



# NEWS



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## 12,000-pound spark of interest

Martial Haprov, the Daily Press

Posted: December 10, 2017, 5:45 p.m.



A 12,000- pound steel beam, which was once part of one of the World Trade Center towers that collapsed on Sept. 11, 2001, sits on display in front of Hesperia's Super Target at the Spark of Love toy drive event on Saturday. [ Martial Haprov, for the Daily Press]

**HESPERIA** — It sat quietly but prominently, never saying a word but telling a powerful story.

Shoppers bustled back and forth past the massive object, some stopping to silently to take in its sight and ponder its connection to an event that changed history forever.

The object, a steel beam from one of the World Trade Center towers that collapsed on Sept. 11, 2001, currently belongs to San Bernardino County Professional Firefighters Local 935, which takes it to special events as a mobile memorial, according to Steve Tracy, training captain with the **San Bernardino County** Fire Department.

“It’s a 12,000-pound reminder of the sacrifice public safety personnel makes every single day,” Tracy told the Daily Press. “We bring it to any major public event to share it with everybody — it always sparks interest.” The memorial was on display Saturday afternoon in front of Super Target here as County Fire, in conjunction with ABC7, held its centerpiece Spark of Love toy drive event.

The department has toy drop-off spots for the drive at all of its stations throughout the county during the holiday season, now in its 25th year. Saturday’s event was the “big one for our division,” said Jason McLaughlin, county fire engineer and event organizer.

All toys collected through the department’s efforts during the drive stay in the community where they were donated, according to McLaughlin.

“We have a lot of need up here,” McLaughlin said. “It’s important for us to work hard (in collecting donations). So we’re out here with (the memorial), interacting with the public as much as possible.” In addition to toys, the drive also accepts cash donations which McLaughlin says go to purchase gifts for kids who might not be targeted in the toy donations.

“There’s always a shortage for certain age groups, usually preteen and teenagers,” he said. “We’ll come back on Wednesday to buy stuff for those age groups. (Target) hosts the event for us and gives us a killer deal on that stuff.”

The department then partners with volunteers from the Children’s Fund who will distribute the toys to local kids. Those volunteers will also join county fire when they shop for the additional gifts on Wednesday. “Several of those ladies are much better at picking out gifts than we are,” McLaughlin said with a laugh. As for the memorial, Tracy tells the Daily Press it’ll continue to visit public events where there’s a need for a visual marker of history.

“In the fire service, we don’t ever leave anybody behind and we never forget either,” Tracy said. “This is a piece of American history, (and the toy drive event) is a respectful way to present it. We’re pretty proud of it.” Visit any of the county fire stations — go to [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org) for locations — to donate a toy or money for the annual Spark of Love drive. Checks for monetary donations should be made out to the San Bernardino County Firefighters Association.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20171210/12000-pound-spark-of-interest>

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### **Small brush fire in Rancho Cucamonga near 15 Freeway, Baseline is snuffed out**

Stephen Ramirez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: December 10, 2017, 9:24 a.m.

A small brush fire that broke out Sunday morning, Dec. 10 near the 15 Freeway and Baseline in Rancho Cucamonga has been put out, fire officials said.

The blaze was reported at 7:08 a.m., the Rancho Cucamonga Fire Department announced via Twitter. The fire was contained at 5 acres and residents of several nearby apartments were evacuated, but they were able to return just after 8 a.m. No structural damage or injuries were reported.

The northbound side of the 15 was blocked while crews worked on the fire, but the freeway was re-opened at 8:20 a.m., Caltrans reported.

Cal Fire San Bernardino and the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department assisted in controlling the blaze.

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/2017/12/10/small-brush-fire-in-rancho-cucamonga-near-the-15-freeway-baseline-road-snuffed-out/>

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### **Santa visits Christmas bonfires**

Rhea-Frances Tetley, The Alpen Horn News

Posted: December 10, 2017

The annual Mountain Christmas Bon Fires have been sponsored by the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department in Lake Arrowhead and Blue Jay for many years and Crestline was added when County Fire became that area’s local fire agency.

The three events welcome Santa to town and build good community spirit with a get together that includes hot chocolate to help warm folks on the frosty nights. “I’m having lots of fun and am gonna tell Santa I want an X-box,” said Johnny Franklin, 9, of Crestline.

The first bonfire this year was held in Blue Jay just after Thanksgiving weekend, Crestline’s was held on the North Shore of Lake Gregory on Saturday, December 2. The Fireman’s Bonfire, in Lake Arrowhead Village,

which was to be held on Monday, was postponed due to high winds. The main focus of these three events is the arrival of Santa Claus and his listening to the wishes of the small children.

Saturday night in Crestline, Santa not only heard the wishes of hundreds of kids and had his picture taken with them by their parents, the Crestline Chamber also offered free hotdogs and hot chocolate, plus free presents for children under 10 years of age. Santa was very patient and spent time with each child.

The bonfires are created in parking lots by the fire department using left over wooden pallets and are carefully monitored by the firefighters throughout the evening. Representatives from Cal Fire are on hand with their fire truck in case anything goes wrong. After everyone leaves, the firefighters carefully extinguish the bonfire and disassemble the fire pit, all without injury to the parking lots.

The annual, mountain bonfires have been a kid favorite on these mountains for years, and a warm and toasty way to welcome Santa.

<http://alpenhornnews.com/santa-visits-christmas-bonfires-p8508-155.htm>

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## **Recount requested after tight race: Falling 30 votes short, Barstow remains hopeful over Measure J**

**Paola Baker, VVDaily Press**

Posted: December 9, 2017, 8:18 p.m.

**BARSTOW** — The city has requested a recount of the recent special election results after Measure J was narrowly defeated last month.

The recount request was filed by City Manager Curt Mitchell on Dec. 4, a week after official election results showed Measure J — a half-cent sales tax meant to bolster the struggling Barstow Fire Protection District — failed to reach the two-thirds majority needed to pass.

City Clerk JoAnn Cousino listed the certified results during the Dec. 4 City Council meeting. According to Cousino, 2,060 ballots were turned in for the special election. A total of 1,372 “Yes” votes were ultimately tallied — a gain not unnoticed by the Council — but it wasn’t enough to make the measure a reality.

“This ran short of the 66-percent or two-thirds majority needed. We were short 30 votes,” Cousino said.

The request asks the county to recount all Measure J ballots by hand in light of what Assistant City Attorney Matthew Summers called “a variety of community concerns regarding the conduct of that election.”

City Council members have been adamant in stating they wouldn’t give up control of the Barstow Fire Protection District so easily, expressing their disappointment at its failure while still holding on to hope final results would turn things around.

Measure J would have imposed a half-cent sales tax throughout the city 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 BFPD. It was highly touted as a way for residents to maintain local accountability.

The City Council unanimously approved the ratification of the recount request, as well as authorizing the payment of all costs associated with the recount. Summers said the recount was expected to start last week.

“It must start within seven days of the request, and then continues every business day thereafter until complete,” Summers said.

Some residents brought up concerns about potential costs, with longtime resident Mike Hernandez expressing his surprise that the city didn’t have further details. Summers said the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters had not yet provided an estimate but was expected to sometime last week. The Council can drop the recount request if costs are excessive, he said.

Councilman Rich Harpole sought to assuage these concerns by stating that previous recount efforts he was aware of typically cost between \$5,000 to \$8,000.

“I’m led to believe it’s going to be in that general ballpark. I would be surprised if it exceeded that,” Harpole said.

But another resident, Francis Schauwecker, said she backed the recount — and costs related to it — after seeing the “big disappointment” over its failure.

“If we’re looking at 2,000-plus ballots, I’m sure that’s not going to be more than eight hours of work,” Schauwecker said. “I’d like to see the costs remain reasonable, but If we find that there’s 31 ballots in favor of this measure, I think it’s a small price to pay.”

Schauwecker’s comments also seemed to suggest the measure may not have failed if the community had been more informed on the matter.

“I came across a lot of people who didn’t know about this measure, they didn’t know what it was, and they couldn’t understand the language,” Schauwecker said. “So if we can really get out to the community, speak to them on their level, we might be able to get some more support.”

The next City Council meeting is scheduled at 7 p.m. Dec. 20 at City Hall. Visit [www.barstowca.org](http://www.barstowca.org) for more information and to watch archived meetings.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20171209/recount-requested-after-tight-race-falling-30-votes-short-barstow-remains-hopeful-over-measure-j>

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## **Metzler appointed to serve as interim city manager in Victorville**

Shea Johnson, VV Daily Press

Posted: December 7, 2017, 11:26 a.m.

The City Council voted in closed session to appoint Metzler — who had been the logical choice — to act as city manager and also to authorize City Attorney Andre de Bortnowsky to negotiate a contract with him.

VICTORVILLE — Keith Metzler, the assistant city manager, will be the interim top administrator effective Jan. 1, tapped by policymakers Tuesday evening to fill the position being vacated by Doug Robertson who will become the new Apple Valley town manager.

The City Council voted in closed session to appoint Metzler — who had been the logical choice — to act as city manager and also to authorize City Attorney Andre de Bortnowsky to negotiate a contract with him.

City spokeswoman Sue Jones said Wednesday she did not immediately have details about the next steps, expected to include launching a recruitment process for a permanent hire, but that those details might come at the next Council meeting.

Robertson's looming departure comes after 15 years spent in Victorville, including the past six as city manager. He'll be only the fourth chief administrator in Apple Valley since the town incorporated nearly 30 years ago, replacing retired Town Manager Frank Robinson.

Speaking personally, Jones said Robertson had proven himself to be personable and extremely involved in the city during the two years since she was hired, also giving employees the latitude to independently perform their jobs.

"I think he truly cares about this area," Jones said, "and he doesn't just give lip service to that, he rolls up his sleeves."

In a statement Wednesday, Mayor Gloria Garcia called Robertson "a great asset" who was "the right city manager for us during some difficult times."

"We benefited from Doug's creative approach to problem solving and his passion to innovate," Garcia said. "While we are saddened to see Doug leave, he assembled a very talented team that gives us confidence about the future including Keith Metzler, who will become interim city manager in January."

Meanwhile, Garcia was appointed by the Council to serve again as mayor, the face of elected leadership in Victorville, a role she will assume for the fourth-straight year. Mayor Pro Tem Jim Cox was re-appointed as well, also to serve in his role for the fourth year in a row.

The appointments were nearly unanimous at the dais, except Councilwoman Blanca Gomez rejected tapping Garcia as she suggested Cox maintained the superior leadership skills necessary from the city's mayoral figurehead.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20171207/metzler-appointed-to-serve-as-interim-city-manager-in-victorville>