



NEWS



News Headlines 03/16/2022

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Oro Grande fire grows, Day two marks 500 acres, 10% contained

By Rene Ray De La Cruz, Charlie McGee and Martin Estacio, VICTOR VALLEY DAILY PRESS

Posted: March 14, 2022



A helicopter engaged in battling the Heritage Fire in Oro Grande Monday.

Firefighters on Tuesday marked day two of a battle against a vegetation fire in Oro Grande that had grown to 500 acres by noon, and some residents near the Mojave River had gone nearly 24 hours without power.

The blaze, dubbed the Heritage Fire, began around midday Monday in the 14700 block of Heritage Way, west of National Trails Highway, according to **San Bernardino County Fire**. It had reached close to 350 acres by 10 p.m. Monday night, when firefighters had contained 10% of it.

Containment was at 10% midday Tuesday as the fire grew to 500 acres nearly a day into its burn, said County Fire spokesperson Eric Sherwin.

The county department began as the leader of the response with help from numerous other agencies. Early Tuesday afternoon, SBC Fire tweeted that it had entered a unified command with Victorville Fire Department, which means the two agencies were sharing responsibilities to improve their team effort against the flames.

"While the fire line did cross the city limits overnight, it presents NO threat to the residents of Victorville," the department added in its tweet. The cause of the fire is under investigation, Sherwin said.

Southern California Edison imposed an unplanned blackout due to a need for repairs in the northern area of unincorporated Oro Grande around 1:30 p.m. Monday, according to the utility's website, which listed "fire" as the cause.

Utility workers were on the scene as of 6 p.m. Monday, but Edison hadn't provided any estimate as to when the power outage would end. It said 16 customers were affected Monday, then lowered that count Tuesday to seven — but it still had no estimate for when those people could expect the lights to come back on.

Voluntary evacuations were still in place for about a dozen properties south of Melrose Avenue to Roy Rogers Drive between Bryman Road and the Mojave river bottom.

The fire burned actively with shifting winds through Monday night and into Tuesday, fire behavior that was "atypical for this time of year," Sherwin said.

"Typically up here in the desert, our fires lay down at night," he said. "We didn't see that last night."

Sherwin said firefighters were taking advantage of the lower morning temperatures to improve containment lines before Tuesday afternoon, when winds are expected to pick up.

Winds were predicted to blow 10 to 15 mph with gusts as high as 20 mph. The high temperature was expected to hit 78, according to the National Weather Service.

The Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District issued a smoke advisory for the Helendale/Silver Lakes area and communities nearby, including Barstow.

District officials said sensors "were showing increasing levels of PM10 and PM2.5, the pollutant found in wildfire smoke, in the ambient air."

On Monday, more than 100 personnel, 22 fire engines and two strike teams were fighting the blaze. Multiple engines, equipment and hand crews have responded from several fire departments, including Apple Valley, Chino Valley, Fort Irwin, Loma Linda, Rancho Cucamonga and Rialto.

At Silver Lakes in Helendale, about 4 miles from the fire, helicopters were retrieving water and flying toward the blaze.

Helicopters also drew water from a man-made pond near the river to help extinguish the blaze, a property owner said. The blaze began near a multi-acre solar farm and about 2 miles north of Roy Rogers Ranch. By 4 p.m. Monday, the fire had spread south and was near the ranch.

A property owner who lives near the blaze told the Daily Press on Monday he did not know what caused the fire.

"There's a lot of mischievous kids around here that cut chain link fences, trespass and steal property," the owner said. "We also have people growing cannabis illegally."

<https://www.vdailypress.com/story/news/2022/03/14/oro-grande-fire-monday-buildings-threatened-no-evacuation-orders/7042686001/>

Large Commercial Occupancy Destroyed in San Bernardino Fire

By Mike McClintock, Battalion Chief, CITY NEWS GROUP

Posted: March 15, 2022



Fire crews working on the fire in San Bernardino, from the point of view of a helicopter over the scene.

On Sunday, March 13, 2022, **San Bernardino County Fire** crews were dispatched to a reported commercial fire near University & the 215 Freeway, San Bernardino. Crews quickly arrived to find heavy smoke showing from a large two-story commercial occupancy.

Firefighters initiated an offensive fire attack, finding heavy smoke inside the 28,000 square foot building. The building previously burned in 2021, sustaining damage to a portion of the building. Despite the fire damage and being vacant, firefighters pushed inside to complete a search for any potential victims. The fire continued to build and a second alarm was quickly struck. As interior conditions deteriorated, an operational retreat was declared bringing firefighters outside.

Firefighters transitioned to a defensive posture, utilizing ladder pipes and master streams to suppress the fire. The fire was ultimately knocked down in approximately 90 minutes. Crews remained on-scene for multiple hours working on fire suppression and overhaul. No victims were found inside the structure and no injuries were reported to civilians. One firefighter received minor injuries. The fire remains under investigation by SBCoFD Fire Investigators.

San Bernardino County Fire responded with Nine Engines, three Truck Companies, three Chief Officers, an Air/Light Unit, Ambulance, two Investigators, and a Heavy Equipment team. Rialto Fire assisted with an Engine.

<https://www.citynewsgroup.com/articles/large-commercial-occupancy-destroyed#Gallery>

Smoke from Heritage Fire impacting Helendale, Barstow area communities

By Staff Writer, VICTOR VALLEY NEWS GROUP

Posted: March 15, 2022



BARSTOW, Calif. (VVNG.com) — The Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) is advising of unhealthy air quality Tuesday, March 15, 2022, and potentially continuing into the evening due to wildfire smoke impacts. This advisory is in effect for Helendale/Silver Lakes and communities to the immediate north including Barstow and the surrounding area.

MDAQMD officials said smoke is blowing northeast from the Heritage fire, which ignited on Monday, March 14 north of Oro Grande near National Trails Highway. According to the agency, smoke from the incident settled overnight in communities to the north. “Low-cost particulate sensors at ground-level were showing increasing levels of PM10 and PM2.5, the pollutant found in wildfire smoke, in the ambient air.”

Levels of PM2.5 may continue to increase depending on fire containment and shifting winds. Increasing levels of smoke can affect everyone, but it’s particularly unhealthy for those with heart and respiratory illnesses, children, seniors and active adults.

In any area impacted by poor air quality including smoke:

- everyone should consider avoiding any vigorous outdoor or indoor exertion;
- people with respiratory or heart disease, older adults, and children should consider remaining indoors;
- keep windows and doors closed;
- run your air conditioner if you have one – recirculation function is ideal;
- avoid using a swamp cooler or whole-house fan to prevent bringing outdoor pollutants inside.

LATEST UPDATE ON #HERITAGEFIRE:

As of 11:40 am Tuesday morning, the latest mapping flight shows the fire is at 500 acres. Containment increased proportionally and remains at 10%.

On Tuesday morning the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department said the fire burned actively well past midnight with numerous wind shifts until the pre-dawn hours before finally settling down. The active burning period saw continued forward progress along with heavy fuels burning within the interior all the way back toward the heel of the incident.

Firefighters are being reinforced with new personnel this morning. Three strike teams of engines, one dozer, and a hand crew from County Fire will be supported by additional resources from CalFire and Victorville Fire Department.

Objectives today include the extension and improvement of existing containment lines and assessing for any structure damage or loss. Smoke will continue to be visible throughout the high desert with a possible increase in fire activity as the day continues to warm. An evacuation warning remains in place for residences from Melrose Avenue south to Roy Rogers Drive and between Bryman Road and the Mojave river bottom. Sporadic power outages exist due to damage to numerous utility poles and power lines.

No injuries to civilians or firefighters have been reported. The cause of the fire remains under investigation by County Fire’s Office of the Fire Marshal.

<https://www.vvng.com/smoke-from-heritage-fire-impacting-helendale-barstow-area-communities/>

Mariposa Road shut down after vehicle runs off 15 freeway in Victorville

By Gabriel Espinoza, VICTOR VALLEY NEWS GROUP

Posted: March 15, 2022



VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) — **San Bernardino County Fire** and the Victorville Police Department responded to a traffic collision that resulted in Mariposa Road being shut down. The crash was reported at 6:08 AM on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, and involved a gray 2021 Toyota Camry with a solo occupant inside.

According to the California Highway Patrol logs, the Camry was traveling northbound on the 15 freeway between Nisqualli Road and Palmdale Road, when for reasons still under investigation, the vehicle ran off the roadway. Once the vehicle left the freeway, it collided with a metal utility pole and continued through the freeway fencing, eventually stopping and blocking a southbound lane on Mariposa Road.

Life-saving measures were performed on the driver of the Camry, and the driver was taken by AMR ambulance to a local hospital in grave condition. Mariposa Road was shut down in both directions as authorities investigated.

Anyone with information regarding the crash may contact the local CHP Department.

<https://www.vvng.com/mariposa-road-shut-down-after-vehicle-runs-off-15-freeway-in-victorville/>

Heritage Fire Burns Hundreds Of Acres North Of Victorville

By CBSLA Staff, CBSLOCAL.COM

Posted: March 15, 2022



VICTORVILLE (CBSLA) – A brush fire broke out in the Oro Grande community of San Bernardino County Monday afternoon, just north of Victorville in the Mojave Desert.

The Heritage Fire was reported at about 1 p.m. in the 14700 block of Heritage Way, near the National Trails Highway, and quickly spread. The fire burned well into the night buoyed by “numerous wind shifts,” the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department reported. A chopper with the Orange County Fire Authority’s Fire Integrated Realtime Intelligence System (FIRIS) flew over the blaze Monday night and mapped it at 454 acres. The SBCFD said the fire was 10% contained.

An evacuation warning was in place from residents from Melrose Avenue south to Roy Rogers Drive, and between Bryman Road and the Mojave River bottom. Crews Tuesday were hoping to extend containment lines. It’s unclear if any structures have been destroyed. The fire department noted that smoke from the blaze would be visible throughout the High Desert, with the possibility that the fire activity could continue to grow as the day gets warmer.

CAL Fire and the Victorville Fire Department were assisting SBCFD in the air and ground attack.

<https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2022/03/15/heritage-fire-burns-hundreds-of-acres-north-of-victorville/>