



NEWS



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La Cadena fire in Colton stopped at 70 acres amid 108-degree heat

Jim Steinberg, Press-Enterprise

Posted: July 8, 2017, 2:16 PM



Photo of fire submitted to a Facebook page on Saturday afternoon.

COLTON>>>One hundred firefighters from multiple agencies on Saturday battled both flames and 108-degree temperatures Saturday while taking on a 70-acre fire west of the 215 Freeway in Colton.

Fire crews primarily from Colton, San Bernardino County and Loma Linda are “starting to build containment lines,” said Colton Battalion Chief Jeff Bender.

Several crews from other nearby departments have also contributed firefighters and a San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department helicopter is dropping water on the blaze, which has been dubbed the La Cadena fire.

The fire started at about 12:30 p.m. and for a brief period threatened several homes, Bender said. But no structures burned, he said, adding, “This heat is really taking its (physical) toll (on firefighters).”

Wind was a factor in the early part of the fire, but not recently, Bender said.

At 3 p.m., the fire had charred 50 acres and had zero containment, **San Bernardino County fire** officials tweeted.

By 4 p.m., the La Cadena fire was 70 acres — but firefighters had stopped the forward movement of the blaze.

And at 6 p.m., the blaze was 100 percent contained.

<http://www.pe.com/2017/07/08/crews-responding-to-vegetation-fire-in-colton/>

Fire Crews Save Colton Neighborhood From 50-Acre Brush Fire

CBS Los Angeles

Posted: July 8, 2017, 2:55 PM

COLTON (CBSLA.com) – Fire crews have contained a 50-acre brush fire that appeared to be threatening homes in Colton Saturday afternoon.

The blaze broke west of Rosedale Avenue and Maryknoll Drive sometime before 1:15 p.m., according to the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

The flames raced through a hillside.

It burned right above Jeff Mascolina's street. He said his neighborhood was saved because of the firefighters who worked in nearly 110 degree heat.

"They're up there lining up the lines and making sure that everything is great," said Mascolina.

Along with ground crews, the SBCFD was also using water-dropping helicopters to battle the flames.

The cause of the fire was not known.

<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2017/07/08/brush-fire-colton/>

Hot springs trip overwhelms Hesperia hiker, leads to air rescue

Jim Steinberg, The Sun

Posted: July 7, 2017, 10:17 PM

APPLE VALLEY >> A 19-year-old woman became dehydrated and needed to be air rescued Friday while returning from a several mile hike to hot springs, a San Bernardino County Sheriff's report said.

Luzelena Velasquez, a Hesperia resident, hiked into the popular hot springs area of Deep Creek.

She got into trouble on the return hike and her friends called 911.

Personnel from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** responded. Because Velasquez was still several miles from the trailhead and due to the remote location, they requested an air rescue.

Velasquez was hoisted onto a helicopter and flown to a nearby waiting ambulance, the report said.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170707/hot-springs-trip-overwhelms-hesperia-hiker-leads-to-air-rescue>

Sheriff's Aviation Performs Hoist Rescue out of Deep Creek, Apple Valley

SBSD Aviation via Highland News

Posted: July 8, 2017, 7:33 AM

On Friday, July 7th, 2017, Luzelena Velasquez, 19, of Hesperia and several friends hiked several miles to the hot springs area of Deep Creek. After several hours, Velasquez began hiking out and she became dehydrated. Friends hiking with Velasquez called 911 and requested assistance.

Personnel from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** responded. Velasquez was still several miles from the trailhead and due to the remote location, personnel requested Sheriff's Air Rescue 06 and Sheriff's patrol helicopter 40 King respond to assist.

The crew of 40 King, Deputy Doug Brimmer and Deputy Carlos Quezada arrived and located Velasquez on the trail. The crew of Air Rescue 06, Sergeant Michael Gilley, Sergeant James Mahan, Deputy Chris Mejia and Flight Medic Jeff Centeno arrived a short time later.

The crews determined Velasquez would need to be hoist rescued from the location. Flight Medic Centeno was lowered using the helicopter hoist. He performed an initial an assessment of Velasquez and found she had non-life threatening injuries. Velasquez was placed into a harness and hoisted into the helicopter, followed by Flight Medic Centeno. Velasquez was flown to a nearby waiting ambulance.

http://www.highlandnews.net/news/public_safety/sheriff-s-aviation-performs-hoist-rescue-out-of-deep-creek/article_7ad918ca-63ea-11e7-b741-5fbf71ae8f99.html

Dehydrated Teen at Deep Creek Rescued by Sheriff's Aviation

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: July 8, 2017



(VVNG.com File Photo)

DEEP CREEK, Calif. (VVNG.com) A 19-year-old woman from Hesperia had to be rescued out of Deep Creek by the Sheriff's Aviation Unit Friday afternoon.

A group of friends hiked several miles into the hot springs area of Deep Creek. After several hours, the group began hiking out.

The Hesperia teen became dehydrated and her friends called 911 and requested assistance, sheriff's officials said.

Personnel from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** responded.

The group was still several miles from the trailhead and due to the remote location, personnel requested Sheriff's Air Rescue 06 and Sheriff's Patrol helicopter 40 King respond to assist.

The crew of 40 King, Deputy Doug Brimmer and Deputy Carlos Quezada arrived and located them on the trail.

The crew of Air Rescue 06, Sergeant Michael Gilley, Sergeant James Mahan, Deputy Chris Mejia and Flight Medic Jeff Centeno arrived a short time later.

The crews determined the teen would need to be hoist rescued from the location.

Using a hoist, Flight Medic Centeno was lowered and performed an initial an assessment of the patient and found she had non-life threatening injuries before being flown to a nearby waiting ambulance.

<http://www.vvng.com/dehydrated-teen-deep-creek-rescued-sheriffs-aviation/>

Man previously convicted of manufacturing controlled substance seriously burned when suspected THC extraction lab explodes in Victorville

Hesperia Star

Posted: July 7, 2017, 7:49 AM



An alleged THC extraction lab caused an explosion that blew a garage door off a house in the 11500 block of Topaz Road in Hesperia, authorities said. [Submitted photo]

VICTORVILLE — A man who previously pleaded guilty to operating a THC extraction lab in Hesperia was seriously burned when another lab exploded and blew the garage door off a home here, authorities said.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Victorville Station deputies and **County Fire** personnel responded to a report of an explosion and fire in the 11500 block of Topaz road at 6:20 p.m. Thursday.

Upon their arrival they located items consistent with a THC extraction lab, according to authorities, and a man identified as Victorville resident Christian Nathaniel Aguila, 20, was seen running from the location.

Aguila, who was a suspect in an investigation into a THC extraction lab in Hesperia in September and pleaded guilty to manufacturing a controlled substance, a felony, was later located by deputies and airlifted to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center with second- and third-degree burns to his face, head and body, authorities said.

The homeowner, 42-year-old Richard Li, remained at the scene until deputies arrived.

Personnel with the Sheriff's Gangs/Narcotics Division, Marijuana Enforcement Team and Arson/Bomb Detail all responded and through investigation found evidence of a THC extraction operation at the home.

"Both (Aguila and Li) were inside the residence at the time of the explosion and fire," sheriff's officials said in a statement. "Investigators found evidence to suggest the suspect(s) were manufacturing concentrated cannabis, commonly referred to as Wax or Butane Honey Oil (BHO)."

Wax/BHO is a form of concentrated cannabis commonly made by extracting the THC from the marijuana plant or plant material. The THS extraction process is extremely dangerous and has a high potential for explosion and fire due to the use of large amounts of flammable chemicals and solvents during, according to authorities.

The investigation is ongoing and will be sent to the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office for review of criminal charges. Li was arrested on suspicion of manufacturing a controlled substance and was booked at the High Desert Detention Center in lieu of \$500,000 bail.

No update on Aguila, who had previously been placed on 36 months probation and ordered to complete weekends at a San Bernardino jail facility, was provided.

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 may call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463 or visit www.wetip.com.

<http://www.hesperianstar.com/news/20170707/man-previously-convicted-of-manufacturing-controlled-substance-seriously-burned-when-suspected-thc-extraction-lab-explodes-in-victorville>

Grand Jury focuses on improving ambulance availability in the High Desert

Jim Steinberg, The Sun

Posted: July 7, 2017, 6:56 PM



File photo

SAN BERNARDINO >> To improve ambulance availability in the High Desert, a public education plan, enhanced 911 screenings and better coordination between ambulance service providers were among the recommendations in a report by the San Bernardino County grand jury.

The report, called "High Desert Ambulance Availability and Bed Delay," highlights a statewide, national and international issue which centers on the length of time it takes an ambulance crew to release its patient to hospital emergency room staff.

"The ability of a community to maintain a viable EMS (Emergency Medical System) is related to solving this problem," said Dr. Howard Backer, director of the California Emergency Medical Services Authority, after reading the San Bernardino County grand jury report.

California is in the process of collecting the information to develop a statewide picture of how widespread the problem is, Backer said.

For 2016, the grand jury report said there were 11,695 hours of Ambulance Patient Off-load Delays at the three High Desert hospitals in San Bernardino County which operate emergency departments.

This total is in addition to a 25-minute grace period for each ambulance patient delivery — a wait time when ambulance vehicles and their crews are in a holding pattern with the clock not running.

The grand jury report found that contributing factors in the data were:

- An increase in the number of newly insured patients as a result of the Affordable Care Act, placing higher demands on an already strained, overcrowded emergency department.
- A disproportionately low number of local primary and specialty care physicians.
- An aging population with additional medical needs and the evolving role of EMS in health care systems.

B.J. Bartleson, vice president of nursing and clinical services for the California Hospital Association, said that a large number of High Desert residents received medical insurance under Obamacare, but they can't get to see doctors on a timely basis, if at all.

So they show up at hospital emergency rooms, which by law must see them, she said.

In November 2015, the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency, which oversees ambulance services in Inyo, Mono and San Bernardino developed a plan, at the request of the Hospital Association of Southern California, said Tom Lynch, the agency's EMS Director.

The grand jury report recommended implementation of that plan, called the Centralized Medical Control Proposal.

Among other proposals, the plan called for creation of enhanced 911 call screening, designed to identify patients who do not require EMS response or an emergency department to care for their medical complaint.

- Development and implementation of an ongoing public education strategies to address appropriate use of the EMS system.

Those two proposals were separately listed in the grand jury's recommendations.

The ICEMA report also recommended development of protocols to guide transportation of patients with behavioral health conditions to appropriate health care settings.

Backer said the dangerous part of this problem is that because of hospital bed availability or staffing issues, emergency service equipment and crews are tied up and not available to accept other calls.

To help alleviate this problem, the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** created an ambulance operation staffed by paramedics and emergency medical technicians who were not also trained firefighters.

That way, firefighting equipment and their crews were not kept out of service waiting to deliver a patient to the hospital, said Tracey Martinez, a department spokeswoman.

The problem of long waits for patient deliveries at hospitals "has been going on for a long time and getting progressively worse," Martinez said.

American Medical Response said its San Bernardino County operations experience the highest level of delays of its California operations.

"Due to the lack of a trauma center in the High Desert, patients suffering from traumatic injury must be transported outside the area, which places additional strains on our staffing in AMR's High Desert operations," said spokesman Jason Sorrick.

To address High Desert issues, including time delays for off-loading ambulances, “AMR is paying to put our own EMTs through paramedic school, flying in personnel from other parts of the state to run calls, offering \$10,000 signing bonuses and increasing compensation,” Sorrick said.

The grand jury recommended the creation of a new San Bernardino County Hospital in the High Desert similar to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center in Colton, which includes a trauma center.

Asked for a response to the grand jury report, Lynch said that “the report is being evaluated and a recommendation on the response will be developed for review and approval by the board of supervisors.”

Jennifer Bayer, vice president for external affairs for the Hospital Association of Southern California, said her organization is “pleased the grand jury is illuminating this issue.”

<http://www.sbsun.com/health/20170707/grand-jury-focuses-on-improving-ambulance-availability-in-the-high-desert>

San Bernardino river bottom fire burns homeless encampment

Doug Saunders, Press Enterprise

Posted: July 7, 2017, 7:13 PM



A homeless encampment was at the center of a fire in a San Bernardino wash Friday.

SAN BERNARDINO >> A brush fire set a homeless encampment ablaze Friday afternoon at Orange Show Road and Tippecanoe in San Bernardino.

The fire sent a large plume of smoke in the sky and burned for about 2 hours in a wash in the 1800 block of Riverview Drive.

By 6 p.m., the blaze, dubbed the Riverview fire, had grown to 10 acres and firefighters requested additional brush engines to battle the blaze, according to a **San Bernardino County firefighters** on scene.

Shortly before 7 p.m., firefighters knocked down the fire and began mopping up.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

<http://www.pe.com/2017/07/07/san-bernardino-river-bottom-burns-homeless-encampment/>

Two Dead: pickup truck lands on top of car

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: July 7, 2017



Two people died following a crash on State Route 58 Just west of Highway 395, Friday July 7, 2017. (Gabriel D Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

Kramer Junction, Calif. (VVNG.com) Two people are dead, and two others were left injured following a crash Friday afternoon.

The incident was reported around 2:10 pm July 7, 2017, on Highway 58 just west of Highway 395.

The collision involved a silver Toyota Camry, a white Toyota Tacoma pickup truck, and a tractor-trailer.

When firefighters from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** arrived on the scene, they located two deceased occupants inside the Camry.

“A Kenworth tractor-trailer combination vehicle was traveling eastbound on SR 58 just west of Kramer Junction. As eastbound traffic began to slow, the Kenworth collided into the rear of a Toyota Camry,” CHP Officer Adam Carmichall stated.

“As a result of this collision, the Toyota Camry was pushed into the rear of a Toyota Tacoma resulting in the overturning of the Tacoma. Two unidentified passengers in the backseat of the Toyota Camry were pronounced deceased at the scene by emergency personnel,” Carmichall said.

The front passenger of the Camry was airlifted to Antelope Valley Hospital, and the driver of the Camry was transported by ground ambulance to Victor Valley Global Medical Center. Their injuries are unknown at this time.

No one from the semi or pickup truck required transportation.

Officials did say Alcohol and/or drug use is not suspected at this time.

Highway 58 remains open in both directions as the California Highway Patrol Barstow Station investigates the crash.

<http://www.vvng.com/two-dead-pickup-truck-lands-top-car/>

Firefighters battle brush fires, structure fire in triple-digit heat

Redlands Fire Dept. via Highland News

Posted: July 8, 2017, 7:45 AM



Crews use a specially designed pet oxygen mask to revive a dog rescued from a structure fire Friday. Redlands Fire Dept.

As temperatures climbed well into the triple digits on Friday afternoon, Redlands Firefighters battled a brush fire where the northeast portion of the City meets unincorporated county, a separate vegetation fire and a residential blaze that left a family displaced.

Redlands Firefighters in unified command with Cal Fire battled the brush fire near Highway 38 and Garnet Street Friday, July 7. By 5 p.m. firefighters, working in steep rough terrain, had halted the blaze's forward motion. By 9 p.m. the fire had burned approximately 74 acres and was 70 percent contained. No structures were threatened and there were no reports of injuries.

Highway 38 is expected to be closed until about 10 p.m. Fire crews will remain on scene throughout the night. The cause of the blaze is under investigation.

At about 6:45 p.m. Redlands Firefighters responded to a structure fire in the 1300 block of Rolling Hills Road. Crews arrived to find the single-story, single-family home well involved in fire. Additional crews from Colton and **San Bernardino County** assisted, along with Redlands Police and an ambulance crew from American Medical Response.

No one was home at the time of the fire, but several pets were inside the home. After evacuating the animals, firefighters and ambulance crews used special pet oxygen masks carried on the Redlands units in an effort to resuscitate the animals. One dog and a cat were revived. Crews were unable to revive a second dog and two other cats.

The fire was knocked down within 10 minutes. One firefighter suffered an injury when he was struck in the eye by a stream of water from a fire hose. No other injuries were reported. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. The Red Cross responded to assist the family who were displaced by the blaze.

Representatives of the Emma Zen Foundation and Furry Face, A Very Cool Dog & Cat Store donated 12 Pet Oxygen Mask Kits valued at \$100 apiece to the Redlands Fire Department in 2014. The masks have been used numerous times since the donation.

Earlier in the day, Redlands crews also responded to a vegetation fire alongside the 210 Freeway near New York Street. That fire burned approximately a quarter acre. While extinguishing the blaze, firefighters observed and responded to another fire in a culvert at Tennessee Street near San Bernardino Avenue. Tennessee Street was closed between Interstate 10 and Lugonia Avenue for approximately one hour.

http://www.highlandnews.net/news/crime_and_fire/firefighters-battle-brush-fires-structure-fire-in-triple-digit-heat/article_12421512-63ec-11e7-a191-af10dd624a4d.html

This is last chance to give feedback about the dissolution of Upland's fire department

Liset Marquez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: July 8, 2017, 2:14 PM



Engineer Paul Kramer, with Upland Fire Station 163 on Benson Avenue, climbs into his engine Wednesday November 27, 2013 for an assignment. FILE PHOTO

UPLAND >> Registered voters and landowners in Upland and San Antonio Heights will have one more chance to register a protest against dissolving the Upland Fire Department.

Annexing the more than 100-year-old department to **San Bernardino County Fire** has proven unpopular with some residents, specifically those in the community of San Antonio Heights. The move would transfer the city's fire station properties, employees, assets, obligations, as well as liabilities, to county fire. San Antonio Heights, which is already served by county fire, would be incorporated into the same service zone as Upland.

Some property and landowners in both Upland and San Antonio Heights are irked because they would have to pay an annual \$150 parcel tax, which may increase 3 percent annually, and have launched a campaign to stop the process.

The Local Agency Formation Commission, which oversees annexations in San Bernardino County, will hold a hearing Tuesday at Upland City Hall.

LAFCO initiated the 30-day comment period May 12 and was set to conclude it June 14 but extended the period until July 11 after an attorney alleged the notification process discriminated against women.

If the agency receives anything above 50 percent protest from the number of registered voters or parcel owners, the process can be terminated, while anything between 25 and 49 percent would trigger an election.

The hearing begins at 6 p.m. Tuesday at City Hall, 460 N. Euclid Ave.

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/government-and-politics/20170708/this-is-last-chance-to-give-feedback-about-the-dissolution-of-uplands-fire-department>

Uphill battle: Fireworks add to apparent rise in blazes throughout region

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: July 9, 2017, 6:22 PM



A CalFire tanker drops retardant around the Silver Fire near Lake Silverwood near Hesperia on July 4. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

Fireworks lit up the skies during the recent Fourth of July holiday to the delight of many — but the night skies weren't all that was ablaze with a series of pyrotechnic-sparked fires this past week.

According to the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, their firefighters responded to approximately 129 vegetation fires all throughout the county from June 30 to July 6. Of those fires, 67 were confirmed to be caused by fireworks, County Fire spokeswoman Tracey Martinez said.

County Fire investigators determined that 19 of the confirmed fireworks-related blazes occurred in the High Desert, Martinez said, while the Apple Valley Fire Protection District reported one blaze on July 2, determined to be caused by a bottle rocket.

In total, there were 20 blazes directly caused by fireworks in the region from June 30 to July 6, fire officials said. The blazes resulted in 6 injuries, with 3 reported in the High Desert.

These numbers reflect what appears to be a rise in fires in the county and High Desert region this year, keeping fire personnel from County Fire, AVFPD, CalFire, and the National Forest Service busy combating blaze after blaze.

Fire officials had previously given warnings on how increased vegetation would lead to more blaze, so the rise in fires this year isn't unexpected. But the fireworks-related blazes also point at the underlying cause of many of these fires — carelessness and human error.

“With the increased grass crop due to our wonderful winter, we are seeing an increase in wildfires,” San Bernardino National Forest Service spokesman John Miller said. “While arson is a real concern, carelessness and motor vehicles cause most of our fires, with lightning coming in behind that.”

Miller’s statements were reinforced by County Fire lead investigator Brian Headley, who said 40 percent of the fires the department investigated last year were determined to be “incendiary caused,” defined as a fire that is deliberately ignited.

However, there is a clear distinction between these types of fires and arson. Headley described that distinction by speaking about a transient setting a warming fire in a vacant building, which local firefighters can respond to quite often.

“If the structure ignites, is that arson? Did they mean to set the house on fire?” Headley asked. “Arson can be hard to prove because you have to prove that intent, that it’s malicious.”

The Daily Press reached out to officials with County Fire, Cal Fire, AVFPD and the National Forest Service to ask about what appeared to be a recent spike in fires caused by arson. While many officials acknowledged there was a spike, arson wasn’t on an upward trend, they said.

Fire officials instead drew attention to the aforementioned factors behind the cause of a blaze — primarily, human carelessness.

Miller drew attention to vehicle fires — an apparent plight in the Cajon Pass, where calls for service regarding car fires are frequent. He spoke about how improper maintenance can lead to overheating while heading up the hill. All it can take is a spark for a vegetation fire to ignite.

“Vehicles dragging chains, metal straps or parts of their load showering the nearby vegetation in sparks can also cause fires,” Miller said.

While stopping fires from occurring can sometimes seem impossible, what fire officials do is strive to remain proactive.

“We hit fireworks pretty heavy this year; we’ve had several operations,” Headley said in late June. Martinez said the department had fire investigators on patrol throughout the county in the week before the holiday.

“The Firework Interdiction Program netted the seizure of 33,520 lbs of dangerous and illegal fireworks over the course of a four-week period,” Martinez said.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170709/uphill-battle-fireworks-add-to-apparent-rise-in-blazes-throughout-region>

Seven Dogs Killed In Twentynine Palms Fire Sunday

Z107.7 News

Posted: July 10, 2017

Seven dogs died in a fire in Twentynine Palms Sunday afternoon. According to County Battalion Chief Dave Mahan, firefighters from Twentynine Palms, Joshua Tree, and the Combat Center were called to the fire about 2 p.m. in the 1500 block of Wilson Way. Mahan said an RV and a small outbuilding, believed to have been an original homestead, were fully involved when firefighters arrived. Firefighters mounted an aggressive exterior attack to keep the fire from spreading to the main house, but were unable to rescue the dogs inside the outbuilding. There were no other injuries and the cause is under investigation.

<http://z1077fm.com/seven-dogs-killed-in-twentynine-palms-fire-sunday/>