



NEWS



News Headlines 7/7/2016

- SAN BERNARDINO: Arson suspected in Kendall Fire
- SB fire destroys multiple homes
- Kendall Fire Burns Five Homes
- Collision Results in Major Injuries
- Soaring Accident Claims Life
- Fire Destroys Home
- Fine Dining at the Fire Station
- Firemen Go Above And Beyond
- More than 66 Million Trees Dead in California

SAN BERNARDINO: Arson suspected in Kendall Fire

Doug Saunders, Press Enterprise

Posted: July 6, 2016, 5:24 PM



Several hilltop homes burn on Skylark Dr. in San Bernardino following a fast-moving brush fire, on Saturday, July 2, 2016. David Bauman, File Photo

County fire officials believe the Kendall Fire that ripped through Little Mountain in San Bernardino on Saturday, July 2, was an act of arson.

“The cause of the fire is suspected arson and the investigation is ongoing,” spokesman Eric Sherwin said.

The blaze broke out shortly after 1 p.m. leaving three people injured, five homes burned and almost 9 acres scorched.

Two firefighters were injured. One from heat exhaustion and another from smoke inhalation as well as one civilian who also suffered from smoke inhalation.

<http://www.pe.com/articles/fire-807604-little-bernardino.html>

SB fire destroys multiple homes

MJ Duncan, Inland Empire Community News

Posted: July 6, 2016



A total of 120 firefighters were on scene with assistance from Redlands, Loma Linda, Rialto, San Manuel, Colton, CalFire BDU and USFS. Two firefighters and one civilian were taken to local hospitals for heat and fire related injuries. Photo Courtesy/MJ Duncan

On Saturday, July 2, a brush fire ignited in San Bernardino on Kendall Drive and Little Mountain at approximately 1 p.m., destroying four homes. Two county firefighters and one civilian were transported to nearby hospitals for smoke and heat related injuries. A mandatory evacuation was issued at Skylark Drive and Edgerton west of Pershing Avenue. **County Fire** received assistance from Redlands, Loma Linda, Rialto, San Manuel, Colton, CalFire BDU and USFS.

“We were able to get our dogs out, but I’m not sure if we’re still going to have a home,” said Carol McMurry frantically, a resident on the steep hill. “We just have to sit here and watch helplessly.”

The fire consumed 8.7 acres and was fully contained three hours later. A total of 120 firefighters were on scene with 6 chief officers, 12 paramedic engines, 9 brush engines, 3 trucks and 2 inmate crews. Nearby residents lined the streets taking pictures and recording the incident.

“This is just heartbreaking and scary to watch,” said San Bernardino resident Kim Kelly. “This is a reminder that we’re right in the middle of fire season and we all need to be careful.”

County Fire would like to remind homeowners that now is the time to clear your property of dead and downed vegetation. Create a defensible space that will allow your firefighters to protect your home in the event of a wildfire.

Some tips to prevent fires include:

- Remove all dead or dying vegetation
- Trim tree canopies regularly to keep their branches a minimum of 10 feet from structures and other trees
- Remove leaf litter (dry leaves / pine needles) from yard, roof, and rain gutters
- Relocate woodpiles or other combustible materials into Zone 2
- Remove combustible material and vegetation from around and under decks

- Remove or prune vegetation near windows
- Remove “ladder fuels” (low-level vegetation that allows the fire to spread from the ground to the tree canopy). Create a separation between low-level vegetation and tree branches. This can be done by reducing the height of low-level vegetation and/or trimming low tree branches.

<http://iecn.com/sb-fire-destroys-multiple-homes/>

Kendall Fire Burns Five Homes

Mountain News
July 7, 2016 Edition

A rapidly moving brush fire in the Little Mountain area of San Bernardino on July 2 burned five houses, injured two firefighters and one civilian and burned 8.7 acres before being contained. According to **County Fire**, 120 firefighters on scene engaged on the incident. Unfortunately due to the steep slope and rapid rate of spread, four homes were destroyed and one damaged. Due to the quick action of initial resources, multiple other homes in the fire path were saved. The Kendall Fire reportedly was prevented burning into the hills because of quick action and the fire burning into an area that had burned earlier this year.

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)

Collision Results in Major Injuries

Andrea Garcia, Mountain News
Posted: July 7, 2016, 6:00 AM



A three car collision occurred July 5, just 1.4 miles south of SR-138. Charlie Farrell

An accident that took place on Highway 18 on July 5 just a short distance from where the three-beam barrier is being installed may have been prevented if it had happened in the barrier area. According to California Highway Patrol Public Information Officer Juan Quintero, the accident that involved three cars happened at approximately 12:45 p.m., just 1.4 miles south of SR-138.

The head-on collision involved at least eight people in total. Quintero told the Mountain News that car number one was traveling northbound on SR-18 and crossed over to the opposing lane, creating the head-on collision with the two other cars traveling southbound on SR-18.

Car one was driven by Vagarshak Vardanyan, an 81-year-old male from Glendale. Vardanyan drove a 2003 Acura, white in color, which after the accident had major traffic collision damage to the front. Car two was driven by Robert Lee Prior, a 35-year-old male from Palm Springs. Prior was driving a 2003 Toyota 4 Runner, silver in color; the car sustained major traffic collision damage to the front. Car three was driven by John Robert Deegan from Crestline. He was driving a 2009 Toyota Yaris, white in color. Deegan's car had major traffic collision damage to the left side, and the front of the car as well.

Investigation was still underway at press time as to why the accident occurred but, according to Quintero, the investigating officer had checked fatigue for Vardanyan, the driver of the Acura. There were no road conditions that would have caused the accident; weather was clear, it was daylight and the roadway surfaces were dry. There were no possessions like cell phones being used at the time of the accident.

There were five passengers in car one; all were transported to receive immediate medical help. Vardanyan was transported by **San Bernardino County Fire** air rescue to Arrowhead Regional Hospital. He suffered multiple rib fractures, right and left clavicle fractures, a collapsed lung and multiple contusions.

Ruben Sahakyan, a 53-year-old male from Glendale, a passenger in car one, was transported by County Fire to Loma Linda University Medical Center after a complaint of chest pain and left shoulder pain was made. Donatra Sahakyan, a 50-year-old female from Glendale, was also transported to Loma Linda by County Fire with a complaint of pain to the chest.

In addition, a 14-year-old male was transported by County Fire helicopter to Arrowhead Regional with a ruptured spleen and bruised kidney. The last passenger in the car, a 12-year-old female, was transported by County Fire to Loma Linda with a complaint of pain to right wrist and right tibia.

In car two, both the driver and passenger Lisa Y. Malena were transported by County Fire to St. Bernadine Medical Center, Prior with a pain to his left ankle, and Malena with pain to the chest. Quintero told the Mountain News that no information had been released about car three, which probably meant there were no injuries or need of medical transportation.

The three-car collision caused traffic to be almost at a standstill for a couple of hours as the cars blocked the roadway and CHP and County Fire worked to clean up the area and divert traffic around the accident. A comment made on RimTraffic on Facebook stated that the southbound 18 lanes were moving at about one mile per hour.

The status of those involved in the accident was not available at press time.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_40db833c-43e4-11e6-bd83-674fc32a8e79.html

Soaring Accident Claims Life

Mike Harris, Mountain News

Posted: July 7, 2016, 8:37 AM



This photo of Larry Heidler, who died following a hang gliding accident on June 29, shows him posing at the Andy Jackson Airpark in San Bernardino. Courtesy Crestline Soaring Society

Two local soaring accidents less than a week apart claimed the life of one hang glider pilot and sent another paraglider pilot to the hospital for unspecified injuries.

According to **County Fire**, the most recent incident took place in the early afternoon of July 3 when firefighters received a call that a paraglider pilot had crashed into the hillside while soaring. Firefighters were sent to the Andy Jackson Airpark in San Bernardino near California State University, San Bernardino.

Two County firefighters hiked about 300 yards up from the airpark's landing zone to where the victim was located in a small canyon.

Due to the nature of his injuries, it was determined that a hoist extraction was in the best interest of the unidentified patient, according to paramedic public information officer Eric Sherman. Sheriff's Air Rescue 7 was dispatched and upon arrival the patient was packed in a Bauman Bag and extracted from the scene.

The patient's condition was reported as serious but not life threatening. The paraglider pilot was transported to an area trauma center for treatment. The firefighters who hiked up the canyon were also extracted. There was speculation that thermal turbulence may have been a factor.

The more serious incident took place June 29 when Larry Heidler, a 64-year-old resident of Corona, lost control of his hang glider shortly after taking off from the Crestline Soaring Society's glider launch base in Crestline and struck a tree.

According to County Fire, witnesses said Heidler made a 180-degree turn after take off, glided briefly, then crashed into a large tree on the side of a nearby hill. Witnesses to the incident reportedly went to County Fire Station 25 in Top Town to report the accident. Paramedics quickly arrived. Heidler was pronounced dead at the scene, according to the Sheriff's Coroner's report.

Heidler, according to Crestline Soaring Society's web page postings, was an experienced hang glider pilot.

“It is my sad duty to report, one of our pilots, members and friends lost his life shortly after launch yesterday at Crestline,” Dan DeWeese wrote on the Crestline Soaring Society’s website. “Larry Heidler launched around 2 p.m. in typical windy summer conditions, got turned hard right and impacted the tree in the middle of the setup area.”

Bonnie Heidler, Larry Heidler’s wife, expressed her thanks for the outpouring of support.

“I would like to thank everyone for all the flowers, kindness and well-wishing words of comfort,” she posted. “Any of you who knew Larry would have to agree. If anybody needed help he was right there to offer a hand. We spent many times out there with friends and having so much fun. Larry has always loved flying even as a little boy.”

She went on to say that her husband served as a paratrooper with the Army’s 82nd Airborne Division, worked for Boeing and flew ultra-lights.

“But he finally found his true passion at Andy Jackson Airpark,” she added. “He had so many wonderful friends there, and enjoyed all the time spent there. There was so much activity to go along with the flying. He was always ready to be a part of things and help out anyway he could.”

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_b56b8278-4458-11e6-afc3-5bd597560970.html

Fire Destroys Home

Mike Harris, Mountain News

Posted: July 7, 2016, 8:43 AM



County firefighters pour water into the roof vent of a Cedar Pines Park home that just moments before had flames coming out of it. Sheriff's Twin Peaks Station

A Cedarpines Park three-story home was severely damaged by fire on July 1, leaving all levels burned by flames.

According to **County Fire** Battalion Chief Marc Peebles, a report of a split-level residential structure fire along the 22000 block of Crest Forest Drive near Lover's Lane came in at around 10:30 a.m.

First arriving units found what turned out to be a three-story home with heavy smoke and fire showing from all three levels.

A primary and secondary search was conducted and confirmed the structure was unoccupied, Peebles said. Firefighters then aggressively attacked the fire. It took about 45 minutes to get the blaze under control.

County Fire responded with one battalion chief, four paramedic engines, two paramedic ambulances and a fire investigator. Crews were dispatched from county stations 25 in Crestline, 26 in Twin Peaks and 91 and 94 in Lake Arrowhead. Additionally, Cal Fire sent two engine companies and a battalion chief to assist, and the Forest Service sent two engine companies and a hand crew.

County Sheriff assistance included three patrol units, a watch commander, a captain and a Citizen on Patrol volunteer unit for traffic control.

Additionally, Sheriff's Aviation dispatched its 40King helicopter for assistance with letting firefighters know which homes were closest to the blaze and which might needed to be evacuated. Traffic along Crest Forest Drive was backed up for a time while the fire was fought.

Peebles said no other structures were threatened at the time. No damage estimate was available at the time of this writing, but damage to the three-story home was extensive. No injuries to civilians or firefighters were reported. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_7f23c7f6-4459-11e6-a7f2-171929af405d.html

Fine Dining at the Fire Station

Mary-Justine Lanyon, Mountain News
July 7, 2016 Edition

The local fire station may not usually spring to mind when thinking of places to share a delicious dinner with a group of friends, but that's what happened on June 30 when nine women— including this reporter— dined at Station 91.

The occasion was the result of a winning bid by Andrea Hilton for just such a dinner, prepared by the crew on duty that night.

Hilton was joined by Bev Rios, Lorraine Ragsdale, Tracey Moore, Leah Weis, Leslie McLellan, Mary Barlow, Marlana Black and me. Our hosts were Captain Doug Miles, engineer Marcus Golding, firefighter/paramedic Anthony Muscarello and ambulance operators George Funes and Ryan Moore.

When we arrived, Captain Miles gave us a brief history of the building, located just outside Lake Arrowhead Village. It had been a one-room school house. He pointed out the maps the firefighters consult before heading out to a fire, noting the crew also has apps on their phones with the maps.

When asked about the difficulty of finding some homes, Captain Miles said it is each homeowner's responsibility to make sure the address is visible. He suggested looking at your home from a stranger's viewpoint.

We walked up the original stairwell from the 1920s and were shown the battalion chiefs' offices and that of Kat Opliger, the Mountain Division chief. Before going into the station's kitchen and dining area, we walked up to the crew's exercise room.

The daily routine for the five-man crew, Miles said, is to clean the house and then work out for one to two hours. That is required, he said, "because this is a very physical job."

Our hosts had prepared an Asian themed dinner: miso soup, Asian chicken lettuce wraps, rice and vegetarian egg rolls.

Everything was delicious.

While we ate, Captain Miles entertained questions about **County Fire** and its role in the community. They do it all, he said, responding to both structure and wildland fires and performing rescues.

Some of the ladies were surprised to hear they live in the middle of the most densely populated national forest in the U.S. More firefighters have just been added to the ranks of County Fire as they have absorbed San Bernardino City Fire. All of those firefighters, the captain said, will keep their jobs. One-third, he said, will stay in the city while the others will be redistributed throughout the county.

"There will be some new faces up here," he said.

Full to bursting, we nevertheless found room for the peach, apple and cherry turnovers the crew had made.

Captain Miles told us we were the final group to enjoy such a dinner. When they first started, there were just two groups that auctioned them off. Then, he said, every group wanted one and they couldn't turn anyone down. "It grew to the point where it was not sustainable," he said.

As we got ready to leave, we donned junior firefighter helmets for our group photo and thanked our hosts for a delightful evening.

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)

Firemen Go Above And Beyond

Letters to the Editor, Mountain News

July 7, 2016 Edition

On Monday, June 25, my two boxers had an encounter with a skunk. Within minutes my female boxer, Gracie, began having trouble breathing and she progressively got worse. I called Arrowhead Animal Hospital's emergency line and received a return call immediately. They told me to take her to the emergency animal hospital in Grand Terrace.

I knew she would not make it. I put her in my car and raced over to Fire Station 91 and pounded on the door. They heard me knocking and came out. When they saw what was happening, they brought out an oxygen bottle and mask and then began administering oxygen to her and called the animal hospital to alert them of the situation and that I was on my way.

I had a friend come to the fire station. The firemen showed him what to do and gave us the oxygen bottle and mask to take with us. We arrived at the animal hospital about 30 minutes later; they were waiting for me. They took her quickly inside and began to treat her.

After an hour or so the doctor came and told me that he did not think she would survive. However, by morning, she had improved dramatically and I was able to take her home.

Gracie is now back to normal. I have no doubt that if it weren't for the help from the crew at Station 91, she would not have survived. The guys went above and beyond the call of duty. My dog and I will be forever grateful.

Thank you!

John A. Smith, Lake Arrowhead

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)

More than 66 Million Trees Dead in California

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

July 7, 2016 Edition

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has released new estimates on the number of dead trees in California, based on its latest aerial surveys over California forestland. More than 66 million trees have died due to drought and bark beetles since 2010, an increase from 29 million dead trees in 2015 and 3.3 million in 2014.

“The local mountains actually look good compared to the rest of the state,” observed Glenn Barley, Cal Fire San Bernardino unit chief. “The level of tree mortality is nominal now, nothing compared to what is going on in the central Sierra.”

The highest levels of mortality are from Kern County to Calaveras County. In San Bernardino County, crews are continuing to remove dead trees around the communities, Barley said, but they are not creating schedules and priorities as was done in the early years of the 2000 decade.

Chief Ken Pimlott, Cal Fire director and state forester, said “the sheer number of dead trees is hard to imagine, but it’s real and what we have been anticipating for some time now. We must continue our work to remove dead trees around roadways and critical infrastructure, while homeowners remove dead trees around their homes.”

To help homeowners with removal, California implemented a drought mortality exemption to the state’s process of issuing permits for tree removal. That emergency regulation was adopted in June 2015, and was due to expire in January 2016. It was extended for another 90 days, and now has been extended through the end of December 2018.

“The Forest Service has the power to extend that sunset date, if necessary,” Barley noted. “It makes the process simpler for landowners, with a goal of easing the burden on landowners and encouraging dead trees to be removed.”

In the meantime, a coordinated effort is underway to remove dead trees in the 10 counties identified with the highest hazard. County public works crews are removing trees along county roads; Caltrans is focusing on state highways; PG&E, Southern California Edison and other utility companies are removing hazardous trees around power lines; and Cal Fire and the USFS crews continue building fuel breaks and assisting the counties in their efforts.

“The recently released estimates show the voraciousness with which the tree mortality epidemic is gripping California,” said Kevin Cann, a board member of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), a Mariposa County supervisor, and member of the Governor’s Task Force on Tree Mortality. “The situation is dire, not just to those living in rural communities directly dealing with the effects, but to all Californians impacted by the threat wildfires pose to the state’s resources.”

Barley advised anyone traveling up to the central Sierra for vacation or recreation to be aware of the increased fire risk. “We all hope visitors to our local mountains are careful here,” Barley said. “We need to do the same when we go elsewhere.”

Officials also are urging the public to do their part in addition to removing the dead trees around homes to reduce the wildfire threat. “It’s critical now that we are in fire season that everyone living in these high risk areas be prepared to evacuate before a wildfire breaks out,” Chief Pimlott added. “If a wildfire burns in an area with high tree mortality, we know it will burn faster than many residents may be ready for.”

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)