

Cuts

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responders who arrived couldn't do anything because they didn't have any equipment.

"(Staffing levels) need to be readdressed," he said. "You cannot sacrifice the safety of people."

Northern Arizona Consolidated Fire District Chief Patrick Moore disagreed with Shaver's version of events in a Tuesday afternoon phone call.

"The dispatch center first got the call around 1:15 p.m.," he said. The first rescue vehicles from Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District were on the scene at around 1:30 p.m. Pierce Ferry Road is about 10 miles outside of Dolan Springs.

Vehicles from Northern Arizona Consolidated Fire District arrived down stream from the bus on Stockton Hill Road around 2 p.m., and by 2:20 p.m. all of the bus' passengers were on dry land.

"I know. I was there," Moore said. "It may have taken four hours to get a new bus there to pick those people up."

Even if the Dolan Springs station had 10 people on staff at the time of the accident as it did before the county took over the district, it wouldn't have made a difference in the response

times or how the accident was handled, he said.

Ladonna Cypriot from Dolan Springs said she called the fire department for an ambulance for her dying husband on Jan. 27. When the ambulance arrived, the paramedic appeared inexperienced.

"He just stood there by the door to the ambulance and told me to get a list of my husband's medications," Cypriot said. "My husband wasn't breathing. He died before they got to the fire department."

If the Dolan Springs station was fully staffed, her husband may not have survived, she said, "but there would have been someone there who could have helped him."

Another Dolan Springs resident said she called 911 after experiencing chest pain and waited 45 minutes for an ambulance to arrive from White Hills.

Moore pointed out on Tuesday that both of those calls happened in January before Flynn was hired as the district's administrator. He said he didn't want to dispute the residents' claims at Monday's meeting because it wasn't the right time or place.

"That's not what we were there for," he said.

A community meeting in the Dolan Springs area to discuss the Lake Mohave Ranchos Fire District's finances is set

"There were significant variations in how the district's budget was created and the amount of tax revenue they were bringing in."

John Flynn
Fire District Administrator

for the beginning of September.

Flynn said he understood the community's concerns about staff, but a decision has to be made - how fast do the supervisors want to pull the district out of debt?

The majority of the district's expenses were related to labor, Flynn said. If the Board of Supervisors wanted to increase staffing at the stations, he could do that, but it also would take longer to pay off the district's debts.

The credit line from Wells Fargo wasn't the only debt the district had to pay off, he said. The district also had \$147,000 in outstanding bills and more than \$97,000 in other debts.

"There were significant variations in how the district's budget was

created and the amount of tax revenue they were bringing in," Flynn said.

The district's governing board overestimated the amount of money the district would take in from taxes, he said. It budgeted for nearly \$2 million in tax revenues and collected nearly \$777,000.

The district board didn't budget for people not paying their taxes, he said. If the district collected 100 percent of the property tax revenues due to it in the last half of this year, it would collect around \$293,000, but Flynn expects 20 percent of the property owners not to pay their taxes.

In order to move the district back toward solvency, he cut staff to the bare minimum needed to run both the Dolan Springs and Meadview stations; fired the district's fire chief, Mark Hruz; demoted a battalion chief; and signed an agreement with Northern Arizona Consolidated Fire District to provide management services.

The move saved the district \$185,000 in personnel costs, he said.

Flynn also outsourced bill collection for the district's ambulance service and sold anything in the district that wasn't putting fuel in the fire trucks' tanks, necessary to repairing the trucks or providing a service to the

community.

He also eliminated service to all calls that are outside of the district's boundaries.

The district is currently waiting on more than \$400,000 in Medicare/Medicaid payments for ambulance services, Flynn said. And all tax revenues collected by the district have gone to paying off the Wells Fargo line of credit. Flynn expects to cut the amount of money due to Wells Fargo from its current level of \$204,000 to \$185,000 by November.

The district has been operating off of a \$150,000 loan from Mohave County and will probably end up borrowing more from the county until the Wells Fargo credit line is paid off, he said.

Flynn also pointed out that even after the district pays off all of its debts, it would be unlikely that district would ever have as many firefighters as it did in 2012.

The district had at least 10 firefighters at the Dolan Springs station, Moore said.

"It's just not sustainable with the amount of income they're bringing in," Flynn told the Board.

KHS grad visits Rotary

KINGMAN - Kiersten Murphy, a shareholder at Gallagher & Kennedy law firm in Phoenix and a graduate of Kingman High School, will return to her hometown today to meet with local Rotary members.

Her presentation, "Doing Business with the Government: Public Procurement Resources to Help Grow Your Business" will cover procurement issues with an emphasis on identifying procurement resources for people in the community to help them grow their businesses.

The Kingman Rotary Club meets at noon at the Elks Lodge, 900 Gates Ave.

KAOL

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"The challenge next year will be to keep these grades," said Chan. "The state is upping the ante on the tests, and they will be more difficult. There were a few Common Core questions on this past test and we were able to raise our grades despite them."

ROADS MAP

An analysis of Federal Highway Administration road and bridge safety data by the TRIP, a nonprofit transportation research group, and USAToday said Arizona's highway system is in relatively good shape.

The states with the most roads in "good" condition:

- 1) Alaska: 66.4 percent
- 2) North Dakota: 64.7 percent
- 3) Tennessee: 62.3 percent
- 4) Idaho: 61.6 percent
- 5) Florida: 61.1 percent
- 6) Arizona: 57.8 percent
- 7) Missouri: 57.3 percent

- 8) Montana: 56.5 percent
- 9) Nebraska: 53.2 percent
- 10) North Carolina: 49.6 percent

The states with the fewest "structurally-deficient" bridges:

- 1) Florida: 2 percent (tied)
- 1) Nevada: 2 percent (tied)
- 3) Texas: 3 percent (tied)
- 3) Arizona: 3 percent (tied)
- 5) Utah: 4 percent
- 6) Washington: 5 percent
- 7) Oregon: 6 percent (tied)
- 7) Tennessee: 6 percent (tied)
- 7) Delaware: 6 percent (tied)
- 7) Georgia: 6 percent (tied)

Roads

Continued from 1

projects include a widening of State Route 89, technology improvements on Interstate 10 near the Ehrenberg Port of Entry and other projects, but more are needed given Arizona's growing population, he said.

Nintzel said Arizona usually ranks low in congestion compared to other metropolitan areas, but that could change if construction does not keep pace with the population.

Growth in Arizona is "happening at a rate higher than the rest of the nation," said Frank Moretti, the director of policy and research at TRIP, which helped prepare the study.

Dealing with population growth and aging infrastructure in the face of budget cuts will be a significant problem for Arizona, Moretti said.

And Arizona is not alone. Tony Dorsey, a spokesman at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, is worried that the Highway Trust Fund, a national fund that supports the interstate highway system across the country, is in trouble.

"We have been basically flat-lined for over 10

years," Dorsey said of the fund, which relies on a gas tax that has not been raised in years.

Tony Bradley, the executive director of the Arizona Trucking Association, agreed.

"There's less money going into that trust fund," Bradley said, adding that such low funding will only let Arizona maintain its roads and bridges.

If the state is going

to continue to improve, it needs to do more than maintenance, he said.

Bradley stressed the importance of coming up with a solution that addresses transportation funding for the long-term. Nintzel agreed. In order to address growing needs in Arizona, the state has turned to lawmakers at the state and national government levels for help, he said.

"We used to talk about funding needs as if there were storm clouds on the horizon," Nintzel said. "That storm cloud has arrived."

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