



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

May 18, 2021

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lewis T. Broschard III, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

- COVID-19 Update. Beginning this month, the multiple fire-hosted clinics conducted in the last four months have been replaced by a number of other delivery means just in time to free fire resources for fire weather. Getting these joint-venture clinics (between CCHS, CCSO, LEMSA, the Medical Reserve Corps, and CERT teams) organized, staffed, and conducted has represented a heavy lift for all participating agencies across the County. Nearly 30 clinics were hosted in east, south, and west County, each staffed with approximately 70 personnel from all fire jurisdictions and a variety of other County agencies. More than 20,000 residents were vaccinated in these clinics according to CCHS.

As the County and region move into more favorable conditions, we are examining policies established during the last year to determine where changes are needed in light of the improving infection situation, County-wide protection protocols, and evolving CDC guidance. One of the first such areas has been our dispatch protocols where we have reduced the complexity of some of the questions we had been asking of 911 callers with respect to COVID. In the meantime, we continue to emphasize appropriate protection procedures for all employees.

- Fire District Annexation Study Update. As of the first week of May, Phase II of this study continues to move ahead with no significant issues identified. We anticipate receipt of the consultant's report sometime in late May or early June with a report to the Board soon thereafter. In the interim, we continue to take steps in planning for a potential annexation.
- Operations/Fire Weather Update. Continued warm weather and the dearth of spring rain prompted us to increase our responses to all vegetation fires effective May 1 - approximately 10 days earlier than last year. This is yet another indicator of the ever-changing nature of fire weather in the region. All exterior fire responses now include a minimum of five engines, up from one engine previously.

A moderate Red Flag fire weather event occurred May 7-11. Additional engines, our dozer, and Crew 12 were staffed throughout this period and CalOES funded a portion of the prepositioned resources.

On Monday, May 3, through a series of social and traditional media activities, we announced to our communities the official arrival of fire weather. We used this opportunity to remind all of approaching weed abatement and defensible space deadlines – May 16 in east County and May 26 in central and west County – and provided guidance on how to comply with these requirements.

On April 29, a significant grassfire in south Pittsburg threatened several homes and provided a potent reminder of the value of weed abatement and defensible space creation, the interdependence of neighbors on each other's compliance, and the importance of swift and overwhelming fire responses. This incident attracted considerable attention and created a platform for further communication regarding wildfire preparedness.

Our fire control worker program, Crew 12, officially kicked off May 1 with two weeks of training for the 24 members, 10 of whom are returnees from last year. Training comprises a specialized academy conducted by the Training and Safety Division. This year, we have fielded two complete crews, doubling last year's staffing. After the two weeks of training, we will have seven-day-a-week staffing. Crews will be available for spring/summer abatement projects and fire weather suppression support assignments.



Search and Rescue K9 and handler, Bonus and Firefighter Tony Vasta, completed their FEMA certification early this month becoming the first K9 team in Con Fire history. As members of Task Force 4, Firefighter Vasta and Bonus are mission-ready to be deployed anywhere in the Nation. Bonus is a "Live Find" search dog, who specializes in rubble and is now deployable throughout the County.

- **Facilities Update.** After conducting our ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Fire Station 70 in San Pablo last month, we went operational in the new station, moving all apparatus and crews into their new home on April 21. That move went very well, and all fire operations in the City of San Pablo are now based in the new station. We are now taking steps to turn the old FS 70 over to the City.
- **Communications Update.** We continued to make progress this month on infrastructure updates to our communications center adding one new universal power supply (UPS) unit to help provide reliable and consistent back-up power. All systems have been tested and are stable. During the installation process, some existing wiring and loads were reconfigured so that all critical loads can be supported by one UPS in the event of a failure. A second new UPS is expected to be installed this month. To further limit the risk of loss of power, we have also installed dual power supplies to almost every piece of equipment in the server room.

- Training Division Update. The month of May got off to a fast start at the Training and Safety Division. Here are some highlights:
 - The District-wide Truck Company Academy began on May 1 and continues throughout the month involving all of our truck stations and crews. Truck companies are a specialized resource focused on forcible entry, search and rescue, and ventilation procedures at structure fires. The first module of the academy focused on operational functions and search techniques.
 - All companies are completing Wildland Fire Season preparation and safety training this month.
 - Technical Rescue Training was conducted in the first half of May with Confined Space, Trench, and Rescue Systems III courses. Battalion Chief Watson and Fire Captain Brooks have been making great progress in improving our technical and collapse rescue training areas at the Training Center, which were instrumental in conducting this training.
 - All of the senior chiefs recently completed Large Incident Evacuation Training and Planning as part of our ongoing wildland fire readiness efforts.

PHOTOS – Training Activities



Firefighter making access for victim search and rescue.

Shift Training Captain Jason Conner conducting a debriefing with Firefighters after a search evolution.

