



NEWS



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San Bernardino schools officer honored for rescuing residents from fire

Beau Yarbrough, The Sun

Posted: September 23, 2016, 11:32 PM



San Bernardino Unified School District Police Officer Eric Campa visits the site on Wilson Street near Arroyo High School in San Bernardino. PHOTO BY ERIC REED

SAN BERNARDINO >> When San Bernardino City Unified Officer Eric Campa saw smoke on May 10, he had a feeling he knew what was burning.

“I was en route to a call at the security office at the high school, and as I was going to the call, I saw a little bit of smoke coming out,” he said. “I have some history with this house, and knew there were possibly people inside.”

The house at 1074 N. Wilson Street had been abandoned for years. It backed up to the basketball courts and athletic fields of Arroyo Valley High School, and it was a popular hangout for students cutting classes. In the past, bored students had even started fires there, although nothing that had endangered the structure or the surrounding homes. Not before May 10, anyway.

“I knew there had been a homeless couple staying here,” Campa said. “At that time, the front part of the house was on fire.”

After calling the San Bernardino City Fire Department (this was about six weeks before the department became part of the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**), he entered the burning house through a rear door, searching for people inside. Finding no one, Campa emerged and checked a small shed in the back yard, finding an elderly homeless couple inside.

“They were in there, asleep,” he said. “They didn’t even know the house was on fire.”

Campa quickly helped them gather their belongings and cut through the yard to Wilson Street, where his car was located.

“By the time we walked to the front, the house was pretty much fully engulfed” in flames.

Campa’s attention turned to the neighboring house, which had a wooden fence less than three feet away from the burning building.

“I ran over there to help them get their stuff out of their house, evacuate them,” he said. But the fire itself wasn’t the only danger:

“I heard a crack, so I looked up, and the power line was falling. There was a (neighbor) standing here. So I pushed him back, I stepped back, and the power line fell and it hit the ground, right where he was standing.”

Three suspects -- two female and one male juvenile Arroyo Grande students -- were spotted by a teacher as they were running from the burning house, back onto campus. Campa and arson investigators from the fire department interrogated the students, who confessed to the crime. They had been setting things on fire inside the abandoned house, but never intended for the fire to get out of control or to endanger others.

At their meeting on Tuesday, the San Bernardino City Unified school board presented Campa with its Award for Bravery and Courage. Also honored were two Bradley Elementary School recreation aides, Elizabeth Romero and Vanessa Paez, and Curtis Middle School student Janeth Santos, each of whom saved people who were choking this past summer.

Campa, who has been a campus police officer for two years, and served as a campus security guard a year before that, has wanted to be a police officer as long as he can remember.

“I’ve always had a passion to be a police officer, to help people,” the former Colton Explorer Scout said.

This wasn’t the first fire he’s spotted while on patrol, although it’s the biggest and the first time lives were in immediate danger. His coworkers have taken to calling him “firefighter,” he said.

“We all ultimately want to help people,” Campa said. “That’s why we come into this.”

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160923/san-bernardino-schools-officer-honored-for-rescuing-residents-from-fire>

Deer Lodge Park residents remained during Pilot Fire

Gail Fry, Alpenhorn News

Posted: September 23, 2016



“Personally I was shocked at the number of people that did not evacuate,” San Bernardino County Sheriff Department Captain Dale Gregory

At the Lake Arrowhead Municipal Advisory Council meeting held September 8, Lake Arrowhead residents heard from representatives of the public agencies regarding the chain of events that took place in fighting the Pilot Fire that threatened the communities of Deer Lodge Park, Grass Valley and North Lake Arrowhead.

According to information obtained by *The Alpenhorn News* provided by InciWeb, the incident information system, the Pilot Fire started Sunday, August 7, at 12:10 p.m. near the Miller Canyon Off Highway Vehicle area off of State Highway 138 and was 100 percent contained by Tuesday, August 16.

During the Pilot Fire, the community of Deer Lodge Park was under mandatory evacuation orders, while North Lake Arrowhead and Grass Valley were under voluntary evacuation.

“Personally I was shocked at the number of people that did not evacuate,” San Bernardino County Sheriff Department Captain Dale Gregory remarked, expressing his belief that people get complacent, thinking it will be the same as past fire experiences.

Gregory explained, people need to understand that in a mandatory evacuation, if they leave their home, they won’t be allowed to return and evacuation orders can change rapidly depending on fire behavior.

“So if you decide to leave,” Gregory shared, “You need to prepare that you may not be able to come back.”

“I had to threaten to enforce the penal code, if you go back, you are entering an unauthorized area, you will go to jail,” Gregory explained, observing, “It got that bad at one point.”

“I don’t like doing that, but if the agencies decide that issue of a mandatory evacuation, we will enforce it,” Gregory voiced.

“My hats off to the CHP (California Highway Patrol) because they were manning the closures, while the sheriff’s department was evacuating Deer Lodge Park residents,” Gregory acknowledged, explaining, it “can get to the point where they need to do their job.”

Gregory encouraged residents to register their phones for the emergency alert system at website:<http://www.sbcfire.org/oes/AlertWarning.aspx> and the San Bernardino County Preparedness App can be accessed at: <http://readydl.com/landing/eoc06071/index.html>.

San Bernardino County Fire Department Division Chief Kathleen Opliger told the audience the agencies don't take the decision to declare an evacuation lightly and consider "fire danger, alignment of the fire with the topography and wind."

"We look at how much time it's going to take to get folks out and you know our mountain communities are riddled with very small and narrow roads," Opliger explained, adding, "We need the evacuation to allow us to get in there and fight the fire without having to right for space down those narrow roads."

CalFire Battalion Chief Travis Thogmartin voiced, "We look at the progression and what burned each day, the first day quite a bit of acreage burned."

"We're in a five-year drought year and currently with that fuel mortality due to drought and insects you can see the progression on how fast fires are moving," Thogmartin explained.

"The extreme fire behavior we've been seeing over this last year is not the exception anymore, it's kind of become the norm," Thogmartin acknowledged, explaining, "The fuel conditions and the drought, all that stuff is lined up and currently all fires have been at a rapid rate of spread."

"We want to remind everybody to help us do our job by doing defensive space around your homes," Thogmartin voiced, sharing, Calfire's Ready, Set Go Program encourages residents to plan for evacuation."

<http://alpenhornnews.com/deer-lodge-park-residents-remained-during-pilot-fire-p7512-170.htm>

Volunteers help ‘Fight the Blight’ at San Bernardino’s Perris Hill Park

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: September 24, 2016, 1:30 PM



Domenick Rodriguez, 8, of San Bernardino, volunteers his time along with his family to pick up trash during a community clean up day at Perris Hill Park in San Bernardino, Calif. on Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016. The San Bernardino Police Department's Quality of Life team hosted the clean up day in which more than 100 citizens volunteered their time to clean up the community. (Photo by Rachel Luna/The Sun)



Volunteers pick up trash during during the "Flight the Blight" community clean up day at Perris Hill Park in San Bernardino, Calif. on Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016. The San Bernardino Police Department's Quality of Life team hosted the clean up day in which more than 100 citizens volunteered their time to clean up the community. (Photo by Rachel Luna/The Sun)

SAN BERNARDINO >> Like many 8-year-olds, Domenick Rodriguez has dreams for his future. The Norton Space and Aeronautics Academy student hopes to one day be a firefighter. He also has plans for his city, San Bernardino.

“It’s cool, there’s lot of fun things to do and I live here,” Domenick said Saturday morning. He and his family were among the first to arrive at Perris Hill Park for a “Fight the Blight” community clean up event. “We should clean it up because it makes our city look more better and clean.”

Proudly wearing his #FightBlight T-shirt and carrying a black trash bag, the small boy eagerly ran off to start picking up trash and rubbish from the park.

“He inspires me,” said his mother, Brenda Rodriguez who said the young boy has always been mindful of what takes place in his community.

For the last two years, Domenick, his mother and sister, Keilani, 13, have woken up a little earlier on trash day to clean up their neighborhood sidewalks.

“We live across the street from Bradley (Elementary) School and he says ‘Mom, let’s clean up there, too,’” Rodriguez said. “He just always really wants to help everyone he can.”

Rodriguez said she learned of the community clean up through a post on the San Bernardino Police Department’s Facebook page. She told Domenick about it and he immediately lit up, she said.

“We should all learn something from that young man,” San Bernardino city spokeswoman Monica Lagos said. “It’s great to hear that that’s ingrained in our youth. This really is their city and it’s what they make of it.”

The Rodriguez family were among more than 100 volunteers -- about 60 were from Cal State San Bernardino and the California Art Institute -- who gave up their Saturday morning to help clean up the park and the surrounding areas.

In the first hour, volunteers collected at least a dozen large bags of trash and refuse.

The clean up of Perris Hill Park was second such effort in the city. The first took place in June.

“That one went really well and today we should also have a great turnout,” said Eileen Hards, spokeswoman for the San Bernardino Police Department, one of the partners that make up the Quality of Life team.

Other agencies helping with Saturday’s effort were the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, Department of Public Works, Mayor’s Office, City Manager’s Office, CalTrans and Burrtec.

While the group of volunteers for the first clean up was smaller than Saturday’s, both Hards and Lagos agreed that all who showed up were enthusiastic and dedicated to tidying up the Waterman Corridor.

The clean up days are a quarterly event that coincide with the city’s free dump days where residents can bring large items to designated areas for disposal.

“I think it’s a good idea because it will make our city look nicer and hopefully eventually we hope it will help with other things like crime,” Rodriguez said.

The next clean up day will take place Oct. 29 at Seccombe Lake.

<http://www.sbsun.com/social-affairs/20160924/volunteers-help-fight-the-blight-at-san-bernardinis-perris-hill-park>

San Bernardino vegetation fire kept to under 2 acres

John M. Blodgett, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: September 24, 2016, 7:40 PM



A vegetation fire in San Bernardino spread rapidly at first due to windy conditions, but the freeway and the frontage road acted as wind blocks and helped firefighters contain it to under 2 acres Saturday. Photo by John M. Blodgett



Almost 60 firefighters from three agencies made quick work of a San Bernardino vegetation fire Saturday evening. Photo by John M. Blodgett

SAN BERNARDINO >> Almost 60 firefighters from three agencies made quick work of a vegetation fire Saturday evening, stopping its spread to just under 2 acres in about 45 minutes.

The fire, just east of the 215 Freeway along Frontage Road north of Little League Drive, was reported about 5:30 p.m. Saturday, said **San Bernardino County fire** Battalion Chief David Meddles.

The fire spread rapidly at first due to windy conditions, but Meddles said the freeway and the frontage road acted as wind blocks.

Firefighters from the U.S. Forest Service and Cal Fire also fought the fire.

The cause is under investigation, Meddles said.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160924/san-bernardino-vegetation-fire-kept-to-under-2-acres>

UPDATE: “Water Fire” Forward Rate Of Spread Stopped

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim of the World News

Posted: September 25, 2016, 5:26 PM

UPDATE: Sunday, September 25, 5:34 p.m.

San Bernardino, CA – **San Bernardino County Fire** is reporting the forward rate of spread of the “Water Fire” has been stopped.

ORIGINAL STORY

San Bernardino, CA – Shortly after 5 p.m. Sunday, San Bernardino County Fire responded to the “Water Fire” near Sterling and Foothill.

The U. S. Forest Service and CALFIRE responded to the fire that was reported to be about a quarter acre.

Tankers were ordered and then cancelled as firefighters indicated the helicopters and ground crews should be able to pick up the vegetation fire, according to socalmountains.com.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/09/25/water-fire-reported-near-foothill-and-sterling-in-san-bernardino/>

Firefighters Battle Canyon Fire In Lower Waterman Canyon

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim of the World News

Posted: September 26, 2016, 3:35 AM



The Canyon Fire along Lower Waterman Canyon Road drew a response from San Bernardino County Fire, CALFIRE and the U.S. Forest Service/ (Photo by Clayton Malcom/RimFire)

San Bernardino, CA – Firefighters from multiple agencies responded to the Canyon Fire along Lower Waterman Canyon Road Monday morning about 12:31 a.m.

The U.S. Forest Service, CALFIRE and **San Bernardino County Fire** personnel were assisted by dozers and helicopter 531 and were able to hold the fire to roughly two acres.

A hose line was established around the fire and crews were in the mop-up stage at last report.

FIRE UNDER INVESTIGATION

The cause of the fire is under investigation and scanner transmissions indicate it may be arson.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/09/26/firefighters-battle-canyon-fire-in-lower-waterman-canyon/>