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BIONICON USA HEADQUARTERS / DEMO CENTER DESTROYED BY FIRE

Owners see this as a temporary setback and an opportunity to be better; plans to rebuild are already well underway.

Wofford Heights, California: Friday, September 18, not quite two weeks after its official Labor Day weekend opening, the Bionicon USA Headquarters and Demo Center in the Kern River Valley suffered a devastating fire. The building, located on the main road in Wofford Heights, had undergone extensive renovations and improvements in preparation for Bionicon's move to the Kern Valley. This was the company's first full-time Demo Center in the U.S.A. Other Bionicon Demo Centers are in the UK, Germany and Switzerland.

Nobody was in the building at the time of the fire, which was first noticed at about 4 p.m.. Neighbors called 911 and reported smoke coming from the roof. When firefighters arrived on the scene they were confronted with flames shooting out of windows, exploding shock cartridges and burning magnesium fork lowers. Owners Paul and Wendy Ferguson arrived on scene just a few minutes later, only to watch the building burn.

Investigators believe the fire was started by a faulty air compressor, though official reports are pending. The fire destroyed the entire inventory of bicycles, parts, frames and components as well as the workshop and the entire fleet of demo bikes.

“The local community has been behind our move to the Kern River Valley from the start,” said Paul Ferguson, owner and CEO of Bionicon USA, “and their support through this tragedy has been really encouraging. They have made it clear how much it means to have a mountain bike company of Bionicon's caliber doing business here in the valley.”

Bionicon has been welcomed and embraced locally, and in this tragedy that has only become more apparent. There has also been a great outpouring of support from the entire Southern California mountain biking community.

The charred building is uninhabitable and beyond repair. “We've received offers of temporary storage and office space, as well as assistance from Bionicon in Germany to get us up and running as soon as possible,” noted Ferguson. “The search is on for a new office, showroom, bike shop and demo center. We have pending inquiries on a couple of locations.”

The valley's outdoor lifestyle is what attracted the company to the area. There is a vast network of trails, world-class whitewater rafting, climbing, hiking and water sports. The addition of a mountain bike company and full-service bike shop to the valley is crucial to its growth as a mountain biking destination.

Bionicon has been the title sponsor of the famous Keyesville Classic mountain bike race for the past two years, and will continue as organizer and sponsor for the 22nd annual event in 2010. Among the company's plans are to take a lead role in trail stewardship and mountain bike advocacy in the Kern river Valley. In fact, Bionicon has already opened a dialog with the BLM about potential new trails in the Keyesville area.

The 3rd annual Kern River Valley Gathering, hosted by Bionicon at Keyesville, will still take place over Halloween weekend as planned. The “KRV Gathering” is an open-invitation, informal weekend of mountain biking, camping, barbecues, and camaraderie among mountain bikers from all over the southwest.

Bionicon USA expects to be back in business full-time in a new location in the Kern River Valley by December. Wasting no time, CEO Paul Ferguson replaced his laptop the day after the fire, and at the moment is available by phone or email to support customers and dealers. Parts and inventory are ordered and on their way.

“It feels like we've had a practice run at putting together a Demo Center,” said Ferguson, “and this next time around is going to be even better than the original.”

About Bionicon: Bionicon are the original innovators of adjustable geometry and travel mountain bikes. Designed and engineered in Germany since 1999, the company's bicycles feature a patented system that integrates the front and rear suspension, allowing for a radical change of ride characteristics at the push of a button. Bionicon full-suspension bicycles can change on-the-fly from an aggressive cross-country like climbing position to a relaxed and stable downhill position. Bionicon also manufactures commuter road bikes and a line of technical cycling clothing. Bionicon USA began importing the bicycles to the U.S.A. In 2005, and is the sole North American distributor for Bionicon.

More information is available at <http://BioniconUSA.com> or <http://Bionicon.com>

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