

Wildfire rages in desert

BY CHRISTINA ALMEIDA
Associated Press

YUCCA VALLEY, Calif. — A wildfire burned several structures yesterday in a desert locale where dozens of Hollywood westerns were filmed, threatened other towns and prompted 1,000 people to flee.

Winds up to 40 mph quickly fanned the Ridge Fire over 17,000 acres, said California Department of Forestry Capt. Marc DeRosier. The fire started as part of a series of lightning-sparked blazes. It was brought under control but erupted again.

The blaze burned through historic Pioneertown, and television news footage showed several structures burned to the ground. DeRosier said at least 30 homes and outbuildings were destroyed in Pioneertown and surrounding towns.

About 200 homes in the region were threatened, said forestry Capt. Debbie Chapman.

At least 2,500 firefighters aided by six helicopters and six air tankers were working the blaze, which prompted mandatory evacuations of Pioneertown, Rimrock, Gamma Gulch, Pipes



The out-of-control fire near Yucca Valley, Calif., burned dozens of homes and structures, officials said. The fire raged in an area once used as settings for Hollywood westerns.

Canyon and Bowden Flats.

Pioneertown, about two hours east of Los Angeles, was host to Roy Rogers, Russ "Lucky" Hayden and other Hollywood cowboys who helped establish the desert hideaway in 1946. Movie crews nailed together a saloon,

hailed up a railroad car and sank posts around the "OK Corral."

Gene Autry filmed "Last of the Pony Riders" and "Indian Territory" in Pioneertown. Hayden, of Hopalong Cassidy fame, used it for his "Judge Roy Bean" TV series, and "Cisco Kid" producers

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and outbuildings and threatened about 200 more homes, authorities said, prompting evacuation of several small communities.

hot several movies and the TV series there.

By the 1960s, the town had become more of a residential community, although filmmakers be-

gan returning a few years ago. Car companies have filmed commercials in Pioneertown in recent years. Music videos also have been made there.

Carol Post, owner of Pioneertown's Red Dog Saloon, said the fire surged within a block or two of her home in Yucca Valley before the wind shifted, pushing the flames north.

"It was really scary," said Post, 70. "It was a wall of flame." She said that she rushed to Pioneertown to check on her bar but that fire officials barred access.

Elsewhere in the West, Montana firefighters were trying to control a blaze about 40 miles west of Billings that had destroyed at least four structures, including two homes, officials said.

Authorities urged residents in about 120 homes to leave because of the 3,000-acre fire. Five structures were destroyed, officials said. No injuries were reported.

In Nevada, officials said they had gained the upper hand on two lightning-sparked wildfires burning toward the small town of Beatty, near Death Valley National Park.

The blazes were fully contained by last night.

**The Hawaii Tourism Authority and
the City & County of Honolulu, County of Hawaii, County of Kauai and County of
Maui, present a series of workshops on their**

2007 COUNTY PRODUCT ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), in collaboration with each of the counties, invites the community to learn about the **County Product Enrichment Program (CPEP)**.

The **County Product Enrichment Program** supports endeavors seeking to diversify Hawaii's tourism activities in the niche areas of agriculture, culture, education, health and wellness, nature and technology, while also fulfilling the goals and objectives of the County's tourism program. CPEP is intended to support community-based projects relating to tourism product enrichment activities which contribute to Hawaii's visitor experience. Capital improvement projects, infrastructure, and business or organizational start-up plans will not be considered. Programs must be initiated and completed between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007.

Workshops are being offered on the islands of Hawaii, Maui, Kauai and Oahu. Workshops will offer detailed information on this program including the proposal solicitation and award processes. As specific procedures and restrictions vary per county, interested parties are encouraged to attend the workshop in the county most appropriate for their organization or project. Application packets will also be distributed at these workshops. Representatives from the HTA and the respective county will be available to answer your questions at the workshops scheduled for:

Monday, July 17, 2006, from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm
County of Hawaii Aupuni Center Conference Room
(former Firestone Tire & Service Center)
101 Pauahi Street, Hilo

Tuesday, July 18, 2006, from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm
Department of Liquor Control - Kona Center Building
(same building as Driver Licensing)