



NEWS



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Residents Extinguish Two Brush Fires

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: April 20, 2017

Two vegetation fires erupted hours apart in a vacant lot near Golden Rule Lane and North State Highway 173 in Lake Arrowhead on April 17. Both fires were put out by local citizens.

The first fire was reported at about 1:15 p.m. Sunday. Due to the location, all crews were dispatched, according to Eric Sherwin, public information officer for the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

Medical Engine 91 was on the scene from Lake Arrowhead's Station 91, along with fire engines from Cal Fire, the U.S. Forest Service and Glen Helen Crew 15-3.

Brush covering an area of 10 feet by 10 feet was on fire, but local citizens got it under control and put out by the time fire services arrived.

The second fire occurred at 4:15 p.m. It was in the same vacant lot, and covered 5 feet by 5 feet. Locals again put the fire out while fire agencies rushed to the scene.

Cal Fire will investigate the origins and circumstances of the two fires, Sherwin said.

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)

Team Fire Velo to Race Across America

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: April 20, 2017



Firefighter/paramedic Sean Jackson (left) is participating in the 2017 Ride Across America in June to raise awareness of the disproportionate impact cancer has on the lives of professional firefighters such as a Cory Norton (right). Mike Harris



Firefighter Cory Norton is inspired by his wife and two children as he battles a rare form of cancer. His colleagues will Race Across America to support Norton and others who suffer higher cancer rates than the general population.

To prepare for the 2017 Race Across America, bike-riding firefighters, representing San Bernardino County Professional Firefighters Local 935, tackled an extensive ride on April 18. The event served as a practice run for their participation in a much tougher race that begins June 17.

Team Fire Velo/Norton Strong, a charity-based entry in Race Across America, includes Captain Tim GoForth of Lake Arrowhead; engineers Ricky Arnold of Victorville and Travis Grapes of San Bernardino; and firefighter/paramedic Sean Jack, all San Bernardino County Fire personnel.

With months of logistics preparation and training already behind them, the group staged an intricate dry run for the race by biking to nearly every professionally staffed firehouse in county fire's jurisdiction, which aimed at reaching between 40 to 50 stations in one 24-hour period.

The practice ride also serves as training for the group's support team members. They escorted the riders from Fire Station 96 in Fawnskin, across the mountain through Lake Arrowhead and Crestline, then down through

San Bernardino, west to Fontana, up Cajon Pass through Oak Hills, Phelan, Hesperia and Victorville, then east into the desert communities of Yucca Valley and Joshua Tree.

The practice run also was a fundraiser to garner financial support for its cause. People pledges to donate a specific amount per station that the riders tagged. Donations may still be made to support the team and its cause by texting your name and dollar-per-station amount to (909) 234-9957. Sean Jackson will coordinate receipt of all donations.

Teams participating in Race Across America are motivated to raise awareness of the disproportionate impact that cancer has on the lives of professional firefighters, who suffer such diagnoses at a higher rate than the general population. The team's inspiration is county fire colleague Cory Norton, 30, who has been fighting a battle with a rare form of the disease for the past 16 month.

Serving as partners for the team's effort are Team Fire Velo, a national firefighter cycling club and the Fire Family Foundation, the benevolence agency of Firefighters First Credit Union.

Race Across America will begin June 17 in San Diego and will end just over a week later in Annapolis, Md., a distance of approximately 3,089 miles.

The team has produced a video featuring the team members and their personal motivations for undertaking this challenge, which is sometimes described as the "World's Toughest Bike Race."

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)

City Approves Purchase of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for SBC Fire

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: April 19, 2017



(Photo by Gabriel Espinoza)



(Photo courtesy: San Bernardino County Fire)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) Victorville City Council approved a recommendation to purchase 66 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) packs to be used by **San Bernardino County Fire**.

A breathing apparatus is a device worn by rescue workers, firefighters, and others to provide breathable air in an immediately dangerous to life or health atmosphere.

“County Fire must replace SCBA packs before August 31st, 2017 due to current equipment expiring and the need to upgrade packs to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1981; 2013 Edition,” stated an internal office memo from Assistant Chief Dan Mejia.

In preparation for complete SCBA replacement, County Fire invited six known SCBA manufacturers to participate in an evaluation/trial period.

Each manufacturer gave two SCBA packs for the department to trial and evaluate over a six month period. During this trial period, the packs were assigned to floor personnel and were used in live fire incidents, live fire training burns, and other various drills.

The purpose of this evaluation was to grade the overall performance, functionality, and comfort of each SCBA make and to rank the top three performing packs.

Using the combined results from the field evaluations, vendor proposals, and a 15-year total cost analysis, County Fire selected to purchase MSA Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus packs from Bauer Compressors.

During Tuesday night's meeting, the council approved an additional appropriation from the general fund in the amount of \$381,102.16. The City will purchase a total of 66 SCBA packs at a cost of \$5,149.00 per unit. Additionally, 6 spares will be purchased, 5 chargers per station, 35 lith-ion batteries, 32 spare cylinders, and 6 fill station adaptors.

Victorville City Manager Doug Robertson will submit a purchase order directly to Bauer Compressor Inc., for the 66 SCBA's and accessories in the amount of \$434,243.16. County Fire has an implementation date of July 1, 2017.

<http://www.vvng.com/city-approves-purchase-self-contained-breathing-apparatus-sbc-fire/>

Obernolte 'hopeful' judge will strike down fire fee

Shea Johnson, Daily Press

Posted: April 19, 2017, 1:49 PM

Efforts advanced this week to provide rural homeowners 30 extra days to pay or dispute the controversial annual fire prevention fee, according to the office of Assemblyman Jay Obernolte, the lawmaker driving the legislation.

Assembly Bill 288, extending the payment due date from 30 to 60 days after the postmark, passed through the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, his office said Tuesday.

Obernolte, R-Hesperia, has sought to extend the fee's due date since 2015, authoring legislation in every year since then in an attempt to buy homeowners more time.

"The assessment often comes unexpectedly, giving homeowners little time to plan for the payment," his office said. "This bill's ... extension will help solve this problem."

Similar bills by Obernolte have passed the same threshold, yet ultimately died in committee.

Obernolte is now hoping the third time's a charm to provide relief for a segment of constituents he believes have been burdened by an illegal tax.

The fee was enacted in 2011 to offset approximately \$85 million in budget cuts to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's general fund, a CalFire spokesman previously said.

Residents living in so-called State Responsibility Areas — homeowners in parts of Pinon Hills, Phelan, Wrightwood, Oak Hills and Apple and Lucerne valleys — pay the fee to support state fire services for projects, planning, risk analysis, law enforcement investigations, public education, staffing and general fire prevention and suppression.

Fee payers currently owe the state \$152.33 for each habitable structure they own, but the amount is reduced to \$117.33 for the vast majority of homeowners because they simultaneously live within local fire protection district boundaries.

In October 2012, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association sued the Board of Equalization and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, challenging the validity of the fee as a tax in disguise. As a tax, it would have required a two-thirds vote, though the fee was passed by a mere majority.

The lawsuit was later granted class-action status.

“The fire fee is an illegal tax that should ultimately be repealed,” Obernolte said in a statement Tuesday. “I am encouraged that the pending court case against it will likely be heard this summer and I am hopeful that the judge will strike down the ‘fee.’ In the meantime, this bill will provide much-needed relief to rural and fixed income homeowners who are given little time to pay or dispute the fee.”

AB 288 also includes an amnesty program component that would take affect in 2019 and provide a six-month window where penalties and interest are waived to assist homeowners in paying or disputing the fee, his office said.

The amnesty program is targeted to “help families who have struggled to pay the fire fee on time in the past,” he said.

The legislation will next be referred to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations. Meanwhile, bill notices for fiscal year 2016-17 will be mailed between April 28 and May 8 to San Bernardino County homeowners who must pay the fee.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170419/obernolte-hopeful-judge-will-strike-down-fire-fee>