



## DRY CREEK-LOKOYA VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

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A 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corporation Tax ID #68-0383597

www.drycreek-lokoya.com

### CHIEF 16's CORNER

#### Another Generation Steps Forward

A very special event will be happening to me come January 1, 2020. After 41 years of service to the Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department/Company (DCL) and Napa County Fire Department, Station 16, I will be stepping down as Chief 16 to prepare for my eventual retirement, March 1, 2020. I will stay on for the last two months to assist with training.

In those 41 years I have seen great things accomplished by DCL. We were the first volunteer fire department in California to have female firefighters (see our website for more information), we have received newer fire engines from Napa County, we started the original Mt. Veeder Fire Safe Council (MVFSC) to provide neighbors fire safe information and begin the first chipping program (thanks to Captain Bill Robertson), the newer version of the MVFSC teamed up with DCL to continue providing the fire safe projects and the 911 green address signs, and I have seen newer, younger individuals interested in joining DCL to continue our great history and service to our community.

I must admit that after 41 years of service, it will not be easy to fade away and become a former member of DCL. However, it is time to allow others to step in and move DCL forward into the new years to come.

I'd like to thank all of the community members who have given praise to what DCL has done over the years. I hope to see all of you in my new capacity as private citizen. Until then, many thanks for your continued support for the firefighters of the Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department/Company (DCL) and Napa County Fire Department, Station 16.

Chief Green

#### NEW CHIEF 16 LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

Volunteer Fire Chief Dave Robertson

Hello citizens of Dry Creek – Lokoya Fire Response Area, and all citizens of Napa County.

As my first communication to you as your new fire chief, I'd be remiss if I didn't say right away that I've got big shoes to fill. Outgoing Chief Gary Green has responded with and led this fire company in all positions since 1978 (more or less). In this profession I've noticed that there are those who put the badge on, and there are those who embody what wearing the badge is all about. Chief Green is very much the latter.

The "big shoes to fill" is a quote originally attributed to Andrew Jackson. He went on to say, "I have to seize the moment." It's this sentiment that I intend to embrace in assuming the role of fire chief.

Following are some of the moments I want to seize:

#### **First and foremost, the continued protection of citizens of Napa County**

The Dry Creek – Lokoya Volunteer Fire Company is strategically placed to ensure as rapid a response as possible here on "the hill." We are also, however, part of the mitigation plan for the entire county. That means that we are trained for and expected to respond to all emergencies within the county and occasionally out of the county. We keep your safety our number one priority.

**NEW CHIEF 16 LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY**

(continued)

***The growth of the Dry Creek – Lokoya Volunteer Fire Company’s professional culture***

I have long said that what impressed me most about volunteer firefighters was their desire to do the same job as pros, but for free. In my mind being a volunteer firefighter is a high calling indeed, and I demand a high level of professionalism and accountability from all members of the department. Setting the bar high, even for part time fire crews, increases their ability to do the job that much better, faster, and more effective.

Further, the modern-day fire service is indeed one of the hardest careers to get into. One of the critical components is that a recruit ideally has some fire experience to get that pro job. This usually means becoming a volunteer. I set expectations in the Dry Creek station to the professional level so that those on the path to a career firefighter have that career-level foundation of the high level of responsibility and accountability. As responders this just “ups their game” which in turn means that for you, the citizen, responders are of a very high caliber.

***Train, train, train***

Simply put, training makes us able. It enables us to go to virtually any emergency scene and know, essentially, what to do. Which means you’re taken care of.

More than that, training grows the individual, builds teamwork, and allows leaders to emerge. It also earmarks our deficiencies so that we can address them head on and be that much better at what we do.

Training is, and will continue to be, a critical part of the Dry Creek – Lokoya fire culture.

***Committed to ongoing and an increase in recruitment***

*"Great vision without great people is irrelevant."--Jim Collins*

I’m going to jump right out and address this: volunteerism in America is down. Volunteer fire departments are especially hard hit. Training requirements have expanded, and so too has the time commitment. In an age where we seem to scramble to get everything done in our 24 hour day this time commitment has deterred many great potential fire recruits from volunteering. Further our society has become more transient. We’re no longer embedded into our communities and so the desire to protect our fellow citizens doesn’t run as deep as it used to. I intend to address these issues and grow the Dry Creek – Lokoya Volunteer Fire Company to robust membership levels.

***My commitment to you***

*"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live." – George Bernard Shaw*

My, indeed our, commitment to you goes beyond just protecting you as first responders. We have a deep commitment to you all as citizens of this county. Our Dry Creek/Napa County Fire Department station is a safe zone for you, a meeting point, a community hall, a place to come and talk to us just to maintain sense of community, a space to safely vent concerns and give us suggestions for better serving you. In short, we are your department. And we are, and always will be, here for you.

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**Vegetation Management is Needed Along Napa County Roads Used as Egress/Access Routes**

By Jeff Enos, MVFSC Member

A concern for people living in the Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Company’s (DCLVFC) response area which includes Dry Creek Rd., Mt. Veeder Rd., Lokoya Rd., Wall Rd., Redwood Rd. and Oakville Grade, is the condition of the roads and the lack of adequate vegetation management<sup>1</sup> alongside them. The roads serve the dual purpose of evacuation routes for civilians and access routes for first responders.

Napa County is doing its best to provide mostly two-way roads and fill the pot holes on these roads with limited financial and personnel resources. Napa County may cut grass along some roads once its dried. Providing and maintaining adequate vegetation management along many roads in the DCLVFC area by Napa County is not likely to occur. Please understand Napa County has dedicated, hard-working people trying their very best to provide safe road surfaces with limited funds and people.

## Vegetation Management is Needed Along Napa County Roads Used as Egress/Access Route (cont.)

Cal Fire administers Napa County Fire Department through a contract with the Napa County Board of Supervisors to provide fire services to Napa County. Along with that Cal Fire oversees the nine individual volunteer fire companies, DCLVFC being one of the nine. Cal Fire officials have stated providing adequate vegetation management along the roads mentioned above is a High-Priority for Cal Fire. This would include Napa County Fire and DCLVFC. Cal Fire can provide grants to organizations to get the work done if certain standards are met.

The single most essential key in getting and maintaining adequate vegetation management on the roads in the DCLVFC response area is the permission of property owners to allow fuel reduction, removal, and modification on their property along the roads because the Napa County easement is not enough. Cal Fire is saying up to 100' from the center line on the road is needed.

Nobody wants to do any work that would cause erosion and environmental problems. Property owners don't want their trees to fall across and block a road preventing them and their neighbors from escaping a wildfire or emergency responders from saving lives and property. Following the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines is standard practice which includes the involvement of a registered professional forester (RFP). There is no cost to the property owner. Herbicides are not used. The property owner will always have the final say about any vegetation management on their property. It's your land and the Mt. Veeder Fire Safe Council (MVFSC) is here to help not only educate but get meaningful work done that will reduce risk to you and emergency responders.

The MVFSC is currently an advisory committee of the DCLVFC which is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. MVFSC is composed of people who live in the area and are your neighbors. The MVFSC has been doing the work Cal Fire wants done, has the experience, is successful in grant writing, managing the projects and is willing to apply for the grants if there is a reasonable expectation property owners are willing to cooperate. Cal Fire is not likely to award a grant if there is little to no willingness from property owners to allow the work that must be done and maintained on a 3-5 year schedule<sup>2</sup> to provide adequate vegetation management.

Any property owner whose land is along the roads mentioned above and is willing to discuss or consider allowing adequate vegetation management along the road please contact the MVFSC at: [mtveederfiresafe@gmail.com](mailto:mtveederfiresafe@gmail.com) For over 15 years MVFSC has and will help reduce the risk of wildfire in our community. When it comes to wildfire we are all in this together. We welcome your cooperation and want to hear your concerns, thoughts and get an idea if we can work with you to make our community safer. You have the ability to make the difference and your permission is needed. Wildfire is coming...Are you READY? MVFSC can help.

<sup>1</sup>The habitual effort of removing unwanted vegetation by cutting, thinning, chipping or burning unwanted accumulations of live or dead plants such as grasses, shrubs and trees while monitoring and maintaining the landscape for the desired effect. The result would resemble an open park. A shaded fuel break is an example of adequate vegetation management. See picture below.

<sup>2</sup>3-5 years is an estimated maintenance time frame. The key point is the work must be maintained as a condition of the grant.



# MEET YOUR FIREFIGHTERS!

## THE ROBERT HAGGARD AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE GOES TO FF JOSEPH NORDLINGER



Volunteer fire chief Robert Haggard was well known to the community and to his firefighters as a no nonsense, honest, and upstanding citizen. After a long illness, Chief Haggard passed away. In his memory, we have established this award that is given annually to the firefighter that most exemplifies the traits of former Chief Robert Haggard, Honor, Leadership, Community Service. This year's award went to Firefighter Joseph Nordlinger. Joseph is also the chair for the Mt. Veeder Fire Safe Council. The Mt. Veeder Fire Safe Council has received an excess of \$1.5 million dollars for fire prevention projects within the Dry Creek-Lokoya VFD response area. The work of the Mt. Veeder Fire Safe Council directly supports the efforts of the fire department. A well deserved award for an extremely hard working firefighter!

## DCL'S NAPA COUNTY FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR, DYLAN BRUSSTAR



The Napa County Fire Department asks each of the nine volunteer departments to select an individual that supports NCFD and the local fire company as well. This year, Firefighter Dylan Brusstar was selected to represent the Dry Creek-Lokoya firefighters. Dylan is the first to arrive and the last to leave paying attention to details! He exemplifies the DCL in Dry Creek-Lokoya, Dedication, Commitment, Loyalty.

# Home Winemakers Classic

Wine tasting is an everyday pastime here in the beautiful Napa Valley. Worldwide travelers come to experience Napa-signature tastings. However, most don't realize one of Napa's best-kept secrets: **The Home Winemakers Classic**. This event spotlights winemakers who make wine primarily for their enjoyment. You won't find any of these wines at Costco or BevMo!, or even at the local dining establishments. That's because the Home Winemakers Classic is a venue for private winemakers whose wines were not created for commercial wineries. They participate in the HWC year after year to share their best successes with the hundreds of people who come to experience them. And we assure you they are worth it.

For the past 36 years, the Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department (Napa County Fire Station 16) provided this event as a fund-raiser to support their local, volunteer fire-fighting efforts. This much-needed income supported much of the daily operations of the volunteer department. Because Chief Gary Green is retiring in March 2020 (sad, but true), and arranged for some funding through Cal Fire, much thought was given to who could be the benefactor of the event since the department no longer needed to rely exclusively on this fundraising and it was an event that would be sorely missed. It was even considered that the HWC would no longer exist. Your authors (Robin and Cynthia) heard about this and suggested we co-chair the event and during this same time, negotiations between DCLVFD and Mt. Veeder Fire Safe Council (MVFSC) became resolved and the event circumnavigated its demise.

Fast forward to present: we're happy to announce that the event continues and that the 2020 Home Winemakers Classic is to be held at CIA Copia on First St. in Napa on Saturday August 1. This is the first year the MVFSC will be the benefactor and they are a worthy cause but the 37th year for the event!

DCLVFD and MVFSC have parallel charges. While the team at DCLVFD trains endlessly to fight fires, the mission of the MVFSC is to educate and assimilate information to mitigate wildfire spread and damage. They offer homeowners in the Mt. Veeder area the invaluable service of home fire safety assessment to inform homeowners of aspects of their properties that could be ignited by fire sparks common to wildfire.

MVFSC also works to clear ingress and egress to support access to properties that are on and off the main roads and maintains fire breaks and performs many other proactive measures.

Your new co-chairs, Robin and Cynthia hold a lot of experience in event and silent auction planning. Robin has been in the hospitality field and Cynthia has coordinated events for foundations, both for many years. That said, we hope to carry forward the traditions of the HWC that Chief Green has faithfully established.

The 2020 HWC invites our past wine makers as well as new ones. Come visit winemakers you've met in the past and get introduced to new ones. Oh, and by all means shop the silent auction. There are exciting donations that you can win and know that you've supported the very agency that may save your home in the next fire. In the past we have had items from Opus One, Mayacamas Winery, CIA, Hudson, and on and on.

See you on August 1.



# Your Local Volunteer Firefighters Do More Than Just Put Out Fires!

While fires, both structure and vegetation, are the most noticeable and seemingly most dangerous to the most number of neighbors, you local firefighters also respond to medical emergencies (about 95% of our calls), traffic accidents, assist with water and rope rescues, and mitigate other hazards (trees and power lines down across our roads). This is why they train so often and need to have the same training as the paid county firefighters. Below are some of our trainings we must attend to stay proficient in our skills.



Auto Extrication



Medicals



Water Rescue



Building Entanglement Prop



Pump Operations



Structure Fire



Wild Land Fire

## Qualifications

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Must be able to read and write the English language proficiently (Bi-lingual especially appreciated).
- Must pass physical.
- Must be living within responding distance from station but not necessarily in the service area such as in the city limits.
- Must attend two drills a month; there is criteria for excused and un-excused drill absences.
- Must attend recruit training through a College or from Napa County.