



## COLUMNS

# Notes From SEFD – Profiling Our Captains: Aaron Sapienza



by Eddie McArthur  
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Captain Aaron Sapienza has been a full-time employee with Sonoita-Elgin Fire District since 2018. Photo by Eddie McArthur

Each of **Sonoita-Elgin Fire District** (SEFD)'s three captains heads a shift of four firefighters and manages the day-to-day function of that team. In addition, each captain has specific areas of responsibility.

All the department's captains are paramedics, providing the highest level of pre-hospital care. SEFD Chief Marc Meredith remarked that "it is a widely held belief that captains hold the most difficult position in the fire service, having to juggle the responsibilities of supervision and functioning as a line firefighter."

Captain Aaron Sapienza is the longest serving of the SEFD captains. Originally from Massachusetts, Sapienza was stationed at Ft. Huachuca from 1994 to 1996 with the Army.

Preferring our warm climate to the winters of Massachusetts, Sapienza took a job in Tempe after he left the Army. He's been a paramedic for the past 17 years. When an opportunity opened with the Whetstone Fire Department, he jumped at the chance and moved back to the area. Sapienza first joined SEFD as a volunteer in 2016 and became full-time as a firefighter/paramedic in 2018. He was promoted to captain in 2019.

Sapienza is excited about his job and about SEFD in general. He feels that the past few years have improved all aspects of working here and that the chief and Board operate with the best interests of the district and its people. The Strategic Plan, especially with its inclusion of all levels of personnel at the district as well as outside stakeholders in the planning process, has developed a sense of all moving in the same direction.

Sapienza holds numerous certifications. He is Instructor-certified, has a State Inspector Certificate, Safety Officer position, and teaches the Emergency Vehicle Operation Course. He also is working on issues regarding fleet management, building a more systematic way to handle repair and replacement of vehicles for the district. He was the individual sent to evaluate the new pumper/tender that is scheduled to arrive at SEFD soon.

Sapienza loves this area and most especially its people. He speaks of the community support that isn't always there in a more urban locale. His family still lives in Massachusetts, and Sapienza was able to return there to pin a firefighter badge on his nephew who now works in his hometown, happy to pass along the family tradition of firefighting.