



NEWS



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Party shooting

Highland News

Posted: October 9, 2016 8:25 AM

On 10-08-16 at approximately 1:02am San Bernardino Police dispatch received reports of shots fired in the area of the 2600 block W. Cardoman St. Upon arrival officers located a male suffering from a gunshot wound. This victim was treated at the scene by **San Bernardino County Fire**/ Paramedics before being transported to a local hospital, where he remains listed in critical condition.

Initial investigation indicates that the shooting occurred at a house where the residents were having a party. Some uninvited people showed up and began to cause a disturbance. When asked to leave, one of the uninvited males began shooting toward the residence striking the victim. The suspects fled the scene and have not yet been located.

http://www.highlandnews.net/news/crime_and_fire/party-shooting/article_9be5d486-8e34-11e6-ad52-83f2c06f6f59.html

San Bernardino's fiscal comeback impressive, but a long way to go

The Editorial Board, San Bernardino County Sun

Posted: October 11, 2016, 5:21 PM



The Rendezvous Back to Route 66 car show and cruise in downtown San Bernardino on Oct. 1, 2016. Hundreds of classic cars were showcased during the event. (Photo by Rachel Luna/The Sun, SCNG)

San Bernardino residents should keep a couple of things in mind as the city enters confirmation hearings, a very big step on its way to exiting municipal bankruptcy.

One, City Hall has come a long, long way in straightening out San Bernardino's fiscal condition and turning the city into a sustainable municipal entity.

But two, there's still a very long way to go. Emerging from bankruptcy will not immediately bring an era of sunshine and roses, and residents will need to keep that in mind as the city struggles toward normalcy.

How far the city has come fiscally can be seen, as City Attorney Gary Saenz likes to point out, in former Mayor Pat Morris' final State of the City speech in October 2013. Morris warned of a spiraling future that could see San Bernardino rack up a \$360 million deficit in a decade, if it didn't change its fiscal ways.

Of course, it had to change its ways. Bankruptcy forced it to, and in a way provided the cover needed to rein in expenditures and chart a viable fiscal future. Though there still are objections from some creditors — primarily pension obligation bondholders — to overcome, San Bernardino’s bankruptcy exit plan now shows a balanced budget, including a reserve fund for unforeseen problems — 15 percent of the proposed operating budget — for the next 20 years.

That’s quite a turnaround.

It hasn’t been easy, for the mayor and City Council, municipal employees or residents and taxpayers. After Mayor Carey Davis and City Attorney Gary Saenz took office, City Hall had to negotiate with unions, retirees, bondholders and others. The city staff was slashed, from a high of about 1,400 employees to just more than 600 now, not including some vacancies; turnover has skyrocketed as morale bottomed out. The city gave up its own fire department, annexing itself to the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, and its own refuse disposal, contracting with Burrtec.

Now, city leadership is looking to rebuild its Police Department, which City Manager Mark Scott told us “has been nothing short of heroic.” The officer count is way too low and crime is running too high, but help is on the way.

Building public safety back up is part of San Bernardino’s strategic plan. City Hall will devote most of the savings from the fire and refuse moves to boost the Police Department budget from \$54 million last year to \$65 million for the current fiscal year. Not only that, but the city recently grant that will fund 11 additional officers.

A big complement of new police won’t hit the streets immediately, however. It takes quite a while to bring new officers onto the force, so the city expects to take 18 months to phase in all the new hires.

And that’s indicative of the “long way to go” part of San Bernardino’s recovery.

Scott worries that residents will expect an immediate turnaround when the city exits bankruptcy — probably in March — but that’s not the way it will be. Streets, parks, streetlights — the most visible sore points for residents — will take years to restore to what they should be after they were largely ignored due to the city’s fiscal stress. A capital improvement budget for that sort of work is being developed, but those who expect to see immediate fixes will be disappointed.

Falling into municipal bankruptcy has deep and long-lasting consequences. Full recovery is going to take quite a while.

<http://www.sbsun.com/opinion/20161011/san-bernardinios-fiscal-comeback-impressive-but-a-long-way-to-go>

A Korean community in ruins after the Blue Cut fire: 'We've traveled the world only to end up in hell'

One of the areas hit hardest by the 36,000-acre Blue Cut fire was the West Cajon Valley, home to a small Korean community with a big rebuilding challenge ahead.

Ruben Vives, LA Times

Posted: October 13, 2016, 4:00 AM



Inja Pak, 46, stands in one of 10 buildings that served as a retreat center. Her husband, Pastor Hyong Pak, died shortly before the Blue Cut fire destroyed the center. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)



Jong Ku Kim, 75, holds a handful of dried jujube damaged by the heat and flames of the Blue Cut fire that also destroyed more than half of his 1,000 jujube trees. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)

Sarah Choi stood in the rubble, weeping, as her husband propped up an orange tent.

The couple had traveled decades ago from their native South Korea to Canada and then from one state in the U.S. to the other, looking for their “heavenly place.” In Southern California’s high desert, they found what some called the Korean Valley.

There, said Michael Choi, 74, they were told they could farm the land, growing vegetables and working into their 90s if they wanted.

In August, the Blue Cut fire turned their heavenly place into a giant ashtray of charred trees, shrubs and homes.

“We’ve traveled the world ,” Sarah Choi, 70, said, “only to end up in hell.”

When the wildfire swept through the West Cajon Valley — where a Korean community believed to number about 70 families has taken root — it scorched 36,274 acres and destroyed about 105 homes and 216 other structures. Among the losses were jujube farms and a prayer retreat.

How this desert outpost in San Bernardino County became a haven for immigrants is, in many ways, the classic story of that one person who came and started something.

In the West Cajon Valley, some say, that person was Bae Ki Chan.

In 1992, Bae moved to a farm just off Highway 138, seven miles from Wrightwood, and raised goats, boars and pheasants for meat to serve at “The Place Where the Clouds Rest.”

The unlicensed restaurant became a destination for Korean immigrants from around Southern California. Some who visited took notice of the valley; its high elevation meant clean air, the underground water and seasonal weather made it ideal for farming.

In some ways, it was not unlike parts of South Korea.

“It resembles the country life many of them came from,” said Edward T. Chang, director of the Young Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies at UC Riverside. “They found a refuge in the mountainous area with running water, and those are the reasons why they were attracted to it.”

Yeoyong Yun, 71, said he felt like it was destiny that brought him to the West Cajon Valley.

When he was a boy in South Korea, he said recently, a U.S. soldier had given him chocolate candy. The memory stuck in his mind.

“America must be a great place,” he remembered thinking.

As a young adult Yun worked, saved his money and left South Korea in 1982 with his wife and two children — going first to Argentina, where he opened a clothing factory.

About five years later, he sold the business and paid a “coyote” \$20,000 to help smuggle the family across the U.S.-Mexico border.

They settled in Los Angeles and soon had green cards. Yun said he discovered Bae’s restaurant in the mid-’90s — and came to know and love the valley and the mountains around it.

“I liked the sand, I liked the climate, I liked growing vegetables, I liked the ski slopes, I liked the snow. Everything,” he said.

He bought several acres and started his own jujube fruit farm. His wife and kids stayed behind in L.A. and visited on weekends.

“My wife is a city lady,” Yun said in Korean. “I’m a total country boy.” Little by little, he realized other South Korean immigrants were living in the valley.

“It was good to see other farmers, and to see that they were Korean was a happy thing for me,” Yun said.

The combination of Bae’s restaurant and farmers opening to the public turned the region into a getaway destination. Some farms started renting rooms to out of town visitors. They offered karaoke.

By 2000, more South Koreans began moving to the area. Churches sprouted to minister to them.

It was a small-scale version of what happened in L.A.’s Koreatown, according to Chang.

“On Olympic Boulevard, there was a small Korean market. People went to that market to buy goods and fruits and, naturally, it became a gathering place,” Chang said. “And as time grew, more immigrants arrived and more businesses popped up — and that’s how the Korean community began in the Olympic and Normandie area.”

After the Blue Cut fire tore through the West Cajon Valley, it was the churches and organizations like Mea Ola’s Place, a sanctuary for abused and sick horses, that helped provide locals with food and clothing and raised money for recovery efforts.

On a narrow dirt road called Dusty Lane are the ruins of a prayer retreat center operated by the Phelan Garden Church, a Korean Christian church. Some of its buildings had served as temporary housing for those who sought spiritual healing from addiction, depression and other problems.

Inja Pak, 46, said the center was started by her husband, Pastor Hyong Pak, who died five months before the Blue Cut fire.

“We have no insurance,” she said, adding that she and her children were living off \$20,000 in savings — not enough to restore the retreat.

Nearby is a large jujube farm run by Jong Ku Kim and his wife, Young Hee.

The couple, both in their mid-70s, learned about the West Cajon Valley from farmers in Garden Grove. In 2005 they moved here, leased the land and began planting rows of jujube trees.

The jujube is like a date, used for medicinal purposes, as a snack and an ingredient for Korean recipes like ginseng chicken soup.

Jong Ku Kim said the Blue Cut fire destroyed 550 of their 1,000 trees.

Others did not get watered during the weeks that the region was without the electricity needed to operate the farm’s well pump.

This year, Kim said, he would be able to harvest about 20% of his usual crop. He's not sure he can bounce back from the devastation.

"It's not only me, but the people in this area affected by the fire, they're going through a lot of difficulty," Kim said. "Most urgent is cleaning all this up ... that way we can resume what farming there's left to do."

On a recent hot afternoon, Yun and two women sat under a canopy. Nearby, piles of clothes, silverware, plates and other items lay on a blue tarp for fire victims to sift through and take. Stacks of dry kimchi noodle soup, chips and soy bean sauce sat on a plastic table.

Seven years ago, another fire had roared through the Cajon Pass, Yun said. He lost 400 goats and dozens of his jujube trees were destroyed.

He never quite recovered, he said.

Now his home is gone and his farm obliterated. Yun said he's staying with a friend in Phelan, but plans eventually to move to a retirement home. He and his wife have separated.

Since the fire, San Bernardino County has used Korean translators at public meetings and has sent out English and Korean fliers to inform residents of the services available.

"Local Korean associations and churches are using fundraising efforts to rebuild their community," Chang said. "Their efforts seem to be helping, but to what extent is the question."

The Chois said they feel lost.

Sitting on a green cot while eating a boiled potato, Michael Choi said he didn't have money now to make his monthly truck payment.

"Not one dollar," he said.

Nearby, his wife carried buckets of water to pour on the remaining fruit trees. Occasionally, she stopped to cry.

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-blue-cut-fire-aftermath-20160907-snap-story.html>

Former Twentynine Palms Marine accused of killing mistress denied knowing her

Joe Nelson, The Sun

Posted: October 13, 2016, 8:18 PM



Christopher Brandon Lee, right, with his attorney Wednesday in San Bernardino Superior Court. Photo By Joe Nelson

SAN BERNARDINO >> When first questioned by San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies about his neighbor Erin Corwin, Christopher Brandon Lee said she was only an acquaintance and he hardly knew her, according to court testimony Thursday during Lee's murder trial.

"Mr. Lee said they were mere acquaintances, not friends, and he only saw her when she came and left the apartment complex," said sheriff's Cpl. Cathy Tabor, who in June 2014 interviewed Lee along with Deputy Danny Millan.

But Tabor and Millan sensed something a little off about Lee.

"He didn't seem like he wanted to talk. He answered quickly," Tabor said.

Tabor and Millan later learned Lee had been having an extramarital affair with the 19-year-old Corwin.

The deputies interviewed Lee the day Corwin was reported missing by her husband, Jonathan Corwin, on June 29, 2014. Erin Corwin was last seen alive the previous day.

The Corwins lived next door to Lee in an apartment complex on the Twentynine Palms Marine base, and the young couple was friends with Lee, as well as Conor and Aisling Malakie, who lived in an apartment downstairs from them.

But things got too close for comfort when Aisling Malakie caught Lee kissing Erin Corwin on her living room couch on Valentine's Day 2014, according to her testimony Wednesday. The affair caused a rift between the Malakies, Lee and Erin Corwin.

Lee, 27, was a Marine about to be discharged from duty and preparing to move with his wife and daughter back to his home state of Alaska when Erin Corwin was last seen alive at the military housing 4-plex on June 28, 2014.

Corwin's body was found on August 16, 2014, at the bottom of a 140-foot mine shaft on the eastern border of Joshua Tree National Park, where a cluster of abandoned mining camps comprise the Rose of Peru, Brooklyn and Old Dale mining districts.

A homemade garotte, believed to be the murder weapon, was still wrapped around Corwin's neck, and spent 22-caliber shell casings, a white propane tank, and two 5-gallon water jugs with the words "Property of U.S. Government" were found discarded in the mine shaft next to her badly decomposed body.

The bullet casings found in the mine matched ones found in Lee's Jeep, and the water jugs found in the mine were like ones used by the military, according court testimony and Lee's arrest warrant.

On Wednesday, Conor Malakie testified he saw a white propane tank in the back of Lee's Jeep prior to Corwin's disappearance. When he asked Lee what he was going to do with it, Lee said he was "going to blow up a mine shaft" by pouring gasoline on it and shooting it.

Lee's friend, Joseph Hollifield, testified Tuesday he had gone with Lee to the mining district area where Corwin's body was found a week prior to do some off-roading, and Lee brought his 22-caliber rifle. While they were examining some of the mines, Hollifield said he encountered a rattlesnake, which Lee shot and killed.

It revealed that Lee was familiar with the area.

Lee was charged on Aug. 19, 2014 with one count of first degree murder, with special circumstances including lying in wait. He was extradited from Alaska, where he had moved shortly after Corwin's disappearance and being discharged from the Marines.

Corwin's disappearance triggered a massive, 6-week search that began on July 2, 2014 and became so intensive that the state Office of Emergency Services tapped Riverside, Kern and Los Angeles counties for additional resources, said San Bernardino County sheriff's Cpl. Robert Whiteside, his department's search and rescue program coordinator.

"We probably searched in the area of 300 mines during this 6-week investigation," Whiteside said during his testimony Thursday.

Searchers braved intense heat, averaging 105 degrees, and unforgiving terrain. It wasn't until Aug. 16 that the search for Corwin would end. Twenty searchers rendezvoused at the sheriff's Morongo Basin station in Joshua Tree that day, then fanned out into the vast expanses bordering Joshua Tree National Park in search of Corwin, Whiteside said.

About 3 p.m., searchers noticed a foul odor emitting from one mine shaft in the Rose of Peru Mining District.

"You could smell a very strong odor of decomposition and gasoline mixed together," Whiteside said.

A bucket with hole drilled into the bottom and a GoPro camera and light affixed to it was lowered into the mine. The video footage was shown in court Thursday.

As the camera descended further down into the dark ventilation shaft, it illuminated Corwin's badly decomposed body, the water jugs, and propane tank, which had a rope tied around it.

Whiteside called Detective Jonathan Woods at the sheriff's homicide division, who told Whiteside to secure the area until detectives arrived.

Brenton Baum, an engineer/paramedic with the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, retrieved Corwin's body and the other items from the mine shaft, including the 22-caliber bullet casings, he said during his testimony Thursday.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20161013/former-twentynine-palms-marine-accused-of-killing-mistress-denied-knowing-her>

Wildfires prove costly: Bluecut, Pilot fires land in top 10 of biggest blazes statewide this year

Jose Quintero, Daily Press

Posted: October 14, 2016, 4:53 PM

One of the most expensive wildfires in U.S. history was fully contained last week, nearly three months after it was sparked by an illegal campfire, officials said.

The stubborn, drought-fueled Soberanes Fire in Big Sur erupted on July 22, burned for 83 days and charred 132,127 acres — an area about four times as large as San Francisco.

Data from the National Interagency Fire Center in September showed the blaze surpassed \$200 million in firefighting costs, becoming the costliest to fight in U.S. history and putting it well past the previous high of \$165 million established by the 2002 Biscuit Fire that burned in California and Oregon.

Through Oct. 8, Cal Fire and the United States Forest Service had reported a total of 6,441 wildfires throughout the state.

While unable to say if 2016 has been the costliest fire season the state has seen, San Bernardino National Forest Service spokesman John Miller said it's safe to say August was one of the most expensive months locally regarding wildfires in recent memory.

That's due to two of California's 10 largest wildfires this year that raged in the Victor Valley's backyard.

The 36,274-acre Bluecut Fire is listed as the fifth largest fire in the state this year.

The blaze erupted in the Cajon Pass on Aug. 16. Erratic winds spread the fire quickly and carried embers up to 2 miles away, touching off new fires. At the peak of the battle to control the Bluecut Fire, 2,684 personnel were actively involved. The Bluecut Fire destroyed an estimated 105 homes, 213 outbuildings and more than 200 vehicles before it was declared fully contained on Aug. 23.

The Pilot Fire, which burned 8,110 acres in the San Bernardino Mountains and Summit Valley, is listed as the 10th largest fire in California this year.

The Pilot Fire began on Aug. 7 and by the end of the night spread to 1,500 acres, prompting a massive firefighting response from local and regional agencies. The blaze quickly resulted in over 5,300 evacuation orders for homes in the southeast Hesperia, Lake Arrowhead, Lake Gregory and Crestline.

Last estimated figures, available from the San Bernardino National Forest Service, show the cost of the Pilot Fire at more than \$16 million. More than \$18 million was spent fighting the Bluecut Fire.

“These are not final costs as fire managers continue charging to both fires while they monitor them for hot spots that occasionally are detected,” San Bernardino National Forest Service spokesman Gregg Goodland said in an email. “They are the costs that were current as of when the incident management teams transferred command of the fire back to the Forest Service.”

Miller said the Pilot Fire used a San Bernardino County record of 746,156 gallons of fire retardant, a bright pink substance that reduces flammability of fuels or delays combustion. According to Miller, \$3 is the average price per gallon for fire retardant.

Miller said 312,000 gallons of fire retardant were used for the first day of the fire alone.

The Bluecut Fire saw 499,336 gallons of retardant used, with 241,414 gallons used on the first day.

So far this year, the San Bernardino Airtanker Base has pumped a total of 3,425,469 gallons of fire retardant to support wildfires locally and throughout Southern California as part of mutual aid.

— The Associated Press contributed to this report.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20161014/wildfires-prove-costly-bluecut-pilot-fires-land-in-top-10-of-biggest-blazes-statewide-this-year>

Car fire impacts Highway 18 traffic

Five other recent fires in Waterman Canyon under investigation

Douglas W. Motley, Alpenhorn News

Posted: October 14, 2016

A car that plunged over the side of Highway 18 burst into flames in the pre-dawn hours of Saturday, October 8, igniting tinder dry brush in lower Waterman Canyon and forcing weekend motorists to detour onto Old Waterman Canyon Road, while firefighters battled the one-acre blaze.

The fire, first reported around 6 a.m., elicited a quick response from **San Bernardino County Fire**, Cal Fire and the U.S. Forest Service, as well as, a hand crew from Pilot Rock Conservation Camp. In all, 16 engine companies, a water tender and three hand crews finally gained control of the stubborn blaze shortly after 2 p.m. According to U.S. Forest Service spokesman Bob Poole, the incident occurred about a quarter-mile above the lower entrance to Old Waterman Canyon Road.

The badly damaged vehicle was finally retrieved and Highway 18 reopened to traffic in both directions at 2:12 p.m. The driver, said a Caltrans spokesperson, was transported to a local hospital for treatment of moderate injuries.

In addition to last Saturday’s car fire, Waterman Canyon has suffered five suspicious brush fires in the past 12 months, including two arson fires set on September 25 and 26. An arrested transient suspected of starting the two most recent fires alongside Old Waterman Canyon Road was released from custody on September 28 after the District Attorney’s Office decided there was insufficient evidence to charge the suspected arsonist – who was identified as 20-year-old Edwin Valentino Lizano – with two felony counts of arson.

Lizano had reportedly been captured and detained by two Waterman Canyon residents who allegedly witnessed the crime take place. Authorities subsequently arrested Lizano on two charges of arson. A source

familiar with the arrest told *The Alpenhorn News* that arson charges were dropped due to the lack of credibility of one of the witnesses. A check of court records revealed that the witness in question has racked up twenty felony and misdemeanor charges since 2014, with seven felony convictions and one misdemeanor conviction, as well as, one active felony and eleven active misdemeanor charges awaiting trial, enough to discredit his credibility as a witness.

San Bernardino County Fire Department Public Information Officer, Tracey Martinez, told *The Alpenhorn News* last week that the September 25 and 26 Waterman Canyon fires are still under investigation and that arson charges could still be brought against Lizano if sufficient credible evidence is discovered.

<http://alpenhornnews.com/car-fire-impacts-highway-traffic-p7568-154.htm>

Big Falls: Another Hiker Critically Injured Inside Closed Area

Michael P. Neufeld, *Rim of the World News*

Posted: October 15, 2016, 1:39 PM



So far this year, there have been 15 hiker injuries in a closed area of the San Bernardino National Forest in the Big Falls area. (Photo Eric Sherwin/San Bernardino County Fire)

Forest Falls, CA – The closed section of the Big Falls area has chalked up another injured hiker requiring a major response from San Bernardino County Fire, the San Bernardino County Sheriff and the U.S. Forest Service.

The unidentified female hiker was located by firefighters who had to hike to the area along Falls Creek and began treating her for what were described as critical injuries by the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**

THE INCIDENT

The incident — which occurred shortly after noon on October 13 — involved the adult female who had sustained an approximate 20-foot fall from the top of the middle waterfall and impacted the rocky terrain beneath.

Due to the severity of her injuries, the victim was hoisted out by San Bernardino County Sheriff's Air Rescue 6 and transported to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center for treatment of critical, life-threatening injuries.

THE CLOSED SECTION

The victim was hiking in a section that was closed last year by the San Bernardino National Forest due to the high number of injuries occurring in the Big Falls area.

In the year prior to the closure, over 50 victims were treated for traumatic injuries sustained while attempting to cross this section. This year, under the closure, the number of injuries has dropped to fifteen.

The closure remains in effect with signs posted at the trail head and barrier fencing across the canyon. The U.S. Forest Service indicates that violation of this prohibition is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.

Additionally, parties may be liable for all costs associated with emergency responses into the closed area of the San Bernardino National Forest.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/10/15/big-falls-another-hiker-critically-injured-inside-closed-area/>

Barstow Fire Department

Daily Press Letters to the Editor

Posted: October 15, 2016, 7:38 PM

The Barstow Fire Protection District was established in 1926, by its town citizens. For many years the first station was on 1st Street, where Desert Manna is now located. In 1978, the station on Barstow Road was completed and dedicated as the headquarters station. The newest station was built in 1998-99 and dedicated in 1999. The station is located across a small street east of the Diamond Pacific Company building. Both stations are 24-hour manned.

A few months after the World War II broke out on Dec. 7 of 1941, most of the able bodied men were volunteering or drafted into the military services. The district lost most of its men, only a few older firemen were left, but the district did not shut down. The district opted to stay open and do the best they could. There was a call for volunteers that went out! A number of Barstow High School kids volunteered to serve the Fire District.

The city fire alarm system was a very simple, a loud siren that could be heard easily all over town. When the high school kids heard the alarm, they closed their books and immediately ran out, jumped in their jalopies and raced down 1st to the station. So, the Fire District throughout the war years was manned by a few older men and Barstow High School kids. And they did a good job too!

The problem now at the Fire Department is that the firefighter retirement plan monthly payments from the firemen has escalated to a high point, costing the firemen a lot of money in recent years. The SB Cera retirement has advised the city that the members' cost increase is due to the decrease in members, so the Cera plan has to raise the contributions of the existing members to make up for the loss of contributions!

According to the city, they will work hard to rectify the costly costs to our firefighters. We do not want our Fire Department to be taken over by the county. The county has too much money and thus too much power! I believe in us to maintain local control of Barstow Fire and Barstow P.D. We lost what little political power we had left until we were thrown out of the 1st District Supervisor's region and then thrown into the 3rd District by Supervisor Masenbalem, even though it was opposed by the City of Barstow.

Barstow has been treated as a long lost stepchild in recent years, especially by the county!

The county (Board of Supervisors) to my knowledge has never publicly supported the proposed indian casino to be built in the Outlet Mall area. The county knows very well Barstow's economic health is not good! The number of people receiving some sort of government assistance is 53 percent. The Victorville area has gained

a big chunk of political power and us, well we just don't get much support from our elected officials, county or state.

In 2010, the city took over the Barstow Fire District by mutual consent of the Fire District Board of Directors and the City Council, with a unanimous vote. The change was from Barstow Fire District to City of Barstow Fire Department.

Citizens — don't go against the citizens' wishes and voters in 1947, when they decided to break away from the county, become a city, and be self-governed!

Ruben “Benny” Arredondo
Board of Directors, Barstow Fire Protection District

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/opinion/20161015/letters-to-editor-10-16-16>

Man Hit by Car on Highway 395 Succumbs to His Injuries

Victor Valley News Group
Posted: October 15, 2016

VICTORVILLE, CA:(VVNG.com)— A 29-year-old Victorville man who was struck by a vehicle on Highway 395 has succumbed to his injuries.

On Tuesday, October 11, 2016, at about 10:10 a.m., dispatch received a report of a major injury collision between a bicyclist and a vehicle that had just occurred at the intersection of Highway 395 and Dos Palmas.

Officers and personnel from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** responded and located Charles Staples lying on the shoulder unconscious with major injuries. Authorities say Charles was thrown approximately 100 feet from where the impact occurred.

According to the San Bernardino Coroner's office, Charles was crossing Highway 395 at Dos Palmas Road on foot when he was struck by a vehicle.

The driver of the involved vehicle, a 2004 white Cadillac Sedan was transported to a local hospital for complaint of pain from the airbags being deployed.

Charles was airlifted to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center for the treatment of his life-threatening injuries. On Thursday, October 13th, two days after the accident, Staples was pronounced dead.

On October 13th the sister of Charles Staples posted an update on his Facebook page saying,

“At 4am this morning, Charles left us. If you would like to still come by our family still welcomes you. Charles wanted to donate his organs to help others so the hospital will keep him hooked the machines, until donors are in place. Thank you so much to all the kind words and love, we appreciate you all.”
The San Bernardino County Sheriff Department – Major Accident Investigation Team is investigating the incident.

<http://www.vvng.com/man-hit-by-car-on-highway-395-succumbs-to-his-injuries/>

Wildfire: Smart Fire Off Highway 18 And Smarts Ranch Road Fully Contained

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim of the World News

Posted: October 16, 2016, 3:50 PM

Big Bear City, CA – Shortly after 3 p.m. Sunday, firefighters from a variety of agencies responded to a vegetation fire — named the Smart Fire — off Highway 18 and Smarts Ranch Road in the Cactus Flats area. It is now fully contained.

Arriving units located a 15 by 15-foot spot fire between rocks but due to winds in the area units were requested from Big Bear City Fire, U. S. Forest Service, CALFIRE and **San Bernardino County Fire**. Aerial support was also requested.

SoCalMountains.com reported about 3:36 p.m. that units on scene could handle and that the forward rate of spread had been stopped.

However, the U.S. Forest Service indicated that units would remain on scene due to gusty winds to 40 miles per hour in the Cactus Flats area.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/10/16/wildfire-smart-fire-off-highway-18-and-smarts-ranch-road/>

La Nina could spell dry winter

Matthew Cabe, Daily Press

Posted: October 16, 2016 at 4:24 PM

Temperatures in the waters of the Pacific Ocean dropped recently, prompting the Climate Prediction Center on Thursday to reissue a La Nina watch that was canceled in September.

As of early October, ocean-surface temperatures fell to approximately 30.4 degrees — or minus 0.9 Celsius — which Derek Schroeter of the National Weather Service characterized as a moderate drop but enough for the CPC to reissue the watch.

“Right now, it’s pretty much on the fringe of being a La Nina,” Schroeter told the Daily Press. “It’s all about having the (minus) 0.5 degrees Celsius threshold for three months before you can call it a La Nina event.”

Between July and September, the average temperature stood at 31.1 degrees — minus 0.5 Celsius — according to Schroeter, with September seeing a slight drop to just under 31 degrees.

“During September, the conditions started trending toward the La Nina conditions and they’ve continued into October,” Schroeter said. “The drop in temperature in October prompted the Climate Prediction Center to re-issue the La Nina watch.”

There is now a 70 percent chance La Nina will develop during fall and a 55 percent chance it will develop this winter, according to data released by the CPC, which Schroeter said could result in the continuance of dry conditions throughout Southern California.

“The general picture is La Nina brings wetter conditions to the Pacific Northwest down to Northern California while bringing drier conditions to Southern California.”

Generally, what produces El Nino and La Nina phenomenons — warmer surface-water temperatures for El Nino; colder temperatures for La Nina — results in opposite effects. El Ninos tend to bring more storms and precipitation to Southern California, which was the expectation with last year’s “Godzilla” El Nino.

But a series of high-pressure systems off the coast of California pushed the jetstream north, according to Daily Press weather spotter Tom Fracasso, thus rendering El Nino a bust in Southern California despite it being one of the warmest on record.

Conversely, La Nina phenomenons tend to result in more precipitation in the Pacific Northwest and Northern California, according to Schroeter, who said that’s what was puzzling about the “Godzilla” El Nino.

Last year’s precipitation pattern was more typical of a La Nina event,” Schroeter said, adding that current conditions in the Pacific Northwest could produce up to 20 inches of rainfall over the next week.

“There’s other influences,” he said. “Moisture from Typhoon Songda is contributing, as well, and enhancing the energy of the storms in the Pacific Northwest. (The typhoon) is not connected to La Nina. It just happens to be there at the same time.”

So while the potential for high levels of precipitation exist elsewhere, Schroeter said Southern Californians should expect more of the same dry conditions to persist as the state nears a sixth year of drought.

Fracasso said those dry conditions should be expected in the High Desert, as well.

“What happens in Southern California extends from the coast to the mountains to the deserts,” he said, adding that last year’s disappointing El Nino proves that nothing is written in stone with regard to weather.

“History showed us last year that even though we had one of the strongest El Ninos on record we still received well below average precipitation,” Fracasso said. “In other words, weather is not an exact science ... The state dumped hundreds of million of dollars in preventative measures, and the precipitation never materialized (in Southern California).”

What that shows, according to Fracasso, is that research into El Nino and La Nina phenomenons is still in the “infancy stage.”

“We really have to look another 50, 60, 70 (or) 80 years ahead from now to see what La Nina and El Nino do to our atmospheric currents,” Fracasso said.

Meanwhile, precipitation continues to be virtually nonexistent in parched Southern California, where expectations for a wet winter are low.

“We’re off to a real bad start this water year due to an extremely inactive monsoon season in July, August and September,” Fracasso said. “Since the new water year started on July 1, here in Phelan we’ve only received a trace of precipitation. Last year saw 2.3 inches (of precipitation) during the same period.”

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20161016/la-nina-could-spell-dry-winter>