Director of County Communications
Santa Clara County, California
The Community

With a population of over 1.9 million, the County of Santa Clara is one of the largest in the state of California and the largest of the nine Bay Area counties. The County is located at the southern end of the San Francisco Bay and encompasses 1,290 square miles. A significant portion of the County’s land is unincorporated ranch and farmland. The fertile Santa Clara Valley runs the entire length of the County from north to south, ringed by the rolling hills of the Diablo Range on the east, and the Santa Cruz Mountains on the west. Salt marshes and wetlands lie in the northwest part of the County, adjacent to the waters of San Francisco Bay. Nearly 92% of the population lives in cities.

The County is a major employment center for the region, providing more than a quarter of all jobs in the Bay Area. It has one of the highest median family incomes in the country and has a culture rich in its history, ethnic diversity (over 100 languages and dialects are spoken), artistic endeavors, sports venues, and academic institutions. The County is home to professional soccer, hockey, and football teams and minor league baseball. The County operates 28 parks covering more than 50,000 acres, and numerous public and private golf courses are located throughout the County. Stanford University, Santa Clara University, and San José State University, as well as excellent community colleges, serve the County’s student population. Museums, art galleries, an abundance of performing arts venues, and local theme parks and venues for children and adults, can be found throughout the County. With its numerous amenities and one of the highest standards of living in the country, the County has long been considered one of the best places in the United States in which to live and work.

The Organization

Established in 1947 and celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, the Santa Clara County Central Fire Protection District (dba: Santa Clara County Fire Department) is a dependent special district that provides fire services to a portion of Santa Clara County, including the communities of Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, and Saratoga. The Department also provides protection for the unincorporated areas adjacent to those cities.

Wrapping in an approximately 20-mile arc around the southern end of “Silicon Valley”, the Santa Clara County Fire Department has grown to include 15 fire stations, an administrative headquarters, a maintenance facility, five other support facilities, 19 pieces of apparatus, and three command vehicles to cover 132 square miles and a population of over 226,000.

The Communications Department

The Santa Clara County 9-1-1 Communications Department exists to protect lives, property, and the environment by providing the vital connection between the community and emergency responders. The Communications Department is a medium to large dispatch center that provides dispatch services for Law, Fire, EMS and other Local Government agencies. It serves as the primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the unincorporated areas as well as the cities served by the Sheriff’s Office under contract. It also serves as a secondary PSAP for agencies in the county served by the Fire District and is the back up 9-1-1 center for all agencies within the County, including the City of San Jose.

The Communications Center provides dispatching for the Santa Clara County Sheriff, Santa Clara County Fire Department, Santa Clara EMS Agency Contracted Ambulance Provider, and Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department. It also coordinates with other county and municipal agencies for routine and after-hours support of operations.

Department Vision Statement

To be a model in public safety communications by maintaining the highest level of public confidence while providing service in a manner that fosters excellence, integrity, responsibility, and diversity, and, to remain a trusted and valued member of the Santa Clara County community.

The Position

At the direction of the Fire Chief, the Director of the Communications Center plans, organizes, and directs the activities of the Communications Center. This is an executive management position within the Fire District which is responsible for the administration and management of County communications functions which include 9-1-1 telephone answering and emergency
radio dispatching for sheriff, fire, and emergency paramedic services, as well as the technical support for all Land Mobile Radio (LMR), Public Safety Microwave and system administration for the Silicon Valley Regional Communications System (SVRCS).

Essential functions of the Director of County Communications include, but are not limited to the following:

- Plan, organize, direct, coordinate, and manage the activities, functions, and staff of the Communications Center.

- Provide leadership in the development and implementation of programs, policies, and procedures relating to all phases of an integrated emergency resources communication system.

- Provide general supervision of and review work completed by the Deputy Director of County Communications and reporting staff.

- Act in a liaison/coordinator role in working with local and regional agencies on the assignment and coordination of radio frequencies with the Federal Communications Commission.

- Develop and implement departmental policies, procedures, and regulations.

- Ensure compliance with laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to the Communications Center.

- Coordinate the Communications Center’s operational and technical procedures with appropriate agencies, committees, and groups.

- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, other public agencies, community organizations, and the general public.

- Select personnel and evaluate their performance in meeting program goals and objectives. Conduct investigations and apply disciplinary actions as needed.

- Review and analyze legislation affecting public safety communications systems and evaluate the impact on the Communications Center and to the County.

- Develop and review the Department’s budget, identify operational problems, and make decisions on revenue solutions and strategies.

- Represent the County and Communications Center in dealing with other departments, local agencies, employee representatives, and community groups.

- May be assigned Disaster Service responsibilities as needed.

- Perform other duties as assigned.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The Santa Clara County Fire Department is seeking an experienced professional and strong visionary leader to serve as Director of County Communications and provide effective leadership to the Communications Center. The new Director must be an open communicator, both within the organization and with those the organization serves. They must have strong interpersonal skills, be adept at understanding and working within a large organization with many stakeholders and be a strong advocate for their people. A strong background in managing change in a large organization is a must. The new Director must be diplomatic, possess strong public speaking skills, and be able to build and maintain strong relationships both within and outside the organization. They must be collaborative, service oriented, have strong problem-solving skills, and be open to constructive feedback from those the Communications Center serves.

The new Director must have extensive familiarity with the disciplines of Fire, Law, and Emergency Medical Services. They must demonstrate an understanding of the technical and dispatch sides of the organization. The new Director must have a deep understanding of complex budget systems. The new Director must have experience in dealing with labor relations in a strong union environment. They must have political acumen. Prior experience as a Public Safety Dispatcher is a plus. The Director reports directly to the Fire Chief but with consultation with the Deputy County Executive as appropriate.

The minimum requirements for this position are the equivalent to possession of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university in Communications Management, Communications Engineering, Telecommunications Technology, Management Information Systems, Public or Business Administration, or closely related field; and three (3) years of administrative or managerial experience in a medium to large-sized organization; or a combination of education, training, and experience which would demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and ability required.
to perform the job. Candidates must possess a valid state of California driver’s license. As a condition of employment, the selected candidate must complete and pass a background check, Live Scan fingerprinting, psychological evaluation, and a complete medical examination.

**The Compensation**

The salary range for the Director of County Communications is $15,638 to $19,009 monthly; placement within this range is dependent upon qualifications. The Department also offers an attractive benefits package including:

**Retirement** – This position is classified Miscellaneous under the California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS). Classic members will receive the retirement formula of 2.7% @ 55, where PEPRA members will receive the retirement formula of 2% @62. Classic members pay the employee’s contribution portion of 8%; PEPRA members pay a 7.25% contribution. Department employees do not pay into Social Security. Classic members contribute an ongoing 1% of salary to the employer required contribution to CalPERS.

**Medical** – Premium fully covered by the Department for the employee and their dependent(s). Participants can choose from Kaiser or United Health Care plans.

**Retiree Medical** – Retiree with 10 years of service paid for by the Department.

**Dental** – Premium fully covered by the Department for the employee and their dependent(s). Plan is provided by Delta Dental.

**Vision** – Self-insured vision plan for the employee and their dependent(s). The plan provides for coverage for examinations, lenses, and frames every 12 months.

**Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)** – Voluntary employee funded dependent care FSA and Medical Reimbursement FSA. A Limited Flexible Spending Account is available for Health Savings Account holders.

**Vacation** – Vacation leave of 2 to 4 weeks, depending on years of service, with the option to convert sick leave to vacation leave.

**Employee Assistance Program** – Family coverage with 10 visits each per year per employee and covered dependents.

**Life Insurance** – $50,000 coverage for life and accidental death dismemberment provided by the Department. Optional Supplemental life insurance amount of $40,000 or $100,000 is available via payroll deductions.

**Long-Term Disability** – Premium paid by the Department.

**Social Security** – Department and employee contribute to Medicare, no OASDI.

**Sick Leave** – Employee accrues 5.6 hours of sick leave per pay period (or 145.6 hours per year); unused days applied to years of service at retirement.

**Personal Leave** – Personal leave of 24 hours per fiscal year, with option to convert sick leave to personal leave, and the ability to cash out up to 40 hours of available personal leave at any time.

**Holidays** – 14 holidays per year, inclusive of two floating holidays.

**Education Leave** – Up to 40 hours of paid release time every 12 months, on a rolling basis, for school, seminars, and career development.

**Education Reimbursement** – Education reimbursement of up to $2,800 per fiscal year, with additional amounts if the employee is pursuing a higher education degree.

**Bereavement Leave** – Up to 40 hours of paid bereavement leave.