



Foresthill Fire Protection District

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For Immediate Release

February 23, 2018

Contact: Kirk Kushen

Fire Chief

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FORESTHILL FIRE STATION 88 CLOSURE

Unfortunately, due to the continuing loss of several highly trained firefighters and paramedics accepting positions with other fire agencies providing higher wages, full benefits and standard public safety retirement plans, we are closing Fire Station 88 in Foresthill for an indefinite period beginning Sunday February 25, 2018 at 8:00 AM. We have experienced an unsustainable level of attrition over the last year and no longer have adequate personnel to fully staff both Foresthill Fire Stations. The on duty daily staffing at Foresthill Fire will be reduced from 2 personnel at both Stations 88 and 90 to 3 personnel daily operating out of Fire Station 90, located at 20540 Foresthill Road.

Several factors have contributed to this significant reduction of both fire and paramedic ambulance services provided to the residents of Foresthill, the surrounding National Forests and all of the residents and visitors to Placer County. A very low revenue percentage generated from the property taxes paid to Placer County by local residents, combined with the recent failure of local ballot Measure B have left the Foresthill Fire District in a precarious financial position. Local residents already have \$130 in additional taxes added to their Ad Valorem rates annually and voted down an additional \$180 proposed new tax last July to help sustain the fire services.

We are deeply concerned about what's happening to emergency services in the county. A lack of revenue has led to cuts to our fire services that are already having a dangerous impact on the safety of residents in our community, with more cuts to come. The current situation is also immediately threatening other area fire departments. Without additional revenue to provide adequate wages and benefits to all of the firefighters working at the local Fire Districts in this region, more Placer County Fire Districts will lose the staffing needed to keep fire stations open. We are all unable to recruit new employees due to the significant competition from higher paying agencies for the limited number of suitably qualified and trained personnel.

This current critical threat to public safety is not isolated to Foresthill. When one fire station closes in an already insufficiently staffed region, everyone is impacted. The effect from a fire station closing impacts residents from throughout the areas cities, the county and the region. When a fire or life-threatening emergency occurs in Foresthill, Engine Companies and ambulances from a wider geographical area will now need to be moved up to backfill and cover for the vacancies in the response system. This leaves other areas with a reduced level of emergency services that could inevitably lead to the loss of lives and property.

This inherent deficiency in fire protection funding is a critical statewide issue that must be rapidly remedied. The recent fire disasters that took numerous lives and destroyed unprecedented numbers of structures in California this past fire season depend on a strong local government fire protection response to protect our communities. Without additional funding to solidify the local government fire districts, our lives will be threatened by a lack of emergency responders and our communities will continue to experience an unacceptable level of risk, the inability to retain fire insurance and reductions in their property values.