

## **Smoke from fireworks causes huge, but short-lived spike in Bakersfield's air pollution**

By Steven Mayer

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, July 6, 2022

You can thank your lucky skyrockets if you had your windows closed late Monday night and early Tuesday morning.

All through the long weekend, a low pressure weather system had been helping to keep Bakersfield's breathable air in the "good" range — and temperatures nice, too.

Then, between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. Monday, as Independence Day celebrations kicked into high intensity, the PM-2.5 measurement at the air pollution monitor in central Bakersfield began climbing fast.

As so-called safe & sane fireworks — as well as illegal pyrotechnics — were blasting off and blowing up across the city, the PM-2.5 reading began shooting upward like a Roman candle.

By 10 p.m. on the Fourth, the tiny, dangerous particles that are so small they can stick in your lungs and even migrate into the bloodstream, climbed from 8 micrograms per cubic meter of air — measured in hourly concentrations — to an astonishing 327.

Once levels passed beyond 75, they were already in the "very unhealthy" range, the highest or most unhealthy category on the graph.

But the numbers still hadn't peaked.

By 11 p.m., the number hit its zenith, just under 400 micrograms of soot, ash and heavy metals per cubic meter of air.

Fortunately, by 3 a.m. Tuesday, the monitor showed levels had dropped back into the "good" range.

"Anecdotally, we think there were a lot more fireworks being set off this year," said Jaime Holt, chief communications officer for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

She theorized that the pandemic slowed fireworks use in 2020 and 2021, but as worries about COVID-19 eased, area residents went all out this time around.

Last year's numbers seem to bear that out, as particulate matter readings didn't spike nearly as high in 2021. But in 2020, pandemic or not, the numbers climbed even higher than this year, past 700 during the peak-use hours, lightyears beyond safe PM levels.

Ironically, legal fireworks produce lots more smoke than the illegal bottle rockets, cherry bombs and skyrockets.

"But the legal fireworks are less likely to catch your house on fire or blow your hand off," Holt said.

Officials at the air district argue that the pretty colors are not worth the potential damage being done to the health of local residents, especially children, the elderly and those already vulnerable to spikes in air pollution.

"If you have to do fireworks at home, do less than you did before," Holt said.

Samir Sheikh, the air district's executive director, asked valley residents in a news release last week to err on the side of protecting their neighbors and family members.

"There are many ways to be patriotic and celebrate our nation's independence without lighting fireworks," he suggested.

Judging by the thousands of calls the Kern County Fire Department received — 6,400 reports through the Illegal Fireworks Reporter between June 28 and July 4 — and call-outs to 77 fires on the Fourth alone, not everyone in Kern was heeding the call.

## **Electra Fire in Amador County: Containment grows to 10%, but ‘hotter, drier’ weather worries fire crews**

By Jordan Parker

San Francisco Chronicle, Wednesday, July 6, 2022

The [Electra Fire](#) burning southeast of Jackson continued to burn Wednesday morning, scorching a total of almost 4,000 acres, according to Cal Fire.

Firefighters had gained 10% containment on the surging [wildfire](#), which sparked Monday at Vox Beach and continued to swell by the end of Tuesday night, Cal Fire officials said.

Chris Vestal, public information officer for the Electra Fire operation, said late Tuesday that firefighters were pleased with the progress of the day but worried about upcoming weather.

“The weather is getting hotter, drier coming up the next couple of days,” he told The Chronicle.

Cal Fire noted in a report early Wednesday that the fire was actively burning the first half of the night with “short upslope runs,” but humidity in the early morning helped moderate fire activity.

Residents in Amador County and in the Butte Mountain Road area were under mandatory evacuation orders, with evacuation orders and warnings extending as of Tuesday afternoon to encompass an area just east of Jackson stretching to an area west of Pine Grove. Cal Fire also issued evacuation orders for all residents within a 2-mile radius around Lake Tabeaud early Tuesday.

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. reported it was able to restore power to about 4,000 customers Tuesday night. The utility on Wednesday continued to respond to about 8,000 additional customers with outages, a decrease from 15,000 early Tuesday morning, a spokesperson for the company said.

As of Wednesday, one first responder had been injured, and more than 1,200 structures remained in danger as a result of the blaze, according to Cal Fire.

The cause of the fire is under investigation. [A spokesperson for Pacific Gas and Electric Co. said Tuesday](#) that the utility’s equipment was determined not to have caused the fire’s ignition.

## **How to deal with wildfire smoke now coming to the Central Valley’s skies**

By Dom McAndrew

KSEE24/CBS47, Tuesday, July 5, 2022

FRESNO, Calif. (KSEE/KGPE) – Smoke from the Electra Fire burning outside Stockton has blown south to the Central Valley, creating the tell-tale gray color in the skies above Fresno.

The fire began Monday evening in Amador County and crews on the scene placed it southeast of Jackson. As of Tuesday afternoon, it has burned over 3,000 acres.

While the cause of the Electra Fire is under investigation, the effect of the flames can be plainly seen. The federal government’s Air Quality Index clearly shows the smoke emanating from the fire and traveling south, spreading itself across the Central Valley basin.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District posted on Twitter that localized impacts are expected and residents in affected areas should remain indoors with windows and doors closed. The district’s advice is if you can smell smoke, then that is an indication that there is fine particulate matter in the air – which will ultimately impact your health.

The way smoke impacts your health starts with aggravating any kind of respiratory condition that you might already have. According to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, that includes COPD, COVID-19, asthma and bronchitis.

The solution is simply to wait it out. Air officials say limit your time outside and wear a mask (specifically a NIOSH-approved N95 respirator) to limit the amount of particulate matter entering your body. While you are inside, be sure to close your windows and doors, run your air conditioning on recirculate with a new filter, and avoid vacuuming or frying food. More information on how to protect yourself from wildfire smoke can be found [here](#).

Residents can also use the district's RAAN (real-time air advisory network) tool to see what the current air quality situation is – and what it was like earlier in the day and on previous days as well.

## **Data shows how 4th of July fireworks affected our air**

By John Houghton

KSEE24/CBS47, Tuesday, July 5, 2022

FRESNO, Calif. (KSEE/KGPE) — The smell of smoke was present across the Central Valley on the 4th of July, and with that comes poor air quality.

Starting around 9:00 p.m on the 4th, particulate matter levels in Fresno spiked according to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

District officials say that levels went above five, which means everyone should avoid outdoor activity until the particulate matter dissipates.

## **Electra fire nears 4,000 acres, threatens power grid, officials say**

By Hayley Smith

LA Times, Tuesday, July 5, 2022

A fast-growing wildfire burning along the border of Amador and Calaveras counties was poised to become one of the biggest of the season as it approached 4,000 acres Tuesday, prompting evacuations and contributing to widespread power outages across the region.

The Electra fire ignited Monday afternoon near the North Fork of the Mokelumne River and spread quickly amid dry brush and steep terrain, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

"We're closely watching it as it has the potential to become a large fire," Cal Fire Battalion Chief Jon Heggie said.

By Tuesday night, the fire had burned 3,900 acres and was 5% contained, with Cal Fire officials warning that it was threatening more than 1,200 structures as well as crucial power infrastructure.

As the day wore on, Cal Fire expanded its evacuation orders and warnings to include new areas as the blaze appeared to push east from Jackson. Residents in Amador and Calaveras counties were advised to check interactive maps for the latest evacuation information.

"The Electra fire is actively burning, with short intense upslope runs," according to a Cal Fire update Tuesday night. "Short range spotting with rollout is contributing to the fire spread. The threat to critical infrastructure is being monitored and assessed, and protection plans are being put into place."

There were 1,334 personnel attacking the fire from the air and ground, Cal Fire said, and more support was en route. The agency said on Twitter that more than 128 engine companies, 22 water tenders, 33 bulldozers, 39 hand crews and multiple aircraft were working to establish containment lines.

Yet wildfire cameras appeared to show increasing fire activity, including thick smoke, spot fires and a large pyrocumulus cloud signaling intense heat.

"It's smoky. From my office right now, I can see the plume looks like it's picking up," said Jarret Benov, operations captain with the Amador County Sheriff's Office.

Benov said the area where the fire is burning is home to "a lot of vegetation, trees, grasses and fuels."

"It's a mountain community where a lot of homes are on a half-acre, an acre, and are pretty forested," he said.

The fire is one of the largest Cal Fire has faced this year, exceeded by only the 5,800-acre Lost Lake fire that burned in Riverside County in May and the 4,100 acre Airport fire that burned in Inyo County in February, according to the agency.

Though it ignited on the Fourth of July — and amid dire warnings from California fire officials about the risks of fireworks due to severely drought-dried terrain — officials said it was too soon to speculate on the cause of the blaze.

What was more certain was that the state's landscape was primed to burn after the driest-ever start to the year left fuel moisture levels, or the amount of moisture in the vegetation, dangerously low.

In some parts of the state, vegetation was at least four months ahead of where it should be in terms of dryness, officials announced last month.

The fire was also wreaking havoc on the electric grid, with more than 12,000 customers without power Tuesday afternoon, Pacific Gas & Electric spokeswoman Megan McFarland said.

"PG&E has a number of assets potentially at risk due to the fire," McFarland said via email.

She said PG&E was "developing restoration plans for non-impacted lines that were de-energized for firefighter safety," which would allow the utility to restore service to some customers.

Approximately 100 people were evacuated Monday night from the Electra powerhouse, a PG&E hydropower facility near where the blaze ignited, she said.

Though the utility has faced scrutiny for its role in previous wildfires, McFarland said based on the location and timing of the fire and the subsequent power outages, "PG&E understands PG&E was not involved in the ignition."

In response to the fire, the Red Cross opened evacuation centers at the Italian Picnic Grounds in Sutter Creek and the Mountain Oaks School, at 150 Oak St. in San Andreas. Shelters for large and small animal were also available at the Amador County Fairgrounds. An earlier shelter at the San Andreas Town Hall was closed.

The fire also prompted multiple road closures, including portions of Highways 88 and 26.

The blaze was burning not far from where the Butte fire seared through about 70,000 acres in 2015, but Cal Fire spokeswoman Diana Swart said there had been too much regrowth in the years since for its footprint to act as much of a deterrent.

"The vegetation has grown back," she said. "That's a very grassy area; those grasses grow back year after year, so unfortunately we don't have a burn scar fresh enough that would really be that much of a help to us."

The priority on Tuesday was keeping the fire east of Highway 49 and south of Highway 88, north of Jesus Maria Road and west of Highway 26 and Railroad Flat Road, she said.

Weather conditions over the fire were somewhat favorable, including relatively low winds and high humidity, said Eric Kurth, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Sacramento.

However, there were reports of fire-related smoke and air-quality issues in the San Joaquin Valley. Kurth said shifting wind patterns in the afternoon could push the smoke toward South Lake Tahoe.

Residents who see or smell smoke are advised to limit outdoor activities and use an air filter for protection.

At least one firefighter was injured battling the blaze, Swart said. She could not confirm the nature of the injury but said it was minor.

Swart said the initial report of the fire came from Highway 49 and Electra Road — a "very narrow, windy, ruddy road" that leads to the PG&E powerhouse. The area is also popular for recreation because of its proximity to the river, she said.

Benov, of the Amador County Sheriff's Office, said the frequency of wildfires in the region has increased in recent years.

"We had fires, but it wasn't every year where you're thinking, 'Fire season is upon us again, here we go,' and you have them all summer long," he said.

## **Valley air quality worsens with ongoing threat of wildfire and firework smoke**

By Christina Lopez

FOX 26, Tuesday, July 5, 2022

FRESNO, Calif. — The threat of wildfire smoke combined with firework smoke is worsening the air quality throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

A large wall of smoke was seen Tuesday morning traveling west, which drifted from the Electra Fire in northern California near Jackson.

"Wildfire smoke is a little more complex than the smoke that we see coming out of your chimney that's because we don't exactly know what's in wildfire smoke," said Jamie Holt, spokesperson for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. "We, of course, know that there are trees burning, but often there might be homes, unfortunately, cars -- all sorts of plastics, metals, other hazardous materials. That all gets kicked up into the smoke and comes down into the Valley as particulate matter."

The Valley Air District suggests creating a "Clean Air Room" for instances when smoke becomes dangerous. A Clean Air Room is a room or space in your home or apartment where those inside can take refuge in when wildfire smoke becomes dangerous.

The threat of wildfire smoke is not only affecting Valley families but also those who work in and around local communities.

"Although we're not seeing the impacts of the Electra Fire in the valley currently, what could happen is increase winds could bring in that smoke and begin impacting valley residents," said Daniel Gonzalez, Bilingual Outreach Specialist for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. "Those individuals that are impacted in those areas are always recommended to stay indoors with the windows and doors tightly closed."

The State of California Department of Industrial Relations issued a reminder on Tuesday for best practices to protect workers from unhealthy air quality as a result of wildfire smoke.

Cal/OSHA states, "employers must provide proper respiratory protection like N95 respirators for voluntary use if work cannot be moved to a location the air is not harmful."

If employers cannot relocate a job site, they have the option to stop work operations until outdoor air quality becomes improves for the safety of its workers.

The guidance Cal/OSHA provides to its workers and employers surrounding wildfire smoke includes if the Air Quality Index (AQI) for Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is at 151 or greater, businesses must offer its employees communication of safety measures; training and instruction; modifications to spaces were air is filtered for workers; changes to work schedules or practices; and offer respiratory protection in the form of equipment or disposable respirators.

Cal/OSHA going a step further to explain respirators with the following labels will help to filter out fine particles.

N-95

N-99

N-100

R-95

P-95

P-99

P-100

"When we talk about particulate matter, we're talking about smoke and ash, which we can often see, but also those microscopic particles chemicals and toxins," said Holt. "What happens is those make their way into our lungs and in then in some instances, when they're very small, they actually make it into our blood

stream. When we're talking about particulate matter, whether it's from wildfires or during the winter, it can be a problem for those who have pre-existing conditions such as asthma, emphysema and COPD."

Resources to track valley air quality

One way to be proactive and track the air quality in your community is through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) AirNow Fire and Smoke Map. AirNow reports air quality using the official U.S. Air Quality Index (AQI) system.

Another tool individuals and businesses can utilize is Valley Air's Wildfire Prevention & Response page. This page will help communities decipher between wildfire information, best practices to protect yourself from wildfire smoke, as well as an explainer of how wildfire smoke can affect the air quality in your area.

"Folks need to be aware -- wildfire season is here," said Holt.

## **Smoky air hangs over Fresno after 4th of July, city might ban all fireworks But the city is also considering the impact on churches, sports teams, and other groups that rely on the stands to raise funds.**

By Dale Yurong

ABC30, Tuesday, July 5, 2022

FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) -- Without strong winds to clear the smoke from the 4th of July fireworks, it tended to sit over the Valley and cause a spike in bad air quality.

Doctors say it can be especially difficult for people with respiratory problems to enjoy the dazzling displays.

"I usually see a lot of patients with complaints of shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and wheezing," says Fresno allergist Dr. Praveen Buddiga.

The air quality wasn't as bad as a year ago because of the milder weather.

The Valley Air District prefers people attend the bigger shows held in stadiums because the smoke from 'safe and sane' fireworks that you buy tends to stick around longer.

"Folks that live in neighborhoods know this. All that stuff stays ground level. That smoke is very toxic. It's harmful to people's health," says Cassandra Melching with the Valley Air District.

Because of health concerns and the fire hazard, Fresno City Councilmember Miguel Arias says officials have begun discussions which may ultimately lead to a ban on the sale of 'safe and sane' fireworks. But they're also considering the impact on churches, sports teams, and other groups that rely on the stands to raise funds.

"How do we hold public fireworks shows that generate revenue for these local non-profits and get them out of the business of having to do private use fireworks across the city?" he says.

Under that scenario, the city would also stage fireworks shows at Bulldog Stadium or McLane High and have non-profit groups host food booths or possibly share in the profits from the event.

"I think the answer has to be, we have to hold them harmless and give them an alternative source of generating that revenue and I think we can do that," says Arias.

Fresno is home to one of the dirtiest air basins in the country.

The city seeks ways to end the annual spike in poor air quality.

Discussions over a possible ban on fireworks sales will continue for at least the next few weeks.

## **Electra Fire in Amador County: PG&E says it's not responsible for sparking blaze now nearly 4,000 acres in size**

By Jordan Parker, Matthias Gani, Joshua Sharpe

San Francisco Chronicle, Tuesday, July 5, 2022

UPDATE: [Containment of the Electra Fire in Amador County grows to 10%, but 'hotter, drier' weather worries fire crews](#)

JACKSON, Amador County — Flames from the [Electra Fire](#) burning southeast of Jackson swelled to cover 3,900 acres Tuesday, with numerous neighborhoods evacuating while residents in other areas hunkered down for as long as they could amid billowing smoke.

By 9 p.m., firefighters had managed to get 5% containment around [the fast-growing wildfire](#), which sparked Monday near Vox Beach, Cal Fire said, noting the blaze grew “at a dangerous rate of speed” overnight.

Chris Vestal, public information officer for the Electra fire, said late Tuesday that firefighters were pleased with the progress of the day but worried about upcoming weather.

“The weather is getting hotter, drier coming up the next couple of days,” he told The Chronicle.

That’s bad news for wildfire containment.

Helicopters relentlessly dropped water in the afternoon into a canyon below Quail Drive in unincorporated Pine Acres, east of Clinton, where smoke was pouring into the neighborhood. At the foot of Quail Drive, a bulldozer cleared out brush and firefighters converged on the scene, including a Tamalpais hand crew that helped control a backfire down the slope. Remaining residents asked firefighters questions and raked leaves from the sides of their homes amid the smoke.

A fire commander chirped over the radio, summing up the efforts: “It’s a successful game of Whac-a-Mole.”

Chris Mays, 40, a two-year resident of the wooded community, walked to the end of Quail Drive with his son. His wife, three kids, uncle, two dogs, three cats and chickens and ducks were packed and ready to evacuate. But Mays wasn’t ready to leave.

“It sucks. That’s my house,” he said. “I told my family, I’m not leaving until the fire hits the f— house.”

He said he’d seen the smoke shortly after the fire started to the southwest. “If we see houses on fire then we’ll get out of here,” he said.

Cal Fire said the blaze threatened critical power infrastructure, and steep, rugged terrain made it difficult for fire crews to access the South Fork of the Mokelumne River drainage area. A PG&E spokesperson said it had a “number of assets potentially at risk,” but that the utility understood its equipment did not cause the fire, based on the time and location of the start. The cause was under investigation, Cal Fire said.

More than 1,200 structures were considered in danger from the fire late Tuesday.

About 100 people had taken shelter from the spreading flames at a Pacific Gas and Electric Co. facility Monday and then were [safely evacuated](#) from that location, according to Amador County Sheriff Gary Redman.

Residents in Amador County and in the Butte Mountain Road area were under mandatory evacuation orders, with evacuation orders and warnings extending Tuesday afternoon to encompass an area just east of Jackson stretching to an area west of Pine Grove. Cal Fire also issued evacuation orders for all residents within a 2-mile radius around Lake Tabeaud.

At one evacuation site at Italian Picnic Grounds in Sutter Creek, Jim and Lesley Davis grilled hamburgers beside their trailer after being forced to flee their Jackson home on Monday. The couple last evacuated from a wildfire in 2015, when the Butte Fire swept through the area.

Lesley said she was napping around 4:30 p.m. Monday when her friend called. “Are you aware there’s a fire near your house!” Lesley recalled her girlfriend yelling. She jumped up and alerted her husband, who prepared their trailer while she wrangled their two cats, Fritz and Miles, Rocky the dog, and five chickens into animal crates.

A massive dark plume of smoke billowed from behind their house as they pulled out of the driveway. Their property with grazing pastures and a vineyard is a quarter-mile from the fire's origin.

"That really put an exclamation point on our need to evacuate," said Jim Davis.

Dave Rice was cooking dinner when evacuation orders hit the area. He helped his visually impaired wife into their truck and towed their trailer to a nearby evacuation center.

It's not the first wildfire he's seen from his property, but he said natural disasters are everywhere. If he loses his home to the Electra Fire, he and his wife will likely move to Florida to be closer to his daughter.

"If God pulls the rug out from under our feet, then we're gone," he said.

Caltrans said that State Road 26 was closed, both eastbound and westbound, from Buckeye Lane to Lower Dorray Road. One first responder was injured fighting the blaze.

## **California forest fire temporarily strands July 4th revelers**

By Associated Press

The Business Journal, Tuesday July 5, 2022

(AP) — A Fourth of July wildfire that authorities say may have been sparked by fireworks or a barbecue temporarily trapped holiday revelers as it chewed through a mountainous California region that's a top tourism destination, officials said.

The Electra Fire in Sierra Nevada Gold Country broke out Monday afternoon and tripled in size overnight to more than 4.7 square miles (12.2 square kilometers) acres by Tuesday morning.

The fire started at a recreation area that was packed with people, forcing 85 to 100 celebrating the holiday at a river to take shelter at Pacific Gas & Electric Co. facility, said Amador County Sheriff Gary Redman. All were later safely evacuated, he said.

Mandatory evacuation orders and warnings combined affected about 500 people in Amador County and 300 to 400 people in Calaveras County, Redman said.

Redman said the cause of the fire was not known, but that it started in the Vox Beach area of the North Fork Mokelumne River. He said that could suggest fireworks or a barbecue as a potential cause.

One firefighter from the local fire protection district suffered burn injuries, Redman said.

Vox Beach is about 55 miles (89 kilometers) east of Sacramento in the heart of the Sierra Nevada region that is steeped with the history of the mid-1800s Gold Rush.

Several other small fires were burning in the state.

## **New evacuations for communities near California forest fire**

**Evacuation orders have been expanded for remote communities near a wildfire that's chewing through California forests**

By AP

Bakersfield Californian, Tuesday, July 5, 2022

JACKSON, Calif. (AP) — Evacuation orders were expanded Tuesday for remote California communities near a wildfire that may have been sparked by fireworks or a barbecue on the Fourth of July in a mountainous region that's a top tourism destination.

The Electra Fire in Sierra Nevada Gold Country broke out Monday afternoon and tripled in size to about 6.1 square miles (15.8 square kilometers). It was 5% contained Tuesday night.

The fire was making short, uphill runs, fire officials said.

"The rate of spread isn't what it was like yesterday, but it is still spreading," said Amador County Sheriff Gary Redman. He said firefighters were working to keep flames confined to unpopulated canyon areas.



Mandatory evacuation orders and warnings combined affected up to 700 residents in Amador County and 300 to 400 people in Calaveras County, Redman said. Evacuation centers were set up for people and animals.

The fire started at a recreation area that was packed with people, forcing 85 to 100 celebrating the holiday at a river to take shelter at a Pacific Gas & Electric Co. facility, Redman said. All were later safely evacuated.

"This was the closest I've ever been to a fire. It was literally within feet of us," said Milka Mikula of Valley Springs, who had gone to the river with her husband, her 5-year-old daughter and her 1-year-old son.

They had to wait about six hours before they could finally start for home, she told KCRA-TV.

"I just wanted to get home. I just wanted to get out of there with my babies. I was shaking really, really bad for quite some time," Mikula said.

Redman said the cause of the fire was not known, but that it started in the Vox Beach area of the North Fork Mokelumne River. He said that could suggest fireworks or a barbecue as a potential cause.

More than 100 fire engines, 1,200 firefighters and 14 helicopters were sent to the fire, which was a threat to power infrastructure, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said. The terrain was described as steep and rugged.

Cal Fire activated an incident management team for the fire. The teams "are made up of trained personnel who provide operational management and support to large-scale, expanding incidents," Cal Fire said.

One firefighter from the local fire protection district suffered burn injuries, Redman said.

Vox Beach is about 55 miles (89 kilometers) east of Sacramento in the heart of the Sierra Nevada region that is steeped with the history of the mid-1800s Gold Rush.

Several other small fires were burning in the state.

## **Live updates: Electra Fire flares, prompts new evacuations, expands over 3,000 acres**

By Amelia Davidson and Brianna Taylor

Sacramento Bee, Modesto Bee, Fresno Bee, Tuesday, July 05, 2022

2:41 p.m. Tuesday

The Red Cross opened a new shelter in San Andreas for those evacuating from the Electra Fire. The shelter is located at the Mountain Oaks School, at 150 Oak Street. The San Andreas Town Hall shelter is now closed, according to a Red Cross social media post. 12:58 p.m. Tuesday The Amador County Sheriff's Office expanded the evacuation order and warning zones for the Electra Fire. Pine Acres and Clinton are now within the evacuation zone, and parts of Pine Grove are under an evacuation warning. The evacuation zones end just east of Jackson, a town with slightly under 5,000 residents.

Tableau Road and Mount Zion Road are closed at the intersections with Highway 88, and Clinton Road is closed at Butte Mountain Road, Amador Lane and West Clinton Road.

Live updates of Amador County evacuation orders and warning are available here. The Electra Fire is burning in both Amador and Calaveras counties, with Calaveras County information available here.

10:45 a.m. Tuesday Cal Fire assigned Incident Management Team 3 to the Electra Fire, adding to the 1,225 personnel working on the fire as of Tuesday morning. Team 3 is one of Cal Fire's six incident management teams, which are dispatched to significant wildfires across the state.

The California Department of Public Transportation closed a stretch of State Route 26 on Tuesday morning because of the fire. In a social media post, Caltrans District 10 warned the highway would be closed between Buckeye Lane and Ridge Road, with no estimated time of opening.

10:02 a.m. Tuesday

AirNow reported air quality in Sacramento was “good” in both ozone and particulate matter Tuesday morning. The air quality index was at 13, with ozone as the primary pollutant. It’s forecast to worsen throughout the day and week as temperatures rise.

Moderate to unhealthy air quality is reported in Jackson, Sutter Creek, Mokelumne Hill, Angels Camp, Murphys, Amador City and more, according to AirNow’s California fire and smoke map.

Near Jackson, the air quality index was 171 as of 9 a.m., according to the map. Particulate matter is the primary pollutant.

Moderate air quality means most people can open windows or go outside if they don’t “see or smell smoke,” while unhealthy air quality levels suggest people should keep “outdoor activities light and short” and go indoors if symptoms develop, according to AirNow.

7:55 a.m. Tuesday

The Electra Fire, which ignited Monday afternoon along the Amador-Calaveras county line, increased threefold overnight as crews struggled to contain the blaze.

Officials were able to safely evacuate around 100 residents who were stranded in a PG&E powerhouse Monday evening. The evacuees were moved to the powerhouse from a nearby beach when the fire ignited, Amador County Sheriff Gary Redman said Tuesday.

In a Tuesday morning update, the fire stood at 3,034 acres, up from 959 Monday night. It was 0% contained, and 450 structures were threatened, Cal Fire said.

But the blaze, which is burning in mountainous terrain 5 miles southeast of Jackson and 50 miles southeast of Sacramento, appeared to be moving away from populated areas Tuesday morning. It burned in a canyon next to the north fork of the Mokelumne River overnight, Redman said, and officials expect that if it remains below the ridge line on either side of the river, it will stay away from homes.

“The fire wasn’t real active last night, which is good,” Redman said. “It’s still in that canyon area, and as long as it stays there, that will keep it out of the neighborhoods.”

Redman added that the weather is expected to work in crews’ favor through the day, as wind is light and humidity is going to increase.

Evacuation orders remain in place for the Butte Mountain Road and Lake Tabeaud areas, as well as areas of Calaveras County north of Highway 26 from Montgomery Drive to Lower Dorray Road. No new orders were issued overnight.

Evacuation shelters are set up at the Italian Picnic Grounds, 581 Highway 49 in Sutter Creek and at San Andreas Town Hall, 24 Church Hill Road. Large animals can be brought to the Amador County Fairgrounds.

Over 13,000 residents in the Jackson area are without power, Pacific Gas & Electric Co. reported on social media Monday night, as line in the area of the blaze were de-energized “for firefighter safety.” The fire is threatening “critical power infrastructure,” Cal Fire wrote in its Tuesday morning update, including the Electra Powerhouse from which residents were evacuated Monday night.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

## **How many wildfires has California had so far this year? There are several burning now**

By Hanh Truong

Sacramento Bee, Modesto Bee, Fresno Bee, Tuesday, July 05, 2022 11:44 AM

The Electra Fire in Amador-Calaveras has already blazed through 3,034 acres as of Tuesday morning, and this isn’t the first time this year that a wildfire has ignited in the state.

As wildfire season ramps up in California, see what’s happened in the state so far this year:

### **ACTIVE FIRES**

There are several fires of interest in California, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire.

The biggest active fire as of Tuesday morning is the Electra Fire, burning through more than 3,000 acres at the Amador-Calaveras county line at Electra Road and Highway 49, southeast of Jackson. The fire, which is still under investigation, started on Monday and is at 0% containment Tuesday morning. Evacuation orders remain in place in areas near the fire, including Butte Mountain Road and Lake Tabaud.

The Rices Fire in Nevada County at Rices Crossing Road and Cranston Road, south of Dobbins, started on June 28, according to Cal Fire. It's at 85% containment after blazing 904 acres.

The Garrison Fire, another wildfire located in Northern California has burned 166 acres, ignited on Monday in Monterey County. It is at 95% containment.

The Jan-Dar Fire in Butte County, started Monday at Jan-Dar Road and Oro Bangor Hwy, has burned 30 acres and is at 50% containment.

As of Sunday, the Table Fire in Fresno County has burned 52 acres and is 75% contained.

## **PREVIOUS FIRES**

As of July 2022, more than 3,000 fire incidents have burned 21,343 acres in California, according to Cal Fire. No fatalities have been reported.

Some of the larger scale fires the state saw include:

### **Thunder Fire**

The Thunder Fire ravaged 2,500 acres in Kern County from June 22 to June 27. It has since been 100% contained, but the cause is still under investigation.

### **Sheep Fire**

In San Bernardino County, the Sheep Fire blazed 865 acres in June. It has been completely contained as of June 19.

### **Lost Lake Fire**

One of the largest fires of 2022, the Lost Lake Fire burned 5,856 acres in Riverside County, bordering Arizona. Starting on May 26, it was fully contained June 8.

### **Airport Fire**

The second biggest fire, the Airport Fire, tore through 4,136 acres near Bishop, California, in the Eastern Sierra region from Feb. 16 to Feb. 26.

### **Colorado Fire**

The Colorado Fire in Big Sur in Monterey County burned 687 acres in January. Caused by fire escaping into wildland, according to Cal Fire, it has been completely contained.

## **Valley air district urges people to go to firework shows, give up at-home shows**

By Lauren Jennings

Visalia Times Delta, Friday, July 1, 2022

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District officials are urging Valley residents to attend community-sponsored firework events on the Fourth of July, citing air pollution concerns in the midst of what could be a crazy wildfire year.

Each year, particulate matter levels spike – four to five times higher than the federal standard – from personal fireworks during the evening of July 4 .

“We are asking Valley residents to be mindful and considerate of their neighbors,” said Samir Sheikh, San Joaquin Valley Air District executive director. “There are many ways to be patriotic and celebrate our nation’s independence without lighting fireworks.”

Personal fireworks emit particulate matter, including soot, ash and metals. At-risk individuals include children, the elderly and those with existing respiratory conditions.

“This unnecessary source of air pollution compromises air quality and public health,” the district’s press release reads. “Fine particulate matter can invade the bloodstream, get deep into the lungs, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.”

Here are a few Fourth of July community events happening in Visalia and Tulare:

- [Kiwanis Club of Tulare Fireworks Show](#) from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on July 3 at the Tulare Fairgrounds (admission is \$5 for those 5 and older).
- [Great American Race](#) from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. on July 4 at Riverway Sports Park (admission is \$35-\$45).
- [Fireworks Spectacular](#) at 7 p.m. on July 4 at Valley Strong Ballpark (tickets start at \$8).

## **Free air purifiers to deal with wildfire risks being offered**

By Dennis Wyatt

Turlock Journal, Friday, July 1, 2022

The Valley Air District will help low-income households weather wildfires that are ramping up due to dry conditions made worse by the continuing drought.

The agency will make 1,500 portable residential air purifying units with one replacement filter available for free to low-income households within disadvantaged communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

Turlock meets the definition of being a disadvantaged community.

Dubbed the “Clean Airs Pilot Program,” it involves residential versions of portable air purifiers. The purifiers — besides reducing the spreading of COVID, flu and even germs that cause colds — are designed to cleanse the air of smoke and other particles.

“Smoke from severe wildfires can inundate the Valley and make its way into homes, causing health impacts to our most vulnerable residents,” noted Samir Sheikh, Executive Director of the Valley Air District. “This program is designed to help families who may not otherwise be able to buy an in-home air purifier to protect their families during wildfires.”

In an indoor environment where windows and doors are closed and sealed tightly, HEPA air filtration devices, such as those that will be offered under this program, can reduce particulate matter indoors by more than 90 percent.

Use of air filtration devices to create “clean air rooms,” such as a bedroom, will ensure that the home has a dedicated space with safe indoor air quality during smoke events.

The 10 worst metro areas in the nation for air quality issues include Central Valley counties such as Bakersfield, Kern, Madera, Sacramento, Shasta and Butte.

Stanislaus County received a big red “F” on its report card in the American Lung Association’s State of the Air 2022 report. The region is also ranked amongst the most polluted in the country. The San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland region — which includes all of Stanislaus County — made the top 5 list for worst air quality in the nation in the year-round particle pollution and short-term particle pollution categories and in the top 15 list of worst regions for ozone.

Residents experiencing poor air quality due to wildfire smoke should move to a filtered, air-conditioned environment with windows closed. Common cloth and paper masks being used as protection from COVID-19 may not be sufficient protection from wildfire smoke inhalation.

For outdoor workers and other individuals that may not be able to remain indoors, state health authorities recommend the use of N95 facemasks as feasible.

Free air purifiers will be made available soon to low-income households. For more information, email: [grants@valleyair.org](mailto:grants@valleyair.org), or speak to Air District staff, call 559-230-5800.

[The Electra fire grows to 3,000 acres, forcing evacuations, rescues and smoke causing poor air quality in surrounding counties. It is forecasted to get worse throughout the day and week.](#)

## **El incendio Electra crece hasta los 3,000 acres tras obligar a realizar evacuaciones, rescates**

Por Amelia Davidson, Brianna Taylor

Vida en el Valle, Martes, 5 de Julio de 2022

Martes 12:58 p.m. La Oficina del Alguacil del Condado Amador amplió la orden de evacuación y las zonas de advertencia para el incendio Electra. Pine Acres y Clinton están ahora dentro de la zona de evacuación, y partes de Pine Grove están bajo una advertencia de evacuación. Las zonas de evacuación terminan justo al este de Jackson, una ciudad con algo menos de 5,000 residentes. La Highway 88 está cerrada en Tabeau Road y Mount Zion Road, y Clinton Road está cerrada en Butte Mountain Road, Amador Lane y West Clinton Road. Las actualizaciones en vivo de las órdenes de evacuación del Condado Amador y la advertencia están disponibles aquí. El incendio Electra está ardiendo en los condados Amador y Calaveras.

Martes 10:45 a.m. Cal Fire asignó el Equipo de Gestión de Incidentes 3 al incendio Electra, que se suma a los 1,225 efectivos que trabajan en el incendio desde el martes por la mañana. El Equipo 3 es uno de los seis equipos de gestión de incidentes de Cal Fire, que se envían a incendios forestales importantes en todo el estado. El Departamento de Transporte Público de California cerró un tramo de la State Route 26 el martes por la mañana debido al incendio. En una publicación en redes sociales, el Distrito 10 de Caltrans advirtió que la carretera estaría cerrada entre Buckeye Lane y Ridge Road, sin hora estimada de apertura. Martes 10:02 a.m. AirNow informó que la calidad del aire en Sacramento era “buena” tanto en ozono como en partículas el martes por la mañana. El índice de calidad del aire estaba en 13, con el ozono como principal contaminante. Se prevé que empeore a lo largo del día y de la semana a medida que suban las temperaturas. Se reporta una calidad del aire de moderado a no saludable en Jackson, Sutter Creek, Mokelumne Hill, Angels Camp, Murphys, Amador City y más, de acuerdo con mapa de incendio y humo de California AirNow. Cerca de Jackson, el índice de calidad del aire era de 171 a partir de las 9 a.m., según el mapa. Las partículas son el principal contaminante.

La calidad del aire moderada significa que la mayoría de las personas pueden abrir las ventanas o salir al exterior si no “ven o huelen el humo”, mientras que los niveles de calidad del aire no saludable sugieren que las personas deben mantener “las actividades al aire libre ligeras y breves” y entrar en casa si se desarrollan síntomas, de acuerdo con AirNow. Martes 7:55 a.m. El incendio Electra, que se encendió el lunes por la tarde a lo largo de la línea del condado Amador-Calaveras, se triplicó durante la noche mientras los equipos luchaban por contener las llamas. Los funcionarios fueron capaces de evacuar de forma segura a alrededor de 100 personas que estaban varadas en una central eléctrica de PG&E el lunes por la noche. Los evacuados fueron trasladados a la casa de máquinas desde una playa cercana cuando el fuego inició, dijo el martes el Alguacil del Condado Amador, Gary Redman.

En una actualización de la mañana del martes, el fuego se situaba en 3,034 acres, en comparación con 959 la noche del lunes. El fuego no estaba controlado y 450 estructuras estaban amenazadas, según Cal Fire. Pero el fuego, que está ardiendo en terreno montañoso 5 millas al sureste de Jackson y 50 millas al sureste de Sacramento, parecía estar alejándose de las zonas pobladas el martes por la mañana. Ardió en un cañón junto a la bifurcación norte del río Mokelumne durante la noche, dijo Redman, y las autoridades esperan que, si se mantiene por debajo de la línea de cresta a ambos lados del río, se mantendrá alejado de las viviendas. MAPA DEL INCENDIO DE ELECTRA Este mapa actualizado en vivo muestra el punto de partida del incendio Electra y los datos de detección de calor por satélite de los puntos candentes actuales. Haga clic en el botón de la leyenda para obtener más información. iFrames are not supported on this page.

“El fuego no estuvo muy activo anoche, lo cual es bueno”, dijo Redman. “Sigue en esa zona del cañón, y mientras se mantenga ahí, eso lo mantendrá fuera de los barrios”. Redman añadió que se espera que el tiempo trabaje a favor de los equipos a lo largo del día, ya que el viento es ligero y la humedad va a aumentar. Las órdenes de evacuación siguen vigentes para las áreas de Butte Mountain Road y Lake Tabeaud, así como las áreas del condado Calaveras al norte de la Highway 26 desde Montgomery Drive hasta Lower Dorrway Road. No se emitieron nuevas órdenes durante la noche.

Los refugios de evacuación se establecieron en el Italian Picnic Grounds, en 581 Highway 49 en Sutter Creek y en el Ayuntamiento de San Andreas, en 24 Church Hill Road. Los animales grandes pueden ser llevados al recinto ferial del Condado Amador. Más de 13,000 habitantes en el área de Jackson están sin energía, informó Pacific Gas & Electric Co. en redes sociales el lunes por la noche, ya que la línea en el área del incendio fue desconectada “para la seguridad de los bomberos”. El fuego está amenazando a “la infraestructura de energía crítica”, escribió Cal Fire en su actualización de la mañana del martes, incluyendo la Electra Powerhouse de la que los vecinos fueron evacuados el lunes por la noche. La causa del incendio sigue siendo objeto de investigación.