



Dry Creek Station burns despite firefighters' best efforts

For more photos and videos of the Dry Creek Station fire go to www.eastvalleytimes.com

—by Sharyn Cornelius

Early on the morning of Aug. 25, 2010, Bella Vista volunteer firefighters responded to a fire at the Dry Creek Station restaurant and bar that quickly became an exercise in frustration for them. Despite their best efforts and with plenty of water and manpower available, they saw their community's only restaurant reduced to rubble.

Bella Vista volunteer fire chief Ron Smith explained to us on Saturday that even though the local firefighters arrived at the scene of the 5:30 a.m. blaze in record time because they had just returned from a medical aid call, the fire had been burning inside the building's attic for some time. "It's as if you lit a match inside a



Fire fighters are driven off the roof by flames venting through the restaurant side of the building.

Photos by Judy La Russa

shoe box and put the cover back on," Smith said. "The fire burns at a low intensity, but it can still spread through

the inside of the box. Then when it finally burns through the cover, it explodes."

Smith said that the

resident who reported the fire said she saw only smoke coming from the building at first, then as she spoke



Jeff Miller (right) owner of Dry Creek Station and employee Stan Friberg watch the fire move through the attic from the lounge to the dining room of the restaurant. Firefighters were unable to gain access to the flames from below due to the one-inch tongue and groove ceiling above the beams.

with dispatch, she described flames beginning to show on the roof. By the time the first volunteers reached the scene, flames had burst through the roof above the lounge, Smith said. Firefighters tried to cool it down with water, which evaporated almost immediately as the fire rekindled from the extreme

heat in the attic.

Meanwhile additional volunteers donned breathing apparatus to enter the smoke-filled building. They planned to remove the ceiling in the lounge in order to put water on the flames from below. As they went

See *Dry Creek Station* page 3

FERC representatives hear from Kilarc supporters

When Federal Energy Regulatory Commission representatives came to Whitmore on Aug. 17, 2010 to listen to what residents had to say about Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) plans to decommission the Kilarc-Cow Creek Hydroelectric Project, they got a fairly warm welcome. Not only did Whitmore residents put together a potluck smorgasbord of finger foods for the benefit of those who had come straight from work to the meeting, most of the 30-plus speakers refrained from denigrating the Draft Environmental Impact Statement produced by the FERC team, as they had at the previous meeting in Redding. The speakers tried instead to politely explain to the authors of the DEIS how the



Photo by Sharyn Cornelius

Glenn Dye, chairman of the Save Kilarc Committee, welcomes everyone to the public meeting held by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Whitmore on Aug. 17, 2010. At the meeting, members of FERC's environmental review staff took testimony from Whitmore residents, all those who spoke oppose Pacific Gas and Electric Company's plans to destroy the Kilarc and Cow Creek Hydroelectric plants.

loss of the popular Kilarc Fore Bay recreation area and the irrigation water which flows through the Cow Creek

Powerhouse to ranches in the South Cow Creek Valley, would affect them, the "human element" in the environ-

mental equation.

Shasta County Supervisor Glenn Hawes urged the FERC team to heed the wishes of the community and start over on their environmental analysis of the effects of decommissioning, because these people "deserve a top-notch process." He added that destroying Kilarc, which has been a part of the Whitmore community for over 100 years and provides water for firefighting efforts, would be "an environmental injustice that cannot be mitigated."

Congressman Wally Herger's representative David Meurer read a statement in which Herger formally requested that FERC's legal staff analyze the contention raised by Evergreen Shasta Power's (ESP) legal counsel

that, despite the fact that ESP had missed the deadline to apply to relicense the Kilarc-Cow Creek Project, "FERC has the authority to convene a settlement conference [be-

tween PG&E and ESP] and require a review of alternatives to facilities removal." FERC environmental team leader CarLisa Linton said

See *FERC* page 3

Public Works hold water project information meeting

The Shasta County Department of Public Works held an informational meeting on the Elk Trail Water Project on Thursday, Aug. 26, 2010 at the Jones Valley Fire Station. About 60 people, most of whom seemed to be in favor of the project, attended.

DPW Director Pat Minturn went over the projected costs for the project (\$10,316,280) and the amount of grant funding that has been secured to lower the per parcel costs for residents (\$6,248,000). The current estimated cost for residents to pay back the \$4,068,280 zero-interest loan on the project is \$774 per year. The ballots to form the assessment district to repay the loan are already in residents' hands, and many have already voted. The ballots will be tallied after the public hearing at the Board of Supervisors'



Photo by Sharyn Cornelius

PACE Civil, Inc. engineer Paul Reuter goes over the improvements to the Jones Valley water system that will be made as part of the Elk Trail Water Project. County Service Area #6--Jones Valley Water has conditionally annexed the two Elk Trail subdivisions and plans are underway to provide them with piped water as long as a majority of landowners vote to form an assessment district to pay for the costs of the project.

meeting on Oct. 12.

Elk Trail Water Association (ETWA) President Bert Stead thanked everyone who

had played a part in bringing the project to this important crossroads and said the Association will advocate for an

early bidding process to take advantage of lower construction costs and, with luck, provide residents with water by the end of next year. He said it would help to keep costs down if local residents would allow excavation contractors to dump soil on their property. Engineers have said that the soil taken out of the ditches ("Jones Valley Loam" Minturn called it) is not suitable for backfilling, so it must be hauled away. Several people present volunteered to have the soil deposited on their property. Anyone else interested in receiving the fill dirt, should contact Stead by email at skmorlr@com-pair.net.

Former ETWA President Paul Stout asked if the state's budget woes will affect the project. Shasta County Chief Administrative Officer Larry

See *Elk Trail Water* page 3



The winners of the "Little Miss Strawberry Pageant" in Happy Valley pose with NES National title holders Aurora and Karrah Rives (back row left and second from left). The Rives sisters will be present at the Honey Bee Festival on Sept. 11 to play hostess to local competitors and to present the NES awards.

Bee Festival to host first children's beauty pageant

A new feature attraction at the 2010 Honey Bee Festival on Sept. 11 and 12 will be the Little Miss Honey Bee competition put on by Naturally Elegant and Simple (NES) Pageants of California. The beauty pageant, to be held at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, will give local girls (and boys, too, if they wish) the chance to don their Sunday best clothing and strut their stuff in front of the judges.

The Naturally Elegant and Simple organization has been putting on beauty pageants for young girls and boys as well as teens for 15 years. NES emphasizes contestants' natural beauty over the artificial glitz that has become common in such competitions and vows that every contestant will go home feeling like a winner. The NES Pageant at the Happy Valley Strawberry

Festival in May attracted 20 entrants, all of whom had a great time, according to event organizer Vanessa Rives.

Little Miss Honey Bee contestants must be between 0 and 13 years of age; they will be scored on facial beauty, poise and grace, smile and eye contact. Entrants will be judged in separate divisions by age, and one winner will be crowned in each division. In addition, two overall pageant winners will be recognized, and they will receive embroidered sashes. The winners are eligible to participate in all NES California events.

Cost to enter the Little Miss Honey Bee beauty pageant is \$40 for the first child in a family and \$30 for each succeeding child. Deadline to register is Sept. 9, 2010. Please call 347-1723 for more information and to register.