



## NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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### *Multiple Fires Plague the High Desert over the Weekend*

A rash of seven fires over the weekend kept San Bernardino County firefighters in the High Desert busy, as well as displacing several families and injuring one.

The latest fire, an abandoned structure at 11781 Lee Ave, was reported at 3:50a.m. in the City of Adelanto. A first alarm structure assignment consisting of 3 medic engines, one truck, one brush patrol and a Battalion Chief responded. The first in engine reported an abandoned structure which was 100% involved with fire. Firefighters were faced with a poor water system and damaged hydrants in the area which hampered their efforts to extinguish the fire. Engines had to shuttle water from a distant hydrant until a water tender arrived on scene to assist in suppression efforts. One other structure was threatened for a short time but did not sustain any damage. Another fire was reported at 14420 Ivy in the City of Adelanto on Sunday morning. This fire, reported as a garage fire at 1:32 a.m., also brought a first alarm structure assignment which contained the fire to materials within a garage minutes after the first due engine companies arrived. Also on Sunday morning, in the community of Phelan, a small fire damaged a laundry room in the 13200 block of Rapture road. A quick response from personnel at the Phelan firehouse prevented major damage and displacement of a family by quickly containing the fire. The fire was reported at 7:30 a.m. and originally warranted a first alarm structure response, but inevitably was handled by the first in engine company.

Three more fires on Saturday were reported to the San Bernardino County Communications Center including a manure fire near the community of Helendale. The fire, spread by high winds, whipped the fire across an abandoned dairy field. The fire was reported by passer-bys in the area of National Trails Hwy and Corral Rd around 4:40 p.m. The first in engine company found a manure field on fire, being spread by the winds. The fire was contained with the help of the rancher's tractor as well as equipment from the City of Victorville and communities of Silver Lakes and Hinkley. Engine companies were slowed in response due to the remoteness of the location as well as hampered by a lack of water in the area. The cause of this fire was workers using cutting torches to remove steel for scrap. The second fire came at 9:42 p.m. in the City of Victorville in the Old Town section. The fire was reported at 16787 "C" St. and brought a first alarm assignment. The fire was another abandoned structure well involved in fire with several structures on each side of it impinged by fire. An aggressive attack by the engine companies contained the fire to the abandoned structure only. Firefighters have had multiple fires at this address over the past year as it is abandoned and used by vagrants. While mopping up at this fire, firefighters noticed a large column of smoke coming up from the area of Seventh and "C" St. Engine companies broke free from the original fire to extinguish what was found to be several large piles of rubbish in the alley. Both fires were deemed suspicious as well as a description of several individuals in a vehicle were seen lighting the alley way fire.

The largest of the fires, causing the most damage financially as well as displacing many residents occurred on Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> of September. Multiple reports of a large fire brought 2 alarms of firefighters to the corner of Harmony and Seneca in the City of Victorville at 5:30 p.m. Upon arrival the first in companies encountered a large fire that according to witnesses started in the back of a house on Harmony Lane and quickly spread to three structures due to the high winds. With an aggressive attack on the fire, firefighters were able to keep the damage to one structure to a minimum. A second home sustained moderated damage with the resident being transported to the hospital and a third home was completely destroyed by the fast moving fire. A family in the second home, as well as a young family in the third home were displaced and assisted by the local chapter of the Red Cross. The young family had a four year old as well as a new one on the way.

No injuries were reported at any of the fires to firefighters, although one female sustained minor burn injuries at the fire on Seneca Ave. As a follow up to Thursday's fire on Crossing Trail in the City of Victorville, both firefighters are at home recuperating from their burns and are expected to return to full duty in several weeks.

Safety Message: Whether you are at home, work, or even school, remember to practice your E.D.I.T.H (Exit Drills in the home). All buildings should have emergency plans and designated exits identified. If the fire/smoke alarm goes off remember to "get low and go"! Exit the building rapidly and safely, meeting up with others at a safe designated place outside.

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