

# ALERT

February 2019 to August 2019  
Volume 46



**CUEA STAFF**  
Don Boland, Executive Director  
Jenny Regino, Editor

## CUEA 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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When it was time to start planning this year's conference, we decided to get input from our members. Location, location, location was what we heard. So this year, we chose a destination location for our 2019 CUEA Annual Conference. The conference was held on June 13th at the Lake Tahoe Resort in BEAUTIFUL South Lake Tahoe. The theme this year was "CUEA Members Meeting the Challenge". We had a dynamic list of speakers from CalFire, Cal Water, Redding Electric, California Energy Commission, SMUD and EEL.

Deputy Chief Dave Russell from Cal Fire was our opening speaker. Chief Russell was part of the Incident Management Team for the Camp Fire. His presentation was a reminder of how devastating the Camp Fire was to both the residents of Paradise and the firefighters. He was followed by Gerald Simon from Cal Water who shared some of the lessons learned from past experiences. Cal Water responds to many different types of disasters, such as floods, fires and earthquakes. Cal Water's Emergency Response Trailer Unit is fully equipped and can sustain 6 workers with all tools, equipment, tents, port-a-potties, and cooking equipment for 7 days. Next, Ted Miller from Redding Electric presented the value of Mutual Assistance in a



disaster. Redding faced their share of disasters over the last year. The Carr Fire began July 23, 2018 and hit Redding on July 26th. The fire destroyed 270 power poles and miles of 115kv and 12 kv lines. With the aid of 12 mutual assistance crews, Redding was able to repair the damage within 6 weeks. On February 13th, 2019, Redding was hit again, but this time by the winter storm. The storm caused more than 31,000 outages, approximately 75% of their customers. Once again, with the support from Mutual Assistance crews, Redding was able to restore power.

Our afternoon session began with Gordon Schremp from the California Energy Commission. Gordon gave an overview of the California Fuel and Emergency Fuels Activities. He explained CEC's Role for Emergency Fuel and the CUEA related fuel needs. Response vehicles will require sufficient fuel to gain access and maintain operations within the impacted areas. Fuel deliveries would be needed for the staging areas, for vehicles outside of the staging area, back up

## CUEA 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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generation for the telecommunication sites, and the petroleum pipeline pump stations. According to Gordon "These types of emergency & critical response activity fuel needs could be potential candidates for pre-scripted missions." Next on the agenda was Laura Fernandez, a attorney from Braun, Blasing, Smith & Wynne Law Offices. Laura explained the Legal Implications of SB 901. She went through the timeline of how SB 901 came about from 2007 to now. Laura also explained the de energization requirements for PSPS. The closing speaker of the day was Chris Eisenbrey from Edison Electric Institute (EEI) who presented on EEI's Wildfire Initiative. He began by sharing some of the history of EEI. Chris then explained some of the reasons that the wildfire risks are increasing. Some factors contributing to the increase are the climate, compromised tree health, invasive species and federal fire funding challenges. We ended the conference by raffling off two \$100 gifts cards. Congratulations to the winners this year, Jason Hicks from Turlock Irrigation and Simpson Cheng from LADWP.

We hope the attendees of the 2019 CUEA Annual Conference benefitted greatly from the information shared and the relationships built, thus strengthening California's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from threats, emergencies and other serious events. Thank you to those who participated in our conference. With the continued support of the organization and its initiatives, CUEA continues to lead the way in statewide utility emergency response and planning.

## CUEA SIGNED FIRST EVER SPONSOR FOR THE 2019 CUEA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CUEA signed our first ever sponsor for this year's 2019 CUEA Annual Conference in South Lake Tahoe. The sponsor this year was PHOS-CHEK, represented by Scott Holmquist. Scott set up an impressive display outside the conference room.



Don Boland, CUEA's Executive Director & Scott Holmquist

## MITIGATING RISK TO UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Wildfires have become increasingly common, larger, more expensive to fight and deadlier. They are costing billions of dollars in natural resource and property losses. Of significance, wildfires also pose an extreme risk to utility infrastructure. Every year, utilities spend millions of dollars replacing wildfire damaged wood utility poles and infrastructure. Replacing fire damaged equipment is extremely expensive, disrupts routine maintenance schedules and, most importantly, reduces the reliability of electric service. The same fire chemicals traditionally used by wildland fire authorities can be used by utilities, ground application of **PHOS-CHEK LC95A-Fx** long term retardant to wooden utility poles can prevent ignition and eliminate replacement costs. Application to right-of-ways, perimeter fuels around utility substations, switch yards, valve lots, and mountain top communications sites can prevent a fire from entering the area resulting in the protection of utility equipment and critical infrastructure.

**Protecting Your Assets - Solutions You Can Count On**

**Prevent Loss, Reduce Damage and Destruction! Safe - Effective**

Additional information from your CUEA Conference Sponsor at exhibit or [www.phoschek.com](http://www.phoschek.com)



**CUEA 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE PICTURES**



A SPECIAL THANK YOU  
FROM YOUR CUEA STAFF TO OUR  
SPEAKERS AND THOSE  
WHO ATTENDED THE  
2019 CUEA ANNUAL CONFERENCE!  
JENNY REGINO & DON BOLAND



## CUEA'S MEMBERSHIP GROWS BY TWELVE

### Sierra Telephone

Sierra Telephone has been providing service to customers in Eastern Madera and Mariposa Counties since 1895. A 100% digital, fiber optic network and "self-healing" fiber ring provide reliable, secure service of the highest quality. A wide variety of products and services are available to customers within our 775 square mile serving area including Internet and Broadband. Sierra Tel Internet is the premier DSL Internet service provider throughout Eastern Madera and Mariposa counties.

### Sprint

Sprint Corporation is an American telecommunications company that provides wireless services and is an internet service provider, based in Overland Park, Kansas. It is the fourth-largest mobile network operator in the United States and serves 54 million customers.

### Novato Sanitary District

As a special district, Novato Sanitary District is an independent local agency with a publicly elected board of five directors, currently serving about 60,000 residents. The District's primary responsibilities include wastewater collection and treatment, water recycling, and solid waste collection and disposal.

### Cal-Ore Telephone Company

Cal-Ore is dedicated to providing dependable and affordable cutting edge telecommunications services with devoted customer service agents and small town customer care

### Siskiyou Telephone

Siskiyou Telephone, proudly serving the communities of Callahan, Etna, Fort Jones, Greenview, Hamburg, Happy Camp, Horse Creek, Klamath River, Oak Knoll, Orleans, Scott Bar, Seiad Valley, Somes Bar, Sawyers Bar, Cecilville and Forks of Salmon in beautiful Siskiyou County, CA.

### Calaveras Telephone

In 1895 James A. Tower was only 16 years old when, using barbed wire fencing, he strung the first telephone line for what was to become The Calaveras Telephone Company. As demands for the telephone service increased, the young Mr. Tower found it necessary to establish a central office in the small community of Felix near the town of Copperopolis. Then in 1899, Mr. Tower, now 20 years old, negotiated an agreement with Sunset Telephone Company that would connect his subscribers by telephone with the rest of the world. James A. Tower died in 1936 at the young age of 56, leaving his wife Laura and their young son Howard, who was 13 years old at the time, responsible for the operation of the company. In 1950, Mr. Howard Tower, then 27 years old, installed the first automatic switching equipment in the county. This meant that Laura no longer had to operate a manual switchboard. By 1962, all unsightly telephone lines had been buried underground and The Calaveras Telephone Company was operating out of their new modernized buildings in Copperopolis and Jenny Lind. Today we are proud to say Calaveras Telephone Company is still family owned and operated.

## CUEA'S MEMBERSHIP GROWS BY TWELVE

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### City of Banning

The City of Banning is a full-service community serving a population of 30,000 people located in the beautiful San Geronio Pass, 90 miles east of Los Angeles. Banning Electric Utility is a not-for-profit, publicly owned retail electrical energy distribution utility with 6 distribution substations and 134 miles of power lines serving nearly 13,500 citizens and business patrons. The Banning Electric Utility is member of the Southern California Public Power Authority (SCPPA) enjoying the benefits of joint action through cost effective planning, construction, management, and operations of electrical energy resources.

### Kerman Telephone & Foresthill Telephone

Sebastian has provided quality communication and information technology services to communities in California since 1946. We began as a rural telephone company. Over seven decades we've grown to become a premier provider of integrated technology services for both residential and commercial needs.

Drawing on the expertise and experience of our team, Sebastian is able to provide the best and latest technologies – telephone, internet, security, and more – to individuals, businesses, and public institutions. Our residential and commercial services are backed by our live, local customer support, and our construction services are trusted by institutions in both the private and public sectors. In everything we do, Sebastian continues the same commitment to service we've had for over 70 years.

### Ponderosa Telephone

Ponderosa is located in the foothills of O'Neals, CA, approximately 25 miles northeast of Fresno and Clovis. Eighty employees serve approximately 10,000 subscriber lines in rural communities. Our service territory encompasses approximately 3000 sq. mi., from sea level to 10,000 ft. elevations; from the southern California desert to the central California high Sierra.

### Volcano Telephone

Established in 1903, Volcano Communications Company, began as Volcano Telephone Company, a small, brick building in the town of Volcano, California in the Sierra Nevada Foothills. In 1949 the company was purchased by the current owner, Sharon Lundgren's parents, Jim and Janice Welch and their co investors Ted and Catherine Houck. By 1952 the single wire lines with magneto telephones were in the midst of being upgraded to dial services. Within two more years all the lines had been converted to dial and the manual switchboard retired. In 1968 the company, having grown to 12 employees, moved to the current office in Pine Grove, California. Since that time the company has continued to maintain their dedication to providing its rural service area with cutting edge technologies that rival those of metropolitan areas.

### Ducor Telephone dba Varcomm

Varcomm can trace its history to 1910 when farmers in southern Tulare County California, banded together to create a small telephone network with a single telephone line. In 1938 the Roome family purchased the facilities in Ducor, California. In 1954, Virgil A. Roome incorporated the company and served the community of Ducor for the following 59 years until his death in 2013. In 1977, Ducor began service to the community of Rancho Tehama Reserve in northern California. Around 1993 began Varnet, Inc. to provide internet service to the communities that Ducor Telephone Company services. In 1995 Ducor began service to the community of Kennedy Meadows, high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains along that Pacific Crest Trail. 2018 saw the transformation of the company to the new name of Varcomm (Virgil A. Roome) and the introduction of broadband products and enhanced services and is part of Varcomm Holdings, Inc. family of companies. In 1995 Ducor began service to the community of Kennedy Meadows, high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains along that Pacific Crest Trail. 2018 saw the transformation of the company to the new name of Varcomm (Virgil A. Roome) and the introduction of broadband products and enhanced services and is part of Varcomm Holdings, Inc. family of companies.

## CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMPANIES ANNOUNCE WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS CAMPAIGN AROUND PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFFS

Reprinted from SCE Website , By: Brian Leventhal

ROSEMEAD, Calif., May 6, 2019 – Today California’s three largest energy companies announced a coordinated wildfire safety and awareness campaign to prepare Californians for the threat of extreme weather and power outages during times of increased wildfire danger.

The statewide Power of Being Prepared campaign is being led jointly by Southern California Edison (SCE), San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), at the direction of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The multimedia and multilingual campaign includes radio ads, preparedness resources and a new website, prepareforpowerdown.com. It is a call to action for all Californians to take important steps to get ready before the 2019 wildfire season, such as creating a thorough emergency plan and updating their contact information with their energy company.

According to a recent report released by Governor Gavin Newsom’s Strike Force addressing wildfire issues, “More than 25 million acres of California wildlands are classified as under very high or extreme fire threat. Approximately 25 percent of the state’s population – 11 million people – lives in that high-risk area.”

“Wildfires are a real and growing threat in California,” said Denise Everhart, Pacific Division Disaster Executive of the American Red Cross. “Now more than ever it is critical that Californians be ready for the unexpected and prepare their emergency kits, download the Red Cross Emergency App, outline a family plan and practice safety drills before the need arises. Education, awareness and preparedness can make a difference in keeping families safe and saving lives.”

### Public Safety Power Shutoff

Energy companies turn off power to fire prone areas during extreme weather events as a safety precaution. This is known as a Public Safety Power Shutoff. While Public Safety Power Shutoffs are more likely to occur in high fire-risk areas, all Californians could be impacted by emergency events and need to be prepared with a plan and an emergency kit. The Power of Being Prepared campaign provides customers with specific steps they can take to be ready should there be an extended power outage that lasts multiple days.



## CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMPANIES ANNOUNCE WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS CAMPAIGN AROUND PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFFS

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### What to Expect

The decision and action to turn off power is made by each energy company and is based on a combination of factors. These include high winds (including Red Flag Warnings declared by the National Weather Service), low humidity, dry vegetation and conditions on the ground. Power outages could last multiple days, depending on the severity of weather conditions and other factors, so it is important for everyone to have an emergency plan in place.

Energy companies will aim to send early warning notifications via phone calls, text alerts, emails and other means before turning off power. SCE, SDG&E and PG&E are all working with customers to ensure they have updated contact information on file and are able to reach customers before, during and after a Public Safety Power Shutoff event. Energy companies will also use websites and social media channels to share information and provide regular updates to local news and radio outlets.

### Safety Tips

Here are some steps Californians can take to help prepare for extreme weather and Public Safety Power Shutoff events:

- ◆ Update contact information with energy companies to sign up for important outage alerts:
  - ◇ SCE customers: [sce.com/safety/wildfire/pmps](https://www.sce.com/safety/wildfire/pmps)
  - ◇ SDG&E customers: [sdge.com/wildfire-safety](https://www.sdge.com/wildfire-safety)
  - ◇ PG&E customers: [pge.com/mywildfirealerts](https://www.pge.com/mywildfirealerts)
- ◆ Identify backup charging methods for phones and keep hard copies of emergency numbers
- ◆ Plan for any medical needs like medications that need to be refrigerated or devices that require power
- ◆ Plan for the needs of pets and livestock
- ◆ Build or restock emergency kits with flashlights, fresh batteries, first aid supplies and cash
- ◆ Designate an emergency meeting location
- ◆ Know how to manually open garage doors
- ◆ Ensure any backup generators are ready to safely operate
- ◆ Identify the unique needs of your family and loved ones in the area for your emergency plan

## CUEA STANDING MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE'S

### ENERGY AND PIPELINE COMMITTEE

Committee members meet quarterly to assess current and potential issues, which could impact the dependability of energy supplies within the operational systems and vulnerabilities within the organizations continuity plans. As a result the committee has shared successes and experiences relating to emergency preparedness issues such as Employee Emergency Preparedness Programs, lessons learned and newly innovative programs such as Nationwide Security Identification for First Responders and Credentialing of First Responders. Through invaluable information sharing and implementation of updated notification protocols, the Energy Committee is dedicated to ensuring that California is able to meet energy demands and protect its most critical infrastructure. Rod Wheeler from CAISO is the Chair of the committee. If you are interested in being a part of the energy committee, please contact Jenny Regino at [jenny.regino@caloes.ca.gov](mailto:jenny.regino@caloes.ca.gov) or contact the CUEA office at (916) 845-8518.

### PSPS COMMITTEE

The PSPS Committee is a new committee that was formed to heighten awareness of and offer education relating to PSPS. This committee is open to all members as the power shutdowns affect all utilities. CUEA staff will chair this committee. Our first meeting will be held late September or early October in Southern California. If you are interested in being a part of the PSPS committee, please contact Jenny Regino at [jenny.regino@caloes.ca.gov](mailto:jenny.regino@caloes.ca.gov) or contact the CUEA office at (916) 845-8518.

### WATER & WASTEWATER COMMITTEE

This committee has been diligent in its efforts to strengthen the water/waste water emergency response community. The ongoing information sharing between member organizations has proved to be of great value. Exchanging best practices, lessons learned, and emergency related templates between organizations have led to improved processes within the water/waste water arena.

Steve Frew of East Bay Municipal Utility District serves as the Chair of this committee and holds quarterly conference calls to focus on Water security, preparedness, and response. Committee members exchange information on how their companies are dealing with theft, protection of sensitive information, as well as upgrades to security policies and technology. If you are interested in being a part of this committee, please contact Steve Frew at [steven.frew@ebmud.com](mailto:steven.frew@ebmud.com) or contact the CUEA office at (916) 845-8518.

**ALERT**



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FOR OUR NEXT  
SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER BY 12/31/19:  
[JENNY.REGINO@CALOES.CA.GOV](mailto:JENNY.REGINO@CALOES.CA.GOV)**

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