Editorial: Make holiday safe and sane

Staff Reports

Friday, July 2, 2010

If fireworks were legal across Ventura County, we’d advise everyone to use them safely this weekend.

But since fireworks are illegal everywhere in the county, except within the city limits of Fillmore, there’s little reason to offer much advice beyond the wisest of suggestions: Don’t use them at all.

Unfortunately, hundreds of county residents have already made their annual pilgrimage to Fillmore this week to purchase what are called “safe and sane” fireworks. With those purchases in hand residents will return home to illegally use those fireworks before, on and after the Fourth of July.

Fireworks aren’t toys. In the hands of reckless individuals fireworks can seriously injure or even kill. Their use, in the hands of careless individuals, can also spark dry brush, threatening lives and property. — a danger not lost on county fire officials.

“We’re moving into the peak season for wildfire danger right now,” said Capt. Ron Oatman of the Ventura County Fire Protection District. “Fireworks can easily ignite grass and light brush, and they can start a structure fire almost as easily. This is a very serious matter to us and people need to know that anyone who starts a fire with fireworks — even accidentally — can be held liable.”

With professional fireworks shows scheduled in every part of the county over the holiday weekend there’s no need to resort to setting off personal fireworks. These shows are perfectly safe and the fireworks are far more spectacular than what’s available from any roadside stand.

Here’s something else to think about: Anyone caught using fireworks can face fines up to $1,000 and possible jail time.

Besides illegal fireworks, this festive weekend is the inevitable deluge of traffic caused by an increase in travel, accompanied by an increase in accidents. That peril is compounded when some drivers combine driving with alcohol.

Certainly, there’s plenty of family fun right here in the county this weekend so there’s limited need to be driving somewhere else.

Finally, and most important, while we’re enjoying the festive doings all over the county,
let's take a moment to remember what we're commemorating — the privilege of living in the land of the free.