

## Behavioral Health Center evacuated after man allegedly sets fire Tuesday

By **Paola Baker**  
Staff Writer

Posted Oct 10, 2017 at 2:41 PM

Updated Oct 10, 2017 at 4:53 PM

VICTORVILLE — A man was injured after allegedly setting a fire at a behavioral health center here early Tuesday.

Reported just before 10 a.m. Tuesday, the fire erupted at a building in the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Victor Valley Behavioral Health Center, located at 12625 Hesperia Road. The center was evacuated due to the blaze, officials said.

According to scanner traffic, the person was a patient at the center who set a restroom on fire. Victorville Sheriff's Station spokeswoman Mara Rodriguez identified him as Sean Eugene Flores, 25, of Victorville.

Rodriguez said Flores set the fire after he was "reportedly unhappy with the result of his visit" to the center.

"Flores entered a restroom at the facility and lit himself and a paper dispenser on fire, as well as purposely damaging the smoke sensor," Rodriguez said.

San Bernardino County Fire Department spokesman Eric Sherwin said firefighters were dispatched to the center at 9:55 a.m. after receiving reports of a commercial structure fire there.

Firefighters arrived and found smoke and fire in one room, which they were able to quickly contain, Sherwin said.

Flores was reportedly injured and was taken to a local hospital for treatment. Rodriguez said he was then arrested on suspicion of arson.

County Fire personnel directed the center's staff to evacuate the building due to the blaze. DBH spokeswoman Aimara Freeman said all clients in the building were moved to the center's clubhouse building, located next door.

"Staff is still there but they are calling clients right now to reschedule appointments," Freeman said. "There are no clients at the building right now." She said business should resume as usual Wednesday.

Flores remained in custody at the High Desert Detention Center in lieu of \$250,000 bail, booking records show, and was expected to appear in court Thursday.

# The ALPENHORN News

Bringing Our Mountain Communities Together Since 1985

► NEWS ► LOCAL ► CALENDAR ► LIFESTYLE ► FEATURES ► OPINION ► BUSINESS DIRECTORY ► NOTICES ► CONTACT ► facebook

## Crestline residents alarmed over closed-door meetings



Crestline residents alarmed over closed-door meetings

Sunday, Oct 08, 2017

By Gail Fry

The fact both the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and the Rim of the World Recreation and Park District recently held closed sessions to discuss "Price, Terms of Payment" over property at the Lake Gregory Regional Park, alarmed numerous Crestline residents to the point where they took their concerns to the Crestline Village Water District at its September 12 regular meeting.

According to documents obtained by *The Alpenhorn News*, the number of Crestline residents expressing concern about the "lack of information and transparency" with negotiations between the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and the Rim of the World Recreation and Park District (ROWRPD) eventually led the Crestline Village Water District (CVWD) to send a letter on September 20 to BOS and ROWRPD requesting "any available information regarding the negotiations, any proposed changes that may occur in the management of the lake facilities."

Additionally, CVWD voiced, "We would like to explore with each of you the possibility for Crestline Village Water District to exercise local control over Lake Gregory" explaining "we have a direct interest in any ongoing negotiations regarding the possible transfer of Lake Gregory Regional Park to Rim of the World Recreation and Park District."

"We have latent powers to provide recreational services in our service area, and we have an historic stake in Lake Gregory water rights issues," the September 20 letter from CVWD President Connie Bracher explains.

The closed session items on both the BOS' August 22 and on ROWRPD's August 28 agendas, for their regular meetings, indicated ROWRPD General Manager Karen Reams as the negotiating party discussing "price, terms of payment" regarding property located at 24171 Lake Avenue and 24640 San Moritz Avenue, Crestline, Ca.

Historically, San Bernardino County, owner of Lake Gregory Regional Park, leased a portion of Lake Gregory Regional Park known as the Lake Gregory Ball Field to ROWRPD through a long-term lease and the community enjoyed using the ball field for little league and various events.

That all changed on December 31, 2013, when after running an operating deficit, San Bernardino County decided to lease the entire park to a concessionaire to improve its financial sustainability.

Since then, Crestline residents expressed frustration with the lack of park facilities in their community despite paying an annual assessment to ROWRPD for park services.

### Useful Links

- Social Security
- Board of Supervisors
- 2nd District Janice Rutherford
- 3rd District James Ramos
- Animal Care & Control
- Code Enforcement
- Assessor
- Auditor / Controller-Recorder
- Registrar of Voters
- County Parks
- Treasurer-Tax Collector
- Public Works
- Superior Court

### This Week's Highlights

#### Front Page

- Crestline residents alarmed over closed-door meetings
- Weekend Trolley extends service
- Rotary builds handicapped-accessible deck
- School district claims it didn't violate The Brown Act
- Park district playing ball with the county over park in Crestline
- Mountain area nonprofits and donors prepare for Give BIG San Bernardino 2017

#### Top Stories

- First Responder Day declared a success
- Officials warn of Hurricane Charity Scams
- Former employee loses lawsuit against LACSD

#### My Town

- RS Emergency Services Day informational and fun
- School district secretly settles federal lawsuit
- Blue Jay Quilt Walk benefits developmentally disabled
- Lake Arrowhead Home Tour a display of elegance and history

#### What's up!

- Alpen Calendar of Events – October 5 – October 12
- Alpen Calendar of Events – September 28 – October 5

#### Spotlight

- Ma and Paws Pet Supplies in Running Springs

#### Portrait

- Reggie Bannister, a local actor supporting the community

#### Movie Reviews

- Our Souls at Night
- Kingsman: The Golden Circle

#### In The Kitchen with Cathy

- More Pumpkin, Please!
- Oktoberfest!

#### Uncle Mott

- Rocktober

#### Keeping it Real

### Crest Lodge Cabins

Experience the natural beauty of our enchanted Forest Wedding venue. If you love nature, we guarantee you'll love our venue.

Nestled just off Lake Drive in Crestline, The Crest Lodge Cabins offers a naturally beautiful mountain setting for your special day. Crest Lodge's scenic backdrop is the perfect outdoor venue for your wedding day and reception. Our staff will work with you to make your wedding experience as wonderful as you can imagine.

#### Design your own wedding day experience:

- Outdoor Chapel
- Powerful gobo with a fire pit
- 10 cozy cabins & cottages for your wedding party
- Accommodates 150 people
- Catering
- Whimsical playground for kids
- Helpful staff
- Events starting \$195 - \$2,500

To experience it for yourself, call us for a private tour. Hours: Everyday from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. (909) 388-4792. 23508 Lake Dr, Crestline, CA 92325

When Mick Hill was appointed to the ROWRPD board on March 21, 2016, Hill pressed ROWRPD to provide park facilities in Crestline and as a result numerous meetings have been held to obtain community input on different sites and types of facilities.

However, the sudden appearance of closed session discussions between the county and ROWRPD about Lake Gregory took everyone by surprise and unnerved numerous Crestline residents. Questions about the closed session item at ROWRPD's September 18 meeting went unanswered.

According to its September 20 letter, CVWD had "a number of our water customers" attend its September 12 regular meeting to address our board about "their concerns regarding the closed session items on both the BOS agenda and ROWRPD agendas."

"Our district held a special meeting on September 19, 2017 to further discuss and consider these concerns," the letter revealed, explaining, "After listening carefully to our customers, our Board directed me to relay to you their primary concern about the lack of information and transparency regarding the BOS and the ROWRPD agenda items."

In an interview with *The Alpenhorn News*, CVWD General Manager Karl Drew shared that Pastor Bill Mellinger, former fire chief Mike Sherman, Brenda Myer of Cozy Cabin Realty and Dan Kinslow expressed concerns about lack of transparency in the negotiations between the county and ROWRPD at its September 19 meeting.

In an interview with *The Alpenhorn News*, CVWD Director Ken Stone opined, "I don't see the county coming forth with much information" due to the confidentiality of closed session items.

▪ A disingenuous promise of tax relief for the poor

**A View from the Right**

▪ PART II: THE VICE OF GROUPTHINK

**Kool Kids**

▪ Boys and Girls Club of the Mountain Communities



+ Share Like 0

submit your comments

PO Box 4572 Crestline, CA 92325-4572. Telephone: (909) 338-8484, Email: info@alpenhornnews.com

© Copyright *The Alpenhorn News*. All rights reserved.

You are visitor: 1,272,672

[Sitemap](#)

{ powered by [bulletlink.com](#) }

## LOCAL NEWS

## Canyon Fire 2 Day 3: Clouds, lower temperatures could help firefighters battle 8,000-acre blaze



920 S. Canyon Heights Dr. in Anaheim Hills, CA, is destroyed Tuesday, October 10, 2017, along with approximately 23 others after the biggest fire to hit Orange County in nearly a decade. (Photo by Ken Steinhardt, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By **BEATRIZ E. VALENZUELA** and **CHRIS HAIRE** | [chaire@scng.com](mailto:chaire@scng.com) |

PUBLISHED: October 11, 2017 at 5:54 am | UPDATED: October 11, 2017 at 8:22 am

More than 1,600 firefighters battling the fast-moving and devastating 8,000-acre [Canyon Fire 2](#) are steadily gaining control of the blaze – aided by cooler overnight temperatures and the return of the morning marine layer.

“Cooler temperatures overnight have moderated fire behavior,” fire officials said in a Wednesday morning update. “On-shore winds and the return of the marine layer will bring decreased fire behavior.”

The humidity is expected to be around 60 percent Wednesday, according to the National Weather Service, and temperatures should be in the mid-70s in the Anaheim and Orange areas where the fire has been burning for the last three days.

As the fire stretched into day three, officials announced that containment was at 45 percent and full containment was expected sometime Saturday, Oct. 14.

The blaze has destroyed 15 structures and damaged 12, according to the most recent estimate. Three people have been injured.

The number of destroyed or damaged structures could increase in coming days, officials warned, as damage assessment has only been 25 percent completed.

Houses north of Santiago Canyon Road and just west of Santiago Oaks Regional Park in Orange remain the only ones under evacuation orders. Everyone else in Anaheim, Orange and Tustin were allowed to return home Tuesday evening.

“While the loss of so many homes and the memories they held has devastated many families,” Anaheim Police Chief Raul Quezada wrote to residents in an open letter Tuesday evening, “they can and will rebuild, and the city of Anaheim will stand with them throughout that process.”

Quezada also said that, as the clean-up and rebuilding begins, residents should take time to ensure they are ready for future emergencies.

The official Wednesday update from unified command – which includes the leaders of several agencies, including the Orange County Fire Authority and Anaheim Fire & Rescue – also urged residents to “stay vigilant to change in weather and fire conditions” as they return to their homes.

## CANYON 2 FIRE REPOPULATION UPDATE



**CONTACT:** Fire Information Line  
 (Anaheim) 714-765-4333 [www.anaheim.net](http://www.anaheim.net)  
 (Orange) 714-744-7550 [www.cityoforange.org](http://www.cityoforange.org)  
 (Tustin) 714-573-3200 [www.tustinpd.org](http://www.tustinpd.org)  
 (Unicorp.) 714-628-7085 [www.ocsd.org](http://www.ocsd.org)

**RELEASE DATE:**  
October 10, 2017

### RE-POPULATION AND ROAD CLOSURES

**Repopulation Awareness**

- Drive Slowly - numerous crews and equipment will be working in and around the roadways
- Emergency crews and personnel are actively working to accommodate evacuees and assisting them back into their homes as soon possible.

**Repopulation Tuesday, October 10, 2017 at 5:00 PM**

**ALL Evacuation Orders and Road Closures have been lifted** for the impacted fire areas as of October 10, 2017 at 5:00pm with the EXCEPTION of the following areas:

- All roads and houses off Windes Drive, north of Santiago Canyon Road (Santiago Oaks Park, City of Orange)
- Santa Ana Canyon Road between Woodcrest Road and Gypsum Canyon Road (City of Anaheim)

**SAFETY MESSAGE**

The public is reminded to stay vigilant on current fire conditions. If you see electrical wires on the ground, stay clear and contact Southern California Edison immediately. If your gas has been turned off, please contact The Gas Company to turn your gas on. Trees and poles with deep charring, particularly if still smoking, should be considered hazardous. Please drive slowly as emergency personnel are in the area. **Do not enter any building that has been deemed unsafe by your local building official.**

As you re-enter your property and evaluate damage, be aware that hazardous conditions may exist, particularly if a residence or out-building has burned. Hazards may include asbestos, heavy metals, by products or plastic combustion and various other chemicals.

For more information, please contact your respective City Fire Information Line listed above.  
###



**Anaheim Fire & Rescue**  
@AnaheimFire



**#CanyonFire2**

5:59 PM - Oct 10, 2017

🗨️ 7 ↻️ 47 ❤️ 44

In Anaheim, El Modena High School, Santiago Charter Middle School and El Rancho Charter Middle School will be open Wednesday, according to the city’s website.

“Out of an abundance of caution, the following elementary schools will remain closed tomorrow, Wednesday Oct. 11, 2017 for students and staff:

- Anaheim Hills Elementary
- Canyon Rim Elementary
- Chapman Hills Elementary
- Linda Vista Elementary
- Panorama Elementary
- Running Springs Elementary

All other schools in Orange Unified School District will remain open tomorrow. Please reference the OUSD website for additional information regarding schools,” the post read.

The fire was first reported Monday morning near the 91 Freeway and Coal Canyon. The 241 toll road connecting the 91 freeway to the 261 remains closed, officials said.

The cause of the fire has not been determined.

Tags: [Canyon Fire 2](#), [Echo Code](#), [fire](#), [Top Stories Breeze](#), [Top Stories IVDB](#), [Top Stories LADN](#), [Top Stories LBPT](#), [Top Stories OCR](#), [Top Stories PE](#), [Top Stories PSN](#), [Top Stories RDF](#), [Top Stories SGVT](#), [Top Stories Sun](#), [Top Stories WDN](#), [wildfires](#)



## Beatriz E. Valenzuela



SPONSORED CONTENT

### 5 Affordable Family Beach Vacations You Never Considered.

By TitleMax

[TITLEMAX](#)

If your annual summer getaway plan begins with a list of the “most popular” destinations, that can also mean lines,...



## Chris Haire

Chris Haire is a general assignment reporter for the Orange County Register, covering everything from spot news to human-interest features. He also covers the cities of Garden Grove, Westminster and Stanton, and the ethnic enclave of Little Saigon. He has been with the Register since December 2012. He graduated with honors from the Columbia University School of Journalism, with a master's degree. Chris also has a bachelor's degree in journalism from San Francisco State University and would like, one day, to get a doctorate in history. (He's kind of nerdy.) He also loves Russian literature, including Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Pushkin and Solzhenitsyn.

[Follow Chris Haire @CJHaire](#)

[VIEW COMMENTS](#)

## Join the Conversation

We invite you to use our commenting platform to engage in insightful conversations about issues in our community. Although we do not pre-screen comments, we reserve the right at all times to remove any information or materials that are unlawful, threatening, abusive, libelous, defamatory, obscene, vulgar, pornographic, profane, indecent or otherwise objectionable to us, and to disclose any information necessary to satisfy the law, regulation, or government request. We might permanently block any user who abuses these conditions.

If you see comments that you find offensive, please use the “Flag as Inappropriate” feature by hovering over the right side of the post, and pulling down on the arrow that appears. Or, contact our editors by emailing [moderator@scng.com](mailto:moderator@scng.com).

<< TOP STORIES >> [Years of Age](#) [🕒 Mountain Finalists for Senator Mike Morrell's Womer](#)

# ROTWNEWS

ROTWNEWS.com <sup>TM</sup>



- [Home](#)
- [Weather »](#)
- [Contact Us »](#)

[Subscribe](#)

## Lake Gregory Recreation Company Looking Toward the Future

in [Community News](#), [Entertainment](#), [Environment](#), [For Your Information](#), [History](#), [Informational](#), [Mountain Region](#), [News](#), [Subject](#), [Ticker](#) / by [Michael P. Neufeld](#) / on October 11, 2017 at 5:05 am /

f Facebook 2

🐦 Twitter

G+ Google+ 0

**By Susan A. Neufeld**

Crestline, CA – ROTWNEWS received the following email from Kris Koeberer, Chief Operating Officer for The California Parks Company, Lake Gregory Recreation:

Rumors have been circulating that The California Parks Company is losing money on its operation of Lake Gregory Regional Park, and that we have lost interest in continuing to operate recreation services at Lake Gregory.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The California Parks Company is making a fair profit at Lake Gregory and we will be submitting a proposal to continue operating Lake Gregory Regional Park for the County of San Bernardino.

Prior to our management of Lake Gregory before 2013, the regional park had not generated a profit in four years. The regional park had cost the San Bernardino County taxpayers over \$1.4 million in the two years prior to our taking over its management.

Like most parks, Lake Gregory is an amenity for local residents and an expense to taxpayers. However, the desire – when we took over management – was to reduce the cost of operating the lake to the taxpayers while still maintaining and improving the park experience.

Since taking over, we have reduced the cost to the County 60%. In the first year of operation, we cut the County's cost by half, decreased by another \$50,000 the following year and, last year, reduced the county subsidy to only \$50,000, eight percent of what the County paid the year before we took over managing the park.

While reducing the cost to the County, The California Parks Company has also improved the experience for park visitors by:

- Renovating the San Moritz Lodge and turning it into an award-winning, highly-sought wedding venue for brides and over 4,000 of their guests,
- Operating the Lake Gregory Waterpark, we installed an Inflated Wibit waterplay structure, one of the first in California,
- Improving the variety and quality of food service options at Lake Gregory,
- Modernizing recreational equipment rentals,
- Donating to numerous charities and community sponsored events,
- Planting over \$100,000 in fish (approx. 25,000 pounds), and
- Making Lake Gregory a more inviting place to visit.

We are very proud of the improvements we instituted at Lake Gregory, but we could have not have accomplished them without the support of the County of San Bernardino and the Crestline community. We greatly value those relationships and look forward to renewing our assignment to serve the people of San Bernardino County at Lake Gregory

Sincerely,

Kris Koeberer

Chief Operating Officer

The California Parks Company

Lake Gregory Recreation

## Wright, a commanding presence in Adelanto, will retire from public life in 2020

By Shea Johnson

Staff Writer

Posted Oct 10, 2017 at 4:22 PM

Updated Oct 10, 2017 at 4:22 PM

Mayor Pro Tem Jermaine Wright said Tuesday he plans to retire from the public eye in 2020 when his second term on the city council ends, citing an untenable and self-inflicted work-life balance that's carried a heavy personal burden.

ADELANTO — Mayor Pro Tem Jermaine Wright said Tuesday he plans to retire from the public eye in 2020 when his second term on the city council ends, citing an untenable and self-inflicted work-life balance that's carried a heavy personal burden.

Wright, who ran unsuccessfully for San Bernardino County supervisor in 2012 as an Adelanto Elementary School District trustee — two years prior to winning his first term on the council dais — also clarified he has no intentions to seek higher office.

“At this point, 2020: I hope somebody else will come along and do the work because I'm going back into the private life,” Wright said by phone. “That's who I will be in 2020, a private man. I'm going back into obscurity.”

As one of the highest-profile members of the City Council, the oft-fiery Wright has been a vocal defender of Adelanto and its residents and a defiant force who helped to push the narrative of the city as an underdog fighting against the odds.

“My biggest takeaway from all of this is, at the end of the day, we went from a city that should have been dissolved,” he said, “to a city on the rise.”

In a conversation with the Daily Press, Wright, 41, followed up on insinuations he made about his future during the Sept. 27 Council meeting, where he spoke of how four hours of city business each day from home, compounded with 12-hour work days as owner of Fat Boyz Grill, had strained his personal life.

“I've done that, really, every day for the past two years,” he said then. “Every day for the past two years, I've sacrificed my family and sacrificed my children. I can't do that anymore.”

He clarified Tuesday that he was fully committed to finishing his anticipated final term on the council — **he won re-election last November** — but that he would follow newly set boundaries, including working only within office hours at City Hall and not accepting 3 a.m. phone calls from constituents over neighbors' dogs barking.

Wright also hinted that public scrutiny had taken a toll, saying personal attacks "sometimes are just more than you want to deal with," and that his successor should be aware of the microscope that public officials live under.

The Council has been credited with reverting a crash course with bankruptcy and **flipping the city's deficit budget into the black** with a \$400,000 surplus, largely on the back of the commercial marijuana industry.

But city officials have faced questions over the industry's deep-pocketed influence and, on occasion, **raised those questions themselves**, often roiling the positive contributions of industry insiders.

The Council has also been accused by former employees of **targeting them for termination** and stepping outside the bounds of its state-enabled function. **Former workers have sued the city** on related claims.

Wright reiterated the Council never held the power to clean house, but simply sought to cut waste where it was identified, without consideration of who those employees were.

"There's other waste in the city that I still want to get rid of that I see, but I can't," Wright said, attributing the handcuff to the public perception of aforementioned targeting.

Still, he said the groundwork had been laid for the city to be prosperous and he was hopeful that whoever claims his open seat in the 2020 election will bring new vision to Adelanto — a suggestion that commercial cannabis had made the city a single-policy municipality.

"There's no need for me to continue to sit here and continue to beat one issue," he said.

He added that in three years he plans to make himself available to share his expertise with then-city leaders at their request, but not to the level of where he'd formally establish a consulting firm.

"Two terms in office is good enough," he put simply, noting he felt restrained during the first.

Pointing to Adelanto's controversial history, which includes the jailing of a former mayor over Little League embezzlement and a former finance director ensnared in a corruption case in another city, Wright said he wished his ultimate legacy would be tied to Adelanto's resurgence, even if he personally wants to be forgotten.

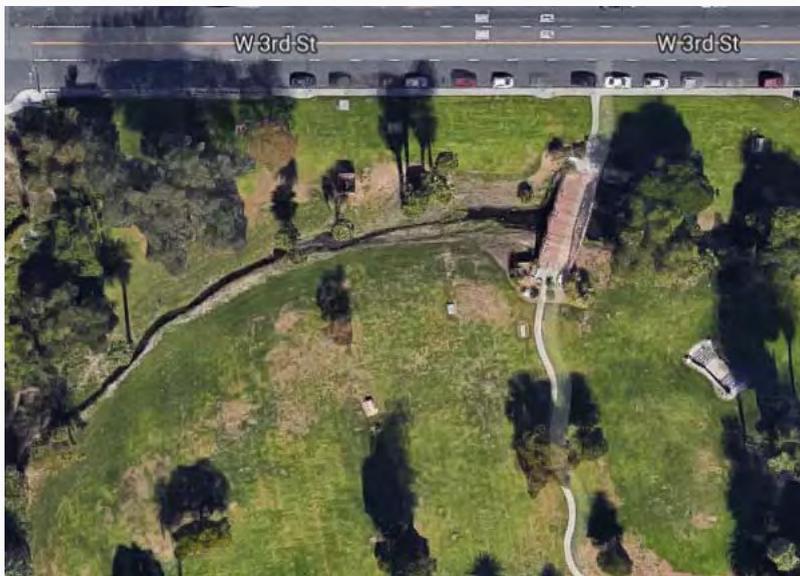
He concluded that his summary of his two terms will recall "that we gave the city back to the residents, that their voices were heard."

NEWS &gt; CRIME

## Transient accused of setting fire to Meadowbrook Park bridge in San Bernardino

By **BEATRIZ E. VALENZUELA** |

PUBLISHED: October 10, 2017 at 10:59 am | UPDATED: October 10, 2017 at 11:20 am



San Bernardino Police officers arrested a man they spotted walking away from a burning bridge in a San Bernardino park.

San Bernardino police officers were at the right place at the right time Tuesday morning when they arrested a man authorities say set a bridge at Meadowbrook Park on fire.

“Officers were in the area at 4:17 this morning and saw smoke and fire and a subject was walking away,” said Lt. Mike Madden on Tuesday.

The officers detained the man, later identified as Santana Ursua, 31, and then called San Bernardino County Fire to extinguish the flames.

Ursua, who Madden described as a transient, was arrested on suspicion of arson and for an outstanding no-bail warrant.

The fire caused substantial damage to the pedestrian bridge, which stretches over a waterway in Meadowbrook Park at Second Street and Sierra Way. The San Bernardino Superior courthouse overlooks the park.

The fire may have caused significant damage to the bridge, said Madden, adding that structural engineers were at the park Tuesday morning assessing its integrity.

Tags: **arson**, **Top Stories PE**, **Top Stories Sun**

## **In a span of three weeks, Starbucks opens three new locations in the High Desert**

**By Rene Ray De La Cruz**

**Staff Writer**

Posted Oct 9, 2017 at 4:14 PM

Updated Oct 9, 2017 at 4:14 PM

HESPERIA — Company employees believe Friday the 13th is going to be another lucky day for coffee lovers in the High Desert.

Three Starbucks will have opened in the High Desert in about a three week span after the company unveils their newest coffee shop on Friday near Rancho Road and Interstate 15 in Hesperia.

A new Starbucks, along Amargosa Road on Restaurant Row in Victorville, is the first business to open in the new development that will also include several other stores, including Cafe Rio, Which Wich?, The Habit Burger Grill and Cracker Barrel Old Country Store.

Store Manager Phil Amador told the Daily Press his team opened the Restaurant Row store last Monday and is excited about the store's "official" grand opening at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, about 90 minutes after the opening of Cafe Rio.

"The interior design of our new store is sure to be a huge hit with our customers. We've also got some great new drinks, including our draft beer," Amador said. "We also boast the longest Starbucks drive-thru in the High Desert."

Amador said business at the store has been good and should increase once construction along Amargosa Road has been completed.

Starbucks Manager Brenda Beardsley said the opening of the Rancho Road store will be a "monumental day" for residents of Hesperia, Oak Hills and everyone that commutes through the south end of the High Desert.

"We're excited about creating a place where the community can gather for great conversation, coffee and other Starbucks goodies," Beardsley said. "A lot of people on that end of town told us they're looking forward to our store opening."

Beardsley said she and her team are "working out the details" to create a memorable opening day ceremony on Friday the 13th for the store located on the southeast corner of Rancho and Mariposa roads.

Several businesses are expected to share the property near the Starbucks on Rancho Road, including a gas station and restaurant.

Store Manager Kelsea Wetzel said her new store has seen a steady stream of customers since opening two weeks ago at the High Desert Gateway II shopping center on the corner of Main Street and Cataba Road in Hesperia.

“Many of our customers are coming in for our pumpkin spice offerings and our new Starbucks Nitro Cold Brew,” Wetzel said. “Our Nitro Brew is straight from the tap and topped with sweet cream — it’s rich, smooth and very tasty.”

Wetzel’s store is the first business to open in one of two multi-tenant buildings in Gateway II, which is expected to also welcome Jimmy John’s, Fatburger, 5-Star Nails and several other businesses. Several more buildings are planned for the development that stretches south from Main Street.

Starbucks barista Nicole Hertzog, 22, who is helping Beardsley to market the stores, said customers love the new store decor, which includes more seating, open ceilings, community tables and more open space.

“People love Starbucks and we’re excited about the company’s expansion plan all across the High Desert,” Hertzog said. “We’re here to serve our customers with great drinks and big smiles.”

For more locations and more information on Starbucks, visit [www.starbucks.com](http://www.starbucks.com).

Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at 760-951-6227, RDeLa [Cruz@VVDailyPress.com](mailto:Cruz@VVDailyPress.com), Twitter [@DP\\_ReneDeLaCruz](https://twitter.com/DP_ReneDeLaCruz) and Instagram [@reneraydelacruz](https://www.instagram.com/reneraydelacruz).



### **SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL**

Wake up to the day's top news, delivered to your inbox

---

---

## The Habit Burger Grill opens in Barstow

**By Staff reports**

Posted Oct 10, 2017 at 2:04 PM

Updated Oct 10, 2017 at 2:04 PM

After a handful of pre-opening events offering up free food to interested guests last week, The Habit Burger Grill in Barstow made its official opening on Monday.

The restaurant is home to the popular, award-winning Charburgers. The menu also includes hand-cut salads, grilled sandwiches — including line-caught, sushi-grade albacore tuna — fresh chicken and hand-filleted marinated grilled tri-tip, and sides including onion rings, sweet potato and French fries and tempura green beans.

Guests can choose from a variety of peppers, lemons, limes and sauces at a complimentary condiment bar to customize the flavor of their meal.

The more than 3,800-square-foot restaurant, which includes a drive-thru, seats 110 people. The restaurant, located at 2860 Lenwood Road, will be open Monday through Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., with the drive-thru remaining open until midnight, and Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., with the drive-thru remaining open until 11 p.m.



### **SIGN UP FOR DAILY E-MAIL**

Wake up to the day's top news, delivered to your inbox

---

OPINION

# How California can prepare for the next natural disaster



Getty Images

Numerous waterways snake through the delta where the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River meet.

---

By **JAMES V. CURATALO JR.** |

PUBLISHED: October 10, 2017 at 7:59 pm | UPDATED: October 10, 2017 at 8:26 pm



Natural disasters happen every day. Sometimes you know they are coming; other times they hit unexpectedly. In Houston and Florida over the last month, hurricanes have wreaked havoc beyond what emergency personnel predicted. Mexico experienced a 7.1 earthquake on the anniversary of its 1985 earthquake that had killed 10,000 people. Some natural disasters you can prepare for; others you can't.

In California, we experience natural disasters all year long. Earthquakes strike unexpectedly, torrential rain leads to flooding and mudslides, and wildfires can occur at any time. No part of the golden state is exempt from natural disasters. The way they impact you personally depends on where you live and how prepared your local community is.

The Cucamonga Valley Water District is a public agency responsible for the water needs of the community, and we are constantly planning in order to prepare for and avoid as many disasters as possible. A large component of this planning is investing in our pipelines, reservoirs, and treatment plants, ensuring they are in good working condition and able to provide the needed water and wastewater service. Many communities throughout the state don't commit to these types of investments and find themselves in the difficult situation of dealing with a broken pipeline, a sinkhole, or a collapsed dam that could cause untold damage.

Just as investments are made in our local water infrastructure, investments must be made in our statewide infrastructure as well. One consideration at the state level is the California WaterFix. Working together, government, environmental, and business leaders have developed a proposal on how to address major concerns about the instability of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The California WaterFix proposes a renovation of the way water moves through the Delta, including the construction of two "tunnels" to ensure water can travel throughout the state in the event that one of the pipelines is deemed unusable. It improves water supply reliability and adds protections for endangered fish species in the Delta.

This project is of particular interest to the Cucamonga Valley Water District because in any given year we get 40-50 percent of our water supply from northern California via the Delta. As a district, we are doing everything we can to maximize local water supplies. However, we will never be wholly reliant on our local canyon and groundwater resources; we will always need to rely on water that is delivered to us from 400 miles away. In order to make sure our customers have the water they need each day to live, work and play, we need to ensure a reliable statewide water infrastructure. The California WaterFix is the solution we need; and we need it today.

*James V. Curatalo Jr., president, Cucamonga Valley Water District.*

NEWS

# Popular food truck festival in downtown San Bernardino to end later this month



Third Thursdays Food Fest, a monthly food truck festival, celebrates its one year anniversary as it attracts office workers, residents and visitors for lunch at the Court Street parking lot in front of San Bernardino City Hall on Thursday, Oct. 15, 2015. (Photo by Rachel Luna/San Bernardino Sun)

By **BRIAN WHITEHEAD** | [bwhitehead@scng.com](mailto:bwhitehead@scng.com) | Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: October 10, 2017 at 4:51 pm | UPDATED: October 11, 2017 at 12:19 am



Three years after first offering good eats to downtown workers and visitors, the San Bernardino Third Thursdays Food Fest will serve its last hungry patron on Oct. 19.

“SB Third Thursdays was designed to draw people to downtown because we needed the attraction to downtown,” said Monica Lagos, city spokeswoman. “Over the course of its existence, it actually drew about 50,000 attendees.

“But throughout the last few months, we’ve seen a decline in attendance, and we believe it’s due to the event just running its course.”

Introduced in October 2014, the monthly food truck festival endeavored to breathe life into downtown San Bernardino by attracting lunch-time crowds to the largely vacant area.

[The inaugural event featured five food trucks and a surprisingly positive response.](#)

From 900 attendees that first afternoon to 2,500 a few months later, the food festival drew city, county and state government officials looking for a quick bite. Also, more trucks to satisfy demand.

“This was innovative for San Bernardino County,” said Jason Tang, co-owner of Yucaipa-based JoJo’s Grill-a-Dog, one of two dozen regular vendors. “There’s not much in terms of regular spots for food trucks here ... that you would see in other counties that are more densely populated.

“We’re sad to see it go because it was innovative and new and exciting for the county.”

County worker Rosina Motta said the festival was a “great addition to our downtown area,” an event she and her coworkers looked forward to every month. While meal prices could be high for some, “most see the food trucks as a convenient option, so it’s worth the cost,” she said.

“It’s a shame it will no longer be a staple.”

Councilwoman Virginia Marquez, whose district includes downtown, said the monthly festival offered her “an opportunity to break bread with others, and to meet new people during our lunch hours.

“To this day, I still keep in touch with friends I met three years ago,” she said. “I truly enjoyed the camaraderie, the food, the entertainment. It certainly was a good thing while it lasted, and I’m going to miss it in the future.”

The final Third Thursdays Food Fest is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 19, at Court Street Square, 349 N. E St. in San Bernardino.

Vendors include Piaggio On Wheels; Smoke'em If You Got'em BBQ; Richeeze Melts; Go Beyond The Bowl; JoJo's Grill-a-Dog; and My Delight Cupcakery.

Motta said she will “definitely” attend the finale.

“We’ve always had a good experience when we’ve been there,” Tang said.

“Anytime we could go, we would definitely go. Always excited to be part of the community and county.”

---

Tags: [Echo Code](#), [fairs and festivals](#), [Top Stories PE](#), [Top Stories Sun](#)



SPONSORED CONTENT

## A Travel Experience Where Pets Are Welcome [↗](#)

By Best Western Hotels & Resorts



You and your pet will find a comfortable home away from home when you stay at one of our 1,600 pet-friendly Best...



### Brian Whitehead

Brian Whitehead is a staff reporter at the Orange County Register. Since graduating from Cal State Fullerton in 2010, he has covered high school and college sports and the cities of Buena Park, Fullerton and La Palma.

[Follow Brian Whitehead @bwhitehead3](#)

[VIEW COMMENTS](#)

**Join the Conversation**

**BUSINESS****Togo's wants to reintroduce itself to the Inland Empire**

Pastrami Reuben is one of the specialty sandwiches served at Togo's Eateries.

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

PUBLISHED: October 10, 2017 at 2:01 pm | UPDATED: October 10, 2017 at 10:02 pm

Togo's Eateries is looking to grow in San Bernardino County, but the sandwich restaurant is changing some longtime features, from its menu to preparation to paying the check.

The sandwich chain is seeking Inland franchisees as it reinvents itself, according to Micheal Norcup, vice president of franchise sales.

"Every so often you've got to take the next step up," he said in a phone interview.

Togo's got its start in San Jose in 1971 and since then has grown, contracted and changed owners. While it was part of Dunkin' Brands a decade ago, it reached 350 stores, according to reports. Now it claims nearly 300.

Togo's has a large presence in Orange County but only a few locations in the Inland Empire, in Corona, San Bernardino and Fontana.

In June, the company assumed new leadership under Glenn Lunde with the retirement of its longtime head, Tony Gioia. At the same time, it began revamping its menu. It currently has a promotion with sriracha melts.

Togo's specializes in hot and cold deli sandwiches made to order with choice of bread. Its menu boards feature numbered items — but they aren't organized numerically. The chain is updating the look and the feel to make it easier for customers to find what they want.

“We simplified a lot of the menu for, one, the franchisees and, two, the guests,” Norcup said. “We’ve updated the look and the feel and the simplicity of making the product as well.”

A simpler menu makes ordering faster and makes it easier for franchisees to train employees, Norcup said.

But that isn’t all. Norcup said Togo’s restaurants will be going from a pay-at-the-end system to paying upfront in a few weeks. Customers won’t be required to participate in the “make line,” with “less of the hundred questions to get your sandwich made.”

The changes will appeal to millennials, according to Norcup, but he said millennials want the same things every customer wants, quality ingredients and in-and-out service.

Norcup said neighborhood shopping centers, close to where people live, are a good fit for Togo’s, but the company also wants to reach a lunch crowd.

“We want to be around where people are working. We don’t necessarily want to be right in the heart of an industrial park, but we want to be where they can get to us fairly quickly.”

Information: [www.togos.com](http://www.togos.com)

Tags: **Restaurant Review**



SPONSORED CONTENT

## 5 Affordable Family Beach Vacations You Never Considered.

By TitleMax

[TITLEMAX](#)

If your annual summer getaway plan begins with a list of the “most popular” destinations, that can also mean lines,...



### Fielding Buck

Fielding Buck has been a business reporter since 2014 with a focus on logistics, supply chain and GIS. Prior experience includes extensive entertainment reporting. He loves photography and dogs and lives in San Bernardino County.

[Follow Fielding Buck @pefbuck](#)

[VIEW COMMENTS](#)

### Join the Conversation

We invite you to use our commenting platform to engage in insightful conversations about issues in our community. Although we do not pre-screen comments, we reserve the right at all times to remove any information or materials that are unlawful, threatening, abusive, libelous, defamatory, obscene, vulgar, pornographic, profane, indecent or otherwise objectionable to us, and to disclose any information necessary to satisfy the law, regulation, or government request. We might permanently block any user who abuses these conditions.

If you see comments that you find offensive, please use the “Flag as Inappropriate” feature by hovering over the right side of the post, and pulling down on the arrow that appears. Or, contact our editors by emailing [moderator@scng.com](mailto:moderator@scng.com).

NEWS

## Lawyers for Rancho Cucamonga men weigh options in national anthem controversy at Citizens Business Bank Arena



Mathew Brady, 20, of Rancho Cucamonga, Ca. demonstrates how a man held him by the throat after Brady left the Laker game at Citizens Business Bank Arena, as Jiahn Talebi, left, looks on. Both men chose to protest the playing of the National Anthem and received verbal and physical threats from others in attendance. (Sarah Alvarado for The Sun)

By **JOE NELSON** | jnelson@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun

PUBLISHED: October 10, 2017 at 1:45 pm | UPDATED: October 11, 2017 at 8:00 am

An attorney for two men attacked during a Lakers game in Ontario last week when they [refused to stand for the national anthem](#) said during a press conference Tuesday she believes the incident was racially motivated.

“I think if this had been an African American male who had thrown a drink on a white woman or a white patron, I think that the results would have been entirely different,” attorney Sharon Brunner said during the press conference at the law office of Jim Terrell, in Victorville.

Brunner and Terrell represent Rancho Cucamonga residents Matthew Brady, 20, who is half black, and Jiahn Talebi, 21, who is half Iranian. Talebi and Brady refused to stand for the national anthem during the Oct. 4, 2017, pre-season Lakers game at the Citizens Business Bank Arena. Talebi said he parodied a line from the national anthem, saying “Home of the slave.”

As a result, a woman approached them toward the end of the game and threw her drink at Talebi and Brady, then ran off with another woman, according to Brady and Talebi.

California Baptist University identified the two women as students at their school and disclosed their names, but the Southern California News Group is not publishing the names because the two have not been charged with any crimes.

A video of the soda-throwing incident was posted on social media and went viral.

Brady and Talebi say security guards at the arena did nothing to intervene as they chased after the two women, but only pointed out the direction in which the two woman fled.

“And that’s just so disturbing on so many levels. The fact that security did not assist them at all in trying to apprehend these girls that just assaulted them, without provocation, is just really questionable,” Brunner said.

Citizens Business Bank Arena spokeswoman Sue Oxarart said in an email Tuesday that guest security is the “number one priority” and that the arena “continually evaluates and enhances all security measures.”

“Regarding the incident that occurred at the game, we are still conducting our internal investigation,” Oxarart said.

Brunner said the purpose of Tuesday’s press conference was two-fold: to bring light to the situation and hope the publicity will prompt anyone who may have witnessed the alleged assaults to come forward with information.

“We believe that others may have been witness to the incident and may also have video of the brutal attack of our clients,” Brunner said.

The press conference was attended by the president and vice president of the Victor Valley NAACP Branch, Bill Thomas and Paul Marsh, respectively, and member Clifton Harris.

Thomas said he plans on reaching out to the president of the San Bernardino NAACP Branch, which covers Rancho Cucamonga and Ontario, to brief him on the situation.

Outside the arena, a man accosted Talebi and Brady, grabbing Brady by the neck so tight it left marks. A security guard standing within feet of Brady did nothing, according to Brady and Talebi. They said four or five Ontario police officers arrived on scene and ordered them to sit on the curb with their feet crossed while an officer briefly talked to the man, then allowed the man to walk away.

Officers then ordered Brady and Talebi to leave the arena premises or face arrest. When Talebi and Brady tried getting the officers’ badge numbers, they were denied, and again threatened with arrest.

The following morning, Brady said his father contacted Ontario police and reported the incident.

Terrell said arena security and Ontario police made a conscientious choice not to investigate or hold those responsible for the assaults accountable. He believes it was not only racial, but politically motivated as well. He cited the recent national debate on whether NFL players should be required to stand for the national anthem.

Brunner said she and Terrell are “reviewing all options,” including a federal lawsuit alleging civil rights violations.

An Ontario Police Department press release issued Tuesday confirmed that one of Brady’s parents contacted police via email on Wednesday, Oct. 5 requesting an investigation and that an investigation was launched by the department on Friday, Oct. 6.

Sgt. Bill Russell, however, told a reporter in a telephone message on Saturday, Nov. 7 there was no investigation “as the two males that were involved in this were escorted out by event security and we never made contact with the females.”

In an email Tuesday, Sgt. Jeff Higbee said, “Sgt. Bill Russell, who works in a division supplementing patrol, did not know that the investigation was begun, at the direction of the (police) chief.”

The police department’s press release also said, “Detectives have reached out several times in an attempt to contact Matthew Brady and Jiahn Talebi but they did not return any phone calls.”

Brady and Talebi said during Tuesday’s press conference they did not respond to the many phone calls by police because they did not want to speak to them without lawyers Terrell or Brunner present.

“After Ontario PD contacted the attorneys representing (Brady and Talebi), they agreed to schedule an appointment to have them provide a statement,” according to the Ontario Police Department press release, released at 5:03 pm.

Brunner said she received a telephone call about 3 p.m. Tuesday, after the press conference, from Ontario police Detective Shahrouz Sadeghian, who said he saw the press conference on TV, knew that Brady and Talebi had already given public statements, but wanted to get them to come in a give them statements anyway. She said she told Sadeghian she would check with Brady and Talebi on a time and get back to him Wednesday to schedule the appointment.

---

Tags: **Citizens Business Bank Arena**, **national anthem**, **Top Stories IVDB**, **Top Stories PE**, **Top Stories Sun**

# Counties may regulate the location of gun shops, 9th Circuit Court rules



By **Maura Dolan**

OCTOBER 10, 2017, 12:10 PM | REPORTING FROM SAN FRANCISCO

**C**ounties may restrict the location of gun stores as long as residents have the ability to purchase firearms, a federal appeals court decided Tuesday.

An 11-judge panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the dismissal of a lawsuit challenging an Alameda County zoning ordinance that barred firearm sales near residential neighborhoods, schools, day-care centers, other firearm retailers and liquor stores.

The 9-2 decision overturned an earlier ruling by a three-judge 9th Circuit panel, which said the county had to justify the restriction. If the zoning amounted to a ban on new gun stores, it was likely to violate the Constitution's guarantee of the right to bear arms, that panel [decided](#) 2 to 1 last year.

In [Tuesday's ruling](#), the court said the 2nd Amendment does not create a commercial right to sell guns, as long as law-abiding people are not deprived of keeping arms in their homes.

"Alameda County residents may freely purchase firearms within the county," wrote Judge Marsha S. Berzon, a Clinton appointee, for the [en banc](#) panel. "As of December 2011, there were 12 gun stores in Alameda County."

In fact, a store selling guns stands 600 feet from the site where the proposed store in the original case would have been located, the 9th Circuit said.

"Gun buyers have no right to have a gun store in a particular location, at least as long as their access is not meaningfully constrained," the court said.

The case, backed by several gun groups, was brought by individuals who sought a permit for a gun store in an unincorporated part of Alameda County.

[maura.dolan@latimes.com](mailto:maura.dolan@latimes.com)

**Twitter:** [@mauradolan](#)

Copyright © 2017, Los Angeles Times

# Crews finish rainbow crosswalk near Orlando's Pulse nightclub, where 49 died



The newly completed rainbow-colored crosswalk near the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, where a gunman killed 49 people. (@citybeautiful)

By **Associated Press**

OCTOBER 11, 2017, 7:45 AM | REPORTING FROM ORLANDO, FLA.

**C**rews have completed a rainbow-colored crosswalk near a gay nightclub in Florida where a gunman killed 49 people.

News outlets report that the crosswalk became reality early Wednesday. Thousands of people signed a petition asking the city of Orlando for a colorful memorial to the victims on the street just south of Pulse nightclub in Orlando.

The [Florida Department of Transportation](#) also approved the crosswalk.

[Omar Mateen](#) pledged allegiance to Islamic State during a three-hour standoff at the nightclub before he was killed in a shootout with police officers in June 2016. It was the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history until Oct. 1, when [Stephen Paddock](#) killed 58 people at a country music festival in Las Vegas.

Copyright © 2017, Los Angeles Times

## NEWS

# LA County moves to add toilets, shower facilities near homeless encampments



FILE PHOTO

In this March 2017 file photo, Los Angeles Sanitation workers remove items from a large homeless encampment along Burbank Boulevard in Encino.

By **DONNA LITTLEJOHN** | [dlittlejohn@scng.com](mailto:dlittlejohn@scng.com) | Daily Breeze

PUBLISHED: October 10, 2017 at 5:21 pm | UPDATED: October 10, 2017 at 8:19 pm



Homeless encampments in unincorporated county areas will be surveyed in coming weeks to determine where toilets, handwashing facilities and showers can be located in a battle to stop the spread of hepatitis A [under a motion](#) approved Tuesday by the Board of Supervisors.

Showers were added before supervisors unanimously voted to request a report and proposed plan identifying locations within 30 days.

Encampments in the San Gabriel Valley River Bed and Los Angeles River Bed will be included in the study that will assess where additional toilet, handwashing and shower facilities are most needed.

The motion by Supervisors Hilda Solis and Kathryn Barger came about a month after a [hepatitis outbreak was declared in Los Angeles County](#) by the county's public health director.

Along with reports of hepatitis A outbreaks in San Diego and Santa Cruz counties, concern has risen about the deadly disease that is spread person to person through close contact or through contact with environments contaminated with feces.

In the city of Los Angeles, leaders have been looking at adding a hygiene center on Skid Row in downtown. Public toilets amid large homeless encampments, however, have been problematic in that they've attracted illegal activity, including drug use and sales along with incidents of rape.

One alternative has been mobile toilets and showers that would be made available but would not be permanent fixtures. If incoming trailers were used, they would come with supervision, officials have said.

San Diego County has seen 481 cases and 17 deaths, with most of the people infected being homeless believed to also be using drugs.

---

Tags: [Echo Code](#), [homeless](#), [LA County Board of Supervisors](#), [public health](#), [Top Stories Breeze](#), [Top Stories IVDB](#),



bloggytown.

Monday, October 9, 2017

BLOGGYTOWN

## Orlando commissioners approve temporary memorial at Pulse nightclub

Posted By Monivette Cordeiro on Mon, Oct 9, 2017 at 7:27 pm



Photo via **onePULSE Foundation**

A rendering of the Pulse interim memorial

The Orlando City Council approved plans for a temporary memorial at the gay nightclub Pulse Monday afternoon.

Pulse owner Barbara Poma and the onePULSE Foundation submitted plans for an interim memorial as they create a permanent memorial in conjunction with survivors of the mass shooting and families of the 49 victims who died last year. At Monday's council meeting, Poma said part of the reason for creating a temporary memorial at 1912 S. Orange Ave. would be to "clean up the site, make it look less like a crime scene and more like a place where you could come and pay your respects."

Photo via **onePULSE Foundation**

There will be several key changes to the current Pulse site. The first is removing the fence installed by the FBI and replacing it with an eight-foot fence that will go completely around the building. Poma says the current renderings show the fence as white, though it will have artistic tribute murals or photos.

As you can see from the design above, part of the fence is clear near the door. Poma says there will framed views to a couple areas on the Pulse building, including the place where police broke down bathroom walls to rescue survivors.

"This seems to be space where a lot of people try to get to – they've climbed the fence, thrown things over, broken into it just to be able to pay respects at that area," Poma tells commissioners. "We think it's an important place for people to be able to get to safely and respectfully."

The plans also include a shorter "offering wall" where people can leave flowers or other tributes in a four-foot perforated fence to honor victims. Poma says there will also be a display with all the names and pictures of the 49 victims and a second viewing area of where the waterfall was at the gay nightclub. The iconic Pulse sign will be secured in an encasement and a removable canvas will be wrapped around its base for people to leave written messages. Additionally, there will be a "survivor grove" area with shady trees to rest, increased lighting, artificial turf, enhanced seating and walkways.



Photo via onePULSE Foundation

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer told Poma that city staff is adding a rainbow crosswalk near Pulse on West Esther Street that should be installed this week.

"I think you guys have done a fantastic job on the temporary memorial site," Dyer says to Poma. "It's making it much more accessible. ... It's going to be much more friendly to the public."

Poma did not have an exact date for when the interim memorial would be completed, but says she expects the process to move quickly and smoothly. The onePULSE Foundation intends for the interim memorial to exist for up to two years, with three possible one-year extensions, as they work toward a permanent memorial.

PDF Pulse\_Presentation.pdf

pulse\_presentation.pdf

— — —

—

Page:

—

Automatic ▾

ViewerJS

×

## ViewerJS

Open Source document viewer for webpages, built with HTML and JavaScript.

Learn more and get your own copy on the [ViewerJS website](#).

Using the [PDF.js](#) (From Source) plugin to show you this document.

Version 0.5.8

Supported by

# San Diego County supervisors join brewing legal battle against feds over Tijuana sewage spills



A sign warns of sewage-contaminated ocean waters on a beach in front of the iconic Hotel del Coronado in March. (Gregory Bull / Association Press)

By **Joshua Emerson Smith**

OCTOBER 10, 2017, 5:10 PM | REPORTING FROM SAN DIEGO

**T**he San Diego County Board of Supervisors voted Tuesday to join the growing legal campaign to force the federal government to do more to stop sewage from spilling over the border from Tijuana and routinely fouling beaches.

“Enough is enough,” Supervisor Greg Cox, whose district includes a region bordering Mexico, said in a statement. “We’ve exhausted all our efforts to resolve this terrible situation and it’s time we force those responsible to once and for all fix this problem.”

A massive sewage spill in the Tijuana River in February fouled beaches as far north as [Coronado](#), and polluted water has continued to regularly flow across the border into the Tijuana River valley through the river and a system of canyons.

In September, [Imperial Beach](#), Chula Vista and the Port of San Diego filed a notice of intent to sue the U.S. side of the International Boundary and Water Commission, which oversees water treaties with Mexico and facilitates funding for infrastructure projects along the border.

Officials with the commission have said in response to the legal actions that they're conferring with the U.S. Department of Justice.

The city of San Diego voted last week to join the legal action, and Coronado has agreed to reimburse cities up to \$50,000 for any lawsuits that result. Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom has also announced support for the legal strategy.

The commission has until the end of November to come up with a spending blueprint that satisfies local officials or risk getting hauled into court.

"Talking about this can only take us so far," Cox said. "At some point, we have to take action to protect the health, water quality and economy of South County and our region."

The move is aimed at forcing federal officials to orchestrate binational funding for improving Tijuana's sewage infrastructure, which the boundary commission in April estimated was in need of about \$500 million of repairs.

The U.S. and Mexico have spent billions on such projects in the past, including construction of wastewater treatment plants on both sides of the border. In the 1990s, before the upgrades were made, about 10 million gallons of raw sewage flowed daily down the Tijuana River into San Diego County.

The brewing legal battle follows the passage last month of a spending package by the U.S. House of Representatives that would eliminate the U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Grant Program, which has helped facilitate upgrades to prevent sewage spills in Tijuana.

Budget negotiations in Congress are expected to continue through November.

[joshua.smith@sandiegouniontribune.com](mailto:joshua.smith@sandiegouniontribune.com)

**Smith writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune.**

Copyright © 2017, Los Angeles Times

**This article is related to:** [Mexico](#), [San Diego County](#), [Coronado](#)

# State Bar of California seeks to discipline L.A. County deputy public defender



By **Marisa Gerber**

OCTOBER 11, 2017, 8:55 AM

**T**he State Bar of California has recommended a 30-day suspension for an L.A. County deputy public defender, concluding that she abandoned her client just before he faced trial on a molestation charge in Compton court.

Delia Metoyer's abandonment "casts a pall of doubt" over whether her former client — a man accused of sexually molesting a child — "was fairly served by the system," wrote [Donald F. Miles](#), a judge of the State Bar Court of California.

A phone call and email to Metoyer, a veteran attorney based out of the public defender's Compton office, weren't immediately returned, and her attorney, James Ham, declined to comment, referring to it as a "pending case."

The public defender's office also declined to comment. But in February, then-Acting Public Defender Kelly Emling sent [a letter to the Board of Supervisors](#) requesting that the county cover the cost of defending Metoyer during the State Bar proceedings. (The letter didn't name Metoyer, but referred to a deputy public defender assigned to the Compton case she handled.)

"My review," Emling wrote, "reveals no indication that the deputy public defender acted in bad faith or with actual malice."

The public defender's office is a county agency whose attorneys are appointed by the court to represent indigent defendants in criminal cases.

According to a timeline of the case laid out in Miles' decision, Metoyer had back pain the week before one of her clients, Matiws Ghebrehiwot, had his trial scheduled in January 2015, and she set up an MRI scan for Jan. 16, 2015.

But she did not mention the scan until the day before her appointment, Miles wrote, when Metoyer and the prosecutor on the sexual molestation case met in chambers with the trial judge to discuss logistics. After the prosecutor mentioned calling Ghebrehiwot's alleged victim — a 7-year-old girl — to testify the next day, Metoyer told the judge she had a doctor's appointment. After the judge told her to reschedule, the deputy public defender accused the judge of being "cruel" and started "whimpering," according to Miles' decision, which was filed last month.

The trial judge asked to move the conversation into the courtroom, where a court reporter could keep a transcript of the discussion, but Metoyer first asked to use the judge's private bathroom. After about 10 minutes, the judge sent staff to check on her. Metoyer had sneaked out of the bathroom, Miles wrote, and used a different courtroom to return to her office without detection.

The attorney then met with her boss — who didn't know Metoyer was supposed to be in court — and the boss called the judge, who agreed to let Metoyer go to her appointment the next day, but asked that she return to the courtroom immediately, Miles wrote. Metoyer refused, leaving to go to the doctor, and was immediately removed from the case, according to Miles' decision. At a sanctions hearing, the trial judge found that the attorney had violated a court order and abandoned her client. Metoyer unsuccessfully appealed.

Early on, Ghebrehiwot — who was unwilling to register as a sex offender — hadn't been interested in a plea, but Miles wrote that after Metoyer "abandoned" him, he agreed to a deal. According to L.A. County court records, Ghebrehiwot pleaded no contest to committing a lewd or lascivious act with a child under the age of 14. He was sentenced to six years in prison.

Miles wrote that while it was beyond his ability to determine whether the plea was a fair resolution, the attorney's "abandonment of her client at trial casts a pall of doubt over both the outcome and whether Ghebrehiwot was fairly served by the system."

Miles noted in his decision that Metoyer had no prior record of discipline since she was admitted to practice law in California in 2000 and presented the court with evidence from four lawyers and a former client detailing her "fine qualities as an attorney." But in recommending that she be suspended from practicing law for 30 days, Miles also noted that Metoyer failed to show any realistic remorse and said she'd committed "egregious and inexcusable violations" that caused "real harm to the administration of justice."

The California Supreme Court has yet to decide whether to approve the disciplinary recommendation.

[marisa.gerber@latimes.com](mailto:marisa.gerber@latimes.com)

**OPINION**

# State pension costs are crowding out basic services



Coolcaesar at English Wikipedia

CalPERS headquarters at Lincoln Plaza in Sacramento.

By **THE EDITORIAL BOARD** | [opinion@langnews.com](mailto:opinion@langnews.com) |

October 11, 2017 at 8:16 am



Rising pension costs throughout the state will continue to crowd out resources needed for tangible services for years to come, according to a new report by the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research.

“There is contentious debate about what is driving these cost increases — significant retroactive benefit increases, unrealistic assumptions about investment earnings, policies that mask or delay recognition of true costs, poor governance, to name the most commonly cited,” explained former Assemblyman Joe Nation, who authored the report. “[B]ut there is agreement on one fact: rising pension costs are making it harder to provide services traditionally considered part of government’s core mission.

As the report notes, while the state contribution to CalPERS and CalSTRS was just \$1.6 billion in 2002-03, by 2008-09 contributions had risen to \$4.3 billion. The report projects that by 2029-30, state contributions will hit \$19.5 billion.

As a proportion of state operating expenditures, pension contributions have ballooned from 2.1 percent in 2002-03 to 4.9 percent in 2008-09, and are on track to hit an estimated 7.1 percent in the current fiscal year and could account for 10.1 or 11.4 percent of state spending by 2029-30.

There is no other way to look at it. The greater the share of the state budget pension costs account for, the less money there is to spend on anything else. As the report points out, over the time period from 2002-03 to 2017-18, social services and higher education have seen the greatest reductions in spending as a share of the state budget, with Department of Social Services spending dropping from 10.7 percent of the state operating expenses to 7 percent.

With pension costs expected to continue to rise over the next decade, more cuts are to be expected. The report notes that among the ways the state can accommodate the projected increases in pension costs by 2029-30 is a 4 percent cut across the board or an additional 27 percent reduction in DSS and higher expenditures.

It is important to keep in mind that the state finds itself in this situation despite having raised taxes and fees many times and even passing tepid pension reforms.

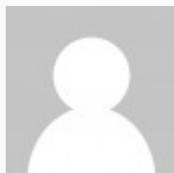
Of course, it isn’t just the state which is grappling with growing pension costs, but local governments and school districts. As the Legislative Analyst’s Office reported earlier this year, from just 2013-14 through 2020-21, districts across the state will experience a tripling of pension contributions — with contributions to CalPERS and CalSTRS growing from just over \$3 billion to \$9.455 billion.

The SIEPR report provides a few case studies to illustrate the real world impact, including the Los Angeles Unified School District. As a proportion of the district's budget, pension costs have grown from 6 percent of operating expenditures in 2002-03 to nearly 9 percent now and on track to hit 12 percent or 13.3 percent by 2029-30. This naturally means less money for programs and classrooms. To accommodate such pension cost increases, SIEPR estimates the district would either have to reduce salary expenditures by 5 percent or cut all spending by 3 percent.

It is imperative that we not allow this problem to get worse or allow squeamish politicians to keep sweeping the problem under the rug. Governments exist to serve not the public, not to sustain unsustainable pension benefits. Self-respecting taxpayers should not allow this to go on.

---

Tags: **editorials**



**The  
Editorial  
Board**

[VIEW COMMENTS](#)

## Join the Conversation

We invite you to use our commenting platform to engage in insightful conversations about issues in our community. Although we do not pre-screen comments, we reserve the right at all times to remove any information or materials that are unlawful, threatening, abusive, libelous, defamatory, obscene, vulgar, pornographic, profane, indecent or otherwise objectionable to us, and to disclose any information necessary to satisfy the law, regulation, or government request. We might permanently block any user who abuses these conditions.

If you see comments that you find offensive, please use the “Flag as Inappropriate” feature by hovering over the right side of the post, and