Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (Pleasant Hill, CA)

Fire Chief

Salary Range
$160,818 to $195,475

The Power of Partnership
The County

Contra Costa County was incorporated in 1850 as one of the original 27 counties of the State of California. It is one of nine counties in the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area, and covers approximately 733 square miles extending from the northeastern shore of San Francisco Bay easterly about 50 miles to San Joaquin County. The County is bordered in the south and west by Alameda County and on the north by Suisun and San Pablo Bays. Contra Costa County had recently been one of the fastest growing work forces among Bay Area counties, with growth in its employment base being driven primarily by the need to provide services to an increasing local population and the presence of relatively high-wage skilled jobs. In addition, the County has one of the State's most heterogeneous populations, rich in ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic diversity. With a current population slightly in excess of 1,000,000, Contra Costa County is the ninth most populous county in California. The City of Martinez is the County seat of Contra Costa County and the location of the County's administrative offices.

Contra Costa County includes varied suburban, industrial, agricultural and port areas and contains 19 incorporated cities. A large part of the County is served by the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) which has helped to enable significant residential and commercial development. Prestigious public and private academic institutions, including Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley, University of San Francisco, University of the Pacific, and various California State University campuses, are within driving distance from the County seat of Martinez. Recreation within the County varies from fishing, boating and water skiing in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers to hiking, horseback riding and camping in Mt. Diablo State Park. Recreational areas, including the wine country of Napa and Sonoma Counties, the picturesque seaside communities of Carmel and Monterey, and the Sierra Lake Tahoe mountain region, are also within driving distance of the County. Contra Costa County provides a full range of services through 32 County Departments divided into service areas such as: Public Protection, General Government, Health and Human Services, Growth Management, Special Districts and Authorities. There are also a number of affiliated organizations. The County has a FY 2009-2010 budget of approximately $1.2 billion, and countywide staff of approximately 7,700. The County's diverse economy provides many opportunities for future business and job generation, and the communities provide a wide range of recreational, cultural, and entertainment activities.

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District is a well-equipped, full-service fire agency that serves a population of over 600,000 across 304 square miles and nine cities, making it the fourteenth largest metropolitan fire agency in California.

The District has a nationally recognized communications center which provides dispatch services for the East Contra Costa, Moraga-Orinda, Crockett-Carquinez, Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection Districts, and the City of Pinole Fire Department.

The vast amount of open space throughout the District presents potential for wildland and urban interface fires. Every spring, in preparation for wildland fire season, Fire District workers maintain 470 miles of fire trails and inspect thousands of parcels of land for fire risk.

The District also provides full service to business and industry, including several petroleum refineries and chemical manufacturing plants. The District has 30 stations, 339 safety personnel including 13 Battalion Chiefs and 65 non-safety personnel, and responds to over 50,000 incidents annually. The total operating budget for Fiscal Year 2009-10 is $99.7 million.

Challenges and Opportunities

The Challenges and Opportunities facing the incoming Fire Chief include:

- Continue to build on the foundation of the District as a regional leader in the fire service, continuing the efforts from the previous administration.
- Increase cultural diversity within the District to represent the community make-up.
- Continue to work with the Building Department on fire inspections and pre-plan fire reviews.
- Develop creative and innovative approaches to working with County Departments on achieving County-wide goals.
Increase the use of technology to strengthen program effectiveness to advance the fire service to the next level.
Address overtime and staffing issues.
Explore the civilianization of certain positions within the District.
Take a realistic look and review of District issues, and recommend changes in policies and/or procedures.
Provide leadership in developing strong internal staff relations.
Explore the feasibility of integrating smaller regional Fire Districts.
Increase the workplace cultural diversity in the District.

The Position
Under administrative direction, the Fire Chief administers fire prevention and suppression operations of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District.

Typical responsibilities of the Fire Chief include, but may not be limited to:
- Directs the organization and staffing of the Fire District, including the Emergency Operations, Fire Prevention and Support Services
- Directs the selection, assignment, training and discipline of Fire District personnel
- Develops plans for future operations and projected needs of the fire service
- Directs and evaluates Fire District emergency response and fire prevention operations and directs on-going advancements to keep pace with industry standards, practices and technology
- Directs Emergency Response Operations including fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous material and rescue services
- Directs Fire Prevention Program management including review of subdivision growth and new building construction, enforcement of fire safety codes, exterior hazard control and urban-wildland interface fire prevention programs, public education programs, and the investigation of fires and submission of reports to proper law enforcement authorities
- Conducts surveys in conjunction with the Insurance Services Office requirements
- Directs the maintenance, operation, and utilization of apparatus and equipment
- Directs the preparation and administration of the Fire District's budget
- Directs the preparation of capital budgets and specifications for new fire apparatus, buildings and other capital requirements
- Directs the personnel and labor relation programs of the Fire District
- Directs the integration and cooperation of the Fire District with neighboring fire districts
- Responds to major alarms and directs operation at scenes of large fires or other emergencies
- Represents the fire service and attends meetings with the Board of Supervisors, Fire Advisory Commissions, City Councils, County management and general public

The Candidate

Education and Experience
Minimum qualifications include:
- Six (6) years of Fire Management experience, and
- A valid California Class C driver’s license upon appointment.

Candidates should have demonstrated responsible command experience in a full-service fire department, including experience in a command position and a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in Fire Service, Fire Administration, public administration or a closely related field is desirable. A Master's degree is preferred.

Candidates should also have knowledge of:
- Modern fire fighting methods and fire prevention practices
- Fire district administration principles of public administration, budgeting, training, personnel management, and municipal government
- Federal, state and local laws affecting the Fire District’s activities
- District geography, fire hazards, and fire fighting resources including personnel, equipment, water supplies, and communications
- Newest developments in techniques and/or equipment used in modern fire district operations
Candidates must also possess the ability to:

- Apply knowledge to varied fire control and fire prevention problems
- Analyze systematically the fire prevention and fire suppression needs of the District and translate them into realistic, practical operating and capital budgets
- Plan, initiate, and carry out short and long-term programs in fire district administration
- Plan, assign and coordinate activities performed by a large group of employees in varied fire district work
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with other officials, subordinates, and the public
- Maintain discipline and the respect of subordinates
- Speak effectively in public
- Prepare clear comprehensive reports

**Management Style and Personal Traits**

The Fire Protection District is a forward-thinking and customer service driven organization. Due to the current fiscal challenges, the next Fire Chief needs to be a highly skilled financial manager that is able to continually provide high levels of customer service while facing budgetary constraints, as well as plan for and maintain the long-term fiscal stability of the District. The successful candidate will be a strong, confident, politically astute leader who is a strategic thinker with a vision for the future. He/She should have strong communication and personal skills, be a good listener, able to build consensus and be a team player who looks at being part of the County team with a broad perspective.

The ideal candidate will have experience as a negotiator and be able to build and maintain strong relationships. He/She should have strong networking skills, and feel comfortable taking an active and visible role in the community. He/She will also mentor, empower and develop staff, and encourage staff participation. He/She will possess strong leadership skills and work ethic, as well as a high level of professionalism, integrity and credibility. This person will be responsive, engaging, dedicated, innovative, energetic, a problem solver, dynamic and have a vision for the District. He/She will have a solid understanding of the District's goals and objectives and will direct the daily operations without micro-managing. Lastly, he/she will show high regard for the organization's values.

**Compensation and Benefits**

The total compensation for this position is within an established range of $160,818 to $195,475 per year, with placement dependent upon the qualifications and experience of the selected candidate. In addition to a competitive salary, benefits currently provided include:

**Retirement**

- The County Retirement Program under the 1937 County Employee Retirement Act
- The County pays 50% of the employee's contribution
- Reciprocity with California Public Retirement System (CALPERS) is available

**Annual Leave Program**

- 3 weeks paid vacation leave
- 12 days of paid sick leave
- 10 paid holidays (plus 24 hours of floating holiday time)
- 70 hours of paid administrative leave

**Insurance**

- CalPERS health plan options
- Dental options include Delta Dental and PMI Dental Care
- Long-term disability
- Term life insurance of $10,000
- Management term life insurance of $60,000 (includes AD&D).

**Benefits**

- Vacation buy-back
- 2.5% management longevity differential after 10 and 15 years of service
- Deferred Compensation Plan (457), including County contribution
- Professional development allowance of $925 every two years
- Additional benefits under review

**How To Apply**

Please submit resumes in confidence by December 4, 2009 to:

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Additional information about this position may be found by visiting our web site at www.allianceresourceconsulting.com

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