



NEWS



News Headlines 1/10/2017

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Adelanto men suspected in rash of fires at local apartment complexes, feed store arrested

Jose Quintero, Daily Press

Posted: January 9, 2017, 10:47 AM, Updated 4:12 PM



San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department deputies arrested Cody Michael McGee, 25, and Jerry Paul Fontaine, 50, believed to be connected to a recent rash of fires, early Saturday morning at the Mountain Vista Apartments. James Quigg, Daily Press

VICTORVILLE - Two Adelanto men authorities believe to be connected with fires at a local apartment complexes were behind bars and expected to be arraigned in a Victorville courtroom Tuesday afternoon if criminally charged by prosecutors.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department deputies arrested Cody Michael McGee, 25, and Jerry Paul Fontaine, 50, early Saturday morning at the Mountain Vista Apartments, located in the 15400 block of Nisqualli Road, booking records show.

San Bernardino County Fire Department officials said McGee and Fontaine were arrested during a "joint surveillance operation" after a dumpster fire at the nearby Golden Sands Apartment complex in Victorville.

Booking records show McGee and Fontaine both live at a home in Adelanto in the 14400 block of Cambridge Street.

Victorville Sheriff's Station spokeswoman Mara Rodriguez said Fontaine and McGee are believed to be connected with other fires at the Mountain Vista Apartments and several other local fires.

Fire Department officials believe the two are responsible for setting fire to hay bales at the J&K Feed and Pet Supplies in Hesperia too.

"Firefighters were instrumental in keeping the fire contained to the hay bales and away from adjacent structures and gas station," County Fire spokeswoman Tracey Martinez said in a statement.

Firefighters responded to three separate fires that were "attempted unsuccessfully" at the Hesperia Feed Bin also located in Hesperia. Fire officials then feared a serial arsonist was targeting the High Desert and set up a surveillance operation in conjunction with the Sheriff's Department.

"The safety of the residents in this county remains top priority for all of us in public safety. The arrests of these two suspects were a result of teamwork and determination," Sheriff John McMahon said in a statement.

The Daily Press previously reported that residents of the Mountain Vista Apartments were concerned that a serial arsonist was in their midst, with some claiming the property's management company was not doing enough to combat the issue.

Martinez told that Daily Press in December that firefighters had responded to a total of 30 fires at the property since the beginning of August. The majority of these blazes were dumpster and vegetation fires.

"One vegetation fire did cause damage to an apartment building, endangering the residents inside," Martinez said. "All other fires were quickly extinguished before the fire spread to adjacent structures."

The Daily Press was previously referred by Mountain Vista's local leasing office to E & S Ring Management Corporation, which manages the property. Portfolio manager Scott Seymour said the company was just as concerned as Mountain Vista's residents about the fires and was doing what it can to ensure residents' safety by maintaining contact with the Sheriff's Department and County Fire, adding extra patrols on the property, with additional security guards at night to try to find those responsible for the blazes.

Fontaine and McGee were being held at High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto each in lieu of \$50,000 bail, booking records show.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170109/adelanto-men-suspected-in-rash-of-fires-at-local-apartment-complexes-feed-store-arrested>

Men Arrested on Suspicion of Arson at Mountain Vista Apartments

Victor Valley News

Posted: January 9, 2017



Authorities responded to 30 fires since August and are investigation any tips received. (Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com)- Authorities announced the arrest of two Adelanto men suspected of being involved with the rash of arson fires at the Mountain Vista Apartments. According to public booking records, Cody Michael McGee, 25, and Jerry Paul Fontaine, 50, were arrested Saturday morning at the Mountain Vista Apartments on the 15400 block of Nisqualli Road in Victorville. Both men are currently being held in lieu of \$50,000 bail and scheduled to appear in a Victorville courtroom on Tuesday.

As previously reported authorities have been investigating the possibility of a serial arsonist at the complex. Officials said since August of 2016 they've responded to 30 fire incidents at the complex, mostly being dumpster fires, and recently bush fires.

"More recently bushes around the community have been set on fire. The proximity of the bushes to the buildings and the safety issues it causes for our residents is very concerning to us," stated Scott Seymour with E&S Ring Management in an email sent to all residents on December 21, 2016.

E&S Ring Management announced a \$2,500.00 reward for information leading to the identification and arrest of the individual or individuals involved.

On October 23, 2016, a 2-alarm fire was reported at J&K Feed and Pet Supplies, 16361 Yucca St., Hesperia. This time the perpetrators set hay bales on fire. Firefighters were instrumental in keeping the fire contained to the hay bales and away from adjacent structures and gas station.

In November 2016, three separate fire starts were attempted unsuccessfully at the Hesperia Feed Bin, located at 16770 Yucca St., Hesperia.

Fearing a serial arsonist was targeting the High Desert, Fire and Sheriff Investigators set up a surveillance operation. The surveillance had been taking place for several months prior to the suspects being apprehended.

"These types of cases remain a high priority with us. A lot of time and effort go into solving arsons. We remain dedicated to aggressively pursuing those who maliciously set fires and put others in harm's way," stated **Fire Chief/Fire Warden Mark Hartwig**. "People in the High Desert are safer today because of the hard work and joint efforts such as this one."

Both suspects have been tied to setting over 30 fires at the Mountain Vista Apartments, one fire at the Golden Sands Apartments, a fire at J&K's Feed & Pet Supplies, and three attempted fire starts at Hesperia Feed Bin.

All fires were found to have been ignited using an incendiary device.

"The safety of the residents in this county remains top priority for all of us in public safety. The arrests of these two suspects were a result of teamwork and determination," stated Sheriff John McMahon.

Fire Marshal Mike Horton reminds residents of the importance of fire safety and to report any suspicious activity immediately by calling 9-1-1 or the We-Tip hotline. Your vigilance may save your life and the lives of others.

<http://www.vvng.com/men-arrested-in-connection-with-arson-at-mountain-vista-apartments/>

Blaze tears through garage of Victorville home Monday

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: January 9, 2017, 12:01 AM



Firefighters responded to a blaze at a home in Victorville late Monday. Two cars in the home were fully engulfed in flames, and two men sustained smoke inhalation injuries before the blaze was contained. Paola Baker, Daily Press.

VICTORVILLE - Two men escaped serious injury after a fire erupted in the garage of a local home late Monday, authorities said.

Reports of a structure fire at a home in the 12800 block of Banyon Tree Lane were received just before 8:30 p.m. Monday. The blaze was reported to be a garage fire with a possible explosion, according to scanner traffic.

Art Pena said he was driving down the street and saw two men working on a vehicle in the garage. As he approached the home, he saw the flames erupt.

"The front of the garage was on fire, so we stopped and called 911," Pena said. "One of the guys was in a wheelchair. We were able to get him into the front yard away from the fire."

When **San Bernardino County Fire Department** personnel arrived, two vehicles in the garage were fully engulfed in flames and the fire had extended into the garage, Battalion Chief Bobby Cox said.

Firefighters were able to keep the flames from spreading further into the home. The blaze was extinguished by 8:51 p.m.

Cox said both men sustained smoke inhalation injuries. One was treated at the scene and released while the other was taken to a local hospital as a precaution. No other injuries were reported.

Victorville Sheriff's station deputies on scene said the fire appeared to have started when the men were working on the car, but the exact cause is still being determined, Cox said.

The blaze remains under investigation by the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170109/blaze-tears-through-garage-of-victorville-home-monday>

Two Men Escape Garage Fire in Victorville

Victor Valley News

Posted: January 9, 2017



(photo courtesy of LLN)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com)- A Monday night house fire sent an elderly man to the hospital and destroyed two classic cars.

At about 8:30 p.m., **San Bernardino County Fire** responded to a residential structure fire in the 12800 block of Banyon Tree Lane.

Per scanner traffic, Initial reports indicated that there were explosions were heard from the area of the fire.

Upon arrival, Fire personnel found a garage fully involved with extension into the attic. An aggressive fire attack kept the fire from extending into the home.

Two elderly residents inside of the garage were helped to safety and narrowly escaped serious injuries.

Both men were treated for smoke inhalation, one at the scene while the other was transported to Victor Valley Global Medical Center.

Two classic cars inside the garage were destroyed by the fire.

Based on preliminary reports, the fire is believed to have started while the two men worked on a vehicle inside the garage.

The official cause of the fire remains under investigation.

<http://www.vvng.com/two-men-escape-garage-fire-in-victorville/>

Fire officials warn of flooding dangers

Daily Press

Posted: January 9, 2017, 12:01 AM

With a rash of storms moving through the area this week, the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** reminds residents to take proper precautions in the event of flooding, especially those living in areas affected by the Pilot and Bluecut fires.

Normally, vegetation absorbs rain, but after a wildfire, the charred ground where that vegetation has been burned away cannot easily absorb rainwater, increasing the risk of flooding and mudflows for several years.

Properties directly affected by fires and/or located downstream of burn areas are most at risk. The best preparation for possible flooding is to plan ahead.

San Bernardino County Fire's Ready! Set! Go! flood preparation webpage shows things that can be done to protect your home, property and family, including how to prepare for wet weather, emergency alerts, sandbag location, and what to include in an emergency kit.

Visit County Fire's Ready! Set! Go! Flood webpage at www.sbcfire.org/ReadySetGoFlood.aspx.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170109/fire-officials-warn-of-flooding-dangers>

Victorville Council meeting: What to watch

Daily Press

Posted: January 9, 2017, 12:55 PM

VICTORVILLE - The City Council will meet Tuesday for a special workshop, an hour earlier than its typical meetings. Leaders will meet at 5 p.m. inside Conference Room D at City Hall, 14343 Civic Drive.

There are only two items on the agenda and each is expected to be discussed at more length than an average item:

- Discussion and possible direction regarding parks development impact fees and options for funding
- Workshop to discuss possible annexation of the city of Victorville to the **San Bernardino County Fire Protection District**

Public comment will be allowed at the end of the meeting.

Wednesday's Planning Commission meeting, meanwhile, has been canceled. The Council will meet for its next regularly scheduled meeting at 6 p.m. Jan. 17 inside council chambers per usual.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170109/victorville-council-meeting-what-to-watch>