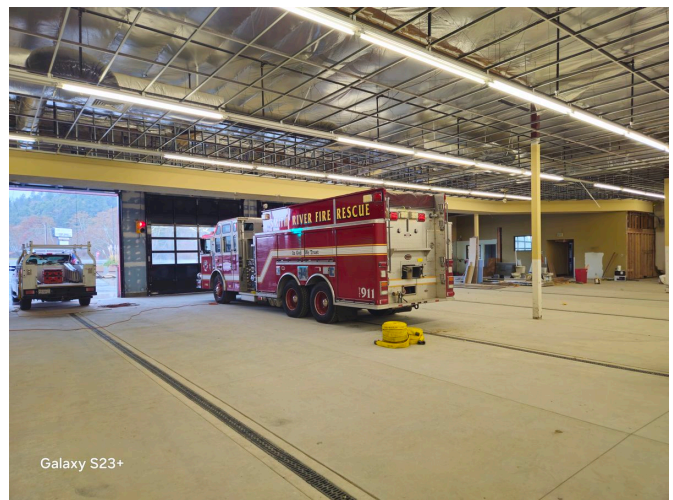


Smith River Fire: A Look at Its New Digs

February 26, 2025



Alas, the former Ray's Food Store in conveniently located Smith River on 101 at Fred Haight Dr. will soon open as the new Smith River Fire Department.

Smith River Fire District (SRFD) Fire Chairperson, Elaine Fallgren and Captain Geoff Antill, Medical Resident EMT shared details of the acquisition of the 21,000 sq.ft. former Ray's Food Market in the heart of downtown Smith River. Captain Antill said, "We learned early on our current building was woefully inadequate, unsafe, and would need to be torn down. The Board went out looking for a new site with limited success. Then, the call from Ray's Food came in; it was just too good an offer to pass up." Fallgren added,

“We weren’t looking for a building as large of what was offered. The location was superb which saved homeowners on discounts on their fire insurance policies.”

Both agreed the building’s size will allow Smith River Fire flexibility in expanding services. Currently, Smith River Fire serves about 2,800 businesses and residents in Hiouchi and another 1500 in Smith River. When completed, the new station can accommodate eight apparatus(es), training rooms, public lobby, administrative offices and other supplies, captain’s office, kitchen, sleeping quartets, hazmat area, and exercise room. The cost to operate the Fire station is about \$2 million, annually. SRF is a volunteer department which saves the tax payer about \$170,000 per year.

With emphasis on non-fire response, fully 70 percent of all calls are medical emergencies, 15 percent are motor vehicle accidents, the remainder are structure and brush fires. SRF also continues mutually aid agreements with Brookings-Harbor and Gasquet Fire departments.

The greatest need for SRF now is to finish the building; and that event will take place sometime in June when a ribbon cutting ceremony is planned

Captain Antill underscored the importance of the new fire building. “With our unusually large building, the Smith River Fire Dept. can double as a resource center, helicopter site to transfer resources and supplies over North Del Norte County, should the Dr. Fine Bridge ever become disabled.

The exact date of the Ribbon Cutting in June has yet to be announced.