

# Preparing Imminent Evacuation of a Rural Hospital During a Fire

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Trinity County Emergency Preparedness  
[www.trinitycounty.org/ep](http://www.trinitycounty.org/ep)



# Objectives

- ▶ Overview of Helena – Fork Fire
- ▶ Hospital's immediate response
- ▶ Actions and daily activities
- ▶ Decision making and patient impact
- ▶ Lessons learned



Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/368380444495072914/?lp=true>



# Trinity Hospital

- ▶ Critical Access Hospital, serving 14,000 community members, 3,200 square miles of mountainous terrain (4–5 people per sq. mi)
- ▶ 24-hour emergency room, 4 ER beds, 25 acute care beds, 25 skilled nursing beds.
- ▶ 171 employees
- ▶ Dedicated in 1950



# Trinity County Public Health

- ▶ Local Health Department, administering and coordinating over 12 multi-faceted public health programs, serving 17 frontier communities within Trinity County (population 14,000)
- ▶ Medical Health Operational Area Coordination (MHOAC)
- ▶ Seven Employees



Source: <https://cascadeclimbers.com/plab/data/513/trinityalps0003.jpg>

# Helena–Fork Fire

- ▶ August 30, 2017 at 5:05pm
  - Volunteer fire response
  - Evacuations ordered, road closures
- ▶ August 31, 2017
  - 5,000 acres, 0% containment
  - Air quality, wind, excessive heat warning
  - 61 engines, four water tenders, 385 personnel
  - 100 people sheltering, large animals at park
- ▶ September 3, 2017
  - 9,000 acres (14 square miles), 14% containment
  - Fire lines, preparation for second evacuation, traffic controls, schools closed
  - 132 engines, 11 water tenders, 1,450 personnel

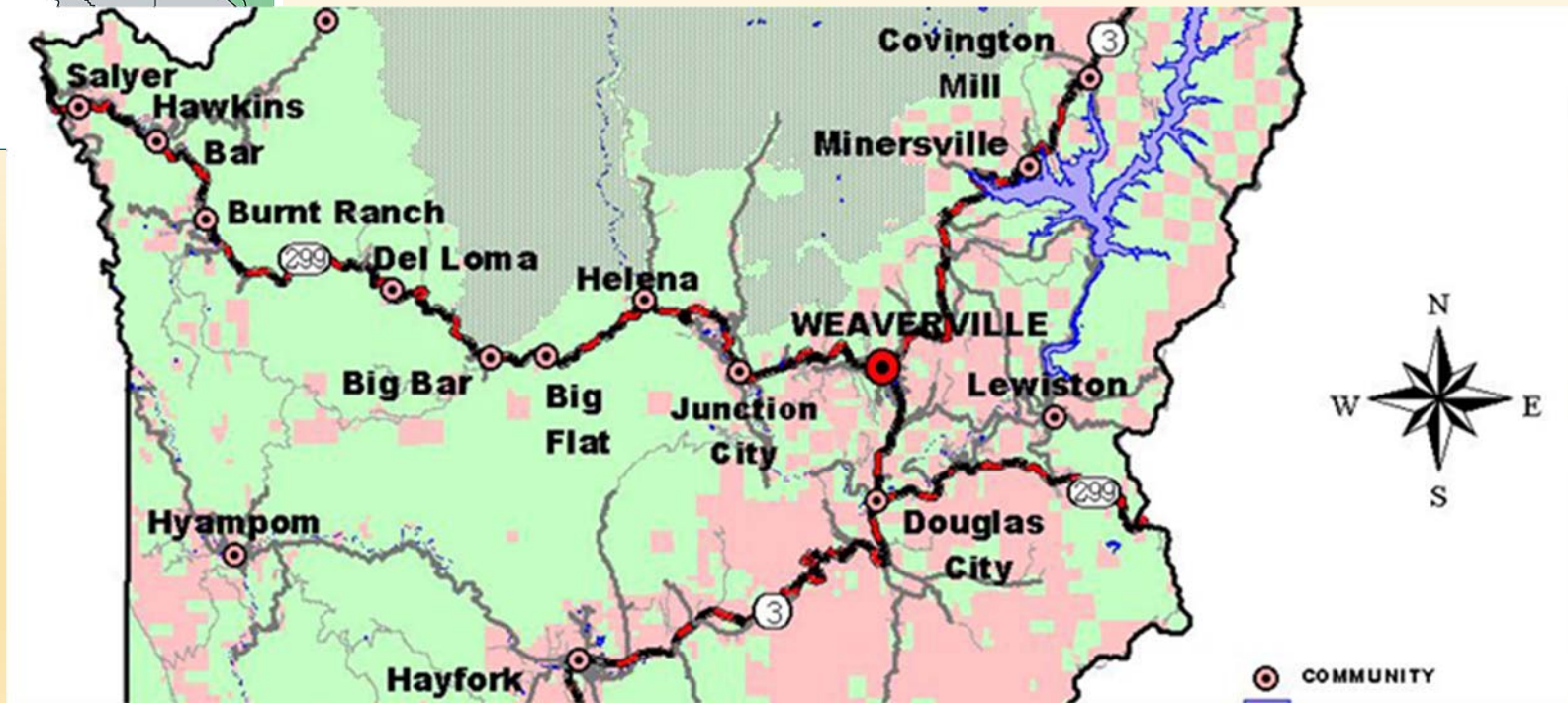




# Geographical Location



Source: Worldatlas.com



Source: Trinity County Emergency Operations Plan

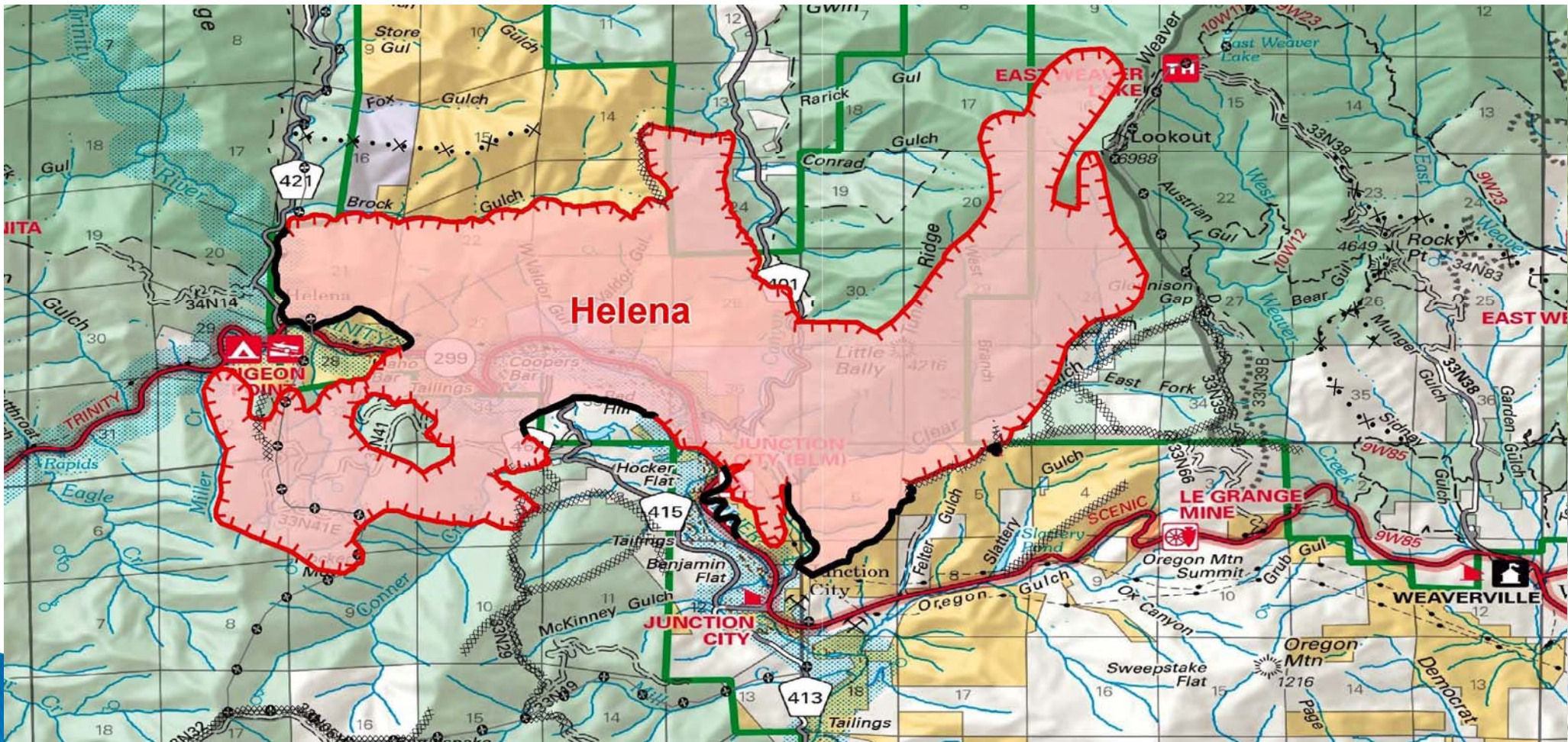
# Helena Fire Movement



Source: Google Maps



# Helena Fire Movement (cont.)



Source: InciWeb



# Helena-Fork Fire (Day 14)

## ▶ Day 14 Overview

- 18,000 acres (28 square miles), 56% contained
- Investigation – human caused
- Schools reopened (closed for 13 days)
- Local Assistance Center (LAC) – 9/6/18
- Traffic stops, road closures
- Sheltering (evacuation orders lifted)
- Recovery, health and safety hazards
- 72 homes, 61 outbuildings destroyed
  - Community with 680 residents (over 20% of housing units)

Source: InciWeb  
U.S. Census



Source: trinityflyshop.com

# Hospital's Immediate Response

- ▶ Leadership exited Board meeting at 1900 surrounded by smoke
- ▶ Reverse 9-1-1 Evacuation Call-not validated
- ▶ Began answering phone calls from staff
- ▶ Shelter in Place
- ▶ Called Administrator on call at Mercy Medical Center (1 hour away) to gauge bed availability
- ▶ Setup debrief/planning meeting for next morning



## ... Reverse 9-1-1

- ▶ August 30, 2017 (evening)
  - Staff calls, calls to receiving hospital
- ▶ August 31, 2017
  - Morning debriefs
    - Six staff displaced
    - One MIA
    - One ER physician late (3.5 hour drive)
  - Patient/Resident Assessment
    - 13 total (seven residents, six patients)
    - Closed two admits
    - HEPA Units
- ▶ September 1, 2017
  - Called families of residents
  - CDPH Called – presented evacuation plan
  - Shelter in-place



Source: InciWeb

# Daily Activities

- ▶ Debriefings: staffing and supplies, situational awareness, communication, patient census/disposition, director “roundtable”
- ▶ Evacuation planning, needs of receiving hospital (i.e., credentialing, charts)
- ▶ Staffing assessment (displaced, absent)
- ▶ Discharge and admission planning
- ▶ Update Mercy Medical Center Redding

**If you fail to plan,  
you are planning to fail.  
~*Benjamin Franklin***



# Actions

- ▶ Just-in-time training
- ▶ Staff credentialing
- ▶ Identified transportation needs and resources
- ▶ Agreement with precious cargo
- ▶ Contacted Public Health for HEPA units / filters
- ▶ Staff assessment for historical knowledge



## Actions (cont.)

- ▶ Regular contact with CDPH
- ▶ Ordered respiratory medications
- ▶ Contacted families of all patients/residents
- ▶ Home Health – evacuation plans
- ▶ Attended community meetings
- ▶ Clinic – high risk patients

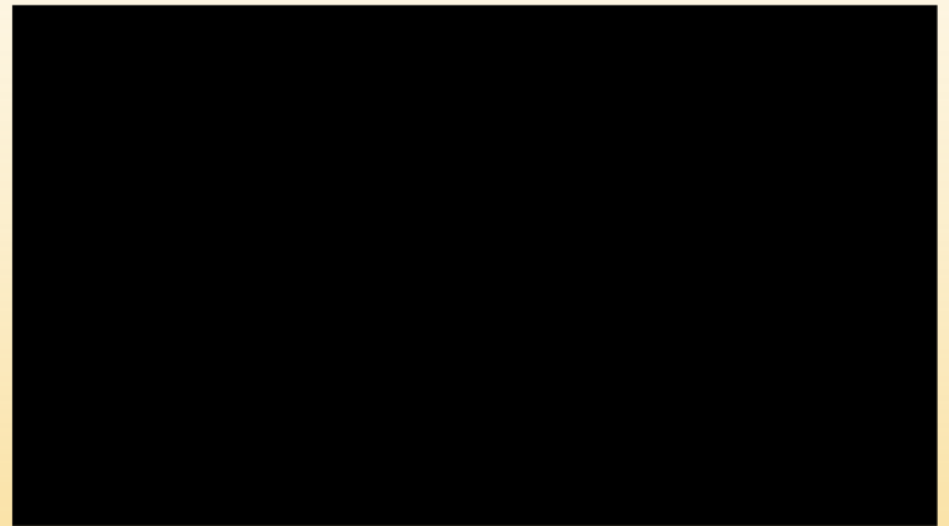


Source: [www.mcmedical.org](http://www.mcmedical.org)



# Decision Making

- ▶ Hazard vulnerability assessment
- ▶ Hospital plans
- ▶ Emergency response reports
- ▶ Team meetings
- ▶ Social media
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Weather, smoke and other fires



Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1A-A7nR7\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1A-A7nR7_4)  
Helena Fire 5 Latest on September 3, 2017

# Patient Encounter Impact

- ▶ Home Health– no missed visits
- ▶ Physical Therapy– 23 cancellations, 26 no shows (over 25%)
- ▶ Hayfork Clinic– 19 Cancellations and 25 no shows (over 25%)
- ▶ Weaverville Clinic– 136 cancellations and 85 no shows (over 50%)
- ▶ ER– 22 poison oak, 22 smoke–related



Source: [www.trinitycounty.org](http://www.trinitycounty.org)



# Lessons Learned

- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Institutional knowledge
- ▶ Historical knowledge–HICS forms
- ▶ Dual community roles– volunteer fire fighters and OES
- ▶ Hand hygiene



Source: [www.trinitycounty.org](http://www.trinitycounty.org)

# Community and Relationships

- ▶ OES
- ▶ Schools
- ▶ Local pharmacies
- ▶ Churches
- ▶ Neighboring counties
- ▶ Receiving hospitals



Source: [www.trinitycounty.org](http://www.trinitycounty.org)



# 1 Year Later...

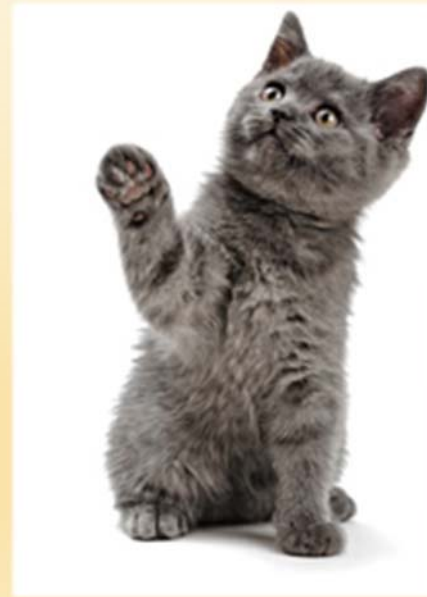
- ▶ OES restructure
- ▶ MHOAC
- ▶ HALF training for fire plan in hospital  
(high acuity low frequency)
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ CodeRED – IPAWS capability



Source: [www.trinitycounty.org](http://www.trinitycounty.org)

# Questions

- ▶ Thank you





# Contact Us

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