



NEWS



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Missing 81-year-old Hesperia man fell into Aqueduct and drowned

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News Group

Posted: April 9, 2021



HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) — The body of a missing 81-year-old Hesperia man was pulled from the California Aqueduct on Friday.

At about 12:03 PM, on April 9, 2021, the San Bernardino County Sheriffs Department received a call from a Hesperia resident relating her husband, who suffered from Alzheimer’s and Dementia, was missing.

According to a California Highway Patrol news release, at 12:10 pm the Barstow Dispatch Center received a 911 call from a good Samaritan reporting a man had fell into the California Aqueduct near the intersection of Rancho Road and 11th Avenue in Hesperia.

“A good Samaritan immediately entered the water in attempt to rescue the male but was unsuccessful,” stated the news release.

Personnel from the California Highway Patrol, California Department of Water Resources, San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department, and **San Bernardino County Fire** Department immediately responded to the scene. Upon arrival, an unresponsive male was located in the water.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department’s Dive Team was immediately dispatched into the water. Despite life-saving measures, the male victim, who was later identified as an 81-year-old male resident of Hesperia, was pronounced deceased.

This investigation will be handled to its conclusion by the California Highway Patrol Victorville Area and the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, Coroner Division. Anyone who witnessed or has information regarding this incident is encouraged to contact the CHP Victorville Area office at (760) 241-1186.

The victim’s wife called 911 and reported that her husband who suffered from Alzheimer’s and Dementia, was missing. (Photo: Hugo C. Valdez, VVNG.com)

<https://www.vvng.com/missing-81-year-old-hesperia-man-fell-into-aqueduct-and-drowned/>

Arizona wildfire leaves a trail of destruction: Two hundred people are evacuated, and 12 homes are destroyed

Adam Shrader, Associated Press

Posted: April 9, 2021 at 6:39PM EDT



A dozer is seen creating containment lines in Arizona as a wildfire burned near the community of Dudleyville on Friday. (Associated Press Photo)

A small community in south-central Arizona remained under an evacuation notice Friday after crews and air tankers stopped the growth of a wildfire that burned at least 12 homes, officials said.

The fire burned through thick vegetation at the bottom of the Gila River in Dudleyville, a census-designated place with a population of about 1,000 located about 60 miles north of Tucson.

Officials said the fire continued on Thursday to an estimated 500 acres with containment around 20% of its perimeter as of Friday. The cause of the fire was under investigation.

The county Sheriff's Office said approximately 200 residents were evacuated and that the evacuation notice might be lifted Friday evening or Saturday morning.

Crews on Friday continued to build fire lines to keep the fire from spreading into Dudleyville if winds gust again but utility crews also needed to check for damage to power lines that were deenergized Thursday, said state Department of Forestry and Forest Management spokeswoman Tiffany Davila.

Approximately 40 people spent the night at a shelter at a high school in a nearby community, Red Cross spokesman Mike Sagara said.

Officials told KNXV-TV that residents can seek shelter at Ray High School in Kearny, which is being set up as an emergency shelter location, as well as the Mammoth Community Center.

There was no immediate report of injuries. Approximately 100 people were assigned to fight the fire.

Arizona State Forestry officials said on Twitter that a dozer was being used to assist with the fire.

'Dozers are a valuable asset in wildland firefighting and are instrumental in creating defensive barriers that keep fires from spreading,' according to the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department. The bulldozers create containment lines during fires.

The National Weather Service in Tucson said that modeling shows that 'considerable' smoke from the fire, combined with smoke from a nearby fire near Bylas, will blow near Graham, Eastern Pinal and southern Greenlee County before settling into valleys at night.

The forecast for the next week shows that weather will remain dry and breezy as the region suffers 'extreme to exceptional drought,' according to the National Weather service. The agency noted that one-year statewide precipitation numbers rank the last year as the driest in 126 years.

Arizona had one of its worst wildfire seasons in nearly a decade in 2020 according to state Forestry and Fire Management Department officials.

Officials have warned there is a potential for widespread, statewide fire activity by June.

Among the factors for last year's severe wildfire season was unseasonably warm conditions, a lack of moisture, an overabundance of fuels across Arizona's central region and within the Sonoran Desert, and increased recreational traffic across the state.

A sweeping government study released Tuesday that concludes the situation is worsening as rainstorms grew more erratic and droughts much longer across most of the western United States over the past 50 years as climate change warmed the planet.

The most dramatic changes were recorded in the desert Southwest, where the average dry period between rainstorms grew from about 30 days in the 1970s to 45 days between storms now, said Joel Biederman, a research hydrologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Southwest Watershed Research Center in Tucson, Arizona.

The consequences of the intense dry periods that pummeled areas of the West in recent years were severe - more intense and dangerous wildfires, parched croplands and not enough vegetation to support livestock and wildlife.

The problem appears to be accelerating, with rainstorms becoming increasingly unpredictable, and more areas showing longer intervals between storms since the turn of the century compared to prior decades, the study concludes.

The study comes with almost two-thirds of the contiguous U.S. beset by abnormally dry conditions. Warm temperatures forecast for the next several months could make it the worst spring drought in almost a decade, affecting roughly 74 million people across the U.S., the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said.

Water use cutbacks, damaged wheat crops, more fires and lower reservoirs in California and the Southwest are possible, weather service and agriculture officials have warned. Climate scientists are calling what's happening in the West a continuation of a 'megadrought' that started in 1999.

The new findings were published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9455701/Arizona-wildfire-growth-halted-evacuation-notice-place.html>

New San Bernardino County app can help crack down on illegal fireworks

Lila Seidman, LA Times

Posted: April 9, 2021 at 12:58PM



Debris covers an Ontario neighborhood after a massive blast that was caused by exploding fireworks last month. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times)

San Bernardino County fire officials are spreading the word about a new system for reporting illegal fireworks less than a month after an explosion in Ontario left two dead and caused more than \$3 million in damage.

Residents can anonymously report the use and sales of illegal fireworks through an online portal that can help fire officials better track activities and identify culprits, according to county Fire Marshal Mike Horton.

Reports collected through the app will go into a database that is viewable by fire and law enforcement agencies, he said. Those reports will be mapped and can be used to direct patrols to heavy-use areas.

Owners of homes where fireworks are observed — including in photos uploaded to the app — will be automatically sent a \$1,250 citation through the app, Horton said. Property owners will be on the hook if their tenants are caught using fireworks, he added.

“We need the community to take responsibility and stop using dangerous and illegal fireworks, and report the people that are so we can concentrate our efforts,” Horton said by phone Friday.

The San Bernardino County Fire Department soft-launched the reporting system last year for a month leading up to the Fourth of July, which is peak fireworks season. During that time, the department received about 2,800 reports.

Now the agency has decided to launch the system earlier and keep it in place year-round.

Horton expects the agency to receive upwards of 8,000 to 10,000 reports through the app this year.

The county will also hold 10 fireworks surrender events throughout the year, where residents can unload both legal and illegal fireworks with no questions asked.

“You drive up, fire personnel remove the fireworks from your vehicle, and you drive away,” a release posted to the county fire agency’s Facebook states.

A massive explosion set off by fireworks at an Ontario home in mid-March has refocused regional attention on the scourge of illegal fireworks.

It took several days for bomb technicians to clear the area after the blast, who filled dozens of large bins with the dangerous fireworks before setting them off in controlled burns. Residents in the area were displaced from their homes, which were ruled potentially unsafe in the aftermath.

Cesar Paez-Vasquez, 20, and Alex Paez, 38, are believed to have died in the explosion, according to preliminary identifications by the Ontario Police Department. A GoFundMe launched by Paez's sister links the men as cousins.

"These two young, driven souls had their lives tragically taken due to an explosion in Ontario, CA," Guadalupe Paez wrote in the online fundraiser. "Along with this, their homes are now in ruins leaving their families with a heavy weight on their shoulders not knowing what is next."

An investigation into the cause of the Ontario explosion is ongoing, officials said.

Most illegal fireworks arrive through ports, south of the border or from neighboring states, according to Horton. And while illegal fireworks are common throughout Southern California, Horton said San Bernardino County is uniquely positioned along the Nevada and Arizona borders, where a large influx occurs.

Leading up to the Fourth of July, fire officials set up checkpoints along strategic border entry points, "and it's literally like shooting fish in a barrel," Horton said.

Over the past four years, San Bernardino County Fire investigators confiscated over 121,600 pounds of dangerous and illegal fireworks and issued more than 700 citations, according to the news release.

After 17 years with the county fire agency, Horton said he thinks the problem is growing worse.

The COVID-19 pandemic might have inadvertently compounded the problem.

"People have been on lockdown for so long, they're trying to blow off steam and have some fun and don't realize the impact they have in Southern California," Horton said. "Beyond wildfires, seen by the example in Ontario, people get killed and your neighbors are affected."

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-04-09/san-bernardino-county-expands-illegal-fireworks-reporting-system-after-ontario-explosion>

San Bernardino County Fire launches new reporting system to help combat illegal fireworks

Martin Estacio, Victorville Daily Press

Posted: April 10, 2021 at 1:49PM



San Bernardino County Fire Marshal Mike Horton speaks during a press conference in Fontana Thursday, April 8, 2021. Courtesy of San Bernardino County Fire Department.

The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department has launched a new system that will allow residents to leave anonymous tips when they see the use or sale of illegal fireworks.

On the Illegal Firework Reporting System, a person will be asked to give the location on a map of the illegal activity and provide additional information or photos. Once a complaint is filed, local law enforcement will be notified for a follow-up and investigation.

County Fire Marshal Mike Horton and other officials stressed at a press conference in Fontana on Thursday that the public's help was needed to combat the "growing problem" of illegal fireworks.

"We are doing the best we can with the resources we have, and the rest is up to the community," Horton said.

The announcement of the new reporting system comes less than a month after a massive fireworks explosion in Ontario left two men dead and caused more than \$3 million worth of damage.

The March 16 explosion damaged dozens of homes and covered about 80 homes with debris, the Associated Press reported.

Officials did not give an update on that investigation Thursday.

Horton said illegal fireworks had already been a problem before the Ontario incident. While safe and sane fireworks are allowed in some cities in the county — Adelanto is one — they are prohibited in all unincorporated areas.

San Bernardino County Fire Department investigators seized over 31,000 pounds of illegal fireworks throughout the county in 2018.

In the past four years, Horton said county fire investigators have confiscated more than 121,600 pounds of dangerous and illegal fireworks and issued more than 700 citations.

"Those citations accumulated over \$875,000 in fines but yet it doesn't deter people enough and fireworks still get into our communities," he said. "We spend thousands of hours in planning, implementing operations to combat illegal fireworks sales and use, but if you measure our efforts by the amount of fireworks that you see in our communities on the Fourth of July, you would think that we weren't being very efficient or effective."

In 2020 alone, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department received more than 10,000 calls from residents hearing or seeing fireworks, according to Assistant Sheriff Horace Boatwright.

Horton said the new system will likely be more effective as it will allow a law enforcement official or fire investigator to use a contactless system to fine violators.

A firework explodes in a night sky in the High Desert.

An official will simply have to see the illegal activity and take a picture of the property where it's taking place. The picture will then be uploaded to the new system and the owner will automatically be cited.

"I want to remind you, you are responsible for what occurs on your property," Horton said.

The fire department is also hosting 10 surrender days where people can drop off fireworks with no questions asked.

Two events will take place locally from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on April 14 and 17 at County Fire Station No. 305 on 8331 Caliente Road in Hesperia.

For more information, visit SBCFire.org.

<https://www.vvdailynews.com/story/lifestyle/public-safety/2021/04/10/san-bernardino-county-fire-launches-new-reporting-system-help-combat-illegal-fireworks/7163807002/>

Hiker falls 25 feet, is airlifted from park

Staff Writer, Hi-Desert Star

Posted: April 11, 2021 at 2:37PM



JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK — An injured hiker, Grant Myatt, 25, of Murrieta, was rescued from Joshua Tree National Park by the crew of Air Rescue 6 after falling 25 feet Friday afternoon, April 9.

At about 3:15 p.m., **San Bernardino County Fire** sought Sheriff's Aviation to help with an injured man in Joshua Tree National Park.

Dispatch received a 911 call of a male who fell about 25 feet while climbing a large boulder. The male, Myatt sustained moderate injuries and needed immediate medical attention.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's helicopters 40King6 and Air Rescue 6 responded and were directed to Myatt's location by fire personnel on scene. Due to the mechanism of injury and the remote location, it was determined a hoist was necessary to complete the rescue.

The crew of Air Rescue 6 configured the helicopter for a hoist rescue. Two Sheriff's Air Medics were lowered down from the helicopter to assist with medical care and rescue efforts.

Myatt was secured into a rescue basket and was hoisted up to the helicopter, followed by both medics. Myatt was given medical treatment inside the helicopter and was flown to a local trauma center in stable condition.

<https://hidesertstar.com/news/178966/hiker-falls-25-feet-is-airlifted-from-park/>

Overtaken vehicle crash along Kelbaker Road near National Trails Highway

Zachary Lopez, Zach News

Posted: April 11, 2021



Sources: California Highway Patrol and **San Bernardino County Fire Department** (Information):

Saltus, California: Overtaken vehicle crash has occurred along Kelbaker Road near National Trails Highway.

The call came in at around 3:06 p.m. PT on Sunday, April 11th, 2021.

Medical Engine 44 and MBA 5 are on scene.

A medical helicopter Native 8 was called to the scene.

As of 4:37 p.m. PT, One patient is being transported by Native 8.

As of 4:42 p.m. PT, Native 8 has launched with one patient to Havasu.

Motorists should drive with caution through the area of the crash.

<https://zachnews.net/2021/04/11/breaking-news-saltus-ca-overtaken-vehicle-crash-along-kelbaker-road-near-national-trails-highway/>

Crash involving a pickup truck with trailer and semi truck along westbound Interstate 40 just east of Mountain Springs Road.

Zachary Lopez, Zach News

Posted: April 11, 2021



Sources: California Highway Patrol and **San Bernardino County Fire Department** (Information):

Fenner, California: Crash involving a pickup truck with trailer and semi truck has occurred along westbound Interstate 40 just east of Mountain Springs Road.

Medical Engine 32, Medical Brush Patrol 18 and Battalion Chief 130 from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** as well as Medical Ambulance 31A are on scene.

According to the California Highway Patrol, a white pickup truck hauling a trailer crashed into the back of a semi truck along the right hand side of the interstate near mile marker 116, and that one of the parties is trapped unable to get him out of the vehicle.

Medical helicopters Careflight 6 and Careflight 1 has been called to the scene.

Reports of possibly two people patients in the crash, including one trapped and being worked on by firefighters to extricate from vehicle.

As of 9:05 p.m. PT, Comm-Center tells 40 Incident Command that Careflight 6 has left, and has a 15 minutes ETA. Crews getting prepare for traffic control for landing of helicopter.

As of 9:09 p.m. PT, 40 Incident Command report extrication is coming along, going to get him out in the next 2 minutes.

As of 9:10 p.m. PT, 40 Incident Command tells Comm-Center that Careflight 1 has taken off from the scene with one patient in route to a hospital in Las Vegas, Nevada. Battalion Chief 130 has left the scene.

As of 9:22 p.m. PT, A&G towing service has been called to the scene.

As of 9:24 p.m. PT, 40 Incident Command tells Comm-Center that Careflight 6 has landed at the scene.

As of 9:42 p.m. PT, Careflight 1 has arrived with one patient at Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.

As of 9:54 p.m. PT, 40 Incident Command tells Comm-Center that extrication on trapped person completed.

As of 10:05 p.m. PT, 40 Incident Command tells Comm-Center that Carefight 6 has taken off from the scene with second patient in route to a hospital in Las Vegas, Nevada.

As of 10:25 p.m. PT, 40 Incident Command tells Comm-Center that 40 Incident Command has been terminated and show Medical Engine 32 and Medical Brush Patrol 18 available.

As of 10:52 p.m. PT, Carefight 6 has arrived with second patient at Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Motorists should drive with caution through the area of the crash.

<https://zachnews.net/2021/04/11/breaking-news-fenner-ca-crash-involving-a-pickup-truck-with-trailer-and-semi-truck-along-westbound-interstate-40-just-east-of-mountain-springs-road/>