



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

January 17, 2023

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lewis T. Broschard III, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

- Operations Update. Rain and wind events at year's end, and again in the first week of 2023, presented numerous flooding and power outage challenges across the county. Con Fire prepared to meet this early-year extreme weather by staffing our new grant-funded Rescue Boat 281 with a three-person crew for water rescues, if needed.



Crew 12, in its first winter storm assignment, was organized into two teams for clearing roads of downed trees to ensure first responder access and availability of evacuation routes. Crew 12 responded to a half dozen such calls at the peak of storm activity on January 4 and 5 in Martinez, Orinda, Pleasant Hill, and Walnut Creek.



Acting as Operational Area Coordinator for the County, Con Fire requested and received approval from the state for prepositioning of the above resources, as well as participating in a countywide task force by providing a four-wheel drive wildland engine.

Other Con Fire preparations included up-staffing two additional dispatchers, to handle the anticipated increased volume of 911 calls, and additional chief officers to support the incident management team. In one of the storms, between January 4 and 5, 911 calls to the Contra Costa Regional Fire Communications Center were up 20% over the same day the previous year and 30% over the previous two years.

In its first year of "off-season" wildfire mitigation work, as a result of Measure X and grant funding, Crew 12 has thus far performed some 2,000 person hours of work including on projects in El Sobrante, Richmond, Orinda, Moraga, and Mt. Diablo State Park. During non-wildland fire months, the crew is staffed with 15 fire control workers led by two fire captains. In addition to the project work itself, Crew 12's typical day includes training on rope and rescue techniques, department policies and procedures, vehicle operations, job skills, equipment maintenance, and physical fitness.



- Training Update. Academy 58's recruits continue to progress through their training curriculum, having completed state fire accredited local academy wildland testing early this month. They are on track for graduation on February 15.



We are prepping for our next lateral academy with a projected start date in March 2023.

Late last year, we scheduled a dozen grant-funded, vendor-taught rescue, wildland, and incident management classes to be conducted at our training facility in 2023. Additional classes will be added throughout the year.

In December, we completed engine-based search classes resulting in all personnel being trained in these advanced search techniques.

In early January, our Training Division hosted a Bay Area Urban Area Security Initiative "Secure the Cities" Hazmat Drill on our training campus.



The 2023 annual training plan was introduced District-wide earlier this month. One of the goals of the plan is to create uniform delivery of required training that will include battalion chief-driven in-person training better suited to our growing and geographically-dispersed District. In the first quarter of 2023, training will include instruction to all county fire agencies on radio and communications changes.

- Pinole Contract Update. Our contract for services in the City of Pinole became effective on January 1, allowing us to take final concrete steps to smoothly absorb all of the city's fire personnel and resources and transition to Con Fire-provided fire, rescue, and emergency medical services. The planning date for operational changes and final implementation of the contract is currently March 1, 2023.
- Fire Prevention Update. Last month, our Code Enforcement Unit was busy completing state-mandated inspections and processing numerous new building permit applications submitted ahead of the January 1 code update. Total state-mandated inspections for the year were up slightly to 7,727 as a result of the annexation of East County Fire in July.

At year's end, the Engineering Unit reported completing a similar number of plan reviews as the previous year, issuing 2,848 building permits.

The Community Risk Reduction Unit saw the largest increase in workload in 2022, completing 3,342 weed abatement inspections, a nearly 70% increase over the previous year's total of 1,997 inspections.

The Fire Investigation Unit experienced a 30% increase in fires investigated in 2022, conducting a total of 948, an increase of 218 from the previous year.

Unfortunately, the number of District-wide fire fatalities also increased in 2022 to seven, an increase of 75% over the previous year's four fatalities. The bureau will continue to focus on education and awareness about the importance of operational smoke detectors and other fire safety measures that should be in place in every home.

- AB1705 Implementation. In 2019, Assembly Bill 1705 (AB1705) was passed and certain sections of the California Welfare and Institutions Code, related to Medi-Cal, were amended and added. In short, AB1705 established a new supplemental Medi-Cal reimbursement program for ground emergency medical transportation services that are operated by a governmental entity, including a fire protection district. Existing law requires the non-federal share of any supplemental reimbursement provided under the modified program to be derived from voluntary intergovernmental transfers of local funds. Known to us as the "PP-IGT" program, this program will replace the current Quality Assurance Fee (QAF) and Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) Medi-Cal supplemental reimbursement programs currently in place. Any required intergovernmental transfers from the District related to the QAF or GEMT programs will cease once those programs are closed out in early 2023.

The bill requires eligible providers, including the Fire District, to receive an add-on increase to the associated Medi-Cal fee-for-service and managed care payments. As noted, the District will need to provide funding, along with all other public providers, to support the financial sustainability of the program for the non-federal share of the program. We anticipate the District will need to provide intergovernmental transfers to the state of approximately \$10 million annually, which will be paid on a quarterly basis at approximately \$2.5 million per quarter. The District anticipates total revenue from the program and the revised Medi-Cal reimbursements to be approximately \$22 million annually. After accounting for the intergovernmental transfers and the dissolution of the QAF and GEMT supplemental reimbursement programs, it is anticipated the District will realize a net increase in total revenue in the range of \$3 million to \$7 million annually from the PP-IGT program.

This program and the District's contributions are still being finalized by the California Department of Healthcare Services (DHCS). The first payment by the District to the DHCS is anticipated to be due on January 15, 2023. The increased Medi-Cal reimbursements to the District will commence on January 1, 2023.

- Fire Station Construction Updates. No updates to the information provided in the report of December 6, 2022. An update will be provided at the February meeting.