



NEWS



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SUSPICIOUS FIRES IN YUCCA VALLEY AND TWENTYNINE PALMS

Staff Writer, Z1077 News

Posted: August 30, 2018



There were two suspicious fire in the Morongo Basin yesterday.

A motorhome is a total loss due to a fire in Yucca Valley Wednesday and Sheriff's deputies are searching for the driver. Firefighters were called to the 55800 block of Santa Fe Trail at 4:59 for a vehicle fire. The older model RV, which had stopped in the middle of the westbound lane on Santa Fe Trail, was fully engulfed in flames and spewing black smoke that could be seen for miles. Battalion Chief Donnie Vilorio said that when firefighters arrived, no one came forward claiming to be the owner or driver of the motorhome. He added that it appeared that the fire started in the rear of the RV—where there are electrical wires and fuel lines—and not in the engine compartment, but that the cause of the fire is unknown. Anyone with information should call the Sheriff's Department at 760-366-4175.

Firefighters were called to another suspicious fire in Twentynine Palms at 5:51 p.m., about an hour after the motorhome fire in Yucca Valley. **County Fire** Captain Durk Carlisle said by the time firefighters from Twentynine Palms and Wonder Valley arrived at the fire near Abronia Avenue and Valle Vista Road, the abandoned and empty shed had burned to the ground. He added that there were no power lines to any of the dilapidated outbuildings on the property nor any readily apparent reason for the shed to catch on fire. The cause is under investigation.

<http://z1077fm.com/local-news/todays-full-newscast/>

Man airlifted out of Adelanto after Mojave Green Rattlesnake bite

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: August 30, 2019



(shutterstock)

ADELANTO, Calif. (VVNG.com) — A 24-year-old male bitten by a Mojave Green Rattlesnake was airlifted to a trauma center Wednesday night.

At about 9:30pm, firefighters with **San Bernardino County Fire** were dispatched to a business in the 9700 block of Yucca Road in Adelanto reference a snake bite.

According to SB County radio traffic, the victim was bitten in the right index by a 24 inch Mojave Green. The male was reported as being conscious and alert with an elevated heartbeat and 'pretty good swelling' to his finger.

County firefighters requested the use of helicopter H325 to airlift the patient to Loma Linda University Medical Center for treatment.

The 'Crotalus Scutulatus' or more commonly known as the Mojave Green is a highly venomous pit viper species found in the deserts of the southwestern United States and central Mexico. It is perhaps best known for its potent venom, which is considered the world's most potent rattlesnake venom.

If you have a rattlesnake in/around your home and wish to have it removed contact High Desert Wildlife Control at (760)961-5980 or visit their website: <http://hdtrapping.com/snake-control/>

In the event of a bite:

- Remain calm, and move away from the snake.
- Immediately call 9-1-1 or send someone for help and safely transport the snake bite victim to the nearest emergency medical facility for treatment.
- Remove wristwatches, rings or anything constrictive.
- Gently wash the area with soap and water. Keep the bite at or below heart level.
- Try to remember what the snake looked like (but do not attempt to kill or catch it!)

<https://www.vvng.com/man-airlifted-out-of-adelanto-after-mojave-green-rattlesnake-bite/>

Two injured after two-vehicle collision in Fontana

Robert Gundran, Daily Bulletin

Posted: August 29, 2018, 9:30 p.m.

The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department said Wednesday that two people were injured after a collision in Fontana.

Dispatch received a call about a two-vehicle collision near San Bernardino and Catawba Avenues at around 7:15 p.m., said San Bernardino County Fire Department spokesman Eric Sherwin.

The fire department said one person was extricated from one of the vehicles by the first fire engine to arrive at the scene.

One person was sent to a local trauma center and another was sent to a local hospital after the collision, Sherwin said.

<https://www.dailybulletin.com/2018/08/29/two-injured-after-two-vehicle-collision-in-fontana/>

Plea to fire chief: Don't move station

Stacy Moore, Hi-Desert Star

Posted: August 29, 2018



About 50 people attended a meeting on a proposed fire assessment Monday in Joshua Tree, including this woman, who asked Chief Mark Hartwig why he didn't try to increase sales taxes or charge insurance companies more for services. She did not want to give her name.

JOSHUA TREE — “We need our fire station on the mesa.”

County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig read the statement on a card passed to him from the audience at a public meeting Monday evening in the Joshua Tree Community Center.

“I hear that loud and clear,” he responded.

The meeting drew around 50 people, who could pass Hartwig questions on cards or talk to him and his assistants in person. Hartwig confronted locals' fears that Yucca Mesa would be the latest community to lose its county fire station several times during the meeting, which he called to present a plan to charge a yearly \$157.26 assessment for fire services.

“You've got two schools up there, you know. You've got Landers and Yucca Mesa elementary,” Helen Price, of Yucca Mesa, told Hartwig.

“Nobody's going to abandon the mesa. Nobody's going to leave the mesa,” the chief assured the audience.

He admitted he does think the station should probably be moved from Aberdeen Road and Avalon Avenue closer to Old Woman Springs Road and “a little bit” closer to Yucca Valley.

“We need to figure out where the right location is,” he said. “That's going to be a community discussion.” The Morongo Basin is home to seven closed county fire stations, in Panorama Heights, Johnson Valley, Landers, Pioneertown, Copper Mountain Mesa, Wonder Valley and Desert Heights. The Desert Heights station was closed by the Twentynine Palms Water District before the county took over.

The shuttered stations are costing homeowners hundreds of dollars in insurance costs, said Penny Mason, who lives in Panorama Heights in Joshua Tree.

She brought her homeowners' insurance bill to the meeting, showing how the cost went up \$630 a year after the Panorama Heights station closed.

“So everyone who lives in an area where they closed a fire station is paying more in home insurance,” Mason said.

She would support the assessment, she said, if the fire department would reopen its more remote stations.

But Hartwig didn't hold out hope of that happening. When an audience member asked if any closed stations would be reopened if the new assessment passed, he responded, "No. I'm looking to maintain the service I have now."

"We're paying more for less," Mason told Hartwig. "As a consumer, that doesn't make any sense."

Scraping by on a little more than a thousand dollars a month, Eileen McManus-Bloomer, who owns a home in Landers, told Hartwig she simply could not afford to pay more: "I am being taxed to death."

Running the Joshua Tree fire station costs an average of \$2.2 million per year, but the fire department gets just \$157,000 from Joshua Tree property taxes, according to the county.

For most Joshua Tree landowners, 2.63 percent of their property taxes goes to the fire department, and that is earmarked for administrative fees.

Hartwig said he could tell a similar story at several places in San Bernardino County. "We have communities throughout the county where the services we provide cost more than the property taxes we generate," he told the audience.

Countywide, the fire department is operating at a \$29 million shortfall. It dips heavily into reserves and depends on payments from the board of supervisors, which is also the fire board, to make its bottom line every year.

Hartwig likened the fire department's dependence on injections from its reserves and the county general fund to living off a credit card. It's not sustainable forever and eventually, the bill will come due.

"They're going to get to the point where when I ask for money, it's going to be so much, the fire board will not be able to do it," he said.

This year, the county put in \$17.3 million.

Hartwig and the board of supervisors want to charge property owners a flat fee per year, starting at \$157.26, that would be tacked onto their property taxes. They would do that by expanding one fire protection zone, FP5, into most areas of the county.

In the Morongo Basin, everyone but Morongo Valley and Twentynine Palms landowners would be affected — Morongo Valley because it has its own fire department and Twentynine Palms because it's already part of FP5.

Property owners can send in protests to prevent the expansion; if at least half protest, the expansion will be stopped. Hartwig said if that happens, he'll have to "make some hard decisions."

He said Monday he hasn't begun to look at what would be cut, but a budget presentation from the fire department to the board of supervisors implies the chief will consider closing more stations. It lists potentially longer response times for each service zone, including an additional 10 minutes in the South Desert, where the Morongo Basin is.

“If you remove stations, it’s going to increase the response time,” Hartwig said Monday.

After talking to Hartwig after the meeting, Mason said she still couldn’t support the new assessment unless fire stations reopen. But she also said it wasn’t fair to depend on Hartwig and his assistant chiefs to pitch the assessment to the public.

“If the fire department has ended up in a budget crunch, rather than sending the fire department into the community with their hands out, the board of supervisors, which is also the fire board, should be out here,” she said.

http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article_d16f6d76-abe5-11e8-98ab-33eb447bd85b.html