



# NEWS



## News Headlines 6/19/2018

- To rectify County Fire budget, supervisors eye parcel tax in unincorporated communities
- Officials warn of dangers of illegal fireworks in Fontana
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## To rectify County Fire budget, supervisors eye parcel tax in unincorporated communities

Shea Johnson, Daily Press

Posted: June 18, 2018, 5:18 p.m.



San Bernardino County Fire Department firefighters battle a blaze along Summit Valley Road in Hesperia in July 2017. An annual parcel tax used to fund County Fire services could be broadened to include property owners in all unincorporated communities as the department seeks to stabilize its financial operations. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

An annual parcel tax used to fund **San Bernardino County Fire** services could be broadened to include property owners in all unincorporated communities as the department seeks to stabilize its financial operations.

County Supervisors voted 3-2 last week to initiate proceedings to expand the boundaries of the FP-5 Service Zone, with notices set to be delivered to affected parties in August, the same month the first of two public hearings will occur.

Inclusion in the service zone means a \$157.26 yearly parcel tax for property owners, which can rise up to 3 percent annually.

The move toward an expanded tax plan comes as County Fire's budget continues to devour cash reserves and investments from the county general fund to offset revenue deficits, according to Fire Chief Mark Hartwig, who presented a shaky spending plan to the Board of Supervisors on June 12.

The budget is projected to increase \$18 million this coming fiscal year, to \$276.6 million. But excluding contracts and ambulance services, \$12 million in reserves and another \$17 million from the county will be used to bankroll a \$29 million shortfall.

The ongoing gap steadily exists throughout a 10-year projection, according to documents provided by County Fire.

"As your fire chief of seven years, and somebody who's responsible as a taxing authority to provide services to the communities that we protect," Hartwig told the board, "I would recommend that we do something, that we don't continue to rely on reserves or one-time money essentially annually from the county Board of Supervisors."

The FP-5 expansion is expected to generate \$27 million yearly — a figure that on its own would nearly eliminate the funding gap. The correlation between projected income and the existing shortfall was expected.

There's a suggestion that county areas that don't generate enough property taxes to fund their levels of service have been subsidized by others that do. Hartwig said "it's not a secret or a shock."

For those who already pay a parcel tax, the expansion won't act as an additional cost, but as a replacement, according to County Fire spokeswoman Tracey Martinez. The expansion would also encompass incorporated cities serviced by County Fire that don't already pay.

Majority Supervisors have opted to enable a protest vote that could kill the plan if enough oppose it, but if it survives and is adopted in October, then new revenue is expected to begin collection in August 2019.

Without a bold injection of revenue, County Fire would be facing service cuts or continued and likely bigger investments from the county since the department's reserves can't satisfy another \$12 million withdrawal moving forward.

Supervisors Chairman Robert Lovingood, whose 1st District represents several unincorporated communities, rejected the plan because he couldn't square putting a burden solely on residents when travelers use a fair amount of fire services.

"I think there's an opportunity to examine other things," he said Monday.

Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford also voted against the idea due to the protest vote procedure, saying she would only support an affirmative vote.

But for others, County Fire's financial situation was unsustainable and such a decision had been staring officials in the face for at least a year.

"The important thing is that we begin to move in the right direction," 5th District Supervisor Josie Gonzales said, "and the right direction is for us to work toward creating a solvency within County Fire."

Aside from potential property owner opposition, the expansion could face a hurdle by a proposed ballot initiative in November to challenge protest vote procedures, county officials say.

The board also unanimously agreed to hire a consultant to review a potential special tax for fire services that would be tested during an election in March 2020, but the parameters of that tax, including how much revenue would be made and who might be affected won't be known until a roughly three-month analysis is completed.

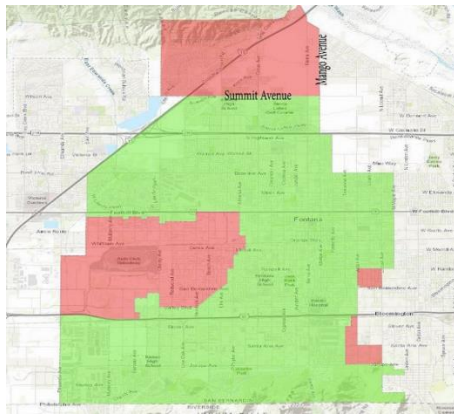
The special tax would not be supplementary to an FP-5 expansion; instead one or the other would be preferred in the coming months.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20180618/to-rectify-county-fire-budget-supervisors-eye-parcel-tax-in-unincorporated-communities>

## Officials warn of dangers of illegal fireworks in Fontana

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: June 18, 2018



This map of Fontana shows where Safe and Sane fireworks are allowed (green) and the areas where all fireworks are banned (red). New this year, no fireworks are allowed in the area north of Summit Avenue.

All it takes is one spark to cause major injury or start a wildfire, which is why the City of Fontana's Police Department, in collaboration with the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, is working to prevent the use of illegal fireworks in Fontana through an educational and outreach campaign during the upcoming weeks.

New this year, all fireworks (including Safe and Sane) are prohibited north of Summit Avenue in the northern part of Fontana, because the area has been designated a high fire hazard area.

Also, while Safe and Sane fireworks are allowed within the majority of Fontana's city limits, no fireworks of any kind are permitted in the unincorporated San Bernardino County areas of Fontana.

The Fontana Police Department is strictly enforcing fireworks-related violations. Fines for possession and use of illegal fireworks range from \$2,500 to \$10,000.

"Although the ordinance prohibiting all fireworks north of Summit Avenue has been on the books since 2009, due to the devastation that wildfires caused California in 2017 and already this year, the Fontana Police Department will be heavily enforcing fireworks-related offenses," says Fontana Police Sgt. Kevin Goltara. "Since March, we've received and responded to dozens of calls for illegal fireworks."

The Say No to Illegal Fireworks Awareness and Enforcement Campaign will include a series of fire and law enforcement operations to stop attempts towards the use, sale and possession of illegal fireworks.

The campaign will also include public service announcements, digital billboard ads on the Interstate 10 and 210 Freeways, social media posts and banners throughout the community.

In 2017, the San Bernardino County Fire Department Office of the Fire Marshal, in cooperation with law enforcement, seized about 40,000 pounds of illegal fireworks in the county.

"Since May, we have already seized more than 14,000 pounds, including two large loads that were on their way to Fontana," said Fire Marshal Mike Horton.

Residents who plan on purchasing fireworks are encouraged to purchase Safe and Sane fireworks. These fireworks may be discharged in Fontana's city limits south of Summit Avenue between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. from Thursday, June 28 to Thursday, July 5.

"The temporary satisfaction you might get from igniting illegal fireworks will not offset the pain of paying fines up to \$10,000. Don't take the chance," said Police Chief Billy Green. "Don't be unsafe and insane to use anything other than Safe and Sane Fireworks if you live south of Summit Avenue."

To report the use of illegal fireworks, call the Fontana P.D. at (909) 350-7700 or the WeTip hotline at 1-800-47-ARSON.

For more information about the use of fireworks, visit [www.fontana.org/fireworks](http://www.fontana.org/fireworks) or call the fireworks information line at (909) 356-7101.

[https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/officials-warn-of-dangers-of-illegal-fireworks-in-fontana/article\\_4907d27e-7329-11e8-a096-ebc88220bfac.html](https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/officials-warn-of-dangers-of-illegal-fireworks-in-fontana/article_4907d27e-7329-11e8-a096-ebc88220bfac.html)

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## **Fireworks warnings go unheeded**

Staff writer, Inland News Today

Posted: June 18, 2018

INLAND EMPIRE – (INT) – Local police and fire agencies are out with their annual warnings about illegal fireworks, but they may be coming too late as the Fourth of July approaches.

Law enforcement seems helpless about halting nightly displays of aerial pyrotechnics and explosive firecrackers coming from neighborhoods from Fontana to Perris and throughout the Metro area. Some citizens complain that it's been going on since Cinco de Mayo and it gets worse every year.

With another wildfire season here, the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department says it's increasing its vigilance in enforcing state and county firework laws. Fines range up to \$1,250 for the first offense, yet few people are caught.

Fontana is pushing to prevent the use of so-called 'safe and sane' fireworks within high fire hazard areas.

In Victorville, fireworks of any kind are strictly prohibited. Violators could be fined up to \$1,000 and jailed for six months yet there have been few reports of that actually happening.

Meantime, there have been only a few reports of smuggled fireworks being seized.

<http://www.inlandnewstoday.com/story.php?s=51120>

## **FIREWORKS ALERT From San Bernardino County Fire**

Susan A. Neufeld, RotwNews

Posted: June 19, 2018



Possession of any fireworks, even ‘Safe and Sane’ is illegal.

San Bernardino, CA – Possession of any type of fireworks, including “Safe and Sane” fireworks, is against the law in any unincorporated area of San Bernardino County. In the event a fire occurs due to the unsafe use of fireworks, the responsible persons are likely to face criminal charges and be held liable for damages.

“Safe and Sane” fireworks are only allowed in the following cities: Adelanto, Chino, Colton and Rialto, as well as specific locations in Fontana, Grand Terrace, and San Bernardino. For more information, call the fire department in these cities. All fireworks that explode, shoot into the air or move along the ground are termed dangerous and are illegal anywhere in California.

With San Bernardino County facing a dangerous wildland fire season, the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**(SBCoFD) has increased its vigilance in enforcing state and county firework laws to protect public health and safety. Fire and law enforcement agencies will be conducting operations this year to stop attempts to smuggle tens of thousands of pounds of illegal fireworks with fines up to \$1,250 for the first offense with the possibility of arrest. Property owners may be cited if they allow fireworks to be possessed, stored or used on their property.

“Residents play an important role in our fireworks investigations. If you see something, say something. Call the authorities or WeTip hotline at 1-800-47-ARSON. To anonymously report illegal fireworks,” Fire Marshal Mike Horton said.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, on a typical 4th of July, fireworks cause more fires in the U.S. than all other causes combined. In addition to fires, fireworks cause deaths, blindness, maiming injuries to children and adults, re-traumatize war veterans suffering from PTSD, and frighten household pets.

While “Safe and Sane” fireworks are allowed in some San Bernardino County communities, the County Board of Supervisors and SBCoFD encourage residents to watch fireworks at community celebrations rather than use their own. Visit: <http://www.sbcfire.org> for a schedule of local firework displays.

No fireworks of any kind are allowed in the National Forest.

Have a SAFE celebration!

<https://rotwnews.com/2018/06/19/fireworks-alert-from-san-bernardino-county-fire/>