



# NEWS



## News Headlines 12/15-18/2017

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## Fire near 15 Freeway in northern Fontana is quickly stopped

Stephen Ramirez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: December 17, 2017, 2:41 p.m.



Firefighters battle a quick moving wind driven brush fire east of the 15 Freeway in Fontana, south of Sierra Avenue, Sunday December 17, 2017. Cause of the blaze is unknown. (Photo by Will Lester-Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

Firefighters have stopped an approximately 100-acre vegetation fire that broke out Sunday afternoon off the 15 Freeway in northern Fontana and was initially spreading rapidly in strong winds.

That spread was stopped a little after 3 p.m. and firefighters went into mop-up mode, the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department tweeted.

The final size of the fire may change some once detailed mapping work is completed, according to department spokesman Ryan Vaccaro.

Firefighters will remain on scene through the night to extinguish any hot spots, he said. The fire's cause is under investigation.

The blaze, named the Duncan fire, was reported about 1:45 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17 off the northbound side of the freeway, north of Duncan Canyon Road, according to the Fire Department and a California Highway Patrol log. The log indicated no lanes of the 15 were closed, but a Caltrans map showed traffic in that area slowing down in both directions.

A helicopter was quickly called in to drop water on the flames.

<http://www.sbsun.com/2017/12/17/brush-fire-spreading-near-15-freeway-in-fontana-area/>

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## Small vegetation fire is extinguished in northwestern Fontana on Dec. 17

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: December 17, 2017

A small vegetation fire, helped by strong winds, erupted in the northwestern part of Fontana on the afternoon of Dec. 17, but the blaze was quickly extinguished, according to Public Information Officer Ryan Vacarro of the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department.

The second-alarm fire was first reported at about 2 p.m. near northbound Interstate 15 north of Duncan Canyon Road, the Fire Department said on Twitter.

Air support was requested as the fire moved to the south. Residents in much of the city could see and smell the smoke.

However, the Fire Department was able to gain control of the fire and stopped its spread.

There were no reports of injuries or structural damage. The cause of the blaze was under investigation.

[http://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/small-vegetation-fire-is-extinguished-in-northwestern-fontana-on-dec/article\\_d7c9906a-e37d-11e7-8eea-d78eff1e3051.html](http://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/small-vegetation-fire-is-extinguished-in-northwestern-fontana-on-dec/article_d7c9906a-e37d-11e7-8eea-d78eff1e3051.html)

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## **Driver flees from vehicle after fiery crash in Victorville**

VVNG Staff, Victor Valley News

Posted: December 17, 2017

**VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com)** – One person was taken into custody on suspicion of driving under the influence following a fiery crash on the I-15 freeway Sunday afternoon.

At about 12:24 pm, 911 dispatch received several reports of a car fire on the northbound Bear Valley Road off-ramp in Victorville.

According to California Highway Patrol incident logs, the vehicle, a blue Toyota Camry overturned several times after hitting a guard rail and catching air. The Corolla came to a stop on the right hand shoulder of the off-ramp and erupted into flames.

Gustavo De La Rocha was traveling southbound and described seeing a blue car going at a high-rate of speed. “When I looked back the car it spun mid-air at the exit,” said Rocha.

Immediately after the crash, witnesses reported seeing a male running from the vehicle and jumping over a wall of the La Quinta parking lot. The male was later apprehended by sheriff’s deputies and was suspected of being under the influence, scanner traffic reported.

**San Bernardino County Firefighters** extinguished the fire and determined no other occupants were inside the vehicle.

CHP logs showed numerous reports taken of a vehicle with the same description driving recklessly and at a high-rate of speed prior to the fiery crash.

Approximately 54 feet of chain link perimeter fencing and 10 metal poles were damaged, cap logs reported. No other injuries have been reported as a result of the incident. Information will be updated as it becomes available.

<http://www.vvng.com/driver-flees-vehicle-fiery-crash-victorville/>

## **Authorities investigating fatal rollover crash involving off-highway vehicle**

**Kevin Trudgeon , VV Daily Press**

Posted: December 17, 2017, 12:01 AM

HESPERIA — A male driver was killed and a female passenger was injured in a rollover crash early Sunday afternoon, authorities said.

Deputies with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Hesperia Station and **San Bernardino County Fire** Department personnel responded to reports of a traffic collision in the desert area of Acacia Road, east of Highway 395, in Hesperia at approximately 1:50 p.m.

When the deputies and County Fire personnel arrived, they found a 2009 Yamaha Rino, a side-by-side off-highway vehicle, overturned with the driver trapped underneath it, authorities said. A female passenger had been able to escape from the vehicle and was suffering from minor injuries.

“The driver was extricated from under the vehicle, however, despite efforts by first responders, the injuries sustained to the driver during the collision were fatal,” sheriff's officials said. “The female passenger was transported by ground ambulance to a local hospital for treatment of minor injuries.”

According to authorities, evidence at the scene determined that the vehicle had been traveling east on an unmaintained dirt trail near Acacia Road when the driver made a left turn at an unknown speed, causing the vehicle to overturn.

The driver and passenger were both wearing safety harnesses, authorities said, but helmets were not being used and the driver was partially ejected as the vehicle overturned.

The Hesperia Sheriff's Station's Major Accident Investigation Team was requested to conduct the investigation into the cause of the crash. Anyone with information regarding the collision is urged to contact Deputy Jeremy Deberg or Deputy Doug Hubbard at 760-947-1500.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20171217/authorities-investigating-fatal-rollover-crash-involving-off-highway-vehicle>

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## **2 deputies injured during Thursday night pursuit in Victorville**

**VVNG Staff, Victor Valley News**

Posted: December 15, 2017

**VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com)** – Two San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputies were injured Thursday night in Victorville during a pursuit.

According to officials, the incident began earlier in the evening when multiple suspects attempted a 'grab and run' robbery at the Mall of Victor Valley at 14400 Bear Valley Road.

Officials said, mall security wrote down the plate number on the suspect vehicle and reported it to sheriff's. A short time later, deputies spotted the suspect vehicle, a black Jeep on the southbound I-15 and attempted a traffic stop near Palmdale Road.

According to Sergeant Steve Pennington, the two deputies were injured when the suspect vehicle side swiped/rear ended their patrol vehicle on the freeway.

At about 5:15 pm, the deputies involved in the hit-and-run continued to pursue the vehicle until they exited onto La Mesa Road.

One suspect fled on foot and three additional occupants remained inside the vehicle. Authorities confirmed all four were taken into custody.

Stolen merchandise was recovered inside of the Jeep which was reported stolen out of Hesperia. Both deputies were treated at the scene by **San Bernardino County Fire** Paramedics, however, no major injuries were reported.

[Additional information will be updated as it becomes available. Check back for updates.](http://www.vvng.com/2-deputies-injured-thursday-night-pursuit-victorville/)  
<http://www.vvng.com/2-deputies-injured-thursday-night-pursuit-victorville/>

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## **Upland former administrator causing waves after his departure**

Liset Marquez, *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*

Posted: December 15, 2017, 10:26 p.m.

UPLAND >> It was a job not many were willing to take in the summer of 2016. Upland was in need of an interim city manager after just firing its top executive.

The departure marked the fourth consecutive city manager, dating back to 2005, to leave amid controversy.

Then came Martin Thouvenell, who spent three decades working for the city in various capacities. He quickly began to stir things up, and much like his 17-month tenure, his departure was met with mixed emotions.

On Monday night, after city and local leaders showered him with accolades and praise for serving on an interim basis, a majority of the council approved a consulting contract that could net Thouvenell \$108,000 in the next year.

As a consultant, Thouvenell would be getting a pay bump. It was a move that infuriated some at the meeting. “The council leaves this impression on residents that they have no voice or even matter in these decisions,” said resident Dede Ramella. “Hiring Mr. Thouvenell as a consultant is a frivolous and careless move.”

### **Tackling city issues**

Thouvenell is expected to help new City Manager Bill Manis, who starts in January 2018, lead the search for a new police chief, focus on Memorial Park renovations, and work on issues with San Antonio Regional Hospital, said Mayor Debbie Stone.

Stone was confident Thouvenell would complete the work in under a year.

“Trust me, he’s not going to sit around and try to drag this out for 12 months,” she said. “He still loves the city of Upland, he still puts his heart and soul into it but he’s just as eager to get these projects done as we are.” After the meeting, Thouvenell confirmed, saying he expects to finish his work in six months.

“It would be fairly difficult to abandon those projects right now and hand those over to somebody because they’re fairly technical in nature. They are big projects for Upland and we’ll be talking more about them soon,” he said.

Thouvenell can be a man of few words, but he never held back during council meetings. Often quick to shut down any rumors or misinformation shared by the public.

### **A swift shift in approach**

When the council first brought him on board, Thouvenell was paid \$75 an hour. But in February 2017 they gave him a six-month extension, and the council agreed to increase his pay to \$80 an hour or up to \$76,000 for 960 hours. The contract was extended a second time, from Aug. 7 to Dec. 31. As a retired state employee collecting a pension, Thouvenell is only allowed to work 960 hours in a fiscal year.

During his tenure, Thouvenell has been spearheading moves to increase revenues and stop the threat of operating in a deficit.

But in the last year, both Police Chief Brian Johnson and Fire Chief Paul Segalla left under a cloud of controversy – both were hired by Thouvenell’s predecessor.

His biggest move was to lead the effort to disband the city’s fire department after more than a century of service and turn fire protection over to San Bernardino County. The move could save Upland \$3.2 million a year.

Under Thouvenell, the council was presented with a financial stability plan which included implementing parking fees at the Metrolink lots and seeking energy efficient building upgrades. The deal will inject \$2 million worth of needed equipment improvements into city buildings that will reduce maintenance needs over the next several years. The upgrades are expected to save \$3 million over the span of 25 years. Both items were approved this year.

The interim city manager was highly vocal about the need to consider a sales tax to address Upland’s financial issues but never put forward a plan for the council to vote on.

Councilman Gino Filippi said Upland’s staff appreciated his guidance as the city overcame staff shortages and budget concerns.

“I’m confident that one day, probably many years from now, people will look back on the work that Marty did while he was here,” he said. “Not just in the last 18 months, but certainly before, and recognize that we have someone with leadership here.”

### **A ‘bloated’ contract**

Residents like Ramella weren’t alone in raising questions, April McCormick called the contract bloated and said the council’s decision to approve it was a fatal flaw in their future reelection bids.

“We just celebrated this man as though he’s leaving. He’s not going anywhere, he’s actually going to go home and receive \$9,000 every single month from the city council,” she said.

Councilman Sid Robinson disagreed, saying the contract was average for what cities pay. Although the cities are not comparable in size and budget, Ontario earlier this year awarded its former city manager Greg Devereaux a \$120,000 contract for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Others residents like Eric Gavin, who is also a paid consultant for the city on homeless issues, applauded Thouvenell for the direction he had taken the council.

In addition, Marcelo Blanco, who was representing the Upland Police Management Association, voiced support for his consulting contract.

“He has done a great job as an interim city manager, and we believe his work is not done yet. We know he’ll be an asset to the new city manager, an invaluable resource to you, and ultimately the community,” he said. Councilwoman Janice Elliott was the lone official to oppose the contract, voicing her concern that only the council could nullify the pact.

“Mr. Manis should be able to terminate any long-term contract that involves our city,” she said. “The duties in this contract are so ambiguous that they could include any of Mr. Thouvenell’s current duties. There are no measurable goals or objectives by which his performance would be evaluated.”

Elliott said she didn’t see the need for a year-long contract to facilitate a smooth transition, adding that Deputy City Manager Jeannette Vagnozzi, staff and another consultant, was available.

She said she also believed Thouvenell’s presence could potentially undermine the new city manager’s authority and motioned that the terms of the contract be amended to be shortened to two weeks with only a \$4,500 stipend.

Elliott’s response drew a long applause from the audience but failed to get the support of the rest of the council who were in support.

### **A need for outside help**

Although many residents questioned whether Thouvenell would impede the new city manager, Manis later stood at the lectern and squashed any of those concerns. Thouvenell agreed and has already spoke to the city’s next top executive about his new role.

Filippi defended the move, saying he spoke with Manis earlier that day about the contract. In their conversation, Manis acknowledged he would be in a position to have to hire a consultant to find the new police chief.

“I asked Mr. Manis if he had a choice who to assist with that function it would be Marty. I don’t think that’s beyond reason,” Filippi said.

Councilwoman Carol Timm said Upland would most likely have to hire multiple consultants to get the projects done. Upland either hires one it doesn’t know or hires a consultant who knows what he’s doing, she explained. “I would rather hire him, somebody we know gets the jobs and knows about these projects,” Timm said.

Timm was actually one of the two council members who wanted to keep the previous city manager and acknowledged she hadn’t met Thouvenell before he joined on an interim basis.

“I was a naysayer, 1,000 percent,” Timm said. “But Marty Thouvenell got the job done.”

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/2017/12/15/upland-former-administrator-causing-waves-after-his-departure/>

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## **HOLIDAY DECORATION SAFETY TIPS**

Staff Writer, z1077news

Posted: December 17, 2017

Now that the Christmas season is here, many people are decorating their homes and yards. Reporter Tanisha Cureton offers the following safety tips from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

With the holiday season upon us, the San Bernardino County Fire Dept. reminds residents of the following holiday decorating and natural Christmas tree safety tips:

Inspect all your lights and cords for breaks, fraying, and damaged connections. If you're using an artificial tree, make sure it is made of safe, fireproof materials. Use miniature lights to produce less heat and reduce drying. Don't forget to water your real tree EVERY DAY. Recycle your tree after the holidays. Never burn your natural tree; it can be explosive.

<http://z1077fm.com/local-news/todays-full-newscast/>

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## **Spark of Love drive needs toys, food**

Saul A. Flores, Needles Desert Star

Posted: December 15, 2017

NEEDLES — The Needles Spark of Love Toy Drive presented by the Women's Club of Needles, **San Bernardino County Fire Department** and Desert Communities Federal Credit Union, is still taking donations for the toy drive.

“We have about 198 children and 86 families that we have signed up so far,” said Tena McGee of the Women's Club of Needles. “One of our goals is to have everybody walk away with three gifts each and we are not half there yet.”

Toy donations can be dropped off at the DCFCU located along Broadway or at one of the many donation drop off locations which include: Best Western, Needles Branch Library, Colorado River Medical Center, Needles High School, Palo Verde College and more.

“Needles Point Pharmacy, Big O Tires among other business and people have been very supportive of the event,” said McGee. “To make sure that nobody goes hungry we are working with Needles Unified School District and Set Free Church to make sure we cover all our bases,” McGee continued. “People can donate non-perishable food items, monetary donations (checks payable to Women's Club of Needles), stockings and stocking stuffers. We are still looking for people to Adopt-A-Family and to Adopt-A-Child for the Christmas season.”

[http://www.mohavedailynews.com/needles\\_desert\\_star/spark-of-love-drive-needs-toys-food/article\\_c302957a-e1e6-11e7-bc7f-17a86ecace21.html](http://www.mohavedailynews.com/needles_desert_star/spark-of-love-drive-needs-toys-food/article_c302957a-e1e6-11e7-bc7f-17a86ecace21.html)

## **29 Palms man arrested for partial amputation**

**Staff Writer, The Desert Trail**

Posted: Friday, December 15, 2017, 12:31 p.m.

TWENTYNINE PALMS — A Twentynine Palms man was arrested Thursday, Dec. 14, on a charge of mayhem.

David Saunders, 34, is accused of partially amputating the right index, middle and ring finger of an unnamed female victim.

He was booked into the Morongo Basin Jail where he was held in lieu of \$100,000 bail.

The investigation which led to Saunders' arrest began at about 6:08 p.m. Thursday, when Deputies W. Ziemer and W. Greer responded to the 74000 block of Valle Vista Drive to investigate a disturbance report.

Deputies discovered the victim and Saunders had been arguing over relationship issues. Saunders left the residence then returned at approximately 5:45 p.m. The victim and Saunders got into another argument and Saunders grabbed a pair of scissors. The victim attempted to grab the scissors out of his hand and her right index, middle, and ring finger were partially amputated.

The victim's friend called 911 and while the victim and Saunders were outside, he reportedly attacked her again, punching her four to five times in the face causing a laceration to the bridge of her nose and severe swelling to the left side of her face.

Saunders left the location before deputies arrived.

**San Bernardino County Fire** and Morongo Basin Ambulance also responded to the location. The victim was transported for treatment to Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs by Morongo Basin Ambulance. Saunders later called 911 from a different location where he was contacted, interviewed and later arrested for violation of PC 203, Mayhem.

[http://www.hidesertstar.com/the\\_desert\\_trail/news/article\\_e35159ac-e1d6-11e7-b640-d738d43b32f9.html](http://www.hidesertstar.com/the_desert_trail/news/article_e35159ac-e1d6-11e7-b640-d738d43b32f9.html)