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# RIVER VALLEY TIMES

40TH YEAR • ISSUE 21

Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughouse, Wilton

NOVEMBER 8, 2024

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**BLANKETS FOR KIDS GIVEAWAY**



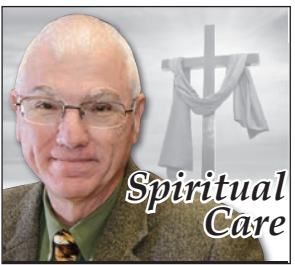
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**THE RETURN OF THE SWAGGER**



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## Automated Evacuation Gates Get Forum



Kayla Medina contemplates using Escuela Gate during an emergency evacuation as the kids wheeling around her are blissfully unaware of any threat. The topic will be discussed at a Nov. 16 town hall. Photos by Gail Bullen

*By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter*

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - After being left out of discussions for years, Rancho Murieta residents will finally have the opportunity to weigh in on a proposal to automate two remote gates, allowing them to automatically open, in addition to the two main gates, during emergency evacuations.

This opportunity will be part of a town hall meeting hosted by Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost at the RMA Building on Nov. 16 at 10 a.m. Frost will begin the session by



The Bent Grass Court gate off Jackson Highway is little noticed by motorists.

discussing county initiatives and introducing her successor, Rosario Rodriguez.

During the second hour of the town hall, Frost has invited Greg Pryor, president of the Rancho

Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council, to present the case for automating the Escuela Gate on the north side and the two Bent Grass Court gates on the south side of the community. If an evacuation is required,

the incident commander or their designee would remotely open the gates using a cell phone, with a code stored at the inter-agency fire dispatch center, according to the fire safe council's proposal.

Although including gate automation in the 2022 budget, the Rancho Murieta Association didn't follow through and denied further requests, citing safety concerns. The RMA Board believes that the remote gates shouldn't be opened until a first responder is on site to manage traffic.

At press time, it was unconfirmed whether RMA

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## Water Industry Pro Takes Over CSD Operations



Eric Houston is the new operations director for the Rancho Murieta Community Services District. Courtesy photo

*By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter*

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - Eric Houston, a 19-year water industry professional, has been appointed as the new operations director at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District. He has been working since Oct. 3.

Houston developed extensive surface water and groundwater treatment expertise as he advanced his career at the City of Sacramento, the Sacramento County Water Agency, and the City of Stockton.

Even before that, Houston was exposed to the field during his upbringing, as his father managed water and wastewater treatment operations in California and Oregon. After high school, he spent about a decade in retail before following in his father's footsteps. Along the way, he earned two associate degrees and a bachelor's degree and obtained the highest-level licenses in his field.

Houston is filling the vacancy created by the May resignation of the prior operations director, Michael Fritsch. Plant Supervisor Travis Bohannon served as the interim operations manager.

### City of Sacramento

Houston began his full-time career in the water treatment industry as a junior plant operator at the City of Sacramento's water treatment facility near Sacramento State in 2005. Within six months, he was promoted to plant operator. He later transitioned to the wells and reservoir operating group, which offered a schedule better suited to his family's needs.

Reflecting on his experience, Houston said "What I got was being able to work with various work groups and to kind of form that teamwork relationship, and the understanding of how to get projects and

*Continued on page 4*

## Fantastical Creatures Roam Harvest Festival



A playful encounter between "SpongeBob SquarePants" character Patrick Star and a grumpy pumpkin adds to the excitement at Cosumnes River Elementary School PTA's annual festival on Oct. 25.

*Story and photos  
by Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter*

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - From a pickle dressed as a ghost to La Catrina from the Day of the Dead, myriad youngsters trying to be someone else and their parents flocked to the annual Harvest Festival held at Cosumnes River Elementary School

on Oct. 25.

Sponsored by the PTA, the event included the spooky haunted hallway, a popular costume contest, Halloween-themed carnival games, a dance performance, a cake walk, crafts, DJ music, bounce houses and food trucks. A book fair ran concurrently in the library.

The main organizer was Lizzeth Delgadillo, the event coordinator for

the PTA. "I heard a lot of cool feedback," she said afterward. "There were a lot of happy parents and kids."

This year's Harvest Festival differed from previous years in that it wasn't a fundraiser. Instead, Delgadillo explained, "I just wanted it to be more of a celebration of our students and the parents, and not having to ask them for too much." After

*Continued on page 3*



# Second Trunk or Treat Draws 200-Plus to Stonehouse Park



Hayley Friedman takes first place in the cart division.



Dressed as an excavator, Noah Matthias poses for Kent Kilborn at the Trunk or Treat event on Oct. 26 at Stonehouse Park, hosted by the Rancho Murieta Association Recreation Committee.



Pricilla Deluna encourages children Thomas and Sloan to pose beside a 1940 Ford Woody.



Hunter Steichen, as Linus from "Peanuts," proudly shows off the trunk decoration he designed himself.

**Story and photos by Gail Bullen**  
**River Valley Times Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)**

- Presented by the Rancho Murieta Association Recreation Committee, the Trunk and Treat early Halloween celebration took place under ideal weather at Stonehouse Park on Oct. 26.

Now in its second year, the event attracted 20 cars from the Rancho Murieta corvette club and the classic cars club, along with three golf carts, whose owners joined in the festivities for the first time.

A crowd of costumed children eagerly moved from car to car, filling their bags with candy and enjoying the spooky decorations, including spiders and other Halloween displays.

Committee member Wylie Haviland estimated that over 200 people attended.

"It was bigger than last year, and we hope to keep growing it so it becomes a hallmark event," he said.

Parents didn't have to worry about food, as the committee served 200 hot dogs with chips, water, popcorn and about 200 trick-or-treat bags.

The committee awarded \$50 gift certificates for the most creatively decorated car and golf cart. Theresa Souza won with her "yellow brick road" setup leading into her trunk, and Hayley Friedman transformed her cart into a harvest festival. A prize for best-costumed pet will be added next year.

Another plan is to invite residents who don't typically get trick-or-treaters at home to join the event next year. "This will give them a chance to interact with the neighborhood kids," Haviland explained.

Pricilla and Taylor Deluna attended with their two young children. "This is so stinking cute," she said. "This is a great option for people who can't do Halloween night."

More photos are available at [TheRiverValleyTimes.com](http://TheRiverValleyTimes.com). ★



Aubree Hanson looks amazed as she shows her mother, Brooke Hanson, her candy haul.

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Lilah Delgadillo acknowledges the crowd's applause as costume contest judge Vandy Passmore announces her first place win in the Pre-K and Kindergarten division. Darek Lorey takes second place with his U.S. Marine costume.



A haunted hallway clown, portrayed by Amanda Spangler, gives third-grader Madison Uhl and her grandmother, Tina Stein, a fright.



Winslet Davies (left) and Aria Arceo check out the colorful selections at the book fair in the library.

# Fantastical Creatures Roam Harvest Festival

Continued from page 1

a highly successful jog-a-thon earlier in the month, the PTA opted to focus on celebration rather than additional fundraising.

Instead of asking parents to bake for the cake walk, Delgadillo used a donation from Turley Wine Cellars, arranged by a fellow PTA member, to purchase pastries. Although she had a budget, Delgadillo sought donations to elevate the event. New to cold calling, she managed to secure contributions and make some new friends.

Donations from Rancho Murieta Homes and Land and Town and Country Realty funded better prizes for the games and costume contest, while a donation from Illume Luxe Studios sponsored a face painter. Tractor Supply also contributed pumpkins, potted mums, and straw bales for decorations.

Delgadillo and her co-chair, Nicole Laird, expressed appreciation for the volunteers, including PTA members, the Kiwanis Club, the Ranch Preschool, CRES teachers who judged the costume contest and ran the cake walk, and seven Pleasant Grove High School students who supervised the carnival games



Emcee Dan Reid announces the winners in the fourth through sixth grade category: Daniel Delgadillo as a mariachi player, Stella Davalos as La Catrina from Día de los Muertos, and Hunter Steichen as Pac-Man.

for community service credit.

Parent Thomas Xanos orchestrated the haunted hallway, despite having fewer helpers this year, while Reggie Vezia served as the DJ, setting the Halloween mood. Dan Reid, dressed as an American revolution soldier, emceed the costume contest and helped organize enthusiastic youngsters into a single line for judging.

Delgadillo had another acknowledgment, "I'm only brave enough to take on these events because I have the best husband (Johnny Delgadillo) and friends that always show up to support me, Katie (Coon), Sam (Kissane), and Amanda (Spangler)," she said. "I'm grateful to all of all parents too."

Adding to the festivities, the junior competition team from Murieta Dance Company performed "Who Do You Think You Are," a piece they'll showcase in their recital on Dec. 14 and 15.

Delgadillo has become well-known around the school for her imaginative and elaborate decorations, having created memorable designs for three father-and-daughter dances and a PTA gala at the country club.

At this year's Harvest Festival, Delgadillo once again showcased her creative talents. Her handiwork was especially visible in the eight Halloween-themed carnival games she crafted from scratch. After designing each game concept, she ordered backdrops, often modifying

them with paint. She also hand-made many game accessories, like covering cans with starched cloth to form little ghost targets for kids to knock off a shelf with a ball. For another game, she individually decorated jars of "witch's brew" as targets for a ring toss.

Delgadillo also designed the Harvest Festival display on the front stage. She and a friend wrapped dried flowers to create a fall foliage arch. She found a fun inflatable tractor, saving her from having to construct one, and scored a giant inflatable pumpkin arch that perfectly bridged the playground and the quad. She also created a photo booth.

The pink witch costume Delgadillo crafted for her daughter Lilah won first place in the kindergarten division, earning the loudest applause. She transformed a pink dress with layers of star-studded and glittery fabric, added a matching cape, crafted a witch's hat from cardstock covered in the same material, and decorated a broomstick.

View more photos from the Harvest Festival at [TheRiverValleyTimes.com](http://TheRiverValleyTimes.com) ★



Kim Sackett enjoys a meal with her daughter Madison, courtesy of one of the three food trucks.



With guidance from Pleasant Grove High School student Aiden Claycond, Kashton Curd takes aim at a ghost in one of the eight carnival games at the event.

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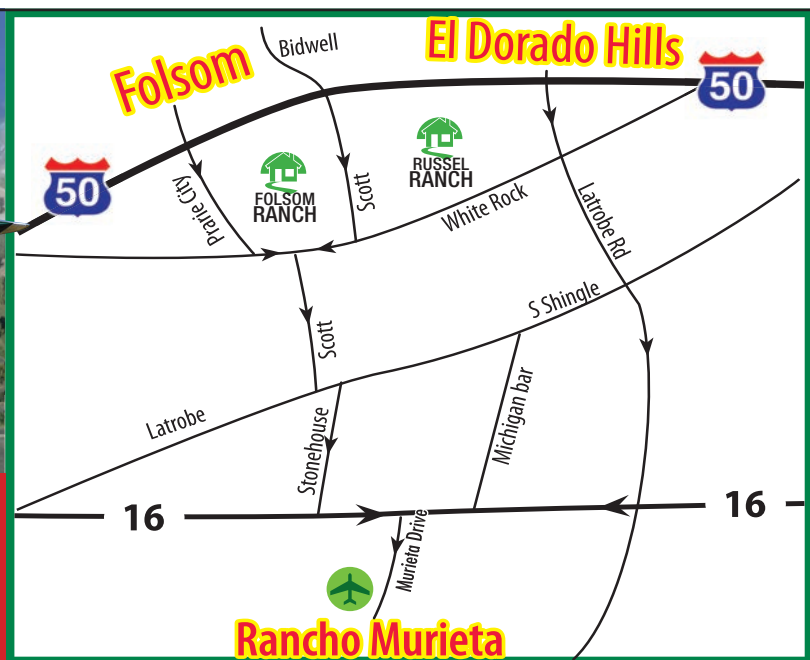
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## Murieta Sidewalk Shoppe Opens Fall Market in Plaza



Handcrafted wares and costumed pets were among the attractions during the Murieta Sidewalk Shoppe at the Murieta Plaza on Oct. 19. In photo right, the winners of the pet costume parade pose with their humans, from left, Ziggy the Silkie chicken with Drew Gray, Luna the Maltese with Jennifer Younger,

and Echo the Australian Shepherd with Carla Hanlon. In photo above, Connie Mesich marvels at Wilton teenager Jake Kunz, who has turned a 4-H project into a business, selling collapsible bars at \$600 each. More photos can be found at [TheRiverValleyTimes.com](http://TheRiverValleyTimes.com). Photos by Gail Bullen



## Say More Than 'Thank You for Your Service'

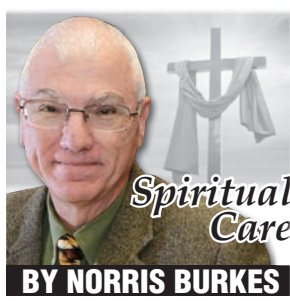
This Veterans Day, I want you to do more than just thank a veteran for his or her service.

As a veteran of 28 years, I want to challenge you to go beyond patriotic rhetoric by asking some specific questions of the veterans you encounter.

First, ask us what we did in military service. Don't worry; our stories aren't just about bombs and bullets and boats.

For instance, most of us would love to tell you about how we deployed on more than a few humanitarian missions.

If you ask, we'll tell about operations like "New Horizon," where we built schools, clinics and playgrounds all over South America.



*Spiritual Care*  
BY NORRIS BURKES

Some of us can tell you about cleaning up New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, while others will tell you about flying into countries devastated by earthquakes or tsunamis.

Ask us what we did, and we might recollect building runways in the desert, pitching tents in the jungle, hot-loading a plane, setting up communications links in the Australian outback and launching a satellite

that gave you the cable TV you enjoy.

Get us talking and we'll tell you about fixing planes, loading planes, flying planes, jumping from planes, fueling planes in flight.

As a chaplain, I can tell you about the blessings I prayed over planes as well as the blessing I had of walking away from a plane crash.

This generation of service members might lose you in their technical talk, but I assure you they are proud to talk about the satellites they control, the drones they fly and the cyber warfare they engage.

After you ask them about what they did, ask them where they've been.

They'll likely share

their version of Johnny Cash's song, "I've Been Everywhere."

They've filled passports doing temporary duty in places like Antigua, Ukraine and Djibouti on the Horn of Africa.

They've flown planes over the North Pole, landed them on the South Pole and navigated submarines under both.

And yes, they've even spent some time in "dark sites" that don't exist.

They shivered with their families on assignment in Minot, N.D., and spent a few sweltering years in Fort Huachuca, AZ.

My family loved the two years they spent in Izmir, Turkey, while other military families enjoyed the island seclusion of Guam

or the Azores.

A few lucky ducks will regale you with stories of embassy duty in Paris, London or Madrid.

But if you want to go deep, ask them what it means to have served.

If you listen well and they think you're interested, they just might tell you.

But it's just as likely they won't be able to tell you. It's just as likely that there will be a hitch in their voice, a mist will form in their eyes and they'll turn away from that question.

Don't get me wrong. They're proud of the things they've done and they want to share them with you.

But I caution you: There are some things they won't share.

Taking an oath to obey the legal orders of those appointed over them meant that they also did the unimaginable and for some the unspeakable.

I know because they told their chaplain.

They told me about the lives they couldn't save and the lives they had to take. They've shown me their physical wounds and they've bared their moral wounds.

Thankfully, the stories of most servicemembers run the course of everyday life; albeit a life of transfers every two or three years, endless inspections and exercises, family separations and making ends meet on military pay.

It was a life of long ago, but it was life from only yesterday. Ask us and we'll tell you.

*Email comments to comment@thechaplain.net. ★*

## Water Industry Pro Takes Over CSD Operations

*Continued from page 1*

things that are needed... being able to get other people to buy into that."

### Sacramento County Water Agency

Houston's next position was with the Sacramento County Water Agency, where a former colleague brought him in to manage the startup, testing, and operation of the newly constructed Vineyard Surface Water Treatment Plant, a facility with a processing capacity of 60 million gallons per day.

Describing his four years with the agency, Houston said it was both challenging and rewarding. "It opened my experience to be able to diversify into a lot of different areas, getting much more involved in the electronics, the mechanics of the whole system, and the hydraulics."

### City of Stockton

In 2015, Houston took on a managerial role with the City of Stockton, overseeing all drinking water operations and acting as the primary liaison with the State Water Resources Control Board. In this position, he expanded his expertise in networking, budgeting and strategic planning.

He also gained valuable experience in advocating for essential, yet costly, projects. "Such as how to paint a project in a good light at a political forum so the public was in support of it. That made it easier for the city council to make decisions," he explained.

Asked for an example, Houston noted a lack of a budget provision for replacing a water plant's membrane filters, which were five years into a 10-year lifespan. "The half a million-dollar cost per set was hard for the city council to stomach,"

he said. However, the council eventually placed a replacement cycle in the budget.

Houston also tackled challenges related to the loss of groundwater wells. His projects included "rehabbing wells, adding drinking water treatment to well sites, and groundwater recharge to perfect our water rights," he said.

Recognizing the value of further education, Houston completed an online bachelor's degree in business management from Western Governors University during his time in Stockton.

### El Dorado Irrigation District

After eight years in Stockton, Houston transitioned to the El Dorado Irrigation District in 2023 as a water treatment plant operator. He was drawn by the prospect of a shorter commute and a fresh challenge. "Since a lot of things had gotten in place in Stockton," he said, "I was wanting a different schedule and to step back for a little bit."

When he joined the district, the plant was undergoing several upgrades. Houston described his role as "just being part of the process," helping to guide the improvements already underway.

### Rancho Murieta Community Services District

A former colleague from Stockton, now the general manager of the Calaveras Public Utility District, informed Houston about the opening at Rancho Murieta CSD. He recommended it as an opportunity for Houston to re-enter management and "to help the community make some changes to get started in the right direction," Houston said. "That really interested me."

Making a difference in larger entities

like Sacramento and Stockton could be "slow and daunting...whereas here in the district, I feel we have the right size to get things moving and able to make improvements," Houston said.

Though new to managing recycled and wastewater systems, Houston is quickly acclimating. He explained that water treatment systems share many fundamental aspects, particularly the underlying hydrology. "The district already has great staff... it's just trying to help them have the tools that they need for improvements and replacement of infrastructure," he said.

Houston identified improving the district's finances as a primary challenge, along with the broader issue facing all public entities today—gaining public trust. In the past, agencies often assumed the public believed they were doing their best. "Now you have to elicit that support, almost go out and earn it... I think that's what CSD is starting to focus on - being more involved in that outreach component," Houston said.

### Background

Houston's father managed water and wastewater treatment systems in California and Oregon, and Houston often accompanied him on weekend call-outs. "Back then, it wasn't abnormal for kids to show up on-site," he said.

After graduating from Placer High School in Auburn, Houston took classes at Sierra Community College before beginning a 10-year career at Walmart, working in various roles at the Rocklin, Clovis, and Antelope stores. Despite working full-time, he attended local colleges to complete his general education requirements before deciding on a major.

Houston was considering a career in engineering or teaching when a pivotal conversation with his father in 2001 changed his direction.

"He pointed out the advantages of going into the water treatment industry since operators were starting to make as much as engineers... without as much college debt."

While still at Walmart, Houston enrolled in a water specialist certificate program at Sacramento State but found the process slow, as licensing exams were only offered twice a year. During this time, his father referred him for a small job at a mobile home park water system, where he checked their well several times a month for a \$300 stipend.

Houston still consults his father for work advice.

"To this day, I still consider him my management consultant that I get for free," he said. "When I run into something I haven't experienced, I shoot him a text message or give him a call, and we talk it over."

Houston and his wife live in Elk Grove, with two children and two grandchildren. He credits his wife for supporting his education and career. "My way to take care of my family was to improve myself," he said.

A cycling enthusiast, Houston has enjoyed road racing, gravel and mountain bike riding and cyclocross. During the pandemic, he joined an online cycling team and logged 10,000 miles in one year. Although time constraints prevent him from road cycling now, he continues to ride his smart bike with online companions worldwide.

Houston also enjoys reading and watching Netflix in his spare time. ★





# COMMUNITY BRIEFS

## Wilton Bingo Games Held Monthly

November bingo will be on Saturday Nov. 9. Doors open at 5 p.m. with food available for sale and bingo starts at 6 p.m. in the Wilton Community Center (9717 Colony Road, at Dillard Road).

All proceeds go to two non-profits: the local Park Council and the Wilton History Group.

The next bingo will be on Jan. 4. Questions, call Lorraine Robinson at 916-212-8896

## RM Veterans Day Celebration Nov. 11

You are invited to the "Been There-Done That Canteen" to honor all past and present members of the USA Armed Forces.

Mark your calendars for Nov. 11 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the RMA Building. Coffee, donuts and conversation will be enjoyed by all the community as they celebrate our dedicated veterans and current members of the armed forces.

The Rancho Murieta Caregivers Support Group, which has sponsored the celebration since its inception, is passing the baton to the Rancho Murieta Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary this year.

The event will be very similar to prior years with a brief program planned for 10 a.m., according to Auxiliary President Melissa Mineni.

## Sheriff's Meeting in RM on Nov. 13

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office will present a community meeting on Rancho Murieta on Nov. 13 at the RMA Building.

The meeting will run from 6 to 7:30 p.m. All residents are invited to attend.

## Supervisor Frost Town Hall Nov. 16

Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost will hold her last town hall in Rancho Murieta on Nov. 16 at 10 a.m. at the RMA Building. Frost also will introduce her successor, Supervisor-elect Rosario Rodriguez.

Greg Pryor, president of the Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council, also is slated to speak. His topic will be evacuating from behind the gates in the event of an emergency.

## Women's Club Holiday Luncheon Dec. 4

The Rancho Murieta Women's Club has a special treat planned for its holiday luncheon on Dec. 4. The Sutter Street Theatre from Old Folsom has agreed to create a version of its holiday production from last year, "Holiday in the Hills."

Several of our members were able to see the original last year at the theatre and speak very highly of it.

The reservation deadline is 5 p.m. Nov. 22. For more information, contact Cindy Shamrock at 916-354-1981 or Barbara Armstrong at 916-541-1884.

## Community Invited to Christmas Dinner at Catholic Church

Please join us for a Christmas Dinner Dance on Friday Dec. 6 from 5:30 to 10 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 14673 Cantova Way.

Enjoy a dinner of Santa Maria tri tip with jus on the side, sauteed shrimp scampi in a wine butter sauce, creamy

pesto pasta with sun-dried tomatoes, green beans almandine, garden salad with balsamic vinaigrette dressing, rolls and butter, and cheesecake with caramel rum sauce for dessert.

The no-host bar opens at 5:30 p.m. with dinner at 6:30 p.m. Dance to the music of DJ Back 2 Back from 8 to 10 p.m. Tickets are \$55 per person and are on sale before and after the Saturday and Sunday Masses at SVDP starting the weekend of Nov. 9 and 10, or by calling Sherry at 916 844-5171.

Gather your family and friends for a fun-filled adult evening.

## Wilton Winter Festival Slated Dec. 7

The annual Wilton Winter Festival will be held at the Wilton Community Center on Saturday, Dec. 7.

Vendors also will sell crafts and holiday goods from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Breakfast will be served 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and lunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The parade will begin at noon with nearby roads closing at 11:30 a.m. After the parade, Santa will listen to Christmas wishes at the community center.

For more information check the Wilton Community Center Facebook page. The event is sponsored by the Sacramento County Parks & Rec Council Area 4B.

## Kiwanis Club Seeks Sponsors for Crab Feed

The Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta, in partnership with the Knights of Columbus, will host their 11th Annual Kiwanis Crab Feed on Feb. 1 at St. Vincent de Paul Church on Cantova Way. The Crab Feed is the largest fundraiser for our Kiwanis Club.

We are actively seeking new sponsors for our event in addition to the many generous returning sponsors. Sponsorship levels range from \$300 to \$5,000 with great benefits at each level. The sponsorship deadline is Dec. 3. In addition, we have limited opportunities for businesses to advertise their business card on our placemat. Placemat ads are \$75 each.

Raffle prizes and silent auction items are also needed. Please consider donating new items, gift cards, wine, travel, etc. We also need baskets or containers for our extravagant raffle. Our Crab Feed is our largest fundraiser, which allows our Kiwanis Club to continue doing the good work in our community.

Please contact Bonnie at 916-502-3260. Crab Feed ticket sales will begin after the holidays. Thank you for your continued support of our Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta.

## Kiwanis Seeks Sweats for Vets Donations

Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta is once again asking for monetary donations to its Sweat for Vets program that will run through the end of December.

This is the 15th year of helping veterans who are hospitalized at the Sacramento Veterans Administration Medical Center in Mather.

Please make your check out to Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta Sweat for Vets. Cash donations and Walmart gift cards are also welcome.

Mail donations to Kiwanis at P. O. Box 855, Rancho Murieta, or put them in a drop box at the RMA building.

If you have any questions, call Diann Swan at 916-354-0656. Thank you for your support of this program. ★

# Blankets for Kids Readies for Holiday Giveaway

By Claire Gliddon, Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids

## SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Got Beanie Babies?

Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids (SBSK) is asking for donations of new or "almost new" Beanie Babies all year long. Every September, Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids picks as many of the lowest-income elementary schools they can and finds out how many kindergartners they have.

Volunteers make double fleece blankets (about 40" x 60") and a little fleece pouch with a Beanie Baby

in it to go with each blanket for its Kindergarten Project. Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids gives blankets and fleece pouches to the children right before Christmas break. Some of the kindergartners live in cars or in places without heat and this is all they get for Christmas.

The gifts are very popular with the teachers and the children.

This is Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids' 11th year for the Kindergarten Project and the volunteers hope to continue doing it for as long as they can get Beanie Babies. In 2023, Sacramento

Blankets for Sacramento Kids gave out more than 2,394 blankets and Beanie Babies for its Kindergarten Project!

Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids is always looking for more volunteers to make blankets year round for children in need. Like to knit, crochet, sew, quilt, make no-sew blankets and have run out of people to make gifts for? We're looking for you.

If you would like more information about Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids, go to [www.sacblankets4kids.com](http://www.sacblankets4kids.com) and sign in. There is no pressure, no timelines, no meetings, just others




Kindergartners are giddy with their blankets and Beanie Babies from Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids. Photo courtesy of Claire Gliddon

who enjoy crocheting, knitting, quilting, sewing, making no-sew blankets and helping many children at the same time.

Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids is a nonprofit organization that serves children in need from infants to

18-year-olds. While the volunteers help all year long, the Kindergarten Project is their "special" project of the year. ★



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# CSD Resumes Publication of Security Logs

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - After halting the publication of security logs in February, the Rancho Murieta Community Services District has released updated logs

for October.

General Manager Mimi Morris announced the temporary suspension of the logs after Security Supervisor Kelly Benitez resigned in February.

She informed the CSD board that she would look for a less labor-intensive

method to produce the logs using updated software.

On Nov. 2, Morris emailed the October logs to the River Valley Times and noted that the district would also publish them on its website.

Additionally, she mentioned that the

district aims to transition to a weekly release of the logs.

The CSD security log serves as the community's equivalent to a police blotter, and over the years, social media comments have shown it to be the River Valley Times' most popular section. ★

## SECURITY LOGS

Following is a summary of activity for the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Security Department for the following dates. Note: these log entries are condensed. For full security log details, go to the CSD website at [www.rmcsd.com](http://www.rmcsd.com).

### Oct. 2

Welfare check, Celebrar Street: Report of juvenile pacing back and forth in the roadway in distress. Juvenile was gone on arrival and officer could not locate him.

### Oct. 5

RMA rule complaint, Ventana: dirt bike at north back area. Patrol observed vehicle with dirt bike. Citation issued for use of streets and guest without resident.

RMA rule violation, dirt bike riding at Lake Clementia. Patrol responded and observed guest vehicle travel outbound with dirt bike.

### Oct. 6

Disturbance, Murieta Drive: Murieta Inn & Spa requested patrol's assistance with uncooperative

guest. Contact made with reporting party.

RMA Rule violation, Guadalupe Drive: observed at Lake Calero, no boat pass, citation issued.

RMA rule violation, Labranza Street: Patrol observed violation of no boat pass on North back Lakes, citation issued.

### Oct. 8

Welfare check, Guadalupe Drive: Welfare check requested due to report of elderly driver leaving North Gate outbound toward Bel Air with disregard of stop light. RP tried to make contact; elderly driver did not acknowledge RP. Patrol checked on driver's status.

Vandalism, Clementia Park: Vandalism founded while on patrol. Bulletin board slashed by Clementia bathrooms. RMA maintenance notified.

### Oct. 9

Gate arm incident, Ventana: Golf cart collision at the Lago outbound lane gate arm. Patrol made contact with driver to inform of damages. Resident acknowledged and took responsibility.

### Oct. 13

Burglary/vandalism, Alameda Drive: Owner of Gibson Golf reported he had video footage of vandalism. Owner stated damages in upwards of \$10,000. Patrol responded to reporting party's home to take report.

### Oct. 16

Miscellaneous, Murieta Drive: Vehicle parked at Murieta Plaza in early morning hours. Patrol approached vehicle, driver resting.

### Oct. 17

Animal complaint, Colbert Drive: Barking dog complaint; two dogs barking for three hours. Patrol responded confirming barking dogs at address, no one home. Dispatch called and left a voicemail informing of complaint.

Citation, Camino Del Sol: Parking violation, resident parked in guest parking. Citation issued.

### Oct. 19

Animal complaint, Murieta Parkway: Report of dog bite; neighbor's dog bit reporting party's son; child was taken to urgent

care. Patrol followed up and spoke to reporting party, giving Animal Control and Sacramento Sheriff's department contact number to report incident.

### Oct. 20

Alarm, Hernandez Square: Patrol came across house in Murieta Village with an audible alarm going off inside. Exterior inspection secure, no signs of forced entry. Dispatch to follow up next day with Murieta Village office to inform of bad smoke alarm.

### Oct. 22

Citation, Cazador 1 Park: RMA rule violation, resident parked in guest parking overnight. Citation issued.

### Oct. 23

Citation, Murieta South Parkway: RMA rule violation, resident parked on street overnight. Citation issued.

### Oct. 24

RMA rule violation, Guadalupe Drive: Resident parked overnight in street in front of home. Citation

issued.

Citation, Colbert Drive: RMA rule violation, resident parked overnight on street. Citation issued.

### Oct. 25

Welfare check, Medella Circle: Welfare check requested due to family unable to reach resident. Patrol responded with no answer at front door. Home was secure with no signs of suspicious activity, dispatch informed.

### Oct. 27

Juvenile delinquency, Murieta Drive: Murieta Inn & Spa contacted security due to four juveniles causing a disturbance. Patrol responded and cleared area, unable to locate juveniles.

### Oct. 28

Stolen vehicle, Murieta Drive: Report of golf cart stolen at Bel Air parking lot. Reporting party contacted Sacramento Sheriff's department. Golf cart found parked hours later by Yellow Bridge.

Citation, Guadalupe Drive: RMA rule violation, resident parked overnight

on street. Citation issued.

Citation, Lago Drive: RMA rule violation, unauthorized vehicle without 24-hour pass. Citation issued.

### Oct. 29

RMA rule violation, Terreno Drive: Resident parked overnight in street in front of home. Citation issued.

RMA rule violation, Anillo Way: Resident parked overnight in street in front of home. Citation issued. d.

RMA rule violation, Oso: Resident parked overnight on street in front of home. Citation issued.

### Oct. 30

Suspicious activity, Murieta Drive: A vehicle with trailer attached, occupied by two subjects, attempted to enter the community via North Gate resident lanes by trying to scan a handheld code from paper. Vehicle backed out of lane and left outbound toward Chevron gas station. Patrol approached vehicle at gas station, and subjects left area westbound on Jackson Road. ★

# Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Marks 10 Years

California Department of Water Resources News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)**

- Sept. 16 marked the 10th anniversary of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), a landmark law that is driving reductions in the overuse of groundwater, protecting drinking water supplies, and making communities, agriculture and ecosystems more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act was signed into law on Sept. 16, 2014, midway through the historic 2012-2016 drought. Driven by the need to address declining groundwater supplies, the law created a state-wide framework to protect this critical resource in California, which provides 41 percent of the state's total supply in a normal year and up to 60 percent during droughts. About 85 percent of Californians rely on groundwater for some portion of their water needs.

In the 10 years since its passage, remarkable accomplishments have been achieved under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act:

More than 250 local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) have been formed to protect drinking water wells, reduce land sinking and improve groundwater supplies.

These Groundwater Sustainability Agencies are implementing over 100 Groundwater Sustainability Plans, using creative solutions like recharging groundwater supplies, limiting usage, and other

management actions that will help create a resilient and sustainable water supply for California.

California is now collecting more groundwater data than ever before, providing a better understanding of groundwater conditions and ultimately leading to better management decisions.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act has raised public awareness about the importance of protecting groundwater and has encouraged more cooperative management efforts.

Water supply reliability is improving with efforts to recharge groundwater. In 2023 alone, 4.1 million acre-feet of water were added to underground aquifers through managed efforts.

The State has invested nearly \$1 billion in the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in 10 years, including more than \$100 million through the Department of Water Resources for local groundwater recharge projects.

"It has been impressive to see that through the tireless efforts of local groundwater sustainability agencies, every ambitious SGMA milestone has been met so far," said Paul Gosselin, Department of Water Resources (DWR) Deputy Director of Sustainable Water Management. "A foundational part of SGMA is that groundwater is best managed locally, by the people that know their groundwater basins and depend on the resource. As a result, over 95 percent of groundwater pumping is subject to a locally adopted, enforceable groundwater



California Department of Water Resources employee Katy Janes, Groundwater hydrogeologist in the Geology and Groundwater Investigations Section of the Division of Regional Assistance North Central Region Office, installs new telemetry equipment in groundwater monitoring wells in Colusa County on July 24. Photo courtesy of California Department of Water Resources

sustainability plan."

The State's goal is to help Groundwater Sustainability Agencies reach sustainable groundwater conditions in their basins while maintaining local control, for the benefit of sustainable agriculture, drinking water supplies, and healthy ecosystems.

Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, local agencies are responsible for the sustainable management of their groundwater basins. However, state agencies – namely the Department of Water Resources and State Water Board – are responsible for ensuring local groundwater management achieves the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act's goals.

The Department of Water Resources is the primary technical assistance and oversight agency responsible for assessing and evaluating basin compliance with the

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The State Water Board acts as the state "backstop" and will temporarily intervene in the management of a groundwater basin when the Department of Water Resources determines that the basin is not in compliance, working with local agencies to resolve failures and end state intervention.

"Improving groundwater management practices to achieve sustainable aquifers is essential for the future of California and the ability of agriculture to continue food production in a hotter, drier future," said Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture. "The State of California has made significant investments to support local authorities with financial investments, policy development to accelerate groundwater recharge, sharing of data and technical assistance to chart a pathway forward

to successfully implement this historic law."

"Ten years ago, when SGMA became law, all of us took on the responsibility of bringing about sustainable management of our groundwater basins for the benefit of everyone who relies on them," said Joaquin Esquivel, board chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. "A lot of progress has happened since then to meet this challenge, and we have more work to do to achieve sustainability for California's groundwater basins."

The next 10 years of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act will focus on implementing the plans developed so far. Projects and decisions aim to bring California's groundwater basins to sustainable conditions by the early 2040s. Weather extremes, especially drought, make this work even more critical, as the state must store and capture as much water as

possible during wet years.

To celebrate this milestone anniversary, the Department of Water Resources will host an event on Nov. 18.

Featured speakers and panelists will include Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth, and Department of Water Resources Deputy Director of Sustainable Water Management Paul Gosselin, as well as representatives from Groundwater Sustainability Agencies, community organizations, state leaders and others in the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act community.

More information will be announced soon.

For updates from the Department of Water Resources, visit <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CNRA/signup/30770> and select the 'Sustainable Groundwater Management' topic. ★

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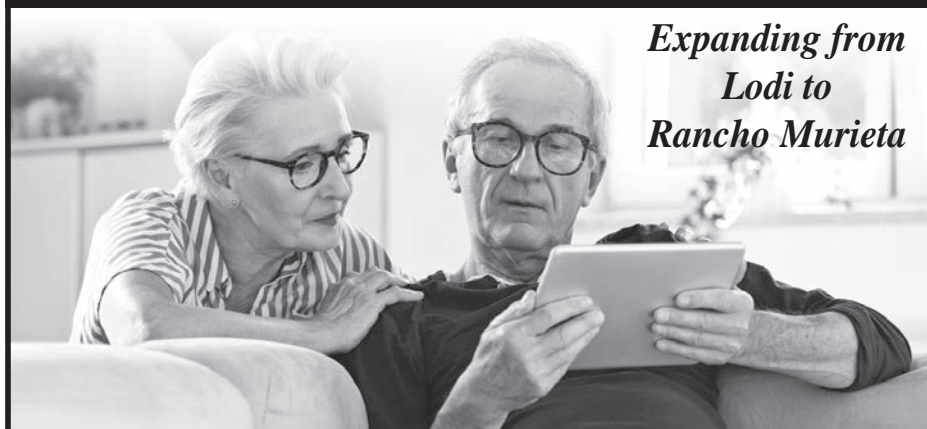
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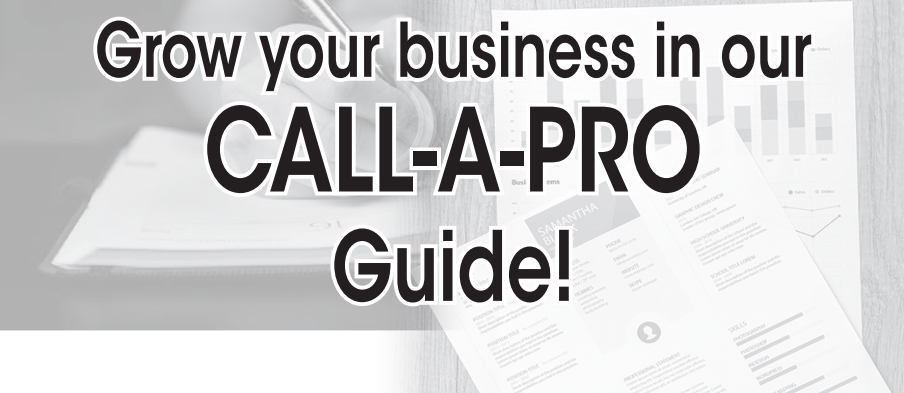


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# Bacterial Pneumonia Increasing in Children

## UC Davis Health News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Cases of pneumonia caused by the bacteria *Mycoplasma*, also known as "walking pneumonia," have been on the rise this year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The agency reports an increase among all age groups across the United States from March 31 to Oct. 5 of this year, with the peak in August, and levels remain high. The data come from the National Syndromic Surveillance Program and bioMérieux BIOFIRE Syndromic Trends.

Young children, particularly those ages 2 to 4, have been most affected this year, with an increase from 1% to 7.2% among children ages 2 to 4. Children ages 5 to 17 also

saw an increase from 3.6% to 7.4%.

Dean Blumberg, chief of pediatric infectious diseases at UC Davis Children's Hospital, answered some questions about walking pneumonia and what parents and families can do to keep their children healthy. His comments follow below.

### What is Mycoplasma Pneumonia?

"Pneumonia from *Mycoplasma*, also known by the nonmedical term 'walking pneumonia,' is caused by the bacteria *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, which causes a respiratory tract infection.

These can be mild infections which, most often, do not require hospitalization, but for some, they can be severe and require antibiotics to get better. Both children and adults can get pneumonia from *Mycoplasma*."

### What are the Common Symptoms?

"Common symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, headache and feeling tired.

It's often called "walking pneumonia" since some people don't feel sick enough to stay home but they are still contagious and can spread the disease to others. Complications can occur that require hospital care, including new or worsening asthma, severe pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

Children under 5 often have different symptoms, including diarrhea, sneezing, sore throat, stuffy or runny nose, vomiting, watery eyes and wheezing. Symptoms typically last for several weeks.

Some infected people may have no symptoms but it can still damage the lining of the respiratory tract,

including the throat, windpipe and lungs."

### How is it Spread?

"It can spread person-to-person through the respiratory route, particularly when people are coughing or sneezing. People who live or work in crowded settings are at an increased risk for outbreaks.

It can take one to four weeks for symptoms to appear after someone has been exposed to the bacteria."

### Who is at Highest Risk for This?

"Anyone is susceptible but those recovering from a respiratory illness are at an increased risk for serious infection. Anyone with a weakened immune system or with preexisting lung conditions such as asthma or reactive airway disease are also at greater risk for serious infection."

### Is There a Vaccine Available?

"No, unfortunately there is no vaccine."

### How is it Diagnosed?

"Testing is available through a nose or throat swab PCR test at your doctor's office."

### How is This Treated?

"Macrolides (such as azithromycin) are a class of antibiotics used commonly to treat bacterial pneumonia including infections caused by *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*.

Make sure to take the full course of antibiotics and don't stop when you start feeling better."

### What are to Keep Families Safe?

"I think a lot of families may not have heard of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* or know that it is going around. I would advise families to follow these

common-sense strategies:

Stay home when you are feeling sick. Keep your children away from others if they are not feeling well.

Cover your cough and sneeze and teach your kids to use their batwing to cover their cough or sneeze.

Wear a well-fitted KN95 or N95 mask if you feel sick and need to be out in public or if you are in crowded settings with others.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children ages 2 and older can safely wear a mask. But the exception is for anyone who cannot easily remove their own mask or who has trouble breathing.

Those who get worsening symptoms, have difficulty breathing or are unable to keep liquids down, should seek medical attention immediately." ★

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# Automated Evacuation Gates Get Forum

Continued from page 1

representatives would be at the town hall.

## Opposing views

Pryor and the RMA representatives elaborated on their positions in recent interviews.

Pryor argued that RMA could be held liable if the remote gates aren't opened immediately. "In my 49 years in fire and rescue, assigning first responders to locate gates they are not aware of an unlocking them with a key creates a huge potential for delay and lives lost," he said. That is an unacceptable risk."

In contrast, RMA general manager Rod Hart emphasized the board's priority on community health and safety. "Without some safeguards there, you could destroy the entire exit," he stated. "All it takes is one scared person who doesn't see the truck that is going 75 mph (and crashes). Now the first responders can't get in, and the evacuees can't get out."

The upcoming presentation on remote gate automation follows an online workshop organized by Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost on Sept. 16. Attendees included Adam House, chief of the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District, other Sac Metro Fire officials, Assistant Sheriff Matt Peterson, MaryJo Flynn, Chief of the Sacramento Office of Emergency Services, high-ranking representatives from county planning, the department of transportation, the county counsel's office, Pryor and other members of the fire safe council, as well as RMA representatives Hart and board member Patrick O'Hern. Although invited, Brian Maynard, Commander of the California Highway Patrol's east Sacramento office, did not attend.

The River Valley Times was not invited. However, Denisa Martian, Frost's chief of staff, prepared 11 pages of meeting minutes, which she made available one month after the meeting. Martian has offered to email a copy to any resident who requests them at [SupervisorFrost@Saccounty.gov](mailto:SupervisorFrost@Saccounty.gov).

## Stakeholder meeting

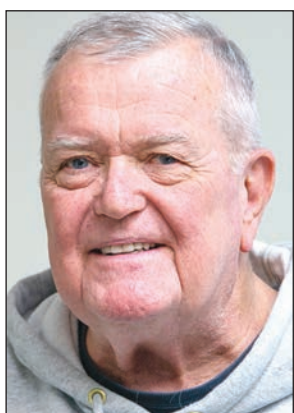
Frost began the meeting by emphasizing the importance of addressing the remote gates as a critical component of Rancho Murieta's emergency



**Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost:** "It is the community that needs to put in the gates or not."



**RMA General Manager Rod Hart:** "Without some safeguards there, you could destroy the entire exit."



**RMA board member Patrick O'Hern:** "If some people turn left and some people right, you are going to block the highway, and that is even without an accident."



**Greg Pryor, Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council:** "What we are looking at is that humans are locked in until someone can get there to unlock them."

evacuation plan, noting they hadn't yet been adequately resolved. "The goal is to adequately articulate the problem and then have the conversation on how to resolve it and get the work agreed on and completed," she said.

Frost added, "If people cannot get out of the gates fast enough, the state and county roads being studied and upgraded may not matter."

Pryor highlighted the urgency of the situation, explaining that a wildland fire driven by 30-MPH wind gusts could quickly spread embers into the community, causing a structure-to-structure fire that could move from north to south within 30 to 60 minutes.

Traffic engineer John Long added, that even under ideal conditions, evacuating from the gates would take an hour and a half or longer to evacuate with emergency conditions likely extending that time significantly.

Pryor also noted that although RMA and Sac Metro agreed to install Knox locks on the gates as an interim solution in 2021, these were intended only to provide entry for fire trucks, not for evacuation. Relying on a first responder to unlock the gates could take five to 20 minutes or more, adding to potential delays.

Transportation representative Cameron Shew

reported that obtaining a permit for Stonehouse Road to allow an incident commander to open Escuela Gate in an emergency would be straightforward. Caltrans confirmed that the Bent Grass Court gates are not in the state's right of way, allowing for immediate automation for emergency evacuation purposes.

RMA General Manager Rod Hart emphasized the board's stance that a first responder should be present before opening the gates.

Pryor countered that leaving the gates closed posed a greater risk than a potential accident. According to the meeting minutes, automation would enable immediate gate opening upon the incident commander's request.

RMA Director Patrick O'Hern, with 25 years of law enforcement experience primarily in traffic, expressed concerns about potential bottlenecks, foreseeing congestion if residents were entering and exiting through the gate within a short period. "Infrastructure work is needed for these cars to have a way out," he noted.

Hart clarified that funding was not a barrier. "The board feels no automation is best," he stated. "Some board members are concerned about traffic safety associated with automated gates and the absence of a person to manage traffic."



A Knox lock that can be opened by first responders secures the second gate at the end of Bent Grass Court. Photos by Gail Bullen

Sac Metro Deputy Chief Adam Mitchell said automated gates wouldn't blocked ingress and egress for emergency vehicles "and fire responders will get to intersections as soon as possible to perform traffic control."

Frost expressed her own concerns about evacuation delays if a fire were to sweep through Rancho Murieta. "She said she didn't want to retire without knowing that she had done everything she could to make Rancho Murieta as safe as possible," according to the minutes.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Frost noted that the stakeholder agencies had agreed, "It is the community that needs to put in the gates or not." Regarding automation, she added, "It is the position of the RMRFSC (fire safe council) and Supervisor Frost that the community, RMA, is responsible for the gates."

One point not discussed at the meeting is that residents unable to evacuate would have an alternative: sheltering in one of the community's green belts, similar to what was done during the Santa Rosa fire. Sac Metro officials and Pryor have confirmed this option at previous meetings. "We always default to sheltering in place if evacuation is no longer a safe option," Pryor explained.

## Interviews

The River Valley Times interviewed Hart, O'Hern, and Pryor before writing this story, and John Long provided a script of his presentation at the stakeholders' meeting. Alongside his concerns about evacuation times within the gates, Long noted that bottlenecks on Highway 16 could also impede evacuation. (Thanks to efforts by Long and Supervisor Frost, Caltrans awarded the county transportation department \$400,000 to study solutions to these

bottlenecks.)

Hart expressed frustration with Pryor's claim that RMA isn't concerned about liability, stressing that, as fiduciaries to the community, they are. "The only thing that could be possibly more important than that is the health and safety of the members we serve," he said. "Automated gates create a hazard for our members exiting on a highway that has never been exited upon before...For people pulling out on the highway, there is a very good possibility of somebody getting hit and killed or at least severely injured."

O'Hern pointed out that, in past emergencies, people who feel endangered tend to use both the entrance and exit lanes when driving through a gate. "So now you have completely blocked the entrance," he said. "If some people turn left and some people right, you are going to block the highway, and that is even without an accident."

Hart voiced concerns about the potential chaos if the gates are opened immediately without oversight. "The first responders are stuck with a mess that they can't change," he said.

Both Hart and O'Hern believe that any delays caused by requiring first responders to open the gates would be minimal. "If it is bad enough that we're calling for an evacuation, the emergency response people already are on-site," Hart noted.

Once first responders arrive in the community, their top priority would be to facilitate an orderly evacuation, O'Hern added.

Hart argued that the risk of a brief delay would be far less dangerous than a scenario where the gate either fails to open or creates a hazard that blocks traffic entirely.

Hart and O'Hern also cited factors that could prevent an automatic gate from functioning, including power outages, downed

cell towers, dead batteries, or mechanical issues—none of which would be an issue with a person present to manage the gates. Hart also remarked that automatic systems could lead to a false sense of security.

Hart acknowledged the valuable contributions of the fire safe council, such as achieving the Fire Wise Community designation. (With assistance from Frost, the council also secured a \$4.5 million Cal Fire grant for fuel reduction intended to prevent wildland fires from spreading into the community and was instrumental in the Caltrans grant.)

"There is a difference of opinion on how people exit out of here," Hart said. "They would like to see it without a human element, and we contend that the safest way is for the human element to be there."

Pryor expressed frustration with the RMA stance. "It would be vastly safer to automate the gates, allowing residents to exit freely while a first responder eventually locates the gates and performs traffic control," he said. "Keeping Rancho Murieta drivers locked in because one might have an accident is a fundamental assault on their intelligence and decision-making abilities."

Pryor also noted that no emergency officials raised objections after he advocated for gate automation at the stakeholder meeting, adding that gate technology is 99% reliable. He supported O'Hern's suggestion to make infrastructure improvements at the remote gates but emphasized that these plans should not delay automation.

"Keeping people locked in is not the way to do things," he stated.

In closing, Pryor reiterated a point he made at the stakeholder meeting:

"While automating the gates might not be a perfect plan, it is the best damn plan we have." ★

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# Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



What a difference a week makes. Entering last week, the Sacramento Kings had lost all of their preseason games, and the first two games of the regular season.

Enter the Portland Trailblazers on Oct. 28 and the home crowd was treated to what everyone had envisioned the new and improved Sacramento Kings would look like.

DeMar DeRozan carved up the defensive of the Trailblazers along with point guard DeAaron Fox for 23 and 24 points respectively, but the real key was the way DeRozan got to his spots and made his mid-range game look easy.

Combined with the lightning quickness of Fox, this tandem poses a threat to opposing defenses every night, and other teams had better bring their "A" game when they come to Sac Town.

Finally breaking into the win column and lighting the beam for the first time in the 2024/2025 campaign, lifted a heavy weight off the shoulders of the Kings players and fans alike, but the week was not over. Convincing victories on the road over Utah and the Atlanta Hawks gave the Kings a three-game winning streak and lifted the team over 500.

DeRozan looked like a natural fit as the Kings made victories over the Jazz and Hawks look pedestrian, and had the Kings been able to shoot a little better from the charity stripe, it's entirely possible the overtime loss to the Toronto Raptors could have been the Kings 4th win in a row.

Sacramento will wrap up their road trip Monday night against the formidable Miami Heat (after press time), but it's obvious that some of the swagger has returned to the team.

I'm impressed with DeMar DeRozan in nearly every facet of his game, and like Malik Monk, DeRozan will be an asset and a role model as it relates to free throw shooting. An 84% career free throw shooter, DeMar has proven his reliability at the charity strip, and with the Kings coming off the 2023/2024 campaign in the cellar of the NBA in free throw shooting, adding a 6-time all-star that can shoot free throws at a consistently high level, is just

what the doctor ordered for the Kings.

Big man and double-double king Domantas Sabonis, like Fox, has struggled in the past from the free throw line, but has looked better so far this season, and has raised his average. It's still early, but if both Fox and Sabonis can get to 80% or better at the line consistently, look for Sacramento to be lighting the beam with increased regularity.

At 3-3 the Kings may not have a gawdy win-loss record, but the last four games have given all the fans a positive look at what the season can look like.

Although DeRozan has already shown he can connect from long range when called upon, he consistently passes up 3-point opportunities for mid-range looks, and he is deadly from the 10 to 15-foot range. DeMar looks so comfortable in mid-range, his stroke is almost effortless, and with that kind of confidence, he poses a serious late game option to go along with Fox and Sabonis.

Shout out to Kevin Huerter who after a subpar start in game one, has returned to what fans have expected to see, and once again, Huerter has shown his acumen both beyond the 3-point line, and driving to the hoop.

Huerter's defense has taken a step forward as well, so we'll give some attaboys to coach Brown for putting Huerter back in the starting lineup and sticking with him. If we can keep Kevin off the injury list, the 2024/2025 season could be a breakout year for a popular player with a big upside.

More than anything, the recent wins, particularly on the road, are spurring a higher volume of optimism, and look for an already loud arena to get even louder.

For any naysayers that felt it would take a long time for newcomer DeMar DeRozan to fit in, he is well ahead of schedule, and the way he and Fox are sharing the ball is a pleasure to watch.

Stay tuned Kings fans. This is what you've been waiting for, and the best is yet to come!

All the best!  
Your thoughts are always welcome at [vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com](mailto:vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com). ★

# Sac State Tennis Trio Heading to Championships



Sac State sophomore Irene Riva was Big Sky Player of the Week twice in 2024. Photos courtesy of Sac State Athletics



Redshirt sophomore Lou Baudouin will represent Sac State and the Big Sky conference at the ITA Championships.



Sac State senior Maddy Ferreros is part of the doubles tandem heading to the 2024 ITA Conference Masters Championships.

## Sacramento State University Athletics News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA, (MPG)** - Sacramento State sophomore Lou Baudouin in singles and the doubles tandem of senior Maddy Ferreros and sophomore Irene Riva have been selected to represent the Big Sky Conference at the 2024 ITA Conference Masters Championships on Nov. 7-10, in Rome, Ga.

The Hornets' trio was selected by a vote of the conference's head coaches following a round of nominations. Coaches could not vote for their own players.

Each Division I conference will send one singles player and one doubles team to the event to played at the Rome Tennis Center, with the four singles semifinalists and top three doubles teams qualifying for the NCAA Division I Individual Championships hosted by Baylor in Waco, Texas, on Nov. 19-24.

Ferreros and Riva wrapped up the 2024 spring season with a 16-4 record at the No. 2 spot in

the Hornets' line up, earning All-Big Sky second team honors in doubles while helping Sacramento State to their first Big Sky Conference regular season and tournament titles since 2012. The 16 wins together were tied for seventh on the school's single-season list.

This fall, the duo were additions to the field at the prestigious Battle in the Bay Classic, which featured student-athletes from 16 of the nation's preseason top 75 schools — including six of the top 10 and two more in the top 25.

They battled the duo of Mila Mulready and Ozlem Uslu from Virginia Tech in the opening round, then drew the No. 36 team in the nation in USC's Emma Charney and Imogen Haddad in the consolation round.

A month later, the duo advanced to the round of 16 at the ITA Northwest Regionals in Berkeley, Calif., posting wins over teams from SeattleU and Santa Clara in the main draw's opening two rounds

before falling to the tournament's No. 5-seeded duo from California.

Baudouin finished her first collegiate season with an 18-6 singles record in the spring of 2024, playing at least one match at every spot in the lineup except for No. 1 and won eight of her 10 contests at the No. 3 spot. She was an All-Big Sky second team selection in both singles and doubles, opening her career with eight consecutive singles victories, while her 18 singles wins overall were tied for 15th on the school's single-season list.

This fall, Baudouin finished 3-1 at the Cal Fall Invitational, posting singles wins over opponents from San Jose State, Nevada, and Pacific, while going 2-2 in doubles. She also reached the main draw round of 16 at the ITA Northwest Regionals alongside partner Palina Saulevich, posting wins over teams from Pacific and UC Davis before falling to Washington State's Hania Abouelsaad and Martina Markov in a tie-breaker, 8-7 (5). ★

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# The Capital SouthEast Connector: A Lifeline for Public Safety and Emergency Response

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



Imagine driving on a partially flooded roadway, where last year, drivers in southern Sacramento County experienced this life-threatening situation firsthand as floodwaters engulfed their cars. Or fleeing a fast-moving wildfire, as hundreds of others did, bottlenecked on narrow two-lane roads with little to no shoulders, while emergency responders struggled to reach them.

These scenarios are not hypothetical. They continue to occur in southern Sacramento County, where existing roads—designed decades ago for far fewer residents—now represent a clear danger. Last year,

Sacramento Metro Fire reported performing over 30 flood rescues along area roads due to poorly designed drainage systems.

When fully built,

the Capital SouthEast Connector will solve those problems in southern Sacramento County. This modern roadway will connect I-5 and Hwy 99 near Elk Grove to Hwy 50 in Folsom and the El Dorado Hills, providing a safer and more reliable transportation network.

As our region faces the dual dangers of summer wildfires and winter storm flooding, the importance of this project becomes even more evident. Roadways play a huge role in the safety and well-being of our community. The Connector is designed to ease traffic congestion while forming part of a resilient transportation network that

protects lives, enables swift emergency responses, and ensures safe evacuations during disasters.

Sheriff Jim Cooper emphasized the critical need for quicker response times in emergencies: “It’s a safety issue for our motoring public and also for your first responders. We’ve got to get there to service those people, and those minutes are critical. Time is of the essence.”

Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District Assistant Chief John Rudnicki echoed this concern, noting the importance of the Connector’s Grant Line Road improvements: “When we look at the number of fatalities and incidents that have affected this roadway, we can clearly see why it is so crucial to make this improvement an engineered solution to prevent future problems.”

Every second counts in an emergency. Whether it is a medical crisis, a fire, or a flood, first responders need reliable, safe,

and efficient routes to reach people in need. The Capital SouthEast Connector will be a crucial thoroughfare for emergency vehicles, reducing response times and ensuring that help arrives as quickly as possible.

*“When we look at the number of fatalities and incidents that have affected this roadway, we can clearly see why it is so crucial to make this improvement an engineered solution to prevent future problems.”*

Beyond day-to-day emergencies, the Connector will play a pivotal role in regional emergency preparedness. During disasters like wildfires, its wide lanes and better access will allow

for smoother evacuations and faster movement of emergency personnel and heavy equipment. Rudnicki recalled the devastating Camp Fire in Paradise, where poor road access severely hindered evacuation efforts. “On a roadway, we’re worried about the smoke, we’re worried about the shoulder. How do you turn your vehicle around if the road is narrowing from four lanes down to two and there’s nowhere to go?” he asked.

Winter brings its own set of challenges, with flooding posing a significant danger to residents and first responders in southern Sacramento County. As Cooper noted, drivers often misjudge the depth of floodwaters or fail to see warning signs, trapping themselves in dangerous situations. The Connector’s design will address these issues with improved drainage systems and clearer signage, ensuring that emergency vehicles can navigate the region safely, regardless

of weather conditions. This project has been a long time coming, but it is now gaining real momentum thanks to recent federal support. “It’s been going on for a long time... trickle here, trickle there, and never a lot of money,”

Cooper reflected, adding, “Finally, we get a lot of money.” This much-needed funding will allow us to address the most dangerous stretches of road and create a safer, more resilient network for all.

The Capital SouthEast Connector is not just a transportation project; it is a lifeline for our community. By building a roadway that can withstand the challenges of flooding and wildfires, we are ensuring that our residents remain safe and connected—no matter what challenges lie ahead.

*Derek Minnema is a civil engineer, and the chief executive leading the Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority.* ★

## What Everybody Ought to Know...

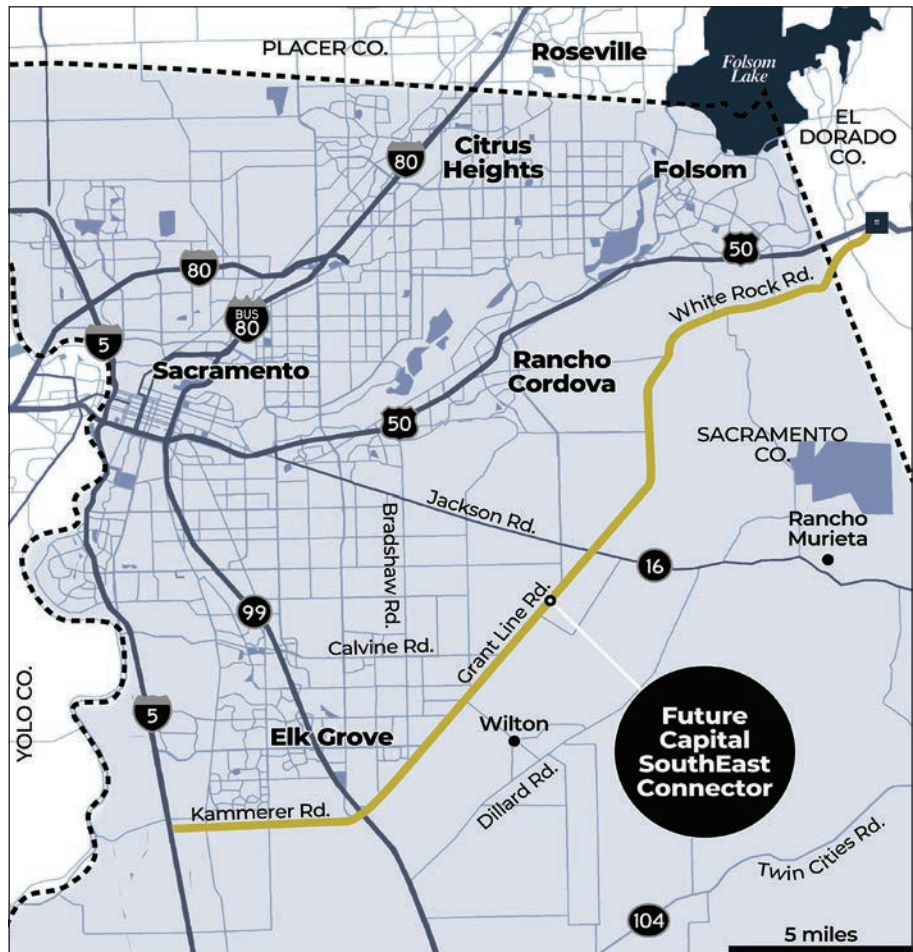
# About Transportation and Traffic in Sacramento County

### 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. We hope to change that through a series of ads. The ads 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)**

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Map showing the location of the future Capital SouthEast Connector

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

**A** The planned Connector is an expressway that will link Interstate 5 and Highway 99 near Elk Grove to Highway 50 in El Dorado County. The new expressway will relieve congestion by directing commuter and commercial traffic around the city on a safe expressway. Travelers to and from areas south of Sacramento will no longer need to go through the city to get to their destinations. The Capital SouthEast Connector Expressway also features a parallel bike and pedestrian trail.

**Q** Who will benefit from the SouthEast Connector Expressway when completed?

**A** The entire region will benefit from reduced congestion on area highways, particularly Hwy 50, and from fewer toxic fumes spewing from thousands of vehicles stuck in traffic. Southeastern Sacramento County residents will have a safe new route to avoid Hwy 50 congestion and bypass downtown traffic. Businesses, companies, farmers, and ranchers will also be able to receive supplies and send products to market

more safely and quickly. Most importantly, the modernized roadway will be safe to travel, unlike current conditions that endanger lives.

**Q** Who approved building the SouthEast Connector Expressway?

**A** In 2004, by a 3-1 margin, voters agreed to tax themselves for 30 years for transportation maintenance, road improvements, mass transit, mobility for seniors and people with disabilities, and specifically to construct a new expressway connecting I-5 and Hwy 99 in the Elk Grove area to Hwy 50 in El Dorado County, now known as the Capital SouthEast Connector. Since the vote, the tax has generated about \$2 billion. To date, the Capital SouthEast Connector has received about \$58 million of those funds, which were paired with federal and state funds to complete 11 miles of the 34-mile project.

**Q** Where have the transportation tax funds not allocated to the Capital SouthEast Connector been used?

**A** The transportation sales tax funds are allocated according to a formula voters approved when they approved the tax. The largest single

recipient of the funds since the tax began is the Regional Transit Authority (38%, amounting to \$709 million) for operating and maintaining light rail and bus services; and providing transportation options to seniors and individuals with disabilities. Street and road maintenance projects have received 29.4%, amounting to \$545.5 million. Overall, capital improvement projects have received 20.4%, amounting to \$377.4 million. The rest of the funds went to smaller projects, and less than ¼ of one percent is spent on program administration.

**Q** What has the Sacramento Area Council of Governments’ role been in the Capital SouthEast Connector’s construction.

**A** The Capital SouthEast Connector is part of the “Sacramento Blueprint,” adopted over 20 years ago by SACOG’s board of directors and still consulted today. The Blueprint’s goal is to integrate land use and transportation planning to improve the region’s quality of life. It was SACOG’s idea to create the Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority to manage the design and construction of the expressway. Over the years, SACOG

has been mostly supportive of efforts to advance the project, but in 2016 the organization decided to remove a portion of the Connector in its MTP update, introducing notable funding challenges for the project. More recently, SACOG determined that constructing a segment of the project was the region’s number one transportation priority, greatly enhancing a successful project application for federal funding.

**Q** What environmental impacts will the SouthEast Connector Expressway create, and how will they be mitigated?

**A** Like any road project, the Capital SouthEast Connector will affect the environment during and after construction, but all federal, state, and local regulations to protect the environment are being followed. After construction, the environment will be greatly enhanced due to a design that controls and channels damaging groundwater that currently floods the roadway and adjacent lands. The Connector Joint Powers Authority is a member of the South Sacramento Conservation Agency (SCCA) that oversees compliance with the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan and its rules for road construction. The Connector project has obtained environmental permits and has also agreed

to purchase lands to replace impacted agricultural land or vernal pools in accordance with the conservation plan’s vision.

**Q** How will the Capital SouthEast Connector affect bike and pedestrian traffic in the area?

**A** Bicyclists and pedestrians who currently face grave danger will be able to avoid traffic entirely by using a paved, Class 1 bike trail that will be built separate from the expressway along its entire length. The bike trail is designed to enable residents to walk or ride their bikes to visit friends in neighboring communities; or peddle to work, local restaurants, stores, parks, and entertainment venues; or simply to exercise and enjoy the outdoors.

**Q** How can residents support construction of the Capital SouthEast Connector?

**A** Your support is vital to our successfully applying for funds to complete the project. Telling your local, state, and federal elected representatives that you support the project is very helpful. You can also learn more about the project or sign up for our newsletter on our website at [www.connectorjpa.com](http://www.connectorjpa.com). Alternatively, you can use the QR code on this page, visit our Instagram page at [www.instagram.com/connectorjpa](https://www.instagram.com/connectorjpa) or our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/@SouthEastconnectorexpressway](https://www.youtube.com/@SouthEastconnectorexpressway) Please send questions or comments to [ConnectorSupport@sacounty.gov](mailto:ConnectorSupport@sacounty.gov).

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