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## Lafayette fire commissioner stepping down in June

By Nick Marnell



Bill Granados and his daughter Lola attend one of his many formal civic events. Photo provided

When Lafayette fire commissioner Bill Granados departs this summer, many of his colleagues say that the loss will be not only for Lafayette and the fire district but for all of Contra Costa County.

Granados was appointed to the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Advisory Fire Commission in 2002.

"I'm 73. Fifteen years is enough time," he said. A ranch owner, he plans to continue roping cows and branding them after he retires June 30. "I've always been kind of a cowboy," he said. He will help the widow of Bob Chapman, who recommended Granados for the commission, keep her cows in line as well.

With his background in chemical engineering, Granados founded ISSCO, a Lafayette company that tests and certifies backflow prevention devices, equipment that prevents used water from reentering the potable water system. "We're protecting the public water supply. Sort of like smog testing for your car," Granados said. He will also keep his hands in this business.

"He's got boundless energy," said Tom Chapman, Bob's brother and commission chairman, whom, to complete the circle, Granados recruited in 2012. "Bill is the most active of the commissioners. He knows what is going on in almost all of the county activities."

Many seconded those attributes: Granados' energy and his involvement. District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen said that Granados attends nearly every supervisors' and fire board meeting. "He regularly provides us with reliable and helpful insight as we address the many fire and emergency medical issues in the county," she said.

Vince Wells, Local 1230 president, praised Granados as the most active commissioner, always representing the interests of Lafayette. "He advocated for the firefighters and never failed to speak out in our support," Wells said.

ConFire Chief Jeff Carman recognized Granados for bringing a level of professionalism to the job and keeping everyone on track when the commission meetings would go awry, which they frequently did until Granados became involved. Granados took his advisory role seriously. "He was at almost every directors meeting letting the supervisors know what he thought of the initiatives the fire district was working on," the chief said.

Carman noted that Granados went beyond just being a fire commissioner for the district, but also tried to create camaraderie among all of the fire commissioners and directors in the county. As president of the Fire Commissioners Association, Granados continues to organize regular meetings of the county fire boards and fire commissioners.

Granados called the hiring of Carman in 2013 the high point of his tenure. As a business executive, Granados could see what ConFire needed in its leadership, and he strongly recommended Carman for the job. "Bill was on one of my interview panels when I applied, so I've always felt a connection with him," Carman said. "He's a class act, and I will always remember him for giving me a chance to be the fire chief."

The failure of 2012 Measure Q, which would have generated \$16 million annually for ConFire, devastated Granados. "But Carman has kind of erased that," Granados said.

Granados' knowledge and instincts came to bear when he stood out as the lone wolf and predicted, in this newspaper, that in 2013 the ConFire board would not approve Fire Station 46, the joint venture in western Lafayette between ConFire and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. "Two chiefs, with one station? It's not going to work," he said. He was correct. When Carman scuttled the on-again, off-again plans in 2016, the chief said that the different cultures of the two agencies would have never melded properly.

The cowboy leaves the district in a much better position. "Things are in good hands. There's nothing to really get worked up about now," Granados said. On that note, he imparts this message to Lafayette residents. "Have faith in Chief Carman and his chief officers," Granados said. "They know how to run the fire district."

Andersen will accept applications in April and May and will appoint Granados' District 2 successor in June.

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