Fire Chiefs Department 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

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Message from the President

By Chief Douglas Fry, Belmont Fire Department, 2010-11 Fire Chiefs Department President

The League of California Cities' Fire Chiefs Department (League Chiefs) has had an interesting year to say the least looking back at the actions by and reactions to the state Legislature and Gov. Jerry Brown's administration. Through all this we have been working extremely hard to maintain municipal fire service standards and protect local control as best we can.

In my third year as an executive officer I served as League Chiefs President and wish to thank all of you for your support and involvement with the League. I sincerely hope that you will continue your involvement in future years as this is not something that we can work on alone; we need to be more engaged than ever before. The growing participation on our monthly department calls, quarterly policy committee meetings, and state working groups is a promising sign. I sincerely appreciate everyone's effort to be available and work through your busy schedule. We were had a great achievement last November with Proposition 22: The Local Taxpayer, Public Safety and Transportation Protection Act of 2010. Our direct involvement showed how vital the protections would be for fire service funding. Thank you for all of your hard work on this successful ballot measure.

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With our successes came many challenges. We, as League Chiefs, have had the chance to be involved in a number of issues, one specifically was the opportunity to sit on an appointment committee that recommended to the Governor individuals to serve in key positions within the state including the Director of CALFIRE and the State Fire Marshal to name a few. Our voice was heard and respected primarily because of the partnership we have fostered with California Fire Chiefs Association, Fire Districts Association of California, and other statewide associations. We have also spent a considerable amount of quality time dealing with "201" emergency medical transport issues at the regulatory and legislative levels. I am sure that more discussion will ensue as we have just scratched the service this year. We look forward to building our collaborative relationship with the 201 stakeholders and completing the task of securing cities' right to provide emergency transport, dispatch and first response services.

Last year in this column, I observed that "the new lens with which we look at tough decisions would affect not only today's fire service, but the future of the fire service". Now, that lens is becoming clearer today and we see that we need to be a bigger part of the change, be directly engaged with change, and in many cases lead that change. This is why the League Chiefs are an integral part of how we operate with other cities and other fire service agencies. You too can support this effort in many ways:

Policy Committee Representation: If you enjoy being part of legislative and regulatory debates and discussions, then a policy committee is the place for you to start. All League policy is broken down by eight committees. These are: Public Safety; Environmental Quality; Transportation/Communications/Public Works; Revenue and Taxation; Housing, Community and Economic Development; Community Services; Employee Relations and Administrative Services. Through these committees, you can be part of the dialogue that guides League decisions on legislation, regulatory or budget related issues.

Department Activities: We conduct monthly conference calls and welcome any and *(continued on page 4)*

What it Means to be a "League Chief"

By Chief Bill Soqui, Cathedral City Fire Department, 2010-11 Fire Chiefs Department First Vice President

Many of you have asked the question or wondered what the unique role of the League of California Cities' Fire Chiefs Department (League Chiefs) is and why you should become involved. It's a good question. All of us have extreme demands on our time as a Fire Chief, including the day-to-day demands on managing or leading our respective fire departments, or the time imposed by our city manager or administrator, and our respective councils or managing boards in addition to the communities we serve, whether they be your local service clubs or just the normal demands of our own personal family life. Many of us are involved in other fire service organizations including international, national, state, regional county, management, labor and fraternal groups or associations.

The easy reaction would be to turtle and pull away from any more demands on our time. However, I would argue that now is the time when it is even more important for each of us to move away from doing just enough to survive day-to-day and become involved at a higher level. It's our time, and our time has come with significant challenges to not only manage the current landscape but to make changes that will take us in the right direction.

The League of California Cities was created with the purpose of having cities work collaboratively to ensure that local municipalities retain the ability to make decisions over issues that primarily impact their specific jurisdiction (i.e., local control). Over the past several years, this has become a more pervasive issue. Municipalities are working against the pressures of a balanced local budget while maintaining service levels after state takeaways (that include vehicle license fees, property and sales taxes, and the elimination and/or restructuring of redevelopment agencies.) Together as city leaders, both elected and appointed, we have worked to stave off countless attempts by the state to raid our city coffers and/or redirect revenue we each depend on to provide basic and essential services to the communities we serve. The landscape is continually changing and a new vocabulary is arising with words like: "realignment", "catch and release", "shift and shaft", and "kicking the can down the road."

"...a new vocabulary is arising with words like 'realignment', 'catch and release', 'shift and shaft'…"

Involvement in the League means that you learn first-hand about legislation, budget proposals, and other decisions that have the potential to impact your city and ultimately your fire department. Additionally, League involvement means that you not only have the opportunity to weigh in on issues concerning all disciplines of local government, but you also have the ability to specialize in particular areas of interest such as public safety, community planning, municipal finance, environmental protection, revenue and taxation, and much more. Through participation in the League Chiefs you are afforded the opportunity to influence League policy through input which ultimately can impact the League's position on proposed legislation and all issues with the potential to impact local control.

To maximize our input, and because we recognize the value in speaking with "one California fire service voice," the League Chiefs work collaboratively with other fire service organizations to find common ground. Being a member of the League Chiefs provides unique opportunities to all of our members. Involvement with the League affords each member a great opportunity to network across all disciplines (e.g., public works, city managers, finance directors, clerks, etc.) from member cities throughout the state and to provide direct input to elected and appointed officials seeking our professional opinion or position. Ultimately, the members of the League Chiefs have the ability to influence positive change on a larger scale that benefits our own departments and the future of the California fire service.◄

JOIN US FOR THE MONTHLY FIRE CHIEFS DEPARTMENT CALL

Second Thursday of Each Month — Legislative Action and Breaking Issues

More Information online at: www.cacities.org/firechiefs

Message from the Director

By Deputy Chief Demetrious Shaffer, Alameda County Fire Department, 2010-12 Director and Immediate Past President

As many of you know, the Department Director is the Fire Chief's voice on the League's Board of Directors. The board deals with issues of policy, shaping the League's vision, and provides the framework for internal and external operations, including the workings of the policy committees many of you are involved with. I was honored to have been elected to serve as the Fire Chief's Department Director and am now coming to the end of the first year of a two-year term.

This year has been quite challenging as the Director because I am not only learning about my role and how to "get things done" at the board level, but I am faced with the reality that my predecessor and mentor (Chief Dennis Downs, City of Pasadena) did such an amazing job representing us for the past six years. In addition, the board as a whole has been grappling with a breadth of issues that significantly impact the cities we all represent.

"A lawsuit has been filed and all indications are that we will finally have an answer as to whether the RDA grab can legally occur or not."

At the top of the list was the successful passage of Proposition 22 which as Chief Downs explained last year, "if passed, this initiative will supersede the previously passed Proposition 1A [2004]" stopping the state from "borrowing" money from cities to balance their budget. Well, just as we were celebrating the passage of Prop. 22 because it was well understood [by the cities] that it was highly unlikely any additional "borrowing" would occur and the state would now be forced to make substantive changes as opposed to kicking the can or passing the burden, we got hit with the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) elimination proposal. Yes, the initial reaction is that there is no way the state could do that because Prop. 22 specifically outlawed the practice. Unfortunately they didn't get that memo and have been working hard to implement the proposal. This unfortunately means the loss of millions of dollars from cities throughout the state and have many wondering how they will survive. The board worked hard to take on this issue and is committed to protecting the rights of our cities. A lawsuit has been filed and all indications are that we will have an answer as to whether the RDA grab can legally occur or not.

So, while Prop. 22 has been the most exciting (not in a good way) topic of the year, the board has also been faced with many other issues that include retirement costs, the rights of a city to declare bankruptcy, the overall health and image of cities (and public officials) following the disturbing events related to Bell and Vernon, and many other issues that continue to climb out of the woodpile.

The Board of Directors is committed to protecting the basic tenements of local control and will work in the most cooperative way possible to ensure that strong cities can indeed prove to ensure a strong state. With that, the goals established by the board for 2011 are:

- **Strong Partnerships for a Stronger Golden State.** Collaborate and partner with other public and private groups and leaders to reform and revitalize the structure, governance, fiscal integrity and responsiveness of our state government and intergovernmental system.

- **Sustainable and Secure Public Pension Systems.** Work in partnership with other groups and stakeholders to promote sustainable and secure public pension systems to help ensure responsive and affordable public services for the people of our state and cities.

- **Responsive and Accessible League Services.** Implement distance learning, meeting and other cost-effective strategies to deliver even more responsive and accessible League educational, information and advocacy services to the city officials of California.

New strategic goals will be set at the League Leaders event this November and I look forward to the challenges that 2012 will bring. I will work hard to keep you informed of issues relative to the board's progress and please don't hesitate to contact me if you have an issue that you would like to discuss or think is appropriate for the board to hear.◄

Message from the President continued

(from page 1) all interested members to call in on the second Thursday of each month. We discuss budget issues, review legislations and regulatory proposals, and hear reports from state agency working groups and task forces.

Educational Activities: Attending our conferences is an important part of networking and enhancing your fire service leadership skill-set. We welcome your feedback on the educational and networking opportunities offered to help us improve future events so they are valuable and meaningful. You can even be part of the final decision-making process on the sessions and speakers we offer at the Fire Chiefs track each year through the annual planning committee, who is charged with ensuring our events are relevant and meet the needs of our members.

Mentoring and Recruitment: We are very much aware of the institutional knowledge that our seasoned Fire Chiefs offer and the need to retain and continue building our knowledge base when those chiefs retire. We urge this group to foster and help new chiefs through their transition into leadership. Helping new chiefs become leaders for the League Chiefs and their community is a lasting legacy. The Department is open to all municipal Fire Chief's participation and involvement. Change is happening all around us; we need to be in tune and in line with what may be around the next corner. We need to take the lead on the shaping the future of California's fire service and embrace the challenges as opportunities. Thank you again for my opportunity to serve you as President. I am confident that incoming President Chief Bill Soqui will continue the progress we have made thus far. If you have any questions or would like more information about the opportunities I have mentioned, please contact League Chiefs staff Dorothy Holzem at (916) 658-8214 or dholzem@cacities.org, or any of the officers listed below.◄

League Chiefs 2010-2011 Executive Officers

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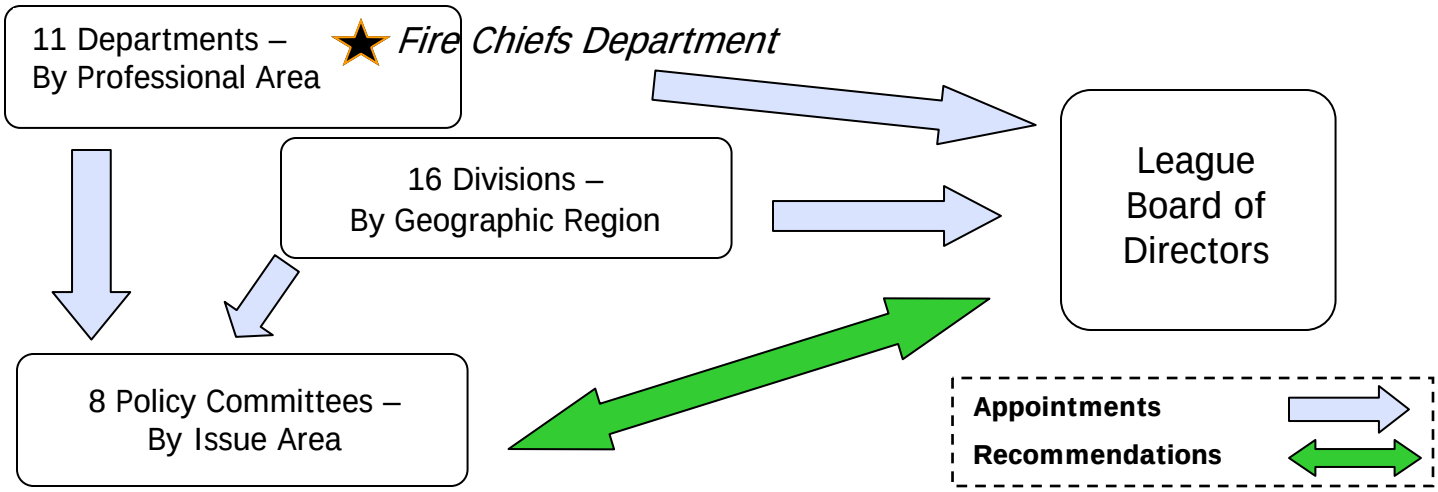
How does the Fire Chiefs Department Help Shape League Policy?