

FIX THE CITY

jamesos@aol.com, Jim@fixthecity.org

July 16, 2018

sharon.dickinson@lacity.org,

**RE: FTC Comment Letter Addendum 1: Expo Corridor Transportation Specific
Plan (CF 18-0437, CPC 2013-0621-CZ-GPA-SP, ENV. 2013-0622 EIR)**

Dear Ms. Dickinson:

Please include this addendum material in CF 18-0437 and confirm receipt of such.

James O'Sullivan

Fix The City Board Member

10 CLOSING RANKS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

MAY 2011



By LAPPL Board of Directors

When we preach *public safety first*, we mean just that. When someone dials 9-1-1, the caller is typically in urgent need of help from police, firefighters or paramedics, if not all three. Our city's residents expect and deserve a timely public safety response – especially when every minute counts.

The League continually calls attention to the impacts of the city budget crisis on the LAPD. But we're also growing increasingly concerned about the effects of budget cuts on the Los Angeles Fire Department. When it comes to public safety, the LAPD and LAFD are full partners in protecting and serving the people of Los Angeles.

Every day, the LAFD temporarily closes 22 fire companies and six ambulance teams to save money. This stopgap measure was implemented in 2009 as part of a budget balancing effort. The idea was that the closed companies' firefighters would report to other companies to fill in for sick or vacationing firefighters. Measures like these leave residents hoping their nearest station won't be closed on a day they need the help of firefighters or paramedics. But hopeful thinking is not an adequate public-safety strategy.

Now, to eliminate the temporary closings, the City is proposing the permanent closure of 18 fire companies and four ambulances at stations across the city. This wasn't the solution to the "temporary" closures we wanted or expected. And it isn't the right one either. Some of our elected leaders are apparently prioritizing other concerns over public safety.

Before Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa unveiled his \$6.9-billion budget (<http://mayor.lacity.org/Issues/BalancedBudget/MayorsBudget2011/index.htm>) last month, we knew it would require difficult choices to close the budget gap. But we also expected the choices to be prudent.

The proposed closure of the Wilmington-area Truck 38 is a case in point. L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe fired off a letter to the Mayor, taking exception with the plan to close the fire company and two ambulances serving the community of Wilmington. Knabe rightfully acted out of safety concerns for his constituents and because the city and county have "mutual aid and automatic aid" agreements to respond into one another's jurisdictions to assist with fire suppression.

Now consider the Malibu/Pacific Palisades border, which has some of the country's densest brush terrain. When a brush fire threatens Malibu residents, LAFD Engine Company 69 is the primary first aid the county receives from the city because of its location on Sunset Boulevard near PCH and Temescal Canyon. Closure of this Company will result in 10-minute response time delays, assuming the next truck is not already out on a call – an unacceptable risk for Southland residents.


And then there are fire calls that impact the LAPD. When a neighborhood needs to be evacuated, for instance, LAPD officers are always on-scene to get residents out of harm's way. And, of course, officers depend on LAFD to respond as quickly as possible when a crime victim or an officer is wounded. Every minute waiting for help can often mean the difference between life and death.

As the men and women of LAPD and LAFD pull together to continue protecting our city despite continually diminishing resources, we are watching to see how many of our elected leaders will stand with us and put public safety first.

COMMENT

BUSINESS

DWP lagging behind on replacing old power poles; 87,000 have exceeded their lifespan

 A DWP overhead line crew replaces a utility pole on Sherman Way in Van Nuys.

A DWP overhead line crew replaces a utility pole on Sherman Way in Van Nuys.

By **MIKE REICHER** | mike.reicher@langnews.com |

PUBLISHED: May 6, 2014 at 11:12 pm | UPDATED: August 28, 2017 at 7:36 am

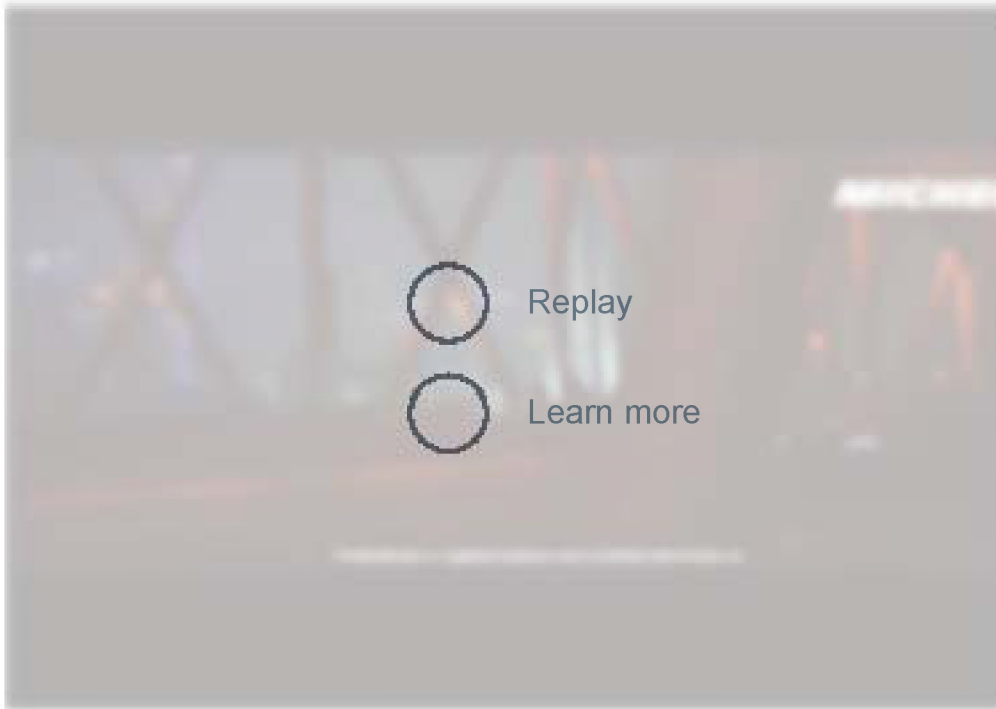


The [Los Angeles Department of Water and Power](#) has slipped far behind its schedule to replace aging power poles and other electrical infrastructure, raising questions about the dangers of wildfires, power outages and other consequences from failed equipment.

While lagging on results, it also spends about three times the amount other utilities pay to replace old power poles, according to interviews and records reviewed by the Daily News.

Why the DWP can't muster the manpower, and why it spends so much amid the frustration, tells a larger story of fundamental problems in the city-owned utility.

ADVERTISING



One key problem appears to be union rules that inhibit contracting out. Combined with a rapidly retiring workforce and shifting funds, the critical upgrades have been left behind.

"This is an organization that's trying really hard to change," said Camden Collins, a deputy with the ratepayer advocate division created in 2012 to serve as a DWP watchdog. "But it's pinned down in so many directions."

The utility has about 320,000 poles in its service territory. About half of them are 50 years or older, and about 87,000 have exceeded their 60-year lifespan.

Internal reports say the agency needs to replace them at a pace of 5,000 poles per year to keep up. But a program launched in 2007 after major power outages has failed to produce results. In its peak year, the department replaced about half that annual rate. Last year the agency replaced fewer than 1,200 poles.

Aging poles and downed power lines have been blamed for a number of devastating wildfires in recent years. And that can mean millions — or even billions — of dollars in penalties and legal costs for utilities at fault.

State regulators and courts blamed downed power lines after wildfires scorched wide swaths of Malibu and San Diego County in 2007, burning more than a thousand homes.

By some estimates, San Diego Gas and Electric paid more than \$2 billion to victims, and it soon launched an aggressive plan to replace wooden backcountry poles with steel ones. Southern California Edison paid regulators \$37 million after overloaded and termite-damaged poles fell in a high-wind area. The utility must follow strict inspection rules.

Now DWP is facing its own legal battle. Victims of last year's Powerhouse Fire near Santa Clarita are suing the DWP, claiming the agency neglected its equipment and that its power lines sparked the blaze, which burned 24 homes and more than 30,000 acres. While the cause of the fire is still under investigation, the DWP said in a statement it "does not believe that equipment age was a factor."

Still, a 2012 consultant's report warned that the utility's infrastructure was facing challenges. "The LADWP system is aging and increasingly prone to malfunction," the report said.

Agency officials say poles have an average lifespan of 60 years, but spokesman Joseph Ramallo noted "there are many factors that determine the condition of the pole, including soil conditions, wind loading, physical loading, insect damage, and original wood material. Some poles in our system can be much older than 60 years and can be in perfectly good condition. The point is that the department needs to ramp up the replacement program."

This fiscal year, DWP has replaced poles at well below its target pace. Since July 1, 2013, the utility has replaced or installed 1,300 power poles, according to officials. In total, crews have installed about 16,000 poles over nearly eight years.

At this rate, they wouldn't finish replacing the 87,000 currently in need for another 40 years or more — and by then tens of thousands of additional poles will need replacement.

DWP is planning to ask for additional ratepayer funds to replace old electric equipment. While Mayor Eric Garcetti said rates would not increase this year, department officials want future hikes for the Power Reliability Program, which covers replacements. Projections show the plan growing from \$737 million spent in fiscal 2013 to \$1.2 billion in fiscal 2017 — a nearly 70 percent increase.

With the delays and difficulty tracking funds today, that projected growth makes some nervous.

“If we’re going to do a moon launch, let’s be sure we have the platform built first,” Collins said.

Born in darkness

Officials proposed the Power Reliability Plan after record summer heat in 2006 knocked out hundreds of transformers and 79,000 customers lost power. They raised rates to replace the outdated transformers, cables, crossarms and poles that make up the distribution system. It was an ambitious push to catch up; before then, workers replaced deteriorated poles occasionally.

At first, crews kept pace with the program’s goals, which were to gradually ramp up to the 5,000 poles-per-year target. They also replaced more outdated transformers than expected from fiscal 2008 through fiscal 2011. But then poles took a back seat, says Randy Howard, senior assistant general manager for power, because crews found other equipment needed more immediate attention.

However, a budget document from 2010 shows the utility was already having problems contracting out the pole replacements. It finished the year \$6.2 million under its pole replacement budget in fiscal 2010, unable to complete work because of delays finalizing a construction contract.

As of December 2013, it was \$79.7 million under budget for the reliability plan, largely because of the contracting blockage.

“When you’re taking on bigger initiatives, we need some outside help,” Howard said last week. “We’ve had some real challenges with the procurement of those resources.”

One key obstacle, officials say, is the contract with DWP’s largest union, [IBEW Local 18](#). The agreement requires that managers negotiate with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers before hiring contractors. Initially, the department is supposed to attempt to fill any internal vacant positions, Howard said. The contract also obligates managers to offer IBEW workers overtime to fill some of the need.

IBEW business manager Brian D’Arcy declined to be interviewed for this story.

Amid the contracting roadblocks, electric crew members started retiring at a fast pace, and the department hasn’t keep pace with hiring.

DWP said it needed about 200 workers at the outset of the plan: electric mechanics, station operators and others to do the extra replacement work. All of them were eventually hired, despite some candidates dropping out of the multi-year training program when they realized the electrocution risks.

Because of retirements, officials say the deficit is now closer to 400 workers, according to an agency report. It could get worse, too: about 40 percent of all DWP workers are eligible to retire, officials say.

Rate roller coaster?

The DWP brought on contractors for the extra pole replacement work in 2009, but they didn't last long because of a drop in funding, Howard said. In fiscal 2011, DWP General Manager Ron Nichols decided against a rate increase, and Howard says that reduction forced the department to eliminate the pole crew contracts.

Collins, the ratepayer advocate, challenged that assertion: "There are constraints, but recent history suggests it is not funding that is the more important one," she said. "They don't need more in the rates than is realistic for them to accomplish."

After raising rates in 2012, the agency tried to bring on contractors, but they faced the same problems. Howard pointed to union negotiations — labor leaders would rather fill the 387 vacant positions first — and the extra time it takes to teach contractors about the DWP grid.

"We spent a year trying to get contractors on board to help us," Howard said.

Instead of actually doing the work, the department spent last year prioritizing the problems, running statistical tests to determine which poles were most likely to break, he said.

Some of the problem may also be City Hall policies, Howard said, like limits on the hours crews are allowed to work.

When department officials present their budget to a City Council committee Wednesday, at least one council member may question the reliability plan.

"To me, it's really important to know if we're on schedule, and if not, why?" [Councilman Felipe Fuentes](#), chair of the Energy and Environment Committee, said in an interview. "When there are delays, there are increased costs, and that's bad for the ratepayers."

More expensive than others

As the DWP struggles with its pole replacement plan, other utilities have made headway at a much less expensive rate. Pacific Gas and Electric, the private utility serving Central and Northern California, replaced about 14,250 poles in 2013, according to a spokesman. PG&E spends about \$11,000 per pole, including labor and indirect costs such as administrative and pension benefits.

The public Sacramento Municipal Utility District spends about \$15,000 for hard-to-reach replacement poles, according to agency spokespeople.

The cost for DWP? About \$42,000 per pole, according to a breakdown of costs in fiscal 2013. The figure far exceeds what DWP had estimated each pole should cost — about \$24,000.

DWP officials say their highly urban service area is more expensive to maintain. Howard says it's about economies of scale; once the replacement plan ramps up it will save on labor and materials: "We think we can bring the cost down substantially," he said.

But Collins says high administrative and overhead costs may be an important factor.

"There's all this other clutter and congestion and stuff that's bogging down our targeted objective," she said. "We just have an organization that's really heavy and cumbersome."

The bigger question — how much the department has spent on replacing old equipment — is difficult to answer, Collins says. Sometimes the agency's financial records lump together new equipment — costs to add a pole for a new business, for example — so breaking out the expense is challenging. That points to another underlying problem the agency is trying to fix: old computer systems don't track costs well, Collins said. Later this year, the agency plans to start updating its decades-old finance software.

As the summer heat approaches, DWP officials hope the transformers and other equipment can handle the added energy load. Since the reliability plan was launched, the average number of outages and the average length of outages have varied widely each year. So far this fiscal year, they are beating their targets, and are well below the 2007 levels. The DWP reports it has fewer outages, on a per-capita basis, than some other major California utilities.

Wildfires, Howard says, aren't as big of risk here as in some other utilities' service areas, because Los Angeles has less open space. But high winds, such as the conditions that started the Powerhouse Fire, are always a threat for outages and can wreak havoc.

“When you have extreme winds and old poles,” Howard said, “that’s where you have the weaknesses.”

Tags: **DWP**



Mike Reicher



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CITY HALL

L.A. Fire Department response times slow, data show

By BEN WELSH and BY BEN WELSH
OCT 23, 2014 | 8:33 PM





L.A. Fire Chief Ralph Terrazas, left, shakes hands with Mayor Eric Garcetti after a press conference to announce the launch of FireStat LA, a new database to gauge the department's performance. Statistics show response times to 911 calls have slowed this year. (Anne Cusack, Los Angeles Times)



Waits for 911 medical help in Los Angeles increased slightly this year, signaling no measurable progress on Mayor Eric Garcetti's campaign pledge to speed up Fire Department responses to emergencies, according to city statistics released Thursday.

Garcetti presented the new figures at a news conference in which he and Fire Chief Ralph Terrazas praised LAFD efforts to overhaul how the agency gauges its performance.

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The new numbers come from a program dubbed FireStat-LA, which is being billed as the cornerstone of a 2-year-old reform drive. The effort began after LAFD officials admitted issuing faulty reports that made it appear the department was performing better than it was.

The ensuing controversy sparked investigations, pledges to improve 911 service from candidates in last year's mayoral contest and the early retirement of former Fire Chief Brian Cummings after Garcetti took office.



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Garcetti said the new information-gathering system is the foundation of changes to come. "Now we can look people in the eye and say this is real," he told reporters.



He said the FireStat program will help increase accountability, improve decision-making and lead to better allocation of personnel and equipment. As a result, Garcetti said he expects to begin trimming tens of seconds off response times in the coming year.

The new statistics, available on a station-by-station basis on the Fire Department's website, followed months of work by outside experts and a newly hired civilian statistician at LAFD.

Citywide, it takes a little more than six minutes and 30 seconds on average for the first rescue unit to arrive at a medical emergency after a 911 call is answered at the LAFD's downtown dispatch center, according to the new statistics. That number ticked upward by three seconds in 2014, the new data show.



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Average 911 wait times are significantly longer in some parts of the city, particularly in the winding roads of the Santa Monica Mountains and in the narrow strip of the city that stretches from South Los Angeles down to San

Pedro. At Fire Station 109, perched on Mulholland Drive south of Encino, times are about three minutes longer than the citywide average. .



The findings match the conclusions of independent studies conducted by The Times in 2012.

"It depends where you are," said veteran firefighter Steve Tufts. "When we're not there in three minutes, there's a reason for it. It's no fault of the firemen. It's the distance from the station. Or they are out on another call."

Garcetti partially echoed that view Thursday. "We will never have the same response time throughout the entire city," he said. "But we can reduce response times everywhere."



Officials said they are sharing the new response-time analysis with rank-and-file firefighters at fire station meetings, with an eye toward identifying ways to improve performance.



What remains unclear is whether the new statistical analyses will lead to a broader restructuring of how the LAFD deploys units and responds to hundreds of thousands of calls for help each year.

This year, an outside consultant hired by the city criticized the LAFD for not pursuing more fundamental reforms, including replacing firefighters with lower-paid civilians in jobs such as answering calls and pre-positioning units outside of fire stations based on service demands.

Union leaders, who wield significant influence at City Hall, have opposed many of those recommendations, arguing that hiring more firefighters should be the city's top priority.



Garcetti has proposed a consolidation of the city's police and fire 911 call centers. While he didn't unveil any other specifics Thursday, Garcetti said more changes could be coming.



"Everything is on the table," he said.

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Ben Welsh

Data Editor



Ben Welsh is the editor of the Data Desk, a team of reporters and computer programmers that collects, organizes, analyzes and presents large amounts of information. Projects he's contributed to have won the Pulitzer Prize, the Library of Congress' Innovation Award and numerous other awards for investigative reporting and digital journalism.

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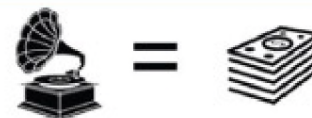
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LAFD Response-Time Scandal

RICK RANGE MCDONALD | MARCH 29, 2012 | 4:30AM

<https://www.laweekly.com/news/lafd-response-time-scandal-2174443>

At a special meeting of the City Council's Public Safety Committee last week, flanked by camera crews, Los Angeles Fire Department Chief Brian Cummings was calm and confident, but the 32-year veteran was in trouble nonetheless.

In two weeks of turmoil that had prompted the meeting, Cummings created an uproar by instituting an information blackout on routine news regarding LAFD emergency rescue calls, and more than once changed his story about why his department gave out false data that depicted L.A. firefighters' response times as being far faster than they are.

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Experts say the difference between a five-minute arrival on the scene, and a six- or seven-minute response time, can result in the death or disabling of a victim. But for years, LAFD has been quietly padding its results, shifting the calls that take six

quickly padding its results, shifting the calls that take six minutes into the "five minutes or less" column.

Under pressure to explain, Cummings admitted that LAFD did not give the City Council true response-time numbers when the council slashed its budget last year. Cummings' team gave computer projections instead, assuring city leaders that it could absorb the budget cut because in 2008 nearly 80 percent of emergency calls were answered in five minutes or less – a rosy record. But untrue. Just 64 percent of LAFD calls were answered that fast.

Now that number has sagged to 60 percent, and a once-heralded fire department is looking like a below-average outfit.

With critics suggesting the fire department lied, Cummings, in a March 16 letter, instituted a highly unusual news blackout on emergency calls, refusing to divulge the addresses or arrival times – key components for the public to judge if LAFD was arriving in five minutes or less.

Cummings told KNX Newsradio that his short-lived blackout was required under privacy law, and told City News Service that City Attorney Carmen Trutanich advised him to do it.

But as critics harshly questioned Cummings' judgment, Kelli Sager, one of the region's leading First Amendment attorneys, said the chief's directive was plainly illegal. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa then publicly slapped Cummings, sending him – and the city's reporters – a letter halting the blackout.

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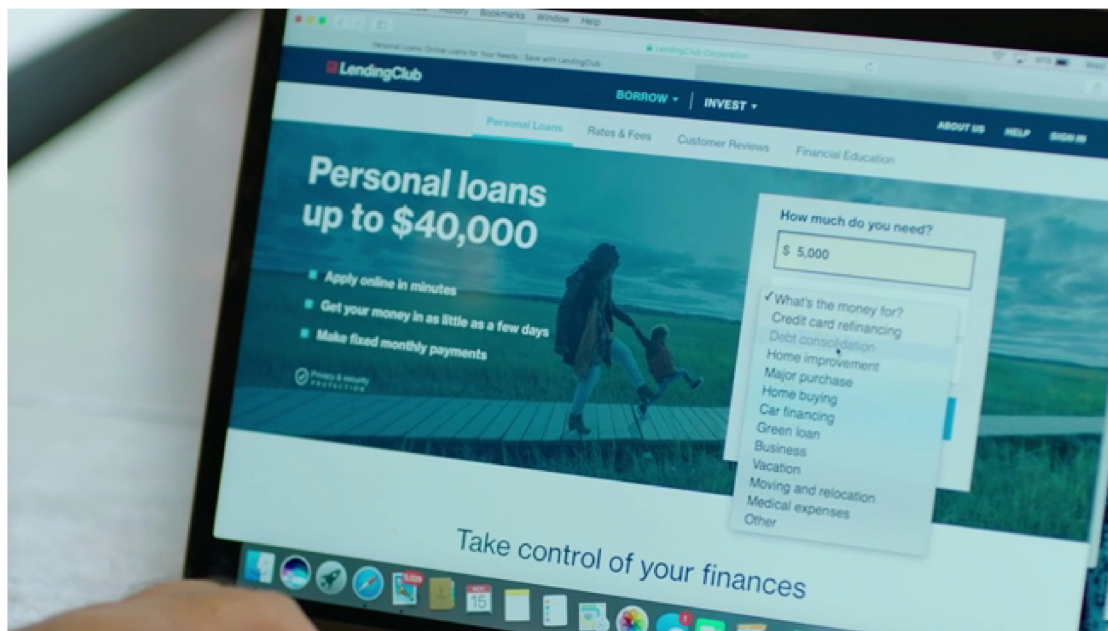
If POMA is safe and tolerable when used with methamphetamine

Cummings was now in the middle of the biggest political crisis the fire department had faced since the 2005 Tennie Pierce dog food incident. He attributed his snafus to misunderstandings.

"It's been clear that the way I have presented the data has been confusing," Cummings told City Council members Mitch Englander, Jan Perry, Joe Buscaino, Paul Krekorian and Dennis Zine, who make up the public safety committee.

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At the three-hour emergency meeting, no City Council member seemed eager to delve into what is emerging as a systemwide safety weakness in a department once held up as exemplary.

"The sky is not falling," insisted Zine, who is running for city controller. "The fire department is going to continue to respond to calls. We're not facing any major upheaval. ... There was a lot of hysteria."

"I have no reason to believe [Cummings] was telling anything but the truth," Englander said afterward. The false response times issued for years by LAFD are "not the scandal that's been politicized by mayoral candidates."

The council members appeared to mostly absolve Cummings. A majority of them, after all, approved Villaraigosa's deep budget cuts to LAFD – tens of millions of dollars over the past three years, which firefighters and others say have created longer response times to fires and other life-threatening situations.

"Resources were being drained," says Miracle Mile Residential Association president Jim O'Sullivan, who has researched the impact of budget cuts. "We need to get LAFD back to the point in which they can protect us."

The night before the meeting, Villaraigosa made light of what others see as systemic public-safety problems, joking about it at a roast for City Council President Herb Wesson. As first

reported by news blog The City Maven and widely repeated, the mayor cracked: "Is Chief Cummings here yet? We called him five minutes ago. Late again."

But days later, a Villaraigosa aide asked the firefighters' union not to be "so public" over the response-time issue. United Firefighters of Los Angeles City President Pat McOske says the aide asked him to "start talking nice." Instead, McOske publicly declared: "I am going to be public every damn day. ... The bodies are piling up!"

Some firefighters say the response-time falsehoods and Cummings' news blackout are red flags that signal larger problems that could endanger the lives of citizens and firefighters.

Activist firefighters, who would only talk anonymously for fear of retaliation – such as holds put on their promotions – tell the *Weekly* that morale is at its lowest point in 20 years, driven, they say, by unstable and politicized leadership. Villaraigosa has placed four different chiefs at the helm – an unprecedented turnover, worse than the LAFD leadership changes of the 1970s – and "our chief is at the beck and call of the mayor," says a veteran with more than 20 years of service.

That veteran feels Cummings has more allegiance to Villaraigosa – who keeps moving chiefs out – than to firefighters. This firefighter says he and many others believe, "If the chief doesn't make a [budget] deal, the mayor will get

another chief."

The city is in serious fiscal straits. Last year the deficit hole was \$336 million; this year it is \$200 million. The *L.A. Daily News* reported in December that Villaraigosa's benchmark mayoral achievement has been that the city has not declared bankruptcy.

Some parts of city government escape deep cuts each year – such as the City Council's and mayor's huge personal staffs. But not the fire department. Stiff cuts backed by Council members Zine, Eric Garcetti and Jan Perry – all of whom are now running for higher office – were justified in part by citing LAFD emergency-response times that looked great on paper. The argument was that such a fine department could roll with the huge cuts. But those numbers are known now to be false.

Firefighters say the cuts have created extreme workloads and dangerous staff and equipment shortages.

"I've been talking with a lot of guys, and they look like zombies," says a second veteran fireman who has worked under five chiefs. "You're put into a position where you can't do a good job. You can't even do an adequate job. We feel we're going to lose people, and we're putting our lives on the line. We'll do it, but the guys are concerned."

L.A. City Council members, despite having personal staffs of 15 to 22 aides each, did not grasp during the budget debates that the response-time data touted by Cummings and then-chief

Millage Peaks were from computer projections.

Instead, two community activists – Mike Eveloff and Jim O'Sullivan – created a spreadsheet showing that quick response times by LAFD were cratering. Then on March 1, city controller candidate Cary Brazeman released a "citizen audit" based on their data, showing that LAFD was achieving its response-time goals only 60 percent of the time.

A few days later, former Villaraigosa aide Austin Beutner penned a widely read Huffington Post column, stating that LAFD's quick response rate had plummeted from 86 percent to 59 percent of all calls. Then the *Los Angeles Times* reported that LAFD had seriously misrepresented its actual response times.

Beutner, a candidate for mayor in 2013, says city politicians "ought to be courageous enough to admit their role in this, and then come up with solutions." He is calling for a citizens' task force, similar to the Christopher Commission, which looked into the L.A. Police Department after the 1991 Rodney King beating.

Union president McOsker welcomes scrutiny. And Bob Stern, seen by some as L.A.'s reigning "good government" expert, says it may be necessary.

"If [the political establishment] punts, then someone else needs to investigate the department," says Stern.

A sweeping, independent review of LAFD has not been

attempted in recent memory. The last such crisis was set off by a much narrower departmentwide hazing problem in 2005. Then, black firefighter Tennie Pierce claimed racial harassment by "nine white" fellow firefighters at Fire Station 5 after one of them put dog food in his spaghetti during a prank. Flanked by top black leaders, Pierce went on camera claiming racism. His lawyer demanded \$3.8 million from the city.

Then-Chief William Bamattre issued a strict ban on all pranks and hazing but was forced out by Villaraigosa. Pierce got rich. But *L.A. Weekly* discovered that Pierce's story had holes, and that Pierce himself was a hazer. The firefighter who fed him dog food was not white but a small Latino, whom Pierce had that day compared to the size of his own excrement. His "white" crew members were a picture of racial diversity. Then photos emerged showing Pierce as an extreme prankster, strapping firefighters to gurneys or spraying water up their noses. In a widely decried move, a majority of City Council members refused to review the photos and awarded Pierce \$2.7 million. Villaraigosa vetoed that award and Pierce got \$1.5 million.

Now, with a deeper crisis that involves risk to the public, McOsker says the L.A. Fire Commission – five political appointees of Villaraigosa's – has dropped the ball. It appeared to be unaware that LAFD was using false response times. McOsker says he'd be surprised if Fire Commission President Genethia Hudley-Hayes and her colleagues "do anything to fix the problems with the chief. We've just been getting more

platitudes, not real action."

Hudley-Hayes did not return the *Weekly's* calls.

During the hubbub over Cummings' news blackout, the mayor abruptly shifted respected Police Commission member Alan Skobin onto the fire commission. Skobin told the *Los Angeles Daily News*, "There are certainly issues at the [LAFD]. Many of them are accountability, transparency, civilian oversight" – problems that once dogged LAPD.

Stern tells the *Weekly* that LAFD brass "don't seem to get the idea that the fire department has to be a responsible, transparent agency – or the same as everyone else."

And Captain Jeff Dapper, a vice president of the firefighters union, says he's fed up with the "changing reasons" given by the brass to explain its false response-time stats. "Just be truthful. Each time you say something different, you lose your credibility."

City Controller Wendy Greuel, who is also running for mayor in 2013, had not audited the response-time stats – but is doing so now. Greuel says, "Everything is on the table about improving the department." But as to forming an investigatory panel, she says, "I'm not going to play politics with public safety."

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Yusef Robb, chief of staff to Garcetti, another 2013 mayoral candidate, also says, "We don't

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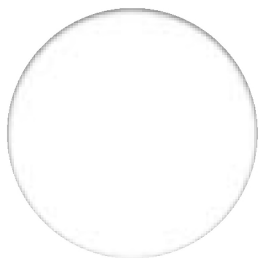
want to create another
bureaucracy that creates a

report that sits on the shelf. We need action."

Beutner maintains that such responses are "underwhelming. There's been a lack of leadership and a lack of understanding what has really happened."

The firefighter who has served under five chiefs says the department is laboring under "a big disconnect," with Cummings and his inner staff on one side, the rank and file on the other. "They don't care at all about what we can deal with. ... They only take care of their own."

Contact Patrick Range McDonald at pmcdonald@laweekly.com.



McDonald has won the "Journalist of the Year" award from the Los Angeles Press Club and the prestigious "Public Service" award from the Association of Alternative Newsmedia. He has dedicated his career to giving voice to the voiceless.

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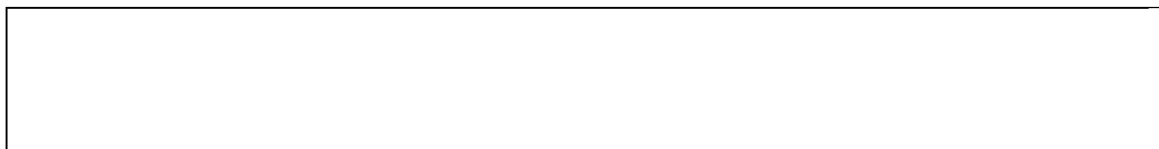
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LA 12/13/2013 08:00 am ET | **Updated** Dec 06, 2017

Los Angeles Fire Department Budget Should Be Restored, Says City Panel

Rick Orlov Los Angeles Daily News



BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

After years of taking budget cuts and under pressure to improve response times, a city panel on Friday endorsed a county grand jury report urging that full funding be restored to the Los Angeles Fire



Los Angeles Fire Department Budget Should Be Restored, Says City Pa...



At the same time, the City Council's Public Safety Committee urged that steps be taken to hire more firefighters to fill the gap caused by retirements and attrition, as well as continue exploring greater use of civilians.

"This is an incredibly serious matter," said Councilman Mitch Englander, who chairs the committee. "I hope we will all be in lockstep to get back to full resources as soon as we can."

The grand jury, in its report released last July, said the problems with LAFD response times was due to the series of budget cuts it has had to take over the years, reducing the number of firefighters and paramedics. It urged that funding and staffing be restored to the levels they were in 2008.

At that time, the department was receiving \$591 million a year. But with the nationwide recession and the loss of revenue to the city, it was reduced by \$66 million to \$495 million.

In recent years, the budget has been able to grow slightly to the point where it is now at \$519 million to support a sworn staff of about 3,000 firefighters.

Englander pointed out that part of the reason for reducing the budget was assurances from fire officials that it would not affect response times. "That turned out to not be the case," he said. "What we need to do now is restore the public's faith in the data to make sure the funding is going into the right places. We do need to restore the budget, but we need to do it in the right way."

As part of that, the LAFD hopes to have five classes for new recruits this year to add between 150 and 160 new firefighters. Still, officials said it will not be until the end of 2015 when it is back to upwards of 3,300 firefighters.



Fire officials have been trying to pursue the training of civilians as emergency dispatchers, something its medical adviser, Dr. Marc Eckstein, said is being used in other fire departments, adding that many departments have gone to a complete civilization or a hybrid where firefighters serve as supervisors.

But UFLAC President Frank Lima raised concerns over how it would affect responses. "There have been studies that bringing civilians to the dispatch center will cost more money and compromise the quality of the work," Lima said. ____

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The Los Angeles Firefighter

Official Publication of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City — Local 112, IAFF, AFL-CIO-CLC
www.uflac.org

VOL. 50, No. 3

May / June 2012

Response Times Exposed by the Media

Since the last issue of the Los Angeles Firefighter went to press, the LAFD has suffered through a series of management-caused scandals and public humiliations, resulting in easily the worst episode of bad press for the Department since the 2006 hazing incidents.

The specific sources of anguish and shame for our Department were the forced revelation of post-“new deployment” response time statistics, the Fire Chief’s multiple and implausible explanations regarding how current average times compare to pre-budget cut averages, the ill-advised move of our dispatch center with resulting system crashes and delayed responses, and finally, the shameful media blackout called by the Chief at the height of the controversy.

UFLAC members well remember the battle that we fought at this time last year with the Mayor and his Fire Chief over their proposed hard closures and position eliminations. Despite our best effort, the former Fire Chief and his then Chief of Staff, Brian Cummings ultimately prevailed on the City Council with their powerful promises of LAFD improvement. In the end the Council took the advice of their chiefs over that of front-line firefighters, electing to close 18 fire companies, 4 ambulances, 9 EMS Districts and 3 command teams, and to eliminate half of the remaining EIT’s. These closures, together with the ambulances and Haz-Mat units scuttled in earlier budgets, amounted to a full 15% down-



Photo By Mike Meadows, EPN

size of the LAFD, both in terms of emergency responders and response units.

One of the few good things that came though as a result of our staffing fight, was an amendment by the Council instructing the Chief to report back every

six months with response time statistics. As the first six-month deadline approached, longtime UFLAC and Fire Station 92 supporter and Westside community leader, Mike Eveloff, believed that LAFD brass could not be trusted to report the statistics ac-

curately. He therefore made a “public records demand” for response time data going all the way back to 2008. Once Mike had the numbers he began crunching them for himself.

This put the Department in a real bind. The Council’s motion

and Mike Eveloff’s independent scrutiny forced them to report the ugly truth: As it turned out, during the first 6 months after the Villaraigosa/Peaks/Cummings “new deployment” went into effect, the LAFD had gotten on-scene within our goal of 5 minutes from the time of alarm slightly less than 60% of the time. That meant that in 40% of emergencies, overworked and under-supported firefighters and paramedics were not getting there in time to, for instance, prevent brain death or to keep incipient fires from burning out of control. It also meant that average response times must have jumped significantly, given that the Chief had claimed last year that we were at 80% prior to “new deployment”.

But the story only got uglier. New Fire Chief Brian Cummings decided to face his first real challenge by stubbornly refusing to admit his error. He could have said, “We were mistaken to have told you that “new deployment” would improve the LAFD’s response to emergencies...it has made things worse and is causing danger and harm to firefighters and the public...we need our resources back”. Instead, he offered a series of ever changing, lame excuses for the dismal response-time numbers and the big drop.

His first play was to throw retired statistician Bill Wells under the bus by blaming the size of the response-time increase on him.

(Continued on Page 8)

Fuel Tanker Erupts into Flames

LOS ANGELES - The collision of a sedan and gasoline tanker led to a spectacular blaze on the Ventura Freeway near Glendale late Saturday night, that snarled traffic for hours but thankfully caused no injury.

The crash and fire on the westbound lanes of the 134 Freeway transition to the southbound Golden State (I-5) Freeway, was reported to the Los Angeles Fire Department on Saturday, April 7, 2012 at 11:09 PM, bringing the rapid response of more than 150 firefighters from the LAFD as well automatic aid from the Burbank, Glendale and Bob Hope Airport Fire Departments.

Firefighters arrived quickly to find a semi-truck tanker with a twin tank trailer, carrying a capacity load of 9,000 gallons of gasoline, to be fully enveloped in fire, after being struck by a compact sedan. Despite the inferno

and a long trail of flames, both drivers were able to flee their vehicles without injury.

With thousands of gallons of flammable fuel already spilled and ablaze, first arriving firefighters carefully staged their apparatus and command post uphill and upwind, as they attacked a wall of flame more than 20 feet [tall](#). [Tanker Erupts in Flames Following Los Angeles Freeway Collision.](#)

Local law enforcement agencies and the California Highway Patrol quickly curtailed traffic on and seeking to enter the busy freeway interchange, aiding the effort to prevent injury and environmental harm.

Firefighters labored for 70 minutes to fully extinguish the flames and dike the flow of as much as 3,000 gallons of unburned gasoline, to prevent it from igniting or entering storm drains.

(Continued on Page 9)



Photo By Mike Meadows, EPN

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(#ISSN01907573)

May / June 2012

LAFD Response-Time Scandal

Chief Cummings' plummeting moral problem

By Patrick Range McDonald,
LA Weekly

(Reprinted with Permission)

At a special meeting of the City Council's Public Safety Committee last week, flanked by camera crews, Los Angeles Fire Department Chief Brian Cummings was calm and confident, but the 32-year veteran was in trouble nonetheless.

In two weeks of turmoil that had prompted the meeting, Cummings created an uproar by instituting an information blackout on routine news regarding LAFD emergency rescue calls, and more than once changed his story about why his department gave out false data that depicted L.A. firefighters' response times as being far faster than they are.

Experts say the difference between a five-minute arrival on the scene, and a six- or seven-minute response time, can result in the

middle of the biggest political crisis the fire department had faced since the 2005 Tennie Pierce dog food incident. He attributed his snafus to misunderstandings. "It's been clear that the way I have presented the data has been confusing," Cummings told City Council members Mitch Englander, Jan Perry, Joe Buscaino, Paul Krekorian and Dennis Zine, who make up the public safety committee.

At the three-hour emergency meeting, no City Council member seemed eager to delve into what is emerging as a systemwide safety weakness in a department once held up as exemplary.

"The sky is not falling," insisted Zine, who is running for city controller. "The fire department is going to continue to respond to calls. We're not facing any major upheaval. ... There was a lot of hysteria."

red flags that signal larger problems that could endanger the lives of citizens and firefighters.

Activist firefighters, who would only talk anonymously for fear of retaliation — such as holds put on their promotions — tell the Weekly that morale is at its lowest point in 20 years, driven, they say, by unstable and politicized leadership. Villaraigosa has placed four different chiefs at the helm — an unprecedented turnover, worse than the LAFD leadership changes of the 1970s — and "our chief is at the beck and call of the mayor," says a veteran with more than 20 years of service.

That veteran feels Cummings has more allegiance to Villaraigosa — who keeps moving chiefs out — than to firefighters. This firefighter says he and many others believe, "If the chief doesn't make a [budget] deal, the mayor will get another chief."

The city is in serious fiscal straits. Last year the deficit hole was \$336 million; this year it is \$200 million. The L.A. Daily News reported in December that Villaraigosa's benchmark mayoral achievement has been that the city has not declared bankruptcy.

Some parts of city government escape deep cuts each year — such as the City Council's and mayor's huge personal staffs. But not the fire department. Stiff cuts backed by Council members Zine, Eric Garcetti and Jan Perry — all of whom are now running for higher office — were justified in part by citing LAFD emergency-response times that looked great on paper. The argument was that such a fine department could roll with the huge cuts. But those numbers are known now to be false.

Firefighters say the cuts have created extreme workloads and dangerous staff and equipment shortages.

"I've been talking with a lot of guys, and they look like zombies," says a second veteran fireman who has worked under five chiefs. "You're put into a position where you can't do a good job. You can't even do an adequate job. We feel we're going to lose people, and we're putting our lives on the line. We'll do it, but the guys are concerned."

L.A. City Council members, despite having personal staffs of 15 to 22 aides each, did not grasp during the budget debates that the response-time data touted by Cummings and then-chief Millage Peaks were from computer projections.

Instead, two community ac-

tivists — Mike Eveloff and Jim O'Sullivan — created a spreadsheet showing that quick response times by LAFD were cratering. Then on March 1, city controller candidate Cary Brazeman released a "citizen audit" based on their data, showing that LAFD was achieving its response-time goals only 60 percent of the time.

A few days later, former Villaraigosa aide Austin Beutner penned a widely read Huffington Post column, stating that LAFD's quick response rate had plummeted from 86 percent to 59 percent of all calls. Then the Los Angeles Times reported that LAFD had seriously misrepresented its actual response times.

Beutner, a candidate for mayor in 2013, says city politicians "ought to be courageous enough to admit their role in this, and then come up with solutions." He is calling for a citizens' task force, similar to the Christopher Commission, which looked into the L.A. Police Department after the 1991 Rodney King beating.

Union president McOsker welcomes scrutiny. And Bob Stern, seen by some as L.A.'s reigning "good government" expert, says it may be necessary.

"If [the political establishment] punts, then someone else needs to investigate the department," says Stern.

A sweeping, independent review of LAFD has not been attempted in recent memory. The last such crisis was set off by a much narrower departmentwide hazing problem in 2005. Then, black firefighter Tennie Pierce claimed racial harassment by "nine white" fellow firefighters at Fire Station 5 after one of them put dog food in his spaghetti during a prank. Flanked by top black leaders, Pierce went on camera claiming racism. His lawyer demanded \$3.8 million from the city.

Then-Chief William Bamattre issued a strict ban on all pranks and hazing but was forced out by Villaraigosa. Pierce got rich. But L.A. Weekly discovered that Pierce's story had holes, and that Pierce himself was a hazer. The firefighter who fed him dog food was not white but a small Latino, whom Pierce had that day compared to the size of his own excrement. His "white" crew members were a picture of racial diversity. Then photos emerged showing Pierce as an extreme prankster, strapping firefighters to gurneys or spraying water up their noses. In a widely decried move, a majority of City Council members refused to review the photos and

awarded Pierce \$2.7 million. Villaraigosa vetoed that award and Pierce got \$1.5 million.

Now, with a deeper crisis that involves risk to the public, McOsker says the L.A. Fire Commission — five political appointees of Villaraigosa's — has dropped the ball. It appeared to be unaware that LAFD was using false response times. McOsker says he'd be surprised if Fire Commission President Genethia Hudley-Hayes and her colleagues "do anything to fix the problems with the chief. We've just been getting more platitudes, not real action."

Hudley-Hayes did not return the Weekly's calls.

During the hubbub over Cummings' news blackout, the mayor abruptly shifted respected Police Commission member Alan Skobin onto the fire commission. Skobin told the Los Angeles Daily News, "There are certainly issues at the [LAFD]. Many of them are accountability, transparency, civilian oversight" — problems that once dogged LAPD.

Stern tells the Weekly that LAFD brass "don't seem to get the idea that the fire department has to be a responsible, transparent agency — or the same as everyone else."

And Captain Jeff Dapper, a vice president of the firefighters union, says he's fed up with the "changing reasons" given by the brass to explain its false response-time stats. "Just be truthful. Each time you say something different, you lose your credibility."

City Controller Wendy Greuel, who is also running for mayor in 2013, had not audited the response-time stats — but is doing so now. Greuel says, "Everything is on the table about improving the department." But as to forming an investigatory panel, she says, "I'm not going to play politics with public safety."

Yusef Robb, chief of staff to Garcetti, another 2013 mayoral candidate, also says, "We don't want to create another bureaucracy that creates a report that sits on the shelf. We need action."

Beutner maintains that such responses are "underwhelming. There's been a lack of leadership and a lack of understanding what has really happened."

The firefighter who has served under five chiefs says the department is laboring under "a big disconnect," with Cummings and his inner staff on one side, the rank and file on the other. "They don't care at all about what we can deal with. ... They only take care of their own."

www.laweekly.com



death or disabling of a victim. But for years, LAFD has been quietly padding its results, shifting the calls that take six minutes into the "five minutes or less" column.

Under pressure to explain, Cummings admitted that LAFD did not give the City Council true response-time numbers when the council slashed its budget last year. Cummings' team gave computer projections instead, assuring city leaders that it could absorb the budget cut because in 2008 nearly 80 percent of emergency calls were answered in five minutes or less — a rosy record. But untrue. Just 64 percent of LAFD calls were answered that fast.

Now that number has sagged to 60 percent, and a once-heralded fire department is looking like a below-average outfit.

With critics suggesting the fire department lied, Cummings, in a March 16 letter, instituted a highly unusual news blackout on emergency calls, refusing to divulge the addresses or arrival times — key components for the public to judge if LAFD was arriving in five minutes or less.

Cummings told KNX Newsradio that his short-lived blackout was required under privacy law, and told City News Service that City Attorney Carmen Trutanich advised him to do it.

But as critics harshly questioned Cummings' judgment, Kelli Sager, one of the region's leading First Amendment attorneys, said the chief's directive was plainly illegal. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa then publicly slapped Cummings, sending him — and the city's reporters — a letter halting the blackout.

Cummings was now in the

"I have no reason to believe [Cummings] was telling anything but the truth," Englander said afterward. The false response times issued for years by LAFD are "not the scandal that's been politicized by mayoral candidates."

The council members appeared to mostly absolve Cummings. A majority of them, after all, approved Villaraigosa's deep budget cuts to LAFD — tens of millions of dollars over the past three years, which firefighters and others say have created longer response times to fires and other life-threatening situations.

"Resources were being drained," says Miracle Mile Residential Association president Jim O'Sullivan, who has researched the impact of budget cuts. "We need to get LAFD back to the point in which they can protect us."

The night before the meeting, Villaraigosa made light of what others see as systemic public-safety problems, joking about it at a roast for City Council President Herb Wesson. As first reported by news blog The City Maven and widely repeated, the mayor cracked: "Is Chief Cummings here yet? We called him five minutes ago. Late again."

But days later, a Villaraigosa aide asked the firefighters' union not to be "so public" over the response-time issue. United Firefighters of Los Angeles City President Pat McOsker says the aide asked him to "start talking nice." Instead, McOsker publicly declared: "I am going to be public every damn day. ... The bodies are piling up!"

Some firefighters say the response-time falsehoods and Cummings' news blackout are



Photo By Bernie Deyo, EPN

President's Report



The Politics of Fire

By Pat McOsker

The Los Angeles Times, typical of many large American newspapers, has a long practice of occasionally accepting and publishing short “guest editorials”. These are usually submitted on topics of immediate public concern by writers positioned to make not only pertinent comment, but comment that wouldn’t necessarily come from the editorial staff. As a rule, the Times’ editors welcome perspective and opinion which differs from theirs...but not on every topic – at least, not equally (It is, after all, an editorial page). They tend to be a bit more proprietary when it comes to City government. Their overall tone on City government matters is almost always disciplined and “on message”, with a little less room for diversity of opinion. This is especially true in matters involving the City workforce. Remember,

the Times is, first and foremost, an employer – a business – and as such their sentiments are clearly with other large scale employers, like Mayor Villaraigosa. Right now, the opinion of the Mayor that most often is expressed or implied on the Times editorial page that he is a leader to be supported and admired. He is someone to be presented as a wonderful and emerging national figure, so modern and so relevant...as long as he minds himself. And, believe me, he does. So, in matters involving any sort of difference of opinion between the Mayor and City employees, the employees’ perspective wouldn’t naturally attract any undue editorial sympathy in the Los Angeles Times. In the present dispute over LAFD staffing shortages and company closures, the paper’s natural affinity with

the Mayor as a fellow employer would tend to combine with its present support of him politically in a way that practically precludes UFLAC’s perspective from being fully presented – editorially, at least. Knowing this full well, I recently submitted to the Times the op-ed piece below without any illusions as to whether or not we’d see it in the paper. They haven’t printed it yet and I’m sure they won’t. However, I believe my submission says something that we firefighters need said right away. Therefore, we’ve printed it here. When it comes to the public’s safety and our own as well, Los Angeles Firefighters and Paramedics will always communicate the truth, loudly and clearly, whenever and wherever we can. In this case, we’ll just have to use some of our own ink.



Photo By Juan Guerra, EPN

Op-Ed Piece

For the sake of public safety, the time has come to de-politicize the work of firefighters and paramedics in Los Angeles.

For three years now, we rank-and-file firefighters have done our best to make Angelinos aware that deep LAFD budget cuts have resulted in tragedies that needn’t have happened. A series of staffing reductions since 2009 mean that there are far fewer first-responders protecting America’s second largest city, causing delayed emergency responses. Too many people in need of help have called 911, and then have waited for thinly-stretched firefighters and paramedics who were tied up on other emergencies. There have been some terrible outcomes along the way.

Since this crisis began, more than 150 LAFD firefighters and paramedics have been taken out of service every day. As of now, 11 engine companies, 7 ambulances, 7 ladder companies, 9 senior paramedics, 2 hazardous materials units, 3 incident com-

mand teams and nearly half of the staff for the remaining command teams have been eliminated. These front-line responders amount to more than 15% of the LAFD resources that protected the City before Mayor Villaraigosa began withdrawing firefighters and paramedics from our neighborhoods.

A few weeks ago the Fire Chief was made to report on response delays for the first time since the Mayor’s cuts went into effect. Although his statistical analysis was met at City Hall with plenty of hand wringing and excuse making, no one should have been surprised to learn that LAFD performance had diminished and that emergency responders now arrive within the life-saving, 5-minute threshold less than 60% of the time. We rank-and-file firefighters warned all along that this would happen. It’s only common sense.

Unfortunately, our repeated warnings have been drowned out by the clever politics of Mayor Villaraigosa. Here’s how: In

Los Angeles, the Fire Chief is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Mayor. When a Fire Chief retires there is no shortage of applicants who want that promotion and its six-figure pay raise. Some of them want it so badly that they are more than willing to do the Mayor’s bidding at budget time.

Three different Fire Chiefs in three years – each one hand-picked by Mayor Villaraigosa – have strenuously advocated his cuts before the Council. In fact, the last two went so far as to say that a smaller fire department would be “better configured for the types and frequencies of emergencies that we get in LA” and would therefore respond better. Proclamations like that coming from LA’s Fire Chief have a powerful influence on City leaders, and the salesmanship has worked.

But why would a Fire Chief say and do such a thing? Understand that in return for loyalty to Mayor Villaraigosa, LA’s Fire Chiefs get more than a just the big pay

raise. They also get a corresponding increase on their pensions. It would be no exaggeration to say that for little more than a year of doing the Mayor’s bidding – and a few hours of testimony in front of the Council’s Budget Committee – three lucky winners of the “Villaraigosa Lottery” have each walked away with a benefit that should yield about 2 to 3 million dollars over their lifetimes.

Clearly, the time has come to take the back-room politics out of decisions that so vitally effect public safety in LA. For starters, the Council must recognize the danger of relying on an appointee of the Mayor for advice – especially when the issues are matters of life and death. Taking a longer view, we must better select LA’s future Fire Chiefs, and then

insulate them from pressure. Ideally, the Chief should be directly elected by the people of Los Angeles or appointed by an elected, autonomous Fire District Board. At the very least, a Fire Chief in Los Angeles should serve under the same protective, long-term contract that the Police Chief does.

More immediately, the City Council must take this public safety disaster out of the Mayor’s hands. They must reopen all closed LAFD resources without delay and return all 150 firefighters and paramedics to daily service. They will save lives in the process. The safety of their constituents depends on it.

Pat



Photo By Mike Meadows, EPN



2nd Vice President's Report

WHAT IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE A UNION?

During times of fiscal uncertainty it is easy to point fingers, blame others, and sit at the kitchen table with a negative attitude. Take the higher road and be appreciative for all the rights we have that the union earned, lobbied, or negotiated for us. Many of our members think that the benefits we enjoy were simply given to us by the city and management out of the kindness of their hearts-WRONG!

Imagine not having your union, what would your current job be like? You would have little rights, no firefighter bill of rights, terrible working hours, significantly less pay, very unsafe working conditions, no DROP program in your pension, no diesel exhaust hoses in the firehouses, no state worker compensation presumptive laws, no Line of Duty Death benefits for your family, no federal Public Safety Officer Benefits if you died on duty for your family, no firefighter memorials, you would

code 3, etc. Conversely, some (not all) of our worst leaders on our job wear a yellow badge and have promoted far beyond their level of competency due to their certifications, diplomas, and numerous classes they have attended. There is something that these "CERT-ologist's" cannot get in a class or a diploma, and that is the respect of the rank and file. This is nothing new, everybody knows it, and it will likely never change. This does not mean there are not good chiefs out there, because there are, we just wish there would be a higher percentage of them. However, the best leaders of this department whom we all know are primarily found in the wood work at firehouses leading by example and standing up for what is right. Remember respect is a two way street, and we have high ranking officials still searching for respect because there is not a certificate for it. Always strive for the platinum rule, and that is to treat others better than they treat you.

NFPA 1710

The IAFF was extremely successful on our quest to complete the NFPA standard on the career fire service organization and deployment standard. NFPA 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, was passed in May of 2001, and further affirmed later in August after an unsuccessful sabotage bid by the League of Cities, and other anti-labor groups. In addition to the direct effort by the

IAFF, UFLAC members over the past 10 years have had a seat on that committee; currently they include Pat McOsker in an IAFF seat, myself Frank Lima in a UFLAC seat (with Tony Gamboa as an alternate), as well as past members like Don Forrest, Ken Buzzell, and Jim Featherstone, to name a few. There are less than a dozen union seats on that 1710 committee nationally.

LINE-OF-DUTY DEATHS (LODD)

Unfortunately, emergency responders sometimes make the ultimate sacrifice in the performance of their job. Firefighting continues to be one of the most dangerous and hazardous professions in the country. The IAFF continues to assist NIOSH with the

Fire Fighter LODD program – a program created by the IAFF (your union). The IAFF provides technical assistance or actual investigation assistance of fatalities or serious injuries of professional fire fighters. Additionally, the IAFF provides instant notification of deaths of IAFF members and provides protocols to assist local affiliates that experience a line-of-duty death. The IAFF assists locals and families with the federal PSOB claims, again a program created by the IAFF in 1976, which now pays over \$300,000 to the family of a fallen member. The IAFF, as it did with the March 1998 deaths of UFLAC members Eric Reiner, Michael A. Butler and Michael D. McComb, immediately details senior staff to a jurisdiction after any multiple fire fighter fatality event, to assist the local affiliate and fire department with experienced advice and personnel to address all the logistical needs. The IAFF also has our IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial, which is located in the shadow of Pike's Peak in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Memorial honors the sacrifice made by IAFF professional fire fighters and paramedics who have given their lives in the line of duty. Since its creation in 1976, the names of over 2,300 fallen IAFF members (which includes dozens of our own UFLAC Local 112 members) have been engraved into the wall of honor located behind the

memorial. The IAFF is currently finalizing plans to add all IAFF members that were killed in the Line of Duty beginning from 1918 on to the memorial walls. If you have never been to a fire-service memorial service please make it a point to do so, you will be amazed. From the IAFF Colorado Springs Memorial, to the California Professional Firefighters (CPF) Memorial in Sacramento, to our own LAFD Memorial at Fire Station 27 they all serve as a public reminder of the risks we fire fighters take every day.

SUMMARY OF IAFF LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

We are under attack brothers and sisters! This information was provided to us at the annual IAFF legislative conference in Washington DC, and put into words for you to understand. We spent several days away from our families, working long hours fighting to protect your benefits, and continuing to forge relationships across the nation with Congress and other IAFF union leaders. The membership (you) deserves to know in detail what it is we do when you send your executive board on travel to conferences.

That is why the UFLAC newspaper articles are an excellent communication tool for the membership to see what their board is doing for them. We made Congressional and Senator visits with representatives from our area. Some of whom include Howard Berman who served as our own UFLAC attorney from 1967-72 back with our founding father of UFLAC Don Wallace and Jim Perry. Karen Bass, newly elected into Congress and when she was in the CA State Legislature as the Speaker of the House she authored our CA Firefighter Bill of Rights (AB220). Other supportive friends that have stood by us for years in Congress that we met with include Xavier Becerra, Laura Richardson, Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, Brad Sherman, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Maxine Waters, Henry Waxman, and Barbara Boxer, to name a few. Read below for details on just one (of many) congressional actions the IAFF is opposing for you. It is both humbling and an honor to professionally represent your needs, and fight for your benefits on behalf of Local 112.

TAX EXEMPTION FOR EMPLOYER-PROVIDED HEALTH CARE

This legislation will implement the recommendations of the federal deficit commission.

Health care benefits provided by employers (LA City) to their employees (us) are not currently counted as taxable income. Similarly, employee contributions toward their health care premiums are made on a pre-tax basis. As the federal deficit continues to grow,

policy makers are considering all options for increasing revenue, including ending the current tax exemption for employer-provided health benefits.

Removing the exemption will raise taxes on those least able to afford it. Taxing health care benefits would particularly be hurtful to firefighters, and would unfairly penalize us for the hazardous work we do. For years, firefighters have accepted lower wages in exchange for better health coverage. Firefighters also face higher insurance premiums due to the health risks posed by our profession. Removing the exemption would add thousands of dollars in additional taxes even though firefighters make middle class wages.

For example at Local 112 we enjoy a healthcare subsidy greater than a thousand dollars per month, but let's use one-thousand to keep it simple. Our employer gives us

\$1,000 a month x 12 months = \$12,000 per year that is NOT counted or added to our annual income (tax free money).

Now, for example we want to buy the family plus 2 children Cadillac PPO plan for \$1,500. So now you take the thousand dollars tax free the City gave you and there is \$500 left for you to pay the premium. We pay that remaining \$500 for our health care in pre-tax dollars. Now, congress wants to help balance the budget on the backs of Firefighters and double tax you on both. Removing the exemption means exposing these amounts to both your gross income and payroll taxes for firefighters.

SAFETY & WELLNESS

Brothers and Sisters, please exercise everyday you work; whether you are on our 24 hour platoon duty or on a special duty 4/10 work schedule. You have the absolute right to exercise, stretch, and stay healthy so take advantage of it. High blood pressure is the silent killer and is treatable! 45% of annual on-duty Firefighter deaths are caused by heart disease each year-high blood pressure is a contributing factor! We as firefighters tend to always help others, but we have a hard time helping ourselves. Also, I can't remind you enough to check your blood pressure on a consistent basis. Keep a confidential log and take care of yourself so that you upon retirement you can enjoy your pension and benefits that we are fighting like hell to protect!



Frank Lima and Firefighter of the Year Doak Smith

be unable to exercise while on-duty, no voice at the table through collective bargaining, no contract, no grievance

procedure, no legal advice, no political action funds, low bid safety equipment, terrible health insurance, etc, etc... You want me to go on? Wake up and start spreading the good news what your union does for you and your family.

It is time you learn your rights, and learn about your livelihood. Get involved and look out for one another out there. We have such a talented membership; bring your interests and talents to the local. As the head of the UFLAC Steward program I am constantly looking to recruit new union leaders for the future. The union steward program is a great apprenticeship into the union if you ever want to run for office.

LEADERSHIP

One thing most of our managers will never understand is that true leaders are born leaders. Books, certifications, diplomas and leadership classes do not make leaders!

The classes certainly help natural born leaders sharpen their skills though. Some of the greatest leaders on our job wear silver badges, take blood pressures, climb ladders, inspect buildings, answer calls and dispatch, drive

INTERNET / SOCIAL MEDIA

Recently nationwide there has been a spike in termination and discipline cases with public safety workers, and private sector workers. People are tending to get more involved in these internet forums, blogs, and social media to discuss work-related events, which is OK. However there is a fine 1st Amendment line to walk with your opinions, facts, and stories and whether or not they have to do with a matter of "public concern" or "public safety".

As a union official and as the UFLAC discipline chair, we get to see complaints against members that are both frivolous and sustained. There has been a recent case where a member's own postings on Facebook, Twitter, and You Tube are being used against him for a potential termination, and are in his pre-disciplinary packet that is required by law prior (aka "Skelly" packet in California State Law). Just be careful of self-inflicted trouble that may be brought upon you in the social media. This has also carried into the arena of High School athletics and collegiate scholarships. Many colleges have revoked scholarships after looking at a talented student athlete Facebook and Twitter accounts.



Director's Report

By Tony Gamboa,
Director

Working Hard for the Membership

IAFF Fireground Survival Training

As an initiative by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to reduce firefighter deaths, the Fire Ground Survival (FGS) program addresses emergencies in fire situations, teaches firefighters how to prevent a Mayday from occurring and how to react if one does occur. On the IAFF training cadre we have two Local 112 members that have taken this training to the next level as trained instructors and have been teaching fireground safety across the country and in Canada. Please check out the IAFF at <http://www.iaff.org/hs/fgs/fgsindex.htm> for more detailed information.

IAFF Legislative Conference

This year's Legislative Conference was well attended by many IAFF locals from across the country. We had 10 appointments the day we were on the hill and were received very well from all of our members of Congress that represent us in the Los Angeles area. Some of the issues this year were Safer and Fire Grants, Attacks on Federal Workers, State and Local Government Taxation. On the State and Local Government Taxation we are asking Congress to step in and help us with this issue. The traditional "brick and mortar" retail establishments are being forced out of business by competition from out of state e-retailers that don't charge sales tax. We are asking Congress to empower states and

local governments to enforce collection of existing taxes on on-line sales. States are already allowed to charge sales and use taxes on goods and services purchased through the Internet, but cannot currently require out of state businesses to collect sales and use taxes if they do not have a physical presence in the state. This limitation results in 23 billion in lost annual revenue.

Drivers License Reminders

The State minimum requirements that went into effect 1/1/2011 in regards to Firefighters is a class C Non-commercial with the Firefighter Endorsement. This endorsement allows firefighters to operate firefighting equipment for their respective departments. The endorsement can be issued by the DMV after proof of required training has been issued by that driver's employer. It is up to each individual fire agencies whether they choose to adopt and allow the new licensing for their members. Fire fighters who hold a class C with the F/F Endorsement are required to have a current DL-546A Physicians Health Report on file with the DMV. This medical report differs from the DL-546 Health Questionnaire that is currently required for a FF Restricted class B license.

Unfortunately the LAFD minimum requirements for members are a class B with a HazMat and Tank endorsements. This decision means that LAFD members below the rank of Chief have

that many more hoops to jump through. Members must have a current DL-51 or DL-546 on file with the DMV in order to be valid to operate commercial vehicles and meet Department requirements.

As you can imagine, your union has been asking the LAFD to become more in line with the state minimum requirements.

Please read the entire prompt in NSS when you sign on. Some members are going through the license renewal/upgrade process or completing medicals unnecessarily.

YOU need to understand the importance of obtaining a computer receipt to assure the DMV does what is required and updates you within the DMV system to keep your licenses current and legal.

You need to be aware that other fire agencies may have chosen to accept varying types of licenses and/or endorsements, but the need to meet LAFD minimum requirements still stands so members you need to know what the LA City Fire Dept. requires and not solely be guided by uninformed DMV employees.

If there are circumstances regarding your medical, you should check with the Driving Coordinator David Fabela at 213-893-9851.

Drivers License Arbitration

Recently your Union carried a class action grievance forward regarding driver's license and



California Labor Federation 2012 Pre-Primary Convention
Photo By Slobodan Dimitrov

unilateral changes by the department. The grievance was sustained and the award granted is below reads:

- Vacate and Rescind Department Bulletin No. 10-05, dated May 19, 2010;

- Comply with the provisions of the Letter of Agreement, dated October 28, 2008 and in particular penalty guideline B-11 with respect to any member who is charged with failing to maintain a valid Driver's License with proper endorsements;

- Cease and desist from changing disciplinary penalties without meeting and conferring in good faith with the union;

- Cease and desist from refusing to allow members who have failed to maintain valid Driver's Licenses with proper endorsements from continuing to work in their regular assignments (except for Engineers, Apparatus Op-

erators and members who have failed to maintain a Class C license);

- Rescind and vacate any pending Board of Rights based upon a charge of failing to maintain a valid Driver's License with proper endorsements and withdraw any such pending charges (except where it is a third offense);

- Cease and desist from ordering Board of Rights based upon charges of failing to maintain a valid Driver's License with proper endorsements (except where it is a third offense); and

- Make whole, for any loss sustained, all members who have been precluded (in violation of the October 2008 Agreement) from working, placed on leave and/or ordered to a Board of Rights because of a failure to maintain a valid Driver's License with proper endorsements.

Risk vs. Gain



By Daniel Curry,
LAFD Safety Officer

Hanging in the 2nd-floor hallway of FHMTTC are three placards that, taken as a whole, are the LAFD Risk vs. Gain Policy.

#1: Activities that present a significant risk to the safety of members shall be limited to situations where there is a potential to save endangered lives. WE RISK A LOT, TO SAVE A LOT.

#2: Activities routinely employed to protect property shall be recognized as inherent risks to the safety of members, and actions shall be taken to reduce or avoid those risks. WE RISK A LITTLE, TO SAVE A LITTLE.

#3: No risk to the safety of

members shall be acceptable when there is no possibility to save lives or property. WE RISK NOTHING, TO SAVE NOTHING.

The text (except for the bolded "WE RISK" statements) of our Risk vs. Gain Policy comes straight out of NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program. The LAFD-added "WE RISK" statements are simplistic summaries in general, but the "RISK A LITTLE" statement is misleading, in my opinion. What is this middle statement requiring of us?

We've already established in statement #1 that we shall only take significant risks when there is a potential to save endangered lives. Therefore, in all other situations, we cannot accept significant risks. Statement #2 begins by stating that our routine activities to save property are inherent risks. Inherent is defined as "existing in something as a permanent, essential, or characteristic attribute." For instance, we can be burned, we can inhale products of combustion, we can have structures fall in on us, etc. Now, look at the second half of the

statement: "actions shall be taken to reduce or avoid those risks." So we wear protective clothing, we wear SCBA's, we wear helmets, etc. And we can choose to avoid a risk, and harking back to statement #1, we shall avoid any significant risks if there are no endangered lives (and you don't get to include yourself!).

So are we really risking a little, to save a little? We're still risking a lot! We should always remember that we are at the whims of physics. We're protected to some degree, but not to all degrees. Will turnouts, or gloves, or hoods protect you in a flashover? To some degree. Will wearing an SCBA protect you from hazardous products of combustion? Only if you use it. Will wearing a helmet protect you if the ceiling caves in at a structure fire? I hope so! Consider that a building on fire is an active demolition project. If it burns long enough, it will collapse. It's simply physics. We are inserting ourselves at some point along the demolition process. It's a race against time. Sometimes the decision has to be "we don't have enough time." Respect that decision, and live to fight another fire, on another day.

The last part of the Risk vs. Gain Policy is vitally important, as well. "No risk to the safety of members shall be acceptable when there is no possibility to save lives or property." What is property? I would argue that property should have some value, either monetarily or culturally, before we allow ourselves to accept any kind of risk in attempting to save it. In December, 2010, two Chicago firefighters lost their lives and

19 were injured in a structural collapse in a fire in an abandoned commercial structure. The property has been abandoned for over five years and city officials had previously cited the building owners for the deteriorated condition of the structure. This building was further along in the demolition process, apparently.

Assess your risks at every incident. Physics plays no favorites.



Community Events

St Baldrick's Fundraiser Sets Record Despite Weather



Photo By Precious Pix

By Danny Wu, LAFD

Anyone who has experienced childhood cancer in any capacity knows the importance of finding a cure for this deadly disease. With this in mind, it took more than pounding rain, howling winds, and at times parking shortages to stop the spirit of firefighters, police, and all that gathered at Fire Station 89 in the name of fighting childhood cancer at this year's LAFD/LAPD St. Baldrick's Fundraiser.

On Saturday March 17th the LAFD and LAPD again joined together to produce another successful St. Baldrick's fundraiser to find a cure for childhood cancer at Fire Station 89.

Worldwide over 160,000 kids are diagnosed with cancer every year and many of them lose their hair during treatment. Like this year's participants, LAFD Co-Organizers Engineer Sean Kennedy and Firefighter Danny Wu, and LAPD organizer Lieutenant Greg Doyle (again along with his cancer survivor son Will) shaved their heads to support kids with a similar "baldness" in exchange for pledges from family and friends. In the process of losing their hair along with other "shavees" they help find a cure for a disease that sadly takes the lives of more U.S. children than any other illness.

This year's event could have been drowned out by the relentless rain and strong winds, but

human spirit and compassion prevailed against the elements to produce the most successful event to date—with over \$105,000 being raised thus far! Leading the charge for the LAFD were Division Chief Patrick Butler and Battalion Chief Dennis Waters—while LAPD Deputy Chief Jorge Villegas also shaved his head and commended his police officers on their support.

Councilman Dennis Zine and renowned City of Hope Pediatric Neuro-Oncologist Dr. Clarke Anderson pleaded with the audience to contribute funds into a hat that were passed around before they lopped their locks in the name of fighting childhood cancer. From the "Twilight" movie Julia Jones shined as a celebrity barber even though she had never shaved a head before, and likewise fellow actress Patrika Darbo from Days of Our Lives smiled as she christened her shavees' with bald domes.

This year's event included the usual generosity of International House of Pancakes and Starbucks providing a delicious free breakfast. Face painter Chloe Akana, Los Angeles World Series Champion Jay Johnstone, and Magic Castle Magicians entertained the crowd while tunes were provided by 93.1 JACK FM and DJ Roger Monay. LAPD SWAT and K-9 were on board to educate the public on their roles in the LAPD, while Brent Hill from the 9-11

Patch Project reminded us to remember all we lost back in 9-11. Fire Attire quenched the public's thirst for LAFD fire apparel, and next to him Kelly Khoury from KENK Shell satisfied everyone's appetite with drinks and snacks. For those staying through lunch, gourmet food trucks An Nam and Macho Nacho created delicious meals while contributing a portion of their profit to St. Baldrick's—as did all the vendors. And throughout the day the Providence Blood Mobile collected over 40 pints of blood and 20 people registered with City of Hope's "Be the Match" Bone Marrow Registry!

This year's event also included a vastly expanded raffle/silent auction organized by Maggie Compton, with items being contributed by among others—Jay Leno (who again donated \$5000 also!), the Los Angeles Kings, and USC Trojans. A small studio with firefighting items and a police motorcycle was created by Precious Pix photographer Laura Lichter who not only donated proceeds from her studio pictures to St. Baldrick's but also took amazing photos during the whole event.

The highlight of this year's event occurred near noon when a ceremony was held to first remember Candace Rodriguez—a brave, insightful, loving and enthusiastic 15 year old who passed away a week before the event and battled Acute Myeloid Leukemia

for almost 2 years.

After a tearful letter was read by Candace's cousin and Maggie Compton, the crowd's somber mood turned to cheers as Max Magilnick was recognized as the participant raising the most money this year—with over \$21,000 raised in honor of his sister Emily who is currently being treated at UCLA with funds directly generated from St. Baldrick's. Last but not least Maggie Compton shined again as she used her creativity towards recognizing all the "honored kids" at the event—with over 30 kids being introduced to the crowd on stage and each being given a distinct red St. Baldrick's t-shirt and gift bag—including her enthusiastic son Ryan as he brought her LAPD husband Jason in tow!

Thanks to all that participated and supported the annual LAFD/LAPD St. Baldrick's Fundraiser.

Over 200 heads were shaved and \$105,000 raised thus far. You can still donate online at: www.stbaldricks.org/events/lafdlapd and help find a cure for childhood cancer!

The St. Baldrick's Foundation coordinates worldwide head-shaving events that raise money to support childhood cancer research. This year was the most successful yet, and without these supporters this event would not have been possible. A special THANK YOU goes out to Ace Party Rents who sheltered us from the rain by generously donating a huge tent on the spot when informed of the last minute weather predicament. The human spirit is indeed alive and well... and the fight against childhood cancer moves forward!

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



Doak Smith Recognized as Firefighter of the Year

LOS ANGELES - Scores of Los Angeles Firefighters past and present joined Los Angeles Fire Chief Brian Cummings and civic leaders in Los Angeles on March 21, 2012, to honor LAFD Apparatus Operator Doak Smith as the Los Angeles Fire Department's 2011 Firefighter of the Year.

Flanked by friends and family, Smith humbly received his award at a well attended luncheon hosted in his honor by the Los Angeles Firefighters Association, at the Kyoto Grand Hotel and Gardens. The coveted award takes into account Smith's long-term accomplishments and is awarded for the previous calendar year.

A 31-year veteran of the LAFD, Smith is assigned to Fire Station 69 in Pacific Palisades, where he operates an aerial ladder truck.

He was resoundingly selected for demonstrated leadership, community volunteerism and his unparalleled compassion for those he proudly serves.

By Brian Humphrey, PSO



EAP Corner

Resilience



By Nancy Mraz, CEAP

The psychological definitions of resilience are; the ability to adapt to adversity in life, the use of coping skills to bounce back from hardship. Life will deal out to each of us a certain amount of difficult situations and times. How we handle the adversity and rebuild our lives is what resilience is all about.

Some of the toughest times in life are the losses we experience that can include the loss of someone we love through illness and death, children born with serious medical conditions, and the cata-

strophic financial hardships that may accompany these conditions.

Sometimes the tough situations in life may hinge on our actions, harsh words spoken in the heat of an argument that can't be taken back, impulsive spending on "toys" with little thought as to how we're going to pay for them.

Whether the difficult times in life are brought about by circumstances we have no control over, or by our own actions, the ability to rebound still requires from us specific actions and strategies.

First we need to start developing a realistic plan of how we're going to work through our situation. Many times in the EAP clients' may state "...I want to be out of debt by the end of the year..." My next question is "how are you going to accomplish that?" We set a goal and forget that the goal needs a concrete plan of how I'm going to be out of debt by the end of the year. What am I going to do with each paycheck that pays down my debt?

Grief is the normal reaction

to the death of someone we've loved. The idea that we can devise a plan to get through it is more elusive to identify. However there are many things that can be done to make the time ahead as easy as possible. Do we have a social network we can lean on, such as family and friends? For people with religious beliefs there may be great consolation in participation within those beliefs. This is also a time to slow down the general pace of life for awhile. Expect that you may need more rest than at other times. Also we are more accident prone when experiencing profound grief and need to be cautious in our daily routines. Make sure your eating properly and avoid the consumption of alcohol.

Another task in developing resilience is the ability to learn from our past, particularly when the adversity is something we have caused. Are we repeating the same actions again and again? Can we realistically look at ourselves and identify the actions

we're taking that keep getting our lives off track? This realistic self appraisal will begin to give us some ideas of the actions we need to change. However we are only capable of a certain amount of objectivity about ourselves, so this is the point where some people may benefit from seeking professional help from a therapist to explore how life has gotten off track.

Finally resilience requires us to remain flexible. As we explore our situation and possible options, can we stay open to the idea that all possibilities need to be considered. An example from the financial world is the family that finds itself unable to meet current financial obligations. Credit counselors will invariably point out that once the basics are taken care of: shelter, food, clothing, and health care, then every other expense needs to be looked at as something that may need to go, at least temporarily. This requires the family to make a decision on which is more important;

continuing to spend money on what they can't afford, or financial stability.

Give us a call in the Employee Assistance Program if you would like more information on how this subject (800)252-8352

Introducing Sharon Miller

We would like to congratulate Sharon Miller, CEAP, and CAA-DAC who has been appointed to the Alzheimer's Disease Task Force. This task force reports to the Secretary of California Health and Human Services. The group is to address concerns regarding the multiple issues dealing with Alzheimer's. From the diagnosis, medical research, resources for patients and their families, to legal issues those patients face.

Ms. Miller has been affiliated with the Employee Assistance Program for the last couple of years. Ms Miller has also been responsible for the development of the Elder Care Packets that are now available through the EAP.

Suicide Prevention in the Fire Service



By Peggy Sweeney

Suicide is a very serious topic that we rarely discuss. Each year, thousands of adults and children either attempt or complete suicide to resolve problems or put an end to emotional pain. As a result of their deaths, surviving family members and friends not only grieve, but must cope with feelings of guilt, anger, and the archaic stigma associated with suicide.

Suicide is a major, preventable public health problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2007 it was the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S., accounting for 34,598 deaths. Men completed suicide four times more often than women at a rate of 78.8% of U.S. suicides. Suicide is the seventh leading cause of death for males and the fifteenth leading cause for females. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 25- to 34-year olds and the third leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year olds. One of the major risk factors for suicide is depression and other mental disorders, or a substance-abuse disorder (often in combination with other mental disorders). More than 90 percent of people who die by suicide have these risk factors.² For every suicide death, it is estimated that an average of six family members and friends will experience the pain of grief; a figure I believe is

extremely low.

"Suicide is the complication of the disease of depression. It is a complication because not all with depression complete suicide, but all who complete suicide suffer from some type of depression". Sue Endsley; her son, Ryan, died by suicide at the age of 19.

Why is there suicide in the fire service?

Professions, such as firefighting, contribute many elements of stress and trauma that greatly exaggerate depression. These men and women are placed in life-threatening situations and witness human injury and death regularly. After one of these traumatic call, they realize that the other firefighters in their department appear to be coping with the severity of the call with no apparent trouble. No one talks about the nightmares or the recurring thoughts of the horrific incidents that haunt them daily. He or she assumes that everyone else is dealing with the stress; hence, something must be wrong with them.

Being injured or disabled as the result of their hazardous job may cause depression. Because they can no longer function as a firefighter, they believe that they are of no value to their department or have a purpose in life. They may be dealing with a seemingly insurmountable personal problems such as a divorce, chronic illness of a family member, financial worries, or substance abuse, to name a few. Rather than asking for help (they may be perceived as weak), they will turn these feelings and thoughts inward. As each new traumatic incident and/or personal struggle occurs, they slip deeper and deeper into depression. It is no wonder that the fire service has one of the highest suicide rates in America. Sadly, the numbers are

escalating at a rapid pace.

Among members of the emergency response professions, it has been my experience that one specific issue or event does not trigger genuine thoughts of suicide, but rather a culmination of traumatic events over years. Left unresolved, without the benefit of trained, professional help, many firefighters become increasingly depressed and overwhelmed by these events. Many develop post traumatic



stress disorder (PTSD); an anxiety disorder often associated with combat veterans or frontline emergency workers like police officers and firefighters. Thoughts of suicide become more focused and appear to be a ready answer for ending the deep emotional pain that has been their constant companion over the years.

As we all know, human beings require certain basic needs, such as food and water, for survival. It is also very important for

our survival to feel needed and appreciated, loved and cared about. When our perceptions of life and living become skewed and there is no one to help us cope with depression, we fall deeper and deeper into the well. It is during this difficult time that many people will resort to the use of mind-altering drugs and/or alcohol (or other potentially addicting solutions such as chronic gambling or compulsive spending) as a means of coping with their emotional problems. These temporary remedies merely assist in numbing the pain they are feeling, but do nothing to resolve the reasons for the deep-seated problem of depression.

Help for firefighters

Too many firefighters are dying by suicide! Organizations within the fire service continue to receive federal dollars for studies on firefighter suicides. We have enough information on this topic. As early as 1991, these same fire service organizations studied this important topic. We do not need another study! We do not need to know how many firefighters have died by suicide, how it was accomplished, or the events that led up to their suicide. The death of one firefighter is enough for me to know that help is needed NOW.

Where can firefighters go for help if it is not offered through their fire department?

"It is a very small field to be sure. The individual's own doctor can start the process. Then go to the Veterans of Foreign Wars local lodge or chapter or buddy up to a Vietnam veteran in the community where the firefighter is living. Vietnam vets get it in spades and have their own cultural story to tell about what they have seen and lived through with their PTSD. There is a

sympiotic relationship between war trauma a soldier is exposed to and a firefighter's exposure to the front line wounding in their community". Shannon Pennington, North American Firefighter Veteran Network (firefighterveteran.com)

We do not need money spent on another study. The money would be better spent on funding to establish chaplaincy programs, counselors experienced in helping firefighters, educational programs related to traumatic stress and suicide prevention as well as bereavement programs for fire departments and families touched by suicide. Some of these programs have been in existence for a while but lack financial help. Namely, the West Coast Trauma Retreat (<http://www.wcpr2001.org>), the North American Fire Firefighter Veteran Network (<http://firefighterveteran.com>), and the Grieving Behind the Badge program (<http://tinyurl.com/GBB-program>). raise funding". Chaplain Skip Strauss, Emergencies Ministries (emergencyministries.org)

It is an established fact that stress and traumatic events influence a person's susceptibility to heart attacks, strokes, and other medical problems. and suicide prevention.

Training them to deal with trauma, stress, and grief is no less important than training them to be safe on the fire ground.

No longer can job-related stress in the fire service be ignored. It is the duty and responsibility of every fire service officer to provide for and enhance the emotional wellness of his or her department as well as themselves if needed. Without the support and dedication of everyone traumatic stress and grief will continue to take a toll on firefighters and their families..

<http://journeysthroughgrief.wordpress>

LAFD in Action

(Continued from Page 1)

No injuries were reported, and there were no evacuations.

Following the Fire Department's mitigation of primary hazards, control of the scene was returned jointly to the California Highway Patrol, County of Los Angeles Health Hazardous Materials Division and the California Department of Transportation, with the latter agency to perform a detailed physical assessment of the overpass for possible fire related damage.

By Brian Humphrey,
LAFD Spokesman



Above Photos By Mike Meadows, EPN

Response Times Exposed by the Media (continued)

(Continued from Page 1)

The Chief claimed that Wells had compiled the statistics wrong in the lead up to budget cuts and that we had really been slower than he reported in 2007/2008. His defense became; "Less than 60% isn't so bad because we were really only at 63% before".

When City Council Members heard that they became nervous and they ran for cover as well. Council Members took the position that their budget decision last year had hinged on the fact that they were told that the LAFD was at 80% on the 5-minute goal AND that "new deployment" was only going to improve responses because, as the Chief had said, "the LAFD would be better configured for the types and frequency of calls we get". They demanded a better explanation for the Chief's inconsistency.

And soon they had it...or at least had another head-scratching story from the new leader of the Fire Department. In this version the Fire Chief claimed that the "80% on-time" claim that he made last year in a well-documented comparison of full deployment to "new deployment" had really just been a projection of past performance using ADAM computer software. Moreover, he admitted that this "projection of the past" was one in which every resource was available and in quarters whenever the alarm bell rang! In other words; instead of reporting the actual numbers to the Council – numbers that were readily available – the Fire Chief instead cooked up a misleading fantasy and used it to help him sell the

Mayor's budget cuts.

Now the press was all over the story. Reporters from every media outlet in town descended on press conferences and Fire Commission meetings to hound the Mayor and his Chief for better answers. As this was unfolding things took another turn for the worse: The ill-advised move of our dispatcher center from City Hall East to the new "Metro Fire Command" facility was back-firing. It would prove to be yet another example of the danger of chronic underfunding the LAFD. Soon fresh examples of delayed responses and bad outcomes caused by faulty communications equipment were being reported by the Los Angeles Times, and they weren't pretty.

In a nutshell, here is what went wrong: Rather than building the new dispatch facility from scratch – meaning constructing it with all new, state of the art communications equipment – and then testing the new center properly by running it in parallel to certify its readiness before switching over, the good soldiers in LAFD management decided to simply pick a day on the calendar and to move our dispatchers and their 25-year old communications equipment over into the new building all at once. When they got there and plugged the aging equipment in, they found that it was incompatible with the new building's technology and it began failing. Metro Fire Command immediately began experiencing system crashes in which audio alarm and emergency information was not transmitting to fire stations, and nobody knew it until companies went overdue.

With the press now bearing down hard on the Department, the Fire Chief (and perhaps the Mayor) decided to "circle the wagons". An ill-advised "media blackout" was called – one in which incident information including the addresses and nature of emergencies would now be concealed from the press in the unrealistic hope that the story would then dry up and go away. Instead, the scrutiny intensified and the blackout became the story. In the ensuing days, UFLAC President Pat McOsker was asked by a number of news agencies to comment on the unfolding events and to discuss the Chief's media strategy. The coverage all proved to run in favor of full LAFD restoration and against the Chief's shifting stories and lack of transparency. The Mayor fared no better with the press.

Ultimately, a wounded Mayor went into damage control. He ceremoniously ordered his Chief to lift the media blackout and simultaneously called for an inadequate LAFD restoration. His lame plan was to immediately fund six part-time (v-staffed) BLS ambulances.

Not surprisingly, every mayoral candidate and half of the City Council went into the "take action" mode then as well. Also not surprisingly, each candidate advocated a different approach to address our issues – each seemingly more designed to deny credit for fixing our problems to their opponents in the race, than to actually fix the problems. A few Council Members did though introduce motions that might actually help to restore a measure of public safety. As this

paper goes to press, none of those motions has yet gone through the full process.

The motions include initiatives to restore all closed LAFD resources for the remainder of the fiscal year, to restore all closed ambulances immediately and all fire companies in ensuing budget years, to fully fund our dispatch center repairs, to add needed staff to Supply and Maintenance, to use the resources of the IAFF analyze LAFD response times and capabilities, to use an LAPD-like "Firestat" reporting system

to measure LAFD performance and progress, and to require of the Fire Chief a better explanation of his response-time reporting.

UFLAC will continue our fight for public safety by weighing in on each of these motions, by fighting for full LAFD restoration in upcoming 2012/2013 budget deliberations, by taking on the Mayor and his Fire Chief whenever and wherever we must, and by bringing every instance of budget-cut affected, delayed emergency response to light.



Photo By Adam VanGerpen

LAFD in Action



Photo By David “Doc” Demule, Editor



Photo By Mike Meadows, EPN



Photo By Rick McClure, EPN



Photo Rick McClure EPN



Photos By Mike Meadows, EPN



Photo By Mike Meadows, EPN



Photo By Rick McClure, EPN



Photo By Adam VanGerpen, Editor

Legislative Corner

IAFF Legislative Conference

IAFF Goes to Congress

IAFF members set off to meet lawmakers on Capitol Hill Wednesday. Nearly 700 members from across the country are in Washington, DC to discuss the challenges that first responders face each day.

Fire fighters on Capitol Hill will talk about a range of issues with their elected officials including pensions, support for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and Assistance to Firefighters (FIRE Act) grants, mandatory Social Security coverage for fire fighters, political attacks on public employees, and a proposal that would consolidate homeland security grants into a single block grant administered

by state agencies.

The IAFF has won significant legislative victories on Capitol Hill, due largely to the relationships that local IAFF leaders have with their elected officials.

Wednesday's visit is a good time to strengthen relationships with lawmakers and to discuss issues that impact IAFF members such as safety and job security.

Several IAFF affiliates have tweeted about meeting their congressional representatives today. Fire fighters are making their time count in DC this week!

Labor's Big Win in Ohio

Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown says when labor wins, America's

middle class also wins.

"The fight in Ohio showed that collective bargaining attacks were an effort to hurt the middle class," he said Tuesday at the IAFF Legislative Conference. "Issue 2 helped to galvanize workers in Ohio to help repeal the union-busting law."

Brown says the threats to workers rights are the worst in 100 years, and they are real.

"At a time when people say that money buys campaigns, Ohio workers stood up and said don't demonize public workers for the failing economy," he said.

"We are at a critical time"

Massachusetts Senator John Kerry told fire fighters at the

IAFF Legislative Conference that there is nothing more special than the loyalty of the brotherhood and sisterhood displayed in the fire service.

Kerry, who quipped that he wrote his speech on a etch-a-sketch, noted that what the country faces at this time is no laughing matter. "The gap between truth and lies grows deeper as some politicians are pushing their own ideologies that aren't in line with the rest of the country," he said. "Collective bargaining has nothing to do with the deficit of our nation," he continued. "No one in the U.S. Congress is talking about raising taxes."

The economy is turning around, but America needs to invest in its

infrastructure in order to move forward. Kerry said that public employees aren't to be blamed for the economy – it's the policies that allowed tax breaks for the top 1 percent are to blame.

"You can't cut your way to prosperity," he said. "You have to invest your way to prosperity."

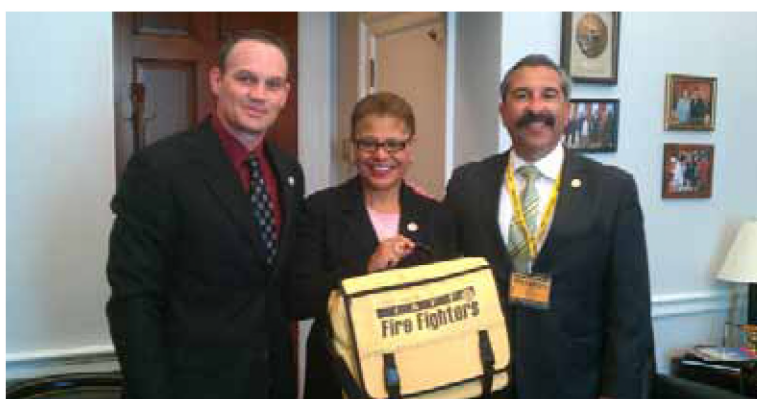
Carville gets plenty of laughs at annual conference

Political strategist James Carville told fire fighters they don't have the luxury to sit back while public employees and their rights are being attacked.

"Go out and get the job done and protect your tradition," he told delegates at the IAFF 2012 Legislative Conference.



Frank Lima, Adam Schiff, Tony Gamboa, Lew Stone



Frank Lima, Karen Bass, Tony Gamboa



Tony Gamboa, Howard Berman, Frank Lima

Determination and Commitment Unites Delegates

Assemblyman Ben Hueso (D - Chula Vista) introduced AB 936 to bring transparency to the decision making processes governing California's community redevelopment agencies. These costly and often-corrupt agencies divert over \$5 billion a year in property taxes into developer projects at the expense of core services like schools, public safety and care for the needy.

Redevelopment agencies an-

nually divert 12 percent of all property taxes statewide, while state and local budgets are in a fiscal meltdown. These precious property tax dollars are skimmed from local governments that provide vital services -- such as fire districts-- and, in doing, so create a requirement that the State, with its ever-shrinking revenues, provide a backfill.

These same RDA's, through the use of creative budgeting tactics

or, in some cases, 11th hour administrative actions, avoid full disclosure of funding decisions benefitting their RDAs and in turn, their citizens have been kept in the dark as to the impact of these decisions on the city's mission to fund core local services.

The best solution is to eliminate RDAs. Short of that, the only way to restore a sense of integrity and re-build the public's trust in this regard is to ensure an open

process when RDA-related budgeting.

AB 936 does this by requiring any matter on a public agency's meeting agenda that would result in forgiving a loan, advance, or indebtedness of a redevelopment agency be made public at a meeting -- and not as a consent item -- at least two weeks before being voted on by that agency's governing body.

This bill further requires a chief

financial official be present at such a meeting to provide the status of the financial health of the agency's funds, as well as demonstrate how the agency is able to effectively continue providing services to the public absent the repayment of the debt proposed to be forgiven and the public interest in doing so.

www.cpf.org

Veteran's Corner

LAFD Members Salute Iwo Jima Veterans

REUNION OF HONOR

On March 9, 2012 members of Fire Station 80 were on hand at terminal 7 to meet and greet the families, friends and actual survivors of the "Battle of Iwo Jima".

Annually veterans return to the island to pay their respect to their fallen comrade's.

They were met with music from that era, USMC Color Guard, patriotic songs sung by the LAX TSA Choir, certificates, WWII

official veterans flags, TSA honor coins and much more.

Fire Station 80 rendered a "Water Salute" as the aircraft carrying the guests taxied for take off. What an honor it was to celebrate and thank those from the greatest generation of all time!

By Bill Staples,
USMC SGT MAJ (Ret)



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In Memory Of...

James A. Perry
Editor from 1969-2009



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The Los Angeles Firefighter

(ISSN #0190-7573)

Local 112, IAFF AFL-CIO-CLC

Official Publication of the United Firefighters of Los Angeles City is

Published Bi-Monthly

Periodical Postage paid at Los Angeles, CA

Known Office of Publication is

United Firefighters of Los Angeles City,

1571 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles,

California 90026-5798

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to The Los Angeles Firefighter

1571 Beverly Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90026-5798

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California Professional Fire Fighters, AFL-CIO

L.A. County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO

California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO

American Federation of Labor

International Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO-CLC

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This union newspaper is printed by a union printer on union-made recycled paper.

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www.lacity.org/pen

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The Los Angeles Firefighter strives to maintain accuracy and fairness in all stories, graphics, photographs and other copy that appears in our union newspaper. It is our practice to correct errors in the issue immediately following their discovery.

If you have a correction or clarification request, please call the UFLAC office at (800) 252-8352 or email us at adamvfire@gmail.com.

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@UFLAC

General Membership Meeting

(2nd Pay Period of Every Month)

9:00 a.m., March 21, 2012, Wednesday,
“B” Shift Working

9:00 a.m., April 18, 2012, Wednesday,
“C” Shift Working

Location – James A. Perry Labor Center

1571 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026

Refreshments and Free Parking Available

Station Stewards
May / June 2012

001	A	Mark B. Stafford
001	B	David Braun
002	A	Michael Seiser
004	B	Edward Larini
005	A	Mario A. Garcia
007	A	Nicholas Gonzales
008	C	Mark Kleckner
009	a	Felipe Villegas
010	C	Kevin Willis
011	C	Gregory C. Malais
015	A	Cameron R. Kennedy
018	C	L. Scott Gribbons
021	A	Harold Raphael
027	C	Ted Nonini
033	A	Craig Poulson
034	C	Joseph Smith
035	C	Daniel Foote
037	A	Jose Holguin
037	C	Christopher Martinez
037	A	Jose Holguin
038	C	Richard Shortle
039	A	John Cardenas
042	C	Ruben Terrazas
043	B	John Balich
044	A	Charles Garcia
044	B	David Raya
047	C	Mark Rousseau
047	B	Chris Stellern
049	C	Stephen Meiche
056	C	Oliver Fry
058	C	Kris Larson
059	A	Ryan Howes
061	C	Martin Enriquez
062	B	Alicia Mathis
064	A	Christopher Bustamante
066	A	John Marasco
066	C	Anthony R. Temple
068	A	Andrew Balandis
069	A	Marc Samama
069	B	Raymond Cuevas
072	C	Henry Gasparri
075	A	Adam M. VanGerpen
075	C	Daniel Castillo
076	C	Francisco “Frank” Hurtado
077	B	M. Benjamin J. Rossell
079	A	Scott Carter
080	C	Brendan O’Connor
083	C	Rigo Arellano
084	A	Thomas G. Chamberlin
085	A	Ed Campos
085	A	Hector Hernandez
085	B	John Maestri
085	C	Charles Herrera
087	C	Kenny Breskin
090	C	Daniel Mattera
092	A	Christopher Contreras
096	A	Ryan Quigley
096	B	James Krebs
098	B	Dario Reyes
101	A	Pat McOsker
102	C	George James
103	A	Robert Perez
103	A	Shawn Connolly
104	B	Glen A. Kratkin
105	B	Keith Massey
109	B	Benjamin R. Guzman
111	B	Harold Hix
112	C	John Donato
114	B	Jacob Ryan
CIU	S	Jeff Rickey
VFP	S	Scott Miller
VPP	S	Russell K. Rawls
VIU	S	David Riles

Union Stewards Needed

We are in the process of reorganizing and updating our Union Stewards Program. It is our goal to have a Union Steward at every work location. Current and prospective Stewards are requested to contact the James A. Perry Labor Center at (800) 252-8352.

Newspaper Mailing List

If you are receiving this newspaper and have a change of address or would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call the union office at (800) 252-8352, Ext. 208 or email Maria Riggs at mriggs@uflac.org



Editors Corner

By Adam VanGerpen,
@avangerpen
Editor

Social Media

Slowly but surely UFLAC is building a following in the Social Media World. We are actively sending real time Tweets and Facebook updates. If you are not already following us on Twitter search for @UFLAC. You should also add @LAFDTalk and @LAFD for all your LAFD related information.

If you are new to Twitter and feel overwhelmed there is a simple way to search for LAFD or IAFF information. When you do a search use a hashtag or # symbol. Ex: #IAFF, #LAFD, #SMEEM.

Feel free to contact me if you are sceptical or do not yet realize how Twitter can help to keep you informed.

There are many advantages to-

Social Media and a few disadvantages. Social Media can be harmful if used inappropriately. As we have mentioned in previous articles several firefighters have been disciplined or even fired for things they posted on Facebook and Twitter.

Please make sure that you use common sense when posting on Facebook and Twitter. When at the Fire Station always keep HIPPA in the back of your mind. When you are off duty think of how your employer would react to information you post.

Always remember that the things you post on Facebook and Twitter never go away.

Technology

Technology is progressing at an alarming rate. All the gadgets in the world will never replace good ole fashion common sense and hands on but it can make your job safer and more efficient. ISTS

is working hard to bring modern technology to every fire station. All stations now have Mac Computers for training and hopefully in the near future will have Apple TVs so members don't need to crowd around the computer for training.

New books coming out from LAFD will now be digital with hyperlinks and the ability to make changes instantly. The new EMS / ePCR Book should be hitting the field shortly and will be LAFD's first entirely digital book. A new Electronic Drill Manual is also in the works with pictures, videos, and hyperlinks.

Health & Safety

Cardiac disease continues to be one of the number one killers of firefighters and is often times preventable. We urge all members to check your blood pressure often and get regular physicals from your physician.

I recently attended the Memorial of our LACoFD brother Captain David Bailey and it was heartbreaking to learn that he was only 50 years old at the time of his untimely passing. Captain Bailey appeared to be in perfect health and had no outside indicators of cardiac problems.

The same day we learned about David Bailey's death there was also a near death of a LAFD Captain. Fortunately the LAFD member was on duty when he went into Cardiac Arrest and was immediately shocked with the AED into a viable heart rhythm. The Captain was at Cedars Sinai Hospital in less than 15 minutes from the time of the incident and immediately went into the Cath

Lab.

Our member is alive and doing well today because of the quick actions of his crew and the rapid transportation to the appropriate facility. Had there been a delay in the response or transportation time we could have had a completely different outcome.

Once again, please take the time to check and record your blood pressure and see your Dr.

Cancer

Chances are extremely high that you know or work with several people who have had cancer. I recently had the opportunity to visit a firefighter who is recovering from Chemotherapy.

Make sure that you document all exposures to carcinogens. Keep a personal log and do an exposure report at the fire station.

Make that you get regular check ups from your Dr. for all

types of cancer including colon and prostate cancer.

There are several things you can do to try and prevent cancer at the fire station. Taking a shower and washing your turnout after every fire are the best ways to try and prevent cancer.

Overhaul

We all know overhaul is the dirtiest part of firefighting. Overhaul can also be the most dangerous part of firefighting. As we have previously discussed, recent studies have shown the alarming number of cancer causing particulates floating in the air during the overhaul phase of the fire.

Wearing respirators can block some of the larger particulates in the air but your SCBA is the only thing that will block all the carcinogens. At a minimum you should be wearing a paper mask during overhaul. Members should consider wearing SCBA's for maximum protection.



Congratulations to LAFD PSO's Erik Scott, Matt Spence, and Brian Humphrey who recently received Letters of Appreciation at a Fire Commission Meeting for their work on the LAFD Blog.



Two Jima survivor Private William Seltzer and Editor Adam VanGerpen at Reunion of Honor Salute at LAX.



Line-Of-Duty-Death



Captain Dave Bailey, LACoFD



We are deeply saddened by the sudden and tragic loss of Los Angeles County Fire Captain David Bailey. Captain Bailey was leading wildland fire training with inmate firefighters at Camp 14 in Santa Clarita when he suddenly became ill. Bailey, 50 is survived by his wife.

Funeral services were being planned Wednesday for a Los Angeles County Fire Department captain who died suddenly while exercising, a county official.

Capt. David Bailey, 50, suffered a medical emergency around 11:30 a.m. Tuesday while exercising at Camp 14 on the 3100 block of San Francisquito Canyon Road in Saugus, Fire Department Capt. Mark Savage said.

"Department chaplains will meet with his family today to discuss funeral arrangements," Savage said Wednesday.

Bailey, 50, was a resident of Acton and an 18-year-veteran of the Fire Department. He was assigned to Fire Station 135 in Lancaster.

"Our hearts go out to his family," Savage said. "I knew him personally and he's going to be missed for sure," he said. "It's just a huge loss for the entire service."

Bailey is survived by his wife, Lisa. They have no children.

Agencies from across Southern California gathered to honor the memory of Captain Dave Bailey at Grace Baptist Church in Santa Clarita.

LACoFD did an outstanding job in planning the very moving tribute to an outstanding firefighter. One of the highlights of the ceremony was when the speaker had everybody stand up with certain certifications. As additional certifications were called out it was apparent that Capt Bailey had more certifications than anybody in attendance.

As a final tribute a line of Fire Apparatus stretched across the Santa Clarita valley in his honor. It was a huge procession of honor with apparatus as far as the eye could see. Rest in Peace Dave.



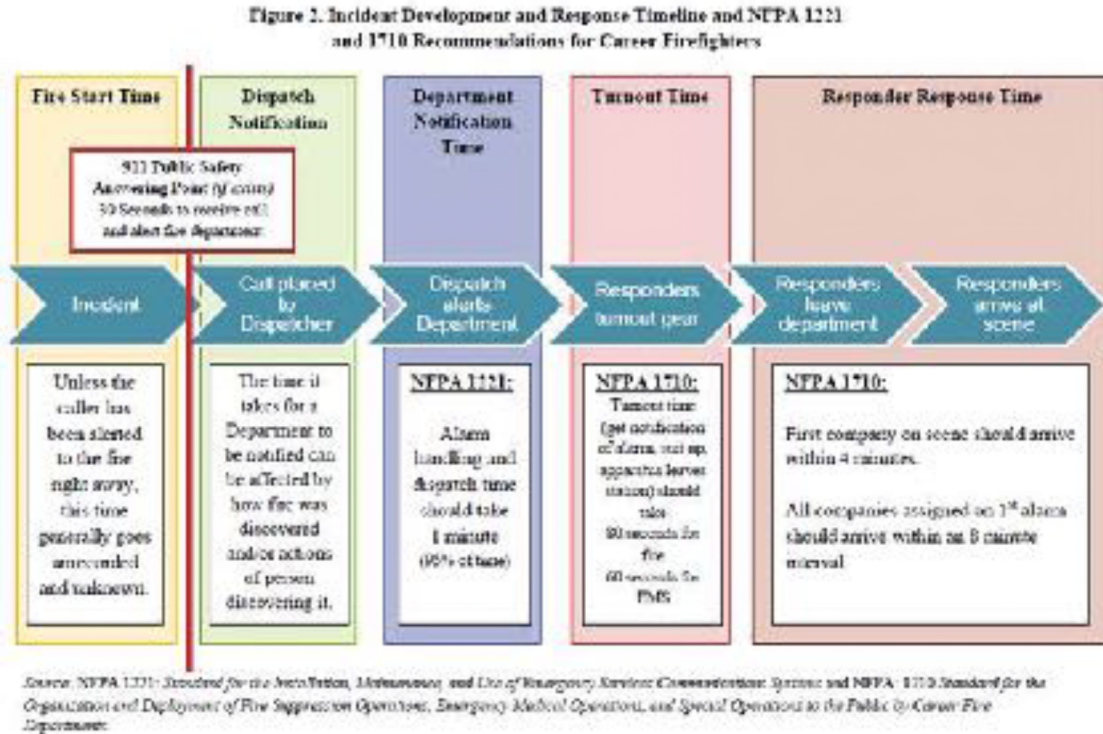
Photos By Adam VanGerpen, Editor

Opinion of Craig Nielsen re LAFD Adequacy In The Project Area

I joined the LAFD in March 1983 and retired in 2016 as a Captain II, having served as a captain at Station 92 for nine years. Station 92s first-in area covers the Westwood Expo station as well as much of West LA and Century City. My full qualifications are attached.

Response Times

Adequate response times are critical to the preservation of life and property. Response times are defined as shown in the chart below.



Emergency calls are first received by the primary public safety access point which is either the LAPD or CHP depending on whether a landline or cellphone is used.

Once the dispatcher determines that the call is related to the fire department, the dispatcher contacts LAFD Metro Dispatch and remains on the line until the LAFD dispatcher is available.

The LAFD dispatcher determines the nature of the emergency and dispatches the appropriate resources. Due to increased demand and reduced staffing, the dispatched units may be far from the actual incident. Dispatch Time runs from the moment the LAFD dispatcher takes the call to the moment resources are dispatched. Dispatch time is deemed adequate if it is completed within one minute 95% of the time (see NFPA 1221 above).

At the station, “Turnout Time” begins from the time the alarm sounds in the station to the moment the vehicles are enroute. Turnout Time refers to the amount of time it takes firefighters to get to their equipment and get underway. For fires this includes an extra twenty seconds for donning protective gear. Turnout Time is deemed adequate if it is 80 seconds for fire and 60 seconds for EMS.

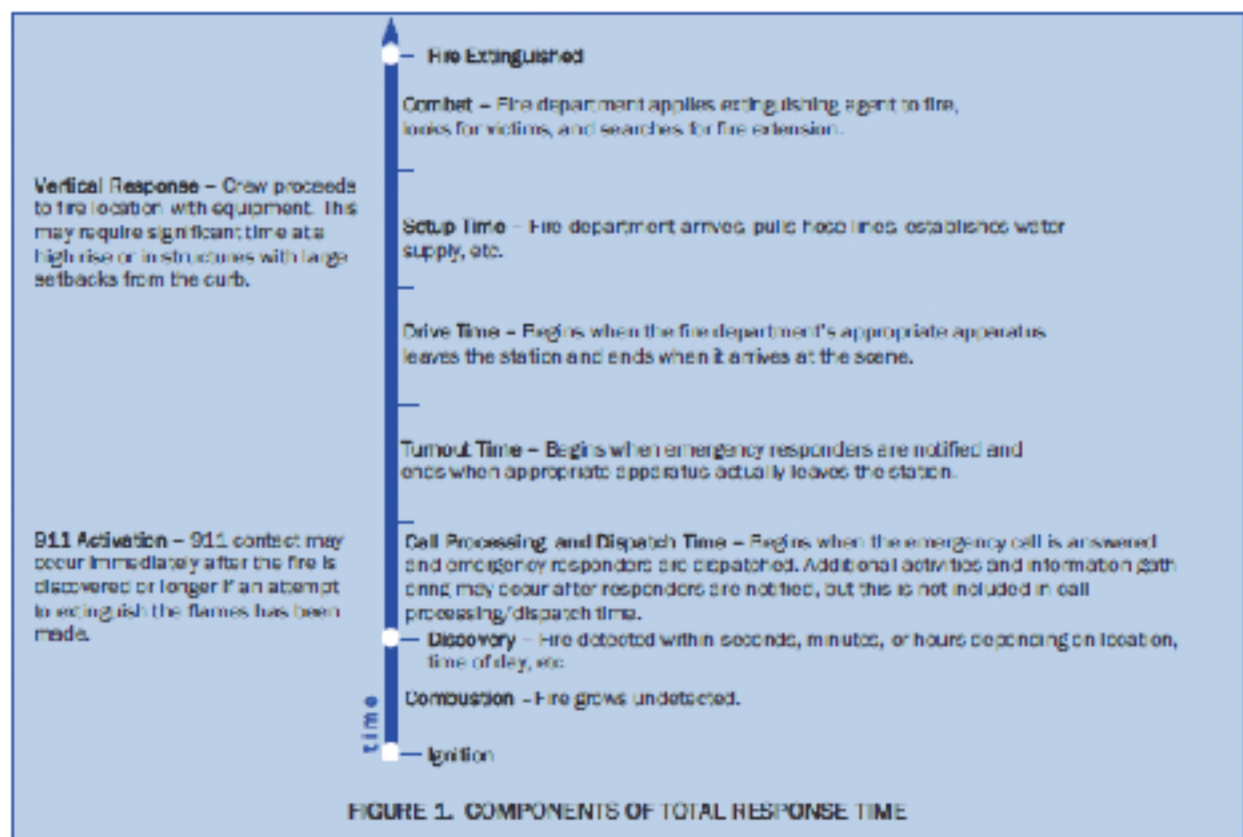
Once firefighters leave the station, Travel Time starts. Travel Time ends when the firefighters are on scene. To be deemed adequate, resources should arrive within four minutes. All companies assigned should arrive within eight minutes.

“Operational Time” is comprised of dispatch time, turnout time and travel time.

“Response Time” is comprised of turnout time and travel time.

Response time is deemed adequate when 90% of the calls are handled within five minutes (for EMS) and five minutes, 20 seconds for fire.

The process relative to a fire is shown below:



Consequences of inadequate response time

The consequences for inadequate response time can be dire. As shown in the chart below, cardiac incident survival drops by approximately 10% per minute. For fire response, a difference of one minute is the difference between a fire being confined to the room of origin and spreading to the entire building as shown below.

EMS	Fire
<p>Figure 4. Percentages of survival to hospital discharge for paramedic response time and stratified by risk group from reported EMS data. All patients were categorized into low-risk (□), intermediate-risk (○), or high-risk (●) groups. The high-risk group included all traumatic and nontraumatic cardiac arrest patients, the intermediate-risk group included all suicide attempts, accidental exposures, unconscious patients, those with penetrating trauma, those with respiratory complaints, and those who were hypotensive in the out-of-hospital setting. All other patients were grouped into the low-risk category. *CIs were not calculated for these response times due to sparse data.</p> <p><small>Reed, P. E., Hootman, E. G., Edwards, W., Cline, J., Jones, K. A., & Hirschman, V. J. (2015). Paramedic response time doesn't affect patient survival? A systematic review of evidence after cardiac arrest. <i>Journal of American Paramedic Association</i>, 12(3), 344-350. Wiley Online Library. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25995288</small></p>	<p>FIGURE 5. MEAN RESPONSE TIMES VS. FLAME SPREAD</p> <p>Confined to object of origin: 6.6</p> <p>Confined to room of origin: 6.7</p> <p>Confined to floor of origin: 6.7</p> <p>Confined to building of origin: 7.5</p> <p>Beyond building of origin: 8.3</p>

Travel Time

Travel time in the West LA area is impacted by heavy traffic congestion which has increasingly deteriorated over time as density in the area increases. In addition, drivers often fail to yield to emergency vehicles. Pedestrians and bike riders also regularly impede emergency vehicles.

Further, the increased use of speed bumps/tables to restrict cut-through traffic from increased density and to reduce speed through neighborhoods also serves to slow down emergency response.

In those areas where traffic lanes have been lost to bike lanes, the resulting vehicular congestion materially impacts travel time.

Finally, the construction of the Expo line at-grade through West LA causes additional delays for first responders. In several instances, my station's response was materially delayed by the train.

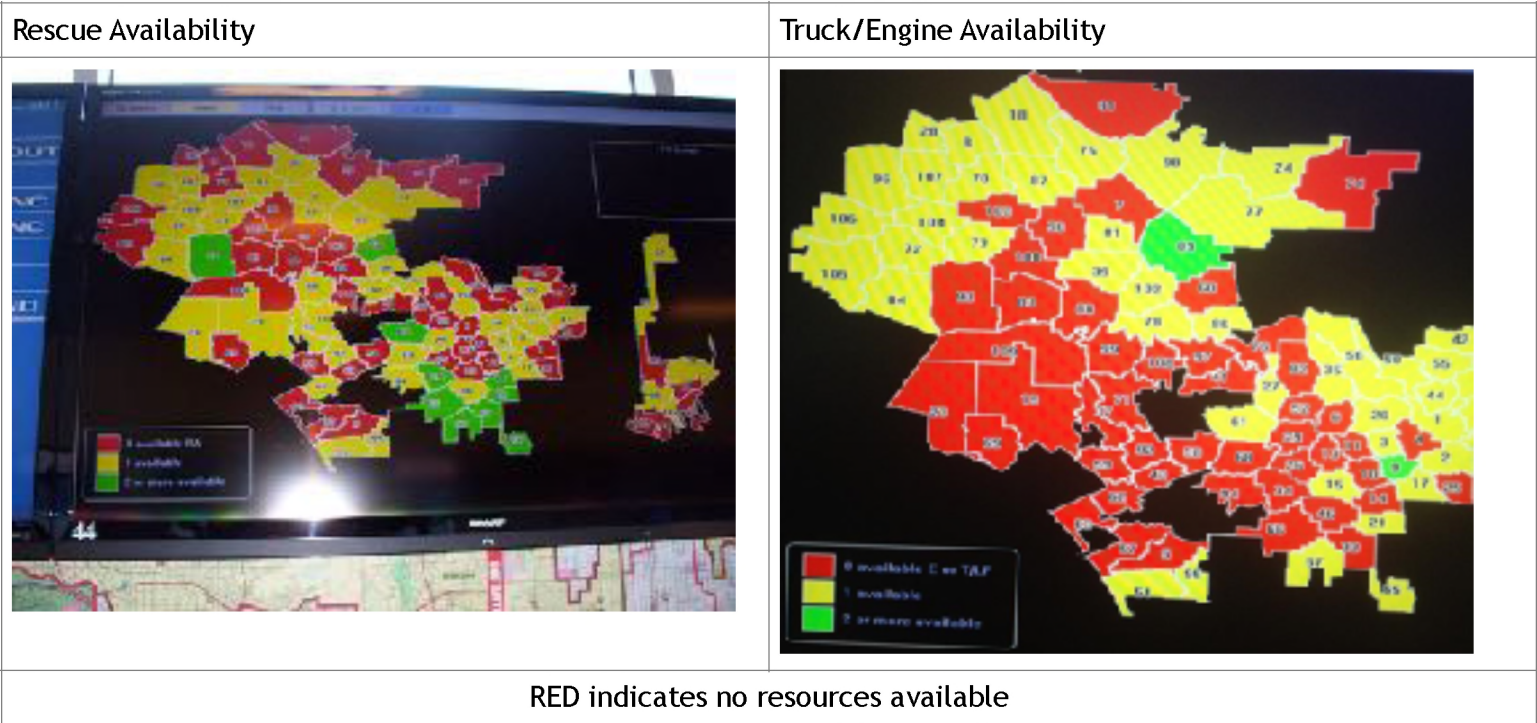
As can clearly be seen in a review of response times, travel time continues to be the primary reason for deteriorating travel times.

It should also be pointed out that due to decreased first-responder availability, we were often called to distant emergencies which required extended travel through the city at heavily congested times. For example, it was not uncommon for Station 92 to be dispatched to Hollywood during rush hour.

Staffing

At Station 92, which is responsible for Century City, there are fewer firefighters than there were in the late 70s. Station 92 was reduced from full task force to a light force in 2010 as a result of budget cuts. The budget cuts essentially cut the staffing and response capabilities in half. This substantially diminishes the ability of the station to respond to major emergencies and also to respond to multiple simultaneous smaller emergencies.

Reduced staffing and increased demand has resulted in first-responder services being provided by distant stations. As shown in the two pictures below from LAFD Dispatch, vast areas of the City are left without a rescue or engine from nearby stations. The result is dispatch from distant stations.



Incidents of unavailability are increasing over time due to increased demand and a decreased number of first responders. While the department recently started hiring again, recruitment is not keeping up with retirement. Not only does this replace experienced firefighters with rookie firefighters, but it also causes all firefighters to work more hours with the resulting fatigue and increased physical strain.

Response times for 92, 43, 59, 37, 58.

As a captain, I am highly aware of response time statistics for LAFD. FireStatLA displays only AVERAGE response time instead of the adopted metric proscribed in NFPA 1710. Regardless, for each of the stations in the project area, the average response times are in excess of five minutes and are not adequate.

The proper metric is NFPA 1710 which is used as a metric because averaged outliers can give the false impression of adequacy. Based on the proper metric of the percentage of time the response is within five minutes (5:20 for fire).

I have reviewed the raw data and calculations used for the results shown below. They are consistent with the results found by both the LA Controller and the Grand Jury.

As you can see, response times for each of the stations is alarmingly inadequate.

LAFD FIRE		2016		Response Time Analysis							Turnout		Travel	
Standard: 90% within 5:00														
	Avg	Avg		Avg	Avg			NFPA						
First In	Dispatch	Turnout	Avg Travel	Response	Operational	#Incidents	#OnTime	1710	Rank	TurnOut	Rank	Travel	Rank	
37	0:00:53	0:01:07	0:04:25	0:05:32	0:06:15	975	535	54.9%	66	65.8%	57	51.9%	49	
43	0:00:55	0:00:53	0:04:28	0:05:21	0:06:16	431	259	60.1%	51	81.1%	47	50.9%	51	
58	0:00:51	0:00:54	0:04:48	0:05:42	0:06:12	803	438	54.5%	67	81.4%	46	46.3%	65	
59	0:00:52	0:00:59	0:04:40	0:05:28	0:06:10	631	343	54.4%	68	87.1%	11	39.8%	84	
71	0:00:57	0:00:53	0:05:19	0:06:13	0:07:10	284	142	50.0%	80	84.4%	27	43.9%	71	
92	0:00:57	0:00:50	0:04:50	0:05:40	0:06:17	496	248	50.0%	80	85.1%	16	41.7%	77	
All LAFD	0:00:54	0:00:58	0:04:29	0:05:18	0:06:12	51,610	31,683	61.4%		3.0%				
Citywide Dispatch Standard per NFPA 1221							Combined NFPA 1710 Citywide							
		Standard: 90%		Standard 95%		Type	Incidents	On Time		Pct OnTime	Pct Calls			
	Incidents	1:04	Actual%	1:46	Actual%	All	402,897	220,354		54.7%	100.0%			
FIRE	53,515	37.17	69.5%	48,959	91.5%	EMS	351,287	188,671		53.7%	87.2%			
* Assumes that all EMS calls are of the class that allows for a longer dispatch time.						FIRE	51,610	31,683		61.4%	12.8%			
Citywide Turnout Standard per NFPA 1710						© 2017 Fix The City								
		Standard: 90%												
	Incidents	1:00	Actual%											
FIRE	52,829	40.56	76.8%											
Methodology: http://www.lafd.org/how-we-calculate-results														
Source: Data Lacity.Org https://data.lacity.org/A-Safe-City/LAFD_ResponseMetrics_RawData/cfh-nnngn														

LAFD	EMS	2015 Response Time Analysis								Turnout		Travel		
Standard: 90% within 5:00														
Fint In	Avg Dispatch	Avg Turnout	Avg Travel	Avg Response	Avg Operational	#Incidents	#OnTime	NFPA 1710	Rank	TurnOut	Rank	Travel	Rank	
37	0:01:04	0:00:34	0:04:42	0:05:36	0:06:00	4610	2162	46.9%	70	61.5%	67	43.5%	69	
43	0:01:00	0:00:47	0:04:06	0:04:53	0:05:53	2596	1682	64.8%	15	71.8%	18	59.8%	17	
58	0:01:02	0:00:30	0:04:29	0:05:19	0:06:21	5052	2564	50.8%	56	69.1%	32	46.6%	54	
59	0:01:00	0:00:47	0:04:35	0:05:22	0:06:22	3250	1666	51.3%	52	70.8%	25	44.9%	63	
71	0:01:00	0:00:51	0:05:08	0:05:54	0:06:55	1152	564	49.0%	60	68.3%	39	44.5%	65	
92	0:01:04	0:00:48	0:04:55	0:05:43	0:06:46	2139	896	41.9%	86	76.9%	24	36.8%	88	
All LAFD	0:01:01	0:00:51	0:04:25	0:05:16	0:06:17	351,287	188,671	53.7%		6.0%				
Citywide Dispatch Standard per NFPA 1221								Combined NFPA 1710 Citywide						
Incidents		Standard: 90% 1:10 Actual%		Standard 99% 2:00 Actual%		Type	Incidents	On Time	Pct OnTime	Pct Calls				
EMS	359,685	293,721	81.7%	331,790	92.2%	All	402,897	220,354	54.7%	100.0%				
						EMS	351,287	188,671	51.7%	87.2%				
						Fire	51,610	31,683	61.4%	12.8%				
Citywide Turnout Standard per NFPA 1710								© 2017 Fix The City						
Incidents		Standard: 90% 1:00 Actual%												
EMS	357,492	239,875	67.1%											
Methodology: http://www.lafd.org/how-we-calculate-results														
Source: Data Lacity.Org: https://data.lacity.org/A-Safe-City/LAFD_ResponseMetrics_RawData/cfhfmgm														

To further validate the statistics provided above, I compared the averages to those provided on FireStatLA. They are in substantial agreement.

	EMS	FIRE
2016	<p>STATION 92 RESPONSE METRICS JANUARY - DECEMBER 2016</p>	<p>STATION 92 RESPONSE METRICS JANUARY - DECEMBER 2016</p>
2017	<p>STATION 92 RESPONSE METRICS JANUARY - DECEMBER 2017</p>	<p>STATION 92 RESPONSE METRICS JANUARY - DECEMBER 2017</p>

Larger structures equate to longer response times.

It is important to understand that provided first-responder services for larger structures consumes far more time. This time is not necessarily reflected in the response times as travel time ends when units arrive on scene.

Gaining entry into larger structures, securing elevators and travel up to higher floors results in longer effective response times.

Also important when evaluating adequacy of fire/rescue service availability is the proximity of a ladder company to larger structures. In the project area, Station 92 is the only ladder company. It covers all of Century City and would be responsible for increased density in the project area. Instead of having its first-responder capabilities increased with higher density, Station 92 lost an engine in 2010 reducing it from a Task Force to a Light Force.

A map of project stations is provided on the following pages.

I have also included a description of certain LAFD vehicles.

Respectfully,

Craig A. Nielsen, Captain II - Retired

Los Angeles Fire Department

July 3rd, 2018



From the LAFD website:

LAFD Triple Combination Fire Engine







LAFD Engine Company - all LAFD Engines are Triple Combination apparatus, meaning they can pump water, carry hose, and have a water tank. Commonly called, "triples" by firefighters, these powerful fire engines are the core of the city's fire defense system. LAFD engines are designed specifically for the diverse needs of the City of Los Angeles. They are housed in single engine fire stations, as well as at task force stations with companion truck companies. This example is a brand new 2010 KME, one of a series of new KME apparatus, designed and built exclusively for the LAFD. These KME triples are unlike any built for other agencies, including but not limited to the LAcFD. Special features include 4-wheel disc brakes, a brush box (for wildfire equipment) that is built in to the unit (rather than sitting on top, creating more drag and reducing fuel efficiency), and advanced lighting and monitor controls.

LAFD Truck Company

The LAFD operates a number of Aerial Ladder Fire Engines - called "Truck Companies" in LA firefighter jargon. However, these powerful apparatus are rarely assigned to run on their own. Typically, a Truck Company runs with a single Engine in a configuration called a "Light Force." Or, when running with two engines, the term "Task Force" is used. The Task Force concept was developed during the Watts Riots in 1965 as a way for firefighters to have flexibility in the jobs they performed. Today, the Task Force and Light Force concepts continue to have merit, but their role may evolve as the department continues to find new methods of operating efficiently and effectively.

LAFD Task Force

The Task Force concept was developed during the Watts Riots in 1965. Essentially, a group of fire apparatus run together to incidents, thereby allowing the firefighters to be flexible relative to addressing the emergency they've been called to. When a Truck runs with one engine, it is referred to as a Light Force. A Light Force is used for a wide array of emergencies, ranging from structure fires to traffic accidents, to cardiac arrest (manpower is very important for heart-related emergencies). Firefighters rotate from position to position, so they are familiar with every "spot" on every rig and the related job descriptions and requirements.

	Truck Company	LAFD Triple Combination Fire Engine	Rescue (ALS)	Rescue (BLS) - 800s	Light Force	Task Force
Vehicle(s)						
Comments, Attributes	Neither holds nor pumps water.	Pumps water, carries hose, and has a water tank			Truck Company + Engine	Truck Company + Two Engines
Staffing	5 FFs	4 FFs	2 FF/Paramedics	2 FF/EMTDs		

Fire Service History

- 33 years in the fire service
 - Emergency Dispatcher, Designated Trainer, Medical Priority Protocols
 - Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
 - 12 years as an Fire Engineer
 - 16 years as a Fire Captain
 - Career Guidance Counselor
 - **Live Fire Training Officer – 2002 through 2006**
 - Developed and administered the Los Angeles Fire Department's Live Fire Training Program to over 3400 firefighters.
 - **Driver Training Officer**
 - Developed and administered the Los Angeles Fire Department's Emergency Vehicle Operation Course (EVOC).
 - **Equipment and Engineering Officer**
 - Charged with developing apparatus and equipment specifications.
 - Budgeting and finance.
 - Procurement and acceptance of apparatus and equipment.
 - Testing and evaluating new equipment
- **Draeger/Swede Survival Instructor – 1998 to 2015**

Education and Training

- Santa Ana College – State Fire Officer Certification
- Los Angeles Valley College – Associate Science Degree Fire Science
- State Certified Fire Instructor 1 and 2

Certificates

- Swede Survival Systems – Phase I, Phase II, Phase III, Phase IV, and Phase V
 - Classes conducted at SRSA in Sweden.
- California State Certified – Senior Instructor
 - Fire Control 3
 - Fire Control 4
 - Los Angeles City Personnel Department
 - Teaming to Win, Delivering Exceptional Customer Service
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
 - Emergency Response to Terrorism
- Fred Prior Seminars
 - Business Writing for Professionals
- Part-time Teaching credential from the State of California

Graduated Training Academy on March 14, 1983

Fire Station 11 (Avarado X 7th St.) Firefighter II
March 1983 to August 1983.

Fire Station 13 (Pico X Union) Firefighter II
August 1983 to November 1983)

Fire Station 29 (Western X 2nd St.) Firefighter III
November 1983 to November 1986

Operation Control and Dispatch (OCD) Firefighter/Emergency Dispatcher
November 1986 to August 1989

Fire Station 64 (Main X 100th St.) Engineer
August 1989 to April 1992

Fire Station 61 (La Brea X 3rd St.) Engineer
April 1992 to April 1993

Fire Station 88 Pacima (Van Nuys X Glenoaks) Engineer
April 1993 to May 1993

Fire Station 2 Boyle Heights (Cesar Chavez X State St.) Engineer
May 1998 to February 2000

Fire Station 29 (Wilshire X Western) Chief Staff Assistant
February 2000 to February 2001

Fire Station 9 (7th X San Julian) Captain I
February 2001 to February 2003

In-Service Training Section (ISTS) Captain I
February 2003 to February 2005

Fire Station 12 Highland Park (Figueroa X Ave 60) Captain I
February 2005 to February 2006

Fire Station 73 Reseda (Reseda Bl. X Sherman Way) Captain I
February 2006 to June 2006

Fire Station 12 Highland Park (Figueroa X Ave 60) Captain II
June 2006 to December 2006

Equipment and Engineering Unit Commander Captain II
December 2006 to December 2008

Fire Station 92 (Pico X Prosser) Captain II
December 2008 to June 2010