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'Urban Dreams Art' Covers Midtown



"Internal Exposure" by Jessica Levine will be located at 1817 Capitol Ave. Photo courtesy of Midtown Association

**Midtown Association
News Release**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Staying true to its mission to be the center for culture, creativity and vibrancy in Sacramento's urban core, the Midtown Association is set to install and display 16 art pieces and sculptures in time for Midtown Second Saturday on Aug. 9.

With sizes that range from 6 inches to 20 inches, some art pieces need specialized and/or crane-like equipment (such as a gradall) to be put into place. Installation throughout the district will take place in early August, and the artwork will remain on display through Midtown Second Saturday on Sept. 13.

"Nearly a year in development and made possible by support from the office of Mayor Kevin McCarty, Supervisor Phil Serna, Sutter Health and Visit Sacramento, the all-new 'Urban Dreams Art Experience' is a truly ambitious and incredibly exciting project all at once," said Executive Director of the Midtown Association Emily Baime Michaels.

"We expect that this art experience will be a real



"Flaming Horse" by Seth Johnson will be located at Fremont Park, Q Street.

tourism draw for the city. Each piece is unique and stunning in its own way. The art ranges in size, scope, subject matter and artist intent, which makes the initiative so intriguing. We look forward to uplifting our local

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Top Tacos Compete in Bracket-Style Tournament



**Battle of the Taco
News Release**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Calling all taco lovers! Sac Taco Fest is back and it's bigger, bolder and tastier than ever. This year's festival debuts "Battle of the Taco," a bracket-style tournament where the public can nominate their favorite local taquerías for a shot at glory. Nominated vendors will battle it out online and in public vote, with the winner crowned at the festival on Sept. 20.

The official tournament bracket has been released and Round 1 is wrapping up. To vote, visit sactacofest.com. Voting closes at 11:50 p.m. Monday, July 28.

"We're excited to give vendors a platform to compete, connect with new audiences and share the flavors that define our community," said Vice Mayor Karina Talamantes. "Sac Taco Fest is a powerful celebration of our culture and entrepreneurial spirit."

"This festival is so much more than just another food event," said Councilmember Eric Guerra. "It's about honoring our community's taco makers and creating a space where culture, competition and celebration come together."

Throughout the voting period, there will be pop-ups at Taco Plaza, 2620 Northgate Blvd., all building up to the big day when the Battle of the Taco tournament concludes Saturday, Sept. 20 at the annual Sac Taco Fest. The all-day, gated street festival on Del Paso Boulevard will transform the area into a vibrant celebration of food, culture and community, featuring top vendors, craft beer and spirits, live bands, DJs and fun for the whole family. Sac Taco Fest's mission is to celebrate and support the small businesses and neighborhoods that give our city its unbeatable taco culture.

"This festival is exactly

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Freeport Bar & Grill Mixes Tradition, Family, Flavor

By Idaly Valencia

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Located along the Sacramento River, Freeport Bar & Grill keeps American cuisine and tradition alive with quality service, classic dishes and a homey atmosphere.

Owned and operated by Nicole Finley's parents since 1996, the family-run restaurant is a staple in the Freeport area. Finley and her brothers are next in line to take over the business, continuing its legacy as a "Gateway to the Delta" and a favorite for locals.

"We really just try to keep it 'back to the basics,'" said Finley. "We have signature dishes that have always been on the menu...we add stuff but we try to keep it with that homey feel where all the meals come with a soup or a salad that you don't have



Pictured is Freeport Bar & Grill's Nicole Finley, whose parents have owned and operated the restaurant since 1996. Photo by Seth Henderson

to pay extra for."

The restaurant has seen renovations over the years, including a covered,

pet-friendly patio for year-round outdoor dining and events.

Despite updates to the

restaurant's appearance, staple recipes remain unchanged. Customer

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'Urban Dreams Art' Covers Midtown



"Mechateuthis" by Barry Crawford will be located at Mulvaney's B&L, 19th Street.



"Sprout" by Paige Tashner will be located at 17 Central Apartment Homes, 17th Street.



"Ratchetfish" by Barry Crawford will be located at The Golden Bear, K Street.



"Art Deco Wings" by Seth Johnson will be located at First United Methodist Church, J Street.

Continued from Page 1
arts community thoughtfully and intentionally and highly encourage the community to immerse themselves in exploring every facet of the pieces that are part of the Urban Dreams Art Experience."

Urban Art Experience Art Piece Rundown

"Art Deco Wings" by Seth Johnson, to be located on the rooftop of First United Methodist Church, sponsored by Stonebridge Properties.

"Dendro" by Daniel Tran, to be located at The Press at Midtown Quarter Apartments, sponsored by Oakmont Properties.

"Mechateuthis" by Barry Crawford, to be located at Mulvaney's B&L, sponsored by the Handle District.

"Internal Exposure" by Jessica Levine, to be located on the front lawn of 1817 Capitol Ave./Priority Parking Office, sponsored by the Handle District.

"Ratchetfish" by Barry Crawford, to be located between The Golden Bear and Der Biergarten, sponsored by The Golden Bear, Der Biergarten, Thomas Roth.

"Reaching Through" by Jessica Levine, to be installed on the exterior landing of the Midtown Art Retail Restaurant Scene (MARRS) building, sponsored by Heller Pacific and Fulcrum Properties.

"Life Labryinth" by Jessica Levine, to be located in the courtyard of 1801 L Apartments, sponsored by SKK Developments.

Unnamed (new concept) by Leaveswell, to

be located in the lobby of Hyatt House, sponsored by Hyatt House and Visit Sacramento.

"The Mare'lot" by Aaron Roseli, to be located on the pool deck of The Mansion Apartments, sponsored by SKK Developments.

"Agua Glow" by Kirsten Hoard, to be located on the second-floor patio at 19J, sponsored by Mohanna Development.

"Sprout" by Paige Tashner, to be installed on the exterior awning of 17Central Apartments, sponsored by D&S Development.

"Flaming Horse" by Seth Johnson, to be installed in Fremont Park, sponsored by CADA.

"Paint Can" by Gale Hart, to be located in the lobby of Fort Sutter, sponsored by Fort Sutter Hotel & Visit Sacramento.

"Clawfoot Creature" by Sarah Fetterman, to be located in the lobby of Eleanor H16, sponsored by MG Properties.

"Face Value" by Colin Mitchell, to be located in the lobby of Channel 24, sponsored by Another Planet Entertainment.

Unnamed (new concept) by Gina Rossi, to be located in the courtyard of 16Powerhouse Apartments, sponsored by Demmon Partners.

In addition to the art pieces, special programming will accompany select artwork along each month's Midtown Second Saturday Art Walk route and the talented local and regional artists will be available for questions and answers about their artwork, process and craft.

After a call for artist submissions in early

March of this year, more than 70 pieces of art were submitted by 36 artists for review and selection by an art selection committee consisting of artists, arts organizations, Visit Sacramento and Second Saturday sponsors. The final artwork selections were based on artistic merit, community engagement and interactive qualities. More information about the Urban Art Experience is available at exploremidtown.org/urban-dreams. For more information about continuously updated Sutter Health's Midtown Second Saturday details, visit midtownsecondssaturday.com. ★

Freeport Bar & Grill Mixes Tradition, Family, Flavor

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favorites such as Yankee pot roast, French onion soup and clam chowder served every Friday are long-standing traditions.

"The Yankee pot roast is the original owner's recipe and we've never changed that. We do homemade clam chowder every Friday, the same recipe that we've had for years," Finley said. "French onion soup is served daily and we have newer items like the Monterey-stuffed avocado salad with mixed greens, fresh avocado and bay shrimp."

Finley has been involved with the restaurant since her youth by hosting, folding napkins and helping her parents where needed. After graduating from California State University, Sacramento, Finley continued working alongside her family assisting both on the floor and with back-of-house responsibilities.

The restaurant stays true to its roots while evolving to meet customer needs, offering veggie patties and gluten-free options.

Family values and community spirit shine through their events for Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day and New Year's Eve. The outdoor patio also hosts weddings, showers and celebrations of life for longtime clients.

Bartender and head server Kristin McCollum has worked at the restaurant for three years but has been in the restaurant industry since 1999. McCollum said she "fell in



David and Caroline Hinshaw, Pocket residents, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with a dinner at Freeport Bar & Grill on July 9. Photo by Seth Henderson



Located just 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento and about 12 minutes from Elk Grove, Freeport Bar & Grill is open daily until 10 p.m.

love" with the Delta community and the people she serves.

"Freeport is a great place to work, great food and good people. My philosophy is we can work hard,

have fun and help each other," said McCollum. "Fish and chips are the best thing on the whole menu, fresh and never frozen cod. We make our own tempura batter and it's a huge

portion, enough for two people to share."

One of McCollum's favorite parts of the job is seeing familiar faces.

"People I served 20 years ago come here



Roberta Ashenfarb is a regular customer who said that the atmosphere, food and staff are among the reasons why she loves dining at Freeport Bar & Grill

and remember me; they become my regulars again. That's something that's always stuck out to me," she said.

According to McCollum, Freeport Bar & Grill is one of the few places in Sacramento that maintains a down-to-earth vibe while offering quality food. Customer-favorite cocktails include the raspberry lemon drop and dragon berry mojito with muddled strawberries, both original recipes.

Roberta Ashenfarb is a regular customer who said that the atmosphere, food and staff are among the reasons why she loves dining at the restaurant.

"The food is fresh; it's very well made. You've got good company here, good people here. They have great specials, and I just love it," she said.

David and Caroline Hinshaw, Pocket residents, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with dinner at the restaurant. They have been dining at the restaurant for a few years.

"We like the service and we like the people," said David Hinshaw.

Happy hour is available

at the bar from 3 to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays with beer and wine specials as well as small bites such as flat bread pizza and pretzels.

Customers can watch their favorite team or sport on the screens upon request.

Located just 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento and about 12 minutes from Elk Grove, Freeport Bar & Grill is open daily until 10 p.m. Kids eat free on Tuesdays and adults enjoy 20% off bottles of wine during "Wine Down Wednesday."

Whether it's longtime residents reconnecting over a favorite meal, new customers discovering a neighborhood gem or families marking life's milestones, the restaurant continues to be more than just a place to eat. It's a community gathering spot where tradition is honored, stories are shared and everyone is treated like family.

To view the menu or learn more, visit freeportbarandgrill.com/about.

Freeport Bar & Grill is located at 8259 Freeport Blvd., Sacramento. ★

Not Showing Us the Money

New Poll Finds Vast Majority of Californians Believe Special Interest Money Has Too Much Influence in Sacramento

By Evan Symon,
California Globe

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According to a new UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) poll released Thursday, the vast majority of Californians believe that special interest money has too much influence in Sacramento politics and decision making, with only 2% of Californians disagreeing in any capacity.

The poll specifically found that 55% of Californians strongly agreed with the question ‘Do you agree or disagree: Special interest money has too much influence in Sacramento politics and decision making?’, with another 20% somewhat agreeing. With 1% somewhat disagreeing and 1% strongly disagreeing, the rest of the 23% were either in the middle and not agreeing or disagreeing, or simply chose not to respond.

When broken down by party, a grand total of 73% of all Democrats agreed with the question, albeit with only 49% strongly agreeing and 24% somewhat agreeing. Only 3% disagreed. Republicans brought a much stronger response, with 81% agreeing, including 69% strongly agreeing, while only 2% disagreed. No party preference voters stood at 75% agreeing.

The question of special interest money having too much influence in the state capitol also showed significant racial fluctuations, although like the party



The vast majority of Californians believe that that kind of spending has far too much influence in the state. Image MPG file photo

registration section, disagreeing with the question only saw a maximum of 3%. White voters proved far more skeptical, with 82% agreeing (64% strongly and 18% somewhat). Meanwhile, Latino voters were the least skeptical, with only 66% in total agreeing (44% strongly, 22% somewhat).

Finally, voter age showed the largest divisions on the question, albeit once again with only a maximum of 3% disagreeing with the question per age group. As it turned out, the younger the voter, the less skeptical of the question they turned out to be. Heading down from age groups, 85% of those aged 65 and older agreed with the question,

followed by 81% of 50 to 64 year olds, 77% of 40 to 49 year olds, 70% of 30 to 39 year olds, and 59% of 18 to 29 year olds.

If measured by only strongly agreeing, all age demos showed 50% or more agreeing, except for the young 18 to 29 year olds section. There, only 38% strongly agreed.

The IGS team pointed out even more demographic fluctuations, while likewise hammering home the fact that the vast majority of Californians all agree on special interest money having too much of an influence on lawmakers in Sacramento.

“Strikingly, this was a question on which there was little partisan split, with 73% of Democrats,

81% of Republicans, and 75% of No Party Preference voters agreeing. At least 59% of each regional, gender, age, education, income, and racial group also agreed with the statement,” said the IGS in their poll findings. “Strong agreement was highest among white (64%), male (63%), and 65 years and older (66%) voters. It was lowest among young voters (38%) and low-income voters (37%). Californians who vote regularly are the most fed up with the money in California’s political system: 87% of them agree strongly or somewhat, compared to 67% of respondents who are not regular voters.”

“The numbers don’t lie. ★

Californians overwhelmingly recognize that big money wields far too much power over our elected officials,” added California Common Cause Deputy Director Russia Chavis Cardenas. “People from every political party, every race, and every walk of life are united behind one urgent demand. They want Sacramento to break the grip of big money on our democracy.”

The California Globe has continuously shown the high amount of special interest money flowing through Sacramento, as well highlighting the groups giving the most. This includes pointing out the hundreds of millions being spent by public sector unions each year on lawmakers and groups in Sacramento, and thus, having a huge amount of influence as a result.

In 2024 alone, lobbying groups spent \$540 million to influence the state government, jumping up 10% from 2023. The largest individual private sector group, the Western States Petroleum Association, spent a total of \$17.3 million in an attempt to influence lawmakers, while the largest sector, public sector unions spent, as mentioned earlier, into the hundreds of millions.

As of early July, 2025 mid-year figures are unavailable for special interest funding. However, as the poll showed, the vast majority of Californians believe that that kind of spending has far too much influence in the state. ★

Bombshell Declassified ICA Report on 2016 Plot to Overthrow Elected President



By Harold Pease, Ph. D.,
LibertyUnderFire.org

The new CIA Director John Radcliffe just released ICA’s Tradecraft Review of the 2016 Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA) revealing the CIA, FBI and DNI’s unsuccessful attempt to nullify Trump’s 2016 election victory over Hillary Clinton because of alleged Russian collusion in the election. In this, outgoing President Barack Obama and then CIA director John Brennan played major and intentional roles in both. The Russian Hoax and its coverup, is now the biggest political scandal in American history. The Report, showed that “then-CIA Director John Brennan, FBI Director James Comey and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, who were “excessively involved” in its drafting, and rushed its completion in a “chaotic,” “atypical” and “markedly unconventional” process

that raised questions of a “potential political motive” (“Obama’s Trump-Russia collusion report was corrupt from start: CIA review,” by Miranda Devine, New York Post, July 2, 2025). The obvious intent, though not cited, was to leave Trump, the 2016 election victor, unseated, against the will of the people who elected him.

A glaring curiosity was the timing, “on December 6, 2016, six weeks before his presidency ended,” and a month after the election, “Barack Obama ordered the assessment, which concluded that Russian President Vladimir Putin ‘aspired’ to help Trump win the election”—thus Russian collusion (Ibid.). Brennan had an obvious obsession to include in the report the unverified, even discredited Steele dossier, “despite objections of the authors and senior CIA Russia experts, so as to push a false narrative that Russia secured Trump’s 2016 victory.” Still another unexplained anomaly for a guy leaving the presidency within weeks, is Obama’s wire tapping of Hillary’s political opponent. Trump responded, “Just found out that Obama had my ‘wires taped’ in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthism!” (X22 Report, Ep. 3679b, July 3, 2025, 47:19, X). “Never

has a president left office to collude with others to impede the next sitting president of the United States of America until Obama! (Ibid. 52:23).

The release of the classified “Tradecraft Review of the 2016 Intelligence Community Assessment [ICA] on Russian Election Interference” was conducted by career professionals at the CIA’s Directorate of Analysis and was commissioned by CIA Director John Ratcliffe last May. It concluded that in 2016, then CIA director Brennan and others rushed the Russia Election Interference Intelligence Assessment. In it “Brennan is shown to have dismissed high-level warnings that the Clinton campaign opposition research, the ‘Steel Dossier,’ was not credible. The intelligence community CIA, FBI, DNI, etc. intentionally fabricated intelligence information to create an entirely fictitious storyline” and weaponized the fake narrative against Donald Trump to prevent him from taking office after being elected by the people (Ibid., 48:19).

If the Coup d’état. was unsuccessful then why does this matter now in 2025—nine years later? Because those unpunished then remained in place enabling them to cheat even more so in every two year election cycle thereafter, potentially to infinity if

not exposed, punished and stopped.

Rasmussen Reports labeled the CIA Directors’ recent release as “An Enormous Scandal, Dwarfing Watergate and the Pentagon Papers,” much much bigger than Watergate (Ibid., 48:52). To which Lee Smith, an investigative reporter replied, “Useful detail but misses crucial fact. I’ve reported in three books: Obama ordered ICA and knew by August 2016 [that the] only intel tying Trump to Russia was [the] dossier. That’s the scandal, not bad tradecraft or stove piping intel etc: Obama framed Trump” (Ibid. 49:25). Let us repeat, “Obama framed Trump.”

General Mike Flynn, who was himself victimized by the Deep State, said, “The newly declassified ICA proves without a shadow of a doubt that the entire operation was a rigged partisan hack job. It wasn’t intelligence. It was propaganda meant to undermine the incoming POTUS. And who orchestrated this disgrace – John Brennan, a man who wore the title of CIA Director but acted like a political assassin in service to the Obama/Clinton machine. He didn’t just fail in his duties. He betrayed it. He weaponized the CIA to push a lie, boxed out the rest of the intelligence community and engineered a fraudulent narrative that tore our nation apart. He

knew the Intel was a lie yet he led a small handpicked Cabal to hide the truth and manufactured a story that served their agenda Everything they accuse Trump, myself, and others of doing they were doing behind the scenes. That is what Marxists do. And while they pushed their fiction, real Americans paid the price. I exposed all of it in my new book ‘Pardon of Innocence.’” General Flynn’s suggestion now is that “John Brennan needs to be put under investigation immediately.” (Ibid., 49:47). Kash Patel in his book “Government Gangster’s” verifies in detail how this was done—this whole attempted Coup d’état.

There are good reasons why Trump could not go after those who went after him and Flynn when he was president before Joe Biden. Then, few knew of the Deep State. Even fewer would have believed him and had he sought justice who would have investigated and who would have prosecuted—a rogue FBI and Department of Justice? And with the corrupt judicial justices that are only now being exposed, who would have convicted? Even now that the vast majority of the people are awakened to these coup conspirators we are probably not ready to give long prison sentences to them—perhaps executions? If justice is not

restored they will be back in power.

Fortunately, “there exists no statute of limitations for conspiring to defraud the US government,” none also for criminal Rico activities, more especially, if criminal activities are ongoing or there exist any attempt to cover them up. This includes cheating in elections in 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024—much of which has been documented. This is why Trump allowed them to continue to do this. It removes the statute of limitations.” (Ibid., 52:08). But we must win decisively both houses 2026.

Ratcliffe in an exclusive interview summarized the rational for the released Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA). “This was Obama, Comey, Clapper and Brennan deciding ‘We’re going to screw Trump.’” And they did. Others called it treason then and now.

Dr. Harold Pease is an expert on the United States Constitution and a syndicated columnist. He has dedicated his career to studying the writings of the Founding Fathers and applying that knowledge to current events. He taught history and political science from this perspective for over 30 years. Newspapers have permission to publish his column. Read more of his weekly columns at www.LibertyUnderFire.org. ★

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MEALS ON WHEELS
SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Girl Scouts Experience Civic Engagement at State Capitol

Girl Scouts Heart of Central California News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Girl Scouts Heart of Central California (GSHCC) was proud to welcome Girl Scouts from across the state for a two-day educational experience centered on civic engagement and advocacy.

This immersive event, which took place on June 19 and 20, was open to Girl Scouts in grades four through 12 and designed to inspire the next generation of changemakers by connecting them directly with government and public service.

Participants engaged in hands-on workshops, toured the historic State Capitol, met with legislators and took part in panel discussions, featuring elected officials and leaders in civic life. The experience empowers girls to explore how the government works, understand their role in a democracy and develop their voices as



Girl Scouts pose in the California State Senate during their two-day event on June 19 and 20. Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California

advocates for the issues they care about.

“This event gives girls a rare opportunity to see government in action and to realize that they, too, can lead and make a difference in their communities,” said Adriana Pedroza,

associate director of girl experience at Girl Scouts Heart of Central California.

Girl Scouts Heart of Central California is dedicated to building girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

Through various programs and initiatives, the organization empowers girls to take the lead in their lives and communities.

Headquartered in Sacramento, Girl Scouts Heart of Central California serves over 16,000 girl and adult

members across 18 counties, including Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Mariposa, Merced, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tuolumne, Yolo and Yuba. ★



Girl Scouts listen to a tour guide outside of the Governor's Office at the State Capitol Building during their two-day event on June 19 and 20. Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California



Girl Scouts listen attentively while inside the California State Senate during their two-day event on June 19 and 20. Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California



Above right: The electronic sign in the California State Senate says, “The California State Senate Welcomes Girl Scouts.” Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California

Right: Girl Scouts listen attentively while inside the California State Senate during their two-day event on June 19 and 20. Photo courtesy of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California

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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Summer league has grown exponentially, and fans are tuned in today like never before.

Sunday night saw our Sacramento Kings vying for their third summer league championship, as they faced off with the Charlotte Hornets in Las Vegas Nevada.

With identical 5-0 records the Kings got a dose of what their first and second round draft choices were capable of, so it remained to be seen how they would perform when the lights were brightest.

After an auspicious summer league audition, Nique Clifford struggled finding his shooting stroke, and had just 4 points entering the fourth quarter. The Kings would never give up on this game. After being down by 18 points, the young squad fought back to a single point deficit with less than 2 minutes remaining.

A pass from Isaac Jones to Clifford well beyond the arc, and Nique did not disappoint draining a deep three. Clifford followed up with an acrobatic jump shot in the corner for another three, and the Kings looked like winners.

Charlotte would not go quietly as sharpshooter Kon Knueppel pulled up for a back breaking three. Moving the ball quickly into the frontcourt Isaac Jones sized up his first 3-point shot of the night and when Isaac converted the three the Kings were knocking on the door once again.

Kings fans can be proud of how the team fought for a win that ultimately would escape them, as a much needed rebound careened off the foot of Isaac Jones, and the Kings would go on to lose 83-78.

Neither the loss of the game nor the championship is the real story. The Sacramento Kings got more than just a glimpse of what their first and second round draft choices are capable of.

Talented, for sure and yes, they are raw. Nique Clifford put together a string of games that stated loudly, I've arrived and ready to make a difference!

Although I don't like using that word, Maxime Raynaud is more of a project. Raynaud, like every rookie, is going to need extended playing time, and time to play through his mistakes.

What the Kings really wanted to know, is can this 7'1" big man make an impact and play alongside Domantas Sabonis. I believe

he can, but confidence building is what will determine how quickly Maxime Raynaud will arrive.

Not to be left behind was the electric play of second year man Isaac Jones, who coming off a stellar 36-point performance, led all scores again with a 24-point performance. Jones made his lone 3-point attempt and added 11 big boards while chipping in with 2 assists.

Isaac Jones summer league performance came as no surprise to me. What's sad is the lack of playing time he received in his rookie year. It's my hope, as Isaac is receiving accolades from other coaches and pundits, that the staff pay close attention to what is possible.

Jones 6'9" frame and 7'3" wingspan make him a difficult guard for any team. He has a definite knack around the rim. He's active, and if he finds himself in a rotation that gives him 20 minutes plus per game, look for both Isaac and the Kings to take a step forward.

There is much to shout about as the Kings close out their summer league schedule. The confident presence that Nique Clifford brought every night is one of many things to be happy about.

Nique lived up to his billing as he played hard at both ends of the court, and like Isaac Jones, Clifford will need to find his place on the team that gets him minutes every game.

Doug Christie has his work cut out for him with a crowded guard rotation, including second year man Devin Carter, who acquitted himself admirably and played dominantly. Devin needs to continue working on his shot, but the upside for Carter is huge. No need for the Kings to question their decision to draft a player that could only contribute half a season due to injury. Carter is winning fans with every game he plays. I look for Devin to be more than just a contributor in the upcoming season.

Yes, Kings fans, you got what you were hoping for, and without a doubt this summer league squad has got the city of Sacramento excited.

Scott Perry isn't done just yet, so stay tuned Kings fans!

All the best!

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

Social Security Matters

What is the Formula for Deciding When to Claim?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I am curious about the "formula" to decide when to take Social Security while still working. I am past the Full Retirement Age. How do you best address such? Should we schedule a call?

Signed: Wondering When

Dear Wondering: Well, you can always contact us by phone on 1.888.750.2622 to speak to one of our certified Social Security Advisors, or you can send your questions to us via email at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. You don't need to pre-schedule a meeting, as we have multiple advisors answering the phone on most normal business days. If they all happen to be busy when you call, simply leave a voicemail and an Advisor will return your call promptly.

For starters, since you have reached your full retirement age, know that your work earnings will no longer negatively affect your Social Security benefits. You can earn as much as possible, and your monthly SS amount will be the same, based on your average lifetime monthly earnings (for your highest 35 years), and based on your age when you claim.

Since you have not yet claimed SS, you are already earning Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) which increase your monthly SS amount by .667% for each month you continue to delay. That's 8% for each full year you delay past your full retirement age (FRA). You should not, however, wait longer than age 70 to claim because that is when you will get your maximum SS benefit amount. For you, that means that your age 70 amount will be 28% more than the amount you would have received at your FRA of 66 years and 6 months (in Oct. 2023), and about 15% more than if you were to claim now.

Note too, that if your more recent income is among the highest of your lifetime, Social Security will automatically increase your monthly SS retirement amount to account for that event. They will check your work earnings each year to see if you are entitled to a larger SS amount because of your recent earnings.

Since (according to your AMAC member record) you are married, you may also wish to consider whether your wife will get a spousal benefit from you when you claim. If your wife's personal SS retirement amount at her FRA is less than the amount you were entitled to at your FRA, then she will get a spousal boost when you claim. With her spousal boost (if claimed at her FRA), her total SS benefit should be about 50% of your FRA benefit amount (not half of the higher amount you will get because you waited longer to claim).

But your wife cannot get a spousal boost until you are collecting your SS.

And here is something else to think about: received SS benefits will become part of your overall income taxed by the IRS when you submit your income tax return. If you file your income tax as "married/jointly" and your combined income from all sources is more than \$32,000 then some of your SS benefits will become taxable income. If your combined income is between \$32,001 and \$44,000, then half of the SS benefits you received during the tax year becomes part of your taxable income. Or, if your combined income from all sources exceeds \$44,000, then about 85% of your received SS benefits will become part of your income taxed by the IRS. Just something to keep in mind, especially since you are still working.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. ★



It's Time to Cut Off Public Broadcasting

In the past, whenever Republicans have tried to cut federal funding for public broadcasting, the 8-foot-2-inch-tall yellow bird has been trotted out as an exemplar of all that is good and necessary about public broadcasting, and the federal dollars have been preserved.

Perhaps our Jim Henson-created feathered friend will continue his undefeated streak, but a Trump-backed recessions bill represents the best chance to defund public broadcasting in decades, if not ever.

The bill, clawing back previously appropriated funding, has already passed the House and is now being considered in the Senate, where the filibuster doesn't apply. The measure targets \$9.4 billion in federal spending, including funds for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The CPB gets about \$500 million a year from the federal government, and parcels it out to NPR, PBS and local public radio and TV stations.

NPR maintains that it only gets about 2% of its funding from the federal government, with more coming indirectly via member stations. PBS gets about 15% of its funding from the feds.

If NPR and PBS programming is as compelling and vital as its defenders say, it shouldn't be a heavy

lift to get foundations, philanthropists and devoted listeners and viewers to fill any funding gap. The organization's already given out a lot of tote bags during fundraising drives. Surely, they can give out some more.

Decades ago, with the rise of cable TV and a proliferation of sources of news and entertainment, it seemed absurd for the government to have to prop up a few select media sources. How much more ridiculous it is now, in the age of YouTube, social media, satellite radio, Substack, streaming services and podcast platforms.

Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Public Broadcasting Act, creating the CPB in 1967, and like many other Great Society programs, public broadcasting is an anachronism that won't go away. Big Bird himself is approaching the age when he'll soon begin to be eligible for senior-citizen discounts.

Supporters of public broadcasting extol the virtues of "All Things Considered," the "PBS NewsHour" and "Frontline," and yes (political bias aside), journalists do some good work for these programs. They also (again, political bias aside) do some good work at The New York Times and CBS News, yet neither of these outlets depend on federal tax dollars.

Oh, defenders also ask, How can we possibly do without the wonder of educational programming like "Sesame Street" and "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood"? "Sesame Street" is, indeed, an American institution. Even if PBS collapsed tomorrow, the show would certainly go on. For about a decade now, new epi-

sodes have been featured on HBO or Netflix, demonstrating how a venerable 50-year-old project can adapt to the times.

It's simply not true, by the way, that we depend on PBS for good shows for kids. There's been educational programming developed by Nickelodeon ("Blue's Clues & You!"), Scholastic Entertainment ("The Magic School Bus") and Netflix ("Ask the StoryBots" and "Ada Twist, Scientist"). And somehow, such iconic children's programming as "Dora the Explorer," "Peppa Pig" and "Bluey" were created without the involvement of PBS.

Then there's the argument that a cut-off of federal funding will be devastating to local public radio stations in rural communities. It's true that small stations could go out of business, but as anyone who has been paying attention has noticed, we live in an era of great media churn. Private media entities are going out of business -- and being created -- all the time. The government shouldn't extend its favor to a few select outlets. Especially when these outlets are so blatantly and pervasively biased. NPR and PBS provide left-of-center content for left-of-center audiences under the guise of objectivity. As many legacy media organizations have long demonstrated, there is a business model there, but it's not one that deserves or needs taxpayer support.

Big Bird should, finally, make his own way in the world.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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New California Budget Ignores Day of Reckoning



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

When Gov. Gavin Newsom and legislative leaders were drafting a more-or-less final 2025-26 state budget last month, they were closing what they described as a \$12 billion deficit, a number that the state's media repeatedly cited.

It was the wrong number; it minimizes the state's chronic gap between income and outgo, as the state's official budget summary released this week confirms.

The budget projects that the state will receive \$208.6 billion in general fund revenues during the fiscal year that began on July 1, but it will spend \$228.4 billion, a gap just shy of \$20 billion.

The \$12 billion figure stems from counting a \$7.1 billion diversion from one of the state's reserve accounts as revenue — an assumption that violates common sense as well as any legitimate accounting scenario.

The more accurate figure of \$20 billion is important because it squares with projections by Newsom's Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office that California has what's called a "structural deficit" in the range of

\$10 billion to \$20 billion a year.

In other words financing all of the programs and services now in state law will indefinitely cost that much more each year than the state is likely to receive in revenues.

The budget closes about a third of the \$20 billion gap with an aforementioned \$7.1 billion shift from the emergency reserve — money that's supposed to be used to cushion the impact of an economic downturn or calamities such as the wildfires that devastated Los Angeles, earthquakes or destructive storms.

The deficit isn't a genuine emergency because it resulted from irresponsible political decisions, particularly Newsom's declaration in 2022 that the state had a \$97.5 billion budget surplus and thus could afford a sharp increase in spending.

The surplus was a mirage, based on assumptions of a \$40 billion annual increase in revenues that never happened. Last year, the Department of Finance acknowledged that revenues over four years would fall short of expectations by \$165 billion.

However, much of the phantom money was already spent, thereby creating the structural deficit that Newsom and the Legislature basically ignored in putting together the current budget.

The \$12 billion gap left after the reserve fund shift was mostly papered over with on- and off-budget loans from special funds, shifting some spending into future years and using

accounting gimmicks, such as shifting some current year spending, the June 2026 state payroll for instance, into the next fiscal year.

One could liken the state budget to a family that takes out loans on its credit cards to finance a lavish lifestyle, or a city that provides pension benefits it cannot afford.

Sooner or later, the debts pile so high that they can no longer be ignored and the day of reckoning arrives. That's one reason why more than 30,000 Californians file for bankruptcy each year and why several California cities have gone bankrupt in recent years.

States cannot file for bankruptcy, no matter how distorted their finances. If they could, California would not qualify because of its almost unlimited ability to borrow money from special funds.

However, there will be a day of judgment if California's spending continues to outpace its revenues, particularly if the state's economy continues its sluggish performance.

Newsom and legislators implicitly assume that at some point revenues will increase enough to cover their spending and pay off their debts — just as a debt-ridden family buys lottery tickets in hopes of avoiding bankruptcy.

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. ★



ABOUT TOWN

Banana Festival in August

The 14th Annual Sacramento Banana Festival, Aug. 16-17 at Land Park, is a multicultural event celebrating cultures in Asia, Africa, and the Americas that use the banana as a source of food, art, and culture.

It will feature music, food and craft vendors, art exhibitions and activities and a kids zone. Details at bananafestivalsac.org.

Area Museum Experiences

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

California Museum – Experience four decades of powerful activist print-making in “Mission Gráfica: Reflecting a

Community in Print,” a striking exhibition that showcases the rich legacy of Mission Gráfica, a renowned community print center in San Francisco. Featuring 42 vibrant screenprints from influential artists such as Carmen Lomas Garza, Rupert Garcia, and Favianna Rodriguez, the exhibit explores themes of cultural celebration, political resistance, and social justice—from gentrification and gender equality to international solidarity. Through Sept. 14.

Details at californiamuseum.org.

California Automobile Museum – Sixty Years of Mustang. A comprehensive history of the Mustang, from when it first hit the roads in 1965 to the current era of Mustangs.

Highlighting stories from prolific names in Mustang history like Saleen, Shelby and Iacocca. Interactive experiences and digital displays showcase the iconic Mustang image over the decades.

Details at calautomuseum.org.

California State Railroad Museum– The Chinese Railroad Workers’ Experience offers visitors a view of the Chinese workers who built the western portion of the nation’s first Transcontinental Railroad. Marginalized by history, the Chinese workers were more than a nameless group of laborers.

Details at californiarailroad.museum.

Sacramento History Museum – “Sacramento In a Can – Featuring the Campbell’s Sacramento

Story” chronicles the fascinating history of the canning industry in the Capital City.

The limited time “Sacramento In a Can” exhibit is perfect for visitors interested in learning how Sacramento became the Tomato Soup capital of the world. Through Sept 1.

Details at sachistory-museum.org.

Elks Lodge 6 Calendar of Events

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

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

Thursdays and Saturdays, 7 p.m.

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.

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

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City's Response to Homelessness Updated



The City of Sacramento funds and operates shelter spaces every night for people experiencing homelessness. Photo courtesy of City of Sacramento

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The City of Sacramento has released its weekly progress report for the City's Incident Management Team (IMT) responding to homelessness. From July 7-13, the city received 801 calls to 311 customer service related to unsheltered individuals. Through the work of the IMT, 1,065 calls were closed, meaning that either

the issue was remedied, compliance was achieved or the issue no longer existed when city staff inspected the site. Department of Community Response staff enrolled 108 people into shared local databases that match them with shelters and other resources. In addition, 27 people were placed into the City's Roseville Road campus or the Outreach and Engagement Center (OEC).

As of July 15, there were zero Pallet homes and one trailer available at the Roseville Road campus as well as five spaces available at the Outreach and Engagement Center. There was an average of 16 openings at city-funded shelters (excluding the Roseville Road campus and the Outreach and Engagement Center). Regarding waste removal, the city cleaned up 100,880 pounds of trash. ★

Three Tips to Protect Rivers When Boating

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - With summer in full swing, City of Sacramento Department of Utilities staff are reminding boaters how they can help keep local waterways clean. "Our rivers are great places to recreate but boats are a surprising source of waterway pollution," said Emma Burke, an outreach specialist that manages the City's Keep Our Waters Clean program, which helps educate boaters. "Waste, fuel and oil from boats can harm local wildlife and affect drinking

water supplies." According to Burke, there are three simple ways boaters can help protect rivers: Use public restrooms and dispose of pet waste properly. Waste carries bacteria, viruses and parasites that can threaten the health of humans and wildlife. Use pumpout stations to remove wastewater from your boat's holding tank. Improperly dumped wastewater often contains excess nutrients that contribute to harmful algal blooms and can harm fish and wildlife. Boaters can find a list of pumpout

station locations on the California State Parks website. Recycle used oil and dirty bilge water at designated facilities. Dirty bilge water can contain pollutants, such as oil, fuel and debris, which should never be dumped in waterways. Boaters can find facilities to recycle used oil and dirty bilge water on CalRecycle's website. "While these are some of the simplest ways boaters can help keep our waterways clean, they also happen to be some of the most effective," Burke said. ★

Vision Zero Tracks Crash Causes

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento is beginning the process to update its Vision Zero Action Plan, renewing its commitment to eliminating traffic-related deaths and serious injuries through data-driven strategies and community input. Originally adopted in 2018, the Vision Zero Action Plan serves as the city's roadmap to reduce severe and fatal crashes. The updated plan will align with federal guidance from the Safe System Approach and the Safe Streets and Roads for All program, as well as California's Safety Corridor guidance. The new plan is expected to be completed in spring 2026.

"The Vision Zero update is more than a document; it's a strategy for investment of policies, programs and infrastructure across all departments at the city," said Jennifer Donlon Wyant, Mobility and Sustainability Division manager with the Department of Public Works. "We want Sacramento's streets to be safe for everyone, all ages and abilities, all ways of traveling, whether you're walking, biking, taking transit or driving. This is the beginning of a collaborative process to get us there." To support the update, the city has launched a Vision Zero Crash Data



Vision Zero rejects the notion that transportation crashes are simply "accidents." Photo courtesy of City of Sacramento

Dashboard, providing data from 2013 to 2023. The 2024 dataset will be added soon. The dashboard highlights the top contributing factors in severe and fatal crashes, including: Driving at an unsafe speed (15%), Impaired driving (13%), Failure to obey signs and signals (12%), Failure to yield (11%). This analysis will help identify state-designated safety corridors, prioritize investments in traffic safety and monitor progress toward the city's safety goals. This summer and fall, city staff will attend local events, host engagement meetings and provide online tools to collect public input. Residents can stay informed by visiting VisionZeroSac.org and signing up for updates. ★

Top Tacos Compete in Bracket-Style Tournament

Continued from Page 1

the kind of inclusive, community-powered celebration that makes Sacramento special," said Councilmember Roger Dickinson. "I'm proud to host Sac Taco Fest in District 2 and support the vendors, artists and residents who make it all possible." "Sacramento Taco Fest 2025 is more than a celebration of culture; it's a powerful economic driver for our local

small businesses," said festival sponsor Cathy Rodriguez, president and CEO of the Sacramento Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. "As a supporting partner, the Sacramento Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation is proud to champion events that spotlight our entrepreneurs, boost neighborhood vitality and build lasting opportunities for growth in our diverse communities." ★

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Hear that Train Whistle Blow

Historic Steam Locomotive Set to Ride the Rails Again

California State Railroad Museum Foundation News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Visitors to the Old Sacramento Waterfront will soon regularly hear that steam whistle blow as Granite Rock 10 returns to operating service, riding the rails of the Sacramento Southern Railroad.

The California State Railroad Museum & Foundation are thrilled to announce the historic steam locomotive is set to officially begin pulling weekend excursion trains on August 9.*

Moving forward, Granite Rock 10 will likely pull excursion trains on two weekends per month, rotating with historic diesel locomotives.

In the meantime, the community and rail fans might see Granite Rock 10 on the excursion train as the train crew gets fully up to speed operating the steam locomotive for the first time in six years.

Since October 2019, Granite Rock 10 has been out of service for needed maintenance that took place in the historic Railyard Shops. Most of the meticulous work done on the locomotive involved a cylinder-rebuilding project followed by precision adjustments to the valves and valve-timing mechanisms.



The California State Railroad Museum Foundation mission is to generate revenue and awareness on behalf of its destinations, while supporting the preservation, interpretation and promotion of our railroad heritage. The foundation provides funding for ongoing support of numerous programs, both at the museum's Old Sacramento location and at the historic park in Jamestown. Photo by Kelly B. Huston, courtesy of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation

The precision-focused maintenance was led by Chief Mechanical Officer Al DiPaolo who was supported by a dedicated crew of mechanics that specialize in historic rail equipment.

"Still operating steam locomotives such as our prized Granite Rock 10 are true survivors and always have a fascinating story to tell," said Dr. Ty Smith, Director of the California State Railroad Museum. "We invite our local, regional, and world rail

community to take a ride back in history to experience the sights, sounds, and smells of a historic train ride reminiscent of an earlier time when steam ruled the rails and connected the nation in majestic ways."

As background, Granite Rock 10 was built in 1942 for the U.S. Army Transportation Corps, sold as surplus to Granite Rock Co. of Logan in 1947 before retiring from service in 1960. The historic steam locomotive was later donated to the California State Railroad

Museum in 1995 and returned to service in 1997, pulling weekend excursion trains and delighting fans of all ages.

With roots dating back to World War II, Granite Rock 10 tells a tale of ingenuity and using every available technological resource available at the time. "Today, Granite Rock 10 allows the Museum to preserve and teach the now nearly forgotten knowledge associated with the maintenance and operation of steam-driven machinery," said Tim Schroepfer, President

& CEO of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation.

In addition to periodic evening and/or special train ride experiences, memorable six-mile, 45-minute excursion train rides are available Fridays through Sundays, with three trains departing on Fridays (11:30 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.) and five on Saturdays and Sundays (10 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 1 p.m., 2:15 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.).

Advance reservations for excursion train rides are available here. Tickets purchased online may be picked up in the ticket office of the Central Pacific Passenger Station on Front Street between I and J streets at the Old Sacramento Waterfront. If still available, same-day tickets are available at the ticket office as well.

For updates on when Granite Rock 10 will be operating on the Sacramento Southern Railroad, the team will give as much advance notice as possible via social media channels. For more information about the California State Railroad Museum or Foundation, please visit www.californiarailroadmuseum.org.

*Steam is not guaranteed and motive power is subject to change on any given day without advance notice. ★

Law Enforcement Partnership Yields 24 Narcotics Arrests



Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho speaks at a podium in Sacramento during a July 16 press conference about a joint narcotics operation between Sacramento Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office. Photo courtesy of the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

Sacramento County District Attorney's Office News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Police Department, along with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office announced the results of a recent operation focused on maintaining safety and quality of life in the central city.

Over a five-week period from April 23 to May 30, a temporary team known as the Central Narcotics Enforcement Team (CNET) worked to identify and stop street-level drug activity.

The operation was part of the Sacramento Police Department's ongoing efforts to ensure our streets remain a safe and welcoming place for residents, workers and visitors.

"This operation addressed street-level drug activity helping to keep our neighborhoods safe," said Sacramento Police Chief Kathy Lester. "We're committed to using focused strategies and strong partnerships to protect our community and preserve the

vibrant atmosphere of our city."

The operation led to approximately 24 arrests, with additional arrests anticipated and resulted in the seizure of large quantities of drugs, firearms and cash.

More than 2,700 grams of cocaine, 6,000 fentanyl pills, 311 grams of heroin and 260 grams of ketamine were seized, along with more than 200 grams of ecstasy, 17 ounces of Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) and nearly two pounds of psilocybin mushrooms.

Also seized in the operation were 20 Adderall pills, more than four pounds of methamphetamine, more than \$31,500 in cash believed to be proceeds from drug sales, three rifles and one handgun.

While Central Narcotics Enforcement Team was a temporary team, the Sacramento Police Department remains focused on using resources effectively, listening to community concerns and working with partners to keep neighborhoods safe.

The link to the July 16 CNET News Conference news conference is <https://www.youtube.com/live/yGTVb6YZ-DAs?si=s9mVyuvdmVyXTd3C>. ★

Governor Newsom Announces Appointments



Gov. Gavin Newsom

Office of Governor Gavin Newsom News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Governor Gavin Newsom announced the appointment of several positions on July 16.

Jennifer Osborn, of Orangevale, has been appointed Director at the California Department of Industrial Relations. Osborn has been Chief Deputy Director at the California Department of General Services since 2021.

She was Director of the Division of Administrative Services at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation from 2018 to 2020. Osborn was Deputy Secretary of Fiscal Policy and Administration at the California Government Operations Agency from 2013 to 2018. She was Deputy Secretary of Fiscal Operations at the California State and Consumer Services Agency from 2012 to 2013.

Osborn was Principal Program Budget Analyst at the California Department of Finance from 1998 to 2011. She earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Nevada, Reno and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and Political Science from California State University, Chico. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$236,052. Osborn is a Democrat.

Gentian Droboniku, of Sacramento, has been appointed Chief Deputy Director of the California

Department of Tax and Fee Administration. Droboniku has been a Research Data Manager at the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration since 2019 and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California, Price School of Public Policy since 2017.

Droboniku was a Research Data Specialist at the California Public Employees Retirement System from 2014 to 2018. He was a Debt and Investment Researcher at the California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission from 2012 to 2014. Droboniku was Performance Evaluator at the California State Auditor from 2010 to 2012. He was a Graduate Student Policy Assistant at California's State Controller's Office from 2008 to 2010.

Droboniku earned a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Southern California and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$214,968. Droboniku is a Democrat.

Sean Connelly, of Sacramento, has been appointed the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Public and Employee Communications at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Connelly has been Chief of Staff in the Office of Assemblymember Jessica Caloza in the California State Assembly since 2024.

He held multiple positions in the Office of Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez in the California State Assembly from 2016 to 2024, including Chief of Staff and Capitol and Communications Director. Connelly held multiple positions at the University of California Student

Association from 2013 to 2016, including Interim Executive Director and the Director of Government Relations.

He was a Legislative Assistant and Consultant for Office of Senator Ellen Corbett in the California State Senate from 2012 to 2013. Connelly was an Executive Fellow in the Capital Fellowship Program at the California National Guard for Adjutant General David Baldwin from 2011 to 2012. He earned a Bachelor of the Arts degree in Global Studies and Maritime Affairs from California State Polytechnic University, Maritime Academy.

This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$172,008. Connelly is a Democrat.

Melissa Bacon, of Sacramento, has been appointed Deputy Director at the Office of Legislative and Governmental Affairs at the California Department of Health Care Services. Bacon has been Assistant Deputy Director at the Office of Legislative and Governmental Affairs at the California Department of Health Care Services since 2016, and was Staff Services Manager from 2013 to 2016.

She was an Associate Governmental Program Analyst at the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs from 2008 to 2013. Bacon was an Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Prevention Coordinator at University of California, Davis, Health, Education and Promotion Department from 2006 to 2008.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of California, Davis. This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$164,400. Bacon is registered with no party preference. ★

Unsecured Property Taxes Due Sept. 2

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Annual bills for Sacramento County unsecured personal property taxes for fiscal year 2025-2026 will be mailed on July 18 and are due no later than Sept. 2 to avoid penalties for delinquency.

If you owned unsecured property in Sacramento County, such as a boat or aircraft or if you leased or owned fixtures and equipment related to a business on Jan. 1 and do not receive a tax bill by Aug. 8, contact the Sacramento County Tax Collector's Unsecured Property Tax Unit at 916-874-7833 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, excluding holidays.

Failure to receive a tax bill does not excuse delinquency or allow the tax collector to cancel penalties or collection costs.

Payments can be made by mail or in person

at the County Tax Collector's Office, 700 H St., Room 1710, Sacramento, CA 95814, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, excluding holidays.

Property taxes can also be paid online by e-check or credit card with the Sacramento County Property Tax Bill Information System website.

Tax bills become delinquent if not paid in the Tax Collector's Office by 5 p.m. Sept. 2 or received by mail bearing a postmark of Sept. 2.

If the tax bill is not paid by the delinquency date, a 10% penalty and collection cost will be added. DMV registration could be withheld on watercraft if unsecured property taxes are reported delinquent.

If a tax bill remains unpaid after Oct. 31, additional collection costs and monthly penalties at the rate of 1.5% will be added to the base tax. ★

Softball Western "B" National Championship Tournament Features 500 Players



Above: Teams are comprised of all-star players or are select teams, where girls try out for squads and practice and play together for several months. Middle: Almost 40 teams, including about a dozen from the Sacramento region, swing into action with opening ceremonies at 9 a.m. July 22 at Maidu Regional Park, 1550 Maidu Drive, Roseville for USA Softball's Western "B" National Championship. Right: About 500 players between the ages of 9 and 11 will compete in the World Series-like tournament that draws teams throughout California and the western states. Photos courtesy of Lisa Zeng



By Ron Trujillo

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- Clutch hits, defensive gems and must-win games will highlight USA Softball's Western "B" National Championship 10-under girls'tournament that runs from July 22 through July 27 in Roseville, bringing about 2,500 athletes, coaches and fans and generating more than \$1 million for Placer Valley.

Almost 40 teams, including about a dozen from the Sacramento region, swing into action with opening ceremonies at 9 a.m. July 22, after press time, at Maidu Regional Park, 1550 Maidu Drive, Roseville.

The first games start at 9 a.m. July 23 at Maidu Regional Park and Mahany Park, 1545 Pleasant Grove Blvd. in Roseville and continue into the evening. The championship games are on July 27 at Maidu Regional Park.

About 500 players between the ages of 9 and 11 will compete in the World Series-like tournament that draws teams throughout California and the western states.

Fans can enjoy the games for free. Drinks and snacks

are available for purchase at the parks.

"You're going to see some very good softball," said Pocket Aces 10-under team manager Corey Chatman.

The Pocket Aces 10-under team, from southwest Sacramento, has practiced since December and has compiled a record of 27-17 this season.

"The teams that are seeded at Nationals are very sound," Chatman said. "It's top tier."

Teams are comprised of all-star players or are select teams, where girls try out for squads and practice and play together for several months.

"They've worked so hard for this," said Woodland Elite manager Fabi Michel.

The 13-player Woodland Elite team has practiced since January and started playing games in February.

"They've learned to communicate with each other on the field and have grown as a team," Michel said. "They go on the field and play their hearts out."

Placer Valley Tourism has hosted the Western Softball "B" Nationals Championship for

various age groups more than a dozen times since 2010, according to organizers.

"It's a long-standing relationship that helps make the tournament go very smooth," said USA Softball of Sacramento tournament director Karla Burket. "Roseville has great fields and all of the leagues in our association have such amazing volunteers."

Placer Valley Tourism, which competes with other communities for the high-profile Western National tournaments, has made significant improvements to local softball fields in the past few years.

"The Western Nationals is always a big hit with the community, from the athletes and their families to area businesses that enjoy the boost in revenue," said Kim Summers, CEO of Placer Valley Tourism and @the Grounds, home of the Roebbelen Center. "Placer Valley's good quality fields combined with the area's amenities make it a great destination for the athletes and their families."

More than 25 teams will be traveling and staying in hotels during the tournament. Area

teams appreciate the ability to stay close to home, saving time and money, while playing against some of the best teams in the West.

"It's a luxury to be so close to home," said Chatman, whose team will come home every night. The close-to-home tournament "is an easy sell to parents."

Winning a championship is the goal but building camaraderie and meeting new girls, especially during the opening ceremonies, are also a huge part of the six-day tournament. Players will exchange pins and wear costumes (the outfits are a surprise until the event) as part of a long-standing opening ceremonies tradition.

"They are super excited about Nationals," Michel said. "Winning is obviously great but having more time to bond and playing together is special. They are so proud to represent Woodland."

Softball has been generating more interest among girls and fans in recent years.

Almost 30,000 girls played for their high school softball teams last year in California, an 11.4% increase compared to

five years earlier, according to the California Interscholastic Federation. Several thousand girls play the sport in the Sacramento region.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association Women's College World Series had a record 1.3-million viewers on average per game for the 15 games this spring on ESPN, including a record 2.4-million viewers for the third and deciding game between the eventual national champion University of Texas Longhorns and Texas Tech Red Raiders.

In June, the Major League Baseball-sponsored Athletes Unlimited Softball League (AUSL) started with four teams that will play a 24-game season this summer. The league has already announced plans to expand to six teams in 2026.

So some of the girls competing in the tournament could continue playing the sport in high school, college or even in a pro league.

"It could be a groundbreaking moment, where they fall in love with the sport," Chatman said. "Western Nationals is going to be something they will remember forever." ★

Baker Claims Championship at Women's Amateur

Sacramento Golf Council News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Taylor Baker of Sacramento emerged victorious at the 2025 Sacramento Valley Women's Amateur Championship, capturing the Championship Flight title at the Alister MacKenzie Golf Course at Haggin Oaks on July 13.

Baker led wire to wire, firing a superb opening round 66 and closing with an even-par 72 for a two-day total of 138 (-6).

Hot on her heels was Rancho Murieta's Hannah Camara, who surged with a final-round 70 (-2) to finish just one stroke back at 139 (-5).

Defending Champion, Rocklin's Kaylyn Noh rounded out the podium at 140 (-4), carding rounds of 68-72.

When asked about the 10-foot birdie putt on hole #18 to win, Baker replied "I was really shaking but I decided to commit to my routine. Ellis (Baker's caddy) and I really liked our line and I just decided to make my best stroke."

The leaderboard was packed with impressive performances, including Erica Villegas (Suisun, -2) in fourth and a tie for fifth at -1 between Darla May Dela Torre (Fairfield) and Tavia Burgess (Mather), who posted low rounds of 70 and 69, respectively.

Notably, Ellie Bushnell of Granite Bay recorded a blazing 68 (-4) on Sunday to vault into a tie for eighth at +1, demonstrating the depth of talent in this year's field.

Karen Garcia of Cool emerged as the Senior Championship Division winner. Garcia posted rounds of 72 and 74 to finish at +2 (146 total), claiming a decisive four-shot victory.



Taylor Baker of Sacramento holds her championship trophy from the 2025 Sacramento Valley Women's Amateur Championship at the Alister MacKenzie Golf Course at Haggin Oaks on July 13. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Golf Council



Karen Garcia of Cool emerged as the Senior Championship Division winner, posting rounds of 72 and 74 to finish at +2 (146 total), claiming a decisive four-shot victory. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Golf Council

It was another victory for Garcia before she heads to the United States Women's Senior Open at San Diego Country Club in August.

Tied for second at +6 (150) were Deborah Robertson of Martinez and Tina Barker of Fairfield. Both players battled in the final round, with Robertson carding a 79 and Barker a 77.

Rounding out the top five were Deanna Payne of Lakeview in fourth at +11 (155) and Melissa Spencer of Santa Cruz in fifth at +13 (157).

The Low Net Champion was Michele Ross of San Leandro with a net score of 137. The Alister MacKenzie Golf Course at Haggin Oaks is among California's most historic public courses. ★

Opened in 1932, it was designed by Dr. Alister MacKenzie, the legendary Scottish architect famed for Augusta National and Cypress Point. Known for its masterful routing, undulating greens and deceptive bunkering, the MacKenzie Course has long been a test for amateurs and professionals alike.

Haggin Oaks has hosted numerous USGA championships, state championships and local events, cementing its place as the "people's championship course" in Northern California.

The course's blend of tradition and challenge made it an ideal venue for this year's Sacramento Valley Women's Amateur, continuing a proud legacy of women's competitive golf in the region. ★

Zack Mate Wins Men's Amateur Championship

Sacramento Golf Council News Release

CARMICHAEL, CA (MPG) - The 2025 Sacramento County Men's Amateur Championship was held on July 12 to July 13 at Ancil Hoffman Golf Course in Carmichael.

Zack Mate of Elk Grove captured the title with an impressive final round 66, paired with an opening 71, for a two-day total of 137.

Finishing just one stroke back in second place was Taylor Knoll of Rancho Cordova, who carded rounds of 70-68 for a total of 138.



Zack Mate of Elk Grove wins the 2025 Sacramento County Men's Amateur Championship, held at Ancil Hoffman Golf Course in Carmichael on July 12 and 13. Photo courtesy of the Sacramento Golf Council

Rounding out the top three was Sacramento's Keith

Okazaki, who posted consistent rounds of 70-70 for a total score of 140.

The prestigious 36-hole stroke-play event was open to all male amateur golfers with a GHIN (Golf Handicap & Information Network) index of 3.0 or less.

The tournament was conducted by the Sacramento Golf Council, which oversees all city and county amateur golf championships.

Chuck Honeycutt served as tournament chair, with assistance from Scott Bland.

For more information about upcoming events, visit sacgolfcouncil.org. ★

Republic FC Signs 2024 Breakout Striker Khorri Bennett



Sacramento Republic FC's newest forward, Khorri Bennett. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

Sacramento Republic FC News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Republic FC announced on July 17 that the club has signed forward Khorri Bennett. He will be added to the team's roster, pending league and federation approval. Per club policy, the terms of the contract were not disclosed.

"Khorri is an important addition for us at this stage in the season to bolster our front line," said Republic FC President and General Manager Todd Dunivant. "He brings strength, physicality and tenacity in front of goal

and we are looking forward to quickly integrating him into our group."

The 27-year-old was a breakout star in 2024. He led the Western Conference with 15 goals to help Las Vegas Lights make their first post-season appearance in club history. Bennett helped the team with six goals and an assist in June 2024, culminating in his selection as Player of the Month. He earned a second Player of the Month nomination in August with a four-game scoring streak. In the playoffs, Bennett netted the game-winning goal in Las Vegas' upset over first-place New Mexico United to punch its ticket to the Western Conference Final.

Bennett's play was recognized beyond the league and in November, earned his first call up to the Jamaican National Team for the Concacaf Nations League Quarterfinals. Earlier this year, Las Vegas announced that he had been transferred to Kuwait Premier League club Al-Nasr SC for

a record fee, where he added one goal and two assists in eight appearances.

Bennett made his professional debut in 2022 for USL League One club Charlotte Independence and across two seasons scored 18 goals and added three assists in 64 appearances. Bennett recorded his first career hat trick on July 28, 2022 and was later named USL League One Player of the Month. The Jacks reached the postseason in both years Bennett was there and in 2023 made its first appearance in the USL League One Final.

Originally from Saint Andrew, Jamaica, Bennett first came to the U.S. to play collegiately at Northeastern University and in three years made 44 total appearances with five goals and three assists. For his senior year, Bennett transferred to Radford University where he started in 15 of 16 games and added three goals and one assist to reach the Big South Conference Semifinals. ★