



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Lompoc Fire Chief Announces His Retirement**

*Kurt Latipow concludes 40-year career in fire service across California and Nevada*

**LOMPOC, CA, May 16, 2017** – City of Lompoc Fire Chief Kurt Latipow has announced his retirement, concluding a 40-year fire service career spanning agencies across California and Nevada. In his career, Latipow developed and implemented a number of comprehensive fire and emergency service strategic plans, and is widely respected as a highly experienced and compassionate leader.

Latipow joined the Lompoc Fire Department in June 2012, the fourth fire chief appointment in his public service career. Latipow’s retirement will be effective June 30. He will be presented with a plaque honoring his years of service at tonight’s Lompoc City Council meeting.

Lompoc Fire Battalion Chief Mark Bray has been appointed interim fire chief until a permanent leader is appointed for the department.

For the past five years, Latipow has led the Lompoc Fire Department, an all-risk department that serves and protects a community of 44,000. During that time, the department developed a master plan, received a grant that added three positions, implemented a quick-attack rescue squad, placed in service a state-of-the-art wildland firefighting engine, initiated an auxiliary firefighter program, and more.

As he faces retirement, Latipow praised the department he felt privileged to lead.

“The Lompoc Fire Department team is an incredibly talented and dedicated group of individuals. It has been a great honor to lead this team and serve the citizens of Lompoc,” Latipow said.

Lompoc City Manager Patrick Wiemiller said he is thankful for Latipow’s service and leadership, and added he will be missed.

“Lompoc was extremely fortunate to have a fire chief of Kurt Latipow’s caliber. He was not only a great leader for our fire department, but he has set the bar for how good fire departments are supposed to run,” Wiemiller continued. “I wish Kurt and his wife, Gail, the best in life’s next adventure.”

**(more)**



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Latipow began his fire service career 40 years ago as a volunteer firefighter with CAL FIRE in San Bernardino County. Working for agencies in California, he climbed his way up through the ranks, and in 1992 was appointed fire chief for the City of Arroyo Grande. Following his service in Arroyo Grande, Latipow went on to serve as fire chief for: Hesperia Fire Protection District, Stanislaus Consolidated Fire Protection District, and the City of Ukiah. Prior to accepting the chief's job in Lompoc, Latipow worked for Washoe County, Nevada in the position of fire services coordinator.

A graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program, Latipow has extensive experience managing large-scale emergencies, and developing and implementing succession plans as well as strategic and master plans. In addition, he has worked on projects related to National Fire Policy, and program development for the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Services in California.

Latipow is a member of various organizations, including: the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the California Fire Chiefs Association, and currently serves as president of the League of California Cities Fire Department, in addition to serving as the chair for the League of California Cities Public Safety Policy Committee.

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### **City of Lompoc**

The City of Lompoc, known as "The City of Arts and Flowers", was founded as a town in 1874 and incorporated as a city on Aug. 13, 1888. Prior to the City's establishment, the building of La Purisima Mission in 1787 marked the earliest European settlement in the Lompoc Valley. Growth in the Lompoc Valley was sparked by the 1901 completion of the coastal railroad between San Francisco and Los Angeles, which included the extension of a spur into Lompoc. The Lompoc Valley is home to Vandenberg Air Force Base, the first missile base of the United States Air Force. Today, the City of Lompoc is a travel destination known for its downtown mural program, local wines and acclaimed cuisine, historic landmarks, parks and nearby beaches. For more information, visit: <http://www.cityoflompoc.com/>