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John Thomson receiving his Author/Scholastic Award of Merit from CCHS Secretary Barbara Kimball and Treasurer John Shea

LOCAL EDH AUTHOR RECIEVES AWARD

Local author John E. Thomson has received the 2018-2019 Award of Merit in the Author/Scholastic Category from the Conference of California Historical Societies.

The award was presented at the Conference's Annual Awards Luncheon that was held at the Sequoia Mansion, the former Bee-Bennett House, in Placerville on June 22nd.

John also received a Certificate of Recognition from local State Assemblyman Kevin Kiley in recognition of the honor bestowed by the Conference.,

John's latest book, *Bass Lake: A Gold Rush Artifact*, tells the story of the development of the mining ditches of southern El Dorado County, the story of the ditch companies that built those ditch systems, and how and when Bass Lake, originally known as the American Reservoir, came to be a living artifact of the Gold Rush of 1849.

John is a founding member of the Clarksville Region Historical Society in El Dorado Hills. He served many years on their board of directors and is currently a Director Emeritus.

The Conference of California Historical Societies was founded in 1954 as a federation of historical societies, museums, libraries, and other history-oriented groups and individuals.

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NEW SAFEWAY CENTER IN EL DORADO HILLS ADDS TENANTS

Several businesses, including a Mexican restaurant from San Jose and a frozen desert shop from Chico, are joining a Safeway anchored center that's under construction on Bass Lake Road in El Dorado Hills.

Donahue Schriber is developing the Sienna Ridge center at the southeast corner of Bass Lake Road and Sienna Ridge Road in El Dorado Hills. The center will ultimately be about 100,000 square feet.

Safeway is expected to open later this year or in early 2020, according to Donahue Schriber. Other businesses are scheduled to start opening in the second quarter of 2020. Last year, the *Business Journal* reported that the locally owned Bark Avenue Pet Supplies Inc. would be among the tenants in Sienna Ridge. It will be the second El Dorado Hills location for Bark Avenue, which focuses on high-quality pet supplies and holistic pet nutrition.

Eight other businesses have signed on to join Sienna Ridge, Donahue Schriber confirmed recently. The new additions include five service-oriented tenants: Chase Bank, Fresh Cleaners, Great Clips, Nail Retreat

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WILDFIRE-DRIVEN POWER BLACKOUTS COMING

The California Public Utilities Commission has adopted an expanded set of rules aimed at clarifying when the state's big utilities can shut off power during times of high fire danger and what they need to do before they turn out your lights.

The commission voted unanimously recently to approve the guidelines — detailed in a 118-page decision. The five-member panel also approved the utilities' first-ever wildfire mitigation plans.

The power shutoffs—a practice the regulatory world calls de-energization—have been used sparingly in the past as a tool to reduce the risk of electrical equipment touching off fires during exceedingly windy, dry, hot weather. The shutdowns are a technique pioneered by San Diego Gas and Electric Co. (SDG&E) after its power lines ignited 2007's Witch Fire, which killed two people and destroyed 1,100 homes.

Here are questions and answers on how the public safety power shutoffs work and what the CPUC's new guidelines will mean for utility customers.

1. *Who makes the decision to shut off power?* The decision rests solely in the hands of California's three investor-owned utilities: PG&E, Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas and Electric. To assist in making the decision, each utility now maintains a special command center—PG&E's is called a wildfire safety operations center—to assess weather data and reports from field personnel and begin the process of deciding when and where a power shutoff

(continued on page 2)



4TH OF JULY

SAFEWAY *(continued)*

and Pacific Dental Services.

Three dining tenants are also in the works: Sourdough & Co., Jon & Bon's Yogurt Shoppe and Mexico Lindo.

Sourdough & Co. is a locally based sandwich chain with several sites in the Sacramento area and beyond. This will be its third restaurant in El Dorado Hills.

Jon & Bon's Yogurt Shoppe has three locations in Chico, with at least one other store planned in the Sacramento area. That store will be in Rocklin Crossings, which is also a Donahue Schriber property. The business sells desserts such as frozen yogurt and ice cream.

Mexico Lindo has one other location, which is in San Jose. On its website, the business says it serves entrees "with the spirit and flavor of old Mexico." In an email to the *Business Journal*, Andres Valencia, one of the business partners behind the upcoming El Dorado Hills restaurant, confirmed plans to bring Mexico Lindo to Sienna Ridge. "I just feel that as a lot of families and people leave the Bay Area, this area is a natural choice. I chose the specific location due to the new shopping center being centrally located in a large residential community with more homes to come," Valencia said.

Valencia expects Mexico Lindo will employ about 30 to 40 people in El Dorado Hills.

Additional tenant spaces are available in Sienna Ridge, according to leasing materials online. Those materials also show the gas station that will be part of the Safeway grocery store. ~

*Credit: Sonya Sorich, Digital Editor
Sacramento Business Journal*

AWARD *(continued)*

CCHS helps historians, and others who are interested in California history, to connect and share information -- joining efforts to preserve records, artifacts, sites and buildings, throughout the State. The Conference also helps local societies and small museums learn about and put into practice the most effective management, acquisition, preservation and restoration techniques.

All proceeds from the sale of John's book, which is available on Amazon.com, go to support the work of the Clarksville Region Historical Society. ~

POWER *(continued)*

might be necessary. The emergency operations centers typically include engineering, safety and communications personnel.

2. *What conditions could prompt a public safety power shutoff?* There is no one standard for the three utilities that have been directed to develop shutoff plans. But the factors the utilities use involve an assessment of upcoming weather—a National Weather Service red-flag fire warning for hot, dry, windy weather, for instance — and conditions on the ground—such as topography and the moisture content of grass, brush and trees in areas the CPUC has identified as being at high risk for wildfires.

SDG&E's list of factors considered in shutting down power during a period of dangerous fire weather last November includes a red-flag warning coupled with a warning of winds gusting up to 70 mph.

3. *How do public safety power shutoffs affect people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations?* Advocates for those with disabilities have pointed out for years -- in cases involving San Diego Gas and Electric, which began preemptive power shutoffs in 2013—that their clients face a potentially life-threatening situation if their electricity is turned off. In a declaration filed in PG&E's federal probation case earlier this year, Melissa Kasnitz, an attorney for Berkeley's Center for Accessible Technology, summarized the dangers:

"Some people will lose access to medical equipment necessary for health and safety, such as home dialysis machines, nebulizers, or respirators. Some will lose the ability to power equipment they rely on for mobility, such as power wheelchairs. Some will face health risks if they lose the ability to regulate the temperature or environment in their homes. Some will lose access to vital (and expensive) medication if they lose access to refrigeration."

While the CPUC's de-energization decision recognizes the issue, it focuses on identifying and educating vulnerable individuals and making sure they're notified in the event a power shutoff is imminent. The guidelines stop short of calling for steps to aid those who lose the use of medical equipment, saying that utilities should partner "with community-based organizations and other entities to develop plans in advance to ensure that needs can be met in the event of a power loss."

4. *Are there other major objections to the*

public safety power shutoffs? The principal concern, voiced by the CPUC itself and many parties who have commented on its new rules, centers on the potential impact to public safety when power is cut off. A blackout would likely disable traffic signals and could interrupt the supply of electricity to police and fire stations. A loss of power could disrupt public water systems needed to fight fires and play havoc with emergency responders' radio communications.

The CPUC's response has been to focus on identifying the full range of potential impacts and developing communication strategies so that all the agencies that might be affected by a power outage know well in advance and have developed contingency plans for the blackout period. Longer term, the commission is encouraging adoption of technology that will limit the extent of outages by allowing utilities to precisely target the areas where shutoffs may be needed.

5. *How will I find out if my utility is considering turning off the power because of extreme fire weather?* Your utility has the primary responsibility for alerting emergency responders, other public safety-related agencies, local governments and customers that it is considering a public safety power shutoff. Under the CPUC's new guidelines, the utilities will be required to give emergency responders and other high-priority groups and agencies between 48 and 72 hours' notice that a shutdown is under consideration. The companies will need to give 24 to 48 hours' warning to everyone else, including customers. The guidelines also require follow-up messages within one to four hours of a shutdown, when it's occurring and again when the process of restoring power is underway.

6. *Have past power shutoffs been effective in preventing wildfires?* It's hard to give a definitive answer, but the most persuasive evidence that de-energizing power lines may be effective in preventing catastrophic wildfires comes from San Diego Gas and Electric. According to data the company provided to the CPUC, its power facilities were involved in starting 175 fires from 2013 through 2018. Of those fires, just three were larger than 10 acres.

Lawyers who have sued PG&E on behalf of Northern California wildfire victims have pointed out that the San Francisco-based utility's equipment started 1,552 fires in a shorter time frame—2014 through 2017—with 68 of those blazes growing to larger than 10 acres. (PG&E has challenged the comparison, noting that its service area is

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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Hello All,

The effects of the new public safety power shutdowns are yet to be seen. The shutdowns, a state response to the catastrophic Paradise fire, may or may not be effective in curtailing fires. But they will change the lives of many of us who live in or near the wildland urban interface (WUI).

The WUI is generally the transition zone between unoccupied wildland and suburban development, and are at risk of catastrophic wildfires.

Insurance companies, which are experts in risk assessment, have figured out that properties in or near the WUI are very prone to wildfires and have either greatly increased their premiums or ceased insuring homes there altogether.

At the same time, the WUI areas will continue to expand, as amenity-seeking retiring baby-boomers migrate to smaller communities close to scenic natural resources. A home in the woods is many a boomer's dream.

Closer to home, we who live in El Dorado Hills face power shutdowns this summer, and probably in summers to come, as the state grapples with the problem.

PG&E says outages may last for days. Prepare for the worst, and hope for the best, seems to be the best policy right now.

Meantime, here's wishing everyone a Happy Independence Day.

Regards,

John E. Thomson

Editor



POWER *(continued)*

17 times larger than SDG&E's and that its distribution and transmission line mileage is five times larger than that maintained by the San Diego utility.)

Bottom line: The CPUC's decision declares that preemptive power shutdowns "can save lives" if coupled with tougher measures to keep trees and other vegetation away from electrical lines.

7. *How many people could lose electricity in a public safety power shutoff?* In the past, power shutoffs have involved utilities' local distribution circuits and have affected relatively small areas. San Diego Gas and Electric has conducted the most shutoffs. Six of the nine shutdowns the company has conducted since 2017 have involved fewer than 1,000 customers. SDG&E's largest shutoff, last November, involved about 25,000.

When PG&E decided to preemptively shut down lines last Oct. 14, it targeted about 40 distribution circuits spread across Napa, Sonoma, Lake, El Dorado, Placer, Amador and Calaveras counties. The number of customers on each circuit varied from as few as 14 up to about 5,200, and about 60,000 customers in all lost power—which stands as the single-largest public safety power shutoff in California to date.

However, the limited size of shutdowns could change this year, with PG&E announcing it will consider shutting down high-voltage transmission lines like the one in Butte County that touched off last November's Camp Fire. In filing its state-mandated wildfire mitigation plan earlier this year, PG&E said de-energizing transmission lines could mean a loss of power anywhere in its 70,000-square-mile service area—even for cities like San Francisco and San Jose that face no immediate wildfire threat. Such a shutdown could also affect factories, airports and other facilities served directly by transmission lines.

The CPUC's decision says that in the event a transmission line shutoff is being considered, utilities must inform the California Independent System Operator, which manages the state's grid, as soon as possible. The power companies must also coordinate with regional and national agencies that provide grid reliability.

8. *If there's a public safety power shutoff, how long will I be without electricity?* San Diego Gas and Electric, the utility that has the most experience with power shutoffs, says blackouts in its service area have lasted from one minute—you read that right: 60 seconds—to six full days. A review of its

biggest shutdown to date, which took place last November, shows that most of the 25,000 or so affected customers lost power for 30 to 48 hours; one circuit, with about 1,400 customers, was out for four days.

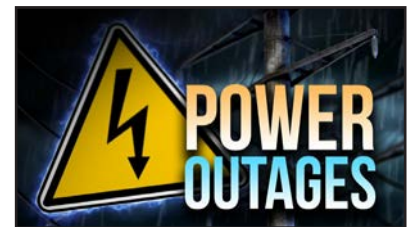
In PG&E's power shutdown last October, most of the 60,000 affected customers appear to have had the lights back on within 24 to 30 hours. Some were in the dark for a little more than two days.

The main reason for delays in restoring power comes from continuing dangerous fire conditions and the need for crews to inspect lines for damage and complete repairs when necessary.

9. *All the food in my fridge spoiled because of a public safety power shutoff. Will the utilities pay?* Here is another "that depends" answer. San Diego Gas and Electric has a claims procedure and received 300 reports of losses in its November 2018 shutdown. About 220 of the claims were for food spoiled because of loss of refrigeration.

PG&E reported receiving 146 claims after its October 2018 shutoff—again, mostly for food losses. The company remarks in its report: "PG&E has stated publicly that because of the safety-related nature of (public safety power shutoff) events, customers will not be reimbursed for associated losses." ~

Credit: Dan Brekke, KQED



PG&E PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTDOWNS LOOM: BE PREPARED

Here's what you need to know about preparing for PG&E's new public safety power shutdown program during California wildfire season.

PG&E has said it will shut down electricity in high-risk areas for "multiple" days if the risk of sparking power lines could cause wildfires. The company said several factors will need to be present before shutoffs are initiated in areas of "elevated (Tier 2) or extreme (Tier 3)" risk. Those include having a Red Flag Warning triggered along with low humidity (below 20-percent) and sustained winds of above 25 mph and winds gusts above 40 mph.

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BE PREPARED *(continued)*

Before a power outage:

1. Make a safety plan for every member of your household, including pets. Identify a backup location where you can go and an emergency meeting spot.

2. Update your contact information with PG&E at pge.com/mywildfirealerts to get alerts about power shutdowns. If your contact information isn't updated, the utility will use what it has on file.

3. Plan for your medical needs, including medications that need to be refrigerated, and power-dependent devices. Talk to your doctor about what you should do, and make sure PG&E knows about any medical devices.

4. Keep a hard copy of emergency phone numbers, and identify a backup method for charging your cellphone.

5. Make sure you know how to manually open your garage door.

6. Have an emergency kit with food, water, a flashlight, batteries, a battery- or crank-powered radio, a charged cellphone, first aid, clothing, medications, cash, credit cards and important documents. Include toys, books and games for children, and have a fueled-up vehicle.

7. If you live in a building with elevators or electronic key-card access, talk to your building manager about how they would



The Violet and the Bee
 "And pray, who are you?"
 Said the Violet blue
 To the Bee, with surprise,
 At his wonderful size,
 In her eyeglass of dew.
 "I, madam," quoth he,
 "Am a publican Bee,
 Collecting the tax
 Of honey and wax.
 Have you nothing for me?"
 —John Bannister Tabb

deal with a multi-day outage.

8. Consider a backup power source, such as a generator, and make sure it's ready to operate safely.

9. Identify multiple people who know how to operate your equipment and backup systems.

During an outage:

1. Unplug or turn off appliances, equipment and electronics to avoid damage from surges when power is restored.

2. Leave a single lamp on so you'll know when power returns. When power is restored, turn on appliances one at a time.

3. Consider using coolers with ice to keep food cold and safe. A refrigerator typically will keep food cold for about four hours, and a full freezer will keep its temperature for about 48 hours if doors to the appliances are kept closed.

4. Check on your neighbors.

5. Only use generators, camp stoves or charcoal grills outdoors. Don't use a gas stove for heat. ~

Source: Pacific Gas & Electric and Ethan Baron, Bay Area News, San Jose Mercury News



LATEST GAS TAX INCREASE HITS JULY 1

You might want to set aside a few extra dollars in your piggy bank because your wallet is about to suffer at the gas pumps, as California's latest gas tax increase kicks in on July 1, 2019.

It will go from 41.7 cents to 47.3 cents -- that's a 5.6 cent increase per gallon of gas as the majority of Americans plan for a summer getaway, according to AAA. Road trips remain a top choice for many families this summer.

The California gas tax increase comes as the average gas prices across the country are down for the sixth straight week to \$2.67 per gallon, according to GasBuddy data, which is compiled from more than 10 million individual price reports covering 135,000 gas stations across the nation. Drivers are also likely to see prices increase as the pump heading into the Fourth of July

holiday weekend.

The state legislature passed Senate Bill 1 in April 2017 under then Governor Jerry Brown. The bill aims to raise \$54 billion over the next decade to fix roads, freeways and bridges. See where the money is going.

In the summer of 2017, drivers in California paid 29.7 cents in taxes for a gallon of gas but after SB-1's passing, that rate spiked up by 12 cents in November of that year, going from 29.7 to 41.7 cents for each gallon of gas.

There was an unsuccessful attempt to repeal the California gas tax in 2018 with Proposition 6, which failed with about 57% of voters against it. ~

Credit Oscar Flores, FOX 11



BLAC BOARD MET MAY 13, SETS AUGUST BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors of the Bass Lake Action Committee (BLAC) have set August 12, 2019, as the date of the next BLAC Board Meeting. The meeting will be held at the home of Fran and John Thomson, 501 Kirkwood Court, Woodridge, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762, 530-677-3039. All BLAC members are cordially invited to attend.

For further information about BLAC meetings and membership, please contact Vice-President John Davey at 530-676-2657. ~



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