

NEWS

Fire district marks accomplishments

In just a couple of minutes last night, Menlo Park Fire Protection District board President Virginia Chang Kiraly ticked off the accomplishments of the district in the past year.

- New labor contracts with firefighters who hadn't had a contract in seven years;
- Paying down \$12 million toward its unfunded pension liability, nearly half of what the district owes;
- Creating a succession plan for the department's management, which included hiring a deputy chief and promoting other officers;
- Partnering with Atherton to fund a \$330,000 stoplight and illuminated crosswalk at Almendral Avenue to give people a safe way across the busy road;
- Strengthening the district's Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, a program that relies on trained volunteers in natural disasters and other emergencies.

Kiraly said, "Robert Jones has really stepped up the game in East Palo Alto."

And she didn't mention that the district is rebuilding Fire Station 2 at 2290 University Ave. in East Palo Alto and has begun the process to eventually expand Station 6 at 700 Oak Grove Ave., near downtown Menlo Park.

The district, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, covers approximately 30 square miles and includes the cities of Menlo Park, Atherton, East Palo Alto and unincorporated areas such as North Fair Oaks and West Menlo Park. About 90,000 people are served by the district.

The district has a five-member



SWEARING-IN — Menlo Park Fire Protection District board President Virginia Chang Kiraly administers the oath of office to newly appointed fire inspector Lindsay Murtha at last night's fire board meeting in Menlo Park. Post photo.

ber elected board, though this fall Kiraly and Rob Silano ran for re-election unopposed.

telligent, extremely hard working and a great contributor."

Likely new board president

Kiraly was president of the board this year, and that's why she gave the "state of the district" speech last night. She'll likely be replaced as president by Silano, who was vice president this year.

Kiraly said one of the perks of the job as president is swearing-in fire personnel. Last night, she administered the oath of office to Lindsay Murtha, who was being promoted to the position of fire inspector.

Fire Marshal Jon Johnston described Murtha, who has been with the district in lower-ranking capacities for the past two years, as "in-

Challenging first day

On Murtha's first day as inspector, last Wednesday, she was called to respond to a house fire in East Palo Alto at 11 p.m. and work until 3 a.m. Then she had to pull a regular daytime shift the next day. But Murtha was enthusiastic last night and didn't complain at all about the unusual hours.

One project Kiraly mentioned that is underway was using Girl Scouts to document the location of Automated External Defibrillators, or AEDs, throughout the district. She said the district has been asking large employers to find their AEDs and the girls would photograph them. The plan is to create a cellphone app that will help people find an AED quickly in an emergency.



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