



Providing resources and information from Management Services in support of the Department's mission.

"However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at."

-Stephen Hawking

Disability Advisory Committee Member Recruitment

John Garlock, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

Per Government Code § 19795(b), each State agency is required to have an active Disability Advisory Committee (DAC). CAL FIRE already has a well-established DAC and is now accepting additional members to join and to serve as an accessibility resource for all employees of the Department.

Joining the DAC does not mean that you must have a disability. Rather, the committee can appeal to individuals who might be noted as sensitive to, interested in, and knowledgeable of issues relating to employees with disabilities, or to those who are interested in learning more in promoting disability awareness throughout the Department.

As a DAC member, you will:

- Serve as an advisor to the Department's EEO office to relay artificial barriers or fair employment accessibility issues concerning employees with disabilities and discuss the development of corrective action plans.
- Initiate, design, coordinate, and implement projects that will improve the personnel practices and employment opportunities for persons by participating in disability awareness events on behalf of the Department.
- Establish liaisons with groups and organizations that are concerned with achieving representation and utilization of persons with disabilities in the Department's work force, such as the State Disability Advisory Council.

- Assist and advise staff on issues relating to the Americans with Disabilities Act Amended Act.

Selection for membership is made by the DAC, with concurrence from the EEO Officer/Liaison. Employees interested in serving on the DAC must submit a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) and provide approval from their manager or supervisor prior to submission. Every effort shall be made to ensure that DAC membership represents the full spectrum of job categories and geographic distribution of the Departmental work force.

To apply, please see the DAC page on the CAL FIRE Intranet located at <http://calfireweb.fire.ca.gov/organization/committees/dac/> to obtain a SOQ with instructions.

Should you have any questions on the DAC or SOQ process, please contact EEO Analyst John Garlock by telephone at (916) 653-0946 or via email at john.garlock@fire.ca.gov.

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Dear Claire DeAir: Competitive Purchases

Connie Guerrero, Business Services Office (BSO)

Are your procurement, contract, state, and federal property, or policy needs fraught with confusion? The BSO presents Claire DeAir, who will be here every month to offer advice and to ease all of your BSO burdens.

DEAR CLAIRE DeAIR,

My Unit wants to purchase 500 hose packs with a specific release cord that is more accessible for the person wearing the pack. We have purchased these from *Vendor A* in the past, and *Vendor A* has told us they are the only entity that sells these packs with this specific release cord. I think they are correct, because I have been unable to find a secondary vendor to give us another quote. Can I just purchase from *Vendor A* since they are the only producer of the product I need?

~CORDIALLY CURIOUS

Dear CURIOUS,

Never forget the number one, fundamental principle of State procurement and contracting is that we want to (or rather, we MUST) make *fair* and *transparent* purchases. California State Law, the State Contracting Manual, and our Departmental policies are riddled with parameters to make sure that we are always making fair and equal procurement decisions. After all, we are spending tax payer dollars, and we want to be able to show the public that we are making responsible decisions with these funds, right? The primary way that we can make fair and equal procurement decisions, the kind of decisions that we can stand behind and defend, is through competition!

I can see that you were already thinking about establishing competition by trying to acquire a second quote. However, acquiring two or more quotes is not the only tool we have to satisfy that competitive requirement. Therefore (the short answer to your question), just because you cannot find two quotes for your desired product does not exempt us from satisfying a fair and competitive procurement approach. Let us look at the other

ways we can satisfy competition:

- *Advertising in the California State Contracts Register (CSCR).*

For purchases of non-information technology goods \$50,000.00 and above, we are REQUIRED to satisfy the competitive procurement requirement by advertising for bids in the CSCR.

If advertising in the CSCR, BSO will use the specifications written by the purchaser to create the advertisement. The purchase must be advertised in the system for a minimum of ten working days, which allows a large platform of potential vendors to see and bid on the purchase. Once the advertisement period has closed, the purchaser may evaluate submitted bids and award to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. If we still only receive one bid that can meet the specifications of your purchase, CAL FIRE may award to a sole bidder. However, a thorough justification letter must be included with the procurement package supporting the decision to award to a sole bidder. This justification shall be drafted by the purchaser and must be comprehensive, including all reasoning behind awarding to the sole bidder and proof that the effort to achieve the minimum two quotes (i.e., a printout of the CSCR advertisement) was made. By taking this step of advertising in the CSCR, we openly create competition by allowing the intended purchase to be viewed by many potential bidders.

- *Specifications.*

Please keep in mind while obtaining quotes or advertising in the CSCR that the specifications written must not be unnecessarily restrictive. In other words, you must be able to justify why the specifications written are required for your program objectives or our Department's mission, and are not simply based upon preference of the users. If the specifications are restrictive to one supplier's product, and that results in only one bid, a justification for

(Cont'd. on Page 4)

Dates to Remember

*Final Filing Date(s):
Communications
Operator
Continuous Filing*

*Deputy State Fire
Marshal
Continuous Filing*

*Deputy State Fire
Marshal III
(Specialist)
Continuous Filing*

*Fire Fighter II
(Paramedic)
Continuous Filing*

*Forester I
(Nonsupervisory)
Continuous Filing*

*Forester II
(Supervisory)
Continuous Filing*

*Forester III
Continuous Filing*

*Forestry Assistant II
Continuous Filing*

*Water Sewage Plant
Operator
Continuous Filing*

Employee Spotlight: Mark Lawson, Division Chief

Isaiah Matthews, Workforce and Succession Planning (WFSP) Unit

To recognize and showcase CAL FIRE's outstanding workforce, the WFSP Unit debuted the "Employee Spotlight" series. The goal of the series is to highlight and connect Departmental employees with one another and share our accomplishments, work duties, interests, and hobbies with the CAL FIRE workforce across California.



Mark Lawson, MMU Division Chief

National Basketball Association great Magic Johnson once said, "If you are a competitive person, that stays with you. You do not stop. You always look over your shoulder." Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit (MMU) Division Chief Mark Lawson has thrived on competition his entire life, never backing down from a challenge, whether it be internal or external. As we sat and spoke during his interview for Employee Spotlight, he described the many ways he expresses his competitive desires: motocross racing, drag racing, competitive bass fishing, eventually leading into his career with CAL FIRE starting around 1987. After three decades with CAL FIRE, Mark is still as motivated, and competitive, as his first day. "It is my 31st season," he says through his naturally warm grin, "and I am still learning every single day."

Mark has spent his entire career with CAL FIRE, and all of it in the unit where he started, MMU. As a Division Chief under Unit Chief Nancy Koerperich, Mark is MMU's Southern Operations Chief. His duties include handling all operational and administrative needs of the Merced Division of MMU. In Chief Koerperich's absence, he reports to city councils and boards of supervisors for Merced County, handling county and city agreements between CAL FIRE, the City of Atwater, County of Merced and administering various grants from state and federal agencies. In addition to that, Mark acts as the Deputy Director of Operations for the Merced County Office of Emergency Services and is an instructor of Fire Science and Fire Academy at Merced College. He is also a sworn Peace Officer, completing the Peace Officer Standards Training Academy training in 2003. Despite those duties, Mark says he will always continue to learn and grow as a CAL FIRE employee. "The day you stop learning is the day you need to call it quits," he says, "The Department is so diverse, and there are so many things to do within the Department, you should never stop learning."

Part of Mark's thirst for knowledge may come from being rather mechanically inclined. Having grown up in Sparks, Nevada, he comes from a family of "motor heads." He and his brother Kevin used to work with their father on cars, raced in motocross competitions, and eventually got into drag racing as part of a family drag racing team, going on to win several western United States drag racing championships. Though he was quite successful in both drag racing and motocross, Mark realized that neither are a sure thing when it comes to job stability and longevity in the sport. Much like other professional sports, only a small percentage of competitors actually make it to the highest level. So, Mark made the choice to step away from racing and riding and started his career with CAL FIRE, and he has not looked back. If you ask him, he will enthusiastically tell you it was no mistake. "I am proud to wear this patch every day," he says, flashing his typical, delighted smile, "I could not imagine working for any other Department." One reason CAL FIRE keeps a competitive person like Mark so engaged is the excitement of the job. Part of what keeps him coming to work every day is, "Never really having the same two days. Positive or negative, it is always something different." He goes on to explain, "To be able to go and effect change on a broader scale, provide greater service to the citizens; there are not a lot of occupations that offer the excitement and reward that CAL FIRE does."

Though CAL FIRE provides a diverse range of programs and opportunity, Mark still feels a need for competition. As we learned when the WFSP Unit visited MMU in November, Mark fills that void by competing against himself and others in the form of bodybuilding. "Bodybuilding," he explains, "is seeing the person in the mirror and trying to be better than that person every day." Mark competes in the Men's Physique Masters Division, where he finished in the top five of the NPC Nationals in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, last year. While most might be content with finishing in the top five out of hundreds of contestants, Mark has greater ambitions. He will be competing June 2, 2018, at the NorCal Championships in Sacramento as a "tune-up" to prepare for the 2018 NPC Masters Nationals in Pittsburg in July. His ultimate goal is to finish in the top two at the NPC Masters Nationals to obtain his IFBB Pro Card. As

What is Lean?

Sean Harrison, Office of Program Accountability

Lean is a continuous improvement methodology based on five key principles to eliminate waste or non-value-added activities to improve processes and quality from the customer's



SOURCE: California Government Operations Agency | California Lean Academy

point of view. Authors James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos developed the term “Lean” in their book about the Toyota Production System, “The Machine that Changed the World: The Story of Lean Productions.”

Lean focuses on creating customer value by minimizing or removing waste and solving problems caused within a process(es). Lean provides a collection of techniques and tools used to streamline processes to provide better results to the customer.

Created as part of the Governor’s reorganization plan and approved by the Little Hoover Commission and the Legislature, the California Government Operations Agency (GovOps) is responsible for administering State operations including procurement, information technology, and human resources. The mission of GovOps is to improve management and accountability of governmental programs, increase efficiency, and promote better and more coordinated operational decisions.¹

In accordance with its mission to help California state improve management and accountability of governmental programs, GovOPs has adopted Lean and created the California Lean Academy (Lean Academy). The Lean Academy provides training and resource materials for continuous improvement methods that support efforts to modernize and streamline government operations across California departments by achieving the following objectives:

- Continuous improvement as a standard practice and expectation for improving organizational performance.

- Standardization of business process improvement methodologies, training, and resources across departments.
- Managers and employees see themselves as partners in continuous improvement.
- Contribute to the recruitment, development, and retention of California State employees at all levels.²

The Secretary of GovOps states, in part, “Together, we will improve and innovate our operations as we continuously strive to provide customer service excellence through an empowered and dedicated civil service workforce.”³

SOURCES:

¹ [Government Operations Agency website](#)

² [California Lean Academy website](#)

³ [Message from Marybel Batjer, Secretary, Government Operations Agency](#)

DeAir (Cont’d.)

awarding to a sole bidder will no longer suffice. Rather, you will have entered into a situation where extensive documentation is required to justify a Non-Competitively Bid (NCB) purchase. Among other documentation requirements, NCB purchases not only have to be approved at an executive level of the Department, but must also gain approval from the Department of General Services.

Competition is an essential principle of State procurement and contracting, I hope now it is a bit clearer why that is. Without competition, we have no way to show the public that we are being open, fair, and equal when it comes to spending tax dollars. Fortunately, we have a few ways of demonstrating competition in our acquisition endeavors—by obtaining two or more quotes and by advertising purchasing intentions on the CSCR. Even when your procurement’s success looks bleak due to an apparent lack of competition, BSO can always assist in getting your unit the products and/or services you need!

Integrity and Ethical Values

Windy C. Bouldin, Office of Program Accountability

In last month's issue of *Connections*, the State Leadership Accountability Act (California Government Code §§ 13400 et seq.) was introduced, and readers learned that internal control, comprised of five components (i.e., the control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, and monitoring) have corresponding principles (i.e., requirements for each component), and attributes (i.e., characteristics which explain the principle in greater detail). Readers also learned that an effective system of internal control provides the *basic foundation* upon which a structure of public accountability must be built and that this is necessary to ensure that State resources are adequately safeguarded, monitored, and administered.

Consulting the United States Government Accountability Office's (GAO's) [Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government](#), let us revisit the *Control Environment* component. According to the GAO, this component is the foundation for the internal control system and provides the discipline and structure that influences how objectives are defined and how activities are organized. Often, in common speak, this is referred to as the tone of the organization.

The control environment has five principles; however, for this article we will focus on the first one: *The oversight body and management should demonstrate a commitment to integrity and ethical values*. The attributes contributing to the effectiveness of this principle are Tone at the Top (and Tone in the Middle for larger organizations), Standards of Conduct, and Adherence to Standards of Conduct.

- *Tone at the Top and Tone in the Middle*. This attribute provides in part that the oversight body and management must lead by example and demonstrate the importance of and commitment to integrity and ethical values through their directives, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as through the organization's values, philosophies,

and operating styles.

- *Standards of Conduct*. This attribute emphasizes the need for established standards of conduct that define the organization's expectations of ethical values. This attribute also affirms the need for this information to be communicated and for the use of ethical values to balance the needs and concerns of varied stakeholders.
- *Adherence to Standards of Conduct*. This attribute reiterates the importance of established standards and adherence to those standards across the organization by encouraging ongoing monitoring or evaluations (e.g., meetings, upward feedback, whistleblower, hotlines) and advises that management must determine tolerance levels for deviation and address deviations both timely and consistently.

- Principle 1: Demonstrate Commitment to Integrity and Ethical Values
- Principle 2
- Principle 3
- Principle 4
- Principle 5

Control Environment



CAL FIRE utilizes a variety of tools to communicate expectations and evaluate adherence. These include, but are not limited to, the [2012 Strategic Plan](#) (e.g., mission, vision, values), messages from the Director, the [Departmental Incompatible Activities Statement \(PO-155\)](#), the [Fair Political Practices Commission Form 700](#), guidance provided by the Department's [Professional Standards Program](#) and [Equal Employment Opportunity Office](#), Position Essential Functions Duties Statement (PO-199), the Departmental Issuance System, and much more.

The leadership and followership of the organization can demonstrate adherence to this principle by displaying and encouraging professionalism and ethical behavior in day-to-day operations, thereby reassuring stakeholders of its commitment.

For more information on the components of internal control or other business tools, please visit the Office of Program Accountability's [Articles, Presentations, and Publications](#) page on the CAL FIRE Intranet.

"Every success is built on the ability to do better than good enough."

-Unknown

Spotlight (*Cont'd.*)

much as bodybuilding is a competition with oneself, its virtues and challenges apply to his work as a Division Chief at CAL FIRE.

Speaking on the relationship between bodybuilding and his work with CAL FIRE, Mark says, “No matter what it is, you get out of it what you put into it.” Mark gives 110% into everything he does, whether it be his work, helping others within the Department reach their goals, teaching or instructing, or preparing for a competition. Giving 110% effort seems to run in his family as well. Mark’s wife, Melissa, also competes in bodybuilding competitions, supporting Mark with diet, workouts, and staying focused while preparing for a competition. His son, Matthew, is preparing for the United States Marine Corps basic training in April, working on getting into the Intelligence Department upon completion. His daughter McKenzie graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a degree in Sociology and is looking to move back near Mark’s hometown in Reno to start her career and be closer to Mark’s parents in Sparks. His brother Kevin is also a part of the CAL FIRE family, working in the San Diego Unit as a Deputy Chief.

Mark spends his days training and preparing for competitions, and he also enjoys hunting, fishing, golfing, and anything outdoors with his family and his two dogs, Scooter and Roxy. He fulfills his love of cars by driving one of his two classic cars, a ’66 Chevy Nova SS and a ’71 Chevy C-10 pick-up. As we concluded the interview, I asked Mark what he liked about working for CAL FIRE. He repeated an idea that we have heard from people we have met all throughout our meetings with units and programs—the diversity. He explained that the diversity of CAL FIRE allows us “in so many different ways, to help people.” He said he is “humbled and grateful to work for a Department that offers the diversity [CAL FIRE] does.”

The WFSP Unit would like to thank Mark Lawson for taking time out of his schedule to speak with us. We would also like to thank Unit Chief Nancy Koerperich of MMU for allowing us to interview Mark.

If you would like to recommend someone for an upcoming edition of Employee Spotlight, please send the WFSP Unit an email at WorkforcePlanningandSuccession@fire.ca.gov with the employee’s name, classification, unit or program, and a brief description on why you think they should be featured in the article.

Learn When to Burn

Lynnette Round, Communications Office

As we roll into spring, now is a great time to clean your yard and home. When you rake leaves, cut trees, and trim shrubs try to place your vegetation piles far from your home. That way when you are ready to burn, you have them a safe distance.

If you are in an area that allows burning, make sure to check with your local CAL FIRE unit, along with the [local air quality management agency](#), to see if burning is allowed. As you may know, the weather plays a critical factor in burning, and burning is restricted when fire danger is high. Did you know that burning household items, even paper, can produce toxic smoke that could harm you, your family, or neighbors? With that in mind, if you need to burn debris from your home, make sure it is only vegetation.

“The good news is that there are many other options to burning,” said Lynne Tolmachoff Chief of Public Education. “You can use chipping, [composting](#), curbside pickups, or a recycling facility to eliminate excess garbage. You can also try [organic materials management](#) that diverts garbage away from landfills and moves it toward the production of value-added products.”

If you plan on burning, here are some requirements to keep in mind: use small 4 foot x 4 foot piles; maximum pile size to 4 feet in diameter; clear all flammable material and vegetation within 10 feet of the outer edge of pile; keep a water supply close to the burn site; and an adult should be in attendance with a shovel until the fire is completely out.

Remember, burning can only be done on permissive burn days. Burn permits are only valid on “Permissive Burn Days,” as determined by the State Air Resources Board or the local Air Pollution Control District. For more information, visit [CAL FIRE’s burn permit page](#) or our [Ready for Wildfire debris burning page](#).

“Success is in the details.”

-Unknown

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*Special thanks to all
contributors!*