



RODEO-HERCULES FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Dear Residents:

As your Fire Chief and on behalf of the Rodeo-Hercules Board of Directors I am sharing news of an initiative that has the potential to result in the provision of enhanced fire and emergency services to the communities of Rodeo and Hercules.

The Fire District is currently examining the possibility of consolidation of our district with the neighboring Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (Con Fire), which serves much of Contra Costa County including communities to the east and south of us. An important distinction is that Contra Costa County Fire Protection District is not a County Fire Department, Con Fire is an autonomous Fire District the same as Rodeo-Hercules.

The decision to examine the feasibility of consolidation is driven in part by a number of long term challenges identified as part of our five-year strategic plan development. The first consideration during this strategic plan was assuring our ability to continue to provide emergency services to our communities as we have done for over eighty years. Another is the considerable development across the district, which is poised to dramatically increase demand for emergency services; and the need to weather the impacts of any future economic downturn -- both significant challenges for our small, standalone fire district.

Consideration of long-term challenges such as these has led the board of directors to approve a review of the feasibility of consolidation. Thanks to your continued support and commitment we are fortunate to be in a position to consider this possibility.

Currently we have joined with East Contra Costa Fire and Con Fire in a feasibility study being conducted on our behalf by a fire-service subject matter expert consultant. At this point, we are simply sponsoring the portion of the feasibility study that addresses a possible consolidation of the Rodeo-Hercules and Contra Costa County fire districts. The study is ongoing at this time and we expect to begin to receive initial results sometime this spring.

The Fire District decided to participate in the study because we believe the prospect of consolidation has the potential to offer many benefits to the communities we serve. Chief among these is additional economies of scale and access to special programs that would be afforded by such a merger.

The Fire District already enjoys a high-level of operational consolidation because of our 20-plus year west county agreement between our district, Pinole Fire and Con Fire. Given this, we believe other possible benefits of a complete consolidation, if proven to be feasible, might include:

- More streamlined and cost-effective administrative functions.
- Enhanced training facilities and staff, to assist with employee growth and development.
- This would include access to a series of regular firefighter academies to better train firefighter recruits and assist with continuing education existing firefighters.
- Access to special programs such as marine rescue, aerial firefighting, heavy rescue and more, all unavailable to smaller fire jurisdictions such as ours
- The services of a staffed community risk reduction bureau.
- Centralized logistics and facilities support

Once the board receives the results of the feasibility study, we expect to engage in a series of public communications, including surveys and public forums designed to assess public opinion regarding the findings. The views expressed will help to formulate the fire district board of directors' thinking on any decisions to be taken regarding consolidation.

It is important to note, no decision has been made about consolidation and none will be made without input from our communities. This will come after we share the results of the feasibility study findings and consider all the likely impacts to the residents we serve. The Fire Board understands that this is a collective decision that needs to be reached together.

As more information becomes available, we look forward to reaching out to residents and influencers alike with more information regarding this initiative in the weeks and months ahead.

Thank you for your continued support of our fire district.

Sincerely,

Bryan Craig
Fire Chief