



# COSUMNES FIRE DEPARTMENT HISTORY



The rich history of the Cosumnes Community Services District (District) dates back 127 years to the establishment of three districts: the Elk Grove Fire Protection District (1893), the Galt Fire Protection District (1921), and the Elk Grove Recreation and Park District (1936), which combined in two phases. In 1985, the Elk Grove Fire Protection District and Recreation and Park District merged to form the Elk Grove Community Services District. The Galt Fire Protection District merged with the Elk Grove Community Services District in 2006 to form today's District, which takes its name from the nearby Cosumnes River.

The following is a chronological history of the Cosumnes Fire Department, with the Elk Grove and Galt's Fire Department's history listed prior to the merger.

## **ELK GROVE FIRE DEPARTMENT 1892 – 2006**

- After a series of fires destroyed all but two buildings on Main Street in 1892, a group of citizens who started the Elk Grove Water Company, constructed an 80-foot water tower on Elk Grove Boulevard. The tank held 45,000 gallons of water, and 3,500 feet of water main was laid east and west on Elk Grove Boulevard, and five fire hydrants were installed. The Elk Grove Water Company conceived the idea of forming a Fire Department.
- In 1893 the Elk Grove Fire Department was founded with a single hose cart and a small group of dedicated volunteers.
- In 1897 a hose cart shed, hose drying tower, and fire bell were installed to alert the volunteer firefighters, special ordered from San Francisco. It was erected in the hose-drying tower located east of the Southern Pacific Depot. A second hose cart and an additional hose were added.
- In 1918 the hose tower, fire bell, and the equipment relocated to a site behind Odd Fellows Hall, the justice court, and the jail.
- In 1920 a chemical hand cart was added. This machine had two 45 gallon soda and acid tanks for quick-attack.
- In 1921, the department received its first motorized fire engine. A 1920 Paige Roadster was donated to transport the chemical tanks. The tanks were mounted to the rear of the vehicle, becoming Elk Grove's first motorized fire engine.
- In 1925, the first of many fire station buildings erected. An iron shed located behind the Odd Fellows building, justice court, jail, and adjacent to the hose-drying tower was built.
- On July 6, 1925, the official formation of Elk Grove Fire District was formed.

Citizens saw the need for increased fire protection and formed the Elk Grove Fire District, a tax-supported agency covering approximately 100 square miles, including the communities of Elk Grove, Sheldon, Franklin, and Point Pleasant.

- J.D. "Del" Cann was appointed as the first Fire Chief and Frank Everson as Assistant Chief.
- The first new engine was purchased in 1928. It was a 1928 Moreland 450 gallon water tank. The District served an estimated 3,000 citizens during these years.
- In 1928, the second station was added to the Franklin area, and in 1930, the third station was added to the Sheldon area.
- In 1934, Otto F. Hansen was hired as the Assistant Fire Chief in charge of the Franklin area for a salary of \$25 a month.
- In 1940, William Perry Schulze was the first full time paid Fire Chief in Sacramento County. Elk Grove Fire District became the first Fire District to employ a full-time Fire Chief.
- In 1943, improvements continued as the District purchased property at 9044 Elk Grove Boulevard and moved the corrugated iron building, which housed two of the engines and the fire bell to the back of the new site. The old hose tower was then dismantled.
- In 1943, an electric siren replaced the fire bell used to alert volunteer firefighters to duty by a large electric siren mounted on the town water tank. Operators from the telephone company activated the siren.
- In 1947, a Van Pelt fire engine was purchased following the end of World War II. It featured a high-pressure, 500 gallon per minute fire pump.
- In 1951, the first District Fire Station was built. The District outgrew its quarters and constructed a new concrete block fire station at 9044 Elk Grove Boulevard. The new Fire Station included three parking bays, a kitchen, a meeting room, a bedroom, and a bathroom. Several apparatus was purchased: 1931 Fageol, 1950 International-Howe, 1958 Ford, and a 1953 Dodge converted from a cattle truck to a fire engine.
- In 1956, following several tragic accidents in the area, the Fire District began offering local ambulance services with a 1951 Chrysler ambulance on loan from the county.
- Charles B. Angell became the first paid firefighter in 1962.
- In 1968 the original firehouse on Elk Grove Boulevard was moved, and a new four-stall metal building was constructed which became the New Firehouse Station 1.
- In 1975, Station 1 relocated, and the original fire bell was again relocated to a new station at 8760 Elk Grove Boulevard, where it continues to serve as Station 71 today.

- In 1975, the Elk Grove Fire District consisted of Chief Gerald Derr, Deputy Chief Clifford Angell, Fire Marshal Robert Edwards, Assistant Chiefs Paul Betschart, and Otto Hansen, Secretary-Dispatcher Virginia Schulze, four full-time captains, two engineers, two full-time firefighters, and fifty active volunteers.
- Most of the firefighters were also Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) responding to 911 emergency calls during the 1975-76 fiscal year. They operated a fleet of 18 fire vehicles including two ambulances.
- In 1980, Elk Grove firefighter, Kit Carver, was the first certified paramedic in Sacramento County.
- The District works jointly with other Sacramento County fire service agencies and participates in countywide utilization of the Incident Command System (ICS). In 1985 cooperation amongst the region's fire service agencies resulted in the creation of the Sacramento Regional Fire/EMS Communications Center, consolidating fire and emergency medical 9-1-1 dispatching services for all of Sacramento County.
- A countywide boundary drop system was established that provides the District with the ability to mobilize resources from over 85 fire stations in the area to respond to significant incidents.
- In 1985, the Elk Grove Fire District merged with the Elk Grove Recreation and Park District to form the Elk Grove Community Services District (District).
- The Fire Department joined forces with Cosumnes River College to create a Firefighter Internship Program in 1987.
- In 1989, Fire Station 74, located at 6501 Laguna Park Drive, was the fourth Fire Station to open.
- In 1996, the Fire Department transitioned to a career department from a combination volunteer/paid-call department. Twenty-six line full-time personnel were hired.
- In 2001, the population doubled from 75,637 to 153,015. The City experienced tremendous growth mainly through the conversion of agricultural land into residential subdivisions.
- In 1997, the State of the Art Alphanumeric Pager system was instituted to recall fire personnel during significant emergencies and disasters.
- In 1997, the Elk Grove housing boom led to the opening of three new fire stations.
- In 1999, Fire Station 75, located in the Laguna West area near Interstate 5 at 2300 Maritime Drive, was the fifth Fire Station to open. An additional 15 firefighters were employed.
- In 1999, Sheldon Station 73 relocated to the Sheldon area, closer to the District's urban core.
- The first Fire Academy began in 1999.

- In 2000, the State of the Art Fleet apparatus and Pierce equipment acquisitions resulted in a state-of-the-art fleet. A dual-purpose rescue-pumper, a pumper-water tender, and two urban interface combination structure-grass engines.
- In 2001, a state-issued California Office of Emergency Services engine was added to render automatic aid for wildland fires, statewide emergencies, and disasters.
- In 2001, Fire Station 76 opened as the sixth station, expanding the Fire Department's personnel base by 15. A full-time engine and medic crew was staffed.
- In 2004, the William Perry Schulze Fire Training opened offering state-of-the-art firefighting and rescue amenities. The facility provides a comprehensive training experience for the Department personnel. Neighboring fire departments and law enforcement agencies also use the facility for training drills and statewide certification classes.
- In 2004, 16 new firefighters were hired to man the first separately staffed truck company.
- In 2005, Station 72 relocated to the Franklin area to better serve the community and the many new homes in the area.
- In 2006, 11 new firefighter-paramedics were hired, and a fourth ambulance was added at Station 72.

## **GALT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

### **1921 – 2006**

- On June 13, 1921, The Galt Volunteer Fire Department was founded.
- The first Fire Chief was appointed, Fred Rothenbush.
- The initial budget was about \$1,000 for the year.
- The first fire truck was built by volunteers. An REO chassis was purchased, and a LaFrance chemical engine was installed.
- Galt Fire Department did not have a fire station. The fire truck was stored in Quenil's garage.
- In 1946, volunteer firefighters were paid one dollar per call regardless of how long the call lasted. The following year all volunteers were issued safety gear.
- In 1947, Station 44, located at 215 5th Street, was the first fire station to be built.
- In 1952, the Galt Fire Department received an ambulance from the county free of charge. Before receiving the new ambulance, Galt Fire would only transport to Sacramento County Hospital's by hearse from the local funeral

home.

- In 1961, Chief August Pahl was the first paid employee and 24-hour shifts went into effect.
- In 1971, the Galt Fire Department upgraded respiratory protection, purchasing MSA air packs, phasing out the old gas mask canisters that predated breathing apparatus.
- In 1974, State of the Art equipment was added. Hurst auto extrication tool and a mechanical device called a Cardiac Thumper. This device provided chest compressions and respiratory support to a patient under CPR and was beneficial during long ambulance transports.
- In 1976, Fire Station 45 was built on the west side of the railroad tracks. The District's second station was erected on 3rd & Guild Street and housed the Fire District administration offices.
- In 1979, the firefighters progressed from basic life support to EMT's. The District would continue to improve as it upgraded to full paramedic status with the first Sacramento County Paramedic class.
- In 1979, The Galt Fire Protection District held the longest-running fire department ambulance in the County of Sacramento. Ambulance service was subsidized by the County of Sacramento until Proposition 13 was implemented.
- In 1996, Station 46 was built at Walnut & Elk Hills Boulevard to provide fire and medical response to the northeast side of town.
- In 1997, the original Fire Station 44 was rebuilt to earthquake protection standards. During this rebuild, the new station building renamed to Station 45.
- The Galt Fire Protection District underwent many other changes to include the addition of a second staffed ambulance located at Station 46.
- In 2006, Galt Fire Protection District and the Elk Grove Fire Department merged its fire services and became the Cosumnes Community Services District (District).
- At the time of the merger, the Galt Fire District had two staffed stations with two ALS engines, two ALS ambulances, and a Battalion Chief.

## **COSUMNES FIRE DEPARTMENT 2006 – PRESENT**

- In 2006, a merger between the Elk Grove Community Services District and the Galt Fire Protection District resulted in the creation of the Cosumnes Community Services District (District). This change expanded the delivery of fire protection and emergency medical services to the cities of Elk Grove, Galt, and the unincorporated south Sacramento County areas – a total of approximately 157 square miles.
- The two Galt Fire Protection District fire stations were added to the District: Station 45 in Galt's historic District and Station 46 in the northwestern area of Galt, next to Galt Community Park.
- In 2007, 17 new firefighters were hired, the first as Cosumnes firefighters serving both Elk Grove and Galt.
- The Special Operations Division formed, managing special response programs such as Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue, and Swiftwater Rescue.
- In 2010, Fire Administration & Fleet Facilities Maintenance opened adjacent to the William Perry Schulze Training Center. The 22,357 square-foot Fleet Maintenance building is State of the art.
- The 7,077 square-foot annex building located at 10573 E. Stockton Blvd serves as the Department's Headquarters. It includes the offices for the Fire Chief and administrative staff.
- In 2010, Tracey M. Hansen became the first female Fire Chief in the region. Chief Hansen led the Fire Department through the challenges of the Great Recession.
- The 2018 Wildfire season was the deadliest and most destructive in California history. Burning close to two million acres. Cosumnes Fire Department OES engines, Type 3's, and strike team leaders had firefighters working around the clock, battling the brutal blazes aggravating the state of California.
- In 2018, the Enhanced Dispatch System was implemented in coordination with Sacramento Regional Fire and EMS Communications Center (SRFECC) as an enhanced medical priority dispatch system throughout Sacramento County.
- In 2022, two new Squad units and a second Shift Battalion Chief, were established with funding from Measure E. Each Squad is staffed with two firefighters, including one paramedic.
- In 2024, CFD opened Station 77 at 8350 Poppy Ridge Road, to provide fire and medical response to south Elk Grove.