



THE MUSEUM TRUMPET



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The Official Newsletter of the San Jose Fire Museum

October 2025

FIVE ERAS OF FIREFIGHTER RESPONSE

The San Jose Fire Department (SJFD) was organized over 171 years ago on January 27, 1854. This covers several eras and begins with the hand drawn apparatus from the 1850's to present day high tech state of the art fire apparatus. Over the past ten years, members of the San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) have been committed to developing a plan to present a clear and concise historical timeline. Continuity will be essential for educating a variety of visitors. The museum has a large and extensive historical collection including apparatus, tools & equipment and written documents. The challenge is how to present it and that is true for all museums.

The Board has had many discussions the past few year on how to create and then display the SJFD history. Just recently, a Design Display Committee has met a number of times to discuss an idea that Retired SJFD Fire Chief Dale Foster offered to the committee. He suggested creating kiosks that tell the story of firefighting that included apparatus, uniforms, eras of specific events and methods of response. The Board stalled on Dale's idea for awhile, but decided recently to take the idea and make it work at Old Fire Station One (OFS1). With input from Dale and April Halberstadt, the Design Display Committee decided on a concept called the "Five Eras of Firefighting" for the SJFD. We have refined the name and now will call it the "Five Eras of Firefighter Response." The committee also decided to create a mural in the large area between the Seibert Gallery and the kitchen dining room (next to the Fire Captain's Office Display). The mural will cover three wall areas and be the display site for the "Five Eras of Firefighter Response." This display mural will be the key area to summarize the story of the SJFD all in one location. It will be an interactive design that visitors will connect to apparatus and other displays throughout OFS1.

Description of each of these Eras:

Hand Drawn & Volunteer Response Era - 1850 to 1871

Horse Drawn & Paid Response Era - 1871 to 1915

Motorized Response Era - 1915 to 1950

Post War Response Era - 1950 to 1975

Modern Day Response - 1975 to Present

To make our next step a reality, the SJFM Display Design Committee has hired Eymann, Bray & Associates as consultants to assist us with this process. Our target date to complete this display is December 15, 2025.



SJFM FIRE CHIEFS CADILLAC ON DISPLAY AT THE SANTO CAR SHOW IN ALVISO ON AUGUST 30TH.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, FALL 2025

By John A. McMillan



The definition of the word “Progress” is moving or advancing toward a goal or a more improved state like completing a project. Well, that is exactly what the San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) strives for everyday at Old Fire Station One (OFS1). We have owned it now since 2015 and our Board of Directors has constantly moved forward with a goal of completing OFS1’s restoration and unveiling a Downtown SJFM to the public. We are also very careful and thoughtful about how we are going to preserve and present the history of the San Jose Fire Department (SJFD).

UPDATE: Garden City Construction has completed most of the Program Design Phase to allow for a design and construction estimate that we mentioned in the Summer Newsletter. The SJFM has also created a Design Display Committee and hired a consultant. The committee and our consultant will spend the next three months visiting other fire museums, gathering historical information and organizing our priorities on what displays we want at OFS1 and how to present them. The outcome of this process will result in an estimated Display Design & Construction Costs. Our goal is to combine the building and display design & construction cost estimates by the first of January, 2026. Then the SJFM can begin the necessary fund raising including grant opportunities and private partnerships.

We were very busy this past quarter of the year, 2025. We have visitors coming to see the SJFM every Tuesday morning and also the first Saturday of each month. We hosted Retired SJFD Fire Captain Sam Seibert’s 106th Birthday on August 26. There were about 100 people attending to say hi to Sam, sing Happy Birthday and enjoy the musical entertainment provide by Jim True, Anthony Radzanowski and his friend Michael McGuire, along with Jeff Webber. We gave a tour of OFS1 including a history of the SJFD to the Recruit Class 2501 on July 17th, just before their Graduation & Badge Ceremony on Friday, July 18.

We were out in the community attending different car shows. Scott Boucher and Jim Carter were the organizers for the end of summer annual car shows. They included the Santos Car Show on August 30 in Alviso, Cars in the Park at San Jose History Park on September 13, and the Goombahs Car Show on September 14 in Willow Glen. Finally, the SJFM opened up OFS1 for the Silicon Valley Pride Parade on August 31, that included a breakfast provided by San Jose Firefighters Local 230.



FIRE CHIEF ROBERT SAPIEN AND CITY MANAGER JENNIFER MAGUIRE RIDE ON SHARKS ENGINE ON AUGUST 31 AT THE SILICON VALLEY PARADE.

San Jose Fire Museum





SJFD CLASS 2501 AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE ON JULY 17, A DAY BEFORE THEY GRADUATED AND RECEIVED THEIR BADGES ON JULY 18, 2025.



SJFD FIRE PREVENTION INSPECTOR DI-AN DUONG AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE DURING SILICON VALLEY PRIDE PARADE ON AUGUST 31.



SAM SEIBERT AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE ON HIS 106TH BIRTHDAY, AUGUST 26, 2025. JOINING SAM IS DAVE WOOD AND A COUPLE OF SAM,S GREAT GRAND NEPHEWS!



PAUL MIDDIONE (SECOND FROM RIGHT) AND HIS STAFF SITTING ON SIDEBORD OF 1945 AMERICAN LAFRANCE, OLD ENGINE 6 LOCATED IN FRONT OF OLD FIRE STATION 6 DURING GOOMBAHS CAR SHOW.

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DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT

SAVE THE DATE

Toy Drive

Saturday November 15, 2025

9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Drive through Old Fire Station One!

Drop off new unwrapped toys

Hosted by the Rod & Wheelers Car

Club and the SJFM benefitting

Los Bomberos of Northern

California

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