



One Nation  
Under God

“ I HAVE A DREAM THAT MY FOUR LITTLE CHILDREN WILL ONE DAY LIVE IN A NATION WHERE THEY WILL NOT BE JUDGED BY THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN BUT BY THE CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER. ”

— MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., A TESTAMENT OF HOPE: THE ESSENTIAL WRITINGS AND SPEECHES



# AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

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SEE  
INSIDE

NAVY WEEK  
PROGRAM  
SETS SAIL



PAGE 2

BOARD CONSIDERS  
RELOCATING DISC  
GOLF COURSE



PAGE 5

HORNET NAMED  
GYMNAST OF  
THE WEEK



PAGE 10



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## Honoring the Best of Fair Oaks



From left to right: Carla Hart won for Best Realtor; Rachel Griffith, founder of Connections, won for Best Networking/Social Group and was also named Best Business Person of the Year; Nicole McKane of Chicago Title Company was awarded Best Escrow/Title Company.

Story by Judy Andrews,  
photos by Michelle Massaro

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - The Best of Fair Oaks 2024 winners were announced at the ninth annual gala at North Ridge Country Club on Jan. 16.

Hosted by the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce (FOCC), more than 250 guests turned out to have some fun and celebrate the nominees and winners. Voting to determine first-, second- and third-place winners occurred

online over five weeks in November and December. Close to 17,000 votes were received and tallied through [bestoffairoaks.com](https://bestoffairoaks.com), the most votes ever obtained in the program's history. In total, 425 nominees competed

*Continued on page 3*

## Sacramento Life Center Receives Grant to Support Low-Income Pregnant Women

**Sacramento Life Center News Release**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento Life Center is proud to announce the receipt of a generous \$20,000 grant from The Kelly Foundation to further its mission of supporting low-income pregnant women and families in the Sacramento area. This funding will directly benefit the Life Center's critical "New Moms" program, which provides essential resources, care and support for new mothers during a crucial period of transition.

The "New Moms" program has been a cornerstone of the Sacramento Life Center's services, offering personalized assistance to mothers as they navigate the challenges of pregnancy and early parenthood. The funding from The Kelly Foundation will enable the center to expand its services, providing additional prenatal care, educational resources, parenting support and financial assistance to those in need.

"We are deeply grateful for The Kelly Foundation's support," said Marie Leatherby, Executive Director of the Sacramento Life Center. "This grant will allow us to continue offering life-changing services to the women and



The Sacramento Life Center's mission is to support low-income pregnant women and families in the Sacramento area. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Life Center

families who need them most. Our mission is to ensure that every woman, regardless of her financial situation, has access to the care and resources she deserves during her pregnancy and after the birth of her child." The grant will be used to enhance various aspects of the "New Moms" program, including expanding prenatal and postnatal care services; providing parenting classes, life skills training and mental health support; offering financial aid for baby supplies, medical costs and other critical needs; and connecting new mothers to community resources and

job placement programs. The Sacramento Life Center has been a vital community resource for nearly four decades, helping thousands of women and families through its comprehensive programs. The center provides free medical services, counseling, education and support, empowering women to make informed decisions and build strong families. The Kelly Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting programs that improve the lives of vulnerable populations, has been a longstanding partner in advancing the welfare of families across the region.

Their investment in the "New Moms" program is an extension of their commitment to uplifting communities and empowering individuals to lead healthy, fulfilling lives. For more information about the Sacramento Life Center and how to support its programs, visit <https://saclife.org/> or call them at (916) 451-4357. **About the Sacramento Life Center** The Sacramento Life Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing compassionate care and support to women and families facing unplanned pregnancies. With a focus on low-income individuals, the center offers free medical services, counseling, education, and support to empower women to make informed choices and build stable, healthy families. **About The Kelly Foundation** The Kelly Foundation is a nonprofit organization focused on enhancing the well-being of families and individuals in the Sacramento area. Through grants and community partnerships, the foundation supports initiatives that address social, health, and economic needs, with a particular emphasis on those who are underserved. ★

## Handyperson Exemption Increases to \$1,000



**Assembly Bill 2622**, effective Jan. 1, allows an unlicensed person to complete small projects up to \$1,000 without obtaining a contractor's license. Photo courtesy Pixabay

**Contractors State License Board News Release**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - A new law will raise the threshold for work requiring a contractor's license from \$500 to \$1,000. Assembly Bill 2622 (Carrillo, Chapter 240, Statutes of 2024), effective Jan. 1, allows an unlicensed person to complete small projects up to \$1,000 without obtaining a contractor's license if they do not hire workers and no building permits are needed. If a consumer's project under \$1,000 requires workers or permits, a contractor's license in the appropriate license classification is required. The new law states that a person who is not licensed can advertise for construction work if the total contract price for labor, materials and all other items on a project is less than \$1,000. The \$1,000 includes all costs associated with the project. The advertisement must state that the person is not licensed. As with any home-improvement construction project, Contractors State License Board cautions that a down payment should not exceed 10 percent of the contract price and any subsequent payments should not exceed the value of the work completed or the materials delivered. If an unlicensed person provides a bid greater than \$1,000, performs work requiring a permit or employs any workers, that person is subject to legal action. Penalties for unlicensed contracting include administrative fines of up to \$15,000, jail sentences of up to six months and fines up to \$5,000. Repeat offenders can face a mandatory 90-day jail sentence and a fine of \$5,000 or 20 percent of the contract price, whichever is greater. Contractors State License Board operates under the Department of Consumer Affairs' umbrella and licenses and regulates about 285,000 contractors in California. ★



# A New Chapter for District 4

By District 4 Supervisor  
Rosario Rodriguez

It's official, I am now your Sacramento County District 4 Supervisor! Words can hardly express how honored and grateful I feel to have the opportunity to serve our community. When I decided to run for Supervisor, I didn't begin by reaching out to super-PACs or big donors. Instead, I focused on connecting with real people throughout District 4. I visited neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and community events to listen directly to your challenges, hopes, and priorities. These conversations shaped my campaign and will continue to guide me in office. To me, representation means amplifying the voices of the people, and that starts with truly listening.

As I step into this role, I want to share my top five immediate priorities for District 4 — priorities rooted in the values and concerns you've shared with me.

1. Addressing Homelessness with Real Solutions: Homelessness has touched nearly every corner of our district, from businesses to schools and neighborhoods. The current situation is unacceptable. We need a comprehensive approach that not only addresses the immediate effects on our community but also provides meaningful services to help individuals break free from the cycle of homelessness. This includes funding programs that target root causes like substance abuse and mental health issues, expanding access to supportive housing, and partnering with nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and local governments to create innovative solutions. The time for empty promises is over—it's time to take action.

2. Fighting Crime and Keeping Our Communities Safe: Public safety is essential to any thriving community. As your Supervisor, I will focus on fighting crime and ensuring our neighborhoods are safe places to live, work, and raise families. I will support our District Attorney and Sheriff in cracking down on crime and holding offenders accountable, while also advocating for programs that build trust between law enforcement and the community. Collaboration is key to creating safer neighborhoods for everyone.

3. Improving Roads and Transportation: If you've driven through

District 4, you know how desperately our roads and highways need attention. From potholes to gridlock, our transportation infrastructure has been neglected for far too long. I'll prioritize securing funding to repair and improve our roads and advocate for major projects like completing the Capitol Connector to ease congestion along Highway 50. These improvements will enhance daily life for residents and attract businesses and investors to our region.

4. Supporting Local Businesses and Job Creation: Thriving businesses are the backbone of thriving communities. I'm committed to making it easier for businesses in our district to succeed by cutting red tape, streamlining regulations, and providing the support they need to grow and create jobs. Whether it's a small, family-run business or a larger enterprise, my goal is to foster an environment where entrepreneurs can thrive, employees feel valued, and opportunities are abundant.

5. Engaging with the Community: I believe government works best when it is transparent, accountable, and inclusive. That's why I'm committed to staying connected with you through newsletters, community meetings, and surveys. Your input will shape our decisions and ensure we're addressing the issues that matter most. We'll continue the tradition of quarterly community meetings, with updates to encourage participation and collaboration. Additionally, we're forming citizen advisory committees to focus on pressing issues like homelessness, public safety, and transportation. If you're interested, please join us—we want your voice at the table.

Thank you again for trusting me with this responsibility. I'm excited to get to work and make a real difference for our community. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out. You can call my office at 916-874-5491 or email me at [SupervisorRodriguez@saccounty.gov](mailto:SupervisorRodriguez@saccounty.gov). I look forward to working with you to make District 4 the best it can be.

Let's get started!  
*Sacramento County Supervisor Rosario Rodriguez represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta and Rancho Murietta.* ★

# Navy Week Program Sets Sail for Sacramento

By Lt. Josh Keim,  
U.S. Navy,  
Navy Office of  
Community Outreach

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - The U.S. Navy's Navy Week Sacramento takes place March 17 to March 23. As part of a nationwide outreach effort, Sacramento Navy Week will bring 50 to 75 sailors to engage directly with the community through a week-long series of performances, educational events and service projects.

This year's Sacramento Navy Week holds special significance as it coincides with the U.S. Navy's 250th birthday, a historic milestone celebrating a quarter-millennium of maritime excellence, national security and global leadership.

"America is a maritime nation and 90% of commerce travels through the seas that the Navy has protected for 250 years," said Cmdr. Julie Holland, Navy Office of Community Outreach director. "We're thrilled to bring your Navy sailors to Sacramento. Though America's Navy operates the world's most sophisticated weapons systems, it is our highly skilled people at sea and ashore who provide an unmatched advantage. At Navy Weeks, Americans connect with sailors who have tremendous character, competence and dedication to the mission and who continue a tradition of decisive power from seabed to space."

Sacramento hosted four previous Navy Weeks, most recently in 2018.

This year promises an impressive lineup designed to inform, educate and inspire the Sacramento



As part of Navy Week, sailors will engage with the Sacramento community through educational events and service projects. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Navy



The U.S. Navy's Navy Week Sacramento on March 17 to March 23 will bring 50 to 75 sailors to engage directly with residents through a week-long series of performances, educational events and service projects. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Navy

community. Meet and hear from senior Navy officials, including those with local ties to Sacramento.

Interact with sailors serving aboard the USS California (SSN 781), a Virginia-class submarine.

Enjoy live musical performances and masterclasses led by talented Navy musicians in the U.S. Navy Band Southwest.

Explore the rich connection between Sacramento and the Navy through interactive presentations and educational programs.

Witness demonstrations featuring the Navy's oldest commissioned ship, the USS Constitution, and its enduring legacy.

Engage in STEM-focused sessions highlighting oceanographic and atmospheric

science with the U.S. Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command.

Discover opportunities within the Navy through community projects, displays and career discussions.

Navy Weeks bring the Navy to regions without a major naval presence, fostering connections and showcasing how the Navy's mission ensures the security, prosperity and freedom of our nation. The Navy Week program has visited more than 95 U.S. markets since the program's inception in 2005.

For more details on Sacramento Navy Week, visit <https://outreach.navy.mil/navy-weeks>. Follow Navy Outreach on social media: Instagram (@navy.outreach), Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn (@navyoutreach) and #NavyWeek. ★

## San Juan Board of Education Welcomes New Members

*Avey Becomes President*



The San Juan Unified School District Board of Education held a ceremony Dec. 17 to welcome new and returning members. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District

### San Juan Unified School District News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - San Juan Unified held a special ceremony Dec. 17 to welcome new and returning members to the Board of Education.

Pam Costa (Area 2) started her fourth term, while Nick Bloise (Area 4) and Abid Stanekzai (Area 1) joined the board for the first time.

At the meeting, Ben Avey (Area 6) was chosen as president for 2025. Tanya Kravchuk (Area 5) was selected as vice-president and Manuel Perez (Area 7) will be the clerk.

Bloise lives in Carmichael and has lived in Sacramento County his whole life. He served more than 23 years in the

U.S. Army and retired as a major. Bloise enjoys helping his community by serving on local boards and running a small genealogy business.

Stanekzai works hard to support the community. Since 2021, he has helped run programs that improve lives and bring people together. Stanekzai has three children who go to Greer Elementary School, where he has been an active parent.

Costa has served on the San Juan Unified Board of Education for 12 years. She has been a student, teacher, principal and director in the district. Now, Costa is a proud grandparent who stays involved in the schools.

To learn more about the Board of Education, visit the San Juan Unified website at <https://www.sanjuan.edu>. ★

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CHORAL SOCIETY  
& ORCHESTRA

DONALD KENDRICK, MUSIC DIRECTOR

EUROPEAN MASTERWORKS

Creation Mass | Franz Joseph Haydn  
(Schöpfungsmesse)

Adagio For Strings | Samuel Barber

Lux Aeterna | Morten Lauridsen

One of the six great Mass settings that forms the  
crowning glory of Haydn's choral music along with  
"The Creation" and "The Seasons"

SATURDAY | MARCH 1 | 3PM

PRE-CONCERT TALK AT 2 PM | Conductor Donald Kendrick

SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center



Sutphen



Couden



Atti



Soar

Elizabeth Sutphen, Soprano

Salvatore Atti, Tenor

Sarah Couden, Mezzo

David Soar, Bass





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The Fair Oaks Youth Outreach presenters included Noah Wright, Emma Ford, Abby Lingenfelter, Ella Strubli Nistor, Savanna Haro, Mihret Gregory, Phineas Bragado, Alice Mironyuk, Gray Mihalakos and technical support from Zac Lingenfelter.

The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District received five first-place awards for Best Children's Activities, Best Entertainment for Concerts in the Park, Best Event of the Year for Chicken Festival, Best Recreation and Favorite Park.

For a complete list of winners, photos and access to the live event stream, visit [bestoffair Oaks.com](http://bestoffair Oaks.com) or [fair Oaks-chamber.com](http://fair Oaks-chamber.com). ★

# WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  <p><b>USDA CHOICE</b></p> <p><b>Bonus Buy</b><br/>           Bonus Beef Rump - Bnls<br/>           \$5.29 <del>\$6.29</del></p> |  <p><b>BONUS BUY</b></p> <p><b>Curry Value</b><br/>           New York Beef Roast-Bnls<br/>           \$6.49 <del>\$7.49</del></p> |  <p><b>WAYNE FARMS</b></p> <p><b>Sanderson Farms</b></p> <p><b>40 lb Case</b><br/>           \$81.60 <del>\$91.60</del></p> |
| <b>Beef Rump/Bottom Round Roast - Bnls</b><br><b>\$4.99/lb</b>   | <b>Beef New York Roast - Boneless</b><br><b>\$5.99/lb</b>   | <b>Boneless/Skinless Chicken Breast</b><br><b>\$2.19/lb</b>  |
|  <p><b>USDA Choice</b></p>   |  <p><b>ibp</b></p>   |  <p><b>Handful</b></p>  |
| <b>Pork Neck Bones</b><br><b>\$1.99/lb</b>   | <b>Pork Butt Bone - In</b><br><b>\$2.99/lb</b>  | <b>Pork St. Louis Ribs</b><br><b>\$3.99/lb</b>   |
| <h2>WEEKLY HALAL SPECIALS</h2>   |   |  |
|  <p><b>WAYNE FARMS</b></p> <p><b>Sanderson Farms</b></p> <p><b>USDA Choice</b></p>   |  <p><b>NB</b></p>  |  <p><b>Bonus Buy</b><br/>           Beef Rump - Bnls<br/>           \$5.49 <del>\$6.49</del></p>                            |
| <b>Boneless/Skinless Chicken Breast</b><br><b>\$2.29/lb</b>  | <b>Australian Lamb Stew - Bone In</b><br><b>\$2.99/lb</b>   | <b>Beef Rump/Bottom Round Roast - Bnls</b><br><b>\$5.29/lb</b>   |

Advertised items good at KP International Market - Rancho Cordova location ONLY. We reserve the right to LIMIT QUANTITIES. Not responsible for TYPOGRAPHICAL OR PICTORIAL ERRORS. All advertising deals are SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE SUPPLY. NO RAINCHECKS.

| FROZEN & FISH DEPT                    |  | EUROPEAN DELI   |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Frozen Sardine</b><br><b>2 lbs</b> | <br>REG. \$6.99/EA<br><b>\$3.99</b> /ea                             | <b>Brilmont German Ham</b><br><br>REG. \$4.15 LB<br><b>\$5.49</b> /lb  | <b>Pitted Olive Garlic Salad</b><br><br>REG. \$5.79 LB<br><b>\$5.79</b> /lb |
|                                       | <b>Ham Off the Bone</b><br><br>REG. \$12.15 LB<br><b>\$6.19</b> /lb | <b>Green Cracked Olives</b><br><br>REG. \$5.99 LB<br><b>\$4.59</b> /lb |  |

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# Sacramento State Opens New Art Studio Lab

By Daniel Wilson,  
Sacramento State  
University

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento State University’s new Art Studio Lab is officially open and will begin welcoming students for classes for the spring 2025 semester.

A ribbon cutting on Nov. 12 welcomed members of the campus community and public to celebrate the milestone as art department students and faculty prepare to move in.

“This creative space has been designed with purpose,” said Christina Bellon, interim dean of the College of Arts and Letters, during the ceremony. “Each square foot, from the studios to the communal workspaces to the indoor and outdoor installation areas, is thoughtfully planned to give students and faculty access to the resources they need to grow as artists and as professionals.”

The 20,377-square-foot, \$18.5-million building, between the old Art Sculpture Lab (ASL) and the ASI Children’s Center, meets LEED Silver Standards and features large windows, a lobby gallery, a 3D technology lab, drawing and painting labs, a metal shop, graduate studios, an outdoor sculpture yard and more significant amenities.

During the ceremony, art



Sacramento State University President Luke Wood is joined by local dignitaries, university staff and students for the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Art Studio Lab building. Photos courtesy of Sacramento State University

department Chair Rachel Clarke thanked many individuals associated with the project.

“The new ASL affirms the Sacramento State Art department’s reputation as the preeminent institution to study art in Northern California,” Clarke said. “The high level of instruction, along with the excellent new facilities, will give students all the tools they need to succeed, fulfilling the art department’s mission to educate the next generation of artists, educators and scholars.”

The new Art Sculpture Lab replaces its predecessor, which served as a California Department of Fish and Wildlife warehouse from 1951 until 1971, when Sacramento State University acquired it and utilized it as an art education and creation space.

Sacramento State

University broke ground on the new Art Sculpture Lab, which was designed by HGA and built by Otto Construction, on June 30, 2023. The university continues to offer potential donors opportunities to support the project, including naming the building and its rooms. Clarke said ongoing fundraising efforts, such as selling engraved bricks that are installed in key locations outside the building, have been successful.

“We are still looking for a building and studio naming donors because we would like to have a substantial endowment that we can use to support new initiatives, like the ASL sculpture garden and our 3D technology space,” Clarke said. “It will mean that we can continue to invest in and sustain the technology, machinery and equipment we use in our programs.”



AI generated the new art building provides students with an advanced artistic environment.

The department originally planned to move students into the building this semester but construction delays altered those plans. Over winter break, the department is moving in more equipment and furniture, including \$300,000 worth of items funded by the university, as they prepare for students to use the new space full-time in the spring.

“We are on target to start teaching there at the beginning of next semester,” Clarke said. “In the spring, there will be drawing and painting classes, sculpture classes and all the shops - wood, metal, wood construction, wax and plaster - will be in full use. The kilns will be working and the grads will be in their studios.”

The old Art Sculpture Lab will be used by the department for the foreseeable future. The art department produced a book

commemorating the old structure that will be made available to donors of \$250 or more, in addition to an engraved brick. The book will also be available at a donation level of \$75.

The book was a collaboration with photography professor Eliza Gregory and her students. It includes photos from the last time the old Art Sculpture Lab was fully operational, along with photos submitted by alumni and emeritus faculty, as well as interviews with former students and faculty.

Sacramento State University President Luke Wood suggested the new structure will have significant long-term impact.

“This facility stands as a testament to what we can achieve together, and it will serve as a beacon of creativity and innovation for generations of Sacramento

State students for years to come,” Wood said. “We are here to celebrate our ongoing commitment to providing innovative, hands-on learning experiences for our students and providing the space for our faculty that they need to guide our students as we they grow the next generation of artists.”

Master of Fine Arts graduate student Sokthea Chan, who also earned a bachelor’s degree in studio art from Sacramento State University in 2014, talked about the importance of collaborative art spaces.

“I hope for the future of the new ASL, there will be opportunities for artists in all fields to be able to connect with each other, have a collaborative space and also share innovative ideas with one another, regardless of where we are in our academic journey,” Chan said.

Amari C. Moore, a Bachelor of Fine Arts student studying studio art, expressed gratitude for all the opportunities afforded by the art department and compared the old and new spaces.

“(The old ASL) has been a place of learning, refining our gifts and talents while building this strong sense of community and friendship,” Moore said. “It is my hope that this new space will continue to do just that on an even bigger level.” ★

## SAFE Accepting Applications for Grant to Support Financial Literacy



SAFE Financial Educators and Volunteers help with a Budget Cents budgeting simulation at Mesa Verde High School. SAFE supports financial education through its own programs like Budget Cents and by awarding grants to nonprofits offering courses to youth and underserved communities. Photo courtesy of SAFE Credit Union

### SAFE Credit Union News Release

**FOLSOM, CA (MPG)** - SAFE Credit Union will grant \$20,000 to a Sacramento-region nonprofit offering financial literacy programs to help people gain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to build solid financial futures.

Applications are being accepted online through Monday, Feb. 3 on SAFE’s website.

“As a financial institution that serves thousands of families, we see firsthand how important it is for people to understand basics like how credit works, saving for emergencies, and budgeting to be sure you can cover all your expenses,” said SAFE Credit Union Vice President Community Relations and Financial Education Rebecca Delmundo. “Unfortunately, not everyone learns this from their families or in school. We’re happy to see more nonprofits offering programs that help people learn how to successfully handle their finances, and SAFE is

ready to help support their efforts.”

The grant will be awarded to support a program operated by a nonprofit that provides financial education programs to youth and/or underserved communities.

SAFE Credit Union has four grant cycles a year, awarding up to \$20,000 each round to nonprofits with programs that support financial wellbeing, education opportunities, affordable housing and workforce development. More information on SAFE’s grant program and other philanthropic efforts is available at safecu.org/community/community-impact.

Grants are just one way SAFE supports financial education in the community. The credit union offers no-cost financial education programs to high school students and young adults through its interactive budgeting simulation, Budget Cents. It also hosts in-person workshops and webinars on general topics such as saving strategies, handling debt, setting up trusts and home buying. ★

By Daniel Canfield,  
Compiled from the  
United States Census  
Bureau Website

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The U.S. Census Bureau projected the U.S. population would reach 341,145,670 at midnight EST, on Jan. 1, 2025. This represents an increase of 2,640,171 (0.78%) from Jan. 1, 2024, and an increase of 9,696,329 (2.93%) from Census Day (April 1) 2020.

By comparison, just before the nation’s independence nearly 250 years ago, the 13 colonies had about 2.5 million residents.

In January 2025, the United States is expected to experience one birth every 9.0 seconds and one death every 9.4 seconds. Net international migration is expected to add one person to the U.S. population every 23.2 seconds.

The combination of births, deaths and net international migration increases the U.S. population by one person every 21.2 seconds.

The projected world population on Jan. 1, 2025, is 8,092,034,511, up 71,178,087 (0.89%) from New Year’s Day 2024. During January 2025, 4.2 births and 2.0 deaths are expected worldwide every second.



The U.S. Census Bureau projected the U.S. population would reach 341,145,670 at midnight EST on Jan. 1, 2025. Photo courtesy of Pixabay

The Census Bureau’s Population Clock, located at [www.census.gov/popclock/](http://www.census.gov/popclock/), displays simulated real-time growth of the United States and world populations. The U.S. Population Clock shows the population by age (0 to 100+) and sex, as well as the highest-density states, counties and cities.

At the end of each year, a revised series of population estimates from the census date forward is used to update the short-term projections for the population clock. Once the updated series of monthly projections is completed, the daily population clock values are derived by interpolation. Within each calendar month,

the daily numerical population change is assumed to be constant, subject to negligible differences caused by rounding.

The U.S. Population Clock identifies California as currently the most populous state in the U.S. with a population of 39,431,263, up 466,070 (1.2%) from a year ago.

Rounding out the top five most populous U.S. states is Texas in second-place with a population of 31,290,831, Florida in third-place with a population of 23,372,215, New York in fourth-place with a population of 19,867,248 and Pennsylvania in fifth-place with a population of 13,078,751. ★

By Julia Ann Easley,  
University of California, Davis

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The University of California, Davis, released systemwide enrollment statistics on Jan. 7. The University of California, Davis, welcomed one of its most diverse entering classes and became eligible to be one of the nation’s few research-intensive universities designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, as it enrolled a record 41,239 students in fall 2024.

At Davis, overall enrollment,

including undergraduate, graduate and professional students as well as 1,174 veterinary and medical residents and interns, increased by 391 students, or 0.9%, over fall 2023.

UC Davis enrolled 9,443 new undergraduates: 6,767 as first-year students direct from high school, 2,656 as transfer students and 20 others seeking a second undergraduate degree.

In late October, UC Davis announced Latinx enrollment had reached a new peak of about 8,100 students or 25.1% of undergraduate full-time-equivalent students. That

surpasses the U.S. Department of Education’s criteria of at least 25% to be considered a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

The campus has long-sought Hispanic-Serving Institution designation to underscore its commitment to serving Latinx students. The status would also make the university eligible to apply for competitive grants from the federal government and foundations to support student success, innovation and institutional transformation benefiting all students.

The new undergraduates come

from 56 of California’s 58 counties, 47 states and U.S. territories, and 48 countries. Approximately 83.4% are California residents, 4.6% are U.S. domestic students from outside California, and 12.1% are international students.

Among new California undergraduates, the percentage of students from historically underrepresented groups (African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latino(a) and Pacific Islander) increased to 37.5%, the highest percentage in more than 25 years. Last fall, the percentage was 36.2%.

Among the new students, 40.8% indicated they would be in the first generation of their family to graduate from a four-year university. About 31.3% of all new undergraduates were considered low income, and 38.8% were recipients of the federal Pell Grant for low-income students.

Robert Penman, executive director of Undergraduate Admissions, said the average grade point average, or GPA, for first-year students was 4.04, and the median was 4.08. More than 75% of first-year students had a weighted GPA above 3.92. ★

## UC Davis Tallies Record Enrollment Numbers



# FORPD Board Considers Relocating Disc Golf Course



The possibility of relocating the disc golf course from Miller Park to another park within the district. Image by Joshua Choate from Pixabay

By Shaunna Boyd

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - The Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District (FORPD) Board of Directors held the swearing-in of the directors re-elected to the three open seats in the November 2024 election during its Dec. 18 meeting.

John O’Farrell, Delinda Tamagni and Darren Mounts all took the oath of office to begin another four-year term of service.

Parks and Facilities Manager Sean Ventura provided an update to the board about the possibility of relocating the disc golf course from Miller Park to another park within the district. Ventura offered the pros and cons of various locations, including Fair Oaks Park, Phoenix Park, Gum Ranch Park, Montview Park and Bannister Park.

Many of the parks are not viable options because the unused spaces are too close to other park amenities, such as playgrounds and walking paths, which would replicate the same ongoing safety issues and user conflicts occurring at Miller Park.

The most promising option presented was Bannister Park, which Ventura said is “incredibly underutilized” and would offer varied and interesting terrain for a disc golf course. There is no playground at Bannister Park, which is used very infrequently but the parking lot is often used for free parking to access the river. Since the Bannister Park field is rented by only one user group, the district could consider moving that group to another site and making Bannister Park a dedicated disc golf course, avoiding any conflicts with other users.

From 4 to 8.5 acres are available for use at the site but the district would need to conduct a site survey to determine the park’s exact boundaries. The wooded areas back up to neighboring homes and, Ventura said, some neighbors have posted “No Trespassing” signs in areas that likely encroach into the district’s land.

While parking at Bannister Park is limited, there is enough available space that the district could expand the parking areas as part of the project. Ventura also suggested that implementing a parking fee at the site could deter the river users from taking up the parking spaces and those fees would generate more revenue for the district than the current Bannister Park field rental fees.

Chair Ralph Carhart said the Bannister Park option was “intriguing.”

Director O’Farrell said it could be a good option since it is so underutilized.

Vice-Chair Tamagni said the district would need to conduct extensive outreach, “go to every door that lines that park,” to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to provide input.

The board directed staff to move forward with a Bannister Park site survey.

During Public Comment, several residents expressed gratitude that the board is considering alternate locations for the disc golf course. But they said that the conflicts with disc golfers at Miller Park are continuing. In response to safety concerns, the district instituted course closure hours in the morning when children walk to school through the park and in the afternoon when they play in the park after school.

However, residents reported that disc golfers at Miller Park are still playing during those times, ignoring the posted rules and even tearing down some of the signs posting the closure hours. And when informed by the parents that the course is closed, the residents added, some golfers yell and swear at them in response. The residents asked that the four baskets causing the most conflicts be removed until the board decides on a permanent solution.

“If we have continuing safety problems, we need to take some action,” Chair Carhart said.

Director O’Farrell said, “It’s not only the safety of it; it’s the attitude of the people that are out there that are causing the problem. And I don’t know how you fix that.”

Director Raymond James Irwin said, “There has to be consequences.”

The board directed staff to temporarily remove the baskets causing the most conflict and Carhart asked that they add signage telling the golfers that the course is “on probation and if there’s continued violation of the hours of use, it will be removed.”

Arts and Entertainment manager Jen Schuler then presented an operational overview for the Village Park facilities reopening this year, including the Fair Oaks Performing Arts Center, Veterans Memorial Amphitheatre, Community Clubhouse, Arts and Crafts building, the outdoor band shell and the Village Plaza.

With construction expected to be completed this spring, Schuler said, the district is planning a soft opening sometime between April and early summer. At that point, the facilities will be open to the public and the district will begin initial operations and staff training. A grand opening event will be planned for the summer.

Since there is limited parking in the Village, Schuler said, the district plans to initially focus on smaller events (200 to 400 people), with occasional larger events such as the Chicken Festival and Christmas in the Village.

Schuler said programming in the Village facilities will include music, theater, acrobatics, comedy dance, art, movie nights and pop-up events. The spaces will host community events and be available for rent.

The district will strive to ensure that revenues from ticket sales, sponsorships and rentals cover the expenses for the facilities, according to Carhart. But, he said, it will take time to get there and the first few years might be “a little shaky.” The district will monitor usage and will redirect funding and staff time as needed.

Carhart said the Village improvement project was intended to keep “the infrastructure in place for another generation, another 40 or 50 years. ... I’m confident we’ll grow into it overtime.”

The board voted unanimously to approve the operational overview.

Schuler then presented a proposed \$48,000 contract with GreyDot Media to provide marketing services for the Village facilities. Schuler explained that GreyDot Media would provide specialized work, including logo creation, branding materials, marketing of the available rental properties, and enhanced ticket sale and event promotion.

The cost of the contract will come from the district’s federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation from the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors.

The board voted unanimously to approve the marketing contract.

The board also voted unanimously to approve a minimum wage increase to \$16.50, a necessary adjustment to remain in compliance with state law that went into effect on Jan. 1. This planned increase was already accounted for in the current budget.

Since this was the final meeting of 2024, the board then selected a new chair and vice chair to serve for 2025. Chair Carhart nominated Vice-Chair Tamagni to serve as chair and Director O’Farrell to serve as vice-chair, and the board voted unanimously to approve the nominations. ★



## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Informing, Empowering and Engaging Readers with Their Community



By Patsy McGavock  
JustServe.org

**ORANGEVALE/FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - How do miracles happen? I submit it’s when proactive people provide the opportunity through small, consistent means. While interviewing those making good in both small and large ways, the common thread is clear: just get started, stay courageously consistent and let it grow naturally. Add a small team as you invite others and your efforts become far greater than the sum of their parts.

In 2007, Brad Squires, then in his mid-30s, sought a way to make a difference. He wasn’t planning to found an Orangevale food bank or community foundation but while leading small group Bible studies at church, he asked himself what he could do that was meaningful.

He identified needs through informal conversations with local leaders and joining the Orangevale Chamber of Commerce.

“We really needed to feed our neighbors,” Squires said.

He gathered friends to run food drives. By 2011, they leased a space and started a food bank.

“The process was organic,” Squires recalled. “We didn’t seek sponsors or funding. Four or five of us pooled resources and did it.”

As programs grew, they identified skill sets among regular volunteers and invited them to take on leadership roles.

“It takes good people with the capacity, heart and ability to do good work,” Squires said.

Squires outlined his process: act on a desire, share it with friends,

## From Idea to Impact: Lessons from Neighbors Who Sparked Community Change

write a simple one-page vision (who, what, when, why, how), circulate it for feedback, identify leaders and maintain a regular routine, such as a weekly volunteer time.

“Be comfortable figuring things out as you go and trust it will grow naturally,” Squires advised.

“Just take the first step. You don’t need everything planned or funded; just start.”

MaryAnne Povey, of Orangevale Live, echoes this approach.

“Don’t hesitate or overthink. Make one call,” Povey said. “You’ll be amazed at how welcoming people are and what you’ll accomplish together. It’s so rewarding.”

Orangevale Live began in 2019 as a simple idea: parent volunteers wanting to live stream high school sports. Today, this Facebook channel dedicated to sharing the good news of Orangevale has 6,500 followers and 1.2 million views.

“We didn’t intend to start anything. It just grew organically,” Povey said.

“As people watch, they want to help. People join and efforts grow.”

When the Chamber of Commerce asked her to volunteer her marketing skills, the following growth surprised Povey.

“It’s a full circle,” Povey said. “Connecting with businesses brought connections to community organizations, which circled back to schools and youth sports.”

“I couldn’t do this without a team,” Povey emphasized.

“If you feel moved to get involved, take the first step. Reach out to someone connected, like our unofficial leaders, to find the right organization or referral. There are always people willing to help.”

The beauty of our

community, Povey noted, lies in its existing framework, much of it built through Squires’ early and continued collaborative approach.

Matt Hedges, a long-time Sacramento County supervisor staff member, credits a strong, engaged Chamber of Commerce for helping this “non-city” achieve city-level community engagement.

“It’s remarkable and attainable,” Hedges said.

The continued growth lies in those people consistently dedicated to the work they step up to.

Such as a local congregation member, who wishes to go unnamed, who organizes yard work with fellow church members one hour every Saturday morning.

Feeling a prompting during a routine church council meeting, he simply asked to get started.

For months, it was just him, his wife and one other person. Frustration was inevitable. But over time, as others recognized the opportunity, the effort grew naturally, because he and his wife remained consistent, not easily dissuaded.

So I will end where I began with an invitation. Sit for a moment, set a time, and ask yourself what is missing in your neighborhood, community or family? Write down a one-page vision plan. Share it and invite feedback. Start small and stay consistent. You don’t need to have everything figured out. Just start and let each step guide the next. Miraculous things will follow in your home, in your life and in your community.

*Patsy McGavock is a volunteer writer seeking to inform, empower and engage readers with their community. She can be reached at PatsyMcGavock.JustServe@gmail.com. ★*



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# Disaster-Prone California Should Adopt a Preventive Approach, Rather Than a Reactive One



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

As horrific as they may be, the wildfires sweeping through Los Angeles neighborhoods, destroying homes and businesses and killing dozens of people, are certainly not unprecedented. Rather, they join a California continuum of natural and human-caused disasters that have afflicted the state throughout its history — fires most recently, but also earthquakes, floods, dam collapses and deadly riots. It’s as if Californians must endure periodic calamities as the cosmic cost of enjoying unmatched attributes of weather, scenic beauty, mineral wealth and enormous amounts of arable land. Precisely 60 years ago, for example, the ruggedly beautiful northwestern corner of California coped with immensely destructive flooding from epic storms. The Eel River basin received 22 inches of rain in just two days. Several small towns along the Eel and Klamath rivers were destroyed, drowned in as much as 50 feet of water, and dozens of state and local bridges were demolished, isolating the region. The federal government even sent naval ships, including an aircraft carrier, to bring relief supplies and assist in search and rescue efforts. Less than a year earlier,

Crescent City, a Del Norte County town afflicted by the floods, had been clobbered by a tsunami touched off by a massive earthquake in Alaska. The persistence of disasters befalling California is underscored by just one data point: During Pete Wilson’s governorship in the 1990s, every California county was declared a disaster area at least once, and several times in some counties. Wilson’s emergencies included the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, the 1992 Rodney King riots and heavy flooding in 1997 that sparked disaster declarations in 48 of the state’s 58 counties. Simultaneously during his time in office, California experienced the worst recession since the Great Depression, a severe drought and was just beginning to recover from the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake in the San Francisco Bay Area that destroyed a section of the Bay Bridge, among other things. It was as if the four horse-men of the apocalypse were galloping across California, dragging Wilson behind them. To his credit, Wilson figuratively shrugged his shoulders and assumed the role of crisis manager, even though, ironically, the disasters undermined his plans for “preventive government” that would deal with issues before they became crises. If disasters of one kind or another are baked into California’s existence, what could be done to mitigate their impacts? When it comes to floods and wildfires, we could — if we had the political will — either stop building homes in areas prone to flood or

fire, or at least impose strict standards on construction to make buildings less vulnerable, as we do for earthquakes. There is some anecdotal evidence that homes built with fire-resistant materials, including non-flammable roofs, have fared better in the Los Angeles fires. We could start by imposing tough new building standards when neighborhoods scorched by current fires are rebuilt. We also need to plan for better escape routes and install better systems for warning people to evacuate. The narrow winding streets in Southern California’s upscale communities became death traps for some. Finally, we need a new approach to insurance coverage. Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara is finalizing a new regulatory system that would let insurers include estimates of future losses and costs of reinsurance in their premiums, hoping that it would prop up a very unstable market. Maybe we should go beyond that. Maybe we need the state to provide basic casualty coverage in a master statewide policy financed by mandatory fees on property, with the option for property owners to purchase supplemental coverage. If disasters are unavoidable in California, we need to accept that fact and adopt Pete Wilson’s preventive approach, rather than merely reacting after the fact. Dan Walters is one of most decorated and widely syndicated columnists in California history, authoring a column four times a week that offers his view and analysis of the state’s political, economic, social and demographic trends. ★

# Social Security Matters About When to Claim Social Security and Taxation of Benefits



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

**Dear Rusty:** I am 65 and currently working full-time. Can I apply for and start receiving my Social Security benefit? I’d expect to have to pay income tax on it if/when I do. **Signed: Curious Worker**  
**Dear Curious Worker:** If you are working full time, you should likely delay claiming Social Security at this time. At age 65, you haven’t yet reached your SS full retirement age (FRA), so you will be subject to Social Security’s “annual earnings test” which limits how much you can earn from work while collecting early benefits. The earnings limit for 2025 is \$23,400 and if you earn more than the annual limit, SS will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. If you earn significantly over the limit, you may even be

temporarily ineligible to collect SS benefits. FYI, the annual earnings limit goes away when you reach your full retirement age, which for you is 66 years and 10 months, or March 2026. As you obviously already know, a portion of your Social Security may be subject to income tax after you start collecting. The threshold for taxation of SS benefits depends on your IRS filing status — if you file your taxes as a single and your combined income from all sources (including half of the SS benefit you received during the tax year) exceeds \$25,000 then 50% of your received SS benefits are taxable. But if you file taxes as “married/jointly” and your combined income is over \$32,000, then up to 85% of your received SS benefits are taxable. Thus, whenever you claim SS, you may wish to consider having income tax withheld from your SS benefit. This is optional, and you can do this by submitting IRS Form W-4V to your local Social Security office, or you could choose to increase your income tax withholding at work or, alternatively, pay estimated income taxes quarterly. So, whether you can claim Social Security now

depends entirely on how much you will earn from working full time prior to your FRA. If you exceed the annual earnings limit before your FRA, SS will take away some of your benefits or, if you greatly exceed the earnings limit, you may even be temporarily ineligible to get benefits (until you either reach your FRA or earn less). But note, if you decide to claim early and any SS benefits are withheld because you exceeded the earnings limit, you will get credit for that (in the form of a slightly increased benefit) after you reach your full retirement age. This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. ★



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Kings Korner By V.G. Harris



Who’s the hottest team in the NBA right now?! Well, if you’re Steve Kerr, he’s telling his Golden State Warriors it’s the Sacramento Kings, as the former world champs embark on their short journey from the bay area to Golden One Arena on Wednesday night. Winners of 9 out of the last 10 games, only the Milwaukee Bucks kept the Kings from riding a 10-game win streak. Solid playoff bound teams like the Celtics, Bulls, and Rockets met with the defensive minded Sactown boys, and each came away wondering what just hit them. Is there reason for optimism in Sacramento? You bet there is, and if there’s one thing the Kings need to be cautious of, it’s making an ill-advised trade. You find many fans or commentators that will argue that the Kings need to strengthen their front court, and the reason is that the current alignment is not living up to their billing. Third year player, and much lauded Keegan Murray is having a subpar season, and if he doesn’t watch out, fans will stop looking at him as a 3-point shooter. As of late, Keegan has made more impact on the boards and on defense than he has as a shooter. Sadly, in a 23-point blow-out of the Wizards, Keegan contributed only 4 points and failed to connect on all 5 of his 3-point attempts. Not to be left out, Trey Lyles, who has been playing abysmal basketball as of late, scored only 4 points as well, while taking up 20 minutes of play on the hardwood. Once considered the Kings 3-point assassin, Kevin Huerter took a total of six 3-point shots, connecting on just one. So, Murray, Lyles, and Huerter made exactly one 3-point field goal while putting in a combined 61 minutes of play on the hardwood. Why do I point out the negatives with the Kings winning 9 out of 10 games and climbing above the 500 mark? Sadly, none of the three just mentioned are likely to bring anything of value on the trade market. While Keegan Murray held significant value on the trade market just one year ago, his interest and value has dropped to an all-time low, and many teams are likely not interested in Keegan at all. Similarly, Kevin Huerter is fortunate to make a basket from 3-point land at all, and the former starter for the Kings and 3-point specialist is likely to fall into the same disinterest category as Keegan Murray. As for Lyles, like Keegan, he’s having a subpar performance in 2024/2025, and his lack of offensive productivity will likely garnish him little interest from other teams. Unfortunately, while teams turn away from trade offers for Murray, Lyles, and Huerter, they will be coming strong for players like Fox, Monk, and possibly even Keon Ellis. Of all the players the Kings have currently, it’s possible that Keon Ellis has the most prolific upside. Ellis remarkably is supplanting other players on the team, as a Bonafide 3-point shooter. In Sunday night’s win over the Washington Wizards, all Keon did was score 18 points in 18 minutes, while connecting on six 3-point shots to lead all players from beyond the arc. Pay attention Sacramento, and I’m talking to you Monte McNair. Keon Ellis brings game on both ends of the court. Sabonis remains untouchable if there is such a term in NBA circles today, but the gossip surrounding DeAaron Fox needs to die down, as any trade involving Fox from this writer’s perspective is a bad idea. The Kings need to hold the fort, pay little attention to trades involving Fox and Monk, and hope that Murray, Lyles, and Huerter will return to some form on shooting acumen. Slumps don’t last forever, and the fact that the Kings have played with such assiduous vigor and success over the past 3 weeks gives Sactown some much-needed breathing room. Shout-out to Domantas Sabonis for taking player of the week in the Western Conference last week, and continuing to lead the league in rebounding and double-double’s once again. Appreciate this remarkable big man, he’s possibly the best we’ve ever had. All the best Kings fans and enjoy this team! Your thoughts are always welcome at vgharrisingsfan@gmail.com. ★



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# California Continues to Prioritize Young Children

## 2025-2026 Budget Highlights Initiatives for All California Kids

### First 5 California News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - First 5 California thanks the Governor and administration for their ongoing dedication to early childhood education, infant and early childhood health, and the protection of early childhood care systems outlined in the 2025-2026 budget proposal.

“As a champion for children aged 0 to 5, First 5 California commends the Governor and Legislature for advancing a budget rooted in values that prioritize young children and families,” said Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, executive director of First 5 California. “We are grateful for the Governor’s commitment to initiatives that provide meaningful support to families, such as free diapers for newborns, smaller class sizes and expanded learning opportunities in Transitional Kindergarten, and English proficiency tools for multilingual learners. These investments, along with First 5 California’s statewide programs like Raise CA Strong to address the childcare



First 5 California remains steadfast in its mission to support the well-being of children during their critical early years. Image by kp yamu Jayanath from Pixabay

crisis, the Fatherhood Initiative and This Is How Dads Do It podcast to support fathers, and the Dragon Song campaign to promote young children’s mental health, create a lasting foundation for California’s families and communities.”

First 5 California remains steadfast in its mission to support the well-being of children during their critical early years. The organization drives impactful statewide initiatives such as the Stronger Starts campaign, which raises awareness of toxic

stress response in young children. Additionally, programs supporting maternal health, educator professional development, and parenting resources are further strengthening California’s early childhood landscape. Wong added, “While the

decline in tobacco tax revenue challenges the sustainability of our programs, this budget represents a vital step in protecting and expanding essential services that reflect a deep commitment to equity and opportunity for all.”

The budget proposal underscores significant long-term investments aligning with First 5 California’s mission to deliver healing-centered, equity-focused programs. Recognizing that 90 percent of brain development occurs during the first five years of life, First 5 California provides essential services to children ages 0 to 5, including family strengthening programs, infant and early childhood mental health services, and high-quality early learning and literacy initiatives.

To maintain this momentum, First 5 California will continue advocating for robust state investments that help ensure the future of these essential programs so that all of California’s youngest children thrive for generations to come.

To learn more, visit [www.ccfca.ca.gov](http://www.ccfca.ca.gov). ★

## Nonstop Flights to Anchorage Offered

## Supervisor Chair, Vice-Chair Elected



Sacramento International Airport will offer seasonal direct flights to Anchorage starting June 14. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

### Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Beginning June 14, Sacramento International Airport (SMF) will offer a new seasonal nonstop flight to Anchorage, Alaska with Alaska Airlines. This marks the first-ever nonstop service from Sacramento to the State of Alaska in the airport’s history.

Perfect for a summer vacation, Anchorage offers a wide range of exciting activities, from breathtaking cruises to wildlife viewing, hiking and exploring the majestic landscapes that make Alaska so special. Whether you're an adventure-seeker or simply looking to relax in nature's beauty, Anchorage has something for everyone.

“We’re thrilled to partner with Alaska Airlines to announce Anchorage as our newest nonstop destination from SMF,” said Stephen Clark, C.M., deputy director of Airport Commercial Development at the Sacramento County Department of Airports. “This new route reflects the strong partnerships we’ve built to deliver travel

options that balance the needs of our business community and the growing demand for family-friendly and leisure destinations. It’s another step in our commitment to serving our region with convenient and exciting travel opportunities.”

The new nonstop service to Anchorage comes on the heels of Alaska Airlines starting four new flights, including the launch of new nonstop service to Orlando, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico and Tucson, Arizona. Additionally, this past Saturday, Alaska Airlines began nonstop services from Sacramento International Airport to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

This new flight is just one of many recent additions as Sacramento International Airport continues to grow and enhance its offerings. By July, Sacramento International Airport expects more than 196 daily nonstop flights on 12 domestic and international carriers, connecting travelers to 36 destinations across the globe.

For more information, visit the Sacramento County Department of Airports website at <https://sacramento.aero/smf>. ★



At the Jan. 7 Board of Supervisors meeting, Phil Serna and Rosario Rodríguez were elected as chair and vice-chair respectively. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

### Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - The annual vote to elect a new chair and a new vice-chair of the Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, Jan. 7.

This year’s elected chair is Supervisor Phil Serna of District 1, and Supervisor Rosario Rodríguez of District 4 was elected vice-chair.

“I am honored to be sworn as the 2025 Chair of Sacramento County’s Board of Supervisors,” said Serna. “As we move forward, my priority will be to foster collaboration and unity in our community and ensure that all voices are heard. I am ready to address the challenges our county faces and build a stronger, more inclusive future for all residents. I look forward to serving with my colleagues and continuing the important work that lies ahead this year.”

Board chair responsibilities are listed below.

The board chair presides over the board

meetings; the vice-chairperson assumes the role in the chairperson’s absence or inability to act. If the chair and vice-chair are absent or unable to preside, the members present will select a member present to act as temporary chairperson.

The board chair also acts on procedural matters or questions, recognizes a board member desiring to speak on an item; is entitled to vote on all matters before the board, participate in discussion relating to any matter, make motions without relinquishing the chair, and second any motion without relinquishing the chair.

The board chair also sits on other boards/commissions as a representative of Sacramento County and is the point of contact for questions from the public regarding the meetings (i.e., coordination of resolutions/presentations and general questions not specific to a district).

The chair and vice-chair serve annual terms. ★

# California Farm Bureau Elects Three New Board Members

### California Farm Bureau News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Three new members joined the California Farm Bureau Board of Directors, and another seven were re-elected, during the organization’s 106th Annual Meeting in Monterey.

Richard Schmid, a beekeeper from Homeland, replaces Scott Hudson in serving District 2, representing Farm Bureau members in Inyo-Mono, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Schmid is the past president and a longtime member of Riverside County Farm Bureau. He has served on the California Farm

Bureau Rural Health and Safety Committee for many years.

Steve Kafka, a forester from Avery, replaces Paul Sanguinetti in serving District 12, representing Farm Bureau members in Calaveras and San Joaquin counties. Kafka is a graduate of Leadership Farm Bureau, a longtime member and chairman of the Forestry/Public Lands Committee, and past president and a longtime board member of Calaveras County Farm Bureau.

Martin Spannaus, a hay farmer and cattle rancher from Corning, replaces Jim Morris in serving District 20, representing Farm Bureau members in Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama and

Trinity counties. He is a past president and current board member of Tehama County Farm Bureau.

Each will serve two-year terms.

Daniel Jones of Dixon was elected to a one-year term as chair of the Young Farmers & Ranchers State Committee. He is a member of the American Farm Bureau YF&R Committee, a Leadership Farm Bureau graduate and a member of Solano County Farm Bureau. He works full time as an insurance adjuster and raises cattle, almonds, hay and olives.

Re-elected to two-year terms on the California Farm Bureau

board were Kevin Merrill of Los Alamos in District 4 (Santa Barbara and Ventura counties); Roger Everett of Porterville in District 6 (Tulare County); April England of Hollister in District 8 (Monterey, San Benito and San Luis Obispo counties); Jan Garrod of Saratoga in District 10 (Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco and San Mateo counties); Joe Fischer of Auburn in District 14 (Amador, El Dorado, Placer and Sacramento counties); Garrett Driver of Woodland in District 16 (Colusa, Glenn and Yolo counties); and Daniel Suenram of Kelseyville in District 18 (Lake

and Mendocino counties).

California Farm Bureau President Shannon Douglass and First Vice President Shaun Crook were elected to serve as delegates at next month’s American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention in San Antonio. Second Vice President Ron Peterson and Mary Lou Coffelt of Hollister, San Benito County, were elected to serve as alternate delegates.

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of more than 26,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of 5.8 million Farm Bureau members. ★

# Farm Bureau Responds to State Budget Plan

### California Farm Bureau News Release

**CALIFORNIA STATE (MPG)** - California Farm Bureau President Shannon Douglass commented on the budget plan announced Jan. 10 by Gov. Gavin Newsom: “Fees, taxes and increasing labor costs continue to negatively impact

California food producers. The latest data shows that the state lost more than 7,000 farms and fallowed nearly 1.5 million acres of productive lands in the past five years, all while costs increased more than \$150,000 per farm in the same timeframe. These are family farms and businesses disappearing from California at an alarming

pace, preventing opportunities for beginning farmers and underserved populations from any pathway to launch agricultural businesses. We’ve heard promises from legislative leaders about focusing on California’s affordability, and we hope that every regulation and law that the governor and Legislature propose keeps affordability top of

mind. It’s clear that any action on key issues such as Cap-and-Trade reauthorization, the insurance crisis and agricultural overtime laws must work for farmers and ranchers and, importantly, the employees who put food on our tables. Only with agriculture as a partner will the governor’s goals to advance economic development in rural

communities find success. The future of California’s rural economies depends on it.”

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of more than 26,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of 5.8 million Farm Bureau members. ★



# COMICS & PUZZLES

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS

POPEYE

BY KENDY HIRSHLAND

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

GRIN BEAR IT

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE

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- \*Half-time headliner
- Ice, dark or middle
- \*Cindy Crawford wore " \_\_\_\_ Dukes" in a Super Bowl ad
- Flightless bird
- \*Last year's Super Bowl winners
- A cheap, run-down motel
- " \_\_\_\_ the fields we go"
- Merry
- Actor's part
- Expensive
- Not him
- Cell phone bill item
- Civil Rights icon
- \*David Tyree's \_\_\_\_ Catch
- Letters of distress
- What rule follower does
- Get cozy
- Greed, biblical-ly-speaking
- Grieve for the dead
- Time period
- \*Team with most Super Bowl appearances
- 3600 seconds, pl.
- Casino chip
- Salmon's output
- En \_\_\_\_, all together
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- \_\_\_\_ lazuli
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- Greek god of war
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- Architectural add-on
- Meat of coconut
- Roman king of Judea
- Like certain whiskey
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- Brag
- Algorithmic language
- Ganders' companions
- Tom Jones's " \_\_\_\_ a Lady"
- Rolodex abbr.
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# Hornet Softball Releases 2025 Schedule



The Sacramento State Softball team is scheduled to play 50 games in 2025. Photo by Sacramento State Athletics

## Sacramento State University Athletics News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento State Softball’s 12th-year head coach Lori Perez announced the team's 2025 schedule, which is comprised of 50 games, including 27 at Shea Stadium.

This year’s regular season schedule, which also includes 17 road games and six at neutral sites, runs from Feb. 6 until May 9. The Hornets will play in three preseason tournaments, including a pair of annual home events, NorCal Kickoff (Feb. 6-9) and Capital Classic (Feb. 28-March 2).

The Big Sky Tournament will take place in Greeley, Colo., May 6-9, and should

the Hornets win the title, they would compete at NCAA Regionals beginning May 16.

Sacramento State is coming off a 2024 season in which the team finished with a 28-20 overall record and 7-4 in the Big Sky Conference. The Hornets went 2-2 at the Big Sky Tournament and fell one victory shy of reaching the tourney title game.

Sacramento State returns just 12 players from a year ago, as the team welcomes 14 new players to the program. The Hornets graduated 11 seniors from last season’s team.

Of the Hornets’ 35 non-conference games, 26 will be played in the state of California. The Hornets will travel to

Hawaii for the Spring Fling (Feb. 13-15) and play a three-game set at Oregon State (March 15-16). Sacramento State will play 18 non-league games at home, including the two tournaments, and home dates with UC Davis, BYU, Fresno State, Cal, Stanford, Pacific, Loyola Marymount and Columbia. The LMU games are a three-game set the weekend before conference play begins.

Sacramento State will play 15 Big Sky games featuring the usual three-game series format with doubleheaders on Fridays and single games on Saturday between March 28 and April 26.

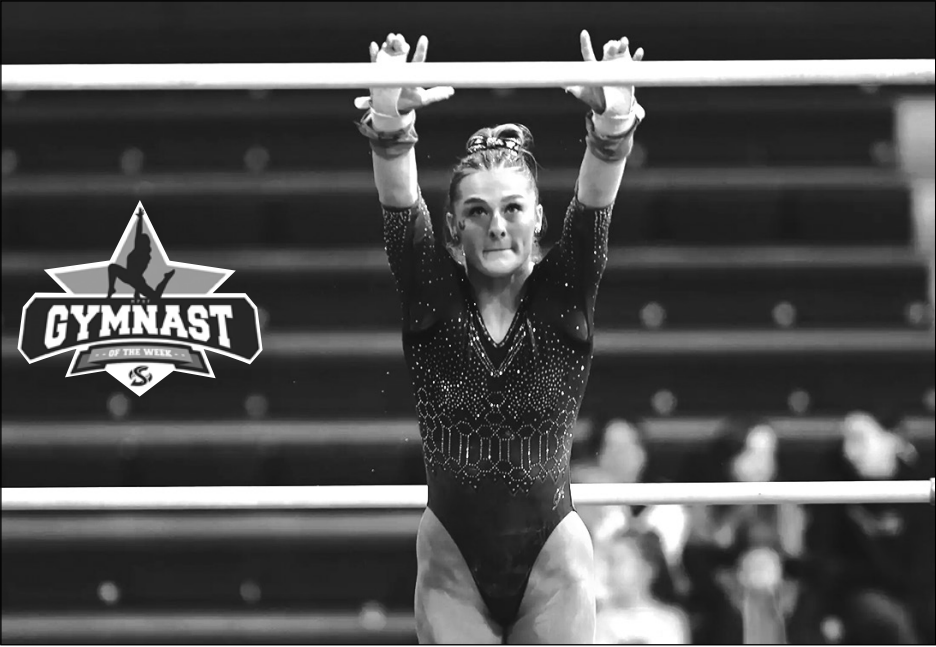
In conference play, the Hornets will host three-game series vs. Idaho State (March 28-29), Northern Colorado (April

11-12) and Weber State (April 18-19). Road series will take place at Portland State (April 4-5) and Montana (April 25-26).

Sacramento State’s coaching staff has two new additions, first-year assistant coach Marina Demore, and first-year student assistant Lewa Day. Demore will serve as the pitching coach after spending the 2024 season as interim head coach at Nevada. Day recently completed her playing career at Sacramento State (2020-24) in which she established herself as one of the greatest players to wear the Green and Gold.

Every home game (schedule permitting), and road games against a Big Sky opponent, will stream on ESPN+. ★

# Hornet Named Gymnast of the Week



Sacramento State gymnast Kara Houghton was named the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Gymnast of the Week on Jan. 7. Photo by Sacramento State Athletics

## Sacramento State Athletics News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento State gymnast Kara Houghton was named the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Gymnast of the Week, it was announced on Jan. 7. The honor was the first for Houghton during her career.

On Sunday, Jan. 5, the junior from Parker, Colo., helped the Hornets record their highest score in a season-opening meet and defeat both UC Davis and UW-Oshkosh in the process, at The Nest. Sacramento State totaled 194.700,

topping the previous record of 194.475 which came at the 2017 NorCal Classic.

Houghton scored 9.800 in each of her three events. She finished in second place on bars and tied for second on beam and floor. Her scores on bars and beam are tied for the eighth highest by a Sacramento State gymnast in a season opener.

The Hornets followed up their success in the season-opening meet with a 194.625-193.825 win over San Jose State on Sunday, Jan 12, at The Nest.

The Hornets are scheduled back in action at The Nest on Friday, Jan 17, against Cornell University and Alaska-Anchorage, after press time. ★

# River Cats Conducting National Anthem Auditions

## River Cats News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The opening of every ballgame starts with the National Anthem, and the Sacramento River Cats want to give you the chance to perform. The River Cats have announced their National Anthem auditions for the 2025 baseball season will take place at Sutter Health Park on Sunday, Feb. 16.

Auditions are open to all soloists and instrumentalists, and those interested in performing prior to a River Cats game must submit an audition demo by Friday, Jan. 31. Demos received past this date will not be considered.

All demos submitted must be an A capella version or original performance of

the “Star Spangled Banner,” sung in full, with clear, consistent and correct lyrics. The full performance must not exceed 90 seconds.

To submit a demo, please email an mp3 or YouTube link to Logan Flair at, lflair@rivercats.com. The email subject line should read “2025 National Anthem Demo” and include a name, phone number and email address in the body of the email.

The River Cats will invite the top demos submitted to Sutter Health Park for a live audition on Feb. 16. Due to the volume of applicants, performers will only be contacted if they are selected to audition in person. Selected performers will be contacted the week of Feb. 10 with further instructions. ★

## By Martín Gallegos, MLB.com

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Ahead of their temporary move to Sutter Health Park in West Sacramento for the next three seasons, the Athletics got a taste of the passion from sports fans in the area while attending a Sacramento Kings game just down the road at Golden 1 Center.

A’s manager Mark Kotsay and players Brent Rooker, Lawrence Butler, JP Sears and JJ Bleday were treated to courtside seats and took in a thrilling Kings victory in double overtime. Throughout the night, the group was frequently stopped by fans in the arena who expressed their excitement about having a new Major League team in town.

“Going to that [Kings] game was our first taste of Sacramento as a sports town,” Rooker said. “Seeing the passion that the fans had for that team made us hungry to get out there and put a good product on the field so we could experience the same thing.”

That Sacramento sports fan fervor is expected to translate to baseball, as the Athletics announced on Friday that 2025 season tickets for their inaugural season at Sutter Health Park in West Sacramento have sold out.

Limited single-game tickets will go on sale in late January. Further details on the pricing of those tickets and promotional and fan events will be shared ahead of the on-sale date.

Sutter Health Park, which the Athletics will share with the



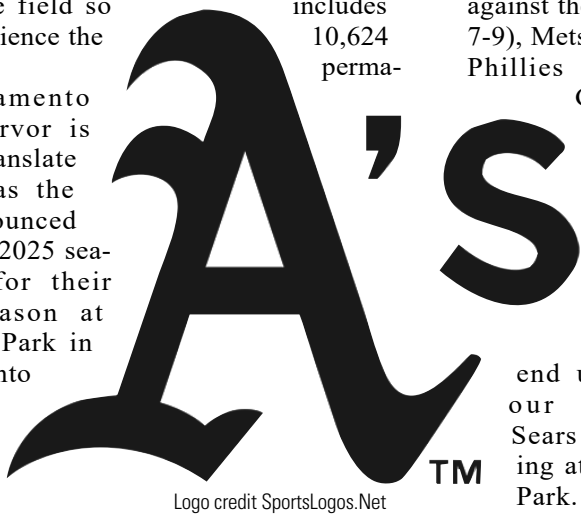
With demand for season tickets so high, the A’s have already created a waitlist for 2026 season tickets. Image by Wendy Luby from Pixabay

Sacramento River Cats, Triple-A affiliate of the San Francisco Giants, is undergoing extensive renovations to bring the stadium’s facilities up to Major League standards. Its current capacity is 14,014, which includes 10,624 permanent seats and 3,390 temporary fixed seats and additional lawn seating on the grass berms beyond the left- and right-field walls.

With demand for season tickets so high, the A’s have already created a waitlist for 2026 season tickets that fans can join at [www.athletics.com/seasonontickets](http://www.athletics.com/seasonontickets).

The A’s inaugural game at Sutter Health Park is set for Monday, March 31 against the Cubs. The home schedule includes matchups against the Padres (April 7-9), Mets (April 11-13), Phillies (May 23-25), Giants (July 4-6), Braves (July 8-10), D-backs (Aug. 1-3), and Reds (Sept. 12-14).

“I think it’ll end up playing to our advantage,” Sears said of playing at Sutter Health Park. “It seems like they’re going to pack it out every night and support us pretty strong. The clubhouse facilities and those facilities we toured looked really nice and upgraded. ... I haven’t been this excited for a baseball season in my life.” ★



Logo credit SportsLogos.Net