



NEWS



News Headlines 03/29/2019

- Traffic jammed on 15 Freeway north after blowout causes truck to overturn
- Saturday is Day 1 for city's new fire department

Traffic jammed on 15 Freeway north after blowout causes truck to overturn

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News Group

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(Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) — Traffic was jammed for commuters traveling northbound after a pickup truck overturned near the same area a sedan overturned this afternoon.

The crash was reported at about 6:21 p.m. Thursday and involved a single pick-up truck that was pulling a flatbed trailer.

According to the California Highway Patrol logs, the blue Chevy pickup truck suffered a blowout, causing the driver to lose control and overturn into the ditch on the right-hand shoulder.

It happened on the NB 15 Freeway just one mile south of Bear Valley Road.

San Bernardino County Firefighters arrived on scene and reported the male driver had minor injuries and that he was able to get out of the vehicle on his own.

CHP logs indicate that a tow truck has been requested to remove the truck and flatbed trailer.

For even more updates on local highways/freeways including the #cajonpass, be sure to LIKE Cajon Crawl and join the Facebook group Cajon Crawl – 15 Freeway Updates.

<https://www.vvng.com/traffic-jammed-on-15-freeway-north-after-blowout-causes-truck-to-overturn/>

Saturday is Day 1 for city's new fire department

Martin Estacio, Victorville Daily Press

Posted: March 28, 2019 at 7:05 PM

The Victorville Fire Department is coming back.

The **San Bernardino County Fire Department** officially ends its fire protection services to the city on Saturday at 8 a.m. At that time, Victorville will once again have its own fire department, as it did prior to July 1, 2008.

The takeover marks the end of a 15-month process. City officials believe operating its own fire department will cut costs and tighten ties between residents and emergency responders.

Fire Chief Greg Benson said in a city-run department, residents are likely to become familiar with the firefighters who work at their local station, and firefighters will in turn know the people they serve.

He compared it to “beat cops” who have a regular area to walk and become immersed in their neighborhoods.

“You’re connected to the community,” Benson said.

Adding to this community approach is the fact that half of the 60 personnel hired to the department already live in the High Desert area, he said.

The department includes 58 sworn employees, in addition to an administrative position and emergency medical services coordinator. The department aims to have 63 members in total.

Each firefighter/paramedic has at least four years of prior experience, with higher positions such as engineers and captains all having at least eight to 10 years, Benson said.

He said he wanted to dispel rumors that department personnel lacked training.

Service levels will be the same as under the county, said Benson, with four stations fully staffed and 18 firefighters on-call at any one time.

He said the city received more than 350 applicants for open positions, and chose the “best of the best.”

Benson, who brings 40 years of experience to the new department, said the new hires also bring their own experience to the department.

With a depth of knowledge in areas such as urban rescue and hazardous materials response, the chief said, department employees are excited to be creating a new work culture that could last decades.

Deputy City Manager George Harris II projects the city to save around \$1 million per year with an in-house department.

A significant reduction in costs became apparent at a recent mid-year budget review, Harris said.

According to city documents, the review showed personnel costs to be lower than budgeted, saving \$382,496.

This lower cost was due to a majority of fire department members being hired under a newer, less expensive pension system — PEPRA, established for employees hired after Jan. 1, 2013 — versus the PERS system.

County Fire argued that their pension system was more solvent and well-funded.

The city's split from the County could be characterized as strained to say the least, according to Daily Press reports.

Tensions rose during negotiations to temporarily extend County services with Victorville until the city's new department was up-and-running. The City wanted six months; the County wanted a year.

Eventually, the two entities agreed to a nine-month contract extension.

Benson said long-term goals for the department include becoming accredited from the Center for Public Safety Excellence, of which only 258 agencies worldwide are. A benefit of being accredited can mean lower insurance rates for Victorville residents.

The chief said two Type-1 fire engines are being built for the department. New command vehicles and medic squads will go into service Saturday.

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20190328/saturday-is-day-1-for-citys-new-fire-department>