



NEWS



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Firefighters to scale tallest skyscraper in West to fight cancer

Rene Ray De La Cruz, Daily Press

Posted: February 18, 2019, 6:04 pm

APPLE VALLEY — Wearing full gear, local firefighters will climb the tallest skyscraper west of the Mississippi during the 28th annual LLS Firefighter Stairclimb in support of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Next month, firefighters with the Apple Valley Fire Protection District and **San Bernardino County Fire** will join career and volunteer firefighters from across the nation in downtown Seattle and attempt to ascend all 1,356 steps of the Columbia Center skyscraper.

Apple Valley Fire Captain John Watterson, who is preparing for the climb, told the Daily Press each climber will wear more than 60 pounds of turnout and breathing gear as they climb 69 flights of stairs inside the building.

Watterson said firefighter paramedic David Martinez is the “frontman” for the AVFPD team that also includes Chad Baeskens, Landon D’Antonio, Corey Fratt, Manuel Lafarga, Parker McColm, Mark Milson and Jared Shepard.

“This will be our first time participating in this event, so we’ve been training pretty hard,” said Watterson, 50, who’ll celebrate three decades with the AVFPD this month. “We’ve been training on a used stair climber at Station One and at the five-story tower at Regional Public Safety Training Center by the Walmart Distribution Center.”

Martinez told the Daily Press firefighters stay fit due to the rigors of firefighting and responding to various emergency situations.

“This climb is really going to test our mental toughness and physical abilities,” said Martinez, who first heard of the LLS climb nearly six years before going full-time with the AVFPD.

“When I discovered the climb, I told myself that I wanted to make the climb as a way of giving back,” Martinez, 44, said. “The climb is for a great cause and every dollar goes to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.”

The annual climbing event is limited to 2,000 climbers, who must each pay an \$80 registration fee and raise a minimum of \$300, Martinez said.

“The fundraising support from family, friends and the community has been overwhelming,” Martinez said. “As a team, we’ve already raised over \$10,000, but we’re still accepting donations.”

Over the last few months, the AVFPD has conducted several fundraising events for LLS including the sale of T-shirts. A limited amount of shirts are still available and can be purchased by calling the AVFPD at 760-247-7618.

Local County Firefighters making the climb include Timothy Arabit, Luke Bagnell, Brian Bement, Ethan Blood, Travis Bonnell, John Demel, Robert Edie, Anthony Forrand, Jesse Gonzalez, Wil Kroschel, Jame Lippen, Kent Meeker, Brandon Miller, Sergio Mora, Philip Nageotte, Andrew Oliveros, Ryan Perez, Ryan Starling, Joe Tambe and Nic Turner.

Watterson said every firefighter has personal reasons for taking part in the climb. He said his motivation includes challenging his own body, his family's battle with cancer and supporting LLS.

Nearly every 9 minutes someone in the U.S. dies from some type of blood cancer, the LLS reported.

Several studies reported nearly 30 forms of cancer have been commonly found among firefighters, including bladder, colon, intestine, kidney, lung, stomach, testis and prostate cancer, as well as leukemia, malignant melanoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma, the Daily Press reported in 2016.

"This climb is just like fighting a fire — we're not sure what to fully expect until we get there," Watterson said. "We're also doing this to save lives."

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is the world's largest voluntary health agency dedicated to blood cancer. The LLS mission includes: Cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life for patients and their families.

General information and donations for the AVFPD and County Fire climbing teams can be found online by searching www.firefighterstairclimb.org. Donations can be made by searching for participating individuals and fire departments.

Check donations can be dropped off or mailed to AVFPD Station No. 1, 22400 Headquarters Drive in Apple Valley. Checks should be made out to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20190218/firefighters-to-scale-tallest-skyscraper-in-west-to-fight-cancer>

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EVENT MARCH 9

Staff Writer, Z107.7 FM News

Posted: February 18, 2019

Learn practical emergency applications and preparedness tips from a variety of demonstrations, classes, and presentations at a community preparedness day set for March 9 in Yucca Valley. There will be hands-on training, booths, and more, and it's all free. Managing editor Tami Roleff says save the date...

The free community preparedness day will have booths and demonstrations that will give out basic first aid tips, bandaging kits, and information on what you need for 72-hour emergency kits; emergency plans for pets and families; how to store food and sanitize water; demonstrations on how to shut off your gas; and more. There will be presentations on how to stop bleeding using tourniquets, what to do if you encounter a downed power line; information about the Red Cross; a "pillowcase" project for kids; and a hands-only CPR demonstration.

The free event is set for 10 to 2 March 9 at the Yucca Valley Community Center.

Presentations and class schedule:

Every 30 minutes: **SB County** Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle – "Until Help Arrives" with firemen teaching short ongoing classes for hands on CPR-

Come learn, practice or refresh your knowledge. (I am no longer physically able to perform CPR but I could direct someone on how to – or could I? Do I know the current method? What is the cadence? Where is my CPR reference guide? Better refresh my skills.)

10-11:30 a.m.: "Stop the Bleed." Learn how to help in a bleeding emergency using tourniquets. Must pre-register on Eventbrite at www.Mbstopthebleed.eventbrite.com, or call Sunny at 760-366-4679. (Class limited to 35 participants.)

Noon: SCE's Jennifer Cusack will cover downed wires and fast moving brush fires.

11 a.m. and 1 p.m.: Sunny Evans – American Red Cross – Pillow Case project. Presentation teaches children how to react and be prepared in a disaster and then, go home and teach their parents.

1:30 p.m.: American Red Cross by Dan Coleman. Learn what the Red Cross does, how they support victims, and how they can help you prepare.

CERT will be teaching cribbing (removable of persons from debris safely) and triage technique, Morongo Basin COAD – solar cooking in spare tires.

<http://z1077fm.com/community-emergency-preparedness-event-march-9/>

Mountain lion removed from tree in California backyard

Rob Picheta, CNN

Posted: February 18, 2019, 5:47 am



The mountain lion is lowered from the tree. The big cat was assessed by wildlife experts before being released back into the wild.

(CNN)Firefighters are well known for their cat-rescuing skills. But members of **San Bernardino County Fire** department faced a bigger challenge than your average trapped tabby when called to a home in California on Saturday.

Arriving at the house in Hesperia, San Bernardino County, they found a large cougar, or mountain lion, sitting about 50 feet (15 meters) in the air in a tree in the backyard.

The homeowner was gardening when they became aware of the cougar, authorities said.

Staff from the California Department of Fish & Wildlife tranquilized the big cat before firefighters approached it using a ladder, the fire department said in a Facebook post.

It was then lowered from the tree in a harness, assessed by wildlife experts and released back into the wild.

"It is common for young mountain lions to wander outside what some would consider normal habitat in an attempt to establish their territory," said Kevin Brennan, a biologist at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

About 80 miles from Los Angeles, the town of Hesperia sits in the Mojave Desert and is bordered to the south by the San Bernardino Mountains.

While cougar attacks on humans are rare, the animal presented a danger to residents, warden Rick Fischer said.

"Leaving the lion in the tree would not have been safe for the community," Fischer said. "Once the lion regained consciousness we ensured he safely returned to his suitable habitat."

Earlier this month, a runner in Colorado strangled a mountain lion with his bare hands after it attacked him. Fewer than 20 people have been killed in North America by mountain lions in more than 100 years, officials said after that incident.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/18/us/mountain-lion-california-scli-intl/index.html>

Mountain lion rescued from 50 feet above home in Southern California

Staff Writer, ABC News Radio/Sandhills Express

Posted: February 18, 2019



(California Department of Fish and Wildlife)

(HESPERIA, Calif.) — Firefighters helped rescue a large mountain lion from a tree outside a home in Southern California over the weekend, authorities said.

The homeowner spotted the wild cat on Saturday afternoon while doing yard work around the residence in Hesperia, a city in the Mojave Desert near the San Bernardino Mountains.

The person alerted authorities and **San Bernardino County firefighters** were dispatched to the property, where they found the cougar perched on a branch about 50 feet above ground, according to a press release from San Bernardino County Fire.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife was called in to help devise a plan to safely extract the animal from the tree. Wildlife officials ultimately tranquilized the mountain lion, after which firefighters approached it using a tall ladder, securing it in a rescue harness before lowering it to the ground.

“It is common for young mountain lions to wander outside what some would consider normal habitat in an attempt to establish their territory,” Kevin Brennan, a biologist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, said in a statement Saturday.

Mountain lions are quiet, solitary, elusive predators that typically avoid people, and attacks on humans are rare. But they have been known to prey on pets and livestock.

“Leaving the lion in the tree would not have been safe for the community,” Rick Fischer, a warden with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, said in a statement Saturday.

Wildlife officials later released the mountain lion back into the wild.

“Once the lion regained consciousness,” Fischer said, “we ensured he safely returned to his suitable habitat.”

http://sandhillsexpress.com/abc_national/mountain-lion-rescued-from-50-feet-above-home-in-southern-california-abcid36158942/

Authorities remove cougar from tree outside California home

Staff Writer, Daily Journal

Posted: February 17, 2019

HESPERIA, Calif. (AP) — Firefighters have rescued a very big cat — a mountain lion — from a tree outside a home in the Southern California desert.

The homeowner called authorities Saturday after spotting the animal near the edge of the San Bernardino Mountains.

San Bernardino County firefighters found the large mountain lion perched on a branch about 50 feet (15 meters) high.

State wildlife personnel tranquilized the animal. Firefighters lowered it to the ground using a rescue harness. A biologist evaluated the cougar before it was released back into the wild.

State Department of Fish and Wildlife Warden Rick Fischer says it's not uncommon for mountain lions to wander outside their habitat in the nearby mountains.

Attacks on humans are rare but the big cats will prey on pets and livestock.

https://dailyjournalonline.com/news/national/authorities-remove-cougar-from-tree-outside-california-home/article_b8904fa4-3d1b-5f62-9a03-4d50deb24f55.html

Officials rescue mountain lion from tree outside Hesperia home

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: February 16, 2019, 8:46 pm



A mountain lion is brought down from a tree near a Hesperia home by county firefighters and wildlife officials on Saturday afternoon. [California Fish & Wildlife]

HESPERIA — Firefighters and wildlife officials successfully rescued a mountain lion stuck in a tree outside a local home Saturday afternoon.

Like the classic legend, **San Bernardino County Fire** Department firefighters found themselves rescuing a cat off a tree — only a much bigger cat than usual.

County firefighters were called to the scene to assist California Fish & Wildlife and San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department officials with the mountain lion, who was up a tree outside a home in the 18000 block of Danbury Avenue.

The homeowner noticed the mountain lion while working in the yard, officials said, and immediately called for help. Firefighters arrived several minutes later and found the big cat perched in a tree approximately 50 feet above the ground, officials said.

Firefighters secured the area as they figured out a strategy to get the mountain lion down to safety. They were able to tranquilize and secure the animal, using a rescue harness, to get it to the ground by 4:20 pm.

From there, the big cat was evaluated by a Fish & Wildlife biologist before being released back into the wild, Warden Rick Fischer said.

<https://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20190216/officials-rescue-mountain-lion-from-tree-outside-hesperia-home>

Mountain lion tranquilized after climbing tree in Hesperia neighborhood

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: February 16, 2019



Mountain Lion located in tree in Hesperia. (Photo courtesy City of Hesperia/Twitter)

HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) — A mountain lion was tranquilized in a Hesperia neighborhood after residents found the wild cat hiding in a tree.

“Mountain lion located in the neighborhood near Danbury and Temecula in Hesperia. Animal Control/Fish & Game responded and tranquilized the animal. It is being transported to the mountains,” stated a City of Hesperia tweet.

According to **San Bernardino County Fire** the homeowner noticed the animal while working in the yard and immediately summoned authorities for help.

The lion was tranquilized at approximately 4:20 p.m., and County Firefighters approached the animal using a ladder.

A lowering system using ropes and pulleys. The lion was then secured into a rescue harness and eventually lowered safely to the ground, where he was evaluated by a Fish & Wildlife biologist,” stated SB County Fire in a news release.

Fish & Wildlife biologist Kevin Brennan says it is common for young mountain lions to wander outside what some would consider normal habitat in an attempt to establish their territory.

Fish & Wildlife Warden Rick Fischer remarked that without the help of San Bernardino County firefighters it would have been difficult to extract the animal safely, and that while human attacks are rare, mountain lions have been known to attack family pets and livestock.

“Leaving the lion in the tree would not have been safe for the community,” Fischer says.

“Once the lion regained consciousness we ensured he safely returned to his suitable habitat,” Fischer says.

There have been several mountain lion sightings reported throughout the Victor Valley over the past couple of weeks.

On February 3, 2019, Trish Morrison posted a photo to Facebook of a large mountain lion spotted in a field close to homes near the area of Kiowa and Tussing Ranch Roads in Apple Valley.

On February 11, 2019, Sean Ishol, a resident of Lucerne Valley, posted a photo to the Victor Valley News Facebook group of a mountain lion hiding inside of his garage.

If dangerous wildlife is spotted, do not approach, call AC immediately at (760) 947-1707.

<https://www.vvng.com/mountain-lion-tranquilized-in-hesperia-neighborhood/>

Stranded off-roaders rescued in San Bernardino Mountains

Richard K. De Atley, Press Enterprise

Posted: February 17, 2019, 11:12 am



Three snowcat rescue vehicles were used to reach a group of stranded off-roaders in the San Bernardino Mountains on Saturday Feb. 16, 2019. Only one of the tracked vehicles was able to reach the group. (Courtesy San Bernardino County Fire Department)

A group of 15 off-roaders and their dogs were rescued early Sunday from the Crab Flats area north of Green Valley Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains after being stranded in sub-freezing temperatures, authorities said.

No injuries were reported from the incident, which began late Saturday night when members of the group, which included three children, contacted authorities by cell phone to report they were stuck.

The group was in five four-wheel drive vehicles, which were outmatched by the conditions on the Forest Service roads they were using, including deep snow and sections washed out by recent rains, **San Bernardino County Fire Department** Capt. Jeremy Kern said by phone.

He said temperature in the area was 24 degrees when the group called about 10 p.m. Saturday, and got colder as the operation continued for several hours. All of the people were sheltered in place while awaiting rescue, and had fuel, Kern said.

The department sent three snowcats to reach the group, but only one of the tracked vehicles was able to complete the route, Kern said. It ferried them out of the area in two groups — nine people and two dogs and six people and two larger dogs.

The group had started out from Fawnskin, north of Big Bear Lake and were about 13 road miles west of there when they called for help, Kern said.

Kern said one of the snowcats which started out from Fawskin had to backtrack after it encountered a large tree across a roadway.

Another snowcat out of Green Valley did not have the clearance for a washed-out road, prompting the call for a higher-clearance snowcat out of Lake Arrowhead.

The crew from Green Valley worked to reinforce the road for the Lake Arrowhead vehicle, which was the one that reached the group, Kern said.

The entire operation took about eight hours, Kern said. The 15 rescued people were eventually shuttled to Running Springs by San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputies to make their own arrangements, Kern said. The off-road vehicles remained in Crab Flats.

"We usually face a couple of these a year," Kern said. "We advise people to pay attention to road closures, and bring proper equipment" to the mountains, including tire chains, warm clothing and extra food, he said.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2019/02/17/stranded-off-roaders-rescued-in-san-bernardino-mountains/>

Community unites, and saves a life

Terri McCawley Hill, Mountaineer Progress

Posted: February 16, 2019

When a customer at Mountain Hardware collapsed, unable to breathe, employees and customers rushed to his side. Having called 911, they performed CPR and first aid while waiting for paramedics. This act of heroism by community members saved the man's life.

Mike Troeger posted the following on the hardware store's Facebook page on Monday, February 11: I would like to thank everyone who helped with the medical emergency we had at the store today. Jerry Campbell, Wrightwood Resident, Bart Mallory, Wrightwood Resident, Teri, Mellissa and Chris - staff at Mountain Hardware, and **San Bernardino County Fire** Department staff.

This event showed us how people just going about their daily life can come together to make a MAJOR difference in someone else's life even though they may be unknown to them.

This, along with many other things, makes me so proud of being part of a GREAT Community – WRIGHTOOD.

Mike

As an addendum to this story, it was brought to the attention of this reporter that the 911 dispatcher couldn't get the address of the hardware store to match their system. The lag time between the call to 911 operators and the arrival of first responders could have been the difference between life and death. Address verification, for shipping, too (not just 911) for locations on Hwy 2 are an issue. The State Highway is listed as SR2, Hwy 2, State Highway 2, Angeles Crest Highway, and others.

Also in Wrightwood, the LA and San Bernardino County line splits the west side of the community. During the Cardinal Fire on Aug 11, 2007, people tried calling 911 and were told they didn't have that address. There were calls from cell and land line phones that were routed wrong, because they came from properties bordering the county line.

San Bernardino County Fire has been pressed to find a resolution to the problem and, although at least one fire chief looked into the matter at one time, nothing has changed.

As a follow-up to this story, staff at the Mountaineer Progress will inquire at the County Supervisor's office as to assistance in fixing the issue , and we will report on new information.

<http://mtprogress.net/home/february2019news.html>