

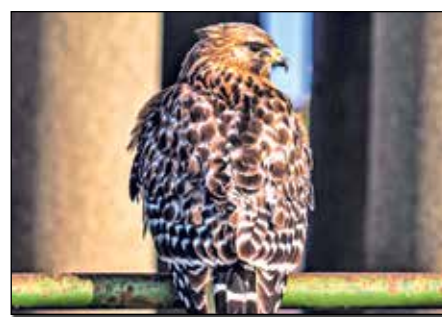


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VOLUME 16 • ISSUE 3

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FEBRUARY 12, 2021

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School's Out Forever?



Want to know why the majority of California schools might not reopen anytime soon? Image by natureaddict from Pixabay

By **Ricardo Cano,**
CALMatters.org

The first deadline Gov. Gavin Newsom set in his \$2 billion plan to reopen California's schools will come and go Monday (February 1st) without the necessary support from the Legislature, signaling the proposal has all but stalled.

The governor's proposal aimed to incentivize school districts to reopen their campuses by paying out grants of \$450 to \$700 per student to schools that developed safety plans for in-person instruction by Monday and

opened doors to the state's youngest students by Feb. 16.

But that proposal capsized under a wave of criticism and now the governor, lawmakers, school district leaders and teachers unions have limited time to figure out a solution before bringing kids back on campuses for this academic year becomes moot.

Criticism for Newsom's proposal stemmed from the state's largest school districts, teachers unions and legislators who called it unworkable and unlikely to nudge open classroom doors for the millions of California

students still learning remotely.

Among the issues raised had been the plan's tight deadlines to receive full funding, the stringent testing requirements attached to the grants – which could have cost districts more than the grants were worth – and, for some legislators, the lack of emphasis and coordination Newsom's proposal placed on prioritizing vaccines for teachers and school staff.

Newsom's staff said in legislative hearings this month that the plan's deadlines were based on a sense of urgency and the high stakes behind

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Los Rios Colleges to Offer Student Scholarships

By **Scott Crow,**
**Los Rios Community
College District**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Los Rios colleges - American River College, Cosumnes River College, Folsom Lake College and Sacramento City College - are offering \$735,000 in scholarships to students in 2021, with the application period opening January 15.

There are over 480 different scholarships offered, with each one focused on a specific major, program of study or subject area. Students have until March 5 to apply for the scholarships.

"The impact of a scholarship on a Los Rios student's life is transformational," said Los Rios Chancellor Brian King. "Scholarships allow students to take more units, work fewer hours, focus on school and complete their goals in less time. They also ensure groceries on the table and help to pay the rent. It is an investment in their plans and their futures."

Although community colleges provide the best value in higher education, the costs of books, supplies and transportation are still substantial. Estimated books, fees and tuition are \$2,500 per year for a full-time student, and the cost of attendance for a low-income independent student is \$19,821. Even for students who receive all the financial aid available to them, they still have \$6,674 in unmet need.

"The majority of our students are low-income and eligible for less financial aid than students attending four-year institutions. Due to the high cost of living in the Sacramento region, most students work 20 to 40 hours per week just to make ends meet," King noted. "Scholarships bring higher education into the reach of students for whom an education might not otherwise be attainable."

Many scholarships were established by generous donors who want to support students. This philanthropic support has a great impact on countless students each year.

Students should visit losrios.academicworks.com/ to learn more about scholarship opportunities and apply.

Los Rios colleges offer AA/AS degrees, certificates and transfer-education opportunities in more than 70 career fields. For more information, go to www.losrios.edu. ★

Proposition 19 Puts Family Legacies at Risk

**Commentary
by Ted Gaines**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - A massive change to property tax law is coming soon that could cost families thousands of dollars a year and affect how parents and grandparents pass down properties through generations.

Proposition 19, passed by California voters last November, makes major adjustments to the "parent-child" and "grandparent-grandchild" exclusions, all to the harm of taxpayers. Prior to Prop. 19, parents and grandparents could transfer their principal residence to a child or grandchild with no value limit and without adjusting the property tax base-year value, meaning that the child or grandchild would not be saddled with a huge new property tax assessment when they became owner. The person receiving the property could live there, rent it out, use it as a second home, or let it sit empty – there were no restrictions on property use to qualify for the exemption.

Prop. 19 changes all of that. Once the new law goes into effect on February 16,



Prior to Prop. 19, parents and grandparents could transfer their principal residence to a child or grandchild with no value limit and without adjusting the property tax base-year value, meaning that the child or grandchild would not be saddled with a huge new property tax assessment when they became owner. Image by Tumisu from Pixabay

2021, the unlimited value provision disappears. The new formula will be the current taxable value of the property plus one-million dollars. This change will hit many coastal property owners in the pocketbook as they inherit or receive property that appreciated wildly in California's multi-decade housing boom. Modest homes in Silicon Valley neighborhoods owned and transferred by middle-class families will face stratospheric tax bills under the new regime.

As bad as that will be, it is another provision that is more likely to cause havoc and financial loss for many Californians. Under Prop. 19, a person receiving property under one of these exclusions must now use the property as their primary residence to qualify. That means if you have moved to a different city, you would have to move back and occupy the home to receive the exemption. It means that if you are happy with your current home, you would have to give it up

and move to qualify for the exemption.

The date these changes go into effect is right around the corner. If you are planning on transferring property to a child or grandchild, please be aware of the very different landscape that awaits you and them after February 16.

There are a thousand unanswered questions regarding these changes that are not clarified in the proposition language. What happens if multiple children receive a

Continued on page 3

Looming Tax Tsunami Requires Immediate Action to Protect Unemployed

By Jacqui Nguyen, Senate Republican Caucus

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California Senate Republicans are concerned about the looming tax tsunami facing unsuspecting and unemployed Californians stemming from mismanagement and fraud in the state's Unemployment Insurance program. Senate Republicans delivered a letter to Governor Newsom urging him to take immediate action to help those innocent victims.

Californians will begin receiving 1099-G tax forms summarizing their taxable earnings from unemployment benefits. Not only will the tax bill come as a shock to recipients, there is a distinct possibility many victims of fraud will be left on the hook for taxes on money never received. The Employment Development Department (EDD) has struggled to do even the slightest thing right during the pandemic and to think this agency could straighten this out on its own prior to tax day is unfathomable.

By the end of 2020, EDD had paid out \$10.4 billion in benefits to claimants whose identities were unverified and that figure could climb as high as \$30 billion. This resulted in frozen bank accounts, stalled benefit payments and a variety of other problems each of our offices has been tirelessly working to help these individuals with over the last ten months.

The Auditor's report last week underscored Californians' worst nightmare by pointing out the potential problems with regard to tax liability. Without immediate action by the Governor and our federal representatives, innocent people will be left to fight the IRS over tax liabilities for benefits they never received.

Senate Republicans share the auditor's concerns, and want to ensure the Newsom Administration is taking every action possible to enact the auditor's recommendation to promptly assist victims of identity theft and help them avoid tax liabilities for unreceived benefits. April 15 is just a few months away and Republicans are rightfully concerned the agency will be unable to effectively address this new challenge.

An excerpt of the letter is below. For the full letter visit cssrc.us/sites/default/files/210202_EDD-Fraud-Tax-Liability-Audit.pdf.

... As we enter the tax filing season, many Californians will be surprised to learn that they have tax liabilities for UI benefits that were fraudulently claimed in their name. This is because 1099-G forms will soon be arriving in the mailboxes of taxpayers who were victims of identity fraud. Even more concerning is that there will be victims of identity fraud who will have no idea why they even received one of these forms until after they file taxes. This is because EDD is generally going

to mail the 1099-G to the most recent addresses of record, which are the ones the bad actors used to obtain UI benefits.

The State Auditor shares our concern for the tax liabilities for victims of this identity theft and recommends that EDD should prepare to assist victims of identity theft to ensure that they receive prompt assistance and avoid tax liabilities for benefits they never received. Specifically, the auditor recommends that EDD must prepare to respond to victims of identity theft who receive incorrect tax forms, and should, by mid-February 2021, provide information on its website and set up a separate email box for such individuals to contact EDD and receive prompt resolution. We wholeheartedly agree with this recommendation, but remain skeptical about the agency's ability to do it effectively, if at all. Our offices are currently hearing from the same amount of constituents as we did last spring, who are seeking help from EDD because of problems with identity verification, backlogged claims, and frozen accounts. ...

Last week, Senate Republicans requested legislative leadership for an immediate oversight hearing to discuss ways to implement the State Auditor's recommendations. An oversight hearing was held on Wednesday, February 3 with the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) and the Assembly Insurance Committee. ★

Mystery Brings Unlikely Departments Together

By Ken Casparis, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - This past December, a routine storm drain clearing led to an inter-departmental collaboration to identify the remains of a missing local man.

On Dec. 8, 2020, Sacramento County Department of Water Resources (DWR) employees were clearing a storm drain near Gordon Drive in Sacramento. While unclogging their vacuum machine, the crew manually pulled what was thought to be a stick out of the muck that clogged the machine only to find a shoe attached. It turned out to be a human leg bone and foot. DWR crews stopped work and notified the Sheriff's Department.

"Water Resources works regularly with law enforcement. Our staff teams up with deputies throughout the year as we clean up drainage culverts and water pipes because we run into homeless camps. We ask for the deputies' assistance to make sure nobody is harmed by our machines," said Water Resources Director, Michael Peterson. "So when our crews came across human remains, while shaken up by their discovery, they kept their cool and knew to call the Sheriff's Office for assistance."

When Sheriff's Office detectives responded to the scene, they discovered what appeared to be an additional bone in the storm drain. Detectives contacted the Sacramento Coroner's Office to assist with further evaluation of the remains.

Deputies and a Forensic Pathologist from the Coroner's Office responded to the scene. The leg bone and an additional bone found in the storm drain were determined to be human. Coroner personnel also searched a second area of the storm drain and discovered even more bones. The bones were

retrieved by Coroner personnel and were found to be an almost complete human skeleton.

In addition to the skeletal remains, a debit type card with no name printed on it was also recovered. The debit card company was contacted by the Sheriff's Office and it was learned that the card belonged to a male subject that had been reported missing. The male subject was last seen in November of 2018.

After seeing news reports of remains being found in the area of Stockton Blvd and Gordon Drive, the family of the missing male contacted the Sacramento County Coroner's Office to see if the bones found in the storm drain could belong to their missing relative.

The brother and daughter of the missing person provided DNA samples to the Sacramento County Coroner's Office. The Coroner's Office ran the DNA samples provided by the family and a sample from the remains using their ANDE Rapid DNA instrument. The Coroner's office was able to confirm that the remains belong to the missing male subject, and this case came to a close.

"While my team often works with the Sheriff's Office, we don't usually work with Water Resources, so this was a unique experience for us," said Kim Gin, Sacramento County Coroner. "This was a great example of County employees, that don't usually work together, coming together to identify this local man and bring some closure to his family."

The Sacramento County Coroner's Office has 73 active "John Doe" and "Jane Doe" cases dating back to 1975, and they need your help to identify them. If you recognize the description of someone on this site that could lead to an identification, please contact the Coroner's office by calling (916) 874-9320 or email coronerweb@saccounty.net ★

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Love, Shop, Dine; Support Fair Oaks!



Dot Boyd, Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - Did you “attend” the BoFOs?! If you did, I’m sure like me, you are beaming with pride over our FOYO leadership team who brought the 2020 Best of Fair Oaks Awards Night to life! It was pre-recorded at iconic locations in Fair Oaks by FOYO members: Jimmy Larkin, Jr. Honorary Mayor, Sophie Bollinger, Miss Fair Oaks, Matthew Mason, Producer and Director of the 2020 BoFOs, Noah Wright, Delanie Kendall, Cassie Kendall, Jake Wright, and Emma Ford.

You can see the Best of Fair Oaks Awards Night at www.fairoakschamber.com and even donate to their scholarship fund there. Applications are

being accepted now for youth ages 12-19, to join this very special group!

BoFO voting took place at www.bestoffairoaks.com where you can see all the nominees and the winners in each category. Not listed at that site, are the nominees and winners for the special FOCC-specific awards, chosen by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director for their support of FOCC and the community over the previous year.

Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Ryan Griffith, Averik/Voterfly, and the nominees were: Katy Coss, FO Park & Rec District, John Oldham, Resident Member, and Jeanette Woodward, Resident Member;

The winner for Business Person of the Year was Chrysti Tovani, Tovani Design & Photography, and a hard-working candidate for Honorary Mayor last year. The nominees were: Dot Boyd, Senior Safety Specialist, Erik Hokom, UPS Store Gold River, and Wei Zhang, FO Brew Pub;

Business of the Year was awarded to French in the Village, owned by

Rose Erickson. The nominees were: Del’s Pizza, Averik/Voterfly, Smokey Oaks Tavern, and Valley Redemptive Church;

The Special Recognition Award was presented to Mary Howard, Resident Member for her exceptional support of FOCC all year.

The most prestigious award, Citizen of the Year went to Keith Wright, Director of the OV-FO Food Bank for all that he and his team have done to serve our communities in these unprecedented times. Congratulations to all!

Hey Fair Oaks and Orangevale – let’s show some more love to our local businesses! The OV-FO Community Foundation has launched ‘Dinners on Us’ through March 12th! Details are at this link and on social media. It’s a great program with a different restaurant featured each week. You can pay what you can or pay it forward. Either way, everyone wins! <https://ovfocf.org/dinners-on-us>. Thank you for shopping, dining, and spreading the love locally. We’re all in this together!

See you in Fair Oaks! ★

Mike Galli is PGA Golf Professional of the Year in Northern California



Mike Galli, professional golfer at North Ridge Country Club. Photo courtesy Sally Galli

By Sally Galli, SGC

FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG) - In acknowledgement for his outstanding dedication and performance, Mike Galli, Head Golf Professional at North Ridge Country Club, is the recipient of the 2020 Northern California PGA Golf Professional

of the Year Award. This honor is awarded to a PGA Professional for qualities of leadership, strong moral character, and a substantial record of service to the PGA and game of golf. Galli has spent the past 25 years at North Ridge Country Club, where he manages golf operations including teaching, tournaments, and course play for the 462-member, private facility.

Galli’s passion as a teacher is evident. He is a highly regarded golf instructor and Certified Plane Truth Instructor. His study of the game and the mental-physical connection are the cornerstones to his teaching philosophy. With a desire for helping players

lower their handicap and enjoy this great game, he develops and coaches players of all levels.

Mike served four years as President of the North State PGA Chapter. With the help of an enthusiastic board, he proudly implemented many procedures and events to encourage growth of the Chapter, participation, camaraderie, and, of course, fun.

A native of Northern California, Galli played for San Joaquin Delta Junior College and California State University, Sacramento.

Mike would say simply “Golf has to be fun.” It is his charisma and love of the game that has led to his continuing success. ★

Proposition 19 Puts Family Legacies at Risk

Continued from page 1

property but only one makes it a primary residence, for example? What happens if someone qualifies for the exclusion, then moves out of the primary residence for a time, then moves back in? Does the exemption kick back in or is it lost forever? It was an initiative written with little concern for detail.

Proposition 19 does provide some new and welcome benefits for California taxpayers, most notably that it allows certain property owners to transfer their base-year tax assessment to all 58 counties. This allows homeowners who want to downsize, move closer to their children, or relocate for any other reason to keep a lower property tax. Prior to Prop. 19, that benefit was only available within counties or in a handful of counties that accepted base-year transfers. Taxpayers can now also use that transfer provision three times instead of the one-time, geographically limited use in prior law.

Although I favor the base-year transfer provisions, I oppose this new tax increase, which

will take hundreds of millions of dollars a year from Californians inheriting their family’s biggest asset. But it’s now the law, and as a Board of Equalization Member and taxpayer advocate, I will be seeking to identify every area where Prop. 19 is unclear and am committed to working with the legislature, county assessors, tax professionals and taxpayers to ensure effective administration of this new law.

Visit my website at boe.ca.gov/gaines for more information on Prop. 19 and for examples of how the new law would affect passed-down properties. Please consult a qualified attorney or tax professional for advice on transferring any property.

Senator Ted Gaines was elected to represent the Board of Equalization’s First District. He is a leading taxpayer advocate and is committed to providing trustworthy and transparent representation for nearly ten million constituents in 30 counties of northern, eastern, and southern California. For more information, visit boe.ca.gov/Gaines. ★



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SACRAMENTO COUNTY

State Lifts Suspensions of Half a Million Driver's Licenses

By Robert Lewis,
CALMatters.org

More than 400,000 Californians had their driver's licenses reinstated last month after an appeals court ruled that the state was illegally penalizing people who failed to appear in court on costly traffic tickets.

The lawsuit was part of a broader, ongoing effort by legal advocacy organizations to roll back California's traffic fines and court fees, which they contend disproportionately impact low-income residents and communities of color.

More than three million traffic infraction citations are issued in California every year, averaging between \$600 and \$700 each.

California has among the highest traffic ticket penalties in the country due to a litany of state and county add-on fees. A ticket for running a red light – which has a base fine of \$100 – actually costs nearly \$500 because of state and local fees, and more than \$800 if the driver misses a deadline to pay or appear in court.

The ruling “limits this blunt instrument of punishing people for not taking care of traffic tickets when in reality, for many Californians, traffic tickets are simply too expensive to take care of,” said Rebecca Miller, senior attorney at the Western Center on Law and Poverty, one of the organizations that sued the Department of Motor Vehicles.

“Like any state in the country, we have over-policing of lower-income and black and brown communities in California.”

Several Bay Area residents sued the DMV in 2016 when their licenses were suspended after they failed to pay a traffic ticket or appear in court. Last June, a three-judge panel in the First Appellate District ruled in their favor, deciding that the state inappropriately suspended the licenses of drivers without formal notices from traffic courts that their failure to appear was willful.

As a result, the DMV lifted suspensions on 555,000 driver's licenses. Because some had additional suspensions for other reasons, about 426,000 motorists were eligible to have their licenses reinstated, according to the DMV.

Legal aid groups – the Western Center on Law and Poverty, Bay Area Legal Aid, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area and the East Bay Community Law Center – represented the plaintiffs.

The lead plaintiff, Guillermo Hernandez, of Richmond, had been ticketed in 2013 for not updating his driver's license information and driving without a valid registration, court records show.

Hernandez said he tried to go to court to take care of the ticket but was told twice that clerks couldn't find it in the system. It was only later when he tried to renew his license that he discovered there was a hold on it for more than \$900 in fines and fees.

“At that time I just didn't have the money. I didn't have work. That's a lot of money... How am I going to pay it?” he said, speaking in Spanish.

Hernandez had to cut back on his work buying and selling secondhand goods around the area. “I was afraid they would grab



Guillermo Hernandez, who uses his van for his businesses, lost work when his license was suspended in 2013 for failure to pay a ticket. He sued the DMV along with several other Bay Area residents and won. Photo by Anne Wernikoff, CalMatters

me and make me pay more money for tickets,” he said.

Hernandez said he's glad he saw the lawsuit through the appeals court even after his attorney helped him get onto a repayment plan and get his license back before the case concluded.

“I feel really proud that I did something for society,” he said.

The appellate opinion is somewhat narrow and technical: By law the DMV is supposed to suspend a license if it receives a notice from a traffic court that a driver “willfully” violated a written promise to appear in court, according to the opinion. The DMV argued that when it receives notices a driver failed to appear in court that indicates that the actions were willful. The trial court agreed, but the Appeals Court found that the DMV needed a more formal notice that a driver broke the law.

The DMV said in a statement to CalMatters that from now on it “will only impose a (failure to appear) suspension based upon misdemeanor (failure to appear) notifications submitted by the courts.”

But attorneys involved in the case said it's too soon to tell how the case will affect license suspensions going forward.

Fees Tacked onto Traffic Fines

Economic justice advocates and some government officials are examining court fines and fees as part of a national reckoning over racial disparities in the justice system. A growing body of data suggests black and brown drivers are more likely to be pulled over than white motorists, and they often face staggering bills for traffic tickets.

That's because state and local governments have tacked on numerous fees that have nothing to do with traffic violations, said Martin Hoshino, the state Judicial Council's administrative director, who served on a national task force regarding fines, fees and bail practices.

“It became unnerving to think that courts had been turned into revenue centers, and judicial officers were in this really awkward position of perhaps knowing they were imposing a fine or fee for which their court operation was benefiting. I think that's wrong,” Hoshino said.

Records and interviews show fees in criminal court, including for traffic violations, have funded an array of services and projects in California, including court construction, DNA collection, emergency medical

air transport and sunken vessel recovery off the coast.

“When you put all of the decisions together and look at it holistically 30 years later, you find out you've created a regressive, harmful, at times self-defeating revenue system because you're pushing people into debt traps,” Hoshino said.

In addition, “you're not able to collect the debt,” he said. Uncollected debt on court fines and fees doubled over the past decade to roughly \$10 billion in California.

Stacey Kmetz knows about the burden of traffic ticket debt. The San Jose resident, who was out of work and sleeping on a friend's couch, got a nearly \$900 ticket in Marin County for driving without proof of insurance.

“I was really stuck. I asked everybody I knew for help,” Kmetz said.

When she didn't appear in traffic court by the date on her citation, her license was suspended. Kmetz ultimately went to court and got a \$78-a-month payment plan, records show. But the court did not notify the DMV to lift the suspension.

“I pleaded to have that license so I could pay my bills and look for work,” she said. “I was working with two temp agencies who wanted nothing to do with me when I explained the situation.”

Legal Aid attorneys stepped in and got the court to recall the failure-to-appear notification. Kmetz was able to get her license back in October after six months without it.

“It was terrible. The anxiety of the whole dilemma...it was awful,” she said, adding that she's since used her license to work as a driver for some delivery apps.

Pilot Program To Avoid Court Appearances

Lawmakers and court officials have taken some recent steps: They have eliminated license suspensions for failing to pay traffic tickets and developed payment plans.

The court system also developed a pilot project that makes it easier for low-income motorists to request a traffic ticket fee reduction. A website called MyCitations allows motorists to request a reduction online. The courts can consider a driver's income and other information on their ability to pay before deciding whether to lower a penalty.

The virtual ticket system was created so that motorists wouldn't have to appear in person at a courthouse if they wanted to get

their ticket debt reduced.

Many Californians can't afford a day off work to plead their case to a judge. But when they don't pay and don't show up at court, the fines increase, their licenses can be suspended and if they are caught driving on a suspended license, they face criminal charges.

“It's the criminalization of poverty,” said Asher Waite-Jones, staff attorney and clinical supervisor at the East Bay Community Law Center.

The pilot project includes seven counties. Tulare, Shasta and Ventura counties launched the first year, San Francisco and Santa Clara counties are in year two and Fresno and Monterey counties are launching now.

From April 2019 through Nov. 2020, nearly 7,000 drivers requested a fine and fee reduction through the pilot program. More than 85 percent of those drivers reported incomes below the poverty line and their debt was an average of 447 days outstanding, according to a recent report on the project the Judicial Council prepared for the legislature. Three quarters of the requests were approved; the penalty was reduced an average of \$347 per ticket, according to the report.

The governor's current budget proposal includes money to bring the pilot system statewide. Ongoing funding would increase to \$58.4 million by 2024-25.

“It's been really important during the pandemic

because it gives people a way to request a discount without going into traffic court,” said Anne Stuhldreher, director of the financial justice project in the San Francisco treasurer's office. “We should be able to hold people accountable without putting them in financial distress.”

Stuhldreher and legal service attorneys suggest a better fix is doing away with many of the fees. Last year, lawmakers eliminated a number of fees levied in criminal court. Advocates are pushing them to do the same with traffic tickets.

When courts do reduce a driver's ticket penalty, the amount varies, depending on the court and judge; the reduction can be 50 percent in some courts and 80 percent in others.

“Fifty percent is not necessarily meaningful to many of my clients who are homeless or completely destitute,” said Waite-Jones, the East Bay Community Law Center attorney.

The court system administrator, Hoshino, recommends more substantial changes from lawmakers.

But he also worries about how California will make up the revenue for vital services if the fees are slashed. The state collected \$1.4 billion in court fines and fees – all cases, not just traffic-related – in 2018-19.

“If you're going to remove \$1.4 billion for state and local programs, you're either going to end up abolishing those programs or you're going to have to find alternatives,” Hoshino said. ★

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The Storms Have Hit the Region, Take Time to be Prepared



From the Office of Supervisor Rich Desmond

Dear Friends,

With the extreme winter weather we are facing, please be assured the Sacramento County Department of Transportation (SACDOT) is prepared to provide a quick response to flooded roadways and broken traffic signals.

When winter weather hits, crews will respond twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week to clear roadways, remove fallen trees, repair streetlights, fix traffic signal malfunctions and keep traffic moving safely. Flooded roads are monitored and closed when necessary. When roads are flooded, they are posted to allow you to check routes for problem areas.

While crews are in the field every day, your assistance – especially during bad weather conditions – is important. Report roadway issues by calling 311 (or 875-4311) or reporting

online at the 311 website. You can also report with a 311 app on your phone.

Fallen Trees and Branches: During severe weather conditions, crews may clear just the material in the roadway and move on to the next incident. Additional cleanup work is performed when crews have handled all incidents that require immediate attention. (Note trees or branches that fall on private roads or property are the responsibility of the property owner so please contact a private tree service for fallen trees or branches on your property)

Flooded Roads: Crews respond immediately to flooded roads and attempt to clear what is causing the problem right away. If the flooded road cannot be cleared, signage will be placed to close the road and maintenance crews will work to continue to clear the roadway.

Plugged Culverts (a tunnel carrying a stream or open drain under a road or railroad): If a culvert is plugged, SACDOT crews will flush the culvert until it's clear.

Traffic Signal Out: Technicians are dispatched immediately to make repairs to traffic signals that are out or malfunctioning.

Downed Street Signs and Stop Signs: Street signs will be replaced as soon as possible. Downed stop signs are a priority and SACDOT's goal is to

have them back up within two hours of notification.

Street Light Out: When reporting a problem, have the pole number or property address available. The pole number can be found on a sticker approximately 8 feet high, usually on the traffic side of the pole.

Plugged Storm Drains (a major cause for localized street flooding): Call 311, give the location and the Department of Water Resources will dispatch crews to remove leaves and/or other debris from the drain.

Sandbag Sites: If your property has a history of flooding, get sandbags in advance at Sacramento County's sandbag self-serve sites. Locations can be found online at the Department of Water Resources website.

If you encounter a downed power line, electrical sparking, or any other emergency that is a danger to yourself or others please immediately call 911. For any other power outages please report them to SMUD at 1-888-456-7683 or on SMUD's website. For any PG&E outages contact 1-800-743-5000 or report them on PG&E's website.

As always, if you have any further questions or concerns you may contact me at richdesmond@saccounty.net or (916) 874-5471.

RICH DESMOND
Supervisor, Third District

Los Rios Wins \$5 Million Department of Labor Grant

By Scott Crow,
Los Rios Community College District

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Los Rios Community College District has been awarded a \$5 million, four-year Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant from the federal Department of Labor. This award is part of a brand-new grant program and Los Rios is one of just 11 grantees nationwide and one of only two California colleges to receive an award.

The project, "Crosswalking Business Pathways to Public Sector Careers" will create new pathways to training for workers, including individuals with barriers to employment, for entry and middle-skill jobs in the public sector. Grant activities include: The development of new Los Rios business information worker programs. Increasing referrals from Sacramento Training and Employment Agency (SETA) and Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC) to these new programs. Increasing internship and other work-based training opportunities through the Institute of Local Government (ILG). Pursuing strategies to transform regional public-sector outreach and hiring practices.

"This grant is a major win-win for our region," said Los Rios Chancellor Brian King. "This innovative and collaborative project will increase opportunities for workers in our communities while supporting local employers at the same time.

We are grateful for this grant support and look forward to putting the project into action."

American River College will lead the project, which includes all the other Los Rios colleges - Cosumnes River, Folsom Lake and Sacramento City colleges - and SETA, CAERC, ILG and Valley Vision. There is a need to train an additional 2,300 skilled workers annually in the business information field. With shared focus and dedicated resources, the project will strive to address the annual gap in skilled workers needed and increase the number of individuals trained for business services careers in our region.

The Los Rios Community College District is one of the nation's most respected learning institutions and the second-largest community college district in California, serving the greater Sacramento region. Los Rios includes: American River, Cosumnes River, Folsom Lake and Sacramento City colleges; six major education and outreach centers; and specialized workforce and economic development programs, for regional businesses, governments and organizations. Los Rios colleges offer AA/AS degrees, certificates and transfer-education opportunities in more than 70 career fields. The District's 2,400 square-mile service area includes all of Sacramento County, most of El Dorado County and parts of Yolo, Placer and Solano counties. About 75,000 students are enrolled in the four Los Rios Colleges. For more information, go to www.losrios.edu. ★

GOBIZ Director Releases Joint Statement with California Labor Secretary

By Kaitlin Lewis,
Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Following the California Employment Development Department's (EDD) release of the state's employment data from December the Director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), Dee Dee Myers issued the following joint statement with California's Labor Secretary, Julie A. Su: "Nearly a year ago, California was experiencing record-long job growth and record-low unemployment. The numbers we see today

reflect the challenges we've faced and the work that needs to be done – as a state, as a country, and as individuals. Throughout this pandemic, Californians have stepped up; whether it be small businesses protecting their employees and customers, manufacturing companies pivoting to make PPE, essential workers continuing their critical activities to keep us all healthy, fed, and safe, or neighbors checking on neighbors. It's crucial that we do everything we can to ensure that Californians can get back to work safely. By doing what we can to step up and protect one another, we can and will rebuild our economy, our state, and our nation." ★

Social Security Matters

Social Security's "First Year" Rule



By Russell Gloor,
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I am 63. My birthday is 10/23/1957. I currently draw a small pension of \$14K and a salary of \$75K. I'm contemplating retirement at the end of April this year and I'd like to start drawing Social Security beginning June 1st. I've been told by friends that I won't be able to start drawing it this year because I will already have exceeded the maximum Social Security allows me to earn in a year. Is this true? Should I postpone my retirement until the end of the year? Please advise. **Signed: Confused by Friends**

Dear Confused: Yours is a perfect example of why you should always check with a reputable source when receiving Social Security advice from friends.

Whenever Social Security (SS) benefits are claimed before reaching full retirement age (FRA), the so-called "earnings test" applies. This sets an earnings limit, which for 2021 is \$18,960 annually - an amount you will have exceeded by the time you start your SS benefits in June. However, Social Security also has a special "first year" rule which applies to anyone who claims early Social Security



reach your full retirement age of 66 1/2, your annual earnings limit will increase by about 2.6 times, further mitigating risk of exceeding the earnings limit in the year you attain FRA.

For awareness, if you were to return to work in any year between 2022 and the year prior to the year you attain FRA, and you exceed the annual earnings limit, Social Security will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. In the year you reach FRA, if you were to work and exceed the increased limit, SS will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$3 you exceed the limit by. However, at your FRA you'll receive time-credit for any months your benefits were withheld because you exceeded the earnings limit, which will result in your benefit amount being increased slightly at your full retirement age. In this way, you may, over time, recover any benefits which were withheld because you exceeded the earnings limit.

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. ★

benefits mid-year.

The first-year rule essentially waives using the annual earnings limit in your first year and, instead, applies a monthly earnings limit for the remainder of the year after your benefits start. The monthly limit is 1/12th the amount of the annual limit, so in 2021 the monthly limit is \$1,580. Provided you don't exceed the monthly limit after your benefits start and during the period from June 2021 through December 2021 (and if you're fully retiring from work you won't), you'll not exceed the earnings limit during your first year collecting benefits. Note, your pension and other "passive" income doesn't count toward the earnings limit; only earnings from working count. So essentially, using the "first year" rule means your earnings before you claim benefits won't count, including any final pay you receive in the month you begin your benefits.

Starting in 2022, should you decide to return to work, you'll be subject to the annual limit, which will be a bit more than the 2021 limit because the limit changes annually with changes to the National Average Wage Index. The earnings limit applies until you reach your full retirement age, after which you can earn as much as you like without jeopardizing your Social Security benefits. In the year you

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By Marlys Johnsen Norris, Christian Author

Almighty God Will Have His Way!

Most consider a certain building their church, but we do recognize that church can occur **where ever a person may feel close to Almighty God.** Recently our pastor gave a message about **“the assembly of believers who have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior and made Him Lord of their lives.”** His message related to us - **regardless of the denomination - where one may choose to worship and serve – that (those who have made that decision) ARE actually the true church and we are joined together IN HIS LOVE.**

Some people are so convicted (of their personal sins) after attending church, they begin to say unfavorable things about the people (Christians) who do attend regularly. Yes, their unkind words might draw away from themselves, but they are not fooling an all knowing God who knows everything about everyone!

Truth is: those who attend on a regular basis are all on their personal individual journeys to learn the ways of God. Some are young in their walk, while others are old and still learning. Not one of them is in the exact same place, to know how to do it all and to love Him with their heart and soul. Plus, each one is learning God’s Word the Scripture and seeing it “come alive” on all kinds

of different individual ways in their lives.

God does *not* expect us to be carbon copies of each other or some kind of robot. God loves everyone and everything He has created. Just look how different animals are and the flowers, birds and trees! His plan for every life is unique and beautiful, original and special. His desire for humankind is that every single one of us will desire and seek Him with all our heard and discover His plan for our whole life, heart and soul.

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Blind Institute of Technology and Society for the Blind Breaking Barriers

By Kristin Thébaud, Thébaud Communications

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Society for the Blind in Sacramento and Blind Institute of Technology™ (BIT) in Colorado are joining forces to create a new pathway for employment of people living with blindness or visual impairment. Both organizations are driven by the ultimate goal of full independence for people who are blind and visually impaired (BVI), which makes this a natural pairing.

BIT’s sole focus is employing BVI professionals in corporate America, placing them in positions on par with their education and skill level, through networking, education and workforce development. Society for the Blind is taking on the challenge of employment with its primary focus placed on providing people who are blind or visually impaired with the tools they need to attain employment and independence. The two forward-thinking organizations will pull their resources together to achieve the goal of significantly decreasing not only unemployment, but the underemployment epidemic that plagues professionals who are blind or visually impaired.

“For far too long, blindness organizations across the country have approached the unemployment epidemic amongst the blind and visually impaired in a siloed fashion, which has done nothing as evidenced by the same unemployment rate as 30 years ago when the ADA was passed. It is time to end the epidemic and put BVI professionals where they belong, in mainstream corporate America. I am super excited to be collaborating with a progressive leader like Society for the Blind and look forward to the impact we will make together,” said Mike Hess, BIT executive director.

“It is so important for blindness organizations like Society for the Blind to be creative and really make a difference in the employment opportunities for people living with low vision and blindness. I believe that collaborations allow us all to do more and be more effective, and

that is why I am thrilled to be partnering with BIT. Working together, I believe we can truly move the needle on the rate of employment in a positive direction,” said Shari Roeseler, executive director, Society for the Blind.

By leveraging relationships built with its corporate partners, emphasizing workforce development and accessible technology, BIT strives to put its talented, corporate-ready professionals in the best possible position for success. BIT works with disability inclusive Fortune 500 industry giants across the country, placing professionals in all aspects of business, including IT, finance and operations, earning a median salary of \$70,000 a year. For those candidates who have the technical aptitude but lack relevant certifications, the BIT Academy offers opportunities to achieve the training and certifications that help them to be competitive, such as its Salesforce Administration Certification Prep course. BIT is an authorized Salesforce training provider for people with disabilities.

Society for the Blind is the Sacramento region’s only comprehensive training and rehabilitation center serving people who are blind or have visual impairments. Serving 27 counties in northern California, Society for the Blind serves nearly 6,000 people impacted by vision loss or blindness each year through its Core Blindness Skills programs, a Low Vision Clinic and other supportive services and programs. In 2018, Society for the Blind established the CareersPLUS program in an effort to address the high unemployment rates among people with vision loss. In the past three years, more than 65 people have found employment and/or pursued college and vocational training through the CareersPLUS program. Society for the Blind is an authorized provider of employment services for the State of California Department of Rehabilitation.

To learn more about the two organizations, visit their websites at www.blindinstituteoftechnology.org and www.societyfortheblind.org. ★

A Divided House Makes a Happy Home

By Rev. James L. Snyder

Never has our world been more divided than today. Politics, religion, sports and on and on I could go. For the most part, so many people think being divided is a negative thing. And for many people it is.

However, after being married to the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage for almost 50 years, I have discovered that a divided house can be a very happy house.

All of this came to focus recently when we finally finished adding an office room to our house. It has been in process for at least four years. That’s where my “forbearance” comes to play.

Last year we were almost ready to finish when the coronavirus hit and put everything on the pause. I’m not too fond of pause unless on a cat or dog.

This has brought our house to the Great Divide, which has brought a lot of happiness to our home.

On the other side of our house is a room called the Craft Room, which the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage supervises. This is a room that, although I may be allowed to step in, for various reasons, I don’t.

I look into that room,

and I see all kinds of crafty stuff that I have no idea in the world what it is. And believe me, I am not going to ask what anything in that room is.

So, at one end of the house, we have my wife’s Craft Room, and at the other end of the house, we now have the Pastor Cave, of which I am the sole supervisor and administrator. It is the place where I am in control of everything.

When my wife is in her Craft Room on one side of the house, and I’m in my Pastor Cave on the other side, we are significantly divided but enthusiastically happy.

The saying is true, what divides us may destroy us. But, if put together craftily, what divides us may bring us together on a different level.

She’s happy in her room, I’m happy in my room, and the house rings with enthusiastic happiness.

One of the essential aspects of a good marriage is knowing what the other person delights in.

For example, my wife delights in crafts. I could not spend five minutes in a craft room working on some craft. I would go absolutely insane. I probably would cut myself using

some of them in her craft room.

My wife takes great delight in working in her craft room. And you know what they say, a delighted wife means a delighted husband.

I am delighted when she is delighted, and that makes everything come together.

I’m happy when I’m in my Pastor Cave and take great delight in what I’m doing. I have everything at my fingertips that I need to do that makes me happy.

If our home weren’t so divided, we wouldn’t have all that delight that we enjoy right now.

I read in the Bible just the other day a wonderful verse, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

Amos must’ve been a husband to say something like this. The important thing is the focus of the agreement. At the opposite ends of our house, my wife and I are in full agreement.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, 1471 Pine Road, Ocala, FL 34472. He lives with his wife in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 352-687-4240 or e-mail jamesnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whatafellowship.com. ★



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Although he was preparing for a career as a professional trumpet player, God had different plans and called Mike into the ministry. He first served as youth pastor and song leader in his local church in East Longmeadow, Mass., before being called to serve as youth pastor and music pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Windsor, Conn. he also attended Northland Baptist Bible College (Dunbar, Wis.) earning a master of ministries degree in Bible. During the ministry at Calvary, Mike and Lori adopted their son, Drew. He also attended Northland Baptist Bible College (Dunbar, Wis.) earning a master of ministries degree in Bible. Mike next served under Dr. Frank Bumpus at Bethel Baptist Church in Schaumburg, Ill., before being called to serve the next 17 years as a school representative and staff evangelist for Bob Jones University. During his time on University staff, Mike traveled the United States, speaking at countless churches, camps, and retreats.

Today, Mike travels as an independent evangelist, preaching and playing his trumpet at ministries across the United States and around the world.

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Ask Toni

Medicare Prescription Drug Penalty Confusion!!



Toni King

Hello Toni:

Turned 65 in August 2018, continued to work full-time with an HSA that has a \$3000.00 deductible before any prescriptions or medical claims are paid by the insurance plan. The HR manager of my employer advised me to enroll in Part A when I turned 65. Because I received wrong information, I could not fund my HSA from that time.

I decided to delay Part B until December 1st when I retired and enrolled in a Medicare supplement plan G and a Part D prescription drug plan also with a January 1st start date.

I have received a notice from CMS (Medicare) saying they do not have record of me having prescription drug coverage that "met Medicare's minimum standards from 8/1/2018 to 12/31/2020 and I may receive a Part D late enrollment penalty. What does this mean?"

I thought applying for Part B kept me from a penalty. I do not understand any of this! Thank You, Claude from Dallas, TX

Claude:

I hate to inform you, but you have a Medicare problem! Your HSA health plan had a deductible of \$3,000 which is more than the \$445 Medicare Part D deductible for 2021 and you may not have met Medicare's minimum standards.

Claude, the letter you received from the Medicare Part D plan that you enrolled in, explains what you should do to inform Medicare what prescription drug coverage you have had by either calling an 800 number or has a form describing what type of coverage you had which you can mail back to the Medicare Part D plan you enrolled in.

The Medicare & You handbook states: "Creditable" prescription drug coverage could include drug coverage from a current or former employer or union, TRICARE, Indian Health Service, the VA, or health insurance coverage. Your plan must tell you each year

if your drug coverage is "creditable coverage". This information may be sent to you in a letter or included in a newsletter from the plan. Keep this information because you may need it when or if you join a Medicare drug plan late."

Claude ... Did you receive such a letter informing you of "creditable coverage"? Creditable drug coverage should "meet or exceed" what Medicare's Part D plan minimums are for that current year.

Your late enrollment period (LEP) does not begin from the day you lose or leave your company health plan, BUT from the month that your Medicare Part A started, and your Medicare Part A began when you turned 65.

This LEP (late enrollment period) penalty can be because:

- 1) You waited past 63 days without creditable prescription drug coverage when you are leaving company benefits and you are older than 65 years old and 90 days. Do not wait past 63 days to get Part D when leaving company health plans.
- 2) Your company prescription drug benefits (not health benefits) are not creditable as Medicare declares. Claude, this is your situation.
- 3) You simply never enrolled in Medicare Part D when you were first eligible and want to enroll.

Americans retiring after 65 with employers' benefits and taking the "Request for Employment Information CMS L-564" form to Social Security to avoid the "famous" Medicare Part B penalty need to realize that this form only informs Medicare that you have had employer benefits since turning 65. The form does not inform Medicare that you had "creditable" prescription drug coverage.

2021 Confused about Medicare Zoom webinars is Thursday, February 25th at 4:00 PM. Visit www.tonisays.com to sign up for Toni's new event.

Toni King, Medicare author/advocate is giving a \$5 discount to the Toni Says® readers on the new 2021 Medicare Survival Guide® Advanced book at www.tonisays.com. Have a Medicare question? Call 832/519-8664 or email info@tonisays.com. ★

Orangevale Chamber of Commerce Business Spotlight LPL Financial - Luz Johnson



Luz is a financial planner/advisor and a member of the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce. Photo: MaryAnne Povey

By MaryAnne Povey

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPG) - This month we are shining the spotlight on a name you may already know, Luz Johnson! We know Luz (pronounced like Lucy without the y) from countless community activities and volunteer projects she's involved in, most recently running for the Honorary Mayor of Orangevale and raising over \$5k for her charities Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center and the Orangevale Women's Club. But, besides all of the great things she does for our community, what exactly is her profession? I recently sat down to find out, so here we go...

Luz is a financial planner/advisor and a good person to know when it comes to making your financial investment decisions and planning for your future or for a family member. Luz has a passion for people, and a heart for seniors. She has a knack for simplifying and explaining the complexities of financial planning, investments with a great eye towards the future.

"The education part of investing is so important," Luz shared, "I wish I had someone talk to me in my 20's about the things I know now." Her motto "better to plan now, than in a crisis" is how she helps clients make their finances work for them, including seniors who have concerns about if their long term investments will last as long as they do.

"I think people trust me. If they come in with something that is not right for them, I tell them. I encourage lots of questions so that everyone is on the same page."

Luz moved her business to Orangevale

after realizing it didn't make sense not to be part of the community in which she's lived with her family for the past 20 years. "I really wanted to live, work and worship in my community. Plus, you can't beat the commute!" she laughed.

Since making that move, Luz quickly became a community leader by joining the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Orangevale Women's Club, and the Kiwanis Club of OV-FO to name a few. She is a regular volunteer at the OV-FO Foodbank and shares her expertise by hosting symposiums to bring businesses and guest speakers together on topics including what seniors should know about future planning and a women's symposium.

With a focus on senior care and planning, Luz is very helpful when it comes to the dollars and cents of placing a loved one in care. "I know the costs for the array of services, whether it's DIY, in-home, or a full care facility, I like to help figure out what you can afford to do."

Besides the people she loves to serve, when I asked Luz what else makes Orangevale special to her, she replied, "I love how people that live here love the community. And, besides that seeing posts on Facebook about a lost horse just cracks me up".

If you are in need of some financial planning, advice, or just want to talk to someone you can trust, give Luz a call at 916.860.7035. Her office is located at 8856 Greenback Lane, Orangevale. She'd love to hear from you! LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC. ★

Sacramento County's Winter Response for Homeless

By Janna Haynes, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County is in the midst of a challenge it has not seen before. Between severe weather events, a continued public health pandemic and housing instability, the challenges of responding to the needs of the homeless population are greater than ever.

The County continues to adapt and respond in real time and develop and operate ongoing programs and services that deliver real and permanent change.

Sacramento County Launched A Weather-Specific Motel Voucher Program

For many years, the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance (DHA) has run a motel voucher program for persons experiencing homelessness that are particularly vulnerable due to age, illness, injury or other highly vulnerable situations such as families with children. The program provides them with short motel stays in a moment of crisis, coupled with on-going supportive services.

In an effort to increase sheltering capacity over the winter months, the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board approved up to \$600k in additional funding in December to expand the motel voucher program into a weather-related response. Approximately 60 additional motel rooms are now available for a minimum of three nights or longer during extended weather events.

This approach offers several advantages to warming centers: (1) It relies on outreach partners to identify unsheltered people who



Between severe weather events, a continued public health pandemic and housing instability, the challenges of responding to the needs of the homeless population are greater than ever. Image by Q.K from Pixabay

would not otherwise be reached; (2) It offers several days of stay (compared to an overnight stay at a warming center); (3) It allows people to shelter with pets and partners and in privacy, which is critical during COVID-19; (4) It coordinates transportation for unsheltered people to the motels.

The following criteria will trigger a weather-related response: (1) Nighttime lows of 37 degrees or lower for two or more days within a five-day span; or (2) Rain for two or more consecutive days (forecast 60% or more); or (3) One day or night of rain combined with nighttime lows of 32 degrees or lower.

Because of the existing infrastructure already in place, DHA was able to activate this critical effort in advance of Tuesday's big storm and bring people into shelter in just a few days. The County will continue these efforts for upcoming storms.

DHA is working to expand capacity at its existing homeless shelter for increased weather respite response.

Cities May Open Warming Centers Under Any Conditions

Sacramento Emergency Operations Plan (EO), operated out of County Office

of Emergency Services has Severe Weather Guidance to use in the event of severe weather situations that require emergency response for local governments, non-governmental organizations and other agencies in preparing and coordinating response efforts.

This criteria is a guide to trigger an emergency response on a countywide scale but does not limit cities within the county from opening a warming center under any conditions they see fit and offers material support when they do. The Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services helps support such efforts with food, water, blankets and COVID-19 safety guidance provided by the County Public Health officer.

In anticipation of a weather event, the County organizes a call that includes each city and special districts to ensure seamless collaboration and consistent messaging.

In addition, DHA has an eligibility specialist on location to connect people to mainstream services such as cash, food and medical benefits.

For more information visit ha.saccounty.net/Pages/default.aspx ★

State Invests \$571 Million in Expanded Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes

By Gilbert Mohtes-Chan, Caltrans

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The California Transportation Commission (CTC) has allocated more than \$571 million to address transportation needs throughout the state, an investment that will help repair highways and bridges and enhance California's growing network of mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian routes.

"Expanding access to safe walkways, bicycle routes and convenient transit options, in addition to maintaining our highways, advances the state's efforts to address climate change and improve the quality of life for all Californians," said Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin.

State and local projects approved in Caltrans District 3 include: Sacramento County: \$2.2 for the Sacramento County Street Rehabilitation Project in Fair Oaks and Orangevale. Improvements include sidewalk repairs and Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant curb ramps. Sacramento County: \$1.3 for the

Sacramento County Street Rehabilitation Project in Arden Arcade, Carmichael and Rio Linda. Improvements include sidewalk repairs. Sacramento County: \$6.5 million for a Caltrans project to install fiber optic cable and wireless communications systems on U.S. Highway 50 in the Rancho Cordova, Folsom and El Dorado Hills areas. Butte County: \$10.9 million for a Caltrans project to install fiber optic cable and wireless communications systems on State Route 99 from Southgate Avenue to Garner Lane in Chico.

"Upgrading our transportation systems technology is vital to keep traffic moving, increase safety and improve our environment," said Caltrans District 3 Director Amarjeet S. Benipal.

Funding for the projects approved comes from federal and state gas taxes, including more than \$159 million from Senate Bill (SB) 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017. To learn more about SB 1 projects in your community, visit Rebuilding California - Senate Bill 1. ★



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Valentine Soulmate

Ladies, Valentine's Day is just around the corner, but have you made good decisions on your potential partner? Are you making the same mistakes over and over? **Arnoux Goran**, author speaker and personal transformation expert, says once a woman knows the six types of men, she can navigate her way to a red hot romance. He shares his secrets in "How to Manifest Your Soulmate." Here's the six types from worst to best.

CATEGORY 6 IS THE WORST. He's a monster, sociopath or psychopath who should be locked up. Enough said.

CATEGORY 5 IS SOMEONE WHO USES WOMEN. He's the type of guy who tells a girl he loves her, and then, after they have sex, she never hears from him again. **CATEGORY 4 IS THE MAN WHO TREATS WOMEN LIKE PROPERTY.**

He's a man who thinks a woman is nothing more than an animated Barbie doll. He has a car, he has a house, he has a dog... and he has a woman. **CATEGORY 3 IS A MAN WHO IS A NATURALLY MASCULINE BEING WHO BEHAVES FEMINE WITH HIS WOMAN.** He's afraid to "be a man" with her, to take the lead, or even be strong on her behalf.

CATEGORY 2 IS THE MAN THAT HONORS AND LOVES WOMEN, BUT ISN'T VERY GOOD AT RELATIONSHIPS. He's not good at communicating. He has intimacy and jealousy issues. He doesn't please his woman sexually. He doesn't take responsibility for his emotions and acts like other people are the cause of how he feels. **FINALLY, YOU HAVE THE MAN WHO LOVES AND**

RESPECTS WOMEN, AND IS GOOD AT RELATIONSHIPS. He creates intimacy easily, takes charge automatically, and always speaks lovingly to his lady. He brings his woman to ecstasy in bed.

He is good at romance and remembering little things. Many women don't believe he exists...which is why they can't find him, even if he lives right next door

Here are three tips to find HIM! **1) BELIEVE HE EXISTS AND YOU CAN BE WITH HIM.** It's harder than it sounds.

It's a choice, but the hard part is letting go of all the sadness that you haven't met him yet, the fear you'll never meet him, and the anger towards the past men you dated who were jerks, in order to open your heart again to love. **2) MAKE A CLEAR INTENTION AND DECLARATION TO THE UNIVERSE THAT THIS IS SOMETHING YOU WANT IN YOUR LIFE.** Get the power of your intention focused in the direction of attracting and meeting that beautiful man. **3) GET AN EDUCATION IN RELATIONSHIPS AND DATING, ESPECIALLY IN HOW TO DROP YOUR BAGGAGE FROM THE PAST.**

Check out **Arnoux's** course at www.howtomanifestyoursoulmate.com. It goes into detail so you can be happy and ready to meet Mr. Wonderful. Arnoux Goran is the founder of Total Health Mastery University and has changed the lives of many thousands of people all over the world. Hope you find the love of your life. I did. Rick and I celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary this January!!! **HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!!!** ★

How Long Will California Economy Languish?



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

As COVID-19 began surging through California a year ago, Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency and ordered widespread restrictions on personal and economic activity to curb infection rates.

His actions immediately triggered a severe economic recession. California had been enjoying record-low unemployment just before the shutdown, 3.9% of the labor force, but within weeks the jobless rate quickly shot up to a record-high 16.4% as employers laid off workers.

Initially, there was a fingers-crossed hope that the recession would be what economists call a "V" – a deep plunge followed by an equally rapid recovery. However, as the public health crisis and the recession continued, it became apparent that it would be a "U" – a steep decline that reaches bottom, eventually followed by a gradual recovery.

Employment actually rebounded somewhat during summer and autumn months as Newsom loosened economic controls, although certain sectors such as tourism and travel continued to lag.

However, when infection rates, hospitalizations and deaths shot upward again late in the year – thanks,

probably, to too many holiday gatherings – Newsom clamped down again, businesses closed and joblessness again increased.

The state's official unemployment rate – the percentage of the labor force not working – edged upward in December to 9% but when those who dropped out of the labor force or were involuntarily working part-time are included, the real rate is more like 15%.

Even without that adjustment, 9% is still very high and, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the third highest of any state. Only tourism-dependent Nevada and Hawaii are higher, with South Dakota and Nebraska at other end of the scale at 3%.

Overall, California has lost 1.5 million jobs in the last year of pandemic and economic turmoil, leaving a salient question hanging in the air: How long will California's pandemic-induced recession continue?

The answer depends on two unpredictable factors – when and if vaccinations can tame COVID-19 and whether President Joe Biden and Congress pump additional billions, or even trillions, of borrowed dollars into the nation's economy.

Newsom's proposed 2021-22 budget projects, "Businesses are expected to continue to operate at limited capacity into 2021. Increased automation and a shift to online retailing will lead to permanent job declines in leisure and hospitality, retail, and other services."

The budget also implies that the bottom of the "U" will continue for some time,

saying, "Nonfarm employment for California is projected to recover to pre-pandemic levels in 2025."

The millions of Californians affected by the pandemic's economic fallout are understandably worried about their futures and their angst is one of the drivers of a petition campaign aimed at recalling Newsom.

Whether from concern for his constituents or worries about a recall, Newsom is proposing "a broad-based recovery package to support businesses, individuals and job creation both during the pandemic and as the state recovers. It totals \$14 billion, including \$3.5 billion in immediate relief for individuals and small businesses disproportionately impacted by the pandemic."

While Newsom wants fast action from the Legislature, its fiscal advisor, Gabe Petek, wants a more deliberate and skeptical approach, noting that "unlike the federal government – which can run a deficit to pay for fiscal stimulus – the state must balance fiscal stimulus with other one-time and on-going spending priorities."

In other words, a dollar spent on Newsom's economic recovery plan is a dollar that can't be spent on something else – unless, of course, the governor and legislators are also willing to raise taxes. As the pandemic, the recession and the recall campaign evolve, big state stimulus expenditures will be one of the year's more interesting issues.

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

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- CLUES**
- ACROSS**
- Newton's first name
 - Part of smog
 - Hissy fit
 - Human trunk
 - Form of "to be"
 - Illegal booze
 - Editorial changes
 - Crematorium jar
 - #56 Down, alt. sp.
 - *One of six Presidents named James
 - *First President previously divorced
 - Civil War's Johnny
 - Manage without help
 - Military procedures
 - Cone-shaped quarters
 - MLB bench
 - Cowboy's necktie
 - A whole lot
 - *Whig, e.g.
 - Resembling wings
 - Nightly necessity
 - Experience emotion
 - Large ray
 - Glacier's deposit
 - "Watch out!" on a golf course
 - Traditional sock pattern
 - Reduced Instruction Set Computer
 - Knight's title
 - Bypass
 - Foot digit
 - *President Chester
 - *He signed legislation to create Medicare
 - Fauna, Merryweather and ___ fairy godmothers
 - Expert
 - Convex molding
 - Bumpkins
 - Café alternative
 - Car ways
 - Trans-Siberian Railroad city
 - Piercing part
 - Slightly drunk
- DOWN**
- Anything
 - *Trump had button on desk to order his favorite one
 - Desertlike
 - Up and about
 - Coddle
 - Half-man, half-goat
 - Legendary NHLer
 - Tragedy, or comedy, or satire
 - Cheap form of payment?
 - Before Scotia
 - Clickable picture
 - Olden day "your"
 - Be in charge, two words
 - Newspaper notices
 - What all of #70 Across do
 - Painting or poetry
 - *He beat McCain and Romney
 - Kind of cap
 - Colloquialisms
 - *First "dark horse"
 - Gamecock's spur
 - Dessert sandwiches
 - Wombs
 - *#29 Down predecessor
 - Creative
 - 18-wheeler
 - Green pasta sauce
 - Big Island greetings
 - Australian flightless bird
 - Group of people, often in research
 - Extremely angry
 - Concluding stanza in poetry
 - *G. W. Bush to Yale, e.g.
 - Schneider and Lowe, e.g.
 - Major bike maker
 - Audience's rejection
 - Sold in bars
 - Auto pioneer
 - Like a busybody
 - Back, to a pendulum
 - Latin dance three-step move, once

Crossword Puzzle Solutions on Page 8

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
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71					72			73				

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8		7	5			4	
		9		7			
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Find Puzzles on Page 8

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Sudoku Puzzle on Page 8

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7	9	4	3	6	2	8	1	5
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4	5	8	1	9	6	2	3	7
9	3	1	6	2	7	4	5	8
2	8	6	5	4	3	9	7	1
5	4	7	8	1	9	6	2	3

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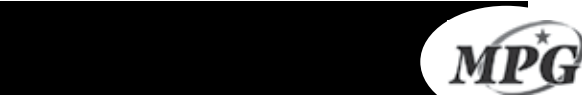
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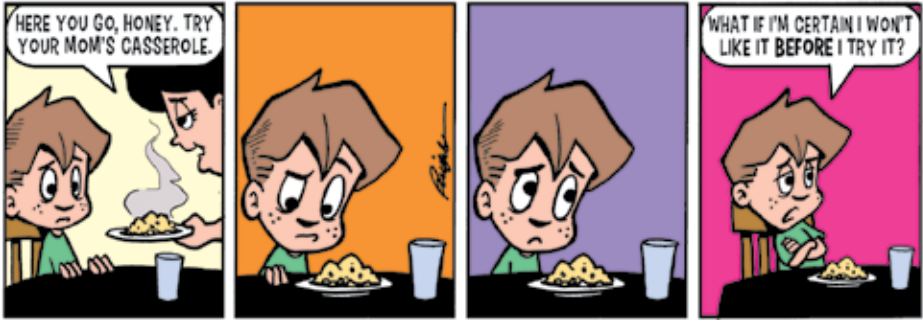
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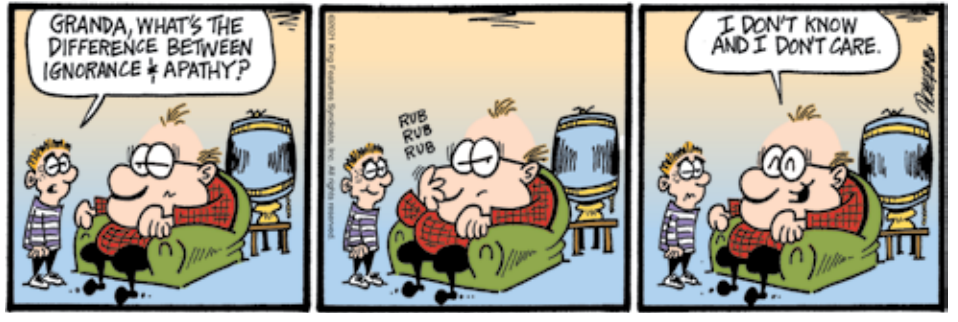
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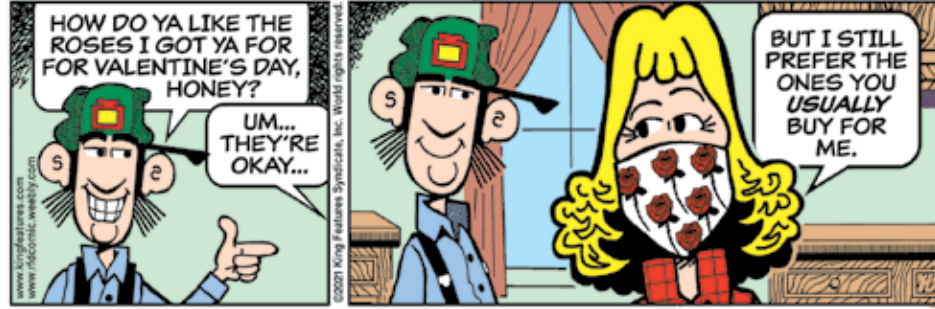
by Gary Kopervas

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



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R.F.D.



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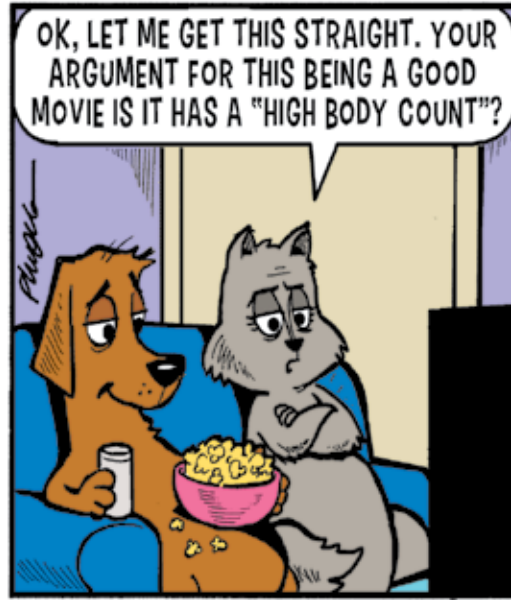
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We Only Accept ATM, Cash, & Checks M-F 9-8, SAT 9-7, SUN 10-7 Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21



\$2.50 OFF
ANY PURCHASE OF \$7.00 OR MORE OF PET OR FISH SUPPLIES (Excluding Pet Food or Litter) Cannot be used in conjunction with similar dollar or percentage off coupons & advertised sale items. Limit 1 PLU 331 CHM Limit: 1 Coupon Per Family Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21

FREE PURE NESS PET BOWL
Sm. Size #00201 or #000A1 with any purchase of pet, fish food or supply. Limit 1. 99c Value PLU 338 CHM Limit: 1 Coupon Per Family Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21

Look for Advertisised Sale Items Everyweek at www.petclubstores.com

<p>BLUE BUFFALO DRY DOG FOOD •Chicken (Reg. \$11.00 Off) 30 Lb Bag •Chicken (Large Breed) •Fish & Oatmeal (Reg & Lrg Breed) •Puppy (Reg & Large Breed) As Marked \$8 OFF Our Regular Low Prices! Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21</p>	<p>NATURAL BALANCE DRY DOG FOOD •Ultra Free 24 Lb •Potato & Duck 26 Lb •Fat Dog 28 Lb •Vegetarian 28 Lb Chicken & Brown Rice 26 Lb Limit 2 Bags Per Family \$5 OFF Our Super Low Prices Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21</p>	<p>MERRICK'S GRAIN FREE DRY DOG FOOD •Chicken/Sweet Potato •Duck/Sweet Potato •Buffalo/Sweet Potato •Salmon/Sweet Potato •Venison/Sweet Potato 25 Lb Bag Limit 2 Bags Per Family \$10 OFF OUR REGULAR LOW PRICE! Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21</p>	<p>PURINA KIT N' KABOODLE DRY CAT FOOD 16 Lb Bag Limit 2 Bags Per Family \$8.99 Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21</p>
<p>FRISKIES BUFFET CANNED CAT FOOD 5.5 Oz All Varieties Limit 2 Cases Per Family ON SALE Everyday Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21</p>	<p>FUSSIE CAT PREMIUM CANNED CAT FOOD Black Label Gold Label 2.8 Oz. Limit 2 Cases Per Family ON SALE Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21</p>	<p>TIDY CATS SCOOPABLE CAT LITTER 20 Lb Jug •Regular •Unscented Limit 2 Jugs Per Family ON SALE Everyday Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21</p>	<p>HI-COUNTRY WILD BIRD SEED 20 Lb Bag (Kaytee, 20 Lbs - \$9.99) (Audubon Friends, 20 Lbs - \$6.99) Limit 2 Bags Per Family \$7.99 Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21</p>
<p>IAMS DRY CAT FOOD •Healthy Adult Chicken •Indoor/Weight Control/Hairball •Salmon & Tuna •Hairball \$18.99 16 Lb Bag Limit 2 bags \$17.99</p>	<p>EVERCLEAN PREMIUM CAT LITTER •ES Unscented •US Ever Fresh 25 Lb. Box Limit 2 Boxes \$12.99</p>	<p>MERRICK'S GOURMET CANNED DOG FOOD 13.2 Oz All Varieties Limit 2 case On Sale</p>	<p>SCIENCE DIET DRY DOG FOOD 28.5-33 Lb Bag •Lite •Active Maturity Limit 2 Bags \$47.99 •Perfect Weight •Sensitive Stomach \$51.99</p>
<p>PRO-PLAN DRY DOG FOOD 30-35 Lb Bag Limit 2 Bags Per Family •Chicken & Rice •Lamb & Rice •Beef & Rice •Sensitive Skin & Stomach •Lite •Performance \$3 OFF OUR SUPER LOW PRICE</p>	<p>PESTELL CLUMPING CAT LITTER 40 Lb. Bag Limit 2 Bags 30 Lb Bag \$8.99</p>	<p>IAMS DRY DOG FOOD •Large Breed •Lamb Meal & Rice •Weight Control Limit 2 Bags Per Family \$27.99 •Lamb Meal & Rice •Weight Control \$28.99</p>	<p>SOLID GOLD CANNED CAT FOOD Including •Perfect Pairings Cups •Holistic Delights Pouches 2.75 Oz - 6 Oz Can As Marked 10% OFF OUR REGULAR LOW PRICES</p>
<p>FRESH STEP CAT LITTER 21 Lb Bag (14 Lb Bag - \$4.49) Limit 2 Bags \$6.49</p>	<p>CORE NATURAL DRY CAT FOOD •Original •Indoor •Turkey Grain Free 11-12 Lb Bag (Wellness Grain Free Cat Food 11.5 Lb •Adult Chicken •Healthy Weight •Indoor Salmon \$29.99) Limit 2 Bags 3 FREE Care or Wellness Cat Cans 5.5 Oz With each purchase \$37.99</p>	<p>ÖKOCAT CLUMPING WOOD LITTER •Regular •Soft Step 11-13 Lb 16.7 Lb 19.8 Lb \$13.99 \$19.99</p>	
<p>ADVANTAGE FLEA CONTROL & TREATMENT Dog Small (Green) Dog Extra Large (Blue) Dog Medium (Teal) Cat Small (Orange) Dog Large (Red) Cat Large (Orange) Limit 2 Per Family. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \$4 OFF OUR REGULAR LOW PRICES</p>	<p>PET 'n SHAPE HEALTHY DOG TREATS All Varieties 20% OFF OUR SUPER LOW PRICES</p>	<p>PETSPORT DOG TOYS •Tuff Balls •Fetch Me Fido •Fling Thing •Biscuit Buddy •Soft Toys •Twisted Chews •Assit Toys All Varieties 20% OFF OUR SUPER LOW PRICES</p>	<p>MARINELAND POWER FILTER SALE MODEL TANK SIZE PENGUIN 100B20 Gal.\$17.99 PENGUIN 150B30 Gal.\$24.99 PENGUIN 200B50 Gal.\$29.99 PENGUIN 350B75 Gal.\$39.99</p>
<p>BAGS ON BOARD WASTE PICK UP BAGS •Refills •Hand Armor •Dispenser •Green Pups 20% OFF OUR SUPER LOW PRICES</p>	<p>VAN NESS BOWLS •Crocks •Ecoware •Stainless All Varieties 20% OFF OUR SUPER LOW PRICES</p>	<p>AQUEON BOXED 10 GALLON TANK With Economy Kit Just add Heater For Tropical Fish \$36.99 Limit 1 Per Family</p>	<p>REPTILE SUPPLY SALE Zoo Med Reptibark 5 Oz\$5.49 Tetra Reptomim 3.7 Oz\$3.79 Tetra Reptomim 10.59 Oz\$8.49</p>
<p>BONUS COUPON JONNY CAT PREMIUM CAT LITTER 10 Lb Bag Limit 2 Bags Per Family Limit One Coupon Per Family Price Valid Only With Coupon Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21 \$1.79 CHM PLU 365</p>	<p>BONUS COUPON WHISKAS TEMPTATIONS CAT TREATS •All Varieties 3 Oz. Limit 2 Pkgs with Coupon Limit One Coupon Per Family Price Valid Only With Coupon Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21 \$1.39 CHM PLU 569</p>	<p>BONUS COUPON FANCY FEAST GOURMET CANNED CAT FOOD 3 Oz - All Varieties Except Elegant Medley Limit 1 Case Per Family Limit One Coupon Per Family Price Valid Only With Coupon Effective 2/10/21 - 2/16/21 ON SALE Everyday CHM PLU 361</p>	

Local 2 Local Featuring Clay Oven Indian Cuisine



Mavi is owner of Clay Oven Indian Cuisine located at 8807 Greenback Lane in Orangeville. Photo: Orangevale Women's Club

By Nancy Eagleson, Orangevale Woman's Club

ORANGEVALE, CA (MPC) - Loyal 2 Local is a new project sponsored by the Orangevale Woman's Club (OVWC). We will be highlighting businesses in our community twice a month in the View, the OVWC website www.orangevalewomansclub.org and the OVWC Facebook page. The second business we are featuring is Clay Oven Indian Cuisine at 8807 Greenback Lane in Orangevale.

We had great time interviewing the owner Mavi. When entering the restaurant, you are greeted with the delicious aroma of fresh herbs and spices that whet your appetite for the exciting meals to come.

Mavi opened Clay Oven in January 2020 and as you know had to close down 3 months later. He is now open for Take Out service from 11am to 9pm 7days a week. The pandemic has definitely caused him some difficulties but he remains very positive. He was forced to lay off workers, work longer hours, and figure out how much food to buy weekly with only take-out orders being served. Mavi says, "The people in Orangevale have been wonderful to us. We really appreciate it." Some

of his favorite meals people ask for are "Butter Chicken, Lamb, Chicken Curry and the Samosa appetizers." Mavi opened another restaurant called the Indian Palace in 2017 located at 8865 Folsom Blvd. in Sacramento. Obviously, he is a hard worker and takes pride in his restaurants.

Clay Oven Indian Cuisine is a traditional Indian restaurant in Orangevale that serves authentic Indian cuisine. Clay Oven has made a mark for itself by providing an everlasting impression on one's mind with outstanding service and authentic lists of traditional Indian cuisine. The dishes are prepared with the finest and freshest ingredients, fresh herbs and spices to bring you lip smacking yet healthy delicacies. Clay Oven has great options for vegetarian and nonvegetarian choices. Once they are able to open for dine in please remember they have WIFI, beer and wine and plenty of parking.

Clay Oven is offering a 10% Discount to anyone mentioning they have seen this article. The special ends February 25, 2021. The restaurant is open for Take Out only 7 days a week from 11am to 9pm. Please give them a call at (916) 989-1482 or go to their website www.clayovenorangevale.com and order some fantastic Indian delicacies. ★

Red Shouldered Hawk Photo Wins WCA Contest

Rick Reed Public Relations

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The non-profit provider of regional rehab, recovery and release of injured, orphaned and displaced birds and small animals, Wildlife Care Association (WCA) challenged the community to send their best bird photos and you did! Congratulations to all our photo entry participants!

Our 2020 honors go to Jody Reese of Fair Oaks for her sharp picture of the Red Shouldered Hawk, one of many Raptors resident in the Sacramento Valley. The Hawk is an important part of the ecological balance in maintaining the environment, primarily thru rodent control. Reese captured the stunning view many don't see as the birds soar high in the sky seeking prey. The Red Shouldered Hawk is in sharp focus and the picture captures its beauty and power at rest.

The annual Wildlife Care Photo contest seeks to promote outdoor activity, appreciation for nature and offer a unique view of the avian life in the Sacramento region. Contest entries begin on Oct 1st and continue to December 31st. Photo entries are free to kids under 12 and this year Honorable Mention goes



Winning photograph snapped of a red shouldered hawk by Jody Reese of Fair Oaks. Photo provided by WCAS

to eleven-year-old Dylan Nguyen of Milpitas who submitted a compelling picture of a bird seen across the region, the Blue Scrub Jay. See all the photo entries displayed in the WCA Photo Album on Facebook on the Wildlife Care Association

Birds can be found everywhere around us when we take time to look for them as they help balance our environment and maintain our quality of life in the Sacramento region.

Prizes included a crystal sculptured Soaring Raptor, a collectible edition of the Reader's Digest "Birds, Their Life, Their

Ways, Their World", a copy of Lone Pine's Field Guide "Animal Tracks-Northern California", a Golden "Guide to Field Identification-Birds of North America", a WCA T-shirt, a set of glass Owl salt and pepper shakers and a personal tour of the Wildlife Care Association rehabilitation facility at McClellan Park.

For more information or for help with injured, orphan or wildlife displaced by human activity call the non-profit Wildlife Care Association of Sacramento volunteers at 916-965-WILD. ★

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School's Out Forever? SMUD Accelerates its Fleet Electrification with Five All-Electric Work Trucks

Continued from page 1

a school year that could end entirely remotely for the majority of California's 6.1 million students.

Jessica Holmes, a Department of Finance analyst, told lawmakers at a Jan. 21 hearing that it would be "very unlikely" that school campuses would reopen this school year if schools haven't yet done so by April.

"If we're in distance learning at the end of this school year, what does it mean for next school year, and that is a very big fear and concern that we have," Holmes said.

The governor and the Legislature are negotiating the plan behind closed doors, but a key issue affecting whether more school campuses will reopen this semester seems to depend on whether teachers will receive priority access for vaccination.

The California Teachers Association, which wields significant influence at the Capitol, wrote in a letter to the governor Wednesday calling for teachers to be vaccinated before reopening campuses. Teachers unions have also opposed allowing schools to reopen if their counties remain in the state's purple tier – which the state currently allows for elementary schools.

When Newsom first introduced his proposal Dec. 30, the state included a rationale for it, noting low risks of transmitting the coronavirus through in-person instruction, especially for elementary grades, if paired with rigorous safety protocols. Researchers with the Centers for Disease Control found little evidence of transmission through in-class instruction in an article published this week, though cautioned that other school-related events such as indoor sports practices could result in higher transmission of the virus.

While some school districts, such as Long Beach, have begun to vaccinate some educators, the picture is muddled from county to county, with some prioritizing Californians 65 and older for the limited doses received so far.

Last fall, local school superintendents, school boards and labor unions in some districts, such as San Francisco, put forth requirements for reopening campuses that exceeded those of the state's, prompting a group of Democratic lawmakers to introduce legislation that would mandate when schools should safely reopen.

Gov. Gavin Newsom spoke candidly about the prospects for physically reopening California's K-12 schools in a Thursday conversation with school superintendents.

In a candid conversation with

superintendents Thursday reported by Politico, Newsom expected his plan would change as his office negotiates with the Legislature, and said requiring all educators be vaccinated before reopening schools would likely mean campuses staying closed.

"If everybody has to be vaccinated, we might as well just tell people the truth: there will be no in-person instruction in the state of California," Newsom told the superintendents.

Democratic Assemblyman Patrick O'Donnell, chair of the Assembly Education Committee, said state and local officials should better coordinate access to the vaccine for California's educators. Schools should offer in-person instruction if teachers receive the vaccine, O'Donnell said.

"The governor's keeping his own staff at home, but then he tells teachers they need to go back into the classroom without vaccination? That's not right," O'Donnell said. "Let me be blunt: the path to getting our schools reopened is to vaccinate our teachers, and I'm confident the governor will help us achieve our goal."

The governor remains under immense pressure to act on schools. Parents frustrated with how the state and local districts have handled reopenings throughout the pandemic have begun grassroots organizing, and the issue could fuel a long-shot recall effort.

Newsom's reopening plan also included new guidance that has had a ripple effect on schools that have already reopened. Some districts in San Diego and Placer counties have scaled back plans to expand their in-person instruction offerings to students and families, citing updated guidance that puts firmer restrictions on spacing students' desks.

This week, the Roseville Joint Union High School District in the Sacramento suburbs decided to revert to a hybrid model for some of its high schools instead of remaining in a 5-day week in person as it had planned when campuses first opened Jan. 5.

"It's infuriating. Parents are fed up," said Jonathan Zachreson, a Roseville parent of three attending schools in the elementary and high school districts. "It looks like these politicians are incentivizing reopening schools, but in reality the plans they come up with do the exact opposite."

Ricardo Cano covers California education for CalMatters. Cano joined CalMatters in September 2018 from The Arizona Republic and azcentral.com, where he spent three years as the education reporter. ★

SMUD News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - SMUD has partnered with Zeus Electric Chassis, Inc. and the California Mobility Center (CMC) to procure five custom, all-electric work trucks as it works to transition to an all-electric fleet. The trucks are the only all-electric work truck chassis manufactured in North America in the medium duty class and will be customized for a variety of uses throughout SMUD's service territory.

"This is a phenomenal addition to our fleet," said SMUD General Manager and CEO Paul Lau. "Not only does it showcase the future of electric vehicles and the ability to transition a large fleet to all-electric, but it also reduces our operating costs and greenhouse gases – helping us meet our goal of zero carbon by 2030."

SMUD has invested in fleet electrification for more than 10 years and has a total of 950 assets in its fleet consisting of sedans, service trucks, bucket trucks, trailers, cable pullers and other construction equipment. Electrification efforts have depended upon commercially available technology and focused on electric and hybrid light duty vehicles and hybrid bucket trucks. Just last year, SMUD added 16 new Chevy Bolts to its fleet, bringing the count to 122 all-electric or hybrid vehicles across the fleet.

SMUD has a goal to transition 25 percent of its total fleet to electric or hybrid options by 2022 and recently added electric service trucks to its fleet.



The trucks are the only all-electric work truck chassis manufactured in North America in the medium duty class and will be customized for a variety of uses throughout SMUD's service territory. Photo courtesy SMUD

Zeus is a start-up company out of Lindstrom, MN and is currently the only complete custom upfit electric truck chassis manufacturer in North America for medium duty work trucks.

SMUD's fleet engineers helped design the vehicle specifications and Zeus will fabricate the trucks in collaboration with the CMC. With a nine-month lead time, SMUD hopes to have the vehicles in operation by the end of the year.

SMUD has long been a supporter of electric vehicles, having worked with major automakers and a wide variety of technology companies for the past 30 years to help test and optimize EVs and vehicle charging equipment, and demonstrate real-world effectiveness.

SMUD's efforts and partnerships have already brought electric vehicles to underserved communities; electric school buses to local districts; clean public transportation; mobile battery charging stations and more.

Additionally, SMUD's special EV rate discount

allows EV owners to save money when they charge their vehicles between midnight and 6 a.m. This allows owners to maximize their savings while mitigating the impact to SMUD's electric grid for all customers.

SMUD was introduced to Zeus through its work with the California Mobility Center that was founded to serve as an innovation hub of policy, funding and commercialization of clean transportation technologies including autonomous transportation; electric vehicles; battery storage; shared mobility solutions; public transit and more. The goal is to provide equal opportunities in Sacramento for increased mobility and access to employment, healthcare and education.

As the nation's sixth-largest, community-owned, not-for-profit electric service provider, SMUD has been providing low-cost, reliable electricity for almost 75 years to Sacramento County (and small adjoining portions of Placer and Yolo Counties). ★

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