



NEWS RELEASE

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Mark A. Hartwig
Fire Chief

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CONTACT: Megan Blaney, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5870, 800-426-8689, pager #2119

Lucerne Valley Explorers Win Annual "Muster" Competition

The competition was tough and plentiful. The winners from years past were in attendance and ready to reclaim their prize. But when the Lucerne Valley Explorers competed up against 26 other Explorer Post teams in the annual Fire Muster competition for the Inland Empire Fire Explorers Association earlier this month, they won not only two gold medals, they won the entire event! The Muster took place at the Western States Police & Fire Games at the Ontario Convention Center on June 4.

The Lucerne Valley Explorers took first place overall in the competition after winning two of the three individual competitions. The two teams (A and B) from the High Desert Explorer Post started the day with a win when Team A took the gold in the Make or Break, a game of speed where the goal is to connect hoses as fast as possible without disconnecting any of them. Team B then took 3rd place in the wet and wild bucket brigade. The last event of the day was Waterball, where teams concentrate a hose on a ball suspended between them on a cable and try to spray the ball over to their opponents' team. After a few tense moments, Team B pulled ahead and took the gold in that event, placing the Lucerne Valley team in first place overall.

The 17 Explorers on the winning team come from Lucerne Valley, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville and even as far as the Landers area. The co-ed team ranges from ages 14 to 21 years and travels to Station 8 in Lucerne Valley to drill twice a month and sometimes even more frequently as the time of the competition approaches.

San Bernardino County Firefighter Kevin Phillips took the Explorers to the games this year. He has been an explorer advisor for 21 years and joined County Fire in 2006 from Apple Valley Fire.

"These kids are fantastic," Phillips said. "It's a good group of young adults and also important, it's a good group of parents being very supportive."

All in all, the Lucerne Valley Explorer Post brought home two gold medal plaques, one silver medal plaque, and a large plaque and the trophy for the overall contest winner.

"This is the first year that a County Fire Post has won it," Phillips said of the trophy. "It will be proudly displayed in Station 8."

The trophy is a relatively new addition to the Muster. It has been around for five years and for the last four years, the winners have been the cities of Rialto and Riverside.

But this year, Lucerne Valley was determined to break that trend. "It's a big thing. These kids worked very hard and there's a lot of dedication to get to the point where they're at," Phillips said. "Some of them are going for that brass ring. Their whole intent is to be a firefighter some day."