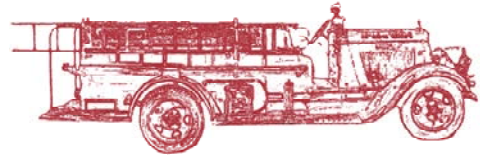
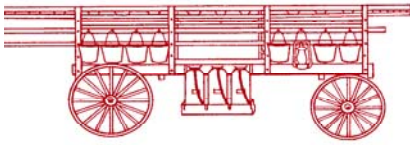


# CAMBRIA CSD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Established 1887



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## History of the Cambria Fire Department

The Cambria CSD Fire Department began its history 129 years ago as the Hope Volunteer Fire Company. The Hope Volunteer Fire Company was organized in 1877 to provide fire protection to the village of Cambria, a small but growing town south of William Randolph Hearst's ranch holding and his developing dream building project.

A hook and ladder wagon was ordered from Chicago and arrived in Cambria in pieces, by wagon. John Eubanks, a local Cambria blacksmith and wheelwright, assembled this first piece of fire equipment for the Hope Volunteer Fire Company. When this piece of equipment was placed in service it provided an additional resource for the Fire Company over and above their leather buckets and hook tipped poles. This new 'hook and ladder' wagon is pictured in our letterhead on the above left. The ladder wagon provided brass hand pump cans, oil burning lanterns, more leather buckets, ladders to reach upper levels of the growing Cambria town/village, and more hooks to pull roofs or building siding down to extinguish fires. This wagon was hand pulled by the 28 initial volunteer members of the Hope Volunteer Fire Company. They were dispatched to calls by the ringing of bells strategically placed around town. Water was used from animal troughs, creeks, cisterns, and wells that were located all around town. In 1885 musically oriented members of the Hope Volunteer Fire Company joined other residents to form Cambria's first marching band.

In 1889 a large fire erupted in the 'commercial' or downtown area of what is now the East Village. The Proctor Hotel, a 3-story building located at the corner of Bridge and Main Streets, and most of the East Village commercial area burned to the ground in spite of the valiant efforts of the Hope Volunteer Fire Company and over a hundred citizen volunteers. Several residential homes were lost as well. The reason for the loss was determined to be a lack of adequate water supply, antiquated and too little firefighting equipment, and finally a lack of volunteer firefighting personnel. Cambria residents and Hope Fire Company Volunteers worked together to remedy these problems.

The human pulled 'hook and ladder' wagon remained in service until 1933, when the Cambria community purchased the first engine powered 'motorized pumper' truck. This first fire engine was a 1931 Dodge, which is also pictured above in our letterhead as the vehicle on the right side. The Cambria firehouse was located near the current home of the Main Street Bank of America, near Burton and Main Street.

In 1933 the Hope Volunteer Fire Company/Cambria Fire Department became the Cambria Fire Protection District. With a publicly elected Board of Directors, an appointed Fire Chief and a group of dedicated volunteers they continued to provide fire protection and emergency services to the Cambria and North Coast area.

The Cambria Fire Protection District received 'General Fund' property tax monies to operate and maintain the fire station, perform vehicle maintenance and repair as well as equipment purchases necessary to keep the department operating.

In 1940 the fire station was moved to 4039 Burton Drive, next to the Brambles Restaurant. During the 1940's and early 50's several of the fire department's volunteers were also volunteers with the Cambria Chamber of Commerce Volunteer Ambulance service. Later in 1951 the Cambria Community Healthcare District assumed the operation of the Cambria ambulances. The Cambria Fire Protection District and the new Cambria CHD ambulance shared volunteer personnel, as many of the volunteers were firefighters who volunteered on the ambulance, and many of the ambulance volunteers joined the fire department.

In 1950 the Cambria Fire Protection District was a signatory to the 'new' State of California 'California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement'. This California Master Mutual Aid Agreement allowed for Fire/Rescue agencies all over the State of California to request, receive and provide mutual aid resources in the event of an emergency that overwhelmed the local area or regions resources.

Initially many of the Fire Chiefs were retired Southern California Fire Officers, and so many of the Cambria Fire District's 'newer fire equipment' (used fire apparatus), came here from Los Angeles City/County, and other Southern California cities and Fire agencies.

In the mid sixties Cambria Firefighters began attending Red Cross First Aid courses and became certified in standard first aid.

Around 1967 the Cambria Fire Protection District hired its' first 40-hour paid Fire Chief. The Fire Chief was required to respond to calls after hours and live in town. This was the department's first full-time paid employee.

In the 1970's the Cambria Fire Protection District began responding on a regular basis to vehicle accidents for patient extrication. During this year the State of California amended the State's Mutual Aid Agreement to become the California Emergency Services Act. This streamlined and enhanced mutual aid requests and responses throughout the State of California, so the State was better prepared to respond to an manage single or multiple large emergencies.

In 1976 the Local Agency Formation Commission approved the formation of the Cambria Community Services District. The creation of this new Cambria CSD included the Cambria Fire Protection District along with other existing operating water, wastewater and lighting special districts in Cambria. The Cambria CSD General Manager worked with the Fire Chief to hire the first 40-hour firefighter, who provided coverage Monday through Friday from 0800-1700 hours. At night Reserve firefighter personnel provided emergency response coverage with the full-time Fire Chief.

This first full-time firefighter began their employment in late 1976. The Cambria CSD was entitled to receive General Property Tax funds because they had absorbed the former Cambria Fire Protection District.

In 1978 Basic Life Support (BLS) medical equipment was being carried on fire apparatus, and medical calls were increasing as a new call type. This was in response to the fire services ever changing and expanding mission and was in direct response to California legislation, and several widely viewed TV shows including 'Rescue 8' and 'Emergency!'.

In 1987 the Cambria CSD Fire Department purchased a new Structural Fire Engine to replace aging, used fire equipment. This new Engine was placed in service in 1988. Later that year a second new, replacement fire Engine was purchased, (a demo unit), and placed into service.

In 1992 the number of 40-hour firefighters rose to 3. With these three positions 7 day a week daytime coverage could be provided. Nighttime coverage was still the responsibility of the Reserve Firefighters and the Fire Chief.

In 1993 the State of California began a budget funding shift program called Educational Reform Augmentation Funding (ERAF), to fund the State's schools.

These funds were taxes collected from State of California taxpayers. Instead of being returned to the communities where these taxes were targeted to go, the State of California used these funds to finance schools statewide. This produced a General Fund property tax reduction in the amount of \$350,000 to the Cambria CSD and the Cambria CSD Fire Department. A Fire Suppression Assessment was created, approved by the Cambria CSD Board of Directors, and was presented for a vote of approval by Cambria property owners. 70% of Cambria property owners and taxpayers approved the Fire Suppression Assessment, which would generate \$350,000 per year, and eliminate the potential full-time personnel lay-offs that were anticipated due to the impending General Fund reduction. These Fire Suppression Assessment funds could not be used to fund a fire station, only personnel, equipment, and apparatus.

In 1995 a new fire station was proposed. Funding for this new fire station was set up as a 10-year construction loan, along with the profits from the sale of the old Burton Fire Station, now located in a prime commercial real estate area. In 1997 the old fire station and property located at 4039 Burton Drive was sold to help finance the new fire station. The new fire station located at 2850 Burton Drive was dedicated in October 1997.

In 1999 a Fire Department strategic plan was completed by a community coalition including Cambria CSD and Fire department staff. The strategic plan was approved by the Cambria CSD Board of Directors and included the previously approved Fire Suppression Assessment funding; equipment, tool, and apparatus purchasing, program and service creation as well as other necessary administrative and operational budgetary support.

In July of 1999 the three 40-hour firefighters were promoted to Fire Captains and placed on 24-hour shifts. This began the department's 24-hour/365 day year coverage. Reserve Firefighters were hired to fill the second position on duty with the full-time Captain. This effectively provided a 2-person Engine Company every shift.

The Cambria CSD Fire Department purchased and placed into service its first semi-automatic defibrillator in 1999.

In 2002 the department was authorized to hire an administrative technician or department secretary. With the growing number of records to manage, an ever burgeoning telephone and walk-in customer volume, a significant amount of reports that needed to be managed, as well as better organizing department records and improving document management, this new position was of significant help in improving our department's productivity.

In 2003 we received approval to hire a 40-hour Fire Captain/Fire Marshal to assist with the growing number of fire plan reviews, inspections and public education, and a 40-hour full-time Engineer to drive the Engine, so the Captain could focus on their primary function as an emergency scene manager and company officer. This Administrative Fire Captain was a safety member and augmented emergency responses during his 40-hour workweek. In 2003 the Cambria CSD and Cambria CHD signed in interagency agreement to share personnel between the two agencies. This agreement included 3 provisions:

1. Cambria CSD Fire department personnel who were on duty with the fire department, certified State of California Paramedics and also employees of the Cambria CHD could function as paramedics on a call when the Cambria CHD paramedic requested assistance.

2. Cambria CSD Fire Department personnel, who were approved and licensed by the State DMV to drive and operate an ambulance, could staff and operate the backup ambulance when requested to do so by the on-duty Cambria CHD medic unit. This third person on the Fire Engine would be released to staff the backup ambulance, and the Fire Department would call-back a third person to fill the vacancy on the fire engine.
  
3. Any Cambria CHD employee who was also a Cambria CSD Fire employee and was on duty (with the CCHD) during a fire/rescue or other significant emergency would be released, if possible to provide additional staffing with this fire emergency. If they could not find a replacement for the person on the ambulance, this release would not occur.

In 2004 the Cambria CSD and CHD agreement was modified to allow for each agency to remain responsible for their own agencies' personnel's pay, and restricted the usage of provision number 3 to a confirmed structure, Wildland or other declared personnel intensive emergency.

In 2005 our department received approval to hire two additional full time Engineers, convert the existing 40-hour Engineer to a 24-hour shift schedule, and place all three of them on shift with the three shift Fire Captains. With this began our 3-person constant staffing pattern that we follow today.

Also this same year we hired a replacement for the vacant Fire Captain/Fire Prevention Officer. This new position was an Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal, whose role was to manage the Fire and Life Safety portion of our department's mission as well as functionally divide the numerous programs and responsibilities of the department between the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief. This also provided an alternate for Chief Officer emergency response duty coverage for nights and weekends.

The Cambria CSD Fire Department continues to plan and implement the necessary changes to provide effective Fire and Life Safety protection for the residents of Cambria and the surrounding area.