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Believe it! Fire Station 16 is under construction

By Nick Marnell



Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin, left, seems overjoyed at Station 16 groundbreaking. Photo courtesy city of Lafayette/Jeff Heyman

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District celebrated the groundbreaking of Lafayette Fire Station 16 with a gold shovel ceremony April 11, and the 22 gold shovels used for the event could have each signified one of the many obstacles the district had to overcome to finally begin the construction.

"It was hard getting here, but we're here," said Fire Chief Jeff Carman, who credited the efforts of public officials, his staff, neighborhood groups and the firefighters union for navigating through years of frustration to arrive at the day's banner event. The station closure, the wrath of the city, the financial problems, the failed joint venture with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, all disappeared in the rearview mirror as Carman announced additional fire protection coming for the western Lafayette area, a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, not unlike the North Bay region that was devastated by wildfires in October.

"Station 16 makes us safer," Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin said more than once to the dozens of attendees.

Assistant Fire Chief Aaron McAlister, the master of ceremonies and the district point person for the project, warned the Los Arabis Drive neighbors that thanks to the vehicle activity and the construction noise about to commence, things will get worse before they get better, words spoken just before a mid-April storm rolled over the hills into Lafayette. "But you know where we're headed, and we thank you for your support," McAlister said.

ConFire expects to commission the rebuilt Fire Station 16 in early 2019.

Reach the reporter at: nick@lamorindaweekly.com

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