



NEWS



News Headlines 06/04-06/2022

- Measure Z, repeal of a fire tax, won't be enforced even if it passes, judge rules
- San Bernardino County Paramedic Engine 76 was struck by a big rig while it protected an earlier crash scene on the 10 Freeway
- Apple Valley's Fire Chief put on admin leave, public meeting Monday night
- 12 Fire Departments That Are Hiring Firefighters

Measure Z, repeal of a fire tax, won't be enforced even if it passes, judge rules

By Martin Estacio, VVDAILYPRESS.COM

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San Bernardino County Fire Chief Dan Munsey speaks at a county supervisors' meeting Jan 11.

A measure on Tuesday's ballot seeking to repeal a special fire district tax won't be enforced even if voters decide in favor of it.

San Bernardino Superior Court Judge David Cohn ruled on May 31 that the "Initiative to Repeal the Special Tax Associated With Fire Protection District Service Zone (FP-5)," known as Measure Z on the primary ballot, was "invalid and shall not be enforced or given legal effect."

Cohn's judgment comes after he found in March that the petition used to gather signatures to place the measure on the ballot had false or misleading information.

The **San Bernardino County Fire** District had sued the county's Registrar of Voters and Measure Z backers to keep the measure from being printed on the ballot.

Although Cohn had ruled in favor of the district, the Measure Z proponents filed a petition to a state appeals court, which stayed — or temporarily put on hold — Cohn's March 29 order. That meant Measure Z was printed on the ballot despite its legal status still being decided.

In May, the appeals court denied the petition from the measure's proponents and lifted the stay, essentially agreeing with Cohn.

Measure Z is the second attempt — which now appears to be unsuccessful — to repeal a fee that was levied on properties when the fire protection zone, known as FP-5, was expanded in 2018. In November 2020, Measure U failed to pass after roughly 52% of voters cast ballots against it.

After the county Board of Supervisors voted to expand FP-5, the zone annexed more than 19,073 square miles of unincorporated land and some cities. An annual tax was assessed on all parcels with the ability to raise the fee up to 3% a year.

The current fee stands at \$161.98 after county supervisors approved an increase recommended by the fire district last year. County fire officials say the tax is necessary to fund existing emergency services. Revenues from FP-5 amount to \$42.7 million, or 18% of the fire department's operating budget, Fire Chief Dan Munsey told county supervisors at a meeting in January.

Without the tax revenue, 15 fire stations could be closed, which would result in delayed response times and higher homeowner insurance costs, opponents of Measure Z argue.

Measure Z supporters believe the tax is unfair and that the expansion should have been approved by a two-thirds vote of those affected as is typically required by the California Constitution.

That argument failed in 2019, however, after Superior Court Judge Donald Alvarez ruled against the Red Brennan Group, a 501 (c) 4 nonprofit that has funded the repeal efforts and had sued to stop the tax.

Alvarez cited earlier court decisions that found language in the constitution requiring a two-thirds vote on general or special taxes didn't address those imposed in annexations like FP-5.

The fire district argued in its lawsuit filed this year that the petition used to gather signatures contained false or misleading information because statements implied that the tax was unconstitutional despite the judge's ruling.

"First, Petitioners presented false and misleading information to the voters to trick them into signing the Initiative," the fire district wrote in a legal brief opposing the appeal court's initial decision that allowed the measure to be printed. "And now Petitioners seek to trick this Court into letting their Initiative slip back onto the ballot."

An attorney for the Measure Z proponents argued that false or misleading statements must have been intentional in order for the initiative to violate elections code and that intentionality was never proven. Cohn later ruled in favor of the fire district.

Despite the judgments, Tom Murphy, president of the Red Brennan Group, said his organization was "committed to repeal" of the FP-5 tax.

"We are considering all options available to continue pursuit of this goal," he wrote in an email.

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/story/news/2022/06/05/san-bernardino-measure-z-fire-tax-repeal-wont-enforced-passed/7523739001/>

San Bernardino County Paramedic Engine 76 was struck by a big rig while it protected an earlier crash scene on the 10 Freeway

By Staff Writer, FIREHOUSE.COM

Posted: June 5, 2022



No serious injuries were reported after a tractor-trailer slammed into the back of a San Bernardino County Fire Department pumper that was blocking an accident in Fontana Friday morning.

Firefighters from the Bloomington fire station responded on Medic Engine 76 to a traffic collision on the 10 Freeway and blocked the scene when they arrived.

The tractor-trailer slammed into the rear of the pumper, causing extensive damage to the rig.

"Thankfully all SBCoFD personnel were outside of the apparatus when it was struck and were not injured by the secondary collision," the fire department shared in a statement.

Firefighters treated the two occupants of the big rig who sustained minor injuries.

"The apparatus was successful in shielding the original scene, and no first responders or members of the public were injured by the secondary collision," the department shared.

"We are thankful that our firefighters, emergency responders and others on-scene weren't injured this morning in Fontana. While an Engine is replaceable, people are not," Assistant Chief Jeff Birchfield said. "We are fortunate that this incident had a positive outcome, but it's a great reminder to stay alert while driving and be cautious around incidents on the freeway."

<https://www.firehouse.com/apparatus/type/pumper/news/21269977/san-bernardino-fire-truck-struck-by-tractortrailer-on-ca-freeway>

Apple Valley's Fire Chief put on admin leave, public meeting Monday night

By Andrew Caravella, HDDAILYNEWS.COM

Posted: June 5, 2022



Photo cred: Apple Valley Fire Protection District

The board of directors representing the fire department in Apple Valley has put AV Fire Chief Ken Harrison on administrative leave. The news comes after nearly a year since Chief Ken Harrison was hired by the fire department.

According to public records, a special meeting was held on Saturday, June 4, 2022. In a closed session, the board of directors discussed the performance of Chief Harrison.

After the meeting, HD Daily News obtained a memo sent to members of the Apple Valley Fire Protection District. The memo tells firefighters that "the board of directors placed Chief Harrison on paid administrative leave." The memo lets firefighters know that a public meeting will happen on Monday, June 6, 2022 at 7:00 pm at Station 336.

Anyone who is wanting to attend the public meeting, Station 336 is located at 19235 Yucca Loma Rd, Apple Valley, CA 92308. The fire station is near the intersection of Yucca Loma Road and Apple Valley Road in Apple Valley.

Chief Harrison has been a firefighter for 25 years, working for Orange County Fire Authority, an organization that holds 77 fire stations, 11 battalions, and 1400 firefighters. Some of his accomplishments include the successful management of a \$5 million dollar contract for fire safety services with included attention to recruitment and training.

Back in June 2021, when Harrison was newly hired he said "Fire service has been my life's work and my passion for nearly three decades and I'm thrilled to be bringing my experience to the talented team of the Apple Valley Firefighters. I am excited to what the future holds and am looking forward to what we can accomplish together to serve the community."

Only one of the five Apple Valley Fire Protection District board members has experience or a background in professional firefighting. Board member Sid Hultquist has worked for the Barstow Fire Protection District, **San Bernardino County Fire** and at one time served as the Fire Chief for Apple Valley. In total, Hultquist has nearly 40 years of experience in firefighting.

The news of AV Fire's Chief Harrison being put on administrative leave comes less than a week since the public announcement that Fire Chief Jeff Armstrong presented his resignation letter to the City of Victorville, citing different "leadership styles."

https://www.hddailynews.com/news/local/apple-valleys-fire-chief-put-on-admin-leave-public-meeting-monday-night/article_35e300bc-e501-11ec-b1df-d7154e35c0a2.html

12 Fire Departments That Are Hiring Firefighters

By Staff Writer, FIREHOUSE.COM

Posted: June 5, 2022



Almost daily in news headlines, fire departments are sharing their struggles with recruiting new firefighters. Here's a list of 12 departments that are hiring. Find more on Firehouse.com's [Jobs page](#).

Eddy County Fire & Rescue

Carlsbad, NM

Starting Salary: \$21.49/hr

Click [here for details](#)

Fontana Fire Department

Fontana, WI

Starting Salary: \$47,915

Click [here for details](#)

Frederick County Fire Rescue

Frederick, MD

Starting Salary: \$20.48

Click [here for details](#)

Huntsville Fire Department

Huntsville, AL

Starting Salary: Competitive for entry-level and lateral transfers

Click [here for details](#)

Irving Fire Department

Irving, TX

Starting Salary: \$62,040

Click [here for details](#)

Marietta Fire Department

Marietta, GA

Starting Salary: Not shared

Click [here for details](#)

McKinney Fire Department - Lateral transfers only

McKinney, TX

Starting Salary: 67,431

Click [here for details](#)

Naperville Fire Department

Naperville, IL

Starting Salary: \$71,751

Click [here for details](#)

New Orleans Fire Department

New Orleans, LA

Starting Salary: \$33,111

Click [here for details](#)

Sacramento Fire Department

Sacramento, CA

Starting Salary: \$25.13

Click [here for details](#)

San Bernardino County Fire Department

San Bernardino County, CA

Starting Salary: Not Shared

Click [here for details](#)

Tampa Fire Rescue

Tampa, FL

Starting Salary: \$19.32-35.58

Click [here for details](#)

<https://www.firehouse.com/careers-education/news/21269380/12-fire-departments-that-are-hiring-firefighters>