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Gold River Messenger

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**A CHRISTMAS
SPECTACULAR**



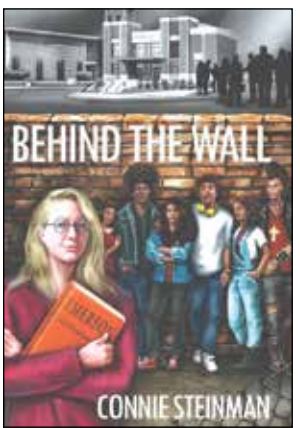
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Fish are a Jumpin'



Giant Chinook leap from the river in their eagerness to follow the uphill flow.

**Story and photo
by Susan Maxwell Skinner**

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The 2022 Chinook run is in full swim.

Now cooled sufficiently for spawning, the American River is teeming with migrating salmon. Nimbus Fish Hatchery recently opened ladder gates and is harvesting eggs and milt for artificial fertilization.

The Chinook giants climb to the facility via a \$9.7 million ladder that replaced an antiquated weir system last year. "We've been pleased with its operation," notes hatchery education specialist Laura Drath. "The new ladder works for the fish. Its location opens up more spawning habitat in Nimbus Basin. It also eliminates danger to staff who had to

work on the old weir."

Thirty-pound fish were already leaping as Nimbus technician Ryan Reed winched up ladder gates. Irresistibly drawn to water that courses down ladder steps at 25 cubic feet per second, 100 Chinooks completed the passage in the first hour.

Their weeks-long migration runs the swimmers ragged. Ending a three-year life cycle, reproduction is now a final goal. Many spawn naturally and die in river shallows before reaching the ladder. But more than a century of river alteration means insufficient gravel beds remain to accommodate salmon and steelhead nests.

Much gravel restoration has been recently achieved; salmonids can

be now seen breeding in augmented beds near Ancil Hoffman Park and Sailor Bar. The hatchery is nevertheless tasked to artificially fertilize about nine million eggs in mitigation for Nimbus Dam's impassable barrier. Salvageable fish meat is processed in Oregon for distribution at California food closets.

Eggs hatch in about six weeks. In spring, fry are released to begin their journey to the Pacific.

For now, the primal dance of death continues at Nimbus, as fish pitch ebbing strength at currents, rocks and ladder steps.

Salmon processing continues at Nimbus until mid-December. Anyone may visit the Fish and Wildlife department facility at 2001 Nimbus Road, Gold River. ★

California Faces \$25 Billion Budget Shortfall

**Commentary
by Tim Anaya**

When I last wrote about California's state budget picture, Gov. Newsom was warning in his September veto messages about the state facing lower-than-expected tax revenues in the first months of the new fiscal year, and urging lawmakers to "remain discipline when it comes to spending."

With ongoing inflation and economic problems, the state's budget problem is growing worse by the day. The Department of Finance's most recent Finance Bulletin, released in October, pegged the current deficit at \$6.967 billion through September.

Personal income tax cash receipts in September came in 22.9 percent lower than projected for the month, while estimated tax payments for the month were 42.3 percent lower. The Department notes that "September is a significant month of personal income tax receipts as many taxpayers pay their third quarter estimated payments."

While the Governor's budget won't be released until January 10, we get a sneak preview of the budget debate every November when the non-partisan Legislative Analyst's office releases their annual fiscal outlook for the year ahead. This year's outlook, which was released on Wednesday, is pretty dire.

According to the LAO report, the state faces a \$25 billion budget shortfall in the 2023-24 fiscal year, which is primarily the result of lower revenue estimates than projected in the 2022-23 state budget. Over the three year budget period (2021-22 through 2023-24), the LAO estimates \$41 billion in lower revenue than projected in the enacted state budget. If the state enters a recession, which many economists believe is nearly upon us, the LAO says "revenues could be \$30 billion to \$50 billion below" their current estimates. The LAO also forecasts multi-billion-dollar deficits each year through the 2026-27 fiscal year.

Rising inflation makes the state's budget problem even worse. The LAO estimates that the Legislature can meet the requirements of the voter-approved Proposition 98 minimum funding guarantee for education and provide an 8.38 percent cost-of-living adjustment. However, inflation adjustment isn't built into the rest of the budget. As a result the LAO notes

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Sprouts Farmers Market Opens



Dignitaries pose for a photo after the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation donated \$50,000 to Soil Born Farms on November 10 in Rancho Cordova.

**Story and photos
by Shaun Holko,
assistant editor**

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - Rancho Cordovans who have dietary restrictions or healthy eating habits may have a new favorite spot in their city as Sprouts

Farmers Market recently opened a store in Rancho Cordova.

The new grocery store is located at 10846 Bear Hollow Dr., right by the intersection of Zinfandel Drive and International Drive. A ribbon cutting was held bright and early

on November 11 at 6:45 a.m. to christen the new location.

The night before the grand opening, Sprouts representatives held a "sneak peek" of the store for Rancho Cordova dignitaries and media to tour the location. Among those

in attendance were Rancho Cordova Vice Mayor Linda Budge, Deputy City Manager Micah Runner and City Council Members Garrett Gatewood and Siri Pulipati.

"It's wonderful, it's really a good-looking

Continued on page 3

Vending Machines Dispense Gifts for the Needy

Sacramento-area Giving Machines Are the Only Ones in California

By Gary Zavoral

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - This holiday season, Sacramento-area residents can go to vending machines and purchase clothing for a local refugee family, meals for a needy family, a blanket for a homeless person, essentials for a battered woman, and even chickens for a family in Africa.

It is part of a global effort to promote the true spirit of the holidays by giving gifts to those in need. The Light the World Giving Machines, organized by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will be located on the first floor of the Westfield Roseville Galleria and stocked with items that are needed by four regional and three international charities.

The Sacramento-area Giving Machines will be available Nov. 22, 2022, to Jan. 2, 2023. The items available to donate range from \$7 socks to a \$250 children's bedding kit that includes a mattress, blanket, sheets and pillows.

"The Giving Machines will help Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Sacramento in our mission to assist women, children and families in our region who are struggling during these very tough economic times," said Miriam Sammartino, director of Catholic Charities and Social Concerns for the Diocese of Sacramento. "This wonderful program will enrich and transform the lives of those who both give and receive."



Sacramento-area Giving Machines will be available Nov. 22, 2022, to Jan. 2, 2023. The items available to donate range from \$7 socks to a \$250 children's bedding kit that includes a mattress, blanket, sheets and pillows. Photo courtesy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The other local charities with items available for donation are Al-Misbaah, Homeless Assistance Resource Team (or HART) and Placer Food Bank.

The initiative has proven to be popular throughout the United States since 2017, and this year has been expanded to reach 28 cities worldwide. The three Giving Machines inside the Roseville mall will be the only ones this holiday season in California. Those unable to visit a machine in person can still participate by making an online donation at www.LightTheWorld.org/give.

"We are excited that the Church has chosen the Sacramento region for this year's Light the World

Giving Machines," said Bruce Anderson, the director of the local effort. "Our region has proven to be very charitable, and we expect there to be an outpouring of support from the public. These giving-focused vending machines offer a unique and memorable way to light the world with love by serving and caring for others both locally and globally."

Since the first Giving Machine appeared in 2017, total contributions have reached \$15 million. As part of its ongoing global humanitarian efforts, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints covers all operational costs, ensuring that 100% of every donation goes to the charitable cause of your choice. A team of

volunteers will be staffed at the Roseville location to assist individuals and families with their donations and to answer questions. Due to the influx in the past couple of years of refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine, several of the items from the charities will benefit these families.

"The gifts that the public can purchase from these charitable vending machines will help refugees from Afghanistan and the Ukraine get settled here in their new hometown," said Helena Madera-Silmi, resource director at Al-Misbaah, a local Islamic nonprofit organization that assists refugees and others in need of all faiths. "They include clothing, kitchen

utensils and even bicycles for the breadwinner of the family to get to and from work. This is a fun and exciting way to really light the world with true charitable love."

Other Giving Machine charities also are assisting refugee families, as well as those experiencing hunger and homelessness.

"The holiday season is all about bringing joy to others. The Light the World Giving Machines will not only bring joy to families and individuals in our area but also healthy food," said Dave Martinez, executive director of Placer Food Bank, which provides hunger relief to El Dorado, Nevada and Placer counties. "By using these charitable

vending machines, you can really bring the 'merry' into this season, and beyond, through your gift of purchasing food and meals for people of all ages, genders, race and ethnicities – many of whom experience chronic food insecurity or for those who need food assistance during this economic challenging time."

HART has 10 groups throughout the Sacramento region that provide services to those experiencing homelessness and assist them in their efforts to become self-sufficient.

"During this season, Christians celebrate the day when a baby was born to parents who had no room in an inn. This winter, and every winter, there are many of our friends and neighbors who find themselves with no place to live, and that is why our Homeless Assistance Resource Teams exist," said Travis Kimball, who represents the Rancho Cordova HART. "We provide food, shelter and supplies to the unhoused in the greater Sacramento area, and we are so happy to be part of the inaugural Light the World Giving Machines here. We hope area residents will find the true spirit of this season by purchasing something for the needy and find joy in doing so."

For more on the area's Giving Machines, including answers to frequently asked questions, go to <https://www.givingmachinesgreatersacramento.org/>. ★



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CRPD Seeks Input on Optimized Plan Sprouts Farmers Market Opens

By **Shelby Golden,**
Cordova Recreation & Park District

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - The Cordova Recreation & Park District (CRPD) is developing a strategic planning document to provide guidance to CRPD over the next ten plus years. An Optimized Plan is a forward-looking framework to guide decisions for an equitable recreation and park system that efficiently serves CRPD's diverse community.

An engaged community is essential for creating a successful Optimized Plan. Tell CRPD your thoughts! What do you like? What do you want? What are your priorities? Your input will guide the development of the plan for making the CRPD's current recreation and park offerings as effective as possible into the future.

The online survey is live through

December 11. Survey respondents will be eligible to win a \$100 gift certificate for CRPD programs!

CRPD also invites you to participate with the project at the upcoming Cordova Community Christmas Tree Lighting event on Sunday, November 27 from 4 - 7:30 p.m. at The Village Green.

To learn more about the Optimized Plan and to take the survey, please visit <https://crpd.com/optimizedplan/>.

Cordova Recreation & Park District is one of the largest independent special districts in Northern California serving over 128,000 residents and four school districts in the greater Sacramento area. CRPD provides over 43 parks and recreational facilities, a full-service 18-Hole course at Cordova Golf Course, as well as youth & adult sports, camps, enrichment classes, educational programs and special events for the community. ★



The new Sprouts Farmers Market is located at 10846 Bear Hollow Dr. in Rancho Cordova.

Board Appoints Health Services Director

Sac County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Board of Supervisors at its October 25 meeting concurred with the County Executive's appointment of Timothy Lutz as Director of Health Services, effective Nov. 7, 2022.

"Mr. Lutz has demonstrated expertise in community collaboration and leading health and social services teams, and we expect that his extensive experience and passion for public service will greatly benefit the department and the people in Sacramento County," said Chevon Kothari, Deputy County Executive for Social Services. "We look forward to welcoming Mr. Lutz to the County."

Lutz has nearly 20 years of public service experience leading social

services programs, including more than 12 years of executive management experience. Prior to his appointment with the County, he has served as the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) Director, the County Administrative Officer for Calaveras County, the Director of Fiscal Operations for the Tulare County HHS and as the Executive Director of the Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging.

Throughout his career, Lutz has developed and implemented a variety of health programs and services, including behavioral health, human services, public health, primary health Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) look-alike clinics, inmate medical and behavioral health services, and homeless initiative services and housing, among others. He also has

extensive experience collaborating and partnering with external stakeholders and community partners to advance health services and shared initiatives.

Lutz has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Master of Business Administration from California State University, Fresno. He also has certificates in Intermediate and Advanced Government Accounting, Advanced Financial Reporting, and Best Practices and Effective Budget Preparation from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), as well as Driving Government Performance from Harvard University. He is also a Credentialed California County Senior Executive from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). ★

Continued from page 1
store," Budge told the Grapevine Independent. "You can't help but be impressed with the commitment to fresh food, to the organization of the store, to the fact that because they're so committed to health and wellness, that everything that you need for health and wellness is really located in an easily accessible place."

To help celebrate the opening, the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation awarded \$50,000 to Soil Born Farms, a local nonprofit farm that promotes urban agriculture, sustainable food systems and healthy food education. Soil Born Farms has received over \$300,000 since 2017 to support local school gardening programs throughout Rancho Cordova and Sacramento County.

"Sprouts is very thoughtful with the products they put on their shelves and offering a good mix of things that folks with different dietary needs [seek]," said Shawn Harrison, founder and co-director of Soil Born Farms. "Our mission as an organization is to try to teach people about how to do simple, delicious cooking and grow their own food and take care of the Earth. It's a perfect connection for us."

"Generally having more energy, folks committed to health and wellness in our community can only be a good thing."

The Rancho Cordova Food Locker has partnered with Sprouts' Food Rescue program. The new store will donate groceries that are no longer fit for sale but remain edible and nutritious for consumers at the food locker.

"We're going to have to do some work to make sure that the older part of Rancho Cordova is aware that we have this new resource," Harrison explained. "With the work that we did on Zinfandel with Lowe's, more people are used to coming out to this direction, so it won't just be the newer residents who are coming into Rancho Cordova. I think [Rancho Cordovans] will receive it well."

DoorDash Delivery Available

Sacramentans who want to buy groceries from Sprouts but may not have enough time in their schedules have a new service available: DoorDash. According to Sprouts, more than 20,000 products from the store are available for delivery on the app.

Options include organic groceries, local farm-fresh produce, keto friendly, gluten-free, vegan and plant-based items. ★

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A Christmas Spectacular



Enchant, the world's largest Christmas light spectacular, will take place at Sutter Health Park from November 25 through January 1. Photo courtesy of Enchant

Sutter Health Park News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento was chosen as one of the select cities to host Enchant, the world's largest holiday-themed light event, with opening day set for Black Friday (Nov. 25).

One of Sacramento's must-visit summer locations, Sutter Health Park, is taking over the winter with a holiday event sure to spark joy for all ages.

"We are so honored to be one of the nine venues across the U.S. hosting Enchant in 2022," said Brittney Nizuk, director of events and entertainment at Sutter Health Park. "This experience is going to be one that kids and grownups alike will never forget. Sutter Health Park will

be transformed into a true immersive winter wonderland right before your eyes. Magical is the only way to describe it – you must see it to believe it."

Enchant features a mesmerizing walk-thru light maze on the field with over four million lights, a 100-foot holiday tree, visits with Santa Claus, an ice-skating trail, live entertainment, and a village/marketplace with crafts, gifts, as well as holiday treats and cocktails.

In addition to partnering with Sutter Health Park, Enchant has partnered with the Hallmark Channel, the event's first national sponsor.

"Hallmark Channel's 'Countdown to Christmas' is synonymous with the holidays, bringing warmth, connection and happiness to millions of viewers," said Lara Richardson, chief marketing officer,

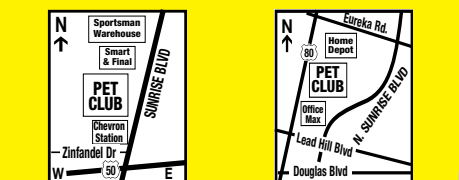
Hallmark Media. "Lights are such an integral part of Christmas magic, whether they be displayed on your house; strung throughout your favorite hometown spots; or featured in grand, eye-opening light displays like Enchant, this partnership creates a new way to spread Hallmark Christmas joy."

The supplemental perks with the Hallmark Channel partnership include a "Hallmark Cozy Christmas" lounge, photo opportunities, and a chance for fans to win a set visit to an in-production Hallmark movie.

Sutter Health Park is also expanding its ballpark family during this special season and will be looking for support in roles like guest services, security, parking, concessions, etc. ★

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Rancho Cordova Author Publishes Biography

Dorrance Publishing Co. News Release

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - Behind the Wall, a new book by Connie Steinman, has been released by Dorrance Publishing Co., Inc.

Behind the Wall follows a diversely populated suburban city high school with underprivileged students who learn life skills, coping skills, and self-reliance through the lessons of Emerson, taught by a teacher who encourages them to look within to persevere and to beat the odds. Connie Steinman connects and inspires James and his friends who are credit deficient to graduate! This is a book about teaching, learning, and self-reliance. It contains a lesson for all of us.

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Carol Jago is a long-time high school English teacher and past president of the National Council of Teachers of English. She is the author of *The Book in Question: Why and How Reading Is in Crisis* (Heinemann).

“This is a book about teaching, learning, and self-reliance. This is a book that contains lessons for all of us. What is the wall in the book’s title, the wall behind which so many of the book’s events unfold? Because the book contains so much about education and schools, one might immediately make reference to Pink Floyd’s epic work, but there is even more here if that is possible. Here is an escarpment not necessarily built of bricks, an adamant structure figuratively formed from a dark Maya, a wall of societal illusion and deception that sends a message of impending defeat to those confronting it. Connie and her friends are not vanquished, they



Behind the Wall follows a diversely populated suburban city high school with underprivileged students who learn life skills, coping skills, and self-reliance through the lessons of Emerson, taught by a teacher who encourages them to look within to persevere and to beat the odds. Courtesy photo

are victorious through rapturous transcendence; they stare through the wall and ultimately atomize it using powerful, positive thinking which is in many ways attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s writing. The dust that is left is the symbolic remains of poverty, discrimination, class struggle, and intimidation that were the wall’s former elements. Though written by an English teacher, Behind the Wall is a work built on the poetry of emotions: Behind the Wall is a study of the beauty of imperfection: Behind the Wall is a patchwork quilt fashioned from the fabric of everyday people.”

Denis Racine is a retired Secondary English teacher.

Connie Steinman is a Deaf teacher and has taught American Sign Language at the same high school for twenty years. She participated in UC Davis Globe Academy to direct students in a scene of *Taming of the Shrew*, received a Fulbright Scholarship for the China Institute 2015 to study the Silk Road and the Mao Goa Caves, and traveled to India twice for Teach for Peace to learn how to apply Gandhi’s philosophy in the classroom.

For more information check out the authors website at www.conniesteinman.com. ★

W.H. Williamson Park Groundbreaking!



Cordova Recreation & Park District Board of Directors and staff with the Williamson family celebrating the groundbreaking of W.H. Williamson Park. Photo courtesy of CRPD

By Shelby Golden, Cordova Recreation & Park District

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - The Cordova Recreation & Park District’s (CRPD) Board of Directors, staff, Williamson family and the community gathered to celebrate the W.H. Williamson Park groundbreaking on September 29, 2022.

In 2014, the Williamson family dedicated two parcels to CRPD for future park use. These parcels are the last remaining piece of the historic Williamson Ranch which maintained orchards in Rancho Cordova since the 1850’s. The ranch was home to four generations of Williamsons. The orchards included grapes, apples, prunes and walnuts. A historic marker on the east parcel speaks of the importance of the property to

Rancho Cordova.

In 2018, the Cordova Recreation & Park District led several well-attended workshops to discuss potential park designs with the surrounding community. A final park concept was approved by the CRPD Board of Directors in 2019.

This year, CRPD received a grant contract with the State of California for the Recreational Infrastructure Revenue Enhancement Program along with My Park Enhancement funds. With this State grant and My Parks Enhancement funds, CRPD is now able to begin the first phase of park construction, the west parcel.

Now, CRPD is excited to announce the groundbreaking of the west parcel for the future W.H. Williamson Park. This future park will include a walking path, sound wall, monument sign, shrubs

and several drought tolerant shade trees selected from the Sacramento Tee Foundation’s Shady Eighty Program. The park will be a great example of water-wise landscaping in this increasingly difficult climate.

For park updates, visit www.crpdc.com/upcoming-parks/w-h-williamson-park/.

Cordova Recreation & Park District is one of the largest independent special districts in Northern California serving over 128,000 residents and four school districts in the greater Sacramento area. CRPD provides over 43 parks and recreational facilities, a full-service 18-Hole course at Cordova Golf Course, as well as youth & adult sports, camps, enrichment classes, educational programs and special events for the community. ★

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President Robert S. Nelsen Announces His Retirement



By Cynthia Hubert, Sac State

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - President Robert S. Nelsen, who for the past seven years has overseen Sacramento State’s historic student achievement and shepherded the University through unprecedented challenges, will retire in July, he announced Wednesday, November 2.

Nelsen will be remembered for his dedication to student success, his efforts to raise the University’s profile in the region, his commitment to diversity and inclusion, and a deep love for what he warmly called the Hornet Family, among other notable accomplishments.

Whether delivering a speech, shoveling dirt to break ground for a new campus building, or attending an athletic event, Nelsen has been widely admired for performing his duties with unbridled enthusiasm and a gentle sense of humor. His declaration “Sac State is No. 1! Stingers Up!” – often made with his wife, Jody, by his side – has become his signature valediction.

“Sacramento State will always be in my heart,” Nelsen said, adding some flavor from his Texas roots. “I wish I could be president

forever, but I know the time is right for me to hang ‘em up.”

Nelsen, 70, became Sacramento State’s eighth permanent president on July 1, 2015, succeeding Alexander Gonzalez, who retired after 12 years of leading the University. Prior to arriving in Sacramento, Nelsen spent the better part of three decades in the University of Texas system.

He was president of UT-Pan American from 2010 to 2014 and served as special advisor to UT’s executive vice chancellor for academic affairs. His career also includes service as a professor of English, a vice provost, and a director of creative writing.

Nelsen earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in political science from Brigham Young University, and his doctorate from the University of Chicago’s Committee on Social Thought.

Arriving at Sac State, he said a primary goal was to improve graduation and retention rates, and success followed. Under his leadership, the University has seen a 187% increase in the number of students who graduate within four years. Sac State’s performance in the CSU’s Graduation 2025 initiative is among the best in the system.

With Nelsen’s oversight, the University surpassed its On The Rise fundraising goals, raising \$239 million in its first comprehensive campaign. He celebrated completion of major campus projects, including the funding, construction and 2019 opening of the Ernest E. Tschannen

Science Complex, and the Planetarium next to it. Nelsen also was instrumental in the creation of Sac State’s Antiracism and Inclusive Campus Plan, which is guiding the University toward its goal of creating a campus culture that is fair and welcoming to all.

The gains have occurred even as Sac State was forced to adjust to the devastating impacts of a global pandemic, which in March 2020 sent students, faculty, and staff members home to study, teach, and work. The campus quickly pivoted to online learning, and notably, the University’s enrollment and graduation rates held steady. About 31,000 students returned to campus in the fall, and the University maintains a COVID-19 positivity rate of less than 1%.

CSU Interim Chancellor Jolene Koester called Nelsen “a brilliant, compassionate and student-focused leader who has successfully guided Sacramento State through a period of remarkable growth and transformation.”

“Sac State’s student body is larger and more dynamically diverse than ever before,” Koester said. “Most important, the University has made extraordinary progress in helping that talented and diverse group of students reach their academic goals.”

“These accomplishments would have been impossible without the faculty, staff, students, and community members who have poured their hearts into this work,” he said. ★

Facing \$25 Billion Budget Shortfall

Continued from page 1

that, “our estimate of a \$25 billion budget problem understates the actual budget problem in inflation-adjusted terms.”

In one bit of good news, the state has amassed a significant rainy day fund reserve in recent year. The rainy day fund reserve, which became law in 2014 thanks to the efforts of then-Assembly Republican Leader Connie Conway, has required the state to save money in good times to blunt the impact of a massive budget shortfall like the state is facing this year. But the amount saved in the reserve – about \$22 billion – is roughly the same as the state’s current shortfall.

Now that incoming lawmakers and the Governor have received the bad news, it’s up to them to figure out how to respond. You can expect Newsom will propose a January budget that sounds fiscally conservative – suspending new programs, making cuts where they won’t conflict with liberal priorities, and focusing on addressing the state’s unfunded obligations, and cautioning lawmakers to focus on one-time spending.

What is unclear is how the Legislature will respond. Keep in mind that one-third of the Legislature is newly elected, and the new Democratic members are generally more liberal than the members they are replacing by any objective measure.

How will they respond if Newsom wants to suspend or repeal some of the new ongoing spending they have enacted in recent years? The LAO notes that recently enacted ongoing spending will grow to \$12 billion in new annual spending by the 2025-26 budget year and is a prime target for being suspended or cut.

Signaling a potential budget fight with Newsom, Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, said in a statement that, “we are prepared to hold onto the gains we’ve made and continue where we left off once our economy and revenues rebound.”

Consider that the opening salvo in what will surely be one of the most challenging budget debates in Sacramento in more than a decade.

Tim Anaya is the Pacific Research Institute’s senior director of communications and the Sacramento office. ★



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STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • HAPPY HOLIDAYS

- CLUES**
- ACROSS**
- Result of too much pressure
 - Stir-fry pan
 - Steps to the river, in India
 - Hindu sage
 - Attorneys' org.
 - *Christmas cookies emanation
 - The Brady Bunch, e.g.
 - Mourner's wish
 - Mature, as in fruit
 - *Santa's entryway
 - *Holiday plum treat
 - Foot the bill
 - Hot alcoholic beverage
 - Not transgender
 - *Frosty's corn cob
 - Attract
 - Bad luck prediction
 - Indian cuisine staple
 - The whole amount
 - *"Keep this information" button
 - *Coveted letter on a dreidel
 - Dry as dust
 - Opposite of digest
 - Inconclusive
 - Dirty air
 - Diplomat
 - Tallest volcano in Europe
 - Like a fox
 - Lion output
 - Beholder's organ
 - *Breaking holiday news
 - *Not coal on Christmas
 - Courtroom excuse
 - Golf coach at a country club
 - Very, in music
 - Make a logical connection (2 words)
 - Promissory letters
 - Pine or long
 - Chows down
 - Hundredweight, acr.
 - Ooze out
- DOWN**
- Nile denizen, for short
 - *Like Duke brothers in "Trading Places"
 - *New Year's Eve option: Spumante
 - Title-holder
 - Take for ransom
 - On one's guard
 - *"Wan of Star Wars"
 - K, in Greek
 - *Rose Bowl field, e.g.
 - Kachina doll maker
 - Answer from the flock
 - Drink for John Glenn
 - Fervent
 - Giving the once-over
 - *"Mele Kalikimaka" strings
 - More sordid
 - Trig function
 - Insect in adult stage
 - *Number of candles in Kwanzaa's kinara
 - Sacrifice for gain
 - Eighty-six
 - List components
 - *Holiday song offering
 - Lament for the dead
 - Scotland's famous loch
 - Eagle's aerie
 - Lid or lip embellishment
 - Go to bed (2 words)
 - *Yule tradition
 - Pirate's "Yes!"

CROSSWORD

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MACC Director and Curator Cheryl Gleason Reflects on 5 Years of Art in Rancho Cordova

Visit RC News Release

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - The Mills Station Building has lived many lives. Since 1911, it's been a cannery, a gas station, a post office, a grocery store, and a dance hall, among other things. It's undergone significant metamorphoses, but one constant is the building's significance to the Rancho Cordova community.

"It's really incredible," said Cheryl Gleason, art director and curator of the Mills Station Arts & Culture Center (MACC), which currently occupies the building. "I really wish these walls could talk."

Though the building's walls are silent, they are quite literally blank canvases. Since 2018, local and international artists have displayed their work on the MACC's walls. From exhibits exploring intricate 3D worlds constructed from tape to shows featuring wildfire photography from across the west coast, the MACC regularly features exhibits focused on local artists, culture, history, and social justice.

This month, the MACC celebrates its fifth birthday with a special exhibit titled "How Sweet It Is." The exhibit showcases sugary-sweet artwork from local artists and will also feature a new show called "CREATIONS" by Utah-based artist Christopher Creek, who sculpts intricate artworks into the filling of double-stuffed Oreo cookies.

For Gleason, the five-year anniversary marks a significant milestone not just for the MACC but for herself. "When I got this job, it was right before Christmas and I felt like that was the best Christmas present that year in 2017," said Gleason. "Thinking about the last five years, I'm looking back at the amazing accomplishments from where we started to what we have created here today and the immense trust and leeway I've had to be creative in establishing what's going on here."

"I can't thank the Cordova Community Council, the Rancho Cordova City Council and retiring City Manager Cyrus Abhar enough for that opportunity," she added.

Seeds of an Artist

Gleason's roots in the art world date



MACC Director and Curator Cheryl Gleason. Photo via MPG archive

back to her childhood. Growing up in Sandpoint, Idaho, she was passionate about drawing, often recreating found pictures on paper with pencil. She dreamed of being an artist, but after finishing high school, she decided to enroll in a 12-month architectural drafting course. But the work didn't resonate with her.

"I ended up moving to California and I started going to community college," said Gleason, who signed up for art classes while attending school. "I just fell back in love with that thing that was missing from my life for the longest time."

After community college, Gleason earned a degree in fine art and a minor in art history from the University of California, Davis. But post-graduate life quickly pulled her back from her passion. While studying at UC Davis, Gleason was employed by Nugget Markets and

following graduation, she quickly rose through the grocer's ranks, eventually becoming the market's director of training. Nearly 12 years passed and all the while, Gleason felt an itch, as if something was missing from her life.

"I learned a lot, but I didn't paint much and there was always this slight frustration and sadness," she said.

Eventually Gleason left her post at Nugget Markets for a job in Rancho Cordova. During that time, she noticed art submission calls from the city hall in Rancho Cordova.

"I had a little bit more time, so I started painting again," she said. "And I started submitting to these shows and getting to know the artists and getting to know the Cordova Community Council."

As Gleason built relationships in the Rancho Cordova community, the Cordova

Community Council and the City Council were hard at work on a secretive project at the Mills Station Building, a project that would elevate the arts by transforming the building into a home for them.

A center for the arts

When the MACC was ready to launch, the Cordova Community Council tapped Gleason to run the center. Since then, Gleason has worked tirelessly to establish the MACC as the artistic hub for the Rancho Cordova community. She partners with local nonprofits in the area like Rise Up Theatre, Ri-Nu Imagination, the Soroptimists and more. Through the Rancho Cordova Arts 501c3 arts group, they raise money in their annual Micro-Masterpieces fundraiser to buy thousands of dollars of art supplies for the students and teachers in Rancho Cordova.

Underlying all the community engagement work is a passion for the arts and its indelible effects.

"That's why having the MACC, which is free, where anyone can come and see different exhibits and be inspired or have thought-provoking conversations, even if only in your own head, is very important," she said. "Culture is what defines a city."

With each exhibit, Gleason hopes to spark reflection and conversation. And her mind is always burgeoning with ideas for future shows. Inspiration strikes from anywhere and everywhere.

"I get ideas from the damndest places," she said. "It can be a picture in a magazine, it could be a conversation that you and I have where you mention something. I mean, it's just so random how the brain works."

When asked about the MACC's important to the community, Gleason said, "Art is more important today than it ever has been. It's a reflection of our culture. It talks about our past, it talks about our present and it talks about our future."

And for the MACC, the future looks bright.

Celebrate five years of the MACC by attending "How Sweet It Is," which is running Oct. 6-Oct. 22. Learn more about the event and the MACC at www.rcmacc.org ★

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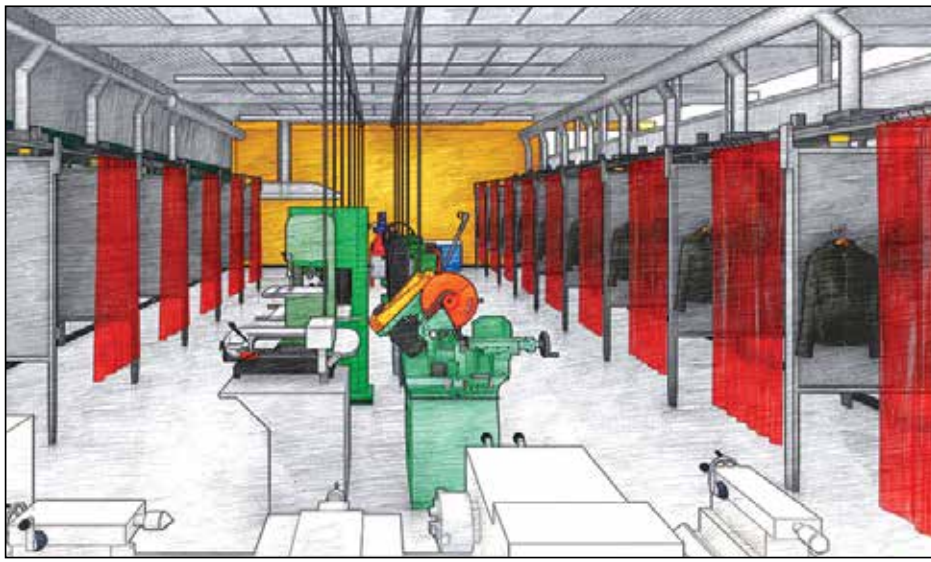
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Construction on New CTE Building at Rio Americano High School



The new metal shop will feature an expanded metal removing main section and welding booths for Rio Americano students of CTE. Photo courtesy of SJUSD

SJUSD News Release

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - Students enrolled in Rio Americano High School's Career Technical Education (CTE) classes will soon be able to enjoy a completely renovated learning space. The current CTE building will receive a 21st century upgrade, allowing students who are currently enrolled in Rio's medical sciences and manufacturing pathways to learn in a brand-new space.

San Juan Unified's CTE programs involve a sequence of courses that integrate core academic knowledge with technical and occupational knowledge, providing students with a pathway to post-secondary education and careers.

Rio's current medical sciences space will be renovated to resemble a hospital, giving students the opportunity to learn essential skills in a real-world setting.

The manufacturing pathway will receive a reconfiguration of the existing space to house the current woodshop and metal shop, and

allow for the addition of an innovation lab. "I am excited about the renovated space as the original area was designed in 1963 for a maximum of 20 students," said pathway instructor Matt Cole. "This space just doesn't work for the program currently, so having the room for a full class to move and work is exciting."

Construction began prior to this school year and is well underway, with most of the electrical, plumbing and utilities work already completed. The new walls are up and construction crews are working on hanging drywall before the next phase begins. The building is anticipated to be completed in January 2023.

Check out some progress photos of construction and renderings of the new space configuration below.

To learn more about San Juan Unified's pathways across the district's high schools, visit the CTE program website. Stay up to date with all of the district's construction happenings by visiting www.sanjuan.edu/constructionnews. ★

Jesuit 5-star Recruit Andrej Stojaković Commits to Stanford

By Shaun Holkko, sports editor

SAN JOSE, CA (MPG) - Jesuit five-star recruit Andrej Stojaković recently verbally committed on November 7 to play basketball collegiately at Stanford University, beginning next year.

Stojaković, a 6-foot-7 small forward, is the eldest child of former NBA All-Star Peja Stojaković. Peja played in the NBA for 16 seasons and was selected to the All-Star team in three consecutive years from 2002-04. He was drafted by the Sacramento Kings where he played from 1998-2006.

"I am excited to announce that next year I will be attending Stanford University," Stojaković said Monday afternoon live from the Zoom headquarters in San Jose. "I chose Stanford because for me it was the best basketball decision but also the best academic and long-term decision."

"I believe that Stanford is the place that will allow me to achieve my dreams on and off the court."

Stojaković chose Stanford over other powerhouse programs like Kentucky, UCLA, Texas, Indiana, Florida, Louisville, Tennessee, Oregon, UConn



Jesuit sophomore small forward Andrej Stojakovic makes a chest pass during a 69-61 win against Christian Brothers on April 24, 2021 in Carmichael. Stojakovic committed to play collegiate basketball at Stanford University on November 7 in San Jose. Photo by Allene Salerno/Lenie's Pictures™ (leniespictures.smugmug.com)

and Georgia Tech. His final four schools came down to Stanford, UCLA, Oregon and Texas.

According to 247Sports, Stojaković is the 21st overall ranked prospect in the Class of 2023. With the beginning of the name, image and likeness (NIL) policy in the NCAA, Stojaković recently signed with U'u Sports Management.

As a junior at Jesuit in Carmichael, Stojaković averaged 25.3 points, 9.3 rebounds and 1.4 steals in 26 contests. In the high school offseason,

Stojaković played for the Compton Magic, which has had over 40 players go on to play professionally in the NBA and its affiliates since 1993.

Stojaković is Stanford's second five-star commitment from the Class of 2023, joining combo guard Kanaan Carlyle, who is the fourth highest ranked recruit in program history. He will also be rejoining a familiar face, as his former Jesuit teammate, Isa Silva, committed to Stanford in 2020 and is currently a sophomore for the Cardinal. ★

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Feeding a Country During War

By Michele Townsend

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - We all see on TV news about the war in the Ukraine. Most of us feel compassion towards what the citizens in that country are going through, but we really have very little idea of what it's really like. One local man, who is a baker by trade (specializing in making bread) decided that he wanted to do something to help them. For safety purposes, we will use only his first name - Shawn.

"Sometimes charity takes more than writing a check or waving a flag," said Shawn. He joined a group out of Washington DC called World Central Kitchen. This organization is strictly a humanitarian organization with no political influence or agenda. They simply go where they are needed to help get food to those who need it. In fact, neither the organization nor the government supplied any support, of any kind, in the mission.

Shawn explained that even though the Ukraine usually has a good wheat production, other countries are sending them wheat now, but they didn't really know what to do with it. Businesses like bakeries are shut down or bombed. Those that aren't cannot follow their regular baking schedule because they are under martial law. No one is allowed outside from 10pm to 6am, except for military. Shawn knew he could help.

Shawn and three others went to the war-ravaged Ukraine this summer to do what they could to feed the Ukrainian people. Told ahead of time to bring a flak jacket and a Kevlar helmet, Shawn wasn't sure what he was getting into. He just knew that they needed help and this was something he could do. He didn't bring a jacket and helmet



"It was an amazing experience. They were very grateful that we were there, and I would love to go back" Shawn said. Photo by Tatsiana Kalasouskaya Dreamstime.com

because he thought it would raise questions in both our airports and theirs. Once he was there, he wished he would have.

"You can't go into a war zone armed unless you are part of the local militant system," Shawn said, "I just went in looking like a normal American tourist." Shawn and his friends arrived in the Ukraine with only their carry-on luggage. They were questioned why they were there. Any electronic devices were gone through thoroughly, including all text messages, photos, etc. Burner phones were purchased for the minimal communication that would be used. Russian spies and Pro-Russian Ukrainians had devices that lifted cell phone numbers when they crossed into the country. Those numbers were closely monitored while they were there. Photos were not permitted.

They traveled in different

modes while there, but no matter how they were traveling, they were regularly stopped (about every kilometer) and questioned by Ukrainian Security about why they were there and what they were doing. They especially focused on Americans. Men would board trains, buses, etc. armed with machine guns and AK47's to question passengers on their purpose of travel. Every time they focused a lot of attention on Shawn, often being the only American.

Ukrainian soldiers don't have many supplies on the frontline, so it was standard practice for people to take an SUV or some other vehicle and fill it with gasoline, food, socks and other supplies. They would then take these vehicles to the frontline and just leave them there. One of these vehicles was one of the modes of transportation that Shawn's group used to get to the next area.

Shawn and his group would arrive in a city and pull together whatever they could to set up. They would gather supplies from grocery stores that had been bombed, or restaurants that had been destroyed and occasionally they might get some food from suppliers. They would use whatever they could, often an oil drum to cook on. In one city they even used a burnt out tank to turn into a stove. They would gather big pots and set them on their make shift stoves to make soup or stew. Sometimes they made sandwiches. Occasionally they had bags of groceries to hand out.

When the air raid sirens go off, they go off across the country so you never know where the missiles were headed. Many people began to ignore them. Others would run for cover, taking safety in the underground bunkers that are

under most public buildings there (left over from WWII). There were missile strikes all around them, the closest being just a few blocks away. It was so close they could feel the rumble of the ground as the bomb exploded. In one town there was a missile that had hit the ground and was sticking out of the ground but had not detonated.

In the more rural areas, such as villages, people hid in their root cellars (a cellar that is designed for storage of potatoes and other produce). They would come out sheepishly at first, until they got to know them, then more people would come out. Sometimes the same people would make multiple trips to the same bunker. This was especially true in areas that were under heavy bombardment.

As people got to know the group, more people would come out to help. There was even a 15-year-old girl in a flak jacket and Kevlar helmet delivering bread. The group would come across schools being taught in bunkers because their school had been bombed. Shawn and his friends did what they could to get these kids school supplies.

"The hardest thing was the language barrier," Shawn said, "But we brought a bunch of little hot wheels cars and John Deer tractors and handed those out. It was a great ice breaker, as many of them were farmers." Shawn and his group spent three and a half weeks there and he spent around \$5000 out of his own pocket to fund the trip and supplies. They fed roughly 1500 people a day from their mobile kitchens, mostly women and children.

"It was an amazing experience. They were very grateful that we were there, and I would love to go back" Shawn said. ★

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