



NEWS



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ANOTHER LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION FEE

Staff Writer, Z107.7 News

Posted: November 27, 2017

Another lawsuit was filed against the County Board of Supervisors and the **County Fire** Protection District 5, asking for a preliminary injunction to stop the implementation of the new fire fee. The lawsuit, filed November 14, argues that the “fire protection fee” is actually a tax, and that the county and county fire are trying to find loopholes to circumvent the law, which requires a two-thirds majority vote of the electorate to pass the tax. Managing editor Tami Roleff delves into the arguments made in the lawsuit to stop the fire fee...

The Red Brennan Group, along with community groups from Homestead Valley, Lucerne Valley, Johnson Valley, and others, filed another lawsuit against the county and the county fire department, asking for an injunction to stop the imposition of the FP-5 fire fee. The lawsuit argues that the injunction should be granted because they plaintiffs are likely to prevail on the merits of their case; that the “fee” is actually a “tax,” which requires approval by two-thirds of the electorate; that the process to protest the fire fee was burdensome on property owners; that an environmental impact report should have been prepared; and that the injunction should be granted because denial of the injunction will cause great and irreparable harm. A hearing date is set for December 19 for the first lawsuit, and the hearing for the second lawsuit is December 20.

<http://z1077fm.com/another-lawsuit-filed-against-county-fire-protection-fee/>

SAFETY TIPS FOR THOSE HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Staff Writer, Z107.7 News

Posted: November 27, 2018

Now that the Christmas season is here, many people are decorating their homes and yards. Reporter Eric Knabe offers the following safety tips from the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department...

With the holiday season upon us, the San Bernardino County Fire Dept. reminds residents of the following holiday decorating and natural Christmas tree safety tips:

Inspect all your lights and cords for breaks, fraying, and damaged connections. If you're using an artificial tree, make sure it is made of safe, fireproof materials. Use LED light they produce less heat and reduce drying. Don't forget to water your real tree EVERY DAY and recycle your tree after the holidays. And this important: Never burn your natural tree; it can be explosive.

<http://z1077fm.com/safety-tips-for-those-holiday-decorations/>

Could This Gel Help Tame the California Fires?

Gordy Megroz, Bloomberg Businessweek

Posted: November 27, 2018



An Atira Gel Strike truck. SOURCE: ATRIA SYSTEMS

Strong Water gel has the potential to help stave off blazes. Why isn't it being used more?

In 2009, Jeff Denholm was making a living as an adventure athlete, competing in stand-up paddleboard races and riding giant waves at Mavericks, the famous surf break near his home in Santa Cruz, Calif. Denholm was sponsored by Patagonia Inc., but to generate extra cash—"Adventure athletes don't make a ton of money," he says—he had a side gig leasing a fire truck to state and county crews that had run out of equipment battling wildfires.

One firefighting tool that Denholm kept onboard was retardant, which helps tamp down existing fires and can prevent them; he used a type known as a foam suppressant. Last year the U.S. Forest Service spent about \$72 million on retardants, but in researching them, Denholm discovered some discouraging information.

Some don't work. And the most widely used variety—the rust-colored chemicals that airplanes dropped this summer on the Carr and Mendocino Complex fires in Northern California, which are made by Phos-Chek—can have a negative environmental impact. A 2014 National Marine Fisheries Service study found that two Phos-Chek products caused Chinook salmon to die in a lab experiment. A third Phos-Chek retardant that's being used to fight the Camp and Woolsey fires has not undergone any studies on toxicity. (Phos-Chek didn't return requests for comment; a Forest Service spokeswoman said in an email that Phos-Chek products meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's rating of "practically nontoxic.") Denholm started thinking he could make a retardant that was effective and wouldn't harm the environment.

Soon after, he met Stephen Haddix, who was an independent representative for Barricade International Inc., a maker of gel retardants Denholm was looking into. Gels, which started gaining traction in the early 2000s, stick to surfaces for up to eight hours. Unlike other retardants, they can be used on the sides of structures, such as the walls of a house; they prevent fires from spreading and reduce their intensity. But they're hard to work with. Firefighters must strap a five-gallon tank of concentrate to their backs and spray it from hoses. And gels are slippery, which can make moving around while using them dangerous.

In 2011, the men worked together to make a better gel. They called the company Atira Systems Inc.—"Atira" is a Pawnee term for "goddess protector of the Earth," Denholm says—and raised about \$4 million from investors. He and Haddix hired a chemist, a man who had spent 25 years creating paints and inks, to formulate the gel. They will say only that the main ingredients are the same plant derivatives found in cosmetics.

By 2013, they had their first prototype, which they called Strong Water; two years later, they had a product they thought superior to anything on the market—environmentally safe, not slippery, easy to clean up—and

slightly cheaper than competitors' offerings. (It's now \$325 per five-gallon bucket.) Unlike other gels, the concentrate is mixed with water in a unit inside a truck and sprayed from there, eliminating the need for firemen to strap on tanks.

Denholm and Haddix made two sales in California, to the **San Bernardino** and San Diego **county fire** departments, and one to the Texas Forest Service. Shane Glaze, San Bernardino's fire captain, used Strong Water to coat 20 of 128 homes in the West Cajon Valley during the 2016 Blue Cut fire. The blaze destroyed 108 homes, but the 20 covered in Strong Water stood without a char mark. If Strong Water "were on every fire truck in California, we'd be saving a lot more homes," Glaze says. A five-gallon bucket of the product, mixed with 250 gallons of water, can protect 1,000 square feet from a direct flame or "burnover"—when a fire moves through a location—for four to five minutes. That doesn't sound like much time, but a typical wildfire runs its course in three to four minutes.

According to the Forest Service, gels aren't effective at providing long-term fire suppression, and so it's not interested in buying them. The spokeswoman wrote that Phos-Chek products are the only ones that provide long-term fire suppression, effectively lasting, by some accounts, for several days. The agency "has determined that national contracts" for gels "are not needed at this time," she wrote.

Haddix says Strong Water can work in tandem with Phos-Chek retardants. "It's a matter of tactics," he says. "They like to put their retardant on way ahead of the fire. We'd put ours on as the fire approaches."

Without contracts with the Forest Service or the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), the state agency responsible for firefighting, Denholm and Haddix have sold a little less than \$1 million worth of product in total, to the two county fire departments in California. (Cal Fire relies on Forest Service approval before it considers purchasing a retardant.) "It's difficult to overturn entrenched government contractors," Denholm says.

So they've turned to the private sector. Denholm says that a "large" insurance company is vetting Strong Water for use, but he won't say which one. In 2005, insurer American International Group Inc. introduced its Wildfire Protection Unit and has long used gels to try to prevent damage. AIG didn't return requests for comment.

Meanwhile, California is experiencing its worst fire season in history. As of Nov. 18, 872,786 acres had burned; that's almost 400,000 more acres than what was lost to last year's record-setting fires. The Camp Fire alone has killed more than 75 people and destroyed more than 16,800 structures. "I find it extremely frustrating that the barrier to entry is so hard, and the need is so great," Denholm says.

BOTTOM LINE - Strong Water could be employed in tandem with other fire retardants to help battle the blazes besetting California, but state and federal agencies don't seem interested.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-11-27/could-strong-water-gel-help-tame-the-california-fires>

One person is hospitalized as a result of traffic collision in Fontana on Nov. 25

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: November 26, 2018



This was the scene of a traffic collision in Fontana on Nov. 25. (Contributed photo by Mike Myers)

One person was hospitalized as a result of a traffic collision in the northwestern part of Fontana on Nov. 25.

At about 12:41 p.m., the Fontana Police Department and the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department responded to the scene of the two-car accident in the 7600 block of Cherry Avenue.

According to witnesses, the driver of a white Kia Rio was making a right turn out of a business driveway to go south on Cherry Avenue. Witnesses said the driver of a beige Toyota Corolla was traveling in the No. 2 southbound lane of Cherry when the two cars collided. The Corolla came to a stop in the intersection of Miller and Cherry.

A Fontana officer said there were two adults and one child in the Kia. All three were evaluated by the paramedics but declined treatment at the scene.

One adult in the Corolla was treated and transported to a hospital with minor injuries.

There was an UBER decal on the rear back glass of the Kia, but it was unknown if the car was in service at the time of the accident.

An absorbent was used to clean up a small oil spill.

The Fontana PD is handling the accident investigation.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/one-person-is-hospitalized-as-a-result-of-traffic-collision/article_56f34da6-f1ae-11e8-920f-bbf53785635a.html

Wrong-way crash intentional?

Martin Estacio, Daily Press

Posted: November 26, 2018, 3:32 pm

OAK HILLS — The man killed when his car crashed head-on into a semitrailer truck carrying two fuel tankers on Saturday morning may have driven the wrong way on Interstate 15 intentionally, according to California Highway Patrol officials.

The driver, identified as 22-year-old Elijah Steven Avila-Mott of Diamond Bar by San Bernardino County Sheriff-Coroner's officials, made comments to friends and family which suggest that it was a deliberate act, according to the CHP.

CHP Public Information Officer Brian Alvarez said investigators are collecting phone data and texts related to the deadly collision.

Avila-Mott was driving his silver Subaru, initially reported as blue by witnesses, south at a high speed on the emergency shoulder of northbound Interstate 15. He slammed into the truck just south of Oak Hill Road at around 11:46 a.m.

The truck caught fire and good Samaritans were able to pull the driver, 40-year-old Terry Martin of Riverside, out of the burning cab. They were tending to him on the shoulder when emergency personnel arrived.

San Bernardino County firefighters extinguished the blaze in about 10 minutes but not before it destroyed the cab and punctured a "basketball-sized hole" in the front tanker, said County Fire Battalion Chief Kelly Anderson.

Martin was taken by ambulance to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center with minor injuries. As of Monday afternoon, he was no longer an admitted patient there.

Avila-Mott suffered multiple injuries and died at the scene.

The crash is still under investigation. Anyone with information is encouraged to contact Officer Stillmunks at the San Bernardino CHP Office at 909-383-4247.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20181126/wrong-way-crash-intentional>