



HOMELESS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Addressing homeless crisis in San Bernardino with compassion and hope

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As the homeless population increases in San Bernardino County, so do the efforts to help feed and clothe those on the streets.

 By Rob McMillan

Monday, May 6, 2019 8:37PM

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (KABC) -- Homelessness is an issue that touches nearly every community in Southern California. In the Inland Empire, [Mary's Mercy House](#) in San Bernardino is just one place that is helping to clothe and feed the homeless, but soon more help will come with the addition of a new transitional shelter.

More help, for a problem that continues to grow.

A man, recently homeless, who wants to stay anonymous, gives us his perspective.

"My day is depressing, basically it starts with getting food," he said.

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## HOMELESS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



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His message is that finding yourself homeless can happen quickly.

"I think the thing that most people don't realize...two or three mistakes in their life and they can get up right where I'm at," he said.

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He says about a year ago, he had a job as a welder. He had a car and shelter, but now, nothing.

On this day, he's hanging out with a growing crowd of people at Bobby Vega Park in San Bernardino.

In San Bernardino County, like many counties -- according to the numbers -- the problem is getting worse.

The number of homeless is up 23% from last year.

People on the street say there are so many of them, the shelters are flooded and they often can't get into one. Although for some, drug and alcohol addiction is such a problem, they're not allowed inside.

"The shelters are flooded, you can't get into a shelter," the homeless man said. "A lot of people have drinking problems, and if you smell like beer, you can't get in."

For him, transportation is the main problem.

"You'd have to hang out there all day just to get a spot, and that's not feasible to do," he said.

Father Michael Barry runs Mary's Mercy House in San Bernardino. They give clothes to the homeless, and prepare 8,000 meals a month, but it's not enough.

"When we talk about the homeless, it's like the water coming in on the beach, it's all over the place, and we have to begin to address what we can," Barry said.

He said while there aren't enough services out there for the homeless now, more help is on the way.



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Barry said they've broken ground on a new facility, and phase one should be complete in about a year. That would mean 82 beds for homeless men, but it won't be just a place for them to sleep.

"There are all sorts of needs that emerge; they need clothing, and things like, 'I need to get from here to a job interview.' We help them with that, bus passes, things like that," Barry explained.

He acknowledges not everyone will make it through the program. He's hoping for a 50% success rate.

"Everybody's doing a little bit. I have no false impressions that we're doing everything we can do. I know there's a lot more, but we're scratching the surface," Barry said.

Some who are on the street remain hopeful.

"Something will come along," the homeless man said. "I think that's what everyone is waiting for."

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# Half of SoCal say government officials are responsible for taking care of homeless, poll says

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Half of Southern Californian residents believe government officials are responsible for taking care of the homeless population, according to an exclusive Eyewitness News poll conducted by Survey USA.

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Half of Southern Californian residents believe government officials are responsible for taking care of the homeless population, according to an exclusive Eyewitness News poll conducted by Survey USA.

The survey asked, "Who is responsible for taking care of the homeless?" An overwhelming 50 percent of participants said it should be government officials.

### MORE: Addressing homeless crisis in San Bernardino with compassion and hope

As Eyewitness News continues our ongoing series on homelessness, tune in to ABC7 Tuesday at 5 p.m. for an in-depth look at a Los Angeles County homeless outreach program, which helps find the most vulnerable and gets them help.

### MORE: SoCal residents concerned over becoming homeless, poll shows

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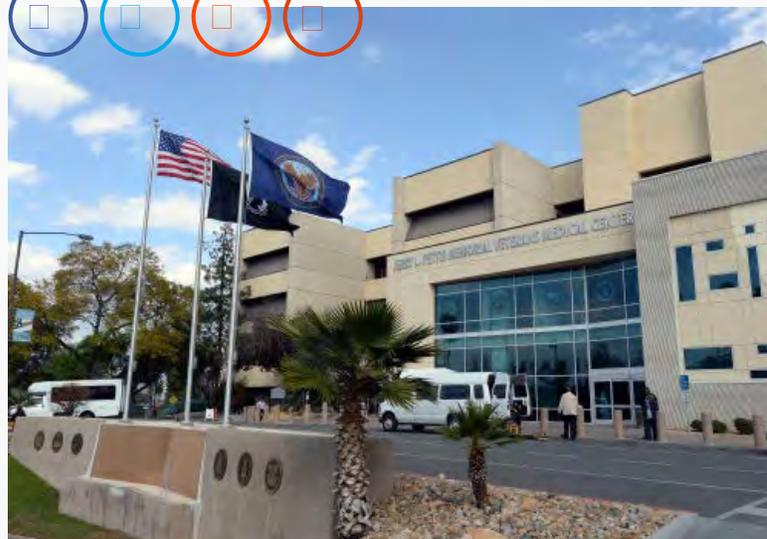
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NEWS

# Feds say VA covered up Legionella at Loma Linda hospital, putting patients, staff at risk

Draft report substantiates whistleblowers' complaint that staff was not informed of bacteria discovery



Legionella bacteria was discovered Wednesday, June 13, at the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial VA Medical Center in Loma Linda, a facility at the center of a federal whistleblower complaint from a group of physicians and nurses. (File staff photo by, Will Lester-Riverside Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **SCOTT SCHWEBKE** | [sschwebke@scng.com](mailto:sschwebke@scng.com) | 

Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: May 6, 2019 at 6:38 pm | UPDATED: May 6, 2019 at 11:14 pm

Department of Veterans Affairs officials failed to notify physicians in 2017 about Legionella bacteria found at the VA Medical Center in Loma Linda, posing a public health danger and possibly causing at least one doctor to contract potentially fatal Legionnaires' disease, according to a federal report obtained by the Southern California News Group.

The 26-page VA report substantiates a whistleblower complaint filed in February 2018 with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel by two doctors and six nurses at the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial VA who alleged hospital officials concealed the Legionella discovery for months.

"We found violations of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Health Administration policy, and note that a substantial and specific danger to public health and safety existed at Loma Linda," says the November 2018 report from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-Redlands, said Monday the VA's findings — which have not been publicly released — are disturbing.

"Inland Empire veterans deserve access to the

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highest-quality care in clean and safe facilities, which is why I was outraged by reports that the Loma Linda VA failed to inform staff about the spread of Legionella at their facility,” he said in a statement. “While the Office of Special Counsel continues to investigate these reports, I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to conduct the necessary oversight to ensure our veterans and those who provide them care can feel safe inside VA facilities.”

The VA did not substantiate several other whistleblower allegations about the medical center, including a nursing shortage and unsanitary conditions.

### Report not final yet

Stephanie Rapp-Tully, a Washington attorney for the whistleblowers, declined to discuss the report’s findings.

“The report is a draft that is covered by executive privilege because it is not final,” she said. “Thus, we cannot comment.”

The VA takes Legionella prevention very seriously and its directives for the bacteria are among the most stringent in the country, said Wade J. Habshey, a spokesman for the Pettis Memorial VA Medical Center.

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“We conduct quarterly water safety testing, and if any trace of Legionella is identified in water during routine preventative surveillance, that water source is immediately placed out of service, infection control staff are notified, mitigation is completed, and the area is retested along with the entire water loop,” he said. “The area is not reopened until it has tested negative.”

The report acknowledges that, despite evidence in 2017 of Legionella in the Pettis Medical Center’s water system, VA officials didn’t develop an effective strategy to deal with the problem until contacted in June 2018 by the Southern California News Group.

The Pettis Medical Center has 162 acute-care beds and a 108-bed community living center. It is part of the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System that has more than 2,400 employees and 1,300 volunteers who serve more than 76,000 veterans.

### Federal team investigated complaint

The Office of the Medical Inspector assembled a team to investigate the whistleblowers’ complaint and made a visit to the hospital from July 9-13, 2018, and interviewed more than 50 employees.

Legionnaires is a severe form of pneumonia that can be contracted by inhaling microscopic water droplets in mist or vapor. Legionella bacteria thrive in fresh water, but can multiply in indoor water

systems such as hot tubs and air conditioners, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Legionella is not spread through person-to-person contact. Symptoms can include diarrhea, high fever, cough, chest pain and shortness of breath. Those at higher risk for infection are people 50 and older and those who have smoked or currently smoke, have chronic lung disease or a weakened immune system. Left untreated, Legionnaires' disease can be fatal.

According to the report, federal investigators reviewed data from Pettis Medical Center for 2017 and 2018 and found 33 positive results for Legionella, the report says.

Specifically, 64 individual tests were conducted in wards, intensive-care units, operating rooms and other inpatient patient rooms. Nine tested positive for Legionella, with one room testing positive twice in September and once in October 2017. All positive tests were on the hot water outlet in the sink, the report says.

Hospital officials informed the nurse manager of the Legionella, patients were relocated to different rooms and the sink was removed.



Remediation is underway at Pettis Medical Center after

However, other nurses and the hospital's doctors were kept in the dark for months about Legionella bacteria lurking in the water system.

## Communication splintered

Legionella was discovered Wednesday, June 13 in the facility's water system (Contributed Photo)

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Federal investigators also reviewed Pettis Medical Center's Water Safety Committee meeting minutes for October, November and December 2017 and March 2018.

During the December meeting, the hospital's associate director for patient care services, who was not identified, stated that she "normally does not send out emails regarding Legionella information, but would leave it to leadership to decide," the report says.

The hospital's Facilities Management Service chief expressed concern during the meeting about two separate "silos" that existed in communicating Legionella issues to staff: one from the Facilities Management Services Department and the other from the infectious disease and nursing departments, according to investigators.

"The FMS chief also stated that the communication had not been tightened up enough and suggested a future discussion on how to improve communication flow," the report says.

### Delay in informing staff

Investigators found evidence hospital officials worked to mitigate the Legionella, but staff was not informed until June 2018, when SCNG contacted the VA about the whistleblowers' complaint.

The report also states the Office of Inspector General is investigating an allegation from the whistleblowers that at least one physician at the hospital contracted Legionnaires' disease.

Legionella cases are required to be reported to the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health within a week of discovery. Failure to report can result in disciplinary action by the California Board of Medical Quality Assurance.

Information was not immediately available from the health department regarding whether the VA reported any Legionella cases at Pettis. Thirty Legionella cases and three deaths were reported in San Bernardino County in 2017. Figures for 2018 have not yet been compiled.

The blistering Legionella findings by the VA punctuate several difficulties and controversies plaguing Pettis Medical Center.

In 2018, the VA gave the hospital a one-star rating, the lowest possible performance score for its medical facilities.

And last month, the Southern California News Group revealed that 57-year-old Edwin Winslow Bennett, convicted of the 1989 gangland-style execution of a business rival, is employed as a project manager for the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System's Ambulatory Care Center in Redlands.

That revelation has prompted Aguilar to demand answers from the VA regarding Bennett's hiring.

"This fact raises a number of concerns and issues regarding Loma Linda VA's hiring process and background check system," he wrote in a letter to Karandeep Singh Sraon, director of the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System.

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## VVCC to run job training center at airport

By Scott Nordhues

Posted at 12:01 AM

VICTORVILLE — A new center for job training to be operated by Victor Valley Community College will be established at Southern California Logistics Airport.

Stirling Capital Investment and Prologis, Inc. announced Monday that they have reached a 10-year agreement with VVCC to donate a building at SCLA that will be used for training programs.

The two companies revealed in March they had formed a partnership to develop commercial and industrial businesses at SCLA.

The goal of the new training center “is to be responsive to what will propel the economy of the High Desert region forward,” said Daniel Walden, superintendent and president of VVCC. “We have an opportunity to work with our local manufacturing, transportation and logistics industries, among others, to better understand the skill sets businesses need today and for the future.”

“The City of Victorville is pleased to see our relationship with VVCC expanding at SCLA,” said Victorville Mayor Gloria Garcia. “We remain excited that our community will have new opportunities and pathways to employment with our growing industries at SCLA.”

Robert Lovingood, 1st District Supervisor, said the training center “will bring accessibility to individuals within the High Desert and surrounding areas to acquire in-demand manufacturing skills to better position them for employment in living-wage and higher-paying positions with growth potential.”

Lovingood said Victor Valley Community College, San Bernardino County Workforce Development, Stirling and Prologis worked together to provide a facility “tailored to the workforce needs of local industry.”

Stirling President and CEO Dougall Agan said that manufacturers and employers based at SCLA “provide us with immediate input on what our local businesses need to continue to grow. Qualified, highly skilled employees are always in demand when businesses are relocating to a new region for expansion or planning future investment.”

The VVCC training center “will be a game changer in providing the training that helps position the Inland Empire’s skilled workforce at a competitive advantage and attracts companies looking to expand in or relocate to Southern California,” San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board Chair Tony Myrell said.

The roughly 66,000 square foot structure that will house the training center was built in the 1970s as part of the former George Air Force Base, Stirling said in a news release. The structure is being extensively remodeled for Victor Valley Community College and other tenants, with Stirling overseeing the design and construction process, the company said.



## Despite Rumors on Social Media, San Bernardino Shelter Says It's Not Euthanizing All Animals

**They need you to adopt the animals, though.**

By [Kim Tobin](#)

Published May 6, 2019 at 6:55 PM

Dogs and cats need homes after a San Bernardino shelter is due to close, worrying residents who heard social media rumors that the animals would be euthanized. Kim Tobin reports for the NBC4 News at 5 Monday, May 6, 2019.

(Published Monday, May 6, 2019)

A group of animal lovers was lined up outside a San Bernardino city shelter amid rumors that it would have to shut down, leaving more than 100 animals without a place to go -- or worse.

Residents were also very concerned about another rumor: that the San Bernardino Animal Shelter would euthanize all the animals May 7.

The city says that's not true, and also says animal activists have been spreading lies on social media.

Some San Bernardino city officials spoke out against include the claim that all the dogs and cats were to be euthanized because the shelter is closing.

[2019 Southern California Images in the News](#)



Riverside County Department of Animal Services

"In regards to the rumors that have been spread online, there will not be a mass killing of the animals here at the shelter," Sadie Albers of the San Bernardino Animal Shelter said.

The 60 dogs and 40 cats will be transferred over to Riverside County Animal Services because San Bernardino is falling behind.

"The animal shelter here has had a troubled past. It's out of date and the city does not have the finances to bring it up to code, that these animals really deserve," Albers said.

- [One Man's DWP Bill Says He Used 135,000 Gallons of Water](#)

The shelter says there are a small amount of animals that are not adoptable — either they have behavioral issues, or bit a child, and as standard procedure, those animals will be put down.

No closing date is set but they will hold a free adoption event Thursday to try to find as many homes as possible before the animals are transferred to the county.

"This shelter was designed to handle a whole lot of animals. We can handle what's coming our way from the city of San Bernardino," John Welsh of Riverside County Animal Services said of the influx of the animals left behind from San Bernardino Animal Shelter.

- [FCC Warns of 'One Ring' Robocall Scam](#)

The dogs and cats will have new resources they didn't have at their old shelter, he said.

"We have a whole army of registered veterinary technicians to help those animals coming from San Bernardino," Welsh said.

Many in line Monday, ready to help the animals they thought would be euthanized due to the rumor on social media, said they would return Thursday to adopt.

- [Click Here or Email Your Photos to \[isee@nbcla.com\]\(mailto:isee@nbcla.com\)](#)

The free adoption event is Thursday, May 9, at the San Bernardino shelter located at 333 Chandler Place San Bernardino from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All adoptions and spay and neutering will be free.

Adopters must be 18 years old and have a valid ID.

- [Updates: Download the NBCLA App](#)

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LOCAL NEWS

# San Bernardino voters elect new 3rd Ward representative today

Initial unofficial results will be posted at 8:05 p.m. Tuesday on the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters website



Treasure Ortiz and Juan Figueroa, candidates for the vacant San Bernardino City Council seat in the Third Ward, listen to questions during an open forum to debate city issues at Bethel Temple in San Bernardino on Tuesday, April 9, 2019. (Photo by Terry Pierson, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

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By **BRIAN WHITEHEAD** | [bwhitehead@scng.com](mailto:bwhitehead@scng.com) | San Bernardino Sun  
PUBLISHED: May 7, 2019 at 6:30 am | UPDATED: May 7, 2019 at 6:31 am



Voters in San Bernardino’s 3rd Ward will select a new representative Tuesday, May 7.

In a special vote-by-mail election, first-time [candidates Juan Figueroa and Treasure Ortiz](#) are vying to succeed Mayor John Valdivia and shift the balance of power at City Hall. Prior to being elected mayor in November, Valdivia had represented the 3rd Ward on the City Council since 2011.

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The victor Tuesday will hold the 3rd Ward seat for the remainder of Valdivia’s term, which expires in November 2020.

Initial unofficial results will be posted at 8:05 p.m. Tuesday

on the San Bernardino County

Registrar of Voters website, [sbcountyelections.com](http://sbcountyelections.com).

The deadline to certify the results in May 31.

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By Upbeat News



### Brian Whitehead

Brian Whitehead covers San Bernardino for The Sun. Bred in Grand Terrace, he graduated from Riverside Notre Dame High and Cal State Fullerton. For seven years, he covered high school and college sports for The Orange County Register. Before landing at The Sun, he was the city beat reporter for Buena Park, Fullerton and La Palma.

□ Follow Brian Whitehead [@bwhitehead3](#)

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## Town's draft by-district maps available for review

By Matthew Cabe  
Staff Writer

Posted May 6, 2019 at 5:49 PM

Updated May 6, 2019 at 5:49 PM

APPLE VALLEY — Town officials have released three draft maps for review ahead of the next public hearing on an upcoming switch to by-district elections here.

Originally set for a tentative release last Friday, the maps arrived Monday with Town Attorney Thomas Rice shouldering the blame for the brief delay.

“Town Hall was closed on Friday so I sent the maps to staff today,” Rice told the Daily Press. “It was my fault for picking an off-Friday in the schedule and not getting them out sooner. With that said, we have additional time built into the schedule so we don’t have to worry too much about minor delays.”

Dubbed “Green,” “Tan” and “Purple,” the maps follows major roads to break the town into five potential districts with “significant commercial territory” included in each, according to a cursory review. All options, save “Green,” also includes open space.

North Apple Valley, which was zoned for industrial growth via the town’s 2006 North Apple Valley Industrial Specific Plan, is included in the first and fifth districts on both the “Purple” and “Tan” maps. On the “Green” map, the area is included in the first, third and fifth districts.

Apple Valley’s total population is divided into segments that contain between 13,000 and 14,000 residents in each draft map.

Another option open to the town is to create four districts with an at-large mayor elected to represent all of Apple Valley. That scenario wasn’t depicted in the draft maps, but Rice said the town remains free to consider that and other

alternative systems going forward.

The “Green,” “Purple” and “Tan” maps are available for review at [www.AppleValley.org](http://www.AppleValley.org). Click “[District-Based Election Information](#)” on the right side of the homepage. Links to each map are available on the resulting page.

Hard copies are also available for a printing cost of 30 cents per page.

Public Hearing No. 3, which will continue the discussion on redistricting, is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. May 14 inside Town Council chambers at Town Hall, 14955 Dale Evans Parkway.

Contact the Town Clerk’s Office at 760-240-7000 ext. 7800 with questions or comments about the draft maps.

*Matthew Cabe can be reached at [MCabe@VVDailyPress.com](mailto:MCabe@VVDailyPress.com) or at 760-951-6254. Follow him on Twitter [@DP\\_MatthewCabe](https://twitter.com/DP_MatthewCabe).*

# 19-Year-Old Man Arrested in Victorville After Allegedly Stealing Car With Baby Still Inside

POSTED 1:31 PM, MAY 6, 2019, BY [CINDY VON QUEDNOW](#)

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A 19-year-old man was arrested in Victorville last week after allegedly stealing a car with a baby still inside it, officials said.

The incident occurred at a gas station in the 15400 block of Palmdale Road on May 3.

The victim parked her vehicle at a pump and walked five feet to the window to pay for the gas. While she was at the window, she saw a man get into her car and drive away while her 18-month-old granddaughter was still inside, [Victorville police said in a news release](#).

Another customer saw the man take the car and began to follow the suspect “at a safe distance, to help deputies locate the child,” police said.

The man, identified as Alber Jimenez Melara, was found in Hesperia and taken into custody.

He was booked on suspicion of kidnapping and vehicle theft, police said.

The baby was evaluated at the scene and safely returned to her grandmother.

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BREAKING

# Free pet adoption event Thursday

May 6, 2019 Updated 15 hrs ago

San Bernardino City Animal Control is closing its animal shelter and hosting a free animal adoption event 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, May 9, at 33 Chandler Place, San Bernardino. Adoptions come with free spay and neuter and free rabies vaccinations. For more information, call (909) 384-1304.

Ad



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## Dispute over dogs leads to shooting

**By Staff reports**

Posted May 6, 2019 at 6:26 PM

Updated May 6, 2019 at 6:26 PM

VICTORVILLE — Two men have been arrested and booked on suspicion of attempted murder stemming from a Sunday shooting incident.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputies said a 30-year-old male was shot in the abdomen and foot about 1:30 p.m. after the suspects drove by a residence in the 15000 block of Arlette Drive. The wounded man was flown to a nearby trauma center, where he was treated and listed in stable condition.

Deputies later arrested Ricardo Sandoval, 19, and Rafael Sandoval, 24, in their home in the 8400 block of Seventh Avenue in Hesperia. The two men were known to the victim.

Deputies did not say whether the Sandovals are related.

Authorities said the shooting is believed to be in connection with a dispute over the injured man's dogs. The Sandovals are due in court on Tuesday.

Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to contact Deputy A. Quezada or Deputy M. Carabajal of the Victorville Sheriff's station at 760-241-2911 or Sheriff's Dispatch at 760-956-5001. Callers wishing to remain anonymous may call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463, or may leave information on the We-Tip website at [www.wetip.com](http://www.wetip.com).



NEWS

# Riverside leaders say council candidate's racist statements are 'unacceptable'



John Dave Denilofs is running for Riverside City Council. (Photo courtesy of John Dave Denilofs)

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By **RYAN HAGEN** | rhagen@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise  
PUBLISHED: May 6, 2019 at 4:12 pm | UPDATED: May 7, 2019 at 7:23 am



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Riverside leaders Monday condemned racist comments by a candidate

for Riverside City Council that include a call to kill Muslims and 6 million people in the United States.

[John Dave Denilofs](#) has said the comments, mostly made in Facebook videos leading up to the November 2016 election, don't reflect his actual opinions. But he has not apologized for them.

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He's one of six candidates on the ballot to represent Ward 7 in an election that will be decided in [a mail-in election](#) June 4. Ballots were sent starting Monday, May 6, the same day city officials learned of Denilofs' comments and called for voters to reject him.

Denilofs argued that anyone who waves a Mexican flag in the United States should be killed, as should Muslims and "the people who made laws where it's safe for Muslims."

He refers to "black people on the street" by the N-word and uses a vulgar term for women.

And he said Donald Trump should declare martial law and kill 6 million people. That's the same as the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust.

Denilofs, who said he he's not racist and wanted to drive people to the Facebook page he ran, stood by that Monday.

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“Of course what I said was inappropriate,” he said in a Facebook comment, “but I was pushing Freedom of Speech which is becoming not allowed for Conservatives.”

Councilman Steve Adams, who's not running for re-election, represents the ward in the southwest corner of the city and said the comments offend the ward, city and country.

“Any comments like that are unacceptable from anybody, regardless of where you're from in the United States,” Adams said. “Ward 7 happens to be the most diverse ward in the city of Riverside and very proud of that. We have every religion, every race. It's a great ward, a true melting pot of what America is all about. For a candidate or anyone to say that, that's not the American way.”

Adams, who supports Steven Hemenway in the Ward 7 election, said he wouldn't ask Denilofs to withdraw from the race.

“I can only imagine that people, once they recognize what he said, will vote for someone else,” Adams said. “Part of America is to let the people have the choice. Just because he makes ridiculous statements, that's part of his right. I would not ask him to step out.”

Rabbi Suzanne Singer of Temple Beth El in Riverside said it was irresponsible for the city's elected leaders to do anything but vocally oppose Denilofs.

“As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, I am appalled at these

comments," Singer said. "Whether or not they were meant seriously or they were just an attempt to get more likes, the real issue is that words have consequences. You can't just throw these things around. It is going to provoke real damage."

And by saying it's up to the voter, officials are normalizing rhetoric that should be beyond the pale, she said.

"That's just unconscionable to have someone like that representing people in the city," she said.

If Denilofs is elected, Singer said, she will move.

The Greater Los Angeles Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations called out the remarks against Muslims as well as those against other groups.

"While it is not surprising, it is unfortunate to see an equal-opportunity bigot running for public office," CAIR-LA Executive Director Hussam Ayloush said in a written statement. "At a time when the current trend of normalizing hate speech has emboldened bigots in their speech, as well as in their actions, the last thing Riverside needs is a bigot setting the vision and goals of the city from the City Council dais. I hope the voters will send a clear message that bigotry and intolerance have no place in Ward 7."

Ward 4 Councilman Chuck Conder said Denilofs should publicly apologize and remove himself from consideration. If Denilofs were elected, Conder said he would consult the city charter's list of requirements for a council member and try to have voters recall him.

"I could not serve at the dais that's going to be used by someone with those kind of thoughts," said Conder, a retired Air Force officer. "My military honor would not allow me to."

Ward 3 Councilman Mike Soubirous said he opposed racism but wondered aloud about what speech was unacceptable.

"It's a balance between freedom of speech and what people consider hate speech," Soubirous said.

If Denilofs were elected, Soubirous said he would hold his breath in anticipation of a racist remark, but he would have to work with him.

“If the voters voted for someone that they knew did this, you’d have to work with them and do what’s best for the majority of the city,” he said.

Mayor Rusty Bailey said there was no room for racism in the city.

“Especially as a representative of the city on the City Council,” Bailey added by text message. “There are no excuses for his words or behavior. I’m glad he is taking responsibility for them.”

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support someone who — again I have not seen the comments, but I’m assuming what was reported was accurate — said something improper.”

Ward 5 Councilman Chris Mac Arthur said he trusted the voters in Ward 7 to make the right decision.

“His comments are completely inappropriate,” Mac Arthur said. “I was

Ward 1 Councilman Mike Gardner said it wasn’t surprising that one person in a city of more than 320,000 people had racist views, so he doesn’t think the statements reflect on the city overall.

“Obviously anything that is racist or sexist or improperly said about any group of people is not something fitting for a councilman,” said Gardner, who is also running for re-election. “It really is not for me to tell people how to decide whether to support a candidate or not. On a personal level, I would not

support someone who — again I have not seen the comments, but I’m assuming what was reported was accurate — said something improper.”

Ward 5 Councilman Chris Mac Arthur said he trusted the voters in Ward 7 to make the right decision.

“His comments are completely inappropriate,” Mac Arthur said. “I was

disgusted by them.”

Ward 2 Councilman Andy Melendrez couldn't be reached Monday. Ward 6 Councilman Jim Perry, who had jury duty, said he wanted to watch the videos before commenting.

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## Ryan Hagen

Ryan Hagen covers the city of Riverside for the Southern California Newspaper Group. Since he began covering Inland Empire governments in 2010, he's written about a city entering bankruptcy and exiting bankruptcy; politicians being elected, recalled and arrested; crime; a terrorist attack; fires; ICE; fights to end homelessness; fights over the location of speed bumps; and people's best and worst moments. His greatest accomplishment is breaking a coffee addiction. His greatest regret is any moment without coffee.

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NEWS  POLITICS

# Riverside County board chairman sees roadblocks in social services oversight

Taxpayers have spent more than \$11 million to settle lawsuits involving child protective services

By **JEFF HORSEMAN** | [jhorseman@scng.com](mailto:jhorseman@scng.com) | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: May 6, 2019 at 5:26 pm | UPDATED: May 6, 2019 at 5:26 pm



The chairman of Riverside County's Board of Supervisors says he's met resistance from inside county government when it comes to getting information to prevent future lawsuits involving child protective services.

Kevin Jeffries' unusually public and stern warning amid ongoing scrutiny of the Department of Public Social Services, which has undergone a leadership overhaul following lawsuits [alleging incompetence](#) that led to



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horrific outcomes for vulnerable children.

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In one case, a toddler already on child protective services' radar was found holding the mummified corpse of her infant sibling. In another, a teenage girl who had told county workers that she was being molested by her mother's live-in boyfriend gave birth; DNA tests showed the father was the boyfriend, according to court records.

The lawsuits [led to more than \\$11 million in out-of-court settlements](#) last October for a county struggling to keep pace with rising costs.

Supervisors have oversight responsibilities for a wide range of county agencies, including social services.

Expressing his frustration during the board's April 30 meeting, Jeffries said his staff, and staff for another supervisor, had recently been denied access to a social services meeting involving "child issues, child death issues."

Though Jeffries said supervisors' staff members eventually were allowed to sit in, he said that the initial response was a "long-standing practice" at social services that makes it hard for supervisors to get information they need to make changes that save taxpayer money.

"We go into closed session and we will be

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Riverside County Supervisor  
Kevin Jeffries (File photo).

writing million-dollar checks involving child issues, adult protective issues, and other things, and our only way of knowing as to whether or not our departments are doing everything they can – whether or not they’re funded, underfunded (or) understaffed – is to

gather information,” Jeffries said.

“So, when we have a department, or department heads, or others, telling us that we’re not allowed in the room, it obviously raises red flags,” he added.

“What are you trying to cover up? What are you trying to hold back?”

After Jeffries’ remarks, Supervisor Karen Spiegel said: “Thank you for that, because I think you speak for all of us up here.”

Asked to respond to Jeffries’ comments, county spokeswoman Brooke Federico said the social service department “engages in a variety of meetings” and that the topics of some of those meetings might involve information that, by law, can’t be shared.

But she added: “Board members or their staff members can attend meetings of interest, and (social services) will do what it can to provide information that may help with funding, staffing, plans or practices.”

Susan Von Zabern, who had been social services director since 2007,

12

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left that job in September. A national search for a replacement followed, but last month, the county announced that Assistant County Executive Officer Sarah Mack, who had led social services on an interim basis, would be the permanent director.

Marie Brown Mercadel, who had been assistant social services director of children’s services since 2016, resigned earlier this year, according to Federico.

After the April 30 meeting, Jeffries said board members were being asked to approve lawsuit settlements “some three years or more after the occurrence of terrible incidents involving children,” and that such lengthy waits “makes it nearly impossible” for the board to fix problems that might have led to, or contributed to, mistakes by the county.

“The public expects that we can and will dig in, and make sure that everything is being done that can and should be done, to help vulnerable children and seniors,” he added. “While at the very same time, a growing bureaucracy doesn’t want to be held accountable and is attempting to close off access for us.

“If this continues, I believe we are going to have to ask some folks to ‘retire early’ in order to fix this.”

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## Jeff Horseman

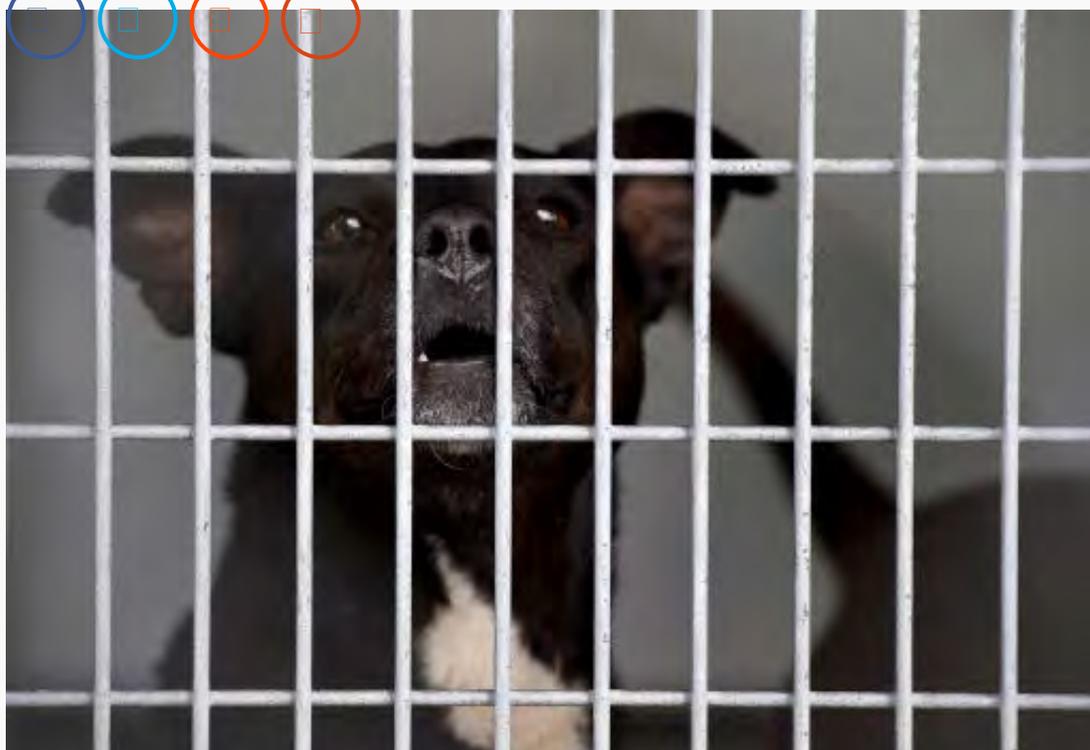
Jeff Horseman got into journalism because he liked to write and stunk at math. He grew up in Vermont and he honed his interviewing skills as a supermarket cashier by asking Bernie Sanders “Paper or plastic?” After graduating from Syracuse University in 1999, Jeff began his journalistic odyssey at The Watertown Daily Times in upstate New York, where he impressed then-U.S. Senate candidate Hillary Clinton so much she called him “John” at the end of an interview. From there, he went to Annapolis, Maryland, where he covered city, county and state government at The Capital newspaper before love and the quest for snowless winters took him in 2007 to Southern California, where he started out covering Temecula for The Press-Enterprise. Today, Jeff writes about Riverside County government and regional politics. Along the way, Jeff has covered wildfires, a tropical storm, 9/11 and the Dec. 2 terror attack in San Bernardino. If you have a question or story idea about politics or the inner workings of government, please let Jeff know. He’ll do his best to answer, even if it involves a little math.



LOCAL NEWS

# Riverside County supervisors to consider contract with San Bernardino for animal control services

San Bernardino is expected to save more than \$450,000 in the deal.



A female black and white lab mix howls during “Free Adoption Day” at the San Bernardino Animal Shelter in San Bernardino on Thursday, March 21, 2019. The city has decided to outsource its animal services to Riverside County rather than put out a request for proposals to

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nonprofits and rescue organizations. (Photo by Jennifer Cappuccio Maher, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

By **BRIAN WHITEHEAD** | [bwhitehead@scng.com](mailto:bwhitehead@scng.com) | San Bernardino Sun

PUBLISHED: May 6, 2019 at 12:51 pm | UPDATED: May 6, 2019 at 12:58 pm

## MOST POPULAR

Six weeks after San Bernardino city leaders voted [to outsource animal control services to cut costs](#), Riverside County supervisors on Tuesday, May 7, could approve a \$2.1 million contract with the city to provide field, shelter and licensing services for one year.

San Bernardino is expected to save more than \$450,000 in the deal.

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The Board of Supervisors meets at 9 a.m. at the County Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon St. in Riverside.

On March 20, about a month after saying they would allow area rescue organizations, nonprofits and volunteer groups [to submit proposals to run the 50-plus-year-old city shelter](#), San Bernardino policy makers opted to instead have the city manager negotiate and sign a contract with Riverside County for animal control services.

Councilmembers Sandra Ibarra and Henry Nickel voted against the move.

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A few weeks later, Councilmen Fred Shorett and Jim Mulvihill [changed their minds](#) about outsourcing. Their requests to reconsider the decision via a special meeting came too late, however.

According to city staffers, outsourcing to Riverside County would give strays from San Bernardino the best chance to find permanent homes. Additionally, staffers have said, contracting out would provide animals better care at a state-of-the-art facility in Western Riverside, and help San Bernardino remain fiscally solvent.

But since Riverside County first proposed [taking over animal control services a year ago](#), area animal advocates, rescuers and volunteers have said closing the San Bernardino shelter on Chandler Place, which is run by the Police Department, would flood city streets with strays and contribute to increases in pet abandonment and euthanasia rates.

And while those same groups [are dismayed with current management there](#), they contend a city the size of San Bernardino needs its own shelter.

Should Riverside County leaders approve the contract Tuesday, San Bernardino animals will be transported to the Western Riverside facility on Van Buren Boulevard gradually, said John Welsh, spokesman for the county's animal services department. In a corresponding move, the San Bernardino shelter will close, though not immediately.

San Bernardino would be the latest Inland city to contract with Riverside

County for animal control services, joining neighbors Colton, Fontana, Grand Terrace and [Rialto](#).

In lieu of a shelter, area animal advocates could submit proposals to run [an adoption center/intake facility](#) locally.

On Sunday, May 5, San Bernardino police dispelled rumors online that animals at the shelter would be euthanized if not adopted by Tuesday.

City leaders voted to outsource “in the interest to provide better and more cost efficient services,” a statement on the Police Department’s Facebook page [read in part](#). “As a result, animals under the care of the San Bernardino Animal Control Services will be transported to the Riverside County Animal Shelter, on a yet to be determined date.

“This transition will have no impact on the overall care and maintenance of any animal housed in the San Bernardino facility.”

The Police Department is holding a free adoption event from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, May 9, at the shelter, 333 Chandler Place, in San Bernardino.

All animals, spay and neutering, and rabies vaccination will be free, police said.

“We’re hoping some of the biggest critics in San Bernardino come to realize we’re easy to deal with,” Welsh said. “We’re not looking to euthanize San Bernardino’s stray dogs and cats. I can’t figure out why

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some of the falsehoods are being blasted out there on social media, but we know what we're all about and so do national groups who've been working with us for years."

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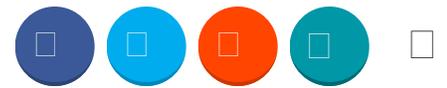
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## Brian Whitehead

Brian Whitehead covers San Bernardino for The Sun. Bred in Grand Terrace, he graduated from Riverside Notre Dame High and Cal State Fullerton. For seven years, he covered high school and college sports for The Orange County Register. Before landing at The Sun, he was the city beat reporter for Buena Park, Fullerton and La Palma.

Follow Brian Whitehead [@bwhitehead3](#)



NEWS  LOCAL NEWS

## City/county spat halts work on 600-bed Santa Ana homeless shelter

Last year, Orange County and Santa Ana leaders agreed to build a new emergency shelter to replace the Courtyard; now, the project is on hold



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A man eats a snack at the Courtyard shelter in Santa Ana in 2017. City and county officials planned to replace the Courtyard with a new shelter on South Yale Street. (File photo by Kevin Sullivan, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By **ALICIA ROBINSON** | [arobinson@scng.com](mailto:arobinson@scng.com) | The Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: May 6, 2019 at 3:52 pm | UPDATED: May 6, 2019 at 4:28 pm

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About a month ago, Orange County and Santa Ana officials stood in a federal courtroom and told U.S. District Court Judge David O. Carter they'd aim to open a homeless shelter with up to 600 beds by this fall.

Now the project is on an indefinite hold, after Orange County First District Supervisor Andrew Do questioned whether the city still supports the shelter. The proposed site is [an existing industrial building on South Yale Street](#) a few blocks north of West Warner Avenue, near the southwestern corner of Santa Ana.



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City leaders learned Do had halted planning for the emergency shelter April 16, when the supervisor dispatched county CEO Frank Kim to the council meeting with a letter explaining his concerns.

In a phone interview, Do said the City Council had signed an agreement last fall to partner with the county on a shelter at a location to be determined, but several new council members were since elected in November and he's recently heard criticism from some city leaders and ambivalence from others regarding the proposal.

In the letter, Do also expressed surprise that no public outreach had been done; the original city/county agreement doesn't specify any outreach or whose responsibility it would be.

With only three original supporters of the shelter agreement still on the dais, Do said, "The outreach will have to wait until there is some official action taken by the current council to say, "We support this.""

Councilwoman Cecilia Iglesias, who won her seat in November and whose council ward includes the Yale Street property, said she won't be signing on to any such action.

"I don't agree that it should be in Santa Ana," she said. "We've done our share."

Iglesias questioned how many of the homeless now staying at [the Courtyard](#), a 400-bed shelter in the city's Civic Center that the Yale Street facility would replace, have legitimate ties (school, work, family) to Santa Ana, and how many of them genuinely want help. She also said other areas, particularly south Orange County, should take steps to

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house more of the region’s homeless.

Do “is doing the best that he can,” she said, but the other four supervisors “need to step it up” and encourage the creation of shelters in their districts.

The county spent \$12.25 million to buy the Yale Street property, and the city had agreed to chip in some state grant funds and an ongoing \$1 million a year toward shelter operations.

It’s unclear how or when the stalemate may end, but if it doesn’t, city and county leaders could be facing a new crisis in coming months. The Yale Street shelter was expected to replace the Courtyard and eliminate the need for cold-weather beds at the city’s National Guard Armory and the need for the year-round space at [The Link](#), a temporary 200-bed shelter the city opened in November.

Do noted that because the new shelter is intended to be used for years, it could take at least 18 months to build. The Link was intended to close by late 2020, and the county’s contract with Courtyard shelter operator Midnight Mission expires this September, though it could be extended.

Santa Ana Mayor Miguel Pulido, who supported the agreement with the county, said he was stumped as to why Do hit the pause button on the Yale Street project.

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the shelter," he said, adding: "There's no site in the city that's not going to have some opposition."

Pulido said he was leaving it to the council to decide if another show of support needs to be sent to county officials.

Do said as soon as he hears there's support from the city, he's prepared to "move ahead post haste" with community meetings and resume planning for the shelter.

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Tags: [homeless](#), [Top Stories OCR](#)

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## Alicia Robinson

Alicia Robinson covers cities and local government for the Orange County Register. She has also reported at the Press-Enterprise in Riverside, the Daily Pilot in Costa Mesa, and at small daily and weekly papers in the midwest, before she became an honorary Californian based on hours spent in traffic. Besides government and policy, she's interested in animals both wild and domestic, people who try to make the world better, and how things work.