

History

Fire Station 28, Piru

In the 1920s and 1930s the town of Piru, with a bank, a grocery store, a meat market, a furniture store, and a newspaper, was more of a commercial center than it is today.

In November 1928, County Fire Chief Walter Emerick and his assistant, Walter Claberg, attended a meeting of the Piru Chamber of Commerce. The Chief proposed that the County Fire District take charge of the fire fighting equipment in the town of Piru and that additional equipment be added when funds were available. At this time the Piru Volunteer Fire Department struggled with two small pumppless Ford trucks.

The decision made Piru the Fire District's third fire station after Santa Paula and Ojai. Hugh Warring, owner of the Piru Water System, agreed to install fire hydrants when the Fire District assigned Piru a pumper.

Frank Bowdle was Piru's Fire Chief in 1928, when the District took charge of the Piru Fire Department. The District later hired Bowdle as the first paid fire personnel at Piru. He operated a gasoline station, where he also lived, at 4072 Center Street that was then Highway 126.

In November of 1930, the County Fire District delivered a Dodge fire truck with pump and a 450-gallon water tank to the town of Piru. Fire District personnel at Santa Paula built the pumper.

In 1931, district personnel built a firehouse on Market Street. Material for the 18-by 30-foot concrete block and red tile roof building cost \$179.15. This was Piru's fire station until 1950 when today's station was built on Church Street. The property was sold to the Fire District for \$500 by Harry Lechler's father and was the first building on the block.



Piru's first County Fire Truck in Front of 1931 concrete block Firehouse.