



NEWS



News Headlines 01/29/2021

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8,000 Inland Empire residents remain under evacuation orders, warnings as storm passes through region

Leticia Juarez, ABC7 News

Posted: January 29, 2021



OAK GLEN, Calif. (KABC) -- About 8,000 people in Riverside and San Bernardino counties remained under evacuation orders and warnings on Friday as a powerful storm marched across Southern California, raising fears of flash flooding while dumping rain and snow on the region.

In San Bernardino County, residents of the communities of Oak Glen, northeast Yucaipa and Mountain Home Village were warned to be prepared to leave if conditions warranted.

Although a division chief with the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department, who lives in Oak Glen, had expressed concern that a drainage channel that runs underneath a bridge at Oak Glen Road would overflow, conditions in the snow-covered area were calm on Friday morning. K-rails installed alongside the channel on Thursday were still in place.

"Don't wait, do it now. It's not like a fire -- you can't see it growing," Yucaipa Fire Chief Grant Malinowski warned at a Thursday morning news conference. "That whole hillside can come down at one time. It's not incremental.

In Riverside County, an evacuation order was issued for areas near the Apple Fire burn scar: Noble A, Noble F, Bench A, Mias A, Mias B Zones and Millard Shooting Ranch. A temporary evacuation point was established at Banning's Hemmerling Elementary School, 1928 West Nicolet Street, according to the county's Emergency Management Department.

<https://abc7.com/weather/storm-8k-inland-empire-residents-remain-under-evacuation-orders/10125973/>

ARCO/ampm closure remains mystery

Kathy Portie, Big Bear Grizzly News

Posted: January 29, 2021 at 5:10AM



The ARCO pumps at the Big Bear Lake am/pm are wrapped in caution tape as are outdoor restrooms and the entrance to the store.

Yellow tape surrounds the Big Bear Lake ARCO/ampm store on the corner of Big Bear Boulevard and Starvation Flats. A sign on the door states it is temporarily closed and that public restrooms are out of service. A yellow caution sign swings in the wind at the Big Bear Boulevard entrance claiming the location a hazardous site.

But there is no clear reason why the store and gas station hve been closed for more than a week. The city of Big Bear Lake has not been informed. Neither the Big Bear Fire Department or the **San Bernardino County Fire** hazardous material division have been notified or given details about the closure. Neither fire department was involved in the decision to close the store.

Calls to the store go unanswered. The store phone number is the only one listed for the owner with the city. Attempts to reach the corporate offices have been unsuccessful. It was later learned the corporate office media relations department no longer accepts phone calls, so an email request for an interview was sent. There has been no response to the Grizzly's request.

David Wert, public information officer for San Bernardino County, said neither the county fire marshal nor county public health were aware of the closure. As of Jan. 1, state law requires businesses to report to local health departments if there is a COVID outbreak at their location.

Wert said the fire marshal has been able to make contact with the business. "It appears it was a voluntary self-closure, and the business stated it plans to reopen tomorrow (Jan. 29)," Wert wrote in his email response to the Grizzly.

<https://bigbeargrizzly.net/news/4906/arcoampm-closure-remains-mystery/>

Oak Glen, east Yucaipa, Pass residents ordered to evacuate ahead of storm

Brian Rokos, The Press Enterprise

Posted: January 28, 2021 at 6:08PM



San Bernardino County fire officials along with other agencies held a news conference Thursday morning, Jan. 28, in Yucaipa, to talk about the preparations underway in the area as the third in a series of storms moves into Southern California. (Photo by Brian Rokos/Staff)

Mandatory evacuations were ordered Thursday, Jan. 28, in the footprints of the El Dorado and Apple fires that burned in San Bernardino and Riverside counties, ahead of a storm that could cause mud and debris flows from mountainsides unable to absorb much precipitation.

The rain and snow from a storm that has already caused flooding in other parts of California were expected to last from about 10 p.m. Thursday to 10 a.m. Friday.

In San Bernardino County, evacuation warnings were upgraded Thursday to northeast Yucaipa, Oak Glen and Mountain Home Village.

The same happened Thursday in these designated zones known to residents of the San Gorgonio Pass in Riverside County:

- Noble A and Noble F (generally in the area of Oak Glen Road and Cherry Valley Boulevard)
- Bench A (generally between Bluff Street and the intersection of Wildwood Canyon Road and Oak Glen Road);
- Mias A and Mias B (generally north of Banning and east of Bluff Street)
- Millard Shooting Ranch.

Residents can type in their address on the RivCoReady website to learn if they are under evacuation orders.

Mudslides are not like fires in that residents can see them coming and time their evacuations, **San Bernardino County Fire** Battalion Chief Grant Malinowski said at a morning news conference. He urged residents to leave immediately.

“If you wait, it’s too late,” Malinowski said.

San Bernardino County and state emergency officials’ choice of a location for the news conference — a parking lot below snowcapped Birch Canyon and next to Birch Creek in Oak Glen — was made with a purpose:

Geologists determined that because of damage to the soil-stabilizing vegetation and its steepness, Birch Canyon was the most likely location in the El Dorado burn scar to suffer erosion, and they pegged the likelihood of that happening at 80%, said Tracey Martinez, a spokeswoman for the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

“We’re very concerned,” said Kylie Reykdal, whose family owns the Oak Glen Steakhouse next to Birch Creek on Oak Glen Road. On top of that, the family lives in the area of Yucaipa under the evacuation order. The county installed K-rails along the creek to divert runoff away from businesses.

Whether it’s rain or snow that falls at certain elevations will go a long way in determining how much damage is done.

This is a relatively warm storm, with rain expected to fall at 6,000 feet. If that happens, **San Bernardino County Fire** Division Chief Shane Glaze said, the rain could dislodge the snow and send it tumbling down the mountain where it would clog creeks, causing flooding.

Alison Law-Mathisen, co-owner of Moms Country Orchards on Oak Glen Road, has lived on the mountain all of her 73 years and cares for her 103-year-old mother. She described photos of her father standing on top of oak trees that barely peeked out above 10 feet of snow during the flood of 1938, and she’s considered something of a local expert on the weather.

“If it rains up high, oh, my fricking God, it’s going to be a mess,” Law-Mathisen said.

Throughout the day Thursday, San Bernardino County sheriff’s deputies and San Gorgonio Search and Rescue team members went door to door alerting residents and business owners of the evacuation order. The teams kept a list of who is not evacuating in case rescues are required.

Cindy Gillilan, whose home backs up to the mountain, has lived in Oak Glen for 42 years. She said she hasn’t decided whether to evacuate, but she did truck in K-rails to protect her property.

“We’ve had flash floods, but we’ve always had trees on the hills (to prevent mudslides),” she said. “Now there’s nothing but debris and dirt. I think it’s going to be a bad one. I hope not.”

Oak Glen resident Dave Garcia told search and rescue volunteers that he did not plan to evacuate ahead of the storm as he is caring for his elderly parents. He said his wheelchair-bound father would be difficult to move.

“We’ll stay here and see how it goes,” Garcia said. Runoff typically flows on either side of the area where he lives on Harris Road, he said. “I’ve been through heavy downpours before but because of the burn area I can see their concern.”

K-rails were placed along Oak Glen Road in an attempt to prevent overflowing creeks from wiping out roads. Although signs say the road was closed, traffic was being allowed to snake through the staggered concrete barriers.

K-rails also were installed along Birch Creek.

A temporary evacuation point for Banning area residents was established at Hemmerling Elementary School, 1928 W. Nicolet St., Banning.

The Red Cross set up an evacuation center for San Bernardino County residents at East Valley High in Redlands, 31000 E. Colton Ave. Because of coronavirus, limited services will be available at the evacuation center. There will be no overnight stays, but volunteers there can help to try to find a hotel for affected residents only.

An information line for displaced San Bernardino County residents only is 909-355-8800.

Large animals being evacuated can be taken to the Devore Animal Shelter, 19777 Shelter Way, San Bernardino.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2021/01/28/evacuation-orders-now-in-place-for-some-residents-near-apple-el-dorado-fire-footprints/>

Vaccination appointments are full but more doses are coming

Dina Colunga, Redlands Community News

Posted: January 28, 2021



Vaccination appointments are hard to come by after San Bernardino County announced people ages 65 and older were eligible to receive their shots.

As of Tuesday, Jan. 26, 83,411 people have received their first doses.

According to the county, a current shortage of vaccines will delay vaccination efforts.

“While we are eager to focus vaccinations on older residents, we simply do not have enough doses to meet the needs of all 65 and over individuals in the county at this time,” said County Department of Health Director Corwin Porter. “We are focusing intensely on obtaining additional supplies and will move forward quickly when we receive them.”

San Bernardino has been among the state’s most adept counties in its distribution of the vaccines, having administered or allocated some 82% of the 90,400 first-round doses it has received. The county has also allocated 88% of the 62,200 second-round doses it has received.

While the county continues to vaccinate its most vulnerable residents, it is also expanding operational and logistical procedures to ensure the process will proceed efficiently once additional vaccines are obtained.

There is a sign-up form on the county’s COVID-19 Vaccination website where residents 65 and over can register to receive vaccination news, including vaccination opportunities. In less than one week, more than 22,000 seniors have signed up for these notifications.

The county will also soon announce community vaccination sites, including “supersite” events, and there are new partnerships secured with private pharmacies to distribute the vaccine, including Walgreens and Costco.

To effectively administer resident vaccinations and accurately transmit the resulting data to the California Department of Public Health database, the county has conducted training and evaluation drills. The evaluation exercise helped prepare more than 70 providers and staff to operate the county’s upcoming community vaccination sites, or Medical Points of Distribution (MPODs). They were designed to evaluate the following:

- The ability of county residents to register for COVID-19 vaccinations.

- The ability of participants to upload vaccination data to the database.
- The ability of participants to implement the mandated 15-minute observation period.
- The ability to integrate a video conferencing translation platform.

“As we continue to expand our vaccination program, our ability to implement it smoothly and efficiently is essential,” said Michael A. Ramirez, supervising emergency services officer for the **San Bernardino County Fire** Office of Emergency Services. “These simulations enable us to determine the effectiveness of our processes and identify any concerns that need to be addressed.”

Porter said the exercises are a critical component to build readiness and capacity to vaccinate more residents.

“It is especially important given we will soon be opening up more MPODs and vaccination supersites in the coming weeks,” he said.

https://www.redlandscommunitynews.com/vaccination-appointments-are-full-but-more-doses-are-coming/article_8b1ce87a-619c-11eb-bbf4-df5fc8849366.html

Wet weather to remain in the Inland Empire — but evacuation order downgraded

Brian Rokos, Alma Fausto, The Press Enterprise

Posted: January 29, 2021 at 8:51AM



Cal Trans employees and the California Highway Patrol stop vehicles at a check point along Highway 138 east of Highway 2 in Phelan for snow chains on Friday morning, Jan. 29, 2021 as a large winter storm moved through the area. Chain restrictions were lifted at 9:30 a.m. on Highway 138 while chains were still mandatory on Highway 2 heading towards Wrightwood and Mt. High ski resort. Mt. High reported 16-20 inches of fresh snow overnight. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

Though authorities in the Inland Empire had braced for the possibility of major damage, the rainfall had fallen short of expectations by Friday morning, Jan. 29.

Authorities had issued a mandatory evacuation for parts of Riverside County for fear of flooding and debris flow especially at wildfire burn scars.

But by Friday morning, authorities were breathing sighs of relief: There were no reports of serious incidents.

“Rainfall rates never reached thresholds, so although there was a decent amount of rainfall, it was not at the intensities that could possibly cause mud and debris flows in the county’s recent burn scars,” said Shane Reichardt, a spokesman for Riverside County’s Emergency Management Department.

A flash-flood watch was still in place for many parts of the county in the Cherry Valley area until 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29, according to the National Weather Service.

Firefighters did respond to a water rescue in Perris.

They helped a driver whose car was stuck in water at San Jacinto Avenue and Murrieta Road, the Cal Fire/Riverside County Fire Department said. Rescuers entered the water and got the driver, who was sitting on the car’s roof, to safety.

Authorities in San Bernardino County had also prepared for major snowfall.

“The snow level actually dropped down to about 4,000 feet very quickly so the amount of rain we were supposed to get on the snow pack never materialized, so that was great news,” said Tracey Martinez, **San Bernardino County’s Fire** Department spokeswoman.

There were no major incidents that she knew of related to the weather.

Drivers were required to use chains in snowy areas such as on Highway 138 near Wrightwood. An evacuation order that had been issued the day before was downgraded Friday morning to an evacuation warning: “The warning is still in effect due to rain predicted for the remainder of the day,” the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department said in a Tweet.

The National Weather Service reported that the Inland Empire had absorbed a half-an-inch to one inch of rain.

The rest of Friday was expected to be cool in Southern California, with highs in the 50s in most coastal and valley areas, and in the low 60s along the coasts. The mountains will have rain and clouds overhead keeping the area in the 30s below 6,500 feet, and in the 20s above 6,500 feet.

The high deserts will peak at 45 to 50 degrees, and the low desert in the low 60s.

<https://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/2021/01/29/wet-weather-to-remain-in-the-inland-empire-but-overnight-downpour-fell-short-of-expectations/>