



SFM Report

August 2007

CAL FIRE State Fire Marshal Monthly Report to the California Fire Prevention Officers



**Kate Dargan
State Fire Marshal**

Fire Prevention Partners:

The most important news of the month is the appointment of our own Tonya Hoover to Assistant State Fire Marshal! Chief Hoover was widely supported by a variety of key fire service, building, and code stakeholders and brings many years of fire prevention experience to Cal Fire/Office of the State Fire Marshal. She is both a leader in our field and a trusted colleague and friend to many of us. Her responsibilities will include executive oversight of State Fire Training, Fire and Life Safety Divisions, Pipeline Safety, and the Codes and Regulations Division. She will begin her duties on August 27th and be sworn-in to her appointment and position on Sept 4th in Sacramento. Congratulations Tonya!

This last month has been dominated by the Angora Tahoe Fire and its physical and social aftermath. While a USFS Fire in origin, it was a Unified Command fire with the Lake Valley Fire Protection District where the 267 homes and businesses were destroyed. Fire Chief Jeff Michael has done an outstanding job of leading his troops through a battle and his community through a recovery. We all dread the experience he has lived through.

The Angora Fire inspired people around the country to discuss forest hazards, fuels treatment, defensible space, firesafe planning, and balancing of environmental and public safety goals. Governor Schwarzenegger and Governor Gibbons of Nevada have appointed a bi-state Tahoe Fire Commission to evaluate the current policies of fire prevention and planning, fuels and forest management, land use regulations and public safety. I have been honored with the Governor's selection as Co-Chair for this Commission and will be devoting much of the next 8 months to leading the Commission and preparing our recommendations for improving the Tahoe fire planning environment.

Chief Grijalva and I were asked to testify at a CA Joint Legislative Committee on Fire Preparedness and Prevention this past month. Between the two of us, we spoke to Senators, Assembly members, and others about the future of firesafe planning and prevention for CA. If you know me at all, you know this is one of my deepest passions - educating people about the need for more prevention, land use planning, certified courses, defensible space, risk and mitigation mapping, and all the other elements that we need in order to adequately address wildfire hazard. Much of my tenure as SFM will be devoted to supporting and developing this capacity. Your help, involvement, and local experience will be key to our success.

State Fire Training

ICC California Amendments courses coming soon

The International Code Conference (ICC), in cooperation with SFT, is developing two six-hour **transition courses** on the California Building Code (CBC) and California Fire Code (CFC). These courses will familiarize **Fire Prevention Officers** with the amendments in the **2007 codes**. Courses will include a matrix on the adoption tables and cross references to the 2001 CFC/CBC and the 2007 ICC versions of the CFC/CBC. ICC will coordinate course delivery and locations through the northern and southern California Fire Prevention Officers sections. We expect these courses will be available September 2007 thru February 2008. Watch this space for more information.

Fire Prevention Courses Updated

The Certification Training Standards (CTS) are being updated for the Fire Marshal Series within State Fire Training. January 2008 is the target for completion. Curriculum workgroups will be assembled to update the fire **prevention courses** that support the Fire Marshal certification track. Progress reports will be made available.

Fire and Life Safety

S & R Class Already Full

The Statutes and Regulations Class is being offered September 13-15 in Roseville, but this popular class is already full. Instructors Steve Guarino Deputy SFM Supervisor, Bill Green Retired Davis Fire Marshal, and Hugh Council Retired SFM Division Chief, plan to offer the class again this winter. We will bring you the details.

SFM Testing Hydrogen Car

This Ford Focus is a fuel cell vehicle which runs on hydrogen. The State Fire Marshal's office is putting it to the test as part of the state's Hydrogen Highway Initiative. According to Todd Succo, Ford Project Manager, it is a zero emission vehicle. The only exhaust is water. It has a range of 200 miles on a full tank of hydrogen. The tank holds 4 kg of hydrogen compressed at 5000 psi. The Air Resources Board (ARB) is also part of the project.



Leslie Goodbody of ARB says having SFM test drive the vehicle is a win-win for the operation since we will give it a good workout in a variety of conditions. SFM staff will be driving it for the next few months then Ford will evaluate its performance. We will let you know how it does.

Solar/Photovoltaic Task Force

There have been recent concerns identified between the solar industry and the fire service, mostly involving rooftop photovoltaic panels and ventilation/access needs. The OSFM is putting together a task force to quickly address these issues and educate all stakeholders of the needs of each. The task force will get communication rolling and develop guidelines that locals can use if needed.

Exchanging Assignments

Vickie Sakamoto and Ben Ho have reversed roles within the SFM system. Beginning immediately, Chief Ho will be responsible for Fire Engineering and Chief Sakamoto takes the lead in Fire and Life Safety northern region.

Pipeline Safety

Crude Leak

On July 7th 2007, Pipeline Safety Engineer Adriana Crasnean responded to an overflow tank incident at the Vopak Marine Bulk Liquid Terminal in the Port of Long Beach. Crude oil was released to a secondary containment area during the transfer from one tank to another. Tank 601 was overfilled and about 8400 barrels were spilled. No waterways were affected. The cause of the incident was operator error. An employee miscalculated the remaining space in the tank.



Trestle Fire

On July 9th, 2007, Pipeline Safety Engineer Emmett Cooper and Supervising Engineer Chuck MacDonald responded to a pipeline trestle fire above the LA River in the city of Long Beach. The cause of the fire is under investigation by the Long Beach Fire Department. The wooden bridge pier on the westerly side of the bridge was badly damaged as well as parts of the steel bridge structure. All of the pipeline supports were badly damaged by the fire causing the pipelines to sag. The bridge superstructure was reinforced and permanent repairs are planned. While the pipelines did not leak, they were damaged by the fire and sections of pipeline were replaced prior to returning to service.



Fire Prevention

Fire Hazard Severity Zones and Building Standard Requirements (FHSZ-BSR) Project

More and more interest is becoming apparent as this project continues. All 56 counties with **State Responsibly Area** lands have completed their public

hearings and CAL FIRE/SFM staff is organizing the comments for review by CAL FIRE Director, Chief Ruben Grijalva.

The GIS layer for the draft **Local Responsibility Area** maps, showing only the very high fire severity zones (VHFSZ), will be going out to the local agencies in late August or September. We are **encouraging fire departments** to meet with their Planning and Building Officials **to review those maps** for line accuracy. Some local agencies do not have GIS support in their jurisdiction and it will be difficult for them to determine exactly where the lines of the VHFSZ are located. The project team is working on local CAL FIRE Unit personnel (and our Contract Counties) to help those jurisdictions that need assistance.

The **actual draft maps** that will go to the local jurisdictions for acceptance will probably go out in **January and February '08**. When those maps arrive, the jurisdiction will go through the public hearing process much like CAL FIRE has just completed.

California Building Industry Association is assisting the project team by getting the word out to the building industry about listing with the State Fire Marshal. Although it is not a requirement of the new Building Code that they list, it will help consumers and developers to find products that meet the new requirements. They will be listed in the Building Materials Listing (BML) section of the SFM website.

Signup for updates

If you want all the updated information on the project, go to our ever-growing website: <http://www.fire.ca.gov/wildland.php> Sign up for updates on the lower right side of the page. Also checkout our Frequently Asked Questions at: http://www.fire.ca.gov/wildland_faq.php

Building Standards Workshop

Learn how to implement Chapter 7A of the California Building Code at a half-day workshop on September 20 in Napa. Sponsored by Napa Firewise, in conjunction with CAL FIRE, the workshop will be at the Soscol Professional Plaza from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with lunch provided. For details visit www.co.napa.ca.us/firewise/events

State Fire Marshal and Hollywood

Did you know there is a professional organization specific to fire safety in the motion picture and entertainment industry that can help you with technical permitting issues? Since this is such a big business in Southern California, the **Safety Advisory for Fire & Fireworks in Entertainment (SAFFE)** was formed. SAFFE is a professional partnership of



the fire service and the entertainment industry that provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information that promotes safety, protects life, the environment, and the property within which the entertainment industry works.

On July 24, 2007 SAFFE held its quarterly meeting at Warner Bros. Studio in Burbank. Some of the topics discussed were, film school education, remote control devices, pyrotechnic permitting, and protective clothing. You can get more information about SAFFE at <http://www.safefirefx.org/> or by contacting Deputy State Fire Marshal Al Adams @ 626-305-1908.

Code Development

Amendments now Available

As we previously reported, The California Building Standards Commission (BSC) completed the adoption and approval of the 2007 California Building Standards Codes on January 30, 2007. The **Final Express Terms** (amendments) have been integrated into each code by the publishers and are now available to the public as of July 1, 2007 and effective on January 1, 2008. Additional information may be found at the BSC's website <http://www.bsc.ca.gov>.

CAL FIRE
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<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov>
