



NEWS



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Man arrested for allegedly setting fire to ex-girlfriend's home in Victorville

Jose Quintero

Posted: February 23, 2017, 10:57 AM



San Bernardino County Fire Department personnel responded to a residential structure fire at the intersection of 5th and B streets in Victorville on Tuesday morning. No injuries were reported and the cause of fire was under investigation, authorities said. [James Quigg, Daily Press.]

VICTORVILLE — A 27-year-old transient accused of setting fire to his ex-girlfriend's home on Tuesday afternoon was behind bars and expected to be arraigned in a Victorville courtroom Thursday afternoon if criminally charged by prosecutors.

The blaze displaced two adults and five children and firefighters found three kittens, three puppies and a dog dead in the home, **San Bernardino County Fire Department** officials said.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department deputies arrested Manuel Rodriguez on suspicion of arson in the 15500 block of Fifth Street on Tuesday afternoon, hours after firefighters responded to a blaze at a home at the intersection of Fifth and B streets in Victorville.

While at the scene, deputies learned that Rodriguez was upset at the homeowner, his ex-girlfriend, and tried to gain entry while emergency personnel was on scene, sheriff's officials said in a statement Thursday.

Fire personnel responded to the blaze, reported at 10:15 am., and found the single-family home engulfed in flames. Firefighters found heavy smoke and flames coming through the front door and took an interior attack. Firefighters made an aggressive interior attack and brought the fire under control in about 15 minutes.

Three kittens, three puppies and a dog were found dead in the home during a secondary search. American Red Cross officials were requested to assist two adults and five children.

Arson was determined to be the cause of fire during the investigation. Additional investigation and interviews led to Rodriguez's arrest.

Rodriguez was being held at High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto in lieu of \$50,000 bail and is expected to be arraigned in a Victorville courtroom Thursday afternoon if criminally charged by prosecutors, booking records show.

The investigation is ongoing and anyone with information is asked to call the Victorville Sheriff's Station at 760-241-2911. Those wishing to remain anonymous can call the WeTip hotline at 800-782-7436 or visit www.wetip.com.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170223/man-arrested-for-allegedly-setting-fire-to-ex-girlfriends-home-in-victorville>

Victorville Man Sets Fire to Ex Girlfriend's home

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: February 23, 2017



(Photo credit SBCoFD)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) A 27-year-old Victorville man was arrested after intentionally setting fire to his ex-girlfriend's home.

On February 21, 2017, at 10:15 a.m., Deputies were dispatched to the 15500 block of Fifth Street to reports of fire and found no one inside the home. However, several small animals perished in the fire.

San Bernardino County Firefighters from the Victorville station arrived on scene and quickly put the fire out.

“Deputies received information that the homeowner’s ex-boyfriend, Manuel Rodriguez, was upset with her and was at the residence trying to gain entry while emergency personnel were on scene,” Sheriff’s officials stated.

Deputies detained the suspect at the scene and determined the suspect had an outstanding warrant from another county.

Victorville Sheriff’s officials conducted their investigation along with interviews that led to the arrest of Rodriguez.

He was subsequently booked at High Desert Detention Center for arson.

Anyone with information about this investigation is asked to contact the Victorville Police Department at (760) 241-2911. Callers wishing to remain anonymous are urged to call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-78CRIME (27463) or you may leave information on the We-Tip website at www.wetip.com.

<http://www.vvng.com/victorville-man-sets-fire-ex-girlfriends-home/>

Victorville Fire that Left Seven Displaced Determined to Be Arson

24/7 Headline News

Posted: February 23, 2017

VICTORVILLE – A Victorville man was arrested for setting the fire that left seven residents displaced on Tuesday morning. On Tuesday, February 21, 2017, a fire was reported at the home in the 15500 block of 5th Street near B Street. When they arrived they found that the home was fully involved in smoke and flames. No one was inside the home at the time of the firefighters and deputies arrival.

“Deputies received information that the homeowner’s ex-boyfriend, Manuel Rodriguez, was upset with her and was at the residence trying to gain entry while emergency personnel were on scene,” Victorville Sheriff’s Station spokeswoman Mara Rodriguez said. “Deputies detained the suspect at the scene.”

When deputies searched the records of Manuel Rodriguez, 27, they found that there was also an outstanding warrant for his arrest in another country. Interviews and investigation led to the arrest of Rodriguez, who was booked at the High Desert Detention Center for arson.

Anyone with information about this investigation is asked to contact the Victorville Police Department at (760) 241-2911. Callers wishing to remain anonymous are urged to call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-78CRIME (27463) or you may leave information on the We-Tip website at www.wetip.com.

<https://247headline.com/victorville-fire-that-left-seven-displaced-determined-to-be-arson/>

Vandals Damage Rec Facilities

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: February 23, 2017, 11:00 AM



Crews work to repair water damage at the Twin Peaks Senior Center. Bob Kinzel

A pattern of vandalism against three Rim of the World Recreation and Park District (R&P) facilities has surfaced.

John Bernardi, president of the Mountain Communities Senior Citizens, announced in the group’s February newsletter that the Twin Peaks Senior Center was damaged Dec. 29 by a flood attributed to vandals. The seniors have an agreement with R&P to use the facilities in Twin Peaks for their activities.

In his message, Bernardi said, “Unfortunately, the R&P department offices had the same problem.” The front of the recreation center building on State Highway 18 in Rimforest was damaged when unknown persons broke a window, entered and vandalized the facility on New Year’s Day.

Then the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department reported that on Jan. 9, vandals forced open the boarded-up snack bar window at the ball field on Grandview Road in Twin Peaks. The building was damaged after the vandals set off fireworks inside.

Bob Kinzel, recreation and maintenance manager for R&P, observed that it was the same modus operandi in each case. Karen Reams, general manager for the district, said, "It disheartens us to see someone come in purposely, knowing it will be costly to repair." Reams has worked at R&P for seven years, and Kinzel has worked there six. "We never had any vandalism until now," Reams noted. "It hurts."

On Jan. 3, Bernardi got a call from the Weight Watchers group, which uses the senior center on Tuesdays. He and his wife, Dorothy, drove to the center and saw water flowing out of both doors. Bernardi called R&P, and Kinzel arrived. After the water main was turned off, Kinzel, Bernardi and Dorothy began to sweep the water out of the building.

Kinzel called County Fire for assistance, and two paramedics were available to help with the clean-up process.

Reams contacted the insurance company and a restoration company. "The flooring was damaged beyond repair," Reams said. "We had to replace all of the flooring in the main room, kitchen and both bathrooms. Fortunately, the kitchen cabinets were okay."

In addition to the broken window, the blinds were damaged, as well. A little water seeped under the stage area, Reams said, but fans quickly dried out the moisture.

The cause of the flooding turned out to be a valve that apparently had been kicked off the wall in the ladies' restroom. "It did not appear to be frozen," Kinzel noted. "The center was still heated."

The seniors had hoped to re-open the center on Jan. 23, but did not, due to the heavy snow. They next aimed for the end of the month and, ultimately, the center re-opened Jan. 30 for use by the seniors, whose activities had been canceled for a full month.

Kinzel observed: "The senior citizens were hurt more than anyone. They had a month of not being able to get in for any activities." Reams pointed out the importance of the senior center for many people. "It's their social time together. They are home alone a lot, and this is their chance to get together with each other."

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_f3937166-f9eb-11e6-bcfc-cf485a482b39.html

Milhiser pegged as interim Adelanto city manager

Shea Johnson, Daily Press

Posted: February 23, 2017, 4:55 PM



G. Michael Milhiser, center, observes the Adelanto City Council meeting on Wednesday night. The City Council has selected Milhiser as Adelanto's interim city manager. [Jose Huerta, Daily Press]

With Milhiser, city officials are likely hoping his experience can help Adelanto navigate a complex and nascent medical marijuana industry that has yet to entirely get off the ground, despite signs of life.

ADELANTO — G. Michael Milhiser, a former city manager for Upland and Ontario, was appointed Wednesday night to serve as interim city manager here — becoming the city's fourth top administrator in two years.

Milhiser will essentially be tasked with holding down the fort for four to five months while a consultant firm hired by the city two weeks ago searches for a permanent replacement for Cindy Herrera, who formally resigned Wednesday.

Herrera will revert back to her previous post as City Clerk. Her ultimate replacement, likely to be announced this summer, will be the fifth city manager in Adelanto since long-time city manager Jim Hart resigned in February 2015.

"(Milhiser) brings a lot of experience, so we're looking for his support through this transition," City Attorney Curtis Wright, the city's third since November 2015, said Wednesday after the Council solidified its decision by vote in closed session.

That decision apparently came down to the wire. The Council was still conducting interviews behind closed doors leading up to its open session meeting, which started roughly an hour late.

Milhiser, who sat in the back and didn't officially assume the seat on the dais, served as the top administrator in Upland for nearly nine years, ending in 2005. Before then, he was the city manager in Ontario from 1992 to 1994 and a city administrator in Montclair between 1978 and 1992.

Since 2007, he has held posts as a board member for the Monte Vista Water District in Montclair and as chief administrative officer for the Morongo Band of Mission Indians.

His appointment would appear to meet the criteria that city officials said they sought for their permanent city manager: he's experienced

"What we need is somebody in here that has nothing to do with the city whatsoever," Mayor Rich Kerr said last month when it was announced Herrera would step down, "and all they are is focused on city manager."

Herrera, who previously had no experience as a city manager, had framed her choice to leave the post after about 18 months as a foregone conclusion.

"I always felt that I was going to be there just to help (the Council), give them time so they could find the proper candidate to fill this role," she said last month.

Herrera had been more or less thrust into the role after former City Engineer Tom Thornton, who had served triple duties while also the public works chief, resigned as the top administrator after only six weeks. Thornton had routinely butted heads with Kerr, Mayor Pro Tem Jermaine Wright and Councilman John "Bug" Woodard, who he believed were interfering with day-to-day activities — a sentiment revealed in emails publicized by this newspaper in the summer of 2015.

But Milhiser also may have faced those same concerns. He reportedly resigned from his post in 2005 as Upland council members believed he overstepped his authority, according to the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin.

With Milhiser, city officials are likely hoping his experience, however, can help Adelanto navigate a complex and nascent medical marijuana industry that has yet to entirely get off the ground, despite signs of life.

Milhiser is also familiar with financially struggling entities. He took over a cash-strapped Tri-City Mental Health Center after his Upland gig, according to the Daily Bulletin, and he lamented Upland's budget woes and backed its recovery plans as a guest commentary contributor in a December op-ed for the Bulletin.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170223/milhiser-pegged-as-interim-adelanto-city-manager>

Two Injured in Head-on Collision on Hesperia Road

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: February 23, 2017



San Bernardino County Firefighters extricated a female from a Ford Taurus after a crash Thursday afternoon on Hesperia Road. (Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com)- A two-vehicle head-on traffic collision closed portions of Hesperia Road just before 2:00 p.m. Thursday afternoon.

The collision occurred at the intersection of Hesperia Road and Cherry Hill Drive in Victorville. Deputies arrived on scene and located a Chevy Avalanche and a Ford Taurus with major front end damage.

According to authorities, the Ford Taurus was traveling southbound on Hesperia Road and the Chevy Avalanche was heading north when the two vehicles collided head-on.

San Bernardino Fire Captain Jason Serrano stated a female passenger of the Taurus required minor extrication, and the driver sustained moderate injuries. Both were taken to local hospitals for treatment.

The two male occupants of the Avalanche were not injured.

Traffic on Hesperia Road was jammed as deputies assisted with traffic control. The roadway is expected to be cleared shortly.

The accident remains under investigation by the Victorville Police Department.

<http://www.vvng.com/two-injured-head-collision-hesperia-road/>

Last call for Devore's ME 2

Terri Hill, Mountaineer Progress

Posted: February 23, 2017

A day after the nationally televised plunge of San Bernardino County Fire's Medic Engine 2 (ME2) into Cajon Creek, off I-15 last Friday, the work to recover her from the muddy creek bed began. All three firefighters escaped the engine before it fell over the side of the road. Jeff Allen, Engineer/Paramedic and Public Information Officer for SBCo Fire explained the recovery procedures of the engine itself, and the equipment onboard.

A new engine will cost between \$500,000 and \$600,000. With the addition of new equipment, the price will be close to \$700,000 to replace the Devore Station's ME 2. The final cost has yet to be calculated. During recovery of the engine, electronics, ropes, ladders, baskets, and other removable tools will be salvaged and surplused. All new engines start with new equipment, as it gets as much wear and tear as the engine itself. Allen also mentioned the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) suggests engines remain on the front line for 10 years before they are relegated to reserve status.

Terri Kasinga of Caltrans reported, "The engine landed in the path of the water, diverting it away from the road, and possibly preventing further damage."

Allen commented, "The ironic thing is, this engine was called 'The Protector of the Pass.' And the pass killer her." Then he continued, "But the engine and equipment can be replaced. Our firefighters cannot."

<http://mtprogress.net/home/newsfebruary232017.html>

Our View: Storm death reinforces lurking danger in desert

Daily Press Editorial Board

Posted: February 24, 2017, 12:01 AM

The tragic death of Michael Douglas Williams, of Victorville, last week reinforces the lurking danger of flash flooding in the High Desert.

New residents to our region may not realize it, but a decent storm can quickly turn hard and dry desert ground into channels for raging water in far less time than you would expect.

Because the desert landscape is mostly incredibly hard, rain doesn't quickly soak into the ground, especially during thunderstorms or any storm that drops a large amount of precipitation in a short amount of time. Adding to the situation is the fact that many areas of our region lack adequate or even any drainage systems.

While down the hill most areas have extensive sewer and drainage systems, that is not the case in the High Desert.

So last Friday, when the most powerful storm since 2010 created havoc all over Southern California, it came as little surprise that our region was not spared.

We saw flooding on the 5 and 110 freeways in the Los Angeles area, enough to close both freeways. We saw mudflows in the burn area of the San Gabriel Mountains above Duarte, enough to force residents to evacuate.

We saw high winds blow over big rigs in the Cajon Pass and elsewhere, and muddy messes throughout the High Desert, from Phelan and Oak Hills to Victorville, Adelanto and Apple Valley.

Swift-water rescues were required in several locations as the National Weather Service's flash flood warnings proved to be well founded.

Unfortunately, rescuers were unable to get to Williams before his Mercedes was submerged in Victorville at Doris Davies Park. When he was pulled from the vehicle, he was dead.

Though many of our streets most prone to flash flooding are marked with warning signs, it is common to see drivers become stuck during storms. The **County Fire** and Sheriff's Departments regularly rescue people who thought they could make it across a flooded roadway, only to realize too late that they can't.

In what has become our wettest year since 2010, we wish to remind all High Desert residents to exercise caution when driving during or immediately after storms. There are dozens of locations in our region that flood, particularly those streets that see dramatic elevation changes in a short distance. Be alert for natural washes and don't assume your vehicle will be able to cross any flooded road or wash.

According to experts, just six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars. That makes it easy to either lose control of your vehicle or for it to stall out. When in doubt, stop and turn around. It's better to have to go out of your way and find an alternate route to your destination than to lose your life.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/opinion/20170224/our-view-storm-death-reinforces-lurking-danger-in-desert>

Allegedly drunken motorist drives off Lake Arrowhead hospital helicopter landing pad

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: February 24, 2017, 7:46 AM



A reportedly drunken motorist drove off this helicopter pad early Friday, Feb. 24, 2017, at Mountain Communities Hospital in Lake Arrowhead, ending up 30 feet below in an embankment. No major injuries were reported. (Photo from the Mountain Communities Hospital web site)

LAKE ARROWHEAD >> A reportedly drunken motorist drove a vehicle off the helicopter landing pad of Mountain Communities Hospital in Lake Arrowhead Friday morning, California Highway Patrol officials said.

It's unclear how the allegedly impaired driver made his or her way onto the helicopter landing pad, but Officer Marcelo Llerena said the vehicle was recovered about 30 feet down an embankment.

CHP and **San Bernardino County Fire** personnel were called to the hospital, 29101 Hospital Road, around 5:30 a.m., Llerena said. No major injuries were reported.

The unidentified driver was arrested, officials said.

The incident is still under investigation.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170224/allegedly-drunken-motorist-drives-off-lake-arrowhead-hospital-helicopter-landing-pad>