

# FROM THE DESK OF THE MAYOR

## Community Fire Protection



July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017

With several significant fires in the Sooke Region over the past weeks, many people in our community have fire safety at the top of their minds. Sooke crews battled a wildfire on Mt. Manual Quimper for several days in early July, eventually handing over the incident to the expertise of the BC Wildfire Service. On July 12th, Sooke offered mutual aid in the form of a Tender Truck, an Engine, and 7 members, to Metchosin Fire to assist with another wildfire on Sooke Road. Both incidents are believed to be human-caused and preventable. Sooke Fire Rescue responds to many, smaller, human-caused fires each week, sometimes several per day. Each of these has the potential to become much larger incidents. Each of us, as community members, has a responsibility to make sure that we are preventing these incidents from happening.

During this warm, dry, fire season, Sooke residents are reminded to be fire smart. If you smoke, dispose of your cigarette butts in a responsible manner. Respect current burning prohibitions, which include campfires. If you live in a wildfire interface area (which many of us in Sooke do), take a few minutes to check out <https://www.firesmartcanada.ca>, conduct a risk assessment of your home, and take proactive measures to protect your property and your family.

My thoughts are with BC residents and communities impacted by the devastating wildfires. I'm proud to share that Sooke Fire & Rescue volunteers John Hester and Roy McTavish left Sooke today with two Metchosin volunteers onboard Engine #3 for Cache Creek to assist other volunteers. Volunteer Manolo Serrano joined the crew destined for 150 Mile House several days ago. Sooke remains well protected by the remainder of our dedicated crew.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my gratitude to the men and women of Sooke Fire Rescue Department, to our mutual aid departments, and to all the first responders offering assistance to those affected by wildfires across the province. The career component of Sooke Fire Rescue has been understaffed for several years, and despite constant and ongoing recruitment efforts, our volunteer resources are often stretched to their limit. Sooke Fire Rescue will be entering a new hiring phase this summer, with two new career positions being added to the organization. I wish the department well in their hiring process and look forward to added fire protection for this amazing community.