

TEMTF Blackout Meeting Highlights - 6/19/19

The Topanga Emergency Management Task Force (TEMTF) held a meeting last Wednesday, June 19th, that brought together many of the Major Players during a power-outage: SCE, Telecoms, Waterworks, Govt., Emergency Services, CPUC, and a lotta concerned citizens with some great questions.

The only important player not in attendance was Frontier: their representative was in the hospital and apparently had no backup to send - harbinger of things to come?

The Highlights of the meeting for me were:

SCE BLACKOUT TRIGGERS AND LENGTH

SCE will NOT use Red Flag Days as a trigger for PSPS Blackouts, but instead use their own homegrown mix of weather-analysis and fire danger tea-leaf science

"Impossible to say" is how much notice we will be given

"Impossible to predict" is how long the blackouts will last

12-24 hours is required to patrol all lines before restoring power after the Dangerous Weather is deemed over via second cup of spiked tea leaves

CELL SIGNAL SERVICE NEAR TCB

6-8 hours is how long Spectrum has backup for their micro-cells (repeaters) on TCB

8 hours is how long AT&T has backup for their micro-cells (repeaters) on TCB

72 hours is how long Verizon has backup for their micro-cells (repeaters) on TCB, PLUS they plan to refuel the diesel generators as needed

NEVER is when Verizon plans to bring in portable cell towers, since they are only deployed to replace existing ones that are dysfunctional (as in burned - in Malibu)

HOME CABLE LANDLINE

Spectrum offers a 24-hour home backup battery for their cable box, but it requires a \$50 tech visit just to "see" one

DRINKING WATER & SUCH

1-2 days is how long our water supply lasts without power (under normal usage), but generators can be brought in by LA County Waterworks

HOME BACKUP POWER

3 minutes per person was allotted for Public Comment, which was plenty for me to stammer through my suggestions:

- even before any fire, a multi-day Blackout is its own emergency

- SCE needs to reach out to all its customers AGAIN and explain what is going to happen this Fire Season

- our communication needs be Hardened in the Home and not rely on cell service or electricity from the SCE grid

- small solar-powered batteries and portable panels are viable options to backup cable Landlines & cell calls over WiFi

- Cable Telecoms could partner with solar battery suppliers and offer a range of Home Backup Packages to customers at various price-points

- Wireless Telecoms need to bring in portable cell towers to Town Center and other large gathering areas during a Blackout

- CPUC needs to write some rules & regulations that require the Telecoms to keep our 911 access more reliable, now that copper has been all but abandoned

ATTENDEE DETAILS

SCE - Tom Jacobus (Business Resiliency & Corporate Security) & David Ford (Topanga Liaison)
Telecoms (wired and wireless) - Spectrum (Patrick Odenthal, Dir. Filed Engineering), Verizon (Mike Elliott, Dir. Network Assurance & 2 more), AT&T
LA County Waterworks - Dave Rydman
Assemblymember rep - Tim Pershing, for Richard Bloom
Sheila Kuehl District 7 rep - Tessa Charnofsky
Office of Emergency Mgmt - Jeanne O'Donnell (Sr. Emergency Pgm Mgr)
Animal Safety - Susan Clark & Alli Acker
TCEP - Jame Grasso, Bryce Anderson, Kristin Brumfield
CPUC Power Ladies - Alice Stebbins (Executive Director) & Elizaveta Malashenko (Director of Safety & Enforcement)
—assorted emergency management agencies & people whose names I did not get
—plus a packed room full of concerned residents