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Gold River Messenger

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Serving Gold River and Sacramento County

MARCH, 2021

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Three Strikes for Bald Eagle



The bald eagle that perished near the American River at Folsom had minor traces of rodenticide, plus an embedded fish hook in its system. Cause of death is nevertheless judged to have been a collision with power lines that stretch over the Johnny cash Trail.

**Story and photo
by Susan Maxwell Skinner**

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The bald eagle found dying near Folsom's Johnny Cash Trail last month had a three-strike run-in with urban influences. While its flesh showed minor traces of two rodenticides, the great raptor was not poisoned to death. Neither was the angler's hook found in its system fatal.

A California Department Fish and Wildlife analysis last week concluded the eagle – an otherwise healthy young adult with good muscle and fat distribution – died of “massive trauma and blood loss” after some sort of violent impact. The male bird was discovered huddled against tree roots and later transported to a Folsom vet clinic, where he died.

When one of a protected species

– and America's iconic national symbol – dies through human influences, federal and corporate agencies react. The eagle's remains were necropsied at the California Fish and Wildlife Investigations Laboratory in Rancho Cordova. Tissue samples were sent for further analysis in a UC Davis lab. While the nature of the fatal accident might never be proven, a Fish and Wildlife scientist theorized the bird might have collided with power lines, then plummeted to earth. Either the collision or the fall – through trees and branches – fractured sternum and keel bones. The bird's stomach was empty, so it had likely been hunting in the nearby American River.

For the couple that found the fallen icon, a Sunday walk turned into an afternoon of heartbreak. Danny De Lange and girlfriend Sydney Frank explored a mud track near the Johnny

Cash Trail. Their steps followed a creek near Folsom Prison fence line. Above was a thick canopy of branches and – rising with the ravine slope – a dozen power cables. The hikers found the bald eagle in the throes of a tragedy that saddened nature lovers everywhere.

“My girlfriend warned me not to turn quickly, recalls De Lange. “She'd seen a bald eagle behind me. I expected it to be in a tree but when I looked, it was leaning on the roots of an oak. I could see blood on the side of its head. Its eyes were open and it was breathing. It seemed in pain and unable to move.”

“Our gut reaction was emotional. Here was the embodiment of our nation, helpless.” Using cell phones, the couple contacted the police and animal agencies. “To our frustration,

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County Program Helps with Emergency Rent and Utilities

**By Angela Jones,
Sacramento Housing
& Redevelopment
Agency**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento launches \$95.6 million Phase 2 of Emergency Rental Assistance Program to pay past due rent and utilities for renters and landlords impacted by COVID-19. Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency will accept online applications for Phase 2 of the Sacramento Emergency Rental Assistance (SERA 2) Program under a new round of federal and state funds to help low income renters in the city and county catch up on past due rent and utility payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications will be accepted Feb. 25 through March 19. Landlords can apply for assistance on behalf of their tenants and tenants may also apply on their own behalf.

To be eligible for the assistance, applicants must be renting housing in the City or County of Sacramento; have household gross annual income at or below low-income limits ranging from \$48,350 for a household of one to \$91,150 for a household of 8; and must have at least one household member that is unemployed, or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or has experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19. Eligible applicants must also demonstrate a risk of being unhoused or housing instability. Applicants may use the funds for back rent and/or utility bills in arrears from April 1, 2020 through March 1, 2021. Families that applied for the previous round of SERA assistance last fall may apply for the second round of funding.

The city was awarded \$31.6 million from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and state funding from SB 91 for emergency rent assistance. The county will apply a total federal and state allocation of \$64 million in emergency rental assistance the SERA 2 Program. Federal and state guidelines require all of the funds to be spent by the end of this year. More details, plus an information flyer in multiple languages are available at www.shra.org/sera ★

Business Outlooks to a Positive Future

By Chris Ching

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - Despite having to overcome hurdles brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic, the February 25, 2021 Business Outlook & Economic Forecast was a success according to Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce President, Diann Rogers who noted strong attendance numbers for the event's first foray into the world of Zoom..

“We were able to create a quality production and reach a larger audience” said Rogers.

Organized by the Chamber, the Business Outlook brings together city government leaders and business owners providing them with information and insight into the economic health of the community along with national trends and indicators.

Since COVID prevented the customary gathering of



Amanda Norton, Economic Development Manager, City of Rancho Cordova. Photo courtesy of City of Rancho Cordova

attendees, it was initially thought the Outlook might be an in-person/zoom hybrid solely handled by the Chamber. However, concerns over safety protocols

and possible technical gaffes led to a fortuitous result. The Marriot who has hosted the event in the past suggested one of their partners Encore, an audio/video company,

could take over production duties turning the location at the hotel into a media studio.

Encore seamlessly brought physically together a small number of Chamber speakers and Mayor Garret Gatewood virtually, the event attendees, and a Keynote Speaker all the way in Washington DC. This also freed up the Chamber to focus on the content unencumbered by unnecessary logistics.

Introduced by the Honorable Rosanna Herber, the SMUD Director representing Ward 4, Keynote Speaker Neil Bradley, the Executive Vice President and Chief Policy officer for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, shared his insight into business development on the national stage with the pandemic obviously dominating his presentation.

Utilizing the shape of a letter “K”, Bradley described the economy on

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New Study Finds SacRT's Fare-Free for Youth Program Succeeds

By Jessica Gonzalez, SacRT

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - A new study released by the University of Texas, which evaluated the Sacramento Regional Transit District's (SacRT) "RydeFreeRT" fare-free transit for youth program, found the innovative program achieved multiple key goals to increase transit ridership and school attendance.

In Sep. 2019, SacRT launched the RydeFreeRT program, which provides fare-free transit for youth in grades TK through 12. With RydeFreeRT, students and youth can ride the entire SacRT transit network for free.

The program is a result of SacRT Board Director and Sacramento City Councilmember Jay Schenirer's effort to combat chronic absenteeism in schools and support young people's overall success. The City of Sacramento made a \$1 million investment in the initiative, signaling its continued efforts to increase positive outcomes for Sacramento youth. The program was extended for a second year through Sep. 30, 2021, and the City has committed to continue its investment annually.

The study, "RydeFreeRT Evaluation Study:

User Demographics, Attitudes, and Impacts on Travel Behavior," was funded by Sutter Health. Every three years, Sutter Health conducts Community Health Needs Assessments to determine the unique needs and challenges for each community Sutter serves. Sutter's investments with the study directly connect to the priority area of basic needs, which includes supporting access to education, food security, housing and economic security.

Researchers at the University of Texas at Austin administered and analyzed 5,600 student surveys before and after several months of the program's implementation.

Key findings from the study include: **Increased Ridership** - The study found a statistically significant increase in the share of students who reported using SacRT to get to and from school, as well as a corresponding statistically significant decrease in the share of students reporting traveling to and from school in an automobile.*

**This finding is in contrast to prior transportation research showing that, when fares are decreased or eliminated, new transit riders tend to be pulled from slower modes such as walking and cycling, demonstrating that the program has potential to create a new*

generation of public transit riders.

More Access - Students who reported using SacRT also reported that they can more easily access important non-school destinations because of the RydeFreeRT program.

Afterschool Transportation - Many students who did not ride SacRT regularly to get to school reported they are using public transit more to get to afterschool and non-school activities because of the RydeFreeRT program.

The RydeFreeRT program was well received, pre-COVID-19, by February 2020, student ridership increased by 127%. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, students took advantage of the fare-free program as SacRT provided more than 1 million rides in 2020.

"We saw a huge jump in student ridership when we launched the fare-free transit program, proving there is a real need to get students to school and other activities throughout the region," said SacRT General Manager/CEO Henry Li. "We are excited to see so many students take advantage of the program and hope to keep them as life-long transit riders."

"RydeFreeRT has clearly had a

positive impact on Sacramento youth," said Sacramento Councilmember Jay Schenirer. "This program has multiple 'bottom lines,' including helping to combat climate change. It's rare to find a public program that has a ripple effect like this one."

"A lack of access to basic services is among the top health indicators affecting disadvantaged communities. Unfortunately for many that includes barriers getting to school and other life-enriching activities for young people," said Keri Thomas, vice president of external affairs for Sutter Health Valley Area. "The data shows that when we lower barriers, we can help make a difference in changing that trajectory."

With distance learning and many community-based institutions temporarily closed to the public due to the pandemic, SacRT continues to find creative ways to communicate about the RydeFreeRT program by partnering with school districts and local organizations. In 2021, SacRT will expand outreach efforts to reach limited English speaking populations as well as disadvantaged communities.

To view the full study and learn more about SacRT's fare-free program for youth and students, visit rydefreert.com. ★

Sacramento Public Library Reopening Plans

Sacramento Public Library Press Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - You can now visit 21 library locations with limited occupancy. The public will be able to visit and browse any of the reopened locations to browse for up to one hour.

Patrons can continue to use curbside service at most locations and make one-hour computer appointments at select locations.

Which locations are open to the public?

Some 21 locations are open for browsing as of February 9: Arcade, Arden-Dimick, Belle Coolidge, Carmichael, Colonial Heights, Elk Grove, Fair Oaks, Martin Luther King, Jr., North Highlands-Antelope, North Natomas, Rancho Cordova, Rio Linda, Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven, Southgate, South Natomas, Sylvan Oaks, Valley Hi-North Laguna

and Walnut Grove.

Curbside service at select locations continues to be available Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

One-hour computer appointments at select locations continues to be available by calling (916) 264-2920.

Appointment times at most locations are 10:30 a.m. / noon / 2 p.m. / 3:30 p.m. / 5 p.m. *Special hours for seniors and those with chronic conditions or who are immunocompromised are available on Wednesdays from 9 to 10 a.m.;*

Patrons can return items curbside at most locations during regular hours of operations.

24-hour book drops are available every day at 17 locations.

Ella K. McClatchy and Orangevale remain closed.

Are face coverings required?

Yes. All patrons and staff must wear CDC recommended masks,

which are required at all times. If you cannot wear a face-covering during your visit, you are welcome to use our curbside service.

What safety measures are in place at the library?

Public health and safety are our priorities. Please be advised that a few things have changed to help reduce contact and slow the spread of COVID-19. We have implemented the following safety measures:

Face coverings are required at all times for anyone two years or older; We are practicing social distancing - observe all signage and markers; Libraries will have limited occupancy and seating to ensure proper social distancing; Library visits are limited to one hour per patron; Hand-sanitizing stations are provided for use prior to entry, and frequent handwashing is encouraged; Staff conduct daily health checks; High-touch surfaces will

be disinfected regularly.

Please keep yourself and others safe by:

Staying home if you're experiencing symptoms of any illness; Wearing a face covering that covers your nose and mouth, which is required for all patrons two years or older; Washing or sanitizing your hands frequently; Maintaining at least six feet of distance from staff and other patrons; Respecting social distancing guidelines and limiting your visit to one hour; Following the instructions of the library and security staff.

Are there limits on the number of people allowed into the building?

Yes. Our occupancy is limited to ensure that all can maintain social distancing following public health orders. Thank you for your patience.

How do I return items?

Patrons can return library

materials during our hours of operation in designated bins. Book drops are also available at select locations. Returned items will be placed in quarantine for 24 hours and will not be checked in immediately. Items may take up to a week to be removed from your account.

Can I drop off donated materials?

The library is not accepting donations at this time. Learn more about Friends of Sacramento Public Library donation guidelines.

What services are available?

The following in-person services are available: Curbside pickup and returns; Computer use; Mobile Printing; Mobile Services

The following virtual services are available: Virtual Programming, Personalized Reading Recommendations; Personal Shopper; Homework help; Virtual Job Coach; English Language Learning; Online learning; VetNow; JobNow ★

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Pork Spareribs Single Pak **\$2.49/lb**

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Columbus Pine Roasted Turkey Breast **\$7.79**

Columbus Maple Syrup & Honey Ham **\$7.19**

Columbus Applewood Smoked Ham **\$7.59**

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Business Outlooks to a Positive Future



Diann Rogers, Pres. and CEO, Chamber. Photo courtesy of City of Rancho Cordova

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two different courses after last year's "full economic halt" caused by COVID. Industries that have recovered and doing actually better than they were pre-pandemic such as financial institutions and healthcare contrasted with others continuing to suffer like restaurants and tourism.

Bradley also remarked



Neil Bradley

there were 6.8 million open jobs but industries are finding them difficult to fill despite record level unemployment. Still the tenure of his presentation was positive and felt the country has "a lot to build on".

Other issues he brought up were "turbocharging" the vaccinations to strengthen

recorded in housing and employment.

Echoing Bradley's earlier words, Rogers felt there was "lots of optimism" for Rancho Cordova and data about business conditions both on a local, state and country wide reflected such.

In her presentation, City Economic Development Manager Amanda Norton covered new development and potential projects both in housing and commercial, economic development and recovery and new business on the horizon for Rancho Cordova.

Faced with an unprecedented economic situation, Norton demonstrated how the city rose to the challenge with programs such as a free food delivery service and assisting business owners navigating the labyrinthine processes to secure grants plus support during the ever changing safety protocols.

She also touched on the much awaited Civic Center along with other future developments like a Youth Center and a Little League facility. Completed and soon to be businesses/projects discussed included Starbucks, SF Market, Marriott Towne Place Suites and a new retirement residence.

As with so much in the past year, the Outlook was hardly conventional but with the Chamber delivered on its promise to support local business and show where the city is heading - and thankfully the direction points to a light at the end of the tunnel.

Event documents and video will be available in March at www.ranchocordova.org. ★

the economy, frustration with Congress' occasional lack of quick action and how legislation can change that. Bradley also pointed toward the Cyber Security industry being a huge player in the future. Along these same lines, he cautioned how cyber terrorism is becoming a danger to local governments.

A "silver lining" in the pandemic he spotlighted was how businesses have discovered they could still operate even though employees are not physically together and how many have found connectivity between them has only grown.

Bradley concluded his words reminding attendees to continue to expect actions as much on the federal level as the local.

Giving the Economic Snapshot and Business Confidence Survey, Chamber President Diann Rogers illustrated where the city had been in the past year to where it is now. While the hospitality and hotel industry and general building showed clear decline due to the pandemic, positive numbers were

Three Strikes for Bald Eagle

Continued from page 1

no one we called could come to pick up an eagle," says De Lange. A nurse assistant, he judged the raptor in bad shape. "A couple of times, we heard him cough and gag. I knew that could indicate internal bleeding. We stayed with him for more than two hours, talking to him and trying to keep him awake. We kept our distance and did not touch him. We took a photo only because we knew he was a protected bird. We felt some sort of evidence might be needed."

As darkness fell, US Fish and Wildlife biologist Jennifer Brown arrived with a transport carrier. Animal rescue expert Ben Nuckolls came minutes later. "I was struck by how beautiful the eagle was," says Jennifer Brown. "My biggest impulse was to get him help." Anticipating a struggle, she first gloved up. "But when I lifted him, there was just no fight left in him." Brown drove her fragile passenger to a Folsom veterinarian; he died 30 minutes after arrival.

"When you're working in animal rescues, you steel yourself for the worst," she says. "His chances were slim but I still had hopes. When I heard he passed away, I was

very sad. Especially with an eagle - its species has such an amazing recovery story from near extinction. I knew he was a young adult. He hadn't had a chance to live a full life."

Transmission lines along the American River supply the power grid from Folsom and Nimbus dams. SMUD, PG&E and WAPA (Western Area Power Administration) maintain cables that pass over the Johnny Cash Trail and adjacent areas. PG&E offers this statement: "At PG&E safety is our most important priority, and we work closely with wildlife organizations to protect all endangered species. With respect to the incident near the Johnny Cash trail, our team is investigating the circumstances, however there are no definitive results at this time."

Footnote: Rare in Sacramento County, bald eagles have established a presence on Lake Folsom and on American River stretches over the last 12 years. At least six nests are documented in this vicinity. The deceased male is possibly from a Folsom Lake family. Necropsy examination revealed the raptor had recently engaged in breeding. Although eagles mate for life, widowed adults can eventually continue breeding with another partner. ★

SMUD Extends Suspension Of Power Shutoffs

SMUD Press Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and growing economic challenges, SMUD announced it will extend the suspension of disconnecting power due to non-payment for residential and commercial customers through June 30, 2021, at the earliest.

"We stand by our community during these tough times," said SMUD CEO and General Manager Paul Lau. "This prolonged pandemic has put a strain on our local economy and we're committed to ensuring that ALL customers have safe and reliable power as we work through these unprecedented times."

The suspension of power disconnection due to

non-payment began March 13, 2020 and will last through June 30, 2021, at the earliest, as SMUD continues to monitor the evolving situation.

Customers who are behind on payment will still owe SMUD for service, they will just not lose power at this time. Customers are encouraged to contact SMUD to make payment arrangements or to enquire about energy assistance rates and other programs.

Since March, SMUD has suspended power shutoffs for non-payment and late fees, as well as adjusted its low-income rate so more people can qualify. SMUD is also offering flexible payment arrangement options.

In the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic, SMUD has taken a number of actions to keep its

employees and the community safe. As an essential service provider, SMUD is proactively minimizing risk to employees to ensure reliable electric service and is asking the public to abide by the social distancing guidelines and not approach work crews. Their safety and well-being is key to keeping our community powered, so please thank them from afar. For information about our continued efforts, please visit smud.org/HeretoHelp.

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). For more information, visit smud.org. ★

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COVID-19 Vaccine Questions Answered: How Do I Get a COVID-19 Vaccine?

City of Rancho Cordova

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County Public Health, healthcare networks and pharmacies throughout the region are vaccinating people with the COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccine supplies are limited, so the most vulnerable are being vaccinated first. The City of Rancho Cordova wants to answer your questions, point you in the right direction, and help you sort through the confusing chatter about how to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

When will I be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

We know, it's confusing. We have broken down the process for getting a COVID-19 vaccine into three simple steps.

Step 1: Find out if you're eligible to receive the vaccine.

Vaccine supplies are limited right now, so the vaccine is being provided in phases beginning with those with the highest risk, including 65 and older, healthcare and congregate care workers, first responders, and education and childcare workers. Visit Sacramento County's website at COVID19.SacCounty.net for more detailed information.

Step 2: If you're eligible to receive a vaccine, you can contact a few different resources for availability.

Check with your healthcare provider and local pharmacies. Start with their websites for information. Links are available on the city's coronavirus webpage at CityofRanchoCordova.org/coronavirus or by calling Rancho Cordova City Hall at 916.851.8700.

If you are eligible based on your employment, check with your employer or contact Sacramento County Public Health through its website at COVID19.SacCounty.net.

If you are 65 and older, Sacramento County is now offering appointments first come, first served. Make an appointment online at COVID19.SacCounty.net. If you need assistance, ask a trusted family member or friend to help you make the appointment.

Emergency service workers, and food and agriculture workers can also sign up to receive email updates about future Sacramento County hosted vaccination clinics at COVID19.SacCounty.net.

Step 3: If you aren't eligible yet to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, sign up to find out when it's your turn.

The State has launched a new app called My Turn where you can find out if it's your

turn to get vaccinated. Sign up at MyTurn.ca.gov or contact the California Department of Public Health on their COVID-19 hotline at 833.422.4255.

If I already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and that it is possible to get reinfected, you should be vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 infection. However, if you were treated for COVID-19, talk to your doctor about getting vaccinated. Some COVID-19 treatments require you to wait 90 days before getting a vaccine.

Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine even though there are new variants?

Yes. During the February 1, 2021 Press Briefing by the White House COVID-19 Response Team and Public Health Officials, Dr. Anthony Fauci discussed why Americans should get the current COVID-19 vaccines now, even with the variants circulating, instead of waiting for the next generation of vaccines.

"There is a fact that permeates virology and that is that viruses cannot mutate if they don't replicate," said Dr. Fauci. "If you stop their replication by vaccinating widely and not giving the virus an open playing field to continue to respond to the pressures you put on it, you will not get mutations."

What can I do now to protect myself from COVID-19 until I get a vaccine?

Wear a mask, wash your hands and social distance. The Centers for Disease Control, or CDC, tell us that masks protect both you and others from airborne droplets, which is how the virus is spread, as does washing your hands frequently and staying at least six feet from others.

Avoid gatherings. Contact tracing data show that gatherings are the main source of recent outbreaks. We know it's tough, but these small sacrifices will help save lives.

If you suspect you have COVID-19, get a free test. This helps identify others who may have been exposed to the virus, which helps stop the spread.

Do you have more questions about COVID-19 vaccines?

Visit CityofRanchoCordova.org/coronavirus for more information or contact City Hall if you don't have access to a computer at 916.851.8700. ★

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Saturday, March 13th, 11 am to 1 pm
Summerset Senior Living, Rancho Cordova

Senior adults can participate by driving through Summerset Senior Living's parking lot to pick up free grab bags that include information on medical and mental health services, financial assistance, food assistance, caregiver support, in-home care and more! Multiple vendors from the greater Sacramento area will be in attendance.

Please call (916) 400-3831 to RSVP for your Grab-Bag

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GRM

Doggy Dash Registration Opens Now!

Sacramento SPCA Press Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Registration for the Sacramento SPCA's Virtual Walk & Pet Festival is Now OPEN!

On Saturday, June 5th, join thousands of walkers as we lace up our shoes and leash up our pups for the 28th Annual Sacramento SPCA Doggy Dash, our largest fundraiser of the year and an opportunity to celebrate the amazing commitment of our community to healthy, happy and unconditional relationships between pups and their people!

This virtual event allows you to participate in your own way while keeping the community safe. Show us your support by walking in your neighborhood, backyard, or local trail - creativity is encouraged!

JOIN US ONLINE for all the fun!

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First 5 Sacramento Approves Funding

By Erin Maurie, Sacramento County News

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The First 5 Sacramento Commission unanimously approved more than \$40 million in funding for contracts that will begin July 2021. Funding over a three-year period is for critical prevention and early intervention programs that will serve young children and their families in Sacramento County. Funding was allocated specifically to: Prevent African American Child Deaths; Strengthen Families/Decrease Child Maltreatment and Trauma; Improve School Readiness; Build Quality Child Care Settings; Increase Breastfeeding.

A list of agencies approved for funding can be found on the First 5 Sacramento website.

As stewards of Proposition 10 tobacco tax public funds, First 5s across the state toward three primary goals: 1) to ensure children receive the best start in life; 2) that parents and caregivers have the tools they need to help their children be successful, life-long learners; and 3) that systems serving children are streamlined and efficient.

"For more than 20 years, First 5 Sacramento has invested considerably in a variety of early intervention and preventive programs serving children and families," said First District Supervisor and Chair of the First 5 Sacramento Commission Phil Serna. "These programs provide parents and caregivers the necessary tools to ensure children achieve their greatest potential and succeed in life."

Research shows that 90% of a child's brain develops in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, a tobacco tax, to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0-5. In the last year, First 5 Sacramento distributed approximately \$11 million a year in Prop 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs in Sacramento County. All 58 counties have a First 5 Children and Families Commission providing unique local services for that county. More information available at www.first5sacramento.net. ★

Another Chance to Act on Housing



By Dan Walters
CALMatters

When he was running for governor three years ago, Gavin Newsom promised, rather absurdly, that he would spearhead a drive to build 3.5 million new housing units by 2025.

It was absurd because it would require California to escalate new construction from about 100,000 units a year to 500,000, which would be financially and physically impossible.

Once elected, Newsom backed away from that pledge, calling it “aspirational,” but he did attempt, a year ago, to once again focus attention on the state’s housing crisis by devoting nearly all of his State of the State address to it and the closely related homelessness issue.

Within weeks, however, his attention shifted to the COVID-19 pandemic and housing went on the Capitol’s back burner.

Meanwhile, California’s housing shortage has gotten significantly worse. This month, Newsom’s Department of Finance revealed that just 102,800 residential building permits were issued in 2020, down 8.8% from 2019’s total, which itself was a 3.8% drop from 2018.

Not only is overall construction headed the wrong

way, but all of last year’s decline was in apartments and other forms of multi-family housing where shortages are the worst. Moreover, when housing lost to fires, old age and other causes is included in the equation, the net gain last year was only about 75,000 units, under half of the state’s official yearly goal.

The cold fact that housing construction is headed the wrong way, and that housing shortages and high housing costs are feeding a high poverty rate and pushing employers and workers out of the state doesn’t seem to be having much effect on the Capitol.

Newsom and other politicians talk a good game, but don’t back up their words with action. What happened, or didn’t happen, to last year’s major housing bill is a telling example.

The measure, carried by Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, was a modest stab at the housing issue’s biggest roadblock – the not-in-my-backyard attitudes in local communities. The bill would have made it easier to build duplexes and other low-impact multi-family projects on lots zoned for single-family homes.

Atkins’ measure cleared the Senate easily and had enough votes to pass the Assembly. However, due to conflict between Atkins and Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon over legislative procedures, it was held in the Assembly on the last night of the session until just minutes before the midnight deadline, leaving too little time for a final Senate vote.

Newsom could have intervened in the petty squabble to get the bill to his desk, but didn’t, for reasons best known to himself.

The Legislature is back in session and its leaders and Newsom have another opportunity to match their words on the housing shortage with action – or not.

Atkins has introduced a new version of her failed bill, now known as Senate Bill 9, and others have proposed measures to speed up construction, most notably a four-bill package by Sen. Scott Wiener. The San Francisco Democrat has emerged as the Legislature’s leading housing advocate with a willingness to challenge the reluctance of many cities to build their fair share of low- and moderate-income housing.

The most important of the four is Senate Bill 478, which would neutralize local ordinances that effectively prevent construction of multi-family projects on land zoned for them by imposing unworkable land-to-building ratios.

The Atkins and Wiener bills challenge local governments’ much-cherished powers over land use, which is the most contentious but most important piece of the housing conundrum. They also will test the willingness of California’s political leadership to do something more than talk about the crisis.

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



By County Supervisor
Sue Frost

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

You may have seen on the news or outside your car window as you drive through town that a movement is growing in California. There is increasing support for the simple notion that children in California need to get outside and play. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, children have been denied access to youth sports, physical education classes, and even playgrounds. Like many drastic steps taken in the early days of the pandemic when much was unknown about the virus, such actions seemed like acceptable, short-term precautions. It is not March 2020 anymore. We have more information on which to make decisions about our citizenry’s health and safety. The time has long passed for children to get back in the game.

All priorities being about protecting health right now; physical activity for our youth is becoming more important than ever. That simple notion is defensible with the common knowledge we know to be true that kids need exercise to protect their physical health. Cardiovascular health, body composition, strength, coordination are all things that are put at risk if children are not getting enough physical activity. Virtual learning is challenging enough, but I think we can agree that physical education has its own

GOLD RIVER COMMUNITY UPDATE

Let Them Play

unique difficulties. Does the child live in a home with a large yard? Near a safe park? Does the child have access to an outdoor gym or online fitness class? Children with access to some or all the above may be having an easier time getting the exercise they need than children who do not. That is why the decision to restrict physical activities for youth so stringently is not only an issue of health but also an issue of equity.

Then there is the importance of mental health. I have spoken before of the dangers of focusing too closely on one health crisis at the expense of creating others. Everyone receives mental benefits from exercise, none more so than children. Exercise is an excellent way to cope with stress, socialize with friends, and build confidence. There are also the benefits of participating in team sports like learning how to work together, responsibility, communication. Stripping away these critical outlets and opportunities for children is depriving them of some of the most important aspects of being a kid while preparing for a stable future. For some children, sports could determine their entire future as a pathway to college or even professional sports opportunities. State officials may consider what type of future California children will have with so much critical development time spent looking at a computer screen in isolation.

California stands among only around a dozen or so states holding on to the practice of restricting youth sports to such an extreme level. It is unnecessary. Models for the safe continuation of youth sports exist across the country, and in every regard, they are successful. We know

now that a lack of exercise has devastating effects on physical and mental health. We know that transmission among athletes is significantly lower than other forms of social contact. It is difficult to understand any reasoning at this point to keep kids from having adequate access to sports and exercise.

As I said, I do not want us to focus so narrowly on one threat to health that we become blind to others. The reality of children struggling more with mental health than ever before is beyond anecdotal. Studies and stories of increases in depression, eating disorders, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies are right there for all to see. Children need to get off of Zoom and on the field to be protected from these avoidable conditions. The future of our children is not something to think about tomorrow but today. For the sake of comprehensive well-being, California officials need to get together, listen to the pleas of desperate children and parents, and the research piling up from entities interested only in the facts. When the reality that has been created is looked at through a pragmatic lens, it is clear the need exists for our children and our state to let them play.

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

Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes all or part of the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, Rio Linda, Elverta, Gold River, Rancho Murieta, North Highlands, Carmichael, Foothill Farms and Fair Oaks. ★



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Ask Toni

Medicare Supplement Rate Increase is Outrageous!



Toni King

Toni:

We have received a 20% increase for our Plan F Medicare Supplement that is effective May 1. I am a 70-year-old female in good health, but my husband

is undergoing cancer treatment at MD Anderson. Also, his cardiologist has advised him that he may need a pacemaker.

My friends have advised me that we will have to wait until October when Medicare Annual Enrollment begins to change from our current Medicare Supplement plans. I am concerned that with the Medicare Supplement increase we may not be able to afford the premiums. What should we do? Would a Medicare Advantage plan be a good option to change to with Fred’s cancer issues? ~ Carol from Denver

Carol:

Carol, you were given wrong information from your friends. I have good news for you because you do not have to wait until Medicare Annual Enrollment to change your Medicare Supplement insurance company and enroll in a new plan. You can change your Medicare Supplement any time during the year. Medicare Annual Enrollment is a time to change your Medicare Advantage plan or Medicare Part D Prescription Drug plan.

You are not alone with receiving a Medicare Supplement plan increase. It seems that the renewal increase is more than the public is expecting. Most insurance agents are finding out about the Medicare Supplement increases via an email from the insurance company informing of a renewal rate adjustment.

In 2015, Congress passed legislation called “Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015” (MACRA) to help the medical industry by correcting the “Doc Fix” proposal. MACRA also made changes to Medicare Supplement’s plans F and C which began January 1, 2020 and so Medicare Supplement plan increases began.

Anyone that wants to change their current Medicare Supplement plan and have had their Medicare Part B longer than 6

months must now answer underwriting questions regarding their current and past health issues as you and your husband will have to do.

Carol you have an option to change from your current Medicare plan to a different Medicare Supplement company or a different type of Medicare Supplement plan such as plan G or N. Carol both you and your husband must qualify by answering medical underwriting questions.

If you cannot qualify because of a health issue, then another option may be to search for the right Medicare Advantage plan to fit your medical needs. The only catch to making a change to a Medicare Advantage plan is that you must wait until Medicare Annual Enrollment period which begins October 15th thru December 7th every year.

The Difference in Medicare Supplement Plans:

- **Medicare Supplement Plan F:** is available to those with Medicare Part A with an effective date prior to January 1, 2020. Plan F has less out of pocket with premiums which maybe higher.
- **Medicare Supplement Plan G:** offer lower rates and the same Medicare benefits as Plan F except the Medicare Part B deductible is not covered and will be paid for by the enrolled Medicare beneficiary. Part B deductible for 2021 is \$203.
- **Medicare Supplement Plan N:** generally, has lower premiums than Plan G with generally more out of pocket. There is a \$20 co pay for a doctor visit with \$50 co pay for emergency room. Part B deductible is not covered, and Part B excess charges are not paid for by the insurance company which Plan G includes.

Caution: Do not cancel your existing policy until you have been approved by your new Medicare Supplement insurance company.

2021 Confused about Medicare Zoom webinar is Thursday, February April 1st at 4:00 PM. Visit www.tonisays.com to sign up for Toni’s new webinar event.

Toni King new 2021 Medicare Survival Guide® Advanced book is available at www.tonisays.com. Medicare question? Call 832/519-8664 or email info@tonisays.com. ★

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Poppoff!

With Mary Jane Popp

Language of Pain

We all want to live healthy lives. But many routinely employ some daily activities that lead to chronic disease. According to Family Physician **Dr. Trevor Campbell**, author of “**The Language of Pain**,” we must understand that language can speed recovery. On my POPPOFF Radio Show, he shared these eight things to think about.

Here goes.

- 1. CHRONIC PAIN IS IN YOUR BRAIN.** Pain is a sensation, and all sensations are generated by the brain (perception), the eyes and ears only receive the stimuli, the brain interprets it. By the time you develop chronic pain, the wiring from the injured body part has already become embedded in your brain where the connections have spread.
- 2. DON'T FIGHT PAIN...OUTSMART IT.** The word fight implies something very specific in language. It assumes violence as well as protracted effort on a battle ground. Fighting increases sympathetic overdrive (a prolonged fight or stress response). It's not an environment that is supportive of healing. Try to trick it. An added complication is that so-called battleground is the body and mind that is then likely to be laid waste by the fall out.
- 3. REWIRE YOUR PAIN ESCAPE.** Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to change. You learn a new language and your brain changes. Everything we learn causes change in the brain. Neuroplasticity led to your chronic pain, but the good news is that it is also your escape.
- 4. RE-FRESH YOUR THINKING AND BEHAVIORS.** Unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviors like pain focus, hypervigilance, fear avoidance and dread can rewire your brain into poor

health. Your brain was mis-wired. With inactivity and self-imposed social isolation, the body and mind then become casualties of these behaviors and thought pathways.

- 5. LEVEL YOUR PLAYING FIELD.** Stress makes recovery and healing neuroplasticity an uphill process, therefore, do as much as you can to reduce chronic stress load. In other words, don't make recovery harder than it needs to be.
- 6. DELETE THE MIND TRAPS.** Toxic and negative narratives become paralyzing in their effect. It's an accumulation of all the setbacks, negative symptoms and experiences you have accumulated over the years. Eventually people treat you and react to you based on the story rather than the reality of the situation.
- 7. IT'S ALL ABOUT TIME OUTSIDE THE TOXIC ZONE.** Exposure time in a toxic situation...environmentally extreme, chemically poisonous, lifestyle compromising, even stressful, is a major determinant of outcome. A cornerstone of medical healing is “first remove the cause.”
- 8. SUCCESS – THE FAULTY PAIN ALARM INACTIVATED.** With acute (short-lived) pain, the problem is locally experienced. But, with chronic (of long duration) pain, the problem has moved from the body part and exits in new circuits of the brain and spinal cord. Think of chronic pain as a faulty home alarm system. This alarm not only sounds when the home is invaded, but has become so hypersensitive, it sounds even in non-threatening situations. Minor incidents may become triggers.

Check out **Dr. Trevor Campbell's** website at www.drtrivorcampbell.com for more details on “**The Language of Pain**.”

STAY HAPPY AND HEALTHY!

Social Security Matters

About Working While Collecting Early Social Security Benefits



By **Russell Gloor**,
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I will be 65 in August of this year. If I start drawing Social Security on my 65th birthday, how will my Social Security check be affected if I continue working at my full-time job, and take home \$1380 every two weeks, until I reach my full retirement age? **Signed: Working Senior**

Dear Working Senior: Social Security (SS) has an “earnings test” which applies to anyone who collects benefits before they have reached their full retirement age (FRA). There is also a “first year rule” which applies when someone claims benefits mid-year, prior to their full retirement age. The first-year rule says that if you exceed a monthly limit you aren't entitled to benefits for that month, and that applies for each remaining month in the first year, after your benefits start. Then, starting in 2022, you'll be subject to an annual earnings limit. Since you will reach your full retirement age in 2022, your annual limit that year will be a bit more than the 2021 FRA-year limit of \$50,520 (the earnings limits change annually).

If you claim Social Security to start in August



when you are 65, for the remainder of 2021 you'll be subject to a monthly earnings limit of \$1,580. And if your gross earnings for each remaining month in 2021 are more than that (and yours would be), then you won't be entitled to Social Security benefits for the remaining months of 2021. For clarity, you would also have the option to request that the annual limit (\$18,960 for 2021) be used instead of the monthly limit, but at your earnings level you would still be required to repay all of your 2021 benefits (using the annual limit would require you to repay \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit).

When you file your income taxes next year, SS will discover you exceeded the 2021 earnings limit and require you to repay all benefits received in 2021. By “repay,” I mean they will give you an option to repay everything they paid you in 2021 in a lump sum, or they will withhold future benefits until they recover what you owe because you exceeded the monthly limit. Alternatively, you could request a less severe repayment plan, but you would need to negotiate that directly with Social Security.

Essentially, if you plan to continue working full time in 2021, it may be wise to simply delay claiming your

Social Security for a while, because you will end up needing to return any benefits paid in 2021. You could still claim in August and then inform them you will exceed the limit; in which case they will simply withhold your benefits. But in any case, you won't be eligible for SS benefits in 2021 at the earnings level you shared.

As explained above, your 2022 earnings limit will be more than the 2021 limit of \$50,520 for those achieving FRA, and if you claim benefits to start in January 2022 that higher annual limit would apply. If you're still working full time at the same earnings level, you probably will not exceed the 2022 annual limit, so your benefits wouldn't be affected. But if you get a raise and exceed the 2022 limit, SS will want back \$1 for every \$3 you exceeded the limit by (the FRA-year rate). Of course, since the earnings limit goes away when you reach your full retirement age, you might also consider just waiting until your FRA to claim Social Security and completely avoid the earnings test.

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

Bera Elected Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee

By **Travis Horne**,
Office of Congressman Ami Bera

WASHINGTON, DC (MPG) - Congressman Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-07) was elected to again serve as Chairman of the influential House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation for the 117th Congress. Chairman Bera released the following statement on his election:

“I am honored to be elected to serve again as Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation. Asia continues to be the most consequential region for American foreign policy, as our economy and national security are intrinsically

linked to this region.

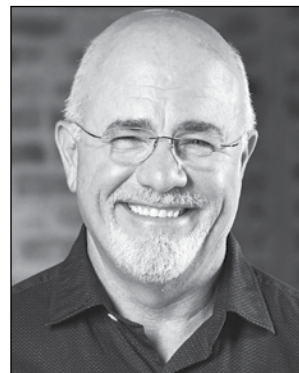
There are many pressing challenges that Congress must work to address, from an authoritarian China and a provocative North Korea, to the receding of democracy and human rights across the region.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Subcommittee and the Biden Administration to tackle these problems, restore American global leadership, and rebuild our alliances in Asia and the Pacific.”

Democratic Members selected to serve on the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation for the 117th Congress include: Representative Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-7), Chairman; Representative

Brad Sherman (CA-30); Representative Dina Titus (NV-1); Representative Andy Levin (MI-9); Representative Chrissy Houlahan (PA-6); Representative Andy Kim (NJ-3); Representative Gerry Connolly (VA-11); Representative Ted Lieu (CA-33); Representative Abigail Spanberger (VA-7); Representative Kathy Manning (NC-6).

Congressman Bera was also selected to serve on the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights for the 117th Congress. Bera also serves as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Korea and previously chaired the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans. ★



Dave Ramsey Says

It's Just Not Worth It

Dear Dave,

Do you think I should get a new hybrid car to save money on gas? A lot of my friends have done this, and with the rise in gas and oil prices lately, they're telling me I should, too. According to them, I'll save a ton of money, especially since I have a bigger car and a longer drive to work. What are your thoughts?

—Daneen

Dear Daneen,

I get lots of questions about these kinds of scenarios, and how it plays into people's budgets. Many folks wonder if it would be better to go out and get a new vehicle with better gas mileage. Well, do you really want to lose more money?

Let's say you currently drive a vehicle worth \$10,000 that gets 15

miles per gallon. There's a \$25,000 hybrid you're thinking about buying that gets 25 miles per gallon. That's a \$15,000 price difference just to get 10 more miles a gallon. If you drive 100 miles a week, that's about a \$10 difference a week. That would be about \$40 extra you're spending a month in gas if you stuck with the current car. A monthly car payment is a whole lot more than that! In short, the math doesn't work. You'd have to drive to the moon and back to make it worthwhile.

There are a lot smarter things you can do to cut down on your fuel bill. Have you thought about trading for something smaller? If you're driving a gas guzzler, trade it in on another car worth no more than your current car's selling price. This means better fuel efficiency without a car payment. Carpooling is an option, too, even if you split the driving just a few days a week.

If you want to get a little more radical with the money-saving ideas, you could think about moving closer to work. Spend some time doing the calculations and looking at the specifics

to see if it makes sense in your case. Finally, and this may be a last ditch effort, you could consider changing jobs. No one's forcing you to work where you do, especially if you're spending a lot of time and money on the road just getting to and from your job. If you're really spending a ridiculous amount on gas each month, it might even be time to look into ideas you may have once had to start your own business.

But don't use better gas mileage, or bad advice from your friends, as a rationalization for buying a new car. It's just not worth it!

—Dave

Dave Ramsey is a seven-time #1 national best-selling author, personal finance expert, and host of The Ramsey Show, heard by more than 16 million listeners each week. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, Today Show, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business, and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people regain control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions. ★

Oh, for a Life like My Kitty

By **Rev. James L. Snyder**

The other night the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were watching the news on TV. All it showed was riots, looting, and chaos, which has become the normal. When will they ever get back to broadcasting good news?

After a while, I heard a deep sigh on the other side of the room, and somebody say, “What's wrong with people?”

I just let that go, realizing that there is no way to answer such an inquiry. People will do what people will do. Many of those people are not good people.

Thinking about this, I remembered a little change that came into our house about a month ago.

Getting up one morning as I looked out the glass doors onto the back porch, I saw a little kitty looking at me. It could not have been more than a month old. I had no idea where this little kitty came from. I assumed it was just passing through, and the mama was somewhere around the corner.

As my wife came into the kitchen, I said, “Look at that little kitty on the porch. Isn't it cute?”

Even before she looked,

she said very sternly, “Don't you dare feed that kitten.”

After getting up in the morning, I would go to the glass door, look out, and sitting in front of the door looking at me was the kitty. It would look at me, then turn and look at the food dish, which was empty at the time, and then look back at me and meow.

One afternoon I went out to sit on the porch with the kitty to have a conversation.

The kitty lay down, facing me, and I began our little conversation.

“What do you think all of this nonsense and chaos and looting that's going on in the world today?”

The little kitty yawned a big yawn and stretched like it was getting ready to go to sleep. It acted as if it had no idea what I was talking about. It was very calm, cool, and collected and seemed to be enjoying resting on the back porch.

“What do you think about all this mask-wearing people are doing today? Do you understand what that's all about?”

Nonchalantly, the kitty laid his head down on its paws and closed its eyes as though it was no concern.

I had more questions I asked the little kitty and got

the same answers.

Then, the little kitty stood up, looked at me, looked over at the food dish, looked back at me, and softly meowed.

Although the kitty was not too interested in my questions, it was interested in her question, “When are you going to put food in my dish?”

After all, no matter how bad the world was out there, this little kitty could not fix the problems. The only problem this kitty could fix was conning me into giving her food every morning and evening.

Sitting there, watching the kitty, I thought of a verse of Scripture. “Put them in fear, O Lord: that the nations may know themselves to be but men.” (Psalm 9:20)

That kitty knows that it is a “kitty.” Today's problem is that people do not realize they are “but men” and do not have the solution for the world's problems.

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 352-216-3025 or e-mail jamesnyder2@att.net. The church web site is www.whataffiliation.com. ★



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DA: Let's All Remember the Victims of Crime



Anne Marie Schubert

By Shelly Orio, Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert announces the "2021: Year for Victims" campaign to recognize

victims of crime and ensure that they are not forgotten by the criminal justice system, legislators, public officials, the media or the community.

The campaign will be rolled-out on a local, state and national level and led, in part, by a coalition representing the voices of victims and survivors.

Called "Voices for Victims," the coalition consists of members who have their own personal experience with the criminal justice system and have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to achieving justice for themselves or a loved one. It also includes community leaders who advocate for victims of violent crime. Coalition members are: Dr. Nicole Clavo - People v. Lindsey;

Karen Johnson - People v. Dunn; Melissa Oliver Storz - People v. Bracamontes; Bob Canady - People v. Hronis and Bertsch; Nicole W. - Mother of Sexual Assault Victim; Keith Dobson & Tamra Dobson - Parents of DV Murder Victim; Paduacee Vue - People v. Vang; Tammy Johnson - People v. White; Roberta Sanchez - People v. Sanchez; Kristie Kiefer - Victims of Crime Case Manager, CASH; Rhonda Campbell - Victim Services Specialist, MADD/People v. Winnett; Rachele Dittmore - Co-Founder, City of Refuge; Joyce Bilyeu - Director of Client Services, Family Justice Center; Misty Foster - Chapter Leader, Sacramento Chapter of Parents of Murdered Children (POMC);

Mervin Brookins - Co-Founder & CEO, Brother to Brother; Nina Acosta - Program Manager, District Attorney Victim Witness Program.

The coalition's mission is to ensure that in the pursuit of criminal justice reform the survivors are not forgotten, and the voices of victims are heard. Members serve as liaisons and advocates for victims by sharing their personal stories and supporting legislation, enforcement, funding and resources that will help victims obtain justice.

The website www.VoicesforVictims.org was created to provide more information about the coalition and its members as well as videos and resources.

Other components of the

campaign will include a broad, coordinated social media campaign and an online book highlighting "Profiles in Courage." These profiles will shine a spotlight on the long journey victims, survivors and advocates must travel in obtaining justice.

DA Anne Marie Schubert states, "As District Attorney, I strongly support measured criminal justice reforms that reduce recidivism and enhance public safety. However, improvements to the system can be accomplished without wholesale abandonment of victims or their right to be heard. Through this coalition, we hope to ensure that when public safety policy decisions are being made, the voices of victims will neither be silenced nor ignored." ★

DA and Police Chief Announce EDD Fraud and Assault Weapons Arrests

By Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On January 14th, 2021, the Sacramento Police Department North Gang Enforcement Team executed a search warrant at an apartment located on Quay Court, which is located in the Greenhaven-area. During service of the warrant, officers contacted 25-year-old James Smith and his girlfriend, 21-year old Chyna Hill.

The investigation led to the discovery of several illegally possessed assault weapons with extended magazines, handguns, and \$1,100 in cash.

Officers also located 15 Employment Development Department (EDD) debit cards with various names on them and a red notebook. In the notebook, officers located a list of 55 different individual profiles with names, dates of birth, social security numbers, usernames, and passwords associated with EDD accounts.

An examination of the EDD accounts revealed that Hill and Smith received over \$550,000 in fraudulent EDD funds.

On February 19, 2021, Sacramento



The investigation led to the discovery of several illegally possessed assault weapons, handguns, and \$1,100 in cash. Photo credit Sacramento DA

Police Department SWAT team and Sacramento District Attorney's Office Investigators arrested Hill and Smith. They were charged with two counts of being in possession of assault weapons,

23 counts of unemployment insurance fraud, 13 counts of possession of stolen property, and one count of possessing identifying information with the intent to defraud more than 10 persons.

Smith was also charged with two counts of possessing firearms as a felon and one count of possessing ammunition as a felon.

Smith, who is a validated gang member, has also suffered a prior strike conviction for residential burglary.

"By taking these guns off the streets, our officers have made our city safer for the community and our officers. These investigations are important, as they not only address violence occurring in our community, but also can lead to other serious crimes," said Sacramento Police Department Chief Daniel Hahn. "The Sacramento Police Department is committed to protecting our community and reducing gun violence."

"Unfortunately, the circumstances of this arrest, as shocking as they might be, do not represent an outlier in EDD fraud investigations. Law enforcement personnel are frequently discovering EDD fraud associated with violent criminal activity as well as drugs and weapons offenses. In some cases, it is clear that the EDD fraud is providing a direct catalyst for the violence or funding the means to carry it out," said District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert. ★

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Ancil Hoffman Golf Course Wins CGCOA Award



Left to right: Asa Jennings (GM, Ancil Hoffman Golf Course), Greg Bliet (Golf Division Manager), Liz Bellas (Director, Sacramento County Regional Parks), Rod Metzler (CP CourseCo), Supervisor Rich Desmond (District 3), Marc Connerly (Executive Director, CGCOA) and Michael Sharp (President & CEO, CourseCo). Photo: Sac County

By Ken Casparis, Sacramento County

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County's very own Ancil Hoffman Golf Course, which is owned by the Department of Regional Parks and operated in partnership with CourseCo, was recently named the winner of the 2020 California Golf Course Owners Association (CGCOA) Community Environmental Award.

"CGCOA's criteria for the Community Environmental Award includes preserving coveted resources such as water and electricity; implementing environmentally smart programs; maintaining a recycling program throughout the property; creating safe, natural habitats for birds and other animals that occupy the course; and increasing citizen awareness of the role played by golf courses as friends of the environment," said Marc Connerly, Executive Director of the CGCOA. "For this year's award, leadership and activities related to the responsible management of the pandemic were added to the award criteria."

Regional Parks, CourseCo and Ancil Hoffman staff were recognized for their leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the development and quick implementation of safety protocols that allowed golf courses to remain open. These same safety protocols have been modeled by golf courses across the nation.

"We wanted to make sure that our residents were able to safely enjoy our courses during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Greg Bliet, Golf Division Manager. "We

developed and implemented protocols and staff training to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our employees and golfers, and have been able to continuously remain open during the pandemic."

Safety protocols implemented at Ancil Hoffman and other County courses include: Check-in for golf is in designated areas and limited to one guest at a time

Play is limited to individual play – no tournaments or leagues; Golf carts are limited to one rider per cart; We ask that all guests pay with credit card; Pens for credit card signature are sanitized between uses; All practice areas are either temporarily closed or reduced to 50% capacity – please call ahead to check;

Doors are propped open; Ball washers have been removed from the course; Rakes have been removed from golf course bunkers (we recommend playing as ground under repair); Cups have been set to reduce touch points – please leave flags in place and do not touch; No shared equipment including golf clubs, every player must have their own set of clubs; Cleaning of all surfaces has been increased to a minimum of 4 to 6 times per day;

All employees wear masks when in buildings or interacting with customers; All employees at all point of sale locations wear gloves; All employees have received significant training on sanitary and safety standards; A designated Safety Ambassador is on duty at all times.

Golf carts are fully disinfected between uses; Range balls are fully disinfected between uses; Range baskets are fully disinfected between uses; Garbage cans lids are removed or touchless. ★

Record Gun Sales in California, Nationally and 39 States

By Molly Haley, Prism PR

LOS ANGELES, CA (MPG) - During times of unrest in America, gun sales have historically spiked, and a new study analyzing 20 years of data shows the pandemic in 2020 led to a record-breaking year for gun sales in Alabama, nationally and in 39 states.

California ranks third for overall gun sales, but it comes near the bottom after adjusting for its large population. Nationally, a record 23 million guns were sold in 2020, a 60% increase from 2019.

SafeHome.org today released a study: Guns in the U.S.: 20 Years of State and Federal Data using data from 2000 through October 2020 from the FBI, U.S. Census Bureau, CDC, among others.

The unprecedented spike in 2020 can be attributed to the worst pandemic since 1918, and social and political unrest, not seen since the 1960's and the Civil War, respectively.

It also marks the continuation of a 20-year trend of more guns in America.

Key Findings in California:

California ranks in the top 15 for both total gun sales and per capita sales in 2020; 2020 Total Sales: 548,598(3rd); 2020 Per Capita Sales: 0.127(15th); 2000-2020 Total Sales Change: 64%(46th); 2000-2020 Per Capita Sales Change: 15% (48th)

Key National Findings:

Gun sales in 2020 increased by 158% from gun sales in 2000; Since 2000, gun sales have risen in every state, the majority increasing by triple digits; 25 states had record sales months in 2020 –16 of them in March when coronavirus lockdowns began; 16 states had record sales months in December 2012, the month of the Sandy Hook shooting, and six states in December 2015, the month of the San Bernardino shooting.

To view the full study and methodology, please visit SafeHome.org. ★

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The Underground Clothing Connection

Venture into Style and Fashion for Teens at Sunrise Mall

By Elise Spleiss

CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG) - The difference between failure and success can be found in just the right clothing, especially when you are a teenager. Enter, The Underground Clothing Connection.

The Underground, a one-of-a-kind store at the Sunrise Mall in Citrus Heights recently opened for qualified high school students to shop free of charge for all their clothing and accessory needs.

A community partnership between the Citrus Heights Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART), Sunrise Mall, San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) and Sunrise MarketPlace (SMP) has made this history making project possible.

Many high school students in the SJUSD, while living in secure housing of some kind, are facing hard times with their families in other ways. After filling their basic needs, parents or guardians are often left with little if any funds for adequate, if not stylish clothing and other accessories for their teens.

The school district attempted to fill this need with a clothing closet at a satellite location. When it was noticed that students were not going there, HART board members Stan Munoz and Kaylon McBride, formed a small panel of Mesa Verde High School students to find out why.

The students asked Munoz if he would have gone into a store where, when he came out, he would have been teased about getting his clothes from that "poor kids' store." Acknowledging the dilemma, Munoz asked them "how can we change this and give these students a sense of pride?" The answer, find a location away from their school where all students would be proud to go.

The stars lined up for the project as Munoz presented the issue to HART Chair and Executive Director of the Sunrise Marketplace Kathlynn Carpenter. Carpenter met with Sunrise Mall general manager Natalie Worststein, who was happy to be part of this community partnership. With 30 percent of the mall vacant, Worststein offered the former REI 21 space for the new venture at no charge.



Volunteer scheduler, and SJHS alumni, Kaylon McBride and HART board member Stan Muñoz work to make The Underground Clothing Connection a great place for students to shop. Photo by Gerry Stolz



Sunrise Mall offered the former REI 21 space for the new venture at no charge. Photo by Elise Spleiss

Munoz, with 40 years as manager at J.C. Penny's enlisted Casa Roble student volunteers to create this only store of its kind in the country. Asking them how they want the store to look, he sent them into Macy's and J.C. Penny's for ideas. "We want it to be the best-looking store in the mall. We

don't want it to feel or look like a thrift store. We want it to feel like you're just shopping." They have succeeded.

The name, The Underground, was also chosen by the students. These volunteers set up the store, and are continuing to take care of it under Munoz's guidance. There

are no tables, all clothing is hung and well-marked. Volunteers help the customers find what they are looking for. The most sought-after items: torn jeans, leggings and hoodies.

Clothing and other donations are plentiful. The clothing on the clothing trailer was brought to the store. Mall shoppers, teens and adults alike, mistaking the Underground for a regular store, would leave and return with their own donations; Word of mouth and social media is spreading the word. Private mother's online groups help each other, all taking on a life of its own.

As in the major stores, each section of clothing and accessories is a separate shop. Girls and boys separated by age. Juniors, young men, shoes, a boot bar and, handbags. Shoppers are given a shopping list with up to 25 items they can take home. Mothers who come in with their students and younger children are often pregnant. They now have maternity, small children and infants clothing.

This experience is bringing out the best in both the student customers and volunteers. With their integrity restored some customers say they want to volunteer to work. While many are earning their community service hours from school, they say they would work even without getting credit.

These jobs look good on a resume. Students are learning about customer service, merchandising, displays and cleaning. They have spent endless hours sorting bags and bags of clothes. Some are finding they have a good eye for what's in style.

Shopping is by appointment only, two days a week. Customers are referred by a school principal, counselor or school liaison. Kaylon McBride, SJHS alumni, is the customer and volunteer scheduler working with the schools.

On a feedback form, one shopper commented, "Very welcoming, loving people; When I feel that kind of spirit, I don't feel like I'm being judged."

More volunteers are needed in order to expand their hours of operation.

For information, email: citrusheightshart@gmail.com ★

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 Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21

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<p>BLUE BUFFALO DRY DOG FOOD</p> <p>•Chicken (Reg. \$11.00 Off) 30 Lb Bag •Chicken (Large Breed) •Fish & Oatmeal (Reg & Lrg Breed) •Puppy (Reg & Large Breed)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">As Marked \$8 OFF</p> <p><small>•Senior (Reg & Lrg Breed) •Lamb & Rice •Healthy Weight</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ON SALE</p> <p><small>Limit 2 Cases Per Family Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</small></p>	<p>PRO-PLAN DRY DOG FOOD</p> <p>•Chicken & Rice 30-35 Lb Bag •Beef & Rice •Lamb & Rice •Sensitive Skin & Stomach •Lite •Performance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$3 OFF</p> <p><small>Limit 2 Bags per Family Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ON SALE</p> <p><small>Limit 2 Cases Per Family Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</small></p>	<p>MERRICK'S GRAIN FREE DRY DOG FOOD</p> <p>•Chicken/Sweet Potato •Duck/Sweet Potato •Buffalo/Sweet Potato •Salmon/Sweet Potato •Venison/Sweet Potato</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$10 OFF</p> <p><small>25 Lb Bag Limit 2 Bags per Family Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ON SALE</p> <p><small>•Regular •Unscented Limit 2 Jugs Per Family Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</small></p>	<p>PURINA KIT N' KABOODLE DRY CAT FOOD</p> <p>16 Lb Bag</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$8.99</p> <p><small>Limit 2 Bags Per Family Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</small></p> <p>HI-COUNTRY WILD BIRD SEED</p> <p>20 Lb Bag (Kaytee, 20 Lbs - \$9.99) (Audubon Friends, 20 Lbs - \$6.99)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$7.99</p> <p><small>Limit 2 Bags Per Family Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</small></p>															
<p>NATURAL BALANCE DRY DOG FOOD</p> <p>•Ultra Fresh 24 Lb •Potato & Duck 26 Lb •Fat Dog 28 Lb •Vegetarian 28 Lb •Chicken & Brown Rice 26 Lb Limit 2 bags per family</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$3 OFF</p> <p><small>OUR SUPER LOW PRICES</small></p>	<p>EVERCLEAN PREMIUM CAT LITTER</p> <p>•ES Unscented •US Ever Fresh 25 Lb. Box Limit 2 Boxes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$12.99</p>	<p>MERRICK'S GOURMET CANNED DOG FOOD</p> <p>13.2 Oz. All Varieties Limit 2 case</p> <p style="text-align: center;">On Sale</p>	<p>IAMS DRY CAT FOOD</p> <p>•Healthy Adult Chicken •Salmon & Tuna (Hairball \$18.99) 16 Lb Bag Limit 2 bags</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$17.99</p>															
<p>EUKANUBA DRY DOG FOOD</p> <p>•Adult •Lrg Breed (Adult & Lamb) (Large Breed •Senior •Puppy 33 Lb \$45.99)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$43.99</p>	<p>PESTELL CLUMPING CAT LITTER</p> <p>40 Lb. Bag Limit 2 Bags</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$8.99</p>	<p>IAMS DRY DOG FOOD</p> <p>•Mini-Chunk</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$27.99</p>	<p>SOLID GOLD CANNED CAT FOOD</p> <p>Including •Perfect Pairings Cups •Holistic Delights Pouches 2.75 Oz - 6 Oz Can</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10% OFF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">As Marked OUR REGULAR LOW PRICES</p>															
<p>FRESH STEP CAT LITTER</p> <p>21 Lb Bag (14 Lb Bag - \$4.49) Limit 2 Bags</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$6.49</p>	<p>IAMS DRY DOG FOOD</p> <p>•Lamb Meal & Rice •Weight Control</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$28.99</p>	<p>CORE NATURAL DRY CAT FOOD</p> <p>•Original •Indoor •Turkey Grain Free 11-12 Lb Bag (Wellness Grain Free Cat Food 11.5 Lb •Adult Chicken Cat Cans 5.5 Oz) •Healthy Weight •Indoor Salmon \$29.99 Limit 2 Bags With each purchase</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$37.99</p>	<p>ÖKOCAT CLUMPING WOOD LITTER</p> <p>•Regular •Soft Step 11-13 Lb</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$13.99</p> <p><small>Dust Free 12.5 Lb \$17.99 19.8 Lb \$19.99</small></p>															
<p>MEOW MIX CAT FOOD</p> <p>Market Select 2.75 Oz Cup Limit 1 Case</p> <p style="text-align: center;">53¢</p>	<p>MARINELAND POWER FILTER SALE</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th>MODEL</th> <th>TANK SIZE</th> <th>PET CLUB SALE</th> </tr> <tr> <td>PENQUIN 100B</td> <td>20 Gal.</td> <td>\$17.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PENQUIN 150B</td> <td>30 Gal.</td> <td>\$24.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PENQUIN 200B</td> <td>50 Gal.</td> <td>\$29.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PENQUIN 350B</td> <td>75 Gal.</td> <td>\$39.99</td> </tr> </table> <p>AQUEON BOXED 10 GALLON TANK With Economy Kit</p> <p>Just add Heater For Tropical Fish</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$36.99</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Limit 1 Per Family</small></p>			MODEL	TANK SIZE	PET CLUB SALE	PENQUIN 100B	20 Gal.	\$17.99	PENQUIN 150B	30 Gal.	\$24.99	PENQUIN 200B	50 Gal.	\$29.99	PENQUIN 350B	75 Gal.	\$39.99
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<p>HAMILTON & COASTAL PET LEASHES</p> <p>•Leashes •Harnesses •Nylon •Collars •Leather</p> <p style="text-align: center;">20% OFF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OUR SUPER LOW PRICES</p>	<p>VAN NESS CAT PANS</p> <p>REGULAR HI-SIDES</p> <p>Large CP2 \$3.49 Large CP2HS \$5.49 Giant CP3 \$5.99 Giant CP3HS \$6.99</p>	<p>CONAIR GROOMING SUPPLIES</p> <p>•Clippers •Trimmers •Shampoo •Brushes •Combs •Deshedding Tool All Varieties</p> <p style="text-align: center;">20% OFF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OUR SUPER LOW PRICES</p>	<p>PET CORRECTOR</p> <p>1.58 oz. \$6.99 6.35 oz. \$13.99</p>															
<p>BONUS COUPON</p> <p>JONNY CAT PREMIUM CAT LITTER</p> <p>10 Lb Bag Limit 2 Bags Per Family Limit One Coupon Per Family Price Valid Only With Coupon Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$1.79</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>CHM PLU 365</small></p>	<p>BONUS COUPON</p> <p>WHISKY TEMPTATIONS CAT TREATS</p> <p>•All Varieties 3 Oz. Limit 2 Pkgs With Coupon Limit One Coupon Per Family Price Valid Only With Coupon Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$1.39</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>CHM PLU 569</small></p>	<p>BONUS COUPON</p> <p>FANCY FEAST GOURMET CANNED CAT FOOD</p> <p>3 Oz - All Varieties Except Elegant Medley Limit 1 Case Per Family Limit One Coupon Per Family Price Valid Only With Coupon Effective 3/10/21 - 3/16/21</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ON SALE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Everyday</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>CHM PLU 361</small></p>																