



NEWS



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Yucca Valley's labor day fireworks show moves ahead, despite California wildfires

Dani Romero, KESQ Channel 3 News

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Back in May, Yucca Valley Town Council decided to postpone their annual Fourth of July fireworks until Labor Day weekend.

Residents in Yucca Valley will be seeing the skyline light up on Labor Day weekend.

"We are very excited, I would like to say my kids are more excited than I am they missed having the Fourth of July fireworks so they feel like they get a little bit of summer left," said Jamie Brislin.

Jamie Brislin and her kids can't wait for the firework show.

The Town Council made its 5-0 official vote to move ahead and hold their Fourth of July firework show on the September 5th. The fireworks will be a remote viewing from Brehm Park and will start at 9:00 p.m. amid California facing some of largest wildfires.

"I think its a really dumb idea we have lots of fires we always have fires, its really not a point in enhancing the problem," said Dave Cutler.

Yucca Valley's Community Service Manager, Sue Earnest said the contract was signed back in March, its too late cancel.

"So we have the capability of doing it in a safe and secure manner. the penalties for cancelling the contract this late in the game were significant," said Sue Earnest. "So we would be forfeiting a large about of funds."

We asked Earnest:"It is wildfire season is worth the risk of a possible fire danger to have this show?"

"We work really closely with the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department and there are heavy protocols that are instituted by our vendor including a limit on the wind speed," said Earnest.

We reached out to San Bernardino County Fire Department to weigh on this matter.

"In an event like this we take all the safety precautions to try to mitigate any fire hazard," said Scott Tuttle, Battalion Chief for San Bernardino County Fire Department.

A spokesperson from the Town of Yucca Valley tells me News Channel 3 they plan on closing off streets nearby to discourage people from gathering.

"No matter what people are going to gather," said Richard Massey.

Earnest said the council is encouraging people to watch from their home or in their car.

"We have every confidence that our citizens can watch responsibly," said Earnest.

<https://kesq.com/news/2020/08/25/california-fires-not-enough-to-cancel-yucca-valleys-labor-day-fireworks/>

County Firefighters are in the Heat of the Battle Against Wildfires

Staff Writer, San Bernardino County Wire

Posted: August 25, 2020

Fires are continuing to range throughout California, with well over one million acres having burned since August 15. Combating these blazes are more than 14,000 brave men and women — including many from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

“Our people are battling multiple fires throughout the state, assisting in wildfire suppression and lending both equipment and expertise to the effort,” said Fire Chief Dan Munsey. “They are working with fire personnel from federal, state and local agencies on a collaborative effort to protect property and save lives.”

Many of the fires ravaging the state have been triggered by lightning, with an estimated 11,000 lightning strikes responsible for some 367 fires, which are then exacerbated by dry conditions and searing temperatures. The most devastating fires are largely concentrated in the northern part of the state.

The County Fire Department is part of the state’s Master Mutual Aid system, a cooperative emergency-response program established to fight major forest and brush wildfires. County firefighters, management and equipment are dispatched to areas of the state facing the greatest threats. For example, County firefighters previously battling the Lake Fire in north Los Angeles County were recently redeployed to the Carmel Fire near Salinas. County crews are also contributing to the fight against the LNU Lightning Complex, primarily focusing on preventing the destruction of structures.

Chief Munsey stressed, however, that while County firefighters have traveled north to fight some of the state’s worst fires, the department has not neglected local blazes.

“We have fought the Ranch 2 Fire in the Angeles National Forest, the Dome Fire in the desert between the I-15 and I-40 highways, and a vegetative fire in Joshua Tree, among others,” Chief Munsey said. “At the same time, we’re careful to ensure that our own stations are covered, and regularly respond to small fires in the County before they become more dangerous conflagrations.” San Bernardino County Fire resources deployed to other counties are fully reimbursed for all costs through the Master Mutual Aid agreement.

Munsey also noted that peak fire season — which is typically occurs between late September and the end of October — is still more than a month away. He emphasized the steps local residents can take to reduce the threat and help protect their own homes and businesses.

“We have created a series of tools and materials to help County residents prepare for potential fires, all of which can be found on the San Bernardino County Fire website. Our “Ready! Set! Go! – Fire” program provides a wealth of information that can make the difference between inconvenience and disaster.”

He urged residents to download the San Bernardino Community Preparedness App, which features a five-step family emergency plan creation wizard, relevant news and timely alerts from the County, live information on evacuation routes and shelters, one-button status sharing, and a library of emergency preparedness eGuides.

Chief Munsey also suggested following the department’s Twitter and Facebook feeds to access updated information on an almost real-time basis.

<https://wp.sbcounty.gov/cao/countywire/?p=8546>

Fireworks usage, complaints increase in Rancho Cucamonga

STEVE SCAUZILLO, San Gabriel Valley Tribune / SCNG / DAILY BULLETIN

Posted: August 24, 2020, 2:49 p.m.

Rancho Cucamonga experienced one of the most active years for illegal fireworks in the city's history this Fourth of July, with usage and complaints increasing over last year, the city reported.

The increase of nerve-wracking, near-nonstop fireworks was felt across the county and the entire United States for weeks leading up to Independence Day, reported Fire Marshall Rob Ball, of the Rancho Cucamonga Fire District.

Many theorize that people cooped up due to COVID-19 shelter-at-home orders, paired with cancellations of public fireworks displays, took matters into their own hands by setting off fireworks curbside and in backyards, parking lots and fields.

"With most public fireworks shows canceled, they would see the Fourth of July as a chance to get out of the house and get fireworks," Ball told the City Council on Aug. 19.

Fireworks sales — both the "safe and sane" variety and those that are illegal in California — were booming this year. According to Fire Engineering magazine, some retailers reported sales up 200% from 2019, according to a city report on last month's fireworks use and prevention.

The city of Boston reported a 2,000% increase in fireworks complaints over the same period in 2019, he said. In Los Angeles, police and fire dispatchers received 170% more complaints this year over last year, Ball reported.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department reported 2,918 incidents of illegal fireworks between July 1-5, as compared to 1,434 reports of illegal fireworks over that same period in 2019.

This year and last, the busiest areas for calls were Hesperia and Victorville. But in the valley region, Rancho Cucamonga residents called most often in both years, the Sheriff's Department reported.

Out of 1,259 calls made to the county sheriff's from the valley/mountain regions from July 1-5, 276 were from Rancho Cucamonga residents, amounting to about 22%.

Most illegal fireworks are bought in Nevada, where sales were up at least 30%, the report said. The Rancho Cucamonga Fire District, in conjunction with the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department and the Colton Fire Department, confiscated illegal fireworks at the California-Nevada border from drivers trying to smuggle them into the state.

In four weekends in June, the joint effort resulted in seizure of 40,000 pounds of illegal fireworks, the city reported.

In addition, the 10-member Rancho Cucamonga fire interdiction team used aliases to buy fireworks advertised online. They contacted 33 potential sellers and in coordination with the Rancho Cucamonga sheriff's station, made five purchases of 90 pounds of fireworks and handed out \$5,000 in fines.

Using a newly created computer app in which residents reported the use of fireworks in real time, Rancho Cucamonga patrols on July 4 gave out 11 citations of \$1,000 each and netted 150 pounds of fireworks, Ball reported.

But in a city of 177,000 people and 56,000 households, it's impossible to catch all the violators. Ball said enforcement is not enough. The Fire District is mapping calls from the app to target potential abusers with patrols on July 4 next year. Using a list of prior complaints, in the weeks leading up to July 4 this year, the city mailed postcards and posted social media educational messages to say fireworks can harm people, animals, as well as the environment, the latter by igniting wildfires.

The city reached 90,000 social media users with its "Vets, Pets and Regrets" program, Ball said. "We were hoping to appeal to the better nature of people and to their personal sense of safety," he said.

Veterans with PTSD can be triggered into a stressful episode by loud, house-shaking illegal fireworks exploding like bombs in the night sky, Ball said.

Dogs and cats often run under beds or leave the backyard when fireworks are exploding overhead. "More pets go missing on the Fourth of July than any other day," Ball said.

Finally, fireworks can damage an eye or result in the loss of fingers, hence the "regrets" portion of the campaign.

"It just seemed unbelievable," Councilman Sam Spagnolo said at the Aug. 19 meeting. "Sometimes you would think you were in a war zone."

Rancho Cucamonga also closed the North Etiwanda Preserve on the holiday weekend to prevent people from lighting fireworks and causing wildfires in the rugged, chaparral-covered hills.

During June and July, no significant fires or injuries from fireworks were reported, Ball said.

<https://www.dailybulletin.com/2020/08/24/fireworks-explode-by-200-in-rancho-cucamonga-as-fire-officials-stepped-up-enforcement/>