



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Fire Chief / Fire Warden*

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## **Opliger to Lead Mountain Division**

The San Bernardino County Fire Department announces the promotion of Battalion Chief Kathleen Opliger to Division Chief responsible for Division 4 (Mountain region), overseeing fire and emergency medical response, and rescue operations. Division 4 covers over 600 square miles of vegetation-covered mountains, foothills and valleys. County Fire works closely with the local community in the mountains through the Fire Safe Councils and the multi-agency Mountain Area Safety Taskforce.

“Mountain residents are unique and harbor a special place in my heart.” stated Chief Opliger. “I look forward to continuing the strong collaboration Chief Johnstone and staff have fostered with the community.”

Chief Opliger’s fire service career began in 1988, when serving as a Paid-Call Firefighter with the Idyllwild Fire Protection District. In 1989, she went to work for the U.S. Forest Service, San Bernardino National Forest, where she served for several years, working her way up through each of the ranks from Hotshot Crew Firefighter to Engine Captain. Opliger temporarily served as a Battalion Chief in both Operations and Training.

In 2005, Chief Opliger came to work for the San Bernardino County Fire Department as a Battalion Chief, serving Division 1 (Valley) and Division 5 (South Desert). For more than a decade, Chief Opliger participated on incident management teams as a division supervisor, operations branch director, and operations section chief. During this assignment, she responded to many large & devastating wildfires & all-risk incidents throughout the U.S. and Canada, most notably to Hurricanes Katrina & Rita.

Chief Opliger lives in Cherry Valley with her husband Rocky and their three Labradors. Kathleen and Rocky have two grown children, Brandon, who is a firefighter on the Palomar Hotshot Crew, and Erin who recently graduated from U.C. Santa Barbara. Kathleen & Rocky enjoy spending time in Lake Havasu City boating, water skiing, and fishing.

Chief Opliger fills the recently vacated position left by Chief Jim Johnstone, who promoted to Assistant Chief. Johnstone proudly served the Mountain residents for the past 1 ½ years.

Photographs of Chief Opliger are available at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org) under latest news.

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