

Tahoe Douglas adds wildland engine to fleet



Tahoe Douglas is ready for the next wildland fire.
Photo/Provided

A wildland fire in Tahoe – it’s not a matter of if, but when.

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District is even more prepared than before.

“This new engine provides our residents with two Type 3 Wildland engines for wild fires. Type 3 engines are a shorter wheelbase and typically four-wheel drive for operating off road in wildland fires,” Fire Chief Ben Sharit told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Tahoe Douglas firefighters are all too aware of how dry the terrain is after battling the King Fire last week on the Carson side of Kingsbury Grade. Now they have another machine to help them with the next fire.

“They can carry a crew of four or five firefighters and a lot of forestry tools, chain saws and hose packs. They can also cut fire lines around fires much like a hand crew does,” Sharit explained.

The 16-year-old engine this one is replacing will be put on

reserve status for about five years.

According to Sharit, it's best for an engine to see regular action for 15 years before moving to reserve status. Tahoe Douglas sells its 20-year-old engines or donates them to department that will use something that old. Lake Tahoe Community College Fire Academy is leasing one of the department's reserve 1996 Seagrave Type 1 engines for \$1 per year.

"This provides the college fire academy with an engine to train their recruits and assist TDFPD with storing the engine in case we need it back when our front line engines are assigned to large fires or are out of service for repairs," Sharit said.

A Type 1 is also known as a structure engine. They are typically larger than a wildland engine and pump a lot more water. The Type 3 engines pump water at a higher pressure to deal with what is usually a longer hose in the wild compared to what is needed at a structure fire.

To pay for the equipment, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District has a strategic plan that includes a capital asset plan for replacing equipment in a 15- to 30-year span. This rig cost \$280,000, which included all the equipment on like the hoses and saws.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report