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Firefighters' are briefed prior to Moraga's Aug. 11 Painted Rock Prescribed Burn exercise.

Photo courtesy Moraga Police Chief Jon King

MOFD holds massive Wildland Fire Training Burn at Painted Rock

By Vera Kochan

Moraga's residents are accustomed to what's become the annual Painted Rock Prescribed Burn conducted by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, but the Aug. 11 event was decidedly a much larger production.

MOFD hosted a Wildland Fire Training Burn that involved 15 additional fire districts. Contra Costa County Fire, Alameda County Fire, Oakland Fire, Hayward Fire, East Bay Regional Park District, San Mateo County, Cal Fire, Central Santa Cruz Fire District, Santa Clara County Fire, Watsonville Fire, Scotts Valley Fire, Ben Lomond Fire, Livermore-Pleasanton Fire, Rodeo Hercules Fire and CAL OES were on hand to take advantage of the training session, which this year covered 150 acres of the John Muir Land Trust's Painted Rock and the Moraga Geologic Hazard Abatement District (GAHD). Also on hand were members of the Lafayette Police Department, Chief Ben Alldritt, Administrative Analyst Cathy Surge-Moscato and Police Services Assistant John Cornell, who provided drone coverage from the top of Moraga's La Salle Drive, and Moraga Police Chief Jon King. Total involvement included

130 personnel, 29 fire engines, one dozer, and three wildland fire hand crews. Ambulances were also in attendance as a precaution.

The day began at 9 a.m. with a firefighters' operational briefing in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center parking lot before crews headed out. A media briefing was held at 11 a.m. in MOFD Fire Station 42 (555 Moraga Rd.) where MOFD's Chief Dave Winnacker, Public Information Officer for Painted Rock Trust and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein, and King answered any questions. The entire operation was not expected to last beyond 6 p.m.

According to an MOFD notice, the training was organized using the incident command system (ICS), and included management staffing for fire operations, logistics, planning, public information, and safety. Firefighters practiced wildland fire suppression skills including firing operations, progressive hose lays, mobile attack, and the use of fire suppression hand tools. The burn also served to remove hazardous fuels prior to the onset of critical wildfire conditions for the coming fall season.

MPD stressed that safety was the number one priority and that the project was set up to "take advantage of existing weather and fire control lines."

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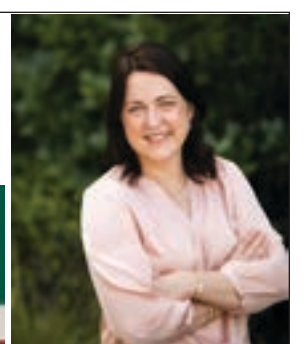
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Orinda Police Chief takes plunge for donations at National Night Out

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Police Department hosted a National Night Out event at the Orinda Police Station on the evening of Aug. 1. National Night Out is hosted by police departments nationwide to promote safer communities through knowing your neighbors and local police officers.

From 5 to 8 p.m. the event offered Orinda residents an opportunity to meet community members, learn how to help fight crime, and have fun. New this year, the OPD barbecued hot dogs and hamburgers and had a bounce house for the littles.

However, according to Officer Norma Perez, by far the most popular activity was dunking the Chief. For each donation of a backpack or school supplies, donors got three chances to dunk Chief of Police Ryan Sullivan in the dunk tank.

Unfortunately for the Chief, it was a chilly evening, but he good-naturedly went into the frigid water fully dressed in his uniform and shoes. Fortunately, not all those who tried to hit the button by throwing a baseball succeeded, but when they did, the action was so fast as to be a blur as the Chief was unceremoniously and instantly dropped into the tank of cold water.

City of Orinda staff were on hand to distribute safety information, and OPD Officers both worked the grill and chatted with residents, young and not-so-young, who turned out for the event, which was held behind the police station, just off Altarinda Road.

Twenty-five backpacks and a few bags of school supplies were donated on the night. For each donation, the donor received three attempts to dunk the chief. Fortunately, out of the over 75 chances to dunk the chief, only a few succeeded. All supplies donated were given to the Family Justice Center in Concord.

Orinda Police Chief Ryan Sullivan sits perched on the dunk tank platform Aug. 1 during National Night Out.

Photo Sora O'Doherty

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