

NEWS

After 2 earthquakes, Ridgecrest and Trona focus on recovery

Residents reflect on what they've learned as California preaches earthquake preparedness in the Great ShakeOut



Ridgecrest resident Jim Combs (left), 69, stands outside his damaged mobile home in Trousdale Estates with Jeanne Young, from the Long Term Earthquake Recovery Working Group, Monday, Oct. 14, 2019. Combs, whose home is still red-tagged from the July earthquakes, lives on his front porch by day and sleeps in his car at night. Some Ridgecrest residents and businesses are still in the process of repairing damage from two major earthquakes that hit the area in early July. Thursday, Oct. 17, is the Great California ShakeOut beginning at 10:17 a.m. The day is designed for earthquake awareness and preparation. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

By **STEVE SCAUZILLO** | sscauzillo@scng.com | San Gabriel Valley Tribune

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RIDGECREST — Jim Combs crouched down to peer under his damaged mobile home ripped from its foundation in July by a powerful earthquake that sent it sliding nearly 2 feet away.

The metal jacks holding up the home had collapsed. Steel binding straps failed. His mobile home has been red-tagged since July 5, rendered inhabitable by a 7.1 quake that evening that bounced buildings, caused fires and frayed nerves in this town. The mainshock was felt by 30 million people in Southern California and parts of Nevada, Arizona and Mexico.

More than three months later, on Monday, Oct. 14, Combs, 69, is still waiting for his home to be fixed, sleeping on his porch by day and in his car at night.

RELATED: [What you should — and should not — do during an earthquake](#)

The slight man, whose warm smile pokes from behind a Santa Claus-like beard, has no home owner's insurance, lives on a fixed income and can't afford the needed home repairs. While volunteers work on finding cash and willing contractors to do the work, he recounts his experience with several "thank you, Lords," raising eyes skyward while evoking a come-what-may demeanor.

"You just got to live with it — and deal with it," Combs said Monday, when asked about life in Ridgecrest, where earthquakes swarm literally every day on the active Eastern California Shear Zone — sometimes erupting with the energy of a major quake.

Life lessons from quake country

The people of Ridgecrest, a town of 33,723, and of Trona, 30 miles southeast with a population less than 2,000, suffered the brunt of a 6.4 quake on July 4, a foreshock to the more powerful mainshock that struck around 8 p.m. July 5. With the epicenter of the second, larger quake about 10 miles from Ridgecrest in Kern County, it's a minor miracle no one was killed or seriously injured, residents say.

RELATED: [Ridgecrest aftershock prognosis: They won't stop for years, and another strong one is possible](#)

The desert's autumn chill now in the air, residents were returning to normal this week. Can they inform the rest of Southern California about surviving an earthquake in advance of the [Great California ShakeOut](#) – this year set for Thursday, Oct. 17 – a day that preaches awareness, protection and a get-ready attitude? Many responded with lessons from their own lives.

“I would suggest to people they get renters insurance. That could've really helped me,” said Combs, who rents his mobile home for the past two years after leaving Salinas to escape crime and gang violence. On his aisle of Trousdale Estates, four mobile homes were labeled uninhabitable by city inspectors following the July earthquakes. Another on the next aisle was nearly flattened, abandoned by the owner.

Tina Harry's mobile home had no gas for a month, she said, forcing her family to cook meals outside. Now, deemed livable but still not fixed, the home slants to the east. While the gas is back on, cooking is still a challenge.

“The pots on the stove keep sliding off,” she said. She's hoping to get a lower estimate for the repairs and help to pay for them.

Nonprofits step up

Damages from the pair of quakes did not reach a high enough threshold to merit assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), according to Jeanne Young, a volunteer with the Long Term Earthquake Recovery Group, formed by Light House church in town and Altrusa International of the Indian Wells Valley, a nonprofit. Her team goes from home to home, bringing contractors who donate their time along with cash raised by the Lions Club, Rotary Club and local Realtors.

Young's group has found grant money for residents, she said. In Trona, San Bernardino County has not been as helpful as Kern County, home to Ridgecrest, she said. Yet, she's found contractors in Trona willing to donate labor. They've rebuilt porches, installed stoves and water heaters and done repairs at no cost.

“It is all God. He provides,” said Young, wearing a black “No Fear” T-shirt.

Help comes from nonprofits and faith-based entities from Corona to San Francisco providing volunteers and cash assistance. Most of the damage in the high desert communities near Death Valley National Park occurred in mobile home parks where homes are more susceptible to earth movement. Usually, this affects low-income families and people like Combs and Harry with limited resources whose next step could have been permanent homelessness.

“We have a strong community that raised a lot of money,” said Jamie Callahan, an administrative assistant at the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce who was born and raised in town. Callahan lost her rental home in the Cedar Fire of San Diego in 2003.

The Ridgecrest Lions Charity Foundation raised \$32,000 and most of that money is going to help mobile home dwellers fix their homes, Ken Echeberry, treasurer, said in a phone interview on Tuesday, Oct. 15. He estimated the group has helped 43 families totaling 117 people.

“Most have restrictive incomes and they don’t have the money to do repairs,” he said.

Businesses work together

The chamber has put on seminars on how to stay in business and help employees. The best example was Searles Valley Minerals, a chemical plant in Trona that suffered damage but whose owner kept paying his employees during the shutdown. The plant has been repaired and recently re-opened, Callahan said.

On a smaller scale, the Ridgecrest Cinemas are showing movies again, despite ongoing repairs to the north side of the building. Long, metal braces held up the walls on Monday.

Shortly after the quake, the chamber brought together Costco and Walmart to form Operation City Serve. Products damaged in the earthquake, from lawnmowers to air mattresses to paint cans, were kept in storage then handed out, Callahan said.

“It was go-back items, you know, stuff slightly damaged. They took all that stuff and instead of throwing it away, stored it and just gave it out for free,” she added.

No effect on San Andreas

The earthquakes in the two high desert cities occurred on the Little Lake Fault Zone, part of the Eastern California Shear Zone, not the San Andreas Fault, explained Susan Hough, a seismologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Pasadena. The eruptions took place closest to the China Lake Naval Weapons Station, which saw roads separate and buildings damaged. The July 5 quake was 10 times more powerful than its predecessor the day prior, she said.

The quakes originated in an active fault area that continues to produce aftershocks daily, usually with a magnitude less than 3.0. The twin quakes in July neither increase nor decrease the chance of a quake on the San Andreas hitting Los Angeles. The chances of a magnitude 7.0 quake or higher hitting the L.A. basin is 1-in-100 and that hasn't changed, Hough said.

"It is all random," she added.

The Great ShakeOut website relies on a July 2017 USGS study that says while the likelihood of a magnitude 6.5 to 7.0 earthquake is lower, the chance of a larger earthquake is higher in Southern California because of new faults being discovered that can rupture together, causing more powerful earthquakes. The 2017 study includes 350 fault sections, way more than the 200 found in a study a decade earlier.

The 2017 study "should also serve as a reminder that California is earthquake country, and residents should always be prepared," the website warns.

About 10.7 million Californians have signed up to participate in the Great ShakeOut beginning at 10:17 a.m. Thursday. Cerro Coso Community College in Ridgecrest, as well as school districts and government agencies statewide, are among those instructing students, employees and others to participate in the ShakeOut. San Bernardino City Unified School District sites, for example, will practice evacuations in coordination with the district's Emergency Operations Center.

Nerves, faith and family

Callahan remembers preparing dinner on July 5 with her 18-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son at her Ridgecrest home. She had just finished cleaning up from the smaller July 4 quake, thinking the shaking was over.

"We saw telephone poles bouncing off the buildings behind our house," she said. Water lines broke, damaging the drywall in her home.

Now, anxiety remains part of daily living in Ridgecrest, she said. She's learned to keep calm for the sake of her family.

"The hardest part is not screaming," she said. "I don't want my children to see me living in fear."

The July earthquakes brought people together and made the community stronger, Callahan said. Her faith not only settles her nerves but allows her to see the bigger picture.

“It is God’s way of putting us on our knees,” she said.

PREPARING FOR AN EARTHQUAKE

If the shaking starts ...

- Drop, cover and hold on. Drop to the ground. Take cover under a sturdy desk or table and stay there for at least 60 seconds. Don’t run out of buildings. Most injuries occur when someone is moving or from falling debris.
- If driving, pull over to a clear location with no trees or power lines, stop and stay there with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking stops.

Some things to do in advance...

- Identify a safe place under sturdy furniture or against an interior wall in your home; do a “hazard hunt” for items that might fall in your home and secure them.
- Create a personal or family disaster plan: Every member of the family should have a wallet card with essential contact information.
- Keep an earthquake kit in your home with seven days of supplies, including one gallon of water per person per day for three days or, ideally, two weeks.
- Review insurance coverage; consider earthquake insurance.

Source: *The [Great California ShakeOut](#)*

For more information go to earthquakecountry.org.

OPINION

Pension costs continue to drive tax hikes across California: Susan Shelley



(File photo/SCNG)

By **SUSAN SHELLEY** | letters@ocregister.com | Orange County Register

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The answer is, “Pensions, pensions and pensions.”

For \$1,000 and control of the board, what’s the correct question?

Did you guess, “What are top three reasons everybody’s trying to raise taxes in California at the same time?” That’s correct, but you lose. We all do.

Virtually every government in California — city, county and state — is plagued by unfunded pension debt, a crisis caused by politicians who cheerfully overpromised retirement benefits without thinking about what would happen when the bill came due. This merry looting of the future has its origin in the late 1970s, when then-Gov. Jerry Brown signed a series of laws that allowed public employees in California, for the first time, to unionize and go on strike.

That created a new dynamic in politics: unions automatically withheld dues from paychecks, piling up money year after year that could be spent to influence public policy — specifically, their own contracts.

More and more jobs were unionized in the public sector, and also in private-sector companies that were funded indirectly by tax dollars, such as health care providers and some construction firms. The unions enjoyed ever-increasing influence over the people negotiating across the table from them, thanks to lavish campaign contributions and ground-game political assistance.

While taxpayers were squeezed by cost-cutting at their own jobs, the public-sector union contracts grew more generous and the reach of the public-sector unions expanded to encompass more categories of jobs. Most recently, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 378 to allow self-employed child-care workers who serve government-subsidized families to unionize.

In California, public employees are guaranteed that the pension plan that's in place on their first day of employment will never be reduced, no matter what, unless they receive a compensating benefit such as a raise. This is called "The California Rule," and it's been upheld by state courts. So the overpromised pensions can't be changed and must be paid, even if money has to be taken away from essential services to do it.

Welcome to the looted future of California. On every ballot, you'll see dire warnings that there's a desperate need for more money for schools, police, fire protection, paramedics, 911 emergency service, street repairs, parks and libraries, even though California already has the highest state income tax, highest state sales tax, highest gas tax, and don't even ask about all the utility taxes, phone taxes, vehicle registration fees and assorted hidden taxes that are built into the prices you pay for everything.

Where's the money? Pensions, pensions, pensions. A medium-sized fortune also goes to pay back investors who made loans to our government by buying our state and local bonds. These payments are mandated by law. The only way out is to declare bankruptcy, or stop borrowing and negotiate a different deal for new hires. Of course, if the public can be convinced to approve tax increases, the merry looting can continue.

Here's what's coming soon to a ballot near you.

In March, the statewide ballot will include a \$15 billion education bond. If voters say yes, the state will be able to sell \$15 billion in bonds to investors, spend the all the cash on school buildings, then pay it back with interest.

Also in March, the Los Angeles County Fire Department is reportedly planning to ask voters to approve a new parcel tax to raise \$1.4 billion for "infrastructure needs." Parcel taxes are property taxes that are added to the main tax bill (the money you're already paying that wasn't spent on fire protection).

In November, a new version of the already qualified "California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act" will likely be on the statewide ballot. It would revoke Proposition 13's protection from business properties and hike their taxes (and your prices) by requiring reassessment of the properties to current market value, instead of their lower assessment under Prop. 13.

And even that's not enough. On Monday, the California School Boards Association filed an initiative they describe as "Full and Fair Funding" for education. It would hike the state's top personal income tax rate in California to 16.3 percent.

California taxpayers who would like to move to a state with lower taxes have 49 other choices. Californians who don't want to move had better get organized and start voting like their children's future depends on it.

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OPINION

OC supes raid budget to backfill the cost of raises



Speakers address the Orange County Board of Supervisors during an April meeting. (File photo by Paul Bersebach, Orange County Register/SCNG).

By **THE EDITORIAL BOARD** | opinion@scng.com |

PUBLISHED: October 16, 2019 at 10:05 am | UPDATED: October 16, 2019 at 10:05 am

The Orange County Board of Supervisors last month shifted \$24 million to the sheriff's department to paper over an embarrassing shortfall – and it approved a report on its budget without public discussion. That's a bad approach for the county board, which has been widely criticized in recent months for its spending and open-meetings policies.

But what followed is even harder to fathom: The county complicated last year's budget problem by assuring that future years' will be worse.

The sheriff's department overspent its annual budget by \$33 million, according to a VoiceofOC report. The department didn't hire additional staff or boost services that helped police the county. Instead, it had to endure rising costs that stemmed from the 8.8-percent pay raises the county board approved in 2016. It also had to deal with related pension and medical-care increases.

Yet shortly after county supervisors agreed to tap their discretionary budget – money that could have gone to pressing needs, such as dealing with the homeless situation – they agreed to give deputies 14 percent raises over four years, at a price of \$151 million. Apparently, supervisors forgot the common advice for anyone who gets stuck in a hole: First, stop digging.

Sheriff's officials point their finger at supervisors who approved the labor deal a few years ago. That's an amazing example of buck-passing. The sheriffs' department, and unions that represent the deputies, helped champion the large pay hikes that lie at the heart of the county's budget problem. Of course, the department shares blame.

Policing is important, but it's not the only important program the county provides. There was no need for the latest budget-busting raise deals. Deputies already earn exceedingly generous compensation packages. The county didn't even calculate the increased burden on the pension system as they approved the latest raises, which will lead to bigger shortfalls in coming years.

Don't be surprised when, in a few years, the county has to shift millions of dollars to the sheriffs' department, sheriffs' officials blame supervisors who approved the deal, and new supervisors blame their predecessors.

Politicians are slow to learn.



<https://www.sfgate.com/news/bayarea/article/County-Makes-New-Offer-To-Union-14537511.php>

County Makes New Offer To Union

Bay City News Service Published 9:11 pm PDT, Tuesday, October 15, 2019

Santa Clara County officials made a new offer to union negotiators with Service Employees International Union Local 521 Tuesday after a months-long stalemate and seven days of strikes.

The county on Tuesday offered union workers a 3 percent general wage increase if they decide to ratify the newly proposed contract with the county, with another 3 percent wage

increase each year for the next four years.

The county also removed a prior request for union workers to contribute 2 percent of their premium toward the health care costs.

County Executive Jeffrey Smith said in a statement Tuesday that the county "proposed significant wage increases designed to keep their salaries highly competitive with those of other public servants in the region, while also protecting the stability of the county budget in the hopes of minimizing the impact of an economic downturn on our critical services and workforce."

Janet Diaz, union chapter president for SEIU Local 521, said in a statement that the county's proposal is "not by any means a tentative agreement on behalf of the workers of Santa Clara County," instead calling it "an attempt to force its employees to accept the same proposal put forth months ago."

"Their offer does nothing to address the 1,500 plus vacancies across the county impacting 911 dispatchers, social workers, health care providers and the thousands of dedicated county employees who ensure residents are protected, healthy and safe," Diaz said.

She added that the county's offer is "a clear message from the county that the interests of the community are not a priority. Our Santa Clara County bargaining team is discussing next steps and our recommendation to our membership."

Union employees first initiated strikes earlier this month after the county failed to address allegations of unfair labor practices when the county restructured its Department of Family and Children's Services without negotiating with SEIU Local 521.

The union has also been fighting for higher wages and new contracts.

Last week, the union reached its seventh day of strikes before postponing further strikes until after PG&E's Public Safety Power Shutoff.

The union did not say whether they would resume strikes following the shutoffs.

https://www.avpress.com/news/around_the_state/l-a-county-to-establish-youth-climate-commission/article_c076f4f8-efdc-11e9-bd27-d3fd499972ee.html

L.A. County to establish Youth Climate Commission

10 hrs ago

LOS ANGELES (CNS) — The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted today to create a Youth Climate Commission.

Supervisors Hilda Solis and Sheila Kuehl co-authored the motion to establish a 25-member commission with five seats granted to residents of each supervisorial district.

“Young people, especially young people of color, bear the brunt (of the climate crisis),” Solis said. “We must assure that they have a seat at the table.”

More than 2 million Los Angeles County residents are under the age of 18 and Solis pointed out that many teens are already mobilizing to demand action on climate change.

Kuehl quoted Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teen who recently blasted United Nations members for their inaction on climate change, saying “our house is on fire.”

Several students offered their support for the

motion.

“Let students, who have the most to lose, help to address the largest crisis facing humanity,” a student from the Marlborough School in Hancock Park urged the board.

The Board directed the county’s chief sustainability officer to report back in 60 days on the steps to set up a commission that is representative of the geographic and socioeconomic diversity of the region.

The scope of the commission’s work was not addressed in the motion.

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS

County to consider stronger Native American artifact protections

By **JIM JOHNSON** | jjohnson@montereyherald.com | Monterey Herald

PUBLISHED: October 15, 2019 at 3:59 pm | UPDATED: October 15, 2019 at 4:00 pm

SALINAS — Declaring every Oct. 12 Indigenous Peoples Day in Monterey County, the Board of Supervisors is poised to look at more effectively protecting Native American remains and artifacts in the wake of another Carmel Point project violation.

On Tuesday, County Administrative Officer Charles McKee announced a formal referral from Supervisors Luis Alejo and Mary Adams calling for the county to amend the county's regulations regarding on-site archaeological monitoring for development projects to "better protect Native American and other cultural resources," especially in "sensitive areas and sites."

That would include increased daily fines of \$10,000 or more for violations of the county's requirement to have archaeological monitors on site during excavation, grading and similar work in areas that might have archaeological resources in order to "ensure compliance," according to the referral.

While Alejo declined to tie the call for tougher archaeological monitoring rules to the latest Carmel Point violation, citing it as a legal matter, the referral comes in the wake of Scenic Road property owners Dale Skeen and Jomei Chang of Atherton being fined and their project site red-tagged for grading in preparation for a three-story home construction project without a required archaeological monitor on the site earlier this year.

Resource Management Agency director Carl Holm said the property owners had already paid the \$4,300 fine associated with the violation and the red-tag had been “partially” lifted to allow the completion of a retaining wall and work to be done on securing the site as the rainy season begins.

According to attorney Molly Erickson, representing clients David Sabih and Save Carmel Point Cultural Resources, the property owners “disturbed” more than 700 cubic yards of earth on the site and transported most of it to a landfill from March until the county issued a stop work order in early June, violating conditions the county board placed on the project when it was approved in 2008.

Erickson has sued the county on behalf of Save Carmel Point Cultural Resources over the county board’s approval earlier this year of three other Carmel Point homes each with large basements requiring extensive excavation. She said the \$4,300 fine was inadequate given the “unquantifiable” damage caused and the potential loss of Native American cultural resources such as remains and artifacts in “archaeologically sensitive” Carmel Point – the county’s oldest known archaeological site. She noted it represented a fraction of the cost of an archaeological monitor.

In separate letters to the county board, Alliance of Monterey Area Preservationists representatives Mimi Sheridan and Nancy Runyon called for the county to rescind the project permit approval and fine the property owners at least twice what an archaeological monitor would have cost.

Earlier this year, Native American remains were uncovered at another construction project site nearby, and the county also red-tagged another Carmel Point construction site for unpermitted excavation without an archaeological monitor present.

Earlier Tuesday, the full board adopted a resolution establishing an Indigenous Peoples Day, not coincidentally on the same date Columbus is believed to have arrived in the Americas in 1492. The resolution noted how the “cultural and governmental contributions of the Indigenous Peoples of Monterey County have shaped the course of the county throughout history,” including local Native American groups such as the Ohlone Coastanoan, Esselen, Rumsen, Salinan, and Amah Mutsun nations.

It also noted the “unfortunate chapters of violence, discrimination, and deprivation that occurred, as well as the effects and injustices that continue,” while calling for the county to “help heal and close the wounds incurred throughout history” by changing “policies and practices to reflect the experiences of Indigenous Peoples, and uplift our county’s Indigenous roots, history and contributions.”



Search Input Field

County Supervisors Approve Ban On Vaping Products In San Diego's Unincorporated Areas

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

By [City News Service, Tarryn Mento](#)

Supervisors voted 3-2 to prohibit flavored nicotine sales and impose a one-year ban on the sale and distribution of all electronic smoking devices within unincorporated areas of San Diego County.

0:00 / 7:13

Aired: October 16, 2019 | [Transcript](#)

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The San Diego County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday voted 3-2 to ban vaping product sales in unincorporated areas. The measure puts a one-year moratorium on the sale of vaping devices and permanently bars flavored nicotine.

The move comes amid growing rates of [teens vaping](#) and hundreds of [vaping-related lung illnesses](#) across the U.S. — including more than two dozen deaths. Health officials reported at least [25 confirmed or probable cases](#) in San Diego County.

The board's decision came after a lengthy and sometimes emotional public hearing. Supervisors Greg Cox, Nathan Fletcher and Dianne Jacob voted in favor of the ban, while their colleagues Jim Desmond and Kristin Gaspar opposed. The county's chief administrative officer will return to the board within 60 days with more specifics on how the county will enact the ban.

Public health advocates, researchers and some youth showed up to applaud the move and talked about the grip vaping products have on some teens. One college student said he'd witnessed peers go hungry to save up money to feed their nicotine addiction. Others pointed out that other flavored nicotine products, including menthol cigarettes and sweetened cigars, are not covered by the ban.

It is unclear how the final policy will apply to those items as well as the flavored e-liquids, but more specifics are expected when supervisors do a full review of the ordinance language.

Those opposed to the measure questioned whether the restrictions will do anything to improve public health. They pointed out that black market

tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) products appear to have caused most of the vaping-related illnesses and that vaping has helped many people quit smoking regular tobacco cigarettes. Some merchants who sell vaping products said their businesses would be seriously harmed by the ban.

However, the opponents said they do support stronger regulations for shops that illegally sell to underage minors and providing more education about the impact of vaping.

Federal health agencies said most sickened from vaping reported using THC-containing devices, many of which were purchased from illicit sources. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said a small group of patients reported exclusively vaping nicotine and therefore the substance is still part of the investigation.

The CDC advises against vaping all substances but both the agency and the Food and Drug Administration have [emphasized the dangers](#) of THC-containing devices and unregulated products of any sort. While Marijuana use is legal in California, it is still against federal law.

San Diego County Public Health Officer Dr. Wilma Wooten reiterated this information in a presentation to the supervisors and stated her support for the proposal introduced by Fletcher and Jacob.

"Because we do not know the actual cause of this outbreak, putting a ban—and this is a temporary ban of one year—on these products is warranted until we find out more information and the FDA has approved e-cigarette use in general," Dr. Wooten said.

The FDA has regulatory authority over electronic nicotine delivery systems, or e-cigarettes, but Acting Commissioner Ned Sharpless said in a [recent online post](#) that its "policies and procedures in this area are still evolving."

The policy proposed by Fletcher and Jacob includes a vaping public health awareness campaign, a tobacco retail licensing program and enhanced enforcement of laws that restrict the purchase of tobacco products to 21 years of age or older. It also outlaws smoking in outdoor dining areas and buffer zones to address second-hand smoke.

At the meeting, Jacob added county parking lots to that list, suggesting it be discussed with county employee bargaining units. She also proposed a carve-out for hookah vendors after testimony from industry representatives.

Fletcher seconded the amendments and supported moving forward despite concerns from local retailers.

"Folks are in business to feed your families and take care of your kids, I get that," Fletcher said. "But that's a motive that's profit. We have an obligation that's different than that. We have an obligation to do what we can to protect public health."

He added that the one-year ban on vaping devices will allow time for officials to develop proper regulations with industry input and could result in the moratorium lifting earlier.

Gaspar said she opposed the measure because it "misses the mark in favor of political grandstanding." She said she supports prevention programs and strong regulation to address youth usage, but said the proposed item from Jacob and Fletcher affected adult users and overlooked online sources that sell to kids.

"While I'm sure there are still kids out there who go to a store corner that does not have a thorough ID check, most kids go on their phones," Gaspar said.

Desmond, who cast the other no vote, said a ban would encourage black market purchases, which has been linked to the lung illness outbreak. He favors better enforcement of existing laws against sales to minors over adding regulations that "burden law-abiding businesses."

Supervisor Greg Cox said he agreed with Gaspar and Desmond's comments but supported the ban because the public health crisis required action.

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Ventura County supervisors could ban vape flavors

Tom Kiskien, Ventura County Star Published 5:45 p.m. PT Oct. 15, 2019 | Updated 8:29 a.m. PT Oct. 16, 2019

Ventura County supervisors said Tuesday they'll consider restrictions on vape shops, including a ban on flavored vaping products.

Supervisors voted 4-0 to ask staff to prepare an emergency ordinance that could place a moratorium on new vape and tobacco retail stores in the unincorporated areas of the county.

The moratorium would be aimed at allowing the county to prepare a licensing program for tobacco retailers that could include restrictions aimed at limiting youth access to vaping products.

The ordinance would also call for an interim licensing program that could include a ban on flavored products in unincorporated areas that could be quickly implemented.

The goal is to gain more control over vape shops, said Supervisor Linda Parks who introduced the request for the ordinance along with Supervisor Steve Bennett. She expressed particular concern about teen vaping, quoting data that suggests nearly one of three 11th-graders in Ventura County has used vaping products.

More: [Vaping injuries rise; county health officer cites telltale signs \(/story/news/local/2019/10/04/vaping-injuries-symptoms-signs-county-health/3864604002/\)](https://www.venturacounty.com/news/local/2019/10/04/vaping-injuries-symptoms-signs-county-health/3864604002/)

"They are the No. 1 users," Parks said of youth, contending flavored products are aimed directly at them.

"This is certainly a public health issue," she said.

Before the meeting, County Counsel Leroy Smith said staff would have to explore the county's legal authority to impose restrictions such as a ban on flavored products. The ordinance will be brought back to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors for consideration.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted earlier this month to ban flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes. The Ventura City Council asked its staff in July to prepare an ordinance that includes a flavor ban, also asking for information on the feasibility of banning online sales within the city.

Parks cited the dangers of nicotine contained in vaping products, also expressing concern about other ingredients. She focused too on the nationwide surge of severe lung disease linked to vaping.

Officials at the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention said there have been 1,300 lung injury cases linked to vaping with at least 26 deaths, including three in California. They said data suggests vape products containing THC play a major role in the outbreak, expressing particular concern about products obtained off the

Federal officials also said some patients have reported exclusively using nicotine vaping products. They continue to recommend people refrain from THC and nicotine vaping.

4 free articles left.

In Ventura County, 10 possible cases of lung illnesses linked to vaping have been reported. Eight have been accepted by the California Department of Public Health with the majority involving THC, said Ventura County Public Health Officer. Dr. Robert Levin.

"People are dying because of this," Parks said Tuesday.

The proposed ordinance brought praise from Rigoberto Vargas, director of Ventura County Public Health, and Sabrena Rodriguez, president of the Ventura Unified School District Board of Education.

More: [Ventura moves toward banning flavored tobacco, in shops and online \(/story/news/local/communities/ventura/2019/07/16/ventura-moves-toward-banning-flavored-tobacco-shops-and-online/1740704001/\)](https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/local/communities/ventura/2019/07/16/ventura-moves-toward-banning-flavored-tobacco-shops-and-online/1740704001/)

She cited rising vaping among kids, including at least one case in which an elementary school student was found with a vaping device.

"The point is to get these (products) out of the hands of our youth as quickly as possible," she said.

The legal age for buying tobacco products in California is 21. Audrey Scanlon, manager of Vape Creations in Ventura, said minors who obtain vape products usually get them online or by persuading an adult to make a purchase for them.

"We all agree no youths should be able to get their hands on (products) period," she said, suggesting that data on the extent of adolescent use is blown out of proportion.

Many vape supporters want regulation, including caps on the levels of nicotine in vape products, Scanlon said.

But if her shop were located in an unincorporated part of the county, a ban on flavored products could "put revenue so low we would eventually close our doors," she said, adding the flavors appeal to adults trying to quit cigarettes, Scanlon said.

More: [Vaping-related lung injury cases surge to 1,080; deaths rise to 18 \(/story/news/nation/2019/10/03/mayo-clinic-vaping-study-chemical-fumes-blame-lung-illnesses/3850859002/\)](https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/nation/2019/10/03/mayo-clinic-vaping-study-chemical-fumes-blame-lung-illnesses/3850859002/)

Ventura County supervisors unanimously voted to request legal staff to prepare the ordinance. Bennett was absent. They also expressed interest in a measure that would encourage cities in the county to take similar action.

According to county board materials, restrictions could affect not only flavors but could also regulate vaping and tobacco paraphernalia and the proximity of shops to schools.

Parks cited the announced federal plans for a ban on flavored products, suggesting the county needs to take action.

"We need to do what we can," she said.

Tom Kisken covers health care and other news for the Ventura County Star. Reach him at tom.kisken@vcstar.com or 805-437-0255.

FEATURED, LOCAL NEWS, TOP STORY

SEXUALLY VIOLENT PREDATOR MAY MOVE TO JOSHUA TREE

OCTOBER 17, 2019 | Z107.7 NEWS | LEAVE A COMMENT

A Ventura County judge has ordered that a convicted rapist and child molester be housed in Joshua Tree. Ross Wollshlager, 56, was convicted of multiple rapes and child molestations in Ventura County for crimes committed in 1983, in which he crept into the homes of his victims late at night and raped them. Wollshlager was paroled in 1987, and after his release from prison, he sexually assaulted a 10-year-old girl who was asleep in her own bed. He was convicted in 1996 and the state formally declared him a sexually violent predator. In January of this year, Judge Nancy Ayers ordered Liberty Healthcare to assist in the conditional release of Wollshlager into the community. (Liberty Healthcare is the organization contracted with the Department of State Hospitals to find housing for and provide outpatient treatment and supervision of sexually violent predators.) Liberty Healthcare attempted to find housing for Wollshlager in Sacramento County, but protests by residents last month forced Liberty to look elsewhere. Residents in north Joshua Tree were notified Wednesday by Sheriff's deputies that Wollshlager may be moving to the area of Aberdeen and Border Avenues. Wollshlager has no ties to Joshua Tree or San Bernardino County.



Ross Wollshlager

[Privacy - Terms](#)

Sheriff John McMahon, Sheriff's Captain Trevis Newport, Supervisor Dawn Rowe, and the District Attorney's office will hold a meeting Tuesday, October 21, at 5:30 p.m. in the Sportsman's Club, 6225 Sunburst Street in Joshua Tree. They will present information about the release of convicted child rapist Ross Wollschlager into Joshua Tree, and voice their opposition to his placement.

A final determination of Wollshlager's placement will be at a hearing in Ventura County on November 7.

Press release from the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office:

EMERGENCY




COMMUNITY MEETING

**JOIN SHERIFF JOHN MCMAHON, SUPERVISOR DAWN ROWE
AND THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

WHEN: OCTOBER 21, 5:30PM
WHERE: SPORTSMAN'S CLUB
ADDRESS: 6225 SUNBURST ST., JOSHUA TREE
SUBJECT: URGENT MEETING

MESSAGE:
 On Thursday, October 17, 2019, the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office announced they received a letter from the State of California Department of Hospitals concerning a residential placement recommendation made to the Ventura County Superior Court for the community placement of Ross Wollschlager, who was committed as a sexually violent predator, into the community of Joshua Tree. Members of local government would like to present information to concerned community members and voice our collective opposition of Wollschlager's placement within San Bernardino County, for the specific purpose of public safety and awareness. Under Welfare & Institutions Code §6609.2, Sheriff John McMahon has authority to give notice of any impending release of a sexually violent predator to any person. Captain Newport will inform those in attendance as to the court proceedings to date, as well as those subsequently scheduled, while informing the public regarding options available to affected communities.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT (909)387-4855**

Ross Leo Wollschlager is a convicted rapist and child molester from Ventura County, California. A Ventura County judge now proposes to drop this declared sexually violent predator into San Bernardino County. San Bernardino County DA Jason Anderson, Sheriff John McMahon, and county law enforcement strongly objects to Joshua Tree being a dumping site for a sexual predator with no connections to our county. A final determination of this predator's placement will be made in Ventura County Superior Court, Courtroom 13, on November 7, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. The Ventura County Superior Court is located at 800 South Victoria Road, Ventura, California.

San Bernardino County law enforcement has been notified that a Sexually Violent Predator from Ventura County may be released in Joshua Tree. This person, Ross Leo Wollschlager, has no ties to San Bernardino County. His crimes were committed in Ventura County. His prior grants of outpatient treatment and subsequent revocations of his outpatient status occurred in Ventura County. If he is to be released, San Bernardino County law enforcement thinks he should remain in Ventura County.

Ross Leo Wollschlager committed multiple rapes and child molestation. He has crept into homes of his victims late at night after first peeping in on them. Once inside, he would find his prey sleeping, and then commit rape. In 1983, Wollschlager was charged with four counts of rape, and convicted by his guilty plea of two counts of rape. After serving his sentence, he was paroled in 1987.

After his release from prison for rape, Wollschlager sexually assaulted a child, a 10-year-old girl asleep in her bed in her family's home. Her 9-year-old niece slept nearby. The girls tried to stop the sexual assault without success. Their screams awoke family members. They drove Wollschlager away. He was caught and convicted of committing lewd acts on a child. A Ventura County judge returned him to state prison.

Thereafter, because of his record, he was formally declared a Sexually Violent Predator under the state Welfare & Institutions Code in Ventura County and committed to the Department of State Hospitals for treatment from Ventura County.

On January 31, 2019, however, Judge Nancy Ayers of Ventura County Superior Court ordered Liberty Healthcare to assist in the conditional release of Ross Wollschlager into the community. (Liberty Healthcare is the organization contracted with the Department of State Hospitals to find housing for and provide outpatient treatment and supervision of Sexually Violent Predators.)

On March 28, 2019, Judge Ayers found "extraordinary circumstances" existed to authorize placing Wollschlager outside of Ventura County. He was first scheduled to be sent to Sacramento County.

After unsuccessfully attempting to place Wollschlager in Sacramento County, Judge Ayres then ordered Liberty Healthcare to consider additional counties, including San Bernardino County.

On September 19, 2019, Judge Ayers tentatively ordered Wollschlager be placed at a residence located in Joshua Tree. Law enforcement in San Bernardino County was recently informed of this, and strongly opposes taking responsibility for this Ventura County sexually violent predator. San Bernardino County DA Jason Anderson has ordered deputies of his own SVP Unit to go to Ventura County on November 7 and oppose Wollschlager’s release to our community.

Any further inquiries should be directed to the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department Public Affairs Division at paffairs@sbcasd.org

Contact: Kimberly Fuller, Executive Secretary by phone at (909) 382-7714 or by email at kfuller@sbcda.org

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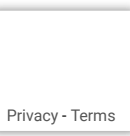
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Officials Voice Opposition to Plan to Relocate Violent Sexual Predator to Joshua Tree

POSTED 10:18 PM, OCTOBER 17, 2019, BY ERIKA MARTIN



Authorities in San Bernardino County said Thursday that they're fighting against plans to relocate a habitual sex offender to Joshua Tree.

Ross Leo Wollschlager, 56, has been convicted in multiple rapes, including that of a 10-year-old girl who was asleep in her family's home while he was on parole, according to a news release from San Bernardino County sheriff's officials.

Court and inmate records show the violent sexual predator was being held at Coalinga State Hospital in the Central Valley after being released from custody in Ventura County on Oct. 3.

A hearing on where Wollschlager will be placed into society is set for Nov. 7. San Bernardino County officials plan to attend the proceedings and oppose the move, arguing that he has no ties to their jurisdiction.

In 1983, Wollschlager was charged with four counts of rape, but he was only convicted on two counts after negotiating a plea deal with prosecutors, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

Deputies say he was granted parole in 1987, and it was after that that he sexually assaulted the 10-year-old girl. He returned to prison, but was subsequently placed in a state mental health hospital.

Wollschlager was later released from a mental institution in 2007, and the state hired Liberty Healthcare Corp. to resettle him after he wound up living in the Ventura River bottom, according to the Los Angeles Times.

In 2010, the Thousand Oaks Acorn reported that he had quietly returned to a state mental hospital.

But this January, a Ventura County court ordered Liberty Healthcare to help relocate Wollschlager into society.



A section of open roadway stands before sunrise at Joshua Tree National Park on Jan. 4, 2019. (Credit: Mario Tama / Getty Images)

San Bernardino County officials say the court determined that “extraordinary circumstances” authorized him to be placed outside of Ventura County. After an attempt to resettle him in Sacramento County failed, Liberty Healthcare began seeking other options.

On Sept. 19, the court tentatively ordered Wollschlager to live at a residence in Joshua Tree, according to the Sheriff’s Department.

San Bernardino County District Attorney Jason Anderson and Sheriff John McMahon both say they strongly object to the decision, and Anderson ordered officials from his office to attend the Nov. 7 hearing.

A community meeting on the issue will take place at Sportsman’s Club – 6225 Sunburst Ave. in Joshua Tree – at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 21.

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Climate Change May Pose Threat to Joshua Trees, Prompting Group to Seek Tougher California Protections

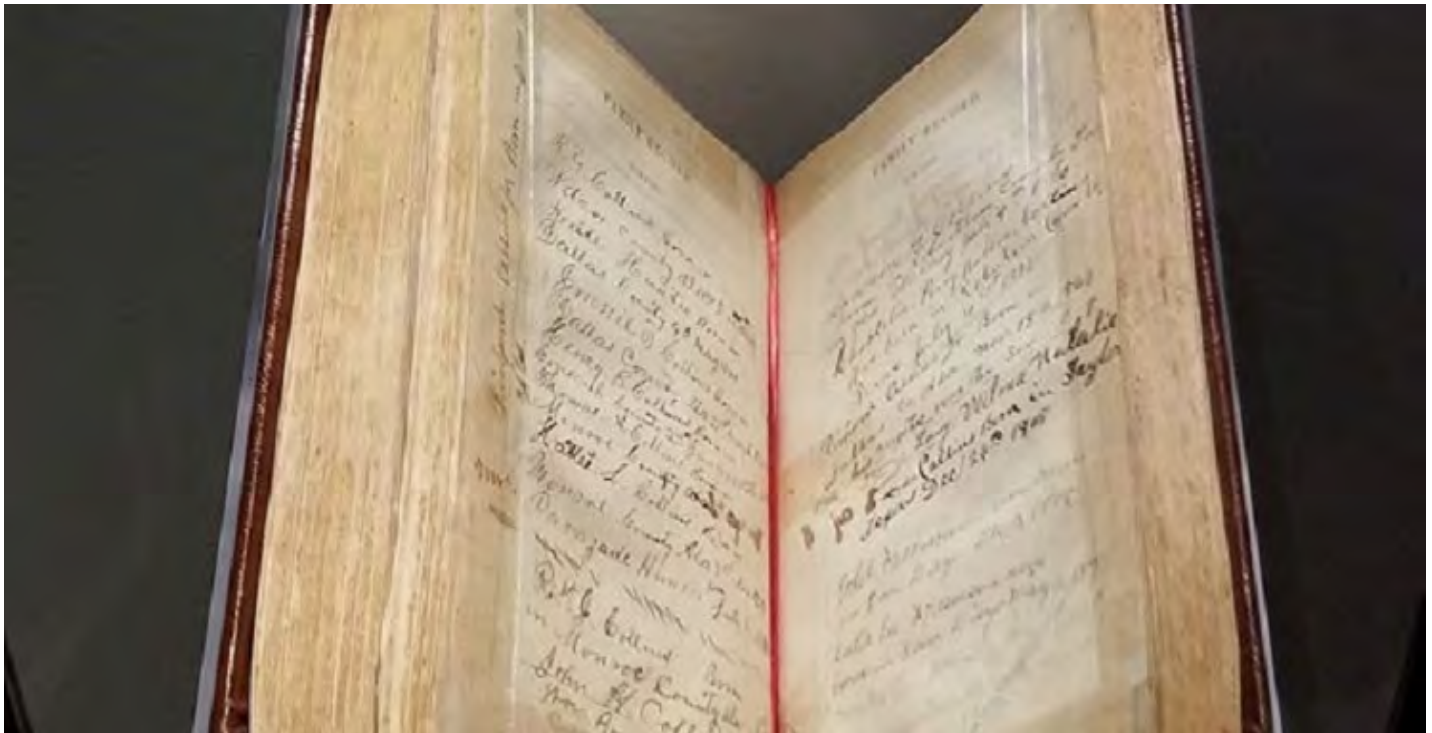
Missing Venice Man’s Burned Body Found in Joshua Tree; 2 Women, Man Charged With Murder: Authorities

Joshua Tree Man Arrested at High School, Accused of Sex With Underage Girl



African American experience subject at Victor Valley Museum

By **Press Release** - October 17, 2019



Date: October 17, 2019

Time: 15:00-17:00

Location: 11873 Apple Valley Rd,
Apple Valley, CA 92308

[Click here for more info](#)

Community

Conversation features Richard Diggs and Hardy Brown II

Apple Valley, Ca -The Victor Valley Museum is proud to host a remarkable conversation featuring Richard Allen Collins Diggs and Hardy Brown II, two historians with powerful stories about different aspects of the African American experience. The presentation takes place this Saturday, Oct. 19, 3 to 5 p.m. at the Victor Valley Museum, 11873 Apple Valley Rd, Apple Valley.

The emergence of a family bible in 1985 led Richard



Diggs to the discovery of 150 years of documents — birth, marriage and death records — to piece together the pre- and post-slave experiences of the Collins family, from Africa to the Americas. Beginning in 1618, Diggs recounts the remarkable family trajectory including the first people to be taken as indentured servants until 1720 when they were forced into chattel slavery. The Collins family bible is on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C.

Hardy Brown II is the Executive Director of the Black Voice Foundation and Curator of Footsteps to You: Chattel Slavery, Objects from the Gore Collection. This award-winning exhibit tells the story of chattel slavery in America through the objects collected by Jerry Gore, a historian whose lifelong goal was to expose the horrors of slavery so that visitors to his hometown of Maysville, Kentucky could appreciate the daily perils experienced by enslaved people as well as the strength it required to fight for their freedom. The collection is now owned and stewarded by the Black Voice Foundation, and will be exhibited at Victor Valley Museum through December 22.

Event ticket includes a reception of light hors d'oeuvres and tour of the exhibit Footsteps to You: Chattel Slavery.

The Victor Valley Museum and the County Museum's other exciting events and exhibits reflect the effort by the Board of Supervisors to achieve the Countywide Vision by celebrating the arts, culture, and education in the county, creating quality of life for residents and visitors.



The Victor Valley Museum is a branch of the San Bernardino County Museum located at 11873 Apple Valley Road in Apple Valley. Regular museum days and hours are Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission to the talk is included with general admission: \$5 (adult), \$4 (senior or military), and \$2.50 (student), EBT cardholders are \$1. Children under 5 and the San Bernardino County Museum Association members are free. Parking is free. For more information, visit www.sbcounty.gov/museum. The museum is accessible to persons with disabilities.



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San Bernardino County Museum Hosts Science Spooktacular

By **Press Release** - October 17, 2019



Date: October 26, 2019

Time: 11:00-16:00

Location: 2024 Orange Tree Ln,
Redlands, CA 92374

[Click here for more info](#)

Community

Live Bats and Mummy Science Featured

Redlands, Ca-Have you ever wondered what makes a witch's cauldron boil or how mummies have lasted thousands of years? Venture into the museum and explore the science around the spookiest time of the year! The event for all ages takes place at the San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands on Saturday, Oct. 26, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Face the rarities, oddities, and just plain spooky of the museum's collection as you visit curated booths featuring fossils, radioactive minerals, night crawlers, bats, and more. Featuring a bone chilling scavenger hunt highlighting the stories of potions, rituals, night creatures, and the science of decay. Only the bravest

will succeed and make it through to the ghostly selfie station and become a certified mad scientist.

A number of local partners are participating including anthropologist Dr. Guy Hepp of Cal State University San Bernardino, paleontologist Dr. William Gelnow, wildlife biologist and bat conservationist Jill Novelle, mummy expert Chey Midkiff, the Geology club of CSUSB, UCCE Master Gardeners, and more.

According to museum curator of earth sciences Crystal Cortez, "Science Spooktacular is an opportunity for the museum to present fascinating science-based stories about some of the earth's most remarkable phenomenon and natural processes, like how fossils form and what makes deadly minerals."

The San Bernardino County Museum's exhibits of regional, cultural and natural history and the Museum's other exciting events and programs reflect the effort by the Board of Supervisors to achieve the Countywide Vision by celebrating arts, culture, and education in the county, creating quality of life for residents and visitors.

The San Bernardino County Museum is at 2024 Orange Tree Lane, at the California Street exit from Interstate 10 in Redlands. The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Science Spooktacular is included with general admission: \$10 (adult), \$8 (military or senior), \$7 (student), and \$5 (child aged 5 to 12). Children under five and Museum Association members are admitted free. Parking is free. For more information, visit www.sbcounty.gov/museum. The museum is accessible to persons with disabilities.



https://www.fontana Herald News.com/entertainment/lewis-library-in-fontana-will-hold-sweet-treat-event-on/article_77840b66-f11a-11e9-837a-5344112799fa.html

Lewis Library in Fontana will hold 'sweet treat' event on Oct. 22

Oct 17, 2019 Updated 18 hrs ago



Local residents enjoyed going to the Lewis Library for an event in September. The next special event is Oct. 22.

The Lewis Library and Technology Center is inviting residents to have a sweet time at the upcoming "sweet treat" event.

The free event will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 22 from 4 to 7 p.m. at 8437 Sierra Avenue.

Children can meet Vanellope Von Schweetz from the Candyland Kingdom during the event. 

Families can also enjoy a variety of fun-filled crafts, face painting, balloon artists, and other activities.

Visitors should bring their library cards, as every 15 items checked out during the events will earn them an opportunity drawing ticket for a chance to win prizes.

----- IN ADDITION, students can earn food prizes by participating in the Baker's Book Club at the Lewis Library from Oct. 7 through Nov. 23.

Students ages 4-12 can receive food coupons at Baker's Drive-Thru restaurants by reading 200 pages (Level 1), 400 pages (Level 2), or 600 pages (Level 3.)

Students ages 13-17 can get food coupons by reading 500 pages (Level 1), 800 pages (Level 2) or 1,100 pages (Level 3).



The Level 1 prize is a free ice cream milkshake, the Level 2 prize is a free bean and cheese burrito with a small fry and small drink, and the Level 3 prize is a free Single Baker and milkshake.

All students who reach Level 3 will be entered into a drawing for the grand prize, a Samsung Galaxy Tab A.

For more information about events at the Lewis Library, call (909) 574-4500.





https://www.highlandnews.net/business/sb-airport-hosts-chinese-ambassador-businesses/article_c5adbdbef124-11e9-a74b-f3e9c9815852.html

FEATURED

SB airport hosts Chinese ambassador, businesses

Jason Miller 17 hrs ago

1 of 2



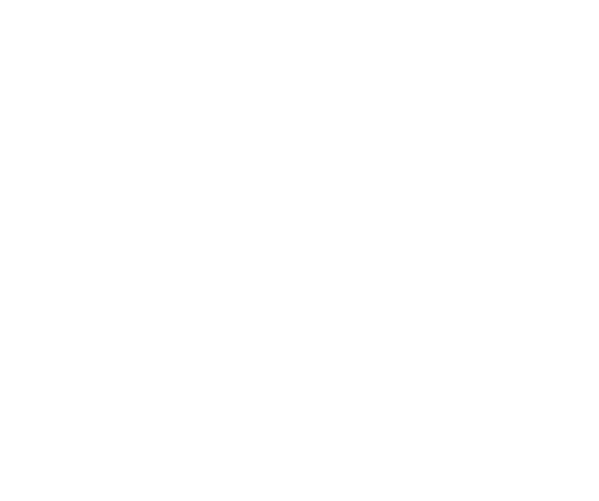
Ambassador Zhang Ping, left, and San Bernardino Mayor John Valdivia discuss trade opportunities between China and Bernardino during the China/San Bernardino International Trade Symposium on Oct. 11.

Jason Miller

Over 300 hundred people from around Southern California attended the 2019 China/San Bernardino International Trade Symposium at the San Bernardino International Airport (SBD) on Friday, Oct. 11.

Attending the event was Highland Mayor Penny Lilburn, Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales, San Bernardino Mayor John Valdivia and Ambassador Zhang Ping from The Consulate General for the Peoples Republic of China to name a few.

Six Chinese-based airlines attended to explore the possibility of bringing flights into SBD.



“This is all dependent on whether [President Thrump] can sign a future U.S.-China trade deal,” said Valdivia.

Cargo and exports are also a big factor; during a Q-and-A session, Ping mentioned that people in China prefer the cherries sold to them from San Bernardino County compared to Chile.

Trade was not the only thing discussed; Ping said that “40,000 students were exploring attending Cal State San Bernardino.”



Ad



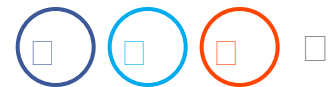
Ping also said that the Chinese government polled its citizens and 1.2 million people want to visit California.

The issue of unions was also brought up during the session and how the airport would negotiate with them on an upcoming cargo logistics development; Gonzales addressed this saying, "It's important as this airport grows that we work in partnership with our unions," "because we need to keep in mind that unions exist because there are jobs, without a job there is no organized union," and "it's a partnership we need to create."

The Q-and-A session ended with an invitation to Ping to attend the SBD Fest on Nov. 2-3.

Jason Miller





NEWS

Rialto water district's new CFO's spotty record includes fiscal malfeasance in Hawthorne

Rickey Manbahal was forced to resign in the South Bay city after officials learned he had 'borrowed' \$25,000 from city coffers





In this June 2015 file photo, former Hawthorne Finance Director Rickey Manbahal addresses the City Council during a meeting about budget deficits. (Photo by Steve McCrank, Daily Breeze/SCNG)

By **JOE NELSON** | jnelson@scng.com and **SCOTT SCHWEBKE** | sschwebke@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun

PUBLISHED: October 17, 2019 at 6:07 pm | UPDATED: October 18, 2019 at 12:24 am

The new chief financial officer for the embattled West Valley Water District in Rialto admitted to fiscal malfeasance while working as Hawthorne's finance director and was forced to resign last year after officials there learned he took out a secret \$25,000 personal loan from the city.

Shamindra "Rickey" Manbahal acknowledged publicly in June 2015 he helped cover up the city's \$5.6 million deficit by using millions of dollars in reserve funds to plug huge budget gaps. At the time, however, the city was not aware of the \$25,000 loan, approved by the city's then top administrator,

subsequently learning of it from an internal investigation that led to Manbahal's dismissal in May 2018.



West Valley Water District offices in Rialto. (Photo courtesy of West Valley Water District).

Manbahal requested the “emergency” loan in October 2014 due to personal financial problems, even though he subsequently admitted to an investigator that he helped pay half of a roughly \$120,000 tab for his daughter’s wedding four months later, in February 2015, according to a 22-page investigation report released by the city.

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Hawthorne submitted its case on Manbahal to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for consideration of criminal charges, but the office declined to file.

"The district attorney's Public Integrity Division received documents that did not support the initiation of a criminal investigation," office spokeswoman Shiara Davila-Morales said.

Manbahal paid the loan back in full, Hawthorne City Attorney Russ Miyahira said in an email Thursday.

Hired in August without a contract

In August, the West Valley Water District in Rialto appointed Manbahal its new CFO, without a contract and without a background check. He immediately began work, but a contract was not approved until Sept. 19, when the district's board of directors approved, on a 3-2 vote with board members Clifford Young and Greg Young dissenting, to hire Manbahal while a background check was still pending, according to water district records.

According to Manbahal's employment contract, he receives a salary of \$174,970 and a package of benefits, including 120 hours of administrative leave, 120 hours of vacation annually, 96 hours of sick leave each year, up to \$5,000 annually in tuition for continued education, and up to \$125,000 in life insurance.

Fired from city of Novato

Less than a month before Manbahal was appointed as the water district's top money manager, the city of Novato fired him as a financial consultant after learning what occurred in Hawthorne. At the time, he was working for consultant MV Cheng & Associates, which contracts with the water district.

Manbahal had also performed work for the water district as a subcontractor for MV Cheng prior to his appointment as the district's CFO.

Water District General Manager Clarence Mansell Jr. said both Manbahal and Misty Cheng, CEO of MV Cheng & Associates, disclosed their firing in Novato to the water district, but said it was politically motivated.

Problems in Florida, too?

Additionally, a man with the same name and birth date as Manbahal was charged in 2005 with two felonies, grand theft and engaging in contracting without certification, in Palm Beach County, Florida, when he was working as a contractor, according to court records.

Ultimately, the Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office decided not to prosecute the man and the case was closed.

Mansell claimed the man charged in the Florida case was not Manbahal.

"These matters did not show up in our background investigation," Mansell said.

Additionally, he said, Manbahal "vehemently denies" he was charged in Palm Beach, claiming he was informed by a law enforcement agency that he actually was a victim of identity theft instead. "We will be contacting the law enforcement agency to verify his statements," Mansell said.

Kathleen Einhorn said Thursday she paid Manbahal about \$10,000 in 2005 to install cabinets in her Lake Worth, Florida, home, but no work was done. When Einhorn went to Manbahal's business, Capital Custom Cabinetry, in nearby Boca Raton to complain, she was perplexed to find cabinets being built for other customers but not for her.

"I think what was happening, as money was coming in, they were applying it to build cabinets for whoever complained the most," she said.

Einhorn sued Manbahal but Capital Custom Cabinetry declared bankruptcy and she was unable to recoup any of her money.

Candid about Hawthorne troubles

West Valley Water District board President Mike Taylor said in a telephone interview Wednesday that Manbahal was candid about his background with Hawthorne during an interview, and he was hired on condition that if the district learned he withheld any pertinent information, he would be fired.

"He was up front about everything that happened in Hawthorne right out the gate," Taylor said.

Manbahal downplayed the magnitude of the incidents in Hawthorne in a statement Wednesday, saying he voluntarily informed the water district of a "political claim" made against him while working in Hawthorne. He did not respond Thursday when asked to elaborate on what he meant by "political claim," who made the claim and why.

"I remain focused on improving the financial practices of the District to better serve our ratepayers," Manbahal said in his statement.

West Valley board director Clifford Young disputes the assertion that a proper background check was conducted on Manbahal and that the board was privy to what happened in Hawthorne and elsewhere.

“That’s a bald-face lie,” Young said, adding he learned about the Hawthorne incident through media reports, not from Manbahal. “He never disclosed it to me.”

Young ultimately voted against employing Manbahal. “I had some problems with him being fired by the city of Hawthorne that were not brought to my attention,” he said. “I was very disturbed about the process of his hiring by the water district.”

Young also is unaware that Manbahal underwent a thorough background check by the water district.

“Why would you hire him if you didn’t do a background check?” he asked. “Overall, it’s disturbing when people are hired by the district in executive positions without going through proper procedures or background checks because, when they come to the board for approval, we don’t know anything about them. It’s highly inappropriate.”

Young, former CFO Naisha Davis, and Patricia Romero, now an administrative services analyst, have sued some of the district’s board members, lawyers and consultants in Los Angeles Superior Court alleging widespread corrupt practices, including bribery and kickbacks.

The defendants call the allegations erroneous and the lawsuit politically motivated because it is an election year and Young lost his position and power as water district board president.

Manbahal doing well

Taylor said Manbahal has helped resolve many of the district’s financial issues.

“It was nice to have someone who applied for the job who could hit the ground running,” said Taylor, noting that he was unaware Manbahal had been working for the district, with consultant MV Cheng & Associates, before Manbahal applied for the CFO position.

Taylor said Manbahal was the top candidate out of a pool of applicants, and he wanted to hire him quickly to fill the CFO post and help stabilize water district operations. He said the district has had roughly a half-dozen or more CFOs in the last three or four years.

“We needed full-time people in there. You can’t run the district on contract people all the time. We’re trying to stabilize the organization with permanent executives,” Taylor said.

Board director Greg Young said he was “deeply concerned” given Manbahal’s history.

“The hiring is just another corrupt hiring in a long string of highly questionable selections designed not to improve how West Valley is run but to continue a system of patronage for the current regime,”

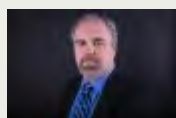
Young said in an email. “There is no legitimate reason to hire Mr. Manbahal given his history in Hawthorne.”

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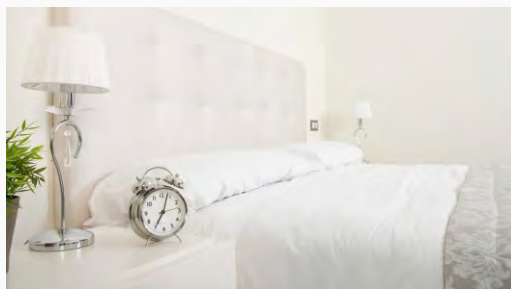


Joe Nelson

Joe Nelson is an award-winning investigative reporter who has worked for The Sun since November 1999. He started as a crime reporter and went on to cover a variety of beats including courts and the cities of Colton, Highland and Grand Terrace. He has covered San Bernardino County since 2009.

Nelson is a graduate of California State University Fullerton. In 2014, he completed a fellowship at Loyola Law School's Journalist Law School program.

[Follow Joe Nelson @GumshoeJoe](#)



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By AMAG Pharmaceuticals



This is a common symptom of a chronic condition—one that many postmenopausal women experience.



Scott Schwebke

Scott Schwebke is an investigative reporter for the Register and the Southern California News Group. A native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., he was previously a breaking news and multimedia reporter for the Ogden, Utah, Standard-Examiner. Scott has also worked at newspapers in Colorado, North Carolina

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Comments (0)

State Senator, Assemblymember and Local Dignitaries Celebrate Establishment of the California University of Science and Medicine's New Campus, Scheduled to Be Completed in May 2020

October 17, 2019 12:33 PM EDT

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Colton, CA, Oct. 17, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The California University of Science and Medicine (CUSM), one of California's newest medical schools, celebrated the completion of its foundation with a beam signing event on Tuesday, September 17. Nearly 100 guests including dignitaries, faculty, staff and students, as well as CUSM's Board of Trustees and Founder, entered the construction zone to leave their mark on the core of the university's new building.



The California University of Science and Medicine celebrated the completion of its foundation with a

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beam signing event on Tuesday, September 17. The new campus is scheduled to be completed in May of 2020. The event was well attended by Senator Connie Leyva; Assemblywoman Eloise Gomez Reyes; Supervisor Robert Lovingood; Colton Mayor Frank Navarro; Supervisor Josie Gonzales; San Bernardino Community College District Board Member Frank Reyes; Colton Unified School District Board Member Dan Flores; and by representatives from Congressman Paul Cook's office, State Senator Mike Morrell's office, and Assemblyman James Ramos' office.



"We are pleased to celebrate this significant milestone for CUSM and to recognize the progress that has been made. This beam and the many signatures on it reflect the many hands and many partners who have helped to make this day possible and to ensure that CUSM will be successful in training the next generation of healthcare professionals of, by, and for this region," said Paul Lyons, MD, Dean and President of California University of Science and Medicine.

Gathered under the cover of the three-story concrete structure, CUSM's supporters shared their hopes for the future of the University, deep gratitude to CUSM Founder and Chair of the Board Prem Reddy, MD, and stories of CUSM's significance to the Inland Empire. The event culminated with the opportunity for all attendees to sign a supporting steel column in the heart of the 85,000-square foot structure.

"I am so grateful for the partnerships we have built with Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, our County Board of Supervisors and the esteemed legislators who have supported us in many ways," said Dr. Reddy. "CUSM was founded with a vision to advance medicine, train exceptional physicians and improve the health of communities, especially underserved communities like our own County of San Bernardino." Dr. Reddy is also the Chairman, President and CEO of Prime Healthcare, one of the nation's leading health systems with 45 hospitals in 14 states.

CUSM launched in 2018 and currently has a student body of 164 Doctor of Medicine (MD) candidates and 48 Master of Biomedical Science candidates who are pursuing their medical education at the school's San Bernardino location until this summer, when the new campus opens in Colton, adjacent to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center.

"Dr. Reddy, I heard all those titles you have; the next one is dreamer and maker of dreams," said

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Assemblywoman Eloise Gomez Reyes, who represents CUSM and the 47th District in the California Legislature. “Knowing that you’re going to provide these opportunities for students of the Inland Empire, to come here to study medicine and to practice it in the Inland Empire, is one of the best things that anyone can do for the Inland Empire.”

Studies have shown that a majority of physicians practice medicine within 75 miles of their residency programs, and the Inland Empire area is particularly underserved when it comes to healthcare. In San Bernardino County, there are only 34.5 primary care physicians per 100,000 residents, far below the benchmark of 60 to 80 doctors per 100,000.

Senator Connie Leyva presented CUSM with a state proclamation, sharing her personal connection to Colton and her desire to see the region continue to grow, while addressing the area’s healthcare disparities.

“When we work together, we win together, and we would not be standing here today if it wasn’t for every single person in this room,” said the Senator. “I want to thank everyone for their dedication to the Inland Empire, to Colton. The fact that we will have a world-class medical school in the Inland Empire is such a blessing for all of us.”

San Bernardino County Supervisor Robert Lovingood shared his support for the new medical school. “I’ve been a witness to the Reddy family and what they mean first to the High Desert and now to what they bring to all of San Bernardino. Your generosity, your support of students. It’s incredible,” Lovingood said. “As we move forward, California can’t understate the need for the physicians that this university is going to create. I thank you Dr. Reddy and I thank your family for this opportunity.”

“The founding of CUSM is a monumental achievement that will create a lasting legacy that will benefit medicine, communities across the world and especially this community, which is its home,” said Kavitha Bhatia, MD, MMM, FAAP, CUSM Founding Vice Chair of the Board. The state-of-the-art medical school will reflect the latest in medical education design. “Most importantly it’s not the structure, but it’s the people and learning that will happen within. A place where students grow into physicians. Where the highest levels of learning are pursued. Where medicine is advanced and where dreams will be realized.”

CUSM first-year medical student, Kylee Borger, expressed excitement over the school’s creation as a local who “practically grew up” in the Arrowhead Regional Medical Center Emergency Room – not as a patient, but shadowing her mother, a registered nurse, and her father, an emergency room physician. Ms. Borger earned a Bachelor of Arts from NYU Shanghai, and a Master of Public Health from Emory University prior to entering medical school at CUSM last summer.

“Arrowhead is the place I fell in love with medicine and that ignited my desire to become a medical student,” said Borger. “CUSM shares my desire to improve the health of those in underserved communities while being advocates for the elimination of health disparities,” Borger added.

When complete, the university’s campus will be a state-of-the-art medical training facility located adjacent to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, the university’s teaching hospital. Arrowhead Regional Medical Center physicians and leaders also attended the event and ARMC Director, William L. Gilbert, spoke about his facility’s collaborative role as the university’s teaching hospital.

“Education and research are shared priorities for us at Arrowhead and at CUSM. I am so proud of what we are doing here in Colton, California. We think this will inspire others to become healthcare professionals and practice right here in San Bernardino,” said Gilbert.

“The City of Colton is very proud to be a part of the collaborative effort in supporting Dr. Reddy and the whole team. I know that the evolution of this institution will extend to other areas of medicine, such as pharmacy, nursing, psychiatry, and other medical fields. We will be there to support these future endeavors,” commented Frank Navarro, Mayor of the City of Colton

In addition to Senator Leyva, Assemblywoman Gomez Reyes, Supervisor Lovingood and Mayor Navarro, the event was attended by Supervisor Josie Gonzales; San Bernardino Community College District Board Member Frank Reyes; Colton Unified School District Board Member Dan Flores; and by representatives from Congressman Paul Cook’s office, State Senator Mike Morrell’s office, Assemblyman James Ramos’ office, San Bernardino County Medical Society, and the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health, among others.

About the California University of Science and Medicine

California University of Science and Medicine (CUSM) is dedicated to advancing the art and science of medicine through medical education, research, and compassionate healthcare delivery in an inclusive environment that inspires, motivates and empowers students to become excellent and caring physicians, scientists, and leaders. CUSM is a not-for-profit health sciences university established in 2015, led by a dynamic group of MD/PhD faculty members. CUSM offers a Master in Biomedical Sciences degree program and a Doctor of Medicine (MD) program to prepare its diverse student body for careers in healthcare, public service, teaching and research. Learn more at www.cusm.org.

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Attachment

- [CUSM Steel Beam Signing Grid](#)



https://www.highlandnews.net/online_features/education/sbccd-opens-new-building/article_14195dec-f10b-11e9-b0ce-1f02b1539ee9.html

SBCCD opens new building

19 hrs ago



SBCCD's new three-story building located at 550 E. Hospitality Lane, Suite 200, San Bernardino, CA 92408
Photo Courtesy of SBCCD



The San Bernardino Community College District is expanding its reach and its investment in the community with a move to a new building on Hospitality Lane.

Move-in day is Friday, Oct. 18 to a three-story building located at 550 E. Hospitality Lane, Suite 200, San Bernardino, CA 92408.

The community college district will move several offices into the second floor, including business services, human resources, facilities planning, public affairs, technology, research planning, and the chancellor's office. This building will also house the meeting room for the public meetings of the Board of Trustees.

The public will have an opportunity to see the new space at a study session with the board at noon on Thursday, Oct. 24. The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be 4 p.m. Nov. 14.

When guests enter the building, they will find a commemorative plaque on the first floor that reads, "On the eve of the San Bernardino Community College District's first 100 years of public service, this building is dedicated to our community as a bridge to a better tomorrow."

The first floor is leased by Molina Healthcare, and the third floor is being leased by the law firm, Gresham | Savage. The rental revenue will go to the SBCCD to benefit students who are part of The Free College Promise at San Bernardino Valley College and Crafton Hills College.



At a public board meeting last year, Chancellor Bruce Baron recommended that the Board of Trustees approve buying a larger building to save on the cost of leasing space in Redlands for its IT department. The purchase of the three-story building was supported by a portion of the proceeds from the FCC auction of some of the broadcast signal from KVCR, the public radio and TV stations owned and operated by the community college district.

The former headquarters at 114 S. Del Rosa Drive will continue to be used as office space for the district's Inland Futures Foundation, and the Economic Development & Corporate Training division; now called iLEAD (Institute for Local Economic Advancement and Development).

The San Bernardino Community College District serves approximately 18,000 students who are seeking career training or transfer to UC or Cal State.

"We are making transformative changes to meet our community's needs," Baron said. "As we approach our 100th birthday in 2026, we want even more students, parents, alumni, educators, philanthropists, business, and civic leaders to join us in our educational mission."



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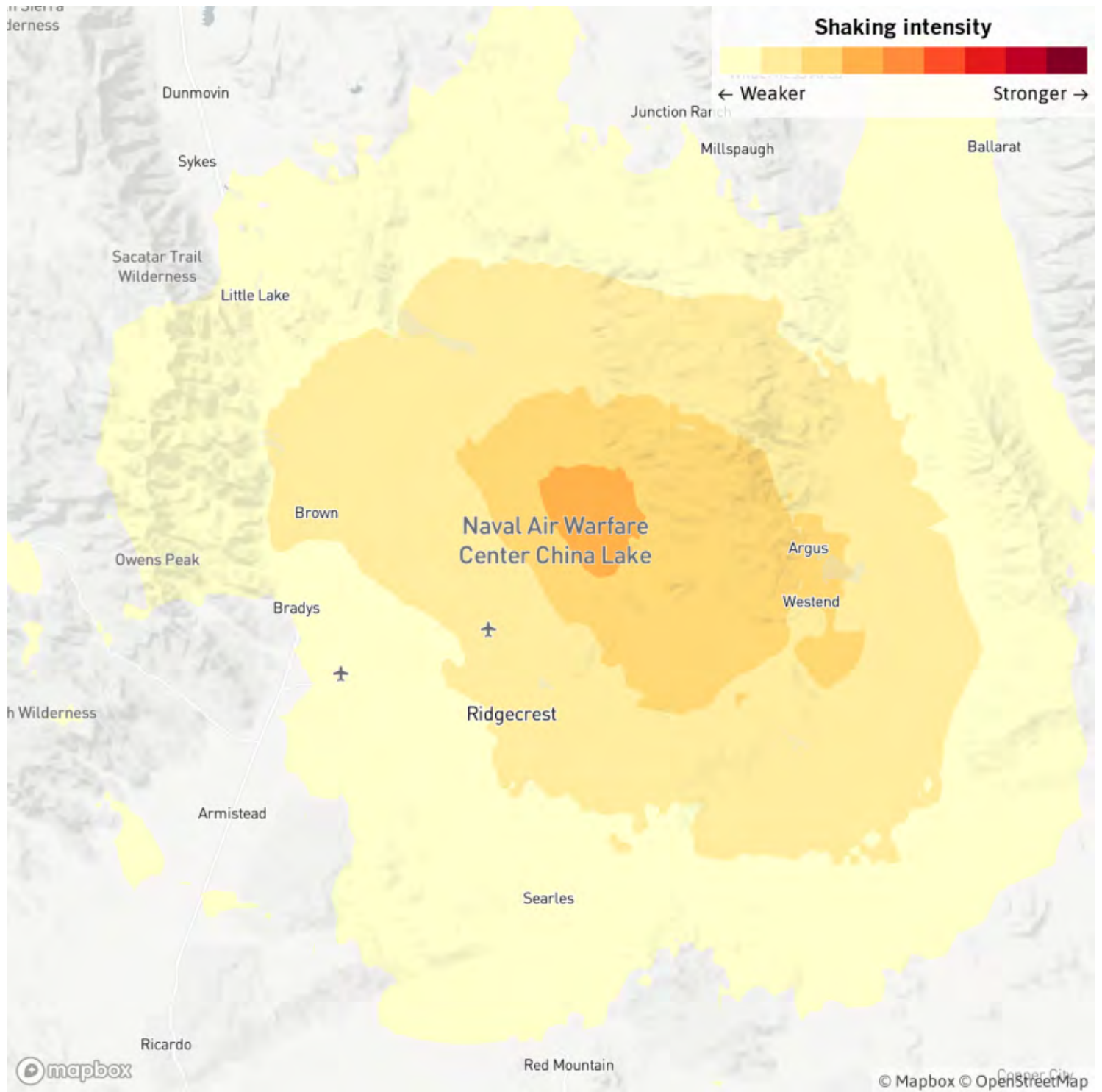
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CALIFORNIA

Earthquake: 3.8 quake hits near Ridgecrest, Calif.



OCT. 17, 2019
10:56 PM



A magnitude 3.8 earthquake was reported Thursday evening at 10:34 p.m., six miles from Ridgecrest, Calif., according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The earthquake occurred 34 miles from California City, 63 miles from Tehachapi and 66 miles from Barstow.

In the past 10 days, there have been two earthquakes of magnitude 3.0 or greater centered nearby.

An average of 234 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3.0 and 4.0 occur per year in California and Nevada, according to a recent three year data sample.

The earthquake occurred at a depth of 4.9 miles. Did you feel this earthquake? Consider [reporting what you felt](#) to the USGS.

Even if you didn't feel this small earthquake, you never know when the Big One is going to strike. Ready yourself by following our five-step [earthquake preparedness guide](#) and building your own [emergency kit](#).

This story was automatically generated by Quakebot, a computer application that monitors the latest earthquakes detected by the USGS. A Times editor reviewed the post before it was published. If you're interested in learning more about the system, visit our list of [frequently asked questions](#).



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Unprecedented movement detected on California earthquake fault capable of 8.0 temblor



Buckled asphalt in a parking lot in Argus, Calif., after the Ridgecrest earthquakes in July. (Robert Gauthier / Los Angeles Times)

By RONG-GONG LIN II
STAFF WRITER

OCT. 17, 2019
1:45 PM



A major California fault capable of producing a magnitude 8 earthquake has begun moving for the first time on record, a result of this year's Ridgecrest earthquake sequence destabilizing nearby faults, Caltech scientists say in a new study released in the journal *Science* on Thursday.

In the modern historical record, the 160-mile-long Garlock fault on the northern edge of the Mojave Desert has never been observed to produce either a strong earthquake or even to creep.

But new satellite radar images now show that the fault has started to move, causing a bulging of land that can be viewed from space.

“This is surprising, because we’ve never seen the Garlock fault do anything. Here, all of a sudden, it changed its behavior,” said the lead author of the [study](#), Zachary Ross, assistant professor of geophysics at Caltech. “We don’t know what it means.”



The creeping illustrates how the Ridgecrest quakes — the largest in Southern California in two decades — have destabilized this remote desert region of California between the state's greatest mountain range, the Sierra Nevada, and its lowest point, Death Valley.

It's also punctures a persistent myth that circulates in California and beyond — that quakes like the Ridgecrest temblors are somehow a good thing that makes future quakes less likely. In fact, earthquakes make future earthquakes more likely. Most of the time, the follow-up quakes are smaller. But occasionally, they're bigger.

Not only has the Garlock fault begun to creep in one section, but there's also been a substantial swarm of small earthquakes in another section of the fault, and two additional clusters of earthquakes elsewhere — one south of Owens Lake and the other in the Panamint Valley just west of Death Valley.

Whether the destabilization will result in a major quake soon cannot be predicted. In September, the U.S. Geological Survey said [the most likely scenario](#) is that the Ridgecrest quakes probably won't trigger a larger earthquake. Nevertheless, the USGS said that the July quakes have raised the chances of an earthquake of magnitude 7.5 or more on the nearby Garlock, Owens Valley, Blackwater and Panamint Valley faults over the next year.



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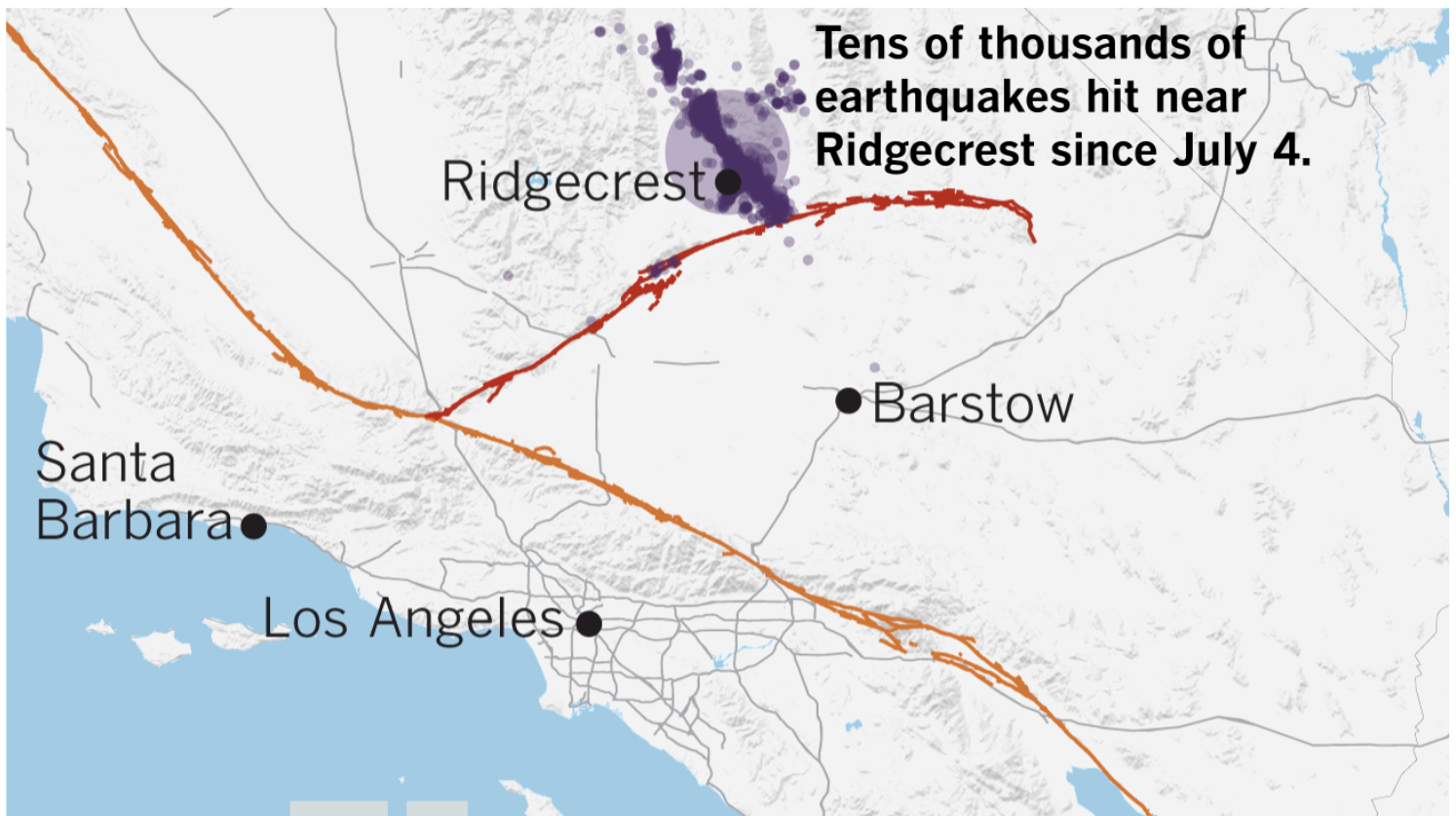
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By Hewlett Packard Enterprise

A large quake on the Garlock fault has the potential to send strong shaking to the San Fernando Valley, Santa Clarita, Lancaster, Palmdale, Ventura, Oxnard, Bakersfield and Kern County, one of the nation's most productive regions for agriculture and oil.

Important military installations could also get strong shaking, such as Edwards Air Force Base, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake and Fort Irwin National Training Center. The fault is crossed by two of Southern California's most important supplies of imported water — the California and Los Angeles aqueducts — and critical roads like Interstate 5, state routes 14 and 58 and U.S. 395.

A major quake on the Garlock fault could then, in turn, destabilize the San Andreas. A powerful earthquake on a stretch of the roughly 300-mile-long southern San Andreas fault could cause the worst shaking the Southern California region has felt since 1857, and send destructive tremors through Los Angeles and beyond.



One plausible scenario involves the Ridgecrest quakes triggering a large temblor on the Garlock fault, which then triggers a seismic event on the San Andreas. The chances of such an event happening are small. Another plausible scenario, not mapped, involves a rupture of faults southeast of the Ridgecrest quakes. (Jon Schleuss / Los Angeles Times)

A creeping fault triggered by a nearby quake doesn't necessarily mean a big quake is coming. The southernmost tip of the San Andreas fault has traditionally crept in response to distant quakes, including the magnitude 8.2 quake off the coast of southern Mexico in 2017, nearly 2,000 miles away. "But that doesn't mean the San Andreas went off," said USGS research geologist Kate Scharer, who was not part of the study.

What's unusual now, Ross said, is that the Garlock fault has been seismically quiet in the historical record until now. And while it's unclear what the creeping and aftershocks might mean for the near future, the newly recorded movement highlights how much of a potential risk the Garlock fault is to California, should it rupture in a big way.

The research was authored by some of the nation's leading experts in earthquake science at Caltech in Pasadena and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Cañada Flintridge — which is operated by Caltech.

The findings confirm what some scientists expected from the Ridgecrest quakes. The largest quake of the sequence, the magnitude 7.1 event on July 5, ruptured along 35 miles over a series of

previously unidentified faults over 22 seconds. Its southeastern ends terminated just a few miles away from the Garlock fault.

The Garlock fault accumulates seismic strain at among one of the faster rates in California. According to USGS research geophysicist Morgan Page, who was not involved with the study, the average time between earthquakes of at least magnitude 7 on the central part of the fault is about every 1,200 years. But there's huge variation; sometimes, only 200 years might pass between major quakes on the fault; then, however, it could be 2,000 years before an encore. The last time a big quake is believed to have hit the Garlock fault is about 465 years ago, give or take a century.

To some scientists, the physics of the magnitude 7.1 quake on July 5 immediately suggested that the Garlock fault would be more likely to rupture as a result. Here's one possible explanation: The southwestern side of the fault that ruptured on July 5 lurched northwest. This had the effect of moving a block of land away from the Garlock fault, unclamping it and making it easier for blocks of land accumulating seismic strain on both sides of the Garlock fault to move — as if a bicyclist had decided to loosen brakes that had been gripping the tire tightly.

Satellite radar imagery shows that the part of the Garlock fault that has begun to creep is about 20 miles long, with the land on the northern side of the fault moving west, while the other side moves east. The radar images show one side of the fault has moved at its largest extent about four-fifths of an inch relative to the other.

Helping scientists have been state-of-the-art observations with incredible high-resolution details that haven't been possible in any previous major California earthquake.

The Ridgecrest earthquakes struck in an area that has a particularly extensive network of earthquake sensors near the seismically active [Coso Volcanic Field](#) of Inyo County, which uses heat from magma to fuel a power plant. More seismic stations have been installed since the last big Southern California quake in 1999, and there is now frequent satellite radar imagery taken of the Earth's surface.

Besides the Garlock fault, there is also reason to focus on risks from other nearby faults.

There is a line of potentially ripening fault zones along the so-called Eastern California Shear Zone, one of the state's most significant seismic zones, which carries a good chunk of the earthquake burden needed to accommodate tectonic plate movement as the Pacific plate slides northwest past the North American plate.

They include, generally speaking, an unruptured segment about 30 miles long between faults that ruptured in the [1872 Owens Valley quake](#) and the Ridgecrest quakes, and a 75-mile gap along the Blackwater fault system between the faults the caused the Ridgecrest quakes and the magnitude 7.3 [Landers quake](#) of 1992. Some day, those fault segments will eventually need to rupture to catch up with the movement of the tectonic plates, but it's not known if that will happen in our lifetime.

Earthquake scientists not affiliated with the study called the discovery of the triggered creep on the Garlock fault scientifically interesting that should be understood better, but emphasize that its implications are not clear. Although the Garlock hasn't been observed to creep before in response to big quakes, other faults that have crept haven't been seen to rupture in major quakes.

"It's actually probably pretty common, and if that's the case ... that doesn't necessarily mean it's portending something terrible," said Page of the USGS.

Also, the creep observed was probably only in a relatively shallow area. "What we're really interested in is what happens at the depths of where earthquakes occur," said USGS seismologist Elizabeth Cochran, who was not involved with the study. Earthquakes typically occur between one mile and 10 miles deep; the creep calculated probably occurred in the shallowest hundreds of feet below the surface.

More research needs to be done on whether the releasing of seismic energy in the form of a creeping fault near the surface advances or slows a subsequent earthquake, said Scharer of the USGS. In this particular case, the amount of creep and its shallowness would do little to affect the timing of when the next earthquake strikes the Garlock fault, Scharer said.

Sometimes, big quakes can lead to other ones; a classic example was in 1992, when the magnitude [6.1 Joshua Tree temblor](#) in April was followed up two months later by the [magnitude 7.3 Landers earthquake](#), which in turn triggered just hours later the [magnitude 6.3 Big Bear earthquake](#); seven years later, a [magnitude 7.1 quake hit Hector Mine](#). But other times, a single big earthquake and its

associated aftershocks can lead to decades of seismic quiet, like the magnitude 6.9 [Loma Prieta earthquake](#) of 1989.

Despite the uncertainty, what's happening in this region bears close scrutiny, given how the Garlock fault is an important major fault for Southern California. There are few big earthquakes that have been observed in California in modern times, and just because something hasn't been observed in the past doesn't mean it can't happen.

In addition to Ross, the other coauthors in this study are Benjamín Idini, Zhe Jia, Oliver Stephenson, Minyan Zhong, Xin Wang, Zhongwen Zhan, Mark Simons, Eric Fielding, Sang-Ho Yun, Egill Hauksson, Angelyn Moore, Zhen Liu and Jungkyo Jung.

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Rong-Gong Lin II is a metro reporter, specializing in covering statewide earthquake safety issues and Northern California.

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MORE FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

'ShakeOut' earthquake drill hits Victor Valley

By **Rene Ray De La Cruz**

Staff Writer

Posted Oct 17, 2019 at 5:09 PM

VICTORVILLE — Millions of people across the state followed the direction to “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” during the “12th annual Great California ShakeOut” earthquake drill.

The ShakeOut began at 10:17 a.m. Thursday and came less than four months after the Ridgecrest area was struck by temblors of magnitude 6.4 and 7.1 during the early part of July.

During Thursday’s 60-second earthquake simulation in the Victor Valley, schools, government agencies, first responders, businesses, nonprofits and others participated in the safety preparedness event. Many found shelter under a sturdy surface before fleeing to safety.

At Excelsior Charter School, nearly 800 students were evacuated off the campus as part of the ShakeOut Drill, which ran in conjunction with neighboring Victor Valley College in Victorville.

Excelsior Dean of Students Michael Moore and the school’s Emergency Task Force sprang into action after an alarm sounded across the campus and the public address system delivered instructions.

Wearing a pink shirt, safety vest and colorful “Higgs Boson” particle accelerator inspired bowtie, Moore radioed instructions to teachers and staff as they began leading students and adults to a dirt field on the southeast corner of Spring Valley Lake Parkway and Francesca Road.

“Partnering with Victor Valley College for the ShakeOut is ideal,” Moore said. “They will give us the all-clear, but it takes them a bit longer because of various factors such as a possible chemical spill.”

Tarel Mosco hundred with her fellow food servers from Excelsior, as she told the Daily Press that it was her third ShakeOut drill at the school.

“I think the staff here at Excelsior and the college do a great job evacuating both campuses,” Mosco said. “It takes a lot of work to evacuate hundreds of people, but they do a great job and it’s very organized.”

After the ShakeOut, Gov. Gavin Newsom’s office announced that an earthquake early warning alerts produced by the ShakeAlert system were now available to the public via a smartphone app and the same wireless notification system that issues Amber Alerts. For more information, visit <https://earthquake.ca.gov/>.

The system detects the start of an earthquake and calculates location, intensity and alerts areas where shaking is likely to occur. Most Californians live within 30 miles of an active fault, according to the California Earthquake Authority.

As of Thursday, nearly 11 million people had signed up to participate in the Great California Shakeout. Participants across the U.S., Japan, New Zealand and Canada also joined in on the emergency response event, according to shakeout.org.

For resources and more information on the Great California ShakeOut, visit <https://www.shakeout.org/california/>

*Reporter Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at 760-951-6227,
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Hesperia Council approves cannabis audits

By Rene Ray De La Cruz

Staff Writer

Posted Oct 17, 2019 at 4:10 PM

HESPERIA — The City Council voted to amend its municipal code governing audits and fees for cannabis businesses in the city's green zone.

During Tuesday's meeting, the Hesperia City Council voted 3-1 to remove the requirement to notify cannabis business owners 30 days in advance of the audit fee becoming due.

The modified ordinance states that the yearly audit and fees, \$6,000 financial and \$1,250 ordinance compliance, are a part of the business license renewal, allowing the licensee the ability to plan for the fees as part of their renewal.

The first cannabis business in the city's green zone was opened just before September 2018, so the audits will be a first for businesses that sell medicinal cannabis-based products. The audits done by an independent agency may include a review of inventory, taxes, accounting practices, and delivery methods.

Several cannabis business owners voiced their objection to the audits, with Rehab Delivery CEO Kasha Herrington asking the Council not to place "monetary burdens" on their shoulders.

The city believes that conducting audits will ensure that businesses comply with state and local law is being upheld and that each business is paying its required taxes and fees.

Mayor Larry Bird, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Holland and Councilman Cameron Gregg voted to amend the cannabis ordinance. Councilwoman Rebekah Swanson dissented.

Holland said the ordinance amendment and audit by an outside company is intended to keep medicinal, non-storefront retail delivery businesses honest.

“Cannabis businesses should be treated like all businesses,” Holland said. “But it’s a unique business because it’s a cash model. Not everyone reports their revenue.”

Holland said the audit is a fairly simple process and a business procedure that’s “unfortunate, but it’s necessary.”

There are eight operating commercial cannabis businesses in the green zone. Based on current applications, there are as many as 30 to 40 new businesses expected in the future, a city staff report said.

Business owner Mia Mahoney said the doors to her new business have yet to be opened and she’s just finding out about the audit fees.

“At the end of the day, we want to be treated like everybody else,” said Mahoney, owner of Underground Medicinals. “As far as we’re concerned, it looks like extortion.”

Medical Cannabis Education Center CEO Rick Casas, who opened the first cannabis business in Aug. 2018 in the city’s green zone, told the Daily Press he agrees to an audit but wonders why business owners should have to pay another fee.

Casas told the Council he paid nearly \$25,000 to open MCEC, \$9,000 for his business license and thousands of dollars in city and excise tax. He also said that the council is making uninformed decisions when it comes to cannabis.

“Please make your decision based on the information you understand and not on what you don’t understand,” said Casas, who believes the council should have met with business owners to discuss the audit before placing it on the agenda.

In a letter to the Daily Press, Herrington said “High taxes, unfriendly banks and the unregulated black-market are some of the obstacles that are holding back licensed cannabis companies, like myself, as we try to cultivate a new industry in not only Hesperia, but California.”

After the meeting, 71-year-old Marcy Little told the Daily Press she’s concerned that the council’s appointment of Brigit Bennington spells “bad news” for the city’s cannabis industry.

“I know that Bird, Gregg and Bennington aren’t big supporters of cannabis, which may mean more pressure on these businesses,” said Little, who uses medical cannabis to relieve back pain. “I hope these delivery businesses don’t pack up and leave.”

*Reporter Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at 760-951-6227,
RDeLaCruz@VVDailyPress.com, [Twitter @DP_ReneDeLaCruz](https://twitter.com/DP_ReneDeLaCruz).*

Adelanto free dump day returns on Saturday

By Garrett Bergthold

Staff Writer

Posted Oct 17, 2019 at 3:18 PM

ADELANTO — Local residents can dump their residential trash at Adelanto Stadium free of charge from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Residents who prove their residency with a driver's license and utility bill can drop off appliances, computer monitors, furniture, mattresses, toilets, televisions and other similar bulky trash items. Bags of trash or anything else normally picked up by Burrtec, the city's waste disposal provider, will also be accepted.

Commercial trash will not be allowed. This event is for residential refuse only.

Hazardous waste will also not be accepted. This includes oil, paint, pesticides, batteries, fluorescent lights and household chemicals. These items can instead be dropped off at the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds every Wednesday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The last scheduled Community Clean Up event in July was cancelled via a Facebook post three days before the event due to what City Manager Jessie Flores later acknowledged was an issue with the cost.

The costs of the four Community Clean Up events are split between Burrtec and the City of Adelanto. Each pays for two cleanups a year, although an anonymous city employee previously said the total number may soon go down to two.

Adelanto Stadium is located at 12000 Stadium Way, Adelanto.

Garrett Bergthold can be reached at GBergthold@VVDailyPress.com or at 760-955-5368.

Follow him on Twitter at @DP_Garrett.



https://www.highlandnews.net/news/political/city-considers-monthly-council-meetings/article_77553e7c-f11e-11e9-bf18-1ff705f06187.html

City council

City considers monthly council meetings

Hector Hernandez Jr. 17 hrs ago

After an investigation by city staff and a discussion at its Oct. 8 meeting, the Highland City Council's Finance and Personnel Subcommittee decided not to further pursue reducing city council meetings to once a month.

The idea of reducing the city council's regular meeting schedule was first advanced by Mayor Pro Tem Larry McCallon during the council's Sept. 10 meeting following a series of short 30-minute meetings with light agendas.

McCallon asked city staff to look into the possibility of saving council members' and city staff's time by reducing the number of meetings held.



"It would be better use of staff's time at city council meetings. By consolidating staff reports and doing a little more planning we ought to be able to accomplish our business at one meeting a month," McCallon said when requesting city staff to prepare a study on the idea.

After looking into the suggestion, city staff informed the subcommittee – McCallon and Councilman John Timmer – that once-a-month meetings supplemented by as-needed special meetings created numerous limitations on agenda actions and public comment.



There may also be challenges in fulfilling a quorum for special meetings, which require four-fifths vote for some items.

During special meetings tax roll items, assessment districts, community facilities district, Mello Roos items, salaries, salary schedules and compensation benefits of local agency staff, paramedic taxes and other tax related items cannot be acted on.

Other legal limitations on special meetings include the prohibition of public comment on issues not on the meeting agenda and ordinances cannot be adopted. First readings of a city ordinance can occur during special meetings.

"This could potentially move the [fee adoption] schedule out to three months having to hold a first reading, second reading and then the 60 days after that," said City Manager Joe Hughes.

This would also impact the processing of appeals and application deadlines.

"The city council and staff promotes Highland as a business friendly city and this could put out the timeframe for developers' projects 30 days or more for items that need to be continued. It would be 30 days, not two weeks, until the next meeting," Hughes said.

Hughes also pointed out that meetings could grow longer if multiple public hearings have to be held on the same meeting.

"There is a time savings and people's time is valuable which is why we were looking at this," Hughes said, pointing out that while reducing the number of meetings will save some time it will also increase the length of meetings, making the time savings "most likely a wash."

"As staff, knowing we have a meeting every two weeks gives us a certainty," Hughes said, referring to the city's ability to schedule and complete work items.

Hughes also noted that there's also the public perception of reducing the public opportunity to speak to consider.

This was a concern Mayor Penny Lilburn expressed when the idea was first brought up.

"We do not televise our city council meetings so this is the only opportunity for the community to come a give input, and we have items that the public can come to," Lilburn said.

After hearing the staff report, McCallon and Timmer agreed the issue was not worth pursuing further.

"When I read the limits it creates it stuck out to me that it takes away a lot of flexibility from our city in getting things done in a timely manner," Timmer said.



The staff still has the possibility of canceling a meeting if there's little to nothing on the agenda and it's appropriate to move the item to the next meeting.

According to Hughes, canceling a city council meeting is a rare occurrence that happened just once this year. (City council does go dark in July.)

Hector Hernandez Jr.



LOCAL NEWS

Fontana wants to know what residents want in a new city manager. Here's how to speak up

A public forum is scheduled Monday, Oct. 21, about three months after longtime City Manager Ken Hunt retired





Fontana is searching for a new top administrator after longtime City Manager Ken Hunt retired in July. (Photo by Brian Whitehead, The Sun/SCNG)

By **BRIAN WHITEHEAD** | bwhitehead@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun

PUBLISHED: October 17, 2019 at 3:54 pm | UPDATED: October 17, 2019 at 3:55 pm



Next week, Fontana residents can share with city officials the qualities they want in a new top administrator.

About three months after longtime City Manager Ken Hunt retired, Fontana is hosting a public forum from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 21, at City Hall to receive thoughts and suggestions from community stakeholders on the qualifications for Hunt's permanent replacement.

Michael Milhiser, a former top administrator elsewhere in the region, is serving as interim city manager.

Rakesha Thomas, Fontana's director of human resources and risk management, said in a news release city staffers have been laying the groundwork for a "unique, transparent and, we believe, highly effective" search for Hunt's successor.

Whomever Fontana hires will take the reins of a city poised to overtake San Bernardino as the county's most populous city.

Over the past decade or so, Fontana's population has increased an average of 1% per year and has grown 8.3% between 2010 and 2018.

Mayor Acquanetta Warren said this month city leaders "want to create a lively, vibrant community so our residents, our teachers, police, our kids and grandkids don't have to leave Fontana."

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LOCAL NEWS

Highland rapper's homeless care packages initiate 'culture of compassion'



Zane Finch-Lomibao, pictured, distributed backpacks with phone chargers and toiletries to 105 homeless individuals in San Bernardino, Highland and Redlands on Sept. 9, 2019. He plans to make it an annual event. (Photo courtesy of Zane Finch-Lomibao)

By **JENNIFER IYER** | jiyer@scng.com | Redlands Daily Facts

PUBLISHED: October 17, 2019 at 4:28 pm | UPDATED: October 17, 2019 at 4:28 pm

In six weeks Highland rapper Zane “zane” Finch-Lomibao raised \$1,600 which he used to put together care packages that were distributed to homeless individuals in Highland, Redlands and San Bernardino last month.

He raised the money by selling T-shirts with his Human B(ie)ng Project logo and with a benefit rap show.

“In starting this project, I had hoped to initiate a culture of compassion when addressing the homeless,” he said in an email. “In observance of the response from my peers in the community I think we accomplished that on a small scale.”

The 105 backpacks he distributed on Sept. 9 were full of hygiene products, fleece blankets and phone chargers. They also gave away socks, tobacco, feminine care products and makeup.

One woman, who identified herself as Katrina “like the hurricane” promised to share the items she didn’t use, and led his group in prayer before they left.

He called it “one of many special moments that day.”

Another homeless person, a young lady named Trish was grateful for the makeup in particular, he said.

“We shared a crying hug as she told me the next day was her birthday,” he wrote.

He said he plans to make the distribution an annual event on Inland Empire Day, 9/09 in honor of the region’s 909 area code.

Those interested can follow along on Instagram at [@handiecapt.records](#), his umbrella brand which encompasses the Human B(ie)ng Project.

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NEWS

James Ramos: CA's first Native American state lawmaker



BY **CHUCK MCFADDEN** POSTED 10.17.2019

[TWITTER](#)

For California's Native Americans, times change — but sometimes very slowly.

[\(HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/SHARE\)](https://twitter.com/share)

[FACEBOOK](#)

One big change: the historic election of James C. Ramos, 52 to the state Assembly's 40th District in the Inland Empire.

[EMAIL](#)

[\(MAILTO:?\)](mailto:)

First, some background:

[SUBJECT=JAMES](#)

[RAMOS: CA'S](#)

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[AMERICAN](#)

[STATE](#)

[LAWMAKER&BODY='HTTPS://CAPITOLWEEKLY.NET/JAMES-](#)

The California Gold Rush of 1849 brought some 300,000 rough and ready adventurers to California seeking their fortunes. It also brought disaster to Native Americans. An estimated 100,000 of them died during the first two years of the Gold Rush alone; by 1873, only 30,000 indigenous people remained of an original population estimated at 150,000.

RAMOS-CAS-
FIRST-
NATIVE-
AMERICAN-
STATE-
LAWMAKER(')

To all appearances, extermination was state policy.

On January 6, 1851 at his State of the State address to the California Senate, California's first governor, Peter Burnett, said this: "That a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the races until the Indian race becomes extinct must be expected. While we cannot anticipate this result but with painful regret, the inevitable

It took 169 years after the heyday of the Forty-Niners for California to elect its first Native American to the Assembly.

destiny of the race is beyond the power or wisdom of man to avert."

In 1852, U.S. Sen. John Weller — who became California's governor in 1858 — told his Senate colleagues that California Native Americans "will be exterminated before the onward march of the white man ... the interest of the white man demands their extinction."

It took 169 years after the heyday of the Forty-Niners for California to elect its first Native American to the Assembly. Ramos, a lifelong resident of the San Manuel Indian Reservation in San Bernardino County and a member of the Serrano/Cahuilla tribe, won his seat on Nov. 6, 2018.

Ramos, a Democrat, represents a district that includes San Bernardino, Loma Linda, Rancho Cucamonga and Redlands.

Earlier, in 2011, he achieved another first, becoming the first Native American appointed to the State Board of Education by then-Gov. Jerry Brown.

He grew up in a mobile home in a poverty-stricken area, working in fast-food restaurants and as a janitor. Nonetheless, he acquired an AA degree from Victor Valley College, a bachelor's degree in accounting from CSU San Bernardino and then a Master of Business Administration from the University of Redlands.

Ramos's political career is replete with firsts. He was the first Native American to be elected to the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, and, earlier, to the San Bernardino Community College Board of Trustees (2005-2012.)

Ramos had served as a county supervisor since 2012. In 2015, he was unanimously elected as board chairman.

Earlier, in 2011, he achieved another first, becoming the first Native American appointed to the State Board of Education by then-Gov. Jerry Brown.

Ramos's most recent bills signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom include expanding school district suicide prevention policies that are age appropriate to kindergarten and grades 1 through 6 , and another requiring crime victims and their attorneys to be made aware of early termination of probation.

On June 18, Newsom signed an executive order acknowledging and apologizing for the state's mistreatment of Native Americans.

He has been married to his wife Teri for 29 years. They have four children and three grandchildren.

California is now working to make up for its horrific record of persecution.

On June 18, Newsom signed an executive order acknowledging and apologizing for the state's mistreatment of Native Americans. The executive order included the creation of the Truth and Healing Council with consultation from California Native American tribes who are to work with the Governor's Tribal Advisor and Administration regarding policies that may affect tribal communities.

"As the first California Indian elected to the state Legislature, I applaud the executive order signed by Governor Newsom today to issue a formal apology from the state for past cruel treatment of Native Americans. This action will go a long way to start the healing process between the state and Native American communities throughout California ... This historic acknowledgment by the Governor marks the beginning of a new relationship between the state and the more than 700,000 Native Americans who make the State of California their home," Ramos said in a prepared statement.

Tribal leaders from across California met on the day of the signing. Ramos sang a traditional bird song.

Most elected officials ignore the oath of...



OPINION LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Most elected officials ignore the oath of office: Letters





Most elected officials ignore the oath of office: Letters

By **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** | |

PUBLISHED: October 17, 2019 at 1:00 am | UPDATED: October 17, 2019 at 8:34 pm



Re “Elected officials should revisit oath of office” (Letters, Oct. 2):

I was surprised by ex-councilman Gino Filippi’s letter, but I agree that “elected officials take an oath ... upon accepting their seats.”

He was addressing aligning spending with revenues. When he left office, Upland had unfunded liabilities of about \$100 million, and thousands more were wasted firing city managers. The California oath of office applies to all city, state and county employees, as well as all elected and appointed government officials.

Filippi said, “I often wonder how many truly would benefit from revisiting the affirmation,” AKA their oath of office. Frankly, I don’t think we can know the benefits of complying with the oath of office because the norm for many is to simply disregard their oath when it comes to their lawful duty “to bear true faith and allegiance to our

constitutions.”

ADVERTISING



Unfortunately, our Upland city officials, past and present, have not defended our fundamental First Amendment right to petition to seek redress of grievances.

I have filed numerous complaints, petitions and claims to Upland city officials on behalf of the 75,000 people in our community. They were neither investigated by the city manager, who is required by city law to investigate, or responded to by the City Council. Upland City Council does not even have a citizens communication or grievance policy.

However, their ethics code requires compliance with the letter and spirit of our laws. The oath and the Constitution are laws. Perhaps our representatives have become too comfortable because city officials are subject to little or no oversight. Perhaps we are unable to hold them accountable without our right to petition for redress. We need our rights restored. Those who represent us must honor their oath, which requires them to recognize their duties and our rights according to law.

— *Hal Tanner, Upland*

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By History Daily

HISTORY DAILY

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CALIFORNIA

After a trash truck dumped a fiery load, dozens of mobile homes burned and an 89-year-old woman died



Judy Dorius of San Diego salvages iron pot stands from the burned remains of the home where their mother, Lois Arvickson, 89, died after the Sandalwood fire burned her mobile home and many others at the Villa Calimesa Mobile Home Park in Calimesa. (Gina Ferazzi / Los Angeles Times)

By MARISA GERBER
STAFF WRITER

OCT. 18. 2019

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-10-18/calimesa-mobile-home-sandalwood-fire-lois-arvickson>





CALIMESA, Calif. — As the siblings stared out at the blackened canyon, flecks of ash from the fire that stole their mother floated down on their shoulders. Even a week later, the stifling air still smelled of smoke.

For several hours this week, Don Turner and his older brother and sister camped outside Villa Calimesa mobile home park, waiting for officials to let them return to the rubble at plot E23 — the spot where, last Thursday, their mother, Lois Arvickson, 89, died near her phone inside her longtime home.

“It’s on fire,” Turner recalled his mother telling him, saying she needed to find her purse. Moments later, the phone cut out.

On Tuesday — five days since [the deadly fire](#) — Turner and many others with ties to the mobile home park stood outside a chain-link fence, staring inside and struggling to navigate their new reality. A young mother sobbed into her cellphone, saying she was desperate to get back inside her semi-charred home to retrieve clothes for her baby, and a man sitting in the bed of a pickup truck politely shooed away reporters.



“Please,” he said, softly, “we’ve talked to so many people.”

Another longtime resident paced 7th Street, past a circle of sheriff’s deputies guarding residents from entering, and approached a reporter.

“May I go on the record,” he said, his eyes filling with tears, “saying there were many, many lovely people who lived here.”



Rosie Castellon pauses as she sifts through ashes trying to salvage any family photographs after the Sandalwood Fire burned her mobile home and many others at the Villa Calimesa Mobile Home Park. (Gina Ferazzi/Los Angeles Times)

The Sandalwood fire, named for a street near the mobile home park, began last Thursday around 2 p.m. and burned more than 1,000 acres over five days. It started when the driver of a garbage truck dumped a “hot load” — a pile of burning trash — along the side of 7th Street, said Capt. Fernando Herrera, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

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By Palm Springs CVB

Garbage trucks often haul a dangerous cocktail of combustible items — batteries, pesticides, paint — and it's not unheard of for drivers to dump a simmering load, Herrera said. Many residents of the mobile home park said it seemed unnecessarily reckless to drop the load next to a canyon of dry shrub backing up to the park. Ultimately, [the fire destroyed](#) 76 mobile homes and killed Arvickson and a second victim, whom officials haven't yet publicly identified.

Riverside County [homicide investigators were at the scene](#) last week, but when asked Wednesday if the case had been presented to the Riverside County district attorney's office — the entity that would bring criminal charges — sheriff's officials declined to comment. The agency investigating the fire posted on Facebook on Wednesday, [asking the public](#) to share photographs and videos that could reveal details about the fire.

As the investigation continued, residents were focused on getting back inside the park. While deputies allowed residents to return for a few minutes on Monday, the park was closed to the public on Tuesday and Wednesday, as county health workers in white hazmat suits walked through the park. Officials reopened the park on Thursday, [saying residents could return](#) only to clean up and retrieve belongings but that it still wasn't safe to live in the area. While residents said they understood the precaution — their homes were old and no doubt had lead paint and asbestos — they grew anxious. They were tired of the limbo.

While they waited Tuesday, residents wrapped one another in long hugs and whispered about who the second victim might be. They swapped insurance information and asked about their long-term plans, knowing that even the surviving mobile homes might not be habitable for a while. Maybe the homes could be hauled out, a resident's father mused, but would another park accept them?

For the park's older and disabled residents, many of whom lived on tight budgets, Villa Calimesa had been a rare blessing in Southern California: an affordable, safe and well-maintained park with a pool and a clubhouse. It was a place where, if you'd been here more than a year or two — and most residents had — your neighbors not only knew who you were but had given you a nickname. There was the Goth Grandma down the street and the so-sweet-she-gave-you-a-cavity Old Lady.

That was Arvickson.

Well-trimmed hedges line the main road and a small, yellow sign reads “NOT A THROUGH STREET” — a reminder that there is only one road in and out of the park. As ambulances poured in last Thursday, residents’ cars squeezed out beside them.

Bill Kellison, 86, was outside pulling weeds last Thursday when he saw a trash truck dump something near Jack in The Box. Soon, he said, flames were tearing across the canyon at 35 mph, and he went to bang on his neighbor’s door. She was inside vacuuming and listening to music, he said, but he finally got her attention.

“Get in the truck!” he yelled.

“Do you have car seats?” she asked, gesturing to two young children in the home.

“Hell no,” Kellison yelled back, “but get in the truck!”

They all got in and Kellison said he nearly rammed into a fire truck as he drove through smoke.

Around that time, in the E section, where Arvickson lived, Lori Piercey was sitting inside her home with the shades drawn to keep out the heat. Her husband wasn’t home, and Piercey, 61, who works as a waitress at Tartan restaurant, had slept in until noon that day. After breakfast, she thought about taking a shower. First, she flung open the door to check the weather and spotted a Cal Fire pickup truck driving by.

“Evacuate,” the driver said.

“Evacuate for what?” she asked.

“Look!”

The wood chips in her neighbor’s yard had turned into a ball of fire. She jammed on tennis shoes and grabbed two things — her flip phone and her work uniform.

Piercey sprinted to her white Mercedes and punched the accelerator. Everything turned black, and she repeated a phrase in her mind: “Please, Jesus, get me out of this park.”

In the days that followed, she thought about all the things that she had left inside: her passport, license and iPad, but also a photo of her father, who has since died, and of her mother, who has dementia. She'd left behind her husband's Purple Heart medals from his time in Vietnam.

Piercey was struggling to adjust to her new reality. Since the fire, she's been staying with her mother-in-law in Redlands. For the first time in nearly 20 years, she had called in sick to Tartan on Thursday. And since she hadn't been around on Monday when officials let residents return for a few minutes, as of Tuesday morning, she was still clinging onto some hope that, perhaps, part of her home was still standing.

"No, babe," her husband had warned her, "I saw on TV. It's all gone."

Nearby, Doug Turner, 68, another of Arvickson's sons, was recounting memories of his mother, who worked as an administrative assistant at convalescent hospitals while he was growing up. His mother was frugal, he said, often cooking liver and onions for dinner and dressing her four children in hand-me-downs.

She was a deeply kind and fiercely independent person, he said. Even at her advanced age, she had maintained a sharp mind, tearing through mystery books, and she still drove herself to doctor's appointments and the nail salon. She loved to entertain her 12 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren with stories about their family's deep roots in the desert communities around Calimesa.

"She was exuberant," Turner said.

Soon, his brother and sister, Judy Dorius, 70, walked over and embraced him. They laughed together about one of their mother's nicknames — Grandma Blue Goat, for the blue, '65 Mustang she used to drive. And they recalled how, even though she disliked raw fish, she loved to join them at their favorite sushi restaurants, ordering cucumber salad and edamame.

A few weeks ago, Dorius recalled, her sister had been in town from Oklahoma and their mother was overjoyed to have all four of her children together. They spent most of the time laughing hysterically, and at one point, Arvickson laughed so hard that tears streamed down her face and Dorius snapped a photo of her mother.

Dorius sighed, realizing that was probably the last photo she'd taken of her.

Don Turner said that when his mother first called last Thursday, nothing seemed out of the ordinary. She could see smoke a couple of hills away — usually, he said, that meant a fire in nearby Beaumont.

“OK,” he told her, “keep me posted.”

As he was preparing to drive from his home 50 miles away in Phelan, he got a notification from his mother's Life Alert system. He hopped back on the phone with his mother, and she asked him what she should do.

“Is anybody there yet?” he asked.

“No,” she said.

“Hit your Life Alert and get out,” he told her.

“It's on fire,” she said. “I'm going to get my purse and go.” Then the line went dead.

At the time, he thought she meant flames were arriving at the edge of the mobile home park. Now, he realizes she must've meant the fire had reached her home.

He rushed south but got stuck in traffic, and when he finally arrived, officials wouldn't let anyone into the park. He headed to an evacuation center, desperately approaching each time one of his mother's neighbors arrived. There was one neighbor, in particular, who he thought might have driven his mother, but when they arrived without her, the reality began to sink in.

He checked hospitals and bombarded officials at the command post with questions, and his sister, who lives in San Diego, and his brother, who was vacationing in Fresno, rushed toward Calimesa. Other family members watching news coverage on TV reported what they were seeing.

“We see her mobile and her car,” Don Turner recalled them saying, “and there's nothing left.”

By Thursday evening, officials confirmed that a body had been found inside the home. To confirm the identity of the charred remains, they said, they would need to get DNA swabs from the children.

By Saturday morning, they knew for certain: Their beloved mother had died inside her home on plot E23 — the home tucked in the back of the park overlooking a canyon.

She had always called it her million-dollar view.

CALIFORNIA

FIRES

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Marisa Gerber writes narrative stories about life in Los Angeles and across the Southland for the Los Angeles Times. She previously covered L.A. County's criminal courts for The Times and, before joining the newspaper in 2012, wrote about life on the border for several publications in Arizona. Gerber grew up in Nogales, Ariz., and graduated from the University of Arizona.

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CALIFORNIA

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CALIFORNIA

Saddleridge fire renews debate on utilities' opaque process for ordering power outages



Fire inspectors comb the scene in the foothills behind the homes in Sylmar under a Southern California Edison transmission tower and line as investigators try to determine the cause of the deadly Saddleridge fire. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

By JOSEPH SERNA, JAMES RAINEY

OCT. 18, 2019
5 AM



The conditions seemed right last week for Southern California Edison to power off the towering electric lines that sweep behind a row of stucco homes in the Sylmar foothills. Winds were high, humidity was low, and there was plenty of dry fuel to ignite if a Santa Ana gust caused a spark to fly or a transformer to blow.

But Edison did not power down the transmission lines, even though the utility cut electricity to other areas during those days of high, hot winds. Some nearby residents are now questioning that decision, especially with the news Monday that the 8,000-acre fire, which destroyed 17 structures and damaged 58, [started beneath an Edison high-voltage transmission tower](#).

Edison this week repeatedly declined to answer questions on its decision-making before the fire, whose cause remains undetermined, according to fire investigators.

Edison revealed to regulators its equipment in the area was “impacted” about the time the fire began, but hasn’t offered further details. It also declined to comment on a state map that shows that the risk of a utility-sparked fire in that area is considered “extreme,” and National Weather Service data Oct. 10 showed wind gusts exceeded 30 mph in the area throughout the day and night.

The lack of clarity is renewing calls for more transparency from utility officials as they make decisions that could affect millions of Californians.

State. Sen. Henry Stern (D-Canoga Park), whose district includes the area where the Saddleridge fire began, said utilities face a “complex tension” in which they get criticized if they are overly aggressive in shutting down power or take a risk in keeping the lights on.

“Our Monday morning quarterback says, ‘We should’ve shut down that line.’ But when we shut it down you’re mad,” said Stern. “You can’t democratize decision-making ... but we do have the right to know how they’re making that decision.”



CALIFORNIA

California’s huge, humiliating power outages expose the vulnerabilities of PG&E’s power grid

Oct. 10, 2019

The focus on Sylmar comes after Gov. Gavin Newsom, state regulators and consumer advocates have lambasted Pacific Gas & Electric for its widespread power outages of last week, which many called excessive. PG&E shut down power to millions of customers, while Edison cut electricity to far fewer, 24,000, drawing less attention to the utility, except now, with the Saddleridge fire.

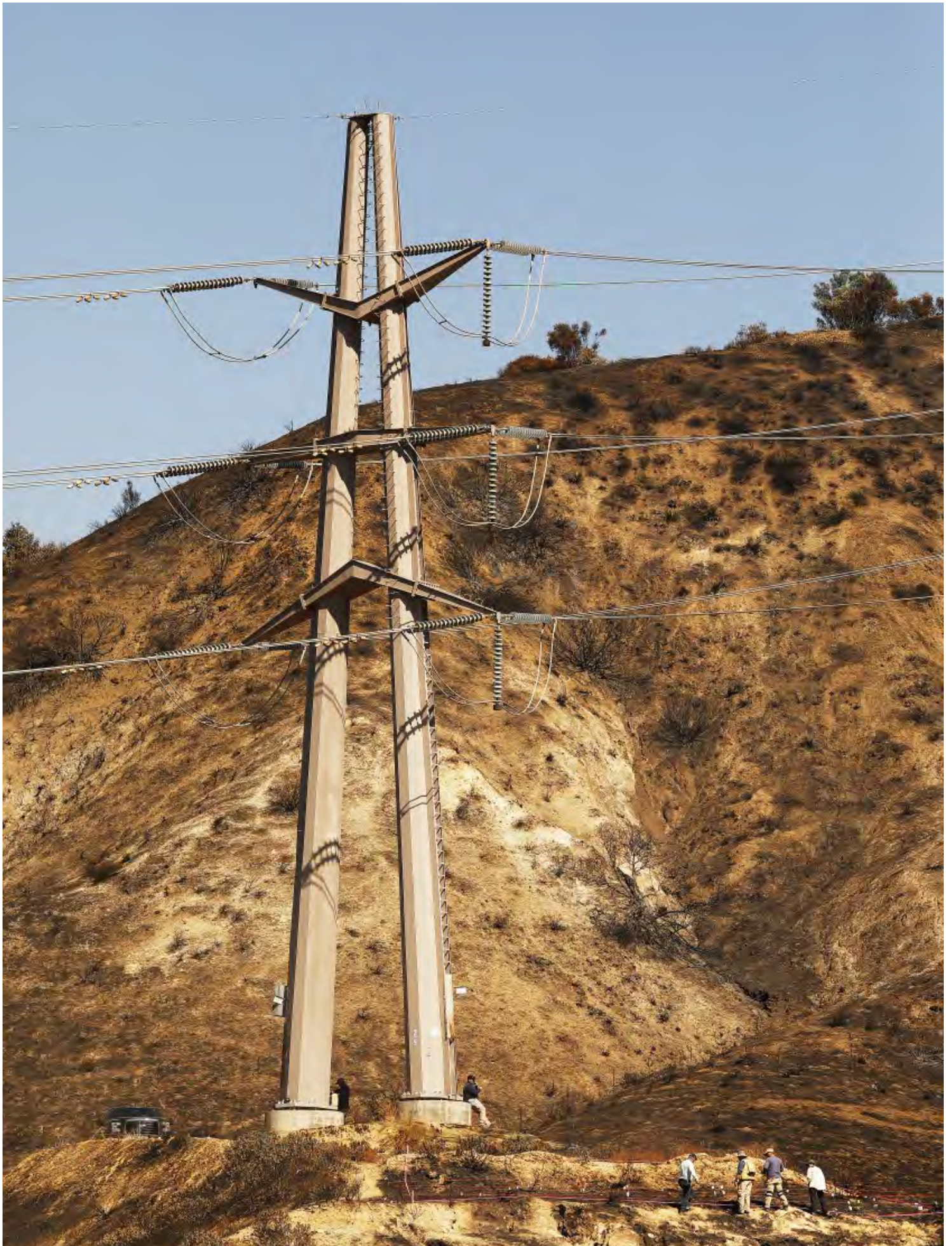


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What Are the Top Vulnerabilities in the Diagnostic Process?

By Coverys

As of Thursday morning, the fire had burnt 8,391 acres and was 56% contained.





Fire inspectors comb the scene in the foothills behind the homes located in the 14000 block of Saddleridge Lane in Sylmar under a Southern California Edison transmission tower and line as investigators try to determine the cause of the deadly Saddleridge fire. (Al Seib/Los Angeles Times)

Edison has prepared a Wildfire Mitigation Plan, in which it explains to regulators and the public some of its criteria for ordering “public safety power shutoffs.” These shutoffs, the plan says, would be done only “when conditions pose a significant threat to the public.”

It also acknowledged “refining the tactical and strategic decision making protocols” around the shutoffs.

“The complexities of the service territory, including size, topography, wind and weather patterns, and the uncertainty of weather events, make it difficult to predict exact locations where proactive de-energization would or should be consistently considered,” the Wildfire Mitigation Plan says.

When asked about why the lines above Sylmar remained energized, Edison spokesman David Eisenhower referred back to the utility’s boilerplate criteria for outages: high winds, low humidity, vegetation moisture, on-the-ground observations, potential threats to infrastructure and public safety risk.

Shutoff decisions are made by an “incident management team” of Edison executives, meteorologists and others. The Edison plan lists 14 bullet points to be considered each time the utility preemptively cuts power. The criteria include the potential impacts to customers and communities, red-flag warnings issued by the National Weather Service and alternatives for rerouting power around affected areas.

Over time, utility officials say, public safety power shutdowns will affect smaller groups of customers as equipment is added to the grid to better fragment them. Stern and others have called for developing a micro-grid, in which rural or vulnerable communities can live off their own power supplies for days at a time. Experts say a combination of approaches — burying power lines in

some areas, insulating them in others, replacing wood poles with sturdier ones — can collectively lead to a more hardened, reliable grid.

But in the meantime, the focus remains on the companies to provide more answers. On Thursday, the leader of the state Senate called for an investigation into how PG&E reached its power shutdown decision that affected more than 2 million customers. The utility's chief executive said in a news conference last week that the company would do better in the future.

Daniel Drumlake, who lives just blocks from the Saddleridge fire's likely ignition point, said he would favor power shutdowns during the windiest and driest days.

“After experiencing a couple of these big ones, sure, they should shut down,” said Drumlake, who teaches culinary arts at Glendale Community College. Still, he acknowledged that people were likely to complain about outages. When his neighbors suggest all the power lines should be undergrounded, he tells them: “You know how many billions, maybe trillions [of dollars] it would cost to bury those lines?”

Los Angeles Times



Donna Porco, a 35-year resident of the Sylmar hillside just below the giant transmission lines, acknowledged that utility officials are “darned if they do and darned if they don’t” — customers will complain about intentional power shutdowns or about fires that come when the lines aren’t shut down. Still, she said, in conditions like the ones last week, when the winds howl down the Newhall pass, the lines should be turned off.

“The easiest thing to do is just turn it off and be inconvenienced for a few days,” said Porco, a retired special education assistant in the Los Angeles schools. “At least then you have a home to go to, and vegetation in the backyard and all the animals survive.”

Madu Shah, an accountant, lives just across the street from a home that burned on Beaufait Avenue in Porter Ranch. Twice over three decades she has seen her neighbors' homes burn. She was reminded of [last year's Camp fire](#), the deadly blaze sparked by a PG&E line that devastated the community of Paradise in Northern California.

“If you can save houses and people, of course, shut the power off,” Shah said. “Look at what happened in Paradise. Oh, my God. Anything is better than that.”



NEWS CRIME + PUBLIC SAFETY

San Bernardino resident shot to death



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

PUBLISHED: October 17, 2019 at 1:59 pm | UPDATED: October 17, 2019 at 2:00 pm



A 51-year-old San Bernardino resident was found shot to death early Thursday, Oct. 17, the San Bernardino Police Department said.

Officers responding to a report of a shooting about 2 a.m. in the 1200 block of East Lynwood Drive found Vernon Lee Moore unresponsive.

No arrests had been announced.

Police ask anyone with information on the crime to contact Sgt. Al Tello at 909-384-5613 or at tello_al@sbcity.org.

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Bark Beetle Arson-In-Progress Thwarted by Crestline Residents

Story and Photos by Nick Kipley, Reporter | Posted: Thursday, October 17, 2019 9:00 am

At approximately 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 13, a fire began in the vegetation behind the McDonald's in Crestline. Among the hillside shrubbery stands at least four dead pine tree victims of the bark beetle plague. Unknown residents of Crestline responded quickly to the blaze, working together to extinguish the flames using rakes and a garden hose before the fire could spread beyond a ten-foot diameter.

“Citizens ran back there and put it out very, very, very quickly,” said Lt. Don Lupear of the Twin Peaks Sheriff’s station.

Emergency dispatchers notified first responders and the call was answered by Sgt. Gerred Brasheer, who was closest to the fire, responding to a traffic incident.

“[Brasheer] got there even before the fire trucks did. By the time he got there, citizens of Crestline had put out the fire,” Lupear said. “They did a great job.”

While en-route to the incident at the McDonald’s, Brasheer noted that he passed by a man who was walking away from the scene in a way that seemed suspicious. Upon arrival at the scene, Brasheer found that the fire had been put out. He interviewed a potential suspect who had said he had spent the night before in a tent with a person named Matt who was no longer in the area. Brasheer got back into his vehicle and went back around looking for the suspicious man he had seen earlier and was able to find him.

Brasheer apprehended and arrested Matthew Shipman after he was able to match the unique tread pattern of Shipman’s shoes to tracks in the immediate area around the fire. Shipman was a known arsonist on parole for arson and was carrying a torch-style lighter in his pocket. Shipman was also identified by one witness as having been seen leaving the scene of the incident location earlier that morning.

Shipman was arrested for allegedly having set fire to someone else’s belongings behind the McDonald’s and, at the time of press, is currently in custody.

“We want people to know we don’t have an arsonist running around the mountain,” Lupear said.



The incident took place behind the McDonald's in Crestline.

'Airsoft Escobar' Arrested

Posted: Thursday, October 17, 2019 9:00 am

On Saturday, Oct 12, at approximately 7:30 p.m., deputies from the Twin Peaks Sheriff's Multiple Enforcement Team (MET) initiated a traffic stop on a gray Ford pickup truck, in the 28900 block of Hook Creek Road, in the community of Cedar Glen, for running a stop sign with a burned-out license plate light and a damaged windshield.

The driver, and sole occupant of the vehicle, was contacted and identified as Emilio DeLa Cruz, a 49-year-old resident of Cedar Glen. DeLa Cruz was determined to be under the influence of a Central Nervous System Stimulant (methamphetamine) and was subsequently arrested.

During a search of DeLa Cruz's vehicle, deputies seized over 210 grams of narcotics, which included 98 grams of suspected crystal methamphetamine, 101 grams of suspected cocaine, and 17 grams of suspected heroin. In addition, deputies recovered hundreds of dollars in US currency, an electronic scale, and a metal replica ('Airsoft') rifle, which had the appearance of a real firearm.

The High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) estimated the cost of the narcotics, found in De La Cruz's vehicle, to be worth over \$5,000 on the street.

Emilio De La Cruz was arrested for violation of Health and Safety Code Sections 11378, 11379(a), 11351, and 11352(a), which included both the possession and the transportation of controlled substances.

Under Miranda, De La Cruz admitted he had picked up the drugs around a week ago and had planned to sell them on the street for at least \$800.

De La Cruz was booked at Central Detention Center where he is being held on both a \$400,000 bail and a No Bail hold pending a bail verification hearing.

Anyone with information related to the investigation is requested to call Deputy Kelly Bush or Deputy Chad Cusimano of the Twin Peaks Station at (909) 336-0600 or We-Tip at (800) 782-7463 if they wish to remain anonymous.



It turns out the gun was an 'Airsoft' replica, but the drugs were real.

Sheriff seeks two men in connection with Apple Valley robbery

By Staff Reports

Posted Oct 17, 2019 at 4:22 PM

Updated Oct 17, 2019 at 5:21 PM

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department is seeking the public's help in identifying two men who robbed a 7-Eleven in Apple Valley early Thursday morning.

Both are described as black males, over 6 feet tall, skinny build, who were wearing masks and gloves, according to deputies.

One man who held a store clerk at gunpoint wore a black Aeropostale sweatshirt with "NY" on the pants and gray Nike shoes.

The other man wore a black sweatsuit and acted as a lookout at the front door.

Both men then fled and entered a silver or gold sedan which was parked in a rear alley of the 7-Eleven located on 17979 State Highway 18.

The robbery occurred at about 1:56 a.m. Sheriff's officials said the men took about \$90 in cash.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Deputy T. McGee at the Apple Valley Sheriff's Station at 760-240-7400.

Persons wishing to remain anonymous can contact the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463 or online at www.WeTip.com.

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Housing developers used city-backed property as 'personal bank account,' lawsuit alleges



L.A. City Atty. Mike Feuer, shown in 2018, filed a lawsuit this week against an affordable housing developer and several other companies over the the alleged misappropriation of a city loan. (Marcus Yam / Los Angeles Times)

By DAKOTA SMITH, DOUG SMITH
OCT. 18, 2019 | 5 AM

Accusing a prominent affordable housing developer of using a city-financed property “as a personal bank account,” Los Angeles City Atty. Mike Feuer on Wednesday sued the company and several others, alleging they misappropriated millions of dollars of public money.

The lawsuit stems from a \$2.3-million loan issued by the city in 1999 to finance the acquisition and development of Richard N. Hogan Manor, a 51-unit housing project at 5500-5528 S. Figueroa St. The money was distributed through the city’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund program, according to the lawsuit.

The city, in the filing in Los Angeles County Superior Court, accuses Figueroa Economical Housing Development Corp. and several other companies and individuals of a fraud, deceit and a breach of contract, among other complaints.

The companies, according to the lawsuit, refinanced the property without the city's knowledge to get more money and then wrongfully conveyed the deed of trust to another company. The lawsuit alleges that they "treated Richard Hogan Manor as a personal bank account" and that the transactions were "devised to misappropriate money for other uses."

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Feuer's office declined to comment on the filing.

Kendall Walker, identified in the complaint as the chief executive of Figueroa Economical, told The Times on Thursday that he was unaware of the lawsuit. He did not respond to several follow-up emails and phone calls.

Figueroa Economical is a well-known developer of subsidized housing in Los Angeles. It has secured commitments of \$43 million from the Proposition HHH homeless housing bond to work on five projects to create 326 units of housing.

The lawsuit over the Hogan Manor project describes a complicated series of loans and title changes that it alleges were intended to illegally remove the city from the project.



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By Enterprise.nxt

In accordance with the terms of the 40-year loan agreement Figueroa Economical made with the city, the developer loaned money to a company named RCC Credit that, in turn, loaned it to Richard N. Hogan Manor LP, a partner of Figueroa Economical.

But then things went off track, the lawsuit alleges.

In 2017, according to the suit, Vivian Lum, an attorney with Lum Law Offices, which is a limited partner of Hogan Manor, purported to assign RCC Credit's interest in the partnership deed of trust to another company, the Evergreen Advantage LLC.

Then in 2018, Hogan Manor secured a \$7.2-million loan against the property from yet another company, PS Funding, the lawsuit alleges. The city alleges that Evergreen Advantage received \$4.4 million in the proceeds from that loan, which should have been paid to the city, according to the lawsuit.

Later, Hogan Manor defaulted on the \$7.2-million loan, according to the lawsuit, but the city was unaware of the refinancing effort until it received a notice of the default.

The city accuses Figueroa Economical and the other companies of breaching their duties under the city loan agreement and wrongfully assigning the partnership deed of trust without the city's consent or notice, causing "unjust enrichment and misuse of government funds," among other things.

It also accuses the companies of submitting a false financial report to the city. According to the lawsuit, they owe the city \$4.46 million on the loan.

Lum didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Evergreen Advantage also did not respond to a call from The Times.

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