



NEWS



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Two people are hurt in rollover collision in Fontana on May 5

Mike Myers, Fontana Herald News

Posted: May 6, 2019



Two people were injured in this rollover collision in the intersection of East Avenue and Miller Avenue in Fontana on May 5. (Contributed photo by Mike Myers)

Two vehicles were involved in a rollover traffic accident in a residential area in the northwestern portion of Fontana on May 5.

The Fontana Police Department and the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department responded to the collision at about 5:16 p.m. in the 7600 block of East Avenue.

A red Chevy pickup and a black Nissan Versa collided in the intersection at East Avenue and Miller Avenue. The driver of the red Chevy rolled over and landed in the center divider on Miller.

Two people were treated by emergency medical responders and transported with unknown injuries to a local hospital.

According to a Fontana P.D. officer, the cause of the crash was not immediately known.

The Fontana P.D. is handling the investigation.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/two-people-are-hurt-in-rollover-collision-in-fontana-on/article_c43c5694-7018-11e9-9f28-8380a062af3a.html

23-year-old man killed in head-on crash on Phelan Road Monday

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: May 6, 2019



The Victorville CHP is investigating a crash that left a 23-year-old Phelan man deceased early Monday morning. CHP officers at the scene said the driver of the Hyundai was on his way to work when the crash happened. (Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

PHELAN, Calif. (VVNG.com) — A man died as a result of a head-on traffic collision early Monday morning that shut down Phelan Road, officials said.

The driver who died may have been driving the wrong way.

At about 2:50 a.m., **San Bernardino County Fire** and the California Highway Patrol were dispatched to the crash on Phelan Road and Vinton Road.

Upon arrival, emergency crews located a white 2012 Hyundai Sonata and a gray 1992 Mazda pickup truck with major front-end damage.

According to CHP Officer B. Diaz with the Victorville Station, the Mazda pickup truck was being driven westbound on Phelan Road by a 23-year-old man from Phelan, and the Hyundai was being eastbound by a 22-year-old man from Piñon Hills.

“Per witness statements, the pickup truck was heading westbound in the eastbound lanes, approximately 10 miles per hour,” Officer Diaz said. “That’s when the head-on traffic collision occurred.”

Officer Diaz said the two vehicles collided in the eastbound lanes. The Hyundai was traveling at speeds of about 55 miles per hour.

Witnesses told officers the truck up was traveling on the wrong side of the road, as far back as the train tracks.

First Responders pronounced the driver of the pickup truck deceased at the scene. The driver of the Hyundai sustained only minor injuries.

Phelan Road is shut down as of 4:30 am as officials investigate and await the coroner’s response.

Traffic is being diverted along a shoulder of the road and motorist should expect delays.

Anyone who may have witnessed the crash is urged to contact the CHP office at (760)241-1186.

<https://www.vvng.com/23-year-old-man-killed-in-head-on-crash-on-phelan-road-monday/>

Big Bear’s fire escape routes high risk

Matthew Cabe, Daily Press

Posted: May 5, 2019, 12:01 am

There are three main routes out of the Big Bear Valley, but what happens when one of those routes proves too dangerous for evacuations during a large-scale wildfire?

That question became a reality during the Old Fire, which burned more than 91,000 acres after joining the Grand Prix Fire in October 2003. More than 1,000 structures were destroyed and six people were killed, ranking the Old Fire 11th and 16th, respectively, on CALFIRE’s lists of the 20 most-destructive and deadliest wildfires in state history.

The Old Fire was one of 14 major fires that burned simultaneously during what the U.S. Department of Agriculture later dubbed the “California Fire Siege of 2003.” By the time all 14 were extinguished, 24 lives were lost, 3,710 homes were gone and more than 750,000 acres were scorched.

For Big Bear Fire Department Chief Jeff Willis, the Old Fire is one that’s difficult to forget. He told the Daily Press evacuations were complicated by an influx of people in the Big Bear area at the time.

“The first communities that were evacuated were Lake Arrowhead and Running Springs, and the evacuation route that most chose was coming to Big Bear,” Willis said. “A few days later ... the Big Bear community needed to be evacuated, so we experienced a situation where we were artificially high (in population).”

The three routes out of the Big Bear Valley are highways 330, 38 and 18, Willis said. During the Old Fire, an estimated 80,000 full-time residents were evacuated from the San Bernardino Mountains between Oct. 25 and Oct. 29, according to a 2003 Daily Press report.

Evacuees in Big Bear experienced a 28-mile traffic jam into Lucerne Valley on Highway 18. Willis said that route was shut down, which “forced the issue on the other two” highways.

Ultimately, the Old Fire never reached Big Bear and none of the six deaths occurred there, but the small number routes available for evacuations remains a pressing issue.

An analysis released last week by the USA TODAY Network-California placed the ZIP codes that comprise Big Bear, Minnelusa and Sugarloaf within the worst 1% statewide when it comes to population-to-evacuation-route ratios.

Another community included within the worst 1% was Paradise, the Northern California town decimated by the 153,336-acre Camp Fire that killed 85 in November.

Paradise, as well as Big Bear, Minnelusa and Sugarloaf, are considered very high risk zones, according to the USA TODAY analysis.

Paradise had five two-lane roads and one four-lane road leading out of town, according to an Associated Press report based on the analysis. The Camp Fire forced officials to close three of those routes, further clogging the remaining roads.

Looking at ZIP codes and multiple population data sets, the analysis found, on average, 134 Californians living in the riskiest areas for each lane of traffic going in either direction. Only one out of 20 ZIP codes had more than 313 people living in the riskiest areas for each lane of traffic.

Paradise had more than 1,000.

But some areas, such as Oak Park in Ventura County, South Lake Tahoe in El Dorado County or the Palos Verdes Peninsula in Los Angeles County, have two, three or five times the number of people living in the highest-risk zones, per lane of major roadway out, compared to Paradise.

No other section of San Bernardino County was within the worst 1%, but Caltrans spokesperson Terri Kasinga said the expanse of the agency’s District 8, which includes 49 cities in San Bernardino and Riverside counties, doesn’t decrease congestion during evacuations when major fires break out.

“It actually increases congestion with substantial delays on multiple routes surrounding the incident on both state and local roadways,” Kasinga said. “Caltrans, CHP and other partner agencies provide viable detours during incidents in an attempt to mitigate traffic impacts.”

How District 8’s road infrastructure fares amid fires that prompt evacuations depends “on the location and magnitude of the incident,” according to Kasinga. She said the detours offered prove “sustainable” during large-scale incidents.

During 2016's Bluecut Fire, which burned 37,000 acres, Kasinga said Caltrans worked with the California Highway Patrol, and the San Bernardino County Fire and Sheriff's departments as part of Incident Command in addition to San Bernardino County Emergency Management.

"Caltrans has multiple plans to respond to natural and man-made disasters," Kasinga said, including a Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government Plan, an Emergency Operations Plan, a Technology Recovery Plan and the Pandemic Response Plan.

"The COOP/COG does not replace any of those plans; however, it complements them," she said.

Between 80,000 and 86,000 residents in the West Cajon Valley, local mountains and part of the High Desert found themselves in the Bluecut Fire's sprawling evacuation area, according to **County Fire** and Sheriff's Department officials.

Spokesperson Jodi Miller said the Sheriff's Department believes less than half of those residents complied with the evacuation orders. Even so, the "sheer volume hinders getting residents out of the area," according to County Fire spokesperson Tracey Martinez.

Martinez added, though, that County Fire had an "extensive" plan in place to ensure the timely evacuation of all 80,000+ residents had they left, as well as three portable shelters capable of housing more than 15,000 people combined.

"One of the arsenals in our tool box is the Telephone Emergency Notification System," she said. "We use TENS only in crisis situations."

The system uses listed and unlisted numbers in the region's 911 database to alert residents of life-threatening emergencies. It's updated every six months and has placed hundreds of thousands of calls during wildfires and flood events since 2004.

But the 911 database only includes landline phones. Martinez said county residents can visit www.SBCounty.gov/SBCFire/TENS/TENSContact.aspx to register their cell phones. Those without internet access can dial 211 to sign up.

Willis, meanwhile, said at least half a dozen wildfires have posed some type of threat to the Big Bear area in the last decade, meaning the community must be constantly prepared.

He said the most effective approach requires a "holistic" program that starts with his department's capability, capacity, training and equipment, and includes reducing risks in the community by ensuring residents replace shingle roofs and create defensible space around their homes.

Despite the congestion that resulted on roads, Willis said the Old Fire was a good example of early evacuation orders, which are also crucial.

"California is highly fire prone," Willis said. "You're not going to find anywhere else in the United States that compares to California ... so all those things have got to come together."

<https://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20190505/big-bears-fire-escape-routes-high-risk>

Overtaken truck and trailer causing traffic delays on 15 Freeway in Hesperia

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: May 4, 2019



Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News

HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) A dark-colored Chevy pickup truck hauling a trailer overturned and is causing delays for travelers on the 15 Freeway Saturday.

The incident was reported at about 3:47 p.m. on the northbound 15 Freeway near Rancho Road.

For an unknown reason, the driver of the Chevy lost control and overturned and blocked the number 3 and 4 lanes.

The California Highway Patrol and **San Bernardino County Fire** responded to the crash and reported no injuries, per scanner traffic.

Both north and southbound direction of travel on the 15 Freeway were experiencing heavy delays in the immediate area.

<https://www.vvng.com/overtaken-truck-and-trailer-causing-traffic-delays-on-15-freeway-in-hesperia/>

Coroner ID's pedestrian struck and killed by vehicle on Phelan Road Tuesday night

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: May 4, 2019



A female pedestrian was killed after she was struck by a vehicle on Phelan Road Thursday night.(Photo by Colin Opseth, for Victor Valley News)

HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) — The San Bernardino County Coroner's Office identified the woman struck and killed by a vehicle Tuesday night as Bertha Magana-Rios, 37, a resident of Phelan.

It happened on May 2, 2019, in the area of Phelan Road and Beaver Avenue in the unincorporated area of Hesperia.

First responders arrived on scene and located Bertha in the roadway with CPR already in progress. She was pronounced deceased at 9:10 pm, by **San Bernardino County Fire** department personnel.

Family friend, Brittanie Anne Taylor, told Victor Valley News Bertha or more commonly known by people who knew her as "Alicia" died right in front of her family home.

According to Taylor, Bertha had just gotten off at the bus stop and was using a flashlight and cane as she tried to walk across the street.

“She was crossing the street to get to her house which was directly across from the bus stop,” said Taylor. “Bertha lived with Cerebral Palsy which made it difficult for her to run or scurry across the road.”

Bertha’s flashlight and cane were found on Phelan Rd along with her other belongings.

The female driver of the involved vehicle, a blue 2016 Toyota Scion iM, remained at the scene and cooperated with authorities.

In a comment, Taylor said the victim’s father, Joseph McCoy, understands this was a tragic accident.

“While his heart is full of grief at this time, he holds no animosity nor malice. His thoughts and prayers are with the other family’s who were also affected by this tragedy. He feels there is no forgiveness needed because there was no ill intent or maliciousness. Joseph’s wish and desire is that God may assuage their hearts and free them of any guilt they may be feeling. If anyone involved would like to get in contact with Joseph, you can email him at josephemccoy@yahoo.com

He would also like to express his appreciation to all the emergency services personal that worked so diligently to save her life. Their professionalism and kindness were of great comfort to him.”

The cause of the crash is under investigation by the Victorville CHP Office.

<https://www.vvng.com/coroner-ids-pedestrian-struck-and-killed-by-vehicle-on-phelan-road-tuesday-night/>

Crews tackle small brush fire north of Big Bear near Holcomb Valley Pinnacles

Jonah Valdez, San Gabriel Tribune

Posted: May 4, 2019, 3:56 pm



A brush fire burned about a quarter acre near the Holcomb Valley Pinnacles, a popular climbing spot, north of Big Bear on Saturday, May 4, 2019. (Courtesy of U.S. Forest Service)

A brush fire Saturday burned a quarter acre near a popular climbing area in Holcomb Valley, north of Big Bear, authorities said.

The fire was caused by a trailer that caught fire, which then spread to the surrounding vegetation, said Zach Behrens, spokesman for the San Bernardino National Forest. The trailer was parked near the Holcomb Valley Pinnacles, a popular climbing area.

Initial reports of smoke rising from the area came in to fire personnel at 1:40 p.m. Once fire crews arrived, they saw visitors using shovels to throw dirt on the blaze, Behrens said.

Fire crews with the U.S. Forest Service and the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department were able to gain the upper hand on the brush fire by about 3 p.m., said Eric Sherwin, spokesman for county fire. Also, two small Cal Fire tankers flew by and dropped fire retardant in the area, Behrens said.

Sherwin said the fire was never a threat to residents.

As of 4 p.m., the fire was 95 percent contained.

It was not immediately clear how the trailer caught fire.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2019/05/04/crews-tackle-small-brush-fire-north-of-big-bear-near-holcomb-valley-pinnacles/>

Semi hauling cars loses brakes and crashes near Highway 138 and 15 Freeway

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: May 3, 2019



(Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

CAJON PASS, (PHELAN, Calif.) — CHP Officer Pedro Sanchez said a semi-truck hauling cars reportedly lost his brakes and crashed Friday.

At about 4 p.m., the yellow semi trailer was traveling on the southbound 15 freeway exiting the Highway 138 offramp when he was unable to stop.

“From witness statements he was sounding his air horn attempting to alert other drivers,” stated Officer Sanchez. “But apparently his brakes failed and he went across State Route 138 and overturned here in the embankment.”

San Bernardino County Fire arrived on scene and treated the male driver for minor injuries. He was the only occupant. As a precaution, the driver was transported to a hospital. No other injuries were reported.

This is the same offramp where a dump truck lost their brakes in June of 2014, killing two teenagers from Phelan and injuring three others.

The identity of the driver was not available.

<https://www.vvng.com/semi-hauling-cars-loses-brakes-and-crashes-near-highway-138-and-15-freeway/>

Elderly woman airlifted after head-on crash involving 2 pickup trucks on SR-18 in Lucerne Valley

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: May 3, 2019

LUCERNE VALLEY, Calif. (VVNG.com) — An elderly woman was airlifted to a trauma center following a head-on crash involving two pickup trucks Friday afternoon.

It happened at 5:23 pm, on May 3, 2019, along State Route 18 in front of the Mitsubishi Cement Plant in Lucerne Valley.

According to the California Highway Patrol incident logs, a black Dodge Ram and a white Dodge Dakota collided head-on leaving the passenger in the white vehicle trapped.

Firefighters responded to the scene and confirmed extrication would be required on one person and two other people sustained minor injuries.

Extrication on the trapped occupant was completed by 5:50 pm, radio traffic reported.

County Helicopter H325 was requested to the scene and landed at the Mitsubishi Cement Plant.

The woman was airlifted to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. An update on her condition was not available.

CHP Victorville is investigating the cause of the crash. Additional information will be updated as it becomes available.

<https://www.vvng.com/elderly-woman-airlifted-after-head-on-crash-involving-2-pickup-trucks-on-sr-18-in-lucerne-valley/>