



NEWS



News Headlines 9/20/2017

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Houses ablaze at Johannesburg historic mining town

Gail Wesson, The Press-Enterprise

Posted: September 19, 2017, 8:32 PM

Two houses burned to the ground and two others were threatened Tuesday in the former mining town of Johannesburg on Highway 395 at the Kern-San Bernardino County line, according to a **San Bernardino County Fire Department** report.

The latter two homes were saved by firefighters, according to Eric Sherwin, department spokesman. “It doesn’t appear that anyone was home at the time of the fire.”

Sherwin on Wednesday morning said neither firefighters nor civilians were injured in the fires.

Firefighters were expected to remain at the scene into the night doing extensive mop up.

The fire was reported at 5:55 p.m. in the 700 block of Highway 395, the southeastern edge of the town. The fire was knocked down by about 6:45 p.m.

The Kern County Fire Department was assisting. Propane tanks were exploding during the blaze and in daylight, smoke was visible from 10 miles away.

The cause of the fire was under investigation.

Johannesburg is one of three small unincorporated towns, the others are Randsburg and Red Mountain, in the area with a rich history of mining, that today are more like ghost towns. They are at the San Bernardino-Kern county line.

The towns are about 20 miles south of Ridgecrest with many of the original mining cabins and a few commercial buildings from the mining era still standing.

<http://www.sbsun.com/2017/09/19/houses-ablaze-at-johannesburg-historic-mining-town/>

How a \$300K grant will mean better training for San Bernardino County firefighters

Ryan Hagen, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: September 19, 2017, 5:29 PM

SAN BERNARDINO >> County firefighters will be able to train more frequently and with upgraded equipment thanks to a newly secured \$304,000 grant.

Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-San Bernardino, announced the grant from the Department of Homeland Security on Monday.

The money will be used to purchase a mobile Class B fire simulator, replacing an older stationary model at the Richard Sewell Regional Training Center in San Bernardino.

“The AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grant) Program has afforded **San Bernardino County Fire Protection District** the opportunity to continue providing state-of-the-art training equipment to our firefighters, in turn providing our citizens with premier fire services,” Fire Chief Mark Hartwig said in a statement. “With a service area stretching over 19,000 square miles, the mobile simulator is an invaluable training tool.”

The existing simulator is more than a decade old — meaning it’s missing multiple generations of improvements — and too far from fire stations that have to be kept consistently staffed, said fire department spokeswoman Tracey Martinez.

Soon, the simulator will be brought to the fire stations, allowing them to train more often.

“Sometimes people have to travel up to four hours to come to the training facility, so this will give us an opportunity to train more firefighters with it,” Martinez said. “It’s a state-of-the-art simulator that will provide life-saving training.”

Acceptance of the grant still has to be approved by the county Board of Supervisors, then the simulator needs to be bought, so it could be six months before it’s available for training, Martinez said.

The AFG program has distributed \$6.7 billion in grant funding to fire departments across the country since 2001 as part of the federal government’s disaster preparedness efforts, according to Aguilar. That includes \$275,000 secured by the Colton Fire Department in July.

“Inland Empire first responders have proven their heroism time and time again, and San Bernardino County Fire is no exception,” Aguilar said in a statement. “These federal dollars will go toward training and equipment that will keep our community even safer. By acquiring a mobile fire simulator, the San Bernardino County Fire Department can ensure that firefighters throughout our community have access to lifesaving training.”

<http://www.sbsun.com/2017/09/19/how-a-300k-grant-will-mean-better-training-for-san-bernardino-county-firefighters/>

12 Highlanders displaced by 6th Street fire

Hector Hernandez Jr., Highland Community News

Posted: September 19, 2017 2:25 PM



Firefighters from seven agencies swarm a Highland apartment fire on Tuesday, Sept. 19.

A two-alarm apartment building fire displaced a dozen Highland residents from their homes at Pinehurst Apartments on Sixth Street Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 19, but thanks to a large multi-agency response firefighters limited the fire to one building and no injuries.

At about 10:15 a.m. firefighters from the Highland Fire Department first responded to the fire reported "with flames out the window" on the second story of an apartment building at 6th Street and Central Avenue. The attic fire involved four units and filled the apartment complex with smoke and firefighters. According to witnesses, the fire started in a vacant apartment.

Robert Raymond was in his attached apartment unaware of the fire when neighbors came pounding at the door to evacuate him and Rene Guidubaldi from the burning building.

Jessica Watkins was one of those neighbors. Her husband made the 911 call.

"First we saw smoke, looked and saw the back window was exploding," Watkins said. "We ran upstairs and helped get them out to a safe distance."

Upon arrival, Highland firefighters called in a second alarm because it was an active fire in a multi-family structure, summoning 13 fire crews from seven neighboring agencies. According to Capt. Debbie Chapman, CalFire public information officer, the crews brought 10 engines, two ladder trucks and a breathing apparatus.

Responding agencies included Highland Fire, San Manuel Fire, Redlands Fire, **San Bernardino County Fire**, Colton Fire, Rialto Fire, San Bernardino County Sheriff, Edison and Southern California Gas Company. The Red Cross is also assisting those displaced by the fire due to burn and smoke damage and the turning off of electricity and gas.

According to Chapman, the fire's cause is under investigation.

http://www.highlandnews.net/news/crime_and_fire/highlanders-displaced-by-th-street-fire/article_1aa3c772-9d81-11e7-bad7-4b10c1691781.html