



## CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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February 12, 2019

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jeff Carman, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

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- Fire Station 16 (Lafayette): The roof is on and the framing is complete. The HVAC, electrical and plumbing have been roughed in, and we are preparing for windows and exterior finishes. Sheetrock is expected to arrive this month, and we will begin to work on interior finishes. The building should be substantially complete by late March and potentially occupied in April. The timeline has been affected by weather and the ability to secure utility services. We will plan a groundbreaking ceremony as the final completion date become clear.
- Fire Station 70 (San Pablo): The District received three bids for the project. We are currently performing due diligence on the low bidder and vetting any contractual issues. We will return to the Board in March with an intent to award the contract and potentially issue a notice to proceed with construction in April. We are already attempting to establish site utilities based on our experience with the Lafayette project.
- Fire Station 9 (Pacheco): We continue to meet with airport staff on the potential site layout. We are early in the CEQA process, and our goal is to have CEQA completed and architectural drawings approved by the end of 2019. We are working with Capital Projects to pre-qualify bidders in spring of 2019.
- Fire Station 86 (Bay Point): The site layout is complete and the CEQA process is in progress. The District has been meeting with neighboring property owners and sharing the site plans. We will be presenting to the Bay Point Municipal Advisory Council in May 2019. Our goal is to have CEQA complete and architectural drawings approved by the end of 2019. We are working with Capital Projects to prequalify bidders in spring of 2019.
- Fire District personnel recently inspected four new fire engines and a new ladder truck at the manufacturer's facility in Appleton, Wisconsin. The inspection went very well and the new apparatus should arrive within the next few weeks. These new apparatus will replace existing apparatus that are due for replacement as a result of heavy use and high mileage. In addition, two new wildland fire engines arrived last week and will be placed into service prior to the 2019 wildland fire season. These new apparatus will replace existing wildland apparatus which will be placed into

reserve status. This is an improvement for the District as we have not had reserve wildland apparatus in the past.

- Academy 52, the first accredited academy in the history of the Fire District, will graduate 24 recruits on February 14. These recruits will fill existing vacancies and allow us to place Engine 16 into service in Lafayette. Academy 53 will begin on February 19 with 21 recruits and graduate in late spring/early summer 2019. The District saw the need to hold back-to-back academies this year in order to keep vacancies to a minimum as we head into another wildland fire season. While our aim was to place 30 recruits into Academy 53, we are experiencing a shortage of qualified firefighters and paramedics. Our recruitment numbers were down over 50% in 2018. We are currently in a recruitment process and anxiously awaiting the data in hopes that the volume of candidates returns to normal levels.
- One of our senior fire investigators, Vic Massenkoff, retired from the Fire District in January. Vic was an excellent investigator who helped arrest and convict several arsonists over the course of his career. As our fire investigation unit is extremely busy, and the arson problem in our county is significant, finding a replacement for Vic was a difficult task. Fortunately, we were able to recruit Glenn Myer, a fire investigator from the Solano County District Attorney's office who has extensive experience and will be a great addition to our team.
- The auto/mutual aid issue with East Contra Costa Fire continues to tax our organization, and we have been working with their fire chief in an effort to assure we are both operating as efficiently as possible under the circumstances. Unfortunately, after reviewing the data from CY 2018, it is clear we need to make additional changes to the aid program. The numbers indicate that ConFire resources spent over 564 hours assisting East Contra Costa Fire, while East Contra Costa Fire resources only spent 172 hours assisting us – a 3:1 ratio. In addition, under the current system, over 30% of the resources requested from ConFire never arrived on scene but were committed to response for almost 90 hours. With the rapid growth in call volume that both agencies are experiencing, this level of commitment cannot be sustained. At the March meeting, I hope to present to the Board an alternative plan that will reduce the level of commitment, better balance the commitment for each agency, and result in a more efficient aid agreement.
- The ambulance transport program continues to perform at very high levels allowing us to meet our response time goals 95-96% of the time and maintain very low response times county wide. I look forward to presenting our annual report to the Board at our March meeting.
- As you know, Captain Roger Harless passed away unexpectedly in January due to a cardiac ailment. Captain Harless was a well-known and respected firefighter for 29 years and, because he was assigned to Fire Station 11 in Clayton for a number of years, he was known as one of "Clayton's firefighters." The Fire District assisted with Captain Harless' funeral, and fire companies were brought in from many of our surrounding agencies to allow on-duty personnel to attend his services. I want to

thank the many agencies – including police, fire, and EMS – who united in support of our efforts to assure a proper send-off for Captain Harless.

- As mentioned before, our Fire District has an ongoing and significant problem with arson. Our fire investigation unit is tasked with many arson fires each month and has made several high-profile serial arsonist arrests over the last several years. I am pleased to report that one of those serial arsonists was sentenced last week to 19 years in prison. This investigation, arrest, and sentencing is the result of a team effort between our fire investigators, local law enforcement, and the district attorney's office.