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## MOFD to Leave Local 1230?

*By Nick Marnell*

Rumblings abound among the Moraga-Orinda Fire District rank and file of a desire to break off from their parent labor union and form their own local, according to a district union representative.

"Nothing specific, we're just looking at our options," said firefighter-paramedic Mark DeWeese. "We always want to look at what's out there. What if we had our own union? We have 50 guys in our district and there have always been a bunch who think that it would be better for us to go off on our own."

Both MOFD chief Stephen Healy and Vince Wells, president of the International Association of Firefighters, Local 1230, declined to comment.

"We're not looking to leave IAFF," said DeWeese, the district union representative. As to the pros of breaking off to form a separate local, "I'd rather not answer that," he said.

Mike Mohun, San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District captain and president of Local 3546, which split from its parent union in 1993, cited the benefits of a breakaway by using simple logic. "The larger the group you belong to, the smaller you are," he said. "In a smaller organization, you have more of a say."

The SRVFPD captain said that he favors the hands-on approach he employs at his local chapter. "I work in San Ramon," he said. "I am in constant contact with my employees, the chief officers, the board of directors. I am much more geographically accessible."

According to Mohun, the breakaway of MOFD would also take a burden off of Local 1230. "The more employees that you represent, the more difficult it becomes to manage them," he said. "It'll be much easier for ConFire." Wells is a captain with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. "There's no urgency," said DeWeese, who noted that the membership meets regularly to discuss such topics. As for any affect of a possible split on the district residents, "It wouldn't be a big deal. Not much would change for the citizens of Moraga and Orinda," he said.

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