

New fire station coming to Boulevard

By [Karen Pearlman \(/staff/karen-pearlman/\)](/staff/karen-pearlman/) 4:56 p.m. Jan. 23, 2014

BOULEVARD — Boulevard, the rural East County community with less than 1,800 residents, will be getting a new fire station within the year.

Officials broke ground on a new site on Thursday for the \$3.5 million station that will serve a 78-square-mile area that is known for wildfires.

"The facility that was out there before, that is still there, needed to have upgrades," said Herman Reddick, program manager for the San Diego County Fire Authority. "It used to be an old courthouse. We needed to build a modern station."

The Boulevard Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department has been operating out of one station that protects a primarily rural area through a public department whose members are on a volunteer status. Before the fire authority, many rural communities were served by part-time volunteers who responded from work or home.

One of the improvements under the fire authority is to make sure communities are completely covered by firefighters. The volunteers in Boulevard will be joined by "career" firefighters, Reddick said.

County volunteers receive the same basic training as Cal Fire career firefighters, and under the fire authority, back country firefighters are dispatched and overseen by Cal Fire.

The new 7,866 square-foot station on Ribbonwood Road will be one of 16 constructed or remodeled by the San Diego County Fire Authority, the group formed by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors in 2008. The old station will remain at 39223 Highway 94 and its future is up in the air, but there are no current plans to raze it.

The new Boulevard station will feature sleeping quarters, a training room, space for up to six emergency vehicles and environment-friendly elements. It will be constructed to modern standards, with resource-saving features that include low water usage, cool roof technology, and a 20 kilovolt solar array to power the station.

"This is big improvement from where it was," Reddick said. "The station was coming to the end of its service. It's old and would need a lot of renovations. The facilities inside are not adequate for the Cal Fire personnel now. To have better facilities means they can concentrate more on what their job is, and training for that job."

"If they have to worry about plumbing, how to stay warm during winter months... that could affect their ability to respond. With these new facilities, they can concentrate on serving the community. We should have the new station completed by January 2015."

County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Dianne Jacob said the new station is an important step for the region.

"This project is the latest demonstration of the county's commitment to beefing up fire protection and emergency medical response in our rural areas," she said.

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