

# 4th Annual Bucket Brigade Blood Bank of the Redwoods

Fire departments around Sonoma County are still competing in the Blood Bank of the Redwoods' 4th Annual Bucket Brigade, which continues into January. Of course the West County Firefighters would like to win the Trophy this year but we will need the help of the community to do so. To help us you can donate blood, through the Blood Bank of the Redwoods, anywhere in the county between now and the end of January and ask that the donation be made in the name of your favorite West County Fire Department.

## Help Us, Help You



**Address Signs help us find you during an emergency. Order from your local Firefighters Association or Fire Department.**

## Graton

### Christmas Tree Farm/New Fire

**Station** - Thank you to everyone that came to our new property on Highway 116 to get a Christmas tree... We sold a lot of trees and cleared more space for the new station! A big "Thank You" to our tree farm manager, Heather O'Dell, for all of her hard work getting the tree farm looking so great. We had a great time meeting everyone and raised a lot of money to go towards the new fire station. Remember- your Christmas tree was also a donation and, therefore, a tax-deductible item for your taxes. We look forward to seeing you next season!  
**Toy Drive... Another Success**

The 2009 Toy Drive was a fantastic success, thank you! Graton Fire was able to deliver presents to over 50 children, brightening their holidays.



We wish everyone could experience the joy we see when the fire engine pulls up and delivers your presents... once again, thank you. A tremendous thanks also needs to go out to the Graton Post Office, Andy's Produce, and Graton Community Club for being toy collection points.

## Forestville

**Toy Drive - 2009** - The Forestville Firefighters Association toy drive was a huge success despite a slow start. Your donations provided toys to 60 families through the Giving Tree at the Forestville School, 78 families through the Forestville Methodist Church and over 50 families through Toys for Tots. The Forestville Firefighters Association also donated several movie passes for some of the older recipients. A special thank you to all who donated to this wonderful cause!

### December Blood Drive

The Forestville Firefighters would like to thank the 42 citizens and firefighters who donated a total of 39 units blood at the December 16 blood drive at the Forestville Fire Station.

### Property Tax Information

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 Districts 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 Districts 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 Districts revenue for the next few years. The Board will again 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.

## Sebastopol

**Toy Drive** - The Sebastopol Firefighters would like to thank the local citizens, Sebastopol I.O.O.F. Lodge and CVS Pharmacy for a very successful toy drive. In cooperation with the Sebastopol Alliance Church, we were able to provide toys to 266 children in 102 families in the Sebastopol area. We received a record number of cash donations, which helped to purchase gifts for older children, who are often left without gifts.

### Community Emergency Response Team Classes

The department will be publicizing the CERT classes for 2010 soon. If you ever wanted to be better prepared to survive and respond to natural disasters, this is the class for you. 196 Sebastopol residents have already been trained and you are next. Watch the City of Sebastopol website for class dates and details. [www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us](http://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us)

## Russian River

**Toys for Kids** - Thank you all for assisting us with the annual toy drive it was a very successful year.

**RRROC** - Please help us by attending the RRROC meeting at the Guerneville Vets Hall on January 21st, at 6 pm. We are ultimately asking for funds to purchase and equip a new and much needed ambulance. This will be a difficult decision when goes up in front of the Supervisors since the law is very grey in this area (my opinion) and not likely to be approved.

**For 2010** - Regretfully by the time you read this article, The Russian River Fire Protection District will have hosted a public hearing on January 6th, at 7 pm, at the fire station to discuss another special tax headed to the voters on June

8th, 2010. We are up against statutory deadlines and have to get this out to you for a first look. The Board has indicated it will hold more public hearings if the public indicates a need or desire.

Following the advice of many after our failed tax initiative of two years ago, we hope to present to you something more palatable. The new tax measure still asks for more money, but it is easier to understand than our last measure. Vacant parcels will be charged \$70, no matter the size. At property owners' suggestion, contiguous vacant parcels will be charged \$70. Parcels with one home will be charged \$140.00. If your parcel has more than one home on it, the first home is charged \$140.00 and each additional home on the same parcel is charged \$70.00 (2 homes on one parcel = \$210.00, three homes on one parcel = \$280.00). Most commercial and industrial properties will be charged \$350.00 per parcel. The exception to that is if you have more than four specific uses on your parcel. As an example, if you have a 500 acre parcel with crops on 200 acres and you have a bed and breakfast for a maximum of ten couples, a 1000 square foot retail store and a house your tax will be \$350 based on the single highest use (the bed and breakfast).

If you add one more use to this property, let's say a factory that is industrial in nature, the single highest use changes to industrial use and the fire tax becomes \$700.00. Most of our parcels do not resemble anything like this but it is used to illustrate my point. Agricultural parcels are charged \$175.00. This new tax measure is asking for \$100 more from most of you per year. That equals \$.27 more per day than what you are paying now for a total of \$.38 per day.

The Russian River Fire Protection District has done everything in its power to save money and reduce expenses but it is not enough. We are not willing to reduce the level of service to balance the budget. It is simply not in your best interest for us to do that and the wrong thing to do; your safety depends on us. It has been thirty years since our last tax measure was overwhelmingly passed. We need your help as much as you need ours. We will make every effort to keep you better informed. Thank you.