

# Building A Team For Success...

*Chief Matt Gallagher, Diamond Springs-El Dorado  
Fire Protection District*

*Chief Tim Cordero, El Dorado County Fire  
Protection District*





## **Consolidation / Annexation Benefits & Needs Assessment**

The following slides will identify some of the benefits to a successful merger of the agencies, along with the necessary support for long term sustainability and service delivery.

## Historical Perspective to Merging:

- The Diamond Springs – El Dorado Fire District (Diamond Springs) was involved in the preliminary “pre-consolidation” discussions in 1990, County Fire was established in 1991.
- For various reasons, the Diamond Springs – El Dorado Fire District, and their elected officials at the time determined that consolidating was not in the best interest of Diamond Springs.
- Over the following decades, “firehouse” conversations have always been present regarding merging our departments, largely because of our commonalities in calls and culture.
- Barriers to prevent meaningful conversations for a merger have occurred at all levels of both departments.



# Meaningful Conversations...

- The conversations regarding moving towards a merger began to take place between the two districts, with an attempt at entering into a Shared Service Agreement.
- Unfortunately, the shared service agreement was unsuccessful, with some valuable lessons learned
- Both agencies retained the belief that a merger would be beneficial – but how do we make it happen...



## **Looking to the Future-**

- We realize the potential benefits to merging the agencies, despite the previous challenges
- Command Staff from both Diamond Springs and County Fire began to meet and discuss these opportunities, while being very aware of the previous issues that created a failed attempt.
- We agreed that in order to be successful, we had to learn from the past and forge a new path forward
- In October of 2022, Diamond Springs and County Fire entered into a shared service agreement pertaining to:
  - Training
  - Chief Officer Coverage
  - Fire Prevention

# Support for Consolidation or Annexation

- The Board of Directors for the Diamond Springs – EL Dorado Fire Department and the El Dorado County Fire Protection District voted to unanimously support the conversation of merging the Agencies
- El Dorado County Professional Firefighters Local 3556 and the Diamond Springs – El Dorado Professional Firefighters Local 4972 both provided letters of support for the discussion
- Command Staffs for both agencies are in full support of having the discussions and pursuing the opportunity



## **Opportunities:**

- **Investing in our most valuable asset, your FIREFIGHTERS!**
  - Standardized training, equipment, and SOG's
- **Enhanced service delivery to citizens**
  - Commonality across crews
  - Increased depth in resource availability
  - Ability to expand specialized resource qualified personnel, such as swift water rescue, confined space, auto extrication, truck operations, rope rescue and paramedic services
- **Increased firefighter KSA's (knowledge, skills & abilities) by providing greater opportunity to work in areas across the County. From river rescues in Coloma, urban environments in Diamond Springs/Placerville and forest lands with snow in Pollock Pines – each area presents a different challenge for firefighters to mitigate.**

# Opportunities:

- Streamline administration functions by eliminating redundancy across agencies, including duplication of software platforms.
- Centralized and standardized Fire Prevention Bureaus for the public and contractors
- Increased purchasing power for apparatus, equipment and daily operations, saving tax dollars
- Firefighting is a team sport, combining our districts expands our team to provide opportunities for greater depth in all positions and develops a stronger more resilient team
- Two Budgets, Two Badges





# Key Points for a successful merger



- Integration of labor contracts for active employees and retirees
- Ensuring the communities maintain a voice in their fire protection services, keeping THEIR local fire department
- Obtain on-going increased revenue streams to support a highly functioning, modern full-service fire department to meet the growing needs of the communities
- Maintaining full and purposeful support from elected officials throughout the merger process and beyond
- Transparency is critical across all levels to create and maintain support for this project

# County Support is Critical for Success

- ERAF shifts have impacted your local fire districts since the mid-90's
- Approximately 10% of our budget is lost annually, this dramatically impacts our operations, limiting our ability to expand and grow in concert with our communities
- Hiring additional firefighters, replacing apparatus and purchasing newer technologies for our crews is severely impacted due to ERAF funds shifted away from your fire districts
- Sustainable funding is critical for maintaining a fire service that can meet the demands of our communities



## Funding Needs for Success:

- One time funding for the project XXX
- Adjustment to the Ad Valorum rates to provide on-going, sustainable funding. Under an annexation, these adjustments would need to be within the Diamond Springs area.
- Proposition 172 Funds, a voter approved tax initiative to offset the impacts from ERAF to maintain public safety services, police, fire, district attorneys and corrections.
- PILT Funds, Federal dollars to help local governments carry our vital services such as firefighting. The funds would assist in the services we provide within the Federal areas of the County
- TOT Funds, our County has a large recreational and visitor draw which impacts service providers and local tax dollars are used to mitigate these impacts.
- These funding sources need to be sustainable and in perpetuity to preserve and expand current emergency services to the citizens and visitors in our County.





## **We need the County on our Team!**

- Mergers of fire districts in our County have a great track record when it comes to conversations, completing them is where our record suffers. We are looking to put a WIN on the board – but without the County joining our team the odds go against us. We need modest, sustainable support from the County to put a win in our column. Let us be the catalyst to build a team others want to join and ultimately provide our County and Citizens with a high performance, fiscally responsible and full-service fire district!

**Our Goal and Vision is bringing our agencies and firefighters into a single, stronger and more effective fire district to serve our citizens and communities. While providing career growth, development and opportunities for ALL our firefighters who ultimately provide a service which is critical to our County and residents.**

**The County has been encouraging these mergers for years.**

**We are here, sleeves rolled up-**

**We aren't looking for a hand-out-**

**We're looking for a TEAMMATE to help us get the job done!**

