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Carmichael Times

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Merry Christmas!



Sacramento Public Library Puts out Call for Artists

By Tamara Warta

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Public Library (SPL), which has 29 locations spanning from Orangevale to Isleton, recently announced its new Parks and Tranquility project. With the intention of bringing visual and performing arts to a selection of the region's many outdoor spaces, artists are invited to apply for grant awards that range from \$5000 - \$10,000.

"We will engage and collaborate with community members, community-based organizations, and arts and justice collectives," states the official website, "to create site-specific art and educational experiences at multiple California State Park sites around Sacramento County."

A schedule of the public events developed through the Parks and Tranquility program are expected to be announced in early 2024.

The idea to bring the arts into parks and other outdoor spaces was inspired by the California State Library's statewide Parks Pass program. This program allows any California resident with a library card to borrow free passes to approximately 200 state parks. SPL specifically was granted funds to identify and create art installations to complement these passes. While any artist may apply, selected projects should carry one of the specific themes being prioritized by the library.

According to Ricardo M. Ramirez, the system supervisor of SPL, these themes include a project goal to "generate positive measurable impacts in the areas of health, natural resource stewardship, and historical and cultural connections with an equity lens."

"SPL will engage and collaborate alongside our Sacramento community members, community-based organizations, and arts and culture collectives on arts and recreational equity experiences that include community events and field trips," Ramirez also stated.

Selected artists will work with a special project team that consists of both library staff and community members. The original visual artwork will be featured at pre-selected California state parks, while other artists will prepare and execute community workshops featuring their art discipline.

"All types of art mediums are eligible," said Ramirez. "We encourage

Drumming up Harmony

Story and photos by Susan Maxwell Skinner

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - When Martin Ross and his Twin brother Mark were children in Orangevale, they had a set of drums.

"Our mom took them away," laments Ross, now 54. "She said we made too much noise."

Fast forward 15 years: Ross was studying for his bachelor of science at UC Berkeley. "One day, I heard joyous, chiming music," he recalls. "I followed the sound across campus and saw musicians — I didn't know what their instruments were. They told me they were playing steel drums. One guy said he'd been playing only six months. Next semester, I joined them."

Fast forward another 15 years: Ross was studying to be a Salvation Army pastor in Southern California. "At Christmas, I was collecting money outside stores," he said. "People



Martin Ross (second from right) presents a steel drum concert in Willie's burger restaurant, Carmichael. Twin brother Mark plays percussion. Daughter Carmen (left), wife Tory and daughter Kirsten join the ensemble.

seemed to prefer hearing steel drums to bells. That's how I got 10,000 hours of practice. And we raised a lot of money."

Last week, Ross, his daughter Carmen and twin brother Mark performed a free concert at

Willie's burger restaurant, Carmichael. Fans heard jazzy Christmas tunes and cheered a musician who has dedicated much of his life to community.

Born to military parents, he learned service to others was part of life. "My mother

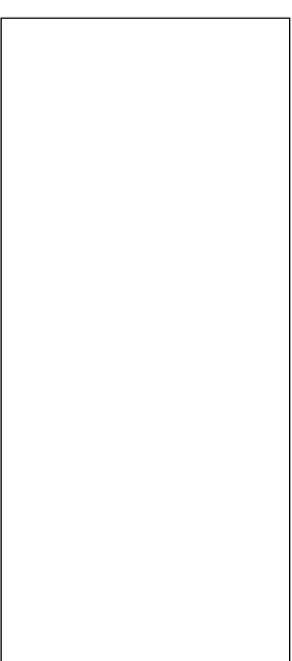
took us to senior homes, to talk and share time with residents," he said. "At university, I learned to blend people skills with analytic skills for problem solving. I felt I could build bridges that way."

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Midway Antique Mall Says Goodbye

Story and photo by Tamara Warta

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Time is about to move on from a retail location that has enjoyed a long nostalgic pause with the Sacramento community. Midway Antique Mall, which has been selling retro finds to antique lovers since 2006, will close its doors on January 21, 2024.

The 30,000 square foot antique mall, which is located at 5130 Madison Ave, is owned and run by Mark and Ann Saunders. Meeting with Mark in one of Midway's staged midcentury rooms feels like coming home for a chat with a cherished grandparent, complete with a record softly playing throughout the mall and the couple's 6 lb yorkie named Ike at his post by the cash registers.

"I think the customers will miss Ike more than me and Ann," jokes Saunders, as he reflects upon the start of Midway while surrounded by the various rooms displaying their huge accomplishment.

With a passion for antiquing since the early 1990s, the Saunders were regular dealers at the old Antique Plaza in Rancho Cordova. After being in the court reporting business for over 30 years, they decided to shutter their deposition reporting firm and become full time antique retailers following Antique Plaza's closure.

"We decided to open our own little weekend store, maybe 2500 square feet," recalls Saunders. Soon, they started getting calls from other dealers, ending up with approximately 100 inquiries into their new business that was intended to be small and simple.

"Ann and I sat down and said, well...okay! And we decided to open Midway."

The business started in the building that is now occupied by Green Acres, and moved to their



Mark, Ike, and Ann Saunders in front of an original vintage jukebox at Midway Antique Mall.

current location in 2008. And, seemingly from the moment it began, Midway has been anything but small in the world of antiquing. Prior to the pandemic, the mall was open 7 days a week, 10am-6pm, with both of the Saunders present everyday. Keeping Midway open has always been a team effort - although Mark lovingly gives most of the credit to Ann.

"My job is to keep our booths stocked, help dealers move in, deal with customers, and calendar coverage," says Saunders. "Ann, on the other hand, is the business manager and financial officer. She - by herself - handles all the paperwork... she has done an incredible job for one person. Without Ann, this never would have happened. If something had happened to her, Midway

would've closed the next day. Without her - the rules she created, the financial management - there's no way I could do it by myself. Ann gets 100 percent credit for Midway beginning and being maintained."

Post-pandemic, Midway changed their business model and is now closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays - it gave the Saunders some time to rest while also, surprisingly, improving their business. Sales went up, utility costs went down, and other antique shops up and down California followed suit.

Midway has long been an example to others when it comes to how to showcase antiques the right way, and outside of their throngs of loyal customers, the mall has gotten to be the background for many a photo shoot. It

has become the holiday tradition of many couples and families to come sit in the shop's staged 1950s "Dean Martin room" and nab the perfect vintage holiday card photo.

When HBO came knocking, Midway also got to serve as a movie set for a Carol Burnett documentary.

"It was amazing how those movie cameras can take one of these rooms and make it look like a house," said Saunders. Both he and Ann got to enjoy the film's premiere at Sacramento's Crest theater and had fun spotting one of their kitchen sets.

When speaking about the photo-shoots and documentary, Saunders reflects, "No other mall does anything like that. A lot of customers say it's just a museum trip back in time."

While Mark Saunders clearly has a joy for his antiques - especially for the mall's mid-1950s to 1960s pieces, he is also a serious businessman. During its run, Midway rarely had a spot for a new dealer, and when it did, it would be gone within a week.

"We are very strict on who we let in here. All of our stuff has to be at least 30 years old - no new, no reproductions, no made in China."

Midway currently has 250 dealer spaces, 160 dealer showcases, and as high as 120 dealers selling at the mall. With Midway closing, Saunders couldn't provide a definitive answer as to where all of its current dealers will go.

"It's kind of an end of an era. There will never be another Midway," says Saunders. "We have customers from all over the world... Ann and I are kind of unusual dealers. Most want to buy and sell - we care where the stuff goes. Most is priced not to sell until I find the right home."

Antiquing is not an easy game. Midcentury antiques in particular are getting harder to find because parents are passing away and children are keeping them within the family. And, for the Saunders, Midway is staying within the family as well. They declined offers to sell Midway, with Mark instead saying, "Midway is Mark and Ann. We birthed Midway and we will lay it to rest."

"For the most part, all of the dealers are great people," said Saunders. "It's just been fun, but after 35 years in court reporting and 19 years here, I'm out of gas."

When asked what he will do now that he's retiring, the 74-year-old mentions his excitement for playing with his classic 1955 Chevy and 1962 Rambler. But, with a smile, it is clear that something else will take number one spot in the coming days.

"Ann and I are going to start dating again." ★



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Board Approves Parks Fee Schedule Update

Drumming up Harmony

Continued from page 1

He has been building bridges most of his career. Fluent in Spanish, he worked with Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles. He tutored Native American children in Arizona. With the Salvation Army in Lodi, he helped smooth paths for Pakistani and Hispanic newcomers.

He is now an executive for the nonprofit Health Education Council. As a volunteer, he sits on Carmichael Park District board; chairs Sacramento County's Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee; he's also a commissioner for the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency and boosts the Carmichael Kiwanis Club. The six ft.-plus taekwondo black belt teaches martial arts to kids and has coached basketball, track and race walking.

Carmichael residents, he and wife Tory were Salvation Army majors together. Tory is now a marriage and family therapist who runs Sacramento County's Mental Health Access program. Along



Musician Martin Ross uses felt-covered mallets to coax melodies from his steel drum. Originating in the Caribbean islands, the instrument is a staple of calypso music.

with his daughters Carmen, Alexandria and Kristen, and twin brother Mark, Tory shares the family flair for percussion.

"Music has done so much good in my life and career," said her husband. "I've used it in tutoring for after-school programs and music camps, particularly with kids from underserved areas. The steel drum's festive sound crosses many cultures. To me, it feels like music from heaven. When I'm playing, I feel I am connecting with everyone."

A career-long mentor, the musician has long pushed for Science,

Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education. "Now that the field includes arts and (has) been renamed STEAM," he said, "I feel I am helping put the 'A' in STEAM by sharing my music."

"The arts, like sports, create a sense of belonging for some kids who don't do so well academically. Both are an additional motivation for kids to stay in school and graduate."

Martin Ross will appear on the November 2024 ballot as a candidate for San Juan Unified School Board.

Contact him at www.linktr.ee/martinross. ★



An updated fee schedule will go into effect on Thursday, January 11, 2024, in Sacramento County parks including the American River Parkway. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County Regional Parks

staff compiled the daily vehicle, daily boat launch and annual pass fees charged by other comparable park agencies with similar facilities," said Liz Bellas, Director of Regional Parks. "We wanted to ensure that the revisions to our fee schedule are within the range of fees charged by these agencies."

The proposed revisions include increases to the following fees:

Daily Parking; Annual Pass; Amplified Sound Permit; Bounce House Permit; Special Event Permit; Open Trail Event; RV Camping (Sherman Island only); Youth Group Camping (Scouts, Church Groups, etc.); Gibson Ranch House (off season event package only); Habitat Restoration Program.

View the 2024 Fee Schedule to learn more. ★

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, at its December 12 meeting, approved the 2024 Department of Regional Parks Fee Schedule. The updated Fee Schedule will go into effect on Thursday, January 11, 2024.

The Fee Schedule was last updated in 2022 with an understanding that updates would happen every two to three years. Regional Parks updates its Fee Schedule intermittently to:

Adjust fees for inflation; Ensure fees cover costs of services provided; Standardize fees with similar facilities and services; And, raise needed revenues to offset department maintenance and operations costs

"Going into this update,

Celebrate Art and Cuisine with the Sacramento Artists Cookbook

Sacramento Fine Arts Center News Release

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - This year the Sacramento Fine Arts Center celebrated food and art with an artists cookbook. This cookbook is made up of recipes from multiple individuals and features artwork from local artists. Sac Arts worked with the community to create a publication that celebrates the rich culinary and visual arts sectors of Sacramento. We are dedicating this beautiful art cookbook to our Sacramento area community with its incredible diversity of languages and cultures. Many of the recipes reflect the richness of the Sacramento area as well as its history in its art and recipes. Sac Arts is proud to be located within such a community and to support its creative life in many ways.



Illustrated pages from *Savoring Sacramento: An Artists' Cookbook* featuring *Lemons*, by Joann Lindelof-Wilson, watercolor 36" x 20" 2020. *Artichoke Lemon Soup* recipe by Pamela Mares. Image courtesy of Sacramento Fine Arts Center

pages of art and recipes from our community. Cookbooks can be purchased in our Gallery Store for \$45.

Sacramento Fine Arts Center is located at 5330 Gibbons Drive. The gallery is open to the public: Tues. - Fri. 11am - 3pm and Saturday 11am-5pm. There is no fee to visit our gallery. *Our gallery is temporarily closed December 17-January 2.*

The Sacramento Fine Arts Center was founded

in 1986. Our Mission is to encourage the creation and presentation of original visual arts, to support the cultural life of the community, and to encourage all artists to fulfill their potential. Classes, exhibits and competitions are ongoing at the Fine Arts Center 5330-B Gibbons Drive, Carmichael, CA 95608.

For more information call (916) 971-3713 or visit: www.sacfinearts.org. ★

Three Arrested in Operation Bad Elf for Retail Theft at Target

Sacramento Sheriff's Dept News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - During Operation Bad Elf, Detectives observed two women enter a Target store, and fill a cart with merchandise, while a third woman waited in a vehicle in the parking lot. As the two women exited the store without paying, Detectives detained all three women while they were loading the items in the vehicle. Detectives located hundreds of other items inside the vehicle, stolen from numerous stores in the Sacramento area.

Detectives determined that earlier in the day, the three females had stolen from Lululemon, Bath and Body Works, Michael's, CVS, and TJ Maxx. All three women were arrested for felony grand theft and conspiracy; but have all since been released pending their court date. Most of the items have been returned to

their respective owners yesterday, with a total recovered loss value of approximately \$7,240.

Detectives believe these women have taken part in other similar organized retail thefts throughout the region, and are asking anyone that may recognize them from other previously unreported crimes to contact the Sheriff's Office at (916) 874-5115 or the Sacramento Valley Crime Stoppers at (916) 443-HELP (4357). Tips leading to an arrest are eligible for a CASH reward of up to \$1000, and tipsters remain anonymous. Tips are paid in cash, and you are never asked for identification. Contact Sacramento Valley Crime Stoppers at (916) 443-HELP (4357), 1-800-AA-CRIME, or **TIPS. Use the "P3 TIPS" app or online at www.sacvalleycrimestoppers.com.

Tip information may also be left anonymously at www.sacsheriff.com or by calling (916) 874-TIPS (8477). ★



Approved Budget Priorities Based on Survey Results

					
\$22.50	\$19.20	\$17.50	\$16.80	\$13.10	\$10.80
Reducing homelessness	Public safety, including law enforcement	Maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and public buildings	Services for children, seniors, and families	Economic development such as job creation	Parks and environmental protection

Image courtesy of Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, at its Dec. 12 meeting, approved recommended budget priorities based on the results of a survey of County residents. The Board also approved the General Fund Contingency Policy.

The public opinion survey, conducted by a professional public opinion firm, was conducted in October and November of 2023. The survey was a follow-up to the County's first public opinion survey in 2021, which was conducted so the County could develop budget priorities based on public input.

The results of the 2023 survey were remarkably similar to the results in 2021, with focus areas such as homelessness and road improvements identified as priorities.

The recommended priorities for the use of General Fund discretionary funds in the FY 2024-25 budget are:

Complying with the County's legal, financial, regulatory and policy obligations, including providing mandated services, ensuring collection of revenues, and complying with the General Fund Reserve policy;

Optimizing the use of County resources, with budgeted service levels for County programs informed by community priorities, improving effectiveness and efficiency where possible, and limiting the extent to which reductions in dedicated revenue are back-filled with discretionary resources;

Funding new or enhanced programs that focus on the most critical and urgent needs, with the following priority focus areas identified in the survey of County residents:

A Countywide focus area of addressing homelessness, its impacts, and contributing factors, including the cost and availability of housing, mental health services and substance abuse treatment.

An unincorporated focus area of improving the condition of roads.

SURVEY PREPARATION

The professional polling firm conducted focus groups of County residents in November 2022. Key overall findings of the budget priorities focus groups generally aligned with the 2021 survey results. The central, top-of-mind concern was homelessness, and participants associated many overlapping issues with this concern, including substance abuse, mental health, blight and illegal dumping, the quality of the parks, housing costs and crime. Another top concern was infrastructure, with a particular focus on significant road improvement.

Additionally, while participants prioritized helping children and seniors, poverty and food insecurity were not seen as urgent problems.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The firm conducted surveys through telephone and online interviews with 1,061 respondents, with a margin of sampling error of ±3.1% at the 95% confidence level. The survey was available in 10 languages, including English.

SURVEY AUDIENCE

Of the 1,061 respondents surveyed, residents

were drawn from communities in proportion to the County's adult population by age and gender and came from a mix of educational backgrounds and household incomes.

More than half of the respondents identified with a race or ethnicity other than white, and more than one-quarter indicated they spoke a language other than English at home regularly.

More than two in five respondents personally experienced homelessness or knew someone who had.

SURVEY RESULTS

Survey result highlights include:

County Context: The top concern survey respondents wanted the County to address, by far, was homelessness. Of the respondents identified, 58 percent reported homelessness as the most important problem (compared to 53 percent in 2021). The second and third categories were crime/safety/drugs at 18 percent and housing/affordable rent at 15 percent (both were at 13 percent in 2021).

Infrastructure/road repairs was in the fourth category at 8 percent (same in 2021) cost of living/inflation was fifth at 7 percent (versus 5 percent in 2021).

Road conditions are a bigger issue in the unincorporated areas than the cities, with 66 percent of residents in the unincorporated areas citing road conditions as an extremely or very serious problem.

Resident Priorities for the County Budget: Low levels of homelessness and crime, the fair and transparent administration of elections and adequate protection for vulnerable children were seen as keys to making Sacramento County a good place to live. Residents also valued enough good, well-paying jobs for local residents and accessible mental health services.

Less important to residents were adequate retail and shopping opportunities and low levels of incarceration.

Residents were also broadly satisfied with waste disposal, County parks and libraries. Majorities were satisfied with public transportation and preparation for public health emergencies.

However, four in five residents were broadly dissatisfied with homelessness prevention. Addressing homelessness, affordable housing and mental health services were areas that people highly value but see the County as falling short.

Allocating the County Budget: Residents were asked to imagine they are in charge of the County budget and were asked how they would prioritize County spending in six broad areas.

On average, residents allocated more funding to reducing homelessness and public safety than other areas. Infrastructure maintenance came in third, followed by services for children, seniors and families, economic development such as job creation, and parks and environmental protection.

For City of Sacramento residents, homelessness was a higher priority than in the unincorporated areas and other cities. Homeowners were slightly more likely to prioritize homelessness, safety and infrastructure. ★

Sacramento Public Library Puts out Call for Artists



Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, one of the potential sites for a Parks and Tranquility Project art installation. Photo courtesy of California Department of Parks and Recreation

Continued from page 1

a wide range of artists and all levels of experiences to apply for these grants. We are fortunate to be in a dynamic and lively arts community, and are continually inspired by what we see, hear, and experience. We plan to curate a number of public programs that will incorporate the work of the selected artists that reflect our communities and the joy of being in natural spaces."

While any type of artist is welcome to apply, it is with the understanding that their art form may be converted to accommodate a realistic outdoor art installation. A watercolor or acrylic painter, for example, may complete their piece and see it converted into a more durable digital print. Dancers should expect to accommodate an outdoor learning or performance space in lieu of a traditional indoor studio.

In order to be eligible for the Parks and Tranquility grant, applicants must be a resident of the Sacramento region and aged

16 or older. Applicants cannot be currently employed by SPL, and should be eligible to receive taxable income. The selected artist(s) must also be available for public events and installations related to the finalized artwork at the select location(s).

The grant application and selection process is a quick turnaround — applications are due by December 30th, and artists will be notified by the end of January. Time is of the essence for those artists wishing to be considered. With all levels of experience welcome to apply, SPL understands there will be questions. Applicants may call (916) 264-2920 or email park-sandtranquility@saclibrary.org with any inquiries.

Potential artists may visit saclibrary.org/Parks-and-Tranquility for more information and to apply, as well as for the opportunity to view artists' inspirations behind the project for a better view of what SPL is seeking out for this unique new opportunity. ★

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Carmichael Times

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Sacramento Grocery Indicted for Conspiracy, Obstruction of Justice, Fraud

U.S. Attorney's Office
News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - A federal grand jury returned a 25-count indictment Thursday against Shahrir "Sean" Loloee, 53, of Granite Bay, and Karla Montoya, 42, of Sacramento, charging them both with conspiracy, obstruction of agency proceedings, and possession and use of false immigration documents, U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert announced on Friday, December 15, 2023. Loloee is additionally charged with falsification of records and a pandemic relief fraud scheme.

According to court documents, Loloee is the owner of the Viva Supermarkets chain of grocery stores, and Montoya is the general manager. Since 2008, Loloee and Montoya engaged in a conspiracy to employ a labor force at the stores that consisted of a significant number of workers who lacked employment authorization in the United States. Loloee and Montoya did so for the purpose of reducing Loloee's labor force costs through unlawful means, including by failing to pay required overtime wages.

The indictment alleges that, in 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor began two investigations at Viva Supermarkets. Loloee and Montoya obstructed these investigations in a variety of ways, including by making false statements to agency investigators, listening in on an employee interview with an investigator for the purpose of influencing the employee to make false statements, instructing an employee to lie to an investigator about her hire date, and directing certain workers to hide to prevent them from being questioned by agency investigators. Loloee is also charged with three instances of providing false documents to obstruct the Department of Labor's investigations.

The indictment further alleges that Loloee committed wire fraud when he applied to receive COVID-19 relief from the Restaurant Revitalization Fund program (RRF). Established as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the RRF was designed to support the restaurant industry by providing funding to those that had suffered significant pandemic-related revenue loss. To be eligible for an RRF award, a restaurant must have had a loss in gross receipts in 2020, as

compared to 2019. In May 2021, Loloee submitted applications to the Small Business Administration (SBA) requesting RRF funds for two of his grocery stores. In the applications, Loloee substantially underreported each of his store's 2020 gross receipts to make them appear entitled to an award, when they were not. Loloee requested over \$2.2 million, and based on his fraudulent representations, the SBA awarded Loloee approximately \$1.2 million.

This case is the product of an investigation by the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation and Homeland Security Investigations. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Audrey B. Hemesath, Matthew Thuesen, and Kevin Khasigian are prosecuting the case.

This case was investigated with the assistance of the Tax Recovery in the Underground Economy (TRUE) Task Force includes the California Department of Justice, the California Employment Development Department, the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, the Franchise Tax Board, the IRS-CI and HSI. The TRUE Task Force was created to ensure multi-agency collaboration and to combat wage theft, tax evasion, and other crimes in the underground economy.

If convicted, Loloee and Montoya face a maximum statutory penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each count of conspiracy to defraud the Department of Labor, to commit immigration document fraud, and to obstruct justice; up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each count of possession of false immigration documents or use of a false immigration document; and up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each count of obstruction of agency proceedings. If convicted of the counts of falsification of records or wire fraud, Loloee faces a maximum statutory penalty of up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each count. Any sentence, however, would be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables. The charges are only allegations; the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. ★

New Low-Floor Light Rail Trains Enter Final Testing Phase



A low-floor test train at 16th Street on December 7, 2023. Photo courtesy of SacRT

SacRT News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) is pleased to announce a significant milestone in the Light Rail Modernization Project as its new low-floor trains enter the final testing phase, bringing the region one step closer to an enhanced and more accessible public transit system. SacRT began the "burn-in" testing phase on December 7, 2023. Testing is being conducted systemwide on the Blue, Green, and Gold Lines from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m., Monday through Friday. This schedule is designed to minimize any impact on regular light rail service.

During this phase of testing, the new low-floor trains will simulate real-world scenarios, actively pulling into stations, deploying ramps, opening and closing doors and proceeding to the next station. To distinguish these trains from regular service trains, prominent "Test Train" decals are on doors and windows to prevent customers from accidentally boarding.

The burn-in testing is expected to take approximately two weeks per train. This thorough process allows SacRT staff to

identify and address any issues before the trains are approved for passenger service. The testing process is projected to continue through spring 2024 for the first 20 low-floor trains in anticipation of starting passenger service with the new trains on the Gold Line in summer 2024. Learn more about the testing process at sacrt.com/newtrains.

About the New Low-Floor Light Rail Trains:

The new low-floor vehicles will provide easier access at every doorway, a spacious seating design, and large windows for better light and views. They feature improved accessibility with wider aisles. The new low-floor vehicles will increase overall operational flexibility by providing more access to passengers with disabilities. SacRT is modernizing the light rail system to make future travel easier, safer, and more convenient for riders. The project includes the purchasing of new low-floor trains, reconfiguring station platforms to accommodate the new trains and adding a passing track to allow for 15-minute light rail service at all Folsom area stations. Learn more about the project at sacrt.com/modernization. ★

'Tis the Season for Scams: 5 Ways to Protect You and Your Family

From StatePoint

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - In today's hyper-connected digital universe, cyber criminals have more information than ever before, with the ability to reach you through unsecure public Wi-Fi, your email inbox, via text message, and more.

According to a Scam and Robocall Report from T-Mobile, Americans lost an estimated \$39.5 billion to phone scams in 2022. Lucky for you, there are several ways to protect and safeguard your personal information to help prevent scammers from scammin' this holiday season.

1. Avoid Public USB Ports: Traveling by plane this holiday season? The FCC warns that cyber criminals can download malware to public USB charging ports to gain access to your information. Prevent this by using an AC power outlet instead.

2. Beware of Charity Scams: It's the season of giving, but the FCC warns many cyber criminals take advantage by creating fake charities staged as real nonprofit organizations to gain access to your payment information. Woof. To prevent this, don't click on suspicious email or text links and verify the organization is registered at the National Association of

State Charity Officials or Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance before donating this holiday season.

3. Screen Your Calls: Scammers are continuously upping their game, with total robocall attempts up 75% from 2021 to 2022. Detecting whether an incoming call is a potential scam isn't always easy, but T-Mobile's Scam Shield app makes it simple. Free to all T-Mobile customers, Scam Shield enhances your scam-blocking protections so you can say goodbye to scam calls. In 2022 alone, Scam Shield identified or blocked 41.5 billion scam calls in the T-Mobile network. That's

a whopping 1,317 calls identified or blocked every second. With Scam Shield, when the network detects a potential scam call, it is flagged and displayed as "Scam Likely" on your device. Customers who want even more protection can download the Scam Shield app or dial #662# from their T-Mobile smartphone to enable Scam Block, which automatically blocks any calls that match the database of scam calls. Take that, tricksters. To learn more, visit t-mobile.com/scamshield.

4. Shop Smarter Online: According to Statista, 57% of holiday shoppers plan to use their smartphone to make

holiday purchases this year, and scammers are onto them, ramping up activity during the two weeks before Christmas. To minimize any cyber Grinch trying to steal your personal info, monitor your financial accounts regularly for suspicious charges and sign up for your bank or credit card company's text or email notifications to stay on top of fraudulent activity.

5. Use Secure Tools: Safeguard your online accounts with Multi-Factor Authentication, which requires users to enter two different kinds of information to log in, like a password and one-time PIN code. It's like having

a digital bouncer to make sure only you get into your accounts. Another protection is a password manager, giving you the ability to securely store passwords across multiple platforms and websites. The tool also provides an autofill password function and a new password generator.

To learn more about the industry's top fraud trends and how to stay protected from scammers year-round, check out T-Mobile's Scam Shield Report found at t-mobile.com/news.

While cyber threats are on the rise, you can sleigh scams by staying vigilant and incorporating these best practices into your life this holiday season. ★

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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Well, Kings fans, the In-Season Tournament is over, and our Sacramento Kings gave it a good run.

Were it not for the New Orleans Pelicans, the Kings might well have played in the final game.

For many fans around the NBA, we're still waiting for a complete explanation as to how the whole thing works. For me, it's been a bit of a head scratcher. It seemed very much like crowning the NBA winner for the first quarter of the season, and I for one had a hard time making sense of it.

When I first heard of the In-Season Tournament, my first thought was why. For years I've heard rumblings and concerns about the intermittent lack of effort that certain teams would bring on a given night, and it seemed as though this was the NBA's way of curbing some of the lackluster play in the early-season play.

But we have three quarters of the season to go. If this is really the reason for this experiment, what is the plan moving forward?

Given the enormous salaries NBA players have today, it seems incomprehensible that further incentive is needed to get 100% effort. For certain, there is a modicum of players that simply go through the motions, and isn't this a coaching and management issue?

I'm glad the Sacramento Kings don't have this problem. Every game I'm amazed at the energy and enthusiasm this group of players brings to the hardwood, and without a doubt, this IS the best game in town!

I don't think I really have a problem with the In-Season Tournament. I just wish I had a better understanding of how it came about, and what the powers that be are actually thinking. Perhaps I'm being naïve that we should expect such transparency from the NBA, but it would certainly be refreshing.

No question, professional sports as we

have known it is in the changing business. The major leagues have implemented a pitch clock, pitchers no longer have to throw four pitches outside for a batter to get a walk, and they are even putting runners on base to start an inning, just to speed up the game.

The old adage, "nothing stays the same," appears to be alive and well, and that is not to say that all changes are bad. I'm old enough to remember when the NBA implemented the three-point line, and it was without a doubt one of the best changes ever made.

True, the Kings didn't win the In-Season Tournament, but as of this writing they have a 12-8 record and are in sixth place in the western conference. I can remember, not long ago, when Kings fans would have danced in the streets for a start like this, and with a fortuitous bounce here and there our record could easily be two games better.

Sabonis, Fox, and Monk have been the night-in and night-out standouts without question, and many are wondering how Malik Monk can get more time on the floor. The same can be said for Trey Lyles. Trey was out for a number of games due to injury, but like his Kentucky teammates, his presence is felt whenever he takes the floor.

If there is an area of concern, it may be found in the substitution patterns. It seems to vary from game to game, and fan favorites like Davion Mitchell at times find themselves out of the game entirely. Last season, Davion was typically the first player off the bench, and his intense defense literally brought the crowd to its feet. Is this a matchup issue, or does coach Brown believe players like Chris Duarte and Keon Ellis bring more to the table.

Your thoughts are welcome and I'd like to hear from you. Send your comments to vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com.

Stay tuned for another edition of Kings Korner next week. ★



Be A Christmas Hero

Do your kids look up to you as their hero, or do they admire a sports figure instead? How would you like to put that same sparkle in their eyes that they do? Thomas Gagliano wants you to have that love and admiration every day. Life Mentor, Speaker, and author, Thomas has seven tips to achieve your hero status in 2024 with "The Problem Was Me." Isn't that the best gift you can give your child? The Christmas presents will be tossed eventually, but the strength you can give your child will last their whole lives. So let's score with these simple tips!

- 1. LISTEN:** Provide a safe environment for your children where they can cry on your shoulder or just talk to you...even if they tell you something you don't want to hear.
- 2. PERMIT MISTAKES:** Give your children the message that they can make mistakes. Let them know that mistakes are part of being human. Affirm they can fall at times without becoming a failure.
- 3. CELEBRATE VICTORIES:** Celebrate achievements by taking your child for an ice cream or a pizza slice. Don't run immediately to the next dilemma. Take time to enjoy what's been accomplished.
- 4. MONITOR YOUR INNER CRITIC:** If we grew up with an inner critic telling us all the things we're doing wrong in life, chances are high we will give this inner critic to our children.
- 5. CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES:** There are times when we need to relinquish our need to be right in our

conversations with our children, and choose closeness instead. We can choose to be close by identifying with our children's struggles and listening to their feelings.

- 6. BE CURIOUS:** Be interested in your children's lives. Ask them how they are doing and what's new with them. By being curious, you give them the message they are important and you're thinking of them.
- 7. CONFER REGULARLY WITH YOUR INNER CHILD:** When our children struggle, stop and think about what you wanted to hear from your parent at that age. Let that compassion shape what you say and how you say it.

A good parent also gives your child a shoulder to cry on and an ear to hear their feelings and thoughts as well. Heroes can cry too, even if society tells them to be tough. Heroes let their children explore who they want to be, instead of imprisoning them in predefined roles...roles that we as parents want them to play.

The feats of the heroes he describes won't make the front page of the newspaper. However, it's so much more important. Why? Because what love can equal the love and admiration seen reflected in the eyes of your own child? Thomas Gagliano shares how to achieve that admiration in "The Problem Was Me." So let 2024 be the year you can be a hero and make a BIG difference in the lives of your children both physically and spiritually. What a gift! ★

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!



Employment Opportunities

Employment and Independent Contractor Positions at Messenger Publishing Group

We publish 18 local newspapers in the Sacramento Region. Our main office is in Carmichael. We have been publishing for 17 years and are seeking new qualified employees.

CURRENT WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Office Administration – We are seeking a full-time administrative support person for our newspaper group. This position works in the Carmichael office and works directly with the Office Manager. Work hours are between 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Previous office management experience is required.

Production Layout/Graphic Design – This part-time position assists with the layout of the newspapers and works with the production staff to create our weekly newspapers. Must have good working knowledge of InDesign production programs. Must be able to work within our current system and be able to take direction to meet our deadlines. Previous layout experience is a must. This is an entry level position. Work hours are between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm. This position is in our Gridley office and begins in January.

Copy Editor – We are seeking a part-time copy editor for our newspaper group. This position works in the Carmichael office and works directly with Editor. Work hours are flexible between 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Previous editing experience is required.

City Reporter – We are seeking a part-time City Reporter for our newspaper group. This position may be assigned to work in the Carmichael office or another area office and works directly with the Editor. Work hours are flexible depending on assignments. Previous reporting experience is required.

Advertising Services Support – We are seeking a part-time Advertising Services Support person for our newspaper group. This position works in the Carmichael office and works directly with the owner of the company and the advertising/graphics staff. Work hours are flexible between 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Previous office experience is required.

Delivery Driver – We are seeking a part-time Delivery Driver for our newspaper group. This position would transport newspapers from our Carmichael office to our offices in Marysville and Gridley. Work hours are from 8:30 to 4:00 every Thursday. Must be able to lift and move bundles of newspapers without assistance. Must have your own reliable cargo van. This is an independent contractor position and pays a flat rate for your service.

Newsstand Delivery Driver – We are seeking a part-time Newsstand Delivery Driver for our newspaper group. This position works from the Carmichael office and delivers to our locations in the West Sacramento/Sacramento Region. Work hours are from 8:30 to 5:00 Thursday and/or Friday. Must be able to lift and move bundles of newspapers without assistance. You must have a reliable vehicle. This is an independent contractor position.

To find out more or to apply:

Email your questions or resume to Publisher@MPG8.com

Social Security Matters

I'm 65 and Working; Can I Collect Ex-spouse Benefits?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I turned 65 earlier this year, and I still work full time. I was divorced four years ago after 38 years of marriage, but my ex-husband has been collecting Social Security for at least 10 years now. Can I start collecting Social Security and still work full time? And can I collect my ex-husband's amount if it is more than mine (and what is the best way to achieve this)? When I went to my local SSA office, they said they had no way of knowing that.

Signed: Working Divorcee

Dear Working Divorcee: Although you are eligible to claim Social Security at age 65, because you are working full time you may wish to wait a bit longer to do so. That's because Social Security has an "earnings test" which applies to anyone who collects benefits before full retirement age, and you have not yet reached yours.

The earnings test imposes a limit on how much you can earn before SS takes away some of your benefits. If you exceed the annual earnings limit (\$22,320 for 2024), Social Security will want back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the

limit and you will need to repay that, usually by having future benefits withheld. If you significantly exceed the limit, you may even be temporarily ineligible to receive SS benefits until you either earn less or reach your full retirement age (FRA) of 66 years and 8 months. So, if your earnings from working will significantly exceed the annual earnings limit (which changes yearly), it's likely that your wisest move would be to wait longer to claim your Social Security. As a bonus for doing so, your monthly payment will have grown and will be higher when you claim later. The earnings test no longer applies after you reach FRA.

Regarding benefits from your ex-husband, you cannot collect his instead of yours. What you may be able to do, when you claim your own benefit, is to get an additional amount which brings your monthly payment up to 50% of his. In order for that to happen, you would need to satisfy the following criteria:

- You are not currently married.
- The personal benefit you are entitled to at your FRA must be less than 50% of your ex-husband's FRA entitlement.

If the above are true, when you claim your own SS retirement benefit you will also get a "spousal boost" to bring your payment up to what you're entitled to as an ex-spouse. The amount of the spousal boost, if you claim Social Security at your FRA, will be the difference between half of his FRA entitlement and your FRA entitlement. If you claim your benefit before

your FRA, not only will your own benefit be reduced for claiming early, but the amount of your spousal boost will also be reduced (benefits claimed before FRA are always reduced).

Whenever you decide to claim Social Security, you will be automatically deemed to be filing for benefits from your ex-husband as well (you shouldn't need to apply separately). You've already satisfied the basic criteria of at least 10 years married to get benefits from an ex-spouse and, if you satisfy the above criteria as well, you will be entitled to a spousal boost when you claim. But your current earnings from working full time will likely affect your eligibility to collect Social Security benefits at this time, so waiting until your full retirement age to claim may be your best choice.

If you will only slightly exceed the annual earnings limit you can consider claiming earlier, as long as you are comfortable with receiving a permanently reduced amount, and the prospect of not getting benefits for a number of months if you exceed the earnings limit (the number of months you will go without benefits depends on how much you exceed the limit by).

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org. ★

Made It Home for Christmas

*A brother calls from Alaska
another calls collect
A sister calls from south L.A.
As we guess who's calling next*

*As we grow a little older
each one's sure to realize
how Dad and Mom worked and saved
to put presents before our eyes*

*Our family spans the world now
spreading all that we have learned
from cold showers every holiday
to every Christmas we have earned*

*Christmas Day is changing
We're getting older every year
but its warmth abounds in memories
and in wishing you were here*

*So from Mom and Dad's prayers go out
to our families and their youths
to their hopes and dreams of doing well
and in living Christmas truths*

— Paul V. Scholl

California's Water Wars See Some Breakthroughs But More Clashes Loom



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

The politics of water in California could be likened to the constant grinding of tectonic plates 10 miles or more beneath its surface.

The Pacific Plate battles with the North American Plate for dominance along the 800-mile-long San Andreas Fault tracing California's coast. When one gives way, the state experiences an earthquake.

Similarly, California's water interests – farmers, cities and environmentalists, principally, with infinite numbers of sub-groups – joust constantly over how the state's water supplies will be apportioned.

The conflicts of water buffaloes, as they have been dubbed, play out in legislative arenas, in the many federal, state and local governmental agencies that manage water distribution, and increasingly, in state and federal courts.

Their grinding struggles have been underway for as long as California has been a state (173 years), but on occasions – sometimes separated by decades – major actions change California's waterscape.

This appears to be one of those occasions. California's recent experience of drought followed by torrential rain and snow storms seems to have jolted water stakeholders into doing things that seemed impossible just a few years ago.

California's users of

Colorado River water, principally the Imperial Irrigation District, last week formally signed an agreement with other states to reduce diversions from the much-troubled river. It's hoped that the deal will stave off an otherwise imminent catastrophe in the rivers two major reservoirs, Lake Powell and Lake Mead.

Federal officials pressed for the historic agreement, threatening unilateral cuts if it didn't happen, and lubricated it with many millions of dollars in compensation.

The state Department of Water Resources has released a final environmental impact report on a plan to bore a tunnel beneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and carry some Sacramento River water to the head of the California Aqueduct without pulling water from the Delta itself.

Versions of the bypass have kicked around for more than six decades, with officialdom saying it's needed to protect water supplies to the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California and opponents, particularly environmental groups, saying it would worsen water quality in the Delta. Release of the report sets the stage for what could be years of political and legal battles before construction could begin.

Tunnel advocates say that water would be drawn only during periods of high precipitation and snowpack runoff to improve water reliability, which is also the rationale for another major construction project that's languished for decades: the Sites reservoir in Colusa and Glenn counties. In November, Gov. Gavin Newsom designated Sites for streamlined approval of a final environmental impact report, paving the way for

construction that could begin as soon as 2025.

In October, the federal Bureau of Reclamation announced the approval of a storage capacity expansion plan for the San Luis Reservoir, a key element of California's water supply system. San Luis, in the Pacheco Pass, is an off-stream reservoir that absorbs water drawn from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and stores it to meet later demands. It's similar to how the proposed Sites reservoir would function – storing water when it's available to cushion periods when natural flows are diminished. The plan would increase the reservoir's capacity by 130,000 acre-feet.

Finally, the state water regulators are poised to approve first-ever projects that directly convert sewage into drinking water. Reusing water "gives us a supply that in essence is always going to be there," Darrin Polhemus, a water board deputy director, said.

While important, these recent developments don't end California's water wars. For instance, the state is beginning to implement first-ever controls on pumping from underground aquifers under a law passed a decade ago, which could sharply affect agriculture production in the San Joaquin Valley.

Meanwhile, the water buffaloes are gearing up for the most divisive of all potential conflicts – whether the state will breach water rights, some of which date back to the Gold Rush days. Preliminary skirmishes are already underway, as the New York Times detailed last week.

It will be epic.

Dan Walters has been a journalist for more than 60 years, spending all but a few of those years working for California newspapers. ★

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GABES 12-29-23

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PROJECT 1-12-24
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FBNF2023-08715
Anita Smedley-Brown, 2236 Zinfandel Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670 is doing business under the Fictitious Business Name(s) "First Watch Evening, Overnight, Weekend & Respite Care" 2236 Zinfandel Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. Filed with the Clerk of Sacramento County November 27, 2023
Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023 Jan 5, 12, 2024
FIRST 1-12-24
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FBNF2023-08745
Middleton Strategies LLC, 5750 Sunrise Boulevard Suite 225-J, Citrus Heights, CA 95610 is doing business under the Fictitious Business Name(s) "Middleton General Contracting/Middleton Property Management" 5750 Sunrise Boulevard Suite 225-J, Citrus Heights, CA 95610. Filed with the Clerk of Sacramento County November 28, 2023
Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023 Jan 5, 12, 2024
MIDDLETON 1-12-24
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FBNF2023-08957
Iris Salon Suites, Inc., 11829 Delavan Circle, Rancho Cordova, CA 95742 is doing business under the Fictitious Business Name(s) "Phenix Salon Suites" 3160 Arden Way, Sacramento, CA 95825. Filed with the Clerk of Sacramento County December 6, 2023
Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023 Jan 5, 12, 2024
PHENIX 1-12-24
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FBNF2023-08965
Sorin Mocan, Julian Mocan and Evan Mocan, 8820 Ridge Hill Court, Orangevale, CA 95662 are doing business under the Fictitious Business Name(s) "Sorin's Painting" 8820 Ridge Hill Court, Orangevale, CA 95662. Filed with the Clerk of Sacramento County December 6, 2023
Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023 Jan 5, 12, 2024
SORINS 1-12-24
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FBNF2023-09090
Judith Burrell, 2736 14th Street, Sacramento, CA 95818 is doing business under the Fictitious Business Name(s) "J Roseth Executive Coaching" 2736 14th Street, Sacramento, CA 95818. Filed with the Clerk of Sacramento County December 13, 2023
Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023 Jan 5, 12, 2024
ROSETH 1-12-24
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FBNF2023-08966
Qingtian Inc., 3700 Crocker Road Suite 150, Sacramento, CA 95818 is doing business under the Fictitious Business Name(s) "Tasty Dumpling" 3700 Crocker Road Suite 150, Sacramento, CA 95818. Filed with the Clerk of Sacramento County December 6, 2023
Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023 Jan 5, 12, 2024
TASTY 1-12-24
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FBNF2023-09117
Crawford Bros Inc, 25216 HWY 96, Klamath River, CA 95050 and Shannon Enterprises, Inc, 8330 Hidden Valley Circle, Fair Oaks, CA 95628 are doing business under the Fictitious Business Name(s) "CBSE Properties" 8330 Hidden Valley circle, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Filed with the Clerk of Sacramento County December 13, 2023
Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023 Jan 5, 12, 2024
CBSE 1-12-24

titled matter appear before this court on February 7, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. in Department 53, located at 813 6th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, and show cause, if any, why the petition for Change of Name should not be granted.
Dated: November 6, 2023
Richard K. Sueyoshi, Judge of the Superior Court
Publish: December 1, 8, 15, 22, 2023
SIMPSON 12-22-23
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE
CHANGE OF NAME
#23CV001549
Kathy Dawn Mirrione has filed a petition with this court for a decree changing the name(s) of Kathy Dawn Mirrione to Kathy Dawn Schroeder-Creed.
IT IS ORDERED that all persons interested in the above-entitled matter appear before this court on February 28, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. in Department 53, located at 813 6th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, and show cause, if any, why the petition for Change of Name should not be granted.
Dated: November 14, 2023
Richard K. Sueyoshi, Judge of the Superior Court
Publish: December 8, 15, 22, 29, 2023
MIRRIONE 12-29-23
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE
CHANGE OF NAME
#23CV012742
Gail Ann Eby-Martin has filed a petition with this court for a decree changing the name(s) of Gail Ann Eby-Martin to Gail Ann Helms.
IT IS ORDERED that all persons interested in the above-entitled matter appear before this court on February 27, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in Department 54, located at 813 6th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, and show cause, if any, why the petition for Change of Name should not be granted.
Dated: December 4, 2023
Christopher E. Krueger, Judge of the Superior Court
Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023 Jan 5, 12, 2024
MARTIN 1-12-24
NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE
JOYCE L. JIMERSON
CASE NO. 23PR001699
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, and contingent creditors of and persons who may be otherwise interested in the will or estate, or both, of Joyce L. Jmerson.
A Petition for Probate has been filed by David Mott, in the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, requesting David Mott be appointed as personal representative(s) to administer the estate of the decedent.
The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the executor to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the executor will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or have consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.
A hearing on the petition will be held in this court as follows January 24, 2024, 1:30 p.m. in Dept 129; Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, William R. Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse, 3341 Power Inn Road, Sacramento, CA 95826
IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.
IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the deceased, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor.
You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.
YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.
The name, address and telephone number of the Petitioner is: Shelly Kerley, 6217 Clara Way, North Highlands, CA 95660; 916-470-2063
Publish: December 8, 15, 22, 2023
KENT 12-22-23
NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF JOYCE L. JIMERSON
CASE NO. 23PR001699
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, and contingent creditors of and persons who may be otherwise interested in the will or estate, or both, of Joyce L. Jmerson.
A Petition for Probate has been filed by David Mott, in the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, requesting David Mott be appointed as personal representative(s) to administer the estate of the decedent.
The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the executor to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the executor will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or have consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.
A hearing on the petition will be held in this court as follows January 24, 2024, 1:30 p.m. in Dept 129; Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, William R. Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse, 3341 Power Inn Road, Sacramento, CA 95826
IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.
IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the deceased, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor.
You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.
YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.
The name, address and telephone number of the Attorney for Petitioner is: Terri L Cipponeri, Ewing & Assoc, 995 S Main Street, Lakeport, CA 95453; 707-263-6400
Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023, Jan 5, 2024
JIMERSON 1-5-24
NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF ROBIN KAY MATTOS
CASE NO. 23PR001891
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, and contingent creditors of and persons who may be otherwise interested in the will or estate, or both, of Robin Kay Mattos.
A Petition for Probate has been filed by Krista Michelle Talavera, in the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, requesting Krista Michelle Talavera be appointed as personal representative(s) to administer the estate of the decedent.
The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the executor to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the executor will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or have consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.
A hearing on the petition will be held in this court as follows January 30, 2024, 1:30 p.m. in Dept 129; Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, William R.

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF JAMES KENT

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE CHANGE OF NAME

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NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE

Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse, 3341 Power Inn Road, Sacramento, CA 95826
 IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.
 IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the deceased, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.
 YOU MAY EXAMINE the file

kept by the court. If you are interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. The name, address and telephone number of the Attorney for Petitioner is: Ruby Steinbrecher, PO Box 2790, Sebastopol, CA 95473; 510-435-6356
 Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023, Jan 5, 2024
MATTOS 1-5-24

SUMMONS

SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL)
CASE NUMBER: 23CV009805
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
 All persons unknown claiming any legal or equitable right, title, estate, lien, or interest in the Property adverse to Plaintiff's title, or any cloud of Plaintiff's title to the Property and Does 1 through 5
YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: Tracy K. Sharp.
NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard un-

less you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.
 You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.
 There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit

legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Website (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 dias, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la informacion a continuacion.
 Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO despues de que le entreguen esta citacion y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefonica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su re-

spuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas informacion en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov) en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentacion, pida al secretario de la corte que le de un formulario de exencion de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia.
 Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remision a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniendose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de

abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos extras por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperacion de \$10,000 o mas de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesion de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso.
 The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es): Carol Miller Justice Center, 301 Bicentennial Circle, Sacramento, CA 95826
 The name, address and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Vanessa Amador, Norcal Attorney Brokers, 1355 Florin Road Suite 4, Sacramento, CA 95822, 916-396-9934.
 Date: (Fecha) 10/12/2023
 Clerk (Secretario) K. Johnson, Deputy (Adjunto)
 Publish: Dec 22, 29, 2023, Jan 5, 12 2024
SHARP 1-12-24

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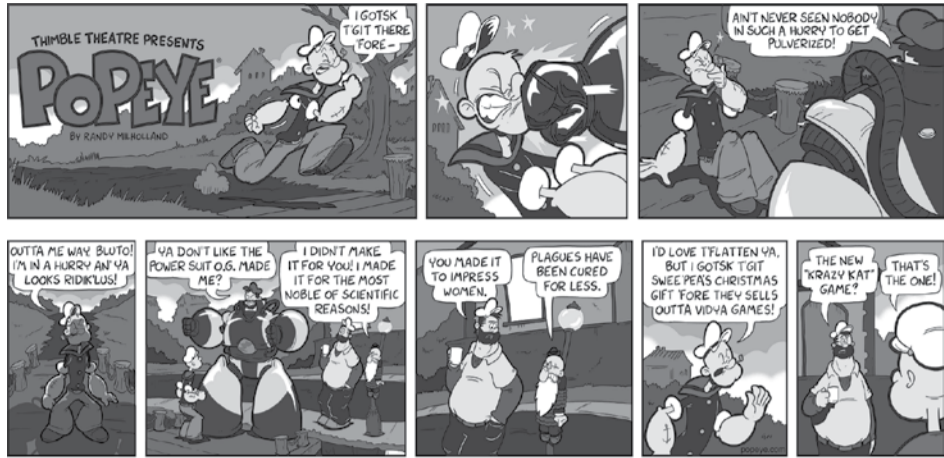
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COMICS & PUZZLES

The Spats



by Jeff Pickering



Amber Waves



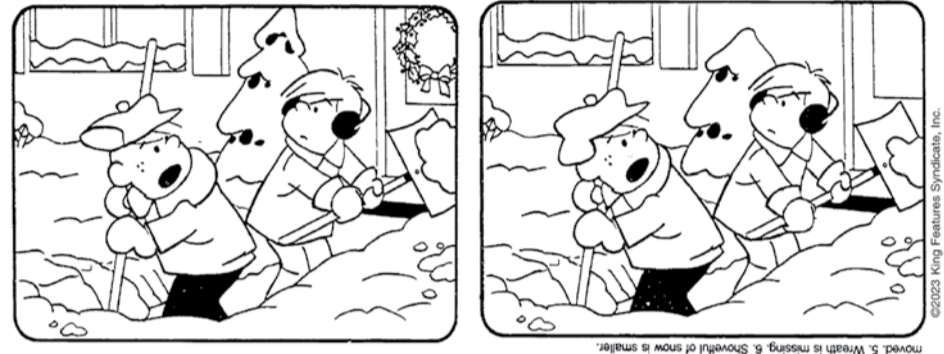
by Dave T. Phipps



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BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

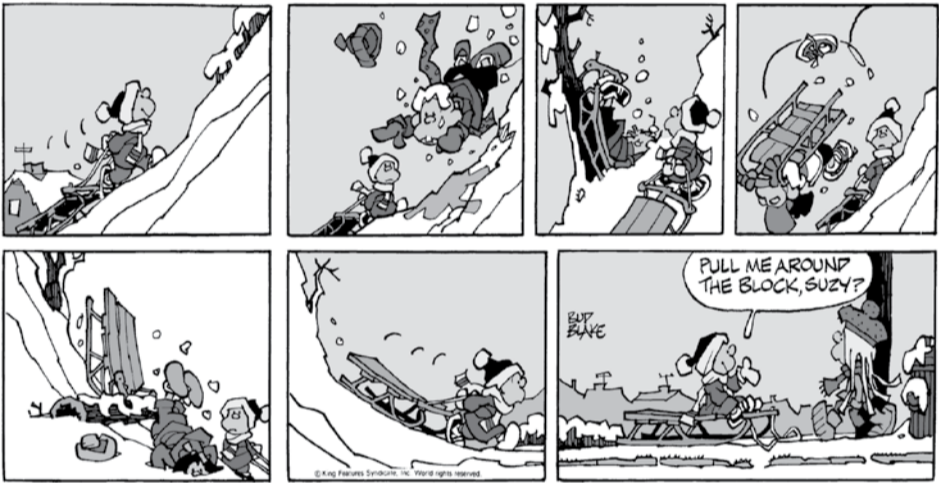


Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

TIGER



by BUD BLAKE

GRIN and BEAR IT



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C	H	A	S	M	A	L	B	S	U	E	D		
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STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • COCKTAILS

CLUES

- ACROSS**
- Great divide
 - Priestly vestment
 - Took to court
 - Haile Selassie's disciple
 - 10 decibels
 - *Applatin's schnapps
 - Rose oil
 - Maui garland
 - Birth-related
 - *Old Fashioned liquor option
 - *Gin+vermouth rosso+Campari
 - Not him
 - Bye, in Palermo
 - VA.gov beneficiary
 - Puerto follower
 - Like Ferris Bueller
 - Exclude
 - "___ Your Enthusiasm"
 - Green-light
 - Tiny coffee cup, or -tasse
 - Cut mission short
 - Not final or absolute
 - Makes a sweater
 - Wing-shaped
 - Bird, in Latin
 - One with drug dependency
 - Do like a frog
 - A U.S. time zone
 - Dance with #17
- Across**
- Anatomical duct
 - *It usually comes in a conical glass
 - *Popular cocktail mixer
 - Spy's other name
 - Knicks' org.
 - Give a speech
 - Clan emblem
 - Party barrel
 - Clean a spill (2 words)
 - Part of pump
 - Sargasso or Barents
 - Same as apse
- DOWN**
- Sticking point, in alimentary tract
 - Possesses, archaic
 - *Bellini with ___ Spumante
 - Squirrel away
 - a.k.a. felt-pen
 - Competently
 - M tley Cr e's Tommy
 - Russian pancakes
 - Practice in the ring
 - As far as (2 words)
 - Distinctive flair
 - Place for a hero
 - Fluffy sweater material
 - *All My Children" vixen Kane
 - 2010 Movie "___ Pray Love"
 - Toyota model
 - *Moscow Mule spirit
 - Make corrections
 - Shy
 - * ___ Libre
 - Forearm bone
 - Not dead
 - Honkers
 - Lemon or orange piece
 - South American monkey
 - Highlands hillside
 - Crossbeam
 - Religious split
 - 252-gallon wine cask
 - *Tequila+grapefruit juice+sparkling water
 - Kind of golf course
 - Razor sharpener
 - S.A.T. section
 - Balm ingredient
 - Baptism or shiva, e.g.
 - Asian weight unit
 - John Galsworthy's "The Forsyte ___"
 - Nukes
 - Sewing case
 - Gym set
 - * ___'s Knees

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A Budget Rollercoaster

By Alexei Koseff,
CALMatters.org

With tax revenues in a free fall comparable to the Great Recession and the dot-com bust, California faces a projected \$68 billion budget deficit next year that will require spending cuts and reserve funds to close, state finance officials said today.

The new estimate from the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office, released as Gov. Gavin Newsom finalizes his January budget proposal, reflects a substantially delayed tax-filing period this fall where collections came in far below what lawmakers expected when they adopted a spending plan over the summer.

This projected deficit would be a record for California. But officials noted that it is partly because the budget has grown so much in recent years — the most recent was more than \$300 billion — and that the state has closed similar or worse spending gaps, by percentage, in the past.

Legislative analyst Gabriel Petek cautioned that California is better prepared to respond to the situation than during the economic recession 15 years ago, because it has since built several multibillion-dollar rainy-day funds, though the state is also looking at a structural deficit of about \$30 billion annually going forward.

"I go with the word 'serious.' A serious budget problem," Petek said during a briefing with journalists. "I would stop short of calling it a crisis."

H.D. Palmer, a spokesperson for Newsom's Department of Finance, said the administration will have different numbers when the governor presents his 2024-25 spending plan next month, but Newsom is preparing to address a significant deficit.

"Both the Governor and the



A California Analyst predicts a \$68 billion deficit. Gov. Gavin Newsom unveils his revised budget proposal for 2023-24 during a press briefing at the state Natural Resources Agency in Sacramento on May 12, 2023. Photo by Rahul Lal, CalMatters

Legislature have a substantial challenge before them in closing a very large revenue gap in this budget," Palmer told CalMatters. "The IRS, with the best of intentions, created a situation this year that is entirely new territory."

Severe winter storms prompted the federal government to delay the income tax filing deadline for most Californians from April until November, and the state followed suit, giving an incomplete picture when legislators and the governor crafted the budget this summer.

It already accounted for a \$30 billion deficit, after two years of record surpluses driven by economic recovery and federal aid related to the coronavirus pandemic. But those collections were ultimately another \$26

billion below estimates — a drop of 25% from the prior year — digging a financial hole wbased on money the state committed in its spending plan.

This year looks weak as well, according to finance officials. California has been hit particularly hard by inflation, which pinched the housing market; a stock market downturn, affecting capital gains; and a drop in investments in the tech industry, which has pulled back on initial public offerings. Overall tax revenues are projected to be \$58 billion below assumptions in the multi-year budget window.

Though the Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that tax revenues will begin growing again next year, the recovery is likely to be slow, opening up long-term funding shortfalls that

could affect essential programs in future years.

"There are enough options available to address this immediate problem," Petek said. "Our high-level suggestion to the Legislature is just to be judicious about reserves because there's a lot of uncertainty ahead, so preserving some of that resilience would be helpful."

His office recommended that Newsom declare a fiscal emergency, allowing the state to dip into as much as \$24 billion of its rainy-day funds, and that legislators pull back on one-time spending allocations that have not yet been distributed, potentially saving \$10 billion or more that had previously been set aside for transportation, environmental and education programs.

Petek also suggested that

California could cut the deficit by nearly \$17 billion over the next three years by recalculating its constitutionally-mandated funding obligation to schools and community colleges, known as Proposition 98, based on the lower revenues. Though this would decrease the state's base education funding over the long term, Petek said the immediate effects could be offset with reserves.

That option, in particular, could encounter stiff resistance in the Legislature. Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, a Hollister Democrat, released a statement last week, when it became clear that tax revenues would be substantially below estimates, committing to a budget that "protects classroom funding."

Newsom and lawmakers are also likely to confront months of tremendous pressure from advocates arguing that their priorities should be protected in any budget solutions. Statements started rolling out mere minutes after the Legislative Analyst's Office published its report.

"California leaders have stepped up before to prioritize Californians who are struggling to get by and they must continue this in 2024," said Pete Manzo, president & CEO of United Ways of California.

Republican legislators chastised their Democratic colleagues for continuing to make new spending commitments in recent budget cycles even as it became clear that the economy was increasingly shaky.

"Hopefully, the supermajority will see it is time for a more realistic budget strategy," Senate Republican Leader Brian Jones of San Diego said in a statement, "instead of throwing money at a laundry list of projects that sounds nice on the national television debate stage." ★



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A Big Change at EDD

EDD changes unemployment contractor after scams

By Lynn La, CALMatters.org

California has a new unemployment and disability payment contractor after the state's multi-billion-dollar pandemic fraud panic. The Employment Development Department hopes it will be the end of an era of brazen scams, which wreaked havoc for laid-off workers and fueled police busts involving stacks of ill-gotten debit cards issued at the department's direction by then-contractor Bank of America.

EDD tells CalMatters that on Monday it plans to begin notifying 850,000 benefit recipients of the new payment provider: Money Network, an electronic payment company owned by finance tech company Fiserv. Money Network may sound familiar; it was also tapped by the federal government and Gov. Gavin Newsom to pay out COVID-era stimulus funds, which attracted its own waves of debit card scams.

Money Network won the EDD contract after a competitive bidding process. It comes as the agency embarks on a five-year, \$1.2 billion tech overhaul known as EDDNext.

The contract will primarily be paid for through a debit card revenue-sharing agreement, similar to the EDD's previous deal with Bank of America. The agency will also pay \$32 million over five years for Money Network to offer a long-discussed direct deposit option to



The offices of the Employment Development Department in Sacramento where it all went wrong. Photo by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters

workers' bank accounts, which the EDD says will launch in spring 2024.

In mid-January, people receiving unemployment, disability and paid leave benefits from the EDD will be mailed new Money Network debit cards. Payments will officially begin on these cards on Feb. 15. Anyone who still has a Bank of America EDD debit card will have until April 15, 2024, to spend the money.

In the meantime, fraud analysts tracking an uptick in attacks on government benefit debit cards — not just California's unemployment program, but also food assistance and others will be watching to see what lessons have (or haven't) been learned from the pandemic. The new EDD cards will include both security chips and tap-to-pay options common in consumer credit cards.

Still, the EDD is advising cardholders to be vigilant: "Beware of scammers. We will never request your personal information by text message, e-mail or on social media."

Tens of thousands of

Californians are still awaiting aid from the COVID-19 rent relief program. But as CalMatters housing reporter Ben Christopher explains, the program may run out of money before it can help the remaining eligible applicants.

The \$5.2 billion program launched in 2021 to help Californians pay down rental debt they accumulated during the pandemic. Though it stopped taking new applications in 2022, more than 70,000 households still have applications pending. The program has enough funding to cover a little more than 14,000 people — meaning the remaining 80% of the total applicant pool is out of luck.

That's devastating news for tenants and landlords alike who may ultimately wait in vain for relief to come. As one graphic designer and single mother told Ben: "I'm trying to find a way to freelance or do whatever I can do to get the money to just pay it myself... I can't sit and depend on it and wait because it's been two years." ★

Caltrans Releases Draft Project List for Public Comment

Caltrans News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Caltrans today released the draft 2024 State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) plan, the state's primary funding program for maintaining and preserving California's transportation infrastructure.

The draft, which features a new interactive dashboard detailing the location and specifics on approximately \$16 billion in projects, will be open for public comment through Jan. 19, 2024. The list of approximately 600 projects throughout the state includes approximately 100 carryover projects where Caltrans later added climate adaptation, additional safety protections, and bike and pedestrian elements. These projects had been developed before the state's adoption of the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) in 2021. The added elements were funded by approximately \$600 million from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The 195 new projects being added to the SHOPP reflect planning work largely completed after CAPTI implementation. These projects, totaling \$6.2 billion, include many climate, safety and multimodal features within the overall "fix it first" framework established in Senate Bill (SB) 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017.

The SHOPP covers four fiscal years (FY 24/25 through 27/28) and funds roadway and bridge rehabilitation or replacements, along with safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, operational improvements, and climate adaptation projects.

For increased transparency, Caltrans incorporated the interactive dashboard to allow the public to map, search and download all the proposed projects, including significant details on the project scope.

"Caltrans is focused on maintaining and improving the state's transportation network so that it is safer, more reliable and more climate resilient," said Caltrans Director Tony Tavares.

"We are also committed to transparency to ensure the public has the opportunity to be engaged before we move forward with projects."

In line with the "fix it first" philosophy, the SHOPP's primary focus is fixing and maintaining the state highway system. Along with keeping the state highway system in a state of good repair, the SHOPP also includes additional objectives, such as improving safety for all road users; increasing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure; ensuring projects are equitably distributed in rural and urban centers and throughout all socioeconomic sections; and providing for climate adaptation.

Proposed funding includes: \$8 billion to improve more than 6,000 lane-miles of pavement; \$3.2 billion to repair and upgrade 80 bridges and tunnels; \$900 million for safety improvements; \$666 million to upgrade drainage systems by repairing more than 58 miles of culverts and diversions; \$604 million for 1,400 new and improved signals, signs, ramps, and metering systems; Nearly \$400 million to make infrastructure more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The prior SHOPP had no dedicated investment for climate resiliency; \$280 million for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure; \$173 million for improved highway/interstate signage and lighting.

Interested parties are encouraged to review the draft SHOPP online dashboard at projectbook.dot.ca.gov. The website includes a link to submit online comments on the draft SHOPP.

Building on the SHOPP transportation efforts, the 2023 State Highway System Management Plan (SHSMP), released earlier this year, lays out the future objectives for SHOPP projects. The 2023 SHSMP is organized to incorporate more climate-friendly elements into maintenance projects and presents a performance-driven, integrated management plan for California's state highway system's needs, investments, and performance for the 10-year period spanning through June 2033. ★

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