



**CITY OF DIXON  
PRESS RELEASE  
August 1, 2016  
For Immediate Release**

**Fire Chief Aaron McAlister Reflects on his Tenure in Dixon**

Dixon recently said goodbye to its Fire Chief Aaron McAlister who is moving on to become Assistant Fire Chief at Contra Costa County Fire. Chief McAlister's assignment with Contra Costa County Fire will be support services Dispatch for Fire Prevention, Fleet and Facilities. He will also serve as a duty chief to a 25 station Fire Department.

Deputy City Manager-Admin Services, Joan Michaels Aguilar, had the pleasure to work with Chief McAlister during her tenure here in Dixon since 2011 and got a chance to chat with him during his busy last week in July.

Ms. Aguilar asked the Chief the top five things he was proudest of during his time in Dixon, he noted several areas.

- Guiding the department through the economic downturn
  - We were able to still purchase new equipment during uncertain times
  - We were in concessionary bargaining with the labor group and we were able to maintain a cohesive relationship with labor to stay focused on the mission of the fire department
- ISO Rating- the department received a 2 point decrease in our ISO rating. This is a reflection of the Dixon Fire Departments capabilities and results in savings for our community in terms of insurance premiums.
- Staff Changes- I have had the opportunity to hire or promote 2 Captains, 3 Division Chiefs, several Engineers and several firefighter paramedics for both full time permanent and limited term positions. Having the right people in the right positions is the key to current and future success.
- Creative long term strategies- in this category I would put the Winters agreement and the renewal of the City / District Contract. The Winters agreement is outside the box thinking and represents the ability of Dixon to "leverage our assets". It is

successful for both parties. The District agreement was on a 3 year term. I took it to a 7 year term to provide more stability for both sides. It also results in a small percentage increase for the City.

- The general leadership provided by Dixon Fire. I had the opportunity to represent the City in front of LAFCO and the BOS on several occasions. I had a turn as President of the Fire Chiefs Association and have served as the operational area coordinator, a position I was elected to by my peers. The Wragg Fire was the largest fire to impact the County in a decade and I participated in the coordination of the incident. In my position as Coordinator I was asked to go the State of Washington representing our State and the 40 firefighters from throughout California. This all reflects positively on the City of Dixon and the leadership we have provided. We are one of the smaller agencies in the County but we have played a large role.

As a long-time finance professional and working in the public sector for 37 plus years, Ms. Aguilar can vouch for the creative thinking exhibited by Chief McAlister with the Winters contract and leveraging grant resources. Dixon has been particularly lucky in applying for and receiving grants whether for equipment such as Self Contained Breathing Apparatus, defibrillators, regional communication equipment or the FEMA SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) Grant for funding three Firefighter or Firefighter/Paramedic positions awarded back in 2013. Often times, public safety and finance do not always see eye-to-eye, but Aaron always recognized keeping Finance informed on financial matters affecting Fire, while recognizing the City's continued fiscal recovery and limited resources.

When Joan asked what Aaron would miss the most in Dixon, Aaron noted, "I will miss the family environment of the Dixon Fire Department. There are many social events and the group is close. Going to a much larger organization, I most likely will not have the close relationships I have enjoyed with the staff at the Dixon Fire Department." One of the key things in any organizations is the relationships that are built and Solano County has lost one of its recognized leaders in the fire profession.

Ms. Aguilar shared that "I want to express my admiration for the dedication and service of our Dixon Fire Department personnel whether they are serving the community locally or assisting on strike teams. On behalf of the City of Dixon, while we are sad to see Aaron leave, we wish him the best in his future career."

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