

Aptos, La Selva fire districts look at consolidating

SANTA CRUZ — In light of a proposal by Aptos and La Selva fire districts to look at consolidating their services, the Local Agency Formation Commission Wednesday postponed a public hearing on joining all south county fire districts under one umbrella organization.

Currently the area is served by Watsonville, Aptos, La Selva, Freedom and Salsipuedes fire departments and the California Department of Forestry.

In December, LAFC Executive Director Pat McCormick proposed consolidating the fire services in the largely rural south county area under one "sphere of influence," or map of service boundaries.

He said the single sphere could save money and provide better service.

The idea was called "provocative" by commissioners, but it met with stiff resistance from many board members from the different fire districts.

Following McCormick's proposal, Aptos

and La Selva fire boards voted to initiate their own study for consolidating their services. APTOS, CALIFORNIA 95003

At Wednesday's hearing, Aptos Fire Chief Al Forbes said Aptos and La Selva are looking at a joint powers agreement for the two fire districts.

Aptos Fire Board is meeting Feb. 12, and La Selva Fire Board Feb. 19.

He told LAFC commissioners that the districts will have a better idea after the meetings whether the consolidation will fly or not.

The LAFC public hearing was postponed indefinitely. One suggestion being considered by commissioners is to have a special night meeting so that residents in the affected south county area can attend.