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Roars into  
Sacramento**

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# RIVER VALLEY TIMES

40TH YEAR • ISSUE 15

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AUGUST 9, 2024

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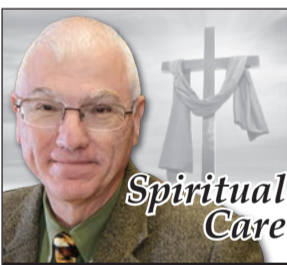
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**HOT JAZZ  
JUBILEE 2024  
TO SIZZLE**



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**MY LIMITLESS  
LIMITATIONS**



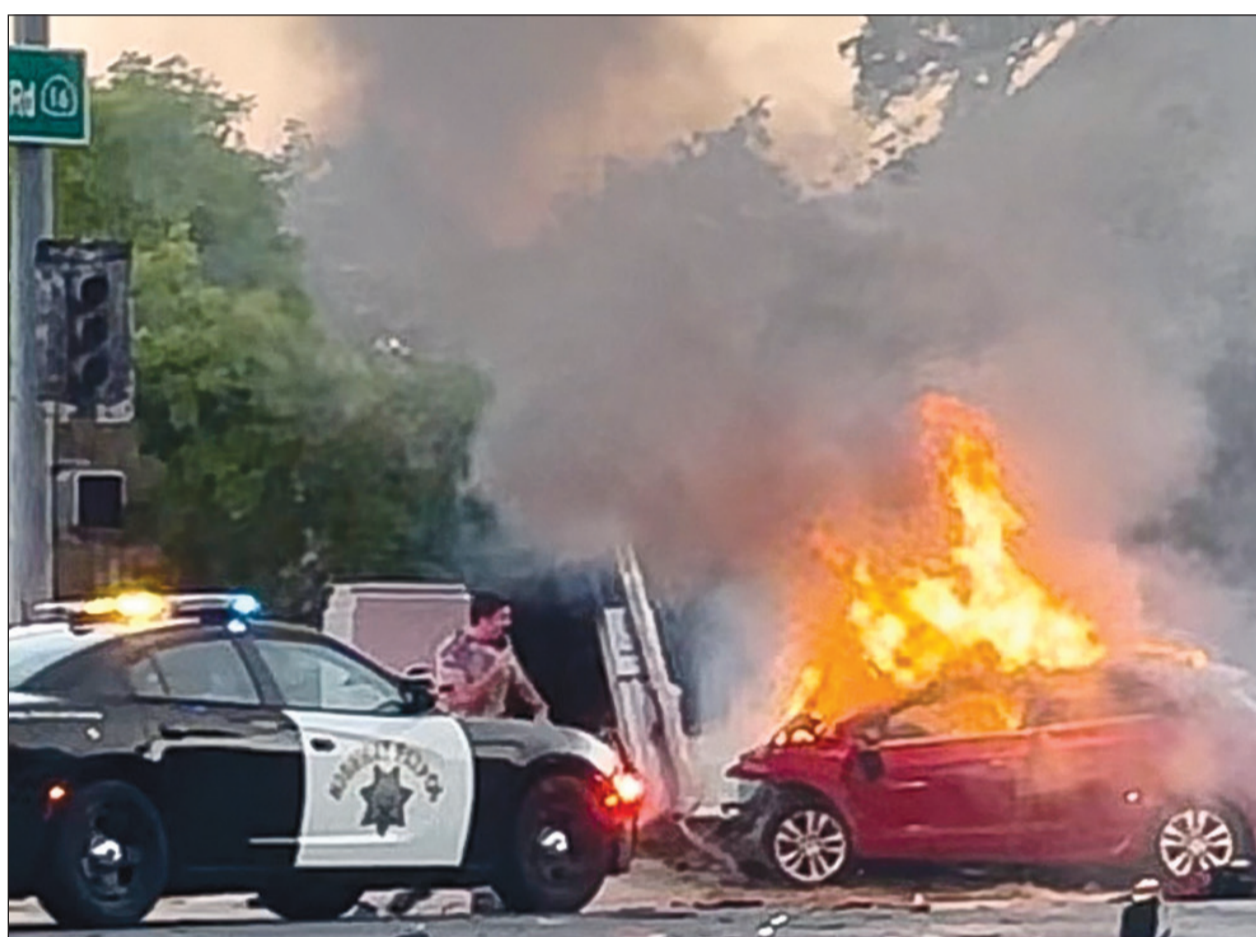
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## Chase Ends in Fiery Crash



The photo shows the Hyundai burning after the crash before it was doused by firefighters. Photo courtesy of Pasha Miller

**By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - A CHP pursuit of what turned out to be a stolen car ended badly for the driver and his female passenger when his vehicle broadsided an SUV, hit a pole and burst into flames on Jackson Highway at Murieta Parkway at about 8:15 p.m. July 29, according to the CHP and a witness account.

Two CHP officers following the

car stopped and pulled the couple out of the fiery wreck. Both suffered major injuries and he died at the hospital the following morning.

The Sacramento County Coroner's Office identified the fatality as James William Toomey, 36, residence city not listed.

The three occupants of the Rivian SUV, driven by a Rancho Murieta woman, were hospitalized for moderate injuries. Three teens on two golf carts managed to stop before entering

the intersection.

The intersection became a spectacular light show due to the flashing lights from 11 marked patrol cars, several fire engines, at least four ambulances and other vehicles with emergency lights in what was deemed a multi-casualty incident. Although Jackson Highway was blocked off from the western side of the intersection to Cantova Drive for many hours, Rancho Murieta

*Continued on page 3*

## Sheriff's Service Center Reopens

**By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office has reopened its service center in Rancho Murieta after it was closed at the beginning of the pandemic four years ago.

This reopening is in partnership with the Rancho Murieta Community Services District. The two agencies marked the occasion with a grand opening event held at the district office on July 31.

Initially, two VIPS (Volunteers in Partnership with the Sheriff) will operate the center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays. They will provide information and take non-emergency police reports.

The plan is to expand the program as more VIPS are recruited. The VIPS will meet with residents in a designated area set up in the reception area of the district office.

Assistant Sheriff Matthew Petersen told a small crowd that the service centers are invaluable to the sheriff's office and the community alike because of the involvement of community residents.

"We serve the community but we also need that exchange," he said. "We couldn't be happier to open another service center."

District Board President Tim Maybee said he was speaking on behalf of his fellow board members and the community by thanking the Sheriff's Office for its support at all levels.

As for the service center, Maybee described the reopening as a second chance that many other communities don't get.

"This is just a maturation process for our community to get this back up and running again," Maybee said.

The grand opening also attracted Sacramento Supervisor Sue Frost and Supervisor-elect Rosario Rodriguez and more than a dozen deputies who serve the area.

The two VIPS who will initially operate the service center are residents Elizabeth Jacobsen and Larry Casares.

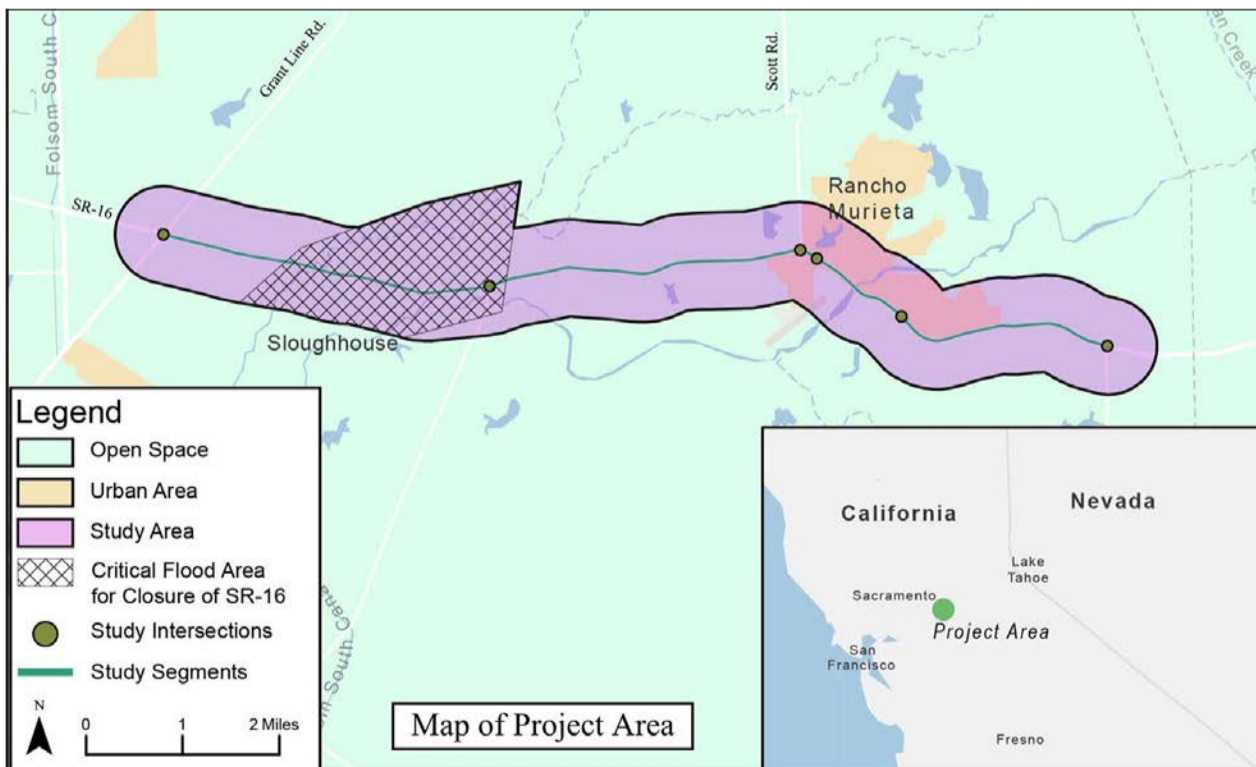
After she left her full-time job, Jacobsen said, she wanted to be involved in the community and give back.

"This seemed to be a good way to mix both of them," Jacobsen said.

Jacobsen began volunteering at the Sheriff's

*Continued on page 6*

## Frost, Fire Safe Council Help Win Caltrans Grant



A graphic shows the study area for a \$400,000 Caltrans grant recently awarded to the Sacramento County Department of Transportation (SACDOT) to find ways to help Rancho Murieta residents safely evacuate in an emergency. Courtesy photos

**By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - Thanks to behind-the-scenes advocacy by three Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council representatives and staunch support from Sacramento County Supervisor Sue

Frost, the Sacramento County Department of Transportation (SACDOT) has secured a \$400,000 Caltrans (California Department of Transportation) Sustainable Communities Grant to study ways to improve evacuation and emergency access on Jackson Highway.

Although the highway's infrastructure problems had been on the fire safe council's radar for some time, members couldn't gain any traction until flooding from the 2023 storm isolated Rancho Murieta and drew nationwide attention to the entire region.

The study "will

undertake a comprehensive study of wind-driven fire and flooding risks on the highway with a specific focus on six critical intersections between Grant Line Road and Ione Road in Sacramento County and flooding in the Sloughouse area," according to the grant application.

*Continued on page 9*

# Tribute Band Provides Ultimate Salute to the Bee Gees



Preparing to take a bow at the end of the show are Peter Sprague, left, as Maurice Gibb, John Acosta as Barry Gibb and Eric Sean as Robin Gibb. Bass guitarist Bill Pearce plays behind them.

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - Channeling the Bee Gees in their prime, a tribute band filled the dance floor with revelers when it performed at the Lake Clementia Amphitheater on July 27 in gloriously cool weather.

The third summer concert presented by Entertainment, Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta (ETC) drew about 1,100 attendees, just short of a sell-out, according to Board President Jane Rosetta.

She said the concert was amazing. “Everyone I spoke to had a blast and said the Bee Gees Gold were the best performers they had seen in several years,” she said. “They sounded just like the Bee Gees.”

In a pre-concert program, an ETC board member presented this year’s scholarship winner, four Murieta Dance Company students performed to hip-hop music and the emcee fired a T-shirt cannon into the crowd and recognized some of the event sponsors.

### Concert

The musicians didn’t waste any time getting the party started with the disco hit, “Saturday Night Fever.” The musicians also raised the temperature with “Jive Talking” and “More Than a Woman” halfway through their playlist and closed down the party with “Staying Alive.”

The group performed “Tragedy” as their encore and, as the lights went out, left the stage. Despite the dance floor crowd hammering the stage and shouting “One more song!” they didn’t return.

Looking and sounding like Barry,



Eric Sean channels Robin Gibb to the delight of attendees Karen Hoberg and Paul Miller, on the right. Hoberg is the title sponsor for the ETC concerts.

Maurice and Robin Gibb, the singers performed many of the other Bee Gees classics such as “If I Can’t Have You,” “How Deep is Your Love” and “I’ve Got to Get a Message to You.”

Many in the dance floor crowd sang along.

Following the concert, band leader John Acosta said they had met some lovely people and the crowd had been great.

Drummer Dan Sia was even more enthusiastic.

“The crowd was amazing,” he said. “Everyone was so energetic, so it was awesome.”

Attendee Mark LeBlanc never stopped smiling as he and his wife, Romi, showed off their dance moves next to the stage. They always attend ETC concerts when “the band is playing fun dance music and the crowd is energized,” LeBlanc said.

### Scholarship

Every year, the ETC sets aside \$2,000 from the concert proceeds to fund a scholarship for a Rancho Murieta high school senior as part of its mission of keeping the arts alive in the community. To be selected



Using his falsetto to great effect, musician John Acosta looks and sounds like Barry Gibb. Photos by Gail Bullen



A section of the dance floor crowd reveals the multi-generational appeal of the Bee Gees.

as the winner, seniors must pen an essay about the arts.

This year’s winner was Seline Tijero, who graduated from Pleasant Grove High School, where she was enrolled in the Biomedical Academy and was part of the Associated Student Body (ASB) leadership class. She was the vice president of the Rancho Murieta Key Club in her junior year.

Before the concert, Tijero said that winning the ETC money felt like winning an arts scholarship because of her deep love for music and dance, and she was thrilled to achieve it through her writing, another form of art.

ETC Board member Stephanie Stanislaus, who chairs the Philanthropy Committee, introduced Tijero and last year’s winner, Allison Myers, to the crowd. Myers presented the check to her successor.

After Stanislaus explained that Tijero would attend Sacramento State University to study nursing, she asked how she would incorporate her love of arts into her major. “I hope not only to pursue nursing but

also minor in dance so that I can incorporate that into my college life post-college,” Tijero told the crowd.

### Other Happenings

Four Murieta Dance Company students performed an award-winning piece featuring a hip-hop music combination of “I Wish” by Skee-Lo and “Hey ya” by Outkast. Nine youngsters belong to the competition hip-hop troupe. However, since five were out of town, the choreography was modified. The dancers were Kennedy Brenner, Jema Nauman, Aislinn Brenner and Launa Kische.

ETC Board Member JT Turner, who emceed the concerts, also used a cannon to fire T-shirts supplied by Go 4 Pizza and Horizon Glass into the crowd. He also recognized some of the sponsors, including Title Sponsor Karen Hoberg of Rancho Murieta Homes and Land.

The next ETC concert on Aug. 17 will feature Kalima – The Spirit of Earth, Wind & Fire. Tickets can be purchased at Ace Hardware in Murieta Plaza. ★



Seline Tijero, center, accepts a \$2,000 scholarship check from last year’s winner, Allison Myers. ETC Board Member Stephanie Stanislaus thanks the community for their support.



Murieta Dance Company students, from left, Kennedy Brenner, Jema Nauman, Aislinn Brenner and Launa Kische perform a hip-hop number before the concert begins.



Romi and Mark LeBlanc revel in infectious dance music.

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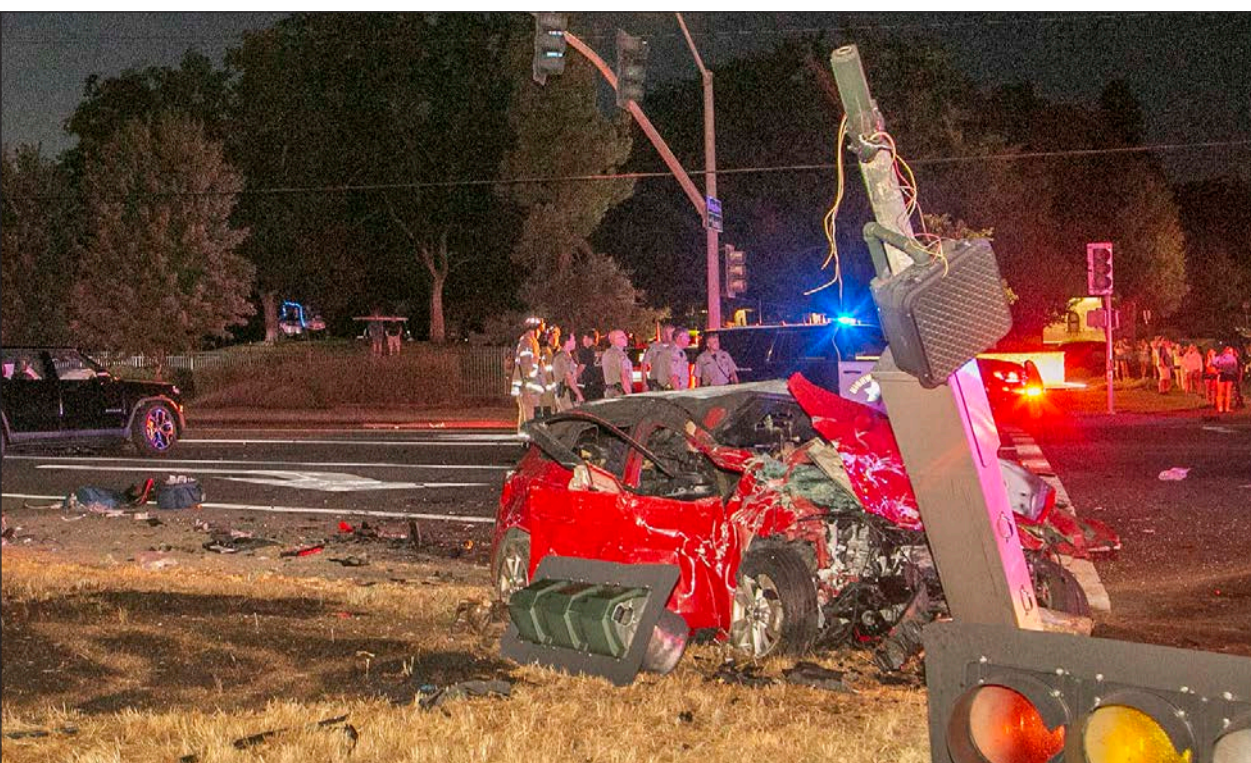
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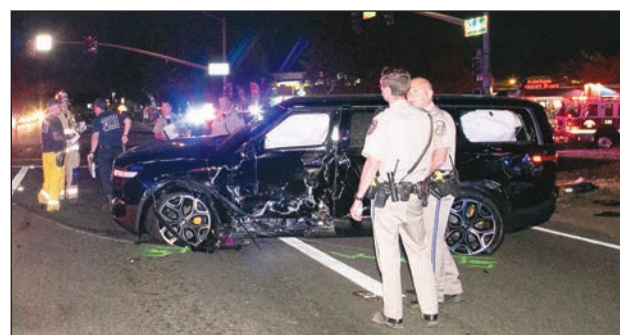
\*Source: MLS for residential, Not including “Residential Income”

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# Chase Ends in Fiery Crash in RM



A burned and crushed Hyundai awaits towing after broadsiding the black Rivian at left on Jackson Highway at Murieta Drive. The collision took place about 8:15 p.m. July 29 when the Hyundai driver was being pursued by the California Highway Patrol.



Although a black Rivian suffered major damage in the collision, the three occupants, who are from or connected to Rancho Murieta, escaped with moderate injuries. The side and front airbags deployed. Photos by Gail Bullen

Continued from page 1

residents could get in and out of the community.

Officer Trent Senter, the public information officer for the East Sacramento office, said an Amador CHP officer saw a red Hyundai Elantra traveling at a high rate of speed on Highway 88 and tried to stop it. When the driver failed to yield, he initiated a pursuit. The Hyundai continued fleeing onto Highway 49 and then merged onto the Jackson Highway heading east. As it approached Murieta Parkway, the driver of a Rivian was traveling south (from the North Gate). After the two vehicles collided in the intersection, the Hyundai caught on fire.

Senter said that two Amador CHP officers managed to remove the two occupants from the burning Hyundai. Both suffered major injuries and were

transported by ambulance. The female driver of the Rivian and her two passengers, an adult female and a male, also sustained moderate injuries and were transported by ambulance. The CHP later discovered that the Hyundai was a stolen vehicle, although Senter did not have information on where it had been stolen from. He also confirmed that the Hyundai driver died at the hospital.

Several Rancho Murieta residents reported that a CHP helicopter took part in the pursuit and circled the intersection several times. Rancho Murieta resident Parsha Miller witnessed the entire accident and provided information about the three occupants in the Rivian.

Miller said the three extricated themselves and walked to the grassy area by the fire station. The driver was a Rancho Murieta resident who was

transporting her daughter in the passenger seat and her daughter's boyfriend in the back seat on the driver's side. The boyfriend texted Miller the next morning. He said the driver, Gabbie, was released from the hospital after treatment for a concussion but he, Nathaniel, and her daughter, Lizzy were still in the hospital waiting for tests. Miller also reported that three teenagers in two separate golf carts were able to stop before entering the intersection.

Here is Miller's account. She was traveling west on Jackson Highway coming from the south to the north to go home. She stopped for the red light and was waiting in the right-hand lane. She saw the Rivian begin to cross the highway from the North entrance. At the same time, she saw the two golf carts on Murieta

Parkway next to the Chevron Station about to enter the intersection.

"All of a sudden, I heard a whizzing noise behind me and saw the red vehicle going at least 100 mph hit the left front fender and driver's door (of the SUV)," Miller said. "The Rivian spun into the opposing lane and the red car ricocheted straight into some kind of pole. The rear end bounced about 10 feet high, came down and caught fire."

Miller also heard an explosion and then sirens. Two CHP patrol cars pulled up and two officers jumped out. Although the car was engulfed in flames, they pulled out the driver. Then they ran to the passenger side and pulled out the woman, although Miller couldn't see the second rescue.

"It was a sight to see because they were so heroic," she said. "To see

them pull those two out, especially the female when the car was engulfed in flames and smoke rising up. I don't know how they could see or get in there."

The two officers were Brandon Rodgers and Jim Dann, according to the Amador CHP office.

Miller saw the driver of the Rivian get out of the vehicle on the passenger side, and she was followed by a young female who had been in the front passenger seat and a young male who had been in the rear left passenger seat.

"They walked to the grassy area by the fire department and sat down," Miller said. "They looked stunned but didn't appear to have life-threatening injuries."

Miller could also see that the side and front airbags had deployed in the Rivian.

"I think the side bags kept them from getting more severely injured," she said.

Miller said a CHP officer also told her that the size of the Rivian was a factor in their survival.

Miller checked with the young people in the first golf cart to see if their parents had been notified. They were fine, she said. The girl told her that as they started to cross the highway, something red caught her eye. She told the boy and he hit the brakes.

Miller didn't talk to the occupant in the second cart behind them. A hotel employee said the occupant was a 16-year-old boy who also had stopped in time.

"I'm so grateful the golf carts weren't involved," Miller said.

Miller said that Rodgers, who had been involved in the pursuit, came over later to talk to her.

She informed him that she had witnessed the accident and showed him her video of him and the other officer rescuing the two occupants of the burning vehicle.

"He was like, 'Oh, my God,' when he saw it," she said. Miller mentioned that she gave Rodgers a hug and repeatedly asked if he was OK.

She inspected his hands and arms for burns but Rodgers assured her that he was fine.

Rodgers told her that the pursuit began in San Joaquin County.

"He told me it was a long pursuit traveling well over 100 mph," she said. "He didn't say what it was about and I don't know the details why he was chasing him," she said.

Miller was also impressed at how the two officers went on to check SUV occupants and the youth in the golf carts.

"They just did their jobs," she said. ★

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# Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



# Hot Jazz Jubilee 2024 to Sizzle Over Four Days

## Hot Jazz Jubilee News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The ninth annual Hot Jazz Jubilee will feature four days of music and entertainment over Labor Day weekend, Aug. 30 to Sept. 2, under one roof.

Five rooms in the DoubleTree by Hilton Sacramento will offer music, ranging from the large Grand Ballroom to the more intimate Garden Terrace and RJ's. Dancers will want to be in the three ballrooms that offer a dance floor.

The annual extravaganza will feature more than 20 bands and guest artists.

"We are excited to offer some new featured performers, plus some bands returning by popular demand," said Hot Jazz Jubilee festival director Pat Jones. "And the variety can't be beat. We have jazz, swing, zydeco, rock 'n' roll and R&B. Something for everyone."

Performers include Brian Casserly, Todd Morgan & The Emblems, San Lyon, Katie Cavera & the Lost Boys, and many more. Some exciting special sets are "Boogie Woogie Extravaganza" on Saturday, Aug. 31 and a "Back to the Future" Old Time Rock 'n' Roll set on Sunday, Sept. 1.

In addition, Shaymus Hanlin will present his "Tribute to Frank Sinatra" and High Street Band will honor veterans with its "Salute to the '60s" on Friday, Aug. 30. There will be two gospel sets on Sunday, Sept. 1, one set with Yve Evans and Company, and the other set with High Street Band. Special guest pianist Nicole Pesce will perform two sets, "Two Pianos, Six Hands," with Stephanie and Paolo.

Single-day tickets are \$65 for Aug. 30, \$85 for Aug. 31 or Sept. 1 and \$65 for Sept. 2.

A four-day event pass is \$155. Admission is free for children 18 and under.

Tickets are available online at [hotjazzjubilee.com/purchase-tickets](http://hotjazzjubilee.com/purchase-tickets).

For special group rates, visit [info@hotjazzjubilee.com](mailto:info@hotjazzjubilee.com). ★



Brian Casserly is a regular featured all-star at jazz festivals throughout the country and a session musician for commercials, professional recordings and musicals in the U.S. and Canada. Photos courtesy of Hot Jazz Jubilee



High Street Band plays jazz, Motown, R&B, blues and funk tunes that bring their audiences to the dance floor.

always seen a higher ceiling in Trey, and the only way we will ever know if I'm right, is to increase his playing time.

Trey is a consistent three-point shooter and solid rebounder behind Domantas, and I believe as the Kings continue to search for power-forward solutions, they should look no further than their own bench.

I have to believe that Monte McNair shares some of my zeal for this talented big man, or we would have already seen him in either a trade or trade rumors.

The real question is not McNair, but coach Brown. During last season's campaign, there was no consistent rotation for Lyles coming off the bench, and he went through stretches in which his minutes were sparing to say the least.

For any player, and particularly a big man, there must be that vote of confidence, that is demonstrated by his consistent time on the court, and that includes hard-wood time during the last five minutes of a game. Show him that you trust his game when it means the most, and watch his confidence grow.

I give Mike Brown high marks for understanding how to bring along Keon Ellis, but his reluctance to use Trey Lyles when the Kings are starving for front-court players, remains a mystery to me.

The summer league did reveal that the Kings have a burgeoning star in your Boogie Ellis, who did pretty much what he wanted to against opposing summer league players. Boogie has been invited to training camp, and although the Kings remain guard heavy, Boogie's instant offense and frenetic defense means he deserves a closer look. At only 23 years of age, the Kings want to make sure they don't pass on a guard that may very well portend happy times for their future.

The big man/power forward rumors are ubiquitous, but I'm convinced that Monte McNair has at least one more notable move to make, and it's my educated guess it will come in the form of a power forward.

Stay tuned this off-season as its roster moves aren't over yet!

All the best, Kings fans! ★

Your thoughts are always welcome at [vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com](mailto:vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com)

The NBA summer league is over, but changes to the Kings ultimate roster for the upcoming season are not nearly over.

GM Monte McNair has earned his stripes by consistently making solid moves that will give Sacramento Kings fans potentially the best NBA team they've seen since the Webber/Bibby era, in which the Kings won a gaudy 61 games in 2021/22.

At this juncture, making predictions that would rival that season seems ludicrous, but make no mistake about it, McNair has his sights on a 60-win season, and he's scouring the NBA and beyond to find components that will get this franchise to that end.

The power forward position continues to be a point of focus, and although the Kings recently acquired Orlando Robinson, the search continues for a true rim protector that can play defense and add even a modicum of scoring while he's on the hardwood.

Potentially, that player could be a bench player for the Portland Trailblazers by the name of Robert Williams III. At 26 years of age, Williams' best playing days are still in front of him, and his seven points and six rebounds a year ago for the Trailblazers doesn't tell the full story. At 6'9" and 250 lbs., Williams is a true shot blocker, and the thinking here is given more playing time, this young man could become a true double-double threat.

The Kings are all too familiar with a double-double threat, as big man Domantas Sabonis has led the NBA in double-doubles the past two seasons, while leading the entire NBA in rebounding at the same time. Imagine if the Kings could surround this stevedore with just a little more support around the rim!

The only Sacramento King currently playing basketball in the Paris Olympics is none other than Trey Lyles, and although he's had a less than stellar performance so far for his home country of Canada, I remain convinced that if used correctly for the Kings, Lyles not only could give the Kings a boost in the upcoming season, he could actually break into the starting lineup.

Most pundits think I'm crazy, but I have

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# Monster Jam Roars into Sacramento



Earthshaker driver Joe Urie will compete at Monster Jam.



Megalodon returns to Golden 1 Center with driver Angelina Nock at the wheel.

Driver Fernando Martinez returns to Monster Jam at Golden 1 Center as the El Toro Loco driver from Aug. 16 to 18. Photos courtesy of Monster Jam

## Monster Jam News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Experience big-time family fun at Monster Jam. An unexpected, unscripted and unforgettable motorsports experience for families and fans returns to Sacramento for an adrenaline-charged weekend at Golden 1 Center from Aug. 16 to Aug. 18.

At Monster Jam, world champion athletes and their 12,000-pound monster trucks tear up the dirt in wide-open competitions of speed and skill.

The excitement begins at the Monster Jam Pit Party held in Sacramento prior to the events on Saturday, Aug. 17 and Sunday, Aug. 18. Fans can see the massive trucks up close, meet their favorite

drivers and crews, get autographs and take pictures. Activities include the Sand Box play area, UNOH tire demonstration, coloring and temporary tattoo station, and new photo ops, including the chance to take a photo with the Series trophy. This fun-filled experience is the only place that allows people to get up-close access to the Monster Jam teams and get an insider's look at how these trucks are built to stand up to the competition.

Fans will be on the edge of their seats as the world's best drivers show off massive stunts, big air, backflips, crazy stunts and all-out racing in fierce head-to-head battles for the Event Championship.

Engineered to perfection, the 12,000-pound Monster Jam trucks push all

limits in Freestyle, Skills and Racing competitions.

Fans are encouraged to get to their seats early to experience Monster Jam Trackside approximately one hour before the event start time.

Featured festivities include competition previews, driver interviews, giveaways, opening ceremonies and power rush truck introductions.

Monster Jam drivers are trained, world-class male and female athletes. They have mastered the physical strength and mental stamina needed to compete, and the vital dexterity to control 12,000-pound machines capable of backflips, vertical two-wheel skills and racing at speeds up to 70 mph to produce jaw-dropping, live

motorsports action seen throughout the world.

Enjoy big-time family fun at Monster Jam. The competitions start at 7 p.m. Aug. 16, 7 p.m. Aug. 17 and 1 p.m. Aug. 18.

Also on Aug. 17 is a pit party from 4:30 to 6 p.m., which requires an event ticket and pit pass for entry.

On Aug. 18, the pit party from 10:30 a.m. to noon requires an event ticket and pit pass for entry.

Tickets are affordably priced for the whole family. Tickets and pit passes are available for purchase at the Monster Jam website at [MonsterJam.com](http://MonsterJam.com), which will direct you to Ticketmaster.com.

If not sold out, tickets will be available at the door. ★

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Murieta Bulldogs' Concert Fundraiser is Aug. 10

The Murieta Bulldogs Baseball Club will present its annual concert fundraiser from 3 to 10 p.m. Aug. 10 at the Murieta Equestrian Center at 7200 Lone Pine Drive.

The Cripple Creek Band is the featured entertainment.

This family friendly environment includes a barbecue sampling contest from the best chefs in Rancho Murieta, raffle and silent auction items, food trucks and a bar that will open at 6 p.m. with wine, beer and mixed drinks.

Bring a lawn chair but no coolers or glass of any kind.

A general admission ticket is \$40 or \$45 at the door. Tickets can be purchased online by searching for Murieta Bulldogs at [zeffy.com](http://zeffy.com). Email questions to [murietabulldogsbaseball@gmail.com](mailto:murietabulldogsbaseball@gmail.com).

### Summerfest Tickets Are on Sale

Summerfest is slated to return on Friday, Oct. 4 and Saturday, Oct. 5 to Stonehouse Park, and tickets are now on sale on the website: [www.summerfest-rachomurieta.org/tickets](http://www.summerfest-rachomurieta.org/tickets).

Tickets will only be sold online or at the event. For the first time, a \$20 discount will be available with the online purchase of four tickets.

A cornhole tournament will be a new event that will take place on Saturday for attendees 18 years and older. A participant link will be posted soon.

### Gold Rush Classic Tournament Set for Aug. 22-23

We are thrilled to announce and would be excited to have you participate in the 2024 Gold Rush Classic on Thursday and Friday, Aug. 22 and 23, 2024, at the Rancho Murieta Country Club.

The Gold Rush Classic is a celebrity Pro-Am Golf Tournament, a Celebrity Challenge, a Million Dollar Hole-in-One contest, a Celebrity Draft Party, a Farm-to-Fork Dinner, and

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### Kiwanis Club Opens Ticket Sales for Farm to Fork Dinner

Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta is thrilled to announce that we will be holding our third annual Turn-Around-Scholarship (TAS) fundraising dinner at the Rancho Murieta

Country Club on Saturday, Sept. 28.

The tickets will go on sale online on Aug. 20 at [www.rmkiwanis.org](http://www.rmkiwanis.org). Tables will accommodate up to 11 people, and tickets purchased together-sit together. The tickets are \$80 per person. The deadline for ticket purchases is Sept. 20.

The TAS Program, administered by the Elk Grove Regional Scholarship Foundation, provides scholarships to Elk Grove Unified School District high school students who have overcome adversity to improve their GPA scores to at least 3.0 by graduation.

This year we are excited to be hosting the event

at the Rancho Murieta Country Club, creating an inviting atmosphere for our community. The event will be held outside on the lawn, and we are able to expand our available seating.

There will be a full, no-host, bar set up outside. If you wish to bring your own wine, there will be a \$15 corkage fee collected at the entrance. Tables are round and able to accommodate 8 to 12 persons at the table. Chef KC is developing a fantastic menu for us and the evening should be wonderful.

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Volunteers Elizabeth Jacobsen and Larry Casares pose with Office Manager Karla Brown as the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office reopens its Rancho Murieta Service Center on July 31. Photos by Gail Bullen



Sheriff's officers, Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost and Tim Maybee, president of the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board, gather for a photo at the open house.

# Sheriff's Service Center Reopens

Continued from page 1

Central Division two years ago.

"It's been a long process to get this reopened," she said. "It's nice to be here."

Casares decided to volunteer after cutting back on his volunteer work as a chaplain in law enforcement and more recently for communities who lack

resources for a chaplaincy program.

Casares' nickname was Chappy as in "Chappy is in the house," when he worked at police departments. He has also volunteered at the Rancho Cordova Police Department, which has a contract with the Sheriff's Office.

"I also do VIPS patrol whenever they

need a fill-in," Casares said.

Before the pandemic, the VIPS program operated out of the James L Noller Safety Center across the parking lot from the district office. However, the trailer that previously housed the service center is out of commission because of needed repairs.

The late Jacque Villa was the cornerstone of the previous service center for more than 16 years. In addition to taking minor police reports during her

twice-weekly office hours, Villa checked phone messages daily from her home and fielded other phone calls at all hours of the day from residents needing advice. Villa and the other VIPs also provided another set of ears and eyes for district security by patrolling twice a week in their marked truck.

Rancho Murieta residents interested in volunteering with the VIPS can contact volunteers@sacsheriff.com. ★



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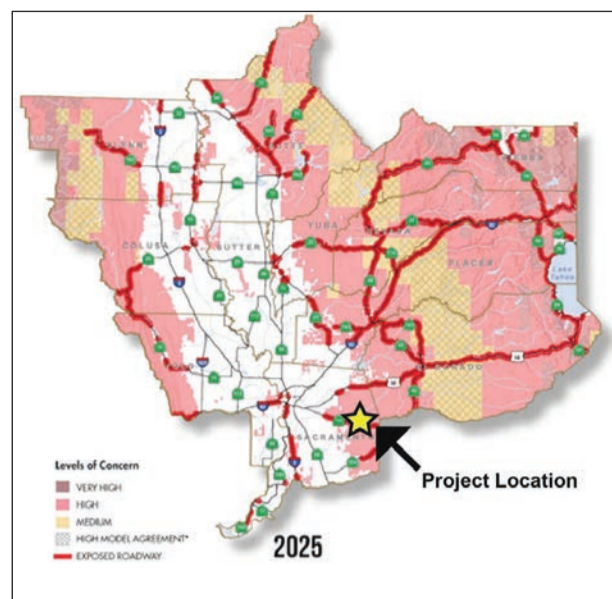
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# Frost, Fire Safe Council Help Win Caltrans Grant



CAL FIRE designates much of the area surrounding Rancho Murieta as high risk.

described Long as the driving force in securing the Caltrans grant. Long demurred, saying it was a group effort. All three were unanimous in their praise of Frost, with Pryor describing her as the catalyst.

Frost remembers that Pryor often called her, asking if they should give up.

"I told him that the squeaky wheels gets the grease so we're just going to keep doing it until they give us what we want," Frost said.

Frost said she was thrilled that Rancho Murieta was the Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant recipient.

"I'm especially grateful for community members who have tirelessly advocated for fire and storm safety in the vulnerable areas of Sacramento County. Special thanks to Greg Pryor, John Long, John Merchant, and the Rancho Murieta Fire Safe Council, who are long time champions for fire safety in our community," Frost said. "We are all grateful for the help from SACDOT, Caltrans and a multitude of county, state and federal representatives that helped make this possible."

Hume described the Caltrans grant as a "great first step" because rural communities often have only one way in and out.

"We really have two disaster seasons that we need to worry about: fire season and flooding season," he said. "In both cases, the community needs viable evacuation routes to get to safety."

Asked about Long, Pryor and Merchant, Hume said: "I think these guys have really leaned into these issues to raise awareness. They all bring personal expertise from their professional backgrounds in order to protect their neighbors."

The Caltrans grant was the second time that Frost helped the fire safe council

secure outside funding to help protect the community. The first was the CAL FIRE \$4.5 million grant.

Pryor, Rob Schultz and Cheryl McElhany unsuccessfully applied for CAL FIRE grants for several years, each time needing to find a sponsor as the fire safe council wasn't a non-profit organization.

Frost brokered an agreement with Sacramento County Regional Parks to sponsor their 2022 application and to administer the project if a grant were awarded. Schultz spent weeks writing the application. The group landed the \$4.5 million grant that year.

The on-the-ground fuel mitigation inside and north of the community is expected to begin in the fall with a Rancho Murieta forester supervising the work.

Despite years of efforts, the fire safe council hasn't been able to reach an agreement about evacuating from inside the gates with the Rancho Murieta Association Board. Prior said their primary concern is that the community could have very little time to evacuate if a fierce wind-driven fire approached from the north.

Fortunately, the community has greenbelts where residents could shelter if they couldn't get out through the main gates.

As one last effort, Pryor has put together a Sept. 16 online meeting to again discuss evacuation from inside the gates.

Vorster said the "stakeholders" at the upcoming meeting will include Sacramento Metro Fire Chief Adam House, Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services Director Mary Jo Flynn-Neveins, Supervisors Frost and Hume, and representatives from Rancho Murieta Association, the Rancho Murieta Community Services District and the fire safe council. ★

Continued from page 1

The consultant hired by the Sacramento County Department of Transportation will also identify infrastructure improvements, and develop a funding and implementation plan that will meet a Caltrans requirement for highway improvement funding.

The fire safe council representatives working with Frost to seek outside funding for highway improvements are Greg Pryor, John Merchant and John Long. Fellow community activists often refer to them as the "Three Amigos."

Pryor, a retired firefighter, is president of the fire safe council. Merchant, a retired businessman currently circulating a water moratorium petition, is a council member. Long, a retired traffic engineer with 46 years of experience, was a member of the Rancho Murieta Association Emergency Preparedness Committee that led to the fire safe council's formation. He has served as an advisor to the council since then.

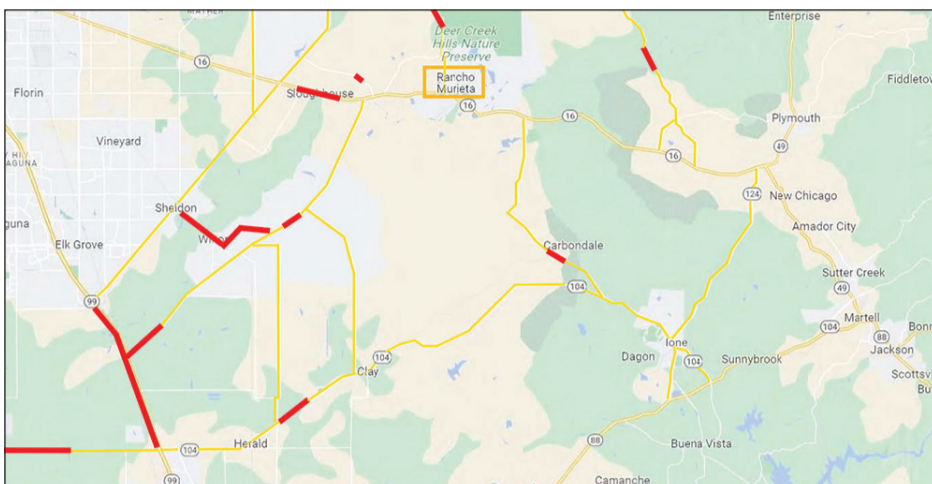
After the flooding exposed the community's vulnerability, the three turned to Frost.

"We brought up the issues," Long said. "Supervisor Frost was listening to us."

Frost soon brought Supervisor Pat Hume into the conversation because the Sloughhouse flooding was in his district. Frost set up a March 21, 2023, bus trip with Merchant as their guide so elected and agency officials could see where the roadways had flooded in the New Year's storm and the fire risk on Scott Road.

"The real takeaway was that a lot of people didn't realize how far away we were," Merchant said.

Frost and the three fire safe council representatives also organized a roundtable on March 27, 2023 at the RMA Building. The attendees included representatives from the California Highway Patrol, the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office, Sacramento Metropolitan



Graphic shows the intersections that flooded in the January 2023 storm.

Fire District and State Senator Roger Niello's chief of staff to discuss the critical importance of Jackson Highway during an emergency.

Frost told the group that she had been working with the fire safe council as they looked at issues inside the gates. But the flooding of major access roads prompted a broader conversation about the infrastructure outside the Rancho Murieta area.

Long explained why Rancho Murieta is the Sacramento County community uniquely at risk of flooding and fire. He said the largest population significantly impacted by the 2023 flooding lived in Rancho Murieta. Emergency access, not evacuation, was the issue because everyone could shelter in place as the community became an island.

Although firefighters were on duty at Station 59, other fire equipment, along with CHP, and Sacramento County Sheriff's Office could only respond from Amador County.

Fortunately no incidents requiring an outside emergency response were reported.

"We really dodged the bullet, Long said in retrospect.

In addition to major intersections going underwater, a low-lying section of Jackson Highway in Sloughhouse became impassable due to the volume of rain and flooding after the Deer Creek levee broke. Although boils threatened the stability of the Cosumnes River levee on the other side of the highway, it held even though the flow of water

was only exceeded by the devastating flooding in 1997.

When that same levee broke in 1997, the highway was impassable for days. Long expects that the Sacramento County Department of Transportation consultant will evaluate the Sloughhouse levees as one of the factors affecting all-weather access on Jackson Highway.

"We are trying to shame Caltrans," Long said in a recent interview. "Don't you want to keep your state highway open if it floods?"

Addressing fire risk at the round table, Long used a CAL FIRE map of state responsibility area to show that Rancho Murieta was the only urbanized area in Sacramento County mostly surrounded by a high-hazard zone.

Although not mentioned at the meeting, the 2021 Caldor Fire could have devastated Rancho Murieta if the wind had not been blowing east that day, according to the grant application. It would have been extremely challenging to evacuate the entire community in a short period of time, given the constraints along Jackson Highway.

Depending on where a fire was burning, residents might have to go east or west, traveling in only one lane to allow emergency vehicle access coming the other way. However, "the time it would take to get 6,000 to 9,000 out would be excessive," Long said at the meeting.

To solve the capacity issue, Long said, the fire safe council wasn't looking at widening Jackson

Highway to four lanes, which would be exorbitant. Instead they wanted practical spot improvements, such as adding a lane in the outbound direction at a key intersection to eliminate bottlenecks. An example can be seen at the Jackson Highway and Excelsior Road intersection.

Or, as Long explained recently, "My thing is practical solutions. I want to do something sooner than later. If it is too expensive and takes too long, the problem will persist."

Following the March 2023 meeting, the two supervisors began involving the top-level staff at Sacramento County Department of Transportation from Director Ron Vicari on down.

"We convinced the county that these concerns were high enough so they went after the grant," Long said.

Sacramento County Department of Transportation retained an on-call consultant to write the grant application, but Long, who has grant-writing experience, also assisted.

Long said his role was to provide local knowledge and to review and provide feedback on the application. Sacramento County Department of Transportation also applied for a federal grant along the same lines but didn't receive it, he said.

Long said the county also has asked him to serve as an unpaid advisor for the study, which he expects will take at least two years. Long is hoping for a shorter time frame.

Pryor and Merchant

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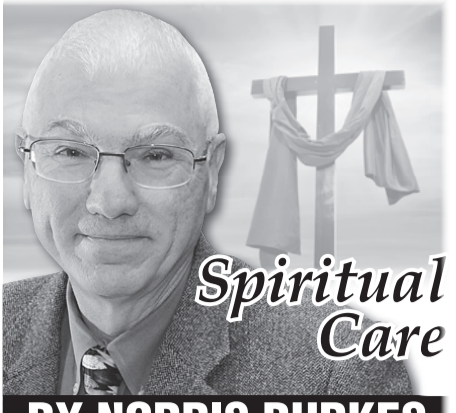
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### Spiritual Care

**BY NORRIS BURKES**

“A man’s got to know his limitations,” is the famous advice given by Clint Eastwood in his role as Dirty Harry in the 1973 movie “Magnum Force.” As a spiritual columnist, I see some spiritual awareness in those words.

While my limitations are unlimited, I can briefly share three settings where it’s helpful for me to “know my limitations.”

Three things I’m too inept to manage in the retail setting:

I can’t seem to learn Italian so I can order a venti or grande iced tea at Starbucks. I remind the clerk, “This is America, darn it. Give me the Jumbo Super Slurper.”

I’m unskilled in the self-check line at the grocery store. Those computer voices fluster me. They sound too much like creepy Hal in “2001: A Space Odyssey,” just endlessly repeating, “Unauthorized item in the bagging area.”

I can’t manage accuracy when the grocery store asks for my personal

# My Limitless Limitations

information on the store application for “preferred card.” I don’t need the avalanche of junk mail, text messages or email spam they bring, so I use the name “Ima Snooty.”

Three things I’m too clumsy to accomplish at church:

I don’t care to hug strangers. This limitation is a trait of the INFP, a type from the Myers Briggs personality test.

The letters stand for “Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Prospecting” and, according to the test, an INFP “tends to be quiet, open-minded, and imaginative, and they apply a caring and creative approach to everything they do.”

As an INFP, I sometimes feel like I’d rather run to my car after my sermon than stay around and hug people.

I’m unable to think of the word that fills in the “fill-in-the-blank” sermon outlines found in many church bulletins. These outlines are akin to karaoke and were popularized by the now-retired evangelical pastor Rick Warren.

I’m too rhythmically challenged to clap to the beat of contemporary church music. I have to make a choice: sing or clap. And since people tend to get hurt when I clap, I stick to singing.

Three situations where my faith is stronger because it’s limited:

On a more serious note, I’m a man who acknowledges his faith limitations.

I cannot, will not, tell you that your faith

and beliefs are wrong and mine are right. Some Christians are fond of quoting John 14:6 concerning Jesus being the only way to God. But if you are reciting the verse to other faiths, you are not sharing your faith, you’re shouting your condemnation.

I won’t impose my faith on you in a public situation by giving a public prayer when I know that the audience may not be of my faith. Because, if I only pray what doesn’t offend me and -- you can only hear what doesn’t offend you -- then we dilute both of our faiths.

I won’t debate you. I’m not going to argue religion with you. Neither will I engage in disputes over abortion, the death penalty, theology, politics, evolution or the existence of God. I will, however, engage in a thoughtful examination of the issues. Maybe it’s the INFP personality, but my dad taught me that it can take more courage to walk away from an argument.

That’s enough of the negative limitations. Before I finish, let me tell you where I tend to be limit-less.

I try to be an example of struggling faith. “What is that?” you ask. Struggling faith recognizes that no one has faith

completely figured out. God is too big to be contained in one religion. We can learn things about faith from people of other faiths, and even from people who profess no faith at all.

I want to follow the direction of I Peter 3:15: “Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you’re living the way you are and always with the utmost courtesy.”

Finally, if you ask me, I will pray with you without limits. My prayers are voiced in plain English without the “thee” and “thou” from King James’s Old English. However, given my touch of ADD, the prayers won’t be a grande or a venti size prayer, just a small one.

Just don’t ask me to do one of those huggy prayers. After all, a pastor really should know his/her limitations.

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# Two Wildland Fires Break Out Near RM

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)**

- Two wildland fires that broke out near Rancho Murieta on Aug. 3 and 4 raised concern among residents who saw smoke and heard sirens.

Both fires were contained at approximately six acres each, with no structures threatened and no injuries reported.

The first incident, known as the Murieta Fire, was reported around 7 p.m. Aug. 3 in the 14800 block

of Jackson Highway. This fire occurred on ranch land located south of Jackson Highway and east of the Cosumnes River.

The second fire was spotted around 4 p.m. Aug. 4 at the end of the Rancho Murieta Airport runway, west of the river. This fire moved into heavy brush and trees in steep terrain adjacent to the river, necessitating extensive mop-up operations, according to Captain Parker Wilbourn, the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (Sac Metro) public information officer.

Wilbourn said that Sac Metro and CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection) operated a joint command for both incidents, successfully halting the fires' forward progress at approximately six acres each.

While Sac Metro firefighters and equipment were the first to respond, both fire areas fall within a state-responsibility area, meaning that CAL FIRE is responsible for investigating the fires' causes.

The River Valley Times also contacted CAL FIRE

but was unable to get more details about the fires, including the causes, before press time.

The Cantova Fire scanner traffic indicated that mowing caused that fire. A Sac Metro aerial photo of the Cantova Fire shows a large agricultural field, apparently hay, that had been partially mowed.

Wilbourn said that Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers responded to the Cantova Fire to provide rehabilitation support due to the triple-degree temperatures.



An aerial photo shows the location of the Cantova Fire that broke out at about 7 p.m. Aug. 4. It ignited near the end of the Rancho Murieta Airport runway and west of the Cosumnes River. Photos courtesy of Sac Metro

CERT, a volunteer branch of Sac Metro, assists at various incidents, Wilbourn added. ★

# Gold Rush Classic to Culminate with Community Concert



Moonshine Crazy, a Northern California country band, will play the Gold Rush Classic concert at the Lake Clementia Amphitheater on Aug. 23, open to all residents. Courtesy photo

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)**

- Although only a few Rancho Murieta residents will play a round of golf with celebrities such as Sacramento Kings player Malik Monk or retired football hall-of-famer Tim Brown when the Gold Rush Classic unfolds this month, everyone is invited to the culminating event.

The pro-am tournament at the Rancho Murieta Country Club will wrap up with the "Where the Stars and Guitars Shine" concert at the Lake Clementia Amphitheater on Friday, Aug. 23. The gates open at 7 p.m. and the music begins at 8 p.m.

Moonshine Crazy, a Northern California band known for covering and writing modern country-rock music, is the featured act. The band recently performed at the Folsom Pro Rodeo and headlined at the Red Hawk Casino on New Year's Eve. Moonshine Crazy has also opened for many country recording artists.

Tickets cost \$20 and can be purchased at The Local Bean Café up until the event.

Tickets will also be sold at the gate before the concert, subject to availability. For more details, visit goldrushclassic.org.

Funds generated from the Gold Rush Classic will support Jordan's Guardian Angels, Make-A-Wish Foundation, 1st Tee of Sacramento, Gold Rush Charlies, the Rancho Murieta Community Church Youth Group, the Murieta Trail Stewardship, the Rancho Murieta Kiwanis Club, the Pleasant Grove High School Golf teams and other children's charities in Sacramento and beyond.

The original Gold Rush Golf Tournament was held at the Rancho Murieta Country Club from 1983 to 1987. During those years, the tournament became a significant event in the Senior PGA Tour calendar. It also attracted legendary golfers, including Arnold Palmer who won the tournament in the event's inaugural year. ★

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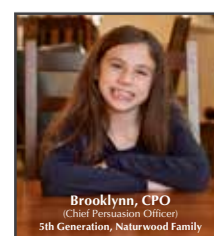


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# Bipartisan Effort by California Congress Members Drives Modern Multi-Modal Transportation Project Forward

By **Derek Minnema, Connector JPA Executive Director**

While Congressional bi-partisanship is an endangered species these days, three members of Congress from California are demonstrating how diverse political perspectives can unite to support a road project that will literally save lives and greatly alleviate traffic congestion in the state's capital city. Democratic Representatives Ami Bera and Doris Matsui, along with Republican Kevin Kiley, are collectively pushing for federal funding to support the Capital Southeast

Connector project. This multi-modal transportation project represents a new way of thinking about transportation.

Recently, the United States Department of Transportation allocated \$25 million to the Capital SouthEast Connector project. This funding will play a pivotal role in transforming a segment of Grant Line Road into a 4-lane expressway in Rancho Cordova, addressing longstanding safety concerns and improving traffic conditions on this route traveled heavily by commuters and commercial vehicles.

Bipartisan collaboration enhances public trust and

confidence in the project, highlighting it as a community-centric initiative rather than a politically motivated endeavor. This approach sets a positive precedent for future infrastructure projects, emphasizing the importance of cooperative governance in long-term strategic planning. By working together, these three representatives have created a model for effective governance that might inspire similar collaborations on other critical issues.

The next step to fully fund the Connector improvements in Rancho Cordova will be to secure matching funds from the State of California. Federal support

creates the opportunity to leverage the funding for more dollars by the State, potentially amounting to over \$50 million in federal and state funds to greatly improve traffic flows and safety throughout the entire Sacramento region.

"This project is really a testament to what is possible when everyone in our region is working together," Congressman Kevin Kiley said recently. "When you think of the political divisions that exist in this country, one of the ways we can overcome them is through local regional projects that affect people's lives in a tangible way."

The Capital Southeast

Connector project aims to improve access and connectivity for all users and modes of transportation. It includes an all-weather bike and pedestrian trail connecting communities, a wildlife crossing, roundabouts and other improvements to dangerous intersections, and generally modernizes an old and dilapidated road. The project has already received 50-year environmental permits approved by federal resource agencies.

The goal is to create a comprehensive transportation network in California's capital, including non-motorized transportation options that encourage eco-friendly

commuting, reduce traffic congestion, and promote healthier lifestyles. More importantly, the modernized roadway will eliminate dangers that have already led to deaths.

The Capital Southeast Connector project is more than just a roadway; it is a testament to the power of collective thinking to meet shared community needs and promote smart regional development.

To learn more about the work underway visit [www.ConnectorJPA.com](http://www.ConnectorJPA.com) or visit our YouTube channel at [youtube.com/@south-eastconnectorexpressway](https://youtube.com/@south-eastconnectorexpressway) ★

## What Everybody Ought to Know...

# About Transportation and Traffic in Sacramento County

### Why Are We Publishing This Information

The Capital SouthEast Connector is the largest and most significant road project in Sacramento and El Dorado Counties, but its value to the region is often unknown to residents.

The Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority (the agency responsible for designing and building the expressway) hopes to change that through a series of ads appearing over the next several weeks. The ads will explore the Connector's history and future, its financing, its challenges, and its successes.

Please send your comments about these ads, or any questions you might have, to [ConnectorSupport@SacCounty.gov](mailto:ConnectorSupport@SacCounty.gov)

For more information or to sign up for our newsletter, visit our website at [ConnectorJPA.com](http://ConnectorJPA.com) or go to our YouTube channel [@south-eastconnectorexpressway](https://youtube.com/@south-eastconnectorexpressway)

**Q** What is the Capital SouthEast Connector Expressway?

**A** The planned Connector is a four-lane expressway that will link Interstate 5 and Highway 99 near Elk Grove to Highway 50 in El Dorado County, by-passing downtown Sacramento and alleviating traffic congestion on existing highways, especially Highway 50.

The expressway will greatly lessen traffic congestion during commute hours and re-route many commercial trucks away from the metropolitan area.

The Connector will also link communities along the route with a parallel 30-mile regional bike and pedestrian trail that connects residents to recreational, entertainment and retail facilities, and to each other.

The route follows Grant Line Road and White Rock Road south of Highway 50 from El Dorado County to Kammerer Road west of Highway 99 in Elk Grove. The new roadway will eliminate dangerous curves and properly drain areas prone to frequent flooding.

Existing roads along the Connector's path are poorly designed with sharp curves and narrow or no shoulders. During flood or fire emergencies the roads are frequently closed or greatly congested,

hindering access for first responders and evacuation efforts.

**Q** What has been done to date, and what remains?

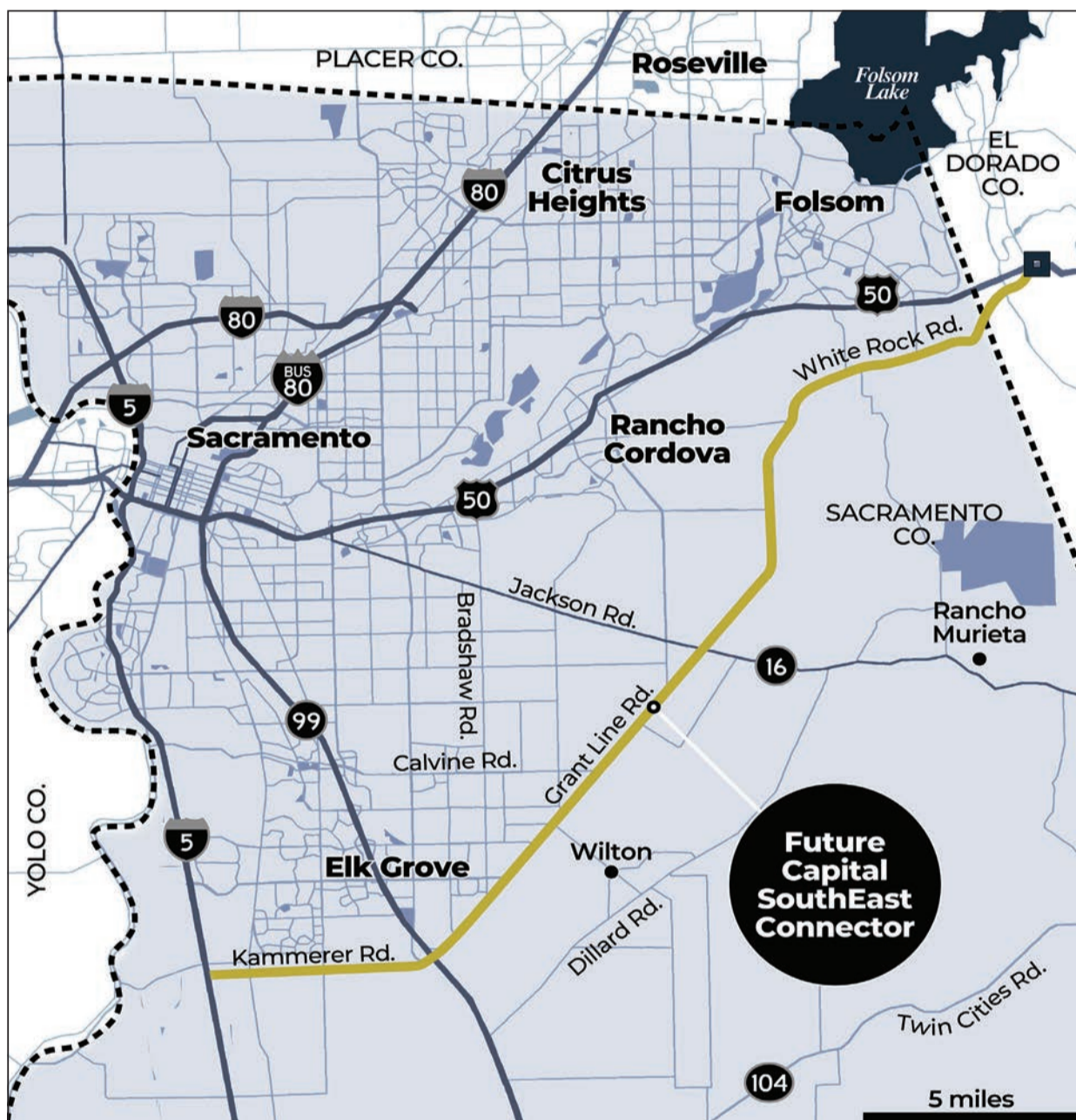
**A** At this point, about 11 miles of the Connector have been completed, including two highway interchanges and a railroad grade separation, at a cost of approximately \$200 million. Highway projects in California require extensive environmental approvals, permits, and mitigation, and often face legal challenges, adding to the difficulties of completing construction.

It is estimated that the entire expressway will be completed by 2035 with a total cost of \$500 million.

**Q** When was the Capital SouthEast Connector first envisioned?

**A** Back in 1975, the state studied traffic in the Sacramento region and recommended a beltway around the city of Sacramento due to the area's rapid growth and inadequate transportation corridors. The southern section of that beltway is what is now becoming the Capital SouthEast Connector.

At that time, Sacramento County had about 697,000



Map showing the location of the future Capital SouthEast Connector

residents and only four cities. Since then, three more cities have formed while the county's population more than doubled along with associated traffic headaches.

**Q** When did taxpayers first get asked to fund the project?

**A** In 2004, residents voted overwhelmingly to tax themselves to build the SouthEast Connector Expressway and other transportation projects. Since then, only approximately \$60 million of \$1.62 billion generated by those taxes have been allocated to the Connector project.

Meanwhile, residential and commercial development along the route continued to expand much faster than road construction needed to service the area. Thousands of new homes have been built along the route, and at least 32,600 more have been approved for construction in the near future.

**Q** When was the Capital Southeast Connector Joint Powers Authority formed and what does it do?

**A** The Capital Southeast Connector Joint Powers Authority was formally established in 2006 to design and construct the expressway after voters approved its construction in 2004.

Elected officials from Sacramento and El Dorado Counties and the cities of Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, and Folsom (the jurisdictions directly affected by the Connector project) comprise the JPA's board of directors.

The JPA's Fiscal Year 2025 budget is approximately \$7 million, which largely funds engineering design services and right-of-way acquisitions. Construction funding comes from state and federal transportation resources.

**Q** How has the affected community been involved in the project's planning?

**A** From its inception, project planning has emphasized public input and participation to ensure that the completed expressway reflects the needs and desires of the communities it serves.

Over the years, countless community outreach meetings, agricultural focus groups, and presentations to civic groups and the Sac-

ramento County Community Planning Advisory Councils have occurred. The JPA board of directors meets quarterly, and the meetings are open to the public.

The endeavor has received widespread support from government officials and residents seeking to alleviate traffic problems and improve safety along the route.

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