

NEWS



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1-20-12 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

Firefighters and emergency responders from throughout Orange County were to put to an extreme test as they fought the seven alarm fire at the Mill Street industrial park location in Cornwall this past weekend. Nearly 200 responders from as many as 18 fire companies and Orange County Emergency Services turned out to fight and contain the fire in the weekend's bitter cold temperatures. I am proud to salute those emergency responders and express my appreciation for their selfless commitment to preserving and protecting the public safety for the residents of Orange County.

To learn that the majority of the firefighters and emergency responders in Orange County are volunteers may come as a surprise to many who live here. Those brave men and women who we count on to protect us in a crisis do so on their own time, frequently sacrificing precious moments they could otherwise be spending with their family, recreating, or simply getting a good night's sleep. When the alarm goes off, they respond to the call – regardless of the time of day, or night.

For some Orange County communities it is a dwindling pool of individuals willing to make the necessary sacrifices that come with being a volunteer firefighter; however, the need remains. The County's Division of Fire Services, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner John Horan, is responsible for assuring the efficient deployment of firefighting resources and coordination of the fire departments in Orange County. Fire Services also provides training for firefighters and technical resources such as fire investigation, hazardous materials response, and technical rescue response. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer firefighter or learning more about the programs and services provided through the Orange County Division of Fire Services, visit their pages on the County website at www.orangecountygov.com or call them at 374-1900.

While there are risks of fire any time of year, winter presents unique risks, as well as challenges specific to fighting cold weather fires. To do your part to prevent fires, please consider these winter fire safety tips from Deputy Commissioner Horan:

- Never discard hot ashes inside or near the home. Place them in a metal container outside and well away from buildings.
- Never use your stove or oven as a supplemental heating device.
- If you use an electric heater, be sure not to overload the circuit. If you must use an extension cord, be sure to use one the same size or larger than the appliance electrical cord.
- Avoid using electrical space heaters where they may come in contact with water and keep space heaters free and clear of obstructions such as draperies.
- If your pipes are frozen, never try to thaw them with a blow torch or open flame.
- Use a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace.
- Don't leave candles unattended.
- Be sure you have working smoke alarms in your home.
- If you have a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of snow so that it can be easily located in a time of need.
- If you have fire safety questions, contact your local fire department or the County's Fire Services staff.

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness,

Edward A. Diana
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