

Contra Costa County



Fire Protection District

May 12, 2015

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jeff Carman, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

-
- The District continues to work with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) to complete the MOU for the construction and staffing of Fire Station 46. The draft MOU currently resides with County Counsel; however, we were notified recently of some small changes that MOFD wanted to make. So while our counsel can review and respond to the bulk of the language, there are still some small details we are awaiting from MOFD's counsel. Our hope is that we can be complete by July 1 with the MOU.
 - The District is also continuing preparation of its response to the countywide RFP for ambulance transport. The proposal is due on May 21. This is a very large and complex proposal, with formal presentations to be given in June. The District is being assisted by AMR and consultant, AP Triton.
 - The District and County HR continue to work together to conduct the necessary promotional and recruitment opportunities. Later this month, the first entry-level firefighter and firefighter-paramedic recruitment in many years will proceed with the written test portion being conducted. In addition to the firefighter recruitment, there are several tests in process or planned in the near future to include dispatcher, fire mechanic, fire inspector, fire engineer, and battalion chief.
 - On April 16 many law enforcement and fire officials from across the County participated in a luncheon ceremony honoring our dispatch personnel. Many times these men and women go unnoticed and unappreciated for the work they do before and during an emergency incident. This annual event provides a means for us to give them the recognition they deserve for the work they do to keep our personnel and our customers as safe as possible.
 - The District opened Squad 70 in San Pablo effective May 1. Squad 70, like Squad 1 in Walnut Creek and Squad 6 in Concord, is intended to respond to lower level medical incidents allowing the trucks and engines to remain in service for fires and major medical incidents. Squad 70 is funded through a sales tax initiative in the City of San Pablo.

- The District's Communication Center recently completed an upgrade to its computerized dispatch system. The upgrade provides additional tools and faster processing for our dispatchers who dispatch over 87,000 calls and answer over 110,000 phone calls annually. We anticipate that the new technology will allow for faster and more efficient call processing.
- After over a year of work with the District's data mining vendor, I am sorry to report that they unexpectedly went out of business last month. This is a setback for the District and its ability to report our performance data accurately. We recently interviewed another potential vendor who provides a more personalized service and includes GIS data in their reports. We hope to move quickly to enter into a contract with a new vendor so we can resume reporting performance data.
- For the last several years, the District has had a live fire flashover and a structural fire attack training prop located on the military base in Concord. These training devices assist us in training our firefighters in simulated firefighting situations. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the military base has had to cancel our training days on short notice, which has left us in a predicament for training our new recruits. Fortunately, we have been able to relocate our training to the new maritime training academy in Richmond, allowing our recruits the opportunity to train with live fire. The District is currently looking for a new location to house this critical training capability.
- With the recent failure of the benefit assessment for East Contra Costa Fire, they will be forced to reduce their on-duty staffing to just nine personnel and three engine companies each day. This is a dangerous level of staffing to serve a population of over 100,000 in such a large service area. Chief Henderson and I have met and are developing contingency plans that will allow ConFire to help on major incidents without reducing service levels for our citizens. We currently have a robust automatic and mutual aid plan in place, but with East Contra Costa's further reduction in staffing and a very difficult fire season in our future, it is important that we address the issues in advance. There will be times when we just cannot send resources into East Contra Costa due to high call volumes and significant fire potential in ConFire's district. Recently, an article in one of the newspapers stated East Contra Costa will have to rely more on mutual aid. While this may be true, it is important to note that mutual aid resources may be coming from a lot farther away than what has occurred in the past.
- A few months back I reported that the District was working closely with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office in both marine and air operations. On May 1 we held a joint wildland training session in the Antioch hills. During this training we were able to exercise our new training and equipment by dumping water from the air on an active fire. This capability, along with our dozer resources, will be vital to our efforts this summer.