



LOCAL NEWS

Large solar project east of Barstow wins OK from San Bernardino County supervisors



By **SANDRA EMERSON** | semerson@scng.com |

PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 6:53 pm | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 6:56 pm

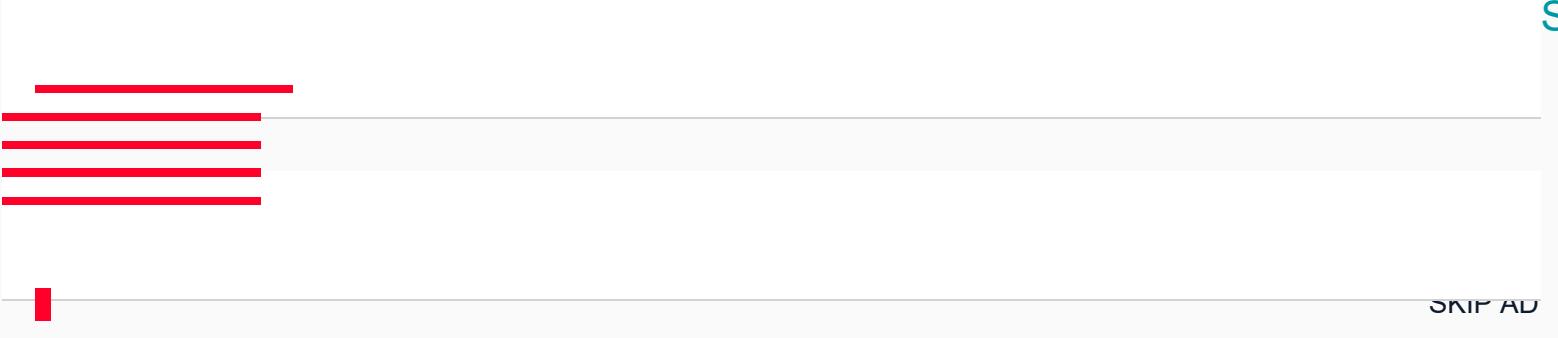


A large solar project planned in the unincorporated communities of Daggett and Newberry Springs east of Barstow has been given the green light.

On Tuesday, Dec. 10, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors denied an appeal filed by residents over the county planning commission's approval of San Francisco-based Clearway Energy Group's plans for a solar-generating facility on about 3,500 acres near the Barstow-Daggett airport.

While supervisors' decision upholds the project's approval, they asked the developer to keep it farther away from nearby homes and to use technology to monitor dust and air quality.

"You have half the members in the room that are residents supporting this. You have the other half so far not supporting it and it's a struggle," Supervisor Robert Lovingood said. "My biggest concern is what's the direct impact on someone's house?"



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In September, planning commissioners unanimously approved the project which includes a 650-megawatt photovoltaic solar power generating facility with up to 450 megawatts of battery-storage capacity.

The Newberry Community Services District, which provides fire protection, parks and recreation and street lighting services to residents in Daggett and Newberry Springs, appealed the commissioners' decision and asked supervisors to reject the project.

District officials say there are deficiencies in the project's environmental documents and it violates the county's rules on solar projects. They say that storing energy at the plant would be unsafe and the project will harm the water supply and air quality. Mainly, they worry construction will increase dust in the area and affect residents' health.

"We don't believe this project should be built where it's proposed to be built," Jack Unger, district

director, said.

The Daggett project is one of a few that were already being reviewed by the county when supervisors voted in February to prohibit utility-oriented renewable energy development in rural zones and most unincorporated communities. The decision restricted such development to areas already used for agriculture and mining and the remote areas of Amboy, El Mirage, Hinkley, Kramer Junction and Trona.

For the past few years, desert residents have been calling on the county to ban these type of projects to protect communities from potential health hazards caused by blowing dust, which increases when desert land is disturbed by construction. They have also cited the protection of scenic views and preservation of habitat and wildlife as reasons to prohibit large solar development.

When supervisors approved the ban, they agreed to let developers apply for a General Plan amendment, or a boundary change, if they have a site that meets the county's criteria but is within the prohibited zones. Any exception would require supervisor approval.

Terri Rahhal, director of the county's land use services, said that other than a part of the project property being zoned for rural neighborhoods it complies with the new rules because it's proposed for land that's already been used for agriculture, it's near other energy facilities and has transmission lines.

The solar project has undergone a rigorous county review for the past two years, said James Kelly, senior director of development for Clearway.

The solar facility would replace the retired Coolwater natural gas-fired plant with clean, renewable energy, has enhanced safety features and a dust-control plan that would improve the land's conditions, Kelly said.

"We will be a good long-term steward of the land," Kelly said.

The facility will be built over the next several years, with construction expected to start in 2020. The first phase would be online in 2021, followed by the second and third phases by 2023.

Once complete, there would be eight to 12 employees onsite and millions of dollars in tax revenue to the county, according to Clearway.

Kelly said there are seven to eight homes in closest proximity to the project's later phases. The closest home to where solar panels are proposed is about 185 feet, he said.

Kelly said they will take nearby homes into consideration in the design to minimize the impact.

Supervisors heard from about two dozen residents, both for and against the project, and union members who supported the 500 construction jobs it could create.

Jesse Wright, a member of Local Union 783, said he's been out of work for several months, but has worked on similar projects out of the area.

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"If there's an opportunity for me and my brothers and sisters in the union to work closer to home and be with our families, that would be awesome," the Apple Valley resident said.

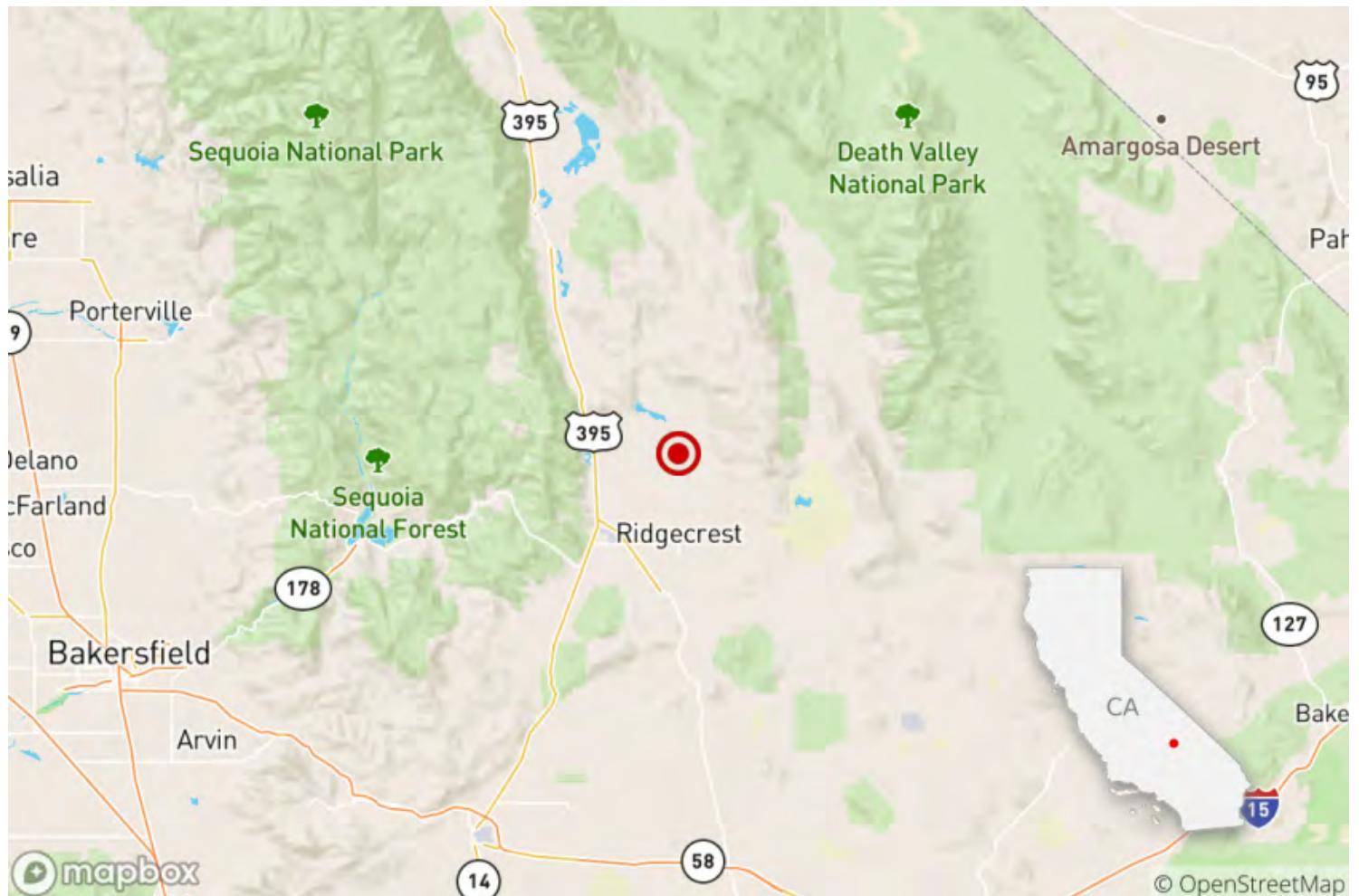
Several Newberry Springs residents, said the jobs are a temporary benefit, while effects on air quality and property values are permanent.

"When they leave, they have 12 jobs and we're stuck living with the air quality and a great view of hundreds and hundreds of solar panels," Newberry Springs resident Margie Roberts said. "The county gets money from taxes for this development and the residents get nothing. There is nothing for us to benefit from in Newberry Springs and you can't buy my lungs."

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CALIFORNIA

Earthquakes: 3.1 quake reported near Ridgecrest, Calif.



A magnitude 3.1 earthquake was reported near Ridgecrest, Calif., at 10:57 a.m. Tuesday, according to the USGS.

By QUAKEBOT

DEC. 10, 2019
11:08 AM



A magnitude 3.1 earthquake was reported Tuesday morning at 10:57 a.m. Pacific time 10 miles from Ridgecrest, Calif., according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The earthquake occurred 37 miles from California City, 62 miles from Tehachapi, Calif., 67 miles from Bakersfield and 68 miles from Rosamond, Calif.

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

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

The earthquake occurred at a depth of 4.2 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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CALIFORNIA

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1 hour ago



OPINION

Businesses struggle to comply with unclear ADA website requirements



(iStockimage)



By KYLA CHRISTOFFERSEN POWELL and LING LING CHANG |

PUBLISHED: December 11, 2019 at 6:00 am | UPDATED: December 11, 2019 at 6:00 am



With a number of new landmark laws going into effect January 1, California's businesses face heavier burdens than ever before. Businesses, both small and large, are struggling to comply with policies such as the California Consumer Privacy Act and Assembly Bill 5, the codification of the California Supreme Court's Dynamex decision.

Yet another issue looming large for business owners is a resurgence of shakedown lawsuits under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) lawsuits – this time over website violations.

The ADA was enacted in 1990 to prohibit discrimination against accommodations for people with physical or mental disabilities – a laudable goal. Unfortunately, it has too frequently been used by profit-seeking plaintiffs' lawyers to shake businesses down with money demands under threat of lawsuits over minor technical violations, such as a disabled parking sign that has faded to the wrong shade of blue, or a door sign hanging slightly too high or low.

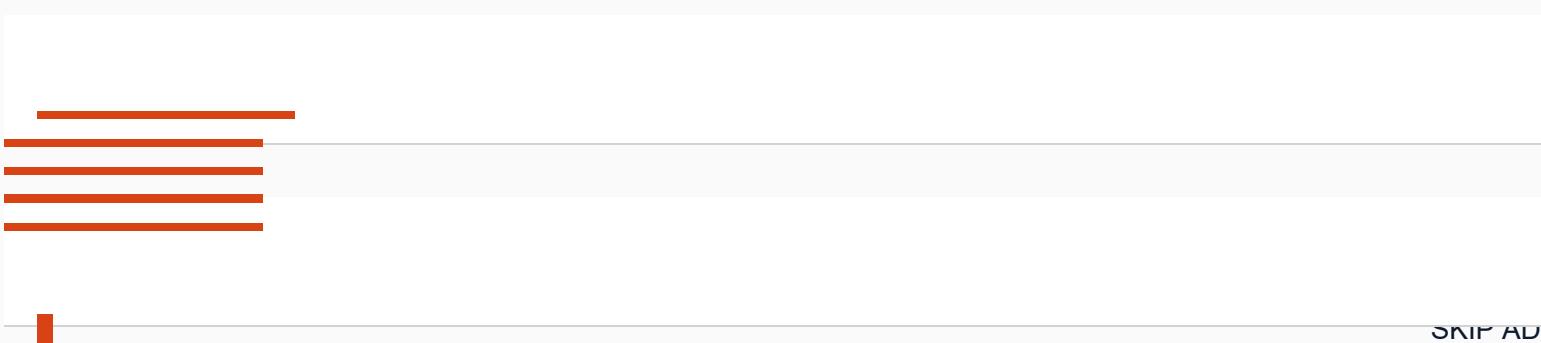
Now we are seeing a similar abusive litigation dynamic for businesses with an online presence. The absence of clear rules on website accessibility is open season for plaintiffs' lawyers to exploit the ambiguities with lawsuits alleging violations of an amorphous standard. Between 2017 and 2018, website lawsuits filed in federal court under the ADA increased by 177%.

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This staggering increase has led us co-host a number of public workshops aimed at helping small local business owners understand how best to comply with ADA requirements, including with their websites. By equipping local business owners with the information they need, they achieve better compliance rates and are better positioned to protect against being sued. Unfortunately, without clear rules for website accessibility, compliance is a guessing game and businesses remain exposed to lawsuits.

This was the case for a local hamburger restaurant in Anaheim who was sued on the basis that its online food delivery platform was allegedly not accessible. Today, this small restaurant is facing huge legal fees and an expensive settlement. Without clear regulations, businesses like this have no way to protect themselves.

Regulators have stated that “effective communication” must be provided to those with disabilities but

have not clearly defined what it means. These ambiguities are further complicated by the fact that communications disabilities are very individualized, creating a moving target for compliance. The U.S. Department of Justice needs to establish clear standards so that businesses have certainty when they take steps to comply.

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The cost of making a website compliant is also an important factor that regulators should consider, particularly for small businesses. The cost of an effective audit on a website can run anywhere from \$7,000 to \$50,000 dollars depending on the complexity of the site. This does not include the costs of continually updating the website for compliance. These mounting costs can be ruinous for some small businesses who end up closing their doors.

We need to use the law to punish bad actors, not run honest mom and pop shops out of business. Without clear rules, businesses will continue to see shakedown lawsuits that take advantage of this ambiguity. Establishing fair and reasonable rules will ultimately promote adoption of accessible websites under the ADA, which benefits consumers with disabilities and businesses alike.

Senator Ling Ling Chang represents the 29th State Senate District. Kyla Christoffersen Powell is the president and CEO of the Civil Justice Association of California, an association which advocates for balance in the legal system on behalf of employers, businesses, and Californians who are negatively impacted by our current legal climate.



OPINION

Chad Mayes and the plight of the California Republican Party



Assembly Republican Leader Chad Mayes of Yucca Valley speaks to Riverside County Republican Party members Thursday, Aug.

17 at The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa in Riverside.

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

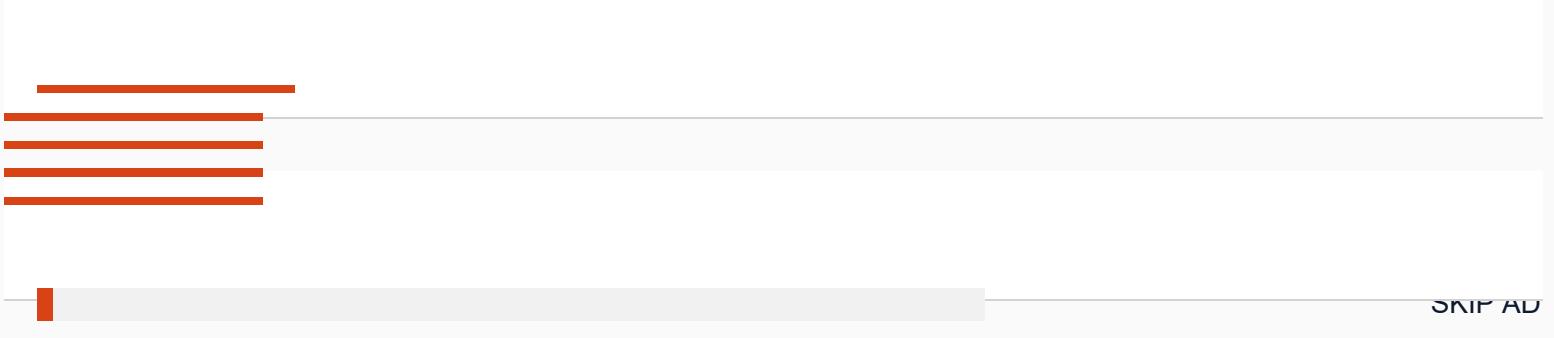
PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 4:11 pm | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 4:12 pm

Assemblyman Chad Mayes of Yucca Valley has rarely hidden his frustration with the national Republican Party, yet his decision last week to ditch the state GOP and run for re-election as an independent still stung Republican officials and caused a buzz within the Legislature. The California GOP quickly rescinded its endorsement.

Mayes waited until a day before the candidate filing deadline, but left enough time for a GOP challenger to hop on the ballot. That raises a question that commentators have been mulling: Can a No Party Preference candidate have a political future? Voters unaffiliated with any party have surpassed GOP registrants, but no-party candidates haven't won major office.

It also points to the elephant in the room. How is the GOP going to survive in California given the following dilemma? The base strongly supports Donald Trump, yet he remains wildly unpopular among other voters. The party's problems started well before Trump, but the president has accelerated its decline. For instance, his unpopularity in 2018 helped Democrats make deep gains even in the conservative bedrock of Orange County.

The centrist Mayes had been forced out of his leadership position in 2017 after backing the state's cap-and-trade program, but he said that he finally had it with party activists that demand total loyalty: "You have to be with them 100 percent of the time or they won't have you."



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Meanwhile, former Republican senator Janet Nguyen of Garden Grove announced her decision to run against Republican Assemblyman Tyler Diep of Westminster, after a former GOP chairman blasted Diep's pro-union votes. In January, Assemblyman Brian Maienschein of San Diego left the GOP to become a Democrat. Republicans now have only 28 legislative seats out of 120. No Republican holds statewide constitutional office.

Mayes has long been a party outlier, but his defection is a reminder that the GOP needs to figure out a compelling state-based message – and soon. California is under the grip of progressive political leadership, so there's desperate

Unions must follow court's dues ruling

need for political competition. The GOP should avoid these circular firing squads and get busy on ideas.

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LOCAL NEWS

17% hike in trash rates proposed in Upland

Burrtec Waste Industries, the city's trash hauler, says its costs are going up





Omar Guardado of Burrtec throws a lawn chair into a trash truck at the camp area at Auto Club Speedway on Monday, March 23, 2014, part of Burrtec Waste Industries' cleanup of the Auto Club Speedway the day after the big Auto Club 400 race. Burrtec has asked the city of Upland for more than the usual consumer price index raise in rates. The City Council voted to pursue the trash rate increase. A special public hearing will be held Jan. 27, 2020. (File photo)

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

PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 2:09 pm | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 2:10 pm

Upland City Council voted Monday night, Dec. 9, to consider a raise in trash rates 17% on average for residential customers and slightly more for some business uses, four times the usual inflation rate adjustment.

A hearing on the proposed rate hikes is scheduled for next month. If at that time the City Council approves the new rates, they would take effect Feb. 1.

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Residents and business owners will have the opportunity to comment on the 2020 rate schedule to be charged by Burrtec Waste Industries at a public hearing beginning at 7 p.m. Jan. 27 at City Hall, when a City Council vote is expected.

Normally, rate increases are capped at 4%, but Burrtec, the trash hauling and waste processing company based in Fontana, cited several “uncontrollable costs” stemming from China’s new policy not to accept recyclable materials that often results in additional processing of waste as well as additional fees charged to dump waste in landfills.

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The state’s mandated program to recycle commercial food waste also has contributed to increased costs, according to a city’s report on the rate hike.

“These are state mandates for recycling and food waste and China is not accepting these materials or some of these,” Councilwoman Janice Elliott said Monday. “So the costs are really just pass-through costs.”

“These increases are tough sometimes,” acknowledged Michael Arreguin, Burrtec vice president, who briefly addressed the City Council. He said Burrtec did not receive a rate increase in 2019, expects the 2020 increase to be approved and will not ask for another increase until at least 2021. He said the majority of the increase pays for additional costs charged to his company.

A sample of the proposed trash rate hikes looks like this:

- 35-gallon trash barrel goes from \$17.51 to \$21.17 a month (20% hike)
- 65-gallon trash barrel (for both residential and commercial customers) goes from \$21.79 to \$25.65 (18% hike)
- 95-gallon trash barrel (for both residential and commercial customers) goes from \$26.23 to \$30.23 (15% hike)

Commercial customers with larger roll off bins will see rate increases averaging about 19%, the city report stated.

Councilman Ricky Felix said residents can save money by recycling more or buying fewer products containing packaging materials.

Councilman Rudy Zuniga suggested that the city and Burrtec look at lowered rates for seniors and disabled people. He also suggested that commercial users take on more of the extra costs.

Arreguin said the city of Rancho Cucamonga does offset some of the residential trash collection costs

with higher commercial rates.

Interim Upland City Manager Rosemary Hoerning said the city and its consultant, R3 Consulting Group Inc., will look at a five-year plan for rates, trash hauling and waste processing with Burrtec sometime after the new rates are approved. The five-year plan could include some of the changes suggested by the City Council.

The City Council postponed a water rate hike Monday night that was set to go into effect Jan. 1. The city wants to wait until a report on the water rates and service is completed before allowing new rates to go into effect. The report is expected sometime in February, Hoerning said.

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LOCAL NEWS

60 Freeway in Chino to close Friday, Dec. 13, and Sunday, Dec. 15

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The eastbound 60 Freeway lanes are eerily empty at the 15-60 interchange in Jurupa Valley on July 26, 2019, as Caltrans launches the first of 15 weekend-long closures. The big 60 Swarm closures are over. However, the demolition of the Pipeline Avenue bridge will close both sides of the freeway for a couple miles in Chino on alternating nights this weekend. (File photo by Terry Pierson, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)



By DAVID DOWNEY | ddowney@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 2:24 pm | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 2:38 pm

Another closure is coming to the 60 Freeway in the Inland Empire this weekend.

It won't be as sweeping as the 60 Swarm full freeway closures of recent months that forced many to overhaul their weekend driving plans. But a bridge demolition will close a couple miles of the 60 Freeway in Chino, Caltrans officials said.

Construction crews intend to tear down half of the Pipeline Avenue bridge, triggering alternating closures of the westbound and eastbound sides of the freeway, Caltrans spokeswoman Kimberly Cherry said.

On Friday, Dec. 13, all westbound lanes of the 60 Freeway will close from Ramona Avenue to Reservoir Street, from 11:45 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 14. The closure will extend to the westbound on-ramp at Reservoir Street and the westbound off-ramp at Ramona Avenue, Cherry said.

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Then, on Sunday, Dec. 15, the eastbound side will close from Reservoir Street to Ramona Avenue, from 10 p.m. Sunday to 5 a.m. Monday, Dec. 16. Also scheduled to close during that time are the eastbound on-ramp at Ramona Avenue and eastbound off-ramp at Reservoir Street.

No closures are planned in that area for Saturday night, Cherry said.

The demolition, one of many projects associated with the 60 Swarm, is part of continuing work to rebuild bridges at Pipeline, Monte Vista and Benson avenues in Chino.

Workers tore down half of the Benson Avenue bridge in November.

Sometime over the next several weeks, Cherry said, workers will demolish the Monte Vista Avenue bridge, triggering another round of full closures, Cherry said.

Meanwhile, drivers should brace for more nighttime lane closures Mondays through Fridays as workers continue to repave portions of the 60, between Euclid Avenue in Ontario and the 60-91-215 interchange in Riverside.

Though the massive 12-mile full freeway closures are over, 60 Swarm projects will continue through fall 2021.

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Adelanto celebrates completion of road project

By **Rene Ray De La Cruz**

Staff Writer

Posted at 2:02 AM

Updated at 2:02 AM

ADELANTO — City officials gathered Monday on the corner of Ranchero Road and Highway 395 for the ribbon cutting of a recently completed multi-million dollar street project.

Adelanto Mayor Gabriel Reyes and several city leaders cut the ribbon on the \$2 million capital improvement project of Ranchero and Adelanto roads near Adelanto Stadium.

The roadways channel a significant portion of truck and passenger vehicle traffic through the city, City Manager Jessie Flores told the Daily Press

In July, Sully-Miller Construction Co. was awarded the project which was paid with \$3.66 million of Measure I funds to repave over 10 lane-miles of major arterial street.

“The paving means and methods are considered green in that existing asphalt is pulverized and reused as base material,” Flores said. “This greatly reduces greenhouse gas emissions from transporting new base material to the job site.”

Flores added that the new surface contains a rubberized component in the asphalt. These rehabilitated streets contain thousands of recycled Vehicle tires.

“Depending on future increases in traffic, these roads now have an expected design life of 20 years,” Flores said. “It’s the first time in over 25 years since the city has had any type of investment in its street infrastructure plan.”

The City of Adelanto is experiencing a boom in recent activity, such as industrial related job creation, housing construction, stadium events and commercial and retail development along its main highway corridors, Flores said.

"Under Mayor Reyes leadership and this new administration, we will continue to see activity and progress well into 2020 and 2021," Flores said.

*Reporter Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at 760-951-6227,
RDeLaCruz@VVDailyPress.com, Twitter @DP_ReneDeLaCruz.*

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/volunteers-are-sought-for-fontana-s-clean-up-day-on/article_7b27b4ba-1ace-11ea-9bc1-b7a4553adbcd.html

FEATURED

Volunteers are sought for Fontana's Clean-Up Day on Dec. 14

Dec 9, 2019 Updated Dec 9, 2019



Volunteers help clean up the Southridge Bird Farm during a previous event in Fontana. (Contributed photo by City of Fontana)

'Tis the season to give back to the community.



Fontana residents are invited to participate in the city's final Clean-Up Day event for 2019 at the Southridge Bird Farm, 14501 Live Oak Avenue, on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Volunteers will assist in picking up trash, removing weeds, raking, and other duties as needed. Participants are asked to dress comfortably and wear closed-toe shoes or boots. Staff will be on-site with a sign-in sheet and will provide volunteers with a schedule as well as any supplies necessary for the day. Lunch will also be provided.

Fontana's Park Clean-Up Day is a reoccurring event that takes place at different locations every month throughout the year. The first event of 2020 will be on Jan. 25 at the future South Fontana Sports Park on Santa Ana Avenue between Cypress Avenue and Juniper Avenue.

Persons who have questions can contact the Public Works Department at (909) 350-6760 or by email at ffix@fontana.org.





Brady, Pinkerton to lead VVC trustees in 2020

By **Matthew Cabe**

Staff Writer

Posted Dec 10, 2019 at 12:01 AM

Updated at 12:55 AM

After a swearing-in ceremony Tuesday night, the college's new Board president set his sights on winning the nation's most prestigious community college award.

VICTORVILLE — After he was sworn in Tuesday night as president of the Victor Valley College Board of Trustees, Joseph W. Brady outlined his goals for the new year, which include putting the school in a position to win the nation's most prestigious community college award.

Brady, who served as vice president in 2019, spoke emphatically while discussing the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence during a meeting that also saw trustees John Pinkerton and Brandon Wood sworn in as vice president and clerk, respectively.

"This school will win the Aspen award," Brady said.

Of the roughly 1,500 community colleges in the United States, just 927 are considered for the \$1 million Aspen Prize, according to VVC officials.

The Washington D.C.-based Aspen Institute, which bestows the prize every two years, split this year's recognition between Indian River State College in Fort Pierce, Florida, and Miami Dade College in Miami, [according to the TCPalm news site](#).

The announcement was made in April. Each school will receive \$350,000, TCPalm reported.

In November, the institute released its list of the top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the 2021 prize. VVC was not among the 19 California schools, but officials say steps are being taken to change that outcome.

Recently, an advisory group called the VVC Aspen Congress was established to lead the college in its pursuit of the award. The Congress will review and make recommendations about college practices with the aim of helping VVC earn what's known as the "signature recognition of high achievement and performance" among American community colleges.

VVC officials said the first goal is to break into the top 900 community colleges before cracking the top 15%. After that, the focus will shift to the top 10, then to the nation's No. 1 spot.

For Brady, earning the Aspen Prize will require increased effort from all involved in the plan. On Tuesday, he praised his Board colleagues for their professionalism and unity, adding that meetings held in years past were often "better than Monday Night Football."

That sentiment echoed comments he made in an article published by VVC in May. In it, Brady said there existed "an extremely toxic environment" on the Board when he first joined its ranks in 2011.

The hiring of former Superintendent/President Dr. Roger Wagner helped change that, according to Brady in the VVC article. He said Dr. Daniel Walden — who was hired in late 2018 to succeed Wagner — will help take VVC to "the next level."

One of the upcoming projects Brady believes will boost VVC's service to the High Desert is the proposed construction of a stadium and multi-purpose conference center on campus.

On Tuesday, Brady set seemingly straightforward goals for the Board in 2020: increase community involvement, begin meetings on time and take a five-minute "technology break" before the 6 p.m. start that follows closed session.

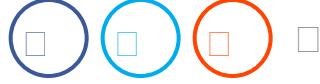
"I'm very concerned about people's time," Brady said. "I, like everybody in this room, lead busy lives, and I think we need to respect the people that are here."

That positive “atmosphere,” coupled with work accomplished by VVC’s “great staff,” will provide the school an opportunity to win the Aspen Prize, according to Brady, who was sworn in during the meeting by his wife, Deborah.

Pinkerton was sworn in as vice president by Walden. His wife, Sharon, stood by him as he recited his oath. First elected to the Board in November 2012, Pinkerton works as a counselor at Silverado High School.

Wood, meanwhile, was sworn in as clerk by his daughter, Kortney Walsh, who graduated from VVC this year. Wood joined the Board about six years ago. He served more than eight years in the U.S. Navy and works as a defense attorney in Victorville.

Both Pinkerton and Wood thanked those in attendance for their support. The Board next meets in January.



LOCAL NEWS

San Manuel Pow Wow rescheduled for this weekend at downtown San Bernardino stadium

The free three-day event was postponed in October due to the rash of fires and strong winds





In this file photo, Leland Walema, 4, of Needles, dances during the 23rd annual San Manuel Pow Wow at Cal State San Bernardino. This year's three-day event is scheduled to begin Friday, Dec. 13, at San Manuel Stadium. (Photo by Sarah Alvarado, Contributing Photographer)

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

PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 10:56 am | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 10:58 am

The 24th annual San Manuel Pow Wow is back on, and for the first time in its history, the free three-day event is happening in the heart of San Bernardino.

Postponed in October due to the rash of fires, strong winds and subsequent power outages in the northern part of town, the annual celebration of Native American culture is scheduled for Friday through Sunday, Dec. 13-15, at San Manuel Stadium, 280 S. E St. in San Bernardino.

Hundreds of North America's best dancers, drummers and artisans are scheduled to compete for more than \$250,000 in prizes.

The Pow Wow will have contests for children, teens and young adults, as well as blessings, intertribal

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dancing, Bird Singing and exhibits honoring veterans.

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Festivities are scheduled from 5 p.m. to midnight Friday, with the Grand Entry at 8 p.m.; 11 a.m. to midnight Saturday, with grand entries at 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.; and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, with the Grand Entry at 1 p.m.

Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets.

For more information, visit socalpowwow.com.

LOCAL NEWS, TOP STORY

JURY TRIAL STARTS FOR FORMER MARINE ACCUSED OF KILLING ACTIVE DUTY MARINE

DECEMBER 10, 2019 | Z107.7 NEWS | LEAVE A COMMENT

The jury trial started Monday for a Twentynine Palms man accused of stabbing and killing a Marine. On February 5, 2018, William Olivo, 27, is accused of stabbing and killing Dominique Clement, 21, in Clement's apartment in the 74400 block of Joe Davis Drive in Twentynine Palms. When deputies arrived at the scene, they found Olivo outside the apartment holding a knife. Dominique Clement died at the Naval Hospital on the base a few hours after he was stabbed. William Olivo is facing charges of murder, assault with a deadly weapon, making criminal threats, and attempting to intimidate a witness. Clement was a Marine stationed at the Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School on board the Combat Center in Twentynine Palms at the time of his death, and Olivo was discharged from the Marine Corps in 2015.



Dominique Clement Family photo

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NEWS □ CRIME + PUBLIC SAFETY

Man dead after crash on transition road between 15 and 10 freeways in Ontario



By ROBERT GUNDTRAN | rgundran@scng.com |

PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 7:23 pm | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 9:50 pm



One man died after a crash in the transition from the 15 Freeway to the 10 Freeway in Ontario on Saturday night.

Jesus Garcia, spokesman for the California Highway Patrol's Rancho Cucamonga Office, said the crash happened just before 11:15 p.m., when a man was driving a 2008 Saturn sedan on a transition road from the 15 Freeway south to the 10 Freeway east.

The Saturn left the road on the transition road, overturned and crashed into a eucalyptus tree, Garcia said.

The man died from injuries sustained in the crash at 12:10 a.m. on Sunday, according to the San Bernardino County Coroner's Office. His name will be released once family is notified of his death.





Man faces federal threat charges, made over 10,000 harassing phone calls, authorities say

By **Martin Estacio**

Staff Writer

Posted Dec 10, 2019 at 6:44 PM

Updated Dec 10, 2019 at 6:44 PM

A Twentynine Palms man faces federal charges after officials said he allegedly made more than 10,000 harassing phone calls to government offices which included death threats to congressional staffers.

Robert Stahlnecker, 48, was arrested at his home on Friday. He is being charged with threatening federal officers and employees, interstate communications with threat to injure a person and anonymous telecommunications harassment, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California said. His arraignment is scheduled for Dec. 26.

According to an affidavit filed with the federal complaint, Stahlnecker's calls, made over a period from January to November, followed a similar pattern: He would typically complain about a Veterans Affairs Hospital in Loma Linda and then "(launch) into profanity-laced, obscene, and offensive tirades."

On Aug. 28, Stahlnecker allegedly called a congresswoman's office in San Mateo three times within five minutes. He reportedly yelled at a female staffer who answered the phone, saying she didn't care about veterans, and threatened to come to the office and kill her.

On Sept. 26, Stahlnecker made eight telephone calls to the office of a U.S. Senator from Ohio, according to the affidavit.

"During the calls, Stahlnecker allegedly berated the intern who answered the call, using vulgar language to insult her, and finally, threatened to come to the senator's office to kill her," the U.S. Attorney's office said.

The Congressmembers were not identified.

Stahlnecker has been the subject of 41 investigations for threatening or harassing calls since at least 2009, the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

He has convictions for harassment in New Jersey and for making terrorist threats in Pennsylvania.

In 2015, Stahlnecker was convicted of impeding the operations of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in the same Riverside district court he is set to be arraigned.

He allegedly made thousands of calls to Veterans Affairs facilities, including its suicide prevention hotline, to complain about services and "verbally abuse employees," the affidavit reads.

That conviction was later overturned by an appeals court.

Martin Estacio may be reached at MEstacio@VVDailyPress.com or at 760-955-5358.

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NEWS □ CRIME + PUBLIC SAFETY

Video released of tense standoff in Fontana between police officer and suicidal man; no shots fired



Screenshot from Fontana Police Department Officer Josh MacMillan's body camera in a standoff between him and a man who called 911 on himself. (Photo courtesy of the Fontana Police Department)

By ROBERT GUNDTRAN | rgundran@scng.com |

PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 6:58 pm | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 9:58 pm



Body camera video released by the Fontana Police Department showed how a standoff between an officer and a suicidal man — who called 911 on himself — ended without tragedy in November.

Fontana Police Chief Billy Green said in the video released Monday that the incident happened just after 9 a.m. Nov. 27 in the area of Commerce Way and Santa Ana Avenue. The Ontario Police Department received a call about a man with a gun and transferred the call to Fontana's police dispatch center.

The 911 caller said he saw a man pull out a gun, so he hid behind something so the man didn't see him.

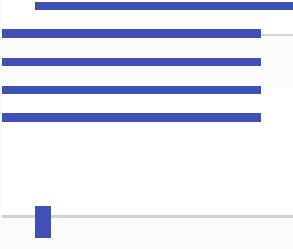
"I was going into work, and I saw this man walking up and down the street and he looked, he looked disgruntled. Very disgruntled," the caller said. "And when he saw my car, he pulled the gun out."

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The caller said he drove into work faster than he normally would when the man pulled a gun out of his pocket.

Fontana police dispatch contacted Officer Josh MacMillan, who arrived at the scene to find a man walking up and down the street with his hands in his pockets.

"Show me your hands," MacMillan said as he exited his police vehicle with his gun drawn. "Show me your hands right now. Don't pull anything out."

The officer repeated instructions until the man pulled his right hand out of his pocket, but kept his left hand hidden from view. MacMillan continued instructing the man to take his left hand out of his pocket.

"Pull your hand out, do not pull a gun out," he said. "I'm telling you right now, I will shoot you. You understand me?"

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"Shoot me," the man said, repeating it until he started to cry. "Please, just please. Please, please please shoot me."

"I do not want to shoot you," MacMillan said. "Pull your hand out of your pocket bro. Come on! Don't do this man."

This exchange lasted for several minutes with MacMillan asking the man's name and asking how he could help him, and the man pleading for the officer to shoot him.

"Let me help you out," MacMillan said as the man fell to his knees. "Pull your left hand out so I can approach you safely. Pull it out, come on dude."

Eventually the man took his left hand out of his pocket.

"You can't help me," the man said, crying.

"You may think I can't, but let me try. Just give me a chance," MacMillan said.

As additional officers arrived, the man pleaded for MacMillan to shoot him once more.

"No, I don't want to kill you. I don't want to kill you," the officer said. "You're not dying today."

The officers put the man in handcuffs, and checked his sweater pocket for the suspected gun, only to find a phone instead.

"I don't have a gun, I'm the one who called," the man said through tears.

Officers didn't find a gun on the man after searching him, and put him into the back of a police SUV. MacMillan continued to assure the man that they would talk and get through whatever was ailing him.

Green confirmed that the man involved in the standoff was the same person who called 911 about a gunman in the area.

"He placed the call to facilitate our response in an attempt to commit suicide by cop," Green said.

"Had the man not responded to the tireless deescalation tactics employed by Officer MacMillan, the outcome could have been tragic."

Video of the incident may be disturbing to some viewers and includes profanity. It can be found [here](#).

Anyone with suicidal thoughts, or knowing of such a person, can obtain help by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

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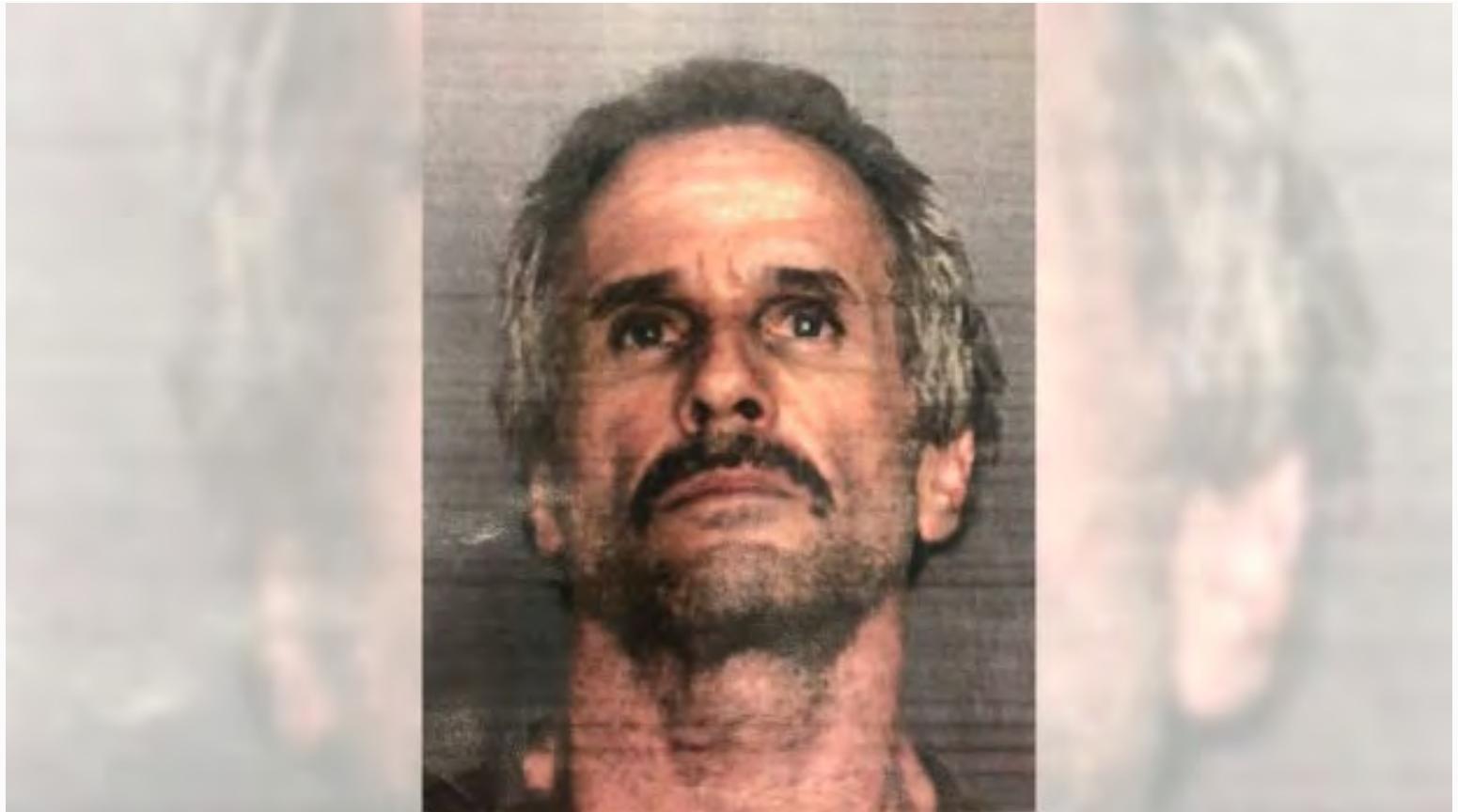
[Man in Claremont arrested on suspicion of attacking and injuring police officer](#)

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NEWS □ CRIME + PUBLIC SAFETY

Upland man, 60, admits murdering mother of 21-year-old daughter he was dating





Thomas Sanford Hill, 60, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder on Oct. 25, 2019, in the death of Sharon Wrede, 60. (Courtesy of Upland Police Department)

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

PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 3:01 pm | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 3:02 pm

An Upland man has pleaded guilty to first-degree murder after authorities say he shot and killed the mother of a 21-year-old woman he had been seeing.

Thomas Sanford Hill killed 60-year-old Sharon Wrede just before 8 p.m. on Nov. 7, 2017, in an alley in the 700 block of North Ukiah Way, according to Upland police. The alley ran between Hill's residence and the home that Wrede and her daughter shared. While it's unclear whether Hill and Wrede fought about his relationship with her daughter immediately before she was shot, Upland Lt. Marcelo Blanco said at the time that the two had argued about it in the past.

Hill, 60, made his plea to the judge on Oct. 25 in Superior Court in Rancho Cucamonga. The San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office did not object to the plea, but Sanford's attorney, Deputy Public Defender Tawnya Hughes, did object, Superior Court records show.

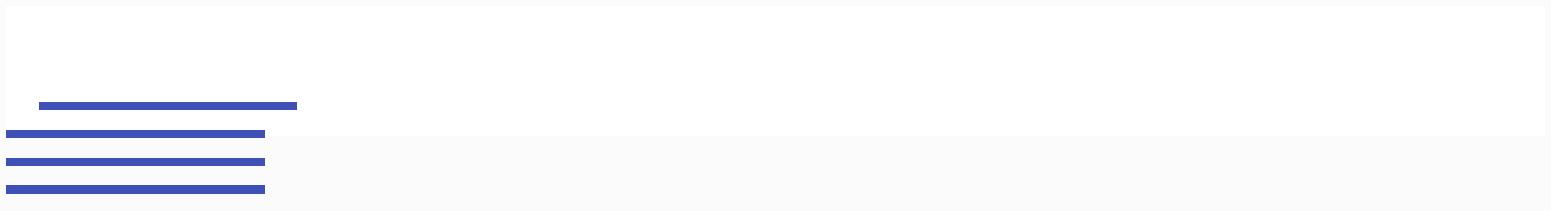
Hill also pleaded guilty to two counts of resisting arrest and one count of evading a police officer.

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He faces a maximum term of 50 years to life and a minimum term of 25 years to life when he is sentenced Jan. 17, said Kimberly Fuller, a district attorney's spokeswoman.

Hill was quickly identified as a suspect the night of the shooting. Later that night, Hill was spotted driving near the crime scene and when officers tried to pull him over, he sped off. Hill drove onto a freeway and was not stopped until police spun out Hill's vehicle about 100 miles later, on the 5 Freeway in Gorman.

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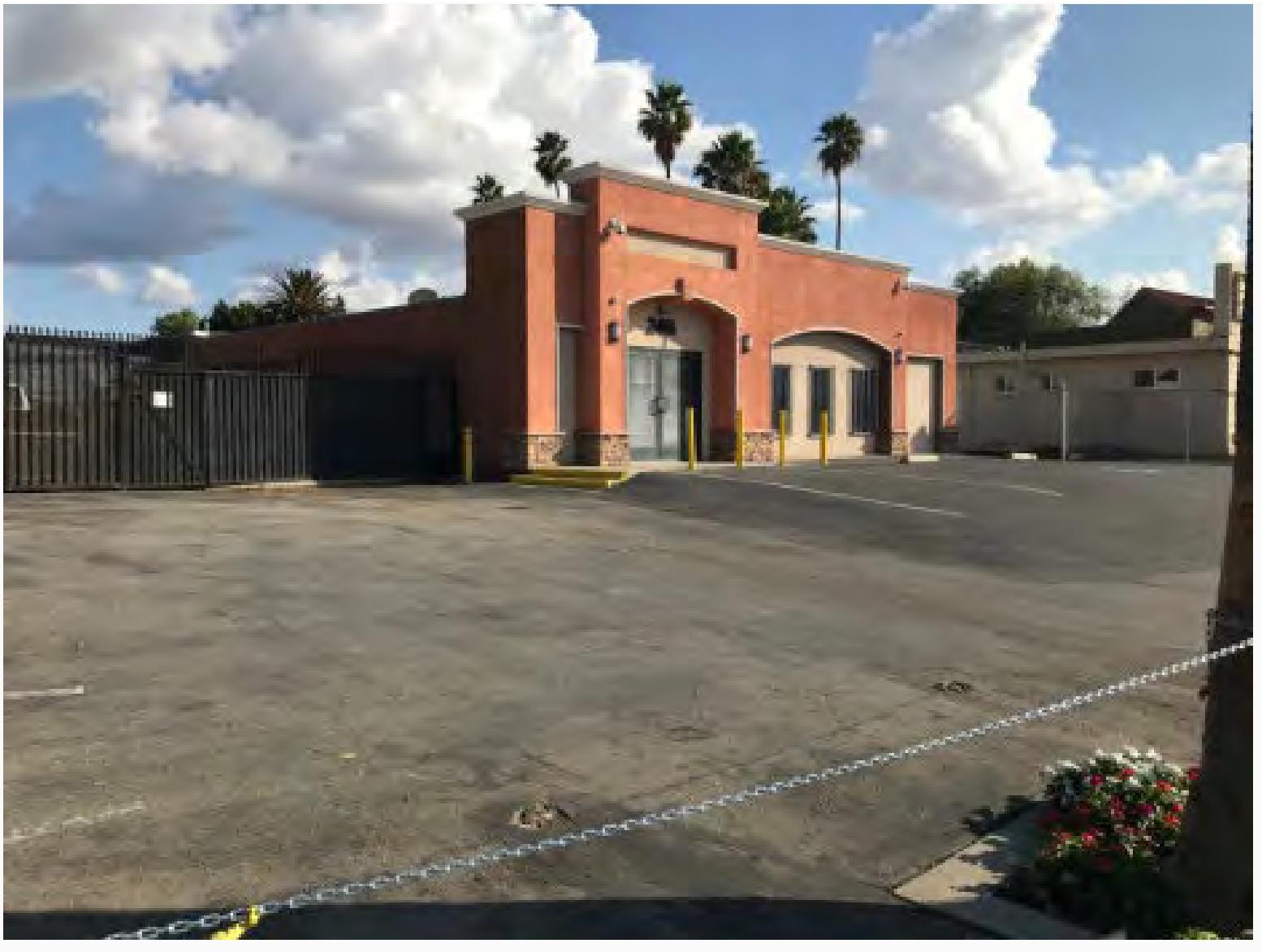
[Bounty hunter slain at Moreno Valley](#)



LOCAL NEWS

Riverside County OK's first marijuana store in unincorporated areas





This Highgrove storefront is set to become the first licensed cannabis store in unincorporated Riverside County after the Board of Supervisors approved a permit for the retailer Tuesday, Dec. 10. (File photo by Jeff Horsemann, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **JEFF HORSEMAN** | jhorseman@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 4:17 pm | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 4:19 pm

Highgrove will be home to unincorporated Riverside County's first licensed marijuana store after the retailer was granted a permit Tuesday, Dec. 10.

The Board of Supervisors' 5-0 vote came after more than two hours of public debate from roughly 30 speakers centered on whether marijuana businesses should be allowed in residential parts of the county's unincorporated communities. That discussion stemmed from an item unrelated to the permit.

The Artist Tree, which has a sister location in West Hollywood, will operate in the 200 block of Iowa Avenue, about 1,500 feet from the Riverside city limits. Recreational and medical marijuana will be

sold from the store, which can be open between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. under county rules.

The store is the first to win approval under rules approved by supervisors in 2018 that allow cannabis commerce in certain unincorporated areas. But they're forbidden from doing business on land zoned rural residential or rural agricultural.

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That upsets marijuana advocates and prospective cannabis entrepreneurs. They used an agenda item on whether the board should extend its ad-hoc cannabis committee past 2019 to urge the board to loosen restrictions on marijuana ventures in rural residential zones.

Residents who wanted the restrictions to stay in place also spoke. Allowing marijuana in rural residential zones, they said, would worsen crime, odor, traffic, and other problems caused by illegal growers in rural places such as Anza, Aguanga, and Sage.

Eventually, the board voted 4-1, with Supervisor Jeff Hewitt opposed, to let the ad-hoc committee of Hewitt and Supervisor Karen Spiegel dissolve at the end of the year.

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LOCAL NEWS

Riverside County supervisors OK new contract with deputies' union



By **JEFF HORSEMAN** | jhorseman@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise
PUBLISHED: December 10, 2019 at 3:43 pm | UPDATED: December 10, 2019 at 3:50 pm



Despite concerns about adding to skyrocketing pension debt and cities' law enforcement costs, Riverside County supervisors Tuesday, Dec. 10, approved a labor deal intended to keep the county competitive with law enforcement agencies dipping into the same limited talent pool.

The 5-year contract covering roughly 2,400 employees in the Riverside Sheriffs' Association was approved 4-1, with Supervisor Jeff Hewitt opposed. The deal, which has been ratified by union members, follows more than three years of often frustrating negotiations that led to the board imposing contract terms on the union in 2017.

The contract converts salary steps to "broad ranges" with 4% raises as employees move up the ladder. Pay at the top of the range for the law enforcement bargaining unit will go up 20% over the life of the contract, while the top of the range of the corrections bargaining unit will see a 13% increase spread over five years. ✖

The deal includes pay incentives for school resource officers, union members working at the John J. Benoit Detention Center in Indio and Special Enforcement Bureau pilots.

In all, the county projects the new contract will cost \$145.7 million over five years, with the county on the hook for \$103 million. Five years from now, the county will pay roughly \$45 million more than it does now for salaries and benefits for the same employees.

The contract will boost efforts to recruit and retain candidates for law enforcement jobs as they decide where to work, association President Bill Young told supervisors. A survey by the county's human resources department found the county ranked last among neighboring agencies in deputies' pay, Supervisor Kevin Jeffries said.

Hewitt was concerned about how much the new contract will cost cities that rely on the Sheriff's Department for police services. For years, contract cities have warned of escalating contract costs squeezing their budgets and Menifee is transitioning from using deputies to forming its own police force to save money.

The union and county, Hewitt said, need to come together to address the county's unfunded pension liability, which stands at more than \$3 billion and is projected to steadily grow in the next decade.

Jeffries' acknowledged Hewitt's concerns but said it's up to the board, not the union, to get a handle on pension costs.

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CALIFORNIA

To bring a boy's murderers to justice, a prosecutor wrestled with his own childhood abuse



Jennifer Garcia, a teacher who repeatedly reported signs that Gabriel Fernandez was being abused, comforts Deputy Dist. Atty. Jon Hatami, who became emotional after sentencing. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

By MARISA GERBER
STAFF WRITER

DEC. 11, 2019
3 AM



Jon Hatami's voice shook and he stared down at the courthouse floor as reporters packed around him. Minutes before, the prosecutor had won a conviction in the killing of Gabriel Fernandez, one

of the most infamous and chilling child abuse cases in California history.

When paramedics arrived at Gabriel's Palmdale home in the spring of 2013, the 8-year-old had shattered ribs, a cracked skull and cigarette burns dotting his unconscious body, signs of the torture inflicted by his mother and her boyfriend.

After Hatami was assigned the case, he long guarded the gruesome details inside his mind, unable to speak publicly about the prosecution that had both infused him with deep purpose, but also strained his marriage and eroded his trust in law enforcement. In the fall of 2017, moments after jurors convicted the boyfriend, Isauro Aguirre, of murdering Gabriel, Hatami thought it was finally safe to unburden his heart.

During that emotional news conference, he stunned the crowd.

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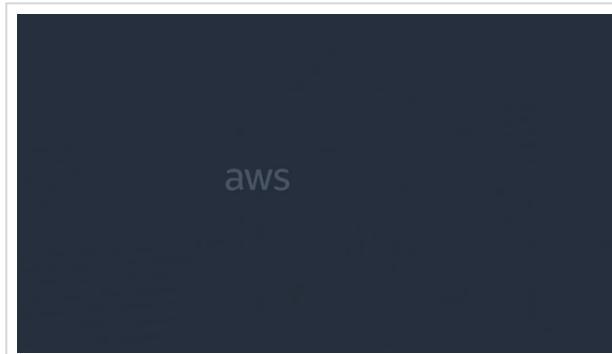
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“Sorry,” he said in a hushed voice, swallowing tears. “I was a victim of child abuse.”

“At what age?” a reporter shouted.

“Four, five,” Hatami answered, closing his eyes.

Reflecting on that episode now, Hatami described his public revelation as spontaneous — a split-second decision to highlight his own past. The 49-year-old prosecutor said that as a child, he was physically and verbally abused by his father and kidnapped and shuttled across the country by his mother, leading to years of emotional instability.



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And he believes that his experiences and years of self-reflection make him uniquely equipped to prosecute child abuse cases.

“It’s my truth,” says Hatami, who refers to himself an abuse survivor. “I know what it feels like to be powerless.”

‘It’s my truth. I know what it feels like to be powerless.’

DEPUTY DIST. ATTY. JON HATAMI

Prosecuting Gabriel’s case also reawakened some of Hatami’s own demons, pushing him to grapple with old memories and study his own psyche. His cases often involve cycles of abuse — Gabriel’s mother, for example, says she was sexually and physically abused as a child — and he knows that he inherited some of his father’s anger. He dreads the thought of treating his children the way his father treated him — of violating their trust, of instilling fear.



Family and friends attend a memorial service for Gabriel Fernandez. (Gina Ferazzi / Los Angeles Times)

These days, when Hatami reflects on the verdict, his eyes well up. He felt such relief for Gabriel and his relatives: Finally, he thought, the system had done something for them. A few months later, in early 2018, Gabriel's mother, Pearl Sinthia Fernandez, pleaded guilty to first-degree murder.

Raised Catholic and now Lutheran, Hatami sometimes thinks about Gabriel in heaven and wonders whether God or some spiritual force led the case to him.

"I think I became a D.A. for that case," Hatami says, choking up. "I'll never have another Gabriel."

'I was so small'

His father could be so fun, Hatami says, but small things — watching a TV show he didn't like or eating food he deemed unhealthy — could set him off, and then his face would shrivel and flush red as he screamed. Sometimes his father slapped him, Hatami says. Other times he yanked him by his hair, smashing his small body into the white walls of their apartment in Queens, N.Y.

In one of his most distinct early memories, he's standing inside a New York courtroom for a custody hearing and his father whispers in his ear, encouraging him to tell the judge he'd rather live with his father. Hatami remembers feeling terrified. He froze, unable to say a thing.

"The court was so big," Hatami says, "and I was so small."

Column One

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After the hearing, his mother, who'd been granted temporary custody, flew him and his younger brother to Florida, leaving them temporarily with an elderly woman who was a stranger to the young boys.

"My mother kidnapped my brother and I," Hatami adds matter-of-factly; he believes that his mother feared his father planned to flee with the boys to his native Iran.

In an interview, Hatami's father, now in his 80s, acknowledges raising his voice to his son, but denies abusing him physically.

"That's completely out of my character," he says, suggesting that Hatami might have imagined the abuse — details of which, however, were confirmed to The Times by another close relative who asked to remain anonymous.

'I think I became a D.A. for that case. I'll never have another Gabriel.'

DEPUTY DIST. ATTY. JON HATAMI

Hatami's mother did not respond to multiple voicemails or a letter seeking comment. The prosecutor's father, as well as another close relative, confirmed Hatami's characterization of his travels with his mother as a kidnapping.

Hatami says that the old woman in Florida, whose name he doesn't know — "the lady," he calls her — often chased him around her single-story home whacking him with a wooden spoon. A few months later, he says, his mother returned and moved the boys to California.

His father eventually contacted New York police, the FBI and groups that help search for missing children, Hatami says, and photos of himself and his brother listed as missing children ran in an edition of Ladies' Home Journal. In the early 1980s, someone recognized them as the boys in the photos, and the prosecutor, then in his early teens, remembers federal officials coming to their North Hollywood home to question his mother. Ultimately, she got "a slap on the wrist," he says, noting that parental kidnapping wasn't taken as seriously back then.

Hatami enlisted in the Army at 18 and spent the next seven years bouncing from stint to stint across the globe. Although he didn't talk about his childhood then, afraid that fellow soldiers might view him as weak, the structure of the military helped him process and direct his anger. The Army showed him the power of a long run — still his go-to stress reliever — and offered time for self-reflection.

"I am good," he recalls telling himself for the first time in his life. "I am somebody."

Hatami later moved to Nebraska for law school and then returned to Los Angeles County in 2003 to work as a civil attorney. A year later, he wrote a letter to The Times responding to [news of a Chatsworth teenager](#), who discovered while searching the internet that his mother had kidnapped him from his father's home years earlier.

"My heart just goes out to that Chatsworth student," Hatami wrote, explaining that his mother had kidnapped him, too.

'In Gabriel's shoes'

Two years later, he took a job with the L.A. County district attorney's office, and eventually was assigned the case of a 7-year-old boy who, like Gabriel years later, was abused by his mother and her boyfriend.

During closing arguments at trial — his final words to jurors before they ultimately convicted the defendants of child abuse and torture — Hatami said that the boy, a weak swimmer, had flailed in the pool as his mother repeatedly shoved his small hand from the ledge. He got a bit emotional as he spoke, Hatami recalls, but it was so subtle that he doubts jurors noticed.

One of three prosecutors assigned to the D.A.'s complex child abuse unit, Hatami has had practice tamping down his emotions since then.

He says he can't envision ever recusing himself from a case simply because it involved child abuse, even one as brutal and personally triggering as Gabriel's. What Gabriel and other children have endured far exceeds what he himself experienced — "Most of my victims are dead," the prosecutor says.

And yet, the impact of his own abuse haunts Hatami's adult life in ways he continues to unearth. For a long time, the concept of being either a dad or a husband terrified him. Could he truly trust somebody? Would a future wife ultimately remind him of his mother? And could he be a good dad?

"I'm flawed," he often says.



Jon and Roxanne Hatami with 4-year-old Lindsey Beth and Jon Jr., 7, before dinner in their Santa Clarita Valley home. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)

Hatami credits much of his personal growth to his wife, Roxanne, who once worked as a bailiff at the Antelope Valley courthouse. He proposed in the courtroom where they met and they married in 2011, when he was 40. Through the years, Roxanne — now a detective in the Sheriff's Department — learned to gently point out when he snapped at her with a mean name during arguments. That's hurtful, she'll say.

But yelling is a learned behavior, she knows, and one that takes time to unlearn.

"This is just kind of a product of what he's left with, unfortunately," she says.

Gabriel died in May 2013 — six months after the couple's son, Jonathan Jr., was born. Hatami spent long hours in the office, piecing together evidence of Gabriel's last days. He studied X-rays of shattered ribs and thought of his own son, now a toddler, bumping into things at home. Small bones are pliable, he realized, and shattering them would take deliberate effort.

'He really had to put himself in Gabriel's shoes.... In doing that, he sacrificed a lot of himself.'

ROXANNE HATAMI

Some nights, while he was preparing to present the case to grand jurors, Hatami's mind raced and he didn't want to talk. Other times he and Roxanne — working full time and up many nights with Jon Jr. — bickered over small things.

"Our home life was really kind of turned upside down," Roxanne recalls. Although her husband had discussed his abuse in broad terms years earlier, he opened up in much more detail while prosecuting the case.

"He told me that he really had to put himself in Gabriel's shoes. Like, 'How did he feel?'" Roxanne recalled. "In doing that, he sacrificed a lot of himself."

The stress got worse, the couple said, after Hatami publicly challenged the L.A. County Sheriff's Department — his wife's employer and the agency that investigated Gabriel's death. In a motion asking for an investigative file — critical evidence that Hatami says the department's internal affairs division hid from him for years — the prosecutor alleged inaction by deputies who had responded to Gabriel's home in the months before his death. Before long, Roxanne started hearing rumors about veiled threats from co-workers, and the couple lost some friends.





Jon Hatami helps daughter Lindsey Beth, 4, play basketball. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)

In the end, all the stress was vindicated.

"That case was so important. It was worth it," Roxanne said during a recent conversation in the kitchen of the family's home in the Santa Clarita Valley. Down the hall, Hatami rolled a ball back and forth to Jon Jr., now 7, and their daughter, Lindsey Beth, 4, who had red dots of marinara sauce crusted into the corners of her smile.

A few minutes earlier, she sashayed over to her father and hugged his leg.

"Did I do a good job with the pasgetti?" she asked. He peeked over at her nearly empty pasta bowl.

"Yes," he said, smiling, "you did."

"I'm the bestest!" Lindsey Beth said, twirling.

Finally, a murder trial

By the fall of 2017, prosecutors had decided to try the defendants in Gabriel's case separately. Fernandez ultimately pleaded guilty to avoid the death penalty, but Aguirre decided to take a

chance before a jury.

At trial, Hatami spoke slowly while describing Gabriel's torment. The little boy often slept in a cabinet with a sock gagging his mouth. Fernandez and Aguirre forced him to eat cat feces and his own vomit. Aguirre — who Hatami believes hated Gabriel because he suspected he was gay — lashed the boy with a metal hanger and beat him with a bat.

Moira Shourie, a media executive who served as the jury forewoman, focused on the way Hatami spoke about Gabriel — with such conviction that she assumed he'd known the boy personally.

"He really delivered Gabriel's voice," she said. "He spoke for the victim."

Jurors convicted Aguirre of first-degree murder after six hours of deliberations. A few minutes after the verdict was read, Hatami, elated and exhausted, walked toward the media scrum. He hadn't planned to say anything about his own past, but it felt like a natural response to one of the questions.

Almost immediately, some of his bosses expressed concern about how the comments might hurt the case, and within days Aguirre's defense team asked the judge to declare a mistrial and remove Hatami from the case, questioning whether he could be "evenhanded."

The responses perplexed Hatami, who thinks it's a farce to say that any prosecutor — or human, for that matter — goes into their job with a completely clean slate. Some prosecutors just keep their experiences more private.

'He really delivered Gabriel's voice. He spoke for the victim.'

MOIRA SHOURIE, JURY FOREWOMAN

"We're all humans; we all come with ourselves," he says, noting that, for him, speaking about his past is therapeutic. He also hopes to encourage other survivors and to remind them to hold no shame.

The judge ultimately denied the defense request for a mistrial and [jurors voted](#) to sentence Aguirre to death. After the death sentence was read, Hatami joined the jurors in the deliberation room and started to sob, bracing himself on the back of a chair.

A complicated love

Because of his own experience, Hatami understands behavior that some might find contradictory. It doesn't surprise him, for example, that shortly before Gabriel's death, the little boy wrote a note that said, "I love you mom and Gabriel is a good boy."

Although Hatami's own parents have softened with age, and he has let both of them meet his children, the relationships remain deeply strained. He's not sure he's forgiven them, he says, but he does love them.

"God," he says, letting out a long sigh, "it's so hard to explain to people."

Even as he wishes for some profound apology, he still craves their approval. And, over the years, he's taken steps to show them love.

In the summer of 2008, he said, he moved into his mother's home for six months as she recovered from broken ribs sustained when [an off-duty LAPD officer hit her](#) with his Hummer then fled the scene.

Around the same time, Hatami's father, who lives in New York, contacted him about changing the spelling of his last name, explaining that when he emigrated to the U.S., he'd imprecisely translated his name from Farsi to "Hatemi." At his father's request, the prosecutor said, he officially swapped out the E for a second A.

Asked about his father's remark that Hatami might have imagined parts of his past, the prosecutor tightened his lips and shook his head. "My imagination?" he said, tears again welling into his eyes.



Jon Hatami plays a game with Jon Jr., 7, at home in Santa Clarita Valley. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)

"I know," he says. "I know, because I can be like him."

Back when he was prosecuting Gabriel's case and his own son was younger, Hatami says, he recalls a time he lost his temper and yelled. In that moment, before his son burst into tears, Hatami stared into his son's small, brown eyes and recognized the look of fear. He remembered the feeling of being so small.

Shattered, he hugged his little boy and told him he was sorry.

"I'm not going to do that again," he said. "I love you."

"Oh, it's OK, Dad!" his son said. "I love you."



Jon Hatami and son Jon Jr. get in some play time outside. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)

He works hard not to raise his voice now, and when he does he's racked with guilt for days and rushes out to buy the children toys or candy or doughnuts. He now lets Roxanne handle all of the discipline.

One morning earlier this year, Hatami pulled up to Summerwind Elementary School in Palmdale in his F-150 pickup. Shourie and the other jurors had invited him to Gabriel's old school for the dedication of a plaque. "In memory of Gabriel Fernandez," it read, "whose smile and story touched 19 jurors."

Inside the gym, Hatami spotted a big banner of Gabriel wearing a brown fedora and a smirk. He sighed, wondering how much longer he could handle these cases. Hatami currently has 10 open child-abuse cases. As he stood there, he noted, authorities were searching a nearby landfill for the body of another little boy.

During the ceremony, Gabriel's first-grade teacher shared memories of her former student and Hatami hunched forward, dabbing his eyes with a tissue. His shoulders bounced as he cried and Deputy Dist. Atty. Scott Yang, who prosecuted the case alongside Hatami, rested his left hand on his co-worker's back.



Jon Hatami, standing, at a dedication ceremony for Gabriel Fernandez at Summerwind Elementary School. (Kent Nishimura / Los Angeles Times)

Moments later, a line of first-graders filed into the gym and sang for Gabriel.

“You can count on me, like one, two, three,” they sang, signing each number with their hands.

The song ended and Hatami vaulted from his seat. For a moment, before the other adults joined the ovation, it was just him, standing and smiling, clapping and crying.

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HOMELESSNESS

Report shows national increase in laws focused on 'criminalizing' homelessness



In this file photo, officers from San Diego Police Department's homeless outreach team and social workers speak with a man on a sidewalk in City Heights. (Nelvin C. Cepeda / San Diego Union-Tribune)

San Diego's new law prohibiting people from living in vehicles is mentioned in the report; the city did not make the report's 'Hall of Shame'

By GARY WARTH

DEC. 10, 2019
1:58 PM



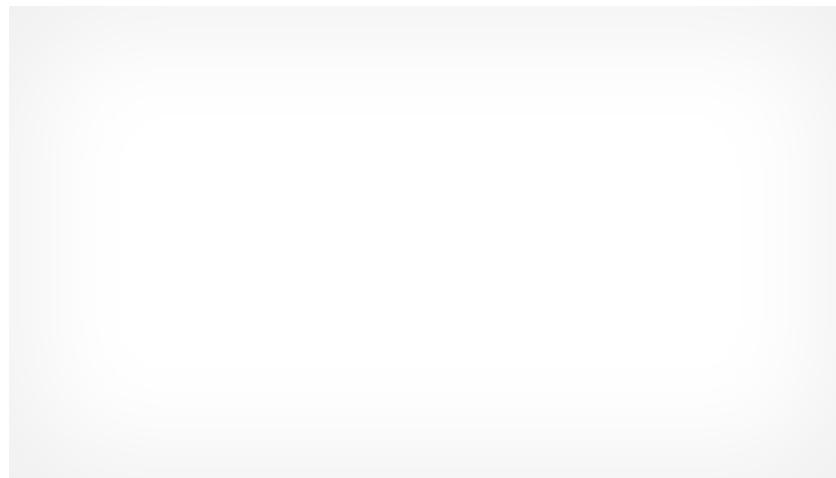
Cities throughout the country are adopting more laws that focus on homeless people, according to a recently released report from the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty Law.

San Diego's vehicle habitation law is mentioned in the Law Center's 2019 [Housing Not Handcuffs](#) report, but the city was not listed among others as part of the report's "Hall of Shame."

It also noted some progress around the country in trying to help homeless people off the street, and mentioned Clairemont Lutheran Church's plan to build affordable housing units on its parking lot. While not mentioned in the report, the local group Yes In God's Back Yard is going even further with the effort, and is looking at using shipping containers for affordable housing at other church sites.

Overall, the report criticizes cities for, in the words of the Law Center, "criminalizing homelessness" with laws against sleeping in public or in vehicles, loitering, panhandling and other behavior associated with being homeless.

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"The results of our research show that the criminalization of homelessness is prevalent across the country and has increased in every measured category since 2006, when the Law Center began tracking these policies nationwide," the report reads.

The Law Center also found that in the 187 cities studied, laws focused on homelessness have increased since it last published a [Housing Not Handcuffs](#) report in 2016.

San Diego's law against people living in vehicles wasn't completely new. The city had a law on the books for 35 years, but it was repealed early this year after a judge ruled it was too vague to be enforced. A revised law has since been adopted.

San Diego isn't alone. Half of the cities in the report have one or more laws prohibiting people from sleeping in vehicles. The report also found that 64 new laws against the practice have been adopted in the cities, representing a 213 percent increase since 2006. Of those, 22 were adopted since 2016.

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The report also said 72 percent of surveyed cities had laws against camping in public, with 33 laws adopted since 2006 and nine since 2016.

Just over half of surveyed cities had laws against sleeping in public, with 13 new prohibitions passed since 2006, including six adopted since 2016.

Imperial Beach was not mentioned in the report, but it expanded its laws against camping and sleeping in parks and other public spaces to include streets and sidewalks in September.

The report found 83 percent of surveyed cities had laws against public urination and defecation, and 76 percent of the cities had a law against rummaging through trash bins or other refuse.

San Diego police Capt. Scott Wahl cringes at the phrase "criminalization of homelessness," and said cities have to draw the line somewhere when it comes to behavior often associated with homelessness.

"It's extremely frustrating," said Wahl, who heads a neighborhood policing division that includes homeless outreach teams and officers who deal with quality-of-life crimes sometimes committed by homeless people.

"As police officers, we are unfairly judged," he said. "There's kind of a stereotype that the Police Department is criminalizing homelessness when they get involved. That couldn't be further from the truth."

Wahl said police are obligated to respond to public complaints about behavior such as defecating and urinating in public, but also stressed that enforcement of other laws is done progressively, by first issuing warnings to people found sleeping in public or engaging in other prohibited behavior. The captain said officers also assist homeless people in finding shelter beds and other services.

"But if everything fails, we have a responsibility to do something," he said.

Wahl said San Diego Police Department homeless outreach teams patrol the city seven days a week and include 10 full-time officers, four part-time officers, two sergeants, four county Health and Human Services Agency specialists and three Psychiatric Emergency Response Team members.

Homeless outreach teams are focused on getting help for homeless people on the street, but officers still ticket and arrest homeless people for some violations, he said. While some may see it as cracking down on homelessness, Wahl said the enforcement also can be seen as an intervention against self-harming behavior.

"We're not going to let it deteriorate to people killing themselves on the street," he said. "It's not compassionate to let things get to that point. Just because you're doing something about it doesn't mean you're not compassionate."

The report called out several cities and the federal government in a “Hall of Shame” for what it said were bad policies.

On the federal level, the Law Center was critical of a September report from the Council on Economic Advisors that suggested people remain homeless because they are “too comfortable” living on the streets and called for more police enforcement to move people into shelters or housing.

In California, Redding made the “Hall of Shame” for the mayor’s call of requiring mental health treatment and conservatorship of some homeless people and proposing creating a shelter where homeless people would not be allowed to leave until they proved they were self-sufficient.

Sacramento was included in the hall for sweeps of homeless encampments and an effort to ban certain people from public spaces.

Ocala, a city in central Florida, made the “Hall of Shame” for what was called an aggressive enforcement of laws against resting on public property. Wilmington, Del. was included for banning homeless people who are free on bail from certain areas, and Kansas City, Mo. was included because health officials poured bleach on food to prevent it from being served to homeless people.

The state of Texas was included after the Department of Transportation was directed by Gov. Greg Abbott to sweep homeless camps in Austin after the city amended its camping ordinance to allow them.

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LIVING IN

Beaumont, Calif.: Growing Fast, but Still a Bedroom Community

This Riverside County city began to grow years ago, when prices of coastal real estate skyrocketed and people flocked east in search of affordable homes.

By Debra Kamin

Dec. 10, 2019, 9:01 a.m. ET

When Lynn Baldi moved to Beaumont in 1978, the Riverside County city was mostly shrub land, apple orchards and empty lots. That open space was exactly what she wanted. Ms. Baldi, now 72, had been living in San Bernardino and was looking for a quieter place to raise her children. At the time, Beaumont — now one of the most rapidly growing cities in California — was sleepy and pastoral.

"In 1978, we had smog in San Bernardino," Ms. Baldi said. "In Beaumont, the wind was blowing, and it was just beautiful."

The city — which sits atop the San Gorgonio Pass, a corridor between mountain ranges on the rim of the majestic Great Basin — is hardly recognizable to Ms. Baldi today. It has more than quadrupled in size since 2000, from 11,495 to nearly 50,000 residents, according to United States census reports. In 2007, it was California's fastest-growing city, and today it remains in the top five.



By The New York Times

"It used to be that if you came down the 10 toward Palm Springs, there was nothing there, from Yucaipa to Palm Springs," Ms. Baldi said, referring to Interstate 10 and two nearby cities. "It's just exploded."

After Ms. Baldi, a construction consultant, settled in Beaumont with her first husband and their children, a divorce and the death of a second husband followed. Five years ago, she bought a home in Four Seasons at Beaumont, a planned community with single-story homes, fitness centers, hiking trails and swimming pools, for residents 55 and over. Built in 2005, it is one of three designated seniors-only housing developments in the city.

She paid \$319,000 for a two-bedroom, two-bathroom house with a bonus room, and has watched its value, like that of nearly everything in her city, steadily appreciate. The house three doors down from hers, similar in size and layout, recently sold for \$450,000. "That's a lot of money," she said.



There are 13 city parks in Beaumont, as well as a new 20-acre sports park. In November, Little League members played a baseball game at Noble Creek Park. Roger Kisby for The New York Times

In the past 20 years, as real estate prices along California's coast pushed skyward and a decades-long housing shortage sent families farther east, Beaumont has become a destination for those in search of affordable homes. Halfway between San Bernardino and Palm Springs, and equidistant from Los Angeles and the northern suburbs of San Diego, it offers an appealing choice for commuting families priced out of bigger cities.

And the pace of development has been dizzying. Dozens of gated communities and master-planned neighborhoods have changed the face of the city; a handful of new shopping centers, with tenants like Walmart, Panera Bread and Wells Fargo, have followed. A 12-screen movie theater and an In-N-Out Burger, the beloved California-based fast-food chain with a semi-secret menu, are slated to open there in early 2020.

Rosy Kamacho, 54, and her husband, Luis Kamacho, 55, have lived in Beaumont for more than a decade. The couple, who are from Peru, bought their first home in the city in 2008, spending \$240,000 for a three-bedroom, four-bathroom, single-family house in Fairway Canyon, a master-planned community of stucco homes in several neighborhoods, with access to parks, a golf course and a 10,000-square-foot recreation center. In 2012, they took advantage of the dip in housing prices to move into a newer, larger home in the same community, paying \$210,000 for a five-bedroom, three-bathroom house now worth at least \$440,000.

"We like it in Beaumont," said Ms. Kamacho, who runs her own geriatric-care business. "It's very quiet — we don't like noisy cities."

Mr. Kamacho, a business analyst who works in Riverside, Calif., drives around 45 minutes each way to work, she added, and "when he gets home, he doesn't want to hear cars honking."

The couple have two sons: one who is 21 and lives at home while attending community college and another who is 14 and attends Beaumont High School, where he is on the swim team. "We chose to live in Beaumont because it's a safe city, and our kids have always been able to play outside without me worrying," she said. "Right now, it's growing, but when we started living here, it was still a small town."



Most businesses are clustered in the Second Street Marketplace, a sprawling collection of restaurants and big-box stores. Roger Kisby for The New York Times

What You'll Find

"Beaumont is definitely growing and has been since 2002. There are a lot of new homes being sold out here. But it's still a bedroom community," said Randy Harris, a real estate agent with the Harris Group, a family-owned company.

The city is at an elevation of about 2,600 feet, in a valley between the San Bernardino Mountains and the San Jacinto Mountains, with Interstate 10 and State Route 60 meeting at its center.

Most commerce is clustered in the Second Street Marketplace, a sprawling group of restaurants and big-box stores. Nearby San Gorgonio Village is under construction between First and Second Streets, and the nine new businesses it will add, including the movie theater, In-N-Out Burger and Planet Fitness, will do little to alleviate traffic problems.



1111 MAPLE AVENUE | A two-bedroom, one-bath home, built in 1916 on 0.19 acres, listed for \$199,000. 909-821-6137
Roger Kisby for The New York Times

There are 13 city parks in Beaumont, as well as a new 20-acre sports park, a recreation space with playgrounds, running tracks, basketball courts and a baseball diamond, at the southeast corner of Brookside and Beaumont Avenues.

At the southern edge of the city are Potrero Canyon and Laborde Canyon, two remote patches of badlands once used by Lockheed Martin for rocket-propellant testing. Contamination was later found at both sites, and while Lockheed Martin remains in charge of the cleanup and reclamation effort, Potrero Canyon is now mostly under the control of the State of California, while Laborde Canyon is owned by Riverside County.

What You'll Pay

As Beaumont has grown, its housing prices have, too: The median year-to-date sale price in 2019 is \$345,000, compared with \$335,000 in 2018 and \$310,000 in 2017.

Prices are still low enough, though, that many buyers feel they justify a longer commute.

"I just sold a home to a client who worked in Downey," Mr. Harris said, "and he was driving at least 65 miles each way. There aren't a lot of good jobs out here yet, but the prices are so good that people are willing to drive."

As for rentals, a two-bedroom apartment can run about \$1,000 a month; a single-family home with four or five bedrooms can be had for between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a month.



Dining at the family-owned Marla's restaurant. Roger Kisby for The New York Times

The Vibe

In 2015, agents from the F.B.I. and the Riverside County District Attorney's Office raided Beaumont City Hall, tipped off to widespread corruption. Eventually seven city officials were charged with fraud and stealing from public coffers; all eventually pleaded guilty, with six convicted of felonies.

After the dust settled, it emerged that for more than a decade, in the whirlwind of Beaumont's frantic growth, officials including the city's police chief, city attorney and public works director had been privately profiting from city bond sales and development fees. Beaumont was bankrupt, and its reserve funds had been drained.

Since then, the city has rebounded, with an A+ credit rating from Standard & Poor's and a new Amazon fulfillment center currently under construction, projected to bring in 1,500 new jobs.

"We've cleaned house," said Lloyd White, a city councilman who has lived in Beaumont with his wife, Marti, and their two children since 2007. "We know where every penny is now."

One problem, Mr. White said, was not that Beaumont grew too fast, but that job growth didn't keep pace with home construction, so the city remains, essentially, a bedroom community.

"This is still the only place where you can buy a home for \$300,000 and be able to work in Orange County or Los Angeles and live out here, comfortably, on that salary," he said.

"But we're located between two freeways, so the jobs coming here right now are logistics jobs," he said, referring to blue-collar positions that involve driving and shipping. "Until we start changing the job base here, we're going to be a commuter city."

663 AMERICAN AVENUE | A three-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bath house, built in 1957 on 0.19 acres, listed for \$279,000. 909-499-0529
Roger Kisby for The New York Times



The Schools

The Beaumont Unified School District is the fastest-growing school district in Southern California, currently serving 11,027 students across seven elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools. The student body has grown 3 to 4 percent every year since 2013, said Terrence Davis, the district superintendent, adding that he is hiring 30 to 40 new teachers a year.

"Beaumont is a tight-knit community, and despite all the hubbub and growth, it has a small-town feel," Mr. Davis said. "It's a high priority for us to keep that connectivity and that feeling."

Many residents complain that Beaumont's schools are at capacity and that more classrooms are desperately needed to keep up with the swelling student population. A bond measure, intended to help the school district improve its infrastructure, security services and facilities, will be on the ballot in March 2020.

On state proficiency exams, 46.8 percent of Beaumont's third-graders met proficiency standards in English language arts, compared with 48.54 percent statewide; in mathematics, 51.3 percent met standards, compared with 50.22 percent statewide.

Of the district's eighth graders, 48.45 percent met proficiency standards in English language arts, compared with 49.4 percent statewide; in mathematics, 28.7 percent met standards, compared to 36.3 percent statewide.

On the 2018 SAT exam, Beaumont High School students scored an average of 495 in evidence-based reading and writing and 466 in math, compared with 540 and 536 statewide.



156 PAISLEY COURT | A four-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath home, built in 2006 on 0.14 acres, listed for \$345,000. 626-283-5077
Roger Kisby for The New York Times

The Commute

Beaumont is 90 minutes from Los Angeles, barring traffic jams; it is about 80 minutes from Irvine and just shy of two hours from San Diego. Palm Springs can be reached in 30 minutes; Redlands, a popular shopping and dining destination for Beaumont residents, is 15 to 20 minutes by car.

A system of commuter buses connects Beaumont with the cities of Calimesa, Redlands and Loma Linda, and the San Bernardino Transit Center; a one-way fare is \$3.50.



The Lamb Canyon trailhead sits off State Route 79. Roger Kisby for The New York Times

The History

Beaumont's first settlers arrived in the mid-1800s, following the Southern Pacific railroad. The city was initially called San Gorgonio. In the 1880s, a wealthy investor named H.C. Sigler bought the city and changed its name to Beaumont, meaning "beautiful mountain."

Shortly after, miles of eucalyptus trees were planted, the city's first hotel was built and its first newspaper and railroad depot were established.

When Beaumont was incorporated as a city, in November 1912, its primary industry was apple growing. In later decades, it was known for its dude ranches, which attracted tourists.

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