



Media Advisory

Clark County Fire Department ■ 575 E. Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89119

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For Immediate Release

January 30, 2006

What: New Fire Chief Badge Pinning

When: Wednesday, February 1, 2006, 9:00 AM

Where: County Commission Chambers

Steven M. Smith will be officially promoted to head the Clark County Fire Department at a badge pinning ceremony that is expected to attract a large group of department personnel. He has been selected to be the eighth fire chief for the state's largest fire department and one of the nation's most visible.

Smith, a Clark County battalion chief, replaces Earl Greene, who is retiring effective February 2.

"I have really high expectations for Steve," said County Manager Thom Reilly. "He has been in the trenches for 25 years, has demonstrated exceptional leadership capabilities and is held in high esteem by the men and women of the department. The great respect and confidence that they have in him is indicative of what can be expected."

Smith, who has worked for the department since 1980, has been a county battalion chief since 1997. Battalion chief is the highest-ranking suppression position in the department. Before that, he worked as a fire captain, a fire engineer and a firefighter/paramedic. As battalion chief, he managed emergency response efforts at significant incidents, coordinated the training, inspections, community service requests and staffing of equipment for about 60 fire personnel in nine stations.

Shortly after joining the department, he helped fight the horrific MGM Grand fire on Nov. 21, 1980, which killed 87 people and injured 679. Three months later, he battled the Las Vegas Hilton fire, which killed eight.

"I am honored and excited to have been selected as the fire chief," Smith said. "We have an enthusiastic and energized department seeking the opportunity to perform to its highest ability. I look forward to working with all members of the department and community to develop solutions to our current and future challenges."

Smith, a former U.S. Marine, will oversee a fire department that is responsible for protecting the famed Las Vegas Strip, the largest part of the Las Vegas Valley and a county the size of New Jersey. His purview also covers the resort townships of Laughlin, Primm and Jean.

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News release also available on the Internet at www.accessclarkcounty.com

Clark County Board of Commissioners

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The Clark County Fire Department has 25 fire stations and 733 personnel, including 614 suppression personnel, 58 fire prevention and investigation employees, and 61 in administration, training and support. The department also oversees the state's largest volunteer force of about 350 personnel who serve in the rural parts of the county.

Smith was among a group of finalists who went through an exhaustive process that included interviews with Reilly, county senior management and screening panels consisting of local and national fire representatives, citizens and others. Candidates also were required to make presentations to fire department staff.

Smith has been an active member of the community. He is involved in awarding an annual scholarship through the UNLV Athletic Foundation and three academic scholarships through the Clark County Public Education Foundation. He also has lent his support to the annual Susan G. Komen Foundation "Breast Cancer Run" and to Child Haven, a county facility for abused and neglected children. He is married to Jill Smith and has two sons, aged eight and five months.

Greene has been chief since November 21, 1996. "Earl has improved operations over the years and worked hard to make this community safer," Reilly said. "We owe him a debt of gratitude and his leadership has been a great asset to the organization."

The department is an active one, responding to more than 101,000 incidents in 2005 – 3,809 fires, 74,287 medical calls and 23,649 other calls, including technical rescues, hazardous material incidences and false alarms. Volunteers responded to 2,150 calls. Reflecting the nation-leading growth of the county, the number of incidents over the last 20 years has increased an average of 9.3 percent annually.

In 2004 some 577 fire investigations were conducted, resulting in 21 adult and two juvenile arrests. There were five fire fatalities, down from 11 in 2000, and fire losses totaled \$34.4 million. The department also conducted 59,561 inspections in support of new construction, new business licensing and other building safety requirements.

The department maintains an "accredited agency" status by the Commission of Fire Accreditation International and is one of only 89 departments out of 18,000 across the country to earn this recognition. The accreditation is granted to departments who successfully meet requirements that measure virtually all performance aspects of emergency planning, inspection, training, education, suppression and resource allocation.

The department's total service area encompasses 7,910 square miles – about the size of New Jersey – with an urban planning area of 293 square miles. During the accreditation process, evaluators commented favorably about the unusually positive relationship between the fire department and the safety directors at resort hotel properties. That translates into safer and more efficient emergency response and cooperation, officials said.

In addition, the fire department also maintains one of only 28 Urban Search & Rescue Teams in the country, provides fire and rescue services to the nation's sixth-busiest airport and maintains heavy rescue and hazardous materials teams. The department possesses a Class I rating from the Insurance Services Office.

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