



Ventura County Fire Protection District  
2014 Annual Report

# Message from the Fire Chief



2014 was a year of change and looking ahead to 2015, change would be an appropriate word to use again. It is normal for an agency such as ours to experience a certain amount of turnover through retirement. Last year was no exception as we saw key members of our executive staff team retire. Change presents opportunity and we took this opportunity to review the way we are structured and organized.

The result was a reduction in the number of bureaus and a reorganization of how our workload was distributed. We also added some talented new faces into our management ranks.

The drought was and continues to be a major concern for us. The Governor declared a state of emergency over the lack of rainfall and we took measures to save and conserve. As the moisture in the vegetation that covers our hillsides dropped to historic lows the risks to our communities increased. There were no significant wildland fires locally but the northern portion of the state did not fare as well. The District had resources assigned to Northern California fires for weeks at a time. This again reminded us that no single agency has sufficient resources to combat these large wildland fires and that we are fortunate to live in a state where the mutual-aid system is second to none.

Our plans to update outdated facilities continue to move forward. Three fire stations are slated to be replaced in the coming year. Fire station 20 in Upper Ojai will be relocated to a more suitable parcel about one-half mile west of the current station. Fire station 27 in Fillmore will be moved to a parcel with more space and better access. Fire station 35 in Newbury Park will have a new and more modern home just up the street from its current location.

A number of significant initiatives played an important role in the District this year. Active-shooter training was delivered across the county and involved more than 1,500 law enforcement and fire personnel from a variety of agencies. It is troubling that we have to focus on training our personnel for such an incident, but I am proud of the efforts of our staff to develop and deliver this innovative program that has been replicated by many other agencies across the state. We have also revamped our fire safety inspection program and kicked off the campaign with a new effort aimed at all of our hotels, motels, apartments and condominiums. While we spend much of our energy and efforts training and preparing for emergency response, we recognize that prevention is critical in our efforts to reduce the risk to our community.

As we move forward into 2015, I am excited by many opportunities to better serve our community. I am pleased to work for an agency that has incredible people who are not satisfied with the status quo. Regardless of their position or level of responsibility, I continually see a workforce that is looking for ways to do things better and more efficiently. We are indeed fortunate.

## Board of Directors

The Ventura County Fire Protection District (District) is a special district within the county that was created by a special election, held in 1928, to provide fire protection for the unincorporated areas of the county. Over time, the protection was expanded to include six cities in the county – Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Camarillo, Port Hueneme and Ojai.

The County of Ventura Board of Supervisors acts as the Fire District's board of directors. One supervisor is elected from each of the five supervisorial districts within the county. These five supervisors appoint the fire chief to provide fire protection services for the District.

### Ventura County Fire Protection District Board of Directors



#### District 1 – Supervisor Steve Bennett

Represents the communities of San Buenaventura, Montalvo, Saticoy, Ojai Valley, City of Ojai, Upper Ojai Valley, Riverpark, Northwest Oxnard, and North Coast.



#### District 2 – Supervisor Linda Parks

Represents the cities and areas of Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park, Westlake Village, Oak Park, Bell Canyon, Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Somis, Las Posas Valley, California State University Channel Islands, portions of the Oxnard Plain, Santa Rosa Valley, Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu, California Air National Guard, and South Coast.



#### District 3 – Supervisor Kathy Long

Represents the communities of Camarillo, Port Hueneme, Southeast Oxnard, East Oxnard Plain, Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru, East Lockwood Valley, and eastern portion of Naval Base Ventura County Port Hueneme.



#### District 4 – Supervisor Peter Foy

Represents the communities of Simi Valley, Moorpark, Santa Susana Knolls, Box Canyon, Chatsworth Peak, Home Acres, Sinaloa Lake, and Tierra Rejada Valley.



#### District 5 – Supervisor John Zaragoza

Represents the communities of Oxnard, Oxnard Shores, Mandalay Bay, Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach, Hollywood by the Sea, Channel Islands Harbor, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Del Norte Area, Oxnard College, Oxnard Plain, Strickland and portion of Naval Base Ventura County Port Hueneme.



#### County Executive Officer – Michael Powers

Oversees more than 8,500 employees in 27 agencies and departments, including the Fire District. In addition, supports all major county functions including budget, finance, legislation, human resources, labor relations, economic development and information technology.

## District Promotions

### Promoted to Deputy Chief

Vaughan Miller

### Promoted to Assistant Chief

Michael Milkovich

### Promoted to Division Chief

Norman Plott

### Promoted to Battalion Chief

Darin Anderson

Kevin Davis

Brian Dilley

Robert Szczepanek

### Promoted to Fire Captain

Hector Garcia

Keith Helm

Rodd Landon

Jonathan Jesseman

Jeffrey Maurer

Anthony McHale

Dennis O'Shea

Eric Roulston

Michael Taguiam

Joseph E. Williams

Kimo Ukauka

### Promoted to Fire Engineer

Sean Ameche

Marcos Aviles

Andrew Cipolini

Michael Cosio

Chad Diederich

Richard Ellison

Brian McGrath

Katy Pallotto

Bradley Peters

Nicholas Pisciotta

Jose Ramirez

Richard Randolph

Edward Torrijos

### Promoted to Senior Fire Control Worker

Lance Campbell

Tyler Johnson

### Promoted to Fire Equipment Mechanic II

Ryan Lee

### Promoted to Administrative Assistant II

Velinda Trujillo

### Promoted to Administrative Assistant I

Nina Acosta

## District Profile

The Ventura County Fire Protection District response area covers 848 square miles, an area about half the size of Rhode Island. Ventura County has a total land area of 1,843 square miles, 42 miles of coastline and ranges in elevation from sea level to 8,831 feet at Mt. Pinos in the Los Padres National Forest.

The Ventura County Fire Protection District is an all-risk fire department that provides fire, emergency medical and rescue services in areas as diverse as urban centers, the coastline, farmlands and wildland.

## District Snapshot

Fire Stations	32
Support Facilities	4

### Personnel

Safety	383
Non-Safety	133
Wildland	42
Total	558

## 2014 Calls for Service

Medical	26,564
Public Service	3,077
Traffic Collision	2,606
Alarms	1,810
Fire	1,133
Investigations	1,343
Hazardous	746
Fire-Brush	61
Rescue	48
Alert	11
Other	15
Total	37,414

## Staff Hours by Call Type\*

Fire-Mutual Aid	49,566**
Medical	29,255
Fire	5,384
Traffic Collision	5,334
Public Service	3,443
Hazardous Condition	1,390
Investigation	1,195
Fire-Brush	998
Alarm	883
Other	595
Rescue	377
Aircraft Distress/Down	44
Total	98,464

\*Figures derived using CAD data

\*\*Mutual-Aid figure provided by Business Services. Costs reimbursed by host agencies



## District Retirements

### Deputy Chief

Michael LaPlant

### Assistant Chief

David Keith Gurrola

### Battalion Chief

Glenn Garcia

Danny Swensen

### Fire Captain

Anthony O'Hagan

Arsenio Saenz

James Stephenson

Robert Towers

Michael Wickham

### Fire Engineer

Cynthia Gordon

David Pumphrey

William Reynolds

Bertrand Van Auker

Samuel Villavicencio

Ottis Gillespie

### Firefighter

William Elder



Ventura County Fire Department  
 165 Durley Avenue • Camarillo, CA 93010  
 805-389-9710 • Fax: 805-388-4364  
<http://fire.countyofventura.org> • Twitter @VCFD  
<http://www.facebook.com/venturacountyfire>

# BUREAUS



## Administrative Services Bureau

Under the direction of Assistant Chief Mike Milkovich, the Administrative Services Bureau supports the mission of the Ventura County Fire Protection District by tracking industry standards, delivering quality training and assuring that District personnel have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures necessary for the continued delivery of the highest level of public Service.

### Human Resources (HR)

The Human Resources section handles the recruitment, hiring and administration of the District's employees. It coordinates insurance and other benefits, assists with retirements, conducts testing for new hires and promotional opportunities, and performs risk assessment for the District. Disability management is also under the supervision of HR. Additionally, HR plans and presents the annual Awards Ceremony and Promotional Ceremony events.

In 2014, Battalion Chief Dustin Gardner joined the HR team to serve as the leader of day-to-day operations and liaison to Labor Relations, County Counsel and Central HR at the County Government Center. Significant changes instituted this year include the use of a lottery system for firefighter recruitments and the implementation of an Engineer Academy designed to increase the number of qualified promotional candidates.

### Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

With 122 firefighters in the field daily the District is the largest first responder in the County. The EMS division is responsible for providing the continuing education necessary for dispatchers and firefighters to maintain Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Paramedic certification. The EMS division also provides quality assurance by reviewing EMS documentation. The Public Access Defibrillator program is also administered through this division. This program includes the inspection of defibrillators placed in public buildings and the required training for lay persons in the use of defibrillators and CPR.

Battalion Chief Scott Zeller transitioned into command of EMS in early 2014. Several changes were implemented in both the methods that care is provided and the process of training providers. All District providers were trained in the Cardiac Arrest Management system, or CAM. This system was adopted with the intent of maximizing the number of cardiac arrest patients who survive the event neurologically intact. In 2014, the District saw an increase in one critical category of cardiac arrest saves up from 43 percent to 52 percent; however, more data is necessary to attribute this increase to the CAM system. Chief Zeller and his staff worked closely with the Ventura County Emergency Medical Services Agency and other EMS providers in developing response protocols for potential cases of Ebola within the county.



### Training

The training section partnered with all of the District's bureaus to plan and implement a Districtwide Office 365 training program. This course included lecture, video and hands-on training for all employees of the District. Representatives from each bureau were trained as subject matter experts and, in turn, provided instruction back to all members. This training facilitated the transition to Office 365 making the shift from GroupWise much easier for all.

With a focus on the science of adult education, the District held its first Engineer Academy. The two-week program assisted prospective engineers with both didactic and manipulative training in the job of fire engineer. The candidates were trained to performance standards and tested at the end of the academy. The result was an approximate 50 percent increase in the pool of qualified fire engineers. This academy ensured consistent instruction of standards and a level playing field for evaluation in the testing process. Looking to the future, this same concept is in the planning stages for a Captain Academy in 2015.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Firefighter Academy was held from February through June of 2014. This 18-week academy graduated 18 trainees from the District and three from the Ventura City Fire Department.

## BUREAUS

---



### Business Services Bureau

Under the direction of Bureau Manager Tom Kasper, the Business Services Bureau supports the mission of the Ventura County Fire Protection District by providing fiscal services, managing capital projects, maintaining District facilities, managing records and collecting and analyzing data related to emergency response.

#### Fiscal Services

Fiscal services is responsible for all Fire District financial matters including payroll, accounts receivable/payable, purchasing, budget preparation and monitoring, disaster reimbursement, cost recovery, grant management and fiscal planning and analysis.

#### Custodian of Public Records

The management of all public records requests, subpoenas and records are accomplished through this office. In 2014, a new public records request function was added to the District's website improving efficiency on both the requesting and receiving side. In all, the office processed over 3,000 public records and documents to meet the requirements of both the California Public Records Act (PRA) and subpoenas. 100 percent of PRA requests were provided within the required ten-day period.

#### Facilities

The goal of the Facilities Unit is to construct and maintain safe, healthy, reliable and productive work environments which enable the District to achieve its operational objectives. In pursuit of this goal, in addition to managing routine maintenance at the 36 District worksites, the Facilities Unit managed several other large projects. With construction to replace three fire stations slated to begin in 2015, several deadlines were met, including completion of architectural and engineering designs for the three sites and completion of a California Environmental Quality Act analysis for the Summit Fire Station in Upper Ojai. Several renovation projects were coordinated: the installation of five traffic preemption systems in Newbury Park to improve response times, installation of security systems at the Regional Training Center (RTC) and three stations, and the installation of a high-efficiency HVAC system and carpeting at the fire administration building. Another large project at the fire administration building was the interior reconfiguration in support of the District's reorganization.



### Support Services Bureau

Under the direction of Assistant Chief Rod Megli, the Support Services Bureau supports the mission of the Ventura County Fire Protection District by providing leading-edge technology and logistical support including maintenance and repair of fleet vehicles, receiving and distribution of equipment and supplies and providing for the continuous operation of critical information technology and communication systems.

#### Vehicle Maintenance Unit

Fleet maintenance plays an essential role in the execution of the District's mission. The Vehicle Maintenance Unit (VMU) is responsible for the care and repair of the 371 emergency and non-emergency vehicles assigned to the District. This includes everything from golf carts to bulldozers. Each year the unit performs preventive service and maintenance on all engines and ladder trucks in the fleet. They also check and maintain all aerial and ground ladders.

In the past year a new vendor was chosen for forthcoming apparatus purchases. The VMU worked closely with operations personnel and the vendor to develop specifications for new pumpers and a new quint. Delivery is expected in late 2015. A new rescue vehicle was also developed and placed in service in the Ojai Valley. So far, this vehicle is exceeding the expectations of firefighters. Finally, the VMU was also involved in developing the environmental safety modifications for the new dozer delivered to the Wildland Unit in 2014.

#### Supply Unit

This unit manages the ordering, receiving and distribution of logistical needs to the Fire District's 36 work sites. Maintaining key relationships with vendors and Ventura County's General Services Agency contributes to the efficiency of the unit. On average in 2014, 5,131 transactions per month were completed with a 96.7 percent accuracy.

# BUREAUS

## Information Technology Services (IT)

Fire IT made significant upgrades to several systems this year. vCAD, a situational awareness application that shows the locations and status of apparatus and personnel, was upgraded from a web app to an iOS app to meet business requirements and ensure security. Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) capabilities were added to our back-up Dispatch Center to provide disaster recovery and continuation of operations in the event of disruption to the main Fire Communications Center. A major upgrade was made to every computer from Windows XP to the Windows 7 operating system and new Microsoft Office 2013 software. Along with this upgrade, all email accounts were migrated from GroupWise to Office 365 Outlook.

## Telecommunications Services

All issues with radio and hardline communications are managed through Telecommunications. Several large projects were carried out in 2014. All safety personnel were personally issued new Motorola APX 6000 hand-held radios. These state-of-the-art radios expanded the channel capability from 48 to 1000. Telecom worked with many agencies from local, state and federal government to design an effective frequency matrix. This radio programming and set-up has been adopted by several other fire agencies. A new radio repeater was established on Anacapa Island increasing communications capabilities in the Rincon area. Finally, looking toward the replacement of the District's mobile radios, Telecom worked with the radio cadre to set up a mobile platform and system to get the several potential replacement radios out to the field for evaluation by firefighters.



## Emergency Services Bureau

Under the direction of Assistant Chief Andy Ortega, the Emergency Services Bureau implements the core mission of the Ventura County Fire Protection District: Anticipation and response to the dynamic public safety needs of a diverse community.

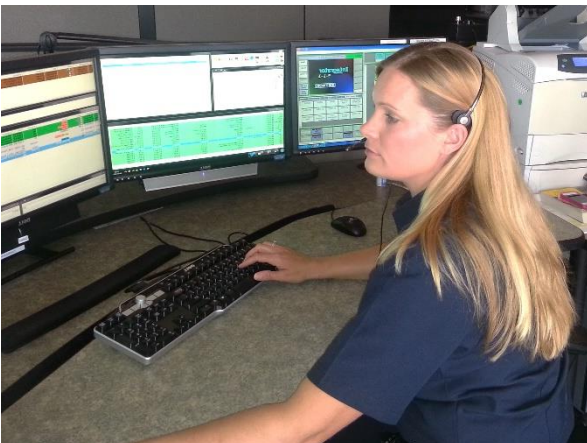
All aspects of emergency response are managed through the Emergency Services Bureau (ESB). This includes the dispatch and response of apparatus, maintenance of the Computer Aided Dispatch system, GIS mapping and fire investigation. Additionally, the bureau coordinates with cities served by the District, partner agencies and cooperating agencies to ensure that critical relationships are maintained and operational agreements, contracts and policies are current and valid.

The District consists of three divisions with a total of 32 fire stations. These forces serve a population of more than 480,000 in six cities and the unincorporated portions of Ventura County. The dynamic public safety needs of this diverse community include emergency medical service, fire suppression, hazardous materials response, aircraft crash rescue, urban search and rescue, water rescue, public service and more. In 2014, the District answered over 37,000 calls for assistance, up 5.2 percent from 2013. With the exception of the Ojai Valley which remained essentially unchanged from 2013, all response areas experienced an increase in calls for service.



## Wildland

In early 2014, the Wildland Unit initiated the operational phase of the Buenaventura prescribed fire project in Barlow and Sexton Canyons. After four years of planning and coordination with over 70 stakeholders and regulatory agencies, 350 of the planned 1,200 acres of Phase 1 were burned. Primarily, this vegetation management project is intended to provide a fuel break between the Ventura fuel bed and the interface where it meets the City of Ventura. Other benefits include the improvement of watershed, grazing land for property owners, and valuable training opportunities for multiple fire departments.



## Fire Communications Center (FCC)

As a regional dispatch center FCC is tasked with dispatching for the District as well as Ventura City, Santa Paula City, and Fillmore City Fire Departments and all emergency medical services transport providers within the county. The center also coordinates with many assisting and cooperating agencies. Over 65,000 calls were answered in 2014 as the community accessed this first step in the chain of care. In 2014, dispatchers assisted with the delivery of seven babies and provided CPR instruction that saved 13 lives.



# BUREAUS



## Fire Prevention Bureau

Under the direction of Fire Marshal Massoud Araghi, the Fire Prevention Bureau supports the mission of the Ventura County Fire Protection District by building partnerships with our communities to protect lives, property and the environment through education and the application of fire and building codes.



The Fire Prevention Bureau is responsible for fire safety compliance and education as well as engineering and development. In 2014, the Fire Prevention Bureau performed 3,045 plan reviews, conducted 3,208 inspections, and issued 451 filming permits and 282 fire code permits. In total, 4,689 projects were opened. The bureau launched a new Fire Safety Inspection Program (FSIP). An integral component of this program is the completion of state-mandated apartment and condominium inspections by field personnel. A key objective is to reduce the risk of fire in occupancies that have potential for significant life or property loss.

### Community Education

The Community Education Unit is responsible for educating the public concerning fire prevention and safety. The unit reaches out to both adults and children through public events, fire station tours, school visits and the Child Passenger Safety Program. In 2014 the Community Education Unit assisted 219 customers with guidance in the inspection, installation and use of child safety seats.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program provides disaster preparedness training and basic disaster response skills to the public. Trained community members are capable of providing first aid, rescue of trapped victims and limited firefighting. In 2014, the CERT program provided 19 classes throughout Ventura County and educated 397 county residents. The District presented its first CERT class geared for the deaf and hard of hearing, which was both well-received and well-attended.

### Technical Support

The Fire Prevention Bureau, along with its partner agencies, launched Accela Citizen Access (ACA). ACA provides a web-based portal for customers to check the status of their projects, pay fees and perform research. Soon customers will have the ability to request inspections, submit electronic plans, apply for minor permits and view Fire Prevention Bureau metrics, all on-line.

### Fire Hazard Reduction Program (FHRP)

The District's Fire Hazard Reduction Program remains one of the most efficient and effective in the nation. Over 15,000 parcels received notices to abate hazardous vegetation last year. By leveraging the District work force and prioritizing the program, each of these parcels received at least one on-site inspection in a 30-day period. Out of the 15,325 parcels falling under Ventura County Ordinance 28, only 28 parcels required clearance by the Fire District's contractor, a 99.8 percent compliance rate.

