

A strong police presence keeps the 2019 Art and Wine Festival safe



Photo J. Wake

And just like that, the 2019 Art and Wine Festival is a memory. But at least for the weekend the downtown was transformed as Lafayette welcomed crowds from all over the Bay Area to enjoy the nonstop music, to savor wine and enjoy local brews, and to shop the hundreds of varied arts and crafts stalls. It takes a small army of volunteers to help put this event on. And it takes many more to keep everyone safe.

Many residents commented on the excellent job done by the Lafayette Police Department on being well

prepared and keeping everyone safe. There was a visible police presence including some officers with dogs, and less-visible undercover police working to be ready for anything.

City Council Member Cam Burks said several people approached him. "Folks who were at Gilroy and witnessed the shooting commented on how reassured they were and how seriously we were taking it. Huge kudos to you, Ben (LPD Chief Ben Alldritt) and the entire event planning team."

-- P. Fisher

Third-party engineering consultants to provide analysis of pipeline in Briones; history of prior concerns come to light

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"Such spans are an accepted industry construction practice. As such, the span segment receives ongoing monitoring and inspections to ensure safe operations. We know through the results of our latest inspections that it continues to operate safely."

"We have taken several actions including: visiting the site on multiple occasions to take measurements of the pipe and the surrounding terrain, conducting erosion analysis and other geological observations, and performing weight-bearing load calculations," says Sarkissian. "In addition, PG&E is performing additional weight-bearing load calculations for a variety of operating scenarios. To do this, PG&E performed a detailed laser scan on Wednesday, September 18th. The data compiled to date verifies the safety of this pipeline."

PG&E has hired a third-party engineering and scientific consulting firm to perform the additional weight-bearing load analyses of the pipe span to determine potential public safety risks. Sarkissian says that in the coming days they will be conducting site visits to analyze additional segments of the line in the area to further verify the safety of the pipeline. PG&E will be performing a comprehensive site walk of the entire pipeline transmission system throughout Briones Regional Park and the city of Lafayette, and says it will take actions as appropriate on any findings.

Residents remain con-

cerned, however, despite the reassurances from the utility. The Sept. 18 Springhill Valley Homeowners Association meeting was packed as people came to hear Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Assistant Fire Chief Will Pigeon and Moraga-Orinda Fire District Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein speak. The Dawsons were also on hand to answer questions. SVHA President Susan Candell says the association will work as hard as they can to support PG&E on any mitigation work the utility deems necessary. The association has sent a letter to all stakeholders endorsing the concerns set out by ConFire Deputy Fire Chief Aaron McAlister in an earlier letter to PG&E.

In a Sept. 19 letter to the city council, Gina and Michael Dawson on behalf of the GSTF state, "Although PG&E let us know they intend to provide reporting on the two recently discussed exposed sections ... we ask city council and management to join us, and amplify our requests by making a public call for transparent and comprehensive reporting on all exposed pipeline sections in Lafayette, an updated analysis of High Consequence Area (HCA), and Lafayette specific pipeline threat identification."

The letter continues, "That this is an opportune time for city council to reconsider the Community Pipeline Safety Initiative agreement goes without saying - a program unabashedly named for 'community pipeline safety,' when it clearly does not prioritize that safety entrusted to PG&E, should be unacceptable."

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