



NEWS



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County Supervisors Consider County Fire Tax to Help Balance Fire Budget

Susan A. Neufeld, RotwNews

Posted: June 21, 2018

San Bernardino, CA – San Bernardino County Supervisors vote 3-2 to initiate proceedings to expand boundaries of the FP-5 Service Zone. The annual parcel tax to fund **San Bernardino County Fire** services could be broadened to include all property owners in the unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County. This tax would help stabilize the San Bernardino County Fire its financial operations.

County Supervisors voted 3-2, Lovingood and Rutherford voted against it on Tuesday June 12, 2018 to initiate proceedings to expand the boundaries of the FP-5 Service Zone, with notices being delivered to affected parties in August. The Board of Supervisors will have the first of two public hearings in August.

The tax in the service zone means a \$157.26 yearly parcel tax for property owners, which could be increased by 3% annually.

The expanded tax plan comes as County Fire's budget continues to devour cash reserves and investments from the county general fund to offset revenue deficits, per Fire Chief Mark Hartwig, who presented a spending plan to the Board of Supervisors.

The budget is projected to increase \$18 million this coming fiscal year, to 276.6 million. Excluding contracts and ambulance services, \$12 million in reserves and another \$17 million from the county will satisfy the \$29 million shortfall.

The gap exists throughout a 10-year projection, according to documentation from County Fire.

"As your fire chief of seven years, and somebody who's responsible as a taxing authority to provide services to the communities that we protect," Chief Hartwig told the board, "I would recommend that we do something, that we don't continue to rely on reserves or one time money essentially annually from the Board of Supervisors."

For property owners who already pay a parcel tax, the expansion won't act as an additional cost, but as a replacement, according to County Fire PIO Tracey Martinez. The plan would also encompass incorporated cities serviced by County Fire that don't already pay.

Without a bold injection of revenue, County Fire would be facing service cuts or continued investments from the county since the department's reserves can't satisfy another \$12 million withdrawal.

Other than potential property owner opposition, the expansion could face a hurdle by a proposed ballot initiative in November to challenge protest vote procedures, county officials say.

<https://rotwnews.com/2018/06/21/county-supervisors-consider-county-fire-tax-to-help-balance-fire-budget/>

Fire officials' July 4th reminder to Southern Californians: Be aware of the dangers of fireworks

Beatriz E. Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: June 20, 2018, 9:40 p.m.



The force of an easily obtainable and illegal explosive, one that's popular leading up to the Fourth of July, sent a tangible shock wave several feet into a crowd gathered outside a **San Bernardino County Fire** Department bay to talk about illegal fireworks.

The power of an M-80 can cause severe injuries including loss of limbs, fingers and even hearing, according to authorities at the safety demonstration Wednesday morning.

In 2016, about 11,000 people across the nation were injured by fireworks, said Dr. Ramona Snipes, Kaiser Fontana emergency room director. Of those, 35 percent were people younger than 15 years old.

"A third of those injuries are to hands and limbs," she said. Another third are injuries to the head and eyes and about 70 percent of all injuries involve burns.

The powerful explosive was just one type of dozens of illegal fireworks on display during the demonstration. "Since May 12, we have seized 30,000 pounds of illegal fireworks and we still have two more weekend to go for our enforcement," said Fire Marshal Brian Headley. The county fire marshal only conducts their operation on the weekends, he noted. "Last year we seized 35,000 pounds."

Fontana Police Chief William Green said officers are currently conducting several operations in the city to keep the illegal fireworks off the streets, including undercover and online actions.

Those caught with illegal fireworks can be fined up to \$1,250 which increase with each additional fine. But when someone can purchase \$1,000 worth of fireworks and then turn around and sell them for three times the cost, many are willing to take the risk, Headley said.

While there are sections of Fontana that does allow "Safe and Sane" fireworks within the city limits, said Mayor Acquanetta Warren, she made it clear all fireworks were off-limits in the area north of Summit Avenue, west of the 15 Freeway and east of Lytle Creek Road — an area considered a high fire danger location. All fireworks are banned from all the unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County and in Riverside County.

Warren instead encouraged people to attend a Fourth of July fireworks show at Fontana High School.

Those who do purchase Safe and Safe fireworks must also be responsible in their use, officials said. Officials advise that only adults light fireworks, and to always keep a bucket of water nearby. Also, make sure everyone is out of range before lighting the fireworks and never give fireworks to small children.

Warren also called on residents of the city and county to help authorities get the dangerous explosives off the streets by calling law enforcement if they see anyone buying, selling or using illegal fireworks.

“We urge the public to help us prevent another devastating wildfire season,” said San Bernardino County Fire Marshal Mike Horton. The city of Fontana and the county of San Bernardino will have zero tolerance for unsafe behavior that could lead to a devastating fire.”

Authorities ask anyone who wants to report the use of illegal fireworks to call their local law enforcement office or Fontana police at 909-350-7700.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2018/06/20/fire-officials-july-4th-reminder-to-southern-californians-be-aware-of-the-dangers-of-fireworks/>

See the Yorkshire terriers rescued after house fire

Nicole Irwin, Press Association

Posted: June 21, 2018



Firefighters saved the pets when looking to see if anyone was trapped and in need of assistance.

Two small dogs have been rescued by firefighters after a small blaze at a home.

The Yorkshire terriers were given a check over and returned to their owners after being given a clean bill of health.

Firefighters from **San Bernardino County Fire** Department in California were called out at about 8.40pm on June 20 to reports of a fire.

Once on the scene, they saw “light smoke” coming from the attic vents of the bungalow and smoke and fire in the bathroom.

While looking for potential victims the firefighters found the dogs and carried them to safety – with the moment being caught on camera.

Sharing the story on Facebook, the department encouraged people to have a fire exit plan.

<https://www.independent.ie/world-news/and-finally/see-the-yorkshire-terriers-rescued-after-house-fire-37034552.html>

Kids keep cool at summer splash

Leslie Shaw, **Hi-Desert Star**

Posted: June 20, 2018, 5:43 p.m.



Benjamin Limon-Flores, 3, squeals in delight as he runs through the sprinklers at Joshua Tree Water Park Saturday.

JOSHUA TREE — Kids kept cool by running through sprinklers, water wheels and dump buckets while vendors offered their wares nearby at Summer Splash at the community center Saturday.

Outside there was live rock and roll music provided by The Dirt Boys and Skitzo Attack, military vehicles from the combat center, a craft project, a hot dog and hamburger concession run by the Joshua Tree Rotary Club and a **San Bernardino County fire** engine.

Heidi Saunders brought a desert tortoise and a 4-hour-old baby potbelly pig. Saunders was at the event to make people aware of the new “zoo,” Heaven’s Gate Large Animal Rescue, she opened in Landers.

Summer Splash is hosted by the Joshua Tree Rotary Club and Recreation and Parks District.

http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article_1e602fa2-74ec-11e8-9c0d-5b5dc38341bc.html