

Progress seen in S. California fire battle

by UPI

LOS ANGELES -- Firefighters in Southern California reported cautious optimism Monday in the battle against week-old wildfires that burned more than 2,000 homes. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection spokesman Bill Peters told the Los Angeles Times if high winds return, the fires could flare up. "We definitely are closing in on it," he said. "The bulk of the fires are fully contained or near containment, unless we get some adverse weather to kick us back into active fire." By midday Sunday, most evacuation orders from Los Angeles south to the Mexican border had been lifted but 1,454 people were still in public shelters, officials said. State officials said as of Sunday, there were 13,135 firefighters and other emergency workers manning 1,477 fire engines. Damage assessment was still in progress Monday and officials said the fires destroyed 2,813 structures and 518,489 acres were scorched. Seven people died in fire-related incidents and 113 firefighters and 26 civilians were injured, the report said.

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