



NEWS



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Seismic Simulator Shakes San Bernardino

Doug Saunders, The Sun

Posted: September 28, 2016, 5:31 PM



Chairman of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, James Ramos, takes part in the unveiling of the Office of Emergency Services newest earthquake education tool, a Seismic Simulator. (Courtesy photo)

SAN BERNARDINO >> County officials unveiled Wednesday their newest tool set to educate the public of the power of earthquakes — a seismic simulator.

The new mobile earthquake educational exhibit was introduced in the parking lot of the County Government Center, at 385 N. Arrowhead Avenue, by **San Bernardino County** Fire officials along with Office of Emergency Services.

“It’s not a question of ‘if,’ but ‘when’ the next damaging earthquake will occur in San Bernardino County,” said Michael Antonucci, emergency services manager at the Office of Emergency Services. “The Seismic Simulator shows residents just how crucial it is to be prepared before another earthquake strikes in our region.”

The mobile simulator replicates the movement and violent shaking of a strong earthquake. Four people at a time are able to watch a brief educational video before the shaking starts.

The unit wasn’t cheap. This trainer comes at a cost of nearly \$150,000 — a bill covered through a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant — and officials already have several appointments throughout the county to showcase their newest tool, beginning with a school in Bloomington.

The unveiling of this educational simulator falls on the heels of an earthquake advisory issued Wednesday by CalFire Office of Emergency Services. The advisory warns Californians of the higher likeliness of an earthquake striking parts of Southern California following a series of quakes in the South Salton Sea area.

“The California Office of Emergency Services has conferred with the California Earthquake Prediction Evaluation Council (CEPEC) that includes scientists representing the California Geological Survey, University of California at San Diego, Southern California Earthquake Center at USC, and the U.S. Geological Survey knowledgeable about this seismic region’s history and potential,” the advisory reads. “Based on these discussions, the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services advises the counties of Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura.”

They believe that stresses associated with this earthquake swarm may increase the probability of a major earthquake on the San Andreas Fault to values between 0.03 percent and 1.0 percent of an additional earthquake as large or larger than the September 26 magnitude 4.3 earthquake occurring over the next seven days, until Tuesday at 9 a.m., according to the advisory.

Emergency Services Officer Michael Ramirez said preparedness is a key factor to surviving the potential devastation of an earthquake.

“Promoting disaster preparedness is what the Seismic Simulator is all about,” he said. “The more residents we have prepared, the better chance our communities have to recover after an earthquake.”

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160928/seismic-simulator-earthquake-training-tool-unveiled-by-county-officials>

SEISMIC SIMULATOR: Office Of Emergency Services Shakes Things Up

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim Of The World News

Posted: September 29, 2016, 12:06 AM



Third District Supervisor James Ramos was among the first individuals to experience the simulated force of an earthquake while in the new Seismic Simulator. (Contributed Photo)



A FEMA allocation of \$48,500 help create the Seismic Simulator. (Contributed Photo)



Requests for the Seismic Simulator should be made through the Office of Emergency Services at (909) 356-3998. (Contributed Photo)

San Bernardino, CA – No one knows when the BIG ONE will happen. But experts state that the BIG ONE is inevitable...especially along the San Andreas Fault.

That's why the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** Office of Emergency Service has introduced its new mobile earthquake educational exhibit known as the Seismic Simulator.

Supervisor James Ramos was among the first to experience the force of a simulated earthquake in the Seismic Simulator stationed outside the County Government Center in San Bernardino Wednesday morning.

SEISMIC SIMULATOR

The Seismic Simulator — created under a \$148,500 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) — simulates lateral movement and a violent physical shaking experience of a very strong, major earthquake.

The exhibit can accommodate up to four passengers who are seated at one time within the Seismic Simulator.

Ramos — who represents the third supervisorial district including Bear Valley — was shown a brief educational video on the importance of practicing “Drop, Cover and Hold On!” before experiencing the simulated force of an earthquake within a mock living room setting.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

“It’s not a question of ‘if,’ but, ‘when’ the next damaging earthquake will occur in San Bernardino County,” Michael Antonucci, Emergency Services Manager at the Office of Emergency Services, stated following the demonstration.

“The Seismic Simulator shows residents just how crucial it is to be prepared before another earthquake strikes in our region,” Antonucci continued.

SIMULATOR AVAILABLE

The earthquake exhibit will be made available to partner agencies and other jurisdictions, according to the Office of Emergency Services.

“Promoting disaster preparedness is what the Seismic Simulator is all about. The more residents we have prepared, the better chance our communities have to recover after an earthquake,” Michael A. Ramirez, Emergency Services Officer with the Office of Emergency Services explained.

Contact the Office of Emergency Services at (909) 356-3998 to request the Seismic Simulator be made available.

GREAT SHAKEOUT EARTHQUAKE DRILL

Residents are also asked to register for the worldwide Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drills scheduled for 10:20 a.m., on October 20, by visiting SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE/SHAKEOUT online.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/09/29/seismic-simulator-office-of-emergency-services-shakes-things-up/>

Earthquake simulator offers 'E' ticket experience

Inland News Today

Posted: September 28, 2016



SAN BERNARDINO - (INT) - The latest in earthquake education was unveiled Wednesday outside the San Bernardino County Government Center.

Emergency preparedness officials introduced the Seismic Simulator. It simulates the lateral movement and violent physical shaking experience of a very strong, major earthquake.

"It shows residents just how crucial it is to be prepared before another earthquake strikes in our region," said Michael Antonucci, Emergency Services Manager at the Office of Emergency Services. (INT)

<http://www.inlandnewstoday.com/story.php?s=43656>

San Bernardino Fire Dept.: Destructive Blue Cut Fire Failed to Burn Homes Protected by Gel

Daily Dispatch via KNBC-TV NBC 4 Los Angeles

Posted: September 26, 2016, 8:03 PM

The devastating Blue cut fire failed to burn any homes that had been covered with fire-resistant gel, including a new version being tried by fire officials for the first time, according to the **San Bernardino Fire Department**. For more than two decades, gel has proven its ability to resist flames and protect buildings. "We've had a 100 percent success rate so far," said San Bernardino County Fire Capt. Shane Glaze, who described his department as an early adopter of the technology. "Nothing is fireproof, but we apply the gel, and for the most part, the fire cannot penetrate through." Sadly, as quickly as the Blue Cut Fire expanded, the county's gel strike teams could not get to every structure that was threatened, and some 100 burned.

<http://www.dailydispatch.com/StateNews/CA/2016/September/26/San.Bernardino.Fire.Dept.Destructive.Blue.Cut.Fire.Failed.to.Burn.Homes.Protected.by.Gel.aspx>

Seismic Simulator Shakes San Bernardino

KFI AM640

A seismic simulator made its debut in San Bernardino so we sent KFI's Kris Ankarlo out to experience first hand what it may feel like when a big one hits. The video above shows you what it looks like when a major event rattles the earth.

Ankarlo describes the feeling as "lunging left and right, front and back" with enough force to cause a "tinge of adrenaline" to course through him. The simulation underscores the point earthquakes are scary. Remember, it's not a matter of if - it's a matter of when - the next major quake strikes SoCal.

Michael Ramirez with the San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services told Ankarlo it's important for residents of San Bernardino County to understand they live in an area riddled with faults, like "the mother of all faults, the San Andreas fault."

Ramirez says when people step into the simulator they will "experience that lateral motion that replicates the kind of shaking they can expect."

The seismic simulator made its debut this week and will be travelling around the county.

Note: At 10:20 a.m. on October 20, 2016, millions of people will participate in the largest earthquake drill ever: ShakeOut! Why? Earthquakes can happen anywhere you work, live, or travel, especially in Southern California, which is why everyone, everywhere should know how to protect themselves should an earthquake occur.

<http://kfiam640.iheart.com/articles/local-news-465708/watch-seismic-simulator-shakes-san-bernardino-15151678/>

Upland moves to divorce Montclair in managing fire department

Liset Márquez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: September 27, 2016, 4:16 PM



A fire engine pulls out of Upland Fire Station 163 on Benson Avenue for an assignment in this November 2013 file photo. FILE PHOTO

UPLAND >> City leaders have decided to call it quits on a pilot program launched more than two years ago joining the Upland and Montclair fire departments' command staff.

The Upland City Council on Monday night gave interim City Manager Martin Thouvenell the authority to provide notice to terminate the agreement with Montclair because it was no longer cost effective. According to the arrangement, the city must provide six months' notice.

In 2014, the cities agreed to divide compensation costs for key positions as well as created a unified response, and dropped service boundary lines between the two cities to allow the closest engine to respond to an emergency in either city.

Councilwoman Carol Timm said the benefits of the alliance no longer outweigh the costs.

"We did the right thing in the beginning. These funds went to the general fund, and it was a great Band-Aid when we needed it most, when our finances were lowest. Now it's time to rip off the Band-Aid."

Montclair City Manager Ed Starr was aware Thouvenell was considering going in that direction but didn't know the topic was on Monday's agenda.

Starr said he hopes to talk to Thouvenell next week to determine how soon Upland would like to see the contract terminated.

"I'm not going to undermine him. He has to make the calls for the best of the city, and I understand that," he said.

Upland officials projected the city would save \$140,000 annually by sharing several positions — fire chief and fire marshal, a senior administrative assistant and an emergency services coordinator — with Montclair.

But when Upland took into account overtime costs, the wear and tear on an aging fleet, and redirection of staff time, the actual savings for a total year would be \$55,000, Deputy City Manager Jeannette Vagnozzi said.

The merger always was considered a pilot program, and implementation of a new phase prompted city officials to conduct a financial analysis, she said.

"At this current time, this partnership, we're seeing the benefit isn't as strong as it once was," she said.

If Upland were to revert to the organizational structure prior to the merger — reclassifying two positions from deputy chiefs back to battalion chiefs and a senior administrative assistant back to administrative assistant — there would be annual salary savings of \$30,000, according to a staff report.

“When we started this project, it really was an outside-of-the-box way to merge our staff together and bring some cost savings to both of our cities,” Deputy Fire Chief Dave Corbin said at Monday’s meeting. “We were able to bring back positions that we lost over the years during harder fiscal times.”

Councilman Glenn Bozar commended Thouvenell for bringing forward the item for review. He was the only council member who voted against the agreement because he believed the savings wouldn’t materialize.

Thouvenell said he didn’t want the fire chief and division chiefs working elsewhere.

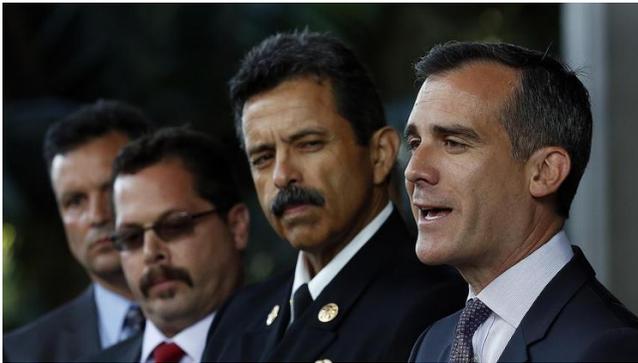
“I want them here working on the problems Upland has,” he said. “I need them here doing Upland business.”

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/government-and-politics/20160927/upland-moves-to-divorce-montclair-in-managing-fire-department>

Ousted L.A. fire marshal claims corruption among city fire inspectors

Ben Welsh, LA Times

Posted: September 27, 2016, 6:40 PM



L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti, right, stands next to city Fire Chief Ralph M. Terrazas. (Mel Melcon / Los Angeles Times)

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Former L.A. fire marshal alleges corruption in city fire inspection program

A top Los Angeles Fire Department official is alleging corruption in the city inspection programs he once administered as part of a \$5-million retaliation claim filed Tuesday.

Deputy Chief John Vidovich was removed from his post as fire marshal last month after a two-year tenure that was marred by disclosures about delinquent inspections and mounting criticism from the firefighters' labor union.

In his legal claim, Vidovich said he was pushed out after he exposed fraud, extortion and overtime schemes among the LAFD units charged with enforcing fire safety codes for apartment houses, schools, hospitals, film shoots and other buildings.

He pointed the finger at a group of senior inspectors who told The Times in May that, under his leadership, the bureau put the public at risk by requiring it to cut corners on safety reviews in a frantic drive to clear a massive backlog of uninspected buildings. Vidovich denied those accusations.

Vidovich said that when he took over as fire marshal in 2014, the inspection program was “in disarray” with those inspectors responsible for much of the backlog.

He accused them of falsifying records, engineering improper work slowdowns and manipulating a department database to prevent the inspection of vulnerable facilities such as the Veterans Administration hospital near Westwood.

Spokesmen for Mayor Eric Garcetti and the LAFD declined to comment on the allegations. Attorneys for the inspectors Vidovich accused of wrongdoing could not be reached for comment.

Last month, Fire Chief Ralph M. Terrazas reassigned Vidovich to a newly created position advising Garcetti. Aides to the mayor said they intended to use the fire marshal's 35 years of experience at the LAFD to complement a drive to streamline new construction projects.

Vidovich said that the position was non-existent and his ouster was the result of plot to unseat him by the mayor's office in exchange for an endorsement by the firefighters' union in Garcetti's upcoming reelection bid.

The resulting public humiliation "adversely affected his personal health and well-being," according to the claim, which seeks \$5 million in damages as well as legal fees and other costs.

The union that represents inspectors and other firefighters earlier this year voted to approve a resolution of "no confidence" in Vidovich. Before the 3,100-firefighter department decided to replace Vidovich, the union, a powerful player at City Hall, was preparing to pressure the mayor and other elected officials to remove him.

In an interview last month, the union's president, Capt. Frank Lima, praised the move but denied that it played a role in his group's endorsement of the mayor. In 2013, when Garcetti won the mayor's office, the union supported his opponent, then-City Controller Wendy Greuel. Lima was not immediately available for comment Tuesday.

Vidovich, whose total compensation was about \$236,000 in the last fiscal year, was previously the agency's chief of staff. If the city does not settle his claim, Vidovich is prepared to file a lawsuit suing the city, his attorney said.

His case joins a long history of disputes at the LAFD that have ended up in litigation, which have resulted in millions of dollars in settlements and verdicts over the last several decades.

<http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-lafd-marshall-claims-corruption-20160927-snap-story.html>

Suspected arsonist arrested following two brush fires in San Bernardino foothills

Doug Saunders, The Sun

Posted: September 28, 2016, 2:37 PM

SAN BERNARDINO >> Assisted by residents, firefighters arrested a man they believe started two brush fires in San Bernardino's foothills early Monday morning.

Shortly after 8 p.m. Sunday, firefighters responded to reports of a brush fire in the lower Waterman Canyon area near Highway 18. When they arrived, a resident had already extinguished the fire.

The resident gave a description of a man he had seen allegedly starting the blaze, according to a fire department news release.

A search of the area came up fruitless.

Shortly after midnight, another vegetation fire was reported in the same vicinity. While firefighters battled that blaze, fire investigators learned that two residents were detaining a man they believed started the fire, the release states.

Fire investigators interviewed the man before arresting him.

Edwin Lizano, a 20-year-old transient, was booked into West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga on the suspicion of arson. He's being held in lieu of \$250,000 bail.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160928/suspected-arsonist-arrested-following-two-brush-fires-in-san-bernardino-foothills>

Apple Valley Town Council formally supports special fire tax Measure A

Matthew Cabe, Daily Press

Posted: September 28, 2016, 5:27 PM

APPLE VALLEY — In depicting a potential future, Councilman Art Bishop said voting against a measure that would help fund the independent fire district in Apple Valley would leave the town in “dire straits.”

While proponents of Measure A, which will appear on the November ballot in Apple Valley, say the special tax would reopen at least two closed fire stations in the district, Bishop — who served as fire chief of the Apple Valley Fire Protection District from 2010 to 2012 — stated he's more concerned with how many more stations will close should the measure be defeated by voters.

“If this measure doesn't pass,” Bishop said, “I wouldn't want to be in the position of our fire board because they're going to have to make a drastic decision.”

That drastic decision could possibly include the district's board of directors choosing to dissolve the fire district, whereupon San Bernardino County Fire would most likely take over providing service in the town, a move Mayor Barb Stanton said would come with its own fees.

“The **San Bernardino County Fire Department** would get all district assets, the property tax revenue and would have the authority to levy an additional \$148 tax per year with a 3 percent increase each year,” she said.

Both Stanton and Bishop’s comments came during Tuesday’s meeting, not long before the Town Council’s unanimous vote to formally support Measure A.

The tax needs a two-thirds majority to pass and would continue local funding for emergency response and fire protection by charging single-family residences \$126.90 annually for fire services.

Vacant land and commercial businesses would also be subject to the special tax at rates that vary depending on acreage and square footage, respectively.

A similar tax was passed by town voters in 1997 — 68.7 to 31.2 percent, according to the San Bernardino County Elections Office — and monies collected have accounted for approximately 30 percent of the district’s revenue.

But that tax came with a 20-year sunset clause and will expire next year.

“This money’s going to go away (and) our fire district will be without millions of dollars in budget and operational money,” Bishop said. “These are funds that the fire chief and the fire board are able to use as operational money. This is what’s paying for the firefighters.”

With its current staff of nine firefighters the district has struggled to respond quickly to emergencies, averaging about seven minutes per call, according to Chief Sid Hultquist.

Both staffing and response times in the district are below national standards, but despite the apparent need for the tax not everyone is on board. In a recent Daily Press Town Council Forum, candidates Salvatore Ortiz-Lopez and Richard Bunck both opposed the tax — with Ortiz-Lopez stating he was against raising taxes of any kind.

Instead, he called for a community-based plan in which “neighbors are the ones who are watching neighbors” and subsequently put out fires together as soon as they start.

In response, Bishop said a majority of calls AVFPD responds to are medical rather than fire emergencies, which prompted Bunck to question why the district hasn’t looked at restructuring how it responds to medical emergencies.

“There’s a tremendous amount of money and a tremendous amount of possible savings there by reorganizing the paramedics and the fire response, and understanding that those are two separate issues.” Bunck said. “I’m not an expert on this, but it’s ... something I’ve looked at for years ... and I’m in favor of how we can look at working smarter in the fire district.”

Of the seven fire stations in the town, three are currently open and, during the meeting, Stanton said a defeat of Measure A would force the closure of at least one more fire station.

“We need to open fire stations,” she said. “We need more than nine firefighters on duty at one time ... (The town is) 77 square miles. I understand our fire department is over 200 (square) miles that they service ...

They've just been so wonderful to our community, and I think the future without (AVFPD) would just not be the same in our town."

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20160928/apple-valley-town-council-formally-supports-special-fire-tax-measure-a>

Southern California's tallest waterfalls to stay closed another year

San Bernardino National Forest officials are extending the closure of Upper Big Falls until Oct. 7, 2017

Suzanne Hurt, Press Enterprise

Posted: September 28, 2016, 10:45 PM



A sign advises visitors to the Waterfall trail head above Forest Falls, on Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2016. David Bauman, The Press-Enterprise/Scng

Upper Big Falls will remain closed another year while San Bernardino National Forest officials devise a plan to address injuries and other issues at Southern California's tallest year-round waterfall.

Record-high visitor injuries led forest officials to close the spectacular upper portions of the 500-foot-long series of ice-white cascades on Falls Creek for a year Oct. 8, 2015.

Injuries at the forbidden falls have dwindled during the year-long closure near Forest Falls.

But despite a "dramatic" drop in the number of rescues, that section will remain off limits for a second year so forest officials can create a management strategy for the area, said Travis Mason, who manages the falls as assistant recreation officer for the Front Country Ranger District.

"We saw great success over the summer. That is why we're continuing the closure," he said Monday.

CHUTE'S DANGERS

Access to the top three falls was banned for a year after firefighters and deputies rescued at least 57 people who had been hurt climbing around the falls in 2015. Most fell scrambling up "the chute," a drought-exposed section of rock on the side of the third falls.

This year, with water once again flowing over the chute, 18 people have been injured – all but one in the forbidden area, said **San Bernardino County Fire Department** Capt. Tom McIntosh, who oversees the Forest Falls station.

Most have fallen from the top of the third falls, often just above the chute, when they slipped on wet or

smooth-polished rock, got too near the edge or weren't paying attention while crossing Falls Creek to get to the second falls.

McIntosh said he'd like to see a cable installed above the third falls.

Emergency responders made 16 rescues and five people were hoisted out by helicopter. Helicopter rescues cost \$1,500 to \$2,200 an hour.

McIntosh said he had expected the closure would be allowed to expire this year because the dangers posed by the exposed chute are gone.

He said it's disappointing that forest officials didn't generate an effective management plan in the past year so they could reopen the area now.

"I believe the public has the right to access public land," he said. "The risk is no greater now than it has been for 50 years."

On Wednesday, Chelsea Vancil, 22, of Yucaipa, and Alli Sheaffer, 19, of Calimesa said they were disappointed to hear the closure was being extended. More people should get to see the beautiful falls, the two friends said while hiking along the oak-shaded creek.

But Bailey Luszeck, 18, who grew up in Forest Falls, said the extension makes sense.

"I heard it was restricted because a lot of people were falling off it – mainly tourists and flatlanders," he said.

"But if they're just going to have a rinky-dink little fence over there, it's not going to stop anyone," he added, looking at the torn-down plastic orange fencing marking the closure.

Forest officials also closed San Bernardino National Forest's Sapphire Falls and Cucamonga Canyon in April 2013, a month after a hiker died crossing from one fall to another.

By mid-May 2015, Forest Service officers had issued 30 trespassing citations with \$175 average tickets to those violating the Cucamonga closure. People caught defacing federal property could be charged more, forest spokesman John Miller said that year.

McIntosh believes three to five citations, some with fines of \$3,000 to cover helicopter rescues costs, were given to people hurt in closed Upper Big Falls this year.

Miller said he didn't know the number of citations or size of fines given out for Upper Big Falls closure violations.

Forest officials will mull options to reduce injuries when creating the management plan, but nothing is being considered yet besides signs. English and Spanish signs in the lower falls and parking area will announce the closure extension on Saturday, Oct. 8, Mason said.

Forest officials are abandoning orange plastic fencing they'd stretched across the canyon to block off the closed area after trespassers repeatedly tore that down, Mason said.

There were about 10 rescues a season until alcohol was outlawed in the recreation area before 1990. Rescues fell to three to five a year, but began growing in 2010.

At least two people have died there. A 16-year-old boy died after falling from a rock bluff in 1998. In 2011, a girl was killed by falling rock knocked loose by someone hiking or climbing above her.

'MESSING UP NATURE'

Partying, graffiti and trash, including many broken beer bottles, have been a problem in the closed area. Mason said that's decreased since early summer.

The problem has grown as non-locals have discovered the falls online, McIntosh said.

The closure was extended for safety reasons only, Miller said.

On Wednesday, at least 190 spots throughout the canyon bore graffiti or gray or tan paint covering it. Repair paint or graffiti marked boulders along the trail, trees, canyon walls, and rocks and cliffs at the third and second falls.

Wrappers, plastic water bottles, cigarette butts and other trash lay in the area. Vancil said she removed a lot of trash Tuesday.

Frustrated Forest Falls residents have posted graffiti photos online, said Elkhorn General Store clerk Kelli McKibben, adding, "They're really irritated. It's not cool."

Vancil and Sheaffer, who believe gang members are leaving graffiti, said the tagging should stop.

"They're messing up nature," Sheaffer said. "I feel like it's not nature anymore."

<http://www.pe.com/articles/falls-814471-forest-year.html>

BREAKING NEWS: Arson “Suspect” Released Due To Lack Of Evidence

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim of the Worlds News

Posted: September 29, 2016, 5:30 AM

San Bernardino, CA – The San Bernardino County District Attorney has ordered the release of 20-year-old “arson suspect” Edwin Valentino Lizano for lack of evidence.

“It was turned down,” the District Attorney’s Public Affairs Officer Christopher Lee told ROTWNEWS.com, “due to a lack of sufficient evidence on September 28.”

“SUSPECT” RELEASED

Documents from the West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga — where Lizano had been held on \$250,000 bail — show he was released from custody at 5:04 p.m. on Wednesday, September 28.

Lizano was arrested on Monday, September 26, suspected of setting the Canyon Fire and another fire in the lower Waterman Canyon area this past weekend.

The transient was scheduled for a video arraignment on Wednesday, September 28, but that court hearing was never held.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/09/29/breaking-news-arson-suspect-released-due-to-lack-of-evidence/>

Arrest in Arson Fires

Mike Harris, Mountain News

Posted: September 29, 2016 6:00 AM



A combined aggressive response from three agencies limited a Lower Waterman Canyon fire on Monday morning just after midnight to two acres. Clayton Malcom

A young male transient has been arrested for allegedly causing two vegetation fires that started four hours apart late Sunday night in Lower Waterman Canyon, according to **San Bernardino County Fire** officials.

Edwin Lizano, 20, was booked on two counts of arson on Monday at Sheriff's West Valley Detention Center with bail set at \$250,000.

According to County Fire Marshall Mike Horton, the suspect initially was detained by local residents then turned over to fire authorities.

Lizano was transferred to St. Bernadine Medical Center for treatment then taken by San Bernardino Police Department officers to West Valley Detention Center where he was charged with two counts of PC 451, arson.

A third fire, called the Water Fire, which started around 5 p.m. on Sunday near Sterling Avenue and Foothill Boulevard remains under investigation, officials said.

The first of the two Lower Waterman Canyon fires reportedly started around 8 p.m. Sunday and was quickly put out by a joint response from County Fire and the Forest Service. It was limited to a few hundred feet.

But a more serious fire occurred just after midnight located about two miles from the first incident.

A combined rapid response by units from County Fire, the Forest Service and Cal Fire was able to contain the second Lower Waterman Canyon fire just off Highway 18 to just two acres.

Even though Santa Ana winds had been strong on Sunday, by midnight conditions were calm. "The area (of the fire) had a lot of cover and a lot of over hanging trees, but there was no wind," according to Cal Fire Battalion Chief Travis Thogmartin who is assigned to the agency's Pilot Rock fire camp.

Forest Service Engine 336 was the first on scene and crews made a very aggressive attack on the fire, according to Gregg Goodland, Forest Service acting deputy public affairs officer. First units arriving on scene found one acre of heavy vegetation burning.

Due to the serious threat to the forest a unified command was designated to fight the blaze. County Fire responded with five engines, a dozer, one hand crew, two water tenders, a battalion chief and a fire investigator.

Cal Fire responded with five engine companies, a dozer on standby, and Battalion Chief Thogmartin.

In addition to Engine 336, the Forest Service responded with Air Attack 5-1, eight other engine companies, a water tender, one hand crew, a battalion chief and a division chief.

“The night firefighting capable helicopter 531 from the Angeles National Forest also responded but was cancelled just prior to arrival on scene as the ground resources had progressed efficiently with their attack,” according to Goodland. Forest Service law enforcement personnel also were assigned.

By 1 a.m. hose lines had been placed around the perimeter of the fire, and initial containment quickly followed. No structures were immediately threatened and there were no reported injuries. Crews remained on-scene throughout the night and into the morning to fully contain the fire. Cause of the fire remains under investigation.

“A great aspect to note about this incident is the fact that Forest Service officials had positioned these resources effectively and placed them on 24-hour staffing,” said Goodland. “In addition, it should be noted that Cal Fire also had additional resources prepositioned in their unit.”

Quick action by residents in detaining Lizano may have saved their neighborhood from going up in flames, County Fire officials said, and helped put a suspected arsonist behind bars. County Fire thanks these residents for being vigilant, “seeing something, saying something,” an official added. Anyone with information on an arson fire can contact We-Tip at 800-47-ARSON (800-472-7766) or Fire Dispatch at 909-356-3805.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_27e1f336-85c8-11e6-9bf4-d7d977bd86bd.html