

2020 Could Not Stop San Miguel CSD

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By Ashley Sangster and Anthony Kalvans, of the San Miguel Community Services District

SAN MIGUEL – While many communities have struggled in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, the San Miguel Community Services District (SMCSD) has taken this time to move forward to serve the community better. With a special focus on meaningful items that make a difference, including community safety, beautification, community support, administrative changes, and planning the future of San Miguel.

For community safety, the district is adding temporary housing to support the Fire Department duty officer coverage as well as a Sheriff’s beat station to provide enhanced safety and security. This long-sought-after facility will improve emergency response times for all call types. In addition, the district purchased a brand-new wildland fire engine at a significantly reduced cost, saving the taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars. The new engine is a significant addition to the existing fleet and will enable our firefighters to better protect the community from wildland fires that happen at the edge of town, in the river, or anywhere needed in the community.

For beautification, the district has moved to take a serious stance on illegal dumping and has had a successful year cleaning up mattresses. The district was able to recycle over 70 mattresses. Other efforts included taking over maintenance of the downtown landscaping and gateway signs at no additional cost to the taxpayers. Thanks to the district’s management, they were able to cut water usage from community landscaping by over 60 percent.

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For community support, the district moved quickly at the beginning of the pandemic, offering support to struggling families and businesses. The firefighters adopted trash clean up on Mission Street and partnered with the FDAV church to give away food boxes throughout the pandemic.

The district also saw its ISO Rating improve and encourages those with property insurance to check if they qualify for a lower insurance rate. Several new utility projects are also slated to break ground later this year.

The board has also undergone significant changes from previous boards. Nearly every board member has served less than two years and make up the most diverse board in SMCSDs history. The members come from an extremely broad range of backgrounds covering age, ethnicity, and job professions.

In an effort to ensure transparency and accountability, the current board also took steps to be held accountable by instituting a yearly board performance analysis and became one of the first agencies in the county to institute automatic pay freezes for board members if the district encounters a financial crisis. Future pay increases for the board will also need to go to the public for a vote.

Looking towards the future, the board has already started a process of continual review of financial resources and developed a plan to stabilize the San Miguel portion of the water basin, and kicked off strategic planning, which will ensure that the SMCSd is prepared to lead the community into the future. 2021 is looking to be an exciting year for our district and community.

For more information about the San Miguel Community Services District, visit sanmiguelcsd.org.

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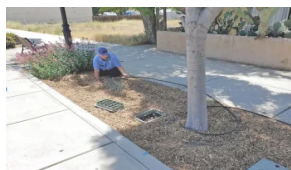
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