



NEWS



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Motorhome fire doused before reaching Hesperia home

Daily Press

Posted: October 22, 2016, 5:13 PM



(photo courtesy San Bernardino County Fire)

HESPERIA — A motorhome fire in the 10600 block of 3rd Avenue in Hesperia was contained by **San Bernardino County Fire** on Saturday.

According to the County Fire Twitter account, firefighters responded to a residential structure fire after smoke was reported seen from 3rd Avenue around 11:45 a.m. Saturday.

Upon arriving, officials saw heavy smoke coming from the fire, which was “to the rear of a single story structure.”

Authorities later tweeted that both a fifth wheel trailer and a motorhome were fully involved in the fire, both in the backyard of a one-story home.

Firefighters contained the fire before it could reach the home, and no injuries were reported as a result.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20161022/motorhome-fire-doused-before-reaching-hesperia-home>

5th Wheel And Motorhome Total Loss After Fire

Victor Valley News

Posted: October 22, 2016



(photo courtesy San Bernardino County Fire)

HESPERIA, CA:(VVNG.com)– **San Bernardino County Fire** responded to a structure fire in the area of 3rd Avenue and Mesa Street in Hesperia Saturday.

At about 11:45 a.m. dispatch received multiple reports of a fire in the backyard of a residence on the 10600 block of 3rd Avenue.

When firefighters arrived they located a fully involved 5th wheel and motor home to the rear of the single story home. They determined there was no exposure to the residence.

No injuries were reported as a result of the fire.

The cause of the fire is currently under investigation. An investigator was requested to respond.

<http://www.vvng.com/5th-wheel-and-motorhome-total-loss-after-fire/>

Muscoy brush fire uncovers large homeless encampment

Doug Saunders, The Sun

Posted: October 20, 2016, 6:10 PM



San Bernardino County firefighters work to put out a brush fire that sparked in the center of the Cajon Wash at a homeless encampment in Muscoy. Photo by Doug Saunders

MUSCOY >> Firefighters battled a small vegetation fire in the heart of the Cajon Wash Thursday afternoon.

Shortly before 3 p.m. firefighters received several calls regarding heavy smoke being visible near Mallory and Duffy streets, fire officials said.

They found heavy smoke coming from the Cajon Wash.

As the smoke lifted, a large homeless encampment, hidden from society's view, was exposed.

Several tents, lawn chairs, coffee percolators sitting on make-shift stoves, mattresses and other household items could be seen sitting in the middle of the lingering smoke obviously abandoned by their previous owners.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20161020/muscoy-brush-fire-uncovers-large-homeless-encampment>

Kitten rescued from SUV engine by San Bernardino County fire personnel

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: October 21, 2016, 10:17 AM



John Singleton with the San Bernardino County Fire Department holds a kitten that fire personnel rescued from a SUV engine compartment Thursday in San Bernardino. Photo courtesy of San Bernardino County Fire Department

SAN BERNARDINO >> A group of vigilant **San Bernardino County fire** personnel rescued a kitten from the engine compartment of an SUV whose driver was dropping off items at a household hazardous waste facility Thursday.

Around 1:30 p.m., a San Bernardino resident pulled into the County Fire Department facility at 2824 E. W St. when Juan Gloria, a fire equipment technician, heard a faint noise coming from the vehicle, according to fire officials. He soon realized a tiny white kitten was stuck in the SUV's engine compartment.

Maintenance Specialist Jeff Pollack helped take apart the vehicle's air filter and window washer fluid tank where the kitten was stuck.

With help from Randy Miller and John Singleton, the men were able to rescue the kitten unharmed.

The driver of the vehicle told fire officials that the vehicle's hood was left open overnight and believed that's when the kitten may have gotten into the vehicle's engine compartment.

According to fire officials, it's not uncommon for animals such as cats to search for warmth inside vehicles as temperatures begin to drop.

The kitten was returned to the driver, who has since found the tiny feline an adoptive home.

<http://www.sbsun.com/lifestyle/20161021/kitten-rescued-from-suv-engine-by-san-bernardino-county-fire-personnel>

Town Hall Forum: Mountain Communities Preparedness Open House

Michael P. Neufeld , Rim of the World News

Posted: October 22, 2016, 12:04 AM



One of the many exhibits on display at the October 25 Mountain Communities Preparedness Town Hall event at the Lake Arrowhead Resort and Spa will be the seismic simulator. The free event starts at 6 p.m. (Photo by San Bernardino County Fire)

Lake Arrowhead, CA – The Mountain Communities Preparedness Town Hall Forum and Open House begins at 6 p.m. at the Lake Arrowhead Resort and Spa. Come and gather information about overall disaster preparedness including fire, earthquake and winter weather preparedness.

Over 20 agencies and organizations will be on hand to share up-to-date preparedness information.

The Town Hall Forum portion of the evening will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the completion of audience questions and answers by 8 p.m. Speakers for the Town Hall Forum will be representing CalTrans, CHP, County Fire, County Sheriff, County Public Works and the office of Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS

Here is a partial list of the agencies or organizations scheduled to participate: American Red Cross; Arrowhead Fire Safe Council; Big Bear Valley CERT; Big Bear Valley COAD; CALFIRE; CalTrans; Central Mountain **SB County Fire/ECS**; California Highway Patrol; Mountain CERT; Mountain Rim Fire Safe Council; National Weather/SkyWarn; Rim Communities COAD, and the SB County Fire Office of Emergency Services.

Others set to participate: SB County Fire; SB County Public Works; SB County Sheriff & Citizens On Patrol; Simpler Life; Sempra; Southern California Edison, and the U.S. Forest Service.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Lake Arrowhead Resort and Spa is located at 27984 Highway 189 in Lake Arrowhead.

For additional information contact San Bernardino County Fire Office of Emergency Services at (909) 356-3998.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/10/22/town-hall-forum-mountain-communities-preparedness-open-house/>

Majority of money for Bluecut Fire victims won't be available until November

Matthew Cabe, Daily Press

Posted: October 22, 2016, 3:07 PM



Andrew Jung separates rock, dirt and ash from on his property as Representatives from 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood's office toured the West Cajon Valley on Tuesday searching for families still without electricity after the Bluecut Fire. (James Quigg, Daily Press)

WEST CAJON VALLEY — A majority of the money approved to assist Bluecut Fire victims won't be available until mid-November, but the dollar amount might only begin to scratch the surface of what's necessary to both spur and sustain long-term recovery.

In September, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors approved more than \$700,000 in assistance to victims of the fire, which burned 36,274 acres, destroyed more than 100 homes and cost \$18 million to fight.

But \$500,000 of that total will come from U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant funds, which Don Holland — 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood's policy advisor — said won't be available until Nov. 15.

“Because of (HUD) regulations, the county must wait 90 days from the date of evacuation in order to use the CDBG funds,” Holland told the Daily Press. “So the board also approved \$100,000 in discretionary funding to address the urgent and immediate needs of residents.”

County spokeswoman Felisa Cardona said an additional \$110,000 was authorized to cover the cost of roll-off bins to remove debris.

“Supervisor Lovingood, his staff and county staff are in the midst of planning efforts and volunteer outreach,” Holland said.

In early September, the U.S. Small Business Administration opened the Disaster Loan Outreach Center in Hesperia to help homeowners, renters and businesses affected by Bluecut Fire, according to county officials.

That center closed on Sept. 22, however, and only two loan applications have been approved thus far, according to SBA spokesman Gary Colton.

“Two were approved for a total of \$231,600,” Colton told the Daily Press. “They are for rebuilding or replacing the home that was damaged or destroyed. It also covers any lost personal property (such as appliances and furniture) up to \$40,000.”

Prior to the Bluecut Fire's containment, the county issued a statement that Gov. Jerry Brown “requested a federal declaration, which would have cleared the way for federal assistance to fire victims.”

The statement said the “fire did not meet the threshold for a federal disaster, and the request was not approved,” which prompted the state to combine the Bluecut Fire “with two other recent California wildfires in a request for federal consideration. But the federal government did not approve that proposal, either.”

But that information was inaccurate, according to Mary Simms, spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Simms told the Daily Press the county “quickly revised the information,” and emails obtained by the Daily Press between a FEMA representative and county spokesman David Wert show that a Fire Management Assistance Grant was “the only request FEMA has received (and approved) to date.”

The approved grant will “reimburse 75 percent of the eligible firefighting costs” through President Barack Obama’s Disaster Relief Fund, a FEMA statement showed.

Cardona said the county later learned that the state had not made the request because officials knew it didn’t meet the federal threshold, which prompted the county’s correction.

But the approved funds will not cover relief to victims, thus forcing the county to “find money in other places,” according to Robin Bishop.

Bishop chairs the San Bernardino County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, which Holland said has been working with the county and other nonprofits to help affected families by providing housing, food, water, clothing and debris-management services.

Bishop — who helped organize recovery efforts for Hurricane Katrina, Superstorm Sandy and in Baton Rouge after heavy rainfall left much of southern Louisiana submerged in flood water earlier this year — said VOAD was initially given free rein to conduct debris management on affected properties.

But after one week — with concern over asbestos contamination growing — the county restricted work to homes built after 1985.

“That limited us because most of the homes down there were built before 1985,” Bishop said. “I fought very hard with the county on that. I told them, ‘Whether you guys like it or not, they’re already putting stuff (containing asbestos) in your landfill.’”

VOAD was deactivated on Oct. 3, according to Cardona, because “the mission to coordinate debris removal could not move forward until properties were cleared for debris removal and asbestos.”

And on Oct. 12, the county required “all damaged structures within the burn area to be tested for asbestos” in an attempt to “guard against health and safety risks that could arise through the inadvertent disturbance or illegal disposal of asbestos materials.”

The county continues to look at different funding sources, according to Bishop. She said a partnership with the Inland Empire United Way means donations received will provide additional funding.

Inland Empire United Way President and CEO Greg Bradbard told the Daily Press donations total \$386,000 and will assist families with immediate needs. Additionally, IEUW began a collaboration with the Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County on Friday, according to Bradbard.

“CAP will be providing the case management services,” he said. “So we’re encouraging anyone who’s lost homes or been displaced as a result of the fire to contact CAP and make an appointment. CAP Bluecut Fire case managers will then meet with those people and help the families.”

While much of the United Way donations were used to support the volunteer effort after the fire, Bradbard said the goal is to use the donations “for unmet needs that can’t be met by other sources” like temporary housing and property projects, including well repair.

He said United Way continues to receive donations, but not to the extent it did in the immediate aftermath of the fire.

“It’s definitely slowed down quite a bit,” Bradbard said.

And Bishop said the \$386,000 is not enough to cover the needs of victims.

“Unless there’s major fundraising,” she said, “there’s going to be a lot of needs that go unmet. When you don’t have that money coming in that makes it very difficult. The county is a poor county to begin with. Now it’s up to county to figure out what we can get and from where.”

But that is a statement the county might not wholly agree since counties do not receive funding to help disaster victims, according to Cardona.

“That is not one of the functions charged to county government by the state,” she said. “That’s what private insurance is for. Property owners who choose to not carry insurance run the risk of incurring huge expenses on their own. The only government assistance available to disaster victims is through FEMA, and that only kicks in when damage has reached a certain level.”

She added, however, that the county Board of Supervisors “has gone above and beyond what counties are charged with.”

“Had the Board of Supervisors not decided to use CDBG funds in this way, uninsured homeowners would have to do this work at their own expense.”

Still, Bishop said the county must acknowledge that recovery is a long-term endeavor, adding that the potential for flooding is a concern if winter brings rain and properties aren’t cleaned up in time.

“It’s a big scramble and issues will cascade,” Bishop said. “Things that aren’t cleaned up will cascade into a flood issue. These things come in waves, and there are so many factors to consider. It’s a mess and it’s going to be a mess for a long time.”

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20161022/majority-of-money-for-bluecut-fire-victims-wont-be-available-until-november>

Assessing cost of damage proves difficult

Matthew Cabe, Daily Press

Posted: October 22, 2016, 3:59 PM

While the cost of fighting the Bluecut Fire is estimated at more than \$18 million, assessing total costs related to damage has proven problematic due to the “unusually high number of unpermitted structures that were lost or damaged.”

San Bernardino County spokesman David Wert told the Daily Press the Assessor-Recorder-Clerk removed more than \$5.3 million in value from the 2016 assessment roll as a result of the Bluecut Fire.

The assessment roll contains all taxable parcels in San Bernardino County and included 817,383 parcels valued at nearly \$195 billion, according to Assessor Bob Dutton in a June statement.

Wert added, however, that calling the removed \$5.3 million a “damage estimate” would be misleading.

“It does not include untold numbers of unpermitted structures, which range from tool sheds to complete homes that were simply built without a permit and were therefore unknown to the county,” Wert said.

“We don’t have complete numbers because the only information counties gather in terms of property loss is the loss to assessed value.”

Therefore: “In the eyes of the county these (unpermitted) structures never existed, so the county doesn’t have information on their value,” according to Wert, who said the actual value of all the structures lost is likely much higher than the \$5.3 million figure.

Many of those unpermitted structures were erected in the West Cajon Valley where a tight-knit Korean community lives a mostly agrarian lifestyle. Robin Bishop, chair of San Bernardino County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, helped spearhead the recovery effort there.

She said a majority of people in the valley live on limited funds.

“The Korean community is a quiet community,” Bishop said. “I don’t think a lot of people knew about it. These people want to live off the grid. They don’t have a lot of money coming in, and they didn’t have insurance.”

Bishop said county Code Enforcement officers, as well as volunteers, found that off-the-grid lifestyle led to the lack of permits, which has resulted in some landlords kicking out tenants.

Meanwhile, Wert called the situation uncommon, but not unheard of.

“Yes, some people in rural areas build homes without permits,” he said. “It doesn’t happen very often today, but some of the places touched by this fire had homes that were built 40 or more years ago.”

But it’s not only the unpermitted structures that make assessing the monetary damage difficult. Exacerbating the situation, Wert said, is that many permitted structures that were on the tax rolls had “different base-year values due to Proposition 13,” which was passed by California voters in 1978.

“In other words,” Wert said, “a home that could have sold the day before the fire for \$300,000 might have an assessed value of \$50,000 because it had been owned by the same person since prior to 1978. Another home that could have sold the day before the fire for \$300,000 might have an assessed value of \$150,000 because it was purchased by the current owner in 1995.”

For the purposes of assessing outright damage costs, the estimate for the two hypothetical homes would be \$600,000, according to Wert; however, he said “to the county, it was an impact of only \$200,000 to the assessment roll.”

“Also, I think most people would consider the value of a house to be either the cost to replace it or the price for which it would have sold in the current market,” Wert said, “and the assessed valuation is not necessarily either.”

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20161022/assessing-cost-of-damage-proves-difficult>

Fire season increasing

Jose Quintero, Daily Press

Posted: October 23, 2016, 12:01 AM

After a week of high temperatures and gusty Santa Ana winds, the National Weather Service predicts cooler temperatures heading into the week and a slight chance of showers Monday.

However, fire officials don’t believe any traces of rain could do much to put an end to the so-called extended fire season.

Cal Fire spokeswoman Lynne Tolmachoff said over the past 20 years the length of wildfire season has increased due to climate change. Over the past five years, California has been in a drought that has “rapidly” increased the length of fire season.

Tolmachoff said fire season is typically from June to September, October at the latest, but now it's routinely spanning April through November.

“This is something we live with in California,” she said. “It does seem as though fire season is year-round these days. This (past) weekend we (were) expecting rain in Northern California and strong winds in Southern California. One part of the state might see a break and get a little bit of rain, other parts of the state aren’t seeing the rain.

“We are definitely seeing fire season extended and sometimes it never even comes to an end in a particular year. ... As long as the drought keeps lingering, we are seeing vegetation dry out and dying, which that will never recover. Those fuels would be there for years to come.”

Cal Fire Southern Region Chief Thom Porter said late September through mid-November is typically Santa Ana wind season.

“Many of the state’s largest and most damaging wildfires coincide with this time of year,” Porter said in a statement.

Santa Ana winds are spawned by cold air descending on the vast interior area of the West known as the Great Basin. Air flowing from that region of high pressure spills through mountain ranges and down into the metropolitan regions of Southern California.

The winds push back the normal moist and cooling influence of the Pacific Ocean and gain warmth from compression and speed, similar to the way a languid river turns into rapids as it narrows.

Earlier this month, Cal Fire announced additional firefighters have been placed on duty in efforts to staff extra equipment and aircraft in preparation of Santa Ana winds and extreme fire conditions across the state.

Cal Fire made the announcement due to heightened fire danger caused by low humidity and gusty winds. The Santa Ana Wildfire Threat Index reported “marginal” threats throughout the Inland Empire on Wednesday and Thursday. The index reported moderate threats in the Los Angeles and Ventura areas.

San Bernardino National Forest spokesman John Miller said he is concerned with the looming Santa Ana winds.

“Depending on precipitation, we have seen fires on Thanksgiving and even in January,” he said. “It might be unusual but definitely not unheard of. The long-range forecasts don’t have any precipitation locally until December.

“Fuels are extremely dry and very receptive to fire. Grass and chaparral is extremely dry. The humidity goes down and the winds pick up, which creates a situation where you can have a rapidly growing fire that will grow intense and become very difficult to control.

“We say Santa Ana season is October. But let’s face it, you will get Santa Ana winds all the way into spring time. In a normal year with normal weather conditions you will have had the rain and the snow that reduces the threat of a large wildland fire.”

Despite the trend of the increasing number of wildfires in the midst of the ongoing drought, Tolmachoff feels there are enough resources throughout the state to combat these type of blazes.

“We have a good mutual aid system throughout the state between agencies. We have a lot of resources within the state that we can utilize during any wildfire,” Tolmachoff said. “We work well together to get the job done.”

Over the past couple months the state has experienced a rash of fires that were “preventable,” according to Tolmachoff, because “95 percent of wildfires are caused by the activity of people.”

Miller said California has “set the bar” on how to coordinate and respond to wildfires.

“The Inland Empire really developed the incident command system that is utilized all over the United States and the world after the Forest Service did a study in Riverside in 1970,” Miller said. “We really use the Santa Ana Winds Index as a tool to monitor fire weather year-round. We use the index as a measure to see if we need additional firefighters in Southern California from other parts of the country.

"Do we need to change staff patterns and have more resources available at night time? This is all something we do hand in hand with Cal Fire."

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20161023/fire-season-increasing>

Officials investigating commercial fire as 'suspicious'

Daily Press

Posted Oct 23, 2016, 10:45 AM



Firefighters knocked down a 'suspicious' blaze late Friday at an unoccupied commercial business in Victorville, thwarting the progress of flames before they could tear through attic space or the interior portion of the building, officials said. Photo courtesy of San Bernardino County Fire

VICTORVILLE — Firefighters knocked down a "suspicious" blaze late Friday at an unoccupied commercial business, thwarting the progress of flames before they could tear through attic space or the interior portion of the building, officials said.

The fire was reported at 7:20 p.m. to the rear of a two-story building in the 14000 block of Culley Court. **San Bernardino County Fire** Medic Engine 311 arrived on scene in roughly four minutes where crews found the exterior stairwell landing ablaze.

"Crews initiated an aggressive offensive attack with a quick knock down of the exterior fire," officials said in a statement early Sunday. "Fire had extended into the second story through two rear doors. Firefighters forced entry and stopped the progress of the fire before it could become established in the commercial attic space or interior portion of the building."

Crews cleared both stories of the building of smoke through horizontal ventilation. Investigators were called to the scene and the incident is currently being investigated as suspicious in nature.

Twenty-one fire personnel were involved in knocking down the blaze. There were no injuries reported to either firefighters or civilians.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact San Bernardino County's Office of the Fire Marshal at 800-468-4408.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20161023/officials-investigating-commercial-fire-as-suspicious>

Feed store saved after massive hay pile catches fire

Daily Press

Posted: Oct 23, 2016, 12:13 PM



A massive pile of hay became fully involved in flames just before 1 a.m. Sunday, but firefighters arriving on scene were able to contain the second-alarm blaze before it could reach the nearby J and K's Feed and Vet Supplies, officials said. (Photo courtesy of San Bernardino County Fire)

HESPERIA — A massive pile of hay became fully involved in flames just before 1 a.m. Sunday, but firefighters arriving on scene were able to contain the two-alarm fire before it could reach the nearby J and K's Feed and Vet Supplies, officials said.

The incident was reported by multiple parties beginning at 12:56 a.m.

Fire crews were dispatched to the 16300 block of Yucca Street, where en route they witnessed, from miles away, "a large column of smoke and flames," **San Bernardino County Fire** officials said in a statement Sunday.

Once on scene, fire personnel saw a 10-foot-high pile of hay, covering roughly 100 feet by 100 feet of ground, engulfed in flames.

"Initial crew priorities were to protect the immediate structures exposed to the west and south that included the feed store and gas station," officials said. "Large diameter hose lines as well as master streams were placed into service from engine and aerial truck ladders."

Firefighters quickly mitigated the nearby structures' exposure to the blaze and the buildings ultimately sustained no damage. But the hay fire took about 45 minutes to completely knock down and, "due to the size and density of the pile," crews followed up with an extensive mop-up and overhaul operation.

As progress continued to be made, the nine engines and two truck companies assigned to the incident were released and replaced with an inmate hand crew and bulldozer to ensure the fire was completely out, officials said. Crews remained on scene throughout the wee hours of Sunday to monitor the scene.

Forty firefighters responded to the fire and there were no reported injuries to either fire crews or civilians.

The blaze was being investigated by County Fire.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20161023/feed-store-saved-after-massive-hay-pile-catches-fire>

One dead, five injured in Newberry Springs crash

Daily Press

Posted: October 23, 2016, 3:51 PM

NEWBERRY SPRINGS — One person died and five others were injured Saturday night in a crash on northbound Interstate 15 near Harvard Road, **San Bernardino County Fire** Capt. Mike McClintock said.

At 10:52 p.m., officials received reports that a silver Buick had struck the center divider. It was unclear if any other vehicles were involved in the crash.

The Marine Corps Logistic Base Barstow Fire Department was first to the scene. When County Fire personnel arrived, they found six patients: one person dead, three with significant injuries and two suffering from mild to moderate injuries, according to McClintock.

Officials reported the Buick had sustained heavy damage.

The three severely injured patients were flown by airships to area trauma centers and the two lesser injured were taken by ground ambulance to a nearby hospital.

Both County Fire and MCLB responded with two engines and Desert Ambulance had multiple ambulances at the scene.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20161023/one-dead-five-injured-in-newberry-springs-crash>

The psychology of disaster

Matthew Cabe, Daily Press

Posted: October 23, 2016, 4:36 PM



Sarah Choi waters plants in her orchard by hand. They are still waiting to have electricity restored to pump water through their irrigation system. (James Quigg, Daily Press)

WEST CAJON VALLEY — More than three months have passed since Michael and Sarah Choi lost the home they'd rented on a property here that was also torched, wiping out the fruits and vegetables they sold to make money.

In the weeks after the Bluecut Fire's containment, Sarah Choi, 70, was found sitting in the burned rubble of her home, speaking of ending her life, as first reported by Terri Hill in the Mountaineer Progress.

On Oct. 2, the tall task of restoring power to the property owned by Young Yoo — the Chois' landlord — was addressed in the Daily Press, with Sarah Choi's tearful face overwhelming the front page. On Oct. 13, she appeared again, this time on the front page of the Los Angeles Times.

Between the three reports, Sarah Choi became the face not only of Bluecut Fire victims, but of how a disaster can affect the psyche.

When Robin Bishop — chair of San Bernardino County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster — and Marlene Kiemel — of San Bernardino County Emergency Communications Service — found Sarah Choi, she was sitting amid what was left of her home.

Bishop told the Daily Press that for her, being active in a disaster is “about getting on the ground and meeting with these people.”

“Mrs. Choi had suicidal ideation over this,” Bishop said. “I found her sitting in a pile of rubble talking about killing herself. I’ve annoyed everybody trying to get these people help. Thankfully we had Mike Antonucci. Thanks to him, we were able to maneuver things into place. He came up there himself to meet with them. That’s the kind of guy he is.”

Antonucci is the manager of the county’s Office of Emergency Services. Bishop said with his help, a crisis team was activated and Sarah Choi was sent to a hospital to receive proper care.

“There are some people who are so psychologically affected that they might not know what they need right now,” Bishop said. “They need to be guided. The bottom line is you don’t know what you don’t know.”

Studies have found that a paradox exists in research on traumatic stress, suicide and disasters, according to information released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration last year.

Various research projects on disasters collected by SAMHSA showed that “although traumatic stress is a risk factor for suicide, and traumatic stress increases in the aftermath of disaster, in many cases suicide rates have not increased after disasters.”

A survey conducted after Hurricane Katrina, however, showed “significant increases in the prevalence of suicidal ideation and plans” one year after an initial post-disaster survey was taken.

The team that conducted the second survey, according to SAMHSA, attributed the increases “to the fact that stressors associated with the hurricane remained common at the time of the follow-up, which was nearly two years after the hurricane. The persistence of these stressors may have led to the increases they saw.”

It’s one reason why Bishop emphasizes the importance of long-term and whole-community recovery.

“From the little kid all the way up,” Bishop previously told the Daily Press. “And so as we transition into recovery, it’s absolutely critical that we have that whole community approach. They’re invested and they have augmented resources come in. They need help because a lot of people don’t know about recovery. And so we’re trying to guide them and help the best we can.”

Bishop said what people have trouble thinking about with recovery is that it’s “a holistic process.”

“The psychological is involved,” she said. “A lot of medical conditions have been exacerbated by this disaster. There are a lot of pieces to this puzzle.”

San Bernardino County spokeswoman Felisa Cardona told the Daily Press the county is aware that victims “have suffered significant losses and trauma” as a result of the Bluecut Fire.

“We have dispatched our Department of Behavioral Health to assist fire victims throughout this process,” Cardona said.

Cardona added that DBH staff will attend an open house scheduled for 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Nov. 5 at Phelan Elementary School.

The open house was organized to educate victims on the assistance available to them for removing asbestos and debris from their property.

“(Staff) will be available at the open house for any victims who need counseling,” Cardona said. “DBH has provided counseling services to the victims during and since the fire.”

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20161023/psychology-of-disaster>

New County Phone App Helps In Natural Disasters

Sara Snyder, Z107.7 FM

Posted: October 24, 2016

The state of California and San Bernardino County have set up websites and apps to help residents in case of natural disasters and emergencies. The California Office of Emergency Services, caloes.ca.gov, has tips for individuals, families, businesses, and schools and teachers, on how to prepare. Sign up for updates at CalOESPIO@caloes.ca.gov. Kirby Davis has more information about a free phone app developed by the county...

San Bernardino County has prepared a new app for smart phones to help residents prepare and plan for disasters. The Ready SB County app allows users to share their status with selected contacts with the push of a button, receive critical emergency alerts, locate the county’s emergency shelters, view up-to-date evacuation route maps, get the latest news and weather for San Bernardino county. The app also creates a personalized emergency preparedness plan that includes what you’ll need for an emergency supply kit, an emergency food supply shopping list; an emergency communications plan, and critical information to prepare your home for a disaster. This free app is available for both Android and iPhones and can be used with or without an Internet connection.

<http://z1077fm.com/new-county-phone-app-helps-in-natural-disasters/>