

A blueprint to success: GPD prepares comprehensive fire plans

Written by By Kimberly Gaona Sun Correspondent
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While firefighters are busy running to save citizens lives, whether it be automobile crashes, fires, exposure to hazardous materials or just a false alarm, the administration is gearing up for anything that could happen.

Chief Eric Babcock said that he has to look at what could cause fires.

“My job is to assess the risk,” Babcock said.

He said that he has to have his firefighters and staff monitor the vegetation that has grown throughout the rain, because that could dry out and become a fire hazard.

He also has to have plans in place as Gallup has over 70 trains coming through on a daily basis and a refinery that sits on the outskirts of the town.

Jesus Morales said that the firefighters are also busy preparing fire plans within their districts.

“They are going out into the districts in order to identify any hazards – basically putting in a game plan in case of an emergency,” Morales said.

He said that the firefighters are going to businesses and schools and mapping the locations of hydrants, deciding where to place the fire trucks, where to place the ladders in order to vent.

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While the first priority is buildings with over three stories as well as schools and assisted living facilities, Morales assures that it will not stop there.

“Every business will eventually be pre-fire planned,” he said.

Firefighters are doing sketches of buildings to show access, windows, basements. Morales said that while these may not seem dangerous during business hours, at night time when there is no electricity or light and fire has caused any type of structural damage, these things could be highly dangerous for firefighters. He said that the Insurance Service Organization is already requiring businesses to have a pre-fire plan in place at opening and then again annually to keep up with any changes to the businesses.

“People may see a fire truck, a ladder up or firefighters walking around, it’s not an inspection,” he said.

“Basically they are getting a plan together before an emergency happens.”

Morales said that every district will be doing this for their district.

“It helps us to be a little bit safer, to make sure everyone goes home, that’s what we are doing,” he said.