



ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY

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Brian Fennessy Fire Chief

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Dear OCFA Family:

I want to begin this email the same way I ended the “Ask the Chief” segment that is embedded below; by thanking all of you, the incredible personnel of the Orange County Fire Authority.

It has been almost two years since we collaboratively and effectively pivoted on a dime to uphold our mission in the face of this COVID-19 pandemic. The evidence of our success during this challenging time is as substantial as it is uplifting — from our record of uninterrupted service during the height of the Omicron variant to our immediate and impactful response on the recent Emerald Fire (and again today in our assistance on the Jim Fire).

Just as we are right to celebrate these and many other successes (along with the resilience of the OCFA personnel who made them happen), we are equally obligated to acknowledge how difficult it has been. Indeed, even in the best of times, work in the fire service can be challenging, heart-wrenching, and for our firefighters, dangerous. Of course, our safety personnel courageously accept those risks with an oath of service just as our professional staff accept the responsibility that comes with supporting first responders. That said, none of us signed on to do this work during and through a global pandemic.

And yet here we are, two years in, poised to not only step into what we hope is the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, but also emerge as a national model for best practices and procedures in both good and challenging times.

With all that in mind, as we slowly and responsibly return to some sense of normalcy, I wanted to pause to simply say thank you. Thank you for picking each other up with kindness and care, particularly for those among us who lost loved ones during this time. Thank you for covering each other and our stations every time infection rates spiked. Thank you for living up to the tenets of our vision statement — courage, compassion, and competency — every day and on every call. And of course, thank you for doing all of that while navigating this pandemic — from adapting to ever-evolving pandemic policies and juggling childcare during school closures to staffing and enrolling our academies with high-quality cadres, recruits, and candidates (see attachment).

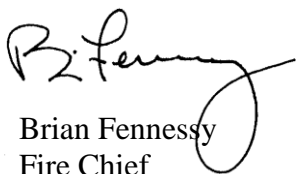
My gratitude for your service and selflessness is matched only by my excitement to begin seeing all of you in person more often, whether it be at RFOTC, station visitations, or at OCFA events. In the meantime, I will seek out new ways to communicate with you while continuing our most tried and true engagement platforms. To that end (and as promised above), here is our February [“Ask the Chief,”](#) which covers everything from Citygate’s service level assessment and progress to ambulance response times. You can also find this episode and pose questions for future episodes on the Hive under “Ask the Chief.”

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RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLERS AND SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

Again, thank you for all that you do for OCFA and the nearly two million people we serve. Together, we can and will continue our ascension as a premier fire service agency in our state and nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Fennessy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Brian Fennessy
Fire Chief