

NEWS > CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY • News

El Dorado fire destroys 4 homes as firefighters continue to ward off flames



A firefighter watches as the El Dorado fire burns near the intersection of Highway 38 and Valley of the Falls Drive just west of Forest Falls Wednesday evening Sept. 9, 2020. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

By **JOSH CAIN** | jcain@scng.com | Los Angeles Daily News

PUBLISHED: September 10, 2020 at 10:02 a.m. | UPDATED: September 10, 2020 at 2:19 p.m.

[The El Dorado fire burning through thousands of acres](#) in the San Bernardino Mountains has destroyed four homes and damaged two others, officials said Thursday, Sept. 10.



Among smaller outbuildings, like garages and sheds, another six were destroyed and four damaged, said Cathey Mattingly, a Cal Fire spokeswoman.

The blaze, which started at El Dorado Ranch Park in Yucaipa on Saturday, [ignited by a pyrotechnic device at a gender reveal party](#), has burned 12,610 with containment now at 23%.

Containment is the line firefighters draw around the perimeter of a fire, where trenches have been dug or where bodies of water prevent the fire from spreading further.

Firefighters surrounded more of the fire despite Wednesday's Santa Ana winds picking up and driving flames toward homes tucked into heavily wooded mountain towns in the San Bernardino National Forest.

[MAP: Where the El Dorado fire is burning in the San Bernardino Mountains](#)

By late afternoon Wednesday, flames were menacing homes in Forest Falls. Firefighting crews could be seen watering down properties.

Fire crews on the ground had to contend with powerful winds, gusting to 23 and 24 mph, which drove an arm of the fire surging toward Forest Falls in the late afternoon.

Around 1:30 p.m., firefighters watched as the winds drove the flames toward Valley of the Falls Drive and Highway 38. The flames eventually jumped the highway and “made a little run” Mattingly said.





The El Dorado fire burns out of control just southwest of Forest Falls near the intersection of Hwy 38 and Valley of the Falls Drive Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2020 as Santa Ana winds push flames up the canyon towards the mountain town. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

When a fire is burning hot and sending up huge smoke clouds, embers stay lit as they drift into the air. The winds already fueling the fire can then push those embers forward, sometimes hundreds of feet, sometimes miles ahead of the fire. When they land, they can start new, smaller fires. That's what fire officials call "spotting," Mattingly explained.

That's what happened as firefighters were getting ready to defend Forest Falls on Wednesday. Fire crews could be seen hosing down homes and front lawns in anticipation of fires running through the community.

It's not clear if any of the destroyed buildings were in Forest Falls. Fire officials did not give locations of any of the destroyed homes.

Mattingly said numbers of structures burned usually account for buildings fire inspectors find after a fire has passed, so the numbers released Thursday could account for buildings burned in the last five days.

Still, officials with the San Bernardino County Fire Department said firefighters worked through the night to save "hundreds of homes."

The [El Dorado fire](#), and the [Bobcat fire](#) burning north of Azusa, have sent huge plumes of smoke skyward blanketing Southern California with smoke and in many places ash.

A red flag warning issued by the National Weather Service expired at around 8 p.m. on Wednesday. That's around when winds slowed, Mattingly said.



“Once the wind died down, they were able to get the fire cooled down and slow it down a little bit,” Mattingly said.

On Thursday, winds were not expected to be as strong, so firefighters were hoping to make progress on increasing containment lines, Mattingly said.

This is a developing story. Please check back for updates.

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Take a virtual look at Earth's moon thanks to NASA

By the t.e.a.



(Via Unsplash @mikepetrucci) When was the last time you took a look at Earth's moon? Everyone in the world can see...

Josh Cain | Reporter

Josh Cain's interest in writing and reporting the news started as a kid growing up in Orange County, California. He attended journalism school at Boston University. Since 2016, he's worked at what would become the Southern California News Group, first as a digital editor for SCNG's San Gabriel Valley newspapers, then as a crime, cops and courts reporter for the Los Angeles Daily News. He's affiliated with the Asian American Journalists Association, Los Angeles chapter, for which he was elected a board member in 2019. As a chapter, the association represents Asian and Pacific Islander reporters in the



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New El Dorado fire evacuations ordered for communities along Highway 38



A firefighter lights a back fire near the intersection of Highway 38 and Valley of the Falls Drive as they battle the El Dorado fire just west of Forest Falls on Wednesday evening Sept. 9, 2020. The El Dorado fire burned into the mountain community of Forest Falls and threatened a number of homes. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

By **JOSH CAIN** | jcain@scng.com and **ERIC LICAS** |




elicas@scng.com | Los Angeles Daily News

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Firefighters surrounded [more of the El Dorado fire burning in the San Bernardino Mountains](#) by Wednesday morning, Sept. 9, but authorities later expanded evacuation orders as winds kicked up flames, complicating firefighting efforts.





Update: Firefighters ward off El Dorado fire from mountain communities, 'hundreds' of homes saved

 **Yucaipa Police** 
@YucaipaPD 

[#EIDoradoFire](#) - UPDATE - Immediate Evacuation Order Angelus Oaks and community of Seven Oaks. Evacuate via Hwy38 North toward Big Bear @YucaipaPD @CALFIREBDU @SanBernardinoNF @SBCOUNTYFIRE

3:27 PM · Sep 9, 2020 

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 **SB County Fire** 
@SBCOUNTYFIRE 

Firefighters made a hard stance today on the [#EIDoradoFire](#) in Forest Falls and Mountain Home Village, saving numerous homes. The wind driven fire has increased fire activity and prompted additional evacuations. @SanBernardinoNF @CALFIREBDU @sbcountysheriff @CHPInland

8:19 PM · Sep 9, 2020 





742



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By around 1 p.m., a wall of fire was advancing toward the community of Forest Falls. [New evacuation orders](#) were issued to residents there, as well as people living to the north, between Angelus Oaks and Onyx Summit along Highway 38. Oak Glen, North Bench Yucaipa, Mountain Home Village, Hidden Meadows and a portion of southern Cherry Valley were also evacuated, according to San Bernardino County officials.

Towers of flames engulfing a lines of trees could be seen just about a half mile to the southwest of the highway and Valley of the Falls Drive, with lines of firefighters in vehicles looking on Wednesday afternoon. The wall of flames heading west crested a mountain on the edge of Forest Falls and started moving into the valley at around 1 p.m.

Within an hour, the fire had jumped Highway 38 and crept toward homes on the western edge of the town.

“Winds developed over the fire at 10 mph causing unburned islands of fuel to burn and produced a lot of smoke in the area,” officials said. The winds Wednesday were [not as strong as predicted](#), but light winds were expected to continue through the night, according to the National Weather Service.

Firefighters surrounded homes that were most at risk and hosed down the properties, hoping to slow the fire’s spread. Flames singed the back yards of some of the homes, but none were lost in Forest Falls as of Wednesday afternoon.

Most residents had left — evacuations were already in place for all of Forest Falls, a small mountain community that sits in the middle of numerous popular hiking trails and campgrounds.

Food, water and refuge were available for evacuees at a center run by the Red Cross at Redlands East Valley High School, 31000 E. Colton Ave. Residents affected by the new evacuation orders were advised to evacuate by heading north on Highway 38 toward Big Bear. Officials reminded people to gather their pets, medications and important documents.

**Will Lester**

@WillLesterPhoto



The [#ElDoradoFire](#) burns near the intersection of hey 38 and Valley of the Falls Rd Wednesday afternoon.

Winds are currently pushing up the cvn Active fire is



for local newspapers, online news publications and radio stations. Most of the funding for those internships comes through membership dues, but the association also raises funds through its annual Trivia Bowl. For the competition, local media companies and other businesses buy tables for their employees to participate.

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Watch these end of the world movies and see how likely you are to survive

By the t.e.a.



Would you be able to survive any of these films? I ranked them by a survival score of 1 emoji (we would survive...

Eric Licas | Reporter

Eric is based out of the Orange County Register and reports on crime and public safety for the Southern California News Group. He was born in the Philippines, was raised in the San Fernando Valley and has previously written about immigration, poverty and entertainment for Inquirer.net and The Asian Journal. He enjoys photographing concerts and sporting events or jamming on one of his personally customized guitars in his free time. His inspirations include Kurt Vonnegut, Tom Wolfe, Ronnie James Dio and Randy "The Macho Man" Savage.

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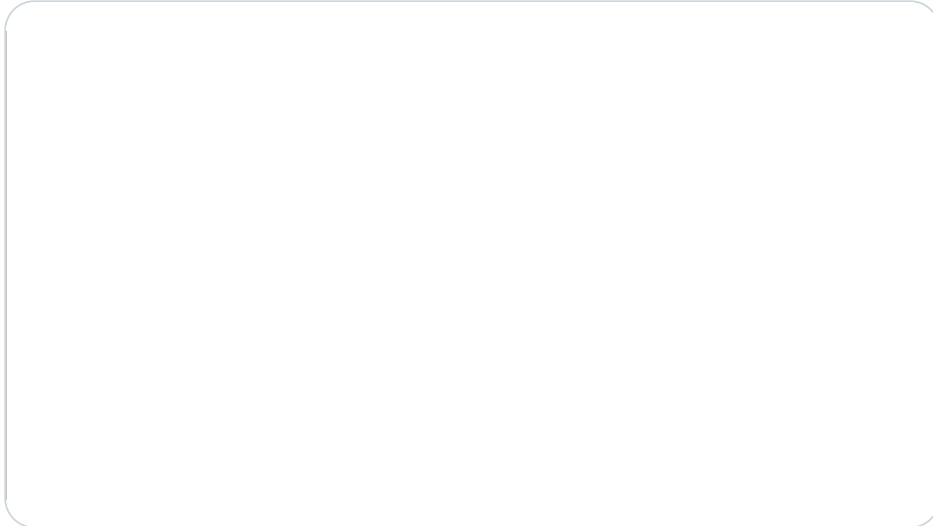
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Winds are currently pushing up the canyon. Active fire is still approximately 1/2 mile from #forestfalls and closing, if you're there leave now!



1:05 PM · Sep 9, 2020



140



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The El Dorado fire has so far burned through 12,474 acres, officials with the San Bernardino National Forest said Wednesday evening. It was 18% contained. [The fire started Saturday](#) during a family's baby gender reveal event at a Yucaipa park when a pyrotechnic device used to generate smoke sparked flames.

[MAP: Where the El Dorado fire is burning in the San Bernardino Mountains](#)

Fire crews had worked Tuesday night into early Wednesday morning dousing hot spots and setting up lines to protect structures, including Forest Falls, officials said in a statement. But Santa Ana winds were making that job more complicated.

Despite temperatures dipping from the [weekend's triple-digit heat](#), the dry and relatively hot weather was still posing a challenge.

"The vegetation is very dry," fire officials said, warning of spot fires popping up ahead of the burned area if winds continue to blow strongly. They said winds funneling down into the canyons had the possibility of strengthening that effect.



Will Lester

@WillLesterPhoto



#4 of 4 - Firefighters save homes on Canyon Drive in [#forrestfalls](#) Wednesday while the [#ElDoradoFire](#) jumps hwy 38 Wednesday afternoon



NEWS > **CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY** • News

El Dorado fire smoke prompts warning to San Bernardino County residents



The El Dorado fire burns out of control just southwest of Forest Falls near the intersection of Hwy 38 and Valley of the Falls Drive Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2020 as Santa Ana winds push flames up the canyon towards the mountain town. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

By **BRIAN ROKOS** | brokos@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: September 10, 2020 at 2:10 p.m. | UPDATED: September 10, 2020 at 2:10 p.m.



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San Bernardino County health officials on Thursday, Sept, 10, cautioned some residents to stay indoors to avoid the harmful effects of smoky air from the [El Dorado fire](#) burning in the San Bernardino Mountains.

The elderly, children and others with breathing problems or heart conditions should seek shelter and keep doors and windows closed, or seek alternative shelter as [the El Dorado fire burns](#) near Yucaipa, a news release said.

[MAP: Where the El Dorado fire is burning in the San Bernardino Mountains](#)

Officials recommended setting air conditioners to recirculate so units don't draw air from outside. They also urged anyone with chest pain, shortness of breath or fatigue to contact their doctor.

“This is important not only for people with chronic lung or heart disease, but also for individuals who have not been previously diagnosed with such illnesses. Smoke can ‘unmask’ or produce symptoms of such diseases,” the release said.

The San Bernardino County Public Health’s health centers can be reached at 800-722-4777.



South Coast AQMD 
@SouthCoastAQMD 

Air Quality Forecast (Thursday, September 10th):
aqmd.gov/forecast

- Coastal: Good -to- Moderate
- LA: Moderate -to- Unhealthy
- OC: Good -to- Moderate
- Inland Empire: Moderate -to- Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
- Coachella Valley: Moderate





7:05 AM · Sep 10, 2020



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The South Coast Air Quality Management District said the most significant impacts from the fire will be in the San Bernardino County valley area. Smoke will likely also affect the Coachella Valley. Southwest Los Angeles County, Orange County and southwest Riverside County will have more modest smoke and ash effects.

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By the t.e.a.

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Brian Rokos | Reporter

Brian Rokos has worked in newspapers since 1985, at the Mountain Democrat in Placerville, News Chronicle in Thousand Oaks, the Cincinnati Post, the Orange County Register and currently The Press-Enterprise/Southern California News Group. Among the major stories he has covered are destructive wildfires, Christopher Dorner's rampage, the San Bernardino terrorist attack, Chase Merritt murder trial and the Perris torture case.



Half the state is breathing smoky air 'no matter which way the wind blows'



A CREW clears vegetation from around a barn Wednesday as the Bear fire burns through the Berry Creek area of Butte County. ()

BY SUSANNE RUST AND TONY BARBOZA

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Shrouded in near darkness, beneath a gloomy, orange sky, Fabian Rios worked to repair a fire hydrant late Wednesday morning.

Working alongside the headlights of his truck, the Bay Area utility employee said the lack of light wasn't troubling him.

"The real problem is the ash falling from the sky," said Rios, who works for the city of Mountain View and was wearing a surgical mask. "I am just getting covered."

As fires rage up and down the West Coast, the skies over California [have taken an apocalyptic turn](#) — choking the air with ash and smoke in some regions, while snuffing out sunlight in others. Rarely have so many Californians breathed such unhealthy air.

“About half of the state’s population has been impacted by wildfire smoke levels exceeding air quality standards,” said Melanie Turner, a California Air Resources Board spokeswoman, referring to tiny, lung-damaging pollution particles known as PM2.5.

In parts of Southern California, [soot fell like snow](#). Air quality officials issued a wildfire smoke advisory for much of the region, warning “meteorological conditions will bring smoke and ash into portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Orange Counties.”

People downwind of the Bear fire — [including those in Paradise](#), site of a deadly 2018 blaze — suffered amid the smoke, with many unable to turn on air conditioners because of an intentional PG&E power outage.

And some of the state’s worst air quality came inside [its most popular national park](#). The AQI in Yosemite Valley hit nearly 400 by early afternoon, about six times worse than the particle pollution in Los Angeles.

“What’s notable is that it’s everywhere,” said Anthony Wexler, director of the Air Quality Research Center at UC Davis. “So no matter which way the wind blows you’re getting hit by smoke and ash. It’s pretty brutal.”

In the Bay Area, a marine layer from the Pacific protected lower elevations from the oppressive, sun-smothering smoke, leaving the air tolerably breathable. But there were no views of the mountains from Mountain View. The skies darkened to a twilight-like dimness.

Street lamps along the peninsula’s El Camino Real brightened the road for noontime traffic, while hotels and restaurants in Palo Alto and Mountain View kept alight their marquee lights and entrance displays — making for a dinner-like atmosphere for their lunchtime patrons.

From Sacramento to the Bay Area to Monterey, motorists turned on their headlights on the gloomy streets.

“Today the sky is almost completely dark and orange brown due to smoke coming from the August and North fires which is above the marine layer,” said Ralph Borrmann, a spokesman for the Bay Area air district. “So air quality is good in most places, but the sky looks dreadful due to the smoke filtering out the blue light spectrum and leaving us with orange only.”

Roger Gass, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said the smoke was keeping temperatures cool — 20 degrees lower than the weather service had anticipated for many parts of the Bay Area — and that coolness was keeping the smoke high, allowing the marine layer to remain over the region.

“Usually, the sun burns the marine layer off during the day, pushing it offshore,” said Gass.

But because the smoke was keeping temperatures so cool, the marine layer was staying put and providing a buffer from the unhealthy smoke above.

At a briefing Wednesday, Gov. Gavin Newsom said he was stunned by the images he saw from his hometown. “The number of photographs that have been sent by family, friends this morning overwhelmed my inbox,” Newsom said at a briefing.

Federal satellite imagery showed massive plumes blanketing the length of California and much of the West Coast on Wednesday, extending south to Cabo San Lucas and far out over the Pacific Ocean.

These big plumes combined with soot and smoke from more localized fires to torment millions of Californians, many eager to get outside after months of coronavirus shelter-in-place orders.

In Southern California, the worst concentrations of smoke were projected in communities closest to the Bobcat and El Dorado fires, according to the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

While the levels of fine-particle pollution in Northern California were not as high as they were during the 2018 Camp fire, the smoke has persisted longer and over a widespread area of the state, according to the California Air Resources Board.

“We have had other bad smoke years,” said Turner, the CARB spokeswoman. “But we are seeing larger fires and more fires this year, and that means a much higher population in both urban and rural areas that is exposed to dangerous smoke.”

Wildfire smoke consists of thousands of different compounds, including gases, liquids, solids and in-between honey-like textures. Its composition varies significantly depending on what type of vegetation was burned and how recently.

Some of the most dangerous soot is the smallest.

The [particles known as PM2.5](#) are less than 2.5 microns in diameter — about 1/30th the width of a human hair. They are so tiny that they can be inhaled deeply into the lungs and pass into the bloodstream.

In the short term, wildfire smoke can irritate the eyes, nose and throat. It can trigger asthma attacks as well as raise the risk of heart attack and stroke.

At greatest risk are children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with asthma and other chronic respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, as well as outdoor workers who face higher levels of exposure.

Wildfire smoke is elevated across so much of the state right now that “there’s a huge amount of concern about the health dangers,” said Bonnie Holmes-Gen, chief of the California Air Resources Board’s health and exposure assessment branch.

“We have so many people that are exposed to dangerous levels of smoke.”

Research into past fires, she said, shows dramatic increases in emergency room visits for asthma attacks and other ailments during fire episodes.

“We expect that is happening again,” she said, urging people to take measures to protect themselves when there is wildfire smoke around them, and to stay inside and run an air filter if pollution levels are elevated.

Dar Mims, a meteorologist with CARB, said the foul air has lingered over Northern California for so long because the fires arrived during the summer, when the air is more stagnant.

“As these fires continue to burn they’re going to be at the whims of the wind shifts,” said Mims, adding that the smoky skies will likely linger until a “season-ender” storm dampens the tinderbox conditions.

While air quality in much of Southern California has remained in the “good” to “moderate” level at the ground level, satellite imagery shows smoke higher up in the atmosphere over much of the region.

The district warned that the region could also see more falling ash as “larger particles settle out of the atmosphere.”

The siege of smoke across the West is the result of a historic number and acreage of active fires that have besieged the state since mid-August, when a dry lightning storm ignited a spate of fires along the state’s Central Coast.

Since then, a pair of historic heat waves, combined with shifting wind patterns and increasingly blazing acreage has left the state — and much of the West Coast — covered in a thick, choking smoke. “Unprecedented” was how the National Weather Service’s Bay Area office described it.

It’s a word that has been used to describe many of the natural disasters that have befallen the state in the past month — disasters fueled by a bigger force than isolated heatwaves and lightning storms, said Wexler.

“Look around, we have a record number of wildfires, we have a record heatwave. What’s the common theme, folks? It’s climate change,” Wexler said. “We’re going to be seeing new stuff all the time, because we’re playing games with our planet.”

Some 6,000 feet above San Francisco Bay, at the top of Mount Hamilton, Elinor Gates, an astronomer at the University of California’s Lick Observatory, looked out at air thick with smoke and ash, the light an eerie, dark orange.

The observatory survived a fire that burned through three weeks ago, she said — adding to the apocalyptic scene she saw outside her window.

“The trees are black and the leaves a sickly brown,” she said.

“It all lends to this sepia-like photographic quality ... like an old disaster photo.”

Times staff writers Rong-Gong Lin II, Anita Chabria, Maura Dolan and Phil Willon contributed to this report.



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TRAVEL

California's 18 national forests, Highway 1 south of Big Sur closed: What you need to know



Bobcat fire rages in San Gabriel Mountains. (Irfan Khan/Los Angeles Times)

By MARY FORGIONE, CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS

SEP. 9, 2020 | 3:16 PM UPDATED SEP. 10, 2020 | 10:34 AM



With public lands throughout California menaced by wildfires and dismal air quality, state and federal officials have closed dozens of state parks, Highway 1 south of Big Sur and all of the state's national forests.

At 5 p.m. Wednesday, all 18 national forests closed access to more than 20 million acres across California because of "unprecedented and historic fire conditions." Campgrounds, trails, picnic areas and roads shut to visitors until further notice, according to a U.S. Forest Service news release.

LIFESTYLE

Our guide to Griffith Park. How to safely explore its wild, classic and hidden gems

Sep. 4, 2020

"These temporary closures are necessary to protect the public and our firefighters, and we will keep them in place until conditions improve and we are confident that national forest visitors can recreate safely," regional forester Randy Moore said in the release.

The broader order comes after eight forests, including the nearby Angeles and San Bernardino forests, closed Monday. The Bobcat fire blazing through the Angeles forest near Azusa had grown to 11,456 acres with zero containment as of Wednesday afternoon.

On Thursday, officials asked visitors to stay away from Big Bear Lake, Big Bear City, Moonridge, Sugarloaf, Lake Williams, Baldwin Lake, Fawnskin and other communities in the area because of the El Dorado fire. The fire, which started Saturday, has grown to 12,610 acres. As of Thursday afternoon, it was burning south of the community of Angeles Oaks in the San Bernardino National Forest.

National forests will be assessing risks at each site to decide when to lift the order. The Angeles Forest will be closed at least through Monday.

Travelers planning a getaway to any affected areas should check fire status as well as the status of any place they plan to visit — local, state and national parks and forests — before they leave home. Checking [highway statuses](#) with Caltrans is recommended, as well.

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The Dolan fire in Monterey County has forced closure of Highway 1 from Gorda to 3 miles north of Slates Hot Springs, shutting down a 23-mile stretch of the coastal route that Southern Californians take to Big Sur, Carmel and Monterey. (Because of that closure, northbound drivers can't reach the Monterey County coast via Nacimiento-Fergusson Road, either.)

The massive Creek fire in the Sierra National Forest, which has grown to more than [163,000 acres](#), has prompted warnings and evacuations across a wide part of central California, including popular spots such as Shaver Lake and Huntington Lake.

Forest closures shut down [Mammoth Mountain](#)'s bike park, gondola rides, guided climbing and other summer activities. However, the Sierra Star Golf Course and lodgings remain open at the Mammoth Lakes resort.

Hikers with permits heading to Mt. Whitney, the John Muir Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail (where it runs on national forest land) also had to curtail their plans.

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Meanwhile, Yosemite National Park, less than 50 miles north of the still-uncontrolled [Creek fire](#), remained open to visitors with advance reservations on Wednesday afternoon. Rangers did close the park's Mariposa Grove on Sunday night as a fire precaution.

The southern portion of the park is now under a fire advisory — a possible prelude to evacuation — and spokespersons are warning of poor air quality and visibility.

Still, said park spokesman Scott Gediman on Wednesday afternoon, "All park entrances and facilities remain open. Our best advice is for people to monitor air quality and decide how they want to proceed."

Writer and environmentalist Bill McKibben, tweeting a sepia-toned view of Yosemite's Half Dome on Tuesday, wrote, "California faces the greatest siege of fire in recorded history."

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State officials have closed 22 California state parks because of wildfire threats, including two in Southern California: Riverside County's Wildwood Canyon State Park and San Bernardino County's Chino Hills State Park. Also, Mount San Jacinto State Park is partially closed, with wilderness areas off-limits to day hiking and overnight hiking

Otherwise, the state park closure list is dominated by Monterey County, where eight parks are closed, and Northern California. As of midday Wednesday, the [California State Parks list](#) of fully closed units included these:

- In Monterey County, threatened by the Dolan fire: Andrew Molera State Park; Garrapata State Park (on the east side of Highway 1); Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park; John Little State Natural Reserve; Limekiln State Park; Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park; Point Lobos State Natural Reserve; and Point Sur State Historic Park.
- In San Mateo County, threatened by the CZU August Lightning Complex fire: Año Nuevo State Park (including Gazos Creek Beach); Butano State Park; and Portola Redwoods State Park.

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- In Santa Cruz County, also threatened by the CZU August Lightning Complex fire: Big Basin Redwoods State Park (including Rancho del Oso and Little Basin); Castle Rock State Park; and Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park (including Fall Creek).
- In Santa Clara County, threatened by the SCU Lightning Complex fire: Henry W. Coe State Park.
- In Napa County, threatened by the LNU Lightning Complex fire: Robert Louis Stevenson State Park.
- In Sonoma County, also threatened by the LNU Lightning Complex fire: Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve; and Austin Creek State Recreation Area.

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- In Butte County, threatened by the Butte Lightning Complex fire: Lake Oroville State Recreation Area.
- In Contra Costa County, under a red flag warning for fire danger: Mount Diablo State Park.



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Another five state parks are partially closed. Besides Mount San Jacinto State Park, the list includes Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve in Mono County; South Yuba River State Park in Nevada County, the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park and Wilder Ranch State Park in Santa Cruz County.

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In Marin County, Tomales Bay State Park had been closed under threat by the Woodward fire but [reopened Wednesday](#) for day use.

Also, [Point Reyes National Seashore](#) is closed because of the Woodward fire.

TRAVEL

THINGS TO DO



Desert Sun.

HEALTH

San Bernardino County reports 9.44% COVID-19 positivity rate; remains in purple tier

Amaray D. Alvarez Palm Springs Desert Sun

Published 1:54 p.m. PT Sep. 10, 2020

San Bernardino County health officials on Thursday reported 301 new cases of coronavirus and five additional virus-related deaths since Wednesday.

The county's online dashboard notes that a large amount of deaths are being added this week "as a result of staff's continuous validation and cleaning of COVID-19 associated data."

The county now has a total of 50,210 reported COVID-19 cases and 796 virus-related deaths. San Bernardino County is reporting the fourth-highest number of coronavirus cases and deaths in the state after Los Angeles, Riverside and Orange counties.

As of Thursday, San Bernardino County's positivity rate is 9.44%, placing it in the lowest tier of the state's four-tier framework for reopening. That's the purple tier, which restricts the most business activity and has the most capacity restrictions.

The purple tier is for counties with widespread COVID-19 cases — they have a case rate of greater than seven cases per 100,000 people or a positivity rate of 8% or higher. This tier limits indoor operations for many non-essential business sectors, including restaurants.

San Bernardino County currently has a case rate of 23 cases per 100,000 people.

More: Halloween trick-or-treating will look 'very different' in California, official says

Purple, red, orange, yellow: How do California's new COVID-19 tiers work?

Health officials on Thursday reported that 531,886 coronavirus tests have been conducted in the county, including 4,230 tests that were added since Wednesday.

The county, which has a target of 3,288 tests per day, launched a new billboard campaign urging people to get tested, even if they don't have symptoms.

Health officials noted Tuesday that the county's contact tracing program is "showing notable improvement." County Public Health Director Corwin Porter reported an increase from 46% last week to 67% this week in the number of infected individuals that contact tracers have been able to reach.

Who is contracting the virus?

About 53% of cases in the county are in people under the age of 40. The cases, broken down by age bracket, are as follows:

- 3,324 (6.6%) cases are among people ages 0 to 14
- 2,601 (5.2%) cases are among people ages 15-19
- 11,411 (22.7%) cases are among people ages 20-29
- 9,456 (18.9%) cases are among people ages 30-39
- 8,230 (16.4%) cases are among people ages 40-49
- 7,347 (14.6%) cases are among people ages 50-59
- 4,372 (8.7%) cases are among people ages 60-69
- 3,409 (6.8%) cases are among people older than 70
- The ages for 60 cases (0.1%) are unknown.

About 78% of virus-related deaths in the county are over the age of 60. The deaths, broken down by age bracket, are as follows:

- 0 (0%) deaths are among people ages 0 to 14
- 0 (0%) deaths are among people ages 15-19
- 5 (0.4%) deaths are among people ages 20-29
- 28 (3.4%) deaths are among people ages 30-39
- 39 (5%) deaths are among people ages 40-49
- 102 (12.9%) deaths are among people ages 50-59
- 163 (20.4%) deaths are among people ages 60-69
- 459 (57.9%) deaths are among people older than 70

The county has not updated hospitalization numbers since Tuesday, when 172 of its intensive care unit beds were still available. At that time, 214 total coronavirus patients were hospitalized, including 84 patients in ICU beds.

According to the county, a total of 44,675 people have recovered, which is about 88.8% of its overall number of cases.

The county's total amount of known active coronavirus cases stands at 5,535. This total is derived by subtracting deaths and recoveries from the current total, 50,210.

The county on Wednesday provided a current update about COVID-19 cases in skilled nursing facilities. There have been a total of 1,725 positive cases, 3,899 suspected cases and 255 deaths among residents in 61 facilities. Among staff, there have been 1,120 cases, an additional 765 suspected cases and 10 deaths.

Where are the cases?

Here is Thursday's list of confirmed cases and deaths in the high desert, with increases from the previous day's tally in parentheses:

Adelanto: 747 cases (+3), 19 deaths

Apple Valley: 1,079 cases (+6), 22 deaths (+1)

Baker: 12 cases

Baldy Mesa: 1 case

Barstow: 280 cases (+14), 9 deaths

Daggett: 1 cases

Helendale: 56 cases, 1 death

Hesperia: 1,850 cases (+17), 24 deaths

Hinkley: 7 cases

Joshua Tree: 72 cases, 2 deaths

Landers: 9 cases, 1 death

Lucerne Valley: 23 cases, 2 deaths

Morongo Valley: 38 cases (+1)

Needles: 48 cases (+1)

Newberry Springs: 9 cases (+2)

Oak Hills: 184 cases, 1 death

Oro Grande: 15 cases (+1), 1 death

Phelan: 201 cases (+1), 3 deaths

Piñon Hills: 56 cases

Pioneertown: 2 cases

Twentynine Palms: 78 cases, 1 death

Victorville: 3,196 cases (+16), 29 deaths

Yermo: 12 cases

Yucca Valley: 228 cases, 14 deaths

Here is the list of cases and deaths in mountain communities:

Big Bear City: 37 cases

Big Bear Lake: 51 cases

Blue Jay: 12 cases, 1 death

Cedar Glen: 7 cases

Crestline: 68 cases, 3 deaths

Forest Falls: 6 cases (+2)

Rimforest: 4 cases

Running Springs: 25 cases

Sugarloaf: 12 cases

Twin Peaks: 11 cases (+1), 1 death

Wrightwood: 25 cases (+1)

Amaray Alvarez is an intern at The Desert Sun. You may reach her at amaray.alvarez@desertsun.com

LOCAL NEWS • News

San Bernardino County reports 26 new coronavirus deaths

By **RYAN HAGEN** | rhagen@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: September 9, 2020 at 3:33 p.m. | UPDATED: September 9, 2020 at 3:38 p.m.

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San Bernardino County recorded another 26 COVID-19 deaths Wednesday, Sept. 9, after not updating its numbers Tuesday.

The county is now averaging seven deaths from the disease per day, which is better than August, when COVID-19 killed an average of 10 people each day, but still worse than the five deaths per day in July.

The number of new cases per day, averaged over the past seven days to account for data entry fluctuations, is 238. That's the lowest the average has been since June 17, about the time that a surge of cases attributed to Memorial Day and reopenings began.

Here are the latest numbers, according to county and state public health officials.

San Bernardino County



Confirmed cases: 49,909, up from 49,691 Tuesday, Sept. 8

Deaths: 791, up from 765 Tuesday

Hospitalizations: 214 confirmed patients Tuesday, down from 224 Monday, Sept. 7; 61 suspected patients Tuesday, up from 42 Monday

Intensive-care unit: 84 confirmed patients Tuesday, down from 85 Monday; 5 suspected patients Tuesday, same as Monday

People tested: 527,656, up from 525,146 Tuesday

Recoveries (estimated): 44,316, up from 43,967 Tuesday

To see a map and list of cases, deaths and per-capita rates by community, click [here](#).

Here is a look at how the county’s numbers have changed each day:

Staff writer Nikie Johnson contributed to this report.

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Ryan Hagen | Reporter

Ryan Hagen covers San Bernardino County and politics for the Southern California News Group. Since he began covering Inland Empire governments in 2010, he's written about a city entering bankruptcy and exiting bankruptcy; politicians being elected, recalled and arrested; crime; a terrorist attack; fires; ICE; fights to end homelessness; fights over the location of speed bumps; and people's best and worst moments. A graduate of Pepperdine University, he teaches journalism classes at Cal State San Bernardino. His greatest accomplishment is breaking a coffee addiction. His greatest regret is any moment without coffee.

rhagen@scng.com

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Desert Sun.

HEALTH

San Bernardino County reports 218 new coronavirus cases, 26 additional deaths Wednesday

Laine Henry Palm Springs Desert Sun

Published 2:33 p.m. PT Sep. 9, 2020

San Bernardino County health officials on Wednesday reported 218 new cases of coronavirus and 26 additional virus-related deaths since Monday.

The county noted Tuesday that it would not provide updated data following Labor Day. On Wednesday, its online dashboard included a note that said a large amount of deaths had been added and would continue to be added over the next several days "as a result of staff's continuous validation and cleaning of COVID-19 associated data."

The county now has a total of 49,909 reported cases and 791 virus-related deaths.

San Bernardino County is reporting the fourth-highest number of coronavirus cases and deaths in the state after Los Angeles, Riverside and Orange counties.

As of Wednesday, San Bernardino County's positivity rate is 9.46%, placing it in the lowest tier of the state's four-tier framework for reopening. That's the purple tier, which restricts the most business activity and has the most capacity restrictions.

The purple tier is for counties with widespread COVID-19 cases. It represents counties with a case rate of greater than seven cases per 100,000 people or a positivity rate of 8% or higher. This tier limits indoor operations for many non-essential business sectors, including restaurants.

Health officials on Wednesday reported 527,656 coronavirus tests have been conducted in San Bernardino County, including 4,613 tests that were added since Monday.

The county, which has a target of 3,288 tests per day, launched a new billboard campaign last week urging people to get tested, even if they don't have symptoms.

Who is contracting the virus?

About 53% of cases in the county are in people under the age of 40. The cases, broken down by age bracket, are as follows:

3,301 (6.6%) cases are among people ages 0 to 14
 2,579 (5.2%) cases are among people ages 15-19
 11,351 (22.7%) cases are among people ages 20-29
 9,417 (18.9%) cases are among people ages 30-39
 8,184 (16.4%) cases are among people ages 40-49
 7,292 (14.6%) cases are among people ages 50-59
 4,346 (8.7%) cases are among people ages 60-69
 3,384 (6.8%) cases are among people older than 70
 The ages for 55 cases (0.1%) are unknown.

About 78% of virus-related deaths in the county are over the age of 60. The deaths, broken down by age bracket, are as follows:

0 (0%) deaths are among people ages 0 to 14
 0 (0%) deaths are among people ages 15-19
 3 (0.4%) deaths are among people ages 20-29
 27 (3.4%) deaths are among people ages 30-39
 39 (5%) deaths are among people ages 40-49
 102 (12.9%) deaths are among people ages 50-59
 161 (20.4%) deaths are among people ages 60-69
 457 (57.9%) deaths are among people older than 70

The county has not updated hospitalization numbers since Sunday, when 30.8% of its intensive care unit beds were still available. At that time, 228 total coronavirus patients were hospitalized, including 89 patients in ICU beds.

According to the county, a total of 44,316 people have recovered, which is about 88.8% of its overall number of cases.

The total amount of known active coronavirus cases in the county stands at 4,802. The active case total is derived by subtracting deaths and recoveries from the current total, 49,909.

The county on Wednesday also provided a current update about COVID-19 cases in skilled nursing facilities. There have been a total of 1,725 positive cases, 3,899 suspected cases

and 255 deaths among residents in 61 facilities. Among staff, there have been 1,120 cases, an additional 765 suspected cases and 10 deaths.

Where are the cases?

Here is Wednesday's list of confirmed cases and deaths in the high desert, with increases from the previous day's tally in parentheses:

Adelanto: 744 cases (-2), 19 deaths
Apple Valley: 1,073 cases (+7), 21 deaths (+1)
Baker: 12 cases
Baldy Mesa: 1 case
Barstow: 266 cases (+6), 9 deaths
Daggett: 1 cases
Helendale: 56 cases (+1), 1 death
Hesperia: 1,833 cases (+13), 24 deaths (+3)
Hinkley: 7 cases
Joshua Tree: 72 cases (+1), 2 deaths (+1)
Landers: 9 cases, 1 death
Lucerne Valley: 23 cases, 2 deaths
Morongo Valley: 37 cases (+1)
Needles: 47 cases (-1)
Newberry Springs: 7 cases
Oak Hills: 184 cases (+1), 1 death (-1)
Oro Grande: 15 cases (+1), 1 death
Phelan: 200 cases, 3 deaths
Piñon Hills: 56 cases
Pioneertown: 2 cases
Twentynine Palms: 78 cases, 1 death
Victorville: 3,180 cases (+8), 29 deaths
Yermo: 12 cases
Yucca Valley: 228 cases (+2), 14 deaths (+1)

Here is the list of cases and deaths in mountain communities:

Big Bear City: 37 cases (+1)
Big Bear Lake: 51 cases (+1)

Blue Jay: 12 cases, 1 death

Cedar Glen: 7 cases

Crestline: 68 cases, 3 deaths

Forest Falls: 4 cases

Rimforest: 4 cases

Running Springs: 25 cases

Sugarloaf: 12 cases

Twin Peaks: 10 cases, 1 death

Wrightwood: 24 cases (+1)

Laine Henry is an intern at The Desert Sun. You may reach him at laine.Henry@desertsun.com

LOCAL NEWS • News

Montclair still not sure about reopening City Hall and public parks

City is waiting for SB County coronavirus statistics to improve



FILE PHOTO: Montclair City Hall on Tuesday, July 10, 2019. Montclair City Council has kept City Hall and other facilities, as well as parks, closed for the past 6 months to protect against the spread of the coronavirus. On Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020, the City Council said they would consider some reopening measures possibly to take effect by Oct. 5, 2020. (Photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **STEVE SCAUZILLO** | sscauzillo@scng.com | San Gabriel Valley Tribune

PUBLISHED: September 10, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. | UPDATED: September 10, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.



Taking a cautious approach, the Montclair City Council set Oct. 5 as a very tentative date for reopening City Hall, but community buildings, parks and ball fields could remain closed for many more months.

After six months of closures due to the [coronavirus pandemic](#), the City Council on Tuesday night, Sept. 8, wanted to switch from virtual to live meetings in the Council Chambers possibly by early October. Meetings moved online this spring as public gatherings were restricted to prevent the virus' spread.

Any reopening of city facilities or live meetings open to attendees, however, depends on San Bernardino County seeing a drop in positive COVID-19 cases and testing rates. The decreases need to be significant enough to justify moving the county from the purple tier, signifying “widespread risk,” to the lower red tier representing a “substantial risk” under the state’s latest [benchmarks for reopening](#), said City Manager Ed Starr.

The county’s positive testing rates are below 8%, tentatively qualifying it for the red tier but the rates must stay that way for two weeks, according to state rules. The earliest the county would know if it qualifies for the upgrade would be Sept. 29, Starr said.

While new cases went from a peak of 988 on July 1 to 49 on Sept. 4, positive tests must keep below the 8% threshold in order for the county — and the city of Montclair — to ease restrictions on city facilities and businesses, he said.

The seven-day average for new cases in the county has dropped from 763 on July 19 to 52 on Sept. 9, according to the county Department of Public Health. The positivity rate is 7.34% as of Wednesday, Sept. 9.

“For us to move to the red tier, we would have to have one of those numbers stay for two weeks,” said Lana Culp, department spokesperson.

The City Council asked for an updated report at its next meeting to discuss reopening city buildings and switching to live council meetings beginning Oct. 5. Starr said a camera could be installed in the Council Chambers to stream live to Facebook, but phone-in participation for those wishing to comment may be impossible.

Only about 15 people can be seated in the chambers to accommodate social distancing, he said. A video feed could be piped into the lobby, accommodating overflow watchers.



“I would say keep it (City Hall) the way it is now, open only by appointment,” said Mayor Pro-Tem Carolyn Raft.

“I don’t think it is safe for us to even start talking about dates,” said Councilwoman Tenice Johnson, who said she wouldn’t reopen City Hall until the case numbers were way down.

Councilman Bill Ruh said he agreed to using a camera for live feeds and the lobby for overflow watchers.

“But we need to be very careful,” added. “We don’t want anyone from the public to say ‘I attended a Montclair council meeting and that’s why I am sick.’”



The former Nordstrom store at the Montclair Place mall in Montclair sits empty Monday, July 20, 2020. Sears, another retailer at the mall, closed earlier this year. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

The council is holding a live public hearing at 7 p.m. Sept. 21 the senior center, 5111 Benito St., for a presentation on the Montclair Place District Specific Plan, a document laying out future zoning and mixed uses for the mall that has lost two major tenants, [Sears](#) and [Nordstrom](#) in the past year. Most likely that meeting will not be livestreamed but the audio may be recorded and posted on the city website the following day.

If the county went to the red tier, [Montclair Place](#), which reopened on Friday, Sept. 4, to 25% capacity, could go to 50% capacity, Dutrey said.

First District Supervisor Curt Hagman said he’s optimistic the county will be upgraded. He said businesses should not be penalized.



“The data shows 70% of spread is by friends and family members at family gatherings, not going to a business,” he said.

Hagman cautioned he [didn't want a repeat of May](#), however, when the county lifted face-covering mandates and reopened establishments only to return to tighter restrictions when positive cases began to rise.

“When we opened up last time people thought they were safe and they let their guard down,” he said.

[Orange County moved to the red tier](#) on Tuesday, but Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties remained purple Wednesday.

Ontario City Hall is open; masks and social distancing is required. Parks in Ontario and Rancho Cucamonga are open but with playgrounds roped off.

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By SilverLadder - National Family Life Insurance

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Steve Scauzillo | Reporter

Steve Scauzillo has been a journalist for more than 40 years, had has worked as a beat reporter, assistant city editor, Opinion Pages Editor, general



https://www.highlandnews.net/opinion/columnists/elmamae_henderson/most-highland-library-services-continue/article_a4aa5418-f382-11ea-9f55-c782b86079eb.html

Most Highland library services continue

By ElmaMae Henderson

Sep 10, 2020



The Highland Sam J. Racadio Library.

The Sam Ricardo San Bernardino County Branch Library is open. While its services are somewhat limited, it is possible to borrow books.

On the Internet, reached at: sbclib.org, VISION 2 Succeed, has information about events in San Bernardino County District. Many organizations as well as individuals are taking part without cost to participants. While some of this data appears out-of-date, there's much to learn, much that is never out-of-date: youth programs, the Workforce Development Board, (WDB) and Economics Development Agency (EDA). The partnership includes employers, educators, and businesses.

San Bernardino County's VISION 2 Succeed is inspired by the innovation of leaders like Supervisor Robert Lovingood at State of Education events.

Your Sam Ricardo Branch Library, 7863 Central Ave., just north of Fifth Street, is open and welcoming. Of course, county guidelines require masks and social distancing, but don't let these requirements stop you from using this beautiful building's resources. It's particularly important as schools are still in a quandary about protecting children and teachers during the coronavirus pandemic. Your library is always a source for education as well as the pleasures of reading. Just as you will, I will be glad when we can feel more relaxed and do away with this social distancing and the masks. These inconveniences will not keep me away from our library. It is still a lovely place to read, rest and enjoy, with a knowledgeable, welcoming staff. Will I see you at the library? I hope so.

THINGS TO DO > RESTAURANT FOOD AND DRINK • News

Oktoberfest 2020 hasn't been canceled by coronavirus in Southern California



Rae Venner pours the first beers of the season during the 2019 Big Bear Lake Oktoberfest at the Big Bear Convention Center in Big Bear City. (Eric Reed/Contributing Photographer)

By **FIELDING BUCK** | fbuck@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: September 9, 2020 at 1:47 p.m. | UPDATED: September 9, 2020 at 1:51 p.m.

Munich canceled its world-famous Oktoberfest celebration back in April, but in Southern California a few places are willing to keep the party going with beer and brats.



Those venues will be required to have social distancing, due to the [novel coronavirus pandemic](#). State COVID-19 guidelines also ask businesses to [“consider limiting excessive consumption of alcohol.”](#)

Two German eateries are in Orange County, which on Tuesday got the go-ahead from the state of California to allow [indoor dining at reduced capacity](#).

Most Oktoberfest celebrations, however, have been called off due to the pandemic.

Here's what's happening and what isn't around Southern California.

Scheduled events

Big Bear Lake Oktoberfest

Where: Convention Center of Big Bear Lake, 42900 Big Bear Blvd., Big Bear Lake

Details: One of Southern California's longest-running Oktoberfest celebrations will mark its 50th anniversary at this year's festival. Its website isn't currently providing details, but says there will be a safe outdoor celebration with [limited attendance](#) but with table service and live entertainment.

The event website has posted dates for weekends in September, beginning Friday, Sept. 11.

Prices vary by date, starting at \$40 per person for seating reservations on Friday and going to \$85 on Saturday.

Information: 909-585-3000, bigbearevents.com/oktoberfest

Old World Village Oktoberfest

Where: Old World Village, 7561 Center Ave., Huntington Beach

Details: This venue, which includes a restaurant and European market, will be serving German food and beer on a 10,000 square foot patio Wednesday through Sunday, [beginning Sept.18](#), according to the venue's website.

Information: 714-895-8020, oldworld.ws

Oktoberfest at the Phoenix Club

When: Weekends, Oct. 1-25

Where: 1340 S. Sanderson Ave., Anaheim



Details: This German dance hall is still working out its plans for Oktoberfest, but is open Wednesday through Sunday for German food and beer.

Information: 714-563-4166, thephoenixclub.com

Canceled events

Alpine Village: Oktoberfest had lost its home in this Bavarian shopping center in Torrance when the pandemic hit. Its restaurant, losing money, was [already closing](#). The shopping center is [still open](#), including a market and bakery that sell German sausages, beer pastries. But the property hadn't announced any Oktoberfest events at press time. alpinevillagecenter.com

Lake Arrowhead Village Oktoberfest: Last year it ran mid-September through October. This year it's seeking donations to help bands and entertainers who lost work to the pandemic. lakearrowheadoktoberfest.com

King Ludwig's Oktoberfest: This would have been the 31st year for this Beaumont/Cherry Valley event. bcvparks.com/oktoberfest.html

Long Beach Oktoberfest: The Long Beach event will be rescheduled, according to its website. tasteofbrews.com/oktoberfest.html

Montrose Oktoberfest: This one-day street party took place on Honolulu Avenue last year. oktoberfest.montrosechamber.org

Oktoberfest at Fairplex: It was scheduled to run three weekends in October at the Los Angeles County fairgrounds in Pomona. fairplex.com/events/oktoberfest

Redlands Oktoberfest: The one-day event usually takes place in Sylvan Park in October. redlandsoktoberfest.com

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LOCAL NEWS

Inland events to mark 9/11 terrorist attacks go on, despite coronavirus



Students look at a 25-foot-long steel beam from the World Trade Center that was on display at Patriot High School in Jurupa Valley on Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2019. Some events were canceled this year, but others will go on Friday, Sept. 11, 2020. (File photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **STAFF REPORT** | |

PUBLISHED: September 9, 2020 at 2:50 p.m. | UPDATED: September 10, 2020 at 1:44 p.m.

Though [the coronavirus pandemic](#) continues, Inland residents will still mark the 19th anniversary of the [Sept. 11 terrorist attacks](#).



Some commemorations have been canceled, others have been moved online, but some will continue in person with social distancing and other safety measures.

Here are highlights of local events.

CANYON LAKE

Canyon Lake is lighting up in blue to commemorate the 19th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

On Friday, Sept. 11, about 800 Canyon Lake residents, including Mayor Pro Tem Kasey Castillo and other community leaders, are expected to join in a solemn ceremony called Tribute in Light to honor the victims. The event, open only to residents and guests, will begin with a golf-cart procession at Fire Station 60. At 9:11 p.m., the community will be lit with blue spot lights, visible to the public from at least a half mile away.

The socially distant ceremony will feature speakers and video appearances from state Sen. Melissa Melendez, R-Lake Elsinore, and the Frederick family from New York, whose son Dennis survived the attack. Former state Sen. Jeff Stone, who was appointed the U.S. Department of Labor's western regional director, is scheduled to speak.

The event is set for 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.

— *Allyson Escobar*

MORENO VALLEY

The M on Box Springs Mountain will be lit up in red, white and blue from dusk to midnight on Friday, Sept. 11, to commemorate the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

The M is lit almost nightly in recognition of holidays and observances important to the community. For more information, or to suggest an occasion to light the M, visit [MoVal.org/mschedule](https://www.morenovalley.org/mschedule).

— *Beau Yarbrough*

NORCO

At 8:35 a.m. Friday, Sept. 11, Norco is hosting a virtual Patriot Day ceremony on its official [Facebook page](https://www.norcofire.com).

Norco Mayor Berwin Hanna and representatives from Cal Fire/Riverside County Fire Department and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department will reflect on the terrorist attacks, honor victims and recognize first responders.



From 7 a.m. to noon, the community is invited in-person to honor the nation's flag, pay tribute to fallen heroes and reflect on the meaning of Patriot Day at George A. Ingalls Veterans Memorial Plaza. Vehicles may enter through Gate 5 of the Ingalls Event Center from Crestview Drive. The center is at 3737 Crestview Drive, Norco.

— *Allyson Escobar*

RIVERSIDE

The Riverside Citywide Never Forget 9-11 Day of Service is going virtual this year.

Options for participating include organizing a neighborhood cleanup, donating blood and scheduling a virtual preparedness presentation, a city news release stated. Participants are encouraged to share their events on social media.

A new video highlighting activities of previous years and new content is scheduled to be released via [riversideca.gov](https://www.riversideca.gov) Friday, Sept. 11. That video will feature music and messages and footage of Riverside first responders at Ground Zero in New York City, the release stated.

Neighborhood cleanups by families or groups of eight or fewer people may be organized with Keep Riverside Clean & Beautiful by registering at <https://forms.gle/LEZpie5z8k4oVvHR6>.

Blood donations may be scheduled with LifeStream Blood Bank at www.LStream.org/Riverside by entering the code GCRC at check-in.

The American Red Cross plans to make virtual preparedness presentations to schools and community groups. Presentations may be scheduled by contacting Kimberly Aufrecht, preparedness manager, at 714-313 5440 or Kimberly.Aufrecht2@RedCross.org.

— *David Downey*

RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Flags will be lowered to half-staff at all Riverside County facilities Friday, Sept. 11, in honor of Patriot Day.

Unlike prior 9/11 remembrances, there will be no ceremony at the County Administrative Center in downtown Riverside because of COVID-19 concerns, county spokeswoman Brooke Federico said.

— *Jeff Horseman*

TEMECULA



Beginning Wednesday, Sept. 9, Great Oak High School's Young America's Foundation club will honor victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks with a public display of U.S. flags.

The display was placed by club members at the Temecula Duck Pond and Veterans Memorial, on the east end of the park by the gazebo.

As part of the 9/11 Never Forget Project, 2,977 flags placed by club students honor the memory of the victims in the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and on United Flight 93.

The memorial will be open to the public until the end of the day, Friday, Sept. 11. The park is at 28250 Ynez Road, Temecula.

— *Allyson Escobar*

If you have a 9/11 event to share, email us at inlandeditors@scng.com

Editor's note: This story has been updated to correct errors. Dennis Frederick is a 9/11 survivor.

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Avoid familiar ritual of fall, says county

Officials soften initial trick-or-treat ban to a recommendation as COVID-19 set to impact Halloween.

BY HAYLEY SMITH AND COLLEEN SHALBY

Less than a day after issuing new health guidelines that banned trick-or-treating and other Halloween activities, Los Angeles County public health officials walked back the decision Wednesday.

Citing an inability to maintain safe social distancing and the potential for gatherings beyond household members, county officials initially nixed trick-or-treating along with other Halloween traditions, including haunted houses and parades.

But Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said Wednesday that the guidelines have been [“slightly revised.”](#)

Ferrer said the change distinguishes between activities originally prohibited under the health officer order from activities that are “not recommended.”

“This year, it’s just not safe to celebrate in the ways we usually do,” Ferrer said. “We are recommending that trick-or-treating not happen this year.”

The Department of Public Health previously said that because some of the traditional ways in which Halloween is celebrated do not allow contact with nonhousehold members to be minimized, it is important to identify safer alternatives.

“Trunk-or-treat” events involving car-to-car candy dispersal, which are sometimes held by churches or schools, also are not recommended under the revised order.

The news was not well-received by some residents, and even [a few celebrities took umbrage with the rules.](#)

“I do not agree with the new measures in place,” said Joanna Cortez, an Elysian Valley resident with two nieces and a baby on the way.

“Trick-or-treating is an outdoor activity,” she said, noting that wrapped and packaged candy can easily be sanitized before being consumed. “We can have measures in place like

social distancing and leaving out candy in a bowl for children versus actually handing out candy.”

But other community members weren't so sure. James Lamb said that in previous years, he's had hundreds of trick-or-treaters at his Burbank home on Halloween, but in light of the pandemic, it doesn't seem like a good idea this year.

“I don't think there is any good alternative at this point, short of buying your own kids candy and just staying home, unfortunately,” said Lamb, the father of an immunocompromised child.

Health officials say it can be difficult to maintain social distancing on porches and at front doors when children are trick-or-treating.

But L.A. County Supervisor Janice Hahn said that “even a pandemic can't cancel Halloween.”

“In fact, it's the only day of the year we were expected to wear masks before this crisis started,” said Hahn, whose Fourth District includes many of the beach cities. “Be safe, practice physical distancing and get creative about how you celebrate with your kids this year,” she said in a statement.

Representatives from the candy industry also added their voice in opposition to the earlier ban on trick-or-treating.

“There will be regional differences across the country in the way that people are going to celebrate the Halloween season throughout the month of October,” said Carly Schildhaus of the National Confectioners Assn.

“We're pleased that the Public Health Department in L.A. County is reassessing their earlier decision that really lacked creativity when it comes to trick-or-treating and Halloween.”

Other Halloween events, including large gatherings or parties with nonhousehold members — either indoors or outside, will not be permitted under the [new health order](#).

The latest guidelines also prevent carnivals, festivals and haunted house attractions, and instead encourage online parties, [car parades](#) that comply with vehicle parade protocols and Halloween movie nights at drive-in theaters that meet health and safety standards.

Annual Halloween events such as [Knott's Scary Farm and the Oogie Boogie Bash](#) at Disneyland have already been canceled because of the pandemic.

The county won't strip away all Halloween celebrations. Halloween meals at outdoor restaurants, Halloween-themed art installations at outdoor museums and dressing up homes and yards with decorations are still allowed — provided they comply with countywide COVID-19 protocols.

The announcement follows a scorching hot Labor Day weekend, in which public health officials [urged residents to stay home](#) to avoid holiday-related outbreaks.

As of Wednesday, COVID-19 has claimed more than 13,900 lives in California, with more than 746,000 confirmed cases.

Times staff writer Jaclyn Cosgrove contributed to this report.



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ROSEVILLE/PLACER NEWS

Placer health officer resigns in protest after supervisors lift COVID-19 state of emergency

BY [MOLLY SULLIVAN](#) AND [TONY BIZJAK](#)

SEPTEMBER 09, 2020 03:08 PM , UPDATED 18 MINUTES AGO



Placer County Health Officer Dr. Aimee Sisson answers media questions at the Community Development Resource Center in Auburn on Monday, March 2, 2020, after confirming that a county resident has tested presumptively positive for the coronavirus. PAUL KITAGAKI JR. PKITAGAKI@SACBEE.COM

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03:16

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Placer County's public health officer [Dr. Aimee Sisson](#) resigned Tuesday in protest over the county's Board of Supervisors' decision the same day to declare that the [county no longer recognizes COVID-19 as an emergency](#).

Sisson, who led the county through the early days and months of the COVID-19 pandemic, submitted her resignation in a letter to county Executive Todd Leopold immediately after the board rescinded the emergency declaration it had passed earlier this spring when the virus first hit.

"Today's action by the Placer County Board of Supervisors made it clear that I can no longer effectively serve in my role as Placer County Health Officer and Public Health Director," she wrote. "I am grateful to have been granted the tremendous privilege and responsibility of protecting and promoting the health of Placer County's 400,000 residents over the last 10 months."

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Sisson did not immediately respond to a Sacramento Bee request for further comment.

Placer County board chairwoman Bonnie Gore said she respects Sisson's stance, but that the board is taking a broader view of public health than Sisson, balancing [the COVID-19 infection and death numbers](#) with the need to get businesses and the economy going, and with the need to improve mental and emotional health of county residents.

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“At the end of the day, our board had a direction that she didn't believe she could support,” Gore said. “The difference is, she and the governor and the state have been very focused on COVID health and I have looked at this as a public health issue (beyond) COVID. How it is affecting our mental health and our emotional health of our residents.

“Our case numbers are so low, it doesn't warrant a shutdown.”

[Placer has experienced 3,238 cases in the last six months, an 36 deaths.](#) Its infection rate currently is low. The county reported 18 new cases on Wednesday.

Gore said that businesses and residents are still obligated to follow state COVID rules, but she said the county does not intend to enforce those rules itself, even if it receives complaints from residents about businesses. It would be up to the state, Gore said, to step in if, for instance, the state believes a restaurant or hair salon is violating state rules or guidelines for operations.

Sisson will leave her position Sept. 25, she said. That makes her one of nearly a dozen county health officers who have resigned over the course of the six-month pandemic. Several others quit amid pressure to reopen local economies, according to various reports.

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“Over the past seven months with Dr. Sisson’s leadership, Placer County has succeeded in limiting the spread of COVID-19, leaving us well positioned to continue safely reopening our economy while still taking necessary precautions,” said Placer County Executive Officer Todd Leopold in a news release. “We wish her the best in her future endeavors.”

Sisson joined Placer County public health team in October 2019. She oversaw the county’s response to the pandemic since February when Placer County recorded the first confirmed COVID-19 death in the region. Since then, she has been involved in numerous initiatives to curb the spread of the virus, including, most recently, working with the Placer County Office of Education to secure a

“Placer County will immediately begin the search for a new health officer in collaboration with incoming Health and Human Services Director Dr. Rob Oldham and the county Board of Supervisors,” the county said.

Sisson’s resignation comes a day after Placer County was downgraded from the most state’s most restrictive level of coronavirus monitoring to the second most restrictive, allowing some businesses and schools to reopen.

On Tuesday, the county’s Board of Supervisors also voted unanimously to end the county’s local state of emergency.

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The outdoor dining area of Barra de Pan in Corona, California, operated by Lucy Silva in her backyard | Clay Larsen

FEATURES

Riverside's Newly Legal Home Restaurants Look to Revolutionize California's Food Scene

How California's new AB-626 could unleash a completely new kind of marketplace of home-cooked meals

by [Farley Elliott](#) | Sep 2, 2020, 2:15pm PDT

Photos by [Clay Larsen](#)

The colorful plates at Lucy Silva's Corona, California, restaurant Barra de Pan won't stop coming. They are a force unto themselves, arriving in quick succession until they threaten to overtake the outdoor table. There's a steaming plate of birria tacos, their tortillas red and softened from a dip in the cooking consomme, plus tacos al vapor, enchiladas, and cafe de olla. Silva, her kind eyes smiling from behind a mask, never slows down.

Like every restaurant in California at the moment, Barra de Pan's dining is limited to a single large patio area. The kitchen is out in the open air too, a mishmash that includes a retro suburban four-burner stove, a discada for tacos, a fridge, and a homemade pizza oven. She and her daughters cook, run orders, talk with customers at socially distanced tables, and occasionally duck inside to stack dirty dishes for the late evening clean-up. Working at Barra de Pan takes its toll, but for the Silva family, going to bed at the end of a long shift means simply walking upstairs to their bedrooms.

Barra de Pan is a home restaurant in the vast Inland Empire, and it has been given full approval to operate thanks to [California Retail Food Code AB-626](#), which legalizes "microenterprise home kitchen operations." The newly implemented regulation allows anyone to run a licensed restaurant out of their home kitchen and dining room. No commercial space, no food truck, no ghost kitchen, and no staff is needed — just pull some local permits to get certified by the Riverside County public health office.

AB-626 may seem like a small adjustment to the state's vast body of food regulations, but in reality it's something much more: The new law could unleash a dining revolution in California, precisely when it's needed most. Between stay-at-home mandates, high unemployment, and the still-raging coronavirus pandemic, the entrepreneurial opportunities presented by AB-626 could mean tens of thousands of dollars in the hands of local chefs who feed their communities the food they most want to eat. And while Riverside is the state's only county to fully implement AB-626, the dozens of restaurants that have come online since January 2020 are proving that a path forward for legal home cooking is not only possible, it's needed.



Barra de Pan's home kitchen, put together by Lucy Silva and her daughters

In late 2008, Los Angeles, like the rest of America, was hit hard by the Great Recession. Restaurants closed, jobs disappeared, and people who had spent a lifetime walking the financial tightrope that is the hospitality industry suddenly found themselves dangling into space. And yet, just one year later, LA gave rise to the modern food truck movement as small bands of chefs, cooks, and newly minted owners decided collectively to forego big financing and brick-and-mortar locations altogether. The food truck revolution changed America, ushering in a new era of low-cost entry and big culinary ideas. It not only democratized the process of running a restaurant, it literally took the show on the road. From food truck reality shows to movies like *Chef*, food trucks were seen across the country as a way in.

Now, LA is once again in the grip of mass layoffs, rolling restaurant closures, and the kinds of **real estate woes** that mirror 2008, if not worse, as the pandemic rages on. With a little luck and some political will, AB-626 could turn home kitchens into the food movement of 2020 and 2021.

Akshay Prabhu spent years trying to legalize at-home restaurants in California. While a neuroscience student at UC Davis, he ran his own underground restaurant and fantasized about building a mobile hot

dog cart before running into various legal hurdles. Without an existing legal framework in place, Prabhu decided to begin lobbying Sacramento politicians directly. His ask was simple: What would it take to rethink the word “restaurant” and legalize micro-entrepreneurs that cook out of their homes?

Just like that, the AB-626 movement was born, and along with it Prabhu’s platform Foodnome, a website and app that helps home cooks through the permitting process and features their restaurants all in one place. Prabhu wasn’t alone in his efforts; state [assemblymember Eduardo Garcia](#), whose district covers large swaths of Riverside and Imperial counties, shepherded the bill all the way to the governor’s desk, as did [Cook Alliance](#), a non-profit partner also working to bring home restaurants to life.



Akshay Prabhu, founder of Foodnome | [Foodnome](#) [Official photo]

Prabhu's company helps simplify the process for aspiring home restaurateurs, who have been mostly women of color and immigrants so far. Staffers help home chefs walk through the cumbersome permitting process. The initial costs (usually just over \$1000) covers the \$651 paperwork, liability insurance, and startup toolkit. Chefs must also pass a week-long food management certification course and undergo home kitchen inspections by public health officers; once approved, they're free to sell food from their home.

And while these entrepreneurs don't *need* to use Foodnome as a listing directory for their business (they can market themselves on Instagram or other social media platforms), there's strength in being listed alongside almost every other approved home business under AB-626 — about a few dozen spread mostly around Riverside, Corona, and the Moreno Valley.

It is Prabhu's belief (both before the pandemic and moreso now) that at-home restaurants can serve as a path forward for eager self-starters, who could then go on to open a retail space and hire more people, while serving the food that the community likely wants to eat. "Our home restaurants are representative of the diversity of the community," Prabhu says. "They address a lot of food desert issues."

"There are so many people within these communities that could serve food," Prabhu says, "We need to reduce the distance that food travels and increase availability of food in key neighborhoods."

Right now, Prabhu says, "there are too many barriers." The language of AB-626 gives "full discretion" to public health departments and regional governing bodies (be they city or county) to actually create the framework for approving at-home restaurants, meaning there's no formal statewide body overseeing all the permitting. Licenses and health departments in one county don't need to follow the same approval process as the next county over; in fact, they don't have to actually permit AB-626 at all.

As it now stands, the only county in California with AB-626 up and running is Riverside, though Prabhu says that **others are considering the measure**. San Bernardino is looking at neighboring Riverside as a test case before it decides on its own approach, and Alameda County — home to large cities like Oakland, Berkeley, Fremont, and Hayward — is said to be considering it as well, with first approvals to hopefully come before the end of 2020.

LA County advocates have been calling on county supervisors to take up AB-626 for **more than a year**, which could help bring in needed revenue through the permitting, approval, and taxation process. After all, underground at-home restaurants like Carnitas El Momo and the original Starry Kitchen have been

proliferating in neighborhoods for years to **much public acclaim**, though always under the threat of being shut down for operating illegally. But with stricter regulatory enforcement, a stronger brick-and-mortar restaurant lobby, a much larger population, and overlapping jurisdictions (Pasadena and Long Beach each have their own public health departments, for example), immediate movement seems unlikely — especially when LA County public officials already can't find a way to **streamline a path forward** for longstanding local street food vendors.

Silva didn't decide to open her own home restaurant under AB-626 because she wanted to change the entire business model. The single mother of three spent decades cooking food for others, mostly through local initiatives like the Corona **Child Nutrition Services** and her own non-profit **Food Runners**, which offers low-cost catering for other non-profits in the Inland Empire using trained student volunteers and donations.

For years, Silva's food was made off-site in an unlicensed kitchen, before an anonymous tip led to a crackdown by the local health department. Silva says she was fortunate to have a sympathetic ear with local political officials (and the help of a \$1,000 grant from the United Way) to bring her into compliance at a commissary kitchen, but the idea that she couldn't legally offer food to those in need simply because it was cooked in her house always seemed foolish. The arrival of Foodnome and AB-626 came at the right time, and offered a legal pathway to keep going. "I thought, I'm already doing this," says Silva from her backyard restaurant in Corona, "so why not make it official?"

Her permit process with Riverside County took several months, beginning in October 2019 and ending with a fully licensed at-home restaurant in January 2020, the first month they were formally allowed. While waiting, Silva and her daughters spent time tweaking their corner lot, which already included a thriving front yard garden and flagstone patio.

"When I got divorced, I told my husband all I wanted was the house and the kids," the Tijuana-born Silva says. She got both. By the time final approval was given by Riverside County, Silva's outdoor setup had grown to include half a dozen dining tables, string lights, multiple working sinks, and all that outdoor cooking equipment. **The restaurant** was an easy hit, thanks to its colorful ambiance and inviting, familiar Mexican comfort food. Customers would start a night under the stars with tacos, and end with cafe de olla and buñuelos, at least until the coronavirus pandemic struck.



Evon McMurray's home kitchen in Eastvale, California

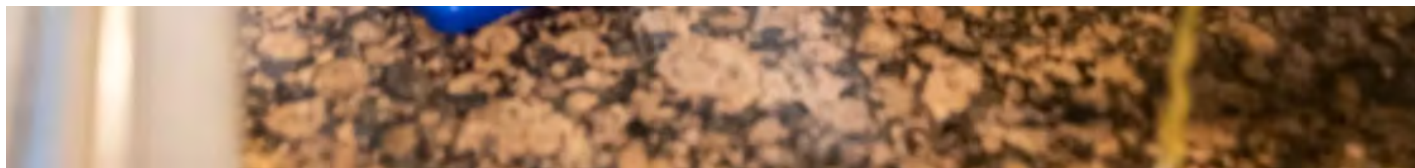
For Evon McMurray in Eastvale, a rolling suburb just southwest of the city of Riverside, AB-626 was nothing more than the chance to continue doing what she loves, even into retirement.

“I’ve always had a restaurant of some kind,” says McMurray from the front door of her tract home. As a teenager growing up in Louisiana, she watched her father bounce between various jobs, including as a short-order cook, and spent time herself working for her aunt at a diner in Grambling, Louisiana before moving out west. At 18, she went into business with her in-laws on a South LA restaurant off Vermont called A Family Affair — a fitting name for McMurray’s journey.

“My home has always been the gathering place for family,” says McMurray, who was raised alongside nine siblings by her single father. Today she counts five children of her own, 16 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. When her sister passed away, McMurray says she “inherited” her now-76-year-old deaf and blind brother-in-law, and his 33-year-old son, who has Down Syndrome. Much like her first Southern California business venture, McMurray’s home in Eastvale is now both a restaurant and a true family affair.

McMurray’s menu at her **Foodnome restaurant Jerky Jerk** is an eclectic collection of personal things. “I’m between two worlds: southern Louisiana and northern Louisiana,” she says of her culinary inspiration, “and everybody thinks the cuisine is the same. It’s not. If you go to New Orleans you’re going to get gumbo, you’re going to get jambalaya. You come to northern Louisiana, you’re going to get red beans and

rice, fried chicken, smothered potatoes, and smothered pork chops. I mix the two because we have that Cajun-Caribbean-African influence. It's how we grew up.”



Evon McMurray slices plantains at her home kitchen restaurant Jerky Jerk

Much like the growing Southern-influenced soul food movement happening **in the LA County suburb of Antelope Valley**, the food at Jerky Jerk weaves between classics like pineapple upside down cake and baked mac and cheese to oxtails, jerk chicken, fried plantains, and red beans and rice.

Despite a written proposal for a possible future restaurant (lovingly called the Bean Pot) McMurray says that the timing isn't right. And anyways, the money just isn't there. "Financially, I can't do it," she says. Besides, right now her work is needed at home, not out in the world, and that has made AB-626 a perfect middle ground for this uncertain moment.

Chef My Nhan Tran uses her menu at **My Fair Kitchen** as a way to reach her community locally and culturally, and to draw from her deep connections to the heartfelt foods of her past. A Vietnamese immigrant born in Soc Trang province south of Ho Chi Minh City, Tran says that cooking more expressive versions of familiar dishes has allowed her to engage with her Eastvale neighbors. "I just started to discover my passion," says Tran. "I [would] go home and try to cook whatever I ate, and just try to remember the taste. I might go check YouTube, but I always know what I want it to look like."

Tran's aesthetic can best be described as *The Most Beautiful Vietnamese Food You Have Ever Seen*. There's a casual meticulousness to her setup, tucked inside a stucco corner house. A full butter poached lobster tail over garlic noodles might appear from the built-in oven of her slate-toned suburban kitchen, a rich complement to the herbaceous pho (with handmade meatballs, naturally) that arrives next.



Layout of Vietnamese fish stew

Initially, Tran would draw customers (mostly friends and neighbors) by offering her food for free, partly to test new recipes and partly for the crowd it drew. Hers is one of the newer restaurants on Foodnome, relatively speaking, having only been permitted this summer. The lack of legal documentation before AB-626 left her in legally murky waters, and Tran — a former software engineer and now stay-at-home mother of four — never wanted to risk her future opportunities by taking money up front.

“I don’t want to do anything illegal,” says Tran of her time cooking in the vast underground of unlicensed restaurants in Southern California. “I want this to be a real career. I don’t want people to think I’m just doing this for the quick cash. I don’t like for them to think that way.”

Tran says she has a plan to draw a crowd even as the COVID-19 pandemic hangs in the air, and as more people join the home kitchen movement. “I will do Vietnamese that no one is selling,” she says. “I want to be different. If I cook my pho, it needs to be different than the restaurants around here.” Down the line, Tran is already planning to debut a Soc Trang speciality: fermented fish noodle soup (bun nuoc leo),

a pork and crab vermicelli soup (bun rieu cua), and a variety of shareable grilled fish and meat dishes. It's not the sort of thing found in most Vietnamese restaurants in Southern California, and for her, that's precisely the point.

Even with so many talented cooks on his side, Prabhu knows that Foodnome faces an uphill battle in continuing to fight for AB-626. The pandemic has encased the state's already-slow centers of bureaucracy in molasses, and existing restaurants are fighting **an increasingly public battle** just to keep their doors open one more day. But that's no reason to hide from the fight for increased access and low-cost entry into the restaurant world for so many eager entrepreneurs. If AB-626 is able to expand into Alameda County, San Bernardino County, and beyond, the results could be massively beneficial not only for Foodnome, but also for diners, cooks, cities, counties, and communities at large. It could even lead to a new golden age of American dining, one not centered in large urban areas or around deep-pocketed investors.

There's existing competition out there already, including the Glendale-based **DishDivvy**, which has been tinkering with a similar model **since 2017**. It's also a touchy time to confront the restaurant industry with a new ownership model, when existing brick-and-mortar owners and lobby groups are fighting a public battle with government representatives just to stay alive as COVID-19 rages across the state. "The restaurant lobby is pretty strong at the county level," Prabhu says, in part because "the cities make a lot of money from restaurants" and the revenue they generate. California restaurants accounted for nearly **\$100 billion** in sales in 2018.

But for many, these home kitchens won't generate enough sales to directly compete with existing commercial restaurants. "People have been really welcoming to what I'm doing," Silva says, but for now that isn't going to translate into a full-fledged restaurant. The moment is too volatile, and AB-626 has allowed her to make enough money to be sustainable from home. While the law specifically calls for "no more than one full-time equivalent food employee" per permit, she runs the restaurant with her daughters, who have their own jobs, helping out when they can.

Much like cottage industry wholesale production laws, AB-626 also caps the money made at "no more than \$50,000 in verifiable gross annual sales," but with everything else she's doing at the moment, that number sounds like enough to Silva. "I always wanted to open a restaurant and have my own business, so this is just like a perfect thing."

Jerky Jerk's McMurray agrees. It's hard to think of a better time than now to continue her passion for cooking while bringing in some needed extra income, she says, and it's hard to imagine a better place to do it than right in her own kitchen.

"Sitting at the table, you get more information over a meal than you do sitting in on any question and answer session," says McMurray. "It's the way to bring love home." ■



Array of dishes from Barra de Pan, a licensed home restaurant in Riverside, California.



Eater LA

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'Seriously delinquent' mortgages at 7-year high in LA-Orange County, Inland Empire

CoreLogic fears late pays "could nearly double" by early '22.

By **JONATHAN LANSNER** | jlansner@scng.com | Orange County

Register

PUBLISHED: September 9, 2020 at 5:59 p.m. | UPDATED: September 10, 2020 at 8:46 a.m.

The number of “seriously delinquent” mortgages in Southern California have skyrocketed to levels not seen since 2013, a new study shows.

CoreLogic’s monthly tracking of late-paying borrowers shows a steep rise since late winter of very late first mortgages — those “90 days or more past due, including loans in foreclosure.” Stubbornly high unemployment — [15.9% in July in the four-county region](#) — has crushed many family finances and made house payments a challenge.

In Los Angeles and Orange counties, 3.4% of mortgages were in or near foreclosure in June, up from 0.9% in May and 0.7% a year earlier. This is the highest rate of loan troubles since May 2013 but it’s also well below the Great Recession’s high of 9.5%.

In Riverside and San Bernardino counties, 3.8% of home loans were seriously delinquent — that’s up from 1.3% in May, 1% a year ago and it’s the highest rate since December 2013. Still, it’s far from the Inland Empire’s harsh Great Recession collapse when this late-pay measurement hit a 16.3% peak.



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Lenders and government backers of mortgages have offered forbearances programs to defer monthly payments for those borrowers with finances hurt by the coronavirus. It's a safe bet that delaying repayment as well as foreclosure proceedings will prevent a flood of motivated sellers from swamping the currently rebounding housing market.

Nationally, "seriously delinquent" mortgages were 3.4% of all loans — up from 1.3% in June 2019 and the highest since February 2015.

But without more government help, CoreLogic fears serious delinquency rates "could nearly double" by early 2022.

"Not only could millions of families potentially lose their home, through a short sale or foreclosure, but this also could create downward pressure on home prices — and consequently home equity — as distressed sales are pushed back into the for-sale market," the report said.

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RATING ACTION COMMENTARY

Fitch Affirms San Bernardino County Investment Pool at 'AAAf'/'S1'

Wed 09 Sep, 2020 - 5:05 PM ET

Fitch Ratings - New York - 09 Sep 2020: Fitch Ratings has affirmed the Fund Credit Quality Ratings (FCQR) and Fund Market Risk Sensitivity Ratings on San Bernardino County Investment Pool at 'AAAf'/'S1'.

The ratings reflect Fitch's review of the fund's investment and credit guidelines, and the portfolio's credit quality and diversification. The 'AAAf' FCQR indicates the highest underlying credit quality (or lowest vulnerability to default). The 'S1' rating indicates a very low sensitivity to market risk.

KEY RATING DRIVERS

Asset Credit Quality

The main driver of the fund credit rating is the high credit quality of the portfolio. It is the policy of the Treasurer to invest public funds in a manner that will preserve the safety and liquidity of all investments within the County investment pool while obtaining a reasonable return within established investment guidelines.

As of the review date, the pool primarily invested in government securities, direct agencies, corporate certificates of deposit and commercial paper. Other investments included negotiable certificates of deposit and money market funds.

The pool's weighted average rating factor (WARF) is in line with Fitch's 'AAAF' rating criteria of 0.3 or less. WARF is a risk-weighted measure of a portfolio of assets that accounts for the portfolio's credit quality and maturity profile.

Portfolio Sensitivity to Market Risks

Market risk is mitigated by the duration of the pool, as well as the high allocation to government and agency securities. As of the review date, the pool's duration corresponds to a 'S1' fund sensitivity rating.

Coronavirus Impact

The coronavirus-driven heightened market volatility in 1Q20 did not have a material impact on the pool, as the portfolio's credit quality remained high. The pool's rating could be adversely affected in the event of meaningful portfolio credit deterioration in the future.

U.S. Government and Agencies on Negative Outlook

The recent revision of the United States' Rating Outlook to Negative from Stable has no immediate impact on the pool. A Negative Outlook does not impact Fitch's calculation of the WARF that is the primary driver of FCQR, nor does a Negative Outlook impact Fitch's calculation of the Market Risk Sensitivity Factor (MRSF) that is the primary driver of the Market Risk Sensitivity Ratings (MRSR). These dynamics also apply to the subsequent Rating Outlook revisions with respect to U.S. government sponsored entities.

However, if U.S. government and agency debt were subsequently downgraded to 'AA+', this could impact LGIP ratings, as these securities would be assigned higher rating factors and market risk factors. Based on a review of recent surveillance reports, a hypothetical downgrade of U.S. government and agency debt to 'AA+' would not impact the pool, assuming no changes to the current portfolio.

INVESTMENT MANAGER

The Treasury Pool is actively managed in accordance with the California Government Code, the Treasurer's Statement of Investment Policy and internal investment guidelines. The Investment Policy is reviewed annually by the County's Treasury Oversight Committee and approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

RATING SENSITIVITIES

Factors that could, individually or collectively, lead to a positive rating action/upgrade:

Positive rating actions are not applicable as the assigned ratings are the highest ratings outcomes under Fitch's Bond Fund Ratings criteria.

Factors that could, individually or collectively, lead to a negative rating action/downgrade:

The ratings are sensitive to material changes in the credit quality or market risk profiles of the fund. A material decrease in portfolio credit quality could result in the FCQRs being lowered. A material increase in portfolio duration could result in the fund market risk sensitivity ratings being lowered.

Fitch conducted stress tests as outlined in its rating criteria to test the sensitivity of the fund's ratings against potential changes in the portfolios' credit quality.

Fitch receives monthly fund portfolio holdings information including credit quality, market value and duration of the individual securities to conduct surveillance against the Bond Fund Rating criteria. For additional information about Fitch bond fund ratings criteria, please review the criteria referenced below, which can be found on Fitch's website.

BEST/WORST CASE RATING SCENARIO

International scale credit ratings of Financial Institutions and Covered Bond issuers have a best-case rating upgrade scenario (defined as the 99th percentile of rating transitions, measured in a positive direction) of three notches over a three-year rating horizon; and a worst-case rating downgrade scenario (defined as the 99th percentile of rating transitions, measured in a negative direction) of four notches over three years. The complete span of best- and worst-case scenario credit ratings for all rating categories ranges from 'AAA' to 'D'. Best- and worst-case scenario credit ratings are based on historical performance. For

more information about the methodology used to determine sector-specific best- and worst-case scenario credit ratings, visit [<https://www.fitchratings.com/site/re/10111579>]

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The sources of information used to assess this rating were the public domain and the investment manager.

REFERENCES FOR SUBSTANTIALLY MATERIAL SOURCE CITED AS KEY DRIVER OF RATING

The principal sources of information used in the analysis are described in the Applicable Criteria.

RATING ACTIONS

ENTITY/DEBT	RATING			PRIOR
San Bernardino County Investment Pool	Fund Cr Qual Rtg	AAAf	Affirmed	AAAf
●	Sensitivity	S1	Affirmed	S1

[VIEW ADDITIONAL RATING DETAILS](#)

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https://www.redlandscommunitynews.com/news/government/five-redlands-voting-centers-proposed/article_586d906a-f38c-11ea-9dd6-6f9578303cf4.html

EDITOR'S PICK

Five Redlands voting centers proposed

By James Folmer Editor Redlands Community News
Sep 10, 2020

Redlands City Clerk has proposed five voting centers that will be available for registered voters to cast ballots in person eight hours a day leading up to Election Day on Nov. 3.



While many voters will use a vote-by-mail option, the San Bernardino County registrar of voters has worked to secure countywide polling places for this election.

Due to public health precautions, many of the polling places used in past elections are not available to the registrar of voters for this election.

To address the loss of about half of the facilities, polling places used in this election will be open for four days — Saturday, Oct. 31, through Tuesday, Nov. 3.

They will be open for eight hours a day on Oct. 31, Nov. 1 and Nov. 2. Hours have not been determined.

Prior to finalizing polling place assignments for the 2020 presidential general election, the registrar of voters has prepared a proposed list of polling places and a map of these locations.

Proposed polling places in Redlands include:

- American Legion Post 650, 1532 Church St.
- Joslyn Senior Center, 21 Grant St.
- Redlands Community Center, 111 W. Lugonia Ave.
- Redlands United Church of Christ, 168 Bellevue Ave.
- University of Redlands, Orton Center, 1200 E Colton Ave.

City Clerk Jeanne Donaldson said finding five large venues to serve as voting centers was a challenge. Normally, public schools are ideal, she said, but Redlands Unified is closed because of the pandemic. The larger voting centers will replace regular polling places, allowing for physical distancing and reducing crowds on Election Day.

https://www.highlandnews.net/news/political/highland-to-have-four-in-person-polling-places/article_358bbcee-f38b-11ea-a3c2-831bdbccb0f9.html

BREAKING

Highland to have four in-person polling places

To limit crowd sizes, in-person voting to be spread across four days and four Highland polling locations.

Hector Hernandez Jr.
Sep 10, 2020

San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters has identified four polling places for in-person voting in Highland under the state's coronavirus safety measures for the 2020 Presidential General Election.

In order to allow voters to vote in-person without creating large crowds, voting will take place over four days, from Saturday, Oct. 31, to Tuesday, Nov. 3.

Highland City Manager Joseph Hughes reported to Highland City Council during its Tuesday, Sept. 8, meeting that, due to the coronavirus social distancing requirements and extended voting schedule, serving as a polling place meant a greater time and space commitment this year, which made finding qualifying venues more difficult.

While the county set a goal for a minimum of three polling places in Highland four have been proposed, Hughes said.

Polling is scheduled to take place at: Highland City Hall, 27215 Base Line; the San Manuel Event Center, 27923 Highland Ave.; Immanuel Baptist Church, 28355 Base Line and Highland Family YMCA at 7793 Central Ave.

To help limit the spread of coronavirus, mail-in voting is recommended and in-person voters are encouraged to vote early in order to help reduce crowds on Election Day, Nov. 3.

Mail ballot drop boxes will also be available at Highland City Hall and the Highland library, 7863 Central Ave. beginning Tuesday, Oct. 6.

Hector Hernandez Jr.

NEWS > **HOUSING** • News

Southern California builders double home construction plans, but it's no boom

Over 12 months, 42,946 SoCal units were planned – 2% below the 5-year average.

By **JONATHAN LANSNER** | jlansner@scng.com | Orange County

Register

PUBLISHED: September 9, 2020 at 12:01 p.m. | UPDATED: September 9, 2020 at 12:01 p.m.

Southern California homebuilders may have doubled their construction plans since May's coronavirus bottom, but it's no broad building boom.

My trusty spreadsheet, filled with Census Bureau construction data, shows 4,019 residential units were permitted in the four-county region in July, 107% above May's stay-at-home-orders depressed low. This data includes single-family homes and multi-family housing.

Housing appears to be an economic leader amid the pandemic. Local builders have seen sales rebound as house hunters, armed with cheap mortgages, seek bigger living spaces.

However, the summer's permit surge still left construction plans in the region 15% below July 2019's level as housing construction remains modest. In the past 12 months, 42,946 SoCal units were planned – 2% below the previous five-year average.

The rest of the state saw 6,331 units permitted in July – 33% above May and 21% above July 2019. Still, no building boom. In the past 12 months, 62,413 units were planned – 2% above the previous five-year average.



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At the SoCal metropolitan area level:

Los Angeles and Orange counties: 2,715 permits, 123% above May but 7% below July 2019. Past 12 months? 28,866 units — 9% below the five-year average.

Inland Empire: 1,304 permits, 80% above May but 27% below July 2019. Past 12 months? 14,080 units — 18% above the five-year average, a rare California region with surging residential construction plans.

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By the t.e.a.



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LOCAL NEWS • News

San Bernardino mayor vetoes council-approved cap on campaign contributions

The city does not presently restrict how much someone can give a candidate for office



A statue of Martin Luther King Jr. sits adjacent to San Bernardino City Hall on Thursday, Sept. 3, 2020. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

By **BRIAN WHITEHEAD** | bwhitehead@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun

PUBLISHED: September 10, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. | UPDATED: September 10, 2020 at 1:32 p.m.



A decision in San Bernardino to support legislation that on Jan. 1 sets a yearly \$4,700 limit on how much someone can give a candidate for county or city office has been vetoed by Mayor John Valdivia and will be discussed further next month.

Council members Theodore Sanchez, Sandra Ibarra, Henry Nickel and Jim Mulvihill last week favored following the guidelines outlined in Assembly Bill 571, which was crafted to combat corruption – or the appearance of it – at all levels of government.

Council members Juan Figueroa, Fred Shorett and Bessine Richard opposed.

In a memo to elected officials and city management last week, Valdivia, who was absent for the Sept. 2 vote, vetoed the move, as he can any action approved by fewer than five council members.

The item is expected to be taken up again Oct. 7.

“What (a contribution limit) does is make you have to compete and really go out and develop a diverse base of support,” Nickel said. “I think that’s a good thing. Limits force us as politicians to go out and attract other interests other than a single interest.”

Signed into law last fall, Assembly Bill 571 on Jan. 1 will set the default contribution limit at \$4,700 per year per individual for cities and counties without their own laws regulating campaign donations. Jurisdictions can adopt their own rules before then to avoid defaulting to the limits already in place for state Assembly and Senate candidates.

Pomona, Grand Terrace, Upland and Santa Ana are a few cities in the region with their own campaign finance rules.

The new legislation puts the California Fair Political Practices Commission, or FPPC, in charge of enforcing the default limit and makes violations punishable as a misdemeanor. Restrictions also will be put in place on personal loans and for committees formed to fend off recall measures.

The yearly limit per individual can be increased or decreased in January of odd-numbered years.

During a council workshop last month, San Bernardino leaders discussed drafting an ordinance formally establishing no cap on how much an individual can contribute to a campaign – as is the case presently.

Shorett, who strongly supported the move, called it a “right” this month for people to support the candidate they want.



“Fundraising should only be limited to your ability to raise funds and you should be trusted with those funds,” he said. “There’s no reason why people can’t be trusted to raise money on their own and spend it wisely. ...

Restricting contributions “is an absolute abomination,” Shorett added. “Everyone wants transparency and everybody wants everybody’s hands to be tied. That’s not the American way.”

Councilwoman Sandra Ibarra found no issue capping donor contributions.

“Right now we don’t have limits and look where our city is,” she said. “I think this is a step forward that we put limits on ourselves, so we don’t let the big dollars affect our voting.”

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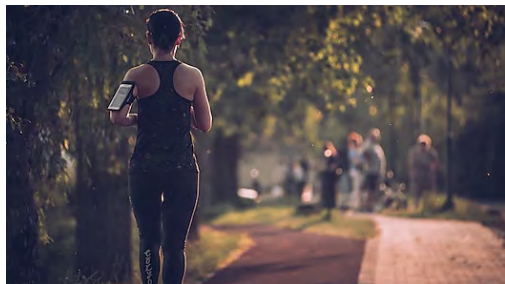
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By the t.e.a.



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Brian Whitehead | Reporter

