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Canyon Fire Grows Rapidly North of Los Angeles, Prompts Widespread Evacuations

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A fast-moving wildfire burning north of Los Angeles has forced thousands of residents to evacuate as high temperatures and dry conditions continue to fuel the blaze. The Canyon Fire, which broke out on Thursday afternoon, has grown from an estimated 30 acres to approximately 1,500 acres, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) as of 10:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

The fire ignited around 2:00 p.m. local time near the unincorporated community of Piru, located in Ventura County. With a population of just over 2,000, Piru and surrounding areas faced immediate risk as the fire expanded quickly due to ongoing heatwave conditions. The National Weather Service (NWS) reported that temperatures in the Lake

Piru region reached nearly 100 degrees Fahrenheit on Thursday, creating conditions conducive to rapid fire spread.

Although the fire initially threatened Piru, officials say it is now pushing eastward toward Interstate 5, placing several Los Angeles County communities in its path. Among those under evacuation orders are Romero, Val Verde, Oak Canyon, Hasley Canyon, and Castaic. Ventura County has also issued mandatory evacuations for the Lake Piru Recreation Area, Camulos, and Piru itself.

Authorities have deployed significant resources in an effort to contain the blaze. Ventura County Fire Department spokesman Andrew Dowd told *The New York Times* that approximately 150 firefighters are actively battling the fire. In addition, 11 fixed-wing aircraft and seven helicopters have been dispatched to perform water drops over critical areas.

Despite the scale of the emergency, the nearby city of Santa Clarita has not yet been placed under evacuation orders. However, officials have warned residents to remain vigilant. Los Angeles County Supervisor Chair Kathryn Barger emphasized the seriousness of the situation, stating that the fire is “spreading fast under extreme heat and dry conditions near the Ventura–Los Angeles County line.” She urged residents in affected areas to heed evacuation orders without delay, noting, “When first responders say GO, leave immediately. Keep aware—please don’t risk lives.”

To support evacuees, an emergency evacuation center has been established at the East Gymnasium of the College of the Canyons, located at 26455 Rockwell Canyon Road in Santa Clarita. Pet owners have also been given designated locations to ensure animal safety. Large animals are being accepted at Pierce College in Woodland Hills, while small pets may be taken to the Castaic Animal Care Center or the Agoura Hills Animal Shelter.

The Canyon Fire marks the fourth major wildfire in Southern California within the past several weeks. Just last week, the Gifford Fire burned through approximately 98,000 acres, making it the largest fire in the state so far this year. Earlier this year, a devastating series of wildfires in January destroyed over 16,000 structures, scorched about 40,000 acres, and resulted in 30 fatalities. Among the most damaging were the Palisades Fire, which severely affected the Pacific Palisades and nearby coastal communities, and the Eaton Fire, which burned over 14,000 acres in the San Gabriel Mountains and caused heavy damage in Altadena.

A February report from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) estimated that January’s fires caused approximately \$250 billion in damages and reduced Los Angeles

County's gross domestic product (GDP) by an estimated \$4.6 billion.

As of the latest updates, the Canyon Fire remains uncontained at zero percent, and fire officials have not yet projected when it might be brought under control. Authorities continue to monitor the situation closely as crews work to prevent further spread into populated areas.