



A firefighter faces a wall of fire in eastern Orange County, Calif., on Wednesday. 500,000 have fled the fires.

Decrease in winds eases Calif. fires

Fires threaten 8,500 homes, cause \$1 billion in damage

By ELLIOT SPAGAT
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A merciful easing of the winds fueling Southern California's sprawling wildfires finally gave fire crews a chance to fight back against some blazes Wednesday, and weary residents could take solace in an overriding sign of hope: Just one person had died from the flames.

While the final toll has yet to be tallied, officials were crediting an automated, reverse 911 calling system that prompted the orderly evacuation of more than half a million people.

Steve Levstik got a call 15 minutes before flames swept through his Rancho Bernardo neighborhood.

"It was very intense. On the

call, it was like, 'This area, go! This area, go!' In 2003 there was less guidance. It was like, 'Just pay attention to the news and if it looks bad, leave.'"

On Wednesday, winds dropped considerably from fierce gusts of up to 100 mph earlier in the week.

The improving weather allowed for a greater aerial assault on the flames and helped firefighters beat back the most destructive blazes. Authorities said they had largely contained many of the fires north of San Diego, and all five fires in Los Angeles County were about 50 percent contained or more.

But none of the six major blazes in San Diego County was more than 15 percent contained.

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Ragtag co-founder joins First Ward race

True/False organizer Sturtz is fifth to run for Crayton's seat.

By JACOB STOKES
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Paul Sturtz, organizer of the True/False Film Festival and co-founder of Ragtag Cinemacafe, said Tuesday he will run for the First Ward City Council seat.

Sturtz said in an e-mail news release that he will officially announce his candidacy at four Columbia locations Thursday. Sturtz, 43, will be the fifth to announce his run for the seat, which is currently held by Almeta Crayton.

Crayton, who is serving her third term, has said she will seek re-election. The other announced candidates are John G. Clark, Sal Nuccio and Marlon Jordan.

Sturtz, who has lived in the First Ward for six of his 12 years in Columbia, has been a long-time critic of what he sees as a city government that has approved development plans without scrutinizing their impact, or what he calls a "slash-and-burn economy." But Sturtz is quick to say he isn't against growth.

Instead, Sturtz calls for sustainable growth.

"We have a limited base of land out there," Sturtz said. "We need to protect the things that make Columbia and Boone County unique."

Commenting on how he would implement sustainable growth, Sturtz pointed to some programs already in place around the First Ward, such as Columbia Youth-Build, which teaches youth construction skills and helps build houses in the community.

"I feel like there's a lot of good people who are doing great things all over," Sturtz said. "There's a lot of really great models (of sustainable growth) that are happening in the First Ward already."

In addition to being an entrepreneur, Sturtz has been active in community organizations. He was a KOPN/89.5 FM board member in 1997. He is a founding member of Big Canoe, an organization founded to encourage economic and environmental sustainability.

When asked about incumbent Almeta Crayton, Sturtz said: "I think Almeta's been a tremendous personality and force in the city, and I wouldn't want to diminish that. She's raised a lot of issues that wouldn't have been raised otherwise."

Missourian reporter Paul Hagey contributed to this report.

head start

By AMBER HANNEKEN
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The political scene is building in mid-Missouri, with presidential campaign supporters drumming up local support.

Five groups have formed locally, four Democratic and one Republican, each in support of a particular presidential candidate. Thus far, more Democrats seem to be selecting specific candidates.

"I think on the Republican side we don't have a real strong candidate yet," said Russ Duker of the Boone County Republican Central Committee.

Here's a look at each local campaign:

The candidate	A local supporter	What they do
 Rep. Ron Paul R-Texas	 Matt Begemann, 20, MU senior	■ Radio advertisements WHY: "He has a statement, then backs up that statement with references to the Constitution." COMING UP: Meetings 7 p.m. Fridays at the Cherry Street Artisan. CONTACT: ronpaulcolumbia.com.
 Sen. Barack Obama D-Illinois	 G.T. Blackwell, 24, Bookseller at Barnes & Noble	■ Barack-a-Que picnic ■ Canvassing trip to Iowa WHY: "He would be able to restore the United States' credibility." COMING UP: A trip to see Obama speak at 5 p.m. Friday at Union Station in St. Louis. CONTACT: grehn@studentsforbarackobama.com
 Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-New York	 Betty Wilson, 75, Attorney, certified mediator	■ Boone County Fair parade ■ Homecoming parade WHY: "She has the experience ... and the vision to be our leader." COMING UP: Meeting 7 p.m. Nov. 5 at Focus on Learning Center, 110 N. Tenth St. CONTACT: 442-1372 or 442-3134
 John Edwards, Democrat, North Carolina	 Rebecca Schedler, 52, Library Information specialist	■ A canvassing trip to Iowa WHY: "He knows what it's like to not be able to pay your bills — that gives him a depth of experience." COMING UP: Fundraising House Party at 7:30 p.m. Friday. CONTACT: 882-0837 or 443-4401
 Gov. Bill Richardson Democrat, New Mexico	 Bill Clark, 75, Second Ward committeeman	■ A discussion with Missouri Richardson campaign director WHY: "What he's done internationally transcends party." COMING UP: There are no scheduled events at this time. CONTACT: 474-4510 or Kelley Lucero at klucero@socket.net

New synagogue's space seen as a boon to Jewish faith

By AARON DOHOGNE
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Like many Columbia Jews, Laura Cohn celebrated her bat mitzvah at the Hillel House at MU. However, her younger brother, Eli, is expected to celebrate his coming of age at Congregation Beth Shalom's new synagogue on Green Meadows Road.

"It's going to be really nice to have his bar mitzvah in the place where we regularly hold service," said the children's

"I need the temple, the Jewish community, to create a connection with my Jewish faith."

JUDITH GOODMAN
Grew up in a large Jewish Community in Baltimore

mother, Leah Cohn. "For my daughter, it wasn't an option. We didn't have any room. It's the difference between doing something in your home and a hotel, your space and borrowed space."

Congregation Beth Shalom will celebrate the opening of the new synagogue at noon Sunday. The occasion will mark the end of the congregation's long-time reliance on churches and the Hillel House

to accommodate special celebrations and services on the High Holy Days.

The synagogue, at 500 Green Meadows Road, sits on land purchased by the congregation four years ago. An old farmhouse on the same land was converted into a school and temporary sanctuary until the synagogue could be built. The converted farmhouse is only big enough to hold about 50 people for services — the

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Coming Saturday

29 photojournalists 62 photo assignments
12 photo editors

36 HOURS
IN COLUMBIA



Outside today

This morning: Clear with a cold north breeze.
Temp: 39°
Over lunch: Increasing clouds, breezy.
Temp: 57°
This evening: Chilly with spotty light rain possible.
Temp: 55°

Clarification

The Missouri School of Journalism budget for next year's 100th anniversary centennial dedication is not segregated from the school's "overall budget," according to Journalism School administrators. Also, the Journalism School's For All We Call Mizzou goal is \$100 million. The university campaign was established in 1999. To encourage support before its centennial, the J-School added the brand "100 by 100" in 2006. To read a full response to Wednesday's 1A story on the centennial, go to ColumbiaMissourian.com.

THE GREAT PUMPKIN CARVE



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Our 100th year/#42
2 sections
42 pages

