

**Contra Costa County**



**Fire Protection District**

March 14, 2017

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jeff Carman, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

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- Fire Station 16 in Lafayette was approved by the Lafayette Design Review Commission on February 27. Our architect will begin drafting the construction and design plans for building permit submittal. Meetings are scheduled with LEED consultants and others involved with this process. District staff have been engaged with the architect in selecting interior finishes and details needed to complete the construction and design plans. In addition, we have requested that the project manager begin the process of prequalifying contractors for the project.
  - The elevations and design plans for Fire Station 70 in San Pablo are being developed in preparation for submission to the City of San Pablo after the CEQA process is completed (tentatively scheduled for July). The funding agreement continues to move forward, and District staff, City of San Pablo staff, and County Counsel are working together to finalize the agreement language.
  - Academy #50 graduated on February 10 with eight new firefighters. Our new firefighters spend ten shifts with seasoned firefighters who teach them about life on shift and in the firehouse. After these initial assignments, our newest members will be assigned to their own fire stations.
  - The Fire District began working with County law enforcement managers on a consistent operational policy for working together at violent crime and active shooter incidents. We have seen a significant increase in the number of incidents involving deadly weapons, and our firefighters often find themselves in harm's way. The goal is for all fire and law enforcement agencies in the County to have consistent expectations of each other at these types of incidents.
  - The Fire District is experiencing an issue at the BART station in Pittsburg. We are finding that there are people who ride the BART trains all day seeking shelter and warmth, and when BART service ends for the night, a number of those people find themselves at the end of the line at the Pittsburg station with nowhere to go. This results in many of those people calling 911 asking to be transported to a local hospital

for a medical condition. In the last 12 months, we saw almost 600 patients and transported 545 of them to local emergency rooms. The trend continues to worsen, with January peaking the 12-month period at 79 patients. On at least two occasions, this issue resulted in a "Multi-Casualty Incident" where we transported 9 and 12 patients. This creates a Public Health Emergency because it takes so many ambulances and fire resources out of service and increases response times for others who may need emergency service. We had a meeting with BART police in an attempt to reduce these numbers to a more tolerable level. In the meeting, it was clear that the issue is very complex and will require work in many areas. I am proposing that a group be brought together, consisting of Fire/EMS, County Health Services, County EMS, the City of Pittsburg, and BART staff, to address the issue in depth.

- On a different but connected issue, the Fire District is seeing an increase in wait times at local hospitals. I brought this issue to the Board several months ago to express my concern that as a result of these excessive wait times, the District must staff additional ambulances in order to keep the required number on the road to answer calls. We did see an improvement last year; however, the wait times are increasing again. The County EMS agency tracks and publishes this data, and we are hopeful that the trend is temporary and there will be improvement as we move further into 2017.
- The Fire District received a grant from the Tesoro Foundation in the amount of \$49,500 to purchase atmospheric monitoring devices for all of our fire companies. The monitors will allow our personnel to determine if a flammable level or toxic level of gas may be present at a release. It will protect both our firefighters and our citizens from unnecessary illness and/or death. We want to publicly thank Tesoro for their generous gift.
- The Fire District is expecting four (4) new apparatus in 2017. A new rescue truck for Fire Station 82 in Antioch is in Sacramento at the dealer and should be in-service by early April. A new ladder truck for Fire Station 83 in Antioch should be in service in early May. The new bulldozer transport is on order, and we are hopeful that it can be placed in-service by the beginning of fire season. Lastly, the District's new fire boat is being built, and we anticipate that it will arrive by summer.
- The District's solar project is underway. We plan to announce a groundbreaking ceremony in the near future, and the Board will be invited to attend. The objectives of this project are to generate energy through the installation of solar arrays and reduce energy consumption through measures such as the replacement of several very inefficient HVAC systems at our fire stations.
- While it appears that the flooding potential has subsided, I want to point out that the Fire District was prepared to respond to any potential swift water or flood rescue both in the District and throughout the state. Although the potential existed, I am pleased to report that we had no rescue incidents occur in the District as a result of the excessive precipitation. We did send one of our fire dispatchers to assist the State Office of Emergency Services with the Oroville Dam incident.

- The Fire District is working on contract and ordinance amendments to address rate increases for the ambulance transport program. One amendment addresses the Fire District's ambulance service rates. The contract between the Fire District and County EMS allows the District to request an annual rate increase that is the greater of 3% or the Medical CPI for the preceding year. The medical CPI for calendar year 2016 was 3.8%, so we will use that figure. Another amendment will address the ambulance unit hour rate increase for AMR. The contract between the Fire District and AMR entitles AMR to a rate increase on April 1, 2017, and every April 1 thereafter. AMR's rate increase is a product of the District's increase and the prior year's collections realize percentage.
  
- In the next 30-60 days, we will bring forward a contract between the El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department and the Fire District for dispatch services. One of the media outlets recently reported that this contract would be proposed to the Board this month; however, the statement was incorrect. A proposed contract is currently being review by each agency's counsel, and it should soon be ready for approval. As you know, West County is a difficult area in which to provide service due to the number of fire agencies that serve the area. The fact that there are multiple dispatch centers adds to the complexity. Therefore, having El Cerrito/Kensington become a user of our regional communications center will be of benefit to both agencies.