

Open-Ended Member Responses

The following responses are raw and unedited, representing the candid feedback provided by survey participants. This unfiltered input is crucial for gaining an authentic understanding of the current sentiments and experiences within the district.

In which subjects or areas would you like to see more training?

- All
- All areas
- All aspects of firefighting besides constantly going "back to the basics" and not progressing. Practice like we play in the game. Training on EV's, EV fires, train derailments, live fire training (besides with Stockton).
- EMS
- Firefighting, training and preparing our members to promote, train the trainers,
- Leadership, officer development, basic firefighting skills
- Live fire training at station 17
- Live fire, vehicle extrication, image trend, for the engineers (they need more pumping evolutions, drafting, practicing and rigs they aren't assigned to). Captains could use more sims, and I believe conflict resolution.
- MCI, live fire training, extrication, stokes basket lake rescues, helicopter rescue scenarios, prevention led walkthroughs like we did with Costco, large care home major incidents, more lake side familiarization
- More auto x on electric, and high end cars. All around training. Organized training from the training officer.
- Multi-company Structural/Wildland fire operations, ICS and radio communications, Victim Rescue practices, Vehicle extrication. Any and all Low Frequency, High Risk emergency type incident.
- Onboarding
- State parks incorporation, helicopter capabilities/needs, rope rescue refresher, preparation for the next position.
- Succession planning. Structure. Leadership.
- The onboarding of members. The academy!
- Training the company officers on arrivals and setting up the incident for success. Training standards for newly promoted Capt Eng FFP

- Utilizing more training with neighboring agencies especially Penryn and Newcastle. And this not only includes fire training. But EMS as it is 90% of what we do.
- Vehicle extrication on EVs. Solar and EV fires
- We are working on it.

If you could change one thing about the district's training program, what would it be?

- All members of the training group engaged and better communication with the line for training input.
- Allow the members to utilize district funds to take classes that would benefit the district. We have been constantly denied before. All of us are confused about the cost recovery fund. We were told that would be used for training. But every time it is brought up what the funds are used for and if we can. We are belittled. This is such an easy thing to fix. It's training. We have plenty of money for training. Let the guys take classes they want without having all of these roadblocks.
- Better facilities.
- Consistency across shifts
- Direction. People don't know what classes to take. And when they do find a class they have to burn their own time, and that's hard to do after chief took our days away. Some people know which classes to take, others are just not taking classes because they don't know what to take. But ultimately direction, what classes should we take? What are the department's needs? What's the plan?
- Evolutions
- Find a new training officer
- Have a longer more in depth academy.
- I would put people in the cadre that have experience.
- More multi company training like we've been doing lately with RIC and RT-130 and continue to invite our neighbors from up the hill. I would also like to train with them in their districts so we can build strong relationships for potential future mergers
- More single company training in own primary.
- Move away on dependance of target solutions for department training.
- None (2)
- Promotional training programs. More in depth and comprehensive.
- Same as above. Slowing more input with the line crew.

- Structured and consistent training that is in alignment with our typical type of incidents
- Take away the "Training" title from Chief Feeley. He has been in this capacity for almost two years now and I've seen zero training come from him.
- Take training away from the current Deputy Chief.
- That training was more consistent and pertinent and not just doing mandated box checking on a computer. That the Training Chief actually did his job.
- To include support staff

With regard to the current evaluation process, what should the South Placer Fire District be doing more of?

- current evaluation process appears appropriate.
- Having the administrative office work on better working environment and allowing their input. Instead of dismissing all input from the line.
- N/A
- No opinion

In your opinion, what is the best way to communicate information at South Placer Fire District?

- Allow the PIO to do his job without being micromanaged by superiors. That job does not need to be micromanaged by any chief officer.
- Chain of command
- Clear communication of plans, needs, preparation for the future through a centralized command
- Command Staff is terrible at communicating with line personnel. Hard to know what the 5 year plan is when we don't even know what the plan is for next month. Command staff say they want the input from the crews but they do NOT listen to the crews. Even these surveys are a waste of time because nothing will change. Best way to communicate information is with a different leader.
- department wide "town hall" meetings that can be attended or zoomed into by all personnel; that allows all personnel to have the ability to gain the same information, ask questions, and be able to ascertain a generalized direction of the department without having to rely on second or third hand information.
- District-wide emails

- Email
- Email and meetings with the Chief
- Email for generalized messages. Daily Zoom briefings for shift specific topics and matters of interest to on Duty personnel.
- Email with periodic in-person communication.
- Email?
- emails
- Emails. We need to get emails about what the district is doing more frequently no
- Face to Face
- Face to face and email I think the situation dictates
- face to face, monthly meetings with all members not just officers
- In person
- In person
- In written communication via email from top down. We were having monthly email from Chief about the status of district. Those were very informative and helpful. Those seem to have fallen off. Once a month or more of those emails will help stop rumor mill.
- To have and open line of communication on all levels. There's no trust in upper management on communication with the line.
- When we provide input especially when the unit reps try to collaborate with the district. It's all smoke and mirrors. They ask for our input. But the chief is going to do whatever he wants. It is becoming a waste of time for trying to collaborate. He's going to do. What he's going to do.
- Written communication via email.

What suggestions do you have for improving employee morale at the district?

- There's no input on the direction of the department. We hear there's no money... yet the board and administration wants to open more stations.
- Leadership that values its members goes a long way. Our Chief has consistently shown arrogance and has been deceptive in past interactions that have dissolved the trust in the relationship. The district has lost over 10 individuals in the past 3 years while a close neighboring agency has lost one. The two agencies have very close pay and size similarities and I believe the poor leadership has cost us valuable employees. A change in leadership is mandatory to improve morale.
- Increase pay, 3 person engine companies, truck company back in service, union apparel on duty, employee retention, better command staff leadership, having a command staff with strong communication skills or a complete change with the command staff.
- A new administration. Stop hiring administration positions that we DO NOT need. Three man engine companies. Get rid of the ambulances and concentrate on suppression/ALS engines. Build programs that people want to be apart of IE Truck/Rescue program. Water rescue program. ETC
- Build a relationship between Admin and Line personnel. Leadership engage all members with an open and honest intention.
- increase diverse trainings hosted by the department. Reevaluate policies that restrict or reduce crews willingness to be out in the public.
- Working together with more positivity and encouragement
- We have taken several of these surveys. It's always brought up in meetings and round house table top conversations. Doing the little things that do not cost any money such as:
 - Letting us wear our union shirts
 - Stop micromanaging day-to-day activities
 - Line personnel feel like admin is always out to get them every time we leave the station
 - Address the class B drama
 - Allow us to take classes
 - Stop discipline for health screening results
 - People are leaving here because they see instability. We do not have secure funding and in 2 years we are in the red.

- WORK WITH THE LINE. LISTEN TO OUR INPUT. ADMIN HAS BEEN MAKING DECISIONS FOR THIS DEPARTMENT AND LOOK WHERE THAT GOT US. It's time to let the line have a voice and steer the department. We're tired of losing good guys to our neighbors. It FUCKING SUCKS. That is the biggest morale killer. Seeing guys that we've trained leave for neighboring agencies. And we see them on calls. What's the point in training if they're just going to leave.
 - New management. Chief, Deputy Chief
 - 3-0 on every engine. Single role for ambulances or get rid of the ambulances all together. Nobody joins the fire service to work on an ambulance. Everybody joins the fire service to work on the engine.
 - positivity gratitude and recognition
 - Give the personal what they want. That don't cost the district anything. Hoodies, longer academies for new members, etc.
- "I think that the administration and labor need to mend their relationship. It takes 2 to tango so both groups can work towards improving. As a member of labor I do feel the administration is extremely hostile and I get physically nervous in their presence. I also feel with the last contract we the labor were lied too, so there are major trust issues.
- Listen to the employees. Stop messing with the guys, what's the reason for doing a shift bid when you award it and then immediately management right those employees back to their original spots. Seems like the chiefs just like to play games.
 - A list from the Line was formulated a long time ago and given to the Leadership that had non monetary items/ideas that could be implemented and have immediate positive impacts on moral. They ignored it.
 - Change in culture at the line level... senior members continue to poison current membership with past grievances. More community involvement to put more focus on our residents and less on ourselves.
 - A monthly newsletter from the command staff.
 - Clear communication through all supervisors
 - Meeting in the middle between leadership and the union for what line staff want/need.
 - involve all employees' and support staff in all meetings

- More specialized training programs. Community paramedic, ropes, etc. People become stagnant.
- Too many. It's a complicated bunch of issues.
- Open communication between upper management and line staff. Eliminate micromanaging, allow BCs to do their jobs without being scrutinized. Work on/resolve the childish antics that happen between administration and line staff.

In your opinion, what should the district's senior leadership be doing more of?

- Be truthful and honest with the line. Show them the financial stability of the department. So they can make a decision with their family to stay invested in the department. No true facts,
- Listening to what the root of the problem is rather than being defensive and ignoring it. Value your work force, acknowledge the strengths. There have been many warning signs ignored due to arrogance. Promote teamwork, honor, respect. This Chief wants leverage against his employees to keep them in line rather than empowering them.
- Doesn't matter what my opinion is, they're going to do what they want.
- I don't see them as senior leadership
- Honest communication and valuing input from personnel.
- communicating the goals, plans, and direction of the department.
- Management and politics and less operations
- Stop adding chief positions. Especially with the talk of hiring 3 people to work in prevention. What????? We're not that busy. Why are we creating more overhead and more cost for us. Granite bay is almost built out. Why do we continually add cost to the district. Just listen to the line staff. Guys are voting and they are voting with their feet. And it sure is a great feeling during board meetings during the labor report Duerr buries his head in the computer screen or his phone and doesn't even have the respect to look us in the eye when we are talking.
- what is in their job description. I'm required to fulfill mine; they are not.
- Whatever it can to retain employees and attract new ones.
- discussions on the best aspects of SPFD
- Finding money for the district, and not so deep in the weeds of operations.

- I think the administration needs to lay off with the hostility and join the team and be part of us. Maybe it is too late, I don't know.
- District mergers!! Focusing on their jobs instead of getting in the weeds about every little thing at ground level.
- Focusing on hiring/recruiting/retention, funding sources, consolidation options, 3 person engine companies.
- Their actual job instead of focusing on the petty complaints of a few vocal members with no factual information to back up their "concerns".
- Better communication and understanding what can make line staff happy.
- Open communication with all line personnel not just union leadership. Getting a plan out to line personnel of where we are headed.
- Listen to concerns and value the employees.
- Collaborating
- "Eliminate the micromanaging by senior leadership to Battalion Chiefs.
- The Fire Chief should be in charge of political functions, money, revenue, so forth.... Fire Chiefs should not be involved in operational level decisions.

If you could change only one thing about the work environment at South Placer Fire District, what would it be?

- Administration working on being transparent with the line crew. Listen to what the line is trying to communicate past failures with previous leadership. Instead of being dismissive!!
- Respect
- Different leadership at the top
- The administration
- Change the perception and negativity to one of positivity. This is a great place to work with great people.
- Build an honest and open relationship between Admin and Line.
- New leadership
- Everyone working towards a goal of making everyone better, encouraging one another and not being selfish.
- Loosen the leash on us. Are station inspections really the top on the priority?
- hire new upper management, increase salaries and benefits

- 3-0 engine companies
- more positive team oriented
- Let the guys be guys. If they run a call and want to go buy a coffee, but forgot their class Bs. Let them get coffee. THE GUYS ARE AFRIAD OF UPPER MANAGEMENT. it should be that way.
- The relationship between Senior Leadership and Labor.
- Merger
- To not be so Data driven, to remember that we and the customers we serve are more than just numbers and that a graph or chart doesn't tell the whole story or the quality of the service we provide.
- Greater focus on helping Admin achieve department goals and objectives rather than criticizing them for it.
- Less out of pocket medical cost
- Better morale
- Update old stations
- Administrative attitudes towards line personnel
- Better relationship with admin
- No BLS personnel

In your opinion, what is the district's single greatest strength?

- The line crew. Over the years they always carry the district's financial burden. Which makes us in the lower tier of pay and benefits do to their poor judgment, which includes the past board members.
- Employees
- Line Personnel
- The men and women that work fo the district
- Culture of providing good service to our public.
- Professionalism and service provided during incidents
- Its line staff
- Its employees

- We literally give the community amazing service for the little they pay. They have a ton of stations, paramedics, and two ambulances. Their level of service equates to a Lamborghini when they pay for a Honda Civic, which is not sustainable.
- the line staff
- Line staff
- friendly, professional, helpful staff
- Beautiful Equipment
- The labor group
- The area that we serve is amazing
- There are a handful of dedicated members that keep the train moving and respond to calls for service, which is the MAIN reason we exist.
- Customer Service to our external customers.
- EMS
- Line staff
- Provide great customer service
- Service that we deliver to community.
- Line personnel
- The service we provide, for the cost of tax payers
- We are great at EMS and amazing customer service.

In your opinion, what is the district's single greatest weakness?

- The lack of leadership and vision of the department's future. Not valuing the crew's commitment over the years. Expendable employees.
- Trust
- Poor leadership, poor communication, no trust between admin and line personnel, employee retention, employee development, pay/benefits, 2 person engine companies, closed stations, a community that is unaware of the seriousness of the poor state of the district.
- Lack of respect from the top down
- Lack of self-confidence and acceptance that the District is a great place to work. Being able to move on from the past and embrace the future
- Valuing employees.

- Communication: between line and admin, and, between the district and community we serve
- Its leadership
- Compensation
- Our ability to retain employees. Everyone struggles to hire people. But we have it both ways. We can't hire or retain people we have. Sure we hired people but its the same story. They will leave and after they have been trained.
- upper management
- Too much overhead
- ability to raise tax funding
- Not having lifelong firefighters that want to stay.
- How employees are treated
- Egos
- Quality Leadership. Getting buy in on the mission, telling us where we're going, giving us our lanes to stay in and letting us get it done. Not focusing on the small stuff and being a Dictator on tools and equipment that he'll never use.
- A few very negative vocal individuals influencing the rest of the membership in a negative and detrimental fashion.
- Communication between union and command staff
- Leadership
- Money
- No plan for future.
- Public education
- Our identity.
- We do not participate in any outside trainings with our local agencies. It's pathetic

In your opinion, what single greatest opportunity should the district take advantage of in the future?

- Build a positive workplace.
- Assess the needs of the district and base all decisions moving forward on those needs.

- Allowing the line personnel, 522 representatives and board of directors to work together in finding a new leader
- Merging with a department that is financially stable IE Rocklin Roseville Metro.
- Transport service to the entire District
- Consolidation With neighboring FD(s) (If done correctly)
- Increased social media and public education presence
- Its Wealth
- Merging with other departments to create a department with a lot of potential that will be attractive to people as well as engaging and makes people want to stay. Get rid of the old south placer way.
- look for new upper management
- Merger
- tax measure
- N/a
- Taking care of the employees
- Merging with other districts! SP, Penryn, Newcastle, Auburn, Placerhills, Foresthill
- Consolidation
- Grants for more personnel and facility improvements.
- Consolidation
- Create better morale starting from the top to the bottom.
- Grants
- Its members willingness and desire to work for more funding.
- Consolidation
- Being the lead agency in a merger
- Merging

In your opinion, what is the single most significant challenge that the district faces in the future?

- Financial Security for the community and the members of the district.
- Keeping our qualified employees and engaging in succession planning. Valuing their KSA to training new members and create a healthy culture.

- Employee retention/budget Issues
- Lack of money coming in
- Funding
- Funding
- district image: a majority of individuals we serve have no idea who their fire department is. This limits our ability to ask for additional funding and gain support from the community.
- Staying solvent
- Funding. Admin dropped the ball on a tax measure. The union pushed hard for a tax measure this upcoming November. But admin dropped the ball and now we are left again on our backs when we could have collaborated with the line staff and got everyone on board to push with one unified voice. But it is funding that is the huge downfall of this agency.
- recruitment and retaining employees, salaries and benefits
- Retention
- tax measure
- Paying the guys what they deserve.
- Retention
- Budget
- Quality Employee Retention
- Funding and bad attitudes
- Securing a long term funding source to be able to provide a competitive salary to keep quality employees.
- Maintaining tenured employees and keeping "senior" guys within the department
- Leadership vs union
- Money
- Funding
- Funding
- Funding and recruitment
- Money

If you were in charge, what would you include in your strategic plan for the next 3–5 years?

- A positive working relationship with the district and the community being informed of its financial situation and how to make it a great department. Where employees want to stay and serve.
- Revenue, merger, succession planning, staffing goals based on real world call volume
- Hard to formulate a plan for the next 3-5 years when I don't know what the plan is for next month. SPFD has the potential to be a "destination department" for other firefighters but we need better leadership to get us there.
- Find better ways to capture money.
- Consolidate
- much of what was hit during this survey. Identify the direction the department is heading.
- Working with the organizations to obtain a better fire assessment that fulfills the needs of the SPFD employees and its constituents.
- Downsizing the department. The community already voted. And they voted for a reduction in service. We can't keep the illusion of fire service up anymore. You need to downsize and consolidate stations and work on acquiring funding/consolidation. PERIOD. Stop worrying about the day to day operations. As chiefs find the damn money and keep the doors open so that there is a department for the guys that want to stay here.
- Merger
- build the team, progress toward tax measure
- How we are going to keep up with neighboring agencies pay and benefits. Which in turns, keeps personnel, which ups moral, and efficiency of the crews.
- Building a great working relationship with the line personnel. Give them space to do their jobs. Task people with task and not micromanage how it is done. I would have non confrontational meetings with labor on a regular basis. I would let everyone know what the plans are and take input from line staff.
- Merging with the other districts

- Focus on quality over quantity. Easier said than done, but if you really care about your people and want them to be safe and effective, you don't spread your resources thin just so it looks like you're covered to the public. It's embarrassing and totally unacceptable that we have 2 engine companies that are staffed with only 2 people. Stand up to the Board and Public and explain that given your budget restraints this is the level of service we're able to provide and we will NOT sacrifice FF safety over data points. Continue to foster relationships with outside Fire Districts and County Reps and look for alternate means of sustainable funding.
- Re-open Station 19, Hire Firefighters and have them sign a 5 year contract with us, Hire a Fire Inspector and a Plans Examiner, Create an annual Fire Permit for local businesses to cover the cost of Prevention Hires, Remodel existing facilities (Station 15 or 17) to accommodate an actual Administration area and a new training/meeting room.
- Working with allied agencies for a consolidation
- Work on better relations between leadership and union.
- upgrading the older stations.
- How we are going to secure funding moving forward. Will we look to merge? With who? When? What stations would open with certain levels of funding.
- Merger, and the securing of new funding.
- Consolidation

Please use the space below to tell us your suggestions or final thoughts for improving South Placer Fire District.

- Start being transparent and build a positive workplace
- This agency was ready and willing to embrace a new fire chief. The members respected his resume and were eager to have him lead. He has been referred to as the genie Chief because you better be careful what you wish for. Trust has been broken and there has not been a clear vision of our future rather I'm waiting on data to make a plan. Several attempts to repair this relationship have ended in frustration and disbelief that anything will change until we have new leadership.

- In the end, it really doesn't matter what I think. My opinion in this survey will be ignored. I'll just be labeled as a "disgruntled employee" by the admin and the board of directors. SP is going to continue to lose great personnel to other departments, which is putting the community at risk. "People don't leave bad jobs; they leave because of bad leaders, poor management, and a lack of appreciation for their worth."
- It really doesn't matter! I'm not very hopeful in the current administration and honestly the lack of forward thinking from four of our board members.
- Leadership and Line personnel must earn each other's respect and build a relationship.
- South Placer has so much opportunity to become great. We need to generate a public image that garners support.
- This is an amazing place to work. We're in a great area that allows us to sleep most nights and not beat us down. We should be attracting the guys that have been working at busy departments that want a change of pace. Fix the funding crisis. Consolidate with other agencies. And quit putting the hammer down on the guys. Let us do the job and stop creating roadblocks. Let's turn this damn place around.
- South Placer Fire is actually a great place to work. It's a hidden gem. We didn't have 2 guys leave Stockton to come here because it sucks. Some people are disgruntled but some of us are very aware how lucky we are to work here. I left another agency that I liked to come here and I don't regret it. I think the ambulances hurt our morale because we are not 3-0 on the engines. Again, nobody joins the fire service to ride an ambulance so when a 25 year senior employee gets mando for an ambulance apprentice spot, it can be discouraging. Especially when our successful neighbors don't have ambulances and have 3-0 engines. That's the dream we all had coming in to this job. We also need more buy-in from our own line staff. Kinda hard to convince new guys to stick around when senior guys talk about how unhappy they are. I do think we are slowly getting better but we still have a long road ahead of us. We need Roseville to stop growing so they can stop hiring for a while.
- None
- Find money out there. If that means merging, taxes, etc. we need more revenue.

- South Placer is a great place to work. It has been challenging with the new administration, I think most employees for the lack of better words feel they have been shit on. I had a lot of hope for that class the Chief provided us the Extreme Ownership, but when I heard a senior leadership officer jokingly make a comment that he hopes we got something out of it and can see where they are coming from I realized administration doesn't think they are part of the problem and their egos and arrogance are getting in the way of any real progression. It feels sometimes decisions made at the top levels are to hurt or piss off employees. I know it is actually bad when senior employees recommend we look at Cal Fire to take us over. That is a sad day.
- SP needs to merge. The future of SP is not SP. It's something else, something bigger and better. We need to check our egos and agree that we are no better than any other district in this county. We are all failing, and we all have areas that need improvement. Our chiefs have to agree that they won't be "The Chief" anymore and they'll be some type of deputy or something. At a minimum, we need to join the JOA to share our staffing. Join or die.
- The Fire Board is more concerned with optics and the majority of them have no clue what's REALLY going on. This ship is sinking and they have failed to listen to us. The quality of service to the community is going to suffer and unfortunately they may never really know that. It takes a lot to run a FD, I understand that, but the guys riding on the fire engines and going on the calls have been waving their hands for a while now, saying "hey, we have a problem," and the leadership has failed to acknowledge or take action.
- Team work makes the dream work.