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Festive sendoff for MOFD Chief Healy

By Nick Marnell

Paige Meyer, left, with MOFD Fire Chief Stephen Healy Photo Nick Marnell

Family, friends and coworkers of Fire Chief Stephen Healy celebrated his 31-year fire service career and his 12 years with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District during a farewell party at the Hacienda de Las Flores in Moraga Sept. 20.

County Supervisor Candace Andersen recognized Healy with a resolution from the Board of Supervisors, and officials from Moraga and Orinda read proclamations from their municipalities. Current and former members of the district board and friends from other fire agencies honored the outgoing chief, with the firefighters presenting him an axe, a tool put into service while Healy was fire chief and symbolizing the history and experience of all of the fire service members.

The banter between Healy and Paige Meyer, fire chief of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, stole the show. "Thanks for dressing up," Healy zinged at Meyer, the only chief officer not in Class A dress blues. It was payback from a meeting years ago when Meyer looked in the audience for Healy and asked him to please stand. Except that Healy was standing.

Healy read a short, emotional speech, thanking his family, the firefighters, the district staff and board members. "This is the best place I have ever worked," Healy said. "Nowhere else has even come close."

The dozens in attendance applauded MOFD Director Steve Anderson's concluding words. "The true test of someone's character is if they do the right thing when no one is looking," Anderson said.

"The chief did the right thing when no one was looking."

Healy is succeeded by Interim Fire Chief Jerry Lee, who was sworn in earlier that evening at a district board meeting.

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