



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mark A. Hartwig
Fire Chief

DATE: May 9, 2012
CONTACT: Tracey Martinez, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5950, 800-426-8689, pager #3307

3rd Alarm Fire at Supermarket

Date/Time: May 9, 2012, 11:36 a.m.
Location: Lucerne Valley Market, 32900 block of Hwy. 18, Lucerne Valley
Incident: Commercial Structure Fire

Summary: San Bernardino County Fire received numerous calls stating the Lucerne Valley Market was on fire and they could hear explosions coming from the back side. When firefighters arrived on scene five minutes later, a partially enclosed attached work area and large metal rafters filled with content were fully engulfed in flames and the fire was spreading along the exterior wall into the attic of the business. The fire was also encroaching three adjacent metal storage bins.

With an aggressive attack firefighters quickly contained the fire to the south side of the business, keeping the fire from damaging the majority of the store merchandise and destroying the building, with an estimated value of \$2 million. The fire was completely extinguished within 1 1/2 hours. Several of the interior sprinklers activated, slowing the spread of the fire and allowing firefighters time to ventilate the roof and contain the blaze.

The explosions initially reported were caused when the fire reached an electrical transformer. Southern California Edison quickly arrived on scene and were in the process of restoring electricity.

Store employees had safely evacuated everyone from inside the store. A 30' block wall separates the market from a small strip mall containing a bank, a beauty salon and a laundry facility. All occupants of those businesses safely evacuated. Firefighters were instrumental in keeping the fire from spreading to this building, however the businesses did sustain minimal smoke damage. In total, about 50 people were evacuated.

The fire is believed to have started in the outside work area. The cause of the fire remains under investigation by San Bernardino County Fire Investigators. Preliminary content and structure damage is estimated at \$300,000. The outdoor storage bins received fire damage to the exterior, however there was no damage to the interior. The outdoor work area and metal rafters, along with its content, are a complete loss.

Six San Bernardino County Fire engines and two truck companies responded along with three engines from assisting agencies.

Firefighters remain on scene conducting a water salvage operation, assisting to protect product inside the store from further water damage.

Photos are available at www.sbcfire.org under latest news.

###