



# Fire Districts

## Public Meetings

### Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors

Wednesday, Aug. 5, 7 p.m.  
Moraga Library Community Room  
1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga  
For meeting times and agendas,  
visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

### ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, Aug. 18, 1:30 p.m.  
Board Chamber room 107,  
Administration Building,  
651 Pine St., Martinez  
For meeting times and agendas,  
visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

Emergency response information and training:

Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)  
[www.lamorindacert.org](http://www.lamorindacert.org)

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# Firefighters' Union Balks at Station 46 Joint Venture

By Nick Marnell

Frustrated with the drain on district resources in other parts of the county, Vince Wells, president of Local 1230 of the firefighters' union, questioned whether the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District board should approve a joint venture with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to build a new fire station in western Lafayette. Based on preliminary discussions, ConFire would front \$6 million to build fire station 46 and would share the estimated annual \$2 million operational costs equally with MOFD, which will own the new station.

"Rather than just looking at the terms of the contract, check to see if this whole thing is worth the money," he told the board July 21. Wells argued that the district answers far more calls

on the East County border than it does in Lafayette, "and there are no costs shared, and no fire stations being built to address that." The East Contra Costa County Fire Protection District recently closed two fire stations and relies on outside assistance, mainly from ConFire, which supports the struggling district through automatic and mutual aid agreements.

"Where are the priorities?" Wells said later. "Why are they just looking at Lafayette? You can't do a project like this based on politics alone."

Wells also suggested that Lafayette may not be receiving what it thinks. "If they want to pay for a faster response time, they should get a station dedicated to their area," he said. "Paying a 50-50 split for a fire

station that isn't yours is not mutually beneficial." He proposed that a more equitable financial arrangement might be for ConFire to pay MOFD for the number of calls it responds to in western Lafayette, as the district does with Richmond.

"I was initially never supportive of this," said Director Karen Mitchoff. "I would like an updated perspective. We have concerns in other parts of the county, and Lafayette continues to be served with two fire stations and mutual and automatic aid."

Vice Chair Candace Andersen said she was disconcerted to hear that labor was potentially going to object to the station 46 venture. "I understand that Vince Wells is frustrated by the fire station closures in the East County

Fire Protection District," said Andersen, whose district includes Lafayette. "ConFire is doing what it can to help East County Fire through our auto aid and mutual aid agreements. However, Vince should not expect the citizens of Lafayette to forego their appropriate level of service to solve that problem in another fire district."

"We believe the carefully articulated agreement between the two fire districts to build and operate station 46 is still on track for approval," added Lafayette Emergency Services Task Force co-chair Brandt Andersson.

The station 46 contract is expected to come before the ConFire board of directors for approval at its Aug. 18 meeting.

# Supervisors Award ConFire County Ambulance Contract

By Nick Marnell

The Board of Supervisors July 21 authorized the county Health Services Director to execute a 5-year contract with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to provide emergency ambulance transport service in most of Contra Costa County starting in January. ConFire, with its subcontracting partner American Medical Response, the current county ambulance transport contractor, will provide ambulance service to the portions of the county not served by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, which provide their own ambulance transport service.

The private-public arrangement, named the Alliance, is the first of its kind in California, and brings with it not only a chance for the fire district to recognize additional, non-tradi-

tional revenue but also to better control the deployment of its resources. "Many times I'm asked, why do you send a fire engine and an ambulance to a call," said ConFire chief Jeff Carman. "The answer is, that I don't." No longer will the district be in the dark about ambulance deployment. With dispatch now consolidated for both ambulances and engines, ConFire will have the ability to control the deployment of each more efficiently.

The deal comes with its risks, as pointed out by Stewart Gary of public safety consultant Citygate Associates, LLC. Ambulance revenues have fallen nationally from an average of 66 percent of the amounts billed to 26.5 percent recently. The Alliance projects revenue collection rates of 24.5 percent, largely due to the uncertainties of government reimburse-

ments and the Affordable Care Act. "And your revenue rates may not be at rock bottom," said Gary. "It may be several years before they are."

Since the Alliance did not figure any supplemental governmental revenue into its financial assumptions, the net gain to ConFire after year one was projected at \$1.9 million on revenue of \$39 million; but \$9 million of ConFire's cash reserves will be needed to cover the early cash flow losses. Also under this groundbreaking paradigm, the economic responsibility of the ambulance transport plan shifts from the private contractor, AMR, to the taxpayers of the fire district.

Nevertheless, Gary attempted to impress upon the supervisors that they are looking at a long-term positive business model.

"You have before you a restructured bid that requires no subsidy and is revenue positive without any supplemental revenue," he said. "You have a framework for ConFire to apply for and get those supplemental revenues, which will be in flux for a while."

"This may not work out in the end," said Supervisor Mary Piepho. "But this is what the public wants us to test and what the public wants us to think through."

The supervisors unanimously awarded the contract to ConFire, though they had no other option than temporarily extending the current contract with AMR, as no other entity bid. The final contract is expected to be presented to the board for approval in September.

## As Seen in Lamorinda A Road Less Traveled



Photo Victor Ryerson

Long-suffering residents will finally get relief from navigating the potholes on Arroyo Drive, a short residential street connecting Moraga's Corliss Drive and Orinda's Ivy Drive. The Moraga side has twice been repaved in recent years, most recently in 2014, while the Orinda side has languished for lack of funding, creating this interesting visual contrast. Repaving of the short stretch in Orinda is slated for later this summer, thanks to Measure J funding. *V. Ryerson*

## Moraga Structure Fire

By Nick Marnell



Photo courtesy Moraga-Orinda Fire District

One firefighter was injured during the Moraga-Orinda Fire District response to a two-alarm fire the night of July 21 at 1884 Joseph Drive in Moraga. The home was completely destroyed, according to fire chief Stephen Healy, with the

next-door residence suffering minimal damage. The first unit arrived in eight minutes and three seconds, he said.

"The cause of the fire was likely a hot object left in the garage," said Healy, who reported that the firefighter received a lower body injury

while inside the burning structure. He was transported to the hospital, treated and released, and is expected to make a full recovery.

Healy estimated damage at \$700,000 to one structure and \$100,000 to the other.

## Helping Others is in Firefighters' Blood

... continued from page A8

On June 22, the day after Father's Day, Andrade arrived at the cancer center for his procedure, termed peripheral blood stem cell donation. He was given a mild muscle relaxant, and then the collection of his blood-forming cells began.

Blood was drawn from his left arm through sterile tubing into a sophisticated cell-separating machine - an insatiable machine, gulping the blood out of his left arm, passing it through a centrifuge, extracting the blood-forming cells that it needed.

"I felt instant relief from the swelling and pressure as the blood left my body," said Andrade.

A line from the machine connected to an IV bag, which slowly filled with the blood stem cells. All the while, the machine pumped plasma and blood cells back into Andrade's right arm. After the machine feasted on Andrade's blood non-stop for five hours, a courier arrived and placed the one-pint bag of harvested blood stem cells into an ice chest, to

be delivered to the leukemia patient within 24 hours.

The prior week, the recipient had received a heavy dose of chemotherapy, which wiped out his diseased blood cells. That allowed Andrade's donated cells to easily move through the recipient's bloodstream and settle in his bones, which is where the donated cells began to grow and produce new blood cells, essentially giving the leukemia patient a new blood and immune system. "He and I became similar," said the firefighter.

Andrade signed a waiver that, due to confidentiality guidelines, he cannot meet his recipient for one year. "Yes, I want to meet him," he said.

During the last hour of the procedure, the hospital staff took Andrade's blood sample to confirm that his blood counts were normal. His parents drove the groggy, lethargic, sore-armed firefighter home to Roseville. After less than two weeks of

recovery, Andrade reported to work at ConFire station 15 in Lafayette.

"Above and beyond? I don't think so," said Andrade. "I just had the opportunity to do this. Any one of our firefighters would have done the same thing."

"I have always admired how firefighters aren't just heroes on-duty, but their entire lifestyle is dedicated to giving to others and sacrificing what they have for others," said ConFire chief Jeff Carman. "I am proud to have Daniel as one of our firefighters. Even though he is a new firefighter for us, he is already showing great leadership qualities."

Be The Match representative Hannah Jacobs said that California ranks number one in the nation for patients searching for a marrow match, and that nearly 5,000 Californians have donated marrow since the 1987 inception of the registry.

For information on becoming a donor, visit [bethematch.org](http://bethematch.org).

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