



NEWS



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- New agreement between Victorville, San Bernardino County Fire could 'save some more lives'
- Authorities identify Hesperia woman killed in single-vehicle crash on Highway 395

New agreement between Victorville, San Bernardino County Fire could 'save some more lives'

Martin Estacio, Victorville Daily Press

Posted: February 3, 2021



A Victorville Fire Department captain saws into a smoldering tree during a wildfire in Old Town Victorville on Thursday, June 4, 2020.

An agreement city officials say will reduce response times for emergencies, such as car crashes and strokes, has been approved by the Victorville City Council.

The City Council on Tuesday voted unanimously in favor of the automatic aid agreement between the Victorville Fire and **San Bernardino County Fire** departments.

As part of the agreement, fire engines from both departments can be dispatched to a call based on proximity, regardless of whether an emergency occurs within city or county boundaries.

Previously, the city and county operated under a mutual aid agreement, which required prior authorization for assistance and a potentially longer wait time for someone in need of emergency services.

The agreement appeared to be a sign of lessening tensions between the two agencies, which started when the city canceled its decade-long contract for County Fire services and opted to restart its own fire department.

City Manager Keith Metzler said during Tuesday's meeting that both departments had "come a long way" since then.

The transition back to the city-run Victorville Fire Department was contentious at times, with County Fire union officials opposing the switch and rocky negotiations over extending the contract to avoid a lapse in service.

After Victorville Fire officially began operating in March 2019, the City Council received an unsettling report later that year that some city-owned fire equipment — which the county was responsible for maintaining per its contract — was found missing or damaged.

In the report, submitted that June, city officials suggested that some damage may have been intentional.

A County Fire spokesperson said at the time that the department was a "professional organization, and we expect professionalism at all times from each of our employees."

Metzler said the now-improved relationship between the departments was likely due to a change in leadership.

Dan Munsey became the county's new fire chief in November 2019 — about eight months after Victorville Fire started up again — while John Becker was appointed Victorville's interim fire chief last August after Greg Benson abruptly resigned.

“I think the confluence of that change has made both of our organizations much more open to letting the past be the past and moving forward and just focusing on what is the best public service to the residents regardless of whether they're in Victorville or Adelanto or Hesperia,” Metzler said.

Victorville had automatic aid agreements with other agencies like the Apple Valley Fire Protection District, Cal Fire, and the Bureau of Land Management in place before Tuesday's approval.

Becker said the new agreement could “possibly save some more lives” in some areas because the boundaries separating the two departments' jurisdictions had essentially been dropped thanks to the new agreement.

The Victorville Fire chief mentioned Victor Valley College, as one example, which sits within the city's jurisdiction but could now be served by a closer County Fire engine in Spring Valley Lake should the need arise.

“So if you're having a heart attack and you're closer to a Victorville unit, even though it's in San Bernardino County, we're going to respond,” he said.

<https://www.vvdailynews.com/story/news/2021/02/03/new-agreement-between-victorville-san-bernardino-county-fire-could-save-some-more-lives/4369142001/>

Authorities identify Hesperia woman killed in single-vehicle crash on Highway 395

Rene Ray De La Cruz, Victorville Daily Press

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San Bernardino County Sheriff's officials identified Jameshia Avery, 28, of Hesperia, as the woman killed in a single-vehicle crash early Sunday morning, Jan. 31, 2021, near Highway 395 and Yucca Terrace Drive.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's officials have identified the 28-year-old woman killed in a single-vehicle crash early Sunday morning near Highway 395 and Yucca Terrace Drive.

Jameshia Avery, of Hesperia, died when she was ejected from a 2016 Ford Mustang after the car veered off the road and hit a dirt berm, the Hesperia Sheriff's Station said Tuesday.

Investigators believe Avery had been traveling southbound on Highway 395 near the intersection with Yucca Terrace Drive at the time of the crash. The Mustang rolled multiple times after hitting the berm on the east side of the highway.

Why the Mustang veered from the southbound lanes remains under investigation, according to officials.

Deputies and **San Bernardino County Fire Department** personnel responded at about 5:39 a.m. Sunday. It appeared that Avery had not been wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash, officials said. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Taylor Reynolds, spokesperson for the Hesperia station, told the Daily Press on Wednesday that investigators found no indications of contributing factors such as drugs or alcohol.

The crash remains under investigation. Anyone with information is asked by the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department to contact the Hesperia Sheriff's Station at 760-947-1500 or Sheriff's Dispatch at 760-956-5001.

Callers wishing to remain anonymous can call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-78CRIME (27463) or leave information on the We-Tip website at www.wetip.com.

<https://www.vvdailynews.com/story/news/2021/02/03/authorities-identify-hesperia-woman-killed-single-vehicle-crash-highway-395/4367850001/>