

## **Northern California wildfire leaves town in ruins, thousands flee**

09/11/2018 09:26 by admin

Fire officials issued evacuation notices for homes on the east side of Chico, a city of about 93,000 people situated about 90 miles (145 km) north of Sacramento.

### **Paradise: Cassie Lerossignol hugs as coworker as the Feather River Hospital burns while the Camp Fire rages through Paradise, Calif., on Thursday, Nov. 8, 2018.Â (AP)**

A fast-moving wildfire advanced to the outskirts of the Northern California city of Chico early on Friday, forcing thousands to flee after it left the nearby town of Paradise in ruins. Fire officials issued evacuation notices for homes on the east side of Chico, a city of about 93,000 people situated about 90 miles (145 km) north of Sacramento.

“Firefighters continue to actively engage the fire in order to protect life and property,” the Chico Fire Department said in a Tweet.

Flames from the unchecked, 20,000-acre (8,100-hectare) Camp Fire were being driven westward by 35-mile-per hour (56 km-per-hour) winds, fire officials said.

The fire earlier ripped through Paradise, about 20 miles east of Chico. “The town is devastated, everything is destroyed. There’s nothing much left standing,” said California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) spokesman Scott Maclean.

### **Flames burn inside a van as the Camp Fire tears through Paradise, Calif., on Thursday, Nov. 8, 2018. Tens of thousands of people fled a fast-moving wildfire Thursday in Northern California, some clutching babies and pets as they abandoned vehicles and struck out on foot ahead of the flames that forced the evacuation of an entire town and destroyed hundreds of structures. (AP Photo/Noah Berger)**

“This fire moved so fast and grew so fast a lot of people got caught by it.”

Maclean said an as yet unspecified number of civilians and firefighters had been injured, and that it could be days before authorities would know whether anyone had died.

Paradise is located on a ridge and had limited escape routes. Traffic accidents turned roads into gridlock and residents abandoned vehicles and ran from the flames carrying children and pets, officials said. One woman stuck in traffic went into labor, the Enterprise-Record newspaper reported.

“It’s very chaotic,” Officer Ryan Lambert of the California Highway Patrol.

Rescuers used a bulldozer to push abandoned cars out the way to reach Feather River Hospital and evacuate patients as flames engulfed the building, Butte County Supervisor Doug Teeter told reporters. The hospital was totally destroyed, Mike Mangas, a spokesman for operator Dignity Health, told Action News Now.

The fire, which began early on Thursday, was the fiercest of several wind-driven blazes across California, during what has been one of the worst years for wildfires in the state.

- Reuters