

Are Your Tax Dollars Supporting the TCVFD?

Maybe not. Although .03% of the assessed value of your property and improvements is collected each year in your annual property tax payment, only that tax money from property owners in the Trinity Center Community Services District (CSD) supports the Trinity Center Volunteer Fire Department (TCVFD).

A property with a value of \$80,000 contributes \$24.00 a year to the CSD, \$200,000 contributes \$60/year, and \$500,000 contributes \$150/year.

TCVFD's first responsibility is to the property owners within the District; see the map to the right. The District contains 465 parcels, 3,200 acres, and 354 unique owners. Property owners within the CSD enjoy a Class 5 Public Protection Classification for fire insurance based on fire alarm handling, fire department capability, and water supply, resulting in lower fire insurance rates. *(For more information on ratings, please visit www.isomitigation.com)*

The Trinity Center CSD was created in 1961. At that time, the entire area was checker-boarded with sections (640-acre blocks) of private land and federal forest. Only sections that were private at that time were eligible for inclusion in the District. Residents in sections south of Norwegian Meadows opted out of the District formation.

Also not included in the District are the Trinity Center Elementary School, Trinity Center airport, and KOA Campground since they are, or were, within a federally owned section.

Today, TCVFD answers medical and fire calls all the way from East Fork Bridge to Cedar Stock Resort—far outside of the District's area of responsibility and funding. This extended "Sphere of Influence," which includes Covington Mill, Long Canyon, and Lake Forest, contains an additional 2,743 acres in 369 parcels owned by 257 unique owners.

The .03% property tax collected from property owners in the Sphere of Influence areas goes to the Trinity County General Fund, not to the Fire Department. The County does not use this money to provide fire fighting or medical service.

The primary fire provider for property outside of the District is CAL FIRE (the new name for CDF). There is no medical provider for this area and properties have the lowest fire rating—Class 10 (no recognized protection.)—typically resulting in higher fire insurance premiums.

Because service by CAL FIRE can be spotty, TCVFD rolls to all calls outside of its district, when possible. The TCVFD volunteers take their oath of Honor and Safety seriously and will not let their neighbors go unprotected. Only three times in the last ten years has the fire department not been able to respond outside of its district.

The CSD receives a little more than \$40,000 per year for all operations. Most of the tax money income is used to maintain, house, and fuel existing equipment, pay ever increasing liability and workmen's compensation insurance, maintain department buildings, train fire fighters and first responders, and match grant funding for new equipment and safety and medical gear.

The cost to train and equip a firefighter is approximately \$7,400. The cost of fire fighting equipment is also increasing—a fire pumper costs in the range of \$150,000 - \$400,000, ambulance \$80,000 - \$150,000, and advanced life support medical equipment \$10,000 - \$30,000. *(Source: National Volunteer Fire Council Fact Sheet, 2005.)*

With department and service district expenses rising faster than property values (post and pre-Prop 13) and no foreseen change in the tax revenue rate, it is essential that all TCVFD customers help where they can to insure the fire department's operation standards, continued growth, and ability to serve all members of our community.



Trinity Center CSD (in yellow)