

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Dec. 1

Major step taken toward unification

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) meeting on Dec. 1, the board approved a contract for a service agreement with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) and witnessed the swearing in of a newly promoted lieutenant.

Director Terri Hayes was expected to arrive late, but the meeting ended before that occurred.

Unification update

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the following:

- TLMFPD and DWFPD had "put the cart before the horse" a little bit and had the "first" execu-

tive staff meeting with the three battalion chiefs from Wescott.

- The operational meeting was productive and lasted four hours, and it is exciting to finally see the unification come to fruition.
- The details are being worked on, to figure out what it will look like on Jan. 1.
- The "best and the brightest" were in the room putting all the pieces together, and the meetings will continue with operational staff throughout December.

"There is excitement, and it will be a heavy lift in January, but we are getting ready for what comes next," said Kovacs. See www.ocn.me/v21n12.htm#tlmfpd and #dwfpd.

President John Hildebrandt said he wished he could say all of the numbers in the Emergency Services Consultants International (ESCI) study are "rock solid," unfortunately they are not, but they are not enough to prevent the unification. About \$238,000 will be needed for salary equalizations, but the report indicated only \$158,000, so Wescott will need to add about \$90,000 for the salaries and benefits, said Hildebrandt.

Jones said he did not know where the number came from either, but numbers were added and it caused manipulative changes that continued throughout the study. "It is a number that can be handled and taken care of and the problem would be identified by DWFPD, and fixed by Jan. 1, and we will be okay," said Jones.

Hildebrandt said, "When the inclusion is complete and the whole district is paying 18.4 mills (with a mill levy drop for the DWFPD residents) a revenue loss of \$330,000 would occur, but he is comfortable

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