

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Thanks Retiring Fire Chief for 30 Years of Service

Maple Ridge, BC: On Friday, September 3, Maple Ridge Fire Chief Howard Exner will retire after 30 years of service with the Maple Ridge Fire Department (MRFD). Chief Exner joined MRFD in 1991 as a volunteer firefighter and accepted a full-time position in 1998 as Chief Training Officer. Chief Exner is one of a handful of original volunteers who made the transition to career firefighting when the City's fire protection model changed two decades ago.

He was promoted to Deputy Fire Chief in 2013 and to Fire Chief in 2016. Chief Exner is a highly decorated firefighter and his professionalism and leadership have earned him numerous awards. He is the architect of the City's fire training program and helped shape the Department's fire delivery model when the City transitioned from volunteer service to today's composite model, which delivers fire safety with career firefighters and paid on-call firefighters.

"Chief Exner indicated he did not want any special attention drawn to his retirement, and while I know this media release goes against that request, Council and I want to acknowledge Howard's outstanding service to this community," said Mayor Morden.

He continued, "Chief Exner has helped build the Department's capacity and skill set, which makes all of us safer. He and his team have dealt with extraordinary circumstances, including the homeless encampments and severe weather events with professionalism, compassion and determination. Howard's first priority is, and has always been, the safety of all citizens and his co-workers. On behalf of Council and a grateful community, I want to thank him for his vision, leadership and integrity."

In the fall of 2019, Fire Hall No. 4 opened with the training facility co-located on the site. This facility is a manifestation of Chief Exner's long term vision to develop training facilities that ensure Maple Ridge's fire protection services continue to evolve to meet the needs of our growing community.

Thank you, Howard. Enjoy your well-earned retirement.