



Greg Devereaux wins 'Red Carpet' award

By [FIELDING BUCK](#)

2017-02-23 21:06:55



San Bernardino County chief executive Greg Devereaux was honored for leadership in public service Thursday by the Inland Empire Economic Partnership.

Devereaux recently announced that he [plans to retire by the end of June](#).

"I think Greg is receiving this award tonight because we all recognize that he has done everything in his power to lift our community, to lift our standing in the state and the nation, and to show the world that in the face of the worst you can be the best," said county supervisor Janice Rutherford in making the presentation.

The event was an evening to honor the public sector in Riverside and San Bernardino counties called "Turning Red Tape into Red Carpet." It took place at the Doubletree by Hilton Ontario.

Other honorees included:

Public-Private Partnership: City of San Bernardino/Burrtec, San Bernardino Quality of Life Team.

Responding to Globalization: Riverside County Economic Development Agency, Riverside County College of Foreign Trade.

Sustainable and Green Development: San Bernardino Community College District and the City of Redlands, Sustainable Water Futures.

Real Estate Redevelopment and Reuse: City of Corona, Corona Historic Civic Center Adaptive Reuse.

Cooperation Among Cities, Counties or Agencies: City of Moreno Valley, Employment Resource Relaunch (ERC).

Business Retention & Expansion: City of Riverside, Streamline Riverside.

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Inland Valley Daily Bulletin (<http://www.dailybulletin.com>)

San Bernardino County may have to pay Chino dairy family \$48 million

By Richard K. DeAtley, rdeatley@scng.com, [@RKDeAtley](https://twitter.com/RKDeAtley) on Twitter

Thursday, February 23, 2017



San Bernardino County could pay \$48 million for the property of one of the few remaining Chino dairy farmers after the family complained in a lawsuit that most of their spread, located under a landing pattern for Chino Airport, had been turned into a no-build zone without compensation.

The lawsuit, which went into private arbitration, claimed that the county had, bit by bit over the past 25 years, turned most of the 58 acres of dairy land owned since the 1960s by Jim and Annie Nyenhuis into a runway protection zone.

Planes, including private jets, fly low right over the family's ranch-style home and property on Remington Avenue as they come in for a landing at the airport, just west of the dairy.

The designation precluded most of the acreage from development, even as property all around the Nyenhuis's farm turned into commercial and housing developments, the lawsuit said.

The \$48 million includes the value of the 58-acres of land, legal costs, and relocation money for Jim and Annie Nyenhuis, said their attorney, John C. Murphy.

The award is not final, county spokesman David Wert said Thursday.

"I respectfully submit, it's over," said Murphy.

A stipulation in the case said the parties need to participate in a final order of condemnation. Under terms of the agreement, the final judgment cannot be appealed.

Murphy said in an interview that the county agreed to arbitration in the case as evidence mounted that a development plan for the airport was referred to as a "draft" plan only to avoid admission of language that the county should buy the Nyenhuis property.

"The suit in question wasn't filed until 2015. The only reason it took time to settle the case was that the two sides had vastly different opinions on the value of the land," county spokesman Wert said.

"We didn't want to bug them," Annie Nyenhuis said of the county in an interview Thursday. "We were happy here."

The couple — Jim is 87 and Annie is 81 — raised eight children at their home, which faces north and now looks across the street at a commercial building development where other dairy properties once sat. And more development is on the way.

"We've always been happy, but now we're getting closed in," Annie said during an interview at the couple's home. "Today, you need a bigger dairy to operate, and there is no more land."

“It’s time for us to move,” she said. “We have been here, longer than some people.”

The couple are both postwar immigrants from Holland who worked their way through the Southern California dairy industry, making their way to Chino and developing their property in the 1960s.

A stipulation filed in August of last year followed a February denial of a county motion for summary judgment and the beginning in April of a deposition of San Bernardino County Airport Director James Jenkins.

The stipulation said the parties had engaged in settlement discussions, and that the Nyenhuis family agreed that the county could acquire the property for public use.

The county agreed to compensate the family for the taking of the property under California’s eminent domain law.

The arbitration under retired San Bernardino County Superior Court Judge John W. Kennedy assigned an independent appraiser to value the Nyenhuis land, which came to \$47.3 million, Murphy said.

In addition, the mediator also said the county should pay \$480,780 for legal fees and relocation expenses of up to \$200,000.

There may be something for the county in the agreement: There are 20 acres on the east side of the property that is outside the no-build zoning and viable for development.

The stipulation says the Nyenhuis family will agree to convey some portion of the property , as identified by the county, directly to a third party.

URL: <http://www.dailybulletin.com/general-news/20170223/san-bernardino-county-may-have-to-pay-chino-dairy-family-48-million>

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San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

Former county CAO Mark Uffer testifies at Colonies trial

By Joe Nelson, The Sun

Thursday, February 23, 2017



SAN BERNARDINO >> Former San Bernardino County Administrative Officer Mark Uffer testified Thursday at the [Colonies](#) corruption trial about one defendant's alleged influence over the county supervisor he worked for and the county's negotiations with a Rancho Cucamonga developer that resulted in a \$102 million settlement prosecutors allege was tainted by bribery.

Mark Uffer, who served as the county CAO from 2004 until his [termination](#) in November 2009 for undisclosed reasons, said defendant Mark Kirk, former chief of staff for former county Supervisor Gary Ovitt, "drove the agenda" for Ovitt's office, while Ovitt often quietly went along with what Kirk had to say.

Uffer said Ovitt was a "passive supervisor" who, had he managed his staff differently, could have been more effectual.

"Mr. Kirk essentially dominated the office," Uffer said. "It was always uncomfortable to go into that office because you couldn't deal with Ovitt directly."

Prosecutor Lewis Cope's line of questioning regarding Kirk's alleged influence over Ovitt goes toward the prosecution's allegations that Kirk used that influence to deliver Ovitt's vote approving the Colonies settlement in November 2006 in exchange for a \$100,000 bribe.

Ovitt has denied Kirk had any influence over his decision approving the settlement, and Kirk denies any wrongdoing, as do the other three defendants in the case - former county Supervisor Paul Biane, Rancho Cucamonga developer Jeff Burum, and former Assistant Assessor Jim Erwin.

The four defendants stand accused of conspiring to force a \$102 million settlement between the county and Rancho investor group Colonies Partners LP, of which Burum is a co-managing partner, in November 2006 in exchange for bribes.

While time ran out Thursday for Kirk's attorney, Peter Scalisi, to cross examine Uffer, Burum's attorney, Stephen Larson, noted that each county supervisor and their respective chiefs of staff have their own management styles, and asked Uffer if a chief of staff could be fired on a 4-1 vote by the Board of Supervisors, to which Uffer concurred.

Cope also delved into questions regarding Uffer's knowledge of settlement negotiations between the county and Colonies Partners. Uffer said efforts to settle the Colonies litigation ramped up in late 2005.

He said Biane was concerned about taxpayer liability and felt the matter should be put to rest, and then Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus also began displaying unusual behavior in a rush to settle the lawsuit.

At Cope's request, he recounted a meeting with Postmus upon Postmus' return from a China trade mission in late 2005.

Postmus appeared “somewhat disheveled” when he met with Uffer, Uffer said.

“His hair was all messed up, one shirt tail was out. He had a handful of cigars. He smelled bad, like he hadn’t bathed in awhile, and he was unshaved,” Uffer said.

Postmus placed the cigars in a humidor, sat down and said, “We have to settle this Colonies lawsuit right away,” Uffer said. He told Cope that Postmus did not elaborate.

“I can only describe it as a bizarre encounter,” Uffer said.

Settling the Colonies litigation became “all-consuming” to Postmus, Uffer said.

The defense camp maintains that the settlement was above board and validated in a court of law, and that \$400,000 in contributions by Colonies Partners to five political action committees tied to the defendants within a year of the settlement were merely an act of good faith to rebuild political relationships soured by the heated and lengthy legal battle.

On cross-examination, Larson asked Uffer if he felt Postmus’s appearance and erratic behavior during the 2005 meeting in Postmus’ office could be attributed to drug use. Uffer said Postmus “had the shakes” and a “constant runny nose.”

“You think that might be because of the drugs?” Larson asked.

“He exhibited a lot of those signs,” Uffer said.

It has become widely known that Postmus is an admitted recovering methamphetamine addict who hit his bottom during the Colonies’ settlement negotiations and during his brief stint as county Assessor.

During closed-door meetings and mediation sessions regarding the Colonies’ case, Postmus would always be texting people on his Blackberry, but Uffer said he never knew who Postmus was communicating with.

Failing settlement negotiations drove Postmus to the point where he wanted to outsource county counsel, Uffer said, so much so that he berated County Counsel Ronald Reitz during a business plan presentation. Reitz subsequently retired, and Postmus recruited Riverside attorney and former Deputy County Counsel Dennis Wagner to serve as interim county counsel, Uffer said.

But Larson asked Uffer if it was a common practice for municipalities and other public agencies to hire outside counsel, to which Uffer said ‘no.’

Uffer said shortly after coming aboard as CAO and familiarizing himself with the Colonies’ litigation, he recommended using reserves from the county Flood Control District, which Colonies sued in March 2002, to settle the Colonies case, but that would have bankrupted the district, and the county declined his recommendation.

Testimony resumes Monday before Judge Michael A. Smith.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170223/former-county-cao-mark-uffer-testifies-at-colonies-trial>

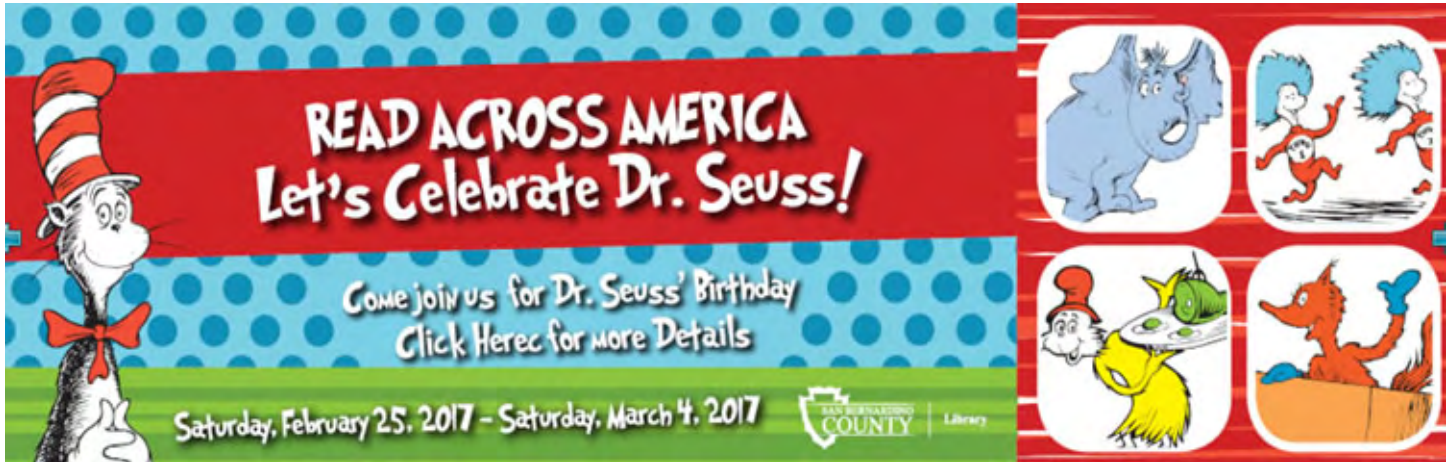
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Education •

The San Bernardino County Library Celebrates Seuss

By Staff • February 24, 2017 • 0 comments • 2 views



San Bernardino, CA - The [San Bernardino County Library](#) invites you to join in the celebration of everyone's favorite author, Dr. Seuss. A week-long celebration of reading and Dr. Seuss is in store, in support of the Countywide Vision's literacy campaign, [Vision2Read](#), and NEA's Read Across America initiative. Starting Saturday, Feb. 25 through Saturday, March 4, each of our 32 branch libraries will host a special-themed storytime or event featuring popular Dr. Seuss stories.

[Dr. Seuss Dates & Locations](#)

All SBCL branches will host fun programs for the whole family which include crafts and, of course, reading favorite Dr. Seuss stories. Select branches will offer opportunity drawings and more. Please check with your local County library for more details.

NEA's Read Across America is an annual reading initiative and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on March 2, the birthday of beloved children's author Dr. Seuss.

The San Bernardino County Library System is a dynamic network of 32 branch libraries that serves a diverse population over a vast geographic area. The County library system strives to provide equal access to information, technology, programs, and services for all people who call San Bernardino County home.

The library plays a key role in the achievement of the [Countywide Vision](#) by contributing to educational, cultural, and historical development of our County community.

For more information on the San Bernardino County library system, please visit <http://www.sbclib.org> or call (909) 387-2220.

INLAND EMPIRE CHILDREN NEWS

Trout coming to Inland Empire Classrooms



February 21, 2017 • 0 comments

Bill Chamberlain and Terrence Stone Receive Boy Scout Honor



February 17, 2017 • 0 comments



Apple Valley Sheriff's Station receives nearly \$115,000 in grant funding

Friday

Posted at 9:29 AM

Updated at 9:30 AM

By

Staff Writer



APPLE VALLEY — The Town Council has authorized the acceptance of nearly \$115,000 in grant funding that will benefit the San Bernardino County Apple Valley Sheriff's Station's juvenile officer position through the current fiscal year.

The \$114,974 — unanimously approved by the Council during its Feb. 14 meeting — is part of the state's Citizen's Option for Public Safety (COPS) Enhancing Law Enforcement Activities Subaccount (ELEAS) grant program, which Capt. Frank Bell said provides additional funds to local law enforcement.

"Every agency is guaranteed a minimum of \$100,000 and it's based on population," Bell said. "Each year, these funds have been used to supplement the juvenile officer position here at the Apple Valley (Sheriff's Station), which was added as a result of the initial grant program."

Town spokeswoman Kathie Martin told the Daily Press on Thursday the juvenile officer primarily oversees the Apple Valley Police Activities League and its SHOCK program, a 10-week intervention designed to combat the negative influences facing teenagers.

The COPS ELEAS grant is distributed annually by the state to counties, according to Bell, with the funds then getting filtered out locally. California Department of Finance documents show that more than \$214 million was allocated for Fiscal Year 2016-17 throughout the state.

Nearly \$4 million was allotted to San Bernardino County, documents show. Victorville and Hesperia received \$190,212 and \$143,573, respectively. Adelanto, Barstow, Needles and Yucca Valley each brought in the baseline \$100,000.

The FY 2016-17 amount for Apple Valley is a nominal increase compared to funds received in the previous fiscal year, which totaled \$111,599, according to Bell.

Matthew Cabe can be reached at or at 760-951-6254. Follow him on Twitter

San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

DA finds San Bernardino officer justified in fatal shooting of suspect in Garcia case

By Doug Saunders, The Sun

Thursday, February 23, 2017



SAN BERNARDINO >> The fatal shooting of an armed gang member by a San Bernardino rookie police officer, who was defending himself and his partner, Officer Gabe Garcia, was found to be justified, prosecutors said in a report released Thursday — more than two years after the attack on the officers.

“It is the conclusion of the District Attorney’s Office that Officer Gabriel Garcia and Officer Marcus Pesquera acted in complete self-defense and defense-of-others,” the report states. “No charges will be filed against them.”

On August 22, 2014, Officer Marcus Pesquera along with his field training officer, Garcia, a six-year veteran of the force, were on patrol in San Bernardino’s Westside when they came across a group of people gathered around a car drinking.

• **Read the report:** [DA rules fatal San Bernardino OIS justified](#)

Pesquera, who had graduated the police academy just seven weeks earlier, recalled that night.

“We were trying to be proactive on patrol when we found ourselves driving down 19th Street, making our way down Garner Avenue,” Pesquera recalled. “It was a bumpy, unpaved road when we saw a car with its lights on and people just hanging out.”

As both officers stepped out from their black-and-white patrol car to see what the group was doing, the [unthinkable happened](#).

One person in the group, Alex Alvarado, 38, a longtime member of a criminal street gang based in Redlands, opened fire on the unsuspecting officers.

“Gabe had his gun drawn, so I drew my weapon,” Pesquera said in an earlier interview. “Then I heard shots ring out. I went to the ground to gain cover as I was taking fire.”

Facing a heavily armed gunman and Garcia severely wounded, Pesquera, in a desperate gunbattle, leapt from his cover to return fire and after nearly three dozen shots were fired he ultimately killed their attacker.

Police Chief Jarrod Burguan never doubted his officer would be justified for his actions that dark August night.

“I’ve never been concerned about the legality of Officer Pesquera’s actions that night,” Burguan said in an emailed statement. “What he did and how he reacted was heroic and he has certainly been recognized for that.”

• **Photos:** [San Bernardino police officer wounded, gunman dead after gun battle](#)

Pesquera has been [highly decorated](#) for his actions.

More than a year following the shooting, Pesquera — one of two officers statewide — was recognized and honored by Governor Jerry Brown for his quick and life-saving action in that gunbattle.

It was the first time a San Bernardino Police officer been awarded the [state's highest award for police valor](#).

“Due to Officer Pesquera’s courage under fire, he quickly ended the suspect’s deadly assault, while simultaneously calling the situation in to the communications center,” a statement released in 2015 from the Governor’s office stated. “Officer Pesquera’s heroic actions allowed officers and medical personnel to safely and swiftly reach Training Officer Garcia and begin life-saving measures.”

Brown and state Attorney General Kamala Harris presented the Medal of Valor to Pesquera along with Sonora Police Department Officer Ryan D. Webb, who also survived a shootout in 2014.

Alvarado was no stranger to law enforcement.

In 1995, he was arrested, tried and convicted of receiving stolen property and sentenced to prison. In 2004, he graduated to assault with a deadly weapon and sentenced to probation. However, his probation was eventually revoked and he returned to state prison.

• **Related story:** [San Bernardino Police Department waits for word on gravely wounded officer](#)

On the night of the shooting, Jonathan Contreras, 20; Gonzalo Medina, 22; and Orlando Cruz, 24, all of San Bernardino, were the three men drinking with Alvarado. All three were charged with two counts of attempted murder of a peace officer and possession of an assault with a weapon.

Medina was also charged with possession of a firearm by a felon. Each defendant pleaded guilty to assault on a peace officer with an assault weapon and admitted a firearm allegation. All were sentenced to 15 years in prison.

“Peace officers protect and preserve the peace so that members of the public can feel safe on the streets and find peace in their homes,” the District Attorney’s report says. “Investigation and prevention of crime is but one key police function. When the public needs help, they always call the cops.”

Even as Alvarado lay on the ground, he was determined to kill the officers. He tried to get an AK-47 rifle as he was being handcuffed, according to the report.

Toxicology results show Alvarado was under the influence of alcohol and methamphetamine. Coroner’s officials attribute the cause of death to a gunshot wound to his chest.

“Officer Garcia suffered a serious head injury from which [recovery](#) has been slow,” the report concludes. “His [scar is a reminder not of disability](#) but of heroism and exceptionalism by two brave officers.”

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170223/da-finds-san-bernardino-officer-justified-in-fatal-shooting-of-suspect-in-garcia-case>

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Attorneys file notice to appeal San Bernardino bankruptcy confirmation

By Ryan Hagen, The Sun

Thursday, February 23, 2017



SAN BERNARDINO >> Three alleged victims of police beatings whose judgments would be reduced by 99 percent under the terms of the bankruptcy plan approved by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Meredith Jury have filed notice that they will appeal that ruling.

City officials expect its bankruptcy plan to unfold as approved during the appeals process, as Stockton's bankruptcy did when a creditor [appealed that bankruptcy confirmation](#). Anything else would be "extremely unusual," bankruptcy attorney Michael Sweet, who is not involved in the case, said Thursday.

Jury [confirmed San Bernardino's bankruptcy](#) plan orally in December and issued her 51-page ruling in writing Feb. 7, giving approval to a plan that pays some creditors as little as 1 cent for every dollar they're owed.

That's a violation of due process for people like Paul Triplett, who a jury decided in 2006 was entitled to \$7.7 million because police beat him after a traffic stop, according to attorney Duane Folke of Los Angeles.

Triplett would get \$77,000 under the approved plan, which Folke said is only a fraction of Triplett's medical bills.

"My concern is all the years of blood, sweat and toil that went into not only drafting but passing the civil rights statute that has made a difference in this country since the '60s," Folke said. "If this ruling is left to stand, I am afraid that it will emasculate in part the civil rights statutes, because if you get a police department that does what it did to my client ... all they have to do is look to this case and cite it as precedent for why they should be able to pay 1 cent on the dollar."

Folke is seeking 50 cents on the dollar.

San Bernardino [filed for bankruptcy in August 2012](#), saying a deficit of more than \$45 million would leave it unable to make payroll without bankruptcy protection. The nearly five-year bankruptcy has cost at least \$25 million but allowed more than [\\$350 million in savings](#), according to the city.

City Attorney Gary Saenz did not return calls to discuss the appeals. Previously, Saenz has said he sympathizes but that the city had to do what was best for city residents, and he agreed with Judge Jury that there was no legal reason civil rights creditors should be paid more than others who have lawsuits against the city.

A majority of every class of creditors voted in favor of the plan, including more than 95 percent of the 983 creditors — with collective claims of \$154 million — who would be paid 1 cent for every dollar they were owed.

Of the 43 creditors holding a total of \$2.8 million in claims who voted against the plan, attorneys filed three notices of intent to appeal, on behalf of Triplett; Hector Briones and Rosoland Harding; and Rovinski Renter.

In her order, Jury addressed the objections at length.

“The city does not now have, and is not projected to have, the financial resources to fully fund its infrastructure repairs and necessary rebuilding of police and other municipal services, let alone pay anything more on general unsecured claims than 1 percent,” Jury wrote in part. “ ... There is no benefit to separate classification of the litigation claims; they would still get only 1 percent, because the unrefuted evidence shows that 1 percent is all that the city has available to pay them.”

The city’s attorneys requested that the appeal be heard by U.S. District Court Judge Otis D. Wright II, saying that would best avoid duplicative work because Wright previously heard five [appeals of Jury’s decisions](#) earlier in the case. Folke said he had no objection to Wright.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/government-and-politics/20170223/attorneys-file-notice-to-appeal-san-bernardino-bankruptcy-confirmation>

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Sex registrant compliance sweep in Adelanto nets two arrests; 40 found in compliance

Friday

Posted at 9:04 AM

Updated at 9:04 AM

By **Jose Quintero**

Staff Writer



ADELANTO — Authorities on Wednesday made two arrests after contacting over 40 people in a sex registrant compliance sweep in Adelanto.

San Bernardino Sheriff's Department investigators assigned to the Victor Valley Station, state parole agents and San Bernardino County probation officers conducted the sweep called "Operation Safe Home."

The sweep visited registered sex offenders in the city to verify compliance with their registration requirements, along with probation and parole searches, sheriff's officials said. Forty registrants were found to be in compliance.

"Two arrests were made and three persons required to register were found to be in violation of their registration terms," sheriff's officials said in a statement.

"Criminal investigations are being conducted on those three persons."

A search of booking records showed Alyce Franklin was arrested on suspicion of failure to report an address change. Franklin, 58, was arrested at the intersection of Pearmain Street and Lee Avenue at approximately 10:20 a.m. Booking records list Franklin's residence in the 11900 block of Sand Avenue in Adelanto.

Franklin was being held at West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga in lieu of \$25,000 bail, booking records show.

A search of booking records did not yield any other arrests made during the sweep.

"The Victor Valley Sheriff's Station continues to monitor and conduct random compliance checks of all registered sex offenders within the City of Adelanto," sheriff's officials said. "Compliance checks are conducted in accordance with state laws and guidelines for monitoring sex offenders."

San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

Molestation suspect found dead in Big Bear jail cell

By Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Thursday, February 23, 2017



BIG BEAR >> A Big Bear man recently arrested for allegations of child molestation was found hanging dead in his jail cell early Wednesday morning, officials said.

“On Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at 4:20 a.m., the jail deputy was conducting his observation logs when he saw (Richard Harold) Todd hanging from the bars of his cell, with his shoelaces tied around his neck,” a San Bernardino County sheriff’s news release stated.

The deputy cut Todd down and called for medical aid but he was pronounced dead at the scene, officials said. Todd was housed alone in the cell.

Todd had been arrested the day before after detectives served a search warrant his home in the 300 block of East Country Club Boulevard for a child molestation investigation, authorities said.

Detectives learned Todd had allegedly used his pet dog and bird to lure a 6-year-old child into his home where the 60-year-old then reportedly he “touched the victim and used foreign objects on the victim’s genital area,” according to previous reports.

Authorities believe the child may have been victimized by Todd for the last year, officials said.

Todd, a 60-year-old aircraft painter, was booked into Big Bear jail on suspicion of sexual molestation of a minor, possession of child pornography and possession of an illegal assault rifle.

Officials say there have been several young people visiting Todd’s home unsupervised for several years and they believe there may be additional victims.

Sheriff’s Homicide Detail responded and are conducting the investigation.

Riverside County Coroner will conduct the autopsy to determine the cause of death.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is urged to contact the Homicide Detail, Detective Justin Long at 909-387-3589. Callers wishing to remain anonymous are urged to call the We-tip Hotline at 1-800-78-CRIME (27463) or you may leave information on the We-Tip Hotline at www.wetip.com.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170223/molestation-suspect-found-dead-in-big-bear-jail-cell>

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Economist: Poverty, state regulations hurdles to High Desert growth

Thursday

Posted Feb 23, 2017 at 5:38 PM

Updated Feb 23, 2017 at 5:38 PM

By

Staff Writer



VICTORVILLE — The High Desert's real estate engine continues to run in stable fashion, with new opportunities on the horizon along with the speed bumps of government regulation and the roadblocks of poverty.

This was part of the message delivered Thursday to local and regional leaders who attended the annual High Desert Real Estate Symposium & Forecast, hosted by Coldwell Banker Commercial, in Victorville.

Veteran home builder Chris Canaday of CT Properties in Orange County was one of several out-of-town developers who told the Daily Press they attended the symposium to discover more about the area, with its variety of real estate and development opportunities.

"I've heard much about the affordability of land, the demand for housing, the growth in the industrial sector and what Stirling Development is doing at the Southern California Logistics Airport," Canaday said. "There's a lot of positive news and feelings about the High Desert from the people that I've met here today — something that is attractive to any developer."

In his economic update, economist John Husing told the audience the Inland Empire, with a greater population than the states of Oregon and Kentucky, continues to be an economic powerhouse in the nation.

"With all due respect, anybody that knows anybody in Sacramento, you might tell them that, because they keep trying to create policies as if we are a minor footnote in Southern California," said Husing, vice president of Economic & Politics Inc.

With an Inland Empire and High Desert growth rate of nearly 6.2 percent over the last six years, health care services, logistics, construction, manufacturing and non-health professionals are the key sectors that are expected to generate the most revenue in the regions.

Husing said major issues facing the region are California's environmental policies that discourage construction and manufacturing from setting up shop in the Golden State.

Another vulnerability for the Inland Empire is the percentage of workers (27.8 percent) with AA degrees or higher, compared to Los Angeles County with 37.7 percent, San Diego at 45 percent and Orange County with 46.3 percent.

Husing said for the nearly 440,000 people living in the High Desert confronting an unemployment rate of 6 percent, "poverty is the single biggest issue" facing the the region.

"More than one out of four children live in poverty," Husing said. "Now, that is catastrophic and it means you have children in poverty with all those issues before they ever get into class."

Husing said the percentage of children living in poverty is 50 percent in Adelanto, about 40 percent in Barstow, just over 33 percent in Apple Valley and Hesperia, and Victorville at the IE level of 19 percent.

Keynote speaker Fred Schmidt, president and chief operating officer of Coldwell Banker, delivered his national commercial real estate review that included how over 70 million "Generation Z" consumers, from birth to 18, will begin flooding the market.

"This group grew up with a cell phone in their hand," Schmidt said. "When it comes to market needs, think about Generation Z and how they live, work and play."

Schmidt said the growth of ecommerce will continue to place a strain on big box retailers who don't adapt to a growing population, led by Baby Boomers, who shop online.

Jason Lamoreaux, broker and Coldwell Banker Commercial Real Estate Solutions president, said the commercial real estate forecast includes an increase in housing starts, a decrease in vacancy rates in all sectors, the expansion of retail and industrial sectors and the increase in median sale prices for resale homes.

With 300 single family homes permits pulled in the High Desert last year, Lamoreaux said the inventory of needed homes is about 1,400 short of a balanced market.

Lamoreaux said the completion of road construction in the Cajon Pass has eliminated the barrier to potential home buyers who avoided the area due to longer commute times.

"Next year, we'll have to exclude cannabis-related commercial properties in our numbers," said Lamoreaux, who revealed that Adelanto's cannabis cultivation zone increased pricing in the commercial real estate category.

During the symposium, video clips were shown of High Desert mayors and San Bernardino County Supervisors Robert Lovingood and James Ramos giving a brief overviews of their own areas of oversight.

Barstow Mayor Julie Hackbarth-McIntyre said the city's retail boom included the introduction of Oggi's restaurant, Marshalls and Harbor Freight Tools, and the possibility of more several more development projects such as a Best Western Plus and a Home2 Suites hotels.

Hackbarth-McIntyre said Barstow also will welcome a senior community that will be constructed by Eagle Real Estate, the same group that is building the Villas in Hesperia for 55-plus residents.

Retail panelists included Lewis Retail Vice President of leasing Bill Worsley, Sobel Development President Brad Sobel and TRC leasing manager Rebecca Taylor.

The industrial panel speakers included Sterling Development Vice President Anita Tuckerman, Aemerge RedPak President/CEO Adam Seger, DeVoll General Manager Stacy Devoll and Jano Dekermenjian, the senior associate, government relations for Weedmaps.

Dekermenjian, a former legislative aide who helped craft state regulations on cannabis, told the group state regulations are still being established and local governments will face the challenges of a "maturing industry."

For information on the symposium, call Coldwell Banker Commercial at 760-684-8000 or visit

Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at 760-951-6227, or on Twitter@DP_ReneDeLaCruz.



Milhiser pegged as interim Adelanto city manager

Thursday

Posted Feb 23, 2017 at 4:55 PM

Updated Feb 23, 2017 at 5:14 PM

With Milhiser, city officials are likely hoping his experience can help Adelanto navigate a complex and nascent medical marijuana industry that has yet to entirely get off the ground, despite signs of life.

By

Staff Writer



ADELANTO — G. Michael Milhiser, a former city manager for Upland and Ontario, was appointed Wednesday night to serve as interim city manager here — becoming the city's fourth top administrator in two years.

Milhiser will essentially be tasked with holding down the fort for four to five months while a consultant firm hired by the city two weeks ago searches for a permanent replacement for Cindy Herrera, who formally resigned Wednesday.

Herrera will revert back to her previous post as City Clerk. Her ultimate replacement, likely to be announced this summer, will be the fifth city manager in Adelanto since long-time city manager Jim Hart resigned in February 2015.

"(Milhiser) brings a lot of experience, so we're looking for his support through this transition," City Attorney Curtis Wright, the city's third since November 2015, said Wednesday after the Council solidified its decision by vote in closed session.

That decision apparently came down to the wire. The Council was still conducting interviews behind closed doors leading up to its open session meeting, which started roughly an hour late.

Milhiser, who sat in the back and didn't officially assume the seat on the dais, served as the top administrator in Upland for nearly nine years, ending in 2005. Before then, he was the city manager in Ontario from 1992 to 1994 and a city administrator in Montclair between 1978 and 1992.

Since 2007, he has held posts as a board member for the Monte Vista Water District in Montclair and as chief administrative officer for the Morongo Band of Mission Indians.

His appointment would appear to meet the criteria that city officials said they sought for their permanent city manager: he's experienced and he's seemingly not connected to the city.

"What we need is somebody in here that has nothing to do with the city whatsoever," Mayor Rich Kerr said last month when it was announced Herrera would step down, "and all they are is focused on city manager."

Herrera, who previously had no experience as a city manager, had framed her choice to leave the post after about 18 months as a foregone conclusion.

"I always felt that I was going to be there just to help (the Council), give them time so they could find the proper candidate to fill this role," she said last month.

Herrera had been more or less thrust into the role after former City Engineer Tom Thornton, who had served triple duties while also the public works chief, resigned as the top administrator after only six weeks. Thornton had routinely butted heads with Kerr, Mayor Pro Tem Jermaine Wright and Councilman John "Bug" Woodard, who he believed were interfering with day-to-day activities — a sentiment revealed in emails publicized by this newspaper in the summer of 2015.

But Milhiser also may have faced those same concerns. He reportedly resigned from his post in 2005 as Upland council members believed he overstepped his authority, according to the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin.

With Milhiser, city officials are likely hoping his experience, however, can help Adelanto navigate a complex and nascent medical marijuana industry that has yet to entirely get off the ground, despite signs of life.

Milhiser is also familiar with financially struggling entities. He took over a cash-strapped Tri-City Mental Health Center after his Upland gig, according to the Daily Bulletin, and he lamented Upland's budget woes and backed its recovery plans as a guest commentary contributor in a December op-ed for the Bulletin.

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..... Follow him on Twitter at

Our View: Authorities should probe Adelanto district's 'error'

Tuesday

Posted Feb 21, 2017 at 10:19 AM

Updated Feb 21, 2017 at 10:19 AM

By Daily Press Editorial Board

There are honest mistakes and then there are errors. We're all human, so we all make both occasionally. In most cases, you learn from them and go on and hope nobody else is affected by yours.

But that doesn't appear to be the case with what some are claiming was a clerical error made by the Adelanto Elementary School District.

In that case, the "error" covered perhaps as many as 17 years and affected the pay of 176 employees, potentially shorting them amounts totaling in the millions of dollars. Apparently, classified employees were placed on the wrong salary schedule, which prevented their paychecks from reflecting appropriate annual pay increases.

The school district last week approved a contract with an accounting organization to perform an audit. But we find it unusual and more than a little disturbing that this error was discovered in October but the school board wasn't informed until December. We also wonder why it took the board until mid-February to order an audit?

District officials are convinced the amount of money owed to employees won't be in the millions. They also promised "appropriate compensation" for those who were shorted, but can't yet say if that means they will be repaid in full.

If the total amount owed does run into the millions, it could bankrupt the school district.

We don't pretend to know how this error occurred or if it really was an error. And that's precisely why we think the 176 employees affected deserve to have the situation scrutinized.

We hope either the San Bernardino County District Attorney or the county Grand Jury will launch a review of the school district, its payroll processes and those individuals responsible for ensuring employees receive their full pay.

We've heard from employees who said they questioned the amounts they were receiving in their paychecks years ago but were always given one excuse or another for why they hadn't received the money they thought they should have.

That doesn't sound like an honest mistake. It sounds more like a cover-up.

We certainly don't want to believe a local school district would be involved in something like that, but it's also hard to believe such a mistake could occur for 17 years without anyone noticing.

A District Attorney's Office or Grand Jury review certainly would help the affected Adelanto Elementary School District employees regain confidence that the problem actually will be identified, that they will be restored to their proper salary schedule and that they will receive any and all back pay due them.



High Desert Education Consortium honors administrators

Thursday

Posted Feb 23, 2017 at 7:15 PM

Updated Feb 23, 2017 at 7:16 PM

By Staff Reports

VICTORVILLE — The fourth annual High Desert Education Consortium drew the largest attendance yet with 104 school administrators and local officials gathering at the Victorville Holiday Inn early Thursday morning.

The 7 a.m. event kicked off with lots of coffee and a presentation of the colors by Summit Leadership Academy students under the direction of Military Instructor Wayne Wyatt.

The breakfast is organized by the High Desert Education Consortium, which includes Azusa Pacific University, University of La Verne, San Joaquin Valley College and Park University.

Each year the Consortium selects an individual as "Administrator of the Year" and Marcelino "Chico" Garza, special assistant to the San Bernardino County Schools Superintendent Ted Alejandre, was this year's honoree.

"Mr. Garza has over 30 years of experience working with schools, communities and business throughout the state of California," APU High Desert Regional Campus Assistant Director Emily Wolken said.

After 22 years of service in the U.S. Army, Garza's educational background in psychology and business enabled him "to work effectively to identify and meet needs of individuals, schools and businesses," Wolken said.

"Mr. Garza uses his lifetime experience and real-life education to mentor others."

Along with honoring Garza, the event program included a special presentation from Mariana Academy AVID program students and a vocal performance by the Apple Valley High School Choir.

The mission of the Consortium is threefold, representatives said: to aid individuals in reaching their career goals, to support the economic development of the High Desert and to serve as a "catalyst" to encourage educators.

At Thursday's ceremony, educators and any locals interested in the organization were encouraged to contact a university representative for more information.



Allegedly drunken motorist drives off Lake Arrowhead hospital helicopter landing pad

By [BEATRIZ VALENZUELA](#)

2017-02-24 07:54:34



A reportedly drunken motorist drove a vehicle off the helicopter landing pad of Mountain Communities Hospital in Lake Arrowhead Friday morning, California Highway Patrol officials said.

It's unclear how the allegedly impaired driver made his or her way onto the helicopter landing pad, but Officer Marcelo Llerena said the vehicle was recovered about 30 feet down an embankment.

CHP and San Bernardino County Fire personnel were called to the hospital, 29101 Hospital Road, around 5:30 a.m., Llerena said. No major injuries were reported.

The unidentified driver was arrested, officials said.

The incident is still under investigation.

This story is developing. Check back for updates.

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San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

Why Chinese officials are visiting Chino, Brea next month

By Jim Steinberg, The Sun

Thursday, February 23, 2017



CHINO >>> A 40-person contingency from China is expected to travel here next month to learn how to grow their own private aviation industry.

After attending a conference in Brea, they'll hit a trade show at the Chino Airport before returning home to put into practice tips to nurture the nascent charter plane and private aviation sector.

For now, American companies — such as Threshold Aviation Group, headquartered at the San Bernardino County-owned Chino Airport — stand ready to serve as advisers.

“There is a lot of very, very low-hanging fruit. But the tree is in a hostile place,” Threshold CEO Mark DiLullo said.

Up until several years ago, Chinese private plane owners faced lengthy approval processes to go anywhere beyond circling an airport.

Now they can fly 125 miles or less, without approvals and it's expected that limit, and another one limiting pilots to fly no higher than about 10,000 feet, will be relaxed in a few years, said Karl Yi Zhao, Threshold's director of China business development.

“This is one of the interesting situations where our businesses and government regulations are maybe decades ahead of China,” said Jay Prag, clinical associate professor, The Drucker School of Management at Claremont Graduate University.

U.S. companies can make money teaching Chinese how to manage and do the ground part of the business. “Obviously, down the road at some point, China will be doing this on their own,” Prag said.

Prag will be among the speakers at a conference March 27 at the Embassy Suites Brea. A trade show follows March 28 at Threshold at Aviation's 50,000-square-foot Hangar No. 3. Both events are part of the inaugural “U.S.-China General Aviation Business Week,” sponsored by [Threshold](#) and the [Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics](#).

The aim of the conference is to “provide a bridge to promote the general aviation cooperation between companies, institutions and investors from the two countries,” Yuangang Gao, director and professor of the General Aviation Industry Research Center at Beijing Aeronautics and Astronautics University, said in an email.

China is home to 2,500 general aviation aircraft and 300 general aviation airports. This compares to near 200,000 general aviation aircraft and 20,000 general aviation airports in the United States, Gao wrote.

The general aviation industry in China will need international cooperation to spur its development, and the United States is a world leader, wrote Gao, who is also deputy secretary general of the Chinese Aircraft Owners

and Pilots Association.

“We believe China is an incredible emerging market, and they don’t know about general aviation,” DiLullo said.

Business opportunities for American firms include helping Chinese partners develop and manage general aviation airports, refueling services, aircraft repair and overhaul operations, avionics, and help with selecting the right aircraft for the owners’s needs, said DiLullo and other executives with Threshold, which provides aircraft management services, aircraft charter services, aircraft maintenance and modification, avionics installation and repair, aircraft recovery, sales and other services.

“We are a lot bigger than we look,” said DeLullo, whose firm employs about 65.

Experience in many international business deals, including one with Russian investors who were seeking to certify an aircraft to U.S. standards, has given the firm confidence to develop links to China, he said.

At the company’s planned trade show, the objective is to introduce American companies to high-level officials from China’s equivalent of the Federal Aviation Administration and related agencies, DiLullo said.

Those wishing more information about the trade show or conference should contact Douglas J. Crowther, Threshold’s director of business development, by phone at 909-606-6319 or by email at dougcrowther@yahoo.com.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/business/20170223/why-chinese-officials-are-visiting-chino-brea-next-month>

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Inland businesses have some worries about 2017, according to study

By Fielding Buck, The Press-Enterprise

Thursday, February 23, 2017

Small businesses feel good about how they will do in 2017 but not so good about the Inland Empire or the nation, according to a new study.

In Union Bank's annual Small Business Economic Survey, 92 percent of Inland participants said their businesses are headed in the right direction. Only 38 percent believed the national economy is headed in the right direction.

Thirty-three percent were confident in the direction of the local economy, a 12 percent drop from the 2016 survey.

Union Bank surveyed 591 small businesses in California and 102 businesses in Oregon and Washington state during a three week period in December and January.

Fifty-seven percent of total West Coast participants said their local economies were on the right track, and 53 percent said the national economy is on the right track.

Among other Inland findings:

Affordable Care Act: 57 percent said health care changes drove up costs, but 83 percent said the law has not impacted employment.

Minimum wage increases: More than 25 percent expressed a high level of concern.

Federal support: 38 percent said that keeping jobs in the United States was the best way to encourage small business. Thirty-two percent preferred government programs.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/business/20170223/inland-businesses-have-some-worries-about-2017-according-to-study>

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Logistics fueling Inland Empire's economic growth

By The Editorial Board, San Bernardino County Sun

Thursday, February 23, 2017

Much of the Inland Empire's economic growth since the Great Recession is associated with the booming logistics industry. The region's proximity to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the relative abundance of land and an expanding population have made it a prime location for large companies to do business. This means more job opportunities for locals and more tax revenues for local governments.

The growth of the logistics industry has been so great, according to a recent story in The Press-Enterprise, that the Inland Empire ranks second in the nation in having million-square-foot-plus "megawarehouses." In total, there are 13 such warehouses in the region, spanning 15.4 million square feet. These include three Amazon fulfillment centers in Eastvale, Moreno Valley and San Bernardino.

According to CBRE, the real estate company that assessed the growth in megawarehouses, there are six additional such buildings under construction in the Inland Empire, more than any other metropolitan area. This includes the Citrus Commerce Center in Fontana and the Meridian Business Park in Riverside.

"The Inland Empire continues to dominate in attracting large e-commerce users in the region due to the availability of brand-new, state-of-the-art facilities," said Kurt Strasmann, senior managing director of Orange County operations for CBRE.

While there have always been opponents of the increase in the number of warehouses throughout the region, it is important to keep in mind the tangible benefits seen thus far.

According to the latest Inland Empire Quarterly Report published by the Inland Empire Economic Partnership, the logistics industry added 53,000 new jobs in the region between 2011 and 2016, accounting for 23 percent of all jobs created in that time period. For many Inland workers and families, the growth of this sector has been immensely beneficial.

But there are looming threats. Locally, environmental activists are seeking to impose crippling regulations through the South Coast Air Quality Management District, while at the federal level, President Trump seems skeptical of international trade.

Excessive regulations and anti-trade rhetoric must be rejected if the Inland region is to see continued economic growth.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/opinion/20170223/logistics-fueling-inland-empire-economic-growth>

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VVC to unveil new complex Friday

Wednesday

Posted Feb 22, 2017 at 8:45 PM

By Staff Reports

Victor Valley College will unveil its new Automotive/Welding Vocational Complex at 10 a.m. Friday on the lower campus in Lot 17.

The complex offers new and remodeled construction that creates 7,677 square feet of auto/diesel mechanics labs, 4,040 square feet of new welding labs, 6,293 square feet of lecture classrooms, a service writer area and a state certified smog program.

The event will include light refreshments, self-guided tours and demonstrations.

VVC is located at 18422 Bear Valley Road in Victorville.



Despite a Strong Economy, Budgets Are Breaking Across San Diego County

THE GIST

The economy is doing well and tax revenues are rising – so why are three of San Diego government agencies facing massive hits to their bottom lines?



Supervisor Dianne Jacob said in her State of the County address the county “may be looking at a \$100 million hit to our budget.”

By Ashly McGlone (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/author/ashly-mcglone/>)
| February 9, 2017

The economy is doing well and tax revenues are rising – so why are three of San Diego’s largest government agencies facing massive hits to their bottom lines?

The city of San Diego estimates it must slash \$47 million to \$67 million in spending, San Diego County may have to cope with \$100 million in new costs and San Diego Unified is staring down at least \$124 million in cuts – an especially dire challenge because the reserve fund has nothing to spare.

Some of their troubles are common.

First, all three agencies are dealing with rising pension costs. State and local pension fund leaders are reducing long-term earning expectations, which increases the amount of money employers must contribute to fulfill retirement promises for current and former employees.

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Traditionally, when things don't pencil out it's the employer – also known as the government or taxpayers – that are ultimately on the hook to cover losses. In contrast, city of San Diego employees hired after 401(k)-style pension reforms were enacted in late July 2012, except for police, just get less in retirement.

Lowering expected returns also increases each agency's unfunded pension liability (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/government/despite-reforms-city-county-pension-funds-billions-short/>), or the gap between the cost of what's been promised and what's in the bank.

Longer life expectancies are having the same negative effect. People are living longer, and drawing pension checks longer than once anticipated. This increases employer costs and needed contributions.

Other factors contributing to the budget crunch are more unique to each agency.

Here is a closer look:

City of San Diego

In November (https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/fy18_5year.pdf), the city was projecting a \$37 million shortfall next year. The city's independent budget analyst (https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/16_43_five-year_forecast_complete_report.pdf) more recently put the deficit at \$57 million, which included "critical strategic expenditures" inexplicably left out of the earlier forecast in a departure from previous practice.

Since then, the city's pension payment grew by another \$10 million annually, so the deficit now stands at \$47 million to \$67 million, or nearly 5 percent of the city's \$1.4 billion general fund next year.

More than anything else, rising pension costs are hurting the city's bottom line.

In total, annual pension costs will increase by \$63.4 million next year to \$324.5 million. Most of the increase – about \$47 million – will come from the city's general fund. To put the impact in perspective, without the pension increase, the city's general fund deficit next year would be \$20 million at most.

Current city officials have pledged to never again deliberately underfund pensions – a practice that once made the city infamous nationwide – so the higher costs will be paid and the money to do so must come from somewhere else.

Though the city's tax revenues are rising, they're not rising fast enough to cover the added costs.

Property tax revenues are expected to exceed estimates this year by nearly \$1.3 million, but sales tax revenues are lagging behind by more than \$1.3 million, according to the Mid-Year Budget Monitoring Report (http://docs.sandiego.gov/councilcomm_agendas_attach/2017/bge_170202_2.pdf) released last month.

Hotel tax revenue growth is also lagging, with officials now expecting nearly \$900,000 less this year than what was included in the budget.

It's unclear if this year's tax trends could impact next year's expectations.

Property tax revenues were previously forecast to bring in \$532 million next year, nearly \$29 million higher than newly revised estimates for this year. Sales tax revenues were expected to total less than \$271 million next year, \$700,000 lower than current year estimates and hotel tax revenues were anticipated to total \$120 million next year, \$7.6 million higher than current year estimates, city records show.

What tax revenue gains do exist are not all up for grabs, either.

A portion of the city's tax revenue increases are now restricted for infrastructure needs, thanks to a measure approved by voters in June 2016.

Proposition H is expected to render \$17 million untouchable for other budget needs next year, city records show, but it's possible some city maintenance costs currently paid by the general fund could be shifted to the infrastructure fund.

To help close next year's \$47 million to \$67 million budget gap, all city departments were asked to identify cuts totaling 3.5 percent for next year. If all suggested cuts were enacted, savings could total \$45 million, per the independent budget analyst.

On Monday, the City Council will vote on whether to slow down plans to reach minimum 16.7 percent general fund reserve levels recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association. The move could free up \$3 million annually over the next five years.

More will be known about what will get cut when Mayor Kevin Faulconer releases his proposed city budget by April 15 and a revised budget in May. The budget will be sent to the Council for approval in June.

San Diego County

County leaders have long touted a healthy reserve fund and stellar bond ratings as signs of financial health. That hasn't changed, but state and federal actions outside of their control could bring new costs to the county budget.

Supervisor Dianne Jacob said in her State of the County (<http://www.diannejacob.com/news/news-releases/jacob-unveils-her-seven-in-17-in-state-of-the-county-speech/>) address Feb. 1 that the county "may be looking at a \$100 million hit to our budget."

Jacob's office said the \$100 million figure referred to a possible \$75 million cost increase if the Affordable Care Act is repealed and local residents lose insurance. The expectation is that the county will have to provide medical care to masses of newly uninsured residents.

"An early estimate is the county, who has responsibility for indigent health care costs, could be faced with \$75+ million in increased medical costs for people who lose their health coverage under the Medicaid expansion of

ACA,” county spokesman Michael Workman said in an email.

The remaining \$25 million cited by Jacob refers to Gov. Jerry Brown’s proposed decrease in state funding for in-home support services, which provides home help to low-income residents who are elderly or disabled.

Whether either impact becomes reality next year remains to be seen, but Jacob seems to think there’s a real chance supervisors will have to come up with \$100 million more than anticipated.

That may result in cuts to other services, or using money in the reserve fund.

Already anticipated in the \$4 billion budget are rising county pension contributions, expected to increase from \$394 million this year to nearly \$469 million next year. The county spends another \$81 million annually to pay off pension obligation bonds, loans the county obtained a decade ago to make pension contributions.

San Diego Unified School District

The amount of budget cuts needed at San Diego Unified is rising, with the latest staff estimates after the governor’s state budget topping \$124 million (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/san-diego-unifieds-looming-budget-cuts-now-top-124-million/>).

Budget documents show school officials plan to outspend general fund revenues (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/what-happened-to-san-diego-schools-budget-in-one-chart/>) this year by about \$100 million – more than any other year in recent history. In recent years, the district relied on its reserve fund to help cover funding gaps, causing it to dwindle to minimum 2 percent levels required by the state.

The district must grapple with cuts to its \$1.3 billion general fund budget even as costs for pensions and other employee benefits are rising.

Contributions for teacher pensions totaled nearly \$125.5 million this year and will increase by \$10 million next year. Contributions for non-teaching staff pensions totaled nearly \$37.5 million and will increase by \$3.2 million. Even steeper increases are needed in future years.

Revenue increases from the state are slowing a bit faster than expected after years of large cash infusions following implementation of the new Local Control Funding Formula. The formula sent more money to districts like San Diego Unified that have large populations of English-learners, students from low-income families and other vulnerable students.

Exactly what will get cut next year will be approved by the school board Feb. 21, but school sites have begun circulating notices (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/EllenBrowningScrippsES.jpg>) indicating the district plans to cut nearly all vice principals at elementary schools. The school district declined to confirm or deny whether that was true earlier this week (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/principal-says-all-vice-principals-in-sd-elementary-schools-will-be-cut-as-budget-shortfall-gets-real/>).

For some, like Ellen Browning Scripps Elementary, lunch and recess supervision is being reduced from 44 hours to 16 hours a week, while the school's library position will be reduced to one day a week, according to a message from the school's principal. Counselor hours will also be trimmed.

**ellen browning scripps elementary school**

Dear Parents,

You may have heard in the news that California's school funding is taking a hit this year. Our District has a \$125 Million deficit projected for next year. In order to balance the budget many painful cuts will have to be made. The District tried to keep the cuts away from school sites as much as possible, but we will still feel those painful cuts at EBS.

- Discretionary budget reduced from \$84,000 to \$77,000
- Vice Principal's job cut. (The District cut all elementary VPs except for schools with over 1000 students.)
- Lunch and recess supervisors reduced from 44 hours a week to 16 hours a week (split between 5 people)
- Health Tech will need supplemental time added to have the Health Office staffed full time. (Just like this year)
- Library position reduced from 17.5 hours a week to 8 hours (1 day) a week
- Counselor allocation for next year is 2 days a week. This year we added an extra ½ day a week from our school budget.
- Computer Assistant. AFP usually funds this position for about \$40,000.

We would like AFP to help us out during this budget crisis by supplementing some of the positions above. The hard part is that we cannot fund them all. This District is not allowing us to spend more than \$77,000 supplementing positions even if the money is donated. Also, we are not allowed buy back the vice principal position. My belief is that the Health Tech and lunch supervisor positions have to take priority since they greatly affect the health and safety of the students. I also know that keeping the Technology Academy has been a priority for our parents and teachers.

If you are interested in hearing more about the budget, please attend the AFP meeting tomorrow night at 6:30 in the MPR.

I look forward to seeing you then.

Sincerely,

Liz Sloan

Principal

(<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/scripps elementary1.jpg>)

In a message sent out on social media Tuesday, Superintendent Cindy Marten pledged to “not increase core class sizes,” and to “cut from the top first.”

Across our district, parents and schools are meeting to find creative solutions to help us close the \$124 million budget shortfall we face in 2017-18. That process will continue until the Board meeting on February 21, when we present our budget.

Even before then, I want to assure parents and students of the following:

1. We will not increase core class sizes. Students learn best in small class settings, and San Diego Unified has some of the lowest class sizes in the state. We plan to keep it that way.
2. We will cut from the top first. Before we ask schools to do more, we will cut central office staff.
3. Students will still have access to our amazing International Baccalaureate (IB), dual-language, arts and other programs that help them develop as complete individuals.
4. Every possible qualified teacher will be in the classroom serving students, and not on special assignment to support other district goals – no matter how worthy those goals may be. We need all hands on deck.
5. We will treat our teachers and classified staff with the dignity and respect they deserve. Where layoffs are necessary, we will work to make their transition smooth.
6. We will look at creative financial solutions like early retirement for long-time educators.
7. Finally, the cuts we make now will improve the long-term financial stability of the district, so families understand they can count on their schools for the future.

In the meantime, let me reassure all families that we are funded through the end of this year, and all of the talk about changes relates only to the school year that starts in the fall.

Finally, we will continue to keep parents informed. From the start, we have been open about the challenges we face. We have repeatedly updated the board and the public on the situation, and we will continue to do so.



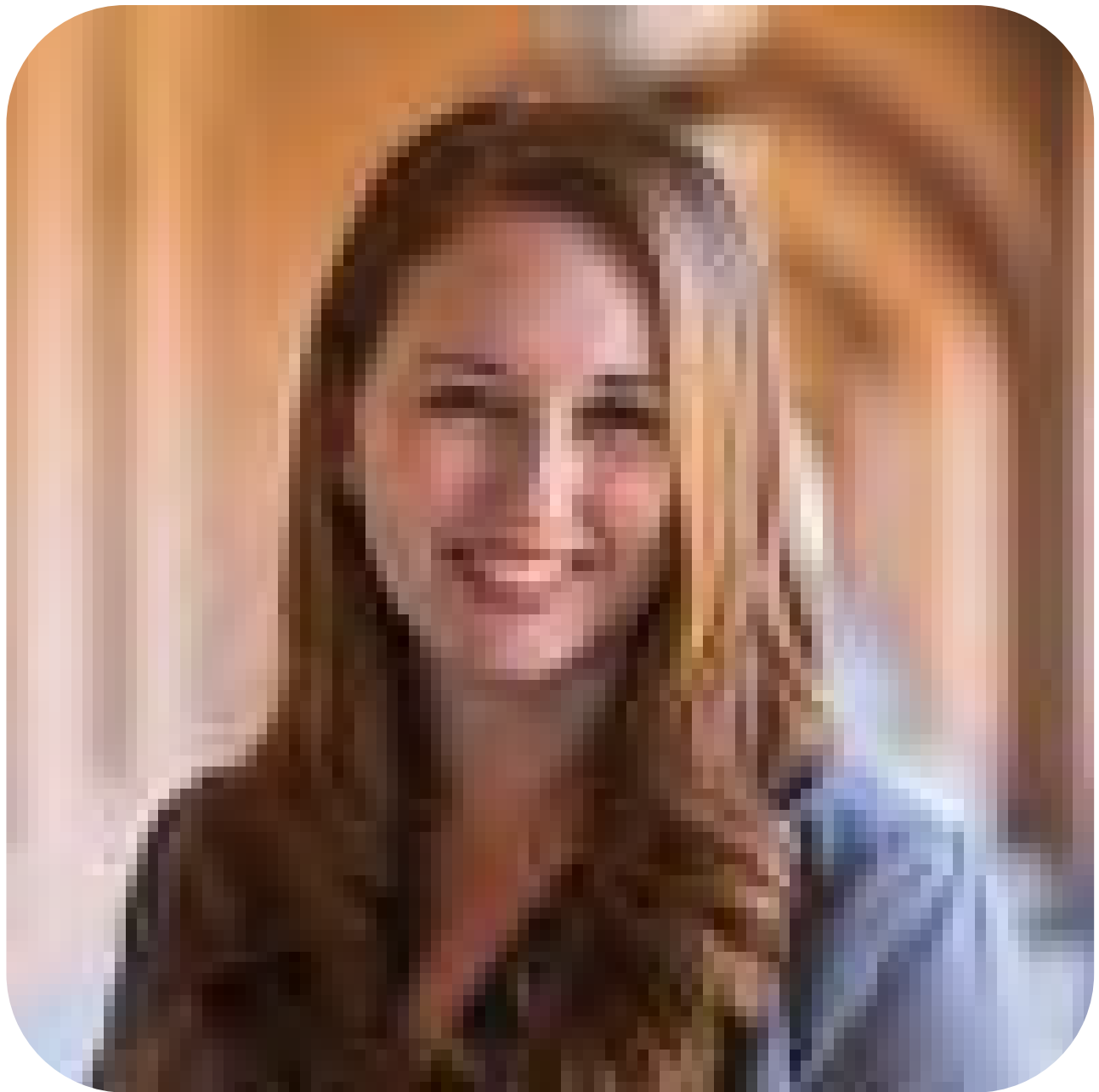
Cindy Marten
Superintendent

(<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Marten.jpg>)

“Where layoffs are necessary, we will work to make their transition smooth,” Marten wrote, adding that the district is also exploring early retirement incentives for long-time educators.

This article relates to: Education

(<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/category/topics/education/>), Government (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/category/topics/government/>), Must Reads (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/category/must-reads/>), San Diego City Finances (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/category/all-narratives/san-diego-city-finances/>), School Finances (<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/category/all-narratives/school-finances/>)



Written by Ashly McGlone (<http://voiceofsandiego.org/author/ashly-mcglone/>)

San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

White House signals possible crackdown on recreational cannabis

President understands ‘pain and suffering’ but there’s a big difference, says Sean Spicer

By Brooke Staggs, bstaggs@scng.com, [@JournoBrooke](https://twitter.com/JournoBrooke) on Twitter

Thursday, February 23, 2017



Americans can expect to see “greater enforcement” of federal laws banning recreational marijuana use, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said Thursday, signaling the Trump administration might be considering a crackdown on legalization drives spreading state to state.

At a press briefing, Spicer said President Donald Trump was supportive of a federal rule that gave states leeway to allow medical marijuana use.

“I’ve said before that the president understands the pain and suffering that many people go through who are facing, especially, terminal diseases and the comfort that some of these drugs, including medical marijuana, can bring to them,” Spicer said in response to a reporter’s question. But he added, “There’s a big difference between that and recreational marijuana. I think that when you see something like the opioid addiction crisis blossoming in so many states around this country, the last thing we should be doing is encouraging people.”

Spicer didn’t indicate how the president intended to enforce federal laws in states that had approved recreational marijuana consumption. Twenty-eight states have medical marijuana laws on the books, while eight states — including California — permit recreational cannabis.

When a reporter pressed him for clarity, he said it was “a question for the Department of Justice.”

A spokesman for the Justice Department declined to comment on the matter.

Aaron Herzberg, a cannabis real estate investor based in Costa Mesa, said it would be unrealistic and “political suicide” for Trump to “wage an all out war” against recreational marijuana, pointing to millions of dollars in tax revenue flowing to states with legal cannabis laws. He said he suspects Spicer’s comments are “saber rattling” more than a viable threat.

Marijuana remains illegal under federal law, but the Obama administration largely let states carry out their own legalization schemes, as long as they enforced regulations aimed at preventing sales to minors, money laundering and other criminal offenses. Thursday’s comments from Spicer were perhaps the clearest indication yet that the Trump administration may not go so easy on legal weed states.

California’s new Attorney General Xavier Becerra noted he took an oath to enforce the state’s laws.

“If there is action from the federal government on this subject, I will respond in an appropriate way to protect the interests of California,” Becerra said via email.

Smart Approaches to Marijuana, which funded opposition to California’s marijuana legalization measure Proposition 64, applauded Spicer’s comments.

“This isn’t an issue about states’ rights; it’s an issue of public health and safety for communities,” SAM President Kevin Sabet said.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions made statements similar to Spicer’s when he was being vetted by Congress. As a result, Paul Armentano, deputy director of the marijuana rights organization NORML, said Spicer’s comments weren’t surprising. But he pointed to the irony of Quinnipiac polling out just hours earlier that found 71 percent of voters oppose enforcing federal laws against marijuana in states that have already legalized pot.

The press secretary’s statement linking legal marijuana to the opioid epidemic drew immediate criticism from cannabis rights advocates, who cited research indicating the opposite is true.

“Spicer has it exactly backwards,” said Ethan Nadelmann, executive director of Drug Policy Alliance. “Greater access to marijuana has actually led to declines in opioid use, overdoses and other problems.”

Thursday’s controversy came days after Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Costa Mesa, and three other congressional representatives from states that have legalized marijuana officially formed a “Cannabis Caucus” to advance federal laws allowing cannabis cultivation, sale and use.

A group of Democratic legislators in California is floating a bill that would make it illegal for state or local authorities to assist federal agents in investigations and enforcement actions involving Californians who are complying with state marijuana laws.

“We have hoped and still hope that the federal government will respect states’ rights in the same manner they have on several other issues,” said Derek Peterson, CEO of Irvine-based cannabis firm Terra Tech. “We also hope that the states make a point of defending their independence in regards to this and protect their constituents.”

Staff Writer Daniel Jimenez contributed to this report.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170223/white-house-signals-possible-crackdown-on-recreational-cannabis>

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