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Concert Band  
Presents "Musical  
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**He is  
Risen!**

*Celebrate Easter*



# Gold River Messenger

VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 4

*Serving Gold River and Sacramento County*

APRIL 2023

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## Storms Test American River Wildlife



Veteran wildlife rescuer Ben Nuckolls and assistant Leslie Ackerman help an injured beaver near the American River during recent storms. Another of the aquatic rodents was relocated after ending up in Folsom Post Office grounds. Photo by Janni Nichols.

*By Susan Maxwell Skinner*

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Storms that swelled waterways in recent weeks have challenged river and flood plain wildlife.

Wind has dislodged nests and uprooted trees. In the February-March nesting season, many baby birds have perished. Flood plain inhabitants that retreat to higher ground have ended up competing for reduced food or in unsafe situations.

Even fish seem to have died from too much water. Trail users last week reported scores of dead carp and bass in Lake Natoma. Fish and Wildlife Department sources ascribed the event to water oxygen depletion that can occur when drought is followed by sustained rain. (Coursing down creeks and bluffs, water flow carries huge amounts of organic matter; bacteria burn oxygen to feast on the fermenting soup in ponds and

streams; the banquet consumes oxygen that fish need to survive).

Riverbank dwellers have been washed from homes. California Wildlife Encounters capture specialist Ben Nuckolls was recently called to the Folsom Post office to rescue an adult beaver.

The river-dweller's misadventure followed February floods. "He must have negotiated several Folsom streets and intersections to arrive at the Post Office," considered Nuckolls. "Post Office workers found him in a fenced parking lot. When we arrived, he was behind bushes and scared."

Nuckolls and assistant Christina Sullivan netted the 40-pound rodent. After examination for injury, it was released in a nearby waterway. More recently, Fair Oaks resident Nuckolls and assistant Leslie Ackerman rescued another beaver from Sailor Bar Fair Oaks.

Three baby hawks whose nest fell with an uprooted pine did not survive. "The tree branches were dense," says Nuckolls. "We did our best to get to the nest but the babies did not make it. In the last few weeks, I have been involved with 20 weather-related rescues. When rescues fail, I carry a heavy burden."

"We always see more wildlife displacement after storms," notes Effie Yeaw Nature Center Director Kent Anderson. "Usually, animals just wait it out and get back to their routines after storms. This year, the weather's been chaotic, with back-to-back storms. Animals tied to the waterways have suffered more."

Wild Animals in distress should be reported to: Gold Country Wildlife Rescue (530) 885 0862; or the Wildlife Care Association (916) 965 9453; Department of Fish and Wildlife (916) 358-2900. ★

## County Hires New Economic Development Director



Crystal Bethke. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

**Sacramento County  
Press Release**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento County has a new Economic Development Director. Crystal Bethke, who has worked for Sacramento County's Office of Economic Development since 2007, was officially appointed in her new role on March 26, 2023.

"Crystal is known as a doer, problem solver, and collaborator," said Dave Defanti, Deputy County Executive for Community Services. "I have great confidence in her ability to lead the Office of Economic Development and look forward to working with her in her new role."

In her former role as a Senior Economic Development Specialist, Bethke developed and led a wide range of initiatives in business attraction, retention and expansion, small business and nonprofit support programs, and neighborhood revitalization.

Most recently, Bethke managed COVID-19 business support efforts, including over \$17M in direct grants and business recovery programs through the County's American Rescue Plan Act funding, as well as oversaw Business Environmental Resource Center (BERC) staff activities providing assistance to businesses to promote sustainability, including providing assistance with permitting and regulations. She also coordinated commercial corridor revitalization efforts through cooperative programs, incentives, Property and Business Improvement District support, and direct business assistance.

Along with the aforementioned initiatives, Bethke also managed the Small Business Liaison Program providing assistance to small businesses, large retailers, and entrepreneurs with licenses, permits, funding, business planning, and industry regulations; and participated in the development and administration of the \$104M budget and expenditures, including managing pass-through programs, contracts and grants.

Bethke has a Bachelor of Political Science and Government degree as well as a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of San Francisco. ★

## Eggcellent Times at Hagan!

*By Patrick Owen, CRPD*

**RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)** - Thanks to the beautiful weather and our fantastic community, Cordova Recreation & Park District's (CRPD) Hoppin' & Huntin' at Hagan was a smash hit once again. This year, we were blown away by just how many people joined us to celebrate and we can't thank the community enough for spending Saturday with us at Hagan Community Park!

Thousands of local residents enjoyed activities such as free egg hunts, spring bunny photos, carnival games, Tot Lot and more! We loved seeing everyone receive balloons and other items from the local vendors, grab tacos and shaved ice at the food trucks and navigate the hopstacle course



Kids loved the giant egg hunt at Hoppin' & Huntin' at Hagan Community Park on Saturday, April 1, 2023. Photo by Rick Sloan

designed by the Mather Sports Complex.

Once all the eggs had been gathered and the prized golden eggs redeemed for special rewards, the fun

continued at the brand-new Floating Egg Hunt After Party at the Cordova Community Pool! The wading pool was the perfect spot for an aquatic hunt and was overflowing

with eggs for anyone wanting more springtime festivities.

Another huge thank you to our sponsors Music & More DJ Entertainment,  
*Continued on page 9*



# California Lifts Target for 15% Water Conservation

By Alastair Bland,  
CALMatters.org

With the Sierra Nevada smothered in snow, large swaths of the Central Valley underwater and many Californians weary of water, state officials announced today that they are lifting some drought-related provisions on water use.

“Our water supply conditions have improved markedly,” said Secretary of Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot.

The state is rescinding its request for voluntary 15% water conservation statewide, which was issued in July 2021, and instead, Crowfoot said, shifting to an approach of making conservation a “way of life.”

“We need to maintain our vigilance,” he said. “It’s not about going back to normal anymore. It’s really adjusting to a new normal.”

Some of the state’s emergency provisions were ended and some were left in place. Wasteful uses of water, such as hosing down sidewalks and watering ornamental grass on commercial property, remain banned, according to state officials.

The state, however, is ending its requirement that local water agencies implement Level 2 drought contingency plans, which are locally written water use regulations—such as limits on watering lawns— that are invoked during water shortages.

In total, 81 drought-related provisions were enacted since April 2021.



California ended its voluntary statewide target, triggering concerns from experts that many water supplies remain depleted. Other drought measures remain in place. Photo courtesy of Marysmn Dreamstime.com

Just 33 remain in place, said Gov. Gavin Newsom at a press briefing today.

State officials also announced today a large increase in the amounts of water that local suppliers will get from the State Water Project, increasing from 35% announced last month to 75% of requested supplies. The water is provided to 750,000 acres of farmland and 27 million people, mostly in Southern California.

The announcements come as some of the state’s reservoirs near capacity, with some of the state’s largest

expected to fill by late spring. And the snowpack of the Sierra Nevada, nearing record levels in the southern portion of the range, continues to grow.

When Newsom issued his voluntary conservation target almost two years ago, many water experts said Newsom should have made it mandatory, as former Gov. Jerry Brown did during the previous drought. They also criticized him for failing to reduce use by farmers, who consume 80% of the state’s delivered water supply.

State officials say

even though the 15% target was voluntary, it worked. However, the data does not back that up: Californians used 6% less water from July 2021 through December 2022 compared to 2020 — falling far short of Newsom’s 15% goal.

Heather Cooley, director of research at the Pacific Institute, an Oakland water supply thinktank, said California must not relax its ethos of water conservation.

In spite of wet weather, the state’s largest water supply — its groundwater basins — remain depleted.

“Even though reservoirs are recovering, groundwater aquifers remain depleted. The Colorado River — a major water source for Southern California — is also facing a massive deficit,” Cooley said. “The reality is we don’t have water to waste in California. We need to continue investing in water efficiency to prepare for a hotter, drier future and more intense droughts.”

Californians did cut their average water use by 600,000 acre-feet in almost two years. That’s almost two-thirds the volume of Folsom Reservoir

and enough water to serve 1.2 million households in a year.

Crowfoot stressed that the drought is not over, noting that drought status “is not a completely binary situation.” In some parts of the state, drought conditions have dramatically eased, but not in others. Crowfoot said the Klamath River basin and the region of Southern California that relies on Colorado River water continue to face “acute water shortages.”

Thousands of households lack drinking water due to depleted groundwater basins, which have been overdrafted for decades and experts agree they will not rebound in a single rainy winter.

Joaquin Esquivel, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board, said the hope is that cities “are not just rebounding” to old ways of water use.

“Conservation remains a priority,” Crowfoot added.

Michael Anderson, a climatologist with the California Department of Water Resources, said snowpack is at 278% of normal, with another storm system expected to hit the North Coast and move inland and south from there, starting Monday. The system, he said, will deliver a relatively cold storm originating in the Gulf of Alaska, unlike some recent blasts of tropical moisture. This means it will drop more snow in the mountains.

“Not massive accumulations, but could be locally heavy,” he said. ★

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# River City Concert Band Presents "Musical Adventures"



The Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band. Courtesy photo

**River City Concert Band Press Release**

**RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)** - The Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band presents "Musical Adventures," Sunday, April 16, 2023, at The Cordova Performing Arts Center, Rancho Cordova. The concert begins at 3:00 p.m.

Under the direction of Tom Seaton, the Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band will take the audience on an epic adventure through the magic of music. As a part of this adventure, the band is honored to present the world premiere of Arthur and the Legend of the Holy Grail, by Kelly Bennette, who will be present at the concert. Bennette's musical compositional credits include approximately eighty marches as well as numerous overtures and concert band pieces. Also included in Sunday's performance will be musical renditions of Aesop's Fables (with narration from Rise Up Theatre's Dennis Cain), Walt Disney's Beauty and the Beast, The Lord of the Rings and highlights from the movie "Hook."

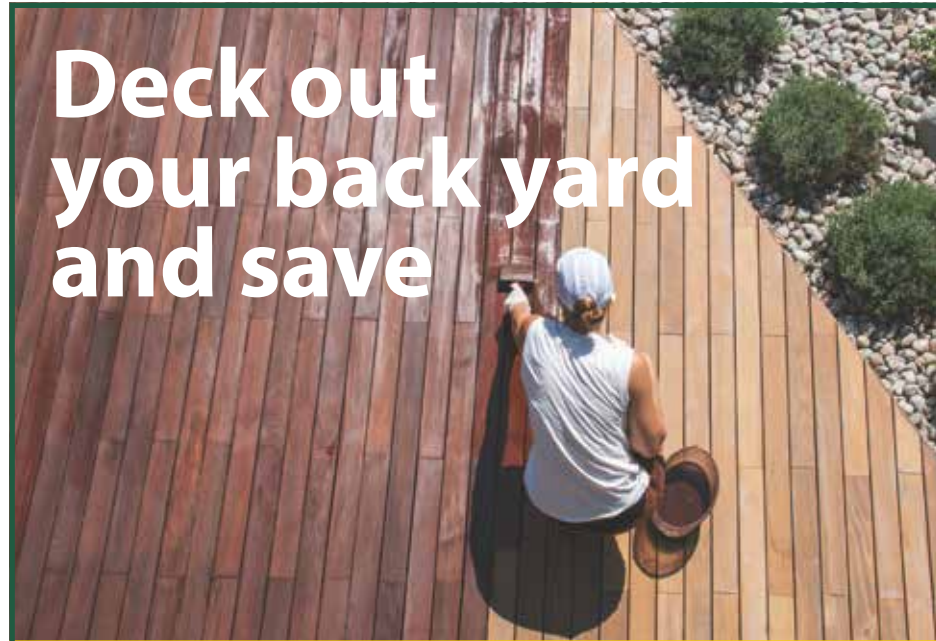
The band is pleased to be sponsored by the City of Rancho Cordova and is enthusiastically affiliated with the Sacramento Valley Symphonic Band Association (SVSBA) and the Association of Concert Bands (ACB). Performing an average ten

concerts a year, Rancho Cordova RCCB remains true to the American Community Band tradition, all of their concerts and performances throughout its year long season are free to the public. Therefore, there is no admission charge.

As a part of the band's effort to Love Music, Share Music and Make Music, a donation to further our mission to provide music to audiences, foster musical interest among children and provide performance opportunities for skilled community musicians would be gladly accepted. The RCRCCB also is accepting non-perishable donations for the Rancho Cordova Food Locker, who have provided their truck to move the band's equipment.

The Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization made up of approximately 50 volunteer musicians who donate their time and musical talents to present concerts with a broad audience appeal, conducted by music educator Tom Seaton. The band can be followed on Facebook and their web page can also be visited at [www.rcconcertband.org](http://www.rcconcertband.org). Videos of live and virtual performances can be viewed on the band's YouTube channel.

Come join the Rancho Cordova River City Concert Band on Sunday, April 16th at 3:00pm, at Cordova Performing Arts Center, 2239 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. ★



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# Aging Workers Are in Demand; They Are Reliable, Mature and Professional

**Commentary**  
by John Grimaldi, AMAC

WASHINGTON, DC, (MPG) - It's a given that the state of the U.S. economy over the past several years has caused many elders in our population to go back to work or, for those who are already in the workplace, to keep their jobs as long as they can. The inflationary cycle triggered by the policies of the Biden administration didn't make it easy for older workers to make ends meet. The cost of living has increased considerably over the past two years. But, according to a survey conducted by the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies, "almost half of Baby Boomer workers (49 percent) expect to or already are working past age 70 or do not plan to retire. Their reasons for doing so are almost as likely to be healthy aging-related (78 percent) as financial-related (82 percent)."

The first boomers, those of us born between 1946 and 1964, celebrated our 65th birthdays in 2011 but many of them opted to keep working. The online employment agency, Indeed, says these aging workers are in demand. For one thing, "Baby boomers often aim to work as long as it takes to reach their goals and try to differentiate themselves by attaining the promotion, raise or acknowledgment they want. This generation has experienced the benefits



The senior services organization, Vantage Aging, says that this results "in a strong work ethic. With an older worker, you often find yourself with someone who works hard to get the job done right." Photo courtesy of Pixabay.

of hard work and dedication, which is something they expect from their employer."

What makes senior citizens particularly valued members of the American workforce? Reliability, maturity, and professionalism. The senior services organization, Vantage Aging, says that this results "in a strong work ethic. With an older worker, you often find yourself with someone who works hard to get the job done right.

It is estimated that the aging of the U.S. will continue for another four decades during which the numbers of the 65-year-old population will increase by more than 37 million, increasing from 46 million today to more than 98 million in 2060. The American Psychological Association reports that, going forward, "older adults will live longer than ever before: One out of every four 65-year-olds today will live past

age 90. This demographic shift has moved the focus of researchers, health care providers and policymakers from how to extend the lifespan to ways to improve the quality of our later years. Staying healthy, active, and productive are admirable goals for our nation's older adults. However, society's view of 'old age' has not always kept up with the reality of being old in America. Many current beliefs about aging were based

on information that is no longer valid given recent scientific advances."

The aging process is not kind to the elderly. Many of us will have memory issues, we might find some complex chores are harder than they used to be, and we might have difficulty staying focused. But the National Institute on Aging that o [NIA] tells us that "aging may also bring positive cognitive changes. For example, many studies have shown

lder adults have more extensive vocabularies and greater knowledge of the depth of meaning of words than younger adults." However, the NIA also points out that "despite the changes in cognition that may come with age, older adults can still do many of the things they have enjoyed their whole lives. Research shows that older adults can still: learn new skills, form new memories, and Improve vocabulary and language skills." ★

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**A:** To change your name with the DMV, you'll first have to change your name with the local Social Security Administration (SSA) office. The DMV electronically verifies your name, birth date, and social security number with the SSA. After you've changed your name with the SSA, you'll need to complete a driver's license or identification card application, a process you can start online. Next, you'll need to visit a local DMV office to provide evidence of your name change and pay the application fee. At the time of this transaction, you'll also be required to surrender your current driver's license.

A name change is also an opportunity to apply for a REAL ID instead of a standard driver's license. For more information, visit [realid.dmv.ca.gov](http://realid.dmv.ca.gov).

**Q: I'll be moving into a new home after getting married. Do I need to visit a DMV office to change my address?**

**A:** You can change your residence or mailing address online in the DMV's Change of Address System. However, you cannot use this online service if you: Do not already have a California driver's license or identification card, do not have a social security number, have an army post office or fleet post office address, have an address outside of the US. or, have applied for but not yet received your REAL ID. For those, you must complete a change of address form and mail it to the address listed on the form.

**Q: My best friend is getting married out of state next summer and my passport has expired. Can I use it instead of a passport to fly to the wedding?**

**A:** Yes! A REAL ID is a federally accepted form of identification and may be used to board domestic flights and to enter secure federal facilities, such as military bases and federal courthouses. One benefit of a REAL ID is that it allows you to carry a single piece of identification that serves a dual purpose, as opposed to having to keep up with both a driver's license and a passport during travel, a time which is often already very busy and hectic. Starting May 2023, a standard driver's license/ID will become federal non-compliant, meaning you will not be allowed to board an airplane or enter secure federal facilities using it.

**For more information or answers to questions not listed here, Please visit [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov).**



# Stars & Stripes Dog Rescue is an Inspiration



Susan Aimes of Stars & Stripes Dog Rescue trains dogs that would be otherwise euthanized in shelters. After training the dogs are certified for various service tasks supporting veterans. Photo courtesy of Ken Friedman

By Ken Friedman, OV/FO Community Foundation

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Susan Aimes and I first met at a Chamber of Commerce event, and I was extremely impressed by what she was doing. The following is an interview that I did with her and one of her dogs that she is training.

Susan and her son Dustin had for years been interested in rescuing dogs that were going to be euthanized. Her son also wanted to be in the service and be there for his country. In 2021 her son, while in the service, passed away unexpectedly and after the initial grief, Susan decided to fulfill the dream that they both had.

Susan and her daughter started Stars & Stripes Dog Rescue, a non-profit. They wanted to do this for Dustin and for the veterans that are many times overlooked. Susan acquires medium and large dogs from both Stockton and Modesto pounds as they have an abundance of dogs that are going to be put down. Most people prefer the smaller canines.

They then train these dogs to be companion

dogs and after they are trained and certified, they are donated to veterans that need these animals for comfort and companionship. If the dogs have the right temperament, they are then trained to be service dogs and donated to veterans who need this level of help.

Susan and her daughter have now started a foster program, where veterans can obtain a dog and learn to train it by themselves, using online guidance. This is done in such a way that there is little or no stress on either the veteran or the dog. Susan and her daughter have been working with the Veterans Administration on this project.

For the Stars & Stripes Dog Rescue to have a larger impact, they need more volunteers to assist in the training and more donations to provide the medical care and other provisions for both the dog and the veterans. Every cent of the donations goes to the dogs and veterans.

You can make your donations or for more information to the website: <https://starsandstripesdogrescue.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/starsandstripesrescue>

Email address: [starsandstripesrescue@gmail.com](mailto:starsandstripesrescue@gmail.com) ★

# Social Security Matters

## Why Should a Non-working Spouse be Entitled to Social Security Benefits?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

**Dear Rusty:** Why can a non-working spouse claim half of their working spouse's benefit even though they have not contributed to the Social Security system? This doesn't seem right or fair to those of us who have contributed for years from our paychecks. **Signed: Inquisitive**

**Dear Inquisitive:** This is a question which needs a bit of historical background to properly explain: Social Security's original purpose when it was enacted in 1935 was to prevent America's seniors from living in poverty (remember, Social Security was enacted during the "Great Depression"). Even before the first Social Security check was sent to a retired worker in 1940, Congress had already changed the original Social Security law to, as well, provide anti-poverty benefits to non-working spouses of a worker (a

predominant family reality at that time) and surviving spouses, as well as to their minor children. Social Security's fundamental goal has always been to lift eligible Americans out of poverty, which it still does very effectively.

It's important to note that this change did not (and does not) detract in any way from the benefits provided to those who work and contribute to Social Security thus earning their own SS retirement benefit. In other words, those who receive their personally earned SS retirement benefit are not at all penalized if their non-working spouse also receives a benefit (albeit a considerably smaller amount) on the worker's record. Living expenses for two people are, simply, higher than for one, which was/is the rationale for also paying benefits to a dependent not eligible for Social Security benefits on their own work record. In the end, it all comes down to avoiding poverty.

Although the numbers vary somewhat by state, gender, and ethnicity, without Social Security about 38% of all Americans over age 65 would be living below the poverty line, whereas with Social Security only about 9% of Americans over 65 live below the poverty line. But that 9% number would be significantly higher if

non-working spouses and survivors of eligible workers were also not entitled to Social Security benefits.

While it is true that Social Security is facing future solvency issues, the thought of restricting benefits to only those who have worked and contributed to the program (and not to their non-working spouses or minor children) is not something being considered by anyone with Congressional influence, regardless of political affiliation. Doing so would be devastating to a large segment of the American population, severely increasing poverty – the very thing that Social Security is designed to prevent.

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website ([amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org).* ★

# Board Approves \$1.7 M to Keep Homeless Housing

Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved at its March 28, 2023 meeting \$1,000,000 in General Fund dollars to preserve housing supports for individuals currently sheltered in the County's Scattered-Site Shelter Program. The Board also approved a redirect up to an additional \$700,000 to preserve housing for households currently housed in the County's Flexible Housing Pool (FHP) program, for a total of \$1,700,000.

These two programs have been funded by the County, but operated by Sacramento Self-Help Housing (SSHH). SSHH is a local, community-based nonprofit that serves people experiencing homelessness through outreach services, shelter, supportive services, and permanent housing. As one of their main services, SSHH leases or facilitates direct leases with landlords of properties on the open market to provide 'scattered site' housing and sheltering for people experiencing homelessness.

### The Problem

County staff were made aware of significant financial issues at SSHH that led to landlords not being paid in full for rent, in both the housing and sheltering programs, which puts program participants at risk of losing their housing or shelter. County staff have been working in coordination with SSHH staff to improve their processes, invoicing, landlord relations and audited their financial practices. In spite of this work, rents went unpaid and SSHH invoiced the County for funds they have not paid landlords and for costs they have yet to incur.

The County's number one priority is keeping folks housed or sheltered, despite the significant issues the unpaid rents caused with the landlords.

### Flexible Housing Pool Program

SSHH was a provider of Property Related Tenant Services (PRTS) as part of the Flexible Housing Pool (FHP) program.

In the spring of 2022, SSHH reported funding shortfalls in their PRTS contracts under the FHP program to County staff, which was scheduled to end June 30, 2022. County staff worked with SSHH to improve their invoicing processes such that rental payments to landlords would not be delayed. However, SSHH continued to fall behind in payments to landlords, and in August of 2022, the Department of Human Assistance (DHA) augmented SSHH's budget by \$370,000 and extended their contract through the end of 2022 to stabilize the clients in rental units.

However, the back rent owed and damage

assessments required up to an additional \$700,000 to cover, which was approved by the Board on Tuesday, March 28.

The extended contract for PRTS with SSHH expired on December 31, 2022 and the County hired a new provider, through the competitive bid process, for both PRTS and the Intensive Case Management Services. Consumer Self-Help Center (CSHC) took over the 38 clients and units in the PRTS program and has been working with both tenants and landlords for nearly three months.

### Scattered Site Shelter Program

Sacramento Self-Help Housing has also been experiencing financial issues with its County-funded scattered-site shelter program. This shelter model, which master-leases single-family homes, provides a 24/7 on-site house monitor and can shelter up to five unhoused individuals at one time, has historically been successful in transitioning people off the streets and into more stable housing situations. The intent of this model is a short stay in the shelter home and a more seamless move into traditional or supportive housing.

This program has been funded for a capacity up to 160 beds at any given time, but County staff learned that there were unpaid rental balances to landlords and that the program had not been working at capacity for some time. There are currently 80-90 clients in this shelter program.

### The Solution/Next Steps

In addition to the Board's action to preserve housing, the County has conducted a thorough audit of SSHH's financial management and cash flow issues and the results of that audit will be made public in the coming weeks. The County is also aware that SSHH holds contracts for similar services with other jurisdictions and organizations that are experiencing similar issues with SSHH and are also dealing with funding shortfalls. The County is working in partnership with those jurisdictions and organizations to help find a resolution that will protect their clients and units.

Due to the overwhelming and ongoing issues with SSHH's management of both these programs, the County has opted to let their contracts expire and move forward with alternative providers. CSHC has already begun its work and the County is in final talks with another provider that will take over the scattered-site sheltering program. Once that provider is under contract, the County will release more information and work directly with both the new provider and SSHH to transition all units and clients over.

For more information about what the County is doing to address homelessness, visit our website. ★



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# Audit Request Approved to Get Answers on Homelessness Spending



**From the Office of Senator Roger Niello**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Californians may finally get some answers on how the state and local communities have spent billions on the homelessness crisis in the last five years.

Senator Roger Niello and his colleagues Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh, Assemblymembers Josh Hoover and Evan

Low joined Senator Dave Cortese in winning a request to audit billions of dollars California has spent on addressing the homelessness crisis from the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC).

On March 22, 2023, members of JLAC unanimously approved the audit request. The audit will examine how the state and cities have spent state, federal, and local dollars and how effective the money spent has been to date.

"Homelessness is the most urgent issue facing California," said Senator Niello. "Given the crisis has only worsened, we need to know what the money has accomplished and what programs have been effective in moving people to

permanent housing." "This is a good start," said Senator Ochoa Bogh. "California Legislative Republicans have been calling for accountability to homeless spending for several years. This will begin to give taxpayers an idea of how these dollars have been spent on a crisis that has only gotten worse."

California has spent more than \$20 billion over the last five years on homelessness and has seen the population of unhoused in this state explode to more than 172,000.

The governor announced earlier this month that he plans to spend another \$1 billion of taxpayer dollars with a hope of reducing the homeless population by 15 percent by 2025. ★

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- ❖ **DANIKA BRABEC** was named to the Spring 2022 Dean's List at Fort Lewis College (Durango, CO).
- ❖ **CELESTE FOURNIER** was named to the Fall 2022 President's List at Gonzaga University (Spokane, WA)
- ❖ **KRISTEN RAMOS** was named to the Spring 2022 Dean's Academic Honor List from Louise Herrington School of Nursing at Baylor University (Waco, TX)

Gold River Messenger, Jan. '23

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16. Type of wrap
17. Old fashioned "before"
18. Do like ivy
19. \*Smooth, skeletal or cardiac
21. \*"Gray's \_\_\_\_"
23. Gardener's tool
24. Detected by olfactory system
25. Acronym-named sandwich
28. Sore throat voice
30. Retires from military service
35. Steak option
37. Place at angle
39. Double, in French
40. \*Certain apple's namesake
41. Fork pokers
43. Heavy metal's Quiet
44. \*Pelvis bone
46. \*Hardened keratin plate
47. Wedding promise?
48. Mandela
50. \*Part of eye, not flower
52. Tokyo, formerly
53. Alpine transport
55. Cuckoo
57. \*Vein to "go for"
61. \*Call body, axon and dendrite
64. Use the other side of pencil
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20. Minimum
22. Endorsement
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26. Big Dipper shape
27. Hiker's path
29. \*Largest organ
31. Fogginess
32. Speak one's mind
33. \*AB+ or B-
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36. Outback birds
38. Dam-like structure
42. Snail trail
45. Like certain Crüe
49. Gianni's league
51. Cup holder
54. Orderly arrangement
56. Popular movie genre
57. J in B. J. King
58. Serve as motive
59. Em's and Dorothy's last name
60. CPO, in auto industry
61. Glowing gas
62. Iridescent gem
63. Byproduct of wool combing
66. Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem
68. Canny

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# EDD Deemed 'Non-Responsive' by Congressional Committee

By Thomas Buckley,  
CaliforniaGlobe.com

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A person in a coma is considered to be non-responsive.

Unironically, also considered to be non-responsive is California's Employment Development Department (EDD) when it comes to answering Congressional questions.

The House Committee on Oversight and Accountability – which is looking into various aspects of the pandemic response, including its financial impacts – has deemed the EDD's answer to a January information request as not nearly good enough.

"The EDD has not provided documents requested by Chairman (Kentucky Republican James) Comer," said a committee spokeswoman. "We intend to have additional follow up on the document request."

When asked by the Globe for a comment, the EDD provided a copy of a letter it sent to Comer's committee in late January and did not address the current issue of their failure to provide the requested documentation.

Non-responsive, indeed.

The committee is attempting to get to the bottom of the massive fraud perpetrated against the EDD during the pandemic. The current estimate is that the EDD lost about \$40 billion to illegitimate claimants, including prisoners (and not just from California prisons,) garden variety local scammers, and international fraud rings, all of whom simply walked right in to the department's completely unprotected system.

While the EDD has claimed it did the best it could, it should be noted that the EDD – even though it could have purchased basic fraud protection software that would even work with its antiquated IT systems for about \$5 million- had no way to prove if an applicant was who they said they were until the end of 2020,



California has 12% of the nation's workforce, but had more than 20% of the country's unemployment benefit fraud. MPG file photo

months after the pandemic began.

The EDD also had no system to check to see if people in prison, people from out-of-state, and people from overseas – all ineligible for benefits – were getting benefits in the form of a chipless debit card pre-loaded with up to about \$15,000 – each.

The EDD did not even cross-reference addresses to notice and potentially flag as fraudulent when a single home received dozens, if not hundreds, of cards (they used to have one but stopped paying for it when a federal grant ran out a few years ago.)

Particularly telling is that California has about 12% of the nation's workforce, it saw more than 20% of the unemployment benefit fraud in the country, meaning that word spread very quickly in the fraud world that the state was an especially easy mark.

In January, the committee requested the following:

1. All processes and procedures

related to the disbursement of unemployment insurance benefits during the pandemic, including policies and procedures intended to ensure payments are made to the proper individual, and to ensure that the individual is a qualified recipient of unemployment insurance;

2. All documents and communications between employees of the California EDD and employees of the U.S. Department of Labor regarding the state's UI benefit program;

3. All documents and communications related to efforts to prevent payment of fraudulent UI claims;

4. All documents and communications related to efforts to recoup UI claims paid improperly;

5. All documents and communications related to identifying the total number of improperly paid UI benefits and documents sufficient to show whether those funds remain in the United States or were transferred to entities outside the United States.

States.

The committee spokeswoman would not specify exactly how the EDD was "non-responsive" – for example, was the information missing or unrelated or gibberish – but stressed the agency remains very prominently on Congress' radar.

In the January letter to the committee – the one that was re-provided to the Globe – department chief Nancy Farias blamed the Trump administration for the massive fraud, stating, in part, "... we object to the Chair's mischaracterization of California's response to the UI fraud attacks and the Chair's failure to acknowledge the inadequate response by the Trump Administration, which left neglected state UI systems fighting domestic and international criminal enterprises effectively on their own."

In other words, the feds didn't hold their hand tight enough.

Either way, this claim flies in the

face of a California State Auditor's report that states flatly that the feds "warned the state at least three times in the early months of the pandemic to beef up its fraud protections."

The date for the next response deadline is not yet clear nor is exactly when Farias and other EDD employees will have to testify in front of Congress.

As of midnight Wednesday, the EDD – which, again, suffered a very preventable loss of \$40 billion – still owed the federal government a principal amount of \$18,735,210,647.41 in addition to interest of \$142,361,804.80.

Finally, the state has increased unemployment insurance taxes on California businesses to make up the shortfall and it is not clear if anyone at the EDD has been fired for the failure; in fact, the person in charge at the time, Julie Su, could become, the next Secretary of Labor in the Biden administration. ★

# How Does Wildfire Smoke Impact Pregnancy and Children?

UC Davis Health  
Press Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

- How does exposure to wildfire smoke affect pregnant people and their developing babies? UC Davis Health researchers hope to answer that question, thanks to a new two-year, \$1.35 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The study is led by molecular epidemiologist Rebecca J. Schmidt, an associate professor in Public Health Sciences, and Miriam Nuño, a professor in the Division of Biostatistics.

The researchers are gathering birth and health records as well as data about wildfire smoke exposure in California. They'll look for links between pollution from wildfire smoke and low birth weight, developmental delays, and autism.

The team is also partnering with regional organizations to educate underserved communities about the impact of smoke and provide strategies to reduce exposure.

"This is a California study, but the whole country is being exposed to wildfire smoke," explained Schmidt, who is also a faculty member at the UC Davis MIND Institute, the Perinatal Origins of Disparities (POD) Center, and the Environmental Health Sciences Center. "It's important to find out what the real concerns during pregnancy may be, including perhaps at what times during pregnancy we need to have moms be the most careful about their exposure."



How Does Wildfire Smoke Impact Pregnancy and Children? Researchers awarded \$1.35 million EPA grant to study impact of wildfire smoke on pregnancy, health, and development. Image by Saiho from Pixabay.

Schmidt has a history of studying the impacts of wildfire smoke on pregnancy and children. Her previous research involved collecting hair, blood and other samples from pregnant people and newborns. Her findings from that study will complement this new work.

Collecting data on smoke exposure, births, and health

Wildfire seasons are becoming longer and more severe. It is estimated that wildfire smoke is linked to 339,000 premature deaths each year worldwide.

In California, where massive wildfires such as the Camp, Caldor and Dixie fires have affected both urban and rural areas, hundreds of thousands of pregnant people have been

exposed to wildfire smoke.

"Studies have shown associations between wildfire smoke and lower birth weight or preterm birth, which are linked to later health outcomes," Schmidt said.

The study has four areas of focus:

Find out which areas of California were exposed to the most wildfire air pollution; Study wildfire smoke exposures before pregnancy and during each trimester of pregnancy; Researchers will look at these in relation to birth weight and gestational age as well as factors like neighborhood and local environment;

Explore associations between wildfire smoke exposure and autism and developmental delays;

Work with community partners to share research results and tools to help reduce smoke exposure in vulnerable populations.

"Our first step is to see who has the greatest exposures to these repeated wildfire events," Schmidt explained. "Then we'll look at how that varies by factors such as race, ethnicity, rural versus urban location, poverty level and exposure to other pollutants."

The study will include all people born in California between Jan. 1, 2000, and Dec. 31, 2021, roughly 11 million births. However, when looking at autism and developmental delays, researchers will only include people over 3 years of age by the end of 2021. Autism diagnosis

is typically more reliable after this age.

Researchers will use state birth records, historical air monitor readings and health records from the California Department of Developmental Services.

**Empowering vulnerable populations**

The study aims to identify vulnerable populations where people are exposed not only to wildfire smoke but also to other pollution and pesticides and have less access to health care.

"Even though we are all exposed to wildfire smoke, we all have different risks," explained Nuño. "If you have can work from home versus having an outdoor job, this is where these differences really manifest."

The researchers are

partnering with the March of Dimes, Empower Yolo and the Knights Landing One Health Center, which provides health care in the rural Central Valley community.

Together, they'll deliver their findings and strategies for reducing exposure to wildfire smoke to underserved communities. This will include providing the materials and training to help people make Corsi-Rosenthal Air Boxes. This is a low-cost filtration system that's been shown to be effective at removing particulates from indoor air. Creator Richard L. Corsi, dean of the UC Davis College of Engineering, is a partner on the project.

"This project will advance solutions to challenges lying at the intersection of climate change and environmental justice, both here in California and in communities around the country," said EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator Martha Guzman. "Advancing scientific research that helps protect public health and the environment is central to EPA's mission and this project will have lasting results for years to come."

Environmental justice is a major focus, notes Nuño, who is also the interim director of the Center for Healthcare Policy and Research.

"Pregnant women are stressed about the impact of wildfires, especially those who are more vulnerable. Justice calls for empowering these women with this information," she said. ★





## Easter Blessings

Christian or not, Easter is a special time. History can attest to the many traditions and rituals. But what is most important in all of them is that it is a time for renewal...of life...of hope...and especially after we have lived through three years of a pandemic we never dreamed of...a look at the future and not the past. Perhaps it is time to just enjoy the little things that make Easter so special and put a smile on our faces and food for our soul. But there is fun too. Ever wonder where some of the symbols of Easter originated. It's a mixed bag, but here are some theories.

Peter Cottontail will come hopping down the bunny trail once again. He is universal and secular, but I found some interesting history about this funny bunny. Here's one that surprised me. Perhaps the hare and not the rabbit should be the leader of the pack. Since ancient times the hare has been the symbol of the moon. Legend has it the hare never closes its eyes, not even for a single blink. Maybe it's because of the fact that hares, not rabbits are born with their eyes open. Rabbits are born blind. Fertility might have some bearing on the picture since rabbits beat hares in being more prolific. So many more bunnies can hop down that bunny trail.

How about those colored eggs? Some historical reasons for them too. At the Passover Seder, a hard-boiled egg dipped in salt water symbolizes both new life as well as the Passover sacrifice offered at the Temple in Jerusalem. The ancient Persians painted eggs for

Nowrooz, their New Year celebration falling on the Spring Equinox. In Christian tradition, the egg was a symbol of new life as a chick might hatch from the egg. In Medieval times, eggs were forbidden during Lent, and then eggs were on the menu after the strict Lenten fast. Wonder if they were scrambled or sunnyside up?

And oh those lovely Lilies. They came from Bermuda. Goes back to the 1880's when Ms Thomas P. Sargent fell in love with their beauty blooming in Spring. She brought back bulbs to her home in Philadelphia from Bermuda. Bet you can't bring plants past customs these days. But today, they are a permanent symbol of Easter too.

Can't leave out chocolate. Chocolate eggs began in 19th century France and Germany and soon spread to the rest of Europe and eventually the United States. Children were told to make nests or baskets so the Easter Bunny could leave them there. I'd go on an Easter egg hunt for chocolate any time! So after the Lenten time sacrifice, what a treat. Bring on the chocolate in any form anytime!

So there. Got some traditions of your own? Dig them out from the past and share them. Caring for each other is so important in our times of war, disease, hate and crime. The bottom line is we can make it through these times with that blessing of new life and rebirth that is the promise for a better tomorrow. ★

**HAPPY BUNNY DAY!!!**

# Eggcellent Times at Hagan!



Meeting the bunny was all the rage for kids gathering for the fun at the annual Hoppin' and Huntin'. Photo by Rick Sloan



All available hands take to task the great Easter egg hunt on Saturday. Photo by Rick Sloan

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Continued from page 1  
 Rancho Cordova Fiber City and Rancho Cordova Rotary Club for making this joyful event an even bigger success!

You can visit our website [crpd.com](http://crpd.com) to see all our other upcoming community events.

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Fashion and bunnies go hand in hand during the Hoppin' & Huntin' at Hagan. Photo by Rick Sloan

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**WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS**

<p><b>Beef London Broil &amp; Top Round Roast</b>                  Pinta Para Hornear Roast sin Hueso  <b>\$3.99/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Beef Ribeye Roast - Boneless</b>                  Chuletón de Ternera Asado  <b>\$5.99/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Beef Ribeye Steak - Boneless</b>                  Filete de Chuletón de Ternera  <b>\$6.99/lb</b></p>
<p><b>Boneless/Skinless Chicken Breasts</b>                  Pechuga de Pollo sin Hueso  <b>\$1.79/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Boneless Pork Loin Chops</b>                  Chuletón de Cerdo sin Hueso  <b>\$2.39/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Pork Tenderloin</b>                  Lomo de Cerdo  <b>\$2.99/lb</b></p>

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**FRESH PRODUCE**

<p><b>Cosmic Crispy Apple</b>  <b>\$1.39/lb</b></p>	<p><b>D'Anjo Pear</b>  <b>89¢/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Grapefruit 5 lb</b>  <b>\$5.99/bag</b></p>	<p><b>American Eggplant</b>  <b>99¢/ea</b></p>
<p><b>Guava</b>  <b>\$2.99/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Mexican Green Onion</b>  <b>3/\$2.00</b></p>	<p><b>Navel Orange 10 lb</b>  <b>\$4.99/bag</b></p>	<p><b>Seafood Mushroom 150 g</b>  <b>\$1.29/ea</b></p>

**AMERICAN/HISPANIC GROCERY**

<p><b>King of Kings Original 16 lb</b>  <b>\$12.99</b></p>	<p><b>Vanitas 4.99</b></p>	<p><b>Chim's Chip Cooking Original 13 oz</b>  <b>\$3.99</b></p>	<p><b>Comarama Tomato &amp; Shrimp Cocktail 32 Oz</b>  <b>\$2.99</b></p>	<p><b>Chamber Oats Old Fashioned 6.1 Minute 42 oz</b>  <b>\$5.99</b></p>
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**ASIAN GROCERY**

<p><b>3 Elephant Thai Jasmine Rice 20 lb</b>  <b>\$17.99</b></p>	<p><b>Twin Fish Dried Red Pepper Corn 2 oz</b>  <b>\$2.99</b></p>	<p><b>Dynasty Premium Sesame Oil 3 Ltr</b>  <b>\$2.99</b></p>	<p><b>Premium Coffee Latte Bold 8.55 oz</b>  <b>\$1.99</b></p>	<p><b>Knorr Chicken Broth Mix 2.2 lb</b>  <b>\$9.99</b></p>
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**EUROPEAN GROCERY**

<p><b>Deep Mango Scent 1.5 Liter</b>  <b>\$1.99</b></p>	<p><b>Mild-East Pickled Cucumbers 690 g</b>  <b>\$1.99</b></p>	<p><b>Ullar Tea Biscuits 400 g</b>  <b>\$2.19</b></p>	<p><b>Prep Juice Protein 4 lbs</b>  <b>\$7.99</b></p>	<p><b>Meyer Lemon Organic Walnuts 250 g</b>  <b>\$3.69</b></p>
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**KOREAN/JAPANESE GROCERY**

<p><b>Korean White Rice 20 lb</b>  <b>\$24.99</b></p>	<p><b>Spiced Sesame Oil 27 x 4.7</b>  <b>\$12.99</b></p>	<p><b>Spicy Sesame Noodle 4 x 150 g</b>  <b>\$5.99</b></p>	<p><b>Dried Shred Pollock 4 oz</b>  <b>\$6.99</b></p>	<p><b>Korean Rice Cake 2 kinds 680 g</b>  <b>\$2.99</b></p>	<p><b>Dessert Sea Salt 2.5 lb</b>  <b>\$9.99</b></p>
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**FROZEN & FISH DEPT**

<p><b>Dried Pollack 200 g</b>  <b>\$12.99</b></p>
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