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20 Years After the Oakland Firestorm, What Can Lamorinda Learn From It?

Submitted by Jonathan Goodwin

On October 20, 1991 Oakland, California suffered one of the most devastating fires in United States history. The fire began around 10:40 am but could not be brought under control until the late afternoon. In the first hour one home ignited every five seconds and most of the eventual 25 fatalities occurred during the course of a desperate evacuation. By the time it was over there were over 1000 injuries, more than 3000 residences were lost and the damage was estimated at \$1.5 billion in 1991 dollars.

On October 12th, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Orinda Library Auditorium (24 Orinda Way), the Lamorinda Wildfire Forum will present a program remembering the 1991 Oakland Firestorm. Speakers will include CAL FIRE Unit Chief Steve Woodill, Oakland Firestorm survivor and Special Assistant to Oakland Mayor Jean Quan, Sue Piper, a representative from the Berkeley Fire Department and a representative from the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. They will discuss the policy and implementation lessons, changes and remaining challenges they've been working on over the past 20 years. The program will conclude with MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley presenting the initiatives the Moraga-Orinda Fire District has been undertaking to mitigate local hazards.

The Lamorinda Wildfire Forum is supported by the Canyon Fire Council, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, the Lafayette Emergency Preparedness Commission, the Orinda Citizen Corps Council, the City of Orinda, the City of Lafayette, the Town of Moraga and Lamorinda CERT. The purpose of the program is to provide a basis for future wildfire policy discussions in Lamorinda.

If you plan to attend, please contact Jonathan Goodwin, CanyonFire@VFEmail.net.

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[back](#)

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