

Communiqué

CAL FIRE

Moving Forward



***Introducing CAL FIRE...
Director's Message***

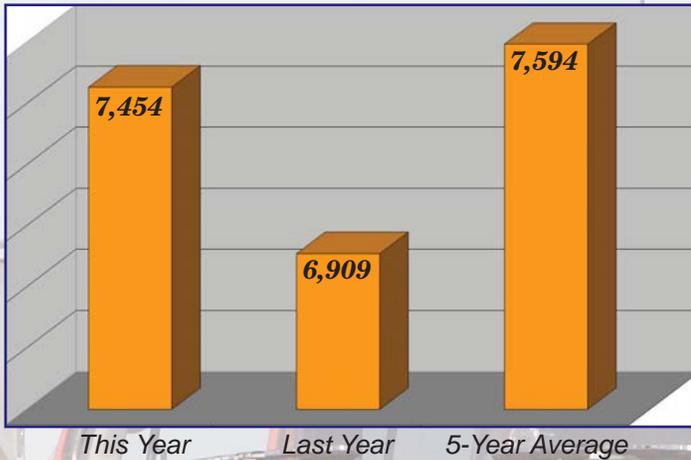
***Why 100 Feet?
Public Education Campaign***

SuperTanker

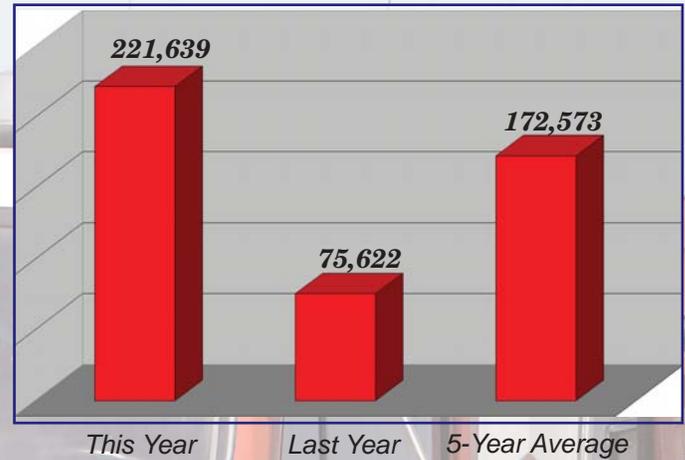


Fire Season 2006

Number of Fires



Acres Burned



These graphs include all fires in CAL FIRE's Direct Protection Area (DPA), Local Responsibility Area under contract with CAL FIRE, and other agencies' DPA in State Responsibility Area. Weekly fire statistics are posted on the internet under Statistics and Events in the Fire Information section.

Top 10 Fires

FIRE NAME	COUNTY	DPA	START DATE	ACRES BURNED	CAUSE
Day	Ventura	USFS	9/4/2006	162,702	Human
Bar Complex	Trinity	USFS	7/27/2006	100,414	Lightning
Sawtooth Complex	San Bernardino	CDF	7/9/2006	61,700	Lightning
Esperanza	Riverside	CDF	10/26/2006	40,200	Arson
Canyon	Stanislaus	CDF	7/17/2006	34,000	Equipment Use
Uncles Complex	Siskiyou	USFS	7/23/2006	30,454	Lightning
Olive	Merced	Local	7/21/2006	25,007	Miscellaneous
Heart-Millard	San Bernardino	USFS	7/9/2006	24,210	Lightning
Horse	San Diego	USFS	7/23/2006	16,681	Human
Orleans Complex	Siskiyou	USFS	7/24/2006	15,710	Lightning

Information provided by CAL FIRE's Fire Protection Statistics Unit. The data is gathered from reports filled out by CDF units. These statistics are not yet final.

Call Type Breakdown

Vegetation Fires	Structure Fires	Other Fires	Medical	Haz-Mat	Public Service / Other	Total
8,268	6,017	36,630	243,849	8,474	37,369	340,607

This information is gathered from CAL FIRE's Command and Control System's Crystal Reports from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006. These numbers may not be final.



Communiqué

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From the Cover...

A converted DC-10 drops water during a training exercise. More on the SuperTanker on page 8. Photo courtesy of 10 Tanker Air Carrier Inc.

From the director

Introducing

CAL FIRE

Just over one year ago I assumed my duties as director of California's largest fire and resource management department. Our department has gone through some very positive transitions in the last year. I believe that these changes will not only make our department stronger as a whole but will allow us to more efficiently protect the lives, property and resources of California.

The most recent is the adoption of the name CAL FIRE. I know many in the department have been working hard for many years to see this day. I want to thank the Branding Committee and Co-Chairs Dave Titus and Unit Chief Bill Holmes for their hard work in implementing this new brand. Over the last 100 years our mission has become increasingly complex and the length of our full department name reflects that. The use of CAL FIRE incorporates all aspects of our department; Fire Protection, Resource Management and the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Initially, you will start seeing CAL FIRE at some of the following places;

1. New Nomex
2. New equipment striping
3. Telephone answering
4. Facility Signs
5. E-mail signatures

The Branding Committee has outlined a number of other applications for CAL FIRE that will be rolled out in the future. I want to stress the importance that only approved applications of CAL



FIRE be used. It is also duly important to note that no materials, signs, insignias or decals shall be destroyed during the implementation of CAL FIRE. Therefore all new materials will be transitioned in as old supplies run out.

Another major change that is important to me is the full merger of CAL FIRE and the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Our two departments have never really been integrated into one since the merger in 1995. OSFM supports the mission of CAL FIRE by focusing on fire prevention; therefore I have moved the entire Fire Prevention & Law Enforcement bureau under the Fire Marshal, bringing OSFM's building, fire, and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) codes and CAL FIRE's Wildland fire prevention responsibilities under one roof. In January, we also moved some field Deputy State Fire Marshals into CAL FIRE offices. There are still more changes that need to be made to fully integrate both departments, but I

am very happy with the progress so far.

In 2006 a number of historic advances were made under CAL FIRE leadership. During the raging Sawtooth Complex in July, CAL FIRE was the first fire agency to use the DC-10 Supertanker. Tanker 910 was able to lay a line of retardant 1.3 miles long and approximately 26 feet wide in less than one hour. The DC-10 was also used throughout the season on the Day Fire, Rico Fire, and Esperanza Fire as well as in Washington State. Crews on the ground reported good coverage and saturation. With the help of the DC-10, ground crews and our air fleet were able to attack wildfires head-on.

Another first in firefighting technology was the use of an unmanned aircraft to help map the fire's perimeter. The Altair Unmanned Aircraft flew over the Esperanza Fire in November and helped give ground crews a better idea of exactly where the fire had burned. Look for this aircraft in the future to help map fires faster and more efficiently.

In June of 2006 the Mexican government asked Governor Schwarzenegger and CAL FIRE for assistance in battling a wildfire in Baja, Mexico. CAL FIRE often responds to fires along the San Diego / Mexico border but this was the first time that CAL FIRE responded this far into Mexico.

The department made administrative progress in a number of important areas. A base bud-

get deficiency was addressed, the CAL FIRE Firefighters contract was rolled over for two years with significant improvements for the firefighter I classification, a major step was taken to provide an inversion fix for incumbent supervisors and managers, appointments were made to over 20 key leadership positions, two-year work plans were developed for every major program, succession plan implementation was funded and begun, a statewide supervisors and managers meeting was held for the first time in many years, department wide communications improvements were initiated, Schedule A and Amador costs were clarified, two significant Schedule A contracts were added in Placer County and San Diego County, and mission clarification and discussions with key political bodies are well underway.

It also was a difficult year for CAL FIRE. On March 13 Captain Patrick Henry suffered a fatal heart attack while on duty at Parlin Fork Conservation Camp in Mendocino County. On September 6 Battalion Chief Rob Stone and CAL FIRE/DynCorp Pilot George "Sandy" Willett died in the line of duty east of Springville in Tulare County when their OV-10 air tactical aircraft crashed. Six days later Battalion Chief Steve Faris was killed in an off-duty traffic collision in San Bernardino County. In November CAL FIRE joined the US Forest Service in mourning the death of five USFS firefighters who lost their lives battling the

Esperanza Fire. It is times like this that we must remember and honor our fallen brothers and sisters and make sure that we learn from the accidents in hopes of preventing them.

As we move forward in 2007 and prepare for the fire season ahead, we have every reason to look to a bright future for CAL FIRE. We will continue the re-organization of the department to better meet the needs of our mission. I want to stress the importance for all employees, from deputy directors in Sacramento to seasonal firefighters in remote locations, to understand that great customer satisfaction, improved communications, inclusiveness, and consensus building are the keys to a great organization.

I look forward to the year ahead and I know that, just as 2006 saw many historic firsts for firefighting, CAL FIRE will continue to lead the nation in resource management, fire and life safety, and firefighting innovations.



The Spring 2007 edition of the communiqué will have more on CAL FIRE. Updates are also posted on the intranet under "CAL FIRE Update."

Why 100 feet?

CAL FIRE kicks off prevention campaign to educate the public about Defensible Space

By Michael Jarvis, deputy director, Communications, Sacramento Headquarters

To kick off Wildfire Awareness Week 2006, CAL FIRE bestowed the title of All Star Firefighter to “Tonight Show” musician Kevin Eubanks on May 10 in Ventura County.

Eubanks, the bandleader and guitarist on “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno,” became a public advocate for firefighters and public safety after the September and October 2006 Topanga Fire scorched more than 25,000 acres in Ventura and Los Angeles counties. Despite its size and proximity to homes in the area of the fire, only three residences were destroyed in the Topanga fire due to the hard work of firefighters from throughout the state. Another major factor in the Topanga fire success story was Ventura County – which is rec-

ognized by CAL FIRE as a model for fire prevention -- thanks to its successful planning and fire hazard reduction programs.

Eubanks truly is an “all star” not only for donating his name and image to the cause but for taking the time for numerous interviews with Southern California media about his personal experience with the Topanga fire. Not only did he encourage Californians to get involved in fire safety and to practice defensible space but Eubanks also stayed after the event to pose for pictures with firefighters who attended the event from Ventura, Los Angeles and throughout the state. Later that night on “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno,” Eubanks wore his CAL FIRE Nomex as well as a Los Angeles Fire Department hat and briefly discussed Wildfire Awareness Week with Leno, who ribbed him about being a volunteer firefighter.

Last year Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a proclamation officially recognizing May 7-13 as “Wildfire Awareness Week” in California. “Wildfire Awareness Week is a valuable opportunity for California’s fire agencies and communities to reduce the risk of wildfire and increase public safety and environmental health,” the governor announced in his proclamation.

An Aggressive Campaign –

As the governor recognized Wildfire Awareness Week, CAL FIRE kicked off a public information campaign to remind residents of the 2005 state law that extends the “Defensible Space” distance to 100 feet. CAL FIRE initiated its “Why 100 feet?” campaign to inform the public about the importance of the change to Public Resources Code 4291.

As part of its campaign, CAL FIRE’s Communications office issued thousands of brochures to units statewide to focus on defensible space. This campaign has been powered by the strength and experience of firefighters, inspectors, fire prevention specialists and Volunteers In Prevention (VIP) as well as the local and state partners with CAL FIRE.

This year CAL FIRE rolled out a variety of physiological techniques and devices to grab the public’s attention:

Billboards –

Southern California advertising company, Lamar Advertising has



Above, the Tonight Show’s Kevin Eubanks poses with CAL FIRE firefighters.

Right, motorist on I-10 pass a CAL FIRE billboard in Riverside.



donated billboard space throughout Southern California to CAL FIRE. The billboards are simple. They read “Why 100 feet?” in bold white letters with a black background. The only other images on the billboard are the CAL FIRE logo and the CAL FIRE website. The idea is to catch people’s attention and have them want to go to the website for more information.

3-D Fridge Magnets – Lenticular magnets present three-dimensional images that change when moved or observed from different vantage points. It is a technique similar to the prize cards that were often inside a box of Cracker Jacks. CAL FIRE developed a lenticular that shows a home that is properly landscaped with defensible space, then shows the same home overrun with vegetation, and finally, the same home fully engulfed in flames.

Scratch ‘n’ Sniff cards – CAL FIRE licensed a patented technique that makes a postcard-sized handout that smells like a burned home. The scent is a disturbing reminder for those who have suffered from fires but serves as an ominous warning to those who don’t practice fire safety. The cards have been well received by all (not counting a bomb-sniffing dog named Ruby at the Sacramento Airport).

Web site movies – The department placed short movies on its site to bring emotional and compelling visuals and sounds to the public. The short films use animation to bring to life the same information located on the defensible space handouts. The site also utilizes a list of more than 100 personal artifacts and valuables that will be irreplaceable in the event of a fire. Hopefully

the list will make homeowners consider the implications of a fire.

Fire prevention is crucial – When property owners remove unnecessary vegetation it saves lives, property and the environment. Residents must complying with the new rule that requires property owners to cut vegetation within 100 feet of their homes and structures. Before the new law went into effect in January 2005, the defensible space requirement around structures and homes was set at 30 feet. Now it’s 100 feet, which means residents living in the State Responsibility Areas must take steps to reduce the risk of a fire spreading.

The 30 feet nearest to the structure is the Lean, Clean, and Green Zone. This area requires the greatest reduction in flammable vegetation. The amount of cleanup needed in the Fuel Reduction Zone in the remaining 70 feet (or to the property line) will depend on the grade of the property and the vegetation. In this zone, spacing between plants and the removal of “ladder” fuels and lower limbs beneath large trees is critical.

CAL FIRE encourages property and homeowners to remove dry, dying or dead vegetation early instead of later in the year when the grass and brush dries



A display of some of the new CAL FIRE Defensible Space publications.

out and becomes a major fire hazard. Most units are emphasizing that lawn mowing should NOT occur after 10 a.m. when conditions pose an extreme fire risk. Additionally, it is very important that homeowners make sure to remove any build-up of leaves, needles, or debris from gutters and roofs. The law also requires that tree limbs are trimmed at least 10 feet from any chimney and dead limbs that hang over homes or garages be removed.

Proper clearance and other fire resistant measures dramatically increase a home’s chance of surviving a wildfire. Firefighters also must have room to work to suppress a structure or wildfire from spreading without posing unreasonable threats to the thier lives. Share the message of fire safety to save lives.

*For more on the
Why 100 feet? campaign
or Defensible Space
www.fire.ca.gov*

SuperTanker

CAL FIRE uses DC-10 airtanker in historic firefighting flight

By Mallory Fites, communications assistant, Communications, Sacramento Headquarters

CAL FIRE firefighters have a new tool to battle California wildfires: a modified DC-10 known as Tanker 910. The 31-year-old former passenger jet has traded in its 285 American Airline passengers to fight fires as the first modern Supertanker used in the nation. It is able to dump 12,000 gallons of fire retardant in eight seconds. “It would take 10 drops from a S-2T to duplicate that,” said CAL FIRE Chief of Flight Operations Bill Payne. The stream of retardant creates a consistent 100-foot wide buffer between the threatening wildfire and the communities at risk, allowing ground crews to actively build containment lines. Currently Tanker 910 is on a “call when needed” basis by CAL FIRE at a cost of \$26,500 per hour with a minimum use of three hours.

Tanker 910’s modifications for aerial firefighting include, three external tanks holding 50 tons of water or retardant, a computerized gravity-feed water dump system that’s controlled from the cockpit, and large-scale drop maneuverability. It operates out of Victorville, California and since October 28 has made

9 drops in Washington and 14 drops in California. Most notably on the Day Fire, the fifth largest fire in modern California his-

tory at 162,702 acres. Some other wildland fires that Tanker 910 has been assigned to fight include the Sawtooth Complex in San Bernardino County, the Rico Fire in Monterey County and the Horse Fire in San Diego County and according to Chief Payne, “it was extremely effective; it did exactly what we wanted it to do.”

Tanker 910 was modified and tested over a four-year development program by 10 Tanker Air Carrier LLC using extensive private investment capital. In July, CAL FIRE Aviation Management certified the aircraft after repeated tests in desert drops and runs at higher elevation. The aircraft has yet to be approved for use on federal land, but is currently being evaluated by the U.S. Forest Service.

As for the future, according to research showing increased wildfires in the Wildland Urban Interface, “There will always be a role for smaller tankers but supertankers will have a presence”, stated Chief Payne. An important thing to remember, “Airplanes don’t put out fires, people on the ground put out fires.”



Photos provided courtesy of 10 Tanker Air Carrier Inc.

Programs make for faster response

Three new computer systems rolled out: CAD, CAIRS and ROSS

By Mary Beth Kihlthau, student assistant, Fire Protection, Sacramento Headquarters

CAL FIRE is leading the way into the twenty-first century with its new Command and Control automation programs. These programs are creating the foundation for CAL FIRE to build on for the next twenty years. CAL FIRE has officially launched three new programs: Alturas Computer Aided Dispatch system (CAD), the California All Incident Reporting System (CAIRS) and the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS).

The Altaris CAD replaces Cal CAD which served CAL FIRE very well for many years. Altaris CAD is a Geographical Information System (GIS) based system which uses many inputs to determine the closest unit to send to an incident. This means that help gets there faster with less human interface. Some of the inputs it uses are: location, travel routes, special conditions, equipment type needed based on call type and more. The Altaris CAD program is one of the most complex CAD systems to have been installed in the world. The system is comprised of 22 independent sites, covering thousands of square miles with every kind of hazard type possible and they must be able to communicate with each other and ultimately feed into one universal database. Recently CAD to CAD was implemented, allowing CAL FIRE to put into practice a "no borders basic response plan," according to Deputy Chief Kevin Olson, program manager of Altaris CAD

and CAIRS. This is the first time in the United States that CAD to CAD has functioned successfully. The Altaris CAD is a very robust system, now that the basic system is working well, CAL FIRE can begin to use some of the enhancements such as mobile computing.

CAIRS is a data collection program that is able to collect information on all incidents. CAIRS is built on the National Fire Information Standard developed by The National Fire Information Council. By reporting in this format, CAL FIRE is able to meet all the current federal grant reporting requirements. California All Incident Reporting System is the replacement for EARS, Emergency Activity Reporting System. EARS is a DOS-based data reporting program that has been serving CAL FIRE since 1989 and will be shut down on January 31, 2007. One of the big

advantages of CAIRS is that it interfaces with the Altaris CAD program and pre-populates many of the fields, increasing accuracy and decreasing input time.

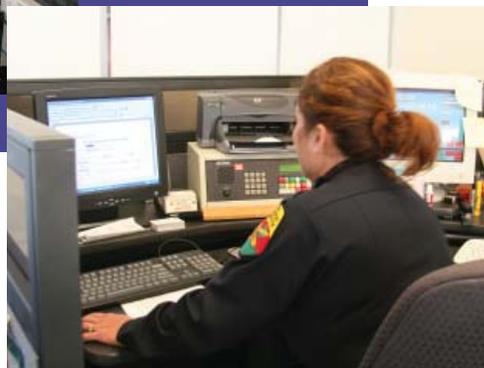
ROSS is a federally developed resources tracking system. All major fire events in the United States are tracked in ROSS; it also can be used for all risk events. In April of this year CAD and ROSS will begin to interface with each other to provide faster information sharing between the two programs. Forty percent of all requests placed in ROSS nationwide come from California.

The CAL FIRE Command and Control Automation programs provide the ability to get resources to incidents faster, to allocate resources for maximum efficiency, guide resources to incidents, and gather statistical data only limited by the imagination. CAL FIRE is paving the way in automation for agencies all over the country. For more information on all of these programs please see the CAL FIRE intranet site under IT Projects and Applications.



Above, Captain Mike Weber dispatches a new incident in Butte County.

Right, in the Sacramento Command Center Captain Lupe Ramirez fills requests in ROSS.



CAL FIRE Angels

Remembering the crew of Air Attack 410

By Becki Redwine, fire prevention specialist II, Tulare Unit

On the morning of September 6, 2006 CAL FIRE's Air Attack 410 surveyed the area near Mountain Home State Forest where a fire occurred earlier that morning. This was the fourth fire to occur in this drainage and there were concerns that there may be other fires still burning. The flight seemed like any other. The OV-10A Bronco spotter plane out of Porterville Air Attack Base was piloted by DynCorp pilot "Sandy" Willett. Battalion Chief Rob Stone was in the observer's seat to survey the area for the safety of the ground troops and determine the best tactics for suppression. After a quick air-to-ground conversation with those on the fire, AA 410 continued up the drainage into the blue sky and clouds.

A San Joaquin Valley local, 52-year-old Sandy Willett flew planes all his life in one capacity or another – crop dusting, drug eradication, and eventually fighting fires for the last four years. He also enjoyed motorcycles, vintage Firebirds and TransAms. Obviously, he enjoyed the wind in his hair and he understood the risks involved with his job. Sandy's passenger that day was Rob Stone who moved to Three Rivers in Tulare County when he was just a youngster. Stone wanted to be a firefighter ever since he could remember. And he made a fine one, real early.

After serving as a Paid Call Firefighter with Tulare County Fire at the age of 18 and then as a seasonal firefighter with CAL FIRE for 3 years, he became one of the youngest firefighters to reach the Engineer level in CAL FIRE. He served his entire 18 year career in the Tulare Unit. But Rob had an identity problem – he loved cow-

Online condolences and memories are still posted at www.virtual-condolences.com

boyin' as much as he loved firefighting. He couldn't decide what he wanted to do most! So he did them both – with gusto. Roping and branding calves was his



Fire apparatus place decals on equipment to show respect.

other job. Just being outside in nature was his passion. A crowning day in his career was July 1, 2006 when, at age 36, he made Battalion Chief at the Porterville Air Attack Base. He'd been gone most of the summer on numerous fires and mentioned how he loved this fast-paced duty and how excited he was about doing some great things for his wife and two kids with his overtime. One of his many respected traits was that he demanded the same performance of everyone he worked with as he did of himself.

Obviously, there was a greater purpose for these two men, as their plane crashed that day and left hundreds of family members, friends and



Above, firefighters from across the state salute the procession for Chief Rob Stone.



Right, hundreds gather to pay their respects for the two fallen firefighters.

Photos by Wes Schultz.

colleagues mourning their loss. Understanding that "Greater Purpose" is the tough part for those left behind. Memorial services were difficult for many to attend, but so beautiful, touching and appropriate. Nearly 2,000 people crowded into a Visalia church at Rob's service where 70 fire trucks lined the streets. A memorial service for Sandy Willet was held the following

day in Hanford, CA. Trust funds were established for both men's families. Online condolences and memories are still posted at: www.virtual-condolences.com. The Tulare Unit did everything possible to honor these men as they deserved.

A Serious Accident Investigation Team and the National Transportation Safety Board are conducting an extensive inves-

tigation into the exact cause of the accident. CAL FIRE investigators have arrested the person who allegedly is responsible for the four fires that occurred in the Bear Creek Drainage. He is currently in custody awaiting trial on charges of homicide and arson.

Chief Stone and Pilot Willett will forever be missed but not forgotten.

CAL FIRE mourns fellow firefighters

On October 26, 2006, five firefighters of the United States Forest Service lost their lives during the Esperanza Fire in Southern California. On November 5, 2006, CAL FIRE joined thousands of firefighters from across the nation in Devore, California to remember the ultimate sacrifices of Mark Loutzenhiser, Jason McKay, Jess McLean, Daniel Hoover Najera and Pablo Cerda in service to their nation. Video of the event is posted at <http://www.engine57memorial.org>.

Photos by Wes Schultz.



Unmanned aircraft is latest firefighting tool

NASA teams up with CAL FIRE, USFS

By Daniel Berlant, communications specialist, Communications, Sacramento Headquarters

In late October the devastating Esperanza Fire in Riverside County destroyed 34 homes, burned more than 40,000 acres and took the lives of five firefighters from the United State Forest Service (USFS).

Unnoticed by many who were fighting the fire on the ground was a significant piece of new fire technology, the Altair Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS).

Built and operated by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems of San Diego, the Altair Unmanned Aircraft System is a high-altitude aircraft that is controlled on the ground and generally used for scientific and commercial research missions.

The Altair is the same type of aircraft as the more-famous Predator B, an unmanned aircraft used by the United States Air Force for surveillance and reconnaissance.

Operating at an altitude of 43,000 feet, the aircraft soared over the Esperanza fire during a 16-hour period delivering real-time thermal infrared data to incident commanders via a satellite communications link.

Featuring an 86-foot wingspan and 3,000-pound fuel capacity, Altair can fly above 52,000 feet and remain airborne for more than 30 hours. The aircraft is configured with a fault-tolerant dual-architecture flight control system, triple-redundant avionics and a Honeywell turboprop engine for high reliability.

According to NASA, an Airborne Science & Technology Lab sen-

sor on the Altair provided useful imagery on the Esperanza Fire. The rapid-response fire mapping mission was conducted using the Autonomous Modular Sensor (AMS) on the Altair on October 28-29, 2006.



Airborne Science & Technology Lab staff mobilized October 27

to upload the sensor system and the aircraft was flown the following day. Numerous infrared images were collected, processed aboard the aircraft, and broadcast in near real-time via satellite for dissemination to the fire community.

Just as the military aircraft is able to fly undetected at high altitudes, the Altair was able to fly above and out of the path of air-tankers and helicopters battling the fire below. Another advantage is that the Altair can fly at night while other firefighting aircraft are grounded.

Some 100 visible and infrared images were generated along

with more than 20 data files that included the fire's perimeter. The Incident Command Team on the Esperanza Fire used the thermal imagery and derived products to study the fire overnight. Most importantly, they used the tech-

nology to help prepare maps to assist in the planning efforts for the Incident

A high-tech infrared imaging sensor in its underbelly pod, the Altair unmanned aircraft flew repeated passes over the Esperanza fire to aid firefighting efforts. Photo courtesy of General Atomics Aeronautical Systems.

Action Plan which was distributed the next day at the team's morning briefing.

"As a fire department and especially a wildland one, we're going to look at the technology that's out there," said CAL FIRE/Riverside County Fire Captain Julie Hutchinson. "The sooner we get information to the ground forces and fire managers, that makes a difference. That's a huge thing for us."

Being able to help firefighters on the ground better understand both the movement and location of the fire is an important result from this new tool.

The window of opportunity to

support fire mapping efforts for the Esperanza Fire came only days after the aircraft's manufacturers -- along with NASA and the USFS -- had completed the Western States Fire Mission.

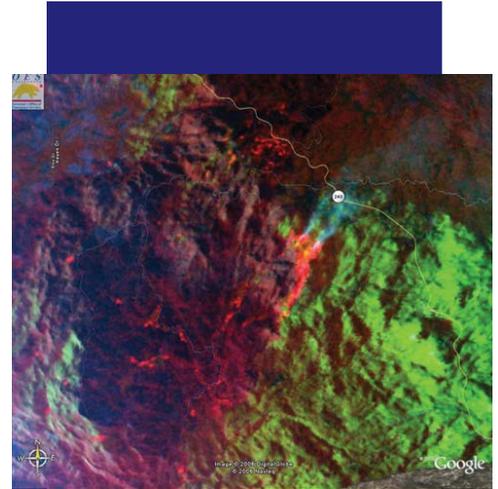
The mission was designed to evaluate the use of an Unmanned Aircraft System with advanced imaging systems and to help improve fire mapping capabilities as well as information on fire-related atmospheric changes. Carrying a payload of instruments for imaging wildfire conditions and measuring trace gases from biomass burning, the Altair UAS operated over the Mojave Desert and Yosemite National Park in California during the course of the Western States Fire Mission. This resulted in the setting of several new records for Altair, including an endurance of 23 hours and altitude of 48,000 feet with scientific instruments on board.

Altair, a high-altitude version

of Predator B, was designed specifically for scientific and commercial research missions that require high-altitude endurance, reliability and increased payload capacity.

It was built in partnership with NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center for its Environmental Research Aircraft and Sensor Technology (ERAST) program. The aircraft has logged nearly 500 flight hours since it began service in 2003 and is currently operational with NASA, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the USFS.

The flight project was sponsored and funded by NASA's Science Mission Directorate. The team consisted of specialists from NASA's Ames Research Center, NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center, the National Interagency Fire Center, USFS Remote Sensing Laboratory, California Governor's Office of Emergency



Images taken by the Altair over the Esperanza Fire. NASA Ames Earth Science image.

Services, and General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

With the everyday advancement of technology, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is continually exploring opportunities to partner with federal agencies to develop cutting edge firefighting technology.

CAL FIRE Lifeguards?



Photos courtesy of CAL FIRE / Pismo Beach Fire

Did you know CAL FIRE / Pismo Beach Fire Department in San Luis Obispo County hires approximately 25 seasonal lifeguards and operates a junior lifeguard program. Another example of CAL FIRE providing a variety of services to protect California.



Protecting history from the devastation of fire

CAL FIRE archaeologists critical in saving artifacts and cultural history during wildfires

*By Linda Pollack, lead archeologist, Southern Region
Dale Hutchinson, deputy chief, Riverside Unit*

On March 30, 2006, the Society for California Archaeology gave CAL FIRE the M.R. Harrington Award for Conservation Archaeology. This award was presented to the department in recognition of its successful efforts to protect archaeological sites during wildfires. It was specifically given to CAL FIRE as a team award recognizing outstanding work by our staff archaeologists, incident commanders, and the entire work force of firefighters that have found a way to incorporate site protection efforts on private lands without hindering or delaying emergency response operations. Director Grijalva accepted the award on behalf of

the Department.

CAL FIRE archaeologists have been assigned to wildland fires for many years yet there are still people within the department who don't even know that CAL FIRE has archaeologists. This small but mighty award-winning team consists of six archaeologists who are assigned to fires of all different sizes. These fires are typically on or adjacent to tribal lands, where archaeological sites may be impacted. They also may be requested when a unit wishes to have an archaeologist's expertise in dealing with cultural resource issues.

CAL FIRE archaeologists identify and protect fragile, non-renewable archaeological, historical, and cultural resources whenever feasible. When archaeologists were initially assigned to fires, the concern was that the archaeologist would hinder the emergency response

operations by not allowing tactics necessary to fight the fire or by placing themselves in danger by not understanding fire behavior. This apprehension was unwarranted. Rob Lewin, who has worked with CAL FIRE archaeologists on many fires as both planning section chief and operations section chief, said "always the results were effective and positive."

As trained firefighters, they're able to quickly disburse to the ground while the fire is still burning. On the Sierra Incident in 2006, three different agency archaeologists were in the jurisdiction of the burning land, but only the CAL FIRE archaeologist was able to field inspect sites during the fire because both archaeologists from the other agencies weren't able to provide first hand information. This site was extremely important because two Native American sacred sites were mapped as having been impacted by bulldozers. The local tribes wanted to meet with fire officials to learn what happened and what could be done to repair the damage. The CAL FIRE archaeologist was able to make the determination that neither site was impacted. Meetings were held at each of the local tribal offices and their worries were quickly put to rest. This ability to respond quickly lessens the time needed during fire suppression repair, as much of the repair work near archaeological sites can be assessed and completed during the



Above, one of the many bedrock mortar outcrops at a village site that was protected during the Sierra Fire.

Right, mortar and pestle found in a newly discovered site in an area of the Sierra Fire that burned.



initial repair work.

Since most of CAL FIRE's work is on privately owned land, the CAL FIRE archaeologist may have little or no information on where known sites are located. Written records and maps for sites in the area may be available, although sometimes they're over 50 years old and not accurately described or mapped, therefore the archaeologist must use professional judgment to determine where sites may be located and get out ahead of the bulldozers to locate the sites.

During the Sierra Incident, 22 site locations were known and relocated and four additional sites were discovered when the archaeologist was surveying dozer lines, hand lines, and areas of retardant drops. One surprise during this fire was relocating a site that was previously recorded as a small site when in reality it was a fairly large undisturbed village site with more than 100 bedrock mortars, a large midden soil area over an acre in size, and hundreds of artifacts. The danger posed to this site was that it was in a prime location to be used for staging; luckily it was avoided and no damage was done. According to Lewin, "It is nice to know that our department is effectively working to preserve our history."

For the most part, archaeological site locations are kept confidential, which means firefighters and dozer operators may inadvertently impact sites that they could have avoided if they had known about them. Having a CAL FIRE archaeologist at the fires enables CAL FIRE to get site information disseminated to those in planning and out

on the lines in order to protect sites. CAL FIRE archaeologist can also teach people about the value of these resources, which includes seeing them first-hand, so people will be more interested in protecting them. According to Phil Veneris, "[the] skills as an Incident Archaeologist have proven valuable to me as an operations section chief on Incidents. [The archaeologist] always has a detailed plan to present to the Incident Action Plan and gives a good talk during the Operational Briefing." During the Topanga Fire in 2005, mysterious rock-art paintings graced the cover of one of the IAPs. This brought about a great deal of interest in local Native American culture and how our firefighting staff can protect sites during their suppression efforts.

Off the fires, CAL FIRE archaeologists spend many days each year teaching staff at the CAL FIRE Academy and throughout the state about our responsibility to protect sites. When discussing the protection of cultural resources during fires, an Incident Commander said, "When you overhear heavy fire equipment operators and crew captains talking passionately about archaeological sites, you know the message is getting delivered!"

Learn more about CAL FIRE archaeologists

visit the CAL FIRE website at www.fire.ca.gov, click on Resource Management, then Archaeology, then Reports.



A portion of one of eight rock art features at the Burro Flat site that was protected during the Topanga Fire.



Director Grijalva accepting the M.R. Harrington award from Society for California Archaeology president Shelly Davis-King.

Historic remains of unrecorded buildings located at a division break on the Sierra Fire.



CAL FIRE EEO needs

CAL FIRE's Equal Employment Opportunity Program is recruiting EEO Counselors

By Michele Villados, staff services analyst, Sacramento Headquarters

CAL FIRE is currently recruiting for EEO Counselors. Counselors act as coordinators for the services provided by the EEO staff. Do you think you have the right stuff?

EEO Counselors are an important part of the Department's process for resolving EEO issues. As the first point of contact for employees with concerns, an EEO Counselor is called upon to be friendly and approachable while remaining impartial. This is a critical component of the role, as it isn't a counselor's job to take sides or offer advice, but to listen carefully and to accurately document the complaining party's concerns. Often, this includes asking carefully thought out questions to obtain relevant information. This can be challenging, as the complaining party may be experiencing anxiety, frustration, anger or other emotions as a result of his/her concerns. It is the counselor's job to see past those emotions to clarify the employee's concerns.

EEO Counselors must be trustworthy. It is essential that concerned employees have confidence in their counselor's discretion. If you're the sort of person who can keep a secret—the kind of person others seek out to confide in—you might be right for this responsibility. If you're receptive to the needs of others, and recognize that those needs vary from indi-

vidual to individual depending on cultural, religious, medical or personal backgrounds, then you might be an ideal candidate.

Would you like to make a positive difference in your workplace? EEO Counselors have the opportunity to share information about the State Employee

both processes at the same time. EEO Counselors can help CAL FIRE to ensure that the workplace is respectful and supportive for all employees. Encouraging use of the mediation program is a critical aspect of achieving that mission. EEO Counselors are ideally situated to share information about mediation and to encourage all employees to use the process early on, to help resolve issues such as workplace disputes and communication problems.

The EEO staff is committed to making certain all CAL FIRE employees are treated fairly in their workplaces and to addressing concerns about EEO issues whenever and wherever they occur. If you're interested in being part of that process, and you believe you have the qualities to be an effective EEO Counselor, EEO would like to hear from you. Check out the EEO Counselor Recruitment Notice and Statement of Interest links on the Intranet homepage, just under the Director's box, or use the links provided below. The deadline

to submit a Statement of Interest is January 31, 2007.

Mediation can...

- *Improve your relationships in the workplace*
- *Allow you to maintain control over the outcome*
- *Prevent escalation of the problem*
- *Preserve your rights to pursue further action if no resolution*
- *Assure that your statements made during mediation remain confidential*
- *Resolve conflict—over 90% of cases mediated have resulted in written agreements*

Mediation Program with those who find themselves involved in a workplace dispute. Mediation is always an option for employees who want to move beyond a difficult situation to find a more constructive and positive way to interact with a co-worker. Since the use of mediation doesn't preclude filing an EEO complaint, CAL FIRE personnel can use

Learn more

For more information visit the CAL FIRE intranet

Statement of Interest for EEO Counselor

Communications Corner

CAL FIRE Public Education / Communications working for you

By Alisha Herring, staff services analyst, Communications, Sacramento Headquarters

The CAL FIRE Communications Office has gone through some significant changes over the past year.

After more than 20 years of service to the department, Lisa Boyd moved on to new opportunities in October. Boyd's contributions include developing the department's Web site, producing the Communiqué and other publications, and establishing many of the outreach programs currently used.

June Iljana stepped into Lisa's role as print and electronic information manager this month. Iljana comes from the Department of Boating and Waterways where she handled public information working with media, Web sites, safety campaigns, publications and legislation.

Alisha Herring returned to the Communications Office almost a year ago after serving for several years in fire protection and the executive office. She is the primary contact for Web posting and handles many other operational functions including coordinating contracts and working with vendors and department staff to initiate improvements.

Daniel Berlant is the communications specialist and information officer. He handles media inquiries for headquarters, updates the incident Web site, coordinates Camp Smokey at the State Fair, produces the Communiqué, responds to publication requests and works with the fire prevention specialists in the field.

Although the duties are broken

out as above, the Communications Office really works together as a team on all projects. Deputy Director Michael Jarvis has a dynamic group of people who are enthusiastic about providing the highest level of support to the field.

WWW.FIRE.CA.GOV

The Internet has provided CAL FIRE with an outstanding opportunity to share our mission with the world. Over the years, the CAL FIRE Web site has expanded to electronically distribute current information about our department to the public and to staff in the field.

Over the past 10 years, the CAL FIRE Web site has grown and attracted thousands of people each day. On average, the site receives more than five million visitors each month from around the world. In spring of 2006, we completed the rollout of the new CAL FIRE Incident Web site. The new section posted current fire information all major incidents. In August alone the CAL FIRE site had 15 million hits.

CAL FIRE currently hosts more than one thousand pages that provide extensive information about the Department's emergency response and resource management mission, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, fire prevention and fire life safety

education, CAL FIRE careers, and emergency incidents. At the click of a button, detailed information is revealed on topics, such as firefighter I requirements, the aviation program, high fire hazard severity zones, model 34 specifications, regulations, hired equipment policy, state fire training, urban forestry, prevention and planning, cooperative fire protection, forest practice, education, major incident information and much more.

This month, the California eServices Office rolled out its newest Web site design. The CAL FIRE Web site will be converting to the new design over the next year. Some notable changes include a new look-and-feel, the reorganization of the navigation and structure of the home page, the Google search engine, and a statewide brand.

The process of adapting the CAL FIRE Web site to the new template is just beginning. In the meantime, visit www.ca.gov for a preview.



A look at the new California Web site

CAL FIRE leads nation in fire preventable construction

New building codes make structures safer before the fire ignites

By *Ernylee Chamlee, staff chief, Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering, Sacramento Headquarters*

Year after year, Californians have watched raging wildfires threaten and destroy communities. The history of these fires dates back to the early 1900s when people began to settle in the areas of California where wildfires have always been a way of nature. Homes have burned, lives were lost, businesses were ruined, communities became devastated and millions of dollars were spent on trying to suppress these fires. CAL FIRE said, ***“There must be a better way!”***

CAL FIRE has successfully taken a historical step forward in the prevention of property damage due to fires in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Under the leadership of our State Fire Marshal personnel, the State of California initiated special California Building Standards for all new construction in the WUI. These requirements will protect structures from ignitability caused by flying embers entering the structure through roof openings, windows or being lodged in other flammable surfaces. These building standards, found in Chapter 7A of the California Building Code, go into effect January 2008.

Research in the Wildland-

Urban Interface (WUI) home losses provided new information on why homes burn and how we can best protect them BEFORE the fires occur. We know that defensible space (which keeps the direct flames and heat away from

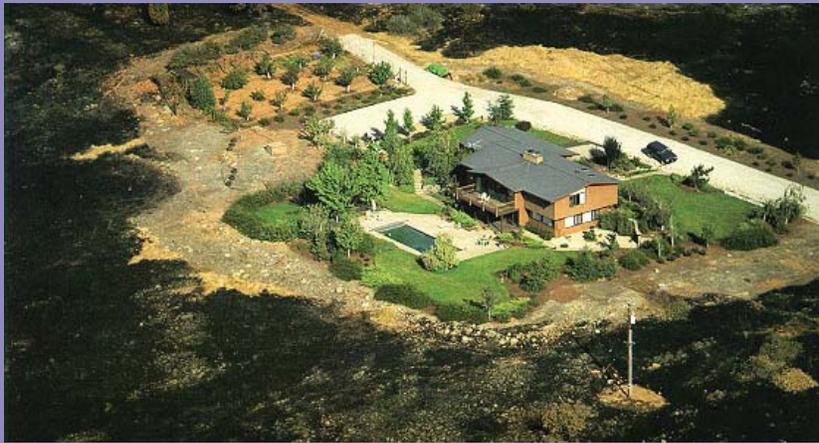
caused by flying embers entering the structure through roof openings, windows or being lodged in other flammable surfaces such as deck and roof framing. These building standards, found in Chapter 7A of the California

Building Code, go into effect January 2008. California will be the first state in the nation to require ignition resistive construction of all new structures built in the WUI areas designated as “Very High Fire Severity Zones.”

The Fire and Resource

Assessment Program (FRAP), under the direction of Staff Chief Wayne Mitchell, is updating the new Statewide Fire Hazard Zone Maps. The maps are being sent to each CAL FIRE Unit for review and acceptance of the zone designations. Once approved by the CAL FIRE Units, the maps will be shared with all local jurisdictions that have areas labeled “Very High.” The local government can vote to accept or reject the designation for the area(s).

Until recently, little, if any, comprehensive guidance as to how to best construct homes and projects in WUI areas existed. The new Chapter 7A of the California Building Code is the



the sides of the building by eliminating flammable vegetation in the home ignition zone) helps protect homes during wildfires. Senate Bill 1369 increased the minimum clearance (defensible space) requirements for all buildings in the State Responsibility Areas (SRA) from 30 feet to 100 feet.

In addition to the implementation of the new 100 foot requirement, the State Fire Marshal personnel have successfully initiated special California Building Standards for all new building construction in all “Very High Fire Severity Zones” in the State. These requirements will protect structures from ignitability

first to address any fire-related construction requirements. They go into effect January 2008 and include: ignition resistive siding and decking, double-paned windows, eaves and wall vents that reduce ember penetration, and enclosed overhanging decks.

CAL FIRE, under the direction of Steven Quarles (a CAL FIRE contract employee from California University of Berkeley) is prepar-

ing training curriculum for all state building officials, industry personnel and community development staff. The training will be available for CAL FIRE personnel also.

Many changes have taken place in the staff organization of Fire Prevention. Dave Hillman is now Chief of Fire Prevention and Law Enforcement and reports to the State Fire Marshal under the new

reorganization. Tom Hoffman, Chief of Law Enforcement along with his staff, Ernylee Chamlee, Chief of Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering, Chief Vickie Sakamoto and her SFM Fire Engineering Staff all work under the direction of Chief Hillman. You will be seeing much more fire prevention information in the coming months.

CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire celebrates its 75th anniversary



Above, equipment from throughout the years was on display at the event.

Right, Unit Chief Henri Brachais displays an Assembly Resolution commemorating CAL FIRE / Butte County.



On November 9, 2006 CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire celebrated its 75th anniversary with a large luncheon filled with history, stories of the past, and visions for the future. More than 300 people attended the event in Oroville. The inside of the community center had tables filled with firefighting tools from throughout the years. Outside, visitors were welcomed with a look at fire equipment from a historic Model A to a brand new engine.

Photos by Wes Schultz.



Above, firefighting tools were displayed by decade allowing visitors to see the advancements in technology.

Left, Deputy Chief George Morris emceed the event.



ALS provides more options in saving lives

EMS services expanded in Riverside put more paramedics in fire stations

By Greg Adams, fire captain / paramedic, Riverside Unit

Most fire departments throughout California provide some form of pre-hospital Emergency Medical Service (EMS). The form of EMS service depends on community desires, available funding and



Photo by Wes Schultz.

pre-hospital EMS needs. Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and First Responder EMS provide Basic Life Support (BLS), which is the foundation of any EMS system and is based on ensuring victim airway support, breathing and heart/blood circulation.

Advanced Life Support (ALS) or paramedic service is a significant step up from BLS. Paramedics are authorized to perform invasive techniques on patients including drug therapy, airway

management (intubations) and electro cardio therapy. The CAL FIRE / Riverside County Fire Department provides a two-tiered EMS system. The core or fundamental level is BLS with the enhanced level being ALS.

EMS within the Riverside County Fire Department started in the 1960's with volunteer firefighters using volunteer-owned rescue squads. They provided oxygen and operated at a simple Red Cross Basic First Aid training level. A major change occurred during the early 1970's when the TV show, "Emergency" debuted and depicted pre-hospital care with paramedics. With that debut, every home in America soon learned about ALS and its values. Many communities began to implement ALS. Beginning in 1980 at Indian Wells, CAL FIRE / Riverside County Fire Department initiated paramedic service. Soon, paramedic ambulances were also operational in the cities of Palm Desert and Rancho Mirage. When Indio joined the CAL FIRE/ Riverside County Fire Department in 1996, ALS was a part of that change. The City of Temecula added medic squads during 1999. Little change occurred until 2002, when three paramedic engines began responding in the remote communities of Desert Center, El Cariso and Lake Riverside. Elected officials saw the value and the little additional cost of increasing EMS.

Today, 56 of the existing 95

fire stations in Riverside County provide ALS. Currently, ALS is delivered in four modes of service. They are (1) seven medic ambulances that are staffed with two paramedics which transport patients, (2) two medic squads that are staffed with one paramedics and do not transport, (3) medic fire engines that are staffed with two medics and do not transport and (4) 54 medic assessment fire engines that are staffed with one medic and do not transport.

During mid-2004, a committee was formed to review the entire fire department pre-hospital medical program. The committee was tasked with developing a fire department EMS strategic plan and developing EMS operational policies and procedures. Throughout the months following, the committee determined several items which needed to be addressed to meet the rapid



Photo by Wes Schultz.

growth of the program. Some of the major items included:

- Add additional staffing to the EMS Bureau to include a battalion chief and supporting staff.
- Add fire captain/paramedics who will work as EMS area captains.
- Add one EMS specialist.
- Fund county employees who will work on automation projects (data collection, reports, automated class registration, etc).
- Establish the data collection system, including software and field mobile hardware.
- Establish promotional system for paramedic classes (FAE/medic and FC/medic).
- Establish new unit implementation criteria for catch up conversion priorities.
- Establish standards (procedural, staffing and equipment) for all unit types.
- Establish medical operating guidelines.

Through the support of fire department management and the Board of Supervisors, the once struggling EMS section, previously a branch of Health and Safety headed up by one fire captain overseeing all aspects of EMS for more than 1200 employees has grown into its own bureau and will continue to grow to meet the needs of future expansion.

Most issues identified in the strategic plan have either been completed or are in progress and nearing completion. Additional engine companies were upgraded in July 2006 along with the addition of three EMS

area captains, one training specialist, one management analyst and one clerical staff member.

All new stations will include paramedics as the standard staffing with additions to the EMS Bureau staff as outlined in the counties EMS strategic plan. At the end of this expansion in 07/08 every Schedule "A" County engine in CAL FIRE/Riverside County Fire Department will provide ALS service to the public we serve. The EMS expansion program in Riverside is just another example of CAL FIRE providing the highest service available to the citizens of California.



Welcome to CAL FIRE!



Above and right, firefighters from CAL FIRE's newest contract districts receive their new badges as CAL FIRE employees.

In 2006 CAL FIRE welcomed two new departments: Placer Consolidated Fire Protection District in Auburn and San Diego Rural Fire Protection District in Jamul.



Above, Director Ruben Grijalva discusses the great benefits of cooperating contracts between local and state agencies.

Facility Highlight

Vina Helitack Base - Tehama-Glenn Unit (TGU)

Located 12 miles North of Chico in a large native grassland known as the Vina Plains, Vina Helitack provides a valued asset to the Tehama-Glenn Unit as well as many northern CAL FIRE units.

In 1955, a fire station was established in Vina and staffed with a CAL FIRE Schedule B engine. Not long after that an additional engine was added to Vina by Tehama County Fire. In 1974, CAL FIRE established a helitack base at Vina, replacing the Schedule B engine with a helicopter and crew. For the first eight years (1974-1982), the helicopter, pilot, and maintenance were provided by a private vendor via contract with CAL FIRE while the fire crews staffed the copter. The Schedule A county fire engine remained at Vina until 1980.

In 1982, when CAL FIRE began its own Helicopter Program, the contract copter was replaced with a UH-1F model copter that was acquired by CDF on loan from the federal government. CAL FIRE hired their own civil service helicopter pilots and contracted for maintenance of the copters. In 1989 the UH-1F model was replaced with a UH-1H model from the federal excess property program. With ongoing modifications, the UH-1H is the model that CAL FIRE operates today.

Vina Helitack serves an initial attack area of around 2.5 million acres. The area is a diverse blend of grassland, oak woodland, brush, and timber covering Tehama and Glenn counties, most of Butte County, and part of Shasta County. In addition Vina responds initially into portions of Lassen, Plumas, Trinity and Mendocino National Forests.

On average Vina responds to

26,200 acres and destroyed 954 structures in 1999, the Storrie Fire which burned 55,261 acres in 2000, the Poe Fire which burned 8,333 acres and destroyed 133 structures in 2001 and the Mussolini Fire which burned 3,260 acres in 2002.

Vina's crew is comprised of four fire captains, two fire apparatus engineers and nine firefighters. Normal daily staffing includes one pilot, two fire captains and six firefighters on the aircraft with one fire apparatus engineer operating the helitender. A typical day for the crew involves a rigorous physical fitness training program in the morning, with station projects and



CAL FIRE file photos

170 incidents a year, including fires and rescues. Some of the helitack bases more notable incidents include the 49er Fire which burned 33,400 acres and destroyed 312 structures in 1988, the Campbell Fire which burned 125,892 acres and destroyed 27 structures in 1990, the Jones Fire which burned



fire training filling the rest of the day. The crew is well trained in helicopter operations and safety, short haul rescue and firefighting techniques, including tactics, procedures and strategy.

Vina Helitack operates with a UH-1H Superhuey. This helicopter has been significantly upgraded from the original UH-1F models acquired in the late 1980s. It carries nine passengers, has a 324 gallon Bambi water bucket and has an internal gross weight capacity of 10,200 lbs. and an external capacity of 10,500 lbs.

Vina was initially constructed with a lookout tower built into the station; however, this lookout has not been staffed since the late 1960s. It is still maintained and augments existing lookout shots if needed.

Vina Helitack is very involved with the local community. The base provides tours for schools,



Photos by Wes Schultz

boy scout troops, and other groups and also participates in a local high school job shadowing program.

Vina has remained prepared throughout the fire season by

training, inspecting, cleaning, and maintaining their equipment, while they work with the firefighters to fill the needs at the Helitack base. Summer is always busy for Vina as they maintain their vital role in serving and protecting California.

Animal Respirators

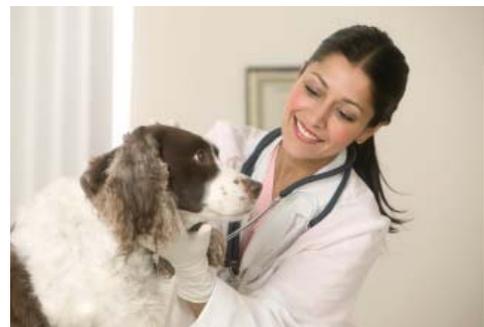
Each year, thousands of pets die in house fires due to smoke inhalation. For most people, the death of their pet is like losing a member of the family. On March 8, 2006, the Redding Kennel Club donated 15 oxygen masks to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). Five masks were donated to the Tehama-Glenn Unit and 10 were donated to the Shasta-Trinity Unit.

The mask set includes three different mask sizes: small, medium and large. The mask is similar to

those used by veterinarians for anesthesia. In the past, firefighters have tried to use human oxygen masks for injured animals, however, the shape of the animal's muzzle and the animal's fur often got in the way. The animal masks are cup shaped and have a rubber ring that creates a seal, allowing rescuers to pump pure oxygen into the animal's nose.

Although saving human lives will always take precedence, saving any life is

important. This extra tool will help firefighters save family pets and reduce the trauma fire victims endure.



Conversation...

Chief Del Walters

By Janet Upton, public information officer, Butte Unit



Del Walters was appointed as Assistant Northern Region Chief on September 1, 2006. The Communique's Janet Upton caught up with Chief Walters during his travels around the state:

Tell us about your career with CAL FIRE.

I started my career with as a Firefighter I in June of 1971 and was stationed at King City in the San Benito-Monterey Unit. I became a permanent fire apparatus engineer (FAE) there in 1977 immediately after receiving a degree in Forest Resource Management from Humboldt State University.

In 1981 I promoted to fire captain A in the Sonoma Unit and worked in several stations and the Emergency Command Center (ECC).

I promoted to a limited term (LT) battalion chief in 1985 and my primary objective was to essentially get rid of my job. The assignment was to transition the Sonoma County Schedule "A" program to the newly-formed Sonoma County Fire Service. The second part of that LT assignment was to attend POST.

After my temporary assignment was up, I did another summer in the Sonoma ECC before becoming the vegetation management program coordinator there for about a year and a half.

In 1988 I became the Russian River battalion chief. I had that assignment longer than any

other I've had. It was also one of the most enjoyable.

I remained there until I was promoted to the Sonoma administrative chief position in 1996. This was at the same time the merger of Sonoma and Lake-Napa Units was being considered, and I was asked to be the planning section chief for that effort. I actually worked as administrative chief in both units concurrently for a year before they merged on July 1, 1997.

A big move for me personally was when I relocated to Redding in 2000 to take the deputy chief position in the Shasta-Trinity Unit after living in Santa Rosa for 18 years.

I held planning and operations section chief positions during the early days of CAL FIRE Command Teams before becoming the incident commander of CDF ICT #3 in 1998. I had to give up that position in 2003 after I was appointed as staff chief of Operations for the Northern Region.

I've enjoyed every position I've held. I was appointed assistant region chief for the Northern Region recently, and I'm looking forward to this next adventure unfolding.

Which of your accomplishments are you most proud of?

Probably the opportunities I've had to represent CAL FIRE in assisting other agencies during major incidents. It's rewarding to gain the trust of people from

other agencies, both fire and non-fire, and see them take the service we provide and expand on what they've learned. One particular instance comes to mind; that's when a small group of us helped formulate the Lower Russian River Flood Response Plan with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office and several Fire Protection Districts. It's a plan still in use today in the areas along the river that are prone to severe flooding.

I was also assigned to the Disaster Assistance Branch of OES in 1995 to assist in developing a joint Disaster Field Office with FEMA. That event provided many opportunities to showcase our department's expertise in ICS and demonstrate our leadership abilities when called upon to help mitigate complex emergencies.

Assisting USDA and Food and Ag during the Exotic New Castle Disease was another such assignment. Had you told me earlier in my career that I'd be the incident commander on a Team responsible for chicken disease fighting, I might have thought you were joking. I learned a lot from that assignment and forged some lasting friendships around the country.

Seriously, I don't see our job as getting any less complicated in the future.

Speaking of the future, what do you see in the future for CAL FIRE?

We are much more than a fire department, even though we will soon be known as CAL FIRE. We should embrace that fact and take pride in it. I see us continuing to be relied upon to provide leadership in emergency response services and resource protection. I do think that being linked to resource management garners us a lot of political clout. Environmental issues are not going away anytime soon, and I believe that dealing with those issues has an appropriate place within our mission.

Regardless of our organizational structure, I firmly believe our mission will continue to evolve in the "all-hazard" world.

What do you feel is the biggest challenge facing CAL FIRE today?

For the short term, I see our biggest challenge being the rapid attrition of our people. We're seeing such a dramatic turnover. We need to really step up our training, especially in operations.

What would you like to accomplish during your time as Assistant Region Chief?

One of my goals is to further the "total force" concept in CAL FIRE. I would like our employees to be aware of the value of the other disciplines within the department. Utilizing everyone's talents is important in meeting our mission.

Tell us about your family.

My wife Janet and I live in Redding and will celebrate our 28th wedding anniversary in April. We have two grown children; our son David is 26 and our daughter Shannon is 24, both of whom live in Santa Rosa. They have both chosen work outside the traditional emergency services world. I am very proud of them choosing to make it on their own.

Any hobbies?

I love to travel and have been doing a lot more of it the last few years.

I enjoy the outdoors, especially hunting pheasant and working with my dog, Otter. He's a Lab/German Short Hair/mutt mix and a natural in the field.

I've also recently taken up the game of golf, though I'm not sure why. I actually enjoy playing, but haven't found the time to get proficient.

Any concluding comments?

I'm optimistic about the direction CAL FIRE is headed. I am really pleased by what I'm seeing in Sacramento. I appreciate the Director's collaborative approach to problem solving, dedication to communication and "from the bottom up" management style. I think it's a really good fit for us. I see the interaction between CAL FIRE and the Legislature and the Governor's Office at an all time high right now.

Have an idea for a Communiqué story?

You can submit story and photo ideas to the Public Education / Communications Office for the Spring issue. The deadline for submitting is March 1.

Contact Daniel Berlant at Daniel.Berlant@fire.ca.gov or (916) 651-FIRE (3473)

Transitions... *A look at CAL FIRE's newest unit chiefs*

Santa Clara Unit (SCU)

Chief John Ellis

By Chris Morgan, fire prevention specialist II, Santa Clara Unit



On April 17, 2006, Chief John Ellis was appointed unit chief of the Santa Clara Unit. He will manage a firefighting force protecting 1.5 million acres of wildland. Chief Ellis started his career in 1980 with the National Park Service as a law enforcement ranger at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

In 1983, he became a public safety officer with the city of Brisbane, until 1985 when he accepted a position as a public safety officer (combined fire and police) with the city of Rohnert Park. He later obtained the rank of captain and emergency servic-

es coordinator.

In 1994 Chief Ellis became the fire chief for the City of Marysville. Shortly after that the city of Marysville contracted with CAL FIRE for fire services and Chief Ellis became a CAL FIRE battalion chief.

Chief Ellis first came to the Santa Clara Unit in 2001, as the first East Bay division chief. In 2003 he was assigned to the Northern Region Office as the region's administrative officer and later as the South Division operations Chief in the Butte Unit of the CAL FIRE.

San Benito-Monterey Unit (BEU)

Chief George Haines

By Curt Itson, battalion chief, San Benito-Monterey Unit



On March 9, 2006, Chief Ruben Grijalva appointed George Haines to the unit chief position in the San Benito-Monterey Unit. "I am honored that Director Grijalva is giving me this opportunity to continue to serve the people of San Benito and Monterey Counties as the unit chief," said Haines. "We have fantastic employees in this unit, and I am dedicated to maintaining and building on CAL FIRE's history of success in the Central Coast area."

Haines served as acting unit chief since February 2006 and previously served as assistant

chief since 1993. During this period Haines held positions in both administrative services and operations. As incident commander on one of CAL FIRE's Incident Command Teams, he oversaw major fires throughout Southern California.

Chief Haines is a past president of the Monterey County Fire Chief's Association. His goals are to continue the successful operation of the San Benito-Monterey Unit and mentor the incoming company and battalion level officers as CAL FIRE faces the challenges of the future.

Riverside Unit (RRU)

Chief John Hawkins



Chief John R. Hawkins was appointed unit chief of Riverside and fire chief of Riverside County Fire on August 1, 2006. The Riverside County Board of Supervisors worked with CAL FIRE to select and approve Chief Hawkins for their County Fire Chief position.

Chief Hawkins has worked for CAL FIRE for 42 years and has been assigned throughout the state. He began his career in 1964 as a seasonal firefighter. He has worked through the ranks and held a variety of positions. Prior to being appointed he was the deputy chief in Riverside where he was responsible for all special operations including

training, health and safety, EMS, hazardous materials, technical rescue, video production, and telecommunications.

He co-supervised the multi-agency response to the devastating drought problems in the San Jacinto Mountains and was the unified incident commander as part of the Riverside County Mountain Area Safety Task Force (MAST) which has provided him with a well-rounded background.

Chief Hawkins understands the complexities of Riverside County and is prepared to meet the challenges of providing emergency services to the citizens we protect.

Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit (TCU)

Chief Mike Noonan

By Nancy Longmore, fire prevention specialist II, Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit



Mike Noonan was appointed Chief of the Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit on June 19, 2006 after the retirement of Fred McVay. Chief Noonan has been in the fire service for 27 years and is a native of Tuolumne County.

Since arriving back in TCU Noonan has been a battalion chief at Sierra Training Center, Sonora and Baseline Camp; he has been a division chief at Baseline Camp and the South Division. He was involved in the CAL FIRE Incident Command Teams 8 and 7 as the operations section chief and deputy incident commander.

His previous assignments included fire apparatus engineer, training captain, crew captain, and engine captain. He started his career in TCU and has worked in Sonoma, Santa Clara, and Tulare units prior to returning to TCU in 1997. He is a graduate of Summerville High School, Columbia Junior College (AA-Fire Science), and Fresno Pacific (BA-Management and Organizational Development). Chief Noonan is married to his high school sweetheart, Anna, and they have eight children (4 boys and 4 girls) and one grand-daughter.

Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit (NEU)

Chief Brad Harris

By Tina Rose, fire prevention specialist II, Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit



On May 1, 2006, Brad Harris officially became the Nevada-Yuba-Placer unit chief after being appointed by CAL FIRE Director Ruben Grijalva. With 29 years of distinguished firefighting experience under his belt, the NYP Unit will benefit greatly from a proven leader.

Chief Harris began his career working as a seasonal firefighter in the Shasta-Trinity Unit. After graduating from college he took a firefighter/engineer job with Moffitt Field Fire Department at the Naval Air Station facility. He was later hired as a fire protec-

tion operator/fire investigator for Oroville City Fire Department.

In 1986, he came back to CAL FIRE in the Riverside Unit as a fire apparatus engineer. He went through many promotions: from fire captain in 1990, to battalion chief in 1992, to division chief in 2001 and then to deputy chief of Riverside's Field Operations in 2003.

When asked what he will miss the most about Riverside his reply was "most definitely the people." Chief Harris and Mary, his wife of 26 years, plan to make Nevada County their new home.

Mendocino Unit (MEU)

Chief Marc Romero

By Tracy Boudreaux, fire prevention specialist II, Mendocino Unit



On May 8, 2006, Chief Ruben Grijalva announced the appointment of Marc Romero, as the successor of the Mendocino Unit. Chief Romero began his career in the San Luis Obispo Unit in 1974. He later ventured to the Mendocino Unit to work at Howard Forest Helitack. This proved to be a career defining move as he obtained his first permanent appointment for CAL FIRE as a fire control aid. His employment continued in the Coast Region for several years.

In 1982 Romero went to Tulare as a permanent fire apparatus engineer but returned to Mendocino in 1985 as a fire captain.

He promoted to a chief officer in 1992 when he became the last emergency command center chief to supervise the Region's ECC, which was closed in 1994 during a department reorganization.

After a stint in Sonoma-Lake-Napa as a field battalion chief, Romero's next promotion came in 1997 when he moved to Redding as the division chief of the Northern Operations Command Center. Eventually, he became the Shasta-Trinity administrative division chief and later the unit deputy chief of operations. Chief Romero and his wife Carmen currently reside in Redding and are looking forward to their return to Mendocino.

San Luis Obispo Unit (SLU)

Chief Matt Jenkins



Chief Matt Jenkins was appointed unit chief for San Luis Obispo on March 20, 2006. Chief Jenkin's fire service career began 29 years ago in San Luis Obispo County as a reserve firefighter in Los Osos. He then became a firefighter at the Cameron Park Fire Department in El Dorado County where he worked for over 18 years and advanced to fire chief.

Upon conducting an efficiency study for the Cameron Park Fire Department, he decided to contract emergency services with CAL FIRE. This gave him the opportunity to transfer to

the Central Coast as a battalion chief then later he promoted to assistant chief and then to deputy chief. Chief Jenkins has been involved with the development of six cooperative fire protection agreements between the state and local agencies.

He has significant experience in emergency incident management and commitment to fire prevention and public education. He has committed his life to public service and is honored to be entrusted with protecting the lives and property of San Luis Obispo County and beyond.

Lassen-Modoc Unit (LMU)

Chief Brad Lutts

By Nikole Melo, fire captain, Pre-Fire Engineering, Lassen-Modoc Unit



Brad Lutts was appointed Chief of the Lassen-Modoc Unit following the retirement of Don Posten in March of 2006. Chief Lutts is a 30 year veteran of public safety and emergency response services in California, having performed both fire protection and law enforcement duties.

Since arriving in the Lassen-Modoc Unit in 2000, Lutts has served as administrative officer, the division chief in command of Devil's Garden Conservation Camp, operations chief, and as a team incident commander.

His previous CAL FIRE assignments include law enforcement bureau chief in the San Mateo-

Santa Cruz Unit, field battalion chief in the Mendocino and San Mateo-Santa Cruz Units, fire captain specialist/law enforcement in the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit and seasonal fire fighter in the Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit.

Lutts believes the Lassen Modoc Unit is strong organizationally and operationally and will successfully meet any challenges that lie ahead. The unit's personnel are its most important resource and the unit will continue to develop its employees to achieve the department's mission and their individual professional goals.

14 CAL FIRE firefighters receive Medal of Valor from Governor

December 5, 2006 Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger awarded 14 CAL FIRE firefighters the highest public servant honor, the Governor's Medal of Valor, for demonstrating extraordinary bravery and heroism in saving a life. The 2006 recipients included Timothy Main, James Rajskup, Robert F. Green,



William (Bill) F. Mason, James Rissmiller, William R. Clayton, Kevin O'Leary, Patti K. West, David W. Junette, Thomas McConnel, Joseph W. Waterman, Tena G. Anderson, Fredrick Westrip, and Raymond Chaney. Since the Medal of Valor program began in 1959, a total of 75 medals have been awarded to CAL FIRE employees.

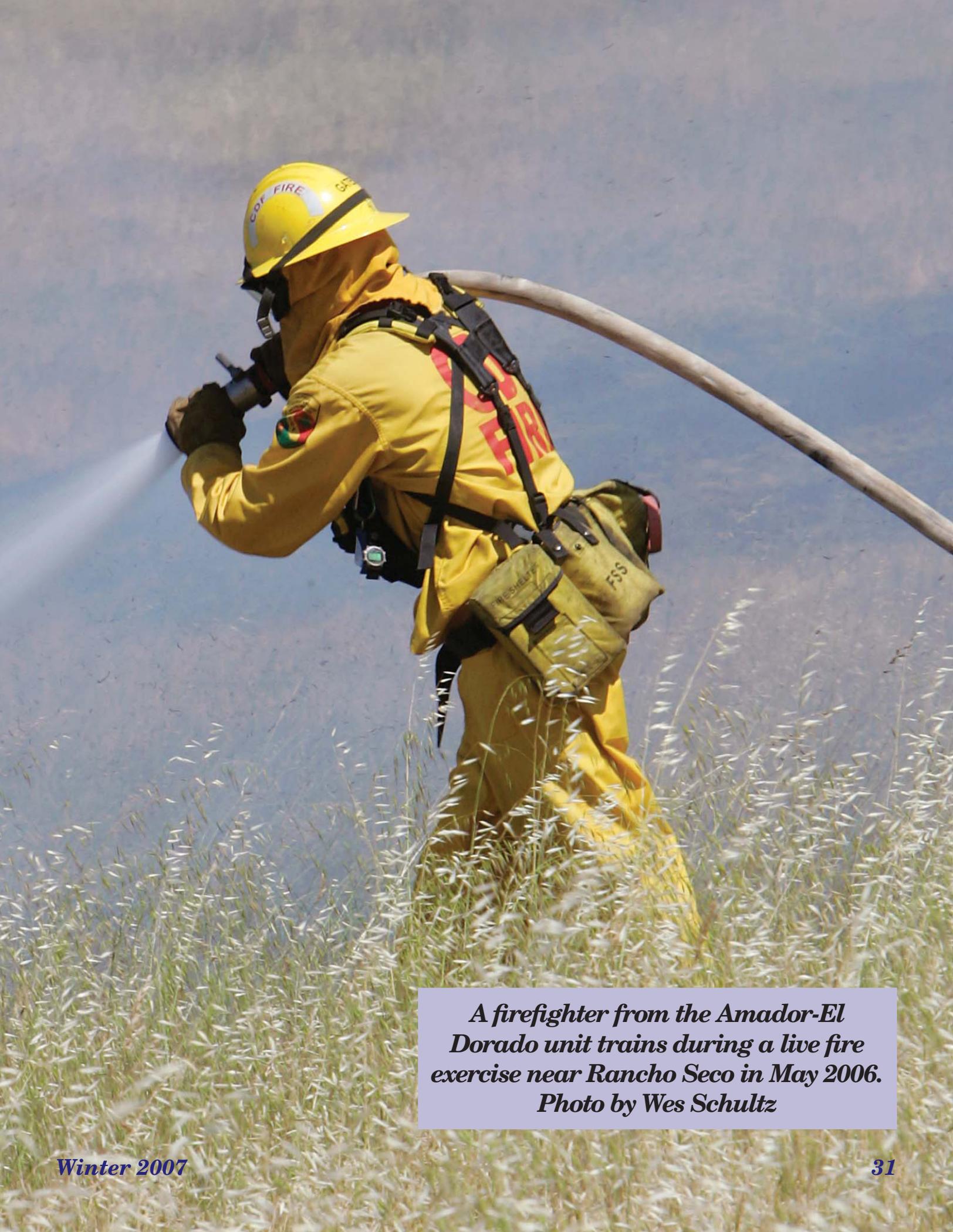
Photo by Alisha Herring

Sawtooth Complex - July 2006

The Sawtooth Complex raged east of Yucca Valley in the San Bernardino Unit from July 9 - 19. The lightning caused fire consumed over 61,000 acres and destroyed approximately 50 homes, 171 outbuildings, and 191 automobiles. At the height of the fire nearly 3,000 firefighters were on scene battling the blaze.



Photos by Wes Schultz



*A firefighter from the Amador-El Dorado unit trains during a live fire exercise near Rancho Seco in May 2006.
Photo by Wes Schultz*