



# NEWS RELEASE

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**Mark A. Hartwig**  
*Fire Chief / Fire Warden*

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## **Benfield Tapped to Lead South Desert**

San Bernardino County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig is honored to announce the promotion of Dave Benfield from Battalion Chief to Division Chief, assigned to Division 5 (South Desert). As Division Chief, Benfield will take responsibility for fire and emergency medical response, and rescue operations in the South Desert region.

Chief Benfield began his fire service career with the Central Valley Fire Agency in September of 1981 as a limited-term firefighter. He was hired as a full-time firefighter in 1983, promoted to engineer in 1987 and on to Captain in 1989. A promotion to Battalion Chief came in 2010 and Dave was assigned to the South Desert.

“Though the South Desert Division is the second largest division in County Fire, it has managed to maintain a strong sense of community. The fire crews are of the highest caliber and very dedicated to the communities they serve. I plan to continue that tradition.” stated Division Chief Dave Benfield.

Division 5 encompasses many different aspects of terrain and topography in the County’s South Desert that draw visitors from around the world to the eastern Mojave Desert, from Yucca Valley and the Joshua Tree National Park to the Colorado River. This division also neighbors the U.S. Marine Corps Air/Combat Training Center in Twenty-Nine Palms. Division 5 encompasses the City of Needles and the communities of Havasu Lake and Big River drawing millions of visitors each year for river and lake front recreation.

Chief Benfield and his wife Stephenie love to travel and try new restaurants. Dave enjoys playing guitar and deep sea fishing.

Chief Benfield follows behind Division Chief Don Trapp, who was tasked with managing two County Fire divisions.

A photograph of Chief Benfield is available at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org) under latest news.

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