

Monthly Message from the Chief

July 2010

I realized my preferred method of management style early in my career. While most managers employ the spectrum of management styles from dictatorial to laissez-faire (let it be), I found mine to be predominantly inclusive. Not only do I believe including others who will be subject to a decision results in a better decision; the process, perhaps more importantly, results in better understanding and buy-in. A collaborative process encourages healthy communication and serves as a teaching mechanism that helps new or prospective managers develop their own styles and understanding of an organization.



Due to my management beliefs, I have resurrected and/or created a number of committees, councils and advisory groups. My intent is to provide avenues for anyone in CAL FIRE to contribute to the direction of our department and to have a logical chain of approval that allows representatives of our units, regions and programs to participate in the establishment or amendment of policies and procedures. July marks a landmark in the organization of these bodies. The Management Council will meet for the first time this month.

The Management Council is comprised of the Assistant Region Chiefs, Assistant Deputy Directors of all programs, Assistant State Fire Marshal and the Chiefs of the Budget Office, Information Technology, Technical Services, the Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), and Office of Program Accountability. It will answer to the Executive Team (E-Team), which is comprised of myself, all those who report directly to me and those that answer directly to the Chief Deputy Director. The Management Council evolved from what was originally the Fire Protection Executive Committee (FPEC), which subsequently expanded in order to consider Fire Prevention matters, as well. FPEC will be meeting for the last time this month to put their issues in order to submit to the Management Council. The first meeting of the council will focus on orienting members to their purpose, establishing internal business processes, and establishing ground rules for conducting meetings. I have appointed Tony Favro, Chief of Program Accountability and Information Security, to a two-year term as Chair.

The primary reason for the creation of this council is to provide a clearing house for issues arising from different advisory groups that cross program boundaries. The council will afford representation across the entire spectrum of disciplines within our department and be the coordinating body for policy and procedure recommendations coming from the following bodies:

- Operations, Safety, Health and Training Advisory Committee (OSHTAC)
- Management Services Advisory Committee (MSAC)
- Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC)
- Uniform Advisory Committee (UAC)
- Capital Outlay Command (CAPCOM)
- Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC)
- Resource Management Council (RMC)
- Fire Prevention Steering Committee

Of these, MSAC, RMC, ITAC and the Fire Prevention Steering Committee are just ramping up. There are also many working groups, both standing and ad hoc, organized under these committees. This network of involvement is a very ambitious undertaking, particularly in the case of the Management Council. It will take a great deal of energy and focus to keep issues moving toward resolution. At the same time, it provides opportunities for our people to influence the department. I encourage participation at every level and spreading the effort necessary to arrive at the best solutions while making the best use of our time. It is my hope that in this time of frequent turnover in our department this inclusive approach to management will contribute to the education and effectiveness of new and future managers.



Del Walters, Chief
Director