



County of Santa Cruz

FIRE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

ROLES OF THE COMMISSION:

The County Fire Department Advisory Commission exercises the following responsibilities in its efforts to ensure that the interests of the County Fire Department, career and volunteer fire companies and citizens residing within the County Fire Department jurisdiction are protected and promoted by monitoring, studying, and advising the County Fire Chief and Board of Supervisors on the following:

The preparation and implementation of the County Fire Department Master Plan;

How the County's fire protection, rescue and emergency medical services programs can be improved and made more cost effective;

The budget priorities of the County Fire Department, along with specific recommendations;

The changing role or mission of each of the volunteer fire companies and the resulting changes in their requirements; and

Such other matters relating to the county's fire protection, rescue and emergency medical services program as the committee desires to bring to the attention of the Fire Chief and Board of Supervisors.

MEETING DATES, TIME AND LOCATION:

The FDAC schedules six regular meetings each year (usually January, March, May, July, September, and November). The regular meetings are held from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the CAL FIRE Headquarters on Highway 9 in Felton. The Commission's mailing address is 701 Ocean Street, Room 330, Santa Cruz.

COMMISSION STRUCTURE:

As of December 2009, the Commission is comprised of the following members:

1 st District	Alex Leman
2 nd District	John Willett
3 rd District	Tom Scully
4 th District	Vacant – to be filled, pending approval of membership ordinance revision
5 th District	Arnie Wernick
Santa Cruz Co. Planning Dept.	To be removed, pending approval of membership ordinance revision
Office of Emergency Services	Paul Horvat
CAL FIRE/County Fire	Deputy Chief Kathleen Lineberry
Volunteer Company Officers	Mike Coryell
Fire Labor Org.	Ian Larkin

COMMISSION STAFF

The CAL FIRE/County Fire Deputy Chief serves as staff to the Commission. A County staff person serves as administrative secretary.

ATTENDANCE:

(see attached roster)

ANNUAL GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS – 2009:

The Commission continued work on a new Master Plan for 2006-2011, and reviewed and considered revision of the Commission membership ordinance.

Commission members participated on a budget subcommittee to review and recommend the annual County Fire Department proposed budget, including evaluation of the need for an increase in County Service Area 48 fire fees in order to continue to finance increasing operational costs and a mechanism to fund the vehicle replacement plan. The Commission recommended that the Street Naming and Addressing function be reviewed yearly based on the work load of the Fire Marshal’s Office and that the cost of the position be allocated on a more equitable basis.

Commission members participated in discussions on County Fire’s change to 5 engine/2 person staffing in response to LAFCO’s December 8, 2008 decision to reject Bonny Doon’s application to form a fire protection district; and reviewed and advised on the development of a long-term plan to increase engine staffing at all 5 stations to 3-person in order to meet operational and safety standards.

Commission members also participated on subcommittees to formulate the Commission’s response to the Santa Cruz County Grand Jury 2007-2008 Final Report, and to design the Commission’s portion of Santa Cruz County Fire’s website. The Santa Cruz County Fire Department website went online in October 2009.

Commission members participated in directing the efforts to improve incident statistics reports in order to better monitor and study County Fire's emergency responses. Reports currently produced from Felton ECC have improved detailed information, can be downloaded from the Felton ECC website, are provided to commission members on a CD, and are monitored for additional information needs.

Commission members reviewed and approved of the plan to build the Fall Creek Fire Station engine apparatus building located adjacent to the McDermott Fire Station.

Per capita cost for volunteer firefighters (both entry level and annual maintenance costs) were developed and budgeted accordingly.

Commission members reviewed and approved of the plan for County Fire Volunteers to participate in the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT), a mentoring and training program to help candidates prepare for the demands of the CPAT and a rigorous assessment of the physical abilities of the candidates. CPAT is an internationally recognized physical ability standard for entry-level firefighters.

Commission members approved plans to upgrade internet service to all Santa Cruz County Volunteer Companies.

Commission members approved of the purchase of a Type 1 Fire Engine as part of the Vehicle Replacement Plan.

FUTURE GOALS

The Commission expects to continue the work begun on the various issues identified as priorities under its charter including the following:

- Monitor work on the next Fire Department Five Year Master Plan and review annual operational agreements for compliance with Master Plan goals and objectives;

- Review impacts to County Fire from proposed annexations by Fire Protection Districts;

- Review potential opportunities to improve service delivery through cooperative arrangements with other local agencies;

- Review a plan to enhance recruitment and retention by implementing a program for Pay-Call firefighters;

- Assess the ability of the County Fire Department to provide service, given increasing demands on CSA 48 Funds; begin the process of documenting service delivery and operational needs in County Fire in preparation for recommending fee increases in the next two years;

- Finalize and obtain approval of the Commission's revised membership ordinance;

- Review means of implementing charges to other fire protection districts and agencies for the street naming/addressing function, which has been absorbed by County Fire staff;

Pursue CSA 48's share of Braemoor area property taxes;

Review the feasibility of County Fire joining EMSIA;

Review an updated Volunteer Handbook;

Review the Volunteers in Prevention (VIP) program to give community members or County Fire Volunteers the opportunity to enhance the support function of the Santa Cruz County Fire Department.

Review and prioritize various County Fire facility maintenance projects.

Create a plan of action to maximize citizen understanding, involvement and appreciation of what Santa Cruz County Fire does for them and how they may be able to assist.

RECOMMENDATION:

In advisory capacity to the County Board of Supervisors and the County Fire Chief, continue to support activities and policies necessary for the efficient operation of the County Fire Department and its staff.