

Staff and Board Members Support the Food Locker

Sacramento County Highlights 2024 Achievements

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Serving Gold River and Sacramento County

**APRIL 2025** 

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# Girls Kick Off 60th Season Cordova Girls Softball League Celebrates Anniversary



The Lady Tigers march onto the field during the player parade. Photos by Rick Sloan

City of Rancho Cordova News Release

#### RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)

- A sea of excited young athletes, proud parents and community leaders filled the Mills Middle School Softball Complex on Saturday, March 22, as Cordova Girls Softball League (CGSL) celebrated its 60th anniversary season with a spirited opening day ceremony.

The event began with a player parade, where nearly 300 girls from 26 teams took to the fields in full uniform, proudly carrying team banners and high-fiving local leaders. The energy continued as Mayor Siri Pulipati



A Blaze player focuses on the next pitch.

and Rancho Cordova City league officials, families Council members joined and longtime supporters for

a ceremony reflecting on six decades of empowering young female athletes in Rancho Cordova.

"This league is about so much more than softball; it's about teamwork, confidence and lifelong friendships," said Rod Borba, Cordova Girls Softball League President. "Seeing these girls out here today, playing on first-class fields made possible by this community, shows just how far we've come."

The celebration took place at the Mills Middle School Softball Complex, a 15-acre regional facility featuring seven new fields, spectator Continued on page 3

### Fraudulent **Invoices Target** County's **Planning Customers**

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County officials have been made aware of a fraudulent email scheme targeting both current and former planning customers.

The scam involves sending fake invoices using the names of county officials and the official Sacramento County logo, instructing recipients to wire money. The current reports of this scam utilize an email address of "planning-applications.saccounty.gov@ usa.com."

Customers are urged to be cautious and not respond to these emails or send any payments. Anyone who receives a suspicious email of this nature should forward it to sacplan@saccounty.gov for review.

"Sacramento County takes this matter very seriously and we are actively working to educate our customers so that they don't fall victim to this scam," said Sacramento County Planning Director Todd Smith. "We urge our customers to remain vigilant and verify any financial requests directly with the county before taking action. If you're unsure whether an invoice is official, contact us to verify."

The Sacramento County Department of Technology is investigating the incident and will collaborate with law enforcement if necessary.

The Sacramento County Department of Finance issues planning customer invoices through the U.S. mail and does not instruct customers to wire funds as a method of payment. Payments are only accepted by mail to P.O. Box 1587, Sacramento, CA 95812, in person at county locations, and certain payments are accepted online. If you have received an

invoice from Sacramento County Planning and Environmental Review and would like to verify its authenticity, email sacplan@saccounty. gov or call Planning and

Environmental Review at 916-874-6141.



# **Soroptimists Receive Women's History Month Proclamation**

Scan our QR Code for a Soroptimist direct link to our online edition! International of Rancho Cordova & PRESORTED STD. US POSTAGE **Gold River** 

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OR CURRENT POSTAL CUSTOMER **RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)** - Rancho Cordova Mayor Siri Pulipati presented the Soroptimist International of Rancho Cordova and Gold River Club with a proclamation honoring Women's History Month during the March 17 City Council meeting.

News Release

The proclamation recalled the origin of Women's History Month and the Soroptimist organization, as well as celebrated the club's accomplishments helping the community's at-risk women and students during its more than 15-year history.

Since the Rancho Cordova/Gold River club's founding in 2009, members have helped give



hope, support and empowerment to almost 2,000 Folsom Cordova Unified

School District homeless and at-risk students in 15 years; to more than 1,500

domestic violence survivors through the making Continued on page 3

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#### **APRIL 2025**

# Sacramento County Highlights 2024 Achievements

Sacramento County News Release

#### SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)

- Sacramento County covers 965 square miles and is home to the California state capital, 1.6 million residents and seven incorporated cities: Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento. The population of Sacramento County's unincorporated area is approximately 600,000.

Sacramento County released its 2024 Year in Review, show-casing significant achievements and statistics across its more than 35 departments.

This award-winning ((Public Relations Society of America, California Capital Chapter, 2024 Influence Award for Annual Reports) annual report details where property tax dollars are allocated and provides insights into the demographic and economic landscape of the county.

This report distills the county's tremendous positive impact on residents and their quality of life, highlighting key achievements such as those listed below. There are many more achievements in the report.

#### **Social Services**

A remarkable 58% reduction in the number of youths in foster care since 2015, reflecting ongoing efforts to improve family stability and support systems.

In 2024, Child Support Services collected approximately \$129 million, playing a crucial role in preventing children and families from falling into poverty and ensuring financial stability.

#### **Health Services**

Sacramento County Public Health earned national accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board, becoming the 26th local health jurisdiction (of 61) in California to achieve this feat.

The Community Wellness Response Team began operating



In 2024, Sacramento County filled 90,798 potholes, removed and replaced 126 curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

24 hours a day, seven days a week in 2024, providing field-based in-person crisis intervention, assessment of needs and risks, and safety planning. In 2024, the response team received 964 calls, of which 595 resulted in an in-person response.

#### Homeless Services and Housing

Dedicated outreach teams served 1,469 individuals experiencing homelessness, successfully transitioning 396 individuals out of unsheltered conditions, illustrating proactive steps toward addressing homelessness in the community.

#### **Community Services**

The Department of Airports was the first airport in the country to submit a Safety Management System Implementation Plan to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 2023, the first to get it approved by the FAA and the first to submit a Safety Management System

County staff supported the development of six major industrial and commercial projects, creating 1,156 new jobs



Sacramento County's Animal Care Animal placed 3,278 dogs and 3,541 cats into new adoptive homes, and helped reunite 983 lost dogs and 69 lost cats with their owners. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

and \$60.5 million in capital investment.

The Department of Transportation filled an impressive 90,798 potholes, removed 132,000 square feet of graffiti, investigated 933 traffic-safety complaints; and replaced 126 curbs, gutters and sidewalks.

The Sacramento County Water Agency installed a new, 22-mile pipeline, replacing an outdated and undersized system in Arden. The agency installed more than 1,000 new water meters.

Animal Care placed 3,278 dogs and 3,541 cats into new adoptive homes, and helped safely reunite 983 lost dogs and 69 lost cats with their owners. In addition, 1,821 pets were vaccinated and 351 animals were spayed/neutered through the PAWS (Pet Aid and Wellness Services) program, which also performed 1,055 wellness exams and saved 18 pets from shelter surrender by assisting owners in crisis. Another

1,200 animals were spayed and neutered at Mobile Animal Sterilization Hospital (MASH) clinics, providing essential services in underserved areas.

#### **Administrative Services**

The General Services' Surplus Unit was recognized with the prestigious Public Surplus Excellence Award, placing the Surplus Unit among the Top 10 sellers nationwide and the Top 5 county sellers. The Surplus Unit is vital in efficiently redistributing and reselling retired county assets, ensuring valuable resources are maximized and put to good use.

The Finance Department collected and distributed more than \$2.8 billion in property taxes to local government agencies.

The Consolidated Utility Billing division collected more than \$500 million in utility charges for water, sewer, garbage and drainage services.

Residents can read the full 2024 Year in Review online at saccounty.gov/Documents/YearIinReview.2024.pdf and watch the video overview at youtube.com/watch?v=TgmEFkYjCTA. \*\*



# Girls Kick Off 60th Season



A sea of excited young athletes, proud parents, and community leaders filled the Mills Middle School Softball Complex on Saturday, March 22, as Cordova Girls Softball League celebrated its



Cordova Girls Softball League President Rod Borba introduces the Butterflies at the player parade.



Lady bugs player winds up to throw the ball against the



Winners in each division of the annual candy sale hold certificates after selling the most sweets, with half of the proceeds benefiting the league.



Sidewinders march proudly down the field in full uniform during the player parade, carrying their banner.



The Lucky Ladies team join the player parade at the Cordova Girls Softball League celebration



The players of Team Fire and Ice light up the field during the parade.

Continued from page 1

seating, a snack bar and a community plaza. The complex was made possible through a unique partnership between the City of Rancho Cordova, Folsom Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD) and Cordova Girls Softball League. The city contributed \$3 million from

its Community Enhancement & Investment Fund (CEIF) to ensure that Rancho Cordova's young athletes have top-tier facilities to develop their skills.

"This project reflects what's possible when a community comes together to support its youth," said Pulipati, who later took the mound

to throw out the ceremonial first pitch of the season. "We're not just celebrating a league today; we're celebrating a legacy that will continue to inspire generations of young athletes."

After the ceremony, the excitement carried into the afternoon as Cordova Girls Softball League

teams took to the field for opening day games. Parents, coaches and fans filled the stands, cheering as players showcased their talent on the state-of-the-art fields that have become a regional hub for girls' softball.

As Cordova Girls Softball League embarks on its milestone season, Rancho Cordova continues to lead the way in supporting youth sports and ensuring that opportunities for female athletes remain a priority. With a renewed commitment from the city and a new complex to call home, the future of girls' softball in Rancho Cordova looks brighter than ever.

# Soroptimists Receive Women's History Month Proclamation

Continued from page 1 and giving of Comfort Kits over 12 years; presented more than \$30,000 in Live Your Dream cash awards to 39 head of household women who are working on completing higher education over 13 years.

More than 4,500 women and girls in total have been served during the club's

15-year history.
In 2024 alone, the club

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has knowingly saved one female veteran from committing suicide through our holiday stockings for veterans' "mission" and received medical services at the VA Northern California Healthcare System in Mather. The club also last year facilitated the rescue of a woman and her 6-year-old daughter and referred another trafficking survivor to a local organization for



Soroptimist is an international nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. Photo courtesy of Soroptimist International of Rancho Cordova and Gold River

mental trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) people at their best, working to help other women to be their best. To receive

Soroptimist is an international nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. The name, Soroptimist, means "best for women" and that's what the organization strives to achieve. Soroptimists are

ing to help other women to be their best. To receive more information about Soroptimist International of Rancho Cordova and Gold River, how to become a member or learn how to volunteer, email siranchocordova@soroptimist.net or call club Vice-President Sheryl Longsworth at 916-833-1218 or visit soroptimistranchocordova.org.



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# **SacSewer Offers Tours**



Sacramento Area Sewer District's free Echo Water Resource Recovery Facility (Echo Water Facility) public tours are educational and free for adults and children 12 and older. Photo Courtesy

#### By MPG Staff

**SACRAMENTO REGION - Reservations are** now being accepted for the Sacramento Area Sewer District's free EchoWater Resource Recovery Facility (EchoWater Facility) public tours from April to October.

The Sacramento Area Sewer District (SacSewer) provides service to residential, commercial and industrial customers throughout unincorporated Sacramento County; the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento; West Sacramento; and the communities of Courtland, Locke and Walnut Grove. The district is governed by a 17-member Board of Directors: five Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, five Sacramento City Council members, two Elk Grove City Council members, and one representative each from Yolo County and the cities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Rancho Cordova and West Sacramento.

According to the Sacramento Area Sewer District's website, it is the second largest sewage collection utility in California, and owns the Echo Water Resource Recovery Facility, the second largest water resource recovery facility of its kind in

Beginning next month, the public will have an opportunity to learn more about the water resource recovery facility, where an average of 151 million gallons o f sewage treated daily.

Located near Elk Grove, the Echo Water Facility Public Tour offers a behind-thescenes look at how the recovery facility collects and treats sewage, manages and

recovers natural resources, and protects the environment for the 1.6- million people it

"Our public tours offer the community a unique opportunity to experience firsthand how we're setting the bar for excellence in utility management and environmental sustainability," said SacSewer's communications director Nicole Coleman. "We invite everyone to join us for a tour, ask questions and learn how the critical work we do is shaping a more sustainable

SacSewer's free public tours run from April through October and are open to anyone interested in learning about sewage collection and treatment, sustainability and environmental stewardship. Children under 12 are not permitted on public tours and adults must accompany tour participants who are minors.

The three-hour tour includes a 60-minute classroom presentation and a 120-minute walking and bus portion.

Tour participants will gain a deeper understanding of what happens after they flush their toilets, wash their dishes or do laundry and how these everyday actions connect to a vast, sophisticated treatment process designed to protect the environment and public health.

Closed-toed shoes are required as tour groups will walk through industrial areas.

For more information about the Echo Water Resource Recovery Facility public tours, including tour dates and registration details, visit SacSewer.com/tours. To experience a virtual tour, visit sacsewer.com/ virtual-tours.

For more information about the Sacramento Area Sewer District, go online to sacsewer.com.

# **Roger Niello Appointed** to Little Hoover Commission



Little Hoover Commission News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - State Sen. Roger Niello (R-Fair Oaks) has been appointed to the Little Hoover Commission by the Senate Rules Committee, chaired by Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg).

Niello replaces Senator Scott Wilk (R-Santa Clarita), who served on the Little Hoover Commission from 2023 until he termed out of office in 2024. Wilk automatically left the commission when his legislative service ended.

"It is both a privilege and a profound responsibility to be appointed to the Little Hoover Commission and contribute to its mission of improving state government. I am looking forward to collaborating with my fellow Commissioners to make a meaningful impact in shaping a government that addresses Californians' needs," Niello said.

Niello has been senator for California's Sixth Senate District, representing portions of Placer and Sacramento counties, since 2022. In 1974, he joined his family business, the Niello Auto Group, and spent the next 25 years running retail automobile dealerships with his family partners.

Niello was elected to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors in a special election in 1999 and in 2004 was elected to the California State Assembly and re-elected twice. After his time in the Assembly concluded, Niello accepted an appointment as president and CEO of the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce.

Niello has served as president of the Golden State Voter Participation, chair of the Sacramento Valley Lincoln Club Board, co-chair of the California Civic Learning Partnership in Sacramento County, member of the University of California Center Sacramento Advisory Board, the Dignity Health Sacramento Service Area Hospital Community Board, the Greater Sacramento Economic Council Board, and Sacramento Rotary.

In February 2011, he was named the University of California Center Sacramento Governance Fellow, the first to serve in that position.

Niello earned his undergraduate degree from the University of California at Berkeley and his master's degree from the University of California at Los Angeles.

The Little Hoover Commission is America's only permanent, independent citizens commission working to improve state government. A nonpartisan oversight agency created in 1962, the commission includes 13 commissioners appointed by the governor and legislative leaders. The commission's mission is to investigate state operations and promote efficiency, economy and improved service.

State Sen. Roger Niello represents District 6, which includes Antelope, Arden-Arcade, Carmichael, Citrus Heights, Clay, Fair Oaks, Folsom, Foothill Farms, Franklin, Galt, Gold River, Herald, Mather, Orangevale, Rancho Cordova, Rancho Murieta and Wilton in Sacramento County. The district includes Auburn, Granite Bay, Lincoln, Loomis, Newcastle, Penryn, Rocklin, Roseville and Sheridan in Placer



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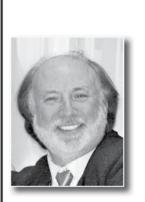
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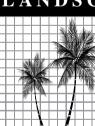
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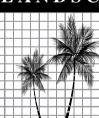
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## **CRPD Staff and Board Members Support** the Rancho Cordova Food Locker



Cordova Recreation & Park District staff pose with Rancho Cordova Food Locker Executive Director Carrie Johnson in front of the food donated by CRPD staff. Photo courtesy of CRPD

#### By Elena Burgé, Cordova Recreation & Park District

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - The Cordova Recreation & Park District (CRPD) is honored to support the Rancho Cordova Food Locker with a generous staff-led donation drive, gathering 866 food items to aid in the fight against hunger. As part of the Cordova Recreation & Park District's Community Engagement Program, this initiative took place during their recent staff appreciation event, where employees came together in the spirit of giving to collect non-perishable goods.

The Rancho Cordova Food Locker plays a crucial role in providing food assistance to local individuals and families experiencing hardship. Open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., the Food Locker has seen demand skyrocket, now serving nearly three times as many households as it did just a year ago.

"Community partnerships are the heart of what we do at the Rancho Cordova Food Locker," said Carrie Johnson, Executive Director of the Rancho Cordova Food Locker. "The support from the Cordova Recreation & Park District exemplifies how, by working together, we can ensure no neighbor goes hungry. When organizations unite with a shared purpose, we create a more resilient and compassionate community."

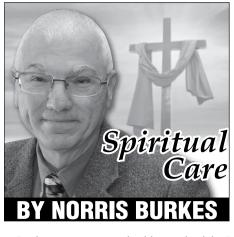
Cordova Recreation & Park District's commitment to public service goes beyond parks and recreation. Employees, board members and leadership take great pride in championing efforts that strengthen the well-being of our neighbors. This donation drive is a testament to the generosity and dedication of the Cordova Recreation & Park District team, reinforcing the Cordova Recreation & Park District's mission to uplift and support the community.

"This donation is a reflection of the compassion and generosity of our Cordova Recreation & Park District staff and board members, who wanted to personally support families in need in our community," said Cordova Recreation & Park District General Manager Patrick Larkin. "The Rancho Cordova Food Locker has created a welcoming center where our friends and neighbors who are facing food insecurity can access healthy food at no cost with ease and dignity. We are proud to partner with this organization to address to the growing issue of food insecurity in our community.'

Cordova Recreation & Park District has had a continued relationship with the Rancho Cordova Food Locker, working together to support those in need. In November, Cordova Recreation & Park District's Leadership, Parks Services and Recreation teams came together to give back by volunteering at the Rancho Cordova Food Locker, helping distribute food to families facing hardship.

As food insecurity remains a growing concern in Rancho Cordova, Cordova Recreation & Park District encourages other organizations and individuals to join in making a difference. For those interested in supporting the Rancho Cordova Food Locker, more information can be found on their website ranchocordovafoodlocker.org/. Together, we can ensure that every member of our community has access to nutritious meals and the support they need.

## Is it Ever Too Late to Talk to God?



During my career as a healthcare chaplain, I would often feel like I was pastoring a parade. That's because, by definition, my chaplain relationship with patients was a temporary one.

I suppose that's why I am relieved when a patient asks if they can call me "Pastor" instead of "Chaplain." I hear their request as an invitation to assume the more personal role of their family pastor.

However, that's not quite how it started with a patient I first knew as "Mr. Penny." I call him "mister" because that's how he introduced himself when I entered his hospital room at Houston Northwest Medical Center in 1992. I reciprocated his formality by introducing

myself as "Chaplain Burkes." At first, I thought he was using titles in rec-

ognition of our age difference. But eventually it seemed like it was more about him wanting to distance himself from the three-piece-suited chaplain who matched his stereotypical idea of the "preacher."

Doctors told Penny he had inoperable brain cancer, but he didn't want to talk about that. The balding, bony man just wanted to chat.

During his next several hospitalizations we talked sports – either the Houston Oilers or my lunchtime basketball games with local clergy.

For Penny, the greater the emotional distance we could maintain from reality, the better.

Finally, though, on his last hospitalization, his nurse summoned me from lunch to tell me Penny had a favor to ask. Thinking this sounded like the call to a

deathbed confession, I made a quick exit from the cafeteria toward the ICU. I walked into his room to find his wife strok-

ing his fevered head.

"Oh good," she said. "I'm glad you're here today and not playing basketball."

"Knee problems," I said.

"He wants to ask you something." I looked at the figure on the bed, twisted

and ghostly. His raspy breathing suggested he wouldn't have much strength for this

conversation, so I leaned over the bed and called to him as if announcing my presence through a dense fog.

"Mr. Penny, it's Chaplain Burkes," I said. "Is there something you want to ask me?"

He nodded. "Teach me..." he said, his voice

He took a fuller breath and added, "Teach me

to pray." Confused by his sudden approach to an intimate moment, I searched his wife's face for

She was chewing on her thumbnail. "He's embarrassed."

"Embarrassed?" I asked.

"He's afraid he's being hypocritical to wait until his death to talk to God," she added. I nodded. It's a common reasoning I hear

from patients. Jesus summarily dismissed this poor logic in his conversation with two insurgents occupying

crosses on either side of his. The first man spent his last hours mocking Jesus and goading him to use his power to save

everyone. But the other guy was quite the opposite. He felt shame for his past life, so he asked Jesus,

"Remember me when you enter your kingdom." Jesus swiftly responded. "Today you will be with me in paradise."

Instead of disqualifying the dying man for being hypocritically tardy, Jesus assured him that he would be rewarded in the promptest

"Mr. Penny," I said. "I think you'll find that God cares very little about your past.

He mostly cares about what you'll do with the next minute of your life."

Penny nodded.

"Prayer is just talking to God," I added. "It's not theologically complicated. Just talk from your heart."

Penny closed his eyes and began moving his lips. I couldn't hear what he was saying, but when he opened his eyes his expression told me that he'd heard God's voice.

I know this because the "mister" who had been so dependent on titles to gain distance from spiritual matters shifted his heart to say one last thing to me.

"Thank you, Pastor. Thank you."

Sign up to receive this weekly column in your email box at https://thechaplain.net/newsletter/ or send me your email address to comment@ thechaplain.net.

All of Norris's books can be ordered on Amazon. Autographed copies can be obtained on his website www.thechaplain.net or by sending a check for \$20 for each book to 10566 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602. ★

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**Dave Ramsey** 

Dear Dave.

My wife and I are going through a divorce, and she just had our first child. Under the circumstances, I feel it's my responsibility to take care of her for a while longer, and to put her and our son in a safe, new vehicle. She's driving a 2002 Chevy Prizm right now with lots of miles on it. I'm afraid any kind of accident could result in a disaster. Do you think I should buy her a bigger, safer new car?

– Ewan

Dear Ewan,

God bless you both. And that little boy. I'm truly sorry you're going through a mess like this, and I appreciate your attitude and concern about things. Divorce carries a lot of emotional stress and worry for everyone involved, but honestly? I don't think buying her a new car will solve anything.

My guess is the truth of the matter is this: The whole situation is breaking your heart, and you're worried sick about your son. This is 100% natural, buddy, and it means

### **Dave Ramsey Says**

### He's Going to Need You in His Life

with all your heart. But if it were me, I'd find a little bit larger used car-a good, reliable one—that either one of you, or both of you combined, can pay for with cash. No payments, no leases.

But Ewan, here's the important thing. Spend every second you can get hugging and loving on that little boy. And let his mom know you want to be part of his life as much as possible. He's going to need his daddy around.

– Dave

#### It's Not About Greed, it's About **Doing Good**

Dear Dave,

On your show, you're always talking about accumulating piles of cash. I've gone to church my entire life, and I know for a fact the Bible says not to lay up treasures on earth. Doesn't that mean we shouldn't be greedy or accumulate wealth?

Lawrence

Dear Lawrence,

The Bible also says in Proverbs that in the house of the wise there are stores of choice food and oil. I ap-

you love that little baby preciate your concern, but when I talk about "piles of cash," my frame of reference is that we're to handle our money and other possessions for good and for God. It's not about greed, or to show off or to use it just to buy bigger and better things for ourselves.

If you look back through scripture, you'll find many of the Bible's major characters were wealthy people, who understood they were not the owners of the monev and wealth. They understood God owned it all, and their job was to manage it all properly for God's glory.

But here's the thing. You can't do good if you don't have the resources to do good.

– Dave

Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national bestselling author, personal finance expert and host of The Ramsey Show. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, Today, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions.

# Brighten a Senior's Day

Volunteer with Meals on Wheels Sacramento County

We need compassionate volunteers to deliver meals, support our community cafes, or help with clerical tasks. Your kindness helps our elderly neighbors maintain independence and dignity through improved nutrition.

For more information and to sign up, visit mowsac.org or call (916) 444-9533. Be the reason someone smiles today. Volunteer with us and make a heartfelt difference.

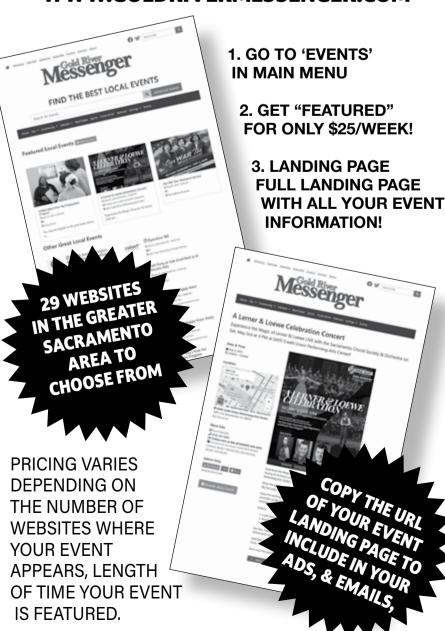


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FOR A QUICK QUOTE.

# Kings Korner By V.G. Harris



For the Sacramento Kings, life is like a box of chocolates, you never know you're going to get.

After a blowout loss to the Orlando Magic, the Kings sustained back-toback close losses to the Indiana Pacers and the lowly Washington Wizards. For many Kings fans, it was their darkest hour.

Radio talk shows lambasted the Kings, and many even suggested the team was playing to opt out of the playin, in favor of securing a first-round draft pick.

I would never accuse the Kings of tanking, because I don't believe it's in their DNA. There is far too much pride in these gladiators for any of them to take a night off.

True, at times they look like they've never seen a basketball before, but I see effort on the court every night, and I believe in this eccentric group that has captured the hearts of so many fans.

With negativity abounding the Kings drubbed the Charlotte Hornets 125-102 in a game that was never in question, but looming ahead was the indomitable Cleveland Cavaliers.

No one gave the Kings a chance and considering that the Sactown boys had just handed the Cavaliers a shocking loss in Sacramento just three weeks earlier, the Cav's were just waiting for payback.

In a game that was thoroughly entertaining, the Kings played like a team on a mission, and outplayed the Cavaliers for 48 minutes, handing the Eastern Conference leader only their 16th loss of the season.

Domantas Sabonis came to play and made a statement early, scoring 15 of his 27 points in the first quarter. Zach Lavine showed off his offensive prowess by adding 37 huge points in a 120-113 win over the Cavaliers and making the potential for postseason basketball a very real possibility for the Sacramento Kings.

But this win doesn't just portend postseason basketball, it sends a message to every negative pundit, and every Kings fan, that on any given night this newly assembled group of ballers, can beat the best that the NBA has to offer.

Hope is a fleeting emotion, but on this night in Cleveland, the Kings gave every fan a reason to play on. No more nonsense about playing for draft picks. Instead watch the movie "Hoosiers" again, and while you're at it why not plug in "Miracle on Ice".

I remember the 1976 Warriors that with only one star, went on a run that saw them winning four straight games over the Washington Bullets and shocking the basketball world.

These things happen, and they're the very reason we watch basketball.

We as fans are blessed with an eclectic group that have come together under difficult circumstances, and with a rookie coach, are trying to do what every supposed expert believes they can't do.

Well call me Pollyanna, because I decide what I believe, and I'll be rooting until they turn the lights out.

For many fans, your favorite player isn't even a member of the starting five, and that is what drives you. Bench rotations are ever so critical, and whether it's Malik Monk, Isaac Jones, or even Doug McDermott, fans live and die with every shot.

I was astounded to hear that Vegas has the Detroit Pistons as 6 ½ favorites over the Sacramento Kings Monday night, and every player on the Kings should take that as an insult. Put a chip on your shoulder and show the Pistons how they just defeated perhaps the best team in the Eastern Confernce the night before.

Look for anything that brings motivation and let's end this season on a high

Will the Kings finish 500 or better? I don't know, but I'll be watching, and I know anything is possible.

The offseason and its moves will take care of itself. It's time to put the hammer down and play basketball the way every fan knows this team is capable of.

Stay tuned Kings fans because the playoffs are more than just a pipe dream!

All the best!

Your thoughts are always welcome at vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com.

# **Social Security Matters**

### When is the Best Time for Me to Claim Social Security?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I will be 66 ½ in June and would like to discuss when would be the best time for me to start taking my social security benefits. I am still employed full time and don't want to be penalized because of that. Please let me know what I need to do to set up an appointment with you. I got your information from the AMAC website, and I look forward to hearing from you. Signed: Ready to

Dear Ready: You can certainly call us on 1.888.750.2622 during normal EST business hours for a personal conversation. But to facilitate that conversation, be aware that deciding when to claim your Social Security benefit normally depends on just a few factors, including your financial need, your health and expected longevity, and your marital status. A few things to be aware of:

• Born in 1958, your "full retirement age" is age 66 years and 8 months. If you were born in October 1958, you will reach you FRA in June 2025, and that is the point you can get 100% of the SS benefit you've earned from a lifetime of working.

• Once you reach your FRA in June, Social Security's "annual earnings test" no longer applies. Thus, you can continue working after you start your SS benefits and your earnings will not negatively affect your monthly benefit amount. If you claim any earlier than your FRA, you will get a smaller benefit and also be subject to Social Security's annual earnings test (which for you this year - your FRA year is \$62,160, or \$5,180/month after you start your SS benefits). If you decide to claim before your FRA, your benefit will be reduced by .556% for each month early (a permanent reduction). · You can also wait

beyond your FRA to claim and earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) at the rate of .667% per month (8% per year of delay), in order to get an even higher benefit later. If financially feasible, you can delay up to the age of 70 when your monthly benefit will reach maximum - about 27% more than it will be in June of this year.

• If you are single and will not be eligible for a spousal benefit, then you should make your claiming decision based only on your own needs. If, however, you are married and your spouse's FRA benefit is more than twice your FRA amount, you may be entitled to a "spousal boost" (a supplemental amount added to your own SS benefit).

• Your life expectancy should be considered when deciding when to claim your SS retirement benefits. If you expect to enjoy at least "average" longevity (about 87 for a woman your current age), then you might also consider delaying your claim (if financially feasible) and that is often a prudent choice. If you don't expect to achieve a long life, or if you need the money sooner, or if you are entitled to spousal benefits, then claiming at your FRA of 66 years and 8 months is likely your best option.

In the end, only you can decide when you should claim your Social Security, but we're always here to answer any additional questions you may have. You can feel free to call us at any time (1.888.750.2622) during normal EST business hours to discuss your options directly with one of our certified Social Security advisors. Or you can also ask any additional questions via email, which we will be most happy to respond to promptly.

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# In California's Capitol, Some Political Fights Span Decades



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

Were we able to transport ourselves back in time 50 years and into California's Capitol, we would find a governor seeking and enjoying massive attention by national political media as he eyes some greater office. We'd also find a Legislature dealing with conflicts among influential interests with heavy financial impacts.

In other words, the Capitol's dynamics in 1975 were pretty much what they

are today. The resemblance even extends to specific issues. For instance, then-Gov. Jerry Brown was touting a "peripheral canal" in 1975 to carry water around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Gavin Newsom was seven years old then, but now as governor is waging the same campaign for a tunnel to do the same thing and is facing the same opposition.

Other conflicts that confronted Brown and legislators a half-century ago can be found again among the hundreds of bills introduced so far in the 2025 legislative session.

On Tuesday, for instance, the Senate Judiciary Committee took up Senate Bill 29, a measure that would extend indefinitely the ability of survivors of people who died as a result of medical malpractice to sue for "pain,

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Legislature provided a temporary window for such suits because the court system was in pandemic-induced turmoil.

Insurers and other opponents of the measure contend that it violates a 2022 compromise on the limits of malpractice damages, a deal that seemingly ended a 47-year-long political battle that began when Brown signed the Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act in 1975.

A half-century ago, doctors and other health care providers were also skirmishing over "scope of practice," the body of state law that defines in great detail which medical professionals can perform which procedures on which parts of the human body.

The hardest-fought battle pitted orthopedic surgeons against podiatrists over the legal right to perform ankle surgery, and it raged for years until the latter prevailed. Ever since, there have been similar conflicts too numerous to list, such as psychologists vs. psychiatrists over the right to prescribe drugs, optometrists vs. opticians over eye treatment - and even veterinarians vs. dog groomers over who could legally brush a dog's teeth.

The current version of this perennial turf battle is Assembly Bill 876, which would allow nurse anesthetists to provide their services more independently — the latest in a years-long string of legislative efforts by nurses to bolster the scope of their

practices. Soon after becoming governor, Brown pledged to reform workers' compensation, the system that

suffering, or disfigurement." provides income and medical care to those with work-related illnesses and injuries. That effort failed. but as one of the last acts of his first governorship, Brown signed a bill to increase payments to such workers by about \$3 billion a year, angering employers who must provide coverage.

That touched off a predictable cycle in which a majority of the workers' compensation interest groups would work out some sort of systemic overhaul once each decade and get it enacted over objections of groups left out of the negotiations.

The last such instance occurred in 2012 when Brown, once again governor, negotiated and signed legislation to raise benefits again, but impose new rules on eligibility and medical care to save enough money to pay for the benefits.

The Capitol is overdue for another workers' compensation deal and a newly introduced measure, Senate Bill 555, could be the vehicle. It would increase benefits to workers with partial but permanent disabilities, which have been capped at \$1,256 a month for the last decade.

The bill would provide automatic cost of living increases and is certain to draw fire from employers — another chapter in what has been one of the Capitol's longest running high-dollar conflicts.

Dan Walters is one of the 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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# More Than a Meal



The solutions-focused partnership between Meals on Wheels and Sacramento County Department of Child, Family and Adult Services helps ensure that no senior is left without food or a safety net. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

#### Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - On a routine Monday meal delivery, a volunteer driver with Meals on Wheels (MoW) Sacramento County made a frightening discovery. A senior had been trapped in a collapsed bed since Friday, without food, water or a way to call for help. Staying calm, the driver called 911 and remained at the scene until the emergency contact

Reflecting on moments like these, Mindy Klick, executive director of Meals on Wheels Sacramento County shared, "I want to say these are success stories but they are more like life-saving stories."

Although often mistaken for a public agency, Meals on Wheels Sacramento County is a program of the private nonprofit called ACC Senior Services, formerly known as The Asian Community Center of Sacramento Valley.

Meals on Wheels Sacramento County partners with Sacramento County Department of Child, Family and Adult Services to tackle senior hunger and isolation head-on.

Department of Child, Family and Adult Services' support has helped shrink the growing waitlist by providing funding, vehicles and equipment to make meal delivery safer and more efficient.

"We try to provide whatever we can to help seniors stay in their homes safely," Klick said.

In the current fiscal year, Meals on Wheels Sacramento County is serving an average of about 1,500 meals to seniors each month, with flexible meal options designed to fit their lifestyles:

Home delivery gives participants a choice of daily hot meals or weekly frozen meal packs.

Restaurant meal vouchers provide flexibility and the opportunity to dine out at local partner restaurants.

Community Cafés, located in community centers and other sites across the county, provide more than just a meal; they offer a space for seniors to connect, socialize and combat loneliness. For many participants, the opportunity for conversation is just as important as the food itself.

AniMeals, a pet food program, ensures

that seniors don't have to choose between feeding themselves and their beloved pets. Many participants consider their pets to be family and AniMeals provides food for these furry companions, allowing seniors to care for them without sacrificing their own

Despite their name, Meals on Wheels is about far more than just meals: "This is about making sure our seniors are safe, cared for and not forgotten," Klick

To help achieve these goals, Meals on Wheels Sacramento County also equips seniors with essential home items such as microwaves for easy meal prep, shower chairs for safer bathing and bedside commodes for added convenience. Regular wellness checks and emergency support add another layer of safety, ensuring help is always within reach.

"We try to provide whatever we can to help seniors stay in their homes safely," Klick explained.

A key part of this safety net is the bond between seniors and their delivery drivers. Assigned to regular routes, drivers provide consistency which builds trust and familiarity. For many homebound seniors, they might be the only human connection that day or even that week.

If something seems off such as changes in behavior, health or routine, the driver initiates the chain of support by alerting their caseworker who can respond as needed.

"If we see a situation that concerns us, we're able to reach out to DCFAS (Department of Child, Family and Adult Services) and either get advice, coaching on how to handle it or have Adult Protective Services step in and assist," said

Klick spoke highly of the Department of Child, Family and Adult Services team.

"I have not met a nicer group of peo ple with the biggest hearts, trying to do the right thing," she said. "I can pick up the phone and say, 'This is the challenge we're facing, what are your thoughts? How can we partner?"

This open, solutions-focused partnership between Meals on Wheels and Sacramento County Department of Child, Family and Adult Services helps ensure that no senior is left without food or a safety net.

# **Comprehensive Update** on Response to Homelessness

Sacramento County News Release

#### SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -

The Sacramento County departments of Homeless Services and Housing, and Health Services presented their biannual report to the Board detailing outreach efforts to the homeless population in the unincorporated region of Sacramento and along the American River Parkway from July 1 to Dec. 31, 2024.

This is the third such report out since the start of the city/county partnership agreement was signed in December 2023. In addition to reporting on joint outreach efforts in the City of Sacramento, county staff also report on similar activities in the unincorporated county.

Looking at the county outreach items by the numbers starting from July 1 to Dec. 31, 2024, 10 parkway staff, 10 encampment services staff and six community-based outreach staff provided 25,274 services to 810 unduplicated individuals and supported 184 unduplicated individuals with transitioning out of unsheltered homelessness (which includes shelter and housing). On average, that is 31 services per participant.

Examples of service numbers and types include:

General case management: 16,397

Housing search/placement: 1,206

Vital document support: 1,024

Healthcare Services:

CalAim services: 294 Coordinated Access System (CAS) Referrals:

More than 70% of unsheltered individuals served were between the ages of 25 and 61, 53% were male and 53% were Black, Indigenous and

People of Color (BIPOC). What about individuals in shelters? In county-funded shelters,



More than 70% of unsheltered individuals served were between the ages of 25 and 61, 53% were male and 53% were Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). MPG file photo

45% of individuals are between the ages of 45 and 64, 64% report a disabling condition, 40% have no income, and on average, have experienced nearly four years of homelessness.

From July 1 to Dec. 31, 2024 county shelters enrolled 1,137 unique households.

Taking a look at behavioral health services by the numbers indicate that from July 1 to Dec. 31, 2024, 1,360 unhoused residents were referred to behavioral health services and 947 individuals were successfully admitted and linked to services.

During the same period, HEART Team efforts included 1,607 individuals engaged, 342 referrals to behavioral health services and individuals linked to and served by outpatient programs.

From July to December 2024, the Full-Service Partnerships (FSPs) served 2.631 (95% of total capacity) unduplicated individuals out of which 76% of those individuals are housed, 11% are in shelters, 9% are unsheltered and 4% are unknown.

The Department of Homeless Services and Housing continues update its data dashboards, reflecting its commitment to providing clear, accessible information to support

data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement in addressing homelessness.

Data presented in the dashboards is organized into two general categories: program performance data and demographic insights data.

Program performance data helps track key performance metrics, including program reach, services provided to program participants, program utilization and connections to shelter and housing. Demographic insights

include data on age, gender, race/ethnicity and vulnerability factors such as lengths of homelessness, disability conditions and financial resources.

homelessness, disability conditions and financial

Explore the dashboards

at https://schs.saccounty. gov/Pages/Sacramento CountyHomelessnessData Dashboard.aspx and discover how the collective efforts are making a difference in our community. Currently, the dashboards only reflect demographics and outcomes from Department of Homeless Services and Housing

what Sacramento County is doing to address homelessness, visit schs.saccounty.

funded programs.



# Sacramento Book Festival Welcomes Big Names

Sacramento Book Festival News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 31, the California Writers Club Sacramento Branch will launch the second annual Sacramento Book Festival at the Shepard Garden & Arts Center, next to McKinley Park, in East Sacramento.

As part of the free festival's focus on literacy, organizers will run a book drive for new and gently used children's books for the Mustard Seed School. This Sacramento Loaves & Fishes program is a free private school for children ages 3 to 15 years old who are currently homeless. The Sacramento Book Festival

committee will also welcome the Sacramento Literacy Foundation to the event, an organization whose mission is to help all children in the community read at grade-level. Also, there will be 916 Ink, an arts-based creative writing and literacy nonprofit organization helping Sacramento youth discover a love of reading.

The festival will feature more than 125 local authors reading, participating on panels and introducing themselves to Sacramento

Black Women Write, Capital The roster includes New York Books on K, Capitol Crimes, Elk



panels and introducing themselves to Sacramento readers. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Book Festival Times bestselling thriller author Grove Writers Guild, Friends of

James Rollins, award-winning mystery author Catriona McPherson, crime fiction writers Claire Booth and James L'Etoile, among many others who Sacramento-area readers will recognize. In addition, there will be chil-

dren's activities, a food truck and a

scavenger hunt with prizes. Event sponsors include 916 Ink, Amatoria Fine Art Books, Avid Reader on Broadway, the Sacramento Library - Book Den, the Mustard Seed School, Northern California Publishers and Authors, Northern California Romance Writers, Paper Lantern Writers, Sacramento Literacy Foundation, Sacramento Public Library, A Seat at the Table Books and Underground Books.

The authors, by neighborhood,

are as follows: River Park authors Scott Coatsworth authors Ann Naimark Oleas and Rancho Cordova author

and Ann Da Vigo. Fair Oaks authors Tim Schooley and Sandra Navarro.

Jill Davis.

Curtis Park/Downtown Sacramento authors Michael Gorman, Grete Brewer-Bakken, Brian Buhl, Melissa Buhl, Chance Knight, Linda Townsdin and Jeff Galvin.

Carmichael author Ann Chehak and Antelope author Candice

West Sacramento author Jeyzel Rossi and American River author Bonnie Blue.

Gold River author Luanne

Elk Grove authors George Hahn, Rosemary Covington, Betsy Schwarzentraub, Nafisa Kahn and Brvan Hill.

East Sacramento authors Anara Guard and Brian Reisinger.

Land Park authors Ron Javor, Jennifer Morita and Michele Drier. Pocket authors Eileen Hook and Dorothy Rice. Arden Arcade/Arden authors

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Folsom author Joanne Kwan and Winters author Catriona McPherson.

# SMUD to Hold Public Proposed Rate Action Workshops

SMUD News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The SMUD Board of Directors is holding two public workshops and a public hearing to discuss proposed rate changes.

The Chief Executive Officer & General Manager's Reports and Recommendation on Rates and Services, released by SMUD CEO & General Manager Paul Lau, outlines a proposed rate increase of 3 percent

on Jan. 1, 2026, and another

another
3 percent increase on Jan. 1, 2027.
The pro-

posed changes also include an optional Time-of-Day (low use) Rate, updates to transmission rates and other miscellaneous changes.

While SMUD works hard to control costs and operate efficiently, the need for a modest rate increase is attributed to several factors including wildfire prevention and mitigation, new generation projects, higher commodity costs for California clean energy compliance, infrastructure investment to maintain a reliable grid, the Folsom Administrative Operations Building and increased operating costs due to inflation, according to SMUD officials.

SMUD officials say that SMUD is committed to keeping rate increases within inflation, and if the proposed changes are approved, SMUD's rates would remain among the lowest rates in the state, currently on average more than 50- percent lower than neighboring PG&E's rates.

Detailed information on the proposed rate action and a complete copy of the Chief Executive Officer and General Manager's Report and Recommendation on Rates and Services can be found on smud.org/RateInfo.

SMUD will work closely with

customers and other stakeholders, including community groups, service organizations, business groups, elected officials and more, to discuss these changes.

In addition, two public workshops and a public hearing will be held for customers to learn more about the process and comment on the proposed changes. Meetings will be held in-person at SMUD's Headquarters building and virtually via

loom.

A public workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, April 30

at 5:30 p.m., followed by another public workshop on Tuesday, May 13 at 10 a.m. Additionally, a public hearing will be held on Wednesday, June 4 at 6 p.m.

Accommodations are available for disabled individuals. If you need a hearing assistance device or other aid, or have questions about the proposal, visit smud.org/RateInfo or call SMUD at 855-736-7655. Written comments can be emailed to ContactUs@smud.org or mailed to SMUD, P.O. Box 15830, B256, Sacramento, CA 95852-0830.

As the nation's sixth-largest, community-owned, not-for-profit electric service provider, SMUD has been providing lowcost, reliable electricity to Sacramento County for more than 75 years. SMUD is a recognized industry leader and award winner for its innovative energy efficiency programs, renewable power technologies and for its sustainable solutions for a healthier environment. In 2023, SMUD's power supply was, on average, 78 percent carbon free, and SMUD has a goal to reach zero carbon in its electricity production by 2030. For more information on SMUD's Zero Carbon Plan and its customer programs, visit smud.org.

# Rancho Seco Recreational Area Implements New Boat Restrictions

By MPG Staff

#### RANCHO SECO, CA (MPG) -

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District announced new watercraft restrictions on March 25 at Rancho Seco Lake as a preventive measure against the spread of invasive, non-native golden mussels recently discovered in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The new restrictions follow an alert issued by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife that indicated the potential environmental and economic threats it could pose to the region.

According to the alert, golden mussel shells were recently discovered in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The species pose a threat to natural ecosystems, water conveyance systems, infrastructure and water quality in California and across the United States.

"This discovery is the first known occurrence of golden mussels in North America," the Department of Fish & Wildlife wrote in the alert.

Golden mussels are similar in appearance, biology and impact to quagga and zebra mussels, per the alert, but can also establish in waters with lower calcium levels than required by quagga and zebra mussels.

To protect Rancho Seco Lake from invasive mussels, only small watercraft that can be launched by hand (such as canoes, kayaks, smaller electric watercraft, paddle boats, sculls and the like) are now allowed.



A float-tube fisherman works the water at Rancho Seco Lake Photo courtesy of SMUD

The watercraft must be thoroughly cleaned, drained and dried before launch, and cannot have been in any other waterway, including the Delta, for at least 30 days. To further protect the ecosystem, only artificial bait and lures are permitted.

The measure also bars trailer-launched water-craft and live aquatic bait, including all baitfish, crawfish, crabs and mussels.

Small electric trolling motors and other hand-launched watercraft such as hand-launched canoes, rafts, kayaks, rowboats, paddle boats, inflatables, sculls and other hand-launched recreational watercraft will still be allowed on the lake.

All permitted watercraft will be required to undergo a watercraft inspection by a certified inspector or canine upon park entry. Inspectors will restrict any boat that has been in any other body of water in the last 30 days or that they deem a risk.

All watercraft must be clean, drained and dry. Boaters will be required to participate in visual inspections of their watercraft.

All visitors planning to

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launch any flotation device will receive inspection, and devices must be fully clean, drained and dry before launching.

Other bodies, including the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, have taken similar steps to protect against the invasive species.

The 400-acre Rancho Seco Recreational Area remains open for a wide range of activities including camping, hiking, fishing and bird watching. Visitors can still enjoy the scenic Howard Ranch Trail, picnic areas and renovated facilities.

SMUD's popular Trout Derby event on April 5 and 6 continued as scheduled, with staff and resources in place to ensure all participants can enjoy a successful fishing experience while adjusting to the new watercraft guidelines.

Certified watercraft inspectors and canine teams will be on-site to conduct thorough inspections, ensuring all watercraft meet clean, drain and dry requirements before launching.

For more information about recreational activities at Rancho Seco Recreational Area, visit smud.org/RanchoSeco. \*





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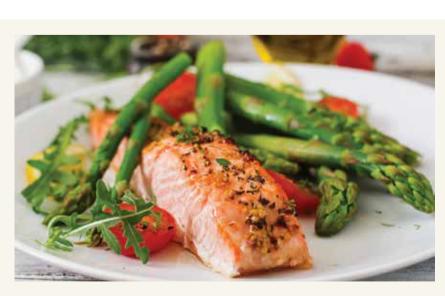
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