



THE MUSEUM TRUMPET



Vol. 17. No. 3

The Official Newsletter of the San Jose Fire Museum

July 2026

NAMING RIGHTS FOR TOM RICHARDSON

By John A. McMillan

The San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) is very happy to announce the unveiling of the “Richardson Fire Apparatus Display Area”. In honor of SJFD Retired Fire Captain Tom Richardson who has gifted the SJFM two million dollars. Our SJFM Board of Directors has unanimously approved naming the Apparatus Room at Old Fire Station One (OFS1) in his name. We contacted Tom to let him know and he stated he was very honored to receive this recognition. It is a permanent decision and there is now a sign hanging from the ceiling in the middle of the Apparatus floor with this recognition.

Tom’s name is the third time the SJFM has recognized a major donor. The first Naming Rights went to the Brandenburg Family for their one million dollar gift to purchase OFS1 back in 2015. We named the kitchen & dining room area the “Brandenburg Kitchen & Dining Room” in their honor. The second Naming Rights went to deceased retired SJFD Fire Captain Sam Seibert who donated over \$350,000. The front lobby at OFS1 is named “The Seibert Gallery”. There are over 16 areas of OFS1 that qualify for Naming Rights. They start at \$100,000 for a historic fire apparatus restoration and up to three million dollars for funding the new rear Fire Exhibition Hall structure in the backyard of OFS1. Please contact John McMillan or Jim Carter if you would like more info on this program.



“RICHARDSON FIRE APPARATUS DISPLAY AREA” SIGN INSTALLED PERMANENTLY ON THE CEILING CENTERED OVER THE APPARATUS FLOOR IN OLD FIRE STATION ONE.



OUR SJFD 1931 MACK FIRE ENGINE, SERVED MANY YEARS AS SJFD FIRE ENGINE CO. NO. 2.



PICTURE OF SJFD HOOK & LADDER CO. NO. ONE. FORMERLY PALO ALTO HOOK & LADDER CO. NO. ONE.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, SUMMER 2026



By John A. McMillan

The San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) has a lot of projects that we are working on this summer. We mentioned in the Spring Newsletter about our Display Design Process and we are getting close to having Era One constructed and installed. Our target date for completing Era One is September 11, 2026. We are still working with Garden City Construction developing a cost estimate to finish the complete restoration of Old Fire Station One (OFS1). We have also been working on an application for a State of California Resiliency Grant. The application deadline is this September, so we have a small window to complete the grant process.

We also have decided to install a new roof at OFS1 this summer. We have been repairing the current roof with patching and maintenance every year for the past 11 years. It is getting a lot more expensive every year and the threat of major water leaks is increasing and is too risky to ignore. The last thing we need is roof failure and damage to the interior and the collection. Right now we estimate this project will cost us between \$250,000 to \$400,000 and the plan is to have it finished before the upcoming rainy season.

We are experiencing more visitors this summer and it probably is connected to kids out of school and families on vacation and looking for things to do. We still are open just 10 hours per month, every Tuesday and first Saturday of the month from 10am to 12 noon.

We are also in the process of developing an updated Capital Campaign Document. The last time we updated it was about seven years ago. This document is used for introducing our non-profit to potential partnerships and donors. The big addition to this document is the announcement of our first ever Advisory Board. In our next newsletter we will be able to officially announce the members of the board and explain their mission to support our organization.

Another project we are working on is updating our SJFM Website. We are working with Vitaly Litvinenko to evaluate our current website and then Vitaly is providing us options to create a better looking and more user friendly system. Our Board has received a proposal from Vitaly and approved it. We hope to provide a better product for anyone who wants to access our Fire Museum through the internet.



ONE OF THE OLDEST DOCUMENTS IN THE SJFM COLLECTION - AN EXEMPT CERTIFICATE FROM THE SJFD TO VOLUNTEER LEVI GOODRICH, DATED NOVEMBER 1, 1871.



SJFD RECRUIT CLASS 26-01 CELEBRATED THEIR COMPLETION OF THE SJFD FIRE ACADEMY ON JUNE 3RD AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE.

THE SAN JOSE FIRE MUSEUM LOST A FRIEND

The San Jose Fire Museum lost a friend, Retired Fire Captain Joe Roberts passed away on February 26th, 2026. Joe was a 32 year veteran of the San Jose Fire Department (SJFD). Joe was a dedicated firefighter, and later a leader as a Fire Captain. He was a founder and expert in Urban Search and Rescue for the SJFD.

Joe was a founding member of the SJFD Honor Guard and also a renowned bagpiper who played throughout California and the nation. He began playing the pipes in 1958. But Joe did a lot more. Joe supported young people who had a desire to become a firefighter. He would help them in preparing for a career as a firefighter.

Joe was also a major supporter of the San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM). He helped the SJFM prepare for events and was always available to perform the Bagpipes for Memorial Services at Old Fire Station One. He was also one of the major donors for the SJFM, gifting over \$116,000. The last couple of years, Joe volunteered to become a docent for the SJFM and went through the early training. Joe was a great friend and supporter of the SJFM!



CAPTAIN JOE ROBERTS IN HIS SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT HONOR GUARD BAGPIPES UNIFORM.



THE SAN JOSE FIRE MUSEUM PRESENTED SJFD RETIRED DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF GERRY KOHLMANN WITH THE 2026 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD.



San Jose Fire Museum

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DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT

SAVE THE DATE!

PATRIOTS DAY
25th Anniversary
September 11, 2026
9-11:45am

**March to Fire Station One
and Ceremony at the Bell.**
**Reception to follow at
San Jose Fire Museum.**

"The Museum Trumpet"

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