

Wildfires barrel toward Northern California lake towns

LAKEPORT, Calif. (AP) — A fire official says a Northern California wildfire is now the ninth most destructive in the state's history.

State fire spokesman Scott McLean says the blaze rampaging in the area of Redding has destroyed 818 homes and 311 outbuildings. Another 165 homes have been damaged by the fire, which also killed two firefighters and four civilians.

More than 27,000 people remain evacuated because of the blaze, which has burned for more than a week. However, another 10,000 were allowed to return home today as fire crews managed

to reinforce some containment lines.

The huge blaze is now 23 percent surrounded.

It's one of three that have burned homes in the north. Seven homes have been torched and more than 10,000 are threatened by a pair of fires in Mendocino and Lake counties. Those fires were among 17 burning across the state, where fire crews were stretched to the limit.

"We have experienced fires the last four years, and so we're very aware of what can happen with fires and the damage they can cause," Lake County Sheriff Lt. Corey Paulich said.



AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez
Firefighters with Cal Fire Mendocino Unit cover themselves from smoke and ash created by an advancing wildfire Monday in Lakeport, Calif.

Derick Hughes II did not heed the order and remained behind at his property in Nice, California, where he

ran sprinklers on his roof and removed yard plants that could catch fire.

The 32-year-old Marine

Corps veteran sent his wife and two daughters to safety along with three carloads of belongings. But he said he had too much at stake to leave himself. He bought his three-bedroom house last year using a loan from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"This is everything I bled for, and I've worked really hard to get to where I am, and I'm just not willing to give it up so easily," he said over the phone. "Some people may think that's selfish of me, and I have insurance. But the way things go, I'd rather not start over."

Hughes said about five of his neighbors also dis-

obeyed the evacuation text alert they got Sunday evening to protect their homes and keep looters out. Farther north, police said five people were arrested on suspicion of entering areas evacuated due to the explosive wildfire around Redding.

Authorities were also investigating at least 18 reports of missing people, though many of them may simply have failed to check in with friends or family, police said.

The fire that threatened Redding — a city of about 92,000 — was ignited by a vehicle problem a week ago about 10 miles west of the city.

BRIEFLY

'Medicare for all' projected to cost \$32.6 trillion

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Bernie Sanders' "Medicare for all" plan would boost government health spending by \$32.6 trillion over 10 years, requiring historic tax hikes, says a study released Monday by a university-based libertarian policy center.

That's trillion with a "T." The latest plan from the Vermont independent would deliver significant savings on administration and drug costs, but increased demand for care would drive up spending, according to the analysis by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University in Virginia. Doubling federal individual and corporate income tax receipts would not cover the full cost, the study said.

Sanders' plan builds on Medicare, the popular insurance program for seniors. All U.S. residents would be covered with no copays and deductibles for medical services. The insurance industry would be relegated to a minor role.

"Enacting something like 'Medicare for all' would be a transformative change in the size of the federal government," said Charles Blahous, the study's author. Blahous was a senior economic adviser to former President George W. Bush and a public trustee of Social Security and Medicare during the Obama administration.

Responding to the study, Sanders took aim at the Mercatus Center, which receives funding from the conservative Koch brothers. Koch Industries CEO Charles Koch is on the center's board.

Trump says 'no problem' shutting government

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unnerving fellow Republicans, President Donald Trump declared Monday he would have "no problem" shutting down the federal government this fall if Congress won't come up with more money for border security.

Trump's threat, his second in two days, put him further at odds with his own party in Congress, where many Republicans are facing tough re-election fights this November. A shutdown when government funding expires at the end of September, just weeks before the midterm elections, would be the second under unified Republican control of Washington, following a weekend stoppage in January.

"I would have no problem doing a shutdown," Trump said during a joint press conference at the White House with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. "It's time we had proper border security. We're the laughingstock of the world."

The president's comments suggest he continues to believe that an election-season showdown over immigration would fire up his base and boost his party's chances of holding power in Congress. Republican leaders disagree, hoping they can avoid a high-profile display of dysfunction and focus their message on the GOP tax cuts and the strong economy.

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