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# Land Park News

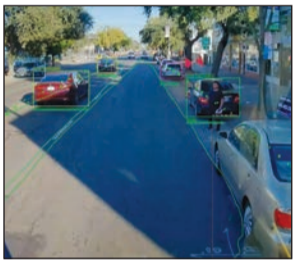
VOL 34 • ISSUE 5

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MARCH 7, 2025

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CHAPLAIN, YET**



PAGE 9

## Little Free Libraries Blossom in Land Park

Story and Photos  
by Kristina Rogers

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Land Park is home to bibliophiles who love trading and sharing books. They visit the library, scour bookstores and chat about good stories in book clubs. But no one needs to leave their Land Park neighborhood to find a new book to enjoy. The Little Free Library movement has made it so that all you need to do is go for a walk to find new, free books.

Messenger Publishing Group asked some Land Park residents about their personalized Little Free Libraries and how they became involved in the movement.

Steve Graham (781 5th Ave.) has enjoyed his Little Free Library for about 10 years.

"I saw one and thought that's a smart idea," Graham said. He built his little library with glass blocks from a garage sale, then added a matching bench.

"My house is a major route for school. The kids will stop and sit on the bench, and sometimes their parents will join them." Graham tends to enjoy reading the classics,

"I just tackled Ulysses because I hate myself," he laughed. His Little Free Library is well managed by

*Continued on Page 2*



Steve Graham is at his little library on 5th Avenue where youths sit on the bench to read.

## Bill Aims to Ban Disposable Vapes

**CALPIRG New Release**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - In an effort to reduce the proliferation of discarded electronic waste in California, Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin introduced Assembly Bill 762 on Feb. 19, to ban single-use disposable vapes in the state.

The bill's authors were joined by recyclers, college students and environmental advocates who support the effort to stop beach pollution and electronic waste at a news conference.

"Disposable vapes have become the new poster child for our single-use, throwaway society," said Fiona Hines, CALPIRG legislative advocate. "Some of these vapes come with digital touchscreens, even though they're designed to be thrown out after a week."

According to CALPIRG's Vape Waste report, Americans throw out 4.5 disposable vapes per second. The newest models come with touch screens and installed games, even though they're unable to be refilled once they run out of nicotine or cannabis e-liquid.

Tobacco products - mostly cigarette butts - have polluted beaches for decades. Now, trendier disposable vapes pose a more permanent pollution threat. While cigarette trash takes 10 years to degrade, the plastic in disposable vapes is not biodegradable, and will never fully leave the environment.

"Disposable vapes are ruining our beaches, environment, and public health. I'm pleased to sponsor a ban," said Assemblymember Irwin, author of the bill. "We have enough single-use waste and public health concerns without vapes littering our state."

"Disposable vapes have batteries which can't be removed, and contain residue hazardous waste," said Joe La Mariana, RethinkWaste executive director. "Because of these batteries, disposable vapes are difficult to recycle and

*Continued on Page 3*

## Sacramento County Celebrates 175 Years



**Sacramento County  
News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - This year marks a significant milestone in the history of Sacramento County as it celebrates its 175th anniversary, also known as its demisemiseptcentennial.

Since its founding on Feb. 18, 1850, Sacramento County has been at the forefront of service delivery, evolving to meet the needs of its residents with integrity and innovation. Sacramento County was incorporated in response to the needs of a growing population. The county is one of the original 27 counties of California. The county charter was established in 1933 and is still in use today.

Sacramento County's population



The current Sacramento County Board of Supervisors is, from left, Patrick Kennedy (District 2), Phil Serna (District 1), Rosario Rodriguez (District 4), Rich Desmond (District 3) and Pat Hume (District 5). Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

in 1850 was 9,087. Today, the county serves more than 1.6 million residents across its landscape. Over the past 175 years, Sacramento County has remained committed to providing

essential services that enhance the quality of life for all who call it home.

The county's responsibilities to its

*Continued on Page 8*



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# Little Free Libraries Blossom in Land Park

Continued from Page 1

the neighbors, who don't allow the collection to grow stale.

At 780 Swanston Drive, Francesca Pardini explained, "As soon as we moved into our home, I knew I wanted one."

They had their Little Free Library for two years. Francesca bought pre-made building plans online, then her father helped her build it. Pardini replenishes her library with books she gets from the Facebook "buy nothing" group. She also keeps extra books in her office to change out occasionally. Pardini is a fan of contemporary fiction and fantasy. Her partner, Calen McNickles, likes fantasy, such as Tolkien and Joe Abercrombie.

Retired elementary school teacher and children's librarian Karen Martin bought a pre-made box for her 1770 5th Ave. home two years ago. Today, the bright blue box is a popular hub for neighbors with little ones.

"I have two daughters and six grandchildren, so I've wanted to do this for a while," Martin said.

After a long career in supporting early reading, Martin understands the value of inspiring the next generation to love books. When asked what she enjoys reading, she responded, "Historical fiction. My book club just finished 'Comfort of Crows' by Margaret Renkl. We also read 'The Covenant of Water' by Abraham Verghese. And I really enjoyed 'The Women' by Kristin Hannah."

She has assistance with keeping her library



Ruby Clark Shows off her grandchild's custom-painted little library on 7th Avenue.



The Snoopy-inspired library was built as an Eagle Scout project.



Francesca Pardini and Calen McNickles stand at their little library on Swanston.



Land Park has an array of various personalities represented in the Little Free Library community.



At Karen Martin's 5th Avenue "Blue Box," little children love stopping while walking with their parents.

offerings fresh.

"A gentleman who rides a bike with big saddlebags filled with books comes to move things around. He's the nicest man and keeps the collections vibrant and different," Martin said.

For those who like the "take a book, leave a book" philosophy, they can learn more online at [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org). The website provides all the resources to get started. People can build their own purchase plans or have a pre-made Little Free Library delivered. Those who register with the organization are

called "Stewards" and receive several benefits, including having their Little Free Library listed on a neighborhood map. The map is also conveniently found on the organization's phone app.

Many little libraries are not registered with the organization. And they don't have to be. Take Ruby Clark's at 1615 7th Ave.

Around four years ago, she received a free little library as a Christmas present. Her grandchild personally stripped and painted it in a green trees

motif. Clark's favorite types of books are best sellers, history and murder mysteries.

"The library is used by neighbors, and we change it out from time to time," Clark said.

Then there are neighbors who inherited their little library, as is the case with Jennifer and Robert Pennington at 1817 Castro Way. Their cute Snoopy-inspired Little Free Library came with their house.

"The last owner's son built it as an Eagle Scout project," explained Jennifer Pennington. "We

try to keep on top of it but are rather busy. There is a 'library angel' who drives around in a van and comes by to replenish it."

Book aficionado Megan Seely has had her Little Free Library for more than 10 years. The tall 2676 Harkness St. library was built by her brother-in-law as a birthday gift. She finds people are great about rotating it.

When asked what she likes to read, Seely answers, "That's like asking who's your favorite child. I actually read a lot of non-fiction, historical fiction and social commentary. Plus, young adult books because I have two

teenagers."

The family's beloved childhood series is "Lemony Snicket." A quote was added to the door of their little library from the cherished stories: "All the secrets of the world are contained in books. Read at your own risk."

With an abundance of colorful little libraries to choose from, Land Park continues to be a neighborhood filled with literary risk-takers.

*Kristina Rogers is a Land Park resident, writer and reader. She is currently reading Matt Haig's "The Life Impossible."* ★

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# Bill Aims to Ban Disposable Vapes

# Block a Bus Stop, Get a Ticket

Continued from Page 1

can pose a fire risk to our facilities. We need to make it easier to recycle at scale, not riskier.”

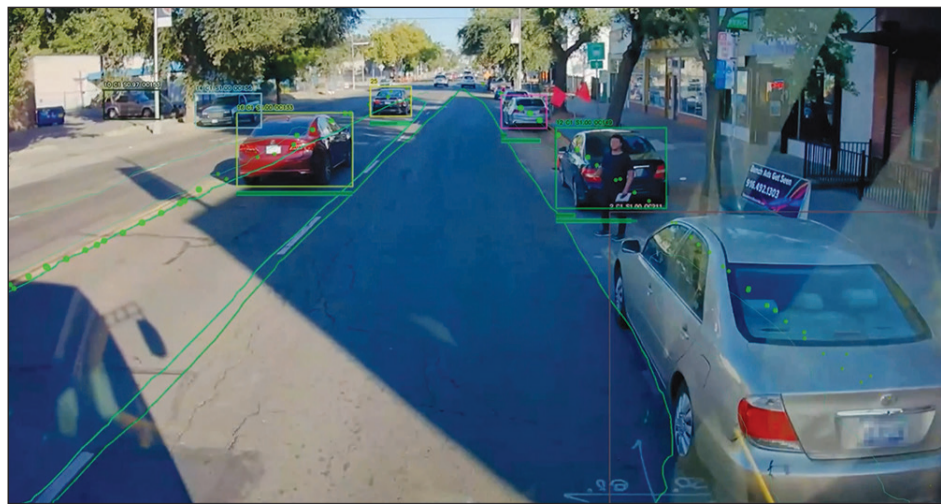
“Every second, 4.5 disposable vapes are tossed away, leaving behind toxic waste, fire hazards and a massive drain on our planet’s resources,” said Tony Hackett, Californians Against Waste Policy Associate. “These products aren’t just a public health risk; they’re an environmental time bomb. California has led on waste reduction before, and it’s time to do it again by banning single use vapes and shifting to safer, more sustainable alternatives.”

“The California Product Stewardship Council believes that manufacturers should take responsibility, including financially, for the end of life of the products that they create,” said Doug Kobold, Executive Director with the California Product Stewardship Council. “On occasion, the most problematic products and the problems that those products cause require urgent action to protect the health and wellbeing of our environment,

communities and families. We believe that a ban on these unrecyclable single use vapes will reduce the dangers and costs these devices pose to local government waste authorities and facility operators.”

Vape waste pollutes California’s beaches and poses a threat to wildlife, who may ingest the toxic e-liquid residue or choke on large pieces of plastic. Americans throw out 500 pounds of e-waste each second, and the non-removable batteries in disposable vapes make them difficult to recycle, adding to the pileup. If passed, Assembly Bill 762 would ban the sale of these single-use products in California to reduce the harm to nature and wildlife, which relies on clean open space to hunt, migrate and mate.

“Nothing we use for a few days should pollute the environment and harm wildlife for centuries to come,” said Hines. “We hope the state legislature moves swiftly to reduce this harmful contributor to our larger e-waste problem. Thanks to Assemblymember Irwin, we can envision cleaner beaches and healthier wildlife in our state’s future.” ★



Pictured is the view from forward-facing cameras on SacRT buses that use artificial intelligence to detect parking violations within the City of Sacramento. Photo courtesy of SacRT

## Sacramento Regional Transit District News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -

The Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) is alerting drivers that the City of Sacramento will begin issuing citations to vehicles parked illegally in bus stops. This marks the next phase of SacRT’s Bus Stop Enforcement Program, which launched in December 2024 to improve rider safety, accessibility, and the reliability of bus service across Sacramento.

Since the start of the program in December, 2,740 warnings have been issued to vehicles obstructing bus stops between Dec. 19, 2024, and Feb. 11, 2025. The enforcement program, powered by advanced AI-enabled camera systems provided by Hayden AI, ensures clear and accessible bus stops for all passengers, including those with mobility challenges.

Blocked bus stops force passengers to board or exit buses in unsafe areas, often into traffic, and can delay buses, impacting the entire transit system. By keeping bus stops clear, SacRT

ensures safer boarding for riders, particularly seniors and individuals with disabilities, while improving overall service reliability.

“Keeping bus stops clear is critical to ensuring the safety and accessibility of our transit system,” said SacRT General Manager/CEO Henry Li. “This program is a significant step forward in creating a safer, more reliable experience for our riders and bus operators while promoting sustainable and efficient public transit.”

One hundred SacRT buses are equipped with forward-facing cameras that use artificial intelligence to detect parking violations within the City of Sacramento.

Evidence packages, including video, photos and location data, are reviewed by the City of Sacramento before issuing citations. Citations will be mailed to the registered owner of vehicles detected blocking bus stops. The citation is \$100.

The enforcement program not only targets vehicles blocking bus stops but also extends to bike lane violations, supporting the city’s commitment

to safer streets and sustainable transportation. Bike lane enforcement will begin later in 2025.

“The City of Sacramento is committed to keeping bus stops clear to ensure rider safety and prevent transit delays caused by illegally parked vehicles which create hazardous conditions for riders and delay transit service,” said Staci Hovermale, parking manager, City of Sacramento. “Through our partnership with SacRT, we are addressing these challenges head-on, enhancing efficiency and reliability for everyone who depends on public transit and bike lanes.”

SacRT’s program joins similar enforcement initiatives in major cities like Oakland, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and New York City, where technology-driven solutions have significantly improved transit operations and street safety.

California-based Hayden AI provides the automated bus stop and bike lane enforcement camera systems for SacRT buses and Duncan Solutions provides the violation processing software. ★

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RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

# Tickets Now on Sale for Capital Airshow

## California Capital Airshow News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The 2025 California Capital Airshow, presented by Sacramento County in partnership with the City of Rancho Cordova, returns to Mather Airport on March 22 and 23.

A limited quantity of tickets are now on sale for this highly-anticipated event, which is headlined by the world-renowned U.S. Navy Blue Angels flight demonstration squadron.

Gates to the Airshow will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 22 and Sunday, March 23. Each day will feature four hours of non-stop flying performances from noon to 4 p.m. Performers

include the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, U.S. Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II, U.S. Air Force F-16 Viper and C-17 Globemaster III demonstration teams, Tucker's Air Patrol, vintage World War II aircraft and more.

The event also offers miles of exhibits, aircraft displays and entertainment on the ground.

"With the Blue Angels headlining for the first time since 2019, this year's Airshow promises to be an unforgettable experience for aviation fans of all ages," said Darcy Brewer, executive director of the California Capital Airshow. "Our team has worked tirelessly to create an event that showcases the awe-inspiring power of flight, and we can't wait to welcome everyone for

a weekend with amazing performances and family fun."

The event offers several ticket types, with a range of experiences and accommodations. General Admission tickets for the 2025 Airshow includes free parking and event admission for up to six children (ages 15 and under).

New this year is an exclusive event entrance and venue for all attendees with upgraded tickets. Guests will have access to food trucks and upgraded restrooms dedicated to upgraded ticket holders. The Airshow has several tiers of ticketed experiences, including the Capital Club, Flight Line Club and Mather Club, which offer a range of benefits such as shaded seating, complimentary beverages, buffet



The 2025 California Capital Airshow will be headlined by the world-renowned U.S. Navy Blue Angels flight demonstration squadron. Photo courtesy of the California Capital Airshow

lunch and prime views of the aerial performances. Returning this year is The Hangar experience, which includes unlimited craft beer and spirits from the City of Rancho Cordova's Barrel District and wine

from Starfield Vineyards. For those seeking a more premium experience, First Class, a brand-new offering for 2025, includes exclusive access to VIP amenities, a pilot meet-and-greet, and premium

food and drink options. Tickets will not be sold at the event gates. For more information about tickets, pricing and packages, visit online californiacapitalairshow.com. ★



**McClatchy Music Presents**

## Spring Soiree

The C.K. McClatchy Music Program invites supporters of music to its Spring Soirée fundraiser on Saturday, March 22, 2025 from 7-10pm held at the McClatchy High School L-Wing quad and the Auditorium.

Join us for an evening of appetizers, mocktails and a silent auction to support this excellent program. This adults-only event includes solo and chamber music performances by the program's students, and will culminate with a concert.

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# Hornet Nets Pitcher of the Week Award

## Sacramento State University News Release

### SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- Fresh off a performance that earned him his first victory of the season, senior right-hander Evan Gibbons was named the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) Pitcher of the Week on Monday, Feb. 24.

It is the first career honor for Gibbons, who became the first Hornet hurler to win the award since teammate Kade Brown did so on April 22 of last season.

The three-time WAC All-Academic Team selection put up a stellar start in game three of the series against Ball State on Feb. 21, picking up his first "quality start" of the season while combining on a three-hit shutout.

Brown allowed only two



On Feb. 24, Hornet senior right-hander Evan Gibbons was named the Western Athletic Conference Pitcher of the Week. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State Athletics

hits and five baserunners total over six shutout innings, walking a pair and tying his career high with eight strikeouts. Of the five Cardinals that reached base during his time on the mound, Gibbons stranded four of those in scoring position as Sacramento State went on to win the game, 2-0.

The eight strikeouts matched his high bar set in 2023 against Utah Tech and tied twice in 2024 in starts against Utah Valley and Stephen F. Austin. Gibbons is tied for second on the team with 10 strikeouts over 10.2 innings of work, holding opposing hitters to a .231 batting average.

Following a short break, the Hornets returned to the diamond on Feb. 26, defeating South Dakota State 14-2 in the opening game of a four-game home series at John Smith Field. ★

## Women's Tennis Adds International Talent



Cami Maldonado Gutierrez, ranked as one of the top 10 juniors in her home country of Mexico, has committed to join the Sacramento State women's tennis team for the 2025-26 season. Courtesy photo

### Sacramento State University News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Cami Maldonado Gutierrez, ranked as one of the top 10 juniors in her home country of Mexico, has committed to join the Sacramento State women's tennis team Head Coach Sophie Breault announced on Feb. 21.

"We're thrilled to welcome Camila to our program and can't wait to see her growth over the next four years," Breault said. "Cami is a crafty lefty with incredible skill in moving the ball around the court. With so much untapped potential, she has everything it takes to become a top collegiate player."

"Aside from her talent, she's a kind, hardworking, and passionate competitor who will be a perfect fit for our team culture and the Hornet family. We have no doubt she'll make an immediate impact as we pursue our goals of winning the Big

Sky Championship and beyond."

Originally from Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, Mexico, she ranked as high as No. 561 in the world according to the Jan. 6 International Tennis Federation's Juniors ranking and is currently No. 584 as of Feb. 17.

A member of the Chiapas State Team in 2022, she reached the quarterfinals of the Conade National Olympics and is well-versed in both singles and doubles competition.

Among her career highlights, she claimed five doubles titles from 2023-24 and was a semifinalist in a sixth event, while claiming a singles championship and another singles finals appearance at a pair of J30 Intercollegiate Tennis Association tournaments in Nicaragua. She also reached the semifinals of an event in Tabasco, Mexico in late May of 2024.

Overall, Gutierrez posted a 25-11 overall record in singles play and was 25-8 in doubles matches in 2024. ★

## Aggie Earns Player of the Week Honor



On Feb. 26, UC Davis sophomore Mika Ikemori was named Big West Player of the Week. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics

### UC Davis Athletics News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - UC Davis sophomore Mika Ikemori was named Big West Player of the Week, the conference announced on Feb. 26.

This marks Ikemori's first career Big West Player of the Week honor.

Ikemori went 4-0 across three different matches over

the course of a week. On Feb. 21, Ikemori and her partner Daisy Maunupau beat Oregon's No. 1 doubles team of Tilde Jagare and Juliett Santitto, currently ranked No. 80 in the nation. Ikemori followed that up with a straight sets victory at No.1 singles against Santitto 6-4, 6-3.

On Feb. 22, Ikemori and Maunupau won at No. 1 doubles against Cal State

Stanislaus' Emma Yu and Annabelle Mulick, 6-3. That afternoon, Ikemori secured her fourth win of the weekend when she beat Jessup University's Briana Smith, 6-4, 6-0.

UC Davis was back in action against Cal Poly on March 1 for their first-ever theme day, We Stand We See, bringing awareness to illnesses that affect many around the world. ★

## Sacramento Kings Working to Enhance Accessibility

### Sacramento Kings News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - On Feb. 24, the Sacramento Kings in collaboration with Ticketmaster and OneCourt announced an innovative way for blind and low vision fans to experience live basketball action at Golden 1 Center. Beginning immediately and continuing through the NBA 2024-25 regular season, One Court's haptic display will be available at all home games, free of charge, allowing fans to feel the game in real time.

OneCourt devices will be available for checkout at Guest Services, located near Section 109 and 207, on a first-come, first-served basis. Five devices will be available at each home game, expanding access to this groundbreaking technology and ensuring more fans can engage with the action in an inclusive way.

This cutting-edge technology converts live game action into audio and trackable vibrations, allowing users to follow plays with their fingertips.

The Kings worked closely with the NBA to integrate OneCourt with the league's live gameplay tracking system, ensuring fans receive real-time updates through the device's intuitive interface.

"At the Kings, we are committed to



The Sacramento Kings are implementing an innovative way for blind and low vision fans to experience live basketball action at Golden 1 Center. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Kings

making live sports more accessible and inclusive for all fans," said Sacramento Kings President of Business Operations John Rinehart. "Partnering with Ticketmaster to make OneCourt technology available at Golden 1 Center allows us to deliver an innovative, real-time experience that ensures Blind and Low Vision fans can feel the excitement of every play."

"Our partnership with the Sacramento Kings brings OneCourt's adaptive technology to fans at Golden 1 Center, helping make gamedays more immersive and inclusive," said Ticketmaster Senior Director of Client Development Scott Aller. "Live experiences are for everyone, and this

initiative is part of Ticketmaster's ongoing work to expand opportunities for how every type of fan can connect with and experience their favorite events."

"We believe that sports are for everyone and at OneCourt, we have created an intuitive tactile broadcast that makes sports more enjoyable for fans of any age, background, or visual ability," said OneCourt Founder and CEO Jerred Mace. "Fans feel more empowered than ever before to attend live sporting events and join in on the action. We are thrilled to partner with the Sacramento Kings and Ticketmaster to make OneCourt available to basketball fans at Golden 1 Center." ★

## Sac Pro Sport Venues Promote Sustainability

### Sacramento River Cats News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - On Feb. 25, the Golden 1 Center and Sutter Health Park announced a new multi-year, sustainability-focused partnership with Kimberly-Clark Professional™. Fans attending Kings, River Cats and Athletics home games will benefit from Kimberly-Clark Professional's high-quality paper towels, soap, and toilet paper, reinforcing both venues' commitment to cleanliness and environmental responsibility.

"As an organization, we are always looking for ways to enhance sustainability efforts while improving the fan experience," said Sacramento Kings President of Business Operations John Rinehart. "Kimberly-Clark Professional products provide innovative hygiene

solutions for Golden 1 Center and Sutter Health Park, and we are excited to partner with a company that shares our commitment to health, safety, and environmental stewardship."

"We're dedicated to the teamwork it takes to help create better fan experiences," said Kimberly-Clark Professional Chief Customer Officer Ignacio Suit. "Customers can count on our towel, tissue and hand hygiene brands, Kleenex and Scott, to stand for safety and cleanliness from a responsible and ethical source."

Kimberly-Clark recently earned the No. 2 spot on Barron's list of most sustainable U.S. companies for its achievements in reducing its environmental footprint and announced its ambition to be 100% natural forest free across its portfolio. ★

# Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Breaking news, the Sacramento Kings can win games against playoff quality teams without all-world center Domantas Sabonis. It happened Saturday night in Houston Texas against a playoff bound Rockets team, as iron man Sabonis grabbed his right hamstring and was forced to leave the game only two minutes into the action.

Not to be esoteric, but intended for every fan and pundit to understand, this team even short-handed can make the playoffs. Yes, I said playoffs, not playin.

Even with the news that Sabonis will be sidelined for 2-3 weeks, every fan should find the positive where it takes you. With Sabonis resting his ailing hamstring, players such as Keon Ellis, Trey Lyles, and hopefully Markelle Fultz, will get much more court action, and Fultz in particular needs more time getting used to his new teammates.

I'm excited to see the athleticism and deft ball handling that Fultz brings to the hardwood, and without question Malik Monk needs time without the ball. Monk is getting exhausted handling the ball every possession, and he is leading the team in turnovers nearly every night. This comes from trying to do too much, and I love the effort Malik brings every game. No one gives more, but he is more comfortable in the role as a 2 guard, and with either Devin Carter or Markelle Fultz on the court, Malik can assume his former role.

Not to be overlooked as the Kings have put together a 3-game winning streak, is the work of big man Jonas Valanciunas. Jonas looks like the NBA starter he's always been and will fill the void left by Sabonis as he nurses his hamstring over the next half dozen games.

Valanciunas is an excellent rebounder and has a low post game that is second to none. He gets criticism for his defense, but I believe he is a more than capable team defender, and he accepts a challenge well. Without question the acquisition of Jonas Valanciunas was bound to pay dividends, and Sacramento is about to see what this quality NBA center can do.

While pundits criticized the trade that brought Zach Lavine to the Kings from

Chicago, all that Zach has done is play better and better with every game. The initial jitters that led to poor 3-point shooting has been replaced by stellar knock-down 3's, that ignite the home crowd and show naysayers that this former NBA all-star can make a difference every night.

This is exactly the type of team Sacramento fans have been hoping to see for years. A team that can take any team to the wire every night, and as this newly assembled group has found time together, they are looking like a bonified playoff contender.

Just percentage points ahead of the Dallas Mavericks in the Western Conference standings, Monday night's game looms large.

The Kings occupy the No. 9 spot in the standings but are amazingly only a half-game out of the No. 6 spot. Five quality teams are vying for No. 6, but the Kings are finding their collective stride at just the right moment. Tested they will be as they enter American Airlines arena and face Kyrie Irving and Klay Thompson.

If ever in a frenetic season it is time for optimism, that time is now! It should come from every corner, and regardless of what occurs against the Mavericks and the Nuggets on Wednesday night in Denver, everyone should be looking forward to Friday night's contest against the visiting San Antonio Spurs.

Much has been said about the back story of DeAaron Fox leaving the Kings, and for one night that needs to take hiatus. When DeAaron is introduced as a member of the opposing team, every fan needs to get on their feet and put their hands together. What Fox did for the Sacramento Kings in nearly eight seasons is legendary, and without question No. 5 will have his jersey retired someday.

Stand up Kings fans, because the best is truly yet to come! It's a great time to be a Sacramento Kings fan, so remember the glass is half full, and the playoffs are right around the corner!

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

## Social Security Matters

### Should I Wait until Age 70 to Claim Social Security?



By Russell Gloor,  
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

**Dear Rusty:** I am a married woman, at my full retirement age, and the primary earner in my marriage. How do I know if I should take my Social Security now or wait till 70? I will lose quite a bit if I take it now. How will it affect my taxes if I take it now while still working a full-time job? **Signed: Undecided**

**Dear Undecided:** As you apparently already know, waiting until you are 70 to claim Social Security will result in you getting your maximum possible monthly SS retirement benefit. After your full retirement age, you get about 8% more each year you delay claiming up to age 70. But deciding exactly when to claim should consider both your financial needs and, importantly, your life expectancy. If you don't urgently need the money

now and your life expectancy is at least "average," then waiting until age 70 to claim is usually the right choice. But if you urgently need the money, or your life expectancy is less than average (mid-80s for a woman your current age), then claiming before age 70 is usually prudent.

Regarding taxation, Social Security benefits may be taxable if your combined income from all sources exceeds the threshold for your IRS filing status. If you file taxes as "married/jointly" and your combined income (including your work income) exceeds \$32,000, then half of the SS benefits you received during the tax year becomes part of your taxable income. But if your combined income is over \$44,000, then up to 85% of your SS benefits becomes taxable income (the thresholds are lower for those who file as a single). So, your full-time work income will likely affect how much of your Social Security benefits are subject to income tax by the IRS.

In the end, only you can decide when you should claim Social Security. Taxation of benefits may be a factor to consider since you are still working full time (thus more

of your SS benefits will be taxable). But waiting longer to claim results in a higher benefit for the rest of your life (your SS retirement benefit will be .667% more for each month you delay, up to age 70). If the "rest of your life" is a long time and you don't urgently need the money, waiting is often the right choice. If not, claiming earlier may be wiser.

If you want to get a more personalized estimate of your life expectancy, I suggest you use the tool we use here at the AMAC Foundation: [www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/](http://www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/).

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## Lacking the Capacity to Store Water That Atmospheric Rivers Dump on the State



By Dan Walters,  
CALMatters.org

President Donald Trump is obsessed with how California manages its water supply, demanding changes as one price of giving the state billions of dollars in aid to cope with Southern California's deadly and destructive wildfires.

However, Trump's specific complaints are not grounded in hydrologic or managerial reality — such as his insistence that a lack of water from Northern California was a factor in either the fires' eruption or the firefighting efforts. Hydrants dried up largely because systems were designed to deal with individual structure fires, not widespread wildfires involving thousands of buildings.

That said, there's much to criticize in how California, once a global leader in large-scale water management, has faltered. Population growth and evolving agricultural practices have increased demand, while federal and state environmental laws, judicial decisions, political foot-dragging and climate change have restricted supply.

One major failing has been a slow response to an obvious need for more water storage — either in reservoirs or underground aquifers — to capture winter rains and spring snowmelts as a buffer for dry years.

Scientists believe that even if California's overall water supply from rain and snow storms doesn't decline, wet and dry cycles have become more intense, and more precipitation is coming as rain instead of snow. Thus the natural reservoirs of snowpacks in the Sierra and other mountain ranges are becoming less dependable, increasing the need for supplemental storage.

California's most recent experiences — two wet winters that defied some forecasts — underscore the need.

A new report from the Public Policy Institute of California points out that the atmospheric rivers that dropped immense quantities of rain and snow on the state this month, following a very dry January, did not result in substantial new storage in the state's major reservoirs.

"Rather than storing all the water they can, during the winter reservoir operators are required to maintain enough space in their reservoirs to capture high inflows and reduce the risk of flooding downstream," PPIC researchers Jeffrey Mount and Greg Gartrell wrote.

"When the February storms arrived, the surge of water into the state's two largest reservoirs — Shasta and Oroville — quickly filled the flood reserve space. Because the winter flood season is far from over, dam operators had no choice but to let the water go to make space for possible future floods.

"And they let go a lot of water. Between February 1 and 18, those two reservoirs alone released more than 2 million acre-feet of water into the Sacramento and Feather Rivers to maintain

space for future stormwater."

An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons and 2 million-acre feet equates to more than half of Oroville's capacity, or about 20% of what Californians consume each year for non-agricultural purposes.

Overall, Mount and Gartrell calculated, 5.1 million acre-feet of water flowed into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta from storm runoff and reservoir releases during that period in February. Just 4% of it could be diverted into storage because of insufficient capacity and operational mandates.

Even a relatively tiny increase in storage capacity could pay huge dividends when wet winters such as this evolve into periods of drought. Had the long-proposed Sites Reservoir on the west side of the Sacramento Valley existed, it could have banked as much as 1.5 million acre-feet of that excess flow.

California's water managers acknowledge the need for more storage to take advantage of high-precipitation winters such as this one, but clearing all of the legal and financial hurdles and actually building it take decades. Sites, first proposed seven decades ago, is just now beginning to appear feasible.

The hydrological reality of California's water supply is changing faster than our willingness to deal with it. The outcome of that disparity is perilous.

*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. ★*

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# Age, Disability-Friendly Action Plan Launched

## Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento County is taking a significant step toward ensuring a more livable and accessible future for its aging and disabled residents.

By 2030, one-fourth of Sacramento County's population will be 60 or older, and approximately 200,000 residents currently live with a disability.

In response to these growing needs, the Department of Child, Family and Adult Services has launched the Local Age and Disability-Friendly Action Plan (LADAP),

a comprehensive initiative shaped by years of advocacy and community input. Sacramento County is proud to partner with the California Department of Aging and AARP's Age-Friendly Network of States and Communities to achieve this goal.

On Feb. 25, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors formally adopted the Local Age and Disability-Friendly Action Plan resolution, reinforcing the county's commitment to improving access to essential resources for older adults and people with disabilities. This plan aligns with the

five bold goals of California's Master Plan for Aging.

The first goal is Housing for All Stages and Ages which is ensuring accessible and affordable housing options for residents of all ages. The second goal is Health Reimagined that is expanding healthcare access and wellness programs tailored to older and disabled adults.

The third goal is Inclusion and Equity, Not Isolation, which is fostering community connections and reducing social isolation.

The fourth goal is Caregiving That

Works, which means strengthening support for caregivers and long-term care services.

The fifth and final goal is Affording Aging, which is addressing economic challenges that impact aging residents.

Sacramento County will celebrate the launch of the Local Age and Disability-Friendly Action Plan from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 17 at the Sacramento State Union Ballroom, 6000 J St. All Sacramento County residents are invited to attend, with registration open until room capacity is reached.

Register on Eventbrite.com. For more information, visit the Master Plan for Aging website at [mpa.aging.ca.gov](http://mpa.aging.ca.gov). ★

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Subscriptions should be mailed to *Land Park News*, 7144 Fair Oaks Blvd. Suite 5, Carmichael, CA 95608.

The *Land Park News* is published twice a month. Call (916) 773-1111 for more information. Call Linda Pohl for advertising or other inquiries at (916) 619-8189.

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# Two Days is All You Need

## City of Sacramento News Release

### SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

- As the weather begins to warm, the City of Sacramento Utilities staff are reminding Sacramento residents and businesses that they can water with sprinklers up to two days per week, starting March 1.

The change marks the start of the city's spring

and summer watering schedule, which will remain in effect through the end of October.

"Landscapes naturally need more water as days get longer and temperatures rise," said William Granger, the City's water conservation coordinator. "By adjusting your watering routine, you can help your landscape thrive while using water

more efficiently during the warmer months."

Customers with even-numbered addresses can water on Wednesdays and Sundays and those with odd-numbered addresses can water on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

"We also ask everyone to water before 10 a.m. or after 7 p.m.," said Granger. "Watering in the middle of the day causes much of the



March 1 marks the beginning of Sacramento's spring and summer watering schedule, which will remain in effect through the end of October. Photo courtesy of City of Sacramento

water to evaporate before it even reaches the roots."

Granger also emphasized that wasting water

is never allowed, nor is watering when it is raining and 48 hours after.

More on the watering

schedule can be found at [cityofsacramento.gov/utilities/water-conservation/watering-schedule](http://cityofsacramento.gov/utilities/water-conservation/watering-schedule). ★

# Sacramento County Celebrates 175 Years

## Continued from Page 1

residents have grown over the years, pursuant to the county charter or ordinances or by state or federal mandate to provide health and welfare, criminal justice and municipal services (including law enforcement), as well as other services to county residents.

Major services include the Airport System, Animal Care and Regulation, Clerk-Recorder, Criminal Justice, Health and Welfare, Property Tax System, Regional Parks, Transportation, Waste Management and Recycling, Voter Registration and Water Resources.

As part of our 175th anniversary

celebration, we invite you to share your historic photos of Sacramento County. Whether it's a beloved landmark, a community event or a special moment in time, we want to showcase your memories on our county website. Share your historic photos at [saccounty.wufoo.com/forms/celebrate-sacramento-countys-175th-anniversary](http://saccounty.wufoo.com/forms/celebrate-sacramento-countys-175th-anniversary).

Join us throughout the year as we commemorate 175 years of service, innovation and community spirit.

For more information about Sacramento County's Demisemiseptcentennial celebrations and to learn more about the essential services provided, visit the county's 175th Anniversary website at [pio.saccounty.gov/anniversary175](http://pio.saccounty.gov/anniversary175).

This newspaper will also run monthly updates about the demisemiseptcentennial celebrations. ★

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Get a break on your taxes! Donate your car, truck, or SUV to assist the blind and visually impaired. Arrange a swift, no-cost vehicle pickup and secure a generous tax credit for 2025. Call Heritage for the Blind Today at 1-844-491-2884 today! (Cal-SCAN)

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# Sacramento Habitat for Humanity Celebrates Its 200th Home Build



On Feb. 22, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento joined with community partners to welcome home seven inspiring families to Oak Park.

## Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - On Feb. 22, seven hardworking families achieved their dream of first-time homeownership after completing 500 hours of sweat equity and purchasing their home. This was made possible through the generosity of volunteers, donors, Habitat for Humanity, and the City of Sacramento.

This milestone marks an incredible achievement, 200 homes built by Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento over its 39-year history.

“This milestone is more than just a number, it represents 200 families who now have a stable foundation for a brighter future,” said Leah Miller, President & CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento. “Each home we build is a testament to the resilience of the families we serve, the generosity of our community, and the life-changing impact of equity building homeownership for generations to come.”

For future homeowner Wendy, the journey to homeownership has been one of perseverance, from growing up in foster care to becoming a young, single mother determined to break the cycle of hardship. “A Habitat home would not just provide my children and me with a safe and stable space, but also the opportunity to build



Kimberly Coley, chief advancement and marketing officer for Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento, addresses the group assembled on Feb. 22 to celebrate the 200th built home.

a future we can be proud of,” she shared. For Ahmad and Marzia, this home



Pictured here are some of the hardworking families that achieved their dream of first-time homeownership through the Habitat for Humanity program. Photos courtesy of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento



Participating families completed 500 hours of sweat equity as part of purchasing their homes.

represents the security and stability they have never known. “Being given the chance through Habitat for Humanity to build and purchase our own home is a blessing. We want nothing more than a safe place where our four children can play without fear and grow in an environment that nurtures their well-being.”

Each family has worked alongside hundreds of volunteers, not only building their own homes but also those of their future neighbors.

Now, they are stepping into homeownership with an affordable 30-year, 0% interest-equivalent mortgage, creating a stable foundation for a better tomorrow. ★

# MAKING THE GRADE

MPG Staff

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Congratulations to all the students listed below for their impressive grades.

**The University of Utah summer 2024 Dean’s List:** John Demello of Sacramento, Joseph Eyraud of Sacramento, Karoline Oberhansley of Sacramento, Ilianna Vasquez of Sacramento.

**Pennsylvania Western University fall 2024 Dean’s List:** Thomas Collins of Sacramento, Erik Mata of North Highlands.

**Georgia Southern University fall 2024 President’s List:** Ania Tarrant of Sacramento.

**Trine University students graduating at the end of the fall 2024 term:** Sudha Aljapur of Sacramento, receiving a Master

of Science in Business Analytics.

**University of Maryland Global Campus’ Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi:** Pedro Rodriguez Valenzuela of Sacramento.

**Cedarville University fall 2024 Dean’s Honor List:** Grant Luman of Sacramento

**Central Methodist University fall 2024 Dean’s List:** Sydney Lee Carter of Sacramento, Michael William Clarke of Sacramento.

**Middle Tennessee State University fall 2024 semester Dean’s List:** Nicholas Theodorovic of Sacramento.

**Hofstra University fall 2024 Dean’s List:** Chloe Bessey of Sacramento.

**University of Mississippi fall 2024 Honor Roll:** Ryan Bassett of Sacramento.

**University of Rhode Island fall 2024 Dean’s List:** Levert Bryant of Sacramento.

# ABOUT TOWN

## Donate to Scouting for Food March 8

Please help Scouting America (BSA) Troop 5010 to collect non-perishable foods for the South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership food pantry. This food drive serves many families in need within our community. Drop off in the troop’s food barrel anytime until March 8.

Drive-thru drop off directly to Troop 5010 in the Elks Lodge parking lot on March 8 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

For more information, call 916-544-1141.

indoor cars, equipped with climate control and restrooms, or in outdoor patio cars, which feature flaps and heaters during cooler months.

Bring a picnic to enjoy with family and friends in our private park before or after your train ride (no outside food or drink on the train).

Adult tickets are \$59.95, excluding fees. Two children under 13 are free with one Adult paid admission. Pets are welcome at an additional fee.

Get tickets and information at riverfoxtrain.com/pocket.

## Pocket Community Day Train Ride April 26

The Pocket community can reconnect with friends and neighbors while traveling through the scenic Yolo countryside aboard the River Fox Train at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 26. Enjoy open seating in

## Area Museums Offer Plenty of Experiences

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/

## Elks Lodge 6 Calendar of Events

Elks Lodge 6 Sunday Breakfast, 8:30 am-11 am every Sunday; \$15 tax included.

Good time and place to connect with friends and family.

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

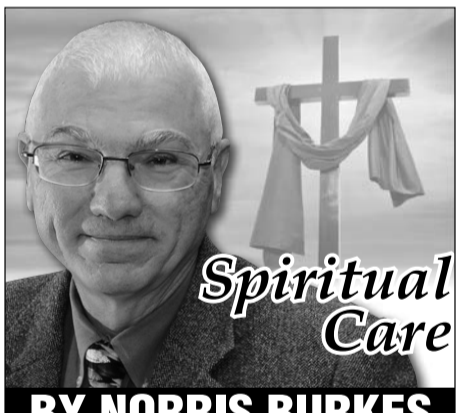
Martial Arts, Monday 5 p.m.

Pickleball, Monday, Wednesday, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.; Thursday, 4:30-7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 4-7 p.m.

Karaoke Nights, Thursdays and Saturdays, 7 p.m.

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

# God’s Not Finished With This Chaplain, Yet



BY NORRIS BURKES

When a reader once left a voicemail suggesting that I wasn’t worthy of my chaplain title, I shrugged. That’s OK, I thought, I’ve heard that before.

The worst occasion happened during my USAF deployment to Saudi Arabia in 1999. That’s when my supervisor, Col. Mike Bradshaw, told me I wasn’t being promoted to the rank of Major.

“You’ll be reconsidered next year,” he promised. “But trust me,” he added in his signature truism, “it’s really a ‘one-chance-mistake-Air-Force.’ You won’t remain active duty.”

So, I guess it was appropriate that a few mornings later, I walked into the chapel men’s room to evacuate the constipation of my disappointment. Before entering the stall, I followed military tradition and tucked my hat into the beltline at the small of my back.

Before taking my place on the porcelain throne, I noticed the toilet brand name, “Norris.” I shrugged. It fit the “career” I was having.

I stayed for much longer than I should have. I didn’t want to go to the office. How was I supposed to be a supportive chaplain to the deployed troops when I felt so low?

Finally, however, I stood to do my “paperwork.” As I discarded the paper into the receptacle, I noticed that some careless fool had ditched his hat in my toilet.

First, I wondered, why hadn’t I previously noticed this?

But my second and more sober observation was that this fool’s hat had a Christian cross affixed on it. That fool was me!

I almost cried looking at my hat in the flusher. Was God using a metaphor to tell me that my chaplain career was in the toilet? If so, was the military my only path of ministry? Or were there other ministry venues? I wasn’t sure.

I had no choice but to go to the chapel office and ask our NCOIC (office manager) for a new hat. As I unfolded my story, Master Sgt. Steve Carothers folded his 6-foot-5-inch frame in half, overcome with near stroke-inducing laughter.

He then made a comical demand. “If you want me to give you a new hat, you are going to have to give me just one good reason why I should overlook such a blame fool mistake as that.”

“Well,” I admitted, “there are some foolish officers in this Air Force who seem like they operate with a head full of crap.”

He shook his head with large, agreeable nods.

“But” I said, “don’t you think it takes a really good officer like me to admit that he has a hat full of crap?”

Hearing my logic, he dropped to the floor, hysterically beating the tile with his fist.

“I give up, Chaplain,” he declared. “You got your new hat.”

The Bible says in James 5:16, “Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed.”

I confessed my mistake—my sin—and got a new hat. But better than that, I got a new ministry.

For you see, despite my sinking feeling that my career was flushed in the crapper of chaplain careerism, I had a creatively hysterical moment in which I emailed my “hat-full” story to a Florida friend, a newspaper editor named Tom Clifford. Tom thought it was riotously funny but too inappropriate for a newspaper.

Still, he saw through my “crap,” and 10 months later, he invited me to begin this syndicated newspaper column.

Col. Bradshaw had asked me to trust him. Trust is best left to God, not man. Now, almost 25 years after the famous toilet week, I look back over a long and rewarding career as a healthcare chaplain.

Better yet, I managed to finish a career in uniform. In 2002, I transferred to the California Air National Guard and was twice promoted, retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 2014.

So, now I know that if I ever meet up with Col. Bradshaw again, I’d like to tell him one thing: “Trust me, God’s still not finished with me.”

This column was excerpted from my book “Thriving Beyond Surviving.” ★

# UC Davis Offers Doctor of Nursing Program

University of California,  
Davis News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at the University of California, Davis has earned accreditation for its Doctor of Nursing Practice – Nurse Anesthesia degree program by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA).

This significant milestone marks the first Doctor of Nursing Practice – Nurse Anesthesia program within the University of California system and only the sixth of its kind in California. The program is set to welcome its inaugural cohort of students in June.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice – Nurse Anesthesia program is an integrated, full-time, three-year curriculum designed to equip experienced critical-care registered nurses with the knowledge and hands-on training required to become Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists.

The program blends rigorous online coursework with in-person simulation training and extensive clinical experience, ensuring students receive a comprehensive and immersive education.

“Earning COA accreditation validates the quality of our curriculum and faculty and highlights the caliber of the dedicated and supportive staff here at the School of Nursing,” said Program Director Jakkarin “Jake” Sareerak. “As a new program, we prioritized hiring the highest caliber of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists faculty, many of whom have served in program administrator



University of California, Davis has earned accreditation for its Doctor of Nursing Practice – Nurse Anesthesia program, the first of its kind within the University of California system. Photo courtesy of Pixabay

roles and bring extensive experience in both education and clinical practice.”

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists programs have transitioned from the master’s degree to the Doctor of Nursing Practice level to better prepare clinicians for the increased complexity of patient care and to equip them with advanced leadership and quality improvement skills. This change, supported by accrediting bodies, ensures that Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists are ready to meet modern health care challenges and effectively lead interdisciplinary teams.

Applicants must hold either a bachelor’s degree in nursing science or an equivalent major or a bachelor’s degree in another specialty in addition to a Master of Science in Nursing or an

equivalent graduate degree.

Graduates of the Doctor of Nursing Practice – Nurse Anesthesia program will be fully prepared to take on leadership roles in anesthesia care, Sareerak said, which addresses critical gaps in health care access across California.

#### Addressing the Shortage

The demand for anesthesia providers continues to outpace supply nationwide. The American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology reports that by 2033, the anesthesiology workforce could experience a shortage of approximately 12,500 providers. That is further exacerbated in California’s rural and underserved areas.

With 40-million residents, the state has a growing need for anesthesia services, especially

as its aging population requires more procedures. In addition, non-operating-room anesthesia sites are increasing due to technological advancements, which require more anesthesia care beyond traditional surgical settings.

By expanding nurse anesthesia education, the School of Nursing is actively addressing this workforce challenge and strengthening the future of anesthesia care in California.

“With the growing shortage of anesthesiologists and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists across the nation, this program is poised to help bridge the gap by preparing highly-skilled nurse anesthetists to serve diverse patient populations,” said Dean Stephen Cavanagh.

UC Davis Health is also

meeting this need head-on by partnering with the School of Nursing through its expansion efforts. A key milestone in this expansion is the integration of the 48X Complex as part of the program’s primary clinical training site.

Expected to open for patients in July, the four-story, 268,228-square-foot complex will feature 14 operating rooms. The large facility is ideal for presenting learning opportunities for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist students and addressing the shortage of ambulatory operating room capacity at the main hospital.

“This initiative will provide invaluable hands-on experience for future Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists while ensuring a steady pipeline of highly trained anesthesia providers within UC Davis Health. We hope to retain many of the graduates which will help us reinforce our commitment to delivering safe, high-quality anesthesia services and shaping the future of health care excellence,” said Kimberly Beres, the health system’s chief nurse anesthetist.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice –Nurse Anesthesia program is the latest offering from the Top 25 15-year-old nursing school. The school already offers a popular Doctor of Nursing Practice - Family Nurse Practitioner program that is helping to fulfill California’s shortage of primary care providers, along with master’s degrees in nursing, physician assistant studies, a Doctor of Philosophy program and a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner post-graduate certificate program. ★

## California Comment on Latest Small Business Optimism Index



Overall, small business owners remain optimistic regarding future business conditions but uncertainty is on the rise. Photo by Gustavo Fring Pexels

National Federation of  
Independent Business  
News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Small business optimism across the nation fell a bit in January but for the third consecutive month, came in higher than its 51-year average, according to the release Feb. 11 of the monthly Small Business Optimism Index by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB).

“Prior to this nice three-month stretch, the Small Business Optimism Index went 34 consecutive months below its 51-year average,” said John Kabateck, state director for National Federation of Independent Business in California. “What we could be witnessing is a possible rebound for all sectors of the economy. A rebound that could get some serious traction with the right state and federal policies. A possible rebound that could just as easily be undercut by the wrong ones.”

The National Federation of Independent Business’s legislative agenda for California can be read at [nfib.com/news-article/nfib-announces-legislative-agenda-for-california](https://www.nfib.com/news-article/nfib-announces-legislative-agenda-for-california). For National Federation of

Independent Business’s congressional agenda, visit [nfib.com/news-article/nfib-to-congress-advance-the-small-business-growth-agenda](https://www.nfib.com/news-article/nfib-to-congress-advance-the-small-business-growth-agenda).

The National Federation of Independent Business’s monthly Small Business Optimism Index is the gold standard measurement of America’s small business economy. Used by the Federal Reserve, Congressional leaders, administration officials and state legislatures throughout the nation, it’s regarded as the bellwether on the health and welfare of the Main Street enterprises that employ half of all workers, generate more net new jobs than large corporations, and gave most of us the first start in our working life.

The Optimism Index (aka Small Business Economic Trends report) is a national snapshot of the National Federation of Independent Business member, small-business owners not broken down by state. The typical National Federation of Independent Business member employs between one and nine people and reports gross sales of about \$500,000 a year.

“Overall, small business owners remain optimistic regarding future business conditions but uncertainty is on the rise. Hiring challenges

continue to frustrate Main Street owners as they struggle to find qualified workers to fill their many open positions. Meanwhile, fewer plan capital investments as they prepare for the months ahead,” said National Federation of Independent Business chief economist Bill Dunkelberg.

#### Highlights from the Latest Small Business Optimism Index

The net percent of owners expecting the economy to improve fell five points from December to a net 47% (seasonally adjusted).

Thirty-five percent (seasonally adjusted) of all owners reported job openings they could not fill in the current period, unchanged from December.

Twenty percent (seasonally adjusted) plan capital outlays in the next six months, down seven points from December.

A net 3% of owners reported that their last loan was harder to get than in previous attempts (down one point). The last time it was this low was June 2022.

A net 0% (seasonally adjusted) of owners plan inventory investment in the coming months, down six points from December’s highest reading since December 2021. ★

## Drivers See a Slight Break at the Pump



Gas prices are expected to remain steady as March arrives and routine seasonal maintenance wraps up. Photo by Engin Akyurt Pexels

AAA Northern California  
News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - With winter nearly in the rearview, temperatures warmed up while gas prices cooled down. Last week, gas prices dropped by three cents, bringing the national average to \$3.12 per gallon.

Gas prices are expected to remain steady as March arrives and routine seasonal maintenance wraps up.

On Feb. 27, California drivers saw an average price of \$4.81, a three-cent drop from two weeks ago.

Fuel prices throughout the state on Feb. 27 included San Francisco at \$5.05, Oakland at \$4.98, San Jose at \$4.91, Sacramento at \$4.95, Fresno at \$4.82 and Stockton at \$4.77.

Regarding the Oil Market Dynamics, at the close of the Feb. 26 formal trading session, the West Texas Intermediate (WTI) rose \$2.54 to settle at \$80.04 a barrel. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported that crude oil inventories decreased by 2 million barrels from the previous week. At 412.7 million barrels, U.S. crude oil inventories are about 6% below the five-year average for this time of year.

A quick analysis of gas stats shows that the nation’s Top 10 most expensive gasoline markets are California (\$4.81), Hawaii (\$4.54), Washington (\$4.14), Nevada (\$3.84), Oregon (\$3.76), Alaska (\$3.46), Arizona (\$3.40), Pennsylvania (\$3.33), Washington, D.C. (\$3.25) and Illinois (\$3.24).

The nation’s Top 10 least expensive gasoline markets are Mississippi (\$2.67), Texas (\$2.69), Oklahoma (\$2.73), Kentucky (\$2.74), Louisiana (\$2.76), Arkansas (\$2.78), Alabama (\$2.78), South Carolina (\$2.79), North Carolina (\$2.80) and Tennessee (\$2.80).

Taking a glance at the electricity stats in the nation shows that the Top 10 most expensive states for public charging per kilowatt hour are Hawaii (55 cents), West Virginia (47 cents), Montana (45 cents), Idaho (42 cents), Arkansas (42 cents), New Hampshire (42 cents), Tennessee (42 cents), Kentucky (41 cents), Alaska (41 cents) and South Carolina (41 cents).

The nation’s Top 10 least expensive states for public charging per kilowatt hour are Kansas (22 cents), Nebraska (24 cents), Maryland (25 cents), Missouri (25 cents), Delaware (28 cents), Iowa (28 cents), Texas (29 cents), Michigan (29 cents), Utah (29 cents) and North Dakota (30 cents). ★