

PLACER COUNTY
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

M E M O R A N D U M

To Honorable Board of Supervisors

From Thomas Miller, County Executive Officer
by Rui Cunha, Emergency Services Program Manager

Date February 23, 2010

Subject **Authorize the County Executive Officer to approve an exception to the County Credit Card Policy to provide credit cards to select CAL FIRE battalion chiefs who manage day to day operations of Placer County Fire**

ACTION REQUESTED

That your Board authorize the County Executive Officer to approve an exception to the County Credit Card Policy and provide County credit cards to select CAL FIRE battalion chiefs who manage day to day operations of Placer County Fire (PCF)

BACKGROUND

Placer County Fire, a contracted service to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), operates from 8 fully staffed fire stations and oversees an additional 6 volunteer stations. Professional firefighters and volunteers respond to over 5000 calls for service annually. While most calls are limited in duration and require no special logistical support, there are several calls every year that do. While Placer County Fire has adopted the Placer County Procurement rules and adheres to these rules, there are occasions when in spite of prior planning it is necessary to make emergency purchases in order to support firefighting operations or to resolve station or equipment issues that would otherwise limit service. Most occasions are resolved relatively quickly when they occur during normal County operating hours. For those occasions when issues occur after normal County operating hours, CAL FIRE Battalion Chiefs authorize the use of State issued credit cards for emergency purchases.

Purchases that are billed on State issued credit cards are billed back to Placer County with the addition of a varying administrative rate usually around ten percent. Additionally, as these purchases are made on a State issued credit card, purchases comply with State credit card rules and not Placer County credit card rules. Administrative charges due to necessary credit card purchases can be around \$3000 annually. These costs can be avoided merely by providing select PCF leadership who manage the fire stations and their corresponding annual budgets with a County issued credit card. With this solution, PCF leadership would be subject to County credit card rules for use, control, and security of the County provided cards.

Board of Supervisors
Credit cards for CAL FIRE
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Paragraph 5, Placer County Credit Card Policy states in part, that, "The County Executive Officer may approve a credit card be issued to an extra-help employee under rare circumstances, and only when the exception is specifically requested by the department head " Therein lies the reason for this request for exception to policy in that PCF employees are not "extra-help employees " The intent of this request is to provide County credit cards to select PCF Battalion Chiefs using the same process as is used for "extra-help employees" who are afforded County credit cards They would be briefed just as any County employee of the use of the card, allowable expenses, expense limit, proper control, etc The credit card Program Coordinator in the Office of the County Executive Officer will be fully briefed on this exception to policy and all of its implications

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the General Fund as a result of this action However, savings of as much as \$3000 per year should be realized by avoidance of administrative charges that are currently added to necessary purchases on State issued credit cards