

Aptos-La Selva fire merger wins approval

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The consolidation of the Aptos and La Selva fire districts received the blessing of the county's Local Agency Formation Commission last Wednesday.

Patrick McCormick, LAFCO's executive officer, called the action at last week's meeting "the final marriage" between the districts.

LAFCO member and county Supervisor Robley Levy, in whose supervisorial district both districts are located, noted that they'd had "a nine-month engagement period" which seemed to be very successful.

The Aptos and La Selva Beach fire departments have been operating together since July 1985 under a joint powers agreement.

Levy made the motion for final approval of the consolidation, which was unanimously accepted.

Former Aptos Fire Chief Al

Forbes has been the fire chief of the joint Aptos/La Selva Beach Fire Department since July. The former chief at La Selva, Al Kinslow, is now assistant chief of the joint operation.

Forbes said Thursday the LAFCO approval was a formality. "It's mostly a paper change," he said. "There will be no changes in stations, operations or staffing."

The merger must still go before the county Board of Supervisors for final approval.

The Aptos/La Selva merger is the second merger in the 13 years since a study recommended that Santa Cruz County districts consolidate into three major departments — North, Central, and South.

The other consolidation was the merging of the Soquel and Live Oak fire departments into the Central Fire Department.

The Capitola Fire Department is also considering merging with the Central Fire Department.