



NEWS



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TWO INJURED STATE ROUTE 247 HEAD-ON CRASH FRIDAY

Staff Writer, Z107.7 News

Posted: February 11, 2019

Two men were injured in a head-on crash on Old Woman Springs Road in Johnson Valley Friday evening.

Just before 7 p.m., a Jeep Wrangler and a semi-truck hauling a trailer crashed near Pony Road.

County Fire Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle said that the male driver of the Jeep had to be extricated by firefighters; he was in critical condition and was taken by Morongo Basin Ambulance to St. Mary's Hospital in Apple Valley.

The driver of the big rig suffered moderate injuries and was taken to Desert Hospital in Palm Springs.

The California Highway Patrol is investigating.

<http://z1077fm.com/two-injured-state-route-247-head-on-crash-friday/>

Vehicle Crashes into Spring Valley Lake Home Causing Fire

Staff Writer, 24/7 Headline News

Posted: February 11, 2019



SPRING VALLEY LAKE, Calif. – Residents of a Spring Valley home were displaced Sunday morning when a vehicle crashed into their home, sparking an inferno.

The fire was reported just after 10:00 a.m. when the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department received multiple reports that a vehicle crashed into a home causing the home to become fully involved with fire. As the first responding firefighters approached the area, a large column of smoke could be seen. The first engine arrived at the home in the 13000 of block Riverview Drive, Spring Valley Lake within around 5 minutes to a well-involved single story home. The surrounding homes were reportedly threatened by the fire.

The winds hampered the operation and caused concern for the fire spreading to other structures. Additional resources responded to the area initiating an attack. Multiple vehicles were found to be involved. Firefighters searched for potential victims in the vehicle and inside the home. “Crews deployed lines to protect the nearby structures and limit any spread of fire,” said Captain Jeremy Kern in a written statement. “High winds in the area complicated suppression efforts and presented additional challenges with exposures and fire spread. After the initial defensive attack firefighters were able to transition to an offensive operation and enter portions of the involved structure with the priority to search for any occupants. Firefighters entered the home and initiated an offensive fire attack.”

The primary and secondary search was conducted and all clear for the involved building and exposures. The fire was knocked down within 30 minutes. One firefighter suffered minor injuries and was transported to the

hospital. No civilians were injured as a result of the fire. A total of 35 personnel from San Bernardino County Fire were assigned to the incident. Apple Valley Fire District also assisted with one truck.

The cause of the fire was the traffic collision into the home. Damages estimates are not known at this time, but fire officials said that the damage is significant. Firefighters were able to successfully prevent the fire spreading to other nearby homes. “The fire remains under investigation by the county office of the fire marshal and California Highway Patrol,” Kern said. “Additional information as to cause, and traffic collision will be released by CHP. Due to the resources committed at the fire additional county fire equipment was brought in from the valley division to maintain service levels and station coverage.”

San Bernardino County Fire reminds residents to provide two means of escape from every room and make sure everyone knows where to meet after leaving the home. Develop and practice a fire escape plan for your household. Remember, never return to a burning building for any reason. Your belongings can be replaced – you can’t! Learn more at www.sbcfire.org.

<https://247headline.com/vehicle-crashes-into-spring-valley-lake-home-causing-fire/>

Vehicle Sets Home on Fire in Victor Valley-Area Crash; Firefighter Suffers Minor Injuries

Kristina Bravo, KTLA 5 News
Posted: February 10, 2019, 1:59 pm

A driver in the Victor Valley area crashed into several vehicles and a home on Sunday morning, setting them ablaze and leaving one firefighter with minor injuries.

San Bernardino County Fire said around 10 a.m., it received multiple reports of a vehicle that had set a residence on fire in the 13000 block of Riverview Drive in Spring Valley Lake.

The agency said before crews even got to the scene, they spotted a big column of smoke visible throughout the desert.

Firefighters arrived to a one-story structure burning amid dangerous wind conditions, which threatened nearby homes. They also discovered a number of other vehicles involved.

The Fire Department said no other buildings were destroyed in the incident. It did not specify how many cars were burned.

Crews extinguished the fire in about half an hour, according to the Fire Department. A total of 35 county fire personnel, including four chief officers, responded to the blaze. Seven engines were deployed.

The vehicle that started the incident only had one occupant, the Fire Department said. The agency said no civilian was hurt in the fire, but one firefighter was hospitalized for minor injuries.

The cause of the crash remained under investigation. The Fire Department has not released an estimate of the damages. Authorities provided no further details.

<https://ktla.com/2019/02/10/vehicle-sets-home-on-fire-in-victor-valley-area-crash-firefighter-suffers-minor-injuries/>

Spring Valley Lake House catches fire after car crashes into it; firefighter injured

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: February 10, 2019



(Photo by Peter Lawson (left)/Hugo Valdez, Victor Valley News (right))

SPRING VALLEY LAKE, Victorville Calif. (VVNG.com) — A car crashed into a house and both became fully involved in flames Sunday morning.

Just after 10 am, witnesses reported a vehicle possibly struck a gas line and caused a house to catch fire in the 13300 block of Riverview Drive. The flames described as a fireball sent a large column of smoke billowing into the windy skies.

Captain, Public Information Officer Jeremy Kern said Medic engine 22 arrived in 5 minutes and reported a well involved single story structure with the surrounding homes immediately threatened. “Due to the wind conditions, fire involvement and potential for spread a second alarm was requested,” stated Kern.

Crews deployed lines to protect the nearby structures and limit any spread of fire. High winds in the area complicated suppression efforts and presented additional challenges with exposures and fire spread.

Fire crews had the fire knocked down in 30 minutes. One firefighter was transported by AMR ambulance for minor injuries.

Scott Cotton was inside the home when the car crashed into the garage. He described hearing the sound of metal crunching, glass breaking, and a strange zapping type sound.

“I looked up and saw the fire and knew I had to get out. After I ran outside I saw the driver of the car was still inside the car, so I went over to try and help him get out,” stated Scott.

Scott said he was unable to open the door and seconds later there was a small explosion that sent him down to the ground. “When I got back up he had somehow managed to get himself out.”

Witnesses said the driver managed to crawl through a window and had a bloody face along with burns to his arms. He was transported by ambulance to a nearby hospital for treatment.

The girlfriend of the 28-year-old male driver arrived at the scene of the crash and said they live together, less than a mile away in Spring Valley Lake.

She said her boyfriend borrowed her BMW to drive to the store just up the street and when he took longer than expected she knew something was wrong.

“I’m not really sure what happened. All he’s told me is he just blacked out and don’t remember anything after that,” she said.

A total of seven engines, two truck companies, four chief officers, one heavy rescue and one investigator totaling 35 personnel from **County Fire** were assigned to the incident. Apple Valley Fire District assisted with one truck.

The official cause of the crash is under investigation by the California Highway Patrol.

A Gofundme to help the family who lost their home and cars in the fire is accepting donations via the following link: Family loses everything in fire

<https://www.vvng.com/spring-valley-lake-house-catches-fire-after-car-crashes-into-it-firefighter-injured/>

Car Crash Sparks Fire in Home Near Victorville

Mike Bebernes, NBC 4 News

Posted: February 10, 2019, 1:31 pm

A car crashed into a home in Spring Valley Lake Sunday morning, sparking a structure fire that threatened to spread to other houses amid strong winds, according to the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

Firefighters reached the scene of the crash on the 13000 block of Riverview Drive shortly after 10 a.m. and found multiple vehicles and a house on fire as a result of what appears to be a single car driving off the road into the structure.

Firefighters were initially forced into a defensive position to prevent the blaze from spreading. Seven engines and a total of 35 fire personnel were needed to knock down the fire over the course of 30 minutes, the department said.

No injuries to civilians were reported. One firefighter sustained minor injuries. The cause of the crash is under investigation. The identity of the driver was not made available.

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Car-Crash-Sparks-Fire-in-Home-Near-Victorville-505640561.html>

2 people injured in Sunday night crash on Amargosa Road

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: February 10, 2019



VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) — Two people were injured in a single vehicle rollover crash Sunday night.

It happened today at about 6:00 pm, in front of the Red Lobster Restaurant on Amargosa Road in Victorville.

For reasons still unknown, a 2004 Volkswagen Beetle lost control, crashed through the chain linked fence and overturned into a drainage ditch along the southbound I-15 freeway.

San Bernardino County Firefighters responded and located a VW Beetle upside down in the ditch with two occupants requiring minor extrication.

Two people were transported by ground ambulances, one of them to a local hospital and the other to a trauma center down the hill.

Victorville deputies shutdown Amargosa Road for a short time as they investigated the crash and cleared the roadway.

At this time, it's unknown if the rain was a contributing factor in the crash.

<https://www.vvng.com/2-people-injured-in-sunday-night-crash-on-amargosa-road/>

Two people are injured in traffic collision in Fontana on Feb. 9

Mike Meyers, Fontana Herald News

Posted: February 10, 2019



Two people were injured in a two-vehicle collision in Fontana on Feb. 9. (Contributed photo by Mike Myers)

Two people were injured when their vehicle was struck by a flatbed tow truck in Fontana on Feb. 9.

At about 8:51 p.m., the Fontana Police Department and the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department responded to the incident in the intersection of Merrill Avenue and Catawba Avenue.

Authorities said that when they arrived on scene, firefighters had to use the "jaws of life" to free at least one person in a blue Toyota Corolla. A second person was injured and removed from the Corolla by firefighters.

According to a Fontana P.D. officer, the victims were unable to give a statement regarding the accident. Both of the victims were transported to a hospital with unknown injuries.

The Fontana P.D. is handling the investigation of the collision.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/two-people-are-injured-in-traffic-collision-in-fontana-on/article_cac94aa8-2d74-11e9-aae6-73fc15861df8.html

Fire at Redlands asphalt company causes \$15,000 damage

Brian Rokos, Press Enterprise

Posted: February 9, 2019, 3:10 pm

A fire believed to have been caused by electrical or mechanical failure caused \$15,000 damage to an asphalt contracting business in Redlands early Saturday, Feb. 9.

The fire was reported about 1:30 a.m. at Competitive Asphalt Coatings at 8203 Alabama St., a Redlands Fire Department news release said.

Eighteen firefighters, including three from **San Bernardino County**, needed 20 minutes to put out the flames, which were contained to a shop area. The building and its contents, including a tractor and small tools, were damaged.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

<https://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/2019/02/09/fire-at-redlands-asphalt-company-causes-15000-damage/>

TWO INJURED IN HEAD-ON CRASH IN JOHNSON VALLEY FRIDAY EVENING

Staff Writer, Z107.7 News

Posted: February 8, 2019

Two men were injured in a head-on crash on Old Woman Springs Road in Johnson Valley Friday evening.

Just before 7 p.m., a Jeep Wrangler and a semi-truck hauling a trailer crashed near Pony Road.

County Fire Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle said that the male driver of the Jeep had to be extricated by firefighters; he was in critical condition and was taken by Morongo Basin Ambulance to St. Mary's Hospital in Apple Valley.

The driver of the big rig suffered moderate injuries and was taken to Desert Hospital in Palm Springs.

The California Highway Patrol is investigating.

<http://z1077fm.com/two-injured-in-head-on-crash-in-johnson-valley-friday-evening/>

A SUSPICIOUS FIRE IN TWENTYNINE PALMS

Staff Writer, Z107.7 News

Posted: February 8, 2019

Law enforcement officials are investigating a suspicious car fire in Twentynine Palms Wednesday night.

Just before 6:30 p.m., a passer-by called to report a fire in the 4400 block of Adobe Road.

When firefighters arrived, they found a station wagon fully engulfed in flames.

County Fire Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle said the car appeared to have been inoperable and abandoned for quite some time.

Sheriff's deputies determined that the home where the vehicle was burning had been burglarized and the suspects stole a television, computer, three bicycles, and then set the car on fire and attempted to set the house on fire as well.

Anyone with information should call the Sheriff's Department at 760-366-4175.

<http://z1077fm.com/a-suspicious-fire-in-twenty-nine-palms/>

San Bernardino County property owners, officials await judge's decision in fire zone lawsuit

Sandra Emerson, Redlands Daily Facts

Posted: February 8, 2019, 4:28 pm

San Bernardino County residents opposed to paying more in property taxes for fire services are poised for a disappointing ruling from a superior court judge.

But even if Judge Donald Alvarez approves a request from the county and the fire district to dismiss a lawsuit filed by The Red Brennan Group and the Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association asking to stop the imposition of the tax — something Alvarez has told lawyers is likely — opponents say they won't give up.

"Ultimately, he hasn't issued a decision yet," said Sean Wade, an attorney representing The Red Brennan Group. "He said he's going to issue a writ of opinion, but that's the way he was leaning (at that time)."

On Oct. 16, the Board of Supervisors approved the expansion of a fire protection zone, known as FP-5, to cover all unincorporated county areas, and some cities, as a way to address a \$29 million budget shortfall.

Revenue from property taxes and contracts and existing fire protection service zones have not been enough to cover the district's rising costs, and the county's fire agency increasingly has had to rely on county general funds and its own reserves to stay afloat.

The expansion also came with a \$157 annual parcel tax, which could go up by 3 percent each year. Some property owners are already paying a tax, although amounts vary, while others are not.

The tax is expected to generate an additional \$26.9 million for the fire district starting in November.

The funds will address the deficit, and allow county fire to pay for capital improvements and boost its reserves.

Some property owners, however, have questioned the constitutionality of the tax, saying the process of approving the tax has violated state law.

The county asked property owners to submit written protests to the idea. If 25 percent of property owners who control at least 25 percent of the assessed land value in the area protested, the matter would have gone to an election. To defeat it outright, more than 50 percent would have needed write in their opposition.

While the judge has yet to issue a formal decision, Tom Murphy, a spokesman for The Red Brennan Group, said they plan to appeal. They may even file a second lawsuit once the tax goes into effect in November, he added.

“We think that the constitution is clear and that there should be a two thirds vote to impose this tax,” Murphy said. “We believe in that. We’re going to push to get that point across.”

Four months after its approval, Murphy and Wade, said they continue to hear from residents interested in the lawsuit.

“(The amount of money, \$157,) doesn’t seem like much if you break it up monthly, but (for) folks on fixed incomes, that counts,” Murphy said. “And they’re upset about it partially because they didn’t have a chance to vote on it.”

San Antonio Heights residents are still waiting for a ruling from Judge David Cohn on a similar lawsuit they filed in August 2017 against the county, fire district and Local Agency Formation Commission over their inclusion in Upland’s annexation into the fire protection zone.

After the city applied for annexation as a financial move, the LAFCO board decided to include the Heights, an unincorporated community to the north already served by county fire.

Oral arguments in that case were heard Dec. 18.

The court is making its decision based on documentary evidence that was filed before the hearing, said county spokesman David Wert.

Cory Briggs, an attorney for the San Antonio Heights Association, the homeowner group that filed the lawsuit, confirmed via email Friday, Feb. 8 that Cohn had given a tentative ruling in favor of the county.

However, he said The Red Brennan Group case has no impact on the Heights case, and there has not been a final ruling.

<https://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/2019/02/08/san-bernardino-county-property-owners-officials-await-judges-decision-in-fire-zone-lawsuit/>

Judge leans toward dismissing fire tax lawsuit

Martin Estacio, Daily Press

Posted: February 8, 2019

SAN BERNARDINO — A Superior Court judge has indicated he will likely dismiss a lawsuit filed against the County protesting a parcel tax passed in October to shore up fire department finances.

At a Tuesday hearing, Judge Donald Alvarez heard arguments from lawyers representing the County and lawyers for the Red Brennan Group, one of the plaintiffs suing to halt implementation of the tax.

RBG attorney Sean Wade said Alvarez signaled he was leaning toward agreeing with the County’s assertion that the plaintiffs have no legal claim to file the lawsuit.

Alvarez is expected to issue a written opinion in the next few weeks.

RBG's contention is that the County violated California's constitution when the Board of Supervisors approved an expansion of Fire Protection Zone 5, or FP-5.

The expansion added 19,073 square miles of unincorporated County land to the fire zone and imposed an annual levy of \$157.26 on all parcels on that land, with a possible maximum increase of 3 percent per year.

County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig told the Board in June the revenue would help reduce a nearly \$30 million deficit in the department's budget.

The County supervisors took up the issue after fewer than 25 percent of the affected landowners responded to public notices that were mailed to them. The protest process called for the issue to be decided by public vote if more than 25 percent of the landowners responded to the notices.

RBG asserts the expansion should have been approved by a two-thirds vote in the first place, citing a constitutional article stating "no local government may impose, extend, or increase any special tax" without one.

According to a statement from Red Brennan Group, the County's legal representative, Pamela Graham, contended the lawsuit should be dismissed for several reasons. One of the reasons is a clause in the constitution favoring a "pay first, litigate later" rule which prohibits courts from preventing collection of a tax.

Graham also cited a 2012 case in which a small unincorporated area, Sunset Beach, was annexed by the city of Huntington Beach.

In that ruling, the California 4th District Court of Appeal ruled against Sunset Beach residents who sued the city over two taxes imposed on them without the opportunity to vote.

The Court found that property owners who are annexed are responsible for paying taxes existing in the original area.

Wade argued the facts in that case were different from the fire tax case. In Sunset Beach, an area covering 32 square miles completed an "island annexation" of an area less than a quarter square mile, he said.

In the FP-5 expansion, a zone covering 5.17 square miles around Helendale "proposed swallowing" over 19,000 square miles, according to the statement.

He argued the "difference in magnitude alone should provide sufficient reason to allow the lawsuit to continue."

At the hearing, Wade said the judge noted that a health and safety statute allowing annexation to happen through district expansion does not limit the size of the expansion.

"We hope after reviewing the written briefs, that Judge Alvarez alters his initial inclination," said Tom Murphy, RBG spokesperson, in a statement. "However, we will prepare to appeal a ruling that is not in our favor."

He said “all options are on the table,” including a follow-up lawsuit when the tax is first collected and an initiative to repeal it on the 2020 ballot.

<http://victorvilledailynews.com/>