



NEWS



News Headlines 8/15/2018

- Yucca Valley crash hospitalizes four
- Water, fire major issues in Lucerne Valley
- San Bernardino County Fire Chief says changes needed to meet budget shortfall
- Hesperia woman accused of DUI and hit-and-run crashes into back of tractor-trailer
- Hesperia woman trapped under semi accused of DUI and hit-and-run
- New Fire Tax Will Cost Taxpayers \$27 Million Per Year

Yucca Valley crash hospitalizes four

Staff Writer, z1077 News

Posted: August 15, 2018



Photo courtesy of Caleb Nicholson

Four people were hospitalized following a head-on crash in Yucca Valley Tuesday night. Just after 8 p.m., two small sedans crashed on Old Woman Springs Road and New Horizons. **County Fire** Battalion Chief Donnie Vioria said a back seat passenger in one of the cars, identified only as being a woman in her 50s, was critically injured. The male driver of her car, in his 70s, and another female passenger in her 40s, as well as the male driver of the other car, also in his 70s, were all out of their cars when paramedics arrived. All four people were taken to Desert Hospital in Palm Springs. The Sheriff's Department is investigating the crash.

<http://z1077fm.com/yucca-valley-crash-hospitalizes-four/>

Water, fire major issues in Lucerne Valley

Martin Estacio / For the Leader

Posted: August 15, 2018, 12:01 a.m.

Water and fire issues in LV

The Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association meeting last Tuesday focused on several agenda items, major ones relating to two of Earth's basic elements: Fire and water.

Here's a recap of the discussions on both.

Water

The Mojave Water Agency has created an ad hoc well committee to form a link between the agency that doles out water/pumping rights and San Bernardino County, which issues the well permits.

Creation of the committee was borne of concern that some residents may be pumping and exceeding their allowable annual water usage of 10 acre-feet per year, and not paying for the overage (adjudicated water rights) as required, said Richard Selby, vice president of LVEDA and California Rural Water Association field specialist for the agency.

Conservation of water is especially important when it is not replenished adequately by natural sources.

“Let’s face it, water is getting very precious. We go into droughts,” Selby said. “We don’t have magic rainfall. We don’t even have enough snow on the mountains to give us much recharge of the water we use. So we have to be concerned about how we use it.”

The committee is intended to more closely scrutinize the reasons for a well being constructed in the first place.

Prohibition of hauled water also has been contentious for this rural community.

Even though Sacramento enacted the prohibition state-wide only recently, at the beginning of 2018, it had been an unwritten “internal policy” of the county for several years prior, said LVEDA President Chuck Bell said in an email response.

The law states that no building permits will be issued for construction of a new residential development where the source of water is hauled.

Bell sees this as a “property right taking” because in many rural desert and mountain communities, hauled water may be the only option.

Wells are expensive to build and operate and the probability of even tapping into usable groundwater is marginal, he said in the email.

LVEDA is working with a legal foundation to provide a test case that will challenge the prohibition.

Fire

The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department is proposing to levy an annual parcel tax of \$157.26, with a possible 3 percent increase annually, on all property owners within unincorporated areas of the county. Vacant parcels are not excluded.

Expanding the department’s Service Zone FP-5, additional revenues would be used to help offset a \$29 million deficit, officials say.

This is not set in stone however, said Mark Lundquist, field representative for Third District Supervisor James Ramos.

Public notices will be sent out to property owners Sept. 14, and if at least 25 percent protest, the proposal would be placed on ballot and require a 50-plus one majority to approve it, he told attendees. A majority of protest votes would terminate it outright also.

The Lucerne Valley/Johnson Valley Municipal Advisory Council meeting at 5 p.m. Thursday will host county Fire Chief Mark Hartwig, who will talk and answer questions about the proposed parcel tax expansion.

Roger Peterson, MAC chairperson, encouraged residents to bring their friends and family members to pack the Community Center and let their voices and feedback be heard.

Another group is also hoping that voices and feedback will be heard.

Representatives for the California Opportunity Study are conducting research by interviewing 40 randomly selected families in the area.

Their mission is to understand how people make ends meet in America, listen to their stories, and lend some context to dehumanized data points and figures, hopefully influencing decision makers of public policy, they said.

The comprehensive study, sponsored by the Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality and Princeton University, will sample a broad range of socioeconomic households.

It will also seek to understand the “challenges of raising children, finding unemployment and juggling work and home responsibilities, as well as what it’s like to live in California these days,” according to the website.

The representatives, who are also college students, have only received about six to seven responses from the sample size in Lucerne Valley so far.

This has not affected their enthusiasm, however.

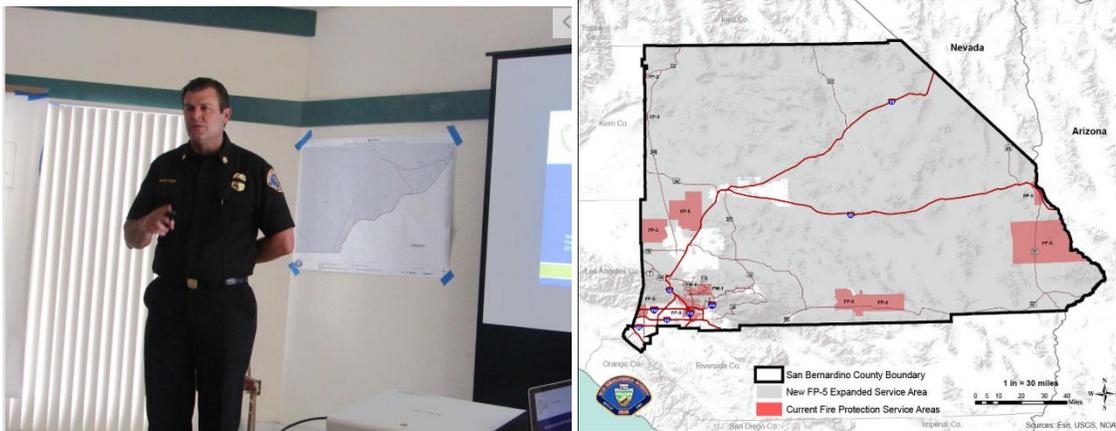
In response to one attendee’s conjecture that the limited response from the selected residents might be all they receive, one of the women replied: “We are not giving up.”

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20180815/water-fire-major-issues-in-lucerne-valley>

San Bernardino County Fire Chief says changes needed to meet budget shortfall

John Gutekunst, Parker Pioneer

Posted: August 14, 2018



San Bernardino County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig makes his pitch to Big River residents to expand a service zone within the county to include almost the entire county. He said this was needed to increase revenue to meet a budget shortfall. 2) Under the proposal, the current FP-5 service zone will be expanded from several small areas in the southern part of the county to all the shaded areas.

San Bernardino County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig was in Big River, Calif. Aug. 9 to present his case for expanding the FP-5 service zone within the county fire district to cover almost the entire county. Hartwig said the department is currently looking at a \$29 million shortfall, and expanding the FP-5 zone would increase revenue while spreading the tax burden more evenly. He said it would allow the department to keep services at their current levels.

The current FP-5 consists of small, unconnected areas located mostly in the southern part of the county. The expanded FP-5 would include all unincorporated areas of the county, except those already receiving fire and emergency medical service from other districts. It would also include the cities of Grand Terrace and Upland, and the town of Yucca Valley.

Hartwig told the attendees at the Big River Community Services District office that this was one of about 25 meetings they have scheduled between July and mid-October.

San Bernardino County is the largest county in the nation, covering 19,000 square miles. With a population of 2.4 million, it is the 12th most populated county. Approximately half the residents are served by the county fire district. The others are served by municipalities that have their own fire departments, communities that contract for fire services, and those that are served by special districts.

The county fire district is a separate entity from the county, but the county supervisors serve as the fire board. The district currently has three revenue sources: property taxes, service zones where residents pay extra for fire or paramedic service, and Memorandum of Understanding with San Bernardino County for service enhancements.

Hartwig said the property tax revenue is insufficient for the department, and they have been spending their reserves, up to \$11.9 million in the FY 2018-19 budget.

“We can’t live off our reserves anymore,” he said.

He said the County Supervisors are under no obligation to provide funding, but they have done so every year. For the current fiscal year, that’s \$17.4 million. Hartwig said this is a year-to-year arrangement, and it’s dependent on the county having the funds to provide to the department.

“We’re at the mercy of the general fund,” he said.

Hartwig acknowledged many areas of the county are underserved, including the Colorado River Corridor. Among other things, he said Big River needs a full-time engine at their station. They are currently staffed by volunteers, or “Paid Call Firefighters.” He added the county supervisors agree with him.

“They haven’t disagreed with me on the need,” he said. “They tell me there’s no money.”

The department’s administration concluded expanding FP-5 would be the best way to increase revenue.

According to information provided by the department, the benefits of FP-5 expansion include establishing sustainable capital improvement funds, eliminating the special fees for fire and paramedic service, establish a consistent tax rate throughout the county, and allow the department to maintain the current level of services.

“I’m asking people to allow me to generate revenue so we can keep up services,” Hartwig said. “I’m asking for your support so I can provide a sustainable fire district.”

Hartwig said notices would be sent out to all property owners on Sept. 14. Letters protesting the proposed FP-5 expansion will be accepted until the close of business Oct. 15. A public hearing and possible adoption of the proposed expansion will be held at 10 a.m. Oct. 16 at the San Bernardino County Government Center.

Additional information on the proposed FP-5 expansion, including the answers to Frequently Asked Questions, can be found on the department's website, www.sbcfire.org.

https://www.parkerpioneer.net/news/article_6d295240-9fe3-11e8-b04c-337e18768de7.html

Hesperia woman accused of DUI and hit-and-run crashes into back of tractor-trailer

Kevin Trudgeon, Daily Press

Posted: August 14, 2018, 10:37 a.m.

VICTORVILLE — A woman accused of driving under the influence crashed into a tractor-trailer while reportedly fleeing the scene of a hit-and-run here early Monday morning.

Deputies with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Victorville Station responded to the intersection of Bear Valley and Mariposa roads at approximately 12:37 a.m. for a collision involving a Honda Accord and tractor-trailer.

According to authorities, the driver of the Honday, Alana Marie Joerger, 36, of Hesperia, failed to stop at a red light while traveling south on Mariposa Road and "collided with the trailer section of the semi-truck traveling east on Bear Valley Road."

The front of the Honda became lodged under the trailer and **San Bernardino County Fire** Department personnel had to extricate Joerger, who suffered serious injuries and was airlifted to a trauma center for treatment.

"During the investigation, deputies discovered just prior to the collision with the semi-truck, Joerger had been involved in a collision in a parking lot on Mariposa Road," sheriff's officials said.

"While in the parking lot she backed into another vehicle. When the owner exited the vehicle to assess the damage, Joerger hit him with her vehicle causing injuries to his face. Joerger was fleeing the scene of that collision when she collided with the semi-truck."

The victim in the parking lot was transported to a local hospital for treatment of his injuries, authorities said, and when Joerger is released from the hospital she will face charges of driving under the influence and hit-and-run with injuries.

Anyone with information related to this investigation is urged to contact the Victorville Sheriff's Station at 760-241-2911. Persons wishing to remain anonymous may call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463 or visit www.wetip.com.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20180814/hesperia-woman-accused-of-dui-and-hit-and-run-crashes-into-back-of-tractor-trailer>

Hesperia woman trapped under semi accused of DUI and hit-and-run

Staff Writer, VVNG

Posted: August 14, 2018



Bear Valley Road was closed while officials investigated a crash Monday morning. (Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) — A 36-year-old woman who was pinned inside her vehicle after crashing into the trailer of a semi is accused of driving under the influence and hit-and-run, officials said.

Deputies from the Victorville Police Department responded to the intersection of Bear Valley Road and Mariposa Road, for a collision involving a semi-truck and a Honda Accord at about 12:37 am, on August 13, 2018.

Officials said, the driver of the Honda, Alana Marie Joerger was traveling south on Mariposa Road and failed to stop at a red light causing her to collide with the trailer section of a semi-truck traveling on Bear Valley Road.

The front of the Honda became lodged under the trailer, making it necessary for personnel from **San Bernardino County Fire** to extricate her from the vehicle. She sustained serious injuries and was flown to a nearby trauma center for treatment. The driver of the semi-truck was uninjured.

“During the investigation, deputies discovered just prior to the collision with the semi-truck Joerger had been involved in a collision in a parking lot on Mariposa Road. While in the parking lot she backed into another vehicle. When the owner exited the vehicle to assess the damage, Joerger hit him with her vehicle causing injuries to his face. Joerger was fleeing the scene of that collision when she collided with the semi-truck,” officials said in a news release.

The victim was transported to a local hospital to be treated for his injuries.

Upon her release from the hospital, Joerger will face charges for driving under the influence, and hit and run.

Anyone with information about this investigation is asked to contact the Victorville Police Department at (760) 241-2911. Callers wishing to remain anonymous are urged to call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-78CRIME (27463) or you may leave information on the We-Tip website at www.wetip.com.

<https://www.vvng.com/hesperia-woman-trapped-under-semi-accused-of-dui-and-hit-and-run/>

New Fire Tax Will Cost Taxpayers \$27 Million Per Year

Staff Writer, Mountain News

Posted: August 14, 2018

Tonight the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department will hold a community meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Rim of the World High School.

Part of the meeting will be to discuss a proposed tax that will cost affected taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

As stated in the June 28 printing of the Mountain News, the County Fire Department is looking for a way to secure its annual finances and bring in an additional \$29 million a year.

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors voted at its June 12 meeting on a proposal to fund services by broadening an annual parcel tax to include property owners in all unincorporated communities.

Property owners included in the expanded service zone will have an annual parcel tax of \$157.26, which can be increased by up to 3 percent each year and is expected to cost taxpayers \$27 million.

The proposal was presented by Mark A. Hartwig, fire chief/fire warden, according to the supervisors' agenda. The purpose of the zone expansion is to fill a \$29 million funding gap for County Fire.

Since the tax targets parcels, it is indiscriminate of property value. However, many lower-value homes are built on numerous small parcels, while more expensive homes are generally built on one large parcel. Because of this, homeowners with lower-value homes could end up paying more taxes than anyone else.

If the special tax is protested, it can be killed by more than 50 percent of affected landowners. Alternatively, if at least 25 percent protest, the issue will be sent to voters on a ballot.

The zone currently includes San Bernardino, Helendale, Needles, Twentynine Palms and Upland, where property owners pay a \$157.26 parcel tax each year.

In addition to encompassing unincorporated communities, the zone expansion proposal might include certain incorporated cities that don't already pay the tax, but where County Fire does provide service.

Recognizing that this might become a major issue in the mountain communities, the Mountain News asked its readers, through its Online Poll, what they think about the proposed tax.

A whopping 71.2 percent voted against the tax, agreeing with the statement that they "hope to be among the 50 percent of protesting landowners who kill the tax."

A modest 17.8 percent of responding readers said they favor sending the issue to voters on a ballot, to determine the outcome through American democracy.

Only 11.0 percent of respondents said they support the tax. They agree that "fire prevention and suppression are important, so we should just allow the tax to go into effect."

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_790f00a0-9a66-11e8-a1db-eb1a7696ce.html