



NEWS



News Headlines 06/30/2023

- 29 Palms fire burns two homes, displaces family with children

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By Kurt Schauppner, Hi-Desert Star

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Firefighters work on putting out flames at two house fires in Twentynine Palms Thursday morning.

TWENTYNINE PALMS — A fire that started in a car spread to two houses and displaced two Twentynine Palms families Thursday morning, June 29.

An 80-year-old woman, her daughter and four grandchildren — three boys ages 19, 9 and 7 and a 5-year-old girl — were affected by the fire. A tragedy was averted after three people reentered the house to retrieve the youngest daughter, who had been left behind in the confusion.

The fire struck at 6:37 a.m. in a car parked at a house in the 72300 block of Sunnyslope Drive. It spread to a fence and then to the house next door, where it did extensive damage and forced family members to flee.

“It’s gone,” Yvonne Gomez, the children’s mother, said as family members loaded a pickup truck with clothing and other items salvaged from the home later Thursday. She said she was not certain where the family would stay.

After she and her family escaped, she realized her 5-year-old daughter was still in the house.

“I got my kids out and then I realized my baby was still there,” she said. She and two others reentered the building to get the girl out.

She said a fire captain on the scene tried to stop her from going back into the burning building to retrieve her daughter.

County fire Battalion Chief Mike McClintock said firefighters were told at first that everyone had gotten out of the house.

They were fighting the fire from the outside as it burned two structures and the car when they learned that a member of the family was not accounted for.

Following regulations, he said, the fire captain went to get personnel to enter and rescue the child when family members reentered the building and brought the child out.

They were lucky, he said, in that the flames were confined to the attic area.

“This happened in three seconds,” he said.

According to McClintock, firefighters were initially dispatched at 6:38 a.m. to a vehicle fire that was upgraded to a structure fire while they were en route.

“Prior to our arrival, a sheriff detective in the area visualized the smoke, arrived and notified the residents of the home catching fire, assisting them with evacuation,” he said.

Firefighters from the downtown Twentynine Palms fire station found multiple vehicles and one home well involved in flames and an additional home catching fire.

As more crews arrived, firefighters worked to suppress the fires in both homes, entering to search each house and fight fires in the attic space.

An active gas leak and affected power lines complicated their efforts, McClintock said. Ultimately, the fire was knocked down in about 40 minutes.

One person was taken to the hospital with minor injuries related to smoke inhalation.

The fire heavily damaged two single-family homes and destroyed two passenger vehicles and two motorcycles, McClintock said.

Between the two homes, five adults and four children were displaced. The Red Cross was requested to help them with shelter.

The fire remains under investigation by the San Bernardino County sheriff’s and fire departments.

Christina Dozer, a neighbor and friend of the family, is collecting donations of clothing, including shirts, tops, pants and shoes.

To make a donation, contact Dozer at (760) 401-9401 or via Facebook.

https://www.hidesertstar.com/deserttrail/29-palms-fire-burns-two-homes-displaces-family-with-children/article_bd4850ae-16d6-11ee-8a1f-833212828646.html