

Special NHW Meeting
Monday July 8, 2019 7 PM Wyandotte Grange 4910 Foothill Blvd

“HOW WILL WE COMMUNICATE WITH 9-1-1 Medical or Fire Emergency, SHERIFF’S OFFICE/CALFIRE/EACH OTHER DURING A PGE SAFETY POWER OUTAGE with LIMITED WAYS OF COMMUNICATION?”

We have a problem to face as a community. Many of us lost our cellular, computer and house communication lines on June 8th when PGE shut off the power. We could not reach each other, outside family and dispatch due to power shut off. What will we do if there is a fire during a red flag day and we can’t communicate with Sheriff, if his office can’t send warnings to us with The Red Alert System over phone, internet and cell and WE can’t connect with each other?

Because of 21st century technology, many of us lost all communication linked through WIFI, cell, computer, TV in the neighborhood. June 8, 2019 was round two of that nightmare. The reality is that PGE is geared up for more of these safety power shut offs. The night of Nov 8, 2018/Camp Fire many of us lost communication due to cell towers being destroyed . We were 20+ miles away from the fire. I don’t know for sure about everyone on this side of the county and our foothill/mountain area, BUT when the power is shut off, or lost during a fire event, if you have VOIP, only a cell phone, a hard wire line phone with an answering machine only and count on WIFI for phone, internet, TV, security system in your house, chances are you are cut off from communication. If you have a hard line wired phone, if you are lucky, you can use the old fashioned Princess style plug in and have phone service unless those lines go down too.

I am calling this “Y2K -2019.” We are ostensibly back to 1965 era without communication during an emergency. AS we all know, it’s utter chaos during the first minutes, hours, 12-24 hours of a fire. What happens if we can’t communicate?

As a community we need to have a grassroots approach, network with each other and perhaps find folks with ham radio communication experience to work with us and county agencies to figure this out.

Our strengths are the following and we need to capitalize on them:

- * our strong NHW and community network in these foothills
- * Sheriff’s Office Lt Bell, CALfire Chiefs Lowe, Brownell and Mancini who know us and are working with us on Fire Safety and Prevention Projects, OES Cindi Dunsmoor and CHP Lt Stokes/ officers will be tuned in and will be at our July 8 meeting to weigh in and give us the down and dirty reality check on this situation
- * a brain trust of smart people in the neighborhood who can work together
- * radio systems (Ham radio operators, 21st Century CB on logging trucks, two way short range Walkie Talkies, vehicles, HORNS on cars and battery operated boat horns)
- * vehicles -wheels - good old face to face communication - get to know you neighbors/ make good contact. Have an “in your street, in the trench plan to alert, to awaken, check on each other and evac

plan if you are on a narrow or dead end road. Nobody is going to do this for you. You must get proactive.

Please plan on attending this meeting and invite anyone you know in the greater south county area who has Ham Radio experience or CB radio experience and is willing to help.

There is an answer. There are some really good ideas to share with you. We must get proactive and organized now.

WE will need people from each part of the NHW area and outside of the area involved. Liaisons from each street must take responsibility and stay tuned in during RED FLAG POWER OUTAGE EVENTS. We must set up a system to contact and communicate with the Sheriff's office and each other. It could be as simple as good Samaritan community Ham Radio operators being committed and on call during Red Flag events monitoring the channels from Sheriff. We will set up protocols together. If there needs to be an alert, that operator and our folks living near them can set off alerts by car horns to wake up their neighbors and get the barking chain alert lit up and on this mountain. Those that still have phones and cell can get calling neighbors, use walkie talks amongst neighbors on the same channel or hit the pavement and bang on doors. WE all have cars with radios and maybe satellite radio, so there is another link for communication and keeping phones charged or driving to an area where there is cell reception.

Truckers all have CB radios that can be on dedicated frequencies to monitor the status and events. The rest of us will just have to be extremely aware of any fire engine sirens, dogs and animal carrying on in the night. WE must sleep with one eye open, nostrils flared and ears to the ground during these power outages and of course, at night. Some of us will have generators and have some form of communication. BUT, if the lines/ towers go down like they did during the Camp Fire, we will not have the communication. We need to be ready for action. This situation has come up fast on local government.

If you are old enough, you will understand the concept, "Community Civil Defense Networking." WE must look out for each other and work on a back up plan with county agencies.

If the Camp Fire, Loma Rica, Cherokee, Sonoma, Napa, Carr Fires taught us anything it should be this: things happen extremely fast in a fire, there may not be time for authorities to get the word out. PAY ATTENTION, THINK, HAVE A PLAN, GET PROACTIVE AND MOVING. You all better be uber prepared and ready to roll if things move fast, vehicle gas tanks full, know how to open garages doors without power. HAVE AND EVAC PLAN and alternate routes planned. If a fire happens fast you best have enough defensible space to shelter in place till fire passes, then get out. All of these concepts were reviewed again at our Fire meeting in May. You should have received info from PGE this week. However, there is no mention of communication systems in power outage or back up plan. There-in lies our issue.

Review all of the evacuation and planning info I've sent from CALFIRE, OES etc.

I have one request: the tone of this meeting will only be about progressive, productive problem solving. I ask that no one come to vent, whine or complain about PGE. WE all feel the same way, it's a

dangerous sad situation. We live in California, that's our choice. We have to deal with the reality and help each other, the Sheriff, BCFR/CALFIRE, CHP and the County OES for our safety. Hope to see you,
Lois Miller