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# Gold River Messenger

VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 1

Serving Gold River and Sacramento County

JANUARY 2023

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## Aging Well at Home



Your Fitness Genie owner Jenn Alton has been a NASM certified personal fitness trainer for 22 years and specializes in senior fitness. Photo provided by Fitness Genie

By Margaret Snider

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)

- Preserving fitness at an advanced age is a one of the challenges seniors face. The most basic skills, or activities of daily living, include bathing, getting dressed, walking, eating meals, and conserving personal hygiene, but further ability to maintain good mobility and strength can enable seniors to continue living at home. Personal trainer Jenn Alton has taken it as the goal in her business, Your Fitness



Your Fitness Genie owner Jenn Alton chats with client Cyndi Sills as she works on her cardiovascular health with an exercise bike at her home in Rancho Cordova on Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Photo provided by Fitness Genie

Genie, to help people do problems with stability, this. When people have walking, or a tendency

to fall, Alton pointed out, they may be well enough to exercise, but through discomfort, pain, inertia, dependence on medication, or lack of motivation may not do so. "I feel extremely passionate about my mission statement: Age well at home," Alton said.

Using herself as an example, Alton said that she does not like to cook, and has compensated for that over the years by buying a lot of cookbooks, which she doesn't use. Similarly, people who

Continued on page 2

## Dr. Pimentel Named FLC President



Dr. Art Pimentel has been appointed the fourth president of Folsom Lake College and will begin his tenure on January 9, 2023. Courtesy photo

FLC News Release

FOLSOM, CA (MPG) - Dr. Art Pimentel has been appointed the fourth president of Folsom Lake College by the Los Rios Community College District Board of Trustees at their December 14, 2022 meeting. He will begin his tenure at Folsom Lake College on January 9, 2023.

With over 17 years of higher education experience, Pimentel's extensive background includes leadership of student and instructional services, fiscal management, marketing, community outreach, enrollment management, facilities management, government relations, and institutional and strategic planning. This also marks a return to Los Rios where he previously worked for five years within the district including serving as the Dean for Sacramento City College's West Sacramento Center and as the district's Interim Director of Educational Services and Student Success.

Pimentel most recently served as President of Woodland Community College. Under his leadership, Woodland Community College increased its student retention rates by over 5% since 2019, increased enrollment by 9% post-pandemic, began construction on the college's \$42 million performing arts and culinary services building, expanded behavioral health services through a partnership with Yolo County, and developed strong partnerships with all K-12 districts in the college's service area to expand dual enrollment and career exploration opportunities.

"We couldn't be happier to welcome Dr. Pimentel back to Los Rios and to Folsom Lake College," said Brian King, Chancellor of the Los Rios Community College District. "Dr. Pimentel brings a wealth of skill and expertise to the presidency, and a

Continued on page 6

## Anderson and Johnson Honored for Historic Birthdays

By Shaun Holkko,  
assistant editor

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - Two Rancho Cordova pillars were recently honored for reaching a milestone: turning ninety years old!

Guy Anderson and Erika Johnson were honored on December 10 by the County of Sacramento for each turning 90 recently. Johnson's birthday was on November 30 and Anderson's birthday was five days later on December 5.

"Whereas, Erika is enduring and generous in her support of community organizations as well as civic activities and projects benefiting worthwhile causes in the Rancho Cordova community," part of Johnson's proclamation from the Board of Supervisors read. "Erika's strong sense of community, witty sense of humor,



Guy Anderson is presented the County of Sacramento proclamation by Rancho Cordova Vice Mayor Linda Budge (middle) and District 5 Supervisor Don Nottoli's Chief of Staff Rebecca Sloan on December 10 at Anderson's daughter's house in Fair Oaks. Photo by Rick Sloan

and spunky disposition continue to be a blessing to all those who have come to know and love her."

Anderson is a Cordova legend who led the

Cordova baseball program for 45 years.

"It's outstanding and just real heart-filling that I've had since it came from Don Nottoli and the

Board of Supervisors," Anderson expressed to the Grapevine Independent on December 16.

Anderson coached 18

Continued on page 3

# Coastal Kombucha Vibes in the Heart of Gold Country



A member of the Barrel District, Shorebirds Brewing Company is the only hard kombucha brewery in Rancho Cordova. Courtesy photos

## Visit RC News Release

**RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)** - Inspiration for a hard kombucha brew can strike from anywhere.

A floral scent discerned on a morning hike, a succulent flavor from a piece of fruit or a potent spice from a windowsill garden. All ingredients are fair game when it comes to this fermented tea.

"Brewing by nature is a really fun way to express your creativity," said Randall Echevarria, co-owner and founder of Shorebirds Brewing Company, which he runs with his husband Monte Hudock. "It's fun to experiment with different kinds of fruits, botanicals and yeast strains to create different layers of flavors and flavor profiles."

A member of the Barrel District, Shorebirds Brewing Company is the only hard kombucha brewery in Rancho Cordova. And since its opening nearly half a year ago, it's gained notoriety in the city for its flavorful libations, coastal vibes and crafty events.

"The reception has been great," said Echevarria, reflecting on the establishment's first handful of months in existence. "We're getting to know our customers and, similarly, their interest in our hard kombucha flavor profiles. We're always brewing something new: new experimental batches and seasonal releases based on what's in season."

Flavors abound in the Shorebirds taproom. From strawberry and blueberry mojito to blackberry thyme margarita and citrus green tea, the kombucha brews don't simply tantalize the tongue, they're a feast for the eyes too, their colors warm and inviting when placed on a flight board.

"Our blueberry mojito hard kombucha is my go-to, but they are all so incredibly good it's hard to choose," said Echevarria when asked if he has any favorite Shorebirds flavors. "Chasing Daylight is another popular go-to. It's a tropical fruit bomb of pineapple and orange and a tea blend of hibiscus, roses and rose hips with lemon and grapefruit peels, and activated charcoal that gives the drink a dark appearance."

"It's a really fun drink that's quickly become the most popular, right along with our blueberry mojito and blackberry thyme margaritas," he added.

Inside the Shorebirds brewery, the aesthetic and color palette are reminiscent of days spent lounging on the beach, a vibe inspired by Echevarria's youth in Crescent City, a beach town in Northern California.

"We wanted to capture a bit of California's surf culture," said Echevarria. "Growing up in a small beach town definitely helped shape the brand and the look and feel of our taproom."

Echevarria and Hudock have spent years refining their brewing skills. In the early 2000s, they both worked at Pyramid

Alehouse, a now-closed Sacramento brewpub. While there, they met Sabrina Helmick, who now works as Shorebirds' taproom manager.

In 2015, Echevarria and Hudock turned their love of brewing into a business by launching the Brass Clover Cold Brew Coffee Company, which was based in the same location as Shorebirds Brewing Co.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the two took the shutdown as an opportunity to reevaluate the cold brew coffee business. A new idea was fermenting in their minds.

For some time, Echevarria and Hudock had been experimenting with hard kombucha brews at home. While reevaluating their coffee business, they noticed a lack of a hard kombucha presence in the local brewery scene. The duo decided to step in and fill the void.

"We spent almost the first two years of the pandemic perfecting our brewing process and refining our recipes," said Echevarria. "We worked with an international consultant to dive deeper into the art and science of hard kombucha fermentation and worked with a local brewer to further refine our craft."

"While we were brewing test batches and doing product development, we were also on a separate track going through the permitting and licensing processes with local state and federal authorities," he added.

In summer 2022, Shorebirds officially opened its doors.

With almost half a year of operation under their belt, the Shorebirds team is constantly expanding and innovating when it comes to their offerings and in-person experiences.

"We're pushing the envelope of what hard kombucha is and what it can be," said Echevarria. "Earlier this summer, we introduced a hard kombucha soft serve and will soon be launching a hard kombucha acai bowl."

Each week, the Shorebirds team selects one of their hard kombucha flavors and converts it into a boozy ice cream treat. In addition to innovation, the brewery also hosts events, like craft nights with the locally owned Heart Craft Studio.

"We're always looking for new opportunities and ways to support other local businesses, especially new entrepreneurs," said Echevarria.

With the addition of Shorebirds Brewing Company, the Rancho Cordova Barrel District is now nine members strong. And the Shorebirds team is excited to be part of the fold.

"The Barrel District is known as a region for producing solid craft alcoholic beverages, whether that be beer, seltzer or mead and now, hard kombucha," said Echevarria.

Learn more about Shorebirds Brewing Company on their website and follow them on social media. ★

# Aging Well at Home

*Continued from page 1*  
know they need to exercise may get all the right equipment, buy a nice exercise outfit, but don't utilize them. They may also not know how to use the equipment and therefore be afraid of injury. "Personal trainers assist by, first, helping people define their goals." Trainers also can show clients the correct way of using equipment and exercising to avoid or mitigate injury.

One of Alton's clients Cyndi Sills, 72, admits she doesn't like exercise at all. "I have Jennifer come because if she comes, I'll do it and if she doesn't, I won't." She has built up enough equipment at her home, Sills said, so that the training can take place right at her house. "We do a variety of things," Sills said. "We work on cardio and weight training, and for me balance is a big, important thing." Although she remembers the different exercises, Sills doesn't know when to switch from one thing to another. Having Alton there keeps her on track. "When you have Jennifer, she's the brains behind it, she just says, 'You do it,' and then you feel better."

For 12 years, Alton worked as a personal trainer for 24 Hour Fitness, training clients in an age range of 12 to 92 years. She began Your Fitness Genie around 2002 and saw clients at a local gym as an independent personal trainer. "Exercise really is a benefit for so many of the medical conditions that are out there," said Alton. She has certifications in several specialties of personal training with NASM (National Association of Sports Medicine), and she



Your Fitness Genie owner Jenn Alton instructs client Cyndi Sills on overhead dumbbell shoulder press, while sitting on a stability ball at Sills' home in Rancho Cordova on Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Photo provided by Fitness Genie



Jenn Alton helps client Cyndi Sills correct her knee issues by squatting with a band and engaging her core through TRX suspension training at Sills' home in Rancho Cordova on Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Photo provided by Fitness Genie

has chosen senior fitness as her training specialty.

Alton also encourages her clients to join classes that she teaches at Neil Orchard Senior Center on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. The classes involve active aging chair yoga, floor mat pilates, restorative yoga for the back, and active aging balance and movement.

Another of Alton's clients is 90-year-old June Huffman. "It is hard for me to get out," Huffman said, and she also trains at home.

"(Alton) is like a breath of fresh air when she comes in," Huffman said. "She's always happy and very positive . . . She's very much aware, in my case anyway, of how I'm feeling and what I'm doing and so forth." Huffman said that she does feel better when she works out. "My sons especially notice that there's a difference when I'm doing it and when I'm not."

For more information about Your Fitness Genie, call or text Jenn Alton at 916-768-8767. ★

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# Anderson and Johnson Honored for Historic Birthdays

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players who went on to play in Major League Baseball (MLB) and racked up 927 wins over four plus decades leading the Lancers.

“I think my record speaks for itself, not trying to be political, but I think my record speaks for itself in my involvement. I was an administrator, an athletic director and a teacher for Cordova High School for 45 years.”

Anderson also had six terms over 24 years for the Cordova Recreation and Park District (CRPD) as a board member.

“I came here in 1963 and opened Cordova High School brand new,” Anderson said. “It’s just been a pleasure to be in this community.”

Nov. 30, 2022 is now known as “Erika Johnson Day” in Sacramento County. Dec. 5, 2022 is now known as “Guy Anderson Day” in Sacramento County.

“When you hit 90 and you look back, I’ve had a wonderful time with everything I’ve done in the area of Rancho Cordova,” Anderson said.



Nov. 30, 2022 is now known as “Erika Johnson Day” in Sacramento County. Photo by Rick Sloan



Dec. 5, 2022 is now known as “Guy Anderson Day” in Sacramento County. Photo by Rick Sloan

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# All Long Term Services Will Soon be Available

Cal Healthcare Compare News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Beginning in 2023, Californians will get easy access to data on over 19,000 long term care services and facilities in California, thanks to a \$1 million grant from the California Department of Aging for the expansion of the Cal Long Term Care Compare website.

Through this funding, Californians will be able to access Cal Long Term Care Compare to compare quality performance and facility information for over 1,000 nursing homes, as well the following services and facilities in their area: home health agencies, hospices, adult residential care programs, adult day health centers, long term care hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation facilities and more.

The public website will be updated over a two-year period to include comparative information, such as facility location, number of beds, resident information, services, and resident feedback, for these additional long term care options. In addition, the website will be updated to include several tools designed to guide Californians through the decision-making process, from determining their long-term care needs to selecting the right provider in their area. As part of this effort, overall website accessibility, such as Spanish



Californians will be able to access Cal Long Term Care Compare to compare quality performance and facility information. MPG file photo

translation services and ADA compatibility, will be improved so that even more Californians can access this vital information.

Cal Long Term Care Compare is a free website that offers an unbiased, one-stop snapshot of how local long term care services and facilities compare to each other and to statewide averages on a variety of quality metrics.

"Searching for long term care services can be a difficult, anxiety-ridden challenge. We know that many individuals and families struggle with just understanding the difference between the various long term care options - such as nursing homes versus hospice," said Dr. Bruce Spurlock, Executive Director of Cal Healthcare Compare. "We

hope that this free site will lessen the apprehension and provide individuals and families with reliable, objective information and educational material so that they can be more confident in the decisions they make."

Created by Cal Healthcare Compare, a multi-stakeholder non-profit, the user-friendly website offers a quick reference about some of the most pressing issues consumers need to weigh before choosing the long term care facility best suited to their unique needs. Funded by California health plans, data analysis informing the posted measures are produced by researchers from the UC Davis Center for Healthcare Policy and Research and the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing. ★

# Allowing Hallucinogenic Drugs Can Lead to More Violent Crime

CDAA News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Prosecutors in California strongly object to SB 58 (Senator Wiener), which seeks the wholesale decriminalization of many dangerous hallucinogenic drugs.

"This proposal recklessly puts policy before science for numerous psychedelic drugs that have proven to be highly unpredictable and have even been connected to violent crimes," said Greg Totten, CEO of the California District Attorneys Association (CDAA).

Unfortunately, the

authors of this bill are charting a path that would allow these dangerous hallucinogenic drugs to be legalized before they have been fully understood by the scientific and medical communities.

"If the proponents want more research, that's one thing," Totten said. "And if they are advocating for therapeutic use under medical supervision, that is also worth considering. But science does not fully understand these drugs and that's why this bill is so reckless, because it advocates for skipping that scientific scrutiny altogether."

"As for dealing with drug cases involving users of hallucinogens, as prosecutors our focus has long been to seek treatment, not jail," Totten said. "We know that we can help people get on the right track by compelling them into treatment for drug addiction, and that is only possible if there are laws that govern these controlled substances."

The California District Attorneys Association is a statewide training and advocacy organization representing elected district attorneys, city attorneys with criminal divisions, and more than 3,500 prosecutors. ★

# Bera Helps Secure \$15.2 Million for County Health Department



Office of Representative Ami Bera, M.D.

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On November 29, 2022, Representative Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-07) announced that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has awarded the Sacramento County Health Department

\$15,264,533 in funding to improve its public health infrastructure and strengthen its ability to recruit and retain public health care workers. The funding is provided through the American Rescue Plan, which Rep. Bera championed and voted for in March 2021.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of having a public health infrastructure that can prevent, detect, and respond to emerging health threats," said Representative Bera, who previously served as Chief Medical Officer for Sacramento County. "As a doctor, I am proud to

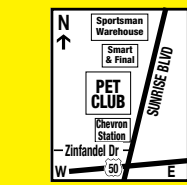
help secure over \$15 million in federal funding to help Sacramento County improve our health care services and keep our communities safe and healthy."

The CDC Public Health Infrastructure Grant Program provides flexible awards directly to state, local, and territorial health departments, to help ensure they have the people, services, and systems they need to promote and protect health in their communities. The grant includes significant resources that Sacramento County can use to recruit, retain, and train its health care workforce. ★

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# Sacramento County Searching for Shelter Operator

**Sac County News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - The County of Sacramento Office of Homeless Initiatives (OHI) is seeking interest from qualified organizations interested in operating a low-barrier, scattered-site interim 24/7 shelter program for persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

The program will be inclusive of both operations and re-housing services. The shelter re-housing services provider may be the same as the shelter operations provider or will work closely with the provider if a separate entity.

Sacramento County funds and supports operations of sheltering programs throughout the County, using a variety of approaches and physical buildings to address the unique needs of people living unsheltered. These shelters are low-barrier and come with access to services that help people stabilize their lives, including case management and rehousing support.

One of the core sheltering programs is the Re-Housing Shelter Network (RSN), also known as "scattered site shelter." The County typically shelters up to 155 clients in these shelters at any given time across the County. This model utilizes existing residential homes within neighborhoods to support small (typically less than 5) sheltering programs.

The RSN allows sheltering for people who cannot be supported in traditional, congregate settings, and can

accommodate varying household configurations and serve people with their pets. Each location has a 24/7 live-in site monitor that helps provide for clients' basic needs. With recent expansion in the RSN program, and the changing needs in the Sacramento shelter system, the County is seeking interest from community partners with expertise in shelter operations and/or re-housing services.

The County has been running this scattered site shelter model since 2018. Clients appreciate a smaller environment that allows them to truly experience the transition off the streets and into a house setting while having their basic needs cared for and an on-site house monitor. Clients can bring their partners, pets and possessions to the house with them. This low-barrier model helps increase the chances that potential guests will say "yes" to the opportunity.

Once in the scattered site shelter, clients have access to supportive services such as case management, rehousing services and resources to provide for one's basic needs. These supports are an important step on a client's pathway toward housing.

For more information about this particular partnership opportunity with the County of Sacramento, read the full Letter of Interest, including deadlines and pre-submission meetings that allow potential respondents to ask questions of County staff.

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

# Conversion to Organics Could Increase Food Prices, Shrink Farm Profits

**California Farm Bureau News Release**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - A European Union policy goal to exponentially increase organic farming to 30% of all agricultural production by 2030 is expected to be considered by Gov. Gavin Newsom for next year's budget. However, a new economic analysis says such a plan would dramatically increase the price of food for many consumers and jeopardize the solvency of organic farms.

California currently has an estimated 7.35 million acres of irrigated cropland, of which 460,000 acres – or 6% – is certified as organic and not all of that is farmed in any given year.

A preliminary analysis by ERA Economics, a Davis-based consultancy specializing in the economics of agriculture and water resources in California, focused on the potential challenges of applying the EU standards to one California crop: tomatoes. The state produces 95% of America's processing tomatoes and the total annual tomato crop is valued at \$1.2 billion.

Only 5% of California's 228,000 processing tomato acreage is currently needed to meet consumer demand for organic. The study found that reaching 30% organic production by 2030 would cause substantial disruptions to the market. The farmgate price of conventional tomatoes was estimated to rise by more

than 11%. And, importantly, the price for organic tomatoes was estimated to fall by 28% at the farmgate level – potentially putting the market price below the cost of production.

That could mean organic farmers would be forced to cease production, sell, or farm something else – a result that could potentially crash the organic market and ultimately drive-up consumer prices. Mandating an increase in organic acreage without a clear connection to consumer demand could result in market disruptions that would hurt farmers, farm employees and consumers alike, the study noted.

Any initial organic price drop would mostly benefit wealthier consumers who purchase organically grown products, with lower-income customers paying more for traditionally grown products. All tomato farmers, organic or not, could see reduced profits, according to the analysis.

"Farming works when we are able to grow what the consumer actually wants and not what government mandates. California consumers are already struggling to afford higher prices for food than other states because of government mandates and these types of proposals just make things worse," said Jamie Johansson, president of the California Farm Bureau. "When the government increases the price of food, it acts like a regressive tax, hurting lower- and middle-income

families the hardest. At the end of the day, the government needs to let organic markets grow organically."

To increase organic acreage for processing tomatoes from an average of 4% to 30% would represent a five- to six-fold increase in current acreage. Tomato growers and processors interviewed for the analysis confirmed industry data regarding consumers' finite desire to purchase organic tomato products;

Tomato growers may specialize in organic, non-organic or both, depending on market demands and conditions. By mandating a specific growing method, it could greatly impact the ability of farmers to keep their operation sustainable, both financially and as they encounter other challenges, such as climate change and pests and disease;

Both conventional and organic farmers of processing tomatoes face risks of economic losses. Conventional growers, with likely reduced acreage, could see a 17% potential downside cost from expected earnings;

Organic production presents greater risk of crop failure, higher production costs and lower crop yields. As a result, organic farmers are likely to see less stability. They face a potential downside cost of 36% of anticipated net returns, making it potentially unprofitable to grow organic processing tomatoes. ★

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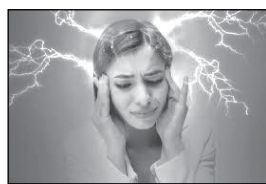
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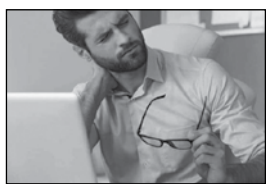
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# Hospitals Finally Face the Music



Commentary by Sally C. Pipes

Two Georgia hospitals were recently fined \$1.1 million for failing to publish their prices. The facilities had also ignored letters from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services asking them to publicly disclose what they charge for procedures.

It's about time. The federal government directed hospitals to publish clear, consumer-friendly charge lists by the beginning of 2021. Six months later, just 6% of hospitals nationwide had complied, according to a study published in June in the medical journal JAMA.

Hospitals shouldn't be able to get away with flouting the law. Price transparency empowers patients and payers to shop around for medical care – and ultimately allows them to leverage the power of competition to extract the best value for their dollar.

The Trump administration issued the price transparency rule in 2019. It required hospitals to publish standard prices for 300

of their most common services, including rates for insurers and those for individuals paying cash. The rule set daily fines for non-compliant institutions, which the Biden administration increased in November 2021.

Since the rule took effect, hospitals have been cautioned plenty. CMS has issued more than 350 warning letters requesting compliance.

Yet transparency has lagged. The biggest medical centers have been among the worst offenders. Just 0.5% of facilities owned by the country's three largest hospital systems were fully compliant as of early 2022, according to a report from Patient Rights Advocate.

Hospitals may be leery of revealing their prices because the results can be embarrassing. In one case, an Illinois patient received a \$15,000 hospital bill for an EpiPen. He later learned he could have purchased the same device from a pharmacy for \$320.

Or, take the recent experience of a couple in Fresno, Calif. According to reporting from NPR, the husband underwent cataract surgery with an in-network provider that cost over \$4,000. His wife, who has the same coverage, received the same exact procedure at a neighboring clinic – and only owed \$204. The two facilities were just a half mile from one another.

High-cost

providers wouldn't be able to get away with those wide spreads in price if patients and payers knew about them. That's why a 2021 RAND Corporation study projected that improving price transparency could reduce U.S. healthcare spending by up to \$26.6 billion a year.

Of course, some hospitals may be justified in charging more than others. Factors like quality, convenience, and reputation of doctors and hospitals always influence price. But patients and payers should be able to evaluate those factors on their own. Hiding prices deprives them of key pieces of information that help them make prudent decisions.

Opaque prices also undermine competition – and thus help healthcare providers avoid improving quality or reducing costs in order to attract customers at the margin.

The feds did the right thing by fining hospitals that aren't following the rules. But more needs to be done to make hospitals around the country do what businesses in every other sector do every day – tell potential customers what they can expect to pay.

Sally C. Pipes is President, CEO, and Thomas W. Smith Fellow in Health Care Policy at the Pacific Research Institute. Follow her on Twitter @sallypipes. This op-ed originally ran in the Chicago Sun-Times. ★



**WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS**



# SMUD Crews Respond to Storm Outages

## SMUD Special Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento region was hit by heavy rains and 70-mph winds by the latest storm that ripped through Northern California overnight. Storm damage knocked out power to more than 345,000 SMUD customers at its height around 2 AM. As of 3:45 PM, approximately 60,000 customers remain without power.

The most recent storm was the worst storm in more than 30 years, eclipsing last week's New Year's Eve storm. So far, SMUD has identified more than 80 downed power poles and dozens of downed trees impacting utility equipment. These numbers will grow significantly as assessments are completed.

SMUD line crews, troubleshooters and other field personnel will work 24/7 to restore power to customers if it's safe to work. Crews made steady progress throughout the day Sunday to assess damage, make repairs and restore power. Thanks to partnerships with other local utilities and contract crews, SMUD has nearly doubled the typical number of crews in the field working to restore power from 16 to 30. Additional mutual aid crews are incoming, which will bring total crew count to approximately 40 on Monday.

Due to extensive damage, many customers will experience lengthy outages that last overnight, and many will last well into



SMUD crews were out in full force to repair damage caused by the high winds. Photo courtesy SMUD.

the coming week. SMUD is contacting customers we expect to be out of power overnight directly so they can make arrangements.

When storms knock out power, SMUD works around-the-clock to restore electric service as safely and as quickly as possible, but restoration efforts can be slowed when winds are too high for crews to safely work, or access is limited or not possible due to floods.

**SMUD prioritizes where crews will be sent during a storm:** Public safety hazards (power lines down, poles down); Hospitals and critical flood control pumps; Areas with large numbers of customers out of power; Scattered, smaller outages.

Safety is a top priority and SMUD is providing

tips for customers to stay safe.

**If the power goes out;** Check to see if the lights are out in neighboring homes — if so, it's likely a larger outage; Report the outage at [smud.org/outages](http://smud.org/outages).

If you are the only one without power, visit [smud.org/storms](http://smud.org/storms) for instructions on safely checking/resetting your main breaker.

**If stormy weather knocks down a power line;** Stay away and call SMUD at 1-888-456-SMUD (7683) or 911 immediately; Assume the line is "energized" and stay away and warn others to do the same; Do not remove fallen tree limbs or other debris from power lines. Tree limbs and other objects can conduct electricity that can shock

anyone coming in contact with them.

SMUD urges people to check on family, friends and neighbors who may experience outages. For those experiencing prolonged outages, SMUD is working with its customers on an individual basis to provide for specific needs during the storms. In case of extended outages or for those with medical needs, SMUD urges customers to have a back-up plan for accommodations if needed.

While homes can get cold without power, SMUD warns customers **not** to heat homes with propane heaters, grills, hibachis or BBQs. They produce carbon monoxide, a clear, odorless gas that can be fatal to humans and animals. ★

# Dr. Art Pimentel Named President of Folsom Lake College

Continued from page 1

deep commitment to the students of our region. I can't wait to see the great things that FLC will accomplish under Art's leadership."

Pimentel earned his Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences from California State University, Sacramento; his Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from California State University, Sacramento; and his Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) from the University of California, Davis.

In addition to his career in higher education, Pimentel has been active within the community. He was elected to the Woodland City Council and served from 2004-2008, elected Mayor of Woodland in 2008 and served from 2008-2012, and served on the Woodland Joint Unified School District Board of Trustees in 2014. He also served as the Chairman for the Yolo County Transportation District, Yolo-Solano Air

Quality District, and the Cleaner Air Partnership of Sacramento.

"I look forward to joining the Folsom Lake College family and working with college staff and faculty to continue the important work of increasing access to higher education by focusing on closing equity gaps and improving student achievement," shared Pimentel.

Pimentel will succeed Dr. Whitney Yamamura who departed Folsom Lake College in August 2022 to serve as Chancellor of the Coast Community College District in Costa Mesa, CA. Retired Folsom Lake College President Dr. Rachel Rosenthal has been serving as Interim President since Dr. Yamamura's departure while the college and district conducted the comprehensive nationwide search process. The community will have the opportunity to welcome Dr. Pimentel at events this spring. ★

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  19. \*Checkout clerk
  21. \*Meat professional
  23. \*... the land of the free...
  24. Fictional Himalayan
  25. Meme move
  28. Man Ray's art movement
  30. On cloud nine
  35. Crude group
  37. Seaside bird
  39. Formerly known as dropsy
  40. Make-up artist?
  41. Blast from the past
  43. Bruce Willis' ex
  44. Chocolate substitute
  46. Mischievous sprites
  47. Plaintiff
  48. \*Advantageous display
  50. \*Spumante
  52. Meddle
  53. Largest share owner
  55. \*... to Joy
  57. \*Coldest display
  61. \*What's on \*?
  65. Main artery in the body
  66. Feathery neckwear
  68. Isolated
  69. Hipbone-related
  70. Octopus' defense
  71. Espresso plus steamed milk
  72. Eye contact
  73. Word from #32 Down
  74. Goes up or down
- DOWN**
1. D.E.A. agent
  2. On a deck, perhaps
  3. Pad
  4. Gem State
  5. Depended on
  6. From a distance
  7. \*Reusable one
  8. Hacienda brick
  9. Cleopatra's necklace
  10. Moonfish
  11. Boundary line
  12. Looker or ogler
  15. Capable of movement
  20. One of the Muses
  22. Shoshonean
  24. Railyard worker
  25. Gabbana's partner
  26. Relating to bees
  27. Edward Teach's facial feature
  29. \*Prepared food department
  31. Contributes
  32. Get ready to drive (2 words)
  33. Type of wheat
  34. \*Ricotta and eggs section
  36. Semiaquatic tetrapod, for short
  38. Sips from a flask?
  42. Bar by estoppel
  45. Novelist Honoré de
  49. Blackbird dessert
  51. Paragons
  54. Galactic path
  56. Pomp
  57. Be unsuccessful
  58. Dramatic part
  59. Sportscaster Andrews
  60. JFK or ORD postings
  61. Japanese alcoholic beverage
  62. Tiny amount
  63. Not in favor of
  64. Lecherous look
  67. \*O in BOGO

**CROSSWORD**

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# Girl Scouts Heart of Central California Holds STEM Expo



Girl Scouts build a toolbox out of wood during the STEM Expo on November 6 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento. Courtesy photo



Girl Scouts problem solve how to build a structure with the pieces provided during the STEM Expo on November 6 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento. Courtesy photo



A Girl Scout looks through a microscope during the STEM Expo on November 6 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento. Courtesy photo

## Girl Scouts HCC News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Girl Scouts Heart of Central California held their annual STEM Expo on November 6, 2022 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento with 142 participants in attendance.

The event featured a variety of hands-on activities designed to foster curiosity and confidence in participants with an eye toward the future in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

Highlights from the array of experiences provided include:

Solar bracelet making: Provided by event

partner SMUD, this creative project centered on understanding energy. (The beads used could change depending on light.)

Ecology and botany learning: Highlighting the Girl Scouts and UC Davis Arboretum's Public Garden Program, living plants were used in captivating games designed to teach plant identification while having fun!

Robot programming and play: Provided by event partner Code Ninjas, this hands-on experience encouraged problem-solving and analysis skills essential to tomorrow's thinkers.

Paper rockets and DNA bracelet making: Provided by event partner



A Girl Scout makes a solar bracelet during the STEM Expo on November 6 at Camp Pollock in Sacramento. Courtesy photo

Americorps Fellows and the Girl Scouts Heart of Central California's Mobile STEM Center,

these tactile projects kept participants actively engaged while learning.

One highlight of the day

was feedback received from a newly established local Daisy Troop. Having formed just one week prior, the STEM Expo was the troop's first Girl Scouts event. They arrived early and were some of the last to leave! Their enthusiastic troop leader made connections for future activities inspired by both the event itself and by other leaders in attendance. The troop is especially interested in working more with Code Ninjas.

Over the last 30 years, employment in STEM occupations has grown 79% with the promise of continued growth in the fields. Women comprise only 34% of the STEM workforce and have lower

median salaries than their male counterparts.

The future for women in STEM is far brighter, however, thanks to events like this that inspire tomorrow's thinkers and leaders. STEM is a foundational part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, the four-pillar framework around which all our activities are built. Along with the other pillars (outdoors, life skills, and entrepreneurship) Girl Scouts is committed to providing opportunities for growth through STEM-focused learning.

For additional information about this impactful event, please contact: Andrea Fruchier, MarComm Senior Director. ★

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# What Taxpayers Need to Know about Unemployment



**Commentary by Jon Coupal**

I sincerely hope that readers aren't turned off by the title of this column. While most taxpayers aren't directly responsible for paying unemployment insurance taxes, the truth is we all pay and, in California, we pay a great deal more than we should. Last week I received an email from a dentist who operates a small dental office and is required to pay the unemployment insurance tax and, sadly, is paying much more than he should because our unemployment insurance program is insolvent. Like so many other measurements of California's performance relative to other states, our businesses – both large and small – are paying a penalty for the incompetence of our elected officials and bureaucrats. Here's what taxpayers should know about unemployment insurance. California's unemployment insurance program (UI) is funded by a tax imposed on employers. The proceeds are deposited in the Unemployment Trust Fund of the U.S. Treasury Department. States may withdraw funds from their accounts to pay unemployment benefits. Here's the kicker: If a state's trust fund does not have adequate funds to pay benefits, it must borrow money from the federal fund to satisfy

unemployment claims. But if a state's UI Fund is insolvent for more than two years, that tax rate increases each year. The tax can be hefty, as much as \$420 per employee per year. Like other states, California was slammed by the pandemic. Low unemployment quickly became unprecedented levels of high unemployment. While few dispute the need for workplace closures early in the pandemic, California was much slower in reopening than more freedom-oriented states like Texas and Florida. This had a direct impact on the further decimation of the UI fund. That's just one reason why, by the spring of 2020, California's UI Fund was depleted and continued to fall further behind. This required even more borrowing from the federal government. Even worse, California was suffering from a second epidemic: an epidemic of massive fraud in the administration of unemployment insurance claims. On Gov. Gavin Newsom's watch, the Employment Development Department (EDD) failed to process a backlog of claims for hundreds of thousands of unemployed Californians while sending out as much as \$30 billion in unemployment benefits for phony claims, including fraudulent claims paid to death row inmates. Much too late, after several legislative hearings on the lack of oversight of EDD, there were modest corrective actions taken. But this was the epitome of closing the barn door after the horses bolted. If anyone believes that the massive EDD fraud didn't impact ordinary taxpayers, they couldn't be more wrong. California's employers are directly responsible for

the cost of EDD providing benefits on fraudulent claims, which means that all of us must absorb the cost of this inexcusable lack of oversight. Perhaps the most important thing for taxpayers to know about California's unemployment insurance program is how insolvent it is. EDD itself projects that at year's end the UI Fund's total debt will exceed \$19 billion. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Labor confirms that California's debt problem is the worst of any state, with an accumulated debt that exceeds the debt of all other states combined. Again, in the competition between states, it is notable that most other states have no outstanding debt because they used Covid relief funds from Washington to pay down their UI loans. For example, Texas approved a \$7.2 billion payment and has eliminated its UI debt entirely. What about California? Because of its insolvency, it must pay \$470 million in interest payments alone to the federal government. That's nearly half a billion that could otherwise go to education, transportation, or public safety. Worse yet, this is an annually recurring expense. Remember just last June when California had a \$95 billion surplus? That would have been the time to increase the payments to the federal government to reduce our UI debt. But now, the LAO tells us we have a \$25 billion deficit "problem." So let's just chalk this up as another missed opportunity for the Golden State. And citizen taxpayers, as well as California's beleaguered business community, are paying the price. *Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. ★*

# CHP Highlights New Laws in 2023



California Highway Patrol (CHP) is educating the public on traffic safety laws that were passed during this year's legislative season and signed by Governor Gavin Newsom. Photo courtesy of Michael Ludwig | Dreamstime.com

## CHP News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -** As we head into the new year, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) is educating the public on traffic safety laws that were passed during this year's legislative season and signed by Governor Gavin Newsom. The laws take effect January 1, 2023, unless otherwise noted.

**Public Employment: Peace Officers: Citizenship (Senate Bill (SB) 960, Skinner)**

The law maintains that peace officers, including peace officer trainees, be legally authorized to work in the United States consistent with federal law and regulations, however, removes the requirement that they be citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

**Catalytic Converters (SB 1087, Gonzalez) (Assembly Bill (AB) 1740, Muratsuchi)**

These laws specifically list who can sell catalytic converters to recyclers and require those recyclers to keep documentation such as the year, make, model, and copy of the vehicle title from which the catalytic converter was removed. The purpose of these laws is to help reduce catalytic converter theft.

**Vehicular Manslaughter: Speeding and Reckless Driving (SB 1472, Stern)**

This law expands the criteria for "gross negligence" as it relates to the crime of vehicular manslaughter. Drivers involved in sideshow activity, exhibition of speed, or speeding over 100 miles per hour which results in a fatality could now be charged with Vehicular Manslaughter with Gross Negligence.

**Motor Vehicle Speed Contests and Exhibitions of Speed (AB 2000, Gabriel)**

Parking lots and off-street parking facilities are now included as locations where it is a crime to engage in a speed contest, exhibition of speed, or sideshow activity.

**Endangered Missing Advisory: Feather Alert (AB 1314, Ramos)**

The new "Feather Alert" allows law enforcement agencies to request the CHP to initiate an alert when an indigenous person has been kidnapped, abducted, or reported missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances, and specific criteria has been met to permit alert activation. Additionally, consistent with the Department's existing AMBER, Blue, and Silver Alert programs, this new "Feather Alert" program encourages the use of radio, television, and social media to spread the information about the missing indigenous person.

**Hit-and-Run Incidents: Yellow Alert (AB 1732, Patterson)**

This law authorizes law enforcement agencies to request the CHP to activate a "Yellow Alert" when a fatal hit-and-run crash has occurred, and specific criteria has been met to permit alert activation. The law also encourages local media outlets to disseminate the information contained in a Yellow Alert. The new law serves to use the public's assistance to improve the investigatory ability for law enforcement agencies throughout the state when working to solve fatal hit-and-run crashes. ★

**Online Marketplaces: Reporting (AB 1700, Maisenschein)**

This law requires the Attorney General's Office to create an online reporting system for users of third-party online marketplaces to report listings of suspected stolen items. The reported information would be available to local law enforcement and the CHP's Organized Retail Crime Task Force to assist with investigations.

**Bicycles Omnibus Bill (AB 1909, Friedman)**

Much like the move over or slow down law, this law provides for increased protections to bicyclists by requiring vehicles passing or overtaking a bicycle in the same direction, to move over to an adjacent lane of traffic, if one is available, or slow down and only pass the bicyclist when safe to do so. The law also permits Class 3 e-bike riders to use approved bicycle paths and trails, bikeways, and bicycle lanes. The law prohibits local governments from requiring bicycle registration and allows local authorities to prohibit any electric bicycle on an equestrian, hiking, or other recreational trail.

**Electric Bicycles: Safety and Training Program (AB 1946, Boerner Horvath)**

This requires the CHP to work with other traffic safety stakeholders such as the California Office of Traffic Safety, to develop statewide safety and training programs for electric bicycles. This training program, which will consist of electric bicycle riding safety, emergency maneuver skills, rules of the road and laws pertaining to electric bicycles, will launch on the CHP's website in September 2023.

**Pedestrians (AB 2147, Ting)**

This law prohibits peace officers from stopping pedestrians for certain pedestrian-specific violations, such as crossing the road outside of a crosswalk, unless there is an immediate danger of a crash. The CHP reminds all road users of the responsibility to travel safely and look out for one another on the road. The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest level of Safety, Service, and Security. ★

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# The Marvelous Cakes of Jewel Burgess

Visit RC News Release

**RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)** - The meal arrives on a black platter. Butter mixed with herbs melts atop the grill-marked surface of a juicy T-bone steak. A savory baked potato with a helping of sour cream sits to the side. And to top it all off, a hefty mug of frothing Budweiser promises to quench one's thirst.

But cutting into this bountiful meal will yield a surprise. For the steak isn't medium rare, it's red velvet cake; and the bubbling beer isn't liquid at all, but cake of the pumpkin spice variety.

"I'm known for people looking and having to think, 'Is that cake or is it not?'" said Jewel Burgess, owner of Cake Jewel Custom Cakes. "That's my whole motivation, capturing that wow factor."

And Burgess' hyper-realistic cakes are the epitome of wow. From pancake breakfasts and hamburgers to zombie sculptures and cakes that look like hats, Burgess' baked goods are masterfully crafted works that toy with perception. And her talents haven't gone unnoticed.

Since launching Cake Jewel Custom Cakes in 2015, Burgess has appeared and competed on multiple Warner Bros. Discovery Networks shows, including Food Network's Halloween Wars, Cakealikes and The Big Bake, among others.

"Cakes have consumed my life, literally," said Burgess. "The last thing I think about before I go to sleep is, 'What cake can I make that can wow you?' Because that's my whole purpose in this."

"It's not just a cake; it's an experience," she added.

Burgess didn't start baking with the intent of becoming a professional. She simply wanted to bake a cake to celebrate her son Benjamin's first birthday. At the time, Benjamin was obsessed with Mickey Mouse so Burgess decided to bake a two-tier



Since launching Cake Jewel Custom Cakes in 2015, Jewel Burgess has appeared and competed on multiple Warner Bros. Discovery Networks shows, including Food Network's Halloween Wars, Cakealikes and The Big Bake, among others. Photos courtesy of Jewel Burgess

Mickey Mouse Clubhouse cake.

"I never decorated cakes, never made anything from scratch," said Burgess, who dove headfirst into the culinary art. "When I took the cake to the party, people were like, 'This is so cute! Where did you get it?' I was like, 'I made it!'"

"The next month, someone asked me if I could make their daughter's first birthday cake," she added. "That cake request turned into another and another

and then all of a sudden, I was posting cakes on Facebook and Instagram, almost every week."

And thus, a business was born. As Burgess shared her creations online, she continued honing her craft, learning the ins and outs of the Play-Doh-like fondant icing. Every day, she sculpted and baked, and sculpted and baked.

"It was about a year and a half after I started baking and putting everything online, that's when

the Food Network contacted me," said Burgess, who successfully auditioned for the channel and was placed on a show. She spent 10 days in Los Angeles filming the baking series. She and her team won two of the three episodes in which they appeared.

"I came back, and I started, little by little, specializing in more reality-based cakes," said Burgess. "I started looking into more specialized techniques and

looking at finding a mentor and it just grew from there."

As Burgess' business grew, she continued making appearances on Food Network shows. Most recently, she appeared on Food Network Canada's The Big Bake.

Though her cakes have put her on the national stage, Burgess is through and through Rancho Cordovan. She's lived in the city for the last 48 years, moving here when she was two years old, and over the years, she's watched the city develop and grow, all the while making it a central hub for her life and business.

"I love Rancho Cordova," said Burgess. "This city has just really expanded. It's a wonderful place for families and it's a tight community because if you live here long enough, everyone knows everyone."

In addition to creating custom cakes, Burgess also hosts baking classes, teaching her hyper-realistic style to the masses. In a recent class, she and her students created a cake that looks like a short stack of pancakes.

"They did awesome," said Burgess of the class. "They were so excited and kept sending pictures of their cakes to friends and family."

One common thread throughout Burgess' life is that she has the soul of an artisan. Whether it's baking, crafting jewelry or designing clothes, any mode of expression is an outlet for her.

"I love art," she added, reflecting on her motivations. "I love to share it; I love to make people smile. I don't like to do anything boring."

"Although baking is fun, it's not my passion; my passion is art and creativity."

And who says art can't be delicious too?

Find out more about Jewel Burgess and Cake Jewel Custom Cakes by following @cake\_jewel on Instagram or visiting www.cakejewel.com

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