



## CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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November 9, 2021

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lewis T. Broschard III, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

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- Annexation Update. With approval of annexation resolutions by both our Fire Board and the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District board of directors in September, we began in earnest to implement the planning processes that will support the merger of the two organizations. We are following the Incident Command System for this complex undertaking and have developed a comprehensive Incident Action Plan to guide our collective activities. While we begin to address the administrative, logistical, and financial actions needed to complete the annexation process, application to the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for annexation approval was made, and we have been informed a hearing is likely to occur in January or February. We conducted our first all-employee webinar late last month and implemented a series of scheduled communications and webinars designed to educate and inform our members on the progress of the annexation efforts.
- Future Fire Stations Update. The District received the keys to Fire Station 4 from the City of Walnut Creek at the beginning of the month, and we are assessing needed upgrades to return it to operational status after years of closure. We are planning on a July 2022 reopening date.

We have also entered into preliminary discussions with Lafayette on replacement timing for Stations 15 and 17. This is driven, in part, by the need for a ladder truck in Lafayette and a station that will physically accommodate it.

- EMS Update. Annual flu vaccines were offered to all employees in multiple sessions in October. In addition to administering flu vaccines, we used these sessions to review their continuing education course status.

We continue working with the LEMSA to gain permission to utilize Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances as augmentation to Advanced Life Support (ALS) units currently deployed. This would provide much needed additional transport capacity to our current delivery model which continues to be strained due to high call volume and staffing issues at the paramedic rank.

Con Fire has purchased ballistic protection for Alliance ambulance crews. Delivery and deployment of this important protective equipment is expected in late November.

The annual LEMSA audit of our ambulance operations is underway with expected completion of the report provided to the LEMSA by mid-November.

- Logistics Update. In October, we acquired two surplus emergency generators and two skid steers along with other valuable federal government surplus equipment. Several of our apparatus orders have been delayed into December. We have attempted to hire additional mechanics for our apparatus shop, but have been unsuccessful due to the current compensation structure of our Mechanic positions relative to both private and public sector employers.



Fire Station 86 construction is progressing well with walls up and roof on ahead of the early rains in October. Project continues on schedule and is on track for completion in spring 2023.

- Communications Update. Our dispatch center remodel project continues in the design phase and assessment of inherent challenges of using an existing building along with functional needs of the center into the future.

The Fire Communications Manager recruitment continues with interviews tentatively set for the second week of November. The Information Systems Technician II and Fire Dispatcher recruitments were opened in late September and late October, respectively. Fire Dispatcher Gerard Heidkamp was promoted to Senior Fire Dispatcher effective October 2, 2021, filling a vacancy due to a retirement.

The District is in the final stages of a successful major transition to the Google Workspace platform. This project moved all employees from Microsoft Office to Gmail, Google Calendar, and other related Workspace tools. The transition was a massive undertaking over the course of several weeks and was effected with minimal disruption to operations. It is interesting to note that 586 end users were migrated to include multiple training sessions and the transfer of 6.34 terabytes of data. The District is now beginning to enjoy the many communications and functionality upgrades the new Google Workspace provides.

Communications Division staff have embarked on a test project to establish LAN connections for operational mobile data computers (MDCs) in all apparatus to provide more consistent and reliable connectivity between the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and all fire resources in the field.

- Fire Prevention Update. The communities of Clayton, Lafayette, Pleasant Hill, and Walnut Creek, including Rossmoor, have all gone live in the Zonehaven digital evacuation tool project. Unincorporated areas are being worked on currently.

Evacuation plans for a major evacuation of Rossmoor have been reviewed, and preplanning work has resulted in significant improvements based on work with Rossmoor public safety and Walnut Creek police.

The Diablo energy storage project in Pittsburg, which presents specialized hazards and training needs for firefighters, is being closely monitored and a training program for fire responses has been developed in conjunction with the developer. First responder training was completed earlier this month as a prerequisite for startup of the facility. Commissioning of the project is expected to occur soon.

- Operations/Fire Weather Update. With the arrival of early rains in late October, we were able to reduce our response profile to reported vegetation fires earlier than in recent years. The weather allowed us to take advantage of a few remaining weeks of our seasonal hand crew availability to turn their attention to future wildfire risk mitigation. Partnering with County Public Works, for unincorporated areas, and city public works departments, Crew 12 spent the last several weeks clearing vegetation along likely wildfire evacuation routes and reducing the fuel load on public land in high threat zones in El Sobrante, East Richmond Heights, Morgan Territory, Lafayette, and Martinez.



Staffing in the Emergency Operations Division has been impacted by higher than normal levels of vacancies due to injuries throughout the summer. Like many local fire agencies throughout the state, our responses and commitment to statewide mutual aid was reduced this summer. We did send two engines and a team leader to assist with the Caldor fire that endangered South Lake Tahoe; deployed one member briefly to a FEMA rescue task force responding to the hurricane in Louisiana; and also provided several overhead management resources to fill state positions at multiple incidents throughout California. More recently, we briefly deployed a water rescue team to El Dorado County in support of FEMA Task Force 4.

To aid in our strategy to improve staffing levels, we opened lateral firefighter and firefighter-paramedic recruitments in September. This academy (Academy 57) is planned for spring 2022 and would consist of 30 firefighters. These positions are necessary to maintain critical staffing capacity heading into next year's peak fire season and to provide for additional personnel to reopen closed fire stations in 2022.

- Training Update. Last month, Con Fire's recruit academy was reaccredited as a State Certified Firefighter Academy by the Board of California Fire Services. Con

Fire is among only 25 departments in the state to hold this distinction. The reaccreditation process, led by Captain Jesse Ingram, involved a detailed self-assessment, site inspections, and a presentation to the Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee.

Academy 56 recruits began their training on October 18. Twenty-eight recruits, consisting of 11 firefighter-paramedic recruits and 17 firefighter-EMT recruits, were ushered into their academy experience with a family night and orientation the week prior. Graduation is scheduled for early March 2022. These recruits will assist the District in gaining ground on our current staffing shortfalls, filling vacancies as a result of retirements, and providing necessary personnel to begin the process of reopening fire stations in 2022.

- Legislative Update. In early October, AB389 was signed into law by Governor Newsom. AB389 provides clarity to the “Alliance” model of subcontracting for emergency ambulance services as being a legal and approved method for a county to consider for serving their communities. Additional components of the final legislation provide for necessary elements in emergency ambulance RFP processes. The bill was carried with significant support by Assemblymember Tim Grayson. The California Professional Firefighters Association and the California Fire Chiefs Association also provided much needed support for our efforts in making AB389 a success.