

# Meet CAL FIRE's New Chiefs...

## Janet Upton continued...

In the realm of education, I'd like to see CAL FIRE have its own mascot. I know Smokey Bear is an icon but his message is one note and I believe our prevention messages should reflect fire and life safety messages that can help prevent all types of emergencies and tragedies we see across the state on a daily basis. We are all-risk and our safety messages should be, too.

This all being said, at the end of the day I would like the Sacramento Public Information and Education program to be known for exceptional internal customer service and support of the field. We have a great staff and the feedback we've had so far indicates we are succeeding.

### Tell us about your family.

My husband, Scott, is an air tactical group supervisor at the Chico Air Attack base and we have three kids; Scotty, Matt and Cristina. At one point during the lightning fires in Butte last June, I was the PIO, Scott was the helicopter coordinator, Scotty was working as a firefighter on an engine, his wife, Dani, was working in the phone center, Matt was loading tankers and Cristina was working as a call taker. I think the Upton's needed their own T-card rack in the Plans section!

### Any concluding comments?

Just that it was quite a ride the first few months and I am really enjoying the challenges of the job. After my appointment was announced, I received many messages from people in our department and they were very inspiring. The support of the field means the world to me and I am striving to live up to everyone's expectations, including my own!

It really is an honor to have been appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger to a department with such a noble mission of protecting the people, property and resources of California. CAL FIRE is a world class organization we should all be proud of.

## Dale Hutchinson, Unit Chief, Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit

By Julie Hutchinson, fire captain, Riverside Unit

On February 2, 2009, Dale Hutchinson was appointed unit chief of the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit. Chief Hutchinson has worked in the fire service for 28 years, beginning his career in 1980 while still in high school, as a volunteer firefighter at the Desert Hot Springs Station in Riverside County. His original reason for joining the volunteer company was to help the community. It did not take long for him realize that being a firefighter would be his lifelong career.

In 1983, he accepted a permanent position as a dispatcher clerk in Perris followed by a limited-term fire apparatus engineer job in the San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit in 1986.

Then in early 1990, Chief Hutchinson moved back to Riverside and promoted through the ranks. His positions included working as an engine and truck captain, deputy fire marshal, fire investigator, field battalion chief, Pre-Fire battalion chief and division chief at Oak Glen Camp.

Since 2006, Chief Hutchinson has been the Deputy Chief of Western Operations, Pre-Fire Management, and the Fleet in the Riverside Unit.

He has developed a fair and consistent management style and has extensive experience dealing with personnel issues, contracts/cooperative agreements, major incident management, complex interagency relationships, and is prepared to meet the challenges ahead.

Chief Hutchinson has been involved with Incident Command Teams since 2001 working his way to Incident Commander on Team #7.

Chief Hutchinson will be commuting from Riverside County until his son Andrew graduates from high school in mid-June. The family will then look at options for potentially relocating. Chief Hutchinson has been married for twenty years to his wife Julie who is a Fire Captain in the Public Affairs Bureau in



the Riverside Unit. His daughter Kathryn is in Kindergarten and reminds him constantly who the boss is!

"I look forward to working to develop and continue strong interagency cooperation and communication to provide the best service possible to the people we serve," said Chief Hutchinson.

## Loren Snell, Staff Chief, Cooperative Fire Protection Program, Sacramento Headquarters

By Lyndee Port, communications analyst, Sacramento Headquarters

On July 1, 2008, Loren Snell was promoted to the position of staff chief of the Cooperative Fire Protection Program at Sacramento Headquarters.

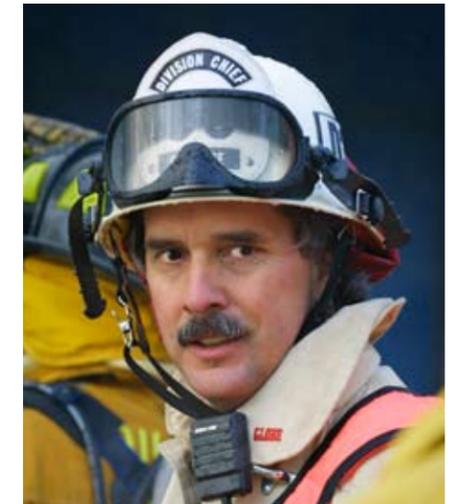
Chief Snell began his career with CAL FIRE in 1972 as a seasonal firefighter in the Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit. He accepted a permanent position in the Siskiyou Unit as a fire apparatus engineer in 1977 and five years later promoted to fire captain in Siskiyou. Chief Snell then transferred to the Academy as an instructor, later promoting to Battalion Chief of the Sacramento Command Center.

In 1992, Snell transferred to the Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit as the training and safety bureau chief and in 1997 promoted to division chief of Placer County Operations. In 2006, Snell con-

sidered retiring and took nine months off, but was unable to stay away for long and returned in 2007 to Sacramento Headquarters as the deputy chief of Command and Control.

When asked what his favorite time with CAL FIRE has been, Snell responded, "As I reflect back over the years, probably the time on the 'red sled' (fire engine) was the best of times. You are out there physically, mentally engaged on an incident; living it; eating it; bringing it back in your lungs." Though no longer on the 'red sled', Chief Snell's new role is vital to the department's relationships with local, state and federal agencies.

Chief Snell lives near Folsom Lake State Park and likes to make use of all the park's trails while running or riding his



bike. That is of course when he isn't spoiling his new grandson — Aiden.

## Brenda Seabert, Staff Chief of Fire Protection Operations, Sacramento Headquarters

By Lyndee Port, communications analyst, Sacramento Headquarters

On December 2, 2008, Brenda Seabert was appointed staff chief of Fire Protection Operations at Sacramento Headquarters. She is responsible for organizing and coordinating the state-wide fire protection programs, including the Department's emergency command and control system, telecommunications and various automation programs.

Chief Seabert started her career with CAL FIRE in 1980 as a seasonal firefighter in the Riverside Unit. In 1983, she spent the summer as a limited term engineer in the Mendocino Unit, before transferring back to the Riverside Unit and promoting to engineer, captain then to battalion chief. In Riverside, Chief Seabert worked on a Helitack Crew for five years. In 1987, when she promoted to a fire captain, Seabert became the first public affairs captain in the Riverside

Unit. "It was pretty fun to develop that program," said Seabert.

From there, Chief Seabert promoted to assistant chief in South Ops. She later returned to the Riverside Unit as the administrative division chief for a couple of years, before returning to the field as the division chief of Bautista Conservation Camp. Chief Seabert had been looking to come to Northern California, so she transferred to the Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit as the administrative officer where she worked for approximately two years.

"I've worked in the administrative side of things for about the last five years so getting back to the operational side is really enjoyable for me because that's my true love of the department."



Chief Seabert has a fondness for horses and owns four of them. Painting is a hobby of hers and plans to focus a lot more on her art when she retires.