



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

July 13, 2021

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lewis T. Broschard III, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

- Operations/Fire Weather Update. Hot, dry, and windy weather continues to contribute to heightened fire danger across the District, county, and region. In June, we dispatched on numerous grass and vegetation fires managing, through a combination of early reports and quick and overwhelming responses, to keep all but two of these small.

On June 27, we responded to assist Federal Fire with a fire on MOTCO property which burned approximately 40 acres though no structures were threatened. Again, in the early afternoon hours of July 4, a fire that began with a vehicle accident on Kirker Pass Road between Clayton and Pittsburg burned approximately 73 acres before being brought under control by Con Fire, other local agencies, and Cal Fire.

We continued to up-staff a complete wildland fire engine and crew through the Independence Day holiday, and it was de-staffed after the holiday. However, our Crew 12 hand crew continues to be staffed seven days per week and has proven invaluable in its new configuration.

ConAir 1 maintenance is almost complete with a required mechanical service which includes the installation of additional radios to better communicate with Cal Fire, other air resources, and fire companies on the ground. We expect it back in service mid-July.

The new ladder truck has been delivered to Fire Station 70 in San Pablo. The crews at the station are currently training on its features and working towards completing driving competencies. We anticipate the ability to place the truck in service sometime in August. Truck 70 will replace the two-person EMS Squad 70. Funding for two of the four ladder truck positions continues to be supported directly by the City of San Pablo through their sales tax measure.

- Independence Day Holiday Weekend Staffing. Historically, Independence Day evening, as well as the days leading up to and those following it, represents extremely high fire danger due to illegal fireworks use across the county. Each year, we up-staff significantly to ensure our preparedness for the increase in service demand – in particular, fire responses.

This Independence Day was no exception, and owing to the ultra-high fire danger as a result of the drought, we redoubled our preparation efforts. Throughout the entire weekend, we up-staffed an additional Crew 12, for a total of 24 fire control workers; a second fire dozer; and an additional wildland fire crew. On the holiday evening, we initially staffed two complete task forces, each led by chief officers, and, as a result of fire activity, established a third task force mid-evening. We also fielded all five of our fire investigators for law enforcement activities and stood up our District Operations Center staffed by the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Assistant Chiefs, and support personnel.

On the evening of July 4, between 9 p.m. and midnight, we responded to 48 grass, vegetation, and exterior fires and five structure fires, most resulting from fireworks.



- Fireworks Safety Public Communications. Since kicking off our fireworks safety messaging campaign with law, city, and county partners in early June, we continued to share a variety of traditional and social media messages across our platforms as well as with partners for repurposing on their social media platforms. We also created a special new page on our website dedicated to the topic and conducted a second fireworks dangers media event in the days before Independence Day. All of this has resulted in a very high-level of safety messaging visible across the county, Bay Area, and nation.

On the evening of July 4, we also up-staffed with a PIO in our District Operations Center and two field PIOs with an embedded pool reporter and photographer to help share the dangers of fireworks in near real time, resulting in further visibility for the issue.

As a result of this combined effort, there was widespread media attention focused on Contra Costa County fireworks issues, including significant social media and web presence.



- Fire District Annexation Feasibility Study Update. Following last month's presentations of the contractor's preliminary findings, report author AP Triton makes its presentation of the final report at today's Fire Board meeting. Similar presentations are also scheduled for the East Contra Costa and Rodeo-Hercules boards.
- Fire Prevention Bureau Update. Our inspectors reviewed and approved applications for three Independence Day fireworks displays for last week's holiday. Each was reviewed to ensure the safety of those in attendance in addition to the safety of the surrounding areas. Inspectors were on hand at each of the displays at set up and during the fireworks shoots to ensure the correct product was brought to the site, the explosives were set correctly, and the shoot was done safely. An engine and crew was also on scene at each display to immediately address any spot fires that occurred. The approved shows took place in Antioch, Concord, and Pleasant Hill.

Fire investigators continued their undercover investigations in recent weeks taking illegal fireworks off our streets at the point of sale. In the three-week period leading up to Independence Day, they conducted seven sales "busts," resulting in seizure of fireworks with a street value in the thousands of dollars. On July 4, investigators were on area streets in force, issuing 10 citations and confiscating some 70 pounds of fireworks.

In the first of a series of Chipping Days, three Lafayette Firewise neighborhoods took advantage of this service provided late last month by Con Fire, Cal Fire, and the City of Lafayette to further reduce risk of wildfire danger in their communities.

- Communications Division Update. Mission Critical Partners is now under contract to provide professional subject matter expert advice in coordination with our other partners in the initial design phases of the pending fire communications center rebuild in the old Administration building.

The installation of the two new permanent UPS units and all dual power supplies is now complete, and the fire communications center has reliable backup power.

The Everbridge paging system went live for the District and all contract dispatch agencies on June 28. This system should provide a more effective and efficient notification system for management and staff recalls.

Our Fire Communications Manager will be leaving the District on July 9. The District and Senior Staff would like to thank and acknowledge Traci Barkley for her knowledge, dedication, and care for her employees over the last three years while leading several fire communications center improvements. We wish Traci great success in her future endeavors. The District will begin a recruitment process for this critical position this month.

- COVID-19 Update. Reacting to CDC, state, and county guidance, we began to accept employee attestations of their vaccination statuses and allowed mask removal by those vaccinated, if desired. Unvaccinated employees continue to be required to wear masks at work. We are encouraging vaccinations for all unvaccinated employees.

We continue to monitor for guidance on return to work requirements and are prepared to update related policies, as needed.

- AB 389 Update. This bill is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Health Committee on July 14.