



NEWS



News Headlines 12/6/2016

- Suspension of burn permits is lifted in Riverside, San Bernardino counties
- Motorcyclist Injured After Avoiding Wrong-Way Driver
- Hesperia Councilman Mike Leonard ready to move on

Suspension of burn permits is lifted in Riverside, San Bernardino counties

Anne Millerbernd, Press Enterprise

Posted: Dec. 5, 2016, 5:26 PM

With fall in the air and winter approaching, Cal Fire officials say the threat of a wildfire has diminished enough for people to resume permitted burning in the Inland area.

The suspensions on burns in Riverside and San Bernardino counties was lifted at 8 a.m. Monday. People with current and valid permits can burn in those areas on days designated by local air-quality regulators.

The permits apply to agricultural burning, prescribed burns, residential burning, beach burning and other types of burns. Fire agencies suspend those permits during peak fire season.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District announced that residential burning will not be allowed Tuesday in most of Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles and Orange counties – air quality was expected to be poor, and burning wood in indoor or outdoor fireplaces could make it worse. The ban doesn't apply to the desert areas or the mountains above 3,000 feet.

To check whether burning is permitted on a given day, go to aqmd.gov or call Cal Fire/Riverside County at 951-940-6949.

Also Monday, Cal Fire reopened several especially fire-prone areas that were closed in June: Avery Canyon and Reinhardt Canyon in Hemet; the area around the Ramona Bowl and Bautista Canyon near Hemet; North Mountain and Indian Canyon in the San Jacinto area; a hilly area east of Menifee Road in the Nuevo/Lakeview area; the area around Sage Road and Minto Way in Sage; and Whitewater Canyon in Cabazon.

Though temperatures have decreased, firefighters wrote in a news release that it's still important to be mindful of humidity levels and outdoor behavior.

The Inland area is expected have mostly average weather this week. Some drizzle was expected Monday night and Tuesday morning, and clouds will linger for the foreseeable future, according to the National Weather Service.

<http://www.pe.com/articles/fires-820219-quality-allow.html>

Motorcyclist Injured After Avoiding Wrong-Way Driver

Gabriel D. Espinoza, VVNG

Posted: December 5, 2016

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG) Dispatch received a call that a motorcyclist was down in the roadway after swerving to avoid a wrong-way driver Monday night.

The call was dispatched at approximately 7:10 p.m. near the intersection of Bear Valley Road and 7th Avenue directly in front of the Food 4 Less grocery store.

When deputies arrived they located the down motorcyclist with minor injuries.

The alleged wrong-way driver did not stop and has not been located by authorities.

The biker was traveling westbound Bear Valley when he laid his bike down trying to avoid the eastbound driver traveling in the west bound lanes, according to a witness statement.



(Photo: Gabriel D. Espinoza, VVNG)

The 20-year-old rider of the blue and white Suzuki was wearing appropriate protective gear, and as a result, was able to reduce the amount of injury sustained. He was transported to Desert Valley Medical Center for treatment of minor scrapes and elbow pain.

<http://www.vvng.com/motorcyclist-injured-after-avoiding-wrong-way-driver/>

Hesperia Councilman Mike Leonard ready to move on

Rene Ray De La Cruz, VV Daily Press

Posted: December 5, 2016, 5:56 p.m.

HESPERIA — Councilman Mike Leonard took time to reflect on his three terms in office, as he helped guide a city during a time of explosive growth over the last decade.

“After 12 years on the Council, it was just time to call it a day,” said Leonard, 69, who added the last couple of years “have been a struggle” after working in public service for nearly three decades.

Leonard, who did not make a bid for reelection last month, will be recognized along with Councilman Eric Schmidt, as the duo makes way for candidates Larry Bird and Rebekah Swanson who won the two open Council seats.

“I worked for the Hesperia Fire District for 28 years and I worked for County Fire and was a volunteer way before that,” Leonard said. “I was also heavily involved with San Bernardino County Associated Governments and the Victor Valley Transit Authority during my time on the Council, so I had a pretty full plate.”

Leonard said after talking with his wife, Lana, of 48 years, the couple decided it was time to “stop planning their lives around meetings” and start taking time for themselves.

“As long as my health is good, we plan on doing a lot of traveling,” Leonard said. “We’ll pack up the motorhome and travel west to east with our German Shepherd, Lacy.”

Mayor Bill Holland told the Daily Press he’s losing a valuable colleague and a Councilman who brings a unique perspective to the table.

“Mike’s experience as a longtime citizen and firefighter helped us to see many agenda items through his perspective,” Holland said. “It’s going to be rough not seeing Mike sitting next to us.”

Leonard said he’s seen a lot of growth and development during his time on the Council including the construction of City Hall, library, Hesperia City Park Civic Park, county building, police station, the Ranchero Road Underpass and Interstate 15 Interchange projects.

“We also saw the construction of the water treatment plant, the installation of purple pipe and the Super Target shopping center over on Main Street,” Leonard said. “Our economic development department busted their butts to make that all this happen and the staff deserves a lot of credit.”

Leonard said his “proudest moment” over the last 12 years was his involvement with VVTA as they obtained funding, some \$300,000, to continue the bus route to Fort Irwin “for our military families.”

“VVTA is a great organization and they do a fantastic job,” Leonard said. “We also went from working in a small trailer to the large, beautiful building that we have on E Avenue.”

Leonard, who ran for Council when he was with the fire department, said he was motivated to run because he felt the Council at that time was “more worried about themselves and their development buddies” and not public safety or the citizens of Hesperia.

“My attitude has also been that I work for the people that elected me and not for any developer,” Leonard said. “That is an attitude that every Council member and politician should adopt.”

Leonard told the Daily Press he credits Assistant City Manager Brian Johnson for “keeping the City of Hesperia out of financial trouble” and helping the city “through times of uncertainty during and after the big recession.”

“The city is in good financial order right now and I hope the Council doesn’t decide to start spending a lot of money,” Leonard said. “They need to take it nice and slow so they can keep our city financially healthy. If they do that, the future of Hesperia will be bright.”

Leonard said former City Manager Mike Podegracz and many former senior staffers did a commendable job as they managed the commercial boom, and the construction of city and county projects.

“Coming from a law enforcement background, our new City Manager Nils Bentsen is doing a great job,” Leonard said. “He’s one of those guys who’ll tell you you’re doing a good job and will tell you you’re messing up. He’s definitely not a yes man to the Council.”

Leonard said since moving to Hesperia in 1968, he seen the “good, the bad and the ugly,” including changes that allow for Section 8 housing, the increase in transients and “people who throw trash all over the place and don’t take care of their property.

“I wish we had enough code enforcement to start driving up and down the street to take care of the problem,” Leonard said. “This trash problem is not only a Hesperia problem, it’s a High Desert problem.”

Leonard said his final words to the Council are, “Remember that you work for the people who put you in office, not the developers.

“I want to thank the residents of Hesperia for allowing me to serve them,” Leonard said. “My advice is to get more involved in everything that goes on in the city, not just roads and public safety.”

Leonard and Schmidt’s final Council meeting will be 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at Hesperia City Hall, located at 9700 Seventh Ave.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20161205/hesperia-councilman-mike-leonard-ready-to-move-on>

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