

NEWS

# More than 30 Riverside County employees receive layoff notices



Kurt Miller, file photo

Layoff notices have been sent to 31 Riverside County employees, including to more than 20 code enforcement employees, as the county tries to cut costs.

By **ALEJANDRA MOLINA** | [amolina@scng.com](mailto:amolina@scng.com) | The Press-Enterprise

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Layoff notices have been sent to 32 Riverside County employees, including more than 20 code enforcement employees, as the county tries to cut costs.

“It is hard to tell good employees, many who have worked for the county for a decade or more, that they are being laid off,” said county spokesman Ray Smith.

“It is difficult knowing that this hurts employees and their families,” he added.

Layoff notices, in the last week of May, were sent to 23 code enforcement employees and one person in the Transportation & Land Management Agency, Smith said. Eight employees in the supply and printing services divisions also received layoff notices. Three other workers in supply services were reassigned to other jobs within the county.

Coral Itzcalli, with SEIU Local 721, said only one of the 31 employees is a member of the union. She said the union is following up with that member and the county.

Smith attributed the code enforcement layoffs to the county’s overall deficit. He said code enforcement is required to reduce its budget by \$3 million for services in unincorporated areas.

General fund support goes from \$9 million to \$6 million a year, Smith said. Additionally, the city of Perris decided to stop contracting with Riverside County for code enforcement services, causing the county to lose \$1 million in revenue that paid for employees who worked in Perris, Smith added.

To cut costs in recent years, the code department has not filled positions when employees left or retired, Smith said. The code enforcement department also reduced the number of its managers.

“The savings was not enough to avoid these layoffs,” Smith said.

With less people, the department will prioritize cases and concentrate on health and safety issues, Smith said.

“High-priority issues include addressing things like hazardous open trenches, pools without fences, unsafe electrical service in buildings,” Smith said.

Meanwhile, lower-priority reports, like parking violations, will take longer to handle, Smith added. The priority level will be assessed when code receives a complaint.

Tags: [Echo Code](#), [public safety](#), [Top Stories PE](#), [Transportation](#)

Press-Enterprise reporter Alejandra Molina at the Riverside office, Monday, June 1, 2015.

### Alejandra Molina

Alejandra Molina has been a reporter since 2006 and has covered a number of beats -- from crime and transportation to religion and immigration -- for The Orange County Register and The Press-Enterprise.

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## [Video] What Is the Difference Between These 2 Retrievers?

By Royal Canin



They may share a name, but that's where the similarities end.

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

## Police shootings and drug use in San Bernardino County to be discussed at forum

*By Staff Report*

Monday, June 5, 2017

Drug use and officer involved shootings in San Bernardino County will be examined at a free forum next week at Cal State San Bernardino hosted by The Sun and KPCC.

In recent years, California voters relaxed drug sentencing laws and legalized marijuana. Advocates say drug users should no longer be treated as criminals. But, an [investigation by The Sun and KPCC](#) found more than 70 percent of people shot by officers in San Bernardino County showed signs of drug or alcohol use.

Law enforcement officials say changes in drug laws have made the job of police more challenging. What's the new role of police when it comes to dealing with intoxicated people who may not be responding the way a sober person would? Are officers accurately perceiving threats? How do we build healthy and safe communities?

Join The Sun's [Beatriz Valenzuela](#) and KPCC's Annie Gilbertson as they discuss how California's changing attitudes may change street level policing at a free public forum at 7:30 p.m. June 14 in the Student Union Theater at Cal State San Bernardino, 5500 University Parkway. Please RSVP at [KPCC.org/inperson](http://KPCC.org/inperson).

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URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/social-affairs/20170605/police-shootings-and-drug-use-in-san-bernardino-county-to-be-discussed-at-forum>

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# LAFCO responds to executive salary complaint

Posted: Monday, June 5, 2017 11:52 am

*Editor's Note:*

*Our May 19 edition included an allegation authorized by Dennis Johnson and written by attorney Marguerite Battersby saying Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Executive Director Kathleen Rokkings-McDonald was illegally double dipping, continuing to work and draw salary from her same position after retiring and beginning to collect retirement benefits.*

*On Monday, June 5, we received a communication from LAFCO attorney Isabel Safie in response to the Battersby charges. It was addressed directly to Battersby:*

Marguerite P. Battersby

Slovak Baron Empey Murphy & Pinkney LLP

1800 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way

Palm Springs, CA 92262

Re: Local Agency Formation Commission for San Bernardino County (“LAFCO”)

Dear Ms. Battersby:

Our firm represents the Local Agency Formation Commission for San Bernardino County (“LAFCO”) which has been asked by the Members of its Commission (“Commission”) to respond to your letter dated May 10, 2017 (“Letter”).

The Commission appreciates your clients’ interest in the integrity of the operations of LAFCO. This is an interest shared by the Commission and its staff. As you know, the Commission approved its budget during its regular meeting on May 17, 2017. It did not postpone this action, as your clients requested, because (1) the Commission is confident that the now-approved budget is sound, (2) the concerns raised in your Letter are misplaced, and (3) the Commission has a statutory obligation to approve a budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year no later than June 15, 2017. In fact, earlier adoption was critical to secure timely apportionment of funds from the Auditor-Controller of the County of San Bernardino.

The concerns raised in the Letter are based on an apparent misunderstanding of a number of facts and/or the law which will be discussed in detail in this response. However, before doing so, it is imperative that we correct some of the points raised in the Letter.

First, the inclusion of the Executive Officer’s SBCERA pension as part of her total annual pay and benefits received from LAFCO is misleading as her pension is attributed to service that the Executive Officer rendered prior to her retired annuitant appointment not as a result of such appointment. Rather, in addition to the benefit of the Executive Officer’s unique special knowledge and skills, LAFCO has enjoyed significant savings over the years through its part-time arrangement with her. The additional annual costs to LAFCO of hiring a full-time replacement would likely be at least \$150,000, including additional pay and

benefits.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, these savings do not account for the fact that without a full-time executive officer in active status with SBCERA for the last 6 ½ years, LAFCO has experienced long-term savings by not increasing its liability for pension benefits. This is because, contrary to the incorrect assertion made in the Letter, the Executive Officer has not accrued pension benefits as a result of her post-retirement appointment with LAFCO.

Second, the Letter assumes a lack of planning by the Commission in its determination to continue the retired annuitant appointment of the Executive Officer from its effective date of October 23, 2010 through the present. This could not be farther from the truth. In fact, from inception, the Commission has planned for the termination of the retired annuitant appointment of the Executive Officer on September 30, 2018. This eight year appointment was deemed necessary by the Commission for numerous reasons including the anticipated schedule of applications for change in organization that would have been challenging to address successfully without the institutional and specialized knowledge of the Executive Officer and the fact that with the budgetary constraints faced by LAFCO, it would not be feasible for LAFCO to recruit an executive officer with the caliber of the Executive Officer during that period. Further, the termination date was communicated to SBCERA, the regulatory body with direct oversight over the retired annuitant appointment of its retirees, which approved the appointment in a certification form dated September 25, 2015. Lastly, with the known factor that the termination of the retired annuitant appointment of the Executive Officer would occur on September 30, 2018, LAFCO has had sufficient time to engage in succession planning efforts for the permanent appointment to the executive officer position.

Third, it is irresponsible to cite provisions and guidelines applicable to retired annuitants under the jurisdiction of the California Public Employees' Retirement System as governed by the Public Employees' Retirement Law. This is particularly important when an inquiry is made as to whether the Executive Officer's employment complies with applicable law. For example, the Letter cites the 180-day waiting period of Government Code Section 7522.56 without acknowledging that such a provision applies only to those retirees whose original appointment date was on or after January 1, 2013. The Executive Officer post-retirement appointment with LAFCO occurred prior to January 1, 2013 and, therefore, is not subject to the 180 day waiting period. Rather, at the time of her retired annuitant appointment on October 23, 2010, her appointment was subject only to the provisions of Government Code Section 31680.6 and guidelines adopted by SBCERA as of that date.

Fourth, the Letter mistakenly asserts a connection between the retiree employment rules and escalating pension costs. However, because the retiree employment rules allow a retired annuitant to return to employment without reinstating into active status which would render them eligible for further service accrual for pension purposes, such arrangements do not add to pension costs. Rather, these arrangements are intended to curb pension costs, at least minimally, by placing a retiree that is not accruing further pension benefits in a position, for a term permitted by law, that would normally be held by an active member accruing pension benefits. Therefore, retired annuitant appointments do not increase pension costs.

Having addressed the noted errors, we now turn to the concerns raised in the Letter. While the concerns are laid out haphazardly in the Letter, we surmise that the concerns encompass two broad categories: (a) whether the negotiation and approval of the employment contracts for the Executive Officer violated

applicable conflict of interest laws; and (b) whether the compensation and benefits paid by LAFCO to the Executive Officer complied with applicable requirements.

I. The negotiation and approval of employment contracts for the Executive Officer did not violate conflict of interest laws.

Your letter asserts that the Executive Officer's post-retirement employment contracts, including amendments thereto, violated Section 1090 of the Government Code ("Section 1090") on the basis that the Executive Director participated in the making of those contracts in her official capacity. This claim is both factually erroneous and legally without merit.

The Executive Director negotiated her contract and subsequent amendments in her private, personal capacity with the Commission's budget committee. These negotiations were at times protracted and involved give and take on both sides, i.e., the committee did not simply rubber stamp the Executive Director's proposed compensation or any conditions, requests or positions presented. The budget committee would then send its recommendation for the Executive Director's compensation and conditions of employment to the Commission. The Commission would then meet to consider the budget committee's recommendations. This was a "give and take" process. Once a preliminary agreement was reached, the Commission would provide direction to draft appropriate contract language for formal approval by the Commission in open session. Thus, as a matter of fact, the Executive Director did not participate in the making of her employment contracts, including amendments thereto, in her official capacity. Therefore, there was no violation of Section 1090.

As a matter of law, a government employee does not have a "financial interest" under Section 1090 in his or her governmental salary. Specifically, Government Code Section 1091.5(a)(9) provides, in relevant part, that "[a]n officer or employee shall not be deemed to be interested in a contract if his or her interest is . . . [t]hat of a person receiving salary, per diem or reimbursement for expenses from a government entity. . . ." In this regard, *Lexin v. Superior Court*,<sup>2</sup> the Supreme Court made it clear that a government employee's interest in an existing employment contract is squarely within the non-interest definition (or exception) of Government Code Section 1091.5(a)(9). The court also recognized that even outside the government salary non-interest, public officials may "negotiate contracts affecting their personal salaries, as when the rule of necessity applies [as it would here as only the Executive Director could negotiate her own contract], [or] when an official or employee is not acting in an official capacity [as here]."<sup>3</sup>

Although not alleged in the Letter, it should also be noted the making or approval of the Executive Officer's employment contract, including any amendments thereto, did not present a conflict under the Political Reform Act. Of particular note is Kinsey Letter A-16-183, issued by the California Fair Political Practices Commission, which concludes that "the Act's definition of income excludes salary, reimbursement of expenses and other specified payments received from a state, local, or federal government agency paid to public officials, including consultants."<sup>4</sup>

II. The compensation and benefits paid by LAFCO to the Executive Officer complied with the retiree employment laws

In the Letter you ask whether the Executive Officer's retirement complies with the requirements of the SBCERA benefit plan. However, since the Letter focuses on the Executive Officer's post-retirement employment with LAFCO, it appears that what you actually meant is whether the Executive Officer's post-retirement employment complies with the laws that permit a retiree to be employed without reinstatement into active status. It does.

As noted, the Executive Officer began her post-retirement employment with LAFCO on October 23, 2010. As an SBCERA retiree returning to work post-retirement with an SBCERA participating employer, the Executive Officer's post-retirement employment had to comply with the provisions of the County Retirement Law of 1937 ("CERL") not the Public Employees' Retirement Law which is applicable only to CalPERS contracting agencies and its members. Notably, the additional rules applicable to the employment of retired individuals enacted by the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2012 ("PEPRA") did not become applicable until January 1, 2013.

The relevant provisions of CERL that permit post-retirement employment without reinstatement are the following:

Section 31680(a)(1): "A member retired for service . . . shall not be paid for any service rendered by him or her to the county or district after the date of his or her retirement, except [a]s specifically provided in [the CERL]."

Section 31680.2(a): Any person who has retired may be employed in a position requiring special skills or knowledge, as determined by the county or district employing him or her, for not to exceed 90 working days or 720 hours, whichever is greater, in any one fiscal year or any other 12-month period designated by the board of supervisors and may be paid for that employment. That employment shall not operate to reinstate the person as a member of this system or to terminate or suspend his or her retirement allowance, and no deductions shall be made from his or her salary as contributions to this system.

Section 31680.6(a): Notwithstanding Section 31680.2, any county subject to Section 31680.2 may, upon adoption of a resolution by a majority vote by the board of supervisors, extend the period of time provided for in Section 31680.2 for which a person who has retired may be employed in a position requiring special skills or knowledge, as determined by the county or district employing him or her, not to exceed 120 working days or 960 hours, whichever is greater, in any one fiscal year or any other 12-month period designated by the board of supervisors and may be paid for that employment. That employment shall not operate to reinstate the person as a member of this system or to terminate or suspend his or her retirement allowance, and no deductions shall be made from his or her salary as contributions to this system. (Emphasis added).

It is our understanding that the County of San Bernardino adopted a resolution pursuant to Section 31680.6 extending the hourly limitation on retiree employment to 960 hours. This is substantiated by SBCERA Administration Policy No. 015 ("Policy"), a copy of which is enclosed for your convenience, which reflects the 960 hour limitation and refers to Section 31680.6.

Effective January 1, 2013, the provisions of Section 7522.56 under PEPRA became operative. While its provisions are too lengthy to lay out in this response, its key restrictions include the following:

The work must be of limited duration;

The retiree must have skills needed to perform the work;

The work cannot exceed 960 hours in a calendar or fiscal year (depending on the administrator of the system);

The retiree's pay rate can be no less than the minimum nor more than the maximum paid to other employees doing comparable work;

The working retiree can receive no service credit or retirement rights for the work performed while also receiving a pension;

No retiree may work for an employer in the same system if they have received unemployment insurance compensation arising out of that relationship in the prior 12 months;

A person who received any retirement incentive is absolutely barred, for 180 days, from returning to work while also receiving a pension; and

Retirees who are not former police officers or firefighters may not return to work within 180 days of retirement unless the governing body of the employer certifies, on a non-consent agenda item, that the appointment is necessary to fill a critically needed position before 180 days have passed.

In a staff report presented to the SBCERA Administrative Committee, Michael Calabrese, SBCERA Chief Counsel, noted that implementation of the provisions of Section 7522.56 by SBCERA staff was not feasible in the absence of formal action by SBCERA to define certain terms that were not defined in PEPRA, including the term "limited duration," and to grant SBCERA staff authority to impose the consequences of Section 7522.56 in the event of a violation thereof. In response, the SBCERA Administrative Committee adopted the Policy effective January 8, 2015. With respect to any member who retired and returned to work prior to January 8, 2015, SBCERA clarified that "retirees shall be treated as if their return to work commenced on the effective date of the policy."<sup>5</sup>

#### A. Pre-Policy Employment (October 23, 2010 – January 7, 2015)

Thus, by express determination of SBCERA, the Executive Officer's post-retirement employment from October 23, 2010 through January 7, 2015 ("Pre-Policy Employment") was subject only to the requirements of Section 31680.6. In that respect, the applicable requirements were that the Executive Officer could be employed by LAFCO while remaining in retired status so long as:

She was employed in a position requiring special skills or knowledge, as determined by the county or district employing him or her; and

Hours worked did not exceed 960 hours in any one fiscal year.



If the preceding requirements were satisfied, the Executive Officer could “be paid for that employment.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, the applicable law during the Executive Officer’s Pre-Policy Employment did not impose any limitations on pay. Rather, it left such a determination to the discretion of the employer. As such, the Commission determined, in a public forum in which it evaluated the initial post-retirement employment agreement for the Executive Officer, that the appropriate amount of compensation to be paid to the Executive Officer was \$102 an hour plus an auto allowance and cell phone allowance provided in accordance with previously approved LAFCO policies. Of particular note given the erroneous conclusions reached in the Letter, is that the initial hourly rate of \$102 was lower than the hourly equivalent of the Executive Officer’s compensation earnable at the time of her retirement of \$114. Thus, even before the statutory restrictions on compensation became applicable to the Executive Officer on January 8, 2015, her hourly rate was consistent with what would become the future restrictions in PEPR.

In the Letter you question whether it is appropriate for the Commission to have granted the Executive Officer an auto allowance and cell phone allowance given her part-time status. However, the extension of these allowances are not predicated on the number of hours worked by an employee but, rather, are based on the extent to which an employee’s job description supports the extension of these benefits. As the chief executive officer of LAFCO, there is no doubt that the Executive Officer would have need of her automobile and a mobile phone to conduct LAFCO business. Thus, these allowances were granted to the Executive Officer not as benefits or compensation but for the benefit of LAFCO.

You also make reference to subsequent amendments to the Executive Officer’s contract that authorized her participation in the 457(b) deferred compensation and the 401(k) defined contribution plans (“Plans”) available for employees of LAFCO. To dispel any misunderstanding created by your erroneous assertion that the Executive Officer is receiving retirement benefits from LAFCO as a result of her post-retirement service, let me make it abundantly clear that the Executive Officer’s participation in the Plans, both during the Pre-Policy Employment and the Post-Policy Employment (defined below) periods, has been limited to contributions from her compensation. No matching or discretionary contributions have been made by LAFCO.

There are two additional points that must be made in response to the erroneous assertions made in your Letter. To comply with the law applicable over the term of her Pre-Policy Employment, Section 31680.6, the Executive Officer must have been appointed to a position requiring special skills or knowledge as determined by employing county or district and her work could not have exceeded 960 hours in any one fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Thus, unlike the requirement under the Policy as specified under PEPR, CERL’s requirement with respect to special skills or knowledge, as applicable during the Pre-Policy Employment period, was with reference to the position as determined by the Commission. The position of executive officer of LAFCO is not only a position requiring special skills and knowledge as determined by LAFCO but the Executive Officer also possesses, and possessed from inception of the retiree employment term, special skills and knowledge necessary to carry out various anticipated reorganizations which were critical to the population served by LAFCO. Finally, as stated clearly in the Executive Officer’s employment agreement, her hours worked have been limited to no more than 960 hours in any fiscal period (July 1 – June 30) since October 23, 2010. As such, the Executive Officer’s employment has not exceeded 960 hours

in any fiscal year whether during the Pre-Policy Employment or the Post-Policy Employment (defined below) periods.

#### B. Post-Policy Employment (January 8, 2015 – September 30, 2018)

Although PEPRA went into effect on January 1, 2013, SBCERA staff did not have the authorization to administer and enforce the requirements of Section 7522.56 of PEPRA until the adoption of the Policy which became effective on January 8, 2015. Though the Executive Officer's post-retirement employment complied with PEPRA from its inception, numerous ambiguities of Section 7522.56 were not clarified until the Policy became effective.

Section 7522.56 of PEPRA imposed several new requirements that were not applicable under the provisions of Section 31680.6 of CERL. These new requirements are referenced on pages 5 and 6 of this response. With respect to the 180 day waiting period, that limitation is not applicable to a retiree whose post-retirement employment commenced prior to January 1, 2013.<sup>7</sup> Since the Executive Officer's post-retirement employment began on October 23, 2010, the 180-day waiting period obviously does not apply to the Executive Officer.

A requirement imposed by the Policy that is not a part of Section 7522.56 of PEPRA, is that an "employer report the proposed re-employment to SBCERA prior to its commencement."<sup>8</sup> However, recognizing that compliance with the preceding would be impossible for a post-retirement employment that commenced prior to January 8, 2015, the Policy noted that "[r]etirees who have returned to work prior to the effective date of this policy shall be treated as if their return to work commenced on the effective date of this policy, and documentation regarding such employees shall be submitted to SBCERA as soon as practicable after the effective date of this policy."<sup>9</sup>

Consistent with the preceding, LAFCO and the Executive Officer notified SBCERA of the employment and submitted a certification of compliance with the Policy, Section 7522.56 of PEPRA and Section 31680.6 of CERL on September 16, 2015, including a copy of the Executive Officer's employment agreement and the amendments thereto dated September 15, 2010, June 15, 2011, May 16, 2012, May 15, 2013 and July 16, 2014 (collectively, the "Agreement"). The Agreement reflected an hourly rate of \$107, effective as of Pay Period 15 of 2014 (commencing June 27, 2014), subject to annual increases equal to the increase in a specified CPI, the aforementioned auto and cell phone allowances, participation in the Plans (with no LAFCO cost), and a hard termination date of September 30, 2018. SBCERA approved and accepted the preceding as complying with the Policy, Section 7522.56 of PEPRA and Section 31680.6 of CERL on September 25, 2015.

As was the case with the Pre-Policy Employment period, the Executive Officer has been restricted to 960 hours in any fiscal period (July 1 – June 30) during the Post-Policy period. Thus, her hours have not exceeded 960 in any fiscal period. Moreover, the suggestion that LAFCO is required to conduct a recruitment for a permanent replacement is incorrect as such a requirement does not exist in the Policy, Section 7522.56 of PEPRA or Section 31680.6 of CERL. Rather, LAFCO's obligation with respect to its chief executive position is to ensure that it has hired the best person for that position as permitted by

applicable laws. Those laws, discussed in detail above, permit LAFCO to retain the Executive Officer, the best person for the position, until September 30, 2018.

While the benefits to LAFCO, the governmental entities within its jurisdiction, and their constituents of retaining the services of the Executive Officer given her vast knowledge of the law, LAFCO operating procedures and the geopolitical intricacies of the region have been substantial, the Executive Officer's employment will end no later than September 30, 2018 as approved by SBCERA. Thus, the process to find a suitable replacement begun long ago in order to ensure that LAFCO continues to operate at the quality level that it has enjoyed under the tenure of the Executive Officer.

Once again, we appreciate your clients' interest in the integrity of the operations of LAFCO and trust that this explanation of the applicable laws and compliance thereto in the post-retirement employment of the Executive Officer resolves your clients' concerns.

Very truly yours,

Isabel C. Safie

of BEST BEST & KRIEGER LLP

Enclosures

1. SBCERA Administration Policy No. 015
2. Certification for Re-Employment of SBCERA Retiree form

cc: Commissioners (regular and alternate) of LAFCO for San Bernardino County

Michael Calabrese, Chief Counsel, SBCERA

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1 The current Executive Officer, with her in-depth knowledge of both the Commission's operations and the communities it serves, has shown a unique ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the Executive Officer position on a part-time basis. The Commission believes that any replacement would have to dedicate his or her full time attention to the job.

2 (2010) 47 Cal.4th 1050, 1084-85.

3 Id. at p. 1085.

4 See Gov't Code Section 82030(b)(2) and 2 CCR 18232.

5 See <https://www.sbcera.org/RetiredMemberBeneficiary/Post-RetirementEmployment.aspx> last visited on June 1, 2017.

6 Gov. Code §31680.6(a).

7 See note to Question 3 on page 1 of the Certification for Re-Employment of SBCERA Retiree form revised 05/21/2015, a copy of which is enclosed herein for your convenience.

8 See Policy, Item 1.

9 See Policy, Item 2.

« [PIONEERTOWN COUPLE ACCUSED IN MOTHER'S CAR THEFT](#)

[FREE FOOD GIVEAWAY IN YUCCA VALLEY TOMORROW](#) »

# TWENTYNINE PALMS PLANNING COMMISSION STUDYING FAILED DOWNTOWN PLAN

By Z107.7 News, on June 6th, 2017

No specific actions are likely to come out of tonight's Twentynine Palms Planning Commission meeting. There could, however, be plenty of discussion. Reporter David Haldane explains...

What if they held a planning commission meeting with nothing on the agenda? That's pretty much the situation in Twentynine Palms where commissioners will meet tonight sans public hearings or action items.

What they do have scheduled are two study sessions; one on regulations addressing height and architectural compatibility in accessory structures, the other having to do with rescinding and replacing the Downtown Economic Revitalization Specific Plan.

Last month the City Council decided to do away with the plan, claiming that some of its provisions contradict the city's goal of creating a "walkable, pedestrian friendly" downtown. No formal action has yet been taken.

Tonight's meeting gets underway 5 p.m. at City Hall on Adobe Road.



June 6th, 2017 | Tags: [morongo basin](#), [san bernardino county](#), [twentynine palms](#), [twentynine palms planning commission](#) | Category: [Local News](#), [Top Story](#)

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## Apple Valley: Here are the Measure F polling locations

### Monday

Posted Jun 5, 2017 at 2:22 PM

Updated Jun 5, 2017 at 4:04 PM

By .....

Staff Writer



APPLE VALLEY — Nearly 7,000 voters have weighed in on Measure F since early voting opened on May 8, according to .....

.....:

For those planning to cast their ballots Tuesday, locations for the seven designated polling places are listed below:

- Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce, 16010 Apple Valley Road
- Church for Whosoever, 18628 Seneca Road
- Hi-Desert Church of Christ, 22332 Eyota Road
- Los Ranchos Mobile Home Park (Clubhouse C), 20843 Waalew Road
- Rock Spring Retirement Community, 20594 Bear Valley Road
- Sandia Elementary School, 21331 Sandia Road
- Town of Apple Valley Conference Center, 14975 Dale Evans Parkway

Each location will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, according to the Elections Office. Voters can find their assigned polling place by:

- Using the “My Elections Gateway” or the online polling place look-up tool. These options are available at \_\_\_\_\_.
- Looking on the back page of the Voter Information Guide.
- Calling the Elections Office at 800-881-VOTE (8683) or 909-387-8300.

A “Yes” vote on Measure F would allow the town to issue up to \$150 million in revenue-bond debt at a maximum of 12 percent interest to bankroll a future purchase of Liberty Utilities’ water system.

A “No” vote would not allow the town to issue the aforementioned revenue-bond debt and could end the town’s acquisition bid.

Town officials believe a future purchase price for the system could be in the \$80 to \$100 million range with interest payments between 4 and 4.75 percent. At those figures and with the elimination of profits, taxes, intercompany service agreements and corporate overhead, Assistant Town Manager Marc Puckett said nearly \$12 million will be available to the town for debt service, capital improvements or a lowering of water rates currently paid by Liberty’s customers.

Opponents of Measure F are critical of Puckett’s claims. They believe water bills could rise some \$500 per year under town ownership. That increase is based on a purchase price of \$150 million paid back at interest rates between 5.25 and 7.25 percent. Those figures were laid out in a Liberty-funded analysis conducted by economist John Husing.

Passage of Measure F does not allow the town to acquire the water system. It would, however, make financing for a purchase available should the town win the right to take Liberty’s system by eminent domain in court. A trial-setting conference for that case is scheduled for June 26, court records show.

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



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

## San Bernardino marijuana lawsuits can move forward, but no longer seek cash

*By Ryan Hagen, The Sun*

Monday, June 5, 2017



SAN BERNARDINO >> Lawsuits seeking to block the voter-approved marijuana regulation plan Measure O have agreed to drop the part of the lawsuit seeking monetary damages, allowing the lawsuits to move forward.

Four cases all relating to Measure O are now set for a hearing June 15, according to online records of a hearing held Monday.

The automatic stay stemming from the city's bankruptcy would otherwise have delayed the lawsuits.

The [two cases](#) heard Monday, brought by a group of marijuana-related businesses and by a group of property owners, argue that Measure O is invalid. If Measure O were blocked, a different marijuana regulation plan, Measure N, would go into effect because voters in November passed it with 51 percent, compared with Measure O's 55 percent.

Meanwhile, the city began accepting [applications for marijuana business](#) permits, as Measure O would require, Monday.

Until November, San Bernardino had consistently banned any marijuana dispensaries, despite officials' estimates that dozens of dispensaries operated openly and illegally in the city.

Two separate groups of marijuana advocates then pushed for different regulation schemes. Dispensary operators who backed the second-place initiative — Measure N — are among those challenging the legality of Measure O, saying the measure was specifically geared to benefit the businesses behind it.

The city also pushed an alternative, Measure P, that would have allowed city officials to change marijuana policy in the future. That measure failed to reach a majority.

Measure O was projected to raise \$19.5 million to \$24.8 million, according to a study by Whitney Economics on behalf of the campaign. A study done by New ERA on behalf of Measure N said that Measure O would bring only \$2.4 million in revenue to the city, while it calculates that Measure N would bring \$18.2 million.

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URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170605/san-bernardino-marijuana-lawsuits-can-move-forward-but-no-longer-seek-cash>

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

## Grand opening for Rialto Marketplace shopping center set for July

By Neil Nisperos, *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*

Monday, June 5, 2017



RIALTO >> The [Rialto Marketplace](#), the city's largest shopping center to date and anchored by a Walmart Supercenter, is set for a grand opening July 20.

The Walmart Supercenter, which opened April 5 at 1366 S. Riverside Ave., is complemented by Jersey Mike's Subs, Chipotle, Carl's Jr., Pieology, Les Schwab Tires, GNC, Kelly's Nails, Wingstop, Menchie's Frozen Yogurt, Wells Fargo, Ono Hawaiian BBQ, 7-Eleven and Juice It Up.

The new Walmart brings with it 85 new jobs, officials said, and replaces a 114,000-square-foot Walmart located nearby, which opened in 1993. The new store is expected to employ up to 400 full- and part-time associates, with many transferring from the Walmart's previous location.

The grand opening ceremony will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. July 20 and will include hundreds of local youths joining Rialto Marketplace company officials, tenants and city leaders to honor a city called "Bridge to Progress."

The event will have music and dance performances, carnival games, a jump house, wall climbing, costume character meet-and-greet, food sampling from the center's restaurants, prize giveaways and Rialto Marketplace Trackless Train Tour, according to organizers.

Jay Prag, professor of economics and finance at the Drucker School of Management at Claremont Graduate University, said the relative low land costs compared to other cities in the Inland Empire, coupled with new retail center development and growing numbers of logistics workers are an indication that the Inland Empire economy is beginning to develop more retail sites not related to commuting.

"I think also, the traffic and congestion that have plagued the 10 and the 210 freeways, to some extent, is giving people a need and a reason to shop more locally," Prag said. "So while there is a Walmart Supercenter in Ontario, it just isn't that easy to get there with the traffic along the 10, and I think that some of the retailers, and especially retailers that are a one-stop shop like a Walmart Supercenter, are seeing really good potential market for the kind of working-class communities of Southern California which Rialto and its neighbors are certainly part of."

The Rialto Marketplace will be the second largest shopping center in town when the 60-acre Renaissance Marketplace retail center property located in the north of town, near the 210 Freeway at the intersection of Ayala Drive and Renaissance Parkway, is expected to be completed next year. That center will include a luxury 14-screen multiplex theater and could potentially have about 500,000 square feet of retail buildings, officials said.

"I think there is a recognition that Rialto is an underserved market for retail and with the housing growth that's coming east of the 15 (freeway) and the job growth that's coming to the region, I think it will bode well for

economic activity in the future,” said Randall Lewis, principal of the Lewis Group of companies, which is developing the Renaissance Marketplace.

Rialto Marketplace will be among 73 shopping centers that the Woodland Hills-based NewMark Merrill Companies retail shopping center development company owns or manages.

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URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/business/20170605/grand-opening-for-rialto-marketplace-shopping-center-set-for-july>

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## Grandmother suspected of killing Colton baby in stabbing spree is caught

*By Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun*

Tuesday, June 6, 2017



COLTON >> The woman wanted for [stabbing her daughter and two granddaughters](#) — killing one of the young girls Monday morning in a Colton apartment — was taken into custody early this morning, police confirmed.

Nicole Darrington-Clark, 43, was found by a San Bernardino County sheriff's deputy around 4 a.m., police said. The deputy spotted her vehicle parked at Ninth Street and Waterman Avenue in San Bernardino with Darrington-Clark inside. The deputy checked the

woman's status and learned she was wanted for the stabbing at the Centrepoint apartments in the 1400 block of Santo Antonio Avenue that killed her 18-month-old granddaughter, Damani Trouter.

Investigators don't know what the motive may have been for the stabbing, which took place just after 9 a.m.

Officers were called to the complex by the "hysterical" wounded woman telling operators she and her children had been attacked by her mother, according to Colton police.

Neighbor Tim Hill helped the woman fend off Darrington-Clark. He then ran upstairs to check on the frightened woman's children and found the 18-month-old dead on the couch and the bloodied and scared 5-year-old hiding in a closet.

"She was shaking, petrified," Hill said. But she recognized him and knew she'd be safe, he said.

He took her downstairs where police had arrived, summoned by the mother's 911 call.

Police initially said the child who died was 6 months old but corrected that information Monday evening to say she was 18 months.

Neighbors, including Hill, said the young mother and her children lived in the complex for about a year. Darrington-Clark was only seen in the complex a few days before the attack.

"She was watching the older girl (Sunday)," said Patty Williams, who watched Monday morning as police and paramedics whisked the wounded mother and child away. Williams said Darrington-Clark didn't live at the complex.

However, Sunday evening, Williams and other neighbors said they heard Darrington-Clark yelling and acting somewhat erratically.

"She was out here (Sunday) night going back and forth from her car," Williams recalled. Despite the strange behavior, Williams and the second neighbor, who didn't want to be identified, said neither thought the situation would escalate to violence.

A longtime friend of the 43-year-old said today she was relieved Darrington-Clark had been found.

“That’s all I’ve been thinking about,” Cindy O’Neil said, adding she was glad authorities were able to find her before she hurt anyone else or herself.

O’Neal had recently spoken to Darrington-Clark and said she was concerned about her friend, who O’Neal said has a long history of mental illness.

“I was worried she wasn’t taking her meds,” she said. O’Neal said tried to reach out to someone but never thought Darrington-Clark would attack her grandchildren.

O’Neal, however, knew about her friend’s 2005 attack on her children, one of which is the same daughter Darrington-Clark stabbed Monday.

Two days before Christmas in 2005, Darrington-Clark — who was then Nicole Yanick Clark and living in San Bernardino — stabbed her 14-year-old son in the throat, abdomen and thigh at an Inglewood motel and then took off with her 10-year-old daughter, eventually throwing the girl out of a minivan as she drove east on the 10 Freeway through West Covina, according to past [news reports](#).

The girl told police that her mother had also tried to suffocate her the night before.

Darrington-Clark entered guilty pleas to two counts of attempted murder. However, Inglewood Superior Court Judge John Meigs eventually ruled she was not guilty by reason of insanity.

He sent her to Patton State Hospital in San Bernardino. She was expected to be confined for 34 years to life, with progress reports on her condition due every six months, according to a report from her sentencing in early 2007.

O’Neal said Darrington-Clark was released from the hospital a few years ago.

Darrington-Clark is in the custody of sheriff’s officials. But as of 5:30 a.m., she hadn’t been booked into jail.

*Check back for more developments.*

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URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170606/grandmother-suspected-of-killing-colton-baby-in-stabbing-sprees-is-caught>

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**BUSINESS**

# Science fiction no more: Robots bring your food at new Montclair restaurant



Photo by James Carbone, Contributing photographer

The “home station” of the robot serving system at Gen Korean BBQ in Montclair, CA., Friday, June 2, 2017.

By **NEIL NISPEROS** | Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: June 6, 2017 at 8:00 am | UPDATED: June 6, 2017 at 9:31 am



R2-D2, Johnny 5 and Rosie – robots serving people food has long been a science fiction theme. On Friday, [GEN Korean BBQ House](#) in Montclair made it happen.

A system of tracks running through the dining area allows wheeled robots to deliver food from the kitchen to the table. But it's not all robots, according to David Ghim, senior corporate manager for the company. Waiters will still take orders and engage with customers.

“This is the first restaurant that we’re implementing this robotic system and we’re hoping, that it helps (our employees) in providing great customer service and that customers are enjoying it as well,” Ghim said Friday.

**GEN Korean BBQ House** opened its 12th location in Montclair at 5247 Arrow Highway, the 10,500-square-foot building that once housed Hometown Buffet.



The robots, with flashing blue and green LED lights, look less like they belong in “[The Jetsons](#)” and more like something out of the 2008 Pixar movie “[Wall-e](#).”

CEO David Kim, who was previously the CEO of Baja Fresh, had the idea for robots.

“(David Kim) saw how he can help the servers,” Ricky Kim, marketing director for GEN Korean BBQ, said. “He’s always talking about doing something different. That’s his motto. Do it different.”

Doing it different is something GEN Korean BBQ hopes can continue at its other locations. The Montclair location is being used as a pilot program, according to Ghim, before they look at further expansion into future or existing locations. The company's first southland location opened in 2014 in Cerritos

The restaurant has partnered with a robotics company to make the robot delivery system a reality, although Ricky Kim said they won't disclose the name of the company because of a non-disclosure agreement.

"If this works, when you get better production out of anything, and if that helps out for service and for revenues, it's a no-brainer to put it everywhere," Ricky Kim said.

Each order is placed on a robot and sent to a table in less than a minute, according to Michael Yates, vice president of operations for GEN Korean BBQ House.

Freshly prepared meats, seafood, and vegetables and traditional Korean side-dishes are brought to the table by a little LED-lit bot.

"It's going to take a lot of pressure off of our operations and it's really going to improve the customer experience," Yates said.

This is the wave of the future, according to [Jay Prag](#), professor of economics and finance at the Drucker School of Management at Claremont Graduate University. He said he expects to see such technology become more widely adopted by the food service and restaurant industry in coming years.

"There will ultimately be fewer jobs in the industry," Prag said. "They won't go quickly because people still like having a face to face encounter with a human waiter, but one waiter will be able to do many more tables because of the technological innovation."

While many industries are expecting increasing robotics and automation in the workplace to replace jobs, Ghim said that's not what the company intends to do with its introduction of robot servers at the Montclair location. The Montclair location employs 150 – not including the robots who assist.

"Our main focus is to provide great customer service and we believe that a big part of that is customer server interaction," Ghim said. "We want that emotional connection to be there with the guest during their meal and we believe that's something that can't be replaced just with the robots."



The innovation is something that is exciting, said [Brad Umansky](#), president of the Rancho Cucamonga-based commercial real estate firm Progressive Real Estate Partners and an expert on retail and restaurant real estate in the Inland Empire.

“Clearly this is something that is innovative, unique and attractive to consumers,” Umansky said. “Consumers enjoy being part of a unique experience, seeing something that they’ve never seen before.”

One thing is clear. You don’t have to tip a robot.

#### LOCATIONS

- . Montclair
- . Tustin
- . Huntington Beach
- . Oxnard
- . Chino Hills
- . Northridge
- . Rancho Cucamonga
- . Rowland Heights
- . San Jose
- . Torrance
- . Glendale
- . Fullerton

Locations also are in Nevada, Texas and Hawaii. A Tempe, Arizona, location is opening soon.

Source: [GEN Korean BBQ](#)

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Tags: **Top Stories PE**

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

## Why dozens of police dogs are descending on Upland this Saturday

*By Doug Saunders, San Bernardino Sun*

Monday, June 5, 2017



UPLAND >> It's certainly not the dog days of summer yet, but Upland High School will be filled with dozens of police canines and food trucks Saturday.

The Inland Empire Police Canine Association is holding its 12th annual K-9 Benefit Show and Fair on the Upland High campus.

The fair helps fund many of the association's programs, including the K-9s for Kids charity event that helps the nonprofit group buy gifts for terminally ill children, [such as the event held at Fontana's Kaiser Hospital's pediatric wing days before Christmas.](#)

Along with police dog demonstrations, several vendors — such as Big Mike's BBQ, Mimi's Pupusas, The Kabobaque, Kona Ice, Suite-106 Cupcakery and 15 other businesses — will have booths on-site.

“The audience will be treated to several live action scenarios, both realistic and entertaining,” San Bernardino County sheriff's Detective Keith Nessel said. “The public will get to see what our dogs are made of and also interact with our furry partners.”

The gates open at 3 p.m. and the K-9 show begins at 6 p.m. Tickets for the show are \$10 each and children younger than 5 are free.

Throughout the year, the Inland Empire Police Canine Association sponsors and donates to various charities. K-9s for Kids brings a moment of joy to a child who is unable to be at home during the holiday season.

For more information, go to [www.inlandempirek9.com](http://www.inlandempirek9.com).

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URL: <http://www.dailybulletin.com/government-and-politics/20170605/why-dozens-of-police-dogs-are-descending-on-upland-this-saturday>

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## NEWS

## Demanding money from developer led to Beaumont councilman's bribery charge, grand jury transcripts show



Beaumont City Councilman Mark Orozco leaves a courtroom after his arraignment on Thursday, May 25, 2017 in Riverside. Orozco was indicted on bribery and felony charges related to his 2012 campaign for county supervisor. (Stan Lim, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **JEFF HORSEMAN** | [jhorseman@scng.com](mailto:jhorseman@scng.com) and **DAVID DANELSKI** | [ddanelski@scng.com](mailto:ddanelski@scng.com) | The Press-Enterprise  
PUBLISHED: June 5, 2017 at 4:05 pm | UPDATED: June 5, 2017 at 6:59 pm



Beaumont Councilman Mark Orozco last year pressured a development firm for a \$15,000 campaign contribution about a week before the City Council considered pro- and anti-growth candidates to fill a vacant council seat, according to grand jury testimony released Monday, June 5.

The 318-page transcript details the case Riverside County prosecutors are pursuing against Orozco, who faces one count of bribery and nine counts of perjury for allegedly falsely and repeatedly listing a loan on campaign finance disclosure forms stemming from a failed 2014 bid for county supervisor.

"I need — I need help. I need — I need money to help retire my prior campaign debt," Orozco told an official with Pardee homes on Jan 13, 2016, according to grand jury testimony.

ADVERTISING

Orozco's indictment was announced May 11. But the grand jury transcript remained sealed until Monday, June 5.

"Mr. Orozco was an individual who has been impacted by greed and power to the point where we will be presenting evidence to you of criminal activity," Deputy District Attorney Amy Barajas told the 19-member grand jury.

Orozco told a DA investigator he lied on his disclosure forms, Barajas said. Filers swear under penalty of perjury that the information in their forms is true.

Orozco could not be reached for comment Monday. A man who answered his cellphone said Orozco could not come to the phone because he was dealing with a death in the family.

His attorney, David Greenberg, described the transcript as full of "supposition, assumption, speculation, but there is no real evidence" that a crime occurred.

He pointed out that two witnesses gave different accounts of Jan. 13, 2016, meeting at model home where Orozco allegedly solicited a bribe.

"You have three people in the same alleged meeting and two of them describe it completely differently," Greenberg said.

He added, "There are different ways to fundraise and some people are more aggressive. That doesn't equal a bribe."

The first part of the transcript features testimony from Jeff Chambers and Mike Taylor, two executives with homebuilder Pardee Homes, which had development projects in Beaumont.

Chambers and Taylor testified about a meeting they had with Orozco on the early evening of Jan. 13, 2016, to give him a tour of three model homes at Pardee's 4,200-home Sundance community. At the time, council members were dealing with a vacancy caused by the December 2015 death of Councilman Jeff Fox.

According to Chambers and Taylor, Della Condon, seen as favoring slow growth, and Sean Balingit, considered more open to development, were two candidates being considered by the council to serve the remainder of Fox's term.

Councilmen Lloyd White and Mike Lara favored Condon while Councilwoman Brenda Knight prefer Balingit, Chambers said, adding Pardee hoped Balingit would get the appointment.

"Would Mr. Lara have gone either way in your observations if the candidate has gotten the support of two other councilmen?" Chambers was asked.

"I believe so," he said.

"So was Mr. Orozco then kind of the deciding factor of how the vote would go ...?"

"Yes."

#### **'It scared me'**

At that point, Irvine-based Pardee Homes was in a difficult spot with Beaumont.

The company, Chambers said, was owed about \$25 million from the city for streets, sidewalks, drainage channels and other public works associated with two large developments, Sundance and the 1,300-home Tournament Hills projects.

The city was supposed to issue municipal bonds to pay for the improvements but was still analyzing the value of the work done.

Meanwhile, authorities were then investigating former City Manager Alan Kapanicas and other city officials for signing off payments from previous bond accounts to companies they owned. Kapanicas and six other former Beaumont officials are now awaiting trial for numerous felony charges, including misuse of bond funds, in a separate city corruption case.

"It was important that we were able to sell the bonds and have the money returned to us," Chambers told the grand jury. "And we made that clear to – we discussed that with Mr. Orozco."

Orozco "was not really all that interested" in Pardee's problem, saying the company had to continue working with the city, Chambers said.

But then, "(Orozco) became belligerent at the meeting and said that we were not supporting him adequately," Chambers said. "He started talking with a lot of vulgar words and raising his voice and saying that he needed our support, he needed – he needed money to help retire his campaign debt."

Orozco said he needed \$15,000 to retire his debt, Chambers said. The bribery allegation is dated Jan. 13, the same date Chambers and Taylor said they met with Orozco.

"Mr. Orozco said 'I know you guys want Sean Balingit. I can help (make) that happen. I need your support, and I can support you,'" Chambers quoted Orozco as saying.

"It scared me," Chambers added. "It seemed like he was saying if you get me the \$15,000, I will vote for your guy."

Taylor, who is Chambers' boss, didn't recall Orozco using profanity, although he said he, Chambers and Orozco were not all in the same room the whole time of the tour.

"Did (Orozco) tell you that, if you supported him financially, he would vote for Sean?" Taylor was asked.

"He never told me that," Taylor replied. But in earlier testimony, Taylor said: "Over the course of that meeting, I believe he said something about him having campaign debt from his previous elections ... his comment to me was that he had campaign debt of approximately \$15,000."

While it's not unusual for Pardee to give elected officials tours of projects, "having the subject come around to asking for financial support and just in the timing that it was being asked made us uncomfortable," Taylor said.

#### **'Very uncomfortable'**

Taylor said he told Orozco any donation request would have to be made in writing and cleared by Pardee's corporate office.

Chambers and Taylor testified about an email they received the day after the meeting from Mitch Star, an associate of Orozco, on behalf of a pro-Orozco political action committee. That email mentioned another dollar total.

A letter attached to the email asked for a \$15,000 contribution to help retire Orozco's \$30,000 debt, Chambers said as he read the letter, which was entered into evidence.

It was followed that Friday, Taylor said, by a voicemail from an Orozco associate, David Weiner, who wanted to pick up the check before the following Tuesday so the PAC could close its books.

Taylor told the jury Pardee had never given that much to a candidate. Further, the Martin Luther King holiday fell on the following Monday, meaning "there was no way we could start the process until next week," Taylor added.

That Tuesday, the council deadlocked on a replacement for Fox.

Pardee never gave Orozco any money, said Chambers, who described subsequent meetings with Weiner and Orozco and hearing amounts of \$30,000 and \$60,000 to retire Orozco's debt.

"After January, every conversation was inappropriate," Chambers said. "I felt very uncomfortable."

#### **An active political career:**

2008: Mark A. Orozco is elected to the Beaumont school board.

2012: Orozco runs as a Democrat for the state's 42nd Assembly District but loses to Republican incumbent Brian Nestande, and he relinquishes his school board seat.

2013: Orozco starts his campaign for Riverside County supervisor and states on his campaign finance disclosure form that he loaned \$50,000 to his campaign.

June 2014: Orozco loses the supervisor's race to incumbent Marion Ashley.

November 2014: Orozco is elected to the Beaumont City Council.

May 11, 2017: Orozco is indicted on suspicion of one count of bribery and nine counts of perjury for falsely stating a loan on campaign finance disclosure forms for his failed bid to become a county supervisor.

# L.A. firefighter dies after falling off ladder during training exercise



Firefighters, fire paramedics, sheriff's deputies and LAPD officers lined Marengo Street on Monday as the procession rolled beneath a giant American flag tied to a pair of aerial ladders.

By **Ruben Vives and Veronica Rocha**

JUNE 5, 2017, 12:50 PM

# A

Los Angeles firefighter died Monday morning, two days after he fell from an aerial ladder during a training exercise in downtown L.A.

The [Los Angeles Fire Department](#) announced Kelly Wong's death on Twitter in a written statement.

The 29-year-old firefighter was participating [in an exercise Saturday morning](#) in the 300 block of South Main Street.

Wong was immediately taken to [Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center](#), where he was listed in critical condition.

Minutes after the accident, firefighters throughout the department showed up to the hospital, Fire Chief Ralph Terrazas said. Other firefighters volunteered to cover Wong's work shifts.

“Despite the heroic efforts of doctors and nurses at the hospital, firefighter Wong succumbed to his injuries early Monday morning,” the fire department said in a statement.

Wong had been a firefighter with the department for two years and was assigned to Station 92 in Rancho Park.

He was set to transfer to Station 9, which serves the skid row neighborhood and downtown L.A.

Wong was working at the station at the time of his fall.

“It is always a tragedy to lose one of our own, especially an accomplished individual who was still at the beginning of what was certainly going to be a promising career,” Terrazas said in the statement.

At 10:30 a.m. Monday a pair of [Los Angeles police](#) motorcycle officers escorted a caravan of LAFD vehicles and a coroner’s van carrying Wong’s body from LAC+USC Medical Center to the L.A. County Coroner’s office.

Firefighters, fire paramedics, sheriff’s deputies and LAPD officers lined Marengo Street as the procession rolled beneath a giant American flag tied to a pair of aerial ladders.

Wong’s family -- his wife, Danielle, his infant son, Colton, his mother, Ann, his mother-in-law and father-in-law, Barbara and [Michael Quinlan](#), and his sisters-in-law Nicole and Stephanie — were present as his body arrived at the coroner’s office.

Some stood by and watched as the American flag draped over his body was carefully folded and then handed to a crying woman.

The body was then taken to the coroner’s office as family members held each other.

"I told the family that they're not alone," Terrazas said. " Colton has ...3,500 uncles and aunts. We're going to watch over them. It's our obligation."

Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) said he had known Wong for a couple of years when the young firefighter graduated from the fire department’s academy at Terminal Island in San Pedro with top academic honors.

Wong emigrated from Hong Kong when he was 8, the mayor said.

“He was a hero to our city, a hero for this department, a hero for his family," Garcetti said.

Fire Engineer Mike Spears said he worked with Wong for more than a year at Station 92, where he cooked delicious meals for the firehouse. He said Wong wanted to learn as much as he could about the department and firefighting.

Wong was “dedicated to the craft,” Spears said, and a loving and doting father.

"He was always showing us new pictures of baby Colton," he said. "He was a happy dad, and we're going to miss him."

The fire department is investigating his death, Terrazas said.

Once the investigation is complete, the chief said he hopes to learn whether improvements need to be made in the training exercises.

This was the department's first deadly accident involving an aerial ladder, Terrazas said.

He declined to provide details about what might have occurred until the investigation is completed. Terrazas said he thinks that Wong participated in similar exercises in the past.

"It was a part of the standard type of training," said Margaret Stewart, a department spokeswoman.

The training exercises, which are typically held on weekends, give firefighters an opportunity to practice how they would respond to a blaze in a high-rise building, she said.

During the drills, firefighters practice pulling hose lines, perform roof ventilation and climb aerial ladders, Stewart said.

The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health is also investigating the accident, agency spokesman Luke Brown said. The investigation will include reviewing the fire department's injury and illness prevention plan, inspecting the scene of the accident and talking to witnesses.

Wong is the third LAFD firefighter to die this year.

Capt. David T. Moorman, 50, died on Feb. 5 when he suffered a medical emergency. He was off-duty and in his home.

Moorman worked with the department 27 years and was assigned to Station 96 in Chatsworth.

In April, Battalion Chief Jerome Boyd suffered a medical emergency and died while driving a city vehicle near downtown L.A.

The 55-year-old firefighter worked for the department for more than 30 years. Boyd was assigned to the department's Fire Prevention Bureau's Public Safety Section.

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**ALSO**

[Los Angeles CEO is accused of asking alleged drug dealer to kill former business associate](#)



# Advocates denounce VA delays in developing housing for homeless veterans at West L.A. site



Homeless veteran Jake Cameron Mitchell seeks assistance during an event at the Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles campus in 2015. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

By **Gale Holland**

JUNE 6, 2017, 4:00 AM

**A** week after officials disclosed a 57% rise in Los Angeles' veteran homelessness, advocates say the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is delaying housing development on its West Los Angeles campus.

A report to be released Tuesday from Vets Advocacy, a non-profit group created to oversee the development, accuses the federal agency of stalling development of a model community for 1,200 homeless veterans on its long-neglected 388-acre campus.

The advocacy group says the VA also dragged out termination of commercial leases on the property and blocked the group's oversight of negotiations with renters, including UCLA, whose Jackie Robinson Stadium will remain on the VA land.

"Change at the West L.A. VA campus is moving too slowly, and the pace of change is slowing as well," the report says. It urges the Trump administration's new VA secretary, David Shulkin, to "make his commitment to

[the development] clear and then do everything within his power to facilitate it.”

“As we have seen with the spike in homelessness, even a year makes a big difference,” Jesse Creed, the executive director of Vets Advocacy, said Monday.

A VA spokeswoman did not immediately answer written questions submitted on a form required by the agency.

Under former Secretary Robert McDonald, the VA and local officials had touted an unprecedented push to get homeless veterans off the streets in Los Angeles. Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) joined the Obama administration’s drive to end veteran homelessness in 2016, although he extended the pledge timeline and finally dropped the deadline last year.

The VA replaced leadership at the VA’s West Los Angeles Medical Center and issued more than 1,500 rent vouchers for homeless veterans in two years. More than have 8,000 veterans found housing since January 2015.

But after falling 30% from 2015 to 2016, the number of homeless veterans in Los Angeles jumped to 4,828 from 3,071 in the official 2017 count announced last week, wiping out the previous year’s improvement. L.A. homelessness overall rose 23% countywide, and 20% in the city.

Stephen Peck, president of U.S. Vets, said more than 500 veterans with VA vouchers can’t find a place to live because of Southern California’s soaring rents. Peck also said the VA does not provide enough case management to help veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma and other severe issues stay in housing.

“They’re not going to get in housing and just get better,” said Peck, who added that he recently met with homeless officials in Washington, D.C., about what he described as a chronic VA problem. “They need support to keep on track, make sure they are taking their medication and keeping appointments so they remain stable.”

Vets Advocacy was created as part of a 2016 legal settlement with homeless and disabled veterans who sued over the VA’s alleged misuse of its West Los Angeles property, the largest undeveloped lot on the city’s Westside.

The settlement included adoption of a master plan dedicating the rolling property to permanent housing and legal, mental health and job services for 1,200 veterans. It also mandated the creation of an “exit strategy” for commercial and other entities that had leased land from the VA while campus buildings dedicated as a soldiers’ home deteriorated and largely emptied.

The group’s report says the VA delayed the initial phase of the housing development by 18 months and reduced the number of units in that phase to 160 from 210. It also said the VA had yet to open a renovated building initially designated for permanent housing a decade ago.

A spokeswoman for Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said the renovated building will open this week. The campus, however, may soon house fewer veterans than it does now.

Earlier this year, the VA ended its contract with the Salvation Army to provide shelter at the West L.A. campus. Some of the 270 beds will be relocated to the Salvation Army's shelter in Bell, but 130 spots for women, older veterans and those in an alcohol and drug treatment program will be lost, said Pilar Buelna, the Salvation Army's executive director of social services in the L.A. area.

Buelna said she believes veteran homelessness rose because the VA and local and federal homeless officials switched from transitional housing programs to permanent supportive housing before the permanent housing was built.

"Our veterans are not happy," she said. "They should have been more strategic with the transition."

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**This article is related to:** Homelessness, Mental Health Research, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Research, Eric Garcetti

# L.A. County might stop charging needy defendants a \$50 fee



L.A. County supervisors are expected to consider a motion that would end the practice of charging a \$50 registration to criminal defendants seeking representation by a public defender or court-appointed counsel. Above, the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)



By **Nina Agrawal**

JUNE 5, 2017, 6:25 PM

**I**ndigent and other needy criminal defendants in Los Angeles County may soon get a reprieve from the \$50 fee they are charged for representation by public defenders or court-appointed lawyers.

The Board of Supervisors is expected to approve a motion Tuesday that would revoke the registration fee, which the county allows these defendants to be charged before they receive any legal services. The motion does not address other fees that defendants might be assessed after a case ends.

The move comes amid growing awareness nationwide of the criminal justice system's disproportionate impact on the poor.

Advocates say that though there has been some reform of the bail system, in which poor people are forced to await trial in jail because they can't post bail, less attention has been paid to the administrative fees and penalties that get tacked on to convictions and fines.

California is one of 43 states that charge some type of public defender fees, according to a 2014 analysis by National Public Radio. The state first authorized counties to impose a \$25 registration fee in 1996. L.A. County approved the fee that same year, raising it to \$50 in 2010.

"In trying to shift the burden of cost from the state to the counties, and now ... to the defendants themselves, we've created user fees, essentially," said Alexes Harris, a University of Washington sociologist who has studied the consequences of legal debts for poor people. "It would be a good business model if the defendants had money, but they don't."

Last year the public defender's office took in approximately \$300,000 from the registration fees, the motion said. The office's total budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year was more than \$200 million.

The public defender's office declined to comment.

Harris said that a \$50 fee may not be significant for a middle-class individual, but it can be unaffordable for a low-income, unemployed or homeless individual.

Civil rights advocates say the fee may interfere with criminal defendants' constitutional right to legal representation. Although California law says defendants cannot be denied legal assistance for failing to pay the fee, some say the law is inconsistently applied, with defendants not always being made aware of their right to waive the fee.

Devon Porter, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California who authored a forthcoming report about public defender fees, said that in L.A. County defendants who are not yet in custody are typically asked to pay the \$50 during their first interaction with a public defender.

"If you walk into a public defender's office and are hit with this fee, our No. 1 concern is that people would go without [counsel] and represent themselves," Porter said.

The issue is of particular concern for immigrants, who may not be aware of the immigration consequences of their criminal cases, Porter added.

Opponents of the fee also say it undermines the relationship between clients and public defenders. Clients often distrust their government-appointed attorneys at the start; immediately asking for money for a service that is supposed to be free only exacerbates that. Porter interviewed several public defenders who said they disliked the practice because it was awkward and impeded their ability to do their jobs.

Even if the registration fee is eliminated, several others will remain in place.

Under California law, defendants may be charged administrative costs related to their booking and arrest, representation and probation services in addition to any criminal fines and penalty assessments.

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# CDPH Notifies Public of Salmonella Infections Linked to Contact with Live Poultry

**Posted: Monday, June 5, 2017 3:21 pm**

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is warning people of the risks of Salmonella infection associated with contact with live poultry. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that from January 2017 through May 25, 2017, 372 ill persons in 47 states have been infected with several Salmonella strains that have been linked to live poultry contact; 36% are children younger than 5 years old. Seventy-one ill persons have been hospitalized and no deaths have been reported. Infected persons include 21 California residents from 15 counties.

Salmonella symptoms include diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps, and usually begin 12 to 72 hours after a person has been infected. Most infected people recover within a week without treatment. However, some people may have severe illness that requires hospitalization. Young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for more severe illness.

Outbreaks linked to contact with live poultry have increased in recent years as more people keep backyard flocks.

Live poultry, especially baby chicks and ducklings, may have Salmonella in their feces and on their bodies (feathers, feet, and beaks) even when they appear healthy and clean, which can get on the hands, shoes, and clothing of people who handle or care for the birds. Salmonella can get on cages, coops, feed and water dishes, bedding, plants, and soil in the area where the birds live and roam.

If you have contact with live poultry:

Always wash hands with soap and water after handling live poultry, their eggs, or anything in the area where they live and roam.

Prevent live chickens, ducks, and geese from coming into the house.

Do not allow children younger than 5 years to handle or touch live poultry and eggs without supervision and subsequent handwashing.

Do not snuggle or kiss the birds.

Do not touch your mouth, or eat or drink while near live poultry.

Visit the CDC's Keeping Backyard Poultry webpage.

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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/multiple-deaths-reported-in-florida-shooting-1496670837>

U.S. NEWS

# Former Employee Kills Five, Plus Self, in Florida Workplace Shooting

Orange County Sheriff says there is no indication shooter had ties to terrorism



Law-enforcement authorities said the shooting took place around 8 a.m. Monday in an industrial area at the office of Flamma Inc. PHOTO: JOHN RAOUX/ASSOCIATED PRESS

*By Cameron McWhirter*

Updated June 5, 2017 2:41 p.m. ET

A disgruntled former employee shot and killed five people at a business just outside Winter Park, Fla., near Orlando, according to Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings.

Mr. Demings said there was no indication that the gunman had ties to any terrorist or subversive organizations.

The shooting took place around 8 a.m. Monday in an industrial area at the office of Flamma Inc., which makes awnings and other accessories for recreational vehicles, the sheriff said.

Four of the victims died on the scene and one more died later at the hospital, he said, adding there were eight survivors, none of whom were shot or hurt.

“He was certainly singling out the individuals he shot,” the sheriff said.

Mr. Demings said the shooter, whom he identified as John Robert Neumann Jr. , was a 45-year-old former employee at the company who was terminated in April. The shooter died from a self-inflicted gunshot and was armed with a semi-automatic handgun and a hunting knife, according to the sheriff.

He said Mr. Neumann lived alone, doesn’t have family in the area and he was a veteran of the U.S. Army discharged honorably in 1999.

The sheriff said the alleged shooter had a criminal history that was “minor in nature,” including driving while under the influence, marijuana possession and misdemeanor battery. Deputies were called to the business in 2014 for a “workplace violence” incident involving the alleged shooter, but no charges were filed, the sheriff said.

“This is a sad day once again for us in Orange County,” Mr. Demings said at a news briefing with the county mayor and agents from the Federal Bureau Investigation.

The shooting in the Orlando area comes almost a year after the mass shooting at Pulse, a gay nightclub in the city, on June 12, 2016. In that shooting, Omar Mateen shot and killed 49 people and wounded another 53 in the deadliest terrorist attack in the U.S. since Sept. 11, 2001.



“Over the past year, the Orlando community has been challenged like never before,” Florida Gov. Rick Scott said Monday. “I ask all Floridians to pray for the families impacted by this senseless act of violence.”

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