



NEWS



News Headlines 5/11/2017

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S.B. County Fire Department is emphasizing wildfire preparedness and arson awareness

San Bernardino County Fire Department via Fontana Herald News

Posted: May 10, 2017, 8:42 PM

We may have received an above average amount of rain this winter, but the risk of wildfire has not washed away.

On May 8, fire agencies gathered for a press conference in Devore to stress the current risk of wildfire in our region and highlight the importance of being prepared. **San Bernardino County Fire** along with CalFire, U.S. Forest Service, law enforcement and Fire Safe Councils continue to work together to make wildfire safety a priority for our region as a year-round reality.

Contrary to belief, with an increase of rain, an increase of wildfires also exists.

San Bernardino County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig explained how we will continue to see wildfires spread this season with high intensity: "The rain helped combat the bark beetle infestation in our local mountains; however, it also causes growth of light flashy fuels. These flashy fuels mixed with high temperatures and winds are a recipe for disaster."

The Blue Cut Fire of last August, which burned 36,274 acres in the Cajon Pass, is an example of the type of fire behavior our region can continue to expect.

Hartwig emphasized the urgency to prepare in advance for wildfire season, by local fire agencies as well as by residents.

San Bernardino County Fire's Red Flag Warning Program warns citizens when conditions for extreme fire danger arise by flying a red flag below the American flag at all of the county's fire stations.

Residents are included in fire prevention by clearing vegetation and debris from around the home, creating a wildfire preparedness plan, and reporting suspicious fire activity.

"We are already seeing vegetation fires this year grow at a rapid rate; now is the time to start preparing," said Hartwig, referring to a series of fires that ignited in Fontana and other local cities in recent weeks.

SBCoFire also encourages residents to get involved in one of four community volunteer programs, as part of the newly implemented Emergency Support Services.

May 7-13 is Wildfire Awareness Week, which provides important information to help local communities stay informed about protecting their families and homes from wildfires and other disasters. SBCoFire reminds residents to do their part in understanding fire danger by exercising extreme caution around dry, flammable vegetation. Wildfire safety isn't limited to those who live near wild lands; it's for anyone camping or spending time in these locations as well.

May 7-13 is also Arson Awareness Week, and residents are reminded of the adage, "If you See Something, Say Something." More than half a million wildfires are set by arsonists each year in the U.S., resulting in more than \$3 billion in damages.

"Reporting suspicious fire activity immediately can save your life and the lives of others," said San Bernardino County Fire Marshal Mike Horton.

Report tips anonymously through We Tip at (800) 47-ARSON or online at www.WeTip.com. We invite you to join forces with SBCoFire and all fire agencies this year in saving lives by preventing wildfires and reporting arson activity. Be vigilant in wildfire preparedness, and help reduce risking the lives of firefighters by evacuating when asked to by law enforcement.

San Bernardino County Fire Department has resources available 24/7, including fire, rescue, EMS service, hand crews, dozers, and aircraft. One spark is all it takes to start a devastating wildfire, but preparedness is how we defend ourselves.

For more information on wildfire preparedness or volunteer opportunities in your community, visit our website at www.sbcfire.org. Download our Ready, Set, Go! Guide at www.sbcfire.org/ReadySetGo.aspx.

http://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/opinion/s-b-county-fire-department-is-emphasizing-wildfire-preparedness-and/article_ed6aa312-35fb-11e7-92f6-9b3ac4f360ed.html

County charging for use of Wonder Valley Community Center

Kurt Schauppner The Desert Trail

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Batallion Chief Mike Snow gives a report on fire station activity at a Wonder Valley community meeting, chaired by Teresa Sitz, Saturday, May 6, at the community center. Kurt Schauppner The Desert Trail

WONDER VALLEY — Residents of Wonder Valley were distressed Saturday afternoon to learn that the county has begun charging for use of the Wonder Valley Community Center.

This was one of several topics that came up during a community meeting chaired by Teresa Sitz, who represents the community on the Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council.

Those taking part in the meeting were given copies of a fee schedule for the community center on Amboy Road next to the fire station and community park.

According to the schedule nonprofit, government or similar organizations that provide charitable activities that are open to the public and do not charge a fee must be \$10 an hour to use the community center.

If the center is used for a fundraiser, private party, social or religious gathering the charge is \$15 an hour and there is a two hour minimum.

The schedule also notes that comprehensive general liability insurance is required for activities at the community center and that a \$250 cleaning deposit is also required.

“Is there any way we can protest that,” Karen Meyers asked.

“Now we are going to have a beautiful community center and it’s not going to be used,” James Brakebill said. “What’s the point of having a community center if you can’t use it?” Sitz wondered aloud.

Committees

In other action, Sitz got little response when she called on community members to form committees to study issues facing the community, including recycling, illegal dumping, fire protection and historic landmarks.

“It’s too much for me to do,” she said. “It would be pretty cool if we had some small committees.

“I think it would also be a maturing of our community,” she said. “I can help you put an agenda together.

After a few moments of silence, Jerry Peek said he would serve on the recycling committee and Barbara Adams agreed to serve with him.

Jim Copeland said he would serve on the fire committee but worried that it would not be effective.

“We go through the same thing over and over again,” he said.

“I feel that committees like this are close to worthless,” Meyers said. “It doesn’t work, it’s not going to work I think.”

“I’m a volunteer, this is not a paid position,” Sitz said. “I can’t do it all, the community has a lot of needs.”

“Teresa can’t fight all the fights for us,” Ed Vallerand said.

“I don’t want to be on a committee that has an agenda that has to be posted,” Meyers said.

“We need to raise some leaders here,” Sitz said.

http://www.hidesertstar.com/the_desert_trail/news/article_2829ba10-3598-11e7-8119-03385db92b5f.html