



TODD SPITZER

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New Hi Tech Camera System Can Spot Small OC Fires Before They Can Spread

Spitzer Embraces New Technology to Help Prevent Repeat of Canyon 2 Wildfire

Orange County, CA – The latest technology in firefighting is not a new type of truck or helicopter. It's a cluster of small white cameras that now sits atop Santiago Peak and can spot a whiff of smoke as far away as Camp Pendleton.

Supervisor Todd Spitzer helped unveil this new system on Thursday at the Orange County Fire Authority campus in Irvine where he demonstrated how a computer is utilized to remotely operate the six mountaintop cameras.

The project is a joint partnership between numerous agencies including OCFA, SCE, the Orange County Sheriff's Dept. and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"We can send a man to the moon, we can send a satellite to Mars, but we can't predict when a large fire breaks out," Spitzer told a gathering of media. "Well, now we can."

Spitzer is enthusiastic about the system, which is one of the first in the state that shows the real time the trajectory of a fire based on weather conditions and topography.

It was in his district that the devastating Canyon 2 wildfire burned out of control for a week in October, destroying 25 homes and forcing nearly 17,000 people to flee the area. More than 9,000 acres were torched.

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Spitzer's Third District is the area most prone to wildfires in all of Orange County.

The cameras on Santiago Peak are perched on a pole installed by SCE. Four cameras are stationary and two more can swivel upon command from a computer or even a cell phone. SCE funded the initial stage of this project with a \$100,000 grant.

Additional towers housing a total of 100 cameras will be built this year to blanket SCE's service area.

"We understand that environmental changes have substantially increased wildfire activity in California and is now the 'new normal' across the state," said Donald Daigler, SEC's director of Business Resiliency. "This type of technology is an important resource for firefighters and will help them better locate and gain control of wildfires faster."

The public can look through the cameras by going to this website:
<http://www.alertwildfire.org/orangecoca/>

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