



NEWS



News Headlines 8/17/2018

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Storms briefly pummel High Desert, flood local roadways

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: August 16, 2018



A fast-moving storm flooded several roadways near Sheep Creek and Highway 18. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

High Desert residents got a brief reprieve from the sizzling heat when a summer storm blew into town, briefly causing flooding along some local roadways Thursday afternoon.

The National Weather Service issued a flash flood warning for the region at around 1:45 p.m. after radar showed “thunderstorms producing heavy rain across the warned area.”

“Up to 2 inches of rain have already fallen,” the NWS said. “Flash flooding is expected to begin shortly, if it is not already occurring.”

NWS spokeswoman Samantha Connolly said their agency began receiving reports of flash flooding in the area at about 3:30 p.m.

“The Pinon Hills area got about a quarter-inch of rain,” Connolly told the Daily Press Thursday evening.

Roadway flooding was reported along portions of Highway 18 in Phelan as the storm intensified. While it didn’t last long, the rainfall was enough to wash out portions of the road there. Flooding was also reported on Highway 247 in Lucerne Valley and Interstate 15 near Bell Mountain.

Emergency personnel were dispatched to a reported rescue on Highway 18 and Johnson Road at about 3:45 p.m. when a minivan got stuck in the rushing waters.

Phelan resident Kathryn Lirica Watts was behind the wheel. She told the Daily Press she had just picked up her 8-year-old daughter from school when she first noticed the storm brewing.

“While I was driving home it started to rain, right after the railroad tracks on Johnson Road,” Watts said. “Then I noticed there was debris and mud everywhere. The road was completely full of water and mud — you couldn’t even see the yellow line on the road.”

Watts said the minivan hit a pothole near the intersection at Highway 18, causing the van to get stuck as rainfall continued to pummel the roadway.

“It was very scary, and my daughter was in the backseat crying while I was on the phone with AAA,” Watts said.

Luckily for Watts, help soon came calling.

Watts said a California Highway Patrol officer was the first to arrive, followed shortly by San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department deputies and a **San Bernardino County Fire** Department truck.

“The fire department carried my daughter out to safety. I had to walk, but they helped me along the way,” said Watts, who is partially disabled and wears a knee brace. “They were really nice about helping me through the water.”

A Sheriff’s deputy had Watts and her daughter stay dry by letting them sit in his patrol vehicle before a tow truck arrived, and they were soon on their way to safety.

The flash flood warning was lifted by 4:30 p.m., Connolly said. While there’s still a chance for storms in Friday’s forecast, Connolly said it was unlikely the region would get more rainfall.

“There’s a cell over the San Bernardino mountains, but it’s pretty stationary,” Connolly said. “There’s a chance of storms in the mountains [Friday], but we don’t expect anything to get up into the High Desert.”

Friday’s forecast shows a 20 percent chance of storms, with daytime temperatures expected to reach anywhere between 95 to 100 degrees.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20180816/storms-briefly-pummel-high-desert-flood-local-roadways>

Murrieta celebrates National Night Out

Stephanie Lai, Myvalley news

Posted: August 16, 2018 2:42 a.m.



Representatives from Target barbecue hot dogs and pass out chips, water and sodas to visitors of National Night Out in Town Square Park in Murrieta, Aug. 7

A REACH Air Medical Service helicopter made a grand entrance, landing in Murrieta's Town Square Park, promptly 5 p.m., and marking the start of the annual National Night Out. The Murrieta Police Department hosted the free, family-friendly evening, 5-8 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 7, to promote police partnerships, public safety and neighborhood camaraderie.

The nationwide event began in 1984, on the first Tuesday in August to bring the community and emergency personnel together for safety demonstrations and festive activities.

Families were able to speak directly to law enforcement and first responders along with various local organizations.

"It gives us a chance to come out and show all the resources the police department has available. The community can come out, talk to us face to face and get to know us a little better," Murrieta Police Department Sergeant Jeremy Durrant said.

In attendance were the Murrieta Police Department, California Highway Patrol, Trauma Intervention Program, Riverside County Office of District Attorney, San Joaquin Valley College, Compassionate Care During Loss, Rose Again Foundation, Temecula Valley Women's Club, REACH Air Medical Service, First Net, San Diego Credit Union, Murrieta Fire Department, Murrieta CERT, **San Bernardino County Fire** and representatives from the Murrieta City Manager's Office.

"Tonight is all about public safety and we're here to show what initiatives city has. I'm out here to help outreach to the community," Murrieta analyst Izzy Murguia said.

Children quickly hopped onto the Murrieta Police Department motorcycles and into the police cars for pictures, and even into the REACH helicopter. Several kids ran to and from the bouncy houses.

Local representatives from Target served guests barbecued hot dogs, chips and drinks. They also gave out free raffle tickets that could be entered to win one of three baskets.

The annual Nights Out brought together numerous organizations focused on public safety in a three-hour, family friendly evening.

<https://www.myvalleynews.com/story/2018/08/17/news/murrieta-celebrates-national-night-out/62076.html>

Helendale Man Arrested for Starting 10-Acre River Bottom Fire

Staff Writer, 247 Headline

Posted: August 16, 2018



HELENDALE – A 50-year-old Helendale man was arrested for starting a fire in the wash area at Vista and Riverview Roads in Helendale.

On Wednesday, August 15, 2018, at around 7:30 p.m., the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department and deputies from the Victor Valley Station responded to multiple reports of a vegetation fire. When the first firefighters arrived they found around an acre of dense brush burning at a slow rate of speed in the area near Helendale Road. Firefighters were able to stop the spread of the fire within an hour of their arrival.

Huriberto Rodriguez, 50, of Helendale, was detained for questioning. Through investigation it was learned that Rodriguez used a BIC lighter to start the fire that quickly grew burning around 10 acres of shrubs before it was fully extinguished. Rodriguez attempted to flee the scene, but witnesses assisted deputies with information about his location. Rodriguez was located down the road from the fire.

Rodriguez was found to be in possession of functioning lighters and was arrested. He was booked into the High Desert Detention Center and is being held in lieu of \$250,000 bail. Rodriguez is scheduled to appear at the Victor Valley Superior Court on August 17, 2018.

Anyone with information regarding this crime is urged to contact Deputy R. Escalera at Victor Valley Sheriff's Station, (760) 552-6800. Persons wishing to remain anonymous can report information to WeTip by calling 1-800-78-CRIME, or by accessing the website at www.wetip.com.

<https://247headline.com/helendale-man-arrested-for-starting-10-acre-river-bottom-fire/>

US Highway 395 remains closed after major injury head-on crash

Staff Writer, VVNG

Posted: August 16, 2018



(Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

(Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) — One person was flown to a trauma center and another was rushed to a local hospital with life-threatening injuries following a major injury crash here Thursday.

It happened at 7:05 pm, on U.S. Highway 395 between Poplar Street and Main Street in Hesperia and involved a white 2011 Toyota Camry and a gray Toyota Scion.

According to San Bernardino County Sheriff's Deputy LaFond, the Camry car was traveling south and the Scion was heading north.

Investigators believe that for reasons still under investigation, the driver of the Scion left the roadway onto the right shoulder where he lost control. The vehicle re-entered the roadway, crossing over the double yellow line and directly into the path of the Camry.

Each vehicle was occupied by a sole occupant. The driver of the Scion was transported to Desert Valley Hospital with life-threatening injuries. CPR was performed on him during transport.

The driver of the Camry was airlifted to an out of area trauma center with unknown injuries.

The stretch of Highway 395 is expected to remain closed for several hours as officials conduct the investigation.

<https://www.vvng.com/us-highway-395-remains-closed-after-major-injury-head-on-crash/>

Crews quickly contain Mojave River bottom blaze to 5 acres; 1 arrested in connection to ‘starting the fires’

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: August 16, 2018



San Bernardino County Fire Department responded to a blaze in the Mojave River bottom, just off Vista Road, Wednesday night. [Paola Baker, Daily Press]

SILVER LAKES — A 50-year-old man was arrested in connection to a vegetation fire that burned 5 acres in the Mojave River bottom here Wednesday evening.

Herbierto Rodriguez, described as a transient in Helendale, was arrested on suspicion of aggravated arson and booked at the High Desert Detention Center in lieu of \$250,000 bail, according to San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department spokeswoman Jodi Miller.

“Witnesses advised deputies that he was the subject they saw setting the fires,” Miller said.

San Bernardino County Fire Department officials said they reached full containment of the blaze by 9 p.m. Wednesday, a little less than two hours after the fire first broke out in the river bottom just off Vista Road.

Dubbed the Vista Fire, the blaze was first reported at 7:25 p.m. in the river bottom area, according to County Fire Cpt. Jeremy Kern. It was initially reported to be a 300-by-300-foot brush fire, but quickly grew to consume over an acre of vegetation.

“Due to the heavy thick fuels burning, flame lengths reached upwards of 30 feet as firefighters initiated their attack,” official said.

By 7:45 p.m., the blaze had spread further, with County Fire sending a full second-alarm response. Plumes of smoke were visible throughout the community and along National Trails Highway.

Kern said approximately 60 fire personnel, which included five engines, five brush engines, a water tender, a hand crew, a dozer and two chief officers, were dispatched to combat the blaze. Crews were assisted by the Apple Valley Fire Protection District and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

By 8:20 p.m., the crews managed to halt the fire’s forward rate of spread, Kern said. No injuries were reported and no damage was reported to any structures due to the blaze.

“In this instance, County Fire was able to keep this fire small due to early identification by 911 callers and an aggressive initial attack,” officials said.

County Fire crews remained on scene overnight and into Thursday morning for mop-up and mitigate any remaining hot spots.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20180816/crews-quickly-contain-mojave-river-bottom-blaze-to-5-acres-1-arrested-in-connection-to-starting-fires>