



City of Colusa California

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** March 17, 2026

**TO:** City of Colusa Mayor and Council Members

**FROM:** Logan Conley, Fire Chief, through Jesse Cain, City Manager

**AGENDA ITEM:** Consideration of intent to secure Sourcewell Contract and Plan for purchase of an Aerial Ladder Truck.

**Recommendation:** Approve Resolution authorizing staff to proceed with planning and ordering activities for the future purchase of a ladder truck through a Sourcewell cooperative contract. With a total estimated cost of \$1.6 million.

### BACKGROUND ANALYSIS:

The City of Colusa Fire Department provides fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services to residential, commercial, and industrial occupancies, including multi-story structures within the city limits.

An aerial ladder truck is a critical component of a modern municipal fire department. It provides specialized capabilities that cannot be duplicated by engine companies alone, including:

- Elevated rescue access to upper floors and rooftops
- Aerial ventilation operations
- Elevated master stream fire suppression
- A full complement of ground ladders
- Specialized tools for apartments, schools, commercial buildings, and larger structures

These capabilities significantly enhance firefighter safety, civilian rescue effectiveness, and overall fire suppression performance.

Currently, the Department does not operate a ladder truck. While the City maintains an ISO Class 3 rating helping residents and businesses benefit from lower property insurance premiums. The absence of local aerial apparatus places long-term pressure on maintaining

this rating, particularly as the City continues to grow and development increases in height and density.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and industry best practices recognize aerial apparatus as a key component of fire protection in communities with commercial occupancies and multi-story buildings. While mutual aid agreements provide supplemental support, reliance on neighboring agencies is not always dependable during simultaneous incidents, regional emergencies, or large-scale events. Establishing local aerial capability strengthens operational self-sufficiency and emergency preparedness.

Fire apparatus manufacturing timelines have increased significantly in recent years. Ladder truck delivery times commonly range from 24 to 36 months or longer. The apparatus presented in this report has an estimated completion timeline of approximately 20 months. Early authorization to begin planning is necessary to:

- Lock in cooperative purchasing pricing
- Secure production placement in the manufacturer's schedule
- Evaluate financing and grant opportunities
- Prevent future operational capability gaps

The estimated cost of the ladder truck is approximately \$1.5–\$1.6 million, depending on final specifications and market conditions.

In addition, the Department's current frontline fire engines are aging. Several units are up to 24 years old, and the newest engine is now 13 years old. NFPA standards recommend that apparatus exceeding 10 years of service be considered for reserve status rather than first-out assignment. The proposed ladder truck would serve not only as the Department's aerial platform but also as a reliable first-out apparatus for structure fires and rescue incidents. This would improve fleet redundancy, operational reliability, firefighter safety, and emergency response effectiveness.

Historically, the Fire Department has funded major apparatus purchases through a combination of Strike Team revenues, grant funding, and General Fund contributions. Additional details regarding prior purchases and funding sources are provided in Exhibit A.

## **RISK OF INACTION**

Failure to initiate planning and procurement activities for an aerial ladder truck at this time presents several operational and financial risks to the City.

Continued reliance on mutual aid for aerial operations increases vulnerability during simultaneous incidents, regional emergencies, or periods of high call volume. Neighboring agencies may not always be available to provide timely support, potentially delaying critical rescue and fire suppression operations.

The Department's aging fleet remains in frontline service beyond recommended NFPA service life standards. Delaying replacement planning increases the risk of mechanical

failure, extended downtime, and escalating maintenance costs, which may compromise emergency response reliability.

Apparatus manufacturing timelines continue to lengthen. Deferring action now may result in significantly longer wait times and increased purchase costs due to inflation, material pricing volatility, and production backlogs. Early placement in a manufacturer's build schedule helps mitigate these risks.

Finally, as the City grows and development trends toward larger and more complex structures, the absence of local aerial capability may place long-term pressure on the City's ISO rating, potentially impacting property insurance costs for residents and businesses.

Proactive planning allows the City to control timing, evaluate funding strategies responsibly, and preserve operational readiness rather than reacting to equipment failure or emergency need.

**BUDGET IMPACT:**

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with this action.

Future funding options may include a combination of Strike Team funds, grant funding, financing mechanisms, and/or other revenue sources, subject to City Council approval at the time of purchase authorization.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Authorizing staff to begin planning and procurement activities at this stage allows the City to:

- Strategically evaluate funding options
- Secure cooperative purchasing pricing
- Protect long-term operational readiness
- Maintain firefighter and community safety standards
- Preserve the City's ISO rating

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Resolution to initiate this process.

**ATTACHMENT:**

Exhibit A: Current Apparatus and Funding History

Exhibit B: Photograph of 75-foot ladder truck and 24-foot ground ladder

Exhibit C: Purchase quote and build specs from Rosenbauer fire apparatus manufacturer.

Exhibit D: Additional Quotes from HiTech E.V.S. Inc.