Firefighter dies; containment grows in Wine Country

By San Francisco Chronicle

Latest developments in the North Bay fires:

8am: Firefighter killed in tanker crash: A water tanker crashed on a winding Napa County road near where firefighters are battling the northern edge of the Nuns Fire, and the driver was killed, officials said.

7:15am: Firefighters making progress: The Atlas Fire is now 68 percent contained – up from 56 percent containment on Sunday. Over the past 24 hours, it grew in size by only 7 acres, to 51,064 acres.

“Firefighters continue to strengthen perimeter control lines, provide structure defense and engage in tactical patrol,” CalFire said in a statement. The Nuns / Adobe / Norbbom/ Pressley / Partrick Fires, at 48,627 acres, are now 50 percent contained, and the Tubbs Fire, at 36,390 acres, is 70 percent contained.

Read the whole story

Nevadans sue Sandoval over

gun background check law

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – A lawsuit has been filed against Gov. Brian Sandoval over the state's failure to implement a private gun sale background check approved by voters in November 2016.

The lawsuit on behalf of Nevada residents Dale Zusi, Vicki Delatorre and Sydney Gordon was filed Thursday in Clark County District Court.

The lawsuit says the case "is about the refusal of the Governor of Nevada to discharge one of his most fundamental constitutional obligations – to see that the laws of this state are faithfully executed."

Read the whole story

Fires deal economic blow to many poor, elderly

By Marjie Lundstrom, Darrell Smith and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

The wildfires ripping through California have at least 20 different names, in 10 different counties.

The Tubbs Fire in Sonoma County. The monster Atlas Fire in nearby Napa County. The Cascade Fire in rural Yuba County.

And because this is California, with its diverse populations and wildly contrasting geography, the paths to recovery will

be a whole lot different, too, according to experts on natural disasters. The survivors who are likely to struggle the most, study after study shows, are the people already struggling: the poor, the disabled, the elderly and children.

Even with financial assistance – and that is iffy – the ability to readily regroup may be out of reach for many Californians displaced by the terrible fires of 2017.

Read the whole story

New normal? Ever more-intense heat, fires, drought, floods

By Stuart Leavenworth, Sacramento Bee

As portrayed in novels, the California of the future is barely habitable. Brutal storms alternate with crushing droughts. Mudslides and wildfires create waves of climate change refugees.

Fiction, right? Perhaps less so after the last week.

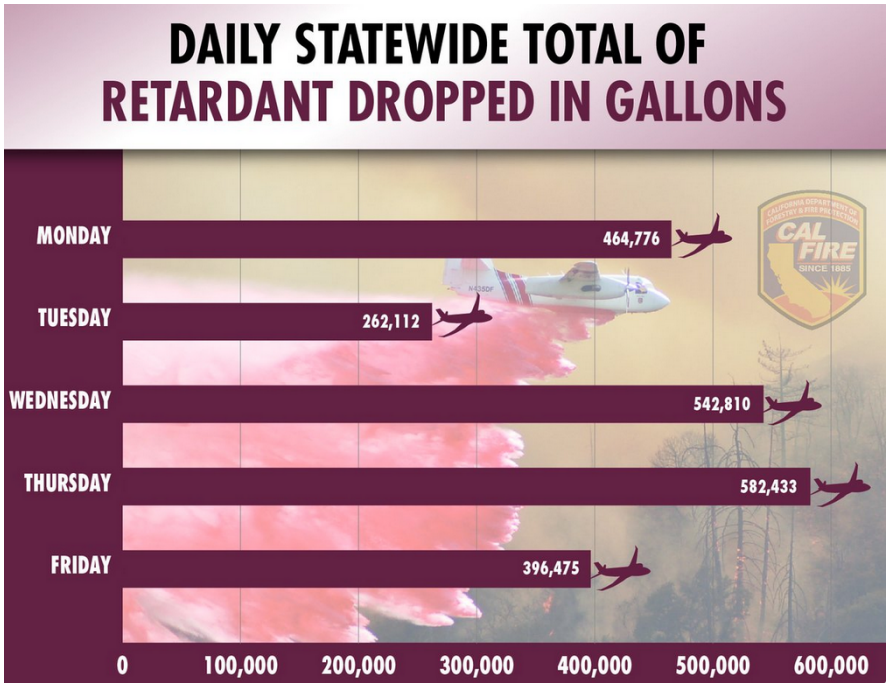
The wildfires in Northern California created scenes from a sci-fi horror movie: Obliterated neighborhoods; thousands evacuated or made homeless; fire authorities stunned by fast-moving blazes and tinderbox conditions that, as Gov. Jerry Brown said, “we’ve never seen.”

California is no stranger to extreme weather. Throughout its history, it has endured natural disasters, ranging from floods to heat waves. But many scientists say the wildfires of the last week are not completely natural. Park Williams, a Columbia University research scientist, said the fingerprint

of climate change “is definitely there.” Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at UCLA, agrees.

Read the whole story

Winds ease, firefighters increase containment



Source: *CalFire*

By San Francisco Chronicle

Latest developments in the North Bay fires:

7:25am. Deadliest of Northern California wildfires now 60 percent contained: The Tubbs Fire in Napa and Sonoma Counties burned through 35,470 acres and was 60 percent contained

Sunday morning, according to the latest CalFire measurements.

7:05am. Hundreds of thousands lost power in wildfires, but most service restored: An estimated 310,000 Pacific Gas & Electric Company customers lost power when a series of deadly wildfires broke out across Northern California, according to PG&E. By Saturday night more than 92 percent of customers had power restored.

Read the whole story

Nestlé makes billions bottling water it pays nearly nothing for

By Caroline Winter, New York Times

In rural Mecosta County, Mich., sits a near-windowless facility with a footprint about the size of Buckingham Palace. It's just one of Nestlé's roughly 100 bottled water factories in 34 countries around the world.

Inside, workers wear hairnets, hard hats, goggles, gloves, and earplugs. Ten production lines snake through the space, funneling local spring water into 8-ounce to 2.5-gallon containers; most of the lines run 24/7, each pumping out 500 to 1,200 bottles per minute. About 60 percent of the supply comes from Mecosta's springs and arrives at the factory via a 12-mile pipeline. The rest is trucked in from neighboring Osceola County, about 40 miles north. "Daily, we're looking at 3.5 million bottles potentially," says Dave Sommer, the plant's 41-year-old manager, shouting above the din.

Silos holding 125 tons of plastic resin pellets provide the raw material for the bottles. They're molded into shape at temperatures reaching 400F before being filled, capped, inspected, labeled, and laser-printed with the location, day, and minute they were produced—a process that takes less than 25 seconds. Next, the bottles are bundled, shrink-wrapped onto pallets, and picked up by a fleet of 25 forklifts that ferry them to the plant's warehouse or loading docks. As many as 175 trucks arrive every day to transport the water to retail locations in the Midwest. "We want more people to drink water, keep hydrated," Sommer says. "It would be nice if it were my water, but we just want them to drink water."

Read the whole story

Wine Country death toll – 40, fires still rage

By Joseph Serna, Laura J. Nelson, Chris Megerian and Sonali Kohli, Los Angeles Times

As the death toll rose to 40, firefighters struggled Saturday to get the upper hand against several massive wildfires that have ravaged Northern California for almost a week.

Strong winds kicked up overnight in the central Napa Valley region, causing some fires to spread and triggering evacuations in Sonoma and elsewhere, officials said.

Fire officials feared that winds forecast for Saturday would be similar to those that stoked the first flames last Sunday night, which have since exploded to more than 15 fires that have scorched 220,000 acres, destroyed an estimated 5,700

structures and caused at least 40 deaths.

Despite low humidity and red flag warnings throughout the region, however, the winds appeared to calm down by Saturday afternoon, aiding firefighters who have been battling the fire around the clock since they broke out on Oct. 8, officials said.

Read the whole story

Climate change turning the dial on Calif. wildfires

By Stefan Becket, CBS News

The deadly wildfires ravaging Northern California have destroyed more than 3,500 homes and businesses, leveling entire neighborhoods and forcing thousands of residents to flee the flames.

At least 40 people have died in the blazes, which have burned 265 square miles of land and rank among the most destructive in California's history. The wildfires kicking off California's fire season come after millions of acres in the western U.S. went up in flames over the summer.

Experts say fires like those burning up Wine Country will be more frequent, more intense and last longer as global temperatures rise. While no single fire can be said to have been caused by climate change, variations in temperature and precipitation are already affecting the complex dynamics that determine how wildfires develop and spread.

Gov. Jerry Brown laid the blame squarely at the feet of

climate change on Wednesday.

Read the whole story

Calif. will provide a year of free community college for new students

By Alexei Koseff, Sacramento Bee

California community colleges will provide a year of free tuition after Gov. Jerry Brown on Friday signed legislation that aims to boost declining enrollment and address a shortage of college-educated workers in the state.

Assembly Bill 19 waives the first year of fees for any first-time student who enrolls full-time at one of 114 community colleges in the state. About half of the system's 2.1 million students already receive fee waivers because of financial need.

Read the whole story

Threat of fire a problem for

insureds in Tahoe-Truckee

By Melissa Siig, Moonshine Ink

About a year ago, Tahoe City resident Kevin Plumb received a letter from The Hartford that it would not be renewing his homeowner's insurance because his fire protection classification had jumped to a six. (The rating is from 1 to 10, with 1 being the least risky.)

Plumb, a contractor who had insured his West Shore house in the Talmont neighborhood for a decade with the company, was shocked. He had been a diligent homeowner and dedicated client. A few years ago during a home remodel project, Plumb cut down all the dead and dying trees from his property. He also had auto insurance and a second home insured with The Hartford. Nevertheless, he was given three months to find a new insurance carrier. After calling every major insurance company he could find, he finally had to settle with Lloyd's of London, and his insurance premiums tripled.

Plumb is not alone. Homeowners all around the basin and Truckee are seeing their homeowner's insurance policies not renewed or premiums increasing as insurance companies try to minimize their risks with regards to wildfire.

Read the whole story