



# NEWS



## News Headlines 7/29-31/2017

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## Firefighters gain control of blaze near Summit Valley Road in Hesperia

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: July 28, 2017, 5:00 PM



A San Bernardino County firefighter hoses down hot spots of a vegetation fire along Summit Valley Road in Hesperia on Friday. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

**HESPERIA** — Firefighters quickly got a handle on a vegetation fire off Summit Valley Road near the Hesperia Airport Friday afternoon.

Reported just after 2:30 p.m. as a “fast-moving vegetation fire,” authorities requested water-dropping helicopters and hand crews to help battle the blaze which erupted in the area of Summit Valley and Telephone Canyon roads.

**San Bernardino County Fire Department** Battalion Chief Dave Meddles told the Daily Press that the fire was initially considered a moderate threat to nearby homes. Fire personnel managed to stop the forward rate of spread quickly after it had burned 3 acres, but reported that it had burned 6 acres as of 5:20 p.m.

Several County Fire and CalFire personnel, including two helicopters, 10 fire engines, and two water tenders, were on hand to combat the blaze.

A closure of Summit Valley Road between Jenny Street and Telephone Canyon Road was requested and was expected to remain in place for at least an hour before being reassessed, according to Meddles.

No injuries were reported and the cause of the fire is under investigation.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170728/firefighters-gain-control-of-blaze-near-summit-valley-road-in-hesperia>

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## Firefighters battle vegetation fire in Hesperia Friday afternoon

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: July 28, 2017



A stretch of Summit Valley Road is closed following a fire that broke out Friday afternoon. (Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) A stretch of Summit Valley Road is closed as firefighters battle a vegetation fire Friday afternoon near the Hesperia Airport.

At approximately 2:40 p.m., The **San Bernardino County Fire Department** requested the assistance of two water dropping helicopters and a hand-crew for a “fast-moving” fire, officials said.

It began near Summit Valley Road and Telephone Canyon Road close to several homes.

However, fire officials said the forward rate of spread has been stopped thanks to the aggressive attack from the ground and the air.

At least two acres have burned so far.

This is a developing story and more information will be provided as it becomes available.

<http://www.vvng.com/firefighters-battle-vegetation-fire-hesperia-friday-afternoon/>

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## Upland fire annexation continues; so does court battle to stop it

Ryan Hagen, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: July 28, 2017, 7:37 PM



Victor Cruz applies a new San Bernardino County Fire sticker onto a Upland fire truck Monday. San Bernardino County Fire will officially take over the Upland fire department on Saturday. On July 17, 2017 the old Upland fire stickers were removed and replaced with the San Bernardino County Fire logos. Will Lester — staff photographer

SAN BERNARDINO >> The annexation of Upland’s fire department — and a new \$150 tax added without a vote as part of that annexation — will continue after a court hearing Friday, but so will the legal battle to stop it.

Judge David Cohn said after a two-hour hearing that he would issue a written order later, and he scheduled another hearing for Sept. 19. But before hearing oral arguments he said that his tentative ruling was to deny the motion for a preliminary injunction.

Cohn said an appeals court ruling that blesses another annexation, *Sunset Beach v. Orange County LAFCO*, made it appear unlikely the challenge would ultimately succeed on the merits. And he said that a preliminary injunction — undoing the take-over of Upland’s fire department by **San Bernardino County Fire Protection District** after it began earlier this month — would be more harmful than the alternative of allowing the annexation to continue.

Any harm to taxpayers could be remedied by repaying the tax which is \$150 per year, per parcel, Cohn said. That could rise up to 3 percent per year.

Attorney Cory Briggs represented the San Antonio Heights Association, which had more than 50 residents present in the courtroom.

He argued that repaying the money wouldn’t fix the damage, both because every resident would have to individually apply within a year to have it repaid and because he said a fundamental right was at stake.

“I think my client would be bothered by the notion that the right to vote can be compensated by a simple refund,” he said. “This isn’t some ‘technical’ right. It’s so important we put it in the Constitution. It’s so important we fought a war over it.”

Residents in the unincorporated city north of Upland, who were already served by county fire, say it’s unfair to impose a tax on them without a vote.

Instead, the county's Local Agency Formation Commission held a protest hearing to see if there was enough opposition to trigger an election. In the end, over resident objections that they didn't feel properly notified, residents fell well short of the requirement, with only 11.9 percent of registered voters and 13.2 percent of landowners objecting to the annexation.

Just as there is no right to vote for the U.S. attorney general, there is no right to vote on annexation, said Donald Wagner, LAFCO's attorney; there's a different procedure, which includes the protest.

"These are the procedures LAFCOs have been using across the state since Sunset Beach," Wagner said, referring to the Orange County case that allowed an annexation into Huntington Beach in 2010.

The city of San Bernardino's annexation into the same fire protection district one year ago is among those that followed the procedure.

Briggs objected that the Sunset Beach case is different: a relatively small unincorporated community being absorbed into an adjacent city.

By contrast, Upland is an incorporated city of more than 75,000 people nearly 50 miles away from the unincorporated Victor Valley community of Helendale, whose voters approved the tax to pay for services in their community.

"This is the tail wagging the dog," Briggs said.

Perhaps an argument could be made that the law should limit the population and distance that can be involved in an annexation, but those are arguments for the state Legislature, not a court that must follow existing law, said Ginetta Giovinco, the attorney for Upland.

Upland began the process in November to disband its fire department, which is more than a century old, saying residents could expect similar service and City Hall could save \$50 million over 10 years. During a hearing in March, the plan was amended to include the unincorporated community of San Antonio Heights.

The parcel tax is intended to cover the county's costs for providing the fire service.

In the words of Wagner, the LAFCO attorney, it would "pick up the folks that have been free riders for so long."

The San Antonio Heights residents who were referenced by that comment groaned loudly — one of two times they reacted out loud during the hearing.

A few minutes later, Briggs came to their defense, pointing out that residents pay county taxes.

"That comment is an absolute outrage," Briggs said. "They have been paying their taxes for years if not decades."

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/general-news/20170728/upland-fire-annexation-continues-so-does-court-battle-to-stop-it>

## Police ID 21-year-old Killed in Hesperia Rollover Crash

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: July 28, 2017



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

HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) A 21-year-old Hesperia man died Thursday night after being thrown from his car in a rollover crash near Mesa Grande Elementary School.

Vince Muldoon was pronounced dead on the scene of the crash near Third Avenue and Sultana Street in Hesperia.

**San Bernardino County Fire** and Deputies from the Hesperia Sheriff's Station responded to the scene of a single-vehicle rollover at 7:56 pm, and located a 1996 Honda Accord.

According to sheriff's officials, witnesses reported seeing the vehicle driving at a high rate of speed northbound on Third Avenue prior to the crash.

For reasons still under investigation, as Muldoon crossed over Sultana Street and lost control of the Honda causing the vehicle to leave the roadway and over turn several times.

The vehicle subsequently came to a stop in the vegetation off the east roadway shoulder.

Despite life-saving measures from citizens and first responders, Muldoon was pronounced dead at the scene from his injuries.

"Speed is being considered as a factor in the collision and at this time it is unknown if alcohol or drugs were involved," sheriff's officials said in a press release.

Muldoon is remembered as having a big heart and family meant everything to him. "He was loved by everyone and everyone will continue to love him forever," said his cousin Taryn Gorman.

Muldoon leaves behind his parents Stacey and Mike Shelton. His siblings Tabatha Shelton, Twin sister Victoria Muldoon and brother Mikey Shelton. Also his cousins T.J., Taryn, Tyler and Travis.

Anyone with information related to this investigation should contact the Hesperia Station, Deputy Getts at (760)947-1500.

<http://www.vvng.com/police-id-21-year-old-killed-hesperia-rollover-crash/>

## Two wildfires briefly threaten Running Springs communities

Douglas Motley, Alpenhorn News

Posted: July 29, 2017

Two wildfires flared-up in the foothills above Highland posing a threat to the Running Springs communities on Saturday afternoon, July 22. The first wildland blaze, dubbed the Dollar Fire, was reported at 1:34 p.m. in tinder dry chaparral, about two miles south of Fredalba. A second blaze, dubbed the Seine Fire for its location near Seine Ave. and Piedmont Drive, roared to life a half-hour later in the hills behind the Wal-Mart Center in Highland, seven miles south of the first fire.

Though the Dollar Fire ignited east of Highway 330, not far from a U.S. Forrest Service target shooting range on Forest Road 1N09, a firefighter at a nearby incident command center declined on Saturday to comment on whether the fire was related to target shooting activity. The Forest Service had suspended all recreational shooting in the San Bernardino National Forest, effective that same day.

Although a previous estimate said the Dollar Fire had blackened 100 acres of dry brush, that estimate was revised downward Monday to 50 acres, with 70 percent containment. At its peak on Saturday, the Dollar Fire had elicited a response from 150 firefighters on the ground, as well as an aerial attack by numerous water-dropping helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, including a DC10 air tanker, capable of dropping 11,000 gallons of fire retardant.

The Seine Fire north of Highland, which blackened about 20 acres of dry brush, brought an immediate response from firefighting aircraft, which were quickly diverted from the nearby Dollar Fire. "The lucky part of this fire is that we had air tankers circling the Dollar Fire. They moved right over and they dropped on it right away and slowed it down," said **San Bernardino County** Battalion Chief Michael Wakoski. Noting that several other fires had burned in the same area this summer, Wakoski added that the circumstances of the Seine Fire are under investigation.

<http://alpenhornnews.com/two-wildfires-briefly-threaten-running-springs-communities-p8261-155.htm>