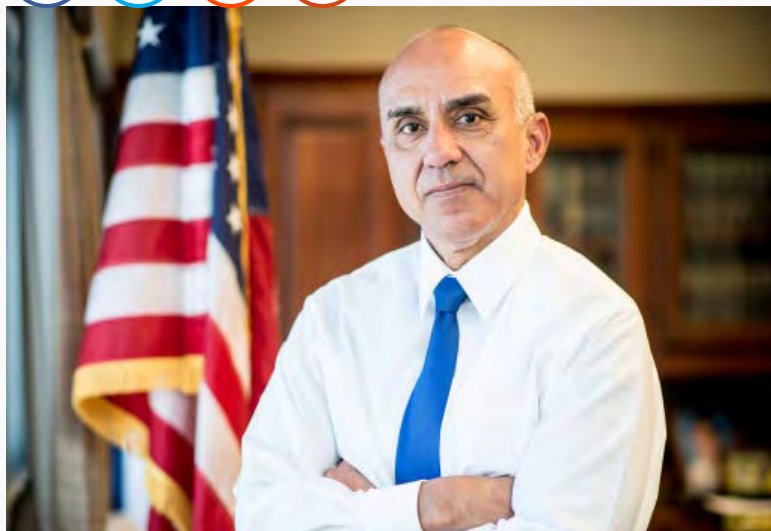




NEWS □ CALIFORNIA NEWS

San Bernardino County DA implies challenger is a puppet funded by former Colonies defendants



San Bernardino County District Attorney Mike Ramos at his office in San Bernardino, Calif. on Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018. Ramos, who served since 2002, is seeking re-election. (Photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The San Bernardino Sun/SCNG)

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



PUBLISHED: March 5, 2018 at 4:44 pm | UPDATED: March 5, 2018 at 5:07 pm

San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael A. Ramos said he knows that his strongest challenger in the June primary election is being funded heavily by the vindicated Colonies corruption case defendants and their supporters.

“I know they’re upset, and I also know they’re coming after me, and I also know they’re going to fund a candidate,” Ramos said during a recent interview at his office.

Ramos was referring to Jason Anderson, a 17-year veteran county prosecutor who became a defense attorney in 2014. Anderson announced his candidacy last month.

“He’s their candidate. They would love to have their puppet in here,” Ramos said of Anderson. He said the former Colonies defendants already have sought more than \$100 million from the county in legal claims since the trial, and are now pooling their resources to fund Anderson’s campaign.

“They’d love to have a D.A. in here that would support them and open up that checkbook. And that’s Jason,” said Ramos, the county’s top prosecutor since 2002 who is [seeking his fifth term in office.](#)

COLONIES CONNECTION

Ramos’ candidacy comes in the aftermath of one of the biggest bungled corruption cases in county history, costing perhaps tens of millions of dollars in taxpayer money. The nearly decade-long criminal investigation and 8-month trial ended in [acquittal](#) for three of the defendants and [dismissal of all charges](#) against a fourth defendant last

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summer. But the exact cost may never be known. The District Attorney's Office maintains it does not keep a record of such figures in the cases it prosecutes.

The vindicated defendants — Rancho Cucamonga developer Jeff Burum, former county supervisor Paul Biane, former assistant assessor Jim Erwin, and Mark Kirk, former chief of staff to former county supervisor Gary Ovitt — have taken legal action.

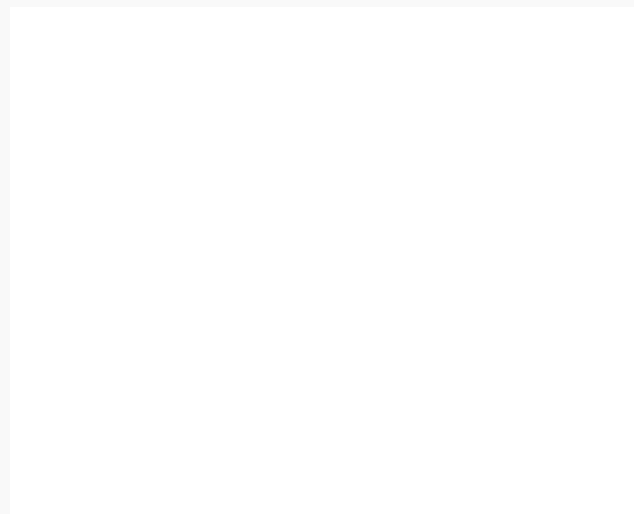
Rancho Cucamonga investor group Colonies Partners, of which Burum is co-managing partner and was a focal point in the criminal case, [filed a federal civil rights lawsuit](#) against the state and county on Thursday, March 1, seeking \$80 million in damages, \$60 million in general damages and \$20 million in punitive damages.



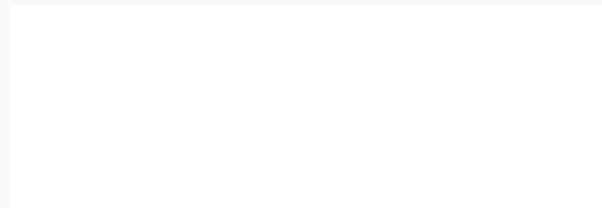
Anderson denied that he is the “Colonies candidate,” but noted the defendants have a right to exercise their First Amendment rights and back the candidate of their choice.

“I’ve got no commitment from anybody. I didn’t

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pull my papers until the beginning of February. So am I the Colonies' candidate? No!" Anderson said.



Defense attorney and former San Bernardino County prosecutor Jason Anderson is challenging incumbent Mike Ramos for District Attorney in this year's election.
(Stan Lim, San Bernardino Sun/SCNG)

He said he was also unaware that Erwin and Kirk **formed a political action committee** last month supporting his candidacy. As of Monday, Business Leaders for Fair and Ethical Government already had raised \$307,600. Burum contributed \$149,100 to the PAC on Thursday, March 1, according to the PAC's finance records.

“Do I suspect that people that are involved with Colonies and are supporters of those people that went through what they went through — are they going to come and support me directly? Perhaps they will, I mean I have to get my message out, right?” said Anderson. “And so there are people with resources that are going to, if they want to donate to me, then they can do that.”

Anderson said he has his own campaign committee, Jason Anderson for District Attorney, that is limited to contributions not exceeding

\$4,400, the maximum allowed per county ordinance.

Anderson, a former Ontario councilman and planning commissioner, said he is relying on support from his friends and colleagues in the legal and law enforcement communities. He acknowledged he's friends with Kirk.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

To illustrate the role Burum and his friends and/or business associates are playing in Anderson's campaign, Ramos pointed out contributions made to the Inland Empire Taxpayers Association PAC on Dec. 5, 2017. On that day, Burum and several friends and/or business associates contributed more than \$50,000 to the PAC, then on the same day purchased four slate mailers for Anderson's campaign, according to Ramos. Burum himself donated \$27,000 to the PAC, according to campaign finance statements.

"Now you tell me that's not money laundering. They're getting away from the campaign limits and they're using these different ways of doing it," said Ramos. "If that's who the public wants as their District Attorney, then the voters are going to vote, and they're going to say that's who they want."

Stephen J. Kaufman, Burum's campaign finance lawyer, said the law allows any citizen to contribute funds to committees that act independently of a candidate.

"It's a First Amendment right," Kaufman said.

"Any implications that donations to independent committees are improper is completely

unfounded.”

Burum said in a statement Monday that Ramos “continues to threaten and try to intimidate me and others who oppose him.”

“His tactics of intimidating people anyone who would go against him just furthers my resolve that it not happen to another innocent person in our county. Until leaders from both business and public office stand up against him, he will not stop his reckless abusive behavior,” Burum said.



Rancho Cucamonga developer Jeff Burum.

LOCAL NEWS

San Bernardino County event to help families reconnect with missing persons



By **MIKE CRUZ** | mcruz@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun
March 5, 2018 at 12:36 pm



With more than 1,600 missing persons reported in San Bernardino County, the Sheriff's Department is holding an event Saturday in Rancho Cucamonga to help families reconnect with missing loved ones.

Those who attend Missing Persons Day will be able to file a report for a missing person, connect with law enforcement, talk with a professional and complete a Child ID kit.

There is no time limit to file a missing persons report, and DNA samples collected to find missing persons will not be used for criminal cases, according to a [Sheriff's Department tweet](#).

Investigators also will not question immigration status when filing a missing persons report.

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The Missing Persons Day event is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Central Park, in David Drier Hall, 11200 Base Line Road in Rancho Cucamonga.

If you are searching for a missing person, helpful items to bring are photos of the person, two of the person's closely related family members for the collection of identification cheek swabs, and any identifying documents such as X-rays or dental or medical records.

Families and friends are welcome to wear memorial T-shirts and bring posters.

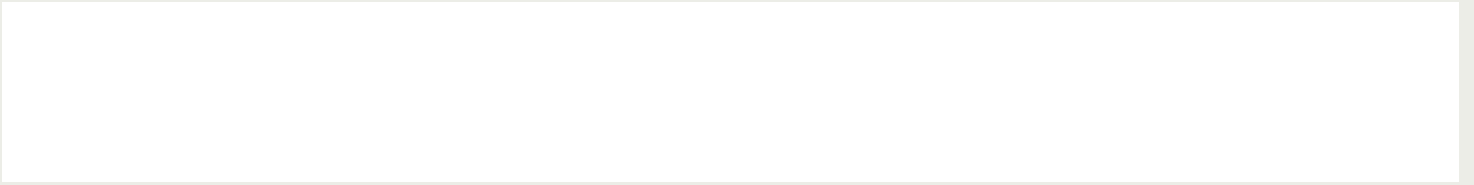


For information or to schedule an appointment, call San Bernardino County Sheriff, Coroner Division, at 800-637-6653 or go online at

<https://www.facebook.com/missingandunidentified.sbcsd>.

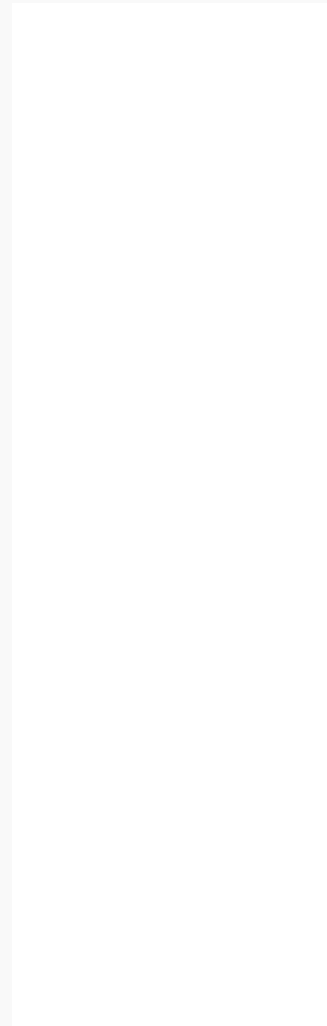
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LOCAL NEWS

Assemblyman Marc Steinorth to run against incumbent Janice Rutherford for San Bernardino County supervisor





Assemblyman Marc Steinorth, R-Rancho Cucamonga, pulled candidacy papers on Monday to run against San Bernardino County Supervisor Janice Rutherford for her seat on the board. He announced last week he would not seek a third term as Assemblyman.

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



PUBLISHED: March 5, 2018 at 8:29 pm | UPDATED: March 5, 2018 at 9:00 pm

Assemblyman Marc Steinorth, R-Rancho Cucamonga, pulled candidacy papers Monday to run against incumbent San Bernardino County Supervisor Janice Rutherford, said Melissa Eickman, spokeswoman for the Elections Office of the Registrar of Voters.

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MOST POPULAR

1

Life in prison for man convicted in 2013 beating and stabbing slaying of Fontana father

On Friday, Steinorth announced that, after serving two terms in office, he would not seek re-election. He said in a statement he had already done “more than he ever imagined” and wanted to spend more time with his family. He stressed, however, that his service to the community was not over. And speculation that swirled about him making a possible run against Rutherford, elected in 2010, was confirmed on Monday.

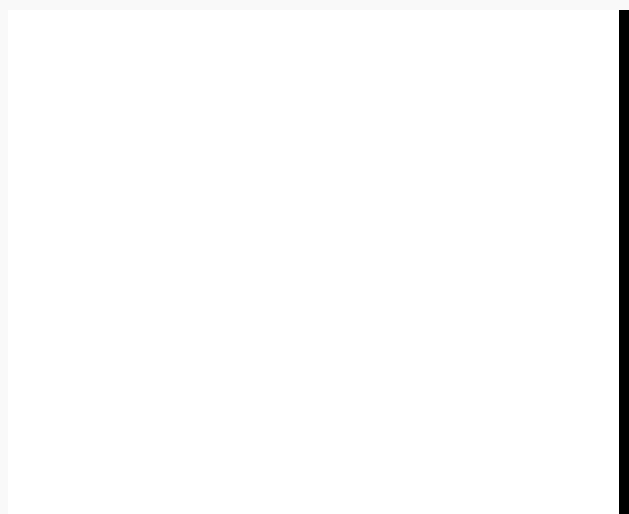
A former Rancho Cucamonga councilman, Steinorth, 47, was first elected to the 40th Assembly District in 2014. His district includes most of San Bernardino and Rancho Cucamonga along with Redlands, Loma Linda and Highland.

San Bernardino County’s second supervisorial district includes the cities of Upland, Rancho Cucamonga, and a large chunk of Fontana, as well as the unincorporated communities of Devore, Lytle Creek, Crestline and Lake Arrowhead.

“It’s a surprise to me. Marc sent me a signed endorsement card,” Rutherford said in a telephone interview Monday. “He has not called me yet, so I really don’t know what’s going on with him.”



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San Bernardino County Supervisor Janice Rutherford, who represents the county's second supervisorial district and was elected in 2010, said Monday she was taken aback by Assemblyman Marc Steinorth's bid for her seat on the Board of Supervisors. She acknowledged it will be a tough campaign race, but she's ready for the challenge.



As of Monday, Steinorth's endorsement was still on Rutherford's campaign website.

Steinorth did not return repeated telephone calls seeking comment.

Steinorth is now Rutherford's most viable challenger. Last month, Ken Petschow, a 54-year-old airline pilot and San Antonio Heights resident, [announced his candidacy](#) for Rutherford's seat on the board. He said the annexation of Upland's fire department by the county, and a \$158 tax imposed on residents as a result, without a vote, was one of the reasons he decided to run.

Rutherford was unphased by Petschow's announcement, but Steinorth's pulling of candidacy papers on Monday sounded an alarm for her.

“He is a tough campaigner, so this is going to be a challenging race. It’s going to require a lot of money and a lot of volunteer time,” Rutherford said. “I’m not concerned about that. I will have most of those things.”

Among Rutherford’s dozens of endorsements include county Sheriff John McMahon, District Attorney Mike Ramos, county supervisors Curt Hagman and Robert Lovingood, and Assemblymen Chad Mayes and Joy Obernolte, among others. Rutherford also announced Monday she received the endorsement of Sen. Mike Morell.

Steinorth’s announcement that he would not seek another term as Assemblyman followed the Feb. 9 [announcement by San Bernardino County Third District Supervisor James Ramos](#) that he would be vying for Steinorth’s seat on the Assembly.

Ramos, who could not immediately be reached for comment Monday evening, said on Feb. 9 that, if elected assemblyman, he would focus on the issues of importance in the Inland Empire – economic development, tackling homelessness, improving education and working with public safety to keep communities safe.

With Steinorth now out of the Assembly race, Ramos, a San Manual tribal member with unlimited funds, said in a statement last week he would be “heavily favored to win.”



LOCAL NEWS

'It's a rebirth': San Bernardino County sergeant back at work after Vegas shooting recovery



San Bernardino County sheriff's Sgt. Brad Powers, center, poses with Sgt. Matt Collins, left, and Sgt. Kaysie Smith after returning to duty on March 5, 2018. Powers was shot at the Route

91 Harvest country music festival in Las Vegas on Oct. 1, 2017, and had been in rehabilitation since. (Courtesy of San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department)

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

PUBLISHED: March 5, 2018 at 6:48 pm | UPDATED: March 5, 2018 at 6:53 pm



Five months after being critically wounded in the mass shooting at the Route 91 Harvest music festival in Las Vegas, San Bernardino County sheriff's Sgt. Brad Powers returned to duty Monday, March 5, a renewed and changed man.

"It's a rebirth, of sorts," Powers said Monday. "Just to have the opportunity. There was a time after I got shot I didn't think I'd make it back. Finally being able to put the badge back on and the gun back on and help the next generation of people coming up it, it means a lot."



San Bernardino County sheriff's Sgt. Brad Powers.

Powers was among the more than 500 injured **MOST POPULAR**

Oct. 1 when Stephen Craig Paddock opened fire from his room in the Mandalay Bay casino resort, mortally wounding 58 before taking his own life.

A bullet penetrated Powers' left side, just above his pelvis, and settled in his right leg. His wife, Kristin, dragged him 20 feet to safety and gave him first aid.

The bullet damaged nerves and veins. He spent 20 days in a Las Vegas hospital and another two and a half weeks at a Loma Linda rehab facility. He also had outpatient therapy at Redlands Community Hospital.

Powers, 45, was assigned to the Fontana station as a patrol detective sergeant before he was shot. He now works in civil liabilities – traffic collisions involving sheriff's vehicles – at the downtown San Bernardino station. He is on full duty with no limitations.

"The department has been amazing, my family has been just incredible,

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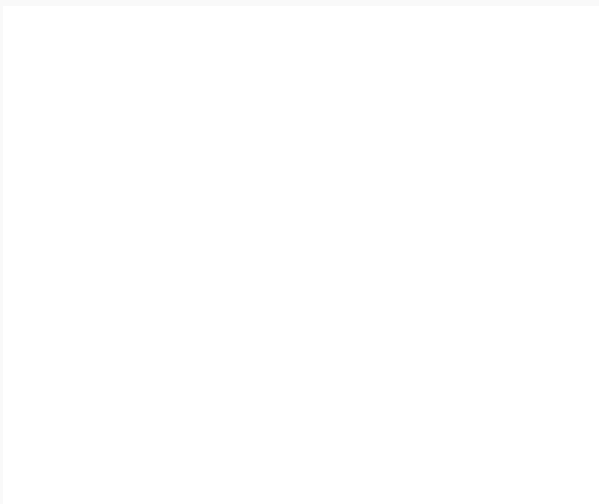
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all the support they've given, and the cheering on," he said.

Sweat equals recovery

The rehabilitation was sometimes grueling.

Powers started at Loma Linda University Medical Center and when he left, he could so without the aid of a walker.



"They knew when to push and when not to push," he said. "At Redlands, they put it into the next gear."

That meant performing squats and lunges, balance drills, throwing the medicine ball, lifting weights and running on the treadmill as he went from a fall risk to above normal status, he said.

"I was pouring out sweat when I came out" after each session, Powers said.

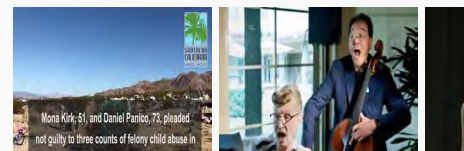
Powers then completed his rehab at home in Rancho Cucamonga, where several contractors banded to [build a handicap-accessible shower](#). Much of the labor and supplies were donated.

[The community held various fundraisers](#) for Powers and other victims.

At least five other county employees were killed or injured in the shooting. Deputy Recorder Dana Gardner, 52, died. A probation officer,

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county firefighter, and employees of the Human Services and Fleet Management departments were injured.

The generosity of others and their good wishes made a deep impression on Powers.

“It’s kind of changed who I am, the way I think and the way I see things,” he said. “Being a cop, we tend to be more introverted and only talk to each other. This has changed my view. All the support has just been mindblowing.”

The aftermath of the shooting has also changed Powers in another way. He acknowledged that while his wife is the country western fanatic in the house, he’s changing his tune.

“I am starting to turn the corner on becoming a country music fan because of the generosity and the human element that was there that night,” he said.

Tags: [country music](#), [Las Vegas mass shooting](#), [Police](#), [Top Stories Sun](#)

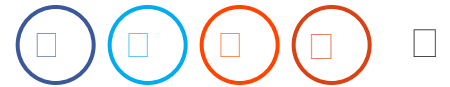
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LA County lost construction jobs but the Inland Empire is booming

By County of San Bernardino



Some of that activity might be going to L.A.'s neighbors in the Inland Empire — San Bernardino and Riverside...



NEWS CRIME

Officials: LA man accused of pimping bites San Bernardino County investigator's hand during interview



Courtesy San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department

Demetrius Auston, 25, of Los Angeles is accused of fighting with and biting the hand of an investigator during a human trafficking investigation, San Bernardino County Sheriff's officials said. (Courtesy San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department)

By **BEATRIZ E. VALENZUELA** |
bvalenzuela@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun



PUBLISHED: March 5, 2018 at 12:05 pm | UPDATED: March 5, 2018 at 2:56 pm

A Los Angeles man being interviewed for suspected pimping reportedly fought with an investigator and bit his hand before being subdued and arrested, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said Monday.

Demetrius Auston, 25, was arrested and booked into the West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga on suspicion of pimping, pandering, assault on a peace officer and felony vandalism. He subsequently was released on \$100,000 bail Saturday morning, booking records indicate.

On Thursday, March 1, members of the San Bernardino County Human Trafficking Task Force pulled Auston over after spotting him occasionally stopping his vehicle to speak to women and girls who authorities believed were working as prostitutes, the statement said.

Authorities then took him to the San Bernardino Police Department for an interview. During the investigation, officials said they learned Auston was pimping a female.

"Auston became combative, damaging city property and assaulted a peace officer. Auston bit the officer's hand, causing the skin to break," the statement said. The investigator was taken to a medical facility for treatment.

The female who authorities believed was being victimized by Austin was rescued and was offered services, the sheriff's statement said.

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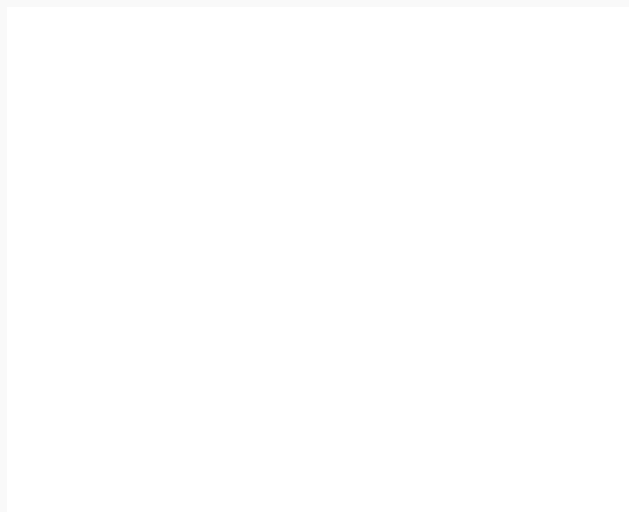
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This investigation is ongoing and authorities ask if anyone believes there are other unidentified victims related to this case to call the San Bernardino County Human Trafficking Task Force at 909-387-8400. Anyone wishing to remain anonymous can contact We-Tip at 1-888-78-CRIME or can leave information on the WE-Tip Hotline at www.wetip.com.



- 10** Hesperia man sentenced to state prison for 2011 rape of 14-year-old
- 11** Here are the 24 finalists for this year's 47th Assembly District Woman of the Year Award
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By County of San Bernardino



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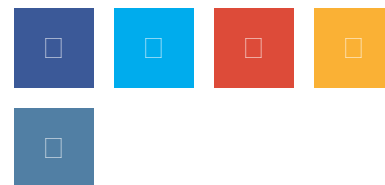
Education •

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Nature Advocate Richard Louv to Speak at Museum Nature-Deficit Disorder in our children?

By Staff - February 28, 2018

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NEWS



San Bernardino Airport Authority Signs MOU with Abu Dhabi Airports

March 5, 2018



Innovative Solutions an "Economic and Community Update"

March 5, 2018



Redlands: Museum Celebrates Festival of Life in the Cracks Day

Author Louv coined the term Nature-Deficit Disorder in his 2005 book

[Redlands, Ca](#) – San Bernardino County Museum and Girl Scouts of San Geronio are joining forces to host a talk by internationally recognized author Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, a classic first published in April 2005. Louv will speak on March 8 as part of the Museum's 2018 Dome Talks speaker series.

Richard Louv is credited with helping to inspire an international movement to reintroduce children to nature. He coined the term "nature-deficit disorder" to describe possible negative

consequences to individual health and the social fabric as children move indoors and away from physical contact with the natural world – particularly unstructured, solitary experience. His groundbreaking research pointed to attention disorders, obesity, a dampening of creativity and depression as problems associated with a nature-deficient childhood.

At the time of publication The Washington Post wrote: “[The] national movement to ‘leave no child inside’ . . . has been the focus of Capitol Hill hearings, state legislative action, grass-roots projects, a U.S. Forest Service initiative to get more children into the woods and a national effort to promote a ‘green hour’ in each day. . . . The increased activism has been partly inspired by a best-selling book, Last Child in the Woods, and its author, Richard Louv.” The newspaper of the American Public Health Association, The Nation’s Health, proclaimed the book “is helping drive a movement quickly flourishing across the nation,” as it described “a generation so plugged into electronic diversions that it has lost its connection to the natural world.”

Cynthia H. Breunig, President & CEO of Girl Scouts of San Geronimo, said, “The Museum, with its renowned natural history collections, and Girl Scouts, with more than 100 years of experience in outdoor education, recognize that nature is essential to the health and character development of all children and young adults. When a girl or boy experiences the joy of sleeping under the stars and of telling stories around camp fires late into the dark, quiet night, their lives are changed forever. They become connected to the natural flow and rhythm of nature; they become connected in a profound way to something larger than themselves. Girl Scouts of San Geronimo Council is committed to continuing our legacy of camp and outdoor fun. This commitment recently led to the purchase of Skyland Ranch, in the San Jacinto Mountains, where we are creating a world-class camp and outdoor education program for Girl Scouts and

March 5, 2018

Solar Jobs to Continue Growing in Inland Empire Despite National Slowdown

March 5, 2018

#NeverForget: Voicing Unheard Stories at Riverside Art Museum

March 4, 2018

Colton: Learn to Create Facebook Ad Quickly

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Up-Close Aircraft Day, Vietnam War Helicopters at March Field

March 3, 2018

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INLAND EMPIRE BUSINESSES



for San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.”

Museum Director, Melissa Russo said, “More than a decade after Louv’s brilliant social observations, our society continues to struggle with a severe lack of child engagement with the outdoors, but there’s hopeful signs that his book helped spawn behavioral shifts in how families spend their leisure time. We see this in the popularity of museum programs that highlight nature topics.”

Dome Talks are evening discussions that feature leading authors and thought leaders discussing topics relevant to the past, present, and future of our Inland Southern California. This year’s lineup emphasizes the seismic shifts, social changes and environmental forces that have affected the lives of Californians. Dome Talks start at 6:30 p.m. with light refreshments provided by the San Bernardino County Museum Association. Talks begin promptly at 7 p.m. with book sales and signing following.

Individual tickets for Dome Talks are \$25 per evening. No discounts apply for this presentation. Tickets may be purchased at the Museum’s welcome desk, by calling the Museum at (909) 798-8608, or on-line at www.sbcounty.gov/museum. Advance ticket purchases are recommended because seating is limited.

Founded in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low, Girl Scouts sparked a worldwide movement inspiring girls to embrace, together, their individuality, strength, and intellect. The mission is to “build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.” In 2015, Girl Scouts of San Geronimo Council purchased Skyland Ranch in the San Jacinto Mountains to provide an outdoor education experience for girls in the Inland Southern California and Greater Los Angeles regions.

The San Bernardino County Museum’s Dome Talks and other



>>Submit your Business,

exciting events and programs reflect the effort by the Board of Supervisors to achieve the Countywide Vision by celebrating arts, culture, and education in the county, creating quality of life for residents and visitors.

The San Bernardino County Museum is at 2024 Orange Tree Lane, at the California Street exit from Interstate 10 in Redlands. Parking is free. For more information, visit www.sbcounty.gov/museum. The museum is accessible to persons with disabilities.

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY MUSEUM

Redlands:
Museum
Celebrates
Festival of
Life in the
Cracks Day

March 5, 2018

Art Exhibit
Marks Black
History
Month at San
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January 30,
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NY Times
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Writer Henry
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BREAKING

Chino Valley compliance operation nets 16 arrests

Probation Department 22 hrs ago

On Friday, March 2, the San Bernardino County Probation Department partnered with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, Chino Police Department and Montclair Police Department for a compliance operation in the cities of Chino, Chino Hills, and Montclair.

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This operation was to ensure probationers were in compliance and to connect them with rehabilitative services and resources offered at Probation Day Reporting Centers. Individuals who were not in compliance with probation or posed a risk to the community, were arrested.

During the operation, 121 compliance checks and 66 searches were conducted, which resulted in 16 arrests.

"The goal of this collaborative effort is to protect the community by ensuring probationers are in compliance with the terms and conditions of probation. We appreciate our partner agencies and their dedication to community safety," Chief Probation Officer Michelle Scray Brown said.

[California's watchdog agency approved record number of settlements for ethics and campaign violations last year](#)

The state Capitol (Los Angeles Times)

California's campaign watchdog agency last year approved a record 340 settlements of cases involving violations of ethics and political finance rules, according to its [annual report](#) issued Monday.

The state Fair Political Practices Commission said it collected more than \$1.1 million in fines from elected officials, lobbyists, political donors and others in 2017 for issues that included failing to properly report contributions.

"These results hopefully will help restore public confidence in the political process by highlighting that California has strong laws that are vigorously enforced," said Jodi Remke, the FPPC chairwoman.

One of the biggest cases last year resulted in the Huntley Hotel of Santa Monica agreeing to pay [\\$310,000 in fines](#) for laundering \$97,350 in donations to City Council candidates and committees in hopes of thwarting the expansion of a competing hotel, according to the report.

<http://www.latimes.com/politics/essential/la-pol-ca-essential-politics-updates-state-watchdog-agency-approved-record-1520275570-htmlstory.html#nt=oft13a-1gp1>

Assemblyman recognizes Columbia Middle School teacher

By Rene Ray De La Cruz

Staff Writer

Posted Mar 5, 2018 at 3:43 PM

Updated Mar 5, 2018 at 3:43 PM

ADELANTO — Teacher Lauren Bailey was surprised when Assemblyman Jay Obernolte, school staff and district leaders burst into her classroom with flowers and news that she was being named Teacher of the Month by the state legislator.

A seventh-grade teacher at Columbia Middle School in the Adelanto Elementary School District, Bailey was assisting students with assignments when the group entered her room on Friday.

“I represent over 20,000 square miles and over 1,000 different schools, and once a month we recognize one outstanding teacher of the month,” Obernolte told the class. “We’re looking for teachers that are dedicated and committed to advancing the lives of their students.”

Bailey’s dedication and passion for her students is shown by her ability to help each student excel through curriculum and the AVID College Readiness System that teaches students fundamental learning, study and academic behavioral skills, along with various academic strategies, Obernolte said.

Bailey’s students voiced their amazement when Obernolte shared how their teacher commutes nearly 100 miles to work each day from her home in the Long Beach area.

“This is really a labor of love, and I really do care about the kids and their success,” said Bailey, who is a certified AVID teacher and language arts core instructor.

“This is a challenging district for so many reasons, but I totally believe in our students and what they can do,” Bailey said.

Bailey added she’s “not always popular” with her students, but she “pushes” them so they can reach their full potential in the classroom and in life.

“I’m really proud of you guys and everything that you’re doing,” Bailey told her students. “You know that it takes a lot of hard work and dedication, and I know that you’re going to do your best to reach your potential.”

Because of the number of outstanding teachers in the district, AESD officials found it difficult to nominate one teacher for the award, Superintendent Amy Nguyen-Hernandez told the Daily Press.

“Ms. Bailey is one of our teachers on our Stand Alignments System work and she is an outstanding participant in that work,” Nguyen-Hernandez said. “She is also positive and she communicates well to our teachers to bring that work to life. These are the reasons why she was nominated for this award.”

Columbia Principal Richard Upshaw praised Baily for her nine years of service to the district and remarked that her leadership in the AVID program has helped the school become an AVID demonstration site.

“She is also one of the teacher trainers who helps train our new teachers and exposes them to our curriculum and good teaching strategies,” Upshaw said. “She’s one of the many teachers who has helped students at Columbia Middle School to succeed.”

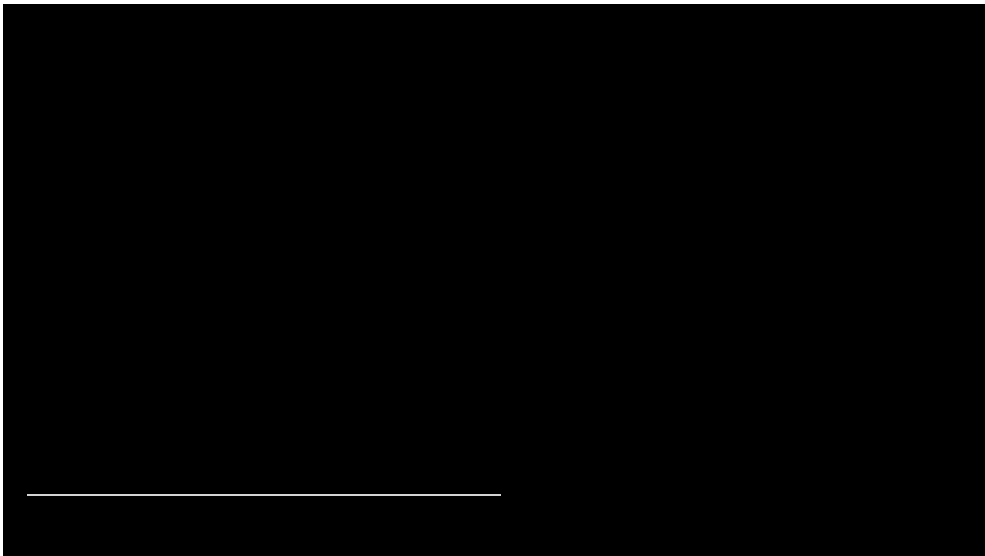
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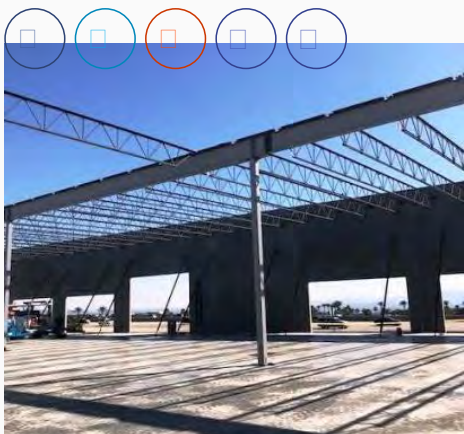


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LOCAL NEWS

Dealer specializing in exotic cars is returning to Upland



(Photo Courtesy CNC Motors)

CNC Motors is building a 50,000-square-foot showroom, auto service and detailing facility, north of the 210 Freeway on the south side of 20th Street and west of Campus Avenue in Upland. (Photo Courtesy CNC Motors)

By **LISET MARQUEZ** |

lmarquez@scng.com | Inland Valley



Daily Bulletin

March 5, 2018 at 3:49 pm

CNC Motors is coming back to Upland.

The Ontario-based, exotic used-car business left Upland six years ago when the dealership ran out of space.

The company is building a 50,000-square-foot showroom, auto service and detailing facility north of the 210 Freeway on the south side of [20th Street and west of Campus Avenue](#).

“We have lived in Upland since 1991. This the only city we’ve known,” said co-owner Clay Thom. “I always wanted to come back.”

The company will spend \$11.5 million for its second location, which will include a showroom and service facility.

A storm drain and sewer lines are being installed. The prefabricated walls went up in the second weekend in January.

Thom said the goal is for the floor room to open by May 1.

It will be located next to the Arco gas station. [Ford of Upland](#) and In-n-Out are opening on the east side of Campus Avenue.

The new location will add 23 employees, expanding CNC Motors’ operations to 50 employees, he said.

CNC Motors, run by brothers Clay and Fraser Thom, started in 2005, operating out of an 1,800 square-foot

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- 11 And the Oscar for glorifying violence goes to ... Hollywood: Political Cartoons
- 12 Dennis Latimore leads a re-charged Chino Hills basketball team to CIF-SS Division 1 title

warehouse inside the Cable Airport Business park. Over time CNC Motors had to move into an adjacent 12,000-square-foot location in the same complex.



But the business kept growing, and they had to move to a 23,000-square-foot warehouse in Ontario.

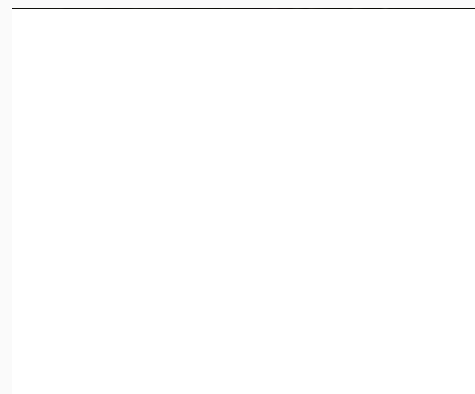
With the new building, Upland will become its retail hub while the nondescript building in Ontario will continue to hold most of the company's inventory. Cars will be sold at both locations, Thom said.

Car prices range from \$150,000 to \$3.7 million. The high price was for a Ferrari sold last year.

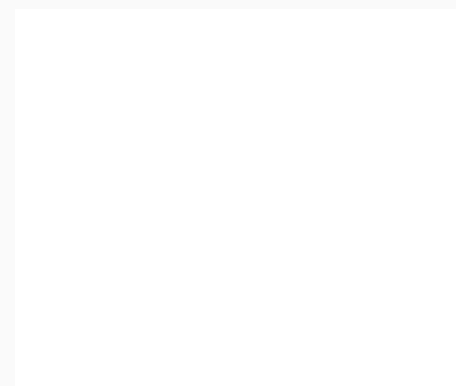
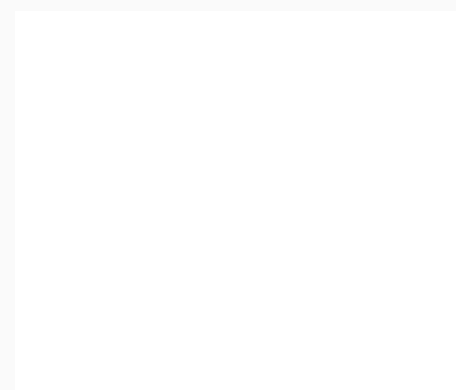
So who buys these cars?

“Most of the cars we sell are for their third, fourth or fifth car,” Thom said.

“These are upper-end vehicles but we do sell vehicles that range from \$30,000 to \$100,000.”



More videos:



Thom said 50 percent of CNC Motors' clients are repeat customers and they're not just local. CNC Motors has shipped exotic cars all over the U.S. and as far away as Russia. They also once sent a Lamborghini to Africa.

While the business continued to flourish, Thom said he always thought about coming back to Upland. He had always eyed the vacant lot just above the 210 Freeway in Upland for a few reasons.

"There's not really anyplace where you can have your car serviced or dealership above the 210 Freeway," he said.

It's also one of the few commercial real estate locations with visibility to the freeway. The Colonies development on the south side of the 210 is below the freeway's grade.

"It's elevated exposure," he said.

CNC Motors CFO Valerie Tanaka, who will relocate to the Upland location when it opens, said there are almost 200,000 vehicle trips a day on the 210 Freeway.

"The visibility will bring significant traffic in the future, and we're counting down the days until it opens," she said.

Man Sentenced 15 Years to Life in Prison for Raping 14-Year-Old After Breaking Into Her Hesperia Home: DA

POSTED 4:36 PM, MARCH 5, 2018, BY KRISTINA BRAVO



A man was sentenced to 15 years to life in prison for raping a 14-year-old girl after breaking into her home in Hesperia, officials announced Monday.



A booking photo provided by the San Bernardino County District Attorney's office on March 5, 2018 shows Julio Moncada.

Julio Moncada, 24, received the sentence Thursday after pleading no contest to one count of forcible rape of a child and admitting a special allegation that the crime was committed during a burglary, according to a statement from the San Bernardino County District Attorney's office.

Moncada, then 18, broke into a house in November 2011 and went into the victim's room and beat and raped her, the news release said. The District Attorney's office said Moncada did not know the victim but had "a brief flirtatious relationship" with the victim's older sister.

Her sister testified that Moncada sent her threatening text messages after breaking up with him earlier in 2011, the District Attorney's office said.

Moncada confessed to raping the 14-year-old after initially denying the crime, according to authorities.

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NATIONAL PARK CLIMBING ROUTES CLOSED FOR NESTING RAPTORS

By Z107.7 News, on March 5th, 2018

Joshua Tree National Park has issued a temporary emergency closure for all public activities in certain areas inside the park to protect nesting raptors. Managing editor Tami Roleff has the list of closed areas...

A pair of nesting red-tailed hawks and prairie falcons have closed some areas of the park to all human activities. Areas closed are the Towers of Uncertainty, about 2 1/2 miles south on Geology Tour Road, as well as the area known as Patagonia Pile. Patagonia Pile is northwest of Hidden Valley campground and includes the climbing routes known as The Head, Labor Dome, and Wall of Biblical Fallacies. Bouldering areas in the closure area include: Iron Door Cave, Voices, Tidal Wave, Tilt-O-Meter, Dino's Egg, and Chuckwalla bouldering area. These areas will remain closed until the nest has been abandoned to ensure the protection of the species for the duration of the nesting activities.

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NEWS CRIME

Rancho Cucamonga man suspected of possessing drugs for sale, having stolen gun



San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputies seized methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and marijuana packaged for sales as well as a stolen semi-automatic pistol while serving a warrant Thursday in the 8500 block of Sierra Madre Avenue in Rancho Cucamonga. (Courtesy photo)

By **MIKE CRUZ** | macruz@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun
March 5, 2018 at 1:02 pm



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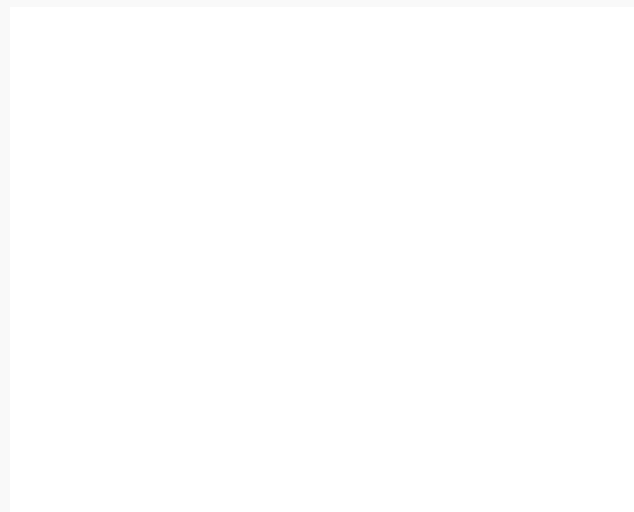
Sheriff's deputies arrested a Rancho Cucamonga man while serving a search warrant last week as part of a drug investigation.

The Multiple Enforcement Team from the San Bernardino County sheriff's Rancho Cucamonga station served the warrant Thursday afternoon in the 8500 block of Sierra Madre Avenue for an investigation involving Gilbert Basilio Martinez, according to a Sheriff's Department news release.

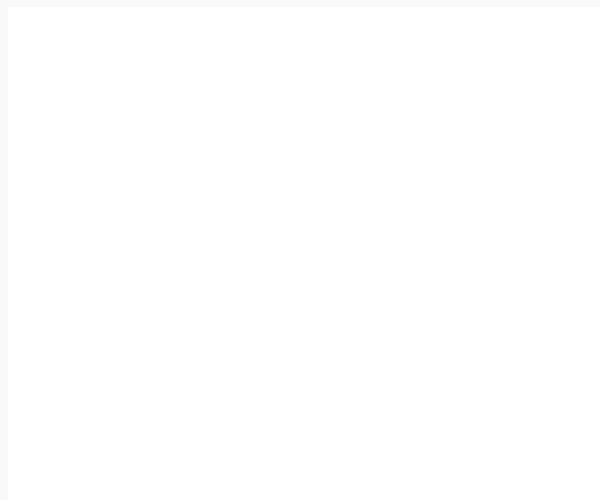
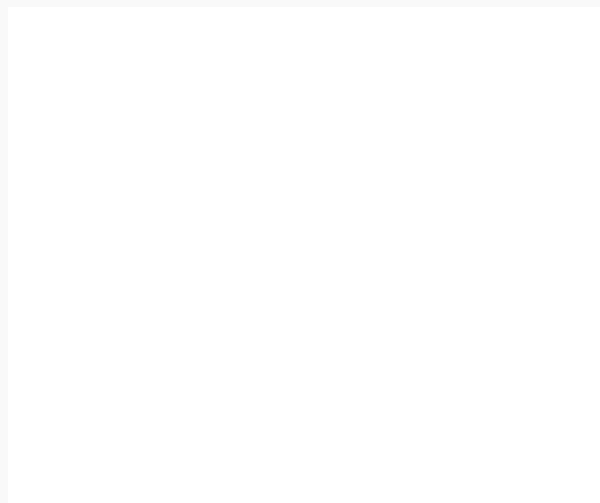
During the search, deputies found methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and marijuana packaged for sales as well as a stolen semi-automatic pistol, according to the release.

Martinez, 45, is a convicted felon and prohibited from possessing any firearms, the news release stated. He was arrested and booked into West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga on suspicion of possession of narcotics for sales and being a felon in possession of a firearm. Sheriff's online records show Martinez was released Saturday in lieu of bail.

Anyone with information about the investigation can contact the sheriff's Rancho Cucamonga station. To remain anonymous, call the WeTip Hotline at 800-78-CRIME (27463) or visit the website at www.wetip.com.



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NEWS CRIME

Victorville woman suspected of stabbing person who stopped to help her after Apple Valley crash



By **MIKE CRUZ** | mcruz@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun
March 5, 2018 at 4:04 pm



A Victorville woman is out of jail after she was arrested Sunday on suspicion of stabbing a person who tried to help her after a crash in unincorporated Apple Valley.

Stephanie Koel, 34, of Victorville posted bail and was released early Monday morning from the High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

Deputies from the Victor Valley station responded about 7:15 p.m. Sunday to the intersection of Cornelian and Deep Creek roads, in unincorporated Apple Valley, on a report that a person was stabbed.

The victim and other motorists had stopped at that location, where Koel had been involved in a rollover crash, to offer help. Koel reportedly asked the victim to help her get the vehicle back on its wheels so she could leave, according to a Sheriff's Department news release.

But the victim suspected Koel was possibly under the influence of alcohol or drugs and asked her to stay until deputies arrived.

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Koel is accused of stabbing the victim in the upper torso before running from the scene.

Deputies later found Koel, and she was arrested and booked into the High Desert Detention Center on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon.

Anyone with information about the incident can call the Victor Valley station at 760-552-6800 or remain anonymous and contact WeTip at 800-78-CRIME (27463) or at www.wetip.com.



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LOCAL NEWS

Video shows girl get rescued after she slips, left dangling from Bear Mountain ski lift



Courtesy Tito Garcia

A small girl who slipped from a ski lift Saturday, March, 3, was rescued by bystanders and staff. (Courtesy Tito Garcia)

By **BEATRIZ E. VALENZUELA** | bvalenzuela@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun

PUBLISHED: March 6, 2018 at 7:25 am | UPDATED: March 6, 2018 at 7:40 am



A visitor to Bear Mountain captured on video the harrowing rescue of a small girl after she slipped from a ski lift over the weekend.

Tito Garcia of Irwindale was in line for the ski lifts at the Big Bear resort late Saturday morning when he heard a commotion.

“People started yelling, ‘Stop the lift!’,” he said Tuesday morning. “That’s when I noticed the little girl hanging.”

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People began to gather underneath the girl who was being held by a person still on the chair, preventing her from crashing to the ground about 12 feet below.

Someone grabbed a tarp and the person holding her let the child fall onto the tarp to cheers from the crowd, Garcia's video shows.

Bear Mountain officials said in a statement the incident was under investigation.



police believe it

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LOCAL NEWS

Why smoke will be visible around Big Bear ski resorts for next 2 weeks



The San Bernardino National Forest plans to start burning piles of collected brush and small trees starting Tuesday, March 6 as part of plan to reduce fuels for possible wildfires in the south side of the Big Bear Valley. Show is a February pile burning in the Pine Cove area. (Photo courtesy of San Bernardino National Forest)

By **RICHARD K. DE ATLEY** |
rdeatley@scng.com | The Press-



Enterprise

PUBLISHED: March 5, 2018 at 4:38 pm | UPDATED:
March 5, 2018 at 4:42 pm

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The San Bernardino National Forest plans to begin burning hundreds of piles of collected brush and small trees beginning Tuesday near Big Bear area ski resorts, and smoke may be visible in the area, the agency said Monday.

Depending on weather conditions, the project is expected to continue intermittently for the next two weeks.

The fuels-thinning project lowers the risk of wildfire making its way into developed communities on the south side of Big Bear Valley. The Forest Service said the 400 piles set to be burned amounts to 181 acres of removed fuels.

The area for the burn is between the Bear Mountain and Snow Summit ski areas, along U.S. Forest Service roads 2N10 and 2N58Y. The closest neighborhood is the Moonridge area in the city of Big Bear Lake, the agency said.

Updates on plans for the pile burnings are available on the Prescribed Burn Hotline, 909-382-2711 or an open-access Twitter account at <https://twitter.com/SanBernardinoNF>.

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LOCAL

Is Orange County turning the corner on homelessness?



Homeless people bring along the Santa Ana River flood control channel work in-line for motel vouchers offered by the county on Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2018. [JILL REPLIC/JILLREPLIC](#)

[Jill Replogle](#) March 5, 2018

In April 2017, federal Judge David O. Carter marched through the 2-mile-long homeless encampment stretched out along the Santa Ana River flood control channel in the heart of Orange County and declared, "No one's got good answers to this."

But nearly a year and several lawsuits later, a wave of efforts to reduce chronic homelessness is sweeping through Orange County, making a once-elusive goal seem reachable.

In the final days of February, under Judge Carter's watch, the last of the tents were cleared from the riverbed encampment and some 700 homeless people were placed in motels.

Meanwhile, dozens of OC's top business and civic leaders have pledged to help find — and fund — housing and support to the county's estimated 2,500 homeless people who sleep outside on any given night.

The business community in tourism- and services-dependent Orange County has a vested interest in reducing street homelessness. And civic leaders are increasingly seeing their private-sector counterparts as key allies in eliminating barriers to housing the homeless, including NIMBYism.

Advocates and experts on homelessness say they're hopeful that Orange County could be turning a corner.

"Judge Carter and this whole saga of removing people from the riverbed has shaken things up," said Eve Garrow, homeless policy expert at the ACLU of Southern California.

Carter presided over a settlement in February in which the county provided minimum 30-day motel stays for homeless people who were living along the riverbed along with gift cards for food. Over the course of a week, individuals and families — some of whom had been homeless for decades — packed up their belongings and boarded buses bound for hotels scattered across the county, as far away as San Clemente.

Bird's-eye view of an area behind Angel Stadium before and after the homeless encampment was cleared in February 2018. Video footage courtesy of Orange County Public Works.

Over the next few weeks, county social workers are tasked with assessing each person's needs, with the ultimate goal of finding long-term housing and support services for everyone. It's an unprecedented experiment that could, if successful, make OC a model for other cities struggling with how to dismantle large homeless encampments humanely.

Or, it could fail spectacularly. If permanent housing can't be found for those displaced, the chronically homeless could be dispersing across the county to set up new camps on OC's parklands and sidewalks.

Garrow and other observers have noted that the rushed process has led to some snags. Some people have been evicted from motels for behaviors stemming from mental health and substance abuse problems.

"It wasn't totally thought out and wasn't totally coordinated," Garrow said. Still, she praised the county for providing motel rooms with running water and other basic necessities that people camped along the river didn't have.

"To do that in a really compassionate way also says something about our county," Garrow said.

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Sherene Hines washes her hands at a public sink near the Riverbed Plaza in Orange County on April 27, 2017. She had been living on the river for four years before she took a 30-day motel voucher offered by the county on Feb. 20, 2016. [JULIE HENNING](#)

HOMELESSNESS IS EXPENSIVE AND BAD FOR BUSINESS

While the county scrambles to come up with a mid- and long-term plan for the former riverbed homeless, OC's private sector is stepping up to offer help at a scale not seen here before, observers say.

Last week, Orange County United Way, along with prominent business, faith and civic leaders, launched a coordinated push to house the homeless. The initiative, "[United to End Homelessness](#)," was borne out of a UC Irvine-led study that found it's twice as expensive to care for a homeless person on the street as it is to get them into [permanent supportive housing](#).

"This is the first time that we've seen that there's been a high level leadership group of, for the most part, business leaders who are finally wanting to pay attention to this issue and feel it needs to be solved," said Carla Vargas, chief operating officer of Orange County United Way.

The initiative's "leadership council" includes executives from the Angels, Disneyland and developer FivePoint Holdings, among other major players in OC's business world.

As tents began to multiply along the Angels' fence line last year, executives expressed concern to county and Anaheim city officials that homeless people were engaging in potentially dangerous activity on or near the property, including trying to hot-wire the "A" and starting campfires near propane tanks.

Also last year, Anaheim removed bus benches near Disneyland after receiving complaints from surrounding businesses of homeless people taking over the benches and drinking and smoking pot at bus shelters, Anaheim spokesperson Mike Lyster said.

Last week, the United Way brought a group of business and civic leaders to OC from central Florida, where a [similar initiative](#) is credited with helping cut the number of homeless people by half in five years. The idea was to pitch OC business leaders on why they should get involved.

Andrae Bailey, who led the Florida initiative and now consults with cities on homeless issues, said central Florida, which includes Orlando, was in a similar situation to Orange County: homelessness was threatening to affect the region's reputation and its lifeblood — tourism.

"There's nothing more important than your community's brand," Bailey said. He mentioned a recent cable news segment about the riverbed homeless camp in OC.

"Your community was not being talked about because of Disneyland or your weather or the incredible work you're doing on a bunch of different fronts, people were talking about you because of homelessness, and that's where we were in Orlando."



Protesters in Orange County, backed by advocates for the homeless, announced a federal appeal against Orange County and the cities of Anaheim, Costa Mesa and Orange in Jan. 25, 2016. Advocates have long urged the region's approach to homelessness, including the county's failure to spend local funds on housing the homeless. [JULIE HENNING](#)

WHO WILL PAY TO HOUSE THE HOMELESS?

The central Florida initiative recently launched a \$7 million [pilot program](#) that seeks to get chronically homeless individuals into permanent supportive housing. It's funded largely by the nonprofit Florida Hospital group.

Leaders of the OC homeless initiative say they also plan to leverage funds from the private sector. The Association of California Cities - Orange County is working on a business plan to fund 2,700 units of permanent supportive housing using a combination of state, federal and private funds. The units would be spread throughout the county, with each city [responsible for a quota](#) depending upon its share of the overall homeless population.

At a recent meeting of city leaders, Anaheim businessman Bill Taormina announced his intent to raise money from OC's most deeply-rooted — and deep-pocketed — families to help fund the initiative.

While Eve Garrow from the ACLU says private money is welcome, she warns

that it's not necessarily sustainable.

"I think we need to get the ball rolling somehow," she said. "But if it were you, if it were your family, you would probably want housing to be paid for by a dedicated funding stream."

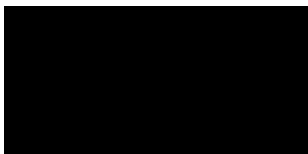
Garrow and other advocates for the homeless have long criticized county leaders for [failing to use discretionary funds](#) to address homelessness. Up until recently the county has relied almost exclusively on state and federal pass-through funds to pay for housing, mental health and other services for the homeless.

During a court hearing in February, Judge Carter noted the county's failure to allocate its own dollars to address homelessness and accused county leaders of "chipmunking away" federal funding.

IT TAKES A COUNTY TO COMBAT NIMBYISM

Though dwarfed by neighboring Los Angeles, Orange County's homeless problem is among the worst in the nation for a region of its size. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, OC had the second largest homeless population in the country in 2017 among small regions and cities, behind Honolulu.

It also had the second highest rate of unsheltered veterans among similarly sized regions and cities — 88 percent of homeless veterans in OC last year were sleeping outside.



Orange County United Way hopes to better people's understanding of homelessness in order to get community buy-in for a Housing First approach.

Backers of the new homeless initiatives in OC hope convincing the general public that most homeless people aren't homeless by choice is key to easing public opposition to measures like building temporary shelters and creating permanent supportive housing.

"This NIMBY issue is going to be fierce," said Heather Stratman, CEO of the Association of California Cities - OC. "We can plan and get the money and entice projects, and communities can be very unaccepting of this. And so one of the strategies is to get the business community engaged, so that the business community starts to stand up and say, 'No, we need this for our community. This is the right thing to do. This Not in My Backyard mentality is actually harming us.'"

Orange County United Way has launched a public relations campaign aimed at educating OC residents and leaders about the causes of homelessness and championing permanent supportive housing as a solution for the chronically homeless.

United Way CEO Sue Parks said there seems to be a common perception in Orange County that the homeless population is largely from out of town, and that many have been evicted from sober living homes (the group recently launched a [survey](#) to better gauge perceptions of homelessness).

But the UC Irvine study found that nearly 70 percent of the county's homeless have lived here for at least a decade. "These people are our neighbors, these people have grown up here, they are part of our community, and we need to have that common understanding of what's going on," Parks said.

The study also found that the top three causes of homelessness are unemployment, the high cost of housing and family problems, including domestic violence. Alcohol and drug abuse and mental health problems followed.

Public officials in recent years have faced a barrage of complaints from residents about homeless people sleeping in parks, along bike trails and on sidewalks. In the Santa Ana Civic Center, where at times nearly 200 homeless people have slept in tents, lawyers and patrons of the adjacent law library have complained about safety concerns, and of discarded hypodermic needles and human feces around the outside of the building.



Homeless tents in the Santa Ana Civic Center's Plaza of the Flags in mid-2017. Under new regulations enacted by the city of Santa Ana in May 2017, tents are prohibited to be taken down in the daytime and the plaza is periodically mowed. [JILL WEINSTEIN/KPCC](#)

As a result, the city of Santa Ana has tightened restrictions on homeless campers in the center's Plaza of the Flags. The city also shut down the county's only [needle exchange program](#), which operated out of the civic center.

Last fall, more than 15,000 people signed a [petition](#) on [change.org](#) demanding

that authorities clean up homeless encampments in OC and enforce anti-camping laws in public places.

"We support helping the homeless who are willing to do what's necessary to become independent, productive members of society, but those who repeatedly refuse help cannot be allowed to camp and live on the Santa Ana River trail or in our city parks," the petition read.

At the same time, proposals to place temporary shelters on county-owned land in various OC cities have been met with swift opposition by local officials and residents.

Eve Garow from the ACLU praised the United Way's effort to change the narrative around homelessness.

"It's the foundation of everything else, that we change hearts and minds," she said. "So that when people look at a homeless encampment we have an appropriate reaction, which is moral outrage that we would let people live in these conditions in one of the richest nations in the world, instead of feelings of fear and revulsion."

Andrae Bailey from the Florida homeless initiative said education was vital to helping that community reduce homelessness. "We had to have a real conversation about chronic homelessness," he said. "Don't confuse NIMBYism with a community like Orlando that didn't understand homelessness. (In the past) we didn't help people get off the streets the way we do now because we believed that they wanted to be there."

IN EVERY CITY'S BACKYARD

Finally, OC leaders say, getting the county's constellation of local governments — including 34 cities — to work together on homelessness is central to success. In recent years, discussions on addressing homelessness and affordable housing in the county have often been marked by grumblings that not every jurisdiction is pulling its own weight.

Irvine Mayor Donald Wagner confirmed that. He said the United Way initiative, which he's part of, feels different.

"It's the first time that I've seen the county, the surrounding cities, organizations come together under one umbrella," he said.

A city like Irvine might be a test case for the Association of California Cities - OC's ability to successfully lobby its members to fulfill their target quota of permanent supportive housing. Wagner said Irvine had been "blessed" to have few homeless people on city streets, saving local leaders from the tough political quagmires faced by officials in cities like Anaheim and Santa Ana.

"So we've been able to step back and say this is a county-wide problem, but it's not one that the residents of Irvine are yelling at us about," he said.

Wagner was unaware of the 226 units of permanent supportive housing that the Association of California Cities - OC has determined that Irvine should provide under its plan, so he said he couldn't comment on whether he thought the city could deliver.

But, he said, if there's a way to reduce homelessness in Orange County, he wants to be part of it.

"If we're going to be walking in the right direction, I want to be involved and I want Irvine to be involved," he said.

Permanent supportive housing goals for Orange County cities under ACC-OC plan

CITY	% OF POPULATION	TARGET NO. OF HOUSING UNITS
Aliso Viejo	1.6	42
Asheville	11.2	303
Bea	1.4	37
Brea	2.8	71
Costa Mesa	3.6	96
Cypress	1.6	42
Deer Park	1.3	35
Fountain Valley	1.6	48
Foothill	4.5	120
Garden Grove	5.5	149
Huntington Beach	6.2	167
Irvine	8.4	226
Laguna Beach	0.7	20
Laguna Hills	1.0	27
Laguna Niguel	2.1	56
Laguna Woods	0.5	14
La Habra	1.9	52
Lake Forest	3.7	92
La Palma	0.5	14
Los Alamitos	0.4	10
Mission Viejo	3.0	83
Newport Beach	2.7	72
Orange	4.4	119
Placentia	1.6	44
Rancho Santa Margarita	1.5	41
San Clemente	2.0	50
San Juan Capistrano	1.1	31
Santa Ana	10.7	289
Staff Beach	0.6	21
Stearns	1.2	33
Tustin	2.6	69
Villa Park	0.2	5

Homeless	2.9	79
Very/Low	2.7	57
Intermediate	4	107
Total		243

Source: Association of California Cities - Orange County

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT



How More Generous Pensions Boosted City Costs

POSTED BY : ED MENDEL MARCH 5, 2018

CalPERS sponsored legislation resulting in more generous city police and firefighter pensions, SB 400 in 1999, a well-known issue in the debate about whether growing pension costs are "unsustainable."

But CalPERS also backed legislation, AB 616 in 2001, giving most local government employees the option of bargaining for generous pensions once limited to police and firefighters, who face hazardous duty and may need to retire early from their physically demanding work.

The "3 at 50" pension for police and firefighters in SB 400, which provides 3 percent of final pay for each year served at age 50, is capped at 90 percent of final pay. There is no cap on the three AB 616 pension formulas.

The most generous of the three AB 616 formulas for non-safety or "miscellaneous" employees, "3 at 60," provides a pension at age 60 that is 90 percent of final pay after 30 years of service and 120 percent of pay after 40 years of service, according to a CalPERS [benefit chart](#).

Why provide a monthly pension payment that is higher than the monthly paycheck earned on the job?

"The 3% at age 60 formula encourages skilled workers with invaluable experience to stay in their jobs longer," said a CalPERS analysis of AB 616. "If public agencies are willing to pay for the higher formulas in order to increase the benefits they provide to their employees, they should be allowed to do so."

Another CalPERS analysis of the bill said it could be argued, on the other hand, that the "enhanced benefit" provided by the "3 at 60" formula, which begins with 2 percent of final pay at age 50, will "encourage earlier retirement for some employees."

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All three of the AB 616 local government formulas, including "2.5 at 55" and "2.7 at 55," are more generous than the "2 at 55" formula received by most state workers hired before a pension reform on Jan. 1, 2013.

CalPERS calls employees hired before the reform "classic" members. Employees hired after the reform have a cost-cutting miscellaneous pension formula, "2 at 62," and are called "PEPRA" members, the abbreviation for Public Employees Pension Reform Act.

Like most CalPERS miscellaneous formulas the "2 at 55" received by state workers is uncapped. At age 60 with 40 years of service the formula provides a pension of 90.48 percent of final pay, much less than the 120 percent provided by the "3 at 60" formula.

How many CalPERS members retire with pensions of 100 percent or more of their final pay? A poorly worded Calpensions public records act request to CalPERS last year yielded 2,217 names with no time frame, employer or pay and pension amounts.

About 40 percent of the local government CalPERS classic miscellaneous plans provide the three AB 616 formulas. According to a CalPERS public agency summary 112 plans are "3 at 60," 276 plans "2.75 at 55," and 242 plans "2.5 at 55."

As an incentive to adopt the more generous AB 616 formulas, CalPERS offered to ease the cost for local governments by inflating the value of their investment funds from 90 to 95 percent of market value, drawing opposition from the chief actuary then, Ron Seeling.

As the sponsor of SB 400, CalPERS gave legislators a 17-page pamphlet with a quote from the CalPERS president then, William Crist. He said the pension increase would not cost "a dime of additional taxpayer money," a phrase often cited later as employer rates soared.

A legislative analysis of SB 400 said CalPERS expected the state employer rate to "remain below the 1998-99 fiscal year for at least the next decade." Not mentioned in the pamphlet or legislative analysis was a word of caution from CalPERS actuaries.

One SB 400 scenario given the CalPERS board in June 1999 showed that if investment earnings averaged 4.4 percent, instead of the 8.25 percent forecast, the artificially low annual \$159 million state payment to CalPERS could soar to \$4 billion in a decade, which happened.



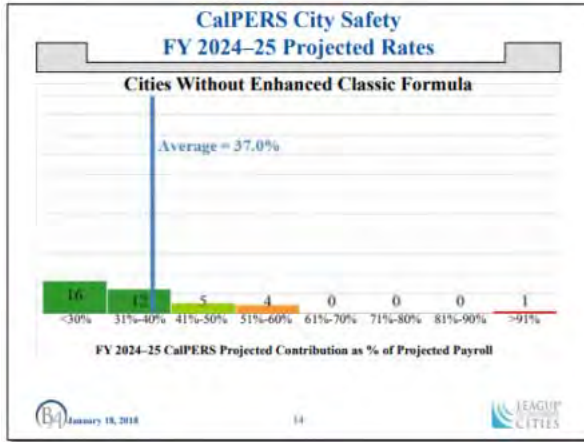
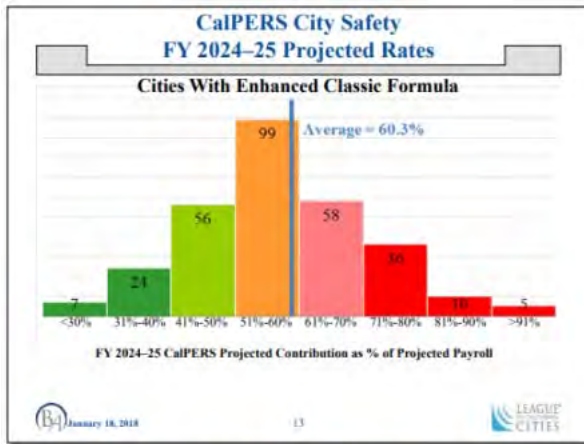
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Last month a pension sustainability study by Bartel Associates actuaries for the League of California Cities said the “most prominent source” of CalPERS cost escalation began with state and local “enhanced pension benefits” granted following SB 400 and AB 616.

“Cities throughout California followed the state’s lead in providing enhanced benefits and, when negotiated, statute required those enhanced benefits apply to both prior and future service,” said the [Bartel study](#).

“These enhanced benefits have caused a ripple effect that have fundamentally altered the way in which local agencies can retain employees and provide basic and critical services to the public.”

Over the next seven years, the study found, city CalPERS costs will increase more than 50 percent and reach 15.8 percent of the average general fund, nearly doubling from 8.3 percent a decade ago and forcing revenue increases or service cuts.

Four other factors were cited in addition to more generous pensions: investment losses, automatic cost-of-living adjustments, a policy that delayed payment of debt or “unfunded liability,” and a demographic change causing debt for retirees to exceed debt for active workers.

Among “classic” employees hired before the reform the study found a costly gap between projected CalPERS rate increases for those with pensions increased or “enhanced” after SB 400 and AB 616 and those with “unenhanced” pensions.

When a big rate increase is fully phased in by fiscal 2024-25, the average CalPERS rate for “safety” or police and firefighters with enhanced pensions is projected to be 60.3 percent of pay, far above the rate for unenhanced pensions, 37 percent. (see chart above)

A smaller rate gap is projected in seven years for classic non-safety or “miscellaneous” employees: an average 36.7 of pay for pensions enhanced by the AB 616 formulas, compared to an average rate of 28.1 percent for unenhanced pensions. (see chart at bottom)

As a booming stock market gave CalPERS a surplus at the end of the century, equity was a leading argument for raising pensions. The 17-page pamphlet for SB 400 was titled: "Addressing Benefit Equity: The CalPERS Proposal".

A reform gave state workers hired after July 1, 1991, a lower formula, "1 at 60," than the "2 at 60" formula received by state workers hired earlier. The inadequate lower formula hurt recruitment, said the pamphlet, and side-by-side state workers doing the same job received different benefits.

Another inequity, said the pamphlet, was that two-thirds of CalPERS local government members received a "2 at 55" pension, more generous than the state worker formulas. In small type on three pages the pamphlet listed nearly 400 local governments with a "2 at 55" formula.

SB 400 gave most state workers a retroactive "2 at 55" formula, retirees received a one-time permanent pension increase of 1 to 6 percent, and the Highway Patrol received the "3 at 50" formula that also was made available to local governments.

Two years later the equity argument was used again. Backers of AB 616 said local safety employees were enabled by SB 400 to negotiate a 50 percent increase in their pensions, while local miscellaneous workers were not offered a similar benefit increase.

"This bill seeks to provide a local option formula for these members that would increase their retirement benefits by 33 percent," said a legislative [*analysis of AB 616*](#).

Now there is a new equity issue. The PEPRA reform cost-cutting formulas for new hires, "2 at 62" for miscellaneous and "2.7 at 57" for top safety, are less generous than the pensions received by classic state and local government employees under SB 400 and AB 616.

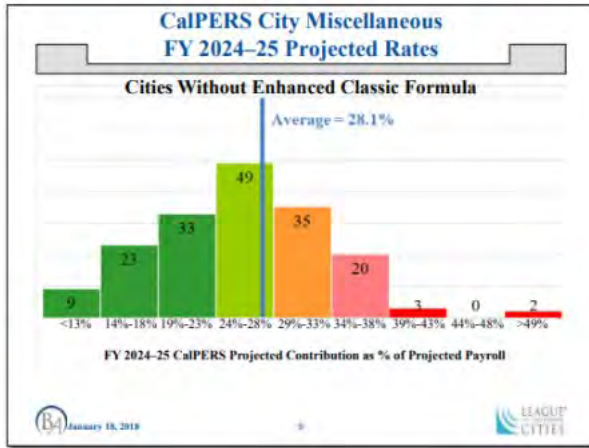
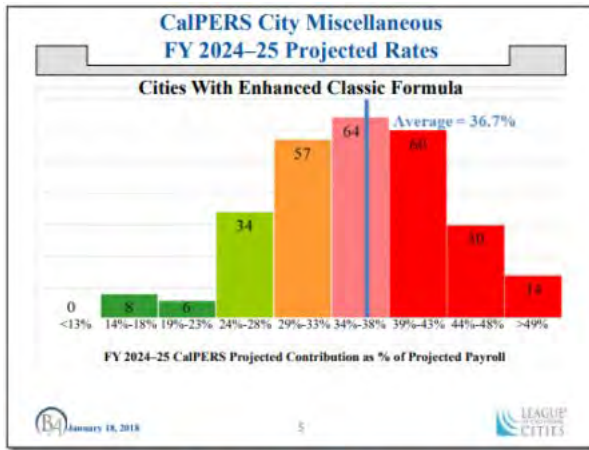
The League of California Cities "sustainability principles" call for a "single benefit level for every employee" and converting employees in pre-reform or classic plans to PEPRA formulas for work they do in the future.

As cities opposed more employer rate increases last fall, officials from Hanford and Benicia told the CalPERS board some of their unions are willing to negotiate switching to lower-cost pensions, but current state law does not allow it.

"Currently, the Public Employees' Retirement Law (PERL) provides different benefit formulas for pre-PEPRA (i.e. Classic) employees," Amy Morgan, CalPERS spokeswoman, said via email.

"Any modification in benefit design would require legislation and will be analyzed in accordance with contact clause of the state and federal constitutions. CalPERS administers pension benefits in accordance with the PERL."

The state Supreme Court has agreed to hear appeals of two cases pension reformers hope will weaken or eliminate the "California rule," a series of court decisions said to mean the pension offered at hire can't be cut without providing a comparable new benefit.



Originally posted at Cal Pensions.

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Reporter Ed Mendel covered the Capitol in Sacramento for nearly three decades, most recently for the San Diego Union-Tribune. More stories are at Calpensions.com.

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Economists overwhelmingly agree: Trump's food-box idea is absurd



By MICHAEL HILTZIK

MAR 05, 2018 | 3:05 PM





Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, seen here in congressional testimony in February, likened the Trump administration's food-box idea to Blue Apron, a service that delivers ready-to-cook meal packages to affluent consumers. (Susan Walsh / Associated Press)



The Trump administration's idea of replacing up to half of all food stamp benefits with food boxes has been properly flayed by public assistance and nutritional specialists, members of Congress on both the Democratic and Republican sides of the aisle, and experts in food policy.

Now we have the opinion of the nation's economists, thanks to a regular survey by the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business. According to results published Friday, the survey's panel of 43 economists (conservatives, progressives, and almost every shade in between) is nearly unanimous about the idea. Their conclusion: It stinks.

In fact, among economists with any opinion, it was unanimously thumbs down on food boxes.

Despite stereotypes of the incompetent poor, there is little reason to believe the government is a more efficient shopper than people.

— YALE ECONOMIST LARRY SAMUELSON

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Asked whether providing cash debit cards "does more for its recipients' well-being" than directly providing a smaller selection of foods directly, 29, or 67%, agreed or strongly agreed. Of the 43 panelists, only one stated that he disagreed. Another said he had no opinion, and the other 12 didn't answer or were uncertain.



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Asked in a second question whether providing benefits via debit cards allowing them to choose and buy groceries at stores "does more to raise food security and reduce hunger" than through the food boxes, 24, or 56%, agreed or strongly agreed.

That number doesn't include MIT economist David Autor, who marked "disagree" on his ballot but told me by email that he had checked the wrong box in error. In a comment appended to his ballot, he stated, "Economic insecurity of food stamp recipients would rise if their choices were further constrained." In other words, he agreed that the debit card method was superior. One other economist disagreed, and 17 others didn't answer, were uncertain, or had no opinion.



COLUMN

Trump's plan to replace food stamps with food boxes is his meanest idea yet

FEB 13, 2018 | 9:45 AM

As it happens, the one respondent who said he disagreed with both statements, [Aaron Edlin of UC Berkeley](#), told me later he "misread the questions and would answer differently after rereading them." That is, he would have agreed that food boxes were inferior to the current system of debit cards, making the feeling unanimous among economists who expressed an opinion. (Technically, the cards are "electronic benefit cards," which work like debit cards at the checkout counter.)

As I reported earlier, the Trump administration cooked up the food box idea as part of its budget proposal for the coming year. The budget calls for replacing half of the monthly cash benefit for most recipients in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP — to use the food stamp program's formal name — with a Department of Agriculture food box containing "shelf-stable milk, ready-to-eat cereals, pasta, peanut butter, beans and canned fruit, vegetables, and meat, poultry or fish."

USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue and White House

Budget Director Mick Mulvaney are enamored with their cleverness; Perdue said it would be "cost-

effective" and Mulvaney called the proposed change "a Blue Apron-type program where you actually receive the food instead of receive the cash."

In fact, the change would raise costs enormously and place logistical pressures on SNAP that would be insupportable. Even Perdue, who appears to have trouble listening to his own words, acknowledged that it would cost states \$2.5 billion a year to manage. That's probably an underestimate, since nothing on this scale has been tried before.

Among other obvious drawbacks, standardized food boxes don't leave room for allergies, religious or cultural nutritional restrictions. The very notion that the government is better placed to make food choices for families than the families themselves has been debunked at length. By whom? Among others, by the USDA, which threw cold water on a similar scheme in 2007.

Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program rises in economic slumps and falls in recoveries. The chart shows the general economic trend, with spikes related to natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Hurricane Harvey and others last year. (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities)

□ □

As it's currently designed, SNAP is an effective counter-cyclical economic recovery program — its benefits increase and cover

more people as the economy turns sour, and shrink during recoveries. That's what's been happening lately, according to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#).

"Despite stereotypes of the incompetent poor, there is little reason to believe the government is a more efficient shopper than people," observed economist Larry Samuelson of Yale in the Chicago survey.

He's right about the stereotype, which is related to the cherished conservative concept of the "undeserving poor." Republicans long have had their axes poised over SNAP — House Republicans voted in 2013 to strip \$40 billion from the program over 10 years, which would have thrown more than 3 million people off its rolls annually, and constantly try to legislate how recipients spend their benefits, fantasizing that they're blowing their monthly check (average: \$125.79 per person, or \$4.20 a day) on lobsters and truffles.

The Trump budget said the quiet part of this scheme out loud: It set forth a plan to cut SNAP spending by one-third, or \$213.5 billion, over 10 years, with about 60% of the savings coming from the boxes.

Who's better to notice that those numbers don't compute than a panel of economists? No wonder they turned thumbs down on this heartless and absurd scheme.

Keep up to date with Michael Hiltzik. Follow [@hiltzikm](#) on Twitter, see his [Facebook page](#), or email michael.hiltzik@latimes.com.

[Return to Michael Hiltzik's blog](#).

UPDATES:

6:15 p.m.: This post has been updated to reflect that Professors Autor of Yale and Edlin of UC Berkeley did not mean to "disagree" with the proposition that food boxes are superior to debit cards, but misread the questions.

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The candidates want to build more houses in California than ever before. Experts see the goal as an empty promise



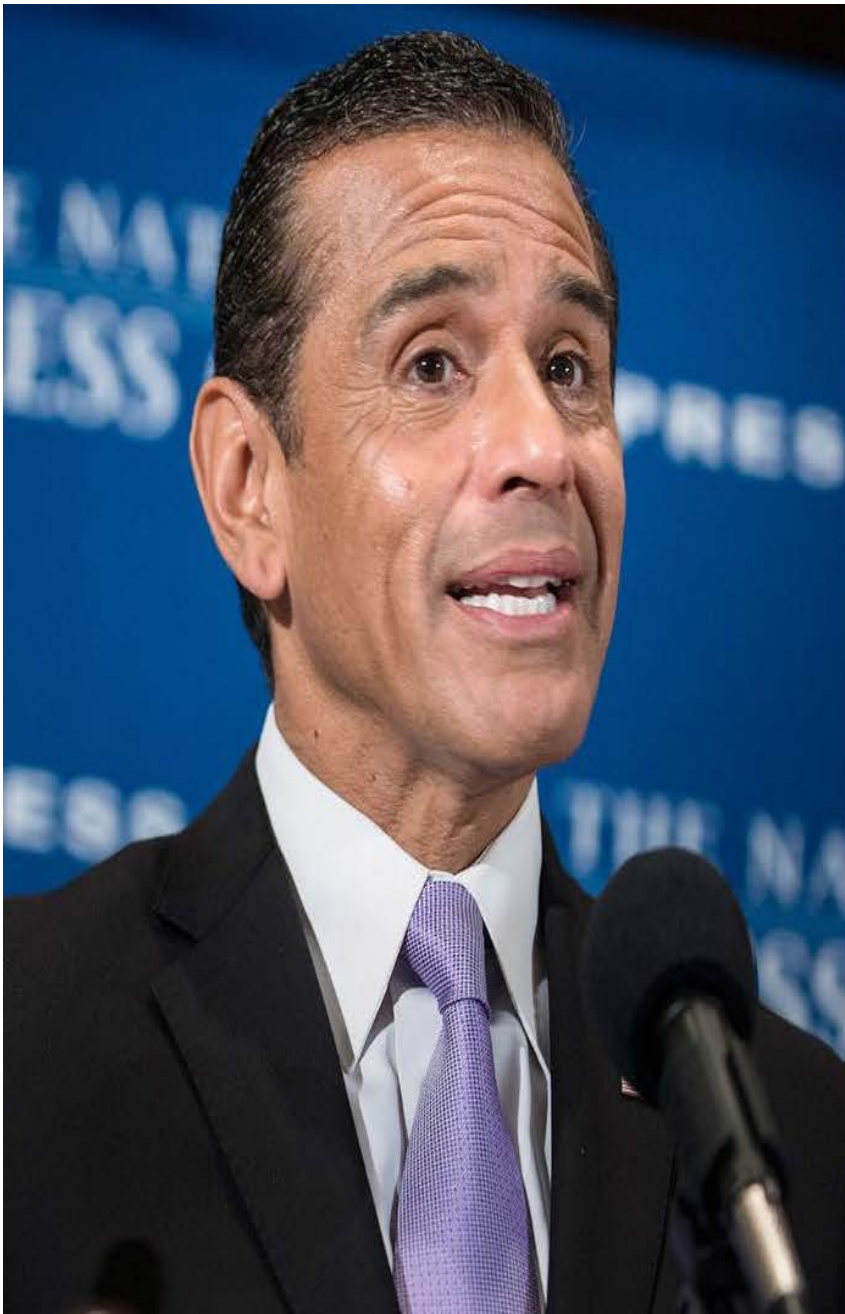
By LIAM DILLON

MAR 06, 2018 | 12:05 AM

| SACRAMENTO



The candidates want to build more houses in California than ever before. Experts see the goal as an empty promise



Gubernatorial candidates Antonio Villaraigosa, left, and Gavin Newsom, right (Getty Images / Associated Press)

□ □

Two of California's leading candidates for governor say they're going to end the housing shortage, a driver of the state's affordability crisis.

Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom and former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa both have said they want developers in California to build a half million homes in a year — something that's never happened, at least in modern history. And they want builders to do it for seven straight years, resulting in 3.5 million new homes from the time the next governor takes office through 2025.

Those numbers are so out of scale with California's history that they might be impossible to achieve. Practical concerns, including developers lining up enough financing and construction workers to build so many homes so quickly, could stymie the effort. Meeting the goals could also require rolling back decades of popular state policies on growth, taxation and the environment, according to housing academics and economists.

Without specific plans to transform how housing gets approved in California, said Christopher Thornberg, founding partner of Los Angeles-based consulting firm Beacon Economics, Newsom and Villaraigosa's promises are empty.



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"You're just saying it," Thornberg said of the homebuilding goals. "You don't really mean it."

Newsom and Villaraigosa said in separate statements to The Times that setting the 3.5-million home goal ensures they'll be held accountable to whatever needs to be done to attain it.

Here's why the two candidates' goals will be so difficult to achieve and how they say they're going to do it.

How many houses are we actually talking about?

For decades, not enough homes have been built in California to accommodate a growing population, leading to a spike in housing costs. Since 2011, for instance, the Bay Area has added about 627,000 new jobs but only 138,000 homes, according to the Building Industry Assn. of the Bay Area.

Newsom and Villaraigosa's homebuilding goals would address that problem, but they're without precedent.

Only twice since 1954 — the year the state building industry began tracking permits — have developers built more than 300,000 homes in a year. The highest year on record is 1963, when 322,018 home permits were issued.

To reach 500,000 homes in a year, the state would need to replicate its largest production in modern history plus an additional 178,000 homes, a number the state has surpassed just three times in the past 27 years.

Overall, the state's rate of homebuilding would have to triple the historical average, quadruple last year's production and reach nearly seven times the pace of building in the last decade.

Unprecedented homebuilding goals

Gubernatorial candidates Gavin Newsom and Antonio Villaraigosa want 500,000 new homes annually through 2025.



Source: Construction Industry Research Board @latimesgraphics

(Los Angeles Times)



Where do these numbers come from?

The goal of 3.5 million homes originated in a 2016 report on California's housing problems by the McKinsey Global Institute, a private think tank.

The report found that California ranked 49th in the country in housing production per capita and estimated the state would need 3.5 million new units through 2025 to build homes at a per capita rate equivalent to New Jersey and New York.

California could achieve that goal, the report said, through a dramatic increase in development near transit, increasing building on parcels already zoned for apartments and condominiums and adding some units to single-family parcels.

But there's a crucial difference between the McKinsey report and the pledges from Newsom and Villaraigosa. The McKinsey report sets a goal for California to build 3.5 million homes from 2015 through 2025, an 11-year period. The gubernatorial candidates want to do it in only seven years, a period that would begin when the new governor takes office in 2019.

How do they plan to get there?

Housing affordability has emerged as one of the most prominent issues in the gubernatorial campaign, and all major candidates have pledged to address the problem. State Treasurer John Chiang, also a Democrat, has set a goal of having developers build 1.6 million homes for low-income Californians by 2030 through a mix of state bond funding, tax credits and other subsidies.

Newsom and Villaraigosa, however, are the only ones to have set the 3.5-million home goal.

Newsom's proposal relies on spending hundreds of millions of dollars more on low-income homes, approving some development through regional governments rather than solely at the local level and financially rewarding cities and counties that approve housing, especially near transit, and punishing those that don't.

Villaraigosa emphasizes sequestering property tax dollars to finance low-income housing, making loans to homeowners who want to build a second unit on their lots and making unspecified changes to the California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA, the 1970 law that requires developers to analyze and lessen a project's effect on the environment.

Neither of them, though, have specified how many homes they expect each part of their housing plans to produce to add up to 3.5 million homes. Instead, they contend that simply setting a bold goal will require them to allocate funding and reduce the red tape needed to meet it.

"A crisis of this magnitude requires ambitious goal setting matched with focused leadership and bold, innovative policy initiatives," Newsom said in a statement responding to questions from The Times. "It requires an affordable housing 'moonshot.'"

"Housing has to be delivered at the local level, and building consensus is the only way to get there," Villaraigosa said in a statement. "It comes down to having the courage and experience to lead on this issue, and I am committed to getting it done."

What would it actually take?

As governor, Newsom or Villaraigosa would have to reshape how housing gets permitted to make the process faster and more likely to result in approval.

Doing so, experts said, could require taking on three of the most substantial barriers to large-scale housing production, all of which have had long enjoyed broad support:

- **Proposition 13, the 1978 ballot initiative that restricts property tax increases, which gives** cities incentives to approve commercial and hotel development instead of housing **because those projects generate more local tax revenues. It has also helped protect homeowners from rising taxes.**
- **The California Environmental Quality Act, which** creates a lengthy process **for assessing the effects of new housing and leaves projects vulnerable to litigation. Environmental groups also credit the law with preserving the state's natural beauty.**
- **Local control over development decisions. Cities and counties determine what is built in their communities, and desirable coastal locales often prefer restrictions on growth. Los Angeles, for instance,** had in 1960 zoned enough housing to accommodate 10 million people, **a figure that's since been reduced to a little over 4 million. Residents like to shape how their neighborhoods look.**

Michael Lens, an associate professor of urban planning and public policy at UCLA, said the candidates would need to make substantial changes to all three policies, potentially even scrapping them, if they wanted to reach the homebuilding targets.

"You could take away one of those pillars and have a wobblier table of housing resistance," Lens said. "But [removing] all three would be more useful."

The housing production goal also could conflict with other promises. Newsom and Villaraigosa support California's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets, which require concentrating homes near jobs and transit so people drive less. That means the state couldn't count on large, single-family developments, such as suburban projects built during an early 2000s surge in production, to meet the 3.5-million home target.

Even if it were politically possible to supercharge housing production, there are practical problems that the candidates would have less control over. After a long period of growth, Gov. Jerry Brown has warned that the state economy should expect a slowdown in the coming years, which could also decelerate development.

In addition, it takes time for builders to secure land and financing, no matter how quickly a government approves blueprints and permits. Changes implemented on the first day of a Newsom or Villaraigosa administration might take years before they'd lead to ribbon cuttings for new homes.

"Depending on the size of the project, the stuff that starts in 2019 might not even come online until somewhere around 2025," Lens said.

There have to be enough construction workers to build all those homes, too. California contractors already are having trouble finding labor, and that's before spending ramps up on more than \$5 billion annually in road repairs and transit upgrades coming after the Legislature approved a gas tax hike last year, said Peter Tateishi, CEO of the Associated General Contractors of California.

"We don't see a path to building 500,000 homes in one year on top of all the other infrastructure projects that are on the docket," Tateishi said.

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Once again, California sees the unintended consequences of bad legislation

By Jon Coupal and Kammi Foote

Posted Mar 5, 2018 at 4:11 PM

Updated Mar 5, 2018 at 4:11 PM

Last July, we wrote a column regarding the foolishness of Senate Bill 2, a new \$75 tax on real estate recordings, ostensibly for the purpose of funding housing programs. We pointed out that imposing a tax on real estate transactions to pay for programs to make housing more affordable is like treating someone with a low blood count with leeches.

While the fundamental irrationality of SB2 is water under the bridge, a host of implementation problems have now arisen that need corrective action, and quickly.

For example, SB2's language makes it difficult for California's 58 County Recorders to determine if they should charge the additional \$75 for tax liens and lien releases presented by government agencies.

These tax liens can originate from small local business activities like selling Avon, from failure to pay your annual income taxes, from a missed tax payment on your jet ski, for child-support collection and more. You don't even need to own a house to have one of these liens recorded against you, and worse yet, you may not even know that the lien exists until it shows up on your credit report.

State agencies and the IRS have refused to pay the \$75, arguing that these documents are exempt from the new tax. The attorney general agrees (see AG 18-101), but California's Office of Legislative Counsel issued an opinion that contradicts the attorney general — making it even more confusing for taxpayers and county recorders.

At this point, most recorders interpret the statute as mandatory, because the legislative counsel has told them this was the original intent of the bill. Therefore, they are mailing back lien releases as unrecorded to state agencies and to the IRS for lack of the \$75. For property owners, this is a real problem because their debt has been paid but their credit is not cleared because the lien hasn't been released.

Some taxpayers are so eager to clear their credit that they are intercepting the lien releases at their county recorder's office and offering to pay the \$75, legal or not. The Department of Child Support Services intends to record all lien releases itself instead of

giving them to the redeemed payer to record more quickly on their own, but it is still being held up. Some child-support payers might be offering to take the release to the recorder themselves and paying the \$75 to have their credit cleared. As the situation continues, however, others might be discouraged from paying up their child support arrears or tax debts in the first place. The extra hurdle is not helping the government, the taxpayer, or the children.

It is also true that the state of California cannot tax the federal government. Although this has been settled law for hundreds of years, many county recorders are attempting to collect the tax from the IRS. And although this is legal doctrine, it makes common sense as well. Would there be any sense or justice if the states had the power to tax the federal government out of existence?

Because the language of SB2 is so confusing, and it relies on many assumptions that the county recorder has no ability to independently verify, payment of the tax on most documents relies on self-certification. Most people do not have law degrees, so many people are paying the tax when they are not legally required to pay it, and others are receiving exemptions when they are not entitled to them.

SB2 gives a long but non-exclusive list of “real estate instruments” to which the fee applies. This includes a “release” and a “mechanic’s lien,” but not just a “lien” nor a “tax lien,” and certainly not a “child support lien.” SB2 also uses the words “transaction,” “in connection with” and “relating to real property,” none of which are defined in statute. Is enforcing a government debt a “transaction”? Are IRS tax liens and releases “relating to real property”? Tax liens use specific real property to enforce a debt, but they are not like a mechanic’s lien where the contractor performed work on that specific property.

There are many other types of liens where intent could vary as to whether to charge the \$75: liens for postponement of property taxes for senior citizens, government liens recorded in error, government liens released due to discretionary re-prioritizing, and, less sympathetically, liens for graffiti nuisance abatements or violations of various safety codes. It is unclear whether the legislature intended to extend the tax to these recordings, although they were aware that this was a potential issue and chose not to address it.

Clean-up legislation is needed promptly. SB2, as substantive legislation, was bad enough. Its implementation is almost worse.

Jon Coupal is the president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and Kammi Foote is the clerk-recorder of Inyo County.

'We all almost died': Survivors of Las Vegas sniper find support in each other

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'We all almost died': Survivors of Las Vegas sniper find

support in each other

By JOHN WILKENS

MAR 05, 2018 | 10:50 AM





Psychologist Shiva Ghaed leads a gathering of local people who survived the mass shooting in Las Vegas last fall. (Nelvin C. Cepeda / Union-Tribune)

□ □

For Erin Powell, it's jackhammers. They sound like the rifle she heard that night.

For Jill Winter, it's high-rise buildings. They remind her of the Mandalay Bay, where the gunman broke two windows on the 32nd floor to fire at the crowd.

For Mark Medford, it's a face he sees in his sleep, of a woman shot in the head at the concert. He picked her up and carried her away from the carnage.

Five months after the Route 91 country music festival in Las Vegas turned into the largest mass shooting in U.S. history — 58 dead and more than 500 injured — much of the nation has moved on. But the 20,000 people who were there, including dozens from San Diego County, are still dealing with the after-effects.



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A support group that meets weekly in Mission Valley is helping many of them move forward. It's led by Shiva Ghaed, a licensed clinical psychologist who specializes in trauma and works at Naval Medical Center San Diego.

Her professional training and experience are important to the local Route 91 survivors, but so is this: She was at the concert herself, caught in the terror, dodging the bullets.

"We all almost died," she said Monday night, when about 40 people gathered at In Cahoots, a dance hall and saloon that provides free space to the group because it is a country music place and because it's closed to the public on Mondays.

They sat in chairs arranged in a large circle on the dance floor as the meeting opened. The lighting was low. Boxes of Kleenex were positioned nearby, just in case.

Several people hugged "Comfort Cubs," teddy bears weighted to approximate the feel of a newborn baby. Originally created by an Encinitas woman for mothers who lose their babies in childbirth, the bears increasingly have been donated to people suffering from all kinds of trauma: hurricanes, floods, shootings.

Ghaed tells the group, "Don't avoid." Several heads nod in agreement. They've heard this before from her. She wants them to embrace their feelings and memories about what happened and learn how to process them, put them together in a way that is less scary.

Avoidance is always easier, she said, but it can cause problems later.

"You can't jump inside your bucket," she tells them. "If you start avoiding everything, you'll lose all the things that are dear to you."

You'll be alive, she said, but not really.

Some group members are doing a project called "58 Random Acts of Kindness." It's a way to pull them out of their despair and pay forward their gratitude for having survived. One act of kindness for each person killed that night, Oct. 1, 2017.

Powell has completed 32 of hers. The 4S Ranch-area resident picked up the tab for a mother and daughter she saw dining at a restaurant. She bought a clerk at a golf course anything he wanted from the pro shop after she saw him calmly handling a customer's rude, noisy complaints.

Helping others is healing, said Powell, who attended Route 91 with her husband, David. And she needed healing.

"We were all a mess," she said.

In the first weeks after the shooting, the sound of jackhammers at a construction site or a helicopter flying overhead would send her to the ground in a fetal position, sobbing. She had nightmares.

She said coming to the weekly support group meetings has made a difference. Part of it is "being able to know that you are not the only one going through this," she said. And part of it is the "Trauma 411" counseling Ghaed provides, in person and in writing with documents shared via Facebook and a website, route91therapy.com.

There are lessons called "Find New Meaning After Trauma" and "Why Avoidance Makes It Worse" and "Tips on Managing Nightmares."

All of it's free. Ghaed said when she came back from Las Vegas, grateful to be alive (four people standing next to her were killed), she knew because of her professional training and experience that the survivors would need help coping with what they'd seen and heard.

"I felt a sense of panic, that there would be thousands and thousands of people with these invisible wounds," she said. "I know how insidious PTSD can be."

She put out the word through the local media that she was forming a group. Forty-two people showed up for the first meeting. She estimates about 200 different people have attended at least once, with most sessions drawing between 40 and 60.

Now survivors in other cities are reaching out to her, too. She's been to Las Vegas a couple of times to help a group get started there. Just last week she received an email from someone in Chicago.

"People are resilient," she said, "if you give them the tools."

At Monday's support meeting, the members broke into smaller groups to share how they were feeling. The Parkland school shooting in Florida has triggered difficult emotions for some of them. Panic attacks. Tears. Unexpected outbursts at friends and relatives.

Lisa Como told a story about Thanksgiving. The El Cajon resident was happy to be surrounded by family for the holiday, but not so thrilled when an argument broke out about the dinner rolls.

"I got shot at!" she yelled. "I don't care about the rolls!"

Awkward silence ensued.

That was a reminder to her that healing doesn't happen in a straight line. There are good days and bad days.

A good day was a recent excursion group members made to a "Paint and Sip" studio in Escondido. The owner gave a free session to the survivors. They painted pictures of American flags and drank wine. "We had fun," Como said.

Another "exposure activity" is planned for July to a Padres game. For some, it will be their first time at a large, public event

since Route 91.

"Some people are just treading water out there," Ghaed said.

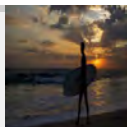
And some people aren't. Medford and his wife, Shannon, went to country music concerts before the shooting, and they've gone to them since. "It's really helpful in feeling normal again," the Lakeside resident said.

But he doesn't think he'll ever move beyond remembering the face of the woman he tried to help in Las Vegas. She'd been shot in the head. He carried her to a police car and put her in the backseat. He doesn't know for sure, but he believes she was among the fatalities.

Until about a month ago, he refused to remove his concert wristband from that night. Then he replaced it with a large tattoo on one forearm. It has a cross, and the words "country strong," and the number 58. And underneath it all, one word: "Survivor."

At the end of Monday's support group, he and the others gathered in the middle of the dance floor at In Cahoots. They squeezed close together, like a football huddle, and if they looked like a team, that's because they are.

In unison, on the count of three, they shouted the two words that bind them, now and for as long as they need it: "Route 91!"



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Victims of Las Vegas mass shooting start receiving payments of up to \$275,000 each

By DAVID MONTERO

MAR 05, 2018 | 5:30 PM

| LAS VEGAS





Mourners hold candles during a vigil a week after the Las Vegas mass shooting. (Drew Angerer / Getty Images)

□ □

More than 500 victims of the mass shooting in Las Vegas began receiving money Monday from a victims fund that collected in excess of \$31 million after the tragedy.

The Las Vegas Victims Fund nonprofit set aside \$275,000 for each of the 58 victims killed on Oct. 1 and equal payments to another 10 who suffered paralysis or brain damage.

Scott Nielson, chairman of the Las Vegas Victims Fund Committee, said in a statement that the generosity shown to those who suffered in the attack was "tremendous."

"We recognize, however, that money cannot replace a life lost or forever changed due to this tragic event," Nielson said. "What the committee worked hard to do was distribute the gifts given by tens of thousands of people in a way that would help those families and survivors most severely impacted."



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Divided into three levels, the committee announced there were 532 claims total. The second level consisted of 147 people who were injured and hospitalized. Fourteen claims in that tier got \$200,000 each and required proof the victim had been hospitalized for more than 24 days. There were nine who got \$150,000 each for 16-23 days in the hospital and 15 who got \$100,000 each for eight to 15 days in the hospital.

Most claims in the second level — 77 total — got \$52,500 for hospital stays that lasted two to seven days. Thirty-two people who spent one day in the hospital received \$17,500.

The mass shooting in Las Vegas — the largest in modern American history — drew worldwide attention after Stephen Paddock opened fire from his room on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino down into a crowd of 22,000 attending

the Route 91 Harvest country music festival.

But after the shooting, there were complaints made by some suggesting that the money in the victims fund didn't match the scope of the tragedy and that many would be left out when it came to receiving money.

In 2016, the Pulse Nightclub shooting resulted in 49 people being shot and killed and the OneOrlando Fund received donations totaling \$29.5 million. Each casualty claim resulted in a \$350,000 disbursement.

After mass shootings, funds are often established where people can donate to help those who suffered in the tragedy. In San Bernardino, the families of the 14 people killed in the workplace shooting on Dec. 2, 2015, were each eligible for about \$140,629. Another 37 people who were present during the shooting at the Inland Regional Center were eligible for \$2,993 each.

After the 2012 mass shooting at the Aurora, Colo., movie theater, more than \$5 million was donated to a fund. Claims on the deceased came to \$220,000 each.

But unlike Las Vegas — Orlando, San Bernardino and Aurora had fewer claimants. In the Orlando victims fund, 186 claims for people who were present in the nightclub — the lowest tier level — received \$25,000 each.

The scope of the shooting in Las Vegas — with thousands at the concert — didn't allow for the fund to cover all of the survivors. By mid-December, the fund was at \$16 million. Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo said in January there were more than 800 people injured in the attack.

In the weeks after the holiday season, the fund almost doubled and included donations from the Vegas Strong Fund, which was established and funded largely by several casinos. MGM Resorts, which owns Mandalay Bay, gave \$4 million through its foundation. A Vegas Strong benefit concert at T-Mobile Arena raised about \$700,000.

Contributions from individuals ranged from \$1 to almost \$400,000.

Under the fund, victims who received outpatient care by a doctor — 317 total — will divide a little more than \$2.51 million, though the exact totals for each claim in that third level hasn't been determined and is awaiting a final tally on the total number of valid claims.

The rolling disbursement of funds is expected to be complete by the end of the month.

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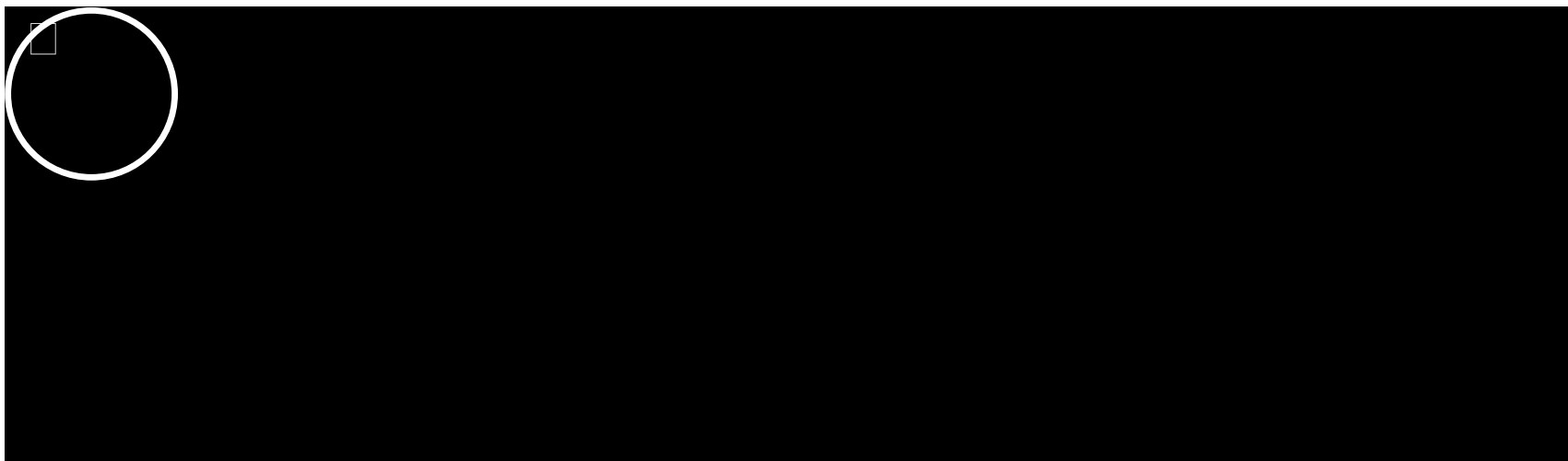
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'We can't let this pass us by': Here's how a Native American tribe in Oregon sees hope with marijuana



By KURTIS LEE

MAR 06, 2018 | 3:00 AM
| WARM SPRINGS, ORE.





Carina Miller, a tribal council member, stands where Warm Springs Forest Products Industries was located. The lumber mill closed in 2016. (Kristyna Wentz-Graff / For The Times)



A weathered marquee near the center of this small Native American reservation perched on the high desert plateaus of central Oregon reads "Every Day Is Another Chance," offering a sense of optimism that can be hard to find among anybody who lives here.

The once-bustling lumber mill that sliced and shipped Douglas fir throughout the Pacific Northwest closed two years ago when the machines got too old and expensive to replace. The tribe tried a casino, but it was located half an hour from the highway, and nobody came.

Now they've opened another one, but meanwhile, nearly a quarter of those living on the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs reservation are unemployed. To Carina Miller, a member of the tribal council, it's time for the tribe to wade outside its comfort zone, to go beyond the traditional native economies of bingo, gambling and hydropower.

If everybody in Oregon is talking about getting rich off legalized marijuana, she figures, why should the tribe be left behind?



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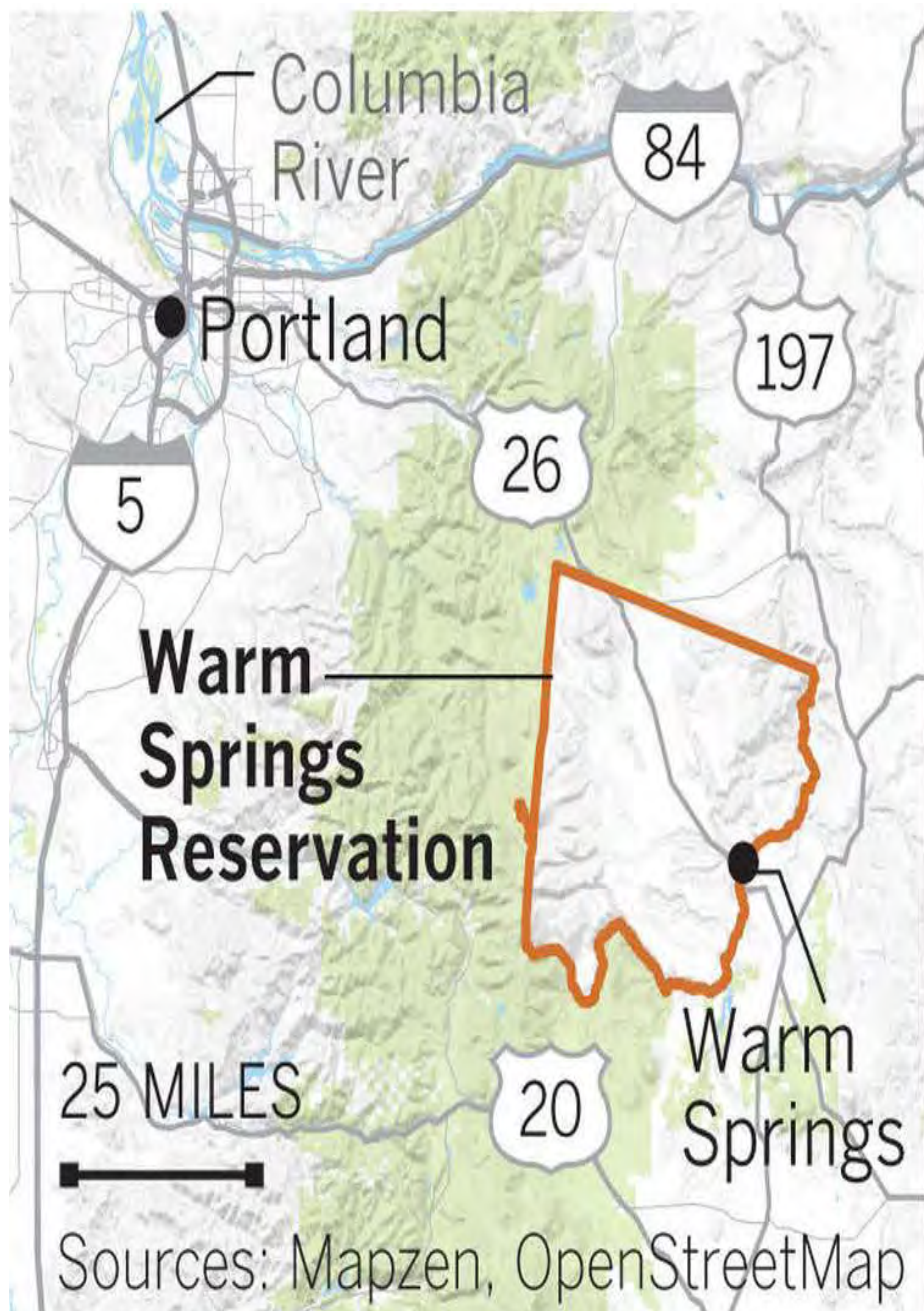
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"We've got to think bigger and think about the future," Miller, 30, said as she stood at the site of a large pot-growing facility the tribe wants to develop on its reservation about two hours east of Portland. "We're already behind on a lot of things. We can't let this pass us by."



(Los Angeles Times)



Many tribes for years have turned a wary eye at legalized cannabis, mindful of the substance abuse problems that have

plagued many Native American populations.

But in 2015, recreational use of marijuana in Oregon became legal, and selling it became good business.

As marijuana laws expand across the West, a handful of tribes in Nevada and Washington state have explored selling pot at dispensaries, both on and off reservations. But no tribe is as far along in the process of becoming a fully operating venture as the one here at Warm Springs.

Spearheaded by younger tribal members who are eager to join the legalization movement sweeping the country, the tribe has taken steps to become the first vertically integrated Native American pot operation — growing pot on the reservation and selling it off-site.

The effort has detractors, particularly elders who worry about substance abuse and bristle at the idea of inviting more federal scrutiny to their land. But they are hardly being heard in the push to explore this new opportunity.

The tribe's pro-pot effort began in 2015, after Oregon voters legalized the sale and possession of up to an ounce of marijuana. As pot shops and grow facilities popped up across the state, Miller, a lifelong resident of the reservation made up of 5,000 members of the Wasco, Warm Springs and Paiute tribes, watched as the economy and quality of life declined on the reservation.



The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in Oregon is hoping to capitalize on the marijuana market, with the tribe voting to legalize pot and build a large grow facility. Some tribal leaders see it as a key to survival. (Kristyna Wentz-Graff/ For The Times)

□ □



Abandoned homes sit behind concrete barriers on a road in Warm Springs. (Kristyna Wentz-Graff / For The Times)

□ □

She and other organizers — many of them under 30 — saw big new pot economies develop in states including Colorado and

Washington. They wanted in.

A referendum was drafted for the reservation's December 2015 ballot. The pitch to voters: Let's grow pot on the reservation and sell it at dispensaries in Bend and Portland.

The organizers held town halls, scouted potential grow spots and consulted the federal government. Despite a winter storm on election day, 1,450 people voted — nearly 1,200 of them voting "yes." The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs had made history as the first tribal group in the state to pass a pro-pot measure — though it is still illegal to use or possess pot on the reservation.

The celebratory spirit was stifled a few months later when Warm Springs Forest Products Industries — the tribe's lumber mill — announced bankruptcy and the scaling-back of jobs.

The tribe had purchased the mill in the 1960s and for nearly half a century it was a major employer. But over the last decade, the company began to founder. The mill's equipment was suited for larger logs that over time became increasingly rare, leaving the company with little work.

Layoffs came in spells, and when the mill officially closed in the spring of 2016, nearly 100 people lost their jobs. Desperate, many boarded up their homes and fled in search of work.

"Generations of families worked there," said Miller, whose aunt and uncle chopped wood at the mill for several years. "It was our source for money."

Miller and others figured the marijuana measure would provide a good alternative, but have grown frustrated by a series of setbacks — a combination of bureaucratic complications, turnover of tribal council members and insufficient seed money has left the roughly \$3-million effort in limbo.

Initial plans to construct a 36,000-square-foot indoor grow facility have been scaled back to 4,000 square feet. Between the construction and maintenance of the building, the tribe estimates the project will still create 20 new jobs, a number they expect to keep growing, and bring in about \$1.5 million a year. The money, proponents say, will fund several things on the reservation, including healthcare and education.



Wild horses run through land where the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs plans to build a large marijuana growing operation. (Kristyna Wentz-Graff / For The Times)

□ □



Warm Springs Tribal Council Representative Carina Miller, left, and Cannabis Project Coordinator Laurie Danzuka. (Kristyna Wentz-Graff / For The Times)

□ □

Laurie Danzuka, who is overseeing implementation of the cannabis project, joined Miller one recent morning for a tour of the

site of the proposed facility, a barren vacant lot not far from the fire station. Nearby a half dozen wild horses sprinted across dried sagebrush. A crisp wind whipped up dust.

"I can really see brighter days for the reservation — for our people as a whole," Danzuka said. "I just wish it would have happened earlier. This, in some ways, is a crisis situation for the tribe's economy."

Both Danzuka and Miller expect pot to bring in more money than the gaming industry — the leading source of income for many tribes nationwide. They say pot is a more reliable money source, especially in a rural area such as Warm Springs, far from major cities or tourist destinations.



High unemployment and poverty plague the Warm Springs community. (Kristyna Wentz-Graff / For The Times)

□ □

Along Route 26, the Indian Head Casino, the main attraction here, rakes in an average of \$1 million a year — a figure that

some tribal officials say is declining. In 2011, another local casino, Kah-Nee-Ta, shuttered its doors because of a dwindling clientele.

Even so, others are fearful of wading into the marijuana industry, which they view as illegal.

Raymond Tsumpti, a tribal council member who was among the minority to oppose the ballot referendum, was police chief on the reservation for nearly a decade and still holds his law-and-order views.

"It's illegal and classified a Schedule I drug by the federal government," said Tsumpti, 73. "That's all I need as proof it's not needed on this land."

To Tsumpti, the risk of getting shut down by the federal government, which has not legalized marijuana, is too great.

In 2014, the Obama administration issued a directive that advised all U.S. attorneys to follow the so-called Cole memo when enforcing marijuana laws on tribal lands. The memo urged prosecutors not to interfere with state-sanctioned cannabis laws, as long as people weren't violating specific federal priorities, such as selling to minors or shipping pot across state lines. In January, U.S. Atty. Gen. Jeff Sessions announced he was ending the Cole memo protocol.

That means a big risk, as far as Tsumpti is concerned. "It's not worth it," he said.

He's also worried about encouraging young people to engage in substance abuse, a concern expressed not only by some here, but at other reservations. In 2013, the Yakama Nation, about 200 miles north of here in Washington state, opted against allowing marijuana, citing, among other things, concerns about substance abuse.

Tsumpti said the pot-grow plan reminds him of the Kah-Nee-Ta casino's decision to start selling alcohol on the reservation in the 1970s — also highly controversial at the time.

"All for the sake of making money," Tsumpti said, shaking his head. "People suffer from alcoholism and it's all because we wanted to make a little money. We don't need this now."

For the moment, most people seem to be worried more about supporting their families than anything else and fret that the marijuana project is taking too long to get off the ground.



Jackson Mitchell helps out at the family bread stand in Warm Springs. (Kristyna Wentz-Graff / For The Times)

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On a recent afternoon, Jackson Mitchell stood outside his mother-in-law's fry bread stand, a pop-up camper placed near the

center of town. A handful of brick buildings — the library, a post office, a market — surrounded the stand. A park nearby sat empty; its cracked concrete basketball court with netless hoops looked as if it hadn't hosted a pick-up game in years.

Mitchell lost his job at a water-bottling plant last year and now works part-time at the stand.

"All of Oregon is making bank. ... We're the first people to inhabit this land, we should be making a profit off it as well," said Mitchell, who voted for the 2015 referendum and said he'll try to get a job at the new facility whenever it's ready. "I will be the first to sign up. I want to work, I need to work," he said.

Mitchell figures he's not the only one who's waited years for something good to happen on this beautiful land.

"We have to have a brighter future," he said. "And marijuana seems to be it."

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