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Lamorinda Fire News Briefs

By Nick Marnell

Stations 16 and 43 Construction

A structural engineer told Contra Costa County Fire Protection District chief Jeff Carman that he concurred with the opinion of the district contractor that fire station 16 in Lafayette was not doomed to the wrecking ball. "There's no reason why we can't rebuild it," said the chief. Initial plans call for the stripping of the structure down to the frame and rebuilding from there.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District, though, plans to raze its dilapidated station 43 and erect a totally new structure on Via Las Cruces in Orinda. Initial estimates approach \$4 million. Fire chief Stephen Healy said that the district may need to purchase a temporary station to house the station 43 crew during construction.

Representatives from Brandis Talliman LLC, a San Francisco-based investment banking firm, plan to outline public and private financing options at the Nov. 4 district meeting.

MOFD is Hiring

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District is seeking firefighter-paramedics. Fire chief Stephen Healy said that the district extended its application period this time from one to two months to broaden the pool of potential applicants. "The best candidates are taking a lot of tests," he said.

The deadline for applying is 5 p.m. Nov. 13. More details, along with the employment application, are available at the district website, mofd.org.

ConFire Ambulance Contract

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors awarded the available county ambulance contract to the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, and the district's contract negotiations with the county emergency medical services agency should be completed by mid-October, according to ConFire chief Jeff Carman. The district then plans to finalize an agreement with American Medical Response, the current county emergency medical transport provider, to subcontract for ambulance service. ConFire takes over the available county ambulance contract in January.

"We are working to merge our two dispatch centers," said Carman. The Contra Costa Regional Fire Communications Center in Pleasant Hill operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year, with ConFire dispatchers providing fire and medical service to most of the county. The center also contracts for dispatch service with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. ConFire will add AMR dispatchers to the center to systematically deploy ambulance calls after the first of the year.

ConFire and AMR transmit via different radio frequencies, but by January, the chief said that AMR dispatch will merge into the ConFire radio frequency.

"We're making good progress, but there's not a lot of breathing room," said Carman. "But that's the way I like it."

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