



OCFA Monthly Bulletin

From the Fire Chief

Dear OCFA Family:

Over the past several months, I have been sending these monthly bulletins to our Board of Directors (BOD) to share the exceptional work that our safety and professional staff do in service of our communities. These communications have been well received and garnered much pride among our Directors, so beginning with this bulletin, I will be sharing them with a wider audience, including all personnel.

As you will soon read, we have been busy, but before we get into highlighting the many heroes among us, I do want to pause a moment to thank you. Whether you serve our communities as a firefighter, professional staff member, or Honorable Director, your work and passion breathe life into our mission. While there is endless evidence to point to that truth, none is more poignant than our collaborative efforts during an unprecedented time that put us on the front lines of a global pandemic – both as first responders and the leaders of a countywide vaccination plan. We also faced contract provider staffing complications that increased ambulance response times and navigated issues that further aggravated the volume of forced furling.

To be clear, we haven't just worked through these challenges, we've worked to solve them. Case in point, the acceleration of our ongoing academies is beginning to help with forced staffing, our advocacy with our ambulance contract providers and the County has yielded positive results, and our partnership with OCHCA made the COVID-19 vaccine accessible to our communities.

That said, we are not yet where we need to be, particularly as it relates to forced shifts among the captain rank. As we continuously work to solve this and other long-running issues, know that I see your feedback as an opportunity to grow and better serve you and our communities. Yes, a thorough review of some criticisms can reveal context that alleviates major concerns and provides potential solutions, but there are always teachable moments for me along the way.

So, as I begin my fifth year as your Fire Chief, I want to both express my gratitude for all fact-based feedback you have provided and recognize your resilience over these challenging past two years. I also want to reaffirm a statement I made in my first open letter to you – four years ago almost to the day: "Compassion for people affected by change is critical to leadership."

Few in our communities have been affected more by the change this pandemic has wrought than first responders and the professional staff who support them. Rest assured, both as a fire chief and a colleague, my compassion for all that you have endured (and the changes it has affected in your lives) is matched only by my commitment to your feedback and work through our challenges together.

With that in mind, this bulletin seeks to highlight our achievements while concurrently sharing the work that we hope will illuminate a brighter, safer, and healthier future for all of us and the communities we serve – now and in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Brian Fennessy
Fire Chief

IN THIS ISSUE

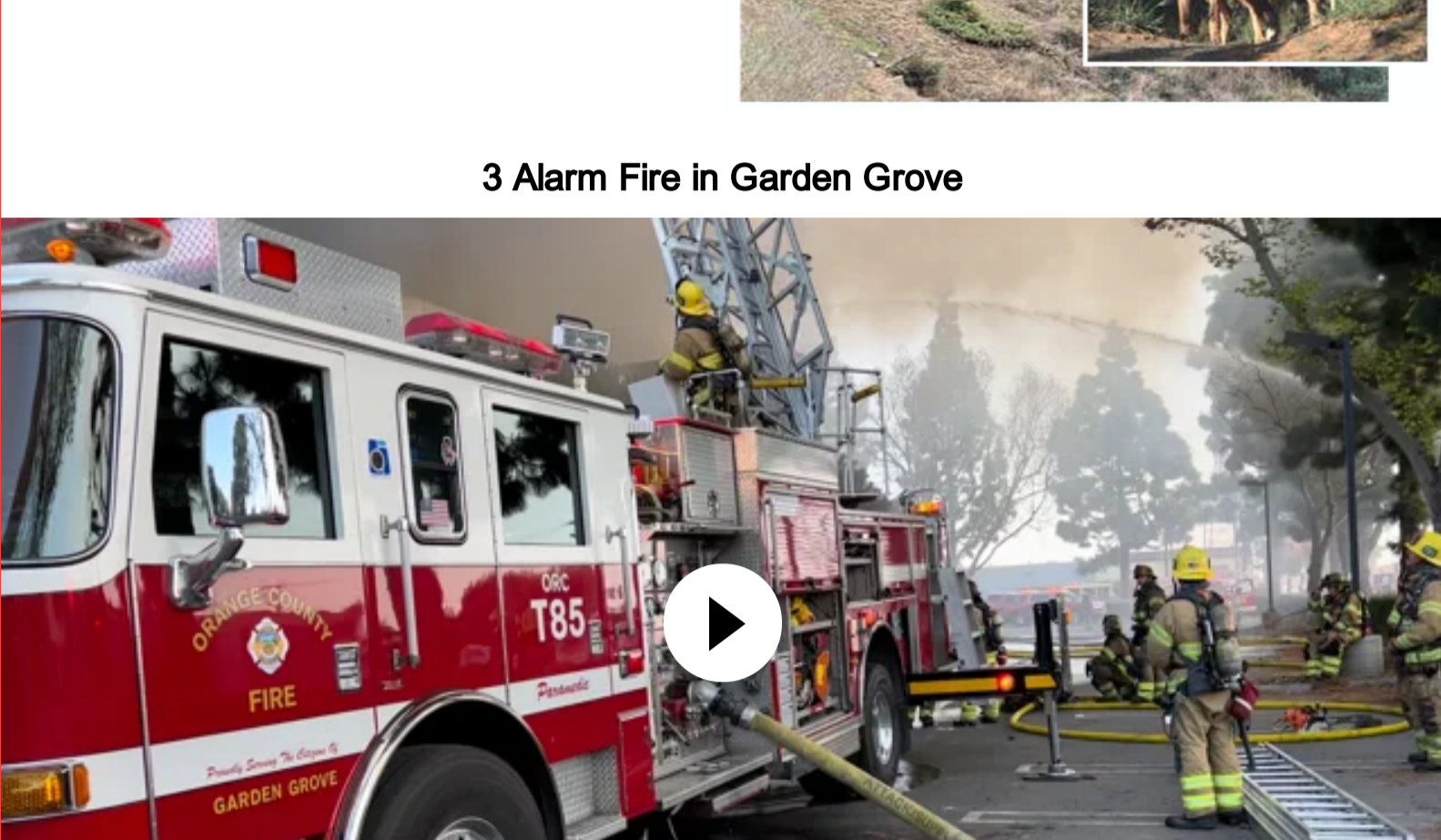
- Ask the Chief
- Monthly Spotlight - Excellence in Service
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Updates
- Monthly OCFA Social Media Feature Topics
- Human Resources Health Screenings
- Pass-Along Podcast
- Retirements



ASK THE CHIEF

We took the show back on the road to begin anew with an Ask the Chief tradition that celebrates the craft of a station that went above and beyond on a recent incident. Of course, there are daily examples of such heroes throughout the OCFA (and that none of our personnel do it for recognition), but this month, we selected **Station 38**, and you will soon know why!

Also in this episode, Chief Fennessy and Captain/PFO Sean Doran discuss everything from Air Ops and Tesla solar panels to the Emerald Fire and portable restrooms facilities for major incidents.



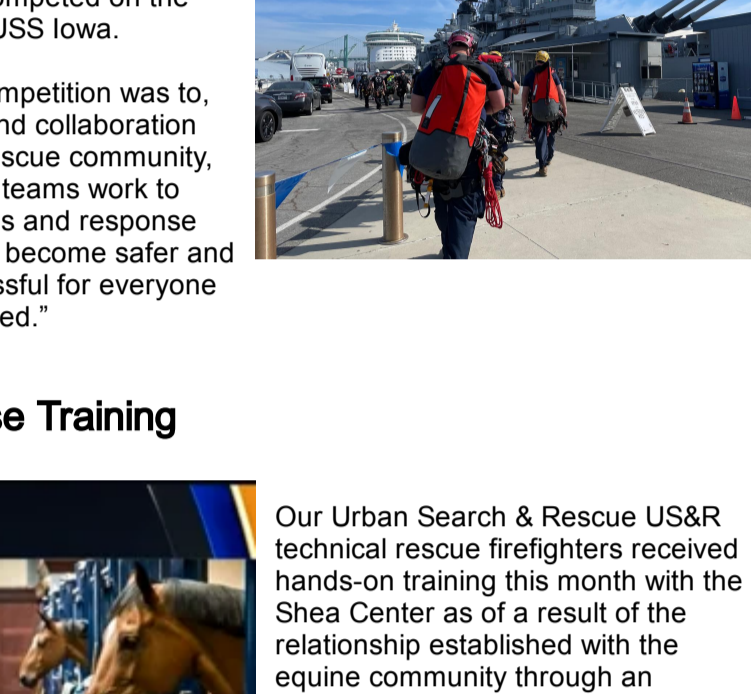
Want to ask the Fire Chief an anonymous question? Click the thumbs up below!

MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT - EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

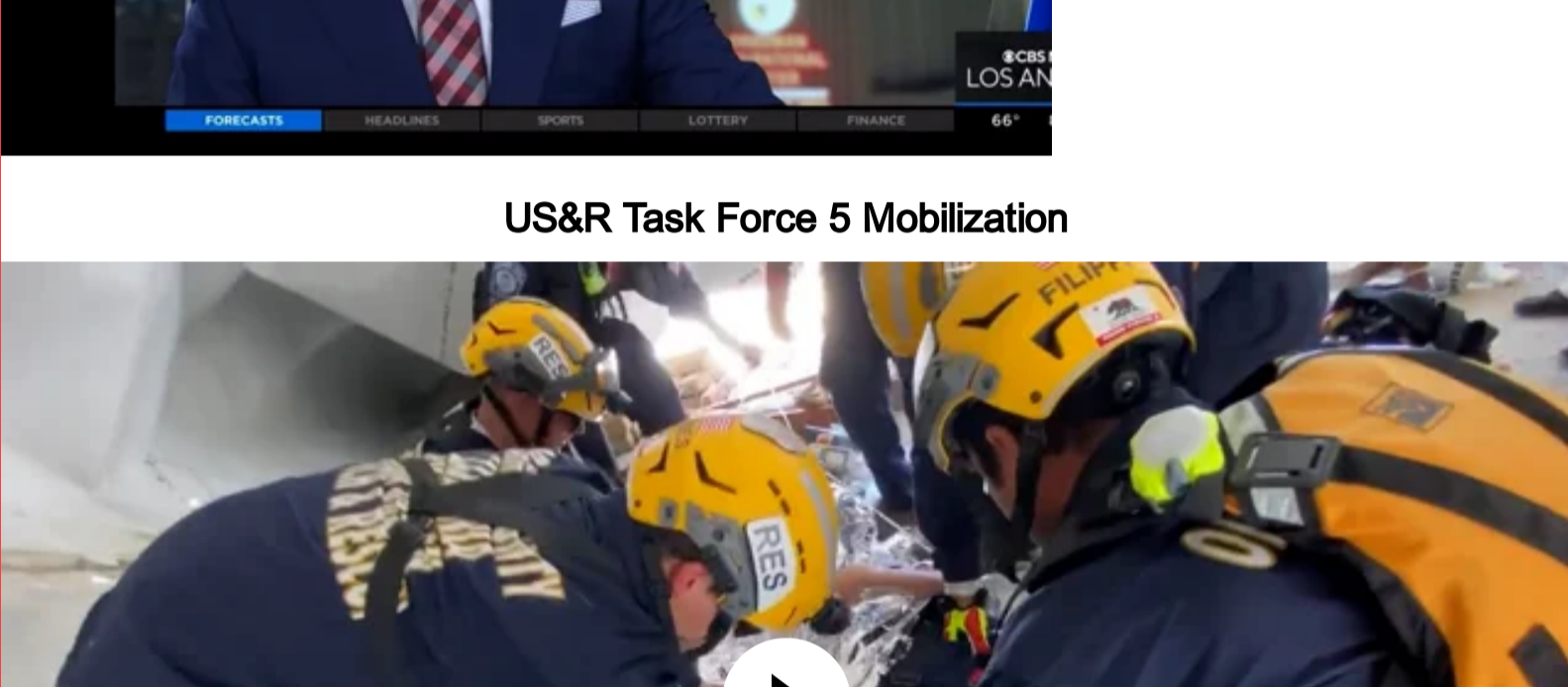
Natural Communities Coalition Quarterly

OCFA's Community Risk Reduction was featured in the first edition of the Natural Communities Coalition newsletter. We appreciate the opportunity to spread fire and vegetation management safety information through additional resources.

[Click Here to Download the Article](#)

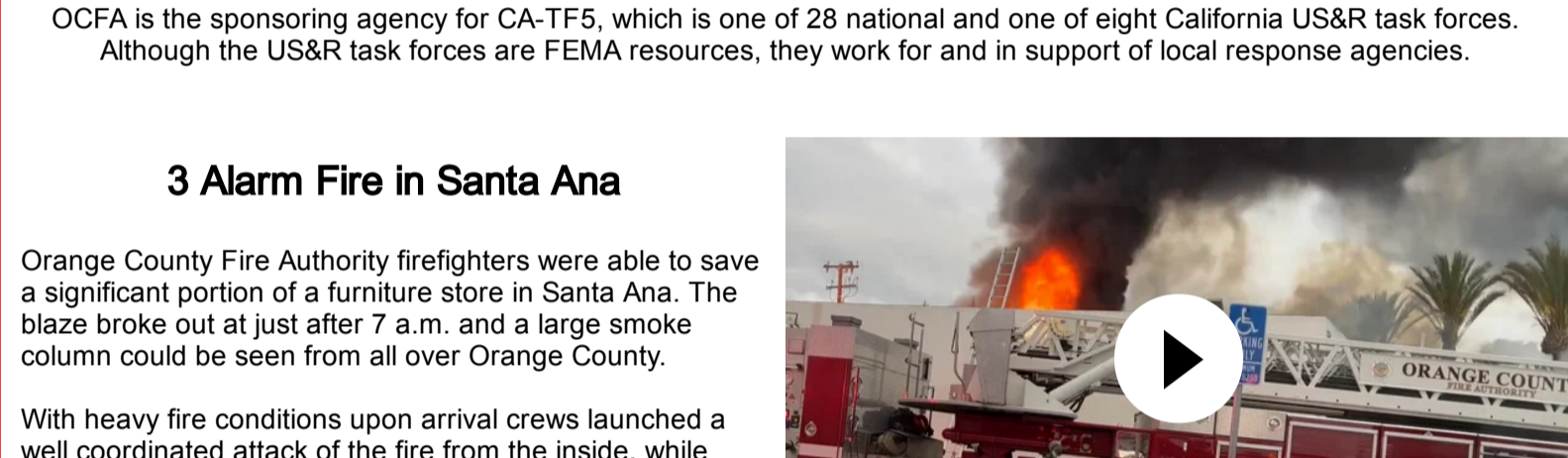


3 Alarm Fire in Garden Grove



On April 4, at 11:20 a.m. ECC received reports of a structure fire in Garden Grove. Firefighters initially went inside to search for people and confine the three alarm blaze. Due to the extreme fire conditions, crews were pulled out and they went into a defensive mode. No injuries were reported. It took firefighters two hours and a crane to get the fire under control. Fire investigators are on scene, and a cause has not been determined yet.

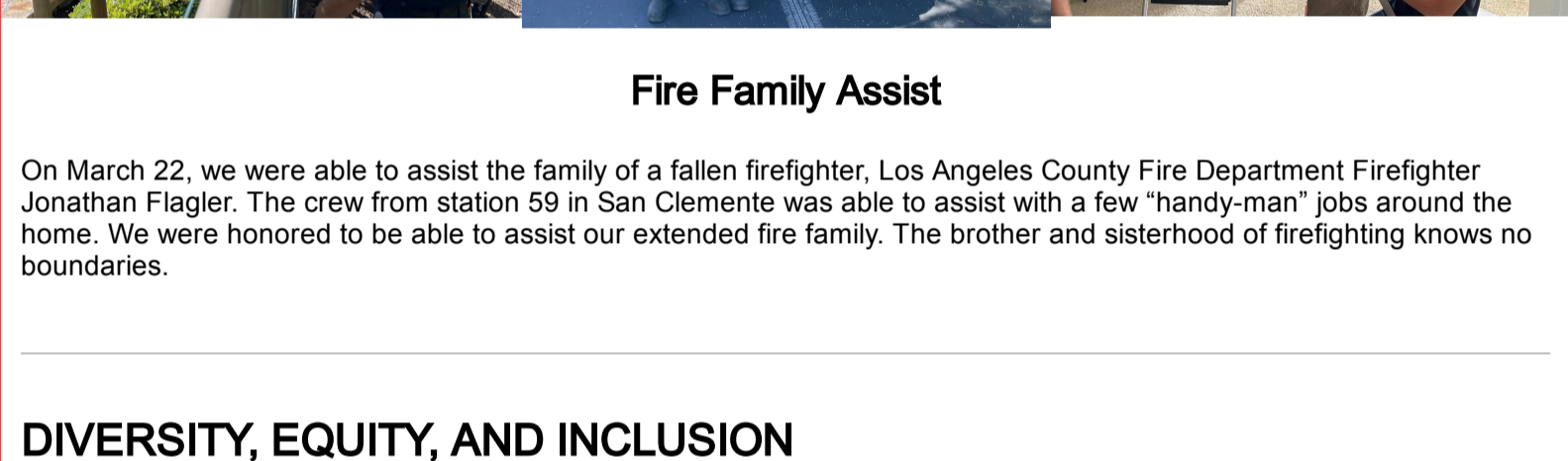
International Rescue Competition



In late March, members of our technical rescue team partook in a multi-day event where teams from all over the world competed on the Battleship USS Iowa.

The goal of the competition was to, "foster learning and collaboration within the global rescue community, knowing that as teams work to sharpen their skills and respond capabilities, rescues become safer and increasingly successful for everyone involved."

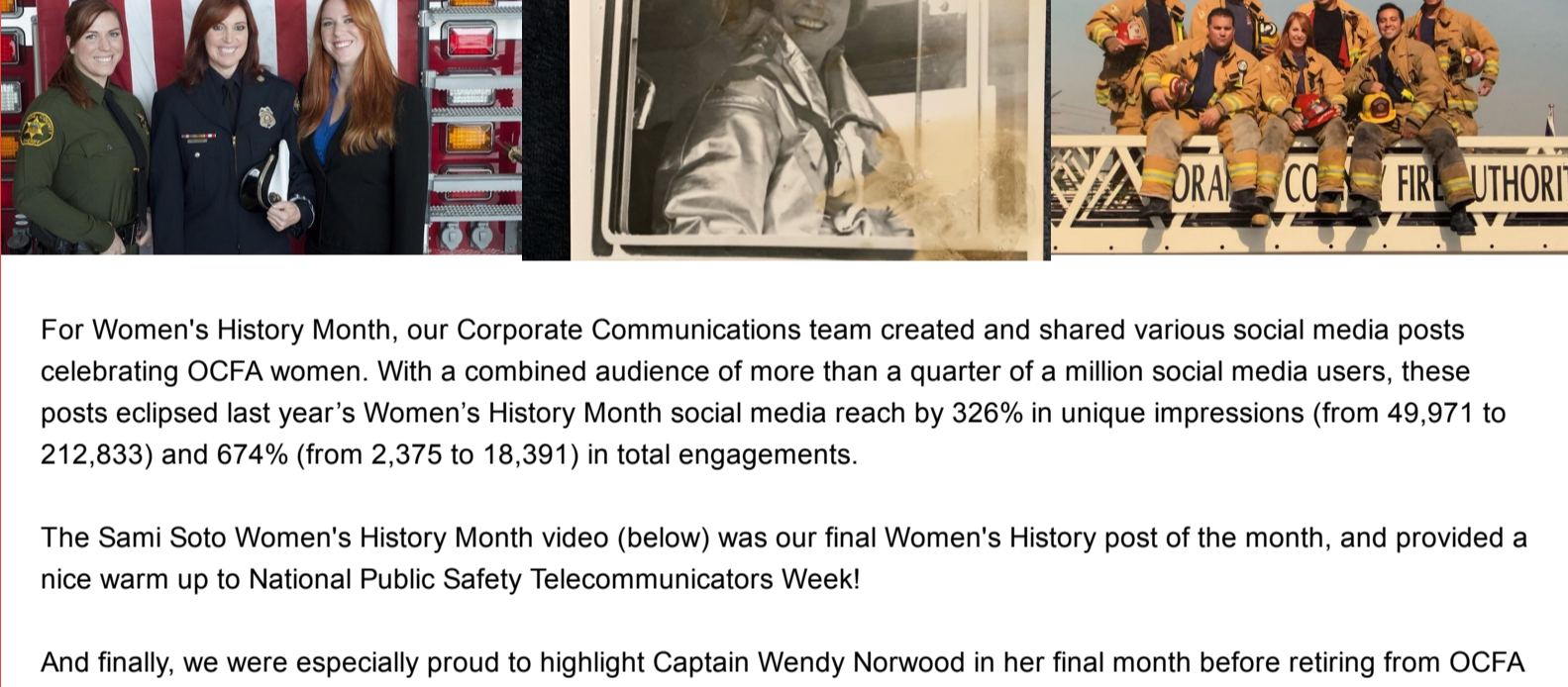
US&R Horse Training



Our Urban Search & Rescue US&R technical rescue firefighters received hands-on training this month with the Shea Center as a result of the relationship established with the equine community through an extremely technical rescue.

Training as a team with their experts, volunteers, and local veterinarians builds upon our commitment to provide exceptional emergency and support services to our community.

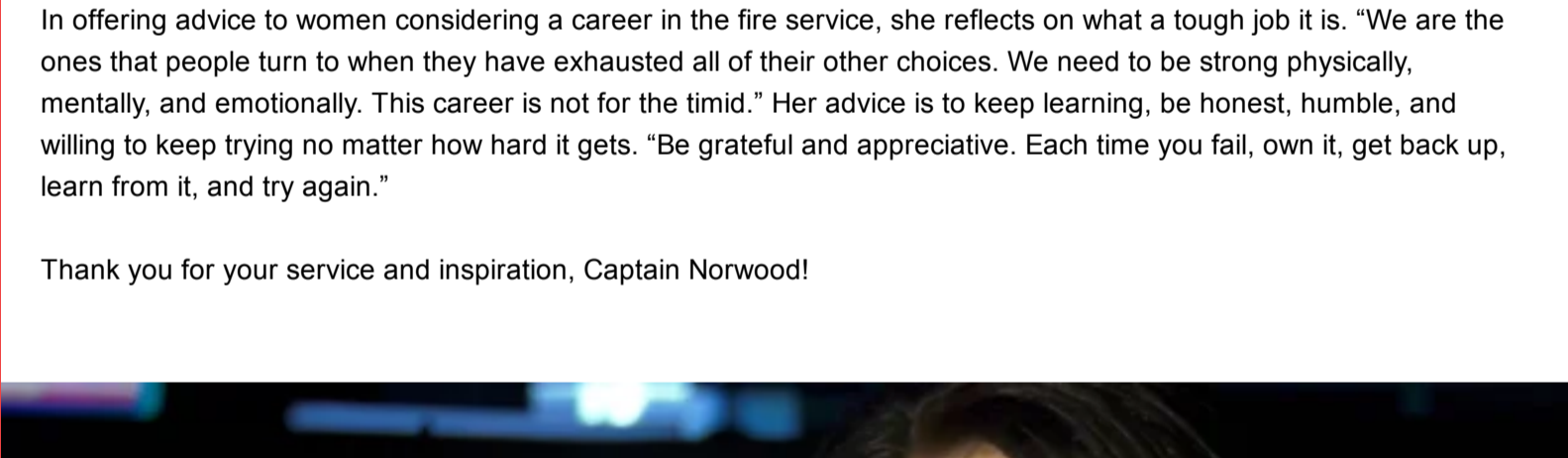
US&R Task Force 5 Mobilization



US&R California Task Force 5 recently executed a full-scale mobilization exercise – deploying from Orange County to San Diego for a hurricane response drill scenario. CA-TF5 members performed search and rescue at De Anza Point, which, as part of the scenario, was only accessible by boat due to flooding and debris. This exercise was funded by California Fire Rescue Training Authority in partnership with CALFIRE.

OCFA is the sponsoring agency for CA-TF5, which is one of 28 national and one of eight California US&R task forces. Although the US&R task forces are FEMA resources, they work for and in support of local response agencies.

3 Alarm Fire in Santa Ana



Orange County Fire Authority firefighters were able to save a significant portion of a furniture store in Santa Ana. The blaze broke out at just after 7 a.m. and a large smoke column could be seen from all over Orange County.

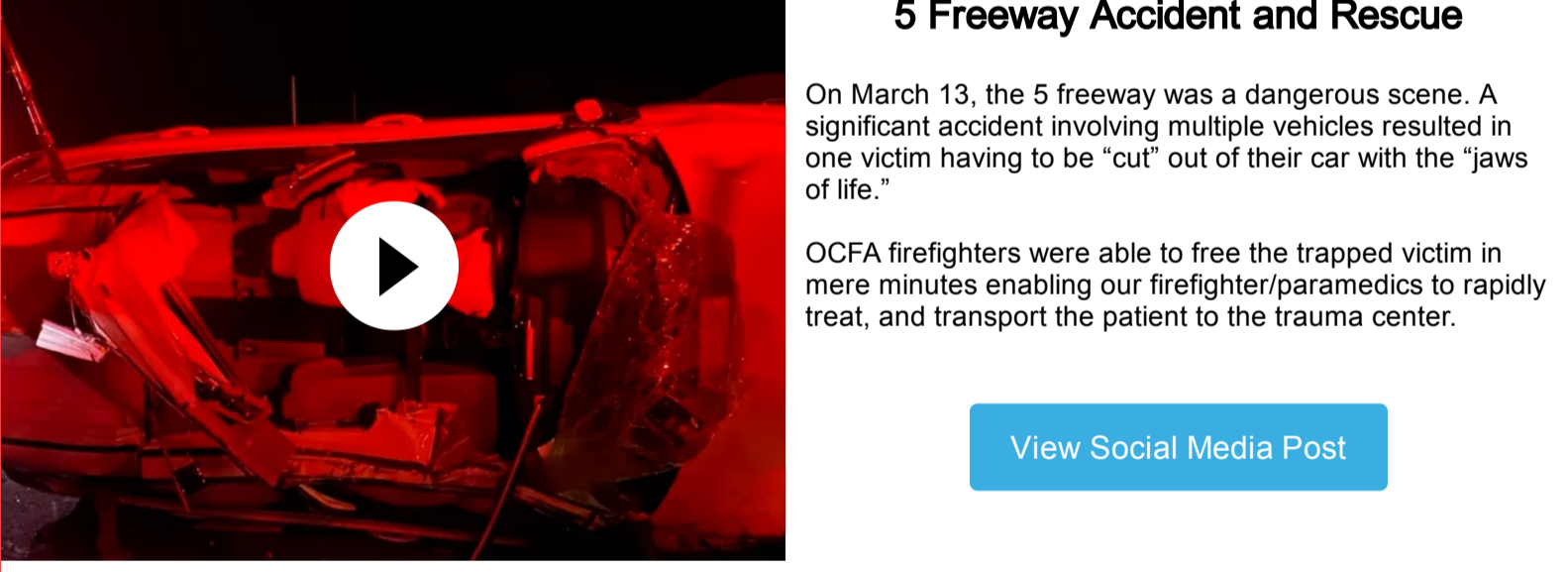
With heavy fire conditions upon arrival crews launched a well coordinated attack of the fire from the inside, while firefighters on the roof performed vertical ventilation "cuts" to make conditions more tenable and aid in limiting fire spread.

Fire Family Assist

On March 22, we were able to assist the family of a fallen firefighter. Los Angeles County Fire Department Firefighter Jonathan Flagler. The crew from station 59 in San Clemente was able to assist with a few "handy-man" jobs around the home. We were honored to be able to assist our extended fire family. The brother and sisterhood of firefighting knows no boundaries.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Women's History Month



For Women's History Month, our Corporate Communications team created and shared various social media posts celebrating OCFA women. With a combined audience of more than a quarter of a million social media users, these posts eclipsed last year's Women's History Month social media reach by 326% in unique impressions (from 49,971 to 212,833) and 674% (from 2,375 to 18,391) in total engagements.

The Sami Soto Women's History Month video (below) was our final Women's History post of the month, and provided a nice warm up to National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week!

And finally, we were especially proud to highlight Captain Wendy Norwood in her final month before retiring from OCFA on March 25, 2022 - a perfect ending to our month-long Women's History Month celebration. Captain Norwood's post was one of our most popular social media entries of the month, and we are proud to share it below.

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Captain Wendy Norwood has been on the job for 40 years starting as a Reserve Firefighter with the Santa Ana Fire Department. She became a Paramedic in 1985, and later a Fire Captain in 1990.

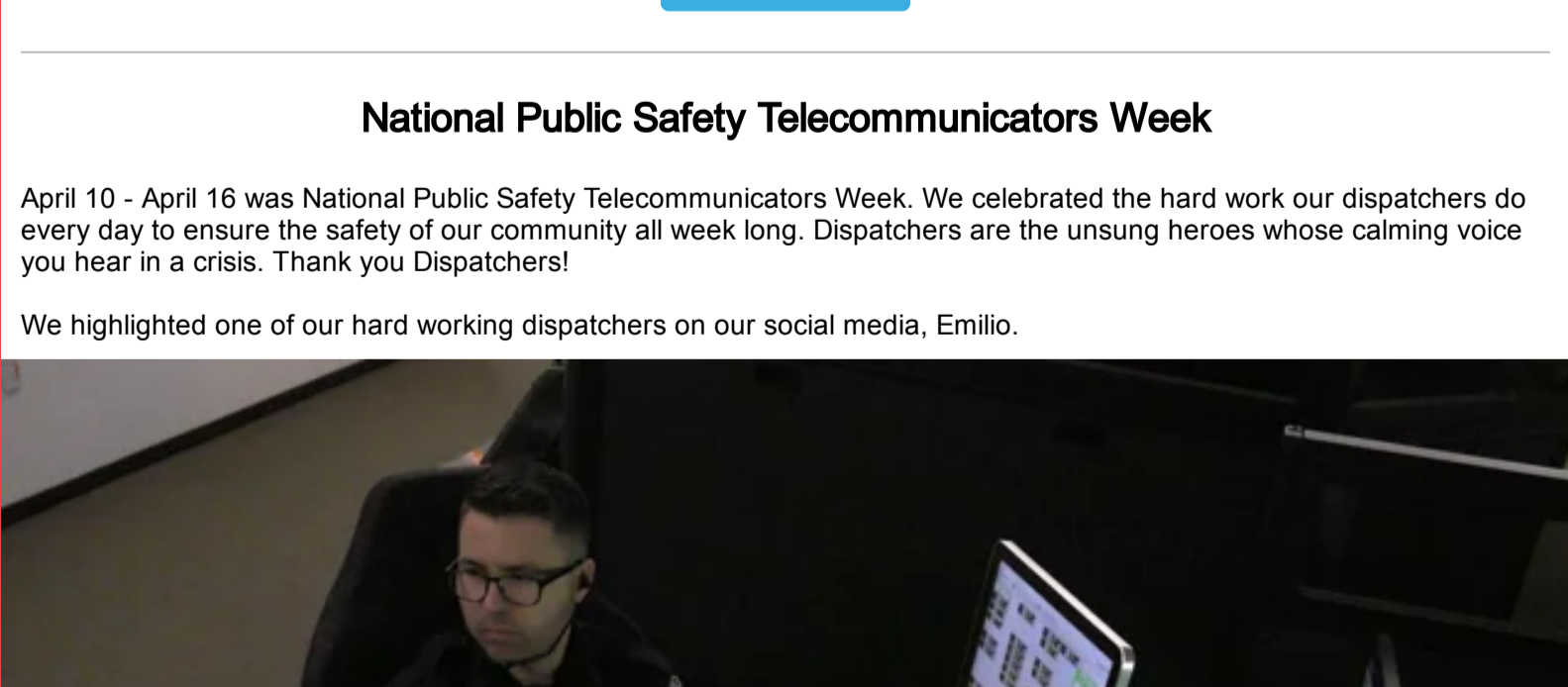
A heart of service runs in the Norwood family. Wendy is the mom of identical twin girls, Kendra and Lindsey, and she had already been a firefighter for seven years when they were born. "The girls don't know any life other than their mom being a firefighter and they all shared their lives around my schedule. If Christmas was a workday, we had Christmas on a different day and the same went for all of the other special days. They spent a lot of time in the fire station when they were young." Kendra is now an Orange County Sheriff's Department Deputy and Lindsey is the top Supervisor for the Costa Mesa Police Department's Crime Scene Unit.

Wendy remembers it being difficult in finding consistent childcare for her twins, but on the flipside, she remembers having many days off and was able to attend school functions and go on field trips with her girls.

She enjoys diving, surfing, playing guitar, and getting together with her daughters and brothers during her time away from work. Wendy had considered opening a dive shop in the Florida Keys if she had not begun her career in the fire service. She used to live and work in Hawaii as a dive master and instructor.

In offering advice to women considering a career in the fire service, she reflects on what a tough job it is: "We are the ones that people turn to when they have exhausted all of their other choices. We need to be strong physically, mentally, and emotionally. This career is not for the timid." Her advice is to keep learning, be honest, humble, and willing to keep trying no matter how hard it gets. "Be grateful and appreciative. Each time you fail, own it, get back up, learn from it, and try again."

Thank you for your service and inspiration, Captain Norwood!



Samantha Maria "Sami" Soto
ECC Communications Supervisor

SOCIAL MEDIA

OCFA's Corporate Communications personnel seek opportunities to share information of interest with the citizens we serve. Social media posts that attracted a high level of interest in the past month are featured below.

Over the past month we had:

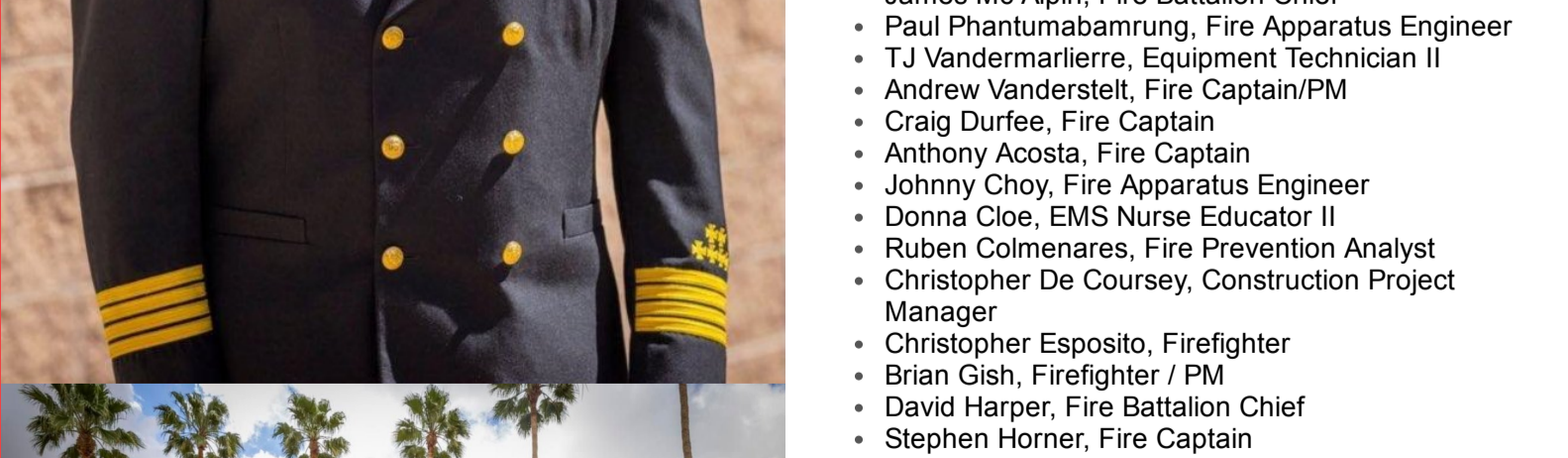
- Over 5 million impressions (eyes on our content)
- 398,067 engagements (interaction with our content)
- 1,095 link clicks/redirections

OCFA had increases in almost every category.

- Impressions (reach) went up by 2.9% this month
- Engagements (interactions) were up 27.7% this month
- Videos were up 42.6%



5 Freeway Accident and Rescue

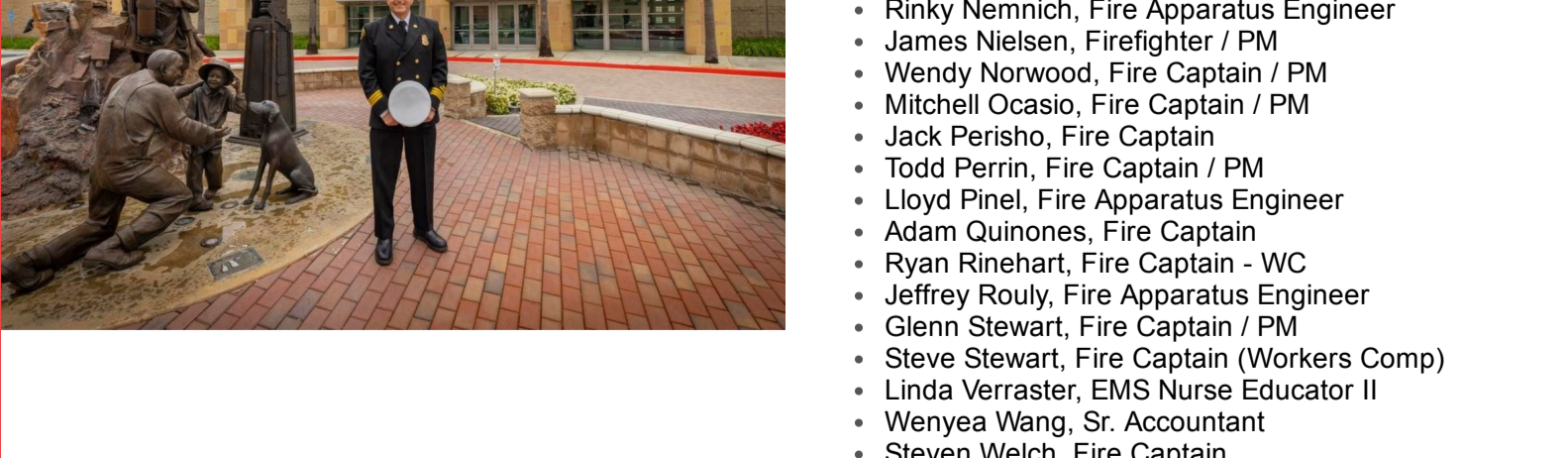


On March 13, the 5 Freeway was a dangerous scene. A significant accident involving multiple vehicles resulted in one victim having to be "cut" out of their car with the jaws of life.

OCFA firefighters were able to free the trapped victim in mere minutes enabling our firefighter/paramedics to rapidly treat, and transport the patient to the trauma center.

[View Social Media Post](#)

Dog and Owner Rescue



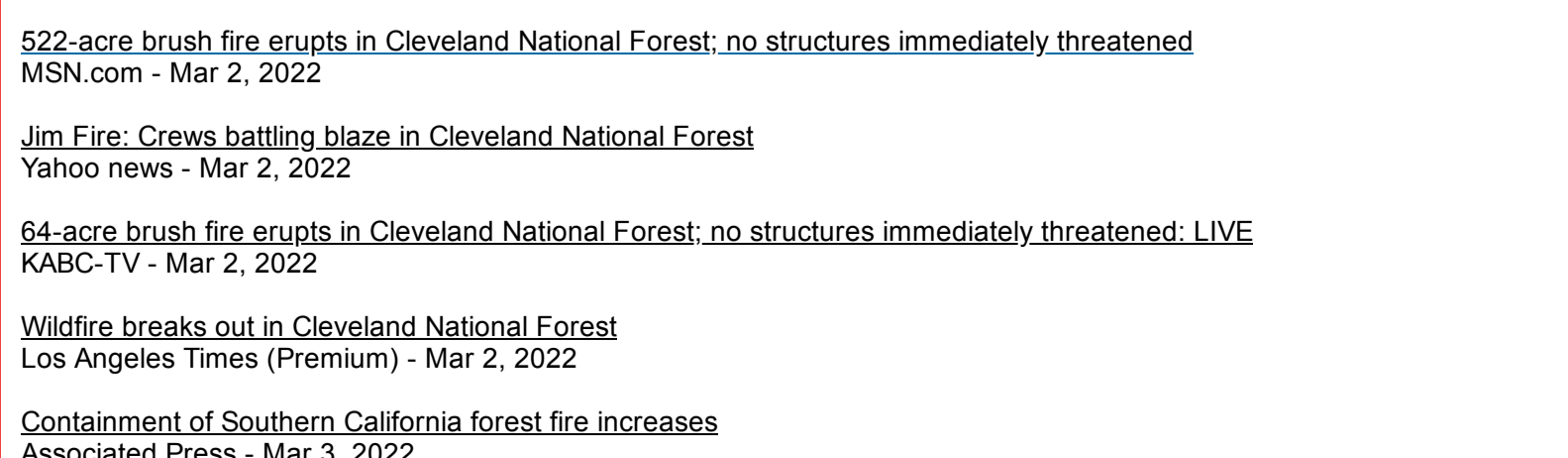
On March 21st our firefighters and technical rescue team members were able to rescue a dog and her owner when both became trapped on a steep hillside behind their home.

Harley fell down the hill and her owner attempted to go down and rescue her. Unfortunately, both became stranded.

After rescuing the pair and making sure they were both safe, the firefighters were able to chat with them for a few moments before loading up for the next call.

[View Social Media Post](#)

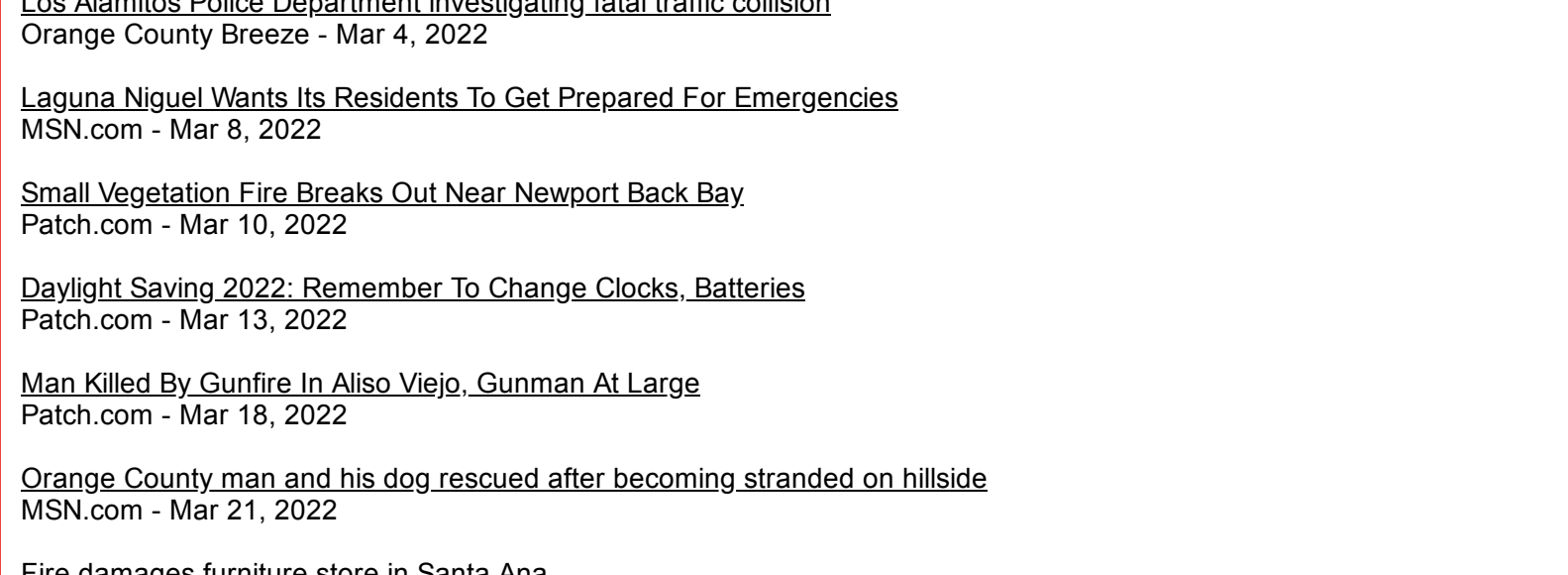
Health Screenings



The Human Resources Department has partnered with Longevity to provide direct access to preventive healthcare to our non-safety professionals and support employees. Already available to our firefighters, these on-site health screenings now empower non-safety personnel to guard against a number of common and preventable conditions including cardiovascular disease and cancer. The flyer detailing the 10 screenings is attached below.

[Download the Flyer](#)

Pass-Along Podcast



From the Orange County Fire Authority, we're reintroducing the Pass-Along Podcast! We address firefighter issues from top to bottom. On the newest episode of the Pass-Along Podcast, Deputy Chief Penny Gossey sits down with our new Assistant Chief of Operations T.J. McGovern. Chief McGovern discusses his plans and goals for his new position. Finally, Chief Gossey answers some questions from the field. Click the button below to listen to the newest episode.

[Listen Now!](#)

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

April 10 - April 16 were National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. We celebrated the hard work our dispatchers do every day to ensure the safety of our community all week long. Dispatchers are the unsung heroes whose calm voice you hear in a crisis. I thank you dispatchers!

We highlighted one of our hard working dispatchers on our social media. Emilio.

OCFA Dispatcher Spotlight

Retirements

January

- William Blumberg, Management Assistant
- Steve Klein, Facilities Maintenance Manager
- Bill Cron, Firefighter

February

- Mark Lundquist, Fire Captain

March

- Jeffrey Buckingham, Fire Captain
- Anthony Duchi, Fire Captain
- Dennis Gomez, Fire Battalion Chief
- James Mc Alpin, Fire Battalion Chief
- Paul Phamthabamrong, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- T.J. Vandermarlierre, Equipment Technician II
- Andrew Vandersels, Fire Captain/PM
- Craig Durfee, Fire Captain
- Anthony Acosta, Fire Captain
- Johnny Choy, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- Donna Cloe, EMS Nurse Educator II
- Ruben Colmanares, Fire Prevention Analyst
- Christopher De Courcy, Construction Project Manager
- Christopher Esposito, Firefighter
- Brian Gish, Firefighter / PM
- David Harper, Fire Battalion Chief
- Stephen Horner, Fire Captain
- Phillip Johnson, Assistant Chief/Operations
- Mitchell Kahn, Fire Captain
- Jane Lambert, EMS Nurse Educator II
- Stacy Lambert, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- Timothy Loya, Fire Captain
- Michael Moffitt, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- Susan Morris, Supply Services Specialist
- Ricky Nemnich, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- James Nielsen, Firefighter / PM
- Wendy Norwood, Fire Captain / PM
- Mitchell Ocasio, Fire Captain / PM
- Jack Penho, Fire Captain
- Todd Perra, Fire Captain / PM
- Lloyd Priel, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- Adam Quinones, Fire Captain
- Ryan Rinehart, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- Jeffrey Rouly, Fire Captain - IWC
- Glenn Stewart, Fire Captain / PM
- Steve Stewart, Fire Captain (Workers Comp)
- Linda Venarier, EMS Nurse Educator II
- Weny Wang, Sr. Accountant
- Steven Welch, Fire Captain
- Kelly Zimmerman, Fire Battalion Chief
- Gary Zumbo, Firefighter
- Christi Denton, EMS Nurse Educator II
- Michael Petro, Fire Division Chief

Orange County Fire Authority in the News

522-acre brush fire erupts in Cleveland National Forest; no structures immediately threatened
MSN.com - Mar 2, 2022

Jim Fire: Crews battling blaze in Cleveland National Forest
Yahoo news - Mar 2, 2022

64-acre brush fire erupts in Cleveland National Forest; no structures immediately threatened. LIVE
KABC-TV - Mar 2, 2022

Wildfire breaks out in Cleveland National Forest
Los Angeles Times (Premium) - Mar 2, 2022

Containment of Southern California forest fire increases
Associated Press - Mar 3, 2022

OC Firefighters Battling Blaze Off Ortega Highway
KFI-AM - Mar 3, 2022

Firefighters achieve 15% containment of Jim fire in Cleveland National Forest
The Orange County Register - Mar 3, 2022

Pickup Truck Tumbles Down Tustin Embankment; OCFA Patch.com - Mar 4, 2022

Los Alamitos Police Department Investigating fatal traffic collision
Orange County Breeze - Mar 4, 2022

Samira Najati Wins 1st Residents To Get Prepared For Emergencies
MSN.com - Mar 8, 2022

San Juan Capistrano Fire Breaks Out Near Newport Back Bay
Patch.com - Mar 10, 2022

Daylight Saving 2022: Remember To Change Clocks, Batteries
Patch.com - Mar 13, 2022

Man Killed By Gunfire In Aliso Viejo, Gunman At Large
Patch.com - Mar 18, 2022

Orange County man and his dog rescued after becoming stranded on hillside
MSN.com - Mar 21, 2022

Fire damages furniture store in Santa Ana
The Orange County Register - Mar 25, 2022

Fire Damages Santa Ana (CA) Furniture Store
Fire Engineering Magazine - Mar 29, 2022

One Killed in Fire in Fire Department's Fire on 5 Freeway in Yorba Linda
MSN.com - Mar 31, 2022