



NEWS



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Trona man accused of sexually assaulting underage girl

Desert Dispatch

Posted: March 15, 2017, 2:31 PM

TRONA — A 39-year-old man and former citizen volunteer who allegedly sexually assaulted an underage girl was arrested Tuesday, authorities said.

Edwin Michael Funke, of Trona, was arrested Tuesday after an investigation linked him to the crime. San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department officials said Funke, a former citizen volunteer at the Trona Sheriff's Station, sexually assaulted a 14-year-old girl.

The investigation began when Sheriff's detectives received information about an "inappropriate relationship" between Funke and an underage girl. The girl told detectives that Funke sexually assaulted her at his home "on several occasions" last year, authorities said.

Together with the Sheriff's Crimes Against Children Detail, Trona Sheriff's Station detectives investigated the claims and Funke was arrested on suspicion of oral copulation and lewd acts with a child on Tuesday.

Funke remains in custody at the High Desert Detention Center in lieu of \$50,000 bail, authorities said, and is scheduled to appear in court at 12:30 p.m. Thursday.

Funke was a Citizen Volunteer at the Trona Sheriff's Station since October of 2014, authorities said, but is no longer affiliated with the department.

Funke was also a paid call firefighter at **San Bernardino County Fire Department's** Station 57 in Trona, according to County Fire spokeswoman Tracey Martinez, but has been suspended "pending the outcome of the criminal investigation."

The investigation is ongoing, and anyone with information is urged to contact Detective M.J. Higgins with the Crimes Against Children Detail at 909-387-3615. Persons wishing to remain anonymous can contact the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463 or online at www.wetip.com.

<http://www.desertdispatch.com/news/20170315/trona-man-accused-of-sexually-assaulting-underage-girl>

Paid-Call Firefighter Arrested For Alleged Lewd Acts With a Child

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: March 15, 2017



Edwin Funke, 39 years old, resident of Trona (Facebook)

TRONA, Calif. (VVNG.com)– A 39-year-old paid-call **San Bernardino County Fire** Fighter from Trona has been arrested for lewd acts with a child, San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department announced Wednesday.

On Monday, March 13, 2017, Sheriff’s Detectives received information regarding an inappropriate relationship between Edwin Michael Funke and a 14-year-old female.

“Detectives contacted the victim and she disclosed that Funke sexually assaulted her at his home in Trona on several occasions in 2016,” stated sheriff’s officials in a press release.

Detectives from Trona Station and the Crimes Against Children Detail conducted an investigation and Funke was arrested on March 14, 2017.

Funke was booked at the High Desert Detention Center for violation of PC 288a(b)(1); Oral Copulation and PC 288(c)(1) Lewd Acts with a Child with bail set at \$50,000.

“Mr. Funke is an active Paid-Call Firefighter at Station 57 in Trona. Due to his recent arrest, Mr. Funke has been suspended pending the outcome of the criminal allegations,” San Bernardino County Fire Department spokeswoman Tracy Martinez told Victor Valley News.

According to the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, “Funke has been a Citizen Volunteer in Trona since October of 2014, but is no longer affiliated with the department.”

Funke is scheduled for arraignment on March 16, 2017 in Victorville Superior Court.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is urged to contact the Crimes Against Children Detail, Detective M.J. Higgins at (909)387-3615. Callers may remain anonymous and contact WeTip at (800)78-CRIME or www.wetip.com

<http://www.vvng.com/firefighter-arrested-alleged-lewd-acts-child/>

Death investigation underway after body found Thursday morning off Highway 138

Jose Quintero, Daily Press

Posted: March 16, 2017, 8:45 AM

A death investigation is underway after **San Bernardino County Fire Department** personnel responded to a report of a possible dead body off Highway 138, roughly two miles east of Interstate 15, on Thursday morning.

Fire personnel responded to the call, reported at 7:04 a.m., and pronounced the person dead, according to department spokesman Eric Sherwin.

Emergency personnel requested San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department officials to the scene to recover the body and assume their investigation.

Further information was not immediately available Thursday morning. This story is developing and will be updated as more information is released.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170316/death-investigation-underway-after-body-found-thursday-morning-off-highway-138>

Locator Device Spurs Rescue

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: March 16, 2017

An injured hiker in the Lake Arrowhead Pinnacles activated his personal locator device at 10:30 a.m. on March 8, and San Bernardino County Air Rescue 7 responded immediately.

William Simpson, 67, of Santa Monica, fell while hiking and was suffering from his injuries, according to a news release from the San Bernardino County Sheriff-Coroner Department. When he activated his In-Reach personal locator device, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) for the State of California received Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates and text messages from Simpson.

The crew of San Bernardino County Air Rescue , Corporal Michael Gilley, Fire Captain Mark Murphy, Fire Captain Eric Spies, Fire Captain Jerren Grundy and Deputy Paul Kowalski responded. Using the GPS coordinates that OES provided, the crew located Simpson on a trail. They were able to land near Simpson and confirmed that he had activated his device.

The crew loaded Simpson into the helicopter and flew him to a nearby ambulance for further treatment.

A personal locator device is also known as a PLB, Personal Locator Beacon, or as a SEND, Satellite Emergency Notification Device. These satellite-based, hand-held devices were originally designed for anglers, backpackers and pilots. They are currently considered to be a powerful safety net for wilderness travelers.

Prices range from \$15 for a Slim Pocket or \$30 for a TrackR Bravo to \$168 for a Backcountry Access or \$250 for an ACR ResQLink. Numerous other brands are available for various prices.

The OES is set up to receive data from PLBs. State and county OES locations coordinate logistics, communications, information technology and services with regard to a variety of events.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_0050f4c2-09d3-11e7-bb7f-c74ed58e2c28.html

Fire Department—Always Ready to Rescue

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: March 16, 2017



Division Chief Kathleen Opliger and Battalion Chief Bob Evans explained the advantages of having an Emergency Operation Center on the premises at Station 91.

Search and rescue (S&R) missions have been numerous in the mountain communities this winter. In general, the Twin Peaks Sheriff's Station handles the search while the **San Bernardino County Fire Department (SBCFD)** undertakes the rescue.

To facilitate S&R efforts, the SBCFD has an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on the premises at Station 91 in Lake Arrowhead. All partners involved in a joint effort, such as the California Highway Patrol, sheriff's department, Caltrans, Cal Fire, Edison and others, work cooperatively at the Zone Operation Center.

The event might be S&R, fire, earthquake or another natural disaster. "If the infrastructure fails, we can still function at the center," said Division Chief Kathleen Opliger. "Our connectivity is second to none. We can be cut off from phones, electricity, computers, and still operate."

The EOC has supplies and everything needed for planning a mission.

"After securing their families for safety, all employees can come in to work at the center," Opliger explained. If families cannot be secured at home, there are place to house families so that the employees can work.

The EOC, sometimes called the "mother ship," was installed in September 2015, Opliger said. Ron Walls, a former battalion chief, requested budget funds to establish the EOC. Walls is no assistant chief in the north desert region based in Hesperia, but he is well-remembered for his initiative and work toward establishing the EOC.

The value of having the EOC is that every agency is in a “unified command position,” Opliger explained. “If it is a large incident, we can bring everyone together for a unified action plan. We establish a common set of objectives, with no duplication of efforts.”

Bob Evans, one of three battalion chiefs, described how community leaders can also come together to build a team to support the agencies when working toward common goals. Recently, a local ham radio operator helped the SBCFD with an off-road S&R effort during a winter storm, guiding rescuers to a stranded vehicle and its occupants.

“It takes a lot of people and good communication,” Evans reported. “The fire department can often use help from citizens, such as ham radio operators.”

Word of the existence of the EOC has spread far and wide. It’s not just for use by the fire department; it is available to all stakeholders during an emergency.

Opliger explained that the county’s fire department is a community-based fire protection that provides hands-on, kind, caring service at each of many locations.

“The reality is that we are the community fire department. We transport people to the hospital, we undertake rescue missions and provide other services, treating each person as if they were a family member,” Opliger said.

The SBCFD benefits from having access to all county equipment, multiple hand crews, helicopters and much more by virtue of being a regional fire department. Facilities in the mountain communities are unique because they also have three snow cats and a dozer which are not usually needed by other fire departments.

“It does not cost the community a nickel more to use the county resources brought from down the hill and other areas,” Opliger noted. Therefore, it is not necessary to have additional funding in order have all that equipment available.

The mountain communities also enjoy the benefits of having a rescue team on hand. Station 91 is one of only four stations that have a rescue team, explained Sean Jackson. “We are trained in four urban search and rescue, swift water certification, confined space and high elevation rescue.

Capt. Carlos Corletto described the difference between a fire engine and a fire truck, explaining that a fire engine is used for rescue missions. They carry no water, no hose, no ladders.” It’s a giant toolbox with ropes, for rescuing someone who is over the side of a cliff. It carries swift water gear and has a new speed boat that inflates rapidly,” he stated.

The fire department handles ice rescue and water rescue aspects of an emergency, until the dive team arrives, if necessary, for recovery efforts. It is another dimension of station 91 and the other mountain-top fire stations that make them unique by comparison with fire stations down the hill.

http://www.mountain-news.com/mountain_living/features/article_c34bc454-09d6-11e7-ad05-2b768b840274.html

Homestead Valley Community Council Meets Monday

Z107.7 News

Posted: March 16, 2017

The Homestead Valley Community Council will meet Monday, March 20. If you own property, or live in Flamingo Heights, Landers, Yucca Mesa, or Johnson Valley, you can find out about any updates on a variety of issues that were discussed at the last meeting. Representatives from the Sheriff's Department, **County Fire**, CalFire, and State Senator Jean Fuller's field rep may be on hand to hear your concerns. The meeting starts at 3 p.m. at the Flamingo Heights Community Center on Perris Road, behind La Copine restaurant on Highway 247.

<http://z1077fm.com/homestead-valley-community-council-meets-monday-22/>