

COMMUNITY NEWS

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Fire Administration

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Fire Chief Announces Retirement

San Mateo Consolidated Fire Chief John Healy Reflects on 36-Year Career

San Mateo, CA — Lead text After more than 36 years of public service, San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department Chief John Healy announced he plans to retire at the end of the year from his chosen profession and the organization that has been his extended family.

Healy began his career at age 19 as a volunteer firefighter in Foster City, and spent 16 years with the City of San Mateo fire department. Healy was instrumental in the creation of San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department, as he helped oversee the merger of the three departments in San Mateo, Foster City and Belmont.

Healy said it's been a privilege to work side-by-side with some of the most dedicated fire service professionals in Foster City, Hillsborough, Union City, San Mateo and Belmont.

"My career has provided me countless life lessons and unforgettable memories. The most important lessons learned were service before self, giving your very best daily, and leaving every situation better than you found it. Those were characteristic taught to me, and I have worked to share these values with the team, so that they may pay it forward to future members," Healy said.

Growing up in San Mateo, he attended local schools and feels fortunate to work in his hometown where he's been an active member of the community. Healy and his wife Stacey are raising three sons, two who attend Serra High School and one now in college.

Emergency response service requires a great deal of sacrifice, including being away from family and friends on special occasions and holidays. For Healy, being part of such a great profession was never about personal accolades or recognition, it was about the service the team provided to the community.

"The pride felt from helping others during their most challenging time was a feeling that few professions get to experience. Wearing the uniform and the badge was the greatest honor and it's difficult for words to fully express what that means to me," Healy said.

Over the course of his career he's seen vital progression of a profession that holds high value on training and education. Healy earned an Associate of Science Degree in Fire technology from College and San Mateo and a Bachelor of Science Degree in both Fire Administration and Fire Prevention Technology from Cogwell Polytechnical College in Sunnyvale. He attended training throughout the state and has earned California State Fire Marshal Certification as a Chief Officer, Fire Investigator, and Fire Instructor. Reflecting on his career, he said he'll miss the adrenaline rush from responding to emergency incidents.

"I had the honor of responding to help so many communities throughout State, starting with the Oakland Hills Fire in 1991 and dozens of others up and down the State as a Strike Team Leader. I treasure all the community events where we raised money for those in need. I was proud to be part of the Holiday Toy Drive and Chili Cook-off and plan to continue being part of those types of events," Healy said.

He applauded the skilled firefighters and communities of Belmont, Foster City and San Mateo for their formation of SMC Fire. After several years of shared services that provided cost savings to the communities while improving level of service, the new department officially commenced operations in January 2019.

"I will treasure all the memories from my three and a half decades of service. I am confident the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department will continue to tirelessly look for opportunities to improve our service to the community. The next generation of SMCFD is filled with talented and dedicated members anxious to continue moving forward and grow in their constant pursuit of being the best," Healy said.

Throughout his career he held every rank in the fire service. Healy started as a volunteer firefighter in 1983, became a Firefighter/Engineer in 1984, a Fire Captain in 1995, a Battalion Chief in 2003, Deputy Fire in Chief 2008 and then Fire Chief in 2015.

"I want to thank the City Councils, City Managers, and community members for allowing me to be part of something so special, and for trusting me to lead the organization as fire chief for the past 5 years. I look forward to new and exciting challenges that lay ahead and plan to spend time boating, hiking and traveling with family and friends," Healy said.

His first day of retirement will be December 28, 2019. The San Mateo Consolidated Fire Board will be discussing the next steps for hiring a replacement Fire Chief in the coming months.

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