



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SMITH SELECTED AS NEW DIRECTOR OF DISPATCH AND ALARM Watts retiring in July after distinguished public service career

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – Subject to confirmation by the St. Charles County Council at its June 30 meeting, County Executive Steve Ehlmann has appointed Jeff Smith, Fire Chief for the Lake Saint Louis Fire Protection District, as the new Director of St. Charles County's Department of Dispatch and Alarm. Smith will replace Bob Watts, who announced back on March 19 his plans to retire at the end of July after 11 years of service. It is expected that Smith will start employment with the County on July 7 to allow for a transition period between directors.

Smith has served with the Lake Saint Louis Fire Protection District since 1991 as a Firefighter, Engineer, Lieutenant, and Fire Marshall before becoming Fire Chief in 1999. During his time with the district, Smith received numerous honors, including Firefighter of the Year, Outstanding Achievement, and Distinguished Service Awards. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Fire Science, with a Minor in Business Management, from Central Missouri State University.

Watts' distinguished career in public service spans decades, including a career serving in the United States Army and as a Journeyman Air Traffic Controller. Watts previously served as a medical officer for the Berkeley Fire Department, and Battalion Chief and Chief of the Cottleville Fire Protection District. Appointed as Director of Dispatch and Alarm in 2003, Watts led the department's development of GIS capabilities which allowed for the implementation of an automatic vehicle locator system to improve response times for fire and ambulance vehicles, and deployed a mobile data communications system to provide faster information to responders in the field. Watts was passionate about helping to educate residents in the community about how to keep their families and businesses safe and hosted the County's cable and web program Safe & Sound. Watts' leadership and communications efforts during his tenure brought together fire districts in St. Charles County to cooperatively deploy new technologies to serve the citizens of St. Charles County and was critical in the development of the County's new county-wide emergency radio communications system.

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