



The



Joshua Tree

August 4, 2026

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF FIRE SERVICE

The Rotary Club of Victorville welcomed Victorville Fire Chief **Bobby Clemmer**, who shared the remarkable history of the Victorville Fire Department as it celebrates its 100th anniversary. Chief Clemmer, who became Fire Chief in 2023 after serving with both the Barstow Fire Department and the Victorville Fire Department, has led the department for the past two years. He reflected on how far the organization has come since its humble beginnings in 1926.



Long before Victorville had a formal fire department, fires were fought by determined community volunteers armed with little more than well pumps, bucket brigades, and an early soda-and-acid "chemical engine." Recognizing the growing town's need for organized fire protection, the Victorville Businessman's Association began discussing the issue in 1923. Those conversations led to the formation of the Victorville County Fire Protection District on July 26, 1926.

The department continued to evolve over the following decades. The Victorville Volunteer Fire Department was officially established in 1930, and by 1938, night

watchmen were hired to provide dependable 24-hour alarm coverage for the community.

One of the department's most significant turning points came during the 1970s. In 1972, the department hired its first full-time Fire Chief, marking the transition toward a more modern organization. Two years later, the devastating Stewart Hotel fire exposed the limitations of relying solely on volunteer resources. In response, the department purchased its first aerial snorkel truck, providing firefighters with equipment that greatly expanded their capabilities.

The City of Victorville officially assumed control of fire protection in 1976, hiring its first six career firefighters. By June 27, 1977, the Victorville Fire Department was formally established as a city-operated department with additional full-time personnel. Throughout the 1990s, the City continued investing in fire protection by expanding stations and staffing to meet the needs of its rapidly growing population.

Chief Clemmer also discussed more recent history. In 2008, the City contracted with the San Bernardino County Fire District to provide fire, EMS, and rescue services. A decade later, the City Council voted to once again establish its own municipal fire department, with full city operations resuming in 2019.

Today, the Victorville Fire Department proudly serves approximately 150,000 residents across 74 square miles

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This Week's Functionaries

Invocation: Brad Letner

Flag Salute: Pete Lawson

4-Way Test: Mike Page

Fine Master: Ryan McEachron



LETNER'S LETTER

Thank you to everyone who helped make this week's meeting such a great celebration of our



Fire Department's Centennial! Especially thanks to Fire Chief, Bobby Clemmer, and Battalion Training Chief Travis Espinoza, for sharing their insights with us.

One of the things I've always appreciated about Rotary is that every member brings something different to the table. Some lead projects. Some mentor. Some build relationships. Some quietly step in whenever help is needed. None of us has to do everything, but all of us have something to offer.

My hope is that this year, each of us finds a place to plug in that matches our interests, talents, and schedule. Rotary works best when serving others feels less like an obligation and more like an opportunity. That's the kind of club I hope we continue building together.

Brad

Bobby Clemmer

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of residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, industrial areas, and wildland interface. Five strategically located fire stations operate around the clock, providing rapid emergency response every day of the year.

The department is staffed by a dedicated team that includes a Fire Chief, Deputy Chief of Operations, Battalion Chiefs, EMS Manager, Fire Captains, Fire Engineers, Firefighter/Paramedics, prevention officers, and administrative professionals. Together, they respond to nearly 25,000 emergency incidents each year. Chief Clemmer noted that approximately 78 percent of those calls are medical emergencies, while the remainder include fire suppression, hazardous materials incidents, and technical rescue operations.

Rotarians also learned about one of the department's newest additions; a state-of-the-art tillered aerial ladder truck that arrived in May 2024 at a cost of \$2.7 million. The unique apparatus is the first of its kind in the High Desert and is specifically designed to navigate narrow streets and tight turns while providing exceptional aerial reach. Although traditionally requiring two operators, the truck can also be operated by a single firefighter when necessary. Chief Clemmer explained that firefighters have dedicated extensive time to training with the specialized vehicle to maximize its capabilities.

As Victorville continues to grow, so too does the responsibility placed upon its firefighters. Chief Clemmer emphasized that while equipment and technology have changed dramatically over the past century, the department's mission has remained constant: protecting lives and property through professionalism, preparedness, and service to the community.

The Rotary Club thanks Chief Bobby Clemmer for sharing the fascinating story behind the Victorville Fire Department's first 100 years and for recognizing the men and women who continue to answer the call every day. Their century of service stands as a proud reminder of the dedication and sacrifice required to keep our community safe.

CREATE LASTING IMPACT

Big Blue Poker Chip



Steve Murray had the chance to draw the Blue Chip but picked green and saved it for another!

We will continue in 2 weeks with 13 chips and \$225 for the lucky Rotarian who can draw the Blue Chip.

Spoon of Exception



Arsalee Morales had her first week with the Spoon and shared that she has a new position at Sciens as an outside salesperson, which will result in more traveling for the company. The company currently specializes in monitoring fire alarm systems, and will soon

also be adding sprinkler systems and fire extinguishers to their services.

Raffle

This week, **Chris Ackerman** donated VTA stadium bag that will be used by **Arsalee Morales** and **Steve Murray** won a VTA canvas bag. Ackerman then went home with a bottle of vodka and a Rotary koozie from Steve, while **Keith Metzler** received a Rotary koozie and candle from **Pam Murray**.

Rotary Guests

This week we welcomed former Fire Captain **Pete Lawson** and his wife **Sharon Lawson**, who were guests of **Ryan McEachron**. Also from the Victorville Fire Department we had **Travis Espinoza** in attendance.

Joining **Keith Metzler** this week was Deputy City Manager **Tony Camargo**.

Families in attendance were **Harrison Hove**, at the meeting with **Jon Hove** and **Steve & Pam Murray** were on "Grandparent Duty" to **Silas & Madelyn Spague**.

Fine Session



Ryan McEachron was our Fine Master and began by giving **Mike Page** a \$10 fine for not wearing his Rotary Pin. The City of Victorville did not get a pass as **Keith Metzler** was penalized \$10 for just being in attendance!

Jon Hove paid \$10 for talking to **Dr. Ron Boyd** at the Board meeting about his fat cat (19lbs!), while **Kirsten Acosta** was fined the same amount for the next VVC semester beginning on August 24th.

Finally, as **Bill & Linda Scott** head off to Monterey Car Week with his Ferrari, he will have \$10 less in his wallet for gas!

Your Rotary Moment

Ryan McEachron shared with the Club that RYLA is coming soon and your help is needed. RYLA takes high school Juniors and Seniors, and has them working together with other students in the District as a team. The Club tries to send 4-6 students each year to learn leadership skills.

Ryan said that facilitators are needed, and this a great opportunity to have your "Rotary Moment". If that is not for you, we also need your financial support to send these students to RYLA as well as TLC in 2027.





VICTORVILLE ROTARY CLUB OFFICERS

Board of Directors

President 2026 - 2028	Brad Letner
Immediate Past President	Steve Murray
Executive Secretary	Pam Murray
Treasurer	Darron Poulsen
Foundation.....	Jon Hove
Membership	Bryan Gillespie
Club Service	Arsalee Morales
Community Service	Craig Garrick
Vocational Service	Angel Espino
International Service.....	Ben Tafoya
Youth Service	Ryan McEachron
Directors/Members-at-Large.....	Bob Basen & Dr. Ron Boyd
Joshua Tree/Marketing	Chris Ackerman
Recording Secretary.....	Pam Murray

Positions & Committee Chairs

Scholarships.....	Kirsten Acosta
Billing	Pam Murray & Darron Poulsen
Public Service Awards.....	Arsalee Morales
Teacher Mini-Grants	Angel Espino
Special Projects.....	Rob Kilpatrick
Dan Stover Music Contest.....	Angel Espino
Read B4K	Brad Letner
Grants.....	Please Volunteer
Food Baskets.....	Ben Tafoya
Interact (Junior Rotary).....	Please Volunteer
Programs	Mike Page
Fundraising	Brad Letner
S.T.A.R. Students	Chris Ackerman
Club Learning Facilitator.....	Please Volunteer

The Victorville Rotary Club meets every Tuesday for fellowship
at 11:30 a.m. and meeting at 12:00 noon at the Bear Valley
Country Club, 13229 Spring Valley Parkway, Victorville

Make-up Days and Locations

MONDAY:	San Bernardino East, Imperial Palace, noon
TUESDAY:	Rancho Cucamonga Sunrise, 7:15 a.m. Empire Lakes Golf Course Rancho Cucamonga, 12:00 p.m., Etiwanda Gardens
WEDNESDAY:	San Bernardino Crossroads, Hilton, noon, Barstow, DiNapoli's Firehouse, 1358 E Main St, Barstow, CA
THURSDAY:	Apple Valley, Rusty Bull, 13685 John Glenn Rd, Apple Valley, Noon. Ontario, 12:15 p.m., Doubletree Hotel San Bernardino, Denny's at I-15, 7 a.m. Redlands, Masonic Temple, noon
FRIDAY:	San Bernardino North, Elks Lodge, 12:05 p.m.

Calendar Dates

Aug 3

Board of Directors Meeting

5:30pm Board Meeting
Coldwell Banker
12138 Industrial Blvd., Suite102
Victorville, CA 92395

Oct 7

76th Anniversary Fundraiser

5:30pm Doors
6:00pm Dinner • 7:15pm Drawing
Spring Valley Lake Community Center
12975 Rolling Ridge, SVL

Rotary



Club of Victorville, CA

Upcoming Programs

Aug 11

2nd Tuesday Fun: Town's End 5:00pm

22020 Hwy 18, Apple Valley, CA

Aug 18

OPEN

Aug 25

OPEN

Sept 1

OPEN

Sept 8

2nd Tuesday Fun: Pick Your Pleasure Wine, Whiskey & Cigar Night

Letner Lakeside Lounge

Nov 17

2026 Teacher Mini-Grants

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