



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors
Wednesday, Sept. 19, 7 p.m.
 Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors
Tuesday, Sept. 18, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez
 For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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Firefighter strike teams face new challenges

By Nick Marnell



MOFD Capt. Jon Bensley, center, at the Carr Fire. Photo courtesy MOFD Firefighters Association

The Bay Area firefighters returning from deployments at the recent California wildfires agree: The fire behavior that they have seen this year is unlike anything they have ever witnessed.

Jon Bensley came home in August after eight days at the Carr Fire, a wildfire that burned more than 200,000 acres in Shasta and Trinity counties and caused

38,000 evacuations. "It was a big fire, but it was the behavior that put us all on edge," said the Moraga-Orinda Fire District captain. "We're always thinking about fire behavior, and trying to predict what we might see, but that surpassed anyone's expectations."

The fire created its own weather system, and produced a fire whirl – a tornado – with

winds over 140 mph. The whirl remained on the ground for 30 minutes and reached a height of 18,000 feet, destroying property and killing three in Redding.

Capt. Brent Boling of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District was at a pizza shop with his crew in Redding when the fire tornado hit. "We got caught in evacuation traffic, on our way to base camp," Boling said. "Usually we're dealing with fire in the brush. The progression of this fire was house to house. You wouldn't expect that behavior."

"It reminds us to step back for a moment and think about what we are doing, and how best to serve the situation," said Bensley of the fire, which killed two firefighters. "It makes you re-evaluate the risks you are taking and how you are going to operate."

Both firefighters praised the community for its support. One boy wearing a firefighter outfit carried a sign along base camp every day thanking the crews, as did two young girls riding along on horseback. Families delivered food and treats to the camp. "You couldn't pay for a meal in Redding yourself," Bensley said.

Receiving encouraging cards from local residents helped cheer up the firefighters, many of whom were missing their families. "It's incredible what our families handle while we're gone," said Bensley, whose wife tends to a 5- and

a 3-year-old, plus a 4-acre farm. "She says, 'As soon as you leave, the kids get sick, something breaks and I get forced to go to work. With no babysitter.' She's fighting the fire at home."

Boling has two daughters enrolled at Saint Mary's College. "It never ends being a dad," Boling said. While he worked on the strike team, one daughter on a trip with a friend called him when the headlights went out in her car. "She caught me on Face Time, with flames shooting in the background, and asked me to help her fix them. 'Ah, I'm a little busy now ...'" Boling told her to get a hotel room and deal with the headlights the next day, which she did.

For Boling, the Carr Fire was his 17th out-of-district assignment. "My first strike team, the Fountain Fire in Shasta County, remained in the Top 10 until the last two years," he said, emphasizing the ferocity and destruction of the recent wildfires. The Fountain Fire marked its 26th anniversary Aug. 20.

Bensley was on edge for most of his interview, not because he was uncomfortable sharing his story but because he had to wrap up his captain's workload at MOFD Station 43.

That night, he was leaving Orinda to work the Mendocino Complex Fire, the largest fire in California recorded history.

MOFD chief offers strategies to cope with PG&E power shutdowns

By Nick Marnell

To allay concerns about power shutdowns that the Pacific Gas and Electric Company plans to institute during high fire-threat weather conditions, Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Dave Winnacker outlined steps residents can take to ensure that they always receive proper emergency notifications and evacuation alerts.

According to the utility, "For public safety, it may be necessary for us to temporarily turn off electricity to customers who are served by PG&E electric lines that run through extreme fire-threat areas." But if PG&E shuts down

power, how will residents be made aware of an approaching fire or to evacuate, especially in the era of internet-based phone systems and hands-free phones?

Winnacker recommended the purchase of an uninterruptible power source, which for about \$75 will provide adequate power for up to six hours. "And that gives you your Wi-Fi connection," he said. He also suggested the purchase a battery-powered AM/FM/weather alert radio to receive notifications during a power outage. The chief said he found one on Amazon for \$29.

The chief eschewed the use of sirens. "They are not designed to reach into buildings to communicate what is going on outside," Winnacker said. Rather, he favors relying on the Contra Costa County Community Warning System, which provides automated phone calls, text messages and weather alerts and allows for targeted evacuations of those who face the highest risk. For residents who sign up for Reverse 911, a feature of the warning system, "We can determine to the lot where the emergency is," Winnacker said.

The chief also recommended

signing up for Nixle alerts, emergency notifications provided by public agencies.

PG&E said it will make every effort to contact customers in advance of a power shutdown. Customers can sign up for the alerts on the utility website.

The chief offered perspective on the utility's power shutdown policy. "There is very little likelihood that this will happen," Winnacker said. Even in this record-setting fire season, PG&E has not yet reached the threshold for a preemptive power shutdown anywhere in California.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report Aug. 14-27

Alarms	23
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	7
Traffic	69
Suspicious Circumstances	13
Suspicious Subject	4
Suspicious Vehicle	7
Service to Citizen	35
Patrol Request/ Security Check	20
Vacation House Check	13
Supplemental Report	11
Welfare Check	3
Abandoned Vehicle	50 Block Miramonte Dr. 2100 Block Ascot Dr. 2100 Block Donald Dr.
Accident Property	600 Block Moraga Rd.
Auto Burglary	St. Marys College (3)
Beat Info	1800 Block School St. 40 Block Cumberland Ln.
Civil	1800 Block Joseph Dr. 200 Block Calle La Mesa

Coroner's Case	1300 Block Rimer Dr.
Disturbing the Peace	Police Department Canyon Post Office
Drunk In Public	Safeway (2)
DUI Misd	Coral Dr./Moraga Way
Excessive Speed	Skate Park Canyon Rd./Country Club Dr. (2) Moraga Way/St Andrews Dr. Rheem/St. Marys (2) Renalt/Rheem Moraga Rd./Corliss Dr. St. Marys Rd./Moraga Rd. Larch Ave./Wandel Dr. (3) Campolindo Dr./Moraga Rd. 500 Block Rheem Blvd. (2) Fernwood Dr./Rheem Blvd. (2) Rheem Rd./Campolindo Dr. (2) Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr. Campolindo Dr. Fernwood/Green Moraga Way/Camino Ricardo

Fire/Ems Response Info	Camino Pablo/Hodges Dr. 600 Block Moraga Rd. Canyon Rd./Eb Mud Trail
Found Property	
Police Department (2)	10 Block Moraga Valley Ln. (2) Police Department St. Marys College 200 Block Tharp Dr. 300 Block Moraga Rd. 600 Block Rheem Blvd. Police Department Campolindo High School Starbucks 200 Block Tharp Dr. Draeger Dr./Moraga Rd. (2) 100 Block Derby Ln. 70 Block Miramonte Dr. 600 Block Moraga Rd. 2000 Block Ascot Dr. Calle La Montana/Corte Del Cae 1000 Block Sanders Dr. (2) Wells Fargo 40 Block Cumberland Ln. 1500 Block Canyon Rd.
Fraud False Pretenses	
Grand Theft	
H&S Violation	
Hailed by Citizen	
Harassment	
Identity Theft	
Juvenile Disturbance	
Lost Property	
Loud Music	
Loud Noise	
Loud Party	
Ordinance Violation	
Other Non Criminal	
Petty Theft	

Phone Harass	50 Block Sullivan Dr. 40 Block Sarah Ln.
Public Assembly Check	1400 Block St. Marys Rd.
Public Nuisance	Rimer Dritharp Dr. 1900 Block Ascot Dr. Moraga Way/St Andrews Dr. Moraga Way/Ivy Dr. St. Marys Rd./Bollinger Canyon Safeway Moraga Way/Moraga Rd. Camino Ricardo/Moraga Way 300 Block Rheem Blvd. Bollinger Canyon Rd./
Reckless Driving	
Shoplift	
Tc - Property Damage	
Traffic Hazard	
Valley Hill	
Unwanted Guest	1400 Block Moraga Rd. 1500 Block Canyon Rd. 70 Block Sullivan Dr. 1400 Block De La Cruz Way
Vandalism	
Violation Restraining Ord	40 Block Sarah Ln. Williams Dr/Chalda Way St. Marys Rd./Carter Dr.
Warrant Arrest	
Warrant Service	10 Block Laird Dr.

Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Aug. 12-25

Alarms	52
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	8
Traffic	66
Suspicious Circumstances	7
Suspicious Subjects	17
Suspicious Vehicles	10
Patrol Request/ Security Check	20
Service to Citizen	63
Supplemental Report	19
Vacation House Check	28
Welfare Check	11
Abandoned Vehicle	60 Block Brookwood Rd. 10 Block El Toyonal 60 Block Brookwood Rd. 30 Block Marston Rd.
Accident Injury	Moraga Way/Stein Way
Accident Property	Police Department Camino Pablo/Brookwood Rd.
Auto Burglary	60 Block Loma Vista Dr.
Auto Burglary	40 Block Loma Vista Dr.

Battery	80 Block Loma Vista Dr. 30 Block Oak Rd.
Beat Info	40 Block Orchard Rd. 10 Block Woodcrest Dr.
Civil	70 Block Van Ripper Ln.
Civil Problem	10 Block Altarinda Rd.
Commercial Burglary	10 Block Orinda Way
Dependent Child	100 Block Brookside Rd.
Disturbance-Domestic	Lombardy Ln./Van Ripper Ln. 70 Block Van Ripper Ln.
Disturbing the Peace	Orinda Convalescent 100 Block Orchard Rd.
Drunk In Public	Safeway 500 Block Moraga Way Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.
DUI Misd	Lombardy Ln./Tarry Ln. First Republic Bank Lavenida Dr./Estabueno Dr.
Forgery	
Found Property	
Hailed by Citizen	Orinda Way/Camino Sobrante
Harassment	10 Block Irwin Way
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	200 Block El Toyonal Moraga Way/Stein Way 40 Block Overhill Rd. (2) Lost Valley Dr./Valley View Dr.

Identity Theft	Police Department
Intoxicated Subject	500 Block Moraga Way
Juvenile Disturbance	20 Block Adobe Ln. 10 Block Rio Vista 10 Block La Campana Rd. Lombardy Ln./Dalewood Dr. 30 Block Zander Dr. 10 Block Sunrise Hill Rd. 20 Block Las Vegas Rd. 10 Block Las Vegas Rd.
Loud Music	
Loud Noise	
Medical Hospital	60 Block Moraga Way 500 Block Moraga Way
Misc Burglary	Christian Scientist Church
Ordinance Violation	10 Block Lloyd Ln. 60 Block Monte Veda Dr.
Other Misdemeanor	Safeway
Petty Theft From Veh	20 Block Camino Encinas
Possession Of Stolen Prop	10 Block Theatre Sq 106
Public Assembly Check	10 Block Camino Sobrante (2) 20 Block Orinda Way
Reckless Driving	Safeway

Camino Pablo/Eb Sr 24	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.	
Camino Pablo/Wb Sr 24	
St Stephens Dr./Eb Sr 24	
School Assembly Check	Orinda Intermediate School (2) Miramonte High School (2) Glorietta Elementary School
Surveillance	20 Block Block Of Muth Muth Dr. Lost Valley Dr. 10 Block Southwood Dr. 10 Block Lost Valley Dr.
Tc - Property Damage	40 Block Via Floreado
Trespass	El Ribero/Camino Sobrante Moraga Valley Swim And Tennis
Unauthorized Possession	10 Block Monte Vista Rd.
Unwanted Guest	Safeway
Vandalism	40 Block Donald Dr. 10 Block Tamalpais View Rd. 500 Block Miner Rd. 70 Block Van Ripper Ln. 20 Block Adobe Ln. 10 Block Dos Posos
Verbal Dispute	
Video	
Warrant Arrest	

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