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Fire districts prepare for shutoffs

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"The generators in the class that we are talking about are designed to run around the clock, in that type of environment," Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Dave Winnacker said.

The communications center, which dispatches calls for both Lamorinda fire districts, also must be supplied with fuel, and food delivered to the dispatchers. ConFire has satellite backup for cell coverage, as well as backup radio ability. "But the first thing we do is get the engines out of the apparatus bay, onto the ramps,"

McAlister said.

Both districts expect a spike in emergency medical calls and ambulance transports during a power shutoff, especially as the outage lingers. Again, the agencies look at the shutoffs as any other emergency, and as calls come in, they will respond. Winnacker said of one of the tools at his disposal is the ability to upstaff to meet demand.

McAlister called the sharing of information the most critical component of the planned outages, especially the location of the shutdown. "Don't tell me you're going to shut down 500 customers in

Lafayette," he said of PG&E.

"Give the fire district a map. Is it downtown? Is it St. Mary's Road?"

Though the fire districts have handled emergencies of all types, the PG&E power shutoffs may pose challenges not yet considered. "We're gathering information," McAlister said, such as ambulance transport data from North Bay counties that experienced a power shutdown in June. "It's a new program and we're wrapping our arms around it."

"Our regulators agree that this program can be effective," Tom Guarino of PG&E said.

MOFD conducts first controlled burn exercise in Moraga



Photography by David Grube for John Muir Land Trust, © 2019

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At 11:30 a.m., Gehling approved the test results and the exercise began.

An unusual sight was firefighters setting fires, as they poured a mixture of diesel fuel and gasoline onto the brush. Even more unusual was to see

firefighters making no attempt to extinguish the fires. "The fire will put itself out," Gehling said. "If done right, this is very easy to do."

The steep terrain proved anything but easy for the fire crews. But plenty of safety precautions were in place, as a hose line circled the perimeter of the exercise, and the Berkeley engine trailed along the ridge to protect the back end, toward Buckingham. Two 2,500-gallon water tenders sat nearby and Medic 41 was parked at the top of the hill, just in case.

The exercise began slowly, but once it became obvious that the "safety strip" – the black path that remained after incineration – was able to hold off the oncoming fires, crews began taking out bigger chunks of vegetation as they moved down the hill toward Moraga

Road.

Lafayette resident Jerry Kent watched the proceedings from the Campolino High School parking lot. "It's a smart move, to do this with the fire department here and things under control," Kent said. "I saw this hill burn last year when it was out of control."

By mid-afternoon, a 5-acre, 1,100 foot strip of the 15-acre property was completely charred. Gehling reported that no one was hurt and that he had heard no complaints of smoke drifting into the neighborhoods. "They did exactly what they said they were going to do, and did it very cautiously," Lewis said of the firefighters.

"We can use this tool to make the community safer," Gehling said. "The black part of that hill will not burn the rest of this year."

Letters to the editor

Foul language

A fight broke out in Colorado among parents and coaches at a Little League game for 7-year-olds after the 13-year-old umpire issued a warning about their foul language. Recently we tuned in to an acclaimed TV show and found that the dialogue relied primarily on the relentless use of F-bombs. Julia Louis-Dreyfus, one of our favorite performers, starred in Veep for four years, and we looked forward to enjoying the whole series, but the first episode turned us off.

There used to be societal standards regarding public speech. We are debasing our language and ourselves, and we should think about the long-term effects.

Dale Walwark
Moraga

Affordable Housing

My husband and I have been residents of Lafayette since 1969. And we wanted to comment on the article by Nick Marnell about Assembly Woman Rebecca-Bauer-Kahanss positions on AB 1482 and AB 1487 by saying that we are the supporters of Bills that would help make fair and affordable housing in our city a possibility. The Assemblywoman did not vote against these bills for clear reasons stated in the article. We would like to see both of these bills get a chance to address the issues of housing which is so unfair and discriminatory for so many living in our city and in this county.

I cannot help but feel that the inequities of the housing situation most often will not be addressed by many citizens, just like the issues on segregation and equal education were NOT addressed by so many localities during the 1960s and '70s. We need the State Assembly to step up like the federal government did when it was necessary to take the lead and give direction on how we begin to make this issue and the many issues that divide our

communities between the "haves" and the "have nots" a basic question of fairness. WE are better than this, and we need to make America a just and decent place with opportunity, especially in housing, available to all.

Thank you.
Lynn MacMichael
Lafayette

National Lineworker Appreciation Day

July 10 is National Lineworker Appreciation Day, a day that we ask East Bay residents to take a moment to recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on for our community.

PG&E has thousands of lineworkers serving 5 million customers across our service territory, and they are often unsung heroes. Day and night, no matter the weather, these lineworkers are up in bucket trucks, operating heavy machinery and often arriving first on emergency scenes, all to serve our customers.

The dedication and sacrifice of a lineworker is something to be celebrated, and that's why the Edison Electric Institute (EED), the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), and the Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) has established July 10 as Lineworker Appreciation Day. If you see a lineworker today, please stop and say thank you and let them know you appreciate the work that they do.

Vic Baker
Senior Manager of PG&E's Diablo Division

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate and be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

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The Lafayette City Council is soliciting applicants to fill a vacancy on the Planning Commission

Planning Commission. This seven-member body is responsible for matters relating to land use and development in the city. The commission serves as an advisory agency to the City Council for administering the laws and ordinances governing the approval of general and specific plans, zoning text amendments and rezonings. The commission also hears and decides on applications for subdivisions, land use permits, variances, and ridgeline development. Members of the Planning Commission are required to be qualified electors of the City of Lafayette, and are selected on the basis of training, education, occupation and expertise. The commission reviews design drawings, construction plans and technical reports. The following are planning documents that commissioners must be familiar with to execute their duties. 1) Lafayette General Plan; 2) Lafayette Municipal Code, Title 6 -Planning & Land Use; 3) Downtown Specific Plan; 4) Downtown Design Guidelines; 5) Residential Design Review Guidelines. Link to the application and additional information www.lovelafayette.org/pc

Individuals with questions may call Interim Planning & Building Director Greg Wolff (925) 299-3204. Completed applications must be received by 5:00pm August 30, 2019.

Community Panel for Lafayette City Manager Selection

Lafayette's City Council is looking for five residents to serve on a community panel to interview finalists for the City Manager position.

- Requirements**
1. Available to serve on August 2, 2019, from approximately 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at City offices.
 2. Lafayette resident (must be able to provide proof of residency).
 3. At least 18 years old.
 4. Willing to sign a confidentiality agreement to protect the privacy of candidates.

- How to apply**
- Fill out the online form at www.lovelafayette.org/communitypanel.
 - Complete a form in person at Lafayette City Offices, 3675 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, California 94549, or
 - Fill out a form at the City Council meeting on July 8 or July 22.

- Selection**
- Applicants will be divided into geographical sections of the City (Happy Valley, Reliez Valley, Burton Valley, Downtown/Acalanes Valley).
 - One member will be randomly selected from each geographic location.
 - After the geographic selections are made, one more member will be randomly selected from all remaining applicants.
 - The random selection will be done on Monday, July 29th and live-streamed on Facebook.

Applications must be received by 5:00 pm on Friday, July 26, 2019. For more information, or to apply, please visit www.lovelafayette.org/communitypanel.