



PKS Fire Department Acquires Thermal Imaging Camera

By Jason Baker, PKS Fire Chief

Photos by Dan Law



The Pine Knoll Shores Fire Department has recently acquired a new thermal imaging camera (or "TIC," as it's called by fire professionals). The device was gained through a matching grant received from Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative and the town of Pine Knoll Shores.

Before explaining the benefits of a TIC, let me dispel some Hollywood firefighting myths. Real world and Hollywood can have very differing realities. The Hollywood image of firefighters running into a burning building, while standing upright with fire all around, is bunk! In a house fire, or any "compartment" fire, visibility is limited to non-existent—you cannot see your hand in front of your face and many times the actual fire is hidden by the smoke itself.

A thermal imaging camera is just that, a "thermal imager" using technology that allows firefighters to "see" in a very hostile environment where natural visibility has been removed. The main purpose of a thermal imaging camera is to enable firefighters to locate victims who may be in the building and see fire that is hidden in the smoke. In addition, the TIC can help to ensure that a firefighter is less likely to become disoriented in the smoke as they can "see" the room and locate doorways and windows through the screen of the TIC—which can be very important if things go bad and a quick escape is needed.

Beyond the purpose described above, a TIC can be used to further benefit the firefighter and those he/she serves. Many times we are called to investigate the smell of smoke in a house. With a TIC we can scan the house where we may suspect hidden fire and "see" if there is a hot spot behind a wall. Without a TIC, we would have to cut an inspection hole in the wall or take the chance that there is no fire—a dangerous gamble with the homeowner's property and safety.

The fire department is called many times for a possible electrical fire or the smell of something electrical burning. If the odor of burnt wires is present, we can more precisely pinpoint the location of the overheated wires since the TIC will reveal the

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Special People, Special Town

By Barbara Milhaven

We have lovely Christmas customs here in Pine Knoll Shores to help us celebrate the holiday season. We decorate with natural greens, an exceptionally tall tree inside town hall and a floating, lighted Christmas tree topped with a Moravian star in the pond in front of town hall. We don't have Santa's elves doing all of this work to beautify the town and bring joy to the citizens; volunteers and town workers do the magic.

Public Service Director Ernie Rudolph and his hard-working crew haul in the pond fountain and pull out the float adorned with the Christmas tree; all this is done with a rope and a pulley system—and most likely not easy to accomplish. Garden Club members decorate the town hall inside and out and some brave ladies



It's a group effort—and no small task—to get the town Christmas tree onto the floating platform and positioned in the center of the pond.

actually climb a tall ladder to decorate the highest branches. For Christmas 2013, members of the Garden Club expanded their industry to make a number of festive wreaths, placed strategically at the end of many of our streets along Highway 58.

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