



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

April 26, 2022

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lewis T. Broschard III, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

- Annexation Update. Last month, we received final approval from the LAFCo for our annexation of East Contra Costa County Fire. The LAFCo will now submit the annexation information to the State Board of Equalization and we anticipate the State will acknowledge the annexation in early May.

We continue our preparations for the June 30 effective date of the annexation and the subsequent transfer of East Contra Costa Fire resources, personnel, and responsibilities to Con Fire with a 90-day action item list of final preparations for this major event.

A change of command ceremony is being planned for July 1.

- Pinole Fire Contract for Service Initiative. We continue to work with City of Pinole executive staff and the LAFCo Executive Director to move this initiative forward. We anticipate joint planning meetings of City, Fire District, and CAO staff to begin in April.
- Operations Update. As we prepare for another early season of fire weather, we promoted several suppression personnel, including one captain to battalion chief and three engineers to captain.

New hires for our seasonal fire crew, Crew 12, completed their onboarding training last week, part of our continued preparation for another challenging and dangerous season of fire weather. Beginning last week, the off-season fuels mitigation crew that has been working to reduce danger across the County ahead of fire weather joined these newly trained fire control workers to provide full-week coverage as fire weather approaches.

Six firefighters began their sixth week of Hazardous Materials Specialist training this month. When they will complete training next month, they will be eligible to staff our highly specialized hazardous response team.

We began ground school for the REACH/Con Fire helicopter fire specialists last week. Over the summer, these personnel will assist in staffing our aerial firefighting capable helicopter on wildland fires.

On April 1, fire trail maintenance for the District's regional fire trails began in the open spaces, and several members of our heavy equipment program traveled to Southern California to participate in intensive hands-on training for fire dozer operations.



On March 20, we led a three-and-a-half-hour, nearly 50-person rescue effort that freed a man from an 18-inch underground storm water pipe where he had been stuck for up to two days. The rescue took place after passersby heard cries for help



coming from underground and reported this to 911. The complex, high risk, and rare “confined space” rescue was conducted by specially trained rescue technicians with support from City of Antioch Public Works and Antioch PD. Four Con Fire firefighters, connected by umbilical lines for breathing air and underground communications, made entry into the storm water infrastructure, locating the victim, clearing considerable debris blocking his path, and bringing him to the surface shortly before 9 p.m.

Greater alarm fires in the last month kept us busy and, unfortunately, resulted in the displacement of dozens of residents pointing out the continued dangers – to firefighters and civilians – of structure fires across the District. As we focus on the fire season that is fast approaching, it is also important to remain vigilant with ensuring smoke alarms are properly installed and maintained throughout the homes, apartments, and other residential living areas of our communities.

- **EMS Update.** Paramedic School classroom coursework was completed for three of our existing firefighters. They start their hospital clinical time in early April. Four additional firefighters start paramedic school in late April with the classroom portion occurring for the next seven months.

Robin Holcomb, EMS Secretary, has been elected to the position of Secretary of the Cal Chiefs Administrative Services Section.

In an effort to find solutions to our local ambulance patient offload time (APOT) delays, we collaborated to hold a meeting of Con Fire leadership, County EMS

Agency leaders, Hospital Council Representatives and local hospital executives and physician leadership. Agreement was reached to commit to quarterly meetings. We are seeking solutions from the hospitals that can be implemented in the short-term while also understanding the long-term nature of the APOT issues statewide. We will continue to work with our hospital leadership to seek out their proposed solutions to this critical issue. As previously stated in prior reports, APOT delays are a major factor in affecting overall emergency ambulance system performance and resource availability.

- Medical Director Update. Multiple initiatives are being pursued to reduce call volume burden on the ambulance system by reducing the need for some transports, including:
 - Researching the implementation of the Nurse in Dispatch and Doctor Telehealth programs in conjunction with AMR parent company Global Medical Response. This program has potential to reduce ambulance system overload by allowing use of alternate destinations such as urgent care clinics and physicians' offices, as well as alternate transportation methods such as taxis, ride sharing services, etc.
 - Participated in a state-wide multi-LEMSA effort to establish Assess and Refer policies in conjunction with CAL-ACEP, a political action committee representing Emergency Department Physicians.
 - Augmented our weekly Medical Director and EMS Chief field responses where the Medical Director evaluates and observes fire and ambulance responses in real-time during actual EMS calls. This real time evaluation in the field helps ensure we are sending the right resources to incidents and offers us a way to evaluate our dispatch center's ability to effectively triage medical calls.

The Fire District initiated a full review and revision of our Respirator, Aerosolized Transmissible Disease, and Communicable Disease policies.

This month, we entered the final phase of a several year project to replace our old narcotics safes on our apparatus. The new technologically advanced safes were trialed over the last year and found to be more user-friendly and secure. This will result in better oversight of our controlled substances and reduce risk of loss or diversion.

- Communications Update. Fire Communications Center staff are working with their Operations counterparts and other agencies to ensure everyone is prepared for the upcoming wildland fire season, expected to begin earlier than in recent years.

Information Systems staff continue to work on final details necessary to support the pending annexation of East Contra Costa Fire.

Recruitment efforts continue with both the vacant IS Tech II position and one of two vacant Fire Dispatcher positions being filled this month. The Fire Communications Manager position recruitment is now closed and two candidates participated in oral board interviews last week. We are hopeful of filling this position next month.

Final conceptual design drawings for the remodeled Fire Communications Center to be located in the old Fire Administration Building on Geary Road were approved this month. The architect is now completing all documents required for submission to the Pleasant Hill Planning Department, and we are working with County Capital Projects to issue a construction contract RFP. Current estimates call for construction to begin in early 2023. Once this project is complete, the plan is to move other Communications Division staff into the vacated Fire Communications Center.

We are pursuing accreditation of our communications center. This process has been ongoing for well over a year with emergency medical dispatch (EMD) process compliance and training being the main focus. Once accredited, we anticipate being able to work with the County EMS Agency to implement new response protocols for EMS incidents to provide further efficiencies and sustainability to the overall EMS and emergency ambulance programs.

- Training and Safety Division Update. Lateral Academy 57 began on March 28 with twenty-eight experienced firefighters including fifteen EMTs and thirteen paramedics. They are now in week five of an abbreviated eight-week training and orientation program. Graduation is scheduled for May 23.

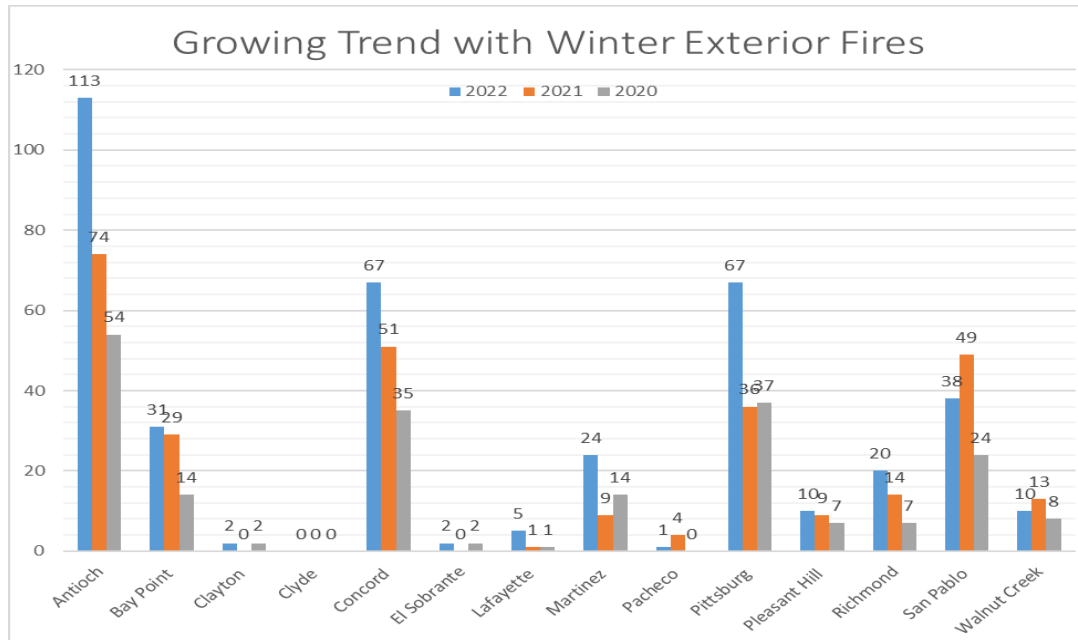
Annexation training academies have been completed for Battalion Chiefs, Captains, and Engineers in preparation for annexation. Live fire training has been a part of these academies. Multi-company drills are ongoing to ensure interoperability on day one of annexation.



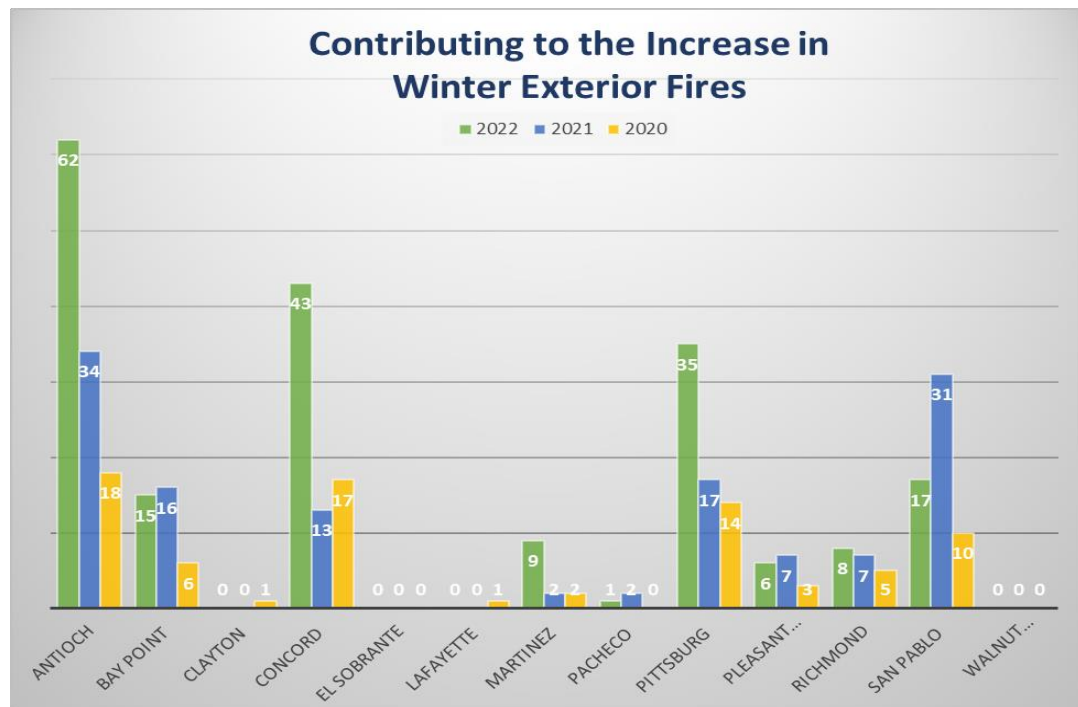
Pre-season wildland training is ongoing, including a Hand Crew Academy, operations and communications annual preparations, and drills. Live fire training is planned for May in anticipation of an early arrival of fire weather.

- Support Services Update. The Fire District took delivery of two Type 6 wildland fire engines, placed two new Battalion Chief vehicles into service, and continued with the many logistical preparations required for the annexation.
- Fire Prevention Update. Our Fire Investigation Unit's investigations at 79 fires resulted in the arrest of six arson suspects in March.

Analysis of exterior fire data by the Bureau shows a significant increase in winter exterior fires in the last three years. The trend is toward more of these destructive and dangerous fires with a 35 percent increase in the last year in all but two of the communities we serve. Exterior fires in and around homeless encampments, a significant contributor to the overall exterior fire problem, are also on the rise.



Above chart shows the growth in numbers of winter exterior fires across Con Fire communities since 2020.



Above chart shows the growth specifically in winter homeless-encampment-related exterior fires across Con Fire communities since 2020.