



NEWS



News Headlines 7/28/2017

- Drug Lab Busted in Twin Peaks
- Monsoon Season Is Here — Thunderstorms Possible Through September
- Deputies investigate fatal crash in Hesperia
- 5 recent Highland fires fueled by abundance of dry brush, Cal Fire says

Drug Lab Busted in Twin Peaks

Mountain News

Posted: July 27, 2017, 9:35 AM



Deputies arrested three suspects after they discovered a THC extraction lab in Twin Peaks. The substance is a concentrated form of marijuana produced through a dangerous, potentially explosive process. Cynthia Bachman

A Twin Peaks man and two other suspects were arrested July 22 when they were discovered allegedly operating a Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) extraction lab and engaging in sales of concentrated cannabis/marijuana.

Personnel from the **San Bernardino County Fire District** and HAZMAT responded to the scene because of the potential for an explosion or fire.

Discovery of the lab occurred by chance. Deputy K. Bush from the San Bernardino Sheriff's Twin Peaks Station went to a residence in the 890 block of Strawberry Peak Lane in Twin Peaks to serve a felony arrest warrant for a fugitive. Upon arrival, he noticed items that were consistent with a THC extraction lab.

THC is the main active ingredient in marijuana that causes the "high" when using the drug.

Extraction of THC is extremely dangerous. It has a high potential for explosion and fire, due to the use of large amounts of flammable chemicals during the process.

Deputy Bush opted not to attempt contact at that time. Instead, he requested assistance from the sheriff's department Gangs/Narcotics Division.

The sheriff's Marijuana Enforcement Team and Clandestine Lab Team served a search warrant at the residence, where investigators found evidence of a THC extraction operation.

Three suspects were inside the residence at the time: Ryan Michael Parker, 30, a resident of Twin Peaks; Chad Robert Freed, 30, of San Bernardino; and Jose Guadalupe Mata, 23, of Rialto. They were arrested at 1:30 p.m.

Investigators reportedly found evidence to suggest that the manufacture of concentrated cannabis, referred to as Wax, Shatter, Dabs or (Butane) Honey Oil, was occurring at the residence. The illegal operation was capable of making several pounds of product.

Concentrated cannabis can sell for much more than marijuana itself. Some marijuana users prefer using the concentrated by-product over the straightforward method of smoking marijuana (bud) because of the higher concentration of THC levels produced. The effects are much stronger than the traditional method of smoking the plant material, according to the sheriff's press release.

The concentrated cannabis products are commonly made by extracting THC from the marijuana plant or plant material. The dangerous THC extraction process was occurring in a confined residential area with several homes on the street. An explosion or fire would have had a devastating effect on the forest and other homes in the area. This chemical process is illegal and is a violation of California's Health and Safety Code.

The investigation is ongoing. It will be sent to the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office for review of criminal charges against the suspects.

Parker was booked at the Central Detention Center in San Bernardino for charges of manufacturing a controlled substance and for an outstanding felony drug warrant from Riverside County. His total bail was set at \$700,000; however, records reflect that Parker was released July 24.

Freed and Mata were also booked for charges of sales of concentrated cannabis/marijuana. They were cited and released July 22 at 9:30 p.m. Sheriff's records show that no court appearance has been scheduled.

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 We-Tip Hotline at 1 (800) 78-CRIME (27463). Callers also may leave information on the We-Tip Hotline at www.wetip.com.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/crime_log/article_95936c16-72e9-11e7-ae5a-4b3736b9d34e.html

Monsoon Season Is Here — Thunderstorms Possible Through September

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: July 27, 2017, 10:14 AM



When the weather is hot and dry, seasonal monsoons can turn mild weather into dry thunderstorms. Precipitation can evaporate before it reaches the ground, leaving dry fuel susceptible to lightning strikes. National Weather Service

In early July, weather forecasters issued warnings that individual thunderstorms were expected to bring lightning and potential brush fires to the mountain communities.

One lightning strike on July 9 ignited a fire three miles north of Lake Arrowhead and Deer Lodge Park. It was held to fewer than five acres, and was brought under control within 90 minutes, thanks to an aggressive attack coordinated by the San Bernardino National Forest, Cal Fire and the **San Bernardino County Fire Departments**.

At that time, the National Weather Service (NWS) had predicted a 20-percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Fortunately, communities west of Running Springs were barely affected during that three-day period. The brunt of the weather was to the east, particularly in the Big Bear area, as was predicted by Alexander Tardy, warning coordination meteorologist for the NWS.

Similar weather reports predicted thunderstorms last week, with estimates of a 30-percent chance on some days. Those failed to materialize. However, the possibility of thunder and lightning still looms ahead of us.

We are now in the season of monsoon moisture and it seasonally continues almost until almost the start of fall, which will be Sept. 22 this year.

“The main time we get moisture from Mexico is in July, August and September,” Tardy contends. “It is caused by a shift in the wind as the deserts near Phoenix and Las Vegas heat up.

During the hot days, the wind shift allows moisture to come from Baja California, and it goes up to Big Bear.” Tardy added that the monsoon moisture does not make it as far as Mammoth to the north.

During the monsoon season, Tardy explained, moisture comes to California from the south, particularly up from Mexico. Monsoon-related weather can put on a dramatic show. Relief from sweltering temperatures might be offset by the threat of lightning and high winds. Rain, if any, might be intense enough to cause flooding.

Heavier rains are more likely in the afternoon hours, Tardy said. “During the hottest time of the day, that’s when the atmosphere is juiced up with a lot of energy.” As long as there are no fires, such storms are “spectacular” and can be seen from far away, according to Tardy.

But low humidity is often the case in the mountain areas, bringing the threat of dry thunderstorms.

The phrase “dry thunderstorm” is used frequently by wildland firefighters. Generally, it describes thunderstorms that produce little or no rain that reaches the ground. The lack of precipitation makes it more likely that cloud-to-ground lightning might ignite a fire if it hits dry vegetation.

The lack of humidity — dry atmosphere — causes rain below the cloud base to evaporate before it reaches the ground. For rain to be effective in preventing fires, it needs to reach the ground after penetrating the highest vegetation layer — the aerial canopy. Sufficient precipitation on the ground is called a “wetting rain.”

The quantity of rain also must be greater after long hot and dry periods. If it is insufficient, the rain will not moisten the dry vegetation — the fuel bed — beneath the forest canopy.

In some instances, the quantity of rain might be sufficient, known as a “large wetting rain.” But at the same time, strong winds may cause the storm to pass through an area too quickly, resulting in a short duration at various locations where moisture still cannot penetrate the aerial canopy or the fuel bed.

Another consideration is the atmospheric condition before and after the storm cell passes through an area. Combine a dry atmosphere, breezes and a dry fuel bed before the storm, and conditions are ripe for fires caused by lightning.

Other threats accompany severe thunderstorms, including hail and high winds, as were present in the Big Bear and Onyx Peak areas on July 9. A severe thunderstorm is one that can produce hail one inch or larger in size. Without hail, a severe thunderstorm is deemed to be one that is accompanied by gusts of wind exceeding 58 mph.

Either the hail and/or the wind can damage buildings, windows, roofs, plants, trees, vehicles and other property. Weather forecasters issue warnings and encourage people to pay attention because it is important to know when severe storms are possible.

Some people might wonder why the dramatic weather does not show up at their homes. Tardy says that this is because the storms are sensitive and sporadic. “When the hot air is rushing up the mountain slope, you can see big clouds build up over the mountains. If we don’t get any fires, it can be a fun time of year,” Tardy concluded.

http://www.mountain-news.com/mountain_living/features/article_0552e87e-72ef-11e7-ac52-aff365f2e308.html

Deputies investigate fatal crash in Hesperia

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: July 27, 2017



One person died following a crash on Third Avenue in Hesperia. (Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

Hesperia, Calif. (VVNG.com) San Bernardino County Sheriff's officials are investigating a deadly crash Thursday night.

The accident was reported at approximately 8:00 p.m. on Third Avenue just north of Sultana Street, in front of the Mesa Grande Elementary School.

When firefighters from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** and AMR arrived on scene and they pronounced the driver of an older Honda deceased.

Authorities were searching the area for a white sedan, possibly a Toyota Corolla, that may have been involved in the crash.

Third Avenue is closed between Sultana Street and Olive Street while the Major Accident Investigation determine the cause of the crash.

<http://www.vvng.com/deputies-investigate-fatal-crash-hesperia/>

5 recent Highland fires fueled by abundance of dry brush, Cal Fire says

Beatriz E. Valenzuela, Press Enterprise

Posted: July 28, 2017, 6:00 AM



Mandatory evacuations were ordered Tuesday afternoon for an area north of Highland Avenue and west of Church Street because of the Mart fire, according to the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**. A portion of Highway 330, between Highland Avenue and Live Oak near Running Springs, was also closed because of the brush fire, which the U.S. Forest Service reported as 300 acres as of 4:30 p.m. (Courtesy photo/Jason Winston)

HIGHLAND >> Despite the cluster of fires in Highland in recent weeks, fire officials say it's too early to tell if arson was a factor in any of them.

"Proving arson is really challenging," said Capt. Liz Brown with Cal Fire of the five recent fires that have scorched the hillsides above Highland since June 27th's Mart fire. "There are so many causes to a fire that we first have to close the door to before we can make that determination and unless we have an eyewitness, it's hard to say it's definitely arson."

As investigators continue to probe the cause of the wildfires, Brown says the real issue this season are the fuels present in the county.

"The challenge is, right now, the grass crop that is truly carrying these fires. The whole county is covered in grass," she explained. "Let's say a car that pulls over where there was only rocks but now there's this abundance of grasses. When that grass touches the catalytic converter it can quickly go up."

Four of the five fires in the Highland area were sparked along Highway 330, a heavily traveled roadway that connects the mountain communities with the San Bernardino basin. Highway 18, which connects the Big Bear community and Lucerne Valley with the rest of the Inland Empire and the 15 Freeway, a major artery for the Inland Empire, also see similar issues with spot fires.

"With so many people driving up and down those thoroughfares, statistically something will happen with a vehicle that can start the fire," she said.

Even the way the roadways are constructed either help or hinder fire growth.

Wildfires have less of a chance to take hold along the 10 Freeway because, according to Brown, it's a larger highway — which creates a barrier for most blazes.

However, most are unaware of just how many wildfire reports Cal Fire fields in the county.

Firefighters are called out to the Cajon Pass for spot fires along the 15 Freeway daily, she said, but most people don't hear about them because most are contained before they get too large. And that's the way Cal Fire plans it.

"At Cal Fire our mission is to stop 95 percent of fires at 10 acres or less and we've been able to meet those goals," she said. "The ones that go beyond 10 acres are the 5 percent."

They're able to maintain those aggressive numbers because of their response, which includes a helicopter, air tanker, bulldozer and two handcrews, she said.

Brown noted that the increased flash fuel has meant larger wildfires earlier in the fire season.

Usually, larger fires in the region are fueled by Santa Ana winds — which normally take place around September and lasts until about November.

Fire is, and always has been, a natural part of the California landscape and residents need to be proactive to protect their homes.

All local fire authorities promote the wildfire action plan "Ready, Set, Go!". The program educates residents on how to protect themselves before, during and after a wildfire.

"I think the most important thing if someone sees something, say something," Brown said.

<http://www.pe.com/2017/07/28/five-recent-highland-fires-fueled-by-abundance-of-dry-brush-cal-fire-says/>