The High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto (pictured), is among the county jails under public scrutiny for alleged inadequate medical care of inmates, which spurred a class action lawsuit in 2016 and, more recently, four claims against the county on behalf of Betty Lozano, and Adelanto resident who died after being booked into the jail in July.

In the last three years, 30 people have died in San Bernardino County jails with 18 of those deaths, or 60 percent, being medical-related, according to Sheriff's Department figures.

Last year, eight of 10 in-custody deaths, or 80 percent, were found to be medical-related while so far this year, four of eight in-custody deaths, or 50 percent, were determined to be medical-related, according to the Sheriff's Department.

Attorneys representing the family of an Adelanto woman who died in custody in July, apparently from a drug-related medical emergency, say the problem has become so bad jail nurses are speaking out and fear losing their licenses, and at least one former nurse is pursuing legal action.

“We think somebody needs to be looking into these deaths and find out exactly what’s happening and put measures in place so they can be prevented,” said Victorville attorney Sharon Brunner, who along with attorney Jim Terrell are representing the family of Betty Lozano, who died shortly after 11 p.m. July 26 after she stopped breathing at the High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto and was hospitalized.

ALLEGATIONS DISPUTED

The Sheriff's Department has long stood by the quality and quantity of medical care its inmates receive and denies any allegations of medical neglect or mistreatment of its prisoners.

“We refute claims that our inmates are not getting the care they need. Inmates today have access to kiosks within their housing units and can request medical attention at any time,” Lt. Sarkis Ohannessian said in an email. “Visiting a (doctor) in the jail today is faster than the attention you and I get from our personal healthcare providers. And, any patients requiring hospitalization are taken by ambulance to the hospital.”

He said significant improvements have been made in recent years to address concerns of ailing inmates and the growing jail population in the age of prison realignment.
“We continue to update our facilities and improving the level of care our medical staff provide in terms of preventative care,” Ohannessian said. “There are procedures in place to screen the 83,000 inmates who are booked each year into our facilities.”

He noted that in 2008, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors approved a $10.8 million contract with the state to expand a treatment program for mentally ill inmates at the West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga that is tailored to restore mental competency to inmates so they can stand trial for the crimes in which they are accused.

“The state would not have entered into a contract with our agency if we were lacking in our ability to care for our inmate population,” Ohannessian said. “Our success rate in getting criminal defendants back in court to stand trial has been remarkable, to say the least.”

RECENT DEATHS

Lozano, 34, was arrested about 4:27 p.m. July 26 on suspicion of being under the influence of drugs. She began to suffer a medical emergency while in the back of a patrol car or upon arrival at the jail and was in a semi-conscious state, sheriff’s officials said.

According to claims led with the county on Sept. 26 by members of Lozano’s family, Lozano was admitted to the jail in a wheelchair, nude from the waist down and in a semi-conscious state. Her feet were dragging along the ground as she was wheeled into the intake area of the jail, as the wheelchair had no footplates. She was “dumped” from the wheelchair onto the floor of a “sobering cell” and left there for hours without appropriate medical attention.

Lozano stopped breathing at 8:50 p.m. and was taken to Victor Valley Global Medical Center in Victorville, where she died at 11:11 p.m. the same night, Ohannessian said.

Brunner and Terrell said they plan on filing a federal lawsuit this week with more than a dozen causes of action including wrongful death, denial of medical care and civil rights violations.

Lozano’s death was followed by three more deaths at other county jails in September, with two of them occurring on the same day.

On Sept. 24, a deputy found 44-year-old inmate Albert Snell hanging by a sheet from the top bunk of his cell at 3:09 a.m. at the West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga. The deputy cut the sheet and began CPR. Medical personnel summoned to the cell took over when they arrived, but it was too late. Snell was taken to the hospital, where he died at 4:02 a.m., according to the Sheriff’s Department.

Several hours later, at about 8:43 a.m., inmate Jacob Hoyo, 29, suffered a seizure at the jail. He was taken to the hospital, where he died at 10:12 a.m.

Prior to being into the jail, Hoyo had been involved in a traffic collision and was arrested for a DUI. He was treated at a hospital and medically cleared by doctors for booking at the jail, sheriff’s officials said.

About 9 p.m. on Sept. 29, a deputy at the sheriff’s Morongo Basin jail in Joshua Tree found inmate Henry Simmons, 60, of Joshua Tree, dead in his cell. Earlier in the day, at 12:51 p.m., he was arrested at the Hi-Desert Medical Center, in Joshua Tree, and booked into the jail on suspicion of being under the influence of a controlled substance, according to a Sheriff’s Department press release.

The Riverside County Coroner’s Office conducted the autopsy on Simmons, the results of which are pending.

Ohannessian said an in-custody death is “always tragic” and not something the Sheriff’s Department takes lightly.

“Our specialized detectives conduct a full investigation in every case and the results of those investigations are examined at the highest level in our department to ensure safety concerns of the inmates and staff are adequately addressed,” Ohannessian said in an email. “Within the last couple years, hundreds of camera systems have been installed in the jails as an added tool to monitor inmates. Deaths of incarcerated individuals will always be a concern for any agency, who all have their share of these types of cases. Whether they are medical in nature, suicides or other, we try our best to intercede and get them help.”

PRACTICE & POLICY

Despite the Sheriff’s Department’s firm stance that inmates at its jails receive appropriate and expeditious medical care as needed, it counters hundreds of inmate complaints that have poured into attorney offices in recent years alleging the exact opposite, including Brunner’s and Terrell’s offices and the Berkeley-based Prison Law Office, a prisoner advocacy nonprofit.

In February 2016, the Prison Law Office filed a class action lawsuit against the county alleging drastically deficient medical and mental health inmate care as well as other civil rights violations at San Bernardino County jails.

“Jail medical, mental health and dental care is so deficient that it is harming the people it aims to serve,” according to the lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Riverside.

Terrell, one of the Victorville attorneys representing the family of Lozano, said, “We receive countless letters (from inmates) each month, and they’re all about medical abuse. Eighty or 90 percent are about just total neglect.”

Data from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics underscore the importance of adequate medical and treatment for prisoners.
In 2011–2012, an estimated 40 percent of state and federal prisoners and jail inmates reported having a current chronic medical condition while about half reported ever having a chronic medical condition. Additionally, 21 percent of prisoners and 14 percent of jail inmates reported ever having tuberculosis, hepatitis B or C, or other STDs (excluding HIV or AIDS). Female prisoners and jail inmates were more likely than males to report ever having a chronic condition according to BJS numbers.

Prison Law Office Executive Director Donald Specter said protocol calls for inmates to be interviewed by a nurse during intake, and if the inmate appears to suffer from an urgent medical condition, they're supposed to be referred to a doctor. A special protocol is also supposed to be in place for treating inmates going through drug withdrawal, he said.

“If it's an emergency, then they're not supposed to be admitted to the jail, but taken to a hospital,” Specter said. “If it's something that can be taken care of within the jail, they're supposed to be referred to a clinician who has the authority and training to treat them.”

Specter said he visited the High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto about a month after Lozano's death and noticed a problem with how inmates were being medically screened during intake.

“The nurses were not doing the (medical) evaluations,” said Specter, adding that the medical evaluations were being done by sheriff’s deputies and that the evaluations were not being done in private.

“That's what I learned while I was there – the deputies are doing the medical and mental health intake and are completing the forms,” Specter said.

Specter said the Prison Law Office is in settlement negotiations with the county regarding its class-action lawsuit, and one of the things the Sheriff’s Department has agreed to do is implement sweeping reforms including a revamping of its inmate intake procedures. That includes, among other things, videoconferencing capabilities that allow clinical staff at other facilities to participate in intake procedures, implementation of a tuberculosis screening protocol that conforms to Centers for Disease Control guidelines and adopting withdrawal assessment and treatment protocols.

MOVING FORWARD

Ohannessian said the Sheriff’s Department has been working cooperatively with the Prison Law Office for more than a year to address its claims, and that all county jails are inspected by the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to ensure they meet the requirements set by the state.

Still, the impact prison realignment has had on county jails cannot be ignored, sheriff’s officials maintain.

Prison realignment, or AB109 (the Assembly Bill for which the law is based), took effect in California in October 2011, shifting many prisoners serving longer sentences into county jails instead of state prison and resulting in sharp increases in both inmate-on-inmate violence and violent confrontations between inmates and deputies.

Additionally, arrestees suffering from drug abuse and chronic medical conditions such as cancer, HIV, dialysis, and mental health issues require substantially more resources for ongoing treatment, Ohannessian said.

The demand for increased medical and mental health care and resources for inmates has grown by leaps and bounds in the last several years.

In 2012, physician clinics at county jails averaged 2,100 patients per month. Today, the clinics average 5,200 patients per month, Ohannessian said.

In 2012, jail nursing clinics averaged 4,500 patients per month, and today they average 7,200 patients a month. Offsite specialty clinic referrals averaged 120 patients per month in 2010 and had increased steadily, with the average now at 220 patients per month, Ohannessian said.

Referrals for mental health care at county jails averaged 900 patients per month in 2012. That average is now 1,400 patients per month. Out of the approximately 6,000 inmates now in custody, 1,100 have been identified with a history of mental health issues and are receiving medications and/or therapy, Ohannessian said.

As the Sheriff’s Department continues grappling with the issues surrounding inmate monitoring, medical and mental health care, its harshest critics continue to ask: Why are inmates still dying at such alarming rates?

“It's a problem that has to be addressed because more people are going to die,” said Woodland Hills attorney Dale K. Galipo, who is partnering with Brunner and Terrell on the Lozano case.

Citing the recent deaths at the jails, Galipo said the county has a long way to go before the ideal is met.

“I think that, clearly, there's a lot of work to be done to get to the bottom of it, to compensate the victims and to find out what the current policies are and how it needs to change to ensure this doesn't happen in the future,” he said.
Parenting classes in San Bernardino jails help inmates reconnect with their children and themselves

Christopher Vallejo was grocery shopping when he ran into one of his former students, a student he taught at the High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto. “He had his two young sons with him, maybe five and six, and he comes up and he’s telling me how great he’s doing,” recalled Vallejo, who teaches parenting classes in San Bernardino County’s jails. “He looked healthy. He looked sober and he was working. They were happy and kind of joking around with him.”

This outcome is what San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department strives for when inmates take classes offered through the Inmate Services Unit. The unit offers 24 classes and programs including vital classes for inmates who are parents through The Parenting Intervention Project. This project includes in-jail parenting and in-jail trauma recovery classes as well as parent-child interaction time. The classes and programs are designed to help inmates realize how their childhood traumas affected their lives, what they can do to be better parents and pave the way for successful reentry.

Dr. Laura Kamptner of California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB), along with Dr. Faith McClure, created the research-based parent education program in 2009.

“Research shows that when we can work with people to change their attitude and help them to understand themselves and help them to have empathy for their children, then we’re more likely to see long term behavior changes as opposed to a parenting class that just focuses on teaching parents punishment techniques to keep their kids in line,” said Kamptner.
The goal is to look at inmate rehabilitation holistically, according to Chris Martin, inmate programs coordinator for the San Bernardino County Sheriff. "Society has come to the conclusion that just putting these people in jail for two, three, four years and letting them sit there doing nothing and then releasing them back into society once they’re sentence is over is not helpful. So we want to look at the whole issue and break the cycles."

Vallejo teaches the Trauma Recovery & Family Relations classes as well as directs interns, hailing from CSUSB and California Baptist University, who also teach the classes. "We want them to start reconnecting with themselves in order to have the warmth, responsiveness and empathy needed to be able to give that to their kids. We are trying to relearn this intergenerational teaching that they’ve picked up so far, but instead of passing on incarceration and abuse, we want them to pass on that warmth, responsiveness and empathy."

The classes, offered at three of the four jails, are popular and have waiting lists to enroll. Some inmates must take the classes under court order and many others volunteer.

Once the students successfully complete 12 hours of the Trauma Recovery & Family Relations classes, they may be eligible to participate in the TALK Program, offered at two facilities. This program allows 90-minute visits between inmates and their children supervised by a clinical facilitator and interns who have been trained in developmentally appropriate practices.

Added Vallejo, “You get to see the parents, and many of them for the first time, having uninterrupted access to their kids. One individual, a father, was telling me ‘I’ve never actually spent an hour playing with my kid. I’ve been high. I’ve been running around on the street. I was on my phone, distracted in some way. This was really fun.’”

Martin recalled another successful TALK visit, saying “Last year, we had two dads who had never met their children before – they were infants. When you see these big, rough, manly men, just sobbing and holding their children for the first time, it really does give them a reason to succeed. And it gives the children their parents.”

According to Kampfner, there are few, if any, other programs like this one. “First, some jails have minimal programming. And that’s why the recidivism rate is very high. Glen Helen (Rehabilitation Center) is very unique in that respect. It’s unique in that it’s an actual class and the type of parent education class is very unique as well.”

The next step is a pilot project with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and the Probation Department. “Our goal is to have these people in our parenting class in custody, hand them over to an extension of the program in probation and continue the work that we started with them in jail,” said Kampfner.

And as Vallejo experienced, it’s important to give them the tools to successfully reenter the community: "On the most practical level, it does come down to the fact that you’re going to be in the grocery store with these individuals. Do you want them buying groceries alongside of you or do you want them waiting outside to steal yours when you walk out?"
Land grab: What happens when warehouses move in next door?

Andrea Bernstein
October 16 2017
A truck passes Jurupa Valley High School after school. Long-term studies of the Inland Empire show that pollution is high in communities with significant concentrations of warehouses and diesel trucks. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

Ana Carlos still remembers the day last November when the letter came in the mail.

"I get inside the kitchen, I open it up, and it basically looks like an escrow contract," she recalls.

An Orange County developer was offering her $440,000 for her house. She paid less than half that six years ago. The offer still stands.

"I wouldn’t even considering selling," she says, looking out at her property. It spans two acres, with a barn, horses and goats. "They could have come here with an offer of $1 million, and I would have said, no thank you."
Nine-year-old Ernie Carlos plays tetherball in the backyard of his Bloomington home. In Nov. 2016, the Carlos family received a letter from an Orange County developer offering $440,000 for their house. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

Carlos lives in Bloomington, an unincorporated area in San Bernardino county about four miles southwest of the city of San Bernardino. A drive through reveals custom homes spaced far apart and the occasional roadside stand selling eggs.

"We have three young children, so for us it was exciting for them to grow up and be outside with animals, in the garden," she says. "We liked the feel of this rustic town."

But developers have other plans for Bloomington. The community is nestled deep in the Inland Empire, which has become a mecca for the logistics and e-commerce industries. Over the past decade, warehouses have become a common sight in this part of Southern California.

As e-commerce and rapid shipping have become a way of life, the Inland Empire has become a mecca for logistics warehouses. Inside are mountains of online inventory. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC, GOOGLE EARTH
As Americans buy more of their merchandise online, the industry is in a frenzy to build more warehouses to keep up with demand. But land in San Bernardino and Riverside counties isn’t as easy to find these days. Much of it has been built out or bought up.

So some developers are getting creative – buying up patches of neighborhoods so they can demolish the homes and squeeze warehouses into the open space.

"I see it when I go to south Fontana," Carlos says. "To the left are homes, and to the right are these massive warehouses that don’t end. They keep going and going, miles and miles of warehouse."

In some areas, it’s clear that a few homeowners simply refused to sell.

A street sign in Mira Loma. Long-term studies of the Inland Empire show areas with more warehouses and trucks have higher incidences of asthma and other health problems, especially among children.MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

"[The warehouses] have them caged in. An itty bitty house with these huge warehouse walls [around it]," says Carlos.

She mentions a family she knows in Fontana who refused to sell, even as the developers offered them more money. But as the months passed, more of the neighbors took the offers.

"And little by little, they started seeing the land leveled behind them, to the right and left of them," she says.

Then the warehouses were built. The offer from the developer increased to more than $1 million.

"With the walls going up, and the warehouses, and the traffic from all these workers coming in, the trucks, they caved, they said, fine, have our house," Carlos says.
She worries it could happen to her. The letter she received makes it clear that the developer, Howard Industrial Partners, is trying to acquire 30 adjoining acres. It’s unclear what the company intends to build, but its website shows mostly logistics and distribution centers in its portfolio.

Carlos says it would be strange to have a big white building overlooking her horse stable, or to feel "caged in" by warehouses on either side of her. And then there’s the traffic, the noise of heavy trucks, and the pollution, she says, her voice trailing off.

Long-term studies of the Inland Empire show that pollution is high in communities with high concentrations of warehouses and diesel trucks. There are also higher incidences of asthma and other health problems, especially with children.
"These developers know that once the neighbors start seeing the community go, we’re going to budge," says Carlos. "We’re going to throw in the towel and say, fine. Would we really want to be enclosed in walls of warehouses with our kids? This is not what we signed up for."

A VICIOUS CYCLE

Rigoberto Diaz owns a home up the street from Carlos. He’s lived here for 17 years.

He got the same letter from the developer, and he's already accepted the offer. A few other neighbors did too, he said.

"They’re afraid to say it, because [some neighbors] may get mad," says Diaz. "But the reality is, they already signed up. I know quite a few of those. They’re keeping it to themselves."
Proponents of warehouse development in Bloomington says it would generate additional tax revenue to address problems such as a lack of sidewalks. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

Diaz won't say how much money he was offered – just that it was more money than he could make in a traditional sale, and it’s money he can give his kids someday.

He doesn’t have it yet, or even a guarantee from the developer. The deal is contingent on whether the neighbors living closest to him also agree to sell. One hold out would block it from happening.

A warehouse looms over a residential community in Mira Loma. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

But Diaz thinks most people in the neighborhood actually want out. He says this area has its share of problems, which the county can't fix.

To explain, he pulls out some photos of his backyard after it rained last year.

"It's a lake," he groans, pointing at the sizeable body of water that he says forms every time it rains. Water streams in from several other properties. Diaz has asked the county to fix it many times over the years.
"They say they don't collect enough money from taxes," he says. "They don't have the resources, so they won't be able to fix it."

The Carlos family owns two acres of land in Bloomington, with horses, goats and chickens. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

As Diaz sees it, Bloomington is stuck in a vicious cycle. The community generates very little tax revenue because the residents pay low property taxes. So the county provides only basic services. There are few sidewalks, no sewer and a limited law enforcement presence.

With such minimal county services, the community can't attract traditional businesses, such as restaurants, stores and office buildings. And without those companies, the community can't generate more tax revenue.

For the past three years, the Rocha family been fighting to keep a warehouse from being built behind their home. The project is still in the planning approval process. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

Díaz believes warehouse development could generate enough tax revenue to break that cycle.
Others agree. Gary Grosich is a longtime businessman and city planner in the Inland Empire. He also chairs the Bloomington Municipal Advisory Council, a county-appointed board that represents residents. Locals call it the MAC.

"There are several things we need, and the public has been asking for it – more public safety, we need an additional sheriff, we need to provide more services in the way of parks, we need infrastructure improvements," Grosich says.

He insists that Bloomington isn’t going to allow warehouses to "hopscotch" all over the community. The MAC recently recommended that three small sections of town be designated for future industrial development. That would keep most of the warehouses clustered together, away from the central part of town. Ana Carlos and Rigoberto Diaz live in one of the designated areas.

Nine-year-old Ernie Carlos plays in the backyard of his Bloomington home. Some developers are buying up patches of neighborhoods so they can demolish the homes and squeeze warehouses into the open space. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

Developers would still be required to go through the same county approval process, which includes an environmental review and a vote from the board of supervisors. Projects in the designated areas would be more likely to receive the required zoning changes.

"The areas identified by the council for rezoning were selected because of their proximity to the I-10 and 60 freeways, the railroad tracks, existing industrial areas and truck routes," said Lee and Associates, the real estate firm that sent the offer letters to Carlos and Diaz. "We have been in contact with property owners in those areas, and most have told us that they support the council's proposal," the firm said in an emailed statement.
Grosich says the MAC spent months gathering public feedback from residents as it developed Bloomington's updated community plan, and that most residents support the idea of limited warehouse development in exchange for enhanced public services.

But others in the community say the MAC has turned a deaf ear to their concerns, and they don’t believe a plan like this will limit warehouse development.

Kim and Thomas Rocha formed Concerned Neighbors of Bloomington and collected 1,000 signatures from residents who oppose warehouses. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

A COMMUNITY DIVIDED

Kim and Thomas Rocha live a few blocks east of Rigoberto Diaz.

For the past three years, they've been fighting to keep a warehouse from being built behind their home (it’s still in the planning approval process).

In that span of time, several other warehouse projects have been proposed around town.

"We realized that, 'Oh my God, they’re going to surround us.' So it doesn’t [matter] if I win [the fight against] this warehouse here, I’m still going to have one right there," says Kim Rocha. "So I’m going to have the trucks anyway. Smog, pollution, the quality of my life...and our community, it’s a poor community, and a lot of poor people sometimes don’t have a voice."
Earlier this year, the Rochas formed a group called Concerned Neighbors of Bloomington. Kim says they’ve collected more than 1,000 signatures from residents who oppose warehouses, so they find it hard to believe the MAC’s claim that most residents support this kind of development.

"It's like, where are these people?," she asks, growing frustrated. "We don't find these people saying they want the warehouses. To me, it's like, who is telling you this? Because we are in this community too."

Bloomington residents don't often attend county meetings to protest the warehouses, says Kim Rocha. They work long hours, some are elderly and don’t speak or read English, she says. So when the county sends a postcard to inform them of a future warehouse project, many people don’t see it or understand what it says, adds Rocha.

Residents may not find out what's going on until a project is about to break ground. That's similar to what happened this summer after the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors approved a warehouse project near an elementary school. Many parents were shocked that they weren't informed beforehand.

"It's like David and Goliath," Kim Rocha sighs. "Like, we’re fighting big business, big money, and we're just little people."

The Rochas have been to many of the MAC meetings, and they know about Bloomington's tax revenue problem. They don't think warehouses are the way to solve it.

Ultimately, Kim Rocha says, if they can’t get county leaders to see it their way, it'll be up to residents to hold the line.

For the past three years, the Rochas have been fighting to keep a warehouse from being built behind their home. The project is still in the planning approval process. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

"If you don’t sell, you may be the major block that’s stopping them. Just don’t sell, don’t give in," Thomas Rocha says, recounting the advice he recently gave a retiree who lives nearby.
He and his wife also realize the developers have deep pockets, and that worries them.

"Remember the lady who lived over there?" Kim Rocha says, gesturing over her head.

Her husband nods.

"Her house value came in at $375,000, and they offered her $800,000."

The woman took the offer.
Mandalay Bay room 32135 will never see another guest. Here’s what has happened to other mass shooting sites

By Melissa Etehad

OCTOBER 20, 2017, 6:50 PM

What should be done with the sites of mass shootings?

For some grieving families, tearing down a building and replacing it with a memorial feels right. In other cases, people prefer no special marker.

MGM Resorts announced Friday that it does not plan to rent out room No. 32135 at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, the perch from which Stephen Paddock shot and killed 58 people and injured more than 500. The company did not say what it plans to do with the suite.

Here is what’s been done with other sites:

**Pulse nightclub, Orlando, Fla.**

In May, the owner of the nightclub, which was known as a safe space for the city’s LGBTQ community until Omar Mateen killed 49 people there June 12, 2016, announced plans to turn the shuttered club into a memorial.

The owner, Barbara Poma, said she plans to open a new Pulse in a different location.

Poma hopes the memorial, which will include a museum, will be a space where survivors can grieve and people can honor the dead.
Two months after Oliver Huberty killed 21 people and injured 15 on July 18, 1984, the fast-food corporation bulldozed the restaurant.

The company then donated the site to San Diego, so city officials could decide what to do with the land.

Today, a memorial to honor the victims of the massacre stands in its place. On the anniversary of the shooting, victims’ friends and families adorn the site with flowers.
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

It took university administrators years to determine what to do with all the buildings and rooms where Seung Hui Cho killed 27 students and five faculty members on April 16, 2007.

The building where most of the deaths occurred — Norris Hall — underwent $800,000 in renovation and was reopened in 2009, the second anniversary of the massacre. Faculty, worried about further traumatizing students, decided not to use that space as classrooms. The area is now a study space with no visible indication of its history.

West Ambler Johnston Hall, the dorm where the first two students were killed, was renovated, renamed “residential college” and reopened in the fall of 2012.

School officials established a memorial for the victims elsewhere on campus.
Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Conn.

In 2013, school officials decided to demolish the building where Adam Lanza killed 20 children and six staff members on Dec. 14 the previous year.

After much debate, officials agreed to build a new school on the same site. Students in the meantime were moved to a temporary building nearby.

In 2016, the building was finished. The new 86,000-square-foot school cost $50 million and can accommodate 400 students in preschool through fourth grade.

To ensure a calm, safe and welcoming space, its designers included impact-resistant windows and video cameras to monitor the surroundings. Green landscape and treehouses also line the building to resemble nature and a serene landscape.

Absent on the site of the new school: a memorial.
Columbine High School, Littleton, Colo.

Extensive damage was done to the school where teenage gunmen Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold killed 13 people and injured more than 20 others before taking their own lives on April 20, 1999.

Bullet holes pierced the window frame of the athletics department, blood stained the carpets on the stairs, and hallways and shrapnel penetrated the ceiling.

The school underwent a multimillion-dollar renovation the summer after the massacre. Construction workers repaired damaged walls and ceilings and replaced the hallway floors and stairs with new tiles. The science room where one teacher died was gutted and completely remodeled.

The library, where most of the killings occurred, was replaced with an atrium. The ceiling features a mural of clouds and evergreen trees that was painted by Virginia Wright-Frierson.
In 2000, a new library named HOPE Columbine Memorial Library was dedicated to the victims.

![Image of library](image)

An image from a video shows the scene of the 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado. (Associated Press)

**Century 16 movie theater, Aurora, Colo.**

After the shooting on July 20, 2012, in which James Holmes killed 12 people and injured 58, city officials conducted an online survey and found that a majority of residents wanted the theater reopened. But the decision was controversial, as not everyone agreed.

A renovation soon began. A bigger screen was brought into Theater 9, the auditorium where the shooting took place, and the number of available seats was reduced.

The theater was also renamed Century Aurora 16. The auditoriums are now identified by letters instead of numbers.
Six months after the massacre, the theater held a ceremony for victims and their families as well as first responders.

City officials and Gov. John Hickenlooper delivered remarks. Afterward, people gathered inside the theater where the shooting took place for a showing of the movie “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey.”

The theater reopened to the general public about one week later.

The Aurora, Colo., movie theater where a mass shooting occurred in 2012 was remodeled. It reopened the next year, shown here. (Marc Piscotty / Getty Images)

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San Bernardino County – San Bernardino County will be holding meetings for the Countywide Plan to receive comments on the scope and content of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Residents of the County are welcome to attend the meetings and present environmental information that you believe should be considered in the EIR.

The meetings are scheduled as follows:

Thursday, October 26, 2017, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

- San Bernardino Government Center, 385 North Arrowhead Avenue, 1st floor, San Bernardino
- Jerry Lewis High Desert Government Center, 15900 Smoke Tree St., Suite 131, Hesperia
- Bob Burke Joshua Tree government Center 63665 Twentynine Palms Highway, Joshua Tree

If you plan on speaking, you will need to fill out a speaker slip and if you would like your comments considered in the EIR please have a hard copy of your comments to submit.

For more information about the Scoping Meeting and to view the Notice of preparation please visit http://www.countywideplan.com/EIR.
Countywide Plan to improve communities

At an October 4 Countywide Plan regional open house meeting, held by San Bernardino County Land Use Services at the San Moritz Lodge in Crestline, land use services personnel, with their consultants, presented the mountain communities with the results of the numerous meetings held in our communities during 2016 to develop community plans for Lake Arrowhead, Cedar Glen, Crest Park, Deer Lodge Park, Twin Peaks, Rimforest, Skyforest, Agua Fria and Blue Jay.

In an interview with The Alpenhorn News, San Bernardino County Public Information Officer David Wert explained it was a new approach to completing a general plan where its land use services (LUS) actually went out to the communities listening to residents on what they wanted to see in their communities.

LUS, with their consultants, held numerous workshops to receive input from residents on zoning, determining what land can be developed for what uses; infrastructure needs, such as roads, transportation, evacuation routes; healthcare, public safety, education and other county services; community values, determining what should be preserved; and what is needed to improve their communities. The workshops helped to determine a list of potential action plans community members can spearhead with support from various county departments.

Input from communities and/or cities in San Bernardino County will be used to develop the county’s policies and business plan for providing regional and local services according to information on its website.

“We’re still early in the process,” Wert shared, encouraging residents to communicate with the county during this process about what they want in their communities explaining, “This will take years to get it right this time.”

A new feature of the Countywide Plan are action plans to address issues and lack of resources identified by each community to improve their quality of life, such as tools to attract more businesses and jobs to the mountain communities or to spruce up downtown areas.

“In other words, the action plans are a tool the county is providing communities to help themselves set and accomplish goals with the county’s help,” Wert voiced, explaining, the community would first identify an individual or organization to “help oversee the execution of the action plan and ensure steps are completed” with guidance from county departments.

Wert explained the county is creating a “Community Development Toolkit” to provide information and website links on several topics to help people make positive changes in their community.

Wert explains the county envisions the individual or organization spearheading an action plan would obtain funding through either grants, forming assessment districts with the community, creating a nonprofit community development corporation or through external funding sources.

In an interview with The Alpenhorn News at the October 4 open house with LUS Senior Planner Chris Warrick and county consultant, Placeworks Associate Principal Colin Drukker, Warrick suggested the Economic Development and/or Housing and Community Development Agency, which

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works with Community Development Block Grants and other state and federal grants, “are the best resource for people to talk to.”

The county views its new county plan as going “well beyond a traditional general plan,” creating a web-based, comprehensive “complete county” Countywide Plan taking into account “all services” provided by county government. It takes into consideration each community’s “unique values and priorities” to serve as a guide for county decision-making, financial planning and communication and provide a searchable wealth of data and information about county operations.

The Countywide Plan is targeted for adoption in 2018, with the county seeking residents’ views on the individual community plans the county developed after hearing from residents to ensure LUS accurately captured residents’ vision for their community’s future growth.

Warrick and Drukker explained they are looking for new feedback on the proposed county’s policy plan covering a wide range of issues including “environment, resources and conservation, safety and security, economic and social resources.”

“These are the issues that we will be generating goals and policies about,” Drukker voiced, explaining, “We want to know what is most important to people so the county knows where to put its energy,” while asking “are we missing any issues.”

After receiving feedback from the community, the county will go through a California Environmental Quality Act process, which includes an additional opportunity for public comment.

Residents are encouraged to visit the Countywide Plan website: http://countywideplan.com/ to learn more about the process and provide their comments before “we kick off the environmental part.”

Several Crestline residents who attended the meeting explained they are “motivated residents” looking for information on the dam at Lake Gregory, as for the open house on the community plans, they were disappointed there wasn’t a presentation where they could ask questions and have everyone hear the answers.
San Bernardino County's unemployment rate plunges below California's rate

Posted: Saturday, October 21, 2017 3:19 pm

San Bernardino County's unemployment rate showed a significant decrease in the month of September, dropping below the rate for the state as a whole.

The jobless rate in San Bernardino County plunged from 5.8 percent to 5.0 percent, according to data released on Oct. 20 by the California Employment Development Department.

The unemployment rate in California overall held steady at 5.1 percent, the EDD said.

California has now gained a total of 2,643,900 jobs since the economic expansion began in February of 2010.

The United States unemployment rate decreased 0.2 percentage point in September to 4.2 percent, while U.S. non-farm payroll employment declined by 33,000 jobs.

San Bernardino County

San Bernardino County's unemployment rate dropped to 5.0 percent in September.
Frank Adomitis has won his small claims case against the city of Highland and San Bernardino County seeking damages because the city and police department would not allow him to have a city council candidate debate at the police department’s training room, referred to as a community room at that time.

The incumbent candidates and two candidates for the new Districts 1 and 2 had a “candidates forum” at the police department and Adomitis wanted a debate including his own candidates, including himself, at the same facility.

Police Department Chief Captain Tony DeCecio turned down Adomitis’ request, so Adomitis rented the San Manuel Events Center for his event.

City council incumbents and two candidates who supported them did not participate in the Adomitis event.

On July 17, 2017, Adomitis filed a small claims case against the city and county.

On Friday, Oct. 20, Judge David Williams heard the case and decided in favor of Adomitis, who served as his own attorney. The city was represented by Nancy Wayne, representing the city’s third party administrator in claims cases. The county was represented by Rick Castanon of the County Risk Management Department. Neither of them are attorneys registered with the State Bar Association.

Judge Williams ordered the city and county to pay $2,690 plus $90 in court costs.

Castanon says the county is considering whether to appeal the case to superior court. Wayne declined to discuss the case. The defendants have 30 days to appeal from the date of the judgment, Oct. 20.
Bourland: ‘Philosophy is that I know business really well.’

By Anthony Victoria - October 21, 2017
Robb Bourland is a person who enjoys giving back. It’s why he decided to inquire about the vacant West Valley Water District board position vacated by Rialto Councilman Rafael Trujillo six months ago.

He answered the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors’ call to fill the seat at the request of the West Valley Water District Board of Directors when they were unable to fill the seat.

“The residents were aware of the issues happening on the water board,” Bourland said. “And they said, ‘Hey, you know they can use someone with some business expertise?’ And I said yes.”

Bourland looks to take his passion in helping others and his professional utility experience to serve constituents of the water district for two more years.

“I’ve been able to bring some business rigor into their usual day-to-day business,” explained Bourland.

That entails meeting with the 82-plus employees of the district and finding ways to get returns on investments and produce project plans.

“There are candidates that are saying, ‘we could do this and that,’” said Bourland. “My philosophy is that I know business really well.”

Bourland ran the business applications for Southern California Edison, dealing with nuclear and geothermal energy, as well as with the utility giants’ field and customer services for about 35 years.

“I understand utilities really well,” he said.

Bourland is concerned with the aging infrastructure of the system. He’s aiming to help West Valley understand the need to reserve funds for the replacement of old underground pipes and poles to mitigate potential safety and service concerns.
“My mantra for the future generations] is to ensure they have safe, clean, and reliable water,” Bourland expressed. “I help optimize businesses and utilities.”

Bourland also believes the district could improve its technology to help optimize customer service. In addition, he hopes the utility service provider will alleviate resident concerns with increasing rates.

“You do that by making the business run the best it can,” said Bourland. “I want the absolute lowest rates. But we have to take a look at what comprises the rates, the cost of obtaining the water, clean the water, deliver the water, and reduce the costs of those operations. The more we could lower those costs, the more we could lower the rates.”

San Bernardino County Supervisors Josie Gonzales and Janice Rutherford both expressed their support for Bourland.

“Mr. Bourland has done an excellent job as a member of the West Valley Water District Board of Directors,” Gonzales and Rutherford said in a joint statement. “Director Bourland has set a new management tone for the District and is committed to making sure the District provides you with reliable water service at a fair and affordable rate.”

Anthony Victoria

Anthony Victoria is the Community News Editor for El Chicano and Colton Courier. For news leads, he can be reached at his office: (909) 381-9898 ext. 208 or via email: victoriaanthony91@gmail.com
Memorial corridor ‘special’ for both veterans and community leaders

By Anthony Victoria - October 20, 2017

Launching the Route 66 Veterans Memorial Corridor was a special moment for Incredible Edible Community Garden Co-Founder Mary Petit.

Along with fellow Co-Founder Eleanor Torres, veteran service organizations, and community groups, Petit will be planting over 3,000 trees across a 400-mile stretch to honor brave military heroes like her father.

“My dad was in the First Marine Division at Guadalcanal,” said Petit. “I’m wearing his dog tags today, and I miss him.”

IECG held several kickoff events in Barstow, Fontana, and San Bernardino on October 12 and 13 to commemorate the actions of service men and women who have fought in wars dating back to World War II. At the Col. Joseph Rodriguez VFW Post 8737 volunteers planted 18 trees and permanent markers.
Torres said IECG received a $1 million grant through the California Climate Investments Program to work on the project. The marker will include a veteran’s name, branch of service, years of service and the GPS coordinates for the location of the tree.

“We wanted to have a project where we could go across the county and bring our communities together in the distinct in an effort to honor our veterans,” said Torres. “We’re excited about this because not only is it just tree planting...it includes scrubbing the air.”

San Bernardino County Supervisor Josie Gonzales, whose father also served in the military, said the “iconic” Route 66 project symbolizes freedom, venture, and American ingenuity. She also took the time to recognize the contributions of Latino veterans.

“This will serve as a living legacy honoring county veterans for whom we are forever indebted,” she said.

Vietnam War veteran Robert Carcano, whose name and U.S. Army service information will be placed on a marker, confirmed he is thankful that there are still people like the IECG admiring the contributions of veterans.

“[The memorial corridor] is a symbol to all of our veterans, who have served and are serving now,” he said. “It’s a great honor to be a part of this. Maybe someday kids will come by and recognize me.”
Chad Mayes may run for California governor

by Ben Adler | Capital Public Radio News
October 21 2017

Former Assembly Republican Leader Chad Mayes in his San Bernardino County hometown of Yucca Valley.BEN ADLER/CAPITAL PUBLIC RADIO NEWS

Former Assembly Republican Leader Chad Mayes, who drew scorn and fury from party activists this summer after negotiating a cap-and-trade deal with Democrats, says he's considering a run for California governor.

"As of right now, I am not running for governor," Mayes told Capital Public Radio Friday afternoon in an interview in his San Bernardino County hometown of Yucca Valley. "But over the last two months, it seems to be a constant refrain of people calling and asking me if I'd consider running."

Moments later, he added: "I'm not going to rule it out."

Mayes says he'll "more than likely" run for re-election to the Assembly, where he plans to lead what he calls a "Relevant Republican Caucus" that will seek "a seat at the table" when big issues come up for negotiation.
Although he stepped down as Assembly Minority Leader earlier this year under pressure from party activists and leadership, Mayes won't be termed out until 2026. His ally, Asm. Brian Dahle (R-Bieber), replaced him.

But if he jumps into the governor's race, Mayes says, it will be with the goal of modernizing a California Republican Party that he describes as being in a "death spiral."

"My brand of politics is to be loving, to be kind, to be compassionate," Mayes says. "I want to be able to let people know in California there are Republicans that care deeply about our values but care deeply about them. And I want to make sure that message gets out."

If he runs, Mayes would count on the backing of business groups and the Republican establishment. But he's sure to draw fierce opposition from conservatives, activists and party leadership.

"Chad is very demonstrably straining for relevance at a time when the state party has said sayonara to him, and so has his own caucus. And he's out of touch with what Republican activists think in the state," says California Republican National Committeewoman Harmeet Dhillon, who led the effort on the California GOP Board of Directors to pass a resolution calling on Mayes to resign his leadership post after the cap-and-trade vote.

"Becoming like the Democrats and being Democrat-lite is a recipe for extinction, not a recipe for success," Dhillon said Friday night at the California Republican Party convention in Anaheim — which Mayes is not attending.

There could be further ripple effects as well should Mayes enter the governor's race. USC political analyst Sherry Bebitch Jeffe says a third Republican would make it more likely that two Democrats will advance to the November general election under California's "top two" primary system.

"This does make it easier, in terms of Democrats not having to be worried about splitting the Democratic vote and perhaps a Republican eking out a second-place finish," she says.
Amazon.com Inc. said Monday it received 238 proposals from cities and regions across North America to host its second headquarters, a sign of the intense competition to host the $5 billion project.

The proposals came from 54 states, provinces, district and territories. Amazon, now based in Seattle, didn’t name any of the bidders or say when it would come up with a short list for its potential picks.

Cities including New York, Boston, Atlanta and Nashville have said they applied for the new corporate site, which is expected to generate 50,000 high-paying jobs over nearly 20 years.

The proposals were due last week, and Amazon has said it would make a decision on the new location next year.

Amazon has said it would consider factors such as the availability of software developers and other tech talent, good transportation options, cultural fit and the ability to move into a phase-one site as early as 2019. Other items on its wish list: a metro area of more than one million people and tax incentives.

Some cities and states are proposing big incentives. Newark, N.J., last week said it would offer a potential package of $7 billion over a decade.

Still, it is unclear where Amazon might land. “I don’t think any one market fits everything. It’s going to be a balancing act of the various attributes,” says Dave Bragg, a managing director at Green Street Advisors, which conducts real-estate research.

Amazon has increased its workforce from a few thousand to more than 40,000 over the past decade. And it is still planning to add 2 million square feet and 6,000 people in the next 12 months.
But to keep growing, the company needs more space. Amazon has said that it will give its team leaders a choice between staying in Seattle, relocating or being based out of both. It has said that the average pay for the new jobs will be around $100,000, depending on where it locates.

Opening a second, equal headquarters is believed by management experts to be an unprecedented move by an American corporation, and it presents unique cultural challenges for the company.

While Amazon continues to grow in Seattle, experts say it would be difficult for the company to essentially double its footprint there. In addition, hiring thousands more software developers will almost certainly be cheaper and easier in a different city, they say.

Write to Laura Stevens at laura.stevens@wsj.com
Needles Mayor Ed Paget M.D. issues a proclamation making Oct. 10, 2017, Military Vehicle Preservation Day. The Military Vehicle Preservation Association convoy made a stop in Needles as they were traveling from Chicago, Ill., to Santa Monica, Calif., on Route 66. Pictured are: Paget, Robert A. Lovingood (San Bernardino County District 1 Supervisor) and Dan McCluskey (convoy commander).

SAUL A. FLORES/Needles Desert Star

NEEDLES — On Oct. 10, a great many historic military and support vehicles came rumbling down Broadway to their designated stop in Needles, Calif. The Military Vehicle Preservation Association convoy was conducting their fourth trip; which started in Chicago, Ill., and ended in Santa Monica Calif., on Saturday, Oct. 14.

“The people here in Needles have been great to us even though we've been here for a couple of minutes, and the weather has cooperated with us as well,” said Don McCluskey, convoy commander.

The MVPA travels primarily on Route 66 and is made up of historic military vehicles that have been restored.

“We tend to stay off the major highways and use primarily Route 66 so we've been hitting a lot of small towns,” said McCluskey. “They've really opened their arms to us and have supported us through our journey, which is a great sight to see.”

After the drivers had a meal, donated and cooked by Golden Valley Cable, and the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe band played the Star Spangled Banner, city of Needles Mayor Ed Paget, San Bernardino County Board Chair and Dist. 1 Supervisor Robert Lovingood and others had a few things to say and give.

“I'm happy to greet the Military Vehicle Preservation Association convoy which started from Chicago and will end on the West Coast,” said Paget.

Paget went on to deliver a proclamation that made Oct. 10, 2017, Military Vehicle Preservation Day.

“I would like to say that this is fascinating and you've captured a moment of history with this event that has great value to our citizens, youth and to the country,” said Lovingood.

McCluskey thanked Paget and the city of Needles by giving them a license plate that says “Our Host City” in large letters.

Doran Sanchez, Bureau of Land Management Route 66 lead, extended a warm welcome to the convoy, thanked everybody who volunteered and presented Sharon Foster, vice president of East California Route 66 Association.

“I want to thank Needles because we are the gateway to California and we made California very proud today,” said Foster.

Foster presented McCluskey with a Historic California Route 66 sign.
NEWS

Woman found in Crestline collapsed cave identified

By MONICA RODRIGUEZ | morodriguez@scng.com | Daily Bulletin
PUBLISHED: October 21, 2017 at 7:44 pm | UPDATED: October 21, 2017 at 7:47 pm

CRESTLINE — The body of a woman found buried in a Crestline cave has been identified as that of a resident of Lake Arrowhead, the San Bernardino County Coroner's website reported Saturday.

The woman was identified as Jessica “Jace” Elyce Widner, 32, of Lake Arrowhead, according to the website.

San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department investigators are searching for the woman who discovered Widner’s body, according to a statement from the department.

Deputies were called to the area of Highland Drive and Scenic View Drive in Crestline around 7:20 p.m. Thursday to investigate a death, according to the statement.

A woman had contacted the San Bernardino County Fire Department and said a human hand was coming out of the ground near a glass bottle dump, the statement read. The woman showed firefighters where the hand was and then left the scene.

Deputies reached the scene and found a small cave had been dug into a hillside and when they looked inside saw what looked like a human hand coming out of the dirt, the statement reads.

Investigators have not determined the exact circumstances surrounding Widner’s death but they think part of the cave collapsed and buried her, according to the statement.

A specialized recovery team was called to the scene to assist in removing Widner’s body from the cave, which authorities said could collapse further.

About 5 p.m. Friday members of the County Coroner’s office recovered Widner’s body.

Investigators would like to speak with the woman who led firefighters to the victim in order to obtain additional details on the case. In addition, investigators with the Twin Peaks Station of the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department are asking for the public’s help. Anyone with information on this case is asked to call the Twin Peaks Sheriff’s Station at 909-336-0600.

Those wishing to remain anonymous can do so by calling the We-tip Hotline at 1-800-78-CRIME or by leaving a tip on the We-Tip Website at www.wetip.com.
LOCAL NEWS

Rancho Cucamonga moves forward on marijuana ban

A marijuana plant was on display at a September 2016 council meeting, with a deputy guarding it.

By LISET MARQUEZ | lmarquez@scng.com | Inland Valley Daily Bulletin
October 21, 2017 at 6:00 am
Rancho Cucamonga officials want to stop marijuana-related activities in their city.

The City Council this week moved forward with permanent regulations to prohibit both medical and non-medical marijuana activities, including cultivation, sales and deliveries. The ordinance, which would also prohibit outdoor personal cultivation but provide regulations for indoor personal cultivation, was introduced at the Oct. 18 meeting.

“This is a first step in trying to put a regulation on a state mandate,” said Councilman Sam Spagnolo.

Until it goes into effect, the council agreed to extend an interim ordinance that mirrors the regulations, to ensure there is no gap in oversight.

Proposition 64, passed by voters last year, allows for non-medical marijuana activity and allows up to six marijuana plants in or on the grounds of a private residence.

Rancho Cucamonga instituted the interim ordinance last year so that language for a permanent ordinance could be detailed. That interim ordinance was set to expire Nov. 14.

At the Oct. 18 meeting, elected officials agreed to extend that ordinance, while also introducing permanent regulations in the separate ordinance.

The ordinance would amend its municipal code to prohibit outdoor cultivation on a private residence. However, according to city planner Jennifer Nakamura, the city does allow permit cultivation for personal use in an enclosed residence or enclosed and secure structure. It is limited to six plants, she said, and should not create any light, glare, odor or noise.

But Councilman Bill Alexander questioned the impact the regulations put on city staff.

“Is our Police Department going to be putting in more hours? Are our code enforcement going to be putting in more hours?” he asked.

City Manager John Gillison said the cities of Desert Hot Springs and Adelanto will be approving some level of permits and “will be able to take up most of the demand in the county.”

At this time staffing will stay the same, said Gillison, adding a lot of issues will be taken care of through self-enforcement.
“The single best eyes and ears that we have are the residents of this city,” he said. “I can tell almost all of the complaints of the police and planning and community have come from residents or business.”

Anyone who violates the regulation could face a fine of up to $1,000 and/or six months in prison.

“Generally, people get concerned if there’s an illegal grow house next to them because they’re sort of worried about it blowing up and taking their house with them,” Gillison said.

As is the case with any major change, Gillison said, the city will be re-evaluating its response to the proposition.

The council is expected to give final review and approval at its next meeting. It will go into effect 30 days from date of approval.

Tags: marijuana, Top Stories IVDB

SCNG reporter
Liset Marquez
Liset Marquez has covered the foothill communities of Rancho Cucamonga, Upland and Claremont since 2014. She has been with the Daily Bulletin since 2006.

Follow Liset Marquez @Journaliset

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Editor’s Notebook: Cajon Pass commuting isn’t getting any easier
By Steve Hunt
Editor

I’m going to put on my old Cajon Pass Commuter hat today, in part to cover my bald head and in part to commiserate with all my old buddies still making that dreadful drive down the hill. I know, it isn’t always a dreadful drive, but I’m guessing for a lot of you it is.

I had not been forced to make that commute on a weekday for quite a while. It’s been nearly four years since I kissed the daily commute to West Covina goodbye and since then I’ve only had to head down the hill during the week on a few occasions, usually to go to LAX.

Well, with a new job comes new responsibilities and one of them required me to be at the US Bank Building in downtown L.A. at 9 a.m. on a Wednesday morning. I had to go to downtown L.A. on a weekday several years ago, only I had to be there by 8 a.m. I left Hesperia at 5 a.m. and walked in the office at 7:58 a.m.

I expected another three-hour drive this time, so I left at 6 a.m. I walked in the building a few minutes before 9 this time, but only because I paid $20 and change to use the FasTrak lanes from somewhere just west of Peck Road in El Monte all the way to Alameda Street in L.A.

Overall, it was a brutal experience. It took me two hours to drive from Apple Valley to Interstate 10, and that was using every side street I thought would help me after I jumped off the 210 at Grand Avenue in Glendora.

I learned a few things the hard way:

• Interstate 15 is no picnic at 6 in the morning, at least not until you’re a little south of Highway 138;

• The 210 is no picnic at 7 in the morning, especially after you are west of the 57;

• There must be a million more people living in the San Gabriel Valley now than just four years ago, because every street I thought I could count on to cut time off my drive was jammed and really didn’t help me at all. I must have hit 100 stoplights (OK, maybe 2 dozen), but Gladstone, Arrow Highway and even Los Angeles Street were horrible. That didn’t used to be the case;

• FasTrak is overpriced and half the time you’re in the FasTrak lanes you’re not moving any faster than the regular lanes, which is to say not at all. Where FasTrak did help me was right after I jumped into the lanes in El Monte, then after I got past Cal State Los Angeles.

• L.A. needs double-decker freeways everywhere;

• The dinosaurs left L.A. when they heard the freeways were coming;

• You couldn’t pay me enough to make that drive every day.

The most sobering part of this whole experience was I didn’t run into one accident or anything else to cause a delay on the entire trip. I’m sure that would have added another 30 minutes to the drive. Rain would have added an extra hour.

Honestly, I hope this was the last rush-hour trip to Los Angeles I will ever make.

With all due respect to Horace Greeley, I shall not be heading West again any time soon.

I am no young man anymore, but I knew my future — at least as a commuter — can only be headed east or north.

I hope the same will soon be true for all of you Cajon Pass Commuters.
Checkmate, Aldi: Discount grocer’s impact in Southern California forces rivals to lower prices

By NANCY LUNA | nluna@scng.com | Orange County Register
October 23, 2017 at 6:00 am

With 18 months under its belt in Southern California, German-born discount chain Aldi has quickly become the ultimate disruption in a region teeming with supermarket choices.
An epic price war in Southern California has triggered grocery prices to drop an unprecedented 3 percent as traditional food retailers scramble to fend off small-format discounters and e-commerce giants like Amazon.

“Southern California has moved from one of the highest priced markets in the country to the most competitively priced market,” said supermarket analyst Burt Flickinger, managing director of New York-based Strategic Resource Group.

Local shoppers can thank food deflation and Aldi.

The no-frills, limited assortment stores operated by Germany's Albrecht family offer deeply discounted knockoffs of Americans’ favorite brands. Stores are four to five times smaller than traditional supermarkets and employ roughly one-fourth of the staff.

Industry watchers say Aldi's presence forces markdowns by worried rivals.

“There's all kinds of gamesmanship. Some chains will lower prices in advance when Aldi comes,” said Craig Rosenblum, senior director at market research firm Inmar Willard Bishop Analytics.

The war is just starting

Aldi's Southern California invasion has only scratched the surface.

Since March 2016, Aldi, short for Albrecht Discount, has opened 40 stores stretching from Downey to Anaheim to Palm Springs. By the end of the year, Aldi plans to open 14 stores including four more in Orange County: Santa Ana, Laguna Woods, Westminster and La Habra. On Thursday, Oct. 26, Aldi is opening a store in Temecula.

Next year, the company said it would open 20-25 stores.

California is part of an aggressive plan to invest $3.4 billion nationwide to grow to 2,500 from 1,700 stores by 2022.

Flickinger, who tracks supermarket prices and sales, likens Aldi's growth to a “military” assault.

The chain, with its U.S. headquarters in Batavia, Ill., is shoring up forces in untapped markets as it enters a head-on battle with Walmart, Amazon and Lidl. The latter is Aldi’s biggest European foe — a discounter with a similar assortment of inexpensive, private-label goods. It opened its first U.S. stores in Virginia and North Carolina over the summer.

Flickinger projects Lidl will hit California by 2020.
Aldi is fearless — ready to battle any and all competitors.

“If someone goes low, we’ll go lower,” said Tom Cindel, group director of operations for Aldi’s Moreno Valley division.

**Word of mouth marketing**

If Aldi were to describe a typical Southern California convert, that person might be Enrique Escuer.

Word of mouth got him into the store. The discounts and money back guarantees keep him coming back.

The 24-year-old California transplant heard about Aldi from his roommate, who is dating a woman from Germany. The Westminster resident said both are “crazy about the Aldi family.”

When the first three Aldis opened in Orange County last year, he drove to the store in Fountain Valley to give it a shot. He normally shops at Stater Bros.

“I’ve been coming ever since. The prices are really unbeatable,” said Escuer, carrying a basket of frozen foods, bread, produce and cheese.

Cindel, who oversees operations in Southern California, said “word of mouth” marketing is Aldi’s bread and butter. Friends tell friends. Neighbors tell neighbors. Co-workers tell co-workers.

“That’s how it starts. People look at this as their little secret,” he said during a recent tour of the chain’s newest store in Garden Grove.

“We just don’t want it to be a secret.”

**An industry in upheaval**

Aldi’s march out West comes as the $543 billion supermarket industry is a state of upheaval.

Traditional stores such as Ralphs and Albertsons are seeing market share erode at a fast clip. The top national players, which include Kroger, Albertsons and Publix Super Markets, are projected to lose 3.5 percent total market share by 2021, according to a 2017 food retailing report by market research firm Willard Bishop.

Even more daunting: Traditional supermarkets and mass retailers (Walmart, Target) are projected to see sales drop a combined 5.5 percent by 2021, according to the Willard Bishop report.
In Southern California, Aldi is already making a dent.

Flickinger said local Aldi stores are generating $20 million to $22 million per store, per year. That compares to $12 million to $14 million for Albertsons and $17 million to $18 million at Ralphs.

Legacy food retailers are scrambling to survive.

Albertsons, Vons and Vons Pavilion have merged. Target is adding more beer and wine to grocery aisles, and opening dozens of small format stores. Walmart is testing curbside pickup, fast app-based returns and remodeling stores to emphasize convenience. Costco began offering two-day free shipping.

And, let’s not forget the 800-pound gorilla: Amazon.

The e-commerce giant’s $13.7 billion summer acquisition of Whole Foods Market has given shoppers another reason to shift loyalties. Once the purchase was complete, Amazon began reducing prices and selling Whole Foods’ private label 365 brand to Prime and Fresh members.

In the first week of dropping prices, foot traffic at Whole Foods stores increased 17 percent year-over-year, according to a report by mobile data research firm Thasos Group. The largest percentage of defectors came from Target, Costco, Kroger (Ralphs), Walmart and Sprouts shoppers, the survey noted.

Flickinger said Aldi should worry least about Whole Foods/Amazon. Even with the latest markdowns, Whole Foods is “simply unaffordable,” he said.

“Whole Foods has made so many myopic mistakes. It will take five years for Amazon to fix.”
In California, stores offer a wider assortment of produce compared to other Aldi stores. Beyond that, most every Aldi maintains the same assortment of groceries. This is one way Aldi can keep prices low — by buying in volume.

STEVEN GEORGES, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

### Aldi adapts to California tastes

Aldi’s grocery mix is a story of survival of the fittest.

“Every item has to fight for a spot on our shelves,” Cindel said.

The chain works with food manufacturers across the U.S. to create copycats of roughly 1,500 brands deemed to be the most popular among shoppers. By creating their own house labels, Aldi maintains it can save shoppers up to 50 percent on their grocery bill.

In California, stores opened with a slightly larger assortment of items to appeal to buying habits. They’ve also expanded, and added items along the way. One big surprise: flap steak.

“It’s such a big item here in California. Customers want it. Competitors carry it. We have to have it,” Cindel said.

How much do they sell it for? This past week, Aldi was selling choice flap steak for $5.99 a pound. Ralphs was selling it for $10.99 a pound on Instacart, and $9.99 a pound at a store in Orange. (Though, the latter was called flap meat.)
California Aldi stores also carry more tortillas, wine, gluten free products and about 10-20 percent more produce than the rest of the country. Some changes, including adding loose produce, have been adapted to stores nationwide.

“California is leading the way in many innovative things,” Cindel said.

Still, when it comes to customization, Aldi walks a fine line.

High quality in low quantity is how Aldi rolls. Stores don't sell 10 types of ketchup or five sizes of laundry detergent. Instead, they offer one or two options for each grocery item. In some cases, the knockoffs are stocked next to their national brand equivalent. For example, Kellogg Company's Pop-Tarts ($2.48) sit next to Aldi's Millville Toaster Tarts ($1.99).

A random check of prices shows Aldi beating the competition on other items. A half-gallon of Aldi’s Friendly Farms almond milk is $1.99. A private label version at Ralphs is $4.09. National brand Blue Diamond Almond Breeze is $2.99 at Stater Bros. Greek yogurt, which Aldi added in recent years to meet consumer demand, is 69 cents for the private label 100-calorie tub. The Yoplait versions at Ralphs and Stater Bros. cost $1.39 and $1, respectively.

Aldi also appears to be copying its distant cousin, Trader Joe’s. (The companies, related through the Albrecht family, have no operational ties.) Trader’s Pita Bite Crackers sell for $2.69 for a 6-ounce box; Aldi’s sea salt Savoritz in-house brand are $1.99.

Flickinger said Aldi’s impact is real.

In Southern California, a survey of basic groceries such as eggs, milk, celery, ketchup, tuna and bananas shows prices have dropped, on average, 3 percent compared with two years ago, according to data collected by his firm. Strategic Resource Group, which tracks the supermarket and retail industry, said nearly every grocery banner is seeing an overall price drop except Whole Foods Market and Target.

Walmart and WinCo Foods, which has locations in the Inland Empire, are “lowering prices” beyond 3 percent.

With Aldi’s store brands so high quality, and inexpensive, Flickinger said even Amazon will have trouble pitching Whole Food’s 365 label online. “Aldi has checkmated Amazon on the private label side,” he said.

Making the switch
A new 44,000-square-foot Stater Bros. opening Wednesday, Oct. 25 in Tustin will employ more than 100 workers and sell close to 100,000 items.

By contrast, Aldi stores have five grocery aisles with products shelved inside cardboard boxes. The 11,000-square foot stores don't offer full service bakeries or meat counters. Shoppers bag their own groceries and must fork over a 25-cent deposit for a shopping cart. Stores employ anywhere from 15 to 25 non-union workers.

“Everything we do is designed to keep costs down, so we can pass that on to customers,” Cindel said.

Aldi wins, he said, when shoppers realize other stores are overstocked and overpriced for the same quality groceries.

But to get their attention, Aldi must first flood the zone.

“If we throw that Aldi logo in your face enough times, you're going to go 'OK, I'm going to give it a shot. And that's when we got you,” Cindel said.

**Supermarket: A Fractured Industry**

- Traditional stores such as Ralphs and Albertsons are seeing market share erode at a fast clip. The top national players, which include Kroger, Albertsons and Publix Super Markets, are projected to lose 3.5 percent total market share by 2021.
- Traditional stores saw revenue drop 5.9 percent to $440 billion in 2016.
- Stores counts are taking a dive, as well. By 2021, traditional stores will drop nearly 25 percent to 19,132. The drop includes closures and store conversions to other formats.
- Led by Aldi, limited assortment stores made the largest sales gain (excluding e-commerce) in the industry with a 5.8 percent increase in 2016. This format added 155 stores, and reached sales of $37.3 billion.

**Future: Aldi's Next Stores**

Temecula opens Oct. 26, 2017 at 7:45 a.m. at 29655 Rancho California Road, Temecula.

**Opening in November:** Lancaster, Bakersfield, Pico Rivera, Alhambra, Santa Ana.

**Opening in December:** Westminster, Chula Vista, Monrovia, Laguna Woods, La Habra, Glendora, Oxnard, Escondido.

Source: “2017 Future of Food Retailing” report by Inmar Willard Bishop Analytics
Two teams of first responders faced a challenge Sunday to see which one could pull a 757 airplane the farthest in 90 seconds at the SBD Fest air show in San Bernardino. The proceeds benefitted Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital.
By BEATRIZ E. VALENZUELA | PUBLISHED: October 23, 2017 at 5:55 am | UPDATED: October 23, 2017 at 7:43 am

A fire reported off the 210 Freeway near Day Creek Boulevard has shut down all but two westbound lanes of the highway Monday morning. The fire was first reported around 4:30 a.m. along the westbound lanes of the freeway and according to California Highway Patrol incident reports, may have been a house fire which then ignited a tree near the freeway.

At one point, authorities were concerned the fire might jump the wall, according to authorities.

The fire led to a traffic backup for at least one mile on the westbound lanes of the 210 Freeway, but may also be responsible for heavier-than-usual traffic on the southbound 15 and westbound 10 freeways.

*Check back later as further information is made available.*

**Tags:** 210 Freeway, Echo Code, fire, Top Stories IVDB, Top Stories PE, Top Stories PSN, Top Stories RDF, Top Stories SGVT, Top Stories Sun, Traffic

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**[Infographic] Why Do Corporate Tradeshow Attendees Become Disengaged?**

By Hilton

Hilton

Here’s how to make unmotivated trade show customers more excited about your event.

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**Beatriz E. Valenzuela**

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Lessons learned
By Davina Fisher / For the Daily Press
Posted Oct 22, 2017 at 8:40 PM
Updated Oct 22, 2017 at 8:40 PM

HESPERIA — With the firestorms currently raging in Northern California, Hesperia resident Richard Leak laments that it’s a terrible thing that’s happened.

Leak would know. He and 23 other men on the El Cariso Hotshots crew battled what would become known as the Loop Fire in 1966 where 10 men died on site and two more, later, from their injuries.

“I don’t know why I survived and the guys next to me died,” said Leak. “God’s blessing.”

It’s been nearly 51 years since the incident that changed Leak’s life — he lost two fingers on each hand and his career as a firefighter.

“He’s such a humble guy. When people ask him what happened to you, he says it’s just a burn,” said brother-in-law Ernie Jimenez.

Leak began his fire career with the US Forest Service in Cleveland National Forest at the age of 18 and spent two seasons with the El Cariso Hotshots in 1965 and 1966. Hotshots is a term used for an elite group of firefighters specially trained in wildfire suppression tactics.

“I was hired back on in 1966 as a crew boss and in the middle of the fire season I was promoted captain of Crew Two,” said Leak.

At 5:19 a.m. on Nov. 1, 1966, a faulty electric distribution line started a fire within the Department of the Army’s Los Pinetos Nike Missile Site in Angeles National Forest.

“After learning we had been dispatched to the Angeles Forest, I had some real concerns,” said Leak. “Very dangerous mountains.”

The crew of 18 to 20 year olds were given the assignment to cut down trees, brush or other combustibles using hand tools to stop the progress of a wildfire, down the hilltop. This is commonly known as a fireline.

“After constructing line down the steep slope ... we came to an area where we had to cross over a slide area at the top of the chimney chute. (Superintendent Gordon King) observed rocks falling down from the vertical cliff at the top of the chimney,” said Leak. “At this time falling rocks were our main safety concern and not the fire.”

There was no noticeable fire or smoke within the chimney chute that connected to a ravine.
Around 3:50 p.m. a spot fire started in the ravine below the crew.

“We heard the command, ‘Reverse Tool Order,’” said Leak. “This meant to haul ass out to the safety zone.”

Most of the crew were in the safety zone but 10 members were still constructing an indirect line. Leak took about 10 steps and heard a loud boom.

“Sounded like a bomb exploding,” said Leak. “I turned and looked over my shoulder to see what happened and all I could see was a solid wall of orange flames. I had to look straight up to see blue sky.”

Leak says the next thing he heard is what sounded like a jet engine and then a “shock wave” came that was so strong that it knock him to the ground.

At this time the temperature around Leak started to rise. The official investigation report concluded the fire lasted less than a minute but reached 2,500 degrees.

“I remember thinking that I don’t know how much more heat I could stand. I remember thinking to myself that this is it. I am going to die,” said Leak. “Suddenly, I remember I was not hearing any noise, just total silence. I thought maybe I was dead. It was like I was in my own little world. Then all of a sudden, it got real cool. It really felt good.”

Leak says his eyes were blurry but he began to hear noises again. He saw several guys on fire lying on the ground next to him.

“The only thing going through my mind was I needed to help and take care of my crew members,” said Leak.

Still in shock he tried to beat fire out on the guy next to him with no gloves on. After putting the fire out, he noticed skin hanging off his arms.

“My sleeves were rolled up past my elbows. I thought to myself, that doesn’t look good,” said Leak. “I don’t think I fully understood what I was seeing. I was not feeling any pain.”

He remembers trying to help several other guys and putting the fire out on them while not realizing at the time they had already perished.

“Wasn’t too much longer we heard a helicopter,” said Leak. “I like to fly in helicopters and that was the best copter ride I have ever had.”

He was able to continue his career in fire service and retired after 30 years with the City of Vista Fire Department as their Senior Fire Inspector.

Leak says out of all tragedies some good comes.
Some of the lessons learned from the Loop fire are the need for specific safe practice directions on downhill fireline operations, training that illustrates the hazards of a “chimney,” even if devoid of fuel, and mandatory use of lightweight fire protective face masks and gloves on the fireline.

Leak says over the past several years, we have seen fires getting larger and lasting longer.

“Right now, we as firefighters must be aware that we are in an era where fire behavior is changing and getting out of the realm of what we have been taught about fire behavior,” said Leak.

He says experienced firefighters are seeing a more intense fire behavior that includes combustibles in large areas igniting at the same time and whole hillsides exploding in fire or igniting all once.

“There is a lot of research being conducted to understand what is really happening with this new extreme fire behavior. There are many theories, but no definitive explanations,” said Leak. “As firefighters today, it is important to learn, understand and remember the fire behavior that has been established and taught over the years, but it is imperative to keep up with the understanding of this new type of fire behavior.”
Fourteen-year-old girl fends off attacker, San Bernardino County deputies continue to search for suspect
A 14-year-old girl fended off an attack by a man who entered her residence, “bear-hugged” her and said he was going to kidnap her, San Bernardino County sheriff’s deputies said Friday.

The girl told deputies the man approached the residence Thursday afternoon and asked if she could help him jump-start his quad vehicle. The girl responded that she couldn’t and that there was no one else in the residence, according to a San Bernardino County Sheriff’s report.

The girl said she watched the man walk away and then entered the residence. Then she noticed the man was standing behind her.

The man, identified by authorities as Freddie Day, 43, of Twentynine Palms told her that he could have raped and killed her. After the man grabbed her in a “bear-hug,” the girl grabbed him around his throat, which resulted in her being released. She then ran toward the kitchen and grabbed a knife, the report said.

The suspect fled the residence eastbound through the desert. Neighbors confirmed seeing Day in the neighborhood but did not know where he had fled. Deputies conducted an extensive area check for Day but could not locate him.

Anyone with information related to the investigation, or the whereabouts of Day, is asked to contact the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department Morongo Basin Station at (760)366-4175. Anyone wishing to remain anonymous may contact We-Tip at 1-888-78-CRIME or www.wetip.com
Hesperia Sheriff’s Station to host Halloween Haunt

By Rene Ray De La Cruz
Staff Writer
Posted Oct 22, 2017 at 8:11 PM
Updated Oct 22, 2017 at 8:11 PM

HESPERIA — Organizers of a local Halloween Haunt say the event gives the community a safe and secure place to bring children as they trick-or-treat the night away.

The 9th annual Hesperia Halloween Haunt is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 28, and will be hosted by the San Bernardino Sheriff’s Hesperia Station personnel and volunteers, along with Hesperia Sheriff’s Explorers Post 505.

The Halloween-themed event includes a Haunted House & Maze, costume contest, food, bounce house, face painting and time to connect the community with law enforcement personnel, according to Hesperia Station spokeswoman Jackie Chambers.

“The event is organized and carried out by the young adults in our Explorer Post with the help of the advisers,” Chambers told the Daily Press. “Our explorers are able to use their imaginations to come up with their own ideas for each room in the haunted house and do most of the construction themselves.”

Over the years, a mountain of candy has been given out to costumed visitors who have attended the fall event, where brave souls have entered the haunted house that included zombies, scary clowns, ghouls, goblins and other creatures of the night.

The Explorer Post is made up of young adults interested in law enforcement who obtain hands-on experience on the day-to-day job of a deputy sheriff.

Monies raised during the Halloween event helps the Explorer Post with the purchasing of new equipment and sending them to competitions.

This year alone, the explorer’s have volunteered almost 3,800 hours at community events, school site visits and ride alongs, Chambers said.

The 9th annual Hesperia Halloween Haunt is scheduled from 5 to 8:30 p.m. on Saturday at the Hesperia Sheriff’s Station, 15840 Smoke Tree St. Entry tickets are $1.

For more information, contact the Deputy Jones or Chambers at 760-947-1500.

Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at 760-951-6227, RDeLaCruz@VVDailyPress.com, Twitter @DP_ReneDeLaCruz and Instagram @reneraydelacruz
Murder-suicide in Joshua Tree may have been act of 'sympathy' after injury, family member says

By Sonali Kohli and Shelby Grad

OCTOBER 22, 2017, 8:50 AM

A n uncle of the woman found dead in Joshua Tree National Park reportedly said investigators believe her boyfriend may have killed her in a “sympathetic murder-suicide” after she suffered a head injury.

Joseph Orbeso, 22, shot and killed his girlfriend, Rachel Nguyen, 20, and then turned the gun on himself, according to a news release Friday from the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department Morongo Basin station. Investigators recovered a handgun at the scene, Sheriff’s Department spokeswoman Cindy Bachman said.

Son Nguyen, Rachel’s uncle, told the Desert Sun that it appears Nguyen was hurt and that Orbeso was trying to end her pain.

“It was explained to us by the investigators on scene, with the circumstances and positioning of the bodies, that they believe this was a sympathetic murder-suicide,” he told the newspaper.
Orbeso and Nguyen were reported missing July 28 after a bed-and-breakfast owner in the Morongo Basin told the Sheriff’s Department they may have gone hiking in the park that morning.

Authorities found the couple’s car near a trailhead the day they went missing and began searching for the two, at first pulling in 250 search and rescue resources, including “aircraft, dog teams, horse teams, and [a] ground team,” who combined spent more than 2,100 hours looking for the couple. In August, they scaled back the search to weekends.

On Sunday, almost three months after they were reported missing, a park ranger found their bodies inside “a steep canyon to the far north of the Maze Loop Trailhead,” according to the Sheriff’s Department’s statement.

“Based on evidence located at the scene, detectives believe Orbeso shot Nguyen, then shot himself. ....Orbeso’s actions [remain] under investigation,” the statement said.

The Sheriff’s Department update comes days after Orbeso’s father, Gilbert Orbeso, publicly identified the pair and authorities said they were found in an “embrace.”

Authorities did not report the gunshot wounds when they announced the couple’s discovery because the coroner’s office had to confirm the injuries and identify both people, which took time because of the condition of the bodies after months in the desert, Bachman said.

When the two were found, their bodies did appear to be interlocked, she said.

“The position of their bodies,” she said, “appeared that they were embracing.”

ALSO

As flames fade, wine country grapples with emotional scars of devastating fires

Man arrested in hate crime after burning rainbow flag and punching worker at Berkeley LGBTQ center, authorities say

Divide in California's GOP on display at convention: 'We’re not offering anything hopeful'

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This article is related to: Homicide, Crime
California wildfires are only going to get worse. We're not ready

By The Times Editorial Board

OCTOBER 21, 2017, 5:00 AM

Countless research papers and government reports have said it, but the wildfires in Northern California this month brought it home: Climate change is fueling larger, more frequent and more devastating wildfires in the state, and communities have to start making themselves safer now.

Two of the three largest wildfires in California’s history have happened in the last four years. This year’s fires in wine country have been the deadliest in the state’s history, with 42 victims so far. Northern California is now experiencing the kind of wildfires that have rampaged through Southern California in recent years: fast, ferocious blazes that can wipe out suburban neighborhoods.

As higher temperatures and prolonged droughts bring more fires, models predict that the greatest property damage will be in the wildland-urban interfaces where developments abut foothills, forests or other open land. Roughly 6% of the state falls into this category, mainly in coastal Southern California, the Bay Area and the increasingly developed Sierra foothills.
California has to reckon with the fact that continued sprawl into previously undeveloped areas puts life and property at risk. This is not easy. The state has an extreme housing shortage, and it’s simpler in the short term to keep building outward than to redesign cities for greater density. But the threat of climate change has to force California to change the way it grows.

Starting this year, cities and counties are required by state law to develop policies to address the risks that climate change poses to their communities. That should force communities vulnerable to more frequent wildfires to evaluate how — or whether — new homes can be built safely on the urban edge.

The state requires that new buildings in zones deemed by the state to be at high risk of fire be made with fire-resistant materials, such as tile roofs. The state and local governments should also consider requiring older homes and buildings in high-risk zones to be retrofitted.

Unfortunately, urban areas often weren’t included by the state in its designated high-risk zones because, well, nobody expected a wildfire to sweep through a city. State officials are now revising the maps, and the fires around Santa Rosa must surely be a wake-up call that suburbia has to be made more fire resistant.

Californians also must recognize that making their communities more resilient to more intense wildfires will be an expensive, long-term proposition. That means removing dead trees and excess brush to reduce the fuel for fires. That means educating residents about how to protect themselves — like California practices for earthquakes, communities in high-risk zones should be developing wildfire drills. That means investing in fire-resilient communication and alert systems.

The risk of a major wildfire is growing for more California neighborhoods. State leaders, communities and residents must do a better job planning for them.

Follow the Opinion section on Twitter @latimesopinion and Facebook

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Deputies say two women panhandlers used this sign in a ruse for panhandling donations. (Photo courtesy of San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department)

By GAIL WESSON | gwesson@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise
PUBLISHED: October 22, 2017 at 10:09 pm | UPDATED: October 22, 2017 at 10:11 pm

Their sign simply read “Burial Donations,” and an “RIP” plea to help bury what appeared to be a 5-month-old baby girl, but San Bernardino Sheriff’s deputies concluded Sunday, Oct. 22, that two women used the dead baby ruse to collect “burial funds.”
First, deputies arrested Chastity Doll, 26, a Loma Linda transient, on suspicion of panhandling at the busy commercial center corner of Tippecanoe Avenue and Coulston Street, then an hour later arrested Michele Love, 41, of Yucca Valley, also on suspicion of panhandling.

Evidence found when Love was booked into custody at the Central Detention Center in San Bernardino linked the two women together — producing signs to get donations from the public under false pretense, according to the release.

Deputies asked anyone who was a victim of the ruse to contact deputies at 909-387-3545.

Tags: investigation
NEWS

San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District banks water for future use

In the flat, undeveloped desert north of Mentone, ducks and geese float in a series of large ponds, enjoying water from Northern California.

Ponds like these are designed to capture water so that it can percolate through the soil and recharge the Bunker Hill Groundwater Basin, which serves about 600,000 residents in the East San Bernardino Valley and 300,000 residents in the city of Riverside.

Those ponds — and nearly 70 more of them — belong to the Redlands-based San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, which this week announced it recharged the East Valley’s water basin in the most recent water year with enough to serve some 92,000 households for a year, said Daniel B. Cozad, general manager.

It was the 16th largest recharge amount since the conservation district started recording measurements 105 years ago, he said.

Local runoff was below the historical average in the district’s 2017 water year, which ran from October 1, 2016, through Sept. 30, 2017.
Nevertheless, it was much better than in the past four years, he said.

Last year's streamflow total was 8,901 acre-feet above the previous four years of combined streamflow in the Santa Ana River and Mill Creek — enough to provide for the water needs of about 16,000 households, Cozad said.

The San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District is a special government entity created after a severe drought between 1893 and 1903 and has been focused on groundwater conservation.

It owns and manages about 4,500 acres in the Santa Ana Wash, located at the junction of the Santa Ana River and Mill Creek and is bound by the Santa Ana River on the south, Greenspot Road on the northern and eastern boundaries and near Alabama Street on the west.

Because Northern California received a dramatic amount of rain and snowfall last winter, more State Water Project water could be purchased in 2017, Cozad said.

To help recharge the basin, which is at record lows, the area's water wholesaler, the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District based in San Bernardino, has been urging its member agencies to buy as much of the state water as possible for recharge purposes, according to Bob Tincher, the district's water services manager.

The state water project water enters a man-made canal south of Greenspot Road and east of the Highland headquarters of the East Valley Water District, 31111 Greenspot Road.

On a recent visit, water was roaring out of its high-pressure pipeline.

A year ago, Cozad said there wasn't even a trickle coming from the pipeline and into the channel, which flows into nearby basins.

A few customers elsewhere in the region, this time last year, were using State Water Project water, he said.

Within view of the Santa Ana Low, the name given to the point where State Water Project water enters the conservation district, is a giant crane working on an approximately $10 million project to build a large sedimentation pond that would take out silt and other debris from rainwater and snowmelt coming out of the San Bernardino Mountains, Tincher said.

This will be an important structure to support a new series of runoff-water capture basins to be built, starting in about 2020, he said.

It's too early to see if the increase in recharge water has boosted the Bunker Hill Basin's water table, but when final measurements come back at the end of the calendar year, the result will still be at a record low, Tincher said.

While buying State Water Project water for basin recharge is a good idea, the only way Bunker Hill water levels will recover from the San Bernardino Valley's 19 years of drought will be "local rain and lots of it for a number of years," Tincher said.

Tags: Top Stories RDF

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By PODS for Business

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Jim Steinberg

Jim Steinberg is a national-award winning environmental writer. He also covers medical and healthcare issues, drones and aviation, military and the cities of Fontana and Rialto.

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VIEW COMMENTS

Join the Conversation
October heads into triple-digit heat — when will it cool down?

By CITY NEWS SERVICE  
October 23, 2017 at 7:47 am

LOS ANGELES — The Southland, with the exception of the Antelope Valley, was under a red flag warning today, signifying a high risk of wildfire amid a heat wave, gusty Santa Ana winds and low humidity.

The warning, reflecting "a long-duration fire weather threat," will be in effect through Wednesday, with the most critical fire conditions expected today through Tuesday, according to a National Weather Service statement. A risk of wildfire also exists in Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, the NWS reported.

"The duration, strength and widespread nature of this Santa Ana wind event combined with the extreme heat and very dry fuels will bring the most dangerous fire weather conditions that Southwest California has seen in the past few years," warned the statement. "If fire ignition occurs, there will be the potential for very rapid spread of wildfire" and "extreme fire behavior," which could lead to "a threat to life and property."
The red flag warning will be in effect until 6 p.m. Wednesday in the San Gabriel Mountains in L.A. and Ventura counties, the forest that spread over the mountains — the Angeles National Forest in L.A. County and Ventura County’s Los Padres National Forest — the Santa Monica Mountains, the San Fernando, Santa Clarita and San Gabriel valleys, and the Los Angeles coastal zone, which includes beach cities, metropolitan Los Angeles, Downtown L.A. and the Hollywood Hills. The Antelope Valley was the only L.A. County region not under a red flag warning.

NWS forecasters said gusty north-to-northwest of 15 to 30 miles per hour gusting to 35–40 mph would blow through the San Gabriels and the Angeles National Forest through tonight, rising to 20-35 mph with gusts of 50-60 mph Tuesday. At the same time, the humidity level will be between 7 and 15 percent and the temperature in the lower 90s. Roughly similar conditions will prevail in other areas under a red flag warning, although valley temperatures will be in the mid to high 90s.

Also in effect today are excessive heat warnings or slightly less severe heat advisories in coastal and most valley areas of Los Angeles and Ventura counties through Tuesday, including on Santa Catalina Island, as well as wind advisories through Wednesday. The high heat was attributed to strong high pressure combined with warm Santa Ana winds.

The weather service stressed the health risks arising from high heat and urged residents to protect themselves and those around them, including by never leaving people or pets in parked cars, whose interiors can quickly heat up to lethal temperatures, even with windows cracked open.

The NWS forecast sunny weather today and highs of 87 on Mount Wilson; 89 in Palmdale; 90 in Lancaster; 93 in Avalon; 95 in Saugus; 99 at LAX; 101 in San Gabriel; 102 in Downtown L.A., Pasadena and Burbank; 103 in Woodland Hills; and 104 104 in Long Beach. Tuesday’s temperatures will be similar, though Tuesday’s will slip by around six degrees, ushering a cooling trend.

San Bernardino County highs include 99 in Rancho Cucamonga; 100 in San Bernardino and Redlands; and 101 in Ontario.

Sunny skies were also forecast in Orange County, along with highs of 85 in San Clemente; 86 in Laguna Beach; 87 in Newport Beach; 101 in Mission Viejo; 103 in Irvine; 104 in Yorba Linda; and 105 in Fullerton and Anaheim. Tuesday’s highs will be the same or marginally lower. A cooling trend will get underway Wednesday.

In Riverside County, it will be 98 in Blythe; 100 in Menifee, 101 in Palm Springs, Murrieta and Temecula; and 102 in Riverside.

Tags: Breaking news, Echo Code, 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, weather

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Tips for a Successful Soybean Harvest from CROPLAN® seed
By Jamie Kloster, Technical Seed Manager, CROPLAN®

As we near the finish line with this year’s soybean crop, it’s time to focus on capturing the maximum number of...
The plaintiffs' lawyers lined up shoulder to shoulder on a recent Friday in a Houston courtroom, filling every available bench, jury box and table. All had come to hear how they could get a piece of sprawling litigation emerging from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Harvey.

"I've never seen so many suits in the same room, unless it was in church," said Chris Johns, a Texas lawyer in attendance at the Oct. 6 hearing.

The lawyers have coalesced around a corner of eminent domain law they hope will lead to big payouts from the federal government. Dozens of lawsuits filed so far seek compensation for the damage homeowners say was caused when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released water from two area reservoirs in the days after a Category 4 hurricane and historic rainfall flooded Houston in late August.

With an estimated 10,000 homes or more affected by the reservoirs, the litigation has the potential to reach into the billions of dollars. But convincing a judge the controlled release counts as an improper "taking" of private property under eminent domain law could face challenges in court, and a payout isn't a sure thing.

The Addicks and Barker dams were built in the 1940s to reduce the risk of flooding in Houston. By ordering the controlled release, the Army Corps alleviated water levels that could have poured over or around the two earthen dams, potentially rupturing them and causing significant damage.

The government said in a court filing the flooding was a 1,000-year event and that the release of water to relieve the Addicks and Barker dams doesn't qualify as a taking under the Constitution's Fifth Amendment. A "single flood—as opposed to an inevitably recurring flooding caused by the Government—is not a taking as a matter of law," the filing says.

The Justice Department didn't respond to a request for comment.
Affected homeowners and their lawyers are referring to the government's position as the “one flood free” rule.

“I figured, they know what they're doing, and are releasing water only when it won't cause harm to everybody else,” said Jennifer Arriaga, 44 years old, whose home in Houston's Memorial Bend neighborhood largely survived the storm before being flooded with 18 inches of water from the Addicks dam release. Her family faces an estimated $220,000 in damage in the house they'd only just built a year ago, and is pursuing litigation.

The plaintiffs in the cases fall into two buckets: those who live “upstream,” and were flooded in the reservoir areas as rain kept falling, and those “downstream” who were flooded once water was deliberately released.

Val Aldred, a 65-year-old retiree who is a plaintiff in the litigation, said he was shocked to see water inching closer to his Memorial Bend home that Tuesday after the storm when the rain had already stopped. “They didn't even give me notice,” he said. “If they said look, we're going to release the water, and you've got...even three hours to get out, I would have at least appreciated that. That angers me like you can't believe.”

The cases have attracted the attention of plaintiffs’ lawyers from across Texas and other states, including those who typically specialize in personal injury, privacy cases and other unrelated specialties.

Those at the introductory hearing estimate at least 100 attorneys filled the room. Now, many of them are forming coalitions and vying for a leadership position in the cases, which would position them to help steer its direction and potentially be in line for extra compensation.

Houston attorney Derek Potts said he's hosted two meetings in his office of lawyers from between 40 and 50 area firms to try to create a cohesive plan for the litigation. “This is a very high-profile case that strikes close to home for all of us,” he said.

Judge Susan Braden with the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, a specialized court used for claims against the federal government, set an Oct. 20 deadline for applications for lead counsel. The judge has also asked for input on the best way to consolidate the more than 50 cases that have been filed so far, some as proposed class actions and others on behalf of individuals or groups.

Lawyers involved say it looks like the court wants to avoid a repeat of the prolonged takings litigation against the federal government that followed Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Some of those cases are still on appeal.

The Justice Department, meanwhile, has proposed a timeline that wouldn’t determine if the case is a class action until 2018, with discovery starting after that.

In 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that temporary flooding could qualify as a taking eligible for compensation, in a case brought by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission against the U.S. government over the flooding of a wildlife management area that destroyed timber.

Ilya Somin, a law professor at George Mason University, said the plaintiffs’ claims seem plausible, but that the “doctrine in this area is very vague” and courts sometimes have a tendency to rule in favor of the government. The Arkansas case laid out guidelines for when a deliberate flooding by the government can count as a taking, he said, but didn’t specify how long the flooding must take place, what degree of intent is required, and other key factors, leaving the issue somewhat open to interpretation.

Separate Hurricane Harvey-related litigation is being pursued against local entities that released water from Lake Conroe the week of the storm, and lawyers say litigation is also likely against insurance companies as residents start to file claims.

Write to Sara Randazzo at sara.randazzo@wsj.com
LOCAL NEWS

Riverside police officer wounded in 2013 Dorner attack retires

A friend takes a photo of Riverside police Officer Andrew Tachias after Tachias finished the Hometown Heroes Honor Run on Oct. 11, 2014. The event was organized by the Riverside Police Officers’ Association as a tribute to Tachias, who was wounded by gunfire in February 2013. (Brian Rokos, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG) ORG XMIT: RIV2015112418285621

By **BRIAN ROKOS** | brokos@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise
PUBLISHED: October 22, 2017 at 8:01 am | UPDATED: October 22, 2017 at 10:48 pm
Riverside police Officer Andrew Tachias, who survived eight bullet wounds in a 2013 attack that killed his partner and later returned to the force, has retired.

Tachias’ last day was Sept. 28. He will be honored at the City Council meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 24.

Councilman Jim Perry will present Tachias with a proclamation during the night portion of the meeting, which begins at 6:15 in the Art Pick Council Chamber at City Hall.
“We could only imagine what he experienced, and I think because of the service he has provided, he is a shining example of anyone who has worn the uniform in the past and will inspire those will wear it in the future,” said Perry, a retired police officer. “He’s the true survivor story, and for police officers, it’s the prime example of never giving up.”

Tachias, 31, has spoken to police academy classes and other groups about his ordeal, which included 18 days in a hospital, but otherwise has mostly shied away from the public spotlight.

In June 2016, Tachias testified at an Assembly hearing in Sacramento in support of a bill proposing to added a second year of workers’ compensation for California peace officers and firefighters who are “catastrophically” injured in the line of duty. Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed the bill.

Tachias declined to be interviewed for this story.

The bullets that wounded Tachias were shot by Christopher Dorner, a rogue, former Los Angeles police officer who had been fired and was bent on killing law enforcement officers and their families. By the end of his spree, Dorner killed four people.

Monica Quan and fiance Keith Lawrence were the first to die Feb. 3, 2013, in Irvine. Quan was the daughter of a retired LAPD captain who represented Dorner in a disciplinary hearing.

Four days later, a gun battle in Corona injured a Los Angeles Police Department officer. Minutes later, in Riverside, Dorner wounded Tachias and killed his training officer, Michael Crain.

On Feb. 12, Dorner shot San Bernardino County sheriff’s Deputy Alex Collins and Detective Jeremiah MacKay as they tracked the fugitive to an Angelus Oaks cabin. Collins survived and returned to full duty; MacKay was killed. Dorner then killed himself.

The gunfire left Tachias with little use of his right arm. But surgeries and physical therapy allowed him to get rid of a brace.

Since then, however, Tachias has had difficulties with his left arm and hand and faces more surgeries.

His work on the police force had been limited to background checks on officer candidates, proctoring tests, sitting in on candidate interviews and other non-patrol work.
A police officer or firefighter injured on the job would normally have been given one year to heal, but the city extended Tachias’ benefits for two more years.

Detective Aurelio Melendrez, the vice president of the Riverside Police Officers’ Association and a close friend of Tachias’, said the timing of the retirement surprised the department. Melendrez acknowledged that there have been mental hurdles as well as physical obstacles to overcome.

“It’s one of those things that you know is a day-to-day battle,” Melendrez said.

He said he doesn’t know Tachias’ plans, other than to get healthy, stay busy and volunteer.

Deputy Chief Larry Gonzalez was the watch commander the night Tachias and Crain were ambushed at Magnolia and Arlington avenues. Gonzalez saw Tachias near death and then more than two years later beaming as he found purpose in his return to work.

“He’s a battler. He was the first one at work everyday,” Gonzalez said. “He was a collegiate runner, and in an individual sport, I think he relies on that background to battle through everything, and it’s a battle in his own mind.”

Tachias holds cross country records at Covina High and went on to run at UC Riverside. He inspired organizers to create the first Hometown Heroes Run in Riverside in 2013 as a fundraiser for the officers’ assistance fund and competed in the event in 2014.

In an interview with this news organization before the 2014 run, Tachias said he figured he had it good.

“There’s people who have been hurt more than me or haven’t been able to recover like I have,” he said. “There are families that are hurt more than me, not physically but emotionally. Obviously Michael Crain's wife and kids and family. They don't get to see him again. You have people in the military who lose limbs. They have it harder than I have.

“So in the grand scheme of things, I’m doing well.”
Solar panel projects at Mt. SAC, Occidental inspired years of protest. More like them are planned across Southern California.

By STEVE SCAUZILLO | sscauzillo@scng.com | San Gabriel Valley Tribune
October 23, 2017 at 6:00 am
Broadview, a Christian Science nursing home, had obtained the necessary permits to erect a solar array on a steep hillside amid the secluded Montecito Heights section of southeast Los Angeles.

But just after construction began, neighbors became unglued, claiming their canyon views would be blocked and the solar panels would shine a harsh glare into homes and motorists’ eyes on the nearby 110 Arroyo Seco Parkway. One resident called the project “a monstrous carbunkle on the face or our community.”

Inundated by angry calls and emails from constituents, City Councilman Ed Reyes acted. The city withdrew the permits and construction was halted.

After hiring lawyers to fight the ban, a second permit was issued three months later by the Los Angeles Fire Department, declaring the project safe. Construction resumed and the solar farm was completed in October 2011, said Michael Fisher, the executive director of the nursing home at the time.

The lesson learned was simple. If you want to go green, location matters.

**Size and location**

Solar panels on a roof or parking lot? No problem. But solar panels on vacant land or visible hillsides near homes? That can unleash a wave of protests.

While some cry “NIMBYism” over the upheaval against such projects, others say solar panels are a poor choice for crowded Los Angeles County, where open space is at a premium.

What Broadview faced back in 2010 and 2011 could be repeated if the City of Industry goes ahead with its ground-level solar farm on Tres Hermanos ranch, a 2,450-acre piece of vacant land in Diamond Bar and Chino Hills at the border of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Orange counties.

Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut is also planning to install photovoltaic panels on an untouched hillside, facing community protests and lawsuits as a result.

However, City of Industry’s protests may be much louder — its project would be hundreds of times bigger than the less than 1-megawatt installation built at Broadview and the 2.2-megawatt project planned for Mt. SAC in Walnut.

New reports say the City of Industry may produce “at least 450 megawatts” of power a year from a massive solar array that could span at least 1,000 acres of meandering ranch land, a number eliciting surprise from some experts.
Cutting carbon, with costs

City officials argue they see the benefits in having solar energy close to urban areas that would reduce the greenhouse gases causing global warming. That could help local cities keep in line with California’s mandate to cut 681 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 or about 40 percent from today.

Under that mandate, the state is required to acquire 50 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, up from 25 percent today.

These ambitious goals would necessitate giant changes in the way power is produced. Already, experts say the state has snagged the low-hanging fruit by building giant solar plants in the desert and atop major warehouses in the Inland Empire. Now, the efforts may be turning to in-fill projects closer to homes.

While environmental groups encourage renewable energy, they also value preservation. These two goals can conflict.

“I am very sympathetic to that argument (for more solar power),” began Jonathan Parfrey, executive director of Climate Resolve, a Los Angeles-based group active in promoting environmental protection. “At the same time, in Los Angeles, there is such a little amount of open space. Do you want to cover it?

“I would love to see that open space preserved,” Parfrey said. “I think there is a better space to put solar.”

Some neighbors in Chino Hills, indeed city officials themselves, have called on City of Industry to place solar panels atop the hundreds of warehouse roofs within its own borders. But that would be more expensive and requires agreements from each property owner, experts said.

Ground solar is less expensive

“It (ground-level) is a hell of a lot cheaper than roof-mounted solar. There is no comparison,” Parfrey said. It is about half the price to build one large ground-solar farm than several rooftop installations, he said.

In fact, ground-level solar is becoming one of the least expensive forms of energy, lower than building a power plant with turbines powered by natural gas or coal, he said.

Ground solar for larger utility-scale projects cost around $2 per watt, as compared to $4 for rooftop solar (residential), according to a report “Tracking the Sun IX,” from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Median prices were from 2015.
In general, the price of all solar projects from 1998 to 2015 declined by 6 to 12 percent per year, the report found, adding fuel to the drive for more ground-level solar projects.

**Colleges opt for ground solar**

Mt. SAC, the largest single-campus community college in the state, wants to cover part of an 11-acre hillside above Grand Avenue with solar panels, capture the sun’s rays, turn it into electricity and send it to its main campus through underground cabling.

The project would produce 40 percent of the college’s electricity and save about $500,000 a year in energy bills.

But the **Walnut officials and community groups** say cutting into a prominent hillside and installing blue panels and electric wiring would be ugly and destroy views. They have asked the college to build carports on the campus’s extensive parking lots and add solar on top. Such projects provide shade and solar energy.

“I’ve never seen anyone cut into a mountain and put in a solar farm. Most put it on top of a roof or structure,” Councilwoman Mary Su said during a recent protest.

The college researched both kinds of solar and found ground-level cheaper and easier to build, said Gary Gidcumb, senior manager of construction projects for Mt. SAC. Plus, the college has owned that piece of land for decades.

“The costs are less if you are not trying to affix them to a building,” he said.

Putting solar on rooftops require more complex construction and would be less safe, he said. “If we were to put a fixture on a building, if it blew off in high winds or it if were damaged in an earthquake, these are life safety issues,” he said.

Also, repairing a leaking roof then becomes more complicated, he said, as does maintenance of the solar panels. “To maintain them, you have to bring personnel up off the ground,” he said. “They would be in a lot less safe conditions.”

**Two projects, two lessons**

Occidental College in Eagle Rock built a $6.8 million, 1-megawatt ground solar project in 2012. Like Broadview, it stirred strong objections from neighbors. Also the college’s board of directors had to be convinced.

Neighbors were worried about glare that comes with covering a hillside with metal poles and solar panels. Many objected to using open space for a utility project.
What turned around the board was the concept of an artistic, curving design — the panels hug the ground and are based on a hysteresis loop, a mathematical expression. Today, the hillside panels are part of the architecture of the school, displayed within the small liberal arts college's sustainability logo used to promote the institution.

Occidental College also spent a year talking to neighbors in Eagle Rock, Highland Park and Mt. Washington. The residents were offered a discount on home solar installations. Many of the objections faded away.

At Broadview, 1,441 solar panels are mounted on 81, 8-inch galvanized poles able to withstand winds of up to 90 mph, Fisher said. The large panels in the 11.6-acre steep hillside produce 80 percent of the electric power for the nursing facility.

Now in its sixth year of operation, Fisher said there have been no safety issues or other problems.

“I think people were more scared of it, they didn’t know what it was going to end up looking like,” he said. “After it was up, all the objections went away.”

Physics professor Daniel Snowden-Ifft, who led the community outreach effort for Occidental’s solar project in 2012, believes the college’s array is designed more artistically than Broadview’s and that alleviated the aesthetics complaints. Like Broadview, Occidental’s solar array has not had any safety problems and will operate for decades to come, producing clean energy.
If more ground solar projects are to come in populated areas, he shared this advice:

“Anyone considering putting a solar array on the hillside should consider the visual impact in a neighborhood,” said Snowden-Ifft.

**Ground-Level Solar Projects**

**Upcoming projects**

City of Industry plans a solar facility in the 2,450-acre Tres Hermanos Ranch capable of producing 450 megawatts of power annually

Mount San Antonio College plans a 2.2-megawatt project on a Walnut hillside at Grand Avenue

**Existing projects**

Broadview, a Christian Science nursing home, 4570 Griffin Ave., L.A.; 264 KW system using 1,441 hillside panels; can be seen from 110 Arroyo Seco Parkway Freeway. Began operations in 2011

Occidental College, 1600 Campus Road, Los Angeles (in Eagle Rock), 1-megawatt solar plant with 4,886 panels mounted on carports and hillside. Began operations in 2012.

MillerCoors, 15801 W. First St., Irwindale, [15.5-megawatt plant](#), with 10,620 panels on 10 acres. Largest solar array at any one brewery in the country. Began operations in 2015
OPINION

Too many Californians are barely scraping by

Photo by Rachel Luna, Redlands Daily Facts, SCNG
Railroad tracks go through downtown Redlands, Calif. on Thursday, March 23, 2017.

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD | opinion@langnews.com |
October 21, 2017 at 7:30 am
For all the advantages of the Golden State, far too many Californians are barely scraping by.

Last month, the Supplemental Poverty Measure of the U.S. Census Bureau revealed that approximately one-in-five Californians lived in poverty from 2014 through 2016.

Reaffirming this is the California Poverty Measure, a joint research effort by the Public Policy Institute of California and the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, which according to PPIC “accounts for the cost of living and a range of family needs and resources, including social safety net benefits.”

By this measure, approximately 19.5 percent of Californians lived in poverty in 2015, including 21.6 percent of children and 27 percent of Latinos and 35.5 percent of adults age 25-64 without a high school diploma.

Notably, according to PPIC, most poor Californians, 79.8 percent, had at least one working adult in their family, most working full time, which unfortunately isn't enough to keep them out of poverty.

A further 19.2 percent were found to be near the poverty threshold. Taken together, about four in 10 Californians were living in or near poverty in 2015.

There are wide geographic disparities with respect to poverty, with Placer and El Dorado Counties having the lowest rates in the state, at 13.1 percent and 13.2 percent, respectively, compared to 24.9 percent in Los Angeles County and 24.8 percent in Santa Cruz County.

Locally, while Los Angeles County shamefully stands out as the home of the highest numbers of poor people in the state, in raw numbers and as a proportion of the overall population, Orange County wasn't far behind, with 21.3 percent living in poverty, compared to 19 percent in Riverside County and 18.7 percent in San Bernardino County.

To the extent that there is a bright side, from 2011 to 2015, the poverty rate declined from 21.8 percent to 19.5 percent, and the proportion living in "deep poverty" has fallen from 6.3 percent to 5.5 percent.

California can and should do better. The state cannot tax, spend and regulate its way to prosperity. California must become a place that values entrepreneurship more than government programs and the free market more than central planning.