

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2010

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Wurl appointed to succeed Dennen as Fire Chief

Long-time Assistant and Deputy Fire Chief Dan Wurl has been appointed to serve as County of San Bernardino Fire Chief by County Administrative Officer Greg Devereaux, succeeding Pat Dennen, who retired this month.

Wurl was chosen on the basis of his unique knowledge of the County Fire Department's complex organizational and finance structure, and the leadership skills he has developed during his 36 years with the department.

With fire season quickly approaching, Devereaux believes it was vital to fill the chief position quickly with someone who could immediately take the reins without needing to endure a learning curve. No one was more capable of doing this than Wurl.

Starting as a volunteer firefighter and working his way through the ranks, Wurl served in the Mountain and Valley Divisions prior to his 2001 appointment as assistant chief and helped implement a long-anticipated paramedic program. As assistant chief, he was assigned to oversee the department's 63 fire stations and more than 700 suppression personnel, and eventually moved into the administrative support section. In 2007, Wurl was promoted to deputy chief to manage the administrative and management operations of the department.

Wurl played a leading role in the formation of the Mountain Area Safety Task Force, a state-of-the-art partnership for managing natural disasters that became a model for the nation. Wurl was also instrumental in bringing the Fire Reorganization Plan to fruition. The plan dissolved 27 separate fire districts and merged them into a single fire protection district with four regional service zones. The reorganization plan ultimately improved many systems, solidified revenues, and improved the overall efficiency of the department. It also allowed for greater flexibility in the use of department resources and assets and more effective use of executive management to oversee day-to-day operations.

-MORE-

Wurl Appointment
June 15, 2010
Page 2

Wurl served as the Unified Incident Commander during the historic 2003 Grand Prix Fire, overseeing five management teams and allocating resources.

As chief, Wurl will oversee a fire department that encompasses more than 17,500 square miles of diverse environments and provides service to 65 unincorporated communities and five cities. The department's jurisdiction includes highly urbanized metropolitan areas, major transportation corridors – interstate and rail into and out of Southern California, mountain resorts, and vast tracts of high-use recreational desert lands.

"I take great pride in County Fire and relish the opportunity to lead such a group of professionals. I will strive to continue to meet our motto of being a Premier Fire Service," Wurl said.

Wurl and his wife of 28 years, Dede, have two children and reside in Yucaipa. The Wurls enjoy spending time as a family camping, hiking, and playing golf and water sports. Dan and Dede especially enjoy spending time with their grandchildren.

Chief Wurl's biography and photograph are available on the County Fire website at www.sbcfire.org.