PRESS RELEASE
CITY OF MURRIETA
FIRE & RESCUE
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Murrieta Fire & Rescue Appoints James Gillespie as Fire Marshal

MURRIETA, Calif. – Murrieta Fire & Rescue is pleased to announce the appointment of James Gillespie as the department's new Fire Marshal, following the promotion of Doug Strosnider to Chief of Community Risk Reduction. Chief Gillespie joined Murrieta Fire & Rescue on June 29, 2026, bringing decades of experience in fire prevention, fire investigations, code enforcement, public education, and community risk reduction. This appointment further strengthens the department's Community Risk Reduction Division following Murrieta Fire & Rescue's recent ISO Class 2 rating, its renewal as a Fire Risk Reduction Community, and the recognition of Bear Creek as Murrieta's second Firewise USA® community.

Fire Chief Bernard Molloy shared, "As our city continues to grow and evolve, our commitment to the safety of our residents and our personnel remains our highest priority. Meeting that responsibility requires exceptional leadership, and in James Gillespie, we have found a Fire Marshal with the experience, technical expertise, and vision to help Murrieta continue setting the standard for safety and community risk reduction."

Chief Gillespie is widely recognized throughout California's fire service for his leadership and expertise in fire prevention and community risk reduction. He most recently served as Fire Marshal for the Newport Beach Fire Department and previously held positions as a Fire Inspector with the Riverside County Office of the Fire Marshal and a Fire Investigator with the Vista Fire Department.

A respected educator and industry leader, Chief Gillespie serves as an adjunct professor at San Diego Miramar College, where he teaches collegiate fire technology and California State Fire Training courses. He currently serves as President of the California Fire Chiefs Association Fire Marshal Section, is a frequent instructor at fire service conferences nationwide, and is a past President of the Orange County Fire Marshals Association.

During his career, Chief Gillespie has earned numerous professional certifications, including Community Risk Reduction Specialist, Fire Inspector, Fire Investigator, Fire Marshal, Fire Plans Examiner, Fire Service Instructor, Post-Fire Damage Inspection Specialist, and Youth Fire Setting Intervention Specialist.

Fire Marshal James Gillespie added, "I am incredibly excited to join Murrieta Fire & Rescue and look forward to working alongside this dedicated team to protect our community. With this role comes a profound responsibility to uphold the highest standards of community risk reduction, and I am fully committed to ensuring Murrieta remains one of California's safest places to live and work."

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Chief Gillespie holds an Associate of Science degree in Fire Technology and a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Safety Management.

Outside of work, James enjoys spending time with his wife, their two daughters, and their two dogs. His passion for mentorship and education reflects his belief that investing in people is one of the greatest ways to strengthen both the fire service and the communities it serves.

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About Murrieta Fire & Rescue
Founded in 1947, Murrieta Fire & Rescue has grown into a progressive, all-risk fire department dedicated to protecting lives, property, and the environment. Through emergency response, fire prevention, community risk reduction, public education, and disaster preparedness, the department remains committed to making Murrieta one of California's safest communities.

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