



NEWS



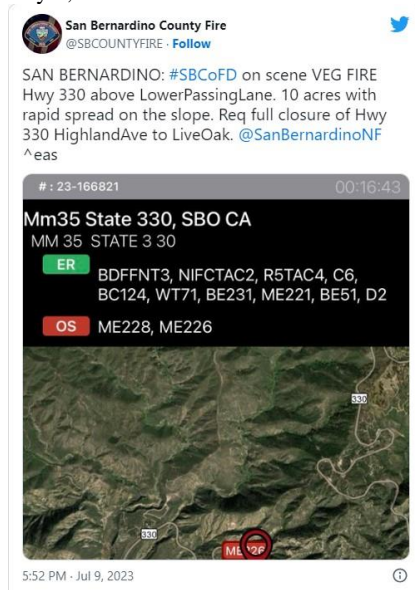
News Headlines 07/07-10/2023

- Brush fire in San Bernardino Mountains stopped at 3 acres
- Two more small fires are reported in Fontana in recent days
- Man drowns near Lake Havasu
- Another fire chief parts ways with the city of Victorville. It's the 7th change in 5 years

Brush fire in San Bernardino Mountains stopped at 3 acres

By Staff Writer, San Bernardino Sun

July 9, 2023



A brush fire in the San Bernardino Mountains grew to 3 acres on Sunday, July 9, prompting the closure of a portion of Highway 330, authorities said.

The fire was first reported around 5:30 p.m., with the blaze growing to about 3 acres in a half hour just off the side of the freeway, with lanes in both directions closed from Live Oak Drive to Highland Avenue, according to the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department.

Caltrans said the closure was later modified to run between East Fork City Creek and Highland Avenue.

The fire was initially mapped at 10 acres but was later decreased to 3, said San Bernardino National Forest spokesperson Delyn Sieliet. By 9 p.m., the fire was 50 percent contained.

The cause of the blaze was under investigation, Sieliet said.

The section of road remained closed in the evening as firefighters continued working to contain the blaze.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2023/07/09/brush-fire-leads-to-closure-of-highway-330-in-san-bernardino-mountains/>

Two more small fires are reported in Fontana in recent days

By Staff Writer, San Bernardino Sun

July 9, 2023



Two more small fires took place in Fontana in recent days, according to the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

At least five fires have been reported in the city at the start of July, and firefighters are warning that the hot conditions could lead to additional incidents as the summer months continue.

----- ON JULY 8, crews responded to a report of “pallets on fire” in the 8300 block of Sultana Avenue at 5:23 p.m.

Crews arrived to find a large outdoor fire with some pallets involved, said Battalion Chief Mike McClintock. Firefighters knocked down the blaze within 15 minutes of arrival. No injuries were reported.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

----- ON JULY 7, a fire broke out in the area of Alder and Jurupa avenues in the southern hilly part of the city.

Crews arrived to find 2-3 acres of vegetation burning uphill. The firefighters worked on perimeter control and limited the fire to less than 5 acres.

No homes were damaged or threatened by the fire.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/two-more-small-fires-are-reported-in-fontana-in-recent-days/article_cc6333d8-1ea6-11ee-8182-275b3dda4b61.html

Man drowns near Lake Havasu

By Staff Writer, Mohave Daily News

July 9, 2023

LAKE HAVASU CITY — A 71-year-old man from Grand Terrace, California, has died after he went swimming in the Colorado River.

At about 5:35 p.m. on Friday, July 7, a boater in distress was reported near Castle Rock, on the Colorado River.

Deputies with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department found an unresponsive man on a boat on the California shoreline.

According to witness interviews, he had been swimming in the water and struggled in the current. It is unknown if the man had been wearing a life jacket.

Deputies and **San Bernardino County Fire** personnel began life-saving efforts while taking him to the Windsor launch ramp in Lake Havasu City.

After the man was taken to Havasu Regional Medical Center. However, he succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. The man's identity has not been released.

https://www.mohavedailynews.com/news/man-drowns-near-lake-havasu/article_ca80958c-1dd5-11ee-9d98-5324c8d9f4cd.html

Another fire chief parts ways with the city of Victorville. It's the 7th change in 5 years

By Rene Ray De La Cruz, Victorville Daily Press
July 6, 2023



After only three months in the role, Victorville Fire Department Chief David Foster is no longer employed at the city-operated fire agency.

After Foster was hired, Victorville City Manager Keith Metzler said, “We selected David because of his breadth and depth of experience leading both large and small fire departments.”

Metzler added that “We are confident David is the right person to lead Victorville Fire through the next phase of its development as a relatively new fire department.”

Foster was the city’s sixth fire chief since April 2018, when former chief Greg Benson was first hired for the position.

Foster's fire service experience included the last two decades serving as chief of the Village Fire Department in Houston, Texas.

Before Houston, Foster was the fire chief for the Dekalb County Fire Department, which serves a population of more than one million people in the Atlanta metro area.

Revolving door continues

Foster assumed command from Interim Fire Chief Racowschi, who has served the department since December 2022.

Racowschi is a retired Torrance fire chief with 35 years of experience. He has proven skill in emergency management, safety, tactical response, technical rescue, communication, administrative management, recruitment, and training, Jones said.

Racowschi replaced outgoing Chief Brian Fallon, who was appointed chief of the Lompoc City Fire Department on the Central Coast, the Daily Press reported.

In June 2022, then-VFD Battalion Chief Fallon was promoted to fire chief, taking over for Fire Chief Jeff Armstrong, who announced his resignation in May of that year.

Fallon joined the VFD in Sept. 2021 after 16 years with the Rancho Cucamonga Fire Department, where he progressed through the ranks.

About 16 months after accepting the position, VFD Chief Jeff Armstrong in May 2022 announced his resignation. He was replaced by Chief Fallon.

In a letter to Victorville City Manager Keith Metzler, Armstrong said, “After careful consideration, I have decided to resign from my position as Fire Chief with the City of Victorville and pursue other opportunities.”

Armstrong added that ultimately his decision “results from an evaluation of organizational ‘fit’ and leadership styles.”

Armstrong replaced former Chief John Becker, who “abruptly retired after the city council decided to contract with **San Bernardino County for fire services**” on May 13, 2008, the Daily Press reported.

Becker was first appointed to head Victorville Fire after the sudden departure of Chief Greg Benson in August 2020.

During that time, Jones told the Daily Press that Benson gave his resignation. She did not provide a reason for his departure, saying her response was limited because the matter was related to human resources.

The Victorville Fire Department is one of the busiest departments in the county and the nation, according to city officials. The department also ranks among the top 6% of the nation’s fire departments having recently received a Class 2 ISO rating.

Chief Foster

During his career, Foster also assisted with the development of a new fire department in the Omaha, Nebraska area. The department became operational within 30 days and was given federal awards of merit, according to the City of Victorville.

After he was hired by Victorville, Foster said, “Very rarely do fire chiefs get the chance to be part of building a new fire department.

“I look forward to helping Victorville Fire progress to the next level,” Foster said. “I’m very excited for this opportunity and look forward to serving with the men and women of the department to provide safety services for the Victorville community.”

Foster's experience includes operations and command levels in fire suppression and prevention, emergency medical services, advanced life support and transport, emergency response management, and hazardous materials.

Foster was born and raised in Burbank. He first joined the fire service as a firefighter in the Air Force, where he served for four years. His first civilian fire experience was as a firefighter in Palmdale.

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/story/news/2023/07/06/another-fire-chief-parts-ways-with-the-city-of-victorville/70381321007/>