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## New Ambulances Rolling in to MOFD

*By Nick Marnell*

At its May 6 meeting the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board unanimously approved a \$425,000 expenditure for two new 2016 International TerraStar Leader ambulances, which will give the district a fleet of six ambulances, including two reserve vehicles. MOFD last purchased ambulances in 2008.

"Our two most active ambulances have been out of service 27 percent of the time," said fire chief Stephen Healy. "We're burning through transmissions, motors and brakes, and a cracked frame, in one case. We are very tough on our ambulances."

The district apparatus committee, headed by battalion chief Felipe Barreto, recommended the purchase of new vehicles as opposed to remounting the current district modules on new chassis. "For one thing, we then wouldn't have reserve ambulances," said Healy. The chief noted that the new ambulances should last up to 15 years, while remounted modules onto new chassis will last maybe half that long. The cost of remounting was presented as about half the cost of a new purchase.

Healy explained that the new apparatus have beefier chassis, stronger power trains and are larger and heavier duty than the models being replaced. He allayed concerns that the new ambulances were so much bigger than the current units that they could not navigate all of the district roads. "Our fire engines can get to every street in the district," he said. "These are much smaller than our fire engines."

Barreto said that the ambulances should be delivered in the fall, and that the two new vehicles will likely be deployed at station 41 in Moraga and station 44 in south Orinda. One reserve ambulance will remain at station 41, the other stored at Moraga's station 42.

The new Internationals will be purchased through the National Joint Powers Alliance, a Minnesota-based municipal national contracting agency. The district plans to send out a request for proposals this month for the lease financing.

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