



NEWS



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CHP investigating fatal crash along NB I-15 in Hesperia

Staff Writer, VictorValley News

Posted: July 16, 2020



HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) — The California Highway Patrol is investigating a fatal crash on the northbound I-15 freeway in Hesperia.

It happened at about 12:40 AM on July 16, 2020, along the I-15 between Main Street and Bear Valley Road.

San Bernardino County Firefighters responded and located a 2006 Nissan Pathfinder on its side and impaled around a high-tension utility pole along the right shoulder of the freeway.

The driver who was the sole occupant of the vehicle was pronounced deceased at the scene. She was described as an older female.

CHP officers told VVNG they were looking into the possibility of a second vehicle that was involved and fled the scene.

County firefighters will respond back out to assist with extricating the driver when the coroner arrives on scene. Southern California Edison employees will also respond to check on the integrity of the pole.

Additional information will be updated as it becomes available. Anyone with information is asked to call the Victorville CHP office at 760-241-1186.

<https://www.vvng.com/chp-investigating-fatal-crash-along-nb-i-15-in-hesperia/>

Drive-through birthday party held in Fontana

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: July 15, 2020



Sunny Kabir and Zoya Younus held a drive-through birthday party for their one-year-old son Zarif in Fontana. A fire truck drove by during the celebration.

Happy parents of a one-year-old boy in Fontana held a drive-through birthday party for him on July 5.

Sunny Kabir and Zoya Younus decorated their front yard, invited family members and friends (and a **San Bernardino County Fire** Department engine) to drive their vehicles through the street, and celebrated the "onederful" birthday of their first child, Zarif.

"During this unprecedented situation, we did our best to make some memories for him. We followed as much social distancing as possible," Kabir said.

Zarif was born on July 5, 2019, the day a 7.1 earthquake, which was centered near Ridgecrest, shook all of Southern California.

"It was a scary and a joyful moment for us. We are blessed to have him and cherish him every day," Kabir said.

The family moved to Fontana from downtown Los Angeles about eight months ago.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/drive-through-birthday-party-held-in-fontana/article_d2e97c38-c6bd-11ea-bd8f-47139a545a31.html

Errant car takes out fire hydrant

Kurt Schauppner, The Desert Trail / Hi-Desert Star

Posted: July 15, 2020, 12:46 pm



Twentynine Palms Water District workers struggle to turn off water to a disabled fire hydrant on Cactus Drive near Encelia Avenue Wednesday, July 15.

TWENTYNINE PALMS — No one was reported injured but a fire hydrant was destroyed and huge amounts of water were let loose when a vehicle crashed into a hydrant on the 71600 block of Cactus Drive, west of Encelia Avenue, at about 9 a.m. Wednesday, July 15.

The crash left the vehicle stranded on a bit of landscaping and sent a fountain of water high overhead, visible from Twentynine Palms Highway and Encelia Avenue.

The incident drew response from **Twentynine Palms firefighters**, the Twentynine Palms Water District and several sheriff's deputies. It also brought out several neighbors eager to record the event on their cell phones.

While Twentynine Palms Water District employees worked to turn off water to the hydrant, water flooded the front yard and driveway of the home but did not make it inside, a firefighter from **station 44** in downtown Twentynine Palms reported.

Water flowed in a steady stream east on Cactus Drive to Encelia and from there north to Twentynine Palms Highway and then east on the highway to a bridge over a flood control channel east of the Stater Bros. shopping center.

<https://hidesertstar.com/news/169801/errant-car-takes-out-fire-hydrant/>

CANDLE BLAMED FOR WONDER VALLEY CABIN FIRE

Staff Writer, Z107.7 FM News

Posted: July 15, 2020

A candle is blamed for a Wonder Valley fire Tuesday night that left a resident homeless. **County Fire** Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle said crews from Twentynine Palms, Joshua Tree, and the Combat Center were called at 9:38 p.m. to a fire in the 6200 block of Allen Avenue. Tuttle said the one-room cabin was fully involved in flames. It took firefighters about five minutes to knock down the flames but they were on scene for just under two hours mopping up. There were no injuries.

<http://z1077fm.com/candle-blamed-for-wonder-valley-cabin-fire/>

CITY OF TWENTYNINE PALMS FIGHTS REPEAL OF FP-5 FIRE TAX

Staff Writer, Z107.7 FM News

Posted: July 16, 2020

FP-5, the controversial fee added on to property tax bills for expanded fire protection, has many local citizens working on a ballot repeal. Now the City of Twentynine Palms is taking definitive action to push back on those efforts out of safety concerns. Reporter Heather Clisby has the details...

When landowners in the county's expanded Fire Protection District 5, or FP-5, saw a \$157 per-parcel fee added to their property tax bills, there was pushback. The imposed fee occurred after a process widely viewed as a violation of Prop 218, which requires voter approval of special taxes.

In a closed meeting on June 8, the Twentynine Palms City Council directed the city's legal counsel and staff to challenge efforts to repeal this fire protection fee. City leaders are concerned that a repeal would interrupt a "critical government service" and is working to remove the issue from the November ballot. Should voters remove the FP-5 fee, the city will lose fire protection funding.

When the city, county, and water district transferred fire responsibility to the **County Fire** District (required by the Local Agency Formation Commission), they had to eliminate the parcel tax that previously existed. Should repeal efforts for FP-5 be successful, the city will be without funding for fire protection.

For more info on this matter, call Twentynine Palms City Hall at 760-367-6799.

<http://z1077fm.com/city-of-twentynine-palms-fights-repeal-of-fp-5-fire-tax/>

COUNTY SUPERVISORS MOVE NEW CHARTER FORWARD

Staff Writer, Z107.7 FM News

Posted: July 16, 2020

Following an hours-long study session on Tuesday, county supervisors voted to move the proposed new County Charter to the next step in the process of bringing the matter to the voting public. Reporter Mike Lipsitz has been following the issue and is here to break it down for us ...

Tuesday's "first reading" of the proposed charter update was approved in a split three-to-one vote with Supervisor Robert Lovingood opposed and our own Third District Supervisor Dawn Rowe absent. A few members of the public spoke in opposition to the new charter, notably, the anti-Fire-Protection-Zone-5-crusader, Tom Murphy of the Red Brennan Group, who protested that the new charter would effectively transfer power from county citizens to county supervisors. The proposed new charter will come up for final adoption, probably as a consent item, at the July 28 meeting of county supervisors. If approved then, the proposed new county charter will be placed on the November Presidential Election Ballot where voters will have final say.

The reasons for the proposed revised County Charter are multiple. The County Charter was approved in 1913 and, although amended many times, contains much of its original language. The supervisor's ad hoc committee believes there is an opportunity now to delete obsolete and redundant provisions, and modernize the use of pronouns and other terms.

Equally important, reports the committee, placing the proposed revised County Charter on the November ballot will provide the public with the opportunity to vote on the crucial issues of:

- requiring County Public Health Officer orders addressed to the public-at-large to be reviewed by the elected Board of Supervisors,
- term limits for the Board of Supervisors,
- compensation for the Board of Supervisors and Countywide elected officials,
- filling of vacancies of elected officials, including removing the Governor's role in this,
- creation of a redistricting commission to ensure public input on the drawing of supervisorial district boundaries,
- addressing emergency preparedness, and
- safe-guarding the electoral process by requiring county election campaign finance regulations and effective enforcement.

The committee's proposal claims that the updated Charter is more streamlined and goes on to say that "a more understandable charter helps the public hold the county, its elected officials, and employees accountable."

<http://z1077fm.com/county-supervisors-move-new-charter-forward/>

How they voted: Needles City Council

SAUL A. FLORES, News West / Mojave Daily News

Posted: July 15, 2020

How they voted: Needles City Council, Needles Public Utility Authority meeting in regular session on July 14. Councilors Tona Belt, Louise Evans, Shawn Gudmundson, Zachery Longacre, Vice Mayor Ed Paget M.D., Timothy Terral and Mayor Jeff Williams were present. Mayor Jeff Williams was given an excused absence, Vice Mayor Paget presided over the meeting.

A) conference with legal counsel regarding potential initiation of litigation (one potential case).

Report: There was a motion and a second to initiate a lawsuit challenging a voter issue that seeks to repeal the parcel tax that the **San Bernardino County** fire protection district relies on to provide essential fire services within the city of Needles.

http://www.mohavedailynews.com/needles_desert_star/how-they-voted-needles-city-council/article_737d0384-c6cf-11ea-bfb7-0b13b9ddd127.html

California homeowners are repeating their past wildfire mistakes

Leslie Kaufman, Bloomberg, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: July 15, 2020 at 2:08 p.m.



FILE – This Nov. 15, 2018, aerial file photo, shows the remains of residences leveled by the Camp Fire in Paradise, Calif. A grand jury investigation into the 2018 wildfire that killed 85 people in Northern California, wiping out a town, found that Pacific Gas & Electric repeatedly ignored warnings about its failing power lines in the area, performed inadequate inspections and ignored pleas from employees about deteriorating equipment. (AP Photo/Noah Berger, File)

On Oct. 8, 2017, sparks from private electric equipment set fire to the dry hills of Northern California's wine country, but it was only once the flames jumped from the grasslands to densely packed Santa Rosa that the destruction intensified.

By the time the Tubbs Fire was fully contained, it had consumed some 5,600 buildings, making it the most destructive in California history.

A year later, transmission lines owned by PG&E Corp. ignited brush in rural Butte County and caused the Camp Fire, which quickly spread into the community of Paradise. By the time it had been controlled, nearly 19,000 structures had been destroyed, easily superseding the damage from Tubbs.

These fires showed how vulnerable suburban communities are in an era when climate change is causing more extreme heat and dryness. And yet as they rebuild, many homeowners in these communities are repeating the mistakes that caused such historic levels of destruction.

That's the finding of a survey released Monday by the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety, an industry-supported research non-profit. While wildfire managers have historically focused on the wildland-urban interface, or WUI, where towns meet flammable vegetation, one clear lesson of the Tubbs and Camp

fires is that suburban communities—even those not in zones labeled high risk—need to take a more defensive approach to fire.

“A critical step in defending against the wildfire threat faced by communities is to build back better than before,” the report states. “Unfortunately, we have already seen missteps taking place.”

Fire risk in the U.S. has been steadily growing in scope and intensity as climate change has created more arid conditions. About 5.7 million acres have been consumed each year by wildfires since the 1990s, according to Verisk Analytics, a data analytics firm. But that number has been growing steadily. In just the last half-decade, an average of 7.8 million acres have burned each year.

IBHS based its analysis on a variety of sources, including an on-the-ground, post-disaster inspection of the Camp Fire site and lab-based experiments on ignition. In particular, IBHS found that wood fences and patios acted as conduits for fire, while houses that had metal fencing were less likely to ignite. Similarly, homes that cleared a 5-foot perimeter of vegetation also did better than those with close-up landscaping.

Despite the obviousness of such steps, many homeowners won’t take them unless they’re required to by law, says Daniel Gorham, a research engineer with IBHS and a co-author of the report.

The reports single out Coffey Park in Santa Rosa as an example of communities returning to dangerous but more aesthetically pleasing practices. The enclave was razed almost to the ground by the fire, but since the area doesn’t fall into the “most severe” fire risk zone on government maps, residents aren’t required to follow the most stringent fire codes. The result, IBHS says, has been rebuilding that includes the same deadly fire traps.

“We understand that there was a need for rush to build back housing,” Gorham says. But he also urges homeowners to follow common-sense safety practices even when they’re not mandatory. “If you don’t want to tear down your whole fence,” he adds, “at least make the five feet closest to your house metal.”

The expanding understanding of how official maps underpredict fire risk echoes the crisis that’s been building in the country around flood risk. A recent study found that the government has underestimated the number of properties at risk for severe flooding by 70%, equivalent to 6 million homes. All of those are likely underinsured.

The IBHS report indicates that a smaller but parallel problem is developing in fire zones. Michael Wara, director of the Climate and Energy Policy Program at Stanford University, says of IBHS’s analysis, “This is one of the first places I’ve seen to emphasize that wildfire resilience is a problem not in the WUI but in the suburbs.”

“We need to think much more expansively about the areas that we are hardening to fire risk,” Wara adds, “even if they are not in severe fire risk zones.”

<https://www.sbsun.com/2020/07/15/california-homeowners-are-repeating-their-past-wildfire-mistakes/>