

## RE-PRINT OF ROSSMOOR NEWS ARTICLE, 11-1-17

### "Public Safety manager makes report on mass evacuation in a fire"

What with the Rossmoor Parkway four-plex that recently burned down, the small grass fire near Rockledge Lane and the devastating fires in the Wine Country, residents are understandably concerned about their safety. Interestingly, 74 was the median age of those who died in the Wine Country fires. So said Dennis Bell, Rossmoor's Public Safety manager, when he briefed the GRF Board on the community's emergency preparedness at the Oct. 27 (2017) Board meeting. "GRF does have an emergency preparedness plan," he said. And, it's highly unlikely that there will ever be a mass evacuation of Rossmoor. If there is a large-scale evacuation, it has to be **ordered by law enforcement or fire department officials**, he said. "I am not a fire expert, but the fire experts have told me that they cannot think of a situation where a fire would take over all of Rossmoor, not to say it can't happen, but it is very unlikely," Bell told the Board. "What the fire department says is that it's much more likely that an area of Rossmoor will be taken over by a fire. The good thing is that Rossmoor is big enough that people can be moved within Rossmoor to safe zones." Bell said the fire department really likes the big green firebreak that runs through the valley. "We prefer to call it a golf course. They say this is a great firebreak and provides a great deal of safety to prevent fires from spreading." Bell emphasized that it is important to note that GRF has a limited role. "GRF is not the first responder," he said. The people who will probably be first on the scene are trained professionals, entry coordinators and specially trained members of the

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). What GRF can do is provide resources, such as buildings for emergency shelter. "GRF doesn't provide food, water or medicine," he said. Nine emergency routes if residents do need to leave Rossmoor and its main artery – Rossmoor Parkway – is blocked, there are nine alternate routes that residents and emergency personnel can take to get in and out of Rossmoor. However, most of these routes are on unpaved fire roads and have locked gates for which GRF **doesn't have the keys** and some traverse private property. One route is nearly impassable to cars.

Residents should use caution and **only take an alternate route if directed to by fire or law enforcement officials**, he said. Those officials will make the call on which routes to use.

#### **The alternate routes are:**

##### **NORTH**

**Comstock Drive:** Improved road through Manor Care parking lot to Tice Valley Boulevard.

**Dog Park:** Improved road through the Acalanes Adult Education Center parking lot to Tice Valley Boulevard.

**Golden Rain Road, Entries 6/7:** Improved road through adult school parking lot to Tice Valley Boulevard Note that the three north entrances all exit on Tice Valley Boulevard and the dog park and Golden Rain Road Entries 6/7 share the same route.

##### **SOUTH**

**Cactus Court Entry 1/2:** Dirt road that leads to Rossmoor Parkway.

**MOD (Mutual Operations Department):** Dirt fire road that connects to the Cactus Court exit. This road has a cattle crossing

gate on it, which would limit vehicle ingress/egress.

#### **EAST**

**Grey Eagle Drive:** Dirt fire road with access to Castle Crest Road. This road crosses private property and has locked gates, for which GRF does not have keys.

**High Eagle:** Dirt fire road to Las Trampas Drive in Alamo. This road traverses private property and has locked gates, for which GRF does not have keys.

#### **WEST**

**Skycrest Drive:** Unimproved, steep grade firebreak/ trail clearing that would be difficult to navigate by vehicle. This road leads to Glenside Road in Lafayette. This road traverses private property and has locked gates, for which GRF does not have keys

**End of Stanley Dollar Drive, Entry 9:** Leads to Lucas Drive in Lafayette. This route will eventually traverse through a residential neighborhood on a paved road.

The current roadway is packed gravel and dirt. Residents should have their own emergency plan and supplies and they should be able to fend for themselves for five to seven days, he said. "Be ready to shelter in place," Bell said.

#### **SIGN UP FOR NIXLE**

In order to get updated information in an emergency, residents should sign up for the Nixle emergency alert system, which can be done by going to the Rossmoor website, **www.rossmoor.com**. In the middle of the home page, click on the Nixle sign up. Residents who do not have the Internet, can sign up by calling **988-7688** and leaving a message. Callers will be asked to leave their name and home phone number. Nixle messages can be sent to residents by text or email. That's how residents of the Wine Country kept abreast of evacuations, Bell said.

