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Message from the President

By Chief Demetrious Shaffer, 2008-2009 Fire Chiefs Department President, City of Newark Fire Department

First, thank you very much for the opportunity to serve as your President of the League of California Cities Fire Chiefs Department for 2009. It has been a very challenging but productive year for the California Fire Service. As a Department, we have been actively involved in a wide range of issues from statewide budget challenges to Blue Ribbon Commission participation.

As a direct result of a strategic planning process implemented at the end of 2008, the Department's efforts were focused on 1) Succession Planning; 2) Legislative Collaboration; and, 3) Improved Fire Service Communications. The purpose of this report is to share some of the Department's accomplishments of the past year as it relates to these three important focus areas.

Succession Planning

The Department Officers worked hard to create a new session at the Fire Chiefs Leadership Seminar for incoming or recently appointed fire chiefs; produced a brochure about the Department to share at events promoting the Fire Chiefs' Department; identified ways new or aspiring Chiefs can get involved by increasing outreach efforts to new chiefs or pairing new committee representatives with senior Chiefs to ensure new Department members understood what was expected and where they fit in.

Legislative Collaboration

The Executive Officers worked to build upon the outstanding relationship that already existed with such organizations as CalChiefs, Fire Districts Association, CPF, and CSFA. In a collaborative process, all of these groups were able to work together to ensure the California Fire Service speaks with one voice on important and far reaching issues. The Emergency Response Initiative (ERI) and aggressive campaigning aimed at protecting local city revenues are examples of two areas where the Department collaborated successfully with many other fire service and local government agencies.

Improved Fire Service Communications

The Department's Executive Officers worked diligently throughout the year to help educate others on how the Fire Chiefs Department fits into the overall League organization and also about the "one-voice" concept of the California Fire Service as a whole.

To further facilitate all three of these goals, League Chiefs hosted a Joint Business Session with leaders from other fire service organizations and expanded interactions with other organizations by participating in legislative advocacy days, an Emergency Economic Summit, the Blue Ribbon Commission, development of the EMS White Paper, the collaborative process with the State EMS Commission, and by providing information to the Joint Legislative Committee on Public Safety.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President. I remain confident that the progress made in 2009 by the League Chiefs will merely serve as a basis for a strong future. ◀

The Important Role of the Fire Chiefs Department

By Chief Cathleen Orchard, 2008-2009 Fire Chiefs Department Immediate Past President, City of Monterey Park Fire Department

The League Fire Chiefs Department serves as a conduit to connect a diverse array of interests – through fire service organizations and elected and government officials — in order to communicate and act on issues of importance.

The League of California Cities was founded with the purpose of protecting local control for cities through education and advocacy. This is accomplished through grassroots involvement from elected and appointed government officials. These officials represent the interests of local government by participating in a mixture of the League's eight policy committees, various regional divisions, and functional departments. The functional departments represent the different disciplines of local government of which the Fire Chiefs Department is one. All of these entities come together to create direction for the League Board of Directors, and for the legislative advocacy that occurs daily in Sacramento.

A role of the Fire Chiefs Department is to weigh in on issues of importance relative to the public safety discipline. This occurs through two primary modes of communication, both captured as significant elements of the Fire Chiefs Department Strategic Plan.

“The dialogue assists in shaping the League’s approach to legislative activity.”

The first occurs in relation to the League and local government. Members of the Fire Chiefs Department sit on each of the League's eight policy committees and serve as the subject area experts on fire service related issues as they pertain to our industry as a whole, and to situations in our local jurisdictions.

These committees are primarily comprised of elected officials who rely on our voice, perspective, and recommendations to clarify topical issues of concern presented to the committee. The committee members vote on each issue before them, determining a committee position of support, neutrality, or oppose. This information then filters upward through the League structure, and serves to influence policy makers at the local and state level.

Additionally the Department communicates monthly by conference call where League legislative staff provides information and seeks input from Department Fire Chiefs on pending public safety legislation, state-wide proposals, and other items of interest to the fire service. This dialogue assists in shaping the League's approach to legislative activity.

The second mode of communication occurs in relation to other fire service organizations including CalChiefs, CPF, Office of the State Fire Marshal, CalFire, California Fire Districts, and CSFA. The Fire Chiefs Department has established mechanisms and pathways for communication, collaboration, and coordination with these allied fire service organizations to influence on issues of mutual interest. These mechanisms include joint participation in scheduled business meetings, conference calls, strategic planning sessions, and ad hoc committees.

This communication also serves to increase understanding among these groups and to promote issue oriented action. While each group operates based on its own mission and goals, we are all better served through improved understanding of diverse positions. This understanding facilitates our working together when we can for a stronger voice in protecting communities and fire service imperatives. ◀

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Message from the Director

By Chief Dennis Downs, 2006-2010 Fire Chiefs Department Director, City of Pasadena Fire Department

The Department Director serves as a crucial link between the Fire Chiefs and the League's Board of Directors and represents the Chiefs on any policy vote or action items that goes before the Board. The League's Board is made up of roughly 60 individuals and like the other Departments, the Fire Chiefs elect their Director to serve for a two-year term. The following summary provides highlights of the 2009 association-wide strategic goals that were formulated and adopted by the League Board and Department, Division, and Policy Committee membership.

Protect Funding for Vital Community Services. Vigorously oppose any state efforts to erode funding for vital community services, including redevelopment and public safety. Oppose proposals to borrow or reduce any local revenue source, including the property tax, the redevelopment (RDA) tax increment, sales tax, Prop. 42 transportation funding or any other local financial resources needed for critical community projects and services.

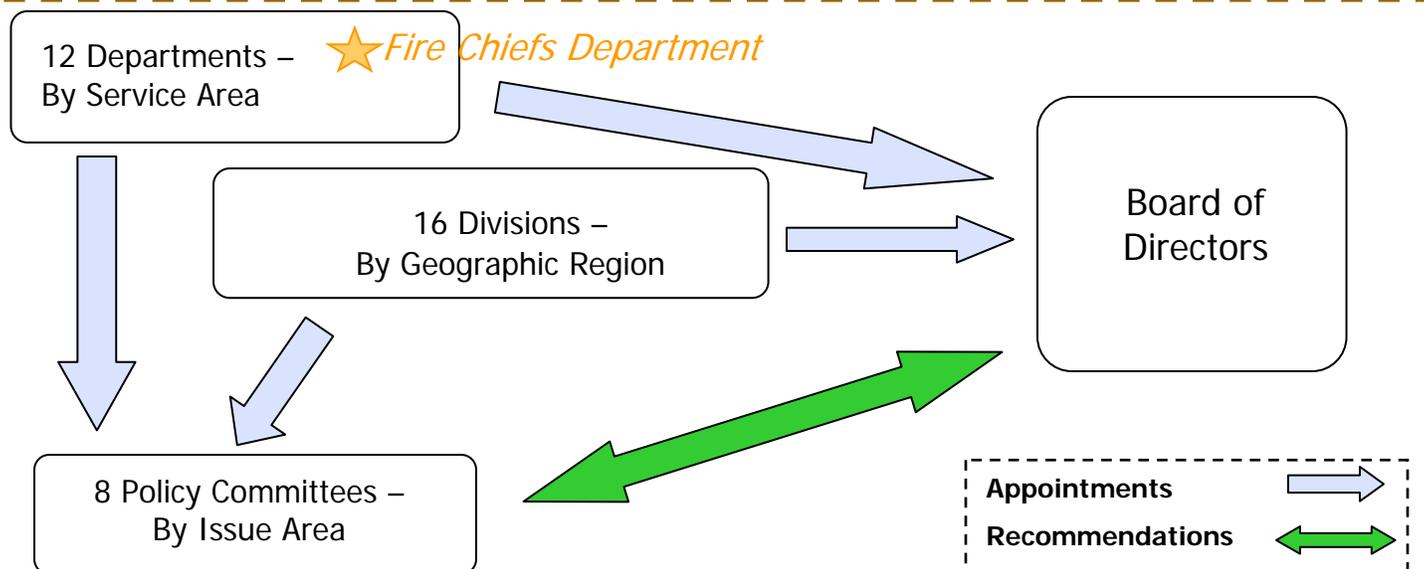
As of September 2009, 245 cities passed a resolution declaring a state of fiscal hardship and city officials recoding 549 "Save Your City" videos, imploring state leaders to leave local funding sources alone.

Promote Economic Stimulus and Infrastructure Investment. Promote expansion of federal, state and local investment in transportation, water and other infrastructure projects that will provide immediate jobs and economic benefits for the state of California. Strongly oppose efforts to divert, reduce or steal RDA funding that is the most significant source of infrastructure investment and economic stimulus in the state today.

Support Sustainable Communities. Support the efforts of city and state leaders to build and redevelop sustainable communities that strike a necessary and achievable balance between economic growth and environmental protection. Advance sensible community sustainability within a framework of local land use control, reasonable implementation of AB 32 and SB 375, increased water supply and conservation, and reform of the profoundly broken RHNA process. Support policies that promote the increased use of renewable energy resources and public transit.

Promote Reform of State Governance, Budget and Fiscal Systems. Build partnerships for reform of the laws affecting the governance of California state government, including the timely adoption of a balanced state budget, to strengthen the ability and responsibility of the executive and legislative branches to perform their necessary and proper roles in our system of state government. Support proposals that provide local policy makers with the fiscal tools and local control necessary to deliver critical local services. ◀

Fire Chiefs Department Within the League of CA Cities



Stepping Up as a Department Member

By Chief Paul Christman, 2008-2009 Fire Chiefs Department 1st Vice President, City of Murrieta Fire Department

The League Fire Chiefs Department is working to improve municipal fire service by protecting local control, advancing educational opportunities, and framing issues impacting cities from a fire chiefs' perspective. The League represents all 480 incorporated cities in California. If your city is a member of the League, then you are also a member who has access to all the benefits that League involvement has to offer.

We are made up of Chiefs from municipal fire departments, or departments/fire authorities that serve cities. We also welcome Assistant and Deputy Chiefs interested in advancing their knowledge base and growing their professional network. We are organized in three parts: Executive Officers guide the work of the Department and provide representation on the League's Board of Directors. Policy Committee Representatives contribute the fire service perspective to local government policy discussions. At-large members represent the League on state and regional task forces and working groups and guide conference programming.

So where can you find a place in our Department? Here are a few different ways to get involved:

- **Policy Committee Representation.** Feel passionate about a specific issue? Join a Policy Committee in the issue areas of Public Safety, Transportation/ Public Works, Environmental Quality, Revenue & Taxation, Housing, Community, and Economic Development, Community Services, Employee Relations, or Administrative Services and be on the front line of formulating League policy.
- **Department Activities.** Participate in monthly conference calls to review the latest proposals coming out of Sacramento, including legislation, regulatory changes, and government organization.
- **Educational Planning.** Set the course for the League's educational events, including the Fire Chiefs Leadership Seminar and the association-wide Annual Conference held each September.
- **Fire Chiefs Listserv.** Reserved exclusively for municipal fire service leadership, you can ask questions or request information from other chiefs throughout the state on this information network. Sign-up at http://lists.cacities.org/mailman/listinfo/fire_chiefs
- **Mentoring and Recruitment.** Provide guidance to new chiefs and up-and-comers and help identify future League leadership. The Department welcomes new and seasoned chiefs to join our efforts. If you know a fire chief who would like to get involved, share this information with them and invite them to join you for the next League event.

If you have questions or want to step up your involvement with the Fire Chiefs Department, please contact one of the Executive Officers or League staff to learn more about how you can join in on the action. ◀

2008-2009 Executive Officers ~ Fire Chiefs Department ~ League of California Cities

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