

News Room

City of Redwood City Welcomes New Fire Chief, Baraka Carter

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Redwood City, California — City Manager Melissa Stevenson Diaz is proud to announce the appointment of Baraka Carter as the new Fire Chief for the Redwood City Fire Department, which also provides fire services to the City of San Carlos. Chief Carter was selected following a rigorous national recruitment process that sought a proven leader who values collaboration and community involvement and can effectively guide the department into the future.

Chief Carter joins Redwood City bringing over 25 years of experience in fire services, most recently serving as Fire Chief for the CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit, South Santa Clara County Fire District, and Morgan Hill City Fire Department. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated excellence in emergency response, fire prevention and organizational leadership. He has served and protected communities and residents living in and near the wildland and urban areas.



"Chief Carter is a dedicated, accomplished and collaborative leader whose expertise and innovative approach will elevate fire services in both Redwood City and San Carlos," said Melissa Stevenson Diaz, City Manager of Redwood City. "His proven ability to build strong teams, foster community trust, and lead with integrity will be invaluable as

we continue our commitment to public safety and service excellence. I particularly appreciate his track record in effective community engagement and welcoming community members into the fire service."

In his previous roles, Chief Carter oversaw fire operations for more than 1.3 million acres across five counties, managed multi-million-dollar budgets, and led diverse teams to deliver high-quality emergency services. He built strong working relationships between CalFire and other State departments, local agencies and community organizations to strengthen services while ensuring the fire department is both responsive and inclusive. His leadership philosophy emphasizes employee wellness, health, safety, teamwork, community engagement, and inclusivity, ensuring that fire services are effective, and adaptive to the needs of the residents.

Committed to community service, Chief Carter is actively involved in community-focused initiatives, including his work with the National Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Hispanic Chambers of Commerce and other grass root organizations dedicated to equity and public service. His commitment to community outreach and engagement ensures that residents have a voice in shaping public safety programs and services.

As Fire Chief, Carter will lead a dedicated team of firefighters and emergency personnel, overseeing critical initiatives such as public education programs, disaster preparedness, and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies to enhance response capabilities. He will also focus on fostering strong relationships with regional partners and stakeholders to enhance the department's ability to serve the evolving needs of Redwood City and San Carlos.

"I am deeply honored to join the Redwood City Fire Department and serve the residents of both Redwood City and San Carlos," said Chief Carter. "I look forward to building meaningful connections with the community, working collaboratively to ensure safety and preparedness, and advancing the department's tradition of excellence."

Chief Carter is a certified Chief Fire Officer, a Type 1 Incident Commander, and a Hazardous Materials Specialist. He is nearing completion of his Bachelor's degree in Fire Administration and has served on several statewide committees including the Statewide Emergency Medical Services Committee, where he contributed to the development of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) policies and practices statewide. Additionally, he is a certified instructor in multiple fire and safety disciplines.

Chief Carter will begin work February 24, 2025. Once set, upcoming opportunities to connect with incoming Chief Carter will be posted on the Fire Department's web page at www.RedwoodCity.org/Fire.

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About the City of Redwood City: The City of Redwood City is a San Francisco Bay Area community located in the heart of Silicon Valley, the technology-rich region extending from the San Francisco Peninsula to the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Redwood City is the third largest city within the County of San Mateo, with 85,992 residents. The city enjoys an average of 255 sunny days a year, which it boasts via the city slogan: "Climate Best by Government Test." Incorporated in 1867, Redwood City is home to the San Mateo County History Museum (located in the county's old courthouse) and the only active deep-water port within the south bay of San Francisco. The city's vibrant downtown, quickly becoming known as the entertainment hub of the San Francisco Peninsula, offers residents, visitors, and businesses a unique retail, entertainment, and restaurant experience.

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