

INDEPENDENT

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AMBULANCE



Sun City firefighters were on the attack during a house fire Jan. 24. The department, including its ambulance division, are seeing continued stability thanks to good fiscal management and an infusion of grants. [Submitted photo]

Ambulance agreements expanded

Sun City West added, Peoria to come

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sun City Fire and Medical Department officials are expanding their West Valley mutual aid for ambulance calls.

As part of the agreement between Sun City Fire District and American Medical Response, the company that bought Rural Metro, AMR units were repositioned to provide limited service between midnight and 6 a.m. However, there are times

when AMR units are occupied during this time period and Sun City and Surprise units, in emergency situation only, are dispatched instead. But because of the agreement, Sun City does not get paid for the service call.

Surprise was experiencing similar issues and terminated their mutual aid agreement with AMR. Surprise officials approached Sun City Fire officials about a mutual aid agreement that would allow the respective departments' units to cover these rare calls in the opposite communities, which would give them the ability to bill

for the service, according to Ron Deadman, Sun City fire chief. That agreement was approved in January.

"This is a starting point and we may expand this to other departments in the future," Mr. Deadman said during the Jan. 9 fire district board workshop meeting.

That expansion is beginning to take shape.

The Sun City Fire District board Feb. 20 approved a mutual aid agreement with Arizona Fire & Medical Authority in Sun City West. Other agreements with neighboring fire departments are sure to follow, according to the Sun

City chief.

"I expect to be approaching Peoria with an agreement proposal soon," Mr. Deadman said.

It may not end there. Mr. Deadman said El Mirage, which has no ambulance service of its own, had up to eight calls for service during the midnight to 6 a.m. time period since December and Sun City handled two of those calls.

AMR continues its certificate of necessity responsibilities in all communities it serves. The agreements between Sun City, Surprise, Sun City West and any fu-

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VFSCW Fire District

Calls

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ture arrangements impacts only mutual aid backup situations.

The added revenue from the agreements will help offset the cost of making the backup calls in the different communities. At the same time it will help Sun City Fire and Medical Department maintain a strong financial position with its am-

bulance service. In January alone the service nearly doubled its projected revenues, according to Gabe Buldra, the district's contracted finance director. Ambulance revenues were \$195,674 for the month compared to a \$115,166 budgeted amount. That overage helped offset expense and personnel numbers that were over budget. January expenses were \$153,689 compared to \$89,613 budgeted and per-

sonnel costs were \$128,854 compared to a budget of \$65,268.

"People must remember, though, that we budgeted conservatively," Mr. Buldra said. "And our original budget was for two ambulances and now we have three operating."

Sun City's ambulance service responds to more than 600 calls per month, Mr. Deadman said.

Overall the fire district

is in a strong financial position year-to-date with all revenue categories exceeding budget (\$15.8 million total compared to \$14.9 million budget) and expenses and personnel (\$12.3 million combined compared to \$11.9 million budget) only slightly over budget, according to Mr. Buldra.

At the same time, Sun City's calls for service continue to rise. January's emergency and medical response

calls were 1,073, about 200 above the same time last year.

"The flu season really hit us hard," Mr. Deadman said.

Thanks to the work of Deborah Musselman, fire district grant coordinator, the district has seen an increase in grant funding. The district currently received funds from five grants (including a SAFER grant that just completed) totaling \$2 million and has applications

in for two more for about million. The remaining grants fund training, sn detectors and installati extraction equipment thermal imaging came Ms. Musselman report

The two in the applica process will fund new diac monitors and S(fit testing equipment, added.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2721. rbradshaw@newszap.com

SCW fire district OKs contract for ambulance transport service

By Tina Gamez
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Just as the Sun City West Fire District saw a possible record number of ambulance transports during the month of March, the governing board approved a contract between the dis-

trict and American Medical Response to come in and help when needed.

Assistant Fire Chief Tim Van Scoter said he's looked back in the records and "can't find a month that's been higher" than the number of ambulance

transports that occurred year to date.

There were 538 ambulance transports compared to 467 same time last year. For the 2014-15 fiscal year to date there have been 4,252 transports compared to 3,581 in the 2013-14 fiscal

The totals include transportation by helicopter and inter-facility transports. Van Scoter said emergency transports have increased, attributing it to "more people here doing
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WFSCW FIRE DISTRICT
 Daily News-Sun April 22, 2015

zens of the city of Glendale."

Contract

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"more things," plus, an aging community.

Van Scoter added that the district is also larger than ever, and "as things get bigger, it's going to get busier."

Southwest Ambulance came into the Fire District 16 times to transport patients.

The governing board discussed going into a contract with American Medical Response in March and postponed making a decision until the April meeting.

The board voted to adopt the contract between the district and AMR for help with ambulance transports during Thursday's board meeting, but before the vote, there was more discussion on how it would benefit the district to have AMR as a backup ambu-

ulance transport provider.

The contract will automatically renew, and Director Jack Meyer was concerned that would occur without the board having an opportunity to look it over each year.

The board, however, will have lists of all contracts on iPads that members can review whenever they want.

Fire board chairman David Wilson's concern with going into a contract with AMR was that the district has never had a contract with Southwest Ambulance.

EMS Coordinator Rebecca Haro explained to the board the difference between a mutual aid agreement and a backup agreement.

"What it all boils down to is the legal Certificate of Necessity that an ambulance company has to operate in and service a specific geographic area," Haro said

that if the district's CON is overlapped by another CON holder such as Southwest Ambulance, the district doesn't need to have a backup agreement according to an Arizona Revised Statute.

But she added that AMR's CON does not overlap the district's CON.

Wilson questioned an area that the district has annexed and now covered under their CON, but prior to the annexation, it was serviced by AMR, so "isn't that an overlay then?"

Haro said even though the small area may be considered an overlay, the "greater area of the district is not overlapped by the AMR CON," so, she

said, it would be beneficial to have the backup agreement so American Medical Response can respond outside of their Certificate of Necessity if the Fire District is ever in "a situation where we need every possible ambulance."

"Having those ambulances available when we need them. That's it, plain and simple."

Rob Biscoe
Chief
Sun City West
Fire District

AMR cannot legally come into the Sun City West Fire District without a request from the district, Haro added.

Wilson was concerned about AMR billing fire district residents for the transport.

"I don't want our residents paying for their transport," he said.

The Sun City West Fire District does not charge its residents for the transport other than the co-pay. After the insurance provider pays

for the ambulance transport, the district does not bill for any balances.

Fire Chief Rob Biscoe said that Southwest Ambulance bills residents for any transports when they come into the district and there is a policy in place to reimburse expenses for residents transported by an outside ambulance provider.

Availability and backup is what Biscoe wants. "Having those ambulances available when we need them. That's it, plain and simple." Biscoe added: "We're not looking at the dollars necessarily, because it's when we don't have the ability to transport a patient, that's the key to this. The backup, the safety net."

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SCW Fire to play greater role in providing care

Fire will handle more medical procedures in effort to curtail hospital admissions

By Cecilia Chan
Independent Newspapers

Sun City West residents in need of primary care will soon receive it from their fire department rather than a hospital.

Staff updated the Sun City West Fire District Board of Directors last week on the Community Integrated Healthcare program, in which EMTs and paramedics will play a greater role in treating patients.

"We believe this is the (emergency medical services) of the future," said Rebecca Haro, EMS coordinator. "It will better serve the residents of our community."

The CIH program, in development for two years, is evolving and driven by the Affordable Care Act, Ms. Haro added.

Under the Affordable Care Act, hospitals must reduce costly readmissions or face a financial penalty. If a patient treated for one of six conditions, such as heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia is readmitted within 30 days, the hospital is not reimbursed for that cost.

"It's an incentive for hospitals to make for better health care for the community," Ms. Haro said.

According to a 2013 report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "the federal

government has pegged the cost of readmissions for Medicare patients alone at \$26 billion annually, and says more than \$17 billion of it pays for return trips that need not happen if patients get the right care."

The report also stated that one in five seniors is back in the hospital within 30 days of leaving.

CIH aims to reduce unnecessary transports and emergency room visits by treat-

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Care

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ing and releasing patients with minor issues and identifying conditions that contribute to hospital admissions and coordinate efforts to address those conditions. Partner agencies include Sun Health, International Medical Direction and Banner Del Webb Medical Center.

Working under the direction of a doctor, fire teams will do routine procedures, such as EKGs, minor lab work, wound care, minor suturing and prescriptions. They also will do followup care with patients in their homes following discharge from a hospital and assess a patient's environment, such as ensuring there is food in the cupboard and if patients can afford their medications. If not, they will be referred to programs that would help.

"This broadens the scope of EMS," Ms. Haro said. "We have the flexibility to tailor this to what our community needs. We believe we can make a tremendous impact."

Under the program, cost savings comes from fewer ambulance transports, estimated at three per day during the first year. Additionally there is a potential savings to patients and the health care system of \$2.6 million the first year, according to the department.

Board member Jack Meyer questioned how a person such as himself or an EMT determine if a trip to the hospital was necessary.

"Our EMTs and paramedics are highly trained," Ms. Haro said. "They have experience and depth of training. All the crews will be made up of seasoned veterans."

She also noted that the teams will be able to call the hospital and talk to doctors.

Board member Bill Hamel was concerned that the district would lose money under the program.

"If we cut ambulance trips, we lose revenue," he said.

The department responds to more than 8,000 calls per year, mostly medical, and in 2013 provided 4,800 ambulance rides. According to Chief Rob Biscoe, some residents think the quickest way to see a doctor is by taking an ambulance and therefore call 911.

The chief informed the board that services such as going to patients' homes and issuing prescriptions are billable.

Additionally, he said, with a nurse practitioner on staff, he or she can also help with employee needs, which cuts the department's expenses.

The department currently budgets \$50,000 per year for mandated annual physicals. If exams were done in-house it would mean significant savings, he said.

Also, employees instead of accessing the department health plan for minor medical issues, the nurse practitioner can take care of the situation, he said.

"There is cost-savings internally and revenue from addition sources," the chief said. "We can more than cover the cost of the program. The key here is this is happening

with health care reform."

Staff is proposing a one-year pilot program, which will collect data, such as how many 911 calls are from the same address, 911 patients treated at the scene and not transported to a hospital and the types of injuries and illnesses treated.

Board President David Wilson said it was the department's responsibility to be on the cutting edge and that it was going to be an experience with bumps along the way.

Staff is still working on cost figures for the program, which will be presented to

the board during budget talks in late April. Mr. Biscoe said the department anticipated rolling out its program at the beginning of the next fiscal year that begins in July.

Ms. Haro said community paramedicine is gaining momentum. Minnesota, Dallas and Reno have all implemented programs, she said.

"This is the wave of the future," she said. "We either have to adapt or get left behind."

News Editor Cecilia Chan can be reached at 623-445-2805 or cchan@newszap.com.



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DAILY NEWS-SUN

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

SCW fire district annexes more county land

By Tina Gamez
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Property owners in an unincorporated 8.5-square-mile area of Maricopa County will soon become part of the Sun City West Fire District, leading to quicker response times and a decrease in costs for service, officials said.

The SCW fire district governing board voted unanimously Tuesday to annex the area north of Dynamite Drive and west of 155th Avenue during a special meeting and public hearing.

Property owner William

Schoentrup, a former firefighter from Mercer Island, Wash., said after the meeting: "I really wanted this to go through because I'm a retired firefighter, and I know all about response times."

He said property owners in the area asked Sun City West to examine the issue to see if annexation were possible.

It takes the area's private emergency services provider about 40 to 45 minutes to respond to a fire call because its station is located near Luke Air Force Base, Schoentrup said.

Even though the provider

has a mutual aid agreement with Surprise, "we would get the first unit that's closest to us, come from the city of Surprise," but, Schoentrup added, "if they're not available because they're responding to another call," then the caller would have to wait for the private provider.

For medical calls, Schoentrup said the company responds from an area near Banner Del Webb Medical Center. "The response time would be a little bit less," but he said there was a situation where a friend of his was injured and the fire

company could not find the property.

"So I had to meet them at Jomax (Road) and 163rd (Avenue) and have them follow me because they didn't have a clue where we were at."

The annexation becomes effective Feb. 5, and property owners in the new area can expect to pay approximately \$179 per year in taxes, which amounts to a decrease in rates from what they're currently paying for coverage, SCW Fire District Assistant Chief Mary Dalton said. Plus, the annexa-

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vF SCW Fire District

Annex

» From page A1

tion will also benefit the district's current property owners who will see a yearly drop of \$4.76 in their property tax rates, she said.

The value of all the annexed property, including land, buildings, and utilities such as power lines and telephone lines is \$4,565,194. But, Dalton said, what the fire district will actually receive in revenue per year is approximately \$120,000 as a result of the annexation.

During the meeting fire district board chairman David Wilson said area residents requested annexation into the Sun City West Fire District in February 2014, and the potential boundary change was "planned, reviewed and studied extensively."

On March 20, a public hearing took place to consider comments from those who live in the area, and after the hearing "the fire board determined that the proposed boundary change would promote the public health, comfort, convenience, necessity or welfare of the property owners in the proposed area and the fire district," Wilson said.

At a public meeting on Dec. 10, Wilson said the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors certified the petitions submitted for the Annexation Area C were valid and met the statutory requirement.

Dalton said about 250 signatures were needed to meet the requirement of more than 50 percent of the property owners in order to proceed with the annexation, and more than 300 signatures were gathered.

SCW Fire District Fire Station 104, which is under construction and located near El Mirage and Happy Valley roads, will be the closest to the area. The fire district is also proposing a station in the newly annexed area, located south of Lone Mountain Road and west of 171st Avenue.

AWARD

SCW fire district wins national finance award

STAFF REPORT

The Fire District of Sun City West has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award for its annual financial report.

The award was bestowed by the Government Financial Officers Association of the United States and Canada. It is the highest form of

recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting fire district officials said.

The award recognizes effectiveness in reporting the district's financial standing in a report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012.

The award marks the third year in a row that the district has been honored.



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SCW fire prepares for growth

MITCHELL VANTREASE
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun City West Fire District officials have spent \$20,000 on architectural designs that eventually could be the basis for reconstructing buildings and adding new facilities.

At a recent board workshop, officials revealed architectural drawings for two new projects, including the reconstruction of the fire station at 135th Avenue and Deer Valley Road. The other project is a temporary station and training facility in the northern APS West Wing area at Happy Valley Road and 115th Avenue.

Deputy Fire Chief Jim Heger said the district is growing and more people are in the expansion area so the

district needs to develop strategies to accommodate those residents.

Heger said \$20,000 has been spent on architectural designs, but there aren't any plans for construction at least for the next three years.

"Right now all we have are concepts, and it's important for us to look to the future," Heger said.

District officials are considering Station 103 at Deer Valley as the center of operations due to the expansion area and multiple annexations.

Reconstruction on Station 103 would potentially feature a 2,090-square-foot addition for the battalion chief personnel as

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five years or more. The expansion concepts are part of the district's 2011-2016 100-page business plan. "The planning is necessary so when it's time, we will be ready," Wilson said. "It's all about looking ahead and making sure we're ready."

also are under consideration. The district has been negotiating with APS for land in the area. Heger said the West Wing project is estimated to cost a little under \$1 million. Fire Board Chairman David Wilson said the projects are not expected to occur within

PLANS

FROM A1

well as private rooms and washrooms at an estimated cost of \$1.7 million.

A temporary station and training facility in the West Wing area

County allows Sun City West Fire access to fueling stations

STAFF REPORT

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors has unanimously approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Sun City West Fire District to allow the district to use the county's fueling stations for its vehicles.

By taking advantage of the bulk-buying power of Maricopa County Equip-

ment Services, fuel costs will be reduced, county officials said Tuesday.

Fuel costs have increased dramatically over the past several years, and the fire district and Maricopa County have been looking for ways to reduce usage and decrease gasoline costs, said Maricopa County Supervisors Chairman Max Wilson. "This agreement will allow

the fire district to access any Maricopa County fueling station, including the facility located at Dysart and Bell Road."

"On average, we hope to save approximately 20 cents a gallon by purchasing fuel at the county fueling stations," said Assistant Fire Chief Tim Van Scoter.

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FUELING

FROM A1

"This is just another example of government agencies working together to reduce costs and ultimately reducing the tax burdens to their citizens."

The district is looking at other ways to share services with neighboring agencies and reduce overall costs in keeping with the its Operational Funding, Cost Savings and Recovery Plan, officials said.

"We appreciate the leadership shown by chairman Wilson and the board of supervisors in getting this IGA approved" Van Scoter said. "We hope to work even more closely with the county and other agencies to implement more programs such as this one in the future."

Fire Station 101

19001 N Camino Del Sol

Battalion 101, Engine 101, Rescue 101

Opened in 1982, Fire Station 101 houses three units. [Battalion Chief 101](#) responds to assist or take command of any emergency requiring multiple units. Also responding from Station 101 are Engine 101 and Rescue 101 [Ambulance] which are staffed with paramedics that are Advanced Life Support equipped.

[Engine 101](#) is staffed with four uniformed personnel including a Captain [Supervisor], Engineer [driver/operator] and two firefighters. [Rescue 101](#) is staffed with two cross-trained firefighters, one Emergency Medical Technician [EMT] and one Paramedic



Fire Station 102

20622 N Stardust Blvd

Engine 102, Rescue 102

Opened in 1990, Fire Station 102 houses two units. Engine 102 and Rescue 102 respond from this station and both units are staffed with Paramedics that are Advanced Life Support equipped. [Engine 102](#) is staffed with four uniformed personnel including a Captain, Engineer and two firefighters. [Rescue 102](#) is staffed with two cross-trained firefighters, one Emergency Medical Technician and one Paramedic



Fire Station 103

13431 W Deer Valley Rd

Ladder 103, Rescue 103

Opened in 1999 to cover our Northeastern area, Fire Station 103 houses two units. This newest, state-of-the-art firehouse includes a training facility that can accommodate 148 students in its [training rooms](#). Also included is a [special room](#) dedicated to air pack [SCBA] repair and maintenance program and individualized sleeping quarters. Ladder 103 responds to medical, fire and traffic related emergencies. This specialized unit has a 75-foot aerial ladder used for extrication, ventilation of hot gasses, high-angle rescue and salvage and overhaul [clean-up]. Ladder 103 and Rescue 103 [Ambulance] are staffed with paramedics that are Advanced Life Support equipped. [Ladder 103](#) is staffed with four uniformed personnel including a Captain, Engineer and two firefighters. [Rescue 103](#) is staffed with two cross-trained firefighters, one Emergency Medical Technician and one Paramedic



Administration Office 19001 N Camino Del Sol

Located adjacent to Fire Station 101 the Administrative building provides offices for the [Elected Fire Board Members](#) , [Fire Chief](#) , [Fire Marshal](#) and our [Administration Staff](#)



Resource Management Office 19001 N Camino Del Sol

Also located adjacent to Fire Station 101, our Resource Management office employs a full-time Apparatus Technician. The Technician runs preventive maintenance programs, make repairs to our fleet of vehicles and maintain Fire District buildings.



Address and telephone [information](#).

Wednesday, April 14, 2010

Pair of grants bolsters community programs for SCW Fire District

ERIN TURNER
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Car seats were at a premium in Sun City West last month during spring break, but some of the problem could be alleviated next year for firefighters, who will use a \$1,300 grant to purchase the child safety devices.

Firefighters reported Tuesday that they had 90 car seat requests in March. The Fire District of Sun City West owns 30 car and booster seats.

"Last month we did 90, and we only install them during (weekdays), so 90 car seats for 30 days is a lot," said Deputy Chief Jim Heger. "Sometimes if a seat doesn't come back in time then we're up a creek and the next person in line doesn't get the seat."

The car and booster seats are available to district residents for free with a reservation and are mainly used by grandparents who have visiting grandchildren.

But the \$1,300 grant from the Sun City West Kiwanis Club will alleviate some of the potential problems in the future.

"We're going to purchase up to 26 car seats and booster seats. We're almost going to double (and) that's really going to augment our program," Heger said.

Heger said the Kiwanis Club grant means visiting children will be safer — something district personnel and

board members were happy to hear.

Fire officials also announced another grant the district has obtained. The Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management State Homeland Security Grant is for \$8,512 and will be used to help facilitate the district's volunteer Fire Corps program.

The money will be used to purchase uniforms for the 20 volunteers in the program, as well as two AED training machines, three mannequins for CPR training, a banner, emergency preparedness guides and Fire Corps informational brochures.

"We're doing very well on our grants," Heger said. "They help tremendously. Just for uniforms for our volunteers it is a little over \$4,000, and now we don't have to use public money for that. We're getting free time and now we're getting money, so this is great. We don't care if it's a donation of \$5 or a grant for \$8,000. Every little bit helps."

Upcoming meetings for the fire district include Thursday's regular board meeting and special budget workshops April 27 and 28. All meetings begin at 9 a.m. in district administrative offices, 18818 W. Spanish Garden Drive, and are open to residents.

For information about the district, visit www.scwfire.org or call 623-584-3500.

Firefighter engineers fitness center for brethren

ERIN TURNER
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Fitness gurus employed by the Sun City West Fire District owe a debt of gratitude to fellow firefighter Bill Marshall.

Marshall, an engineer and 20-year district veteran, spent a good part of the last four months renovating the district's new fitness center. He was honored at the regular fire board meeting on Thursday for his contributions and efforts to the project, which included the transformation of the old administration building behind Station 101 into the new fitness center.

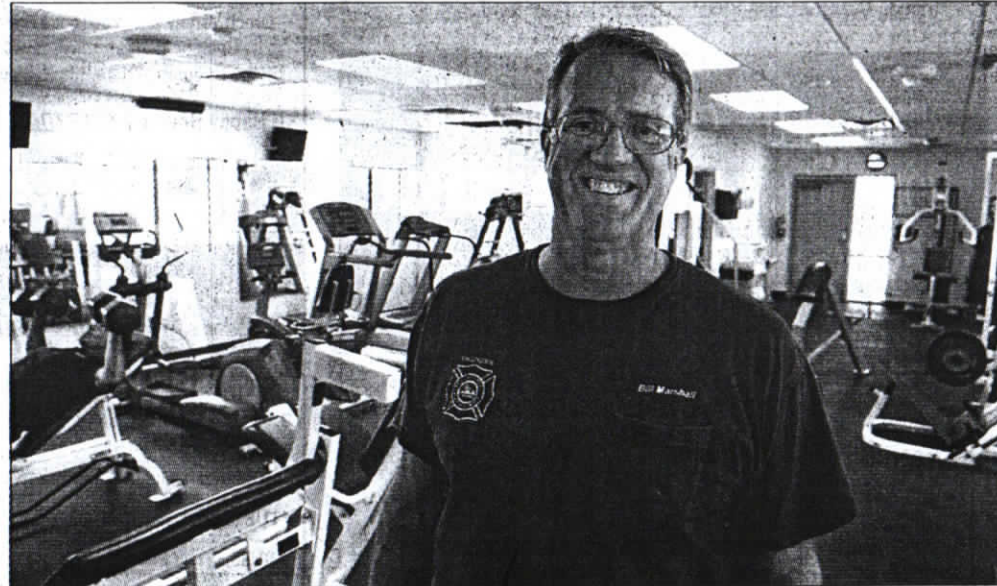
"The fire board wants to recognize (Marshall)

for his dedication, commitment to the completion of this fitness center," said board chairman Dusty Rhodes. "Engineer Marshall contributed many hours of intense, focused labor to refurbishing the facility and greatly contributed to its (function) and attractiveness."

"The fire district has many personnel willing to go above and beyond everyday requirements of their job. Engineer Marshall is definitely one of those committed individuals."

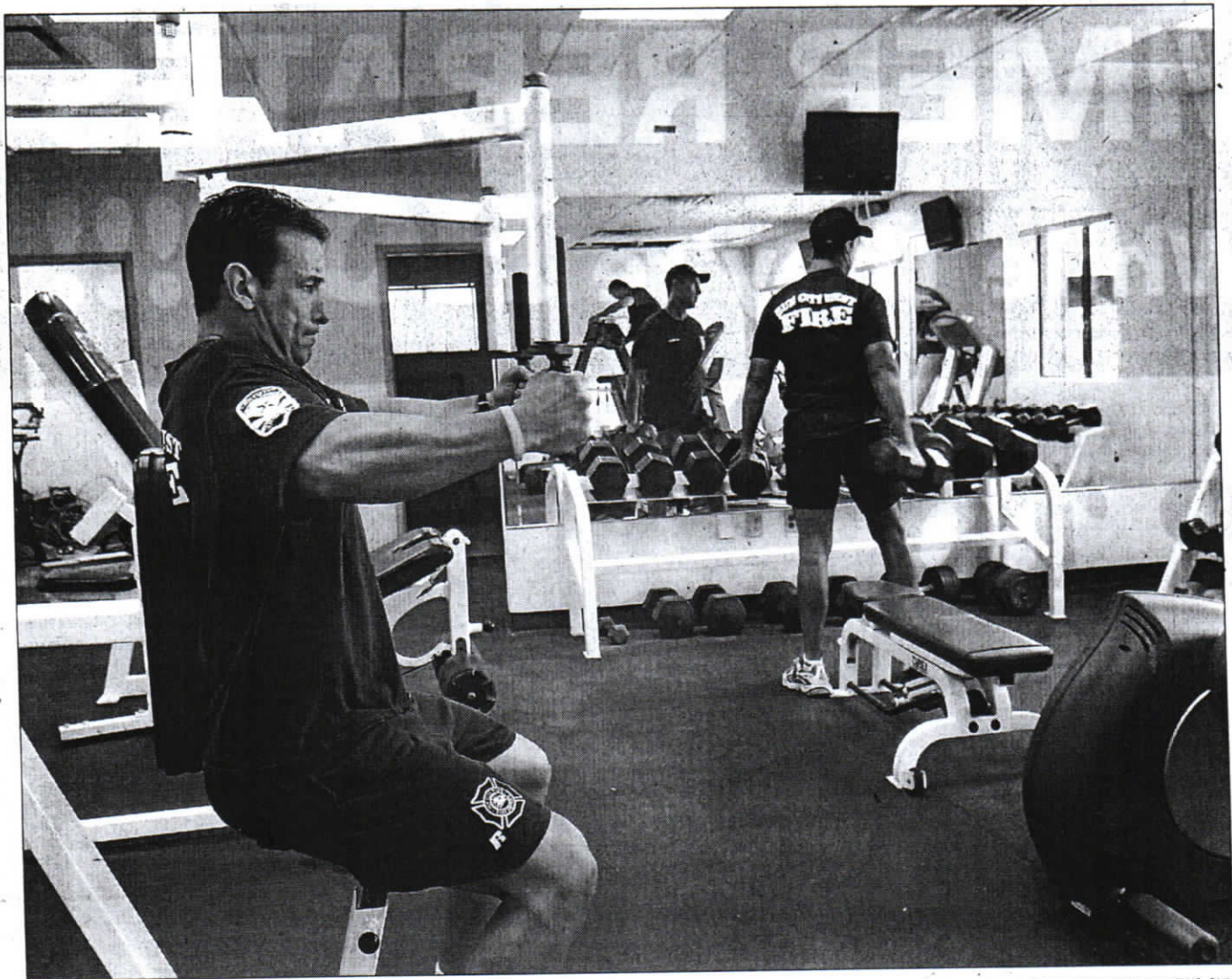
Marshall initiated the renovation efforts, which included removal of car-

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PETE PALLAGI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Engineer Bill Marshall has spent 4 months building this fitness center in the old administration building behind Station 101 in Sun City West.



PETE PALLAGI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Fitness Coordinator John Casey works out with fellow firefighter Pat Misfud in the new fitness center at Sun City West Fire Station 101.

VOLUNTEER: Engineer puts together fitness center

FROM A1

peting and installation of rubberized flooring, removal of cabinetry and walls dividing the interior of the building and installation of a new lighting system and ceiling grids.

The effort Marshall employed in the project is something district officials have come to expect of him, Deputy Chief Jim Heger said.

"He gives 100 percent every

day," he said. "He's always been like that."

Heger said without Marshall volunteering his time for the project labor, the district would likely still be without a fitness center.

"We would've had to pay somebody," Heger said. "Money got a little tight, we had some unexpected costs, so we were going to hold off on this for a while."

Marshall said he was happy to help out with the renovation.

"I made a fitness center because I wanted to create a place where (district personnel) could come to and work out and be physically fit," he said.

The district recently purchased four cardiovascular machines for the fitness center for which Marshall said he still has a few further improvements.

Erin Turner may be reached at 623-876-2522 or eturner@your-westvalley.com.



Independent Newspapers/Dave Casadei
Fire District of Sun City West Emergency Medical Technician Tammy Musick and Firefighter Andrew Skinner enjoy the extra kitchen space at the fire district's Fire Station 101, 19001 Camino Del Sol.

Officials slate May 16 open house

By Dave Casadei
Independent Newspapers

The Fire District of Sun City West is set to unveil its newly renovated Fire Station No. 101 after years of planning and months of anticipation.

According to the fire district's Deputy Fire Marshall Keith Tanner, the fire district will conduct an open house 9 a.m.-noon Friday, May 16 at the new station, 19001 Camino Del Sol.

Mr. Tanner noted free refreshments will be served throughout the morning event, which includes fire station tours, an apparatus display, fire and life safety information, and the fire district's Citizens Academy information.

Fire district Deputy Fire Chief Jim Heger said fire officials spent the past handful of years doing their due diligence in planning how they could improve the 27-year-old fire station — the district's first — that was first built in 1981.

"We thought the building was getting old and we needed to give it a facelift," Mr. Heger said. But he noted the facelift

What do you think?

What other upgrades should the fire district consider?

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was more of one in functionality than anything.

Mr. Heger explained the fire station's living situation was more of a barracks style where everybody slept in a large room.

But, the room became insufficient because it was designed

before larger numbers of women began joining the district. Now, the barracks room were replaced 10 8-foot-by-10-foot rooms equipped with three lockers — one for each shift employee who shares the room — a bed and a desk.

Two rooms have their own bathroom with shower, while the other eight share a bathroom between each set of two rooms, similar to dorm room suite mates.

In addition, fire station upgrades include an on-site washer and dryer, an extractor dryer capable of handling firefighters' turnout gear, a biohazard room to clean used equipment, a locker room that protects turnout gear from the sun and diesel gas fumes, a built-in barbecue, new sprinkler and fire alarm systems, and an improved kitchen with more cooking space and concrete shingles replacing the original tile roof.

Mr. Heger noted the fire station now also has a larger

See **Upgrades** — Page 3

Upgrades

Continued From Page 1

natural gas generator, which can power the entire station, opposed to the previous diesel generator that served about two-thirds of the site.

The project cost \$1.3 million, which came from its Capital Fund. But Mr. Heger noted, project officials were able to complete the job \$5,000 under budget.

The fire district's Capital Fund is financed from property sales tax money from Sun City West residents.

Firefighter Andrew Skinner and Emergency Medical Technician Tammy Musick agree the upgrades were needed and are more than pleased with the finished product.

Post comments in the Public Issues Forum at www.newszap.com. News Editor Dave Casadei can be reached at dcasadei@newszap.com.

SCW Fire District joins national EMT certification registry

JOSHUA S. GARBER
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City West Fire District board announced at its workshop this week that it has been designated a training center for the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians.

NREMT, America's national certifying agency, is meant to establish, maintain and implement uniform requirements for EMTs, who are responsible for providing pre-hospital medical care.

Rebecca Haro, the district's EMS coordinator, said the program's focus will not be on initial certification, but rather on re-certification.

"Glendale Community College is very well known for the initial certification training," said Robert Biscoe, district fire chief. "They do also provide re-certification programs, but there is a significant cost per student."

By re-certifying their EMTs in house, the district will save money, he said.

"It's really a win-win for us," he said. "With us being a certification site, Rebecca can set the schedule. (This) will save us a tremendous amount of money over the course of the existence of the training center."

Arizona EMTs must be re-certified every two years.

In the past, the district's EMT

training had been adequate for state certification but not at the national level, Biscoe said.

Officials from the state's Department of Health Services have indicated they would like to stop certifying EMTs altogether, requiring all EMTs to carry a national certification instead, Biscoe said. By ensuring EMTs have a national certification, the district will not take a hard hit financially in getting personnel up to speed if and when the requirements change.

"I would hope that we would be able to open it up to outside agencies as well," Haro said. "In the past, before we became a national registry and only (offered state certification), we had outsiders from other fire departments attend."

The program is not meant to make a profit for the district, she said. However, because the training will last longer than it has in the past, a "minimal fee" may be charged to outside agencies to cover the additional costs.

The SCWFD will house the NREMT's 43rd training center, Haro said. The low number was surprising, she said, because 45 of the 50 states rely on this national training.

"I expected it to be in the hundreds," she said.

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2/20/07

VF SCW FIRE DEPARTMENT

VF

Thursday, July 6, 2006



SCW Fire District personnel reviews helicopter rescue procedures

BY MARIANNE-SIKLER

In a two-day training session, Sun City Fire firefighter personnel were schooled in procedures for selecting and securing a helicopter landing zone to facilitate the emergency transport of critically ill or injured patients to trauma centers.

On hand to conduct the sessions was helicopter pilot Michael Webb of Life Net, accompanied by crew members Medic Wayne Johnson and Nurse Jeannie Alvarez. Life Net is a helicopter emergency service operating out

of Glendale Airport that transports patients to the five Valley trauma centers at Banner Samaritan, St. Joseph's, John C. Lincoln North, County and Scottsdale hospitals.

Though predominantly serving the Northwest Valley area, Webb said Life Net can travel as far as anywhere along I-10, or to the state line if necessary in the case of a train wreck or multi-casualty situation. Twenty-one helicopters serve the greater Phoenix area, with other helicopter companies serving in Mesa, and Southern Arizona,

See *Helicopter*, Page 4

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THE WESTER

Helicopter, from Page 1
including at Tucson International Airport,
Marana, Sierra Vista, Stafford and Wilcox.

Under the coordination of Capt. Chris Barkley, all district shifts attended the instruction sessions. Discussed were the responsibilities of a landing zone commander in choosing, preparing and securing a landing zone location, arranging for radio communications with the helicopter crew, and observing general safety rules.

Webb stressed the importance of ensuring the landing zone is of adequate size — 100 feet in each direction — free of obstructions during landing and departure, and that proper safety measures are observed to stay clear of the helicopter's 36-foot long rotors.

Safety glasses were listed as a must, as the centrifugal force of the helicopter's rotors — at speeds up to 100 mph— are capable of strewing sand, stones or debris.

"Helicopter landing and takeoff are the most dangerous times, the most vulnerable

for me in the landing zone because I have no control over its security," said Webb.

"That means the landing zone commander should physically walk over the landing zone to ensure obstructions are clearly marked and discussed with the pilot prior to helicopter operations, and that impediments are kept out of the zone," he said.

Barkley said the Sun City West Fire District has a specially trained engine company that's responsible for directing operations, which is called upon for emergency situations. Most firefighter personnel have had prior instructions regarding landing zone procedures, with the exception of a few recruits that were part of the recent review.

According to Barkley, the district is trying to establish a designated area within Sun City West expansion area that has the potential for being used as a helicopter landing area in emergency situations.

SCW



SUBMITTED PHOTO

After years of planning and hard work, members of the Fire District of Sun City West broke ground on the new fire district administrative and maintenance facility at the intersection of Spanish Garden and Sandridge drives in Sun City West. From left are former fire board member Diane Holloway-Cheney, fire board member Dusty Rhodes, fire board treasurer Bill Hamel, fire board chairman Charles Frankel, and fire board member David Wilson. The new facility is tentatively scheduled to open in December.

Ground is broken for new SCW Fire District administration building

District officials on hand to help turn over the dirt

By Marianne Sikler

The Fire District of Sun City West broke ground last Tuesday on its new Administrative/Maintenance facility, located at the intersection of Spanish Garden and Sandridge Drives. Hunt and Caraway Architects, Ltd., designed the project. PFG Construction, Inc. was hired as contractor.

Nearly three years of building committee and Board meetings had gone into planning the new administrative building, which had seen its share of delays in being held up by County approval over a public utility abandonment process, a higher than antic-

ipated cost bid, and a change of contractors.

The new facility will include the Fire District's administrative offices, as well as a vehicle maintenance component. The administration building will house various divisions and personnel, and include offices for the fire chief, deputy chief in charge of the life safety/support services, deputy chief in charge of the emergency services division, and departments of human resources, computer and information technology systems, bookkeeping and purchasing, as well as record keeping, fleet/facilities management, clerical data entry

and disaster planning.

A portion of the new facility will contain an enclosed maintenance bay/garage, which will allow the District to expand its current program of in-house apparatus repair and maintenance—a program that is expected to greatly help decrease outsourced vehicle repair and costs, as well as apparatus downtime. The inclusion of a permanent, enclosed maintenance area will be the first of its kind for the Fire District.

The new facility will incorporate a training/conference room, and a community blood pressure screening area. The blood pres-

sure screening room will be used to continue the free resident blood pressure screenings currently being conducted in the District by a group of volunteer nurses each week Monday through Friday at 9-10 a.m.

A training/conference room will be used for Fire Board meetings, community education programs of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), automatic external defibrillator (AED), and first aid classes. It will serve as an emergency operations center in the event of a community disaster.

Fire Board Clerk Sol Robinson headed the building committee that put in a great deal of hours and effort to oversee and report on the building design. "We worked hard to create an attrac-



Shown (l. to r.) are: former Fire Board member Diane Holloway-Cheney, Fire Board member Dusty Rhodes, Fire Board treasurer Bill Hamel, Fire Board chairman Charles Frankel, and Fire Board member David Wilson.

Photo, Fire District of Sun City West

tive structure which the residents of Sun City West would be proud to have as part of our beautiful and pristine communi-

ty," he said.

The new facility is tentatively scheduled to open in early December, 2005.

SCWFD hopes for Westwing annex

TIFFANY DI GIACINTO
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun City West Fire District's ambitions to annex the APS Westwing substation just outside Peoria likely would have little effect on neighboring fire departments, which would probably respond in the event of a large-scale fire.

The odds of another fire breaking out like the one that crippled the substation last year, however, are slim, and local fire officials aren't concerned the substation is served by a department miles away.

"It would not have any major impact on the system at all," said Mike Tellef, spokesman for the Peoria Fire Department. "The chance of having to respond out there is minute."

The Westwing substation near the Loop 303 and Happy Valley Road has been a county island for more than three decades and is served by Rural-Metro, which has its closest fire station in Litchfield Park.

See WESTWING, A5

From A1

The Fire District of Sun City West has been seeking to include the substation within its boundaries since the July 2004 fire that destroyed four transformers and crippled a fifth unit. The fire led to the substation's owners, APS, to ask Valley residents to conserve power for fear of rolling brownouts.

Peoria firefighters were among 11 departments to respond to the substation fire last year, which burned for more than 24 hours.

"That is the first incident that I'm aware of that has occurred out there," Tellef said. "What occurred last July is an extreme rarity."

Although surrounded on all sides by the Sun City West fire district, the closest fire department to the substation is in Peoria, two miles away. Should the substation be annexed into Sun City West's fire district, Peoria firefighters still would respond to emergencies at the substation as part of the automatic aid system, which dispatches calls to 23 fire departments that

subscribe to the system, including the departments in Glendale, Peoria, Phoenix, Sun City West and Surprise.

Sun City West Fire Marshal Jim Heger said the district is pushing the annexation because Rural-Metro is not a part of the consortium that provides the automatic aid system.

However, Tellef said Peoria firefighters probably would respond to a call at the substation regardless of whether it was annexed by the fire district.

"It just depends on where

the call comes from," he said. "If the call comes from a resident or a phone located in Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise or Peoria, we would automatically respond because we are all on that automatic aid dispatch system. We know no boundaries, so we would automatically go to it."

The call reporting last year's fire at the substation originated in Sun City West. Once fire crews confirmed the substation was on county land, Rural-Metro was called in.

Thursday, June 23, 2005 THE WESTER

Fire District Lock Box Program is successful and safe

The SCW Fire District's lock box program is conducted in cooperation with the Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA) in Sun City West and has been extremely effective with over 2,000 lock boxes successfully installed.

The lock boxes are extremely safe. They are virtually impossible to pick and the keys are only made by the manufacturer—making it impossible to reproduce the key without official authorization.

There have been no incidents of an illegal entry into a home utilizing the lock box in either Sun City West or any of the surrounding areas, some of which have utilized lock boxes for over 20 years. These lock boxes are very different in construction and operation from a realtor's lock box device which is placed on a door handle.

The lock box is a heavy metal box which is mounted securely on an individual's home and which contains a key to the house. The box is locked by a special key to which only the Fire District of Sun City West has access. If there is an emer-

gency in the home, the fire department can use their special key to open the lock box and use the house key to gain entry to the home.

This can add precious lifesaving time and save property because the firefighters do not have to look for a way to forcibly enter the house if someone is unable to answer the door or if the owners are absent and there is an emergency inside the home.

The lock box can be ordered from PORA. There is one rate for members and another rate for non-members. However, both charges are less than ordering the box directly from the lock box company. After receiving the lock box, recipients should call the Fire District of Sun City West and make an appointment to have one of the firefighters install the lock box free of charge.

The lock boxes are a great investment and an effective tool for rapid entry when necessary. Purchase one of these time and property saving devices today by

contacting the Fire District at 623-584-3500.

© THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC FRIDAY, JUNE 17, 2005

Sun Cities budget \$18.7 million for fire districts

Increase blamed on higher costs of fuel, insurance

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

It will cost more to send fire-trucks rolling down the road in Sun City and Sun City West.

The fire districts for both communities have adopted proposed budgets totaling more

than \$18.7 million for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

That's an increase of \$2.8 million from the current combined operating budgets.

Higher fuel and health-insurance costs are among the reasons for the increase, according to officials for each district.

In Sun City, the fire district board has adopted a proposed budget of \$8,783,896, a nearly 9 percent increase from the current budget of \$8,088,425.

The Sun City Fire District also serves Youngtown.

Jim Sebert, the Sun City fire chief, said part of the budget would be used for the renovation of the main fire station, 17017 N. 99th Ave.

The Sun City West board has adopted a proposed budget of \$9,963,357, a nearly 28 percent increase from the current operating budget of \$7,807,490.

Jim Heger, the Sun City West fire marshal, said the proposed budget includes \$1.4 million that has been earmarked for a new fire administration building and the renovation of two

fire stations.

Part of the money for the improvements has been saved up from prior years, Heger said.

The district is close to breaking ground on the new building, which will be at Spanish Gardens and Sandridge drives, Heger said.

Work on the two stations at 19001 N. Camino Del Sol and 20622 N. Stardust Blvd. is to start in January.

The five-member Sun City fire board will vote on a final budget Tuesday. In Sun City

West, the final vote was scheduled for Thursday.

Under Arizona law, a fire district is a quasi-municipal taxing authority that uses its levies to support the services of a fire department.

The Sun City West department, unlike its Sun City counterpart, also provides an ambulance service, so the budgets aren't entirely comparable.

In Sun City and Youngtown, ambulance services are provided under a contract with Southwest Ambulance.

SCW Fire District seeks annexation of Westwing

Chief points to '04 fire

AMANDA MYERS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City West fire marshal said Tuesday response times to the Westwing substation must be shortened or APS and its customers will be at greater risk for property loss and power shortages.

As a county island for more than three decades, the Westwing substation near the Loop 303 and Happy Valley

Road is part of the Rural Metro fire department, with the closest fire station in Litchfield Park. Response times from that station to Westwing average 30 minutes, said Fire Marshal Jim Heger.

The way to shorten that, Heger said, is to bring the Westwing substation into Sun City West's jurisdiction. The district has been seeking to include the substation within its boundaries ever since the July 4 fire that destroyed four transformers

See FIRE, A5

From A1

and crippled a fifth unit, leading to rolling brownouts in area communities that lasted for weeks.

Heger told board members Tuesday in a workshop meeting that he had met with officials from the Westwing substation Monday to discuss the possibility of annexing the county island into the fire district.

"They simply can't get adequate protection from Rural Metro," Heger told board members. "Our main priority is their protection."

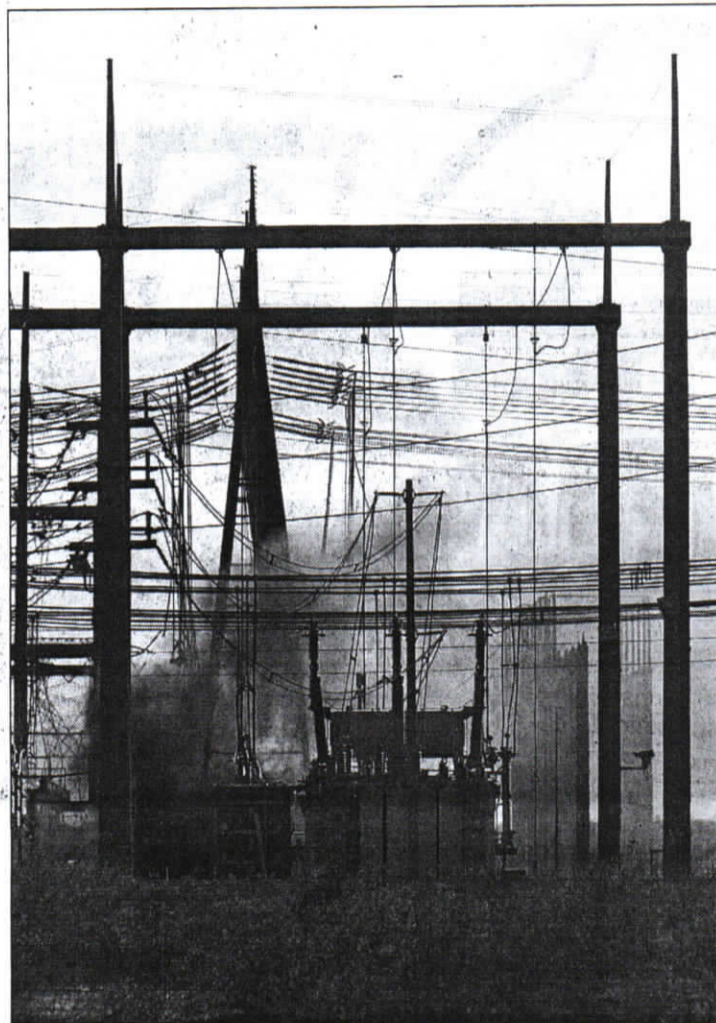
APS spokesperson Damon Gross said, regarding annexation possibilities, officials there are looking at all of their options.

"Fire mitigation at Westwing is very important to us," Gross said, but added, "Right now, our priority is fully restoring the APS substation."

Gross said he expects the facility to be fully operational by July. In addition to repairing and replacing the damaged or destroyed transformers, APS is installing fire walls and oil retention pit to help reduce the risk of future fires.

Though surrounded on all sides by the Sun City West fire district, the closest fire department to the substation is in Peoria, two miles away. Should the substation be annexed into Sun City West's fire district, Peoria firefighters would be dispatched as part of the automatic aid system, a program for any station within the the Valley Fire Consortium, in which Rural Metro is not included.

"My big concern is that they're not within the



JENNIFER GRIMES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

The first of seven replacement transformers has arrived at Westwing, an APS electrical substation at Happy Valley Road and Loop 303, north of Sun City.

consortium," Heger said.

Sun City West firefighters were among 11 departments to respond to the substation fire last year, which burned for more than 24 hours.

The fire was fueled by mineral oil used to cool the transformers, and was started by what fire officials labeled "a mechanical problem."

After the blaze burnt itself out, the Sun City West Fire District sent APS a bill for

approximately \$18,000 for services rendered outside its coverage area. Heger reported Tuesday that APS did pay the bill.

Sun City fire department officials were planning to bill APS for their services.

However, Heger told board members that the Arizona Corporation Commission would step in if APS officials don't make changes regarding fire protection.

"The Corporation

Commission isn't going to allow them to continue operating without proper fire protection. They would frown on that," Heger said. "I think APS realizes now, too, that they don't have the protection from Rural Metro."

In addition, tax money comes into play as fire chief Rob Biscoe explained to board members yesterday.

"Any substations similar in size situated in the city pay taxes to receive services, and that's all we're asking them (Westwing substation) to do here," Biscoe said. "We have to have that money just to be in that ready state."

The only question that remains is what amount of taxes APS will pay should they decide to annex the Westwing substation into the Sun City West fire district. Biscoe estimated the amount to be "close to six figures per year," but said when he inquired for an property assessment from the county, officials there directed him back to APS for a property value.

At least 1,500 homes under construction in subdivisions such as Crossriver, Rio Sierra, Rancho Silverado 1 and 2, and Dos Rios, were recently annexed into the fire district. Should the APS substation be annexed in as well, Heger said he doesn't expect there to be a need for an additional fire station quite yet.

"No, not at this time," Heger said.

Heger plans to meet with APS officials again at the end of the month to discuss the possible annexation further.

Amanda Myers may be reached at 876-2513 or amyers@aztrib.com.

THE WESTER Thursday, June 9, 2005

New contractor named for Fire District administration building

District attempts to control construction costs

By Marianne Sikler

At a special meeting called last week, the SCW Fire District Board voted to award a contract to PFG Construction, Inc., to construct the District's new administrative building, at a cost not to exceed \$1.5 million.

In April 2005, the District Board terminated a previous construction contract with Adaptive CM LLC, after its final bid came in at \$1.9 million, over its initial estimate of \$1.4 million. New bidding for the project was started after termination of the contract.

The PFG construction firm was selected as the new contractor, after submitting a bid of over \$1.457 million. According to Fire Chief Rob Biscoe, the new bid represents a 4.7% cost increase for the project. Biscoe said the District "could not build this (administration) building for \$1.4 million," citing as the reason cost increases all down the line on materials needed for its construction.

Terry Haver, operations manager of PFG, was available at the meeting to describe PFG's services and work experience.

PFG is currently constructing the Surprise fire station 301, and working on five school projects for the Washington Elementary School District, as well as constructing a Danny's Car Wash off Happy Valley and 23rd Ave. The firm is currently building its own 17,000 sq. ft. administration building in Phoenix, to house a staff of 90 people.

Haver, with 35 years experience in working with public projects, will act as project manager for the new administration build-

See **NEW CONTRACTOR**, Page 2

ing project, along with Roger Pelkey acting as supervisor. Pelkey had worked on the Sun Lakes fire station along with Haver, and in conjunction with the Hunt & Caraway architectural firm. Considering the effective working relationship between the parties, Biscoe feels the District will benefit from having a knowledgeable team working on the building project.

The Fire District Board approved a Letter of Intent to officially notify PFG of its selection. Haver said that will allow the procurement process to begin with various subcontractors for the order of materials, and to receive cost estimates. Haver said construction materials have risen significantly, with a building today costing some 32% more due to increases in cement, steel, piping and conduit costs.

Biscoe said the easement abandonment issue has not yet been resolved. Construction can't start until the county issues a permit, and that won't happen until the abandonment process has been completed. He said he's not getting good feedback from the

county as to when the permit issue will appear on its agenda, but hopes that would be mid-June. Once started, completion of the building would take about five months.

In other business, the District unanimously approved a resolution that would establish the formation of a Sun Cities Fire Honor Guard. The Honor Guard would act as a separate entity to represent and honor the membership at formal functions and other events.

The honor guard would be comprised of volunteer, off duty personnel, not as an official unit associated, or under the supervision of the Sun City West Fire District or Sun City Fire Department.

A motion was made and approved 4-1 for an expenditure of not more than \$3,500 for guard uniforms. The dissenting vote came from Dir. David Wilson, who disapproved of using tax dollars as a donation for a unit not associated with, or under the direct supervision of the Sun City West Board.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2005

Lock box confusion causes fire department consternation

STAFF REPORT

The Sun City West Fire Department wants to dispel some rumors surrounding the safety of lock boxes.

"There's some erroneous information out there regarding some instances with lock boxes, but they are referring to the Realtor lock boxes, not the fire departments boxes," said Deb Johnson, the fire department's director of community relations. "We want to put to rest any concerns residents might have."

The lock box program, run in cooperation with the Property Owners and Residents Association, has installed more than 2,000 lock boxes throughout Sun City West since the program began.

Each heavy metal box is mounted securely on an individual's home and contains a key to the house. The box is locked by a special key to which only the Fire District of Sun City West has access. If there is an emergency in the home, the fire department can use their special key to open the lock box and use the

house key to gain entry to the home.

Johnson said that the boxes can "add precious lifesaving time and save property because the firefighters do not have to look for a way to forcibly enter the house if someone is unable to answer the door or if the owners are absent and there is an emergency inside the home."

According to the fire department, the boxes are virtually impossible to pick and the keys are only made by the manufacturer, making it impossible to reproduce the key without official authorization.

"There have been no incidents of an illegal entry into a home utilizing the lock box in either Sun City West or any of the surrounding areas," Johnson said. She added that the fire department's lock boxes are very different in construction and operation from a realtor's lock box device, which is placed on a door handle.

The lock box can be ordered from PORA or by calling the fire department's administration office at 584-3500. After receiving the lock box, recipients are urged to call the Fire District of Sun City West and make an appointment to have one of the firefighters install the lock box free of charge.

Fire District introduces a long range, five year plan

Construction delay, FEMA Grant loss are factors

By Marianne Sikler

At its regular monthly meeting last week, the Sun City West Fire District Board approved a \$9,963,357 Fiscal Year 2005-2006 budget to take effect July 1 through June 30, 2006, compared to last year's budget of \$7,807,490.

The proposed budget includes several large capital improvement projects, paid for by the use of existing funds transferred from the First District's capital account. The monies have been allotted during previous budget years, in order to complete important capital improvement projects without creating an undue tax burden on Fire District property owners during the years in which the projects occur.

Capital Improvement Projects earmarked for the next fiscal year include the completion of the new Administration/Maintenance building, renovations of Fire Stations 101 and 102, and a new ambulance to replace a 10-year old unit, as well as various equipment replacement. Projected capital costs total nearly \$1.5 million.

Fire District operating revenues are derived primarily from property tax levies, user fees from newly annexed development areas, ambulance transportation fees, and Grant revenues. This year's tax levy is estimated to increase by approximately 2.99%. The increase is due in large part to a projected 22% hike in District fuel costs, a 13%

inflation increase in insurance premiums, a 2% employee cost of living adjustment, and a rise in debt service expenses.

Fire Chief Rob Biscoe said the 2.99% increase from last year's \$2.34 to \$2.41 is only projected, since the County will set a tax rate in August that will appear on the real estate tax bills due Oct. 1.

Another delay has arisen over the question of the abandonment of a utility easement on the property, which would affect the design plan. Thought to require only a letter request to the Board of Supervisors, the process was found to be more involved. The services of a civil engineer are needed to plat the area and record the change at County records, necessitating some additional costs.

After going a considerable distance in the selection process, the District's \$400,000 request for a Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) Grant was ultimately turned down. The Grant included costs for other equipment, but was mainly sought to pay for a federally mandated 800 Megahertz radio system upgrade required for fire stations to free up frequencies for emergency use. Biscoe said the District intends to submit a less ambitious Grant request of \$240,000 which he feels may meet with better results.

The District unanimously approved another motion to request

a \$42,500 Grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, to pay for equipment for its ladder trucks.

In other business, Deputy Chief Steve Penney reported for the month of March the District had 406 medical responses, 22 fire responses, and a total of 81 special operations, miscellaneous services, and other non-emergency responses. Fiscal Year-to-date responses number 4,011. Response times are holding a 3:48 minutes for emergency calls, and 5:01 minutes for non-emergency service.

Also introduced to Board members was a copy of the Fire District's cookbook, an accumulation of recipes used throughout local fire stations. The cookbook was originated by former Fire District Board member Diane Holloway Cheney, in a fund-raising effort to raise money to help furnish the new administrative building. The cookbooks are now on sale at the District's station 101 administrative building at Camino del Sol and Johnson, at a cost of \$10.

Communities plan fire station improvements

Sun City renovations won't impact taxes

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Plans to renovate Sun City Fire District's Station 131 are under way, and taxpayers can relax — the improvements won't cost them a dime.

Renovating Station 131 at 99th Avenue and Bell Road has been on the SCFD board's agenda for about three years, but the timing hasn't been right until now, said James Sebert, fire chief.

Funding for the project will come out of the SCFD's capital Projects Fund specifically designed to pay for building, apparatus and equipment costs. A low-interest loan for government agencies may also be acquired by the SCFD to help offset costs, but payments won't be reflected on tax rates.

"We put money away each year for capital projects and it doesn't charge the taxpayers," Sebert said. Capital projects, like station renovations, allow the fire department to save excess funds that have been carried from one year to the next, he said.

Slightly smaller than Station 131, Station 132 at 99th Avenue and Sun City Boulevard was renovated and refurbished in 2003,

using around \$800,000 of the capital Projects Fund. Since then, the fund has been built back up and now it's Station 131's turn.

As of Dec. 31, 2004, the capital Project Fund's balance was about \$380,000. For 2005, an additional \$675,000 has been budgeted for capital projects, and those funds will most likely be used on the Station 131 renovations, Sebert said.

After consulting with nearly half a dozen architects, the SCFD is ready to lay out firm plans, Sebert said. Drawings may not be final until May or June, and the SCFD can't estimate costs until the drawings are complete and contractors submit bids, he said.

There's no timeline on the construction process, but it could take up to nine months to complete, he said. Plans will not call for relocation of the fire services or staff, as operations will continue amid construction. Mold will be removed and structural damage repaired in the renovations as well.

Del Webb's original design for Sun City's fire stations didn't anticipate the increase in emergency calls or necessary staff, Sebert said. Built in 1973, Station 131 accommodates six firefighters in the living quarters and is built to function for 300

emergency calls per year, according to Sebert.

The SCFD currently responds to an average of 900 emergency calls per month and employs 10 to 12 firefighters per shift.

"The quarters are really cramped and we're trying to find the best solution to address the fire service today," Sebert said.

Del Webb's design also employed residential kitchen appliances and plumbing features, rather than commercial ones. Now, when a dozen firefighters try to make three meals a day or wait in lines to use one of the two showers, it's proof that the station needs updating.

"Del Webb was building homes, not fire departments," Sebert said. "A lot of the issues we face are trying to work with residential appliances that aren't built to take this kind of use."

Minor renovations have made improvements over the years, but the upcoming remodel will be the most major, Sebert said. Changes have already been made to include bathrooms for women and more private dormitories, but the next remodel will even further improve the living quarters.

Annie Boon may be reached at 876-2532 or aboone@aztrib.com.

OVER

SCW to construct new administration building; renovate 2 stations

AMANDA MYERS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City West Fire District soon hopes to receive a county building permit for a new \$1.4 million administration and maintenance building.

Fire Chief Rob Biscoe told the board in Tuesday's workshop meeting that the nearly 1,200-page book from the project architect that outlines details of the new building was reviewed and adjusted last week, and changes were sent back to the architect.

Next week, Biscoe said he hopes to send the plans to the county to receive the permit, which takes approximately eight weeks. During that time, subcontractors will be hired and the financial details worked out to keep the building as close as possible to the \$1.4 million price tag set by the board.

Biscoe said once the permit is obtained, the building will be completed within five months of groundbreaking.

The building is part of a \$2.68 million capital improvement plan in the works since November 2002 that includes renovations to Stations 101 and 102, a new brush truck and pumper.

The new 9,871-square-foot administration building will be built on an approximately 1-acre empty lot at the corner of Spanish Garden and Sandridge Drive, less than a mile from the current administration building on Camino del Sol and R.H. Johnson Boulevard. It will contain 13 offices, two conference rooms, a kitchen, four bathrooms, and a multitude of storage facilities, while housing offices for the fire chief and fire marshal, emergency services, life safety and disaster planning departments, human resources, computer and technology and recordkeeping departments.

The reason for the project, say board members, is a space concern. They cite the current administration building's lack of space, which is forcing employees to share offices and storage space.

Additionally, the current maintenance area consists of an outdoor section of the parking lot covered by a tent, while plans for the new administrative building show an attached,

enclosed service bay built to hold the department's largest trucks for routine maintenance and repair.

The original administrative building will be converted into a new fitness center for Station 101.

Additional renovations planned for Station 101 and 102 were originally planned to occur after the completion of the administration building, but Biscoe said Tuesday that those plans may now be pushed up due to the worsening condition of Station 102's roof.

"It has some really bad roof leaks," said Biscoe. "It's just in need of a facelift."

In addition, both stations no longer accommodate the space needs of the firefighters, and sleeping quarters need to be divided into male and female quarters due to the increasing number of female firefighters and paramedics.

Meanwhile, Station 101 will be gutted for expansion and upgrades, Biscoe said. Station 101 is the oldest station in the district, with about 24 years of service.

The estimated cost to renovate both stations, Biscoe said, will be between \$300,000 to \$500,000 and will take about six months. If it's decided that both stations need to be renovated simultaneously, firefighters will most likely live in temporary quarters behind the station, said Biscoe.

With all of the plans in the works, board member David Wilson raised concerns in Tuesday's meeting about what he felt was a lack of public knowledge about the project. He suggested formation of a capital improvement committee of citizens.

However, Biscoe said the board members themselves were meant to be the liaisons with the community. The question was, he said, how to best get the word out.

Board member Sol Robinson voiced frustration over the lack of community involvement in the board's meetings.

"Just look at how many people from the community are here," he said, pointing to the empty chairs. No residents attended Tuesday's open workshop meeting.

Amanda Myers may be reached at 876-2513 or amyers@aztrib.com.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT February 9, 2005

SCW fire rethinks renovation

Station No. 2 most in need of fix-up

By Cecilia Chan
Independent Newspapers

The Sun City West Fire Department Board of Directors plans at its next regular meeting to

commission conceptual drawings of its two oldest fire houses before deciding if it is cost-effective to renovate both simultaneously.

The board originally decided to first build a larger administration building and then gut and remodel the 23-year-old Station No. 1 on Camino del Sol. However, deteriorating conditions at Station No. 2, built in 1990 on Stardust Boule-

vard, prompted directors to reconsider.

"101 is the oldest and first built but it's also the most sturdy and solidly built," Chief Robert Biscoe said at last week's workshop. "The troops at this point (feel) 102 needs priority over 101."

The board last year cited the need to first fix Station No. 1 to provide separate sleeping quarters for the men and women employees.

Director Dave Wilson said water leakage at the Stardust station's dayroom may render the roof unsafe and asked how

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Fire

Continued From Page 1
critical it was.

"I personally believe it's critical," Chief Biscoe said. "We are at the point now those tiles need to come off and a new roof needs to come on."

Deputy Chief Jim Heger said the roof was a sieve with water leaking into the building's electrical components. He said it would cost up to \$40,000 to repair the roof, but then it would be torn down anyway during the station renovation.

"Having gone over the building with a fine tooth comb, that building is critical for replacement much more than 101," Director Sol Robinson said.

Chief Biscoe advised the Board to consider hiring Hunt and Caraway Architect, which designed

the administration building, to do preliminary conceptual drawings and have cost estimates before deciding to do one or both stations at once.

"Let's not build another station No. 102," Mr. Wilson remarked.

Staff said the problem with the station was by the time construction concluded, it was already too small and the district added onto the building piecemeal such as turning the patio into the now leaking dayroom.

Directors also talked about tacking on a new fee.

Mr. Robinson questioned if the district could impose a fee similar to the Recreation Centers of Sun City West's Asset Preservation Fee. That fee is a one-time charge to all new homebuyers that helps pay for major renovations and enhancements.

"We're constantly looking for new funds," Mr. Robinson said. "When somebody buys a home

here in Sun City West, they pay \$1,800 to get on board with our rec center. I know other fire districts have done this."

He pitched a \$100 to \$200 fee for each new home sold.

"It's not a new tax," he said.

Chief Biscoe said state statute allows special districts to devise a fee schedule to support operations. However, he said the provision faces legal and legislative challenges.

Northwest Fire District in Tucson, the largest fire district in Arizona, began charging a fee on new development, which the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association opposes, Chief Biscoe said.

"Southern Arizona Home Builders Association is telling developers not to pay the fee and let Northwest Fire District sue them," he said.

If the district is sued its legal representation is covered through

its insurance but if the district sues it is on its own to pay for the suit, he said.

"I'm of the opinion, let it play out" first, he said.

Changes to the fire board manual's rules of procedure also were debated.

Mr. Wilson argued in favor of the board using Robert's Rules of Order, the bible of parliamentary procedure.

"The purpose of the board is not how good we run a meeting," Mr. Robinson said. "But how good we run a district."

Mr. Wilson shot back, the board's effectiveness depended on how well it conducted its meetings.

The issue will return at a future workshop.

Post your comments on this issue at newsblog.info/0302

News editor Cecilia Chan can be reached at 972-6101 or cchan@newszap.com

Fire District growth and its impact on current District taxpayers

The following is a report compiled by members of the SCW Fire District staff.

The Fire District of Sun City West periodically receives inquiries regarding the growth of the Fire District and how annexed areas will impact the taxes of homeowners in the Fire District. The Fire District and its Governing Board feel it is important to inform the community concerning the Fire Board's decisions regarding service area growth and its impact on residents.

In an effort to proactively address inflationary costs of fire and Emergency Medical services for Fire District residents, previous and current Fire Board

members took the precautionary step of annexing land contiguous to Sun City West. Although this does provide fire service to new communities, the user fees and additional tax base provided by these new communities will assist in stabilizing the amount of tax that Fire District residents must pay to keep the same basic services.

Rapid growth is already occurring in these new communities. These new housing and business developments need fire and medical protection. Because the Fire District will have the closest fire stations to many of these developments, the District would be required to serve them

through existing automatic aid agreements even if they had not been annexed into the Fire District. They would have received the same services currently enjoyed by Fire District residents without contributing to the cost of those services.

Inflationary costs for the Fire District would have a negative tax impact on current residents if the Fire District did not broaden its tax base. The fixed incomes of many residents may not necessarily rise in correlation with inflationary costs. Additional expenditures are also resulting from the increasing service demands of an aging population.

The impact of this greater service demand directly affects facilities, personnel, and apparatus. That affect can be minimized by tax base increases provided by the new development areas.

Annexing these new areas will also provide additional commercial development which will aid in absorbing the inflationary cost of Fire District services as commercial property is currently taxed at a 25% rate versus the 10% rate of taxation for residential property.

Summary of annexation benefits:

Ability to minimize negative inflationary effects on Fire District services to residents by spreading the burden of taxation to additional commercial and residential properties.

Collection of new development user fees to be used for any additional Fire District

facilities/equipment/personnel (infrastructure) necessary to protect the new developments. These fees are also designed to cover costs of service both before and during construction of the new developments. This avoids burdening existing residents of the Fire District with the cost of service to any newly annexed areas until the communities are occupied and paying Fire District taxes.

Ability to provide coverage to many of the newly annexed areas without additional equipment and manpower. This is possible due to the current location of neighboring fire department fire stations who will respond to these communities because of automatic aid agreements with the Fire District of Sun City West.

Fire District residents will benefit from improved and/or added services and programs without additional financial burden due to the increased tax revenues created by the new developments.

The First District of Sun City West is always concerned with providing the best possible programs and services to the residents of the District at a reasonable tax levy. That concern was the source of extensive discussions and plans regarding annexation and growth of the Fire District. Any questions regarding the growth of the Fire District should be directed to the Fire District of Sun City West Administrative Office at 623-584-3500.

THE WESTER Thursday, November 25, 2004

SCW Fire District more than doubles its size

Looking ahead to serving new areas

By Marianne Sikler

Once restricted to a 10-mile radius, the Sun City West Fire District now extends over 23 square miles, with most of its boundaries lying outside of Sun City West.

The annexation of Corte Bella and its immediate vicinity brought about five acres into the District. Expected to be built out in half the time originally planned for its full development, the Corte Bella subdivision will bring 1630 homes into the District within the next few years, 200 less than had been originally planned.

According to Fire Chief Robert Biscoe, the median value of homes in Corte Bella is estimated at \$225,000. Biscoe said "If all 1630 homes were build out and paying taxes into the Fire District at its current tax rate, Corte Bella would produce \$1 million in revenues to the district. That does not account for commercial and business development, which would be taxed at 25% vs. residential assessments of 10%."

Director Bill Hamel pointed out the positive aspects of annexing Corte Bella. Hamel said the Board agreed that Corte Bella could easily be served with existing equipment and personnel and could bring additional fees and taxes into the District to stabilize its tax rate. It's the reason he emphasizes Corte Bella should be considered part of the main core of the District, with any revenues and operating expenses from

other anticipated developments accounted for as a separate budget item.

The District is attempting to assess its timetable for future developments planned on now vacant State land, and the capability of the District to serve them.

Considering other planned developments, Biscoe estimates that within 8-10 years the District will double in size, and population. At that time it will also be growing in service demand and require new stations, additional equipment, and more staff to meet the demand. Biscoe estimates that will require building at least two stations, and adding approximately 37-38 more people to serve the expanded area. The District currently employs 79 people.

"Right now, we're just scratching the very surface of what's to be developed," said Biscoe. He added, "Cross River, Dos Rios, Silverado I & II are now starting to do grading and work up water lines. It is anticipated in the next few months those developments will be receiving their final plats, and will be billed for impact fees." The combined developments will bring at least some 1239 homes into the District.

Biscoe said in addition Rancho Cabrillo, the largest development with some 2,150 homes plans to break ground in January '05. The Sundero development with 69 homes expects to break ground in the third quarter of '06.

The next 12-24 months will

see most of these projects underway. The impact fees received are expected to be set aside for building facilities and buying equipment needed in that area. Biscoe considers the proposed developments to be only a small portion of what will really take place in the upper northern areas. "With just what's on the drawing board today, if all built out and occupied it would produce \$6 million yearly in taxes to the Fire District," he said.

The El Mirage Rd. extension to Loop 303 is slated to bring in a large shopping mall, possibly a power center. The southern part of the area is already annexed into the Sun City West Fire District, and as a result Biscoe anticipates untold millions of dollars in future tax revenues could be generated from it.

There has been a delay in the extension of El Mirage to the 303, due to negotiations becoming bogged down between the County and State Land Department over its value. The recent passage of Proposition 400 allocates \$16 million for extending El Mirage from Bell Road to Jomax.

In other Fire District business, Deputy Chief Steven Penney said the District has received estimates for the purchase of a brush truck, that ranged from \$140,000 on the low end, to \$190,000 on the high end. Penney put forth a proposal for the District to purchase the 4-wheel

See **SCW Fire District,**

Page 2

EV ER

drive truck chassis and equip it in-house, in lieu of purchasing a fully equipped truck. He said purchasing individual pieces of equipment and installing it in that way could save the District \$25,000 to \$75,000. Penney confirmed all purchased equipment would carry a warrantee.

The Board approved the concept of purchasing a truck chassis and equipping it in-house, not to exceed a cost of \$115,000.

According to Biscoe, the brush truck and a two-man squad, in conjunction with temporary trailer facilities at present, would be able to serve remote areas of the District where it is not possible for larger equipment to access because of the rough terrain. Eventually, more development and better roads will merit building one or two full stations in the Northern areas.

Biscoe said a problem was encountered regarding an easement on the new administration building site. Results of a property survey show a public utility easement on the West side of the property. The easement had been put in many years ago, but no public utilities have ever used it. The architects will seek an abandonment of the easement through the County. If unsuccessful, the building design will have to be reworked around it.

If the issue is resolved quickly,

Biscoe said the District can expect to break ground in the next 3-4 months, and see construction completed around five months after that.

The District is working on its annual audit, which is expected to be approved at the December meeting.

Policy Additions & Revisions approved at the District's monthly meeting: A new Safety Officer Policy that rearranges responsibilities and allows increases to the District's Health and Safety program budget to cover training and communication costs.

The creation of a new Receptionist/Data Entry job description (will require computer skills to assist administrative personnel with financial accounting workload).

Revision of a Uniforms policy that pro-rates and limits the uniform allowance.

Revision of the Engineer job description policy that refines level of skills and changes the wording to specify recruits MAY, not shall be promoted to the rank of firefighter (until such time a position is open).

Revision of the Administration Secretary job description (will now be an Administrative Assistant position commensurate with new responsibilities).

Revision of the Maternity Leave policy (a placement-only

change to another policy section that deals with all types of leaves).

The next regular Board meeting will be held 9:00 a.m. on Dec. 16, at the 135th and Deer Valley Road fire station.

SCW

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

October 13, 2004

SCW fire looks at new HQ

Growing district needs bigger building

By Cecilia Chan

Independent Newspapers

The Sun City West Fire District Board will consider later this month borrowing \$2.5 million to help build a new administration facility, renovate a fire house and buy two trucks.

The five-member board at an Oct. 5 special meeting approved the building design for the roughly 10,000-square-foot administration and maintenance building, allowing Hunt & Caraway Architects of Glendale to now draw actual construction plans, which will take

two months. The Sandridge and Spanish Garden drives site, about 1 acre, was recently purchased by the district for approximately \$250,000.

The fire district outgrew its old administration digs on Camino del Sol, said board member Sol Robinson, who oversees the project started in November 2002.

Since its inception in 1981, the district has seen its personnel more than tripled as emergency calls coupled with a rising population ballooned. And further growth is on the horizon

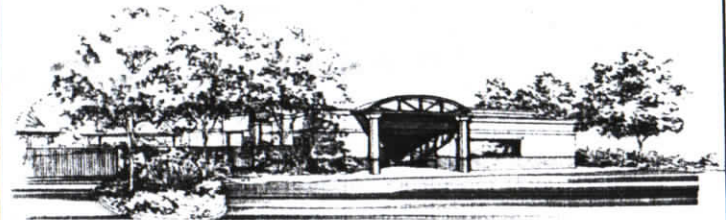
with eight new communities signed on for fire protection. Corte Bella is currently under construction.

Fire Chief Robert Biscoe said the lack of space is "becoming detrimental to operational efficiency" with staff and programs housed in different locations.

The administration building will include offices, a kitchen, two conference rooms and a room to do community blood pressure readings. The district gives about 600 free readings each month.

See **Building** — Page 3

Sun City West Fire District Administration Building



HUNT & CARAWAY Architects, Ltd.

Submitted drawing

Building design for the Sun City West Fire District's administration and maintenance building planned on Sandridge and Spanish Garden drives. Drawing by Hunt & Caraway Architects, Ltd. of Glendale.

OVER

Continued From Page 1

The building also will share space with a service bay for fire trucks. Currently, the district's one maintenance employee maintain the trucks in a makeshift tent.

Chief Biscoe said the training/conference room will be outfitted with the necessary technology that will enable the district in the future to use it as an emergency operations center during a disaster.

The project's pricetag is estimated at \$1.62 million, which includes the construction cost, the architect's fee and the expense for furnishings, he said.

"We have been working very hard over the last several months to get a good handle on the district's needs," said Joe Shelton of Construction Diagnostics of Sun City, hired to help develop the most cost-effective design concept. "Looking into the future is forefront in our minds. We worked diligently to bring the cost under control. At a daily basis we are looking at how we can minimize costs."

The board after discussion gave the go-ahead for staff to put together a contract with National Bank of Arizona for a 20-year, \$2.5 million loan. Two other banks also were considered. Board member Bill Hamel abstained.

By giving the green light Oct. 5, the district can lock in on the fixed interest rate of 4.33 percent. The contract is expected to return Oct. 21 for board consideration. Annual payments on the loan would be \$180,000.

The loan also would help pay for a pumper truck and a brush truck — estimated to cost \$550,000 — and proposed major renovations to the fire station on Camino del Sol at a cost of \$500,000. The rest of the monies would come from the contingency fund, Chief Biscoe said. The district's original expansion plan to tear down the administration building and fire station No. 101 and build a two-story structure instead on the space-limited Camino del Sol site came in at more than \$3 million, he said.

The fire station, built in about 1982, needs to be gutted and renovated to include a commercial kitchen, storage and most importantly separate bunk facilities for female employees currently housed side by side with males, officials said. The district has nine female emergency medical technicians.

Eventually the old, 2,000-square-foot administration building will be turned into a needed fitness facility for firefighters. The district has applied for a grant to offset the cost for that project.

The board also gave the OK for staff to initiate a bid process to search for a pumper truck and a brush truck for an estimated total cost of \$550,000.

Chief Biscoe estimated groundbreaking for the administration building in five months with a five-months completion date.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2004

Sun City West Fire District expands coverage area

AMANDA MYERS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Fire District of Sun City West will soon have a few more homes to watch, now that the annexation of five new subdivisions into the district is complete.

A new map developed by the fire district board members outlines the new area of Sun City West's fire district since the subdivisions of Rancho Cabrillo, Crossriver, Rio Sierra, Rancho Silverado and Rancho Silverado II have been annexed.

The map, emphasized Fire Marshal Jim Heger, is just a draft as some areas have yet to be colored in to designate their inclusion in Sun City West.

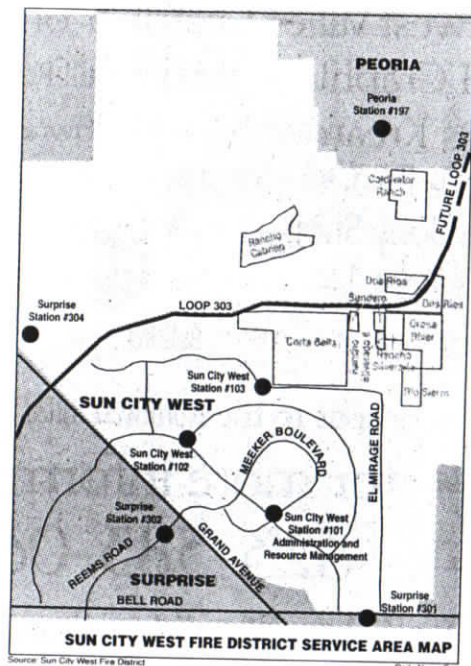
Rancho Cabrillo will be the largest of the five new subdivisions, just under a square mile in area on the south side of Jomax Road between Dysart and Litchfield roads. Developers estimate the area will have approximately 2,150 homes upon completion. Scott Communities owns the area. Scott is a subdivision of the Robson Communities, the builder of

Sun Lakes. The projected start date of homes in Rancho Cabrillo is July.

The four remaining subdivisions — Crossriver, Rio Sierra, Rancho Silverado, and Rancho Silverado II — are owned by Woodside Homes and will occupy approximately half of a square mile near the northeast corner of El Mirage and Deer Valley roads. Altogether, the area is expected to have 1,250 homes.

The map shows Sun City West's three current fire districts, but board

See AREA, A7



Source: Sun City West Fire District

Clark News: Sun

From A1

members say they will use the nearly \$1.2 million in impact fees anticipated to be collected from the developers before ground is broken to establish necessary fire provisions and future fire stations for the area.

Current unincorporated areas surrounding Sun City West's district would be proposed for annexation, said Heger, should homes be built there. To be considered for annexation, said Heger, the land's developer would need to submit a letter of request to the board, and board

members would then determine whether or not annexing the area into the district would benefit the city. Heger said the increase in population with new areas would, in turn, increase sales tax revenue benefiting the fire district.

Amanda Myers may be reached at 876-2513 or amyers@aztrib.com.

SC, SCW raising fire dept. budgets

Fuel, insurance drive increases

By Brent Whiting

The Arizona Republic

Taxpayers in the Sun Cities will have to pump out more money to send firetrucks rolling down the street.

The fire boards in Sun City and Sun City West have adopted proposed budgets totaling nearly \$15.9 million.

That's a combined increase of more than \$1 million from current operating budgets.

Officials in both communities said the hikes are primarily due to higher fuel and medical-insurance costs, as well as cost-of-living increases for fire district employees.

Fire board members said the pay increases are needed for employee retention. Otherwise, firefighters would jump to other Valley agencies.

This means property owners in the Sun Cities, as well as Youngtown, will pay more for fire protection during the fiscal year that starts July 1.

Final tax figures have yet to be calculated, but officials offer these estimates on how the proposed budget increases may affect homeowners:

■ In Sun City, the owner of a home valued at \$100,000 now pays \$241 a year. This will increase by \$24 to \$265 under the proposed budget.

■ In Sun City West, the owner of a \$100,000 home now pays \$225 a year. This will increase by \$8 to \$233.

The five-member Sun City fire board will vote on a final budget June 22. In Sun City West, the vote will be June 21.

Under Arizona law, a fire district is a quasi-municipal

taxing authority that uses its levies to support the services of a fire department.

In Sun City, the fire district board on May 18 adopted a proposed budget of \$8,088,425, an increase of \$743,026 from the current budget, or 10.11 percent.

Youngtown residents are part of this fire district.

In Sun City West, a proposed budget of \$7,807,490 was adopted May 20, an increase of \$270,770, or 3.59 percent.

The Fire District of Sun

City West serves fewer people and homes than the Sun City Fire Department, but provides its own ambulance service.

Robert Biscoe, the Sun City West fire chief, said this means the operating budgets between the two fire districts are not entirely comparable.

In Sun City and Youngtown, ambulance services are provided under a contract with Southwest Ambulance.

Reach the reporter at
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or (602) 444-6937.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 2004

SCW Fire Department's car seat loaner program on rise

AMANDA MYERS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A child car seat loaner program through the Sun City West Fire Department has seen a steady increase in use since its inception a year ago, said Fire Marshal Jim Heger in Thursday's fire board meeting.

Through the program, local residents and visitors to the Sun Cities can borrow a child car seat from Station 101 in Sun City West for no

charge. Deb Johnson, the community services public education specialist at the station, installs the seat properly.

Since the program began, an average of 20 to 25 car seats were loaned out per month. But Heger said that in March, that number jumped to more than 40. He estimates the jump could be caused by the number of visitors to the area increasing in the spring months.

"Some will only need the seat for four days," said Heger, adding that many vacationers don't want to lug one onto an airplane.

Proper installation of the seat is just as important as the seat itself. Not only will Johnson install loaner car seats, anyone can call and make an appointment to come in and have their own child car seat installed for no charge.

Heger said that those at the fire station, like Johnson, who install car seats are thoroughly trained.

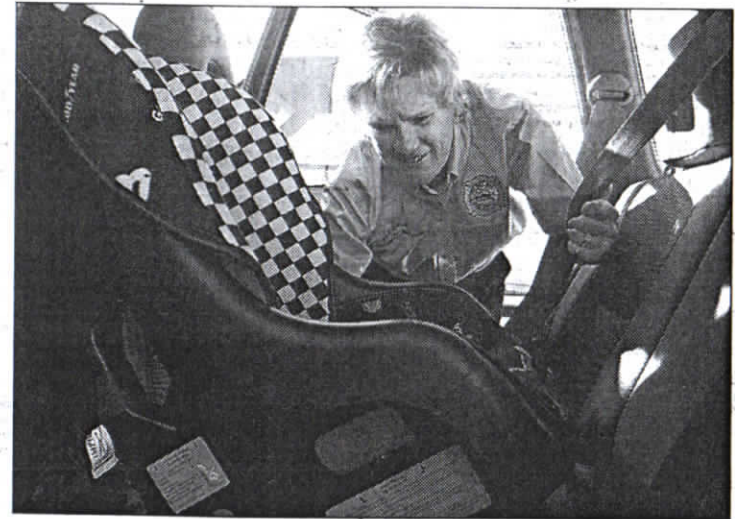
"Everyone takes a 40-hour class."

In addition to the loaner car seats, the state has provided car seats for most Valley fire departments to give away to any family financially unable to purchase a car seat for their child.

A phone call to set up a time to pick up the car seat and have it installed is all it takes. No background checks or other type of proof is necessary, assures Heger.

To utilize either the car seat loaner program or to receive a free car seat, Heger advises calling your local fire department. If they don't have car seats available, they will refer you to the nearest station that does.

Other key points raised at Thursday's board meeting:



MOLLIE J. HOPPE/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Deb Johnson of the Sun City West Fire Department loads a child car seat into a car. The Department has 25 seats available for loan, but people needing one should call ahead for reservations.

- Deputy Chief Steve Penney announced that two EMT's were recently promoted to paramedic after completing six months of paramedic training at Phoenix college and nearly 1,000 hours of training. Paramedics, unlike EMT's, can perform advanced life support, give certain drugs, can intubate, and can apply and read heart monitors and defibrillators. Both men are assigned to Station 101.

- The Sun City West fire

department is looking at possibly acquiring a computer-based learning system to assist with paramedic recertification and continuing education. Rather than travel to the hospital once a month for two to three hours, the computer program would allow paramedics to receive their training online while they're on duty. George Petru, the administrative EMS captain, is currently looking into what the program would cost to implement.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2004

Fire board debates renovating, razing station

AMANDA MYERS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

An estimated \$2.5 million plan to renovate Fire Station 101 in Sun City West was debated by the Sun City West Fire District board members at a workshop Tuesday.

The plans for renovating the 22-year-old station at 19001 Camino Del Sol, the first station in Sun City West, were introduced more than 10 months ago. Board members are meeting with an architect to draw up proposed plans, and hope to make a decision on their direction shortly. Up for debate is whether to add on

to the existing buildings at Station 101, or to demolish and start fresh.

Capt. Bill Marney of Station 101 said the board was being proactive, but renovating the station wouldn't alleviate future concerns.

"My own opinion is they should just level it. I think it would cost us more money in the long run to fix or repair what needs to be done."

Currently, space limitations are the priority for the renovation. Board member Bill Hamel discussed the issue of the bays being too small for the ever-increasing

See FIRE BOARD, A9

From A1

size of the fire trucks.

Additionally, should another ambulance be added, or more firefighters or paramedics scheduled per shift, more space should be allocated, Hamel said.

A regular board meeting will be at 9 a.m. April 15 at Fire Station 103 at 13431 W. Deer Valley Road in Sun City West to discuss plans further.

"Our plan here is at least a 30-year building," said Hamel, who emphasized the need to look toward the future when planning the size and aspects of the proposal.

While some board members disagreed with some of the proposed additions to the station, such as nearly tripling the size of the current 500-square-foot physical fitness room, Hamel said that nothing has been finalized.

Another option proposed at

the workshop included moving the administration building off site to allow for more space for the fire and paramedic equipment.

Hamel said he hoped that wouldn't lessen the drive of the administrators.

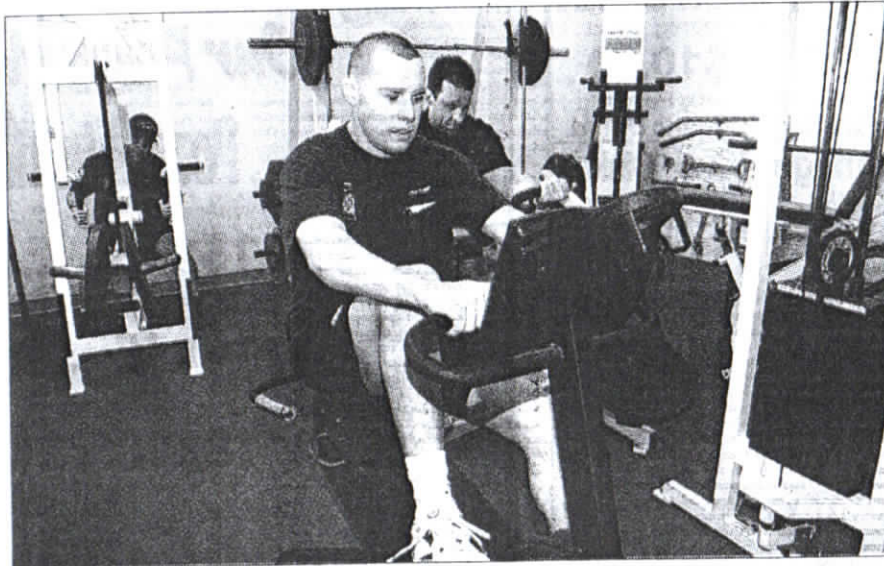
"The activity all around us reminds us why we're here," he said, as the sound of sirens blared from the attached station.

Once plans are approved, said Fire Marshal Jim Heger, construction is planned to last approximately 10 months. However, he added that budgeting will play a part in the timeline.

After Station 101 is modernized, Heger said the board will look at giving Station 102 at 20622 North Stardust Blvd. a similar face lift.

Amanda Myers may be reached at 876-2513 or amyers@aztrib.com.

Firefighter Coy Boggler and other personnel at Fire Station 101 in Sun City West work out. Expected renovations to the firehouse could include expanding the workout space.



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

9/2003

VF

FIRE DEPARTMENT

SCW

Marked for safety

Hydrants easier to spot at night

STAFF REPORT

Yellow fire hydrants in Sun City West are getting blue spots — reflectorized areas that will help firefighters locate the hydrants after dark. The reflectors are being placed in the streets near the hydrants.

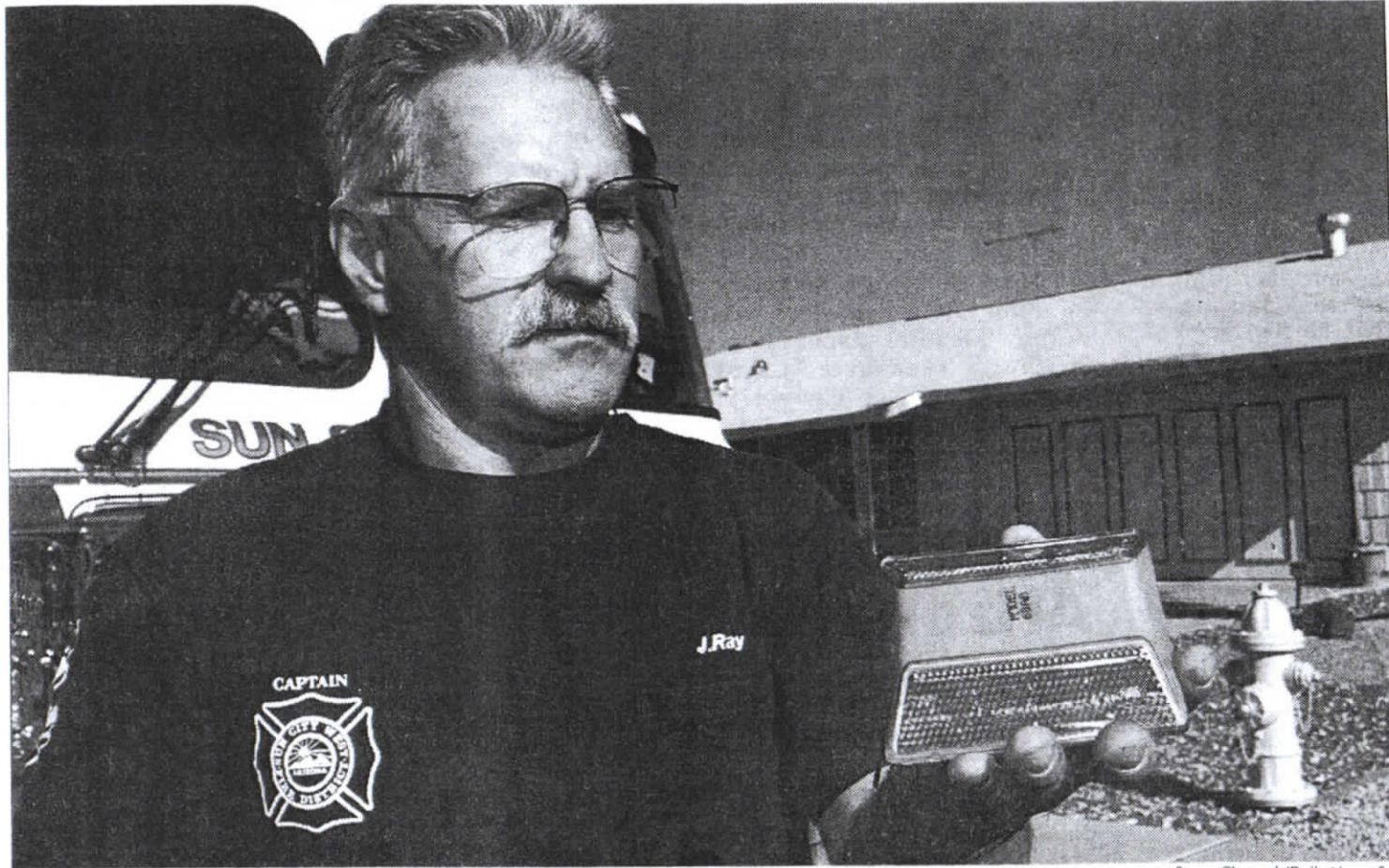
Fire Marshal Jim Heger said the 550 dots being installed this year will be joined by another 500 in the next fiscal year.

Installation of the dots, which shine brilliantly when struck by headlights, started in the community's southeast quarter.

Heger said the hydrants, which are painted safety yellow, are easy enough to see in daylight, "but when the sun goes down, it's a different story.

"The dark of night, shadows from street lights, trees and shrubs all help to conceal the hydrants," he said. "The blue reflectors will make it much easier for us to find hydrants at night."

If water is needed to fight a fire, a large hose line is laid from the hydrant to a pumper truck near the fire site. Water then is pumped under high pressure through smaller hose lines and nozzles for firefighters to use.



Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

Captain Joe Ray of the Sun City West Fire Department holds a blue reflector, one of more than 1,000 to be placed in the streets near fire hydrants. The reflectors are designed help firefighters locate hydrants at night.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 19, 2003

DAILY NEWS-SUN

SCW Fire District expands boundaries

Annexation should relieve tax burden on retirement community

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City West Fire District annexed 119 acres Thursday and is on the prowl for more.

"The day has finally come when our town can grow no further but developers in our annexed district are seeking our fire service coverage," said Director Diane Holloway Cheney. "We have finally realized that there is no other alternative to increasing the tax burden on our own citizens except expansion."

The board voted unanimously Thursday to actively pursue "all available land" for annexation, and to annex the 119 acres within Dos Rios, a development of multi-family residences at the northeast corner of the Pinnacle Peak and El Mirage road alignments.

Chief Rob Biscoe said land available to the district that hasn't already been

gobbled up by surrounding communities such as Surprise and Peoria includes an area bounded by Bell Road, Dixileta Drive, and 115th and 163rd avenues.

The Dos Rios project brings the fire district's area to 24 square miles, 14 of which is Sun City West.

Holloway Cheney said the district has been pursuing the annexation idea for about two years, but only recently did a developer specifically request annexation, requiring the board to make a decision.

The new policy will not have an impact on response times in Sun City West, nor will it require the addition of any stations at this time, district officials said. Instead, it should help spread the increasing costs of running the district over a larger membership.

"We have decided to develop a plan to guide annexations and growth to meet future tax burdens with a pledge to our citizens to maintain the same rapid arrival at their homes in under four minutes and the same high quality service," Holloway Cheney said.

Sun City West has the highest

Insurance Services Office rating of any fire district in the West Valley, Holloway Cheney said. ISO ratings reflect speed, quality and resources of a fire service, and play a significant role in insurance rates. The higher the rating, the better the rates.

Director Bill Hamel said one of the reasons he ran for the board was to prevent annexation, but after reading the policy and talking with residents, he changed his mind.

He said he wants the district to make sure that before it annexes any areas, all agreements are in order to ensure impact fees from new homes pay for new stations, rather than placing the burden on current district residents, and that adequate roads are built.

He said there was some confusion in Corte Bella, being built by Del Webb north of Sun City West, where temporary roads changed with short notice when the community was first being built.

Biscoe and Holloway Cheney said

See FIRE, A4

From A1

impact fees, roads and water connections will be taken care of before service is provided.

Director Sol Robinson said he, too, was against annexation until he "realized we were looking at this the wrong way."

"By expanding like a business, we're expanding our

business to other areas," he said. "We have no idea what the tax base will be five or six years down the road."

Board members said the expansion will not only help spread the tax burden, but will possibly allow the district to introduce programs.

Katy O'Grady can be reached at 876-2514 or kogrady@aztrib.com.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

May 21, 2003

SCW fire district approves tax hike Budget increases 21%

By Anne Brady
Independent Newspapers

The Fire District of Sun City West has approved a 2003-04 budget that is 21% larger than this year's budget, with an almost 4% increase in the tax rate.

The district's board of directors, at its regularly scheduled meeting May 15, approved a proposed budget of \$7.5 million for the fiscal year beginning July 1. That's up from \$6.2 million this year.

The approximate 3.9% increase in the tax rate, from 2.16 percent to 2.24 percent, equates to an 8.5-cent increase per \$100 of secondary assessed valuation.

This means the owner of a home with a \$100,000 assessed valuation in Sun City West would pay approximately \$224 per year, which is \$8.52 more in fire district tax than this year.

The increase in the tax rate is smaller than the increase in the budget due to a rise in the district's assessed valuation and a 69% increase in ambulance

revenue.

Other projected revenue streams creating a positive affect include money to be received from grants and fees from the Corte Bella subdivision.

Various factors were responsible for the budget increase. There was a 32.5% rate increase in health insurance, a 15% rate increase in liability insurance, a 47% increase in the communication contract with Phoenix Fire Department for dispatch services and radio equipment, a \$218,000 increase in the capital purchase/improvement/reserve fund, an approximate increase of \$132,016 in the state pension contributions, which is set by the Arizona Pension Board, and a cost of \$147,380 for complying with a federally mandated public safety communication system.

The final budget approval will be at the regularly scheduled board meeting of June 19.

March 26, 2003

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

Local fire departments in lock-down mode

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

The time-honored tradition of casually dropping by the local firehouse to visit with firefighters, express your appreciation for their service or have your blood pressure checked has to be placed on hold.

With the war with Iraq beginning, the fire departments of Sun City and Sun City West began locking all doors on a full-time basis, which is diametrically opposed to the departments' normal visitor-friendly operating procedures.

Both departments last week were preparing for a heightened state of alert.

"We are tightening down stuff," said Jim Heger, Sun City West fire marshal. "We are locking the station doors, making sure the bay doors are locked when we leave on a call and keeping bay doors locked so people cannot wander around the stations."

"We are also making sure the vehicles are locked at all times," he continued. "We implemented these changes when the last code orange was in effect. We did not reduce security when we returned to yellow alert."

Similar measures are being taken in Sun City, according to Fire Chief Jim Sebert.

"What we did two weeks ago, when we first went on an orange alert, was lock all

the doors to the stations," Chief Sebert said.

"The lobby was locked, and visitors must ring the bell and show identification to gain access," explained Capt. Ron Clark.

"Everyone must be escorted through the station to meet federal guidelines," Chief Sebert added. "No one will be allowed to wander around the station."

One of the problems with residents making appointments for visits to the fire stations, for such services as blood pressure checks, is the department's inability to guarantee personnel will be present at the designated time.

"We can't guarantee an appointment because of our calls," Chief Sebert said.

The Sun City West Fire Department is not as limited as Sun City when it comes to continuing to offer blood pressure checks.

"We will continue to do what we are doing," Mr. Heger said. "It's in a secure area."

Appointments are not required, according to Mr. Heger.

"We do 400 to 600 per month," Mr. Heger said.

Garage doors at all stations in both fire districts are now left down and locked at all times.

Security has also been heightened when the departments are on calls.

See Fire — Page 6

Fire

Continued From Page 5

Both departments are working closely with their respective posses to have fire department vehicles and equipment secured at call sites.

"We have a very good relationship with the posse," Mr. Heger said. "They respond to our calls if they are on duty. A posse member stays outside with our vehicle to make sure it is secure."

"As for security of vehicles when we are out in the field delivering services, we are discussing with the posse to have them provide security under those circumstances, at least during their patrol hours," Chief Sebert said.

Both departments are remaining vigilant in watching for anything suspicious around their facilities.

"We are always looking for anything suspicious, like packages left outside the building," Mr. Heger said.

Sun City Fire Department Shift Commander Ken Swick said training continues on the handling of hazardous materials and possibly bio-chemicals.

"We included that in our training about two years ago," Chief Sebert said. "We have done classroom and field training. The training involved such things as personal protection, like securing their turnout gear. We have them use duct tape to secure the openings on the sleeves of the coats and tape the opening of their boots."

Sun City Fire District Board member Paul Saunders, a former longtime firefighter, said he believes the measures may be a bit extreme and is concerned they may project an image of

unfriendliness.

"I would like to see us post signs at the doors alerting the residents of the restrictions," Mr. Saunders said.

"This is changing the way we deal with the public," he added. "In the 50 some years I have been associated with firefighting, we have always welcomed the public into our house."

"Hopefully the public will understand and won't develop the feeling that we are being unfriendly," Chief Sebert said. "We don't want to be seen as unfriendly."

Should the Sun City Fire Department have to go to a red alert, the highest level, "we would have to provide 24-hour security at our stations," Chief Sebert said. "We would have to control access to equipment."

One of the methods of controlling access to the stations would be the installation of barricades in the driveways, to deter possible terror attacks, Chief Sebert noted.

Should the level of security be further heightened, it would cause a slight problem conducting monthly board meetings, since Fire Station No. 132, where the meetings are normally held, would be locked down.

"We could move the meetings off site," Chief Sebert said. "We are obligated by law to conduct the meetings."

Mr. Heger said Sun City West's Fire Department has yet to formulate a plan to handle a red alert.

Meanwhile, Sun City firefighters Dave Evans and John Ramsey have been activated by the National Guard or Reserves, and the department faces the potential loss of up to four more firefighters to military activation, according to Chief Sebert.

The Sun City West Fire Department has no one in the Guard or Reserves, Mr. Heger said.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT February 26, 2003

SCW fire district calls up 7 percent

By **Mike Russo**
Independent Newspapers

For the second consecutive year, personnel from the Sun City West Fire Department responded to a record number of calls.

Fire district personnel answered 4,720 calls for assistance in 2002, or 12.93 daily. That was up from 4,416 calls in 2001, or 12.1 calls per day; an increase of 6.88 percent.

Call volume has risen significantly in recent years, according to Jim Heger, fire marshal.

"There has been a dramatic increase in the number of calls per day over the past few years," Mr. Heger said. "In the early days of Sun City West there used to be roughly one call every other day."

The Sun City Fire District last month also reported a record number of calls in 2002, but call volume was up only 3.66 percent. However, firefighters there responded to nearly 30 calls per day.

As in Sun City, and has historically been the case, the bulk of the Sun City West Fire Department's calls were for medical assistance.

Emergency Medical Service calls totaled 3,698 in 2002, said Deb Johnson, Sun City West Fire District community relations and public education specialist. That represented an

increase of 5.6 percent over the previous year, when there were 3,468 EMS responses.

Medical calls amounted to 78.35 of the call volume for 2002. In 2001, medical calls accounted for 78.53 percent of all calls.

Total fire calls amounted to 299 in 2002, a decrease of 3.86 percent from 311 fire responses the previous year.

March was the department's busiest month with 502 calls, followed by December, 455. The previous year, December experienced the largest call volume, 459.

The busiest days of the weeks were Mondays and Wednesdays, according to Ms. Johnson.

On the heels of two successive record-setting years, the fire department is preparing to handle an even greater call volume with the pending construction of Del Webb's Corte Bella subdivision, along Deer Valley Drive, immediately northeast of Sun City West.

The fire district has signed a contract with the developer to provide fire and emergency medical service to the community.

Construction of model homes is scheduled to begin on March 4.

"We are not looking for a large jump in call volume out there," Mr. Heger said.

January 15, 2003

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT



Photo courtesy of Fire District of Sun City West.

From left, Sun City West Fire Board member Ray White and Fire Chief Robert L. Biscoe congratulate former Fire Board member Jim Maley on being honored by the district.

SCW Fire District Board honors former member

Jim Maley, former member of the Fire District of Sun City West Governing Board, was recently honored for his service and contributions to the district.

Mr. Maley was presented with a plaque to be permanently displayed at Fire Station 101 and a personal plaque displaying a personalized miniature leather fire helmet.

Mr. Maley was board mem-

ber from 1981 to 2001 serving most of those years as the chairman of the board. During that time, the district was established and grew to the current three stations.

Instrumental in forming the district itself and overseeing its development, Mr. Maley was always committed to an excellent quality of service for the citizens and having professional and well trained personnel.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT AUG. 14-20, 2002

Fire union funds possibly misused

Probe launched by Department of Labor, fire district, union

By Jeremy Pearlman
Independent Newspapers

The United Sun Cities Firefighters Local No. 3573, Sun City West Fire District and the U.S. Department of Labor are investigating allegations that a Sun City West firefighter used up to \$60,000 of union funds in an unauthorized manner.

The man has been on unpaid administrative leave from the fire district since June 28.

The funds in question are

from union dues paid by Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise, El Mirage and Daisy Mountain firefighters.

As of press time, the firefighter's identity has not been released.

During the week of June 10, officials from Local No. 3573 requested that the Department of Labor investigate these allegations, according to Hank Oleson, union president.

"The executive board of the union is being investigated.

(This individual) is a member of the executive board," Mr. Oleson said. "All of our accounts are being audited at our request.

"The allegations are about unauthorized use of union funds," Mr. Oleson continued. "We are doing both an internal and external investigation. The external investigation is being done by the Department of Labor."

A spokesperson for the Department of Labor would nei-

ther confirm nor deny the investigation.

Mr. Oleson does not know the exact amount of money allegedly used in an unauthorized manner, but said \$60,000 is the high end of the range.

"We're talking about a significant amount of money," Mr. Oleson said. "We have to do an audit. Without looking at the records we can't tell what has been authorized and what has not."

Since the investigation is still

ongoing, Mr. Oleson would not comment further on the specifics of the investigation.

"A lot of our membership is worried that nothing is happening. It is ongoing and I can't give out details," Mr. Oleson said.

In addition to the union and Department of Labor investigations, the Fire District of Sun City West is also looking into

the matter.

Although the allegations revolve around union funds, the Fire District of Sun City West is conducting its own investigation.

"We're working with the union to try to gather information and make decisions on our end," said Chief Rob Biscoe, Sun City West Fire Chief. "The thing is, if there is any truth to the allegations, that there was theft or misappropriation, we

wouldn't allow this employee to remain employed here.

"We have to take a look at the situation, when all the facts are on the table, and then make a determination," Chief Biscoe continued. "But it's really too early to say."

According to Chief Biscoe, the district was notified about the allegations in late June. Shortly after, the district placed the firefighter on unpaid admin-

istrative leave pending the outcome of the investigations.

"We have our attorney working on this now," Chief Biscoe said. "The union is doing the investigation and we're waiting to get information sent our way so we could look at it and make determinations.

"What's real important though, is that this specific individual is innocent until proven guilty."

The fire district has sent a letter to the accused individual, to respond to the allegations, according to Tera Jackson, the fire district's attorney.

"This person has a deadline to provide their side of the story," Ms. Jackson said. "If there isn't a response, the fire district has to consider what action to take."

The letter also suggested that the individual obtain legal counsel, Ms. Jackson added.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT JULY 31-AUG. 6, 2002

Sun City West Fire District buys new breathing apparatus

By Jeremy Pearlman
Independent Newspapers

Fires and firefighters share a common need in order survive — oxygen.

To better outfit them to fight blazes, search through smoke-filled buildings for victims and work in hazardous environments, Sun City West's firefighters will soon get a more abundant supply of air.

On July 18, the Fire District of Sun City West Governing Board approved \$35,465 in upgrades to the district's self-contained breathing apparatus units - the second major upgrade in the last three years.

"I think it's important for us to have the units updated and in first-class condition," said Richard C. Parks, board member.

The motion to fund the upgrade passed unanimously.

Similar to devices used for scuba diving, the self-contained breathing apparatus is worn like a backpack and contains a bottle of air, a face mask, air gauges

and an alarm to be used in case a firefighter is lost or injured.

"It is a very important piece of equipment, one of the most important pieces of equipment on the truck for fires and hazardous materials calls," said Chief Rob Biscoe.

"It allows us to breathe clean air in just about any environment and that's certainly important," added Administrative Capt. George Petru.

The units are also one of the most used tools a firefighter has. It should be used for almost all calls except those seeking paramedic or service assistance, according to Capt. Petru.

"If we're operating a floor above a fire we have to have them on, a floor below a fire, for evacuating people, for working near a car fire or if we're in the interior of a house fire. Any of those positions we should (be using the devices)," said Capt. Petru.

The last major upgrade to the district's self-contained breathing apparatus units came three years ago, when all of the

masks, straps, belts, gauges and alarms were replaced.

This year, funds will be primarily used to purchase greater capacity bottles of air.

Although the new bottles will be approximately the same size and weight as those currently in use, they will contain approximately 26 percent more air.

The new air bottles will have 3,000 pounds of air pressure. The bottles the district currently uses have 2,216.

While it varies depending on the situation, firefighters get approximately one minute of breathing time per 100 pounds of air, according to Capt. Petru.

"To go from 2,200 pounds of air to 3,000 pounds of air will ... increase our safety stance," said Capt. Petru. "We can stay in a little bit longer and we have a little bit longer to get out."

The new bottles have a lifespan from 5 to 7 years.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT FEB. 27-MARCH 5, 2002

Fire district annexation of Citrus Point nearing completion

Effective March 16 with no protests

Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

If there are no hitches, residents of the Citrus Point subdivision will officially be annexed into the Sun City Fire District on March 16.

Representatives of the fire district delivered the final documents to the Arizona Department of Revenue on Feb. 14, just hours before the deadline, according to Fire Chief Jim Sebert.

"The Department of Revenue must now wait 30 days to see if anyone wants to protest the annexation to the board of supervisors," Chief Sebert said. "If there are no protests, the Department of Revenue will

notify the Maricopa County Assessor's Office to levy property taxes as of July 1, 2002."

Petitions submitted by the fire district contained the signatures of slightly more than 230 Citrus Point residents, representing roughly two-thirds of the homes, Chief Sebert noted.

For the annexation to occur, the fire district needed to collect signatures from more than one-half of the property owners representing more than one-half of the assessed property value and also one-half of qualified electors. Citrus Point contains 331 homes.

The fire district board voted

unanimously Jan. 23 to move ahead with the annexation.

Homes in Citrus Point have been valued at \$2,860,550, according to the county Assessor's Office. Approximately \$800,000 of that estimated assessed valuation is for a strip of land owned by Salt River Project immediately east of Citrus Point.

Salt River Project representatives did not sign the petitions supporting the annexation. However, officials have indicated SRP will not oppose the move.

"They remained neutral on the annexation," Chief Sebert said. However, he has spoken with a high-ranking SRP official who indicated the utility company will not oppose the annexation if the move hinges on its decision.

Although the Citrus Point Community Association just recently requested annexation into the fire district, the district has been providing fire protection for the community, on a contract basis, since Sept. 1,

2000.

"We are already charging them their (property) tax equivalent," Chief Sebert said.

"There will be no change in the service provided to the community, only the manner in which the fee is collected," Chief Sebert continued.

Currently, Pulte Homes collects a monthly fee used to pay for the fire department's contracted services. Once the annexation occurs, the contract fee will cease and residents will see an additional line on their property tax bill.

For the past year, the tax rate has been \$2.0384 per \$100 of secondary property value, so a property valued at \$100,000 was charged a fire fee of \$203.84.

In addition, Pulte will pay a \$100,000 impact fee to join the fire district.

The assessment is expected to generate approximately \$60,000 in revenue for the fire district, which is the same amount of the existing contract.

Chief Sebert said the Citrus Point annexation effort was a

much more difficult task than Youngtown's annexation two years ago.

"The Citrus Point annexation effort has required about 10 times as much time as the Youngtown annexation because of issues raised by the county," Chief Sebert said.

He lauded the residents of Citrus Point for their seeming acceptance of the annexation.

"The homeowners came through," Chief Sebert said.

"This is a wise move for the fire district and the community," he added.

Citrus Point is located on the south side of Bell Road across from the West Valley Art Museum and immediately west of Sun City. Emergency services are provided from Sun City's main fire station, 131, located at Bell Road and 99th Avenue, approximately 2.1 miles from the Citrus Point subdivision.

SCW

SC West Fire District earns improved rating Department is one of only five in state accorded ISO 2 status

By Jeremy Pearlman
Independent Newspapers

Sun City West was recently classified as one of the top communities for fire protection in the nation by the Insurance Services Office, Inc., a highly regarded supplier of fire department related information to insurance companies.

The Fire District of Sun City West received a Class 2 rating by ISO in the corporation's Public Protection Class program - a program which classifies a fire department's ability to protect the public from fire.

ISO rates departments on a scale from one to 10, one being the highest level of public protection and 10 being less than

the minimum recognized protection level.

Some 45,000 fire departments across the nation have been analyzed and assigned a classification by ISO. Only 347 fire departments have a rating of Class 1 or 2, with only 41 receiving the highest classification.

In the state of Arizona, five departments have a Class 2 rating. No department in the state has attained a Class 1 rating.

Fire Marshall Jim Heger is delighted with the designation.

"This is a big deal," Mr. Heger said. "Only .8 percent of the fire departments in the

nation have it. We're in a pretty elite group of fire departments in the country."

ISO makes its ratings determinations by analyzing a specific fire department's firefighting capabilities, looking specifically at how well a department receives and dispatches fire calls, the community's water supply, a department's training, the number of engine companies, distribution of fire companies and the amount of water a community needs to fight a given fire.

Prior to the most recent rating, the Fire District of Sun City West had a Class 3/9 rating. This classification indicates that parts of the community had Class 3 rated protection while others had Class 9 rated protection.

Three years ago, the district's rating was a Class 5/9.

The improvement in the district's rating is due to a combination of things, including: increased manpower, the addition of station 103, updating of equipment and refinement of the district's documentation.

Battalion Chief Carl Leveto spent a great deal of time working on improving the district's ISO rating.

"The bottom line is, I'm pretty proud of the rating," Mr. Leveto said. "It shows the folks

in Sun City West that they have a department they can be proud of."

While the improved rating indicates the Fire District of Sun City West provides great fire protection for the community, it may not save residential policy holders on their residential fire insurance.

According to ISO's Web site, insurers generally do not make the level of distinctions between the ratings for residential policy holders. Instead, insurers may group several class ratings together in its determination for fire protection insurance.

In addition, some insurance agencies no longer use ISO ratings in determining insurance costs.

State Farm, for example, stopped using ISO ratings in December 2000, according to LaDonna Lopez, an underwriting operations superintendent with State Farm. Ms. Lopez said State Farm compares zip codes with similar loss experience to help determine insurance rates and allows customers to do Internet comparison shopping without having to know their community's ISO rating.

"(An individual) can compare what State Farm offers without having to call up someone and say, 'hey what's my ISO rating?'"

See ■ RATING, Page 5

PORA board backs fire district plan

CITIZEN 3/13/81

By Bob Fell
News Editor

A Sun City West panel took sides on the issue of two pending fire district petitions, despite the feeling by its president that the board could remain neutral.

The Property Owners and Residents Association board accepted the majority report with certain conditions on a split vote.

William Mason, PORA president, said he felt the board should not take a position, but present that factual information is available from both reports and let the people make up their own minds."

The board met Monday to review

and study the findings of a three-member ad hoc committee charged with making a recommendation on the petitions after a thorough study.

Members of the committee were Karl Culler and David Gilchrist, who submitted the majority report, and George Seldin, who read his minority report.

Residents of Sun City West will vote on April 27 on two separate petitions, each calling for the establishment of a voluntary fire district but with different boundaries.

The petition that limits the boundaries to the present Phase I area, which is under development by Del E. Webb Development Co., was fil-

ed by Vic Simpson, chairman of a PORA committee named following a serious home fire last fall.

The other petition includes the precise boundaries of Phase I plus the Phase II land on which DevCo plans future development. This petition was submitted by the Sun City West Fire Protection Committee, established by DevCo and headed by Lester Perril.

Culler and Gilchrist, in their report, recommended the Phase I and II petition over the Phase I only petition because the Phase I petition contains some land technically outside the boundaries of Sun City West.

While the estimated assessed value of the land in Phase II is low

at this time, it has the potential of substantial increase if and when it is developed. It also would save having another election when fire protection is needed in that area.

Culler said the majority report was made with the intention of "enhancing PORA and to give Sun City Westers the best and quickest fire protection."

There were conflicting reports about the intentions of DevCo for the development of Phase II, but Gilchrist said the latest information he has is that DevCo has not abandoned Phase II for development. It might be that commercial and business properties would be the first in the area, he added.

Seldin, Rose Ratner and Shirley

Meindl questioned the inclusion of Phase II when it has little or no assessed valuation. Ratner said he could see no reason for including Phase II and Meindl said he heard Phase II never will be developed.

The estimated value of the land and buildings in Phase II, mostly agriculture, has been placed variously at \$5 million, \$2.5 million and \$250,000 but Perril claims even this would help reduce the individual tax bill.

The discussion took on an "iffy" aspect with various board members conjuring up all kinds of "ifs" for which no one had a factual answer.

But Culler noted that "If we are guilty of getting both petitions passed, then we will have no fire district."

It was explained that if both petitions received a majority favorable vote, there would be no district since each would cancel the other.

Gilchrist emphasized that if a voter approves one petition, he must cast a separate vote against the other. Otherwise it would amount to casting two "yes" votes.

Jake Knapp commented that by not taking a stand, the board could be "creating a third problem and just add to the confusion."

After more than two hours of discussion, Ratner offered a motion to bring to the members all the pros and cons on both petitions and to ask the candidates for the fire district board to present their ideas at the new PORA membership meeting Monday.

The board was in full agreement on these two issues but Roger Curfman offered an amendment calling for the board to take a stand on one petition or the other.

The vote was split 6 to 5 with Curfman, Loise Copes, Paul Cartwright, Morry Garrison, Culler and Gilchrist voting for the Phase I-II petition.

Seldin, Ratner, Meindl, Knapp and Larry Tate voted for the minority Phase I report.

According to the county elections office, only one candidate had filed a nominating petition for the district fire board. Several petitions have been taken out, said Georgia Guest, assistant elections director, but the only one filed as of Wednesday was by Edward Hinsky.

Hinsky, a member of Perril's committee, has filed for the board on both petitions.

PHX. GAZETTE 3-25-81

Sun City West PORA Paves Way For Fire-Truck Purchase

By PAUL BRADLEY
Gazette Reporter

A fire truck could be stationed in Sun City West this summer following a vote of the SCW Property Owners and Residents Association.

PORA members told their board of directors to do whatever is necessary to secure the truck and personnel as soon as possible.

Members were told the Rural Metro Fire System expects to have available within 120 days a truck and enough emergency medical technicians to operate it 24 hours a day.

THE TRUCK will be stored under a tarp in the parking lot of the PORA building on Camino Del Sol if the Del E. Webb Development Corp. does not make a storage facility available, according to a resolution adopted by nearly 800 PORA members. Webb officials in the past have indicated such space would be made available only if paid for.

In instructing PORA leaders to acquire the truck, members rejected a request by Karl Culler, chairman of a committee which studied the question of forming a Sun City West fire protection district.

Culler asked that acquisition of a truck not be considered until after April 27, when Sun City West voters will decide whether to form a fire district and elect a five-member board to administer the district.

"IT'S NOT a good idea to pre-empt the board before it is even elected," Culler said.

Sun City West residents next month will vote in one of two elections regarding fire protection districts.

One proposal would include only Phase I of Sun City West, the area north and east of Grand Avenue. The second proposal would also include Phase II, the 7,000-acre area south and west of Grand Avenue not expected to be developed until the late 1980s.

Much of the debate on the fire truck resolution focused on whether the yet-to-be-developed Phase II should be included in the fire district.

PORA member Leo Klein charged PORA directors with being unrepresentative of members in backing the inclusion of Phase II.

HE SAID the PORA board "consistently votes for what Mr. Meeker (Webb president John Meeker) wants," adding that "if Mr. Meeker wants Phase II protected, let him work something out, and let us not pay for it."

Phase II plan has the backing of Webb officials.

Culler said he agreed a fire truck is needed in Sun City West as soon as possible. But he said waiting for an elected fire board to act is the proper course.

George Seldin, primary proponent of prompt action on the fire truck, told PORA members Sun City firefighters take an average of eight minutes to travel to Sun City West.

Noting most calls from Sun City West are for medical emergencies, Seldin said an eight-minute wait is too long.

SELDIN ALSO said voters should exclude Phase II from the district because "there is no reason to commit ourselves to something that may never come to be." He said Phase II could be added to the district once it is developed.

The election will be held in the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center. People living in Phase I can vote in either election. Those living in the 10 homes in Phase II can vote only in the election that would include that area.

So far Ed Hinske has filed a petition with county officials, qualifying him as a candidate. Dolores Lowe, Anthony Barraco and Victor Simpson are circulating petitions.

NEWS-SUN 11/19/80

SCW wants own fire district

By CHERYL SWEET
Staff Writer

A recent fire that caused extensive damage to a Sun City West residence, has sparked renewed concern for fire protection in the community.

Beefed up efforts to obtain a fire district stem from an Oct. 28 blaze which caused over \$90,000 in damages to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph O'Dea.

Some residents complain Sun City Metropolitan Fire Department's response time was about 20 minutes. Fire officials say they were on the scene in eight minutes.

WESTERS FEEL a district in the area would cut down on response time and reduce the possibility of extensive damage in the future.

Lester Perril, chairman of the community's fire prevention committee, said Sun City West could have a fire district by late spring of next year.

The seven member ad hoc committee, which was created in 1978, has been working in conjunction with Sun City Metropolitan Fire Department, Rural Metro Fire Department, Del E.

Webb Development Co., and Maricopa County supervisors for almost two years on plans for a fire district in the community.

Devco has donated land for the building, which Perril said would cost between \$350,000 to \$500,000. Site for the building is the southeast side of R.H. Johnson Blvd. near Camino del Sol.

FOREMOST IN beginning formation of a district is obtaining residents' approval of the proposed district.

Ten percent of Westers must petition for a fire district, said Perril. County supervisors must then set a hearing date within 30 days to approve the petition, after which time they will set an election date. It takes 51 percent of voters to approve the measure.

After voter approval, plans for the district must be submitted to the county by July 1, in order to form a district by next year. This date marks the beginning of the fiscal year for fire districts.

Money for the building would come from bonds stretched over an estimated 20-year period, said Perril. Services, including equipment and personnel,

could be contracted through the Sun City department, he added.

PERRIL SAID the committee's research indicates the district should have two fire trucks, as one truck would just give residents a "false sense of security," he said.

He added the proposed fire district would serve Phase 1 of Sun City West, which would encompass an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 residents.

Westers currently pay an annual fee for fire service based on square footage of property. Fees range from \$13 for properties up to 99 square feet to \$83 for 3,700 square feet. Most residents pay between \$34 to \$54, Perril said.

Under the proposed fire district, homeowners would absorb fire costs through an increase in taxes. Perril said the committee is waiting for the county's latest figures on property assessments.

Further data on the committee's progress on the district will be given at the Property Owners and Residents Association monthly December meeting, said Perril.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

JAN. 23-29, 2002

Sun Cities firefighters have busy year

Both departments respond to record number of calls in 2001

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

Last year was an extremely busy one for the fire districts of Sun City and Sun City West.

In fact, both departments responded to a record number of calls during the year.

Sun City firefighters responded to a total of 10,247 calls in 2001, or an average of 28.35 per day, up from 9,600 in 2000. Of those calls, 8,042 involved responses in Sun City and 2,305 were in response to calls for

automatic/mutual aid.

In Sun City West, fire personnel were called out 4,416 times, or an average of 12.1 calls per day.

"That was up (8.63 percent) from the previous year when 4,065 calls were logged, said Deb Johnson, Sun City West Fire District community relations and public education specialist.

"It was a record year for calls in 2000," said Sun City Fire Chief Jim Sebert.

"We are averaging 28 calls

over each 24-hour period," said Ed George, vice chairman of the Sun City Fire District board of directors.

Medical assistance continues to make up the bulk of the calls in both communities.

Medical calls comprised 6,205, or 77.15 percent of the Sun City calls.

Cardiac calls amounted to 12.18 percent of the total, 980, and was the single greatest classification of medical calls.

Like Sun City, Sun City West's fire department was kept

most busy answering calls for medical assistance — 3,468, or 78.53 percent of the call volume.

Monday and Friday were the busiest days for both departments, with 1,250 responses being made on Monday and 1,124 on Friday in Sun City.

"We are not sure why, but that is the way it seems to be with doctors also," Chief Sebert said.

"A lot of people get sick over the weekend and they need to see a doctor when the offices open on Monday, and are told

there are no openings for a two weeks, so they call us," Chief Sebert said.

Ms. Johnson agreed with that assessment.

"As for Friday, some people are not feeling well and they don't want to be sick all weekend, so they call," Ms. Johnson added.

Calls by the other days of the week in Sun City were: Tuesday, 1,140; Wednesday, 1,130; Thursday, 1,101;

Saturday, 1,004; and Sunday, 1,113.

Sun City firefighters responded to 79 fire calls for the year, while their counterparts in Sun City West responded to 311.

Of the fire calls in Sun City, only nine were of a structural variety and 16 were vehicle fires.

With so many people maintaining winter residences in the Sun Cities, the winter months are the busiest for both fire departments.

"Our busiest month was December with 459 calls," Ms. Johnson said.

Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2002

Fire districts answer record number of calls

SUN CITIES: Most responses occur on Mondays

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Monday blues are more than a myth — at least in the Sun Cities.

The Sun City and Sun City West fire departments responded to more calls on that day of the week in 2001 than any other day.

Mondays in Sun City accounted for 1,250 calls, followed by Fridays with 1,214 calls. In Sun City West, Mondays also logged the highest number of calls, with 689 for the year.

"It's sort of one of those gee-whiz numbers," said Sun City Fire Chief Jim Sebert. "January also was the heaviest month of the year for responses."

January almost made the top spot in Sun City West as well. With 417 calls, January came in just behind December and March, which had 459 and 419 calls respectively.

"December was a busy month for us," said Deb Johnson of the Sun City West Fire Department. "And it seems like every year as the Northwest Valley grows, there are going to be more and more fire calls for the year."

Last year, the Sun City Fire Department responded to 8,042 calls within the community, including all fires and medical calls. In January alone, the department responded to 947 calls. Sun

City fire personnel also responded to 1,302 calls outside of Sun City as part of mutual and automatic aid.

Sun City West responded to 4,416 calls for 2001, more than 1,000 more calls than it did in 1999. Attributing to the number of calls is an increased number of mutual and automatic aid calls in the area.

Automatic aid allows for the closest rescue unit to a scene to respond to an emergency, which particularly helps communities with limited manpower or emergency vehicles.

All dispatch comes from Phoenix, and all emergency vehicles have global positioning systems that determine which is closest to an emergency call. Because of the central dispatcher, automatic aid does not require any additional work by emergency crews to dispatch trucks from other areas.

Between local responses and automatic aid calls, 2001 kept the community fire departments busy.

Last year "was a record year," Sebert said. "We were averaging about 22 calls a day."

Between the two communities, there were a total of six major fires that completely destroyed homes, but there were no fatalities for the calendar year. Those low numbers are attributed to fire education in the communities, according to Leslie Carroll of the Sun City Fire Department.

See Firefighters credit, A4

From A1

"What we are trying to do is target people in their homes," she said. "We spend about a half an hour with them and give them suggestions for what needs to be done. Residents seem very happy to have us come out to their homes and it allows people to see what the fire department is doing with their tax dollars."

Sun City Fire District board members reported Tuesday morning that since the terrorist attacks in New York and near Washington, D.C., on Sept. 11, fire departments have received more publicity than ever before, bringing fire safety awareness to the forefront of people's minds.

"I've seen the fire departments in this county when they were at their worst," said Paul Saunders, a board member. "There used to be a time when fire departments spent their time inside the station rather than coming out to meet the public. Now they are

out there and it is a lot better for the community to know who is protecting them."

Fire protection depends heavily on the visibility of the fire personnel in the community and the support that crews get from the community, Saunders said.

Jim Hegar, fire marshal for Sun City West, echoed those thoughts about fire protection and urged residents to be aware of the potential dangers in their homes.

The leading cause of house fires is electrical problems, according to data compiled by the Sun City Fire Department. Following closely behind is natural gas leaks and kitchen fires.

"I think if people are aware of the dangers in the home, then they are more likely to take the necessary precautions to protect their homes and themselves from fires," Hegar said.

John Sokolich can be reached at 876-2526 or jsokolich@aztrib.com.

Most-frequent fires in the Sun Cities for 2001:

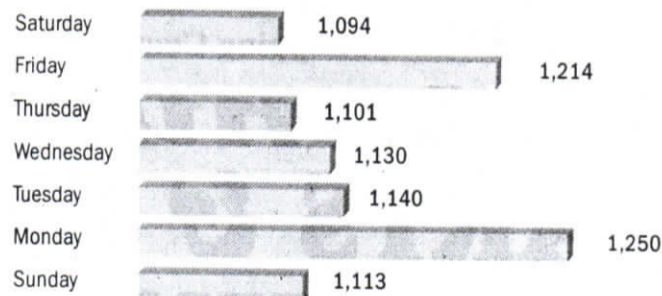
1. Vehicle
2. Electrical/wiring problems in home
3. Natural gas leaks
4. Kitchen
5. Dumpsters

Most-frequent medical calls in the Sun Cities for 2001:

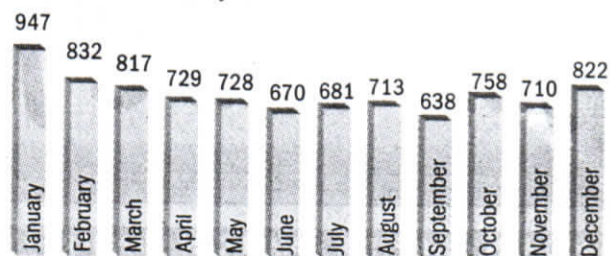
1. Heart problems
2. Fall injuries
3. Difficulty breathing
4. Invalid assistance
5. Abdominal pain

Sun City Fire District

Calls by day of the week



Calls by month of the year



SOURCE: Sun City Fire Department; Complete Sun City West data unavailable.

DAILY NEWS-SUN

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>FIRE / OTHER</u>	<u>EMS</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Ambulance Transports</u>
1982	91	253	344	
1983	109	293	402	
1984	138	309	447	
1985	194	438	632	
1986	408	601	1009	
1987	242	833	1075	
1988	494	730	1224	
1989	532	684	1216	
1990	534	890	1424	
1991	663	939	1602	
1992	607	1001	1608	
1993	578	1265	1843	
1994	653	1426	2079	
1995	371	1498	1869	1245
1996	500	1687	2187	1499
1997	534	1804	2338	1608
1998	604	2108	2712	2107
1999	706	2550	3256	2094
2000	822	3080	3902	2192
2001	912	3389	4301	2494

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT OCT. 17 - 23, 2001

SCW Fire District adds EMS division

By Jeremy Pearlman
Independent Newspapers

A new division within the Sun City West Fire District might help to save community residents some money while continuing to fulfill the district's responsibility of trying to save lives.

In an effort to comply with new National Fire Protection Agency guidelines and achieve a lower Insurance Services Office grading, the district has recently hired and trained six individuals to begin staffing its new Emergency Medical Services Division, which will eventually handle all of the staffing responsibilities of the district's three ambulances.

If achieved, a lower ISO rating should result in lower homeowner insurance rates.

Having an EMS division provides other benefits to the district, according to Jim Heger, fire marshal for the district.

"It reduces time constraints on hiring and filling vacancies in the department," Mr. Heger



Photo by Jeremy Pearlman/Independent Newspapers

The Sun City West Fire District recently began an Emergency Medical Services Division, which will eventually take over all of the staffing responsibilities of the agency's three ambulances. The members of the new division are, from left, Robbie Corcoran, Becky Rauch, Travis Frazier, Spencer Inman, Carol Adams and Coy Boggler.

said. "The amount of time and monies that go into the training of the firefighters is not

involved."

See ■ EMS, Page10

In the past, individuals who might work in an EMS capacity for the district would go through 13 weeks of training at the firefighting academy. The individuals would be trained as a firefighter before they would begin working on an ambulance.

By having a division totally dedicated to EMS, the district will be able to fill these roles in a faster manner and have less training expenses.

In addition, the district will not have to purchase a great deal of gear for cross-trained firefighters who work as EMTs or paramedics; gear that includes such items as helmet,

jacket, special boots and turnout suit.

The three new EMTs and three new paramedics have begun easing the EMS burden currently performed by cross-trained firefighters.

Once fully staffed after July 2002, the division will handle EMS responsibilities

It will also allow firefighters to focus on their firefighting duties, according to Hugh Zembruski, ladder captain at Station 103.

"I think it will help free up firefighters ... at the same time provide the same level of service the citizens of Sun City West

have come to expect of us," Mr. Zembruski said.

Only one new position will be added to the staff, an EMS administration captain.

When fully implemented, the division will have a total of 19 members including the captain position.

The additional 12 slots will be filled through openings caused by the typical amounts of turnover at the district, according to Mr. Heger.

One of the new EMTs, Spencer Inman, thinks the job has been going great.

"I'm very impressed with the customer service and the way this department works," Mr. Inman said.

A certified EMT for a year,

Mr. Inman also has a degree in education. He was one of 100 people to apply for the new positions.

Partnering with Mr. Inman is paramedic Robbie Corcoran.

A paramedic for the last six years and EMT-certified for the last 15, Mr. Corcoran feels the district is viewed highly by local residents.

"We're viewed positively in the community," Mr. Corcoran said. "(The firefighters) say we work hard to keep that reputation."

The other new EMS division members are EMTs Travis Frazier and Coy Boggler, and paramedics Carol Adams and Becky Rauch.

Daily News-Sun • Friday, Aug. 17, 2001

Firefighters wash cars to establish benefit fund

STAFF REPORT

Imagine going to work every day knowing your job could kill you.

Imagine working in a job where you head into a fire instead of rushing out of it.

That's what firefighters face every day while on duty. Most of the time, their

training prevails over tragedy, but there are times when the fire wins.

To help out in those unfortunate circumstances, the Sun City West Fire Department is holding a benefit car wash at its fire station at Camino del Sol and R.H. Johnson Boulevard from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday.

The cost of a car wash is dependent on what the drivers want to donate, according to firefighter Brad Puckett of the Sun City West Fire Department.

"We are just collecting donations," he said. "Anything someone wants to give will be fine."

The money will be placed in a fund to help families of firefighters wounded or killed in the line of duty. The fund is modeled around a similar one in Glendale, and Puckett said fire officials are hoping to start a solid financial base for the fund.

"In essence, this is our

inaugural year for this," Puckett said. "Some of the money will also go to help other local charities, such as Toys for Tots."

For those not able to attend Saturday's car wash, the department is accepting donations over the telephone at 602-208-2745; ask for Michael Patton.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT JULY 4-10, 2001

Fire districts enter into mutual agreement

Pact expected to save money

By MIKE RUSSO
Independent Newspapers

A bond between the fire departments of the Sun Cities, forged during a joint recruiting program earlier this spring, has gotten even stronger.

The two departments have approved an intergovernmental agreement that will allow each department to draw from the other's manpower to meet emergency personnel needs.

Sun City Fire Chief Jim Sebert explained that the IGA would result in a saving for the fire department.

"Sun City West Fire Chief Bob Biscoe and I compared notes and there were times ... that we get to a point where, in essence, we run out of manpower," Chief Sebert said.

Whether through vacations, sick

days or short staffing, there are occasions during the year that the fire district has to call in an employee to cover a shift, Chief Sebert explained.

"Rather than calling back in a battalion chief at his salary, we could use a Sun City West firefighter to fill in for one of our firefighters," explained Chief Sebert.

"We would have had an opportunity to use this arrangement four or five times last year," the chief said. "This will open the door for more opportunities than four or five."

The pay scales of both departments are similar in a range, according to Chief Jim Sebert. "So, we will know our financial obligation (when using Sun City West personnel)," Chief Sebert said.

See ■ PACT, Page 9

Bills for payroll expenditures would be exchanged at the end of each month.

"There really is no net cost to either department to do this," Chief Sebert remarked. "This has the potential to save us money."

Sun City West Fire Chief Bob Biscoe wholeheartedly supported the IGA.

"This will provide a great help in some of our scheduling difficul-

ties," Chief Biscoe said. "It is difficult to staff sometimes.

"The IGA will be used to deepen our personnel pool as backup and it will truly help us on occasion," he continued.

"I think we are going to start working more closely with our neighbors and this is a step in the right direction," said Treasurer Tom Stroozas.

"This is an example of how inno-

vative our department has become," observed Ed George, Sun City Fire District board member.

In April, the two departments combined with the city of Surprise to hold a joint recruitment to establish a candidate list for future department openings.

The joint recruitment drew more than 500 applicants and was characterized as a huge success by Chief Sebert.

© THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2001

Fire budgets increasing in Sun Cities

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

The cost of fire protection in Sun City is going up.

On Tuesday, the five-member Sun City Fire District board adopted a budget of slightly more than \$6.2 million, a \$500,000 increase from the current operating budget.

Board members, including Tom Stroozas, said they worked hard in evaluating community needs and compiling a responsible budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

The budget hike — which comes to nearly 9 percent — is in line with an increase in Sun City West.

On Friday, the Fire District of Sun City West is expected to adopt a proposed budget of nearly \$5.5 million, an increase of \$450,000 from the

current budget.

In both retirement communities, the increases are the result, among other things, of cost-of-living raises, higher fuel prices and mounting expenses for workers' medical coverage, officials said.

In an expected cost-saving move, both districts this month adopted an agreement that allows for an exchange of firefighters to fill job shifts.

If one district has a need for help due to sickness, vacation or other problems, it can fill a shift with an available firefighter from the other district.

Robert Biscoe, the Sun City West fire chief, said cooperative agreements are in the best interest of both agencies.

Reach the reporter at
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(602) 444-6925.

Two decades of fire protection in SCW

By Lynne Carbrey

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the Fire District of Sun City West. According to Jim Heger, the first homes were occupied in Sun City West in 1978. At that time, fire and rescue service was provided from stations at 111th Avenue and Grand, 99th Avenue and Bell and also from Litchfield Park. Due to the distance that had to be traveled, response time was delayed in case of emergencies.

In 1981 there was a serious house fire in SCW and since firefighters had considerable distance to travel, by the time they reached the home it had been severely damaged. At that time, a group of concerned citizens came together and decided to create the Fire District of SCW. Jim Maley, who is still a member of the Board was instrumental in the formation of the District. Rural/Metro Corporation was hired to provide the services. At that time there were approximately 8,915 residents.

A modular unit was placed at the site of the current ABCO Market on Meeker Boulevard. The fire station was on one side, a medical clinic (housing the first doctor in SCW) was in the middle, and Associated Ambulance provided an emergency unit which was housed at the other end.

Heger and Louis Chappell were two of the first firefighters assigned to this area. Jim was stationed in Litchfield Park at the time and Chappell was in Tonopah. Jim is now fire marshal and Louis is the captain of the ladder truck at Station 103. These two men, along with two other firefighters and a lieutenant, formed the entire crew. There were two men on each 24 hour shift and the lieutenant was on duty for eight hours a day.

The District purchased a 1954 Van Pelt fire truck with a open cab to service the area. Jim indicated that the Van Pelt "was a real work horse" and served the community well. Then a mini pumper was purchased and the crew consisted of one man on the Van Pelt and one on the mini pumper.

In 1982, Station 101 was built

and two Mack fire trucks were ordered which had a capacity to pump 1,000 gallons per minute from a midship pump. A district chief was hired at this time. An ambulance was also purchased. The crew now consisted of two men on the engine and one on the pumper and one on the ambulance.

Station 102 was constructed in 1990 at the corner of R.H. Johnson and Stardust. At this time, a second ambulance was added and now there were 20 total firefighters. By now the population had increased to 18,994 and the fire tax rate increased due to the District becoming twice the size. They also purchased a 50-foot telesquirt, or aerial apparatus, truck.

During 1992, Del Webb Corporation expanded SCW and the total area covered grew to about 12 square miles. In 1993, discontent grew among the firefighters as they were working a 72-hour week and pay was very poor, causing great turnover. The contract with Rural Metro was up for renewal and the new one asked for a 10-year contract with a 10% annual contract increase. This would not have covered more firefighters or additional equipment. Morale and working conditions were less than acceptable and so the Fire District board voted to start its own fire department.

In July 1994, the Fire District of Sun City West became official and opened its doors. A great majority of the Rural Metro firefighters opted to remain with the District at this time. There were now 27 full-time firefighters, one fire mechanic and three on the office staff. In December, they began a three-platoon/shift system whereby each crew was on a 24-hour shift every third day reducing the work week to 56 hours.

1996 was the year that three additional firefighters were hired to man the pumper at Station 102 and increased the number from two to three a day. In 1997, due to an increase in calls, a third ambulance was purchased. Soon the District began hiring more

firefighters to man Station 103 which was about to be constructed. The District was growing by one-third and required additional equipment and a total of 18 new firefighters.

The District's budget in 1998 called for a new fire pumper, nine additional firefighters and the construction of Station 103. The last hiring was of three more firefighters for Station 103.

During 1998-1999, OSHA mandated the two in/two out safety rule. This regulation stated that there must always be two firefighters inside supported by two outside in the event a rescue was needed. This necessitated four men on an engine, which is how they operate today.

Heger stated that the SCW Fire District has the best response time of any other district. The National Fire Protection Association recommends a four minute response time which they obviously have improved upon.

Some interesting statistics regarding emergency responses over the years are as follows: In 1982 there were 344 calls; in 1990 there were 1,424 calls; in 1997 there were 2,338 calls; and in 1999 there were 3,725 calls.

It has not been decided yet whether or not a 20-year celebration will be held later this year. It would be fitting to demonstrate the community's appreciation for the superior work that the Fire District does on a daily basis.

Fire district takes secure measures

SCW PROGRAM STARTS:

Residents may purchase lock boxes to give firefighters quick access to their homes in case of emergencies

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun City West residents who appreciate the help of emergency personnel — but not the damage they may cause when entering a locked home — have a more inviting option.

They can keep a spare set of their house keys readily accessible to firefighters, who will use the keys instead of breaking a door or window.

A program introduced Tuesday morning by the Sun City West Fire Department is allowing homeowners to mount a small, secure, metal lock box on the outside of their front door. It will house an entry key, which

WHERE TO SIGN UP

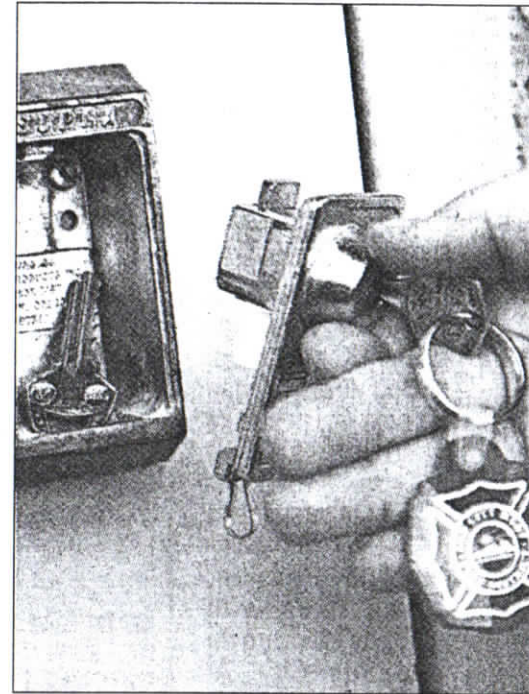
- **SUN CITY WEST:** Fire department administration building, 19001 Camino del Sol, and the posse headquarters, 20450 Stardust Blvd.
- **SUN CITY:** Sun City Fire Department administration building, 17017 N. 99th Ave.

will allow emergency crews to enter homes without causing break-in damage. The same system has been available in Sun City for the past five years.

"The boxes were designed for businesses, but the fire department thought it would be a great idea for homes as well," firefighter Shawn Osborn said. "We can get into a house with or without a key, but this will stop unnecessary damage."

The lock box system was introduced to businesses several years ago as a way to curb damage to glass doors when an after-hours call was received. The fire

See Lock boxes, A5



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Shawn Osborn, a Sun City West firefighter, demonstrates how a lock box works. A master key, owned by the fire department, fits into each box, where a resident's key is available to use in emergency situations.

From A1

department is introducing the program to residents to aid in welfare checks — especially for shut-ins.

"That is exactly what it is for," Osborn said. "This box makes the house keys available any time they are needed to check in on someone, and it allows us to not knock down the doors anymore."

The boxes are made of heavy-duty metal, Osborn said, and are burglar-proof because because potential thieves don't carry the tools

needed to break them open.

"Even if the burglar took the box and then tried to open it, it would take a lot of time and a lot of tools to do it," he said.

The keys required to open the lock box are available only to the fire department.

"The keys cannot be duplicated, and they are checked twice a day to make sure none of them are missing," Osborn said. "But in the event one of the keys shows up as unrecoverable, the fire department will replace the locks on the boxes free of

charge."

The box itself comes at a cost of \$60 in Sun City West, which community officials support as a small price to pay for safety. The cost in Sun City is \$49, due to a difference in shipping and handling costs.

"My wife and I are both sold on the boxes already," said Dick Cherry, Sun City West Posse commander. "It's a good idea because if anything happens where you can't make it to the door, emergency crews can still get to you."

Already 50 to 60 households are participating in the lock box program in Sun City West, according to Osborn, but a push to sign on more residents is under way.

The number of houses in Sun City using the lock boxes were not available Tuesday.

Jack Lewis, Sun City West Posse spokesman, said the program can be especially helpful to residents who live alone or who are prone to falling.

"The lock box is just a simple way for emergency crews to check in on people," he

said. "It can be as simple as someone noticing that their neighbor hasn't been out of their house for a while and won't answer their door. This box will make it so crews can get in to make sure everything is OK."

Lewis said there have been instances where visiting family members have discovered the bodies of relatives because no one conducted welfare checks on them.

"With this, welfare checks will be easier and more frequent, because you don't want situations like that

happening," he said.

Residents can sign up for the lock box program in their respective communities. Information in Sun City West is available in the fire department administration building, 19001 Camino del Sol; and the posse headquarters, 20450 Stardust Blvd. In Sun City, residents can get information in the Sun City Fire Department administration building, 17017 N. 99th Ave.

John Sokolich can be reached at jsokolich@aztrib.com or at 876-2526.

Firetrucks won't roll on Firestones in SCW

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

For firefighters in Sun City West, enough was enough when two Firestone tires failed within three months.

Even though the tires aren't the kind that figure in a nationwide recall by the embattled tiremaker, the firefighters didn't want to keep any Firestones on their vehicles, even as spares.

The Fire District of Sun City West has embarked on a \$7,400 program to replace 56 Firestones on its fleet of trucks and cars.

"It was all about the risk," Fire Chief Robert Biscoe said. "We had two blowouts in a three-month period. We're not willing to put up with that."

The five-member district board voted unanimously Sept. 14 to fund the change, which was expected to be completed this week.



Brent Whiting/The Arizona Republic

Fire Marshal Jim Heger looks at two failed Firestone tires.

Biscoe said he agrees with the decision because firefighters don't want to wait for a third mishap in which somebody might get hurt.

"We've got enough to keep

See **TIRES** | Page 3

From Page 1

us busy when responding to emergency calls without having to worry about tires coming apart," he said.

The district move comes during a nationwide controversy in which Firestone is embroiled in the recall of 6.5 million tires linked to accidents that have resulted in more than 100 deaths.

Firestone, a unit of Japan's Bridgestone Corp., has recalled 15-inch tires because of reports of peeling treads and blowouts. Most of the tires were equipped on Ford Motor Co.'s popular Explorer sport utility vehicle.

Although most criticism regarding the recall has focused on Firestone and when it knew of tire problems, the company has suggested Ford's design for the Explorer also may be responsible for the rollovers.

When contacted about the controversy in Sun City West, a Firestone spokeswoman in Nashville said the tiremaker won't comment on specific instances of tire failure.

She said tires can fail for a number of reasons, including nails, low pressure and improper maintenance.

Biscoe discounted those possibilities, saying that firefighters in Sun City West check the tires weekly and keep logs of tire maintenance.

He said the fire district has contacted Firestone about the two tire failures but has been advised there's nothing that can be done because the tires aren't part of the recall.

Jim Heger, the Sun City West fire marshal, said the first failure occurred June 25 involving a 22½-inch tire that was on the front of a ladder truck on the passenger side.

The blowout, which caused about \$12,000 in damage to the wheelwell and undercar-

riage, occurred while the ladder truck was heading along Grand Avenue near Bell Road, Heger said.

Witnesses told firefighters that the fire engineer driving the vehicle did a superb job of reacting to the blowout and maintaining control of the vehicle, Heger said.

The other blowout occurred Sept. 1 involving a 16-inch tire on an ambulance. The vehicle was returning from a training exercise and carried no patients inside.

Heger said the fire district is keeping the discarded Firestones, hoping for some kind of refund if the tire recall is expanded.

He said the district is believed to be the first Arizona government agency to make a sweeping move in replacing all Firestone tires.

SCW fire district sets impact fees

False-alarm penalty also approved

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

The cost of new construction in Sun City West will become more expensive starting Monday. That's when development impact fees adopted by the Fire District of Sun City West will take effect.

In addition, the district may start charging property owners \$150 or more for some types of false alarms.

The impact fees, which include \$350 for a single-family home and \$175 per unit for a multifamily project, were adopted Sept. 14 by the district's five-member board.

Fire Chief Robert Biscoe

said the fees are intended to defray start-up costs of providing fire and emergency medical protection for new projects in Sun City West, as well as surrounding areas that request service.

"When new development comes in, it impacts the district," Biscoe said. "There's often a waiting period from when the services are made available to when the tax revenues start to roll in."

Impact fees are a way to offset the start-up costs for new people and to provide the equipment needed to keep up with the demand, he said.

By a 5-0 vote, the district

board adopted an array of impact fees, including \$550 for a commercial project of 5,000 square feet or less.

The district has an Internet site, www.scwfire.org, on which the full 3½-page fee schedule has been posted.

By adopting the schedule, the fire district has joined other government organizations that charge impact fees in the growing Valley.

On Sept. 25, Glendale began charging \$6,982 in impact fees for new homes, an increase of about \$3,000 from the previous rate.

The fees are assessed to help pay for libraries, fire

stations, parks, water, street and other improvements that are needed because of construction in the city.

Glendale's fees are among the highest in the Valley, behind Peoria, which charges \$8,109 to \$12,353, depending upon location in the city.

Phoenix has fees of \$8,869 or more, and Surprise has set its impact fees at \$7,189.

Biscoe, the fire chief in Sun City West, said false alarms are another big issue in the retirement community.

That's why the district, starting Monday, will charge \$150 or more for false alarms due to maliciousness, negligence or failure to notify firefighters when alarms are

being tested, Biscoe said.

The actual rate, as posted on the Internet, is \$150 an hour "per piece of Fire District apparatus and crew responding" to the false alarm.

The penalty also may be charged if a false alarm is sounded more than three times during any calendar year due to malfunction.

"We're faced with risk and liability each time we respond to a false alarm," Biscoe said. "In addition, it takes up firefighters and equipment that may be needed for an actual emergency."

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See FIRE | Page 9

Daily News-Sun • Monday, Sept. 18, 2000

Fire officials report tire problems

SUN CITY WEST: Fire district decides to play it safe by replacing all of its Firestones

PATRICK O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Ray Williams is yanking Firestone tires off his trucks.

Those trucks, belonging to the Sun City West Fire District, are going to get another brand of tires after two accidents that involved tread separating from tires.

"We run 60-70 mph on every call," said Williams, the district's senior

apparatus technician. "I just can't risk getting the men hurt."

Fire crews experienced two blowouts — one on an ambulance returning from training Sept. 1, the other on the district's ladder truck as it was traveling to an accident along Grand Avenue June 25 — that have convinced them to spend nearly \$8,000 to replace all 56 Firestone tires on all the district's vehicles, from the ladder truck down to pickups.

District officials plan on keeping all 56 tires, including the two that blew out, in case Firestone announces a recall. The model of tires on the district's trucks are not part of the more than 6 million tire recall under way for several models of Firestone tires.

Firestone officials could not be reached for comment.

"I'd think, more than likely, our tires might be part of the recall," district Fire Chief Rob Biscoe said.

Board members echoed their sentiments about the tire change, voting unanimously to replace the Firestones with Goodyears.

"We don't know what (Firestone) is going to do, but we're not going to wait until another one blows," said district board Chairman James Maley.

Firestone officials have been embroiled in controversy since reports of their tires, mostly on Ford Explorers,

were failing, causing the trucks to roll over. People have flocked to stores in recent weeks to remove Firestones — both those that are being recalled and those not subject to the recall — from their vehicles.

Although the pattern is similar to the recalled tires, with the tread of the two tires appearing to have separated from the rest of the tire like a peel, Williams is not ready to blame it on the manufacturer. At the same time, he said he feels safer with the trucks having different tires.

"If I keep these on the trucks and there is a problem, and I'm not saying there is, and we're running a heart patient to the hospital, we're going to have to bring in another vehicle to take that person to the hospital," he said.

The district is attempting to contact other fire departments to determine if their problem is an isolated one. In the meantime, officials said the district's insurance company was attempting to go after Firestone to pay for the \$12,000 worth of repairs to the ladder truck and the \$1,000 of work the ambulance needed.

While Sun City West has been having trouble with its tires, other local departments reported no noticeable problems. The Sun City Fire District, however, uses primarily Michelin and Goodyear tires on its trucks, said Battalion Chief Ron Gilbert.



Ray Williams, the senior apparatus technician for the Sun City West Fire Department, says the department is replacing the Firestone tires on its vehicles after experiencing trouble with them.

MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Fire protection costs go up

SUN CITY WEST: Fire district's new schedule affects future tenants in retirement community

PATRICK O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Builders who want fire protection in and from Sun City West are going to have to pony up a lot more money starting next month.

The Sun City West Fire District adopted a new fee schedule Thursday designed to bring in more money to the district in the wake of growing construction in the community and a higher call for services outside the community. The fees would take effect Oct. 2.

"Hopefully, this will make it less of a burden on the taxpayers," said Fire District Chief Rob Biscoe.

Under the new fee schedule, no current residents or businesses in Sun City West would be charged impact fees. Those will affect new development and annexations only, officials said.

But they would hit plans for an addition to Grandview Terrace, the homes being discussed on property off Veterans Drive owned by the Fitzpatrick family, and a new Ryerson Company project overlooking Hillcrest Golf course, and any other development that comes to the community after next month.

Officials said, the charges will help the fire district cope with rising costs stemming from growth around the Northwest Valley community and in Sun City West.

They impose impact fees for new structures and for areas wishing to be annexed into the district; make charges for service calls outside district boundaries into areas where there are no mutual aid pacts and add new fees for false alarms payable by everyone.

State law allows governmental agencies to charge such fees and several cities have opted to do so to cover costs of adding infrastructure. Because Sun City West is unincorporated, fire district officials opted to make the move, officials said.

The district learned the hard way about growth several years ago with the addition of the expansion area. Although the district was able to get a new fire station and land to build it to provide area coverage, the fees the board passed would have netted the district hundreds of thousands of dollars more had they been in effect then, said James Maley, the district's board chairman.

Costs depend on what is being added to the fire district. For new development and annexation, the fees are based on the type of units and building. Residential building fees range from \$350 per house or duplex to \$175 per unit for apartments and other multi-family dwellings. Fees for commercial buildings cost \$550 per unit or by square footage.

Biscoe said that with several parcels still under development in Sun City West, and development planned for county areas around the community that might wish to

From A1

be annexed by the district, the move would help the district cover its costs as it grows.

"With all the new development, we are looking at lessening the impact of adding new building," Biscoe said.

Some of that new development is planned for land between the Sun City West and the Peoria border.

Homes and businesses built there would have fire protection from Rural/Metro, whose nearest fire station is about 15 miles south of Sun City West.

In the past, the district has had to wait up to two years before receiving tax revenues on new buildings in Sun City West, Biscoe said.

The second part of the fee structure calls outside the district's coverage area. The new fees will not have an impact on calls to neighboring communities, such as Surprise and El Mirage, because of mutual-aid agreements.

An example of the new fees

would be auto accidents the district responds to along Grand Avenue. The calls are outside the fire district's coverage area, officials said they would charge the people involved in the accidents by using their fee structure for the call. The district responds to about two such calls each month in the Wittmann and Meristown area.

"We've even gone up as far as (State Route) 74," said Fire Marshal Jim Heger.

The charge for equipment ranges from \$125 per hour for a battalion chief or safety officer, \$500 hourly for a pumper truck and \$600 for the district's ladder truck. Out-of-area ambulance service also has a new fee, \$2 an hour.

The district also hopes to cut false fire alarms with a \$150 per hour fee for each piece of equipment that is called to a false alarm. Building and home owners will be allowed three false alarms a calendar year. But they will be charged for false alarms if they fail to notify the district they are working on the alarm system or trigger an alarm intentionally if the alarm malfunctions.

(over)

New Sun City West Fire District Fees



1. Impact Fees

Type of structure	Fee
One-and two-family dwelling (per dwelling unit)	\$350
Multi-family dwellings (per dwelling unit)	\$175
Hotels (per sleeping room) and apartment houses (per dwelling unit)	\$30
General commercial	\$550*
Manufacturing units	\$550**
Public assembly	\$550**
Hospitals/care facilities	\$550**
Hazardous	\$550***
Storage	\$550*
Educational	\$550*

* \$550.00 per unit or \$550.00 for each additional 5,000 square feet or fraction thereof, whichever is greater

** \$550.00 per unit or \$550.00 for each additional 3,000 square feet or fraction thereof, whichever is greater

*** \$550.00 per unit or \$550.00 for each additional 2,000 square feet or fraction thereof, whichever is greater

2. Fees for service outside of defined response area

Type of apparatus	Fee
Pumper (per hour)	\$500*
Ladder (per hour)	\$600*
Rescue/ambulance (per hour and/or normal patient transportation fees)	\$250*
Battalion chief (per hour)	\$125*
Safety officer (per hour)	\$125*

* One (1) hour minimum charge. Time will begin upon the dispatch of the district apparatus and end upon the availability of each apparatus dispatched.

3. False alarm cost recovery

Type of response due to:	Fee
Failure to notify	\$150*
Malicious false alarms	\$150*
Alarm malfunction (in excess of 3 false alarms during calendar year)	\$150*
Negligence, tampering, construction, or modification	\$150*
Response by battalion chief, fire marshal, fire inspector	\$50*

* 1/2 hour minimum charge. The time will begin upon the dispatch of the district apparatus and end upon the availability of each apparatus dispatched. Per hour per piece of fire district apparatus and crew responding.

Fire District reduces response times to below four minutes

New station, firefighters credited

By Diane Holloway

The SCW Fire District was proud to report that during the last fiscal year, its average response time has reduced to 3 minutes and 51 seconds, down from 4 minutes and 2 seconds from the previous years. "This was due to the opening of a third fire station," said Fire Chief Robert Biscoe. "Seconds can be important in responding to emergencies. Our goal is to arrive at all emergencies within four minutes."

"The two biggest events of the last fiscal year involved the opening of the third station and the addition of six new firefighters," said Chief Biscoe. Station 103 opened Feb. 22. The Del Webb

Corporation donated the land and a substantial amount of the construction costs. The six new firefighters satisfied a requirement by OSHA (U.S. Dept. of Labor's Occupational and Safety Health Administration). This federal mandate requires that when firefighters enter a burning structure, they must do so in teams of two with two additional firefighters outside in case rescue of the interior crew is necessary.

A breakdown of the 2,830 incidents that fire personnel responded to during the last year includes 2,198 medical incidents, 442 miscellaneous services, 135 fire incidents, and 55 special operations or other incidents. Some 69% of medical

incidents involved advanced life support administered by paramedics and 31% involved basic life support. There were 220 more ambulance transports than the year before. In the mutual aid arrangement with nearby fire districts, 583 incidents in Sun City

West involved additional aid from other districts and 495 incidents involving other cities received aid from the SCW Fire District.

As the community has grown and its population has aged, the total number of emergencies has gradually risen from below 500 in the early 1980s to the current figure of 2,830. Of 2,198 medical emergencies last year, 708 (32%)



The SCW Fire District annual report highlighted the new fire station 103 and six new firefighters. New firefighter Rayne Gray (l.) and engineer Richard Brevik visited the new fire station at 135th and Deer Valley Road as it was being readied for opening in February.
Photo, Diane Holloway

involved preventable accidents or trauma and the rest were a mixed combination of medical problems.

During the last fiscal year, the Fire District taught over 70 classes to nearly 2,500 people within Sun City West. SCW Fire District employees, themselves, completed 13,550 hours in classroom and practical training.

The SCW Fire District was involved in over 40 community events and public relation activities which reached over 5,000 residents. They also conducted 317 general inspections, 98 construction inspections and 32 plan reviews. Disaster preparedness included a Y2K Town Hall Meeting for Sun City West in

1999 which was so well received that the format is being used in other parts of the Phoenix metropolitan area.

Annual awards for 1999 were given to Alex Sandoval, Firefighter of the Year; George Petru, Paramedic of the Year; and Daniel Davis, Emergency Medical Technician of the Year.

With 78% of SCW emergency incidents being of a medical nature, and only 5% involving fires, it is not surprising that property losses in Sun City West are low. Fiscal year 1999's fire losses of \$185,000 were less than 1998's losses which were \$203,500. Ten years ago, the fire loss for 1989 was \$124,900.

Board votes on station

12-15-95

Preliminary talks begin on design, placement

Staff report

SUN CITY WEST — The fire district governing board voted Thursday to begin preliminary discussions with an architect about the design and placement of the retirement community's third fire station.

Jim Maley, chairman for the Fire District of Sun City West, said after the meeting that construction of the third station is at least two years away. However, state and county regulations require that any plan to consult with an architect be included in meeting minutes.

"We live by the rules," he said.

The fire district intends to consult with Dean Glasco of Glasco-Bedrin Architects. The Phoenix firm designed the fire district's new administration building earlier this year and is working with the Lending Hands medical equipment lending library on its new building.

The Del Webb Corp. deeded a 2.1-acre, triangular-shaped lot at 135th Avenue and Deer Valley Drive to the fire district. The developer of Sun City West also gave the district \$500,000 to build the third fire station in the community's expansion area.

The money has been invested and won't be used until the project gets under way. A third fire station is not yet needed in the expansion area, Maley said.

The third station will be comparable to the district's 4,000-square-foot station on Stardust Boulevard, just south of R.H. Johnson Boulevard.

Maley said fire district board members likely will visit the 135th and Deer Valley site sometime in the next two months to talk to the architect about how the third station should be placed on the site.

"We'll tell him what we think and he'll tell us what he thinks."

The district will use capital reserve funds to pay for preliminary consultations with the architect, Maley said.

Also Thursday, fire district Chief John Rowlinson reported to the board about a homeowner's proposal to increase the number of fire hydrants in the oldest Sun City West neighborhoods.

Tax rate holds line in SC West

By TRACY CHARUHAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Even though the Sun City West Fire District will likely increase its expenditures by more than 22 percent next year, it won't cost residents a dime extra.

"The tax rate will remain the same because of the expansion area," said Frank Hamblet, fire district clerk. "We will have more taxable property and therefore more revenue," he said.

The property tax rate for Sun City West is 1.2432 percent per \$100 of assessed property value. As the number of homes increases, so will the amount of taxes collected to support the fire district. The assessment value is determined by the Maricopa County Assessor's Office each August, said Jim Maley, fire board chairman.

"Tax rates will stay the same, they may even go down. We will have no idea until we hear from the assessor's office," Maley said.

Assessment information is usually available in August.

Expenses in the new budget are up more than \$423,000, or 22.6 percent. The fire district anticipates spending \$2,294,551 in the coming fiscal year, up from last year's total of \$1,871,387.

There are two main reasons for the increase, Maley said. The first is the purchase of two ambulances costing

See Paramedics will, A5

Paramedics will raise SCW payroll

—From A1

\$134,000. The fire district bought the ambulances because after June 30 it will no longer use the services of Rural Metro, which charged the fire district \$1,672,312 for its services last fiscal year. In addition to the cost of the vehicles, \$60,000 was spent to equip both ambulances, bringing the total to about \$100,000 per ambulance.

The second reason for increased expenditures is the fire district's hiring of the Rural Metro paramedics who served Sun City West. They will receive a pay increase, 3 percent more than they are receiving from Rural Metro, Maley said.

"We're not losing anyone," Maley said. "Everybody's staying."

The fire board will present the proposed budget at its monthly meeting at 9 a.m. Thursday in Station 34, 19001 Camino del Sol. Residents may express their opinions on the proposed budget at the next monthly meeting at 9 a.m. June 9 in station 34. The meeting will include the regular monthly meeting and a separate budget hearing.

SCW



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Sun City West Fire District employee Janet Maley holds Lady Cinder, a 10-week-old Dalmatian, at the district office. The puppy is the rage these days at Fire Station 34 grabbing not only the attention of the fire-fighters, but of the office workers and visitors as well.
Story, A3

Dog adds distinction to SCW Fire District

By TRACY CHARUHAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — The fire district has taken on one more team member.

Lady Cinder, a 10-week-old Dalmatian puppy, joined the fire district last month after Chet and Jean Soley of Sun City West donated the dog. The Soleys said they wanted the firefighters to have Cinder because a fire station can't be complete without a Dalmatian.

Cinder was 6 weeks old when she arrived at Station 34 and the district office at Camino del Sol and R.H. Johnson Boulevard. She spends her days at Station 34 and her evenings with firefighter Steve Flores and his family. Flores is in the process of teaching her the three basic commands: sit, come and stay.

When Cinder is old enough, she may go along with her fellow firefighters on emergency calls.

"I'd like to get her a specially adapted harness that would let her ride on top of the fire truck," Flores said.

Flores said Dalmatians do not perform any specific jobs for the firefighters, but are mostly symbolic.

"Back in the days when fire trucks were the pump-and-carriage type, the Dalmatians were used to lead the horses to the fire," he said.

Flores said people are welcome to stop by and visit Cinder who will divide her time between the two Sun City West fire stations at 19001 Camino Del Sol and 20622 Stardust Blvd.

Fire district OKs expansion coverage

By TRACY CHARUHAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Sun City West residents will continue to have prompt emergency service despite a decision Tuesday by the Sun City West Fire District to expand its service area.

"The response time won't be much different than it is now," said Fire Chief John Rowlinson.

The Sun City West Fire Board approved Del Webb Corp.'s request to add 50 acres to the fire district's area of responsibility. The property is located within the expansion area north of Deer Valley Drive and west of 151st Avenue.

The new area includes 38 acres which Del Webb purchased in December from Keen Trust. Owners

of the trust have retained the remaining 12 acres for commercial development.

The fire district's decision to expand its service area clears the way for Webb to circulate petitions in the expansion area seeking property owners approval for the fire protection. The county board of supervisors will make the final decision on the fire protection after it is served with the petitions.

At the time of the original expansion agreement, Del Webb donated \$500,000 to the fire district plus two acres of land at Deer Valley Drive and 135th Avenue for an additional fire station.

Rowlinson said he will continue to monitor response times in order to determine when the new station is needed. "When it (response time)

creeps up on three minutes, then it's time to start thinking about the new station," Rowlinson said. "I'll keep a close eye on the numbers."

The increased service area will not have a big effect on fire taxes for Sun City West homeowners, with fire district and Webb officials predicting a slight decrease in fire rates over the next seven years because of a broader tax base.

"Ultimately this will result in minimal deductions for homeowners," said Steven Carder, vice president of finance and administration for Del Webb Corp. "It makes a lot of sense to include the property in the fire district. It will be a part of the community."

Sun City West resident and community activist Phil Vision said he

had not taken a position for or against the measure but questioned future service.

"I'm concerned about the health and safety of people in the original Sun City West," he said.

Vision also expressed concern that there are only two access roads into the expansion area north of Deer Valley Drive, bounded by 135th and 151st avenues.

Rowlinson said 151st Avenue will be the "main artery" to the expansion area.

"The two access roads, Rowlinson said, are wide and divided. He added that Opticom, an automatic system that gives emergency vehicles green lights at all intersections, may be installed along 151st Avenue. Opticom is used at other locations around Sun City West.

SC West Fire District prepares to take over ambulance service

By ANNE RYMAN
Sun Cities Independent

Preparing for the day when it will assume control of ambulance operations, the Fire District of Sun City West plans to purchase two ambulances for \$73,855 each.

The Sun City West Fire Board's Grounds and Equipment Committee recommended the purchase at the board's Jan. 13 meeting because delivery takes at least 90 days, says Jim Maley, Fire Board chairman.

The Fire District plans to have equipment in place by May 1 that will enable it to take over fire and ambulance operations from Rural/Metro Corp. July 1. The fire

district now pays Rural/Metro for fire and ambulance service. The district owns four fire trucks and two fire stations but does not own ambulances.

The five-member board, citing escalating costs for service, decided last year to end its contract with the private company June 30, 1994.

District officials are in the process of obtaining a Certificate of Necessity (CON) to provide ambulance services in the community from the Arizona Department of Health Services. It filed a CON application with the agency Nov. 15. The application is in the process of a rate analysis. A hearing date has not been set.

Rural/Metro now holds the certificate for the Sun City West area. Municipalities, fire districts or private companies that wish to provide ambulance service are required to obtain a CON. The district does not need a certificate to provide fire service.

"The main thing we consider is whether there's a need for it. Secondly, whether the applicant is fit and proper," says Russ Nixon, manager of the CON Program for DHS Office of Emergency Medical Services.

Applicants are required to submit information on rates, dispatch, back-up services, response

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■ AMBULANCE

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times and type of service to be provided, among other details.

According to papers filed by the district, officials plan to have two ambulance units staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The intended name of the service, Fire District of Sun City West Ambulance, will operate out of the central fire station at 19001 Camino del Sol and a substation at 20662 Stardust Blvd.

The fire board intends to purchase the ambulances from Wheeled Coach Industries Ambulance Sales and Services, a

Mansfield, Texas company.

Although the district plans to take over ambulance and fire services, it intends to use Rural/Metro as its backup for emergency medical services when the district's ambulances are committed to a fire scene, on extensive transports or otherwise in use and unable to respond rapidly, according to the district's CON application.

Fire Board Clerk Frank Hamblet says the district intends to continue the same high degree of performance provided by Rural/Metro.

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Wednesday, Nov. 17, 1993

SCW seeks OK for ambulance service

Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — After more than seven months of preparation, the Fire District of Sun City West has completed its application for permission to provide the community with an ambulance service.

Paralegal Rod Dorsett submitted the district's application for a "Certificate of Necessity" to the Arizona Department of Health Services, Monday, Fire Chief John Rowlinson said.

The health department requires

agencies to obtain a CON before providing ambulance service to an area.

The decision to incorporate an ambulance service into the restructured fire district is a result of the board's decision earlier this year to establish its own fire department effective July 1.

Sun City West is now served by Rural/Metro Fire Department, which provides the community with fire protection and ambulance service. District officials cited rising costs as

their reason for wanting to terminate its contract with Rural/Metro.

The application process requires Sun City West Fire District to demonstrate a public need for the ambulance service and to provide proposed rates, level of service and response time.

Once the application is reviewed by health officials, a date will be set for a hearing, during which all information, including protests, will be presented.

The hearing officer will forward a recommendation to the director of the program, who will make the ultimate decision whether to grant the fire district a CON.

If denied certification, an appeal may be filed.

The certificate is issued only after the district's ambulances are inspected by the state health department.

Initial certification is valid for one year; subsequent renewals are for three years each.

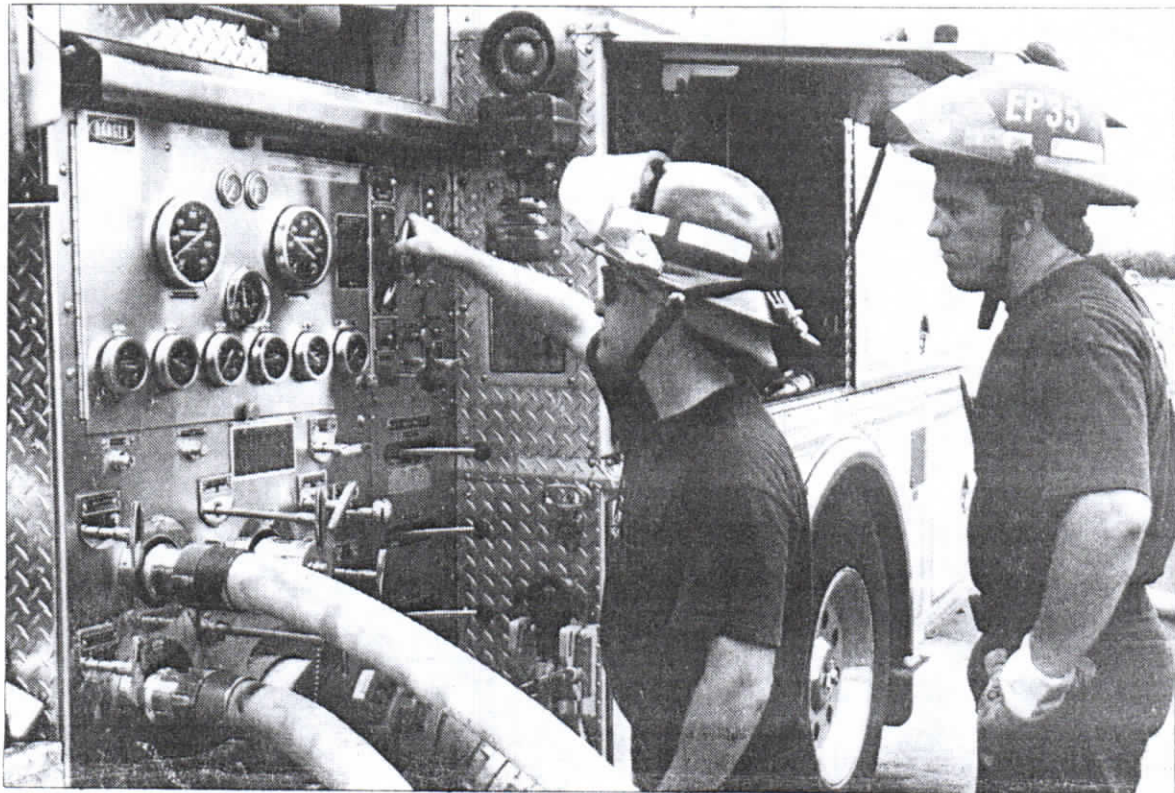


Photo by TYSON KUHRT/Sun Cities Independent

Paramedic Keith Lloyd, left, and Capt. Mark Cichocki inspect the equipment at the Stardust Fire Station in Sun City West. The district will assume total control of operations from Rural/Metro next summer and district officials are hoping most of Rural/Metro's 26 employees now serving Sun City West opt to remain in Sun City West.

Gearing up for change

SC West begins process of forming its own locally controlled fire district

By ANNE RYMAN
Sun Cities Independent

The fire chief and many firefighters and paramedics who now serve Sun City West residents plan to remain with the district when it forms its own department next summer.

District Chief John Rowlinson says the majority of Rural/Metro Corp.'s 26 employees who work in Sun City West have said they will remain with the district when it sets up its own department July 1.

Chief Rowlinson, a nine-year

veteran of the Sun City West district, says he wishes to stay in the area for "personal reasons."

The decision whether to stay with Rural/Metro or remain in Sun City West with the new department is the decision of the individual, says Ted Beam, acting director of government relations for Rural/Metro, the company that has provided fire and ambulance services to the community for 14 years.

"We want to keep as many employees as we can. We've spent a lot more on them than salary —

there's training time and company knowledge. We don't want to bind the new service area, obviously, so we have to consider what's good for both the district and Rural/Metro."

Those employees who wish to travel and work in other areas of the state or country may opt to stay with the company, which has operations in Arizona, Tennessee, Texas, Florida and Oregon. Those who want to remain in the community, however, may choose

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■ DISTRICT

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the new department, he says.

Mr. Beam says he does not know how many employees who work out of Sun City West will remain with Rural/Metro and how many will choose the district.

Fire Board members decided earlier this year to end their association with Rural/Metro Corp. because of escalating costs for service. Board members said they could do the job cheaper if they formed their own department, particularly if they obtained a certificate to provide ambulance service to Sun City West from the state Department of Health Services.

Many Rural/Metro firefighters and paramedics are involved now in task force committees charged with setting policies for personnel, equipment and a communications system for the new department.

They will study and make recommendations to the board on payroll and benefits, hiring and promotion, communications, emergency medical service equipment, fire equipment and manning of stations. Additional committees will be added as the transition continues, Chief Rowlinson says.

To operate independently, board members must buy fire equipment for personnel and vehicles, items previously leased from Rural/Metro as part of the service contract.

The board voted in May to spend \$16,000 for fire suppression gear such as coats, boots, gloves and suspenders and \$3,000 for helmets.

Whether district officials will buy or lease ambulances has not been determined, nor have they decided whether to buy, lease or subscribe to a communication system. Chief Rowlinson says fire officials are considering all options.

"We'd like to have all major policy decisions set by Jan. 1 so it will give us until July 1 to put (them) into place," Chief Rowlinson says.

Board member Frank Hamblet says the board hopes to draw up a budget by Jan. 1 that includes operating costs and expenses for the following fiscal year.

The board also plans to submit a request to the state this fall for a certificate to provide ambulance service to the area. Rural/Metro now holds the certificate to provide ambulance service to the area, but company officials have said they will support the district's application for a certificate.

Fire district board adds expansion area

By Lori Baker
Staff writer

SUN CITY WEST — The Sun City West Fire District board has agreed to accept Del Webb Corp.'s expansion area into the fire district.

The board voted unanimously last Wednesday to provide fire protection and emergency services for the property north of Deer Valley Drive between 135th and 151st avenues. Webb will start building homes on the 1,320 acres in early 1993. About 6,100 people eventually are expected to live there.

Details of an agreement between the fire district and Webb

include:

- Webb will give the district \$500,000 and 2.1 acres of land on the date that Webb closes on its first home in the expansion area. That is expected in July.

- The district may award the contract for construction of a new fire station to a bidder or choose Webb to act as general contractor.

- If the district does not build a facility or contract for construction on the land by Jan. 1, 2000, the property and money will be returned to Webb.

- Webb will install and maintain landscaping on about 1.1 acres of the 2.1-acre site until fewer than 100 homes remain to be trans-

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ferred to buyers.

Webb expects to start selling homes in the expansion area in February. Construction of a new recreation center is slated to begin in April. An 18-hole golf course is under construction.

Webb could not start building homes in the expansion area until it arranged for fire protection. The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors imposed that requirement when it approved Webb's expansion plans in June.

The new fire station will be the third for Sun City West.

District officials project that a property tax increase will be needed to pay for equipment and employees to operate the new station.

But fire district board members said the new station would improve emergency services for residents.

The year the fire station is expected to open — 1995 — a typical homeowner will pay a tax of \$156.67, compared with \$125.09 without the station.

The district contracts with Rural/Metro Corp. to provide fire protection services.

3rd fire station plans worry taxpayers in Sun City West

By ROSA De SIMONE
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Residents sounded an alarm of concern about fire tax increases during a public hearing Thursday regarding the expansion of Sun City West and the possible addition of a third fire station for the community.

Officials of Del Webb Corp. were at the meeting to answer concerns about a proposed fire station which would be located in the expansion area north of Deer Valley Drive. The Sun City West Fire District board will have to decide if the expansion area will be annexed to the fire district.

On Oct. 12, Webb officials presented the Boundary Change Impact Statement, prepared by Webb and reviewed by an independent accounting firm, to the board. That statement examines how a fire station in the expansion area would affect current and future Sun City West residents — both in terms of service quality and increased financial support. At the hearing, the board unanimously approved the statement.

The next step, as required by Arizona Revised Statute 48-262, is for Webb to submit a petition to the Sun City West Fire Board. That petition must be signed by all property owners in the proposed annexation area, signifying their approval of the boundary change.

Since Webb is the sole property owner, the petition requires only its signature.

The Fire District Board, upon receiving the petition, is required to host a second public hearing during which final approval of the annexation may be given, said Jim Maley, chairman of the Sun City West Fire District Board.

Most of the speakers were adamantly against the annexation and the ultimate increase in the fire district tax that will hit all homeowners, both in the existing and new areas.

"There is only one entity that gains anything from the expansion and that's Del Webb," said Ed Hinske, a Sun City West resident.

Webb officials said they will donate 2 acres in the expansion area for the fire station plus give the fire district up to \$500,000 to build and equip the station.

Sun City West has two fire stations built on land donated by Webb and equipped by the fire district.

Although many didn't agree, Webb officials said the donations are unprecedented and the inclusion of the expansion area will not significantly raise fire taxes in Sun City West.

"It is our position that the boundary changes will benefit the current residents and future residents of Sun City West," said Steve Carder, vice president of finance administration for Webb.

Carder said the new station will contribute to increased public welfare.

Fire District Chief John Rowlinson said the new station will be necessary to provide adequate service to residents in the expansion area.

Rowlinson said without the third station, fire and emergency personnel could not maintain sufficient response times — which has been set at a maximum of four minutes by the fire board.

"We cannot meet the four-minute criteria at build out," he said.

Carder said a third station will be necessary because as the community ages, the fire department answers more emergency calls.

Construction dates have not been selected for the proposed fire station, said Martha Moyer, manager of public and community relations for Webb.

"It makes good sense, operationally and economically, to operate the fire services of Sun City West under one umbrella, the Sun City West Fire District," Carder said.

Not all who attended the hearing agreed. Many said they should not have to "subsidize" a third fire station.

Mort Leeper, representing Citizens Alert, said "if there is going to be one, we shouldn't have to pay."

Moyer said the calculations in the impact study project that while there will be an "initial increase" in the fire district tax to support the station, the amount will level off and by 2000 the increase will be less than \$10 annually per household.

After listening to the speakers' dismay with the prospect of paying higher taxes, Carder said:

"We've harked on the financial aspects and overlooked the benefits."

SCW

SCW

3rd fire station plans worry taxpayers in Sun City West

By ROSA De SIMONE
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The next step, as required by Arizona Revised Statute 48-262, is for Webb to submit a petition to the Sun City West Fire Board. That petition must be signed by all property owners in the proposed annexation area, signifying their approval of the boundary change.

Since Webb is the sole property owner, the petition requires only its signature.

The Fire District Board, upon receiving the petition, is required to host a second public hearing during which final approval of the annexation may be given, said Jim Maley, chairman of the Sun City West Fire District Board.

Most of the speakers were adamantly against the annexation and the ultimate increase in the fire district tax that will hit all homeowners, both in the existing and new areas.

"There is only one entity that gains anything from the expansion and that's Del Webb," said Ed Hinske, a Sun City West resident.

Webb officials said they will donate 2 acres in the expansion area for the fire station plus give the fire district up to \$500,000 to build and equip the station.

Sun City West has two fire stations built on land donated by Webb and equipped by the fire district.

Although many didn't agree, Webb officials said the donations are unprecedented and the inclusion of the expansion area will not significantly raise fire taxes in Sun City West.

"It is our position that the boundary changes will benefit the current residents and future residents of Sun City West," said Steve Carder, vice president of finance administration for Webb.

Carder said the new station will contribute to increased public welfare.

Fire District Chief John Rowlinson said the new station will be necessary to provide adequate service to residents in the expansion area.

Rowlinson said without the third station, fire and emergency personnel could not maintain sufficient response times — which has been set at a maximum of four minutes by the fire board.

"We cannot meet the four-minute criteria at build out," he said.

Carder said a third station will be necessary because as the community ages, the fire department answers more emergency calls.

Construction dates have not been selected for the proposed fire station, said Martha Moyer, manager of public and community relations for Webb.

"It makes good sense, operationally and economically, to operate the fire services of Sun City West under one umbrella, the Sun City West Fire District," Carder said.

Not all who attended the hearing agreed. Many said they should not have to "subsidize" a third fire station.

Mort Leeper, representing Citizens Alert, said "if there is going to be one, we shouldn't have to pay."

Moyer said the calculations in the impact study project that while there will be an "initial increase" in the fire district tax to support the station, the amount will level off and by 2000 the increase will be less than \$10 annually per household.

After listening to the speakers' dismay with the prospect of paying higher taxes, Carder said:

"We've harked on the financial aspects and overlooked the benefits."

Webb to donate \$500,000, 2 acres for fire station

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News Sun staff

SUN CITY WEST — Del Webb Corp. has taken the first step toward annexing the new expansion area north of Deer Valley Road into the existing Sun City West Fire District.

Webb delivered its Boundary Change Impact Statement to the Fire District Board Monday.

The statement examines how a fire station in the expansion area would affect current and future Sun City West residents and specifically, how much tax they would pay to support the station.

Webb has said it will donate 2 acres

in the expansion area for the station and will contribute \$500,000 to the fire district to construct and equip the station.

Webb previously donated the land while the fire district paid for the station and equipment on its first two stations in Sun City West at 20622 Stardust Blvd. and 19001 Camino del Sol.

"The \$500,000 will equip and furnish the new station but it won't go so far as providing manpower or a new fire truck," said Sun City West Fire District Board Chairman Jim Maley.

The Boundary Impact Statement projects an initial increase in the Fire

District tax to be borne by all Sun City West homeowners.

As the community grows, individual tax responsibilities will decrease. Maley estimated the maximum tax would be less than \$10 annually per household to support the station's personnel and equipment.

"By the time we build that fire station, they'll have enough people up there that we'll get the taxes from them to pay for any needed equipment," Maley said. "One of the things they (Webb) have to put out (in the impact statement) is how much it's going to cost them (residents) this year, next year and the following year."

The taxes will bring increased protection because more equipment and personnel will be available to respond quickly to medical emergencies and catastrophic occurrences, particularly in the event of simultaneous calls. "When we receive three emergency calls within a 15-minute period, it's tough to get to those in need," Maley said.

Webb has projected a 1995 construction target date for the new station. But Maley said he doesn't know if a new station will be needed by then.

"We have no idea when we're going to build that station," Maley said. "Their interpretation is that we're go-

ing to build it in 1995 but we might not need it.

"Why build it if you don't have enough people up there," he said. "We don't know yet what the economy is going to do or how many houses Webb is going to sell by then."

Maley said the real key to deciding when a new station will be built is the response time it takes to reach a medical emergency.

"As long as our response time remains under four minutes, we won't have to put in a new station."

The Fire District board has 30 days from receipt of the statement to set a public hearing.

Wednesday, July 15, 1992

The Arizona Republic/THE PHOENIX GAZETTE

Expansion depends on Webb

Sun City West asks for 3rd fire station

By Connie Cone Sexton
Staff writer

SUN CITY WEST — The next move toward expanded fire protection service for the community is up to developer Del Webb Corp.

Members of the Sun City West Fire District met Thursday and discussed a June 20 letter from Webb explaining the company's desire to have the fire district annex and serve the proposed expansion area.

Jim Maley, chairman of the fire board, said the letter was read to the members, but there was no discussion.

"Nothing came up," Maley said. "We will not take a vote until we get a commitment from Del Webb" to build a fire station in the proposed expansion area, he said.

Martha Moyer, a Webb spokeswoman, said Webb is working on the fire station issue. "We certainly anticipate meetings (with the fire district board) in the future," Moyer said.

In June, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors approved Webb's plan to expand Sun City West on 884 acres adjacent to the community.

The property is north of Deer Valley Road between the alignments of 135th and 151st avenues. Webb plans to construct homes, a golf course and a recreation center. The expansion area is planned for about 5,000 residents.

In granting their approval for Webb's expansion plan, the supervisors stipulated that the area be incorporated into the Sun

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FIRE

From Page 1

City West Fire District before building permits are issued.

Maley said Thursday's fire board meeting was a chance for some members to read the letter. "Some didn't even know we got it," he said.

Maley said the district will not annex the expansion area until Webb agrees to build a fire station. "They haven't committed to that in so many words," he said.

"The point is, we don't expect people down here to pay for a fire station up there."

Sun City West has two fire stations — one along Camino del Sol Drive, the other on Stardust Boulevard.

If a third station was added in the expansion area, Maley estimates that the fire district would have to add staff eventually.

He said he wasn't sure when Webb officials would meet with the fire district board to discuss the third station.

"They've got a lot to take care of to handle the expansion," Maley said.

"We're only one of 19 items they have to straighten out," Maley said. "We've had a couple of meetings with them, but the board, as a whole, said we are not annexing" until there is a commitment for the fire station.

-- SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT -- JUNE 24-30, 1992

Fire Board: Expansion requires new station

By ANNE RYMAN
Sun Cities Independent

SCW Fire District says current residents should not pay for new facilities

Sun City West Fire Board members say land and a fire station must be provided if Del Webb wants the fire district to annex the proposed expansion area.

Board Chairman James Maley met last week with Del Webb officials to discuss annexing the planned expansion into the existing Sun City West Fire District.

"We can't see the people paying for it. They've already paid for two

(stations)," Mr. Malley says.

Fire protection must be arranged for the expansion before construction begins on homes or the recreation center, according to county officials. One county stipulation on the master plan states that the area should be annexed into the existing fire district, but it does not specify whether a new station would have to be built in the expansion area, says Chuck Roach,

Del Webb Corporation vice president and Sun City West general manager.

He says the fire district has recommended to the county that the expansion area have a fire station. The fire district is also recommending that existing residents of Sun City West not pay for the cost of a new station.

Del Webb has donated land for a station at 135th Avenue and the

realignment of Deer Valley Drive. He says Webb officials have agreed "in concept" with the board that residents of the existing community should not pay for the land and building in the new area and the expansion should be part of the existing fire district.

What must be determined, he says, is who will provide the building and how it will be financed. These talks, Mr. Roach

says, are in the preliminary stages.

For the expansion area to become part of the existing fire district, Del Webb must petition the fire district and the five-member board will decide. No formal agreements or petitions have been filed.

Del Webb donated land for previous fire stations in Sun City and Sun City West, but the fire districts paid for the buildings. The building on Camino del Sol was

built in 1982 and the station on Stardust Boulevard was completed in 1990. Each building cost between \$400,000 to \$500,000.

In Sun City, Del Webb donated land and built three stations. Webb sold the two stations on 99th Avenue to the Sun City Fire District and the station on 111th to Rural/Metro. The Sun City Fire

See EXPANSION, Page 3

■ EXPANSION

District plans to purchase the station on 111th Avenue, Brayton Willis, fire board clerk, says.

Rural/Metro Corporation, a private company, provides fire and ambulance service to the Sun City West Fire District. The district serves 22,000 residents who pay a Sun City West Fire Tax of \$1.20 per

\$100 assessed valuation on their property. Residents received services from Rural/Metro out of Sun City before the fire district was established in 1981.

Mr. Roach says a station in the expansion area would not have to be built immediately, but it would be contingent upon the number of

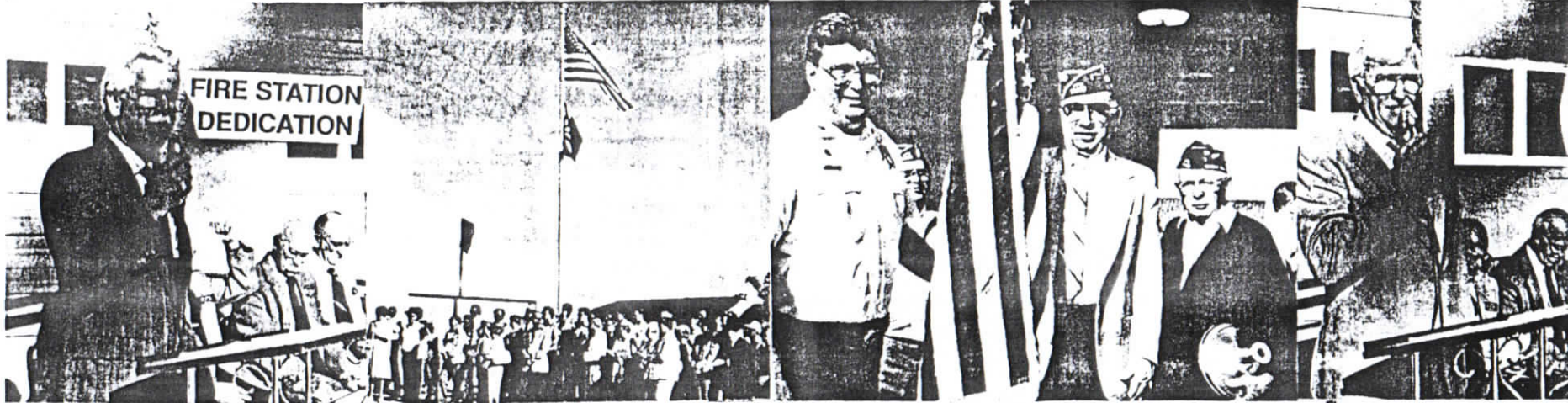
calls received and the response time to the calls.

District Chief John Rowlinson says the maximum response time for a call should be four minutes. Current response times for Sun City West, he adds, are 2.41 minutes for fire and 3.21 minutes for all response times.

Del Webb plans to expand north of Deer Valley Drive on 884 acres between 135th and 151st avenues and hopes to acquire an adjacent 367 acres of state-owned land that will be up for public auction June 30. The expansion is expected to increase the community's size by 6,000.

From Page 1

Sun City West's New Stardust Fire Station Dedicated



by Stan Steciak

At Dedication Ceremonies, on Nov. 2, Chuck Roach, Del Webb's Vice President and General Manager of Sun City West, said it best and in a few words, when he said, "The new Stardust Fire Station is another mark of progress for the SCW Fire District and for all residents of our great community. This is an indication of the dedicated work of the Fire District Board." SCW's State Representative Bob Williams, R. 15th Dist., long time resident, brought back memories of more than ten years ago before the Fire District was established. He said, "Fire protection was something we all yearned for at that time. With the start of the Fire District, we not only received fire protection

but the best emergency, life saving services available."

Joan Damien, representing Dist. 4, County Supervisor Carole Carpenter, brought greetings from Carole and told the audience, "Carole is not well today, but she wants to congratulate the Board members and all Westers on this eventful day, getting your 2nd Fire Station." From Carole, Joan Damien, Chief Administrator in Carole's office, preented Mr. Maley a hand crafted piece of Indian pottery for inside the Fire Station.

An outstanding event at the Dedication was the raising (hoisting) of colors by Captain Louis Chappell and Firefighter James Heger. These two men in blue had the distinction of raising Old Glory for the first time at SCW's first

Fire Station (Camino del Sol). Members of SCW VFW Post 10695 acted as their honor guard. Past Commander Richard Latzke, VFW 10695, presented Fire Chief John Rowlinson an American flag, to be on display inside the station.

The Dedication Ceremony was brief and interesting. Rev. Charles H. Ruby, Pastor, Lord of Life Lutheran Church, made the Invocation. James Maley, Master of Ceremonies, introduced dignitaries present, and also the entire firefighter crew and Alba Stamm, and her group of volunteer receptionists, men and women, appropriately dressed in blue. Maley also introduced Board Members: Bob Shaw, Ray White, Cy Meusey and Frank Hamblet. The Dysart High



school band, directed by Lynn Ramsey, provided music for the dedication ceremonies.

Mr. Maley thanked all who were instrumental in getting SCW's second Fire station built. In closing Maley made note of the large audience and said the last page of the printed program says it appropriately, "And a special appreciation to the residents of Sun city West."

1) Chuck Roach, Vice President and General Manager of SCW.

2) A part of large crowd attending dedication of SCW's new Stardust Fire Station.

3) (L.) Fire Chief John Rowlinson accepting American Flag for inside Fire Station, from Past Cmdr. Dick Latzke, SCW VFW Post 10695. Looking on are Post members Al Schmidt and Jim Ahern.

4) James Maley, SCW Fire District Board Chairman.

5) Bob Williams, SCW's State Representative, 15th District.

6) Firefighter James Heger and Captain Louis Chappell raise American Flag for first time at Stardust Fire Station.

(Photos by Stan Steciak)

SUN CITY WEST ^{SCW} *Your Community Weekly*

INDEPENDENT

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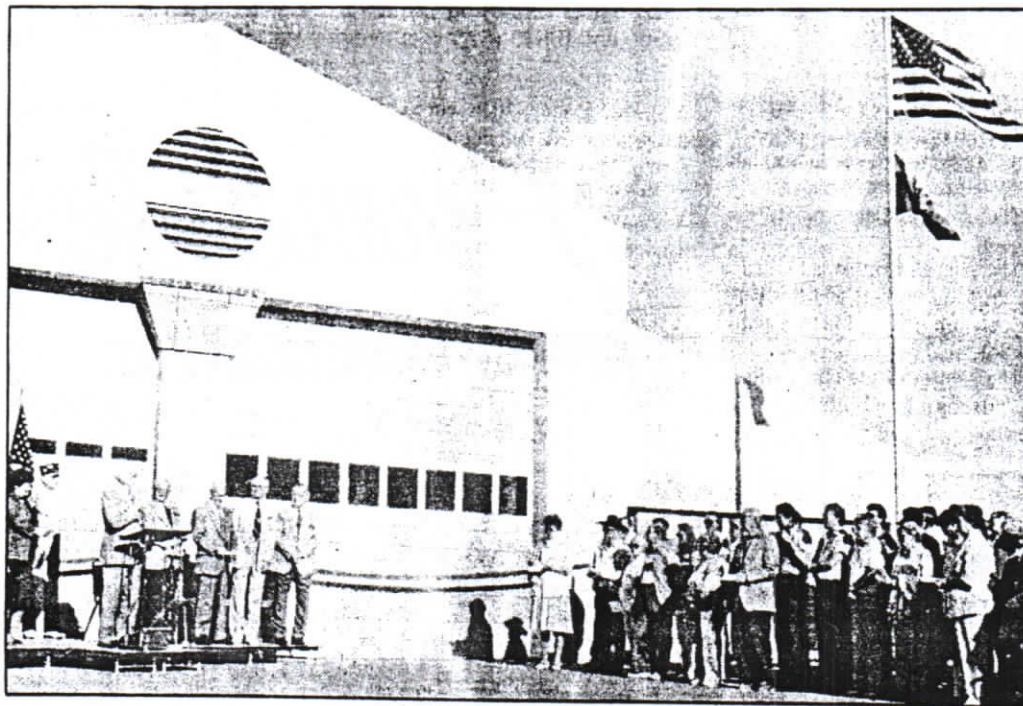
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Volume 30, Number 44

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Stardust Fire Station opens in SC West



The Stardust Fire Station, the second fire station in Sun City West, officially opened Nov. 2. The station is located on the corner of R.H. Johnson and Stardust boulevards. On hand to celebrate the opening, left, were, from left, Jim Maley, president of the SCW Fire Board; Joan Damien, representing county Supervisor Carole Carpenter; Chuck Roach, general manager for Del Webb Communities In Sun City West; and fire board members Cyril Meusey, Bob Shaw and Ray White.

Photos by Bret McKeand/Independent

SCW



Rural/Metro Corp. is manning a second station on Stardust Boulevard in Sun City West. The fire

department responded to 3,089 fire and ambulance calls in the last year in the community.

Nancy Engebretson / Staff photographer

Smoke signal

Sun City West dedicates second firehouse

By Diana Balazs
Staff writer

Sun City West

Sun City West residents dedicated the retirement community's second fire station Friday with much fanfare.

Known officially as the Stardust Fire Station, the facility was built on slightly more than an acre of land at 20622 Stardust Blvd. near the intersection of R.H. Johnson Boulevard and Stardust. The land was donated by Del Webb Communities, developers of Sun City West.

A second fire station had been included in the community's original master plan, district chief John Rowlinson said. The new station was built not far from where the developers envisioned it would be located, Rowlinson said.

A second station was needed to serve the community's rapidly growing northwest section, he said. The station will provide faster response times to area residents.

"Sun City West is laid out in a triangle and we want to be able to provide faster access," Rowlinson said.

Rowlinson, who has served as district chief since 1985, said Sun City West has a population of about 19,000.

Between 75 and 100 people, including nearby neighbors, attended Friday's dedication.

The ceremonies opened with a presentation of colors by the honor guard of the Sun City West Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #10695. An American flag was donated by the post to the fire station.

Master of ceremonies was Jim Maley, chairman of the Fire District of Sun City West. The fire district contracts with the Scottsdale-based Rural/Metro Corp., a private fire protection company, to provide fire and emergency medical services to the community.

Charles "Chuck" Roach, vice president and general manager of Del Webb Communities, said construction of the second fire station "is a step forward for the continued growth of the community."

Maricopa County Board Supervisor Carole Carpenter, whose district includes Sun City West, could not attend the dedication due to illness, but her representatives presented the fire station with a gift — a Southwestern Indian bowl.

State Rep. Bob Williams, R-Sun City West, said the community has come a long way in providing fire protection

See STATION, Page 2

STATION

From Page 1

since it opened 11 years ago. He said minutes count when it comes to an emergency.

"Lord knows how many lives they have already saved in this community," he said of the firefighters and paramedics stationed there.

The Dysart High School Band played as fire district board members and other dignitaries cut a red ribbon stretched across the station's two truck bay doors.

After the ribbon-cutting, the doors were opened and the crowd was treated to refreshments and

tours of the station.

The station officially began operating Oct. 30, Rowlinson said. The firefighters' first call was to Del Webb Memorial Hospital on a report of an activated alarm. It turned out to be a false alarm, Rowlinson said.

Officials broke ground for the 4,500-square-foot structure in early April. The fire district paid for the \$445,000 station in cash. The fire district had been investing funds to build the station for the past several years, Rowlinson said.

The one-story facility was de-

signed by architect Steve Freeman of Phoenix and was built by Liberty Builders of Phoenix.

The new station features a split design with bunk rooms and rest-room facilities on one side of the truck bay, and the living area, kitchen and offices on the other. It was designed to provide quick access to the trucks from any part of the building, Rowlinson said.

The station also has a service pit that will allow firefighters to work underneath their trucks. The pit also can be filled with water to test fire pumps, Rowlinson said.

The station houses a paramedic engine company and a paramedic ambulance. There are four people on duty per shift, Rowlinson said.

Sun City West's other station is at R.H. Johnson Boulevard and Camino del Sol, about 1½ miles from the new station, Rowlinson said. That facility, approximately 8,000 square feet, was completed in 1981.

The Sun City West fire department responded to 3,089 fire and ambulance calls in the last fiscal year, Rowlinson said. There are no plans at this time to build additional stations, he said.

Ex-cowboy found fire engine easy work

By HELEN ALLEN
Staff Writer

Breaking in a fire engine on a cross country trek was easy for a man

who was breaking horses and mules in his youth.

Vic Simpson, who until recently served as chairman of the Sun City West

Fire District board of directors, grew up as a "cowboy and mule skinner" on an Oklahoma homestead.

"I broke big mules when I was 12 years old," he remarked.

THE MULES were used to work the farm section of the Simpson ranch which, over the years, expanded from 160 to 1,800 acres.

It wasn't long before Simpson was also breaking horses, rounding up cattle and branding them.

As a youngster, he wanted to make cowboying a life-long career.

BY THE time he reached college age, Simpson had enough of "fighting cattle and mules" and decided to become a civil engineer.

After graduating from Oklahoma State University, he went to work installing the first all-welded petroleum pipeline between Borger, Texas, and St. Louis.

ANOTHER job was conducting a survey for a 50-mile-long mining company railroad between Babbitt and Silver Bay, Minn., during the winter with three feet of snow on the ground.

"Snow shoes were a must," he said.

Simpson, who was in the

Marine reserves since 1930 and retired in 1968 as a lieutenant colonel, went on active duty during World War II, serving in the South Pacific. He had been among the early group of occupation troops sent to Nagasaki after the war ended with Japan.

SOON AFTER returning to civilian life and the reserves, Simpson opened his own engineering consulting firm which he ran for about seven years. This was followed by a move to California, where he worked in the municipal engineering field for 13 years.

Simpson, who became instrumental in the organization of Sun City West's fire district, had only vague thoughts of fire prevention when he and his wife moved to the community in 1979.

Joining the Property Owners and Residents Association and serving on its research and development committee, Simpson "became aware" of a fire prevention committee in the community.

HOWEVER, it wasn't until a house fire in the fall of 1980 that he became interested and immersed in the job of getting a fire district established.

He prepared and helped circulate petitions which

were filed with the county Board of Supervisors in December 1980. A second petition was filed soon afterward by the fire prevention committee.

Because of a difference in the petitions, two elections were set simultaneously with the same fire board candidates listed on each ballot.

SIMPSON'S petitions covered only Phase I of Sun City West. The others would have required the community to protect Phase I as well as farms and desert currently located in Phase II.

The Phase I ballot won. But as the new board took office and began to set up a fire district, it discovered it could not get on the county's tax rolls due to certain state code stipulations.

Enlisting the help of legislators and the governor, plus running into luck as the Legislature was in special session at the time, the code was changed.

THE CHANGES, Simpson said, not only got the district on the tax rolls, but allowed a lease-purchase plan under which Sun City West built its new fire station.

Breaking in a new fire truck took place in August when Simpson and his

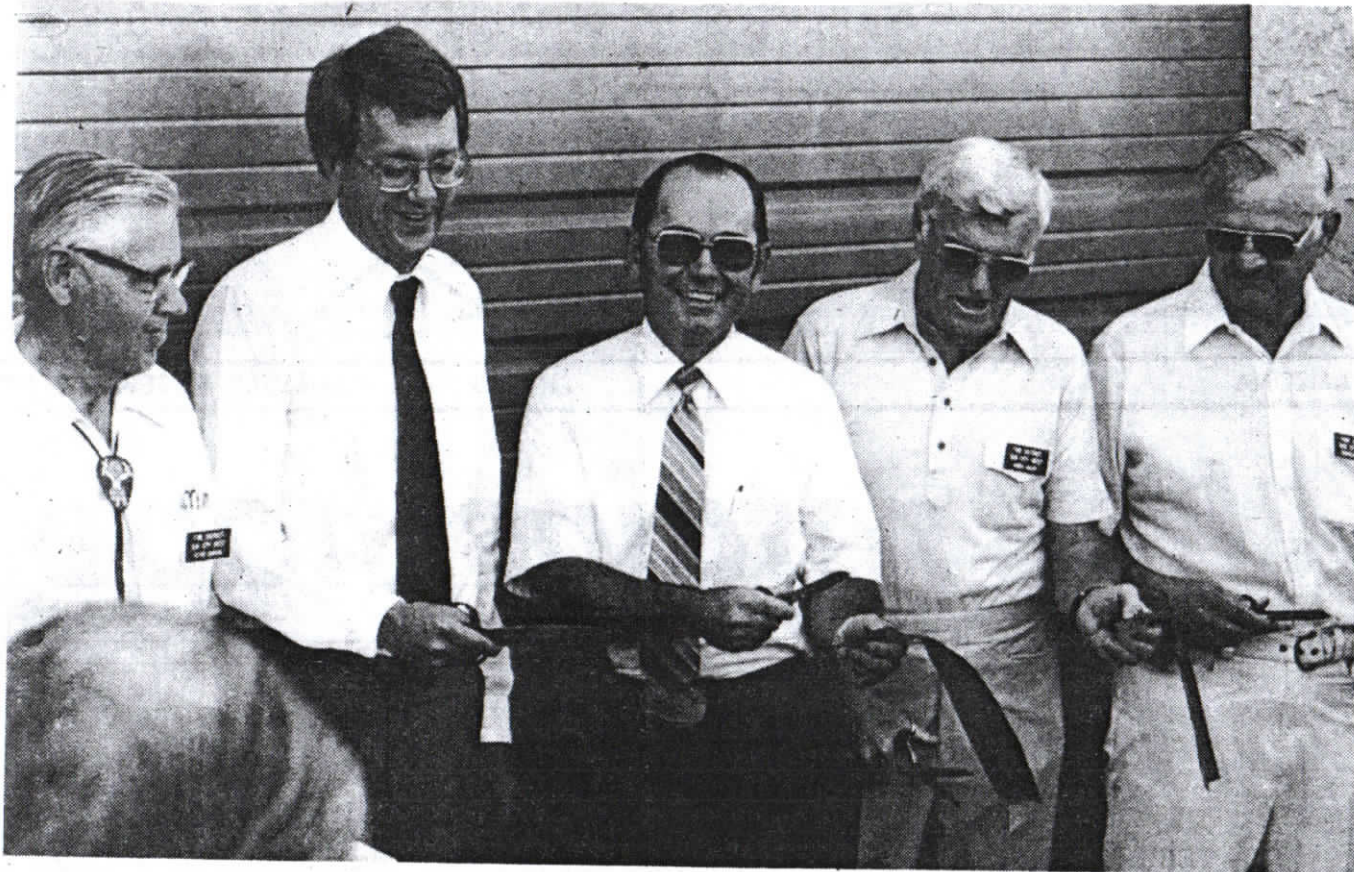
wife drove a new pumper back from Buffalo, N.Y.

The former fire board chairman had become angry after learning that Phoenix was charging an \$800 city sales tax on the community's first fire truck delivered in July. The charge was made because the truck was de-toured through a Phoenix dealer.



VIC SIMPSON

SCW

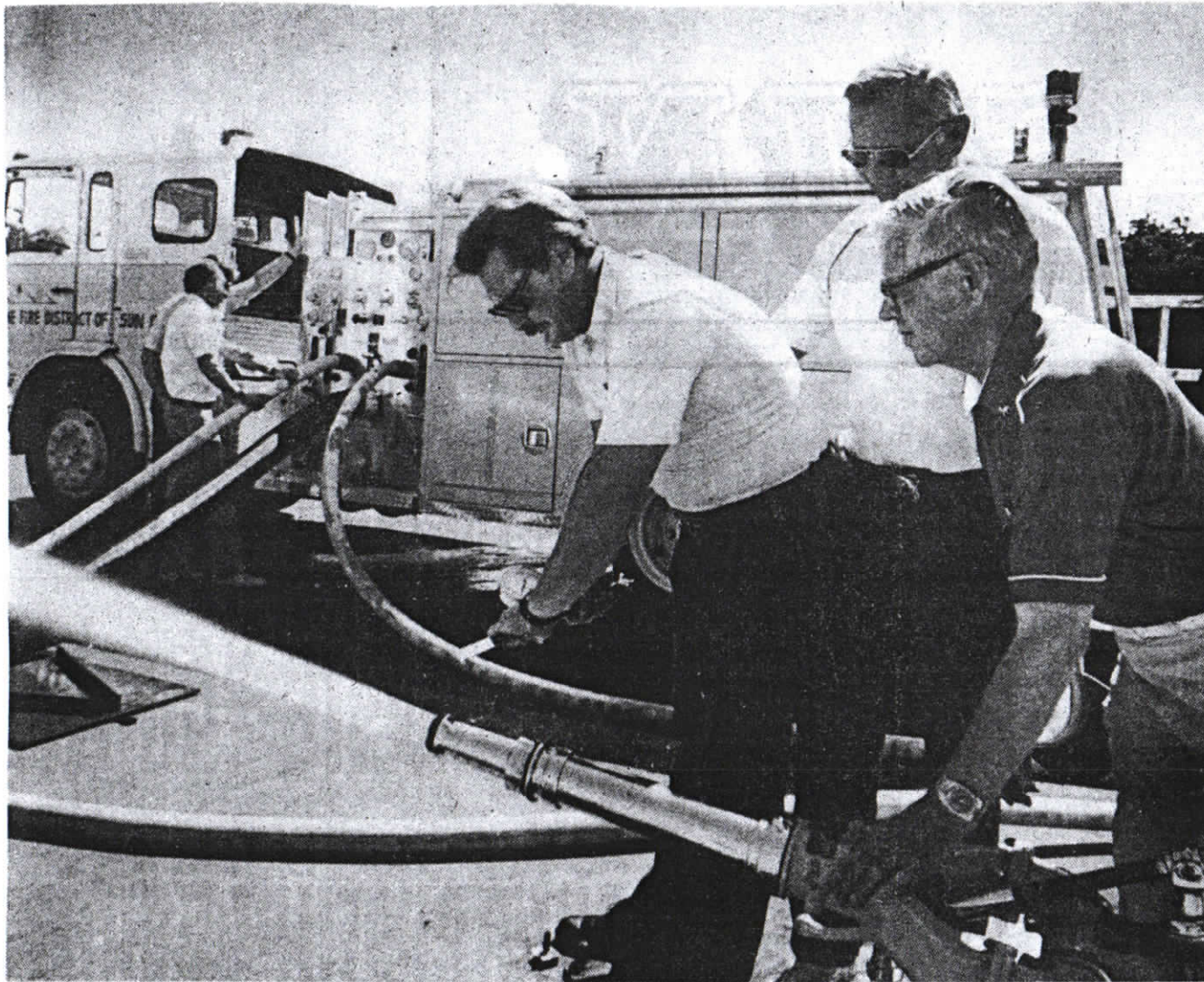


SCW fire station

Ribbon-cutting dedication ceremonies for Sun City West's new fire station were held Wednesday. Manning scissors were Vic Simpson, fire board

chairman, left, Gov. Bruce Babbitt, George Reeve, Devco president, and fire board members Jim Maley and Charles Geyer. (News-Sun Photo)

SCW



SCW gets 7-2-82 fire truck

Sun City West's new fire truck, put through water pressure tests Thursday, will go on public display for a short time Saturday.

The pumper is to be displayed from 7:30 to 8 a.m. Saturday in front of the Crestview Restaurant.

Tests were conducted Thursday morning at the Meade Fire Station in Sun City to make sure that pumps on the new Mack truck could withstand various water pressures, ranging from 150 to 250 pounds.

Upon completing the tests, the truck was taken to the Rural Metro Fire Department headquarters in Scottsdale to be equipped with radios, hoses, nozzles and extinguishers.

Victor Simpson, chairman of the Sun City West Fire Board, said the board is required, under contract, to furnish a truck and basic equipment with Metro providing personnel and other

equipment.

Official acceptance of the truck is expected to take place at a regular meeting of the Fire Board, set for 9:15 a.m. in Western Savings.

Other agenda items, according to Simpson, include a progress report on the construction of the new fire station; and an explanation of a home fire alarm system being made available by Rural Metro.

A second truck is expected to arrive in October.

As Sun City West Fire chief Rick Lamparzyk, left, uses a gauge to check water pressure coming from the fire hose, he is observed by Sun City West fire

board district vice-chairman Charles Geyer, center, and chairman Victor Simpson.

(News-Sun photo by Jim Painter)

SCW

SCW fire board OKs \$554,257 budget

6-18-82

By HELEN ALLEN
Staff Writer

A \$554,257 fire district budget adopted Thursday by the Sun City West board is expected to raise taxes about \$2 or \$3 per residence.

The estimate was made by fire board chairman Victor Simpson.

Simpson explained that of the total budget figure, \$360,900 is to be raised through taxation, \$197,000 is to be contributed by the county and \$50,000 will be a carry-over from the current fiscal year.

THE BUDGET, which goes into effect July 1, was approved with-

out any objection from the some 25 people present.

While the total of the newly adopted budget remains the same as originally presented in May, figures were altered for several items.

The service contract amount with Rural Metro was raised from \$317,000 to \$338,000. This, according to Simpson, allows Sun City West to keep the additional man and pumper put on this month and allows for a fourth firefighter starting July 1.

HE STATED that these additions were being made ahead of

schedule as a result of the May 30 house fire.

Other items showing increases were: lease purchase of trucks, raised to \$47,000 from \$30,000; insurance, \$7,300 from \$6,900; and contingency, \$31,354 from \$19,754.

A \$50,000 cut was made in the lease purchase of a new station, bringing that figure down to \$100,000.

SIMPSON STATED the reduction could be made as the district already has \$150,000 in escrow for the new station, which is expected to be ready for occupancy in September.

He estimated the station would be owned by Sun City West upon completion of three payments with the final one to be made either December 1983, or June 1984.

The original payment time frame had been five years.

A **FINAL** payment on the fire trucks, he said, is expected to be made a year after the station is paid off. Residents, he added, should then see a cut in the fire district tax rate ranging somewhere between 10 and 25 percent.

In other matters, fire Chief Rick

Lamparzyk reported Rural Metro responded to 32 calls in Sun City West during May and in answer to a question from a resident stated hose threads on hydrants are uniform throughout the area.

Questioned on the fire department's response time to the May 30 house fire, Lamparzyk said it was four minutes and 12 seconds after the men were notified.

HE SAID the call made to the fire department was operator assisted instead of direct dialing, and the woman making the call needed to be calmed, requiring another minute to obtain necessary information. He added the call had been taped by the department as routine procedure.

Lamparzyk said there was another loss of a minute as information on the fire was radioed from Meade Station in Sun City to the Sun City West Station.

In answer to a question on the cause of the house fire, Rural Metro battalion chief Weldon Paxton stated an investigator for the fire department and the Sheriff's Office both agreed it had been a florescent light. He was unable to answer if the light had been on at the time of the fire.

SCW

SCW fire board will pay fees to lawyers, opens truck bids

By ROBERTA LANDMAN
Staff Writer

Sun City West fire board members Tuesday voted to pay \$21,928.97 in legal fees incurred since January for the proposed new fire station in Sun City West.

The station will be built by the contracting firm of E.J. Tourley at an approximate cost of \$370,000.

The board will pay \$13,473.05 to the firm of Ryley, Carlock and Ralston, lawyers for the fire district, and \$8,455.92 to Gust, Rosenfeld, Henderson and Divelbess, lawyers for Valley National Bank, lending institution in the lease-purchase agreement with contractor E.J. Tourley.

BOARD CHAIRMAN Vic Simpson today said he was not surprised by the lawyers' fees which he said are "not more than 10 percent above what I was sure would happen ... I have no room for objection," he said, adding that he warned board members about probable fees.

At Tuesday's board meeting and in a telephone interview today Simpson indicated that fees to the district's lawyers reflected the firm's having had to consider what Simpson believes is "the first lease-purchase agreement on a permanent building in the state of Arizona."

On Jan. 21 Simpson reported that the district had hit a snag in financing of the original plan to build with AA Constructors due to legislation that he said did not provide for the purchase of fixed structures in a lease-purchase agreement.

"A LEASE PURCHASE indicates that the lessor—the bank or the builder—can recover his property from the fire district.

"The problem is we own the land. If they want to recover the property, they have to take that building off the land."

When the board sought legal advice about the financing holdup from the county attorney's office, he said it was directed to seek outside legal expertise.

BECAUSE THE lease-purchase agreement was to be a first on a fixed structure, he said, "They (county attorney's office) are not qualified enough—it takes expertise. We were told that by the county attorney's office," Simpson said.

Of the new fire station, he said, "We still own it cheaper than if we had a bond for half a million dollars.

"That would cost us a million dollars paid in 10 years. By lease-purchase, paid off in three to five years ... the cost will be not over \$700,000."

IN ADDITION, Simpson said, "the county pays almost \$300,000 of this," not the taxpayers.

In other matters, the board opened bids for purchase of two 1,000 gallon-per-minute pumpers.

Simpson told representatives of five companies who convened in the Sun City West Medical Building that the board will need time to "review what is offered."

COMPANIES PROVIDED base bids for the purchase of one or two trucks with additional bids for air conditioning.

—Arizona Mack Sales Inc. bid \$79,454 per pumper if two are purchased, with a total bid for two pumpers at \$158,908; bid for purchase of a single pumper is \$80,454; bid for air conditioning is \$1,850.

Bids pertain to purchase on or before April 29. Company specified 90 days delivery time.

—Southwest Fire Equipment Co. Inc. bid \$76,271 per pumper if two are purchased, with a total bid for two pumpers at \$152,542; bid for purchase of a single pumper is \$77,271; no bid for air conditioning; no delivery date reported.

—Thunderbird Fire and Safety Equipment Corp. offered two sets of bids. Based upon purchase on or before April 30, the company bid \$89,169 per pumper if two are purchased, with a total bid for two pumpers at \$178,338 and bid for purchase of a single pumper remains at \$89,169.

BASED UPON purchase after April 30, bid for purchase of two pumpers is \$184,792 and bid for purchase of a single pumper after April 30 is \$92,396; bid for air conditioning is \$879 for either date of purchase; no delivery date was reported.

—Tri-State Fire Apparatus and Equipment Co. bid \$86,135 per pumper if two are purchased, with a total bid for two pumpers at \$172,270; bid for purchase of a single pumper is \$86,135; bid for air conditioning is \$1,605; delivery date reported between 120 and 140 days.

—Fire Power and Equipment Co. bid \$87,281.15 per pumper if two are purchased, with a total bid for two pumpers at \$174,568.30; bid for purchase of a single pumper remains at \$87,281.15; bid for air conditioning is \$1,200; company reported delivery date in November 1982; company placed optional bid for 750-gallon pumper.



Fire station contract signed

Dale Wood, left, branch manager of Sun City West Valley National Bank, signs contract bringing closer to reality the proposed Sun City West fire station. On hand for the signing were fire board members Charlie Geyer, standing; Vic

Simpson, Jim Maley and Dolores Lowe. Simpson said construction could begin as early as today and completion is expected in October. The \$369,611 facility will be built by E.J. Tourley Co. (News-Sun Photo by Jim Painter)

SCW 7

SC West fire station slated for October

By ROBERTA LANDMAN
Staff Writer

The Sun City West Fire District will have a new fire station by early October if construction can start next week, Vic Simpson, Sun City West Fire District board chairman, said at Thursday's board meeting.

Simpson reported that the contract for construction of Sun City West's proposed fire station is being studied by attorneys for the contracting firm of E.J. Tourley.

Should papers be signed by Monday, he said, construction of the \$369,611 structure will begin "next week" with completion "hopefully no later than the first of October."

THE CONTRACTOR, Simpson said, has asked for 180 days for completion in his bid.

The board approved \$3,832 for the purchase of kitchen equipment bought by AA Constructors before the board learned that its lack of proper bid advertising had to cancel plans to sign a contract for construction of the new fire station with the firm.

E.J. Tourley's estimate for kitchen equipment was \$4,009. Simpson said the board's choosing to purchase AA Constructors' equipment resulted in a savings of \$177.

THE ERROR IN advertising has

bestowed other savings on the district. Had AA Constructors gotten the contract to build the fire station, the cost to the district would have been \$428,668 compared with the \$369,611 base bid the board has chosen to accept from E.J. Tourley.

The fire station will house two engines, probably lime green in color, and marked so that Westers will be able to recognize the equipment they are paying for, Simpson said.

The board will open bids for the fire trucks at 2 p.m. April 27 in its temporary quarters in the Sun City West Medical Building.

ESTIMATED COST of the 1,000-gallon per minute pumpers is \$75,000 each, with payment estimated to be completed in four or five years on a lease-purchase agreement.

In other action, Chief Rick Lamparzyk reported that the district responded to 42 calls in March, of which 33 were for emergency medical service.

Simpson asked Lamparzyk to keep records of "how many calls truly are EMS."

SIMPSON EXPRESSED concern that the district might be called upon to fight a fire at the same time as "a so-called medical emergency.

"We have no backing for those things," he said, indicating his desire to learn of other community agencies with emergency training that might be able to share EMS calls.

Board member Charles Geyer said filtering out true EMS calls by telephone "is a problem all over the country.

"But we can't take a chance on not responding."

The board moved to pay \$52,500 for services from Rural Metro and a bill for use of its quarters in the Sun City West Medical Building. The amount of this bill was not available.

SCW

Fire captain starts SCW duties

By Roberta Landman
Staff Writer

Capt. Rick Lamparzyk has been named fire captain for the Sun City West Fire District by Rural Metro. He assumed the duties but not the title of fire chief in the retirement community on Monday.

At Thursday's fire board meeting the board welcomed Lamparzyk aboard, but opted to consider future appointment of a local citizen as fire chief to serve as coordinator between the board and the company.

"I have not been officially designated as fire chief by the fire board. That is a decision they'll have to make," Lamparzyk said Monday.

"I AM a captain ... I am functioning as far as duties go as a fire chief would."

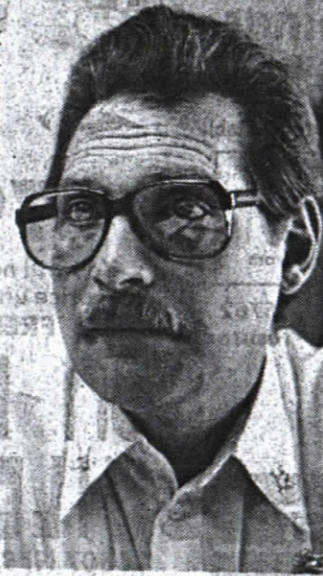
Jim Stenger, Rural Metro vice president of administration, Friday explained that Lamparzyk is the Fire Captain as far as Rural Metro is concerned.

In its contract for services to the fire district, he said, Rural Metro provides an operations officer as local supervisor with the rank of captain.

"LAMPARZYK is the senior operations officer in the area."

Fire district law says the board will have a fire chief that they can appoint to oversee its operations, Stenger said.

Stenger said that should the board choose to ap-



RICK LAMPARZYK

point Lamparzyk fire district chief, he can at the same time function as Rural Metro's Fire Captain.

RURAL METRO, said Stenger, does not call Lamparzyk a fire chief.

"He has not been named a chief by our company or the fire district."

Capt. Paul Williams, former SCW fire chief and now fire prevention and inspection officer for the Sun City Volunteer Fire District, he said, "was a Captain in our company and the (SCW) fire district board gave him the designation of district chief. He was a captain within Rural Metro."

LAMPARZYK, 32, spent eight years with Rural Metro in Scottsdale before assuming his supervisory role in Sun City West. He

said his "strongest background is in fire suppression techniques" and that he has "an above average interest" in suppression of fires caused by hazardous materials.

"I came here for personal growth potential. It's a golden opportunity for myself and the fire board to plan their own destiny. This is brand new—in its infancy."

Lamparzyk, on his first official day on the job, said he plans to "... sit back for about a month and look things over and soak in all I can. If changes are warranted, we'll address that possibility."

LAMPARZYK said "The only thing I'd welcome is one additional piece of fire apparatus," and commended the fire board its decision to accept bids on the possible purchase of pumper equipment.

The Sun City West fire district, he said, has one piece of fire-fighting equipment, a mini-pumper, "capable of pumping a minimum of 350 gallons per minute."

Hooked up to a good hydrant, he said, the pump's output is doubled. "The hydrant gives the extra water we need. For most house fires, what we have is adequate for right now."

IN THE event of a large fire, Lamparzyk said Sun City Fire Department "can provide an additional 750 gallons."

Because the district is new, Lamparzyk said the board's purchase of the mini-pumper "was a wise decision on their behalf."

He would now like to see the district have a truck capable of pumping 1,000 gallons of water. "That would handle any situation I can think of—1400 to 1500 gallons a minute combined."

LAMPARZYK also looks forward to the district's consideration of adoption of its own fire code.

"It is time to recognize the fact the district is going to have to adopt a fire code and this is the time to do it, when a community is in its infant stages."

The fire department, he

said, ultimately "has to assume the responsibility for the lack of codes."

STRICTER CODES, he said, "make the firefighters' job easier in the long run and make a place safe for people to go to and socialize."

"The average guy on the street never notices benefits from a good fire code and prevention education," he said.

The public, property owners and business owners, have to be educated about codes such as the Uniform Fire Code, Lamparzyk said.

"IT IS essential to get a public education program for code and fire prevention."

Sun City West, he said, uses the state fire code. The state fire code, he said, is a pamphlet, while the Uniform Fire Code with 352 pages is "more specific on responsibilities the business owner has to the community to provide a safe, fire-free establishment."

LAMPARZYK did not cite code violations in Sun City West.

He expects "probably 95 percent or greater" of the district's calls will be emergency medical service calls. Sun City West is no different from Scottsdale in that respect, he said.

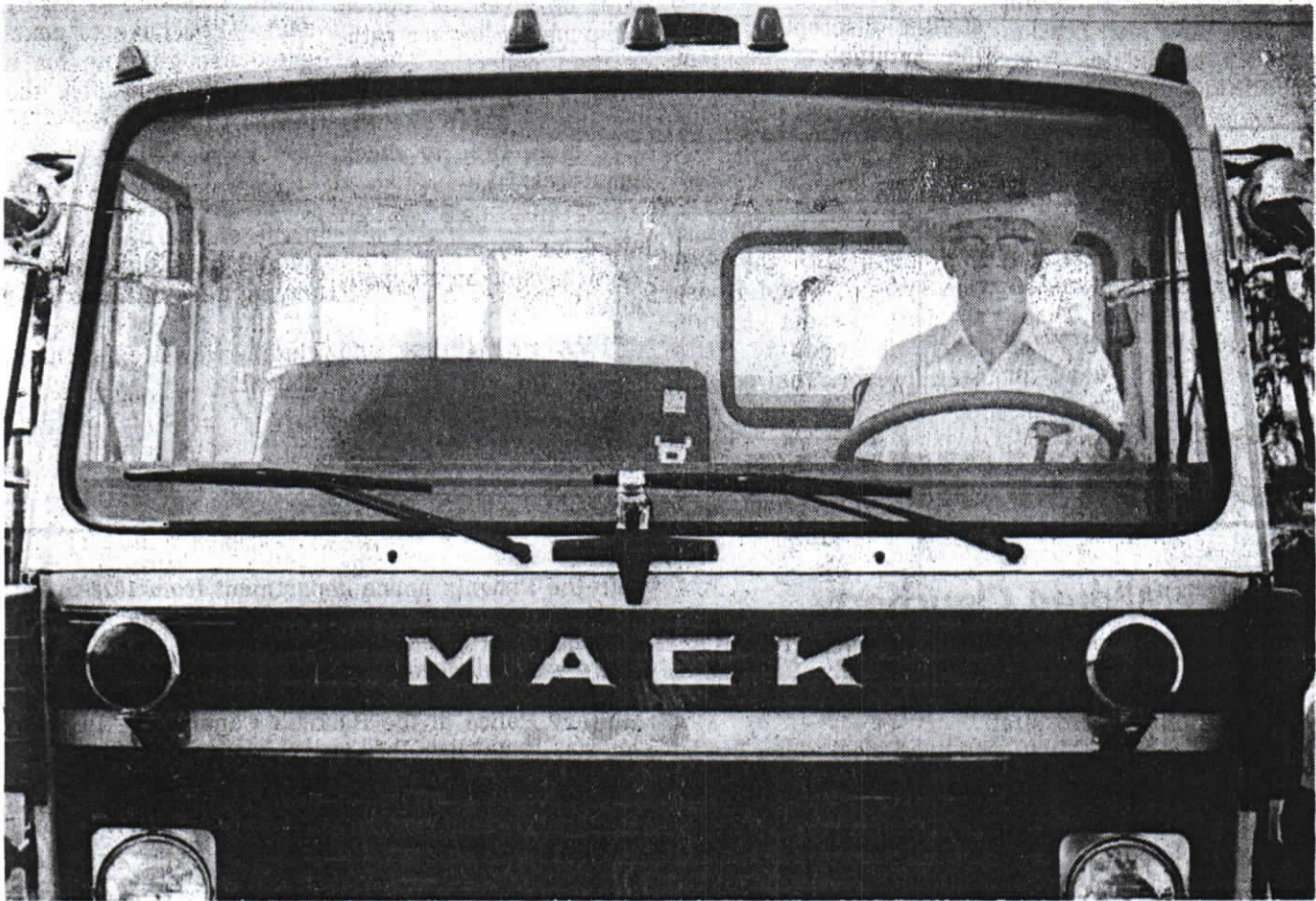
SCW



Firehouse

13-3

Golden shovels cut into the earth during groundbreaking for a firehouse in Sun City West. District fire board members, from left, Charles Geyer, chairman Victor Simpson, Tony Barraco, Delores Lowe and Jim Maley turn spades during ceremonies for the facility to be located at Johnson Boulevard and Camino del Sol. (News-Sun Photo by Bob C. ...)



Sun City West fire board chairman Victor Simpson maneuvers the community's new pumper into parking position. He and his wife drove the fire truck here from Buffalo, N.Y. (News-Sun Photo)

Couple made holiday of firetruck delivery

By HELEN ALLEN
Staff Writer

People going cross country will pick various modes of travel, but seldom a fire truck.

The Victor Simpsons, however, combined a cross-country vacation trip with delivery of a new pumper for the Sun City West Fire Department.

"We had a very pleasant trip," said Simpson, chairman of the Sun City West Fire District board of directors. "The truck gave us no trouble, whatsoever."

IT TOOK the couple 6½ days of driving to get the truck here from Buffalo, N.Y., with both spending time at the wheel.

The average was 380 miles a day.

Simpson conceived the idea of picking up the truck himself after Phoenix asked for some \$800 in sales tax on a pumper Sun City West received in July.

THAT TRUCK was driven from Buffalo to a Phoenix dealer before being turned over to the fire district.

By delivering the truck directly to Sun City West, Simpson is hoping to avoid the Phoenix city sales tax.

When he first broached the subject to his wife, suggesting a

combination vacation-business trip, Simpson said, "it took her a little over a week" to answer.

BUT WHEN she finally made up her mind, Mrs. Simpson also decided to enjoy the escapade.

"She probably put more miles on the truck than I did," her husband added.

He guessed one reason might be "the truck was easier to drive than to ride."

SIMPSON explained the driver's seat was more comfortable and, in addition, there was less bouncing by holding onto the wheel.

The roughness, he added, was due more to the poor condition of interstate highways than to the truck.

Because of the height of the stairs, the couple took along a short stepladder to make it more convenient for Mrs. Simpson to get in and out of the vehicle.

THEIR LUGGAGE was carried in an outside compartment designed to hold medical supplies for life-support personnel.

The only difficulty the two experienced during their cross-country trip was finding restaurants with sufficient parking space.

A couple of motels also accepted the Simpsons with some hesita-

tion, primarily because the managers didn't like the idea of a fire truck sitting out front.

THERE WAS no problem with truck weighing stations except in Colorado and Arizona, the fire board chairman said. Elsewhere the truck was waved through.

Colorado and Arizona authorities required the two to present truck papers as well as proof of their own identity.

The Simpsons flew into Buffalo by way of Trenton, N.J., where they visited a son.

HEADING back to Arizona, they stopped off in Middletown, Ohio, to visit another son and Mrs. Simpson's sister.

"Our grandchildren thought the fire truck was wonderful."

In regard to the cost of the trip, the fire board chairman explained the Mack truck firm provides some funds to cover costs for delivery. This went to the Simpsons for a portion of their expenses.

THE REST, including charges for the flight east, came out of their own pocket.

Simpson said he wouldn't mind making such a trip again and thinks his wife might go along with the idea, too. "But not tomorrow."

8-31-82

17-4

Fire panel picks lease-purchase

By ERIC McMULLIN 9-21-81
Staff Writer

Sun City West's fire station, if approved, will be financed by a four-year lease-purchase plan, fire board chairman Victor Simpson said.

That will allow the fire district to authorize a financial institution to sell tax-free, interest-bearing bonds and buy the fire station from the resulting funds, Simpson said.

The title transfers to the board after the fourth year's installment is paid, he said.

In opting for the lease-purchase arrangement rather than voting fire district bonds, Simpson explained that Sun City Westers would hold sole liability in repaying the bonds.

With the lease-purchase plan, the financial institution will be paid out of operating funds, 40 percent of which are paid by Maricopa County, he said.

Simpson said he cannot say what the cost will be. The fire board has budgeted \$170,000 to pay for the first year's installment, but Simpson said he does not expect the actual cost to reach that mark.

The station will be located at Camino del Sol and Johnson Boulevard on land donated by the Del E. Webb Development Co.

The exterior, as designed by Phoenix architect John Smales, has light orange sides with red tile roofing characteristic of many Sun City West commercial buildings. The exterior design and landscaping must be approved by Devco, which received a copy of the preliminary plans last week, said board member Tony Barraco.

SCWest unveils station

By ERIC McMULLIN
Staff Writer

The Sun City West fire board today unveiled plans for an 8,000-square-foot Sun City West fire station. The plans were designed by Phoenix architect John Smales and must be approved by the Del E. Webb Development Co. for architectural design.

Fire board chairman Victor Simpson said that the board has not committed itself to an exact plan. After approval from Webb, the board will re-examine the designs, make any minor changes it sees fit and accept bids for construction of the building.

The fire station will be located at Camino del Sol and Johnson Boulevard on land donated by the Webb company. Webb counsel Gerald Williams, in a letter to the board, said the company will submit a bid for construction of the fire house.

SIMPSON SAID the building would be financed on a lease-purchase plan. He could not say what the cost would be or how long final approval would take. He also could not say how long construction would take.

In other business, board member Charles Geyer reported that insurance for board members has been secured.

Liability coverage of \$1 million was approved at a cost of \$287 per year; an errors and omissions policy with coverage of \$10 million was approved at a cost of \$1,460 per year; and each board member was bonded for \$175,000 at a cost of \$299 per year.

Earlier, Simpson had said that the errors and omissions policy was needed in the event the board or a member would be sued for failure to contract for needed services. The liability coverage is in case someone suffers injury on fire district property or as a result of any fire district action.

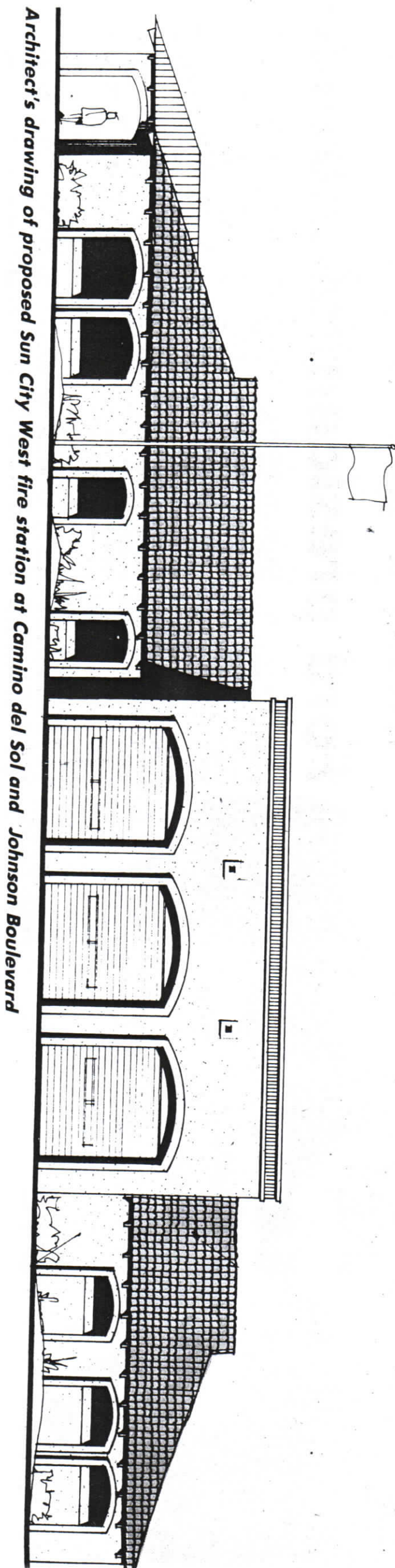
THE BOARD approved expenditures totaling \$9,061.64.

Treasurer Jim Maley reported payments of \$53,616.97 for bills approved during the August meeting and said the board's balance stands at \$125,583.03.

Sun City West fire Chief Paul Williams reported one structural incident on Cougar Drive where damage amounted to \$12,000. Williams said the Sun City West fire department received 29 calls during August with an unusually high number—16—for emergency medical calls.

Board member Tony Barraco complimented Williams and his department for its work in recent fires. He said, though, that homeowners are still not aware that they should dial 939-3111 to reach the fire dispatcher.

Williams said stickers for telephones giving that number are available at the fire station, medical building and Johnson Center. He agreed to have them available at Monday's Property Owners and Residents Association meeting.



Architect's drawing of proposed Sun City West fire station at Camino del Sol and Johnson Boulevard

FOR SUN CITY WEST

Fire, medical plans revealed

4-24-81

By FRAN SMITH
Staff Writer

Officials of Boswell Memorial Hospital, Rural Metro Co. Inc. and Sun City West Utilities this morning announced details on a complex agreement to provide fire protection and emergency medical service in Sun City West starting in June.

The plan described during a public meeting in the Sundome calls for one fire truck and one ambulance with one fireman and two medical technicians on duty 24 hours a day.

Equipment and personnel would be headquartered in a Boswell building that was recently moved to a site on the south side of Johnson Boulevard west of Arizona Bank. Land for the Boswell offices was donated by the Del E. Webb Development Co. Boswell also plans to establish physicians' offices and pre-admission services there soon.

IMPLEMENTATION OF the arrangement for emergency services within about one month depends on the wishes of the fire board to be elected Monday, spokesmen for all of the companies emphasized.

Meetings at which the agreements were reached were facilitated by the Sun City West Fire Protection Committee, headed by Lester Perril. Perril and the other committee members, all of whom are fire board candidates, also arranged the Sundome meeting in cooperation with the Webb Co.

Estimating that it will be at least February 1982 before a fire station can be operating, Perril said that his group called representatives of all of the above entities together "to see if something could be worked out quickly."

FINDING THEM ALL willing to cooperate and support the effort, he drafted the proposals to which they all subscribed.

The system would have the service starting June 1 without charge to the fire district until July 1, when the fiscal year begins and when the board could begin getting tax money.

After July 1, the fire district would pay a "nominal charge" to Boswell for space rental and would pay Rural Metro a sum that "shall not exceed \$288,000" for services to June 30, 1982.

JIM STENGER, VICE president for Rural Metro, stressed that his company

will wait to hear from the board after elected candidates become certified members. "We will be glad to assist them in making service available as soon as possible," he said. "We will absorb costs for the first month until the district can begin receiving taxes."

Stenger said he is prepared to staff the operation with "up to three persons." He added that because of the joint effort planned, "Getting started immediately won't put a burden on anyone."

A letter several weeks ago from Rural Metro to PORA president Bill Mason indicated that the community would be charged \$3,000 to \$4,000 per month for interim service. Stenger explained that the situation had changed because of the cooperation of Boswell and the fact that there would be only one month of operation without a contract with the fire district.

WILLIAM RAYMO, manager of Sun City West Utilities, agreed that rental of fire hydrants, \$100 per year per hydrant, will be delayed until July 1; that there will be no charge for water used in fighting fires; and that fire

plugs will be inspected annually.

A part of the agreement Perril's committee worked out includes the following proposed commitments from the Sun City West Fire District:

—"Minimum remuneration" to Boswell for rental for crews' quarters from July 1, 1981 to Feb. 1, 1982, or until the fire station is completed.

—"COMPLETE remuneration" to Rural Metro for all equipment and services from July 1, 1981 to June 30, 1982.

—Provision of a fire station for locating both fire trucks and ambulance, plus crews, "probably" about Feb. 1, 1982 until June 30, 1982.

—Administrative supervision and support for the operations.

Boswell, Rural Metro and Sun City West Utilities officials said that their offers would be viable regardless of which fire board candidates are elected.

Because Perril rounded up the commitments, arranged the Sundome meeting and announced the proposed system, however, he said he feels that his group should "get credit for it."

SCW wants own fire district

By **CHERYL SWEET**
Staff Writer

A recent fire that caused extensive damage to a Sun City West residence, has sparked renewed concern for fire protection in the community.

Beefed up efforts to obtain a fire district stem from an Oct. 28 blaze which caused over \$90,000 in damages to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph O'Dea.

Some residents complain Sun City Metropolitan Fire Department's response time was about 20 minutes. Fire officials say they were on the scene in eight minutes.

WESTERS FEEL a district in the area would cut down on response time and reduce the possibility of extensive damage in the future.

Lester Perril, chairman of the community's fire prevention committee, said Sun City West could have a fire district by late spring of next year.

The seven member ad hoc committee, which was created in 1978, has been working in conjunction with Sun City Metropolitan Fire Department, Rural Metro Fire Department, Del E.

Webb Development Co., and Maricopa County supervisors for almost two years on plans for a fire district in the community.

Devco has donated land for the building, which Perril said would cost between \$350,000 to \$500,000. Site for the building is the southeast side of R.H. Johnson Blvd. near Camino del Sol.

FOREMOST IN beginning formation of a district is obtaining residents' approval of the proposed district.

Ten percent of Westers must petition for a fire district, said Perril. County supervisors must then set a hearing date within 30 days to approve the petition, after which time they will set an election date. It takes 51 percent of voters to approve the measure.

After voter approval, plans for the district must be submitted to the county by July 1, in order to form a district by next year. This date marks the beginning of the fiscal year for fire districts.

Money for the building would come from bonds stretched over an estimated 20-year period, said Perril. Services, including equipment and personnel,

could be contracted through the Sun City department, he added.

PERRIL SAID the committee's research indicates the district should have two fire trucks, as one truck would just give residents a "false sense of security," he said.

He added the proposed fire district would serve Phase 1 of Sun City West, which would encompass an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 residents.

Westers currently pay an annual fee for fire service based on square footage of property. Fees range from \$13 for properties up to 99 square feet to \$83 for 3,700 square feet. Most residents pay between \$34 to \$54, Perril said.

Under the proposed fire district, homeowners would absorb fire costs through an increase in taxes. Perril said the committee is waiting for the county's latest figures on property assessments.

Further data on the committee's progress on the district will be given at the Property Owners and Residents Association monthly December meeting, said Perril.

11-19-80

SCW

SIMPSON GROUP ELECTED 4-28-81

Westers choose Phase I

By FRAN SMITH
Staff Writer

The proposal for a Phase I fire district for Sun City West and the five candidates supporting that petition were overwhelmingly chosen by voters in a high-turnout election Monday.

Close to 50 percent of the community's registered voters participated in the two separate elections, causing delays of up to two hours in lines at the polls during peak hours.

The vote culminates five months of frequently heated debate over how best to provide fire and emergency medical protection for the community.

THE SCORE ON THE Phase I proposal was 1,041 voting yes, 707 voting no.

On the question of including phases I and II, the tally was 704 in favor and 978 against.

The biggest voter favorite was Charles Geyer, former chief of the fire prevention bureau in Buffalo, N.Y., with 993 votes. Next were Victor Simpson, chairman of the committee petitioning for the Phase I only district, and Dolores "Dee" Lowe with 919 votes each. Geyer, Simpson and Lowe were elected to four-year terms.

ELECTED TO TWO-YEAR terms were Jim Maley with 894 votes and Tony Barraco with 844 votes.

Geyer said this morning, "They'll have a good fire station operating by this time next year. I mean the citizens. They're the people we work for." He added that he sees "no problem" in planning for a budget in time for the county to levy taxes for the fiscal year beginning July 1. He said that he expects the new board will be able to establish fire protection and medical emergency service "soon."

A complex but tentative agreement among Boswell Hospital, Rural-Metro and Sun City West Utilities to start interim service as early as June 1 was announced last week. Although Lester Perril, who failed to win a fire board seat, had facilitated the plan, officials said they would be willing to work with any fire board.

MISS LOWE SAID SHE is surprised that all of the Phase I supporters were elected but that the rapport among the committee members should make it easy for them to work together.

Simpson, who had chaired that committee at the request of the PORA board, could not be reached for comment this morning.

Defeated candidates, all members of the Sun City West Fire Protection Committee, which was organized by the Del E. Webb Development Co. in 1978, were: David Gilchrist with 630 votes; Lester Perril with 580; Ed Hinske with 575; Jens Faaborg with 574 and Samuel Segall with 548.

THAT COMMITTEE, WHICH recently had its name officially registered by the state, had been furnished information and support by the Webb Co., which twice provided the Sundome for its public meetings. One of its reasons for wanting the undeveloped 7,300 acres of Phase II in the district was to help the Webb Co., which has most of that property under option.

The defeated committee also had proposed issuing bonds to raise start-up money for the district, a financing plan that they pointed out would have benefitted the Webb Co., which currently owns about one-third of the assessed valuation in Phase I. By selling bonds, the board would save taxpayers, of which Webb was by far the largest, from having to make a substantial outlay immediately, they said.

Hinske explained his group's loss as evidence that the "other side convinced

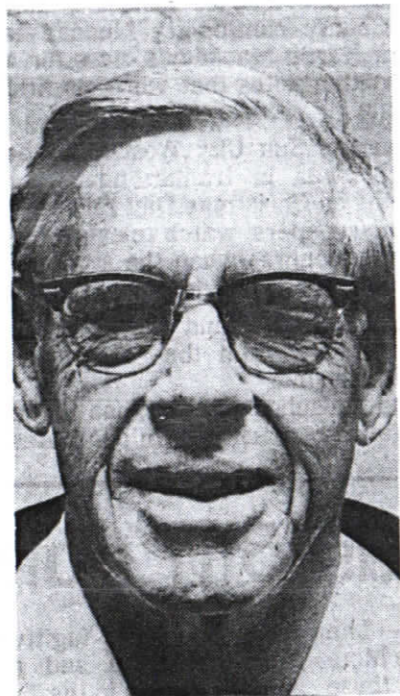
them that Phase II wouldn't be developed any time soon." He added that he believes those elected "can do a decent job" for the community and that he wishes them "luck."

PERRIL, CHAIRMAN of the losing committee, could not be reached today for comment. He said before the election, however, that if he were not elected, he would plan to take a trip "to get away from it all" for a while.

A slow voting process caused many would-be voters to leave the polls in impatience, said William Stewart, election official.

Georgia Guest, assistant director of elections for Maricopa County, said that what seemed like delays could be explained by the "excellent turnout" and the fact that the state statute providing for fire district elections is "cumbersome." She said that the accounting had to be tracked for both elections.

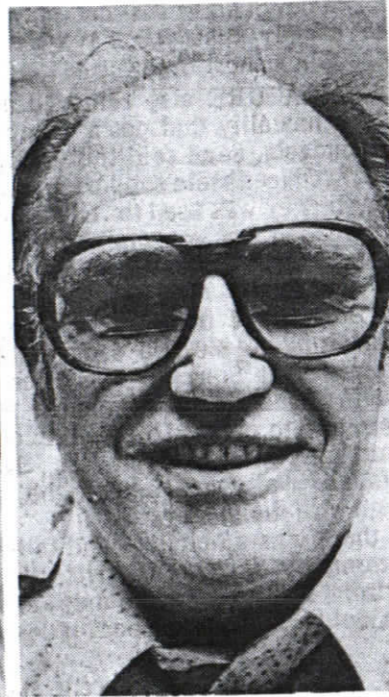
Since two petitions for a fire district had been filed with the board of supervisors, two elections were held simultaneously and voters had to sign two affidavits and be checked on two sets of poll lists in order to select one proposal over the other.



VICTOR SIMPSON



DEE LOWE



TONY BARRACO



JIM MALEY



CHARLES GEYER

1990's

SCW

Sun City West's rapid growth brought the need for another fire station. Fire Station 102 was opened in late 1990 and four additional personnel were hired. This brought the Fire District's manpower to a total of 20 personnel divided between two 24-hour shifts. A Battalion Chief was also added to the growing Fire District. 1992 saw an additional 2 square miles added to the existing 12.5 miles already being protected. Along with this new area, Del Webb Corporation donated 2.5 acres of land as a site to build a future fire station.

Early in 1994, the Fire District elected not to renew its contract with Rural/Metro Corporation and the Fire District was granted a license by the Arizona Department of Health Services to provide its own ambulance service to our residents. In July 1994, the Fire District hired its own employees and began operations with 27 sworn professional firefighters. An Apparatus Technician and an office staff of three were also among the additions. All positions were filled using full-time personnel. 1994 also brought an agreement with Phoenix Fire Department Regional Communications Center to handle the dispatch of Sun City West's Fire and Emergency Medical Service units. In December, the Fire District divided its two shifts into three. Six more firefighters were added to our roster.

In 1995, the District recognized the need for an administrative building. This office was constructed adjacent to Fire Station 101. The new building was soon opened and now houses our Fire Board members, Fire Chief, Fire Marshal and Administrative staff.

In 1996, the District purchased a new Emergency One Fire Engine and a new Emergency One Ladder Truck to help provide better protection to our community. These new units were needed replacements for our aging fleet. An additional Rescue [ambulance] was added as a backup unit to minimize Rescue downtime.

In 1997 Sun City West became part of an Automatic Aid Agreement with many of the Phoenix Metropolitan area fire departments. This agreement provides additional units from other towns when a large response is needed. 1997 also sent our first group of new hires to be trained at the Phoenix Fire Academy.

In 1998 the construction on Fire Station 103 began. Hiring

1970's

In the late 1970s as Sun City was nearing completion, the Del E. Webb Corporation began to plan a new retirement community. Sun City West would soon be developed on a site formerly know as Lizard Acres. Del Webb broke ground on February 15, 1978. The first model homes used for sales were located in Sun City. People began to purchase their new homes and the Sun City West retirement community developed quickly. Our first residents moved into their new homes in October 1978.

Early fire protection was provided by a private company known as Rural/Metro Corporation, a Scottsdale based firm who provides fire and emergency medical service protection on a contract / subscription basis. The closest station was located in Sun City at 99th Avenue & Bell Road. 1979 brought Sun City West its first house fire. Units from the Litchfield Park fire station responded but were unable to save the home.

1980's

Concerned citizens formed a committee to address the needs of the community regarding fire protection. In order to form a fire protection district, petitions needed to be signed and an election held. Five members of the community were elected to form the new Fire Board. On May 4, 1981, the Fire District of Sun City West was officially formed.

The new Fire District contracted with Rural/Metro Corporation to provide manpower and equipment for fire protection. Our first fire station was located in a temporary medical clinic. A single fire unit was placed under a one-sided lean-to. Within a year the Fire District would open its first station. Fire Station 101 a 8,400 square foot station with three drive through bays. A total of 12 personnel could be housed in this station. Along with these improvements came two new "Mack" Fire Engines each capable of pumping 1000 gallons of water a minute. The District also added ambulance service to the contract with Rural/Metro. In 1989, the Fire District purchased a 55' telesquirt [telescoping nozzle] to add to its fleet.

and training of personnel needed to staff the apparatus at Station 103 began. A new American LaFrance Fire Engine was ordered to complete our fleet. Fire Station 103 opened in February 1999.

The Fire District of Sun City West currently operates out of three Fire Stations, utilizing two fire engines, a ladder truck, three rescues, a reserve engine and reserve rescue. Each unit has full Advanced Life Support [Paramedic] capabilities and state of the art equipment. A full time apparatus technician maintains our fleet. Our 70 sworn professional members work three 24-hour shifts, each shift managed by a Battalion Chief. Our Administrative staff takes care of daily business and provides assistance to residents with questions they may have. The five member elected Fire Board provides the policy by which the District is operated. The Fire Chief is responsible for budgets and day to day operations



~~of~~ December 31, 1981
Ground Breaking for fire house in S.C.W.

Charles Geyer Chairman

Victor Simpson

Tony Barraco

Delores Lowe

Jim Maley

Kelly Doyle in background (Granddaughter of Bill & Helen Daniel)