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No Water for You!



California's proposed water conservation rules too stringent and costly, analysts say. Photo courtesy of Animesh Srivastava - pexels

By Rachel Becker,
CALMatters.org

California's legislative advisors lambasted the state's ambitious proposal to regulate urban water conservation, calling the measures costly and difficult to achieve, "in many cases without compelling justifications."

The proposed rules, unveiled in August, call for more than 400 cities and other water suppliers

servicing about 95% of Californians to meet conservation targets beginning in 2025.

The state Legislative Analyst's Office suggested significant changes to the State Water Resources Control Board's proposal, warning that the regulations would set "such stringent standards for outdoor use that suppliers will not have much 'wiggle room' in complying." They also warn that the added

costs will ultimately be borne by customers.

"Whether the benefits of the new rules ultimately will outweigh the costs is unclear," the report says. "These doubts are particularly worrisome given we find that suppliers will face notable challenges complying with these requirements."

The report recommended that lawmakers direct state regulators to "make several of the proposed

requirements less stringent (such as the residential outdoor standard), consider how to target state funding to assist lower income customers, and extend some of the deadlines for suppliers to ensure they can actually achieve the framework's goals."

Water board officials didn't comment on the criticism or recommendations, but spokesperson Edward Ortiz said the

Continued on page 10

**\$250,000
in Grants
Available for
Yolo County
Organizations**

Yolo County
Press Release

WOODLAND, CA (MPG) - Yolo County organizations are invited to apply for small grants intended to improve food security, expand nutrition, or enhance the food system countywide. These grants, ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000, are issued by the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) from a total funding pool of \$250,000. Applications will be accepted through February 1, 2024, with grants being awarded in March 2024, and funding for third-round projects beginning in April 2024.

Applicants must be registered for non-profit, charitable, or educational organizations. Other entities may participate in a project partnership with a qualified non-profit, charitable, or educational organization. To apply, please complete the Yolo County American Rescue Plan (ARP) Food Security Micro-Grant Questionnaire at www.YoloCounty.org/FoodSecurityRound3. Additional materials and inquiries can be directed to HHSA Service Center Branch Director Dr. Tico Zendejas at Tico.Zendejas@YoloCounty.org. Important program details to note:

- Projects with matching funds or contributions will receive extra consideration.

- Applications must include Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), Letters of Support, and Permission from all participating or benefiting agencies or partners.

- Projects must be "one-time" in nature.

- Projects must be innovative and align with the Yolo County Strategic Plan.

- Projects must have measurable outcomes.

- Partnerships are encouraged.

Funding is provided by the ARP, a federal stimulus plan approved by the United States Congress and President Biden, offering \$350 billion in stimulus funding to State and Local Governments out of the \$1.9 trillion-dollar bill. For more information about the American Rescue Plan in Yolo County, visit www.YoloCounty.org/ARP. ★

River Cats Announce National Anthem Auditions for 2024 Season

Performers Must Submit Demo Prior to Feb. 10 Auditions

Sacramento River Cats
News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - It's sung prior to the first pitch of every game, and now you have the chance to do the same as the Sacramento River Cats have announced their National Anthem auditions for the 2024 baseball season will take place at Sutter Health Park on Feb. 10.

Auditions are open to all soloists, groups, and instrumentalists, and those interested in performing prior to a River Cats game must submit an audition demo by Friday, Jan. 26. Demos received past this

date will not be considered.

All demos submitted must be an acapella version of the Star-Spangled Banner, sung in full with clear, consistent, and correct lyrics. The full

performance must not exceed 90 seconds.

To submit a demo, please email an mp3 or YouTube link to Logan Flair at lflair@rivercats.com. The subject

line should read "2024 National Anthem Demo" and include a name, phone number and email address in the body of the email. Submissions that do not meet any of the submission directions or guidelines will not be considered for call backs.

The River Cats will invite the top demos submitted to Sutter Health Park for a live audition. Due to the volume of applicants, performers will only be contacted if they are selected to audition in person. Participants will be contacted the week of Jan. 29 with further instructions. ★



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West Sacramento News Briefs

MPG Staff

15th Anniversary Celebration – The West Sacramento Recreation Center is hosting a 15th Anniversary Open House and Celebration on Friday, January 12th from 6 pm to 9 pm and would

like to extend an invitation to you. Please come celebrate and enjoy the surprises they have in store for you.

Turner Library – Monday, January 22 Turner Library, located at 1212 Merkley Avenue, in

West Sacramento, will be open from 2-6pm. Special upcoming programs and events for the week of 1/21 – 1/27 include Teen Movie Night on Wednesday afternoon, Repair Café’ from 10am-1pm on 1/27 and Retro Family Movie Night on 1/27 from 2-4pm. ★

River Cats Hosting Annual Job Fair January 27th

Up To 200 Part-Time Positions Available for Hire

Sacramento River Cats News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - If you have ever desired to work around the game of baseball, now could be your chance as the Sacramento River Cats are gearing up for the 2024 baseball season with their annual job fair on Saturday, Jan. 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (PT) at Sutter Health Park.

This free event will give interested applicants the chance to speak directly with hiring managers as the River Cats are looking to hire up to 200 game day staff members across multiple positions. Interested

candidates are strongly encouraged to apply online at RiverCats.com/employment prior to attending the job fair, and should come prepared with their ID card as jobs will be offered on the spot for most positions.

Available positions include security, parking, concessions attendants, cooks, suite attendants, EMTs, merchandise associates, and game day entertainment (Cat Crew). Other posted positions will contact candidates and interview outside of the job fair. River Cats and Sutter Health Park employees will receive competitive wages, job training, food discounts while at work, and River Cats tickets. ★

New Electric UTV Voucher Program Announced

Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District News Release

DAVIS, CA (MPG) - Yolo County and The Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District (District) are excited to announce the launch of the new Zero-Emission UTV Voucher Program which offers monetary incentives for local agricultural operators to support the transition from diesel or gasoline-powered UTVs to zero-emission UTVs. Partnering with CARB, Yolo County and the District are expanding the FARMER program by offering these incentives to foster sustainable practices within our local agricultural community. The benefits of transitioning include reduced pollutant

emissions as well as cost savings with lower fuel expenses.

The Program will provide vouchers to qualifying Applicants for up to 75% of the eligible cost of new equipment, with a maximum eligible funding amount of \$13,500. Yolo County residents may be able to receive increased incentives. To qualify for this voucher program, applicants must have an existing, operational diesel or gasoline powered UTV with less than 25 horsepower and agree to destroy or render it permanently inoperable. In addition to emitting zero tailpipe emissions, the new equipment must not have been previously owned and must be indicated as new by the dealer at the time of purchase.

A list of eligible equipment and maximum voucher amounts can be found on the District’s website at <http://www.yoasaqmd.org/incentives/zeroemissionutvprogram>. For questions about the Zero-Emission UTV Voucher Program, contact the District by phone at (530) 757-3650 or email grants@yoasaqmd.org.

Learn more about the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District, additional incentive programs, register to receive air quality alerts and the District’s newsletter Air Aware at www.yoasaqmd.org. Connect with the District on Facebook or X @YoloSolanoAir, or Nextdoor at Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District. ★

Matsui, Dingell, Castor Lead Effort to Protect Energy Efficiency Standards

Office of Rep. Doris Matsui News Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. (MPG) - Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-07) and Reps. Debbie Dingell (MI-06) and Kathy Castor (FL-14) led a group of 49 lawmakers in sending a letter to House and Senate Appropriations leadership, urging them to reject appropriations provisions that would gut new energy efficiency standards.

“As Congress works to come to an agreement on appropriations for fiscal year 2024, we write to oppose provisions in H.R. 4394, the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024, that would diminish the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) authority to set energy conservation standards for a range of appliances,” wrote the lawmakers.

DOE energy efficiency standards cover more than 60 different products ranging from laundry machines and dishwashers to lighting technologies. These standards are important tools to save American consumers money while also

decarbonizing crucial sectors of the economy. DOE recently estimated that new efficiency standards adopted during President Biden’s first term will provide nearly \$1 trillion in additional consumer savings over the next 30 years.

“By ensuring that standards are up-to-date, we can save money and energy while also ensuring that consumers have a wide range of top-performing choices that suit them,” the lawmakers continued. “As a result of standards in effect today, the average American household saves approximately \$500 annually on utility bills.”

The letter has the support of energy efficiency and climate stakeholders.

“The Department of Energy is doing its job updating energy efficiency standards to save consumers and businesses money while protecting the climate,” said Andrew deLaski, Executive Director, Appliance Standards Awareness Project. “There’s no good reason Congress should interfere. The representatives on this letter are standing up for lower utility bills and less pollution.”

“This attack by House Republicans on consumers would block the Department of Energy from reviewing, assessing, and updating appliance energy efficiency standards,” said Margie Alt, Climate Action Campaign Director. “Since their inception in 1987, appliance efficiency standards have reduced family utility bills by about \$500 per month. New efficiency standards will drive innovation and save families even more money in the future. Plus, updated appliance efficiency standards will reduce climate pollution. Congress must reject this effort to keep profits high for big polluters at the expense of our families and our environment.”

Congresswoman Matsui has long spearheaded bold, forward-thinking climate policies and championed robust energy efficiency standards. She sits on the Energy Subcommittee of the Energy & Commerce Committee, which oversees DOE energy efficiency programs, and serves as co-chair of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC). ★

National Average Price of Gas Projected to See Yearly Decline in 2024

GasBuddy News Release

DALLAS, CA (MPG) - GasBuddy, a PDI company, today released its annual Fuel Price Outlook with some good news for drivers: expect lower gasoline and diesel prices in 2024. The outlook highlights key trends in gasoline and diesel prices, forecasting that, after two years of above average gas prices, 2024 will bring relief at the pump for consumers as several factors contribute to less of a pinch at the pump. GasBuddy expects the yearly national average will drop from \$3.51 per gallon this year to \$3.38 in 2024.

Highlights from GasBuddy’s 2024 Fuel Outlook:

Gas prices still could fall below a national average of \$3 per gallon this winter before starting to rise in late-February, getting close to \$4 per gallon as summer approaches, then mildly declining into summer, with hurricane season presenting uncertainty in late summer.

Drivers in some California cities could again briefly see prices above \$6 per gallon if major refinery issues develop during the summer, although most major U.S. cities will see prices peak at or slightly below \$4 per gallon in 2024.

Americans are expected to spend a combined \$446.9 billion on gasoline in 2024. Average yearly spending per household will fall to an estimated \$2,407, down 2% from 2023, and over 12% less compared to 2022.

Electric vehicles (EVs) and the 2024

presidential election have the potential to impact fuel prices in the year ahead, with a potential slowdown in the EV transition at stake.

Memorial Day will be the priciest 2024 holiday at the pump, with the national average price of gasoline expected to be \$3.56-\$4.04 per gallon on the holiday.

“As 2023 fades away, I’m hopeful those \$5 and \$6 prices for gasoline and diesel will also fade into memory,” said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy. “The global refining picture continues to improve, providing more capacity and peace of mind that record-setting prices will stay away from the pump in 2024. I anticipate that we’ll still have some volatility, unexpected outages and disruptions, and potentially weather-related issues, but I do not expect it to lead to record prices. Offsetting OPEC+’s production cuts is contributing to the rise of U.S. oil production, which now stands at record levels. Combined with Canada, North American oil production could further stabilize countries that have decided to curb oil production.”

The outlook forecasts the highest prices will be seen at the peak of the summer driving season in May, with the national average potentially rising as high as \$3.89 per gallon. More uncertainty is expected with hurricane season in late summer. Diesel prices are also predicted to fall incrementally from 2023, peaking at \$4.13 per gallon in March 2024. ★

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Home Care Financial Assistance for Veteran Spouses

By Michele Townsend

SACRAMENTO REGION (MPG)

As we get older, many of us need a helping hand. Our bodies may be sick, they may be broken, or they may just be worn out. In addition, the world currently has more illnesses than it ever has before. Many families would like nothing more than to keep their aging family members at home. However, Home Care is very expensive.

Insurance often does not cover Home Health Care, so many families find themselves in the position that they are forced to put their loved one in a facility, convalescent home, or some other facility that offers assisted living. There are many facilities that insurance pays for and a private facility can cost \$4,000 per month and more.

According to American Veteran's Aid, a private company, the Veteran's Administration (VA), may be able to help. The

program is called Aid & Attendance and may provide you a tax-free benefits of up to \$3,536 per month for all types of long term care. It is designed to off-set the expense of long-term care and can be used for home care or for a facility.

The Vet must have served during War time and had to get anything except a dishonorable discharge. Eligible periods of war are WWII (12-7-41 to 7-26-47 is considered war service), Korean Conflict (6-27-50 to 1-31-55), Vietnam (11-1-55 to 6-7-75 for those who served in Vietnam, 8-5-64 to 5-7-75 for those who served outside of Vietnam) or the Persian Gulf War (8-2-90 through a date to be prescribed by Presidential proclamation or law).

Eligible individuals will be Vets and spouses of Vets that are 65 years and older, need assistance with daily activities such as dressing, bathing, eating, toileting or getting around or are totally disabled. In

addition, the vet must have served for a minimum of 90 days and the spouse must have been married to the vet at the time of their passing, and cannot be remarried unless it is to another wartime veteran. There is income and countable asset criteria established by the VA.

"We just want to help any war time veterans that we can," said Barbara Wright. "We want them to get the benefit, which they so deserve." Aid & Assistance is provided by the Department of Veteran Affairs, and it is extremely easy to inquire about you or your loved one's eligibility. Simply visit <https://americanveteransaid.com/>, enter your information and answer 4 questions. Generally, a representative will call you back within 24 hours and they can often determine eligibility. This is not a one-time payment, but rather a monthly payment. If you don't have access to a computer, you may call Barbara Wright at 877-427-8065 ext. 1019. ★

Sacramento Kings Named NBA Team of the Year

Team also Receives NBA Innovation Award

Sacramento Kings News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

On January 9th, the Sacramento Kings issued the following statement after being awarded the NBA Team of the Year Award and NBA Innovation Award for the Kings Victory Beam. The NBA Team of the Year Award recognizes excellence in team business performance across both key revenue drivers and operational focus areas such as people and culture, community impact, innovative thinking, and data-driven results. The NBA Team Innovation Award recognizes excellence in creating and executing unique ideas that have generated a positive impact on the team's business.

"We are tremendously proud to be recognized with these distinguished honors as we have further ignited our fanbase, continued to build international excitement and revolutionized our business," said Kings Owner and Chairman Vivek Ranadivé. "On behalf of my partners, I want to thank Matina Kolokotronis and John Rinehart for their leadership in fulfilling our vision to make the Kings a

global brand that positively impacts our community and makes the world a better place. I want to further express my gratitude to all of the Sacramento Kings team members who work tirelessly every day to make these ideals a reality. We have the best fans in the world, and we are committed to working hard to bring them the best we can, which they so richly deserve."

Highlights from the Kings business results during the 2022-2023 season include:

- Nearly 100% season ticket Renewal
- Ranked #2 among all NBA teams in ticket revenue growth
- Added over 20 new corporate partners
- Ranked #1 in fan in-game experience in the NBA
- Game viewership up 200%+ and postgame show up 177%
- Most-watched 1st Round playoff game in 24 years
- ABC's largest ever audience for a non-NBA Finals game
- Launched a new e-commerce and renovated in-arena team store that led to a 35% increase in merchandise sales
- Hosted more than 100 community events

impacting nearly 100,000 people

In addition, the team introduced the Sacramento Kings Victory Beam which has solidified Golden 1 Center as a communal fire-place, achieving Kings Owner and Chairman Vivek Ranadivé's original goal for his investment in Sacramento, creating a gathering place, a new town square to celebrate, worship and come together. Fans congregate outside the arena following a win to celebrate and take photos with the glow of the beam. Deemed a "Place of Worship" on Google Maps, it is a pillar of fan engagement and community building.

The beam has become an international phenomenon that has magnified the team's performance, shining a light on the tremendous 2022-23 season in which the Kings broke their playoffs drought and secured the home-court advantage to start the 2023 NBA Playoffs. The beam is a physical manifestation of what makes Sacramento Proud, symbolizing hope for loyal Kings fans as they all joined in camaraderie and celebrated the playoffs appearance.

For more information, visit Kings.com ★

Girl Scouts Kick off 2024 Cookie Season

Girl Scouts of Northern California News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

Girl Scouts of Northern California will kick off their 2024 Cookie Season on January 29. Consumers in all 19 counties from Gilroy to the Oregon Border can support their local girl entrepreneurs by ordering from the iconic cookie lineup online at ilovecookies.org. Local shoppers can also locate cookie booths starting February 11 for in-person cookie sales. The 2024 Northern California cookie season will run through March 17, and all cookie flavors are \$6 a box (shipping fees additional).

This season, cookie lovers can enjoy the full assortment of Girl Scout Cookies, including Thin Mints, Trefoils, Samoas, Tagalongs, Do-Si-Dos, Lemon Ups, Toffee-tastic, Girl Scout S'mores, and Adventurefuls. Visit www.ilovecookies.org for more information.

Girls Scouts of Northern California is one of the largest councils in the country, offering unique outdoor experiences, civic engagement, entrepreneurship opportunities, skill-building, leadership, and fun. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the cookie program are used locally and provide critical funds for girls' access to

affordable programming, the outdoors, camp and program centers, STEM, financial aid, and volunteer support services. Girl Scouts and their troops depend on these funds to support their community service efforts.

This year, over 16,000 Girl Scouts in Northern California will participate in the cookie entrepreneurship program with the goal of selling \$4.3M packages of cookies.

"I am thrilled to kick off another exciting cookie season and to support our cookie entrepreneurs in having a fun and successful year," said Bri Seoane, CEO of Girl Scouts of Northern California. "Each year, these budding entrepreneurs impress us with their dedication to achieving their goals and supporting local initiatives. Through this program, they contribute to their communities and gain invaluable life and business skills that will serve them for a lifetime. I am immensely proud of each and every participant!"

During this highly anticipated time of the year, girls acquire essential life skills, including money management, team building, public speaking, and decision-making. Girl Scouts can earn a variety of badges and awards to develop valuable business skills, including Cookie Business badges, Financial Literacy badges, Cookie Entrepreneur Family pins,

and Entrepreneur badges. Ultimately, this entrepreneurship program serves as a vital steppingstone, equipping girls and gender-expansive youth with lifelong skills, and instilling a deep sense of confidence that they will carry into the future.

How to Purchase Girl Scout Cookies This Year

Starting January 29, consumers can source Girl Scout online via digital cookie stores at ilovecookies.org and have their favorite cookies delivered straight to their home or anywhere in the country or find the closest Girl Scout booth for in-person cookie sales starting February 11 at select businesses and neighborhoods in Northern California communities until March 17.

About Girl Scouts of Northern California

The mission of Girl Scouts of Northern California is to build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. As one of the largest councils in the country, Girl Scouts of Northern California serves a diverse membership of over 24,000 youth and over 21,000 adult volunteers in a 19-county area that stretches from Gilroy to the Oregon border. To learn more about Girl Scouts of Northern California, visit www.gsnorcal.org ★

Sen. Dodd Introduces California AI Accountability Act

Office of Sen. Bill Dodd News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - In response to the unprecedented growth of artificial intelligence technology, Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, introduced the California AI Accountability Act today to ensure state agencies advance safeguards and consumer protections. The bill incorporates and builds upon recent AI directives from President Joe Biden and Gov. Gavin Newsom and seeks to encourage continued innovation while ensuring the rights and opportunities of all Californians are protected.

"By now we all recognize the tremendous capability of artificial intelligence to improve our lives and the functioning of government," Sen. Dodd said. "But we also see its potential downsides — specifically, the threat to consumer privacy, transparency and fairness. My proposal will help identify the risks of these emerging systems and develop appropriate guidelines to protect our state and the public."

The 2023 White House Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights, in addition to recent executive guidance from Gov. Newsom, establish a framework for addressing

concerns including AI-driven algorithms that discriminate against people based on income levels or race, and the effects of automated machines on our workforce. Additionally, the president and governor have underscored threats posed by AI to data and consumer privacy, and the potential for misusing the technology to deceive and defraud.

Sen. Dodd's proposed California AI Accountability Act will guide the decision-making of state agencies, departments and subdivisions in the review, adoption, management, governance and regulations of automated decision-making technologies. One provision in the bill would require state agencies to notify users when they are interacting with AI. Further, it states the intent of the Legislature that the private sector adhere to these rights and safeguards, in addition to any specific statutory or regulatory requirements, and evolving best practices. And the act encourages the state to invest in AI education and build AI competency in the state's workforce.

The bill is a follow-up to Sen. Dodd's Senate Concurrent Resolution 17, adopted last year, which sets forth many of the ideas and was the first AI-drafted state resolution in history. ★

Tanya Aguilera
West Sacramento Specialist

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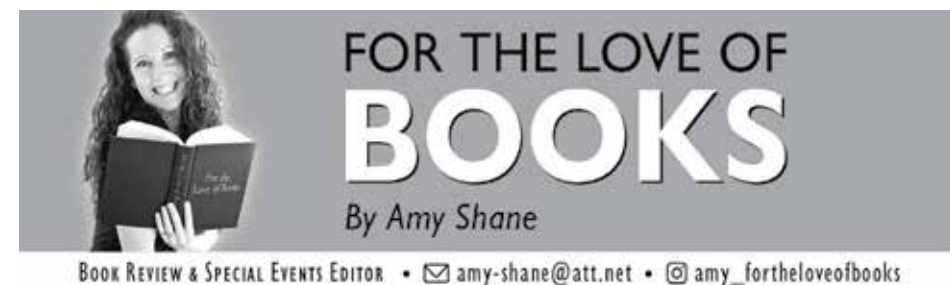
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The Invocations

by Krystal Sutherland

Emer Byrne wasn't aware that her little cornerstone of magic was making her clients a target for a serial killer. Her spells were written to help women gain power, change their lives, or give them the strength to change a situation but not harm them. Now, it's doing precisely the opposite.

Zara Jones would do anything to bring her sister back, even if that means the unthinkable. While Zara can't change the fact that her sister was murdered, or the fact that it was by an elusive serial killer targeting women, the one thing she thinks she can control is magic. Zara's only focus is bringing her sister back from the dead; if only she could find someone with the knowledge strong enough to help.

Jude Wolf, daughter of a billionaire, has learned that there is one thing money can't buy: a soul. Jude, desperate to change her life and be loved by her father, makes a deal that goes horribly wrong. Now, her cursed body is slowly dying, making everything around her rot, spoil, or even mold in her presence. While Jude might have everything at her disposal, finding someone who can



◆ Nancy Paulsen Books
◆ Intended Audience: Young Adult
◆ Rating: ★★★★★
◆ Release Date: Jan. 30, 2023

reverse a curse is nearly impossible.

Three individual paths are about to become one when a clue leads Zara and Jude straight to the magic-wielding invocations of Emer. One girl has the power to write powerful spells, and two girls are willing to do whatever it takes to change their lives. However, none of them expected to be opening the door to a supernatural Jack the Ripper serial killer.

Krystal Sutherland does it again by taking her readers to the edge of darkness and plummeting them straight through. While some books might dance

on the edge of danger and darkness, *The Invocations* pulls its readers deep within its dark and inviting tale.

This fast-paced story is intense, dark, and even gruesome at times, exploring a side of misogyny passed down from the witch trials that is not often discussed but very skillfully adds to the storyline. Told in a three-person POV takes this story to even more powerful storytelling and vulnerability that creates magnificent and magnetic characters that are so instantly captivating that readers will not be able to look away, even if one of the characters has a stench of death.

While this story has a dark supernatural current, it also touches on deep and powerful emotions, subjects, and issues. However, readers will not be dismayed; this story does come to an ending and even an epilogue that will leave readers satisfied.

Sutherland once again delivers a powerful story of sisterhood and friendship, and has truly found her calling of writing within the dark shadows of the macabre, where once you enter, you will never be the same. ★

Learn About Fruit Tree Care in Free Interactive Class



Have your questions about growing fruit trees answered by a UC Master Gardener in Woodland. Photo by Hans from Pixabay

Yolo County News Release

WOODLAND, CA (MPG) - Yolo County residents are invited to learn about fruit tree care with Bonnie Berman, a UC Master Gardener, on Saturday, January 27, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Hanna & Herbert Bauer Memorial Community Garden in Woodland. This free interactive class is presented by the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and will focus on fruit tree pruning, common fruit tree pests and how to control them, as well as tips on how to improve the lifespan of your fruit trees. Winter is the optimal time to care for your fruit trees to help them stay healthy and productive.

This class is available to all and is part

of HHSA's commitment to providing education to help residents eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and live healthier lives. Pre-registration is required by January 26 and can be completed by contacting Nick Gazda at Nick.Gazda@YoloCounty.org or at (530) 666-8429. Please dress for cold weather and wear shoes that can get dirty. The garden is located at 137 N. Cottonwood Street in Woodland, along the west side of the HHSA Bauer Building. Please note that in the event of rain, the class will be moved indoors.

Community garden classes are offered for free throughout the year by HHSA. Interested residents can learn more about the garden's activities and classes by visiting www.YoloCounty.org/Garden. ★

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Budget Deficit Will Test If School Spending Is The Key To Achievement



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

When California's governors and legislators write state budgets, they begin with projecting how much revenue the state is likely to receive.

It's a semi-educated guess that is often billions of dollars removed from the eventual reality, given the high level of volatility in the state's taxation system.

With a revenue number in hand, officialdom then calculates how much of it must be allocated to public schools under Proposition 98, the 1988 ballot measure that governs financing of K-12 schools and community colleges.

It's roughly 40%, but since the revenue assumption is shaky at best, Prop. 98's complex formulas are subject to varying interpretations. The calculation also includes estimates of local property taxes, so the number that emerges for schools is also rather arbitrary.

Whatever the figure may be in any given year, it never precisely squares with reality, which then requires reconciliation in the next budgetary cycle. The 2024-25 budget that Gov. Gavin Newsom proposed this week exemplifies the annual exercise.

When he and the Legislature agreed on a

2023-24 budget last June, they decided that Prop. 98 would give schools, in property taxes and state aid, \$110.6 billion in 2021-22, \$107.4 billion in 2022-23, and \$108.3 billion in 2023-24.

This week's budget declares that those numbers are cumulatively \$11.3 billion too high since revenues are running well under previous estimates. Meanwhile, the Legislature's budget analyst, Gabe Petek, had calculated that they are \$21 billion too high because his revenue estimates are lower than the governor's.

The differing revenue estimates – and the equally divergent calculations of school financing – together account for most of the \$30 billion-plus gap between Newsom's estimate of a \$38 billion deficit and Petek's \$68 billion estimate.

By tapping into a special reserve fund for schools, Newsom's budget proposal makes up most of his \$11.3 billion shortfall between what Prop. 98 requires and what school officials thought they would be getting over the three-year period, thereby shielding them from having to absorb big reductions in money they've already spent.

However, if Petek's more pessimistic revenue estimate turns out to be closer to reality than Newsom's, schools could take big hits and state officials would face pressure to change how schools are financed and how state aid, whatever the level, is allocated.

The latter generally is based on attendance – so

much for each student, with bonus allocations to school districts with substantial numbers of English learners or students from poor households to help them overcome a chronic achievement gap in basic academic skills.

Newsom's proposed budget projects that K-12 schools will receive \$126.8 billion in 2024-25 from local property taxes, state aid and federal funds, or an average of \$23,519 per student.

That's double what it was a decade ago, but there's no indication that the sharp increase in school spending has resulted in a commensurate increase in academic achievement. The state's own competency tests, as well as nationwide tests, show little, if any, overall improvement and the achievement gap is as wide as ever.

Per-pupil financing is likely to increase in the years ahead because public school enrollment is declining and Prop. 98's formula is largely based on revenue, regardless of how many students are in the system.

K-12 enrollment peaked at 6.3 million in 2004, is now below 6 million and is expected to drop to under 5 million in the next decade due to low birthrates and the state's overall population decline.

It will test whether money is truly the key to educational achievement, as the education establishment contends, or other factors are preventing California kids from realizing their potential.

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

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PO Box 447, W. Sac. 95691

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Worship 11 a.m.

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pastorron@newseasons.ws.com

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Sun. Worship - 11 a.m.

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(916) 374-9177

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Meditation: 10:30 am

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Rev. Rick Harrell

www.csasacramento.org

revrick@csasacramento.org

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www.TrinityWestSac.org

info@trinitywestsac.org

Pastor Jamie Crook

Spanish Ministry Pastor: Miryam Osorio

Sunday Worship Services:

10 a.m. Blended/Traditional

Noon Spanish Language

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911 Park Blvd, West Sacramento

Office: (916) 371-4814

Fr. Mathew Rappu, Pastor

Mass: Mon, Tues, Wed 8:30 a.m.

Fri 8:30 a.m. at OLG school

during school year

Sat: 5:30 p.m. vigil, Sun: 9 a.m., 11 a.m.



California State Parks Awards \$41.9 Million in Grants to Create New Parks Across the State

California State Parks News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California State Parks announced on December 28, 2023, \$41.9 million in grant funding to support the diversity of California's park needs. Under "Round Four" of the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Grant Program, the state of California is delivering new park access to an additional eight communities across the state.

To date, the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Grant Program has provided approximately \$1.2 billion to California's communities. Round Four received the highest amount requested in State Parks' nearly 50-year history of grant administration.

"Having access to outdoor spaces is critical for all Californians and these projects will contribute to the quality of life for many people who seek local parks to improve their physical, mental and social well-being," said California State Parks Director Armando Quintero. "State Parks is incredibly grateful to all the organizations who applied for grant funding this round."

Awarded grant projects include:

Sacramento County Southgate R.P.D., Jack N. Sheldon Park & Florin

Creek Trail: \$8,500,000 to acquire approximately 8.77 acres and construct a new dog park with lighting, disc golf course, basketball court, exercise equipment stations, four pickleball courts with lighting, gazebo and BBQ area, practice wall, playground, soccer field with lighting, multiuse trails, informal trails, electric vehicle charging stations, ping-pong with shade cover, educational arboretum, pathways with lighting, two shade structures with picnic tables, public art, and lighting and landscaping throughout the park. Renovate six tennis courts with lighting, a multiuse trail, playground, soccer field and parking with lighting.

Yolo County County of Yolo, Knights Landing Community Park: \$814,649 to create a new park which will include a new soccer field, little league/softball field, full-size basketball court, ball wall, children's playground, perimeter 6' wide walking/jogging path, shaded picnic and BBQ area, open natural grass area, parking lot, plaza area with picnic tables, shade trees, and farmers market/food truck areas for community gathering space. Renovate the existing restroom.

On March 21, 2021, California State Parks' Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS) received \$2.42 billion in

grant requests for Round 4 of the Statewide Park Program. The department was able to award \$548.3 million to projects throughout California; however, approximately, \$1.87 billion in requests were left unfunded. An additional appropriation of \$41.9 million was provided through the 2023/2024 State Budget. This additional funding is now being awarded to unfunded Round 4 applications.

Funding for the grant program was first made available through Proposition 84 (2006 Bond Act) Sustainable Communities and Climate Change Reduction, Proposition 68 (2018 Bond Act) and additional general fund money continue this program's legacy.

Since 2000, California State Parks' OGALS has administered more than \$3 billion in local assistance grants from a variety of funding sources. The funding has established indoor and outdoor recreation in every corner of the state, built trails, acquired and restored sensitive habitat, built natural and cultural interpretative facilities, and fostered outdoor natural experiences for thousands of children, youth and families. Approximately 8,000 California parks have been created or improved through these grant programs. To view previous park projects created through OGALS, visit parksforcalifornia.org ★

Crime Reports

WEST SACRAMENTO



- 12-27-23 CHARLES BRIDGES Arrested for Vandalism after allegedly damaging a window with a fire extinguisher.
- 12-29-23 TEVIN LANEY Arrested for DUI 0.08% after allegedly driving recklessly.
- 12-29-23 JANETTE COLEMANBEAN Arrested for Petty theft.
- 12-31-23 JUAN LEALVALDEZ Arrested for Reckless driving, Obstruction and Parole violation.
- 12-31-23 PAMELA MURPHY Arrested on a warrant after Police responded to a verbal altercation.
- 1-01-24 KAWATHA GETER Arrested for DUI and DUI0.08%.
- 1-01-24 LAURA MILLER Arrested for three warrants.
- 1-01-24 LAMAR PERRY Arrested for DUI and DUI 0.08%.
- 1-02-24 DRAVEN DAROTA GERMAN Arrested for a warrant when Police responded to a disturbance call.
- 1-03-24 ISAAC ESCOBEDO Arrested for Acquiring access of card with intent to sell and Probation violation.
- 1-04-24 ZAZUETA PEREZ Arrested for three warrants and Possession of burglary tools.
- 1-04-24 JUAN NOSIGLIANIETO Arrested for warrant when recognized on street by Police.
- 1-05-24 DONALD LONGMAN Arrested for Vandalism:\$400 or more.
- 1-05-24 LUCIO MORALES Arrested for Disorderly conduct:Loitering.
- 1-06-24 HARPREET SINGH Arrested for Battery after allegedly pushing and throwing his shoe at business owner's face because they wouldn't serve them food because they were closing.
- 1-06-24 VICTOR VOROUKOUAMANH Arrested for giving false ID to Police after Police responded to a call about someone making threats to an employee.
- 1-08-24 AN QUINLAN Arrested for Assault with a deadly weapon with force possible Great bodily injury and Obstruction after allegedly strangling her mother in a fight.
- 1-08-24 JAMES MCDONAGH Arrested for Annoying calls to 911 and False report of a crime to specific Peace officers. 1-10-24 RASHUAD THOM Arrested for Assault with a deadly weapon:Not a firearm and Threaten crime with intent to terrorize after allegedly chasing three victims around an apartment complex while swing a knife and a spear at them.

INCIDENT/CRIME REPORTS

- 12-06-23 Suspect(s) have continued to open fraudulent accounts using victim's identity. Approximately \$12,748 in fraudulent account/charges. Get credit/etc. others ID.
- 12-23-23 Victim had various mail stolen from mailbox. \$2,000 loss. Mail theft, Commit mail theft and Grand theft.
- 12-26-23 Reporting party lost iphone and an unknown individual picked up the item and took it. \$1,500 loss. Appropriate lost property.
- 12-30-23 Victim's son entered the house and vandalized a TV after getting into a verbal argument. \$350 loss. Vandalism.
- 12-31-23 Three suspects were located prowling on private property and placed under arrest.
- 1-01-24 Shoplifting/stolen merchandise returned from Lowes. Approximately 2 hours later suspect returned items back to Lowes. \$800 loss. Petty theft.
- 1-02-24 Vandalism of vehicle gas tank. \$3,000 loss. Vandalism.
- 1-03-24 The reporting party's vehicle was burglarized. Suspect broke the passenger window and stole the title to the car and the ashtray full of coins. Burglary.
- 1-04-24 Victim's bike was stolen and bike lock broken in front of Walgreens. \$135 loss. Petty theft and Vandalism.
- 1-04-24 Suspect stole 2 packages from front porch. \$402 loss. Petty theft.
- 1-05-24 Victim's wallet was stolen at some point. \$320 loss. Petty theft.
- 1-06-24 Unknown suspect attempted to steal victim's vehicle. Take vehicle without owner's consent.
- 1-06-24 Victim advised officers he was assaulted by a store employee. Battery.
- 1-06-24 Suspect punched victim once on the left side of victim's face. Victim was Father in Law. Battery.
- 1-07-24 Unknown subject picked up victim's dog when it got out of the fence. \$200 loss. Theft of personal property.
- 1-08-24 Victim advised best friend her ex-best friend (suspect) is on parole and has been staying at her house for past 3 days. Per parole, suspect is not supposed to be there. Violation of parole.

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The following person(s) is doing business as: DC Plumbing, 2467 Bear River Court, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231042
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: CARNITAS EL RINCON, 1780 E. MAIN ST, WOODLAND, CA 95776 County of YOLO

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231032
The following person(s) is doing business as: Mi Querido Michoacan, 1235 Harbor Boulevard, West Sacramento, CA 95691

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231070
The following person(s) is doing business as: Moreno Your Cleaning Company, 800 Douglas Street, West Sacramento, CA 95605.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20230954
The following person(s) is doing business as: A&V Motors/ A and V/CityGrafix Wraps Motors, 1982 Enterprise Boulevard, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231060
The following person(s) is doing business as: Novonesis US, Inc., 1445 Drew Avenue, Davis, CA 95618, County of Yolo.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 20231057
The Following Person(S) Is Doing Business As: Novonesis Bioag, Inc., 1445 Drew Avenue, Davis, Ca 95618

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240003
The following person(s) is doing business as: Marrone Bio Innovations, 1530 Drew Ave., Davis, CA 95618

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231033
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: Blankinship, a Bowman Compa-

ny, 1615 5th Street, Suite A, Davis, CA 95616 County of YOLO Mailing Address: 12355 Sunrise Valley Dr., Suite 520 Reston, VA 20191

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231003
The following person(s) is doing business as: Westside Registration Services, 540 Glide Court #B, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231041
The following person(s) is doing business as: Master Sprinkler Repair, 339 Bridge Place, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231067
The following person(s) is doing business as: Paint 4 Community, 8 W Casa Linda Dr., Woodland, CA 95695, County of Yolo.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240018
The following person(s) is doing business as: QMA Services/Quance Consulting, 417 Mace Boulevard Suite J, Davis, CA 95618.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240018
The following person(s) is doing business as: Eastside Chef Restaurant, 2105 Town Center Plaza Suite F170, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20231010
The following person(s) is doing business as: Eastside Chef Restaurant, 2105 Town Center Plaza Suite F170, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. F20240002
The following person(s) is doing business as: JR Scientific, 1242 Commerce Ave., Ste D Woodland, CA 95776, County of Yolo.

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The following person(s) is doing business as: QMA Services/Quance Consulting, 417 Mace Boulevard Suite J, Davis, CA 95618.

to the City Hall Building located at 1110 West Capitol Avenue, West Sacramento, CA 95691, ALLIED TRUSTEE SERVICES (Trustee), 1601 Response Road, Suite 390, Sacramento, CA 95815, (877) 282-4991, under and pursuant to Lien, recorded 03-01-2022 as Instrument 2022-0005434 Book - - Page - - of Official Records in the Office of the Recorder of YOLO County, CA, WILL CAUSE TO BE SOLD AT PUBLIC AUCTION to the highest bidder for cash, cashier's check/cash equivalent or other form of payment authorized by 2924h(b), (payable at time of sale) the property owned by JOSUE VARGAS, situated in said County, describing the land therein: APN: 072-364-010-000 The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 4095 LIVERPOOL STREET, WEST SACRAMENTO, CA 95691

The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to satisfy the sums due under the Lien. The estimated total unpaid balance at the time of the initial publication of this Notice of Trustee's Sale is \$9,858.08. THE PROPERTY WILL BE SOLD SUBJECT TO THE 90-DAY POST-SALE RIGHT OF REDEMPTION AS SET FORTH IN CALIFORNIA CIVIL CODE SECTION 5715(B). THE RIGHT OF REDEMPTION BEGINS WHEN THE SALE IS FINALIZED PURSUANT TO CALIFORNIA CIVIL CODE SECTION 2924m. Association heretofore executed and delivered to the undersigned a written Declaration of Default. The undersigned caused a Notice of Default and Election to Sell to be recorded in the county where the real property is located, and more than three months have elapsed since such recordation. NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the Association, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call (844) 477-7869, or visit this Internet Web site WWW.STOXPOSTING.COM for information, using the file number assigned to this case: 22-12362. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Web site. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. NOTICE TO TENANT: You may have a right to purchase this property after the trustee auction pursuant to Section 2924m of the California Civil

Code. If you are an 'eligible tenant buyer,' you can purchase the property if you match the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. If you are an 'eligible bidder,' you may be able to purchase the property if you exceed the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. There are three steps to exercising this right of purchase. First, 48 hours after the date of the trustee sale, you can call (844) 477-7869, or visit this Internet Web site WWW.STOXPOSTING.COM for information, using the file number assigned to this case: 22-12362 to find the date on which the trustee's sale was held, the amount of the last and highest bid, and the address of the trustee. Second, you must send a written notice of intent to place a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 15 days after the trustee's sale. Third, you must submit a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 45 days after the trustee's sale. If you think you may qualify as an 'eligible tenant buyer' or 'eligible bidder,' you should consider contacting an attorney or appropriate real estate professional immediately for advice regarding this potential right to purchase. DATE: December 24, 2023 ALLIED TRUSTEE SERVICES, Trustee TANYA HALL, Authorized Signature WEST SACRAMENTO NEWS LEDGER 1/12/2024, 1/19/2024, 1/26/2024 NEWS LEDGER 1-26-24

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME
NAME CHANGE
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF YOLO
ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE CHANGE OF NAME
#CV2023-2578
Domonique Lashay Gibbs has filed a petition with this court for a decree changing the name(s) of Domonique Lashay Gibbs to Domonique Lashay Brice. IT IS ORDERED that all persons interested in the above-entitled matter appear before this court on February 13, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in Department 14, located at 1000 Main Street Woodland, CA 95695 and show cause, if any, why the petition for Change of Name should not be granted. Dated: December 15, 2023 Stephen L. Mock, Judge of the Superior Court Publish: January 5, 12, 19, 26, 2024 GIBBS 1-26-24

NOTICE OF LIEN SALE

Notice is hereby given pursuant to California Business and Professional Codes #21700-217 Section 2328 of the UCC of the Penal Code, Section 535 the undersigned, StorQuest ExpressSelf Storage/Ramco St. of West Sacramento, will sell at public sale by competitive bidding the personal property of: Star Molina A124; Property to be sold: Household items. Tyler Fournier C110; Property to be sold: Misc items. Whitney Laster C139; Property to be sold: Household, misc items. Mark Pena C159; property to be sold: Tools, misc items. Marlene Gonzalez D229; Property to be sold: Household items. Waheed Afzali E110; Property to be sold: Misc items, furniture. Auctioneer Company: www.storagetreasures.com The Sale will end at 10:00 AM, January, 18th, 2024. Goods must be paid in CASH at site and removed at completion of sale. Sale is subject to cancellation in the event of settlement between the owner and obligated party. 3005 Ramco St. West Sacramento, CA 95691 (916) 241-8600 Publish 1/12, 1/19/24 CNS-3770913# NEWS-LEDGER 1-19-24

LIEN SALE NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 3071 AND 3072 OF THE CIVIL CODE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, THE UNDERSIGNED, WINTERS TOW LLC 416 RAILROAD AVE WINTERS CA 95694 WILL SELL AT PUBLIC SALE ON: JANUARY 30, 2024 10:00AM THE FOLLOWING PROPERTY: 2019 CHEV SILV LIC# 21703K3 CA VIN# 1GC1KSEYXF251813 1/19/24 CNS-3773626# NEWS-LEDGER 1-19-24

LIEN SALE
Extra Space Storage, on behalf of itself or its affiliates, Life Storage or Storage Express, will hold a public auction to satisfy Extra Space's lien, by selling personal property described below belonging to those individuals listed below at the location indicated. 1022 Gibson Rd, Woodland, Ca, 95695 on 1/31/24 @ 11am: Melissa Elliott 19389 County Rd 102, Woodland, Ca, 95776 on 1/31/24 @ 2pm: Julie Gardner: Reignann Gaiher-hopkins: Amanda Kennedy: Lisa Craw: Kimberly Gray 975 F St, West Sacramento, Ca, 95605 on 1/31/24 @ 11am: michelle shirk: Carolyn Rardin: Kandra Lorentz: Angelique Dixon: Carlos Paris: Jess Milbourn, Jr.: Benita Acosta-Bettencourt The auction will be listed and advertised on www.storagetreasures.com. Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction. Extra Space Storage may refuse any bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the personal property. 1/19/24 CNS-3774434# NEWS-LEDGER 1-19-24

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed proposals will be received and submitted electronically through the City's Procurement system at https://www.cityofwestsacramento.org/business/invitation-to-bid until 3:00 PM local time on February 2, 2024, at which results will be posted and available for public review for the:

CITY HALL HVAC REPLACEMENT PROJECT - REBID

This Invitation to Bid (ITB) is for the construction phase of the City Hall HVAC Replacement Project. The City is seeking a qualified contractor to provide all labor, material, equipment, and services necessary.

TENTATIVE CITY SCHEDULE:

Mandatory Bid Walk:
January 25, 2024 - 10:00am
West Sacramento City Hall
1110 W. Capitol Ave
West Sacramento, CA 95691
Bid Release Date: January 19, 2024
RFI Question Cutoff: January 29, 2024
Proposals Due: February 2, 2024

INQUIRIES:
Questions about this Invitation to Bid should be submitted through the OpenGov at https://www.cityofwestsacramento.org/business/invitation-to-bid. If appropriate, the City will post responses to Bidder questions through the Procurement system.

West Sac News Ledger 1-19-2024

TRUSTEE SALE

File No.: 22-12362 APN: 072-364-010-000 NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER PORT TOWNE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION (ASSOCIATION) COVENANTS, CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS AND A NOTICE OF DELINQUENT ASSESSMENT (LIEN) DATED 02-28-2022. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 02-01-2024 at 12:45 PM, Outside the rear (North) entrance

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The Veteran Homeless Crisis



Homeless Veteran on the street. Photo by Larry White from Pixabay

By Shreya Agrawal,
CALMatters.org

California has poured billions of dollars into finding homes for unhoused veterans, but the number of former military service members living on the street has held steady for almost a decade. Today, a third of the nation's unhoused veterans are in California.

Gavin Newsom proposes a significant change in the state's strategy for ending veteran homelessness. His plan, included in a \$6.4 billion mental health bond he's sending to voters in the March primary election, would set aside funding specifically for veterans with serious behavioral health conditions.

That's a shift from California's last two major efforts to fund housing for veterans, both of which created units for a general population of former military service members.

The first effort began in the late 1990s, when the state built seven new veterans' homes over a period of 17 years. Today those veterans' homes are underused. They were built to house about 2,400 people, but only 1,575 veterans live in them. The 300-unit veterans home in Barstow was so underutilized in 2020 that Newsom moved to close it as he braced for a pandemic recession, although lawmakers blocked him from shutting the site.

The second push centered on a pair of ballot measures voters approved in 2014 and in 2018 that allocated \$4.6 billion to build housing specifically for former military service members. The money created the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program, which has supported the construction of about 3,250 housing units for veterans to date.

Veterans advocates and state officials view the programs — along with federal efforts led by the Department of Veterans Affairs — as successful in reducing homelessness among former military service members. In the last 12 years, veteran homelessness in California has decreased by more than 30%.

But the trend in California mostly accounts for gains made during the Obama administration, when veteran homelessness peaked nationwide and the Department of Veterans Affairs moved aggressively to place former troops in housing. Since 2014, the number of homeless veterans in California has mostly plateaued around 10,000 to 12,000 people, according to annual counts released by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Alex Visotzky, senior California policy fellow at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, said the high numbers of veteran homelessness result from the challenges veterans face on returning home in California's competitive housing market.

"When housing markets are unaffordable



The money in the bond would go to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, which would work with CalVet "to focus specifically on housing veterans experiencing behavioral health challenges," said Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin. Photo courtesy of RDNE Stock Project - Pexels

and incredibly competitive, those with the greatest needs are going to be more likely to fall out," he said.

Newsom's new strategy in the mental health bond, advocates say, should help those most in need. The California Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that half of the state's unhoused veterans suffer from some kind of behavioral health issue.

The money in the bond would go to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, which would work with CalVet "to focus specifically on housing veterans experiencing behavioral health challenges," said Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, the Thousand Oaks Democrat who wrote the bill that ultimately put the bond on the ballot.

Studies have shown veterans are over-represented in the nation's homeless population. They may experience personal challenges, such as post-traumatic stress disorders or other mental health issues as well as disabilities related to their military service.

"Transitioning from that very specific culture and society to civilian life is a life-long process," said Amy Fairweather, director of policy at the veterans advocacy group Swords to Plowshares. "If you do have any physical or mental disabilities, dealing with those and trying to re-enter civilian life can be very difficult."

California's long history of providing housing to former military service members dates to 1884, when it opened an estate in Napa County as the state's first veterans home. That site is still in operation, housing around 600 veterans on a picturesque property in wine country.

Altogether, the state now has eight veterans homes. The two largest homes are in fairly remote communities — one is in Napa County's Yountville and the other is in Barstow in the Mojave Deserts. Moving to them can mean living at a long distance from a veteran's family. That geography somewhat limits interest in the homes.

The homes account for the lion's share

of CalVet's \$650 million annual budget. Some advocates have called on the state to put money into programs that would benefit people who don't necessarily want to live in a veterans home.

"The state should keep its promises to the current home residents, but as things change, the program needs to be less structured on just providing room and board for a very limited number of people and more structured on providing skilled nursing facility care for those who need it," said Ethan Rarick, executive director at Little Hoover Commission, which published a report on the veterans homes in 2017.

Outside of the veterans homes, California approved a series of bonds meant to help military service members find housing beginning in 2008. The Veterans Bond Act, passed that year, provided \$900 million to veterans through the CalVet Home Loans Program.

In 2014, California passed an initiative creating the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Program, which put \$600 million toward building multi-family homes for veterans. A second ballot initiative in 2018 gave another \$4 billion to the program.

The federal Department of Veterans Affairs, meanwhile, has kept up steady funding for housing vouchers that can provide a place to live for former troops. The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program, commonly known as HUD-VASH, was a centerpiece of the Bush and Obama administration's efforts to curb veterans' homelessness. It provides rental assistance to over 100,000 veterans nationally.

The number of homeless veterans in the U.S. peaked in the Great Recession, when the VA in 2007 reported some 154,000 former troops were homeless.

At that time, Fairweather of Swords to Plowshares said many of those deployed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were starting to come back home "to a society that wasn't prepared for it."

On top of that, they and older veterans struggled in the economic

downturn, which led to more unemployment and homelessness.

"It all came together in a way that was really disadvantageous to the veterans," she said.

Last year, the VA estimated about 33,000 veterans were homeless nationwide. According to the 2021 annual homelessness assessment report by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, more than half of them are over age 55. The data also shows that Black veterans are more likely to be homeless than veterans belonging to other races.

Advocates say veterans can be reluctant to ask for help.

"When veterans ultimately fall down that hole into homelessness, what is happening along with that is that they're losing connection with friends and family, because they're ashamed that their life is falling apart and it's hard for them to ask for help," said Stephen Peck, president of the veterans support organization U.S. Vets.

Putting the money into the mental health bond comes with a tradeoff.

In advancing Newsom's mental health plan, lawmakers amended an early version of Assemblymember Irwin's veterans' housing bill that would have issued more bonds for the existing veterans' housing program. Without new funding, the program that supports construction of multi-unit veterans' housing is expected to run out of money in 2024.

Still, representatives for Newsom's ballot measure in a written statement said the bond would create more capacity to help former troops.

"Proposition 1 adds new money for California's most vulnerable veterans without any redirection or reprioritization from the current program. Without Proposition 1, there would be zero funding for homeless veteran housing moving forward, which is why the measure is so critically needed," the statement read.

Altogether, the ballot measure going to voters includes \$6.4 billion to fund projects for behavioral health issues and those at the risk of homelessness. It also includes a proposal to adjust how the state spends money it collects for mental health services from a tax on personal income over \$1 million, aiming to direct more of the money to housing.

The \$1 billion for veterans housing will be distributed in the form of loans and grants by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Representatives from veterans' groups say the program's success could hinge on getting the word out, and providing services that provide a path out of homelessness.

At U.S. Vets, Peck said the nonprofit strives to create a community where veterans help veterans.

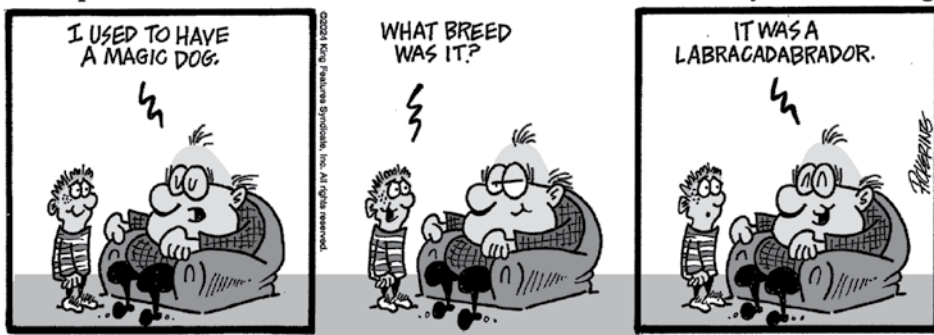
"Building that community is really important," he said. "A federal veteran who's been through the process already is probably more effective than we are as social workers."

Visit www.chcf.org to learn more. ★

COMICS & PUZZLES

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



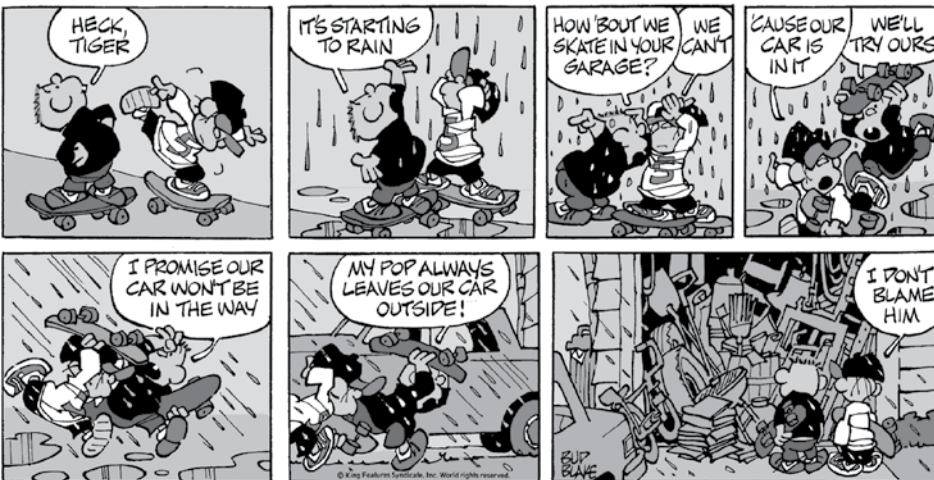
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



GRIN and BEAR IT.

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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CLUES

- ACROSS**
- Moonshine maker
 - *Artist with most 2024 Grammy nominations
 - Not his
 - "Roots" author
 - That guy
 - Full of emotion (2 words)
 - Relating to #3 Down
 - Tarzan's mom, e.g.
 - Caribbean island destination
 - *The Recording _____, voting organization
 - **"What Was I Made For?" movie
 - **"A Boy Named _____" 1970 Grammy winner
 - Prickle on a wire
 - Drench
 - Waiter's handout
 - *Grammy-nominated Lauper song, "True _____"
 - Amusement destination
 - Rachel Renee Russell's "_____ Diaries"
 - Extend subscription
 - South Korean boy band
 - Type of wrap
 - Italian wine region
 - Forearm length unit
 - Honey-producing facility
 - Saw incision
 - Nauseant
 - Fancy marbles used as shooters
 - U.S. Marine Corps gift recipient
 - EU currency
 - Aglet on a shoelace, e.g.
 - *_____com Arena
 - *Miley Cyrus' Song of the Year nominee and popular romantic gift
 - Texas cook-off dish
 - **"In the _____ Tonight," by Grammy-winner Phil Collins
 - Send, as payment
 - Safe place
 - Bird word
 - Leave out
 - Bookkeeping entry
 - Refrigerator sound
 - Scatter
- DOWN**
- Not Sunni
 - Baby powder ingredient
 - Pelvic parts
 - Shows the way
 - Aristotle's school
 - One-horse carriage
 - Mailing "code"
 - Single-cell protozoan
 - *Grammy-winner, _____ Alpert
 - *Purse for the red carpet
 - Bumpkin
 - Pampering place
 - Bar _____, ME
 - Rewards, in the olden days
 - Pendulum's path
 - Cantina staple
 - *"Ice _____, Best New Artist nominee
 - Wooden ship caulking
 - Space exploration

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

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

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

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

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

To find out more or to apply:
Email your questions or resume to Publisher@MPG8.com

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No Water for You!

Continued from page 1
report, along with other feedback received from industry and the public, will be considered. He said a new draft of the rules will be released this spring.

“With changing weather conditions threatening to reduce the state’s water supply 10% by 2040, California is advancing an all-of-the-above strategy to bolster water supplies throughout the state, including conservation,” Ortiz said.

Heather Cooley, director of research at the Pacific Institute, a global water think tank, said conservation and efficiency are the cheapest, fastest ways to meet California’s water needs as climate change renders supplies more variable and uncertain.

“We have to take real action to ensure we can provide safe, clean, reliable water for California communities,” she said. “Retrofitting and taking out old devices, transforming our landscapes, all of those things have a cost. But it’s far less than developing new sources of supply.”

Mandated by a package of 2018 laws, the intent of the rules is to make conservation “a way of life” in California. The rules, which are two years behind schedule, are expected to be adopted by the water board this summer before taking effect in October.

The rules don’t target individuals or businesses, instead setting

individualized conservation targets for urban water agencies across the state based on goals for indoor and outdoor water use, leaks and other factors.

By 2035, water providers will collectively need to reduce water use by 14%. The savings would be enough to supply about 1.2 million homes every year, or about 1% of the state’s total water use.

The report called this amount “modest,” noting that “the agricultural sector uses about four times as much water as the urban sector.”

Water agencies and city officials warned state regulators last fall that complying would be costly, roughly \$13.5 billion from 2025 to 2040 for rebates and other efforts to cut residential use. The benefits are anticipated to reach about \$15.6 billion, in large part because suppliers and customers will buy less water.

The Legislative Analyst’s report noted that an assessment by a consulting firm commissioned by a water supplier raised questions about those calculations. They noted that customers, particularly low-income households, would likely bear the brunt of rates increased to cover the costs.

“Even if benefits outweigh costs in the long run, whether they merit the amount of work and costs to implement the requirements as currently proposed is uncertain,” the report said.

J a y L u n d ,

vice-director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at the University of California, Davis, called the report “an unusually frank assessment.”

“Although there is good room for further conservation, this additional State effort seems like it is probably not needed, or at least, need not be as stringent and complicated as it seems. It has been asked, ‘Is this juice worth the squeeze?’” he told CalMatters in an email.

During the last three-year severe drought, which ended last year, the Newsom administration set voluntary conservation goals that were largely ineffective. Californians used only about 6% less water from July 2021 through the end of last year compared to 2020, far less than Gov. Gavin Newsom’s 15% goal.

Some areas, especially in hot, inland areas of the state, will require more stringent conservation than others under the proposed rules. Inland and eastern California will be required to cut back the most, with the biggest cuts, up to 34%, needed in desert areas, followed by the Tulare Lake region.

Even in the North Coast area, which as a whole is not expected to need to cut back at all to meet the 2035 targets, two large suppliers serving more than 1.6 million customers will nevertheless need to reduce their water use by a quarter.

But increasing conservation in the places that



California’s proposed water conservation rules too stringent and costly, analysts say. Photo courtesy of Tolga Ahmetler - Pexels

need it most will seem a bargain when inevitable longer and drier droughts occur, said Felicia Marcus, former chair of the water board and now a visiting fellow at Stanford University’s Water in the West Program.

“The goal is both to make each locality more resilient to the nightmare curveballs climate change is throwing at us, and to do it in a way that integrates efficiency first and foremost as the most cost and carbon effective measure in the long run,” Marcus said.

Sonja Petek, the principal fiscal and policy analyst who authored the report, said the office isn’t saying to abandon the conservation regulations, it’s just recommending changes to make them more feasible.

“Water conservation is one of the important components of the state’s overall water management strategy,” she said, citing more severe and prolonged droughts and the need to reduce reliance on overdrafted groundwater basins. “Our concern is that if these regulations

were adopted as written, it could lead to a scenario where compliance is not feasible for some water suppliers, so the state might not achieve its ultimate goals.

Assemblymember Laura Friedman, a Democrat from Burbank and an author of the original legislation, said the report “raises some valid concerns with the rulemaking process thus far, however, I have faith in the water board to do its due diligence in implementing the standards that were passed.” ★

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