

# Smoke expected to linger for months

Final fire evacuees  
return home

Fire & Fire Protection -  
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SWANTON — Although the last of the evacuees were allowed to return home Wednesday night, smoke from the Lockheed Fire may linger in the Santa Cruz Mountains for months.

State fire officials say there's no longer any threat to structures in the area of the fire and the blaze is expected to be fully contained by Saturday. Smoke from the smoldering remnants of the fire could stay until the season's first rain.

Thick smoke filled Scotts Valley late Wednesday after a shift in the winds, leading to a flood of 911 calls from residents worried that another fire had started.

"We got at least a dozen phone calls last night," Scotts Valley Fire Capt. Burch Theilen said. "We did go out and did quite a few smoke checks along Glen Canyon, Lockhart Gulch, all over the valley. I think the smoke came in prior to the fog last night and the fog kept it below the inversion layer, making it more miserable for people."

Although there were no new fires Wednesday night, Theilen encouraged anyone to call if they see smoke.

Fire crews still have an open fire line at the Lockheed Fire and

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CAPT. BURCH THEILEN,  
Scotts Valley Fire

## FIRE

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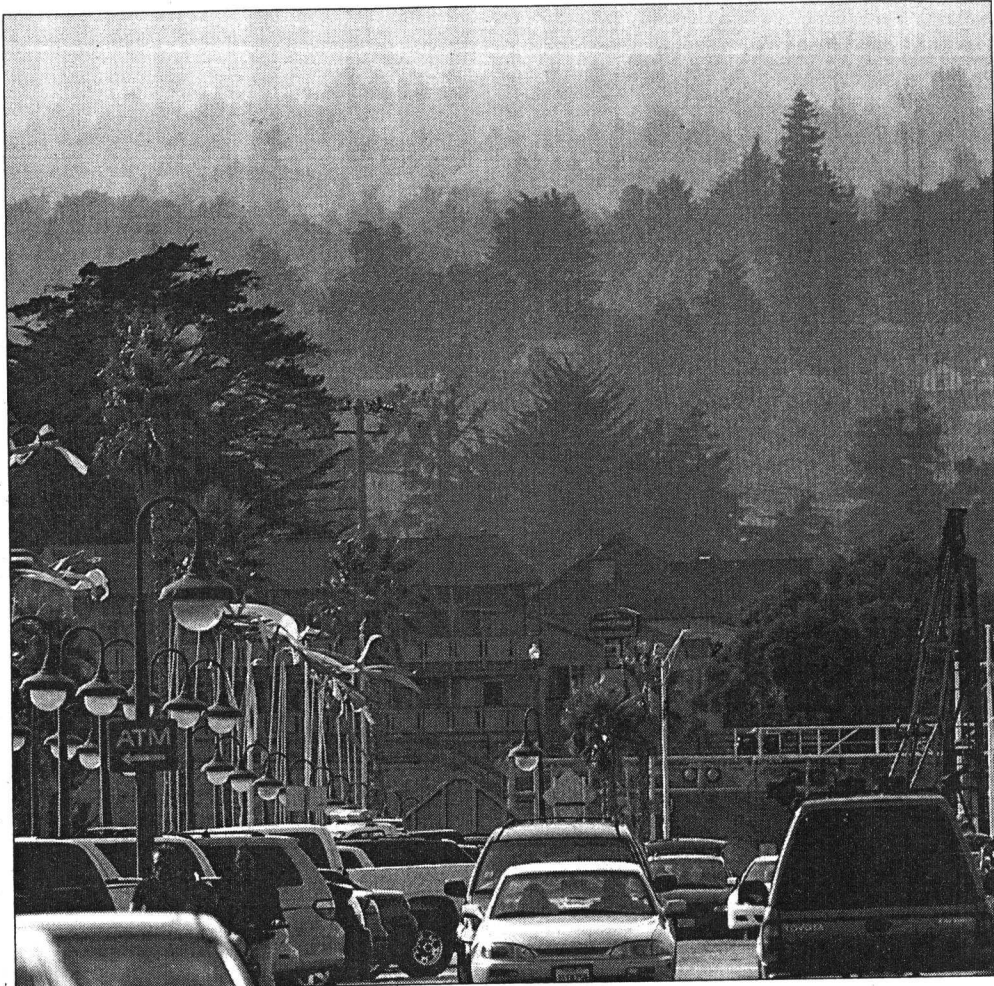
are mopping up around the perimeter.

"[Those] firing operations are putting out a significant amount of smoke," said Cal Fire spokeswoman Julie Hutchinson. "As the sun breaks through and heating increases underground, there will be flare-ups. We could have smoke coming off until we have a good rain to help mop up the interior of the fire."

The Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District posted an air quality advisory Thursday recommending people stay indoors and avoid overexerting themselves outside. People with heart or lung disease should seek shelter from the smoke if symptoms become aggravated, the district advised.

Diffuse smoke remains embedded in the marine layer and may result in patchy areas of light smoke and hazy fog, particularly from Santa Cruz to Aptos, according to the advisory. Light winds from the west to southwest Thursday were expected to push smoke from the Brookdale Inn fire over the Highway 9 corridor, elevating smoke levels.

"Levels got pretty high Thursday morning so the advisory stands for people not to venture outside and to close windows when inside," said Richard Stedman, spokesman for the Unified Air Pollution Control District. "We are expecting the air quality to



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Smoke from the Lockheed Fire blankets Santa Cruz as seen from the Municipal Wharf on Thursday.

get back to normal within the next couple of weeks except for in areas localized to the fire. It could be up to several months, but we expect to see some improvement depending on wind patterns."

The fire prompted the mandatory evacuation of more than 2,200 people in the communities of Bonny Doon, Swanton and Last Chance Road last week. The blaze consumed 7,364 acres and is 85 percent con-

tained. Two outbuildings were damaged and one was destroyed.

According to Cal Fire, eight firefighters suffered injuries, and costs to date have reached \$20 million.

The road closure at Upper and Lower Warnella Truck Trail was lifted at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, but Cal Fire officials said residents of the area should be aware that fire equipment and personnel will be working along the roadways.

Hutchinson said fire crews will be mopping up for several months and that members of her crew from Riverside County are signed up to help out for the next two months.

"A helicopter will be available as a resource in case we need to drop water on it," Hutchinson said. "Big Creek and Felton will probably transition back into the main unit at some point but I'm not sure when that will happen."