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News Release

CITY OF VICTORVILLE CONTINUES TO RECRUIT FOR NEW FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES OPENINGS FOR CAPTAINS, ENGINEERS & FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDICS

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VICTORVILLE, Calif. – Just three weeks following the hire of its new Fire Chief, the City of Victorville continues to recruit fire professionals for its new city-run fire department by releasing applications for Fire Captains, Fire Engineers and Firefighter/Paramedics. Applications for these positions are now available on the City's website at www.victorvilleca.gov. The positions will remain open until filled.

Faced with rising public safety costs, the Victorville City Council authorized establishment of a city-run fire department on Jan. 16 as a cost-savings measure. According to City Officials, cost savings will be realized largely through reduced pension costs through a switch away from contracted services with San Bernardino County Fire.

The per-employee pension cost in the County Fire retirement system, SBCERRA is more than three-times higher than that of the City's retirement system, CALPERS. The percentage for SBCERRA is 65 percent per employee while the percentage is 18.5 percent with CALPERS.

For example, the City would pay annual pension costs of \$65,000 for a County Fire Employee earning a salary of \$100,000; while under the City Fire model, annual pension costs for this same employee would be just \$18,500.

"When you extrapolate the reduced pension costs across a department of 64 employees, the savings really add up," says Deputy City Manager, George Harris. "Victorville is in a very unique position to hit the re-set button on our fire services model for the benefit of our tax payers, and we are making a sensible business decision that will save \$3.5 million in the first five years."

On March 21, the City announced it had selected Greg Benson, an experienced fire chief with more than 30 years of public safety experience, to lead the new Victorville Fire Department. Benson will report for duty on April 23. His first priority will be to oversee hiring for the new fire department. The recruitment for a division chief and three battalion chiefs was launched in February and has progressed to the testing phase.

The City expects to complete the transition from contract services provided by San Bernardino County Fire no later than December 2018. In addition to staffing its new fire department, the City is pursuing a contractual agreement with CONFIRE to continue providing dispatch services for people of Victorville.

Located in Southern California at the high-point between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, Victorville is the leading city for both industry and retail in the High Desert region. Victorville is a growing, vibrant community that is home to approximately 120,000 residents and some of the area's largest employers. Clean air, abundant mountain vistas, family-friendly recreational activities, spectacular sunsets and breathtaking night skies entice locals and visitors alike to fall in love with this city that is within a few hours of SoCal beaches, National Parks, mountain retreats, Ontario International Airport, and other major attractions.

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