



NEWS



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Big Bear Valley Historical Museum in Immediate Need of Funds

Susan A. Neufeld, Rotwnews

Posted: December 12, 2017, 5:01 a.m.

Big Bear Valley, CA – The Big Bear Valley Historical Museum is in critical need of funds. Due to the expected closure of the main parking lot, they need a budget to hire contractors and expand their parking at the Greenway entrance.

The Big Bear Valley Historical Museum is hoping to raise \$500,000. **All Funds go directly to the Museum.** The Airport is going to close off the parking lot at the Museum for their safety zone. This will be a major blow to the Museum and could put them out of business.

The all volunteer Museum provides a valley-wide benefit to both children and adults. By preserving the past, we preserve a rich heritage for our future generations.

The Big Bear Valley Historical Society was founded in November 1967, by a small group of people who wished to preserve the colorful part of this high mountain valley. It's an organization of people dedicated to preserving the rich history of the area and promoting an appreciation of its colorful and diverse heritage.

In addition to hosting historical tours and featured speakers, the Society operates a Historical Museum with an extensive collection of artifacts, featuring exhibits from the indigenous Serrano Indians, the gold mining era, cowboys and cattle ranching, logging, fox farming and early winter sports.

In order to be ready for the Memorial Day Weekend opening, the funds are needed immediately. It just takes a moment to assure the Museum will always be there for locals and visitors alike to enjoy.

There has been a Go Fund Me account set up. Just click on charities Big Bear City, to donate. You can also mail your donations to Big Bear Valley Historical Society. P.O. Box 513, Big Bear City, CA 92314. For more information call (909) 585-8100.

<http://rotwnews.com/2017/12/12/big-bear-valley-historical-museum-in-immediate-need-of-funds/>

Hundreds of Southern California firefighters deploy to massive Thomas fire as other wildfires wind down

Beatriz E. Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: December 11, 2017, 8:28 p.m.



U.S. Forest fire crews fight fire with fire as they set off huge backfires to cut off the northern flank of the Thomas fire near Rose Valley recreation area on Saturday, Dec. 9, 2017 in the Los Padres National Forest. The Thomas Fire has spread to near 150,000 acres. (Photo by Gene Blevins for the Los Angeles DailyNews/SCNG)

Hundreds of firefighters from throughout Southern California have been fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the firefighters of Ventura and Santa Barbara counties to tame and break the destructive and deadly Thomas fire, which Cal Fire has classified as the fifth-largest wildfire in California history.

Among the 6,397 fire personnel on the front lines, fire engines from Victorville, Murrieta, Los Angeles and beyond could be seen parked along winding roads, sitting in the command post set up at the Ventura County Fairgrounds.

Some of those firefighters had just finished battling blazes closer to home. Los Angeles-area firefighters were called to help Sunday night as the major fires in Los Angeles County — the Skirball, Creek and Rye fires — were winding down Sunday. More firefighters were to have deployed Monday.

Murrieta Fire & Rescue personnel, who spent several days last week knocking down the Liberty fire in southwest Riverside County, also were deployed north.

The steady team of firefighters making their way toward Ventura and Santa Barbara counties is due to an agreement between agencies called mutual aid.

“Mutual aid is an agreement between emergency responders to lend assistance across jurisdictional boundaries,” said Massiel Ladron De Guevara, spokeswoman for the Chino Valley Fire Protection District. “This may occur due to an emergency response that exceeds local resources, such as a disaster or a multiple-alarm fire.”

Chino Valley has a strike team battling the Thomas fire, as well as a water tender at the Lilac fire in northern San Diego County.

In October, the fire protection district also had a strike team in Northern California fighting the deadly series of Wine Country fires that ravaged thousands of acres of land and destroyed 8,889 structures. Personnel on that strike team were made up of some firefighters who had only days earlier left the front lines of the Canyon fire in Corona.

The best-known mutual-aid agreement is California's Master Mutual-Aid system, according to San Bernardino County Fire Department spokesman Eric Sherwin.

That agreement is put to work through FIRESCOPE, a system developed after Southern California experienced a series of catastrophic fires in 1970. The fires burned for several days across several jurisdictions.

FIRESCOPE organizes resources, which "allows literally thousands of personnel and equipment to be rapidly assigned without overly taxing any one region," Sherwin said.

A strike team from the San Bernardino County Fire Department was deployed to fight the enormous Thomas fire hours after it ignited Dec. 4. The team is made up of engines from stations in Victorville, Oak Hills, Lake Arrowhead, San Bernardino and Bloomington, Sherwin said.

Two strike teams from the city of Los Angeles were at the Thomas fire Sunday, and units and firefighters from Beverly Hills, Culver City and Santa Monica were in that joint effort. That mutual aid began Dec. 5, a spokeswoman said.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department had seven strike teams assigned to the Thomas fire. In all, at least 100 fire department personnel were there, including bulldozer operators and inmate crews.

The Orange County Fire Authority has sent two strike teams and 10 engines for a total of about 50 personnel to the Thomas fire.

"We have a lot equipment out helping our partner agencies," Orange County Capt. Larry Kurtz said. "But we still plenty have of equipment and manpower guarding right here at home."

Along with the help from California agencies, more than 700 firefighters from 10 neighboring states also have made the trek to Ventura County to assist with the battle against all the recent fire, a Cal Fire representative said.

<http://www.dailynews.com/2017/12/11/hundreds-of-southern-california-firefighters-deploy-to-massive-thomas-fire-as-other-wildfires-wind-down/>.

WEATHER UPDATE: Winds continue in Fontana; fire danger remains high

Staff writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: December 11, 2017



A fire burns in San Bernardino on Dec. 5 before being extinguished. The potential for fire in San Bernardino County remains high because of warm, dry, and breezy conditions. (Herald News photo by Alejandro Cano)

The winds that have plagued Southern California over the past week are continuing to contribute to several devastating wildfires, although the winds have decreased in intensity in some areas in recent days.

As of Dec. 11, fires have burned nearly 257,000 acres and destroyed more than 1,000 structures in Southern California. Almost 9,000 firefighters remain on the line, making progress in some containment of the fires.

The worst blaze is the Thomas Fire in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, which has burned 230,500 acres and is only 15 percent contained. Other fires have caused major damage in Los Angeles and San Diego counties.

San Bernardino County has also been affected, to a lesser degree.

On Dec. 5, the Little Mountain Fire burned 260 acres near University Avenue in San Bernardino. Some neighborhoods were evacuated and two civilians were treated for critical burn injuries and transported to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center.

Also that day, a downed electrical line was believed to be responsible for igniting a vegetation fire near Myers Canyon in San Bernardino which consumed 34 acres.

In Fontana, the winds caused property damage, overturned numerous trucks on local freeways, and forced Public Works Department crews to work until 9 p.m. on some days to take care of downed trees. From Dec. 4-8, the city received more than 80 calls for service related to downed trees or branches, according to Public Works Manager Dan West.

"It slowed down after Thursday night (Dec. 7)," West said.

Still, the potential for fire remains high because warm, dry, and breezy conditions are ongoing, officials said.

http://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/weather-update-winds-continue-in-fontana-fire-danger-remains-high/article_cecff8ea-deab-11e7-acd3-03349e43a8f9.html

As California burns, Congress plans to slash tax write-offs for fires and other disasters

Sarah D. Wire, LA Times

Posted: December 11, 2017



Ventura County fire crews monitor backfires on the Thomas fire along Toland Road near Santa Paula. (Michael Owen Baker / For The Times)
As California burns, Congress is planning to limit taxpayers' ability to write off losses from future wildfires and other disasters.

The disaster write-off is one of the many little-known deductions set to be mostly wiped out in the GOP tax plan, but it's getting fresh attention because of the fires that have devastated parts of Southern California over the last week.

The House tax bill entirely eliminates the deduction that allows people to claim uninsured losses after all types of disasters; the Senate version allows people to take the deduction only if the president declares a federal disaster.

So far this year, nearly 58,000 wildfires have burned more than 9 million acres in the U.S., according to the National Interagency Fire Center. Only a small number would qualify taxpayers for relief under the Senate bill.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy's (R-Bakersfield) staff said the federal disaster version of the deduction is likely to be included in the final tax legislation as the House and Senate work to reconcile their bills over the next few weeks, but acknowledged there isn't a long-term plan to allow people to deduct the uninsured costs of rebuilding from smaller disasters.

That means unless Congress decides to pass a tax exemption for each disaster, future victims will have to pay taxes on the personal costs of rebuilding or hope the incident is big enough to be declared a federal disaster.

Americans deducted \$1.6 billion in 2015 for uninsured losses in natural disasters that were not declared federal disasters, according to the Internal Revenue Service. (California figures were not available.)

The House tax bill does include a limited deduction for the victims of this year's hurricanes in Texas and Florida, and even 2012's Superstorm Sandy. But it leaves out relief for the victims of recent big fires, which Democrats have used to criticize their California colleagues.

"It's appalling Republicans are taking money from any wildfire victims to pay for tax cuts for the rich," Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said in a statement. "A family who loses everything in a wildfire shouldn't have to pray for a federal declaration so they can recover. Tax relief should be available to help all victims regardless of the type of natural disaster."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) also took California Republicans to task Thursday for supporting the House GOP tax bill, saying they “voted to discriminate against victims of fire. We certainly want to have the deduction for victims of hurricanes and the rest, but why are they doing this to our state?” Some Republicans have said they want fire victims to get the same benefits as hurricane victims, but they aren’t clamoring for the broader deduction to be preserved.

But for this year’s California fires, Republican leaders have tacitly committed to including tax relief for victims in a separate spending bill this year, along with millions in disaster relief for the October fires that was requested by the entire California delegation.

“We’ve got to provide relief for people that lost property in the wildfires,” said Rep. Mimi Walters (R-Irvine), who wrote the tax language expected to be added to the spending bill. “What we are doing for the hurricane victims, we are doing for the fire victims ... to make sure that we were on parity with them, that everybody got treated the same.”

Walters’ provision currently only covers people who lost property in the Northern California fires, which killed 44 people and destroyed nearly 9,000 structures, but she said that she’s looking at including the ongoing fires in Southern California.

<http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-ca-congress-tax-fire-20171210-story.html>