



# Fire Districts

## Public Meetings

### Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors  
 Wednesday, Nov. 18, 7 p.m.  
 Wednesday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m.  
 Moraga Library Community Room  
 1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga  
 For meeting times and agendas,  
 visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

### ConFire

Board of Directors  
 Tuesday, Dec. 8, 1:30 p.m.  
 Board Chamber room 107,  
 Administration Building,  
 651 Pine St., Martinez  
 For meeting times and agendas,  
 visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

Emergency response information and training:  
 Lamorinda Community  
 Emergency Response Team (CERT)  
[www.lamorindacert.org](http://www.lamorindacert.org).

**Please submit  
 Letters and Opinions:**  
[letters@lamorinda-weekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorinda-weekly.com)

# Top Priority for New ConFire Facilities Manager: Station 16

By Nick Marnell



Wendy Riley Photo Nick Marnell

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District recently hired a new facilities manager, Wendy Riley, whose to-do list leads off with Lafayette's fire station 16.

Fire Chief Jeff Carman immediately assigned Riley the pro-

posed reconstruction of the station, which has been closed nearly four years. "She understands the importance of this facility and has made it a top priority," said the chief.

The district received additional reports from a contractor and an engineer which Carman said make him even more optimistic that ConFire can stick to its original plan of renovating the station instead of tearing it down and completely rebuilding it.

Riley, a mother of three who joined ConFire in September, is in charge of not only the fire stations, but of all of the district infrastructure, including the dispatch center, the administration center and the training center.

She quickly experienced the singularities of her new industry.

"Coming from the private side to the fire district there were some things I had to learn that are a little bit different," said Riley. "I'm seeing all these names on a list and I see 'PM' after their names and I'm saying, 'We sure have a lot of project managers here.'" No, they told her. Those are paramedics.

Her mission is to reduce the stress on the firefighters, whose jobs she said are already stressful enough. "You don't want to have to worry when you come back from trying to save someone's life," said Riley. "That it's too cold in their dorms, or that the lighting is not working properly. Or worry about pest control." She did a ride-along to get the feel for the firefighters' daily routine.

"Three back-to-back medical calls," she said. "Go out, ride back,

go back out again, non-stop. I never even had time for lunch. They were going to have to do a medical call on me."

Riley mentioned no problems with the other two Lafayette stations, but she did say that the station 15 and 17 building exteriors will be painted this spring. "Standard colors, bright red doors on a beige building backdrop."

The passion for and pride in her job exude within seconds of meeting her. "I'm assisting the men and women who are assisting the community," said Riley. "It's like I'm doing my community service every day."

"Wendy has really helped our entire facilities division move ahead quicker and more efficiently, and fire station 16 is no exception," said Carman.

# Young Cancer Patient Impacts MOFD Firefighter

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The confident, self-assured young girl nearly jumped to the ceiling.

"I wouldn't have thought that going to chemo could be that ex-

citing for anyone," said Brown.

Cancer is a disease emblazoned in firefighters' psyches. A 2014 study released by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health reported that firefighters experienced a higher rate of cancer than the rest of the population, often caused by the flame-retardant chemicals in the gear designed to protect them.

"It's a lot for a little one to go through," said Brown. "Her little brother is experiencing this, too. When we take Finley to the hospital, he misses mommy, and he wants his sister home." She said that Finley's cancer is treatable, with a 90 percent survival rate.

"It's not like you can opt out," continued Brown. "You step up and perform. And you marvel at the number of lives she is touching."

None likely touched more than the firefighter who delivered Finley and her brother a custom set of firefighters' turnout gear.

"Fireman Lucas is my friend," she said. "He's kind and he does

really nice things for us."

"As if we didn't have enough

reasons to love firefighters already," said Brown.



At the Brown residence, top row, from left: engineer-paramedic Matt Epperson, firefighter-paramedic Jared Costanza, captain Mike Rattary and firefighter-paramedic Dave Iman; bottom row: Cooper Brown, Finley Brown and firefighter-paramedic Lucas Lambert

# MOFD Open House and Pancake Breakfast Benefits Burn Foundation

Firefighters of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District helped raise over \$1,235 for the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation at the district's Oct. 3 Open House and Pancake Breakfast in Moraga. Samantha Zepeda from the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation accepts the \$1,235 check from MOFD firefighter-paramedic Matt Lopez. N. Marnell



Photo Stephen Healy, MOFD

# ConFire Firefighter of the Year



Photo Tomi Riley

Fire Chief Jeff Carman presented the 2015 Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Firefighter of the Year award to firefighter-paramedic Vinnie Aiello at the Nov. 10 board of directors meeting.

"Everyone here has taught me a great work ethic," said Aiello, speaking to the board, district staff and friends and family. "A day doesn't go by that I don't appreciate and respect that work ethic for the fire department. And I'm going to continue that work ethic until the day I retire."

Carman cited Aiello's mentorship of firefighters – from probationary cadets to veterans – as a key factor that supported his selection. N. Marnell

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