

How prepositioning of fire resources saved homes in Moraga's Sanders Ranch

By Nick Marnell

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chef Dave Winnacker did not mince words as he discussed the successful containment of the Oct. 10 Merrill Fire, which threatened 140 residences in southern Moraga in the middle of the night.

"The availability of prepositioned resources was critical to protecting homes and stopping the spread of this fire," Winnacker said.

Prepositioned resources are fire agency assets, including equipment, suppression personnel and dispatchers, placed on standby during heightened fire risks, such as after the forecast of an extreme weather event. The prepositioning allows instant response to an incident, since the strike teams are already assembled and ready to roll.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has long used prepositioning. The state allocated \$25 million annually for the prepositioning of local resources after a 2018 presentation to a senate committee by former Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Chief Jeff Carman, who illustrated that, with wildfires becoming larger and more ferocious every year, the state's mutual aid system was not able to cope.

Carman said that at the start of the 2017 Napa and Southern California wildfires, ConFire had resources ready to go, but the district was unable to send crews or engines for hours because it had not received an official order. "That was as frustrating as you can imagine," Carman told the committee. "The system became overwhelmed."

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services funds and coordinates local prepositioning efforts. Once the National Weather Service issued an Oct. 8 warning for high temperatures, strong winds and low humidity, and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company followed up with a threat of a power shutoff for many Northern Californians, ConFire Deputy Chief Aaron McAlister, the operational area coordinator, sent a request to OES for the prepositioning of five engine companies, two water tenders, three chief officers, an extra dispatcher and a bulldozer. He quickly received an approval, which included the redeployment of several Cal Fire hand crews.



Photo courtesy MOFD

The prepositioning was set for 8 p.m. Oct. 9. MOFD prepositioned an engine company, a water tender and a chief officer, and the personnel moved into "wherever we could find the space," said Battalion Chief Matt Nichols, the Merrill Fire incident commander. The water tender crew slept on mattresses on the floor at Fire Station 44.

No one had long to wait. About five hours after the start of prepositioning came a dispatch for a vegetation fire in southern Moraga, threatening homes in the Sanders Ranch neighborhood. "When that fire took off, I was on the phone, the radio, the computer, pushing resources to the incident," McAlister said.

Prepositioned resources fought the Merrill Fire for six hours, as did the five MOFD on-duty engine companies, as well as mutual aid respondents from neighboring agencies, including strike teams from Alameda and Solano counties. Numerous officials confirmed that upwards of 150 suppression personnel fought the wildfire at the height of the incident.

By late morning the fire was contained and though threatened, no structures were damaged, nor was anyone injured. "We had things in place. We had the right formula and we were able to over-

whelm the incident," McAlister said.

The deputy chief acknowledged the fire service personnel who challenged themselves and bought into the idea of doing things differently. He echoed the words of Winnacker on the effect the prepositioned resources had in the containment of the Moraga fire. "Those assets made a major difference," McAlister said.



Photo courtesy ConFire

New ConFire assistant chief jumpstarts Fire Prevention Bureau



Photo provided

Fire Marshal Chris Bachman

By Nick Marnell

The job of the fire marshal with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District has become so complex that new Fire Marshal Chris Bachman also carries the title of assistant fire chief.

Bachman manages the district Fire Prevention Bureau, which includes five main units: Code Enforcement, En-

gineering, Public Education, Fire Investigation and Exterior Hazard Control. But the fire marshal sees his No. 1 goal with the district as the exploration and implementation of community risk reduction.

"We evaluate the hazards, identify the problems and create a plan to prevent catastrophes from occurring," Bachman said. "Educating people on compliance is crucial to achieving that goal."

Bachman cited Lafayette as an example. Logic tells him, he said, that most Lafayette residents, considering their enormous property values, have working smoke detectors. "But when was the last time they cleaned out their gutters?" said Bachman, citing the possibility of flying embers from pine needles causing a major vegetation fire. "We need to provide the community this kind of information, and to focus on implementation."

The assistant chief moved to ConFire this year from a fire department in western Indi-

ana, as he sought a larger agency to utilize his recently earned master's degree in emergency and disaster management from Georgetown University. Bachman spent five residencies overseas, including stints in London, NATO and Paris, where he studied how to combat "not just natural hazards but man-made hazards as well," such as terrorism.

"I am fortunate to have stepped into the position I have," Bachman said. "The staff has done a fantastic job and has made my job easy."

Unlike former fire marshals, Bachman will not double as ConFire public information officer, with that job now handled by Steve Hill.

Distracted driver causes geyser on Canyon Road

By Vera Kochan



Photo courtesy Moraga Police Department

Moraga Police Chief Jon King confirmed a single-car incident, which occurred around 8:56 a.m. on Oct. 24 and involved a "distracted driver" who crashed into a fire hydrant adjacent to the parking lot of St. Monica's Catholic Church on Canyon Road between Camino Pablo and De La Cruz Way in Moraga. Authorities had to reduce traffic to one lane while the East Bay Municipal Utility District began a cleanup that is estimated to cost the driver's insurance company \$1,000. The only damage to the vehicle was a flat tire.

The driver, the sole occupant of the car, was uninjured.

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District
Board of Directors
Wednesday, Nov. 20, 7 p.m.
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas.
Visit www.mofd.org



ConFire

Board of Directors
Tuesday, Nov. 12, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber Room 107,
Administration Building
651 Pine St., Martinez.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



Public Safety

Emergency response:

Emergency: 24 Hours 911
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours
925-284-5010

Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or go to www.nixle.com
Lafayette Police Department:
3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
925-283-3680

Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt
925-299-3221

Police Department Tip Line
94549Tip@gmail.com
Police Department Traffic Issues
94549Traffic@gmail.com

Moraga Police Department:
329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055
Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049
Orinda Police Department:
22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820
Chief of Police, David M. Cook
925-254-6820
Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report

Oct. 6 - Oct. 19

Alarms 101
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 20
Traffic 121
Suspicious Circumstances 8
Suspicious Subject 26
Suspicious Vehicle 28
Service to Citizen 50
Patrol Req./Security Check 30
Pubic/School Assembly Check 8
Supplemental Report 23
Welfare Check 19



Vehicle violations

Auto Burglary
3700 Block Meadow Ln.
3800 Block Palo Alto Dr.
900 Block Dewing Ave.
DUI Misdemeanor
Martino Rd./Springhill Rd.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor
Moraga Rd./Plaza Way
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (4)
Moraga Rd./Plaza Way
3800 Block Happy Valley Rd. (3)
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
1000 Block Dyer Dr.
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Moraga Rd.

Petty Theft From Vehicle
Police Department (2)
3200 Block Alta Ln.
1200 Block Cambridge Dr.
3700 Block Meadow Ln.
Reckless Driving
St. Marys Rd./Glenside Dr.
1000 Block Woodbury Rd.
Pleasant Hill Rd./Springhill Rd.
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Oak Hill Rd.
Pleasant Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24
Deer Hill Rd./Brown Ave.
Oak Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24

Throw Moving Vehicle
Glenside Dr./Reliez Station Rd.
Vehicle Theft
3700 Block St Francis Dr.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
10 Block Greenvalley Dr.
1400 Block Tichenor Ct
3300 Block Kincheloe Ct

Other criminal activity
Attempt Shoplift
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Fraud Credit Card
900 Block Dolores Dr.
800 Block Mountain View Dr.
Fraud False Pretenses
3800 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
3400 Block Black Hawk Rd.

Grand Theft
3100 Block Lucas Dr.
Identity Theft
3100 Block Sweetbrier Cir.
700 Block Solana Dr.
20 Block Ruth Ct.

Panhandling
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Deer Hill Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Petty Theft
900 Block Kelley Ct
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
1000 Block Carol Ln.
900 Block Moraga Rd.
50 Block Lafayette Cir.

Residential Burglary
3300 Block Rowland Dr.
Shoplift
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (3)
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Threats
10 Block Westminster Pl.
Warrant Arrest
Mt. Diablo Blvd./1st St

Nuisance to the Community
Disturbance-domestic
900 Block Diablo Dr.
10 Block Arbor Way (2)
Disturbing The Peace
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Happy Valley Rd.

Drunk In Public
Old Tunnel Rd./Windsor Dr.
Loud Music
600 Block Sky Hy Cir.
Reliez Valley Rd./Hermosa Way

Loud Noise
Reliez Valley Rd./Lombard Ln.
1200 Block Rose Ln. (2)
3300 Block Springhill Rd.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Loud Party
1700 Block Reliez Valley Rd. (2)
Crest Rd./Diablo Cir.
Moraga Rd./Madrone Dr.

Public Nuisance
3400 Block Moraga Blvd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
1000 Block Dewing Ave.
900 Block Oak Hill Rd.

Vandalism
Post Office
1100 Block Cambridge Dr.

Other
Accident Property
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Ordinance Violation
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
1000 Block Dewing Ave.

Trespass
3600 Block Echo Springs Rd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Unwanted Guest
1000 Block 2Nd St.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Violation Custody Order
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
1000 Block Miller Dr.

Violation Restraining Order
1200 Block Warner Ct. (2)
3400 Block Moraga Blvd.

Moraga Police Incident Summary Report

Oct. 8 - Oct. 21

Alarms 17
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 15
Traffic 48
Suspicious Circumstances 3
Suspicious Subject 5
Suspicious Vehicle 9
Service to Citizen 68
Patrol Req./Security Check 38
Supplemental Report 6
Vacation House Check 2
Welfare Check 3



Vehicle violations
Accident Injury
100 Block Eileen Ct.
Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr.

Auto Burglary
Not Available
20 Block Hour Fitness

Excessive Speed
Corliss Dr./Lynwood Pl.
Moraga Rd./St. Marys Rd.
Campolindo Dr./Paseo Del Rio

Reckless Driving
Moraga Way/Miramonte Dr.
Moraga Rd./Corliss Dr.
Camino Pablo Rd./School St.

Canyon Rd./Moraga Way
Canyon Rd./Larch Ave.
Tc - Property Damage
Camino Pablo/Canyon Rd.

Other criminal activity
Battery Domestic Misd
20 Block Lance Ct.
Grand Theft
Not Available
Wells Fargo

Petty Theft
Nations
Nuisance to the Community
Disturbing The Peace
100 Block Miramonte Dr.

Loud Music
1500 Block Canyon Rd.
Canyon Club Brewery (3)
Loud Noise
Bollinger Canyon Rd./St. Marys Rd.

Loud Party
2000 Block Ascot Dr.
Public Nuisance
Safeway

Vandalism
St. Marys College
Other
Ordinance Violation
800 Block Country Club Dr.

ORINDA POLICE

Public Assembly Check
Rheem Valley Shopping Center
Revoked License
Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr.

Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report

will be back next time