

70,000 in Southern California to evacuate after blaze grows

By Christopher Weber and Olga R. Rodriguez
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A fast-moving wildfire forced evacuation orders for 70,000 people in Southern California on Monday, Oct. 26, as powerful winds across the state prompted power to be cut to hundreds of thousands to prevent utility equipment from sparking new blazes.

The smoky fire exploded in size to over 6 square miles within a few hours of breaking out around dawn in Orange County, south of Los Angeles. Strong gusts pushed flames along brushy ridges in Silverado Canyon and near houses in the sprawling city of Irvine,

home to about 280,000 residents. There was no containment.

Two firefighters, one 26 and the other 31, were critically injured while battling the blaze, according to the county's fire authority, which didn't provide details on how the injuries occurred. They each suffered second- and third-degree burns over large portions of their bodies and were intubated at a hospital, officials said.

Kelsey Brewer and her three roommates decided to leave their townhouse before the evacuation order came in. The question was where to go in the pandemic. They decided on the home of her girlfriend's



KNBC-TV via Associated Press

Smoke and flames from the Silverado fire threaten areas near Irvine, California, Monday, Oct. 26, 2020. The fast-moving wildfire has forced evacuations for 60,000 people in Southern California as powerful winds across the state prompted power to be cut to hundreds of thousands to prevent utility equipment from sparking new blazes.

mother, who has ample space and lives alone. "We literally talked about

it this morning," Brewer said, adding that she feels lucky to have a safe place to

go. "We can only imagine how screwed everyone else feels. There's nowhere you can go to feel safe."

Water-dropping helicopters were briefly grounded because the strong winds made it unsafe to fly. Officials didn't immediately know the cause of the fire, one of several that broke out across the region, including another one in Orange County.

About 355,000 power customers — estimated at about 1 million people — were in the dark in the northern part of the state as officials issued warnings for what could be the strongest winds in California this year. Firefighting crews that had been at the ready

overnight quickly contained small blazes that broke out Sunday in Northern California's Sonoma and Shasta counties. The causes were under investigation.

North of San Francisco, a Mount St. Helena weather station recorded a hurricane-force gust of 89 mph late Sunday and sustained winds of 76 mph. Some Sierra Nevada peaks registered gusts well over 100 mph.

The "shut-offs probably did prevent dangerous fires last night. It's almost impossible to imagine that winds of this magnitude would not have sparked major conflagrations in years past," said Daniel Swain, a scientist with UCLA.

Early vote total exceeds 2016; GOP chips at Dems' advantage

By Nicholas Riccardi and Angeliki Kastanis
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With seven days before Election Day, more people have cast ballots in this year's presidential election than voted early or absentee in the 2016 race as the start of in-person early voting in big states led to a surge in turnout in recent days.

The opening of early voting locations in Florida, Texas and elsewhere has piled millions of new votes on top of the mail ballots arriving at election offices as voters try to avoid crowded places on Nov. 3 during the coronavirus pandemic.

The result is a total of 58.6 million ballots cast so far, more than the 58 million The Associated Press logged as cast through the mail or at in-person early voting sites in 2016.

Democrats have continued to dominate the initial balloting, but Republicans are narrowing the gap. GOP voters have



Mark Vergari/The Journal News via AP

Voters line up Saturday, Oct. 24, 2020, in front of the library in Yonkers, New York, as the first day of early voting in the presidential election begins across New York state.

mail-voting fraud.

On Oct. 15, Democratic registrants cast 51% of all ballots reported, compared with 25% from Republicans. On Sunday, Democrats had a slightly smaller lead, 51% to 31%.

The early vote totals, reported by state and local election officials and tracked by the AP, are an imperfect indi-

cal of how voters are expected to vote on Election Day.

Analysts said the still sizable Democratic turnout puts extra pressure on the Republican Party to push its voters out in the final week and on Nov. 3. That's especially clear in closely contested states such as Florida, Nevada and North Carolina.

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The public campground at the Wallowa Falls Hydroelectric Project, known as Pacific Park, located at the south terminus of the Wallowa Lake Highway (OR St. Hwy 351) is currently closed to all public use. The construction in the campground vicinity required under the new Federal Energy Regulatory Commission operating license for the project has been substantially completed and the powerhouse tailrace rerouted to the north of the campsites. PacifiCorp plans to re-open Pacific Park for the 2021 recreation season. We are actively working out campground management details and are not taking reservations at this time. Details will be announced once the plan is finalized. The access trail to the Wallowa Falls Dam on the Upper East Fork Wallowa River has reopened. If you have any questions regarding the Wallowa Falls Hydroelectric Project or the closure of Pacific Park, please email recreation@pacificcorp.com or leave a message on our recreation phone line at 503-813-6666.



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