



NEWS



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Mom is thankful after police hold drive-through birthday event for autistic son

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: August 20, 2020



Elaine Jones

The Fontana Police Department recently helped make a Fontana boy very happy on his 12th birthday.

The P.D. teamed up with the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department, Fontana School Police Department, and Mayor Acquanetta Warren for a drive-through birthday celebration for Eric Jones, a boy who has autism.

"We have befriended Eric over the years and always enjoy seeing him out at our community events," the Fontana P.D. said in a Facebook post.

But due to recent events, P.D. officers had not seen Eric lately, and so they decided to make a surprise appearance, joined by K9 Goose (who is one of Eric's favorites).

Eric's mother, Elaine Jones, appreciated the support shown by the local police and fire leaders.

Elaine Jones has also been highly regarded in the community. She is an ambassador for One Legacy and was honored with an opportunity to ride in the Donate Life float in the 2018 Rose Parade. In 2000, she generously donated a kidney to save her uncle's life, and in 2009 she was again inspired to become an altruistic donor by donating a segment of her liver to a Cambodian infant (who is now 10 years old).

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/mom-is-thankful-after-police-hold-drive-through-birthday-event-for-autistic-son/article_40a2616e-e30a-11ea-b667-871f0e83e756.html

WEATHER UPDATE: Residents, firefighters hoping for some relief from the heat

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: August 20, 2020



Flame retardant drops by aircraft helped firefighters extinguish a one-acre fire in Rancho Cucamonga on Aug. 19. (Contributed photo by Rancho Cucamonga Fire District)

August has been an unpleasant month for local residents trying to stay cool during a lengthy heat wave.

And it's been an especially rough time for firefighters who have been busy attempting to contain fires that have erupted in many areas throughout the entire state.

The National Weather Service said the excessive heat warning which has been in place for a week in Fontana will continue through Friday night, Aug. 21.

Then there will be a bit of a cooldown as temperatures drop slightly into the 90s this weekend (Aug. 22 and 23) after staying above 100 degrees in previous days.

"Dangerously hot conditions will continue through Friday in the Inland Empire and High Desert," the National Weather Service said. "Warm overnight temperatures will offer little reprieve from extreme heat stress during the day, resulting in a high heat risk. A marginal cooling trend is expected for Friday through the weekend; that being said, temperatures will remain above normal, and are expected to rise again next week."

San Bernardino County firefighters are hoping to get some relief after battling fires this past week, including a residential structure fire in the 18400 block of 9th Street in Bloomington on Aug. 17.

On Aug. 19, Rancho Cucamonga Fire units extinguished a vegetation fire in the area of Almond and Mai Street in the northern portion of Rancho Cucamonga. With help from flame retardant drops by aircraft, the blaze was limited to one acre, and no structures were damaged.

However, during the incident, American Medical Response assisted with three firefighters who experienced heat exhaustion and one firefighter with a knee injury, according to Gabrielle Costello of the Rancho Cucamonga Fire District.

----- HERE IS THE FORECAST:

Friday, Aug. 21 -- Sunny, with a high near 102. Light and variable wind becoming west 5 to 10 mph in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 20 mph.

Friday night -- Partly cloudy, with a low around 73. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming light and variable in the evening.

Saturday, Aug. 22 -- Mostly sunny, with a high near 96. Light and variable wind becoming southwest 10 to 15 mph in the morning. Winds could gust as high as 20 mph.

Saturday night -- Partly cloudy, with a low around 69.

Sunday, Aug. 23 -- Mostly sunny, with a high near 95.

Sunday night -- Partly cloudy, with a low around 70.

Monday, Aug. 24 -- Sunny, with a high near 96.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/weather-update-residents-firefighters-hoping-for-some-relief-from-the-heat/article_daa7ef8a-e33d-11ea-b75d-8f13cc7b4b25.html

Fontana Fire Protection District receives \$71,364 federal grant

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: August 20, 2020



The Fontana Fire Protection District (FFPD) has received a \$71,364 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). (Contributed photo by City of Fontana)

The Fontana Fire Protection District (FFPD) has received a \$71,364 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The funding will enable FFPD to purchase a new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) fill station for Fire Station 77.

The new SCBA fill station equipment will have an immediate and long-term impact on firefighter safety and the ability of FFPD to fulfill its firefighting and public protection mission, according to Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-31st District).

The funding came after Aguilar wrote a letter to FEMA advocating for Fontana's AFG application.

“As fires in Southern California become more frequent and intense, I’m glad we were able to secure this funding to provide Fontana firefighters with critical equipment to keep them safe as they work tirelessly to protect Fontana residents,” said Aguilar.

“The AFG Program has given the Fontana Fire Protection District the opportunity to replace equipment that provides invaluable breathing apparatus to our firefighters and cooperators,” said Fontana Mayor Acquanetta Warren. “The program ensures that our first responders have the critical resources needed to continue their top-notch service to residents.”

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/fontana-fire-protection-district-receives-71-364-federal-grant/article_f584f82e-e30c-11ea-91c7-131d4a1dc4e2.html

CALIFORNIA UNDER FIRE SIEGE

Staff Writer, Z107.7 FM NEWS

Posted: August 20, 2020



Monsoons and thunderstorms across the state—with the accompanying lightning strikes—have led to hundreds of new fires in California. California firefighters are stretched to the limit trying to fight all these fires. Reporter Heather Clisby has more details...

Over the past several days, California experienced approximately 10,849 lightning strikes that resulted in 367 new fires. There are currently 6,900 fire personnel from State, local and federal agencies fighting hard to contain the blazes.

Furthermore, California has requested 125 out-of-state fire engines to help with the efforts. Handcrews, diverse teams of career and temporary wildland firefighters, have also been summoned from other states. Nearly all private firefighting Call When Needed (CWN) aircraft in the Western US have been put into service during this fire siege.

San Bernardino County Fire urges the community to heed all warnings of law enforcement and remain prepared to evacuate at any moment. At this time, over 300,000 acres in California have burned.

<http://z1077fm.com/california-under-fire-siege/>

Science Says: Climate change, people stoke California fires

Seth Borenstein, Associated Press / Victorville Daily Press

Posted: August 20, 2020, 12:22pm



A firefighter watches a helicopter douse water while battling the Bluecut Fire that burned more than 36,000 acres in the Cajon Pass in August 2016.

If you want to build a fire, you need three things: Ignition, fuel and oxygen. But wildfire in California is a much more complex people-stoked witch's brew.

The state burns regularly because of fierce autumn winds, invasive grasses that act as kindling, fire-happy native shrubs and trees, frequent drought punctuated by spurts of downpours, a century of fire suppression, people moving closer to the wild, homes that burn easily, people starting fires accidentally or on purpose — and most of all climate change.

"California has a really flammable ecosystem," said University of Colorado fire scientist Jennifer Balch. "People are living in flammable places, providing ignition, starting the wildfires against a backdrop of a warming climate that is making wildfires worse."

Trying to manage California's wildfires is like trying to hold back a tidal wave, said Columbia University fire scientist A. Park Williams: "Big fires are kind of inevitable in California."

And it's getting worse, fast. Area burned by wildfire in California increased more than fivefold since 1972, from a five-year average of 236 square miles (611 square kilometers) a year to 1,394 square miles (3,610 square kilometers) a year according to a 2019 study by Williams, Balch and others.

Dozens of studies in recent years have linked bigger wildfires in America to global warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas, especially because it dries plants and makes them more flammable.

"Fuel moisture drives the fire business," said University of Alberta fire scientist Mike Flannigan. "Fuel moisture is being influenced by climate change."

In California, a Mediterranean climate sets up ideal conditions for fire then is worsened by climate change, said University of California, Merced, fire scientist LeRoy Westerling, who has had his home threatened twice in the last few years.

That means long hot and dry summers with a handful of winter storms bringing rain and snow.

But as the climate warms, snow melts earlier making for drier plants in the summer and the rains come later, extending fire season.

"It's a super strong effect in the summertime and we're right smack in the middle of summertime," Balch said Monday. "Our fire season is not over yet and we have the fall to worry about."

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's fall outlook gives more reason to worry. Parts of California and the Southwest will be drier and hotter than normal with a drought developing in some areas of California not already officially in drought, meteorologist Matt Rosencrans said Thursday.

If you lose a fall storm, as happened in 2019, that leaves California fire-prone in October and November, when often-fierce winds blow from the mountains toward the ocean. Those spread fires easily, even jumping eight-lane highways.

November and December, though technically the wet season, can see some of the worst fires such as 2018's Camp Fire that decimated the Sierra Nevada foothills town of Paradise and killed scores of people.

Another way climate change has worsened wildfire danger is that the jet stream — the river of air that moves storms and daily weather — slows down and weather gets stuck, often with dry periods.

This means California can lose maybe two of its five or six important drenchings, Westerling said. And in other years, with the jet stream stuck in a wet pattern, a couple of extra storms hit California and prompt explosive growth of plants that dry into fuel.

More fires from climate change mean more smoke — and this year that's going to hurt people already hit by the coronavirus, Balch said. "We're seeing compounding extremes."

But more than climate and weather are at work.

When people moved into California, they brought invasive grasses, such as cheatgrass and common Mediterranean grass, that outcompeted native grasses and burn more quickly. They act as kindling for brushland fires.

California's native shrubs burn easily, and so do conifers that release their seeds in fires to regenerate.

For more than a century — spurred by a 1910 inferno — the general government attitude has been to put out every fire. But Williams said that leads to a buildup of fuel that eventually burns.

About 97% of the fires in coastal California are started by people, either on purpose or accidentally, a study by Balch found. The top ignition causes are equipment use — such as weedwhackers, lawnmowers and chainsaws — arson and debris burning.

However, the fires devastating the state this month mostly seem to be caused by lightning strikes, not people, state officials said.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said Wednesday that the state recorded nearly 11,000 lightning strikes in 72 hours and there were 23 major fires or groups of fires, known as complexes.

Another contributor to runaway fires is that homes, especially roofs, are much more flammable than need be, Balch said.

While bigger fires can burn elsewhere — Alaska last year had nine times as much land burned as California — fire risk is greater in the Golden State because so many people live close to the flames.

"We don't hear about fires in other places, the western U.S. or Alaska because they burn for days without getting near a home," said University of Utah fire scientist Phil Dennison.

People keep building closer to areas that are wilder and beautiful but fire-prone, Flannigan said, so "we have to learn to live with fire. It's not going to go away."

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/story/news/2020/08/20/climate-change-people-stoke-california-fires/5620813002/>