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THETIS ISLAND VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

# FIRE CHIEF'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2015

**Thetis Island Improvement District  
Annual General Meeting - Forbes Hall, Thetis Island  
April 23rd, 2016** **Fire Chief J. Caldbeck**



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## Introduction



The Thetis Island Volunteer Fire Department grew out of the Thetis Island Ratepayers' Association's Fire Brigade due to the foresight and perseverance of Peter Rees. Pete, a retired Vancouver Fire Dept. Captain, knew that bake sales could not support and sustain an efficient and effective emergency response agency, and through a referendum of property owners was able to achieve Letters Patent from the Province in 1982. The Thetis Island Volunteer Fire Department was thus formed, along with the Thetis Island Improvement District to govern the Department and support it through tax revenues. The old equipment and buildings held by the Thetis Island Ratepayers' Association were transferred to the TIVFD for the sum of \$1.00 and the hard work to become a professional fire department began.

Please note that I use the word "professional" in its true meaning: having these qualities, a high level of education, training and skills, and the effectiveness to complete required tasks. Many people think a professional fire fighter refers to somebody in a big city department, paid a union wage to train and respond during shifts to emergencies. That describes a "career" firefighter. The Thetis Island Fire Department trains for and responds to the same types of emergencies as their big city counterparts. The differences are that they are not paid to train or respond, and they do not go home from the job since they are always standing by on the pager. Volunteer Firefighters dedicate a huge amount of time to community service. The TIVFD members are available 24/7 to respond to emergency needs on Thetis Island.

The Thetis Island Volunteer Fire Department has a service area of a little over 2,500 acres (approx. 1,000 hectares). Residential, vacation, commercial and farm properties are intermixed with forest land, creating a rural "interface" island at great risk from wildfire. Our foreshore is mostly rocky with no access, making beach ignited fires difficult to address. We are a destination island for boaters (two marinas) and vacationers and have two summer camp/conference centres and an ocean front commercial resort that attract many visitors during the hot, dry months when wildfire danger is highest. We have no "mutual aid" with other fire departments due to our remote location and the time it takes to get here by ferry. Therefore, the TIVFD must be diligent with our public fire prevention education, our emergency response training, and with our commitment to serve our community as professionals at all times.

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# APPARATUS

*The standard for acceptance of fire apparatus as the apparatus becomes less reliable with age and use has been developed for Canada by the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) and is used to determine the insurance grading of a fire service area. This can also affect the rates of insurance for property owners throughout the community. Fire apparatus vehicles are not continuously in use but are subject to considerable mechanical stress due to the nature of their function, possible overloading, different operators, a variety of road types, and also the lack of availability of repair parts for older trucks.*

**ENGINE 1** is a diesel Freightliner, built by Hub Fire Engines (Abbotsford) in 1999 under the direction of Fire Chief Dave O'Hara and Deputy Chief Harry Armstrong. It has hydraulic brakes rather than air brakes so that a higher licence level is not required to drive it. The Allison transmission is geared for the narrow, steep, winding Thetis Island roads rather than for highway or city driving. It has a Hale mid-ship pump with a foam inductor, and a 600 gallon capacity water tank. We carry two ground ladders, a roof ladder, several hundred feet of 1.5", 2.5" suppression hose, .75" and 1.5" forestry hose, hose appliances, 4 ISI/AVON Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) with spare 2216 psi cylinders, hydraulic and hand extrication tools, First Responder medical equipment, traffic control supplies, a Positive Pressure Ventilation fan (PPV), portable scene lighting, a generator, chain saw, and various small hand tools and safety supplies.



Engine 1 works out of Central Hall on Mission Road. Crew capacity: 3 persons.

Requirements in Canada by Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) for Fire Apparatus in small or remote centres list first line fire trucks as having a twenty year span. Engine 1 can operate as a first line engine until 2020, and then the Improvement District can apply for an exception that if granted, would add another five years to the truck as our front-line pumper. The absolute expiry

date for fire engines required for insurance grading for structural fire suppression is thirty years. The older apparatus may be used from twenty to thirty years as a second line truck in fire responses.

Major 2015 repairs to Engine 1: a pump remote throttle was installed.

**ENGINE 2** is a 4 Wheel Drive 1999 Ford F350 diesel. purchased used by the TIVFD in 2007 from a Maryland Fire Dept. and driven in winter to Thetis Island where it was discovered that the chassis was indeed a 1999 but the pump unit and box structure were many years older. An adjustment was made on the selling price, but nonetheless, the TIVFD ended up with a much older engine than we wanted.

This apparatus is rigged for structure fires as well as being a “bush truck”. It carries two ground ladders, a roof ladder, 1.5” and 2.5” suppression hose, .75” and 1.5” forestry hose, a Darley mid-ship pump with a foam inductor installed in 2007, hose appliances, 2 ISI/ AVON SCBA, with spare 2216 psi cylinders, portable pump, on-board generator, various rescue and hand tools and equipment, and First Responder medical supplies and equipment. Engine 2 is stored in the Pilkey Point Hall and is considered our second-in apparatus for structure fires. It is an excellent bush truck. Crew capacity: 2 persons No major repairs.



**TENDER 1** is a strange looking vehicle. It started out life as a 2000 diesel GMC-T6500 Ryder Lease Truck in the eastern U.S. and was purchased used in 2006 and driven to Thetis in winter. The box was removed and sold, the chassis cut to the length we required, and a 1,000 Imp. gallon water tank manufactured and installed by Geoff Howard Industries in Duncan, BC. A deck pump was installed to meet NFPA requirements and it carries two portable pumps, 3” and 4” intake hose, some 2.5” and 1.5” structural fire hose, forestry hose, portable lighting, hose appliances, various water supply fittings as well as two 1,000 gal. portable water drop tanks. The low profile of the tank make this a very safe HD truck to drive.

Crew capacity: 2 persons. Staged at Central Hall. Major 2015 repairs to Tender: 3 days OOS for block heater installation, exhaust manifold repairs.

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**COMMAND VEHICLE:** In 2011 the Department purchased a sound, no-rust diesel 200 Ford F250 crew cab 4x4 from Dallas, Texas. The Dallas FD generously checked out the vehicle for



us prior to the sale. As usual, we had to drive it back to Thetis in the dead of winter. We kept the original colour, HD grill, headache rack and bumpers and added a fire service

radio, a light bar, siren, tow hitch and GPS as well as TIVFD decals. Used primarily by the Fire Chief or Duty Officer for FD errands and officer responses on the island, it is also fitted with a 100 gallon water tank and pump, some rescue equipment, and medical supplies including an AED. The transmission was replaced in June 2015, and a regulation red /white light bar replaced the police red /blue lights that were mistakenly installed in 2011. This vehicle allows us to transport crew to an emergency scene, and acts as a quick-response truck during wildfire season. Crew capacity: 5. Vehicle is normally parked at the Fire Chief's residence for ready response for medical and other emergencies. Major 2015 Command Vehicle repairs: transmission re & re., new water pump.



**RESCUE 1** looks like an ambulance, is fitted out like an ambulance, but since Fire Departments in BC don't run an ambulance service, this vehicle is our Rescue, the workhorse of the Department. It is a diesel 4x4 1995 Chevrolet K-3000, purchased used in late December 2007 from Wilderness Medics in Phoenix, Arizona. Originally an ambulance stationed at the Miramar Air Force Base in California, it had very little rust and all the electrical wiring etc. was specced to military standards. Although not technically an ambulance, it is fitted out with several types of Ferno stretchers, oxygen, AED, medical supplies and medical equipment. Unlike a BCAS ambulance, it also carries two SCBA, rope rescue equipment, portable lighting, some hand tools, and traffic control equipment. This vehicle responds to all emergency call-outs and can be used to carry extra fire fighters to a fire scene. It is the hub for "rest & rehab" at extended fire emergencies and the TIVFD Auxiliary has access to the supplies if needed. On medical responses, our First Responders "extricate and rendezvous" with BCAS paramedics, which means that our team will take you from your home or scene of your medical/trauma distress and rendezvous with paramedics at the community dock or our helicopter landing site and transfer care. We outfit the patient compartment of the Rescue to mimic BCAS vehicles to enhance efficient continuity of care in the rare case the paramedics need to be transported from the dock to the scene. We have an excellent working relationship with BCAS Station 149 in Chemainus. Major 2015 repairs: Dual wheel replaced and new tire purchased, compartment heater repairs, emergency light repairs, headlights replaced and fog lights installed, major servicing in March, new radiator installed.



Total 2015 Litres of Diesel Pumped (all vehicles) : 2,147.8

## ***BUILDINGS***

The Thetis Island Fire Department has two fire halls: the main hall (“Central Hall”) located at 296 Mission Road behind Forbes Hall community centre; and a satellite hall (“Pilkey Hall”) located on the other side of Moore Hill at 207 Pilkey Point Road. Pilkey Hall can be described as a rudimentary garage and exists to house Engine 2.

The land where Central Hall sits was acquired through a very generous donation from Barbara and John Duffield, who severed a portion of their adjacent property for the benefit of the community. The Pilkey Hall land was purchased at a fire sale price from the Hunter family through the efforts of Don Hunter, one of the original Improvement District Trustees.

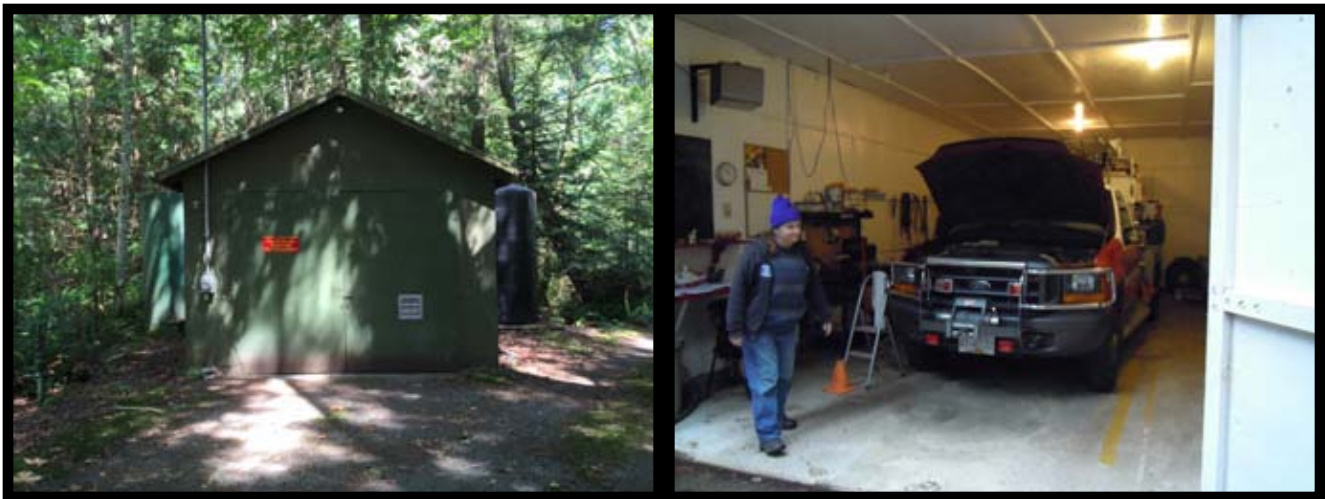


**Central Hall** has three bays, a drill room for training, a small office, and an even smaller radio room. The hall was built with volunteer labour in 1985 with a \$15,000. grant from Provincial gaming money for materials. There was no additional cost to the taxpayer. In later years and again with firefighter volunteer labour, an emergency generator, an Auxiliary shed, and five 2,000 Imperial gallon water tanks were added, all with donated funding. There is no water well on the Fire Department property and rainwater is collected from the roof and used for grey water applications as well as stored for fire suppression needs. One inside tap is connected to a treatment system for potable water needs. In 2015, with a donation from the Pardee family, a shower facility was finally installed. It’s an outside shower, but is a very welcome addition to the hall. The new insulated bay doors installed in 2014 had not been finished correctly and in 2015 the issue was fixed, resulting in BC Hydro savings during the electrical heating months. Simple maintenance of the buildings and grounds are accomplished by TIVFD members volunteering to see to the upkeep. Major maintenance is contracted out. A new “front door” was installed in 2015, replacing the interior door that had been installed in 1985. Fireproof steel, and with a window, the new alarm system with camera and audio, adds to hall security. Firefighters laid a concrete pad in front of the new entryway.



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The **Pilkey Hall**, built in 1981 by the volunteer firefighters for \$6,607., is located at Lot 207 on Pilkey Point Road. It is an auxiliary garage that houses Engine 2. It is heated during the winter, a lesson learned back in 1983 when the 1948 GMC Pumper that was stored there at the time froze and its manifold cracked. The Pilkey Hall has no telephone, but electricity is connected. The residents of the Pilkey Point area raised funds in the early 1980s for a fire truck to be stationed on “their side” of Moore Hill in case of emergency. The TIVFD has always honoured the commitment to those early fundraisers by keeping the hall operational. The 18% grade up Moore Hill and the winding, narrow roads, especially in winter, make road travel to that area of the island a slow and very careful proposition. Firefighters who live in the Pilkey Point area respond to the Pilkey Hall and drive Engine 2 to emergency scenes on any part of the island, but are the de facto “first in” apparatus at a Pilkey Point area fire scene. The Pilkey fire hall has an old metal 2,500 gallon water tank on the road side that is connected to the roof gutters. There is also an antique hand pump that is no longer in use. Hidden on the other side of Pilkey Hall is another water storage tank, plastic, and holding 5,000 Imperial gallons and is also connected to the rain gutter system. The Pilkey Hall is a LERN (Local Emergency Response Neighbourhood) staging area in case of a major disaster. There is no washroom facility at the hall.



The Thetis Island Improvement District undertook an inspection of Pilkey Hall in 2015 with the focus on estimating the usefulness of the 35 year old wooden structure or if a replacement building was warranted. The conclusion of the Board was that there are still several years of utility in the structure if repairs such as replacing rotted lumber are diligently addressed yearly.

# TRAINING

The TIVFD trains every Wednesday evening out of Central Hall on Mission Road from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. throughout the year, and also holds extra weekend training hours for lengthier drills. The TIVFD also takes advantage of off-island instructors travelling to Thetis to facilitate training workshops, and we send fire fighters to other training courses at various locations on Vancouver Island or the Lower Mainland as necessary.



In 2015, we sent Rookie FF Chad Kerr to the Esquimalt Naval Base for a week of training in Light Urban Search & Rescue (LUSAR). Participants came from both the military and volunteer fire departments and the daily 8 hour training included post disaster victim extrication, structure stabilization for rescues, and problem solving when minimal equipment is available. As part of our ongoing Disaster Planning Program, we were pleased that Chad volunteered to attend and bring those skills back to Thetis to share. Several other members have already been trained in Rapid Damage Assessment for Ensuring Post Disaster Building Safety and the LUSAR course contributes to the Department's expertise.



The TIVFD is an active member of the Vancouver Island Fire Fighters Association and takes advantage of their Spring and Fall Training Weekends, facilitated by host fire halls on Vancouver Island. The 2015 Spring Training was held in Errington and offered workshops in forcible entry, the SCBA maze, and Superior Shuttle Service. For VIFFA Fall Training, several members travelled north to Comox to train at the Comox Fire Rescue/JIBC Training Centre.

Courses included rapid building search, vehicle fires, exterior fire suppression tactics, and fire fighter self-rescue. VIFFA courses, although not certified, are an efficient and cost-effective way of giving our newer members experience in tactical operations and in networking with firefighters from neighbouring departments.



Other 2015 off-island training: Capt. Dave Tarris and Lieut. Peter Luckham attended a several day Train The Trainer conference sponsored by the BC Fire Training Officers' Association in Abbotsford, where they were certified to instruct and evaluate the new Provincial Training Standards (the OFC Playbook) being rolled out in 2015-2016. Fire Chief Caldbeck attended an intense 1-day workshop in Cedar on Emergency Services PTSD awareness.

Lieutenant Peter Luckham attended a 20 hour (3 day) course on Emergency Scene Management in Nanoose.

In December, Chief Caldbeck, Deputy Chief Peter Luckham and Capt. Tegan Luckham attended an 8-hour workshop at the Esquimalt Fire Department on Obstetrics for First Responders.



Chemainus Fire Chief Neil Rukus and Capt. Kevin Millard travelled to Thetis to facilitate a low-slope over-the-bank rescue workshop. Low slope rescue is part of the training for motor vehicle incident (MVI) response.



Malahat Fire Chief Rob Patterson and Malahat Training Officer Tanya Patterson spent two days with the TIVFD in June, training all members to NFPA 1071 Wildland Fire Fighting for Structural Fire Fighters. We used our annual combined TIVFD/ Auxiliary Wildfire drill for this training opportunity, and ran a full scenario in Meadow Valley. Both Malahat Officers again returned to Thetis in the Fall, this time to deliver the Electrical Safety for First Responders course and examination to our members.



Kelley Kaye, from Northwest Safety Solutions, serviced and inspected all of our ISI/ AVON SCBA units and stayed after the testing was completed to give all attending members a very informative in-service on SCBA trouble-shooting and procedures on the fire ground.

Regular training on Thetis Island this year was enhanced by a new “members” site on the [thetislandfire.ca](http://thetislandfire.ca) website. The Training Officers post pre-exam materials, videos of interest, and relevant chapters of The Essentials of Fire Fighting. Peter Luckham designed the forum to be interactive, and will be a valuable asset to training into the future..

Drill night focus in 2015 notes: anatomy of a standard fire call; incident response table top exercise for typical structure fire; safety theory and industrial safety history; ropes & knots, difficult terrain extrications; ladders; pumps & pumping; Marina Fire Tactics; wildfire / interface response; driver training; water tending & drafting; hose lays & appliances; small tool procedures; fire streams & hose handling; pump priming & drop tank deployment; SCBA/PPE; fire structure search procedures; Disaster Pre-Planning; winter driving techniques for emergency apparatus; nurse (tandem) pumping; scene lighting; fire behaviour; chimney fire evolutions; incident command procedures; communications; and violence in the workplace.

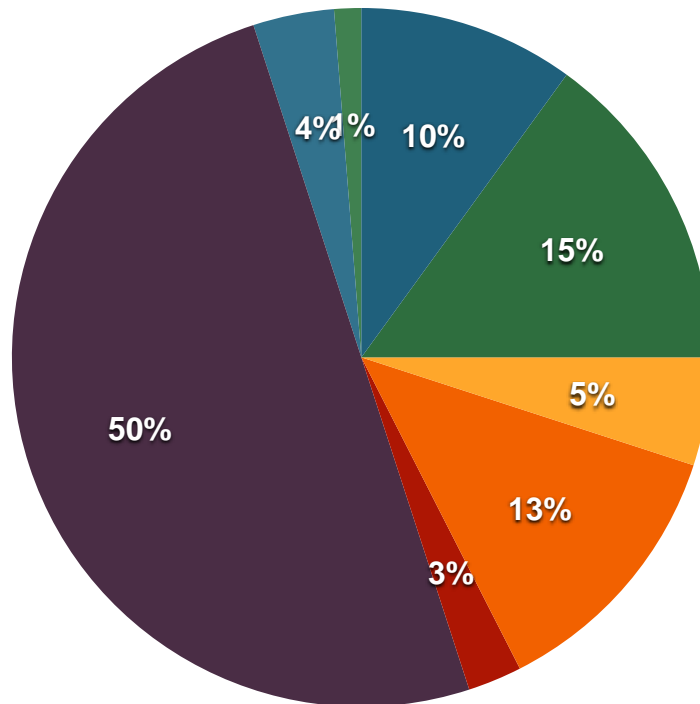
In-house First Responder training focussed on: extrication procedures at MVIs; Pulse Oximetry and Sphygmomanometer procedures; trauma splinting; environmental injuries (particularly heat stress/exhaustion); CPR/ AED refresher; Rescue 1 equipment orientation; Primary & Secondary Medical Assessment procedures; spinal immobilization; child trauma and paediatric assessment; and medical/ psychological causes of scene violence by patients /bystanders..



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# 2015 OPERATIONS

● FIRE      ● HYDRO      ● ALARMS      ● SMOKE INVST      ● PUB ASST  
● MEDICAL      ● 1ST AID      ● SAR



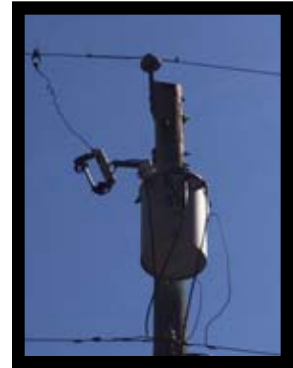
## EMERGENCY RESPONSES 2015

❖ FIRE	8
❖ HYDRO LINES DOWN	12
❖ ALARMS ACTIVATED	4
❖ RCMP/PUBLIC ASSIST	2
❖ SMOKE INVESTIGATION	10
❖ MEDICAL ASSIST (BCAS)	40
❖ FIRST AID	3
❖ SEARCH & RESCUE	1
❖ TOTAL = 80	



## 2015 OPERATIONS

Telus' Paging system was terminated in late 2014 and for 2015 the TIVFD had to go back to the old paper system of issuing Fire Permits and keeping track of fires and smoke from April to November, the months permits are required. Permits were again available on-line at [www.thetislandfire.ca](http://www.thetislandfire.ca) and starting in April they were made available in person on Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Solid Waste Facility (Garbage Dump) during their operating hours of 9am - 12pm. Community Volunteers Vicki Walker and Andy Lamb took on that task for the department. In 2015 we gave out over 200 Fire Permits during the entire April to November Fire Season, although Yard Waste Burning was prohibited from June onwards due to the weather conditions. Campfires were restricted from mid-July through August. The Fire Permit system is also an educational tool, reminding users of the responsibilities and regulations regarding outdoor fires. On June 5th the Hazard Rating was raised to HIGH and EXTREME followed shortly thereafter.



### MEDICAL RESPONSES

Abdominal Pain	4
Allergic Reaction	3
Chest Pain/Cardiac	4
Croup/Paediatric S.O.B.	2
Diabetic/Hypo-Hyperglycemia	1
Fall - Fracture/Dislocation	8
Fall - Spinal Immobilization	3
Head Trauma	2
Minor Trauma/Laceration	1
Overdose	1
Short of Breath (S.O.B.)	3
Sick Person	3
Stroke/CVA/TIA	2
Syncope	1
Unconscious N.Y.D.	
First Aid Assist (no transfer) [# finger/splint; knee sprain; ring removal]	3

TOTAL MEDICAL ASSIST RESPONSES 2015 = 43 {40 were transferred off-island}

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The summer of 2015 started early, with temperatures rising in May, and very little rainfall after the wet and relatively warm winter. The forest dried out quickly and moderate winds predominated, adding to the fire hazard. Thetis Island has large areas of dense, mixed coastal forest full of ladder fuel, and coarse, woody debris litters the dense understory. There has not been a serious wildfire within living memory on Thetis, and the forest fuel load increases yearly. All residences on Thetis Island are deemed “urban interface”, and therefore destructive wildfire is of huge concern to the Fire Department and the land owners. Fire Prevention and Education is one of the TIVFD priorities, and we err on the side of caution when considering rescinding Fire Permits and posting Fire Bans. While taking into account that many summer visitors and permanent residents alike have always burned yard waste and had summer campfires, and that the commercial campground on the south west side of the island offers a typical summer camping experience that includes campfires, we have to balance the risk of our small department, with no immediate mutual aid and limited resources, with the hazard of sparks or embers escaping and igniting a wildfire. The BC Forest Service has been recommending UL or CSA approved propane gas “campfire” appliances that have a limited flame height and throw no sparks or smoke, and the TIVFD fully supports this modern approach to summer enjoyment with a lower risk. Approved propane gas campfire appliances were allowed on Thetis during the complete fire ban. We hope that future years will see the proliferation of these appliances and the decline of summer outdoor wood-fuelled campfires.



All around Thetis Island wildfires abounded. There were almost daily responses from Ladysmith, Duncan, South End, Chemainus, Cedar, North Oyster, Maple Bay, Cowichan Bay and Sahtlam (our neighbouring Fire Departments) for small to medium grass fires, bush fires and forest fires. Further afield, the Elaho, Port Alberni area and Lytton Fires were very destructive multi-week fires that added to the smoke burden in our air shed. One particular week the smoke was so thick on Thetis it practically blocked out the sun and the TIVFD was requested to investigate in case it had a local origin. Air quality warnings lasted for several weeks.

Thankfully our entire community takes wildfire extremely seriously and reports smoke or the smell of smoke during Fire Season to 911 for us to investigate. In one case, a couple of itinerant kayakers were found to have been camping on a remote south side beach with an illegal fire despite the EXTREME fire hazard. Another response was happily more palatable...a neighbour reported the smell of burning wood and upon investigation it turned out to be a cedar-planked sockeye on a deck BBQ. The responding members first had a taste of the evidence before we returned to the original caller and thanked them for their diligence.



The Fire Chief also fielded several requests to investigate vehicles parked on long dried grass at the sides of our roads, a real fire hazard from hot catalytic converters, and also chainsawing on private land during the hottest hours of the day when the Province had already closed to the woods to logging. Reminders were offered about these hazards and risks to our island community during wildfire season. We also responded to illegal fireworks, an illegal burn pile full of garbage next to dry bush, an incinerator fire and an abandoned and a still smouldering campfire on Birchell Hill during the Provincial and Local Fire Ban. In the middle of August we were also tasked to investigate a recreational rocket launch. The rocketeers had not realized that black-powder propellant rockets are also banned by the Province during fire season and are actually more dangerous than regular fireworks for starting fires.

Continuing with the TIVFD Water Storage Project, we purchased and installed another 5,000 gallon water tank on Highways right-of-way at the Highways yard on Foster Point Road. The installation was again done by volunteer labour, and allows ready access and turnaround space for the Tender. It had just been levelled, valve installed, and filled when it was damaged by some sort of vehicle or trailer. Luckily the gouge was not deep enough to affect the integrity of the tank, and Grant Gordon was able to install reflective posts around it to deflect the next inattentive driver. We were also pleased to have property owner / fire fighter Alex Rozewicz offer a location for the next 5,000 gallon fire suppression water storage tank at Pilkey Point. We hope to purchase and have it installed in 2016 in time for Fire Season. The other storage tanks are located at Central Hall (10,000 gallons), Pilkey Hall (7,500 gallons), the corner of Mission and North Cove Roads (5,000 gallons), giving us 27,500 gallons of stored water on accessible roadways in 2015. Stored water is extremely important on Thetis and many residents have taken advantage of the TIVFD offer to supply a fire department fitting to couple their private water storage to our Engines in case of emergency. The Fire Underwriters Survey states that the required fire flow for interface structures on Thetis Island may require as much as 2,250 gallons per minute when considering forest exposures. Water storage and water access is an ongoing priority and acquisition and installation of tanks in our driest areas will continue into the future.

Another big part of the TIVFD mandate is Public Education on Fire Prevention and Life Safety. In 2015 we applied to and won a \$500 prize from the



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National Community Wildfire Preparation Program which we put towards purchasing roof-mounted sprinklers and equipment for Forbes Hall Community Centre in case of wildfire. We also hosted the National Community Wildfire Preparation Day Event on May 2nd at Forbes, where 65 residents gathered to hear presentations from the TIVFD on Fire Smart Communities, disaster preparation, Ministry of Forests response procedures to wildfire, ham radio operation during disasters, Emergency Social Services response, landscaping tips for lowering fire risk, and Local Emergency Neighbourhood Network resources on Thetis. Assisted by Morgan Boghean of MOF Cobble Hill Fire Base, Mary Forbes of ESS, Petra Accipiter of LERN and Simone Luckham of ARCTIC, the workshop also featured videos, pamphlets and door prizes.



The TIVFD takes part annually in Fire Prevention Week in October by running a Thetis Island School response with an educational component. The school children take part in the drill and then ask questions of the firefighters about equipment and we talk about fire safety. Concurrently we run a smoke alarm project for residents and offer assistance with obtaining new alarms or replacing old ones.



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During the Fire Smart presentation at Forbes Hall in 2015, we couldn't help but notice the difficulty people had in the daytime viewing of our educational fire prevention films with the old projector in the community centre. We applied for a grant to replace the Forbes Hall media equipment from FM Global International, and were delighted to be awarded the grant to further Fire Prevention education on Thetis. The equipment was purchased, and would be permanently installed by TICA in 2016.

Another safety initiative was the Reflective Driveway Lot Number Post Project in 2015 where we paired with Aggressive Fire Safety to make address signs easily available. The reflective posts are visible from both directions and are easily seen at night from a distance down the road, making an emergency response to an address that much more efficient. Many property owners supported the initiative by purchasing and placing the posts at their driveway entrance. Unfortunately there are still many lots without any posted address or have small signs that are overgrown and not visible, and time will be wasted if we are called to respond to those addresses.

The TIVFD also participates in the annual BC Shake Out, where communities practice what to do during a large earthquake event. We respond to the fire halls "when the shaking stops" at the pre-arranged time on the October date and complete a response drill as if it were a real earthquake. The school also takes part in this drill.

Yearly, in September, TIVFD firefighters present safety and local information to the incoming Capernwray Harbour Bible School students to help ensure they know what to do if an emergency occurs and how to get help. For most of these students it is their first time on Thetis and they don't know how our 911/TIVFD system works.

The TIVFD hosts the now annual Flu Shot Clinic at the start of Influenza Season and this year more than 65 people took advantage of the on-island venue at Forbes Hall. The TIVFD Auxiliary puts on a great coffee service for the "patients" after they have received their inoculation, and the VIHA nurses get everyone shot-up in under an hour in order to make the next ferry off the island. Proficiency and efficiency are now the hallmarks of the annual clinic. The Thetis Island Community Fund supports our efforts by funding the goodies.

Two important TIVFD events occur in June every year: the annual Combined TIVFD/Auxiliary Wildfire Drill and the TIVFD Pot Luck Picnic. This year the Combined Drill was held in Meadow Valley where we simulated a wild fire response, and included the Auxiliary Water Supply Team, the Auxiliary Traffic Control Team, and the Auxiliary Rest & Rehab Team. Auxiliary members are support personnel that may be called in to assist with non-"hot zone" activities during a large or long emergency event. This frees up our trained fire fighters to apply their skills to the more dangerous aspects of an emergency response.

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## TIVFD AUXILIARY

The TIVFD formed the Auxiliary program several years ago as a proactive measure to offset our chronic firefighter staffing shortage. As a support team to assist in non-hazardous activities at emergency incidents, the auxiliary members take over certain important jobs that free up more firefighters for the “hot-zone” activities. Also, certain support team members can be requested to provide meals to firefighters working extended incidents.



There are at present three Auxiliary Teams active with us: The Rest & Rehabilitation Team, managed by Merry Gooding; the Water Supply Team, managed by James Alton; and the Traffic Control Team, managed by Kat Urton. Auxiliary members also receive training



specific for their duties, but those Auxiliary workshops are held only a few times a year. The TIVFD appreciates the support these community volunteers give us when we are stretched. The Combined Drill is the big opportunity for us to work together at a simulated emergency response. The Pot Luck Picnic & BBQ for the TIVFD, Auxiliary, and their guests was held at Forbes Hall grounds in June.



## OTHER TIVFD ACTIVITIES

Other TIVFD activities in 2015 included participation in the Cowichan Valley Fire Prevention Day in front of the Duncan Walmart, where many local Departments joined together to showcase the Fire Safety House, show off their apparatus and equipment, and meet the public to talk about volunteering for their community.



Chief Caldbeck represented the TIVFD at the May 2015 funeral march and service in Chilliwack for the Line of Duty Death of Volunteer Fire Fighter Brian Smyth, Columbia Valley Fire Dept., who died of a cardiac emergency

sustained while fighting a structure fire at Cultus Lake. Chief Caldbeck and Deputy Chief Shelford also attended the formal memorial service for (Ret) Mill Bay Fire Chief Peter Balding with other Cowichan Valley fire department members, at the Mill Bay Fire Hall..



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In July 2015, we received an impassioned phone call from the Penelakut Band Office asking if the TIVFD could come and assist with the desperate search for a missing teen on their island. We do not normally work outside of our service area, due to liability and insurance issues, but with the permission of the Improvement District, and after having contacted enough other TIVFD members to ensure a Thetis emergency response if needed, six TIVFD members participated in the ground and water search, accompanied by Chris Fordham, Capernwray Harbour Bible Centre Manager and several of his staff. Although the search sadly did not have a positive outcome, we were pleased to be able to help out our close neighbours in a time of crisis.

The new ECOMM dispatch system was inaugurated in November, and when residents dialled 911 for the initial Emergency Dispatcher, they were no longer talking with Nanaimo. ECOMM is situated in Vancouver, and now routes 911 calls from Thetis Island to the required agency...RCMP Ladysmith, Fire Dispatch Nanaimo, or BCAS Victoria. The TIVFD is then dispatched according to call type. This changeover for the lower part of the Province was not without its glitches and the Duty Officer, Capt. Dave Tarris, spent two days at Central Hall assisting ECOMM with the procedure.

The TIVFD also participated in the community November 11th Remembrance Day service at Forbes hall, and assisted with traffic control (Aux) for much-loved community member Gwen Hunter's Celebration of Life.

The Hosers (TIVFD) lost again to the TICS in the annual soccer game, despite a valiant effort. We are just not as fast as the under 10 team!

Chief Caldbeck and soon to be Deputy Chief Luckham attended the Fire Chiefs Association of BC (FCABC) Conference in Penticton. Caldbeck is Chair of the Women & Minorities in the Fire Service Committee of the FCABC

Improvement District Trustee Keith Rush (Chair) and Chief Caldbeck and Deputy Chief Luckham attended a three day LGMA Conference in Parksville in the Fall.

Caldbeck also sits on the Executive Board as Vice President of the Cowichan Valley Fire Chiefs Association (CVFCA) and also the Executive Board (Director) of the Vancouver Island Fire Fighters Association (VIFFA) for 2015/2016.

## **2015 PERSONNEL**

We had several personnel changes in 2015, most notably the retirement of, after 16 years of dedicated service, Deputy Chief Graeme Shelford. Graeme retired on his 75th birthday, on a

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drill night, and we were able to fete him with pizza and cake before participating in a marine fire scenario. To remind him of his long service from fire fighter to Captain to Deputy Chief, we assembled a book of his fire service photographs and presented it to him at the November Awards Banquet.

Our Junior Fire Fighter for most of 2015 was Mikaela MacMullin from Hudson Island and she resigned from the Department in September to live in Chemainus. However, we gained a



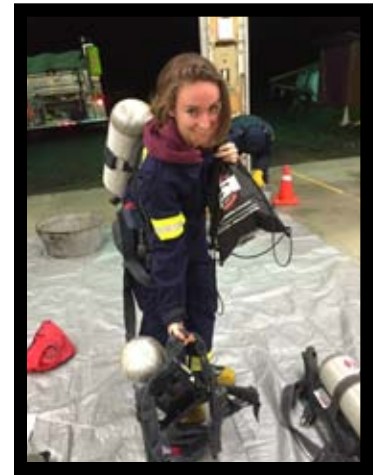
Junior Fire Fighter in September, 15 year old Loughlin Kerr from Ireland when he came to live with his dad, also in the TIVFD.

Richard Hunt, TIVFD Auxiliary member, became a full member of the TIVFD in 2015. Both Junior Fire Fighters Aislinn Cottell and Jacob Frankel became adult members (Rookies) in the Department in September, but both took sabbaticals to attend University in Nanaimo and live off-island during the terms. They made themselves available for drills and emergency responses when on term breaks and holidays. Fire Fighter Noah Bond resigned in December.

When Graeme Shelford retired in mid-September, Lieutenant Peter Luckham became the new Deputy Chief of the Department.

The Annual TIVFD Appreciation Dinner in November was well attended by members and their guests and once again Capt. Dave Tarris received the Bob Challenger Award for most drills and emergency responses attended in the year. Retired Chiefs Pete Rees and Harry Armstrong were awarded "Lifetime Membership", an honour long overdue these founders of the Department. An Award of Merit was presented to Rookie Fire Fighter Christian (Zinger) Zinser for his outstanding work as a First Responder, and the 2015 Fire Fighter of the Year Chiefs' Award was bestowed upon Rookie Chad Kerr for his dedicated service and enthusiasm for training.





2015 TIVFD ROSTER	
Fire Chief Jeannine Caldbeck	Fire Fighter Gerhard Wanney
Deputy Chief Graeme Shelford (to Sept. 15)	Fire Fighter John Gall
Deputy Chief Peter Luckham (after Sept. 15)	Rookie Fire Fighter Travis Clayton
Lieutenant Peter Luckham (to Sept.15)	Rookie Fire Fighter Chad Kerr
Captain Dave Tarris (Duty Officer)	Rookie Fire Fighter Richard (Tiny) Hunt
Captain Tegan Luckham (FR Instructor)	Junior FF/Rookie FF Aislinn Cottell
Sr. Fire Fighter Tim French (Comms Technical)	Junior FF/Rookie FF Jacob Frankel
Sr. Fire Fighter Alex Rozewicz	Junior FF Mikaela MacMullin
Sr. Fire Fighter Matt Hess (Comms Operations)	Junior FF Loughlin Kerr
Sr. Fire Fighter Tom Milliken (Training Asst.)	
Fire Fighter Denis Gagnon (Safety Officer)	
Fire Fighter Noah Bond	
Fire Fighter Ralf Kempe	

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*In closing, I wish to thank all of our Thetis Island Volunteer Fire Fighters for their tremendous work throughout 2015 to keep our island and its residents and visitors safe, and for their unselfish gift of their time to train to the high standards our Department sets, and for their efficient, professional and compassionate responses to all sorts of emergencies at all times of the day and night. As I enter my twentieth year in the TIVFD, ten years as Chief Fire Officer, I am in awe of these dedicated men and women who continue to volunteer despite the pressures of modern times and responsibilities. The support they receive from their families and neighbours to continue this essential service is truly appreciated. The Thetis Island Volunteer Fire Department is a vital part of the fabric of our community. The greatest assets of the Department are not the expensive fire trucks and equipment but are the individual members who train for and respond to your bad day. Please consider joining our Essential Service team.*

*Fire Chief Jeannine Caldbeck  
April 23, 2016.*



