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Gum Ranch Park Opens



Four-year-old Ronan of Fair Oaks beams with pride after helping cut the Gum Ranch Park ribbon, with help from (left to right) FORPD Director Ralph Carhart, District 3 Supervisor Rich Desmond, FORPD mascot Rocky the Rooster, FORPD Chair Raymond James Irwin, SMUD Board member Brandon Rose, and FORPD Director Delinda Tamagni.

Story and photos by Shaunna Boyd

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) celebrated the opening of the new Gum Ranch Park with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on January 13. The park (5600 Tuckerway) is located in The Heritage at Gum Ranch by Elliott Homes, a new neighborhood near Kenneth Ave. and Madison Ave. FORPD Administrator Mike Aho said the park is the result of “such a team effort between the community, the developer, the staff, [and] the Board.”

The location is a well-loved area of the Fair Oaks community that was once the home of a local pumpkin patch owned by the Gum Family. The

park is almost 10 acres, with a mix of active play areas and natural open spaces with drought-tolerant landscaping. Aho said the creation of this park will “preserve and protect this area for generations to come.”

The unique playground equipment was made by Berliner, and Aho described it as “an adventure-based type of park. ... It’s free climbing, just free fun, and something unique and something different.”

In addition to play areas and a covered picnic area, the park also features about a mile and half of walkways, with District plans to add more connecting walkways on the other side of the creek after obtaining the required permits.

Other unique features include two much-anticipated amenities that are

new to the District. The park is home to the District’s first court for pickleball, which is a sport quickly gaining popularity that Aho described as “like tennis with a whiffle ball.” And the kids will be particularly excited about the District’s first splash pad, which will run when the weather warms up.

The park also offers another benefit: Kids in the surrounding areas always walked down Kenneth and along the busy Madison Ave to reach nearby Bella Vista High School. But now their walk will be safer and more enjoyable as they can travel through the park.

District 3 Supervisor Rich Desmond spoke at the event, praising the FORPD for their commitment to

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Sacramento County Deals Major Blow to Big Tobacco

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - With a strong vote of 3 to 1, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors passed the biggest hurdle in advancing an ordinance, authored by Supervisor Patrick Kennedy (District 2), that squarely rejects Big Tobacco’s deeply deceptive sales practice of hiding highly addictive nicotine behind candy flavors that appeal to kids. After returning for a final vote in 2 weeks the policy will take effect in 6 months. Beginning July 2022, the new law requires stores across Sacramento County to end the sale of candy-flavored e-cigarettes and hookah tobacco, menthol cigarettes, and cheap sweet cigars.

With this vote, Sacramento County becomes the latest jurisdiction to join more than 100+ municipalities across California that have already acted to take candy-flavored tobacco off store shelves. It marks a significant loss for Big Tobacco companies currently gearing up to spend millions of dollars in a bid to overturn California’s bipartisan and overwhelmingly popular statewide law that ended the sale of most candy-flavored tobacco products. Voters won’t have a chance to weigh in until late 2022, making this ordinance an important step towards protecting kids from getting hooked on nicotine in the interim.

“In this battle between California and Big Tobacco over the health of our children, Sacramento County is proudly on the frontlines taking action right now to get candy flavored nicotine off store shelves for good,” said Supervisor Patrick Kennedy. “We are listening to the scientists who say that nicotine is a substance that harms brain development. We trust data that says 90% of Sacramento County kids who use tobacco, use a flavored product. We see the addiction, disease, and death Big Tobacco has brought to our neighborhoods; and we are saying enough is enough. I am grateful to my colleagues for standing on the right side of history by taking action to protect the next generation from Big Tobacco.”

“Today we sent a clear message to tobacco companies: Sacramento County puts the health

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Women’s Empowerment Receives Grant to Help Homeless Women

By Kristin Thébaud, Thébaud Communications

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Women’s Empowerment recently received a \$25,000 grant from Save Mart Companies C.A.R.E.S. Foundation to support the nonprofit’s programs that educate and empower women experiencing homelessness with the skills and confidence necessary to secure a job, create a healthy lifestyle, and regain a home for themselves and their children. The foundation has supported Women’s Empowerment since 2010.

“Steadfast funding is the only way we are able to continue empowering women to rise from homelessness so they can

support themselves and their children, especially during a pandemic and housing crisis,” said Lisa Culp, executive director, Women’s Empowerment. “The Save Mart Companies C.A.R.E.S. Foundation is one of our most loyal funders, and we are grateful that each year they recognize the important work we do and deem it worthy of funding.”

The grant from The Save Mart Companies C.A.R.E.S. Foundation will support Women’s Empowerment’s work to help women experiencing homelessness find and maintain housing and jobs, including providing them with job-readiness classes, one-on-one support with a staff social worker and

employment specialist, support groups, legal services, financial literacy, childcare and child developmental assessments, health services and referrals to providers, transportation assistance, paid job training and more.

“When women have control over their income and livelihood, the effect on their families and communities is truly transformational,” said Nicole Pesco, board member, The Save Mart Companies C.A.R.E.S. Foundation. “The Save Mart Companies C.A.R.E.S. Foundation is proud to help provide women with meaningful participation at all levels of economic decision making and a quality standard of living for themselves and their families.”

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, Women’s Empowerment provides a nine-week employment-readiness and empowerment program, paid job training, childcare and support services so all women and their children can break the cycle of homelessness. Women’s Empowerment offers the most comprehensive job-readiness program in the Sacramento area designed specifically for women experiencing homelessness, and their children. Eighty-two percent of the graduates secure a job or enroll in school. Despite the housing crisis, 75 percent regain a safe home for themselves and their children. The award-winning

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CAL FIRE Gets Training Tower

By Kathy Ziprik, Ziprik Consulting

CAMERON PARK, CA (MPG) - Fire Captain/Paramedic Jonah Winger possesses a specific skill that has served him well during his 27 years in the fire service: patience. In 2011 Winger started the process of requesting funding for a fire training structure for the Cameron Park (Calif.) Fire Department. Finally, after many starts and stops, a new Firefighter training structure is now in place.

"The process took us 10 years to complete, but it's so worth it," says Winger, with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the Amador-El Dorado Unit out of Cameron Park. "Fire Facilities was patient to continually update us on costs and information as we worked to get the tower approved over the years. They were easy to work with on choosing, designing, and receiving estimates for the structure we desired.

"Having the three-story Firefighter tower readily available has changed everything. Now we can train any day or time at a moment's notice."

Training is critical for firefighters across the country, but especially in wildfire-prone California. So far in 2021, CAL FIRE has assisted with numerous wildfires, including the explosive 67-day Caldor fire that burned 221,835 acres. CAL FIRE teams are constantly on-call to control all aspects of wildfire suppression in the 1,786 square miles of El Dorado County.

"The Firefighter tower can be used for wildland



Above: Region Cal Fire teams train to lift a man in a rescue simulation. Right: The new Firefighter training structure at the Cameron Park (Calif.) Fire Department. Photos provided by Ziprik Consulting

urban interface structure triage and wildland drill scenarios," says Winger. "Previously we had to train on local business buildings and at our fire stations. Now we are training daily on a tower more suited for our needs. While wildfires are extensive in our area, we use The Firefighter tower almost exclusively for structural firefighting and rescue training."

CAL FIRE/Cameron Park Fire Department has already started including other stations in training for multi-company drills. The height and features of The Firefighter allow replication training for one- to three-story

scenarios of multi-family residential units, single-family residences, commercial structures and health care facilities. The crews are also training on internal and external staircases, fire protections systems, flat commercial roofs, parapets, attics, FDC, sprinklers and standpipes.

To enhance training experiences, several custom elements were added to The Firefighter for CAL FIRE.

"We chose to add the rappelling anchors, FDC, sprinkler system, burn crib, and roof hatch so we could use the tower for a variety of training scenarios," says Winger. "Every drill we place certain features 'in or

out' of play to create a specific atmosphere and training objective."

So, how did CAL FIRE finally get its customized tower? According to Sherry Moranz, Assistant Chief, Central Division Operations for CAL FIRE, the need finally matched up with the funding availability.

"We presented the project concept, the plan, the cost, the justification, and the benefit to the Cameron Park Community Services District Board and to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors," says

Park residents, but residents across all of El Dorado County."

Now located adjacent to Fire Station 89 in Cameron Park, The Firefighter is ready for action. Winger believes more than 100 people will train on the structure regularly.

"The tower and burn room annex are ideal for both fire and EMS scenarios," says Winger. "We anticipate the entire CAL FIRE Amador-El Dorado Unit will train here. This includes our personnel, fire interns, fire explores, fire academies, class and other El Dorado County fire cooperators.

"We waited a long 10 years to get this terrific training tower. Now we plan to use it constantly to hone our skills and prepare even harder to serve residents in our area."

Fire Facilities, Inc. (FFI), an ISFSI corporate sponsor, manufactures a full line of steel fire training structures engineered to withstand real-life firefighting conditions. From mobile units to burn rooms to high-rise towers, FFI training models are available in a multitude of configurations. Our parent company, Trachte Building Systems, is one of the largest and oldest manufacturers of steel self-storage systems in the industry. For more information, visit www.firefacilities.com or call 800-929-3726. ★



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Gum Ranch Park Opens \$2.75 Million EDD Fraud Scheme



The adventure-based playground equipment at Gum Ranch Park offers recreation opportunities for all ages, as showcased by Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Chair Raymond James Irwin, who got in on the fun at the ribbon-cutting event.

Continued from page 1
improving the community with such beautiful parks. He said Fair Oaks is “such a great place to live with such great amenities like this.”

FORPD Director Ralph Carhart, who has a passion for Fair Oaks history, gave an overview of all the previous owners of the property, who all shared a deep love for the site.

FORPD Chair Raymond James Irwin said, “Parks make life better. ... This is a guiding principle and value of who we are as a District and who we are as a governing board. We truly believe in enriching lives, through exceptional park and recreation opportunities that truly strengthen our community. ... Positive healthy growth is always something that’s at the forefront of my mind while retaining our beautiful rural and natural charm, to which this park is a testament.” ★



The new Gum Ranch Park offers an array of exciting rope climbing features to thrill adventurous kids of all ages.



Fair Oaks kids explored the playground amenities at the Gum Ranch Park ribbon-cutting event.



Sacramento County District Attorney Press Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - On January 6, 2022, 35-year-old Jamie Williams-Major was arrested on 166 charges related to an Employment Development Department

(EDD) fraud scheme totaling more than \$2.75 million dollars. Williams-Major fraudulently filed 166 EDD claims in the names of state prison inmates and identity theft victims. To date, this is the largest EDD fraud scheme discovered in Sacramento County.

In April of 2021, Sacramento County District Attorney’s Office, Sacramento County Sheriff’s Office, and the Employment Development Department arrested Williams-Major and six other subjects who were state and local inmates. At that time, law

enforcement believed the subjects obtained more than \$250,000 in a fraudulent EDD scheme.

After law enforcement arrested Williams-Major in April, they obtained a search warrant and searched the contents of her cell phone. Law enforcement discovered the fraud was 10 times bigger than first suspected. Authorities obtained an arrest warrant for Williams-Major and arrested her in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Williams-Major was transported to Sacramento to face additional charges and will be arraigned on January 19, 2022. ★

When to Call 9-1-1

Sacramento Metro Fire Press Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - When someone calls 9-1-1, the expectation is that an ambulance shows up quickly, you are assessed, stabilized if necessary, and taken to the nearest emergency department to be seen by a doctor within minutes. However, when someone calls 9-1-1 for a non-life-threatening event, they often times are not seen quickly at the hospital. Sometimes for several hours.

This is because a hospital emergency department operates under what is called a “triage” system and not a “first-come, first-served” system—like a doctor’s office. The more significant the medical event is, the faster the patient is seen. This is because things like choking, heart attacks, and head injuries require immediate attention to give the patient the best chance of survival.

Metro Fire would like to remind the community about when it is appropriate to call 9-1-1 and when an individual is better served contacting their primary care physician or driving themselves to an urgent care clinic to be seen by a doctor.



Urgent care clinics can handle most non-life threatening situations, allowing ambulances to focus on critical situations. Photo: Sac Metro Fire.

Always call 9-1-1 for a life-threatening emergency. If someone is having difficulty breathing, choking, head injury, loss of consciousness, chest pains, significant bleeding, internal injury, falls from a high distance, or any other injury or illness that is immediately life threatening 9-1-1 is appropriate.

It is recommended that you contact your physician for issues such as general pain, prescription refills, COVID testing, or an illness or injury that is not an immediate threat to health or life. If you need to be seen immediately, urgent care clinics can handle most non-life threatening issues such as prescriptions, routing testing, cold and flu like symptoms, and more! ★

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Assemblyman Kevin Kiley Introduces Bill to Repeal Prop. 47



From the office of Kevin Kiley Assembly Member Press Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Assemblymembers Kevin Kiley (R-Rocklin), James Gallagher (R-Yuba City), and Jim Patterson (R-Fresno), along with 11 coauthors, introduced Assembly Bill 1599 to repeal Proposition 47, the ballot initiative that

reclassified a number of felony theft offenses as misdemeanors.

"After years of failed policies and leadership, California is now experiencing an unprecedented surge in crime," Assemblyman Kiley said. "When you pass laws to legalize bad behavior and have prosecutors who fail to hold people accountable, this is the end result. It is time to end the failed experiment of Prop. 47 and give voters the opportunity to restore consequences and accountability to our criminal justice system."

In a recent column, George Skelton with the LA Times argued in support of Kiley's proposal, stating, "Proposition 47 should be returned to the

voters and exchanged for a product that works better for everyone, including merchants."

While Governor Newsom has stated that "we will not walk back" policies like Prop. 47, the law has received bipartisan criticism including a Democratic legislator who decried the "epidemic of theft caused by Proposition 47 that over promised and under delivered."

Assemblyman Kevin Kiley represents the 6th Assembly District, which includes the Sacramento, Placer, and El Dorado County communities of Cameron Park, El Dorado Hills, Fair Oaks, Folsom, Granite Bay, Lincoln, Loomis, Orangevale, Penryn, Rocklin, Roseville, and Sheridan. ★

Out & About

with MaryAnne Povey



OV Chamber Announces New Board President!



New Board President for Orangevale Chamber of Commerce, Jonathan Spangler. Courtesy photo

By MaryAnne Povey

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - Kicking off the new year with new leadership, the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce is happy to introduce its new Board President, Jonathan Spangler. Jonathan will be taking over the role from Brad Squires, who has led the Board since 2018. Under Brad's leadership, the once struggling organization has been revamped into a vibrant, thriving chamber that is growing and continuing to perfect its services to members and the community.

Some of Brad's most

notable accomplishments include re-locating the chamber office by "restoring an eye sore" vacancy, re-branding the chamber and website, increasing membership and Board of Directors, reinvigorating GLOVE efforts and securing \$7 million for Greenback Lane improvements—just to name a few!

"Jonathan is a great fit in continuing the work that has been started," said Squires, "I'm confident he'll do a great job leading the chamber in a positive direction this year and beyond."

After coming to Orangevale nearly 10 years ago, Jonathan immersed himself into the community because "he wanted to be an example to his family and make the community a better place to be". He's worked in the insurance industry for 20 years, and currently is a partner of Freedom Insurance Services.

It didn't take long for Jonathan to plug in and get involved after putting down roots in Orangevale with his wife Jennifer and two

sons. He first joined the Orangevale Rotary, and then the Orangevale Chamber because both were not just focusing on business and networking but were community- and family-friendly too.

Besides the goals of growing memberships and events for the chamber, his hope is that the Chamber becomes the hub for all the service organizations, business and community events. "Developing a community calendar is critical so that everyone is on the same page," he shared, "With so much always going on, it's really important that we all work together."

Jonathan is very optimistic about the future and his new role "because we are in a good place with a strong board, a new Executive ED and solid structure in place. We're coming out of Covid and all the pieces for success are there."

For more information about becoming a member, upcoming events or getting involved with the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce, go to www.orangevalechamber.com. ★

Sacramento County Deals Major Blow to Big Tobacco

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and wellbeing of our children and our communities first," said First District Supervisor Phil Serna. "More specifically, with the adoption of this ordinance we finally end Big Tobacco's practice of targeting African American neighborhoods, deliberately hooking generations of Black youth on minty-menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products. I was proud to vote YES today."

"When 80% of kids who have used tobacco say they started with a flavored product, that's a huge red flag that it's time to make sure these products aren't sold in our neighborhoods," said

Kimberly Bankston-Lee, Senior Program Director, The SOL Project. "Tobacco companies have long manipulated flavors to get smokers hooked; masking the harsh taste of tobacco behind minty menthols is the reason 85% of black smokers use menthols. Candy-coated flavors are the tobacco companies' latest page from this same playbook, putting youth users at even greater risk of addiction. That's why the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors passed this historic ordinance to take the candy-flavored nicotine Big Tobacco uses to hook kids off store shelves and out of our communities."

"As the global pandemic rages on, the very last thing we need in our schools and neighborhoods is Big Tobacco using candy flavors to lure kids like me into getting hooked on nicotine," said Milton Nguyen, Youth Advocate, 2021 Tobacco-Free Kids' National Advocate of the Year. "Nicotine is especially harmful to young people, capable of harming adolescent brain development and impacting their attention, mood, and impulse control. We need to be doing everything within our power to keep nicotine products out of the hands of kids and this ordinance is a strong step forward." ★



Women's Empowerment Receives Grant

Continued from page 1

organization has graduated 1,734 women and their 3,859 children. Women's Empowerment is funded through private donations from the community and grants. To make a donation, visit Womens-Empowerment.org.

The Save Mart Companies C.A.R.E.S. Foundation supports community, arts,

recreation, education and sports. The foundation was created by Save Mart Supermarkets and operates with a separate board of directors maintaining a separate focus on supporting the company's principle of giving back to the communities it serves. For more information: TheSaveMartCompanies.com/Cares. ★

Discover a New Love for Nature

Effie Yeaw Nature Center Press Release

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - In February you can gain a new love for the great outdoors at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center! Visit the Nature Center for a new Valentine's Weekend program at the nature-themed 'night out' that both adults and children can enjoy.

Also, don't miss out on our other weekend programs Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons happening every weekend in February.

Saturday, February 12: Nature of Love – Looking for a special night out? Join us for an evening of drinks, appetizers, and a hike through the Nature Study Area. Learn fun

facts about the interesting and bizarre mating behaviors of a variety of different animals from small to large.

Have kids? While you and your partner hike, your child can participate in hands-on nature activities, games and meet one of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center's animal ambassadors.

The end of the night,

everyone will come together for s'mores by a campfire.

Weekend Programs – Join a naturalist for a hike, presentation, or art project on Saturdays and Sundays in February at our Weekend Programs! Learn about native species like beavers, falcons and pipevine butterflies or craft your own Valentine's Day card

with one of our resident Animal Ambassadors on it. Whichever program you choose, fun for the whole family is guaranteed.

Space for the programs is limited – call ahead of time to pre-purchase your spot! \$5 ages 12+ / \$3 ages 4–11. Members: \$4 ages 12+ / \$2 ages 4–11. Ages 3 & under FREE.

Saturday programs start

at 10:30 am and Sunday programs 1:30 pm.

The Effie Yeaw Nature Center is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide educational and interpretive programs and information about the natural environment, principally in the American River Parkway. We connect nature to people and people to nature. Join us! ★

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By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

Begin The New Year Living Life Trusting God

Almighty God has provided many of His promises in the Holy Bible for those who will follow and live by His teachings and laws. He is a faithful God who for a thousand generations kept His promises and constantly loves those who love Him and obey His commands. He promises never to leave or forsake anyone who comes to Him with a pure and loving heart to listen and follow. Read His promise in Deuteronomy 7:9.

God shows us how to distinguish right from wrong, how to find the right decision every time. For wisdom and truth will enter the very center of your being, filling your life with joy. God will instruct you and guide

you along the best pathway for your life. He will advise you and watch your progress. See Psalms 12:8 *In everything you do, put God first and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success. Read Proverbs 2: 9-10 and 3:6*

God has a plan for every life! Words in the Old Testament of one who believed and followed reads: "You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book." Psalms 19:16 And God wrote "I have created you and cared for you since you were born. I will be your God throughout all your lifetime, yes even when your hair is white with age. I made you and I will care for you. I will carry you along and be your Savior." (Isaiah 46:3,4)

The promises of God

are available to those who believe and follow God's instructions.

"Take delight in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will act." (Psalm 37:4,5) God will answer your prayers and meet every need!

"Trust in the Lord and do good, so you will dwell in the land and enjoy security. Be delighted with the Lord. Then He will give you all your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust Him to help you do it and He will." (Psalms 37: 3,4,5)

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Newsom Backs Away from Single-Payer Health Care Pledge



By Dan Walters CALMatters

When he unveiled a new state budget last week, Gov. Gavin Newsom crowed about California becoming the nation's first state to embrace universal health care coverage.

His budget would accomplish that goal by extending state Medi-Cal coverage to undocumented immigrants of all ages, beginning in 2024.

"I campaigned on universal health care," Newsom said a day later. "We're delivering that."

Not quite. While running for governor in 2018, Newsom pledged to create a single-payer system for California, making the state the sole supplier of coverage.

"I'm tired of politicians saying they support single-payer but that it's too soon, too expensive or someone else's problem," Newsom said during the campaign.

That pledge won Newsom the support of single-payer advocates. The California Nurses Association decked out a bus that toured the state with a picture of Newsom's face and the words: "Nurses Trust Newsom. He shares our values and fights for our patients."

However, once elected, Newsom did virtually

nothing to implement the promise. Instead, as the state's finances allowed, he extended Medi-Cal coverage incrementally to undocumented immigrants and others lacking private or public coverage.

Along with mandates and subsidies from Obamacare, state actions eventually raised health coverage to 94% of Californians and Newsom's latest extension to undocumented adults would make it, at least on paper, 100%.

Newsom gets a bit testy when reporters ask him about his 2018 pledge. As he was introducing his budget this month, the state Assembly was beginning to move a single-payer bill for what's called CalCare, and asked about it, Newsom replied, "I have not had the opportunity to review that plan, and no one has presented it to me."

"I think that the ideal system is a single-payer system," Newsom said. "I've been consistent with that for well over a decade. ... The difference here is when you are in a position of responsibility, you've gotta apply, you've gotta manifest, the ideal. This is hard work. It's one thing to say, it's another to do. And with respect, there are many different pathways to achieve the goal."

The nurses' union and other single-payer advocates aren't satisfied. The San Francisco Chronicle reported union organizer Alyssa Kang told single-payer advocates on a conference call, "So we want to be absolutely clear: This is a flip-flop from a governor who said ... 'I'm tired of politicians saying they support single payer but that it's too

soon, too expensive or someone else's problem.' This is absolutely unacceptable, and he cannot be allowed to have it both ways."

The differences between universal coverage and single-payer are more than semantic. The former includes a wide variety of public and private health insurance plans, many of which have coverage limits and patient co-pays, while the latter would provide unlimited benefits free of out-of-pocket costs, much like Great Britain's National Health Service.

Providing universal coverage, as Newsom defines it, is doable by spending a few additional billion dollars in the state budget. Single-payer, on the other hand, would require the federal government to give the state the \$200-plus billion it now spends on Californians' health care and the state to raise taxes more than \$150 billion a year.

The legislation now pending in the Assembly would create a framework but the taxes are contained in a companion constitutional amendment that would require two-thirds votes in the Legislature and voter approval.

With massive opposition from employers and much of the medical industry, chances for complete approval of the package are iffy at best and it doesn't appear that Newsom will lift a finger to help it. He's clearly content to settle for universal coverage.

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



By County Supervisor Sue Frost

Orangevale Community Update

Sacramento County Cannot Afford Another Lockdown

And while the omicron variant is extremely contagious, studies have shown that symptoms are less severe than other variants. The whole reason that the shutdowns happened originally were because deaths were on the rise and hospitals were being overrun, and in Sacramento County neither of these two things are happening. Thankfully, COVID related deaths have remained low, and our hospitals are not in danger of exceeding capacity.

Shutdowns do not come free, and should be avoided due to the devastating impacts they have on society. The Wellbeing Trust, a non profit working to de-stigmatize mental health issues, released a study that found 75,000 deaths during the recent national shutdowns were "deaths of despair" - which includes suicides and overdoses. And in California, nearly one in three restaurants permanently closed as a result of the most recent shutdown.

Nowhere are these negative shutdown impacts more evident than how they have impacted children. The United Nations Children's Fund released a report that showed the

current generation of students will lose \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings as a result of the learning losses suffered during the global shutdowns. The United States Department of Education also released a report that showed the pandemic has negatively affected academic growth, has deepened the impact of disparities in access and opportunity, and heightened the risk of sexual harassment, abuse, and violence.

Politicians, the media, and government agents have stoked fears to the highest level, and we cannot blame the public for being afraid. But we must fight to keep our businesses, communities and schools open - while also needing to recognize the importance of respectful debate and compassion.

Thank you for reading - and as always, if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@sacounty.net.

Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Rancho Murieta ★

Through the generosity of the American River Messenger, this column serves to provide an update about matters affecting the unincorporated community of Orangevale.

With the rise in COVID cases across the world as a result of the omicron variant, local jurisdictions are struggling with how to properly react. Some areas like Sonoma County have now issued "shelter in place" orders, which means residents can only go to places for essential reasons, such as the grocery store or doctor's office. I strongly believe Sacramento County should not go down this path, and should do everything possible to avoid further shutdowns like the previous failed attempts.

The current rise of COVID is somewhat misleading, as the only thing the media wants to currently report on is the number of COVID cases.

Probation Officers Endorse Pat Hume for Sac County Supervisor

Sacramento County Probation Association Press Release

ELK GROVE, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Probation Association (SCDSA) endorsed Pat Hume for Sacramento County Board of Supervisors in District 5. Current Supervisor Don Notolli is not running for re-election.

"Pat Hume has a long and consistent record of standing up for crime victims and ensuring public safety officers have the resources to do a difficult job," said Greg Stuber, President of Sacramento County Probation. "He's earned our support."

"It is an honor to earn the endorsement

of the Sacramento County Probation Association," said Hume. "Probation officers are the unsung heroes of our public safety system. They are the ones getting repeat offenders and illegal guns off our streets."

Hume has also been endorsed by the State Coalition of Probation Organizations.

Pat Hume was elected to the Elk Grove City Council in 2006, and overwhelmingly re-elected three times, most recently in 2018 when he earned nearly 60% of the vote. District 5 includes the cities of Elk Grove, Galt and Isleton, and Rancho Cordova, and the unincorporated communities of Rosemont, Wilton, and the Delta. ★



Publisher, Paul V. Scholl

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 - Road crew supply
 - Moron
 - Workman's cotton, once
 - Exclamation of surprise
 - Monte Cristo's title, in French
 - "Olympic Athletes from _____" 2018 hockey winners
 - "Figure skating jump (2 words)"
 - Capone's ilk, e.g.
 - Attention-getting sound
 - Eminem's genre
 - Cashier's call
 - Hit-or-miss
 - It will
 - "Triple one in figure skating"
 - Hustle and bustle
 - German Mrs.
 - A mile racer
 - a.k.a. horse mackerel
 - Jargon
 - Workbench holding device
 - Health club offering
 - Diner, e.g.
 - Latin for "and others"
 - Aviv
 - Ill-mannered one
 - Curiosity's victim?
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 - "_____ the Family" TV series
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 - Poppy seed derivative
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 - Egyptian cobra
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 - More, in Madrid
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- DOWN**
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 - Spectrum maker
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 - Roofed colonnade
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 - "Freezing" Marvel character
 - Letter-shaped girder
 - "_____ the land of the free..."
 - Designer's studio
 - "Briathlon gear"
 - Skyline lobbies
 - Manufacturing site
 - "2022 Winter Olympics number"
 - Like Curious George
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 - "Olympic sled"
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 - Respond
 - Circling

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Nielsen Cautions on Projected Surplus



Office of Senator Jim Nielsen

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Senator Jim Nielsen, R-Red Bluff, issued the following statement in response to Governor Newsom's proposed 2022-23 State Budget:

"Governor Newsom needs to wake up on water storage. There is an urgent need to fully-fund and immediately build large above-ground water

storage projects like Sites Reservoir, and his proposed budget falls billions of dollars short. Groundwater recharge and conservation, while important, simply aren't enough.

"As the state continues to face devastating wildfires that destroy lives, property and wildlife, the governor's budget proposes \$1.2 billion for forest health and fire prevention. Republicans have advocated for these efforts for decades. I'm glad that the Governor is slowly coming around on prevention, though much more needs to be done.

"Dangerous people are not in custody and the people of California don't feel safe. This budget proposal takes a few steps but doesn't sufficiently address the need to support law enforcement.

"The state budget has a \$21 billion surplus, so there's no reason to not provide enough money to fund these critical priorities."

Watch Senator Nielsen's video clips: <https://vimeo.com/663401256/813c-222bcf>

Visit nielsen.cssrc.us/ to the Senate Republican's letter to Governor Newsom outlining their critical budget priorities.

Elected to the State Senate in January 2013, Senator Nielsen represents the Fourth Senate District, which includes the counties of Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Tehama and Yuba. To contact Senator Jim Nielsen, please call him at 916-651-4004, or via email at senator.nielsen@senate.ca.gov. Follow him @CASenatorJim. ★

Tips For Safe Home Heating This Winter

SMUD News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - As overnight temperatures drop into the mid and low 30s, families will continue to use furnaces and heaters to stay warm. To make sure you're heating your home safely, review the following simple tips to stay warm this season.

Test your smoke detectors regularly, and make sure you have at least one carbon monoxide detector in your home. Never use propane heaters, barbecues, hibachis – or any heater with an open flame – indoors. They produce carbon monoxide, a clear, odorless gas that can be fatal to humans and animals.

When using electric space heaters, make sure they are completely unobstructed on all sides, and turn them off when leaving the room. Never use an appliance like a kerosene heater, propane gas grill or heater, stove, oven, or dryer to heat your home.

When using a properly ventilated fireplace: Get your chimney inspected and/or cleaned annually by a professional. Use a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace to protect against sparks, and make sure your damper is open before lighting.

Never leave a fire unattended. Never use lighter fluid or any other type of accelerant to start your fire. Always keep children and pets away from heat sources. Keep flammable materials such as clothing and blankets away from heat sources.

Cold weather can make it tough for some families to stay warm, so SMUD offers programs to help low-income customers save on their electric bills. Eligible customers can take advantage of SMUD's Energy Assistance Program Rate (EAPR), a discount rate that can save customers money on their bill. EAPR customers may also be eligible for our residential weatherization program. Qualified customers can, at no cost to them, have their homes and apartments weatherized to improve energy efficiency and keep down energy costs. Customers needing help with their bills can also apply for the EnergyHelp program. SMUD is not shutting off power, nor charging late fees during this time. For more information on our assistance programs, visit smud.org/financialassistance.

Additional information on safe home heating and SMUD's EAPR program are available at smud.org/Safety or by calling 1-888-742-7683. ★

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Poppoff!

With Mary Jane Popp

Super Hearts



It's that time again when flowers, candy and cards reign supreme. It's Valentine's Day. There are mixed stories on the history of this day, but it's the word LOVE that prevails. Rick and I have shared many many Valentine days together. Married 51 years now and dating an additional four years, you can imagine how many bouquets and cards and candy have been shared. But looking back, I treasure the times when we were just together to share the beauty of our decades of the good and the bad. How many more will we share? We leave that up to a higher power, but we are so happy to have another in the now! When I was thinking about love and every letter in the word, I came up with what I think love REALLY means and how important it is to hold onto it. Here are my thoughts on this special word LOVE.

L...LEAVE the past where it belongs, in the past. Along the way, love will be tested, and if you cannot accept or forgive, then love can fade and be replaced by regrets and anger and you can forget building a future together. **O...ONE** true love comes rarely. Cherish it, nurture it and accept it without judgement. Remember, it is such a short time in the scheme of things on this plain. Be grateful for this precious time. **V...VALUE** what you have. Don't squander your time together by concentrating and picking on

the small and petty everyday things that come up. Appreciate the beauty of your love as pure and simple. Realize how special it is and enjoy every minute of that love. **E...EXPERIENCE** that love in the simple things you do. It's not the fancy restaurants and costly gifts that will last. How about those walks hand in hand, the trust you have built, the smiles you share, the favorite memories only the two of you know about. Bottom line, it's that someone who knows you and cares about all you do and shares the good, the bad, and even the ugly that life hands out.

There are so many poets and authors who can put love in perspective so much better than I can. Here are two thoughts to take to heart. The first comes from **E.E. Cummings** "Love is the voice under all silences, the hope which has no opposite in fear; the strength so strong mere force is feebleness." And to give you a smile on love, it's **Dr. Seuss**. "We're all a little weird, and life's a little weird. And when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we can join up with them and fall in mutual weirdness and call it love." I sort of like the second one best because we all have our quirks and it is special when we find that special someone who can call it what it really is...LOVE! **HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY** to you filled with caring and sharing and plenty of LOVE!!! ★

Cooley's Bill to Aide Small Businesses Passes Committee



Office of Assemblyman Ken Cooley

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - Assemblyman Ken Cooley (D-Rancho Cordova) announced that his Assembly Bill 820, which aims to spur lending to small businesses especially hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic by allowing qualified lenders to receive a tax credit for loans distributed during this trying time, has passed the Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation with bipartisan support.

The 2019 COVID-19 Pandemic response upended the daily lives

of all Californians. In an attempt to limit the spread of the virus, mandatory shutdowns were put in place. As the pandemic worsened and the shutdowns continued, the costs of operating a business without continued revenue became burdensome for many of California's small businesses.

"During the pandemic public investment was offered from the federal and state governments but not nearly enough small businesses applied and received relief. It is clear that the demand for capital and financial assistance exceeds available public resources," Cooley said. "It's vital that we do everything we can to keep these businesses afloat in these trying times. They are the economic engine that will spur our recovery."

AB 820 provides banks additional incentives to lend to small businesses by excluding the qualified interest income from calculation of the sales factor for taxable years

starting January 1, 2022 and before January 1, 2027. These loans must be one million dollars or less issued to a qualified business on or after March 15, 2020, but prior to January 1, 2025. A qualified small business must have 50 or fewer full-time employees and demonstrated annual loss in net income of 10% or more from 2020 to 2021. These definitions help to ensure that the aid is properly funneled towards supporting businesses that have struggled in the immediate throws of the pandemic.

AB 820 now moves to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

Assemblyman Ken Cooley represents the 8th Assembly District which includes the communities of Arden-Arcade, Carmichael, Citrus Heights, Rancho Cordova, Rancho Murietta, Rosemont, Wilton and other portions of unincorporated Sacramento County. For more information, please visit <http://asmdc.org/members/a08/>★

Ask Toni MyMedicare.gov Account Is Important to Processing Medicare Claims



Toni King

Toni:

My husband recently retired from his job and because I am over 65, I needed to sign up for Medicare. I had to go to the local Social Security with the Request

for Employment Information signed my husband's HR department to sign up for Medicare Part B. I asked if I needed to do anything else and I was told I was all set. I received my new Medicare card in the mail with both Medicare Part A and B dates a few weeks later.

It was not until I went to the doctor in March and had my claim denied when I discovered that the old company insurance is still listed as primary not Medicare.

Now my nightmare begins...because the insurance company (Blue Cross/Blue Shield) said that I had to call Medicare to update Medicare's system. Medicare said it would take 10 days to update. What do I do...I have no coverage because the company insurance is still listed as primary and neither Medicare nor my Medicare Plan G will pay? Please advise what I need to do?

~Janie from Lake Charles, LA

Janie:

In the past few weeks, the Toni Says® Medicare hot line has been receiving questions such as yours from those past 65 and leaving employer group benefits who are having their Medicare claims denied. Medicare still has the employer group health plan, whether it is UHC, Cigna, Aetna, etc., as primary insurance which supersedes Medicare and the Medicare Supplement or Advantage plan applied for.

There is a process that those leaving employer group health plans whether you are the employee or the covered spouse and enrolling in Medicare should do to verify which is considered primary

insurance. Also, you need to inform Medicare that Medicare should be primary, and you or your spouse are no longer covered on an employer group health plan.

The verification process to discover what is your primary Medicare insurance is below:

1. Visit <https://www.mymedicare.gov/> and register for a MyMedicare.gov account.
2. View what is in your MyMedicare.gov account and verify that your Medicare information is correct. Knowing this information, you will be able to view what Medicare is viewing while you are discussing your Medicare issues such as what Medicare plan you are using, what Medicare Part D plan you are enrolled in, Medicare claims and other Medicare issues.
3. If you see that your employer group health plan is still primary after you have enrolled in you and/or your spouse's Medicare Part B, then Medicare is requesting that one call the **Medicare Benefits Recovery Center** at 1-855-798-2627 and advise the agent who answers that you and/or your spouse are no longer enrolled in the employer group health plan. The change from group health insurance as primary insurance to Medicare is estimated to take 48 hours.

We are advising those on Medicare to open a www.mymedicare.gov account when enrolling in Medicare whether you are turning 65 with or without employer group health benefits. Medicare mails out the Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) every 90 days or one can view it faster via www.mymedicare.gov.

Please email the Toni Says® Medicare team at info@tonisays.com or call 832/519-8664 regarding Medicare questions including Toni's stress-free way to enroll in Medicare.

2022 Confused about Medicare Zoom webinar is Thursday February 10 at 4:00 PM. Visit www.tonisays.com to sign up for Toni's online webinar event. ★

Social Security Matters Is My Analysis of my Wife's Social Security Correct?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I am 63 and my wife is exactly 4 1/2 years younger than me to the day. I plan to file for Social Security when I turn 70. My earnings history is considerably higher than my wife's. I talked with a person at the local Social Security office, and she suggested that my wife file at 62 based on her own record then convert to her spousal benefit when I file at age 70. However, from what I can tell, if she files before her FRA of 67, not only will she get less based on her own record, but she will also receive less for her spousal benefit, as well as her survivor benefit if I die before her (which is statistically likely). Is my analysis correct? **Signed: Planning Ahead**

Dear Planning: Your analysis is correct regarding your wife's spousal benefit while you are both living, but incorrect regarding her survivor benefit if you die first. Here's why:

If your wife takes her personal Social Security (SS) retirement benefit at age 62, she'll get 70% of what she would get if she waited until her FRA of 67 to claim. That amount is permanent (except for COLA), and it is what her "spousal boost" will be added to when she takes her

spouse benefit (when you claim). In the scenario you mention, in addition to your wife's own benefit being reduced by 30% for claiming at 62, since she will not yet have reached her FRA of 67 when she takes her spouse benefit from you her "spousal boost" will be reduced as well. So, claiming at 62 not only reduces her personal benefit it also means she'll get less than 50% of your FRA benefit amount when you claim (FRA amounts are used to compute spouse benefits, regardless of the age benefits are claimed). All of which means her spousal benefit will be considerably less.

That isn't necessarily an unacceptable strategy unless she is working, in which case she'll be subject to an earnings limit which will either reduce how much Social Security will pay her while she's working or, if her earnings are high enough, eliminate her eligibility for any benefit until she stops working. The earnings limit changes yearly but for 2022 it will be \$19,560 and if that is exceeded, they will take away benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 she is over the limit. There is no longer an earnings limit when your wife reaches her FRA so your wife's plans for working should be factored into her decision on when to claim.

In any case, you should look at your overall benefit opportunity as a couple to see when your wife should claim, and life expectancy should always be factored into your thinking. If your wife expects to live a long life (and does), waiting until her FRA to claim her own SS will maximize her monthly benefit (including her spouse

benefit) for the rest of her life. If her life expectancy is less optimistic, claiming earlier has much merit. Just for reference, a woman your wife's age, statistically, will live to an average age of 87.

Regardless of when your wife claims her own benefit or her spousal benefit while you are both living, her benefit as your widow will not be affected. What affects her survivor benefit is her age when she claims it. If she has reached her full retirement age when she claims her widow's benefit, she'll get 100% of the benefit you were receiving when you died instead of the smaller benefit she was previously getting. If she hasn't yet reached her FRA when she claims her widow's benefit, then it will be actuarially reduced by a fraction of a percent for each month earlier than her FRA she claims it. Be aware too that even if your wife hasn't reached her FRA when you die, she can choose to delay claiming her survivor benefit until it reaches maximum at her FRA.

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

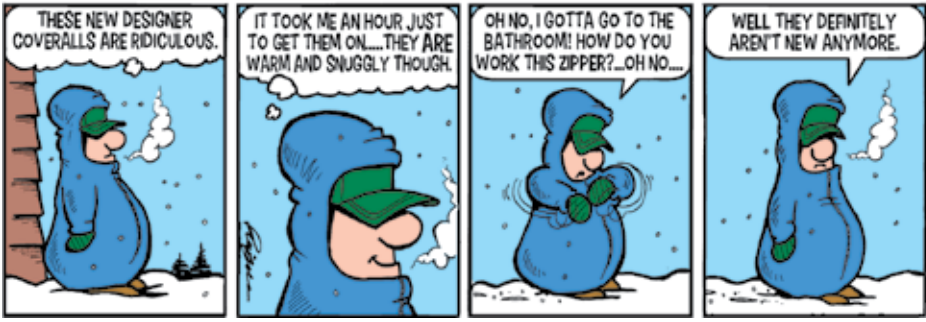
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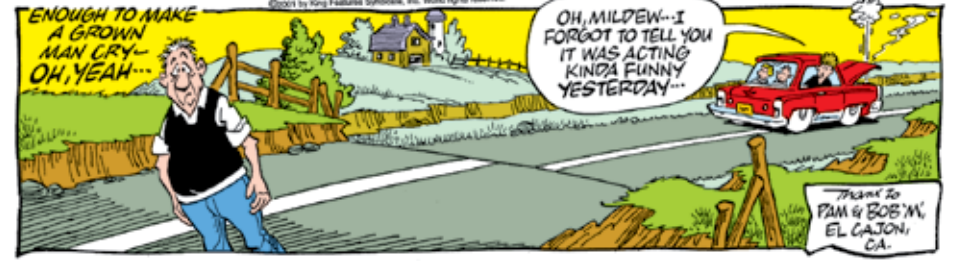
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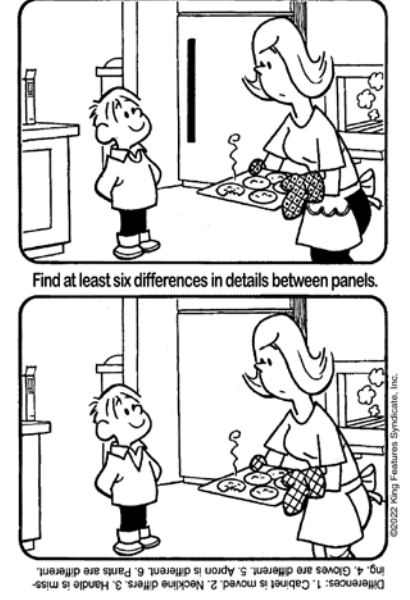


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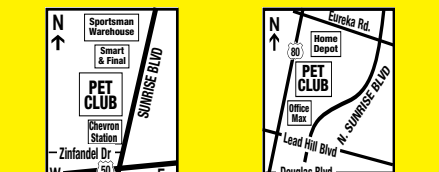
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Board Approves Initial ARPA-Funded Projects

By Kim Nava, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Board of Supervisors approved the initial project recommendations for Phase One Funding Allocations for the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). The funds come from the total of first allocation \$150 million, which the County received in May 2021.

Project proposals had to fit in one of the three Board-approved strategic investments for priority issue areas: Housing and Homelessness, Health, or Economic Response.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Landlord Engagement and Re-Housing Supports: \$10 million
This program will improve re-housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness with an array of supportive services, landlord engagement strategies and incentives, and flexible rental subsidies.

Sacramento County Social Health Connect: \$5 million*
A Social Health Information Exchange (SHIE) is a countywide data infrastructure that links medical, behavioral health, social service and housing data from multiple sources.

Community Nursing Encampment Unit Pilot: \$700,000
This public health nursing team will provide outreach, client advocacy and professional case management to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Community Nursing Children and Families Unit: \$1.5 million
This Public Health Nursing team will provide nursing assessments and interventions, care coordination, linkages to health resources, and health education to pregnant and parenting families experiencing, or who are at risk of, homelessness.

Encampment Management Information Database: \$160,000
This project will allow for the development of a web-based Encampment Management Information Tracking (EMIT) database to help County staff and contractors track and manage response to homeless encampments.

River District Outreach Navigation: \$160,000
The County will dedicate two contracted outreach/housing navigators to specifically work in the River District as a one-year pilot program.

Staff are continuing to develop and scope projects with a focus on housing development projects, funding to support development of new low-barrier, housing-focused sheltering programs, and improving access to the homeless system of care, including shelter and housing.

HEALTH

Substance Use Respite and Engagement Center: \$2.6 million
Funding to support the Substance Use Respite and Engagement (SURE) Center program operated by WellSpace Health, which provides short-term (4-12 hours) recovery, detoxification, recuperation from the effects of acute alcohol or drug intoxication.

Project Roomkey Medical Services: \$1 million
Provides medical services for individuals in Project RoomKey, including health education and care coordination, harm reduction, wellness and supportive care, COVID-19 testing and vaccination.

Emergency Medical Services Equipment: \$107,000
Funding will provide equipment and supplies in order to more safely and rapidly deploy temporary facilities in the event of a COVID-19 resurgence or Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation.

Primary Health Clinic Staffing: \$2.5 million
Funding will support additional temporary staff to increase service capacity at the clinic.

Pandemic Technology Needs: \$350,000
Will fund increased contracted IT Services and staffing support to support and deploy new public health systems and adjustments to current systems to track data and provide care for the community.

Juvenile Medical Services Staffing: \$191,500
Funding will support an additional registered nurse at the Youth Detention Facility.

Employee COVID Vaccination and Testing Program: \$300,000
Add temporary help to support one current Department of Personnel Services (DPS) staff member in the administration of the County Employee COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Program.

Academic Support and School Readiness: \$1.2 million
This project addresses the negative impact of academic disruption and remote learning due to the pandemic on foster

children, families and caretakers.
Building Strong Families: \$3.9 million
Funding will go toward Family Support Navigators to connect families to critical services in geographic locations that were hardest hit by COVID-19.

Sacramento County Social Health Connect: \$5 million*
A Social Health Information Exchange (SHIE) is a countywide data infrastructure that links medical, behavioral health, social service and housing data from multiple sources.

***Total project is \$10 million, funded with \$5 million from both Housing and Homelessness and Health allocations.**
Staff continue to develop and scope projects with a focus on opportunities to maximize the quality and delivery of public health services, and increasing medical care and reduce disease transmission in the Homeless community.

ECONOMIC RESPONSE

Retail Food Permit Fee Waiver: \$6.8 million
Waive the annual operating permit fees from the Environmental Management Department for approximately 7,161 retail food businesses in Sacramento County.

Chamber of Commerce Grants: \$325,000
Direct grants of \$25,000 to Chambers of Commerce located in unincorporated Sacramento County for operations dedicated to small business supportive programs related to equitable economic recovery efforts.

Property and Business Improvement District Grants: \$250,000
Direct grants of \$50,000 to Property and Business Improvement Districts (PBIDs) located in unincorporated Sacramento County for operations dedicated to small business supportive programs related to equitable economic recovery efforts.

Arts and Non-Profit Cultural Grants**
Direct grants in the range of \$5,000-\$100,000 to up to 300 arts and non-profit cultural organizations throughout the County that have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. This project will be in partnership with the City of Sacramento, who will provide a match to the project.

Small Business and Non-Profit Grants: \$7.5 million**
Direct grants of \$5,000 to 1,500 Small

Business and Non-Profit organizations in unincorporated Sacramento County that have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, Business Support Services: \$660,000
Fund the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce for operations dedicated to providing assistance, counseling, County program outreach and other services to businesses that have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Sacramento Inclusive Economic Development Collaboration, Business Support Services: \$1.8 million

Fund the Sacramento Inclusive Economic Development Collaboration (Sac IEDC) for operations dedicated to providing assistance, counseling, in-language support, County program outreach and other services to businesses that have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Business Environmental Resources Center, Business Support Services: \$200,000

Fund the Business Environmental Resource Center (BERC) for operations dedicated to providing assistance, counseling, County program outreach and other services to businesses that have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

****Grant application opportunities will be announced at a later date.**

In addition to approving the recommended projects, the Board asked County staff to bring back funding recommendations for chambers of commerce and property and business improvement districts outside of the unincorporated County who do not receive ARPA grants from incorporated cities, as well as projects that address food insecurity.

The County will receive the second installment of \$150 million in ARPA funds in May 2022.

American Rescue Plan Act funds provide local fiscal aid to support COVID-19 response efforts, cover increased expenditures, replenish lost revenue and mitigate economic harm from the COVID pandemic. For more information, visit the County's American Rescue Plan Act webpage. ★

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