

Appendix H News and Media Coverage

- H.1. International
- H.2. National
- H.3. California

H.1.International

The October 2007 Southern California Fire Siege was covered by news and media sources throughout the world. Copies of the front pages of many of these papers can be found in the Newseum archives at:

http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/default_archive.asp?fpArchive=102407

<http://www.cbc.ca/photogallery/world/768/>

500,000 ordered to flee California's 'perfect firestorm'

Homes 'being destroyed as we speak': Schwarzenegger

Last Updated: Tuesday, October 23, 2007 | 3:34 PM ET

[CBC News](#)

Howling winds and extreme drought fuelled uncontrollable wildfires across Southern California for the third day in a row Tuesday, as the blazes engulfed hundreds of homes in what one fire official called the "perfect firestorm."

About 750 homes across the state have been reduced to ashes as the relentless Santa Ana desert winds continue to fan the 16 major blazes, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger told reporters Tuesday afternoon.

The fires are being blamed for at least one death in the hardest hit area of San Diego County, while at least 18 firefighters have been injured in their attempts to keep evacuation paths clear, Schwarzenegger told reporters at Lake Arrowhead, where officials are co-ordinating the massive fire response teams.

"There are homes being destroyed as we speak," Schwarzenegger said.

Some 25 other people were reported injured since the fires began Sunday, according to the Associated Press.

As many as 500,000 people in San Diego County have been told to leave their homes, the Los Angeles Times reported.

The Associated Press reported Tuesday morning that 300,000 people had left their homes.

Firefighters feared hotter temperatures and high winds Tuesday would make it even harder to fight the fires, though forecasters said relief could come Wednesday as the Santa Ana winds are expected to diminish.

Early Tuesday, U.S. President George W. Bush declared a federal emergency for seven California counties, meaning federal disaster relief will be available to the area.

"All of us across this nation are concerned for the families who have lost their homes and the many families who have been evacuated from their homes," he said during a speech at the National Defence University in Washington, D.C. "We send the help of the federal government."



High winds drive hot embers smouldering in the Malibu Hills on Monday in California. A wildfire driven by powerful Santa Ana winds has forced the evacuation of hundreds of homes.

(Damian Dovarganes/Associated Press)

The Defence Department has agreed to send six Air Force and Air National Guard water- or retardant-dropping planes Tuesday to help the firefighting effort at Schwarzenegger's request.

White House press secretary Dana Perino said the federal government is applying lessons learned from a disaster that deeply damaged Bush's presidency — Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast in 2005 — to do a better job now.

'Most rapid fire spread that I've seen'

Evacuations were announced in one community after another as firefighters found themselves overwhelmed as smaller blazes merged into larger ones.

Gale-force Santa Ana winds, some gusting to 110 km/h, are fuelling the flames. The desert winds, which sweep through Southern California's canyons in the fall and winter, are stronger than normal and turning already parched scrubland into tinder.

"This is some of the most rapid fire spread that I've seen in my career," Capt. Don Camp with California's Department of Forestry and Fire Protection told CBC Newsworld on the telephone from San Diego.

"The winds, the low humidity and the unseasonably warm temperatures for this time of year have all created a perfect firestorm," he added.

Father died trying to save home

Canadian Dr. Jay Doucet, who is working at University of California's San Diego Medical Center where the most serious victims have been admitted, said a father died while working with his son to defend their house against the encroaching flames.

Four firefighters tried to rescue the two, but became trapped and were treated for serious burns, alongside the son, he said.

The majority of the hospital's patients, about 12 of the 19, have been undocumented aliens trying to cross over the nearby Mexican border, he said.

"I think they were trying to escape without notice underneath the smoke. Unfortunately, in every case, the fire caught up with them," said Doucet.

'It was like Armageddon'



This image of the area around Los Angeles captured by the MODIS on the Aqua satellite on Oct. 21, shows smoke pouring from several large blazes northwest of Los Angeles. (MODIS)

The Southern California fires have been compared to ones that tore through many of the same areas in the fall of 2003, killing 22 people and destroying 3,640 homes.

By midday Tuesday, about 99,500 hectares were ablaze. Fires were spreading so quickly some residents were evacuated from buildings twice — first from their home and then from a friend's place or shelter.

Authorities in San Diego County, the hardest-hit area, said they lost track of how many buildings were destroyed.

"It was nuclear winter. It was like Armageddon. It looked like the end of the world," Mitch Mendler, a San Diego firefighter, said as he and his crew stopped at a shopping centre parking lot to refill their water truck from a hydrant.

Asked how many homes had burned, he said, "I lost count."

In the city of San Diego, Mayor Jerry Sanders urged thousands of people Tuesday to leave their homes in a voluntary evacuation.

He also asked residents to stay off the roads to allow emergency vehicles through and put out a request for donations of food and bedding.

Gourmet meals, massages for evacuees

One of the largest gatherings of evacuees in San Diego County was at Qualcomm Stadium, home to the NFL's San Diego Chargers, late Monday.

Up to 10,000 evacuees were enjoying gourmet buffets and massages at the stadium, though still anxiously watching television for news on their neighbourhoods.

After Schwarzenegger toured the stadium Monday night, he said, "The people are happy. They have everything here."

That was in marked difference to New Orleans evacuees who waded through floodwaters to arrive at the Louisiana Superdome in 2005, then endured lack of food, sanitation or law enforcement.

With files from the Associated Press

- This story is now closed to commenting.

Bush flies over California fires

Fire devastation US President George W Bush has flown over the area devastated by the California wildfires to see the extent of the damage for himself.

After his tour with California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, he said the federal government would provide every help to victims of the infernos.

The air tour came as the death toll rose to 14, with four bodies found near the Mexican border east of San Diego.

Meanwhile, fire crews began to prevail after winds fanning the flames lulled.

Mr Bush praised the efforts of the emergency services following his bird's eye view of the seven-county disaster zone in southern California.

'Heartbreaking'

Touching down in Escondido, California, Mr Bush assured victims of the infernos: "We're not going to forget you in Washington DC.

"We want the people to know there's a better day ahead. Your life may look dismal today, but tomorrow life's going to be better. And to the extent that the federal government can help you we will do so."

TACKLING THE FLAMES

- 8,000 firefighters - including a number of prison teams
- 1,500 national guards
- 50 helicopters
- 55 firefighting planes *Source: Office of Emergency Services*

The fires, which broke out last weekend, have forced one million people from their homes in the biggest US evacuation since Hurricane Katrina two years ago.

Mr Bush was heavily criticised for the federal government's sluggish response to that disaster and analysts say he is keen to avoid repeating the mistake.

The US president heaped praise on Mr Schwarzenegger and made an apparent dig at the authorities in Louisiana, which bore the brunt of Katrina.

"There is no hill he's not willing to charge, no problem he's not willing to solve," Mr Bush said of the governor, adding: "It makes a significant difference when you've got someone in the statehouse willing to take the lead."

Mr Schwarzenegger said their tour had been "heartbreaking" and thanked Mr Bush for his prompt signing of a disaster declaration, which will free federal funds to help victims.

The Republican governor said: "I want to say thank you to the president for his tremendous support and immediate help in this disaster and for taking the time to come and see what the people of our state are going through."

Arson?

On Thursday afternoon, the charred bodies of three men and one woman were found in the Barret Junction area east of San Diego, near the US-Mexican border.

A US Border Patrol spokesman said they could be illegal immigrants.

San Diego police said two bodies had been found in the burned ruins of a house in Poway.

One death directly linked to the fires was reported on Sunday and authorities say several others could have died during evacuations.

Meanwhile, police have offered a \$70,000 (£34,000) reward and called in FBI investigators to capture an alleged arsonist they believe started one of the larger fires.

Orange County officials are convinced the Santiago Canyon blaze, which broke out on Sunday, was no accident.

Around 15 blazes remain untamed but fire chiefs said they had "turned the corner".

Maurice Luque, spokesman for the San Diego Fire Rescue Department, told the BBC: "There's no Santa Ana winds. The weather has turned a little more calm, the humidity is up, the temperatures are down a little bit in some areas."

The firestorm has ravaged at least 704 sq miles (1,825 sq km) of land from Santa Barbara down to the Mexican border.

More than 1,600 homes have been incinerated and over \$1bn (£488m) of material damage caused by the wall of fire.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/7062621.stm>

Published: 2007/10/26 00:27:47 GMT

© BBC MMX

guardian.co.uk

11.15am BST

Death toll grows in California wildfires

Fred Attewill and agencies

guardian.co.uk, Friday 26 October 2007 11.47 BST

[A larger](#) | [smaller](#)

The charred remains of six people have been discovered in California as thousands of evacuees start returning home after what have been described as the most devastating wildfires in the state's history.

Four of the victims, believed to be three men and one woman, were found yesterday afternoon in scorched woodland along the Mexican border south-east of San Diego. The area is near a key corridor for illegal immigrants coming from Mexico.

Two more bodies, a man and a woman, were uncovered in the rubble of a burned house in the town of Escondido in San Diego county. It was reported they had been urged to evacuate but refused.

The discoveries brought the official death toll to seven after a 52-year-old man was killed on Sunday. A suspected arsonist, Russell Lane Daves, 27, was shot dead by police on Tuesday near San Bernardino university.

Firefighters have taken advantage of much gentler winds and lower temperatures to launch an aerial bombardment of some of the largest blazes still burning, although some fires in San Diego county and Lake Arrowhead are still only 30% contained.

The fires have destroyed 1,500 homes, displaced half a million people and caused damage worth an estimated \$1bn. Five people in San Diego, San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties have been arrested on suspicion of arson, although the police said none had been linked to any of the major fires.

Across many affected areas, mandatory evacuation orders were lifted yesterday and residents returned to a blackened landscape.

In San Diego county, sheriff Bill Kolender said several confrontations had arisen between police trying to manage the return and residents trying to get back to their neighbourhoods as soon as possible.

"In some areas, particularly Ramona, some of the residents have become quite angry, and they have driven a car into one of our law enforcement vehicles," he said at a news conference.

The US president, George Bush, yesterday visited areas devastated by the fires, promising swift and generous government aid to those who lost their homes and livelihoods to the flames.

The four-hour tour began with a helicopter trip over charred hills and included a brief visit to a gutted home in the San Diego neighbourhood of Rancho Bernardo. It was intended to inoculate the administration from a repeat of the criticism that followed Hurricane Katrina.

"I want to let people know out here in southern California that many across our nation have been moved by the plight of citizens who have lost their homes, lost their possessions, and particularly those who have lost their life," Mr Bush said. "I've come to make sure that the federal government provides help for people here at the local level."

His effort to demonstrate a prompt and caring response to the disaster was backed up by the state's governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, who said the White House had offered support before he had a chance to ask for it. "I call this quick action - quicker than I expected, I can tell you that," Mr Schwarzenegger told reporters.

Yesterday's visit was choreographed between the White House and the governor to ensure Mr Bush conveyed an impression of concern, without being accused of hindering the relief effort with a presidential visit.

The administration had declared the fires a major disaster on Wednesday, a step which allows federal relief agencies to funnel more assistance.

However, Mr Bush faced accusations of trying to score political points from the misery of others, and Democratic leaders said the Iraq war had drained resources which could have gone towards preventing and fighting fires.

"We'll be polite, but frankly that's not a solution," California's Democratic lieutenant governor, John Garamendi, said on the eve of the presidential visit. "How about sending the national guard back from Iraq?"

The fires also disrupted the lives of those ordinarily insulated from natural disaster by their wealth and connections. Many Hollywood celebrities maintain second homes in the Malibu area. Others frequent its sushi bars and even rehab clinics such as Promises, where Britney Spears and Lindsey Lohan were treated and which was evacuated.

Olivia Newton-John, who starred opposite John Travolta in the film Grease, was among the first to be evacuated at the weekend as hotels in beachfront towns filled up with well-heeled refugees from the flames. Cher and Mel Gibson also had to flee to safety.

Several of the evacuees have moved into the notorious celebrity hangout Chateau Marmont. For those unable to pay for such exclusive refuges, the billionaire record producer David Geffen invited firefighters and volunteer workers yesterday to stay for free in his recently renovated Malibu hotel.



from **\$678** * R/T

AUSTRALIA
Book Now and get 3 bonus cities from \$99!
Valid for departures from L.A. or S.F.
[Search Fares](#)

Last Day!

oneworld

QANTAS

*Taxes, fees & restrictions apply

THE INDEPENDENT

October 28, 2007

Forest fires: California in flames

Up to a million people have been displaced, and several killed, but US authorities have acted swiftly to counter catastrophe. Is the quick response down to the lessons of Hurricane Katrina or because of the Golden State's profile? Andrew Gumbel reports

Tim Pershing and Franceska Shifrin weren't thinking too much about fire prevention and evacuation last Sunday when they invited friends to their mountain home in Topanga Canyon, half-way between Los Angeles and Malibu. They were thinking about carving pumpkins for Halloween, making soup and popping chickens into the oven.

Even as reality crept up on them - the smoke and ash pouring out towards the Pacific Ocean just two canyons to the north, the increasingly ominous fire warnings on the radio and the internet, the police checkpoints set up at both ends of Topanga Canyon Boulevard turning away non-residents - they decided to keep the party going.

Pershing, a photographic artist, somehow managed to carve a pumpkin face and hand out beers even as he packed up boxes of his most precious pictures. Shifrin, an accomplished painter who has lived in these mountains all her life, loaded canvases into the back of her car between ladling out bowls of soup and chatting, seemingly without a care in the world.

Then a police car started circulating with a bullhorn, advising residents to pack up and leave. It wasn't a mandatory evacuation order, just a voluntary one. Slowly, the party guests began to disperse, but the hosts remained remarkably cool. In this part of the world, fire is just part of life, the risk of conflagration the price to be paid for living in a little piece of paradise.

Pershing and Shifrin never did leave. Their children wanted to stay put, a local fire captain said they had nothing to worry about that first night, and by sheer luck the wind changed direction soon enough to spare the entire canyon.

Not so lucky was Katherine Johnson, who lives in the beachside community of Venice but recently bought herself a house near Lake Arrowhead in the San Bernardino mountains, two hours' drive east of Los Angeles. In stark contrast to Malibu, a retreat for the rich and pampered who can afford to see their second home go up in smoke and rebuild in the secure knowledge that house prices will still continue to rise, the Lake Arrowhead area is one of the few affordable beautiful places in southern California. It attracts hippies, artists and people much like Johnson, a free-spirited healthcare worker who has a side business performing energetic readings with a bio-feedback machine. She spent the past few months redecorating, buying new furniture and building a new wooden deck from which to enjoy the high-altitude forest.

When the fires first hit the Lake Arrowhead area early last week, Johnson was in New York and unable to do anything to protect her house other than call a friend and beg him to retrieve as much as he could. As of yesterday, with the so-called Slide fire still burning, she didn't know for sure if she still had a house, but the signs were not good. Her street

in Running Springs was listed as one of the most severely damaged. Some 300 houses in the area were reduced to smouldering wrecks - the densest incidence of fire damage anywhere in southern California.

It was the second time in four years that Running Springs had taken a big hit - it was one of the worst-afflicted areas the last time fires fanned by the desert Santa Ana winds broke out in southern California in October. And the reasons aren't hard to fathom. In 2003, as now, the region had endured a dry year. Then, as now, the forests were loaded with combustible materials - brush and fallen bark and leaves on the ground, the trees themselves and of course wooden decks and roofs much like Johnson's.

Much of the Californian media coverage of the fires has focused on finding an easy culprit for the disaster, which will probably end up destroying around 1,800 homes, ravaging 700 square miles and costing well north of \$1bn (£470m). That's nowhere near the sort of damage wreaked two years ago by Hurricane Katrina - which all but destroyed an entire city - but hasn't stopped the comparisons, and similar political sniping about the handling of the disaster.

A fire chief in suburban Orange County, south of Los Angeles, has publicly blamed Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger for failing to provide enough firefighting resources. Other civic leaders have blamed the fires on arsonists - who were indeed responsible for sparking many of the 18 major fires - and offered rewards of up to \$250,000 for information leading to their capture. California's lively environmental movement, meanwhile, has sought to blame global warming, seeing a pattern of worsening disasters that encompasses Katrina and can somehow be laid at President Bush's door.

What they are all overlooking is that fire is part of the natural cycle in southern California and that human development has exacerbated its severity.

"Drought, flood, fire and earthquake - those are the four seasons in California," said Bill Patzert, a climatologist with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the LA suburb of Pasadena. "Here we have 40 million people living in a semi-arid environment, in a rain year [from July 2006 to June 2007] when the rainfall in southern California was between three and five inches. Everybody should have seen this coming 18 months ago."

In a region starved of rainwater, the fires were inevitable. The winds knocked down two power lines in Malibu to get the fire and smoke started there on Sunday. A variety of other instigators - arsonists, careless construction workers wielding a welding torch, and others - touched off the fires elsewhere in LA county and the worst of them, in the northeastern suburbs of San Diego. But as long as the winds were howling and embers were flying uncontrollably into suburban neighbourhoods, there was nothing firefighters could do other than stay ahead of the flames and warn people to get out. They put out warnings to more than 300,000 households, triggering an evacuation of anywhere from half a million to a million people.

The response was actually a marked improvement on four years ago, when 2,400 houses burned and 23 people died in a significantly smaller number of fires. This time, the death toll has yet to reach 10, although more bodies may be found as rescue workers go from house to house.

The fires hit two Californias. The canyon dwellers of Topanga and Malibu have lived with the problem for decades and are more or less resigned to it. The hippies of Lake Arrowhead see fire risk as the reason they can afford to live there at all. But residents of the new suburban neighbourhoods in Orange and San Diego counties still don't appear to have come to terms with their decision to live on the edge of highly combustible chaparral in the foothills of national forests and mountains.

Blaming Arnold Schwarzenegger - or, worse, accusing firefighters, as many did last week, of pouring all their resources into rich communities like Malibu and letting others burn - is just a way of denying the consequences of their own decisions. The same homeowners who build in fire areas have also voted consistently against paying for better local fire services. San Diego, for instance, doesn't have a county fire service at all, forcing it to rely on reinforcements from the rest of the state when crisis hits.

One would think last week's fires would trigger an impassioned debate about housing permits and where to put all the people pouring into California each year. Yet the signs are that business will continue as usual.

State and national leaders have been so concerned not to avoid a repeat of the mistakes made in the aftermath of Katrina that Californians can expect lavish compensation for any damage and carte blanche to repeat many of the same building mistakes they made last time.

On Friday, the head of the San Diego county government, Ron Roberts, proudly announced that he had received the

first rebuilding permit. "This is great news," he said. "We haven't issued the permit yet, but we're going to do it as quickly as possible."

In other words, all those scorched neighbourhoods will be simply be rebuilt. Wait a few years, and chances are very good they will just burn all over again.

Independent Print Limited

 2007 Independent News and Media. Permission granted for up to 5 copies. All rights reserved.
You may forward this article or get additional permissions by typing http://license.icopyright.net/3.7463?icx_id=news/world/americas/forest-fires-california-in-flames-398102.html?service=PrintICopyright into any web browser. Independent Print Limited and The Independent logos are registered trademarks of Independent Print Limited . The iCopyright logo is a registered trademark of iCopyright, Inc.

H.2. National

The October 2007 Southern California Fire Siege was considered a major national event and covered by news and media sources throughout the country. Only a few are included here. Links to others can be found in references section in the back of the main document.

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2007/news/wildfires/index.html>

October 24, 2007

Why Santa Ana Winds Are Dry and Dangerous

By [KENNETH CHANG](#)

Those often furious, sometimes deadly Santa Ana winds contributing to the Southern California wildfires, blowing east-to-west across that part of the state, are a phenomenon of geography as well as meteorology.

When a bubble of high-pressure air moves south into Nevada, Utah and Arizona, it pushes air up and over the San Gabriel Mountains. The air rolls down the west side of the mountains, accelerating through canyons into California. The air, compressed by the winds, heats up.

This week, a particularly strong high-pressure system has generated particularly strong hot, dry winds. "This has been quite an extreme Santa Ana event," said Mark Jackson, meteorologist in charge of the Los Angeles Forecast Office of the [National Weather Service](#).

Santa Anas, which occur most often in the fall, typically gust up to 35 to 45 miles per hour and warm the air by about 10 degrees.

On Sunday, Mr. Jackson said, numerous gusts of more than 80 m.p.h. were recorded, including a gust of 111 m.p.h. at a coastal spot north of Los Angeles. Temperatures have reached the 90s, about 20 degrees above normal. The air has also been very dry, with the relative humidity dropping below 10 percent in places.

The Santa Anas slowed today and are forecast to slow further and perhaps stall on Wednesday. By the end of the week, winds are expected to reverse direction, bringing moister air off the Pacific Ocean and dampening the forest fires. But until the moisture returns, weaker, erratic winds could pose trouble for the firefighters. "It may take these fires in a whole different direction," Mr. Jackson said.

Even if the winds die, he said, "we're at record dry conditions, and if you don't have moisture in the air, it's critical fire conditions."

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)

Fabled Santa Ana Winds Fuel Wildfires in California

by JOHN NIELSEN

October 24, 2007

text size A A A

The massive wildfires in Southern California have been fanned by notoriously hot, dry winds that move through the region every fall and winter. Some call them the Santa Anas. Others call them the Devil's Breath. Since Sunday they have been blowing at near record speeds.

These winds begin when masses of cold air form over high desert plateaus in Utah and Nevada. The winds that spin off of these high pressure systems grow warmer, dryer and stronger as they spill south and west, down through mountain canyons towards the ocean.

When the winds are moderate, they blow air pollution out to sea and make life in Southern California more pleasant. But last week, after a gigantic mass of air formed over the high plateaus, the Santa Ana winds turned into monsters.

Mike Davis, a historian from the University of California, Irvine, says the high speed winds, rushing into canyons, produced "literally a blast furnace effect at the other end of the canyon."

That is what happened on Sunday, he says, when fires burned all the way to the beach.

Hurricane-Force Winds

Malibu is one of several towns and cities ravaged by the wildfires. Those fires have been fanned by a set of Santa Ana winds that is among the most ferocious since the government started keeping records in the 1930s.

"It's probably up there in the top five, as far as wind speeds go," says Eric Boldt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

He says one monitoring point, just above the Point Mugu Air Station, measured winds traveling 111 mph. Winds at another point reached 108 mph. That is the speed of winds in a Category 2 hurricane.

"Not every place felt that, obviously, but many areas did see winds of 40 to 60 mph, and that's like a tropical storm or Category 1 hurricane," Boldt said.

Worst May Be Over

Weather experts say they do not know exactly why the recent spate of Santa Ana winds has been so hellish, nor do they know whether more freakish winds and fires will arrive during the coming winter.

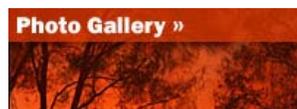
But Robert Fovell, an atmospheric scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles, says he has a hunch that the worst is over.

"As we go on through the winter, we will still have Santa Anas, but they are typically not as hot and not as dry," he says. "As we go through the winter, we have rain, and rain decreases the plant moisture, so it decreases the fire danger."

Fovell says the biggest question now is when the next big rains will come, if they come at all. For more than a year, the region has been mired in a severe drought.

High-Tech Drone Joins Battle Against Calif. Flames

by ERIC WEINER





California Fires Rout Almost 1 Million People, Kill 5 (Update7)

Share | Email | Print | A A A

By Demian McLean and Peter J. Brennan



Oct. 24 (Bloomberg) -- Weakening winds aided Southern California firefighters as they battled blazes that may top \$1 billion in damages and forced almost 1 million people from their homes, the biggest evacuation in California's history.

Hot, dry winds that have fanned flames in the past three days are easing and humidity increased as of 5:49 p.m. local time today, according to the [National Weather Service](#). While winds may fall and humidity rises until Friday, winds may still shift unexpectedly near the coast, the Weather Service said.

"Fire crews need to stay alert to possible wind reversals and erratic conditions," the Weather Service said.

Many planes carrying flame retardant were grounded by the winds, which sometimes reached hurricane strength.

Californian officials reduced the number of homes threatened to 25,925 today from 68,500 yesterday, as fires in some areas such as the San Fernando Valley north of Los Angeles are under better control.

In hills and canyons from Santa Barbara to San Diego, about 8,000 firefighters struggled against more than a dozen wildfires that had scorched at least 645 square miles (1,670 square kilometers), an area twice the size of New York City, in the past four days. Five people had died and 2,327 structures had been destroyed or damaged as of earlier today.

"It's not just the number of homes lost, it's the response costs, the economic factors," [Henry Renteria](#), director of California's Office of Emergency Services, said in Sacramento. "We are starting to get some reports of some agriculture damage, and that's going to be huge to that industry."

Bush Declaration

President [George W. Bush](#) declared a "major disaster" in the region today, offering federal aid to residents who have lost homes.

"I want the people of Southern California to know that Americans all across this land care deeply about them," said Bush, who will visit the state tomorrow. "They can rest assured that the federal government will do everything we can to help put out these fires."

The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency is aiming to add 1,900 firefighters by tonight, spokesman [Aaron Walker](#) said.

San Diego was "seconds" away from a massive power outage, said Rachel Laing, a spokeswoman with San Diego Gas & Electric. California electricity officials put a Southwest Power Link back in service this afternoon, about the time that three high-voltage lines connecting San Diego to the north were knocked out of service.

Arson Possible

The causes of the fires haven't been determined, and arson is a possibility, said Jay Alan, a spokesman for the

state's emergency response office.

The four major fires that have burned the most homes are far from being controlled, according to the state's Web site. In San Diego County, there is only 10 percent containment at the Harris Fire, which has burned 73,000 acres and 200 homes, and the Witch Fire that burned 196,420 acres and 645 homes. The Rice fire, which burned 7,500 acres and destroyed 206 homes, is 15 percent contained.

A fire called Slide in the mountainous community of Green Valley north of Los Angeles burned 300 homes and has zero containment, the state said.

``The entire community of Green Valley was surrounded by the fire and evacuated," according to [the state's Web site](#).

Largest Evacuation

Since the latest wildfires broke out Oct. 21, about 321,000 residents have been ordered to leave their homes, and an additional 500,000 people have left voluntarily, making it the largest evacuation in California's history, the governor's office and state emergency-services officials said.

About 2,576 homes have been destroyed or damaged according to a [state emergency Web site](#). About 184 businesses were destroyed or damaged, while 2,055 are threatened, the Web site said.

Damage in San Diego County alone has reached \$1 billion, local emergency officials said, the Associated Press reported.

The most expensive wildfire in U.S. history occurred in the hills above Oakland and Berkeley, California, in 1991, according to Insurance Information Institute data. That fire caused \$1.7 billion in insured losses, or \$2.52 billion in today's dollars.

Insurance Impact

Allstate Corp., the largest publicly traded U.S. home insurer, may post fourth-quarter profit 8.6 percent below analysts' estimates because of the California wildfires, according to Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. analyst [Jay Gelb](#). The wildfires will cut income for the insurer about 15 cents a share if industry losses reach \$1 billion, Gelb said in a note to investors today.

Companies with business in the area such as Pfizer Inc., the world's biggest drugmaker, closed their San Diego operations during the fires. Pfizer shut its 33.5 acre research center in La Jolla, saying an estimated half of its 1,000 scientists and workers live in areas affected by the fires.

There are 22,000 people in shelters across the region, thousands of them in San Diego's Qualcomm Stadium. About 2,000 people today are at an evacuation center at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

Ted Morrow of Rancho Bernardo constantly checked lists of destroyed homes printed in the San Diego Union-Tribune.

``This is just a few blocks away from me," Morrow said as he ran his finger across a group of addresses. ``The hardest part has been not knowing whether you have anything to go back to."

To contact the reporters on this story: [Peter J. Brennan](#) in Los Angeles at pbrennan3@bloomberg.net; [Demian McLean](#) in Washington at dmclean8@bloomberg.net.

Last Updated: October 24, 2007 21:56 EDT



advertisement

Help people in need.

Donate your car, boat or RV

Free Towing ■ Tax Deductible

Call Toll-Free

1-877-225-9384



msnbc.com

Poor air from wildfires a health threat

Dust and soot-laden air making it difficult for many to breathe

The Associated Press

updated 7:22 a.m. PT,Sat., Oct. 27, 2007

SAN DIEGO - Even as many of the wildfires in flame-ravaged Southern California died down and residents returned home, lingering dust and soot-laden air made it difficult for many to breathe even a sigh of relief Saturday.

Air quality remained poor in the central San Bernardino Mountains and parts of the San Bernardino Valley, as well as swaths of Orange and Riverside Counties. In San Diego County, where only two of five major fires was more than 50 percent contained, the air was especially dismal Friday.

Joe Flynn, 48, worried about air quality as he prepared to return home to Ramona, northeast of San Diego, after a stay at Qualcomm Stadium, where thousands of evacuees sought shelter this week.

But the pull to get back to normal was even stronger.

"Sure I'm worried about breathing that stuff up there," he said. "It's not cool but everyone is dying to get back home."

Thick haze of smoke

Satellite pictures continued to show a thick haze of smoke hanging over the entire region, affecting schools, events and the health of residents all over Southern California.

Residents staying in areas with bad air were advised to avoid exerting themselves. Children and those with heart and respiratory conditions were urged to stay indoors with the windows and doors closed and the air conditioner on.

"In the immediate aftermath of a fire, we're all at risk of the fine particulate matter we can inhale," said Julia

Robinson Shimizu, a spokeswoman for Breathe L.A. "In general it's good to limit outdoor strenuous activity at least seven days after the fires have ended."

In San Diego, the University of California San Diego Medical Center saw an increase in patients coming in with breathing troubles they believe were related to air pollution, spokeswoman Jackie Carr said.

Mayor Jerry Sanders said the San Diego Chargers would play Sunday's game scheduled at Qualcomm. The stadium can seat more than 70,000 fans.

Caution urged

But Ross Porter, a spokesman for the American Lung Association of California, urged fans to use caution when deciding whether to attend.

"Sometimes its better to sit quietly at home and watch it on TV," he said.

Meanwhile, about 23,000 homes were still endangered by five major blazes in three counties.

advertisement



Send flowers for any occasion

Bouquets from \$19.99^{+s/h}

ProFlowers[®]

Order ONLY at proflowers.com/happy or call 1-877-888-0688

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

advertisement

Help people in need.
 Donate your car, boat or RV

Free Towing ■ Tax Deductible
 Call Toll-Free
1-877-225-9384




Altogether, more than a dozen fires raced across more than 503,000 acres _ the equivalent of 786 square miles _ although many of the blazes have been contained.

At least three people _ and possibly as many as seven _ have been killed by flames. About 1,700 homes have been destroyed and damage estimates have surpassed \$1 billion.

On Friday, tens of thousands of displaced families began returning to their fire-ravaged communities, but it will likely be months or even years before they recover the comforts they left behind when they fled giant walls of flames.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's office said he would appear Saturday morning at an Orange County fire command post to discuss efforts to find arsonists, as well as to warn about charlatans peddling insurance scams to fire victims.

On Friday, the governor signed an executive order he said would cut red tape by directing state agencies to aid fire victims with such things as filing for tax extensions and unemployment insurance.

On the other side of the Cleveland National Forest, residents in the Riverside County town of Corona worried that flames they had watched on the news all week might reach them. They packed an elementary school Friday and heard assurances that there was no imminent threat, though some packed valuables in their cars, just in case.

"Your feelings are real but we want to relieve some of that anxiety," John Hawkins, Riverside County fire chief, told residents.

Also Friday, Sen. Dianne Feinstein urged Congressional leaders to provide an additional \$1 billion for firefighting and fire recovery efforts.

The National Weather Service had some good news for firefighters: Winds were forecast to be light on Saturday, with highs hovering around 80 in most of the active fire areas.

The American Red Cross has set up a service for evacuees to register their status and for loved ones to search for evacuees. Either call 1-800-REDCROSS or go to disastersafe.redcross.org

© 2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.
 This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

[MSN Privacy](#) . [Legal](#) © 2010
 MSNBC.com

advertisement

Send flowers for any occasion

Bouquets \$19.99 from 19^{+s/h}



ProFlowers
 Order ONLY at
proflowers.com/happy
 or call 1-877-888-0688

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

H.3. California

The October 2007 Southern California Fire Siege dominated news and media sources throughout California. Only a few of the available reports are included here. Links to others can be found in references section in the back of the main document.

Santa Barbara Independent

Sunday, Oct. 21

New Fire Burns in Northern SB County

Old Blaze's Ash Blows Through Downtown

Sunday, October 21, 2007

By [Chris Meagher](#) ([Contact](#))

Mild winds in the morning kept a **fire at the Sedgwick Ranch**, seven miles northeast of Los Olivos, at the top of Figueroa Mountain Road from burning too quickly, but fire officials are fearful the fire could be pushed by stronger afternoon winds.

According to Santa Barbara County Fire Capt. **Eli Iskow**, the vegetation fire, which was reported at 6 a.m. Sunday, has burned about **400 acres**, and roughly **200 firefighters** are fighting the fire on the ground, in addition to four air tankers and four water-dropping helicopters. Containment lines are being built and reinforced around the areas south and west of the fire in anticipation of **possible stronger afternoon winds**. Two strike teams of structure protection engines have been placed around residences in the area, and an evacuation **warning has been issued for residents of the Woodstock area and local ranches**. The warning area spans **from Figueroa Mountain Road, Roblar and Brinkerhoff**, according to Iskow.

The cause of the fire is unknown.

Officials were fearful the warm weather teamed with high Santa Ana winds would be cause for concern, and it turns out they were correct. In addition to the fire in Northern Santa Barbara County, a wildfire is threatening Pepperdine University, as well as many homes, in Malibu, and there are reports of a person killed by a fire in San Diego. Reports indicate **at least eight blazes in Southern California**.

A **Red Flag Alert** has been declared for the entire county, Iskow said, until Tuesday, when conditions will be reassessed. In the meantime, citizens are cautioned to be extremely careful not to start or worsen fires, as conditions for wildfires are currently optimal. The alert comes from the change in weather conditions toward hot weather, low humidity and high winds. "Any activity in brush areas or areas with vegetation should be done using extreme caution," Iskow said in a statement issued Sunday.

The strong winds have also **pushed much of the settled ash from the Zaca Fire into Santa Barbara**, creating a haze over the city and a caution from the county's public health department. Issued yesterday, the advisory warns residents that air quality is unhealthy for residents. In addition to the Zaca Fire ash and possible smoke blowing in from the Sedgwick Fire, there is also a **possibility of smoke blowing into the county from a fire in Ventura County**. Public health officials are advising residents to stay indoors as much as possible, and not to overexert themselves when outdoors. **Windows**

and doors should also be kept closed to keep bad air flow out. Those with asthma or respiratory problems, as well as people with heart conditions should monitor their conditions.

The county has also established a hotline to assist pet owners with **animal evacuation** and shelter because of the Sedgwick Fire. Those needing help or anyone interesting in assisting in moving or sheltering animals may call the hotline at **(805) 681-4332**.

Santa Barbara Independent

Monday, Oct. 22

Sedgwick Fire 50 Percent Contained

Others Blazes Rage Elsewhere Throughout California

Monday, October 22, 2007

By [Chris Meagher](#) ([Contact](#))

A fire in the Sedgwick Ranch area near Los Olivos is **50 percent contained**, fire officials said, but an **evacuation warning is still in effect** for residents in the Sedgwick Ranch and Woodstock areas, at least until 6 p.m. today. If conditions continue to be stable, the warning may be lifted.

Depending on the weather, **full containment is expected in the next 24 to 48 hours**. More than **250 firefighters** were at the scene as of Monday morning, a number which should roughly double through the course of the day. Crews are mopping and reinforcing the existing fire lines while the size of the fire as of Sunday night has grown to **roughly 710 acres**.



Photo: Paul Wellman

View of ash clouds from County Courthouse on Saturday afternoon.

The warning area spans from Figueroa Mountain Road to Roblar and Brinkerhoff avenues. Santa Barbara County Fire officials have pinned the cause of the fire on a **downed power line** in the area.

Highway 154 travelers should be aware of firefighting vehicles traveling in the area. There is still a [Red Flag Alert](#) in effect for the entire county until tomorrow. Citizens are cautioned to be extremely careful not to start or worsen fires, as conditions for wildfires are currently optimal. “Any activity in brush areas or areas with vegetation should be done using extreme caution,” Capt. **Eli Iskow** said in a statement issued Sunday.



Photo: Paul Wellman

View of ash clouds from County Courthouse on Saturday afternoon.

The fire is one of several burning throughout Southern California. Sunday night, Gov. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** proclaimed a **State of Emergency** in several counties, **including Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties**. More than 11 fires have sprung up as far south as **San Diego County, as well as in Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties**. More than 30,000 acres and several structures have burned, and **one person in San Diego County** has died as a result of the blazes.

Strong Santa Ana winds, the result of high pressure over Utah mixed with the lower pressures over the Pacific Oceans and teamed with warm temperatures, according to AccuWeather, have made Southern California extremely susceptible to fires. Wind gusts have been clocked at **more than 100 miles per hour** — past hurricane strength levels — in some places. Meanwhile, the County Public Health Department, along with the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, has issued a precautionary advisory for Santa Barbara County. Residents should minimize time outdoors and avoid heavy exertion if they can smell smoke from the Sedgwick Fire or other fires in Southern California that continue to burn Monday.

The *Independent's* associate production manager Sarah Wilkinson was driving near Fullerton and snapped some photos of the Southern California fires.



Credit: Sarah Wilkinson



Credit: Sarah Wilkinson



Credit: Sarah Wilkinson



Credit: Sarah Wilkinson

Santa Barbara Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 23

- [Montecito's Citizens of the Year](#)
- [UCSB Biologists Claim to Have Pinpointed Development of Vision](#)
- [SB Museum of Art Receives Rousseau Painting](#)
- [Los Padres Forest Closed](#)

Los Padres Forest Closed

Emergency Closure Due to Hot Weather, High Winds, and Other SoCal Fires

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

By [Matt Kettmann](#) ([Contact](#))

At about 1 p.m. on Tuesday, October 23, the [Los Padres National Forest](#) issued an emergency closure affecting all areas of the forest. Those who attempt to hike, bike, drive, or enter the forest in any way will be subject to **hefty fines and possible arrest**. County roads and state highways that cut through the forest will remain open, but drivers are encouraged to be extra careful and vigilant in watching for fire activity.

As the rest of [Southern California burns](#), firefighting resources are stretched extremely thin, according to Los Padres supervisor [Peggy Hernandez](#), who announced the decision on Tuesday in conjunction with the supervisors of the [Cleveland](#), [San Bernardino](#), and [Angeles](#) national forests. As well, Southern California's "extreme weather" — a mix of scorching sunshine and hot, offshore, desert winds — are not making matters better. The closure will be in effect until these conditions subside.

Those who own property within the forest are exempt from this closure, as are those who already have special usage permits. For more information, call 961-5770.

- [Sedgwick Fire Contained](#)

Sedgwick Fire Contained

Woodstock Evacuation Warning Lifted

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

By [Drew Mackie](#) ([Contact](#))

The Sedgwick Fire in northern Santa Barbara County, not far from Los Olivos, has been **declared 100 percent contained as of 5 p.m. Monday**. The evacuation warning that was in effect for the Woodstock community had been lifted as of 6 p.m. Monday.

No structures were lost in the fire, which consumed about **750 acres**. A Red Flag alert is still in effect for the county, meaning residents should proceed with caution when doing any sort of activity which could start a fire. Fire and sheriff patrols are being conducted to make sure activity doesn't lead to another fire in the area. **Resources are scarce and thin as crews are being sent to Southern California to aid in firefighting there.**

A precautionary advisory from the county Public Health Department was upgraded Tuesday, as the air quality conditions have worsened since Monday. High winds blowing smoke from the fires that continue to rage in Southern California, teamed with the ash being blown in from the Zaca Fire remnants is cause for concern, according to health officials. **Residents should minimize time outdoors and avoid heavy exertion.**

SOUTH STATE

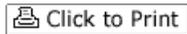
Air quality warning issued

Health officials Monday urged the young, the elderly and those with breathing difficulties in Southern California to remain indoors as wildfires continued to pollute the air with smoke, gas and dust.

The region's air quality has become significantly worse since the fires began Sunday, scorching more than 100,000 acres as of Monday afternoon. Dark gray plumes blanketing communities such as San Diego and Malibu carry soot particles that might worsen pre-existing medical conditions such as lung disease, emphysema, asthma and heart disease, officials said.

Schools that have remained open are being encouraged to limit or cancel outdoor activities such as physical education.

SAC
664
A-17
10-23-07


 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)
[More Metro news](#)

Air quality problems expected to linger

Smoke, ash could remain an issue for several weeks

By **Robert Krier**
 UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

11:43 p.m. October 23, 2007

Decreasing winds should help firefighters Wednesday, but smoke and ash are expected to continue to accumulate, worsening already unhealthy conditions in much of the county.

"It's going to be many days before these particles are out of the atmosphere," said Bill Brick, senior meteorologist with the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District. "We won't have good air around the county until probably Saturday or Sunday."

Rain or a strong marine layer would help dilute the growing concentrations of airborne particles and wash the pollutants out of the air, but no such weather pattern is expected to develop this week, said Ed Clark, warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Rancho Bernardo.

Early in the week, forecasters thought a storm could bring rain by Saturday.

"We're going to have air-quality issues – potentially – for several weeks," Brick said.

On Thanksgiving Day 2003, weeks after the Cedar, Paradise and Otay fires were mostly extinguished, winds kicked up dust and ash in the backcountry and created unhealthy conditions all the way to the coast.

Since the latest blazes began, winds blowing generally from the east have blown particulates – the term for dust, dirt, soot and smoke – more than 1,000 miles over the Pacific Ocean.

Some of that smoke could be sent back over the coast if the winds shift as expected tomorrow, Clark said.

"It will be diluted somewhat, but it will still be an onslaught of dirty air," Brick said.

Several days after the start of the 2003 wildfires, a similar wind shift carried a blanket of smoke back over nearly the entire county.

Yesterday, some flames were pushed eastward, but not because of a shift in large-scale wind patterns, forecaster Noel Isla said. The fires actually create their own weather because the heat causes the air to rise and more air rushes in below, creating an underdraft.

According to air monitoring stations, Escondido has experienced the worst air quality so far this week. Particulate levels have been considered very unhealthy to hazardous at times. Nearly a dozen people were admitted to Palomar Medical Center in respiratory distress, Palomar Pomerado Health spokesman Andy Hoang said.

Fans and special industrial filters were set up along the corridors of every floor of the Escondido hospital. But it still smelled of smoke. Staffers said wafts of sooty air seemed to fill the halls when the winds changed or the elevator doors opened. Masks were available as a courtesy to visitors.

Prolonged exposure to unhealthy air can lead to respiratory, vision and other health problems, said Brick, the meteorologist. But many people initially feel no symptoms.

"You may feel all right now, but these things are cumulative," said Brick, who advised that people remain indoors as much as possible and limit physical activity.

The Santa Ana winds, which peaked near 70 mph Monday, are expected to diminish. Winds should be in the 10 mph to 15 mph range today, and should be fairly calm tomorrow.

That would give firefighters a break. But humidity levels are expected to remain dangerously low today, and temperatures are expected to climb into the 90s in the inland valleys.

■ Staff writer Cheryl Clark contributed to this report.

Robert Krier: (619) 293-2241; rob.krier@uniontrib.com

Sponsored Links[wind slayer download](#)

The new free to play adventure game. Easy to learn, hours of fun.
www.outspark.com/windslayer

[DRYS Could Make You Rich](#)

Why DRYS May Be Stock of The Year-Shocking Evidence-Free DRYS Report.
Jackpotpennystocks.com/DRYS

[New Life Insurance Rates](#)

Get Free Instant Life Insurance Quotes From Local Companies.
Insure-Inc.com

[UAV, Rpv Video/ Telemetry Link](#)

GMS offers the power and size efficient NT series transmitter. This un...
www.gmsinc.com

[Build A Wind Generator](#)

Never Pay For Electricity Again Build For \$100.00 Save Now
www.greenzbuyme.com

RELATED KEYWORDS

- [Southern California](#)
- [Santa Ana](#)

RELATED ARTICLES

[CLIMATE CHANGE: Hotter world may fan flames](#)

October 25, 2007

[Profiling the Unapiker / Theories abound as to who spiked Lake Davis with pike. Will we ever know who's responsible for destroying trout fishing as Portolans knew it?](#)

July 11, 2004

[Media goofed on Antarctic data / Global warming interpretation irks](#)

Santa Ana wind makes October the cruelest month in California

October 24, 2007 | By Carl Nolte, Chronicle Staff Writer

Destruction and death are riding the wind again this autumn in Southern California.

It is the dread Santa Ana wind, moving down the canyons and through the gaps in the mountains, driving wildfires before it like a fiery torch.

The Santa Ana winds go back into California's blazing history. They always come in the fall and winter of the year. In Southern California, October is the cruelest month.

Sponsored Linksadvertisement | [your ad here](#)[Do It Yourself Kevlar \(R\) Safe Rooms](#)

Easy to install Kevlar Ballistic Panels used for safe room walls. Used...
www.armorco.com

[Sacramento Movie Theaters](#)

Find listings for local movie theaters - indie, multiplex & more.
yellowpages.com

[You Can Model a Wind Turbine](#)

Build it Yourself Watch it Working and Save on Your Energy Bills
www.Powersave.com/WindGen

The worst disasters usually happened in this otherwise benign month.

Raymond Chandler, the celebrated mystery writer, mentioned the Santa Ana wind in his story "Red Wind," and so did Joan Didion in her books about California. The Santa Ana season produces a vague unease, a sense of something evil in the air.

"One of those hot dry Santa Anas that come down through the mountain passes and curl your hair and make your nerves jump and your skin itch," Chandler wrote. "On nights like that every booze party ends in a fight ... anything can happen."

The explanation for the Santa Ana is simple: high atmospheric pressure in the Great Basin, in Nevada and Utah, the dry heart of the West. On the coast, the atmospheric pressure is lower. The wind always blows from high pressure to low.

But in this case, said meteorologist Jan Null, an expert on the climate of the West, the wind blows downhill, toward the ocean, being compressed as it moves, heating up as it goes, blowing toward the coast.

"It dries out as it moves, becoming a very dry wind," Null said.

At its worst, the Santa Ana moves through the passes at 70, 80, sometimes 100 mph. It is worst in the fall, when the land is dried out after the long, rainless Southern California summer.

This year has been one of the driest ever recorded in the Los Angeles basin. "An exceptionally dry winter," said Warren Brier of the National Weather Service. "The driest in Los Angeles in 100 years."

Then the table is set for disaster - a hot, dry wind blowing over hills, single-digit humidity, and valleys loaded with brush like chamise and chaparral. Between the brushy hills are the cities and towns that ring the coast.

This fall, the brush has been dried by drought, just waiting for a spark.

In 2003, the same conditions produced 15 huge fires that swept over the mountains behind San Diego and dropped ashes in the city's downtown. More than 1,000 square miles of land burned, 2,232 homes were lost and 14 people, including a Novato firefighter, were killed.

Sponsored Links

Save an average of \$453
on auto insurance.
It's Better Coverage at a better price.

GET A QUOTE

TRAVELERS 

SFGate.com | ARTICLE COLLECTIONS

You are here: SFGate Home → Collections → Southern California

Sponsored Links

[Santa Ana](#)

Can You Type? Earn \$74+/hr From Home. Seen On CNN & FOX News.
JobListingNews.com

[beauty school Santa Ana, California](#)

beauty school Santa Ana, California. Admissions and academics.
www.StateUniversity.com

[Local Jobs \(Now Hiring\)](#)

Search jobs in your area available for immediate hiring.
www.joblocalize.net

[Santa Ana University Degree in 1-2 Years](#)

Get Santa Ana University Degree with Financial Aid in as Few as 2 Yrs.
DegreeGuide.com/santa-ana-univ

[Santa Ana CA Hotels, Up to 75% Off](#)

Get low-cost Santa Ana, CA hotel deals with our easy online search.
SantaAna.Hotel.net/Hotel-deals

RELATED KEYWORDS

- [Southern California](#)
- [Santa Ana](#)

RELATED ARTICLES

[CLIMATE CHANGE: Hotter world may fan flames](#)
October 25, 2007

[Profiling the Unapiker / Theories abound as to who spiked Lake Davis with pike. Will we ever know who's responsible for destroying trout fishing as Portolans knew it?](#)
July 11, 2004

[Media goofed on Antarctic data /](#)

Santa Ana wind makes October the cruelest month in California

October 24, 2007 | By Carl Nolte, Chronicle Staff Writer

(Page 2 of 2)

This one appears worse: Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated by Tuesday, and hundreds of homes were lost. People in San Diego County were told not to go to work, and schools were closed. "I don't know anybody who wasn't affected," said Lynn Delgado, who had to leave her condo in San Diego's Mira Mesa district and take refuge in Point Loma on the coast.

Fire and Southern California are old partners, and the fear of fire goes back far into the region's history. The Spanish governor warned of wind and fire in a message in 1793.

By the turn of the 20th century, the winds that drove the fires had a name - Santa Ana, after the Santa Ana Canyon.

Sponsored Links

advertisement | your ad here

[Santa Ana Jobs](#)

Now Hiring - Santa Ana. Apply now - up to \$39 per hour.
www.CandidHire.com

[Local Employment \(Hiring Immediately\)](#)

100s Of Jobs Available In Your Area. Find Yours Today! FREE Search.
www.LocalJobRush.com

[La Quinta Inn Santa Ana](#)

Book Rooms Starting at \$49/night. Official Site for La Quinta Inn.
www.LQ.com

By 1901, the city fathers of Santa Ana, the Orange County seat, tried to have the name changed on grounds it was bad for business.

But nobody knows for sure the origin of the name, Null said. "Where the name comes from is really a mystery."

Some called it the devil wind - the satana, after the Spanish name for Satan.

In the Bay Area, the hot winds blowing from the hills to the ocean are called Diablo winds, after Mount Diablo. Diablo winds were the driving force for the East Bay Hills Fire in October 1991, which burned 3,354 buildings and killed 25 people.

In Santa Barbara, the wind is called the Sundowner, which drove the huge Painted Cave Fire in 1990, a blaze that jumped Highway 101 and devastated whole areas of the city.

In Colorado the wind is called a Chinook, blowing off the mountains. In France, it is a mistral, in Austria, the foehn, and in Libya, a hot wind is called a *gibbh*.

Is the wind made worse by climate change or global warming? Null, the meteorologist, thinks not. "We've had these firestorms in October for hundreds of years," he said. And California has suffered from periodic droughts in the past.

"The record dry year has just exacerbated the problem," he said.

As it turns out, Santa Ana winds are as Californian as warm days in winter, as earthquakes. It's the price people pay for living in a mild climate that can turn fierce with almost no warning.

Sponsored Links

[Santa Ana Jobs](#)

Now Hiring - Santa Ana. Apply now - up to \$39 per hour.
www.CandidHire.com

SFGate.com

Print This Article

Back to

Article
SFGate.com

Bush Declares California Disaster Area

By JENNIFER LOVEN, Associated Press Writer
Wednesday, October 24, 2007



More...

(10-24) 15:34 PDT WASHINGTON (AP) --

President Bush promised Wednesday that Washington "will do everything it can" to help Southern Californians fearing the worst from wildfires blazing through canyons and neighborhoods for a fourth straight day.

"Americans all across this land care deeply about them," the president said after a special Cabinet meeting on the crisis. "We're concerned about their safety. We're concerned about their property."

Officials throughout the Bush administration talked in blunt terms about offering more in this disaster than the feeble reaction that followed Hurricane Katrina. That storm blew ashore in August 2005, delivering a sharp blow to Bush's presidency and devastating a region whose misery still continues largely unabated two years later.

The California fires are the first disaster since then that begins to approach the scale of Katrina. The White House was determined to convey a picture of a speedy and effective response, and seemed resigned to comparisons despite the different circumstances of the two crises — for instance the relative poverty of the Katrina victims and the hurricane's much more comprehensive reach.

"I think it's inevitable," said White House press secretary Dana Perino. "I understand that the comparison is going to be there, and so I'm not going to call it unfair."

Since Sunday, the fires have charred about 426,000 acres and caused at least a half-million people to evacuate. High winds that had stoked the fires and hampered efforts to fight them moderated somewhat on Wednesday, but there were still stiff gusts.

And even as a dozen fires continued to burn and thousands of people sat in shelters wondering if their homes had been destroyed, officials began to look beyond the moment. San Diego

advertisement | your ad here

KAISER PERMANENTE thrive

LOCALLY GROWN FOOD
AND HAS A LOWER IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

FIND OUT WHY ▶

kp.org/thrive

County's director of emergency services, Ron Lane, said the fires have caused at least \$1 billion in damage there alone.

Bush prepared to travel to the region Thursday for a firsthand look at how the disaster is unfolding and how Washington's efforts to help are working. He also upped the government's engagement by signing a major disaster declaration for California.

The president had already declared a federal emergency on Tuesday for seven California counties, triggering short-term federal help. On Wednesday, responding to a late-night request from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bush went a step further and issued the broader major disaster declaration.

Such declarations set in motion long-term federal recovery programs, some requiring matches from state coffers, to help state and local governments, families, individuals and certain nonprofit organizations recover. The assistance varies from direct aid for uninsured losses to help with rebuilding infrastructure.

At the Cabinet meeting, Bush and a few dozen top administration officials heard from FEMA chief David Paulison and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, who Bush had dispatched to the region. Bush had also heard from them during a conference call Tuesday night.

Afterward, Bush sounded satisfied with his administration's performance.

"I believe the effort is well-coordinated," the president told reporters. "I know we're getting the manpower and assets on the ground that have been requested by the state and local governments."

Bush said Schwarzenegger had told him he is getting everything he needs from Washington.

"I assured him that if he needs anything and we're able to provide it, we will do so," the president said.

Paulison declared Californians are seeing "a new FEMA."

Perino ticked off reasons for what the White House says is a smoother, better response this time: advanced planning to ensure local jurisdictions have evacuation plans in place, prepositioning of supplies when disasters approach, and "lots of early and often communication" between Washington and locals.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2007/10/23/national/w072003D21.DTL>

© 2007 Hearst Communications Inc. | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Feedback](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Site Index](#) |

Blazes in state churning out greenhouse gases in the millions of tons

When it comes to greenhouse gases, Mother Nature and her forest fires like the ones raging through Southern California can be some of the biggest polluters out there.

According to the California Air Resources Board, the blazes raging from Malibu to the Mexican border will send some 2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, plus 200,000 tons of methane and nitrous oxide.

That output of global warming gases is equal to what 440,000 cars would pump into the atmosphere in a year, said Richard Bode, chief of the Air Resources Board's emissions inventory branch.



Matier & Ross

"In terms of global warming, it is a sizable chunk," Bode said. "But you have to remember that overall, the state puts out about 470 million tons of gases every year — so it's about a half a percent" of California's yearly contribution to global catastrophe.

Still, that's a lot of Priuses.

Tit for tat: Quite a food fight breaking out between Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez's camp and his one-time allies in the California Nurses Association — and it's all over who's spending the most on perks.

Núñez is already under fire for spending campaign funds on travel in Europe and South America. He's also taking flak for his wife's work as a lobbyist for hospital interests.

So he was none too happy when the nurses — who were upset with him for not backing their single-payer health care plan — joined the pileup, asking that Núñez recuse himself from

health care issues.

Now, Núñez operatives are shooting back.

"I wonder how many of the hardworking rank-and-file members of the California Nurses Association know that the organization pays Executive Director Rose Ann DeMoro \$207,403, plus another \$10,333 in expenses," Núñez lieutenant Steve Maviglio wrote on a largely Democratic Web site, the California Majority Report.

Maviglio also noted that the association's government relations director and "failed Assembly candidate" Donna Gerber gets \$126,811.

Then there are the nurses as-

sociation's own expense reports, which detail the stays of union officials at the Beverly Hills Hilton, Seascape Luxury Resort in Aptos and the "cozy" Villa Rosa in Santa Barbara.

As for the nurses' response? "Overall, I think the speaker has much greater problems than the California Nurses Association," said union spokesman Chuck Idelson. "There is growing lack of public confidence in his office — they have a lot of questions to answer."

And what better way to answer a question than with another one?

And the winner is?: The state Franchise Tax Board issued a widely publicized report the other day listing the likes of Dionne Warwick, Sinbad and O.J. Simpson as among California's biggest income tax scofflaws.

But well ahead of them on the list, at No. 2, was Big H. Ng of San Francisco, who owes the state a whopping \$6.9 million in taxes and penalties.

It turns out Ng is a former Chinese opera star, who along with her former lover Jack Lee co-owned the Golden Dragon Restaurant in Chinatown.

Neither is a stranger to tangles with government agencies.

Last year, the Washington Street restaurant was closed because of health violations. Then an administrative hearing officer ruled that Ng and Lee owed \$1 million in back wages and penalties to 37 workers for violating the city's minimum wage law.

The couple were also ordered to pay \$837,300 to the city for the cost of investigating the case.

Lee is a longtime elder in the Hop Sing tong, which owned the building that housed the Golden Dragon. He was also among the

"There is growing lack of public confidence in (the speaker's) office — they have a lot of questions to answer?"

CHUCK IDELSON
California Nurses Association

last people to see the group's former president, Allen Leung, alive — the two were spotted dining together just before Leung was shot to death in his export-import business on Jackson Street in February 2006.

In the cards: San Francisco Supervisor Tom Ammiano's proposal for a city identification card for undocumented city residents apparently carries a wallet-load of costs.

According to a new report from the board's budget analyst, the card program — modeled on one in New Haven, Conn., and blessed by Mayor Gavin Newsom — would probably cost more than \$2 million a year to administer.

The city clerk, for instance, would need to hire 13 employees just to process the cards, plus pay for rental space, equipment and training.

The city plans to charge \$15 for adults and \$5 for kids, seniors and poor folks, but that won't cover all the costs.

Bottom line: The city would still have to come up with an estimated \$400,000 to \$1.1 million in the first year, and anywhere from \$325,000 to \$870,000 in each of the next two years — depending on how many people sign up for the card.

Siam dunk: Our buddy and social observer Rich Lieberman reports that after a weekend of stunning football mediocrity

continued →

Connect instantly on the fastest and largest push-to-talk network.



New! i335 by Motorola® \$49.99 after \$50 mail-in rebate.

Shop now



Subscribe to Paper Online Edition

Welcome

Email Alerts: Receive breaking news as it happens.

your email... Submit

Report Your News

DAILY PRESS

Search: Site Web

Search powered by Google™

Home Local Sports Opinion Blogs Entertainment Life Customer Service Place An Ad

Local News

Home > [Local News](#)

Del.icio.us | Digg | [Print Article](#) | [E-Mail Article](#) | Change Font Size 

Smoke from wildfires prompts health advisory

[HILLARY BORRUI](#)

October 24, 2007 - 7:31PM

VICTORVILLE – With smoke, ash and particulate matter from wildfires drifting through the Victor Valley on Wednesday, the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District issued an ongoing health advisory.

Employees at the air district said that the advisory will remain in effect until further notice, and changing weather conditions will continue to bring smoke into the desert through at least today.

“I wouldn’t say it’s going to get any better,” air quality instrument technician Tony Malone said, referring to today’s forecast.

While the health advisory is in effect, people with respiratory diseases such as asthma and the elderly and young children should avoid strenuous activities, according to the MDAQMD.

Residents in areas downwind from the smoke, including Adelanto, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Lucerne Valley, Phelan and Victorville, should stay indoors when possible with the windows closed and air conditioners on the recycled air setting.

Fred Wohosky, who provides weather forecasts for the MDAQMD, said at noon Wednesday that the high pressure system in Colorado that has caused Santa Ana conditions in California would be breaking down over the next 12 to 18 hours, making winds more variable.

“It really has the potential for air quality to be diminished,” he said.

For updated information on air quality, call the MDAQMD at 245-1661, ext. 5067 or 245-1661 ext. 6717. Current health advisories are also at www.mdaqmd.ca.gov.

[See archived 'Local News' Stories >](#)



James Quigg / Staff Photographer

A firefighter hoses into a steep ravine while fighting the Slide Fire in Running Springs Wednesday afternoon.

Top Rated Stories

- Young hero saves life; pulls man from burning vehicle
- Barstow girl, 15, killed in vehicle shooting
- Man rescues girl from Oro Grande Wash
- Van kills boy, 10, on bike
- Road rage ends in driver dead

Most Viewed Stories

- Storm may be a challenge for motorists
- Escapee down to his handcuffs, boxers
- Suspect flees but leaves license plate behind
- And the winner of High Desert Slimdown is ...
- Co-defendant testifies after striking deal
- Road rage ends in driver dead
- Hesperia’s new mayor stands up for Valley-Hi
- Muslim woman sues for being forced to remove headscarf in jail
- A.V. backdrop for Spielberg film
- Barstow girl, 15, killed in vehicle shooting

Ads by Google

[Advertise on this site](#)

[Firefighter Ringtones](#)

Send Complimentary Ringtones to your cell.
BestTones4U.net

[Coffee Exposed](#)

A shocking secret coffee co's don't want you to know.
www.coffeefool.com

[Disaster Relief Kits](#)

Emergency Preparedness Bioterrorism Supplies
frontlinesafetyproducts.com

[Home Wildfire Protection](#)

Protects your Home and Family From Exterior Fire Threats
www.CssFire.com

Click to vote

SEARCH

Home

Topics

Features

Special Reports

theWeekly

EVENTS

DEC 07 Presentation on Financing Services for Patients

Chico

DEC 07 Stem Cell Agency Subcommittee on Governance Meeting

DEC 11 Stem Cell Agency Biotech Loan Task Force Meeting

View All Events

FROM THE FOUNDATION

CalHospitalCompare Now en Español

The first hospital report card available in Spanish, the site will serve the state's 12.7 million Latinos and provide quality comparisons on health services such as maternity and cardiac care.

Expanding the Use of School-Based Clinics

School-based clinics improve access to primary care and mental health services, especially for low-income children. A new report explores their history and plans for expansion.

Welcome to California Healthline. For unrestricted access, please log-in now or register for a free subscription.

Public Health

October 25, 2007

Smoke From Wildfires Raising Health Concerns in Southern California

Smoke inhalation from California's wildfires is causing a spike in respiratory illnesses, but health experts maintain that the health problems are unlikely to lead to higher mortality rates, USA Today reports.

Researchers cited studies of previous wildfires in California and near Denver that found that residents experienced increases in asthma and other illnesses but that inhaling smoke did not increase the mortality rates over the short-term (Sternberg, USA Today, 10/25).

Meanwhile, public health officials and medical providers are recommending that elderly residents and people with respiratory problems stay indoors to limit the amount of smoke inhalation.

Health experts contend that particulate matter is the most dangerous byproduct of wildfires because it is invisible to the naked eye and can worsen symptoms of asthma, bronchitis and emphysema (Chang, AP/Salt Lake City Deseret Morning News, 10/24).

The effect of breathing the particles is not immediate, but several hospitals in San Diego County already have reported an increase in patients with respiratory symptoms.

Smita Desai, pulmonary and critical-care specialist at UC-San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest, said cellular research of particulate matter has found a "tiny risk of increased cancer risk" but noted that further research is needed to better determine the long-term consequences (Clark, San Diego Union-Tribune, 10/25).

Broadcast Coverage

NPR's "All Things Considered" on Wednesday included a discussion with NPR correspondent Carrie Kahn about conditions for nursing home residents evacuated to Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego.

The segment also includes comments from a nursing home resident and a volunteer (Norris, "All Things Considered," NPR, 10/24).

Audio of the segment and expanded NPR coverage are available online.

Readers are invited to send feedback to: chl@chcf.org

Print Article

Email Article

RELATED STORIES

10/24/2007 Wildfires Causing Upswing in Respiratory Complaints

10/23/2007 Fires Force Evacuations at San Diego County Medical Facilities

06/23/2006 Air Pollutants Might Increase Risk of Autism

Already a Subscriber?

Username/Email

Password

Remember me

LOG IN

Forgot your password? Register for an account.

Trial Subscription

Get California Healthline delivered to your inbox. Sign-up for a two-week trial subscription by entering your email address.

SIGN UP

THIS WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ARTICLES

Viewed Emailed

Health Care Reform Negotiations Continue as Priorities Shift

California Hospital News Roundup for the Week of Nov. 29, 2007

Harvard Policy Experts Recommend Steps for Improving Health Care

Health Care Personnel Update for November 2007

Vote on Health Care Reform Postponed, Talks Continue



Los Angeles Times
latimes.com

Change a life.

Sponsor a child

World Vision

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-smoke25oct25,0,2048865.story?coll=la-home-center>
From the Los Angeles Times

Fire-area residents still waiting to inhale

Even as blazes are doused and winds die, unhealthy air is expected to hang around. Experts advise people to stay indoors.

By Marla Cone

Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

October 25, 2007

The state's smog czar warned Wednesday that unhealthy conditions caused by smoke from wildfires are likely to persist throughout much of Southern California until next week.

Even when the fires are extinguished and the Santa Ana winds that carried their smoke die down, the tiny particles suspended in the air could remain in hazardous concentrations "into next week," said Mary Nichols, chair of the California Air Resources Board.

"Our advice for everybody's health, even for people who are healthy, is they should be taking it easy and staying indoors," Nichols said.

Pollution measurements throughout much of the Los Angeles Basin and San Diego County have peaked at levels up to 10 times higher than levels deemed safe by national health standards. Such extreme concentrations of particulates, even if they last a few hours or less, are considered hazardous, capable of causing immediate breathing problems even for healthy people.

In Escondido just after midnight Tuesday, fine particulates reached 325 micrograms per cubic meter of air, according to a California Air Resources Board website. The federal government's health standard for acceptable exposure over 24 hours is 35 micrograms per cubic meter of air. The state air board put mobile monitors in five fire areas in San Diego County shortly after the fires erupted this weekend to detect the highest concentrations.

On Monday in Norco/Corona and Lake Elsinore, levels reached concentrations exceeding 200 micrograms per cubic meter, according to data from the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

Particulates are microscopic pieces of soot, smoke, dust or other materials capable of lodging deep in lungs.

Because of strong Santa Ana winds moving toward the coast, some of the worst smoke is accumulating many miles from fires, including in Long Beach, Simi Valley and the Riverside area.

Pollution concentrations were decreasing region-wide Wednesday, but many areas still exceeded health standards.

"The air quality is officially designated as unhealthy," Nichols said. "There is widespread exposure. . . . This is something that everybody should be paying attention to."

Particulates in the smoke aggravate asthma, emphysema, heart disease and other respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. They also can irritate healthy lungs and airways, causing coughing and shortness of breath, stinging eyes, headaches and stuffy noses.

State and local health officials are urging people throughout the fire region to stay indoors with windows shut, use air conditioning if possible and avoid strenuous outdoor activity.

Some hospital officials reported a moderate increase in patients with respiratory problems. Travis Henson, an emergency room physician at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in the northeast San Fernando Valley community of Mission Hills, said larger-than-normal numbers of patients with asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema had shown up this week.

Henson said he noticed a relatively high number of children with cold symptoms and respiratory problems. Some of these young patients, he said, "maybe have never had asthma before."

Cheryl Evans-Cobb, director of emergency services at West Hills Hospital and Medical Center in the west San Fernando Valley, said she had noticed a slight uptick as well. And among the staff, "lots and lots of people have their fire cough," she said.

Studies show that deaths and hospitalizations from lung and heart diseases, particularly bronchitis, asthma and pneumonia, increase in the days after wildfires.

"Our first concern is individuals with pre-existing chronic conditions like heart disease, chronic lung disease like emphysema, and intermittent diseases and conditions like asthma," said Dr. Mark Horton, the state's Public Health director. "Smoke can certainly exacerbate those conditions."

In addition to particulates, smoke from wildfires carries a mix of toxic substances, including carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides and traces of heavy metals from the Earth's crust. The fires also are emitting large volumes of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, which have been linked to global warming.

Tom Bonnicksen, a forestry and wildfire expert who is a professor emeritus at Texas A&M University, estimates that 19 million tons of greenhouse gases have been emitted by this week's fires. That is equivalent to 3.5% of annual emissions generated statewide from all sources.

Nichols said the state's greenhouse gas inventory already builds in estimates for wildfires. This year's total, however, could exceed that estimate, given the size of the Zaca fire in the Los Padres National Forest this summer and this week's blazes.

marla.cone@latimes.com

Times staff writer Stuart Silverstein contributed to this report.

If you want other stories on this topic, search the Archives at latimes.com/archives.

TMSReprints

Article licensing and reprint options

Copyright 2007 Los Angeles Times | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)
[Home Delivery](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Archives](#) | [Contact](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Help](#)

PARTNERS:





[News Search](#) [Web Search](#) [Classified Search](#) [Advertising](#) [Home Delivery](#) [Reader Services](#) [Traffic](#) [Stocks](#) [Weather](#)
[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Opinion](#) [Entertainment](#) [Features](#) [Columnists](#) [Community](#)
[Subscribe](#) [Previous Issues](#) [Letters](#) [Obituaries](#) [Place An Ad](#) [Send Feedback](#)

[Print Page](#)

Thursday, October 25, 2007

Last modified Thursday, October 25, 2007 6:37 AM PDT

Southwest County's air quality: unhealthy
 By: BRIAN ECKHOUSE - Staff Writer
 Regional and state officials advise staying inside

Flames from the Poomacha fire off Palomar Mountain were miles from Temecula, but wind-swept smoke and ash from that blaze blanketed the southern part of the city Wednesday, prompting some to wear masks -- and most to remain indoors.

The smoke-filled air pushed north Wednesday afternoon, as tiny specks of ash fell to the ground like dandruff.

The lone air monitoring station in Southwest Riverside County -- 20 miles north in Lake Elsinore -- found the level of dangerous particulate matter to be good to moderate, though officials with the South Coast Air Quality Management District said they have deemed the air unhealthy since the region's fires began Sunday.



The rising sun was obscured by smoke from the Poomacha Fire Wednesday morning in this view from Temecula.

DAVID CARLSON Staff Photographer
 Order a copy of this photo
 Visit our Photo Gallery

"The danger from smoke is fine particulates -- the smaller ones that you can't see," said Tina Cherry, a spokeswoman for the air quality district. "They can lodge deep into your lungs and can exacerbate conditions people may already have. And they can be an irritant to people who may ordinarily be healthy."

Once the fires pass, the dangers of smoke inhalation probably will remain for a few days because of the swirling Santa Ana winds earlier this week, said Mary Nichols, the chairwoman of the California Air Resources Board.

In San Diego County -- which borders Temecula to the south -- the unpredictable Santa Ana winds have mixed with offshore fronts, spreading smoke and ashes throughout the region, Nichols said.

"It's something everybody should be paying attention to," she said.

No one is immune from the dryness and smoke, said Ross Porter, a spokesman for the American Lung Association of California in San Diego.

"My lips are chapped," Porter said Tuesday. "My eyes are irritated, and for some people it feels like altitude sickness."

That was especially true because of the air conditions Wednesday in southern Temecula.

A thick beige smoke filled a cloudless sky above Great Oak High midday Wednesday, obscuring the sun in some spots, though it was not as opaque as a pea soup fog.

School remained open at Great Oak, though dozens of parents picked up their children throughout the day. The Temecula and Murrieta Valley unified school districts opted to close schools today.

That undoubtedly pleased a host of adolescents who had complained their health was endangered being in southern Temecula -- even with all school activities being held indoors.

"Tell them to shut down our school," said 16-year-old junior Chris Depackh, whose father is a Los Angeles firefighter. "It's hard to breathe and there is ash falling."

Junior Brandon Hernandez, 16, left school early Wednesday.

"A lot of people are complaining that they can't breathe and a bunch of kids are wearing masks," he said.

Temecula's three high schools still plan on holding football games Friday, but that's pending air conditions later today or first thing Friday morning, district officials said. All three were considering alternatives, including hosting the games Saturday. Calvary Murrieta, which scheduled its football game Friday at Vista Murrieta High, is contemplating alternative sites to hold the game, an official said.

At Pechanga Resort & Casino, a few hundred feet from Great Oak, workers wore masks while driving golf carts.

Temecula resident Olivia Chapa -- who squinted from the ash even though she was wearing sunglasses -- left her home for the casino to escape the horrors of the infernos as seen on television. Ironically, though, she came far closer to the dangerous elements by leaving her home -- and traveling closer to the Rosa fire and heavy smoke.

"I needed to get away from the TV," said Chapa, 63. "I'm going to go in and gamble and forget about it for an hour."

Cherry said she was unaware if there are long-term repercussions from short-term exposure to the dangerous air, "but we are recommending people being out of the smoke."

State and regional leaders advised residents to:

- . avoid all vigorous exercise, indoors or out;
- . remain indoors if they have heart disease or respiratory diseases, including asthma;
- . keep windows and doors closed; and
- . turn on the air conditioner but close the fresh air intake to minimize outdoor smoke indoors.

Those suffering from respiratory illness might be better off relocating temporarily, said Mark Horton, the director of the state Department of Health.

For more information on air quality issues, visit www.aqmd.gov/pubinfo/factsheets.htm.

Staff writer Tom Sheridan contributed to this article. Contact staff writer Brian Eckhouse at (951) 676-4315, Ext. 2626, or beckhouse@californian.com. Comment at www.californian.com.



Search

Home Delivery RSS

This Site Web Search powered by YAHOO! SEARCH

Home News Sports Business Opinions Entertainment Living Info

Classifieds Homes Jobs Autos Obituaries

San Bernardino East Valley West Valley High Desert Mountains Public Safety Elections Politics Transportation Education

Most Viewed Most Emailed

del.icio.us Digg Reddit YahooMyWeb Google What's this?

- 8:50 a.m.: Southern California wildfires map
- Line of fire
- Police fatally shoot 2
- 2 in custody tied to arson
- 3:41 p.m.: San Bernardino authorities arrest biker for alleged arson
- Redlands treasurer arrested on 3 counts
- Watch Fire Video Feeds Here:
- 8:15 a.m.: Fires in Southern California NASA satellite image map
- Running Springs Fire
- Schools closed in San Bernardino, Redlands

Print Email

Smoky air continues to provoke warnings

Gina Tenorio, Staff Writer
Article Launched: 10/24/2007 10:19:08 PM PDT

Smoke from the devastating wildfires continued to pour down from the mountains and settle over hundreds of communities, polluting air and making daily life difficult for tens of thousands of Southland residents.

Warnings from officials about unhealthy air conditions have prompted the closure of Department of Motor Vehicle offices, San Bernardino Associated Governments (Sanbag) office, San Bernardino County Superior Courts and the San Bernardino City and the Rim of the World unified school districts.

And residents around Southern California have been warned not to exercise outdoors and to avoid other strenuous activity.

"A lot goes into the decision to close the office," said Mike Marando, DMV spokesman based out of Sacramento. "We need to look at the ability of the employees to get to work also."

A number of DMV employees are facing evacuations. Combined with the air quality, the decision was made to close at least through today while they assess the risk, Marando said. His Northern California office and many others remained open Wednesday but those in or near the fire zones were not.

While some agencies opted to close for the day, many San Bernardino County offices and state legislators were at their offices working, officials said.

"The county doesn't have any plans to close," said San Bernardino County spokesman David Wert. "The air seems to be clearing up."

However, county employees who felt ill were allowed to go home, he said.

And the county District Attorney's Office stayed open.

"We're here doing the people's work until somebody tells us otherwise," said spokeswoman Susan Mickey.

What is really at issue for the air quality experts is how much particulate matter has climbed above federally set standards, California Air Resources Board officials said.

Measurements taken in the San Diego area showed particulate matter was six times the standard over a 24-hour period, said Dimitri Stanich, air board

SATURN
presents
LAFASHIONAWARDS*

7:00pm Friday,
October 26, 2007

Orpheum Theatre,
Los Angeles

Tickets on sale now
at ticketmaster.com

More News

- Nurse stays for patients, ensures safety
- Anxious to go home
- Saving his home
- A fighting chance
- Line of fire
- 2 in custody tied to arson
- Thousands evacuated to 'chaos' at fire shelters
- Smoky air continues to provoke warnings
- Redlands treasurer arrested on 3 counts
- Stater Bros. Markets opens new corporate office at SBIA
- Traffic Report
- County in need of psychiatrists
- Community Events
- Aiding after-school programs
- Police fatally shoot 2
- Bank robbery suspect eludes police
- Halloween Festivities
- In Brief
- City wins praise for use of hydrogen cars
- \$500K secured for rail study ending at ONT

spokesman.

When the fires broke out over the weekend, measurements were equally high in San Bernardino County, said Sam Atwood, spokesman with the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

They have since begun to register in more normal ranges which is why Atwood advised people not to rely exclusively on reports of those readings. They would be better measuring how they feel, if they see and smell smoke, and if they see ash.

"All someone has to do is pick up the newspaper or watch TV," he said. "Be aware of and heed the forecast."

Despite a weakening of the strong Santa Ana winds, AQMD officials said the smoke from all the wildfires would continue to create unhealthy air, because wildfire smoke contains a high number of both coarse and ultra-fine microscopic particles.

Smoke blown over the ocean could be brought back by sea breezes and recirculated through the region during the next several days, air quality officials said.

Those particles bypass our natural defense system and lodge in our lungs, AQMD officials said. They can cause irritation and can cause decreased lung function over time.

They also make us more susceptible to developing diseases such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and possibly cancer, officials said.

Safety precautions

Protect yourself from the harmful effects of the wildfire-related smoke.

Everyone should avoid all vigorous exertion, indoors or out.

Residents with heart disease, respiratory diseases including asthma, as well as the elderly and children, should remain indoors.

Keep windows and doors closed unless it is extremely hot inside. In those cases, seek alternate shelter.

Turn on an air-conditioner if you have one. Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to minimize outdoor smoke entering the house.

Source: South Coast Air Quality Management District

 [Print](#)  [Email](#)  [Return to Top](#)

Article Comments

The San Bernardino County Sun is pleased to let readers post comments about an article at the end of the article. Please increase the credibility of your post by including your full name and city when commenting. Please note: It may take several minutes before your comment appears.

House Payments Fall Again
See Rates, No Credit Check Req.
Calculate Your New Mortgage
www.LowerMyBills.com

Refinance \$300,000 for Only
\$965/Month
\$300,000 Mortgage for only \$965/month.
Save \$1,000's - No
www.HomeLoanHelpLine.com

Refinance and Save \$1,000S
\$150,000 Mortgage for \$483/month.
Compare up to 4 free
www.pickamortgage.com

Buy your Vegas high rise

Affordable luxury condo, best locale, onsite leasing, complete Jan 08
www.streamlinetowe...

I Had High Blood Pressure

Now it's down to 120/75. Find out how I did it without drugs
www.resperate.com

Six Sigma Certification

100% Online-Six Sigma Certificate from Villanova -Find Out More Now.
www.VillanovaU.com

SAVE THIS EMAIL THIS PRINT THIS MOST POPULAR

Hope and heartbreak

As fires continue to burn, residents see signs of progress

By John Marelus
STAFF WRITER

October 25, 2007

Yesterday was a time filled with mixed emotions.

Although steadily diminishing winds helped firefighters gain the upper hand against certain blazes, other infernos continued to rage unchecked.

Although some evacuees had to flee the path of growing wildfires and many remained at shelters, thousands were allowed to return home.

And while many residents remained without power last night, San Diego Gas & Electric was able to restore a major transmission line and prevent blackouts that would have affected 100,000 people.

"What we were facing was something that could have gone on for hours," said Michael Niggli, chief operating officer for SDG&E.

Since Sunday, the wildfires in San Diego County have forced about 560,000 people to flee their homes. The fires also have caused more than \$1 billion in property damage, disaster-relief experts said yesterday.

As of early last night, fire officials reported that five blazes had burned more than 327,000 acres and destroyed at least 1,100 homes.

The conflagrations also have strained the region's health care facilities.

Hundreds of people have received medical treatment at hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices and evacuation centers.

Hospitals reported that a surge of evacuees began streaming in yesterday with respiratory problems, bruises, splinters, fractures and injuries caused by items that fell on them.

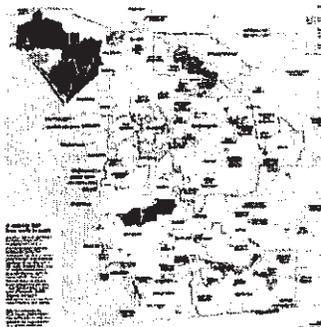
Some had not realized they were wounded because they were racing to flee a fire, said Dr. Shawn Evans, an emergency room physician at Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla.

In Oceanside, Tri-City Medical Center was handling nearly double its typical number of maternity patients. Some of the deliveries were premature, perhaps because of

- [Criticism over issue of air support builds](#)
- [Building patterns are to blame, critics say](#)
- [Fire facts](#)
- [FEMA says it's better prepared](#)
- [There's little rest for the rescuers](#)
- [Optimistic governor tours more fire areas](#)
- [Volunteer firefighters save mountaintop](#)
- [Community profiles](#)



NANCEE E. LEWIS / Union-Tribune
Erin O'Sullivan (left) hugged her mother, Patricia (back to camera), her father, Patrick, and sister Lauren Teliard in front of her parents' home on Aquamiel Road in Rancho Bernardo yesterday. A police escort took the family to the house that was destroyed in the Witch Creek fire, and family members found pieces of china and childhood memorabilia amid the rubble.



A nonstop fight from north to south (PDF)

Ristorante Carmela
Abruzzi Cuisine

Serving Lunch & Dinner

- Homemade Pasta
- Classic Specialties
- Wine & Champagne
- Sauces
- Vegetarian

Present ad for
\$5.00 off
any two dishes
\$2.50 off
any two drinks

823 Grand Ave. San Marcos, CA 92061
760-471-2131
Closed Mondays

WEEKEND GOLF & LOBSTER package

\$399

18 Holes, Dinner, Tee Time, Only at Laguna Golf Country Club

1877-315-1002
www.grandbaja.com

stress from fire evacuations and the loss of homes, said Tri-City spokesman Jeff Segall.

Usually, the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit treats 11 newborn babies at a time. Yesterday, it had 21.

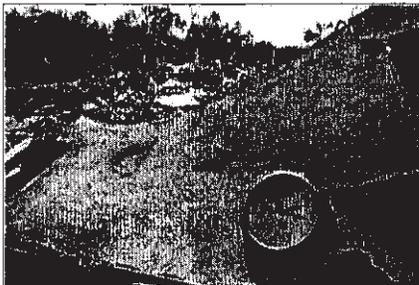
The dichotomy of heartbreak and hope was experienced by people such as Jeff and Ann Owens, who found out late Monday that flames destroyed the five-bedroom home near Lake Poway they had been remodeling for four years.

As they stood in front of the rubble yesterday, Ann found a way to lighten their spirits. She presented her husband with a caramel cinnamon cake and a mini "Happy Birthday" balloon for his 66th birthday.

"I was really surprised," Jeff Owens said. "I needed a smile. . . . I have gone through a few days of serious grief."

From Palomar Mountain to Jamul, residents braced for the worst as the Witch Creek, Poomacha and Harris fires expanded toward them. But as of late last night, firefighters were optimistic about blunting the blazes' advance.

They also were more confident about controlling the Rice Canyon fire, which has charred roughly 9,500 acres in the DeLuz and Fallbrook region.



K.C. ALFRED / Union-Tribune
A clock recorded when the Witch Creek fire destroyed the Poway home of Jeff and Ann Owens, who returned there yesterday. They bought the home the week of the 2003 Cedar fire.

Yesterday afternoon, fire officials said they were preparing to lift Fallbrook's mandatory evacuation order "in the near future." They didn't offer more specifics.

The evacuation order remained in place there to enable power to be fully restored and to make sure the town's water supply is adequately treated, said state fire spokesman David Shew.

At Camp Pendleton, unpopulated swaths of the base were charred and roads were closed by three blazes.

Early yesterday, the fires forced the evacuation of about 800 people on the base. They also prompted officials to temporarily close Interstate 5 from state Route 76 to the Orange County border.

"We just have a lot of fire and limited resources," said Bill Gick, Camp Pendleton's fire inspector. "The fires on Pendleton have grown tremendously in the last day. It is going to get bigger."

By contrast, evacuation orders were lifted in some neighborhoods of Escondido, Rancho Bernardo and Rancho Peñasquitos.

In the Trails section of Ranch Bernardo, the randomness of flames from Monday could be seen in the large, estate-style homes that were destroyed.

One home on Bernardo Trails Drive had basically disintegrated, while a red Jeep with its top down in the driveway looked like it could be driven away.



NELVIN CEPEDA / Union-Tribune
Rory Cox used a lawn sprinkler to water down a neighbor's roof yesterday at a house off Honey Spring

Over at the neighboring subdivision of Montelena, jack-o'-lanterns made of paper and ghosts made of white sheets hung in the front yard of a home on Locksley Street.

Road in Jamul.

Mark Huettinger was relieved when he called the fax machine at his Abra Place home in Rancho Bernardo on Tuesday and it answered. Then his brother brought him down to earth.

"You might come back to a chimney and a fax machine," his brother said.

Yesterday, Huettinger and his wife, Frances, found their two-story, cream-colored stucco home intact. Their only complaints were an accumulation of ash and a slight smell of smoke in the laundry room.

"Wonderful, absolutely wonderful. It looks like nothing ever happened," Mark Huettinger said.

In places still threatened by flames, firefighting crews used at least 57 airplanes and helicopters to dump water and fire retardant, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The availability and use of aircraft continued to stir controversy yesterday.

As federal and state officials patted each other's back for quick action on the aerial front, critics - mainly online bloggers and talk-radio commentators - argued that firefighters lacked air power to battle the infernos.



K.C. ALFRED / Union-Tribune
Amy Fousek collected some belongings yesterday from her Rancho Bernardo home, which suffered fire damage. She was able to recover her 8-year-old son's pet fish.

An irritated Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger bluntly said the skeptics didn't know what they were talking about. He insisted that many of the aircraft were unable to fly until yesterday because of high winds in Southern California.

"Anyone complaining about the planes just wants to complain because that's a bunch of nonsense," Schwarzenegger told ABC News during a morning interview.

He also talked with President Bush, who is scheduled to tour some of the fire-ravaged areas of San Diego County this morning.

Determined to demonstrate that his disaster agencies have gotten their acts together since the chaotic response to Hurricane Katrina two years ago, Bush said he is pleased with the federal government's response to the fires.

"I had a conversation with Governor Schwarzenegger," he said after a morning Cabinet meeting. "My question to him was, 'Are you getting what you need?' . . . His answer was yes."

Today, Bush will take a helicopter tour over the burned areas and visit a fire-damaged neighborhood. He will have lunch with firefighters and receive briefings from federal and state officials before returning to Washington, D.C.

One success story that local authorities have highlighted is the Reverse 911 calling systems. They said the network has paved the way for a fairly orderly evacuation of more than a half-million people - 10 times as many as were driven from their homes by the Paradise fire and the Cedar blaze, which began exactly four years ago today.

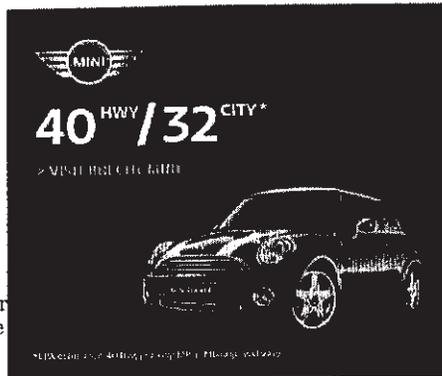
Weather forecasters said the Santa Ana winds that have propelled the blazes and hampered firefighting efforts since Sunday will likely be gone today. In addition, humidity levels are expected to keep rising while temperatures are expected to drop 6 to 8 degrees.

Yesterday, the winds decreased by as much as 36 miles per hour in

Advertisement

some areas. That gave firefighters relief from the gusts of almost 70 miles per hour that had whipped up flames earlier in the week.

Instead of blowing in from the east, as they have since Sunday, the winds are expected to come from the west. Those cooler and weaker westerly winds would be a further blessing for firefighters.



But the calmer conditions would do little to help the air quality, health experts said.

The fires in San Diego County have produced so much soot, ash and other airborne particles that skies will remain polluted for awhile, said Mary Nichols, chairwoman of the California Air Resources Board in Sacramento.

"We can certainly expect that people living in San Diego County will be experiencing several days, if not a week or more, of unhealthful air," Nichols said.

Also in Sacramento, state Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner declared an "insurance emergency" aimed at speeding up the handling of homeowners' claims. The designation authorizes out-of-state adjusters to process those claims.

San Diego County authorities warned evacuees to be on guard for fire-related scams. In the rush to repair fire-damaged dwellings, homeowners can end up hiring disreputable contractors or falling prey to scams involving bogus insurance adjusters or fake charities.

Staff writers Cheryl Clark, Jose Luis Jimenez, Robert Krier, Anne Krueger, Linda Lou, Mike Lee, Steve Liewer, Emmet Pierce, Rick Rogers, Craig D. Rose and Steve Schmidt contributed to this report.

■ John Marellus: john.marellus@uniontrib.com

[»Next Story»](#)

Sponsored Links

Seniors: The Right Is Yours

A Cell phone with Features for YOU!
www.jitterbug.com

Buy your Vegas high rise

Affordable luxury condo, best locale, onsite leasing, complete Jan 08
www.streamlinetower.com

Six Sigma Certification

100% Online-Six Sigma Certificate from Villanova -Find Out More Now.
www.VillanovaU.com

Sell Your Timeshare Today

The Most Effective way to Sell Your Timeshare for Cash. Member BBB.
www.SellATimeshare.com

VA Home Loan

Use Your VA Loan Benefit Today. Buy or Refinance w/ No Money Down!
www.Military.com

[Contact SignOnSanDiego.com](#) | [Online Media Kit](#) | [Print Media Kit](#) | [Frequently Asked Questions](#) | [Make us your homepage](#)
[Contact the Union-Tribune](#) | [About the Union-Tribune](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Your California Privacy Rights](#)

© Copyright 2007 Union-Tribune Publishing Co. • A Copley Newspaper Site

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Today is Thursday, October 25, 2007
Originally published Thursday, October 25, 2007
Updated Thursday, October 25, 2007

Smoky South Bay air
making people sick

Local emergency rooms are reporting an increase in cases of respiratory problems. Health officials are warning even healthy adults to restrict physical activities.

By Melissa Evans
Staff Writer

The thick, dirty plume of air choking South Bay skies has sent more people to the emergency room for respiratory problems and prompted strenuous warnings from health officials Wednesday.

Even healthy people without chronic conditions are at risk for asthmatic episodes, allergies, eye irritation and lung damage because the particles in the air caused by smoke are too small to be filtered by the body, doctors say.

"It's a bad situation out there," said Dr. Lee Weiss, who oversees emergency medical services at Centinela Freeman Medical Center.

Weiss estimates the Inglewood hospital has seen about a 20 percent spike in respiratory-related emergency visits since Sunday, when fires began ravaging Southern California.

Doctors at Torrance Memorial Medical Center and Little Company of Mary Hospital in Torrance have also received more calls and visits from patients, particularly the elderly and those with chronic illnesses.

The harbor areas of San Pedro, Wilmington, and Long Beach were especially vulnerable because of wind patterns and warm temperatures, which are keeping the polluted air stagnant.

"It's not going to cause cancer or anything," said Dr. David Campisi, a San Pedro pulmonologist, when asked about the danger. "But it certainly is going to be irritating to anybody."

Children at most public schools have been kept indoors and restricted from exercise this week. State health officials called a press conference Wednesday to issue warnings to the public that outdoor and indoor physical activity should be restricted until further notice.

"Even adults who are healthy ought to take it easy and stay in an air-conditioned location," said Mary Nichols, chairwoman of the California Air Resources Board.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District, which monitors pollutants in the South Bay and Harbor Area, also issued a warning Wednesday. The closest readings, taken in Long Beach, showed unhealthy levels of contaminants in the air most of the day, said Sam Atwood, a spokesman for the

agency.

The microscopic particles clogging the air have even reached significant levels inside homes, he said, adding that residents are advised to keep windows shut and use fans or air conditioning.

The poor conditions are the result of a "perfect storm" of external pollutants, said Dr. Edward Bold, a pulmonologist from Torrance Memorial. The ash and smoke from the fires are irritating the sinuses, while the hot air from the Santa Ana winds is drying out the lungs.

Because of rapidly changing weather patterns, this is typically the time of year when respiratory problems become more prevalent anyway, Bold said.

"People need to be sure that they're taking all of their inhalers with them when they go outside," he said.

Even if the fires are extinguished quickly, the orange sunrise and gray skies may be around for at least another week in the coastal areas because of wind patterns, Atwood said. The Santa Ana winds have blown the smoky air from the fires west, but eventually the ocean breeze will push it back inland.

The Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America, based in Los Angeles, was flooded with calls Wednesday, said Francene Lifson, executive director.

"We are feeling the effects," she said. "Watery eyes, coughing, wheezing, headaches, everything."

Several workers there who suffer from asthma and allergies had to call in sick because conditions were so bad, she added.

FIND OUT

MORE

For up-to-date air quality reports, visit the South Coast Air Quality Management District at www.aqmd.gov.

For up-to-date air quality reports, visit the South Coast Air Quality Management District at www.aqmd.gov.

melissa.evans@dailybreeze.com

USER COMMENTS (0 of 0 total)

.submission { display: none; }

Dailybreeze.com reserves the right to remove postings deemed inappropriate. In order to preserve your right to comment, you must follow these guidelines:



San Bernardino Co.

Residents urged to take precautions against poor air quality

 [Download story podcast](#)

12:10 AM PDT on Thursday, October 25, 2007

By AARON BURGIN
The Press-Enterprise

Air-quality officials are urging Inland residents -- especially the elderly, children and those with respiratory and heart-related ailments -- to stay indoors if they can, as smoke from a number of Southern California fires pollutes the region's skies.

The South Coast Air Quality Management district issued a smoke advisory for Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange and Los Angeles counties despite calming Santa Ana winds that fanned fires and kicked up smoke and dust since Sunday.

With normal onshore wind patterns returning, smoke that had made its way to the ocean is expected to re-emerge in the region, where it likely will stay for at least the next several days, possibly into next week, district spokeswoman Tina Cherry said.

Suffocating smoke from several San Diego County fires rolled into southwest Riverside County on Wednesday, leaving gray, overcast skies in its wake.

"And this smoke can cause a number of health-related problems if people do not take the necessary precautions," Cherry said, "especially for those vulnerable groups."

District officials recommend that everyone avoid "all vigorous exertion, indoors and out."

They also recommend that residents with heart disease, respiratory disease, the elderly and children remain indoors; people keep windows and doors closed unless extremely hot inside, in which case they should seek alternate shelter; and for people to turn on air-conditioning units and keep the fresh-air

intake closed and filter clean to keep clean air inside of the house or building.

Earlier in the week, district officials said blowing dust kicked up by fierce Santa Ana winds was the primary contributor to the poor air quality. Now the primary culprit for the unhealthful air is PM 2.5, the smallest and most problematic size of particulate matter to lungs, not to be confused with PM 10, the particles that make up dust, said Mary Nichols, chair of the state Air Resources Board.

According to the district's air-quality statement for today, PM 2.5 would be the main contributor to unhealthful air quality from Big Bear Lake south to Temecula.

Nichols and Dr. Mark Horton, the director of the state Department of Public Health, spoke about Southern California's air-quality woes during a Wednesday afternoon news conference.

While focusing most of her comments on the air quality in San Diego County, which has been ravaged by eight fires, Nichols said PM 2.5 exposure is a problem throughout the region.

"That is the size that is inhaled deeply into the lungs and can do damage to the lungs," Nichols said. "It can have an irritating effect on healthy lungs."

PM 2.5 mainly affects people with lung problems such as emphysema and asthma, and heart conditions such as congestive heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Nichols said.

Reach Aaron Burgin at 951-375-3733 or aburgin@pe.com

PRECAUTIONS

Health experts recommend several steps to protect yourself from particulate pollution when air quality is poor. Among them:

Wear a particulate mask if smoke becomes irritating

Avoid vigorous exertion

Stay indoors, especially if you suffer from heart or respiratory disease, or are elderly

Close windows and doors

When using your air conditioner, close the fresh-air intake



[News Search](#)

[Web Search](#)

[Classified Search Advertising](#)

[Home Delivery](#)

[Reader Services](#) [Traffic](#) [Stocks](#) [Weather](#)

[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Opinion](#) [Entertainment](#) [Features](#) [Columnists](#) [Community](#)

[Subscribe](#) [Previous Issues](#) [Letters](#) [Obituaries](#) [Place An Ad](#) [Send Feedback](#)

[Print Page](#)

Friday, December 7, 2007

Last modified Friday, October 26, 2007 3:39 PM PDT

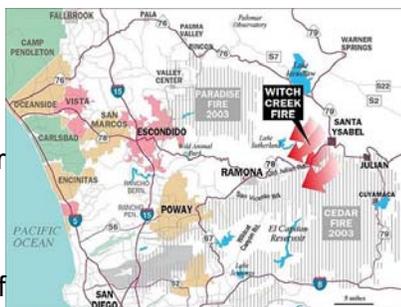
Ramona, surrounding area under mandatory evacuation

By: SARAH WILKINS - Staff Writer

NORTH COUNTY ---- The entire town of Ramona ---- more than 36,000 people ---- and hundreds of residents in surrounding areas were forced to flee their homes Sunday night after a Santa Ana-whipped fire burned through 5,000 acres on both sides of Highway 78, leaving blazing structures, power outages and dead animals in its wake.

[View A Slide Show](#)

The inferno, dubbed the Witch Creek fire by officials, was one of a dozen blazes scorching Southern California from Malibu to Mexico that prompted Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to declare a state of emergency in San Diego, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.



Roads closed because of Ramona-area wildfire include:

- Highway 78 at Magnolia Avenue
 - Highway 78 at Rancho Santa Teresa
 - Highway 79 at Highway 78
 - Old Julian Highway at Vista Ramona Road
 - Highway 79 at Highway 76
- Source: California Highway Patrol, as of 10:45 p.m.

Contacts and updates:

24-hour Community, Health and Disaster Information: Dial 211
County General Information Line: (858) 694-3900
County Office of Emergency Services fire updates:
www.sdcountyemergency.com

San Diego Gas & Electric Co.: www.sdge.com

California Highway Patrol traffic and road closure information: cad.chp.ca.gov

County Animal Services emergency information: (619) 767-2675

In East County, the so-called Harris fire had charred 20,000 acres in Potrero, leaving one civilian dead and at least 14 people ---- including four fighters ---- hospitalized. Further north, fires were burning in Malibu, San Fernando Valley, Fontana, Devore, Arrowhead and other areas, threatening homes and charring thousands of acres.

The Ramona-area fire turned into a wall of flames nearly instantly after it started just before 1 p.m. near Witch Creek Road. Within hours, 40 to 50 mph winds had whipped the blaze across 3,000 acres as it leapfrogged across Highway 78 in several places, fire officials said. At least 350 firefighters were working the fire lines Sunday in an effort to protect structures and allow evacuations.

The cause of the fire was under investigation, fire officials said.

The flames spread into two flanks that descended on Ramona, said Battalion Chief Kelly Zombro, of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Flames surged westward between the areas charred by the 2003 Cedar fire, the 273,000-acre blaze that destroyed 2,400 homes and killed a firefighter and 14 other people. Sunday's flames, fed by gusts of up to 70 mph, were fueled by winds so strong that firefighting aircraft could not safely fly, Zombro said.

Thousands warned by phone

As the fire spread, officials used the county's Reverse 911 system ---- which is used to call residents in an emergency ---- to advise thousands of people to evacuate the areas of Ramona, Ramona Country Estates, Black Canyon, Witch Creek and other areas, sheriff's Lt. Phil Brust said. There were more than 36,000 residents in Ramona, according to the latest population figures compiled by the San Diego Association of Governments.

By late Sunday, parts of the San Pasqual Valley was evacuated and Poway residents were placed on alert.

Evacuation centers were set up at Escondido High School, 1535 North Broadway; and Steele Canyon High School, 12440 Campo Road in Spring Valley. Poor air quality prompted officials Sunday night to move an evacuation center at Poway High School to Mira Mesa High School.

The centers, set up by the American Red Cross, will remain open "as long as there is a need," spokeswoman Gayle Falkenthal said. Lodging, food, drinks and basic health services will be provided, she said.

An evacuation center set up at Escondido High School had more than 30 families by late evening, and authorities said they were anticipating up to 30 more families to show up during the night.

Adam Rosa said he and his parents evacuated their apartment on the east edge of Ramona at 8:30 p.m.

"The fire was right on the other side of the mountain from us when we left," he said. "Everything out there was all smoke and we couldn't breathe. When we were coming down the mountain we could see the mountain behind us."

Motels begin filling

Other families forced to evacuate their homes began trickling into area motels shortly after nightfall.

The front desk clerk at Motel 6 in Escondido said, for example, that by mid-evening four evacuating families had taken rooms at the 131-unit complex at 900 Quince Street.

"We're anticipating more as the evening goes on," the clerk said, adding that several members of one family told her they had to make several back-and-forth trips to rescue their animals because they only had one horse trailer. "It's pretty sad."

All schools in the Ramona and Poway Unified school districts were ordered closed today, as was the Palomar Mountain Elementary School and the Dehesa Charter School in Escondido.

Meanwhile, evacuation points for large animals and livestock were set up at the Lakeside rodeo grounds, at Highway 67 and Magnolia Avenue in Lakeside, and the Del Mar Fairgrounds said Tammy Glenn, public information officer for the county.

As the flames spread, local residents and state officials mounted an effort to rescue some of the hundreds of horses that live in rural ranches in the area.

Desperate efforts to save horses

Earlier in the day, Ramona residents Haley Van Houten and Shelee Lyon moved four horses in separate trailers from the Sierra South Horseshoeing School on Old Julian Highway to a south Ramona ranch. They returned for another load of horses but were not allowed back in.

"I know they mean well, but they don't have horses," Van Houten said of the officials blocking their path. Meanwhile, Lyon damaged the front tires on her vehicle while attempting to get past a tack strip set in the roadway by California Highway Patrol officers manning a road closure.

A second shelter for pets and smaller animals was established by the Escondido Humane Society at Poway High School, authorities said. It was unclear Sunday night whether the shelter was moved.

Authorities said anyone looking for general information on animal services should call 211. For emergencies, they said people should call county animal services at (619) 767-2675.

Power cut to protect firefighters

As of Sunday night, utility crews had also shut down power to more than 1,000 customers in Ramona, Santa Ysabel,

San Diego Country Estates, the La Jolla Reservation and Mesa Grande, San Diego Gas & Electric reported.

At least some of the outages were put in place so firefighters would not have to work around live powerlines, authorities said.

"It's just to make it safe for firefighters and our folks," said Don Parent, spokesman for the utility company. "As soon as we check and make sure it's safe, we'll re-energize them."

The county Air Pollution Control District alerted residents to high concentrations of fine particulates from the smoke, resulting in potentially poor air quality in areas affected by fire. Residents should limit physical activity or stay indoors to avoid exposure to smoke-laden air, authorities said.

The weather is expected to bring little relief today, as winds will be "pretty much the same," gusting at 50 mph during morning hours, 75 mph during the afternoon and slowing only to 55 mph at night, National Weather Service meteorologist Noel Isla said.

Building high pressure is creating humidity levels of less than 10 percent, and wind could blow smoke and sand, creating additional hazards for large vehicles.

Winds should weaken by Wednesday and temperatures should begin cooling by Thursday, the weather service reported.

Information on the fires is available at www.nctimes.com and www.sdcountyemergency.com. Residents can call 211 for non-emergency calls related to the fire. Cell phone calls should be directed to (858) 300-1211.

The Associated Press and staff writers Philip K. Ireland and Bob Masingale contributed to this report.

Contact staff writer Sarah Wilkins at (760) 740-3524 or swilkins@nctimes.com.

Roads closed because of Ramona-area wildfire include:

- Highway 78 at Magnolia Avenue
- Highway 78 at Rancho Santa Teresa
- Highway 79 at Highway 78
- Old Julian Highway at Vista Ramona Road
- Highway 79 at Highway 76

--- Source: California Highway Patrol, as of 10:45 p.m.

Contacts and updates:

24-hour Community, Health and Disaster Information: Dial 211

County General Information Line: (858) 694-3900

County Office of Emergency Services fire updates: www.sdcountyemergency.com

San Diego Gas & Electric Co.: www.sdge.com

California Highway Patrol traffic and road closure information: cad.chp.ca.gov

County Animal Services emergency information: (619) 767-2675

CALIFORNIA FIRES

Smoke drifts north

SJ Merc 10/26/2007 1A

SOME OF THAT HAZE OVER BAY AREA IS FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRES

By Julie Sevrens Lyons

Mercury News

Smoke from the Southern California fires is everywhere.

It's all along the San Diego coastline, where the sky is a burnt orange. It's several hundred miles out to sea. And while you may be surprised, it's even *here* in Silicon Valley, where tiny particles of smoke and soot show up in satellite images.

"There's a heck of a lot of smoke," said Gennet Paauwe, a spokeswoman for the Cali-

fornia Air Resources Board in Sacramento. "And we have a little bit on our doorstep."

But unlike in Southern California, where residents are being cautioned to stay indoors, avoid exercise and wear masks outside, Northern California's air is still generally clean.

And forecasters don't expect it to get much worse.

"It's well within the healthy range for all groups,

including sensitive groups" such as asthmatics, said Karen Schkolnick, a spokeswoman for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

Still, Paauwe said, even in the Bay Area it's important for people with respiratory or heart problems to take it easy in the next few days and pay attention to their bodies. "It's better to take caution than to have something terrible happen," she said.

Smoke from the wildfires contributed, in part, to that layer of haze blanketing the Bay Area on Thursday. It even reached as far inland as the San Joaquin Valley.

Invisible threat

Even if you can't see it, smoke can pose a problem, experts say. The particulate matter — solid particles and liquid droplets — in smoke is very tiny, about one-thirtieth

the diameter of a human hair. These particles can build up in a person's respiratory system, causing itchy eyes and runny noses, and aggravating heart and lung diseases. Fine particles have even been linked to premature deaths in

people with health problems.

In San Diego, where about a dozen fires have burned more than 300,000 acres this week, sending plumes of thick brown smoke over much of the county, air quality has reached unhealthy to hazardous levels in some areas. The so-called "air quality index" is considered good if it falls between 0 and 50. Communities such as Chula Vista, Del Mar and Otay Mesa were all expected to hit 182 on Thursday. By comparison, Santa Clara Valley was expected to hover around 36 Thursday and hit 52 today.

"Everywhere you look, it's hazy," said John Lydon, who lives in Santee with his family. On Sunday, the day the first fires broke out, Lydon's smoke detector went off while he was carrying groceries inside, even though the closest fire at that time was about 15 miles away.

"Even now," he said Thursday, "it doesn't seem to have cleared up that much."

Health experts are cautioning that it could be weeks before air quality improves in Southern California. After the Cedar fire swept through that area four years ago, traces of

the smoke lingered for weeks and winds kicked up ashes more than a month later. Even when the smoke is no longer visible, tiny particles often linger in the air until a good strong rain washes them away.

"It's probably going to be at least a week — or two — before we're talking normal, healthy levels," said Ross Porter, a spokesman for the American Lung Association of California. "We want people to realize this is a persistent condition they're going to be working with through the

continued →

holidays.”

Jennifer Otilio has done all she can to avoid the bad air. Early Monday, as the smoke was beginning to choke her northern San Diego County neighborhood, she packed up her three kids and two dogs and drove her Suburban straight to Los Gatos, where her parents live.

Four years ago, large fires in San Diego caused problems with her oldest daughter's asthma. Otilio wasn't going to take any chances this time around.

“My throat hurt Monday morning. You could already feel it,” she said. And as they made their way up Interstate 5, windows tightly closed, “we saw smoke all the way up until the Grapevine.”

Long-distance traveler

As surprising as it might be to hear that smoke can travel so far, scientists now know it can make its way a heck of a lot farther.

Smoke particles can remain suspended in the air for a very long time, said Tom Cahill, a professor of physics and atmospheric sciences at University of California-Davis. Cahill teamed up with several other

researchers to trace the origin of air pollution wafting over the Pacific Ocean and determined it was from a massive dust storm in China.

“Most of the fine particles at places such as Crater Lake National Park in the spring are in fact Chinese,” Cahill said. “Not just some. Most.”

Yet Cahill said he also doesn't anticipate that residents here will see any negative health effects from the bits of Southern California smoke that have permeated the Bay Area's upper atmosphere.

It's a far different story down south, where residents have been turning up in emergency rooms with burning eyes and irritated lungs.

Dr. Thomas M. Dailey, chief of pulmonary medicine at Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara, said the legacy of these fires won't just be the acres burned or the homes destroyed.

“It's exposing an entire population in Southern California,” he said, “to very unhealthy air.” **X X X**

Contact Julie Sevens Lyons at jlyons@mercurynews.com or (408) 920-5989.



Source: NASA satellite image

Welcome to the Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register
visaliatimesdelta.com tulareadvanceregister.com
Classifieds Dating

Customer Service: Subscribe Now | Place an Ad | Contact Us
Weather Jobs Cars Homes Shopping

VISALIA TIMES-DELTA

Tulare Advance-Register

Search Tulare County: All

Go

Friday, October, 2007

- Home
- Local News
- Local Sports
- Business
- Living
- Obituaries
- Opinion
- Viewpoint
- Entertainment
- Our Schools
- Video
- Forums
- Blogs
- Databases
- SkyCam
- What's New
- Mobile Site
- Archives
- Photo Galleries
- Celebrations
- Nation/World
- Travel
- Technology
- Tulare Weather
- Visalia Weather
- Text Messages
- RSS Feeds
- EXTRA
- Communities
- E-Newsletters
- Contests
- Directories
- Customer Service
- Tulare Advance-Register
- El Sol
- ROI
- Living Here
- Tulare County magazine

ADVERTISEMENT



DONATE YOUR VEHICLE AND HELP LOCAL NEEDY FAMILIES
IT'S TAX DEDUCTIBLE • IT HELPS FEED LOCAL CHILDREN
CALL 732-0101 Help Visalia Emergency Aid Fight Poverty

Officials: Smoke from fires could taint Valley air

By Michael Miyamoto
mmiyamoto@visalia.gannett.com

STORYCHAT  Post Comment

Southern California's wildfires could soon take their toll on the Valley's air.



it's **BIG DAYS of TUNDRA**

STARRING THE #1-SELLING HALF-TON IN CALIFORNIA.

TUNDRA

Local air pollution control officials have issued a health caution for today in Tulare, Kern, Kings and Fresno counties, as well as counties farther north.

"Because of the uncertainty of when these fires

could be extinguished, the cautionary statement is in effect for the next several days," air pollution officials said.

A trough off the Northern California coast affected wind patterns and started bringing smoke from Southern California's wildfires into the Central Valley Wednesday, said Modesto Vasquez, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Hanford.

The same weather and wind patterns are forecast through at least today, Vasquez said.

"There will likely be more smoke coming in," Vasquez said. The smoke is in the 10,000- to 15,000-foot elevation range.

"These fires are producing large amounts of smoke, which is resulting in increasing particulate concentrations," said Gary Arcemont, a meteorologist at the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Residents of the Central Valley are advised to use caution.

Related articles:

- Visalia family's weekend outing turns into chaos
- Local firefighters called to battle blazes in SoCal
- Local church gathering bedding for fire victims
- 'The fire was running out of homes to burn'

ADVERTISEMENT



FOOT PAIN?
FOUR PRODUCTS ARE THE SOLUTION!

Visalia 739-7500
Fresno 226-7500
Come see us today!

ADVERTISEMENT

Air, water at issue; some fires rage on

Sac Bee 10.27.06 (A)
Bee News Services

With some of the worst wildfires dying down, many Southern Californians lucky enough to find their homes still standing could nevertheless face hardships for weeks to come, including polluted air, no electricity and no drinking water.

Power lines are down in many burned-over areas, and the smoke and ash could irritate people's lungs for as long as the blazes keep burning.

Randy and Aimee Powers returned to the San Diego mountain community of Ramona on Friday to find their home intact but without electricity or water, after firetrucks had drained the town's reservoir.

"It's better to be at home. We're going to stick it out and do whatever we have to do up here to survive. We'll make it through," said Randy Powers.

The Powerses were among thousands of people who were returning to their neighborhoods as shelters across Southern California began

shutting down. The largest, San Diego's Qualcomm Stadium, which had housed 10,000 evacuees at the height of the disaster, was being emptied and readied for Sunday's NFL game between the San Diego Chargers and Houston Texans.

While the danger had eased considerably since the weekend, weary firefighters continued to battle wildfires that have plagued seven counties since last weekend.

Better weather, with slowing winds and the promise of falling temperatures and rising humidity, has become the key ally in the land and air war against the fires.

Several blazes remained a threat in Orange and San Bernardino counties. Mandatory evacuations remained in effect for some communities.

In all, nearly two dozen fires had raced across more than 500,000 acres - or 781 square miles - by Friday. Seven people have been reported killed by flames. Seven others died of various causes after being evacuated.

About 1,800 homes have been destroyed.

Damage has been put at more than \$1 billion in San Diego County alone.

The most ferocious in terms of damage, the Witch fire, which has consumed more than 1,000 houses and nearly 200,000 acres, continued to burn strongly Friday afternoon. The Harris fire, raging near the Mexican border, was also far from containment.

But there were also signs of progress. Several of the smaller fires were reported 100 percent contained, and a major fire at Camp Pendleton, which has burned almost 20,000 acres, was close to containment.

The Santiago fire in Orange County continued to burn fiercely in the Santa Ana Mountains, threatening 750 homes in one canyon and moving quickly toward Riverside County. Firefighters were trying to stop the blaze from backing down into Silverado Canyon and jumping a ridgeline and heading toward Lake Elsinore. Fire authorities termed the blaze "very active" with "extreme rates of speed."

It was being fought by 1,100 firefighters, 110 fire engines, three helicopters, four air tankers, 21 hand crews and 10 bulldozers.

In Green Valley Lake near Running Springs in San Bernardino County, firefighters worked to contain the Slide fire, which threatened about 10,000 structures.

The Orange County Fire Authority said that the reward offered for the arrest and conviction of the people responsible for the Santiago arson has risen to \$250,000.

Meanwhile, a 41-year-old Sun Valley man suspected of starting a fire in the West Hills area of Los Angeles has been charged with arson, the District Attorney's Office announced Friday. Catalino Pineda is accused of one count of arson of a structure or forest, but he is not suspected of causing any of the major fires.

Pollution control authorities across Southern California warned that smoke and ash are making the air dangerous. People with heart or respiratory disease, the elderly and children in those areas were urged to remain indoors.

Some people, like Robert Sanders of Rancho Bernardo, had no homes to return to. The 56-year-old photographer came back to find his house reduced to a smoldering pile of rubble. The fire-resistant box he kept his transparencies in was intact, but its contents were melted.

"I've lost my history," Sanders

said. "All the work I've done for the past 30 years, it's all destroyed."

Nearby, Allen Jost and his wife, Edie, were among the lucky ones. Although 26 of 53 homes in their Lancashire Way neighborhood were destroyed, they lost only the spa on their back porch.

Wearing gloves and a respirator mask as he swept soot from his driveway, Jost predicted that hard-hit Rancho Bernardo would eventually bounce back.

"It's going to be a construction zone," said Jost, whose home was still without power and gas. "But the neighbors are already getting together and talking about getting a single source for demolition and design and all that. I think when people rebuild, they'll rebuild in a way that this'll never happen again. We're going to have nice new houses - in a year or two."

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger acknowledged it would take time for the area to recover.

"It won't be overnight, and it won't be easy, but we won't let up until Southern California gets back to normal," he said as he announced several relief measures that will make it easier for fire victims to get unemployment benefits, reproduce documents lost in the blazes and remove debris from the burned-out foundations of what used to be their homes.

"Hundreds of thousands of Californians had their lives turned upside down, and my administration will not rest until their lives are returned to normal," Schwarzenegger said at a news

conference at the Office of Emergency Services offices in Rancho Cordova.

Schwarzenegger announced 17 separate emergency orders after meeting with Cabinet secretaries and department directors.

He then told reporters that the state is being "severely tested," and that while he is happy with its response, "We can't rest on our laurels."

At his news conference, Schwarzenegger said the state "will not tolerate price gougers or shady contractors" out to profit at fire victims' expense. Southern California's economy, he said, sustained a "body blow" and "we won't let up" in recovery efforts "until Southern California gets back to normal."

Cont'd →

In one executive order, the governor suspended an Unemployment Insurance Code section that establishes a one-week waiting period for people seeking jobless benefits. The waiver will apply in seven Southern California counties through April 21.

Another order granted fee waivers in the fire counties for anybody looking for copies of birth, death, fetal death, marriage and divorce documents who suffered the loss of family members, property or their jobs.

The governor also directed the Franchise Tax Board and the Board of Equalization to give fire victims extensions on paying fees and penalties.

Compiled from Bee staff writer Andy Furillo, the Associated Press, Los Angeles Times and New York Times.

XXX

CBS 2 - KCAL 9 - Los Angeles - Southern California - LA Breaking News, Weather, Traffic, Sports, Blogs, Video, Slideshows: Air Quality Improving, Still A Concern Near Fires



(<http://ad.doubleclick.net/click;h=v8/35fb/0/0/%2a/p;139660845;0-0;0;13395717;3454-728/90;23>)

Top News

Save | E-mail ([mailto:?subject=Air Quality Improving, Still A Concern Near Fires&body=http://cbs2.com/topstories/local_story_302142342.html](mailto:?subject=Air%20Quality%20Improving,%20Still%20A%20Concern%20Near%20Fires&body=http://cbs2.com/topstories/local_story_302142342.html)) | Print

Oct 29, 2007 11:18 am US/Pacific

Air Quality Improving, Still A Concern Near Fires

- FIRE WATCH: Complete Fire Coverage
- SoCal Firestorm: Complete Video Coverage
- Messages Of Thanks To Firefighters

(CBS) LOS ANGELES Air quality in the Southland is improving, but smoke from the recent wildfires still means residents in some areas should take precautions, officials said Monday.

Air quality was expected to be moderate in most areas of the Southland, but areas where active fires are still burning -- such as Saddleback Valley in Orange County -- will continue to have unhealthy air, according to the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

In areas with unhealthy air quality, residents were urged to avoid vigorous activity, indoors or out, and keep windows and doors closed unless it is extremely hot outside. People with heart or respiratory diseases should remain inside, according to the AQMD.

AQMD officials also urged schools and day care centers to restrict children's outdoor

activities.

(© 2007 CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. The Associated Press contributed to this report.)

From Our Partners

Careers: Find a job in Southern California

(<http://ad.doubleclick.net/click%3Bh=v8/35fb/3/0/%2a/f%3B39105271%3B1-0%3B0%3B13395717%3B152-1>,

SPONSORED LINKS

Get listed here (http://www.kanoodle.com/signup/contact_information.html?refid=80968703)

AARP Auto Ins Program From The Hartford
Over 50? Save Up To \$385 On Fast, No Hassle Auto Ins. Get A Free Quote
AARP.TheHartford.com

Affordable Health Coverage - Blue Cross
Need health coverage? Quality health plans. Request information today!
www.BCCHealthPlans.com

Refinance Rates At 5%
\$175,000 Mortgage for \$730/mo. Get up to 4 Free Quotes - Apply Today!
www.RiteQuote.com

California Refinance At 5.5% Fixed Rate
\$250,000 Mortgage for \$866/month. Get up to 4 Free Quotes - Apply Now!
www.quotesound.com

View 2007 Consumers' Most Wanted Vehicle
Get FREE Local Dealer Prices & Reviews on 2007 Most Wanted Vehicle.
www.edmunds.com



Air quality was expected to be moderate in most areas of the Southland, but areas where active fires are still burning will continue to have unhealthy air.

Top News Stories

- Residents, Firefighters Brace For Santa Ana Winds (http://cbs2.com/topstories/local_story_302091115.html)
- O.C. Sheriff Indicted On Corruption Charges (http://cbs2.com/topstories/local_story_303040057.html)
- Bush Chides Congress On Spending Bills (http://cbs2.com/topstories/topstories_story_303102014.html)
- Santiago Fire Expected To Be Contained Nov. 2 (http://cbs2.com/topstories/local_story_301150857.html)
- Tropical Storm Noel Heads To Cuba After Killing 20 (http://cbs2.com/topstories/topstories_story_303070214.html)

(<http://ad.doubleclick.net/click;h=v>)



WORLD / America

Calif. fires on retreat as experts warn of air hazard

(Agencies)

Updated: 2007-10-28 14:28

SAN DIEGO, United States - Firefighters tightened their grip on California's wildfires Saturday as officials expressed concern at the health hazards posed by vast plumes of smoke shrouding the region.



San Diego firefighter Paul Moscoso puts out a small pocket of fire in the remains of a destroyed home in Rancho Bernardo, California. California officials called on health-sensitive people to stay indoors Saturday due to heavy smoke pollution shrouding the region as the wildfires which devastated the state this week retreated. [Agencies]

Cooler temperatures and calmer winds have allowed firefighters to staunch or contain most of the 23 fires that have erupted since last Sunday, leaving seven dead, destroying 1,800 homes and displacing 640,000 people.

Firefighting personnel have predicted that three major blazes could be brought under control within 10 days, offering the prospect of a return to normalcy after one of the worst fire disasters in Californian history.

However, Californians were still threatened by the side-effects of the fire, which has elevated air pollution levels to three times higher than normal, raising concern for the elderly, children and people with respiratory ailments.

Patricia Rey, a spokeswoman for the Environmental Protection Agency, said authorities were advising people in fire-hit areas to stay indoors.

"For sensitive groups, we are trying to keep them inside, telling them to try to avoid prolonged exercise activities. If you can do it inside it will be better. Run the air conditioner rather than keep open windows," she said.

"There are pockets of areas that are worse than others, but overall the advisories say they should really be concerned about outdoor activities."

Some 203,000 hectares (502,000 acres) of tinder-dry park and forest land have been incinerated by the firestorm.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services said firefighters were buoyed by the weather conditions but remained vigilant. Figures released by the office on Saturday showed that some 20,600 properties were under threat.

"The weather has enabled the fire personnel to make great progress but there is still a long way to go," spokeswoman Rochelle Jenkins said.

The National Weather Service has warned the weather could again pose problems for crews on Sunday, with less humidity and winds increasing to 25-40 kilometers (15-25 miles) per hour in canyons and passes.

The fires are the worst to hit the state since 2003, when 22 people were killed and more than 3,000 homes lost in a series of blazes, at least two of which were believed to have been set deliberately.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said authorities would ruthlessly track down anyone suspected of starting a fire.

"If I were one of those people who started the fires I would not sleep soundly," Schwarzenegger said. "We're right behind you -- turn yourself in."

San Diego County officials meanwhile said Saturday 640,000 people, sharply higher than previous estimates of 500,000, had been displaced in the disaster.

Nearly 3,000 people remained in temporary shelters across the state as many people headed home to find their homes reduced to piles of ash and rubble.

Hundreds of mental health experts have fanned out across the state to offer counseling and support to the thousands of people affected.

"Some of them are overwhelmed, very sad, stressed, angry, frustrated," said Karen Hoganson, a Red Cross mental health supervisor who spent the past few days counseling people at San Diego's Qualcomm stadium.

California officials have set up a special task force to investigate insurance and contract fraud matters as well as con-artists who pretend to be claims adjusters of contractors.

"We are going after the scam artists, price gougers, shady contractors and anyone else who preys on people hurt by these fires," Schwarzenegger said.

"If anyone tries to exploit this tragedy I will make sure you will pay for rest of your life," added Schwarzenegger. "We will arrest them and we will prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law."

San Diego County officials have put the cost of property damage at more than one billion dollars although insurance industry analysts have said it may go as high as 1.6 billion.

EDITORIALS

Home > Opinion > Editorials

 Editorials RSS Feed  Print Story  E-mail Story

We may breathe easier

Batch Data Processor | Monday, Oct 29 2007 6:10 PM

Last Updated: Monday, Oct 29 2007 6:15 PM

Kudos to Gov. Schwarzenegger for giving the major cities of the Central Valley more say on the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Board -- and two new seats to experts in a position to make policy decisions based on their specific areas of expertise.

Schwarzenegger recently signed state Sen. Mike Machado's SB 719, a move that clean-air advocates have every reason to cheer. The new law makes room on the expanded board for a doctor and a scientist who live under the murky skies of San Joaquin Valley -- and who specialize in the health impacts of air pollution.

The law also opens two additional spaces on the board for city council representatives, increasing the total board membership to 15, and giving cities like Bakersfield, Fresno and Modesto a stronger voice.

Some farmers and business groups objected to Machado's bill because it will detract from their influence over the air board, which has broad regulatory power over homes, businesses and agribusiness interests. Perhaps it will.

But they were overruled by some of the dirtiest air in the nation -- air that has brought valley residents sky-high asthma rates and an array of pollution-related respiratory problems that directly translate into 1,000 deaths each year. The Central Valley needs to start moving quickly and decisively in the direction of workable solutions, and Machado's law paves the way.

Kudos also to state Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, who along with Machado and Assemblyman Juan Arambula, D-Fresno, was one of only three San Joaquin Valley lawmakers to vote for the bill.

That took guts, but it was the right thing to do.

MOST READ

1. Girl hit by SUV gets taken to hospital
2. Man cuts his neck during Taser
3. Doctor calls pot good medicine
4. Pastor named bishop after long struggle
5. Funeral services for Oct. 30

MOST EMAILED

1. Q and A with Julio Mercado
2. Man who died being Tasered identified
3. IRS messed with wrong church
4. A new year, a new body

Warnings issued over California fire pollution

Posted Sun Oct 28, 2007 6:44am AEDT

Cool weather and light winds have helped firefighters in southern California bring more of the state's bushfires under control, but health officials are warning of hazardous air quality in the wake of the fires.

Two-thirds of the fires have now been contained but more than 300,000 residents are still under evacuation orders.

The fires devoured swaths of Californian territory and spewed massive amounts of smoke into the atmosphere.

Alarms have been raised about the longer-term effects of the pollution and the greenhouse gases produced by the fires, which ravaged 203,000 hectares of tinder-dry park and forest land.

California Air Resources Board spokeswoman Patricia Rey says in one week, the blazes poured the equivalent amount of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere as 440,000 cars do over the course of one year.

"It is very concerning right now," she said.

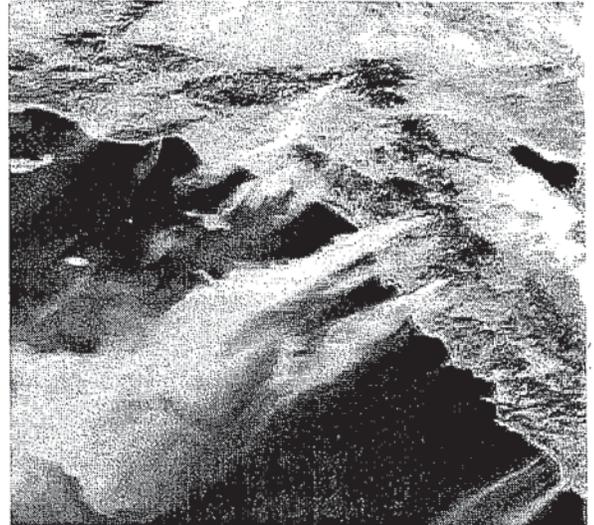
"We are really putting a lot of priority on trying to put out the right advisories for the people."

The board urged residents in five counties to stay indoors due to elevated pollution levels that are three times higher than the federal norms, raising particular danger for the elderly, children and those with asthma or breathing ailments.

"There are pockets of areas that are worse than others, but overall the advisories say they should really be concerned about outdoor activities."

- ABC/AFP

Tags: [disasters-and-accidents](#), [emergency-incidents](#), [fires](#), [bushfire](#), [environment](#), [pollution](#), [air-pollution](#), [united-states](#)



Pollution warnings have been issued in five US counties, following the Californian bushfires. (File photo) (AFP: European Space Agency)

- [Video: Many evacuees return home in California \(ABC News\)](#)

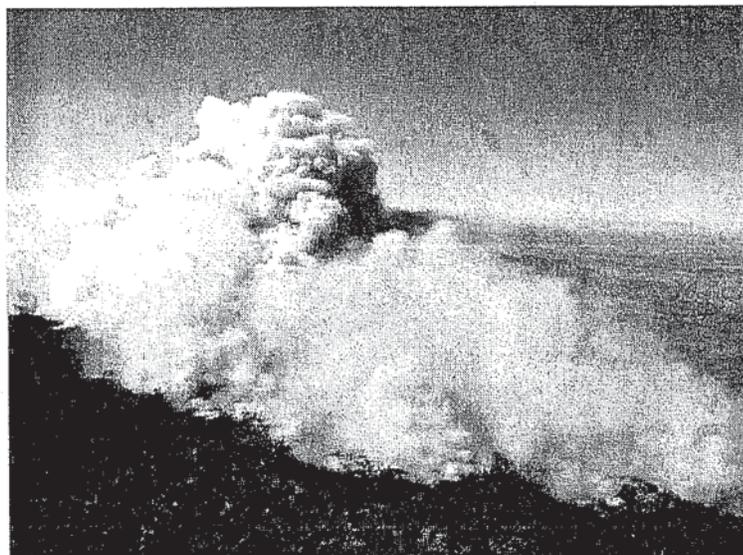
[Back to front page »](#)

[All NYTimes.com Blogs »](#)

OCTOBER 27, 2007, 1:44 PM

Unnatural Hazards in the Fire Zone and Beyond

By ANDREW C. REVKIN



Smoke billows near Lake Arrowhead, California. (Credit: Jim Wilson/The New York Times)

There was plenty of debate this week about whether human-driven climate change played a role in the fires that have scorched large patches of Southern California or raised the odds of more such infernos in years to come.

As with the intensity of hurricanes, that's a tough, if not impossible, call. The natural climate variability in the West has seen great swings of drought and wetter periods without any influence from people.

Some recent research, including analysis of climate models and past records by Richard Seager at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University, projects that the buildup of greenhouse gases is pushing the region into one of its periodic megadroughts.

At the same time, though, this week saw rare agreement among libertarian and some environmental groups and forest ecologists on at least one point: that the destruction in the fire zones was the clear result of much more straightforward and real-time human actions — both the way we treat forests and where and how we build communities (not to mention arson, of course).

The Competitive Enterprise Institute (the same group that last year ran ads saying, "Carbon dioxide...They call it pollution... We call it life) last week excoriated federal officials for generations of bad forest management on federal lands and for state and federal insurance policies that encourage building in fire-prone areas.

"The federal government has mismanaged all the National Forests for a century — believing fires were unnatural and evil and must be extinguished at all costs," said Robert J. Smith, an adjunct analyst for CEI. "Because the feds stamped these out for about 100 years, the forests have become filled with duff, needles, cones, deadwood and downed wood, and thousands of small undergrowth trees — what amounts to a tinder box."

The bottom line? With or without a push from the global buildup of greenhouse gases, the world's prosperous (in this case) and poor (in many others) are increasingly getting in the way of natural hazards, with predictable outcomes.

Search This Blog

Search

Recent Posts

- October 30 **Ice on Air**
0 comments
A discussion of the Arctic sea ice retreat, on WHYY radio in Philadelphia.
- October 29 **The Art of Primate Conservation**
6 comments
Stephen Nash is an artist with an arcane specialty that has made him all too busy these days — drawing precise renditions of primates and other animals on the brink of extinction.
- October 29 **Two New (and Very Different) Roadmaps for Climate Progress**
10 comments
California, New York and other states are joining some Canadian provinces and European countries in a pact aimed at eventually linking their "cap-and-trade" markets in heat-trapping gases. But some climate and economics experts see scant evidence such efforts will limit global warming.
- October 27 **Unnatural Hazards in the Fire Zone and Beyond**
10 comments
The debate over whether human-driven climate change played a role in the fires in Southern California.
- October 26 **Bush Adviser Weighs In on Climate and Health**
76 comments
President Bush's science adviser offers an explanation for some of the edits of testimony on climate change and health.

House Payments Fall Again!

Think You Pay Too Much for Your Mortgage? Find Out!



Select Your State
AL

Estimate New Payment

About Dot Earth

By 2050 or so, the world population is expected to reach nine billion, essentially adding two Chinas to the number of people alive today. Those billions will be seeking food, water and other resources on a planet where, scientists say, humans are already shaping climate and the web of life. In Dot Earth, reporter Andrew C. Revkin examines efforts to balance human affairs with the planet's limits. Supported in part by a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, Mr. Revkin tracks relevant news from suburbia to Siberia, and conducts an interactive exploration of trends and ideas with readers and experts.



On the Dot

ENERGY
New Options Needed



Access to cheap energy underpins modern societies. Finding enough to fuel

CLIMATE
The Arctic in Transition



Enshrined in history as an untouchable frontier, the Arctic is being transformed by

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

[More Metro news](#)

Experts: Wildfires only going to worsen

Many blame threat on global warming

By **Mike Lee**
UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

October 30, 2007

Get used to it.

That's what many climate experts are saying about catastrophic wildfires, including the dozen that have turned San Diego County into a disaster zone for the past week.

They believe such blazes will become a regular part of life in Southern California because global warming is intensifying nature's cycles by lengthening fire seasons and prolonging droughts in parts of the West. The consequences would be more deaths, more houses consumed by flames and more budgets busted by firefighting costs.

"The fires we just experienced are some of the first effects we are feeling from climate change," said Walter Oechel, a biology professor at San Diego State University who had to evacuate his home in Jamul last week.

"We now have a very graphic representation of what many of us have been saying for a long time. It's hitting me very directly and personally, as well as the county as a whole," he said.

Scientists and policy-makers said the threatened succession of massive wildfires is a powerful reason to cut greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming. They also said smarter development policies and better fire-prevention plans can help reduce damage from future infernos.

In recent years, many researchers have linked global warming to environmental changes such as hurricanes and polar ice melt. This has touched off a worldwide debate about climate science, what impact humans have on Earth's atmosphere and whether higher temperatures worsen natural disasters.

Scientists are careful to note that they can't definitively link any specific event to climate change.

"The connection between global warming, Santa Ana winds and extremely low Southern California precipitation last winter are not known with sufficient certainty to conclusively link global warming with this disaster," said researchers at the University of California Merced and the University of Arizona in a statement released Friday.

Not everyone is convinced that global warming explains the recent blazes.

"I am a little skeptical," said Thomas Wordell, an analyst with the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. "The ecosystem (in Southern California) . . . has been very fire prone for a long time. We've had droughts . . . before anybody came up with the terminology of climate change."

Wordell's view aside, international, national and local groups of scientists are increasingly alarmed about the

potentially devastating effects of climate change. These include the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which recently won the Nobel Peace Prize for its work, the National Research Council and numerous University of California researchers.

They generally contend that the connection between global warming and more destructive wildfires is too clear to ignore.

The flames that have consumed much of San Diego County and Southern California "are consistent with what the latest modeling (studies) show," said Ronald Neilson, a professor at Oregon State University and a bioclimatologist for the U.S. Forest Service.

"This is exactly what we've been predicting to happen, both in ■■■ fire forecasts for this year and in longer-term patterns," Neilson said.

Five years ago, Neilson and other Oregon State University researchers predicted that periodic increases in rain and snowfall, combined with higher temperatures and rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, would spur vegetation growth. That would add to already extensive quantities of fuel caused by decades of fire suppression, in which blazes are not allowed to burn out of control and thereby eliminate dead or dying vegetation.

A projection last year by several academic and government scientists said the failure to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions could lead to 55 percent more large wildfires in California by the end of the century.

In addition, a 2006 study in *Geophysical Research Letters*, the publication of the American Geophysical Union, suggests that Santa Ana winds may occur more frequently in November and December as Southern California's climate becomes warmer. In turn, that would heighten the risk of deadly blazes.

Other data show cause for concern as well.

In the 1960s, wildfires burned roughly 4.5 million acres in the United States each year. Since 2000, the average annual total is more than 7 million acres, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. Almost all of the country's largest fires in recent years have been in the West.

"In the past two decades, wildfires have become larger, they have lasted longer and burned much more area than in the past," said Jay Gulledge, senior scientist at the Pew Center on Global Climate Change in Arlington, Va.

Last year, scientists and land managers from the Association for Fire Ecology gathered in San Diego to discuss such trends. Their talks resulted in "The San Diego Declaration," a document that looks eerily prescient in light of the past week's blazes.

"Fire suppression costs may continue to increase, with decreasing effectiveness under extreme fire weather and fuel conditions," the statement says.

From 1997 through 1999, federal agencies spent about \$400 million a year on fire suppression. Since then, the average has grown to more than three times that figure: It's about \$1.4 billion this year, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

One unanswered question is whether permanent or temporary climate changes are causing the ongoing drought in the Southwest.

Researchers connect the drought to the retreat of winter storms and the extension of high-pressure weather patterns into the Southwest, which reduces rainfall. They also discuss how global warming could be causing snowpacks to melt too early each year, creating water-supply shortages in the summer and fall.

Other connections between fire and climate change are more complex. For example, large fires generate enormous volumes of carbon dioxide, which promotes additional warming and more fires.

The amount of greenhouse gases emitted by last week's blazes in Southern California equal that of roughly

500,000 cars traveling on the road for one year, according to the state Air Resources Board.

Increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere also promotes plant growth, particularly in places with limited water, said Oechel at SDSU.

"We could have the unfortunate combination of more fuel and more severe fire weather coming together," he said.

To combat such problems, policy-makers and environmental groups said the latest fires should spur nationwide efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from tailpipes and factories.

"The first rule of getting out of a hole is to stop digging," said Terry Tamminen, former chief of environmental protection for California and a senior fellow at the New America Foundation think tank in Washington, D.C.

■Mike Lee: (619) 542-4570; mike.lee@uniontrib.com

Find this article at:

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/metro/20071030-9999-1n30more.html>

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright 2007 Union-Tribune Publishing Co. ? A Copley Newspaper.Site

More Metro news

Airborne ash expected to be lingering problem

By Robert Krier
UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

November 1, 2007

The Santa Ana winds predicted this weekend to kick up soot and ash from the region's wildfires are expected to be too weak to cause widespread problems with air quality.

That's the good news.

The bad news is the county could be dealing with the problem well into next year. Until a soaking rain, any strong east wind could blow soot and ash from the barren earth all the way to the coast.

After the October 2003 wildfires, the county encountered the problem into the following February, said Bill Brick, senior meteorologist at the county Air Pollution Control District.

Lakeside resident Dennis Poe said he dealt with blowing ash nearly a year after the 2003 fires.

"The ash that fell initially was one thing, but the ash that fell later was just as adverse," Poe said. "Every time a Santa Ana blew in, more ash would come."

The winds this week should peak between midnight Friday and noon Saturday.

Near the burn zones, the air Saturday probably will be unhealthy for the very young, the elderly or people with asthma or chronic breathing problems. Those groups are encouraged to limit physical activity, and parents should consider holding children out of outdoor soccer games, said Rick Ford, director of respiratory care at UCSD Medical Center in Hillcrest.

Most cities should have good to moderate air quality, said Adam Canter, an associate meteorologist with the pollution control district.

■ Robert Krier: (619) 293-2241; rob.krier@uniontrib.com

Find this article at:
<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/metro/20071101-9999-7m1badair.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



SEARCH

- Site
 Web
 Yellow Pages
 A-List Businesses

- San Diego News
- National News
- News Archive
- Contact 10News
- 10News Team
- 10News To Go
- E-mail Alerts
- Get RSS

NEWS

- Home
- San Diego News**
- Weather
- Traffic
- Investigations
- Water Crisis
- Entertainment
- Staying Healthy
- Sports
- Site Contents

MARKETPLACE

- Contests
- House And Home
- Expert Connection
- Chef Larry
- A-List City Guide
- Dating
- San Diego Jobs
- Real Estate
- Automotive

10NEWS

- About
- Advertise
- Contact Us
- AZTECA AMERICA

SITE TOOLS

- Breaking News Alerts
- 10News For Phones
- RSS



San Diego News

Experts: Ash From Wildfires Remain In San Diego Air

POSTED: 5:57 pm PST November 5, 2007
 UPDATED: 7:02 am PST November 6, 2007

SAN DIEGO -- When the fires raged on the ground, ash and smoke gathered in the air.

Building materials, plastics, chemicals, and electronics – those are some of the harmful substances that burned up and polluted the air San Diegans breathe.

Local lung experts told 10News that when the smoke clears there are lingering hazards, even now.

Kaiser pulmonary specialist Dr. David Levine said, "The air quality is still not going to be good for several weeks and people still need to be concerned."

Minute particles that remain in the air, or get stirred up by winds, are the chief danger, experts said.

"(Particles) can lodge deep down in the airways and is associated with a host of respiratory symptoms and sometimes even associated with an increase in heart attacks and cardiac events," said University of California, San Diego pulmonary specialist Dr. Smita Desai.

Levine added, "If they have symptoms they should see their doctor. And those symptoms can be eye irritation, nasal congestion, sore throat, and more serious things such as coughs, shortness of breath, wheezing like someone with asthma."

The county of San Diego's Air Pollution Control District monitors air quality and posts that information on its Web site.

"Cedar Fire studies from the 2003 fires showed that air quality was worse than normal for up to a month out," said Desai.

Ash on the ground is another concern.

After the fires, viewers wrote to 10News asking about the dangers of ash on fruits, vegetables and soil in their home gardens.

10News weathercaster and garden expert Loren Nancarrow offered some advice.

"We were under the smoke as much as anyone here in the North County so everything has been coated with a fine to thick cover of ash. I'm just treating as though it was poison so I'm washing it extra well," said Nancarrow. "Everything I've been able to find on the Internet says it you wash it off it, and this includes the county of San Diego, says if you wash it off it will be fine."

10News' Steve Atkinson asked Nancarrow, "We're talking about lingering effects of some of this stuff. If you till it up, is it still going to be in the soil? What does that do for the soil?"

"It will break it down. Micro-organisms will break it down. But from a gardener's point of view it really screws up the soil. Our soil is really alkaline and so we don't need to add anything that will make it more so and ash just sends it through the roof. What I'm going to be doing and recommending to people is taking household vinegar and spraying whole property and that will bring the PH back down," said Nancarrow.

Copyright 2008 by 10News.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

LOCAL HEADLINES

Man Looking For Estranged Wife Stabs Her Brother, Sister

NATIONAL HEADLINES

AP: Ex-DNC Head Kirk To Replace Kennedy

E-Mail News Alerts

Get breaking news and daily headlines.

[Browse all e-mail newsletters](#)

Related To Story



Video: Tips For Dealing With Ash From Wildfires

MOST POPULAR STORIES

Man Looking For Estranged Wife Stabs Her Brother, Sister

Pro Surfer Sentenced For Fatal DUI Crash

2 Gunmen Break Into Carlsbad Home, Rob Couple

Ex-Sailor Says He Was Hazed By Other Sailors For Being Gay

» [More Most Popular](#)

ON THE SIDE

Lower Your APR Now

Pay Less For Airfare



Eat Healthy At Work

Recognize Alzheimer's

JOB SEARCHING TIPS

monster

Customize Your Resume For Best Results



You have a resume, but it's not working as well as you'd like it to. Find out what can you do to increase the number of calls you receive for job interviews. [More](#)

Why Having Fun At Work Matters

Ten Tips To Boost Your Interview IQ

Make The Most Of Key Career Moments

8 Tips For Job Hunting During A Recession