000 was due in part to Sun City's past relationship with VFIS, Chief Sebert says.

"We've developed a track record of a very low claim history," he explains.

The district received a lower quote of \$31,033 from another provider, Penco.

Although that company came in lower than VFIS, its coverage wasn't "up to the standard that we probably need to be," says Chief Sebert.

VFIS offers training materials and a support network that "probably is well worth the difference in the quote we received from Penco," he says.

- The fire board voted to spend \$18,900 for architectural and design drawings for the proposed construction of additional space at Station 131.

The district has been saving money for the project for the past three years, Mr. Willis says, and should have enough for the entire project by the end of this fiscal year.

"We're just about ready to go," Mr. Willis says.

- Battalion Chief Ron Gilbert reported on plans to sell the district's spare engine to a town in Mexico for \$8,000. The town, which is El Mirage's sister city, currently has no fire engine, Mr. Gilbert says.

- The fire board's next meeting is scheduled 9:30 a.m. Sept. 16 at Fire Station 131, 17017 N. 99th Ave., Sun City.

Woman battles area fires with support of colleagues

By DAVID MILLER
Staff writer

Sandy Young laughed when asked where she'd faced her most dangerous situation. "The bunkhouse," she said.

Joking aside, however, Sun City's only female firefighter says she's not worried about enduring harassment such as that allegedly encountered by a female Peoria firefighter last month.

In fact, Young made it clear how well everyone gets along in Sun City.

"I love it here. It's like home," she said from Fire Station 131, at the northeast corner of Bell Road and 99th Avenue.

Still, she says that not every fire station is so inviting, and that the industry still has a ways to go in fully accepting women.

"It's becoming more welcome," she said.

"As more women go through the academy, (men) are starting to realize that they can do the job, too," added Sun City Battalion Chief Ron Gilbert.

But old mindsets sometimes die hard, and Young says being a woman in today's firefighting field still requires a lot of extra effort.

"You have to work twice as hard, because everyone's sizing you up, every day," she said.

And beyond that, female firefighters are facing greater challenges — some more insidious than others.

In Peoria, an investigation is under way into claims that a male firefighter positioned a video camera inside a women's changing room.

The camera reportedly caught a female firefighter changing clothes. And that's sparked an uproar among Peoria's ranks.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Sandy Young says she loves being a firefighter in Sun City. As a department engineer, she drives a ladder truck and takes calls with a crew of three.

The incident also drew stern reaction from firefighters in other districts, including Sun City Fire Chief Jim Sebert.

"Obviously it's something they're not tolerating, and something we wouldn't tolerate," he said.

And to prevent such incidents from occurring, Sebert says Sun City is trying to prevent harassment before it starts.

For example, at Station 131 a strict bunkhouse policy requires both men and women to don modest sleeping shorts before retiring.

And though Young shares a locker and shower room with her

colleagues, locks are in place for her privacy.

"It feels safe," she said.

Beyond bolted doors, however, few things separate Young and other firefighters.

As a department engineer, she drives a ladder truck and takes calls with a crew of three. And she works out "more than most guys here."

In fact, six days a week will find her in the gym. "We don't have the upper body strength we need for lifting ladders and pulling firehoses," she said.

Young, a nine-year firefighting veteran, also fills in as acting cap-

tain from time to time, which suggests the question: Why doesn't the district bring in more capable women?

"We've had women test. We just haven't hired any," said Gilbert. That situation could change, however, with more women completing the one-year recruiting process.

"There usually seems to be at least one woman in every class," said Gilbert.

Still, Young wouldn't recommend firefighting to just anyone, male or female. "You have to have the personality to do this job. It's not just riding around on fire trucks," she said. "You have to have drive."

July 10, 1997 Daily News-Sun,

Numbers of firefighters in Northwest Valley fire departments

- Avondale: one woman (reserve firefighter), 13 men
- El Mirage: two women, 20 men
- Glendale: seven women, including three captains; 137 men
- Peoria: one woman, approximately 65 men
- Phoenix: 49 women, 1,106 men
- Sun City Fire District: one woman, 45 men
- Sun City West Fire District: no women, 42 men
- Surprise: no women, 12 men

Over

andy Young, a 4-year veteran of the Rural Metro and Sun City fire departments, says she's had a lot of support from her male colleagues. When asked about the videotaping incident in the Peoria Fire Department she said, "That's what video rental stores are for."



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Dedicated drive

Volunteers pumped up

Former firefighters serve Sun City, save department \$90,000 annually

By ANGELA MULL
Staff writer

Time has not extinguished Ed George's memories of his past as a firefighter.

And his volunteer duties as an inspector with the Sun City Fire Department spark his nostalgia.

"I miss the actual firefighting and driving the fire trucks," said the 65-year-old Sun City resident. "You never get that out of your system."

George spends 20 hours a month inspecting local businesses for fire and electrical hazards. He is one of five volunteer inspectors with the fire department; the others are Earl Black, Charles Gerding, Tom O'Brien and Leo Sasseeville.

There are nine volunteers at the department. All work under the supervision of Assistant Fire Chief Steve Morrow.

Morrow said the volunteers are the equivalent of 2½ full-time workers and save the department \$90,000 a year in salaries.

The inspectors, he said, go out and do the things that no one else wants to do.

"Everybody likes to ride the big trucks and go on calls where the action is," he said. "These guys, on a daily basis, do the stuff that is not fun."

If the volunteers were not there, Morrow said, the firefighters would have to divvy up the inspector duties.

"We could not run the division without (the volunteers)," he said. "They're an integrated part of our system."

The duties the volunteer inspectors contribute to the fire prevention services are carried out when they check each Sun City business every six months. Once they arrive on site at a business, they make contact with the person in charge. For George, on Wednesday morning that was Tom Porter, manager of the Osco Drug on



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Ed George inspects a fire extinguisher at Osco Drug in Bell Camino Shopping Center.

10720 W. Bell Road.

After seeking out Porter, George's inspection of the premises included making sure that the Osco's nine fire extinguishers had been inspected within the last year. All had been, but George did make a note of one extinguisher that was hidden behind a silk plant.

► See Duties challenge, A

■ From A1

needed to be more visible, he said.

George is not the only former firefighter volunteering his time as an inspector. Leo Sasseeville, 70, was a deputy chief in New Hampshire for 20 years before moving out to Arizona and taking up volunteer work.

Unlike George, Sasseeville does not miss fighting fires.

"When you get older, life gets to be precious," he said. "When you're young, you're indestructible. Nothing can hurt you."

Sasseeville, who inspects medical facilities, decided to volunteer as a way to occupy his time, and has found that he loves his work.

So does 59-year-old Tom O'Brien, who said he feels his efforts are appreciated at the fire department.

"The type of people I work with have all treated me very well — as part of them — even though I'm just a volunteer," he said.

The relationship between the volunteers and the fire staff is not the only one formed by the volunteers. Black, 76, said the inspectors also forge a good relationship between the fire department and local businesses.

Black said he enjoys his work at the fire department.

"I find it very interesting, very challenging," he said. "It gets me out of the house and among people and makes life interesting."

SC Fire District renews contract

By P. SOLOMON BANDA
Staff writer

The Sun City Fire District board of directors has renewed its ambulance service contract with Rural/Metro Corp. by a vote of 4 to 1.

A media blitz by competitor Southwest Ambulance — designed to rouse community support for its proposed contract through advertisements that promised faster response times, more emergency medical technicians and lower taxes — failed to move the board in its favor.

Despite a mass mailing, full-page newspaper advertisements and the collection of 1,482 signatures in support of Southwest, only eight people from the community attended the board meeting Tuesday in Station No. 1, just north of Bell Road on 99th Avenue.

Rural/Metro, Sun City's main ambulance provider for the past four years, operates its ambulance service under the name Arizona Medical Transport. Its contract expires at the end of this year.

"We're used to them," said Cyril Rengel, a board member who voted in favor of accepting Rural/Metro's proposal. "We like to stay the same."

Southwest is the backup company in Sun City and provides inter-facility transportation for Youngtown.

The difference between the two

ambulance companies is small, according to records at the Arizona Department of Health Services, which regulates ambulance service in Arizona.

Both ambulance companies have been around a long time, are reputable and are authorized to operate within Maricopa County, according to the regulatory agency.

Both companies respond to 90 percent of their calls within 10 minutes and charge the same base rate, set by the state, of \$368 and \$9 per mile. Besides Maricopa County, both companies provide service in at least three other areas.

What made Southwest different from Rural/Metro was a promise to commit to the community a minimum of \$60,000 from ambulance subscriptions, which are insurance policies that cover ambulance transportation.

"We plan on sharing our sales revenues based on a partnership," Southwest representative Scott Long said.

About 5,800 Sun Citizens subscribe to an ambulance service. A change to Southwest would not have affected current subscriptions.

Another source of revenue for ambulance companies is fees charged when a Sun City paramedic rides to the hospital with an injured person.

The fire district receives money from the ambulance service for ad-

vanced life support assistance. The ambulance company in turn charges the insurance company or ambulance subscription service, a practice approved by the state and used by fire departments around the state in order to generate revenue.

More than \$180,000 in revenue is expected to be generated by such fees this year by the Sun City Fire Department.

The Sun City Fire District receives \$74.73 per trip from Rural/Metro for advance life support assistance provided by a Sun City paramedic — a figure that would have been matched by Southwest.

Since the advance life support assistance rate is set by the state, Southwest could not increase that amount in order to give the district more revenue.

Rural/Metro spokesman Steve Savage raised questions about sharing ambulance subscription revenue with the fire district.

"We want to sit down with our lawyers and maximize the money that comes back to the district," Savage said, "but we don't want to get into the kickback range."

Hank Oleson, president of the United Sun Cities Fire Fighters Association, who supported Southwest and was quoted in publicity brochures, said he was disappointed with the board's decision.

Rural/Metro, a publicly traded company with fire and medical ope-

rations in other states, also provides fire service to unincorporated areas of Maricopa County, and operates ambulance services in Pima County, Yuma, and the tri-city area of Mammoth, San Manuel and Oracle east of Tucson.

Southwest Ambulance, a local company, provides ambulance service to Safford and Graham counties, Casa Grande, and the area north of Buckeye to south of Wickenburg. In addition, Southwest has an application pending with the Arizona Department of Health Services to provide ambulance service for the Daisy Mountain Fire District.

The head-to-head battle to provide ambulance service in Sun City is not the first time the two companies have met.

Rural/Metro is fighting a Southwest application, called a certificate of need, with Health Services to provide ambulance service to the Flowing Wells and Northwest fire districts.

That issue is currently tied up in court.

Unlike the Sun City West Fire District, Sun City relies on private ambulance services to provide medical transportation.

Earlier this year, the Sun City Fire District studied the possibility of providing its own service but scrapped the plan.

SC fire chief: Detectors cut losses

Safety ignorance costs Sun Citians during fiery 1994

By JEANNIE JOHNSON
Daily News-Sun staff

Fire raged through the bedroom of Clark and Mary McIntosh just five days before Christmas and caused an estimated \$45,000 in damage.

The Sun City couple had no warning. Their smoke detector's alarm failed to sound.

Last year, families like the McIntoshes lost an estimated \$656,465 in property due to fires — nearly double the loss of 1993. Research shows safety measures such as smoke detectors not only save lives, but also can save property.

"Smoke detectors are there to prevent fire fatalities — a sort of sixth sense to warn people when they're sleeping," said Jim Sebert, Sun City Fire District chief. "Saving property is kind of a by-product of the detectors. The quicker the notification gets to the fire department, the more quickly it allows us to go in and fight the fire."

However, the smoke detectors must be functioning properly in order to be effective. Sebert attributes worn-out batteries with many smoke detector malfunctions.

"The batteries last about a year," he said. "The manufacturers are required to include a chirping sound when the battery is just about ready to run out of power. When you hear the chirping sound, your smoke detector is ready for a new battery."

This annoying chirp may serve as a ready reminder, but it also can prove detrimental. People pull the detector off the wall to get the chirping to stop and often put off getting a new battery.

"You hear stories all the time of families killed and the smoke detector is found on the closet shelf," Sebert said. "Smoke detectors have to be maintained and tested in order for them to be effective."

An easy remedy is keeping a rectangular, nine-volt alkaline battery in the refrigerator. Sebert said it's vital



A firefighter removes a smoldering mattress from a burning house in Sun City last December.

the battery is alkaline.

"These batteries maintain their voltage, then almost immediately go dead," he said. "They aren't like flashlight batteries that start at a volt and a half and then wear down slowly."

For a small investment — \$10 — a smoke detector can save lives and

property, Sebert said.

"Could your protection be better? You bet," he said. "The more smoke detectors you have the better. Most fires in Sun City start in the garage and kitchen. You should have smoke detectors in the kitchen and garage and between those areas and the bedrooms. Many of the Sun City homes were designed with a bed-

room on each end of the house. There definitely should be a smoke detector outside each bedroom."

For a larger investment, a security company can install a system that includes intruder, fire and medical protection. Some builders are even putting systems into the houses they build, said Brad Zellers of Bolt Security.

"I would say 60 to 65 percent of the builders I deal with are putting them in as a standard," he said. "The others are putting them in as an option."

Security systems have a number of benefits — especially for seniors. A smoke detector is hard-wired into the system. Once it is triggered, authorities are notified by a monitor and fire engines are dispatched immediately, Zellers said.

"This way the alarm isn't going to just go off into the night," he said. "It goes into a controlled monitoring location and they call 911 for you. They also have a battery backup which will be triggered in the event of a power outage."

About 90 percent of the security systems on the market also have a panic button which notifies authorities of a medical emergency. Once pushed, Zellers said, a monitoring system calls paramedics.

"They also have pendant transmitters, hand-held transmitters and panic buttons which can be installed next to a bed for handicapped people," he said.

Seniors in Sun City can learn more about home safety at 8:15 a.m. Friday at the Bell Library. The Foundation for Senior Living will present a seminar on safety tips and programs available through the foundation.

"We are in the process of putting together a 100-point check for home safety," said Carey McClure with the Foundation for Senior Living. "That way people can go through a house and check off each point. This service will cost \$10 and give seniors an idea of immediate concerns and what might need to be repaired or replaced in the near future."

Daily News-Sun file photo

Fire loss increases in Sun City

By JEANNIE JOHNSON
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Sun Citians lost an estimated \$656,465 in property from fires in 1994 — nearly double the loss of \$338,820 in 1993.

"As structures get older, we get more fires," said Sun City Fire Marshal Steve Morrow.

Sixteen structure fires resulted in an estimated \$595,550 in damage, 18 appliance fires caused \$21,880 worth of damage, about \$38,665 was lost due to 27 vehicle fires and \$370 in property was lost from fires of unknown cause. Morrow released the totals during Tuesday's meeting of the Sun City Fire District's board of directors.

The department responded to 174 fire calls in 1994, which accounted for only 3 percent of all calls.

The bulk of the calls the department received were for medical emergencies. Last year, 4,668 medical emergency calls accounted for 81.8 percent of all responses from the department.

"As our population gets older, they experience more health problems," said Jim Sebert, Sun City fire chief. "At some point I expect we'll reach a plateau. But I think we can see that the system is working. We have fewer people in code arrest who end up in the cemetery. With the help of the pre-hospital care they receive from our teams, we are seeing more and more people being discharged from the hospital and going on to live healthy lives."

Non-emergency service made up 12.1 percent of the calls. The department received 5,707 calls in 1994, up from 5,577 calls in 1993.

In other fire board-related news:

■ Citizens Utilities has asked the Sun City Fire Department to provide fire protection for its sewage plant located north of Sun City outside the district's boundaries.

Morrow inspected the plant and found no unusual fire risks. However, he found several hazardous materials which would require specialized handling in the event of a spill. The contract with the plant would include basic fire protection, fire prevention and education, hazardous material education and first response in the case of a spill. Most likely, a specially trained containment team would be called in to handle a large spill, Morrow said.

The board voted to table the request until they could come up with a fair dollar figure for the department's services.

■ The board voted unanimously Jan. 3 to sell the district's spare engine, No. 134, to the Christopher Kohls Fire District, which is north of Payson. The truck was sold for \$12,500. The Kohls district will pay \$7,000 down and pay the remaining \$5,500 in July when its annual budget is approved.

■ Sun City Fire Department volunteers received kudos for the number of hours donated to the district in December. Volunteers logged 166.5 hours handling inspections and public education.

Fire district writes 5-year report card

By IAN MITCHELL
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — After five years of running its own fire department, the Sun City Fire District has issued a progress report that highlights the department's 1993 activities and charts five years of fire operations.

The fire district was created in 1966 by public vote, but it contracted with Rural Metro Corp. for fire protection until 1989.

Cyril Rengel, chairman of the fire district board of directors, said moving to a self-operated department was a good decision.

"It's a positive thing," Rengel said.

"It has brought the fire service to a point where we're really second to none around here," he said, noting that most of the firefighters' calls — 81 percent in 1993 — are medical emergencies.

There are 15 fire districts in Arizona, and a chart in the annual report compares Sun City and the other four largest districts. Of the five, Sun City firefighters responded to the most calls in 1993 and the department operated with the smallest budget.

"People don't realize that for what they're getting, we're the lowest as far as cost is concerned," Rengel said.

The fire board chairman credited the unpaid volunteer work of board members and inspectors with helping keep costs down.

Fire Chief Jim Sebert said the volunteer-staffed inspection program, which performed more than 2,600 inspections in 1993, was expanded last year.

"I think that one of the big steps we took was really enhancing our volunteer program," Sebert said. "The training program for the volunteers sort of took off and became much more formalized."

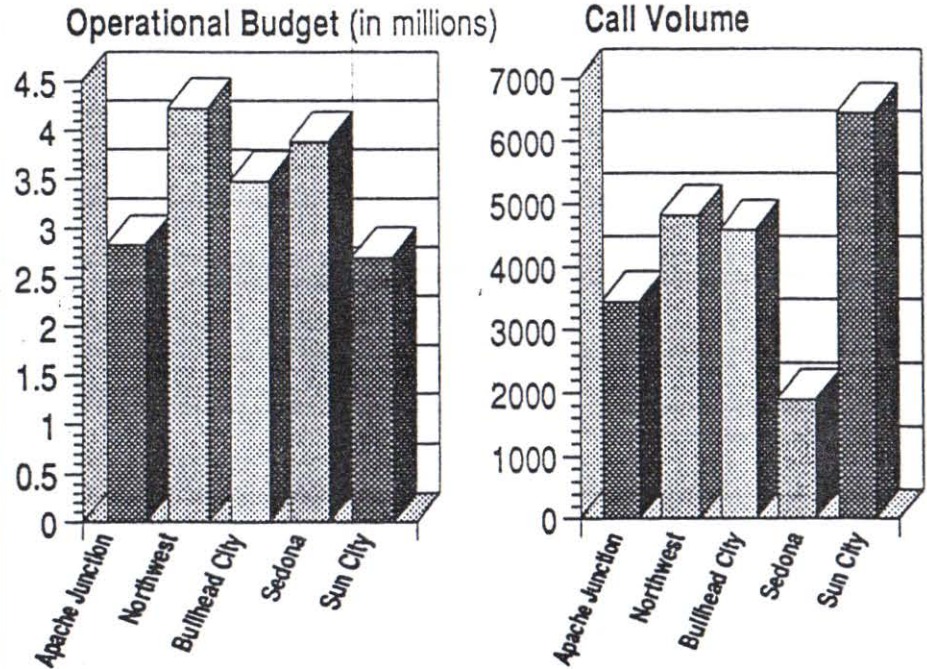
Assistant Fire Chief Steve Morrow, who is in charge of the prevention bureau, said his volunteers have prevented fires.

"When you look at commercial fire loss, it's almost non-existent," Morrow said, "and the direct correlation is those inspectors going out every six months."

Volunteers check new and existing buildings for safety and compliance with fire codes, track hydrant inspections and perform other duties which free firefighters to respond to emergency calls.

Sebert said this year's annual report is more detailed than those of previous years because of questions from residents.

Five Largest Fire Districts in Arizona by Budget and Call Volume



"We've received a lot of requests from the public asking us about our service, asking us about our history, asking us about the kind of calls we go on, asking us about the budget and whether it's high or low compared to other districts," Sebert said.

"We've kind of tried to put all those requests that we get from the public and sort of put them together into one volume."

Morrow, who supervised the production of the annual report, said the facts and figures will show the public "this is where we are now (and) this is where we've been ... hopefully they'll realize that we've progressed to the better."

Morrow said 500 copies of the report have been printed and are available to the public at Fire Station No. 1, 17017 N. 99th Ave.



The Sun City Fire District has announced plans to renovate the fire station located on 111th Avenue, the community's oldest station. Residents east of the station, however, say the district plans to build a block wall on property they own. Fire district officials say the land belongs to the district.

Fire district ponders \$2.8 million budget

Firefighters would
get 4.5% pay hike

By KATHLEEN WINSTEAD
Sun Cities Independent

The Sun City Fire Board will consider a \$2.8 million budget that provides pay raises to personnel, accounts for increases in workers' compensation and adds to the district's capital improvements fund.

The budget for the new fiscal year, which begins July 1, is \$183,000 higher than the current \$2.6 million budget.

The 1993-94 budget includes a 6 percent raise for employees. According to Brayton Willis Sr., fire board clerk, fire district personnel have not had a pay increase in three years.

"Employees will receive a 3 percent raise from July 1 through December 31 and an additional 3 percent raise from January 1 to June 30," says Fire Chief Jim Sebert. The two raises average 4.5 percent for the entire year.

Personnel expenditures, including raises, account for \$2.3 million and are \$135,000 higher than last year. Each firefighter was granted an additional \$50 toward the clothing allowance.

"There are regulations coming out regarding protection," Mr. Willis says. "New fabrics have come out that are more fire-resistant."

Board member George Lange says the pay raises "seem like a lot at this time" and cited the raises fire chiefs will receive.

"The chief's salary will go from \$67,000 a year to \$75,000 plus. Now that's quite a raise," Mr.

Lange says.

"The assistant chief's salary goes from \$58,000 to \$64,000. The battalion chief's salary goes from \$53,000 to \$58,000."

Chief Sebert says, "This will be the last year that myself and the assistant chief receive a 5 percent raise. We are topped out. A number of other people will also be topping out."

The 1993-94 proposed budget of \$2,757,046 is also higher than the current year's budget of \$2,573,991 because of a slight increase in workers' compensation payments which have gone up from \$3.62 to \$4.09 for every \$100 of payroll, Mr. Willis says.

Other increases in the proposed budget are due to normal inflationary costs. Operations expenditures for the proposed budget are \$5,000 less than the current budget, Mr. Willis says.

An increase of \$50,000 in capital reserves will enable the district to replace fire engines in the future, Mr. Willis says.

"We've realized (fire engine) replacement is a necessary item so this is trying to plan ahead for the replacement. We're under budget this year.

"The capital reserves of \$204,000 are being chewed up by improvements to Station 3," Mr. Willis says.

The fire board, during an April meeting, accepted a bid of \$183,556.79 to remodel the station, located at 13013 N. 111th Ave.

At its June meeting, the board will decide whether to adopt the proposed budget of \$2,757,046.

Sun City residents may receive a copy of the proposed budget at the fire board office located at 17017 N. 99th Ave., Sun City.

SC firefighters win chili contest

■ From A1

"I brought two times as much as I did last year. But the crowd was just fanatastic," said Al Smith, the chef at the Lakes Club.

Smith's black-bean Thai chili shared top honors at the cookoff with Palmbrook Country Club's chili largo and vista chili.

Palmbrook Chef Larry Long ran out of 4-ounce sampler cups within minutes of the public distribution part of the cookoff. The cups sold for 25 cents apiece with proceeds benefiting Sun City Meals on Wheels. Luckily, a Promenade merchant had some paper cups to spare.

Long's chili won rave reviews from some pretty discriminating palates.

Chili lover John Snell said Long's concoction was on a par with his wife Jean's chili. That didn't sit well with Jean, who said, "Wait until he wants me to make some more."

Among those braving the seemingly endless line at the Palmbrook chili booth was June Mulligan of Sun City West. To avoid aggravating some ill-timed intestinal trouble, Mulligan was taking her chili samples home in plastic tubs.

"I'll put them in the freezer. Then, when I can eat them, I'll put them in the microwave and heat them up," she said.

The Sun City firefighters' chili supply held out longer than their competitors', lasting a cookoff record 90 minutes. It was also the clear

winner in popularity. Many chili lovers got in line a second time either for a second helping of chili or to snag another balloon animal giveaway.

The firefighters offered degrees of chili — one, two, three or four-alarm batches of the same basic chili ignited with a spice that chef and fire Capt. Deryl Malone declined to identify.

Malone said firefighters eat a lot of chili when the weather turns cold. "I make some smoking potato chowder, too," he said.

It was Malone's chili that had Sun Citians Gene and Stella Argust craving a second helping.

"I'm a three-alarm guy. But I'm going to try the four-alarm

this time," Gene said.

Each of Gene's short pockets contained a plastic spoon. Grabbing them like handguns, he drew the utensils and exclaimed, "The fastest spoons in the West."

Capturing second place in the chili cookoff was Sundae's restaurant. Bobbie's cafe and the firefighters tied for third. The Sun City Country Club earned an honorable mention.

Mike Hudak, chef at Sun City Country Club, said he'll be back next year with a much bigger pot of chili.

He said he was surprised how fast people gobbled up the chili he made from a recipe he perfected just for the contest.

"I think they should do this twice a year," he said.

Tasters fill up on chili

Cookoff brings out
area's best beans

By J.J. McCORMACK
Senior staff writer

SUN CITY — Some like it hot. Some like it boiling.

Some, no doubt, will regret having swallowed so much of it during the Grand Old West Fest chili cookoff Saturday.

Throngs of chili connoisseurs swarmed the Promenade Shopping Center sampling the secret recipes of the six contestants in the cookoff. They formed long lines behind steaming chili pots about 11 a.m., prompting event organizers to start serving hungry chili lovers a half hour early.

An hour later, the chili pots of five of the contestants were dry.

► See SC firefighters, A5

Volunteers operate fire-prevention bureau

Keep losses low in Sun City district

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY — After more than 30 years of fighting fires, Leo Sasseville retired.

Not surprisingly, he quickly became bored.

Shortly after moving to Sun City four years ago, Sasseville returned to what he's known most of his life — fire prevention.

But now he works for free.

Helping the Sun City Fire District is his way of serving the community.

Sasseville, 67, was a deputy fire chief in New Hampshire for 34 years and later managed a fire extinguisher company.

As a volunteer, he inspects hospitals and other health care buildings for fire safety violations. He also gives talks about fire prevention and trains other volunteer inspectors.

+ Without Sasseville and seven other Sun Citians donating their time and talents, the fire district's prevention program would barely exist.

Altogether, the men donate

about 2,000 hours of their time annually.

"If we had to hire people with this much expertise, it would cost us much more than \$100,000 a year," Sun City Fire District Assistant Chief Steve Morrow said.

Morrow, who is certified as a state and national fire marshal, is the district's only paid fire-prevention employee.

Bob Cory, a Sun City resident, started the volunteer program in 1981 when the district was still run by Rural/Metro. Cory spent several years as an inspector.

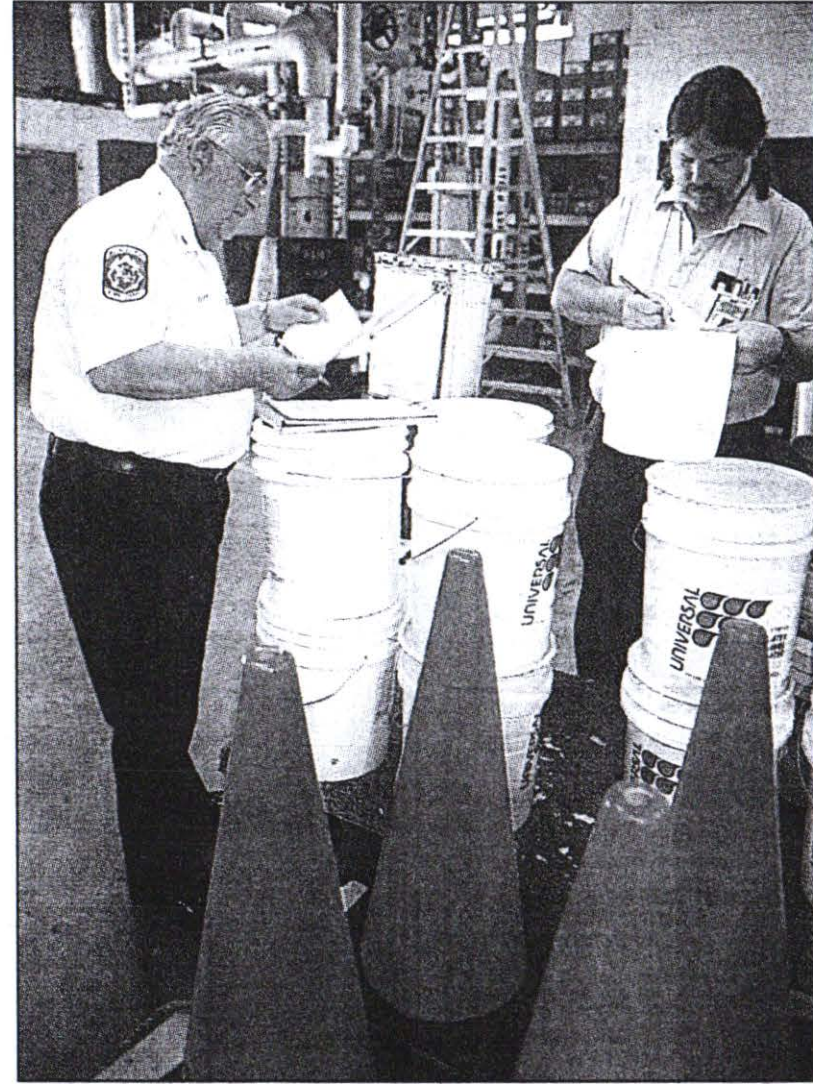
"I don't bowl or play golf, and I was looking for somewhere to volunteer," Cory said. "There was a real need in fire prevention."

Others joined Cory in subsequent years: Bud Stambaugh, Dutch Knop, Walt Hulden, Charles Gerding and Dick Albrecht, who all serve as inspectors.

Because there were enough volunteer inspectors, Cory decided five years ago to donate his time in another way. He files all the written records for the fire district.

Ernie Hulme, another Sun City resident, helped computerize the department several years ago. He puts information from written

See FIRE, Page 3



Mark Henle / Staff photographer

Volunteer fire inspector Leo Sasseville (left) and Boswell Hospital employee Craig Staley go over the paperwork after Sasseville's inspection of the hospital.

FIRE

records into a computer. Details about fire code violations are listed for every business, church and health facility in Sun City.

In March alone, inspectors found 120 fire code violations. Problems involved fire extinguishers, automatic sprinklers, electrical wiring, emergency lighting, unsafe conditions and fire lane violations.

The Sun City Fire District is the only one of the 142 districts in Arizona that has a fire-prevention bureau run by volunteers, fire district board Clerk Brayton Willis said.

"We are glad to have these men," Willis said. "Having fire codes aren't any good if you don't enforce them."

All Sun City and Youngtown buildings — except private homes — are inspected at least twice a year. Hospitals and health care facilities are inspected more often.

Volunteer inspectors also train employees in hospitals and nursing homes on how to move patients quickly out of buildings during an emergency.

The fire-prevention inspections have yielded results, Willis said.

"Sun City Fire District has one

of the lowest fire losses in the United States for a densely populated community of our size," Willis said.

Because of the age of residents in Sun City, it's critical to have an aggressive fire-prevention program, Morrow said.

"Someone 20 years old can inhale smoke and get out of a building OK, but as people get older, their bodies can not take as much smoke," Morrow said.

Another Sun City resident, John Wilson, also helps the fire district. He prepares computerized blue-

prints of Sun City and Youngtown buildings showing the locations of hydrants and sprinklers.

And, of course, the five members of the board that oversees the operations of the department are volunteers as well.

From Page 1

-SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT--JULY 8-14, 1992

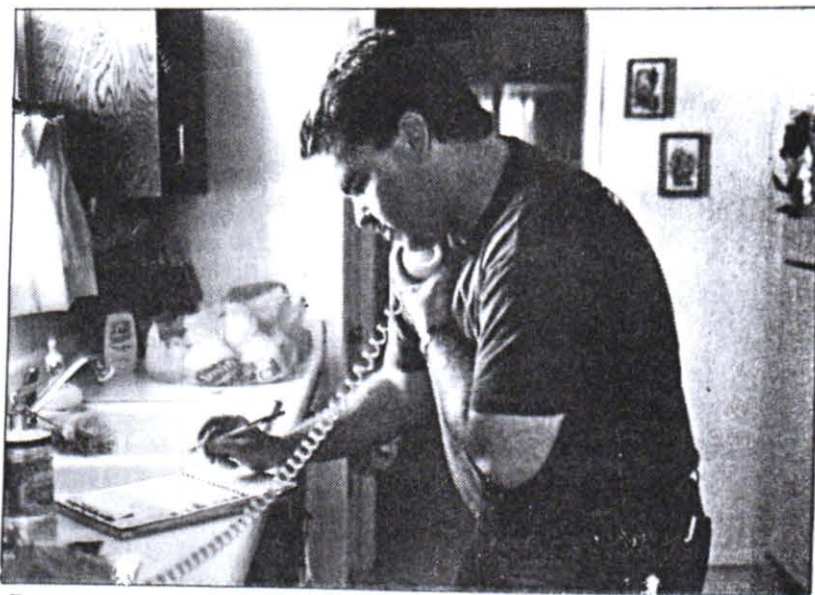
Sun City firefighters find job challenging yet always rewarding

By ANNE RYMAN
Sun Cities Independent

Black smoke pours out of the windows of a three-story apartment building as a fire engine screams to a halt at the curb. Upstairs, a 5-year-old boy cries for help as a crowd of people gather, gaping and pointing at the smoldering structure.

These days, such a scene happens more often in movies or on television as real-life firefighters today get more calls for emergency medical service than they do for fires.

Last year, the Sun City Fire Department answered 78 fire calls while they responded to 4,361 calls



Paramedic Jim Haner phones a doctor during a recent medical call where a woman suffered from abdominal pains.

for emergency service. So while some people may still associate firefighters with battling blazing flames, their areas of service have become broader.

Firefighters answer calls not only for fire but also medical emergencies such as heart attacks, sudden illness or breathing disorders. They even find themselves removing snakes from Sun City yards and rescuing quail from stovepipes.

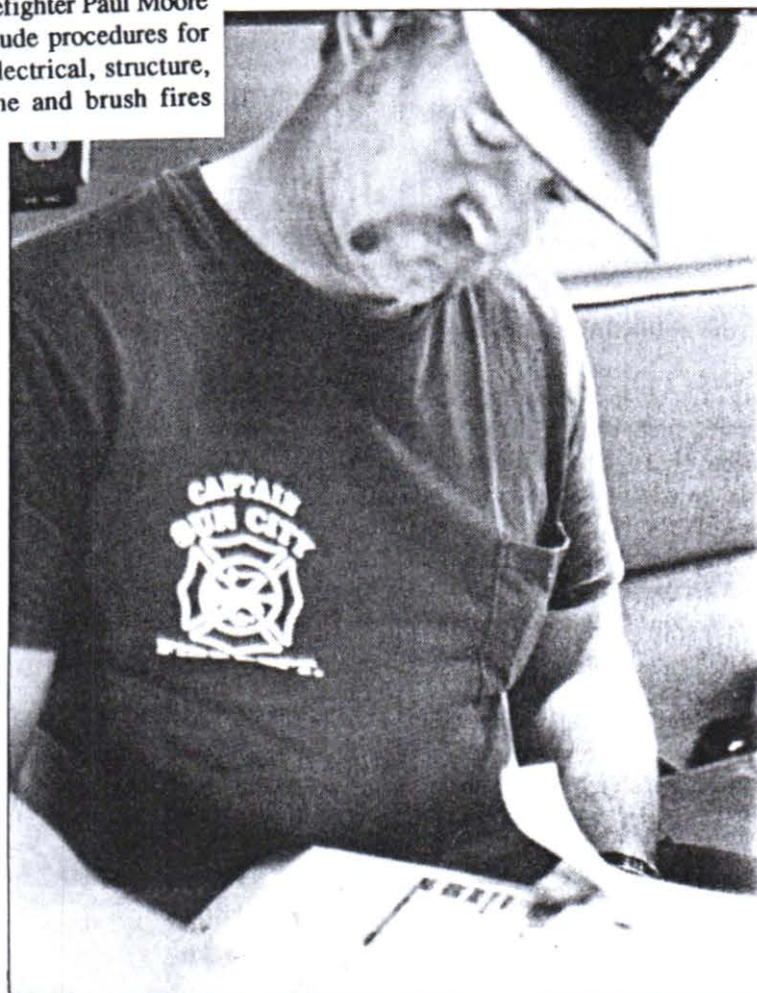
The Sun City Fire Department operates three fire stations, two on 99th Avenue and one on 111th. Between five to six people are on duty at a station at one time along with two Arizona Medical Transport workers.

All 42 Sun City firefighters are

trained in life-saving techniques and more than half are certified as paramedics. The average age is 28 and most are married and have families, Chief Jim Sebert says.

Firefighters attend a 17-week firefighting academy in Phoenix where they learn about equipment, fire trucks, tools and how to operate hoses and nozzles. They learn about the science of fire, how fire travels and different building constructions.

"We learn about every type of fire there is," firefighter Paul Moore says. These include procedures for extinguishing electrical, structure, vehicle, gasoline and brush fires



Capt. Mike Thompson prepares a report as he rides in the back of an ambulance on the way to Boswell Hospital.

over

and handling hazardous materials. Firefighter Dave Kerns says the academy stresses physical training and endurance.

Why firefighting?

For Mr. Kerns, a firefighter for three years, it runs in the family. His father and uncle were firefighters and his uncle encouraged him to become one. An early science project on fire alarm systems sparked Chief Sebert's interest and Engineer Jim Haner says the medical aspect interested him enough to become a paramedic.

Fire station life

Each station has three shifts — 24 hours on and 48 hours off — each beginning at 8 a.m. Each shift becomes its own family with firefighters working, eating and sleeping in the same station. Most say they like the schedule even though it often involves getting out of bed in the middle of the night to answer a call.

"It's a really nice schedule once you get used to it. The guys with families say they like it because they are able to spend more time with them," Mr. Haner says.

While calls take first priority, firefighters follow a daily routine when no calls occur. At the beginning of the shift, they check the paramedic and fire equipment to make sure it is stocked, functioning and in the right place. Each day they have a specific assignment such as yard work or cleaning equipment or the station.

At lunch, they gather on folding chairs around two rectangular tables pushed together and munch cold sandwiches or microwave food, drink coffee, discuss current events and watch the news.

The microwave, the firefighters have found, has become a saving grace, especially when they are called away during meals. Immediately upon hearing a drill during one lunch hour last week, they rose and headed for the door, leaving half-eaten peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches on the table.

If no calls come in during the meal, station members traditionally watch "The Andy Griffith Show" at 12:30 p.m. At 1 p.m., members perform two-hour drills on firefighting tactics and strategies such as driver training, education classes, hose practice and procedures for handling medical emergencies.

At 3 p.m., firefighters do physical training exercises, referred to military-style as "P.T." They lift weights, ride stationary bikes, play basketball or run around the station.

"You have to be in good shape because firefighting is such a strenuous activity. The firefighting

gear alone weighs 20 pounds," Mr. Haner says, and a hose filled with water can weigh 50 pounds.

If the firefighters are not out on an emergency call, they break for dinner at 5 p.m. and shift members take turns cooking.

Challenging calls

While many medicals emergency calls or fires are routine, some test the firefighter's ability and therefore, stand out in their minds.

Capt. Mike Gobster, a firefighter for 18 years, says he remembers rescues the best. He recalls the time a kid was buried up to his neck in dirt after a trench collapsed on him.

"It was challenging talking to him and trying to keep him calm while trying to find out about his injuries without being able to see them."

In addition to the danger associated with fire, firefighters are exposed to needles and blood, two factors that have caused increasing concern because of the transfer of acquired immune deficiency syndrome and hepatitis through body fluids.

Tragic calls

As well as those calls that challenge a firefighter's skills or endurance, they remember the ones that don't end well.

"My most unusual call in Sun City involved a man who burned to death sitting in his recliner. He was burned beyond recognition," Chief Sebert says.

Another incident, he says, occurred when a truck was carrying molten tar down a highway near Tucson.

"The truck overturned and went into a median, the tanker ruptured and surrounded the vehicle. The driver was boiled to death in tar," he says, a scene he describes as "very gruesome."

For some, the best method for dealing with tragic calls is to try not to think of them.

"It's hard to bring up calls because one of my defense mechanisms is to forget them," Capt. Gobster says.

Firefighters don't want to see people die or injured, Chief Sebert adds, but it is their job to help people in these situations.

"When it's all over, if someone lost a life or is severely injured, it's not something we like to think back on," he says.

Firefighters also find it difficult when people witness their home burning.

"You see the tears when everything they've accumulated and the things they have to remember 60-70 years of their life are wiped away."

Capt. Gobster says firefighters must accept that they cannot save everyone.

"We can't turn everything around. We just have to do the best we can."

A good job

Despite witnessing injury or death, firefighters say they have to like the job to continue doing it. Capt. Gobster says he likes the variety of the job and no two calls are the same.

"There's always something you've never had to deal with before. I've been in fire service since 1974 and I still attend a lot of (continuing education) classes."

The department requires firefighters to attend 18 to 20 hours of continuing education each month.

Firefighter and paramedic Paul Moore likes the opportunities and training the job has given him.

"There's a lot of advancement if you're willing to work for it," Mr. Moore says.

Firefighters can work to become engineers responsible for the fire truck, then to captains who take command of the truck and direct orders. At the top of the ladder are the chiefs who direct the overall operations of the department.

Humor in uniform

While firefighting and emergency rescues are serious business, firefighters like to have fun with each other when they are not out on calls. Many tend to have a competitive nature.

"I think it has gone away a little bit, but there's a bit of testing of new employees."

If you're going to go into a burning building, you want to know what you can expect from your co-workers," Chief Sebert says.

Fire board OKs station upgrade

By JACQUE PAPPAS

Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Fire Board on Tuesday unanimously approved a preliminary plan to renovate Station No. 3 in Youngtown.

The plan, which includes widening and enclosing the bay where fire trucks park, will be put out to bid this month, said Chief Jim Sebert.

At the monthly meeting of fire board directors, Sebert gave a slide presentation on an architect's drawings of the renovation.

"We have looked at many options and observed stations in Sun City West, Phoenix and Mesa. But doing something like that would cost at least \$350,000 and, quite frankly, when you look at the expense and our other needs in the future, renovating this station makes the most sense," Sebert said.

The renovation is expected to cost \$125,000 to \$150,000. An architect was paid \$6,000 for the concept.

The plan includes renovating and expanding the firefighter's sleeping quarters, kitchen and bathroom and adding a weight room and lockers. A stone wall will be built to help decrease noise from the station.

The plan results from a fire board study seeking improvements to Station No. 3, the oldest station in the community, built more than 25 years ago.

The station, at 13013 N. 111th Ave., was converted from a home and firefighters have long complained of its cramped quarters, old furniture and an engine garage without doors.

Sun City Fire District has leased the station from Rural/Metro since 1989 when the board voted to replace the corporation's fire protection services with a self-managed fire department.

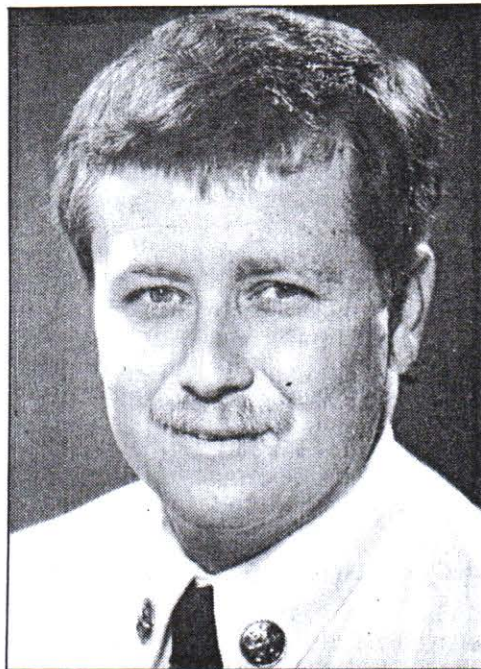
In September, the district negotiated with Rural/Metro to purchase the station for \$39,458.

Although renovating the station is considerably cheaper than building, Director George Lange said he wants to be sure the board is making the right decision.

Lange said he has reservations about the Station 3 garage driveway because it does not provide enough room for fire engines to turn around.

When an engine returns from a call, firefighters have to back it into the garage from 111th Avenue.

Firefighters help direct and stop traffic on 111th Avenue while the



Chief Jim Sebert

engines are backed into the garage.

The new plan provides more space for the engines, but would still require them to be backed into the garage.

"Insurance companies say more accidents happen when vehicles are backing up. I want to make sure we fully consider this," Lange said.

But constructing an engine bay that would allow the trucks to enter and leave the station without backing up would take much more land than the district owns, said Director B. Paul Saunders.

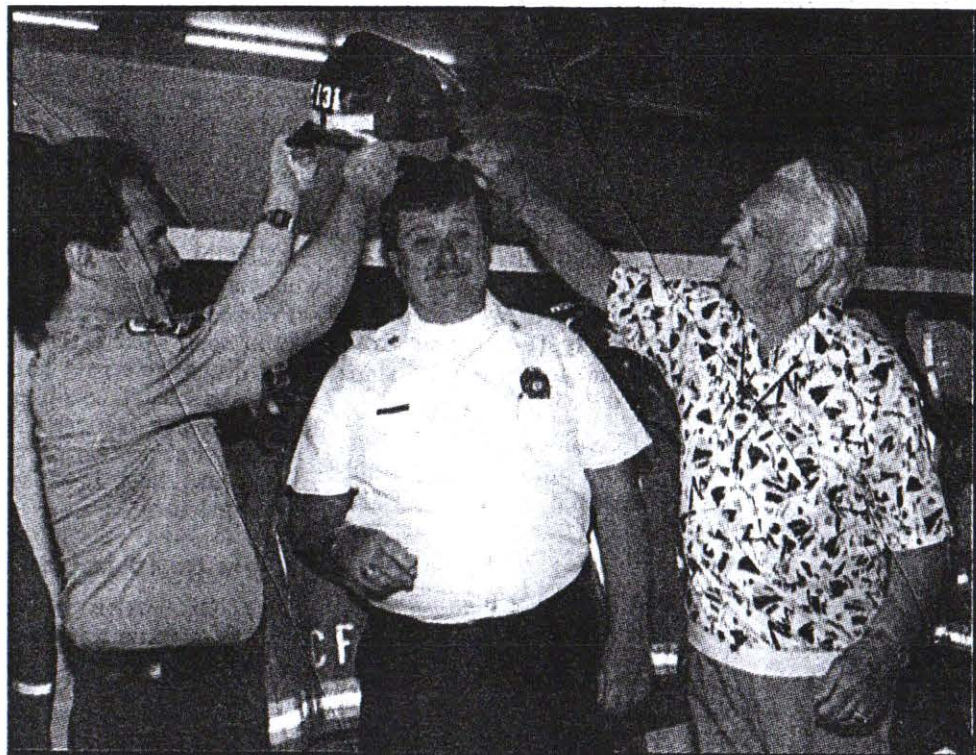
Saunders said he and other board members searched the area for another site for a station to no avail.

"Sun City is built completely up in this area and the few open areas we found are very costly. Besides, this station location is ideal for the south part of Sun City and Youngtown," Saunders said. "I think this renovation is the answer to our problems. We have to make due with what we've got and do it with the money we have got."

Saunders said the station has not had problems in the more than 25 years firefighters have backed trucks into the garage.

One safety measure may be to install special lights on 111th Avenue that would flash when the engines are returning to the station, Director Brayton Willis said.

This way, cars would be alerted to stop, he said.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Capt. Hank Oleson, left, and Jim Pryor crown Sun City Fire Department Chief Jim Sebert as firefighter of the year.

Firefighters applaud Sun City chief's dedication

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Jim Pryor remembers when he and his wife, Elsie, would chase fires in Sun City.

"We'd see the smoke and then go chase the fire in our car. There was always something very exciting about

it," said Pryor, a retired New York City fire chief and former chairman of the Sun City Fire Department board. "Elsie was a real fire buff and was always interested in what the departments were doing."

In honor of his wife, who died last year, Pryor has established the Elsie V.

Open house stirs fire safety interest

Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Fire Prevention Day always attracts a large crowd in Sun City, but Thursday's open house added a new dimension to the word "crowd" when more than 1,000 residents turned out for the annual event.

While the large crowd at the George G. Meade fire station at 99th Avenue and Bell Road surprised and gratified fire officials, Assistant Fire Chief Steve Morrow said he thinks he knows what spurred all the interest this year.

Morrow said the big turnout was partially due to a two-alarm fire Sunday morning that destroyed four condominiums and damaged three others on Oakmont Drive.

"There were more people here this year than have ever been to a prevention day before. It's nice to have the public be involved like this," Morrow

said.

Sun Citian Margaret Luzenski agrees.

"I think that fire really riled up a lot of people," said Luzenski, who regularly attends annual Fire Prevention Day events. "I like the CPR demonstrations, looking at the fire trucks and talking to the paramedics. They've had to come to my house and I appreciate them."

Moore said Fire Prevention Day attempts to promote fire safety and prevention.

Residents brought their fire extinguishers for inspections, signed up for CPR classes and free fire safety home inspections.

More than 700 residents got flu shots and took part in a variety of health screenings offered.

Pryor Firefighter of the Year Award.

Pryor contributed \$250 for the first award, which was given to Sun City Fire Chief Jim Sebert Thursday during the department's Fire Prevention Day events.

"Without Jim, his organization and his ability to work with the board, the

Sun City Fire Department would not be where it is today," Pryor said.

"He went on a limb for us as the first person to secede from Rural/Metro and become a part of the Sun City department. He set the stage. Other firefighters saw his example and followed."

See Award is, A4

Award is a 1st

—From A1

On Sept. 20, 1988, the Sun City Fire Department board voted to sever its contractual ties with Rural/Metro Corp. and provide the community with a locally operated fire department.

Sebert, who started with Rural/Metro in 1973 and was named Sun City chief in 1980, decided to join the self-managed fire department.

Capt. Hank Oleson, who has been a firefighter in Sun City for nine years, was a member of the award selection committee.

The selection committee, made up of a firefighter, captain, board member and member of the public, reviewed nominations from firefighters in the district.

"The group overwhelmingly supports Jim and all the things he has done here in the past three years. He has given us a sense of pride in the department," Oleson said. "It's not easy for us to have that pride because we do not live here so it does not come naturally. But he has helped us cultivate that pride."

Sebert, 39, has supported a number of changes and improvements for the department since the board officially took over Sun City's fire operations Jan. 1, 1989.

Changes include a health plan and pension plan for firefighters, new paramedic equipment, a new engine, cost-of-living and merit increases and a three-platoon system that shortened the workday for firefighters.

"This award is very important to me because it came from the employees. It's an honor I don't think I deserve. It will hang proudly in my office," Sebert said. "The person I wish could be here to see the department now is no longer with us, but her memory will be with this award."

Pryor said he hopes to contribute \$250 for the award every year.

"In New York there were more than 50 different organizations that sponsored awards like this. I will continue this for as long as I can."

Sun City Fire Department

JAMES A. SEBERT, FIRE CHIEF
STEVE D. MORROW, ASST. CHIEF

August 12, 1992

To All Employees:

Each day employees of the Sun City Fire Department provide professional Fire, Rescue, EMS, and community services to the local community with pride and dedication. Occasionally situations arise when members of our department are called upon to perform above and beyond the normal scope of their assigned duty. This department wishes to recognize those individuals by the establishment of a "Firefighter of the Year Award".

Recently a committee comprised of a citizen from the community, a board member, a firefighter, and a captain was convened to outline an award program and select a recipient for the first year's award. The committee members are Mr. James W. Pryor, Board member B. Paul Saunders, Firefighter Frank Levandowski and Captain Hank Oleson.

This committee has established the following program:

1. The Firefighter of the year award will be comprised of two (2) plaques; one plaque will be provided to the recipient, a second plaque will remain in the Department Headquarters noting each year's selection. Additionally, the award will be presented in memory of the late Elsie V. Pryor and involve a \$250 cash endowment. Elsie Pryor worked countless hours behind the scene toward the establishment of our Department in late 1988 and early 1989.
2. Firefighters, Engineers, Captains and Chief Officers will be eligible to receive this award.
3. The award will be presented at the annual Sun City Fire Prevention Day program during National Fire Prevention Week in early October each year.
4. The award will be presented for meritorious service during the previous fiscal year, July 1st to June 30th. However the first award will cover the period January 1, 1989 through June 30, 1992.
5. A nomination review committee will review nominations received from employees of the Department. The committee will be comprised of one (1) Sun City citizen, (1) Sun City Fire District Board member and two (2) members of the Sun City Fire Department; one (1) officer and one (1) firefighter. The individuals noted above will also serve on the initial nomination review committee.

OVER

August 12, 1992

Page 2

6. Employees that witness or have direct knowledge of meritorious service performed by a fellow employee are encouraged to nominate that employee. Nominations may be submitted on a nomination form (attached) or by a letter addressed to the nomination committee. Whether using the form or submitting a letter the following information should be supplied;

- a. Nominee's name.
- b. Incident Number. (if applicable)
- c. Narrative description of the situation for which the nomination is made. The date(s) of the situation should also be included.
- d. Additional comments supporting your nomination.
- e. Your name. (optional) The name of the individual(s) nominating an employee will always be kept confidential. Though optional it is recommended you provide your name in the event that the nominating committee needs additional information to help them select a deserving recipient.
- f. Date nomination submitted.

Nominations for the first award for the period January 1, 1989 (the date this department was officially established) and June 30, 1992 must be submitted by September 11, 1992. Submit nominations through interoffice mail or U.S. Mail to Captain Oleson at Station 133, 13013 North 111th Avenue, Sun City, Arizona 85351. One exception; in the event that your nomination involves Capt. Oleson, then forward your nomination to me at the address below.

This is an award by the members of our department for the members of our department. Each employee is asked to participate in the selection process. You be the judge and decide what situation or event is worthy of consideration. Obviously dramatic fire or river rescues might come to mind and are definitely worthy of nomination. Other situations involving community service and training should be considered as well. Additionally employees that continuously give of their own time to help other employees might be considered too.

I am pleased to announce this program that will recognize those individuals who truly dedicate themselves to the Fire Service, the Sun City Fire Department and our local community. And I am extremely pleased that Mr. Pryor has recognized and honored our department in providing the cash award in the memory of his late wife Elsie.

Your help is needed, please take a few minutes and consider nominating one of your fellow employees for this award. Thank you.

Sincerely,



James A. Sebert, Fire Chief

SC Fire District considers buying Station 3

Rural/Metro Co. to sell fire house for \$40,000

By RICK GONZALEZ
Sun Cities Independent

The Sun City Fire District is one step closer to acquiring the community's oldest fire house from a private fire-protection company.

The fire district's board of directors met last week to discuss the purchase of station No. 3, located on 111th Avenue, at a cost of about \$40,000 from Rural/Metro Corporation.

No vote was made on the matter due to minor details which have yet to be worked out. Officials expect

final negotiations to be completed soon.

During a special meeting held June 26, board members questioned the wording used in some parts of the contract between Rural/Metro and the fire district. The board wants to clarify when Rural/Metro, a private company which furnishes ambulance service, will leave Sun City. Attorneys for both parties also must take a final look at the contracts before any action can be taken.

The fire district already owns the two other fire stations in Sun City,

both on 99th Avenue.

Brayton Willis, fire board clerk, says the station, located south of Grand Avenue on the Sun City side of 111th Avenue, "is in a very, very appropriate location." The station's location allows firefighters to arrive on emergency calls within the department's goal of five minutes, he says. The station serves Youngtown residents as well as residents in the western portion of Sun City.

Mr. Willis says it is important to

See STATION, Page 14



Station No. 3, located on 111th Avenue in Sun City.

keep the station where it is because, without it, "it would be well over six minutes" before firefighters from the other stations would arrive at an emergency in that area.

Mr. Willis says the station also is needed because "there is no other place to build a station" in Sun City. If the fire district tried to purchase a piece of property to build a station, the cost for the property alone would be about \$300,000.

Sun City Fire Chief Jim Sebert told the board he has talked to a Youngtown architect about possibly renovating the fire house because the building needs such repairs as interior work, electrical wiring and plumbing. Board President Cy Rengel says before board members agree to hire the architect, they must decide what they want done.

"I'd like to make it as much like the other stations," he says. Mr. Rengel figures the station's condition will be comparable to the other stations "within two to three years."

"I want to do everything I can to make it liveable."

Board members estimate renovations will cost approximately \$50,000.

Improvements in store for fire station

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — For more than eight years, Capt. Deryl Malone has seen firefighters at Sun City Fire Station No. 3 settle for second best.

Cramped quarters, old furniture and an engine garage without doors.

"The big joke is that this has always been the hand-me-down station. When another station got something new we would get the old one," Malone said. "The conditions have been pretty poor."

But the hand-me-down days for station No. 3 are about over, Sun City Fire District board members said Tuesday.

At a monthly board of directors meeting, the board approved the transfer of \$39,458 from its capital projects account to purchase the station from Rural/Metro Corp.

In addition, the board approved paying an architect \$1,651 to draft the initial plans of remodeling the station, at 13013 N. 111th Ave.

Sun City Fire District has leased Station 3 from Rural/Metro since the board voted to replace the corporation's fire protection services with a self-managed fire department.

Since then, Malone said the board has provided the station many perks such as a new television, computer and air conditioner.

Even so, the station still needed cosmetic and security repairs that Rural/Metro was not willing to do.

"With the landlord a couple of steps removed it was hard to get things done. But this will all change now," said Chief Jim Sebert. "If we were to go out and

secure another location I doubt we could buy property for what we are buying this station for."

The station is the oldest fire station in Sun City, built more than 25 years ago. It was designed as a three-bedroom home to blend in with the neighborhood.

Sebert said the district has been negotiating for many months with Rural/Metro and company founder Louis A. Witzeman to purchase the station.

The deal is expected to go through escrow no later than Sept. 1, said Cyril Rengel, board president.

He said the board will most likely end up spending up to \$110,000 on major repairs at the station in the next couple of years.

"We intend to fix up that station and get it in the condition it should be. There are a lot of major things that need to be done. These people have been living in a sub-standard situation there," Rengel said.

Major repairs will most likely include putting doors on the garage area of the station where the fire vehicles are kept. Other repairs may include enlarging the kitchen and other cosmetic improvements.

Rengel said the station would be refurbished with money from the district's capital improvement fund.

In other business at the meeting, the board announced that it is ready to sign two agreements with Arizona Medical Transport, which supplies ambulance services in Sun City and Youngtown.

The district's advanced life support and labor services agreement will allow Sun City to be reimbursed by AMT when firefighters give paramedic services on an emergency call.

Beginning January, Sun City will have two paramedics assigned to every engine on the fleet. That distinction entitles them to a reimbursement for paramedic services instead of having AMT bill for paramedic services.

Sebert said the department estimates it will get \$50,000 a year in reimbursements.

"We have been negotiating for about six months to try and provide a system in Sun City that mirrors those in the surrounding communities. This is also done in Peoria, Glendale and Phoenix," Sebert said. "This really helps us offset the cost of sending our firefighters to paramedic school."

The district's ambulance transportation service agreement with AMT essentially "puts down in writing things we've already been doing," Sebert said.

He said the agreement guarantees that AMT will provide three ambulances for the exclusive use of emergency calls in Sun City and Youngtown. The agreement also allows for backups when the volume is high.

In other business:

■ The board presented Sun Citian Morris Heitowit, a retired member of the New York City Fire Department with a certificate of appreciation for his work in a myriad of fire prevention projects.

■ There will be three posts on the five-member board up for grabs in November. Directors George Lange, Brayton Willis and John Bergvall's terms expire. They are all eligible to run for re-election.

■ The board cancelled its regular board meeting in August. The next meeting will be at 9:30 a.m. Sept. 15.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Engineer Harold Brown shines an engine based at Station 3, 13013 N. 111th Ave. The Sun City Fire District, which plans to buy it for about \$40,000.

Fire board approves budget

Taxes expected to be raised

By Jeff Nelson
Special to Community

SUN CITY — The Sun City Fire District board of directors has approved a \$2.57 million budget for the 1992-93 fiscal year that includes no cost-of-living increases for employees, about \$40,000 to purchase a fire station, and a slight tax hike.

The budget was unanimously approved by the five-member board at its June 16 meeting.

Merit step increases of 5 percent will be paid to 33 full-time employees under the new budget, Chief Jim Siebert said.

However, because of a cost-of-living freeze, the 13 people currently at the top of the pay scale will not receive any increases, he said.

The Fire District is also working on a deal to acquire the Rural/Metro-owned fire station at 13013 N. 111th Avenue, presently leased by the Fire District to serve residents living in Youngtown and the western portion of Sun City.

The Rural/Metro station is one of three stations used by the Sun City Fire District. The other two are owned by the fire district.

Board members have tentatively scheduled a special meeting Friday to discuss details of the purchase.

If the station is purchased, it will require at least \$50,000 in renovation work, said Brayton Willis, clerk of the board.

He said the building is in serious disrepair, and that it needs a new driveway, electrical wiring, plumbing and interior work.

While Fire District officials know what
See BOARD, Page 5

BOARD

they need to spend during the 1992-93 fiscal year, what they will receive won't be known until August.

That's when the county determines what Sun City's assessed valuation is, Willis said.

The Fire District's budget relies on county assistance and money raised through a Fire District tax on property in Sun City.

The Sun City Fire District tax rate is 95 cents per \$100 assessed valuation, which is one of the eight lowest in the state.

For a house assessed at \$50,000, the Sun City Fire District tax amounts to about \$47 a year, and the county assistance tax is 42 cents a year, Willis said.

Willis said he expects the Sun City Fire District tax to go up at least "a few cents" because of a law enacted June 9 that puts a \$300,000 cap on the amount the county will pay to support a fire district.

The law is aimed at protecting those who do not live in one of the state's 139 fire districts but have had to pay a fire district tax.

Its passage is expected to place a bigger burden on those living in fire districts, including Sun City.

This year, the Sun City Fire District received \$360,000 in county fire district assistance taxes and expected \$460,000 for the 1992-93 year, based on the old law.

Under the new law, the district can expect no more than \$300,000, and the fire district tax paid by Sun City property owners will

"The fire tax could go up a few cents on properties in Sun City, but we won't know until our assessed valuation comes in."

Brayton Willis
Clerk
Sun City Fire District board

have to be increased to make up the difference.

"The fire tax could go up a few cents on properties in Sun City," Willis said, "but we won't know until our assessed valuation comes in."

Sun City residents would see the tax increase on their October tax bills, he said.

In other business, the Fire District is considering purchasing a smaller ladder truck this year, using money from its capital improvements budget.

Siebert said the ladder tender truck would replace the larger ladder truck, presently used on house fires and medical calls.

Fire District officials are hoping that by using the larger ladder truck only for larger commercial building fires, they can extend its life by 10-12 years.

Large ladder trucks cost as much as \$550,000, as opposed to \$100,000 for the smaller vehicle, he said.

Sun City Fire Department called bargain for the service given

By BRAYTON P. WILLIS

The Sun City Fire Board had high hopes of lowering the fire tax for fiscal 1992-93, but the Legislature and special interest groups had other ideas.

Under the present Fire District Assistance Tax Law, ARS 48-807, we would have received approximately \$460,000, or \$138,000 more than in fiscal 1991-92.

House Bill 2279, introduced in the current Legislature, would have eliminated all FDAT for all 139 fire districts in Arizona.

The Arizona Fire District Association battled long and hard, and a compromise was reached, which limits the 13 larger fire districts to a maximum of \$300,000 yearly, a loss of \$160,000 to Sun City.

The proposed budget for the Sun City Fire Department was passed on May 19, and showed a reduction of \$11,568 over the 1991-92 budget.

If the present FDAT Law had remained in effect, plus the budget reduction, Sun Citians could have looked forward to a reduction in our fire tax, even

My view

though the assessed valuation of properties in Sun City dropped below \$200 million. The assessed valuation here has gone down steadily, from \$216 million in 1989, a major factor in determining the fire tax.

No pay raises were granted fire department personnel for this coming year, which is the case in fire departments all over the Valley. The Fire Board must plan for the purchase of Station No. 3 on 111th Avenue, plus setting aside money for its repair and renovation.

The Sun City Fire Department is answering more than 5,000 calls per year, which amounts to more than 2,000 more calls than any other fire district in Arizona.

Since 84 percent of the 5,000 calls are medically related, the Fire Board has found it necessary to expand its paramedic force to cope with the ever-increasing medical assistance needed for our aging population. At present, we have 25 paramedics for Sun Citians' assist-

ance.

Further, to preserve the life of our 1975 ladder truck, the board is considering buying a smaller unit to relieve the ladder truck from medical runs. The cost of a ladder truck would be well over \$650,000.

The Fire Board has as its goal to arrive on the scene of its 5,000 calls in less than five minutes. Anyone familiar with fire and life safety knows that these first five minutes are critical. Letters and calls to the Fire Board all contain high praise for the young men and women who are devoted to Sun Citians.

So long as our calls remain over 5,000 yearly, there is no way we can reduce our services, even though as said before in this letter, the Legislature would have eliminated more than \$400,000 from our revenues.

Thirteen fire districts in Arizona have budgets of over a million dollars. The Sun City Fire Tax of 95 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation still remains far below the fire tax of the other 12.

I personally view my 1991 fire tax of \$48.70 as a real bargain and very cheap insurance, based on the quality of services offered by the Sun City Fire Department and its paramedics. One trip to a fine restaurant or a trip to Laughlin or Vegas would cost far more.

Some recent letters to the editor concerning the Fire Board have contained erroneous figures and statements, and in my opinion were meant solely to undermine our efforts toward the life safety of Sun Citians.

All the decisions of the board have been by majority — a 4 to 1 vote. This majority is well versed in matters of fire protection, medical assistance, management and the financial aspects of fire department operations.

The Fire Board has a Speakers Bureau and would be pleased to address this subject with any organization that needs further information or enlightenment. Call 974-4977 for a board representative.

Willis is clerk of the Sun City Fire Board.

Fire district is adding paramedics

Will have pair on each vehicle

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY — The Sun City Fire District board plans to place two paramedics on each fire response vehicle to provide better emergency medical service.

"We're trying to do what Glendale, Phoenix and Peoria do, which is to have two paramedics on each engine," board clerk Brayton Willis said. The board made its decision for the paramedics Feb. 18. "With a heart attack or a major accident, you need all the paramedics you can get," Brayton said.

Currently, one paramedic is assigned to each unit.

To provide two paramedics on each of the district's four fire units during all three shifts, 24 certified paramedics will be needed.

The fire district has 15 certified paramedics. Four others have completed training and await national certification, and five firefighters will complete paramedic training in the fall, Chief James Sebert said.

"It will be more cost-effective to be able to provide paramedic service with one fire unit instead of two," Sebert said. "Until all the paramedics are certified, we will be responding about 35 percent of the time with two paramedics on a unit."

In 1991, the Sun City Fire District's 43 firefighters responded to 4,361 emergency medical calls in Sun City and Youngtown. That represented 83.2 percent of the total calls for service, Sebert said.

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Of the medical calls, 2,647 required paramedic services, Sebert said.

All firefighters are certified emergency medical technicians and can handle "basic life support" such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, controlling bleeding and splinting a fractured leg, Sebert said. A paramedic is trained in advanced life support techniques, including administering drugs under supervision of a doctor.

Average response times in 1991 improved over the previous year — 4 minutes and 1 second, compared with 4 minutes and 14 seconds.

But Sebert said the district would have done even better if Bell Road had not been under construction.

"We were averaging 3 minutes and 50 seconds until the Bell Road construction started, and that slowed us down a bit to have to go through the barricades and traffic," Sebert said. "After the construction is over with, we will do even better."

One of the reasons response time was improved is that the fire

district put medical equipment on its ladder truck so it could be used to respond to medical emergencies.

"It's controversial because people wonder why a ladder truck responded, but if they're having a heart attack and it responded, the person receiving the service understands the obvious value," Sebert said.

Sebert said response time also was quicker because he started having "dedicated" drivers who became familiar with certain parts of Sun City.

"Before, there was a different driver every day of the week. Now, they know the street layouts and the operation of the vehicle," Sebert said.

Meanwhile, it was announced at the board meeting that Jeff Hummel, a Sun City Fire District paramedic, was selected as the outstanding paramedic for 1991 by Walter O. Boswell Hospital. He was chosen from the 38 paramedics stationed at Boswell. He received \$100, a watch and a plaque. It was the second consecutive year a Sun City Fire District paramedic received the honor.

In other business, the board decided to offer fire protection to the Sun Cities Art Museum, 17425 N. 115th Ave., at a cost of \$100 per year. The museum's contract with Rural/Metro expires in April, and museum officials had asked the

fire district if it would provide fire protection because of Sun City's proximity to the district's fire station at 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

The board also approved purchasing \$7,000 in fire equipment.

Fire district taxes up in Sun Cities

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITIES — Residents of Sun City and Sun City West will be paying higher fire district taxes this year.

The Sun City Fire District tax increased from 92.6 cents to 95.8 cents per \$100 assessed valuation, while the Sun City West Fire District tax went from \$1.186 to \$1.20 per \$100 assessed valuation.

Sun City West District Board Chairman Jim Maley said he was surprised that the tax rate increased.

"We expected a slight decrease because we thought the assessed valuation would go up higher, but we don't know what they're putting on the records until they do it," Maley said. "We're pleased it is only a slight increase, and we expect the tax rate to be going down in the future."

Sun City West's assessed valuation is \$122 million, up from \$115 million in 1990.

Meanwhile, Sun City Fire District Board clerk Brayton Willis said the slight increase in Sun City's tax was expected because he had been told by county officials that the community's assessed valuation would decline. The assessed valuation decreased from \$214 million in 1990 to \$200 million this year.

Maricopa County Assessor Ira Friedman said Sun City's assessed valuation decreased due to several reasons, including the economy.

"We've had a downturn in most areas of the Valley," Friedman said. "The lack of new construction combined with the decrease in values of existing properties caused it."

He said valuation of shopping centers has decreased because the original assessment was based on inflated property values during the mid-1980s.

"We're bringing property values into reality," Friedman said.

In Sun City and Sun City West, taxes paid by residents are used to finance the bulk of the fire departments' expenses. The rest is paid by the County Fire District Assist-

See FIRE, Page 4

Fire budget receives bonus

SC district to get more county funds

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — There's good fiscal news on the horizon for the Sun City Fire District.

During the 1992-93 fiscal year, the district will get 10 percent more than usual in county fire district assistance tax money, members of the fire board announced Tuesday.

Because of a change in the Arizona Revised Statutes, fire districts are prohibited from

getting more than 10 percent of the tax money received the year before from Maricopa County.

In years past, districts were getting as much as 40 percent of their annual budgets from the county.

The new law, however, allows fire districts to get 20 percent in county tax money every five years.

County and fire district officials had been debating whether the 20 percent should be paid in 1991-92 or 1992-93 and the issue was finally decided when H.B. 2283 was signed into law.

The bill fixes the start of the 20 percent clause in 1992-93.

"If the law did not change and we still got 40 percent of our budget and our assessed val-

uation was \$214 million, the taxpayers would have paid 66 cents this year instead of 92 cents," said Fire Board Clerk Brayton Willis.

Board Vice Chairman George Lange said he has heard a rumor that there will be an attempt next year to eliminate the county assistance tax altogether.

Willis said he does not know of any organized effort to eliminate the tax next year.

"People are always trying to take the county assistance tax from the fire districts," Willis said. "Our fire tax would probably jump to \$1.50 if they took that money from our budget."

In 1984, the Sun City Fire District got \$500,000 from the county.

Because of the change in the law, the district in 1990-91 got \$369,487. If the old law was still in effect, the district would have gotten \$950,000.

In 1991-92 the district will get 10 percent of its \$2.58 million budget. The fire tax is expected to increase by a few pennies from the current 92 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation.

"Every once in a while people take a shot at us ... but they never bother to read that our assessed valuation is going down and that we only get a percentage of county money that we used to. We have no control over all these things," Willis said.

The assessed value of a community has a direct affect on the

See Fire, A5

—From A1

amount of tax revenue in a fire district.

The Maricopa County Assessor has estimated that Sun City's assessed valuation will drop from \$214 million in 1990 to

\$200 million in 1991-92.

The decrease in total property values means a tax increase for property owners in the district.

In other business at Tuesday's board meeting, Willis said the

district has received a \$2,262 reduction in its annual insurance premium.

Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Service reduced the premium after discovering that

firefighters in the district undergo extensive training.

Since January, district firefighters have had 4,319 hours in training in a variety of areas from emergency medical services to rescue practices.

Sun Citians oust fire board chairman

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

PHOENIX — Everett Johnson, chairman of the Sun City Fire District board, was ousted from his post Tuesday after 10 years of service as a volunteer director.

Incumbent Cyril Rengel and newcomer B. Paul Saunders were the winners in the four-way race for two four-year terms on the Sun City fire board.

Unofficial election results show Saunders with 9,815 votes; Rengel, 7,768; Johnson, 6,957; and Bert Brosius, 4,741.

Johnson said he was shocked that he was not elected because he campaigned aggressively for his re-election.

Negative campaigning by board clerk Brayton Willis may have influenced voters in Sun City, Johnson said.

Willis wrote a number of letters to local newspapers blasting Johnson as a do-nothing board member who persuaded other directors to elect him as chairman before the issue was discussed in executive session.

"It's strictly a personal thing," Johnson said. "I thought it would be a bit childish if I were to answer his attacks. If I was as stupid and dumb as he wants to believe, I don't think I

would have been chairman for four years."

"Maybe it was jealousy," Johnson said. "But I think I did my share for the fire board and served the people well."

Johnson said his experience on the board was his most valuable asset.

Other candidates said their professional fire experience was an asset.

Saunders said he did little campaigning for the office and wanted to "just let the voters decide on my credentials."

Saunders, 63, worked for the Phoenix Fire Department for 28 years and was Arizona state fire marshal for 11 years. He was out of town today and unavailable for comment.

Rengel, 77, who has been on the fire board for eight years, is vice chairman. He worked for the Minneapolis Fire Department for 25 years and has extensive firefighting experience in a number of states including Arizona.

"I kind of expected to do better," Rengel said. "I put a lot of effort into it. I'm happy to be elected again. We've got a program here in its infancy and it needs a lot of work. We have a good foundation and I think we're on the way."

Rengel said that some people may have voted against incumbents because the fire tax went up.

"The ones who took the time to find out all the services they



Daily News-Sun photo by Frances Guarino

WATCHING, WAITING — Everett Johnson and his wife, Josephine, watch election results from their home. Johnson,

chairman of the Sun City Fire District, was defeated Tuesday in a bid for re-election to the board.

got for the increase don't complain. Some people just look at the bottom line — their taxes," he said.

The Sun City Fire District tax increased from 63 cents last year to 90 cents this year because of a drop in the commu-

nity's assessed valuation, a cut in tax assistance from the county and an increase in services.

Brosius, 69, worked for several telephone companies and has been an active member of the Sun City Posse since 1982.

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Wednesday, Feb. 21, 1990

Role changes for firefighters

Medical calls outnumber fires

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Local firefighters don't spend most of their time putting out blazes these days.

That's because they are too busy playing doctor.

In January, 87 percent of the Sun City Fire Department's call volume was for emergency medical services.

Fire Chief Jim Sebert said the image of firefighters battling buildings in flames has been gradually replaced with the medical assistance they provide to residents in the community.

Sebert said the trend will be more evident in the Sun City department with the advent of more paramedic training.

"Our paramedic and emergency services have added so much. In the past everybody thought the firefighters just sat

around and played checkers all day," Sebert said. "We have always responded with paramedic services, but now we will respond with more paramedics so the level of service is better. It's like a portable emergency room."

Last month the department responded to 503 emergency medical calls in Sun City and Youngtown and two fire related calls, Sebert said.

In January 1989, the department responded to 369 emergency calls.

Sebert said he does not know why there was such a significant increase in emergency related calls, but does not want to speculate with only a one-month track record.

"This could be a seasonal thing or could just be that we have seen a significant increase in medical calls because the

population in Sun City is getting older and needs more assistance," Sebert said. "Indeed we're on the home front here in Sun City with an increase of 114 medical calls. But it's important for people to know that they should not call us in lieu of a doctor."

Sebert said Sun City is increasing the service level of medical care firefighters provide through training programs.

Last month the department reported about 965 hours of organized training of which 531 hours were for eight firefighters training to be certified paramedics.

"It's just an increase in the level of service," Sebert said. "There are large cities where the fire department does not provide emergency services because they have separate departments for that."

Sebert said department staff members are certified as an Emergency Medical Technician.

Some firefighters are Intermediate Medical Technicians and there are two Certified Emergency Paramedics.

Cyril Rengel, vice president of the Sun City Fire Board, said the paramedic training will help the department provide the community with a higher level of service.

"It's a positive step and advantage of the Sun City Fire Department," Rengel said at a monthly board meeting Tuesday.

In other business at the meeting, board member George Lange proposed a motion to increase the gasoline allowance for volunteers in the Fire Prevention Bureau by 50 percent.

The board unanimously voted to increase the allotment for the five volunteers from 10 gallons a month to 15 gallons.

In January the volunteers conducted 328 inspections,

(sun)



Daily News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

Christopher Bracken, the Sun City Fire Department's first paramedic, checks his gear every day to make sure he is equipped for emergency medical calls. Eight firefighters are now in training to become Certified Medical Paramedics.

Fire District to fight bill to reduce funds

By PEG KEITH
Sun Cities Independent

Residents of towns and cities are subsidizing fire districts in unincorporated communities, says state Rep. Lela Steffey.

The Mesa Republican has introduced a legislative bill that would require fire districts to finance their budgetary operations with funds collected from property owners in their own particular districts.

The bill would do away with the Fire District Assistance Tax, which is collected by the various counties.

Brayton Willis, clerk of the Sun City Fire District board of directors, suggests that his fellow residents in the Sun Cities should take action immediately to counter House Bill 2251.

"About all they can do is to call a senator or representative who is on Rep. Steffey's committee (Counties and Municipalities). And the only one on her committee from this area is Rep. Kyle W. Hindman (R-Dist. 15)," he says.

"My suggestion would be to get hold of Reps. Steffey and Hindman and let it be known that if they took 20 percent of our budget — which amounts to \$400,000, annually, of funds from the Fire District Assistance Fund — we would be going from 63 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation to 89 cents."

His concern, he says, is not just for the Sun Cities. "There are so many districts out there operating on a shoe string."

Mr. Willis says there are 35 fire districts in the state with budgets under \$25,000; another 27 fire districts with budgets of \$25,000 to \$50,000 and 20 districts with budgets between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

"There are 18 districts with budgets between \$100,000 and \$200,000," he says. "A fire truck takes \$200,000. What are the little districts doing? They're taking hand-me-downs."

The clerk of the board says that in Sun City, each fire truck is furnished with \$20,000 worth of life-saving equipment.

"Every single member of the Mesa Fire District is paid," says

Mr. Willis. "There are 2,600 volunteers serving in Arizona fire districts."

"What consideration does Mrs. Steffey have for the morale of the people who work five days, then volunteer, weekends and nights? They keep working and scraping, trying to do the same things the big boys down here (in Maricopa County) are trying to do."

Setting up a scenario, Mr. Willis pictures Mrs. Steffey with family and friends traveling to the Pinetop-Lakeside area on the Mogollon Rim. What if one of the party suffered a heart attack, or was involved in an accident?

"It's going to be up to one of those fire districts with budgets that are peanuts, to respond," he says.

There are 136 fire districts in Arizona. "Do you know how many people are served by these districts? Only 635,000 people. I'm guessing there are about 3 million people in Maricopa-Pinal counties."

Sun City, he says, "has a tremendous assessed valuation," estimated at \$216 million, primary and secondary evaluation. Not all the fire districts are so fortunate.

Before 1976, Mr. Willis continues, the fire districts in Arizona received 40 percent of their budgets from a lieu tax on automobiles.

"But the county still gets the lieu tax — and puts it into the budget," says Mr. Willis.

In Sun City, the Fire District Assistance Tax is costing .0064 or two-thirds of a penny per \$100 of assessed secondary valuation, says Mr. Willis.

Many of the counties, though, are up to the limit, charging 10 cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

Cities have stepped in, and, through bond elections, have added money to fund their fire district programs.

Now, the maximum rate that fire districts are allowed to levy is \$2.60 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Rep. Steffey would set a limit

See FIRE, page 6

of \$3.20 per \$100 of assessed valuation. "That's a penalty on the people who choose to live in the boondocks," says Mr. Willis.

Mrs. Steffey does not think the tax is fair for people who live in Mesa, Tempe, Phoenix or Chandler, to pay their own district tax, and an additional assessment for fire protection for people living in the county but not within town

boundaries, Mr. Willis continues.

"My argument is that I pay my taxes in Sun City, but do I have any say, if the county decides to build a bridge in Mesa?"

"Sure, my tax money can be used anywhere in the county ... when we're taxed in Sun City a portion is used elsewhere."

Fire losses remain low in Sun City

By JENNIFER ARP
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Officials on Tuesday applauded the Sun City Fire District's annual report showing an enviable safety record and credited the local citizenry for making it possible.

The report, detailing department activity in 1989, was released during a board of director's meeting at the district office, 17017 N. 99th Ave. It states the department responded to 5,326 emergency calls last year in Sun City and Youngtown. The total estimated value of property lost as a result of 1989 emergency incidents was just under \$300,000, the report states.

"For a community of 45,000, this is going to rank as one of the lowest, if not the lowest, dollar losses in the United States," said board clerk Brayton Willis Sr.

"It's a tribute to the citizens and the fine department and anyone involved with it," Willis said.

Department chief Jim Sebert said it would be difficult to confirm Willis' prediction, but agreed the community enjoyed a high degree of fire safety in 1989 and that the citizenry deserves some of the credit.

"I would have to say by monitoring what goes on in other communities that we do have a very good safety record. I have a feeling it has to do with

the people in Sun City," Sebert said.

Sun City residents tend to be aware of fire hazards and have the means to take care of them, the chief said. "Their housekeeping methods are good. There is an awareness among the people of Sun City that certain things need to be addressed."

Sebert also praised the business community for their "housekeeping" and their cooperation with fire inspectors for minimizing the commercial fire loss.

Of the incident responses last year, 111 were actual fire calls. Another 4,219 were emergency medical calls and the remaining 996 calls were counted as "other, canceled or false" emergencies. The fire district conducted 11,445 hours of training in 1989 and installed more than 800 smoke detectors.

Sebert said the emergency medical calls in 1989 averaged "about one a day in Youngtown and about 10 a day in Sun City." He described the "other" calls as "any number of things that nobody else can really address" like assisting homebound elderly persons.

In other business Tuesday, the board:

- Learned the fire district is in no danger of exceeding its nearly \$1.9 million fiscal 1989-90 budget and likely will not be increasing its budget next year.

from - from Jan 17/90

OVER

Fire trucks cross city line to help fast

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — On February 1, Pearl Hagge frantically called the operator requesting medical help for her daughter who was suffering an acute asthma attack.

When the paramedics arrived at Hagge's Peoria home, she was surprised to see that Sun City Fire Department crews responded.

"I presumed the Peoria Fire Department would come but all their trucks were tied up so the Sun City department came instead," Hagge said. "They gave my daughter excellent care. I think it's a good idea to use the fire truck that can get to the scene quickest. They said another two minutes and she would have been dead."

Hagge's emergency medical call was one of more than 31 cases in which the Sun City Fire Department has responded outside of its jurisdiction to aid surrounding communities.

Since mid-January the Sun City department has been a part of a computer-aided dispatch service that allows local stations to provide automatic assistance when needed.

Sun City Fire Chief Jim Sebert said preliminary indications show that the dispatch service is a success.

"I think this is a program that gets quality care to people quickly. No matter who answers on the scene first, the people have the services of a paramedic," Sebert said. "It's all done to get the people the quickest possible response regardless of geographic boundaries."

Sebert said Peoria, Glendale and Phoenix fire departments sent units to calls in the Sun City Fire District 43 times in January.

The district includes Sun City and Youngtown.

Sebert said the majority of assistance came from Peoria and about one-third of the calls were for residences living just north of Union Hills Drive.

"We've got a group of people both from the ambulance and fire department who work together for one thing — and that's patient care," Sebert said.

Sebert gave the first report on the dispatch service at the Sun City Fire Board's annual meeting Tuesday.



JIM SEBERT — The Sun City fire chief said the department's participation in automatic aid has benefited area residents.

'I presumed the Peoria Fire Department would come but all their trucks were tied up so the Sun City department came instead. They gave my daughter excellent care. I think it's a good idea to use the fire truck that can get to the scene quickest. They said another two minutes and she would have been dead.'

Pearl Hagge, Peoria resident

Brayton Willis, clerk of the board, said the new system is especially beneficial to residents who live on the Peoria/Sun City border.

"A classic example is Camelot Nursing Home which is right next to one of our stations," Willis said. "The people there would have to wait for help to come from the Peoria station downtown if we didn't have the mutual aid service."

The dispatch system runs on a computer that not only dispatches the nearest available unit, but provides speedy information on the location of a call, who's responding and what other units are available in the area if needed.

SC Fire Department to train paramedics

By PEG KEITH
Sun Cities Independent

Paramedic training is intensive, and there's keen competition among fire department personnel hoping to enter the program.

Eighteen local firemen have applied for paramedic classroom and clinical training set to begin this fall in Sun City.

The Sun City district has budgeted for 10 students.

Selections will be made from performances on a written examination to be administered Sept. 5, and an oral interview to follow.

The course, with classroom and clinical practice, includes work with certified paramedic personnel and physicians, in hospital emergency rooms and on-the-scene emergencies.

The training sessions will last until next April.

The coordinator/instructor will be Barbara Aehlert, Good Samaritan Health Services, in cooperation with Phoenix College, Glendale Community College and the Sun City and Glendale fire districts.

Sun City Fire District vice president Cyril Rengel estimates that the training for 10 Sun City Fire Department personnel will cost about \$15,000.

Fire Chief James Sebert rates Ms. Aehlert as one of the best paramedic program coordinators in the state, and adds that she holds one of the highest success rates in getting people through the course.

The classroom sessions will be conducted in the Sun City Fire District's board room.

The coordinator expects nearly 20 students will qualify for the class, half of them from neighboring communities and fire districts.

The Sun City paramedic training program will be 40 hours a week, with the academics class running about 12 weeks, starting Oct. 2.

The clinical and emergency-room training to practice medical skills will run for 16 hours. There will be two months for students to ride with other ambulance and emergency service personnel, a total of 250 hours.

Students then will take their finals for state certification.

The first national-registry examination will be in May.

Mr. Rengel says the paramedic training program fits into a broader goal for the Sun City Fire District.

"What we want to do is demonstrate to the people our concern for them ... for the public safety."

In addition to the paramedic training, the Sun City Fire Board has approved (but has not formalized) a district drug-alcohol program.

Before a department-wide drug policy is put into place, however, certain areas need to be addressed.

Board members have noted some concerns: the need for a tester, security after the tests are administered -- and for the person being tested, as well as some provision that he or she be given the opportunity to have a sample

• FIRE

From page one

test taken by a personal physician.

There are other concerns for procedures and disciplinary action related to suspected drug or alcohol abuse or testing positive, the chief says.

Tests can be made mandatory, he says. These would include pre-employment tests.

The district has a health program in effect with St. Luke's Health Center, which currently is doing drug/alcohol testing for other Valley fire departments.

The board is continuing discussions on formalizing a district drug-alcohol program.

See FIRE, page 16

Extinguisher service is keeping Sun City fire officials busy

By PAUL JUTZI
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Fire Department fire extinguisher program is filling up storage space at Fire Station No. 1, where more than 130 fire extinguishers were brought in for servicing during the first week of the program.

But that's good news, Fire Chief Sebert said today. Inoperable or under-charged fire extinguishers that were sitting on shelves are now ready for action.

Recharging fire extinguishers was a need that Capt. Mike Thompson and Sebert saw in Sun City and decided to do something about. On June 15 the department started collecting extinguishers at the three fire stations. Most have been taken to Station No. 1 at 17017 N. 99th Ave. Residents in Youngtown are also encouraged to add to the collection.

The department contracted with Roadrunner Fire Equipment Co. to offer reduced rates for inspecting, maintaining and recharging extinguishers.

Allan Johnson, owner of

Roadrunner, said 80 percent of the extinguishers so far have needed more than an inspection. He said a six-year maintenance test was needed, meaning many of them weren't checked for at least six years.

He said Roadrunner charges \$8 for the service, which has put many useless extinguishers back into fighting form.

Pat Ryan, a Roadrunner representative, said many people want their extinguisher inspected and nothing else done. But the purpose of inspection is to find problems, which is what's happening, he said.

One problem Roadrunner has discovered is that many Sun Citians are buying cheap fire extinguishers. Johnson said hardware stores sell fire extinguishers for \$10, but these have plastic heads, which are prone to leak.

For another \$10 they can get an all-metal extinguisher, which Johnson recommends. Metal-head extinguishers that Roadrunner services are guaranteed for one year. The company does not guarantee plastic-head ex-

tinguishers.

Another problem is old fire extinguishers. Models from the 1930s and '40s have surfaced. Johnson said it's less expensive to buy a new one than it is to get the old ones tuned up.

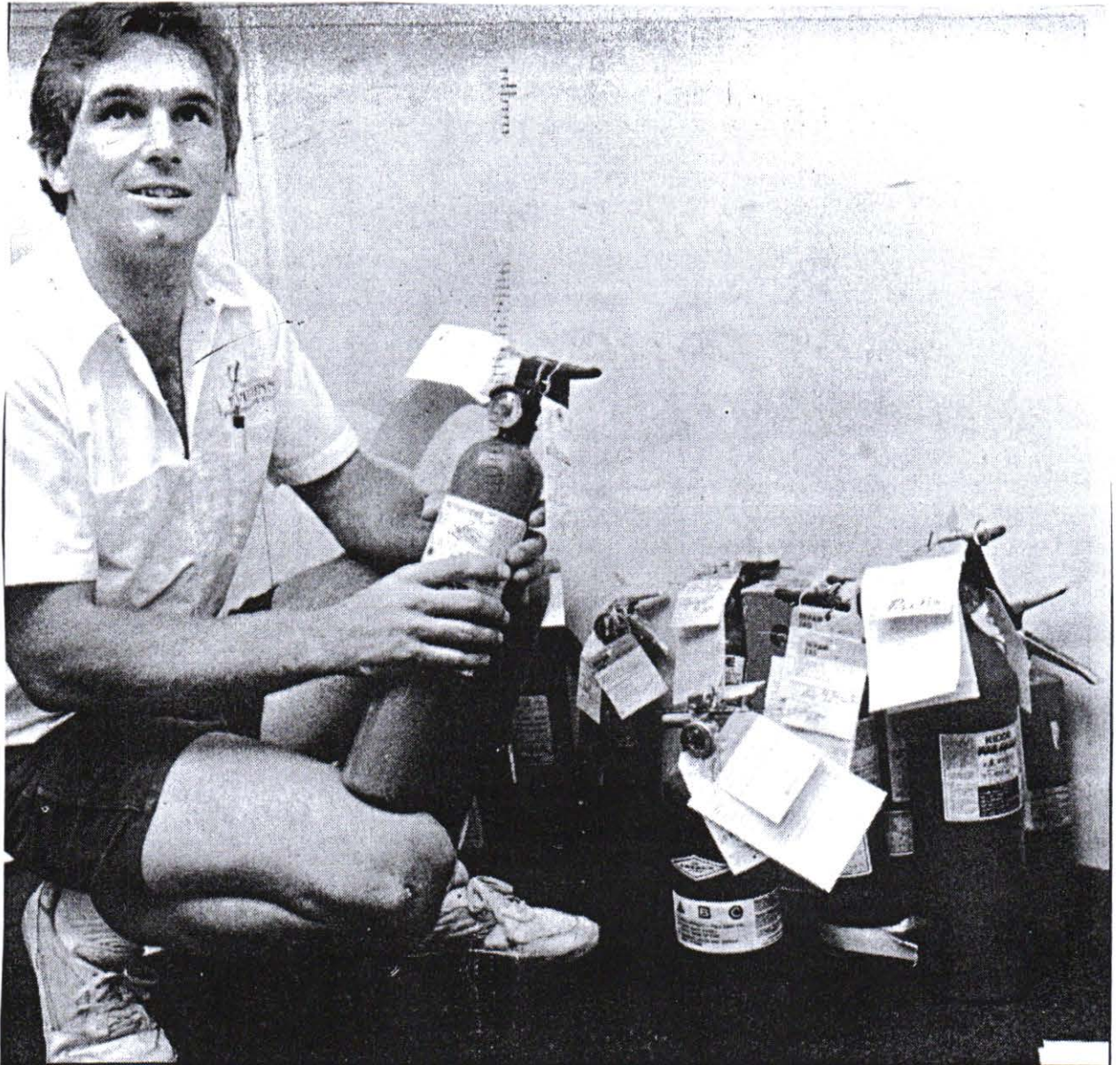
Although many extinguishers have been checked, Sebert said there are about 12,500 extinguishers in Sun City, so the program has a long way to go.

In addition to the fire extinguisher program, the fire department has had a smoke detector program in place in Sun City for two years.

Sebert said a recent revival in the program was spurred by a fire a month ago that killed two Sun Citians and caused \$200,000 in damage. There was no smoke detector in the residence.

The fire department will provide and install a smoke detector for \$10. Sebert said they've installed more than 100 of them since the fatal fire.

For information about the programs, call fire department administration at 974-2321.



News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

DISASTER PREVENTION — Allan Johnson, owner of Roadrunner Fire Equipment Co., poses with some of the more than 130

fire extinguishers Sun Citians have brought for maintenance to Sun City Fire Station No. 1, 17017 N. 99th Ave.

NEWS-SUN June 21/89 Fire board approves new budget

By PAUL JUTZI
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Fire Board on Tuesday adopted a 1989-90 budget that includes a tax increase of three-quarters of one cent to help meet next year's expenditures.

The present fire tax is 62 cents for each \$100 of assessed valuation. The new tax will be 62.75 cents for each \$100.

Fire Clerk Brayton Willis today said Sun Citians will see the increase in their October tax bills.

At Tuesday's meeting he said, "If someone can't accept that three-quarters-of-a-cent increase, then they can jump down my back."

Willis said the assessed valuation of Sun City is now about \$214 million. The new fire tax will provide \$1,347,226 for the 1989-90 budget, about \$20,000 more

than the tax raised for the 1988-89 budget.

The budget for 1989-90 is \$1,882,033, up from 1988-90's budget of \$1,796,896.

The fire department lost \$111,146 from a reduction in the Maricopa County Fire District Assistance Tax. That tax paid for 26.6 percent of the department's budget last year, but will pay for only 20 percent of the budget this fiscal year, which begins June 30.

Youngtown's contract for fire protection services from Sun City makes up for that difference, though, bringing \$198,000 to the department.

Willis said next year's budget is larger than last year's because of several factors:

- Better benefits for employees.
- A 4.1-percent cost-of-living raise for all employees.

- Training 10 firefighters to be paramedics.

- Medical equipment, drugs and radios to equip the paramedics.

- A drug-testing program for all department and board members.

- An approximately 5 percent increase in utilities.

Department officials said they're in need of a new fire truck to meet federal safety standards, and \$100,000 was placed in capital reserves to help buy a truck, also contributing to the larger budget.

Two members of the audience stood and congratulated the fire board for the budget. About 20 people attended the meeting, held at board quarters at 17017 N. 99th Ave.

Board member George Lange today said there weren't any unusual problems

in putting the budget together.

He said, "Considering the fact that we've been operating (as a self-contained department) for only six months, I think we've done real good."

The fire board took over management of the fire department from Rural/Metro Corp. on Jan. 1, 1989.

The 1989-90 budget is broken down as follows:

- Personnel — salaries, wages and benefits, \$1,270,083.

- Operations — apparatus and vehicles, \$48,000; communications, \$54,000; new equipment, \$64,000; station repairs and maintenance, \$23,600.

- Other services and charges — administration, \$17,350; professional services, \$15,000; insurance, \$40,000; interest, \$15,000; rentals, \$152,000; utilities, \$33,000; contingencies, \$50,000; capital reserves, \$100,000.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1989 ←

Fire tax may be reduced for Sun City

By PAUL JUTZI
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Fire Department's proposed 1989-90 budget shows a savings of \$277,000 from Rural/Metro Corp's 1988-89 budget.

The Sun City Fire Board in September 1988 projected savings of \$245,000 when the members voted to take the department's management reins from Rural/Metro Corp on Jan. 1.

Fire Chief Jim Sebert and Fire Board Clerk Brayton Willis said Tuesday that the actual savings probably is more, since Rural/Metro had increased the price of its contract with Sun City nearly every year.

From fiscal year 1985-86 to 1986-87, Rural/Metro raised the contract price by \$132,000. From 1987-88, the Scottsdale-based company raised the price by \$52,000. From 1988-89, the price went up \$123,000, and Willis said it's almost certain the price would've increased again.

Although the final budget won't be adopted until June, Willis said he doesn't expect the final figures to change much. The final version is awaiting exact revenue figures, which were held up by laws passed recently that changed the way a fire district's revenue can be figured.

"We cannot give you the revenue figures yet because of a new law enacted last week," Willis said.

Although next year's budget has a higher total expenditure amount and the revenue from the Maricopa County Fire District Assistance Tax (FDAT) will be lower, Willis said taxpayers have nothing to worry about.

"We anticipate no increase in the fire tax," he said. If the final

version of the budget meets expectations, residents may have their taxes lowered, he said.

Taxpayers are now paying 62 cents per \$100 of assessed property valuation.

Next year's expenditures are listed at \$1,868,033, which is \$71,000 more than this year's. The county fire district tax will provide 20 percent of next year's budget, while this year it provided 26 percent.

Despite those figures, Willis said the \$198,000 Youngtown will pay Sun City for fire protection will make up the difference. Sun City has provided Youngtown with fire protection since Jan. 1.

The final budget will be presented and adopted on June 20 at fire board quarters, 17017 N. 99th Ave.

Fire Board Chairman Ev Johnson attributes the savings to the board's experience.

He said: "The knowledge and expertise that the fire board members have would cost at least \$250,000. That's just about what Rural/Metro was charging for their management."

Willis said the fire department saved \$98,255 in what Rural/Metro called "management fees" and \$155,000 in what the company called "administrative fees." Willis said the \$155,000 was charged "basically, for making out the payroll checks."

The fire department has replaced these charges with a \$17,000 charge: \$2,000 for a private company to handle its payroll and \$15,000 for a new office employee.

The department also saved \$25,235 in vehicle and equipment maintenance and \$15,473 in insurance premiums.

*Fire District
Finances*



Daily News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

Christopher Bracken, the Sun City Fire Department's first paramedic, checks his gear every day to make sure he is

equipped for emergency medical calls. Eight firefighters are now in training to become Certified Medical Paramedics.

Role changes for firefighters

Medical calls outnumber fires

By JACQUE PAPPAS

Daily News-Sun staff

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population in Sun City is getting older and needs more assistance," Sebert said. "Indeed we're on the home front here in Sun City with an increase of 114 medical calls. But it's important for people to know that they should not call us in lieu of a doctor."

Sebert said Sun City is increasing the service level of medical care firefighters provide through training programs.

Last month the department reported about 965 hours of organized training of which 531 hours were for eight firefighters training to be certified paramedics.

"It's just an increase in the level of service," Sebert said. "There are large cities where the fire department does not provide emergency services because they have separate departments for that."

Sebert said department staff members are certified as an Emergency Medical Technician.

Some firefighters are Intermediate Medical Technicians and there are two Certified Emergency Paramedics.

Cyril Rengel, vice president of the Sun City Fire Board, said the paramedic training will help the department provide the community with a higher level of service.

"It's a positive step and advantage of the Sun City Fire Department," Rengel said at a monthly board meeting Tuesday.

In other business at the meeting, board member George Lange proposed a motion to increase the gasoline allowance for volunteers in the Fire Prevention Bureau by 50 percent.

The board unanimously voted to increase the allotment for the five volunteers from 10 gallons a month to 15 gallons.

In January the volunteers conducted 328 inspections,

Rural's ambulances will stay in Sun City

By PAUL JUTZI
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Rural/Metro Corp. has agreed to let the Sun City Fire Department house Sun City's and Youngtown's fire trucks in the fire station at 13013 N. 111th Ave., in exchange for the use of two Sun City fire stations to house Rural/Metro ambulances.

Fire board vice chairman Cy Rengel announced the agreement at Tuesday's board meeting. The two stations Rural/Metro will use are at 17017 N. 99th Ave. and 11401 N. 99th Ave.

Rural/Metro bought the 111th Avenue station in 1964 from Del Webb Corp. for \$1.

As for possible personnel conflicts between Sun City Fire Department employees and Rural/Metro employees, Rengel said each employer would take care of its own staff.

Chairman Everette Johnson opened the last regular board meeting of 1988 with introductions of board members and their qualifications.

He said Rengel has 36 years in fire

protection, including experience as fire chief and eight years with the Arizona Fire Marshall's office as director of training.

Brayton Willis, who is continuing as fire board clerk, has 36 years of fire protection experience, from rookie to chief, and seven years' experience as a fire management instructor.

Member George Lange has been a certified electrical engineer for 30 years, and new board member and treasurer John Bergvall was an accountant for International Harvester for 27 years.

Johnson has 21 years of experience as a fire commissioner and is starting his fifth term as chairman.

He said the combined experience will provide the best fire and medical protection Sun City has had as they run the new department.

Johnson said the previous board spent "hundreds of hours of study and research" in their decision to dump Rural/Metro and that "the decision to operate our own fire department was

arrived at, and there is no guesswork as to the feasibility of successful operation."

The board gave year-end reports Tuesday. The treasurer's report was not available yet, said Lange.

In fire department operations, Rengel said the board has had two productive transition meetings with Rural/Metro. He said they've cleared their files and other property from Sun City offices.

He said Rural/Metro asked for a three-year ambulance contract with Sun City Fire Department, but the board gave them only six months, after which the board would review operations and discuss future contracts.

Rengel also said the former Sun City Fire Department emergency number, 977-4211, would be dropped and only the 9-1-1 emergency line used.

He said 9-1-1 has been successful in Sun City, but there are still some people who don't know about it, and said the fire board and department will try to publicize 9-1-1 more.

Willis gave the budget report. He said as of the end of November, the board has \$250,000 in its checking account and they are well within their budget.

He said the fire department had startup costs, including new uniforms and fire gear because Rural/Metro owns the present ones.

But he expects the \$98,000 profit Rural/Metro admitted they were getting a year will pay for the startup costs.

Willis said legal fees for the board's defense in the lawsuit brought by Sun Citizens for Fire Safety & Efficiency in November would be about \$35,000 to \$40,000, but said the board will try to recover those fees.

He said the fire tax is presently at 62 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation, and increased recently because the county's contribution to fire districts has decreased.

Willis said for fiscal year 1986-87, the county contributed 40 percent of the budget. It decreased to 33 percent

in 1987-88, and again to 26.6 percent for 1988-89. He said for fiscal year 1989-90, the county will contribute only 20 percent and stabilize at that rate.

Lange, reporting on grounds and equipment, said besides usual maintenance, the board spent \$40,000 on resurfacing the parking lot of station No. 1 at 17107 N. 99th Ave. and station No. 2 at 11401 N. 99th Ave.

He said other major expenditures include resurfacing the apparatus room at station No. 1 for \$10,000, repainting station No. 2 for \$1,400, new name and address lettering at stations No. 1 and No. 2 for \$2,000, a new filtration system for firefighters' breathing systems for \$10,500, new uniforms, \$7,000, and \$21,000 for turnout gear — the clothing firefighters wear to a fire.

In other business, the fire board reappointed Bob Lane to serve as legal consultant to the board, and moved that the appointment of former chairman James Pryor be put on the next regular meeting agenda.

MONDAY
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BURRELLE'S

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HC

Sun City may fight own fires

Private pact might end in January

1252A
By Connie Cone Sexton
Phoenix Gazette

SUN CITY — The fire district board plans to end a 28-year association with Rural/Metro Corp. and create its own fire department.

Members of the Sun City Fire Board are expected Tuesday to OK plans to begin operating a fire department Jan. 1. Members of the fire board expect to lure away a number of Rural/Metro employees to their new department.

Rural/Metro officials were surprised at the board's plan. "We have been blind-sided by this," Larry Oehlert, manager of marketing research and support services, said Thursday.

"The very fact that they are intending to keep all of our personnel shows that the quality of service is not an issue here," Oehlert said, adding he does not understand why the board wants to end its contract.

Such astonishment amazes Brayton Willis, clerk of the Sun City fire district board. He said Rural/Metro has known since May that the Sun City group was exploring options for service.

The decision to do some research into the cost of running its own fire department has been on the minds of the fire board members for several years, Willis said. Impetus to start such a study came when about a \$120,000 cost increase was announced by Rural/Metro this spring during the yearly contractual agreement with the fire board.

"We got insurance quotes, maintenance quotes, pay scale figures, we studied pension plans and would you believe when we got all

through we found we had a lesser budget," Willis said.

He said the fire board's estimated budget came in about \$1,033,000. Rural/Metro said its one-year cost would be \$1,326,444.

Jim Pryor, chairman of the fire board, said the members believe they have enough management ability not to have to pay someone else to do it.

Willis agrees. "We have well over 100 years of experience," he said.

Three of the board members are former fire chiefs: Willis, Pryor and Cy Rengel. Another member, Everette Johnson, is a former fire commissioner and member George Lange, was an electrical engineer who installed fire alarm systems.

"Unlike the other 84 fire districts in Arizona, we have some people that know a little bit about running a fire department," Willis said.

"Even though this is like David and Goliath, the little guy vs. the big corporation, we are confident," he added.

Until the fire board makes a formal decision, Rural/Metro has given the district a 120-day extension for service. Willis said the board plans to notify Rural/Metro the first of October of its actions. With a decision to end service, Rural/Metro will have to continue operation in Sun City for 90 days, Willis explained, which will take them into 1989.

Fire board members addressed the issue of pulling out from Rural/Metro during a study session last week. A formal vote will be taken at 9 a.m. Tuesday at the Sun City fire station, 17017 N. 99th Ave.

Members of the fire board say they have added ammunition for running a fire department: the fact that Sun City residents own its own fire equipment and two of the community's fire stations.

Rural/Metro provides manpower, planning and management expertise to Sun City. Willis said

the board expects to hire a number of current Rural/Metro employees, who will retain their positions, therefore not altering service to the community.

Rural/Metro officials contend a switch in management would cause an increase in taxes for Sun City residents.

"When we developed our contract proposal last year, we estimated that it would cost Sun City approximately \$2 million to create a typical municipal fire department for a city of its size," Oehlert said. "Our contract proposal provided for a one-year cost of

\$1,326,444. A three-year contract would have provided significant cost savings over that amount."

In a statement released Thursday, Rural/Metro argued that, through its service, Sun City residents "enjoy the lowest per capita cost for fire protection for a city their size in the state of Arizona."

Their figures state that residents paid about \$28 per person for fire protection, compared to a national average of about \$65 per person for a community of similar size to Sun City.

WEDNESDAY
SEP 21 1988

Suzanne Starr/The Arizona Republic

A decision by Sun City to create a fire department drew boos and applause from about 500 residents who crowded into the meeting.

Rural/Metro is dropped by Sun City

By M.E. Saavedra
The Arizona Republic

1252A

The Sun City Fire Board voted Tuesday to drop Rural/Metro Corp.'s fire-protection services and to create its own fire department to save money.

The board, which oversees the Sun City Fire District's operations, voted 4-1 to discontinue Rural/Metro's services as of Jan. 1, claiming it will save taxpayers about \$246,000 annually. The fire district serves about 42,000 residents.

Rural/Metro officials disagreed with the board's action, saying the annual operating costs for an independent fire department will be nearly double what the fire board projects.

The board's decision was based on a cost analysis it conducted recently after Rural/Metro presented it with a new contract for the 1988-89 fiscal year.

Rural/Metro gave the board a 120-day contract extension July 1 so it could study costs.

Tuesday's action drew boos and applause from about 500 residents of the retirement community who crowded into a Sun City fire station at 17017 N. 99th Ave.

Many of the residents attending the meeting said they had read or heard advertisements



Sun City residents study information about a change in fire-protection services before a meeting on the issue. Some residents Tuesday feared a change in ambulance services.

purchased by Rural/Metro that indicated the fire board was "quietly planning" to increase taxes to benefit someone other than Sun City residents.

However, fire-board officials said the action taken is "the fire board's way of rebelling" and the "only alternative" to excessive fees that Rural/Metro charges the fire district.

"We can manage better than (Rural/Metro)," board Chairman James Pryor told the audience.

Although Pryor supported discontinuing the contract, he voted against the motion because he first wanted the board to confer with the

presidents of the Sun City Home Owners Association and the Sun City Tax Payers Association.

Under Rural/Metro's contract offer for the 1988-89 fiscal year, the board would have paid the firm \$1,326,446 for fire-protection service, \$123,000 more than the previous year, board Clerk Brayton Willis said.

Board Vice Chairman Cyril Rengel said that under its own operation, the district can reduce those costs to \$1,080,793 the first year. Rengel

OVER F — See SUN CITY, page B6

Sun City drops Rural/Metro

—SUN CITY, from page B1

said that involves savings of about \$148,000 in management fees, \$81,000 in employee salaries and \$17,000 in other operational costs. Rengel said the fire board, which includes three former fire chiefs, will manage the new department.

Ron Butler, president and chief executive officer of Rural/Metro, told the audience that many of the board's comments contained misstatements. He said a recent study by Rural/Metro found that 80 percent of the retirement community was satisfied with the service it provides.

Butler said Rural/Metro estimates indicate that the creation of an independent Sun City fire department may boost costs to about \$2 million per year because the new operation would need support and maintenance staffs, which Rural/Metro currently provides.

Some residents attending the meeting said they feared that ambulance services that Rural/Metro provides for the community would be affected. However, board and Rural/Metro officials said that service is provided under a separate contract that is not affected by Tuesday's action.

Willis criticized Rural/Metro advertisements published in local newspapers and a flier that was distributed to Sun City households indicating that

the board's proposal to establish an independent fire department could be the first phase of efforts to incorporate the community. Incorporation has been strongly opposed by Sun City residents.

Butler apologized for the advertisements that mentioned incorporation. He said the publicity was not intended to misinform the residents.

During the meeting, the board also voted unanimously to hire as consultants James Sebert, former chief in Rural/Metro's Sun City district, and Steve Morrow, former captain and fire marshal of the fire corporation's Sun City operation.

Both men will work as consultants until January, when they will head up the new fire department. They resigned from Rural/Metro last week after they were assigned to other departments.

The fire district owns two fire stations and fire equipment currently being utilized by Rural/Metro.

The district receives about 27 percent of its budget from a fire-district assistance tax, which is levied on all properties in Maricopa County to help support fire districts. That tax amounts to less than 1 cent per \$100 of assessed valuation. The remainder comes from a tax paid by Sun City residents at a rate of 46 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Sun City blocs back decision of Fire Board

Move to start department termed thrifty

By Robert Barrett
The Arizona Republic

Sun City's two largest civic organizations have endorsed a decision by the Sun City Fire Board to create its own fire department.

The Sun City Homeowners Association and the Sun City Taxpayers Association in separate meetings on Oct. 11 voted to support the board's decision last month to discontinue Rural/Metro's fire-protection services and create its own department.

The Fire Board, which oversees the Sun City Fire District, voted Sept. 20 to discontinue Rural/Metro's fire-protection services as of Jan. 1, 1989, and create a community fire department.

"We voted to back up the decision of the Fire Board," said Ken Larkin, president of the taxpayers association.

He said the board of directors listened to representatives from both Rural/Metro and the Fire Board before making its decision.

"We felt as though, basically, it would be a big savings for Sun City" to start its own fire department, Larkin said.

Rural/Metro's \$1,326,446 fire-protection fee for the retirement community for fiscal year 1988-89 includes a profit of only 3 percent, said Larry Oehlert, Rural/Metro's manager of marketing research.

"We don't think that is unreasonable," he said. "We have kept increases to an absolute minimum."

Fire Board officials said they decided to terminate the contract with Rural/Metro after realizing the community could operate its own fire department for \$245,653 less each

year than Rural/Metro's proposal.

"We're non-profit, that's the reason we can do that," said Fire Board member Cy Rengel.

The Sun City Fire District serves the community's approximately 42,000 residents. Rural/Metro has provided fire-protection and ambulance service to Sun City since 1960.

The board's decision was to end only the fire-protection services. Rural/Metro will continue to operate the ambulance service.

The taxpayers group also objected to Rural/Metro's efforts to sway public opinion against the Fire Board, Larkin said.

Prior to the Sept. 20 vote by the Fire Board, Rural/Metro had fliers put on every doorknob in the community saying the formation of a community fire department could lead to Sun City's incorporation, Larkin said.

The incorporation issue has been hotly debated in the community for years and several incorporation attempts have failed.

Rural/Metro's attempts to influence public opinion also was criticized by members of the homeowners group.

"I've been personally disappointed in the scare tactics you've used," said association president Ted Hoyt.

Since the Sept. 20 vote, Rural/Metro officials have purchased advertising space in the local paper, the *Daily News-Sun*, urging residents to support Rural/Metro, he said.

The company also is supporting an attempt to initiate a petition drive, by paying volunteers \$2 per valid signature, to place a referendum on the November ballot that would attempt to stop the formation of a fire department until residents could vote on the matter, Hoyt said.

Because Rural/Metro claims its profit on the fire-protection contract would be only 3 percent, the expendi-

— See FIRE BOARD, page C

— FIRE BOARD, from page A

ture of funds for the petition drive advertising makes no sense, said Cromwell, a board member of homeowners group said.

"You look like a congress spending \$1 million for a \$90,000 year job and we're suspicious of that," he said.

Rural/Metro has made some mistakes and should not have brought the incorporation issue, Oehlert said.

"We've served the community 28 years and we feel we're part of community," he said. "Sun City is a flagship for us. We feel we're doing a good job, so why should we leave?"

Oehlert said Rural/Metro is hoping to fund the petition drive for a referendum because the company feels the residents should decide if they want to form a fire department.

"People are complaining they didn't have a say," he said, referring to the Sept. 20 Fire Board meeting where the vote to end Rural/Metro fire protection was taken without allowing public comment.

The referendum is an attempt to allow the residents to vote on the issue, he said.

"If they choose not to back Rural/Metro, we'll quietly fold up our tent and go home," Oehlert said.

Tax group backs split with Rural

By JOHN NICK
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The board of directors of the Sun City Taxpayers Association voted today to support the Sun City Fire Board in its efforts to operate its own fire department beginning Jan. 1, 1989, and end contractual ties with Rural/Metro Corp. for fire protection in Sun City.

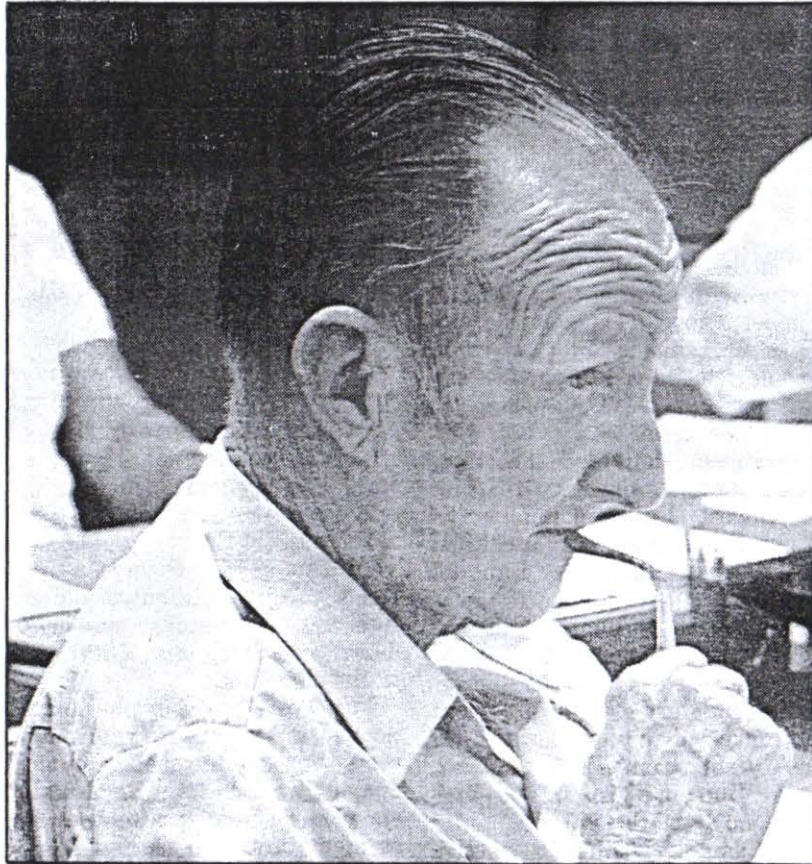
Ken Larkin, president of the taxpayers group, said a majority of the board voted to lend its support to the fire board after hearing reports from officials of Rural/Metro last week and the fire board today concerning future fire protection in Sun City.

Larkin said the taxpayers voted with the fire board because of the possible savings to Sun City if it had its own self-operated department.

In its presentation to the taxpayers, the fire board detailed how it would save more than \$245,000 next year by beginning its own department. Those savings would come by eliminating the profits Rural/Metro now earns in providing fire protection services.

"Everything is political in nature (with Rural/Metro)," fire board member Cy Rengel told the taxpayers group.

"They're doing firefighting for a cost; we (the Sun City Fire District) are a non-profit organi-



FIERY ISSUE — This morning Sun City Fire Board member Brayton Willis, right, tells the Sun City Taxpayers Association of the upcoming changes in the fire department since zation."

Larkin said Rural/Metro's tactics in trying to reverse the fire board's decision also in-

fluenced the taxpayers association's vote this morning.

Rural/Metro has bombarded Sun City residents with a series



News-Sun photos by Mollie J. Hoppes

the fire board decided to break ties with Rural Metro Inc. At left, Howard Scott listens to Willis' hour-long presentation. Willis is the clerk of the board.

of advertisements, some of which contained some factual errors that were pointed out to the taxpayers by fire board member

Brayton Willis, Larkin said.

One advertisement had a map containing the locations of the Rural/Metro fire stations. Two of

those stations are actually owned by the Sun City Fire District, which represents the residents of Sun City, Willis said.

The advertisement also listed the benefits of the Rural/Metro fire department in Sun City.

"There is no such thing as the Rural/Metro Fire Department in Sun City," Willis said, explaining that the Sun City Fire District owns everything except the uniforms the firefighters wear. Rural/Metro also provides personnel and support services.

Willis also blasted claims by Rural/Metro that the board's decision to start a municipal fire department was a step toward the incorporation of Sun City.

That issue will be settled among Sun Citizens, Willis said, and the elimination of Rural/Metro from Sun City has nothing to do with it.

"Rural/Metro introduced incorporation to cause a panic in Sun City," Willis said.

This weekend, a local group called Sun Citizens for Fire Safety and Efficiency began a petition drive to overturn the board's decision. The group has received support from Rural/Metro, including office space and financial incentives.

Those incentives include the payment from Rural/Metro of \$2 for every petition signature.

SC group challenges Rural split

By JOHN NICK
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — A group of Sun City residents has initiated a petition drive to reverse last month's decision by the Sun City Fire Board to end its contractual ties with the Rural/Metro Corp.

The fire district board intends to start its own self-managed fire department on Jan. 1, 1989.

Sun Citizens for Fire Safety and Efficiency is trying to gather enough petition signatures to place a measure on the Nov. 8 ballot to possibly overturn the board's decision to operate its own department.

Paul Pribyl, chairman of Sun Citizens for Fire Safety and Efficiency, said today the committee is seeking two concessions in its petition drive.

First, it wants the fire board to release a line-by-line comparison with its proposed self-managed fire department budget and Rural/Metro's 1988-89 contract proposal.

Pribyl said the comparison will help Sun City residents to make an informed decision when they vote on whether the Sun City Fire District should stay with Rural/Metro or begin its own department.

"The point is not who runs (the fire department)," Pribyl said. "We want (the fire board) to give us the information to show who can run it most efficiently and give us a chance to vote."

Pribyl said he has been in the fire protection field for 44 years, which includes a stint as the director of fire education and

training for the state of Wisconsin.

He said he does not know how many people are working for Sun Citizens for Fire Safety and Efficiency, but he was asked to chair the organization by Nat Jampel, president of the Sun City Town Meeting Association, a local anti-incorporation organization.

"Incorporation does not have anything to do with it," Pribyl said.

But Jampel said he has a "gut feeling" that the board's decision is a step toward creating a municipal bureaucracy in Sun City.

"The board's actions were unilateral, arbitrary and citizens had no opportunity to voice any opinion for the needs to create a municipal fire department," Jampel said. "It was not only arbitrary, but stupid."

He would not reveal how many members are on the Sun Citizens for Fire Safety and Efficiency, but he did say that "we have had dozens and dozens of calls from people who are appalled by the actions of the (Sun City fire) board."

Jampel also supported letting Sun City residents vote on a measure to start its own self-managed fire department.

"We want to have the facts from both Rural/Metro and the board," he said, "then let the people decide."

Rural/Metro officials said they support Sun Citizens for Fire Safety and Efficiency and agree with what they are trying to accomplish. That support in-

—From A1

cludes financial, personnel and business office for the Sun City organization.

The office is at 11115 W. Nevada Ave. in Youngtown and will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

"The committee came to us and asked us to support them," Rural/Metro spokeswoman Susan Brossart said.

"(The petition signatures) are not a vote for or against Rural Metro. It is designed to stay the board's vote."

Petitions can be signed today at local shopping centers and on Tuesday in front of the Sun City Post Office, 9802 W. Bell Road. Petition organizers said they need 1,305 signatures by Oct. 21 to have a referendum placed on the ballot.

Attorneys for the Sun City Fire Board are investigating whether the petition drive is legal, said Brayton Willis, clerk of the fire board.

If it is not legal, Rural/Metro may be planning to use the petition signatures as evidence in a possible court battle to seek an injunction to delay the fire board's decision, Willis said.

The Sun City Fire Board is not alone in operating its own department. Willis said 84 fire districts in the state are operated by fire boards.

Rural criticizes fire board's pullout

By JACQUE PAPPAS
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Although Rural/Metro Corp. celebrated its 40th anniversary last week, the fire protection service isn't throwing too much confetti in Sun City.

Instead, the firm is trying to head off its bon voyage from the retirement community.

Two weeks after the Sun City Fire Board voted to end its contract with Rural/Metro, executives of the company Tuesday told members of the Sun City Taxpayers Association that the self-managed system that will replace Rural/Metro will not be successful.

James H. Bolin, senior vice president of finance for Rural/Metro, told taxpayer board members Tuesday that the fire district is too optimistic in thinking that it will realize a savings by ending its contract with the corporation.

The fire board has said it

hopes to save about \$250,000 in operating expenses in its 1989 budget. The new Sun City Fire Department is scheduled to begin operations on Jan. 1.

"We at Rural/Metro don't believe they will be successful in achieving those savings. We think there are significant problems with the proposal by the fire board for service," Bolin said. "The fire district board has chosen to abandon a system that is very cost-efficient and has decided to take this risk and go off on their own and perform their own management functions for their fire department."

Rural/Metro's fire protection for the fiscal year was about 74 percent of the fire board's \$1.7 million budget.

Bolin said Rural/Metro offers many services that will cost the fire board money such as payroll and accounts administration, group purchasing power, train-

ing programs and 24-hour dispatching service.

He said the fire district's cost of employee benefits most likely will increase. Also, the computer-aided dispatch system could cost more, depending on what the district selects.

Bolin said the fire board also will be a station short because the one on 111th and Grand Avenues is owned by Rural/Metro.

He said the district would have to pay an additional amount to replace the station or perhaps do without it. Bolin estimated an equivalent fire station would cost from \$250,000 to \$500,000 to build.

"We at Rural/Metro are fighting this procedure that the district is doing, because we believe that they are abandoning a system that works very well and they are taking a risk financially as well as operationally, for the community that is un-

wise," Bolin said. "The board can obviously do what it wants. We are trying to bring attention to this change. This is an overwhelming change and it happened virtually with no notice to the community."

Although Rural/Metro has no legal control of decisions the fire board makes, Bolin said the company has made it clear that it would like to negotiate.

Bolin said the corporation made proposals for one- and three-year contracts with the board that provide guaranteed fixed costs for fire protection services.

He said the contract allows for many risks, such as cost fluctuation, to be absorbed by Rural/Metro.

Bolin said the corporation's pre-tax budget shows a \$98,000 profit for Rural/Metro from the 1988 Sun City contract.

"Our annual increases over the last five years have been less

than 5 percent a year compounded. This contract has not been a lucrative contract for us financially. It's one that we are very proud of in our operations here, but it's not a big money-maker for us," Bolin said. "The board has been effective in negotiating with us and squeezing us down year after year after year. We proposed a modest increase over last year and the type of concessions they wanted us to make financially were not attainable or realistic to us."

Weldon Paxton, fire administration manager for Rural/Metro, said the fire board's decision was a surprise to Rural/Metro because the corporation has provided fire service in Sun City for 28 years.

"It's a little perplexing that about a year ago we got a letter from the board complimenting Rural/Metro for being sati-

sfactory in filling the void in respect to all aspects of fire protection in Sun City," Paxton said. "The emergency response time in Sun City is three to five minutes and Sun City already has the lowest cost per capita of comparable-sized departments in Arizona. There's no district or municipality of this size that has such a low per capita cost."

Ken Larkin, president of the Taxpayers, said the board will hold a special meeting Tuesday to hear remarks from representatives from the fire board.

"After the meeting we will discuss both sides and if it is the consensus of the board, we will take a vote on the fire board issue," Larkin said. "Rural/Metro contacted us because they wanted to present the board with their side so we contacted the fire board. We wanted to hear both sides of the issue."

Sun City drops Rural/Metro



FUTURE FIRE DEPARTMENT — Sun City residents packed into the garage of Sun City Fire Station No. 30 today to listen to the Sun City Fire Board's decision to start its own

self-operated department and break contractual ties with the Rural/Metro Corp. More than 200 residents packed into the garage to hear the board's vote.

By **JOHN NICK**
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The Sun City Fire Board voted today to end its contract with Rural/Metro Corp. for fire protection in Sun City.

The vote this morning was 4-1 in favor of the measure to end Rural/Metro's association with the Sun City Fire District and paved the way for the retirement community to begin the operation of its own department on Jan. 1, 1989.

The Sun City Fire District has been operating under an oral agreement with Rural/Metro since July 1, when the 1987-88 fire protection contract expired. Today's vote included a provision to give Rural/Metro a 90-day notice of the termination of that agreement.

Board members Cy Rengel, Brayton Willis, Everette Johnson and George Lange all voted for Rural/Metro's ouster. Board chairman Jim Pryor voted against the measure, saying he favored presenting the idea of a self-managed Sun City Fire Department to members of the Sun City Home Owners Association and the Sun City Taxpayers Association.

The vote drew a mixed reaction from the audience of about 250 Sun Citians who packed the garage of Sun City Fire Station No. 30. Some people cheered the

decision while others booed. The meeting was sprinkled with cat-calls from the audience.

Each board member spoke on the issue of dropping Rural/Metro's fire protection services, which would have cost the Sun City Fire District \$1,326,446 if the board had signed Rural/Metro's latest contract offer for 1988-89.

Willis explained why the board was ending its relationship with Rural/Metro and starting its own fire department.

"We want to replace Rural/Metro's management with Sun City Fire Department management," he said. "That's it in a nutshell."

Another advantage, as the board sees it, is the potential for savings.

The fire board reports it will save \$245,653 this year by starting its own fire department. Anticipated savings are \$148,255 in management/station operation fees, \$80,528 in personnel/manpower costs and \$16,870 in operational costs.

The fire district already owns everything except the uniforms the firefighters wear. Personnel is now provided by Rural/Metro.

Personnel may come from present Rural/Metro employees who have already expressed an interest in working for Sun
See Fire board, A5

News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

(Handwritten signature)

—From A1

City's self-operated department. Willis said Rural/Metro firefighters working in Scottsdale have also expressed an interest in joining the Sun City department.

The fire board also attacked Rural/Metro's advertising blitz, which sought the help of residents to sway the board against dropping the company's contract.

Rural/Metro purchased advertisements on three local radio stations and in local newspapers. It also distributed 30,000 handbills to Sun City homeowners in the past few days.

"If Rural/Metro applied this huge amount of money to the budget reduction of 1988-89 we would not be here," Pryor said.

Rural/Metro officials were on

hand for the meeting, but Pryor followed the board's agenda despite shouts from the audience to let Rural/Metro defend itself.

After the board's vote, Ron Butler, president and chief executive officer with Rural/Metro, spoke to the crowd, which had thinned out since the beginning of the meeting. Butler said the board was untruthful to the residents of Sun City in explaining its decision.

If the figures the board quoted were correct, he said, Sun Cityans would be saving 11 cents a week.

"That is not a good amount of money to risk on the quality of your (fire protection service)."

Butler said Rural/Metro tried to be open with the citizens and the Sun City Fire Board.

Fire board axes Rural/Metro contract

by BRET McKEAND
Sun Cities Independent

Claiming it could manage the Sun City Fire District more efficiently and cost-effectively, the Sun City Fire Board has voted to end its 28-year contract with Rural/Metro Corp. and create its own fire department.

Before an overflow crowd, estimated at approximately 1,000 residents, the fire board last week voted 4-1 in favor of taking over the management of the Sun City Fire District -- its two fire stations, equipment and all personnel.

The Sun City Fire District presently owns the fire stations and all the equipment. For the past 28 years, Rural/Metro has been under contract to provide fire and emergency services to the district.

"We're saying to Rural/Metro that we can manage our own fire district better than (they can),"

said Brayton Willis, clerk of the board.

The board will take over management of the department Jan. 1, 1989. The move will not affect Rural/Metro's operation of its ambulance service in the Sun Cities, nor will it affect fire protection service to Youngtown.

The current contract between Rural/Metro and the board expired June 30, 1988, but was extended 120 days so that the board could study two renewal options presented by the company.

Sue Brossart, public relations specialist with Rural/Metro, says Rural/Metro officials will keep the lines of communication open in hopes of changing the board's mind.

"We are open to discussion and we're certainly willing to negotiate," says Ms. Brossart. "We're hoping the decision is not irrevocable."

She says the current contract

RELATED STORIES:

- Fire Board secures new staff
- Sun City West remains with Rural/Metro
- See page two

was extended June 30 "in good faith" and company officials were "shocked and surprised" at the board's move to form its own department.

James Pryor, chairman, said the fire board began considering taking over control of the district during recent contract negotiations with Rural/Metro.

Mr. Pryor said Rural/Metro officials were too "secretive" and "strict" during contract talks and would not answer any of the board's questions.

"It was an exercise in futility," said Mr. Pryor.

Earlier this summer, Rural/Metro presented a one-year contract for next year that would have cost Sun City \$1,326,444.



FIRE BOARD MEETING HEATS UP. An overflow crowd of nearly 1,000 residents attended the Sept. 20 meeting of the Sun City Fire Board to hear the board discuss cutting its ties with Rural/Metro. After a lengthy meeting, interrupted frequently with cheers and jeers, the board voted 4-1 in favor of ending its 28-year relationship with the fire company and taking over all operations of the fire district.

See FIRE, page two

OVER

According to Cyril Rengel, vice chairman of the board, by creating their own fire department the fire district can save more than \$245,000 next year, most of that from administration fees now being charged by Rural/Metro to manage the three stations.

Mr. Rengel says management of the fire district will now be the full responsibility of the fire board, which is an elected body serving voluntarily.

In addition, said Mr. Pryor, all those presently on the board have extensive backgrounds and experience in fire-fighting. He feels the board is better equipped to manage the Sun City Fire Department than Rural/Metro.

"We're not forming a brand new fire department," he says, "we just want to manage what we have."

Mr. Pryor added that the board is not breaking its ties with Rural/Metro because of the quality of service.

"We have found no fault with the fire-fighters over the years," he told the crowd.

The district's fire chief and fire protection captain have already resigned from Rural/Metro and have agreed to begin working for the Sun City Fire Department under the board's direction. Mr. Pryor said a number of other Rural/Metro employees have been approached about coming to work for the Sun City district.

The meeting, held at the George Meade Fire Station on 99th Avenue and Bell Road, attracted a large throng of residents, many of whom found it

hard to contain their emotions and comments.

The crowd seemed evenly split between those who opposed and those who supported the proposal. By the time the board voted on the matter, which took place more than an hour after the meeting had begun, most of the crowd seemed to favor the move.

The four voting in favor of the move were Mr. Rengel, Mr. Willis, George Lange and Everette Johnson. Mr. Pryor, who supports the move, voted against it only because he would have liked the board to discuss the issue first with the Sun City Home Owners Association and the Sun City Taxpayers Association.

The board's proposal to break from Rural/Metro and form their own municipal fire department came as a surprise to officials at the fire protection company. In hopes of gaining community support against the proposal, the company blasted the fire board in advertisements in local papers and in handouts distributed to Sun City homes.

Mr. Pryor castigated the company for what he called "dirty tricks." He claimed the advertisements were nothing but "propaganda" designed to stir up dissent and anger in Sun City.

In many of the advertisements, Rural/Metro linked the fire board's proposal to incorporation of Sun City. Mr. Pryor said the move "has absolutely nothing to do with incorporation."

According to Larry Oehlert, manager of market research and support services for Rural/Metro,

the fire board will not save money by taking control the department.

"When we developed our contract proposal last year, we estimated that it would cost Sun City approximately \$2 million to create a typical municipal fire de-

partment for a city of its size," says Mr. Oehlert.

He claims the change "could significantly increase the taxes for fire protection paid by residents of Sun City," a claim disputed by fire board members.

"Under our current contract, Sun City residents enjoy the

lowest per capita cost for fire protection for a city their size in the state of Arizona," says Mr. Oehlert.

During 1987, company research showed Sun City residents paid \$28.24 per person for fire protection, compared to a

national average of \$65.53 per capita for cities with populations of 25,000-49,999.

In comparison, residents in Phoenix paid \$66 per person, Mesa residents paid \$65.58, Tucson residents paid \$72.93 and Yuma residents paid \$70.63.



CYRIL RENGEL, vice chairman of the Sun City Fire District, says the fire district can save approximately \$245,000 a year by ending its contract with Rural/Metro and allowing the volunteer fire board to manage and operate Sun City's firefighting force.

Fire district hires management team

When the Sun City Fire Board voted to end its relationship with Rural/Metro, it didn't waste any time taking steps to organize and staff its own fire department.

Shortly after the board voted Sept. 20 in favor of establishing its own municipal fire department, board members quickly voted to officially hire the district's first two employees.

Former Rural/Metro employees Steve Morrow and James Sebert have been hired to assist with the management and organization of the new fire department.

Both Mr. Morrow and Mr. Sebert are no strangers to Sun City. Until recently, the two had been employed by Rural/Metro as the Sun City fire marshal and district fire chief, respectively.

The two have resigned their positions with Rural/Metro and will act as consultants to the Sun City Fire Board until the new department is organized Jan. 1, 1989.

Mr. Sebert will take over once again as fire chief and Mr. Morrow will serve as assistant fire chief and fire prevention officer.

During the Sept. 20 meeting, Brayton Willis, fire board clerk, called Mr. Morrow "one of the best fire prevention officers in the state."

He claimed a number of Rural/Metro's Sun City employees have inquired about coming to work for the new Sun City Fire Department.

Larry Oehlert, manager of market research and support services for Rural/Metro, says the fire board is attempting to attract its company's employees by offering pay increases.

"The Sun City Fire Board has stated its intent to grant significant raises to our fire chiefs, captains and other personnel who agree to work for them," said Mr. Oehlert.

"The quality of our service is obviously not an issue since they have reportedly offered a job to virtually every employee working at our three area stations."

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 16, 1987

Sun City fire tax to go up

By JOHN NICK
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The local fire tax will be going up for 1987-88, the Sun City Fire Board announced Tuesday at its monthly meeting.

Board member Brayton Willis said the fire tax for 1987-88 will be 46 cents for each \$100 of secondary assessed property valuation. That's a six-cent increase over this year's assessment.

Willis said the rate rose for two reasons.

First, Maricopa County's assessed valuation of Sun City dropped nearly \$1.3 million over the past year. The county's valuation of Sun City for the 1987-88 fiscal year was \$212,125,483.

The decrease in the valuation creates a smaller tax base, so each property owner faces a larger levy to raise the same dollar amount of revenue.

The second reason for the increased tax rate is a new state law that went into effect for the 1987-88 fiscal year. The legislation decreased the contribution that Arizona's counties make to the state's fire districts.

Last year, Maricopa County's contribution equaled 40 percent of the Sun City Fire District's \$1.48 million budget.

This year, the county will contribute slightly less than 32 percent of Sun City's \$1.5 million fire budget.

In addition to the local fire tax, Maricopa County residents will pay 9½ cents for every \$100 of secondary assessed valuation. That tax is called the county fire assistance tax. This is the first year that county residents will be assessed that tax.

Despite the increase, Willis said Sun City's fire tax rate will be one of the lower rates in the state. Many Arizona fire districts, he said, are at the state ceiling of \$2.60 for every \$100 of secondary assessed valuation.

The county's property valuation of Sun City caught the board by surprise.

"I don't understand why it went down," board member George Lange said.

"I can't conceive of any property values going down in Sun City," said board member Everette Johnson.

Willis said the figures were presented to him prior to the board meeting, but he said he would do more investigating into the decrease.

An employee from the Maricopa County Assessor's Office said the assessors who determined Sun City's valuation were out of town and could not comment on the decrease.

8. What about fire prevention activity?

The District has established a Fire Prevention Bureau, staffed by a Fire Marshal and other firefighters assigned to Bureau duty from time to time. Such Bureau staff is augmented by trained Sun City residents.

In June of 1978 the voters of Sun City adopted the National Uniform Fire Codes and the Life Safety Code for the District. It is the responsibility of the Bureau, under the direction of the Board, to enforce the Codes. In addition, personnel of the Bureau continuously examine public buildings for fire safety, work with builders and remodelers to insure fire-safe construction through a permit system, and are available for consultation and talks to club members. Plans are made for Fire Prevention Week in October of each year and throughout the year.

9. Is there a Volunteer Fire District program?

Yes. Because of the make up of the people of our community, firefighting is the duty of the personnel contracted from Rural Metro. However, trained volunteers are used in fire prevention, inspections and fire policing activities of the District. They work under the direction of the Fire Marshal.

If you are interested in volunteering for this activity, please contact the Fire Marshal at the George Meade Station, 99th Avenue and Bell Road or call the business phone 974-2321.

10. The Sun City Fire District enjoys good relations with nearby communities and has Mutual Aid Contracts with Sun City West, Peoria and Glendale.

11. Sun City and Youngtown share costs, personnel and apparatus at Station 35 on 111th Avenue. This station serves both communities.

12. Free Public Education classes are offered in our mini theater to Sun City Residents, Clubs and Organizations. Classes in First Aid, CPR, Fire Extinguisher use and home fire safety are but a few of the subjects available. If interested, contact the Fire Chief's Office at 974-6803.



SUN CITY FIRE DISTRICT

TO REPORT A FIRE.....**9-1-1**
OR MEDICAL EMERGENCY

BUSINESS NUMBERS

STATION 30 - George Meade
17017 N. 99th Avenue.....974-1276
STATION 34 - Del Webb
11401 N. 99th Avenue.....974-2843
STATION 35 - Rural Metro Owned
13013 111th Ave.....974-1522

FIRE BOARD OFFICE.....974-4977
FIRE CHIEF974-6803
FIRE MARSHAL974-2321

The Sun City Fire District and the Sun City Fire Department are one and the same.



Questions and Answers About Your Sun City Fire District

April 1987

FIRE AND MEDICAL EMERGENCY
TELEPHONE NUMBER

9-1-1

A CALL TO THE ABOVE NUMBER:

1. REPORTING A FIRE EMERGENCY WILL SUMMON FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT, AND
2. REPORTING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY WILL AUTOMATICALLY SUMMON AN AMBULANCE.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT YOUR SUN CITY FIRE DISTRICT

1. When was the District formed?

On June 23, 1966. The District was established under Arizona Law (Title 48, Chap.5), after an affirmative vote by the electors of Sun City and an order by the Board of Supervisors of Maricopa County. The original district, which was Sun City south of Grand Avenue, has since been enlarged by five separate annexations and now includes all of Sun City as far north as Beardsley Road.

2. Does the District include Sun City West?

No. The people of Sun City West have organized their own fire district.

3. Who is responsible for the operation of the affairs of the District?

Under the law, a board of five citizens of Sun City are elected to govern the District. Board members serve four year staggered terms so that an election is held (after August 1980) every two years on election day in November. At the most recent election which was held in November 1986, the following citizens, who serve without compensation, were elected to the terms ending on the date indicated opposite their names:

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| James W. Pryor | |
| Chairman..... | 1988 |
| Brayton P. Willis, Sr. | |
| Clerk..... | 1988 |
| Cyril J. Rengel | |
| Vice Chairman..... | 1990 |
| George M. Lange | |
| Treasurer..... | 1988 |
| Everette E. Johnson | |
| Member..... | 1990 |

Among others, their duties require them to:

- (a) elect a chairman and clerk;
- (b) appoint a chief;

(c) prepare an annual budget and after a public hearing, usually in May of each year, adopt the same.

(d) hold regular monthly meetings, open to the public, at which formal actions are taken;

(e) plan and manage an efficient and economical organization;

(f) draw checks on the County Treasurer for money to operate the District.

(g) not incur any indebtedness in excess of the taxes collected and other money available and unencumbered in its general District fund, provided, however, indebtedness may be incurred for purposes of acquiring property where a majority of the electors approve the issue of bonds by the County on behalf of the District.

and in addition the board may:

(h) purchase fire protection and rescue equipment, lease or purchase land, and erect or purchase buildings and equipment;

(i) decide by majority vote, how fire protection services are to be provided, the board being authorized to enter into a contract with a private fire protection company.

4. How is our fire protection provided?

The District Board has elected to contract with a private company, Rural Metro Corporation of Scottsdale, AZ. Under our current contract, Rural Metro provides trained manpower, alarm room dispatch, vehicle maintenance and management expertise as needed. Comparable contracts have been made with them since 1966.

AMBULANCE SERVICE is provided as a separate business by Rural Metro; however, the District supports this service by providing apparatus and manpower to situations that require additional men or when ambulances are unavailable or would be delayed. Rural Metro reciprocates by sending ambulances to fire scenes.

The District owns seven fire vehicles. Four pumpers, an aerial ladder truck, a fire prevention pickup truck and a Chief's vehicle and all the tools and equipment on these vehicles.

It also owns the two fire stations on 99th Avenue and all equipment in the stations. The station on 111th Avenue is owned by Rural Metro.

5. How do we pay for our fire protection?

After the budget is approved by the Board, it is submitted to the County Treasurer. The County then contributes 20% of the amount, with the remaining monies necessary, raised by a fire tax levied on properties in the District, but not to exceed \$2.60 per \$100 assessed valuation. The fire tax for 1986-87 was \$.40.

The total assessed valuation in the Sun City Fire District in 1986 was \$213,420,721.00.

6. How many fires have we had in Sun City?

Since 1966 there have been 886 fire incidents. Sun City has been fortunate as indicated by the table below:

| Year | Number of Housing Units | Population | No. of Structural Fires | Average Loss per Fire |
|------|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1966 | 4,500 | 8,100 | 9 | \$2,200.00 |
| 1971 | 11,000 | 20,000 | 31 | 4,300.00 |
| 1976 | 21,800 | 37,700 | 57 | 1,000.00 |
| 1981 | 25,700 | 46,800 | 55 | 1,100.00 |
| 1984 | 26,000 | 47,000 | 40 | 972.00 |
| 1986 | 26,000 | 47,000 | 74 | 2,666.00 |

7. Has the District provided adequate enough fire protection to lower fire insurance rates?

Yes. In April of 1984, the Insurance Services Office of Arizona (the insurance rating bureau) advised the District Board that they had regraded the fire defense facilities of Sun City with the result that the District had improved its protection class from 5 to 4. Improvement in the protection class was due essentially to improvements in the service, manpower and equipment of the District and in the water system. This means for Sun City homeowners the lowest rating available for fire insurance purposes. The Board of the District seeks continuously to improve this rating.

Because of Sun City Fire District's fine fire protection services and low fire loss record, it is recommended you negotiate each year with your insurance carrier for appropriate fire insurance rates.

It's Sun City Fire Department

LOCAL ISSUE

Hopefully we can start the New Year off by correcting a long standing misnomer about fire protection in Sun City. The fire board of the Sun City Fire District sincerely hopes that the following will enlighten everyone concerned:

There is NO rural metro fire department in Sun City. The correct name for the fire force is the Sun City Fire Department.

All persons and property owners of Sun City own the buildings and grounds at the two fire stations on 99th Avenue — Meade Station at 99th and Bell Road and the Del Webb station at 99th and Sun City Boulevard.

They also own all the equipment and furnishings in these stations.

And they own all the fire trucks and other vehicles. The vehicles are clearly lettered Sun City Fire Department. Sun Citians own all of the tools and equipment carried on these vehicles. Another fire pumper is on order and will arrive in 1987.

The fire board on behalf of Sun Citians leases space at the fire station on 111th Avenue, and one of Sun City's fire engines is located there. Youngtown also has a fire engine there.

The cost of the manpower at this station is shared equally by both communities and both these fire

engines respond to either community as the need arises. Rural Metro does own this station and has a fire engine there for use in areas outside Sun City.

The ambulance service for Sun City is provided by Rural Metro as a separate business. The Sun City fire board has no jurisdiction over this business except to state that we are totally satisfied with their operation and their fine medical personnel. We do, however, lease space for their personnel and vehicles at Sun City's two fire stations because of the excellent locations to serve all parts of Sun City.

It might be well to state here that all of our firefighters are also trained medical technicians and respond with ambulances in certain cases or if ambulances are tied up, they will respond and give aid as need be until the arrival of an ambulance.

At this point we must state that the fire board contracts with the Rural Metro Corp. for our manpower and certain other services such as maintenance of vehicles, alarm room dispatch and other

management functions. The fire board, however, oversees through its standing committees all operations concerning fire protection in Sun City.

If anyone or any group would like further information on this subject or any subject related to fire protection, fire prevention, safety, handling emergencies etc., several fine speakers are available at your meeting place or ours. Call 974-4977 or 974-2321 for arrangements.

The fire board meets on the third Tuesday of every month at the board room in the rear of the fire station at 99th and Bell Road. There is seating for 60 and coffee and doughnuts are served. Ample parking is in the rear. Meetings start promptly at 9:30 a.m.

Sun Citians' tax monies provide the ways and means for fire protection in Sun City and the fire board feels that it behooves residents to become more familiar with these services and the men who provide for their well-being in these areas.

James Pryor,
Chairman of the board,
Brayton Willis, clerk
Cyril Rengel, vice chairman
George Lange, treasurer,
Everette Johnson, member

County Imperils SC Fire District's Fund Source

George Meade, Sun City Volunteers Fire Company District chief, has announced the district will fight a movement for state legislation to change the method under which the district derives its funds.

Meade said Maricopa County finance officials have made overtures to the state senate's finance and revenue committee to change the law under which the Sun City fire district obtained \$79,000 from the county general fund in fiscal 1970. Meade said the figure probably will run to more than \$100,000 in fiscal 1971.

"We're the only volunteer fire district in the state that has a paid fire department and no tax. That's what disturbs them," said Meade.

WHAT ALSO disturbs the county, he indicated, is that the county could spend that money itself if Sun City didn't get it.

Meade said the district was formed in 1966 and its income is based upon 1.2 per cent of the lieu tax paid by motor vehicles registered in Sun City. The district has legal authority to levy a property tax up to \$1.20 per \$100 assessed valuation but doesn't require it.

He reported the county wants the legislature to make the tax mandatory, replacing the lieu tax payment.

TO SHOW how significant Sun City's anticipated \$100,000-plus fund is, Meade gave these figures for the

county's four other volunteer fire company districts for the past year: Gila Bend \$261, Wittmann \$325, Wickenburg \$2,935, and Buckeye \$14,000.

"The original intention of the law," Meade said, "was to help out small volunteer fire company districts. But no one ever anticipated a district would get \$100,000."

He said he plans to make personal appearances before several state officials to present the Sun City case.

MEADE announced that the district has concluded a new fire protection contract with Rural Fire Co. to succeed a three-year contract which expired Aug. 31.

He issued this statement: "Figures were submitted by Rural; books and records were examined; recommendations by the Arizona Rating Board were considered, and meetings of the Sun City Volunteer board were held.

"This latter board consists of George G. Meade, fire chief; John W. Prather, secretary and treasurer; Walter I. Isekeit, former fire captain of the Cincinnati Fire Department; Howard L. Reynolds, former fire chief of the Jacksonville Fire Department, and Verner B. Olson, engineer, head of Chicago Fire Protection.

"IT WAS finally agreed by all that the new contract should be for one year with three renewal privileges, the firemen all to get raises,

two extra men should be added, their pay to be borne entirely by Sun City, and that the annual (payable monthly) rate should be increased from \$48,600 to \$74,442.10.

"This was then submitted to the Corporation Commission and subsequently to the County Board of Supervisors, and an interim authorization was granted by the Corporation Commission.

"I might add that about six months ago State Sen. Ray Goetze introduced a bill in the Arizona Senate putting a fire company like Rural under the authority of the Arizona Corporation Commission. This bill took effect on Aug. 11, and Senator Goetze deserves the good will of everybody, not only in Sun City, but everywhere served by Rural.

THE BOSWELL Hospital has been inspected several times and will open soon. The firemen will train some of the people employed there in the rudiments of fire protection and fire fighting.

"The Volunteer Fire Company, under recommendation by the Arizona Fire Rating Bureau to cover this high-rise building, has not only added men to the fire force but will also have to install six or seven hydrants around this one structure and, in addition, install a rebroadcasting unit on top of the building."

SC Fire Board, HOA Put Heads Together

By Hank Essbach

A briefing on some of the problems faced by the Sun City Volunteer Fire District accompanied a request for aid by Sun City Home Owners Association board members on seeking legislation to solve those problems, as three members of the Fire District Board appeared before HOA directors during their July 5 meeting.

Chairman George Evans, board clerk Robert Lane, and treasurer Ed Buente were accompanied by Sun City Fire Chief Geary Roberts and Inspector Lt. John Rowlinson, as they discussed some areas in which it was felt the HOA could be of help to the fire district, with the HOA board.

After Evans gave board members a summation of the district's history, the law under which it operates, and the recently-completed long range planning committee report, Lane noted that, since current board members' terms will expire in June 1978, and an election will be held in April, the HOA might want to assist in getting interested Sun Citians to run for posts on the fire board.

Buente pointed out one recent legislative change allows the fire district to receive no more than 10 percent more in levy income from motor vehicle assessments than it did last year. He added the board anticipates approving a levy of 3.8 mills on Sun City homeowners (it was 2.9 mills this year, and the limit is 20 mills) to make up the difference needed to meet operating costs.

The expected budget of \$729,600, he observed, will be an increase of 30 percent over the

spending during that period, so income could equal expenses. One way in which the board decided wear and tear on equipment could be lessened, Evans added, was to halt response to calls where homeowners accidentally lock themselves out.

Noting the board has worked in the past with the Sun City Condominium Association in promoting the purchase of fire extinguishers for the home, Evans told the HOA board he feels smoke detectors are also very valuable items to have in each home. He revealed more persons die from smoke inhalation, than from any other cause in most home fires.

Lt. Rowlinson said the statistic is that 95 percent die from inhaling the toxic components of the smoke generated, before the flames even reach them. He called the smoke detector "one of the biggest steps in home fire protection in the past 50 years." Chief Roberts added that to date, three states have passed laws requiring the detectors be installed in both old, and new, homes.

Currently, he added, Maricopa County requires the detectors be installed in new housing only. Evans pointed out many home products are composed of plastics, which, when they burn, emit highly-toxic gases.

Expressing satisfaction with the arrangement to contract for fire protection from Rural-Metropolitan Fire Protection Co., Lane told the HOA board it has proven to be less expensive this way, than it would be to organize an entirely new fire department. He cited the examples of Scottsdale, which relies on Rural-Metro service, and

Fire Board, HOA

(Continued from page 1)

department.

Chief Roberts revealed a training program for reserve firemen, which began in February of this year, has involved 45 men so far, who will put in 280 hours in one year. He added they will form a vital backup force to aid in combatting local fires. With implementation of this program, he pointed out, "we could get 60 men in Sun City on very short notice." By the end of this year, he declared, "we will have a viable force," available for response to back-up other firemen, if they are needed.

Roberts said Rural-Metro has working agreements with the fire departments of many Valley cities for mutual aid, in the event big fires get out of control. There are 18 fire stations in the county which could be called upon to render assistance in such an event, he said.

The possibility that Sun City's ISO rating for fire insurance purposes could drop one digit, below its current "5" due to the opening of the 111th Avenue station, was raised by an HOA board members. Evans said he does not believe the expense involved in obtaining a lower grading would be justified in the form of higher taxes to be assessed Sun Citians. Lane said it is possible the grade will drop to a "4" because the 111th Avenue

station has been opened, and due to personnel upgrading.

Concerning the fire district's contract with the Sun City Water Company, board member G. Douglas Morris questioned the fire board members if it might not be better to work out a plan to purchase the existing fire hydrants, instead of renting them each year.

Lane agreed the board should look into this option, adding, however, other matters have occupied the board's attention. Evans said he did not like the thought of having to pay the Water Co. \$1 million over a 10-year period, for use of the hydrants.

Evans said he would like to see some HOA board members volunteer to aid the district in drawing up a new fire code, for submission to the voters of Sun City, next year.

His Nosiness Pays Richly

Meade Wins Cut in Sun City Fire Insurance Rates

By THELMA HEATWOLE

SUN CITY — George G. Meade wears two civic hats . . . and he admits to being nosy.

He's chief of the Sun City Volunteer Fire Company (but refuses to collect his \$1 annual salary) and president of the 3,500 member Sun City Home Owners Association.

Meade's background as a real estate abstractor, accountant and tax specialist plus his ability in research led to the establishment of the fire district.

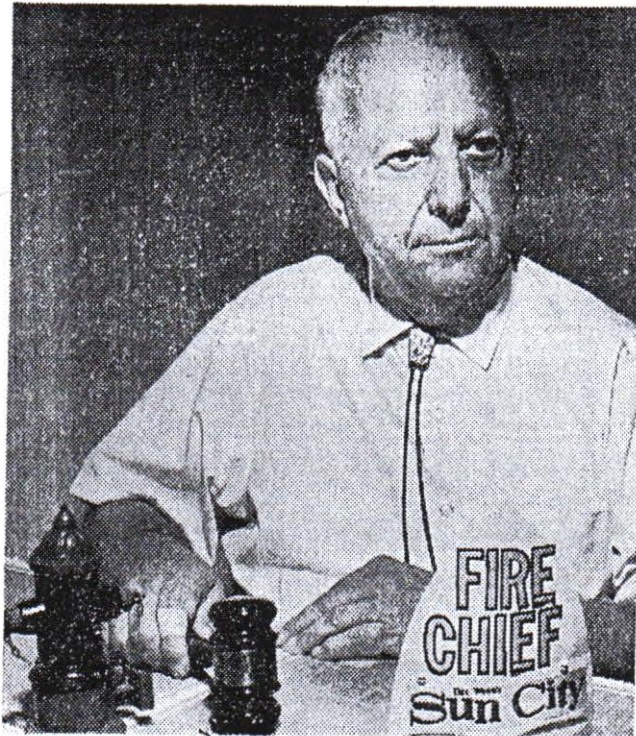
IT WAS "NOSINESS" that prompted him to delve into Arizona Revised Statutes and learn that unincorporated communities could recover a portion of lieu tax equal to 1.2 per cent of the value of motor vehicles in the community to be used for a volunteer fire district.

Examining Arizona Corporation Commission records, he found that other communities had installed fire hydrants through their water companies at no initial cost to residents.

With bulldog determination he headed for the state motor vehicle division. He checked 50,000 car licenses in Maricopa County to estimate the proportion of money Sun City would receive for a fire district.

"AS A SIDELIGHT," Meade said, "I discovered that Sun Citians had from one to three cars per family, and the valuation of vehicles here was about twice that of the Maricopa County average."

Armed with the facts, he secured the backing of the



Republic Photo by Thelma Heatwole

Sun City's George G. Meade
He's Fire Chief And Homeowners President

Home Owners and petitions were circulated calling the election to establish the fire district. Voters overwhelmingly approved.

The first year the district received \$44,500. Meade estimates that next year the lieu tax revenue will go to \$50,000. There will be no need to levy one mill for its support, he said. District funds pay Rural Fire Department for community protection and fees to the water company for the approximately 120 fire hydrants. Sun Citians now have reduced insurance rates.

MEADE ESTIMATES that based on the 5,000 present homes and an additional 1,500 to be built here, the community will save between \$500,000 and \$750,000 through the fire district in five years.

Although he spurns his \$1 a year salary, which he asked for, Meade has been charged \$11.04 yearly tax by the industrial commission on his salary.

"Legally," he explained, "I am taxed as though I am receiving \$400 a month salary."

Meade retired 25 years ago after three heart attacks. An aviation mechanic in the Army signal corps in World War I, he was turned down due to his weight when he tried to enlist in World War II.

"I CHOPPED TREES at my mountain home to reduce," he said, "but wound up with a heart attack instead." He and his wife moved here in 1964.

He came out of retirement in Sun City when his neighbor had a fire and Meade discovered there was not a fire hydrant in the community.

Right now Meade is researching the community hospital proposal and a wave of protests concerning cattle feed lot odors which winds waft in here.

"I will not pigeonhole anything that concerns the community," he said.

Born: 12/25/1884 New Iberia, LA
Died: 10/16/1979
Interred: Sunland Memorial Park
Arrangements by Menke Funeral Home

(Paid Advertisement)

VOTE

This is a continuation of an ad in the Oct. 28 issue entitled "Hydrants." Clip this ad and the previous ad and all subsequent ads for future use.

We will prove that the officers of the Home Owners Association knew some facts, withheld them, knew that instead of saving you money it has been costing you more (that pertains to all construction, 1 and 2 family, 3-4-8-10 family houses) and even the motel and shopping center.

The July 26 article itself proved they knew something (probably not much) and since they did not state any answers it was apparent the information was being withheld.

Why? A 1962 newspaper article by the association's officers states, "When Sun City is incorporated, it will get hydrants."

They were afraid to say "if Sun City, etc." They had knowledge that hydrants could be installed without being incorporated. This information was obtainable from a rocking chair through the use of a telephone.

The Aug. 27, 1964, board of directors meeting mentions "need of fire protection."

Sept. 24, 1964, in the board of directors meeting Herb (Martin) said, "should stress savings to the people by fire protection."

Incidentally these two meetings were primarily concerned (not with the safety or possible loss of your life and property by fire) but what can we do to become incorporated.

The Del Webb Co. takes pride in the welfare of this Sun City but somehow overlooked the installation of hydrants here (they are installed in Sun City, Cal.) and will possibly be installed in late sections.

Had the directors of the association been diligent, conferred with the Del Webb Co. and the water company (then owned by Del Webb Co.) there would be no hydrant problem.

Most of Sun City then was farm land and standard-type hydrants could have been installed then at a cost of less than \$4.25 a dwelling.

Now, as to this great declaration by the directors "should stress savings to the people by fire protection" (8/24/64 meeting) and the July 29 statement by the directors of the association "heartily in favor of any proposition which will provide better fire protection for our homes and at the same time reduce the cost of living."

Let us examine the facts: The 8/24/64 meeting states specifically they knew there was a positive saving. In July 1961 the insurance companies put in effect a ruling (referred to and known to the officers and directors of the Home Owners Association in their July 29 article) as Fire Rating Code No. 189-N.

Maybe they never heard of this before (which would not be surprising) but it has been in effect since July 1961.

In a nutshell, it provided that all 1-story 1 and 2 family houses, within 1,000 feet of a hydrant as the hose is laid in the street and who also subscribed to rural fire protection would be graded Class 8 instead of Class 9 rating. This would reduce all such persons' fire insurance premiums for the current and future years approximately \$5 to \$10 per year on the combined building and contents thereof (even in the installation of an individual hydrant).

The recent Del Webb report states that there are 4,039 living units in the one and two family category and 4,155 living units altogether.

As to the other units not in the one and two family group, the board of directors should have known that all 1-story four and five units and all 2-story dwellings (separated into units of 4 by a firewall) are now rated Class 10 without rural fire protection and Class 9 with rural fire protection and would remain so even with the installation of an isolated hydrant.

In dollars and cents these dwellings would not save money but their lives and property could possibly be saved by the installation of hydrants. This could be particularly important in two-story buildings.

These few paragraphs only concern the installation of a single hydrant which the board of directors did not let you know could be done.

The board of directors (this includes this year's board and all prior boards) purposely withheld information and purposely neglected to act and still will continue to not act in your behalf, using your life and property as a pawn in their efforts to incorporate under control of the clique.

Had they acted in your behalf in this matter for your interests, not theirs, and formed an organized fire district which meets the requirements of the Fire Rating Bureau (and this could have been done in a non-incorporated community) the following schedule indicates the rates, as given by the Fire Rating Bureau (an organization which determines the fire rates for over 200 fire insurance companies in Arizona).

There are a few fire insurance companies which do not belong to this organization (some package deal companies) whose rates vary slightly but their rates compete with the association rates. However, all fire insurance companies are under the supervision of the Insurance Department of Arizona. Should any complaint be necessary, this department conducts hearings.

The following is a schedule covering all buildings 1-2-3, etc., apartments, single-story and two-story, also offices, shopping center, motel, etc.

Only two valuations for buildings and contents are used; in between valuations can be approximated.

Buildings & Contents Rating Building Contents
(Includes Furn. & Clothing)

| \$10,000 Valuation (1 & 2 Units) and \$4,000 Contents | | | |
|---|---|------|---------|
| | 9 | \$16 | \$12.40 |
| | 8 | \$12 | \$ 9.20 |
| | 7 | \$11 | \$ 8.80 |
| | 6 | \$10 | \$ 8.40 |
| | 5 | \$ 9 | \$ 8.00 |

| \$10,000 Valuation (3 & 4 Units) and \$4,000 Contents | | | |
|---|---|------|---------|
| | 9 | \$18 | \$13.20 |
| | 8 | \$13 | \$ 9.60 |
| | 7 | \$11 | \$ 8.80 |
| | 6 | \$10 | \$ 8.40 |
| | 5 | \$ 9 | \$ 8.00 |

| \$20,000 Valuation (1 & 2 Fam.) and \$8,000 Contents | | | |
|--|---|------|---------|
| | 9 | \$26 | \$18.80 |
| | 8 | \$20 | \$14.40 |
| | 7 | \$18 | \$13.60 |
| | 6 | \$16 | \$12.80 |
| | 5 | \$14 | \$12.00 |

| \$20,000 Valuation (3 & 4 Fam.) and \$8,000 Contents | | | |
|--|---|------|---------|
| | 9 | \$30 | \$20.40 |
| | 8 | \$22 | \$15.20 |
| | 7 | \$18 | \$13.60 |
| | 6 | \$16 | \$12.80 |
| | 5 | \$14 | \$12.80 |

| Apt. Buildings (5 to 10 Fam.) \$10,000 and \$4,000 Contents | | | |
|---|---|------|---------|
| | 9 | \$39 | \$19.20 |
| | 8 | \$34 | \$16.80 |
| | 7 | \$30 | \$14.80 |
| | 6 | \$26 | \$13.20 |
| | 5 | \$24 | \$12.00 |

| Apt. Buildings (5 to 10 Fam.) \$20,000 and \$8,000 Contents | | | |
|---|---|------|---------|
| | 9 | \$78 | \$38.40 |
| | 8 | \$68 | \$33.60 |
| | 7 | \$60 | \$29.60 |
| | 6 | \$52 | \$26.40 |
| | 5 | \$26 | \$24.00 |

Phoenix is rated 4 and Scottsdale is rated 6.

To get rid of another stupid series of questions, the answer is Yes, everybody within the prescribed distance from a hydrant who is a member of the Rural Fire Department, regardless of whether he contributed to the fire plug fund, gets a reduction in insurance.

This includes those who could not afford to pay, those who would not (possibly some but not all of the clique who hoped and possibly worked for a failure) and even those of the clique who disregarded your wishes, were not concerned with the danger to your life and property, but were concerned with their own.

We have the situation of some of those -- a director, a vice president, and former president -- who actually contributed money to the installation of the hydrant at 107th Ave. and Sun City Blvd. to enjoy its protection and receive a reduction in insurance premium and purposely failed to secure the same protection and reduction in premiums for you.

At the end of the meeting of Oct. 7 the geniuses (?) who dreamt up the July article, which was published by the direction of the board of directors, were offering free advice to "pick out any location and install your own hydrant." Thus it is apparent there is still no thought of an overall installation of hydrants in the minds of the clique.

These arrogant geniuses (?) who had written so much drivel couldn't remember that in their article they had specifically condemned such a procedure "which would likely result in a jerry-built conglomeration of voids and over-laps (and) engineering-wise would be an atrocity."

It would be if it were entrusted to them.

They are still laboring under the delusion that everybody (but the chosen few of the self-perpetuating clique) are idiots and that this self-chosen few were sent here by the Almighty to lead us down the right (as the self-perpetuating clique determines) path.

Maybe it should be explained to the self-perpetuating clique that everybody in Sun City had already proven his or her ability or they would never have been able to reside here.

What we are confronted with is to protect ourselves from a self-perpetuating clique, posing as our friends but determined to control our present and future. These friends (?) are worse than a known enemy.

Maybe it should be explained to them that there is and has always existed maps of water lines. Without water lines, without an easement to the water company (applied for about 7/16/59) we would have no water and no community.

To protect himself, Mr. Mulcahy singlehandedly, without any help from the clique who not only did not cooperate but did not believe he could succeed, did succeed in inducing most of his neighbors to contribute to the installation of a hydrant in the only method available to him. This in a space of thirty days instead of an investigating-discussing (one word "stalling") since 1961.

A check at the Rural Fire Department reveals that in 1961-2-3- & 4 there were calls for 63 fires only. Some were small but could have erupted into larger fires. One resulted in a death by fire.

An expression of opinion by the department was requested concerning hydrants. The greatest concern was deemed to be fire in the roof structure. This is all wood with shingles that are not fireproof. We do have, in addition to ordinary fire hazards, planes flying overhead. We do have windy days. We do have straight streets with houses fairly close to each other. We do have the hazard of a fire jumping from roof to roof (great concern to fire department).

We could have an added protection if the clique were not so negligent.

The fire department has an apparatus called a water wall for the express purpose of fighting this type fire and to prevent such fires from jumping from roof to roof. But you must have hydrants to supply the water. Their tankers cannot supply the water.

No more space will be wasted talking about the hydrants (costs were explained in ad of Oct. 28) than to state that a standard hydrant (miscalled large size-commercial) rates higher in determining insurance rates. It has a 4-inch outlet, two 2-1/2 outlets (against standpipes with only two 2-1/2 outlets). If the standard is knocked over, no water escapes; if some of the standpipe type is knocked over-- a flood. Of course, our geniuses (?) wouldn't expect any hydrant that does not have a national standard thread would be used.

Returning to those whose only thought was "to save you money" but who caused you to spend more, the following is from an article in this paper dated Feb. 7, 1963, stating, The Rural Fire Department had received Rural 2 rating. Reduced insurance for subscribers. Further reduction probable if hydrants were available.

On July 12, 1962, article, "The Rural Fire Department has sent a report which is available at the association office. It was submitted in answer to a query from the board regarding protection offered."

The thought was there, some knowledge was there, but the willful desire of the self-perpetuating clique prevented anything being done.

The only way to correct this (and there are other abuses) is to elect a new board, none of which is wanted by or belongs to the self-perpetuating clique.

The self-perpetuating clique are beginning to shed crocodile tears, are even going to promise you something new.

Don't be fooled again; it's been done to you before.

Quoting from Lincoln:

"If you once forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem."

"It is true that you may fool all of the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time."

There will be more. Save this ad and all others and hold us to account if we do not carry out our written promises contained in all ads.

All people, members of the Home Owners Association or not, are urged to communicate with any of the undersigned for the purpose of protecting your rights.

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| George G. Meade 933-5439 | Dr. Herbert L. Berger 933-5438 | Dorothy Greenley 933-2354 |
| Sally Ryan 933-2020 | Rowena Harvey 933-5000 | Vernon Finley 933-4867 |
| H. Kendall Mulcahy 933-4748 | John Donnelly 933-2029 | George Eiker 933-0344 |

(Paid Advertisement)

HYDRANTS

Quote from July 29, 1965, release by Home Owners Association:

"No community-wide drive, etc., ever undertaken because it involved collecting money from each property owner and an agreement involving each property owner and a privately-owned water company."

This after discussion and investigation since 1961.

A half-hour of investigation July 30 by the undersigned revealed that a non-incorporated community could have fire hydrants installed under four different methods and, if done through the functions of a state agency, would not necessitate any property owner making a separate agreement with the water company. In one method the fire district receives a return of part of the lieu tax.

The officers of the association have been stalling and withholding information all this time under the guise of "saving your money."

Pure bunk.

In raising the question of cost of hydrants between their lowest figure, \$236, and their highest figure, \$675, the difference amounts to approximately \$2 to \$3 per dwelling. (Oh, yes, we checked with the hydrant sales company; you do get hydrants cheaper if you buy 25 or 50.) Had everybody in Mulcahy's district contributed, it would have cost each about \$4.25 instead of \$6.10 and they still would get the standard hydrants (which you willfully describe as "a large sized commercial or industrial hydrant").

This hydrant is that used in hundreds of towns and villages (populations from 1,000 up) in residential fire protection.

Now check this attempted brilliant thought with actual facts -- every home owner within the prescribed 1,000 feet of that hydrant who belongs to the Rural Fire Department has already lost between \$5 and \$10 per year due to the fact a hydrant has not been installed. Since the hydrant has been installed, the owners of homes have received a cash refund, each between \$5 and \$10. Since all fire insurance rates have increased this year on new policies, the saving will be even greater.

A few more hours' investigation provided the answer to every question (including the stupid ones) and in a subsequent article answers will be given on every question.

Up to Oct. 20, 1965, checking at the Board of Supervisors, rating board chief engineer, Arizona Corporation Commission, Arizona Health Commission or chief of rating board (which calculates rates for over 200 fire insurance companies) nowhere was there any recollection of anybody representing the Home Owners Association making an investigation concerning fire protection, hydrants, fire insurance, etc.

The chief engineer of the rating bureau said he had ready a report showing proposed locations of hydrants in the residential sections, recommendations concerning hydrants in the motel and business sections, and recommendations for the overall fire protection of Sun City, all of which could possibly reduce the insurance of everybody -- all homes, apartments, and business property. Since Mr. Mulcahy and Mr. Hardin had brought the maps and consulted him, the reports would be released to them. A lower rate of insurance than specified under 189N is possible.

The most important thought in the minds of the officers of the H.O.A. is to try to convince you they are "saving" you \$2 or \$3 once while actually it has (and will continue to) cost you \$5 to \$10 each.

Almost everybody in Sun City has mementos, heirlooms, etc., which, if lost in a fire, cannot be replaced no matter what amount fire insurance you carry.

But most important of all, the directors and officers have risked your life by fire for years in an endeavor to gain personal power.

This should prove to all that the officers and directors, this year and for the past 3 or 4 years, in this important matter (and there are other matters) have not served the best interests of the members and a complete change is necessary.

It is time for a change, and it would be impossible to select an independent board with members who cared less for the opinions, welfare, and who would be as arrogant as the present clique.

On Thursday morning, Nov. 4, at the Community Center, a meeting will be held to nominate candidates for the board of directors and discussion of other matters.

All members are urged to attend and under Article XII, Section 2, of the bylaws "any member, in good standing, may make additional nominations from the floor at the November meeting."

Exercise this right and nominate any member you wish, whose presence on the board for the ensuing year, you believe will benefit the association.

Some nominations will be made by the undersigned:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| George G. Meade | Dr. Herbert L. Berger | Dorothy Greeley |
| 933-5439 | 933-5438 | 933-2354 |
| Sally Ryan | Rowena Harvey | Vernon Finley |
| 933-2020 | 933-5000 | 933-4867 |

SUN CITY SUN CITIZEN



Vol. 4, No. 11

Sun City, Arizona

Ten Cents

Thursday, July 1, 1965

To Install Fire Hydrant

"They said it couldn't be done, but Sun City is going to get its first fire hydrant," said H. Kendall Mulcahy, the originator of the projector.

The goal of \$675 for the installation of the hydrant has been passed by \$10 donations, and refunds are already being made, according to Mulcahy.

"There are 160 homes within a radius of the fire hydrant and if the majority of the residents would make donations

in a radius of the fire hydrant and if the majority of the residents would make donations then it would cost each one \$5 or less," he said. "The required amount has been paid to the Sun City Water Works."

Jeff Hardin, Del Webb engineer, said the hydrant has been ordered and should arrive within about two weeks. Installation will be made as soon as possible after the hydrant arrives.

The community's first fire hydrant will be placed at the intersection of 107th Ave. and Sun City Blvd. and will serve residents within a radius of 1,000 feet.

Installation will present no problem as a watermain is located along 107th Ave. and all that is necessary to hook the hydrant to this main.

Mulcahy said homeowners in the vicinity of the project have been asked to be included in the project but have been advised they are outside of the 1,000 foot radius and were informed to start a similar project in their own neighborhood.

Mulcahy explained that he learned that the Arizona Fire Rating Code states property owners can get reduced fire insurance rates if there is a fire hydrant within 1,000 feet from the property.

Mulcahy who resides at 10644 Snead Dr., said the idea of a fire hydrant installed in the neighbor originated when he and other neighbors were having a patio barbeque.

They all agreed it was a splendid idea but they said "It couldn't be done." That's when he started out as a one-man committee to raise funds. Some of the neighbors turned down the request for \$10 toward the project but many were eager to get the drive started.



EDITOR:

Thank you for your fine article about "our fire hydrant!"

I have received a number of telephone calls from persons wishing they could have one in their area. One fine gentleman wrote, "If you cannot reach your goal of \$675.00, let me know—I'll contribute \$10.00."

I am thankful to be able to say we have reached our goal—the fire hydrant is ordered—and the money coming in now from the rest of our neighbors will be refunded equally to each one, thus making the ultimate cost less than \$10.00 each.

At this time, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my neighbors, for without their support, success would not have been possible. My special thanks, too, to Mr. Harry W. Brinkman, 10608 La Jolla Drive, and to Mr. Robert W. Bridges, 10632 Snead Drive, who helped me so generously with the all-important "leg work!"

In closing, I wish to answer those people who asked me why we needed a fire hydrant when we have a Rural Fire Department. The fire hydrant will make it possible for the men to be better prepared to do a good job. Stop by on 111th; talk to the men; see the equipment—it will open your eyes as to what a serious business fire protection really is.

Sincerely,
H. Kendall Mulcahy
10644 Snead Drive

Thursday, July 1, 1965

Sun City Citizen

Page 2

SUN CITY SUN CITIZEN



Vol. 4, No. 11

Sun City, Arizona

Ten Cents

Thursday, June 24, 1965

Sun City's First Fire Hydrant To Be Installed

Baer's Store To Expand

Baer's Draperies at the Sun City Shopping Center will expand this summer, according to owner Bob Baer. Present operations will move late July to stores being vacated by Brice's Hardware and Brown's Furniture.

Baer will expand his present line of draperies and carpets and by September first will offer a wide assortment of home furnishings. "Our home furnishings department will include lamps, mirrors, and everything necessary to furnishing a home completely," says Baer.

Store space will expand from the present 3,000 square feet to 7,500. The larger facility will be equipped with modern lighting, new fixtures and will be completely carpeted.

"We would like residents of Sun City and Youngtown to come in any time and meet us and most especially to visit our new location in late July. We want them to see our complete line of merchandise and to see that it is competitively priced," Baer said.

Baer will be going to the furniture market in Los Angeles next month to select new lines of fine furnishings to be available in his store.

Says Baer, "We have had a very pleasant relationship with Sun City and Youngtown and as a consequence feel this expansion is an answer to the wants and needs of established and new residents."

Baer's Draperies came to the Sun City Shopping Center in April, 1960.

Now Located In New Office

The Sun Citizens office now is operating from its new quarters in the Masters T.V. Store in the Sun City Shopping Center.

The office, which had been located in the Brice Hardware Store in the Shopping Center, moved to Masters T.V., because the Brice Hardware moved to the Brice headquarters in Peoria.

The Sun Citizen has the same telephone number - 933-3531, and the mailing address is P.O. Box 520 Sun City. News items can be brought to the new office and should be in before noon on Mondays.

Sun Citizens Like Mysteries

Sun Citizens love mystery stories and the majority of mystery readers are men but surprising as it might seem, women enjoy Western stories.

Frank Rodriguez, librarian with the Maricopa County Free Library mobile unit that visits Sun City every two weeks, said that an average of 200 books are issued each day the unit comes to the Shopping Center.

"Mystery stories make up about 90 per cent of the books issued and while men are in the majority as mystery readers, women come a close second," he said. "You would think that the men would be in the majority when it comes to reading Western stories but in this category the women are far in front."

Rodriguez said the adult readers drop off during the summer months as many leave on vacation but the grandchildren visiting Sun City make up for the "dropouts."

The children use the library cards of their grandparents and many of them go for science fiction stories and there is a large collection of children's books as the unit travels into a number of sections in the county where children readers outnumber adults.

Newcomers select books on Arizona history, especially those pertaining to Maricopa county. The unit also carries a collection of restricted books, "for adults only." These are placed on the very top shelves and out of children's reach. The unit carries volumes of every description and periodically books are removed from the shelves and replaced with others.

The unit visits the Sun City Shopping Center on alternate Fridays and is open from 9 a.m. until noon. In July the schedule of visits are July 2, 16, and 30.

Books can be kept by library card holders for two weeks before being declared delinquent. Library cards can be obtained at the unit.

Smile - You May Be On Our Candid Camera

It has been the general feeling for some months now that because of the rapid growth of the community, we are losing the close personal ties we once had. WE DON'T WANT TO SEE THIS HAPPEN.

As a public service the Record - Sun Citizen has decided to print at intervals beginning in September, a special "Know Your Neighbor" page. Residents of both Sun City and Youngtown will be pictured at random throughout the winter. Newcomers will be introduced in a special section as they arrive. We hope you will clip this section each time so

that eventually you will have a complete "family album" of your neighbors and friends.

Unfortunately, because of the difficulty encountered in printing, we cannot use prints that you already have. Our pictures must be the same size and of uniform quality. For this reason, we have contracted a reputable, local, licensed and bonded photographer to handle the picture taking for us. They have arranged for space at 11215 West Nevada in Youngtown. Photography will begin soon in order to backlog as many pictures as possible for fall use. They will contact you by telephone to arrange a convenient time for you. No photographs will be taken in your homes and pictures for your use will be taken only at the above address.

There will be several poses taken from which you may choose the pose that you prefer for use in the paper. There is no cost or obligation on your part for this service. Additional prints will be available if you so desire.

We hope you will join us in what we look forward to as being a real "fun project."

Webb Gets OK On Apt. Rezoning

The Del E. Webb company has been given the "green light" by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors to erect apartments on six acres of land to the rear of the new shopping center to be constructed at the southeast corner of 107th and Peoria Aves.

The apartment site had been zoned by the county as commercial as it had originally been selected for the site of the second shopping center and then it was decided to move the site closer to Peoria Ave. The county board approved the change in zoning at its last meeting.

Dick Clark of the Del Webb operations department, said it is uncertain when work will be started on the apartment project but it will not begin until the new shopping center is completed, because of the buildings operation strike.

IBM Engineer Visiting Here

David Hart, IBM engineer who with his family, soon will be transferred to Lebanon, is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Francis D. Hart, 11639 Thunderbird Rd.

Hart, his wife, Carol, and their children Elizabeth and Warren, of Upper Montclair, New Jersey, are the Sun City visitors. They also are visiting Mrs. Hart's mother and grandmother, Mrs. William Anderson and Mrs. E. McKeown in Phoenix.

David is a systems engineer manager at IBM's Elizabeth, N.J., office. He is being transferred to the IBM's Middle East Regional headquarters office in Beirut, Lebanon.

This territory includes Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Greece, United Arab Republic (Egypt) and Libya.

David and his family will sail from New York July 16, on the Rotterdam and will visit briefly in Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Germany, Florence and Rome, Italy.

They will fly from Rome to Beirut where they plan to make their home for the next two to four years.

Installation of Sun City's first fire hydrant is a certainty and will be located at the intersection of 107th Ave. and Sun City Blvd., according to H. Kendall Mulcahy, 10644 Snead Dr., originator of the project. This, he believes will lead to installation of other hydrants throughout the community.

"The idea started when a group of neighbors were on a patio at a barbecue when strong winds blew some embers from a charcoal fire," Mulcahy said. "We then realized the danger of a spreading fire and not a fire hydrant in the entire community."

This was the nucleus of the project and after weeks of

work Mulcahy has been able to gain the support of the majority of homeowners within a 1,000 foot radius of the proposed hydrant. The goal to be reached is \$675 for the hydrant and installation and more than \$500 has been raised despite the fact a number of householders have refused to join.

Mulcahy said there are 160 homes within the circle, with 107th and Sun City Blvd., as the hub. He said the Water Company has agreed to install the fire hydrant at a total cost of \$675 and there will be no further assessments. Each householder was asked to contribute \$10.

Mulcahy has sent letters to every homeowner included in the project and has also canvassed the area and in event more than the required \$675 is collected than a refund will be made.

"I have been making a preliminary investigation and find that the Arizona Fire Rating Code states that all homes within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant can have fire insurance rates adjusted to effect an annual saving of from \$6 to \$13 per home, depending upon the size of the dwelling," Mulcahy

He also said that a necessary requirement is that a homeowner have membership in the rural fire department in order to be eligible for lower fire insurance rates.

Persons in the area who have not paid \$10 and desire to be included in the project should make their checks payable to the Sun City Water Co., according to Mulcahy. Checks will not be cashed until the entire amount of \$675 has been subscribed.

"My chief interest in this matter is to lower the fire insurance on my home and those of my neighbors and at the same time increase our fire protection," Mulcahy said.

Liquor License

Mrs. Kathryn E. Breitbach of 11013 Connecticut Ave., was granted a liquor license Monday by the Maricopa County Board for the operation of a package liquor store in the proposed new Sun City Shopping Center, at 107th and Peoria Avenues.

The store will be known as Kay's Liquor Store and will have a drive-in service window.

In a few hours, you could be voted out of a lot of money.

**UNLESS YOU STOP THE PEOPLE
WHO PLAN TO DO IT. NOW!**

Tuesday morning at 9:30 a.m.
the fire board is very quietly plan-
ning to vote your taxes up.

The Sun City Fire Board wants
to operate their own municipal fire
department.

Why in the world would they
want to do that? Could there be
something wrong with the quality
of the service performed by your
own Rural/Metro Fire Department?
No. In fact, they're planning to
hire Rural/Metro people. And in a
recent survey, 96% of you rated
your Rural/Metro Fire Department
good to excellent. Not one of you
said it was poor.

Could it be because of what the
current service costs in Sun City?
No. Right now, Sun City enjoys
the lowest per capita cost for fire
protection for a city of its size in
the State of Arizona.

Could it be a step towards
incorporation and more govern-
ment control? Maybe.

Why do you think? It must be
good for someone. And this time
the someone is not you.

**GET TO THE MEETING.
STOP THE VOTE.**

**Tuesday September 20th at
9:30 a.m. At the Fire Station
on 99th Avenue North of
Bell. The cost of fire protec-
tion could double in just one
short year.**

Your Fire Board Members are:
James Pryor, Chairman . . 933-8108
Everett Johnson 972-3382
Brayton Willis, Clerk 974-4977
Cy Rengal,
Vice Chairman 972-1038
George Lange 977-6844

Paid for by your Rural/Metro Fire Department.