



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

August 9, 2022

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lewis T. Broschard III, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

- Marsh Fire Flooding Ends Smoke Hazard. On July 25, we announced completion of our week-long flooding operation that resulted in extinguishment of the Marsh peat fire burning for several weeks in the waterfront areas of Bay Point and Pittsburg. Some 200 million gallons of adjacent Sacramento River water were, with assistance from the Contra Costa Water District and the property owner, used to flood the 200-plus acre marsh area. PG&E also provided resources to support the operation in the form of infrastructure protection teams and a large water-dropping helicopter.



The original fire began May 28 in a homeless encampment in Bay Point, burning approximately 200 acres in a largely inaccessible area with no structures or inhabitants, creating a lingering and stubborn fire burning in underground peat deposits.

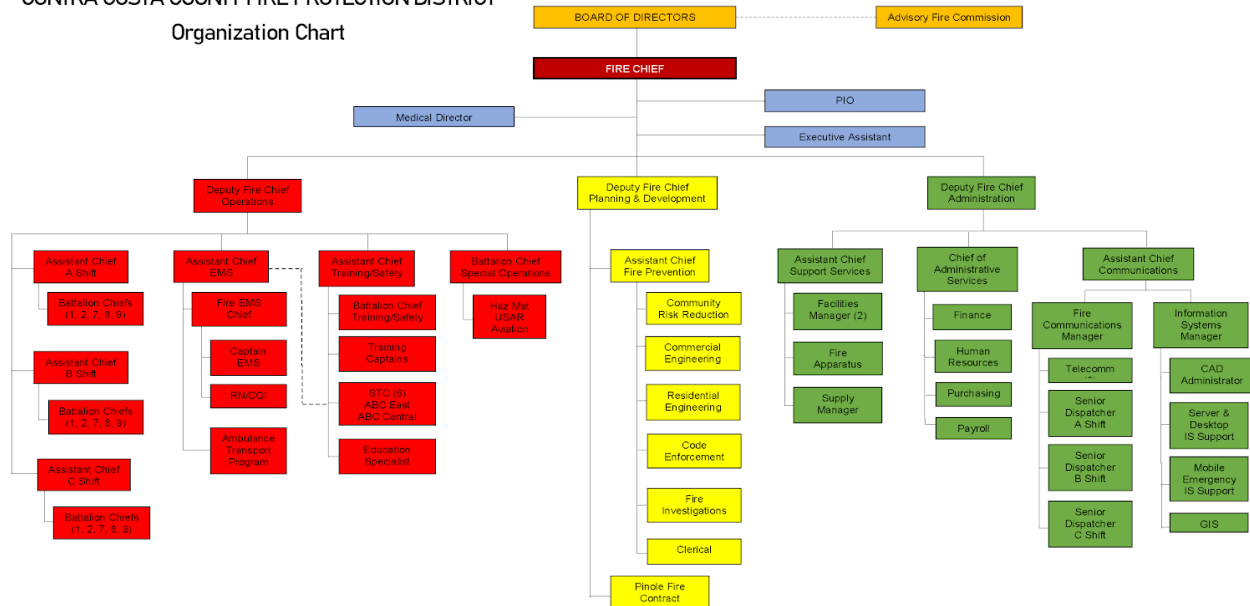
On Saturday, July 9, driven by wind, the peat fire flared up extending into adjacent grassy areas of Pittsburg, threatening overhead high-voltage PG&E transmission lines and nearby decommissioned industrial sites. In spite of high winds at the scene, an overwhelming response from Con Fire, aided by Cal Fire, resulted in the fire being contained before it could extend into neighboring homes. The fire consumed an additional 74 acres, bringing the total area burned by the fires to approximately 500 acres.



Peat fires are notoriously stubborn, can be virtually impossible to extinguish, and are often left, for lack of alternatives, to burn themselves out. As a result of the flare up, the remaining peat fire produced significant smoke presenting potential health hazards to downwind residents. Recognizing the health threat precluded a longer-term solution, Con Fire took immediate and aggressive action working with city, county and federal agencies and regulators to implement a more immediate extinguishment plan resulting in extinguishment and an end to the smoke hazard.

- Leadership Changes Update. Effective August 1, we implemented a number of leadership changes designed to ensure effective management of our annexation-expanded District. These included creation of two new deputy chief positions, bringing the total to three; three new district chief positions; and three new shift safety captain positions. By the end of last month, candidates for each of these positions were named. They include:
 - Deputy Chiefs Chuck Stark (Operations Section) and Brian Helmick (Planning and Development Section). Deputy Chief Aaron McAlister will serve as the leader of the Administrative Section
 - Assistant Chiefs Tracie Dutter (Support Services Division), and Dave Watson (Training and Safety Division)
 - District Chiefs Lon Goetsch, Vito Impastato, and Mike Quesada
 - Battalion Chief (Special Operations Division) Whit MacDonald
 - Shift Training Captains Ben Sanders, Damian Sanderson, and Tom Zurflueh

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Organization Chart



- Pinole Fire Contract for Service Initiative. We continue to work with the City of Pinole executive staff, County Counsel, and County Administrator's Office. District and City Staff and County Counsel are preparing initial drafts of the service plan and contract for service and continue to meet on a regular basis.

- EMS Update. Twenty-five years ago this month, on August 1, 1997, Con Fire began providing paramedic service to residents. On that day, Squad 15 was placed in service at Fire Station 15 in Lafayette with then-Captain Dave George as our first fire captain paramedic on duty. Since that historic occasion, vast improvements have taken place to Con Fire's EMS offerings including institution of District-wide Advanced Life Support (ALS) EMS with a paramedic on every apparatus, including phased introduction of ALS services to East County beginning with the June 1 opening of Fire Station 95 in Oakley; adoption of the Alliance model for most County EMS ambulance transports; and creation of the Con-Air helicopter transport public/private partnership with REACH.



The Contra Costa County EMS Agency announced last month the County EMS System had achieved the American Heart Association 2022 Mission: Lifeline EMS Recognition Gold Plus Achievement Award. Mission: Lifeline is the AHA's national initiative to advance the system of care for patients with acute, high-risk time sensitive life and/or quality of life threatening disease states.

The award was achieved through the efforts of Contra Costa County paramedics and EMTs who consistently recognize the possibility that a STEMI may be occurring and quickly provide advanced notification to STEMI Receiving Centers; followed by swift response, coordination, and skilled care of designated STEMI Receiving Centers that provide those patients the necessary treatment for survival within optimal timelines. The role of EMS in the system-of-care for these patients is crucial and often sets the course for the patient's outcome.

The award demonstrates the value of service provided to County residents by all EMS providers, including Con Fire Alliance personnel – both AMR and Fire. The CC EMSA expressed its sincere appreciation to all field and hospital care providers and recognized the hard work the achievement took to attain.

- Communications Update. Fire Communications Center dispatchers did a tremendous job handling the Independence Day holiday weekend surge of 911 calls, not only handling the calls themselves but also dispatching crews on nearly 350 fire and emergency medical calls on the 4th of July alone. During the four-day holiday period, 1,129 calls were made to 911.

All Division staff continue to work on validation and final adjustments of information technology, CAD and resource adjustments related to the recent consolidation.

As a result of two separate unsuccessful recruitment efforts for our long-open Fire Communications Manager position, District human resources staff is working with County HR on a salary survey and other strategies to fill this critical position.

Work continues with County staff and the architect on the pending remodel of the Fire Communications Center. The architect is working on completion of final conceptual design drawings so they can accurately estimate total project costs.

Our application for emergency medical dispatch (EMD) accreditation through the National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatchers remains under review. We anticipate approval of our application in early August. Once accredited, we anticipate being able to work with the County EMSA to implement new response protocols for incidents providing further efficiencies and sustainability to our overall EMS and emergency ambulance programs.

- Training Update. Preparations were completed last month to expand the 24-hour Shift Training Captain Program (STC) effective August 1st, 2022 to better serve our new, post-annexation geographic service area. "Safety 2," consisting of three additional STCs, is now deployed from Fire Station 81 in Antioch and will improve response times and Training Division services and support in Battalions 8 and 9.

An Engineers Academy was conducted in late July to prepare Battalion 9 firefighters to be able to act-up in the Engineers rank to meet minimum staffing demands.

The first of three outreach events for Firefighter Academy 58 has been completed. Recruit firefighters were fitted for uniforms/personal protective equipment and provided with physical fitness orientations last month. Academy 58 begins October 3, 2022.

As part of leadership changes mentioned above, the Training Division is proud to welcome newly-promoted Assistant Chief Dave Watson; 40-hour Training Captain Raphael Ochoa; and Shift Training Captains Ben Sanders, Damian Sanderson, and Tom Zurflueh to the Training family.

- Fire Prevention Update. The Bureau received the CAL FIRE Fire Prevention Grant contract for the Lafayette/Walnut Creek Shaded Fuel Break in late July. RFP's and environmental studies are expected to start in the next 60 days.



The Bureau continued to work with our Firewise communities to coordinate "chipping" days supported by Crew 12 to assist residents with disposal of debris from their weed abatement and defensible space creation efforts. In addition, we are working with the City of Martinez on another Crew 12 project to create a shaded fuel break in the historic olive grove near Rankin Park. Work on the project began last month and is expected to be completed in August.

We completed recruitment for our Inspector I and II vacancies with interviews scheduled for mid-August. Another recruitment process will begin in August to fill the fire prevention captain vacancy created by Tracie Dutter's promotion to Assistant Chief of Support Services.