

Communique'

January/February 2006

California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection



From the director

Off to a fast start

Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman appointed State Fire Marshal Ruben Grijalva acting CDF Director on January 1, 2006. In the last issue of the Communique you met Chief Grijalva as the state fire marshal, his philosophy and background. [Summer-Fall 2005](#) Now he begins another chapter as acting CDF Director.

How did Chief Grijalva describe his first 30 days, “hectic, challenging, and rewarding.” He has kept up that hectic pace - traveling to each of the CDF Units, meeting with all of the programs, and personally engaging as many employees as he can to immerse himself in the CDF experience. “It has been rewarding,” said Grijalva, “especially meeting so many employees who are so dedicated and talented.”

Governor Schwarzenegger appointed Chief Grijalva as state fire marshal in August, 2004. Chief Grijalva spent the previous 10

years as the Palo Alto Fire Chief. As a member of the Palo Alto Fire Department, and the city of Sunnyvale in both police and fire capacities, Grijalva has more than 30 years experience in public safety. That includes extensive skill in negotiations, from labor to legislative, code development to hostage negotiations. Chief Grijalva was the primary hostage negotiator in the 1988 Sunnyvale incident at ESL, Inc. where the largest mass murder in Santa Clara history occurred. Grijalva spent five hours trying to persuade Richard Wade Farley, who had killed seven people and injured four others, to surrender and let the other hostages go. Farley eventually agreed.

The role of CDF Director, overseeing nearly 4,000 permanent employees and 1,400 seasonals, and a budget of more than \$770 million, brings its own set of challenges. “As a member of the governor’s staff I have the

responsibility of advising the administration on fire and life safety issues,” said Chief Grijalva. His years of experience and a calendar packed with meetings and field tours to bring himself up to speed on CDF will aid him in fulfilling that responsibility. Chief Grijalva also hopes to have the building blocks of a two-year plan outlined for the department within his first 100 days. Even with a full calendar and dealing with day-to-day operations, he has identified several priority issues facing the department.

“The long and short term budget issues facing this department must be the top priority. We need to address the long term funding issues that will support our statewide infrastructure, and ongoing equipment and training needs in order to continue responding to the citizens of California.”

He acknowledges that the budget issues and processes on the scale CDF is facing will be an educational process both for himself, and for the control agencies that determine the department’s financial support. “We have begun meeting with the Department of Finance, and providing them with field tours to support the statistics and information we have concerning our current and long-term needs.”

An issue directly tied to our funding and planning issues led our new acting director to ask, “What is CDF’s mission? We know that we are an all-risk department, but we need to clearly re-define our mission to ensure that it truly fits what we are doing today and in the years to come,” said Chief Grijalva.

Chief Grijalva also places priority on CDF working more closely with its local government partners to strengthen its Schedule A and Amador contracts. “Dealing with local government is a two-way street; there needs to be communication from both sides,” says Grijalva. He cited growing administrative costs charged to contracts as an example. “CDF is not just indiscriminately adding costs to the contracts and we need to be more effective in

communicating with local governments the reasons for those costs.”

As Chief Grijalva has stressed on many occasions, customer service, communication, and consensus building are keys to his management style. Consensus among stakeholders, such as our local government partners, and consensus among employees. “I have asked every program to submit a two-year plan, outlining those issues that they feel will be priority within their programs,” said Chief Grijalva. He’s even made that same request of the CDF Firefighters Union. Chief Grijalva was very clear that the nature of this department’s mission, and state government, will never allow for a plan set in stone. But the information will be used to create a two-year plan of flexible priorities for CDF that also will assist the department in its funding and future planning endeavors.

“Every employee should know the department’s top five priorities so they understand the reasons decisions are made,” said Chief Grijalva. “They still may not agree with all the decisions, but knowing the reasons why is important for morale, and operating as a team.”

In keeping with Chief Grijalva’s goal of improving communications, he has initiated a weekly chief’s message for CDF employees via the department’s internal Intranet. He will also provide a regular column in the CDF Communiqué on issues important to employees and the citizens of California.

“I am grateful for this opportunity,” said Chief Grijalva. “I look forward to working together, and facing the challenges ahead, with an outstanding group of employees, and cooperators.”

Ruben Grijalva
(Acting) Director

CDF responds to flooding in Northern California

In support of the 05/06 Northern California flooding CDF responded with 81 camp crews, four helicopters, three dump trucks, three dozers with transports, three chippers, and 53 overhead personnel. These resources came from nine different units and Sacramento Headquarters.

Crews handled duties ranging from filling sand bags and reinforcing levees, to building diversion dams, providing structure protection from rising water, search and rescue, and reconnaissance.

CDF Fire/Butte County Fire

A CDF Fire/Butte County Fire Swift Water Rescue team rescues a man and his dog from high water in the southeast portion of Butte County. Each time a rescue is made a silhouette sticker is placed on the raft, just like some of the old bomber planes. The team actually got a paw print sticker for the side of the raft after this rescue. Rescuers included Fire Apparatus Engineer John Messina, Fire

Captain Tony Brownell, Fire Captain Sean Norman, and Fire Captain Sean McLean.

Three teams of two swift water rescuers were on call for the duration of the flood danger. Working with the county Office of Emergency Services, Butte responded to over 70 flood-related calls between December 28 and January 1, 2006.

Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit

By Linda Galvin, fire prevention specialist II, Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit

On December 28, the National Weather Service predicted that a series of winter storms would pass through the north state with the potential to drop significant amounts of rain over the next 10 days. This led to flood conditions at the end of 2005 and into the New Year throughout the Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit (LNU). Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Solano counties were all affected. Hardest hit in Napa County was the area from south of the city of Napa to Calistoga along the Napa River, and in Sonoma County along the Russian River. Local government Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) were activated, along with the

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and California Department of Corrections (CDC) flood fighting crews and personnel.

Creek and river levels in Napa County began exceeding the flood stage as early as 10 p.m. on December 30 with the Napa Creek in the city of Napa rising eight feet above flood level. Flooding became widespread in Napa County as the Napa River and Napa Creek ran over their banks and a levee failed in the Rutherford-Yountville area. City streets and roads in the Napa Valley were closed, and evacuations were initiated. Along the Russian

River in Sonoma County emergency services personnel from the local fire districts and departments began helping residents as they became trapped by the rising waters.

CDF/Napa County Fire Department personnel (including volunteer stations administered by CDF/Napa County Fire Department) responded to nearly 200 calls during a 48 hour period. Ninety percent of the calls during this period were for flooding, traffic accidents, hazardous conditions and medical aids and public assists. On January 1, 2006, the flood waters began to recede, and CDF fire crews transitioned into CDF flood fighting crews. The eleven CDF fire crews from Delta and Konocti Conservation Camps spent a total of 24 crew days working various assignments ranging from sandbagging to cleanup. Fifteen CDF personnel were assigned to overhead positions primarily in Sonoma County to assist with flood operations.

On January 2 Governor Schwarzenegger

toured the flooded Napa area and later that day declared a state of emergency in the counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Napa, Sacramento, Sonoma, and Trinity, as a result of the damage done by the flooding. The governor followed that by declaring a state of emergency on January 3 in the counties of Butte, El Dorado, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba.

Initial damage estimates for Napa County are \$114.2 million and for Sonoma County \$104 million. On February 3, 2006, President Bush declared a major disaster for California as a result of the severe winter storms that caused flooding, mudslides and landslides. This declaration opens the way for the use of federal funds to help those affected recover from the damages to communities, homes and businesses as well as possible reimbursement to state agencies for dollars expended during the 2005/2006 New Year's Flood.

Lassen-Modoc Unit

by Brad Lutts, operations chief, Lassen-Modoc Unit

In late December 2005, a series of warm storms threatened to cause the Susan River and its tributaries to rise more than two feet above flood stage. With the certainty of flooding in the city of Susanville and the outlying areas of Lassen County, a multi-agency plan was developed to assure a coordinated emergency response and also to take proactive mitigation measures in known problem areas.

Lassen-Modoc Unit resources were vital to the success of the efforts to preplan the flood response, staff the joint city/county emergency operations center (EOC) and to provide overhead and fire crews to clear debris from

waterways, sandbag flooding buildings and roadways and respond to other storm-related emergencies in support of the city and county. On Wednesday December 28, fire crews from the Antelope Conservation Camp began filling sandbags and loading them onto trucks and trailers. That night, the Susan River rose to just six inches below flood stage. Predictions from the National Weather Service indicated that the river would reach three feet above flood stage by early morning on Saturday December 31 and could rise an additional two feet by noon that same day.

Following several meetings to discuss

EOC activation and multi-agency coordination, a plan was developed to construct a temporary floodwall along the Susan River in the hopes of containing the water to prevent major flooding in the city. On Friday December 30, a 400-foot long wall was constructed using concrete K-Rail traffic barriers, reinforced with sandbags. CDF Transport 2241 was used to move the barriers into place while Antelope fire crews placed filled sandbags along the backside.

At about 2:30 a.m. on Saturday, the river rose to less than three inches from the top of the wall. The wall held back the river and prevented the flooding of a number of residential structures including an apartment complex. The success of this wall also allowed the flood fighting forces to concentrate their efforts in other critical areas. Crews continued to work throughout New Year's Day clearing

debris from streams and culverts.

In addition to all five Antelope Fire Crews being used for flood fighting, the CDF Lassen-Modoc Unit supplied staff to fill the positions of EOC deputy incident commander, CDF agency representative, fire/rescue branch director, technical specialist/crews and support dispatchers.

On January 5, the unit received a letter from the mayor of Susanville City. The mayor expressed his appreciation for CDF's participation and rapid response to this incident. That same day, the Lassen County Board of Supervisors held a special session to ratify the emergency declaration. During that meeting the county supervisors, the city fire chief, the county sheriff and the county OES director gave great accolades to CDF for their support.

Southern Region III

Chief Dave Hillman

By Julie Hutchinson, fire captain, CDF Riverside Unit/Riverside County Fire

Chief Dave Hillman filled the region chief position for the "newly" reorganized Region III in August 2005. He acknowledges that he loves the challenges that the region chief position provides and is excited to be working back in Southern California where "fire season" never ends. Region III incorporates more than 5.8 million acres, 148 fire stations including CDF-owned and local government-owned and CDF operated, 13 conservation camps, three air attack bases and one helitack base.

The biggest challenge since the reorganization Hillman says is to keep communication lines open with Fresno, where finance and personnel functions are still located. This requires close coordination. It is

also a priority to provide the support and leadership to the units in all areas including fire prevention, cost recovery, training, pre-fire management, resource management, and camps. Chief Hillman's philosophy is simple: "Let people do their jobs. Offer guidance and help them if they need it." His new assignment keeps him on the road traveling to Riverside, Fresno, Sacramento Headquarters, and each of the Region III units.

Chief Hillman resides in Clovis with Karen, his wife of 33 years, who works as a registered nurse in a pre-school program for Fresno Unified School District. His daughter Kristina, 27, graduated with a business administration degree and now is working on her master's

degree, while working at a local bank. His son Taylor, 25, is working at a TV station in Fresno while working on his degree at Fresno State University. Dave didn't want to forget the four-legged canine member of the family, three-year old Molly.

When Chief Hillman signed on as a seasonal firefighter 38 years ago he had no idea a summer job would become a career - he actually aspired to be a photojournalist! Hillman began his career as a seasonal in the Tulare Ranger Unit in 1968 and worked summers in that capacity from 1968 to 1970. In 1970, he became a limited term fire apparatus engineer and worked in the Madera, and Madera-Mariposa ranger units. In the off-season, he continued attending college at San Jose State. It was during those first few summers as a firefighter that the smell of smoke, the wail of the siren, and the call of public service, led Chief Hillman to discover that the fire service was where he belonged.

In 1973, Hillman graduated from college majoring in journalism and political science. CDF was no longer just a summer job. He pursued a permanent assignment as a fire apparatus engineer (FAE) in the Tulare Ranger Unit. During his Schedule "A" assignment in Tulare as an FAE, he was one of the first to become an emergency medical technician (EMT) and to be truck certified. During this time he made one of the best decisions of his life: He married his high school sweetheart Karen and started his family. While attending the permanent FAE Academy at the CDF Academy in Ione, Hillman made the list for fire captain.

As a fire captain in Tulare he worked various Schedule "A" assignments. He then put his education to use and worked in the fire prevention bureau as a public information officer. Little did he know that fire prevention and law enforcement would become the driving force of his career for 18 years. His next

assignment was a voluntary transfer to the Riverside Ranger Unit as a fire prevention specialist. He was assigned as an area manager for the lower Coachella Valley based out of Thermal. Hillman loved the challenge of the investigations and he was surprised that he enjoyed being a peace officer. The move from Tulare (Farmersville) to Thermal was quite a change for the Hillman family. He said they looked like the characters from the "Grapes of Wrath" driving in his Toyota pickup from the Central Valley to the Coachella Valley. The family adjusted to the desert and son Taylor was born at Desert Hospital in Palm Springs.

Looking for another challenge Chief Hillman moved on to Ione and a position at the CDF Academy. There as a fire prevention officer I (FPO I) he was an instructor for the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Academy. After five years at the CDF Academy, he requested a voluntary transfer to the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit as their FPO I. The family enjoyed the reassignments and travel but was glad to be back close to family and friends in Tulare County. The next promotion was to FPO II at the Region IV headquarters in Fresno. Hillman worked about three years as the FPO II and then following the department reorganization to two regions, he became the deputy chief of fire prevention out of Fresno.

In 1997, Chief Hillman felt the need to return to the operational side of the department. After 18 years in fire prevention and law enforcement assignments he requested a demotion from deputy chief to division chief and accepted a position in the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit. He worked as the operational division chief for western Fresno County and Mid-Valley. The experience he gained in returning to operations combined with his previous assignments made him quite competitive for the next unit chief exam.

Hillman promoted to the Tulare Unit Chief in 2000. He had returned to his home county to lead the unit that gave him his start in CDF. For five years he stood with his employees and worked to meet the challenges that faced Tulare County. He continues to stay informed on the changes in Tulare County, as the continued well-being of the employees and citizens is very important to him.

Chief Hillman has no immediate plans for retirement. He'll work as long as he's productive, enjoying himself, and as long as it works for his family. He has started playing golf again and is not much better than he was 20 years ago but says, "It is just more fun to play now!"

When asked what he is the proudest of, he said, "I am so proud of my marriage to Karen. She is a terrific wife and friend who followed me to the ends of the earth in support of my career;

she is a true CDF spouse. I am also very proud of Kristina and Taylor, they are good people who make good decisions, kind, responsible, trustworthy, and productive citizens. My children are just good people and it is so rewarding seeing them settled and happy. My career has provided a lot of opportunities but my family is what I am the proudest of!"

Chief Hillman's advice to the new generation and even some of the old: "Pay attention to the people you work with. They all have something to offer. Be aware of your surroundings and maintain situational awareness. Remember don't take yourself too seriously and remember why you do the job. Be patient, have fun, and enjoy life."

Chief Hillman is proud of the 38 years of experience he brings to his region chief assignment. He is excited to face challenges that lie ahead for CDF and Region III.

Central Sierra Region IV

Chief Candace Gregory

Chief Candace Gregory brings nearly 29 years of CDF experience to her Central Sierra Region IV Chief position. Having spent time working in a variety of positions throughout CDF locations in the north, central, south, and Sacramento Chief Gregory has never shied away from a challenge. Appointed to her current position last August, she is responsible for "all operations" in six CDF Units and one contract county spanning the central and sierra counties of California. The area incorporates more than 8.6 million acres, 144 fire stations including CDF-owned and local government-owned and CDF operated, 10 conservation camps, four air attack bases and two helitack bases.

Gregory noted in a Communiqué article several years ago that she has worked with many great people who have encouraged her to reach her current level. She noted especially the encouragement she received from her first CDF fire captain when she was a firefighter. Now retired, Fire Captain Jim Wilson encouraged his firefighters to participate in discovering more efficient methods of fighting fires. This included hose pack and hose lay design. Her battalion chief at the time, now retired Butte Unit Chief Bill Sager, encouraged her to prepare herself to promote, with career path guidance. It was through this type of encouraging and mentoring, that she decided to

make CDF her career.

Chief Gregory started with CDF as a seasonal firefighter in her hometown county of Butte in 1977. In 1980 she promoted to fire apparatus engineer for the Shasta-Trinity Ranger Unit and in 1982 she accepted a forestry graduate trainee position in Fresno. Chief Gregory then promoted to fire captain working in both the Fresno-Kings and Butte Ranger Units. The call to become battalion chief came from the San Bernardino Ranger Unit in 1987, where Gregory worked for the Unit's Mountain Battalion. She also worked as the West Valley Battalion Chief, which required interaction with a variety of local government sections, three counties, two national forests and several local fire departments.

In 1991 Chief Gregory headed to Sacramento as a newly promoted division chief, assigned to the department's new All-Risk Division, which included FIRESCOPE responsibilities. She returned to San Bernardino in 1994 as the division chief in charge of support services where she oversaw an integrated state and county budget that exceeded \$22 million.

In the course of her career, Chief Gregory has served in many incident assignments. In 1994, she was the incident commander for a head-on train collision in the Cajon Pass. The incident involved trains from Union and Southern Pacific railroads. It received national attention and involved the coordination of more than 20 local, state, and federal agencies.

During the 1994 Northridge earthquake Chief Gregory was liaison for the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. She has also been a CDF Incident Command Team member.

Chief Gregory's ladder of success continued as she was appointed acting deputy chief, San Bernardino Ranger Unit in 1996. She brought her experience in support services to this position as she continued the support services

duties along with the responsibilities of divisions that included the area between San Bernardino, Inyo and Mono counties.

In April 1997, Chief Gregory was appointed as the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit Chief. "It was exciting to work with the Schedule A contracts in Madera, Mariposa and Merced," she said. "During my time as unit chief we were successful in adding stations, increasing staffing, and in implementing our equipment replacement plans."

She remained the unit chief until 2001 when she promoted to assistant region chief for administration in the Southern Region. Chief Gregory says she visited every station, camp and air base in the region while handling her duties as assistant region chief. "I met, talked, and learned from so many of those I worked with," said Gregory. "I'm especially proud during this time period of the excellent staff we were able to hire in the region office to support those out in the field."

As Central Sierra Region Chief Gregory says her role is first and foremost to ensure that all her personnel have a safe and professional environment to work in. "I am responsible for seeing that my CDF region stays strong and operationally stable now and in the future." She emphasized that hiring the right people to make that happen is essential. Chief Gregory added that it is critical for region chiefs to work with the executive team in Sacramento to meet the needs of the field, and to know the processes in order to work within the system to get things done."

The Central Sierra Region is currently dealing with the loss of its Schedule A contract in Tulare. "Losing this contract is tough for all of us," said Chief Gregory, referring to the fact that Tulare County chose to sever its ties with CDF in December 2005. CDF had provided all fire and emergency services to Tulare via

contract for more than 70 years. The transition is ongoing as Tulare is now in the process of creating its own Tulare County Fire Department. “My number one priority is taking care of all CDF personnel affected by this change. I am confident that we will be able to place every CDF employee with minimal disruption to their lives.”

CDF has some very long and successful ties with local government in central California. “An important part of my job is meeting regularly with all my local government entities to discuss their needs and issues,” said Chief Gregory.

Chief Gregory would like to see the CDF’s yearly budget crisis and ongoing staffing challenges, permanently addressed, but as a region chief understands the realities of having

to constantly deal with these issues. “I set aside time regularly to go out in the region and see the ‘real world,’” said Chief Gregory. “It is so important to hear what my folks are dealing with and find out what they need, so I can better assist them.” Seeing what the CDF personnel can accomplish even with the fiscal and personnel challenges re-motivates her every time. “They are doing such great things out there! It makes me so proud to be their chief.”

Chief Gregory says that changes and challenges that continue to impact CDF, make the encouragement and mentoring that she received early in her career, more important than ever. “We are all responsible for helping create future CDF career employees.”

Extrication training pays off on this Sunday

Information provided by Battalion Chief Tim Crum, Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit

Vehicle accidents are an all-too-common scene for CDF emergency response personnel. The photos here are from a double-vehicle accident on Interstate-80 which runs between Reno and Sacramento in the Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit on Sunday, February 5. This was the second extrication incident of the day. The first one was down the highway about two hours earlier.

A truck and fifth-wheel had pulled over at the bottom of Whitmore Grade to cool its brakes when a motorcycle plowed into the back of the truck and trailer. The motorcycle rider ended up trapped under the fifth-wheel. The motorcycle continued up the back of the truck, flipped in mid-air and landed upside-down, wedged between the open passenger door and the truck.

Meanwhile a passenger auto trying to avoid the motorcycle, ran off the fast lane, down an embankment and into a creek.

Both scenes required disentanglement, and the car required a low angle Z-Rig haul to get the passenger up to the ambulance. Both scenes took place simultaneously with traffic flowing on I-80 between them.

This was definitely an example of the value of keeping up on training for extrication, over-the-side, Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BSL) trauma care, traffic control/safety, etc.

Excellent job by all who responded!

CDF Station 32 (Dutch Flat) and 33 (Placer County Fire Volunteer). American Medical Response ambulances 250 and 260. Calstar 6 (air ambulance out of South Lake Tahoe) and H24 (CHP helicopter providing basic medical transport). California Highway Patrol and Placer County Sheriffs Office

Interstate – 5 hazmat incident

By Armando Rios, battalion chief, Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit

Just after 8 a.m. on February 3, 2006, a truck carrying hazardous materials overturned on eastbound Highway 152 in Merced County. Highway 152 is adjacent to Interstate 5 which runs the length of California. Initially the incident was reported as a non-injury vehicle accident. A short time later it was discovered that vapors were being discharged under pressure - off gassing - from the shipping container. Traffic along Interstate 5 and Highway 152 was redirected around the incident, causing a back-up approximately 10 miles long.

Merced County Engine 72 contacted and advised the CDF Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit Command Center of the updated conditions and requested a hazardous materials response. Engine Fire Captain Robert De Costa was able to confirm that the product in the shipping container was hydroxylamine, an extremely corrosive material which reacts with many substances, including metal. A key concern for the first responders was that the product, when reacting with other materials, generates a large amount of heat. If uncontrolled, the reaction increases at a dangerous rate resulting in the product forming crystals, which are highly explosive.

After making entry into the shipping container it was discovered that an estimated 400 to 900 gallons of the product had been

released from some of the individual shipping containers, "totes". The shipment of 16 "totes", which contained 250 gallons of product, consisted of a rubber bladder bag surrounded by an aluminum frame. For responder safety it was determined that if the product temperature reached 170 degrees Fahrenheit, all personnel would evacuate the immediate area. Shortly afterward, a temperature reading of the released product within the shipping container was taken – it read 133 degrees.

During the long and careful offloading of the released product into the new containers, the product temperature increased up to 150 degrees. It was believed that the increase in temperature was due to the product picking up contaminants in the transfer process, causing a reaction.

Personnel from the Merced and Madera County Fire Departments worked in shifts because of the length of the incident. Due to hard work and efforts of our CDF personnel, Interstate-5 was re-opened just 33 hours later around 6 p.m. on Saturday. Highway 152 was opened to traffic on Sunday afternoon.

We would like to thank ALL personnel involved and a special hats off to all off-duty personnel who backfilled for those committed to this incident, especially on a Super Bowl weekend!

CDF Resources (Merced County)

***Hazardous Materials Unit 89
(Castle Airport Station 89)***

***Hazardous Materials Support Unit 89
(Castle Airport Station 89)***

***Engine 72 (Santa Nella Station 72)
Water Tender 71 (Los Banos Station 71)***

***Battalion Chief Armando Rios (B4222)
Battalion Chief Marty Milojevish (B4217)
Battalion Chief Tom Egling (B4219)***

***Merced County Fire Engine:
Fire Captain Robert DeCosta
Fire Captain Bert DeCosta***

Hazmat Team Members:
Fire Captain Jeff Heyer
Fire Captain Steve Carrick
Fire Captain Mark Simmons
Fire Captain Gabe Santos
Fire Captain Doug Hartgraves

Fire Apparatus Engineer Brian Nation
Fire Apparatus Engineer Josh Nettles
Fire Apparatus Engineer Mark Pimental
Fire Apparatus Engineer Kirk Potter
Fire Apparatus Engineer Glenn Riggs
Fire Apparatus Engineer Walter Garrett
Fire Apparatus Engineer Chris Butler
Fire Apparatus Engineer Albert Ybarra
Fire Apparatus Engineer Justin Schmallinger

Fire Apparatus Engineer Chris Bernard
Fire Apparatus Engineer Javier Fuentes
Fire Apparatus Engineer Gene Potkey
Fire Apparatus Engineer Rigoberto Ramirez
Fire Apparatus Engineer William Chaco

Firefighter I Matt DeCosta
Firefighter I Adom Amaral

Paid Call Firefighter Randy Peterson
Paid Call Firefighter Robert Callahan
Paid Call Firefighter Justin Orr
Paid Call Firefighter Daniel Valenzuela
Paid Call Firefighter Tiffany Heyer

Los Banos City Firefighter Dave Anderson

Taking Care of our own **Employee Support**

Through family illness and death, marriage break-ups, the loss of fellow firefighters, and 9/11, many in the CDF family have come to know that Jay Donnelly and the Employee Support Services (ESS) programs he has been associated with for over six years are there for them. Jay will be retiring on April 30, but he will leave knowing that those programs are solidly in place.

Fire Captain Tim Ward has been supporting these efforts since he filled the role of ESS coordinator two years ago. Jay speaks highly of Tim's abilities and the hard work he has put in traveling throughout the CDF Units providing training and employee support. "I average 3,000-5,000 miles a month doing this job," said Tim, "But I love it."

"Jay is a tremendous boss and a super person," said Tim. "When I first introduce myself to our folks I tell them I am the new Jay Donnelly and they know exactly what I do."

What they do is oversee the Employee

Assistance (EAP) Program, Substance Abuse Assistance Program, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program, and the Chaplain Utilization Services component of the ESS program. The ESS services, and Tim and Jay, provide critical support for the nearly 5,000 men and women of CDF.

The **Employee Assistance Program** is provided via state contract with an organization specializing in helping employees and their family members deal with everyday issues such as stress, anxiety, family issues, depression, alcohol and drug abuse to name a few. The program is confidential and provides a specific number of free counseling sessions. The current contractor, MHN, has thousands of qualified counselors available statewide and can be contacted 24/7 at 866-EAP-4SOC or visit their website at <http://eap4soc.mhn.com>.

Sometimes talking through a problem can make all the difference. EAP can provide that

and much more. Tim and Jay are also available to answer questions or help an employee or family member through the process. “We are here to help,” said Tim. “A lot of people approach me with their personal problems. I help walk them through whatever they are dealing with, and I keep it confidential.” Tim says that the successful contacts and positive impacts make it all worthwhile.

“One out of every 10 people has a substance abuse problem according to the national average,” said Jay. “We know that this is a significant problem within our organization.” The **CDF Substance Abuse Assistance Program** provides the CDF family with the ability to help its own get the help they need. Jay acknowledges that it has become a growing issue, especially the use of methamphetamine and cocaine. “We have been able to do some very good work helping our employees. This department has an exceptional success rate in this area for a uniformed organization.” A lot of that success comes from having staff like Jay and Tim who are accessible, confidential, and work hard to take care of the CDF family. There are also trained CDF field advisors throughout the state who are designated to assist employees and their immediate family members with substance abuse issues. Getting our people the proper medical treatment, counseling, and time in recovery facilities when needed are all components of a successful program. Jay says that the support provided by the unit chiefs has also made a huge difference. “Never underestimate the importance of the support of fellow employees in these situations as well,” noted Jay.

The challenges of an emergency response job are great. Attempting to save the lives of men, women, and children on a daily basis comes with its share of gruesome sights, and sorrow. Dealing with the emotional toll this takes has its own special challenges. **Critical Incident**

Stress Management (CISM) is a multi-layered program that covers everything from debriefing following a traumatic incident, to providing training to CDF families in recognizing the symptoms that a CDF responder may show following an incident or the rigors of the job. “There is an entire process that a responder will go through in dealing with critical incident stress,” says Jay. “Our folks deal with the immediate crisis in a professional manner, as is expected. They then need some time to process what they saw and did.” It is recognizing this and being prepared for the many ways they may choose to deal with it that CISM, family, and Tim and Jay play a major role. “We have 200 folks trained in CISM throughout the field,” said Jay. “We also contract with trained mental health professionals who specialize in CISM to assist when necessary.”

Jay remembered back to his days as a paramedic and how he did not deal with the ugly scenes of his job in the healthiest manner. Coming through that all those years ago gave him the first-hand experience and compassion, to provide the aid and counsel to so many others over the years. He joked that his wife has stood by him through those times and all of their 31 years of marriage.

The **Chaplain Utilization Services** component of ESS ensures that a chaplain or representative of any denomination, faith, sect, etc. can be accessed when a CDF employee or family member requests that service. “On average we receive a request at least twice each week for this service from somewhere within the state,” said Jay. While CDF no longer has its own chaplaincy program or chaplains, Tim and Jay can pull from such organizations as the Cal-Fire Chaplain Corps and other chaplain services.

Jay is a long-time, fully licensed minister.

Tim still provides chaplain services on his days off to law enforcement and local government fire in Sonoma County. "I have been volunteering those services for years," said Tim who joined CDF in 1987 as a seasonal firefighter. He was a fire captain at Delta Conservation Camp before taking on his current position. "I have 13 years left and I hope to continue taking care of CDFers and their families for that duration."

All CDF Academy classes cover each of the ESS services ensuring that students will take that information with them statewide as they fill their CDF positions. In addition, at academy graduations, family support workshops are

offered to ensure that family members also are provided with ESS information. CDF employees can access ESS details via the main page of the CDF internal employee Intranet. And of course all employees, and their family members, can always contact Tim or Jay for assistance with any of the components of the CDF ESS Program. When asked how he handles a job that is basically 24/7 Tim said, "cell phones – we live on our cell phones." Although he was getting ready to leave for a Hawaiian vacation Tim said not to worry, "I will have my cell phone with me if someone needs me."

Deputy Director, Management Services

Bill Robertson

By Monte Manson, associate governmental program analyst, Financial and Administrative Support Team (formally PSA)

In August of 2005, Bill Robertson became the new deputy director for management services, vacating his post as human resources (HR) chief. For the past five years, CDF has benefited from his human resources expertise and forward-thinking philosophies. Robertson is hopeful that he and his management services staff can work towards providing innovative solutions that meet the administrative needs of the department. "CDF's Human Resource Office has become much more of a strategic partner in carrying out the CDF mission over the past three or four years," says Robertson. "I have nothing but pride for the HR branch staff. My goal now as deputy director is to create even more unity between headquarters, the regions and units."

With increased responsibility comes more complex issues. One such obstacle facing Robertson currently is the on-going "changing face" of CDF. Coming into his new position, he expects to take a serious look at CDF's current

classification and training structures to better address the changing face. "It is important to me to get the resources and staffing necessary to set the framework for the next generation," said Robertson. "We need to make sure that the next generation of CDF'ers are provided with the tools they need to lead us into the future."

Another hot topic on Robertson's plate is the department's budget. Though CDF staff have worked extremely hard over the years to keep budget cuts as minimal as possible, he wants to work towards a more permanent solution for the budgetary issues that arise each year. "It's time to make changes that will put the department on sound financial footing," said Robertson. "Management Services is responsible for developing policies and procedures that help, not hinder, departmental operations."

Robertson, a University of Pennsylvania graduate with a bachelor's degree in sociology, began his state service career with the Department of Social Services as a staff services

analyst in 1976. Over the years, he has worked for several other state departments, including the Department of Health Services and Department of Transportation. He came to CDF in 2001 from the Department of Child Support Services. With a progressive, yet straight-forward management style, it's obvious that he truly values CDF's mission. "When I first came to CDF, I really focused on

getting the lay of the land and defining what the need was," said Robertson. "What I have found is a healthy organization with well-trained, accomplished managers who recognize the value of CDF. It's time for us to form partnerships amongst the many talented people we have in CDF so that we can build a sound and effective infrastructure to support the department's mission."

Assistant Deputy Director, Management Services

Tom Lutzenberger

When Tom Lutzenberger started his new job as Assistant Deputy Director of Management Services of CDF, he also started an even more time-consuming job: first-time father. Tom and his wife, Elizabeth, welcomed daughter Isabella Lutzenberger into the world at nearly the same time his new position started with CDF. Tom still laughs when asked about the two events intersecting. "Great timing, huh? Nothing like beginning a new job while getting nothing more than two-hour naps."

So far, the lack of sleep doesn't seem to be slowing him down. Out of necessity Tom has hit the ground running in his new position. Again this year, CDF is being asked to prepare for major budget cuts. For Tom that means attending a lot of meetings and trying to find ways to save money.

Tom explained how he's handling the current proposed budget cuts. "I start by developing a framework for that. We work hand-in-hand with program people in the regional offices and the units. This is not the kind of activity that is done out of a corner office somewhere. It is going to involve everybody with regards to CDF. We are one department and we have to work as a team. Budget will work with accounting, and accounting will work with business services,

and they will pull in various program elements that are affected by it. We start calling the regions and get their input as well."

What does Tom see in CDF's budget future? "I want the department to move toward a platform that has less fluctuation. We've been exposed to quite a lot of that lately, and I don't blame people for being frustrated. Also, I see us getting more involved in out-year planning. Figuring where CDF is going to be years from now. We need to get ahead of the curve and anticipate issues fiscally."

As Tom knows from past experience, budget cuts can be painful. "Fiscal can get very personal. I've been called virtually every name under the sun by advocates who were opposed to the budget cuts I was proposing. You need to understand the human factor but also follow the direction that has been given. That is the toughest part of the job. The numbers part is easy."

Sometimes it helps Tom to try and put himself in the position of the person who is on the receiving end of the budget cut. "We put it into our own context and our own personal reference. "What would that mean if it happened to me, if it happened to my family? You still take that home with you."

He also is acutely aware that when working with numbers, a tiny mistake can occur and have a huge ripple affect. “Oh yes, such as the decimal point in the wrong spot . . . you do the best that you can do and you trust in your people. If you can’t trust your people, then why did you delegate to them? Why did you become a manager? When they present to you, you use your best judgment, make a decision and stand by your decision.”

Tom says the best advice he ever received

was from his dad. “He said, ‘Listen to people, don’t always be the first out of the gate to give an opinion. Don’t always be the one to express an emotion. Just listen to people. Listen to what they say and then make your decision afterwards.’”

When he’s not crunching numbers at work or changing diapers at home, Tom enjoys competitive rugby, a sport he’s played for many years. It’s probably good practice, considering the scrums that can occur over the CDF budget.

Assistant Deputy Director, Labor and Human Resource Management

Larry Menth

It seems appropriate that Larry Menth has been everything from an air traffic controller to a FedEx courier. As the chief of personnel, Menth’s rich and varied breadth of experience serves him well. In many ways, it seems like Menth has been in training for his current job since the late 1980s.

As a field representative in contract enforcement from 1988 to 2001, Menth worked with a variety of labor unions including CDF Unit 8, which represents the uniformed emergency response personnel. Governor Davis appointed him as principal labor relations officer at the Department of Personnel Administration in 2001. But that position ended when Davis was recalled. Menth then went to work in San Francisco for the administrative office of the Superior Courts. In June of 2005 he came to CDF as chief of labor relations. Within six months he was appointed assistant deputy director of labor and human resources management for CDF.

In addition to his work experience, Larry says

his love of historical biographies -- he is currently reading “Team of Rivals,” the story of President Lincoln’s cabinet -- provides valuable insight into the management of personnel as well as negotiations between management and staff. “Part of this job entails ongoing negotiations with labor unions and interaction with support staff and personnel.” Menth is progressive when it comes to the workplace and believes flexibility is the key to getting along with different personality types. “You have to be willing to listen and be open-minded,” he said. The fact that two people can see the same situation differently creates a steady stream of work. “If everybody thought alike, we wouldn’t need human resources.”

Menth admits there is no routine to his daily schedule but emphasized that he regularly relies on his staff to help perform the daily duties of labor relations and human resources. “Today I drove to San Andreas where I did a meet-and-discuss with the CDF Firefighters union, then, back to the office to review policy

on enhanced industrial disability guidelines. Then I prepared two settlement agreements for the union to review and a third for final signature. I scheduled another meet-and-discuss with the union over academy issues. Later today I will prepare for tomorrow's arbitration. That will involve coordinating witnesses and evidence and briefing the attorney." This also involves late night review

and preparation for the next day's hearing.

But it's not all work for the head of CDF's personnel and labor relations programs. Menth likes to play golf a couple times a month (when he can) and he also enjoys spending time with his children -- two sons and a daughter -- and his wife. The Menths live in Rocklin and will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary this year.

CDF Budget Officer

Janet Barentson

By Monte Manson, associate governmental program analyst, Financial and Administrative Support Team (formally PSA)

In December, CDF welcomed Janet Barentson as the new budget officer following the retirement of Kay Fagunes who had held the position for over 20 years. Janet brings more than 15 years of budget knowledge to CDF from the California Highway Patrol (CHP), where she was also their budget officer. "I'm excited to be here," says Janet. "I get to learn about all aspects of a new department. I like that."

With a degree in business accounting from California State University, Sacramento, Janet began her state service career with the Auditor General, known today as the Bureau of State Audits. After five years with the Auditor General, Janet had established and enhanced her fiscal background, and was ready for new challenges.

In 1990, Janet moved on to the CHP, first as an associate budget analyst, and then as the department's budget officer. During her 15 year tenure at CHP, Janet was instrumental in a number of major projects for the department, including a \$100 million Homeland Security Proposal, which included an increase of 250 positions. As a result, more port security and

extra helicopters are now part of the beefed up security Californians enjoy throughout the state. "It was very important for us to do it in a way of being cognizant of the public's money," says Janet.

Janet's new position with CDF brings many challenges, and also, opportunities for the department to evolve fiscally. One of her front-line battles is to help deal with the department's General Fund deficiency and bring CDF into the black. "My job is to provide information so that the appropriate decisions can be made at the executive level," says Janet. "Whatever folks need to do their jobs, we're here to support and empower them. I'm completely neutral." She also described how the department wants to start looking an extra year ahead when planning the budget. "We need to address the deficiency issue for next year now, instead of later, says Janet. "It's about being proactive versus reactive."

There are many other issues on Janet's desk, such as being involved with succession planning for the department. This four-year project will

combat the “changing face” of CDF by increasing examinations, training, and hiring of more staff to replace the anticipated high number of retirees. Yet another task is working with fire protection staff on the current Schedule A administrative rate. “We are working with Fire Protection on the Schedule A administrative rate to make it more of a standard and more defensible,” says Janet.

The administrative rate is part of fees local governments pay CDF when the department provides emergency response services for them.

With the many difficult issues facing CDF in the near future, Janet Barentson’s financial philosophies and fresh ideas will be a welcomed addition to the department.

Chief of Business Services

Cathy Kurtz

Cathy Kurtz found a home when she became chief of business services with CDF in November. “I’m proud to be with CDF and I want to know I’m making a difference,” says the native Texan.

With her help, business services is making work easier for employees, increasing safety and stretching tight dollars. In one instance, Kurtz saved approximately \$100,000 and landed some extra equipment for CDF. “Mobile services had put out to bid for cabs and chassis for fire engines,” she explained. “The low bid actually came in lower than expected and that meant we could buy more equipment. But that change in the contract had to go through Department of General Services (DGS). The amended paperwork sat in DGS until the deadline expired. We were told we would have to buy the equipment out of this year’s money at this year’s prices. That just wasn’t acceptable, especially since we were being penalized for a delay at DGS.” Kurtz called a lot of people – even bothered a lot of people -- and prevailed through perseverance. “I wouldn’t let it go until we got a positive resolution. That is the kind of thing I like to sink my teeth into.”

In 20 years of management experience, Kurtz comes prepared for the job. As an analyst for

the Disney Corporation she expanded travel packages by adding off-site excursions. In an entirely different field, Kurtz coordinated water and waste facilities for eleven western states for three years at the non-profit, federal Rural Community Assistance Corporation. In her role as an environmental assistant, she coordinated strategies with local leaders to utilize federal grants to develop or improve adequate water facilities.

She later worked for the non-profit Association of Regional Center Agencies, which provides services to more than 200,000 people with developmental disabilities and their families. That preceded an appointment by Pete Wilson in the ‘90s to serve as legislative chief and then deputy director for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Kurtz took a civil service job with the Department of General Services, where she managed Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise operations for almost six years before becoming executive director for the Board of Prison Terms. “It was an exciting job but I didn’t have the correctional background,” Kurtz says. “That was my dream job but now that I’ve come to CDF, this is my dream job. It is a field that you can easily become passionate about. I have many more years of service to

provide and this is home.”

Kurtz earned a bachelor’s degree in finance at Texas A&M and a master’s in finance at Golden Gate University. She is married with one son, a

junior at the University of Nebraska studying civil engineering. She and her husband live in Rocklin, where they have created their own backyard garden oasis.

Respect and Professionalism

Equal Employment Opportunity Program

Respect and Professionalism is the program motto of CDF as one of the most respected fire and emergency response organizations in the world. The courtesy and respect that the public expects from its emergency responders is the same courtesy and respect that every CDF employee should give and receive when at work.

With a two-fold goal of ensuring a work place free from discrimination and achieving diversity in the work force, the CDF Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program has clearly outlined objectives to create and maintain the type of work environment we all should strive for.

The CDF EEO team objectives are meant for each employee of this department. We are all expected to:

- ***Comply with employment discrimination laws and CDF EEO policy***
- ***Act in a manner that provides a professional and supportive work environment for all employees***
- ***Project a positive public image***
- ***Respect and encourage diversity in the workplace***

“Today most employees are aware of the personal responsibility they have for their actions. That is due in part to education and training which offer the best prevention for EEO violations, “says CDF EEO Officer Karen Cohen.

Recent efforts to provide that education

include an on-line sexual harassment prevention course, which makes it more accessible to the managers and supervisors who are required to take this training. The EEO staff is also creating their own section on the CDF internal employee Intranet to provide easy access to information for all employees. There is already an abundance of EEO information available on the Intranet for CDF employees including sexual harassment prevention, EEO policies, details on the department’s Upward Mobility Program, EEO counselor listings, the mediation process, and the EEO complaint process. Right now employees can find this information under [Employee Links>Employee Information](#) on the internal Intranet.

EEO issues are not unique to CDF. Many workplaces deal with harassment and diversity-related matters. “CDF is a little different in that it is a paramilitary organization,” says Karen. “We are very much tied to the chain of command, and that presents its own challenges. In a ‘uniformed environment’ it can be difficult for employees to step outside the chain of command to seek assistance with EEO related concerns and complaints.”

While not every issue is an EEO matter, respecting each other’s views and concerns, and having supervisors who create a respectful work environment

can go a long way to preventing the cases that do come across Karen’s desk.

If an employee believes he or she is being

harassed or discriminated against, the employee can come straight to Karen Cohen. The EEO Officer reports directly to the CDF Director. The information is only discussed with those who need to know about it in order to proceed with the matter. Karen points out that retaliation is not acceptable in any form, at any time against employees who come forward with EEO issues.

The EEO staff consists of Karen, two associate governmental program analysts, an office technician and a student assistant, as well as administrative officers in Redding and Fresno who perform EEO duties as part of their region assignments. The staff works closely with the CDF Legal Office, too.

How many cases? Well, the EEO Office does not have a “down time”, but as Karen explains there is a lot of work that goes into each case. “The number of cases tells us who was concerned enough to come forward. The numbers may not accurately reflect the real problems,” says Karen. Also, not every issue becomes a formal EEO complaint. There are counseling and mediation processes that can assist in resolving work place issues. The EEO staff also utilizes the CDF Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) which works to identify and resolve matters that may affect employees with disabilities. Other EEO program components include the bilingual services program, the upward mobility program, and CDF’s recruitment efforts. Karen prepares a Diversity of the Month article each month which she shares with executive staff and posts on the CDF employee Intranet under Newsletters.

“We monitor our complaints, and if there is a pattern within a particular CDF Unit we target our education efforts there,” said Karen. “It is a pro-active program. Our best method for achieving our goal of a supportive work place for all CDF employees is to have a trained and knowledgeable work force.” Karen and her staff

will be providing regular articles in all upcoming Communiqués on a variety of EEO issues and programs.

If you find yourself in a situation requiring EEO support, you can feel confident in Karen’s abilities. She has been CDF’s EEO Officer for the past five years and prior to that, her 18 years with the State Personnel Board - three as their EEO officer - provided her with a well-rounded background to deal with the complexities of the job. “The basic concept of equal employment opportunity has remained the same over the years. However, court decisions are constantly expanding and clarifying the laws and our policies. Keeping up with those changes is an ongoing challenge,” says Karen. There is also the challenge of coming to work and dealing with EEO-related issues day in and day out. Karen acknowledges that working with EEO issues can be frustrating. “Overall, I find it rewarding, and I truly enjoy my job.”

Karen is determined to continue her efforts to improve the CDF working environment, to resolve discrimination and harassment issues, and to provide education to prevent EEO violations. “Respect and professionalism” is the motto, and it is CDF’s policy which is based on the law, Karen says. “What it comes down to is this - use good judgment and do the right thing. Accept the differences in other employees, and treat them with respect and professionalism.”

CDF is an equal opportunity employer, providing equal opportunity to all regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, disability, religious or political affiliation, age, sexual identification or sexual orientation.

Assistant Deputy Director, Operations - OSFM

Hugh Council has the “institutional” knowledge that folks often talk about losing when employees retire. After more than 25 years with the Office of the State Fire Marshal, he accepted the position of Assistant Deputy Director, OSFM Operations, nearly a year ago to help State Fire Marshal Grijalva keep operations running.

Dedicated to his job and knowledgeable in all facets of the OSFM, Chief Council says that he will retire from this position in September. In the interim there are a lot of projects in the works in his divisions. Chief Council is responsible for all aspects of the OSFM Engineering, Fire and Life Safety, and Pipeline Safety Divisions.

“Our engineering division includes all the licensing functions that affect many products consumers use,” said Council. This includes, fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems, flame retardant fabrics and chemicals, and building materials. The engineering staff also provides oversight of the fireworks industry, the film industry’s use of fire and explosives, and vapor recovery systems such as those found at the gas pump.

Just a couple of the issues Council and staff are working on right now include fire safe cigarettes, and fireworks disposal. On January 1, 2007 California law will require that cigarettes be fire safe. “That means that when you set a cigarette down for a period of time it must extinguish itself,” said Council. “This law is already in effect in New York, and it should dramatically reduce the number of fires and deaths caused when people fall asleep while smoking.” Council added that mattresses will also be more flame resistant here in California due to new law. Enforcing those laws and testing the products to ensure they comply will

be a task for the Engineering Division staff.

The disposal of illegal fireworks is being dealt with in a new way. “In the old days we could dig a pit and blow them up. These days there are regulations concerning the emissions that would create,” said Chief Council. OSFM staff have identified the need for a self-contained disposal system that can be trailered around the state. They are in the process of working out the design and acquisition details.

“In front of me right now is a project I hope to successfully see completed soon. It is an updated draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Cal/OSHA and the OSFM clarifying responsibilities when accidental explosions occur for instance on a film set, or in a fireworks plant. The OSFM staff works hard to keep good working relationships with all industry stakeholders and regulators.”

The staff of the Fire and Life Safety Division, previously known as Code Enforcement, is responsible for fire prevention and fire protection as it relates to building construction and protection. Staff performs inspections and reviews building plans for all state-owned and state-occupied buildings, prisons, high-rises, fairs, and other occupancies that fall under the OSFM jurisdiction.

“The entire OSFM has been working with a number of agencies and stakeholders to create a new Building and Fire Code for California since last September,” said Council. “A draft will go to the Building Standards Commission this May to begin the approval process.” In addition, the new Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Building Standards have been approved by the Building Standards Commission and are slated to become effective in 2008 to allow time for manufacturers to develop and get new flame retardant building products to market. All new

construction in the Wildland Urban Interface areas of California will have to meet these standards. More information on both code projects can be found on the OSFM website <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov>.

There are roughly 5,500 miles of hazardous liquid pipeline running through California and the OSFM Pipeline Safety Division is responsible for regulating the safety of all of them. When spills occur, or any other type of pipeline accident the OSFM staff respond and investigate. That staff also ensures that pipeline inspections and integrity testing are ongoing and comply with all federal and state laws. The state's GIS pipeline mapping system is maintained by the OSFM staff and provides the location of all SFM regulated pipeline in California.

A longtime resident of Placerville, Council's fire service career began 38 years ago in 1968 with the Placerville Fire Department. Within a nearly 12 year span he handled duties ranging from training, fire cause investigations, fire prevention and pre-fire planning, as he worked his way up to assistant chief. "I have a lot of good memories of the times I spent riding on an engine," said Council. He also built close ties with CDF and many good friends in the department during those years with Placerville. "There were many mutual aid responses with CDF during that time." He would love to see a completion of the OSFM/CDF consolidation after 10 years – "we'll get there."

In 1980 Chief Council joined the Office of the State Fire Marshal. He has served as the chief of fire engineering, coordinator for OSFM Public Education, and the California Fire Incident Reporting System (CFIRS) program, coordinator for Technical Services (Engineering), and a deputy in the field enforcement and plan review programs. Prior to his most recent appointment, Chief Council

held the position of division chief for code enforcement (Fire and Life Safety).

His vast institutional knowledge comes from having spent time in so many areas of the OSFM and a philosophy that newer employees should take to heart. "I believe that you should learn everything you can about the department you work for, not just your job," said Council. That philosophy has become even more important as the OSFM deals with its own "changing faces" challenges as so many retire and filling vacant positions with qualified individuals becomes more difficult.

"I am working with Human Resources right now to update duty statements so I can try and fill positions in my divisions. About one-third of the 18 positions in Fire and Life Safety are, or will become vacant soon," said Council. He also noted that his divisions are special fund or reimbursement driven, not general fund. "It is a priority to keep those positions filled to meet their safety mandates for California, but also to maintain the fees they bring in." The Engineering Division receives licensing fees and fees for listing certifying equipment and materials. The Pipeline Division charges the industry per mile of pipeline, and Fire and Life Safety is reimbursed for such services as building inspections. Chief Council speaks highly of his staff and the job they do statewide, even with the challenges.

Those who have interacted with Chief Council over the years know about his enthusiasm for the programs he oversees, and the work ethic that always finds a way to get things done. After a long career with the Office of the State Fire Marshal, facing retirement six months from now may be difficult. But as Council says, "You just know when it is time to move on to something else in your life."

Assistant Deputy Director, Fire Prevention and Planning

Chief Wayne Mitchell

Wayne Mitchell has returned to Sacramento Headquarters for a second time, bringing nearly 30 years of experience to the new assistant deputy director, fire prevention and planning position. He sees many advantages to returning to Sacramento: “The work is very interesting, it is statewide in scope, sometimes national in scope, and the challenges can be a lot of fun,” says Mitchell.

Chief Mitchell breaks his job down into components. He supervises the administrative support team that handles personnel, budgeting, procurement, accounting and computer services for Fire Protection. The major program effort is in fire prevention and planning.

“Fire prevention consists of the traditional programs including law enforcement, engineering, and cost recovery, as well as an education component that we coordinate with the Communications Office,” said Mitchell. Planning is more complicated, incorporating the California Fire Plan, and CDF Unit Fire Plans, as well as all issues surrounding the Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), Communities At Risk (CAR) list, National Fire Plan, Fire Safe Councils, Fire Alliance, and FIREWISE communities. Planning also includes overseeing the updating of, and policies associated with, CDF’s State Responsibility Area and Direct Protection Area maps, the Fire Protection Fire Weather and Fire Reporting Statistics programs, and ensuring that CDF’s budget ties to its staffing and equipment guide.

A major part of the program is law enforcement and cost recovery. This part of the team includes the peace officers that support

law enforcement operations and support staff that recover fire fighting costs. The forest and fire laws may seem static but actually, there are a surprising number of issues that come up. This team has to always be on their toes as they work with the Attorney General’s office, defense attorneys, expert witnesses, high tech equipment, accountants, and other law enforcement agencies. The reality of law enforcement in CDF is nothing like the TV detective and lawyer shows – it’s better.

“Then there is what I call external relations,” says Chief Mitchell, “where I represent CDF through national committees.” Mitchell represents CDF on the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), Western States Governors Association, and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Fire Environment Working Team, to name a few. He says that the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorology is right now working on an interesting needs assessment project concerning fire weather. It involves NASA, the National Weather Service, the military and several other federal agencies, some that he’s never heard of. Among other weather-related issues, they are discussing several types of high-tech equipment that may be of benefit to all fire agencies. He has learned, among other things, that the domestic version of unmanned surveillance aircraft is now called the Predator. Did you know that satellites can measure wind speed?

Amidst a never ending task list, Chief Mitchell does identify several priority projects in his programs. This list includes a review of the 10-year-old California Fire Plan,

development of a new set of fire hazard severity zone maps, and implementation of the new 100-foot defensible space law. Chief Mitchell played a major role in the creation of the original California Fire Plan, the framework for pre-fire planning and that prepares citizens to live with California's frequent catastrophic fires. "We are currently reviewing and providing comment on that plan for the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to consider," said Mitchell.

In addition, the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps that were done following passage of the Bates Bill (337) in 1992 are in the process of being updated. The bill was a result of the Oakland Hills fire and required CDF to work with local governments to identify high fire hazard severity zones within local responsibility areas throughout each county in the state. More than 10 years later, the maps are outdated. Gathering current data and remapping is a massive project requiring the policy and procedure skills of Fire Prevention and Planning staff, and the technical GIS skills of the Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) staff. Chief Mitchell estimates that the completed projected is going to take a while.

It was a year ago that the law changed defensible space requirements from 30 to 100 feet in state responsibility area. Since that time Chief Mitchell's staff has been working with the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to define guidelines for Californians. That Board language is finalized and Chief Mitchell's staff is working with the CDF Communications office to create public information materials for homeowners, and a training program for CDF inspectors who are implementing the new rules in the field.

Prior to his return to Sacramento, Chief Mitchell filled the position of assistant region chief, administration, in the Northern Region Headquarters in Santa Rosa. He spent a busy four years dealing with the "admin" side of things, including all the CDF finance and

personnel-related issues for the northern half of the state.

Chief Mitchell's career path started in 1974 when he graduated from Humboldt State University with a degree in forestry. After graduation Wayne headed south to Los Angeles County where he supervised a fire crew. In 1976, Wayne joined the ranks of CDF as a graduate trainee at the old CDF Region 5 Headquarters in Monterey. Subsequent assignments took him to the San Luis Obispo Unit as a crew supervisor at Cuesta Conservation Camp, as a fire captain at the Cambria and Cayucos fire stations, and then to the Shasta-Trinity Unit as a forest practice inspector.

Chief Mitchell soon got his first taste of working with pre-fire issues when he promoted to vegetation management program coordinator in Sonoma County. This was the start of the VMP program and Wayne's assignment was to develop the program in Sonoma County. He also assisted the Marin County Fire Department with VMP projects when they conducted prescribed burns on the south face of Mt. Tamalpais in the early 1980s.

Chief Mitchell made his way to Sacramento in 1986 serving as a division chief, fire protection analyst and later as the deputy chief for fire planning. His position at CDF Headquarters provided many interesting assignments. For example, in 1988 he spent about three weeks at Moose Creek, Idaho predicting fire behavior on a 54,000 acre wildland fire in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness.

In 1991, when the Tunnel Fire in Oakland resulted in the loss of 2,900 structures, Chief Mitchell was asked to do damage assessments. The city of Oakland still uses the core elements of the geographic information system that the damage assessment team established.

Eventually he promoted to staff chief in charge of implementing the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's newly adopted California Fire Plan. He filled that position until 2001 when he moved to the field as the assistant region chief.

A few years in the field were a good reminder of how things work out there, after 14 previous years in Sacramento. He is happy to be back. "Here in Sacramento we get to see change – profound change that people will still be talking about years from now. It may be a slow process but it is important to see," said Chief Mitchell. On spending time in Sacramento he added, "It

can be frustrating, but learning how the processes work really clarifies why things cannot always be done the way we think they should be done when we are working out in the field."

His return to headquarters has improved his daily commute as well. He and his wife, Debbie, have lived in the Sacramento area for 19 years. They have one son, Brayden, who is currently working for the National Park Service on the Lewis and Clark Trail. Chief Mitchell says he is having fun back here in Sacramento, but on the subject of retirement, after 30 years – "My wife says no – she's not ready for me to be sitting at home."

Fire Prevention & Planning Staff

Assistant Deputy Director, Wayne Mitchell

Staff Chief, Fire Prevention Tom Hoffman

Secretary, Law Enforcement, Jacalyn Dunkle

Deputy Chief, Law Enforcement, Vacant

Battalion Chief, Law Enforcement, Steve Dale

Fire Captain, Law Enforcement, Jim Vineyard

Battalion Chief, Fire Plan, Robert Chew

AGPA, PreFire Grants, Vacant

Statistics Analyst, Suzanne Huynh

Deputy Chief, Engineering, retired

annuitant Frank Goddard

Division Chief, Fire Weather, Doug Forrest

100 Foot Defensible Space Update

February 21, 2006

In January 2005 a new state law became effective that extended the defensible space clearance around homes and structures from 30 feet to 100 feet. Proper clearance to 100 feet dramatically increases the chance of your house surviving a wildfire. This defensible space also provides for firefighter safety when protecting homes during a wildland fire. The following is the latest information to come out of last year's new law:

- State law now requires 100 feet of defensible space clearance in most rural areas of California. Some local jurisdictions have ordinances that require more than 100 feet while many municipalities may have no requirements

- The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection on Wednesday, February 8, 2006 adopted defensible space regulations and guidelines designed to advise homeowners on how to comply with the new 100 foot requirement.
- After the board adopts final language, it must be approved by the Office of Administrative Law before it becomes official. This process usually takes 30 days. The official regulations and guidelines are expected to become effective in April 2006.
- Now that the board language is nearly finalized, CDF is embarking on a training program for its inspectors. Delivery of this training is expected in April, 2006.
- CDF is also preparing public information documents, brochures, and web content to explain to homeowners how to comply with the new regulations. The basis of this information will be the guidance document prepared by the board. This guidance document takes into account the extreme variability of California's vegetation and ecological zones.
- Since the state law now requires 100 feet of defensible space, and even though these guidance documents are not yet official, CDF is performing inspections out to 100 feet from homes. Until such time that these regulations become effective, staff has been advised to use common sense and professional judgment when advising homeowners on whether they are in compliance with the 100 foot clearance requirement.
- CDF recognizes that for some homeowners 100 foot compliance can be difficult, may require hard work, and in some cases can be a financial burden. Therefore, the guidelines offer alternatives to achieve defensible space and reduce wildfire intensity.
- If compliance is met out to 30 feet, but not 100 feet, the homeowner will receive a written notice of violation, (similar to a traffic "fix it ticket") with recommendations to reduce the fire hazard. The board and the department wish to emphasize an educational and cooperative approach with the public to reduce fire hazards.

http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/education_publiccode4291.php

Fire prevention along the roads of Southern California

A tried and true fire prevention method is back in Southern California – the road sign. Retired Staff Forester Eric Oldar has spearheaded a campaign that has led to a number of these 4-foot-by-8-foot signs already gracing busy roads in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The 2003 fire siege blackened thousands of acres of forest land in Southern California. The signs are a highly visible tool to remind and educate the public on the extreme fire hazard in the bark beetle infested areas of Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego. "What's especially unique about these signs is that they integrate

two messages; one of fire prevention and one of resource management,” said Oldar. Each of the signs are two-sided, with a 100-foot clearance message on one side and a forestry message on the other. There are a variety of different messages that the signs display with anyone of four different prevention messages and up to six different resource management messages available. The signs are two sided so they can be easily rotated depending upon the season. The signs will display the prevention message in the summer months and the resource management messages during the winter.

The project is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Forest Service’s “Forest Health

Enhancement Program” to deal with the bark beetle destruction in Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties. Oldar designed each sign, while inmates from the Prado Conservation Camp in the San Bernardino Unit construct and paint them. The signs really show off the artistic and creative airbrushing talents on the Prado crews. Each sign takes Prado three to four weeks to create.

Once they are finished they are placed on visible roadsides. There have already been three signs sent to the CDF Riverside Unit and one forwarded to San Bernardino. A total of 12 signs are being placed throughout the two units, with a possibility of more still to come.

Assistant Deputy Director, Cooperative Fire, Training and Safety

Chief Ken Pimlott

By Alisha Herring, executive assistant, Sacramento Headquarters

“I’ve known since I was a junior in high school that I wanted a career with CDF,” says Chief Ken Pimlott. Now, after more than 20 years with the department, Chief Pimlott is the assistant deputy director for Cooperative Fire Protection, Training and Safety in Sacramento Headquarters. In this newly created position, Chief Pimlott is responsible for the department’s Amador agreements, Schedule A contracts, interagency state and federal agreements, fire assistance programs, conservation camp program, CDF Academy, and safety program.

The Cooperative Fire Protection staff is responsible for coordinating agreements and contracts with different agencies throughout California. This allows CDF to exchange fire protection services with local government and

state agencies as well as its federal partners – all with the goal of providing Californians with the best level of emergency response service available, Pimlott says. “Many of the decisions affecting fire protection contracts and associated service levels are very difficult; however, it is rewarding to be part of the process developing solutions.” It is a huge benefit that CDF is a recognized leader at providing emergency services and incident management in this country.”

Through the Forestry Assistance Act, federal financial assistance is available here in California and is funneled through CDF’s State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance programs - both within Cooperative Fire Protection. These grants help state and volunteer agencies fund training, equipment

purchases and organizational needs in fire prevention and suppression.

CDF has a long working relationship with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Chief Pimlott and his staff work to maintain that relationship. CDF houses over 4,000 inmates that make up 196 crews and 39 conservation camps throughout the state. "These crews are the foot soldiers of our fire fighting force," says Chief Pimlott. "When not fighting fires, they are working on floods, earthquakes, or just about any type of incident or prevention project work we do."

The CDF Academy in Ione provides training in fire protection, fire prevention, law enforcement, administration, resource management, and fire crew management for both CDF personnel and other local, federal and state cooperators. "The academy training staff are some of the best in the nation, and they are committed to providing superior training to California's finest fire fighting force," said Chief Pimlott.

He works with the department's safety officer, Larry Crabtree, to ensure CDF's compliance with laws and regulations pertaining to operational and employee safety and to encourage managers and employees in their efforts to improve the work environment. "Safety is an important practice whether you are out in the field or in an office, it is serious stuff," said Pimlott.

"I have a great staff in place to support all of these programs," he said. "It takes a knowledgeable team to work with all of the outside agencies and partners that we work with and in this shop."

Chief Pimlott began his career with CDF in 1987 as a firefighter I in the Tulare and Santa Clara units while attending Humboldt State University. In 1990 Pimlott promoted to a forestry technician within the Forestry

Assistance Program in Sacramento. After three years in Sacramento, Pimlott headed to Southern California where he spent the next 10 years working at both the Southern Operations Center in Riverside and the Riverside Unit. During that time he promoted to forester I at the South Area Office where he functioned as the area service forester. In 1998, after obtaining his registered professional forester's (RPF) license, Pimlott promoted to forester II in the Riverside Unit where he managed the pre-fire management division. "I am especially proud of the cooperative prescribed burning and other fuels management projects we implemented during this time with our local, state and federal partners in Riverside and Orange counties," said Chief Pimlott. In 2001 Pimlott promoted again to assistant chief and worked in the Northwestern and Moreno Valley divisions of the Riverside Unit.

In 2003, Pimlott transferred to Growlersburg Conservation Camp in the Amador-El Dorado Unit. "The time was right for both my family and my career. I grew up in Northern California and knew that I would return some day," said Pimlott.

One year later, Chief Pimlott returned to Sacramento Headquarters as staff chief over the Cooperative Fire Program before promoting to his current position in September 2005.

"Since being back in Sacramento, I now look at things from a different perspective," said Chief Pimlott. "The core mission and values of the department have remained consistent; however, there is a new reliance on technology and a complexity to the state and how we operate."

Chief Pimlott lives just outside of Sacramento in Cameron Park with his wife, Karen, and two boys, Nick and Steven, ages 13 and 11. "I have spent the last few years learning how to snow ski, but with both boys active in sports, we

spend most of our time at soccer, volley ball or track,” said Pimlott. Once a month, the family enjoys working together at a steam train

concession in Tilden Regional Park (East Bay Hills), where Chief Pimlott has volunteered since he was a boy.

Statewide rollout

California All-Incident Reporting System (CAIRS)

By Suzanne Huynh, statistics analyst, Fire Protection Operations

How many wildland fires did CDF respond to last year? How many structure fires, medical emergencies, etc? The department has been using antiquated technology to determine its responses, but soon will have a new hi-tech tool to collect and retrieve that type of information. CDF’s current standalone database Emergency Activity Reporting Systems (EARS) will be replaced by California All Incident Reporting System (CAIRS), which is a web-based subscription service used to collect all-incident data.

The California Health and Safety Code Section 13110.5 requires the CDF/Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) gather statistical information on all fires, medical aid incidents and hazardous materials incidents occurring within the state. The OSFM is then charged with the responsibility of analyzing the data reported, compiling reports, and disseminating the information to federal agencies, the public and the legislature.

Currently, the CDF EARS tracks only fire-related incidents for CDF’s 650 fire stations statewide. These stations report 37,000 fire emergencies each year. That includes more than 5,700 wildland fire emergencies, as well as structure, vehicle and other types of fires. CDF personnel respond to approximately 350,000 other emergencies each year, including floods, earthquakes, medical emergencies, automobile

accidents, lost hikers, hazardous material spills, and train wrecks. Furthermore, the fire-related incidents that are tracked in the existing system, EARS, are not captured in the reporting format required by federal standards.

CAIRS will allow CDF to collect complete data (all incidents instead of just wildland fires), which will in turn allow us to provide a true representation of what CDF does and help the department when requesting funding, staffing, equipment, and much more. Incident data is also critical for tracking activities during federally declared disasters, and assures maximum federal funding support through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). CAIRS is also compliant with the United States Fire Administration’s (USFA) National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

Fire protection staff will be using CAIRS, a web-based subscription service provided by our vendor, Compupro, also known as “NFIRS Online,” to host and collect the data. The National Fire Information Reporting System (NFIRS) is the national standard for emergency incident reporting. After being collected and validated this information will be moved to the CDF data warehouse where it can be accessed and used by all units for generating reports. Being a web-based subscription service, no additional software will need to be loaded onto

the user's computer. With a user name and password staff will be able to use CAIRS from any computer with internet access. CDF will be piloting CAIRS in two units this spring, Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit (TCU) and Tehama-Glenn Unit (TGU). Once the pilot is successful, we will start implementation statewide.

A major bonus to this system is that statewide we will be pre-populating the CAIRS database with data from CDF's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Your hard work establishing a working CAD system in your unit will now go even further! When someone closes an incident in CAD, interfaces will allow that information to show up in the CAIRS online system, reducing the unwelcome task of completing duplicate data entry out in the field. At this time, we are expecting that NFIRS standard reporting will be accelerated at your camp or station by showing up in the database with data including everything from incident number and incident type, fire department,

incident contained and controlled date and time, street prefix, latitude and longitude, section and meridian to name a few options.

The CAIRS Project Team consists of Sacramento Fire Protection staff and the consultant hired to work on this project. The team is working to accomplish the following goals:

Spring 2006
Integration, Testing and Piloting
Summer 2006
Training and Rollout
Fall 2006
Monitoring and Report Development

For more information on CAIRS, CDF employees should visit the project website on the CDF employee Intranet under Program Links>Fire>CAIRS or email the CAIRS Project Team at cairscdf@fire.ca.gov.

CDF nurseries have been busy

Following a short interruption of operations within CDF's Nursery program in 2003 due to budgetary constraints, the program is back up and running again. At both the Magalia and the L A Moran Reforestation Centers over the last year staff has been extremely busy reestablishing a good portion of each facilities seedling production, and renewing the confidence of those clients the nurseries sell seedlings to or process seed for.

Beginning in December of last year and continuing through February of 2006, over 600,000 seedlings were lifted at the CDF Magalia Reforestation Center (MRC) in Butte County. Magalia nursery production is anywhere from 500,000 to a maximum of 2.5 million seedlings per year for bare root seedlings, and about 50,000 for container

seedlings with plans to expand to 150,000 containers next year. After undercutting the seedlings in their beds with tractors to loosen the soil for manually lifting the seedlings, they are pulled from the ground, sorted to eliminate poorly formed, damaged or undersized seedlings, then bundled, packaged and placed in refrigeration until shipped to customers. The nursery uses CDF crews from three different conservation camps, Ishi, Salt Creek, and Valley View, to process the seedlings. Tree seedlings are grown from seed collected for specific seed zones and elevations to ensure compatibility with the area they are to be planted in for optimum growth and survivability.

Over at the LA Moran Reforestation Center (LAMRC) in Davis, CDF staff and crews from Delta Camp have processed approximately

5,000 bushels of cones that produced 5,000 pounds of seeds this year for the State Seed Bank. The seeds are used to produce planting stock for both the CDF nurseries and industrial forest landowners. The Seed Bank is able to store seed for 10 to 30 years or more depending on the seed variety. This facility is also capable of growing 400,000 container seedlings once it is fully back in operation.

The purpose of the two nurseries is to provide seed zone, elevation and species specific forest tree seedlings to small forest landowners, industrial forest landowners and other state and local agencies for timber production, reforestation, erosion control and to ensure the replacement of our valuable forests after fires, insect attacks or destroyed by other natural disasters.

The LA Moran facility was established in 1917

and is the longest continuously operating CDF facility. The nursery at Magalia was established in 1954. The nurseries are partially self supporting, with receipts from the sale of plant materials going back into the program to help cover the costs of operations supplemented by receipts from the sale of forest products from CDF's Demonstration State Forest System. The nurseries are located on 15 acres in Butte County and approximately 40 acres in Davis and Yolo counties. The local citizens feel that the nurseries are an asset to their communities by providing educational and other opportunities. Locals regularly volunteer their help at the nurseries. The nurseries are also involved with cooperative research and tree improvement projects, and provide a training ground for resource managers by supplying internship opportunities.

Tulare Unit (TUU)

Chief Ed Wristen

By Paul Marquez, fire captain, Tulare Unit

When Tulare Unit Chief Ed Wristen retired in July of 2000, he never imagined he would be leading a CDF Unit again. That all changed in December when he received a call from Region IV Chief Candice Gregory asking him to lead the Tulare Unit through a tough time. Chief Wristen was aware of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors desire to terminate the contract with CDF/TUU. Chief Wristen had worked for CDF for 36 years before retirement with 10 years as Tulare Unit Chief.

"I was enjoying retirement, spending time with my grandchildren and new grandson" explained Chief Wristen, who is active with the local Visalia Breakfast Lions Club. "Being involved with the Visalia Breakfast Lions allows me to do service work for the community

which I enjoy". A dedicated CDFer, Chief Wristen has put his retirement on hold for a while to return to his unit.

Chief Wristen sees his current role as unit chief different than the this time. "I saw my first role as a unit chief as a career challenge. I see my current role as a life challenge." His number one goal is to make the Unit's transition from CDF- managed to county-managed a smooth and painless one. "I want to take care of the people." Chief Wristen knows that the transition is going to change many employees' lives and he wants to make it as trouble-free as possible. He believes that having been in the role of Tulare Unit Chief before has its advantages. "I have received support from the Board of Supervisors and the CAO; they've

all made me feel welcome”.

When asked what changes he has noticed since retirement, he said, “After coming back, I see some of the same issues that were here when I left.” Of course, Chief Wristen notes that the biggest issue facing the Unit is the transition from CDF to a county-managed fire department. Beyond that, the technology CDF uses for communication concerns him. “The demand for quick information causes concern

that we may be loosing some accountability,” he says, noting that the “inbox” on his desk used to always have something in it while now most all of his messages come in e-mail.

Chief Wristen has a little saying he likes to share with the CDF and county fire employees. “We will go through this transition with dignity, integrity and pride and when the transition day comes, we will have our heads held high.”

Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit (MMU)

Chief Mikel Martin

By Jody Stanners, OT, Fire Prevention, Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit

After the retirement of Chief Gary Marshall in August 2005, Mikel Martin was appointed unit chief of the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit (MMU). Chief Martin brings with him a wealth of experience. After 33 years with CDF, Chief Martin still holds firm to his belief that everyday is an opportunity for a challenge.

As MMU Unit Chief he oversees all state operations within the counties of Madera, Mariposa and Merced. In addition, Chief Martin is responsible and designated the fire chief of Merced County Fire, Madera County Fire and the Madera City Fire.

Chief Martin began his CDF career in 1973 as a seasonal firefighter in the Santa Clara Unit. In May of 1975 Martin became a permanent CDF employee as a fireman in the San Benito-Monterey Unit. Two years later he was promoted to fire apparatus engineer; in 1985 he made fire captain. Chief Martin transferred for a short stay in the Fresno-Kings Unit in 1994 as a company officer. Much of Chief Martin’s career has been spent in the San Benito-Monterey Unit where he promoted to battalion chief, and worked as a training

battalion chief, administrative division chief, extensively in CDF’s air program, and most recently as the North Division Operations Chief.

Chief Martin comes to MMU with a goal-minded outlook. It is a high priority to establish cohesiveness in the unit as well as reaffirming trust between the local cooperators and CDF. He will utilize his administrative chief experience in achieving increased staffing in the Schedule A program, and developing sound strategic plans while working within budget constraints.

Chief Martin believes that, “People need to be allowed to do their jobs and make decisions. That is what we pay them for. If they fall down, we should be picking them up and dusting them off to go forth and perform at the highest level of their ability. When we do not allow this, we stifle innovation and forward progress.”

It is not unusual for him to drop by a station just to meet the station crews, return a phone call promptly, and take time to get to know his staff. “MMU has an outstanding lot of individuals working in the unit. I have respect for them and their individual commitment to

their positions. I look forward to eventually meeting everyone and utilizing them to their full potential,” said Chief Martin. He is already establishing quite a noticeable personality, having been overheard using phrases such as “Go ugly early” (thanks to retired San-Benito-

Monterey Unit Chief Reno Ditullio, Sr.) or “It’s all good”.

Chief Martin is married to his bride of 15 years, Michelle. He is the proud father of one son, Evan, 23, and one daughter, Kayla, 12.

Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit (LNU)

Chief Ernie Loveless

By Linda Galvan, fire prevention specialist II, Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit

It has been a little over a year since Ernie Loveless was appointed as Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit Chief. He brought nearly 35 years of experience with him having started his CDF career as a firefighter in the San Luis Obispo Unit in 1970. As unit chief he oversees the management services, resource management, and fire protection functions for the unit which includes Lake, Napa, Yolo, Solano, Colusa, and Sonoma counties. Within the unit are two state forests, one air attack base, one helitack base, two conservation camps, 20 state fire stations, and eight local government fire stations. Staffing includes 200 permanent personnel, 200 seasonal employees, and nine volunteer fire stations, staffed with 200 volunteer firefighters.

Chief Loveless is proud to work for a department where there is so much diversity. “We are not just wildland firefighters anymore,” he said. “This is the only organization where a firefighter can live in just about any location in the State of California, work at any one of the many types of positions available such as; truck operator, law enforcement, tanker or copter pilot, technical specialist on any one of the many teams including hazmat, technical rescue, and swift water disciplines; and find a niche that suits them.”

Loveless became a permanent CDF employee

as a “fireman,” a.k.a. firefighter II, in 1971 in the Santa Cruz Unit. Chief Loveless moved quickly up the firefighter career ladder, becoming a fire apparatus engineer within three years and a fire captain in 1978, while working in the Santa Cruz, Shasta-Trinity and Tehema-Glenn Units. As a fire captain specialist in the Shasta-Trinity Unit, Chief Loveless was part of the team that developed and put into action the department’s Volunteers In Prevention (VIP) program.

Promoting to battalion chief in 1985, he came to Lake-Napa as the unit’s fire prevention officer. Chief Loveless also served as the unit’s training officer until his promotion to division chief at Delta Conservation Camp in 1989. He also was the administrative officer for the unit and when Lake-Napa became the Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit, he was the operations chief for the South Division.

In 2001, Chief Loveless left LNU to take the staff chief position for the Northern Region, overseeing all personnel, finance, human resources, fire prevention and technical services functions for the Northern Region. When the opportunity arose, Chief Loveless returned to Sonoma-Lake-Napa to accept his current position, in January of 2005 with responsibility

for the overall management of the Unit.

Chief Loveless believes the opportunities afforded those in fire control is great. With the new retirement solutions and succession planning, any new firefighter equipped with ambition and a “can do” attitude could see themselves as a chief officer within 10 to 12 years. Chief Loveless fully supports and encourages all those who take that challenge. Chief Loveless enjoys the family connection at CDF. Unlike many other government agencies, those in the fire service find themselves spending their extra time with the people they work with. Weekends and vacations are spent with CDF “family” members, who also are there

to share in times of crisis. It’s that CDF “family” that was there when he married his wife, Deborah 20 years ago. Chief Loveless has two grown step-children, and adopted children Donovan, 16, and Lauana, 14, both of whom have been with him since birth. In addition, Chief Loveless and his wife, Deborah, have been foster parents to 64 children over the past 18 years. Chief Loveless loves to travel, fish, camp and ski with the kids, and he tries to get in a round of golf when he gets the chance. When asked why he doesn’t retire, Chief Loveless explains, “Because I am maxed out. Don’t tell my wife - I’m doing this job because I want to, not because I have to”.

Shasta-Trinity Unit (SHU)

Chief Michael Chuchel

By Leah Sandberg, Lassen-Modoc Unit

On October 1, 2005, Mike Chuchel began his duties as unit chief of the Shasta-Trinity Unit (SHU). Chief Chuchel came to SHU from the Tehama-Glenn Unit (TGU) where he was assigned as an assistant staff chief for operations and was responsible for the oversight of all operational programs within the unit and for the Tehama County Fire Department.

“In leaving the Tehama Glenn Unit after almost 16 years, it is the people I miss most. The transition into the Shasta Trinity Unit, on the other hand, has been effortless due to the people here,” says Chief Chuchel.

As SHU Chief he oversees an area of more than 2.6 million acres, 13 state stations, 19 engines, three dozers, two camps, and 129 permanent and 100 seasonal personnel. Chief Chuchel, by Shasta County Board of Supervisors proclamation, is also the Shasta County Fire Warden. As county fire warden he is responsible for 19 fire companies with 225 volunteers, 43 engines, 13 water tenders, 21

rescues, and three boats. Responsibilities also include designated lead agency for the regional, Shasta Cascade Hazardous Material Response Team.

Chief Chuchel notes that resource management responsibilities in the unit include the LaTour and Ellen Picket Demonstration State Forests, and unit forest practice personnel oversee more than 600 timber harvesting documents each year. “The Shasta-Trinity Unit, due to its geography and demographics poses many challenges,” says Chief Chuchel. “These are opportunities I look forward to.”

Chuchel began his fire service career in 1977 in the CDF Butte Unit where he spent six seasons as a firefighter I. In 1982 and 1983 he spent time as a fire protection operator for the Oroville City Fire Department. Then, from 1984 through 1986 he worked for the Butte County Sheriff’s Department as a deputy sheriff-coroner. In 1986 he returned to firefighting and CDF as a fire apparatus

engineer for the Fresno-Kings Unit. Chuchel transferred back to BTU in November of 1988, working at the Bangor and Robinson Mill Stations. In 1989 he arrived in TGU as a fire captain B at Valley View Conservation Camp. He worked at the camp until 1993 when he transferred to Paskenta Station as a fire captain A.

In 1994, Chuchel turned his attention to fire prevention, where his peace officer status came in handy. For four years he worked as a fire captain specialist at TGU headquarters. Chief Chuchel was responsible for law enforcement, cost collection, information, education, unit law enforcement training, and inspections. He also was the unit range master, a member of the Tehama County Technical Advisory Committee, and attended planning commission meetings.

In 1998, Chuchel promoted to battalion chief. He had the Paskenta Battalion that included Schedule A, B and C operational and administrative duties. In 2000 he was on the move again, promoting to assistant chief and returning to the Conservation Camp Program at Salt Creek Conservation Camp. After serving two years at the camp, Chief Chuchel moved back to unit headquarters as assistant chief,

management services, responsible for all personnel, fiscal, procurement and contract processes as well as providing direction, supervision and assistance to management services, fire prevention, fire protection planning, information technology, respiratory protection and Americans With Disabilities Act compliance.

In 2004, Chief Chuchel switched gears and moved into the operations side of the unit where he was responsible for the operational oversight within the unit and for the Tehama County Fire Department including emergency command center (ECC) and mobile equipment. Chuchel maintained oversight in fire prevention and protection planning.

Chief Chuchel has many Incident Command System (ICS) qualifications including working as incident commander of CDF Incident Command Team 2. With over 28 years of service in public safety, he brings a great deal of experience and knowledge to Shasta-Trinity Unit. His belief in establishing and maintaining strong relationships with all other agencies and with the community he serves will help him in his position as Shasta-Trinity Unit Chief.

Tehama-Glenn Unit (TGU)

Chief Gary Durden

By Mickie Jakez, fire prevention specialist II, Tehama-Glenn Unit

Chief Gary Durden was appointed as the Tehama-Glenn Unit Chief in September 2004. Chief Durden joined CDF 35 years ago as a firefighter in the San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit. He became a fire apparatus engineer (FAE) within one year. In 1975, when the Division of Forestry decided to pay FAE's \$1000 per month, Chief Durden decided to make it a career.

Chief Durden has a high regard for the Tehama-Glenn Unit because of the people within the unit. He feels whatever arises the personnel adapt and continue to do an outstanding job in a very professional manner. TGU, as in other units throughout the state, has many diverse programs involving conservation camps, Schedule "A" contracts, law

enforcement and resource management. “At the present time the planning/fire marshal function is inundated due to tremendous growth in the county,” says Chief Durden. “It seems Tehama County has been discovered for everything it has to offer as a wonderful place to live. The staff is doing an outstanding job of meeting the challenge.”

In 1977, the Division of Forestry became the Department of Forestry. At that time Durden was a fire captain with a Schedule “A” company in the Monterey peninsula. In November 1979 he became a battalion chief in protection and planning, serving as the training officer. When the training officer position was cut in 1980 due to Proposition 13 cutback, Chief Durden moved to the Hollister Air Attack Base as the air attack officer. He remained in Hollister until 1986 when he promoted to division chief at the Gabilan Conservation Camp in Soledad. Gabilan was a new conservation camp at the time and construction had not started yet. Inmate crews operated from the south facility at Soledad Prison until the camp was completed on Soledad grounds. The camp worked 80 inmates from the prison.

In July of 1989, Chief Durden transferred

north to the Tehama-Glenn Unit as division chief at the Salt Creek Conservation Camp. Two years later he moved over to the Ishi Conservation Camp. In November 1997, Chief Durden became the operations officer in TGU and held that position until his current appointment.

On a professional basis, Chief Durden points to the start up and construction of Gabilan Conservation Camp and the subsequent years of expansion in the 1980s as an achievement he will always be proud of. Today, he says he is extremely proud of the relationship the Tehama-Glenn Unit has with its local government and federal cooperators.

Chief Durden is also extremely proud of his family. He has been married to his wife Penny for 32 years and says hopefully he will enjoy another 32 years with her. He has two children, Eric and Jody who are both happily married.

“I’m grateful that I have had the privilege to work with the best and most dedicated individuals throughout my career,” said Chief Durden. “The people in CDF are what make this organization.”

CDFers have a belt buckle option

By Alisha Herring, executive assistant, Sacramento Headquarters

In December an optional uniform belt buckle was approved for department uniformed personnel. Why a new belt buckle, you ask? “CDF Firefighters requested a traditional buckle and then presented us with the idea and we liked it”, said Jim Wright, deputy director, fire protection.

The new buckle is actually a traditional fire department style and has CDF Fire in raised lettering. As with all other uniform trim colors, the buckle is gold for chief officer classes, and silver for rank and file classes including fire

captain and below. This new buckle fits best with the 1-1/2 inch uniform belt. The old belt buckle option is just a plain, square-shape with a center bar. It has a nickel finish for rank and file, and gold for chief officers.

In 2006 Chief Wright will again be working with CDF Firefighters to revise the uniform policy and potentially add some additional garments and accessories to the approved lists.

Those personnel wishing to acquire this new approved optional belt buckle should contact the CDF Firefighters Company Store at www.cdf-firefighters.org.

CDF Museum update

After its grand opening on October 6, 2005, the CDF Museum has entered its sixth year with a bright future. Located in a restored building in the CDF San Bernardino Headquarters, the non-profit museum and the dedicated individuals who have built it work to identify, collect, preserve, document, exhibit, and interpret CDF material, equipment, and information.

The museum is funded through donations. Retired CDF employees can already have monthly donations made via payroll deduction. Museum president Jerry Glover is working through the process to allow current CDF employees to donate in a similar manner. Museum "staff" can use all the support they can

get. Jerry and a dedicated group of CDF retirees started and keep the museum going. Museum expenses include such items as the necessary insurance, collection supplies, quarterly newsletter and exhibit maintenance. Additional donations will allow for continued expansion as the museum group attempts to process 100 years+ of history.

From old engines and equipment, to historical documents the CDF Museum allows visitors an opportunity to learn about a department that is now entering its 101st year. You can contact the CDF Museum at 909-881-6984, (there is a voice mail for messages). The museum is open every Saturday, except holidays, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

www.CDFMuseum.org

January/February 2006 **Personnel Transactions**

Sacramento *Headquarters*

Appointments: Ruben Grijalva to Acting Director, Executive Office; Larry Menth to Assistant Deputy Director, Labor and Human Resource Management; Jeri Foley to Staff Services Analyst, Information Technology Services; Gina Dokes to Staff Systems Analyst, OSHPros; Pam Johnson to Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Business Services; Jeff Leddy to Forester II Resource Management.

Promotions: Carol Horn to Executive Assistant, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Deaths: Retired Manager Leonard Arthur Newell, Vegetation Management Program, passed away on December 4, 2005.

North Coast Region I

Deaths: Firefighter I Christine Laramie, Santa Clara Unit, passed away January 19, 2006.

Cascade Region II

Appointments: Robin Palomba to Office Assistant, Butte Unit.

Transfers: Fire Captain Matt Davis from Sacramento ECC to Butte Unit ECC.

Retirements: Unit Chief Tony Clarabut, Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit; Deputy Chief Ralph Minnich, Northern Region; Fire Apparatus Engineer Robert Aberham, Fire Captain Tim Thompson, Fire Captain Mark Coulfield, Fire Prevention Specialist II Robin Sykes, Fire Captain Steve Mancebo, Fire

Captain Alan Merryman, Battalion Chief Fred Fortes, Battalion Chief Craig Dowling, Battalion Chief William Britton, and Fire Captain Jim Casaurang, Shasta-Trinity Unit; Fire Captain James Benson, Butte Unit.

Southern Region III

Appointments: Office Technician Lori Saysourivong to Puerta La Cruz Conservation Camp, San Diego Unit; Acting Unit Chief Tim Turner, San Bernardino Unit.

Transfers: Assistant Region Chief Bob Green from San Bernardino Unit to Southern Region HQ; Fire Captain Brennan Blue from Riverside to San Diego Unit ECC.

Retirements: Fire Chief Dan Turner, Assistant Chief Steve

Heil, Fire Captain Dave Gowan, Fire Captain Ed Dowling, and Fire Captain Steve Mello, Fire Captain Dan Trabucco San Luis Obispo; Deputy Chief Kevin Eggleston, San Diego Unit; Assistant Chief Bill Clayton, San Diego Unit/Rainbow Conservation Camp; Heavy Fire Equipment Operator Ben Anderson, San Diego Unit/Rainbow Conservation Camp; Fire Captain John Gruber, San Diego Unit; Fire Captain Rob Schwabel, Mt. Bullion Conservation Camp.

Separation: Dispatcher Clerk Patricia Barajas, San Diego Unit.

Central Sierra Region IV

Appointments: Kelly O'Keefe and Chris Serra to Fire Apparatus Engineer, Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit; Barbara George to Office Technician, Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit.

Transfers: Assistant Chief Janet

Piccolo from CDF Fire Academy to Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit.

Retirements: Deputy Chief Larry German, Fire Prevention and Law Enforcement, Fresno-Kings Unit; Assistant Chief Ronny Leroy, Baseline Conservation Camp; Heavy Fire Equipment Operator Doug White, Battalion Chief Battalion Chief Daniel Miller, Fire Captain Eric Jack, Fire Captain David Ponte and Fire Captain J. Scott McKinney, Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit; Battalion Chief James Hall, Unit Chief Steve Sunderland and Battalion Chief Ted Reese, Tulare Unit; Fire Captain Rob Schnabel, Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit.

Deaths: Retired Fire Captain Gail Huffman, Fresno-Kings Unit, passed away January 1, 2006; Retired Fire Apparatus Engineer Don McGee, Tulare Unit, passed away January 17, 2006; Retired Battalion Chief Bill Shimer, Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit, passed away February 8, 2006.

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