



# NEWS



## News Headlines 7/26/2016

- Victorville transient arrested on suspicion of arson
- Blaze likely not year's last big one
- Buckskin Fire Board discusses mutual aid
- Residents begin returning home after Los Angeles wildfire

## **Victorville transient arrested on suspicion of arson**

**Jose Quintero, Daily Press**

Posted: July 25, 2016, 2:31 PM

VICTORVILLE — A Victorville transient arrested on suspicion of arson was behind bars Monday, authorities said.

According to Victorville Sheriff's Station spokeswoman Mara Rodriguez, deputies arrested Miguel Angel Zeteno, 36, just before 4:45 p.m. Friday near Mineral and Stoddard Wells roads on suspicion of arson to forest land.

Rodriguez said deputies found Zeteno at a "make-shift camp at the location when he lit several areas of brush on fire" in the Mojave Riverbed, near Highway 18 and Stoddard Wells Road.

He was arrested and booked on suspicion of arson to forest land.

Zeteno is scheduled to be arraigned in a Victorville courtroom Tuesday afternoon. He is being held at the High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto in lieu of \$100,000 bail, booking records show.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20160725/victorville-transient-arrested-on-suspicion-of-arson>

---

## Blaze likely not year's last big one

*Fires could be hotter and spread faster than in the past because of drought.*

Chris Haire, Press Enterprise

Posted: July 25, 2016, 10:19 PM



Sarah Reingewirtz, Staff Photographer

A helicopter drops fire retardant as the Sand fire jumps Placerita Canyon on Monday near Santa Clarita in Los Angeles County.



Mike Meadows

Photographers take pictures of the Sand fire along on Placerita Canyon Road.

Southern California is in for a hot – and likely fiery – summer.

And late autumn may not provide a reprieve from the flames, either.

The ferocious wildfire ravaging thousands of acres near Santa Clarita may portend a relentless fire season that could last into November and December, leaving firefighters to play a game of whack-a-mole – struggling to put out one blaze after another, fire officials and meteorologists warned Monday.

These fires, they added, could be hotter and spread faster than in the past because the yearslong drought has sapped chaparral, brush and trees of moisture, and climate forecasts predict hotter than average weather into December.

Dry conditions and hot weather are the perfect recipes for brush fires, said Cal Fire/Riverside County Fire Department Battalion Chief Justin Scribner, who oversaw firefighters battling an 8-acre brush fire Monday afternoon in Jurupa Valley.

“All those things in alignment, along with the heat and dry conditions in later summer, is definitely something we worry about,” Scribner said.

And come October, the Santa Ana winds could further catalyze fires.

“It’s not a surprise to see the fires behaving the way they are and the number of fires we’ve already had,” said Tom Rolinski, a meteorologist for the U.S. Forest Service.

The Santa Clarita blaze, known as the Sand fire, is not the first to hit the region in 2016. In June, a fire in Calabasas burned more than 500 acres, and a series of fires in the San Gabriel Valley destroyed nearly 5,500 acres.

“The rest of our fire season has the potential for more of the same,” Rolinski said. “I don’t see anything to provide a respite.”

Fire season, it seems, has become a year-round concern, with fire officials throughout the region ready to act quickly whether it is January or August.

“We’re in a five-year drought,” Marc Peebles, spokesman for the Southern California Incident Management Team and **San Bernardino County Fire Department** battalion chief, said on Sunday. “All the fuels, such as brush, grass and timber, are dry. Temperatures are hot. There are active fires burning throughout the western U.S. and people need to be ready for wildfire.”

But this year, the summer and fall could prove even more taxing for fire officials and those who live in fire-prone areas. Over the winter, Southern California got too little rain to alleviate the drought but just enough to allow grasses to bounce back.

Grasses are the kindling that provides the spark. Throw in the weather, and the conditions for a season of infernos are ripe.

“The sense is this is becoming the norm,” said Inspector Gustavo Medina of the Los Angeles County Fire Authority. “We all understand that the fires will get intenser and more frequent.”

During major blazes, firefighters across the state often get called for help and end up being sent to wherever they are needed. For the Sand fire, firefighters from Riverside, Garden Grove, Anaheim, Los Angeles and Los Angeles County, San Bernardino County and other departments are currently battling the flames.

*Staff writers Ali Tadayon and Lauren Williams contributed to this report.*

<http://www.pe.com/articles/fire-809100-fires-county.html>

---

## **Buckskin Fire Board discusses mutual aid**

**John Gutekunst, Parker Pioneer**

Posted: July 25, 2016

An action item at the July 13 meeting of the Buckskin Fire Board on mutual aid between fire departments led to a discussion between department staff, board members and the audience about how fire departments assist each other. People in attendance said they found the discussion informative and educational. The matter ended with Chief Chris Chambers being directed to work on mutual aid agreements and protocols with other departments in the area.

Two district residents, Pat Jones and Wayne Posey, brought their concerns over the costs of “automatic” mutual aid to other fire departments. They were especially concerned with calls from the California side of the river. Jones said the department needed to follow the procedures they’ve had in place for a long time. He added the department is spending a lot of money responding to small items outside the district.

“That’s our taxpayers’ money,” he said. “If they need us, they’ll call us.”

Chambers said the BFD had automatic mutual aid with the Parker and Colorado River Indian Tribes Fire Departments, but not with California.

“We’ll respond if we’re asked,” he said.

Posey said it sounded like district taxpayers were supporting San Bernardino County. He said the department and San Bernardino County should have an intergovernmental agreement or memorandum of understanding where BFD would be paid for their services to California.

“I think that’s a fair request,” Posey said. He added that, unless the Buckskin Fire Board forced them to pay through some sort of agreement, they wouldn’t see a penny from San Bernardino County.

Barry Gerson, who was in the audience and whose wife, Glenda, sits on the BFD Board, defended automatic mutual aid. He said the departments need to rely on each other. He added that dispatchers can’t know exactly what’s going on with any given call.

Chambers said BFD has automatic mutual aid on structure fires and major vehicle accidents. For something like a minor traffic accident, they won’t go. He said departments cancel calls to each other a lot.

“We cancel them, they cancel us,” he said.

Chambers added that, sometimes, another department can respond faster to a call than BFD. He said the state’s Fire Department Assistance Tax for them to respond to a call from outside the district hasn’t changed in years. He said the department receives \$77,000 per year.

Ron Atkins of Havasu Springs Resort, who was in the audience, noted such facilities as the Central Arizona Project intakes are on land held by the Bureau of Land Management. He added the county receives Payment in Lieu of Taxes from the federal government, and one of the intended recipients of such funds are first responders.

Board Member Jeff Daniels said he had no problem with BFD responding where they needed to. He then asked Chambers if it were true that he went to La Paz Central Dispatch and demanded BFD be sent out on everything.

Chambers thanked Daniels for the opportunity to clarify things. He said he asked for BFD to be called for boating accidents on the river or vehicle accidents in their district. He said there were incidents where the fire department might be needed even if there were no injuries. He said they often get cancelled by San Bernardino County, adding they probably get canceled on as many calls as they go out on.

“Did I tell Sheriff John Drum I wanted to be called out on everything in our district? Absolutely!” Chambers said.

La Paz County Sheriff’s Lt. Richard Epps said Central Dispatch receives 150,000 calls a year. He said it’s a stressful job, and they are always training new dispatchers. He said some errors were being made on who to send out.

“These things happen,” Epps said. “It’s a tough job for them.”

Epps said there were good reasons BFD could be called to respond to Parker. Among these were the railroad tracks that run through the town. The Parker FD would not be able to respond quickly if there were a train blocking the streets.

In the end, the board directed Daniels to look into the fees other departments charged and directed Chambers to work on mutual aid agreements and protocols with the other departments in the area.

“This has been a useful discussion,” Posey said. “If there’s an avenue for funding from other agencies, we should explore it.”

Epps said he learned a lot from the discussion. He said there no mutual aid agreements from the Quartzsite, Ehrenberg and McMullen Valley Fire Departments.

Kitty Little of the CRIT Fire Department said she appreciated BFD’s help.

David Pumphreys of the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** said they are planning to have a three-person crew at the Big River station, No. 17. He said they couldn’t do their jobs without help from the other departments, especially CRIT.

“Buckskin Fire is the class of the area,” he said. “It’s managed very well.”

Board member Robert Gory agreed this had been a good discussion.

“I hope everyone who was here learned something,” he said.

[http://www.parkerpioneer.net/news/article\\_84fd463e-5287-11e6-ba27-7f0b77b354b6.html](http://www.parkerpioneer.net/news/article_84fd463e-5287-11e6-ba27-7f0b77b354b6.html)

---

## Residents begin returning home after Los Angeles wildfire

Krystain Orlinski, Reuters

Posted: July 26, 2016, 7:04 AM

ACTON, CALIF. - Thousands of California residents were allowed to return home on Monday after a deadly, destructive wildfire forced them from their houses in recent days as it raged through drought-parched canyons and foothills north of Los Angeles.

About 300 miles (480 km) to the north, though, another fire ravaged a hilly area near the scenic coastal city of Carmel-by-the-Sea, churning through 16,100 acres (6,500 hectares) and destroying 20 homes and two outbuildings, authorities said.

The so-called Soberanes Fire, burning in the Los Padres National Forest in Monterey County, threatened 1,650 structures by Monday evening and was only 10 percent contained, the U.S. Forest Service said.

Near Los Angeles, a beefed-up force of nearly 3,000 firefighters battled to outflank the blaze there - known as the Sand Fire - which has charred at least 50 square miles (130 square km) on the rugged northwestern fringes of the Angeles National Forest, authorities said.

The Sand Fire erupted on Friday and also remained just 10 percent contained on Monday evening as crews backed by bulldozers labored to hack buffer lines around its perimeter.

The majority of the estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people who lived in the 10,000 homes that were evacuated earlier were allowed to return home on Monday evening, fire officials said.

Fed by dense brush left desiccated by five years of drought, flames were initially stoked by triple-digit heat and extremely low humidity. Slightly cooler, moister weather and diminished winds were expected to assist firefighters on Monday.

"We have very little wind, we have an increase in relative humidity, and so it's favorable for us to get out and to put out hot spots and work on line construction," Los Angeles County Fire Chief Greg Hisel said. He said calmer winds were helping to keep the fire stationary.

The Sand Fire blaze was concentrated near the town of Acton, about 50 miles (80 km) north of Los Angeles, as it cast a pall of smoke and soot over a wide area. Much of the Los Angeles basin was dusted with a thin layer of fine white ash from the fire on Saturday and Sunday.

At least 18 dwellings were destroyed over the weekend, and authorities have reported one fatality, an unidentified man found on Saturday evening in a burned-out car parked in the driveway of a home.

Among the properties to go up in flames was the landmark Sable Ranch, a popular location for television and movie shoots.

The causes of the two fires were under investigation. They are among some 3,750 blazes large and small to have erupted across California since January, a higher-than-normal total, collectively scorching more than 200,000 acres (80,940 hectares), state fire officials said.

The biggest so far was last month's Erskine Fire, which consumed 48,000 acres (19,429 hectares) northeast of Bakersfield, killing two people and destroying about 250 structures.

By comparison, the 2003 Cedar Fire ranks as the biggest on record in the state. It blackened more than 273,000 acres (110,480 hectares), leveled 2,820 buildings and claimed 15 lives.

(This story has been refiled to fix typo in lead)

(Additional reporting by Laila Kearney and Chris Michaud in New York, Brendan O'Brien and Milwaukee, and Sharon Bernstein in Sacramento; Writing and additional reporting by Steve Gorman in Los Angeles; Editing by Grant McCool, Jonathan Oatis and Tom Hogue)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-california-fire-idUSKCN1040Q0>