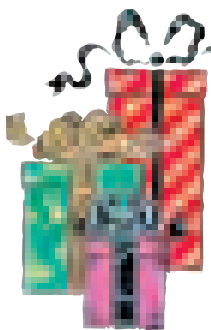


## Rec, Parks Puts Holidays on Ice With Rink in Pershing Square



Thanks to Rec and Parks, an East Coast holiday tradition is an annual part of the Southland, too. And it makes a return visit this Christmas season.

Operating mid-November through mid-January, the Southland's largest outdoor ice skating rink is ready for lots of family fun this holiday season.

The L.A. Kings Downtown on Ice event, an oasis for fun nestled among the towering skyscrapers at Pershing Square, is planned to open Nov. 19, and remain in operation through Jan. 19.

Celebrating its sixth season as the City of Angels answer to New York's Rockefeller Center, the rink is made possible by sponsorship from the Los Angeles Kings hockey team,



the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, and Councilmember Jan Perry (9th District).

**L.A. Kings Downtown on Ice, co-sponsored by Rec and Parks and Councilwoman Jan Perry, returns downtown Nov. 19.**

Open seven days a week, including holidays, with an admission price of \$6 for an hour-long skating session and \$2 for skate rental, the ice rink also offers free hockey clinics for kids and adults, a free musical concert series and

See Ice Rink, Page 3

# Fire!



Two firefighters battle a blaze near the 118 Freeway. (Photo by Mike Meadows.)

## City Employees Come Through to Protect City From Ravages of the Wild Brush Fires

City Departments, personnel spring into action to save lives, curtail fire damage. Here are just some of their stories.

The ill winds started to blow, and then took on a life of their own as firestorms, fueled by the area's wild brush, ravaged out of control over the

October 25 and 26 weekend. That's when several critical City departments kicked into overdrive and used their extensive training and experience to save lives and property.

Undoubtedly, countless thousands of City employees played a huge part in keeping the fires contained to the outskirts of the City. *Alive!* talked to a number of employees who were there and who gave an account of what their departments did. Needless to say, the following represents just a small part of the heroic actions during the emergency.

*Alive!* welcomes your stories and recollections. Send them in to [talkback@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:talkback@cityemployeesclub.com), and we'll print what we can.

And, on behalf of the Club, *Alive!* would like to thank all those who fought the fires who are listed here, and especially those who are not.

### The Beginning: The Mayor/LAFD

Mayor James K. Hahn, along with the Los Angeles Fire Department Chief William Bamattre, activated the City's Emergency

See Fire, Page 10



City Employees Club of Los Angeles  
350 S. Figueroa St., Suite 700  
Los Angeles, CA 90071

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### Inside This Issue

Newest Club Benefit: Jiffy Lube .....	3
Your Letters .....	3
News Briefs .....	4
Political Forum .....	5
Detectives to Be Honored .....	5
Club Co Sponsors Fight for Life .....	6
Bachelor Firefighters to Be 'Auctioned' .....	7
Cultural Affairs Seeks African American Events .....	7
Dept. of the Month - Information Technology Agency .....	8-13
HIA Open House .....	14
LAX Contributes to Flight Path Museum .....	15
The Pet Club .....	15

Club Counselors Visit Mojave DWP .....	16-17
ClubFest 2003 Pictures .....	19-24
Ontario Airport Women Aviators Exhibit .....	25
News Brief .....	25
Firefighters Memorial Service .....	26
Public Safety Unit Receives Big Thank You .....	27
Life's Important Moments .....	28
Welcome New Members .....	29
Retirees News .....	30
RLACEL Nominate Officers .....	31
Cooking with the Club .....	32
FREE Classifieds .....	32
HOT Ticket Deals .....	34
Movie and Book Reviews .....	34
Discount Tickets .....	35

## Club Toy Drive Is In Final Stretch

■ **Bring in a toy, and bring the holidays to those who need it most.**

**Help the Club give back to the community. Call your Club counselor today.**

Club counselors have been busy gathering toys from Club members as part of the Club's holiday toy drive.

The Club will be collecting toys only until Dec. 12. The toys will then be collected and distributed to downtown children in need at a public event from 3 to 6 p.m. Dec. 16 on the 51st floor of the Arco Plaza downtown.

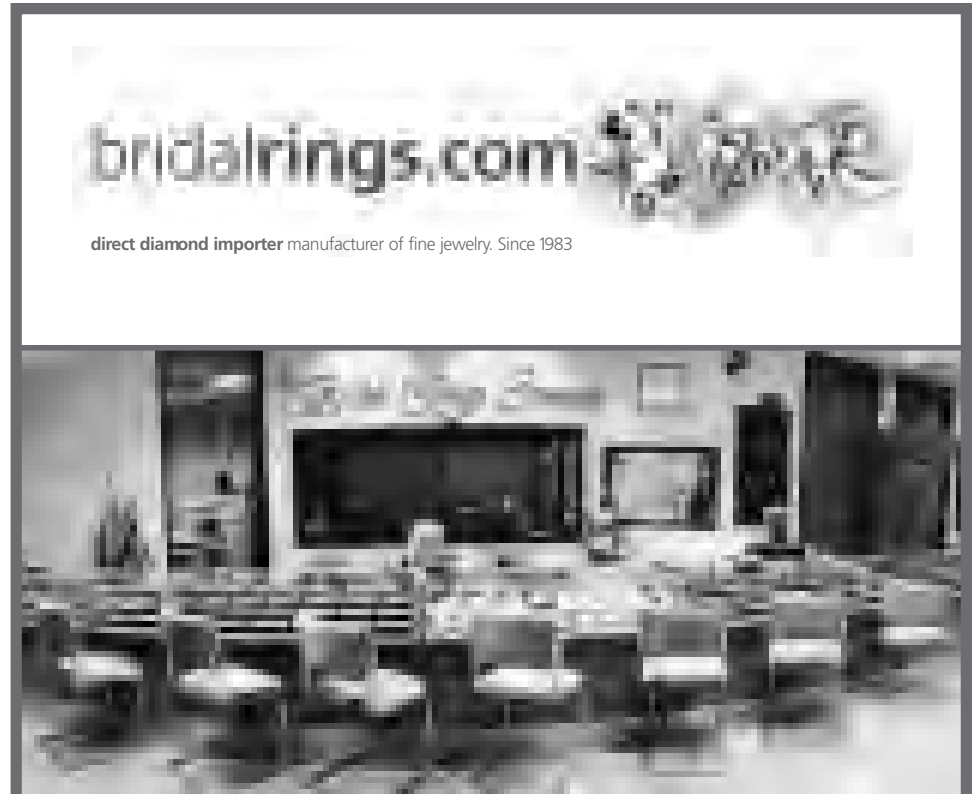
The Club is proud to be supporting the Toy Drive sponsored by the Central City Police Boosters.

The Club toy bin is at the main City Employees Club office at the World Trade Center, 350 S. Figueroa St. downtown. Toys should be for children from the first to fifth grade.

Anyone wanting to help this great cause can contact their Club counselor, or call LAPD Officer Marie Kardiban at (213) 847-0248. 📞



Club staffers (from left) Mike Louie, Angel Gomez and Robert Larios displaying just some of the gifts collected so far in the Club's toy drive.



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GV01

## Lace Up Your Skates Downtown Ice Rink

Continued from Page 1

numerous special events, including a live preview performance of Disney On Ice.

The facility is accessible via the 110 (Harbor), 101 (Hollywood), and 5 (Golden State) freeways, by bus (5th and Olive Streets, if the buses are operating), or Metro Red Line (Pershing Square Station at Hill Street, if the line is operating). There are discount rates for underground parking (with validation).

For more information about L.A. Kings Downtown on Ice, call (213) 847-4970, or log on to [www.laparks.org](http://www.laparks.org), go to Directory of Services, then click on Pershing Square.

There's also a toll-free number, (888) 527-2757. 📞



L.A. Kings Downtown on Ice, co-sponsored by Rec and Parks and Councilwoman Jan Perry, returns downtown Nov. 19.

### L.A. Kings Downtown on Ice Information:

- Nov. 19 - Jan. 19.
- Pershing Square  
532 S. Olive St.  
(across from the Biltmore Hotel).

### Hours of Operation

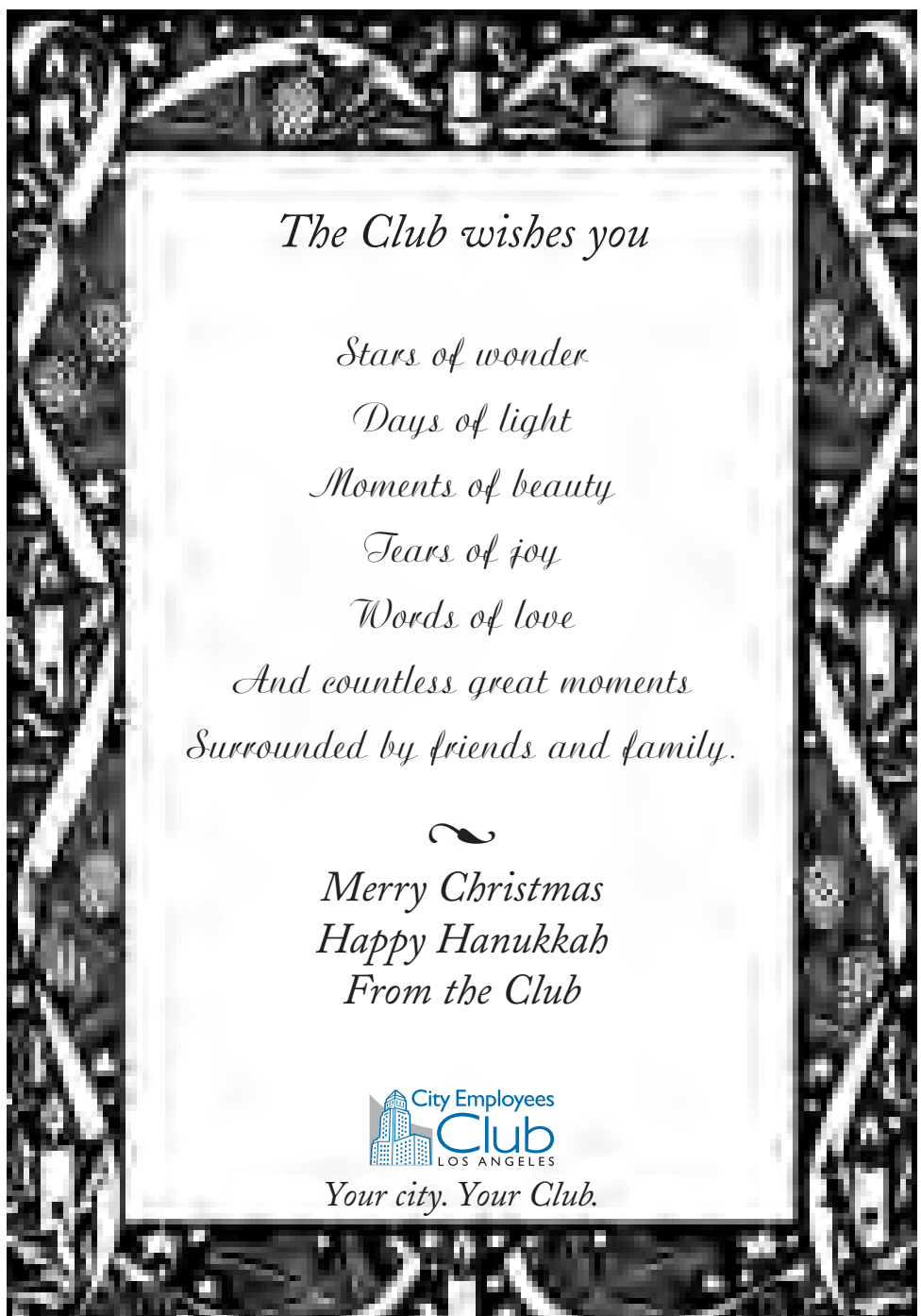
- Open all holidays. Special hours apply.
- Mon. - Thurs., noon - 9 p.m.;
- Friday-Sunday, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
- Extended Holiday Vacation Hours,  
Dec. 19 - Jan. 11:  
10 a.m. - 10 p.m. daily

### Cost

- One-hour session, \$6; skate rental, \$2.  
Family and group discounts are available.

### Parking

- At Pershing Square (underground):  
Mon. - Fri. before 5 p.m., \$6;  
after 5 p.m., \$5; weekends, \$4.  
Rates effective with validation.



*The Club wishes you*

*Stars of wonder*

*Days of light*

*Moments of beauty*

*Tears of joy*

*Words of love*

*And countless great moments*

*Surrounded by friends and family.*



*Merry Christmas  
Happy Hanukkah  
From the Club*



*Your city. Your Club.*



## LAFD Chief Bamattre on Fire Review Commission

Los Angeles Fire Department Chief William Bamattre has been assigned to review the recent firestorms by California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Chief Bamattre, a 27-year veteran of the Los Angeles Fire Department, will formally represent the California Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association, and will join a dynamic and diverse group of Federal, State and Regional colleagues from the fire, safety and elected leadership sectors in specifically addressing these key issues identified by the Governor:

- Reducing and eliminating jurisdictional and operational barriers that prevent the expeditious response of military resources necessary to combat wild fires;

- Readiness training of personnel and military equipment approved for use within the California Incident Command System;

- Development of an interstate and/or regional master mutual aid system similar to California's.

- Updating local building and planning regulations to include more stringent construction standards for high fire threat zones, requirements for brush clearance and fuel modification, and land use planning techniques that protect property.

A statement from the LAFD said that residents of Los Angeles can remain assured that Chief Bamattre will not only share the LAFD's local experience in aggressively and effectively managing wildfire danger, but will also return to our City with enhanced insight into what our regional, State and Federal partners will be doing in the future to best protect all who live, work and play in the Golden State.

For a full copy of the Governor's press release, please visit:

[http://www.governor.ca.gov/state/gov-site/gov\\_homepage.jsp](http://www.governor.ca.gov/state/gov-site/gov_homepage.jsp)

# Departments Come Through During Crisis

## Fire

*Continued from Page 1*

Operations Center (EOC) at level one Sunday morning Oct. 26 as a result of wildfires in Simi Hills, the Santa Susana Mountains and the Santa Monica Mountains.

The Los Angeles Fire Department deployed seven Strike teams, comprised of 35 fire companies to help combat the fires as part of a mutual aid agreement. Three City helicopters also were dedicated to the effort.

"We stand ready to assist our neighboring communities in any way necessary, and at the same time, take precautionary measures to protect the City of Los Angeles from the threat of these fires," the mayor said.

While many resources were redirected to fight the wildfires, all 103-neighborhood fire stations throughout the City remained staffed. "We respond to an average of 1900 calls for service daily, and we are prepared to meet that magnitude of requests today," LAFD Public Information Officer Brian Humphrey said.

City officials encouraged residents to monitor their local radio news for the latest updates on the fires and visit [www.lafd.org](http://www.lafd.org) for the No Parking Enforcement Program.

### The LAFD

Battalion Chief Mark Saxelby, of Battalion 12, led one of the seven Strike teams—Strike Team 1006.

"Sunday was a very long day," he told *Alive!* in professional understatement.

His Strike team arrived in Moorpark in support of the Ventura County Fire Department at 7 p.m. Saturday, and was deployed into action an hour later.

"We spent the night reconning [in reconnaissance work]," he continued. "We were evaluating structures, to see which buildings we could save."

At 3 a.m. Sunday morning, the team refocused on the east side of Moorpark. At 8 a.m., the team was deep in fighting the fires and

protecting houses, and did that most of Sunday.

After the fire passed the area, by about 8 p.m. Sunday night, the Strike team switched to putting out hot spots and helping the public make sure to extinguish small flash fires on their property—sparks on rooftops, in the brush, etc.

At 6 a.m. on Monday, the Strike team moved to the East Simi Valley, where the team was assigned to help hold the fire north of the 118 Freeway. "We were firing out to eliminate the fuel [brush] ahead of the fire to create a fire break," Saxelby continued. "And we continued to check for hot spots."

"As the fire moved out of our area again, we stopped our fire operations [eliminating the brush]. Then we moved to mop-up operations, hosing the area down to make sure it was dead cold." That was until 6 p.m. Monday, when the team went into patrol status, checking for spot fires.

Then the Strike team, in support of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, stood by the rest of the night until 5 a.m. Tuesday morning, when they were reassigned to Stevenson Ranch. At 7 a.m. Tuesday morning, after more than two and a half days on duty, Saxelby was relieved.

"We saved a lot of houses," he said. "If we hadn't been there, a lot more houses would have burned."

"It was good, aggressive firefighting. We provided good escape routes, a good safety zone and a good working area around the houses."

"I'm sure our Strike team slept real well the next day."

### In Remembrance

The LAFD also asked for prayers and thoughts of its fallen colleague Steven Rucker of the Novato Fire Protection District, who died fighting the fires near Julian, in San Diego County. Los Angeles Firefighters were expected to join firefighters and fire service supporters from across North America at Rucker's memorial service Nov. 14 in Marin County. "If you have but a moment, we kindly ask that you visit: <http://www.novatofire.org> and add your words of support for Steve's widow, orphans and fellow firefighters."

### LAPD

The LAPD played at least two roles in support of the fire departments fighting the fires: traffic/pedestrian control, and helping saving animals.

### Evacuations/Traffic

Captain John Sherman, Commanding Officer of the Devonshire Patrol Division, kept people controlled and away from the danger areas. "We handled crowd and traffic control in the involved areas. Our area was north of the 118 Freeway, the area by the Chatsworth Reservoir."

His unit also assisted in evacuations.

"Our motorcycle and black-and-white units helped evacuate the Chatsworth Reservoir area (along with the County Sheriff's Dept.),

the mobile home and condo areas near Topanga Canyon and the 118 Freeway, and Brown Canyon.

"It was really a risky operation," Sherman said. "We had to use a dark, dirt road and we had a number of citizens who refused to evacuate."

"And once we evacuated the area, we had to guard it. We set up fixed posts for security. We worked 12-hour shifts in the smoke."

"In handling the traffic, we were asked to close down streets and handle unruly citizens. We also provided assistance to the traffic officers from the Dept. of Transportation, who worked very hard during the emergency. They don't carry

**"It was a remarkable experience. It's hard to keep so many agencies working together, but we did. Very well."**

— LAPD Captain John Sherman

weapons, and a few times they encountered some unruly people. So we came to their help when they needed it."

For Sherman, Monday was the busiest day. "We were responsible for all evacuations," he continued. "We created evacuation plans, depending on which way the fire went. Ingress, egress ... we figured out how to evacuate them, and where to take them."

"Most of us worked 17- to 18-hour days. During one 36-hour period, the fire was threatening the City of Los Angeles. At peak, we had 300 officers on this job, from the Metro Division, and motor units from all over. Air Support Division helped us with recon missions. There are so many new communities being built that we needed to know what we were dealing with. Air Support really helped us out. With the recon missions, we were able to devise evacuation plans, and download videos to the command post."

"It was a remarkable experience," he summed up. "It was a multi-agency operation—L.A. City fire and police; Ventura County fire and police; L.A. County fire and sheriff; Rec and Parks; Animal Services; Transportation; the Highway Patrol; the Red Cross; the LAUSD police. It's hard to keep so many agencies working together, but we did. Very well."

### Mounted Police Unit

Lt. John Incantro of the LAPD's Mounted Unit teamed up with Animal Services to help save animals (see the next section).

"On Monday, we were assigned by the department to set up a command post and meet with Animal Services and their volunteers and assist with animal rescue. There are ranches up in that area, plus some boarding stalls for horses."

"We worked really well together."

"We brought our 8 horse trailers, empty, and used them to rescue horses. We've never done that before, that I am aware of."

"From three locations, we rescued 120 horses. We evacuated them to Pierce College and Lopez Ranch. We're very grateful for their help."

"Some of the horses were very scared. They aren't like our [LAPD] animals, which are trained for stressful situations. They don't do the work our horses do."

"Later, during the emergency, we also made



Two firefighters battle a blaze near the 118 Freeway. (Photo by Mike Meadows.)



The LAFD swings into action near the 118 Freeway. (Photo by Mike Meadows.)

ourselves available to Ventura County and San Bernardino County, but we weren't needed there.

"The best thing about it, other than saving the horses, is how the three organizations worked so well together—us, Animal Services, and their volunteers."

### Animal Services

Animal Services began by sending warnings to citizens to not forget about the animals.

L.A. Animal Services reminded residents to expect to encounter more than their usual share of wildlife in city neighborhoods and communities as a result of the fires.

The department reminded citizens that the best way to approach wildlife is a position of mutual respect: "Stay away from them just as they will instinctively stay away from you. A wild animal that does not run from a human is probably ill or injured. Do not attempt to handle it.

"It is against the law and a misdemeanor to feed predatory wildlife such as coyotes and bobcats. Doing so endangers neighborhoods and could be a death warrant for the animal as it loses its fear of man and may venture onto highways or into other similar situations.

And then the department got to work, rescuing animals. More than 500, in fact.

L.A. Animal Services, the lead agency for all animal related issues in the City of Los Angeles and one of the largest rescue organizations in the nation, led the effort to rescue, evacuate, transport and house animals affected by the fire disaster.

During the course of the fire, L.A. Animal Services received some 500 calls for evacuation information as it led the effort to evacuate, house and transport some 450 horses from the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County

and Ventura County. Officer Hugh Briefman, horse-specialist and member of the Department's Air Rescue Team, tirelessly led rescue efforts. In concert with LAPD Metro Mounted Horse Unit, the Department evacuated some 100 horses to Stoney Pt. Ranch and close to 300 horses from Box, Bell and Brown Canyons. The Department also rescued 38 cats, 75 dogs, 7-10 barn fowl, 2 peacocks and one llama.

L.A. Animal Services established several temporary evacuation sites for domestic animals, wild animals and livestock. L.A. Pierce College, in Woodland Hills, served as the chief evacuation site where L.A. County Animal Control staff, volunteers and other helpers stood by to help Animal Care Technician Supervisor Sergio Rios house, care for, and keep track of all animals and their owners. Grateful animal owners and community members showed up at Pierce College with water and food for both workers and animals. Amidst all the activity, ACT Supervisor Rios was able to quickly and efficiently reunite all horse owners with their animals.

At an L.A. Animal Services Commission meeting on Nov. 10, Commissioner Paul Jolly commended the Department saying that he was out of town during the fire disaster and worried about his animals. He was grateful L.A. Animal Services was there for him and for his animals.

### Transportation

As Capt. Sherman of the LAPD said, many traffic officers in the Dept. of Transportation provided critical traffic and pedestrian control services in affected areas. These services were vitally important and helped the City deal with this very real emergency.

### Rec and Parks

Many do not know that Rec and Parks has 23 Park Rangers who are sworn firefighters, equivalent to the firefighter designation within the LAFD.

Joe Tafoya, a Park Ranger, is in charge of the Department's Mounted Unit. He was involved in the animal rescue and other things; the department was heavily involved in protecting the City's parks against the fires, plus also opening evacuation shelters on the park lands.

"We are part of the disaster command," he explained. "We worked with the LAFD and the LAPD in the disaster.

"We have ranges who are cross-trained in fighting wildland fires. We run fire equipment out of our parks. We sent a crew to the Crestline area, near Big Bear. There are Rec and Parks campgrounds for boys and girls up there. And we were involved in protecting structures. We helped protect the Crestline Restaurant, I believe.

"Then we evacuated our parks. Four to five parks were threatened in the West Valley. There are \$1 million centers that were at risk. We evacuated them, and then we protected them against the fires.

"There was no damage to any of our facilities.

"Our water tenders—our fire engine pumpers—were purchased for us by the DWP," he said. "Having those pumpers is extremely beneficial. We can't thank the DWP enough. This is what they were purchased for, and they performed really well."

Tafoya was an overflow valve as Animal Services and the LAPD rescued horses from the Hanson Dam Equestrian Center.

Finally, Rec and Parks facilities provided a "first stop" for many of the people who were being evacuated from threatened areas.

"Our Mason and Lamark Recreation Centers were activated as evacuation shelters. People either were brought there or came there on their own after being told we could help them. We offered them what they needed. We were open all night, and we worked with the Red Cross at our shelters. Between 50 and 100 people came through our shelters.

"We all activated. That's what we're trained to do, what we signed up to do. We were ready to go."

### DWP

In addition to purchasing the fire engine pumpers for the Rec and Parks firefighters, the DWP participated in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during the fire emergency. Representatives from both Water and Power organizations were present at the EOC. DWP was ready to assist City or regional organizations if called upon. On behalf of the citizens of Los Angeles, DWP crews and personnel made sure DWP's own system stayed integral and intact, despite the fact that DWP infrastructure exists in the affected areas. DWP staff is presently assessing damage due to the different wildfires around Southern California.

### From Fire to Ice:

### LAFD in a Different Kind of Storm

Wednesday, Nov. 12, at approximately 4:15 p.m. a powerful storm settled over the South Los Angeles, Watts, Lynwood, and Compton area. At least 30 fire companies and other support vehicles under Battalion Commander Michael Rhodes responded to incidents in the South Los Angeles area.

As a result of the powerful storm, hundreds of vehicles were stalled in water up to four feet deep. Hundreds of individuals were trapped inside their vehicles, on top, and in the water near their vehicles. Firefighters using their vehicles traversed the deep water in the intersections to rescue the stranded victims. Also, firefighters waded in the knee-deep water tethered off to their vehicles and building to reach the helpless motorists.

As a result of the actions by firefighters and paramedics, more than 100 motorists were rescued from in, on and around their vehicles. Firefighters and paramedics responded to more than 120 calls for help during a three-hour period (wires down, flood, pole etc.).

The storm dropped approximately 5.2 inches of rain during a 2- to 3-hour period. It could not be readily determined if there were injuries associated with the many incidents firefighters responded to during the height of the storm. If there were injuries associated with this storm, they will probably be listed as minor. There were no firefighter injuries and no stalled rescue vehicles.

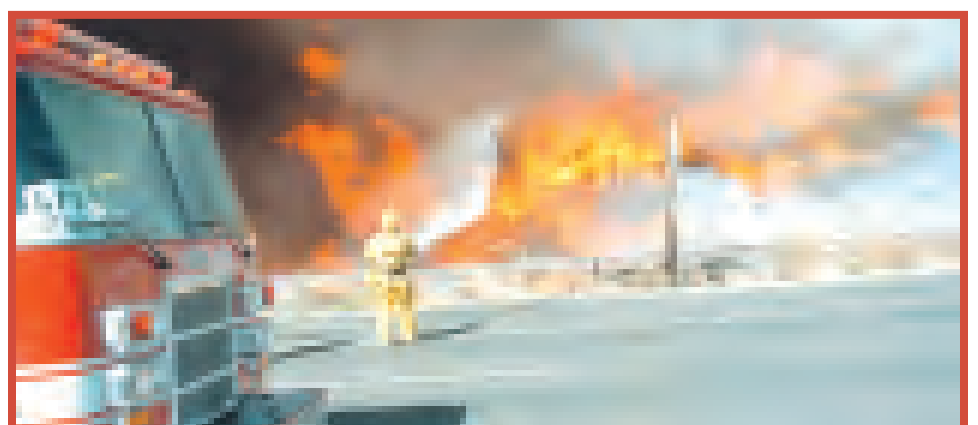
Additional information on these incidents in the South Los Angeles area is still being accumulated.

### Finally, Heroes

The personnel in the City departments mentioned above may have been well trained to deal with these emergencies, but still they performed flawlessly. We are proud of them!

*Alive!* congratulates everyone involved in keeping the City safe from the fire disaster, and especially thanks those whose heroics were not mentioned in this article. We want to know about what you did: please let us know by writing us at [talkback@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:talkback@cityemployeesclub.com) 📧

**Wanna be heard?** Tell us what you think of the brave men and women working for the City who eased us through the fire disaster: [talkback@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:talkback@cityemployeesclub.com)



A firefighter battles a blaze near the 118 Freeway. (Photo by Mike Meadows.)