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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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### **Vehicle Accident Claims Life of Chief Bryan Zollner Medal of Valor Recipient in 1998 for Saving Child**

A single vehicle traffic accident on Thursday, April 12 claimed the life of Bryan Zollner, the North Region Staff Chief of Operations for CAL FIRE. Chief Zollner, 44, of Redding was killed Thursday morning when his vehicle left State Route 44 near Bogard Rest Area, 60 miles East of Redding in Lassen County. The California Highway Patrol responded and is conducting an investigation with a Major Accident Investigation Team from CAL FIRE.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger issued the following statement regarding the death of Chief Zollner: "Each day California firefighters put their lives on the line assisting and protecting our citizens. Maria and I were saddened to hear of the passing of one of California's devoted fire chiefs. Chief Zollner gallantly served our state with courage and skill. We offer our thoughts and prayers to Bryan's family, friends and co-workers during this difficult time." In honor of Chief Zollner, flags at the Capitol and at all CAL FIRE facilities will be flown at half-staff.

Badge shrouds were authorized for all uniformed employees in memory of Chief Zollner by CAL FIRE Director Ruben Grijalva. "CAL FIRE lost one of its best and brightest leaders," Grijalva said. "His passing will affect our organization for a long time to come."

Chief Zollner was a committed, unselfish and knowledgeable member of the fire community who gave everything he had to make the world safe for others. Zollner donated his home for use as a model in fire prevention materials distributed in the department's statewide campaign for defensible space. He was greatly respected among firefighters and all who were lucky enough to have known him.

Bryan came from a family with a legacy of firefighting. His father was a fire chief for the city of Oroville; his great grandfather was a firefighter in Detroit. Bryan started as a sleeper firefighter in the Butte Unit while attending Butte Community College. In 1981 he was hired as a seasonal firefighter by the Butte Unit of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, then known as CDF. He worked a year for the Oroville Fire Department as a fire protection operator before returning to CDF as a limited term Firefighter II in the Fresno-Kings Unit. In 1985, he returned to the Butte Unit as a limited term Fire Apparatus Engineer with the Chico Battalion. For one year he worked for the Yuba City Fire Department.

Zollner returned to CDF in 1986 as a permanent Firefighter II in Santa Clara Unit, received a quick promotion to Fire Apparatus Engineer and went to work at the Ramona Air Attack Base in San Diego. He was promoted three years later to Fire Captain at Bautista Conservation Camp in the Riverside Unit of CDF. Zollner worked in the Riverside Unit in various locations and positions including Battalion Chief and Chief of the Norco Conservation Camp.

In 2001, Zollner accepted the position of Deputy Chief with the public education office for CDF in Sacramento. In 2002 he came to Northern Region as Deputy Chief for Conservation Camp coordination and North Ops Operations. In 2005 he was named Assistant Chief Operations in Tehama Glenn Unit. In 2006 he returned to Northern Region as Staff Chief for operations. Additionally he worked on numerous Incident Command Teams for CDF as an Operations Section Chief, as a Plans Section Chief and was an Incident Commander.

Chief Zollner received the Medal of Valor in 1998 for an off-duty rescue of a child from a burning structure in Riverside.

Bryan Zollner is survived by his wife, Pam; son, Ty; daughter, Alexia Moore; son-in-law, Charles Moore; two grandchildren; sister, Tracy Zollner; and parents Bob and Brenda Zollner.

Services are pending and information will be forthcoming from CAL FIRE.

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