

# East Fork Fire Protection District

## OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

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### **Retirements, Promotions, and Appointments at East Fork Fire Protection District**

Minden – The East Fork Fire Protection District is working its way through a pack of new appointments and promotions stemming from retirements, resignations, reinstatement of a position, and the collateral impacts for several East Fork employees moving up the ladder.

Dave Fogerson left the organization in October to take a job with the State of Nevada, leaving his position open and to be filled by Mr. Jeff Veliquette. Deputy Chief Veliquette was selected from a pool of 12 applicants and will manage the District's Operations Division. Deputy Chief Veliquette comes from the Novato Fire Protection District, where he retired in March of 2020 after a thirty-year career. He has an extensive background in fire and Emergency Medical Services operations as well as a strong background in wildland fire response and incident management. Chief Tod Carlini was very pleased with the recruitment process and noted that the District received some very strong applications. Deputy Chief Veliquette started his new position on December 1, 2020. Joining Veliquette in the rank of Deputy Chief, will be 17-year East Fork veteran and former Battalion Chief Larry Goss. Goss will lead the District's Training and Safety Division which has been void of that dedicated leadership position for the past six years. Goss was promoted into the position after the District Board's authorization. The District had combined the responsibilities of both Operations and Training into one position, formerly held by Fogerson. District Chief Tod Carlini was quick to point out that while Mr. Fogerson did a good job managing both responsibilities, the COVID-19 Pandemic, which was managed in Douglas County mostly by Fogerson, placed a significant strain on both functions administratively. With the number of new personnel in the District and a resurgent of a "retooled" volunteer program, designated management of training and safety warranted the change. *"Deputy Chief Goss has some great ideas to move the District's training program forward and under a more strategic direction for the future.,"* noted Chief Carlini. *"We have lost such a large amount of our organizational experience with retirements over the last couple of years. We hope that we will be able to replace some of the experience voids with new training opportunities at all levels."*

The District has promoted Captains John Brawley and Matt Kruse to the rank of Battalion Chief. One position created with the retirement of Battalion Chief Scott Fraser and the other with Goss's promotion. Fraser retired in mid-December with 20 years of career service and 5 years as a volunteer. Newly elected Board Member, John Bellona, stated that he was the Volunteer Chief for the Ranchos VFD when Fraser started as a volunteer. Chief Carlini stated, *"Scott was one fantastic incident commander. I learned something from him every time we worked an incident together."* Carlini, Fraser, and Goss all worked together to manage Douglas County's largest wildland fire in 2014, known as the Bison Fire. The fire management was later transferred to a Type II Incident Management Team.

Both Brawley and Kruse each have 20 years of experience with the District and both also starting as volunteers. Battalion Chief Brawley will be leading "C" Shift, while Kruse will be in charge of "B" Shift. *"Both are going to be fine chief fire officers. They are both excited about their opportunity to lead at a higher level."* stated Carlini. They will be joining another long-time employee, Troy Valenzuela, who is

the “A” Shift Battalion Chief. Each Battalion Chief oversees four Fire Captains each shift, who in turn manage the Engineers and firefighters assigned to a particular station.



District Chief Tod Carlini presents newly promoted Captain Steven Koontz with his new red helmets, signifying the rank of Captain.

Following in the promotional landslide are newly appointed Captains Steven Koontz and Kevin Repan. Both were promoted in a small in-station promotional ceremony on December 28, 2020. Once again, Carlini had high praise for both young men and for their efforts to prepare themselves for promotional opportunity. East Fork Fire Protection District conducts one of the most challenging promotional testing processes in the region.

Current Captain, Jamie Buck has been appointed to the position of Training and Safety Captain, a position opportunity created by Brawley’s promotion to Battalion Chief. Deputy Chief Larry Goss

noted that Captain Buck would bring a very diverse background to the position and was excited to have him join Training and Safety Captains, Matt Hill and Tracy Connelly. East Fork has staffed this important position for several years now and is one of the few agencies with this dedicated position on each of three shifts.

Rounding out the promotional opportunity, will be Aaron Ghysels. Firefighter/Paramedic Ghysels will be promoting to the position of Engineer in couple of weeks due to the position being vacated by newly appointed Captain, Kevin Repan.

Of course, with the loss of personnel due to retirements and promotions, the District will see more new faces in the entry level ranks. Four new firefighter/paramedics are currently working hard to complete the Regional Fire Academy in Carson City. The District will soon be conducting an additional recruitment for firefighter/paramedics as a priority and to fill current and future open positions.