

US Forest Service

San Bernardino National Forest

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Fire and Aviation Management Chief Mike Dietrich Announces Retirement

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif., March 23, 2009 — Michael J. Dietrich, Chief of Fire and Aviation Management for the San Bernardino National Forest, announced his retirement from the United States Forest Service, effective April 3, after 33 years of government service.

"When the time is right to retire, you begin to reflect on your past accomplishments, people you have met and the places you have been," stated San Bernardino National Forest Fire Chief Mike Dietrich. "It has been quite a run over the years and I feel that I have made a difference for the agencies and the public I have served."

Chief Dietrich's retirement plans include taking some time off to travel and to obtain his Registered Professional Forester license, teaching, and continuing to participate in public service and on Incident Management Teams.

Chief Dietrich began his career in 1976 with the North Dakota State Park, where he served as a Park Ranger and a Park Superintendent. From 1979 to 1998 he served as Fuels Management Specialist and Fire Management Officer with the Bureau of Land Management in Eugene, Oregon.

Chief Dietrich came to the San Bernardino National Forest in November 1998. In addition to fulfilling his responsibilities as Fire Chief, Mike Dietrich has participated in several notable national projects including the development of foam systems in wildland firefighting, and working on the Federal Fire Policy and Program Review, which resulted in major changes in federal fire management.

While on the forest, Dietrich helped develop the Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST), a nationally recognized multilevel government and private partnership formed in 2002 in response to the record drought and bark beetle infestation in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. MAST has been credited with coordinating public safety efforts that helped agencies deal with the dead tree issues and several large fires, notably the Grand Prix and the Old Fire during the fire siege of 2003.

Since 1987, Dietrich has participated on Incident Command Teams, reaching the position of Type 1 Incident Commander of California Interagency Incident Management Team 5. As Incident Commander, Chief Dietrich managed complex fires such as the Zaca, Day and Basin fires. Chief Dietrich also assisted in the Columbia Shuttle Recovery and hurricane assistance, such as Katrina.

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