Monte Rio Fire Protection District
Challenges and Opportunities Facing Our Fire Safety System

The Monte Rio Fire Protection District (MRFPD) has a 100 + year history of responding to local emergencies when residents and visitors need them the most. This incredible legacy of work and preparedness has been powered by a volunteer fire fighting and emergency response technician force since its inception. Times have changed, and the MRFPD Board is working to adapt to modern realities.

In 2017, the North Bay faced the most dramatic and significant wildfires in the history of our State. The Sonoma County fires alone resulted in 9,000 structures lost, including 5,800 homes and 23 of our neighbors lives. We cannot afford to sit back in the Monte Rio area and wait for nature to take its course. In addition, Monte Rio Fire Chief Steve Baxman, who has dedicated his time and life's work to Monte Rio Fire District for free, will be retiring. It is paramount that we prepare to hire a Fire Chief to step into his very large, life saving shoes.

> **MRFPD's Average Demand:***
> In District Response – 402 calls
> Regional Response – 128 calls
>
> *Demand is averaged over three years.

CHALLENGES WE FACE:

Staffing: Volunteer fire companies have faced a declining volunteer base for the past 20 years, mirroring the declining enrollment of our schools. Increased cost of living, shortages of housing, jobs that increasingly demand a longer commute or a two job work schedule, and a general decline in volunteerism have contributed to the problem.

Regional Response: MRFPD is responding to neighboring Camp Meeker and Cazadero's response calls, as those districts are not adequately staffed either, especially during the day when their limited, yet dedicated volunteers are at work.

Retirement: In our own district, Chief Steve Baxman, whom has been a stalwart volunteer with incredible community service ethic, is often responding to calls by himself. Chief Baxman is also approaching retirement age, and great concern lies in what happens next.

Budget: Monte Rio's budget will not allow the district to hire the full time coverage needed to ensure that we can provide the services our residents have come to expect and rely upon. Monte Rio Fire Department is in danger of becoming merely a rich tradition without the immediate tools necessary to get the job done.

> ## We Want Your Input!
> Contact info@monteriofire.org for a survey
> or take the survey at MonteRioFire.org

OPPORTUNITIES ARE AT OUR DOORSTEP:

Collaboration: Monte Rio Fire Protection District has been increasingly working across district boundaries to share resources and realize efficiencies. Currently the district shares administration services with Cazadero and Russian River Districts. Training is starting to occur regionally as well.

Equipment Upgrades: Local fire departments are often first on the scene to extinguish brush fires – a critical component to preventing wildfires. Monte Rio is using trucks that are decades old, and needs new equipment ranging from protective fire gear for house and brush fires, to oxygen tanks and masks. New funding sources are needed to ensure that we can take care of our own here locally, while enhancing the safety of our community.

Ballot Measure: The Board of Directors of the Monte Rio Fire Protection District is seriously considering a parcel tax to fund fire and emergency response services for its residents. With increasing needs for professional staffing, a recently launched stipend program to ensure volunteer coverage, training needs for the next generation of firefighters and equipment, fire trucks, and infrastructure that is aging out, the District is compelled to approach voters after significant internal and external research of options and needs.

A parcel tax for Monte Rio would create a sustainable and dedicated source of revenue to enhance public safety, decrease response times, and better serve the residents of our district. This type of community investment would allow Monte Rio to implement the optimum solution for the future of our fire protection district.

Rev. 6/27/18