



NEWS



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As rain clears out, Highway 138 in Cajon Pass to reopen, Cajon Boulevard to remain closed

Beatriz E. Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun
January 10, 2018 at 9:16 am



San Bernardino County fire crews rescue a man from his vehicle after being surrounded by water near the West End Gun club in Lytle Creek, CA., Tuesday, January 9, 2018 during the first storm of the year. (Staff photo by Jennifer Cappuccio Maher/Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

Crews are expecting to reopen Highway 138 between the 15 Freeway and Summit Valley Road after 9 a.m. following its closure due to mudslides and flooding Wednesday, but Cajon Boulevard, which was also shut Tuesday, will remain closed, **San Bernardino County** fire officials said.

Highway 138 was shut down Tuesday morning after several reports of stranded vehicles in the area, according to Eric Sherwin, spokesman for the fire department. Although no trapped motorists were found, Caltrans and fire crews did find flooded roads and shut down the highway, he said.

As the rains from the first storm of the year continued into Tuesday evening, authorities shut down Cajon Boulevard, which runs along the west side of the 15 Freeway through the Cajon Pass, due to mud and debris in the roadway, he said.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2018/01/10/as-rain-clears-out-highway-138-in-cajon-pass-to-reopen-cajon-boulevard-to-remain-closed/>

Heavy rains prompt evacuations in Corona, rescues in San Bernardino County

Beatriz E. Valenzuela and Shane Newell, San Bernardino Sun
Posted: January 9, 2018, 6:18 a.m.

After months of dry weather, the Inland Empire got hammered Tuesday with more rain than it could handle in one day, leading to evacuations in Corona, rescues of people trapped in rising water in San Bernardino County, and mud and debris all over local roads.

The storm was fiercest in the morning and late afternoon — the worst timing for commuters. Heavy rain over the area burned by September’s Canyon fire sent mud and debris into Corona streets and properties, and when the National Weather Service warned of the potential for “life-threatening flooding” amid a downpour about 4 p.m., city officials decided that a voluntary evacuation of about 150 houses needed to become mandatory.

Though the rain eased up by nightfall, the order will stay in effect overnight “to ensure the safety of residents until further assessments can be made.”

A flood advisory expired at 6:45 p.m. and a flash flood watch for the Inland valleys and a winter storm warning for the mountains were to be over by 10 p.m.

The rain was supposed to ease up by Wednesday, and Inland temperatures should return to the upper 70s and lower 80s by the weekend.

As of 7 p.m. Tuesday, the two-day rainfall totals neared or exceeded 5 inches in some spots in the mountains of San Bernardino County: 5.94 inches at Lytle Creek, 5.79 inches at Cedar Glen, 5.33 inches in Running Springs and 4.72 inches at Yucaipa Ridge, according to weather service data.

Totals were a little lower in the mountains of Riverside County: 3.46 inches at Snow Creek, 3.82 inches on the Banning Bench and 3.62 inches at Vista Grande, according to the weather service.

At higher elevations, the rain turned into snow Tuesday, with at least 4 inches accumulating at Snow Valley, according to resort spokesman John Brice. The weather service said up to a foot of snow could fall on peaks over 8,000 feet.

In the Inland valleys, two-day rainfall totals as of 7 p.m. included 3.78 inches at Glen Helen Regional Park, 3.63 inches in Beaumont, 3.19 inches in Temecula, 3.03 inches at Cal State San Bernardino, 2.24 inches at Murrieta Creek, 2.05 inches at the Hemet airport, 2.24 inches at the Rialto airport, 1.54 inches at the Chino airport, 1.62 inches at the Riverside airport, 1.34 inches at March Air Reserve Base and 0.74 inches at Ontario International Airport.

The greatest concerns Tuesday were for areas in and below the footprints of recent wildfires including the Canyon, Canyon 2, Wildomar, Little Mountain, Mart, Bryant 2 and Manzanita fires.

In the Sierra del Oro neighborhood of western Corona, mud and water filled the yard of Warren Kim on San Ramon Drive, below the burn scar from September's Canyon fire.

"So much water — like a swimming pool," Kim said Tuesday morning.

A nearby drainage ditch had filled up and caused mud to build up in his backyard. When he opened a gate to help clear out his backyard, the mud and water "flooded out like a river" onto the driveway and his front lawn, Kim said.

About 6 inches of mud — with the "consistency of chocolate syrup" — sat atop his once-green lawn.

Kim said he'd called the city five to 10 times after the Canyon fire to get them to clean up the ditch. "It's been a little bit of a struggle," he said.

"The City has been providing ongoing maintenance to all of the ditches and drains in the burn affected areas through the use of city and Cal Fire crews, as preparing for winter storms has been a top priority for us," Corona Maintenance Manager Ed Lockhart said in an emailed statement.

By Tuesday afternoon when the evacuation became mandatory, the mud in front of Kim's home had gotten so thick that bulldozers were needed for him and his family to move their cars from the driveway and head to a motel.

The Corona Fire Department stayed behind and kept trying to clear out the mud, Kim said.

In issuing the evacuation notice, Corona officials urged residents not to delay. “Debris flows can occur without any notice, and evacuation routes can quickly become impassable due to mud and debris or flooding.”

The American Red Cross set up an evacuation center at Corona High School at 1150 W. 10th St.

The city encouraged people to take their pets with them. Evacuated pets can be boarded at the Corona Animal Shelter at 1330 Magnolia Ave.

As the rain drenched the region Tuesday morning, local waterways including the Santa Ana River and Lytle Creek became swollen with fast-moving water — and trapped some people who didn’t get away soon enough. A van became stuck in rising water at 8:30 a.m. in Lytle Creek near the West End Gun Club. The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department performed a swift-water rescue to save a man who was inside. He was evaluated for hypothermia, officials said.

A couple of hours later, the San Bernardino County sheriff’s aviation plucked three people and a dog from the rain-swollen Santa Ana River in Colton, and rescued another person clinging to a tree in the Lytle Creek wash near East Foothill Boulevard and Terrace Road in San Bernardino, authorities said.

The rain also brought headaches for commuters. Flooding was reported on multiple Inland Empire freeways and roadways.

Mudslides covered several mountain roads, while in other places drivers had to dodge boulders, including some up to 2 feet in diameter.

In the Cajon Pass, mudslides closed Cajon Boulevard from Kenwood Avenue to Clegorn Road, and Highway 138 between the 15 Freeway and Summit Valley Road. Highway 18 at The Narrows closed about 7 p.m. because of rock slides, followed shortly by Highway 38 at Valley of the Falls.

About 6:30 p.m., a boulder and vehicle were blocking all lanes of the Ortega Highway at Lookout Point Store above Lake Elsinore.

In the San Jacinto Mountains, mudslides and boulders blocked portions of Highway 243 but no closures were reported.

Caltrans warned people who planned to drive in the mountains to carry tire chains, which were mandatory on some roads. Current conditions and chain requirements can be found on the Caltrans Quickmap.

The combination of flooding, slick roads and hazardous driving conditions may have factored into an increase in traffic accidents. Caltrans spokeswoman Terri Kasinga urged drivers to slow down and watch out for flooding. The CHP also reminded motorists to be prepared for wet weather, slow down (and leave early so as not to be in a hurry) and increase following distance.

The rain was also blamed for a power outage that cut electricity to more than 2,000 homes and businesses in Wrightwood on Tuesday morning, according to Southern California Edison. The outage led the Snowline Joint Unified School District to cancel all classes Tuesday.

<https://www.pe.com/2018/01/09/heavy-rains-cause-havoc-on-inland-empire-roadways-prompt-voluntary-evacuation-for-corona-burn-areas/>

Flooding in Lytle Creek leads to swiftwater rescue

Beatriz E. Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: January 9, 2018 at 9:59 am |



Rains prompted a swift-water rescue Tuesday, Jan. 9, in Lytle Creek.

San Bernardino County Fire crews have rescued a person from his vehicle after it became surrounded by water along a Lytle Creek road Tuesday morning.

Crews were alerted to the situation before 8:30 a.m. of a vehicle in moving water near Lytle Creek Road near the West End Gun club, according to authorities.

A man in the vehicle was rescued and was being evaluated for hypothermia, according to a San Bernardino County Fire Department tweet.

There was only one person in the vehicle, which is described as a van, about 300 feet from the roadway. Heavy rains that have moved into Southern California Monday night have flooded the rural area.

A flash flood watch is in effect for several portions of Southern California until Tuesday night, according to the National Weather Service, especially near and below recent burn areas, including the Canyon, Canyon 2, Wildomar, Little Mountain, Mart, Bryant 2 and Manzanita burn areas.

Authorities remind people not to cross moving water as it can quickly sweep vehicles and people away.

<https://www.dailybulletin.com/2018/01/09/flooding-in-lytle-creek-leads-to-swiftwater-rescue/>

Heavy rain triggers road closures, rescues in Inland Empire

Rob Mcmilan, ABC 7

Posted: January 9, 2018, 4:41 p.m.

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (KABC) --

Rushing water in the Inland Empire stranded motorists and closed roadways across the area amid heavy rains Tuesday.

Lytle Creek swelled with more water than it's seen in around 10 months.

One man who attempted to pass over the creek in a van ended up stranded right in the middle, with a deluge on all sides. The man waited in the beleaguered vehicle until swift water rescuers from **the San Bernardino County** Fire Department arrived.

"I've seen it like that before and made it through plenty of times," said the van's driver, Brett Christiansen. "I think I just got caught on a bigger rock and then it was stuck, so I was there for about an hour and a half."

Mike O'Bier of the San Bernardino County Fire Department said most people underestimate the velocity of floodwaters. O'Bier said the waters in San Bernardino were capable of "moving vehicles, large trucks, commercial-sized vehicles at times."

Firefighters in San Bernardino County say they have conducted around five rescues throughout the day Tuesday. Some of the rescues were of homeless people who were camped out in the river bottom when the rains hit.

Several roads in the area were closed due to mudslides, including Highway 138 on both sides of the 15 Freeway at several junctures.

In Riverside County, mandatory evacuations were issued in the early evening hours for the Canyon Fire burn area in Corona as flash flooding brought an imminent threat of mudslides.

"Do not delay evacuating until the rain becomes severe. Debris flows can occur without any notice, and evacuation routes can quickly become impassable due to mud and debris or flooding," Corona officials said in a press release.

<http://abc7.com/weather/heavy-rain-triggers-road-closures-rescues-in-ie/2920451/>

Upland makes it official: Vagnozzi named assistant city manager

Liset Marquez, **Inland Valley Daily Bulletin**

Posted: January 9, 2018, 4:24 pm

UPLAND >> Jeannette Vagnozzi's title is now assistant city manager, not deputy city manager. The change might sound innocuous. But this is Upland.

At Monday's City Council meeting, some questioned the timing, others a pay increase. One even said the job was unnecessary.

In looking at the job responsibilities of Vagnozzi, City Manager Bill Manis said he recognized she had taken the role of a formal assistant city manager.

He defended the move, saying it is appropriate for a city the size of Upland to have this position, adding that he came from a smaller city, Rosemead, which has 55,000 residents, and he had an assistant city manager that was within the same pay range.

“Our goal here is to be sensitive to the budget,” he said. “There is a net savings that we actually have by not filling other positions. If we just assign this person to do a specific function, we would have to backfill at least two other positions.”

Manis said Tuesday that Vagnozzi’s new pay scale had not been set yet. As assistant city manager, her salary can range from \$11,816 to \$15,892 a month. Under her previous position, the salary ranged from \$9,386 to \$12,624 a month.

Changing the description from deputy to assistant city manager was to reflect the work being done by Vagnozzi, said Kelly Gonzales, human resources manager.

The position of deputy city manager was created in March 2015, she said.

“We were only able to anticipate the response and assignments of the classification,” Gonzales told the council. “Since the position has been filled, the roles and responsibilities have changed significantly, as has the city’s organizational structure.”

The position now also includes positions previously assigned to the community services director, such as overseeing the library and animal services contracts. The position also oversees emergency management coordination with **San Bernardino County Fire** Department and working as the city’s liaison with the city attorney’s office on litigation.

After setting the duties of the classification and comparing them to other agencies’ job descriptions for assistant city manager, “we feel that the position is really acting in the capacity of an assistant city manager, and should be reclassified in order to fully depict the work being done,” Gonzales said.

While members of the Upland Police Officers Association say they are in favor of Jeannette Vagnozzi moving into the assistant city manager role, Eric Widen, a representative of the union asked city officials Monday night why they have been denied cost of living increases during recent negotiations.

“We understand the duties of the deputy city manager may have increased, but the officers of this city know a constant increase in workload probably more so than anybody,” he said.

In the past 12 months, seven officers have left the department, Widen said, where the pay and the incentives are better.

Councilwoman Janice Elliott also joined a few outspoken residents who questioned the move.

Although Elliott praised Vagnozzi for guiding the council through some very difficult transitions – such as the animal shelter and the fire annexation – she asked her colleagues to table the discussion until former City Manager Martin Thouvenell’s contract has ended.

“I’m concerned about the timing of this. We’ve got our new city manager and a one-year contract with a consultant and management consultant,” she said. “It seems with all these management positions, it seems a bit top-heavy.”

Elliott’s motion failed to get the support of the council, and city leaders voted 4-1 to reclassify the position.

Former councilman Glenn Bozar was in office in 2015 when the deputy city manager role was created, and approved of the position. But at Monday's meeting, he was at the lectern criticizing the proposal.

Bozar said he didn't understand why the city was paying multiple consultants.

"I don't see what's going on here as being needed," he said. "In fact, I think the position really should be eliminated."

Elliott also questioned the city's list for comparing the salary rates. Elliott said she felt Rancho Cucamonga and Ontario have larger budgets and aren't comparable, but felt Chino Hills was a suitable match.

"I'm just wondering why these large numbers were included in there," she said.

Gonzales said the list was based on cities used in a two-year study, which started in 2014, to look at the classification and compensation of all the positions in the city.

In addition, the community services director position was budgeted in the 2017-18 fiscal year but has been underfilled, by a management position instead of executive position, which created significant salary changes in the budget, Gonzales explained to the council.

"Those savings more than cover any changes that this potential change would have," she said.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2018/01/09/upland-makes-it-official-vagnozzi-named-assistant-city-manager/>

Rain arrives: Storm hits High Desert with floods, snow and wind Tuesday

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: January 9, 2018, 7:23 p.m.

Rain pummeled most of Southern California Tuesday as a storm moved over the region, bringing wind, rain and snow to the High Desert and surrounding mountains.

The powerful storm wreaked havoc in the coastal areas, particularly in the Santa Barbara and Ventura county areas, still reeling from the catastrophic Thomas and Canyon fires last fall. Mudslides, flooded roadways and several deaths were reported all throughout as the storm raged.

The High Desert appeared to be off to the same start early Tuesday, as motorists were greeted with heavy fog, slow traffic, and several crashes on Interstate 15 through the Cajon Pass. Vehicles were reported to be spinning out, crashing into the center divider, or stuck in flood waters on Highway 138.

The heavy rainfall forced authorities to shut down a portion of Highway 138 in both directions from Wagon Train Road to Summit Valley Road. The closure was expected to last until Wednesday morning, according to Caltrans officials.

In Wrightwood, residents were delighted to finally see some snow — along with Big Bear Lake, which received its first snowfall of the winter.

"We just got a report that it's snowing heavily in Big Bear. They're at 4 to 6 inches of snow right now," National Weather Service spokesman Dan Gregoria told the Daily Press Tuesday evening.

Wrightwood had received about 2 inches of snowfall as of 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Gregoria said, but snow levels were expected to continue rising overnight.

“We’re going to continue having snow over the mountains Tuesday night,” Gregoria said.

Yet for many Wrightwood residents, the winter fun was marred when a power outage began Monday afternoon. Just over 2,000 residents were left without power for over 24 hours as storm conditions worsened. Southern California Edison officials said power was expected to be restored late Tuesday evening.

The storm caused the Santa Ana river to swell with fast-moving water at the Lytle Creek wash, stranding multiple people there early Tuesday morning. **San Bernardino** County Sheriff’s Department and **County Fire** Departments responded to several incidents and ultimately hoist-rescued four people stranded near the river bottom.

As the storm picked up speed, other High Desert areas reported power outages and surges. Almost 18,000 residents in the Helendale and Silver Lakes area were briefly left without power around 10:30 a.m., with power restored about an hour later.

Another 44 residents were affected in Barstow, near E. Navajo Street, while 58 Pinon Hills residents were also left without power when an outage began shortly after 12:30 p.m. Downed power poles and lines were reported there, SCE officials said.

The storm slightly calmed mid-morning, but returned by Tuesday afternoon. Gregoria said Victorville and Apple Valley received just over a half-inch of rain by Tuesday evening. Hesperia and Lucerne Valley reported 0.75 inches and 0.77 inches, respectively.

“The dry air is starting to move into the High Desert,” Gregoria said. “Just a few more light showers that should start to dissipate by Tuesday evening, then we’re back to dry weather tomorrow.”

Wednesday temperatures will still remain cool, Gregoria said, with a daytime peak near 59 degrees predicted. But conditions will only grow warmer from there.

“As we get to the weekend, daytime temperatures will be in the upper 60s to low 70s,” Gregoria said.
<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20180109/rain-arrives-storm-hits-high-desert-with-floods-snow-and-wind-tuesday>