



A 36,000-acre wildfire swept through Pioneertown, near Yucca Valley, Calif., on Wednesday, charring an old car and caboose. Winds and high temperatures were hurting containment efforts.

Calif. Wildfire Spares Area Used To Film Westerns

BLAZE IN DESERT DESTROYS 30 HOMES

By CHRISTINA ALMEIDA
The Associated Press

YUCCA VALLEY, Calif. — Desert winds and blistering heat on Wednesday challenged firefighters battling a 36,000-acre wildfire that destroyed buildings and forced hundreds of people to leave but spared historic structures in a town developed decades ago as a movie set for westerns.

Temperatures hit 108 degrees as 2,500 firefighters attacked flames devouring greasewood, Joshua trees, piñon pines and brush in hills and canyons of the high desert about 100 miles east of Los Angeles.

"It's burning vigorously in specific areas," said Capt.

Marc DeLossier of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Eight air tankers and 13 helicopters attacked from above. Containment was just 16 percent.

The fire, ignited during the weekend by lightning, had destroyed 30 homes and other buildings, DeLossier said. Damage assessment teams were working on a detailed count.

The fire was moving northeast as winds gusted to 40 mph, DeLossier said, and 800 to 1,000 people remained evacuated from Pioneertown, Burns Canyon, Rimrock, Gamma Gulch, Flamingo Heights and Little Morongo Canyons.

Smoke darkened the sky over the Mojave Desert north of the town of Yucca Valley.

Firefighters used picks and shovels against hot spots in

the Pioneertown area, where the fire raged Tuesday.

There was no damage to the historic area, which dates to the 1940s when Hollywood cowboys such as Roy Rogers and Russ "Lucky" Haden began establishing it as a filming site.

In Morongo Valley — where large ranch homes are surrounded by highly combustible greasewood, Joshua trees, piñon pines and fine brush — residents watched nervously.

"I want to see how bad it is and see if I need to pack up my pictures," said Tammy Taylor, who drove the family Jeep to the top of the canyon from their nearby home.

An evacuation center was set up at Yucca Valley High School, and horses and other livestock were taken to the town of Landers.

At Least 60 Loose Bolts Found Where Fatal Collapse Occurred

BUILDERS KNEW 5 FAILED IN 1999 TESTS

By GLEN KENNON
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Inspectors began reviewing the city's entire highway system Wednesday — every bridge, tunnel and roadway — after at least 60 signs of loose bolts and other potential failures were found in the same Big Dig tunnel where a motorist was crushed Monday night by falling concrete.

Initial inspections by state officials revealed that some bolts had started to come out of the concrete in the east-bound connector tunnel, part of the main route to Boston's Logan International Airport. Gaps also had developed between the ceiling and metal plates that help hold the massive panels in place.

There had been plans to reopen that section of tunnel Wednesday, but Massachusetts Turnpike Authority Chairman Matthew Amorello said it would remain closed indefinitely to ensure motorists' safety and to collect more evidence in a possible criminal investigation of the tunnel's designers and builders.

Amorello added that an undetermined number of similar problem areas were found in two adjacent tunnels, raising the possibility of a broader design or construction flaw. The widespread trouble spots prompted the Turnpike Authority to order an inspection of the city's entire highway system — even parts that are decades old and not part of the \$14.6 billion Big Dig system, the nation's most expensive highway project.

Late Monday, 12 tons of concrete ceiling panels in the tunnel collapsed, crushing a car and killing 38-year-old Milena Del Valle. Her husband escaped through a window.

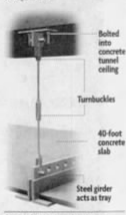
"It was like a bomb," Angel Del Valle told the Boston Her-

'TIEBACK' BLAMED

Massachusetts Turnpike Authority Chairman Matthew Amorello blamed "tiebacks" for an accident in which a motorist was killed by falling concrete in a tunnel.

Tunnel's hanging ceiling

Design's schematic



Graphic by The Associated Press

"It was like a bomb. Everything was falling. It was too fast. I couldn't stop. I couldn't do anything."

ANGEL DEL VALLE
Victim's husband who escaped

ald. "Everything was falling. It was too fast. I couldn't stop. I couldn't do anything." Massachusetts Attorney General Tom Reilly said a contractor and project manager knew about problems in that section of the tunnel as early as 1999, when five bolts failed during testing.

"It was not only identified, but there was a plan to address that problem, and what we're trying to determine right now is was that plan implemented," Reilly said, declining to provide details.

A spokesman for San Francisco-based project manager Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff

declined to comment. Cambridge-based contractor Modern Continental did respond to a phone call and e-mail.

John Christian, an engineer hired to investigate for the Turnpike Authority, said the attachment bolts used a standard design: Holes were drilled into the tunnel's concrete ceiling, and bolts were then inserted, along with pressure-injected epoxy.

He said it was possible that inspectors would find "some generic flaw in the systems that are used for designing these panels."

The strength and quality of the concrete used in the tunnel is key to the safe hanging of the overhead panels, according to Avi Mor, of Dr. Mor & Associates, a Marina del Rey, Calif.-based consulting firm specializing in analysis of construction defects. He said if concrete failure were to blame for the collapse of the panel, investigators would likely find pieces of concrete still exposed to the tie rods.

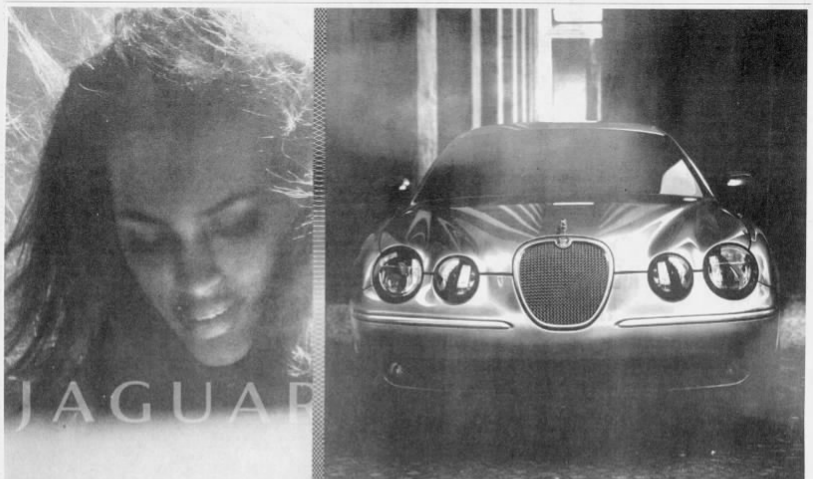
"Concrete is a live material. It goes through cycles of expansion and shrinkage. The tunnel can vibrate," Mor said. "All these things could cause cracks if the concrete is marginal to start with. This micro-cracking can bring it to the point where it could fail."

Cab driver Steve Past, 45, said he drives to the airport four or five times a day.

"The drivers aren't so scared, but people sitting in the back seat are scared. Because who knows? Today one piece falls down, tomorrow another piece," he said.

Scott Brook, an 41-year-old information technology consultant, uses one of the system's main tunnels. On Wednesday, he found himself looking at the ceiling.

"I used to say that the Big Dig was the best thing to happen because it made my commute shorter, but I can't say it's such a great thing now."



SUMMER NIGHTS

GORGEOUS WON'T WAIT FOREVER.

JAGUAR is celebrating Summer Nights with special S-TYPE lease offers and events. See your dealer for more details.

\$399/MO.*
\$1,458 DUE AT SIGNING

2006 JAGUAR
S-TYPE 3.0

24-MONTH LEASE
SECURITY DEPOSIT WAIVED
EXCLUDES TAXES, TITLE
AND LICENSE FEES

JAGUAR. "#1 NAMEPLATE IN SALES SATISFACTION"
BY J.D. POWER AND ASSOCIATES**



*New and previously untraded vehicles only. Offer valid for Jaguar Cars Lease Cash. All leases will qualify for lowest Jaguar Credit lease. Payments may vary. Residency restrictions apply. Take new retail delivery from dealer stock by 10-4-06. **J.D. Power and Associates 2005 Sales Satisfaction Study. Study based on a total of 32,246 new-vehicle buyers who purchased their vehicles in July of 2005. www.jdpower.com. See your local dealer for qualifications, details and compatibility with other program and incentive offers. Visit jaguarusa.com, or call 1-800-AJAGUAR. ©2006 AJAGUAR CAR.

ST. PETERSBURG
CROWN JAGUAR

6001 34th St. N.
787-577-5731

CROWN-JAGUAR.COM

JARASOTA
JAGUAR OF SARASOTA

4811 Clark Rd.
800-498-8609

JAGUAROF SARASOTA.COM

TAMPA
JAGUAR TAMPA

130 E. Fletcher Ave.

866-490-4945

JAGUAROTAMPA.COM

PHOTO: JAGUAR