

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
www.sbcounty.gov



SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
AT YOUR SERVICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 10, 2012

For more information, contact
David Wert, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-4717
dwert@sbcounty.gov

Board members cut their benefits by nearly 40 percent

The Board of Supervisors today voted unanimously to reduce their benefits by nearly 40 percent, making board member compensation comparable to Riverside, Orange, and San Diego counties and saving taxpayers more than \$240,000 a year.

"At a time when we are asking all of our staff and all of our departments and all of our programs to do more with less, at a time when our residents and taxpayers are running their households and their businesses and their lives with less, it is incumbent on us as elected leaders of this county to show that we can do more with less, too," said Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford, who proposed the cuts.

Supervisors eliminated several types of benefits currently provided to members of the board, including their retirement pickups, contributions toward 401(k) and 457(b) savings plans, and medical expense reimbursements.

A voter-approved County Charter amendment sets board member salaries at a fixed amount comparable to supervisors in neighboring counties. However, their benefits add nearly \$121,000 to each board member's total annual compensation. The board's action today cuts that number by more than \$48,000.

The 2010-11 Grand Jury reviewed board salaries and benefits last year and concluded San Bernardino County compensation was not comparable to what was provided in other counties. The board responded by directing the creation of the benefit reduction ordinance approved today.

PRESS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Scott Vanhorne, (909) 387-4833



Supervisors Pursue Ordinance Lowering Other County Elected Officials' Benefits

SAN BERNARDINO—Jan. 24, 2012—Two weeks after adopting an ordinance slashing future Board members' benefits by 18 percent, San Bernardino County Supervisors agreed on Tuesday to craft an ordinance that would bring future County elected officials' total compensation in line with similar-size Southern California counties.

“The gold-plated benefits provided to San Bernardino County elected officials is completely out of line with what other counties are providing, and this Board needs to take action to reign those benefits back to fiscal reality,” said Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford, who requested the benefits reduction ordinance in conjunction with Third District Supervisor Neil Derry.

The proposed ordinance would apply to the offices of Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk, Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector, Sheriff/Coroner/Public Administrator, and District Attorney. If the ordinance is adopted, it would not impact County elected officials currently in office.

State law prohibits reducing elected officials' compensation while they are still serving their term in office. However, elected officials can individually accept benefits reductions. Rutherford has agreed to accept the benefits reduction for Supervisors that was created by an ordinance adopted on Jan. 10.

The County Administrative Office will draft the benefits reduction ordinance for countywide elected officials and will bring it back to the Board for consideration at a future meeting.

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PRESS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Scott Vanhorne, (909) 387-4833



Supervisors Propose County Pension Reform Measure

SAN BERNARDINO—Jan. 24, 2012—Any future increase in San Bernardino County employee pension benefits would have to be approved by voters if a ballot initiative proposed by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday is eventually approved by voters.

“At the end of the day, taxpayers pay for these pensions, so voters should have the final say in whether pension increases are appropriate. This measure allows voters to 'check' the politicians when it comes to a really long-term financial obligation,” said Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford, who proposed the ballot measure along with Fourth District Supervisor Gary Ovitt.

“This measure would have absolutely no impact on employee unions’ collective bargaining rights, but if the contracts they negotiate include increased retirement benefits, then the employee groups will have to convince voters—not just three Supervisors—that the increases are reasonable,” Rutherford said.

“Taxpayers are ultimately responsible for paying the costs of employee pension benefits, and this initiative simply gives them the same control that voters in neighboring counties have,” Supervisor Ovitt said. “Going to the voters for their approval of an increase in benefits gives power back to our residents.”

The proposed ballot measure would amend the County Charter to prohibit the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors from taking any action to increase the retirement benefits of any employee, legislative officer or elected official of the County of San Bernardino in the San Bernardino County Employees Retirement Association (or any successor retirement system), other than cost of living adjustments, without first obtaining the approval of a majority of County voters.

The measure would be similar to the City of San Diego's Proposition B, adopted in November 2006, and Orange County's Measure J, adopted in November 2008. Those pension reform initiatives were adopted with 70% and 75.4% of the vote, respectively.

The County Administrative Office will draft the proposed pension reform ballot measure and return to the Board of Supervisors for a final approval before submitting the initiative to the Registrar of Voters for the ballot on June 5.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 24, 2012

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David Wert, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-4717
dwert@sbcounty.gov

Board launches new prescription drug savings program

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today approved a new prescription drug discount program for residents of San Bernardino County.

Residents can participate in the free program immediately by printing a card at www.coast2coastrx.com/sbc. When the program is in full-swing in four to five weeks, cards will be available at most local pharmacies, libraries and at many county facilities. Information on where to obtain cards will be available on the county's website at www.sbcounty.gov.

"With high healthcare costs, the prescription drug discount card will help ease some of the financial burdens individuals and families face when paying for their medication," said Board of Supervisors Chair Josie Gonzales.

In 2010, users of the Coast2Coast Rx card in other counties saved an average of 45 percent on the cost of their prescriptions. The card, which can also be used on pet medications and by people living outside of the county, may be used at all pharmacy chains and most independent pharmacies in San Bernardino County and covers more than 60,000 medications.

The 2009 California Health Interview Study estimated that 28.3 percent of adults and 7.5 percent of children in the County did not have health insurance. The Coast2Coast Rx card will allow all county residents, regardless of income, age, or health status to save on the cost of their medications.

"This is an innovative, privately-run program that will improve access to essential medicines and treatments for those who do not have health insurance," said First District Supervisor Brad Mitselfelt. "At a time of continuing high unemployment, these cards will make a difference for those who need it most."

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Discount Card
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Providing savings for residents through the program will come at no expense to the county. In fact, the operator of the program, Financial Marketing Concepts, will pay the county \$1.25 per prescription, which will not affect the price of prescriptions to patients. The county will use the revenue to help fund the Department of Public Health's Healthy Communities program.

There are no eligibility requirements, so the discount prescription card is expected to have a sizeable impact on uninsured residents and residents facing high insurance deductibles. If a particular drug isn't covered under a person's health plan, they can use the card to save on those prescriptions.

Besides the discount on prescriptions, the card also provides a discount of up to 50 percent on dental, vision, hearing and diabetes supplies and 50 percent to 80 percent discounts for lab and imaging tests, further helping residents save even more money on their healthcare costs.

Other California counties participating in the program include Alameda, Amador, Contra Costa, Fresno, Humboldt, Kings, Placer, San Benito, San Diego, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Tulare, Ventura and Yolo. A number of other counties in the state are considering participation.

For more information about the program, please visit www.coast2coastrx.com, e-mail cs@coast2coastrx.com, or call toll-free 1-800-931-8872.



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Mark A. Hartwig
Fire Chief*

DATE: *January 17, 2012*
CONTACT: *Tracey Martinez, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5950, 800-426-8689, pager #3307*

Chief Jim Johnstone to Lead Mountain Division

San Bernardino County Fire Division Chief Jim Johnstone has taken the helm as Division Chief of the Mountain region (Division 4), overseeing fire and emergency medical response, and rescue operations. Division 4 covers over 600 square miles of vegetation-covered mountains, foothills and valleys. County Fire works closely with the local community in the mountains through the Fire Safe Councils and the multi-agency Mountain Area Safety Taskforce.

“I look forward to maintaining this strong collaboration with the community,” stated Chief Johnstone. “My promise is to productively engage in our mountain communities and foster positive relationships with our neighboring fire departments. I am thrilled and honored to be given the responsibility of leading such a diverse region and look forward to this new chapter in my career with County Fire, which began more than 25 years ago.”

Johnstone currently oversees the Valley Region (Division 1) since his promotion to Division Chief in August of 2011 and will continue to do so. Division 1 encompasses all unincorporated areas of the San Bernardino Valley as well as the Cities of Fontana and Grand Terrace.

Prior to his promotion, Chief Johnstone was a Battalion Chief in the North Desert region since early 2008. He began his career with the San Bernardino County Fire Department in 1985 as a Firefighter Paramedic in Lake Arrowhead. During his career with County Fire, Chief Johnstone promoted to Engineer Paramedic and to Captain Paramedic. He has served as the Technical Rescue Coordinator for the Mountain Division and as a Rescue Team Manager on County Fire’s Regional Taskforce 6. He has a BS Degree from the University of California Riverside in Administration.

Chief Johnstone is qualified as a Type 2 Operations Chief on Southern California Incident Management Team #2. Prior to this position, he served as a Division/Group Supervisor on this same management team.

Chief Johnstone lives in Lake Arrowhead with his wife Bridgett. Jim and Bridgett have five grown children and two grandsons. He and his family enjoy numerous outdoor activities together.

Chief Johnstone replaces Division Chief John Salvate, who has proudly served the Mountain residents for the past five months. Chief John Salvate was leading both Divisions 4 and 5 encompassing the Mountains and South Desert regions. Chief Salvate will now be permanently assigned to Division 5 in the South Desert.

A photograph of Chief Johnstone is available on our website at www.sbcfire.org under latest news.

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From the County of San Bernardino
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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
AT YOUR SERVICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 18, 2012

For more information, contact
David Wert, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-4717
dwert@sbcounty.gov

Board agenda site now includes search function

As part of the county's ongoing effort to make government more open and accessible, the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors has added a search function to its agenda system, allowing the public to search for words in board agendas, contracts and reports dating back to June 25, 1996.

"This new feature allows the public to easily research matters that have come before the Board of Supervisors, such as seeing when and how often the county has done business with certain contractors or taken action on a particular subject," said Board of Supervisors Chair Josie Gonzales. "This is one of many steps we have taken in recent years to make county government transparent and accountable."

More than 10 years ago, the County of San Bernardino became one of the first jurisdictions in the state to put its agendas, contracts, reports, salaries, and job descriptions online. Later, the county among the first to live-stream board meetings and place property records, statements of economic interest and campaign disclosure reports online.

The new agenda search can be found at <http://cob-sire.sbcounty.gov/sirepub/>. There, users can specify a date range for their search and type in words they want to find in past and current Board of Supervisors agendas as well as contracts, reports, and other agenda backup materials. On that same page, the public can find agendas, agenda items, contracts, reports, and other information for past and upcoming meetings.

The page also includes links to CountyVision, where the public can view past Board of Supervisors meetings and zoom in on discussions on selected items, and a service that allows the public to subscribe to public hearing notices and get an e-mail update when hearings are scheduled.

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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 24, 2012

For more information, contact
David Wert, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-4717
dwert@sbcounty.gov

Supervisors appoint financial expert to retirement board

The Board of Supervisors today selected a highly accredited and experienced financial professional and active community member to represent the county on the board of the San Bernardino County Employees Retirement Association.

Glenn Duncan, president of GTS Financial Services and a member of the Chino City Council, has had a long career as a highly trusted financial professional, making him ideally suited to sit on the board that manages the county retirement system.

"With his background as both a financial professional and community servant, Glenn Duncan is highly qualified to serve on the retirement board," said Board of Supervisors Chair Josie Gonzales.

"With the many changes and challenges facing pension systems, including ours, it is important to have someone like Glenn Duncan willing to serve," Chair Gonzales said.

Since 1992, Mr. Duncan has been president of GTS Financial Services, a tax preparation, bookkeeping, and payroll management firm based in Chino. Mr. Duncan is an Enrolled Agent, a prestigious designation from the Internal Revenue Service making him a federally-authorized tax practitioner who has technical expertise in the field of taxation. Prior to that, he was the owner of Glenn's Tax Service and an instructor at the H&R Block Tax School. Mr. Duncan is also a licensed stock broker, registered investment adviser, and a municipal securities representative.

Mr. Duncan's background as a financial professional compliments his distinguished record of public service. He is serving his fifth term on the Chino City Council and is the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) District 10 Regional Council Board Member. He also serves on the SCAG Four Corners Policy Committee, the SCAG General Assembly, and the SCAG Transportation Committee.

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He is also the treasurer of the Chino Valley YMCA and the recent past president of the Rancho del Chino Rotary Club.

The San Bernardino County Employees' Retirement Association manages the county retirement and pension system and provides its members with an array of services. The association is managed by a nine-member board that includes the County Treasurer, four people appointed by the Board of Supervisors, two people elected by general members, one elected by public safety members of the association, and one elected by retired members.



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Jeanne Bonfilio
Public Information Officer
Office: (424) 832-8219
Cellular: (310) 775-7980
January 20, 2012

ARE YOU, OR IS SOMEONE YOU KNOW, A VETERAN IN NEED OF LONG-TERM CARE AND HOUSING?

*The Barstow Veterans Home has NO WAITING LIST for Residency
in two levels of care: Independent Living -- and Intermediate Nursing Levels of Care*

Barstow – The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) has announced that there is immediate availability – NO WAITING LIST -- for residency in two levels of care for Veterans seeking long-term care and housing at the beautiful Veterans Home of California in Barstow, located at 100 E. Veterans Parkway.

Although this Veterans Home offers three levels of care, space is primarily available in the **Independent Living Unit (Domiciliary)** level of care, for veterans who are self-sufficient and do not require assistance with activities of daily living. In this level of care, non-nursing staff provides minimal supervision. Residents at this level of care have access to other levels of care and medical services. Space is also available in the **Intermediate Nursing Level of Care** for Veterans requiring some nursing assistance to perform activities of daily living. Licensed nursing staff members assist veterans with medications and treatments. Spouses are also eligible to apply with the veteran in all levels of care. For admissions information, please call 800-746-0606.

The Veterans Home of California in Barstow is a 400-bed, long-term care facility located on 22 acres with a panoramic view of the Mojave River Valley. The high-desert atmosphere offers a climate that is healthful, quiet and safe with very low air pollution. The Veterans Home provides California veterans with a living environment that protects their dignity and contributes to their feeling of self-reliance and self-worth. Amenities include: room and board – three meals plus snacks; medical care and medications; optical care, dental care and podiatry services; transportation services to all medical appointments and off-campus activities; a beauty/barber shop; multi-purpose room and limited banking services; opportunities for worship for all denominations through the Chaplaincy Program; a modern fitness center and exercise classes; library, cable television and wireless Internet; housekeeping and laundry services; a caring and compassionate staff; a variety of community outings; and an enhanced activity program.

The Veterans Home of California in Barstow enjoys the strong support from the local community as well as camaraderie from the neighboring Marine Corps Logistics Base and the National Training Center at Fort Irwin. For admissions information, please call 800-746-0606.

Follow the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) on Facebook and Twitter. Note to Editors: CalVet news releases, advisories and newsletters are available at www.calvet.ca.gov and via email from jeanne.bonfilio@calvet.ca.gov.

PRESS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Scott Vanhorne, (909) 387-4833



Rutherford Seeks Applicants for Post on Lake Arrowhead MAC

LAKE ARROWHEAD—JAN. 11, 2012—San Bernardino County Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford is accepting applications from residents who want serve their community on the Lake Arrowhead Municipal Advisory Council (MAC).

“MACs provide unincorporated communities with a voice because they give council members and residents opportunities to share their thoughts and concerns about projects and issues affecting their communities with their elected County Supervisor,” Rutherford said. “In essence, MACs are the eyes and ears of San Bernardino County Supervisors in the many diverse communities we serve.”

Visit <http://www.sbcounty.gov/cob/NewBCCApp.aspx> to fill out an application or call the Clerk of the Board at (909) 387-4265 to have an application mailed to you.

The five-member Lake Arrowhead MAC currently meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Thursday at Fire Station 91 located near the Lake Arrowhead Village. The meeting dates are subject to change.

The vacancy was created when MAC Member Lewis Murray resigned to accept a position as District Representative with the Second District. Murray officially begins in his new position on Tuesday.

The Lake Arrowhead MAC was originally formed in 1976 by former Fifth District Supervisor Nancy Smith.

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US Forest Service

San Bernardino National Forest

602 S. Tippecanoe Ave San Bernardino, CA 92408



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: John Miller (909) 382-2788

Fire Danger Elevated to “Very High” on the National Forest Fire Restrictions Increased

San Bernardino, Calif., January 12, 2012 –Fire Danger increases with the unseasonable warmer, drier weather along with persistent Santa Ana wind conditions. Weather forecasts show that temperatures will continue to be slightly above normal coupled with infrequent storms and long stretches of little or no precipitation for the next few months. This will allow the finer grasses and lighter fuels to cure sooner increasing the potential for large fires.

Fire officials are closely monitoring the weather and fuel conditions, adjusting staffing levels, and increasing or lowering fire use restrictions as deemed necessary.

“During the recent wind events, firefighters responded to several fires during the evening hours, which is very unusual for this time of the year, which demonstrates how dry the fuels are,” stated Forest Fire Chief Shawna Legarza. “We will continue to maintain an increased firefighter staffing level until there is a significant change in the weather,” Legarza added.

Fire restrictions and guidelines effective January 13, 2012 on the San Bernardino National Forest are as follows:

- Wood and charcoal fires are permitted only in developed campgrounds and picnic grounds and within agency provided fire rings or camp stoves.
- Wood and charcoal fires are not permitted at Yellow Post campsites, Fisherman’s Camp, or the following Pacific Crest Trail Camps:
 - Bench Camp
 - Deer Springs
 - Doble
 - Holcomb Crossing
 - Little Bear Springs
 - Mission Springs
- Campfire permits are required for propane and gas stoves and lanterns used outside of developed recreation sites.

- Recreational shooting is limited to Public Shooting Ranges operated under special use permit only, except those engaged in legal hunting.
- An approved spark arrester is required for any internal combustion engine operated on designated forest routes. These include chainsaws, generators, motorcycles, and off-highway vehicles.
- Smoking is limited to an enclosed vehicle or building, or within a Developed Recreation Site.
- Fireworks are always prohibited on the San Bernardino National Forest.

The US Forest Service will be aggressively citing those who do not comply with the posted restrictions. Violation of these prohibitions is subject to punishment by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than six months or both, as Class B misdemeanors under federal law. Persons may also be responsible for resource damage, suppression costs and any injuries that occur if they are found liable for causing a wildfire.

Forest visitors are encouraged to “*Know Before You Go*” and call ahead to the local Ranger Station to check on location conditions and restrictions at the following offices:

San Bernardino National Forest Supervisor’s Office

602 S. Tippecanoe Ave., San Bernardino
(909) 382-2600

Big Bear Ranger Station and Discovery Center

41397 North Shore Drive / Highway 38, Fawnskin
(909) 382-2790

Idyllwild Ranger Station

54270 Pine Crest, Idyllwild
(909) 382-2922

Lytle Creek Ranger Station

1209 Lytle Creek Road, Lytle Creek
(909) 382-2851

Mill Creek Ranger Station

34701 Mill Creek Road, Mentone
(909) 382-2881

Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center

51-500 Highway 74 Palm Desert
(760) 862-9984

The San Bernardino National Forest is comprised of three Ranger Districts spanning 676,666 acres in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. From the desert floor to the pristine mountain peaks, the San Bernardino National Forest offers natural environments, spectacular scenery, developed campgrounds and picnic areas, numerous recreational opportunities, and the solitude of quiet wilderness and open space for the over 24 million residents of Southern California and those visiting the area. The forest environment also provides habitat for numerous plants and animals and is crucial in sustaining drinking water, air, and soil quality. Learn more at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/sbnf>

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