



Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



GRABOST



photos: Admin Analyst Kaitlyn Ducchetti

DISTRICT OVERVIEW

In 1987, Central Fire Protection District was created from the consolidation of the Capitola, Live Oak and Soquel Fire Districts.

In 1986, Aptos Fire District and La Selva Beach Fire District also consolidated, to become the Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District. By 2018, Aptos/La Selva FPD and Central FPD entered into a Shared Services Agreement, combining services with their Administrative and Community Risk Reduction Divisions.

In February of 2021, Central Fire Protection District and Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District consolidated into Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County.

Central Fire District serves the communities of Aptos, Capitola, La Selva Beach, Live Oak, Rio Del Mar, and Soquel.

The resident population is approximately 90,500, with a seasonal influx during the summer, and covers an area of 55 square miles. The District responds to requests for service for fire, water rescue, emergency medical services, hazardous materials calls, and assorted alarms.

The District operates seven fire stations, an Administrative Office, Community Risk Reduction Division, Training Division, and Fleet Services Facility. The District has several robust program areas including Community Risk Reduction, Community Education, Emergency Medical Services, Water Rescue, Fire Investigation, Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue, and Training.

Central Fire District has a publicly elected Board of Directors consisting of five members who are elected to four year, staggered terms.

CONTENTS

5	Chief's Message	16	Fleet & Logistics
6	District Boundaries	20	Operations
7	Facilities	21	Summary of Incidents
8	Quick Facts	22	Training
10	Board of Directors & Executive Staff	24	Community Risk Reduction
11	Organizational Chart	28	Administration
12	Retirements, Promotions & New Hires	30	Finance Charts



CHIEF'S MESSAGE

On behalf of Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County, it is my privilege to present the Annual Report for 2024. I want to recognize the incredible people who work at Central Fire and make this report possible. The 2024 Annual Report offers a look at the achievements, statistical data, and programs that Central Fire District has supported over the past year. There have been many achievements and challenges that the organization has focused on over the past 12 months. We have applied our efforts to the goals and objectives outlined in our Master and Strategic Plans. Although we have not met all our goals, we continue to evaluate our current situation against what we think is likely to happen in the future. The Fire District's focus has been on fire station development outside of flood and tsunami inundation zones.



Fire Chief Jason Nee

This effort highlighted our attempts to purchase property, establish long-term funding mechanisms to develop facilities, and position the organization to continue serving the public for the next 50 years. The District sponsored Measure R, a general obligation bond designed to provide funding for capital improvements, apparatus, and life-saving equipment replacement. Although Measure R failed to achieve the required 66.6% of the vote, there were lessons learned for institutional knowledge throughout the process. Furthermore, the District was competing in a highly competitive real estate market, attempting to purchase property for future station relocation to sites that were strategically advantageous for response considerations and natural disaster vulnerability.

For the first time in decades, the Fire District added a fire unit to the response matrix. Working with the firefighters' union, the District staffed Engine 3543, a type 6 fire engine, with one Firefighter/Paramedic and one Firefighter to augment the response of our existing resources. This trial deployment was met with challenges and opportunities. Thanks to the resilience and positive mindsets of our staff, we worked through the challenges and demonstrated that adding another resource was cost-effective, provided increased resilience in our emergency response, and offered our staff an opportunity to develop leadership skills daily. I would like to thank all members of our District for their professionalism and commitment at every level of the organization. I would also like to thank our elected officials for their continued engagement and supportive efforts.



OUR MISSION

The Mission of Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County is to preserve quality of life for the citizens and visitors of the communities we serve by protecting lives, property, and the environment through emergency response, community risk reduction, and education.



OUR VALUES

Safety

We value safety as a priority in all our actions and take appropriate steps to maintain and improve the well-being of the community and our personnel.

Service

We value service by being prepared to serve with respect and compassion at any moment with knowledgeable and committed personnel.

Professionalism

We value professionalism through our readiness, leadership, and work ethic to provide the highest standards of service with dedication, teamwork, and respect.

OUR VISION

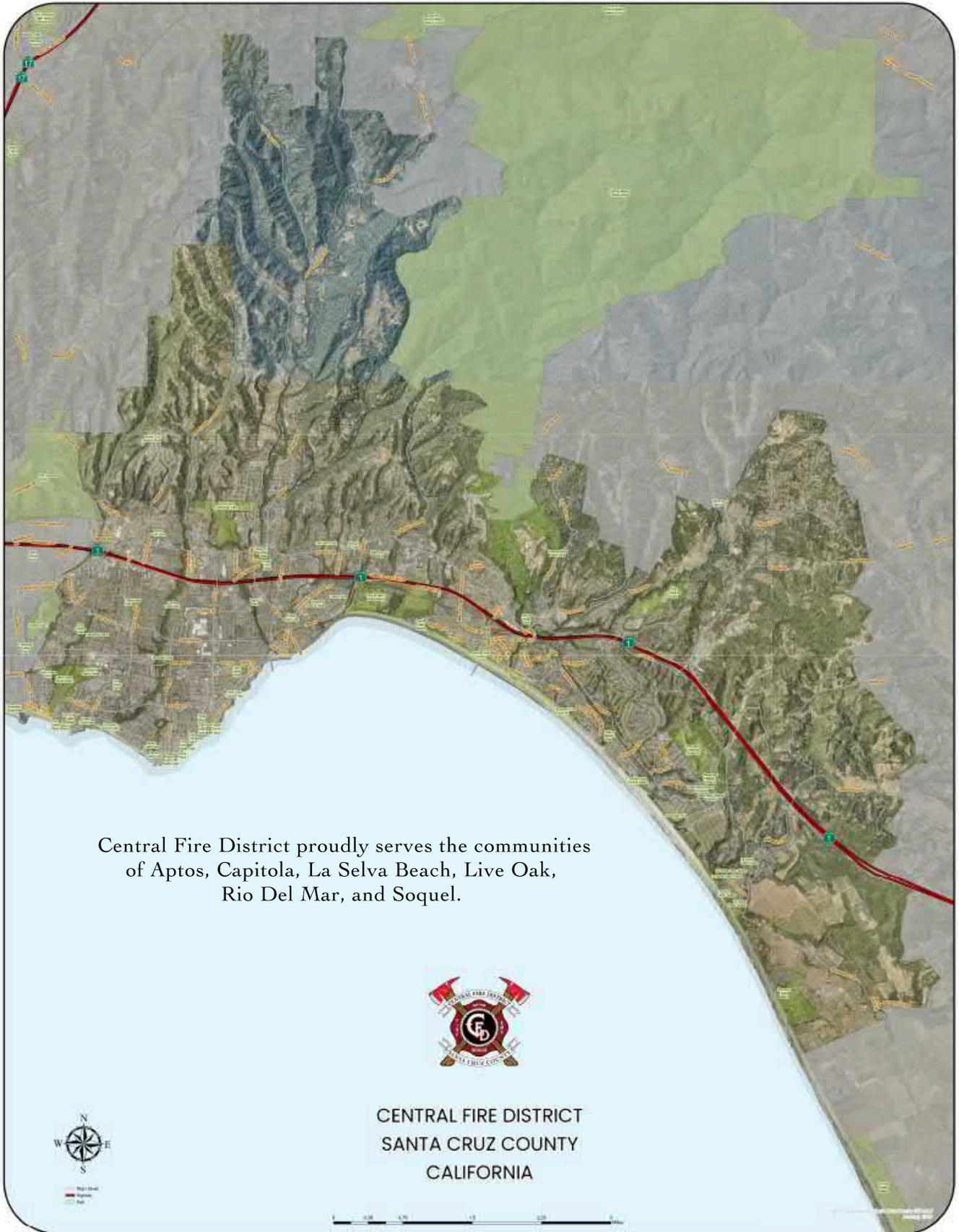
It is the Vision of Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County to:

Position the Fire District securely (operationally, financially, and politically) through and beyond economic uncertainty while creating a resilient, predictable, and sustainable future.

Be a leader in the fire service, respected for our excellence in service delivery, our dedication to the community, and our commitment to our personnel.

Provide exemplary customer service, be fiscally responsible, and support a regional approach to collaboration and progressive innovation.

CENTRAL FIRE DISTRICT BOUNDARIES



CENTRAL

FIRE DISTRICT FACILITIES



Live Oak Station 1
930 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062



Thurber Station 2
3445 Thurber Lane
Santa Cruz, CA 95065



Soquel Station 3
4747 Soquel Drive
Soquel, CA 95073



Capitola Station 4
405 Capitola Avenue
Capitola, CA 95010



Aptos Station 5
6934 Soquel Drive
Aptos, CA 95003



Rio Del Mar Station 6
300 Bonita Drive
Aptos, CA 95003



La Selva Beach Station 7
312 Estrella Avenue
La Selva Beach, CA 95076



Administration & CRR Division
930 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062



Training Division
6934 Soquel Drive
Aptos, CA 95003



Fleet Services
410 Kennedy Drive
Capitola, CA 95010



At a Glance
QUICK FACTS
2024

**Mutual Aid
Given**
141

**Mutual Aid
Received**
7

EMS Incidents
5,277

Fire Incidents
3,717

**Total
Incidents**
8,994

Avg. Response Time
Dispatch to Arrival
0:06:49

Avg. Turnout Time
Dispatch to Enroute
0:01:21

BUENA FIRE

Aptos, CA



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



George Lucchesi
Term of Office
2020 - 2024



Michael Hushaw
Term of Office
2022 - 2026



John Lucchesi
Term of Office
2022 - 2026



Ken Radliff
Term of Office
2020 - 2024



Dave Ronco
Term of Office
2020 - 2024

EXECUTIVE STAFF



Jason Nee
Fire Chief



Anthony Cefaloni
Assistant Fire Chief



Nigel Miller
Operations Division Chief



Patrick Winters
Logistics Division Chief



Nancy Dannhauser
Finance Director



Gena Finch
Human Resources Director



Mike DeMars
Fire Marshal



Scott Vahradian
EMS Chief EMSIA



Ryan Peters
Battalion Chief
Training & Safety



Derek Staley
Battalion Chief
A Shift

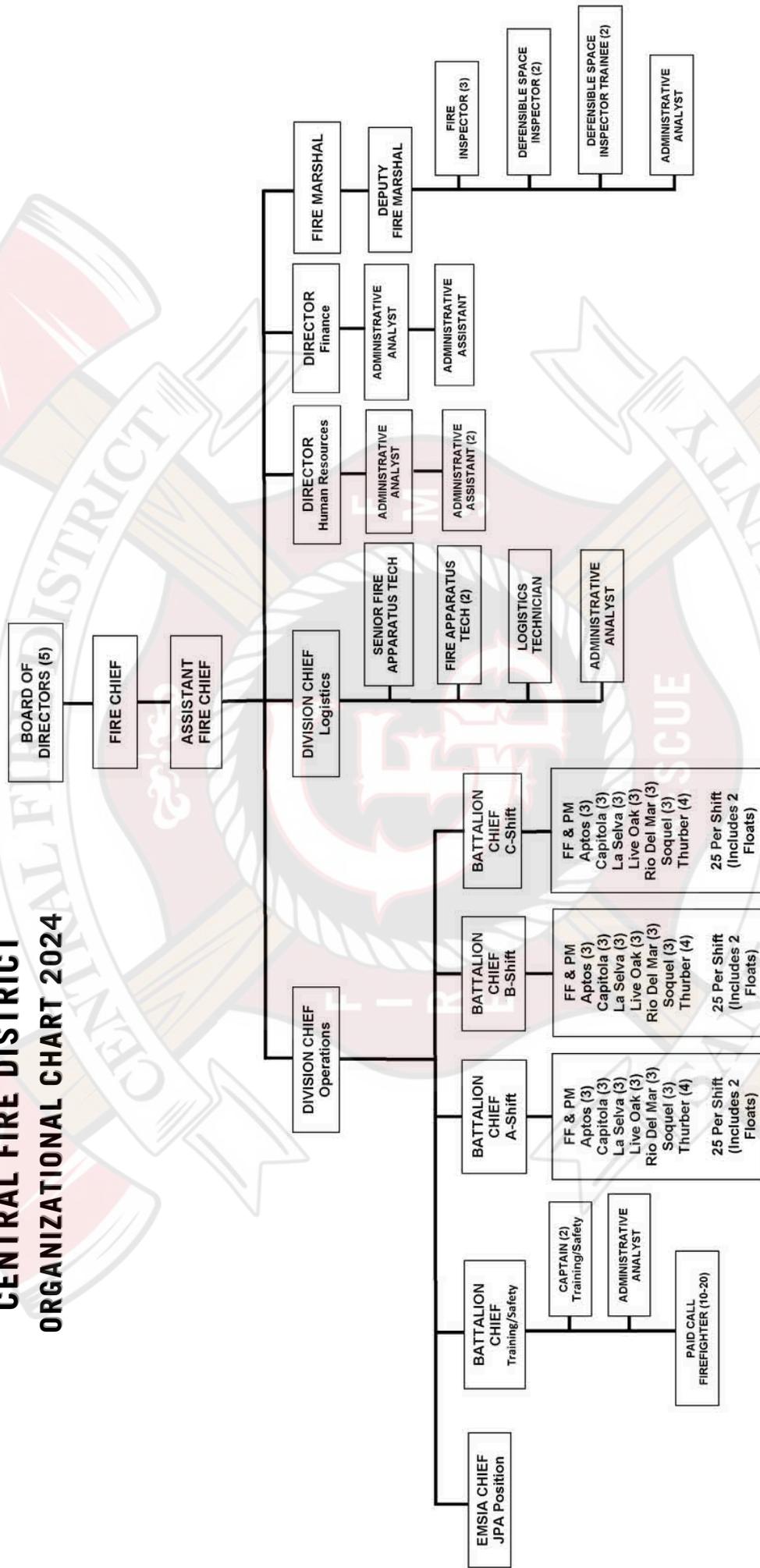


Ernst Bauen
Battalion Chief
B Shift



Richard MacDonald
Battalion Chief
C Shift

CENTRAL FIRE DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2024



RETIREMENTS

It was a significant year for retirements at Central Fire. In 2024, we said goodbye to Firefighter Brian Aluffi, Captain Scott Harway, Captain Laurel Walters, Assistant Fire Chief Anthony Cefaloni, and Fire Marshal Mike DeMars. Their commitment to serving our community has made a lasting impact. As they move on to the next phase of their lives, we appreciate their years of service. Their contributions will be remembered by colleagues and the community alike. Thank you for your service, and we wish you all the best.



Brian Aluffi
Firefighter



Scott Harway
Captain



Laurel Walters
Captain



Anthony Cefaloni
Assistant Fire Chief



Mike DeMars
Fire Marshal



BC MacDonald



Captain Hopper



Captain Carson



Captain Biagiotti



FF/PM Roberts



FF/PM Stanwyck

PROMOTIONS

We are thankful to have a dedicated staff that chooses to take on more leadership roles and responsibilities. We are pleased to announce the following promotions in 2024: Richard MacDonald promoted to Battalion Chief; David Hopper, Luke Carson and Daniel Biagiotti all promoted to Fire Captain; Houston Roberts and Joseph Stanwyck both promoted from Paid Call Firefighter to Firefighter/Paramedic.

NEW HIRES

We welcomed three Firefighter/Paramedics in 2024, ensuring that Central Fire continues to provide exemplary emergency services. Daniel Pedemonte, Vince Tomao, and Justin Cox joined our ranks, ready to protect and serve our community.



Daniel Pedemonte



Vince Tomao



Justin Cox



photo: Admin Analyst Kaitlyn Lucchesi

SHELLY FIRE

Klamath National Forest





photos: Firefighter Paramedic Jeff Wiley

FLEET / LOGS

DIVISION

The Fleet and Logistics Division's mission is to support the District's operational readiness by maintaining 50 Central Fire District vehicles and fire apparatus in safe, effective, and reliable working order. Moreover, it extends its expertise by offering contract services for fleet maintenance to neighboring fire agencies in both Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. This is achieved through comprehensive fleet management practices that encompass the acquisition, inspection, maintenance, repair, testing, recordkeeping, and retirement of vehicles.

Additionally, the Division manages the procurement of supplies and oversees facilities maintenance, repairs, and developments across all District premises.

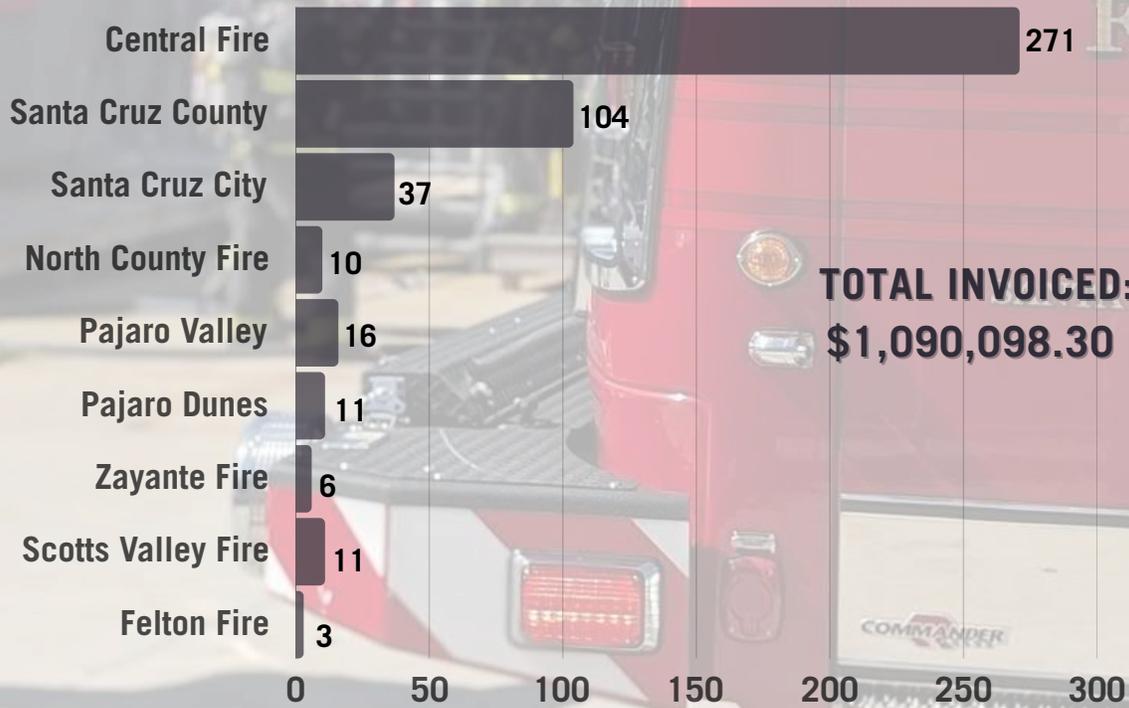
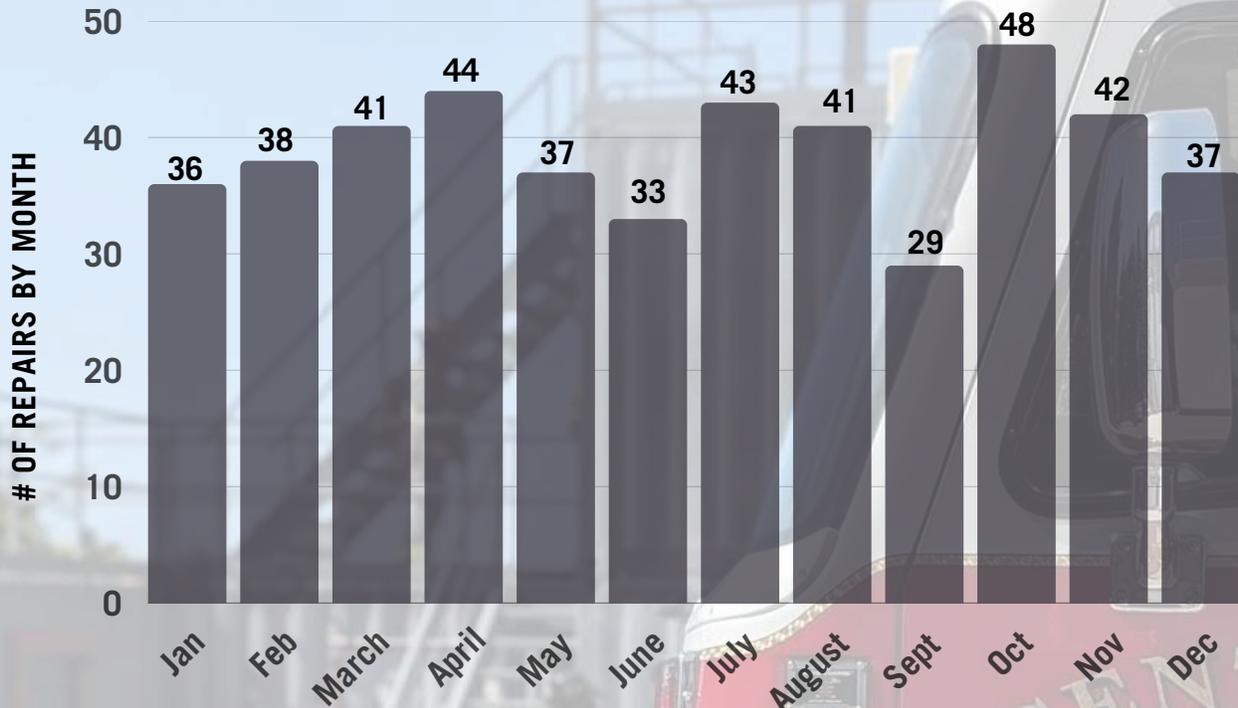
Situated in the City of Capitola, our Fleet Services Facility ensures compliance with all applicable state, local, and federal laws and regulations, and serves on several of the District's oversight and apparatus specification committees.

The Fleet Services Facility proudly holds certification as a California Green Business. We prioritize environmentally responsible practices in the maintenance and utilization of our fleet, equipment, and facilities, ensuring safe and cost-effective operations. The entire team diligently upholds our commitment to service, expertise, and sustainability year after year.

HIGHLIGHTS 2024

- The Fleet Improvement project finished the upstairs offices and staff were able to move back into their new offices.
- Placed two new Type 3 engines into service.
- Ordered three Type 1 vehicles, one Type 3 vehicle, and one BC vehicle.
- Introduced the Ford Maverick for CRR and the F-150 Hybrid for the Training Division.
- Maintained services with significant workflow disruptions during the fleet facility upgrades and provided mobile response services.
- Historically, annual improvement efforts have typically focused on one station each year. But in 2024, renovations were shared between Station 1 in Live Oak and Station 2 on Thurber Lane, both receiving comprehensive upgrades.
- Station 1 underwent major renovations due to storm damage from January 2023, which revealed water leaks from improperly flashed windows. All windows were replaced, and significant repairs were made to a damaged stairwell.
- Station 2 received essential repairs, including relocating the gym to the lower level to prevent ceiling damage caused by heavy weights being dropped, moving the day room upstairs, and relocating the cardio room. New carpets and flooring were installed, and HVAC systems were upgraded, enhancing the work environment and station operations.
- Stations 5, 6, and 7 updated their signage to reflect the 2021 merger into the Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County.

FLEET SERVICES



TOTAL INVOICED:
\$1,090,098.30

CHRISTMAS DAY FIRE

Capitola Village



photo: Firefighter Paramedic Kayla Ray



photo: Firefighter Paramedic Mike Elmasu

OPERATIONS

DIVISION

The Operations Division encompasses several emergency response disciplines, including Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Aquatic Rescue Response Team (ARRT), Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue Team (TRT), Active Shooter Hostile Event Response (ASHER), and the Central Fire Investigation Unit (CFIU). Other aspects of the Operations Division include Training and Safety, Health and Wellness, Peer Support and Disaster Preparedness.

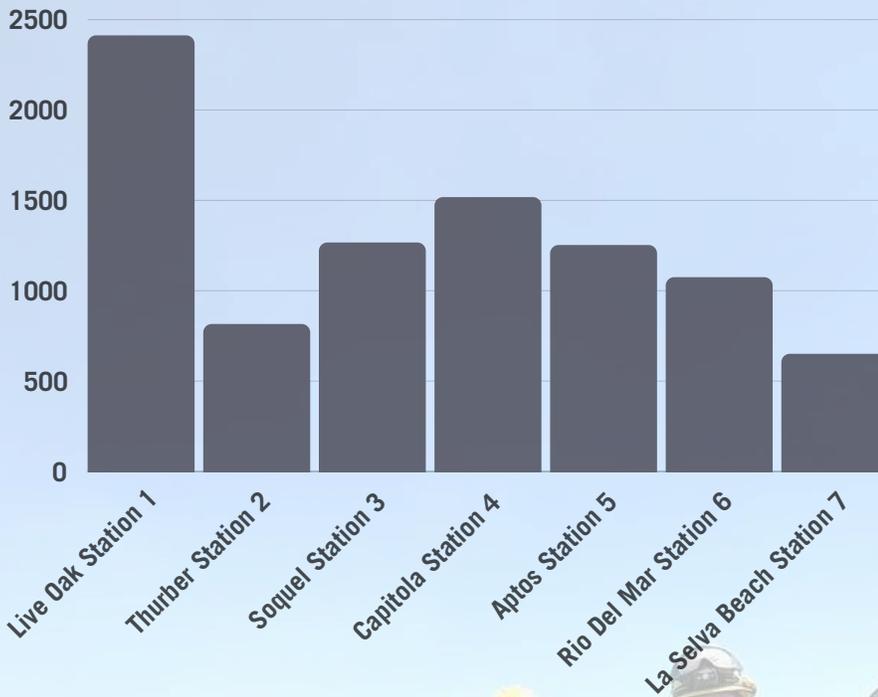
The District responded to 8,994 calls for service in 2024. The Central Fire District Chief Officers, including the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, and Division Chiefs, provide augmented duty coverage supporting the District's Shift Battalion Chiefs in emergency response and program management oversight. The highlights of a few of those programs are detailed below.

HIGHLIGHTS 2024

- Collaboration with Santa Cruz Regional 911 for emergency service radio communications and ongoing partnership with County of Santa Cruz to address radio system challenges.
- Operational deployment model updated with the addition of 3543.
- Revised County Fire Chiefs policies: 2-out, RIC, Mayday, Emergency Communications.
- Task Force 2329 deployed to Eaton Fire, assigned to Division Romeo and Tango in Altadena.
- Planned threat assessments and Rescue Task Force deployments for Capitola Art & Wine, Wharf to Wharf, and Aptos 4th of July parade with Santa Cruz Sheriffs, Santa Cruz City PD, CHP, Capitola PD, and Wharf to Wharf personnel.
- Collaboration with Cal OES for mobile repeaters, emergency tracking devices, "Scout" live mapping, and FIRIS surveillance aircraft.
- Central Fire assisted with initial attacks on wildland incidents on North Rodeo Gulch Road, Buena Vista Drive, and Buzzard Lagoon.
- Responded to house fire on Corte Cabrillo, containing fire to the room of origin.
- Facilitated six Critical Incidents Stress Debriefings for employees and local agency partners.
- Five new Peer Support team members joined in 2024. Peer Support Team members attended California State Fire Training on cancer awareness and mental health.
- Revitalized spouse support network for family member support.
- Purchased new portable combustible gas detectors and equipment for confined space operations.
- CFIU completed the investigation report for the Lawn Way Christmas incident (explosion) in Capitola Village. They also investigated the structure fire at the 2165 41st Avenue business complex.
- Drafted proposal for 24/7 on-call investigation team response plan.
- Aquatic Response Rescue Team provided event safety staffing for Ironman Triathlon with Santa Cruz City Resources.
- Continued training with Movement Specialist Rocky Snyder, focusing on ergonomics and functional fitness.
- Provided "Stop the Bleed" training to local schools.
- Responded to 12 water rescue incidents on 12/23/2024 through automatic/mutual aid.



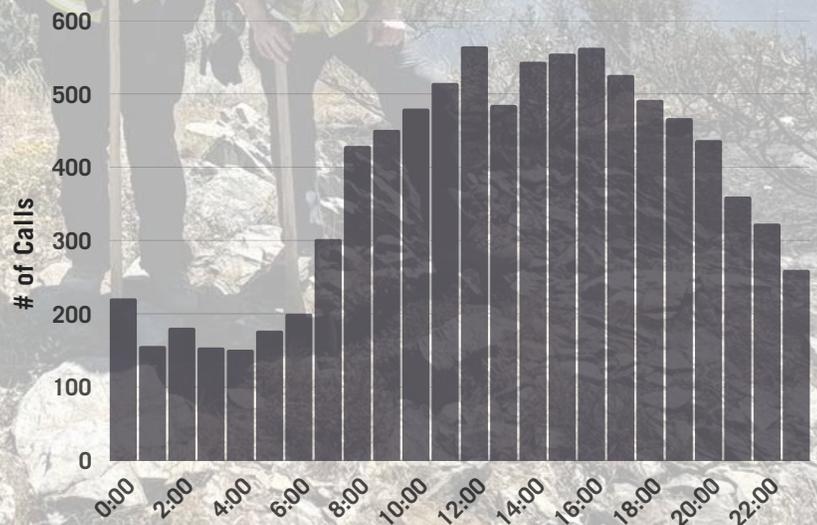
INCIDENTS BY STATION



STATION	CALLS
1 - LIVE OAK	2,413
2 - THURBER	816
3 - SOQUEL	1,267
4 - CAPITOLA	1,518
5 - APTOS	1,253
6 - RIO DEL MAR	1,075
7 - LA SELVA BEACH	651
ADMIN BUILDING	1
TOTAL	8,994

INCIDENTS BY TIME OF DAY

HOUR	# of Calls	HOUR	# of Calls
00:00 - 00:59	221	12:00 - 12:59	565
01:00 - 01:59	156	13:00 - 13:59	485
02:00 - 02:59	181	14:00 - 14:59	544
03:00 - 03:59	154	15:00 - 15:59	555
04:00 - 04:59	151	16:00 - 16:59	563
05:00 - 05:59	177	17:00 - 17:59	526
06:00 - 06:59	200	18:00 - 18:59	492
07:00 - 07:59	302	19:00 - 19:59	467
08:00 - 08:59	429	20:00 - 20:59	437
09:00 - 09:59	451	21:00 - 21:59	360
10:00 - 10:59	480	22:00 - 22:59	323
11:00 - 11:59	515	23:00 - 23:59	260



TRAINING DIVISION

The Training and Safety Division is a vital part of the agency, responsible for planning and coordinating local and county-wide training for line staff while ensuring the safety, health, and success of all employees. The Division's mission is to provide high-quality training and educational support, emphasizing safety. This results in a well-prepared force of trained personnel delivering exceptional service to our communities.

The year began with all shifts aligning with command staff for annual expectations and Command and Control training, establishing a coordinated approach for the busy year ahead. Specialty teams (aquatic response, technical rescue, hazardous materials, fire investigators, truck cadre, and active shooter response) expanded their expertise and recruited new members for leadership development.

The Training Cadre and EMS Subcommittee collaborated with Santa Cruz County Training Officers and EMSIA to create and deliver countywide training sessions, enhancing safety and operational efficiency among neighboring agencies.

In 2024, the Division emphasized career and leadership development by coordinating the California State Fire Training Company Officer class series, Driver/Operator classes, and the L-954 All Hazards Safety Officer course. Additionally, they partnered with neighboring agencies to host the inaugural Battalion Chief Academy in May, which covered all aspects of the position, from administrative duties to managing large-scale incidents.

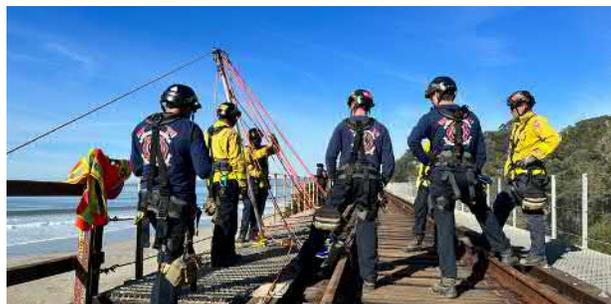
Staff worked under the Fire Chief's direction to implement new practices for the safe operation of District vehicles and equipment, while also supporting health mandates and medical evaluations for line personnel to maintain a healthy workforce.

Special thanks to Administrative Analyst Amy Weisser and Training Captains Dan Jordan and Jacek Kokot for their outstanding service and dedication in 2024. Their expertise and professionalism have been invaluable. Thanks to their hard work and the support of leadership, District employees benefited from diverse educational opportunities, logging nearly 17,000 training hours.

HIGHLIGHTS 2024

- Led countywide training exercises in Special Operations, Engine Operations, Wildland Fire, Truck Operations, and Active Shooter scenarios.
- Conducted quarterly Command and Control trainings by battalion chiefs for operational consistency across shifts.
- Organized Coastal Emergencies Training and interagency collaboration to enhance aquatic rescue response.
- Delivered annual and quarterly training to specialty team members (TRT, ARRT, Hazardous Materials, Truck Operators, CFIU, ASHER).
- Supported the establishment of the first Battalion Chief Academy in Santa Cruz County.
- Collaborated with training chiefs from local agencies and CAL FIRE to identify cost-effective training opportunities.
- Supported 11 new probationary firefighters and ongoing training for 17 Paid Call Firefighter reserves.
- Conducted probationary module testing, essential skills training, task book issuance, and managed paramedic validation for new hires.
- Completed OSHA-compliant safety inspections of all District stations to ensure a safe work environment.

CFD ANNUAL REPORT 2024



photos courtesy of CFD staff

CRR

DIVISION

Central Fire District's Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division includes a Fire Marshal, an Admin Analyst, two Fire Inspectors, and a seasonal Defensible Space Division. CRR plays a pivotal role in enhancing community safety and resilience through education, code enforcement, strategic planning, and the implementation of various safety initiatives.

In 2024, CRR completed 271 state-mandated annual inspections, resulting in a 92.81% completion rate. The division conducted entertainment and event inspections in the City of Capitola, as well as inspections for both small and large-scale construction projects throughout the district. Our team provided service to 31 senior residences by installing or replacing a total of 105 smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. CRR is undertaking in-house plan reviews, transitioning to a paperless system, and collaborating with operations and line staff to update pre-plans within our emergency database.

2024 was a busy season for our Defensible Space Inspectors. Their outreach efforts included meeting with 22 HOAs and Road Associations, aiding homeowners through the FIREWISE certification process, providing home hardening information, and implementing the weed abatement program. The collaborative efforts significantly improved the resilience of homes against wildfires, as residents learned to take proactive measures to protect their properties.

Our district now has over 3,000 residents improving their homes' fire resistance, and Central Fire was recognized by the State Office of the Insurance Commissioner for its efforts in helping constituents secure and maintain home fire insurance.

HIGHLIGHTS 2024

Community Risk Reduction

- Plan reviews: 496
- Revenue: \$251,000
- Fire inspections: 1,306
- Backyard burn permits issued: 182
- Smoke/CO maintenance calls: 31
 - 105 changes/installs
- Monthly bystander CPR classes

Defensible Space Division

- Properties inspected: 3,364
- Vacant lots inspected: 179
- Firewise meetings/presentations: 22
- Certified/in-progress FIREWISE: 20 communities

Noteworthy Events

- Central Fire's 3rd Annual Open House
- KSCO Radio Interview with Fire Marshal DeMars
- 1st place at the Sheriff's Office Annual Trunk-or-Treat
- "Why Go Firewise Event" - Seventh Day Adventist Camp
- Monte Fireworks Display - Capitola Wharf



photos courtesy of CFD staff

PARK FIRE

Chico, CA



photo: Captain Dan Hamilton



photo: Firefighter Paramedic Jeff Wiley

ADMIN

DIVISION

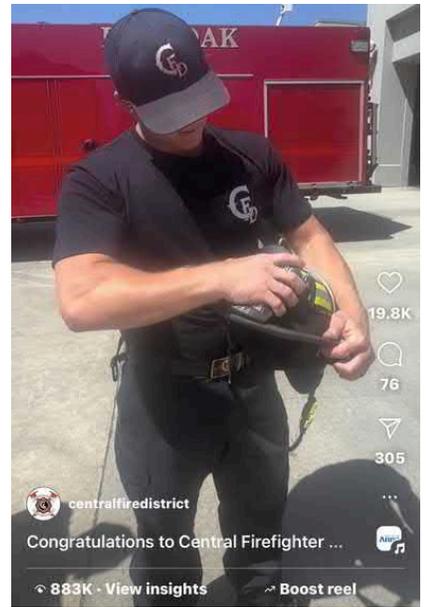
The Administration Division of Central Fire is essential for the smooth operation of the organization, encompassing key areas such as Human Resources, Finance, and general administration. The Human Resources Division handles employee benefits, compensation, and recruitment while also overseeing risk management related to employment practices and property insurance. The Finance Division focuses on managing the District's financial resources through budgeting, financial planning, and expenditure management, ensuring alignment with strategic goals.

Additionally, the Administration Division provides essential support services, including administrative tasks, policy development, website and social media management, and coordination of public director meetings. The administrative staff works behind the scenes to ensure that the District runs efficiently and that our firefighters have the support they need to perform their duties effectively.

HIGHLIGHTS 2024

- Processed over \$20 million in payroll, over the course of 26 pay periods.
- Created agenda packets for 22 Board and Committee meetings including backup documentation, resulting in approximately 180 total hours spent developing the agenda packets.
- Conducted four recruitments, with new hire and promotional testing for the positions of: Battalion Chief, Firefighter/Paramedic, Paid Call Firefighter, and Facilities/Logistics Technician. A total of 99 applications and/or resumes were received.
- Hired three Firefighter/Paramedics. Promoted six employees which included: One Battalion Chief, three Captains, two Firefighter/Paramedics.
- Completed over 600 hours of continuing education which included recruitment and retention, Board of Directors and Brown Act compliance, employment law, leadership, workers' compensation, FMLA/CFRA, government accounting, employee benefits and retirement.
- Implemented a monitoring system to track employee medical absences. This system assists employees in getting proper medical treatment quickly.
- Created a Social Media Committee to assist in content creation and providing information to the public.
- Chosen by the US Department of Labor to participate in data collection related to employment in the fire service. 15 employees were selected at random to participate in the process. The information gathered will be used by groups such as schools, students, and researchers throughout the US.
- HR Director received the Executive Leadership Certification from the Public Section Human Resources Association, and a California Employing Abilities at Work Certification.
- Began a classification and compensation study to use for future staffing and salary planning.
- Implemented ROTH contribution options for all employees.
- Our social media channels sent out a total of 521 posts. Our most popular post to date, is a video of firefighter Cody Nolte switching out his probationary helmet shield (see photo on next page). It had an impressive 25,488 reactions (likes, etc.), and reached a whopping 910,392 users.

CFD ANNUAL REPORT 2024



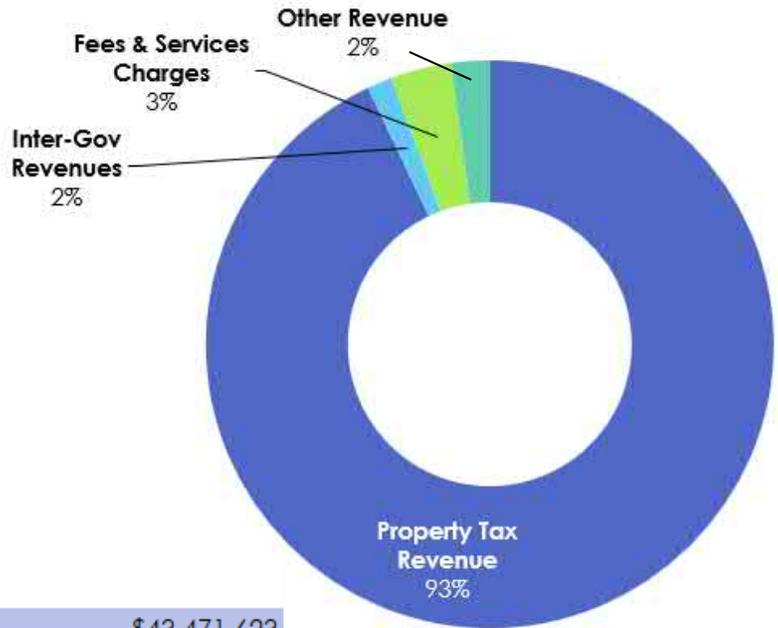
photos courtesy of CFD staff

FINANCES

BUDGET FY 2023/24
\$46,766,432

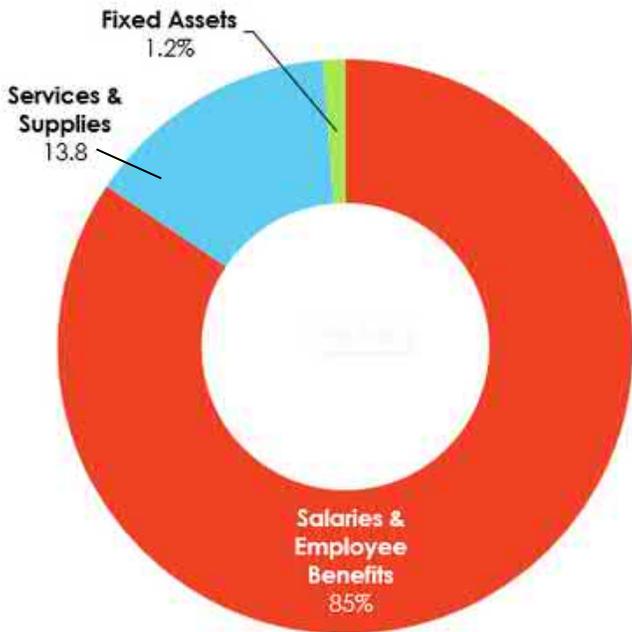
Financing Sources

Property Tax Revenue 93%
Inter-Gov Revenues 2%
Fees & Services Charges 3%
Other Revenue 2%



Financing Sources

Property Tax Revenue	\$43,471,623
Inter-Gov Revenues	\$667,347
Fees & Services Charges	\$1,600,436
Other Revenue	\$1,027,027
TOTAL	\$46,766,432



Expenditures

Salaries & Employee Benefits 85%
Services & Supplies 13.8%
Fixed Assets 1.2%

Expenditures

Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$37,807,670
Services & Supplies (less intrafund transfers)	\$6,407,923
Fixed Assets	\$559,038
Total	\$44,774,630

Capital Set-Asides

Capital Replacement	\$5,867,326
Total	\$5,867,326



photo: Captain Brandon Houston



PUBLISHED BY: CENTRAL FIRE DISTRICT
DESIGNED BY: CHARLOTTE CAMBRIDGE
COVER PHOTO: SLV STEVE
BACK COVER: KAITLYN LUCCHESI

