# AI camera detects wildfire without public alert



In early December, a significant milestone in wildfire detection technology was reached when an artificial intelligence (AI) camera identified a fire in a remote canyon in Orange County, California. This incident marked the first occasion the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) received an alert from AI without an accompanying emergency call from a member of the public.

The announcement regarding this AI-driven detection was made through an X post by OCFA on January 3. The event unfolded on December 4, at approximately 2 a.m., when the University of California San Diego’s ALERTCalifornia camera network detected an "anomaly" in video footage, leading OCFA to investigate further.

Located in wildfire-prone regions throughout Southern California, this camera network plays a critical role in monitoring areas susceptible to fire. The anomaly detected by the camera turned out to be a vegetation fire situated in Black Star Canyon, east of Irvine Lake. The OCFA noted that the location’s limited night-time traffic likely contributed to the absence of any public reports regarding smoke or flames, which could have otherwise delayed the response.

The quick response following the AI alert allowed fire crews to contain the blaze to less than a quarter of an acre, preventing injuries, evacuations, and damage to homes. The OCFA acknowledged that while they have been using AI in conjunction with traditional 911 calls for wildfire detection, this incident represents a pioneering development, as the fire was located exclusively through AI technology.

In their analysis, the OCFA indicated that, without such advanced detection capabilities, the incident could have escalated, allowing the fire to spread unchecked before being noticed by others. Fire Chief Brian Fennessy commented on the broader implications of this technological advancement, stating, “This is one example of how we are leveraging emerging technology and strategic partnerships to combat wildfires.” He emphasised the importance of early detection and collaboration in the face of year-round wildfire hazards, underscoring the role of such innovations in safeguarding lives and properties in a landscape increasingly susceptible to natural disasters.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://thehotshotwakeup.substack.com/p/first-ever-fully-autonomous-ai-lookout> - Corroborates the first-ever fully autonomous AI detection of a wildfire in Orange County, California, and the role of the University of California San Diego’s ALERTCalifornia camera network.
2. <https://www.firerescue1.com/artificial-intelligence/calif-fd-receives-first-wildfire-notification-from-ai-detection-camera> - Details the incident where the AI camera alerted the Orange County Fire Authority to a fire in a remote canyon without a 911 call, and the subsequent response.
3. <https://alertcalifornia.org> - Provides information on the ALERTCalifornia camera network, its deployment across California, and its capabilities in monitoring wildfires.
4. <https://alertcalifornia.org> - Explains the extensive camera network and cyberinfrastructure managed by UC San Diego, which is crucial for detecting and responding to wildfires.
5. <https://thehotshotwakeup.substack.com/p/first-ever-fully-autonomous-ai-lookout> - Mentions the announcement by OCFA on January 3 about the AI-driven detection and the event on December 4.
6. <https://www.firerescue1.com/artificial-intelligence/calif-fd-receives-first-wildfire-notification-from-ai-detection-camera> - Describes the location of the fire in Black Star Canyon, east of Irvine Lake, and the limited night-time traffic that contributed to the absence of public reports.
7. <https://alertcalifornia.org> - Highlights the strategic placement of cameras in wildfire-prone regions throughout Southern California.
8. <https://thehotshotwakeup.substack.com/p/first-ever-fully-autonomous-ai-lookout> - Details the quick response by fire crews following the AI alert, which contained the blaze to less than a quarter of an acre.
9. <https://www.firerescue1.com/artificial-intelligence/calif-fd-receives-first-wildfire-notification-from-ai-detection-camera> - Quotes Fire Chief Brian Fennessy on the importance of early detection and collaboration in combating wildfires.
10. <https://alertcalifornia.org> - Emphasizes the role of emerging technology and strategic partnerships in safeguarding lives and properties from wildfires.
11. <https://www.presstelegram.com/2025/01/04/artificial-intelligence-spots-a-wildfire-in-an-oc-canyon-and-promptly-alerts-firefighters/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data