



From the Fire Chief

Dear OCFA Family:

At last week's JPA Meeting, I shared a point of pride with our Board Directors that very few Fire Chiefs can claim: Our agency boasts the qualities of both a small-town, community-focused fire department known for its personal touch and a large, all-hazard metro that is recognized as a national model.

I have mountains of supporting stories that verify this paradoxical claim, but on this Thanksgiving Eve, I will share just two, both of which align with the season of gratitude and are further proofed in this Bulletin.

First, Chief Henry and Division 6 orchestrated the 5th Annual OCFA Dethi Turkey Giveaway & Senior Luncheon last week, providing a festive meal and a free turkey to area senior citizens. Founded in 2019 by the OCFA in collaboration with the Santa Ana Police Department Jail Team and the Dethi Center, this annual event has grown from just 35 giveaway turkeys in its first year to more than 150.

If that doesn't have the warmth and feel of a community-focused fire department, I'm not sure what does.

At the same time, the University of California announced what quickly became a national news story, one in which the OCFA was and is front and center: A \$6 million research award aimed at reducing cancer among firefighters.

Indeed, with OCFA Fire Captain Derek Biering serving as a co-principal investigator on one of the grant projects (Understanding PFAS Exposure) and my role as the Chair of FIRESCOPE, the state advisory program that works with the UC in administering these grants through the California Firefighter Cancer Prevention and Research Program, our agency is at the forefront of the work.

And if that doesn't encapsulate the power and pull of a national model in the fire service, again, I'm not sure what does.

Each of these two wildly different stories is as important as it is impactful, and any Fire Chief would be grateful to lead an agency that could claim such work. To be sure, many can, as small-town departments around the nation are engaged in similar community-based traditions, just as countless large-scale metros are leading national conversations aimed at improving the fire service and the lives of its members.

However, very few Fire Chiefs can boast that their firefighters and professional staff are equally and concurrently succeeding in each of these traditionally dichotomous arenas, serving as both a small town, personal fire department in their communities, and a large, all-risk model of best practices throughout the nation.

Because of your work and commitment, I am one of those Fire Chiefs, and on this Thanksgiving Eve, it is my honor to share my gratitude. Thank you for continuously evolving in both good and challenging times. Thank you for breathing new life into our mission and values.

And, of course, thank you for elevating this agency to new heights, both locally and nationally.

It is one of life's greatest honors to serve with you, and I wish you and your loved ones a safe, warm, and relaxing Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,
Brian Fennessy
Fire Chief

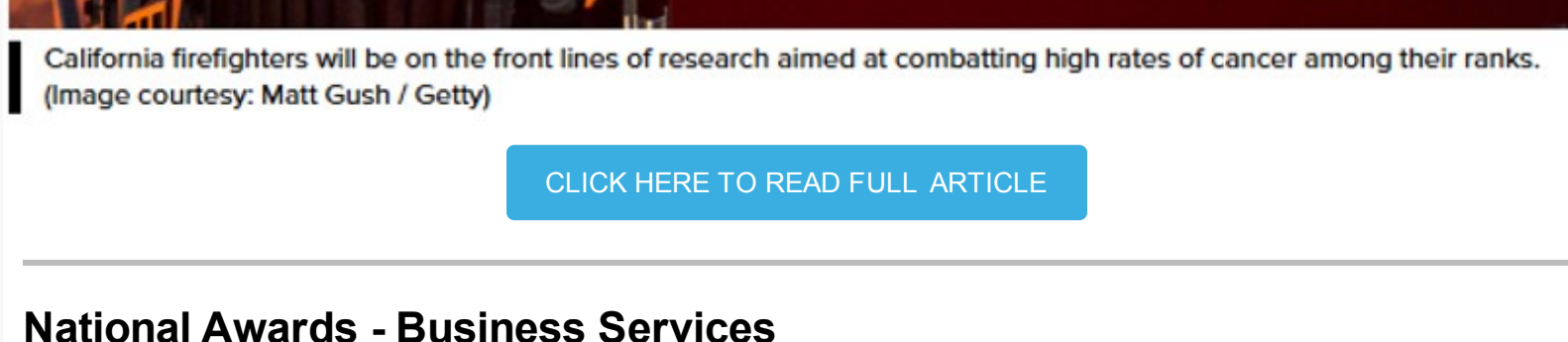
MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT - EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

Quarterly Size Up - August, September, October

On Tuesday, October 12, Deputy Chief McGovern presented the most recent Quarterly Size Up to the Board Directors on the Operations Committee. As per usual, the video was subsequently shared on all social media platforms and at select City Council meetings. Click below to watch the latest Size Up!

UC Awards \$6M to Research Cancer Among Firefighters

On Tuesday, November 19, the UC awarded \$6M to research cancer risks among firefighters with OCFA Fire Captain Derek Biering serving as a co-principal investigator on one of the funded projects (Understanding PFAS Exposure). Serving as the Chair of FIRESCOPE, Chief Fennessy also played an integral role in this in bringing this life-saving research to fruition.



California firefighters will be on the front lines of research aimed at combating high rates of cancer among their ranks. (Image courtesy: Matt Gush / Getty)

[CLICK HERE TO READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

National Awards - Business Services

At our recent JPA meeting, Business Services Department staff were recognized for achieving three national awards. First, the OCFA Budget Team (left) was recognized with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 15th consecutive year. Next, our Procurement Team (middle) was honored with the National Procurement Institute's Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award for the 14th consecutive year. And finally, our Finance Division was recognized with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 26th consecutive year. Congratulations to all the honorees!



San Clemente Exchange Club Firefighter of the Year

On November 19, the San Clemente Exchange Club honored Fire Captain Brandon Zinsmeister as "Firefighter of the Year." With almost three decades of service, Captain Zinsmeister is deeply involved in our communities, both at his home Station 50, and in wildland firefighting as a Hostet and Assistant Superintendent for our members. Congratulations, Captain Zinsmeister!



Spark of Love Holiday Toy Drive

Our 2024 Holiday Toy Drive is off and running thanks to our Community Education Team, Firefighters, and all the volunteers who have stepped up for children in need this holiday season. We will be accepting new, unwrapped toys at all our stations now through 12/13. Additionally, OCFA and KWAVE will have several toy collection events where we welcome all to bring new, unwrapped toys, including Saturday, December 7th from 10am to 2pm at Walmart 951 Avenida Pico, San Clemente!

For more info visit: ocfa.org/toydrive
Bring new and unwrapped toys to one of our fire stations through December 13

[Full Memo and Toy Plan](#) | [Volunteer to Pick-Up Toys](#) | [OCFA Spark of Love Website](#)

Handcrew Firefighter Andrew Brown's Homecoming

On Friday, November 15, Andrew Brown, one of the eight OCFA Hand Crew members injured in the accident on September 19th, returned to Orange County after six weeks of successful rehabilitation at Craig Hospital in Colorado. Accompanied on his flight home by OCFA firefighters, Andrew walked into the arms of his family and friends awaiting his arrival at the airport.

Andrew is quick to thank his family, OCFA Local 3631, the Benevolent Association, and the seven Hand Crew firefighters who endured the accident with him, citing their support of each other and the need to continue rallying around them, particularly the one injured member who remains at Craig Hospital. Click the thumbnail for the full reunion and the button below to donate to the Fallen Firefighter Relief Fund set up for the injured Hand Crew firefighters.

Today, he walked off the plane at John Wayne Airport and was greeted by the OCFA Fire Family.

[Support the OCFA Handcrew FF Relief Fund](#)

Joint Active Shooter Training Exercise

On November 11th, OCFA partnered with the Seal Beach Police Department and other fire departments for a joint active shooter training exercise at McCaughey Elementary. Through a realistic scenario, firefighters and officers worked side by side to enhance coordination, communication, and response strategies. Click below to watch portions of this critical training.

Sensitive Content Warning:
The following video depicts a TRAINING surrounding school shootings.

Holiday Cooking Safety Press Conference

On November 21, the OCFA hosted several media partners for our annual Holiday Cooking Safety Press Conference, sharing tips and data to help our communities stay safe this holiday season. Click below to see NBC's coverage of the event.

OCFA DEMONSTRATES HOLIDAY COOKING SAFETY TIPS

In Memoriam

On Saturday, October 10th, Chief Fennessy and several OCFA firefighters and professional staff attended the memorial services for IT Division Manager Joel Brodowski, who passed away in September after a short but courageous battle with cancer. Click below to watch a short video of the services in Joel's honor.

Photo Album of Joel's Service and Celebration of Life

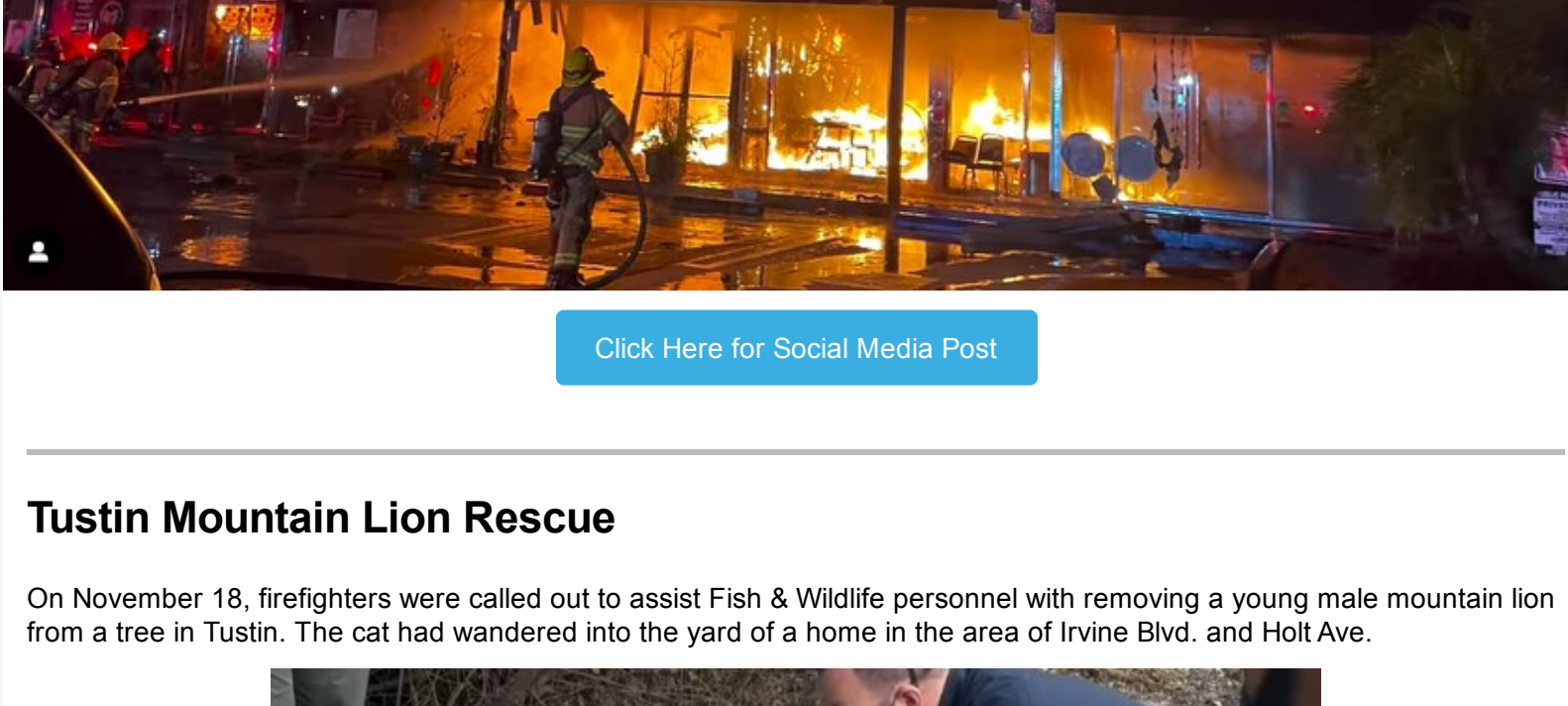
SOCIAL MEDIA

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Top Social Media Posts

Three-Alarm Fire in Garden Grove

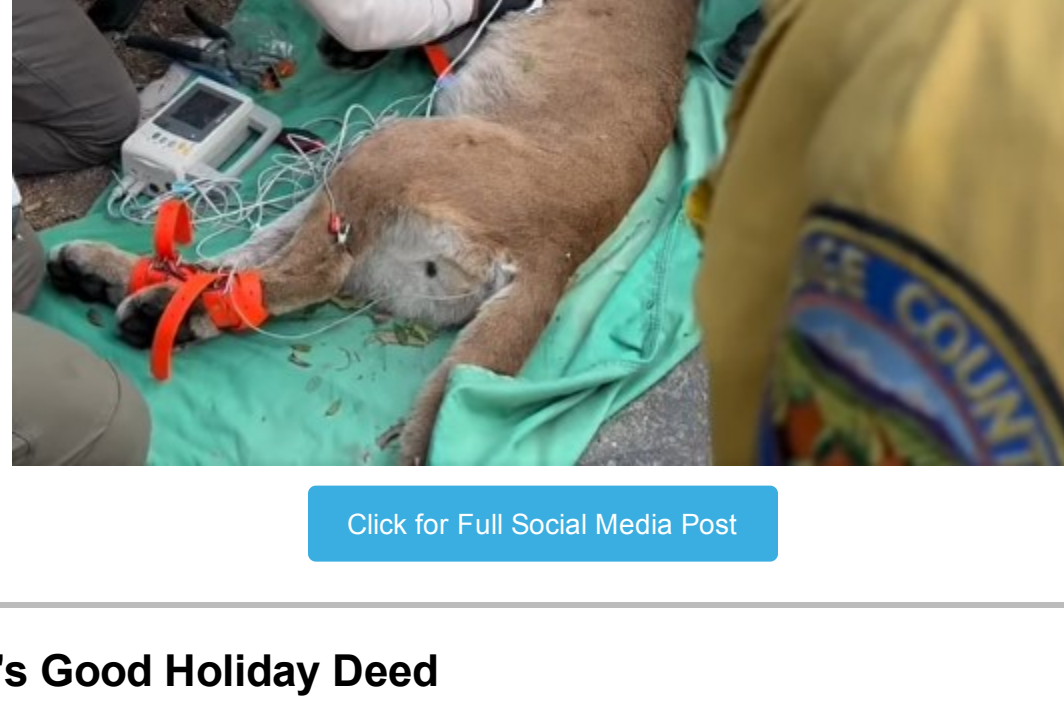
On November 6, OCFA firefighters responded to a fierce blaze ripping through a strip mall in Garden Grove. Upon arrival, flames were rapidly running the length of the building, engulfing multiple units. Acting swiftly, our firefighters ensured no one was inside and launched an aggressive attack on the fire...



[Click Here for Social Media Post](#)

Tustin Mountain Lion Rescue

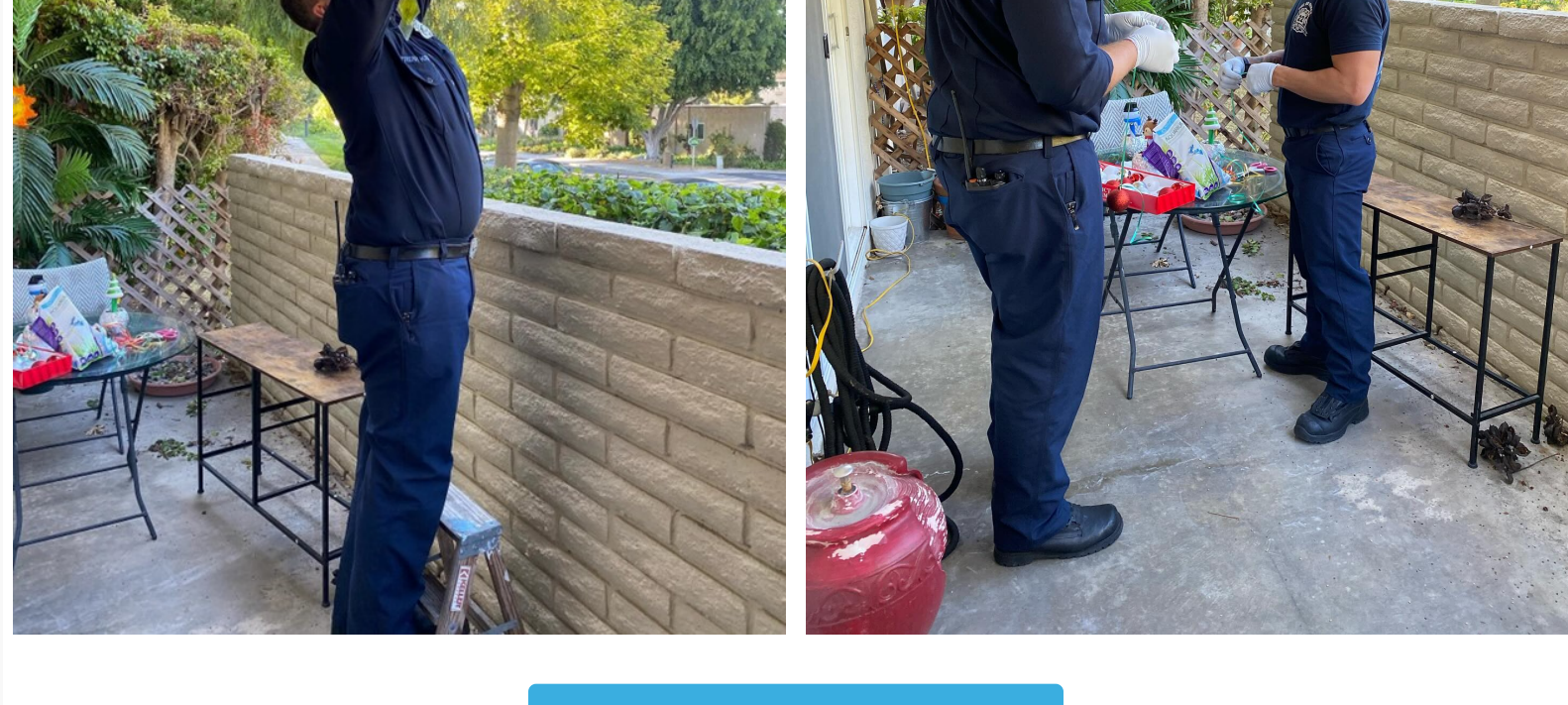
On November 18, firefighters were called out to assist Fish & Wildlife personnel with removing a young male mountain lion from a tree in Tustin. The cat had wandered into the yard of a home in the area of Irvine Blvd. and H&A Ave.



[Click for Full Social Media Post](#)

Engine 222's Good Holiday Deed

On November 22, Engine 222 responded to a call involving a retired nurse who had fallen while trying to hang her Christmas decorations. After ensuring she was safely on her way to the hospital, the crew carefully hung her reborns and ornaments exactly as she had envisioned—three bulbs per reborn!



[Click Here for Full Social Media Post](#)

Orange County Fire Authority in the News

- Evacuations ordered as Line Fire flares up again; progress seen with other wildfires**
Yahoo! News - Oct 1, 2024
- Emotional turnout for Southern California firefighter injured in rollover crash**
Yahoo! News - Oct 2, 2024
- 2 OCFA firefighters injured in crash transition to rehabilitation facilities, 2 more remain hospitalized**
The Orange County Register - Oct 2, 2024
- Head Of OC Agency Blamed For Starting Airport Fire Steps Down: Report**
Patch.com - Oct 3, 2024
- OC firefighter injured in rollover crash receives festive sendoff en route to Colorado rehab hospital**
MSN.com - Oct 3, 2024
- Head of O.C. agency that is blamed for starting Airport fire quietly leaves his job**
Yahoo! News - Oct 3, 2024
- OC firefighter who survived crash out of hospital**
Yahoo! News - Oct 4, 2024
- California firefighting aircraft stymied by U.S. Forest Service policy, local chiefs say**
MSN.com - Oct 4, 2024
- OCFA firefighter injured in violent rollover crash, released from the hospital**
CBS News - Oct 6, 2024
- Alleged arsonist arrested for setting brush fire in Lake Forest**
CBS News - Oct 6, 2024
- 1 in custody on suspicion of starting brush fire near Saddleback Church**
The Orange County Register - Oct 6, 2024
- Fire Burns Near South OC Church; Man Arrested In Connection**
Patch.com - Oct 7, 2024
- 'Electrical event' involving SCE power line caused destructive 2022 fire in Laguna Niguel, OCFA report claims**
The Orange County Register - Oct 8, 2024
- Southern California Authorities Arrest 2 Suspects Connected to Recent Fires**
The Epoch Times - Oct 8, 2024
- OCFA cadet who survived cancer hospitalized in coma after crash with DUI driver**
MSN.com - Oct 11, 2024
- O.C. fire cadet in critical condition after being hit by DUI driver**
Yahoo! News - Oct 12, 2024
- 7 Displaced By Santa Ana Apartment Fire**
Patch.com - Oct 13, 2024
- OCFA cadet remains hospitalized in ICU after crash with alleged DUI driver**
CBS News - Oct 13, 2024
- With Southern California's 3 big wildfires just about out, an update on the havoc they've caused**
The Mercury News - Oct 14, 2024
- OC Firefighter Cadet Critically Injured in DUI Crash**
Patch.com - Oct 14, 2024
- Chief Brian Fennessy: President Of The California Fire Chiefs Association And Head Of Orange County Fire Authority**
Substack - Oct 17, 2024
- Pedestrian in Santa Ana dies after hit-and-run crash, then being struck by another car**
The Orange County Register - Oct 20, 2024
- Pedestrian killed in Orange County hit-and-run crash**
KTTV FOX 11 LA - Oct 22, 2024
- Cause of fire that destroyed Laguna Canyon Road Sunday remains under investigation**
Los Angeles Times - Oct 23, 2024
- Watch: Firefighters rescue parrot, owner's brother from California tree**
MSN.com - Oct 25, 2024
- Orange County unveils new aerial firefighting weapon**
MSN.com - Oct 28, 2024

Promotions

PROMOTIONS

- Gregg Boydston, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- Brandon Maisey, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- Benjamin Pasqua, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- Christopher Chang, Fire Captain
- James Lira, Fire Communications Dispatcher
- Gabriel Sanchez, Assistant Hand Crew Superintendent

20 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Bryan Healey, Deputy Fire Marshal

30 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Craig Covey, Fire Division Chief
- Michael Morganstern, Fire Battalion Chief