



Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP Photo

A firefighter prepares to fight a wildfire as it overtakes a home Thursday in Santa Clarita.

Fires rage across California as utilities shut off power

By JOCELYN GECKER and ROBERT JABLON
Associated Press

GEYSERVILLE, Calif. — Fast-growing fires throughout California forced tens of thousands of people to evacuate their homes Thursday as dry winds and high heat fed flames and fears in the state still jittery from devastating wildfires in the past two years.

The dramatic fires and evacuations — near Los Angeles and in the wine country of Northern California — came against a backdrop of power shutoffs that utility companies said were necessary to stop high winds from toppling trees or blowing debris into power lines and starting fires.

The state's largest utility, Pacific Gas & Electric Co., warned that more widespread blackouts this weekend were expected to shut power across much of the San Francisco Bay Area. It would be the third major outage this month.

Officials said they did not yet know how many homes had burned in the state, and that no immediate injuries were reported. It is not clear how any of the blazes began.

In Southern California, two fires rolled along the parched foothills north of Los Angeles, forcing at least 40,000 people to flee neighborhoods where thousands of homes have sprung up in recent decades.

At least six homes burned as the blazes swept through dry brush to the edge of communities in the Santa Clarita area. Winds gusting to about 40 mph pushed the flames, and enormous plumes of smoke were visible for miles. People used hoses to try to protect their properties.

Los Angeles County Fire Chief Daryl Osby said Thursday evening there was no containment of either blaze.

Hot and dry Santa Ana winds led Southern California Edison to cut power to more than 31,000 customers. It was considering additional power cuts to more than 386,000 customers.

In Northern California wine country, authorities ordered 2,000 people to evacuate as a wildfire burned 49 buildings and exploded to 25 square miles, whipped up by the strong winds that had prompted PG&E to impose blackouts across the region. It was 5% contained.

The outages affected half a million people or nearly 180,000 customers in 17 counties, most of whom lost power Wednesday afternoon and had it restored by Thursday evening, PG&E official Keith Stephens said.

While the cause of fire wasn't yet determined PG&E reported a problem with a transmission tower near the spot where the fire ignited. The company filed a report with the state utilities commission saying it found a "broken jumper" on a transmission tower around 9:20 p.m. Wednesday; it was in the same area where the fire started minutes later.

PG&E CEO Bill Johnson said it was too soon to know if the faulty equipment started the fire outside Geyserville. He said the tower

was 43 years old, which is not uncommon in the industry, and had been inspected four times in the past two years and appeared to have been in "excellent condition."

Officials ordered an evacuation of Geyserville, home to about 900 people and a popular stop for wine country tourists, along with nearby residents. The blaze threatened some of the area's famed wineries and the River Rock Casino as flames raged on the outskirts of town.

A series of deadly blazes tore through the same area in Northern California wine country two years ago, killing 44 people.

Among those fleeing Geyserville was 81-year-old Harry Bosworth, who awoke before sunrise to find a firetruck and firefighters in his driveway. As he and his wife drove off, flames surrounded their driveway and their barn caught fire.

"I could see the fire coming, so we got the heck out of there," Bosworth said after escaping to his daughter's house in the neighboring town of Healdsburg.

Julia Jackson of Geyserville-based Jackson Family Wines, which owns more than 40 wine labels and thousands of acres of vineyards, posted on Instagram that her home was "burnt down to the ground."

"Stuff is just stuff. Thank God I'm alive," she wrote. Jackson, who founded a climate change conference, said such fires are why she is doing the work.

The fire started Wednesday night near the Geysers, the world's largest geothermal field, where nearly two dozen power plants draw steam from more than 350 mountain wells to create electricity, said California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection incident commander Mike Parkes.

It was fueled overnight by 76 mph winds in rugged terrain that was hard to reach, he said. Some people were refusing to leave despite the danger, Sonoma County Sheriff Mark Essick said.

"Please heed our evacuation order," he said in a televised news conference. "We really need to be able to fight the fire, rather than worrying about rescuing you."

The fire raged amid rolling blackouts instituted after utility electrical equipment was blamed for setting several blazes in recent years that killed scores of people and burned thousands of homes.

Forecasts for the weekend showed possible wind gusts of up to 80 mph, prompting PG&E officials to warn of more shutdowns, likely starting Saturday for most of the San Francisco Bay Area, excluding the city itself.

"We do think that it will be the strongest offshore wind even this season, by a large margin," said PG&E meteorologist Scott Strenfel, adding that it will be "possibly the strongest offshore wind event we have seen in years."

Johnson, the PG&E CEO, said it was too soon to put a duration on the weekend outages but local officials reported they had already been notified of shutoffs expected to last from 10 p.m. Saturday to noon Monday.

House investigators subpoena more administration officials

By ALAN FRAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Impeachment investigators issued subpoenas Friday to three more Trump administration officials, demanding their testimony in the probe of President Donald Trump's efforts to force Ukraine to feed him damaging information about his Democratic political opponents.

The chairs of the House committees leading the impeachment inquiry subpoenaed two officials of the White House Office of Management and Budget: acting director Russell Vought and Michael Duffey, who oversees national security programs.

They also subpoenaed State Department counselor T. Ulrich Brechbuhl.

Investigators asked all three earlier this month to testify, but none have appeared.

As House investigators pushed forward, Trump continued his defiance with another round of combative verbal volleys.

He predicted that if the House impeaches him and the Republican-run Senate holds a trial on whether to remove him from office, he would prevail "for one reason: I did nothing wrong."

Speaking to reporters as he left the White House for an appearance in South Carolina, he said people are "angry" because "this isn't a takedown of the president, this is a takedown of the Republican Party."

He also renewed his assertion that the impeachment effort is endangering the economy. He said that "if anything ever happened," the result would be "a recession, depression the likes of which this country hasn't seen."

The Trump administration has refused to make its officials available for depositions in the investigation and resisted supplying documents as well. But witnesses have been appearing anyway after they are issued subpoenas, often on a daily basis for hourslong appearances behind closed doors.

"The committees therefore have no choice but to issue a subpoena compelling your mandatory appearance," the letters read.

Investigators want to know why nearly \$400 million in military aid to Ukraine was delayed, even though it was approved



Susan Walsh/AP Photo

President Donald Trump talks to reporters on the South Lawn of the White House on Friday.

by Congress and signed into law by Trump.

Ukraine has relied on U.S. help during a five-year war with Russian-backed separatists in the country's east, where the rebels control territory. More than 13,000 people have died in the fighting.

Brechbuhl is said to have been the source of a mysterious packet of materials that House investigators were given. Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., has said the package contained information from debunked conspiracy theories about Ukraine's role in the 2016 election. The significance of the packet is unclear.

Others have testified that Trump was demanding investigations of Democrats in exchange for the aid and for an Oval Office meeting coveted by Ukraine's new president, Volodymyr Zelensky.

The committees want Duffey to appear on Nov. 5, and Vought and Brechbuhl the following day.

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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
58 38	57 35	55 35	52 34	53 36	54 37	55 38
Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	Partly sunny	Plenty of sun	Mostly sunny	Mostly cloudy	Plenty of sunshine



ALMANAC

Astoria through Thursday

Temperatures

High/low	65/42
Normal high/low	59/43
Record high	75 in 1941
Record low	32 in 1954

Precipitation

Thursday	0.00"
Month to date	6.92"
Normal month to date	4.16"
Year to date	38.71"
Normal year to date	44.40"

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2019

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Double clusters of Perseus nearly over head before midnight.

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:47 a.m.
Sunset tonight	6:11 p.m.
Moonrise today	5:39 a.m.
Moonset today	5:57 p.m.

	New	First	Full	Last
	Oct 27	Nov 4	Nov 12	Nov 19

TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks	Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
	12:03 a.m.	7.8	6:25 a.m.	0.0
	12:32 p.m.	8.6	7:00 p.m.	-0.2
Cape Disappointment	12:07 p.m.	8.3	5:33 a.m.	0.0
	none		6:10 p.m.	-0.4
Hammond	12:18 p.m.	8.9	5:54 a.m.	0.0
	none		6:30 p.m.	-0.3
Warrenton	12:27 p.m.	9.0	6:09 a.m.	0.1
	none		6:44 p.m.	-0.2
Knappa	12:40 a.m.	8.0	7:26 a.m.	0.0
	1:09 p.m.	8.8	8:01 p.m.	-0.2
Depoe Bay	11:21 a.m.	9.0	5:02 a.m.	0.2
	11:49 p.m.	8.2	5:40 p.m.	0.0

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	73/62/t	75/53/pc
Boston	60/48/pc	55/54/r
Chicago	53/45/r	58/40/pc
Dallas	67/47/s	76/50/s
Denver	68/24/s	30/13/sn
Honolulu	89/76/pc	87/75/pc
Houston	69/48/pc	77/56/s
Los Angeles	88/60/s	73/53/pc
Miami	89/79/t	90/79/pc
New York City	63/55/pc	68/57/r
Phoenix	85/58/s	87/58/s
San Francisco	74/55/s	75/53/r
Wash., DC	67/61/pc	74/56/r

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.

REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W
Seattle	55/37	75/53/pc	Wenatchee	55/31	
Tacoma	55/32		Moses Lake	56/30	
Aberdeen	56/33		Yakima	58/27	
Olympia	55/31		Kennewick	59/31	
Longview	55/32		Walla Walla	53/30	
Astoria	58/38		Lewiston	53/30	
Portland	58/36		Enterprise	43/21	
Salem	56/34		Hermiston	58/31	
Corvallis	58/33		Pendleton	51/29	
Eugene	58/33		La Grande	45/24	
Bend	48/23		John Day	44/26	
Medford	61/31		Burns	48/18	
Klamath Falls	56/24		Ontario	57/32	
			Caldwell	53/27	