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Today is Tuesday, November 19, 2019 -

NEWS ARTICLES

Tuesday, November 19, 2019 Options

Victim Compensation Board Files Liens to Recoup Benefits Paid to Survivors of Terrorist Attack

*By Greg Jones Staff: California Topic: Top - 369 views - Average time spent on item: 10 minutes
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The California Victim Compensation Board, which provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to victims of the December 2015 terrorist attack in San Bernardino, is trying to recoup by filing liens against county workers' claims.



Alan Gurvey

Two liens filed Oct. 29 demand more than \$180,000, of which more than \$150,000 is for "income loss," according to documents filed with the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board.

WorkCompCentral found 10 more liens filed Oct. 29 and Oct. 30 against workers' compensation claims filed by San Bernardino County workers. The total claimed value for all liens filed by CalVCB at the end of October is \$717,634.

The liens surprised a county official, as well as an attorney representing county workers who have filed claims for injuries suffered during the Dec. 2, 2015, terrorist shooting at the Inland Regional Center that killed 14 and injured 22.

Applicants' attorney Alan Gurvey, managing partner of Rowen, Gurvey & Win, said he was surprised by the liens in part because a person with CalVCB in 2017 said the only time the agency seeks reimbursement is to prevent double recovery.

"Apparently, all the correspondence with them in April 2017 has been swept under the table and they are starting over," Gurvey said in an email. "I don't think this will go over big with the (San Bernardino) Assembly members or the administrative director, for that matter, especially if we remind everyone what representations were made two-and-a-half years ago."

The California Victim Compensation Board is a state program that uses federal funds, penalty assessments, criminal fines and restitution payments to reimburse victims who suffer physical injury or the threat of physical injury as a direct result of violent crime. According to its website, the board covers expenses including funeral and burial costs, income loss, medical treatment, mental health services and relocation.

The CalVCB website also notes that the board can reimburse victims for crime-related expenses only when there are no other sources of reimbursement. CalVCB says it must be reimbursed for payments made to a victim who later receives money through a judgment, award or settlement.

"All forms of workers' compensation may be subject to repayment and/or a lien, including but not limited to: temporary disability; permanent disability; proceeds of a compromise and release; (or) the far end of the stipulation with request for award," the CalVCB website reads.

After U.S. Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-San Bernardino, in December 2016 arranged \$4 million in federal funds to provide mental health treatment and other services for the county workers, CalVCB in May 2017 sent survivors a letter informing them that it could provide assistance with expenses including medical treatment

claims that are pending or on appeal through the county's work comp program. The letter said the payments would "not jeopardize your future workers' compensation and settlement benefits."

In another section, the letter informed the survivors that CalVCB can handle reimbursement "by filing a lien against your settlement for the amount CalVCB paid out on your behalf."

CalVCB attorney Kevin Kwong, in an April 17, 2017, email to Gurvey, said the agency does not seek reimbursement for any benefits "unless workers' compensation makes a payment on the same loss that CalVCB has already paid for."

"CalVCB only seeks repayment if the victim receives a double recovery for the same loss — situations where a victim or provider has been paid by both CalVCB and workers' compensation for the same bill," Kwong wrote in another email sent to Gurvey on April 20, 2017. "If there is no double recovery, then CalVCB does not seek repayment. Further, CalVCB has statutory authority to reduce and waive its liens and commonly utilizes this practice when necessary to aid victims."

An "original bill" CalVCB filed Oct. 29 with a lien demanding \$116,512 lists 58 payments made between January 2016 and April as either "income loss" or "medical." Income loss accounts for \$95,986 of the total claimed amount. The "Itemized Statement Justifying the Lien" classifies the service category for each line item as "medical."

The original bill for another lien the board filed Oct. 29 demanding \$65,373 lists 52 line items for payments made between January 2016 and October 2018. The payments are categorized as "health benefits," "income loss," "medical premium payment" and "mental health services."

Income loss accounted for \$56,509 of the total amount CalVCB seeks to recover. While the payment for mental health services is categorized as mental health on the itemized statement, the income loss, health benefits and premium payments are all classified as medical services.

Mary K. Thomson, manager of the Office of Policy and Planning at CalVCB, said in an email that generally speaking, the board can grant monetary compensation equal to the loss of income or loss of support that a crime victim suffers as a direct result of his or her injury. CalVCB can also reimburse an applicant for health insurance premiums and pay for alternative medicine, which may not be covered under a victim's insurance plan.

Thomson said she couldn't provide additional information about the payments and could not answer the question of when the payments CalVCB made would be subject to a lien.

"CalVCB cannot provide an answer to such a hypothetical question, as there are a myriad of circumstances in which CalVCB payments may become subject to a lien," she wrote.

At least some of the payments appear to either supplement temporary total disability or continue providing wage-replacement benefits after a worker hits the 104-week limit for TD.

San Bernardino County in June 2018 published a [report](#) outlining its response to the terrorist attack, saying a substantial number of claims to CalVCB were related to lost income.

"County employee victims eligible for workers' compensation could receive temporary disability compensation that covered up to two-thirds of salary losses," the report reads. "Compensation from CalVCB helped to make their paycheck 'whole.'"

The county's report also highlighted the statutory cap on TD that allows workers to collect the benefits for up to 104 weeks in a five-year period.

"Once employees reach that limit, CalVCB became or would become the primary option for recovering lost wages," according to the county's report.

Applicants' attorney Gurvey said that while liens filed by doctors typically don't impact a worker's settlement, his concern is that the CalVCB liens could be treated more like claims filed by the Employment Development Department or the Department of Social Services.

"These are liens that the defendant will often 'pass on' to the applicant and if defendant is potentially responsible to pay, even if negotiated, they will use it as a deal-breaker to either take as a credit against the applicant's settlement or not settle at all," Gurvey said. "If it becomes a credit, the applicant can lose out significantly."

He also said that based on the description of payments in the county's report, it doesn't sound like any of the workers received duplicative benefits.

Temporary disability provides up to two-thirds of an injured worker's salary, so any amount used to make the paychecks "whole" is not duplicative of anything provided through the comp system. Similarly, the Legislature has made clear its intention that injured workers should receive no more than two years of temporary total disability benefits in a five-year period.

"So, the workers' comp law only allows TTD for two years, and then the CalVCB is now going to go after the benefits that the law doesn't provide for by taking from a settlement," Gurvey said. "Not cool at all, especially given the words from the fund two years ago talking about duplicative benefits, which they are not."

San Bernardino County was not expecting the liens, according to public information officer David Wert. He said this is the first time for the county that there's been a relationship between CalVCB and county workers' comp claims.

Wert said the county received the first batch of liens on Nov. 5 and others have been trickling in since then.

He said the county is discussing the liens with CalVCB, but he had no additional information to provide on Monday.

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Luminarias Light Up Yucaipa Adobe to Celebrate the Season

By **Press Release** - November 20, 2019



Date: December 1,
2019

Time: 17:00-20:00

Location: 32183
Kentucky St, Yucaipa,
CA 92399

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Yucaipa, Ca -San Bernardino County
Museum presents the annual Evening
Luminarias at Yucaipa Adobe, in
partnership with the Yucaipa Historical
Society, Yucaipa Women's Club, and
the City of Yucaipa. The event takes
place on **Sunday, Dec. 1, from 5 to 8
p.m.**

In the 1950s, the Yucaipa Women's
Club was instrumental in helping to
save the circa 1858 adobe. The
holiday event features docent tours of
the site, to highlight the unique local
history and story of the adobe, and the
people who lived there. Visitors can
also enjoy Christmas caroling by the

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The San Bernardino County Museum's exhibits of regional cultural and natural history and the Museum's other exciting events and programs reflect the effort by the Board of Supervisors to achieve the Countywide Vision by celebrating arts, culture, and education in the county, creating quality of life for residents and visitors.

The Yucaipa Adobe, a branch of the San Bernardino County Museum, is at 32183 Kentucky St. in Yucaipa. Admission to the event is \$5 (adult), \$4 (military or senior), \$2.50 (student). Children under five and members of the museum are admitted free. Payment on site is cash only; to pay by credit card in advance or for more information, visit www.sbcounty.gov/museum or call (909) 798-8608. The Yucaipa Adobe is accessible to persons with disabilities.



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LOCAL NEWS

San Bernardino Valley College building set for \$70 million transformation into career hub

Officials expect construction on the Applied Technology Building to start in July 2021 and end about 27 months later



The aeronautics area inside San Bernardino Valley College's Applied Technology Building has several old planes and countless parts. The facility will soon undergo a makeover. (Photo by Brian Whitehead, The Sun/SCNG)

pm

The Applied Technology Building at San Bernardino Valley College may not dazzle from the outside, but inside, longtime professors tell stories of teens and 20-somethings who owe their burgeoning careers to the work done within its brick walls.

Built in 1964, the 78,000-square-foot facility at West Esperanza Street and South Eureka Avenue is one of the oldest on campus.

And thanks to \$70 million in state and [Measure CC funds](#), it is receiving a long overdue makeover.

After championing the building's renovation as a state budget priority earlier this year, state Sen. Connie Leyva, D-Chino; and Assemblywoman Eloise Gómez Reyes, D-Grand Terrace; celebrated the project with other dignitaries Wednesday, Nov. 20, on the grounds of what will become a nearly 100,000-square-foot modern career training hub for Inland Empire students.

“With San Bernardino and the surrounding area being so large, and with so many folks looking for livable wage jobs and careers, for San Bernardino Valley College to offer this type of training for its community is just phenomenal,” college President Diana Rodriguez said.

The new facility, Rodriguez added, “is going to be a huge boon for our students to be able to not only learn, but do hands-on training with state-of-the-art equipment.”

This fall semester, nearly 5,700 students are enrolled in career and technical education courses at Valley College.

Welding, electricity, machinist technology, aeronautics and heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration are but a few of the classes based in the Applied Technology Building.

Mark Williams, an auto collision, refinishing and street rod professor at the college for more than three decades, said Wednesday that his students' average age is 24, an age where men and women are “ready to settle down and not get a

Williams, in his light blue mechanic coveralls, described his pupils as “hardcore, ready for a life,” and said that after 10 months under his wing, he can place a student in an entry-level position.

“We get a wide variety of students,” said Richard Jaramillo, a longtime automotive teacher at the college. “We get students who don’t quite know what they want to do. We’ve had students come into our program thinking they want to be a technician and get confidence in coming back to school and transfer to different areas and get their degrees.

“It hurts us because we lose them, but we’re glad for the students because that’s what we’re here for.”

Approved by 61% of voters last year, Measure CC will generate [\\$470 million for upgrades to classrooms and job training facilities](#) in the San Bernardino Community College District.

Valley College officials expect to have renderings of the new Applied Technology Building by September and begin construction in July 2021.

In late 2023, the Inland Empire’s newest career training mecca will debut.

“When we get the new building,” Jaramillo said, “the outside is going to be as good as the inside.”

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Earthquake: 3.4 quake registered near Ridgecrest, Calif.



A map showing the epicenter of the 3.4 earthquake near Ridgecrest.

NOV. 20, 2019
3:03 PM



A magnitude 3.4 earthquake was reported Wednesday afternoon at 2:51 p.m. Pacific time five miles from Ridgecrest, Calif., according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The earthquake occurred 28 miles from California City, 58 miles from Barstow, 62 miles from Tehachapi and 63 miles from Rosamond.

In the past 10 days, there have been five earthquakes of magnitude 3.0 or greater centered nearby.

An average of 234 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3.0 and 4.0 occur per year in California and Nevada, according to a recent three year data sample.



The earthquake occurred at a depth of 4.9 miles. Did you feel this earthquake? Consider [reporting what you felt](#) to the USGS.

Even if you didn't feel this small earthquake, you never know when the Big One is going to strike. Ready yourself by following our five-step [earthquake preparedness guide](#) and building your own [emergency kit](#).

This story was automatically generated by Quakebot, a computer application that monitors the latest earthquakes detected by the USGS. A Times editor reviewed the post before it was published. If you're interested in learning more about the system, visit our list of [frequently asked questions](#).

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LOCAL NEWS

316-house Mediterra project in Highland moving forward after lawsuit dismissed



The 316-house Mediterra project in Highland is moving forward after a lawsuit was dismissed. Most of the development will be on the north side of Greenspot Road, pictured, east of Santa Paula Street on what that is currently orange groves. (Courtesy of Google Maps)

By **JENNIFER IYER** | jiyer@scng.com | Redlands Daily Facts





The 316-house Mediterra project approved in 2016 by the Highland City Council is showing signs of moving forward after a lawsuit was dismissed last year.

On Wednesday, Nov. 19, the planning commission voted to recommend several dozen changes to the council.

There are three main parts to the revision, said Kim Stater, the city's assistant community development director. Changes are to the development document, planning department conditions and engineering conditions, she said at the meeting.

Camille Bahri, with developer Sunland Communities, said many of the changes were triggered by a city condition to make the project's main access point match the East Valley Water District's access south of Greenspot Road.

TOP ARTICLES 1/5



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By



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“One condition had a rippling effect on everything,” Bahri told the commission.

Revisions include:

- Requiring compliance with new recommendations of a geologic report to address potential rockfalls and floods
- Revising the street layout
- Reducing the minimum allowed density for part of the project from 6.1 houses per acre to four
- Delaying construction of a private pool and barbecue area in a park set to include a public playground and walking path
- Changing when certain disclosures must be submitted to the city
- Changing street improvements to Greenspot Road

The site is mostly north of Greenspot Road, about 550 feet east of Santa Paula Street. Only a water quality basin is slated south of Greenspot. Currently there is a commercial citrus grove on the project site. One single family-home within the boundary will stay, though it will not be part of the development.

In March 2016, the city council approved the development, and a lawsuit was filed the next month by the Coalition to Protect Highland’s Heritage. The suit alleged the environmental documents were inadequate and the city failed to adopt feasible measures to reduce the project’s impacts.

The lawsuit alleged there were potential impacts on 22 sensitive species, aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gases, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, traffic and cumulative impacts.

By March 16, 2018, the parties were “completing the final stages of settlement” according to court documents, and in May the action was dismissed.

Another proposed development in Highland that found itself in court, the 3,600-house Harmony project, had its approvals rescinded after a judge ruled against it in 2018. It would have been southeast of Mediterra.

The council’s approvals for Mediterra, on the other hand, remained in effect for three years from the original approval date, and in February 2019 the council granted a three-year time extension through March 8, 2022.

Bahri did not say when the project would break ground, and was not immediately available for comment Wednesday.

The commission voted 4-0, with commissioner Michael Hall absent. The council will take up the changes at a future date.

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Big Bear Discovery Center to Temporarily Close for Renovations

Written by Michael P. Neufeld on November 10, 2019

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November 11, 2019



By Susan A. Neufeld

Fawnskin, CA – The Big Bear Discovery Center will close its doors after business hours on Sunday, November 10, 2019, to make way for a renovation of the building. Reduced visitor services at an alternative location will be announced in the near future.

The renovation project will allow Mountaintop Ranger District staff to co-locate within the federally-owned facility, expanding customer service for special use permits and other administrative business. It will also result in long-term savings of taxpayer money because the current district offices are leased.

“We are looking forward to seeing this project through to better serve the public,” said Mountaintop District Ranger Marc Stamer. “By co-locating all staff at the Big Bear Discovery Center, visitors will be



Snow Valley Mountain Resort Is Family Owned and Operated

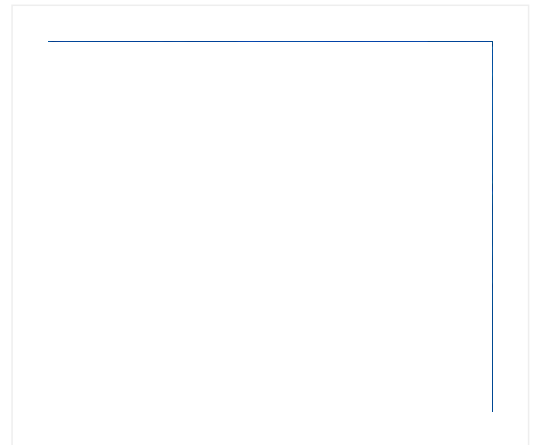
October 22, 2019

able to accomplish all district business in one spot.”

The project is expected to last through the spring 2020, with an anticipated summer 2020 reopening date, which will be announced at a later time.

While an alternative location is set up, Adventure Passes can be purchased in the area at 30 local businesses, which can be found in **an online database** (search for Big Bear and Fawnskin separately in the “Search all columns” box). Wood permits can be purchased by appointment at the forest headquarters in San Bernardino by calling 909-382-2600 or by completing the Feedback Form on the Forest’s **Contact Us webpage**.

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Winter Has Arrived At Snow Valley Mountain Resort

Chain Control in the Mountain Communities – UPDATE 5 – 12: 38 P.M.

Hesperia halts new cannabis businesses

By **Rene Ray De La Cruz**

Staff Writer

Posted Nov 20, 2019 at 5:23 PM

HESPERIA — The City Council voted on Tuesday to place a cap on the number of cannabis businesses allowed in the city's green zone.

Council members approved the ordinance, which pertains to just medical non-storefront retail delivery dispensaries in the city, by a vote of 5-0.

Effective immediately, the ordinance allows the existing 52 applicants to begin operating while placing a pause on the program. The goal is to see if Hesperia can support the number of businesses with current staff and infrastructure levels.

City Manager Nils Bentsen told the council that in addition to the 52 business applicants, there may be 10 or more "in the hopper." He added that the city does not have the staff to handle the influx of cannabis businesses.

Staff also reported that there are 10 operating cannabis businesses in the green zone, which is generally located between "I" Avenue and the railroad tracks, and Bear Valley Road to just north of Main Street.

Under the ordinance, applications that were received by the city prior to the effective date of the ordinance will continue to be processed, except that no new permits will be issued for application that are denied or rejected, or do not complete Part I and Part II of the approval process within specified time periods.

After hearing from several individuals, the council amended the ordinance by removing the ban on new applications pertaining to a change of business ownership.

Attorney Roger Diamond told the council that passing the ordinance and prohibiting applications for a change of ownership might have "unintended adverse consequences" in the form of litigation.

City Attorney Eric Dunn told the Council a change in ownership for a cannabis business is “not as simple as” selling a normal business, mainly due to the exhaustive vetting process by city staff.

After citing several news reports of school violence, Francis Schauwecker, the CEO/founder of Mary Jane University, told the council that “people are suffering” and that cannabis should be a “gateway to healing” for the many seniors, veterans and “children who are crying out for help.”

Columbia Middle School Assistant Principal Elizabeth Zinda-Hansen told the council that the city is saturated with cannabis businesses and that “cannabis is not making things better in our schools.”

Kevin Mahaney, community health director for St. Joseph Health, St. Mary, applauded the council’s actions in “carefully and diligently” reviewing the ordinance.

City staff reported that capping the number of cannabis businesses could result in a slight loss of revenue to the city. But without the cap, the number of cannabis businesses could exceed the ability of Hesperia’s administration, police, code enforcement and staff support to oversee the cannabis industry.

Reporter Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at 760-951-6227,

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[@DP_ReneDeLaCruz](#).

LOCAL NEWS

Montclair gives police 12% raise



Montclair Police station in Montclair on Tuesday, July 10, 2019. (Photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

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

PUBLISHED: November 21, 2019 at 7:30 am | UPDATED: November 21, 2019 at 7:30 am



Montclair police officers will receive a 12% pay raise, an increase that is almost twice as much as was given in 2017 and 2018 combined, city records show.

Rank-and-file officers will receive an 8% raise retroactive to Oct. 14 and a second salary increase of 4% around July 1, 2020, said Jon Hamilton, director of administrative services and human resources.

The last salary increase amounted to a combined total of 7% in 2017 and 2018.

“It is more substantial than what the city has given (in the past),” Hamilton said during an interview on Tuesday, Nov. 19.

The reason is to sweeten the pot and attract more potential officers. The department currently has 10 unfilled spots and has been losing officers to other departments. By increasing the base salary, the city hopes it will attract more qualified candidates and retain existing officers.

“Hopefully it gives some reasons for these (potential) officers to say this is a great place to make a career,” he said.

John Minook, president of the Montclair Police Officers’ Association, likes the way the city is approaching it.

“It is a step in the right direction,” Minook said on Wednesday. “But we are looking for them to make a commitment to keeping our salaries competitive with other agencies.”

The two raises will cost the city more than \$600,000 for the length of the contract, which runs from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021. The first raise costs \$402,295 and for the second, smaller raise, the cost is \$217,239, Hamilton said.

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Man who threw rocks at cars in Montclair shot by police

The contract — approved by the City Council Monday night without discussion — affects 48 total positions: seven sergeants and 41 officers, of which 10 positions were unfilled as of Tuesday, Hamilton said.

Minook said during the last several years, officers have left for Ontario, Upland, Azusa and the Orange County Sheriff's Department for higher pay and better benefits. This, he says, has hurt department morale.

An officer starting at the lowest step earns about \$68,000 in annual base pay, according to the city's salary schedule of October 15, 2019.

"The raises will definitely help retain some officers but we are not there yet. This can't just be a one-time thing," Minook said.

In addition to bolstering recruitment of new officers, the contract signed with the MPOA includes longevity pay spikes for veteran officers who stick with the department. An officer reaching five, 10, 15, 20 and 25-year marks will receive a 2.5% raise per anniversary, non-retroactive.

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"We have some great officers that work for the city of Montclair, so the longevity pay is one way of keeping them," Hamilton said.

Also, the new contract restructures retiree medical benefits of an employee after 25 years of continuous service. The employee can no longer keep the city-provided health care plan and instead must shop around for an individual plan. In exchange, the city will reimburse the cost of premiums up to \$532.16 per month, documents show.

Environmental firm to further clean up contaminated Old Town site

By **Martin Estacio**
Staff Writer

Posted Nov 20, 2019 at 8:33 PM

VICTORVILLE — An agreement with an environmental firm which will further clean up city-owned land contaminated with toxic chemicals was approved by the City Council on Tuesday.

The firm, Ninyo & Moore Geotechnical and Environmental Services, will continue monitoring affected groundwater at the site of the former NuWay Dry Cleaners on the southeast corner of Eighth and C streets, according to the contract with the City of Victorville.

Ninyo & Moore also plans to treat the groundwater using an oxidation process to rid it of any contaminants. The cost of the anticipated cleanup will be covered by a \$1.45 million grant awarded by the State Water Resources Control Board in 2018.

If all goes according to plan, the termination of the five-year contract will conclude an environmental remediation process that began in 2007 when the city purchased the 7,100-square-foot site and demolished the NuWay building as part of a plan to redevelop Old Town.

At the time, an Environmental Protection Agency assessment of soil found that the parcel contained high levels of chemicals, mostly tetrachloroethylene. The federal agency found concentrations ranging from 405 to nearly 54,000 times the acceptable screening level, according to a previous Daily Press report.

The state banned use of tetrachloroethylene, also known as PCE or PERC, in 2007, requiring dry cleaners to completely stop using the chemical by 2023.

PCE is listed as a likely cancer-causing agent by the EPA. The chemical can also affect the kidney, liver, immune system and cause neurological defects.

Remediation in Old Town began in 2010 with soil excavation of so-called “hot-spots” where the chemical was most present. A soil vapor extraction system, which uses vacuum pressure to remove contaminants, was also installed.

Between September 2010 and July 2011, about 540 pounds of the chemical were removed, city documents show. A system was also installed to prevent vapors from intruding into an adjoining administrative building owned by the Victor Elementary School District.

Ninyo & Moore had been involved in the work “since day one,” City Manager Keith Metzler said Tuesday.

PCE, however, remains in the groundwater.

Tests performed by Ninyo & Moore in 2019 showed the chemical to still be present at three to almost seven times the state’s maximum allowed level for water.

The firm plans to install four to five new monitoring wells at the site to further “delineate the lateral extent of the dissolved groundwater PCE plume,” according to Ninyo & Moore’s 2019 report.

In situ chemical oxidation will also be used starting in 2020. The process involves injecting the soil and groundwater with oxidants that can rid it of PCE or bring it to more acceptable levels.

“This really takes us to the next step,” Metzler said of the contract.

He said it would likely take three to four years to treat and monitor the site until remediation is finished.

Martin Estacio may be reached at MEstacio@VVDailyPress.com or at 760-955-5358.

Follow him on Twitter [@DP_mestacio](https://twitter.com/DP_mestacio).



LOCAL NEWS

Emergency road work will shut down 2 Redlands intersections near rail tracks



By **JENNIFER IYER** | jiyer@scng.com | Redlands Daily Facts

PUBLISHED: November 20, 2019 at 5:06 pm | UPDATED: November 20, 2019 at 5:09 pm



Two Redlands intersections will be closed near the railroad tracks beginning Thursday, Nov. 21, for emergency work due to the rain.

According to the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, Redlands Boulevard intersections with Colton Avenue and Tennessee Street will be closed through Nov. 27. The Colton Avenue intersection will be closed from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, and the Tennessee Street intersection will be closed from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. nightly.

A closure planned for Eureka Street at the tracks has been postponed to Dec. 2 through 13.

The agency asks drivers to be alert for crews working on local streets and to allow extra time to reach their destinations.

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[Redlands rail work will close these streets beginning Nov. 18](#)

Area businesses are open during the work.

The construction is part of the \$359.7 million Redlands Passenger Rail Project slated to bring trains from San Bernardino to Redlands by 2022.

Last week the agency ordered its first zero-emission train for the line, the first of its kind operating in the United States.

Information: gosbcta.com/project/redlands-passenger-rail-project-arrow

Construction begins for rail connecting Redlands to San Bernardino

Mountain View Avenue near Redlands closing for a year north of the 10 Freeway

Old rail tracks in Redlands will soon be gone, and no, you can't have the ties

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Colton officers escape injury after suspect...



NEWS CRIME + PUBLIC SAFETY

Colton officers escape injury after suspect shoots at them, police say





San Bernardino County sheriff's bloodhound Dare sits next to the assault rifle she tracked down after police said a man used it to shoot at Colton officers on Nov. 19, 2019. No one was reported injured. Luis Godinez, 35, was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder. (Courtesy of San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department)

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

PUBLISHED: November 20, 2019 at 3:29 pm | UPDATED: November 20, 2019 at 4:51 pm



A man fired on Colton police officers as they investigated a report of a domestic disturbance Tuesday, Nov. 19, and was arrested after trying to flee, police said. No one was reported injured.

Officers went to the 1300 block of North Mt. Vernon Avenue just before 5:30 p.m. As they tried to make contact with people at the residence, Luis Godinez, 35, fired y

from inside, a news release said. No officers were hit.

Godinez left the residence, prompting a search of the area. He was arrested at 7:40 p.m. on Olive Place without a struggle, according to police and jail records. Police initially were unable to find the assault rifle they believe Godinez used, but San Bernardino County sheriff's Deputy Ryan Girard and bloodhound Dare, using a scent from Godinez, tracked down the weapon.

Godinez, also known as Luis Miguel Oliva, was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and inflicting corporal injury on a spouse or co-habitant. Jail records show there was a warrant out for his arrest that accuse Godinez of violating Post Release Community Supervision in Los Angeles County. He was being held in lieu of \$1 million bail at West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga.

TOP ARTICLES 1/5

Wanted Hesperia man arrested after high-speed pursuit

By **Martin Estacio**
Staff Writer

Posted Nov 20, 2019 at 2:26 PM

Updated Nov 20, 2019 at 2:30 PM

A high-speed pursuit of a man wanted for assault on a peace officer ended in his arrest Tuesday night.

Travis Brown, 29, was taken into custody after leading Sheriff's deputies on a car chase that wove through Apple Valley and Hesperia.

The pursuit began at about 5:30 p.m. in the area of Apple Valley Road and Bear Valley Road, after a gang enforcement deputy attempted to make a traffic stop on Brown, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

Instead, Brown fled and "continued through city streets with no regard for public safety," the Sheriff's statement read.

Scanner traffic indicated three Sheriff's vehicles were chasing Brown southbound on Navajo Road at speeds approaching 100 mph.

In the area of Rock Springs Road and Glendale Avenue, Brown drove his vehicle off the roadway and into the desert. Deputies arrested him after he got out of the vehicle and "attempted to hide in nearby brush," officials said.

Deputies also found two loaded handguns in Brown's vehicle that were reported as stolen.

Brown was wanted after he had managed to elude deputies earlier this month in another pursuit.

On Nov. 5, he allegedly rammed a patrol vehicle in a hotel parking lot in Hesperia with his car, prompting a deputy-involved shooting.

He later escaped on foot after crashing in the desert a short distance away. After that pursuit, deputies also found a loaded handgun and silencer inside his vehicle.

Inmate records show Brown faces charges of reckless evading, assault with a deadly weapon on a peace officer, felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition, and grand theft.

He is being held at the High Desert Detention Center in lieu of \$100,000 bail. A court hearing is scheduled for Thursday at the Victorville Superior Courthouse.

The investigation is ongoing, and anyone with information is asked to contact Deputy S. Thurman at 909-387-8400.

Persons wishing to remain anonymous may contact the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463 or online at www.WeTip.com.

Martin Estacio may be reached at MEstacio@VVDailyPress.com or at 760-955-5358.

Follow him on Twitter [@DP_mestacio](https://twitter.com/DP_mestacio).

NEWS > CRIME + PUBLIC SAFETY

Deputies kill armed suspect after barricade at a Morongo home



Deputies kill armed suspect after barricade at a Morongo home

By **JONAH VALDEZ** | jvaldez@scng.com | San Gabriel Valley

Tribune

PUBLISHED: November 20, 2019 at 9:52 pm | UPDATED: November 21, 2019 at 12:18 am

Deputies fatally shot a man armed with a gun at the end of a barricade situation at a Morongo home on Tuesday morning, authorities said Wednesday.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said the suspect had pointed a gun at deputies, prompting them to fire on the man, fatally wounding him. Authorities identified the man as Jacob Cato, 34, of Morongo.

The Nov. 19 incident began at 8:16 a.m. when a resident of the rural desert community had reported hearing shots fired from a neighbor's home, directed at his home in the 53500 block of Cactus Flower Road, the Sheriff's Department said in a news release. Deputies arrived to hearing shots fired in the next door neighbor's yard.

The man suspected of firing the shots walked to the front of the home, authorities said. After deputies tried speaking to the man, he ran into the house, where he holed up for several hours.

About 1:30 p.m., Cato walked out of the house and pointed a gun a deputies, authorities said. Deputies took aim and fired on Cato, who was later pronounced dead at the home.

The Sheriff's Department statement did not say whether a weapon was recovered at the scene.

Investigators were not immediately available for comment.

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NEWS CRIME + PUBLIC SAFETY

Motorcyclist killed in collision with big rig in San Bernardino



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

PUBLISHED: November 20, 2019 at 8:35 pm | UPDATED: November 20, 2019 at 10:44 pm



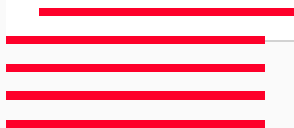
A 38-year-old San Bernardino resident was killed Nov. 14 when his motorcycle crashed into the back of a tractor-trailer in that city, San Bernardino police said in a Nov. 18 news release.

The San Bernardino County Coroner's Office identified the motorcyclist as Francisco Javier Gardea Jr.

Police said the collision happened about 10:30 p.m. The big rig was traveling west across Tippecanoe Avenue at Central Avenue, followed by Gardea on his motorcycle. As the truck continued west on Central, the motorcycle struck the truck's rear. Gardea was pronounced dead at the scene.

"At this point in the investigation, it appears speed was a factor in this collision," police said in a statement. "It is unknown at this time whether drugs or alcohol were factors."

TOP ARTICLES **1/5**



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Police ask anyone with information on the collision to call Detective Dan Acosta or Sgt. Jeff Harvey at 909-384-5792.

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NEWS CRIME + PUBLIC SAFETY

Man in wheelchair dies in collision with vehicle in San Bernardino



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

PUBLISHED: November 20, 2019 at 3:20 pm | UPDATED: November 20, 2019 at 3:21 pm



A 75-year-old man crossing a San Bernardino street in a motorized wheelchair was struck and killed Tuesday, Nov. 19, the San Bernardino Police Department said.

The man, whose name was not publicly announced, was crossing Tippecanoe Avenue in a crosswalk — against a red light — just after 4 a.m. as a 37-year-old Rialto man driving a Toyota Echo was approaching the intersection with Hospitality Lane, a news release said. The driver entered the intersection on a green signal and collided with the pedestrian.

The pedestrian died at a hospital. Neither speed nor impairment are not believed to have contributed to the collision, the release said.

“Assistant Chief David Green cited this incident as a reminder of the need for pedestrians to be extra vigilant when entering the roadway. Particularly at this time of year when there are fewer hours of daylight,” the release said.

Police ask anyone with information about the collision to call Detective Dan Acosta or Sgt. Jeff Harvey [S](#) and 909-384-5792.

This was the second fatal collision this week involving a person in a motorized wheelchair. On [Y](#) Sunday, Greg Alan Rose, 68, of Highland, died when hit by a vehicle as he crossed Victoria Avenue in [B](#) Highland. The circumstances surrounding the collision have not been announced.

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NEWS CRIME + PUBLIC SAFETY

23 arrested in Riverside County gang unit sweep with focus on weapons, drugs and wanted felons



By **CITY NEWS SERVICE** | news@socalnews.com |

PUBLISHED: November 20, 2019 at 5:38 pm | UPDATED: November 20, 2019 at 5:40 pm



BEAUMONT — Nearly two dozen suspected criminal offenders were arrested Wednesday in a Riverside County sweep involving local, state and federal law enforcement personnel, who served warrants and conducted parole and compliance checks at numerous locations.

“Operation Pass Resolve” was led by the county’s Gang Impact Team and was the culmination of a 15-month effort to remove potential threats to public safety in Banning, Beaumont, Hemet, Menifee and portions of the Coachella Valley, according to the District Attorney’s Office.

“The primary focus of Operation Pass Resolve has been to reduce crime and violence while targeting

organized crime, wanted felons and those trafficking weapons and drugs,” according to an agency statement.

The D.A.’s office noted that a few places in San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties were targeted, as well.

Twenty-three individuals were taken into custody today, and six more were being actively sought, officials said.

The operation netted an arrest in Hemet, where the suspect, whose identity was not disclosed, was wanted on a felony warrant involving second- degree murder and gross vehicular manslaughter charges stemming from a 2018 collision in which a motorcyclist was killed in Menifee, according to the D.A.’s office.

Since its inception last year, Operation Pass Resolve has led to a total 126 arrests and the seizure of 197 firearms, 71 pounds of methamphetamine, 55 pounds of cocaine, three pounds of heroin and 1,100 fentanyl pills, officials said.

Preceding Pass Resolve was Operation Valley Vigilance II in the Hemet and San Jacinto valleys.

The Gang Impact Team consists of D.A.’s personnel, U.S. Border Patrol agents, California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation officers, as well as officers from multiple municipal police agencies countywide.

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BUSINESS

Inland Empire's first Latino economic summit set for Friday

Inaugural event is hosted by the Inland Empire Economic Partnership





Speakers at the Inland Empire Latino Economic & Policy Summit include Dennis Arriola, executive vice president and group president of Sempra Energy. Other speakers hail from Bank of America, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and the United Ways of California. (ED CRISOSTOMO, FILE PHOTO, SCNG)

By **JACK KATZANEK** | jkatzanek@scng.com |

PUBLISHED: November 20, 2019 at 12:06 pm | UPDATED: November 20, 2019 at 12:07 pm



The state of the Inland Empire's economy and how it affects the region's growing Latino population will be the focus of a Friday, Nov. 22 summit hosted by the Inland Empire Economic Partnership.

The Inland Empire Latino Economic & Policy Summit will run from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Ontario Convention Center. The inaugural event is themed "A vision of Inclusion and Economic Vitality."

Topics include the state of the region's middle class, Latinos' access to colleges, and the real cost for people to get by in the region.

An estimated 2.3 million, more than half of the Inland Empire's population, have Latino roots.

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Speakers include Peter Villegas, vice president in charge of Latino affairs for Coca Cola Co., and Dennis Arriola, executive vice president and group president of Sempra Energy. Other speakers hail from Bank of America, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and the United Ways of California.

To register in advance, go to ieleps.eventbrite.com. Walk-up registrations will also be accepted.

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LOCAL NEWS

Rain, snow as storm moves across Riverside, San Bernardino counties





A man shovels snow in an attempt to free his car after it got stuck at Jensen's grocery store parking lot during the snow storm in Running Springs on Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2019. (Photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **CITY NEWS SERVICE** | news@socalnews.com |

PUBLISHED: November 21, 2019 at 7:29 am | UPDATED: November 21, 2019 at 7:30 am



RIVERSIDE — Scattered rain showers are expected and light snowfall is possible Thursday in Riverside County before the first rain event of the fall season comes to an end by this evening, according to the National Weather Service.

A cold, low-pressure system currently centered over San Bernardino County will weaken Thursday and continue moving east, but the system is expected to produce scattered rain showers and roughly an inch of snow in the mountains, primarily in San Bernardino County, NWS meteorologist Miguel Miller said.

A winter weather advisory will be in effect until 7 p.m. Thursday in the San Bernardino County mountains and the Riverside County mountains.

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Snow levels were around 5,000 feet early Thursday morning, but the levels will rise to about 6,000 feet by Thursday afternoon, Miller said.

The NWS advised motorists traveling in those mountainous areas to be prepared for reduced visibility and use caution while driving.

As of 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, 5 inches of snow had fallen at Big Bear Resort, Green Valley had 4.5 inches, Wrightwood had 4, Lake Arrowhead and Big Bear City had 3, Running Springs had 2 to 3 inches and Crestline had 1.5.

Mount San Jacinto in Riverside County had no reported snowfall as of late Wednesday night.

Scattered rain showers will continue Thursday, with most of the rainfall activity expected in the Riverside County mountains and the Riverside metropolitan area, forecasters said. Those two areas have a 50% chance of precipitation while the Coachella Valley and the San Gorgonio Pass near Banning have a 20% chance.

Less than one-tenth of an inch of rain is expected in the Coachella Valley, the Riverside metropolitan area and the San Gorgonio Pass near Banning today, while the mountains could get about one-tenth of an inch of rain, according to the NWS.

As of 3 a.m. today, Vista Grande, at 1.63 inches, had received the most rain over the past two days, while other rainfall totals included 1.33 inches in Poppet Flats, 1.3 in Angeles Hill, 1.26 in Live Oak Canyon, 1.22 in the Indio Hills, 1.14 in Pinyon Pines and Tick Ridge, 1 in Cabazon, 0.98 in Cranston, 0.9 in Beaumont, 0.87 in Temecula, 0.86 in Potrero Canyon, 0.31 in Hemet and 0.29 near the Riverside March Air Force Base.

In the Coachella Valley, top rainfall totals were 0.71 near the Kent Sea, 0.55 near Whitewater Trout Farm and in Thermal, 0.44 at Agave Hill, 0.4 at the Thermal Airport, 0.28 in Indio, 0.23 at the Wide Canyon Dam, 0.20 in Palm Desert, 0.18 in Cathedral Canyon, 0.15 in Thousand Palms, and 0.1 at the Palm Springs Airport.

Dry weather is expected by this evening and temperatures will begin warming through Sunday, forecasters said.

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By Graduatez



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Snow blankets Mountain High

By Joseyn Villalobos For the Daily Press

Posted Nov 20, 2019 at 7:12 PM

WRIGHTWOOD — With a fresh blanket of snow at the summit, Mountain High Resort is gearing up to offer another season filled with fun activities.

Visitors can expect live music and tons of giveaways as the ski resort officially opens for the season at 7 a.m. on Friday.

Opening day will begin at the bottom of Blue Ridge Express with free coffee and doughnuts before leading into the opening countdown. After the banner breakthrough, guests can head to the Foggy Goggle Stage for live music, raffles and a photo.

Mother Nature's timing couldn't be better for the resort. Mountain High's website is reporting 6 to 8 inches of new snow on Wednesday. Vice President of Sales and Marketing John McColly also anticipates additional snowfall from "two big storms" that typically hit Wrightwood in November and December.

"We just need cold temperatures. It generally is warm this time of year, but when it does change, it changes pretty quick," McColly said.

Among the events scheduled for the 2019-2020 season, College Nights are set to begin on Jan. 10. Those who show their college ID can ski every Friday from 5 to 10 p.m. for \$30. The Bullwheel Grill is open until 7 p.m. Skiers and snowboarders can also catch a game of super-sized Jenga at Foggy Goggle.

Providing a medley of rock tunes, Pasadena-based band Soul Fuzz will be performing at the Foggy Goggle from noon to 4 p.m. on Jan. 18 and Feb. 15.

McColly recommended visitors check out the scenic ride chair that travels 820 feet high to the Grand View Lodge for lunch.

“You can see Catalina Island one way and the Mojave Desert in another direction,” he said.

According to McColly, Mountain High is the only resort in Southern California that offers Sno-Gos, which are all-mountain snow bikes. McColly said the Sno-Gos are a great third option for those who do not snowboard or ski.

Some 300,000 people visited Mountain High Resort during the 2018-2019 season that ended in April.

The resort, which markets itself as being conveniently located, attracts a wide variety of visitors, McColly said.

“The ages are evenly distributed,” he said, ranging mostly from 18 to 50.

Opening day tickets are \$49 online, \$69 the day-of the event. Ages 12 years and younger are free with a paying adult.

For tickets and more information, visit www.mthigh.com.



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POLITICS

County supervisors again support Trump's lawsuit against California's sanctuary laws



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A divided San Diego County Board of Supervisors, pictured here at a swearing-in ceremony in January, voted Wednesday to file an amicus brief in support of the Trump administration's lawsuit against California's sanctuary laws. (Sam Hodgson/San Diego Union-Tribune)

Divided board, by a 3-2 vote, backs Trump's appeal which has yet to reach the U.S. Supreme Court

By CHARLES T. CLARK

NOV. 20, 2019
3:57 PM

A divided San Diego County Board of Supervisors Wednesday voted 3-2 in a closed session to again support the Trump administration's lawsuit against California over the state's so-called sanctuary laws, which limit local law enforcement's role in immigration enforcement.

The county will join an amicus brief to support President Donald Trump's lawsuit ahead of it being submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court. A federal appeals court rejected the bulk of the administration's lawsuit in April.

This is the second time San Diego County has sided with the president instead of with the state on sanctuary laws. The county supervisors voted to support a similar lawsuit that [failed in 2018](#).

The board, which has since seated two new members, at that time voted 3-1 in favor of the original lawsuit. Former Supervisor Bill Horn and current Supervisors Kristin Gaspar and Dianne Jacob supported the lawsuit and Supervisor Greg Cox, who is still on the board, was the lone No vote last year.

Jacob and Gaspar again backed the Trump administration's lawsuit Wednesday and were joined by Supervisor Jim Desmond. Cox and Supervisor Nathan Fletcher voted against the measure.

"We are simply attempting to bring closure to the litigation by asking the Supreme Court to consider the matter," Jacob said in an email.

Gaspar did not immediately respond to a request for comment and neither did Cox.

Desmond said the board's action protects law enforcement's ability to keep neighborhoods safe.



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By Players Coalition

"I stand firmly in opposing SB 54," he said in an email. "Law enforcement needs to be able to work collaboratively."

Fletcher, meanwhile, decried the board's action.

"The original 2018 lawsuit the county joined failed in its initial effort, and continuing to support the Trump administration is morally wrong and a waste of valuable county resources," he said. "We should not double down on supporting Donald Trump's failed policies. I believe immigrants make our country stronger, and I will continue to stand with them." By continuing to use our site, you agree to our [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). You can learn more about how we use cookies by reviewing our [Privacy Policy](#). [Close](#)

The board's decision was also rebuked by many community advocates, including some who appeared before the board Tuesday for a [TRUTH Act](#) community forum focused on how the county Sheriff's Department works with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

At that forum, which supervisors are obligated by state law to hold at least once a year, more than 40 residents voiced concerns about the Sheriff's Department's cooperation with ICE. Several questioned if the sheriff and county supervisors are committed to following the spirit of the TRUTH Act, SB 54 and other immigration rights laws.

Sheriff Bill Gore said Tuesday the department is trying to walk a fine line, to balance concerns at both ends of the political spectrum when it comes to the immigration issue. He added, it's less safe for everyone if undocumented immigrants don't believe they can talk to the police.

Lilian Serrano, chair of the San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium, said she wasn't surprised about the outcome of the vote but was disappointed, saying the decision was reckless.

"What is very concerning for us is they decided to do this a day after having many community members from all across the county come and express the importance of creating trust between the immigrant community and our Sheriff's Department and county officials overall," said Serrano.

"It's not safe when we have this feeling that public servants are here to serve selective community members. Selective public safety doesn't make San Diego safe."

A January 2017 [study](#) by UC San Diego professor Tom Wong, published by the Center for American Progress, found that crime rates nationwide are higher in non-sanctuary counties.

The three county supervisors who supported the lawsuit declined Wednesday to comment on community members' questions about their commitment to immigration rights laws.

The Trump administration's lawsuit takes aim at three California laws:

SB 54, which garnered the most publicity when it passed, sets stricter guidelines on when local law enforcement officers can turn immigrants over to federal immigration enforcement agencies, making exceptions for about 800 crimes. The law also says local police cannot participate in immigration enforcement task forces.

AB 103 prohibits local governments from adding new immigration detention contracts or expanding old ones with the federal government. It also requires the California Attorney General's Office to monitor conditions at immigration detention facilities in the state.

AB 450 prohibits employers from voluntarily letting immigration officials into non-public areas of the workplace unless the officers have judicial warrants. It also requires employers to notify employees about upcoming immigration inspections.

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POLITICS

County to use automated license plate readers to document poor air quality in some San Diego neighborhoods



The Barrio Logan neighborhood, part of which is pictured here in 2016, is one of several San Diego neighborhoods where automated license plate readers will be used to document vehicle emissions. (John Gastaldo/Union-Tribune)

Data gathered will help Air Pollution Control District determine how to use \$18 million in state funds to address air quality in Portside communities

By CHARLES T. CLARK, LAURYN SCHROEDER

NOV. 20, 2019
4:03 PM

Automated license plate readers are coming to some San Diego neighborhoods.

On Wednesday county supervisors unanimously approved a proposal from the local air pollution control district to use the readers at 12 intersections to collect data on vehicles traveling through some of San Diego's most environmentally disadvantaged neighborhoods.

That data, which will document the amount of air pollution emitted by motor vehicles, will be used to develop solutions to improve air quality throughout the Portside Community.

The Portside Community — which includes Barrio Logan, Logan Heights, Sherman Heights and western National City — is one of 10 communities in the state identified as environmentally disadvantaged. The state has committed at least \$18.4 million to the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District to address air pollution in those areas.

The program requires the city produce a community-level emission inventory detailing the amount of air pollution in the area.

"By having a better understanding of localized air pollution we can achieve greater emissions reductions for the residents living and working in our disadvantaged communities," said John Adams, assistant director of the county's Air Pollution Control District.

The decision comes a few months after supervisors elected to hold off on adopting the license plate reader program, despite community support, and instead asked the air pollution control district to provide more options for documenting air quality. Supervisors expressed concerns that the program could violate residents' privacy.

On Wednesday the district presented three options, including the automated license plate readers.

One method, which district staff said was the least accurate, would have used existing regional monitoring data and by-hand traffic counts to gather estimates for the inventory.

Another method would have relied on software that still took images of vehicles but didn't use license plate numbers. However, that software could misidentify vehicles and would not provide information on the engine or fuel type of vehicles, district staff said.

Supervisors opted to forgo those alternatives and go with the automated license plate readers, which had support from district staff and community members at the Board meeting and other outreach events.

Supervisors Kristin Gaspar and Dianne Jacob, both of whom were reluctant about license plate readers at a prior meeting, said they changed their minds because staff have revised the proposed license reader policy to better address privacy concerns.

Air pollution control district staff said the readers' software would document license plate numbers and a time stamp, but no other information. The district would use that to gather data from the Department of Motor Vehicles on the make, model, year, gross weight and fuel type of the vehicles.

At no point would district staff pull names or addresses of registered vehicle owners, they said.

The district also will not share any data with the DMV or other entities, staff members said, and photos and license plate numbers will be deleted within 21 days of the start of the analysis.

"I believe we have the best intentions with this program but having these details now spelled out in black and white will prevent future program creep that I was concerned about last time," Gaspar said. "The additional security measures and specific procedures regarding the data will provide an additional level of protection for this important information."

The census tracts in Barrio Logan, Sherman Heights and Logan Heights have some of the highest concentrations of diesel emissions in San Diego County, according to state data.

Exhaust from trucks, buses, trains, ships, and other equipment with diesel engines contains a mixture of gases and solid particles, known as diesel particulate matter, or diesel PM. This matter contains hundreds of different chemicals, many of which are harmful to public health.

According to data from the California Environmental Protection Agency, 110.8 kilograms of diesel PM were released per day in the areas of Barrio Logan and Logan Heights, between Imperial Avenue and the San Diego Bay. The four census tracts had the highest diesel emissions in the county for road and non-road diesel sources in 2012, the most recent year available, and the amount places them in the 99th percentile statewide.

In a census tract just north of that area, between Market and A Streets in Stockton, 69.9 kilograms of diesel PM are released per day, ranking 16th in the county.

Data show 11 of the 12 census tracts set for automated license plate reader systems fall in the 90th percentile or above for having some of the highest quantities of diesel pollution in the state.

According to the California EPA, diesel particles contain known carcinogens such as benzene and formaldehyde. As particles decrease in size, they become more dangerous since, researchers believe, they are more likely to penetrate deeper into the lung, carry toxic compounds and be more biologically reactive than larger particles.

Studies show short-term exposure to outdoor air pollution following a heart attack can increase the risk of death, and long-term exposure to air pollution may also result in premature death for people with a previous heart attack.

Emergency department visits for heart attacks are currently the best available way of describing differences in cardiovascular disease across the state at the census tract scale.

In an area of National City (where the license plate readers might be placed), the rate of heart attacks from 2011 to 2013 was about 10.3 per 10,000 people, the highest rate in the county. The census tract has a population of 3,200 people.

Areas of Barrio Logan and Logan Heights with high diesel pollution are not far behind, with a heart attack rate of 9.6 per 10,000 people.

Pollution and health data come from CalEnviroScreen 3.0, which incorporates diesel emissions, as well as ozone concentrations, groundwater quality, hazardous waste and pesticide levels into one interactive tool.

In 2012, then-Gov. Jerry Brown passed legislation requiring 25 percent of all cap-and-trade auction proceeds to go to projects located in communities most vulnerable to pollution and its effects.

CalEnviroScreen was created to help identify these communities and prioritize grant funding.

State data show all 12 of the census tracts are considered “disadvantaged communities” and can be targeted for investment of proceeds from the state’s cap-and-trade program.

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How the Collapse of Local News Is Causing a 'National Crisis'

The loss of local news coverage in much of the United States has frayed communities and left many Americans woefully uninformed, according to a new report.



By Julie Bosman

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School board and city council meetings are going uncovered. Overstretched reporters receive promising tips about stories but have no time to follow up. Newspapers publish fewer pages or less frequently or, in hundreds of cases across the country, are shuttered completely.

All of this has added up to a crisis in local news coverage in the United States that has frayed communities and left many Americans woefully uninformed, according to a report by PEN America released on Wednesday.

"A vibrant, responsive democracy requires enlightened citizens, and without forceful local reporting they are kept in the dark," the report said. "At a time when political polarization is increasing and fraudulent news is spreading, a shared fact-based discourse on the issues that most directly affect us is more essential and more elusive than ever."

The report, "Losing the News: The Decimation of Local Journalism and the Search for Solutions," paints a grim picture of the state of local news in every region of the country. The prelude is familiar to journalists: As print advertising revenue has plummeted, thousands of newspapers have been forced to cut costs, reduce their staffs or otherwise close.

And while the disruption has hampered the ability of newsrooms to fully cover communities, it also has damaged political and civic life in the United States, the report says, leaving many people without access to crucial information about where they live.

"That first draft of history is not being written — it has completely disappeared," said Suzanne Nossel, the chief executive of PEN America, a nonprofit organization that celebrates literature and free expression. "That's what is so chilling about this crisis."

The authors of the report spoke to dozens of journalists, elected officials and activists, who described how cutbacks in local newsrooms have left communities in the dark and have failed to keep public and corporate officials accountable.

In 2017, when work on the PEN project began, researchers planned to call it "News Deserts," examining pockets of the country where local news was scarce. But the more research the group did, the more it realized that the original scope was inadequate: Since 2004, more than 1,800 local print outlets have shuttered in the United States, and at least 200 counties have no newspaper at all.

"This was a national crisis," Ms. Nossel said. "This was not about a few isolated areas that were drying up."

Many Americans are completely unaware that local news is suffering. According to a Pew survey this year, 71 percent of Americans believe that their local news outlets are doing well financially. But, according to that report, only 14 percent say they have paid for or donated money to a local news source in the past year.

"They don't realize that their local news outlet is under threat," said Viktorya Vilks, manager of special projects for PEN, who was one of the report's authors.

The decline of local news outlets threatens the reporting on public health crises in places like Flint, Mich., where residents voiced concern about the quality of their water to The Flint Journal long before the national media reported on the issue.

In Denver, a diminished local news presence — after the closure of The Rocky Mountain News and the shrunken Denver Post — has contributed to civic disengagement, one case study in the report says. Kevin Flynn, a former journalist turned City Council member, lamented the large number of people who seemed to be unaware of local elections, and the relative handful of reporters covering a quickly growing city. "It feels like we could all be getting away with murder right now," Mr. Flynn said of public officials.

In some communities, a dearth of local news was associated with a population that was less aware of politics.

"Voting and consuming news — those things go hand in hand," said Tom Huang, assistant managing editor of The Dallas Morning News.

One case study in the report shared the experience of Greg Barnes, who took a buyout in 2018 after three decades at The Fayetteville Observer in North Carolina.

Toward the end of his time at the paper, the report said, “his job had essentially been filling holes for the rapidly diminishing staff instead of doing the sprawling investigations that had been his trademark.”

The report offers several solutions: It cites newer, digitally focused outlets like Chalkbeat, an online organization that focuses on education; Outlier, based in Detroit; and Block Club Chicago as examples of small but vibrant news sources that have stepped into the void.

But a more comprehensive solution is required, the report suggests, including private donations and expansions of public funding.

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U.S.

Why Some Unions Are Losing Members

Year after Supreme Court ruling that loosened union rules, some report drops in revenue, members



A June 27, 2018, protest in New York against the Supreme Court ruling that banned union contracts that require government workers to pay membership fees. PHOTO: DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

By *Kris Maher*

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Some public-workers unions are experiencing steep losses of members and fees, dips largely triggered by a 2018 Supreme Court ruling that gave members an out.

The Washington Federation of State Employees lost fees from nearly 7,000 nonmembers after the ruling. Nearly 5,000 workers resigned their membership and stopped paying dues in the year that ended June 30, compared with the prior year, according to filings with the Labor Department.

The losses represent a 27.4% drop in workers contributing either fees or dues to the union, which took in \$3.2 million less than the prior year.

The Ohio Association of Public School Employees lost 1,700 fee payers and 448 workers resigned their union membership since the court's decision. Even after signing up new members, it reported 1,662 fewer dues and fee payers through August of this year, a drop of about 5%, compared with two years earlier.

The union took in \$350,000 less in dues and fees in its most recent fiscal year, a decline of about 2.4%. "We're all adjusting. There's no question that we are dealing with a smaller revenue base," said Joe Rugola, executive director of the union.

The court, in its Janus decision in June 2018, banned provisions in union contracts requiring government workers in union-represented workplaces to either join the union or pay agency fees. Unions stopped collecting those fees from several hundred thousand public employees.

The ruling effectively instituted right-to-work rules for public-sector workers in nearly two dozen states that don't have such laws, which allow workers to opt out of paying union dues or fees. Some workers have also resigned their union membership, further cutting into union coffers.

The unionization rate among government workers remains high nationally, but has declined slightly in recent years. For instance, the rate for government workers fell from 34.4% in 2017 to 33.9% in 2018, according to the Labor Department. (The unionization rate of private-sector workers, by contrast, is 6.4%.)

Renewed organizing efforts and some victories for the teachers unions after strikes in several states has blunted the effect of the Janus ruling for some unions, said Robert Bruno, a professor of labor and employment relations at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Mike Yestramski, president of the Washington Federation of State Employees, said the union anticipated the loss of agency fee payers and hasn't had to make cuts. Instead, the union has trained more shop stewards to enforce contracts and try to organize more workers.

"The overwhelming majority of state employees continue to see the value of the union and want to be involved," said Mr. Yestramski, who works as a psychiatric social worker at a hospital in Lakewood, Wash.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Are you, or someone you know, a union member? What has been your experience? How have things changed this year? Join the conversation below.

While many public-sector unions are adding new dues-paying members, the pace typically isn't enough to offset lost revenue from workers who paid agency fees. Fees paid by public employees typically amount to less than full union member dues, but in some cases fees are as much as dues paid by full union members.

The American Federation of Teachers recently reported that it added 6,800 new members but lost 83,000 fee payers in the year ended in June, compared with the prior year. The union, which has 1.7 million members, received \$18 million less in dues, a 9% decline, compared with the prior year.

The Oregon School Employees Association reported a loss of fees and dues from 5,523 workers, a drop of 26.6%, for the year ended May 31, according to Labor Department filings.

The Oregon union, which represents 23,000 bus drivers, cafeteria workers and other support staff, closed three field offices and received a grant of \$400,000 from its parent union, the American Federation of Teachers. A union official didn't respond to requests for comment.

Jennifer Corfee said she resigned from her Afscome local union, which represents city workers in Bellingham, Wash., earlier this month, because she doesn't agree with how the union has spent her dues. An accountant, she calculated that her \$50 in monthly dues will net her at least \$10,000 over the next 18 years.

"Long story short, my reason for pulling out is to take my \$50 a month and put it in my retirement," she said. "It's pretty significant."

Mr. Bruno, the University of Illinois professor, recently found that in Illinois the unionization rate among public-sector unions fell 4.5 percentage points, or about 35,000 workers, in the six months after the Janus ruling. "It's not an earth-shattering number," he said. "On the other hand, organized labor can't be indifferent to any amount of loss."

Conservative groups have run campaigns aimed at persuading government employees to opt out of paying dues.

The conservative Freedom Foundation, based in Olympia, Wash., has focused efforts in Washington, Oregon and California, sending emails, mailings and texts to government workers

to let them know that the Janus ruling means they don't have to pay dues.

Billboards the group paid for in Oregon told public employees they could “save thousands by opting out of union dues!”

The group, which also provides legal counsel to workers, says it has helped 20,000 public employees resign their union membership in California since the Janus ruling. It opened an office in Ohio earlier this month.

“Our experience with public employees shows that a great many are dissatisfied with their union representation, or how unions spend their money,” said Maxford Nelsen, director of labor policy at the Freedom Foundation.

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