

## **Civic News** Fire Districts

## **ConFire Purchases Two Squad Vehicles**

By Nick Marnell

he Board of Supervisors, act- department back!" ing as the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District board of digines with two-person squads unless rectors, approved the purchase of two new squad vehicles for \$345,000 at its Oct. 7 meeting. The new vehicles will replace the two makeshift squad units currently in service.

ConFire added squad units to chase. Walnut Creek station 1 and to Concord station 6 as a test program in 2013. The squad units respond to primarily low level medical emergencies, leaving the engines to respond to structure and vegetation fires. One then spend the money on two new reason that ConFire added the squad unit to Walnut Creek was to pick up some of the slack from the closure of tract, we will still use squads for a vastation 16 in Lafayette. Including riety of tasks," said Carman. "They backup for rescue calls and most of the structure fire calls, Squad 1 is on they would remain as squads with track to respond to over 200 calls annually in Lafayette, according to the ambulances with non-firefighter parafire chief Jeff Carman.

"You're spending money on something that we've not even agreed hicles from Ferrara Fire Apparatus to yet," said engineer Vito Impastato, because, explained Local 1230 president Vince Wells, the district has not accepted the union's terms for making the squad program permanent. "For us, squads are not the right fit," said James "Whit" MacDonald, captain at of money and time, and gets some Lafayette station 17.

"You took away seven engine companies and gave us back two squads," said engineer Leslie Grundler. "It won't be the same until Squad 1 vehicle to roll into Lafayette we have real engines. Give us our fire early next year.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District **Board of Directors** Meetings

**Next meeting:** 

Wednesday, Nov. 5 check website for updates

(Go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for location and more information)

"I don't agree with replacing enthere's a good reason," said Carman. "But we don't have the money to buy an engine. We've given this thought, and it's based on necessity." The board unanimously approved the pur-

The district plans to pitch for the available county ambulance contract in 2015. If ConFire does secure the ambulance contract, it will need a fleet of at least 15 ambulances. Why squad vehicles this year?

"If we get the ambulance concan be rescue vehicles but most likely firefighters on them as opposed to the medics."

The district will purchase the ve-Inc. through the Houston-Galveston Area Council, a government-to-government procurement service. "The H-GAC program complies with all bidding rules in the county," said the chief. "It's a great system, saves a ton great deals through quantity. It's really like the state bid process, but it's na-

ConFire expects the brand new



**Next meeting:** 

Tuesday, Nov. 4

check website for updates

Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St. Martinez (Agenda at http://alturl.com/5p9pu)

## Firefighters Unhappy With **Slow Progress of Labor Talks**

By Nick Marnell

ecked out in black "1230 Strong" solidarity T-shirts, nearly 50 firefighters rallied at the Oct. 7 Board of Supervisors meeting to complain about the slow pace of labor negotiations between their union and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. Talks have gone on since May, the latest contract having expired June 30.

"Instead of honest negotiating, you're treating us as a hostile work group," said ConFire engineer and Local 1230 vice president Vito Impastato, addressing the board. "Nothing can be further from the truth. Treat us as though we've done everything you've asked us to do the last six years."

ident, reminded the board that the been less acrimonious than were the firefighters have taken a 10 percent pay cut, they contribute a Fire District. portion of the employer share of the retirement fund and they have Local 1230 to reach a fair contract struggled with a 25 percent cut in while still ensuring that the district staff. "Provide direction to your will have adequate funds to continue negotiating team," he said. in operation," said Lisa Driscoll, "We're anxious to get back to the county finance director and managebargaining table and restore some ment's lead negotiator.

of the sacrifices we've made for the community.

"Your negotiating team doesn't care," added Wells. "We are hopeful that you do."

Board president Karen Mitchoff advised the rank and file that the board had just that day given direction to its negotiating team. Mitchoff said later that she would not elaborate on what the direction was.

Wells later explained that 10 labor negotiating sessions have been held since May, with one management proposal presented Oct. 2. "And the negotiator couldn't adequately explain the proposal," he said. "It's offensive to us. We can't even get our questions answered." Wells did note Vince Wells, Local 1230 pres- that the tone of the ConFire talks has negotiations with the Moraga-Orinda

"We continue to negotiate with



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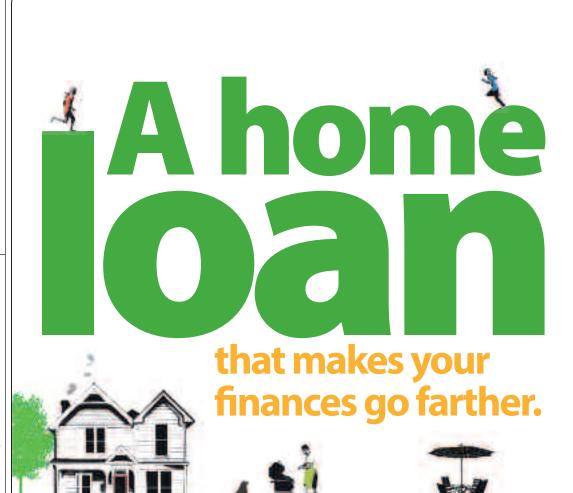
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