

Fire Department News



Graton Fire

Bill Bullard, Deputy Chief
www.gratonfire.com
823-5515

Graton Fire Christmas Tree

Farm: Thu-Sun 9-5

With the purchase of the Del Davis Christmas Tree Farm at 3750 Gravenstein Highway North in 2006, the volunteer firefighters and board members now find themselves selling Christmas trees. With over 9 acres of pine, fir, and spruce trees, we have lots to sell. The tree farm is open Thursday through Sunday from 9am to 5pm and all donations are going to support the new fire station. As a donation, your tree is tax-deductible as well. Trees are being sold by height, regardless of the type of tree. Pull saws and measuring sticks are available as are volunteer firefighters to help you cut, carry, trim, and net your tree. There are fire helmets and badges for the kids. If you have further questions, please call the firehouse, 823-7939. Thank you for supporting the new fire station.

Holiday Safety

This is a great time of the year. We love driving around and seeing all of the decorations and colorful lights. Yet each year, we hear about a holiday tragedy due to these same decorations.

Christmas Trees - Fortunately, we don't believe anyone puts real candles on their Christmas trees any longer. However, an overloaded string of lights, faulty/frayed wiring, or a broken bulb can cause your tree to catch fire just as easily. Always inspect your lights before using them, inside or out. Check the wiring, bulbs, and plugs. Never add more lights than recommended or leave them on unattended. Keep open flames away from the tree and do not place it too close to the fireplace, which will dry out the tree prematurely. Most importantly, keep your Christmas tree watered constantly. A new tree will need a gallon of fresh water daily. It

should be well secured to prevent it from falling and if you see any signs of drying out (e.g. dropping needles, turning brown), remove the tree immediately. To understand the importance of Christmas tree safety, visit www.gratonfire.com and watch the video on the home page. This video demonstrates how quickly a tree can catch fire.

Exterior Lighting - The outside décor looks even greater than prior years. I see more inflatable Santas and Snowmen than ever before. This is a good time to remind everyone about extension cord safety. For example, did you know extension cords should not be connected together? This can cause overheating or allow water to get in. Make sure to only use cords rated to be outside and never overload the extension cord. In addition, never try to defeat a polarized (one blade is larger) plug. This could save your life should the cord short-circuit. One final note-if you have the older, larger style outdoor lights, they can get quite hot. If the air isn't cold enough, they can heat the house siding and paint to the point of combustion.

Toy Drive Deadline is 12/19

Our annual toy drive continues through Friday, December 19th. Each year, Graton volunteer firefighters work with Oak Grove School and local charities to determine needy families in our district. This holiday season, we are collecting new, unwrapped toys for over 30 children up to age 12. We will also accept cash donations, wrapping paper, tape... whatever you can spare. Items can be dropped off at:

- Graton Post Office
- Graton Christmas Tree Farm (Thu-Sun, 9-5)

Thank you to everyone who donated last year and helped make another family's Christmas a reality. We look forward to your support again this year. Questions?

Call 823-7939.



Christmas Trees: Firefighters Josh Skikos, Jeremy Janes, and Dan Gould help Heather O'Dell, formerly of Victorian Tree Farm, get the Christmas trees ready.



Forestville Fire
Dan Norther, Chief
887-2212

Toys for Tots

The Forestville Firefighters Association will be collecting toys for the Holidays again this year. Donations will go to the Forestville Giving Tree Program as well as the Toys for Tots program. Your new and unwrapped gifts may be dropped off at the Forestville Fire Station up to December 23rd.

Property Taxes

Did you know that the Forestville Fire Protection District is almost entirely funded by the property taxes paid by its citizens? Each property owner in the District pays 1% of the assessed value of their property in annual property taxes. The Forestville Fire Protection District receives an average of 11% of that 1% for its annual operations. The remaining 90% of the 1% is distributed to the County of Sonoma and to other agencies within the individual's tax rate area. The property taxes received by the District in December and April make up approximately 85% of the District's total revenue. An additional 11% is derived from a Special Tax for Fire Protection and Prevention, typically \$40.00 per parcel/household, which is also included on your annual property tax bill. The District's remaining revenue, approximately 4%, is derived from various sources such as grants and State reimbursements. Because the District is so dependant on property taxes the number of foreclosures and the downturn in property values could cause a reduction in the District's revenue for the next few years. The Board will be watching the results of the first installment of property taxes, later this month, closely to determine the effects of the current economic situation on the Forestville Fire Protection District.

The Oldest and the Newest

As planned our new 2008 Ford Light Rescue unit arrived on November 11, 2008. The Forestville Fire District Maintenance Division is in the process of installing equipment on the unit. The members of the District, both paid and volunteer, are being trained to use the special features on the unit and it is expected to be in-service and responding to emergencies by the end of the month.

The Forestville Firefighters Association recently purchased the first commercially built and second oldest fire engine to serve the community of Forestville. The engine, "Old #2", was purchased from Rudy Riebli. Rudy is the nephew of Mr. Fred Riebli a past Chief of the District. The engine is a 1937 Ford that originally served the community of Crows Landing in West Stanislaus County until it was purchased by the Forestville Fire Department (pre Fire District) for \$1,500.00 in April of 1948. The engine served our community until the early 1970's when it was sold by the District. There have been several owners of the engine since it was sold who fortunately had an interest in restoring it as a Forestville fire engine and kept it in its original condition. The Association, with the help of donations, plans to restore the engine to its original condition and to enter it in local parades and events. You can expect to see the engine in the 2009 Youth Park Parade in its current condition, running or not.

The District would appreciate any historical pictures of the District's personnel and equipment.

**Please have a SAFE
& HAPPY Holiday
Season! We're here
if you need us!**

