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CITY OF UKIAH AND UKIAH VALLEY FIRE AUTHORITY ANNOUNCE ACTING FIRE CHIEF APPOINTMENT

July 27, 2027, Ukiah, CA — The City of Ukiah and the Ukiah Valley Fire Authority have announced the appointment of Battalion Chief Justin Buckingham as Acting Fire Chief, effective immediately.

Buckingham succeeds Fire Chief Doug Hutchison, who has served the City of Ukiah and the Ukiah Valley Fire Authority for the past seven years. The City extends its sincere appreciation to Chief Hutchison for his dedicated service, leadership, and commitment to protecting the Ukiah community.

Chief Hutchison will continue to assist the organization in an advisory capacity during the leadership transition, helping ensure continuity of operations and a seamless transition for personnel and the community.

Acting Chief Buckingham has a bachelor's degree in Fire Administration and a total of 28 years in the fire service, with 17 of those being in Ukiah. Throughout his career, he has held a variety of operational and leadership roles and has earned extensive specialized certifications. He serves as the Chief Fire Investigator for the City of Ukiah and the greater Ukiah area and is a licensed paramedic with specialized training in hazardous materials response, technical rescue, swiftwater rescue, and numerous other emergency response disciplines.

"Justin has earned the respect of his colleagues through his professionalism, experience, and unwavering commitment to public service," said City Manager Sage Sangiacomo. "His extensive operational knowledge and leadership experience make him exceptionally well prepared to guide the department during this transition while maintaining the outstanding level of service our community expects."

Buckingham said he is honored by the opportunity to lead the department.

"It is a genuine honor to serve in this role and, even more importantly, to continue serving alongside each member of our team. The strength of this organization comes from our people—our teamwork,

our commitment, and our willingness to place service above self. I look forward to supporting our firefighters and continuing our mission of protecting the communities we proudly serve."

The City will begin the process of evaluating long-term leadership for the department while remaining focused on providing the high-quality fire protection, emergency medical, rescue, and emergency response services residents depend upon every day.

For the public, this leadership transition will not affect emergency services. The City of Ukiah and the Ukiah Valley Fire Authority remain fully staffed and committed to delivering exceptional service throughout the community.

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