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ConFire Chief Jeff Carman to depart in March

By Nick Marnell

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Chief Jeff Carman announced his retirement to his staff, officials and district residents on Dec. 7.

"It is with mixed emotions that I write this message to inform all of you that I plan to retire on March 29, 2019," wrote the chief. "This year marks my 35th year in the fire service. It has been an incredible career highlighted by being the fire chief of ConFire for the last five and a half years. In that time, we have accomplished incredible things together, and, while I still enjoy coming to work and being a part of this organization, I think it is a good time for me to move aside and allow new talent and ideas into the organization. Over the course of my career, I have worked for fire chiefs who stayed too long, and I would prefer to end my career on a positive note rather than overstay my welcome."

Carman took over a troubled fire district in October of 2013 and directed ConFire to such financial and operational success that he was named California Fire Chief of the Year in 2018. Among his many achievements are the formation of the Alliance, a public-private partnership that provides ambulance transport service in most of Contra Costa County, beefing up the district hazardous materials response program and the rebuilding not only of a fire station but of district relationships with the city of Lafayette. "City staff was tough but fair," Carman said. "Withdrawing from the joint fire station project with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District was ultimately the right decision and I am anxious to be here for the grand opening of Fire Station 16 next year. I think that decision showed the city of Lafayette we were committed to providing the best possible service to them and was a step in the right direction."

The chief praised his staff and recognized the organization, which he touted as morphing from a reactive organization to a more strategic one, anticipating customer needs and assuring that those needs were met when issues arose. "As a result, I am confident that I can leave the organization knowing that it is on a good path and has a bright future," Carman said.

Over the next four months, the chief plans to come to work every day just as he has for the last five years. "There are still many things I would like to accomplish before I go, and I will continue to work hard to complete those things before I leave. Until then, I look forward to continuing to be the fire chief of this district," Carman said.

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