

Calistoga Tribune

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TUBBS FIRE: ONE YEAR LATER

Disaster impels new emergency alert systems

By **Kim Beltran**
Tribune Editor
& **Claudia Aceves**
Tribune Reporter

If there's one thing that came through loud and clear during last year's October firestorm, it's that emergency notification systems were not adequate.

In the year since the NorCal fire siege, which included the Tubbs Fire in Calistoga and Santa Rosa, the Atlas fire in Napa, and the Pocket and Nuns fires in Sonoma County, governmental officials and first response agencies have begun to implement systems designed to reach all residents in the event of a catastrophic event.

This week, county and law enforcement officials are unveiling three new systems, while the City of Calistoga continues plans to install new emergency sirens to warn its residents of impending danger.

"We have learned from this terrible tragedy and taken important steps toward preventing future disasters," read a statement issued this week by state Sen. Bill Dodd, who authored or co-authored a series of legislation aimed at preventing future disasters. "One year later, there is still more work to be done to help our neighbors and to safeguard our communities, and I remain committed to addressing these needs."

Gov. Jerry Brown signed several of the bills into law, including SB 833 which creates statewide standards for warning the public about wildfires, floods, earthquakes and other emergencies. It requires the state Office of Emergency Services to create emergency alert guidelines, in consultation with government groups, cellphone providers and other stakeholders by July 1.

On Monday morning, the Napa County Sheriff's Office is unveiling two new communication tools for use during emergencies – use of a "high/low" unfamiliar siren on patrol cars to alert residents of an impending crisis, and evacuation tags to be displayed on mailboxes, gates or doors allowing first responders to clear neighborhoods faster.

Law enforcement is prohibited from using the "high/low" or European siren to patrol traffic. However, this "unfamiliar siren" can be used by patrol officers to sound the alarm while driving through neighborhoods during emergencies.

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John and Suzanne Fouts, owners of Mountain Home Ranch, pose next to one of two surviving pillars John's grandfather built at the resort entrance in 1920. The couple is still recovering after losing the Ranch to the Tubbs Fire.

PHOTO BY CLAUDIA ACEVES

Rebuilding is slow going but a few determined diehards pushing onward

■ **Inside:** 86-year-old Knight's Valley resident Madonna Day lost her home and all her worldly possessions on Oct. 9. She's battling insurance adjusters and time, hoping to rebuild the rural oasis she's called home for nearly 50 years.

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By **Claudia Aceves**
Tribune Reporter

In three days' time, it will be exactly one year since Mountain Home Ranch resort owners John and Suzanne Fouts lost their family business and nearly their home and lives to the infamous Tubbs Fire.

On Monday – the one-year anniversary of the start of California's most destructive wildfire – the couple, like many others who lost homes in the blaze, will still be waiting for power to be restored to the property and for the permits to be issued allowing them to rebuild the historic resort, in John's family since 1913.

"We lost our livelihoods and almost our lives and they're treating us like an inconvenience," Suzanne Fouts said of Sonoma County's Permit and Resource Management Department.

After months of unsuccessful inspections, the Foutses finally received a clean bill of health in July, clearing the way

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One family's experience in the year since the fire, as recorded by mom

By **Michelle Hickman**
For the Tribune
Editor's note: We are running Michelle's review in two parts. This is part one.

As I look back over the past year, while it definitely had its share of sadness and loss, some good came out of the tragedy we now call the Tubbs Fire: New friends, a sense of community, and more important, a stronger family unit.

To this day, I still cry when I really think about the

events that occurred. That night our situation seemed to fit like a puzzle. If pieces didn't connect properly, it could have been worse; I might not be here typing this. Thank you to the tree falling and blocking my in-laws from leaving. Thank you to our daughter for not going to sleep after I told her to. She is our family hero. It was because of her I was able to be one of the first, maybe even the first, to call 911 to report the fire.

After finding out the next day that we'd lost all we had known, I truly felt lost, as if we didn't have a map to guide us. I didn't have my calendar; we didn't have our computer that helped us with our budget. My calendar became a piece of paper. It wasn't until we were able to get a computer and a real calendar that I began to not feel lost.

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New Chamber of Commerce director named



Troy Campbell, the executive director for the Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefit District in San Francisco, has been hired to replace outgoing Calistoga Chamber of Commerce executive director Chris Canning.

By **Kim Beltran**
Tribune Editor

Troy Campbell is giving up management of one of San Francisco's biggest tourist attractions to guide and market Calistoga's business community.

The Vallejo resident has been hired by the Calistoga Chamber of Commerce to replace outgoing executive director Chris Canning, whose last full day is Oct. 12.

Campbell, who currently serves as the executive director for the Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefit District, will assume his post in Calistoga on Oct. 22.

"He had all the right things," said Chamber board chair Laura Swanton, also a member of the organization's advisory search committee that helped assess 74 initial job applicants before narrowing the list to the top 10.

Swanton said Campbell's current position has required heavy collaboration with both the

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Fire remembrance ceremony Tuesday

By **Kim Beltran**
Tribune Editor

California Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, and local officials will be hosting a Fire Prevention and Remembrance Ceremony in Calistoga on Oct. 9 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Chris Canning said the remembrance ceremony will be held starting at 5:30 at the city's Firemens Park, corner of Washington and Berry streets.

The event will move to the Community Center where Dodd plans to give a legislative update about his and other state legislators' efforts to curtail the spread of wildfires and help communities be better prepared if disaster does strike.

The ceremony takes place exactly one year and one day after the state's most destructive wildfire started just three miles north of town. In a matter of hours, the Tubbs Fire had raced over the western mountains into the city of Santa Rosa, killing 22 people in Sonoma County and incinerating entire neighborhoods.

It was one of more than a dozen large fires that broke out in early October and were simultaneously burning in eight Northern California counties in what is often referred to as the Northern California firestorm. By the time of its containment on October 31, 2017, the fire was estimated to have burned 36,810 acres and more than 5,643 structures, including more than 2,800 homes in the city of Santa Rosa. In that city, the damage from the Tubbs Fire was estimated at \$1.2 billion. The Tubbs Fire also reportedly incurred an additional \$100 million in fire suppression costs.