



NEWS



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FIRE TAX ASSESSMENT MEETINGS IN WONDER VALLEY AND YUCCA VALLEY

Staff Writer, z1077news
Posted: August 9, 2018



County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig explains that the special operations division includes things like the training division, fuel, hazmat, emergency medical services, and an MOU with the Sheriff's Department.

San Bernardino County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig presided over two Town Hall meetings in the Morongo Basin yesterday. The first, at 4:00 p.m., was at the Wonder Valley Community Center; the second was at 6:30 in the Yucca Valley Community Center. Hartwig was here to try to sell a proposed property tax increase of about \$157 a year to backfill budget shortfalls for the County Fire Department.

County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig warned the residents who turned out that the annual assessment was necessary for the continued survival of county fire services. "We must look at service cuts or raise revenue throughout the (fire protection) district," he said. Reporter Mike Lipsitz reports on the Wonder Valley meeting...

About 60 people turned out yesterday to hear from county fire personnel about the proposed expansion and per parcel tax. The expansion would bring almost all of the county's unincorporated communities as well as Yucca Valley into Fire Protection District 5, a total of 19,000 square miles. The proposal comes in response to a \$29.3 million budget shortfall that county fire is grappling to manage. The shortfall is not new. In recent years the department has relied on bailouts from the board of supervisors and has spent down reserves from \$43 million to less than \$4 million in as many years.

The future of the now closed Wonder Valley Fire Station was a chief concern for many at yesterday's meeting. That station was closed more than a year ago because, according to county fire, of contaminated water there. Hartwig said dealing with the water issue and reopening the station was something the department wants to see, but the current climate doesn't allow any guarantees. Property owners can protest and theoretically kill the plan in an upcoming special protest vote.

After visiting Wonder Valley Wednesday to explain the proposed expansion into the county's Fire Protection District 5, County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig went to Yucca Valley where his message was the same. Managing editor Tami Roleff attended the Yucca Valley meeting, where Hartwig said Yucca Valley residents would benefit from the proposed expansion...

The county fire department is funded through property taxes, contracts with other cities for fire protection, and \$17 million from the county's general fund. (The amount of property taxes collected for the fire department varies by city; 22 percent of Yucca Valley property taxes go to the fire department, while it's only

10 percent from Joshua Tree property taxes, and 3 percent from Wonder Valley property taxes.) That's not enough though; the county fire department has had to spend \$12 million from its reserve fund for the past several years to meet expenses. County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig said last night that if the proposed expansion is not approved by property owners, services will be cut, although specific cuts were not mentioned at this time.

But if the expansion into Fire Protection District 5 is approved, Hartwig said it is his priority—and that of County Supervisor James Ramos—to have two new fire stations built in Yucca Valley, which would include relocating Station 42 from the Mesa to the center of Yucca Valley. The fire department would still request the \$17 million from the county even after the expansion, but instead of using it for expenses, the fire department would go toward the cost of Yucca Valley's new fire stations.

The expansion plan is structured so that it will automatically go into effect unless 25 percent of affected property owners throughout the county submit a protest form. If they do, the proposal will go on the ballot as a voter initiative. If 50 percent submit the forms, the measure will be killed altogether. Protest forms will be mailed to eligible property owners September 14 and must be submitted by October 16.

<http://www.sbcfire.org/ServiceZoneFP-5.aspx>

<http://z1077fm.com/fire-tax-assessment-meetings-in-wonder-valley-and-yucca-valley/>

Car-to-Car Shooting on Eastbound 210 Freeway in the Inland Empire

Christine Kim, Elizabeth Campos, NBC

Posted: August 8, 2018, 10:43 p.m.

Police responded to a call about a car-to-car shooting on the eastbound 210 Freeway, west of the H Street off-ramp, in the Inland Empire Wednesday night.

San Bernardino County Fire responded to a call at approximately 6:27 p.m. and found a victim with life threatening injuries at the scene.

The victim, a 29-year-old San Bernardino man, was found outside a white Dodge Challenger. He had suffered multiple gunshot wounds and was immediately transported to Loma Linda Hospital with critical injuries.

Police are still searching for a suspect and working to determine a motive, but they believe a white BMW sedan may be involved in the incident.

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Car-to-Car-Shooting-Inland-Empire-490425451.html>

Homeowner injured in Barstow house fire that causes thousands of dollars of damage

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: August 8, 2018, 12:25 p.m.

BARSTOW — Firefighters extinguished a blaze that tore through the backyard of a home here Sunday night, causing thousands of dollars in damages.

Reported at 8:04 p.m., Barstow Fire Protection District officials rushed to the scene of a reported structure fire with a victim trapped inside a home in the 3900 block of Cedar Road.

While crews quickly determined no one was trapped, they found an active fire in the backyard of the home, BFPD Cpt. Travis Espinoza said.

“It was one of the homeowner’s grandchildren that noticed the smoke. The homeowner then went out and found a wall of fire,” Espinoza said. “There were multiple cars and general debris in the backyard burning, but there was no extension to the structure.”

With the assistance of mutual aid units from MCLB and **San Bernardino County Fire**, Espinoza said the crews were able to get the flames under control in about 30 minutes.

The homeowner suffered smoke inhalation injuries and was taken to Barstow Community Hospital for treatment. No other injuries were reported.

As BFPD crews were engaged in the blaze, Espinoza said an additional MCLB engine was requested to cover the fire district in the meantime.

“They ran about five calls just in the time we were busy,” Espinoza said.

The blaze at the home on Cedar Road is estimated to have caused about \$65,000 in damages, Espinoza said. The cause remains under investigation.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20180808/homeowner-injured-in-barstow-house-fire-that-causes-thousands-of-dollars-of-damage>