

Central Sierra Resiliency

By Tami Jones

On October 2nd retired So-Cal Edison Forester, John Mount, addressed an anxious crowd of Creek Fire survivors, media outlets, and elected officials at the Shaver Lake Historical Museum, to announce the creation of the Central Sierra Resiliency Fund.

"I'd like to point out that we are only able to have this conversation here today because of [Southern California] Edison's commitment to exceptional forest management. As we know, other parts of the forest didn't fare as well," Mount offered as he choked back tears. "I'm sorry. This is personal for me."

The fund was established by the Historical Society and local community members with a mission to reforest, rebuild and boost community revitalization efforts in the wake of the devastating Creek Fire. Resiliency Council members include Jacqueline MacDonald Pucheu, John Mount, Juli Stewart, Chasie Thiele, and Riley Young.

Pucheu took to the stage to recognize Ridge Top 4-H, Sierra 4-H, Sierra FFA and local scouts in attendance, acknowledging the "next generation of

forest stewards," adding how important the resiliency fund would be in securing healthy forests for future generations.

"In the wake of the largest single fire in California history, the mountain community has come together to empower and lead its own revitalization effort and support the long-term stewardship of this unique region. We want to ensure the resources are available to restore the forests and get people back living, working, and recreating on the mountain again," she explained.

Also in attendance was Ty Gillett, owner of Cressman's General Store.

"The Creek Fire changed our lives, our business, our residence and the land we have called home forever beginning September 4, 2020. It destroyed everything in its path including our business, Cressman's General Store, built in 1902, the house we live in, and our family cabin," shared Gillett.

"I told my wife, Tara, that nothing was going to get in the way of rebuilding our lives and Cressman's. This is where we grew up, fell in love, established our family and built a community of friends that feel like family.

Helping to establish the Central Sierra Resiliency Fund with the Historical



John Mount with kids from Ridge Top 4-H and Sierra 4-H and Jackie MacDonald Pucheu, speaking.

Society means that monies raised can help support collaborative community efforts now, while also focusing on long-term needs. Providing a tax-deductible way of contributing also allows for funding to come from people outside of the region who love the area like we do," he concluded.

According to the Fund's press release, the Historical Society Board of Directors will provide mission-aligned oversight and ensure the restricted Funds are used only for this revitalization

effort. The Resiliency Council seeks to partner with local, state and national organizations to maximize available resources and empower local stewardship of the unique historical and natural resources of the region.

Those interested in learning more about the organization are encouraged to visit www.sierrahistorical.org/resiliencyfund and to also visit the Historical Society Museum in Shaver Lake.