



NEWS



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Proudly on display: County Fire's Division 3 presented with large ceremonial American flag

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: November 14, 2017, 3:57 PM



San Bernardino County Firefighters fold up a 10-by-15-foot flag that was donated to Station 311 in Victorville. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

VICTORVILLE — Local fire officials can now honor those who've made the ultimate sacrifice with a proud display of the country's most esteemed symbol.

Thanks to the efforts of the local Woodmen Life chapter, **San Bernardino County Fire** Department's Division 3 — also referred to as the North High Desert Division — has a ceremonial American flag to fly. The donation came about after a retired County Fire captain got in touch with the organization, well known for placing the stars and stripes all throughout the country.

"We're second only to the U.S. government in giving away flags," local chapter Treasurer Jim Foster said. Under clear, sunny skies, the 15-by-10-foot flag was unfurled at County Fire's Station 311 in downtown Victorville on Monday afternoon. County Fire spokesman Ryan Vaccaro said the flag's use will be ceremonial.

"We can use it for 9/11 events, to honor fallen firefighters, or for memorials, where we'll hang the flag between two fire trucks," Vaccaro said.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20171114/proudly-on-display-county-fires-division-3-presented-with-large-ceremonial-american-flag>

Truck stop stabbing in Hesperia leads to Fresno man's arrest Monday

Paola Baker, Daily Press

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HESPERIA — Authorities placed a 29-year-old Fresno man behind bars after he allegedly stabbed another man at a truck stop here Monday evening.

County arrest logs show Joseph Eric Leroy was arrested after San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department officials connected him to the incident, which occurred at the Pilot Truck Stop at 8701 Highway 395 just before 7 p.m.

An argument over parking reportedly sparked the stabbing, according to Hesperia Sheriff's station spokeswoman Jackie Chambers, who said Leroy approached the victim, a 34-year-old man, in the truck stop's parking lot.

"An argument occurred, reportedly over how a vehicle was parked," Chambers said. "The suspect produced a weapon and attacked the victim."

San Bernardino County Fire Department spokesman Eric Sherwin said paramedics responded and found the man suffering from a stab wound. He was taken by ground ambulance to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center for treatment. No other injuries were reported.

Leroy was arrested on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon causing great bodily injury at the truck stop at 7:38 p.m., according to booking logs.

Leroy remains in custody at the Adelanto Detention Center in lieu of \$50,000 bail, booking records show, and is expected to appear in court Wednesday.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20171114/truck-stop-stabbing-in-hesperia-leads-to-fresno-mans-arrest-monday>

Measure J seemingly defeated

Paola Baker, Daily Press

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BARSTOW — Voters here appeared to have decided against a sales tax hike meant to bolster the city's fire district services, but supporters are holding on to hope amidst an extremely tight race.

Measure J, a half-cent sales tax, has apparently failed to reach the threshold needed to pass: Out of 1,975 total votes and all precincts reporting, almost 65 percent of voters approved the measure, in contrast to the 35 percent opposing it.

Unofficial election results released on Thursday showed 1,276 "Yes" voters have now been tallied — a small, but not unnoticed gain.

"We're hanging in there, watching the numbers inch closer," Barstow city spokesman Anthony Riley said. "We're going to continue to remain optimistic and allow the process to take place."

The measure — which needs a two-thirds majority to pass — would have imposed a half-cent sales tax throughout the city that's expected to generate an estimated \$3.8 million a year, with residents paying an average of \$47 a year, according to city officials. The funds were meant to be earmarked for the Barstow Fire Protection District, which has been financially struggling for some time.

City and fire officials said despite the disappointment, they hope the pendulum will keep swinging and make Measure J a reality.

"Certification isn't expected until the first week of December, so we're still hopeful," BFPD Fire Chief Jamie Williams said. "There's still people out there whose voice needs to be heard."

With a little over 1,000 ballots throughout the county that still need to be counted, Riley said officials were "holding their breath" until officials results are released.

"It's hard in a special election because of the low voter turnout, but despite that low turnout, the numbers were impressive," Riley said. "At a local level like this, every vote counts."

Williams agreed, and thanked residents who got involved in campaigning for the measure.

"Over 65 percent of our community came out to support us," Williams said. "And we're still trending in the right direction. We might still pull it off. It's possible."

The measure was touted as a way for residents to maintain local accountability. City and fire officials both stated the measure would allow the BFPD to stay local, while allowing residents to have their voice heard. With Measure J seemingly defeated, city officials will now be looking at a limited set of alternatives to maintain fire services. The most likely option would be the City Council annexing the BFPD into the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

The region would then fall under the umbrella of County Fire's FP-5 parcel tax, estimated to be about \$150 for every parcel in the city. That tax would increase 3 percent each year thereafter.

Final certified election results are expected to be released at the beginning of December. Until then, Barstow will wait with bated breath.

“We’re hopeful here in Barstow,” Williams said. “We’re not giving up yet.”

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20171114/measure-j-seemingly-defeated>