

FIRE & EMS CHIEF

CRESTED BUTTE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



Why Apply?



The next Fire & EMS Chief of Crested Butte Fire Protection District will lead a highly regarded and evolving combination fire and EMS organization in one of Colorado's most distinctive mountain communities. The District offers a talented and passionate workforce, strong benefits, modern facilities, excellent training opportunities, and a culture deeply connected to the community. Having experienced considerable growth and professionalization, the organization is positioned for its next chapter. The new Chief will have the opportunity to refine systems, develop people, strengthen regional partnerships, balance fire and EMS priorities, and provide steady executive leadership while enjoying an exceptional mountain lifestyle and community.



THE COMMUNITY

Located in the heart of Colorado's Rocky Mountains, the Crested Butte Fire Protection District serves the Towns of Crested Butte, Mt. Crested Butte, and unincorporated portions of Gunnison County in the upper Gunnison Valley. Surrounded by nearly 2 million acres of accessible public lands and anchored by Crested Butte Mountain Resort, the area is known for its dramatic mountain setting and year-round outdoor lifestyle. A popular destination for visitors from around the world, the valley offers world-class hiking, mountain biking, fly-fishing, and lake activities in summer, along with exceptional skiing, snowboarding, and other winter sports during its long, snowy winters.

The District is headquartered just outside Crested Butte, a historic mountain town sitting at an elevation of 8,885 feet with a district-wide population of about 5,100 year-round residents. Downtown is filled with colorful Victorian buildings and locally owned shops and eateries. Just three miles north, the scenic alpine town of Mt. Crested Butte sits nearly 9,400 feet above sea level at the base of its namesake mountain. The town is primarily residential and resort-oriented and serves as the gateway to Crested Butte Mountain Resort. The resort offers more than 1,500 acres of skiable terrain, including some of the most challenging runs in North America.

Together, the two communities offer a welcoming, tight-knit atmosphere. Residents embrace the area's rugged beauty and laid-back lifestyle, balancing outdoor adventure with a strong appreciation for arts, culture, and environmental stewardship.

Tourism is a leading economic driver in Gunnison County, where second homes and vacation rentals comprise the majority of residences. Ranching also remains an important part of the valley's economy and character. Local residents place a high value on their quality of life and appreciate the small, safe communities where they care for their neighbors and enjoy access to the incredible landscape around them. Despite its remote mountain setting, the area remains accessible through Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport, approximately 30 miles south, and nearby Gunnison is home to Western Colorado University.

THE CRESTED BUTTE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

The Crested Butte Fire Protection District (CBFPD) is a combination all-hazards department, providing fire protection and critical-care advanced life support ambulance service. Spanning 220 square miles, the District serves a year-round population of roughly 5,100 residents along with a significant visitor population.

Established in 1973, the District is a Colorado special district with an elected 5-member Board of Directors and operates with an annual budget of approximately \$8 million. Operating from four stations, the District is staffed by 28.6 FTEs, 15 part-time employees, and 6 volunteers, with daily staffing of 6 to 8 personnel. Operations include EMS, fire suppression, wildland fire, hazmat, swift-water rescue, ice rescue, low-angle rope rescue, and auto extrication. The District responded to 925 calls for service in 2025.

CBFPD protects one of Colorado's distinctive resort regions from a range of structural, wildland, and emergency medical risks, operating in a high-altitude mountain environment where the population can swell to 15,000 during peak periods. Recently, the District completed a new safety campus that includes a roughly 22,000-square-foot fire station headquarters, an adjacent search-and-rescue building, and a training building. Funded through a voter-approved 2021 bond issue, the new campus replaces the former Station 1.

THE FIRE CHIEF

The Fire & EMS Chief is the District's Chief Executive Officer, Ambulance Service Administrator, and statutory Fire Chief. The Chief is responsible to the District Board of Directors for effective and efficient operation of the District, and for advancing the Board's strategic direction through sound executive management. The Chief is responsible for the District's day-to-day administration, operations, and finances, providing leadership and oversight to ensure effective all-hazards emergency response, ambulance transport, fire prevention, code enforcement, and community risk reduction services for the District's residents, visitors, and communities.

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IDEAL CANDIDATE TRAITS

Servant Leader with Presence – Visible, approachable, and engaged with fire and EMS personnel, including career, part-time, and volunteer members. Builds credibility by listening, communicating clearly, and remaining connected to the people doing the work.

Culture Builder – Values the District's history and existing strengths while continuing its evolution into a highly professional organization. Builds unity, trust, accountability, and respect across all levels.

Strategic Leader with a Steady Hand – Brings thoughtful, disciplined leadership focused on refining and improving the organization rather than pursuing change for the sake of change.

Board & Governance Savvy – Understands special district governance and builds a productive relationship with the Board while establishing appropriate roles, expectations, accountability, and boundaries.

Fire & EMS Leader – Understands and values both fire suppression and EMS and can ensure appropriate leadership, training, resources, and organizational attention are provided to each.

Combination Department Appreciation – Recognizes the contributions of career, part-time, and volunteer personnel and understands how to integrate each into a cohesive and effective service delivery model.

Financially Astute Executive – Demonstrates sound budgeting, financial planning, and fiscal stewardship while maximizing available resources and maintaining the trust of taxpayers.

Coach & Mentor – Develops company officers and future leaders, delegates appropriately, empowers employees, and creates meaningful opportunities for professional growth.

Collaborative Regional Partner – Builds strong relationships with neighboring fire agencies, EMS partners, emergency management, mountain rescue, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and other community organizations.

Authentic & Community-Focused Leader – Leads with humility, integrity, and emotional intelligence and genuinely embraces the character, relationships, and lifestyle of the Crested Butte community.





OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

1) **Organizational Maturity, Culture & Leadership Development**

The District has undergone considerable growth and professionalization. The next Chief will inherit strong programs and talented employees, along with an opportunity to refine the organizational structure, clarify roles and expectations, strengthen the chain of command, and further develop company officers and future leaders. Maintaining the positive aspects of the existing culture while continuing to raise organizational consistency and accountability will be important.

2) **Balancing Fire, EMS & Combination Staffing**

The District provides both fire and ALS transport services through a combination staffing model that includes career and part-time firefighters, volunteers, and single-role EMS providers. Stakeholders identified opportunities to strengthen EMS training and medical leadership, maintain consistent training across shifts, and continue improving integration across the organization. The next Chief will need to ensure that both fire and EMS receive appropriate attention while developing creative and sustainable staffing strategies.

3) **Governance, Financial Stewardship & Organizational Sustainability**

The District has invested significantly in facilities, equipment, and organizational development. The next Chief will need to work effectively with an evolving Board, provide strong executive guidance, and maintain appropriate governance boundaries. Sound fiscal stewardship, thoughtful prioritization, and the ability to maximize existing resources will be particularly important as the District balances community expectations with long-term financial sustainability.

4) **Mountain Community Growth, Workforce & Regional Partnerships**

Crested Butte's unique mountain environment creates challenges involving housing affordability, workforce recruitment and retention, wildfire risk, limited mutual-aid resources, seasonal demands, and geographic isolation. The next Chief will need to strengthen regional partnerships, support employee housing strategies, maintain strong community relationships, and ensure the District is prepared for the changing risks and service expectations of a growing mountain community.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Bachelor's degree in fire service administration, emergency management, public administration, or a related field, and 10 years of progressively responsible fire or EMS experience, including 5 years as a chief officer or in a comparable executive leadership role. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.

Required Licenses and Certifications

(Current or able to obtain within 1 year of hire)

- Valid Colorado driver's license and safe driving record, or ability to obtain within 90 days of hire.
- Current Colorado Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification, or higher level of EMS licensure.
- Colorado Fire Officer II certification.
- ICS 400 and NIMS 700 certifications.

Residency: Must be able to respond from residence to District Headquarters within 30 minutes at all times of day or establish such residency within 180 days of hire.

Preferred Qualifications

- Master's degree
- National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer (EFO) designation, Center for Public Safety Excellence Chief Fire or EMS Officer (CFO/CEMSO) designation, or Colorado Executive Fire Administrator (CEFA) or equivalent fire officer credential.
- Current or former certification as a paramedic with ALS transport, critical care and/or interfacility transport experience.
- Demonstrated familiarity with Colorado Special District law (Title 32, C.R.S.) and special district governance.
- Experience managing EMS billing, transport operations, and compliance with state and federal EMS regulations.
- Residency within or proximate to the District boundaries.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

CBFPD offers an annual salary range of \$150,000 to \$172,500, based on qualifications and experience, along with a comprehensive benefits package.

- Access to subsidized rental housing or a housing stipend negotiated upon hire.
- 100% employer-paid health, dental, and vision coverage for individual and family plans.
- Robust health reimbursement arrangement with deductible reimbursement and flexible spending benefits.
- Colorado Fire & Police Pension Association defined benefit plan.
- \$1,000 annual recreation benefit.

RESOURCES

[2026 Budget](#)

[2025 Strategic Plan](#)

[Service Area Map](#)



**TO
APPLY**

Apply Online: gmphr.com

First Review: October 18, 2026

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