

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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LAFAYETTE RES RUN for education
Sunday, October 20
 5k, 10k*, 2 Mile Run/Walk
 Dogs and strollers welcome for 10k and 2 mile only.
 *10k race goes around the Reservoir.
 Live Music • Healthy Lifestyles Fair
LafayetteChamber.org/ResRun



Firefighters prepare to execute a controlled burn as part of the North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break.

Photo courtesy MOFD

MOFD profile rising statewide as Cal Fire ups mitigation funding

By Nick Marnell

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, observing how the Moraga-Orinda Fire District has managed the \$4 million North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break mitigation project, has not only

offered high praise for MOFD but backed it up by giving the district more money for additional wild-fire fuel mitigation. The NOSFB, a 1,500-acre, 19-mile state funded effort to reduce dangerous fuels along open space areas, extends along a ridge between Tilden Park and Acalanes High School.

Particularly impressive to Cal Fire is the job the district does to update the public on the progress of the fuel break. Cal Fire Assistant Deputy Chief Angie Lottes said that tracking progress has been difficult from a data reporting perspective for most of the ... continued on Page A8



Advertising

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- Community Service B4
- How to contact us B7
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- Shop Moraga C4

Oct. 6, 3pm - 6 pm
 Cooperage American Grille

Oktoberfest

LAFAYETTE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

To purchase tickets visit www.lafayettecf.org
 Each \$50 ticket provides 2 beers, German food and music from Zicke Zacke Band

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



Photo provided

ConFire Assistant Fire Chief Will Pigeon gives a presentation to concerned Springhill Valley Homeowners Association members Sept. 18.

By Pippa Fisher

Residents in the Springhill neighborhood are waiting to see a third-party expert's report, promised soon, on the 40-foot, exposed, high transmission pipeline near Buckeye Ranch Trail in Briones close to homes, for answers to their questions concerning its safety. Pacific Gas and Electric Company has in-

spected the section and an additional section that was discovered at the Girl Scout camp nearby and says both sections are safe.

The pipeline near Buckeye Ranch Trail, which appears to be unsupported and sagging in the middle, lies across an eroding creek bank, with trees leaning over the pipe in an area where other trees have recently fallen, has been the subject of media scrutiny lately, and was brought to PG&E's attention by Lafayette residents and Gas Safety Task Force Founders Michael and Gina Dawson who note that the Buckeye Ranch Trail section of pipeline was not included on PG&E's report of all exposed pipelines. However local resident Lisa Schreiber points out that back in 2015 she contacted PG&E in multiple emails with her concerns.

In an email response to Schreiber's concerns dated Feb. 18, 2015, PG&E's Mark Torres told her that the company was engaged in a project to return exposed pipeline in the park to underground and were aware of this particular location. "The pipeline should be within at least three feet underground and has become exposed over time due to soil erosion," he said in the email.

In a later email dated Aug. 20 PG&E's Greg Gillis confirmed, "Additionally, this pipeline is one that we have identified as part of a program we started at the beginning of the summer to rebury exposed lines."

When provided with and asked about this email

exchange by Lamorinda Weekly, PG&E responded, "We take our customers concerns seriously and are looking into this. We will provide an update as soon as more information is available." As of press time, no further comment on the 2015 communications had been received.

Michael Dawson says that Schreiber's revelation that PG&E abandoned the fixes they admitted were necessary in 2015 deeply concerns them. "PG&E's continued claims of better pipeline safety mean nothing when they don't address blatant, immediate and serious safety concerns like sagging pipelines, overhanging trees, and rusting patches of bare metal," says Dawson. "The fact these potentially dangerous exposures are in a high-risk fire zone that could impact many neighborhoods makes their negligence unacceptable. We're asking PG&E not only to fix the exposed pipeline threats in Lafayette and Briones, but to also conduct a full safety review of their pipeline integrity in Lafayette."

PG&E spokesperson Tamar Sarkissian says the safety of their customers and communities they serve is PG&E's most important responsibility and says they want the East Bay community to know that the pipeline in Briones Regional Park is safe. "It has been, and continues to be, monitored as part of ongoing maintenance activities," she says.

Sarkissian says that the pipe segment near Buckeye Ranch Trail is operated as an intentional span across the ravine. ... continued on Page A3

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