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# East Sacramento News

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Bringing You Community News For Over 30 Years

DECEMBER 22, 2023

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## Nation's Biggest Lifelike Dinosaur Event Roars into Sacramento



Cammie the Camarasaurus plays a trick on an unsuspecting child by stealing the boy's hat. Photo courtesy of Jurassic Quest

**Jurassic Quest News Release**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - North America's most popular interactive dinosaur experience is BACK,

BIGGER and BETTER than EVER! Sacramento-area families can walk among the nation's biggest herd of photorealistic dinosaurs when Jurassic Quest® opens at Cal Expo

Center for one weekend only Jan. 12-14.

Loved by millions, only Jurassic Quest can bring families memories this BIG! Walk through 165 million years of the Triassic, Jurassic

and Cretaceous periods to learn about the creatures that ruled the Earth! In addition to life-like dinosaurs, Jurassic Quest's classic experiences for the whole family

*Continued on Page 2*



## New Low-Floor Light Rail Trains Enter Final Testing Phase

**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.

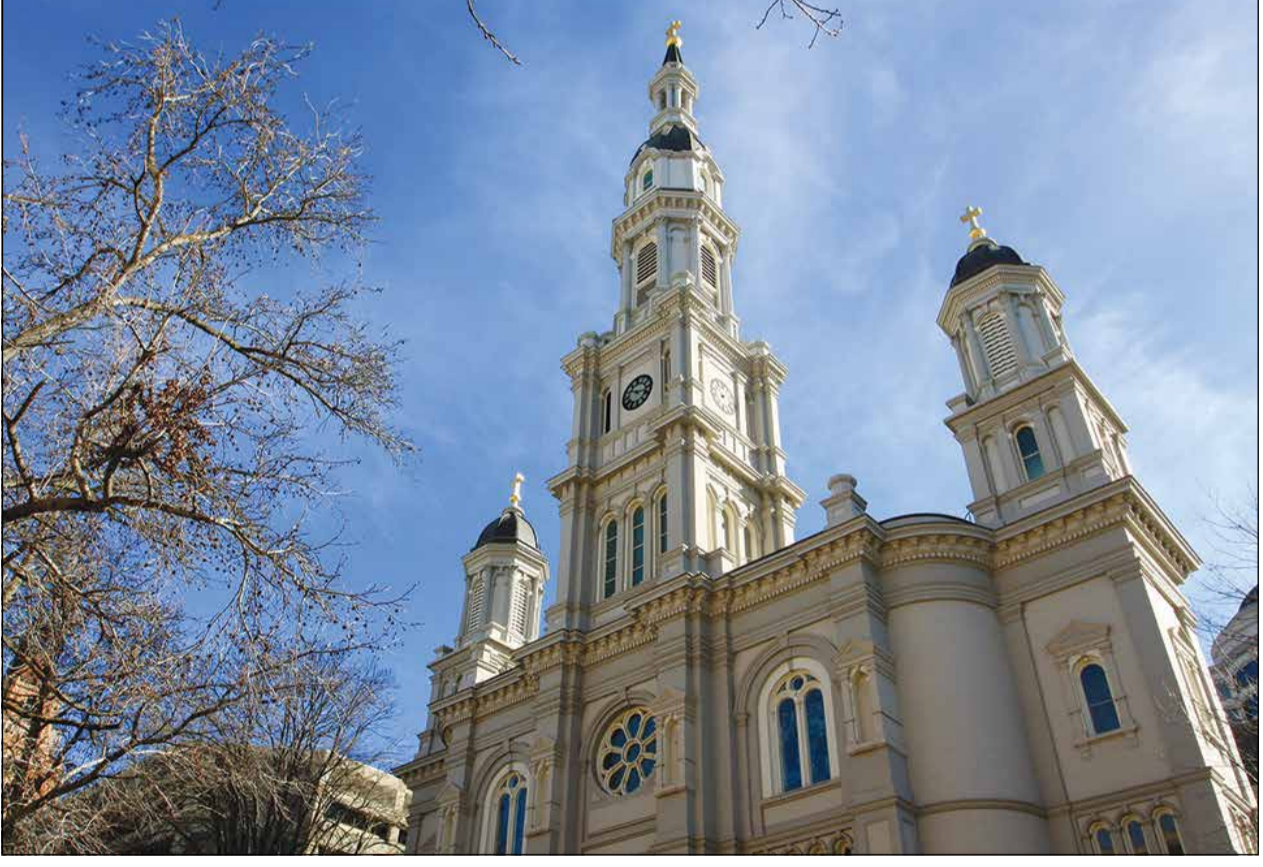
During this phase of testing, the new low-floor trains will simulate real-world scenarios, actively pulling into stations, deploying ramps, opening and closing doors and proceeding to the next station. To distinguish these trains from regular service trains, prominent "Test Train" decals are on doors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

*Continued on Page 3*

## Sac Diocese to Seek Bankruptcy Protection

*Facing Over 250 Sexual-Abuse Cases*



The Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, the seat of the Diocese of Sacramento, is seen in 2011. Bishop Jaime Soto has announced his intention to seek Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on behalf of the diocese, in response to hundreds of lawsuits claiming clergy sexual abuse. 'Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament - Sacramento, California' by TravelingOtter used under CC BY-SA 2.0.

**By Matthew Malone Staff Writer**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The Roman Catholic Diocese of Sacramento

will seek Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection next year, Bishop Jaime Soto announced on Dec. 9, as it faces hundreds of lawsuits alleging child sexual abuse

by clergy. The diocese oversees Catholic parishes in much of Northern California, including Sacramento County.

In a letter published

online and distributed to parishioners at local churches, Soto said he expects to file for bankruptcy protection in March

*Continued on Page 3*

## SENIOR LIVING

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# David Villanueva Appointed County Executive



**Sacramento County News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors unanimously agreed to appoint Assistant County Executive David Villanueva as County Executive. The appointment is effective January 28, 2024. "I am pleased to announce that the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to appoint David Villanueva as County Executive," said Board Chair and Third District Supervisor Rich Desmond. "David's career has been dedicated to public service with Sacramento County and the State of California, with which he has had extensive senior management and executive management experience. "The County as an organization has made tremendous progress over the last three years. We are confident this will continue under David's leadership. David brings a unique combination of business, accounting and technology skills to this role, and he has shown in practice that his decisions are guided by honesty,

integrity and a passion for service and transparency." Appointed Assistant County Executive last May, Villanueva has been serving as Deputy County Executive for the Administrative Services Agency since 2011. Prior to that, he began his County service as Chief Information Officer/Director of the Department of Technology in 2008. Before his County service, Villanueva was the Deputy Director/Chief Information Officer for the California Department of General Services. "I am deeply honored and grateful for the trust placed in me by the Board of Supervisors in appointing me as the County Executive," said Villanueva. "This opportunity to serve our community is both a privilege and a responsibility that I undertake with great dedication. I am committed to fostering a culture of transparency, collaboration, and customer service excellence within our organization. "In the spirit of public service, I look forward to collaborating with our dedicated team and community stakeholders

to continue to build a County government that is responsive, accountable, and committed to making a positive impact in the lives of our residents." During his tenure at the County, Villanueva implemented a number of initiatives. Most recently, he led the County's new Leadership Development Academy program, designed to enhance leadership skills, learn global trends impacting leadership and sustain positive changes in the organization. He also implemented his Agency's departments in the County's Organizational Culture Change Initiative and managed the formation of the Climate Emergency Mobilization Task Force. Villanueva is a longtime member and the current Chair of the Board of Trustees for Plumas Lake School District. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from California State University, Sacramento, and recently completed the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government. ★

# Nation's Biggest Lifelike Dinosaur Event Roars into Sacramento

*Continued from Page 1* include some of the largest rideable dinosaurs in North America, live dinosaur shows, interactive science and art activities including a fossil dig and real fossils like T-Rex teeth, a triceratops horn and life-size dino skull, a "Triceratops" soft play area for our littlest explorers, bounce houses and inflatable attractions, photo opportunities, and more.

New this year! Jurassic Quest is bringing more hands-on activities, education and fun. This evolution, Jurassic Quest includes an expanded Excavation Station and more Jurassic-themed rides and inflatables. Even our animatronic herd has expanded to include fan favorites, the Utahraptor and Giganotosaurus. In addition to "The Quest," a self-guided scavenger hunt style activity where budding paleontologists can become Jr. Dinosaur Trainers, Jurassic Quest has launched a new video tour that's already getting "roaring good" reviews from families and features our star dino trainers: Safari Sarah, Dino Dustin, Prehistoric Nick and Park Ranger Marty (available onsite and on your phone via QR code)! All expanded activities are included with general admission. New attractions launching in winter include kids facing off with the notoriously fast Jurassic Quest Utahraptors for "Raptor Run" races, and "Rope-a-Raptor," where experienced "BrontoBusters" help kids lasso stray dinos to get them back to their pens.

The Jurassic Quest herd of animatronic dinos – from the largest predators to playful baby dinos – are displayed in realistic scenes with some that move and roar, allowing guests to experience them as they were when they roamed Earth millions of years ago. Jurassic Quest works in collaboration with leading paleontologists to ensure each dinosaur is painstakingly replicated in every detail, from coloration to teeth size, to textured skin, fur or feathers, drawing on the latest research about how we understand dinosaurs looked and moved. Families also have the unique opportunity to meet the babies, hatched only at Jurassic Quest: Cammie the Camarasaurus, Tyson the T-Rex and Trixie the Triceratops.

Advance purchase online recommended to ensure desired date and availability at [www.jurassicquest.com](http://www.jurassicquest.com), or tickets are available on-site, and include a 100% ticket guarantee that in the event of a show cancellation or postponement for any reason, ticket purchases will be automatically refunded for the full purchase amount. ★



**Tyranno Tony makes sure Tyson the T-Rex gets whatever keeps the baby happy.** Photo courtesy of Jurassic Quest

General admission tickets include access to the dinosaur exhibits, arts and crafts activities, and dinosaur shows. There are rides and activities that require activity tickets available on site, or guests can upgrade to the Kids Unlimited Ticket (the best value for children ages 2-10). Entry is free for children under age 2. Guests can walk through the dinosaur experience at their own pace, and strollers are permitted. Socks required for inflatable attractions. Some venues may have wheelchairs for use, but please contact the venue in advance to make arrangements.

Admission: Tickets available online (Standard, Senior and Kids pricing available)

General admission includes live shows, arts and crafts activities, and dinosaur exhibits. Tickets for individual activities available on-site. Free entry for children under 2. **KIDS UNLIMITED TICKETS:** Includes admission, plus unlimited access to stationery and walking dinosaur rides, fossil dig, and dinosaur themed inflatable attractions (Note: maximum weight for rides is 140lbs.). Location: Cal Expo Center (1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento, CA) Hours: Friday, Jan. 12: 9am-8pm / Saturday, Jan. 13: 9am-8pm / Sunday, Jan. 14: 9am-7pm

For more information and tickets visit [www.jurassicquest.com](http://www.jurassicquest.com). ★

**Tom Leonard | 916-834-1681**

[Tom.Leonard@CBNorcal.com](mailto:Tom.Leonard@CBNorcal.com)

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**River Park Specialist**



## 2023 River Park Sales



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**3800 Moddison Avenue**  
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(Sold) for \$730k



**3810 Breuner Avenue**  
(Listed) for \$669k  
(Sold) for \$715k



**5516 State Avenue**  
(Listed) for \$789k  
Pending with Multiple Offers!



**5326 Caleb Avenue**  
(Listed) for \$975k  
(Sold) for \$1 mil.

Represented Buyer



# Retail Theft BLITZ Operation and Arrests Made

# Sac Diocese to Seek Bankruptcy Protection, Facing Over 250 Sexual-Abuse Cases



CHPD image of merchandise seized during Retail Theft BLITZ Operation. Photo courtesy of Citrus Heights Police Department

### Citrus Heights PD News Release

**CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG)** - On December 1, 2023, detectives with the Citrus Heights Police Department's IMPACT Unit and the California Highway Patrol's Organized Retail Crime Task Force, conducted an undercover retail store theft operation at two locations in Citrus Heights, resulting in the arrest of multiple theft offenders.

The objective of these operations is to reduce retail thefts and hold those committing these crimes accountable for their actions. This operation was conducted in the 6100 block of San Juan Avenue and was chosen due to the high number of shoplifting incidents at these stores.

This operation utilized both undercover and uniformed detectives and was successful with the arrest of six individuals and the return of nearly \$2,000 in stolen merchandise seized during their arrests over several hours. Most of these offenders have prior felony criminal convictions and, or, probation terms.

The Citrus Heights Police Department's IMPACT Unit, in conjunction with allied agencies, will continue to conduct these operations

throughout the City with the goal of preventing and deterring thefts from our businesses. The following individuals were arrested during the operation:

Hanna Hall Mortensen, 29-year-old female from Citrus Heights, CA arrested for 459.5 PC (shoplifting); Nailah Ebony Perkins, 38-year-old female from Citrus Heights, CA arrested for 459.5 PC (shoplifting); Christian Paul Pinedo, 36-year-old male from Mather, CA arrested for 459.5 PC (shoplifting) and 148 PC (resisting arrest); April Marie Romo, 30-year-old female from San Jose, CA arrested for 459.5 PC (shoplifting); Jennifer Patricia Sainz, 34-year-old female from Fair Oaks, CA arrested for 459.5 PC (shoplifting); Sylvia Sainz, 37-year-old female from San Jose, CA arrested for 459.5 PC (shoplifting).

These arrests are part of ongoing investigations into these incidents and related incidents. Anyone with information related to these crimes, or others in Citrus Heights, is encouraged to contact the Sacramento Valley Crime Stoppers tip hotline at (916) 443-HELP. Tips leading to an arrest may earn a cash reward. ★

Continued from Page 1

2024. "It is now clear to me that the only respectful, transparent, and fair way to address the substantial number of claims by those who have been abused by clergy and other members of the Church is to seek a court-supervised reorganization. This process will also allow me to sustain the sanctifying, teaching, and charitable work of the Catholic community in Northern California," the letter read.

Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection generally allows an organization to continue operating while negotiating with creditors to restructure its debts. The letter noted as much and said parishes and schools in the diocese "would continue their operations uninterrupted."

Soto said more than 250 lawsuits alleging abuse have been filed against the diocese. Without reorganization, "it is likely that not all the abuse victim-survivors would receive a fair consideration of their claim," he said, with available funds being "depleted" in the first

cases brought forward.

"Bankruptcy is a costly and lengthy process, but it also provides supervision and transparency for all the parties involved so that a fair resolution is offered to the victim-survivors of abuse," Soto continued. He expressed hope that the diocese would "emerge from this necessary, penitential exercise with greater resolve to be a humble sanctuary of holiness and healing for all the sons and daughters of God in Northern California."

### Law Group Decries Plan

A law firm that represents people alleging clerical abuse, including cases in the Sacramento diocese, criticized the decision.

"On behalf of the many survivors who were gravely hurt, we react with deep disappointment in the choice made by the Bishop of Sacramento to seek bankruptcy protection from accountability," Jeff Anderson and Associates said in a press release. "We know from all the work we have done

with survivors across the country that bishops and dioceses have continuously utilized Chapter 11 to shamefully protect themselves."

The release said other dioceses have used bankruptcy filings to delay court cases and prevent "full disclosure."

"The Diocese might change, but their motivations for filing bankruptcy remain the same — the desire to protect their reputation and their assets, no matter the moral expense," attorney Jeff Anderson said in a statement.

The Sacramento diocese is the fourth in California to seek bankruptcy protection after a wave of sexual-abuse claims under state Assembly Bill 218. The legislation took effect in 2020 and extended the statute of limitations on childhood sexual abuse, allowing much more time for accusers to come forward after reaching adulthood.

The other dioceses filing for Chapter 11 protection are Santa Rosa, San Francisco and Oakland. ★

# 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

Continued from Page 1

service with the new trains on the Gold Line in summer 2024. Learn more about the testing process at [sacrt.com/newtrains](http://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](http://sacrt.com/modernization). ★

## Are You Single Again?

SingleAgain.com is a website dedicated to helping people put their lives back together again after divorce, separation or the loss of their spouse.

Finding yourself single after years of being in a relationship can add a different kind of unknown stress to your daily life.

We provide articles and information from many sources to help you put all the pieces together so you can live a healthy and loving new life. When you first visit the website, be sure to make us one of your favorites. We publish many articles to help you along your new journey.

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- Counseling & Advice
- Money & Finances
- Health
- Fashion & Beauty
- Consumer News
- Food & Recipes
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*Spiritual Care*

BY NORRIS BURKES

## Signs Point to God's Love for Us All

and location of his services. “No,” he said, “I’m not a preacher. I don’t really know much about the Bible.”

Nevertheless, Jose found the Bible’s most important message, so I asked him what kind of reaction the sign was generating.

“Most people show their agreement in some way,” he said. “They smile or nod and say, ‘That’s right.’” But no matter what their response, Jose held his sign in the same unflinching way he had begun in 2000.

I admire Jose’s courage, but I also appreciated what his sign did not say.

In a time when fundamentalist fanatics picket the funerals of war veterans and thrust placards of dead babies in the faces of confused mothers, I could fill several columns with what Jose’s sign DID NOT say.

It didn’t name conditions such as, “Jesus loves you if . . .”

It didn’t say “Jesus only loves you when . . .” It didn’t say, “My god hates your god.”

The cynic might have scolded Jose saying that it’s easier to hold a placard about Jesus’ love than to actually put love into practice. It’s the warning James, (Jesus’ half-brother) gave against simply telling the hungry, “Be warm and filled,” without offering them a cup of soup.

While I doubt Jose would argue that point, I do think he was on track to offer love.

After all, I don’t think it’s possible to remind each other too often about God’s love for us. For instance, can you tell a child you love him too much? Can you tell your spouse too many times that you cherish her above all?

Maybe Jose’s message, however many times you see it at football games or on the streets of a major city, is that God’s love will always be too big to define or imagine. This was the love that John the Baptist saw in Jesus when he said in Mark 1:7 that he wasn’t “worthy to stoop down and untie his (Jesus’) sandals.”

Maybe it comes down to a variation of what our mothers taught us: If you can’t say something nice about God, don’t say anything at all.

After I got my fill of sourdough and cable cars that day, I entered the subway to take the last train home when I spied a woman holding a hymnal and singing “Silent Night, Holy Night.”

I paused, recalling my experience with Jose. His example inspired me to put down my train schedule and join in song. And for a moment our voices managed to flood the station with an echoing chorus that told a busy world of God’s never-ending love.

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Send comments to [comment@thechaplain.net](mailto:comment@thechaplain.net). Leave recorded comments at (843) 608-9715 or write 10556 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, Calif., 95602.

You can get any of my books for free when you start a monthly donation to Chispa or give a onetime donation of more than \$100. Make checks to Chispa Project and send to 10556 Combie Rd Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602. Comments received at same address or by email [comment@thechaplain.net](mailto:comment@thechaplain.net) or at (843) 608-9715. ★

## 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

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 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 [parksandtranquility@saclibrary.org](mailto:parksandtranquility@saclibrary.org) with any inquiries.

Potential artists may visit [saclibrary.org/Parks-and-Tranquility](http://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. ★

## Physical Altercation Leads to Homicide on Sunnyslope Drive

Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Just after 12:30 AM on Friday, December 8, 2023, deputies responded to a shooting at an apartment on the 6600 block of Sunnyslope Drive. Upon their arrival, they discovered a 35-year-old male, later identified as Christopher Saunders, suffering from a gunshot wound to the chest. He was lying just outside of an apartment. Deputies administered first-aid until Sacramento Metro Fire personnel arrived, but Saunders was ultimately pronounced deceased at the scene.

Homicide detectives and Crime Scene Investigators responded, interviewed witnesses, and gathered evidence. Detectives contacted the residents inside the apartment and learned Saunders drove there in an attempt to locate his estranged wife. When Saunders arrived, he left his car running in the parking lot and banded

on the front door multiple times. The apartment was occupied by Saunders’ estranged wife and her friends who lived there: an adult male, an adult female, and minor children. When they answered the door, Saunders rushed into the apartment, grabbed his estranged wife, and commanded her to leave with him. When she refused, the adults inside the apartment directed Saunders to leave. Saunders then became involved in a physical altercation with several of the family members, including a 15-year-old. The adult male resident then produced a firearm, which was legally possessed, and shot Saunders.

The Sacramento County District Attorney’s Office was advised and made the preliminary decision to release the adult male under the presumption of a justifiable homicide. The District Attorney’s Office will make a final determination at a later date. There is no further information available at this time. ★



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## ABOUT TOWN

### Your Elks 6 Lodge needs your help!

Help is needed in the office from 9 - 3 Monday through Friday to answer phones, sell event tickets etc.

We also need help in the Rental office to answer the phone.

If you can lend a hand even if it is half a day or one day per week, please contact me and I will get your information to the appropriate person.

For questions or to volunteer call or send text message to Sue Hill 215-327-7712.

### Elks 6 Annual Bicycle/Toy Drive

Toy donations are coming in and we thank you. 13 gifts were delivered on 12/2 and 2 more deliveries will be made, one next week and the last on 12/17.

Any items donated after 12/17 will also be given to children as in previous years.

The Dave Hamm bicycle fund has given us enough money to purchase 3 bicycles, 3 helmets and 2 bike locks. Two donations have been made to the bicycle fund by our members. Thanks to the Dave Hamm fund and to our generous members who support the fund.

All new, unwrapped toys and bikes can be brought into the lounge or office and placed near the Christmas tree.

Thank you for your support. We will make a lot of children happy this year.

Any questions, call Joanne Martin 707-486-6027.

### Theatre of Lights at the Old Sacramento Waterfront

Theatre of Lights is a free, family-friendly performance retelling "Twas the Night Before Christmas" in a uniquely Sacramento way on the rooftops of the Old Sacramento Waterfront. Produced by Downtown Sacramento Partnership, the shows are Thursday through Sunday from

Thanksgiving Eve to December 30th (no show on Thanksgiving).

Conceived and created by Stage Nine Exhibitions' Troy Carlson, Theatre of Lights brings together some of California's finest talents in the field of light and sound: 4Wall Productions, Musson Theatrical, Associated Sound, and Emmy-nominated voice actor Bill Farmer, the voice of Disney's Goofy.

The performance features an immersive retelling of Moore's 1823 poem — "A Visit from St. Nicholas," more popularly known as "Twas the Night Before Christmas" alongside stories of how Sacramento pioneers experienced the calamities — and revelry — that befell the new city in the 1850s. The sounds of the fires, floods, and parties will surround the audience as the 150-year-old building facades light up with color. The highlight of the 20-minute production is a live dramatization on the balconies above K Street, complete with a special appearance by Jack Frost, and the lighting of the 60-foot Christmas tree by St. Nick himself.

The show schedule is as follows:

November 22nd through December 30th

Thursday through Sunday, shows at 6 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

#### Special Shows:

Sun. Dec. 24th

One show at 6 p.m.

For more information about this event and to check out other events held at the Old Sacramento Waterfront, visit [oldsacramento.com/event](http://oldsacramento.com/event)

### Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink Open

Nov. 8 - Jan. 15

Sharpen your skates and perfect your triple axel—the Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink returns to the heart of the city on November 8! Feel a chill blow down K street as you approach Ali Youssefi Square and

be teleported into a winter wonderland at the ice rink.

#### Regular Hours

Tuesday – Thursday 2 – 9 PM, Friday – Sunday 10 AM – 10 PM, Closed Mondays except for holidays.

#### Special Events

Dec. 9 – Xfinity Free Skate

Dec. 10 – Crafting Kindness

Dec. 16 – Silent Disco Ugly Sweater Party

Dec. 17 – First Step Communities Donation

Jan. 7 – Crafting Kindness

Tickets are available at the entrance to the rink when you arrive to skate.

For more info about holiday hours and scheduled events, visit [www.godowntownsac.com/events/signature-events/ice-rink/](http://www.godowntownsac.com/events/signature-events/ice-rink/)

### Breakfast With Santa at the Elks Lodge Dec. 17

Two of the best kept secrets in Sacramento are at Elks Lodge 6.

The first secret is they have a wonderful breakfast every Sunday from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Keep it a secret from the kids, but Santa will be there on Saturday, December 17th.

The breakfast will be closed on December 24th and 31st for the holidays.

The breakfast starts with a wonderful omelet bar. The rest of the menu includes: pancakes, french toast, waffles, and biscuits and gravy. There is also potatoes, sausage, bacon, and of course either orange or tomato juice. Don't forget the coffee! All of that for \$15, and children under 10 are half price. That price includes tax and tip [donations to the Purple Pig are encouraged].

That second best secret is the Elks have an indoor swimming pool and athletic facilities with handball courts. While you are there you can have a tour of the facilities.

The Elks Lodge 6 is at 6446 Riverside Blvd.

### Elk's Lodge Calendar of Events Elk's Lodge Sunday Breakfast

Every Sunday 8:30am - 11am

Bring your friends and family

\$15 tax included Best deal in town

Made to order Omelets or eggs any way you want. Bacon, sausage, potatoes, biscuits and gravy, pancakes, waffles, coffee large parties should call for reservations

Guest are VERY welcome!

**Water Aerobics** Monday 10 am, Wednesday 2 pm

**Yoga** Monday 12 pm, Wednesday 3:30 pm

Lodge members free.

**Martial Arts** Monday 5 pm

**Pickleball** Mon & Wed 9 am-12 pm, Thu 4:30-7:30 pm, Sun 4-7 pm

To sign-up or confirm schedule, join playtimescheduler.com

**Improv Night** 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 6-8 pm

**Wednesday Night Dinner** 5:30 to 7 pm

See above and [elks6.net](http://elks6.net) for weekly menu.

**Karaoke** Thursday 7 pm

Saturday 7:30pm

**Friday Happy Hour** Friday 4-7 pm

**Land Park Softball**

Softball is back in Land Park and will now be a part of the Land Park Pacific Little League organization. LPPLL has been a pillar in our community since 1954 and is welcoming softball under their umbrella this SPRING!

Early Bird Registration is NOW OPEN!

Visit [lppll.com/](http://lppll.com/) registration to register and learn more.

### Sacramento Area Museums Showcase Region's Farm-to-Fork Roots All Year Long

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (August 28, 2023) –

The Greater Sacramento region is rich with popular museums and destinations that offer diverse and enriching experiences for individuals, families, residents, and visitors alike. Given the critically important role agriculture continues to play in the region, many local museums offer special exhibits, experiences and activations that highlight ever-enduring Farm-to-Fork connections. A sampling of some of the Farm-to-Fork offerings at local museums includes the following:

**California Agriculture Museum** – Woodland is home to an entire museum focused on agriculture, filled with a unique collection of harvesters, wheel and crawler-type tractors, combines, trucks, art, artifacts, rotating interactive exhibits and much more. In all, the museum tells the history of Farm-to-Fork, dating back to the Gold Rush

era and how the industry evolved from horse drawn to steam driven to fuel powered machines to harvest and transport California's bounty.

**California State Railroad Museum & Foundation** – A Fruit Growers Express refrigerated rail car is on permanent display inside the Museum's Roundhouse. Museum visitors can explore this historic rail car and exhibit, "Farm to Fork: A Public History," and learn about how refrigerated rail cars enabled California farmers, growers, and producers send farm-to-fork freshness all over the country. Visitors can step inside the historic Fruit Growers Express rail car to see how the ice-cooled rail cars transported produce and built an agricultural system that exports more wealth than the California Gold Rush. Plus, the popular weekend excursion train, Sacramento Southern Railroad – currently on pause due to an important rail repair project – runs on the historic Walnut Grove Branch Line. This rail line transported pears, asparagus, celery, seeds, and other products from the Delta communities to markets nationwide.

**Sacramento Children's Museum**

– Young visitors hungry to learn about fresh food have a variety of options at the Children's Museum, including at the miniature Leo's Market and Leo's Food Court (a miniature market of food carts), about bees and honey with the in-house beehive, and an interactive train table highlighting Sacramento's agricultural landscape in miniature, complete with mini livestock. Plus, the Children's Museum will be at the Farm-to-Fork Festival (September 22-23) sharing vegetable stamp printing with visitors.

**SMUD Museum of Science & Curiosity** – MOSAC's interactive exhibits bring the story of water to life, demonstrating how our region is working together to conserve this natural resource for now and future generations. The "Water Challenge" exhibit lets museum visitors actively shape a watershed's flow, create a tune for saving water at home, and choose between local or non-local foods to buy based on how everyday decisions impact conservation efforts — all while learning about the environmental footprint along the way.

**Utility Exploration Center** – The City of Roseville's Utility Exploration Center (UEC) is a testament to the region's commitment to sustainable living and resource conservation. Nestled in the heart of a region renowned for its Farm-to-Fork movement, the UEC acts as an educational hub, encouraging residents and visitors alike to delve into the intricacies of energy

and water conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable practices. By fostering an understanding of how we use and preserve resources, the UEC underscores the importance of our agricultural roots.

For more information about upcoming activities offered by Sacramento area museums, "like" them on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/SacMuseums](http://www.Facebook.com/SacMuseums), follow them on Instagram and Twitter @SacMuseums or visit the user-friendly website at [www.SacMuseums.org](http://www.SacMuseums.org).

### Friends of Sutter's Fort Announces Discounted Admission Rates

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Friends of Sutter's Fort, in partnership with Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, is proud to present a series of family-friendly events and activations this fall highlighted by holiday themed movies, an all-ages concert, and adventurous self-guided evening tours by flashlight or lantern light.

For those interested in visiting inside Sutter's Fort State Historic Park (that is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily), all Fort admission fees will be waived for the duration of a major roof replacement and seismic stabilization project that is currently underway. Visitors can observe the rehabilitation project firsthand and tour the Central Building, which remains open.

*Friends of Sutter's Fort Friends of Sutter's Fort is a 501c3 charitable foundation. As a state park cooperating association, we collaborate with California State Parks at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park to preserve and protect historic structures, and artifacts, and to engage visitors of all ages. For more information, please visit [www.sutters-fort.org](http://www.sutters-fort.org)*

### Elks 6 Lodge Winter Blast February 24, 2024

Last year was a sellout - You don't want to miss this great event.

Tickets will go on sale in the office by 12/10.

Online ticket sales will be available soon, watch for the announcement.

Note the 5\$ savings for tickets purchased by February 3.

### Bunny on the Green Saturday, March 16th, 2024

Late morning/early afternoon, exact time to be determined.

Location: William Land Park Golf 1701 Sutterville Road.

Families are encouraged to come and meet The Easter Bunny for the 2nd Annual Bunny on the Green. It is free to visit the Bunny and take photos. There will also be a children's Easter Bonnet contest and putting activities. Guests can purchase food and mimosa's for the adults. More details to come soon.

★



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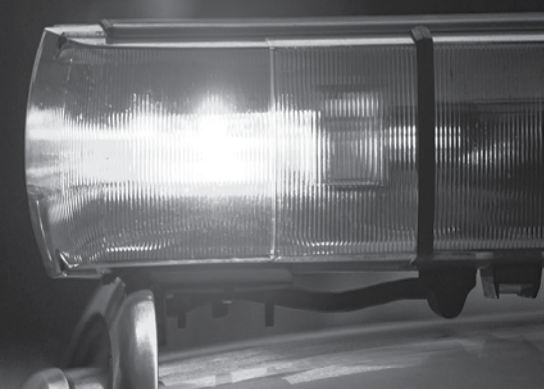
School Board issues

Elections/Polling places, initiative petitions

Tax assessments/proposals



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# Gift Card Scam and Arrest



Over 5,000 gift cards were found in Ningning Sun's possession. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County Sheriff's Office

## Sacramento County Sheriff's Office News Release

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - During our recent retail theft Operation Bad Elf, detectives observed an individual, later identified as Ningning Sun, acting suspiciously near the gift cards in the payment aisles in a Sacramento Target store. Detectives observed him placing all the gift cards on a rack inside his jacket, then replacing the gift cards with another set of seemingly identical ones. After Sun was stopped trying to exit the store with the stolen gift cards, detectives discovered over 5000 gift cards from Target and Apple in his possession.

Their investigation revealed Sun was part of a scam that tampered with gift cards, scanned

the bar code, and stole money from the gift card as money was loaded on them. Victims are completely unaware it is happening, and the money is often siphoned to an off-shore account within seconds. Their investigation revealed that the operation spanned across California and several regions nationwide.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office urges residents to be cautious when purchasing physical gift cards from any retailer. Be observant of any signs of tampering, especially scuff marks or scratches near the bar code on the back of the card. These operations are very sophisticated, and modifications to the gift cards are often virtually undetectable, even to the trained eye. Detectives suspect Sun has done this at many stores and

are requesting the public's help to potentially link him to other crimes.

This investigation is still ongoing, and detectives are asking anyone with information about this incident to contact the Sheriff's Office at (916) 874-5115 or Sacramento Valley Crime Stoppers at (916) 443-HELP (4357). Tips leading to additional charges 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](http://www.sacvalleycrimestoppers.com). Tip information may also be left anonymously at [www.sacsheriff.com](http://www.sacsheriff.com) or by calling (916) 874-TIPS (8477). ★

# Sacramento Grocery Indicted for Conspiracy, Immigration Fraud, Obstruction of Justice, and Pandemic Relief 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. ★

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# Board Approves Parks Fee Schedule Update

## 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, 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. ★

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# A Big Change at EDD

*EDD changes unemployment contractor after scams*

BY LYNN LA,  
calmatters.org

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY CA (MPG)** - 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 workers' bank accounts, which the



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

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." ★

# Mobile Vet Clinic for Unhoused Pets Launches

**Sacramento County News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - PAWS, or Pet Aid and Wellness Services, rolled into action at the Safe Stay community on Florin Rd on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, and began seeing its first four-legged patients, marking a pivotal moment for accessible pet healthcare in Sacramento County. PAWS is the first mobile spay/neuter outreach clinic for pets of unhoused pet owners in the area and was approved by the Board of Supervisors in July 2022.

## Spaying and Neutering at the Forefront:

The primary mission of PAWS is to address pet overpopulation and reduce unwanted litters. The mobile clinic is fully equipped to provide spay and neuter services, ensuring that pets of unhoused owners have access to this vital and preventive care. By focusing on these procedures, PAWS aims to contribute significantly to controlling the pet population.

## Comprehensive Veterinary Care on Wheels:

PAWS goes beyond spay/neuter services; it will also offer vaccinations, medical care, and diagnostic services for ill and injured pets. PAWS offers comparable services to care provided by a traditional veterinary office. This comprehensive approach aims to promote the overall health and well-being of all pets in the community and reduce preventable diseases.

## Removing Barriers to Care:

By removing barriers such as transportation and cost, PAWS bridges the gap in access to veterinary services and represents a significant stride towards a more inclusive approach to pet healthcare. All services are provided by the County at no cost to pet owners.

## Strategic Operation Schedule:

The mobile clinic will operate four days per week, with two days dedicated to providing services at shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness. One day per week will be spent at encampments throughout the County, reaching pets in need where they are. An additional day each week will be devoted to providing spay/neuter services for shelter pets at Bradshaw Animal Shelter.

Dr. Cynthia Metcalf, who joined Sacramento County Animal Care Services earlier this year as the full-time veterinarian for PAWS, emphasized the clinic's commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of both pets and their owners. "PAWS is not just a pet clinic; it's a lifeline for those who do not currently have access to veterinary care. We're breaking down the barriers to that care and ensuring that every pet, regardless of their circumstances, receives the love and attention they deserve, and that every pet owner's concerns are heard," Dr. Metcalf said.

The public can learn more about PAWS and view a calendar of upcoming service areas at the Sacramento County Animal Care Services website. ★



Dr. Metcalf assesses a new patient. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

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