

New SV fire chief fulfills family tradition

By DONNA KIMURA

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SCOTTS VALLEY — After beginning his career as a volunteer, Mike McMurry has risen through the ranks to be named the new chief of the Scotts Valley Fire Protection District.

McMurry, 38, grew up in Scotts Valley and started as a volunteer firefighter 19 years ago.

His father is a retired battalion chief with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. He has two brothers who also work for CDF.

McMurry said he became a Scotts Valley volunteer when the forestry department and other agencies weren't hiring new firefighters.

He became a full-time firefighter in 1980 and has been deputy chief for the last three years.

He takes over the top post from Acting Chief Bruce Scott, who has filled in since the retirement of Mel Angel.

During his career, McMurry has been on a wide range of emergencies.

With the district's mix of rural neighborhoods and high-tech industries, there are wildland as well as hazardous materials issues, he said.

There are also a variety of medical calls as a result of an elderly population in town and Highway 17 running through the district.

When he began, there was no center divider on the highway, making for even worse collisions than there are now, he said.

In his new role, McMurry will lead 27 employees working at two stations. He is quick to praise the



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Mike McMurry

staff for its commitment to the district.

Hiring from within the department ranks speaks well of the entire agency, he said. Two others also applied for the job, which pays approximately \$79,000 a year.

"I think I bring stability," McMurry said. "I came from within."

He said he has also worked hard to build good relationships with other agencies.

McMurry identified two major issues that he will be working on—relocating the district's stations to reduce response times and reorganizing the management staff to reduce the number of chief officers.

Outside the station, McMurry said he spends his time with his young family, which includes a 3-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter.