



NEWS



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Community offers a helping hand to evacuees, first responders

Rene De La Cruz, Desert Dispatch

Posted: August 24, 2016, 12:16 PM



Alberto Zambrano looks over the food he and his family picked up from High Desert Baptist Church in Phelan on Thursday. The church and Victor Valley Rescue Mission were planning to begin a weekly meal outreach program on Thursday, but also offered the food to anyone affected by the Bluecut fire. James Quigg, Daily Press

HESPERIA — As firefighters continue to battle the Bluecut Fire and evacuees wait to return home, many individuals and groups have decided to reach out them.

Officials at The 99 Cents Only Store said its Main Street store near I Avenue in Hesperia will hand out water, baby wipes, snacks and other items to anyone affected by the fire.

The store, which is located near the evacuation center near Sultana High School, will begin handing out resources Friday morning, officials said.

Fitness trainer Laura Streppone of Victorville played Santa Claus by dropping by the Apple Valley Municipal Animal Shelter on Thursday to hand out some supplies.

Streppone said she did a little shopping at local pet stores, and showered the animal shelter with cat and dog food, toys, towels, litter pans, food bowls and pizzas for shelter employees
“I was even short money on pizza, but Little Ceasars on Highway 18 in Apple Valley pitched in,” Streppone said. “I truly hope the families can be reunited with their fur babies soon.”

The Town-operated facility took in some 400 small animals displaced by the fire that began in the Cajon Pass Tuesday.

After spending a night away from their home off Coriander Drive in Oak Hills due to mandatory evacuation orders for the Bluecut Fire, Connie Mumford and her family were happy to offer up a small token of gratitude to those who've been fighting the 35,000-plus-acre fire on the front line.

With some help from her grandfather, Ed Hackbarth, the founder of Del Taco who made a supply run from Barstow, Mumford's husband, Michael, a California Highway Patrol officer, hand-delivered some 40 burritos to firefighters and other personnel on Thursday.

"It's important to let them know that they're appreciated," Mumford said. "We had to evacuate for a day, but we're back and the house is OK. It's just a way of saying thank you for all that they do."

Recently, High Desert Church completed two days of collecting and distributing food and supplies for first responders and residents.

Firehouse Subs of Hesperia recently donated 64 cases of bottled water and provided 100 free sandwiches to the firefighters battling the Pilot fire that began Aug. 7.

High Desert Baptist Church provided hot meals, emergency food, hygiene supplies and clothing during an outreach event at their church in Phelan on Thursday. Director Bill Edwards of the Victor Valley Rescue Mission said the BJ'S Restaurant in Victorville opened up their kitchen and their hearts by donating food to feed up to 200 people for the event.

The Hesperia Church of the Nazarene held a similar charity event at their church the day before.

For those interested in donating to those affected by the Bluecut Fire, donations can be made from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m. at the Salvation Army Social Service Office , located at 14585 La Paz Dr. in Victorville.

"It's so beneficial that the community is coming together to help others," Streppone said. "Some people can be so negative, but getting out and helping others usually solves that attitude."

<http://www.hesperiarstar.com/news/20160824/community-offers-helping-hand-to-evacuees-first-responders>

Don't ignore orders to evacuate fire zone

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: August 24, 2016, 2:05 PM



The Blue Cut fire destroyed the landmark Summit Inn at the top of the Cajon Pass last week. (Photo by Rick McClure/Special to the San Bernardino Sun)

After a valiant, week-long struggle, weary firefighters contained the devastating Blue Cut fire on Tuesday.

The fire destroyed more than a hundred homes and a couple of hundred other structures, and ranks as the 20th most destructive blaze in California's flame-filled history, according to CalFire.

Firefighters applied gel to 107 structures they knew they wouldn't be able to defend, and only three of those were destroyed, **San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Mark Hartwig said. A couple of county bulldozers cut a 50-foot-wide break that kept the blaze from entering Wrightwood on Aug. 17.

We lost some iconic, historic buildings: The Summit Inn, the landmark diner in the Cajon Pass, and two of the county's oldest structures: the Earp cabin and a barn on the Clyde Ranch.

No human lives were lost. That seems quite fortunate, especially since about half the people told they should evacuate by San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies ignored the suggestion.

That's a problem, or at least it figures to be in some future fire. Because today's fires are not your father's fire, according to those who fight them.

Over and over again, some grizzled firefighter or another who has been battling wildfires for 20 or 30 years has said, referring to the Blue Cut or another of the fires that have scorched California's earth this year, that he's "never seen a fire act like this" or "never seen a fire move so fast."

That's a lesson that we in Southern California need to learn. In our fifth year of bone-dry drought, wildfires burn more aggressively, move faster and change directions more quickly than we're used to.

"It's almost like the mountains are just doused in gasoline," said a CalFire captain fighting the Chimney fire near Hearst Castle.

That means people in evacuation zones who elect to stay at home could well wind up facing a raging fire that closes in faster than they could imagine, perhaps leaving them no way out. Or a fire that changes direction with such speed that they're overtaken as they attempt to escape.

Staying in an evacuation zone puts not only your life at risk, but those of firefighters and deputies who might have to decide whether it's worth the risk to try to save you. Don't put them in that spot.

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/opinion/20160824/dont-ignore-orders-to-evacuate-fire-zone>

Giving back: East West Bank Foundation donates \$50K to Bluecut Fire relief fund

Monica Solano, Victor Valley Daily Press

Posted: August 24, 2016, 5:57 PM



David North of Desert Community Bank carries a \$50,000 check as the bank prepares to donate the money to the San Bernardino County Fire Department on Wednesday in Phelan. The donation was in response to the Bluecut Fire, which burned over 36,000 acres. James Quigg, Daily Press



Desert Community Bank staff present a \$50,000 check to San Bernardino County Fire Department officials on Wednesday in Phelan as a thank you for their efforts in battling the Bluecut Fire last week. James Quigg, Daily Press



Emily Wang of East West Bank, the parent company for Desert Community Bank, expresses her gratitude for the San Bernardino County Fire Department and concern for all those affected by the Bluecut Fire. DCB donated \$50,000 to the fire department as a thank you for their efforts. James Quigg, Daily Press

PHELAN — Wednesday afternoon proved to be eventful for the Phelan community as the East West Bank Foundation donated \$50,000 to support Bluecut Fire relief efforts.

The check was presented at the Desert Community Bank in Phelan with staff members, fire officials, 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood and selected guests gathered for the small ceremony. The generous donation was given to the **San Bernardino County Firefighters Association (SBCoFFA)**.

With a total of eight East West Bank branches in the High Desert area, a portion of the donation also will be allocated to the Fire Family Foundation to support families of all firefighters, fire victims, fire departments and charities.

“The five-year drought has made every brush fire in California potentially destructive to our communities,” said Emily Wang, senior vice president and director of marketing and community development at East West Bank.

“As a member of the San Bernardino County, we are here with our community during difficult times. Therefore, we immediately contributed to the relief effort to help minimize the damage, upon learning of the wide-spreading fire. We are grateful for the firefighters who are on the front line risking their lives to protect the community.”

Lovingood and San Bernardino County Fire Department Assistant Chief Ronald Walls each gave a short speech thanking East West Bank for its generosity.

"San Bernardino County Firefighters are just a player in the fire service team that serves the High Desert area, and support our brothers and sister from Cal Fire, United States Forest Service, and many other local government agencies," said Mike McClintock, president of the San Bernardino Co Firefighters Association. "(The firefighters association) also is committed to helping our local community members that have been stricken by these destructive wildfires and look forward to making a positive influence in these communities." In addition to the donation, the bank will be waiving certain service fees and late fees on payments for mortgage, home equity lines of credit, or other loan products through September for impacted customers, it announced.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/article/20160824/NEWS/160829828/0/SEARCH>

Phelan horse rescue shelters Bluecut Fire victims

Mea Ola's Place takes in hundreds of animals; Continues to help displaced residence

Matthew Cabe, Victor Valley Daily Press

Posted: August 24, 2016, 8:23 PM



Ann Kline prepares to unload a horse at Mea Ola's Place in Phelan on Wednesday. Kline is taking several horses from the Bluecut Fire large-animal-evacuation effort at the High Desert Events Center. James Quigg, Daily Press

PHELAN — Before the Bluecut Fire started, Mea Ola's Place was hosting an equine-assisted therapy session for survivors of sexual abuse.

Mere hours later, Founder Lalinia "Ann" Kline and volunteers of her non-profit horse rescue, which relocated to the former site of the White Shadow Ranch in February, were scouring evacuation areas for people and animals in need of help.

And as the fire spread, forcing evacuations of more than 34,000 homes in San Bernardino County, Mea Ola's Place transformed into an evacuation and relief center, eventually taking in more than 200 displaced animals, a family with four basset hounds and a woman with eight cats and two dogs.

The family stayed in a mobile home on Kline's 10-acre property while the woman stayed in an RV that's also on the property.

"It's been surreal," Kline said. "There's so many emotions. It's been a crazy week for sure. We started preparing as soon as we saw the smoke. We just got on it and we've never been trained for this, but I'm really proud of our team."

In addition to taking in displaced animals, which included sheep, geese and a rabbit, Kline and her volunteers transported 20 horses to private residences and to nearby Mustang Spirit Equine Rescue.

By the end of the Bluecut's first day, her 10-acre property was overrun with volunteers. Kline said they were a welcome addition; Mea Ola's Place has regular volunteers that help tend to the nonprofit's own 43 horses, but they needed more after the fire started.

The regular volunteers complete an extensive orientation, according to Kline; however, in the interest of time, fire volunteers received a 10-minute crash course.

“The yard was packed,” Kline said. “10 horse trailer and trucks. 30 to 40 people here just helping. Maybe even more. Most of those people left by about 3 a.m. and we started getting calls about 8:30 a.m. asking for help in the Pinon Hills area. We were all over the place the second day.”

The “Mea Ola’s Place” Facebook page was regularly updated throughout the week with photos and videos of victims — most of whom came for supplies — and donations poured in as a result.

“We have gotten a great response from the community,” Kline said. “Every time I’ve asked for help on social media, we got the help.”

Donations also came from private donors, Agape Fitness and its Chino Hills community — who also donated to the Apple Valley Municipal Animal Shelter — and TERI Inc., an Oceanside-based nonprofit. Jenell Tiffany, TERI’s director of therapeutic equestrian riding contacted Mea Ola’s Place and said they were raising money, according to Kline.

“(Jenell) was a fire victim in 2007,” Kline said. “So she called me right away ... They came with bags filled with the essentials.”

On the first day, numerous victims came for things like dog food and clothing. At one point, Kline said she was giving people anything she could find because there was so much fear given that the fire spread so quickly.

“I was grabbing my clean socks out of our dresser drawers just to give them something,” she said. “What it’s morphed into now, you know, people are coming for cat, dog and horse food. And now we can send them home with water, food and little backpacks for the kids. A little backpack of essentials. Just comfort things for children.”

With the Bluecut fully contained, the last of her evacuees left earlier this week, and Kline said the focus has shifted toward relief and recovery.

“We’re thinking ahead to the next few weeks,” she said. “People aren’t going to have furniture, pots or pans. Our relief effort is just starting. This week is going to get busier and busier. One frustration is that victims don’t know where to go for help. And the people who can help don’t know how to reach the victims. We’re working on that, too.”

Amid the chaos of an emotional two week stretch, though, Kline said she’s happy people are getting the help they need and that the efforts of so many went so smoothly.

“There was not one injury to a person or animal,” she said. “I have a lot of horse experience. They call me the fearless leader. I’m pretty good in crisis situations, and we’re pretty organized. We had walkie talkies, golf carts, and a chain of command for our big events. We had off-duty and retired firefighters helping, too. Thankfully we had the space.”

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20160824/phelan-horse-rescue-shelters-bluecut-fire-victims>

SBCoFD Dozers Protect Wrightwood From Blue Cut Fire

Victor Valley News

Posted: August 24, 2016



(Photo courtesy of San Bernardino County Fire)



WRIGHTWOOD, CA — On Aug. 17 around 10:00 a.m., the day after the Blue Cut Fire started in the Cajon Pass, two **San Bernardino County Fire Department (SBCoFD)** bulldozers helped stop the fire from burning its way into the community of Wrightwood.

Fire engines and aircraft could not access the area between Circle Mountain and Highway 2, where Captain Shane Glaze and his crew of two bulldozers forged a 50-foot wide fire line that held the Blue Cut Fire from entering Wrightwood, an unincorporated community of about 4,500 people.

“We could’ve put 50 fire engines in there and not been successful,” Captain Glaze said.

According to Captain Glaze, the terrain in the area was too soft for fire engines to traverse into and wind conditions were too turbulent for firefighting aircraft to safely maneuver. Instead, firefighters relied on bulldozer crews to clear fuels and keep the fire from crossing Highway 2, the main thorough way into Wrightwood.

Flames shot up as high as 150 feet as the fire approached the dozer line around 2 p.m. Dozers encircled and suffocated any spot fires that jumped over the dozer line. The fire held at the edge of the dozer line and burned back along Highway 2 northeast towards State Route 138, effectively securing the residents of Wrightwood from the threat of wildfire.

The effort was one of many instances where firefighting personnel went above and beyond for the safety of residents. Under unified command, bulldozers from multiple agencies played an intricate role in wildland firefighting efforts by providing structure defense that kept fires from reaching homes and communities. After the fire was contained, dozer crews continued to work to rehabilitate roads affected by the Blue Cut Fire.

SBCoFD bulldozers are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. SBCoFD's bulldozer program was established Aug. 1998 and gives the department increased capability to create fire containment lines for wildland fires. They also clear access routes in remote areas for brush engines by clearing heavy brush, assist with fire engine recovery, separate burned from unburned materials at industrial or agricultural fires, assist with mop-up efforts by breaking up compacted piles for complete fire extinguishment, build dikes to redirect water flow in flood situations, and evacuate persons to safety through water as deep as three or four feet.

<http://www.vvng.com/sbcofd-dozers-protect-wrightwood-from-blue-cut-fire/>

Bulldozers made their mark during Blue Cut fire fight

Inland News Today

Posted: August 24, 2016

WRIGHTWOOD – (INT) – Among the unsung heroes who fought the Blue Cut Fire are the bulldozer operators who get credit for saving this mountain community.

During the second day of the fast-moving fire, fire engines and aircraft could not access one flank of the fire between Circle Mountain and Highway 2.

San Bernardino County fire Captain Shane Glaze and his crew of bulldozers forged a 50-foot wide fire line that prevented the Blue Cut Fire from entering Wrightwood.

Flames shot as high as 150 feet as the fire approached the dozer line. Dozers encircled and suffocated any spot fires that jumped over the line. The fire eventually burned back along Highway 2 northeast towards State Route 138, effectively securing Wrightwood.

“We could’ve put 50 fire engines in there and not been successful,” Captain Glaze said of the strategy that called on the dozer crew.

The same crews continue working to rehabilitate roads affected by the Blue Cut Fire.

<http://www.inlandnewstoday.com/story.php?s=43293>

Blue Cut Fire: Preliminary Operational Costs Top \$12 Million

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim of the World News

Posted: August 25, 2016, 12:05 AM



To date, the Blue Cut Fire's operational costs have exceeded \$12 million. (Photo by InciWeb)

Cajon Pass – For every \$3 Congress gives the U.S. Forest Service (part of the Department of Agriculture) \$2 of that amount is spent fighting wildfires, according to a recent federal study. Preliminary figures for operational costs associated with the Blue Cut Fire in the Cajon Pass now top \$12 million.

That figure is expected to grow now that the 36,274-acre fire is 100 percent contained and the number of firefighters and equipment is reduced.

Operational costs, according to information provided by San Bernardino National Forest spokesperson Lynn Sieliet include the cost of the 2,684 firefighters at the peak of the fire, fixed wing tankers, water-dropping helicopters, bulldozers and other items required to extinguish a wildfire.

“The operational costs,” Sieliet explained, “do not include fire suppression rehabilitation funds.”

Fire suppression repair efforts, which include erosion control, are in progress and the San Bernardino National Forest has deployed a BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response) team.

BLUE CUT FIRE

The cause of the Blue Cut Fire that started on August 16, at 10:36 a.m., is under investigation. The ignition point in the Cajon Pass along Old Cajon Boulevard and north of Kenwood Avenue just west of Interstate 15.

Despite a quick response, the fire quickly spotted across Cajon Creek.

“It was a quick, fast-moving fire front,” **San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Mark Hartwig told the Board of Supervisors. “It had a lot of fuel and really was the result of many years of drought in San Bernardino County.”

During the six days it took to reach full containment, the Blue Cut Fire impacted I-15 and Highway 138 in the Cajon Pass area, forced the closure of county and Forest Service roads, halted rail traffic for an extended period and destroyed several businesses including the historic Summit Inn/Cafe.

The Damage Assessment Team working under the Blue Cut Fire Unified Command reports that an estimated 110 single family residences, 216 outbuildings and in excess of 200 vehicles were destroyed by the fire.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and other agencies issued mandatory or voluntary evacuation orders to 82,000 residents (roughly 34,500 homes) living in Wrightwood, Oak Hills, Lytle Creek, Summit Valley, Phelan and Baldy Mesa.

Sheriff John McMahon and his team dispatched additional deputies to patrol the evacuated areas and arrested several "looters" who tried to take advantage of the situation.

District Attorney Michael Ramos — in addition to prosecuting the looters — has also opened an investigation into price gouging claims involving lodging establishments and other businesses.

COST COMPARISON

While not all the costs associated with battling the Blue Cut Fire are available, the total operational costs of the Pilot Fire that burned 8,110-acres near Silverwood Lake from August 7 to August 16 have been announced by the U.S. Forest Service as \$25 million.

The Pilot Fire began near the Miller Canyon OHV area off Highway 138 and eventually caused the evacuation of Deer Lodge Park and sections of Lake Arrowhead, Summit Valley, Hesperia and other desert communities.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/08/25/blue-cut-fire-preliminary-operational-costs-top-12-million/>

Blue Cut Fire Inferno

Terri Hill, Mountain Progress

Posted: August 25, 2016

On Tuesday, August 16 at 10:36 a.m., a small fire was reported in the area off Route 66 called Blue Cut. First reports were of a 2-acre vegetation fire. Within the first hour, the fire had raged up Swarthout Canyon and made a run on West Cajon Valley. Evacuations were ordered for the West Cajon Valley (Highway 2 to I-15) and Lytle Creek by 11:30 a.m. and **San Bernardino County Fire** was reporting 500+ acres involved. By 12:30 p.m. with 2,000 acres burning, Wild Horse Canyon, including the Mountaineer Progress Office, was ordered to evacuate. As firefighters tried in earnest to gain control, the blaze fingered its way into lower Lone Pine Canyon and west along SR-138. CHP closed 138 from Highway 2 to I-15, and the freeway was closed from Devore to Oak Hills.

At 3:30 p.m. with County Fire reporting the blaze at 5,000+ acres, the entire community of Wrightwood was given mandatory evacuation orders. With 138 and Lone Pine closed, the only exit from the community was N4 and Highway 2 at the west end of town. Residents who work down the hill rushed to make it home in time to be allowed into the community to pack their belongings and evacuate.

The Apple Valley and Devore Animal Shelters, the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds in Victorville, and many private ranchers were available for large and small animal boarding. Facebook became a means of communication between those in need and those with resources. Although the evacuation was mandatory, by Wednesday morning nearly half of Wrightwood residents had remained in their homes. Neighbors who stayed behind tried to help look after and rescue pets left behind by those who could not return before access to Wrightwood was cut off Tuesday evening. Still, the sheriff's department stressed the importance of the evacuation for the safety of residents and firefighting personnel.

Further evacuations were ordered for Phelan (between I-15 and Phelan Road), East and West Oak Hills, and sections of Pinon Hills as well as the Desert Front neighborhoods. As the unified command, including US Forest Service, SBCo Fire, Cal Fire, SBC Sheriff, and CHP tried to get ahead of the forward spread, high

winds pushed the fire north and soon 15,000 acres of dry brush was fully involved.

At 6:00 p.m. SBCo Fire reported six of their firefighters became entrapped by wildfire while defending homes and assisting in evacuations in Swarthout Canyon that afternoon. All six firefighters took shelter within a nearby structure. Two of them sustained minor injuries and were both transported to a local hospital, treated, and released and reported back on the fire line defending structures. One county fire engine was also reported to have received moderate fire damage.

As of early Wednesday evening an estimated 34,500 homes and 82,640 people had been affected by the evacuation warnings. 30,000+ acres had burned with 0% containment. Firefighting units included 1,309 personnel, 152 engines, 18 crews, 8 air tankers, 2 Very Large Air Tankers (VLATS), and 8 helicopters, including night flying helicopters. While drones had not been seen over the Blue Cut Fire, fire managers warned that unmanned aircraft systems pose a major threat to personnel and air support.

Some schools in the Snowline, Victorville, and San Bernardino Districts are closed until further notice. Call your school district for details on the closures.

<http://mtprogress.net/home/newsaugust18252016.html>

County OES launches disaster preparedness app

Victor Valley Daily Press

Posted: August 24, 2016, 4:45 PM

Local public safety officials encourage residents to protect themselves and their loved ones before, during and after a disaster by using a new smartphone app created through the San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services (County OES) in partnership with QuickSeries Publishing. The new app, Ready SB, provides residents with multiple resources that will assist them in preparing for a disaster and is now available as a free download from the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store and can immediately help residents prepare themselves for emergencies. For more information on emergency preparedness visit sbcfire.org.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20160824/county-oes-launches-disaster-preparedness-app>

County Launches Disaster Preparedness App

Mountain News

Posted: August 25, 2016, 6:00 AM

Local public safety officials are encouraging residents to protect themselves and their loved ones before, during and after a disaster by using a new smartphone app created through the San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services (County OES) in partnership with QuickSeries Publishing.

“The county’s primary role is protecting the public. The Ready SB app gives residents and their families the tools and information they need to stay safe before, during and after an emergency,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman James Ramos.

The new app, Ready SB, provides residents with multiple resources that will assist them in preparing for a disaster. Ready SB is now available as a free download from the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store and can immediately help residents prepare themselves for emergencies.

Ready SB features include:

- **My Plan:** Answer five simple questions and Ready SB will create your customized emergency supply checklist.
- **Alerts:** With push notifications, County OES can notify you instantly of emergency situations in your area.
- **My Status:** Use Ready SB's integrated messaging system to send an instant status update to your personal emergency contact to let them know you're OK or that you need assistance.
- **Evacmap & Shelters:** Find evacuation routes with live traffic patterns and shelter locations with on- and offline mapping.
- **Need To Know:** Learn all you need to plan for and respond to natural disasters, terrorism, pandemic flu, floods, earthquakes and more.
- **Resource List:** Find contact information to local health and public safety agencies such as the American Red Cross, Animal Care & Control, county departments and fire protection agencies.

Ready SB's features can be used with or without Internet connection. The app was created through a grant administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This is the first app of its kind within the state of California.

Public safety officials urge residents to utilize the Ready SB app to make a family emergency plan and stay informed during emergencies.

"Ready SB makes emergency preparedness easier than ever. With one app, residents can stay informed and know exactly what to do to stay safe in case of an emergency," said Michael Antonucci, emergency services manager of County OES.

Residents are reminded to take the necessary steps to protect their families as firefighters continue to battle and monitor ongoing fires.

"The **San Bernardino County Fire Department** goes above and beyond to protect its residents from emergencies. Now with the Ready SB app, we're empowering residents with the information they need to take action and prevent themselves from becoming victims of a disaster," Fire Chief Mark Hartwig said. For more information on emergency preparedness, visit sbcfire.org.

http://www.mountain-news.com/mountain_living/article_2d6a2196-6a54-11e6-b37e-bb6806b3a1f0.html

Engine Explodes, Fire Destroys Boat

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: August 25, 2016, 6:00 AM



After this boat caught fire in its slip, ALA Lake Patrol towed it out into the bay, where flames completely consumed it. Jacqueline Countryman



Firefighters from Station 92 responded to the "boat on fire" call. The destroyed boat was towed away on its trailer.

A member of the Arrowhead Lake Association (ALA) was attempting on Aug. 17 to start his boat in its slip when he heard a loud “bang” and saw that the boat’s engine was on fire.

According to ALA General Manager Jim Grant, a member of the ALA Lake Safety Patrol noticed the boat on fire in its slip. The boat’s owner tried to put the fire out, but was unsuccessful.

“The member then pushed his boat away from his dock,” Grant reported. “However,” he added, “the wind blew the burning boat back into a neighboring dock. Lake Safety hooked a rope to the boat and pulled it out of the neighboring dock to the center of the lake’s East Bay.”

A fire pontoon boat from **San Bernardino County Fire Station 92** also responded to the emergency and was able to put the fire out. ALA’s patrol person and Fire Boat 92 towed the boat to the launch ramp and pulled it out of the water, according to Grant.

Mile High Boat Service brought the ALA member’s trailer to the launch ramp, where the maintenance staff lifted the boat onto the trailer. A deputy who responded from the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department had the boat towed to a storage facility.

“The boat appeared to be a total loss,” Grant said, “and there was minimal fire damage to the neighbor’s dock. There were no injuries.”

Grant said the incident is under investigation by the sheriff’s department; a sheriff’s report indicated no foul play is suspected.

The boat’s owner said that prior to starting it, he opened the engine hatch located at the stern and ran the engine blowers. He allowed the engine to vent for about three to five minutes before attempting to start it. The owner also said his boat was equipped with a vac flame arrester, but a report from the Twin Peaks Sheriff’s Station stated it is unknown if the arrester was Coast Guard approved. The report also stated the fire appeared to have been caused by a mechanical malfunction.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_44a21c60-6a4f-11e6-858c-af2793bcd5e9.html