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MOFD Directors Give Unexpected Kudos to ConFire Chief

By Nick Marnell

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District chief Jeff Carman outlined the benefits of the new district ambulance transport program at a county fire commissioners' dinner last month, and he received high acclaim for his performance from an unexpected source: the president and the vice president of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board of directors.

The two districts had attempted to build joint fire station 46 at the Lafayette-Orinda border, and as the deal unraveled, MOFD directors Steve Anderson and Fred Weil blasted the county leadership, calling it unreliable and blaming it for the failure of the venture. A worn-out Carman recommended the reconstruction of Lafayette station 16 instead.

Could the dinner compliments, delivered at the conclusion of the April 6 district meeting, represent an olive branch from MOFD?

Anderson, board president, said that Carman gave an excellent speech, and Weil noted that of all the commissioners' meetings he has attended, the program featuring Carman was one of the best. "He's a terrific speaker," Weil said. "He gets right to the point. He's very direct, and he handled himself very well. I hope the commissioners bring in more speakers like him."

Carman said that the highlight of the March 17 commissioners' dinner was being able not only to present the ConFire ambulance program but also to talk about the potential changes to ambulance transport based on the Affordable Care Act. He told his ConFire board April 12 that in the first quarter, despite the uncertainty of the changes, it appeared that the ambulance program exceeded its revenue goal and expenses were lower than projected.

The chief accepted the positive gesture of the MOFD directors.

"It's nice to know that despite fire station 46 not working out, both Anderson and Weil can see beyond that issue and give me a fair evaluation," Carman said. "It's always nice to be complimented by those that have criticized in the past and I appreciate their objectivity."

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