

The CAO Weekly Report

The week of September 28, 2015



Monterey County Administrative Office

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Environmental Health Bureau Helps Tassajara Fire Victims

Monterey County played an important role in emergency response to the Tassajara Fire. Now that the flames are out, the county effort is underway to help residents begin the recovery process.

Among the first county staff in the fire zone once the flames were extinguished were personnel from the Health Department's Environmental Health Bureau (EHB). These specialists made an initial visit to the areas most affected by the fire, and then returned to the scene this week to do ash sampling and coordinate with state toxic clean-up crews to help with the removal of potentially toxic and dangerous items.

This work is crucial for fire victims so they can clear away debris on their property. Environmental Health Bureau's Hazardous Materials Management Services Supervisor Bruce Welden explains the Bureau's role in this recovery process.



Randy McMurray, Environmental Health Specialist, composites ash collected from a burned home site. Ash is collected using a grid system, composited and then secured in sample jars for testing. This method gives a good indication whether the ash can be safely disposed in a local landfill.

Q. What is the role of EHB staff in disasters like the Tassajara Fire?

A. During the fire itself, the EHB ensures that responders and evacuees have access to safe food, clean water and proper sewage disposal. We provide staff to the Emergency Operations Center and assist the Incident Commander with any environmental health issues that may arise, including hazardous materials, garbage and debris, drinking water and wastewater. After the fire, we work with residents to facilitate rebuilding and re-occupancy.

Q. At what point does EHB staff go into the field? What types of tests or assessments do they do?

A. At this incident, we worked closely with the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) to assist residents to clean up their property. Crews work by assessing and removing asbestos and other hazardous wastes. We may also inspect water systems and on-site wastewater systems to ensure their proper operation and help determine if repairs may be necessary.

Q. In fact it was EHB which called in DTSC for help here. How does your division work with the state and are there other agencies that you contact depending on what is found in these home sites?

A. The EHB has an excellent working relationship with DTSC and we communicated with them immediately during the fire to obtain their assistance. Their capacity for assistance has been greatly challenged by the scope and number of wildfires burning in other counties throughout California.



Environmental Health Specialist Robert Fernandez (right) works with Tassajara Fire victims. Gathering information about what may be in the fire debris is an important to safeguard crews on site and obtaining permission for ash testing is an important part of recovery process.



Dangers such as this partially burned footbridge mean EHB staff must use extreme caution when working in burn areas.

Q. EHB staff worked hard to contact homeowners affected by the fires and when information was received in the field, they worked quickly to reassign crews to sites that needed work. Is this common in a post disaster situation?

A. The EHB strives to be flexible during disaster events so we are better able to assist the community as necessary.

Q. EHB staff has worked with communities in other fires. Are there common problems arising from most fires of this type?

A. The total destruction of a residence and its water and wastewater system(s) often require complete rebuilding. Damaged structures need to be assessed to determine whether they are safe for occupancy (which would be accomplished by the County Building Services) and whether their water and wastewater systems are functioning properly.

Q. When will EHB's work be complete in the

Tassajara Fire area?

A. After completion of the initial damage assessment and cleanup, the EHB will be working with residents to facilitate rebuilding and re-occupation. It is likely that rebuilding activities may extend for months and years after the fire, and the EHB will be available to provide whatever assistance is necessary.



Military and Veterans Affairs Office Shows Updated Digs

The Monterey County Military and Veterans Affairs Office (MVAO) threw open the doors to its newly renovated offices with a grand opening party on Friday, September 25th.

MVAO is located at the Monterey Courthouse, and those headquarters underwent a major renovation which included a complete repainting, new carpet, enlarged offices; a training



Monterey County Veteran Service Officer George Dixon (right), and Analyst Wes Morrill (left) accept a Certificate of Recognition from Shane McKeithen representing Assembly Member Luis Alejo (center).

and meeting room plus a flat screen television is now available for veterans waiting to be seen about their VA claims.

Some 45 well-wishers and supporters came to congratulate the office on its new and updated look including Jimmy Panetta of the Central Coast Veterans Cemetery Foundation; Lt. Colonel Paul Fillingner, Presidio of Monterey Base Commander; Board of Supervisors members Dave Potter and John Phillips; representatives from the offices of Assembly Members Mark Stone, Luis Alejo, and Congressman Sam Farr along with many local veterans.

CSUMB interns and VA Work Study students greeted the guests and MVAO staff described the project and told visitors about some of the interesting memorabilia that has been donated to the office such as a San Francisco newspaper collection from the start of World War II, an antique satchel used to transport cash from a local bank to

Ft. Ord for the soldier's weekly payroll and scrapbooks dating back to the 1970's showing veterans organizations and MVAO events from the era.

Another new addition to the office is a special memento from a Navy veteran and county employee. It is a Monterey County flag which was flown over a base in Kuwait in 2006 and 2007 during the Gulf War. This flag was carried by IT1/EXW Brenda Villanueva through her deployment. Brenda is an Engineering Technician with RMA-Public Works.



Supervisor Dave Potter (left) chats with Social Services Director Elliott Robinson (left center), retired Veterans Services Officer Jack Stewart (center right) and Sid Williams of the United Veterans Council (right).

MVAO staff says all are welcome to take a look at these historical pieces and visit the renovated offices, the door is always open!



Happy Trails to Assistant Auditor-Controller Al Friedrich



Supervisor John Phillips presents Al Friedrich with a special resolution in his honor.

It's never easy to say good bye to longtime members of our county family, even while wishing them well on their retirement. Such is the case as county officials and co-workers marked the tremendous accomplishments of Assistant Auditor-Controller Al Friedrich, who retired last month after nearly 37 years of service.

Friedrich's County 'journey' was a long and interesting one. Those who knew him for the last 20 years or so may not have realized finance was not his first area of expertise.

"In the 1980's, I was with Environmental Health providing technical expertise in water wells, water systems and wastewater treatment," says Friedrich. "My graduate degrees are in Environmental Health Science from UC Berkeley and Biology from USF. Finance studies were postgraduate."

Friedrich moved from Environmental Health to the Budget Office and ultimately to his position as Assistant Auditor-Controller. During his county tenure, here are some of the accomplishments of which he is most proud:

- Authoring and implementing the Deep Well Ordinance in 1987 to protect the Salinas Valley Aquifer from Seawater Intrusion.
- Leading the development and implementation of the tertiary treatment plants at Las Palmas Ranch and Laguna Seca Ranch/Pasadera.
- From 1991 to 2001, coordinated and led the County's Budget annual budget process through good and a number of very challenging years.
- In the mid 1990's, co-led the development and implementation of the County's first automated Budget System.
- Assisted with the multi-department effort in the development and implementation of the Advantage ERP system, a daunting task that continues today. Friedrich says the diligence of ERP staff during the initial implementation should be commended.

“It has been a pleasure to work with staff of Monterey County. We are marked by a sense of family, a work ethic that goes beyond ‘8 to 5’ (whatever it takes to get the job done!) and a willingness to volunteer. This is why I stayed at the County for nearly 37 years!”

Cheers Al!



Friedrich and friends (l-r) Gary Giboney, Mari Beraz, Al Friedrich, Maria Papurello, Ma Mon, Dewayne Woods. Plenty of time to wear all those Hawaiian shirts now!

