



CITY OF VENTURA

FIRE DEPARTMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

Date Of Release: 11/15/2022
Fire Incident Number: 22-0104350
Incident Commander: Fire Battalion Chief Matt Brock
Incident Type: Vegetation Fire
Date/Time of Incident: 01:30 am
Incident Location: Telephone Rd. at Ramelli Ave., Ventura, CA
Cause/Origin: Intentional illegal and unsafe burning
Injuries Reported: None
Units Committed On-Scene: 4 engines, 1 water tender, 2 BC's
Total Fire Personnel On-Scene: 16
Agencies Involved: Ventura City Fire, Ventura County Fire

Narrative: Fire units were dispatched to a reported vegetation fire in the barranca adjacent to the Kimball community park at Telephone Rd. and Ramelli Ave. in the city of Ventura. Units arrived to find a growing fire in mixed vegetation and Eucalyptus trees with firebrands falling into the Lemonwood mobile home community on Johnson Dr threatening homes. Quick actions by firefighters halted the fire and prevented any residences from becoming involved. Fire fighters remained at the scene for several hours as extensive overhaul and complete extinguishment was necessary in light of the predicted Red Flag fire weather warning event later today. The fire originated from a large encampment in the barranca and the direct cause was the intentional and dangerous burning of insulation from copper wire. No responsible person was located and thankfully no injuries were reported however several firefighters experienced extensive exposure to Poison Oak.

The Ventura City Fire Department is committed to working with the City's Beautify & Maintain Program and regional partners to address any ongoing life-safety and property threats posed by homeless encampments in Ventura. Fires can occur in the river bottom because of unsheltered individuals living in the area who use fire for warmth and cooking. These fires can grow quickly and produce a lot of smoke because of strong winds, dry brush, fuel, and tall grasses.

The City's Beautify & Maintain program continues to work on long-term housing solutions and provides preventative resources for our most vulnerable populations. Beautify & Maintain works proactively with the Ventura Police Patrol Task Force, the Ventura City Fire Department, various social service providers, and community partners to clean up brush and debris in the riverbeds. City staff also visits these areas weekly to share education, health, and social services to unsheltered individuals, who legally, cannot be relocated from the river bottom to a safer location.

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