Cal Chiefs honor Chief Stefano for his steady leadership as association president

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Chief Dan Stefano was recognized at the annual conference of the California Fire Chiefs Association for his outstanding leadership during his tenure as the association's president.

Fire department leaders from across the state of California converged in San Diego for the conference, held during the week of Sept. 13, to train, engage and recognize leadership in the state's fire service. Chief Stefano was credited by his peers for bringing dynamic collaborative leadership and organizational oversight to the organization as the President since 2019.

"It has been an absolute honor and privilege to serve as a part of our extremely talented and engaged full Board of Directors and Section Leadership of CalChiefs, particularly at this snapshot in time, as the California fire service

continues to navigate back-to-back years of historic wildfires, an unprecedented pandemic, civil unrest, natural disasters, terrorism threats, behavioral and mental health challenges, and so much more,” Chief Stefano said. “The California Fire Service is stronger and more unified as ever, holding an unwavering priority of focus on our incredible women and men who serve, and most certainly to the communities and people who we all serve, 24/7/365!”

During Chief Stefano’s closing comments, he highlighted the incredible support he received from the City Council, City Manager Lori Ann Farrell-Harrison and the City Leadership Team, as well as the entire CMFR team and his family. He emphasized that only through this incredible support that he was afforded this opportunity to actively engage at both the state and national levels, with the best interests of the California Fire Service and the City of Costa Mesa in mind.

Chief Stefano passed the presidential baton to Ontario Fire Chief Ray Gayk, who was installed as the new Cal Chiefs President. CMFR Chief Stefano will remain an active member of the Cal Chiefs Executive Board and will serve as the Past

President for the next term.

Stefano also thanked the Orange County's Fire Service and the outstanding leadership team that was strongly represented through the attendance by Fountain Valley Fire Chief Ron Cookston, Newport Beach Fire Chief Jeff Boyles, Orange City Fire Chief Sean deMetroplis, Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano, Orange Country Fire Authority Fire Chief Brian Fennessy, and Brea/Fullerton Fire Chief Adam Loeser.

Also a strong representation of the CMFR team was present including Division Chief Jason Pyle, Battalion Chief Chris Coates, Fire Marshal Jon Neal, Community Risk Reduction Specialist Brenda Emrick, Executive Assistant Lora Ross and Management Analyst Kristin Stevens.

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue crews to conduct training exercises in Canyon park

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue will conduct additional training exercises June 24 through June 26, 2020 in and around Canyon Park in preparation for the upcoming wildland fire season, as well as the July Fourth holiday. Exercises will occur daily between 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue wants to ensure the community is aware of the upcoming training and asks residents and park visitors to be mindful of fire department apparatus, equipment, and preparations conducted by fire personnel. These training exercises take place in Costa Mesa and countywide to help prepare the firefighters for vegetation fires within and outside city limits. The training is an extension of the

recent training exercises that occurred in Fairview Park which improves area knowledge and the tactics taken to combat wild fires.

“California is coming off one of the most catastrophic wildfire years in history and with the Fourth of July holiday upon us, this training is an imperative piece in our overall preparations.” Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano said. “We will continue to be unwavering in our efforts to be proactive, engaged with community, and well-prepared for any emergency, which is a testament to all of our professional men and women who serve with passion, professionalism and pride 24/7/365!”

There will be approximately 12 fire personnel present for the training and two to three pieces of fire apparatus daily. Firefighters will train on a couple of trails in Canyon Park where there is dense vegetation and moderate terrain features. The training is conducted to promote safety, mitigation, terrain recognition, and area familiarization while focusing on the fundamentals of wildland firefighting. Moreover, the department is conducting the training with full awareness and sensitivity of all environmental impacts and ensures this training will exclude any live burn training modules. The training will also adhere to County and City requirements/recommendations in regards to COVID19 safety precautions. The training is facilitated with the assistance of the Costa Mesa Parks and Community Services Department.

For questions please contact Captain Joseph Noceti, Public Information Officer at (714) 754-5091.

State legislature unanimously votes to name portion of 55 Freeway after Capt. Mike Kreza

On Monday, Aug. 26, the California State Senate approved Resolution SCR 21 to name a portion of the 55 Freeway after Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Captain Mike Kreza, who was fatally struck by a vehicle while riding his bike off duty in November of 2018.

The freeway will be named the Costa Mesa Fire Captain Michael Kreza Memorial Highway from 19th Street in Costa Mesa to MacArthur Boulevard.

“Fire Captain ‘Ironman’ Mike Kreza will always be in our hearts and now his memory will be imprinted within the gateway to the community for which he loved and served for 18 years,” Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano said. “The Costa Mesa fire family is grateful for this incredibly special tribute to Captain Kreza, an honor we will all treasure, most notably his wife Shanna and their daughters Kaylie, Layla, and Audrey.”

Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley also expressed her gratitude for the honor.

“It is so fitting that there will now be a memorial highway that runs through our city bearing the name of Capt. Mike Kreza,” Mayor Foley said. “He was a distinguished Costa Mesa firefighter and much-loved family man, whose character, integrity, and singular commitment to Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue earned him the respect and admiration of his fellow firefighters, the members of the greater Costa Mesa community and the countless other individuals whose lives he touched.”

SCR 21 was first introduced by Orange County state Senators Patricia Bates and John Moorlach, and Assembly Members Bill Brough and Cottie Petrie-Norris were the principal co-authors in the state Assembly. SCR 21 passed both houses unanimously and has gained widespread support statewide, starting at home with the Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Department, the Costa Mesa Firefighters Association, the City of Costa Mesa, California Professional Firefighters, and the California Fire Chiefs Association.

Once SCR 21 is officially chaptered, the installation process will be discussed and steps to move forward will be set into motion.

Fire & Rescue team member Jon Neal promoted as city's new Fire Marshal

Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano announced that Jon Neal has been appointed to the position of Fire Marshal.

"Jon has been a highly valued addition to our team," Chief Stefano said. "We are pleased to announce that he will be overseeing the entire Community Risk Reduction Division and holding the rank of Fire Marshal, a position we have been working to formalize and reestablish for many years."

Neal has been a member of the Fire & Rescue team since 2015 and works in the Community Risk Reduction Division.

Prior to his work with Fire & Rescue, Neal was hired in 2008 as the City's Storekeeper.

During his tenure with the City of Costa Mesa, he has filled numerous positions.

In 2012 he was promoted to Code Enforcement Officer as part of the Development Services Department's Community Improvement Division.

In 2017, Neal was promoted to Assistant Fire Marshal.

In this role, he is responsible for the coordination and review of building plans and analyzation of statistical data relating to new code provisions. He is the lead in coordinating fire and life protection activities alongside staff from building and planning divisions and various utility companies.

Neal serves as President of the Orange County Fire Marshal section of the Orange County Fire Chief's Association and

serves as Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue's liaison to the City's Network for Homeless Solutions, Group Home Work and Development Review Committee.

Right after graduation from high school, Neal enlisted in the United States Coast Guard where he served as a firefighter on the USCGC Alert, a 210-foot cutter in addition to a multitude of other assignments. Upon completion of his active duty, Neal worked as the inventory control manager at Active Ride Shop, followed by his service as a logistics manager for Invisible Children in Gulu, Uganda.

Neal has earned several California State Fire Marshal Certification in addition to a Bachelor's of Fire Science Management from American Military University.

When not working, Neal enjoys spending time with his wife Zana and spending as much time traveling and participating in outdoor activities including but certainly not limited to, skateboarding, surfing, snowboarding, mountain biking and hitting the trails.

Fire & Rescue crews to conduct wildland fire training in and around Canyon Park

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue will conduct training exercises May 29 to May 30, 2019 and June 10 through June 14, 2019 in and around Canyon Park in preparation for the upcoming wildland fire season. Exercises will occur between 8:30 a.m. to 5:30

p.m.

Fire & Rescue staff wants to ensure the community is aware of the upcoming training and asks residents and park visitors to be mindful of equipment and the day of preparations occurring by fire personnel.

These annual mandatory training exercises take place in Costa Mesa and countywide to help prepare the firefighters for vegetation fires within and outside city limits.

“This annual training is more important than ever, coming off one of the most catastrophic wildfire years in California history,” Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano said. “The new wildland fire season is year round and our professional firefighters continue to be well prepared.”

There will be approximately 10 to 12 fire personnel present for the training and two to three pieces of apparatus (Fire engine, truck, ambulance, or command vehicle) daily. Firefighters will train on a couple of trails in Canyon Park where there is dense vegetation and moderate terrain features.

The training is conducted to promote safety, mitigation, terrain recognition, and area familiarization while focusing on the fundamentals of wildland firefighting.

Moreover, the department is conducting the training with full awareness and sensitivity of all environmental impacts and ensures this training will exclude any live burn training modules.

For questions please contact Captain Joe Noceti, Public Information Officer of Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue at (714) 754-5091.

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue veteran Chris Coates named as department's new battalion chief

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Chief Dan Stefano announced on Thursday Jan. 3 that there is a new member of the department's command staff as Capt. Chris Coates has been promoted to become one of the city's three Fire Battalion Chiefs.

Coates has been a captain since 2003 and most recently served as the department's Administrative and Training Captain, where he maintained the duties of the Public Information Officer and Emergency Medical Services Manager as well as overseeing Training Program and Social Media Program Management.

"Chris is a respected fire service professional and leader who truly understands and embraces the value of building strong relationships, providing exceptional service, professional development, being authentic, and getting comfortable being uncomfortable," Chief Stefano said. "We look forward to his leadership contributions being elevated to a new level, as the expectations for him will continue to be raised, with my full confidence that he will rise to the occasion."

As the new Battalion Chief, Coates returns to the field and will oversee an entire shift of personnel, as well as becoming part of the department's executive management team and taking on additional administrative responsibilities. He will be based out of the city's new Fire Station No. 1. Captain Coates fills the position that became vacant with the recent retirement of Battalion Chief Kevin Diamond. His official start date will be January 21, 2019.

"First, I would like to thank Fire Chief Stefano for this

amazing opportunity," Capt. Coates said. I'm honored and humbled and look forward to serving the city and community and fire family as battalion chief. Further, I am grateful for the relationships I've made with my city staff colleagues and value their expertise and experience. Working side-by-side with them has been so meaningful to my career and that will only expand in my new role. Finally, and most importantly, if it wasn't for the unwavering support and love from my family, none of this would be possible."

Coates has more than 23 years of experience in the fire service and started his career in 1996 as a Firefighter/Paramedic for the City of Escondido Fire Department and later worked for the City of Garden Grove before hiring on in Costa Mesa in 1998.

Coates has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Applied Studies from Brandman University, an Associate of Arts Degree from Santa Ana College, and recently finished his first year in the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program.

He has previously served as the President for the Orange County Fire Chiefs Training Officers Section and currently serves as the President for the California Fire Chiefs Training Officers – Southern Division, among several other honors and distinctions.

With rainstorm coming, sandbags will be available at

City Hall

With inclement weather expected to hit Costa Mesa and Orange County over the coming days, the city will provide residents with sand bags in the rear parking lot of City Hall, located at 77 Fair Drive.

It is a self-service location, and the number of sandbags is limited to 15 per household.

Additionally, Maintenance Services staff will be patrolling potential flooding spots to make sure catch basins are clear of debris and operational throughout the city.

Fire & Rescue to hold open house at Fire Station No. 4 this Saturday Oct. 6

To mark fire prevention month, Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue is inviting the public to an open house this Saturday Oct. 6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Fire Station No. 4.

Members of the public can meet local firefighters and department staff, observe the operations of front-line fire equipment and take part in a fire ground challenge event for adults and kids.

Free parking is available at Estancia High School (south lot).

For more details click here to see the flier.

Fire Station No. 4 is located at 2300 Placentia Ave.

Costa Mesa unveils new Fire Station No. 1 to thankful community

Costa Mesa officially re-opened Fire Station No. 1 with an emotion-packed ribbon-cutting ceremony on Saturday Sept. 29 that was well attended by both high-ranking dignitaries, elected city leaders, city staff and several hundred members of the general public.

Attending the event was Congressman Dana Rohrabacher and State Sen. John Moorlach, both of whom gave presentations to the city, along with a representative from Assembly Member Matt Harper's office.

The event began with comments from City Manager Tom Hatch along with Costa Mesa Mayor Sandy Genis, Mayor Pro-Tem Allan Mansoor, Council Members Katrina Foley, Jim Righeimer and John Stephens.

"This was a phenomenal event for the entire community," Fire Chief Dan Stefano said. "Our fire family is grateful and honored to have this extraordinary resource for our residents and firefighters. We look forward to having this serve as our flagship fire station for decades to come."

Also speaking at the event was Public Services Director Raja Sethuraman, who credited his team and others for building the new station at 1570 Adams Ave., which is an 11,740-square-foot facility that comes equipped with the latest in fire services technology and daily amenities.

The new facility replaces the original Station 1 that was

built in 1961.

This new building is a $10 million city investment that came in $350,000 under budget and is LEED Gold Certified. It has a new public lobby, three fire offices, rooms for laundry, communications, exercise and training. There is also is a kitchen and dining room and 10 bedrooms and five restrooms. This is the first fire station built in Costa Mesa since Station No. 6 was built over 25 years ago in 1993.

Saturday's festivities also included a color guard presentation, plaque unveiling and a flag raising as well as opportunities for the public to take guided tours of the station. Children, some dressed as firefighters, climbed on fire equipment and trucks and the Maltese Cross was also unveiled. The Maltese Cross dates backs hundreds of years. It is a symbol of protection and means that a firefighter is willing to lay down his/her life and works in courage.

City launches new interactive maps to monitor police and fire calls for service

With the City Council hearing from citizens that the city's crime map technology was difficult to navigate online, city staff responded by unveiling two new interactive maps that will give website visitors the ability to monitor Police Department and Fire & Rescue calls for service.

Located on the city's website here and here, the maps are the

culmination of a coordinated effort between the Fire and Police Departments and Information Technology staff.

“The council listened to residents and city staff then took their input and created a user experience that is friendly and informative,” IT Director Steve Ely said. “The Information Technology Department team will continue to work towards bringing more online systems to the public in the future.”

The maps can be viewed in multiple ways, tracking calls from the last 24 hours to the last 14 days. Viewers can click on icons to view additional data such as the city block the incident occurred, the time the event happened and the type of call.

“After several months of development, we have created a new tool for residents to monitor the crime and police-related calls in their city and neighborhoods,” Police Chief Rob Sharpnack said. “Thanks to IT Director Steve Ely and his staff for their hard work and dedication in getting this done.”

For the first time, residents will now also be able to monitor Fire & Rescue calls.

“Costa Mesa has embraced a highly valued level of transparency and we felt this new interactive map will add to that approach by providing residents with a tangible perspective of the emergency incidents and calls for service their fire and rescue teams respond to on a 24/7/365 basis,” Fire Chief Dan Stefano said.

To protect members of the public and first responders, the calls on the maps typically have a 30-minute time delay following the conclusion of an emergency incident or call for service.

Fire Station No. 1 construction nears completion

The reconstruction of Fire Station No. 1 reached another major milestone.

The new station is in the final stages of construction with the installation of architectural finishes and site landscaping.

Cabinetry, carpeting, tiling and exterior finishes are putting the final touches on the beautiful new building.

As Public Services prepares to commission the building for occupancy, the station’s emergency generator is ready for testing and the associated 2,000-gallon fuel tank has been filled with diesel fuel.

This milestone will commence the start-up and testing of various mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in preparation for certification as a Gold level energy efficient building and occupancy for fire crews.

Last day of Fire & Rescue’s

Fairview Park air operations is Thursday Aug. 2

The final day of Fire & Rescue Air Operations Training at Fairview Park is Thursday Aug. 2 from 8 a.m to 1 p.m.

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue has been partnering with several local agencies to conduct Air Operations training at Fairview Park to prepare for the potential of wildfires in the area, as well as regional rescues, in addition to improving communications and inter-operability between our respective emergency ground and air resources.

CMF&R is the host of the operations, which has already taken place at the south end of the park in July.

The Orange County Fire Authority and the Orange County Sheriff’s office and several Orange County fire agencies will be taking part in the exercise. The training will only be static in nature, so there will be no active air operations or water drops, other than landing at the onset of the training and departure at the conclusion of the training.

Fire officials have worked closely with city staff to ensure that all environmental and wildlife concerns are addressed prior to the training and have worked with the local residential community to address any concerns related to the training. We appreciate the community’s support of this important training.