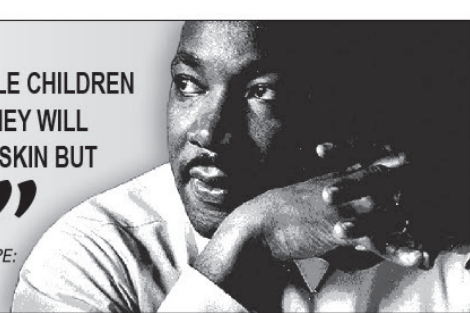




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- MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., A TESTAMENT OF HOPE: THE ESSENTIAL WRITINGS AND SPEECHES



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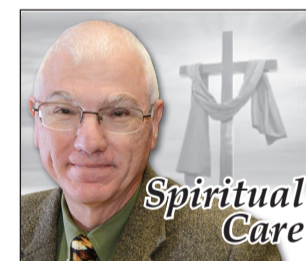
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RUN OF WINS CONTINUES



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WHAT'S IT TO YOU?



Spiritual Care

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Sacramento State Opens Art Studio Lab



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. Photo by Bibiana Ortiz, Sacramento State University

By Daniel Wilson, Sacramento State University

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Sacramento State'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.

Continued on Page 3

Tdap Shot Urged as Whooping Cough Increases

California Department of Public Health News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - California is experiencing an increase in cases of whooping cough (also known as pertussis), a highly contagious bacterial disease that can be spread through coughing and can cause severe illness, especially in infants. California Department of Public Health is urging all Californians, especially those who are pregnant and those who provide care to infants, to be up to date on their Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine to help prevent whooping cough.

Individuals vaccinated against whooping cough are protected against severe illness and complications due to whooping cough. These complications can be most severe in infants, causing apnea (dangerous pauses in breathing) and can be fatal.

More than 2,000 cases of whooping cough were reported statewide between January and October 2024. 62 of those cases were infants less than four months of age who were hospitalized, including one infant who tragically died. During the same time range in 2023, there were less than 400 whooping cough cases reported in the state.

"Since the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, many practices that had lowered instances of whooping cough are no longer in place, and we're seeing the disease return to pre-pandemic levels," said Dr. Tomás J. Aragón, California Department of Public Health Director and State Public Health Officer. "Infants are particularly vulnerable and that's why California Department of Public Health especially encourages people who are pregnant to receive the Tdap vaccine in their third trimester which will pass along protective antibodies to the baby."

With whooping cough cases rising, ensure you are up to date on your whooping cough vaccine.

Continued on Page 7

Robotics and Resilience

St. Francis High School shaping next generation of female engineers

Story and Photos by Katherine Hwang, St. Francis High School, Sacramento School Beat

Katherine Hwang is a St. Francis High School student and a Sacramento School Beat reporter. The Student Education Reporter program is funded by the Sacramento County Office of Education. Each student works with a writing coach throughout the year. The program's goal is to increase media coverage of Sacramento County schools and districts to benefit the students, the parents and educators.

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - In the male-dominated world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, St. Francis High students find opportunity and support in their all-girls robotics and Science Olympiad teams.

According to the International Coalition of

Continued on Page 4



The St. Francis High School robotics deck crew huddles up during the 2024 MATE ROV World Championships.



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U.S. Population to Exceed 340 Million, Census Expects



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

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 Census Bureau's Population Clock,

located at 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. ★

SMF Secures Loan for Growth



Colin Bettis, left, County Debt Officer; Phil Serna, County Supervisor; and Chris Wimsatt, Assistant Director of Airports sign loan documents in Sacramento on Jan. 7. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County Department of Airports

Sacramento County Department of Airports News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Build America Bureau has officially executed a Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan with Sacramento International Airport (SMF), marking the first time funding for an airport project has been secured under the program. The loan will provide critical financing for the new pedestrian walkway, offering significant cost savings and supporting long-term infrastructure improvements.

"We are grateful to our elected officials for assisting us in securing this loan on multiple fronts," said Cindy Nichol, Sacramento County's Director of Airports.

Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA, District 6) and Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA, District 7) supported the pursuit of this loan. Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA, District 8) championed the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act's expansion

to airport projects. The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors was instrumental in the effort to achieve this financing.

The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act is a federal program offering low-interest loans to large-scale infrastructure projects historically focused on surface transportation. Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, signed by President Biden in 2021, Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act eligibility was expanded to include airport projects.

The Build America Bureau, as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, offers expertise and guidance to access federal funding for qualified infrastructure projects.

"Being the first airport to close a TIFIA loan offers an incredible opportunity to improve infrastructure while keeping costs low for our airport and community," said Nichol. "The combination of our rural qualification and TIFIA's flexible terms made pursuing this financing a clear

choice."

SMF will benefit from the program's flexible terms, including low fixed interest rates, deferred repayments, and up to a 35-year repayment period. The \$36.1 million Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan is projected to save SMF more than \$15 million compared to traditional financing methods.

"The Pedestrian Walkway is part of the \$1.3 billion SMForward capital campaign to modernize and enhance infrastructure," said Chris Wimsatt, Assistant Director of Airports for Sacramento County. "Ensuring SMF's ability to meet the needs of the traveling public today and in the future. The TIFIA program offers an innovative financing solution that allows us to modernize our facilities while keeping costs low."

Following the execution of this loan, Sacramento International Airport intends to pursue additional Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act financing for future projects. ★

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Sacramento State Opens New Art Studio Lab

Priorities for a Stronger Sacramento in 2025



Rachel Clarke, Art department chair, was among the speakers at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Art Studio Lab building. Photo by Bibiana Ortiz, Sacramento State University

Continued from Page 1

During the ceremony, Art department Chair Rachel Clarke thanked many of the people 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 Sac State acquired it and utilized it as an art education and creation space.

Sac State 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.”

The department originally planned to move students into the building this semester, but construction delays altered those plans. Over winter break, the department will move 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.

Sac State 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 Sac State in 2014, talked about the importance of collaborative art spaces.

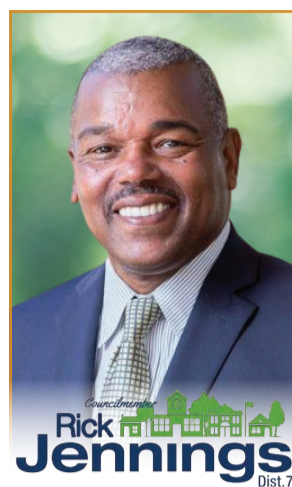
“I hope for the future of the new ASL there will be opportunities for artists in all fields to be able to connect with each other, have a collaborative space and also share innovative ideas with one another, regardless of where we are in our academic journey,” Chan said.

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.” ★

As we step into the new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on where we’ve been and look ahead to where we’re going as a community. This time of year is often filled with resolutions and commitments to improvement, and as your Councilmember, I am making my own resolutions - resolutions that focus on ensuring Sacramento remains a safe, vibrant, and inclusive place for all of us to live, work, and thrive.

One of my top priorities for the year ahead is public safety. Every resident deserves to feel secure in their home, on their streets, and in their neighborhood. To that end, I will continue working closely with our police and fire departments to ensure they have the resources they need to serve and protect our community effectively. This includes not only responding to emergencies but also investing in programs that prevent crime and support



our youth, creating a stronger foundation for future generations.

Another cornerstone of my focus will be on enhancing basic city services. From ensuring our streets are clean and well-maintained to addressing issues like waste management, streetlights, and parks, these are the services that directly impact our quality of life every day. I am committed to ensuring these essentials are not only met but

continually improved upon.

I firmly believe that the strength of our community lies in our ability to come together, share our perspectives, and work collaboratively toward solutions. My New Year’s resolution as your Councilmember is to remain steadfast in my commitment to listening, learning, and leading with integrity and purpose. Together, we can make 2025 a year of progress and possibility for Sacramento.

Here’s to a new year filled with hope, hard work, and collective achievement. Let’s continue building a brighter future, one resolution at a time. Only together can we make that happen. Let me hear from you – please reach out to me at RJennings@cityofsacramento.org.

Councilmember Rick Jennings represents Sacramento City Council District 7. ★

UC Davis Tallies Record Enrollment Numbers

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



UC Davis enrolled a record 41,239 students in fall 2024. Photo by University of California, Davis

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 make the university eligible to apply for competitive grants from the federal government and foundations to support student success, innovation and institutional transformation.

The campus already secured the federal government’s status as a Minority Serving Institution in 2019 when it was designated an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.

New undergraduates come from 56 California counties, 47 states and U.S. territories, and 48 countries. Approximately 83.4% are state residents, 4.6% are U.S. domestic students from out of state, 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 federal Pell Grants.

Robert Penman, executive director of Undergraduate Admissions, said the average grade point average 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. ★



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As we step into 2025, it's a time to reflect on cherished memories, learn from past experiences, and greet the New Year with hope, joy, and open hearts. Let's welcome this fresh start with gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead.

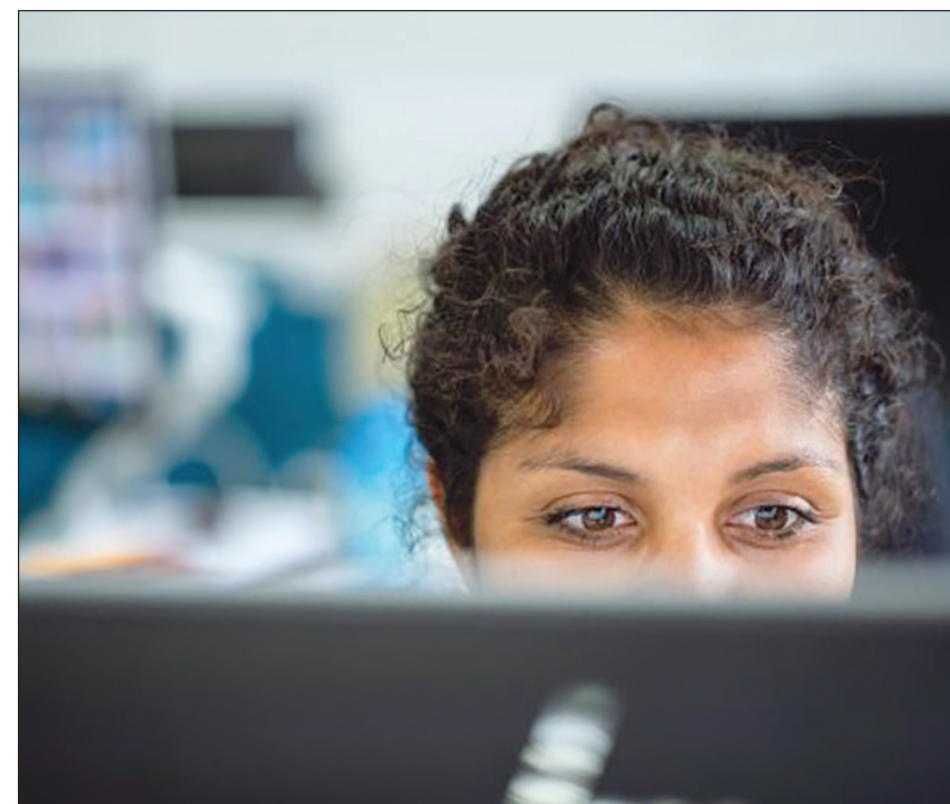


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Robotics and Resilience



St. Francis High School helps to populate engineering with female talent.

Continued from page 1

Girls Schools, girls attending an all-girls school are six times more likely to consider majoring in a STEM subject and three times more likely to consider engineering careers compared to girls who attended co-educational high schools.

Kinnera Tirumala is a senior at St. Francis who has immersed herself in all the STEM opportunities St. Francis has to offer. She has been a part of St. Francis's world-champion robotics team throughout her high school career, and this year she is a member of its executive leadership team. She is also the CEO of Echelon Catapult, an organization of high school students dedicated to teaching STEM to middle school students in underserved communities.

While she still would have taken advantage of STEM classes and extracurriculars at a co-educational school, Tirumala agrees that St. Francis's all-girls STEM environment has given her a safer space to explore robotics and engineering.

"It's also helped me find a sense of purpose, because I see people in my field who look like me, and therefore I am more encouraged to pursue STEM," Tirumala said. "I've had this pleasure of being in a sisterhood of girls where we support one another because we know what it's like to be a minority in the workforce."

These aspects of an all-girls educational environment are very attractive to young girls and their parents who are looking at different high schools in the Sacramento area. Alexa Mendoza, a freshman and new member on

the robotics team this year, was excited to enroll at St. Francis when she heard about the myriad of STEM opportunities the school offers for its students. So far, she has particularly enjoyed meeting new people through robotics.

"A lot of us are freshmen or new members, and if we ever have questions, we can just ask anyone on the team who's had more experience," Mendoza said. "They understand that this is our first time being here. Being on a team with other grades just helps you adjust because some of us don't have experience, and the older members are very knowledgeable and willing to share what they have learned."

The St. Francis' robotics team initially captured attention when it became the first all-female robotics team to win the Marine Advanced Technology Education ROV World Championship in the summer of 2023. All St. Francis students are eligible to join the team, and Tirumala encourages new students to try it out. This year, students and teachers are particularly excited for the new STEM Zone lab that is being built on campus.

The Science Olympiad team is getting a whole new space as well, and the school has also added a maker space that allows students to come in and make everything from club T-shirts to gifts for friends to parts for rockets.

Matilda Myers, a sophomore and a new member of the Science Olympiad team, said the resources St. Francis provides for its STEM teams really benefit the students and the teams.

"It's amazing having access to an entire area blocked off specifically for STEM," Myers said. ★

"It gives us the much-needed room and resources to design, experiment and study, especially since so many girls here hope to pursue STEM-related fields."

These young women are perfect examples of how an all-girls educational environment empowers young women to explore and pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and robotics coach Marcus Grindstaff said he has seen the growth of his students profoundly impact their futures.

"There's a lot of stories of women who went on to study engineering or computer science from the robotics team, but one of them that's really clear to me is my daughter's experience," Grindstaff said. "She had very little interest in engineering when she joined St. Francis, and now she's a freshman at Purdue, studying mechanical engineering. The robotics team really impacted her and gave her the confidence to go after a mechanical engineering degree."

Although Myers and Mendoza haven't decided what they want to pursue as a career, Tirumala plans on majoring in electrical engineering, and she said she would not have the confidence to make this decision without her experiences at St. Francis.

"Don't shy away from those experiences, because all experiences are beautiful," Tirumala said. "If you decide at any point it's not for you, at least you know you've tried it. We really get to flourish and develop our sense of identity (at St. Francis), and I strongly believe that I would not be the person I am today without St. Francis's guidance." ★

Sac City Council Confirms Vice-Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem and Committee Positions



Karina Talamantes and Eric Guerra were appointed to new Sacramento City Council leadership posts. Photo courtesy of the City of Sacramento

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Two members of the Sacramento City Council have been appointed by Mayor Kevin McCarty and unanimously confirmed by the City Council for leadership posts.

The Council on Jan. 7 approved Councilmember Karina Talamantes (District 3) as vice-mayor and Councilmember Eric Guerra (District 6) as mayor pro tempore for 2025. Vice-mayor and mayor pro tempore appointments typically last for a calendar year.

The vice-mayor and mayor pro tempore chair meetings in the mayor's absence and often represent the city in public if the mayor is unable to be present. Councilmember Caity Maple (District 5) served as vice-mayor and Councilmember Talamantes (District 3) was mayor pro tempore in 2024.

"Vice-Mayor Talamantes and Mayor Pro Tem Guerra bring valuable experience to their new roles," McCarty said. "I am confident they will serve our city with dedication and help us continue making progress on the important work ahead."

The City Council also recently approved

McCarty's appointments for the formal committees that make up the city's governance structure. Those committees are Law and Legislation, Personnel and Public Employees, Budget and Audit and the Racial Equity Committee. Those appointments include:

Law and Legislation: Roger Dickinson, Rick Jennings, Caity Maple (chair) and Phil Plukebaum.

Personnel and Public Employees: Rick Jennings (chair), Lisa Kaplan, Karina Talamantes and Mai Vang.

Budget and Audit: Roger Dickinson (chair), Eric Guerra, Caity Maple and Karina Talamantes.

Racial Equity: Eric Guerra, Rick Jennings, Karina Talamantes and Mai Vang (chair).

McCarty also appointed councilmembers to represent the city on regional governance bodies such as the Sacramento Area Council of Governments and joint powers authorities such as the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency.

See a full list of the appointments at https://sacramento.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=22&clip_id=6139&meta_id=807365. ★

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Sac City Unified Reaches Deal with Labor Union

Sacramento City Unified School District News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education unanimously approved a new two-year contract with Service Employees International Union, the labor partner representing hundreds of nutrition services workers, bus drivers, school office managers, instructional aides, technology support specialists, and other administrative and support staff.

The contract includes a 2% salary increase for all unit members retroactive to July 1, 2023, and a 4% salary increase for all unit members retroactive to July 1, 2024.

The new contract also adjusts the main Service Employees International Union salary schedule to address salary compaction among the lowest-paid employees. It minimizes the district's use of outside contractors and streamlines employee transfer and promotion language.

"This new contract demonstrates the district's commitment to leveling compensation and uplifting some of our

lowest-paid employees to a status that is more reflective of their immense value to the families and students we serve," said Jasjit Singh, President of the Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education.

"We are thrilled to announce the approval of a fair and forward-thinking contract that delivers much-needed salary increases and strong language to support our members, including our district's lowest-paid employees," said Karla Faucett, Service Employees International Union Chapter President. "This agreement not only addresses the critical need for competitive pay to retain and attract talented classified workers but also assists in filling vacancies as we continue to recruit and hire for essential positions needed to support the students we serve. Together, we're building a brighter future for our schools, staff, and community," said Faucett.

The district and Service Employees International Union look forward to beginning a new round of contract negotiations in the spring and working collaboratively toward an agreement for the 2025-2026 academic year. ★



The Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education approved a two-year contract with Service Employees International Union. Photo courtesy of Pixabay

ABOUT TOWN

Area Museums Offer Plenty of Experiences

The Greater Sacramento region is rich with museums and popular destinations that offer plenty of must-see and must-do experiences to explore.

A sampling of must-see and must-do experiences and special activations offered by local museums include the following:

California Automobile Museum – Take a ride in a museum car during Sunday Drives, the third Sunday of every month. With paid museum admission, take a ride from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Details at calautomuseum.org/

California State Railroad Museum—The Chinese Railroad Workers' Experience offers visitors a view of the Chinese workers who built the western portion of the nation's first Transcontinental Railroad. Marginalized by history, the Chinese workers were more

than a nameless group of laborers. Details at californiarailroad.museum/.

Elks Lodge Calendar of Events

Elk's Lodge Sunday Breakfast, 8:30 am-11 am every Sunday. Bring your friends and family; \$15 tax included. Best deal in town. Made to order Omelets or eggs any way you want. Bacon, sausage, potatoes, biscuits and gravy, pancakes, waffles, coffee. Large parties should call for reservations. Guests are VERY welcome!

Yoga, Monday 12 pm, Wednesday 3:30 pm. Lodge members free.

Martial Arts, Monday 5 pm Pickleball, Monday, Wednesday 9a-12p, Thursday 4:30-7:30p, Sunday 4-7p.

Improv Night, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 6-8 pm

Wednesday Night Dinner, 5:30 to 7 pm. See elks6.net for weekly menu. ★

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 vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com. ★



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A Veteran Thank Today

Donate Formalwear to Library's Annual Prom Drive



In 2024, more than 900 teens shopped free Prom Giveaway events at the Sacramento Public Library locations. Photos courtesy of Sacramento Public Library

Sacramento Public Library News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Ready to retire formal wear collecting dust in your closet? Give your glam a new home. Starting Jan. 21, Sacramento Public Library will accept donations of jackets, ties, dresses, shoes and accessories for its annual Prom Drive. Visit www.saclibrary.org/prom for full details.

Drop off gently-used formalwear from Jan. 21 through Feb. 1, at any library location during regular hours of operations. Donated clothing, shoes, jewelry and accessories should be free of holes, stains, rips and tears. A variety of styles and sizes including extended and plus are needed.

The library will host a series of Prom Giveaway events in the spring. Teens can browse the free collection and take home the perfect outfit for their special night. Last year, more than 900 teens shopped free Prom Giveaway events at the library.



The Sacramento Public Library is accepting gently used formalwear from Jan. 21 through Feb. 1 at any library location during regular hours of operations. Photos courtesy of Sacramento Public Library

"Prom should be a celebration, not a financial burden. Our Prom Drive ensures that every teen has the chance to shine without worrying about the cost," said Christie Hamm, Sacramento Public Library Youth Services manager. "This initiative, created by teens for teens, allows them to express themselves through the perfect outfit and make lasting memories."

Sacramento Public Library is committed to removing barriers and expanding access for all

in our community. From free access to information and technology to a range of learning opportunities and experiences, the Sacramento Public Library strives to meet the community's needs.

The Prom Drive is one of many programs for youth. Teens are invited to a free night of fun at the Tsakopoulos Library Galleria from 8 to 11 p.m. Jan. 25. Library After Hours: Teen Takeover will feature video games, a deejay, board games, food and drinks. ★

Volunteer Award Nominations Now Open

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Adult and Aging Commission is now taking applications for its "5 Over 50" Volunteer Award.

If you know someone who makes Sacramento County a better place to live and is 50 years old or older, now is your chance to celebrate them. Each year, the "5 Over 50" Volunteer Award recognizes outstanding members of our community.

The "5 Over 50" Awards will be presented during a Sacramento County Board of Supervisors meeting in May. The award is presented in May to coincide with Older Americans Month. Five nominees will receive the award, with one person selected from each district within Sacramento County.



The Sacramento County Adult and Aging Commission is accepting applications for its "5 Over 50" Volunteer Award through Feb. 7. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Nominees must be 50 years old or older, actively involved in volunteer work, and residents of Sacramento County. Two letters of reference are required as part of the application. Applications are due Friday, Feb. 7.

If you know someone who meets the criteria and has made an impact in Sacramento County, nominate them for the "5 Over 50" Volunteer Award. Learn more about the

application process and access the form by visiting the Adult and Aging Commission website at www.dcfas.saccounty.net/SAS/Pages/Adult-and-Aging-Commission.aspx.

Sacramento County's Adult and Aging Commission members look forward to celebrating the winners. Winners will also be featured on Sacramento County's website and YouTube channel. ★

Supporting Dry January Goals

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - As the new year begins, Sacramento County is highlighting the importance of a healthy start by recognizing January as Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month. Many might unknowingly celebrate this month with positive "new year, new me" changes such as "Dry January," which encourages individuals to limit or eliminate their consumption of alcohol and drugs to promote physical and mental well-being. This is also a great opportunity to evaluate your relationship with drugs and alcohol and seek treatment if needed.

Substance use disorder affects countless individuals and families, often showing signs that can be easily overlooked. These warning signs include drastic changes in mood or behavior, such as irritability, impulsivity or depression, as well as shifts in eating or sleeping habits, memory blackouts and neglect of home or work



Sacramento County is highlighting the importance of a healthy start to the new year. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

responsibilities.

Arguments about alcohol or drug use, strong cravings and risky behaviors such as driving under the influence are also key indicators.

For those struggling with substance use, Sacramento County offers comprehensive prevention and treatment services for youth and adults. The Behavioral Health Services, Screening and Coordination team is available 24/7 for screenings and referrals to appropriate treatment providers.

Individuals seeking help

can call 916-875-1055, CA Relay 711 or toll-free at 888-881-4881 to take the first step toward recovery.

By promoting awareness and access to treatment, Sacramento County representatives hope to encourage residents to reflect on their relationship with alcohol and drugs, take steps to improve their health and support loved ones who might be in need. Remember, recovery is possible and resources are available every day of the year to assist those on their journey. ★

Shape Sac County's Economic Future Together



Three meetings in January will be to go over Sacramento County's updated Economic Development Strategic Plan. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County's Office of Economic Development (OED) invites residents, business owners and stakeholders to participate in shaping the county's updated Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP). Three community meetings, two in-person and one virtual, will provide opportunities for the public to share insights and help craft a shared vision for Sacramento County's economic future.

These meetings are part of the county's ongoing effort to create a comprehensive roadmap that supports equitable economic growth, job creation and resource prioritization.

The first in-person community meeting will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 22 at the North Highlands Recreation and Park District at 6040 Watt Ave. in North Highlands. Residents can register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sac-county-economic-development-strategic-plan-update-community-meeting-tickets-1115898826429?aff=oddtcreator>.

The second in-person meeting will be from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Jan. 22 at the Sacramento County Health Department at 7001 East Parkway, Suite A, Sacramento. Residents can

register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sac-county-economic-development-strategic-plan-update-community-meeting-tickets-1115903650859?aff=oddtcreator>.

The third meeting is a virtual meeting from 12:30 to 2 p.m. Jan. 30 on Zoom. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sac-county-economic-development-strategic-plan-update-community-meeting-tickets-1115904563589?aff=oddtcreator>.

Meeting objectives are to hear from community members about economic development priorities; collaborate on a shared vision that reflects collective goals for Sacramento County; and inform the development of an inclusive economic development strategy.

These events are open to all Sacramento County residents, workers and business owners, and focus on addressing the needs of unincorporated areas. Your participation is vital to ensure the updated strategy reflects the diverse perspectives and priorities of our community.

For additional details on the Economic Development Strategic Plan process and to stay updated on progress, visit the Economic Development Strategic Plan webpage at economic.saccounty.gov. For any questions, email Jean Coleman at colemanj@saccounty.gov. ★

2024 Seventh-Best Year for Region's New Home Sales

North State Building Industry Association News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Well above-average new home sales in December pushed sales for the year to just under 7,000, making 2024 the seventh-best year for sales in the Sacramento region since the North State Building Industry Association (BIA) began keeping records.

The Building Industry Association announced Jan. 7 that its members reported selling 398 new homes in December, bringing the yearly total to 6,993. That figure is up 8% from 2023 and is 35% higher than the average year since records began being kept in 1997.

Building Industry Association President and CEO Tim Murphy said area builders are optimistic that the market for new homes will remain robust in 2025.

"While mortgage interest rates remain higher than expected, there is still high demand for new homes, and we are optimistic that trend will continue into 2025," Murphy said. "Many builders are able to offer incentives that make new homes more affordable, and the advantages of buying new are clearly a major selling point as well."

December's sales total was down 24% from November, which is normal as December is historically the slowest month for builders. Sales for the month



The Building Industry Association announced Jan. 7 that its members reported selling 398 new homes in December. MPG file photo

were even with December 2023 and were 24% above the monthly average. As with sales for the year, it was the seventh-best December on record.

For the year, Rancho Cordova nosed out Roseville for the most sales with 620, five sales more than the usual leader. Sacramento was third with 431, followed by Elk Grove (428) and Folsom (331.) Note that total sales for 2024 have been trued up by including statistics for a handful of builders who do not report on a monthly basis. Thus, the monthly figures and the annual total for 2024 are different.

Building Industry Association statistics include sales by members in Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. ★

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. ★

New Law Inspired by Ex-Lawmaker's DUI Adds to Alcohol Education in California Schools

By Ryan Sabalow, CALMatters.org

California public school students will get additional coursework on the harms of alcohol in 2025, thanks to a new law from a former lawmaker whose drunken driving arrest inspired her legislation.

In September, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 2865 by former Los Angeles Democratic Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo, whose DUI last year helped derail her political career.

California schools are already required to provide instruction about alcohol, narcotics and other dangerous drugs. This bill would require that schools also provide instruction about the short- and long-term harms of excessive drinking — including alcohol's link to chronic diseases, mental health problems and deaths.

As she pitched her bill to her colleagues in 2024, Carrillo told them that it was important for students to learn about alcohol's consequences in the hopes they don't go down the path she did.

"I wish I would have known in high school what I know now," she said at one hearing. "I would have made different choices."

On Nov. 3, 2023, Carrillo crashed into parked cars in Northeast Los Angeles. Police said her blood-alcohol level was twice the legal limit, according to the Los Angeles Times. She ended up pleading no contest to the DUI in the middle of her race for Los Angeles City Council, which she lost. Because

she ran for city council, Carrillo left her Assembly seat this year.

Carrillo said her DUI was a wake up call for her. She said she started going to therapy and became sober. As she reflected on her life, she said her own struggles with booze began at an early age. And she was troubled by how prevalent alcohol is in society, despite its documented dangers.

Alcohol is a National and Global Health Issue

According to federal health officials, alcohol-related diseases kill 178,000 people in the U.S. each year, and death rates are increasing. Noting that alcohol causes at least seven types of cancer, including bowel and breast cancers, the World Health Organization last year declared that "when it comes to alcohol consumption, there is no safe amount."

Carrillo testified that 54 Californians die each day from alcohol.

"I want young people to learn early how something that is so legally and easily accessible can do so much harm if not consumed with more knowledge and more responsibility," she told her colleagues.

Her bill passed without any lawmakers voting against it.

What Law Will Do

Under the new law, school boards can decide which grades receive the new instruction. They can ask the state for reimbursements for the costs of instruction, training and updates to instructional materials, said Nicholas Filipas, a spokesperson for

the California Department of Education.

At the San Juan Unified School District in the Sacramento region, educators shouldn't have trouble rolling the bill's requirements into their schools' curriculum, said Raj Rai, a spokesperson for the district, which educates about 39,000 students.

"Alcohol education has been embedded into our high school health class curriculum for quite some time," Rai said in an email. "Our curriculum team will review the currently adopted health materials to see if anything additional is needed to meet the new requirements."

The district already has several programs that teach students grades six through 12 about the harms of alcohol and drugs with the goal of reducing or eliminating teen substance abuse.

The district's high schools also regularly participate in California's Highway Patrol's "Every 15 Minutes," Rai said.

The CHP describes the program as challenging teens to "think about drinking, driving, personal safety, the responsibility of making mature decisions and the impact their decisions have on family, friends, their community, and many others."

Ryan Sabalow is a Digital Democracy reporter for CalMatters. A graduate of Chico State University, he began his career covering local news for the Auburn Journal in Placer County and The Record Searchlight in Redding. ★

Tdap Shot Urged as Whooping Cough Increases

Continued from Page 1

Vaccination is recommended for all: Pregnant people between 27 and 36 weeks of pregnancy, even if they have received Tdap in the past.

Adults, every 10 years.

Adolescents aged 11 or 12 years (Tdap vaccine is also required for 7th grade advancement in California).

Infants and young children receive their own whooping cough (DTaP) vaccines starting at 2 months through 4-6 years of age. Babies and children who haven't had all recommended doses are more likely to have serious complications.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about which vaccines are right for you and your family.

People with whooping cough have

severe coughing attacks that can last for months. Infants too young for vaccination are at greatest risk for hospitalization and death.

Early signs of whooping cough are similar to symptoms of the common cold such as a runny or stuffy nose and low-grade fever. Babies with whooping cough may have trouble breathing, turn blue or stop breathing.

To protect infants from whooping cough, California Department of Public Health strongly urges maternal immunization with Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine in the last trimester (between 27 and 36 weeks) of every pregnancy. When given during pregnancy, Tdap is approximately 90% effective in preventing infant hospitalizations due to whooping cough. It is also beneficial for

all family members and caregivers of newborns to receive either the Tdap (for adults and children older than seven) or DTaP (for those seven years of age or younger) vaccines to prevent spreading whooping cough to infants.

These vaccines are safe and effective and can be received at the same time as flu, COVID, or RSV vaccines.

Tdap vaccines are widely available at many doctor offices and pharmacies. Schedule a vaccine appointment by visiting MyTurn.ca.gov or contacting your local pharmacy or health care provider.

Most health insurance plans, including Medi-Cal, cover Tdap vaccines. Individuals experiencing difficulty finding a place to get immunized may contact their health care provider or local health department for help.

The Vaccines For Children (VFC) program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children (18 and younger) who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of an inability to pay. Contact your doctor to learn if they are enrolled in Vaccines For Children or visit MyTurn to find a location based on your eligibility.

Whooping cough (pertussis) activity in California is on the rise, with more than 2,000 reported cases and one infant death between the months of January and October of 2024.

Everyone who is between 27 and 36 weeks pregnant and family members or caregivers of infants should get the Tdap/DTaP vaccination to help protect infants and young children against serious illness and hospitalization. ★

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SacRT Temporarily Closing Globe Station on Blue Line

Sacramento Regional Transit District News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) is continuing its station platform construction on the Blue Line to prepare for the arrival of the new low-floor light rail vehicles. As part of this modernization project, Globe Station will be closed for construction through Sunday, March 2.

This critical project aims to enhance accessibility and improve the

rider experience. There will be bus bridges in place between Alkali Flat/La Valentina and Marconi/Arcade stations on weekends due to construction activity impacting light rail service.

Construction Timeline and Rider Information:

Saturday, Jan. 25 and Sunday, Jan. 26: A bus bridge will be provided between Alkali Flat/La Valentina and Marconi/Arcade stations.

Monday, Jan. 27 through Friday, Jan. 31: Globe Station will be closed to riders boarding and deboarding. No shuttle bus service will be available. Riders are encouraged to use Arden/Del Paso Station instead.

This pattern will continue through the closure period, with bus bridge service available on weekends.

SacRT encourages riders to plan ahead and check for real-time updates through SacRT's website sacrt.com/alerts, or by



The S700 low-floor light rail trains are designed to enhance accessibility, comfort and efficiency for all riders. Photo courtesy of SacRT

downloading the free Alert SacRT app to receive the latest service updates. The construction schedule is subject to change based on weather conditions and other factors.

About the Project:

This platform construction project is a significant step toward modernizing the light rail system. SacRT is committed to ensuring accessibility and creating a more comfortable and inclusive transit experience for all riders. Once

complete, these improvements will accommodate the new low-floor light rail vehicles and align SacRT with its vision for a more connected future.

Learn more about the project at sacrt.com/stationclosure. ★

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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. ★

Athletics Season Tickets Sell Out

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



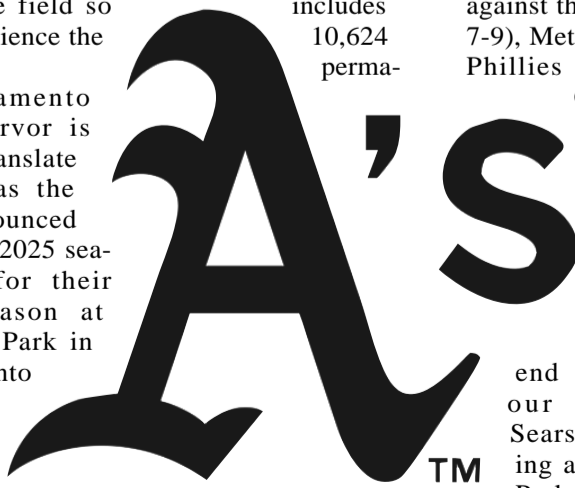
With demand for season tickets so high, the A's have already created a waitlist for 2026 season tickets. Image by Wendy Luby from Pixabay

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

tickets that fans can join at www.athletics.com/seasontickets.

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

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 cappella 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. ★

Capital Stage Managing Director Riedell Announces Retirement

Capital Stage News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On Jan. 7, Capital Stage's Managing Director Keith Riedell announced he will retire in August of 2025 at the conclusion of Capital Stage's 2024-25 Season after 19 years of distinguished service to the company. The Capital Stage Board will launch a nationwide search for a new managing director in the coming weeks.

Riedell joined Capital Stage in 2007 and was appointed Managing Director in 2014. Under his leadership, Capital Stage strengthened its position as one of the Sacramento region's most critically acclaimed theater companies and expanded its artistic and educational programming.

Among his many accomplishments, Riedell is credited with creating and implementing Capital Stage's 5-year strategic plan in 2023, which will guide the company into the future.

"Working with the Company's founders in our formative years was an honor and I am thankful for their trust in me and for allowing me to grow in the organization. I'm also thankful to our current Artistic Director, Michael Stevenson, for how he has led Capital Stage with compassion, dignity, and grace. But now it's time for a new generation of leadership and I'm happy to hand over the torch," said Riedell.

Capital Stage Board President Kathryn Doi praised Riedell's contributions: "When Keith joined Capital Stage during the company's infancy, ticket sales were made by telephone and answering machine. Keith's passion, commitment, and boundless energy have been critical to the development of Capital Stage into the sophisticated and successful arts organization that it is today. We will be forever grateful for his many years of leadership and stewardship."



Capital Stage Managing Director Keith Riedell will retire in August 2025 at the conclusion of Capital Stage's 2024-25 season.
Photo courtesy of Capital Stage

Capital Stage will conduct a national search for its next managing director beginning later this month.

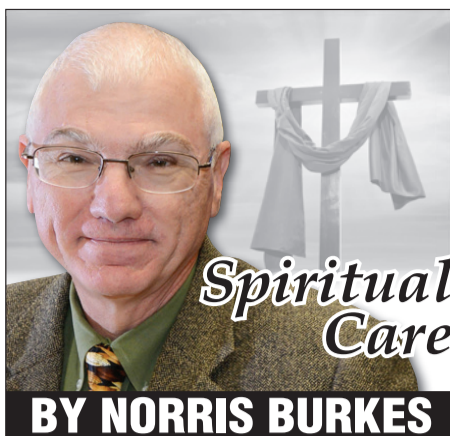
The company has established a search committee comprised of board members and staff representatives to ensure a smooth leadership transition.

Capital Stage is a professional non-profit theatre company in Sacramento whose mission is to entertain, engage and challenge its audience with bold, thought-provoking theatre.

Founded in 2005, Capital Stage presents seven full-length live theatre productions each year, as well as various concerts and special events in its Midtown Sacramento home at 2215 J St., Sacramento.

Identified by the Sacramento Bee as "one of the most respected arts organizations in the region," Capital Stage is a leader in cutting-edge quality theatre in Northern California. ★

What's it To You?



I first met Bill at Baylor University. He was a fellow ministerial student who imprinted his fraternity shirt with a mock Latin phrase, "Quid tibi est?"

In 1978, Google was still a long way off, so my fellow pledges asked him to translate it.

"What's it to you?" he asked with some defiance.

"Oh, come on," we implored, "Just tell us what it means."

Regarding us as lowly plebes, he weighted his last two words, "What's it TO YOU?"

The puzzle game went on a few minutes until we heard the literal translation – "What's-it-to-you?"

Game, set match. He had us.

But, I just shrugged it off because I'd dealt with folks like him in my past who were sanctimonious, always a self proclaimed expert who never offered any level ground to those of us who were searching.

One of my earliest such encounters was a church youth group leader named Sherry.

She always flashed bright smile before she pitched her loaded question, "Have you received the gift of the Holy Spirit?"

The question is a fallacious one, much like the one "Have you stopped beating your wife?"

It was impossible to give Sherry a good answer. If I said, "Yes, I'm full of the spirit," she'd lay out her Bible like a religious yardstick to determine if my holy spirit measured up to hers.

If I said "No," I confirmed her first impression that I wasn't a good Christian.

Worse yet, a "no" answer brought the worst question, "Do you want to

speak in tongues?"

This question was a reference to the ecstatic and unintelligible language spoken by thousands of people in charismatic churches. But, no, I wasn't ready for that one.

I bring up the examples of Bill and Sherrie because I suspect that some of you have been turned off religion by people like them. If so, you're the victim of the loaded questions fired by the pious church goers into innocent bystanders.

These inquisitors are trying to reduce your spirituality to some kind of test that only they can pass with questions such as: "Don't you believe in Jesus? Don't you want the spirit in your life?" or "If you were to die tonight, did you know you'll go to hell?"

How do you answer questions like that from folks like this?

Fellow columnist Carolyn Hax suggests that we regard people's "nutritional label" and ask if they are worth the time. If not, she says, "Friends with a low decency content need to be treated as junk food."

I think this is true in our efforts to find a spiritual community too. Some people and places are just gonna be junk food, but we can also find quality people when we make the effort to look for them.

At the end of the day, spiritual junk food doesn't "fill" you any more than this woman's version of the "holy" spirit. You only encounter God through a spiritual relationship. And like all relationships, you ask questions, you must dialogue, you can even lose your temper, but you will also learn to laugh at yourself and forgive others.

In the meantime, to all you who've had someone discourage you from involvement with the local church, I leave with the strategy suggested in one more pseudo-Latin phrase, "Illegitimi non carborundum."

The humorous phrase originated as an informal motto in the British Armed Forces.

It roughly means, "Don't let the idiots get you down," but if you Google it you'll find a more colorful version mock-Latin aphorism that is best left out of this family newspaper. ★



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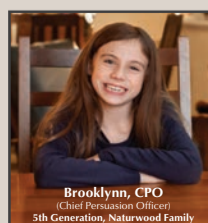
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