



NEWS



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Victorville to review putting public safety tax on November ballot

With seemingly a host of options for fire services, the city's ability to ultimately pursue its favorite one will be tied to voters being on board with a tax.

Shea Johnson, Daily Press

Posted: June 7, 2017, 5:15 PM



VICTORVILLE — The City Council will review the possibility later this month of adding a public safety tax to the November ballot. With seemingly a host of options for fire services, the city's ability to ultimately pursue its favorite one will be tied to voters being on board with a tax.

“Because if they're not,” Councilman Jim Kennedy emphasized, “we don't have any options.”

In February, the Council voted 4-1 to provide notice of termination to the **San Bernardino County Fire Protection District** with respect to its contract with the city, set to expire in July 2018. The notice, more than anything, was a launch moment on bidding for fire services.

“This isn't anything to do about County Fire's services, it is top notch,” City Manager Doug Robertson said at the time, “it's about due diligence ...”

During a Tuesday workshop, the Council directed city staff to submit a request for proposal to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, so the state agency can return an accurate quote for fire services to the city. Cal Fire is just one of several agencies the city is reviewing, and there's been no indication that a departure from County Fire is imminent.

If the city sought to handle such services internally, consultant Citygate Associates, LLC provided a glimpse Tuesday of what an in-house department would require: A minimum headquarters team should have a fire chief, division chief, three battalion chiefs, training officer, Emergency Medical Services clinical manager, fire marshal, two fire inspectors and two office support professionals.

Year-one operating costs for a city department with four stations and at least 58 sworn firefighters would be \$9.7 million.

“In the near term, this can be supported by existing General Fund revenues,” the consultant found, “while a supplemental funding measure for increased staffing, replacement fire apparatus, and fire station repairs could be placed before voters.”

Of all options being reviewed, simply renewing its County Fire contract would present the shortest timeline, while a potential deal with Cal Fire would represent the longest timeline amid multiple sign-offs that must occur at the state level and through the Local Agency Formation Commission.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170607/victorville-to-review-putting-public-safety-tax-on-november-ballot>

End of drought could mean the beginning of a busy wildfire season in Southern California

Steve Scauzillo, San Gabriel Valley Tribune

Posted: June 7, 2017, 6:12 PM



A super scooper air tanker makes water drops as firefighters battle 2,200 plus acre brush fire that started in the hills of Glendora Thursday. The fire destroyed six structures and 3 people taken into custody for involvement of starting the fire. Glendora California January 16, 2014. Photo by Gene Blevins/LA DailyNews

The end of a five-year drought won't necessarily be good news for firefighters.

While the plentiful rains of this past winter have colored the mountains and foothills a verdant green, left standing are those red alerts predicting high fire danger this summer and fall, according to local fire departments.

“Whatever brush didn't burn in last year's fire season is still there but it is dead because of the five-year drought,” said Inspector Gustavo Medina of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. “So you still have vegetation underneath that is brown plus new growth that is ready to burn.”

The combination of dead underbrush and stalks of new grasses and shiny green shrubs are fuel for wildfires. Add heat and winds, and it's a recipe for disaster, he said.

On Monday, the county, as well as Cal Fire and the fire departments from San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside and Imperial counties announced the start of fire season.

The point was driven home during the press conference, Medina said, when several brush fires broke out nearby in Diamond Bar, San Dimas and Walnut. Medina said those fires were indicative of a fire season that now starts earlier and ends later.

The small fires were put out quickly, without causing any structure damage, he said.

To be ready, Los Angeles County Fire has eight helicopters standing by. The department is adding a snorkel helicopter in July that sucks up water from a lake or reservoir through a long tube, he said.

In September, the department will have two super scooper planes available through the end of fire season. The super scooper, officially known as the Bombardier CL-415, is a fixed-wing aircraft that skims water off the surface of a body of water and then drops 1,600 gallons of water onto the fires below.

Fire departments are concerned that homeowners have become complacent since the drought ended. But the heat and Santa Ana winds have already worked a one-two punch, creating wildfires last weekend in Castaic and Santa Clarita.

“Yeah, we are already having brush fires. That dried-up vegetation really burns up. On top of that is the light grasses and bushes,” he said.

Wildfires occur in the Santa Monica, San Bernardino and San Gabriel mountains and in the surrounding foothills, he said.

Homeowners who have experienced wildfires in the past should be ready. Wildfires often occur in a zone where conditions for wildfires, such as high winds and dry brush, can be found year after year.

A few common spots Los Angeles County Fire is watching are the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, the Malibu hills and canyons, the Santa Clarita area and the corridor of the 5 Freeway.

“Anywhere there are mountains and foothills there is a potential that we can have something happen,” Medina said.

The five years of drought have increased the frequency and intensity of wildfires, he said, almost becoming the norm for Southern California, despite last winter’s rainfall.

Residents in fire-prone regions should clear brush to a defensible space, but do not take out trees or chaparral that are fire resistant. Sometimes clearing an area to the dirt will allow more invasive grasses to grow, which are more flammable.

Trees that overhang a roof should be trimmed to prevent embers from flying from treetop to rooftop, he said.

For more information on how to make a home less fire prone, go to the Los Angeles County Fire website: www.fire.lacounty.gov.

<http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20170607/end-of-drought-could-mean-the-beginning-of-a-busy-wildfire-season-in-southern-california>

Second Suspicious Fire in Two Weeks At Twentynine Palms Property

Z107.7 News

Posted: June 7, 2017

A Twentynine Palms property that had an arson fire two weeks ago had another suspicious fire early this morning. According to **County Fire** Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle, firefighters from Twentynine Palms, assisted by Wonder Valley and the Combat Center, were called to the 6400 block of Yucca Avenue at 2:25 a.m. Wednesday morning. Tuttle said the unoccupied building was fully involved with flames when firefighters arrived; the structure is a total loss. On May 24, a duplex on the property caught fire about 8:30 p.m. Witnesses reported hearing explosions before the fire, and a Hispanic woman was seen leaving shortly before the fire was reported. An arson investigator from the County Fire Department has been called in to investigate. Anyone with information should call 909-386-8400.

<http://z1077fm.com/second-suspicious-fire-in-two-weeks-at-twentynine-palms-property/>

Arson arrest in Needles

The Desert Independent

Posted: June 8, 2017



NEEDLES, Calif – On Saturday, June 3, at 5:32 p.m., the San Bernardino County Sheriff - Colorado River Station assisted the San Bernardino County Fire Department, after getting a call about an odor of lighter fluid coming from an apartment on the 1900 block of Clary Drive in Needles. Once on scene, deputies saw smoke coming from under the doorsill. Upon entering the residence, a deputy made contact with a man and escorted him out of the apartment.

The apartment was filled with smoke, and the kitchen had obvious signs of fire damage. Investigators from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's Bombs and Arson Division and San Bernardino County Fire Investigators arrived and took control of the scene.

The man escorted from the apartment was determined to be Andrew Cisneros (age 26 of Needles). He was arrested for Arson and booked into the Colorado River Station jail.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with additional information regarding this investigation is urged to contact the Needles Sheriff's Station at (760) 326-9200.

<http://www.thedesertinde.com/Articles-2017/Arson-arrest-in-Needles--0608.html>

Body Recovered From Aqueduct in Victorville

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: June 8, 2017



A man's body was recovered from the California Aqueduct in Victorville Thursday night. (Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) A man's body was recovered from the California Aqueduct Thursday night.

Just before 9:00 p.m., emergency personnel requested assistance from the Swift Water Rescue Team after it was reported that a man was spotted in the aqueduct near Highway 395 and Eucalyptus.

According to Sergeant S. Kelly with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, a person riding a bike discovered a white male adult floating face down in the water.

The bike rider continued to follow the man as he floated with the current, Kelly stated.

The **San Bernardino County Fire Department** was dispatched and pulled the body from the water using swift water rescue tools at approximately 9:30 p.m. just west of Highway 395.

At this time authorities are investigating the incident to determine how the man ended up in the aqueduct.

Information will be updated as it becomes available.

<http://www.vvng.com/body-recovered-aqueduct-victorville/>