



# NEWS



## News Headlines 9/20/2018

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## Repatriation drill offers state, county and local agencies chance to prepare for full-scale disaster

Paola Baker, Victorville Daily Press

Posted September 19, 2018 at 6:34 PM



Role players play the part of repatriated refugees during a repatriation training at the Ontario Convention center on Tuesday September 18, 2018. The training was based on a scenario of thousands of U.S. citizens of the U.S. returning the country after a crisis in the foreign country in which they were living. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

ONTARIO — The mood was deceptively calm at the Ontario Convention Center as personnel set up various zones offering food, water and other social services.

Then, the first bus arrived — with hundreds of people spilling out, some stepping onto U.S. soil for the first time in years — and there was a sense of controlled chaos as federal, state, and local officials worked to mitigate the situation.

“Ontario could very well be the entry point for hundreds, maybe even thousands of Americans, if a crisis situation were to ever happen,” **San Bernardino County Fire Department** Emergency Services Manager Michael Antonucci said.

County Fire was one of several agencies taking part in the 2018 Emergency Repatriation Drill, held at the Convention Center on Tuesday. The full-scale exercise imagines a scenario where hundreds of U.S. citizens living or traveling abroad are forced to come back to the country quickly due to an emergency.

Tuesday’s mock exercise brought to life a fictional scenario where hundreds of U.S. citizens were forced to flee the Philippines amid quickly growing instability due to terrorist attacks. As one of eight port of entries in the U.S., Ontario was a perfect location to host the drill, which featured over 200 actors playing the part of an American citizen returning from abroad.

“Some of these citizens have been out of the country stationed at a military base overseas for decades,” Antonucci said. “We want to make sure we’re prepared.”

Under federal law, U.S. citizens are eligible to receive “emergency repatriation assistance” through the U.S. Repatriation Program, which includes cash aid, travel expenses, lodging and anything else a returning citizen needs to settle back at home.

The Ontario Convention Center was transformed into the fictional “hub” where frantic citizens could find help on their return home. As officials pointed out, navigating the web of federal, state and local entities can be difficult in even the most normal situations, so ensuring a smooth process was key.

“The main goal is for the 30-odd agencies involved here to work together to process these people, who are getting a 24-hour notice to repatriate, and meeting their needs,” Antonucci said.

The event was sponsored by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the county.

The drill featured about 35 exercise staff from a constellation of federal and local agencies, including representatives from the Department of Defense (DOD), military members from all branches, staff from local trauma centers and local police and fire.

“We’ve got staff members from all over,” Antonucci said. “We want to make sure we can coordinate all resources and offer these citizens everything they need.”

Citizens must be identified by the U.S. Department of State (DOS) as “having returned or been brought from a foreign country to the U.S. because of destitution, illness, war, threat of war or similar crisis” in order to be eligible for the aid.

The exercise also featured staff setting up zones to provide food and medical care to expatriates as they arrived. The goal is to “get them taken care of and get them back home right away,” Antonucci said, but the program will provide shelters for up to 30 days if needed.

Officials said an “after-action report” will be published after the drill that summarizes each participating agencies’ performance and identifies areas that may need improvement, much the same as the last time the drill was held in 2012, Antonucci said.

“The world has changed, so we’ve tweaked it since then,” Antonucci said. “And it keeps changing, so we will revisit the plan based upon what happens now.”

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20180919/repatriation-drill-offers-state-county-and-local-agencies-chance-to-prepare-for-full-scale-disaster>

## Residents learn more about protesting

Kurt Schauppner, The Desert Trail

Posted: Wednesday, September 19, 2018 7:50 am



WONDER VALLEY — Residents here received written instructions for protesting a county plan that could raise the amount their annual fire protection assessments from \$35 to \$157.26.

Teresa Sitz, who represents Wonder Valley on the Basin Wide Municipal Advisory Council, provided protest instructions to residents at a community meeting here Saturday, Sept. 15.

Residents have until Oct. 16 to file protests with the county over a proposal to create a uniform fire assessment fee across county communities served by the county fire service.

When the protest period is complete, the county board of directors will determine the value of written protests filed and not withdrawn.

If at least 25 percent of landowners in the affected territory, owning at least 25 percent of the land in the territory, submit valid protests, the proposed will be submitted to voters for their approval.

If protests are received from more than 50 percent of landowners who own at least 50 percent of the assessed value of land within the territory affected, the proposal will be withdrawn.

Sitz organized regular community meetings in the Wonder Valley community center, where she is also the coordinator.

She brought 20 copies of instructions and protest forms for residents who wanted to protest the proposed expansion of Fire Protection Zone 5.

“They will send you the letter but not the form,” she said. “If you want to protest and you need a form I will give one to you.”

Protest forms may be mailed to Service Zone FP-5 Expansion Protest, 157 W 5th Street, Second Flood, San Bernardino, California, 92415-0451 or brought in person to **San Bernardino County Fire Protection District**, 157 W 5th Street, Second Flood, San Bernardino, California, 92415-0451.

Written protests will be accepted at the hearing at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 16, in the Covington Chamber of the San Bernardino County Government Center at 385 North Arrowhead Avenue in San Bernardino.

Residents also heard from representative of Morongo Basin Ambulance and Mercy Air about services provided to the area. After the meeting they got the chance to look through a Mercy Air helicopter which had been landed behind the community center.

[http://www.hidesertstar.com/the\\_desert\\_trail/news/article\\_4a180b30-bc1b-11e8-b67a-cb74aa62e586.html](http://www.hidesertstar.com/the_desert_trail/news/article_4a180b30-bc1b-11e8-b67a-cb74aa62e586.html)

## **Gas leak shuts down Seventh Avenue in Old Town Victorville**

**Staff Writer, Victorville Daily Press**

Posted September 19, 2018 at 3:48 PM

VICTORVILLE — A portion of Seventh Avenue was briefly shut down after a gas line was accidentally ruptured Wednesday afternoon.

**San Bernardino County Fire Department** crews responded at approximately 1:49 p.m. Wednesday when a gas line break shut down the roadway between Silica Drive and Burwood Avenue.

“The road is closed while Southwest Gas handles the leak,” County Fire spokesman Eric Sherwin said at 2:15 p.m.

A Southwest Gas crew arrived on scene minutes later and began repairs. The gas leak was contained just after 2:30 p.m., according to initial reports.

Seventh Street was shut down for approximately two hours as crews handled the situation. No injuries were reported.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20180919/gas-leak-shuts-down-seventh-avenue-in-old-town-victorville>

## Suspect in custody after reports of shots fired on National Trails Highway

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News Group

Posted September 20, 2018



(Photo by David Joshua Phillips)

ORO GRANDE, Calif. (VVNG.com) — A swarm of officers responded to the the community of Oro Grande after receiving reports of shots fired early Thursday morning, officials said

At about 7:32 am, deputies were dispatched to the 20400 block of National Trails Highway or more commonly known as Route 66.

According to initial witness reports, a male armed with a large gun was seen standing near the roadway, north of the cement factory.

Details into the incident at scarce, however, Sheriff's Spokeswoman Jodi Miller told Victor Valley News, the reporting party stated the suspect was in the roadway firing a weapon in the area of 20046 National Trails Highway.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's patrol vehicles and California Highway Patrol Officers were seen responding to the incident.

Miller confirmed via email the suspect was taken into custody and there were no victims.

**San Bernardino County Fire** along with paramedics was requested to the scene for a dog bite. Per scanner traffic reports, the suspect was bitten by a CHP K9.

Authorities shutdown National Trails Highway in both directions during the investigation and the roadway was reopened at about 9:20 a.m.

This is a developing story and additional information will be updated as it becomes available.

<https://www.vvng.com/suspect-in-custody-after-reports-of-shots-fired-on-national-trails-highway/>

## Woman killed after fiery crash on Palmdale Road in Victorville

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News Group

Posted September 20, 2018



(Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) — A woman was killed in a fiery crash that shut down a stretch of Palmdale Road Wednesday night in Victorville.

At about 11:45 pm, **San Bernardino County Firefighters** responded to the intersection of El Evado and Palmdale Roads and located a 2003 Lexus sedan fully engulfed in flames.

According to witness Richard Suarez, the woman was traveling eastbound on Palmdale Road and a motorcyclist heading in the same direction was stopped at a red light at El Evado Road. “She attempted to avoid crashing into him so she swerved to the right and slammed into the traffic signal pole causing the vehicle to burst into flames,” stated Suarez.

Many bystanders, including an employee from the Circle K gas station, rushed over to the wreck and helped pull the woman from the burning vehicle. Witnesses told Victor Valley News several of the fire-extinguishers at the gas station were used to help try and extinguish the flames.

“I grabbed as many fire extinguishers as I could to put the fire out, we pulled her out, I was holding her hand talking to her to make sure she stayed with us. I performed a little CPR before they took over I’m so sorry I tried everything to help her,” stated the Circle K employee, Eva Kjellesvig in a Victor Valley News comment.

First responders arrived at the scene and immediately began performing life-saving measures on the woman who was unresponsive.

Due to the woman’s injuries, firefighters requested County helicopter H325 to airlift the woman to an out of area trauma center. After approximately 10-minutes of CPR, the woman was transported via an American Medical Response (AMR) ambulance and taken to Victor Valley Global Medical Center.

The request for the helicopter was canceled and the woman was rushed into the ER room of the hospital.

According to the victim’s family, the woman succumbed to her injuries while at the hospital.

No other vehicles were involved in the collision and no other injuries were reported.

Eastbound lanes on Palmdale Road will remain closed for several hours as officials process the scene and clear the roadway.

The official cause of the crash remains under investigation by the Victorville Police Department.



Anyone with information or anyone who may have witnessed the collision is asked to contact Deputy A. Hylin at the Victorville Police Station (760) 241-2911.

<https://www.vvng.com/woman-killed-after-fiery-crash-on-palmdale-road-in-victorville-wednesday-night/>