

**AGENDA**  
**SAN RAFAEL FIRE COMMISSION**

**Wednesday, October 11, 2023 @ 4:00 P.M.**  
**Public Safety Center, Lobby Conference Room**  
**1375 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901**

Watch on Zoom: <https://cityofsanrafael-org.zoom.us/j/83441506482>

Webinar ID: 834 4150 6482

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*Members of the Public May Speak on Agenda Items*

**1. Open Time for Public Expression**

The public is welcome to address the Fire Commission at this time on matters not on the agenda that are within its jurisdiction. Please be advised that pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2, the Fire Commission is not permitted to discuss or take action on any matter not on the agenda unless it determines that an emergency exists, or that there is a need to take immediate action which arose following posting of the agenda. Comments may be no longer than two minutes and should be respectful to the community.

**2. Approval of Minutes – September 13, 2023**

*Recommended Action: Amend and or approve as submitted.*

**3. Brown Act**

*City Attorney Genevieve Coyle*

**4. Fire Foundation – Verbal Update from Commissioner Donna McCusker**

*Recommended Action: Accept Verbal Report and take appropriate action.*

**5. Current Media Coverage**

*Informational only. No action to be taken.*

**6. Chair and Commission Member Reports:**

-  Stan Burford– Chair
-  David Fonkalsrud- Vice Chair
-  Ken Johnson
-  Thomas Weathers
-  Donna McCusker, Alternate

*Informational only. No action to be taken on these items.*

**7. Fire Chief Report**

*Informational only. No action to be taken.*

Any records relating to an agenda item, received by a majority or more of the board or commission less than 72 hours before the meeting, shall be available for inspection at San Rafael Fire Department's Administrative Office, 1375 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, CA. Sign Language interpreters and assistive listening devices may be requested by calling (415) 485-3066 (voice), emailing [Lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:Lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org) or using the California Telecommunications Relay Service by dialing "711", at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request. Public transportation is available through Golden Gate Transit, Line 22 or 23. Paratransit is available by calling Whistlestop. Wheels at (415) 454-0964. To allow individuals with environmental illness or multiple chemical sensitivity to attend the meeting/hearing, individuals are requested to refrain from wearing scented products.

**CITY OF SAN RAFAEL**

**FIRE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

September 13, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

In Person Meeting at 1375 Fifth Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Stan Burford.

Present:

Chair Stan Burford

Commissioner Donna McCusker

Commissioner Ken Johnson

Deputy Fire Chief Abraham Roman

Commissioner Dave Fonkalsrud

**1. Open Time for Public Expression**

No public comments

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Burford makes a motion to approve the draft minutes.

Motion approved.

Chair Burford moved to adopt the draft minutes.

The minutes were adopted unanimously.

**3. Fire Foundation**

Commissioner McCusker talks on crab feed and the need for donations as well as volunteers.

She also mentions a couple of ideas the department could do:

- Therapy Dogs
- Pancake breakfast

**4. Current Media Coverage**

Chair Burford shares a couple of articles

Commissioner Fonkalsrud also shares an article found on

**5. Commissioners' Report**

Commissioner Fonkalsrud touches base on ride-along.

Commissioner Fonkalsrud also discusses community outreach on social media as well as movies at the park in Gerstyle Park

Commissioner Johnson references a couple of articles and talks on increase of insurance.

**6. Fire Chief's Report**

Chief Roman provides an overview of the Fire Chief's Report and answers any questions pertaining to it

Meeting adjourned at 4:54pm

DRAFT

Larry Luckham <larry@luckham.com>

9/12/2023 2:28 PM

re: interesting technology

Darin White <darin.white@cityofsanrafael.org>

Stan Burford (sjburf@comcast.net) <sjburf@comcast.net>

I came across this interesting technology from Japan. I can see it as being a better solution than common sprinklers in some limited situations.

<https://fb.watch/m-p4f7EiRC/>



Larry

TRENDING: Auburn man sentenced to prison for assaulting officers



SEARCH 🔍



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ENTERTAINMENT

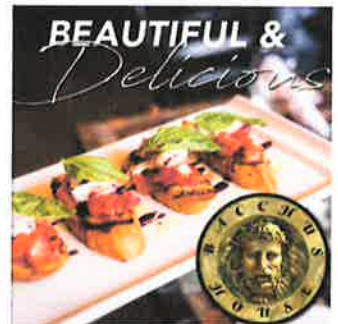
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# VIDEO: BLITZ EARNS HIS OFFICIAL FOLSOM FIRE DEPARTMENT BADGE

Posted by Bill Sullivan | Apr 11, 2023 10:42 pm | Community News





### Celebration includes Chamber ribbon cutting for Hearts 4 Heroes organization

Tuesday ended much like it began for Folsom based charity Hearts 4 Heroes USA, with plenty of celebration amidst a special dedication.



Surrounded by members of the community and local dignitaries just after the five-o'clock hour at Folsom's Fire Station 39 were Shelley and Bruce Martell,



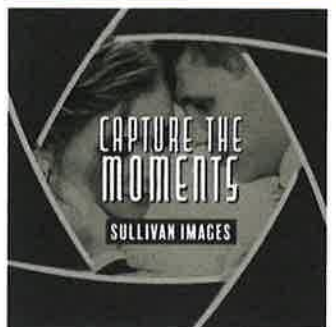
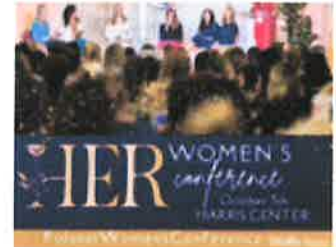
Founders the local organization for two different purposes.



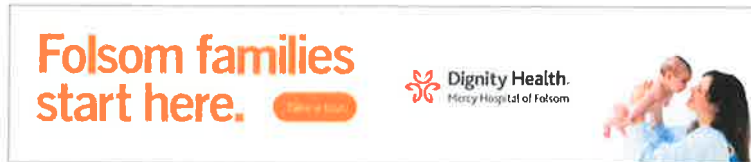
**Watch as the Folsom Fire Department presents Blitz the Therapy Dog with his official FFD pin. Folsom Times Video**

One, to celebrate National Therapy Dog Appreciation Day by honoring Blitz the Folsom Fire Department's therapy dog with the issuing of his official Folsom Fire Department badge. The other, was the official Folsom Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting for Hearts 4 Heroes after its first year of success.

Hearts 4 Heroes was founded by Bruce and Shelley Martell. The organization fully funds all aspects for the dogs and handlers at each station and hospital, with in-house on-site training and group training continued weekly and biweekly.



Their professional teams are committed to the wellness for the dogs and handlers at all times with open communication and training services.



When it comes to the evening event, it was the second event of its type Tuesday, after the local non-profit organization joined Mercy Hospital of Folsom to honor their therapy dog, Cinders. Both dogs were provided by the Hearts 4 Heroes Paw Platoon.

Blitz, came to the Folsom Fire Department after nearly five years of commitment and goals set forth by the Martell family and their unique Paw Platoon program.

“We just really want to help bring their stress level down and make it easier for all of our heroes on the line,” says Martell. “We are very thankful to be able to partner with Folsom and bring a therapy dog into their life.”



SEARCH ...

UPCOMING EVENTS

- SEP 14 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm **FOLSOM GROM RACE SERIES**
- SEP 15 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm **SNOOKS 60TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY**
- SEP 16 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm **RED BUS COMEDY NIGHT**



After months of on the job and off the job training, Blitz has become a member of the Folsom Fire Department’s Peer Support Team that comes together all in the name of mental and emotional health, something that affects many first responders. While he has already provided plenty of support while in training, the energetic Golden Doodle is now an official member of the team following Tuesday’s dedication.

“I would like to thank the community of Folsom for their support, it has been a pivotal year for our organization in one year we have come so far, said Bruce Martell. “This was just an ideal a little over a year ago. I really want to thank the Folsom Fire Department for standing by us and believing in us.”

In conjunction with the dedication of Blitz Tuesday evening, The Folsom Chamber of Commerce presented Hearts 4 Heroes USA with their official ribbon cutting. Attendees and dignitaries stepped outside to celebrate the ribbon cutting in front of the fire station, where

SEP 8:00 am - 1:00 pm  
**17** **FARMERS MARKET | EVERY SUNDAY**

SEP 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
**21** **LADIES NIGHT IN HISTORIC FOLSOM**

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several dignitaries also honored the organization.

“Thank you everybody that just keeps just coming to us and stepping up, it seems like every time I turn around someone is there with a new idea and helping our foundation continued to pay it forward,” said Shelley Martell. “It really is overwhelming and a blessing.”

**(See the entire conversation with the Martell’s in above Folsom Times video)**



Among the presenters were representatives from the offices of Congressman Kevin Kiley, Assemblyman Josh Hoover, Assemblyman Roger Niello and County Supervisor Sue Frost. Multiple members of Folsom City Council were also on hand at the celebration, prior to their Tuesday night meeting.

“Blitz helps us all every day,” said Folsom Fire Division Chief Chad Wilson. “We don’t

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realize what type of help we need or how we are impacted by our jobs every day until we have relief and Blitz has definitely extended that to us.”

To learn more about the Hearts 4 Heroes program or to donate and more, visit its website at [www.hearts4heroesusa.org](http://www.hearts4heroesusa.org).



Folsom Times Photos: Bill Sullivan

AUTHOR: [BILL SULLIVAN](#)

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VIDEO: A Dog's Day, literally, at Folsom's Mercy Hospital

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9/5/2023 3:48 PM

# Folsom FD Therapy Dog

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stephenmizroch@gmail.com

<https://folsomtimes.com/video-blitz-earns-his-official-folsom-fire-department-badge/>

May it suffice to say I am quite jealous?!?  
Which one of you 3 wish to step fwd?!?  
Ha!

I can dream big dreams, can I not? 😊

Donna McCusker  
Senior Vice President  
Portfolio Management Director

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<https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai/how-better-tech-could-save-lives-in-a-world-of-bigger-faster-more-devastating-fires-665c7fb5?mod=djemTECH>

# How Better Tech Could Save Lives in a World of Bigger, Faster, More Devastating Fires

We can already detect fires from space, soon after they start. Here's why we don't yet have a nationwide system for alerting us when they do—but could someday.

Christopher Mims Updated Sept. 2, 2023 at 12:02 am ET



Soon after the fire that would devastate Lahaina, Hawaii, sparked on the afternoon of Aug. 8, a U.S. government satellite 22,000 miles above the earth detected its ferocious heat.

That satellite is one of a pair belonging to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that also allow U.S. agencies to track hurricanes.

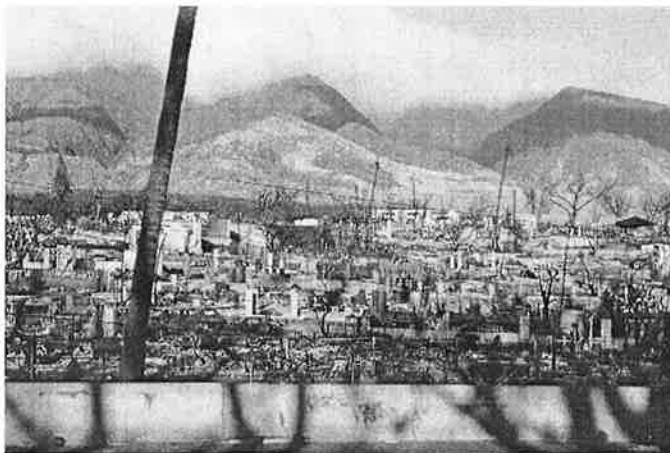
Someday, such space-based tools could be a key part of methods for rapid detection of fires across the entire U.S.

For now, the U.S. government doesn't have a robust capability to alert local authorities to such incidents. But various agencies, along with private companies, are working on it. Prototype systems have already rolled out, including NOAA's own Next Generation Fire System.

Indeed, a wide array of new technologies are being tested and deployed that can alert authorities minutes after a fire starts. These include tower-mounted cameras that use artificial intelligence to identify smoke, and sensors that are installed just above the forest floor, sniffing out fires using a kind of electronic nose.

"I can envision a day when your rural fire department might want to keep an eye on the next-generation fire system, or its successor," says Scott Lindstrom, a wildfire expert at University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The instrument on the satellite that automatically detected the Lahaina fire is so sensitive that it can sometimes detect when a single house catches fire.



The aftermath of last month's fire in Lahaina, Hawaii. Photo: Elyse Butler for The Wall Street Journal

We only know about its success in detecting the fire on Maui because Chris Schmidt, a researcher at the Space Science and Engineering Center at the

University of Wisconsin-Madison, analyzed the data it produced and gave a presentation on it.

Other new technologies allow fire agencies to determine what areas are at risk, and can help forest managers take steps to reduce the severity of future fires in those areas.

Collectively, these fire-prevention and fire-detection systems have the potential to be stitched into comprehensive “fire intelligence networks.” Already, early versions of these networks are rapidly informing the actions of firefighters. In the future, they might generate alerts that help us all cope with wildfires.

“I don’t think there is a silver-bullet solution to wildfires,” says Carsten Brinkschulte, chief executive of Dryad, a Berlin-based startup that makes tree-mounted sensors that can detect wildfires minutes after they’ve begun. “The problem is so big that we need to throw everything that we’ve got at the problem.”

## **America is a tinderbox**

The problem of wildfires in the U.S., especially in the West, is by some measures worse than at any other time in recorded history. Fires are bigger, hotter and more devastating, and the number of “megafires” that scorch more than 100,000 acres has increased sharply in the past decade.

## **Hotter, Drier, More Deadly: Fire Season in America's West**

**Higher winds and temperatures, lower moisture, more fuel and more homes in harm's way are making wildfires bigger and more dangerous than ever**

There’s evidence that early detection of fires is one of the most cost effective ways to tackle the problem of dangerous wildfires, says Matt Weiner, CEO of Megafire Action, a nonprofit founded to enact policy solutions to the megafire crisis.

To prevent future devastating fires, technology must be used in service of what we already know about managing landscapes to save lives and property: We need more fire, not less, but it has to be the right kind—what Weiner and others call “good fire.”

## **Separating good fire from bad**

“We have to do something drastically different in the next 10 years, or we’re going to lose it all,” says Eli Ilano, forest supervisor for Tahoe National Forest in California.

The system Ilano is using, called Land Tender, is made by a startup called Vibrant Planet. It’s one of a range of companies aiming to fight fires with data.

Land Tender creates maps of all the vegetation in an area, and its systems help forest supervisors and local communities figure out how to reduce their risk of catastrophic fire—in the most economical way. That means prescribed burns, which are fires deliberately started during the wet season, reduce the amount of fuel available to future fires, and mechanical thinning, which is just what it sounds like—removing trees and vegetation without clear-cutting an area, says Vibrant Planet CEO Allison Wolff.

Similarly, San Jose, Calif.-based AiDash is used by more than 80 utilities worldwide, to map and manage vegetation that may encroach on power lines, increasing the odds of outages and powerline-sparked fires, says CEO Abhishek Singh.



Firefighters work to put out a fire in the Lake Tahoe, Calif., area in 2021. Photo: Jason Bean/Associated Press

## **Pitfalls, opportunities in early detection**

Other startups offer technology that can make up for shortcomings of satellite-based systems, which have limitations due to the great altitudes where they operate.

**Cameras from Pano AI, mounted on cell towers, water tanks and other high points, can continuously scan in a circle 10 miles out**, says CEO Sonia Kastner. Images from the cameras are uploaded through cellular networks or internet connection and checked by software that can identify smoke. Once a human verifies that it's a fire, an alert is dispatched, via email and text, to customers including fire agencies. Many other companies offer competing camera-based technologies.



Pano AI's camera can automatically scan for smoke over 10 miles in all directions. Photo: Pano AI

For the most at-risk areas with the highest value, there are now options for detecting fires almost as soon as they start. One is Dryad Networks' solar-powered sensors, which can detect hydrogen, carbon monoxide and other gases,

and use built-in artificial intelligence to evaluate when their levels change in a way that indicates a fire has started nearby.

To communicate with authorities, Dryad Networks' sensors create a mesh network—like the ones now popular for spreading WiFi access across a home. But they use a different wireless protocol, called LoRa, which is good for low-power communication across long distances, and even as far as outer space.

Currently, the system is being tested in 50 different installations around the world, including one in a forest of redwoods by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

## **A future of firefighting robots and universal detection**

At least one company has proposed automatically dispatching drones to dump water on fires soon after they're detected, and others are trying variations on this idea.

But fighting fires remains a mostly low-tech affair. And all of the tech that can help with prevention and detection won't touch political hurdles to funding and staffing firefighting efforts.

Implementing the kind of continent-spanning alert system that could underlie future firefighting efforts would require more advanced satellites than the ones currently flying. On the ground, we would also need all the data-processing and communication infrastructure needed to get the right alerts to the right people, as quickly as possible.

It would be very hard to create such a system, says Schmidt, the researcher who analyzed the satellite data from the Lahaina fire. "With the caveat that I'm speaking for myself and not my employer, I absolutely believe we could build something like that," he adds. "It's just a question of whether or not we want to prioritize it."



As wildfires get more intense, early detection and notification will become increasingly important, experts say. Photo: Jae C. Hong/Associated Press

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