



# NEWS



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## County Fire Welcomes New Chief

Nick Kipley, Mountain News

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Chief Munsey (right) talked about the importance of teamwork on Thursday night's MAC meeting by introducing BG Captain Anthony Rapoza (left) and Assistant Chief Ron Walls (center).

On Thursday, Jan. 23, at the joint Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC) Meeting held in the St. Moritz Lodge in Lake Gregory, San Bernardino County Supervisor Janice Rutherford introduced the new Fire Chief for the San Bernardino County, Daniel R. Munsey.

"How long have you been on the job Chief?" Rutherford asked.

"Sixty-two days and about, uh, eight hours?" Chief Munsey replied.

"Sixty-two days and eight hours!" Rutherford exclaimed, "That tells you something about the kind of guy that Dan is. And he has been trying to get out-and-about to the entire county, which as you know is about 25,000 square miles. How many fire stations?"

"I'd say about close to seventy right now." Chief Munsey said.

The County interviewed people from all over the country who were interested in the job, and the applicants from other parts of the nation said that in their first 100 days they would visit every fire station in the county.

"And we looked at them and said: 'I don't think you're gonna be able to do that, physically,'" Rutherford said. "So what was appealing to us about having Chief Munsey as someone who grew up in the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** was his knowledge of those existing stations, his relations with existing firefighters and his connection to the Board and our goals to modernize the fires service to figure out how we take advantage of technology in the modern era to better serve our constituents, and to help us solve some of the financial conundrums we are facing as a fire district."

Following Supervisor Rutherford's introduction, Munsey gave a speech introducing himself to the attendees at the MAC meeting which outlines his goals and aims as the new County Fire Chief in which he lauded Supervisor Rutherford's outreach and communication efforts in conveying the needs of particular communities - especially the communities of the San Bernardino Mountains.

“I didn’t start in a big fire station. I was hired full-time with Lake Arrowhead - and that’s where I started.” Munsey said, “Lake Arrowhead at that time had three fire stations and since that time we’ve joined other fire districts and other fire departments have joined us and we have just become bigger and bigger and bigger.”

“I dropped out of high school. Really. And I didn’t even have a GED. I went to Riverside Poly down in Riverside, and then moved to Joshua Tree to be a rock climber,” Munsey said. “And it was a great life. And I was climbing and my friend fell and broke his back, and I didn’t know what to do. So I went to EMT school. And in order to go to EMT school, I had to take my GED. And I struggled at EMT school, I think I barely made it with C’s - which doesn’t mean I was a terrible EMT but you don’t ever want a ‘C’ doctor or ‘C’ EMT working on you. But education started to become very important in my life and I started as a volunteer firefighter in Yucca Valley. And as you’re riding along, the firefighters started mentoring me and they convinced me that I needed to go to the fire academy. So I did. And then they convinced me that I needed to go to paramedic school. And I did a lot better in Paramedic school, I’m a great paramedic. And through time I’ve gone up and got my graduate degree and school became so important to me I got a 3.96 (GPA). So I tell this story to our youth, because if I can succeed - so can anybody. Trust me.”

Chief Munsey then outlined the three most important things he wishes to accomplish in his first 100 days on the job.

“First is communication,” Munsey said, “I mentioned that Supervisor Rutherford is communicating with me and it’s just as important that I’m communicating with her. Communicating with our local newspaper. Our local community. And communicating with our team and giving them information and coming up with a solid plan. I’m a planner. I don’t just show up to work and hope for the best and hope that everything is going to be all right. That’s not how I operate.”

“The second thing that’s really important to me is that we’re involved in our community,” Munsey said. “I don’t know if you heard but there’s this controversial parcel assessment that was passed? Anybody heard of that? I’m going to be approachable. And I want to answer questions. And I want to look into unique solutions to make sure our fire district is well-funded. I think everybody agrees, especially living up here in the mountains, that we want to keep our residences safe. It’s in the County’s vision. Public safety is very important. But just like you, I have to pay bills. I have four kids. Which means I have even less money than you. And all four of ‘em are working towards college. So I’m going to make sure we have great community connections, and I think our guys are doing a great job of that but I think that we really need to be part of the community and there are some problems we need to solve, and even though I’ve got a great team there are some problems we can’t solve without your help.”

“I’m talking in ‘C’s right now,” Munsey added. “First there was Communication, then there was Collaboration. The third thing I want to talk about is Cooperation with our partners. We’ve got Chief Jones up here from Cal Fire. We have the CHP. We have the US Forest Service. And of course, we have our Lieutenant (Lupear) over here from the Sheriff’s Department who are very important to the fire district and hopefully one day I’ll come up here and talk about some of the collaboration we do with the Sheriff because nobody else in the nation does what the Fire Department and the Sheriff does together. We need to solve our problems by working together. If the fire department is going to solve every problem then I’m going to need to ask you for even more money and I don’t think anybody will give me more money.”

“Will anybody give me more money?” Munsey joked.

“No.” Supervisor Rutherford said.

Chief Munsey moved on to explain the importance of what he called ‘Community Risk Reduction.’

“So we ran 149,332 calls last year,” Munsey said, “That’s a lot. And I’m probably one of the few fire chiefs in the nation who will stand in front of you and say ‘I’m sorry.’ I look at that as 149,332 calls that are all failures. Because my job isn’t to respond to calls. My job is to prevent calls from occurring. And you know this in the context of fire prevention: we have sprinklers and alarms and smoke detectors for early warnings. And over the years while we’ve done a good job of structure fires and preventing those from happening, we’re not doing a really great job with some of the other things. Like the (Thanksgiving/Christmas) storm impacts.”

“We’ve seen wildfires,” Munsey continued, “How many of you were up here for the Grand Prix and Old Fires? Was it scary? Even from where you were (in Lake Gregory)? I was up here. We need to do everything we can to ever prevent these fires from starting.”

“If you live in San Bernardino there are two or three fires we have every year and you can ask anybody that lives in San Bernardino who those fires are and they’ll be able to tell you,” Munsey said. “What are the locations of the fires that burn every year?”

Several audience members chimed in:

“Little Mountain.”

“Waterman.”

“40th (street).”

“Perris Hill.”

“So what is predictable is preventable,” Munsey said. “So if I know fires are gonna burn there am I just going to wait for our guys to respond? No.”

Munsey then explained his strategy to prevent these sites from burning.

“So what would I do to keep Little Mountain from Burning?” Munsey asked.

“Put a fence around it!” an audience member replied.

“Keep people off of it, right. Well, we know that 67% of fires are caused by humans,” Munsey said. “But I know there’s also jurisdiction to put sheep on hills. There’s jurisdiction that puts people and tools on those spaces. I know there’s jurisdiction that uses retardant. And we actually have one of the nation’s experts in here - Chief (Glenn) Barley who does that. Cal Fire does an excellent job. So we’ll be very involved in community risk reduction.”

“When you need us,” Munsey concluded. “We’re gonna be well-trained to respond. Your mountaintop firefighters have worked in some of the most extreme conditions known to man. These guys and gals are really great and I am just absolutely honored to lead them and absolutely honored to be your fire chief.”

[http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article\\_2f1d8b62-4387-11ea-99c7-8f57aff93e2c.html](http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_2f1d8b62-4387-11ea-99c7-8f57aff93e2c.html)

## San Manuel honors first responders with ‘thank you’ brunch

Brian Whitehead, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: January 30, 2020



Representatives from a number of local agencies attended an appreciation event Friday, Jan. 24, hosted by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. (Photo courtesy of San Manuel)

Last fall, the 46, Hill and Tick fires were but a few that ravaged parts of Southern California

For their courage battling a handful of fires in the region last year, first responders from Redlands, Highland, Loma Linda, San Bernardino and Yucaipa were celebrated Friday, Jan. 24, at a “thank you” brunch hosted by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.

Inside the Bear Springs Hotel Event Center, firefighters, police officers and paramedics from local agencies were treated to breakfast burritos from Rosa Maria’s and lunches from San Manuel Casino’s Just Barbeque.

“It does not go unnoticed that these brave men and women sacrifice time with their families to protect ours,” Lynn Valbuena, San Manuel chairwoman, said in a news release.

Valbuena closed her remarks with a moment of silence for the three American firefighters who recently died battling the wildfires in Australia.

First responders from Cal Fire, Redlands Fire, Yucaipa Fire, **San Bernardino County Fire**, US Forest Service, the San Bernardino Police Department and the Central and Highland stations of the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department attended the appreciation event.

Last fall, the 46, Hill and Tick fires were but a few that ravaged parts of Southern California.

In response, San Manuel donated \$1.1 million to fire relief efforts.

“We want to thank all of the first responders,” Valbuena said, “for always putting the Inland Empire community and the safety of its residents first.”

<https://www.sbsun.com/2020/01/30/san-manuel-honors-first-responders-with-thank-you-brunch/>

## Car Fire on Highway 18

Nick Kipley, Mountain News

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Firefighters work together to extinguish flames from the vehicle.

On the afternoon of Tuesday January 28th a car fire started in on Highway 18. The call came in to the Twin Peaks Sheriff's Station, but was then handed off to Arrowhead California Highway Patrol and the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**. CHP Officer Jacob Greide said that the fire began for an "unknown reason" and that officers from Arrowhead CHP closed the highway for approximately 30 to 40 minutes while the firefighters worked to extinguish the blaze.

The fire completely consumed the vehicle and then started moving up the hillside "a little bit" according to Greide, but firefighters were able to contain the blaze before it became more severe or ignited any of the nearby brush.

Greide says that the driver of the vehicle had pulled over when smoke started coming from under the hood. The driver pulled over as quickly as possible as they tried to pull off the road as far from traffic as possible before the flames started coming up from under the hood. Greide said that the car didn't appear to be modified in any way.

"It was a simple car fire," Greide said, "Just a regular car that caught on fire."

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