



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Wednesday, August 31, 2016

# **Mayor Faulconer Adds New Fire Crew to Provide Improved Service During Fire Season**

**MAYOR ASSIGNED NEW BRUSH FIRE CREW FOR SAN PASQUAL VALLEY THROUGH CITY-COUNTY PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIMES IN MULTIPLE COMMUNITIES**

San Diego – With the goal of improving public safety in every neighborhood, Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer joined County Supervisor Chairman Ron Roberts, City Councilmember Mark Kersey and Fire-Rescue Chief Brian Fennessy today to announce a new City-County pilot project to improve emergency response times in the remote San Pasqual Valley during peak fire season months.

A brush fire engine with four firefighters began serving San Pasqual Valley on July 1, providing the highest level of service the expansive rural area has ever received from the City. The crew is stationed at the County Fire Authority's San Pasqual Fire Station #93 – east of the San Diego Zoo Safari Park on San Pasqual Valley Road – at no land cost to the City. [Click here for b-roll](#) of the brush fire engine.

**“We’re in the middle of peak fire season and we need to make sure that we’re as prepared as possible to protect all of our neighborhoods,” Mayor Faulconer said. “This partnership means that help is showing up faster in multiple communities and firefighters are poised to respond more effectively if a wildfire breaks out.”**

The number of emergency responses is relatively low in the San Pasqual Valley as compared to other more densely populated areas of the city. Still, long response times in the area represent an increased risk to residents and visitors of the San Diego Zoo Safari Park when they experience a life-threatening emergency or when a structure fire or wildfire ignites.

**“With wildfires failing to respect city boundaries, regional collaboration is our best public safety tool,” Chairman Roberts said. “I want to thank Mayor Faulconer and the city for their partnership in positioning this powerful brush rig in a way that benefits us all.”**

Mayor Faulconer added the temporary new brush fire crew in the San Pasqual Valley as a pilot project through the fire season. The crew is on duty 12 hours a day (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) as fire officials determined that is the busiest time period for emergency requests in the area.

The closest fire station to San Pasqual Valley is Rancho Bernardo’s Fire Station #33 – which has the largest territory of any station in the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department – and the City often relies on mutual-aid agreements with other fire agencies to respond to calls in the valley.

**“This new brush crew provides critical coverage during the summer and fall when the risk of wild fires spikes,” said Councilmember Kersey, who represents the Fifth District which includes San Pasqual Valley. “Additionally, it helps provide relief to our fire crews in Rancho Bernardo who often travel 15 minutes or more to respond to calls in San Pasqual.”**

Preliminary data from the pilot project shows a significant improvement in response times for the San Pasqual Valley. Fire crews responded to nine calls in July and the average response time was nine minutes and 34 seconds – a 31 percent reduction compared to July 2014 and an 18 percent reduction compared to July 2015.

While the additional crew improves service to San Pasqual Valley, it also narrows the coverage area for fire crews at the Rancho Bernardo station, allowing them to provide improved service to that community. For example, the Rancho Bernardo crew only had to respond to one call in the San Pasqual Valley during July, compared to 14 calls there in July 2015.

**“As the population and traffic in the San Pasqual Valley increases, we need our level of service to keep pace,” Fire Chief Brian Fennessy said. “Add to that the tall grass this year, plus the drought, and we needed to provide better protection for our residents there. This is a good first step toward accomplishing that.”**

The brush fire crew is equipped with advanced life support equipment, including a cardiac monitor and defibrillator so it can respond to house fires as well as medical calls, many of which originate from the San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

The pilot project will continue at least through October and possibly through December, depending on conditions and operational decisions made by Chief Fennessy. Once completed, it will be re-evaluated to determine if a permanent crew is necessary.

###