

## Directors Message

MARCH 2016

CAL FIRE is a leader in fire protection and resource management, and as a leader in these fields, we face increasing responsibility. In recent years, we have led the State's response to extreme fire conditions, epidemic levels of tree mortality, and the operational impacts resulting from unprecedented drought and climate change. Every operational change we make has an impact on the Department's administrative and logistical functions. We cannot make change in one area without adapting in the other.



Over the past several years, the Department has revised its hiring process to ensure we have a merit based system that not only meets our statewide hiring needs, but is responsive to our unique staffing requirements. This effort includes moving to written exams in certain fire protection classifications, addressing specific knowledge, skills, and abilities to bring forward the best candidate pool.

We also separated the Labor Relations and Human Resources programs to address their unique differences and complexities in order to ensure the highest level of expertise within each discipline to support the Department. This reorganization was critical in light of significant changes in recent years in personnel laws, rules, regulations, and hiring practices.

For the first time in many years, the Department stood up an offsite academy at the Ben Clark Training Center in Riverside to deliver the Firefighter Academy (FFA). This addressed the need for additional class space to keep up with the pace of hiring, partially in response to the addition of positions resulting from drought declarations.

The changes we are seeing are not only to meet internal operational needs, but are the result of external requirements as well.

State agencies are preparing for the introduction of FISCAL, the State's incoming accounting and budget system. The integration of this new system into the complex accounting and financial processes within CAL FIRE will be complicated and time consuming, and will influence any modifications to how we do business.

The Department is reacting almost daily to changes in accounting and procurement rules and requirements which have a direct impact on our day-to-day ability to deliver our mission.

It is critical we stay responsive as a department to changing internal and external influences and mandates in order to provide the most efficient and best service to our customers. Along those lines, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you several changes I am making within the organization.

I am reclassifying the existing Management Services Staff Chiefs (Forestry and Fire Protection Administrator) at each Region Office to the Staff Services Manager II classification. This classification is used throughout the State in the performance of a wide variety of fiscal, management, and staff services functions, including such areas as personnel, budget, management analysis, administrative services, program evaluation and planning, and policy analysis and formulation. With the shift in civil service practices that have necessitated changes within CAL FIRE, I believe this classification is the most appropriate to ensure we are best positioned to address these changing environments.

I am reestablishing a dedicated Training Program Staff Chief, and creating a separate program Staff Chief over Safety, EMS, and R&D. In fiscal year 2015-16, a Budget Change Proposal was approved, providing additional position authority at the Academy in Ione. These positions, in combination with the offsite Academy at Ben Clark Training Center, significantly increased the workload of the existing Staff Chief who oversees Training, Safety, EMS and R&D. The Safety, EMS and R&D programs have also experienced increased responsibility and workload as a result of changing statutory requirements, compliance review, and an increasing expectation to evaluate emerging technologies.

I continue to work with the program deputies and Region Chiefs to evaluate pressures and workload requirements, and identify opportunities for further improvements throughout the Department. For example, the increasing workload and the broad geographic responsibilities of the Region Chiefs have exceeded a reasonable span of control. I am considering options to address the breath of that workload, including the possible addition of a second Assistant Region Chief. This option would require approval through CalHR.

I look forward to sharing with you in the months ahead additional information on CAL FIRE's budget that will continue to move us forward in meeting our mission. As we all know, change is inevitable. How we adapt to change and the opportunities it provides will continue to define us as an organization. I continue to be proud of everything you do.

**Chief Ken Pimlott**  
***CAL FIRE*** Director