



NEWS



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Explosion caused by THC lab burns three, 1 arrested

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: August 4, 2017, 5:32 PM



Authorities responded to an explosion and fire, allegedly caused by a THC extraction lab, at a Spring Valley Lake home early Friday morning. Two men and a woman were burned in the fire, and one man was arrested. [Photo courtesy of the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department]

SPRING VALLEY LAKE — Two men and a woman were burned in a fire caused by an explosion from a marijuana extraction lab here early Friday, authorities said.

Steven Ray Hoover, Jr., 25, of Victorville, Jesse Karl Bevins, 28, of Apple Valley, and Paige Nicole Tappe, 26, of Victorville, were all burned in the explosion, which occurred at a home in the 13000 block of Riverview Drive at around 1:30 a.m. Friday.

Hoover was “badly burned” in the fire, San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department officials said in a Friday statement, and was eventually taken to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center for treatment.

Sheriff’s officials, along with **San Bernardino County Fire** personnel, responded to the home at 1:37 a.m. Friday. County Fire spokesman Ryan Vaccaro said initial reports indicated the fire was in a bedroom of the home. Firefighters arrived and found a mattress fire at the home, which was out upon arrival.

Sheriff’s officials said the room was destroyed by the explosion and subsequent fire. Deputies also “located items that were consistent with a THC extraction lab,” officials stated.

The Sheriff’s Department Gangs/Narcotics Division was requested to respond and the Marijuana Enforcement Team served a search warrant at the home and assumed the investigation.

Investigators from the Sheriff’s Arson/Bomb Detail also responded, where they found evidence of a THC extraction operation, officials said.

All three suspects were present when the explosion and fire occurred but fled before emergency personnel arrived. Through investigation, the suspects were identified as Hoover, Bevins, and Tappe, and located by investigators.

Hoover reportedly fled to a family member’s home in Apple Valley, where Apple Valley Fire Protection District officials said they were requested for medical aid. Sheriff’s officials said he has 2nd and 3rd degree burns to his face, head and body.

Meanwhile, Bevins and Tappe were found at a hotel in Hesperia. Bevins has 2nd degree burns to his arm, while Tappe has 2nd degree burns to her arm and back. No further updates on any of the suspects' injuries were provided Friday.

Investigators found evidence to suggest they were manufacturing concentrated cannabis, commonly referred to as "Wax" or butane honey oil (BHO).

The investigation continues, officials said, and it will be sent to the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office for review of criminal charges against the suspects once it is completed. They will face charges of manufacturing a controlled substance and possibly additional criminal charges.

Bevins was arrested and booked at the West Valley Detention Center on the above charge, according to booking records. His bail is set at \$500,000, with additional bail amounts for previous cases. Bevins is expected to appear in court Aug. 8.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is urged to contact the Sheriff's Gangs/Narcotics Division at 909-387-8400. Persons wishing to remain anonymous can contact the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463 or online at www.wetip.com.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170804/explosion-caused-by-thc-lab-burns-three-1-arrested>

3 burned, arrested in honey oil lab explosion and fire near Victorville

Jim Steinberg, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: August 5, 2017, 8:30 AM

One room inside a house near Victorville was destroyed and three people burned by an explosion and fire in what San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputies are calling a honey oil extraction lab accident.

Three suspects were present when the explosion and fire, shortly after 1:30 a.m. Friday, occurred but fled prior to emergency personnel arriving at the scene, the Sheriff's office said, in a statement.

Through investigation, the suspects were identified and located.

Arrested were Steven Ray Hoover Jr., age 25, resident of Victorville, Jesse Karl Bevins, age 28, resident of Apple Valley and Paige Nicole Tappe, age 26, resident of Victorville.

Hoover suffered second and third degree burns to his face, head and body.

He was taken to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, which operates a regional burn center, for treatment.

Bevins had second degree burns to his arm while Tappe had second degree burns to her arm and back.

After the explosion, Bevins and Tappe checked into a hotel in Hesperia. Deputies contacted them there and detained them until investigators arrived.

The explosion occurred in a home at 13150 Riverview Drive, Spring Valley Lake just east of Victorville.

Personnel from the Sheriff's Department Gangs/Narcotics Division were requested to assist with the investigation. The Sheriff's Marijuana Enforcement Team served a search warrant at the residence and assumed the investigation. Investigators from the Sheriff's Arson/Bomb Detail also responded to the scene.

The suspects were believed to be making concentrated cannabis, commonly called Wax or Butane Honey Oil, the statement said.

The three people arrested face charges of manufacturing a controlled substance and possibly additional criminal charges, the statement said.

Bevins was booked at the West Valley Detention Center. His bail is set at \$500,000.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is urged to contact the Sheriff's Gangs / Narcotics Division at 909-387-8400. Callers wishing to remain anonymous are urged to call the WeTip Hotline at 800-782-7463 or at www.wetip.com.

<http://www.pe.com/2017/08/05/3-burned-arrested-in-honey-oil-lab-explosion-and-fire-near-victorville/>

Baptism of fire: High Desert escaped 2 massive wildfires a year ago relatively unscathed

Jose Quintero, Daily Press

Posted: August 5, 2017, 1:45 PM



A plane drops retardant during the Pilot Fire in Hesperia in August 2016. For more than two weeks the Pilot and Bluecut fires ravaged the Cajon Pass and Victor Valley, burning more than 45,000 acres. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a three-part Sunday series that will look back at the Pilot and Bluecut fires one year later.

A year removed from two large wildfires that burned nearly 45,000 acres in the San Bernardino and San Gabriel mountains and surrounding region, **San Bernardino County Fire Department** spokesman Eric Sherwin admits reflecting on August 2016 is bittersweet.

Monday marks the one-year anniversary last summer's Pilot Fire, which burned 8,110 acres in the nearby mountains and Summit Valley. Aug. 16 marks the anniversary of start of the devastating Bluecut Fire, which broke out near Interstate 15 in the Cajon Pass.

"We got the opportunity to do what we are trained to do and what the public expects of us. There is something very rewarding in that," Sherwin said. "But that is tempered by the reality of despite our best efforts the fires did destroy people's homes. We did so well but despite our best efforts the fire bested us in certain areas. But the fact that these fires did not claim any lives is huge. It's a very conflicting feeling that stays with you. But all you can do is look at the takeaways from those two events and say how can we be as best prepared as possible for when the next fire comes."

The Pilot Fire started on Aug. 7 near the Miller Canyon off-highway vehicle area near Highway 138. By the end of the first night the Pilot Fire had 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 southeast Hesperia, Lake Arrowhead, Lake Gregory and Crestline.

Firefighters on the Pilot Fire used a San Bernardino County record of 746,156 gallons of fire retardant, a bright pink substance that reduces flammability of fuels or delays combustion. Roughly 312,000 gallons of fire retardant were used for the first day of the fire alone. Fire officials say \$3 is the average price per gallon for fire retardant, so firefighters spend more than \$2.2 million on retardant alone.

Authorities did not report any damaged or destroyed structures due to the Pilot Fire, but the evidence of how close the blaze came to homes in Summit Valley remains visible today. Several homes along Highway 173 in Summit Valley were saved by the use of retardant dropped from planes or helicopters. The pink outline around some of those homes remains to this day. The roofs of others were pink as well.

The 36,274-acre Bluecut Fire, which began Aug. 16 and quickly grew, was the fifth largest wildfire reported in the state in 2016. The blaze erupted in the Cajon Pass just hours after fire officials announced the Pilot Fire had been fully contained.

Sherwin said he was on his normal aviation duties the day the Bluecut Fire began. He remembers being dispatched to a vegetation fire in the Cajon Pass and not thinking much of it.

“I remember dropping the first and second loads of water and thinking we are making great progress with the hand crews really establishing containment lines,” Sherwin said. “I thought we would have this buttoned up within 20 minutes. But as we dropped the third load of water, that’s when we noticed the winds shifted and had carried embers to the north and into another receptive fuel bed that had been waiting to burn for years because of the drought.”

Firefighters made aggressive attacks, including using 241,414 gallons of fire retardant on the first day, but the erratic winds carried embers up to 2 miles away, touching off new fires.

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, including those 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 area, before being 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.

At the peak of the battle to control the Bluecut Fire, 2,684 personnel were actively involved. The Bluecut Fire saw 499,336 gallons of retardant used, at a cost of about \$1.5 million, with nearly half of that used on the first day.

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 throughout the fall. Both blazes were declared fully controlled last December after the region received its first significant rainfall.

Sherwin said in his career he had never seen such explosive fire activity in San Bernardino County until last year.

“The Bluecut Fire got into so many different canyons and created such a large footprint so early on,” he said. “This was a fire that I had never experienced in the county. Looking back at the things that worked, you realize we had so many assets that were coming off the Pilot Fire that were immediately allocated to the Bluecut Fire to come over, bridge the gap and provide immediately management aspects of battling a fire.

“To have the complexity so early on was beneficial because it something you don’t (usually) see until the second or third day of a large fire. Having those capabilities so early on for a fire that grew so quickly, there were a lot of things that worked in our favor.”

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170805/baptism-of-fire-high-desert-escaped-2-massive-wildfires-year-ago-relatively-unscathed>

Smoky 12-hour days, close flames and a burning desire to excel

Jose Quintero, Daily Press

Posted: August 5, 2017, 3:42 PM



Jose Quintero interviews San Bernardino County Fire PIO Eric Sherwin during the Bluecut Fire in August 2016. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

It’s already been a year?

If there is one thing I’ve learned as a journalist, covering dramatic breaking news is pretty overwhelming. Now that I reflect on a year since the Pilot and Bluecut fires, I mostly remember the long and grueling hours spent trying to figure out a way to be as organized as possible when so much information was literally coming in from every direction.

I’ve been in this wonderful business five years. At the moment, I’m on the slower paced side of things in the sports department.

Last July I was asked by Editor Steve Hunt to take over the Daily Press’ crime and public safety beat. I had spent the prior two years with our sister paper the Desert Dispatch in Barstow when I was asked to cover for Paola Baker, who was going on maternity leave.

The crime and public safety beat in Barstow was never as complex as my time covering the Victor Valley. I never had to cover a wildfire while in Barstow or any major disaster, other than an Ebola “report” at Barstow Community Hospital.

Sure, in the past I helped the Daily Press with sidebar coverage during huge breaking news events. But I never really covered anything that involved seemingly neverending 12-hour shifts while covering the Pilot Fire by being out on the frontlines, along with Chief Photographer James Quigg and photographer David Pardo several days that week.

Now let's be clear. I'm not complaining about working a 12-hour shift. I know we've all been there and done that. I used to work 16-hour days, splitting my old job as a shoe salesman at JCPenney along with an internship here. That was pretty easy looking back because a 12-hour shift due to a major fire was pretty overwhelming, in my opinion.

I remember Aug. 6, 2016 reading Shea Johnson's story on the Pilot Fire and saying to my wife, Luisa: "This is going to be one hell of a week."

Why?

City Editor Kevin Trudgeon decided to take a week cruise, with his fiancée. I'll never forgive him for having a life outside of work and enjoying sun rays and margaritas in Baja California while his dedicated staff was stuck at home covering the heck out of the Pilot Fire.

Sarcasm.

The Pilot Fire wound up being the biggest fire story I had ever covered and I was beat by the end of the week.

Or so I thought.

The Pilot Fire was eventually deemed fully contained early morning Aug. 16. I was relieved, to say the least.

A little after 10:30 a.m. that same day, I heard a report of a vegetation fire, roughly a quarter mile west of Interstate 15, over the scanner.

I turned around and asked Quigg if he heard that.

He said yes, and we kind of huddled around the scanner waiting for more information.

Quigg decided he was going to head out south on I-15, just in case. Trudgeon asked me to stay behind and keep listening to the scanner for updates.

The blaze continued to spread and next thing I know it's reported at roughly 100 acres. Then 500. And then 1,000 within what felt like mere minutes.

Not long after the blaze was reported, CHP logs showed that the interstate would be fully shut down in the Cajon Pass.

I can't even begin to tell you how many friends and relatives began bombarding my iPhone asking for the latest updates. I never answered. I simply copied a link to my story.

Why? Because of page views!

Wednesday morning I started my shift at 6 a.m. I posted an update online sometime around 6:30 a.m. The updates continued up until noon. Trudgeon finally sent me to the frontlines and I made my way up to Phelan and eventually to Highway 138.

Once I got to the intersection of Highways 138 and 2, I was in complete awe. It was sunny and cloudy just west of the intersection. But to the east, nothing but black and grey smoked filled the sky.

I tried my best to track down anyone able to provide comment. I tweeted whenever I could because reception was terrible in the West Cajon Valley.

At roughly 3 p.m. I found **San Bernardino County Fire Department** spokesman Eric Sherwin, who was minutes away from providing a local news station with an update on the fire. Once he wrapped up his interview I asked him questions and after roughly five minutes of chatting I headed back to my car and drove up near the Highways 138 and 2 intersection, where I would find better reception and be somewhat out of danger.

I got on the phone with Kevin and let him know I would be transcribing my notes to email to him to plug into our story.

At about 4 p.m., I made my way up toward Wrightwood and met a whole bunch of people who were asked to evacuate. Many of them had their vehicles packed but stayed behind because once they left, there was no coming back until the mandatory evacuations were lifted.

I talked to several families and provided Kevin with more quotes. Then I headed further up Highway 2 and came across an area where the flames were quickly approaching the highway.

I hung out there for a while taking photos and videos.

I posted several videos onto my personal Snapchat account. It was a bad mistake. Luisa saw just how close I was to the flames and started to panic.

She immediately called me out of concern. Should I have been that close to the flames? Probably not. But I knew just how close I could get without being in immediate danger.

But from the outside looking in, on Snapchat, I understand why my wife was so worried.

I wrapped up around 6 p.m. and went straight home.

Did I finally get to relax and unwind? No. Why? Because I'm a journalist that stresses out easily.

Thursday I was sent to Wrightwood for a sidebar story to see how the community had been affected by the fire. I remember an eery feeling. It felt like being in a ghost town. I went to Jensen's Finest Foods and started talking to locals.

After, I spent the rest of the day driving up and down Highway 138 and Lone Pine Canyon Road, talking to residents and firefighters.

Friday consisted of early updates and then another trip to the West Cajon Valley. On my way there I stopped in Phelan and came across a bulldozer crew that I was able to interview for a sidebar story. Then met up with Sherwin in the Stater Bros shopping center in Phelan and got a morning update before heading to Highway 138.

I spent the rest of the day interviewing more firefighters, residents and ran into San Bernardino County First District Supervisor Robert Lovingood and San Bernardino County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig surveying the aftermath.

Friday was the first day, since the Bluecut Fire erupted, that I worked a regular eight-hour shift. I wrapped up my shift by writing my final story at the Mountain Top Cafe, where I ordered an amazing Country Fried Steak.

Looking back at those two weeks of coverage, there is no denying that breaking news is one thing that makes this career so rewarding.

Last June I was fed up with my job. I had childhood aspirations to be a sportswriter and I was stuck covering crime in Barstow. When I was asked to fill in for Baker I said to myself, I'm going to bust my butt to prove to myself, and maybe my bosses will see just what I'm capable of when motivated to work.

Crime and public safety was never really my calling. I enjoyed the beat while it lasted but it got old really fast. I'm writing this very long reporter's notebook as a sportswriter. I'm very proud to say I'm in a position I've aspired to be in since I can remember.

But for some odd reason, I miss every second of being on the crime and public safety beat.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170805/smoky-12-hour-days-close-flames-and-burning-desire-to-excel>

Bluecut Fire: One year later

Robert A. Lovingood / Contributed Content, Daily Press

Posted: August 7, 2017, 9:14 AM

It has been nearly one year since the Bluecut Fire blackened 56 square miles and forced 82,000 people to evacuate as it surged toward Hesperia, Oak Hills, Phelan, Pinon Hills, Wrightwood, Devore and Lytle Creek. But West Cajon Valley was hit hardest.

In all, the fire destroyed over 100 homes and 200 non-residential buildings. At the peak of the battle to control the Bluecut Fire, 2,684 personnel were actively involved in the fire fight. Six San Bernardino County firefighters who were assisting with evacuations in Swarthout Canyon were trapped as flames swept over their vehicle; two were transported and treated for injuries. For all the devastation, we can be thankful that no lives were lost and there were no serious injuries.

Bluecut was remarkable in many ways. The fire flared out in multiple directions amid homes scattered among undeveloped wildlands. Unusually dry brush from six years of drought and strong erratic winds fanned the flames one direction, then another. Winds carried embers a mile or more, touching off new fires. Veteran firefighters said throughout their entire careers, they had never seen a blaze like Bluecut.

Recovery from disaster always presents challenges. The Bluecut fire has been especially difficult. The fire did not qualify for federal FEMA assistance for individual homeowners.

Tragically, many property owners did not have fire insurance. For them, rebuilding will be a struggle, at best.

During and after the fire, San Bernardino County worked with federal, state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations and hundreds of volunteers to bring relief to victims. The fire served as the first activation of the County's Mass Care and Shelter Plan. And the County opened a Shelter Operations Compound and a one-stop-shop providing a variety of services for fire victims at the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds in Victorville. We also brought in translators to assist Korean language speakers, many of whom have small ranches in the West Cajon Valley and Phelan.

After the fire, San Bernardino County hosted an open house to provide victims with information and resources. And the Small Business Administration set up a temporary office to accept low-interest homeowner loan applications.

Without a federal disaster declaration and FEMA aid, there was no federal government assistance to help people clear their properties of debris and rebuild. So the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors stepped in with \$700,000 to assist property owners with asbestos testing and debris removal.

Dr. Abraham Choi, who runs Hanmi News, a regional Korean-English magazine, has seen both the impact of the fire on the local Korean community as well as the County's response.

"I think you guys did everything you could do for them," Dr. Choi said recently. "You did a lot of work for this community. I appreciate your work."

West Cajon Valley resident Linda Patterson has seen wild fires burn through the area before. But this time, the Bluecut Fire destroyed her home along Highway 138. She is among the few who are rebuilding. When she hit a snag with getting a permit for a temporary power pole, Linda called my office for help. My staff worked out the problem, and Jim Sowers with County Building and Safety took Linda under his wing to clear obstacles so she could start building her new home. When it looked like Linda might have to pay \$19,000 in back school taxes, Jim jumped in to pull original permits from 1945 and resolve the matter to Linda's delight.

"I just know that without them helping me out, it would have been really difficult," Linda said. "God put the right people in the right place for me. The Lord is taking care of me. I'm going to have a beautiful home."

While government isn't perfect, the staff of San Bernardino County worked long and hard on behalf of Bluecut Fire victims and we are dedicated to seeing more success stories like Linda's.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/opinion/20170807/bluecut-fire-one-year-later>

Yucaipa man linked to 8 wildfires is charged with arson

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: August 7, 2017, 8:43 AM



A photo of Jarrod Anthony Samra, 23, of Yucaipa, is on display at a news conference Monday, Aug. 7, 2017, in San Bernardino. Samra will face eight arson-related charges in connection with multiple fires he is suspected of starting, San Bernardino County authorities said. Stan Lim, San Bernardino Sun/SCNG

SAN BERNARDINO >> A 23-year-old Yucaipa man arrested after a fire broke out last week in Mentone has now been connected to at least eight of the wildfires that have been plaguing San Bernardino County this summer, authorities announced Monday.

Jarrod Anthony Samra was charged with eight felony counts of arson, and a ninth count of arson causing great bodily injury for a blaze in which a firefighter broke a leg. He faces up to 19 years in state prison if convicted as charged.

He pleaded not guilty Monday afternoon, and remains in jail with bail set at \$2 million, records show.

Authorities said Samra was once a member of a Fire Explorer program, which gives youths up to age 20 some experience and training so they can see what it takes to become a firefighter. They didn't say what agency's program he was in, just that it wasn't San Bernardino County's.

Samra was arrested Thursday soon after the Bryant 2 fire erupted at Bryant Street and Highway 38 just outside Yucaipa. That 325-acre fire, which still smoldered Monday, forced an evacuation of nearby homes and shut down Highway 38.

Altogether, the eight fires linked to Samra scorched about 930 acres in Mentone, Highland, San Bernardino and Devore and injured three firefighters, according to a list authorities provided at a Monday news conference. Three were small spot fires; the largest, the Bridge 2 fire, grew to 460 acres.

The list did not include a July 26 fire, but online court records show one of the arson charges is connected to an event that date. Authorities could not be reached later Monday for clarification.

"Thank God there wasn't a loss of life," District Attorney Mike Ramos said at Monday's news conference.

Investigators began to suspect that an arsonist was behind a series of fires that started in late June, and a multi-agency task force was formed. Automated license plate readers picked up a white truck with the same plate at several of the fires, according to Sheriff John McMahon and information from an affidavit of probable cause.

As deputies were getting ready to serve warrants Thursday, McMahon said, the Bryant fire erupted and Samra was caught — in a truck with the same license plate, according to the affidavit.

“Using investigative tools and gathering evidence led the task force to identifying Jarrod Samra as the suspect responsible for at least eight fires,” McMahon said in a statement. “This is a perfect example of public safety agencies working together to keep our communities safe.”

The affidavit also said that when Samra was brought in for questioning, he admitted to “starting six of the fires ... with fireworks components.”

The first fire Samra is charged in started July 7. A few other fires broke out in late June in the county’s East Valley area but have not been connected to Samra. The largest was the 670-acre Mart fire, which started June 27 in the East Highland Ranch area and burned dangerously close to homes, forcing evacuations and the closure of Highway 330.

Authorities say the investigation is ongoing, and if any additional evidence is uncovered, prosecutors could file additional charges against Samra.

Anyone with information may contact sheriff’s arson investigators at 909-890-4840.

Several of Samra’s neighbors said Monday that they either weren’t familiar with him or had only briefly met him. He apparently was renting a room from a family in the neighborhood and was gone for most of the day. Some said he was known for his white pickup truck with a large American flag on the back.

The neighbors said they could see the smoke and flames from the most recent fire from their homes and were surprised to find out that authorities believe Samra started it.

“What makes someone do that? What do they get out of it?” said Patsy Housewright, who lives near where Samra was renting.

The Inland Empire has a troubled history with arson, and prosecutors have sent two people to death row for starting fires that turned fatal.

Raymond Lee Oyler, a Beaumont mechanic, set a series of fires in the San Geronio Pass about 11 years ago, including the Esperanza fire that killed five U.S. Forest Service firefighters in October 2006. Oyler, who was convicted of multiple counts of murder and arson, is appealing his death sentence.

Rickie Lee Fowler was convicted of murder in August 2012 and sentenced to death five months later for setting the Old fire in San Bernardino County, which a jury ruled caused five people to suffer fatal heart attacks. That fire was set in 2003.

“We know all too well in this county of the heartbreaking loss” due to fires, **San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Mark Hartwig said.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170807/yucaipa-man-linked-to-8-wildfires-charged-with-arson>

Authorities charge 23-year-old man suspected of starting multiple fires

Daily Press

Posted: August 7, 2017, 3:42 PM

SAN BERNARDINO — Authorities charged a 23-year-old Yucaipa man Monday with several felony counts of arson in connection to multiple fires that burned more than 900 acres and seriously injured one firefighter.

Jarrod Samra was charged with one count of arson causing great bodily injury and eight counts of arson of a structure or forest, according to a statement from the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office. If convicted as charged, Samra faces 19 years in a state prison.

"This arsonist will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law," District Attorney Michael Ramos said. "The history of fires in our county and the destruction they have caused to human life and property is absolutely tragic. Thankfully, through the investigative work of our law enforcement and public safety partners, we were able to stop this individual and prevent any future destruction or potential loss of life."

Samra was arrested Thursday after deputies responding to reports of a vegetation fire on Highway 38 observed a vehicle in the area where the fire originated, according to authorities. The deputies made contact with the vehicle and the driver, identified as Samra, was arrested after further investigation.

"Using investigative tools and gathering evidence led the task force to identifying Jarrod Samra as the suspect responsible for at least eight fires," San Bernardino County Sheriff John McMahon said. "This is a perfect example of public safety agencies working together to keep our communities safe."

Samra was scheduled to be arraigned at 1 p.m. Monday at the San Bernardino Justice Center, authorities said.

"**San Bernardino County Fire** takes arson personally due to the extreme threat to the citizens we serve and the firefighters who put themselves between the fire and communities they protect," Fire Chief Mark Hartwig said. "Catching and convicting these criminals is a high priority."

<http://www.desertdispatch.com/news/20170807/authorities-charge-23-year-old-man-suspected-of-starting-multiple-fires>

Jarrold Samra, 23, charged with multiple counts of arson

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: August 7, 2017



SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (press release) – A 23-year-old Yucaipa man was charged today with several felony counts of arson in connection with multiple fires that burned over 900 acres and seriously injured one firefighter.

Jarrold Samra was charged with one count of Arson Causing Great Bodily Injury and eight counts of Arson of a Structure of Forest. If convicted as charged, Samra faces 19 years in state prison.

“This arsonist will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law,” District Attorney Michael Ramos said. “The history of fires in our county and the destruction they have caused to human life and property is absolutely tragic. Thankfully, through the investigative work of our law enforcement and public safety partners, we were able to stop this individual and prevent any future destruction or potential loss of life.”

Samara was arrested Thursday, Aug. 3, after deputies responding to reports of a vegetation fire on Hwy. 38, observed a vehicle in the area where the fire originated and made contact with the vehicle. The driver was identified as Jarrod Samra. After further investigation, Samra was arrested.

“Using investigative tools and gathering evidence led the Task Force to identifying Jarrod Samra as the suspect responsible for at least 8 fires,” Sheriff John McMahon said. “This is a perfect example of public safety agencies working together to keep our communities safe.”

Samra is scheduled to be arraigned Monday afternoon at 1:00 p.m. at the San Bernardino Justice Center in Dept. S-8. This case is culmination of a multi-agency arson task force involving the San Bernardino County District Attorney’s Office, San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, **San Bernardino County Fire**, Cal Fire, United States Forest Service, and the San Bernardino Police Department.

“San Bernardino County Fire takes arson personally due to the extreme threat to the citizens we serve and the firefighters who put themselves between the fire and communities they protect,” Fire Chief Mark Hartwig said. “Catching and convicting these criminals is a high priority.”

A copy of the complaint and a fact sheet can be downloaded at the following link: <https://goo.gl/q7LWhi>.

<http://www.vvng.com/jarrold-samra-23-charged-multiple-counts-arson/>

Yucaipa arson suspect was a fire explorer — but dropped out, officials say

Joe Nelson, The Sun

Posted: August 11, 2017, 6:11 PM

A Yucaipa man charged with arson in a spate of fires in the San Bernardino Mountains and foothills had participated in a fire explorer program through the Boy Scouts of America and San Manuel Fire Department, officials have confirmed.

Jarrold Anthony Samra, 23, was charged Monday with nine felony counts of arson and arson causing great bodily injury in connection with eight wildland arson fires from July 7 through Aug. 3. He faces 19 years in prison if convicted on all charges.

Altogether, the eight fires linked to Samra scorched about 930 acres in Mentone, Highland, San Bernardino and Devore and injured three firefighters, authorities said.

Samra pleaded not guilty to the alleged crimes during his Aug. 7 arraignment, and will appear again Tuesday in San Bernardino Superior Court for a pretrial hearing. His preliminary hearing is tentatively scheduled for Thursday. He remains incarcerated at the Glen Helen Rehabilitation Center in Devore, with bail set at \$2 million.

Samra was registered with the Boy Scouts of America's Fire Explorer program from December 2011 through December 2013, which the San Manuel Fire Department hosted, said Joe Daniszewski, scout executive CEO for the California Inland Empire Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Samra, however, was never a Cub Scout or Boy Scout, Daniszewski said in a telephone interview.

Jacob Coin, spokesman for the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, said in an email that the Fire Department's records show Samra may have been dropped from the program due to inactivity. He said the Fire Department has hosted fire training through the Boy Scouts' Fire Explorer program since 2011, and continues to participate in the program.

8 FIRES IN A MONTH

The first and last of the eight fires Samra is accused of setting were ignited in the vicinity of Highway 38 and Bryant Street in Yucaipa on July 7 and Aug. 3 and were called the Bryant fire and Bryant 2 fire, respectively. A firefighter suffered a broken leg battling the Aug. 3 Bryant 2 fire, resulting in the ninth felony charge of arson causing great bodily injury against Samra.

During the monthlong investigation, authorities zeroed in on a white GMC pickup spotted in proximity to the fires that was recorded on automated vehicle license plate reader cameras at traffic intersections. The same vehicle was spotted in the vicinity of the Bryant 2 fire on Aug. 3, and a sheriff's deputy stopped the vehicle and detained Samra, who admitted to setting six of the eight fires he is charged with during an interview at the sheriff's Highland station.

Samra said he had started the fires with "fireworks components," according to a sheriff's report filed in court.

Samra also stands accused of setting the 43-acre Hidden fire in Highland on July 12, the 460-acre Bridge 2 fire in Highland on July 14, the one-eighth-acre Piedmont fire in San Bernardino on July 16, the 25-acre Seine fire in San Bernardino on July 22, and the Trout and Helen spot fires in Highland and Devore, respectively, on July 28.

‘AN ANGRY, HOSTILE ACT’

Robert Stadolnik, a Massachusetts-based clinical psychologist specializing in fire-setting behavior in children, adolescents and adults, said in a telephone interview there are multiple theories on why serial arsonists engage in such conduct. Given Samra’s background in the fire explorer program and lack of prior criminal record, he may have been lashing out in anger or had some sort of grievance.

“It’s an angry, hostile act directed toward someone or some organization. That’s usually when you see the kind of number of fires in a quick time frame,” Stadolnik said. “I don’t know if he was trying to get onto the fire department or if there was some other kind of life stressor. The motivation is typically, ‘I’m going to get back at you.’ ”

San Manuel spokesman Coin said the tribe’s fire department has no record of Samra ever applying for a position as a firefighter.

Another local fire organization, Cal Fire, has no record of Samra applying for a position with them, spokesman Battalion Chief Mike Mohler said.

Several other local departments couldn’t immediately verify whether Samra had applied for work with them.

INLAND ARSON CASES

The San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountain ranges have been a draw to other arsonists and serial arsonists.

Raymond Lee Oyler, a Beaumont mechanic, set a series of fires in the San Gorgonio Pass about 11 years ago, including the Esperanza fire that killed five U.S. Forest Service firefighters in October 2006. Oyler, who was convicted of multiple counts of murder and arson, is appealing his death sentence.

Rickie Lee Fowler was convicted of murder in August 2012 and sentenced to death five months later for setting the Old fire in San Bernardino County, which a jury ruled caused five people to suffer fatal heart attacks. That fire was set in 2003.

Socially isolated people with histories of rejection, anger issues, drug and alcohol abuse and prior scrapes with the law are also at risk for such behavior, Stadolnik said.

“Setting a fire is one more antisocial act on their plate,” he said.

But given the number of fires Samra is accused of setting and his lack of prior criminal record, Stadolnik believes Samra did not fall into that category.

“Fire-setting is a behavior that happens within a context. It’s understanding the context first, then you’re able to answer that question why,” Stadolnik said. “I think his prior association with the fire service is a key significant piece of information, especially for him being involved in arson. Fire, for him, has been something that he has been successful at, so even to use it maladaptively, it’s probably something he is fairly comfortable with.”

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170811/yucaipa-arson-suspect-was-a-fire-explorer-but-dropped-out-officials-say>

Firefighters quickly knock down brush fire off Amargosa Road in Hesperia

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: August 7, 2017, 3:57 PM



A San Bernardino County firefighter from Station 314 douses a vegetation fire along Amargosa Road that spewed smoke over Interstate 15 in Victorville on Monday. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

HESPERIA — Firefighters got control of a brush fire that erupted along Amargosa Road Monday afternoon.

First reported at approximately 2:50 p.m. west of Amargosa Road and south of Avenal Street, the blaze billowed black smoke along the west side of Interstate 15.

San Bernardino County Fire Department firefighters quickly responded and found about one acre of brush on fire with a “moderate rate of spread.”

Battalion Chief Bill Mahan said the blaze was initially spreading in a northerly direction. Firefighters managed to stop the blaze’s forward rate of spread within roughly 30 minutes, holding it at just over 2 acres.

Traffic along Amargosa Road was jammed in both directions, with authorities alternating lanes along the two-lane road to let vehicles through. There was also some slowing along southbound I-15.

As of 3:30 p.m. the fire was out, but firefighters remained on scene taking care of any hot spots. Mahan said a hand crew was requested and would walk around the area taking care of these hot spots, while a fire investigator was also requested.

No injuries were reported. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170807/firefighters-quickly-knock-down-brush-fire-off-amargosa-road-in-hesperia>

Brush Fire along Amargosa Road in Victorville quickly extinguished

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: August 7, 2017



San Bernardino County Fire responded to a brush fire along Amargosa Road in Victorville. (Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) A bush fire that burned along the 10000 block of Amargosa Road was quickly extinguished by firefighters Monday afternoon.

San Bernardino County Fire Department personnel responded to Avenal Street and Amargosa Road just before 3 p.m. reference multiple reports of a brush fire.

Fire officials did not immediately know how the fire was started but did confirm the fire burned 2 acres before the forward rate of spread was stopped.

Both northbound and southbound lanes on Amargosa Road were temporarily affected as fire trucks accessed the location.

A fire investigator will respond to the scene to determine the cause of the fire.

<http://www.vvng.com/brush-fire-along-amargosa-road-victorville-quickly-extinguished/>

Authorities: Man found dead in Hesperia house fire

Kevin Trudgeon, Hesperia Star

Posted Aug 9, 2017 at 9:05 AM



A man was killed in a house fire off Mission Street in Hesperia on Wednesday morning. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. [Bryan Kawasaki, Daily Press]

HESPERIA — A man was killed in a house fire here early Wednesday morning, authorities said.

San Bernardino County Fire Department personnel responded to a report of a residential structure fire at 4:46 a.m. in the 15600 block of Mission Street after a 911 caller reported seeing flames coming from the back of a house.

According to authorities, the first arriving engine company reported heavy smoke and flames through the tile roof of the rear of a single-story, single-family dwelling and, while setting up for attack mode, firefighters were advised of a possible rescue situation.

“Firefighters made entry into the home and were faced with hoarding conditions which contributed to a heavy fire load,” fire officials said in a statement. “A roof collapsed over the room of origin, ultimately forcing firefighters to stop their rescue efforts and withdraw from the structure.”

After knocking down a significant amount of the fire from the exterior of the house, firefighters were able to re-enter the building and conduct a primary search, during which a dead man was located in the suspected room of origin, according to authorities.

There were no other occupants in the building.

The blaze was officially declared under control at 5:25 a.m. and no other injuries were reported.

County Fire responded with four engine companies, an ambulance, a chief officer and an investigator. The fire is under investigation by the San Bernardino County Fire’s Office of the Fire Marshal.

Mission Street remained closed from Seventh Street to just east of 11th Street throughout the morning.

<http://www.hesperia-star.com/news/20170809/authorities-man-found-dead-in-hesperia-house-fire>

Hoarding conditions prove fatal for man in Hesperia house fire

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: August 9, 2017, 1:27 PM

HESPERIA >> A Hesperia man was killed by a fire when hoarding conditions prevented firefighters from rescuing him from his home early Wednesday, **San Bernardino County fire** officials said.

“Neighbors told us he was a bit of a recluse and they hadn’t seen him a lot,” Eric Sherwin, spokesman for the Fire Department, said in an interview. The man’s name and age haven’t been released, but Sherwin said he appeared to be elderly.

Firefighters received a 911 call just before 5 a.m. reporting flames coming from the rear of a house in the 15600 block of Mission Street, fire officials said.

Firefighters were unable to get far into the home because of the sheer volume of things inside, Sherwin said.

When the roof collapsed over the room where the fire started, firefighters were forced to halt rescue efforts and get out, Sherwin wrote in a Facebook post about the house fire.

After getting substantial control of the fire, rescue personnel re-entered the house and found the homeowner dead, Sherwin said. No one else was inside.

The fire was under control at 5:25 a.m.

Hoarding conditions can be especially detrimental in emergency situations.

“Should a fire occur, there is more material to contribute to the amount of fire,” Sherwin said.

“And when we come into a house, whether it’s for medical aid or for a fire, it can hamper our efforts to rescue.”

The cause of the blaze is under investigation by the county fire marshal.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170809/hoarding-conditions-prove-fatal-for-man-in-hesperia-house-fire>

Man found dead in House fire on Mission Street in Hesperia

Victor Valley News Group

August 9, 2017



(Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) A deceased male was located in a house that caught fire Wednesday morning.

At around 4:46 a.m. the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** received two calls regarding a house fire on the 15000 block of Mission Street, just west of 7th Avenue.

“The initial report was a passerby who said the back of the house was on fire. Medic Engine 302 was first on scene and they had heavy smoke and fire coming from the back of the house,” stated San Bernardino County Fire Spokesman Eric Sherwin.

As firefighters were setting up to battle the blaze they were advised that a person may have still been inside. However, they located “heavy hoarding” conditions and a roof collapse over the room of origin that forced them to withdraw from the search.

“When they did make entrance initially in the rescue situation, they did encounter heavy hoarding conditions. Which both hampered their efforts to make access to that room and also contributed to the amount of fire inside the structure.

Once they were able to knock the fire down and reenter the residence, they did locate one adult male deceased in the back room where it looks like the fire started, officials said.

Neighbors said the man appeared to have lived alone.

The fire was knocked down by 5:25 a.m., but a portion of Mission Street remained taped off with Sheriff’s crime scene tape as they investigate.

This story is developing and information will be updated as it becomes available.

<http://www.vvng.com/man-found-dead-house-fire-mission-street-hesperia/>

Marijuana grow found after house fire erupts in Victorville

Kevin Trudgeon, Daily Press

Posted: August 10, 2017, 1:31 PM



A San Bernardino County Fire Department firefighter attacks a blaze in the backyard of a Victorville home on Thursday. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

VICTORVILLE — Authorities discovered an illegal marijuana grow after responding to a blaze at a home here Thursday afternoon.

Three women escaped uninjured from the fire, which erupted in the backyard of a home on the corner of Amargosa and Cholame Roads on Thursday afternoon, thanks in part to the quick thinking of a neighbor.

Gilbert Valdez, who works at a business nearby, told the Daily Press that he saw a tree on fire in the backyard of the home at approximately 12:20 p.m.

“I ran over and called 911 as I was running over,” Valdez said. “I started banging on the doors and windows to let whoever was in the house know there was a fire, and when I got around to the backyard I saw wires crackling.”

Three women were inside the home but did not immediately hear Valdez banging on the doors. “We had headphones in and were listening to music,” said Tam Saysamout, who was at the home visiting a friend. “I smelled smoke but didn’t know where it was coming from.”

Saysamout said once they realized there was a fire in the backyard, all three women scrambled to get out, with Saysamout jumping out a window to escape.

“All three women were in the backyard when we arrived,” said **San Bernardino County Fire Department** Battalion Chief Dave Meddles.

Meddles said the blaze mainly involved the tree and a pile of debris in the backyard but did “extend a little into the home.” The fire was officially knocked down by 12:45 p.m.

Southern California Edison officials were contacted to cut the power to the home, according to Meddles, but the cause of the fire remains under investigation.

A total of 19 fire personnel responded to the incident, with two ladder trucks, three engines and a water tender. Authorities had Amargosa Road closed off from Cholame to Dos Palmas roads while they battled the fire.

Victorville Sheriff's station officials also responding to the blaze came across the marijuana grow in the home's detached garage. Station spokeswoman Mara Rodriguez confirmed authorities found the grow, and the Sheriff's Bomb/Arson Detail and Narcotics Details were requested to investigate.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170810/marijuana-grow-found-after-house-fire-erupts-in-victorville>

Illegal Marijuana Grow Discovered Half Mile From Victorville Police Station

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: August 11, 2017

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) An illegal marijuana grow half of mile away from the Victorville Police Department was discovered after a house fire Thursday afternoon.

San Bernardino County Fire responded to reports of a tree on fire at the corner of Amargosa and Cholame Roads at about 12:18 pm, on August 10th.

When firefighters arrived, the fire had already spread to nearby vegetation, a shed, and started to catch the home on fire.

After an aggressive attack firefighters had the fire knocked down by 12:45 pm.

The fire is believed to have been caused by a power line that fell and caught dry brush on fire.

During the search of the property, officials stumbled across an illegal indoor marijuana grow inside the detached garage.

The Sheriff's Marijuana Enforcement Team responded and assumed the investigation. Bunches of marijuana could be seen being carried from the garage to a nearby trailer.

At this time it's unknown how many plants were recovered and if any arrest were made.

Information will be updated as it becomes available.

<http://www.vvng.com/illegal-marijuana-grow-discovered-half-mile-victorville-police-station/>

Bloomington fire prompts 650-gallon oil spill; hazmat team called in

Alex Groves, The Press-Enterprise

Posted: August 4, 2017, 11:52 AM

About 650 gallons of used motor oil and hydraulic fluid spilled from plastic containers at an industrial lot in Bloomington after a fire broke out there Friday morning, Aug. 4, a fire official said.

The fire was reported shortly before 10 a.m. in the back lot in the 18000 block of Slover Avenue, said **San Bernardino County Fire Department** Capt. Steve Tracy.

He said the lot was being used to work on vehicles and for manufacturing purposes.

The fire was contained by about 10:13 a.m., but it had melted plastic containers filled with oil and hydraulic fluid — prompting the spill, Tracy said.

Hazardous material crews were called in to deal with the spill.

Tracy said initial reports indicated that the fire was sparked by welding equipment, but an investigation would be launched to determine the cause.

<http://www.pe.com/2017/08/04/bloomington-fire-prompts-650-gallon-oil-spill-hazmat-team-called-in/>

Baby sitter wanted for child cruelty after children take THC

Hi Desert Star

Posted: August 4, 2017, 2:12 PM

YUCCA VALLEY — After finding two children who were high on marijuana, sheriff's deputies are looking for their baby sitter.

Deputies from the Morongo Basin Sheriff's Station responded to an undisclosed location in Yucca Valley to help the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** with juveniles having trouble breathing at 4:43 p.m. Wednesday.

The victims were a 3-year-old and a 5-year-old, both residents of Yucca Valley.

According to the Sheriff's Department, deputies discovered the children were being watched by neighbors, including Jinger Carter, a 32-year-old from Brea. She had left before deputies arrived.

Investigators learned Carter had eaten and smoked products containing THC, the substance that gives marijuana users their high, near the children.

The children ingested and possibly inhaled substances containing THC, and displayed signs of being under the influence of marijuana, according to the Sheriff's Department.

The children were transported to Hi-Desert Medical Center for treatment.

Deputy R. Nerenberg obtained a search warrant for the house. Investigators conducting the search say they found multiple products containing THC inside the house, in places easily accessible to the children.

Investigators are now looking for Carter. Anyone with information on her whereabouts is asked to call the sheriff's station at (760) 366-4175. To remain anonymous, call We-Tip at (888) 782-7463.

http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article_a2187532-7959-11e7-9da2-af3db22b2e62.html

4 killed in three-vehicle crash on 10 Freeway in Fontana

Alex Groves, The Press-Enterprise

Posted: August 4, 2017, 3:03 PM



Four people were killed in a multi-vehicle crash on the eastbound 10 Freeway in Fontana on Friday, Aug. 4, according to a fire official. TERRY PIERSON — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Four people were killed in a three-vehicle crash on the eastbound 10 Freeway in Fontana on Friday, Aug. 4, according to a fire and CHP officials.

The incident was reported about 12:34 p.m. on the eastbound 10 between Cherry and Citrus avenues, said **San Bernardino County Fire Department** spokesman Ryan Vacarro.

It involved a Toyota Tacoma, a four-door Honda sedan and Nissan Frontier, said California Highway Patrol Officer Jesus Garcia.

Garcia said a woman driving the Honda had mechanical issues and pulled onto the right shoulder. The Nissan Frontier then entered the shoulder and crashed into the Honda. The Honda was pushed into a Toyota Tacoma that was also on the shoulder.

He said the female passenger and two children inside the Honda were killed, as was an occupant of the Toyota Tacoma.

When fire officials arrived, they pronounced the four people dead at the scene, Vacarro said. He said two other people were taken to the hospital for minor injuries.

A medical squad and medic truck were expected to remain at the scene for several hours, Vacarro said.

The California Highway Patrol Rancho Cucamonga office was investigating the crash.

Garcia said it was unknown whether either alcohol or drugs was a factor in the crash.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170804/4-killed-in-three-vehicle-crash-on-10-freeway-in-fontana>

Mountain dodges another bullet

Douglas W. Motley, Alpenhorn News

Posted: August 4, 2017



A fast-moving blaze charred 100 acres in Waterman Canyon on Monday, August 3.
(Photo by Rhea-Frances Tetley)

The mountain communities – besieged by dozens of suspicious wildfires in the surrounding foothills in recent weeks – dodged another bullet on Monday, Aug 3 as flames quickly leaped from their ignition point just east of Old Waterman Canyon Road and raced to the summit of Arrowhead Peak, less than a mile below Crestline before their forward advance was halted by firefighters.

The blaze, dubbed the “Mile Fire,” ignited in tinder-dry brush alongside Old Waterman Canyon Road, just below a small community of homes. First reported at 1:49 p.m. Monday, it brought a quick response from **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, Cal Fire, several local fire agencies and the U.S. Forest Service, which responded with fixed-wing aircraft, including a four-engine C-130 air tanker that made several fire retardant drops. All fixed-wing aircraft were released from the fire following containment at 4:28 p.m.

Crestline residents reported drift smoke and falling ashes on Monday afternoon. Highway 18 was closed to all through traffic for the duration of the blaze. The road was reopened at 7 p.m.

According to Alpenhorn News reporter Rhea-Frances Tetley, who toured the canyon on Monday evening, the ignition point of the blaze was mid-way between the first and second bridges on Old Waterman Canyon Road. She said it appears the fire travelled up two side canyons to the top of Arrowhead Peak, where it was stopped.

San Bernardino County Fire Department Public Information Officer Tracey Martinez told *The Alpenhorn News* Tuesday that the blaze was holding at 100 acres. She said several strike teams had been sent into Waterman Canyon for structure protection. “Fortunately, a quick response from all fire agencies, along with aircraft, was able to keep the fire at bay,” said Martinez.

Scanner reports on Monday indicated that three suspects, two males and one female, had been detained for questioning. Martinez said all three had been released following questioning.

Cal Fire Captain Liz Brown said Tuesday that her agency had provided two fire retardant-dropping PT-type air tankers and several water-dropping helicopters. “The tankers painted the whole hillside with retardant,” she said. Brown declined to characterize the blaze as arson-related. “When we do an investigation, it’s a real challenge. It’s either accidental or arson, but if there are no witnesses, it’s very difficult to prove.

<http://alpenhornnews.com/mountain-dodges-another-bullet-p8275-155.htm>

Tips To Avoid Getting Lost in the Desert

Z107.7 News

Posted: August 6, 2017

With the search for a pair of missing hikers on everyone’s minds, managing editor Tami Roleff offers these tips on how to avoid getting lost in the desert—or anywhere else...

It’s not uncommon for people to become lost or turned around in Joshua Tree National Park. Thankfully, most find their way out, or are rescued by searchers. First of all, if you’re going in the desert, let someone know beforehand where you’re going, when you’ll be back, and give them your cell phone number. **County Fire Battalion Chief Mike Snow** offered these tips to avoid getting lost. He urged visitors and hikers to be familiar with the areas where they are going. Many maps can be preloaded onto your smart phone and used even in places where there is no cell service. Download the map before you leave home. Carry tape to mark the trail you’re on so you can find your way back more easily. Snow also said hikers could use a GPS to track your route and mark your way points. Some phones also have GPS apps. And another tip: look behind you occasionally so you can recognize the trail when you return. Reporting for Z107.7, this is managing editor Tami Roleff.

<http://z1077fm.com/tips-to-avoid-getting-lost-in-the-desert-2/>

UPDATE: Man flown to trauma center after shooting in Victorville; 1 detained

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: August 8, 2017, 2:43 PM



Authorities treat a man who suffered gunshot wounds on Jasmine Street and stumbled into the Community Bingo Hall in Victorville on Tuesday afternoon. The man was flown to a trauma center for treatment. [Photo courtesy of Chris Reay]

VICTORVILLE — Authorities rushed to fly a man to a trauma center after he was wounded in a shooting Tuesday.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and **County Fire Department** personnel responded to treat the man when he stumbled into a nearby bingo hall with gunshot wounds, according to scanner traffic. One person has been detained, according to sheriff's officials.

The shooting occurred at the Wimbledon Apartments, at 16950 Jasmine Street, at around 1:30 p.m., authorities said. The wounded man then walked to the Community Bingo Hall, at 12234 Hesperia Road, at 1:40 p.m. Witnesses told the Daily Press he had a "bloody chest" and appeared to have a gunshot wound there.

County Fire spokesman Eric Sherwin confirmed fire personnel treated a gunshot wound victim. While he couldn't provide further details on the man's condition, Sherwin said the man was taken to Desert Valley Hospital before being flown out to a trauma center for treatment.

The suspect, described by scanner traffic as a Hispanic man wearing a black shirt and red shorts, reportedly fled the scene after the shooting in a silver Isuzu Rodeo. The vehicle was last seen heading west on Nisqualli Road near Del Gado, according to scanner traffic.

Victorville Sheriff's station spokeswoman Mara Rodriguez confirmed the above details, and said one person was detained. Further details weren't available.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170808/update-man-flown-to-trauma-center-after-shooting-in-victorville-1-detained>

UPDATE: Pedestrian struck and killed along El Evado Road early Wednesday morning

Hesperia Star

Posted: August 9, 2017, 8:17 AM



A pedestrian was struck and killed while crossing El Evado Road early Wednesday morning. [Kevin Trudgeon, Daily Press]

VICTORVILLE — A pedestrian was struck and killed while crossing El Evado Road early Wednesday morning, authorities said.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Victorville Station deputies and rescue personnel from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** responded to a report of a vehicle vs. pedestrian collision near the intersection of El Evado and Palmdale roads at approximately 2:14 a.m.

“Upon arrival, deputies were advised that a white Toyota Sequoia was traveling south on El Evado Road and struck a pedestrian who was crossing El Evado Road from the west to east outside of a crosswalk south of Palmdale Road,” sheriff's officials said in a statement.

Paramedics pronounced the pedestrian deceased at the scene, according to authorities, and the driver of the Sequoia, who was uninjured, remained at the scene and was cooperative with the investigation.

The cause of the collision is unknown at this time, authorities said, and members of the Sheriff's Major Accident Investigation Team (MAIT) are continuing the investigation.

El Evado Road was closed from Palmdale to Anacapa roads for approximately six hours before being reopened around 8 a.m.

Anyone with information or anyone who witnessed the collision is asked to contact Deputy Jeffrey Dean at the Victorville Sheriff's Station at 760-241-2911. Callers wishing to remain anonymous may call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463 or visit www.wetip.com.

<http://www.hesperia.com/news/20170809/update-pedestrian-struck-and-killed-along-el-evado-road-early-wednesday-morning>

Two families ‘barely escape’ apartment complex blaze in Apple Valley

Rene Ray De La Cruz, Hesperia Star

Posted: August 9, 2017, 12:19 PM



An early morning blaze destroyed two units of a four-plex in Apple Valley on Wednesday. [Rene Ray De La Cruz, Daily Press]

APPLE VALLEY — Multiple families barely escaped with their lives as an early morning apartment fire destroyed their homes and belongings.

The blaze was reported at 3:18 a.m. Wednesday at a four-plex in the 20100 block of Serrano Road, according to Battalion Chief Jim Hulbert with the Apple Valley Fire Protection District.

Six units with the AVFPD and three from **San Bernardino County Fire Department** responded to the blaze that destroyed two apartment units and one attached garage.

“Thankfully no one was injured in the fire and the Red Cross assisted (the) two families that were displaced by the fire,” Hulbert said. “A female occupant from one of the apartments was taken to a local hospital as a precaution. She was very nervous and had trouble breathing, but it was not due to the smoke.”

Fire Chief Sid Hultquist told the Daily Press one family is still alive because they fell asleep in the living room instead of their bedroom, near where the fire began.

“It was a rapidly spreading fire that started in the patio area, came through the bedrooms and up into the attic,” Hultquist said. “The family said the fire alarm and someone banging on the door woke them up. They barely escaped with their lives.”

Three vehicles were also damaged in the blaze, including a Dodge Charger that was parked inside one of the adjacent garages that received minimal damage. A single-family home on the north side of the fire also sustained minimal heat damage, including a broken window, Hulbert said.

Neighbors reported hearing an explosion just before the fire began, according to Hulbert, who said the cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Frankie Smith, who lives in one of the undamaged apartment units, said a passing stranger warned apartment residents of the fire by “banging on the doors” and screaming “fire.”

“I don’t know what would have happened if this guy had not woken us up,” Smith said. “Thank you, Jesus, that everybody got out alive.”

Jarred Duquette, who invited the Daily Press inside the damaged apartment, said his grandmother, Carmen Hurtado, 66, and his 12-year-old brother and 11-year-old sister escaped the blaze.

“My nana was taken to the hospital as a precaution because she was dealing with anxiety,” said Duquette, 19, as he rummaged through her apartment searching for undamaged mementos.

Duquette, who used to live in the apartment and rushed to the scene, said he’s thankful his little brother decided to sleep in the living room instead of his bedroom near the back patio where he believes the fire started.

Standing near the damaged structure, Duquette’s sister, Autumn, cuddled with her dog, Dodger, as neighbors stopped by to offer help.

“I’m just glad my family is still alive — you can replace stuff, but you can’t replace people,” Duquette said.

<http://www.hesperianstar.com/news/20170809/two-families-barely-escape-apartment-complex-blaze-in-apple-valley>

San Bernardino fire destroys garage, cause under investigation

Doug Saunders, The Sun

Posted: August 9, 2017, 7:51 PM



San Bernardino County Firefighters battle a fully involved structure fire Wednesday in the 1000 block of West Second Street. PHOTO BY DOUG SAUNDERS

SAN BERNARDINO >> Firefighters battled a fully involved garage fire Wednesday evening.

Shortly before 6:30 p.m. firefighters raced to a home in the 1000 block of West Second Street.

A black cloud of smoke could be seen for miles and bright orange flames lit the evening sky.

Firefighters quelled the blaze within 30 minutes and fire investigators were on scene trying to determine what sparked the fire.

No injuries were reported.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170809/san-bernardino-fire-destroys-garage-cause-under-investigation>

Fire in the north bench

Manny B. Sandoval and Rachael M. Gustuson, Yucaipa/Calimesa News Mirror

Posted: August 10, 2017



The fire threatens homes on Yucaipa Ridge and other north bench locations.

A fire broke out at Bryant Street and Highway 38 on Thursday, Aug. 3, around 3 p.m. in the north bench area of Yucaipa and the windy weather caused it to spread quickly.

The fire was near Mill Creek Station. Four structures were threatened and evacuated. As of Aug. 8, at 8:31 a.m., the fire had burned 325 acres and was 95 percent contained.

Unified commands included US Forest Service, CAL Fire, Yucaipa Fire and **San Bernardino County Fire Departments.**

Highway 38, all the way up to Big Bear, and Bryant Street were shut down overnight. The city of Yucaipa worked with a local church to set up an evacuation center.

The fire continued burning east over the north bench Yucaipa mountains on Aug. 4, although the flames were no longer visible to the city of Yucaipa.

Over 150 personnel and aircraft were out on the scene. There were two-reported firefighter injuries, one serious and one minor.

Jarrold Samra, 23, of Yucaipa, was charged with nine counts of arson in connection with multiple fires around San Bernardino County. He was arrested Thursday, Aug. 3, after deputies responded to reports of a vegetation fire on Hwy. 38. They observed a vehicle in the area where the fire started and made contact with Samra.

After further investigation, Samra was arrested. He was arraigned on Monday afternoon at 1 p.m. at the San Bernardino Justice Center on nine counts of arson; arson with a great bodily injury to a CAL Firefighter, who broke his leg fighting the fire. The following eight counts of arson are a result of eight different fires in which Samra is connected, all of which occurred within the east valley. Samra may face up to 19 years in prison.

“This arsonist will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law,” San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael Ramos said. “The history of fires in our county and the destruction they have caused to human life and property is absolutely tragic. Thankfully, through the investigative work of our law

enforcement and public safety partners, we were able to stop this individual and prevent any future destruction or potential loss of life.”

http://www.newsmirror.net/news/crime/fire-in-the-north-bench/article_23eacc84-7de9-11e7-a1c9-072e7ec18910.html

Hoist hazards: Lack of preparation often key factor in rescue situations

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: August 11, 2017, 12:03 PM



The San Bernardino County Sheriff’s and Fire departments have kept busy in recent months with a series of hoist rescues throughout the region, where a four-man team flies to an often remote location to rescue a stranded victim and hoist them out of the area. [Photo courtesy of San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department]

San Bernardino County is home to beautiful wildland, with vast forests, deserts, creeks and rivers that nature lovers take full enjoyment in. But such abundant natural treasures can also come with hazards — as many hikers have come to realize.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff’s and Fire departments have kept busy in recent months with a series of hoist rescues throughout the region, where a four-man team flies to an often remote location to rescue a stranded victim and hoist them out of the area.

The team is frequently dispatched to certain popular areas, including the Deep Creek Hot Springs and the Aztec Falls, to rescue lost or injured hikers. While this is fairly common for the time of year, an apparent uptick in rescues led to the Daily Press looking closer into the issue. Here’s what we found:

Rescues cost money — but save more in the long run

The air rescue team gets deployed to an average of 50 to 70 hoist rescue calls a year, as well as assisting in search-and-rescue calls. Just this year, the team has completed 34 hoist rescues, 14 of which were in the Deep Creek area, according to statistics provided by Aviation Division Corporal Mike Ells.

These rescues typically take up an hour of flight time, which Ells said cost taxpayers about \$2,500 on average. This effectively means about \$85,000 has been spent on the 34 hoist rescues completed this year. These numbers might make one think that it could be easier, and cheaper for taxpayers, to simply send a team in on foot.

Ells, however, argues that the cost of an average hoist rescue is offset by the manpower saved.

“In Mount Baldy, for example, it can sometimes take hours to get someone out of there hiking,” Ells said. “With us, we can get them out in 10 to 15 minutes. (A hoist rescue) doesn’t pull manpower from other areas to help.”

Apart from saving time and resources, hoist rescues can lead to fewer or less severe injuries from a fall. Ells mentioned how in Aztec Falls, it can take a team of 10 to 15 people an hour to hike in and carry the person out. If the person is injured, it takes more time to drive them to a hospital, which can be risky for both rescuers and the injured hiker.

“If a person is in bad shape, the faster they can get to the hospital, the better,” Ells said. “And you take a really good chance of the rescuers getting injured themselves, so it’s just easier to hoist them out.”

Preparation is key

Ells has been in the Sheriff’s Aviation Division for over 15 years, frequently participating in hoist rescues. His time with the team has led him to experience various types of rescues, from a lost hiker who needs a little help in remote terrain to more extreme examples.

“There was a guy we once rescued that had been out in the Deep Creek Hot Springs for four days in the winter,” Ells said. He mentioned the man’s clothes remained wet from snowfall during that period, which illustrated a larger point — the need for preparation.

Ells spoke about the various factors leading to a hoist rescue, such as a person getting lost or being injured with a fall. Most rescues, however, are simply due to a lack of preparation — especially in Deep Creek, where summertime temperatures can easily reach triple digits.

“We see a lot of heat injuries and heat exhaustion at the hot springs. That hike can be a little rough, especially when it’s over 100 degrees out,” Ells said. “Many times, hikers just don’t bring enough water or don’t know the area well enough. They don’t prepare for the hike in and hike out.”

Hazards do exist — Ells mentioned how injuries from falls tend to increase during summer months, when water levels at Deep Creek begin to decline. But most of the hoist rescues, which Ells said typically involve people who are unfamiliar with the area, could be avoided with a little extra work beforehand.

“Check the weather. Weather is a factor with us all the time,” Ells said. “And know the area. Research the area you’re going to. Bring extra clothes, extra water and food, and make sure you let family or loved ones know where you are.”

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170811/hoist-hazards-lack-of-preparation-often-key-factor-in-rescue-situations>

New zoning codes, parking garage repairs, fires discussed at MAC

Rhea-Frances Tetley, Alpenhorn News

Posted: August 13, 2017



The parking garage at Lake Arrowhead Village remains closed while undergoing seismic retrofitting. (Photo by Rhea-Frances Tetley)

The August Crest Forest Municipal Advisory Council (CF-MAC) meeting, held at the Crestline Sanitation District conference room, was filled with important information for mountain residents.

Greg Rice reported on the Community Plan, which will be presented during a community Town Hall meeting at the San Moritz Lodge on Wednesday, August 23. All communities will be affected by several new zoning overlays, which will affect business locations. These zoning changes will completely change the look of the mountains. See the draft plans and maps at www.countywideplan.cp.

MAC member Rick Dinon reported there is a hitch in the Lake Gregory Dam repairs, as the Department of Safety of Dams (DSOD) is disagreeing on the composition of the fill to be used to repair the 70-year-old dam, which the state has determined may collapse during an earthquake. This problem has time to be resolved before repairs begin. However, the lake dredging is ahead of schedule, so the county is on target for beginning the repairs, which should then take 18 months.

County Supervisor Janice Rutherford's representative Lewis Murray reported that Lake Arrowhead Village management was informed 2 ½ years ago by County Code Enforcement that the village's parking structure could collapse during an earthquake and required repairs. They made no repairs, so the structure has been shut down until the emergency concrete repair work is completed. It will be closed for at least three more weeks.

Reports were given by the Sheriff's Department, CHP, which has received two new officers, and the **County Fire Department**. The fire department has received several new pieces of equipment for locating arsonists. "If you see something, say something, and immediately call 911," said Cal Fire Battalion Chief Jeff Veik. "If a lightning strike hits near you, report its location so we can check it out, because a fire could smolder for days and then explode into flames," Veik said adding, "Plus, the \$150 Fire Fee will cease being billed as of July 1, and replaced by the Cap and Trade bill."

U.S. Forest Service District Ranger Mark Stamer announced John Miller and David Kelley have retired and that the fully-staffed fire lookout volunteers are doing a great job locating fires while small.

Lake Arrowhead MAC member Duane Banner announced that historian Russ Keller will give a free PowerPoint presentation on the 'History of Lake Arrowhead' at the San Mortiz Lodge on Thursday, August 24 at 7 p.m.

Rim Recreation and Parks District's Bob Kinzel announced the forward push to create a Crestline sports park, describing potential locations on Old Mill Road and in VOE. They also will enter a joint-use contract with the school district on the Lake Gregory Educational Center for use as a community center with after school programs.

The Active Transportation Plan is holding its final workshop on August 29 at the Hootman Center in Running Springs, and then the finalized plan will be presented at a town hall meeting in October. A \$385,000 grant has been used to explore alternative travel routes and modes of transportation for the mountains.

Public transportation this summer has been tried with the Mountain Trolley carrying more passengers than anticipated, and suddenly helpful for Lake Arrowhead Village customers since the parking structure is closed. These trolleys have also shuttled over 500 folks in Crestline during Corks and Hops Saturdays, from Top Town to Lake Gregory. The trolley service will expand from Crestline and Lake Arrowhead, adding the Running Springs area next summer.

Rosemarie Labadie announced that the Dennis Labadie Memorial Backpack Giveaway will be held the morning of August 12 at the former Alpenhorn Office at 23570 Knapps Cutoff, along with a clothes exchange. Parents must bring their kids to receive a backpack. Several other community groups will be contributing school supplies to the Rim students.

<http://alpenhornnews.com/new-zoning-codes-parking-garage-repairs-fires-discussed-at-mac-p8287-155.htm>

Sheriff's Air Rescue 7 performs hoist rescue of hiker in the area of Crest Forest Drive & Hwy 18

Highland News

Posted: August 14, 2017, 7:16 AM

At approximately 9:00 am on Sunday, Aug. 13, Sheriff's Air Rescue 07 was dispatched to Highway 18 and Crest Forest Drive to assist the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** regarding an injured hiker. The victim, Jessica Christenson, 46, of Long Beach, was attempting to climb on the rocks below Highway 18 when she fell approximately 40 feet. Due to the fall, Christenson suffered moderate injuries, and was unable to walk out.

Fire Department personnel arrived and located Christenson before the rescue crew arrived. The personnel determined Christenson would need to be hoist rescued due to her injuries and the remote location.

Once the helicopter was in position, Crew Chief S. Miller lowered Air Medic B. Horak down to Christenson. After a brief medical assessment, Christenson was placed into a rescue harness and hoisted into the helicopter, followed by Horak.

Christenson was flown to Loma Linda University Medical Center for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

http://www.highlandnews.net/news/public_safety/sheriff-s-air-rescue-performs-hoist-rescue-of-hiker-in/article_30c9f4f6-80fb-11e7-b0c7-cb59397704aa.html