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SADDLE FIRE

Crews to defend homes from blaze

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A small army of firefighters worked again Friday to set up a defensive perimeter around Pine Valley and protect the picturesque Washington County community from an advancing wildfire.

The Saddle Fire, which for 11 days has burned its way through the pine-covered mountainsides just to the south and moved to within a half-mile of the closest homes, was estimated at 1,193 acres as of 8 p.m., and fire crews considered it 5 per-

cent contained. "The winds were active and the fire continued to back down the slope in most areas within the Pine Valley Wilderness," according to a report from the interagency command team managing the fire-fighting effort.

Firefighters took a mostly defensive stance on Friday, with ground crews unable to safely get in front of the fire on the ground because of the steep terrain and unable to utilize the planes and helicopters they had used earlier in the week because of the high winds.

Instead, they worked to clear brush and set up defensible space around the community, using heavy machinery to carve out flammable vegetation.

A voluntary evacuation remained in place, and the Washington County Sheriff's Office was urging people to stay away if possible or at least be ready to leave on short notice.

"It's frightening," said Bill Kissam, a former firefighter from Las Vegas whose home in the Lloyd's Canyon section of the

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COURTESY/U.S. FOREST SERVICE
Fire crews work to strengthen the defenses around Pine Valley to protect it.

Short Creek community plans July Fourth event



KEVIN JENKINS / THE SPECTRUM & DAILY NEWS
The religious exile community of Hildale and Colorado City expects to build on the success of last year's Fourth of July celebration with an event next weekend.

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The religious exile community of Hildale and Colorado City, with a newly formed Chamber of Commerce, expects to build on the success of last year's Fourth of July celebration with a second annual event next weekend.

The inaugural Independence Day holi-

day helped former members of the polygamous Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints headquartered on the Utah-Arizona state line find a measure of independent confidence in their religious and cultural free agent status last year. But the real purpose of the festivities is to restore the cities col-

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If You Go

What: Hildale Fourth of July celebration

When: July 2, 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. with fireworks at about 9:45 p.m.

Where: Cottonwood Park, intersection of Colvin Street and Academy Avenue, Colorado City.

SUU



JORDAN ALLRED / THE SPECTRUM & DAILY NEWS
Dee G. Gibson, of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, gives a plaque to Southern Utah University President Scott Wyatt.

SUU honored for work with vets

Institution receives first Purple Heart

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It has been quite the year for Southern Utah University, which has earned titles such as Most Outdoorsy School in the Nation and University of the Parks.

On Friday, the university earned one more title in honor of its dedication to veterans who have been wounded in combat.

SUU received the designation as the first Purple Heart campus in the state of Utah from the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 0802.

George Washington initially created the Purple Heart in 1782 — then it was called the Badge of Military Merit — and the award is now the oldest military decoration in present use, said SUU President Scott Wyatt.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart was formed in 1931 and remains the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization composed strictly of combat veterans, according to a news release.

Amid a group of nearly 100 veterans — some in their 80s, most in their early-to-mid 20s — Wyatt said support for veterans should not only come from those who have served, but also from those who have no military background, as well.

"I've never served in the armed forces," Wyatt said. "I have never so much as broken a bone. I have never jumped when fireworks go off unexpectedly, or a horn blares loudly in my sleep. I have never felt the cold, hunger or the threat to life that one feels in com-

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St. George man linked with alleged rape

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A St. George man was arrested on Wednesday in connection with an alleged rape case.

James Rivera, 31, is charged with one count of rape and sodomy. He is being held in Purgatory Correctional Facility in lieu of a \$4,000 bail.

According to the probable cause statement filed in the case, a 34-year-old woman told St. George Police that on June 19

she was at Rivera's home where she had fallen asleep on his couch.

The woman reported Rivera had sexual intercourse with her during which time she said he also committed sodomy on her, the statement indicated.

The alleged victim told authorities she had consumed alcohol prior to the incident and had fallen asleep before the incident took place, police wrote in the probable cause statement.

According to the report, the woman told investigators she did not give Rivera

"permission to have sex with her, or perform sodomy on her."

When Rivera was interviewed by police, he admitted to having sex with the woman as well as having to wake her up before having intercourse with her and engaging in sodomy, according to the statement.

Follow reporter Nichole Osinski on Twitter, @nosinski, and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/osinskireporter. Call her at 435-674-6231.

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