



El Dorado County Fire Protection District
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PRESS RELEASE

El Dorado Fire Protection District and El Dorado County Fire Protection District Board of Directors Select Brad Gates as the Next Fire Chief to Lead Unified District

For Immediate Release: Monday March 9, 2026

Brad Gates has been selected as the next Fire Chief of the El Dorado County Fire Protection District as the District completes its annexation with the Diamond Springs–El Dorado Fire Protection District. Under Chief Gates’ leadership, the District will continue its commitment to delivering excellent service to the community while strengthening collaboration and support with our partner agencies.

With the retirement of Diamond Springs–El Dorado Fire Chief Matt Gallagher and the upcoming retirement of El Dorado County Fire Chief Tim Cordero, the governing boards of both districts determined that the newly unified organization required a modern, dynamic leadership structure designed to meet the growing operational, administrative, and strategic demands of a large, all-risk public safety agency. This model reflects the increasing complexity of today’s fire districts and positions the organization for long-term sustainability and regional leadership.

After careful consideration, the Boards initiated a nationwide recruitment process led by an independent consultant. The selection process included participation from the Human Resources Committees of both Boards, full Board interviews, and a stakeholder panel consisting of representatives from El Dorado County, the City of Placerville, and private-sector leadership within the county.

Following this comprehensive process, Chief Gates was selected unanimously.

To ensure continuity and stability, Chief Gates will work alongside Chief Cordero during a structured transition period over the next several months. This collaborative transition is designed to preserve institutional knowledge, maintain operational consistency, and support a seamless leadership transfer for personnel and the community.

Chief Cordero commented on the selection of Chief Gates: “It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the firefighters, the Fire District, and the communities we protect as Fire Chief over the past several years. I commend the Boards of Diamond Springs Fire Protection District and El Dorado County Fire Protection District for their thoughtful and diligent work in selecting the next Fire Chief. Their commitment to identifying the best candidate ensures that our mission—providing the highest level of service, professionalism and protection for our citizens—will continue and grow under new leadership.

I have complete confidence that El Dorado County Fire Protection District will continue to thrive as a valued and collaborative partner and leader within the Fire Service—both throughout our County and beyond. The future of this organization remains strong, and I am proud of the foundation we have built together.”

Chief Gates has served the El Dorado County Fire District for the past three years. Prior to joining the district, he worked for the California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) as a Senior Emergency Services Coordinator assigned to the Disaster Medical Services Division Plans and Training Unit, where he was involved in statewide policy, operations, and program development. He provided leadership support during major incidents including wildland fires, hurricanes, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before his state service, Chief Gates spent 17 years with American Medical Response in Contra Costa County, serving in management and field operations leadership roles. His experience includes disaster response coordination, logistics oversight, training and exercise development, and collaborative system integration with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District.

Chief Gates brings a strong understanding of the evolving nature of modern fire service, where fire suppression, advanced life support, disaster management, and interagency coordination operate as an integrated system. He holds a Master of Public Administration (MPA) in Government Policy and Leadership and a Bachelor of Science in Homeland Security and Emergency Management from Grand Canyon University. He is credentialed as a Chief EMS Officer (CEMSO) through the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He has numerous Emergency Management/Fire Service qualifications and is a recipient of the California EMS Authority Meritorious Service Medal.

El Dorado County Fire District Board Chairman Jim Edmiston stated: “Chief Gates has impressive emergency services leadership experience in addition to extensive formal education. We look forward to his leadership serving El Dorado County Fire, our partner agencies, and most importantly the community.”

Chief Gates has resided in Rescue, California for the past seven years with his wife, Breena, and their two children, Charleston and Tucker.

In response to his selection, Chief Gates stated: “I am honored by the Board’s confidence and the opportunity to serve the residents of El Dorado County in this role. This district plays a critical part in safeguarding life, protecting property, and ensuring emergency readiness across our communities. I remain committed to supporting our firefighters and professional staff, strengthening local partnerships, and delivering reliable high-quality service grounded in accountability and transparency. It is a privilege to lead an organization built on service, professionalism, and deep commitment to the people of El Dorado County.”

As the unified District moves forward, its mission remains unchanged: delivering exceptional fire protection, emergency medical response, disaster preparedness, and community risk reduction services as an all-risk public safety agency serving the residents of El Dorado County.

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