



Dear Islanders,

August 2016

Our Trustees have now confirmed that our Level of Service for the PIVFD will be as Exterior Operations Level Fire Fighter (EOLFF). As is evident, that means that we are trained, authorized and able to fight a structure fire from outside the building. That is how it has always been on Piers but it bears reminding everyone that we cannot enter a burning building to attempt to rescue anyone still inside or to attack the fire offensively. I understand this statement might be frightening to many of you but with modern building materials, working fire alarms and multiple hand held fire extinguishers at the ready, the odds of any of us being trapped in our burning home is minimized. If we all take to time to FireSmart our properties as well, the odds are further reduced. The Task Force report produced a few years ago defined how we need to have a policy of: Prevention, Early Detection, and Rapid Response. The fire department can't act alone in this endeavour. Each of us has to help prevent fire; we need to protect our property from the spread of wildfire and we need to react quickly. Everyone must have an escape plan prepared and practiced and this needs to involve family and guests and overnight visitors.



So, when we do have a fire or medical emergency on Piers, how does the system work?

If someone in distress calls 9-1-1, a central call taker receives the details and transmits those to the Dispatch Centre for us located at the Langford Fire Department building on Goldstream Ave in Victoria. Langford then triggers our pagers which each of the PIVFD members carry at all times. Our pagers sound to alert us to the emergency and the sirens will sound around the island. We have 4 sirens: small ones at the lower reservoir, the new fire hall, the water tower and one very large one at the old fire hall. The siren at the old fire hall is mounted on an dead fir tree just behind the hall. This siren was erected back in the mid 1980s by Len Gillespie and Lionel Green. Lionel acquired it from Chilliwack and transported it to Piers. Its life began as an air raid siren during World War 2.

Before our island had the 9-1-1 system, firefighters were only available on Piers during the weekends - each weekend 4 PIVFD volunteers were designated to be on duty on the island at all times in case there was a fire. The sirens sounded but no one had pagers or anything other than knowledge of the general quadrant where the problem was located. The siren triggered would be in a specific area but we had no idea which property was calling for help. And on the weekdays, we were basically unprotected. We've come a long way since then but where we are today has only been possible because of all the hard work done by Lionel and others before us.

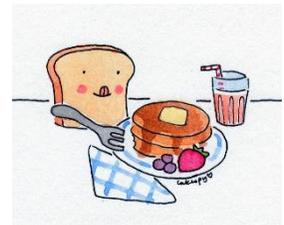
Our sirens will now sound most Thursday afternoons at 4pm. This is to test the system to make sure everything is working properly and it also acts as a reminder to our firefighters that we are beginning a practice. In a real emergency, our pagers sound and we will receive a very brief voice message as to the nature and location of the emergency. Simultaneously, the 4 sirens will sound to alert the island that something is up and the IAmResponding application on our smart phones will give our firefighters a text message with a mapping feature directing us to the exact location – pretty amazing. As with all planning, redundancy is demanded to make sure that every emergency has a rapid response from our trained personnel. We have the pagers, the sirens and those with smartphones have the IAmResponding app.



Recently our friends on Gabriola Island experienced a potentially serious structure fire. This link <http://gabriolafire.ca/2016/08/aug-1-2016-structure-fire/> will be interesting to all Piers Islanders as it reminds us of the dangers of spontaneous combustion and it suggests again how important it is to FireSmart your property. Thanks to Patti L-L for the link.

The next phase of our FireSmart initiative will be an interactive presentation by our very own Master Gardener Brent Schorr and friends at the fire hall on Saturday Aug. 13<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. I urge everyone to attend – you’ll be glad you did! While the session will focus on choosing the best fire smart vegetation to plant on your property, they will also discuss drought and deer resistant plants and they will put aside time to answer any gardening questions which you may have both before and after the FireSmart Gardening presentation at 11 am.

Finally, the annual firefighters PANCAKE BREAKFAST is being held this year on Sunday September 4<sup>th</sup> at 9 am. Please mark your calendars and join us for this annual End of Summer gathering!



Steve Cruise

Chief PIVFD