



NEWS



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Chase ends in crash in Adelanto on Friday afternoon

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: April 7, 2017, 2:12 PM



San Bernardino County Deputies and firefighters respond to a collision in Adelanto CA on Friday April 7, 2017. The collision occurred after a wanted man led deputies on a high speed pursuit through Hesperia and Victorville then ending in Adelanto. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

ADELANTO — Authorities arrested an 18-year-old man who led deputies on a high-speed chase before colliding with two vehicles on Highway 395 and Air Expressway, causing injuries, on Friday afternoon.

Thomas Buckner was arrested on suspicion of failing to yield and a hit-and-run collision following the incident, which began on Hesperia Road around 1:20 p.m. Friday. The incident saw San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department deputies chasing Buckner through city streets, a stretch of Interstate 15, and Highway 395 before he crashed into two vehicles just before 2 p.m.

Five people, including two small children, suffered minor injuries in the crash, authorities said.

Buckner fled on foot after the crash occurred, with scanner traffic indicating he ran towards a nearby water tank. Deputies set up a perimeter and Buckner was located and taken into custody, authorities said.

The chase began at 1:24 p.m. when a Victorville Sheriff's Station deputy observed a black Crown Victoria in an area near Hesperia Road and Center Street and believed he recognized a wanted suspect inside the vehicle, authorities said. The suspect, later identified as Buckner, failed to yield for a traffic stop, instead traveling through city streets at high speeds.

Buckner was involved in a "non-injury" hit and run crash as he fled, and the pursuit was terminated as he was driving erratically, authorities said.

A short time later, a patrol deputy observed a vehicle driving erratically and initiated a traffic stop. The driver, later identified as Buckner, again failed to yield and instead continued driving throughout Victorville and not complying with traffic laws, authorities said.

According to scanner traffic, Buckner jumped on northbound Interstate 15 before getting off on Palmdale Road. He reportedly also caused a property damage crash at the Palmdale and Amethyst roads intersection a little after 1:30 p.m. No injuries have yet been reported from this incident.

Buckner then led authorities eastbound on Seneca Road, near Victorville City Hall, then westbound on Hook Boulevard, northbound on El Evado Road and then eastbound on Mojave Drive.

At one point, the vehicle made a U-turn on Mojave Drive, headed westbound and eventually turned onto northbound Highway 395 at approximately 1:50 p.m. While the ground pursuit was terminated, according to authorities, Sheriff's Aviation helicopter 40King continued to monitor the vehicle and Buckner's actions.

The vehicle reached the area of Jonathan Street and Highway 395, just past Air Expressway, where Buckner collided with a silver Honda Civic as well as a white Dodge Ram pickup truck. He then fled on foot but was quickly taken into custody.

The Civic was occupied by 5 passengers, including a baby boy and a toddler. They were treated on scene and transported to local hospitals, according to **San Bernardino County Fire Department** officials, while the children were taken to Loma Linda University Medical Center as a precautionary measure.

Officials said all injuries appeared to be minor. No other injuries were reported.

Authorities issued a hard closure in both directions at Air Expressway and Highway 395 at 1:55 p.m. due to the crash. The closure was lifted just before 3:30 p.m., according to scanner traffic.

No further details, including booking information or future court dates for Buckner, were available Friday evening.

The investigation is ongoing, and anyone with information is asked to contact the Victorville Sheriff's Station at 760-241-2911. Persons wishing to remain anonymous can contact the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463 or online at www.wetip.com.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170407/update-chase-ends-in-crash-in-adelanto-on-friday-afternoon>

What happens to Montclair Fire Department after its split with Upland

Lizet Marquez, Daily Bulletin

Posted: April 8, 2017, 4:05 PM



Up until Dec. 1, Montclair and Upland jointly ran the Fire Department. FILE PHOTO

MONTCLAIR >> It'll be at least five months before City Manager Ed Starr knows how the split with the Upland Fire Department will change Montclair's fire operations.

Up until late last year, the two cities jointly ran their fire departments. The partnership was born in 2013, when the neighboring cities announced they would merge their fire administration efforts and drop boundary lines. It was a move that saved Montclair about \$500,000 a year, but according to Starr, Upland said wasn't seeing the same savings.

Last year, cash-strapped Upland expressed interest in disbanding its fire department and annexing instead to **San Bernardino County Fire**. The cities terminated the merger in November, and since Dec. 1, 2016 Montclair has been operating the fire department as its own entity again.

Although the service level has not been impacted, Starr said he's exploring the best options for the city, which could include:

- Adding a new fire squad and hiring six firefighters
- Changing dispatch services
- Or negotiating some type of contract agreement with a neighboring fire district

For now, everything is preliminary and Starr said he expects to present his final options to the City Council by September.

As part of the merger, Montclair switched its dispatching services. Starr said he might consider contracting with Ontario — which it used before the pairing.

“I have to analyze if we want to go back,” he said.

He'll also consider possibly adding a new fire squad — which would mean hiring six firefighters — or whether some deal can be worked out with Chino Valley Fire District.

“It's an economic thing I have to study,” Starr said.

Currently, Montclair has six firefighters working 24-hour shifts.

Jim Grigoli, president of San Bernardino County Fire Professional Firefighters Local 935, said he's skeptical about plans to hire firefighters or contract out with another agency.

"If the city can't afford the Fire Department today, they can't afford adding any new firefighters," he said.

Grigoli has represented Montclair firefighters for the past two months. Montclair firefighters decided to join the larger union in hopes of getting better representation in talks with the city, he said.

The department is facing a number of challenges, Grigoli said: Montclair lost a captain who accepted a job in Orange County, and several other firefighters will be taking positions in Ontario. On top of that, the fire engines' thermal imaging cameras are not working, he said.

The way he sees it, there are only two serious options, Grigoli said. The city must either choose to join with larger San Bernardino County Fire or continue to make cuts.

"They won't be able to afford the bills because the bills will continue to rise," he said.

That first option, to bring in San Bernardino County Fire to operate the department, is one Starr said he won't consider.

Last year, both Starr and Upland interim City Manager Martin Thouvenell met with San Bernardino County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig, who presented the cities with separate proposals that would allow county fire to take over operations.

Starr rejected it.

"We do not have the same fiscal concerns as Upland does. We are on much more solid ground," he said.

According to Starr, Montclair is in the middle of a five-year, \$20 million plan to repave every street in the city. There are also plans for facility improvements at its two fire stations and City Hall.

That's not how Grigoli sees it. The option from San Bernardino County would result in a \$1.2 million savings to the city, he said.

"If their firefighters would change to county fire department, it would bring stability to them," Grigoli said.

Starr disputes the savings suggested by Grigoli. The \$1.2 million savings from the annexation would come from the annual parcel tax imposed on property owners.

"It obviously does not result in a true reduction," Starr wrote in an email Friday. Montclair taxpayers would just shoulder more of the costs.

This was not the first time Montclair has received a proposal from county fire. The city requested a proposal in 2012 proposal. Ultimately the city declined because the city would have had to pay \$1 million a year — for 14 years — to CalPERS to pay off its unfunded pension liabilities, Starr said.

Like the 2012 proposal, Montclair would still have to pay \$1 million a year to the state's retirement system for pensions to join with county fire.

The 2016 proposal was similar to what Upland is pursuing: Montclair would have had to disband its fire department, turn over property taxes and facilities, as well as institute a \$154 parcel tax on land owners.

“I could not in good conscious recommend to the City Council that we give 100 percent of our property taxes,” he said.

Starr said the figure is based on the cost of fire services versus property taxes needed to pay it. In Upland, 54 percent of its property tax revenue will be transferred to help the city pay the county fire department for its services.

But Montclair doesn't have the same number of housing units, he said.

Upland's property taxes are coming from 21,000 parcels, a majority at a higher rate, compared to Montclair's 7,500 parcels, he added.

“For us it's not an acceptable program,” Starr said.

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/general-news/20170408/what-happens-to-montclair-fire-department-after-its-split-with-upland>

Firefighters Extinguish Abandoned Vehicle Fire Sunday Night

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: April 9, 2017



VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) Firefighters with **San Bernardino County Fire** responded to a vehicle fire Sunday night.

At about 8:00 p.m. dispatch received reports of an explosion with a possible fire in the area of Lorene Drive and Seneca Road.

When firefighters arrived they located an abandoned vehicle fully engulfed in a remote part of the desert.

As firefighters worked on extinguishing the fire small explosions could be seen coming from the engine compartment.

According to San Bernardino County Fire Captain Jeremy Kern, the explosions were a result of magnesium located in the column of the vehicle.

Magnesium can be found in all vehicles on the road, household appliances, as well farming equipment and fertilizer.

A San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputy at the scene couldn't confirm if the vehicle was stolen due to not being able to obtain information from the vehicle.

No injuries were reported as a result of the fire.

<http://www.vvng.com/firefighters-extinguish-abandoned-vehicle-fire-sunday-night/>