



NEWS



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Summer heat, vegetation growth could bring large wildfires to Southern California

Doug Saunders, The Sun

Posted: April 26, 2017, 7:42 PM



California Conservation Corps Sayer, Michael Ayala from the Pomona Center works on his chainsaw skills to thin the burnable fuels at the Forest Lawn Scout Reservation in the San Bernardino National Forrest, Tuesday, April 25, 2017. (Eric Reed/For The Sun/SCNG)

Even though record-breaking rainfall brought California's long-lived drought closer to manageable levels, temperatures will soon spike and some experts believe this year's fire season across the state may challenge the severity of last year's record.

"Recent rains have created a large crop of grass that will cure in the peak of summer thereby creating a readily available fuel which can catch fire quickly," Cal Fire Capt. Elizabeth Brown said. "Fast-moving fire with a light wind can have devastating effects for residents."

In just a few days this week, several small-scale wildfires erupted in San Bernardino and Riverside counties, charring fields and some mountainsides.

From the beginning of the year to April 22, Cal Fire has battled 320 wildland fires statewide that charred 5,841 acres, according to its website. In 2016, the state fire authority battled 489 wildland fires that burned only 530 acres of land over the same period.

"Grass has carpeted all landscapes in San Bernardino County including desert areas that have not been a cause of fire concern due to the prolonged drought," Brown said. "Everyone needs to have a plan in place, and we're urging everyone to use caution when they are in wildland or open land areas."

The abundant amount of rain that fell on the Southland this past winter has fed vegetation, increasing a substantial growth.

"Six years of sustained drought cause fuels to burn much faster and hotter than in non-drought conditions," Brown added. "The rain we received this year has created a grass crop that when dry will carry fire swiftly and easily."

In August 2016, the drought that cursed Southern California for several years wreaked havoc when flames erupted in the Blue Cut Canyon area of the Cajon Pass, igniting a firestorm that forced thousands to evacuate their homes with some returning to devastation.

The Blue Cut fire rapidly spread, consuming nearly 57 square miles (more than 37,000 acres) of terrain throughout the Cajon Pass. The fire roared in different directions toward Lytle Creek, Wrightwood, Phelan

and the Oak Hills region forcing the shutdown of a section of the 15 Freeway, exploding in size and leaving some seasoned firefighters speechless.

“In my entire career, I’ve never seen fire activity like what we witnessed during the Blue Cut fire,” **San Bernardino County Fire** spokesman Eric Sherwin said. “The behavior of the flames were so erratic and intense, it moved into so many different areas at the same time. It was like it had a mind of its own.”

Climatologist Bill Patzert of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena said the winter rain wasn’t enough to replenish water tables and didn’t even fill up the groundwater reservoirs.

“Fire has always been part of the California landscape and the last five years were the driest due to drought conditions, so the water tables that many say are up are still in punishing low levels,” Patzert said. “We’re a little euphoric when it comes to the winter rain, but really we didn’t get much.”

Following the winter rains the ground today may not be as dry as it was 12 months ago, but now there’s more tall grass and underbrush growing so state fire officials suggest many businesses and homeowners take the time to prepare for wildfire possibilities.

That’s where technology and fire prevention come together. State fire officials designed a new smartphone app called Ready for Wildfire to provide critical wildfire information instantaneously.

“This new tool puts a whole library of step-by-step checklists in the palm of the user’s hand,” Cal Fire spokeswoman Lynne Tolmachoff said in a statement. “It allows homeowners to track their progress while creating defensible space hardening their homes with fire-resistant construction, assembling an emergency supply kit and creating a family communication and evacuation plan.”

Users also will be able to receive notifications in the form of customized alerts to their smart devices, alerting them when Cal Fire responds to a wildland fire in their area.

“One of the many benefits of our new Ready for Wildfire app is the timely and accurate information it provides to residents about a wildfire in their area,” Cal Fire Chief Ken Pimlott wrote. “I am excited about this new valuable tool that will provide early alerts to the public to help ensure their safety.”

To download the app, go to the App Store or Google Play Store and search for Cal Fire.

Patzert also warns that the San Bernardino National Forest isn’t the only woodlands devastated by the tree-killing bark beetle.

The urban forest took a beating during the drought, bringing the bark beetle into the city’s environment and causing concern of urban area fires erupting when the Santa Ana winds come full force at summer’s end, Patzert said.

“By any measure, no matter what, we’re set up to see a big fire season,” he added.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170426/summer-heat-vegetation-growth-could-bring-large-wildfires-to-southern-california>

San Bernardino police, firefighters face off in charity baseball game

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: April 27, 2017, 9:39 AM



The San Bernardino Police Department's newest K-9 pup Sherlock will be at the Guns and Hoses charity baseball game Sunday at San Manuel Stadium in San Bernardino. (Courtesy photo)



Jose Cruz, seen here with his wife and daughter, an 11-year San Bernardino County Fire Department veteran, is undergoing treatment for cancer and is unable to work. A portion of the proceeds from the the Guns and Hoses baseball game on Sunday, April 30, 2017, will go to help his family. (Courtesy photo)

SAN BERNARDINO >> The San Bernardino Police Foundation's 3rd annual charity baseball game at San Manuel Stadium will pit first responder against first responder as the officers take on county firefighters this weekend.

The game will take place Sunday after the Inland Empire 66ers take on the Lake Elsinore Storm. "They can watch fun baseball after they watch real baseball," said a laughing Lt. Vicki Cervantes.

The police and **San Bernardino County fire departments** will be selling tickets to the 66ers' game, with the price of admission also including the six-inning charity game. Proceeds from police ticket sales will go toward funding the foundation's many programs including Shop With a Cop, Cops 4 Kids Fly-in, the Explorer program and the mounted police and K-9 units.

One of the beneficiaries of the foundation is the department's newest addition, Sherlock. "He's part of the K-9 unit, so everything we need for him comes from the foundation," said Cervantes.

The rescue pup quickly made himself invaluable as a community affairs dog the day of the North Park Elementary shooting when he was called on to help calm and comfort the students following the fatal incident.

Sherlock will be there Sunday — in his very own police jersey — to greet fans, said Eileen Hards, spokeswoman for the department.

Another new program the foundation is funding in the fledgling Police Activities League. The PAL program works with at-risk youth, usually through sports and physical activities.

“This is our first time participating, and we are excited to be a part of it,” said Fire Capt. Mike McClintock.

McClintock sees the game as an opportunity to engage and be a part of the community. The county department took over fire duties in the city last July.

“We have 12 firefighters from all over the county on our roster, and we’re really to have a good time with it,” he said.

The fire department is raising funds to help a fellow firefighter who was recently diagnosed with cancer.

“Jose Cruz is married and has a young child, and we’re raising money for his treatment so he can concentrate on his recovery,” McClintock said.

Cruz has been a firefighter with the county for 11 years, officials said.

Both departments will be selling T-shirt specially made for Sunday’s game.

Tickets are being sold in advance for \$10 and can be purchased by calling 909-384-5693, or for \$12 by visiting the 66ers’ [ticket sales site](#). To make a purchase for the police department, fans can input the special offer code POLICEDEPTFUND. For the fire department, input FIREDEPTFUND.

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/government-and-politics/20170427/san-bernardino-police-firefighters-face-off-in-charity-baseball-game>

SBC Fire Department brings Circus to Trona

Michael Smit, Ridgecrest Daily Independent

Posted: April 27, 2017, 10:11 AM



Christina Sanders, Doris Van Horn, and Angela Harrington of the San Bernardino County Fire Department Station 57 stand outside the circus tent on Monday night. The Trona Fire Department sponsored the Culpepper & Merriweather Circus, bringing the show to Trona. Michael Smit/Daily Independent

After driving through miles of empty desert, I now passed by abandoned houses which looked like they'd fall to pieces if I breathed too hard, and I knew I'd reached Trona. "Is there seriously going to be a circus here?" I thought.

In the previous week, I'd interviewed both Culpepper & Merriweather Circus staff and the Trona Fire Department, who sponsored the circus. Yet, as I drove past the empty shells of former lives on the deserted outskirts of Trona, I couldn't help but believe I had fallen for some elaborate prank.

Then, there it was. The large blue and white circus tent sat on the Trona Joint Unified School District's dirt baseball field, with the timeless Trona "T" on the mountains in the background.

I say all this with nothing but good intentions for Trona. It's the most interesting town I've ever seen.

The entire town was built around a factory after borax was found in Searles Dry Lake, spawning the company Searles Valley Minerals. At the time, the area was too isolated for employees to commute, so the company built a town for them, including homes, schools, a hospital, a grocery store, and so on. They even used their own currency, which the locals called Trona Money.

As modern mechanization and computers developed, the company hired fewer employees, and the town's population slowly dwindled to its current population of roughly 1,900. The point is, this isn't where I would expect a circus to come, yet here a circus is.

The Trona Fire Department sponsored the Culpepper & Merriweather Circus performance, which brought the show to town. Christina Sanders, of the Trona Fire Department, explained that if the circus sold 100 tickets, the funds from any more tickets would go directly to the Fire Department.

San Bernardino County Fire Capt. Doris Van Horn said that the fire department was able to bring in \$1,500 from the event. She stated the funds will go towards Spark of Love, a toy drive held every year.

Culpepper & Merriweather perform with a traveling troupe in a one ring circus. Roughly 300 attended the each show, and attendees could sit close enough that Leo the Clown could talk to the crowd without a microphone.

The first performance of the night was Culpepper & Merriweather owner, Trey Key, performing with a male lion and two tigers. As he went about his performance, confidently controlling the crowd as he's certainly done hundreds of times before, a fighter jet from NAWA China Lake flew low over the show, its engines sending thunder through the tent.

The Trona crowd didn't even react to the noise, but it broke Key out of character. For a moment, he looked up, clearly not aware that this isolated desert town is a 30 minute drive from one of the most technologically advanced military research bases in the world. Yes, it was quite a night.

In total, the show consisted of an incredible variety of acts packed tightly into a 90 minute performance. They had dancing unicycle riders, high flying acrobatics, performing horses, jumping dogs, tight rope walkers, a twisting contortionist, and death defying spinning wheel walkers. Each performance held the crowd in a tense combination of disbelief and amazement.

Of course, there was also a clown. Leo the Clown came out to entertain the crowd through any downtime when the set needed adjusting. In most of his acts, Leo called for a volunteer from the crowd, whom he inevitably humiliated in good humor, though never more than he humiliated himself. At one point when Leo was relaxing behind the scenes, a little girl ran up to him, most likely asking to pick her as a volunteer if he called for one again.

The next time Leo went to the stage, he immediately called that same little girl, who happily ran up to him. With a loud, excited voice, he asked her to hold her hand up as high as she could. She did. Even more excited, he told her to make a strong fist. She did. Leo then took off his coat, hung it on her hand, then went into the ring to perform his act.

Throughout the night, performers played multiple roles. The contortionist also did face painting for kids. The senior unicycle rider sold balloons at a booth. The performers stayed around after the show to sign autographs and speak with the audience. All were quite friendly.

Culpepper & Merriweather Circus Officer Manager Alana Green said most of the performers come from two families. Circus runs in their blood. And at least during touring season, it is their entire life.

Green said their performing season runs from March through October, and the performers put on a show almost every single night through the entire season. Every night when the show ends, they pack everything up onto trucks and head off to the next town to set it all up again. They had come from Needles on Sunday, played in Trona on Monday, then were off to Lake Isabella on Tuesday.

The show left me with more to stimulate my curiosity than I had at the start. I drove home with my mind racing, imagining about what it must be like to be born into a circus family and earn your living by honing a skill so unique that most people have never even considered it an option, then performing it under a tent in the desert in the isolated town of Trona.

<http://www.ridgecrestca.com/article/20170427/NEWS/170429637>

Teen Survives 75-Foot Fall Near Heart Rock

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: April 27, 2017, 11:00 AM



The first helicopter responding to rescue a 17-year-old girl who fell at Heart Rock Trail was unable to reach the victim. A second helicopter successfully hoisted the injured girl, who was transported to Loma Linda Medical Center. Eric Sherman

A teenage girl survived a fall of approximately 75 feet down a steep ravine in the Camp Seeley area of Crestline on Saturday. The **San Bernardino County Fire Department** and San Bernardino County Sheriff's Aviation units teamed up to rescue the seriously injured girl.

Search and rescue crews also were kept especially busy rescuing hikers in remote areas in recent weeks. Dakota Strahl, 17, of Victorville, was hiking Heart Rock Trail, and was approximately one mile in from the trailhead when she fell. The fire department received the call for help at 2:40 p.m.

According to Eric Sherwin, public information officer for the fire department, three engines, heavy rescue and an ambulance with one chief officer responded. "Fire personnel hiked in and made patient contact," Sherwin said. "Due to the remote location, they determined that a hoist extraction would be easiest and safest."

Fire personnel then requested assistance from the San Bernardino County Sheriff. A Valley Patrol helicopter 40King4 quickly responded to the victim's location but could not complete the rescue because of the height of the trees in the area, a sheriff's statement said.

A second rescue helicopter, Sheriff's Air Rescue 307, was called. With a longer hoist length of more than 200 feet, the second helicopter lowered a medical crew down 220 feet to the victim, who suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

By 4:20 p.m., Strahl was placed in a rescue litter, hoisted up into the helicopter and flown to Loma Linda University Medical Center, the report stated.

Also on April 22, San Bernardino County Sheriff's dispatch received another call to rescue hikers. Late in the afternoon, Agustin Martinez, 40, of Riverside, called 9-1-1, stating that he and Martin Gutierrez, 51, also of Riverside, were stuck on Yucaipa Ridge after becoming lost while hiking.

A Desert Patrol helicopter 40King2 responded and located Gutierrez and Martinez in steep rocky terrain surrounded by snow and ice at the 8,500-foot level. Gutierrez and Martinez were unable to continue hiking due to treacherous terrain and darkness.

The helicopter crew decided that a nighttime hoist rescue would be too dangerous. The crew contacted Gutierrez and Martinez, who said they were prepared to stay overnight.

Meanwhile, Paul Franklin, the resident deputy in Angeles Oaks, deployed multiple search and rescue teams in an attempt to reach the stranded duo during the night. The teams, however, were forced to cancel their attempts upon reaching areas of snow, ice and steep cliffs. They decided to attempt a helicopter hoist rescue in the morning.

On Sunday around 6 a.m., sheriff's helicopter 40King3 went to the area and located the victims. The crew lowered rescue personnel down to the men. Both were placed into rescue harnesses, hoisted up to the helicopter and transported to sheriff's personnel nearby.

Both Gutierrez and Martinez were uninjured, but were seen by medical personnel as a precaution.

Among other incidents, another notable rescue occurred three weeks earlier, on March 31, when a lone hiker in the Mount Baldy Bowl area became stranded. Due to extreme wind conditions at the high elevation, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's helicopter was unable to conduct a hoist rescue of Ismael Sanchez, 25, of Placentia.

Rescue teams hiked through the night but were unable to reach Sanchez. According to a press release from the sheriff's department, wind speeds were near 80 miles per hour; trails were iced over; visibility was near zero; and, with the totality of the weather conditions, the temperature with wind chill factor was below zero degrees.

The following morning, the patrol helicopter again was unable to rescue Sanchez, due to high winds and adverse weather.

Search and rescue teams from San Bernardino, San Dimas and Sierra Madre met up with the initial West Valley team. Together they were able to locate Sanchez and escort him off the mountain.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_54828ce2-2b69-11e7-8aae-f32d225676e2.html

Fire Stations Getting Improvements

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: April 27, 2017, 11:00 AM



Keeping equipment and facilities in top condition are priorities when the San Bernardino Fire Department's Mountain Zone prepares the annual budget.

The Mountain Zone of the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** currently is making progress with one or more capital projects at each of its fire stations, according to Kathleen Opliger, division chief. “We have projects running at every station, to make them safe, energy efficient, modern and ADA-compliant,” she said, referring in the last item to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Concerned with both public and firefighter safety, the projects maintain the buildings and keep them modern, functional and cost efficient. Utility bills are lowered by changing the lighting. Bathroom additions, new office spaces and other remodeling projects meet ADA requirements, and repainting and reflooring naturally follow from the various projects.

The ability to carry out improvement projects stems from keeping the Mountain Zone in good financial shape. Opliger’s staff, based at Station 91 on State Highway 173 in Lake Arrowhead, is working on a new budget for the upcoming year, which serves to hold financial issues fresh in Opliger’s mind.

“Now is the time when we decide what to cut and how to balance the budget,” said Opliger. “The Mountain Zone continues to be healthy, so we are able to move forward with capital improvements.”

Opliger noted that her division’s budget is balanced against the need to improve the stations and equipment, as well as to provide proper living conditions for the firefighters.

Some fire stations are not so fortunate. “When financial problems arise, the first thing to go is the ability to maintain the fire station and equipment,” Opliger explained. “The priority is paying for salaries, medical supplies and medical equipment for the public. As a result, some fire stations become dilapidated.”

The first things eliminated, she said, are capital improvement projects and one-time expenses. By contrast, other things cannot be cut at all. It is always necessary to make payroll. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements are a priority, as are fresh medical supplies and equipment that firefighters need for rescue operations.

Such items are costly, and it is not unusual for fire departments to face financial challenges.

Opliger points to comments published in the past, and opinions have been expressed, that the county could take over an independent fire department and assess a tax if they wanted to do so. She clarified that such is not the case.

“Sometimes fire departments around us experience financial problems. Being annexed into the San Bernardino County Fire Department would be just one possibility.” Entering into a contract with a private fire department or Cal Fire are other voluntary options.

Opliger is dismayed that annexation by the county might be portrayed as something that is forced upon a fire department that has financial challenges. Opliger mentioned that “Some people lead you to believe that if the public does not approve a new tax for a fire department, that the county will take over and will tax them anyway,” but “That is not our business model.”

The county strives to be a good cooperater, available to lend support when needed. “If someone needs help,” according to Opliger, “it does not matter what color the fire equipment is. When there is an emergency, everyone responds.”

This is an advantage to being affiliated with the county, along with benefits that accrue from having additional fire trucks, helicopters, bulldozers and manpower available.

She further stated that if an independent fire department runs into financial trouble, “We just let them know that we are available. But the county would not be able to take over and impose taxes. We have no legal authority to do so, and we are not interested in that type of relationship.”

As asserted by Opliger, the county has nothing to gain when an independent fire department goes under. If a department is annexed, the county has to take on that department’s debt, retirement obligations, aging equipment and infrastructure. That’s what happened when the City of San Bernardino requested that it be annexed by the county.

Opliger added, “We don’t approach other fire departments; they approach us.” County Fire will provide information on what the county’s services would cost the community if they want to be annexed. “But we couldn’t take over. The other fire department will have to want it. We are only interested in ensuring that the public gets quick service from the nearest source of emergency assistance.”

When fire departments in Crest Forest, Twentynine Palms, Victorville and Running Springs ran into financial trouble, they had several options to consider.

Victorville decided to present citizens with a tax assessment, which was successfully passed.

Running Springs did not pass Measure B, a parcel tax that was defeated in the November 2016 election. Crest Forest and Twentynine Palms considered various options and decided to be annexed into the county’s fire department.

Opliger said that she was “very sad” to see Crest Forest lose its local fire department. Ultimately, “Crest Forest people were thrilled that it worked out as it did.” Part of that annexation was an effort to preserve the history of the Crest Forest Fire Department by setting up a museum and commemorative park.

“We budgeted money into that project,” Opliger stated. “The money in the budget is commensurate with what we are able to do in a given year. For example, we need to build a retaining wall, put up fencing and buy statuary for the trail. It’s a multi-year project. If the total cost will be \$70,000, we don’t budget it all in one year; we spread it out.”

Another commitment was to bring the staffing level from two fighters to three. “We did that last year,” Opliger noted. It was not, however, a matter of hiring one more person. “It means we hired three people because there are three shifts, and we needed one person for each shift.”

Fulfilling commitments is important to Opliger. “We have to be responsible and acceptable to the taxpayers, with ethical and responsible leadership.”

http://www.mountain-news.com/mountain_living/features/article_2508c7b6-2b6d-11e7-a4d3-c7520bd9c99d.html

Crestline Teen Hurt - One of Three Highway Rollovers

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: April 27, 2017 11:00 AM

A 16-year-old girl from Crestline was injured April 22 in a rollover accident, while two other recent rollovers—on State Highways 18 and 330—resulted in no injuries.

According to Officer J. Quintero, public information officer for the California Highway Patrol (CHP), the Crestline collision occurred at 8:30 Saturday evening. Matthew David Philip, 19, of Crestline, was driving his red 2014 Chevrolet Cruz on Crest Forest Drive, south of Skyland, at 40 miles per hour (mph), which Quintero described as a “high rate of speed.”

Philip was unable to navigate a turn. His Chevy left the road and veered onto the west shoulder, where it hit two bollards (thick, low steel posts) and a blow-off stand pipe. The vehicle continued down the road and rolled over onto its passenger side.

Philip’s teenage passenger suffered a concussion, back pain and lacerations to her face. At approximately 9:38 p.m., the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** transported the girl to Loma Linda Medical Center.

Philip was not injured. His vehicle was moderately damaged on its right side and right front, Quintero said.

Another rollover mishap also was a solo vehicle crash. Irving Serrano, 50, of Linwood, was driving 40 mph northbound on State Highway 18, north of Waterman, on April 16 around 9 a.m.

According to the CHP report, Serrano’s silver 2006 Audi A4 approached a right curve and, Serrano said, he realized that he was going too fast for the curve. The cruise control was engaged, and the engine revved up as he negotiated the curve.

Over-correcting to the right caused Serrano’s vehicle to veer off the highway. The Audi hit a hillside, rolled over onto its roof, and came to rest in the No. 2 northbound lane of Highway 18.

Serrano was not injured, and he had no passengers. The car sustained major damage.

Members of Rim Traffic’s Facebook page reported and photographed the other rollover incident. A green vehicle flipped onto its roof April 16 on Highway 330. CHP records had no information regarding the collision.

“When you are the solo-involved party,” Quintero explained, “You can decline to report it if you don’t damage anyone else’s property, if no one was injured and no one was transported to a hospital. It’s possible that the owner did not report that accident.”

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_75cb1c2e-2b6a-11e7-ab66-6b0b50a764d4.html

Fire engulfs home on Wednesday; 1 firefighter injured

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: April 27, 2017, 2:22 PM



Firefighters combat a blaze that tore through a Barstow home on Wednesday evening. Despite extreme winds, firefighters were able to keep the flames from spreading to nearby homes, but the home was unable to be saved. [Photo courtesy of the Barstow Fire Protection District]

BARSTOW — A firefighter suffered a minor injury while combating a blaze that tore through a home on Wednesday evening, authorities said.

The blaze erupted at a home in the 2700 block of Apollo Drive on Wednesday and took firefighters two hours to extinguish. The flames threatened neighboring homes due to extreme winds, Barstow Fire Protection District Interim Chief Jamie Williams said, but firefighters were able to keep the flames from spreading.

BFPD firefighters arrived at the home at 5:38 p.m. and found it fully engulfed in flames. With assistance from a Marine Corps Logistics Base mutual aid engine, firefighters contained the blaze within 30 minutes.

Williams said **San Bernardino County Fire Department** personnel also assisted by handling four additional emergency calls in the city as firefighters fought the flames. The blaze was completely extinguished within two hours.

One firefighter suffered a minor injury, Williams said, but no other injuries were reported due to the incident.

The cause of the blaze remains under investigation by the BFPD.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170427/fire-engulfs-home-on-wednesday-1-firefighter-injured>

Adelanto plans to staff a second fire engine

Nearly 6,000 calls a year have far exceeded the capability of a single engine tasked to cover 50-plus square miles and serve more than 30,000 residents.

Shea Johnson, Daily Press

Posted: April 27, 2017, 5:10 PM



Fire crews battled a two-alarm fire in December 2015 that destroyed an Adelanto home and nearby RV. [Daily Press file photo]

ADELANTO — By nodding OK to a fire services contract more expansive than in recent years, city leaders may have showed just how convinced they are of nearing positive returns for the Adelanto economy.

The City Council authorized staff Wednesday night to prepare a draft contract with **San Bernardino County Fire** that calls for staffing a second engine — a circumstance that hasn't been a reality since 2014 when the department down-staffed to just one, Asst. Fire Chief Dan Mejia said Thursday.

“Adding that second engine,” he said by phone, “will allow us to manage the call load in Adelanto.”

It's a volume, nearly 6,000 calls a year, which has far exceeded the capability of a single engine tasked to cover 50-plus square miles and serve more than 30,000 residents.

The increase to the contract, an effort to present a more sustainable plan, was one of two options in front of the Council that would bolster fire services. But this one in particular also made sense, city staff said, because Adelanto already has the second engine.

This second engine has been maintained and used as a back-up in situations when the main engine was out for repairs, Accounting Supervisor Penny Rose said.

A less expensive option, not recommended by city staff, would have added a paramedic squad in Adelanto yet required a paramedic vehicle, which the city doesn't have.

But staffing a second engine with a three-person crew, which would also allow the city to provide mutual aid to nearby jurisdictions whereas now it simply receives it, will also boost the contract cost. And that would appear to be problematic for a city that, at last count, was operating under a \$1.7-million deficit.

According to a city staff report, the new contract will cost \$4.15 million annually. By contrast, Adelanto is spending about \$2.24 million on the contract this fiscal year, a figure representing roughly 20 percent of general fund revenues.

Officials haven't specified exactly how the second engine staffing will be funded when the contract comes before the dais, but it's likely that the expected revenue surge from medical marijuana — expected to flip the general fund from red to black in this coming fiscal year — is being heavily leaned on.

City officials in February publicly hinted that fire protection would be among the first budget line items to receive attention as soon as the surplus began to flow.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170427/adelanto-plans-to-staff-second-fire-engine>

Homeless child killed while crossing Base Line in San Bernardino is identified

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: April 28, 2017, 6:24 AM



Police are investigating a crash that claimed the life of a 3-year-old boy Thursday, April 27, 2017, after he was struck while crossing Base Line, in a marked crosswalk, with his family. (Doug Saunders, staff, The Sun/SCNG)

SAN BERNARDINO >> The 3-year-old struck and killed by a reportedly drunken driver as the child crossed a San Bernardino street with his family has been identified as Michael Flores.

Michael was struck and killed Thursday evening after a truck apparently didn't stop for a family of four as it crossed Base Line at North Davidson Avenue in a marked crosswalk.

The homeless family was in the crosswalk, and cars were stopped to let them cross, when the Chevrolet pickup truck continued eastbound on Base Line, striking and killing the child, said police Lt. Brian Harris.

After the child was struck, police say the driver, later identified as Crystal Fuentes, 34, of San Bernardino, struck another car heading westbound before coming to a stop more than two blocks away.

Fuentes was arrested on suspicion of vehicular manslaughter and driving under the influence. She is expected to be in San Bernardino Superior court Monday, San Bernardino County booking records show.

Several residents of the neighborhood said the intersection is dangerous for pedestrians and said a signal was desperately needed.

Anyone wishing to help the family should contact the Salvation Army at 909-888-1336.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170428/homeless-child-killed-while-crossing-base-line-in-san-bernardino-is-identified>

Controlled Burn In Yucca Valley This Morning

Z107.7 News

Posted: April 28, 2017

The **County Fire Department** will clear out overgrown brush at the Hi-Desert Water District's recharge ponds in Yucca Valley through a controlled burn exercise Friday morning. Starting at 9 a.m., county firefighters will participate in the training drill to clear debris at the pond that may disrupt the water recharge process. Imported water from the State Water Project percolates into the ground at the pond sites to recharge groundwater supplies. If you see smoke and aren't sure whether it's coming from the recharge pond on Sunnyslope Drive and Pioneertown Road, call 911.

<http://z1077fm.com/controlled-burn-in-yucca-valley-this-morning/>