



PLACER HILLS – NEWCASTLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS

Prevention • Education • Protection



TO: All Personnel

DATE: June 28, 2020

FROM: Kirk Kushen, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: Retirement/Resignation

After 39 years in the fire service, the last three working here in Placer County, I have made the decision that now is the time for me to retire for the second time. I cannot possibly express in words what a pleasure it has been getting to know all of you and working together with each and everyone of you towards improving our Fire Districts. Together, we have all worked very hard to effect positive changes in many areas within our agencies and concurrently, improved the quality of the services we provide the community.

My primary mission and objective, from the very first day I began here three years ago, was to ensure all of our personnel were provided the training, equipment and the tools necessary to operate safely and effectively, for a long career, in a very dangerous profession. It became apparent very shortly after I started to learn our operations, that we had some significant obstacles to overcome with low engine staffing levels, high turnover and attrition rates and serious budget constraints. Some of the personnel, from multiple Districts, were responding in frontline apparatus, still in service, well beyond their normal safe and effective lifespans.

With all of the collaborative efforts contributed by each and every member of our organizations, we have achieved amazing success in numerous areas, for our multiple agencies. We have successfully passed ballot measures in two of three Districts, thanks to the incredible drive of our firefighter's associations, IAFF L-3800 and our dedicated community members. Without everyone, working together as a team, these ballot measures would have ended in defeat, like most statewide tax increases put before the voters.

We have applied for numerous grants from every federal, state and local entity offering application opportunities and achieved some amazing results. We added a Fire Prevention Program in all of our Districts, purchased new rescue equipment, purchased new Type 1 Engines and utilized creative methods to destroy the oldest engines and reduce the age of our fleets. We have also replaced old, unreliable command vehicles, upgraded much of our communications equipment with both new vehicle and portable radios. We have aggressively purchased PPE, provided second sets of turnouts and the equipment necessary to properly clean your gear, reduce exposures to carcinogens and provide a safer work environment for all of you.

With the passage of Measure "A", we have transitioned our full-time permanent staffing levels on our engines to minimum expected standards and included higher pay and full benefit packages. With the addition of seasonal and intern firefighters our overall staffing is higher than ever and at safer response levels. We have added multiple IT and software systems to better track and manage multiple areas including our inventory, equipment status, training and staffing call back systems. We now have dedicated Battalion Chiefs on two of three shifts to ensure we provide you the training, leadership and dedicated I/C's & Safety Officers to mentor you and ensure you can have improved efficiency as an engine company.

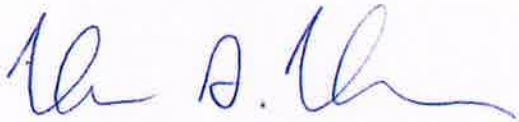
Kirk Kushen, Fire Chief • P.O. Box 350 • Meadow Vista, CA 95722
Tel: (530) 878-0405 • Fax: (530) 878-0959 • www.placerhillfire.org

Overall, I sincerely believe that our Fire Districts and all of our men and women are in a better place now than prior to the beginning of my service here with Placer Hills and Newcastle Fire. I feel now is the right time for me to step aside and allow new energy and a new Fire Chief to continue the forward momentum. I have realized that there are differing views between myself and some of our elected Board members on the priorities and importance of always taking care of our most valuable resource, our personnel. I feel that the salary gap and complete compensation package must be narrowed between ours and other Placer County fire agencies to ensure the future success of our personnel and the stability of our Fire Districts.

I am going to sincerely miss the daily interactions with all of you, the camaraderie and friendships developed and of course responding to emergencies and taking care of our communities and individual citizens on what is usually their worst day. It has been a pleasure to serve with each and everyone of you and this decision does not come easy. It's been a great ride, and in hindsight, I wouldn't have traded it for any other profession. I feel blessed and fortunate to have been in a position to serve the public and lead and mentor some very fine people. Watching all of you learn, grow, progress in life, start families and be successful gives me great pride.

Thank you for the privilege of leading all of you as your Fire Chief for the last three years!

Sincerely,



Kirk S. Kushen

June 18, 2020

Kirk Kushen, Fire Chief
Placer Hills Fire Protection District (PHF)
Meadow Vista CA 95722

Today I have reached a difficult personal decision. I will be resigning my position as the Fire Marshal/Division Chief effective July 18, 2020. I will return all of my Personal Protective Equipment and other items belonging to PHF on my final day of July 18, 2020.

I want to thank everyone whose friendship and support has made this experience at Placer Hills Fire Protection District enjoyable.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vernell Brothers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Vernell Brothers