



NEWS



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9-1-1 dispatchers asking coronavirus questions

Staff Writer, Inland News Today

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INLAND EMPIRE – (INT) – The law enforcement community is taking steps to protect first-responders and others from the coronavirus.

9-1-1 dispatchers are asking additional questions when callers report medical emergencies. Callers are being asked about patients showing flu like symptoms or shortness of breath. Questions are being asked while responding paramedics and law enforcement officers are already dispatched, not to delay response times.

Most **San Bernardino County Fire** facilities are closed to the public until further notice. The closure is out of an abundance of caution to keep the community and employees healthy.

In Riverside, public access to police facilities are closed, but public safety needs are being met.

The Riverside County District Attorney's Office has suspended normal court operations other than those essential to the criminal justice system. The hours the DA's office will be open to the public have been trimmed.

<http://www.inlandnewstoday.com/story.php?s=58290>

YUCCA VALLEY TOWN COUNCIL GETS VIRUS UPDATE

Staff Writer, Z107.7 FM News

Posted: March 18, 2020



San Bernardino County Fire Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle spoke to the Yucca Valley Town Council Tuesday about how the fire department is responding to the COVID-19 threat. Tami Roleff photo

During a special, emergency meeting yesterday, the Yucca Valley Town council approved a resolution proclaiming an emergency within the town due to COVID-19. The resolution makes the town eligible for emergency aid from the state, county, and federal governments. The discussion on COVID-19 continued on into the regular meeting, as the council heard from Town Manager Curtis Yakimow, **County Fire** Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle, and Sheriff's captain Lucas Niles, as they all explained how the town staff and first responders are protecting themselves and the public from the spread of the virus. Managing editor Tami Roleff says the pandemic could affect not only the health and safety of residents, but it could have quite a financial impact on the town's revenues...

Town Manager Curtis Yakimow said the financial impact on town revenues will be significant, due to a reduction in sales tax revenues, transient occupancy taxes, and other revenues.

"If you annualize that, if things don't bounce back immediately, if it takes awhile to ramp up, next year we would be looking at anywhere from a \$1 million to \$2-\$2 ½ million hit to our general fund."

Despite the potential significant loss of revenue, Yakimow said the town's reserve balance and conservative budget would help the town.

"The town financially is very secure and we are able to withstand these types of impacts. It doesn't mean it won't be painful; they will be painful if this occurs. But for the most part we'll be able to continue to deliver services and programs."

The Yucca Valley Town Council was reassured by the Yakimow, Tuttle, and Niles that the COVID-19 virus will not have an impact on service or staffing levels in the town. All town employees are considered essential, and will continue working; firefighters and deputies are taking precautions to protect themselves against contracting the virus, but staffing levels have not changed.

In other business, County Fire Chief Dan Munsey spoke about communication, collaboration, and community, as well as how firefighters are protecting themselves from potential exposure to the coronavirus. Firefighters will be dressed in protective gear from Tivex suits to gloves and eye/face shields, when they arrive at a resident's home for medical help.

The council recognized outgoing Deputy Chief Trevis Newport for his service as captain of the Morongo Basin Sheriff's Station.

And the council heard a presentation from the town's public works department about the jobs the workers in the streets, park, and facilities departments perform.

The council continued to its next meeting a report on broadband services, and received a report on legislative priorities without comment.

<http://z1077fm.com/yucca-valley-town-council-gets-virus-update/>

Town Council approves emergency resolution with spread of COVID-19

Jenna Hunt, Hi-Desert Star

Posted: March 18, 2020



County Fire Chief Dan Munsey gives a presentation during the council meeting Tuesday, March 17.

Jenna Hunt, Hi-Desert Star

YUCCA VALLEY — It is not business as usual in the town as the Town Council approved a resolution Tuesday proclaiming an emergency due to COVID-19.

The resolution makes the town eligible for emergency money from the state, county and federal governments.

The council approved the resolution in a special meeting called Tuesday afternoon just before the regularly scheduled meeting.

"The town is ready," said Town Manager Curtis Yakimow.

Once the regular council meeting started, the conversations about COVID-19 continued and the full council listened to Yakimow, **county fire** Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle and new Sheriff's Capt. Lucas Niles share details of how their workers are adding protections to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus.

"The goal is to flatten the curve and slow the process," Tuttle said. "So far, we have not had any high-risk (911 calls) in Yucca Valley or the Morongo Basin."

All government officials said the COVID-19 virus will not affect service or staffing levels in town.

All town employees are considered essential, and will continue working; firefighters and deputies will take necessary precautions against contracting the virus, but staffing levels have not changed.

Tuttle shared how the fire department is responding to COVID-19.

He and others warned the public not to be surprised to see first responders wearing protective gear looks like it came from a science fiction movie. The gear is the best way to help the first responders and the public, they said.

County Fire Chief Dan Munsey also addressed coronavirus exposure. He said he was 18 years old when the Landers earthquake hit, but he has not seen this type of crisis professionally.

"I've never seen a pandemic take place like this," he said.

He said he was glad to see the council members sitting far apart and the chairs in the room also spaced 6 feet apart. He told people to wash their hands, keep social distances and be careful to avoid potential exposure.

"This could happen in Yucca Valley," Munsey said. "Earthquakes happen and so does the coronavirus."

Munsey said the county's firefighters will be dressed in protective gear when they arrive at people's home for medical help.

"We're taking this seriously and protecting our first responders," Munsey said.

Yakimow said this new public threat not only affects the public's health and safety, but it will affect the town's finances, revenue sources and savings.

"The town financially is very secure," he said, adding that the impacts "will be painful."

Yakimow said the town's strong reserve balance and conservative budget would help the town. He advised the town's revenues will suffer as sales taxes, transient occupancy taxes and other sources of money drop.

"We don't know what the impact will be yet," Yakimow said. "We can assure you there will be financial impacts."

The town also showed a video of county Supervisor Curt Hagman cautioning the public on coronavirus.

"This is a historical time and requires historic action," Hagman said. "The county is taking every step to stay ahead of this threat."

Hagman said that testing will be made available in San Bernardino County.

As of Wednesday, the county has reported three people testing positive for the virus.

http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article_bc240a96-6951-11ea-b31f-3f66d1d99d7c.html

Government agencies respond to COVID-19

Kathy Portie and Judi Bowers, Big Bear Grizzly News

Posted: March 18, 2020

As the Grizzly was going to press March 17, San Bernardino County officials released a new COVID-19 alert.

A third confirmed case has been reported involving a woman in her 50s. No further information was available on the patient and where she lives.

Because of that, the county's acting health officer, Erin Gustafson, has ordered the cancellation of gatherings of any number of people within the county through at least April 6.

The order also requires, starting Wednesday, March 18, the closing of all movie theaters, gyms, health clubs, bars, adult entertainment establishments and other businesses that serve alcohol but do not serve food. Food and beverage establishments must follow guidance issued by the California Department of Health on March 16.

The order does not apply to activities essential to the functioning of the state, including work, public transportation, airport travel, grocery stores, charitable food distribution, certified farmers markets and shopping at stores or mall. The order also does not apply to congregate living situations including dormitories and homeless encampments.

The order is county wide and also pertains to incorporated towns and cities including Big Bear Lake.

All San Bernardino County public schools have voluntarily closed as part of the effort.

"I understand this creates hardships for many families and businesses, but at the end of the day I believe we all understand that we are in this together, and that together, we will get through this," said Curt Hagman, county Board of Supervisors chairman. "The county is taking every step we can to stay in front of this threat."

Some county and local agencies have closed their doors to public access. Others are keeping their doors open for now. All have staff on hand to assist customers and residents with questions, concerns and payments.

The city of Big Bear Lake's doors remain open at City Hall for now. Frank Rush, city manager, said customers are encouraged to make an appointment for any city business that cannot be handled via phone or online.

At this time, no city staff is working remotely, but the city's IT department is working on creating remote connections if it becomes necessary, Rush said. Essential public service personnel such as those in the public works department can't work from home, Extra measures to keep equipment sanitized are in place, Rush said.

Additionally, all city meetings have been canceled. This includes City Council and Planning Commission meetings.

San Bernardino County officials continued their effort to slow the spread of novel coronavirus March 16, announcing the temporary closure of several county-operated attractions. These county departments will offer services online and over the phone, closing public offices until at least April 3.

County officials moved quickly to respond to public health concerns even before the first COVID-19 case was reported in the county on March 15. The county has continued to update its response via the Office of Emergency Services. According to Dawn Rowe, 3rd District Supervisor, the OES is coordinating the county-wide response to the outbreak.

“As it relates to county operations, essential services like law enforcement, fire and public works will continue,” Rowe said.

The county’s second confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported March 16. The patient is a 54-year-old male with underlying health conditions who had come into contact with people who had recently traveled from Washington state. The first case was involved a 53-year-old female Kaiser Fontana patient who returned from London sometime in the past week.

“The health risk from COVID-19 to the general public in San Bernardino County remains low at this time, but everyone is strongly urged to engage in practices that reduce the risk of spread,” Gustafson said. “We are prepared, from a public health standpoint, and our residents, cities, businesses and other key communities have been informed about safe practices.”

San Bernardino County Fire Department closed its stations to the public effective March 17. All stations remain staffed and personnel are responding to all calls for service.

Rowe said the county’s Department of Public Health added a page on its website with updated information on the county’s response to COVID-19. Residents can access the website at <http://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/coronavirus/>.

The county has established a hotline to answer questions and provide information about resources. The number is 909-387-3911, and is available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The hotline is not for medical calls. If you are feeling sick, contact your health care provider or 911. Call 211 with questions about social services.

“We continue to commend the community for its strength and resilience in the face of this challenge,” Hagman said. “Avoiding panic and heeding the advice of public health professionals is the path that will lead us through this crisis. As more testing is conducted and more results come in, we thoroughly expect to see an increase in the number of reported cases.”

In Big Bear City, the Community Services District plans to keep its doors open to the public for now, but encourages people to use the drop box to make payments.

According to CSD General Manager Mary Reeves, the CSD will accept cash payments, but will not make change to avoid potential spread.

Each department has pandemic preparation procedures to follow, Reeves said.

“After every interaction, we wash our hands and clean the area,” Reeves said. “We clean and disinfect the work areas. We’ve canceled nonessential work related travel and classes. And we’ve relaxed the use of sick time for family leave.”

Reeves said the trigger for the CSD to close the office to the public is if and when a COVID-19 case is reported in Big Bear Valley.

“We are also looking into holding our April meetings via teleconference,” Reeves said.

Mountain Transit’s meeting scheduled for March 23 has been canceled and will be rescheduled for a later date. The public hearing was to discuss service changes.

At this time there are no major route or service changes for Mountain Transit. Social distancing on buses is in place. There may be changes in the future to accommodate passenger needs.

The Big Bear Lake Department of Water and Power is limiting lobby access and suspending indoor water audits. The lobby will be closed for payment, but open for urgent questions until further notice.

Customers are encouraged to submit questions by phone at 909-866-5050 or email at

DWPCustomerService@BBLDWP.com. There is a drop box on the south side of the building for payments.

Rush said there have been no orders issued by the state to shelter in place as is happening in Northern California, but admits it could get to that point. He and other leaders are watching what’s taking place in other areas to learn and be ready.

Rush said he expects there will be a lot of great lessons learned from this when we come out on the other side.

http://www.bigbeargrizzly.net/news/government-agencies-respond-to-covid/article_b1ac2a2c-68b0-11ea-bc37-d31a6200320a.html