



# NEWS



## News Headlines 3/2/2017

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## **A taste of government**

**Joselyn Villalobos, Hesperia Star**

Posted: February 28, 2017, 3:55 PM

A group of students were recently chosen from four local high schools to participate in Youth in Government Day where they learned about development process, code compliance, the city's funding and more.

On Feb. 16, the City of Hesperia hosted the educational event for the 11th year, giving students a taste of the inner workings of local government.

"I think it's a very valuable program to highlight important work done by local government," city spokeswoman Rachel Molina said.

The day began at 8 a.m. where students toured City Hall and began learning about the meeting process to help prepare them for their own mock City Council meeting.

The students then proceeded with four different hour-long presentations throughout the day.

Public safety services was the first topic presented by Ron Walls with the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** and San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Hesperia Station Captain Gregg Wielenga.

After Molina educated the students on community relations, Director of Development Services Mike Blay and Code Enforcement Supervisor Theresa Mauger stepped in to explain code compliance.

The last two presentations detailed the development process within the city and the factors of public works.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170228/taste-of-government>

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## Six months later, officials confirm vehicle fire started Pilot Fire

Jose Quintero, Daily Press

Posted: March 1, 2017, 9:58 AM



Firefighters battle the Pilot Fire last August. Authorities have confirmed it was started by a vehicle fire. [Daily Press file]

After months of speculation, San Bernardino National Forest officials told the Daily Press fire investigators have finally determined the cause of last summer's Pilot Fire.

San Bernardino National Forest Deputy Public Affairs Officer Gerrelaine Alcorde confirmed the Pilot Fire was caused by a vehicle fire. However, Alcorde could not provide any more specific information.

The cause of the Bluecut Fire, which erupted just hours after the Pilot Fire was fully contained, remains under investigation, Alcorde said.

The Pilot and Bluecut fires burned nearly 45,000 acres last August and were both declared fully controlled on Dec. 16 after the region received its first significant rainfall. While both blazes were deemed fully contained roughly a week after each started, firefighters continued to monitor and extinguish flames in isolated trees and pockets of vegetation in extreme terrain over the summer and fall.

Some areas were determined to be unsafe for firefighters to access, fire officials said. There was no possibility of an escape outside the established containment lines and fire officials determined the blazes would be fully controlled with the area's first large storm.

Alcorde said residents could expect to see smoke due to prescribed fires, which are essential for restoring forest ecosystems, reducing build-up of hazardous fuels and improving resiliency.

All prescribed fires will be conducted in accordance with an approved burn plan to ensure public safety. Local authorities will be notified prior to burn days and kept informed throughout burning operations, Alcorde said.

The Pilot Fire started on Aug. 7 near the Miller Canyon off-highway vehicle area off of Highway 138. The California Highway Patrol, for some time, had rolled the wildfire into an earlier incident logged a "car fire." But CHP officials were not able to confirm whether the two incidents were connected.

A photo surfaced online days after the fire erupted that claimed the blaze may have been caused by a burning off-highway vehicle. The photo appeared to show the charred frame of a vehicle with a fire engine in the background. Fire officials declined to comment on the photo.

The Pilot Fire, reported as the 10th largest wildfire in California in 2016, burned 8,110 acres in the San Bernardino Mountains and Summit Valley and fire officials did not report any damaged or destroyed structures due to the blaze.

By the end of the first night the Pilot Fire spread to 1,500 acres, prompting a massive firefighting response from local and regional agencies. The blaze quickly resulted in over 5,300 evacuation orders for homes in the southeast Hesperia, Lake Arrowhead, Lake Gregory and Crestline.

The Pilot Fire was not officially contained until Aug. 16, hours before the start of the massive Bluecut Fire, which quickly spread due to erratic winds and extremely dry vegetation, and became the fifth largest wildfire reported in the state in 2016. By the end of the first day, authorities had shut down Interstate 15 in both directions and issued mandatory evacuation orders for over 82,000 residents in West Cajon Valley, Wrightwood, Phelan, Oak Hills and southwest Hesperia.

The blaze destroyed an estimated 105 homes, 213 outbuildings and more than 200 vehicles, mostly in the West Cajon Valley, and was declared fully contained on Aug. 23.

The Bluecut Fire burned 28,980 acres on San Bernardino National Forest land, 6,811 acres on private lands and 448 acres on Bureau of Land Management land, according to a report released in late 2016 by a Burned Area Emergency Response team.

The interagency BAER team was comprised of United States Forest Service scientists and specialists who evaluated post-fire conditions, including public safety and the potential for increased post-fire flooding, sediment flows, rock slides and hazard trees.

The BAER team learned there were over 19,000 acres with "high and very high" hazard ratings for soil erosion, over 5,500 acres with moderate ratings and over 10,800 acres with low hazards.

"In summary, field observations and modeling of the burned area support a general trend of increased flows, sedimentation, and erosion due to post-fire effects especially in sub-watersheds with the most burned acres, specifically moderate and high soil burn severity, high erosion hazard ratings, and the steepest slopes," the BAER team's report said.

"Areas most at-risk from post-fire flooding, erosion, and sedimentation are within the burn area or within close proximity to the burn area, although some sites outside of the burn perimeter that are downslope or downstream of the burn area are still at-risk from post-fire effects."

After the Ken and Spring fires, two smaller fires that erupted weeks after the Pilot and Bluecut blazes, fire officials said there was a cause for concern. They feared an arsonist was at work and issued press releases asking for the public's help in their investigations.

The Bluecut investigations are ongoing and anyone with information is asked to call 1-800-472-7766. Those wishing to remain anonymous may call the WeTip hotline at 800-782-7436 or visit [www.wetip.com](http://www.wetip.com).

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170301/six-months-later-officials-confirm-vehicle-fire-started-pilot-fire?start=2>

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## **Barstow man arrested after hit-and-run crash in Victorville late Tuesday**

Paola Baker, Desert Dispatch

Posted: March 1, 2017, 4:40 PM



San Bernardino County Fire Department personnel give medical aid to a man who suffered "serious injuries" after a hit-and-run rollover crash in Victorville late Tuesday. [David Pardo, Daily Press]

VICTORVILLE — A 23-year-old man allegedly involved in a hit-and-run rollover crash that left two men seriously injured was arrested late Tuesday, authorities said.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department officials said Lamont Diondre Brandon, of Barstow, was arrested following Tuesday night's incident, which began on Nisqualli Road near Cypress Avenue.

Victorville Sheriff's Station spokeswoman Mara Rodriguez said a woman in a gray Honda was headed east on Nisqualli Road when a small red Chevy SUV, headed south on Cypress Avenue, crossed in front of the Honda. She struck the rear of the SUV, which overturned.

"She reported that the SUV rolled before coming to a stop, and she then witnessed some of the occupants exit the vehicle and then leave on foot," Rodriguez said.

Sheriff's officials launched a search in the area for the SUV, which was found at the intersection of Riviera Court and Riviera Drive shortly after the crash.

Two men were found inside the vehicle and were detained. Brandon, the driver, was found nearby after a citizen called to report that three men had come to the door "asking for water and saying their vehicle had rolled nearby," Rodriguez said.

Deputies on scene said all three men appeared to have been drinking and were seen dumping alcohol out of the SUV following the crash.

The two men found inside the SUV suffered "serious injuries" and were taken to a local hospital for treatment. Deputies on scene said one of the men, who was seen walking away from a nearby home bleeding, appeared to have sustained head trauma.

Further details on the men or their condition weren't available Wednesday.

Brandon was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence causing bodily injury, according to booking records, and remains in custody at the High Desert Detention Center in lieu of \$100,000 bail. He's scheduled to appear in court at 12:30 p.m. Thursday.

<http://www.desertdispatch.com/news/20170301/barstow-man-arrested-after-hit-and-run-crash-in-victorville-late-tuesday>