

History

Fire Station 31, Westlake, (Erbes Road)

When Fire Chief Walter Emerick went to a special meeting in Thousand Oaks in April 1931, he was presented with a petition, signed by every resident in the community, requesting a fire truck. Following this meeting, Louis Goebel, owner of the Lion Farm, constructed a 22 by 50-foot concrete block building for the fire station and donated its use to the fire district.



Thousand Oaks' first fire station. 1932 to 1949. Located on Thousand Oaks Blvd at the Lion Farm (Jungleland).

The Lion Farm (later known as Jungleland) sat on several acres along what was then Ventura Boulevard, (Thousand Oaks Boulevard) at Conejo School Road, where the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza is now located. By November, Goebel had completed the fire station except for the doors, which were built by the Fire District at Santa Paula.

On the evening of March 28, 1932, the Fire District delivered Conejo Valley's first fire truck. It was a 1930 open-cab Mack, also built by Santa Paula district personnel. It had a 350 gallon-per-minute front-mount pump with a 430-gallon water tank and 300-feet of 1½-inch hose and 250-feet of one-inch hose.

Local school bus driver, Curley Martin, drove the pumper. A couple of months later, when a truck caught fire on the Conejo Grade and Martin was unavailable, Mrs. Martin drove the pumper and extinguished the truck fire. She received a letter of commendation from the Ventura County Fire Protection District Commission.

On July 9, 1940, a fire erupted at the Lion Farm where more than 200 wild animals were kept and trained for the entertainment industry. Though just a few yards from the fire station east winds spread the fire rapidly and efforts were severely hampered when an elephant named Queenie broke a main water line as she tried to escape the inferno. The fire killed two elephants, six lions and several camels.

In 1949 a new Thousand Oaks fire station at 67 Erbes Road, replaced the Jungleland site. It also received a new 1949 Ford pumper and the 1930 Mack went into reserve status until the late 1950s when it was retired.



New Erbes Road Station 31 - 1949 to 1977.

In 1977 a new Fire Station 31 was built on Duesenberg Drive in Westlake on a site that was purchased from the Prudential Company, an owner of the Westlake Company.