



SFM Report

September 2007

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



Kate Dargan
State Fire Marshal

This month began with a happy event for us at the OSFM, as we welcomed **Tonya Hoover Assistant State Fire Marshal**. She took the oath of office on September 4 before about 100 friends and colleagues. Then we all shared a potluck feast hosted by SFM staff. This was a joyous end to a process which actually began with lots of quiet reflection and consultation with my own trusted advisors. I carefully considered this position and the person I wanted to fill it. The Assistant State Fire Marshal is not only my right hand and business partner, but is often the representative of this office to the public we serve. They must have experience and credibility within the fire service, a solid knowledge of the mandates and responsibilities of the office, and have the personal integrity and work ethic required by this demanding position. In Tonya Hoover we found it all. I know that you will all enjoy working with her as we go forward with our fire prevention programs.



SFM Kate Dargan, CAL FIRE Director Ruben Grijalva, and Tonya Hoover after Chief Hoover was sworn in as Assistant State Fire Marshal

It is September and the SFM Arson/Bomb unit is still working hard to dispose of the illegal fireworks that we obtained this summer. Every year around July 4th, tons of illegal fireworks are seized by local fire and law enforcement officers. It is our responsibility to accept the contraband from them, and dispose of it. This year we will dispose of 50 tons of this volatile and dangerous product. As you can imagine, that is a huge job which falls to our arson/bomb investigators. We are currently burning the product in a make-shift burn chamber in San Bernardino County under a temporary permit from Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC). But DTSC has made it clear that the days of open burning are nearly over.

We may have a solution to this problem which has been vexing us for years. Four mobile fireworks treatment units are now being built as a result of a civil enforcement settlement agreement with a fireworks manufacturing company. We hope to use these units around the state with a permit through the DTSC. But of course, that requires funding and personnel. Senate Bill 839 (working its way through the legislature) establishes the Fireworks Enforcement and Disposal Fund. It will allow us to hire four additional Arson and Bomb technicians/peace officers. These officers will run the mobile treatment units, plus empower us with even more aggressive enforcement to keep these dangerous explosives out of our neighborhoods.

Death of Former State Fire Marshal

Albert E. Hole, State Fire Marshal from 1967 to 1975, died this summer in Fountain Valley CA. Chief Hole was a hard working advocate for fire safety. He added a long list of additional responsibilities to the Fire Marshal's office, including hospitals, houses of worship, motion picture studios, children's sleepwear and more. He created the State Board of Fire Services which still operates today.



He was appointed by Governor Ronald Reagan as the state's 6th State Fire Marshal. He began his career in the fire service with Long Beach Fire Department in 1942. One year later he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and flew 35 combat missions on B-24s in Europe. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 3 oak leaf clusters and the European Theatre of War Medal with six combat stars. After the war, he returned to Long Beach Fire Department where he eventually became the City Fire Marshal.

After serving as State Fire Marshal for 9 years, he became the Fire Chief for the City of Fountain Valley. It was there that he eventually retired from the fire service and lived out the remainder of his life with Joyce, his wife of 68 years. They had a son Michael, a daughter Susan, and many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Reno in October

California-Nevada-Hawaii Forest Fire Council is holding their Fall Conference in Reno, Nevada on October 17-18, 2007. The theme of this year's conference is "Shifting Policies and Practices". Guest speakers will include California State Fire Marshal Kate Dargan and CAL FIRE Director Ruben Grijalva. Topics will include fire severity mapping, new building standards, Fuels Treatment effectiveness on the Angora Fire and What is the True Cost of Wildfires? The keynote speaker will address the implications of the recent report by the Office of the Inspector General. That report declared that the rising cost of fighting wildfires directly correlates to the increase in houses in the wildland urban interface. How might this information change policies and/or tactics in the future on federal land? How might this impact you at the local government level as the cost containment recommendation in the report states that "Suppression Costs Need to be Fairly Shared by State and Local Governments?" Follow this link to register for the conference www.cnhfire.org

Fire Prevention

MAP DATA:

The new draft data for the local responsibility area (LRA) fire hazard severity zone maps will be posted in mid September. This new data reflects the changes made to the State Responsibility Areas (SRA) based on public hearing comments. These updates may cause changes to the LRA as well. The new data will NOT reflect previously received changes from local agencies.

MAP AND CODE SUPPORT GROUPS:

The Fire Hazard Severity Zone-Building Standards Review (FHSZ-BSR) Team is setting up a communications system to ensure that we get good reliable information back to those asking questions and needing help. A Mapping Group and Code Group with task forces are being formed. All local agencies will be asked to communicate with their local CAL FIRE or Contract County mapping or code contact. The contact names and information will be posted on the CAL FIRE website and the contacts will be confirming who they will be dealing with in each of their local agencies. Each Group will capture all questions and issues in an electronic log that will be shared with everyone on line. The contact lists will be posted on the code page: http://www.fire.ca.gov/wildland_codes.php and the mapping page: http://www.fire.ca.gov/wildland_zones.php

INFORMATION BULLETINS:

Two information bulletins regarding enforcement of the new building standards and plan review of state buildings have been posted on the CAL FIRE website: http://www.fire.ca.gov/wildland_codes.php. There will be more listed as they are written. All building elements will have a bulletin.

BUILDING CODE TRAINING:

Classes are being organized around the state to bring everyone up to date on Building Code Chapter 7A. The schedule is at: http://www.fire.ca.gov/wildland_codes_training.php The classes are four hours long and the students get a CD and a notebook. We have had quite a few sponsors ask for classes and we are now working on dates and locations. If you and/or your organization want to sponsor a class, you should book a room that will seat 50 students. Then contact Steve Quarles at (415) 233-1141 or Stephen.quarles@fire.ca.gov

LISTING CODE-COMPLIANT PRODUCTS:

When the new building codes go into effect next year, builders will be looking for products such as triple pane glass, fire resistant decking material, etc. that meet the higher standards. The SFM Building Materials Listing page could be a one stop shopping site for those builders, and thereby help us in applying these new codes as well. Please encourage your contacts in the building industry to list their code-compliant products with the SFM Building Materials Listing page: <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/pdf/fireengineering/bml/listingApplication.pdf> The SFM is distributing a public announcement to trade groups and building industry organizations to get the word out. If you are aware of a newsletter, website or bulletin board which might post our announcement, please email your suggestion to Karen.terrill@fire.ca.gov

State Fire Training

CODE CLASSES COMING SOON:

Fire prevention officers will get training on the 2007 building and fire codes this fall and winter in two six-hour transition courses developed by the International Code Conference (ICC) in cooperation with State Fire Training. We will be announcing the details on these courses soon.

Code Development

POSSIBLE DEADLINE CHANGE FOR LOCAL CODE IMPLEMENTATION:

The Code Development and Analysis Division has requested that the Building Standards Commission change the effective date from January 1, 2008 to July 1, 2008 for the Phase II provisions (wall, eaves, decking, underfloor, appendages and ancillary building provisions) for the new building codes in Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). This revision will not change the effective date for State Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones, or any project timelines. It merely lets those LRA jurisdictions that are ready to adopt locally on January 1, 2008 to do so and the other jurisdictions have adequate time to prepare and adopt after the FHSZ maps are finalized and published.

PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE MODEL CODES:

OSFM has recently submitted several code proposals to the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC). These proposals revise the requirements for wall and eave protection to include ignition-resistant materials for compliance. These are follow-up proposals to the 2006-2007 IWUIC code cycle where OSFM was successful in introducing the definition of- and requirements for ignition-resistant materials.

INCREASING ROOF FIRE RESISTANT STANDARDS:

OSFM has also submitted proposals to the International Building Code and International Residential Code (IRC). These are follow-up proposals to code changes during the 2006-2007 code cycle submitted by the National Association of State Fire Marshals. The proposals affect Class A roof assemblies and the proposed change is to require that decks for slate roofing or clay or concrete roof tile be noncombustible or that the roofing assembly pass the ASTM E108 (UL790) external fire and burning brand test. Additionally the proposal is to add "metal sheets and shingles" to an exception for compatibility with the current text in the IRC and to address the condition where roof decking is not needed for support of the roof covering.