

# Fire Line

Spring 2009

*News from Your Emergency Service Provider*

**San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District**



**Serving Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville, Diablo, San Ramon, Southern Morgan Territory, and Tassajara Valley**

## **Letter From New Fire Chief Highlights Priorities**

The San Ramon Valley Fire District recently experienced several significant changes. This past November, I took over as Fire Chief when **Chief Craig Bowen** retired after thirty years of public service. Having been an Assistant Chief here at the District prior to my appointment as Chief, the transition was relatively routine and seamless.

Long time **Fire Marshal Rick Terry** also retired at the end of the year resulting in a second management vacancy. One of my first orders of business was to fill the Fire Marshal opening and the Operations Chief opening that my promotion created. After an extensive recruitment and testing effort I'm very pleased to introduce to you our new **Operations Chief, Bryan Collins**, and our new **Fire Marshal, Christina Jamison**. Chief Collins comes to us from the Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District where he served as a Battalion Chief for the past nine years, and Chief Jamison from the Ventura County Fire Protection District in Southern California where she was the Fire Marshal overseeing a large and vibrant fire prevention bureau. They are exceptional additions to our management team and both are acclimating quickly to their new surroundings and responsibilities.

Our entire organization has been hard at work creating the new **Strategic Plan** that will guide our decision making for the next several years. If you are interested in where we are planning to focus our attention, I encourage you to read it online or download the Plan, which can be found on our new website at [www.srvfire.ca.gov](http://www.srvfire.ca.gov).

The new **Website** has been an exciting project for a small but determined and creative design team. They have endeavored to provide an easy to navigate site that provides the resources and services that our residents and online visitors asked for in our 2007 website survey.

I'm also proud to report that the District was a recipient of the 2008 International Association of Fire Chiefs **Fire Service Award for Excellence** for its work on aerial photo-based pre-incident surveys. These surveys provide your public safety personnel with comprehensive information about complex facilities and locations in our District.

These plans were jointly developed by the Fire District, the Town of Danville, the City of San Ramon, and the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Nearly 300 local schools, churches, businesses and other key installations in our jurisdiction have now been carefully surveyed and have had detailed plans



**New Fire Chief, Richard Price (center) with other new members of the management team: Fire Marshal, Christina Jamison and Operations Chief, Bryan Collins.**

created for immediate reference by our responding crews.

The economic downturn and all its associated impacts continue to challenge our budgeting and long term capital improvement planning activities. Over the previous years the Fire District has built a solid facility infrastructure and has acquired and maintained a modern fleet of apparatus. Consequently, the District is positioned to weather this economic climate with only moderate adjustments to service levels (assuming that the state budget crisis does not impact the local economy more than we anticipate and the U.S. economy begins to improve later this year). Like most Americans, we are adapting to the realities before us and are adjusting our operations accordingly. We remain fully committed to providing the very best service possible with the resources available—whatever they may be.

If you have any questions or concerns about District services, I invite you to contact me at any time. I can be reached at (925) 838-6601 or by email at [rprice@srvfire.ca.gov](mailto:rprice@srvfire.ca.gov).

Richard Price, Fire Chief

*In the spirit of our tradition, we strive for excellence, respectfully serving all with pride, honor and compassion.*

# A Child Can Drown in Seconds

*Make this summer safe and fun by following simple safety tips*



## Checklist for pool safety

- Always supervise children around water; never leave a child swimming alone — even to just answer the phone or use the restroom.
- Install a fence that is at least five feet high on all four sides of your pool.
- Move lawn chairs and other potential climbing aids away from your fence.
- Check that all gates leading to the pool are self-closing, self-latching and open outward with the latch on the pool side, out of reach.
- Install alarms on all house doors and windows leading to the pool area.
- Drain off water that accumulates on the pool cover.
- Keep reaching aids such as poles and life preservers on two sides of the pool.
- Require all non-swimmers to wear approved personal flotation devices when they are near water.
- Learn CPR. Performing CPR can prevent death or brain damage.
- Call 911. (From your cell phone, call directly to San Ramon Valley Fire Dispatch at 838-6691.)

## Smoke Alarms

Eight people die everyday in the United States as a result of fires in the home. In 2007 the U.S. Fire Administration reported over 400,000 residential house fires and nearly 3,000 deaths. Believe it or not, a substantial number of these homes did not have a working smoke alarm. Having working smoke alarms is the best way to provide an early warning signal and can increase your chance of surviving a fire by nearly fifty percent.

Most home fires happen at night when people are asleep. Some people think the smell of the smoke will wake them; but the truth is that the poisonous gases in smoke may put you in an even deeper sleep.

Here are a few life saving tips:

- Place a smoke alarm on every level of your home, in every bedroom and in the hallways outside sleeping areas.
- Check smoke alarms monthly by



pushing the test button. If you cannot reach the button use a broom handle.

- Change the batteries in your alarms twice a year. As a reminder, when you change your clocks, change your smoke alarm batteries.
- Hard-wired smoke alarms with battery back-ups still need to be tested monthly and batteries replaced yearly.
- Teach children what the smoke alarm sounds like and what to do when they hear it.
- Never disable a smoke alarm or remove the batteries. Most of us would not ride in a car without a working seat belt, and we should not sleep in a house without a working smoke alarm.
- Smoke alarms wear out over time. Replace devices that are over 10 years old.

## Save Lives

We stress the importance of fire safety in our schools, churches and places of employment. But did you know that 84% of all fire deaths occur in the home? Here are a few tips to help keep your home fire safe:

- Remember, three feet from the heat. If you use a portable space heater make sure you keep it at least three feet away from anything that can burn. Purchase a heater that automatically shuts off if tipped over.
- Never leave a candle unattended. Keep all candles at least a foot away from combustibles and always blow candles out before going to bed. Consider purchasing artificial decorative candles that operate on batteries.
- Inspect electrical cords to make sure they are not pinched under rugs or furniture. Replace cords that are frayed or have broken plugs.
- Plan escape routes from your home and have at least two ways out of every room. Practice your escape plan by hosting a family fire drill and setting a meeting place.

## New Station 36 is Open

The New Fire Station 36 at 2001 Lusitano Street, Danville is now open and operational. The fire station design is Spanish Revival; a California Heritage style building with rich stylistic details that compliment the neighborhood very well. It was designed by ATI Architects and Engineers of Danville, and constructed by W.A. Thomas Construction of Martinez. The simple forms and understated accents, like the stucco walls, tile roof, prominent arch over main entry door and wrought iron details, match many of the homes in the Alamo Creek development. The main benefit of this fire station relocation is to improve response times to the more densely populated areas of the response zone. Occupying this fire station will be one fire company, comprised of a Captain, Engineer and Firefighter/Paramedic.

With the new Station 36 in operation, the former Station 36 will be closed. Built in 1979, this station served the community



well for many years. Originally constructed as a volunteer fire station, it served the area known as the Tassajara Fire District. This District, formed in 1970, covered a 42 square mile area for fire and emergency services. The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District merged with the Tassajara Fire District in 1990.

The old station will not be staffed; however, it will remain as a storage facility and a future training site for the Fire District.

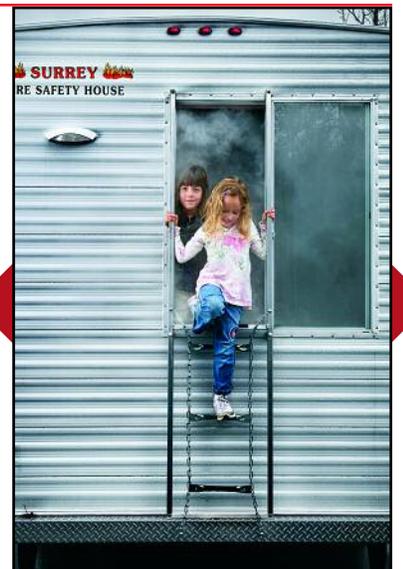
## Newest Member of Our Education Team

The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District is pleased to announce the arrival of the newest member of our public education and community outreach team. In December 2008, a 31-foot mobile Fire Safety House arrived to help educate our community on home fire safety.

Our new Fire Safety House replaces an older two-story version the District has had for many years. "The new house is equipped with many more teaching tools and its single story layout makes it accessible to all populations," said Christina Jamison, Fire Marshal. "We are very excited about sharing this new tool with our community."

The house is complete with a small kitchen, living room and bedroom. As participants go through each room they learn, through hands-on activities; how to call 911, cooking safety, the importance of smoke alarms, fireplace safety, and what to do if they need to escape their home because of a fire. At the conclusion of the tour, fire personnel fill the house with theatrical smoke and simulate, with students, crawling low under smoke, feeling the door to see if it is hot and ultimately escaping through the window down the fire escape ladder.

The Fire Safety House will become a staple at local community events. The new Fire Safety House will make its debut at the San Ramon Art and Wind Festival at Central Park on Sunday and Monday, May 24 and 25. The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District invites everyone to take a tour and brush up on their fire safety skills.



Children learn how to escape from a fire at the new Fire Safety House.

## Emergency Preparedness Award

The San Ramon Valley Emergency Preparedness Citizen Corps Council (Council that oversees CERT and other programs) has received the Gold Award from the California Emergency Services Association (CESA). The award is the association's highest honor, recognizing organizations or individuals who have shown exceptional efforts in the field of Emergency Preparedness. The Town of Danville, the City of San Ramon, the SRV Fire District and the SRV School District work cooperatively as a Citizen Corps Council in developing mitigation, preparation, response and recovery strategies.



CERT prepares citizens to respond to emergencies.

### Accomplishments Recognized by Award

- Regional approach and partnership toward disaster preparedness and emergency response.
- Trained over 500 CERT members in two years.
- Produced the Annual Emergency Preparedness Fair.
- Conducted CERT Drills and integrated CERT communications with HAM radio operators.
- Trained over 200 public employees on how to better respond to natural and man-made disasters.
- Continued outstanding public education efforts using a regional and cooperative approach toward marketing.
- Developed the Pre-Incident Aerial Survey digital mapping program, identifying and documenting over 200 critical sites in the SR Valley.

By taking a regional approach toward planning and preparedness, we continue moving forward, making our community more disaster resistant.

## Get Prepared San Ramon Valley

*2009 is a great year to learn how to prepare yourself, your family and your community. San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District is proud to announce our spring classes that are FREE or low cost to the community. All classes are held at the District's Administration Office at 1500 Bollinger Canyon Road, San Ramon.*



### Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact our area. CERT trains community members in basic disaster response skills. During this 20 hour course students will learn about disaster preparedness, fire safety, disaster medical operations and triage, light search and rescue, team organization, disaster psychology, terrorism and the Incident Command System.

Upon completion of the program, CERT members will participate in a night drill that will put all of their new skills to work. CERT classes are held in the evenings, once a week, for six weeks. Some weekend classes are also available. To find out more about the San Ramon Valley CERT Program and to sign up for the next CERT cycle, please visit our web site at [www.srvfire.ca.gov](http://www.srvfire.ca.gov) and click on the CERT link, under the Community Outreach section.

### **CERT Class, Tuesday evenings**

- 4/28/09 - Intro/Earthquake Preparedness
- 5/05/09 - Terrorism/Suppression
- 5/12/09 - Medical
- 5/19/09 - Light Search and Rescue
- 6/02/09 - Psychology/ICS
- 6/09/09 - Drill

### Community Fire Extinguisher Training

Portable fire extinguishers can save lives and property by putting out and containing small fires. Students will learn the PASS system and have the opportunity to put out a real fire. Pre-registration is required. To sign up, email Kim at [kfrench@srvfire.ca.gov](mailto:kfrench@srvfire.ca.gov) or call Joyce at (925) 838-6688.

#### **Session 1**

Saturday, April 25  
10:00 am - 11:00 am

#### **Session 2**

Saturday, April 25  
11:30 am - 12:30 pm

### Personal Emergency Preparedness (PEP)

We live in earthquake country. There is nothing we can do to stop an earthquake, but we can get prepared! Students will learn hazard mitigation, utility control, duck-cover-hold and tips for creating emergency kits. Pre-registration is required. To sign up, email Kim at [kfrench@srvfire.ca.gov](mailto:kfrench@srvfire.ca.gov) or call Joyce at (925) 838-6688.

#### **Session 1**

Adults • FREE  
Wednesday, May 20  
6:00 pm - 8:30 pm

### Wildfire Preparedness

Is your home and family ready for fire season? Wildfire is all too common in California, and we have all seen the devastation that can result. Homeowners who live near open space or have wildland adjacent to their property are encouraged to sign-up for this free workshop. Learn about home ignition zones, defensible space, and fire resistant construction. Pre-registration is required.

To sign up, email Kim at [kfrench@srvfire.ca.gov](mailto:kfrench@srvfire.ca.gov) or call Joyce at (925) 838-6688.

#### **Session 1**

Adults • FREE  
Thursday, May 7  
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

### New Parent and Grandparent Class

Babies don't come with directions. Parents and grandparents are the most important people in a child's life and the most important factor in childhood safety. Each class will be led by trained fire personnel who will walk participants through basic infant CPR, first aid, car safety and home safety. To sign up for this class, email Kim at [kfrench@srvfire.ca.gov](mailto:kfrench@srvfire.ca.gov) or call Joyce at (925) 838-6688.

#### **Session 1**

Saturday, June 13  
9:00 am - 12:00 pm

### CPR

CPR saves lives. Basic infant, child, and adult CPR classes are offered every 4th Saturday of the month from 8:30 am - 12:30 pm. Early sign-up is recommended as there are only 8 students to a class and classes fill quickly. The fee is \$25 per student and includes instruction, student manuals and certificate of completion. To sign up for a CPR class, contact Renee Vetter at (925) 838-6620 or [rvetter@srvfire.ca.gov](mailto:rvetter@srvfire.ca.gov).

## Fire Line

is published by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District as a public service to the residents of our District.

### Board of Directors

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[www.srvfire.ca.gov](http://www.srvfire.ca.gov)

### Phone Numbers

ADMINISTRATION	<b>925-838-6600</b>
Business Office	CPR Class Information
Fire Prevention	New Construction
Permits & Inspections	Weed Abatement

Dispatch (Non-emergency) **925-838-6640**

Emergencies from cell phones **925-838-6691**

**Emergencies.....DIAL 911**

## Got Aspirin?

If you or a family member is suffering from a heart attack, one of the most powerful drugs to treat that condition may be sitting in your own medicine cabinet...Aspirin. Aspirin is a mainstay of treatment for heart attacks and dollar-for-dollar is probably the most cost-effective treatment available.

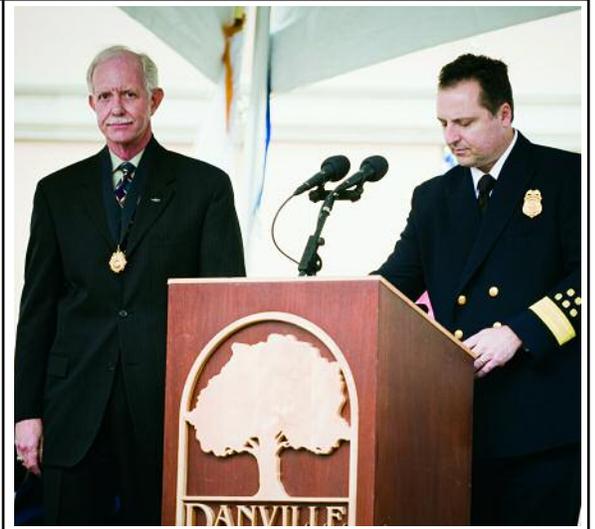
When chest pain is caused by blockages in the heart's own arteries, in most instances part of the blockage is because of a blood clot. Aspirin helps dissolve these clots, and is recommended for patients with chest pain in whom heart attack is a possibility. To work most rapidly, the aspirin must be chewed, and can be followed by a mouthful of water to swallow. Any form of aspirin that can be chewed can be used. Other medications such as ibuprofen (for instance, Motrin®) or acetaminophen (for instance, Tylenol®) do not work the same way as aspirin and should not be used in this situation.

San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District dispatchers are trained to recommend that patients take their own aspirin when a 911 call is made because of chest pain. It is one of the first drugs administered when paramedics arrive, but that treatment can now be started before the EMS crew's arrival. Those who are allergic to aspirin and those with active bleeding from their stomach or other digestive tract areas should not take aspirin. You may wish to ask your doctor if you should take aspirin if this situation arises.

Many years ago, aspirin lost favor as a medicine to control fever and aches, particularly because of serious side effects caused in children - so its presence in the medicine cabinet may be less frequent these days. However it is an inexpensive addition to anyone's first aid kit and can be a lifesaver.

### Honoring a Hero

On January 24, 2009, Fire Chief Richard Price presented local hero, US Airways pilot, Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, with the District's Medal of Valor for "saving the life of another under a time of severe personal duress." On January 15, Sullenberger had deftly landed a disabled plane on the Hudson River, saving the lives of all 155 people on board.



## Why Calling 911 is Critical for Chest Pain

The most modern treatment of heart attacks depends on rapid treatment. In many heart attacks, for every 30 minutes saved, the survival rate from a heart attack goes up by around 15%. One of the ways that rapid care can be best assured is by calling 911 if you have chest pain or pressure.

### Why does calling 911 make a difference?

- Paramedics can begin treatment early with oxygen, aspirin, and other drugs that can help relieve pain.
- If a sudden heart rhythm problem occurs (including a cardiac arrest), paramedics can begin treatment immediately, which increases survival chances tremendously.
- Paramedics can safely transport you to the emergency department and gain immediate entry.
- Paramedics can now obtain a complete electrocardiogram (EKG) in the field that can detect the most serious heart attacks and help prepare the hospital for your arrival.

This last reason has been shown to shorten eventual treatment times at the hospital by 15-30 minutes, which may markedly increase the chance for survival. By preparing a heart catheterization lab, the amount of time needed to reverse a blockage in the heart's arteries can be significantly shortened.

In Contra Costa County, the development of the field electrocardiogram program has been effective in shortening treatment times - in most cases the patient is treated in less than 60 minutes, compared to national averages of around 90 minutes.

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS FOR LOCAL CELL PHONE USERS

Use these numbers, NOT 911, when calling from cell phones.

**FIRE**  
San Ramon Valley Fire  
Protection District  
(925) 838-6691

**AMBULANCE**  
San Ramon Valley Fire  
Protection District  
(925) 838-6691

**SHERIFF**  
Contra Costa Sheriff  
(925) 646-2441

**POLICE**  
Danville Police  
(925) 820-2144  
San Ramon Police  
(925) 228-8282

**STATE HIGHWAY PATROL**  
911 is correct

## Help Us Prepare for Wildfire Season...It's A Team Effort

The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District is getting ready for fire season, and you should too. Our engines and trucks are carrying additional tools and gear to fight vegetation fires in the Wildland Urban Interface. Our firefighters are refreshing their wildfire skills by attending specialized training and participating in situational drills, but we still need your help.

A community that is wildfire smart requires readiness on the part of the Fire District and property owners. Each year, wildfires consume hundreds of homes in California, however CAL FIRE estimates that as many as 80% of homes lost to wildfire could have been saved if their owners had followed a few simple fire-safe practices.



**START BY CREATING A 100' DEFENSIBLE SPACE AROUND YOUR HOME** This area is the space firefighters need to get between your home and an oncoming fire. Make sure this space is well maintained or landscaped. Take action to cut native grasses to less than three inches and limb up trees at least five feet. Remove other combustibles around your home such as firewood or dry pine needles.

**MAKE A DATE WITH YOUR ROOF** Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home; ensure your roof and gutters are clear of pine needles, leaves and other debris. If you have a shake roof, consider replacing it with a non-combustible roof made to withstand heat and embers.

**CONFIRM THAT YOUR HOUSE NUMBERS ARE CLEARLY VISIBLE** and that your driveway or private road is maintained so emergency vehicles can access your home quickly.

Wildfires are a natural part of our beautiful landscape, so preparing our homes and families for wildfire is essential. Take a moment this week to walk around your home and assess it for fire safety. Also begin to create a Family Disaster Plan, which includes escape routes and emergency supply kits for your home and car.

Together we can make our community wildfire smart. For more information on what you can do, visit our website at [www.srvfire.ca.gov](http://www.srvfire.ca.gov) or [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).