



# NEWS



## News Headlines 7/27-30/2018

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## California firefighters make progress in battling deadly wildfire

Karma Allen, abc News

Posted: July 30, 2018, 6:16 a.m.



San Bernardino County Fire Department firefighter James Lippen hoses down hot spots left behind by a wildfire, Sunday, July 29, 2018, in Keswick, Calif.

Firefighters made progress in battling a deadly wildfire in Northern California on Sunday that has leveled hundreds of homes and forced thousands of residents to flee the area.

The Carr Fire was about 17 percent contained by Sunday evening, up from about 5 percent earlier in the day, as fire crews raced to smother the massive blaze, before the weather turned against them.

At least six people have died and more than 800 homes and buildings have been destroyed since the fire ignited last week, according to fire officials.

Among the dead were two firefighters, and a 70-year-old woman and her two great-grandchildren, who died when the fire swept through their home in Redding, California. The sixth victim, who was not identified, did not evacuate despite receiving an evacuation warning, authorities said.

The National Weather Service forecasts more hot and dry conditions for Monday along with high wind gusts, which could fan the flames further.

"Extreme fire conditions continued today while Firefighters worked to build control lines," Cal Fire said in a statement Sunday. "Shifting winds, dry fuels, and steep drainages contributed to rapid growth. Red Flag Warning and heat advisory are in effect for the area through Monday 8 a.m. Crews will continue to assess the number of damaged structures as conditions allow."

The fire, ignited by a vehicle on July 23, has scorched 95,368 acres of land, destroying 874 homes and buildings and damaging 175 others, authorities said Sunday, adding that about 5,000 structures were at risk.

About 38,500 residents were ordered to evacuate. Four evacuation centers have been opened in the area.

Nearly 3,400 firefighters are battling the blaze from the ground and in the air, as officials have deployed 17 helicopters, 334 fire engines, 68 bulldozers and 65 water tenders.

The Carr Fire was one several uncontained wildfires raging in California as the state deals with brutal temperatures and dry conditions.

Another large fire, dubbed the Ferguson Fire, has killed two people, both firefighters, and burned more than 54,481 acres in Mariposa County, California, near Yosemite National Park, authorities said. That fire was about 30 percent contained as of late Sunday.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/california-firefighters-make-progress-battling-deadly-wildfires/story?id=56908363>

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## WONDER VALLEY FIRE LEAVES A FAMILY HOMELESS

Staff Writer, Z107.7 News

Posted: July 30, 2018



A fire destroyed a house and travel trailer Saturday morning in Wonder Valley. Photo Courtesy of San Bernardino County Fire Dept.

A Wonder Valley family is homeless following a fire Saturday morning. According to **County Fire** Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle, firefighters from Twentynine Palms, Joshua Tree, and the Combat Center were called to the 83000 block of Compadre Road about 11:15 a.m. Saturday. Heavy black smoke and flames were visible from the front of the single-story house and several nearby travel trailers when firefighters arrived. The resident was home at the time of the fire, which started in the house and spread to the travel trailers parked nearby.

Firefighters had the blaze under control in about 25 minutes and knocked down in about 45 minutes. The contents in the home are a total loss, as are the travel trailers. The cause is believed to be electrical. Due to the day's high temperatures, the Community Emergency Response Team was requested to provide shade and water for the firefighters at the scene. There were no injuries.

<http://z1077fm.com/wonder-valley-fire-leaves-a-family-homeless/>

## **REDDING, CALIF. | HOPE GROWS AS DEADLY NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BLAZE SLOWS DOWN**

Zainab Sheikh, STL News

Posted: July 29, 2018

REDDING, Calif. — The deadly Northern California wildfire that has forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes slowed down Sunday after days of explosive growth, giving officials hope even as they announced the discovery of a sixth fatality.

Meanwhile officials said a second firefighter died fighting a huge blaze to the south near Yosemite National Park. Brian Hughes, 33, was struck by a tree and killed while working as part of a crew removing brush and other fuel near the so-called Ferguson fire's front lines, national parks officials said.

In Redding, officials stuck a hopeful tone for the first time in days.

“We’re feeling a lot more optimistic today as we’re starting to gain some ground rather than being in a defensive mode on this fire all the time,” said Bret Gouvea, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s incident commander on the blaze around Redding, a city about 230 miles (370 kilometers) north of San Francisco.

Gouvea spoke at a news conference with fire and law enforcement officials. Shasta County Sheriff Tom Bosenko said authorities found a sixth victim of the blaze at a home that was consumed by flames, though he declined to say where. The victim’s identity was not released.

The sheriff’s department is also investigating seven missing persons reports, Bosenko said. Redding police have an additional 11 reports of missing people, though many of them may simply not have checked in with friends or family, said Redding police Sgt. Todd Cogle.

The so-called Carr Fire that affected Redding — a city of about 92,000 people — was ignited by a vehicle problem on Monday about 10 miles (16 kilometers) west of the city. On Thursday, it swept through the historic Gold Rush town of Shasta and nearby Keswick fueled by gusty winds and dry vegetation. It then jumped the Sacramento River and took out subdivisions on the western edge of Redding.

The latest tally showed at least 517 structures destroyed and another 135 damaged, with the fire having consumed 139 square miles (360 square kilometers). A count by The Associated Press found at least 300 of those structures were homes.

After days of fortifying the areas around Redding, fire crews were increasingly confident that the city would escape further damage. The fire had not grown inside the city limits since Saturday, Gouvea said.

Some of the 38,000 people forced to evacuate said they were frustrated because they didn’t know whether their homes were standing or were destroyed. Authorities had not reopened any evacuated neighborhoods where fires raged due to safety and ongoing investigations and urged people to be patient, saying they would soon let residents back.

Fed up, on Sunday morning Tim Bollman hiked 4 miles (6 kilometers) on trails up steep terrain to check on the Redding home he built for his wife and two sons 13 years ago. He found rubble.

“There’s not even anything to pick up,” he said. “It’s completely gone.”

He took hundreds of photos, recorded video and texted his wife.

“It’s the craziest frickin’ thing you have ever seen,” he said, his eyes filled with tears. But then he composed himself.

“It is what it is,” he sighed, and then hiked off.

Keswick, a mountain town of about 450 people, was reduced to an ashy moonscape of blackened trees and smoldering rubble. The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department was called in to tamp down smoking piles of debris that were scattered around the town amid downed electricity lines.

“What we’re seeing here is an incomplete burn situation,” Capt. Doug Miles said as his crew used picks, shovels and rakes to open up piles that just days ago were family homes. The flames laid waste to about 25 blocks, and the “mop up” work was likely to take days. He said his crew would be looking for anything salvageable, but there was little left standing.

The fatalities included two firefighters and a woman and her two great-grandchildren.

“My babies are dead,” Sherry Bledsoe said through tears after she and family members met Saturday with sheriff’s deputies.

Her two children, 5-year-old James Roberts and 4-year-old Emily Roberts, were stranded with their great-grandmother, Melody Bledsoe, 70, when flames swept through the family’s rural property Thursday on the outskirts of Redding.

The sixth victim, who was not identified, did not evacuate despite receiving an evacuation warning, Bosenko said.

It is the largest fire burning in California, threatening more than 5,000 structures. The flames were just 5 percent contained, though Gouvea said he expected that number to climb.

“We’re here till the end, and we will get to an end, and we will bring some peace to this chaos,” he said.

The firefighters killed in the blaze included Don Ray Smith, 81, of Pollock Pines, a bulldozer operator who was helping clear vegetation in the path of the wildfire. Redding Fire Inspector Jeremy Stoke was also killed, but details of his death were not released.

The fire around Redding was among 17 significant blazes in the state on Sunday that had forced roughly 50,000 people from their homes, said Lynne Tolmachoff, a Cal Fire spokeswoman.

About 12,000 firefighters were battling the fires, she said.

“We are well ahead of the fire activity we saw last year,” she said. “This is just July, so we’re not even into the worst part of fire season.”

About 100 miles (160 kilometers) southwest of Redding, one of two blazes that started in Mendocino County forced the evacuation of Lakeport, a city of about 5,000 people, after destroying four homes. More than 4,500 buildings were under threat, officials said. The two fires had blackened 39 square miles (101 square kilometers) and were each 5 percent contained.

Authorities also issued evacuation orders in Napa County, famous for its wine, when a fire destroyed eight structures. The blaze had blackened 150 acres, but was 50 percent contained on Sunday.

Hughes, the firefighter killed near Yosemite, was originally from Hawaii. He had been with California's Arrowhead Interagency Hotshots for four years and reached the rank of captain. Earlier this month, firefighter Braden Varney was killed when the bulldozer he was operating overturned while he was fighting the flames near the national park. At least seven other firefighters have been injured since that blaze broke out July 13.

Some evacuations were lifted but officials said Yosemite Valley, the heart of tourism in the park, will remain closed until August 3.

A big fire continued to burn in the San Jacinto Mountains east of Los Angeles near Palm Springs, but officials lifted evacuation orders for several communities after reporting significant progress by firefighters. The Yosemite and Southern California blazes had burned nearly 100 square miles (260 square kilometers).

<https://www.stl.news/redding-calif-hope-grows-deadly-northern-california-blaze-slows/149342/>



## 'My babies are dead' - California wildfires claim lives of woman and her two great-grandchildren

Staff Writer, Associated Press

Posted: July 30, 2018



apt. Scott Fisher, with the San Bernardino County Fire Department, surveys a wildfire-damaged neighborhood, Sunday, July 29, 2018, in Keswick, Calif. Source: Associated Press

The deadly Northern California wildfire that has forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes slowed down today after days of explosive growth, giving officials hope even as they announced the discovery of a sixth fatality.

Keswick, a mountain town of about 450 people, was reduced to an ashy moonscape of blackened trees and smoldering rubble.

The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department was called in to tamp down smoking piles of debris that were scattered around the town amid downed electricity lines.

"What we're seeing here is an incomplete burn situation," Capt. Doug Miles said as his crew used picks, shovels and rakes to open up piles that just days ago were family homes.

The flames laid waste to about 25 blocks, and the "mop up" work was likely to take days.

He said his crew would be looking for anything salvageable, but there was little left standing.

The fatalities included two firefighters and a woman and her two great-grandchildren.

"My babies are dead," Sherry Bledsoe said through tears after she and family members met Sunday with sheriff's deputies.

Her two children, 5-year-old James Roberts and 4-year-old Emily Roberts, were stranded with their great-grandmother, Melody Bledsoe, 70, when flames swept through the family's rural property Friday on the outskirts of Redding.

The sixth victim, who was not identified, did not evacuate despite receiving an evacuation warning, Bosenko said.

It is the largest fire burning in California, threatening more than 5,000 structures. The flames were just 5 percent contained, though Gouvea said he expected that number to climb.

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Gouvea spoke at a news conference with fire and law enforcement officials. Shasta County Sheriff Tom Bosenko said authorities found a sixth victim of the blaze at a home that was consumed by flames, though he declined to say where.

The victim's identity was not released.

The sheriff's department is also investigating seven missing persons reports, Bosenko said.

Redding police have an additional 11 reports of missing people, though many of them may simply not have checked in with friends or family, said Redding police Sgt. Todd Cogle.

The so-called Carr Fire that affected Redding — a city of about 92,000 people — was ignited by a vehicle problem on Tuesday about 16 kilometers west of the city.

On Friday, it swept through the historic Gold Rush town of Shasta and nearby Keswick fueled by gusty winds and dry vegetation.

It then jumped the Sacramento River and took out subdivisions on the western edge of Redding.

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Authorities also issued evacuation orders in Napa County, famous for its wine, when a fire destroyed eight structures.

The blaze had blackened 150 acres, but was 50 per cent contained on Sunday.

Big fires continued to burn outside Yosemite National Park and in the San Jacinto Mountains east of Los Angeles near Palm Springs.

Those blazes had burned nearly 260 square kilometers.

Yosemite Valley remained closed to visitors and will not reopen until Friday.

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/world/my-babies-dead-california-wildfires-claim-lives-woman-and-her-two-great-grandchildren>

## Two women injured during rock slide at Bonita Falls

Staff Writer, VVNG

Posted: July 30, 2018



(Submitted photo)

HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) — A rock slide at a popular hiking destination in Lytle Creek injured two women who required to be hoisted rescued to safety over the weekend, officials said.

It happened on Saturday, July 28, 2018, at about 1:20 pm, helicopters AR306 and 40King5 were dispatched to the area of Bonita Falls, in Lytle Creek for a report of a possible rock slide resulting in several people getting hurt.

A group of Firefighters with **San Bernardino County** hiked into the remote area and were assisted by the responding helicopters.

“Upon contact, the team requested that AR306 perform a hoist of two victims, who were suffering from minor/moderate injuries sustained by falling rocks,” stated a sheriff’s news release.

Deputy Pepler positioned AR306 overhead of the victims and Deputy Hess lowered Medic Katzer to the base of the falls to assist the Fire Department. It was determined that both victims needed to be removed by hoist.

The first victim, Miriam Becerril, 37, of Hesperia was hoisted via rescue harness and flown to an awaiting ambulance. Helicopter AR306 returned and then hoisted Lourdes Hernandez, 40, of San Bernardino using a stokes basket and was flown to LLUMC to be treated for injuries.

<https://www.vvng.com/two-women-injured-during-rock-slide-at-bonita-falls/>

## Car fire sparks blaze in Cajon Pass; lane closures cause heavy traffic delays

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: July 27, 2018, 11:21 p.m.



Firefighters battle a brush fire off northbound interstate 15 in the Cajon pass Friday. The blaze began when a car caught fire after a crash, officials said. [James quigg, Daily Press]

**CAJON PASS** — A car fire that spread into nearby vegetation along northbound Interstate 15 snarled traffic for hours Friday.

The crash occurred between Cleghorn Road and Highway 138 at 10:54 a.m., according to California Highway Patrol logs. Details are scarce, but the car caught fire, quickly spreading to nearby brush.

By 10:58 a.m., CHP logs were reporting that the flames were spreading to nearby brush. Scanner traffic reported the fire was “moving up the hillside” and several resources, including air support, were dispatched to the area.

Authorities quickly shut down the No. 4 and 5 lanes of northbound I-15 to allow fire crews to access the blaze. A SigAlert was issued at 11:15 a.m. and a hard closure for the truck scales was also requested.

National Forest Service San Bernardino Battalion Chief Jim Snow said crews were able to gain control of the fire quickly, stopping its forward spread at 2 acres.

“We have crews on all flanks,” Snow said just after 12:30 p.m. “We dropped some [fire] retardant at the top and were able to put enough in to secure the area.”

Firefighters from the National Forest Service, CalFire and **San Bernardino County Fire** Department were on hand to combat the blaze. While the spread of the fire was halted by 12:15 p.m., a small flare-up occurred shortly after but was also swiftly doused.

Yet the flare-up prompted officials to extend the lane closures until around 4:30 p.m, according to CHP logs — causing heavy delays on northbound I-15 as traffic backed up well past the Interstate 215 split.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20180727/car-fire-sparks-blaze-in-cajon-pass-lane-closures-cause-heavy-traffic-delays>