

Ventura County
Fire
Protection
District

2010
Annual Report





Message from the Fire Chief

Chief Bob Roper

Leadership Development Key to Future Success

Careful long-term planning, sound fiscal policies and a dedicated workforce made 2010 a successful year for the Ventura County Fire Protection District despite the economic uncertainties plaguing the county, state and country. A coordinated effort at every level of the District allowed us to reduce expenses in some areas in order to focus our resources where they would be of the most benefit to the public and the organization.

As a result, we have been able to hire new firefighters, replace fire engines and build fire stations. We have streamlined some of our fiscal and fire prevention processes to both increase efficiency and reduce or eliminate paperwork. This has brought about more public-friendly procedures and helped to improve relations with the public.

Internally, 2010 was a year focused on leadership. No organization can grow and excel without good leadership. We believe that the best leaders come from within, so we have started programs to ensure orderly succession into leadership and management positions and leadership training to prepare our firefighters and civilian employees for increased responsibilities in the future.

With a well-developed succession plan, we help to ensure the future of the District by developing leaders, capturing institutional memory and maintaining opportunities for innovation. The atmosphere of empowerment and creativity that this effort produces has led to new initiatives in firefighter safety, training and community education.

As we enter 2011, we are faced with many new challenges. Budget issues continue to be a concern and a mild wildfire season in 2010 along with heavy winter rains could mean a severe season in 2011 because of new vegetation added to the already heavy fuel loads on our hillsides. But the men and women of the Ventura County Fire Protection District don't see these challenges as barriers to our success, we see them as opportunities to serve and succeed.

Board of Directors

The Ventura County Fire Protection District (fire department) is a dependent special district within the county that was created by a special election, held in 1928, to provide fire protection for the unincorporated areas of the county. Over time, the protection area was expanded to include six cities in the county – Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Camarillo, Port Hueneme and Ojai.

The County of Ventura Board of Supervisors acts as the District's board of directors. One supervisor is elected from each of the five supervisorial districts within the county. These five supervisors appoint the fire chief to provide fire protection services for the District.

Currently, the Ventura County Fire Protection District Board of Directors is comprised of:



District 1 – Supervisor Steve Bennett

He represents the communities of San Buenaventura, Montalvo, Saticoy, Oxnard Shores, Mandalay Bay, northwest Oxnard, north Ventura Ave., Foster Park, Casitas Springs, Oak View, Miramonte, Meiners Oaks, the City of Ojai, the eastern Ojai Valley and Upper Ojai, and the North Coast.



District 2 – Supervisor Linda Parks

She represents the cities and areas of Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park, Westlake Village, Lynn Ranch, Oak Park, Santa Rosa Valley, Bell Canyon, Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Malibu-Yerba Buena, portions of the Oxnard plain, Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu and the South coast.



District 3 – Supervisor Kathy Long

She represents the communities of Camarillo, California State University-Channel Islands, Port Hueneme, southeast Oxnard, the eastern Oxnard plain, Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru, Lockwood Valley and the eastern portion of Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme.



District 4 – Supervisor Peter C. Foy

He represents the communities of Simi Valley, Moorpark, Somis, Las Posas Valley, Santa Susana Knolls, Box Canyon, Chatsworth Peak, Home Acres, Sinaloa Lake and the Tierra Rejada Valley.



District 5 – Supervisor John Zaragoza

He represents the communities of Oxnard, Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach, Hollywood-by-the-Sea, Channel Islands Harbor, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, the Del Norte area, Oxnard College, portions of the Oxnard plain and the western portion of Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme.



Ventura County Fire Department

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<http://www.facebook.com/venturacountyfire>

Cover: Robby the Firefighter is the newest member of the Community Education team. He attends school programs and events to help teach children fire prevention and safety lessons.

2010 Promotions

Mark Lorenzen to Deputy Chief	Steve Winter to Battalion Chief
Rod Megli to Assistant Fire Chief	Steve Kaufmann to Fire Captain
Keith Gurrola to Division Chief	Massoud Araghi to Fire Marshal
Steve Francis to Battalion Chief	Shea Johnson to Senior Fire Inspector
Mike Milkovich to Battalion Chief	Adonea Scott to Accounting Officer II
Danny Swenson to Battalion Chief	Kitty Turnbull to Accounting Officer I

2010 Retirements

Mark Enneking – Fire Inspector	Frank McGrath – Captain
Rueben Murrieta – Engineer	Fernando Jimenez – Captain
Craig Morgan – Fire Prevention Officer	Gary Hart – Battalion Chief
John Moland – Battalion Chief	Gary Smith – Captain
Ken Maffei – Battalion Chief	Karen Nelson – Public Safety Dispatcher
John Hayes – Fire Equipment Mechanic	Sandy Bastian – Firefighter
Donna McGrath – Office Systems Coordinator	

2010 In Memoriam

Bob Stone – Battalion Chief (Retired)	Raymond L. Giles – Firefighter (Retired)
Larry Titus – Chief Investigator (Retired)	

Department Profile

Ventura County is a geographical area larger than the state of Rhode Island. The Ventura County Fire Protection District response area covers almost half of that area: 848 square miles. The county has 42 miles of coastline and ranges in elevation from sea level to 8,831 feet at Mount Pinos in the Los Padres National Forest. The District provides fire, emergency medical and rescue services in areas as diverse as urban centers, the coastline, farmlands and wildlands.

In 2010, the department responded to 34,609 calls for service – an average of 95 every day – with an adopted operating budget of just over \$135 million, a \$3 million reduction from the previous year's budget. Currently, the District serves about 57 percent of the population of Ventura County, more than 480,000 people in six cities and the unincorporated areas of the county.

FIRE DEPARTMENT PROFILE

PERSONNEL

Safety: (firefighters, battalion chiefs, etc.)	398
Non-Safety: (fire prevention, fleet maintenance, administration, etc.)	133
Total Allocated Positions:	577
Fire Stations:	31
Administration and Support Facilities:	4

APPARATUS

First-Run Fire Engines:	30
First-Run Quint Apparatus:	1
Ladder Trucks (incl. 1 reserve):	4
Paramedic Squad Vehicles:	4
Wildland Fire Engines:	11
Crash Truck:	1
Crew Transports:	2
USAR Vehicles:	2
Reserve Fire Engines:	17
Fire Boat and Water Rescue Craft:	5
Command Vehicles:	14
Heavy Equipment (bulldozers, etc.):	9
Other Emergency Response Vehicles:	33

Years of Service



20 YEARS

Gary Oliver
Larry Williams
William Breuklander
Bill Reynolds
Troy Swickard
Scott Dettorre
Steven Swindle
Joseph Cook
Dave Zimmermann
Mark Haliday
Pat Blase
Mark Fisher
Brett Wreesman

10 YEARS

Mark Pina
Michael Williams
Kenneth Van Wig
Robert Lopez
Tom Lanski
Joseph D Williams
Bruno Baertschi
Scott Sato
Matthew Cundiff
Chris Sharp
Brandon Garnsey
Silvester Alvarez
Finis Miller
Patrick Kelley
Tom Kasper
Jeff Pike
Rod Torres
Adonea Scott
Robin Shedlosky
Sam Belote

5 YEARS

Joseph E Williams
John Muhilly
Michael Tamez
Jeremy Ditlove
Angel Palacios
Aimin Alton
Shannon Black
Doni Farner-Smith
Tonya King
Fernando Calderon
Dan Opbroek
Steven Kennedy

40 YEARS

Gary Desgagnes

30 YEARS

Bob Roper
Glen Renner
Mark Acevedo
David Kromka
Michael Sandwick
Norm Plott
Tom Law
Bart Matthews
Dave Pumphrey
Tom O'Malley
Ed Spafford
Gordon Hildreth
James Stephenson

25 YEARS

Mitchell Lampert
Charles Butler
James Waldron
Joseph Selberg
Juan Carrillo

15 YEARS

Barry Parker
Robert Schaper
Eugene Fong
Christine Saqui
Ed Ornelas
Robert Thietje
Keith Helm
Paul Barrera
Kimo Ukauka
Chris Payne
Marisol Rodriguez
Dennis O'Shea
Chrystal Horton
Michelle Smith
Sheri Wyche
Tanya Lovelace
Raul Garcia

2010 Highlights

Cultivating Leaders

America's sixth president, John Quincy Adams, said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." That is the philosophy adopted by the District's new Leadership Cadre and they are working not only to develop leadership skills in themselves, but in those around them as well.

The Leadership Cadre currently consists of 37 members – civilian and sworn – from across the organization. Their charter was approved in July 2010, and they are charged with developing strategies and curriculum, and evaluating resources District firefighters and employees can use to grow as leaders.

The intent is to provide an environment that includes educational, skill and leadership development opportunities for the entire organization. Over time, this strategy will cultivate a fertile field of home-grown leaders who can continue to help the District thrive in the future.

A prominent success in the cadre's mission has been the establishment of a close relationship with the Los Angeles Fire Department's leadership academy. Three small groups of District firefighters have graduated from the prestigious academy. The coursework consists of 132 hours of classroom instruction, more than 80 hours of homework and a 20-page term paper. The four-week program is college-level instruction and completion

of the course is not only an accomplishment for the firefighters, it is an investment in the District's future.

The District is pledged to developing its leaders from within – building a strong sense of commitment, preserving institutional memory and creating a culture of individual growth. The Leadership Cadre is proving that it is up to that challenge.



Trial by Fire

Ask any firefighter and he or she will tell you, "Every fire is different." And, even though a firefighter may respond to hundreds of fires over the course of a career, there is a very real danger in treating the next one like the last one. As a result, every firefighter tries to learn something new at every fire. The lesson learned on the evening of April 5, 2010, was tragic.

At just after 5 p.m., District units were dispatched to a residential structure fire on Laurelwood Court in the city of Thousand Oaks. The house was well-involved with fire when the first units arrived. The firefighters began an aggressive attack on the fire, trying to save the home. As they fought the fire, they began to hear numerous explosions from inside the structure. About seven minutes into the fire attack, tragedy struck. A firefighter working outside of the structure, 15 to 20 feet away, was struck near his right eye by debris.



The firefighter was quickly assisted to safety and receive immediate medical attention from District paramedics on scene. He was then transported by ambulance to Los Robles Hospital and from there, he was airlifted to the UCLA Medical Center for specialized care.

Although he has since returned to his duties, the firefighter lost his eye as a result of his injuries. Even though the exact nature of the debris that struck the firefighter was never determined, significant amounts of ammunition exploded during the fire and the District conducted its safety review under the assumption that the firefighter had been hit by exploding ammunition.

An investigation determined that the firefighter had been wearing all of the appropriate safety gear at the time of his injury, but had not been wearing his breathing apparatus mask or other eye protection which was not required under the circumstances.

In the interest of firefighter safety, the District assembled an outside committee to determine whether changes were needed to current policies or procedures to prevent this type of injury from occurring in the future. The committee recommended that firefighters should wear eye protection whenever they are working in an area where flying debris could be encountered. They also advised that personnel, as a part of the on-scene size-up process, should question property owners with regards to the presence of on-site ammunition, guns, propane cylinders and potentially explosive materials.

The events of the Laurelwood Incident were tragic - a firefighter lost his eye - but the lessons learned may save another firefighter's life in the future.

2010 Highlights

Wildfire Preparedness

The wildfire season of 2010 was a mild one. While the District responded to dozens of brush fires, cool and moist weather helped save the county from a major, destructive wildfire. The most visible fire occurred near the famous Two Trees above Ventura in June. The fire was contained at about 10 acres, but briefly threatened the landmark and was visible from a wide area.

The two largest fires were the Loma Incident in July and the Hampshire Incident in September.

The Loma Incident was located above Camarillo Heights and eventually burned about 70 acres. The Hampshire Incident began near Highway 101 in Thousand Oaks and consumed about 50 acres. No structures were damaged or destroyed in either fire.

While not terribly destructive, the fires served as important reminders of the need for wildfire preparedness in Ventura County. In 2010, the District employed three programs to help protect residents.

The first line of wildfire defense is the District's Fire Hazard Reduction Program. Commonly referred to as weed abatement, FHRP creates a buffer zone from wildfires around properties in the Wildland Urban Interface, the area where development borders natural vegetation.

FHRP requires 100 feet of brush clearance from structures. This provides firefighters with what is called "defensible space." The 100 feet of clearance between the structures and the fuel is an important tool for the firefighters in defending the homes. In 2010, more than 14,000 FHRP notices were mailed and more than 90 percent of the property owners voluntarily complied with the order.

Sometimes, 100 feet just isn't enough space to protect structures. This can happen where terrain can increase the intensity of a fire or where heavy fuel loads can create very long flames lengths and fierce fire conditions. The District's Wildland Division has identified many of these areas in the county and is working on fuel management programs to reduce the risk.

One particularly effective project was on Krotona Hill in Ojai. In this case structures



Loma Incident



Loma Incident



Krotona Hill Project

on top of the hill were protected by the required 100 feet of clearance, but the fuel load was so heavy further down the hill that an advancing fire would certainly overrun the abated area.

Working with the residents, arborists and other interested parties, the District began a fuel management program that removed dead or diseased oak trees, highly flammable eucalyptus trees and areas of brush to eliminate excess fuel and provide firefighters with a better defense for the property.

While huge volumes of vegetation were removed, it was done in such a way that healthy plants and habitats were preserved. The program was executed so carefully that most of the work is not even visible at ground level.

While vegetation management is critical in protecting Ventura County citizens and their property from wildfires, it is not enough to just remove brush. In the event of a major wildfire, especially during the early stages, there will simply not be enough emergency equipment available to defend every house. This means that residents must take personal responsibility for helping to protect their homes and family. This is where the District's award-winning Ready, Set, Go! wildfire preparedness program comes in.

The program teaches residents how to prepare their homes and family against wildfires (Ready), to monitor conditions and maintain situational awareness during times of heightened fire danger (Set), and finally, to evacuate early, long before a fire arrives at their home (Go!).

The Ready, Set, Go! program helps guard against perhaps the biggest threat from wildfires in Ventura County: windblown embers. The embers can travel more than a mile ahead of a wildfire and enter homes through attic vents or start new fires in flammable materials around the house. The program teaches residents how to "harden" their home against embers, assemble emergency supplies and plan for evacuation.

These three programs, and other District initiatives, will help firefighters save lives and protect property during a wildfire. The county escaped a catastrophic fire in 2010, the District will be ready if 2011 brings a more dangerous fire season.

Bureaus

The Fire District is divided into six functional bureaus. Each performs specific tasks either to directly serve the public, or to support the District's mission of public service.

The Bureau of Emergency Services fulfills the core function of the Fire District. The bureau is responsible for all fire suppression and rescue activities, the delivery of emergency medical care, regional dispatching, and specialized responses such as hazardous materials incidents (HazMat), urban search and rescue (USAR) and water rescues.

The Fire District maintains 31 stations across the county, staffed 24-hours a day, for responding to emergencies. The fire apparatus at these stations are equipped to handle fires, provide emergency medical care and perform rescue operations. As a regional dispatch center, Public Safety Dispatchers at the Fire Communications Center direct responses of the Ventura County Fire Department and most of the other fire agencies and all of the ambulance services in the county.

In 2010, the District began its "quick launch" dispatch program. This program is designed to dispatch fire engines and have them traveling to an emergency while information is still being gathered. This system is improving response times and improving emergency services by getting firefighters to an emergency scene faster.

The Bureau of Support Services consists of the Fleet Maintenance division, the Wildland/Aviation division and the Supply division. Fleet Maintenance is responsible for keeping the District's fleet of vehicles in service and available for response. The Wildland/Aviation unit responds to wildfires with hand crews and dozers to create firebreaks, conduct backfiring operations and assist in firefighting operations and coordinates the use of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department fleet of helicopters for Fire District missions. The Supply division receives and distributes all goods and material for the Fire District.

In 2010, the Fleet Maintenance division placed two new pumper engines into service, along with crew supervisor vehicles, dozer tenders and a number of utility vehicles. In the Wildland division, the Vegetation Management Program helps reduce fire severity by conducting fuel management programs at the Reagan Library, Hopper Mountain, Sisar Road and several areas around Ojai. Major projects are also being planned for the Thousand Oaks area.

The Bureau of Fire Prevention is organized in geographical units to provide the best possible service to the communities each serves. Each unit is responsible for three functions that are both interrelated and mutually supportive. They are: Planning and New Construction, Code Enforcement and Licensed Care, and Engineering and Fire Protection Systems. Fire Hazard Reduction (weed abatement), Community Education and Filming,

and Public Information are handled on a countywide basis with support from the geographical units. Through its processes and programs, the bureau works to make Ventura County safer by educating and informing the public on how to prevent fires and prepare for disasters.

In 2010, the Fire Prevention Bureau enacted Ordinance 27. The ordinance amended the Ventura County Fire Code to update access and water requirements, fire safety regulations, wildland fire safety and administrative citations. The Community Education unit introduced "Robby," a 10-foot tall firefighter who helps with fire safety programs directed at school children.

The Bureau of Planning and Technology consists of the Training, Public Records, Computer-Aided Dispatch, Geographic Information and Mapping, Emergency Medical Services, Information Technology, Pre-Emergency Planning and Investigations, and Telecommunication units. The technology-based units provide the District with the radio, computing and telephone services it requires to deliver its services to the public and operate its non-emergency business functions.

The Regional Training Center is responsible for fire, rescue and emergency medical training for the District's members and the Pre-Emergency Planning and Arson/Fire Investigation unit aids the District by preparing plans for District actions in the event of a major emergency or disaster, investigating the cause of fires and training Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members.

In 2010, major upgrades were made to the Regional Training Center which improved the appearance of the facility, added new training props and provided new training opportunities.

The Human Resources Bureau handles the recruitment, hiring and administration of the District's employees. It staffs the fire stations, coordinates insurance and other benefits, conducts testing for promotional opportunities and performs risk assessment for the department. Industrial accidents and injuries are also under the supervision of Human Resources.

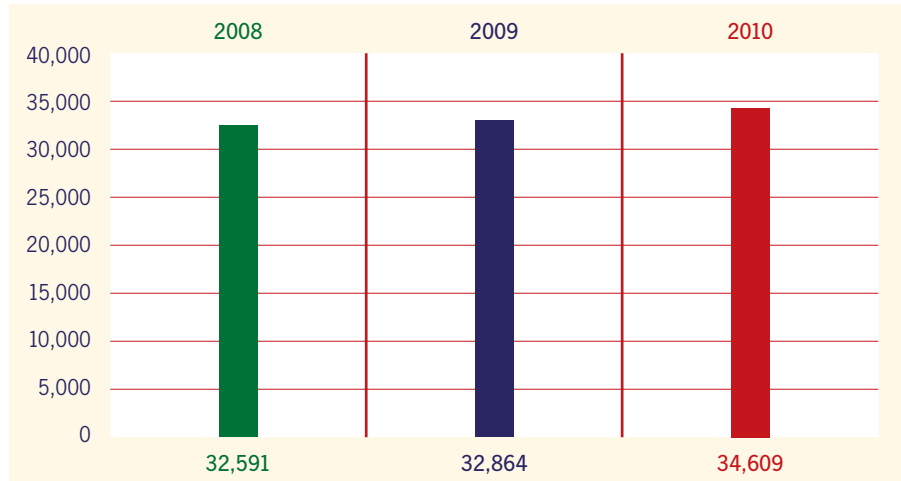
In 2010, the Human Resources Division recruited firefighters for the 2011 Training Academy, fire control workers for the hand crew and a number of administrative positions.

The Bureau of Administrative and Fiscal Services is responsible for the financial management of the Fire District. Its functions include payroll, accounts payable, purchasing, budgets, financial analysis and facilities management.

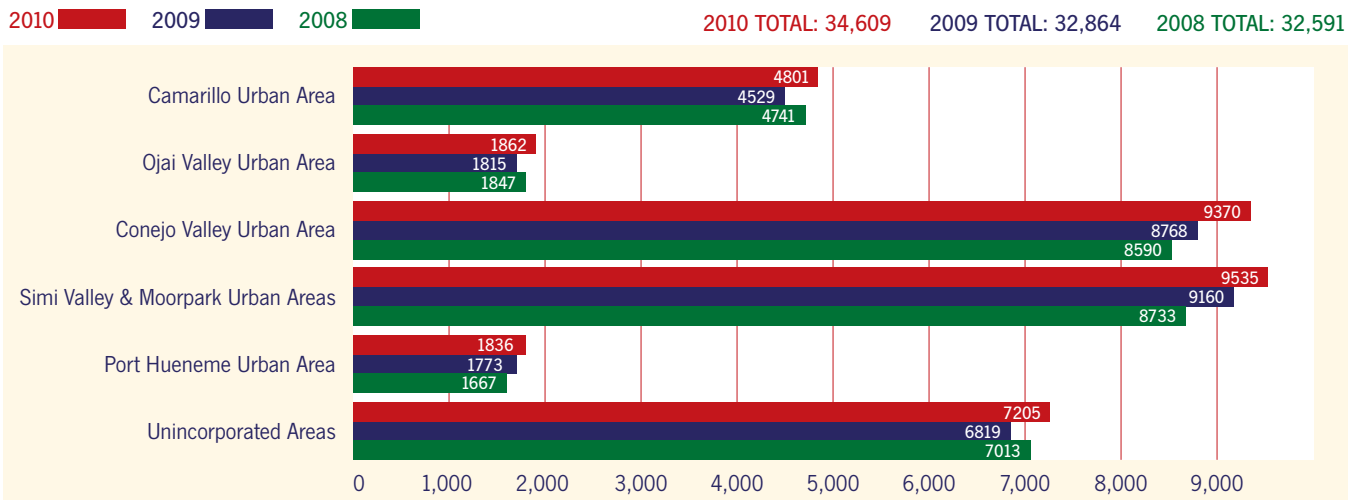
In 2010, construction was begun on a new fire station in Simi Valley to replace Station 43 in the Santa Susana Knolls area.



Annual Calls for Service



Calls for Service by Community



The statistics shown in this graph are generated from the District's Computer-Aided Dispatch system. The CAD system dispatches the closest resource to a call without regard to city boundaries. As a result, the statistics are shown by area, not cities. The Simi Valley and Moorpark urban areas are combined in the system. The Conejo Valley urban area includes Newbury Park and portions of Westlake Village. The Camarillo and Port Hueneme urban areas consist primarily of those cities. The Ojai urban area includes Oak View and the unincorporated area includes brush areas, the Camarillo and Oxnard plains, portions of Malibu, and the communities of Oak Park, Casitas Springs, El Rio and Piru.

Calls for Service by Incident Type

TOTAL: 34,609

