



DRY CREEK-LOKOYA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

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A 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corporation Tax ID #68-0383597

CHIEF'S CORNER

Welcome to the December newsletter! Winter is finally here and the mountains and valleys of our beautiful area are covered in mist and dew. We dodged another summer fire season with minimal fires within Napa County, the State of California, and in our own backyard. Thanks to all of you that kept your fingers on the pulse of the fire season and made sure nothing happened here.

Some good news regarding our apparatus. I have asked for, and have received, permission to replace our aging E216, our Type 3 fire engine. E216 is primarily used for wildland fires but responds to all types of incidents whether they are medical aid calls or structure fire calls. Napa County Fire Department has agreed to remount the compartment section of E216 on a new chassis. This will provide a safe and modern cab for our firefighters while keeping the current build-up and pump. The build-up and pump are still very serviceable and will remain in service for years to come. The remount is scheduled for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

With the change in the seasons, it is also time to change the batteries in your smoke detectors and CO monitors and clean your chimney before you begin to burn those really hot fires. Be especially careful on Christmas morning if you burn the paper wrappings in your stove. Chimney fires are enemy #1 during the winter.

Roads are wet and slippery again and will remain so until next summer. You all know those areas and need to remember to slow down so that you will not need our emergency services. There are still too many fast, local drivers on our roads. We cannot do much about the visitors but we can slow down ourselves. As always, the bicycle riders will be using our area as well. Some are polite and many are not. Remember, your car would win the battle but who wants a bicyclist to be injured? Slow down and wait for the proper place to pass. I do not want to see you heading towards my car or, worse yet, towards one of our fire engines.

Finally, I want to let you know that after 34 years of being a firefighter with the Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department, I will be retiring at the end of this year. It has been a great, long ride. When I joined back in 1978, the fire department was the social club for all of the neighbors and the neighborhood was the fire department. Over the years, the demographics have changed so dramatically that only four firefighters will remain "on the hill" as we call our locals. All of the younger firefighters live "in the flats" where they can find places that they can afford. If you have the time to become a non-paid professional firefighter, call the firehouse

and leave a message (944-1562). Assistant Chief Violet will contact you.

The firefighters nominate and vote for the fire chief for the department. Your new Volunteer Fire Chief will be Larry Russell. Chief-elect Russell comes with 17 years of service with the Dry Creek-Lokoya VFD. He has held the positions of Engineer and Captain. He will serve the remainder of my term for one year and then new elections will be held in November 2012 for a four-year term. Stop by the firehouse and say hi to the new chief when you get the chance.

Thank you for letting me serve the community for the past 34 years with 11 years as your Volunteer Fire Chief. It has been a real pleasure.

Chief Green



Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council

3rd Annual Golf Tournament A Success



On May 4th of this year to commemorate Wildfire Awareness Week, the Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council held its third annual Tee Up For Fire Safety Golf Tournament at Eagle Vines Golf Course here in the heart of wine country. The weather was excellent and well attended including some distinguished players such as retired CALFIRE Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit Chief / Napa County Fire Chief Ernie Loveless and the President of Davey Tree Company, Howard Bowles. Sponsors for the tournament included PG&E, Davey Tree, State Farm Insurance just to name a few. The golf tournament this year raised \$13,261 for fire safe projects in the Dry Creek / Mount Veeder area. These projects include fuel reduction and firebreak projects and public education. An excellent BBQ Buffet style dinner along with a silent auction and raffle held at the Eagle Vines Clubhouse followed the tournament. John Kelly and Jennifer Jeckel provided live music entertainment. This was a very fun event and for a good cause. Hope to see you next year.



Mike Dvorik (PG&E Director), Howard Bowles (Davey Tree President),
Richard Yarnell (PG&E Forester), Steve Tankersley (PG&E)

Old Ridge Road Shaded Fuel Break Project

In the 1800's, some of the ridgelines in our Mount Veeder community were the sites of wagon roads. These old roads later became part of an extensive network of fire trails established to improve access to our steep terrain for firefighters. The fire trails are no longer maintained and have become overgrown, but they can still be seen in satellite views of the area. What remains of these old ridgeline roads and trails today can serve as a starting point for establishing shaded fuel breaks to slow the spread of a wildfire in our rugged hills.

A shaded fuel break is a strip of land in which brush and dead wood has been removed, along with the lower limbs of trees. As its name suggests, a shaded fuel break is not a clear-cut swath. The trees remain but ladder fuel that can carry the flames up into the tree tops is greatly reduced. Wildfire moves more slowly across a shaded fuel break and fire crews have a much greater chance of stopping further spread.

One of the longest of the old roads is the Old Ridge Road. It runs along the spine of the ridge between Dry Creek Road and Mount Veeder Road. About 3 miles long, it separates the Dry Creek Watershed from the Pickle Canyon Watershed. (The boundaries of the watersheds are shown on a map on our website at <http://mtveederfiresafe.org>.) Parts of the road pass through vineyards and those already serve as fire breaks. Vegetation removal along the remaining segments would result in a shaded fuel break that could stop a wildfire from spreading from one watershed to the other.

The Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council has identified a shaded fuel break along the Old Ridge Road as its highest priority project for protecting our neighborhood from wildfire and has already submitted a grant proposal to obtain funding. In the meantime, however, we have agreed to use money we have already raised to fund a pilot project along a segment of the Old Ridge Road. The pilot project will not only itself contribute incrementally to fire safety but will serve as a visible example for residents who want to see what a shaded fuel break looks like. Furthermore, it may allay the concerns of those who envision large-scale tree removal.

The Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council has begun to work with a vegetation management contractor on the details of the pilot project and we expect the work to begin in the spring of 2012.

Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council Receives \$5,000 Grant from State Farm Insurance

On September 19, 2011 the Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council received a check from State Farm Insurance for \$5,000. The receiving ceremony was held in the Napa County Board of Supervisors Chambers with Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Chief Gary Green, CALFIRE Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit Chief / Napa County Fire Chief Tim Streblov and Supervisor Brad Wagenknecht in attendance as well as members of the Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council. This money will be put to use for fire safe projects within our community such as public education and fuel reduction.

Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council Members Attend Wildfire Prevention Regional Conference for Fire Safe Councils

On October 6, 2011 Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council Members Bill Robertson and Gary Margadant attended the Wildfire Prevention Regional Conference for Fire Safe Councils that was held at the United States Forest Service Wildland Fire Training and Conference Center in Sacramento.

The group was welcomed by keynote speakers Pat Kidder who is Chairman of the California Fire Safe Council Board, Margaret Grayson who is the Executive Director of the California Fire Safe Council and Jerry Davies and Kirk Tweedy from State Farm Insurance. State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover also addressed the group.

Tom Harbour, Director of Fire & Aviation of the USFS gave a talk on Cohesive Strategy. The vision of Cohesive Strategy is to safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed, use fire where allowable, manage our natural resources and as a nation, live with wildland fire. The strategy is a national collaborative approach to addressing wildland fire across all boundaries.

Senator Ted Gaines of California First District was a guest speaker and Daniel Berlant of CALFIRE gave a presentation of Ready, Set, Go.

Lunch was provided and in the afternoon there was discussion with a panel of insurance representatives from Farmers Insurance, California Department of Insurance and Insurance Information Network.

There were also presentations from Firewise Communities as well as Stewardship Contracts and Agreements

At the end of the conference there were presentations from the Butte County Fire Safe Council, Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council and the Deer Springs Fire Safe Council who each gave talks on how they were able to raise funds in very innovative ways.

This was a very good conference and it was great to interact with other Fire Safe Councils throughout Northern California and to hear what they are doing and accomplishing in their communities.

Farmers Insurance also had one of their Farmers' Mobile Claims Catastrophe buses there. These buses serve as high tech customer support centers that go to areas where disasters strike and help policy holders with their claims.

Hill & Dale Club Donates!

The local woman's auxiliary, the Hill and Dale club, have, once again, made a generous donation to the Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department. This donation will be earmarked by the fire department to put up a flagpole in front of the main fire station located at 5900 Dry Creek Rd. Having a flagpole at the firehouse has been a dream we have longed to fulfill. Many thanks to the Hill and Dale Club!! If you are interested in learning more about this local club, please leave a message at the firehouse (944-1562) and we will pass along your contact information to the club.



Mount Veeder Neighborhood Watch

The “Watch” is a grass roots local group, organized for neighborhood assistance and help for whatever issue comes our way. We do many things to assist with communications and organization as we help each other with everyday issues. Being good neighbors is our goal.

Many issues are obvious as we all seek to enjoy the beauty and seclusion of living on the slopes of Mount Veeder, yet there are other events arriving at our doorstep requiring a bit of information to tackle. We just have to be on a first name basis and be willing to help solve the issues before returning to our enjoyment of the mountain.

Recent questions involved plumbers, construction contractors, county permits and inspections, well and spring questions, electricity bills and energy conservation, illegal tree cutting, animal management and control, marijuana cultivation, paroled felons, drugs, traffic, trash, street lighting and sharing the road.

Who is going to warn you and assist you with emergencies? Your neighbors! They are your first line of coordination and assistance. The Sheriff, fire department, road crews and other agencies can only do so much. The rest is up to us.

To start, join our communication tree: Send your e-mail address, phone numbers and mailing address to: Gary & Annie Margadant, 4042 Mount Veeder Road, 707-257-3351, gsmargadant@gmail.com, willowbeth@gmail.com

We coordinate creek and road cleanups twice a year in April (Earth Day) and September (Coastal Cleanup Day) with a dumpster at the Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department main firehouse, 5900 Dry Creek. Bring your found trash and get it off the mountain for proper disposal.

End-of-Year Donations

With the end of this year rapidly approaching, any donation given to your local volunteer fire department is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law as we are 501(c)3, non-profit organization. If you wish to make a donation, it can be sent to the main firehouse addressed to:

Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department
5900 Dry Creek Rd.
Napa, CA 94558

Many thanks in advance if you are able to make a donation!

Can It Happen Here ?

On November 1, 2011 Napa County was experiencing some high winds and low relative humidity. At approximately 8:40 in the evening a fire started in the Soda Canyon area. Being driven by these gusty winds the fire quickly grew to 90 acres destroying everything in its path. Residents were ordered to evacuate while fire crews were called in to fight the fire including engines and firefighters from the Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department. By the time the fire had been contained, a home was lost. But it could have been much worse, it could have been dozens or even hundreds of homes and lives lost.

Here on this side of the Napa Valley, we too have conditions that can lend to such tragedy. All fire needs is the opportunity of the right time and the right conditions and an ignition source. Over the past several decades we have been fortunate not to have a wildfire that has taken out multiple homes. But the conditions are there. We have dodged some major catastrophes that could have impacted many of our friends and neighbors such as the Napa Nook Fire a few years ago and the Cavedale Fire in 1996. But the potential and danger is still there.

This is why there is the Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council. We are here because we care about our community and each other. By working together proactively as a community we can change the conditions to a certain extent to help protect ourselves from the wrath of a devastating fire. By working to establish and maintain strategically located shaded fuel breaks, promoting defensible space and fuel reduction projects, educating ourselves and each other on fire behavior and fire prevention methods and principles, we can reduce the risk. The fire threat is not an individual problem, it's not the fire department's problem, it's a community problem. It will take the community to help reduce the problem and to reduce the risk.

If you are interested please fill out the form on the next page and mail it back to us. We will contact you for our next meeting. Or call (707) 944-1562 and leave a message for the Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council. (The Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council is a sub-committee to the Dry Creek-Lokoya Volunteer Fire Department Board of Directors. It is not required to be a firefighter to join the Mount Veeder Fire Safe Council. All that is required is that you live or work in the Mount Veeder/Dry Creek area and you have an interest to be involved in helping protect our community from wildfire.)