



## CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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February 8, 2022

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lewis T. Broschard III, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

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- Annexation Update. The annexation initiative continues with upcoming meetings of the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCo) regarding the sphere of influence change and the application for annexation. Our inter-agency planning continues in the meantime.
- Pinole Fire Contract for Service Initiative. Preliminary discussions have taken place with Pinole executive staff and the LAFCo Executive Officer. Determinations on steps necessary to satisfy all the elements of the LAFCo process are underway.
- Communications Update. The Communications Center continues to monitor the current spike in COVID cases and is working to keep staff safe and healthy to ensure adequate staffing.

The Fire District Communications Manager recruitment is being reopened. Background investigations continue for the new Information Systems Technician II and the Fire Dispatcher candidates.

The design and space planning phase of the pending Communications Center remodel continues. It is our intent to have this project out to bid this year in the fourth quarter.

- EMS Update. The Omicron variant strain on both our ambulances and fire resources responding to EMS calls for service continued unabated through the end of the month as previously reported. There are three root causes which we are addressing on a daily, and sometimes hourly, basis:
  - Staffing – Like those we serve, the Omicron spike has impacted Con Fire and AMR staffing resulting in a reduction in available personnel. As the month draws to a close, we are cautiously optimistic we may have reached the peak as numbers of both infections and those out for symptoms appear to be declining.
  - Call Volume – EMS calls and transports are both at all-time highs further stressing the system. As an example, on January 24 the Alliance transported 272 patients in response to more than 499 separate EMS incidents. These numbers

are well above those typically experienced even at the height of the annual flu season.

- Ambulance Patient Offload Times (APOT) – The Omicron spike has stressed the entire system from 911 dispatchers to first responders and hospital ERs. One result is that offload times at emergency rooms are also at an all-time high. This has resulted in ambulances and crews spending time waiting to transfer patients that might otherwise be spent on the road servicing additional EMS calls. Efforts to resolve, or at least make progress, on this issue have thus far been frustrated by a lack of response from the Contra Costa County Hospital Council. However, there is a recent communication from the Council to schedule a discussion with us and the LEMSA in February or early March.

In order to address the challenges presented to us by the surge and workforce impacts, we have hired additional ambulance companies who are existing BLS providers to supplement our EMS system. To the extent they can provide additional units to us, this has been effective at supplementing our system. This supplemental plan was extended until February 15, 2022, when we will evaluate demand and system performance.

- Logistics Update. We took delivery late last month of our new water rescue boat and trailer as well as its tow vehicle. This project was three years in the making and was funded by federal grants. Fleet and apparatus orders continue to be impacted by supply chain issues. We have multiple orders that have delivery delays. Interviews for our open Shop Mechanic and Logistics Manager positions were conducted last month.



- Training Update. With just over three weeks remaining, Academy 56's course of instruction is centered on vehicle extrication, rope rescue, and multi-company engine and truck company operations. The Academy 56 graduation ceremony is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, at the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek. The graduates will then report to their new companies as probationary firefighters.

In late January, we hosted a welcome event for our 30 new experienced firefighters and firefighter/paramedics who will soon join us from other fire jurisdictions around the state. Lateral Fire Academy 57 will begin on March 28 and run for eight weeks.

Twenty experienced engineers and firefighters recently completed a Captains Academy in preparation for the Captains promotional exam in February and acting assignments.



- Fire Prevention Update. Fire Inspector I recruitment continues with the goal of filling the six current vacancies in the Fire Prevention Bureau. The application period closed at the end of January, and interviews are expected to begin in early February.

Fire District staff evaluated the Walnut Creek and Lafayette areas to create the map for the shaded fuel break grant proposal to CAL FIRE. Pending Board approval, the grant application will be submitted on February 9, 2022.

A collaborative effort with the Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District yielded positive results in getting CalTrans to remove dead Monterey pine trees along Highway 24 between Lafayette and Orinda. Approximately 100 dead trees should be removed from along the highway at a cost of \$150,000.