



# NEWS



## News Headlines 10/22/2020

- Local firefighters sent to battle blazes throughout California
- The Oaks thanks El Dorado firefighters with free meal

## Local firefighters sent to battle blazes throughout California

Douglas W. Motley, The Alpine Mountaineer

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A San Bernardino County firefighter stands ready to battle a recent wildfire in Northern California. (Photo courtesy of SB County Fire Dept.)

Beginning in early August, the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** started dispatching firefighters, including mountain area crews and strike teams, to battle wildfires throughout California. According to County Fire Public Information Officer Tracey Martinez, County Fire has sent at least 10 strike teams, consisting of 21 firefighters and five engines assigned to each team, to various fires throughout the state.

Capt. Don Whitesell from Lake Arrowhead Fire Station 91 told The Alpine Mountaineer on Oct. 13 that local firefighters had been deployed to the Apple Fire, which flared up on Aug. 2 near Oak Glen; and the El Dorado Fire, which ignited near Yucaipa on Sept. 5 and torched over 22,000 acres near Oak Glen, Forest Falls, Angeles Oaks and the San Gorgonio Wilderness Area.

Martinez said strike teams were also sent to battle the Bobcat Fire, which started on Sept. 6 and charred over 115,000 acres in the Angeles National Forest, burning eastward from Azusa towards Wrightwood and northeastward to Pinyon Hills. "Most strike teams are on 14- to 21-day deployments. We still have two strike teams out. We also have hand crews and dozers working the fires as well."

When asked whether any county firefighters had been injured while fighting out-of-the-area fires, Martinez said, "No San Bernardino County fighters have been seriously injured, though we have had a few minor injuries."

"So far this season, we've spent 28 days on out-of-the-area fires. Currently, we have crews working the August Complex and Zogg Fires in Northern California," Whitesell said, adding, "That doesn't mean our local stations have been abandoned; we do backfill with local firefighters, who have knowledge of the local area."

Martinez added, "We move up engines and bring in additional resources to backfill the units while they are assigned to another incident. We use reserve engines and equipment where needed and bring in additional staffing."

Noting that the height of fire season in San Bernardino County is usually in October, when Santa Ana winds blow the strongest, Martinez said, “Our county is not out of the woods yet. Please stay vigilant and continue to create defensible space around your home.”

Tips on how to prepare for a wildfire can be found by logging onto [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org).

<https://thealpinemountaineer.com/local-firefighters-sent-to-battle-blazes-throughout-california/>

## The Oaks thanks El Dorado firefighters with free meal

Joseph Ellis, Highland Community News

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Del Rosa Hotshots enjoy a hot meal provided by The Oak Restaurant in Angelus Oaks while taking a break from fighting El Dorado Fire.

Whoever said there's no such thing as a free meal hasn't met Teresa and Samuel Godines. Sam and his wife Teresa manage The Oak Restaurant in Angelus Oaks, which provided free meals to over 300 firefighters working the El Dorado and other fires in the area in September. Their son Samuel Jr. known by his friends as "Sammy," is the owner. Sammy is also a firefighter with Cal Fire.

Surrounded by the San Bernardino National Forest, Angelus Oaks hosts a **San Bernardino County Fire Station** and other U.S. Forest Services in nearby Seven Oaks. It's no wonder then that The Oaks Restaurant would support the County Fire and U.S. Forest Service firefighters with a free dinner on Wednesday nights during the El Dorado Fire incident.

When asked how they were able to offer these hot dinners free of charge, Sam said the local community came together along with some camps in the area to donate food that they couldn't use due to the fire closure.

On Wednesday, Sept. 16, starting around 5:30 p.m. and lasting until 9 p.m., Sam and Teresa served dinner to 101 firefighters at The Oak; and then, the following week, they more than doubled that number to 217 free dinners to any firefighters who stopped by. Many had heard about their generosity the week before and enjoyed a dinner of crispy fried chicken, green beans, rice sprinkled with yellow corn and a dinner roll.

As a hired vendor to move heavy equipment around the fire points, Tom Aylott stays by his truck and flatbed trailer waiting to move dozers to another hot spot. Lunches usually consist of sandwiches or MREs (meals ready to eat) and dinners are eaten at the base camp often late at night.

"I get tired of camp food that is institutional," Aylott said. "Eating here [at The Oak Restaurant] lets us eat earlier than at camp."

Aylott was on his eighth week of working on four fires, two of which were the Apple and El Dorado fires, and was thankful for this hot meal.

It was not uncommon to see Hotshot “Buggies” rolling up at the restaurant to wash-up and get a home cooked meal. The “buggy” is a green truck used to transport a crew of 10 to a hotspot location. David Borero, superintendent of the Del Rosa IHS Hotshots, described their buggies.

“Each one has a captain and a squad boss and then eight hotshots [sit] in the back,” he said. “We have two buggies, so with the buggies and myself we usually have 20 to 21 people on the crew.”

Borero knew about the free dinners at The Oak Restaurant because he’s family. Sammy and Teresa’s grandkids are his niece and nephew.

Borero pointed out that Del Rosa Hotshots team was originally founded in 1946, making this firefighting team the oldest Hotshot organization in the United States. When out fighting fires, it’s not uncommon for a hotshot crew to work a 16-hour shift, unless they are airlifted to a mountaintop where they may spend the night, sometimes a week or more, looking for and extinguishing hot spots that could reignite with just a change of wind.

Besides seeing Sam and Teresa Godines at The Oak Restaurant, Borero appreciated the hot meal after eating lunches with few calories.

“The food was a very welcomed addition to the normal camp food we receive,” Borero said, “and the homestyle meal allowed us to connect with the community.”

And his team got to eat dinner a few hours earlier than they would have at their base camp. Without a doubt, over 300 firefighters say a big “Thank you” to The Oaks Restaurant and the firefighting family that prepared their free meals.

[https://www.highlandnews.net/news/public\\_safety/the-oaks-thanks-el-dorado-firefighters-with-free-meal/article\\_2d5cac64-14aa-11eb-b349-3b487b300863.html](https://www.highlandnews.net/news/public_safety/the-oaks-thanks-el-dorado-firefighters-with-free-meal/article_2d5cac64-14aa-11eb-b349-3b487b300863.html)