



# NEWS



## News Headlines 06/20/2019

- Piñon Hills Community Summerfest
- Man arrested at scene of house fire

## Piñon Hills Community Summerfest

Michael Palecki, Mountaineer Progress Newspaper

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Last Saturday, June 15, 2019, the campus of Pinon Hills Elementary School was filled with activities for all age groups, as the Pinon Hills Chamber of Commerce hosted Summer Fest 2019. For those who attended, there was ample sunshine, with none of the punishing winds of recent days. As temperatures rose, youngsters cooled off on the water slide and dunk tank.

As guests started to arrive in the morning, KJAY Epic! Radio DJ's Al Anthony and "B Tech" began steaming music for the crowd and announcing the schedule of Summer Fest activities. Pinon Hills Chamber President Lori Weston welcomed everyone and presented a historical account of the foothill community, which changed names over the years from Barrel Springs to Desert Springs, Smithson Springs, and finally to Pinon Hills. Christopher J. Porter, Field Representative for U.S. Congressman Paul Cook, then presented a Certificate of Recognition to Weston, commemorating the incorporation of the Pinon Hills Chamber 71 years ago.

After the presentation, David Stumbaugh, representing Reach Air Medical Services, spoke about their emergency air ambulance insurance plan. The service provides 24-hour seven days a week service at a cost of \$85.00 annually for a household, or \$65.00 for seniors. As he spoke, the red helicopter circled above the athletic field. For more information call (760) 490-7524.

Meanwhile, on the east end of the field, Sparky The Firedog was the first to ride the colorful train around the grounds. On the opposite end of the field, two Pinon Hills kids were happily riding ponies while others were enjoying getting close to friendly farm animals, provided by Critters To Go Petting Zoo and Pony Rides.

Later, after solving a generator malfunction, High-D Boys took the stage with their over-the-top goofy song renditions. Musicians included Robert Blomker on lead vocals, Phil Clevinger on horns and ukulele, Jacob Olsen playing washtub bass, Amber Saudlin on fiddle, with Don Reyes playing guitar. As the syncopated beat intensified, Timber Line Dancers strutted their stuff. Highlights from the first set included blistering versions of "Since You've Been Gone," "When the Saints Go Marching In," and "Folsom Prison Blues," with the audience clapping and the train tooting its horn.

On the upper level of the campus, food trucks were lined up to serve hungry visitors, and vintage cars were lined up for close inspection., Pinon Hills Chamber member Bill Davison posed with his recently acquired bright red and carbon black 2017 Dodge SRT Hellcat, demonstrating the 'definitely not vintage' category. In the 'truly daring' category, Phelan Chamber and CSD board member Kathy Hoffman mounted the Mechanical Bull with her fist raised skyward. Nearby, Pinon Hills Elementary Principal Shannon Avery bravely accepted the challenge just before a precise toss sent her splashing into the Dunk Tank operated by **SBC Fire Explorers** from Post 351.

With larger accommodations for people, parking, events, and entertainment, the school grounds served as the perfect venue for the annual event.

<http://mtprogress.net/pinonhills.html>

## Man arrested at scene of house fire

Staff Writer, Hi-Desert Star

Posted: June 19, 2019



Flames destroy a house on Campanula Street in Yucca Valley Monday morning. The resident was later arrested on suspicion of being a felon with a firearm. The cause of the fire is still being investigated. San Bernardino County fire department photo

**YUCCA MESA** — A house was destroyed by fire and the man living there was arrested Monday morning.

The fire was reported around 5:30 a.m. Monday in the 56900 block of Campanula Street, around Sage Avenue, said **county fire** Battalion Chief Donny Viloría.

Crews from the county fire stations in Yucca Valley, Yucca Mesa and Joshua Tree responded.

“They were greeted by an occupant who had already evacuated numerous pets, including exotic birds and at least one dog,” Viloría said.

“Our personnel then made a push into the structure to extinguish the flames.”

The fire was contained within 30 minutes.

The fire department called sheriff’s deputies to the scene as well.

“We had notes that indicated when we respond to this particular address, law enforcement also needed to be involved,” Viloría said.

Responding deputies talked to the home’s resident, Eddie Brandon, 49, a convicted felon.

The Sheriff’s Department stated in a news release that Brandon admitted he had explosive devices. Deputies also knew there had been prior reports of someone shooting guns in the area.

They found several expended shell casings on Brandon’s property and collected guns, more than 20,000 rounds of ammunition in various calibers, body armor, brass knuckles, pepper spray and a pepper spray gun from the house.

Brandon was arrested and booked at the Morongo Basin Jail on suspicion of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Viloría said there were reports of explosions during the fire, but it’s not certain the sounds were from ammunition or weapons. “Things like that happen on residential structure fires all the time, because maybe in the garage there’s a gas can. Tires explode. A can of Raid bug spray will explode,” he said. “So we hear a lot of explosions while we’re working a residential structure fire.”

After knocking down the flames, firefighters ran their salvage and overhaul operations to recover what they could from the home, then left, not realizing the fire was still smoldering in unseen parts of the building.

“This was an instance where someone has built onto their structure in a way that is not conventional construction, so there were hidden, concealed spaces that were not contained (by fire crews),” Viloría said.

The fire investigator still on the scene saw the smoke and called in an engine around 10:30 a.m.

“When the engine crew got very, very close, they recognized they would not be able to deal with it themselves, so they called an additional structure fire response,” Viloría said.

Firefighters returned, this time accompanied by county animal control officers, who took custody of the birds and the dog.

The house was destroyed by fire.

“The good news is the owner-occupant didn’t suffer any injuries. No firefighters suffered any injuries. None of the animals were injured,” Viloría said.

The cause of the fire, and whether it was connected to the firearms and ammunition on scene, is still being investigated by the sheriff’s bombs and arson division, Sgt. M. Hurtado said.

[http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article\\_5a240056-92ee-11e9-bd33-07c6487c85d3.html](http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article_5a240056-92ee-11e9-bd33-07c6487c85d3.html)