



THE NEWS

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VOLUME 44 • ISSUE 51

Serving Rio Linda, Elverta and Sacramento County

DECEMBER 19, 2025

**SEE
INSIDE**

**SAC SUPERIOR
COURT HOSTS
ADOPTION DAY**



PAGE 2

**A'S SCOUT WINS
GWYNN AWARD**



PAGE 10

**SAC STATE
HEAD FOOTBALL
COACH RESIGNS**



PAGE 10



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Hometown Festivities Light Up Rio Linda



Santa posed for photos with kids and parents at Breakfast with Santa on Dec. 13. Photo courtesy of Rio Linda Parks and Recreation District

By Abbey Wicks

RIO LINDA, CA (MPG) - Saturday, Dec. 13 saw a day of festive activities for Rio Linda. The day began at 8 a.m.

with Breakfast for Santa at the Rio Linda Elverta Community Center, 810 Oak Lane, Rio Linda. Families and young ones filled the community center to enjoy a breakfast of

pancakes, eggs and ham, hot chocolate and coffee for the adults. Free photos with Santa were offered. The breakfast was made possible

Continued on page 3

Board Approves Flexible Housing Pool to Address Homelessness

**Sacramento County
News Release**

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - On Dec. 9, 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved a multi-year plan to launch a Flexible Housing Pool (FHP), a coordinated, countywide system that aligns rental assistance, housing navigation and supportive services for eligible Medi-Cal members.

With this approval, this initiative will position Sacramento County at the forefront of statewide efforts to integrate health care, housing and homelessness response systems.

A Flexible Housing Pool helps residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness secure and maintain stable housing.

The Flexible Housing Pool is envisioned as a centralized program to serve as the fiscal and administrative intermediary for the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Transitional Rent and Housing Deposits benefits.

The program will prioritize Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHHB) participants experiencing homelessness with immediate housing needs to exit shelter in year one.

The county aims to expand the program over time to braid additional funding streams, including Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), Providing Access and Transforming Health Capacity and Infrastructure Transition, Expansion and Development (PATH CITED), and Managed Care Plan (MCP) contributions.

The Flexible Housing Pool provides landlord engagement, risk mitigation and tenancy support

activities across multiple programs and populations.

The program is envisioned to establish a centralized referral, tracking and reporting system to streamline access to housing resources across County departments and Managed Care Plan partners.

Recent state policy shifts have established both the mandate and the resources for a pooled housing model to enhance a coordinated housing system for Medi-Cal members with complex

needs.

CalAIM Transitional Rent, effective Jan 1, 2026, requires Managed Care Plans (Anthem Blue Cross, Health Net, Molina Healthcare and Kaiser Permanente) to provide short-term rental assistance for eligible members, prioritizing individuals with behavioral health needs.

Behavioral Health Services Act, effective July 1, 2026, requires counties to dedicate 30 percent of Behavioral Health Services

Continued on page 5



A Flexible Housing Pool helps residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness secure and maintain stable housing. Photo by Mart Production via Pexels

Torence Powell Selected as Chancellor of Los Rios Community College District

**Los Rios Community
College District
News Release**

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Dr. Torence Powell has been selected as the next Chancellor of the Los Rios Community College District, pending the completion of standard HR processes and approval by the Los Rios Board of Trustees at its January meeting. He will begin his term as Chancellor on July 1, 2026.

"I am honored and humbled to be selected as the next Chancellor of the Los Rios Community College District," said Dr. Powell.

"This marks a meaningful homecoming for me, both professionally and personally. Not only did I spend more than 12 years working in Los Rios, but I am proud to say that my experience as a student at Cosumnes River College (CRC) during and after high school had a profound impact on my life."

Dr. Powell joins Los Rios having most recently served as Superintendent/President of Napa Valley College since 2022. Before his time in Napa, he spent more than 12 years in the Los Rios Community College District, serving in various capacities at Cosumnes River College and the district office, including as Associate Vice Chancellor of Instruction, Workforce, and Economic Development.

"I feel deeply connected to the students that we serve, and our mission to change the trajectory for students and entire families, as that is what CRC and Los Rios did for me and my family," Dr. Powell said. "I could not be prouder to return home to continue the legacy of student-centered excellence that has been the hallmark of the Los Rios Community College District for decades."

Dr. Powell's contract will go to the Board for approval at its Jan. 14, 2026 meeting and will be available to the public when that meeting's agenda is posted. He will

Continued on page 5

Sacramento Superior Court Hosts Adoption Day Event

Sacramento Superior Court News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Sacramento Superior Court finalized and celebrated the adoptions of children from foster care on Adoption Day, Nov. 15.

Adoption Day is an opportunity to increase public awareness of the need for adoptive parents and educate prospective adoptive parents about the adoption process. It is also a time to celebrate local families who have opened their lives to children needing permanent homes.

“Courthouses are often stressful places to visit but this is a special opportunity to witness love and joy, and we are delighted to host this annual adoption day event,” said Juvenile Court’s Presiding Judge Kristina Lindquist.

Adoption Day in Sacramento County is a collaborative effort between multiple agencies.

“I am proud of the hard work our court staff and community partners put into this successful event, as well as the collaboration, dedication and care they put into every single case throughout the year,” Lindquist said.

During Adoption Day, judges



The Sacramento Superior Court finalized the adoptions of 26 children from foster care at the Juvenile Courthouse on Nov. 15. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Superior Court

and court staff were joined by community partners, including the Department of Child and Family Adult Services, Court Appointed Special Advocates of Sacramento (CASA), Parent Cooperative Community, Sacramento Sheriff’s Department Youth Services Unit, Sacramento Public Library, Zeta Phi Beta and Wayfinder.

“All children deserve to have a family and strong connections for life. Adoption is a great work of love and provides a child the

opportunity to develop secure attachments and be supported to achieve optimal physical and emotional growth and health overall,” Sacramento County’s Deputy Director of Child Protective Services Melissa Lloyd said about adoption.

Adoption Day festivities included adoption proceedings, refreshments and children’s activities, such as face painting and balloons.

The Nov. 15 event from 9 to 11:30 a.m. was at the Juvenile

Courthouse, 9605 Kiefer Blvd., Sacramento.

“We are glad to celebrate the adoptions that are occurring on Adoption Day but we should also take this time to reflect that there are many more children and youth who are still looking for permanent homes,” Lindquist said. “It is important to raise awareness of the need in our community for additional foster and adoptive families. Every child deserves the love and connection of a supportive family.”★



Adoption Day in Sacramento County is a collaborative effort between multiple agencies. Lend a Heart is an all-volunteer organization that provides animal-assisted therapy to the Sacramento area and surrounding counties with teams of certified handlers and therapy dogs. An adoptee plays with one of the therapy dogs on Adoption Day. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Superior Court

Keeping Your Peace Through the Holidays



A group sits at a table for a holiday feast. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

By MPG Staff

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - While many residents spend the season preparing Thanksgiving meals, lighting the menorah, decorating their homes or planning festive gatherings, others experience the holidays as a period of heightened stress.

Feelings of overwhelm stemming from financial strain, social pressures, loneliness or challenges related to substance use are common this time of year.

To support residents navigating these emotional ups and downs, the Sacramento County Department of Health Services is sharing guidance to promote behavioral health and help the community cope with

holiday-related pressures.

Health officials say that the first step is acknowledging how you feel. Recognizing signs of stress or disruptions to normal routines can make it easier to respond early. Maintaining consistent sleep schedules and mealtimes can also support emotional stability during a busy season often filled with additional events.

The Sacramento County Department of Health Services also encourages residents to make a plan for managing stress. Whether it’s taking a walk, relaxing in front of the television or connecting with friends through online games, identifying enjoyable activities provides a reliable outlet when

emotions run high.

Connecting with others is another key recommendation. A quick phone call, text message or social media check-in can lift both your spirits and the recipient’s. Officials emphasize that reaching out, no matter the method, helps strengthen support systems.

County health professionals also urge residents to remain mindful of alcohol and substance use. For individuals in recovery or those who find holiday gatherings triggering, planning ahead can be critical. Strategies such as having an exit plan, contacting a trusted person or choosing a nonalcoholic drink can help prevent setbacks. Resources are available for anyone concerned

about their use or their ability to cope.

Knowing when and how to seek support is essential. Residents experiencing serious feelings of depression, anxiety or isolation are encouraged to reach out for help. The 9-8-8 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline connects callers to local crisis centers, and in situations requiring in-person support, Sacramento County’s Community Wellness Response Team could be dispatched.

The Behavioral Health Services Screening and Coordination Team operates a 24/7 hotline offering brief screenings and referrals to appropriate mental health services at 916-875-1055 or 888-881-4881. The Mental Health

Urgent Care Clinic at 2130 Stockton Blvd., Building 300, in Sacramento provides walk-in crisis services for all ages and can be reached at 916-520-2460.

Sacramento County officials remind residents that holiday stress is common and that it is acceptable and encouraged to seek peace wherever possible. They emphasize that no one needs to face these challenges alone and recommend turning to friends, family members or professionals for support.

More information and additional behavioral health resources can be found on Sacramento County’s Behavioral Health webpage at dhs.saccounty.gov/BHS/Pages/BHS-Home.aspx. ★

Help Pets Safely Enjoy Holidays

By MPG Staff

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The holidays bring gatherings, festive décor and plenty of special meals but the season can also present hazards for household pets, according to Sacramento County’s Bradshaw Animal Shelter.

Shelter officials are encouraging pet owners to plan ahead to ensure that celebrations remain safe for cats and dogs.

Food is among the most common holiday risks. While some seasonal dishes are safe for pets in small portions, such as plain turkey or chicken without skin or bones, plain sweet potato or pumpkin, simple fruits and vegetables, and xylitol-free peanut butter, many traditional items should be kept out of reach.

Chocolate, onions, garlic, grapes, raisins, sugar-free foods containing xylitol,

cooked bones, alcohol and raw dough are dangerous and life-threatening for pets. The shelter urges owners to stick with pet-specific treats when in doubt and to secure trash bins to prevent scavenging.

Decorations also pose potential dangers. Tinsel, ribbon and string can cause intestinal blockages if swallowed. Glass ornaments can break and injure pets, while holiday lights and electrical cords might tempt chewers. The shelter recommends keeping candles out of reach or opting for flameless versions to avoid burns or fires.

Several popular holiday plants can be toxic as well. Poinsettias can cause mild stomach upset, while mistletoe and holly can lead to vomiting and diarrhea. Lilies are especially dangerous for cats and should be avoided entirely. Artificial greenery can offer a festive alternative

without the risk.

In addition, the shelter notes that the holiday season’s busier household routines can be stressful for animals. Visitors, parties and frequent door openings could overwhelm pets or create opportunities for escape. Officials advise providing a quiet retreat, reminding guests not to feed pets table scraps and ensuring collars, ID tags and microchip information are up to date.

If a pet ingests a potentially harmful substance, owners should contact their veterinarian immediately or call the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435.

Bradshaw Animal Shelter staff wish the community a safe and happy holiday season and encourage residents to keep their pets in mind as they celebrate. ★

Holiday Airport Travel Ramps Up

By MPG Staff

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento International Airport (SMF) has prepared for another busy holiday travel season, with passenger volumes expected to exceed last year’s total s.

Between Thanksgiving and the New Year, hundreds of thousands of travelers will pass through the Sacramento International Airport.

During the Thanksgiving period, the busiest day was expected to be Sunday, Nov. 30.

For the winter holidays (Dec. 24 to Dec. 31), 30-percent more seats are available compared to the same week in 2024, which means the potential for even more travelers at the Sacramento International Airport.

“We know how important these trips are for our passengers,” said Sacramento County Department of Airports’ Airport Operations and Public Safety Deputy Director Sheri Thompson-Duarte. “We’re ready for a safe, efficient and festive holiday season and we encourage travelers to plan ahead so they can start their journeys stress-free.”

In addition to preparing for higher passenger volumes, travelers will find new dining options throughout the terminals.

Sidewalk Juice and West Coast Sourdough are now open in both terminals, offering fresh sandwiches, soups and smoothies, while Terminal A welcomes Golden Grove Market and a new Starbucks location.

Travelers can make their holiday trips smoother by arriving early and allowing extra time for the busiest travel days. Airport officials recommend getting to the terminal at least two-and-a-half hours before domestic flights and three hours before international departures to accommodate parking, check-in and security screening.

Drivers should check parking availability in advance, as the parking garage and daily lot often fill quickly during peak morning hours. Officials suggest using an Economy lot and taking a shuttle to the terminal. Real-time parking updates are available on the Sacramento International Airport website at flysmf.gov.

Those picking up arriving passengers can avoid curbside congestion by using the airport’s free cell-phone waiting lot until the passengers are ready for pickup.

Travelers are also encouraged to pack smart and review Transportation Security Administration (TSA) guidelines for carry-on items, especially when bringing food, gifts or liquids. ★

Hometown Festivities Light Up Rio Linda



Families enjoy breakfast together at Breakfast with Santa event, with all donning festive Santa hats. Photo courtesy of Rio Linda Parks and Recreation District

Continued from page 1
thanks to sponsors including Rio Linda FFA, Rio Linda Elverta Country Lions and Gregory Realty Group.

Beginning at 9 a.m., families could holiday shop and walk off their

breakfast at Rio Linda High School's 5th Annual Christmas Bazaar. The annual holiday market featured more than 80 local vendors offering unique, handmade gifts. The event, which ran until 2 pm, also included free

kids' crafts, treats and raffles going on all day long. Finally, the merry day's events wrapped up with the Hometown Christmas Light Parade starting at 6 p.m. The parade, which took over M Street in Downtown Rio Linda, lit

up the evening with holiday cheer, hometown pride and plenty of floats including a Christmas farm-themed float by Rio Linda Parks and Recreation District.

"Our Christmas Farm float was proud to roll



Members of the Rio Linda Parks and Recreation District welcome families to Breakfast with Santa. Photo courtesy of Rio Linda Parks and Recreation District

through and celebrate alongside such an amazing community. We are truly blessed to be part of a community that comes together to spread so much holiday cheer," wrote the by Rio Linda Parks and Recreation

District on their Facebook page.

If you weren't already in the holiday spirit, Saturday's events were sure to get every Rio Linda resident feeling the warmth and joy of the season. ★



Members of the Rio Linda Parks and Recreation District welcome families to Breakfast with Santa. Photo courtesy of Rio Linda Parks and Recreation District



Volunteers serve breakfast at Breakfast with Santa on Dec. 13. Photo courtesy of Rio Linda Parks and Recreation District



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Sacramento County's Top Cops Endorse Guerra

Eric Guerra for County Supervisor News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Sacramento City Councilmember and California Air Resources Board Member Eric Guerra announced Dec. 5 receiving endorsements from Sacramento County's District Attorney Thien Ho and Sheriff Jim Cooper in his campaign for the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors in District 1. Longtime Supervisor for District 1, Phil Serna, has announced he won't run for a new term in 2026.

"Homelessness and making our streets safe are two issues that can only be thoroughly addressed by relentless, determined leadership," said District Attorney Ho. "That approach defines who Eric Guerra is and I would be ecstatic to partner with him to deliver on these critical challenges for the people of Sacramento County."

"Eric Guerra is the best choice for county supervisor," said Sheriff Cooper. "He believes in a safer Sacramento with a priority on improving on the homelessness crisis in the County. Eric will bring those charged with solving the homeless crisis together. I look forward to working with him to improve all aspects of public safety and making our neighborhoods safer."

Councilmember Guerra will continue to bring new resources to public safety agencies, just as he's done at the City of Sacramento. At the city, he wrote a human trafficking ordinance going after illegal massage parlors victimizing some of our community's most vulnerable. He has served on Sacramento's regional family Justice Center to respond to human trafficking, elder abuse, child abuse and domestic violence.

"I'm humbled to have Thien Ho and Jim Cooper join our campaign," said Eric. "They are distinguished leaders with remarkable

accomplishments, Thien with his work putting away the Golden State Killer and Jim being the most universally respected Sheriff Sacramento has had in at least a generation."

In addition to the backing of Sacramento County's top law enforcement leaders, Eric has secured the endorsement of Supervisors Phil Serna, Rich Desmond, Patrick Kennedy and Rosario Rodriguez.

Eric Guerra has proudly served as a councilmember for the City of Sacramento since 2015, representing District 6. He also was appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom to serve on the California Air Resources Board, which leads California's response to the climate change crisis.

As chair of Systems Engineering and Technical Assistance (SETA), Sacramento County's employment and training agency, Guerra is championing affordable childcare and workforce programs to help people earn a living wage and keep more of their paycheck. He played an instrumental role in making the Aggie Square development and the many job opportunities it brings a reality for many Sacramentans.

Guerra previously served as his neighborhood association's president, chair of the Sacramento County Planning Commission, a Governor's appointee on the California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees, and president of the Sacramento State Alumni Association.

The son of immigrants, Guerra grew up working the fields alongside his family on farms in the Sacramento Valley, an experience that drives Guerra to help revitalize the American Dream in California. After high school, he graduated from Sacramento State, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering and a Master of Public Policy and Administration.

Eric and his wife, Christina, live with their two sons in the Tahoe Park neighborhood. ★

LifePointe's Church Sisters in Christ

Free Store • 7200 Rio Linda Blvd. at Q St. Bldg 5

Thank You for All of Your Support

We would like to pause during this special time of year and thank the community for their support for the last 7 years, especially Calvary Baptist Church, Elverta Baptist Church and most of all Pastor Robert Hale and my family at LifePointe Church.

With all of your help and love and the Lord's guidance, we have served and helped so many lives homeless and homed.

A special thank you to the Rio Linda News and the Chamber of Commerce.

With much love and devotion, Sandie, Tom, Jesse, Laura, and all the Free Store Angels

We will be closed the Tuesday before Christmas and the Tuesday before New Years

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year

Call Sandie at (210) 326-1806 for more information



California’s Infrastructure Graded a ‘C-’

Aging Assets and Weather Challenges Continue to Strain Infrastructure Systems

American Society of Civil Engineers News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The California Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) released the 2025 Report Card for California’s Infrastructure on Dec. 3 assigning 17 categories of infrastructure a cumulative grade of C-, the same grade that the state received in its 2019 report and below the national grade of C in the 2025 Report Card for America’s Infrastructure.

Although improvements have been made, resulting in six category grades improving, a C- indicates that California’s built environment is not equipped to keep pace with the needs of the largest economy and population in the U.S., particularly as diverse environmental challenges impact infrastructure systems.

California’s aviation, energy, hazardous waste, levees, ports and rail grades all improved compared to their 2019 marks, while the state’s dams, drinking water, schools and stormwater categories decreased.

Grades for each category are listed below.

Ports and rails received a B; aviation received a B-; wastewater received a C+; hazardous waste received a C; bridges, solid waste and transit received a C-; and dams, drinking water, levees, public parks and schools received a D+. Energy, inland waterways, roads and stormwater received a D.

“While California’s infrastructure faces significant challenges, this report serves as a clear call to action,” said Yaz Emrani, P.E., co-chair, 2025 Report Card for California’s Infrastructure. “It highlights both the urgency and the opportunity for us to invest in modernizing and strengthening our systems. By prioritizing infrastructure renewal now, we can create safer, more sustainable communities and pave the way for a stronger future. With focused investment, we can turn these challenges into lasting improvements for all Californians.”

California has some of the strictest environmental regulations in the U.S. While these regulations aim to ensure the future of California's natural resources, environment and quality of life, they also increase the cost of infrastructure projects due to extended planning and permitting processes for systems that urgently need rehabilitation or replacement, adding to the future needs and funding gaps outlined in this report.

California’s transportation funding gap exceeds \$216 billion over the next 10 years. More than



Energy, inland waterways, roads and stormwater received a D. “While California’s infrastructure faces significant challenges, this report serves as a clear call to action. Image by Susie Spades from Pixabay

65 percent of California's bridges (C-) are older than their typical design life of 50 years, and 6 percent of these structures are in poor condition, in line with the national average. In addition to heavy usage from freight movement and a robust population and economy, California’s bridges must be built to withstand earthquakes, wildfires, flooding and sea level rise, which adds to maintenance and modernization costs. Nearly 30 percent of the state’s roads (D) are in poor condition, higher than the national average of 22 percent.

California's energy sector (D) is undergoing a major transformation to meet its 2045 goal of 100-percent clean energy and the state has invested heavily in innovative solutions to make its grid more resilient, resulting in less outages and environmentally friendly. California stands alone as the only state that does not adhere to the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) which mandates compliance with various American Society of Civil Engineers Standards and Manuals of Practices. As a result, California's minimum design weather loadings for overhead electric lines are lower and weaker than the rest of the U.S., contributing to lower grades and reliability.

Despite being a national leader in water innovation and recycled water technologies, the state struggles with equity, affordability and resilience of its aging drinking water (D+) network, especially in rural and disadvantaged communities. More than 85 percent of water utilities rely on components older than their



California’s bridges must be built to withstand earthquakes, wildfires, flooding and sea level rise, which adds to maintenance and modernization costs. Photo by Jimmy Chan <https://www.pexels.com>

design life, leading to more than 105 billion gallons of water being lost per year due to leaking pipes. Upgrades would cost more than \$11.5 billion over the next five years but only \$3.5 billion is currently planned to be dedicated to these networks.

“At California American Water, our commitment goes beyond maintaining pipes and pumps; it’s about safeguarding the health, safety and prosperity of every community we serve,” said Sarah Leeper, president, California American Water. “The urgency of this mission is highlighted by the recent American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) report, which downgraded California’s drinking water grade from a C in 2019 to a D+ in 2025.”

“This underscores the significant infrastructure pressures facing our state, including droughts and climate resilience and aging pipes and critical equipment. As we face

these challenges, our ongoing investments are essential to help ensure that Californians continue to have safe, clean, reliable and affordable water for generations to come,” Leeper said.

The report includes the recommendations below to improve the grade.

Promote legislation that provides consistent and reliable long-term funding. To ensure reliable infrastructure investment, California should advocate for dedicated, long-term funding sources across sectors and support legislation that removes barriers to funding flexibility.

Encourage collaborative leadership in infrastructure. California should promote cross-sector partnerships and invest in workforce development to strengthen infrastructure leadership. Advancing asset management, predictive maintenance and innovative practices, such as smart

technologies and sustainable materials, will improve system performance and resilience.

Raise public awareness of the connection between infrastructure conditions and quality of life. California should involve communities in planning, educate residents on infrastructure’s role in safety and well-being, and transparently communicate both improvements and risks to foster trust and preparedness.

Implement efficient infrastructure delivery through improved policies and regulations. California should streamline permitting and adopt data-driven, risk-based approaches to accelerate infrastructure delivery and reduce costs. Modernizing standards and integrating multi-modal, climate-resilient planning will help ensure systems are efficient, adaptable and future-ready.

The report card was created as a public service to inform citizens and policymakers about the infrastructure needs in California. Civil engineers use their expertise and school report card-style letter grades to condense complicated data into an easy-to-understand analysis of California's infrastructure network. American Society of Civil Engineers State report cards are modeled after the Report Card for America’s Infrastructure, which is released once every four years.

For more information about the American Society of Civil Engineers, visit www.asce.org or www.infrastructurereportcard.com or follow @ASCETweets and @ASCEGovRel on Twitter. ★

750,000 CalKIDS Scholarships Awarded

CalKids News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - As National Scholarship Month shines a spotlight on the power of educational opportunity, California celebrates the growing impact of the California Kids Investment and Development Savings Program (CalKIDS) Scholarship Program, the nation’s largest children’s development account program, serving more than five-million children statewide.

Launched in 2022, CalKIDS provides scholarships worth up to \$1,500 for eligible public-school students and up to \$175 in scholarships for every child born in California on or after July 1, 2022.

Administered by the ScholarShare Investment Board and chaired by state Treasurer Fiona Ma, CPA, CalKIDS was created to make higher education more accessible for California families and to promote college-going mindsets across communities.

In just three years, more than

750,000 students have already claimed their scholarships, which can be used to help pay for tuition, books, housing and other educational expenses at accredited colleges, universities and vocational schools across the country.

“CalKIDS is one of the smartest investments our state has ever made. The program is a catalyst for building family assets and expands access to education,” said Treasurer Ma. “For older students, it offers real financial support to meet immediate education needs. For younger families, it plants the seeds of lifelong financial literacy.”

The CalKIDS Program is designed to advance educational access and economic mobility for California families. By giving every eligible child a scholarship account automatically, with no application required, CalKIDS removes barriers and provides families with an easy first step toward higher education.

“Having a CalKIDS [Scholarship] Account had helped

me a lot,” said Abigail Lopez, a California State University, San Bernardino student. “I found out about it my first year of college and wanted to use it to pay my tuition, books and housing. It relieved some stress I had about paying for things for school. I will forever be grateful for the money I had received from CalKIDS.”

For many new parents, CalKIDS serves as an early reminder that it’s never too soon to start thinking about their child’s future.

“College may be a long way away, but seeing my son get his first scholarship last year was a special moment as a new parent,” said Lindsay Ferguson of Orange County.

Said Cindy Duran, Faculty CalWORKs coordinator and Saddleback College counselor, “My experience with CalKIDS has been eye-opening, especially when students are able to use the money for college and vocational school. CalKIDS provides families with an additional way to receive money for their education that most students aren’t

aware of. What makes CalKIDS even more impactful is that families don’t need to apply; accounts are created automatically and students can simply register online to claim their funds.”

Sixty percent of all Californian public-school students in second- to 12th-grade are eligible for a CalKIDS Scholarship.

One-hundred percent of children born in California on or after July 1, 2022, can claim a CalKIDS Scholarship.

Families can visit www.CalKIDS.org and click “Confirm Eligibility” to check eligibility and claim a CalKIDS Scholarship. Public school students will need their Statewide Student Identifier (SSID), a 10-digit number found on the student’s school portal, transcript or report card, or by directly contacting their school.

Parents of newborns will need the 13-digit Local Registration Number (LRN), located on their child’s birth certificate.

Once a CalKIDS Account is claimed, students can request to use their scholarship funds after

turning 17 and enrolling in an accredited higher education or career-training institution.

CalKIDS plays a central role in California’s cradle-to-career vision, promoting savings behaviors and college-going mindsets in communities statewide. Research from Washington University in St. Louis’s SEED OK study, found that a small investment at birth can change family behavior and expectations for years to come, especially for marginalized households and communities of color.

Scholarship investments such as CalKIDS help close long-standing gaps in educational equity and send a powerful message to children: the future is yours. The full Washington University in St. Louis study can be found online at csd.wustl.edu/items/seed-for-oklahoma-kids-seed-ok-2.

Families and students are encouraged to take the easiest step toward a brighter future by visiting calkids.org today to check eligibility and claim their CalKIDS Scholarship. ★

'Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over'

City of Sacramento
Police Department
News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The holiday season can be dangerous for people on the roads. In December 2023 alone, 1,038 people were killed in the U.S. in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The Sacramento Police Department wants to remind the public of the dangers of driving impaired and to celebrate the holiday season responsibly by not driving under the influence.

“We want to make sure everyone gets home safely so that they can celebrate the holiday season with their families and loved ones,” Sergeant Anna Mahoney said.

“Not only is driving impaired illegal, but it is also dangerous and never acceptable. We are asking everyone to do their part to keep themselves



and everyone on the roads safe.”

The Sacramento Police Department encourages everyone to stay in for the night or plan ahead by designating a sober driver, using public transit or calling a taxi or rideshare service if you intend to drink.

Impaired driving is not just from alcohol. Prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, cannabis products and

other drugs may also cause impairment. If you plan on drinking or taking medications with a driving warning label, let someone who is sober drive. If you see someone who appears to be driving while impaired, call 9-1-1.

Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. ★

Board Approves Flexible Housing Pool to Address Homelessness

Continued from page 1
Act funds to housing interventions.

The state also created the PATH CITED grant through the CA Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), of which Sacramento County was awarded \$5.8 million to fund both the assigned Flexible Housing Pool contract with Brilliant Corners and some additional components that will come in the future.

By aligning county, state and Managed Care Plan investments, the Flexible Housing Pool creates a sustainable platform that strengthens accountability, expands housing opportunities and builds long-term community trust.

Sacramento County Department of Homeless Services & Housing (DHS), in partnership with Sacramento County Department of Health

Services (DHS), will function as the lead agency. Partnerships with Managed Care Plans and local housing providers are a critical piece to the success of this program. The county has selected Brilliant Corners to act as the third-party administrator of the program.

"We are honored to be selected as operator for the Sacramento Flexible Housing Pool," said William F. Pickel, Chief Executive Officer of Brilliant Corners.

"For over a decade, we've operated Flex Pool programs across California, helping municipalities meet the needs of our unhoused neighbors by scaling access to housing opportunities in real time, while always grounded in a person-centered approach that ensures quality housing outcomes for a range of populations; even those

with complex needs.”
“We look forward to partnering with Sacramento County to operationalize its vision of coordinated, effective and compassionate housing approach that reduces homelessness and advances behavioral health recovery.”

Brilliant Corners will administer rental subsidies, including CalAIM Transitional Rent and Housing Deposits, manage landlord incentives and risk mitigation, coordinate housing navigation and tenancy supports, including a robust landlord program and oversee financial, administrative and reporting systems for the Flexible Housing Pool.

Brilliant Corners will begin work on the Flexible Housing Pool immediately, and CalAIM Transitional Rent mandates will begin Jan. 1, 2026. ★

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Torence Powell Selected as Chancellor of Los Rios Community College District

Continued from page 1
succeed Dr. Brian King, who announced his retirement last Spring effective June 30, 2026.

“Dr. Powell has a deep commitment to the transformational work of our colleges and a personal connection to communities we serve,” said Los Rios Board President Kelly Wilkerson in an email to all Los Rios employees and students. “Throughout his



career, he has demonstrated a collaborative leadership approach and a willingness to tackle tough issues on behalf of students.”

Dr. Powell will be available for press requests following his formal appointment on Jan. 14, 2026. ★

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I'm not enough

You are more than enough

I can't keep going

I will carry you

I'm not strong enough

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I'm too tired

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I can't forgive myself

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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



The Sacramento Kings had a rough week. Whether it’s at Golden One or on the road, the 2025-26 campaign has not been a pleasant experience.

Diehard fans will likely point to injuries, and you would have a point, but injuries alone cannot account for losing 20 games in the first 26 contests. There is more to the story.

The Kings as they are currently assembled do not match up with bigger teams. Does that mean that the Kings need to build a team that resembles the Oklahoma City Thunder? Well, it wouldn’t be a bad idea, but easier said than done, it’s important to note that there are a host of players under 6 feet, 6 inches that are difference makers in this league.

Well, I don’t pretend to be able to read the mind of Scott Perry, but if you listen to him, he will tell you that he has autonomy and will be the architect of what is apparently going to be a rebuilding season. Perry has alluded to this experience likely taking three to five years, which no one wants to hear.

For me, I can condense the process to five players that I would keep at all costs.

Domantas Sabonis has had little time on the hardwood this season due to injury, but make no mistake about it, he is a difference maker. Any player that can lead the league in double-doubles, year over year, while also leading the league in rebounding three years running, is someone you need to covet. Sabonis also led the league in triple-doubles two years ago, so there you have an anchor on your team that simply needs to stay.

The Kings are guard heavy, but their young guards have yet to see their potential. Players like Nique Clifford and even Devin Carter have not had sufficient time for fans to see what could be an incredible upside. Keep these youngsters and remember why you made them number one draft choices.

Keegan Murray had a rookie season three years ago that was eye popping because he was living up to his hype. The NCAA scoring champ out of Iowa set a Sacramento franchise record of 11 consecutive threes, and a total of twelve three-pointers in one game.

Keegan’s experience in Sacramento has been up and down, but this year could be a breakout year for the young baller that has not just the shooting ability, but a knack for defense as well. Keep him!

Maxime Reynaud is getting game time due to Domantas being sidelined and he is giving Kings fans a glimpse of what this seven-footer can do. He is my fifth pick to stay.

As our Sactown ballers lost three games last week by a total of 56 combined points, I glanced around the league to see who might be a player that could bring a steadiness to this lineup. One player, although a guard, was Austin Reeves, who managed to drop 51 points on the Kings earlier this season when both Lebron James and Luca Doncic were sidelined with injuries. The same Austin Reeves that just 4 years ago went undrafted by all 30 NBA teams and would eventually be signed to a two-way contract as a walk-on by the LA Lakers.

In high school, Reeves scored 73 points in one game and won back-to-back state titles. Reeves went on to play for Oklahoma averaging 32 points per game as a senior while making the NCAA tournament. How does the entire league miss on a talent that is having the time of his life playing in the NBA?

As I’ve said before, the Kings need to find someone that can assess talent and hit home runs. It needs to happen sooner rather than later, so right now would be just fine.

Are you listening, Doug Christie? You have a player sitting on your bench by the name of Doug McDermott that can shoot threes like everyone else shoots free throws, and he needs to find a place in your rotation. With six wins to show for the season, what are you waiting for?

Just as Austin Reeves was a welcome surprise, maybe McDermott could bring some much-needed energy to this team.

Stay tuned Kings fans because we’re only 25 percent of the way into the season!

All the best and a very Merry Christmas!

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

Trump Sides with Agriculture Again in California’s Never-Ending Water Wars



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

From the onset of his foray into presidential politics a decade ago, Donald Trump has been obsessed with managing California’s water, often interjecting himself into decades-long conflicts over how the precious commodity should be divvied up.

During his first stint as president, Trump was heavily influenced by the Westlands Water District, a huge agricultural water agency in the San Joaquin Valley that sought more irrigation water for itself and other farm interests.

That relationship led to an extremely controversial contract that guaranteed Westlands as much as 1 million acre-feet of water each year from the federal Central Valley Project, solidifying the district’s supply situation. Lacking water rights, Westlands had historically depended on temporary contracts to meet members’ demands.

The new contract angered environmental groups because it threatened to reduce flows through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for wildlife habitat. The groups sued and won rulings against the contract in trial and appellate courts.

After Trump moved back into the White House in January, he immediately picked up where he left off, issuing an order to federal water officials to maximize deliveries in California.

He also complained that

a shortage of water deliveries to Southern California was a factor in the rapid spread of deadly wildfires in Los Angeles County, claiming that the state’s efforts to protect “an essentially worthless fish called a smelt” was at fault.

“Governor Gavin Newsom refused to sign the water restoration declaration put before him that would have allowed millions of gallons of water, from excess rain and snow melt from the North, to flow daily into many parts of California, including the areas that are currently burning in a virtually apocalyptic way,” Trump wrote on his social media site, Truth Social.

Newsom’s office rebuked the claim, saying, “There is no such document as the water restoration declaration – that is pure fiction.”

Meanwhile, Trump’s executive order pushed the Bureau of Reclamation to modify how it operates the Central Valley Project, a complex of reservoirs — including Lake Shasta — and canals that captures runoff from Northern California mountains and supplies water agencies in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys.

Last week, the bureau announced an operational modification that would increase annual water deliveries by 130,000 to 180,000 acre-feet from the Central Valley Project and another 120,000 to 220,000 from the State Water Project, the latter chiefly generated from the Oroville Dam on the Feather River. The two projects share management of the Sacramento River and its tributaries.

“This updated operations plan reflects our commitment to using the best available science to increase water deliveries while safeguarding the environment and honoring the legacy of the Central Valley Project’s

90 years of service,” Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum said in a statement.

The announcement sparked reactions, both pro and con, that reflect the state’s long-running water allocation battles — praise from Westlands and other agricultural water agencies that are facing supply reductions from regulation of groundwater use and condemnation from state officials and environmental groups.

“These operational refinements reflect a thoughtful, data-informed approach that strengthens water supply availability for growers while maintaining California’s commitment to environmental stewardship,” Westlands said in a statement.

Newsom spokesperson, Tara Gallegos, had another take: “The Trump administration is putting politics over people — catering to big donors instead of doing what’s right for Californians. As per usual, the emperor is left with no clothes, pushing for an outcome that disregards science and undermines our ability to protect the water supply for people, farms, and the environment.”

For their part, state water officials say they have no intention of matching the Bureau of Reclamation’s new operational rules.

So here we go again, another chapter in the war over water that began when California became a state 175 years ago. It’s probably headed to the courts and will probably outlast not only Newsom’s governorship but Trump’s presidency.

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. ★

Social Security Matters

About Remarrying and Benefits from an Ex-spouse



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I am almost 57, divorced after a 14-year marriage. My former spouse is 15 years older than I and made significantly more money than me. I am required to retire from my job at age 60 but expect to keep working in some capacity.

I have a girlfriend of a similar age to me. She did not earn as much as her former husband as she mainly raised their children. She is also divorced from an older spouse who made more money than she did. I am trying to figure out if we will be penalized if we marry, or if it matters if we wait until after we reach 60 years of age. Can I claim my own benefits when I become eligible at 62, then claim survivor benefits later, whenever my former spouse passes? Is that affected if, or when, I remarry? I do not want to give up my potential survivor benefits from my ex-spouse. Are those affected if I remarry?

If I understand correctly, if I remarry even after 60, we would both forfeit divorced spousal benefits, is that right? Given that my girlfriend’s former spouse

probably made more money than I, would she be forfeiting her former spousal benefits if we were to marry, even after age 60?

Lastly, I am considering retiring abroad as an expat. Any suggestions about how that would affect our Social Security benefits? **Signed: Starting Over**

Dear Starting Over: With certain exceptions, benefits from a living ex-spouse cannot be collected if you remarry (regardless of your age when you remarry). So, from what you’ve shared, whenever you remarry both you and your new wife will forfeit eligibility for benefits from your respective ex-spouses while they are living (FYI, there are exceptions for those who are disabled).

However, the rules are different for a surviving ex-spouse: if you remarry before age 60, you will forfeit your surviving ex-spouse benefit. But if you remarry after age 60, you retain eligibility to collect survivor benefits from a deceased former spouse. So, if you and your girlfriend remarry after you are both age 60, you will both still be able to claim survivor benefits based on your former spouses’ records.

And, yes, it is possible for you to initially claim your own SS retirement benefit at 62 and claim your surviving ex-spouse benefit later (after your former spouse dies). Provided you remarry after age 60 you do not lose that option, but if you were to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit before reaching your full retirement age (FRA), the monthly payment amount would be reduced (all SS benefits taken before FRA are reduced).

Note too, that if you plan

to continue working after you are first eligible for SS benefits, Social Security has an “earnings test” which limits how much you can earn from working while collecting early benefits. The limit changes yearly (for 2025 it is \$23,400) and if exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. And as you likely know, claiming at age 62 will also mean a benefit payment of about 30% less than available at your FRA of 67. So, if you plan to work after age 62 and plan to claim early SS, you should take the “earnings test” into consideration. FYI, the earning test no longer applies after you reach your full retirement age.

Now, regarding retiring overseas, be aware that Social Security has limits on where you can collect U.S. Social Security benefits. I suggest you use Social Security’s Payments Abroad Screening Tool to find out if benefits are payable wherever you plan to retire abroad. That SSA tool can be found here: www.ssa.gov/international/payments_outsideUS.html

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In the contention over the U.S. peace plan for Ukraine, the Europeans are in their accustomed role -- carping from the sidelines.

Not only can the once-great European powers no longer dictate the fate of far-flung parts of the world, they can’t even dictate the end of a war involving a European country whose fate they deem crucial to their own future.

We’re a long way from the British controlling about a quarter of the globe’s territory in the early 20th century; a long way from British and French diplomats, Mark Sykes and Francois Georges-Picot respectively, drawing the lines in 1916 to divide up the Ottoman Empire; a long way from Napoleon sitting with Tsar Alexander in Tilsit in 1807 and rearranging the map of Europe.

France was once so diplomatically central that there are dozens of Treaties of Paris, whether in 1259 (between King Louis IX of France and King Henry III of England) or in 1951 (setting up the European Coal and Steel Community). Now, France scurries around with its European counterparts to react to whatever the American president is doing.

It’s gotten so bad that some European analysts speak of a potential “scramble for Europe,” or attempts by richer, more powerful outside countries to influence the course of Europe.

The late conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer maintained

Europe Has Made Itself An Afterthought

of the U.S., “decline is a choice.”

This isn’t quite right with regard to Europe, whose great powers were kneecapped by the cataclysms of the early 20th century. France bore the brunt of World War I, suffering 1.4 million dead and 4.3 million wounded and a ruinous economic cost.

As for Britain, stretched to the max, it got steadily eclipsed in power and influence by the United States as World War II progressed. The less said about Germany’s role in all this, of course, the better. And then the European colonial empires inevitably dissolved. So, Europe was going to be diminished compared to its glory days. Its current fecklessness, though, has indeed been a choice, borne of strategic fantasy and economic incompetence.

Strong militaries were deemed as a thing of the past, or something unnecessary as long as Uncle Sam was around. The Brits, for instance, are hard-pressed to maintain a 73,000-strong army, and the size of their once-storied surface fleet is at a historic low.

Europe imagined itself “a diplomatic superpower,” but has learned to regret that “soft power” not backed up by hard power is of limited utility. Both the Nobel Committee and Amnesty International have considerable soft power, too, but no one pays attention to them regarding high-level geopolitical questions.

Economically, the EU “regulatory superpower”

has hobbled growth -- over the last 30 years, Western European labor productivity declined from 95% of the U.S. level to 80% -- while Europe’s commitment to “net zero” greenhouse emissions has driven insane energy priorities. Years into the Ukraine war, Europe is still dependent on gas imports from Russia.

None of this means that the U.S. should go out of its way to give Europe the back of its hand. Whatever its other failings, Europe has collectively given Ukraine more aid than the United States, and was justifiably furious at the initial 28-point Ukraine proposal. That plan had the embattled country handing over to Moscow strategically important territory that is still in Ukrainian hands; agreeing to a limit on the size of its military; and the U.S. taking currently frozen Russian assets in Europe to rebuild Ukraine (getting 50% of any profits) and to pursue joint investment projects with Russia.

Negotiations with the Ukrainians have reportedly produced a more reasonable version, but it is Washington and Moscow that matter most here.

The analyst Robert Kagan famously wrote years ago that, in their divergent approaches to the world, “Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus.” Having long outsourced power politics to Mars, it turns out that Venus has limited influence even in her own backyard.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Mouth is open. 2. Patch on sleeve is higher. 3. Mouth is open. 4. Mouth is open. 5. Patch on sleeve is higher. 6. Mouth is open. 7. Mouth is open. 8. Mouth is open. 9. Mouth is open. 10. Mouth is open. 11. Mouth is open. 12. Mouth is open. 13. Mouth is open. 14. Mouth is open. 15. Mouth is open. 16. Mouth is open. 17. Mouth is open. 18. Mouth is open. 19. Mouth is open. 20. Mouth is open. 21. Mouth is open. 22. Mouth is open. 23. Mouth is open. 24. Mouth is open. 25. Mouth is open. 26. Mouth is open. 27. Mouth is open. 28. Mouth is open. 29. Mouth is open. 30. Mouth is open. 31. Mouth is open. 32. Mouth is open. 33. Mouth is open. 34. Mouth is open. 35. Mouth is open. 36. Mouth is open. 37. Mouth is open. 38. Mouth is open. 39. Mouth is open. 40. Mouth is open. 41. Mouth is open. 42. Mouth is open. 43. Mouth is open. 44. Mouth is open. 45. Mouth is open. 46. Mouth is open. 47. Mouth is open. 48. Mouth is open. 49. Mouth is open. 50. Mouth is open. 51. Mouth is open. 52. Mouth is open. 53. Mouth is open. 54. Mouth is open. 55. Mouth is open. 56. Mouth is open. 57. Mouth is open. 58. Mouth is open. 59. Mouth is open. 60. Mouth is open. 61. Mouth is open. 62. Mouth is open. 63. Mouth is open. 64. Mouth is open. 65. Mouth is open. 66. Mouth is open. 67. Mouth is open. 68. Mouth is open. 69. Mouth is open. 70. Mouth is open. 71. Mouth is open. 72. Mouth is open. 73. Mouth is open. 74. Mouth is open. 75. Mouth is open. 76. Mouth is open. 77. Mouth is open. 78. Mouth is open. 79. Mouth is open. 80. Mouth is open. 81. Mouth is open. 82. Mouth is open. 83. Mouth is open. 84. Mouth is open. 85. Mouth is open. 86. Mouth is open. 87. Mouth is open. 88. Mouth is open. 89. Mouth is open. 90. Mouth is open. 91. Mouth is open. 92. Mouth is open. 93. Mouth is open. 94. Mouth is open. 95. Mouth is open. 96. Mouth is open. 97. Mouth is open. 98. Mouth is open. 99. Mouth is open. 100. Mouth is open.

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE

GRIN & BEAR IT

by Dave T. Phipps

Just Like Cats & Dogs

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • YEAR-IN-REVIEW

CROSSWORD

CLUES

ACROSS

1. W.E.B Du Bois' org.

6. Rascal

9. Ho-hum

13. "Pomp and Circumstance" composer

14. Tropical constrictor

15. Forgo

16. Tequila source

17. + or - atom

18. Reason by deduction

19. "Trade war" weapon, pl.

21. *2025 MLB World Series winners

23. ___-tzu

24. C&H crop

25. Duncie

28. Western necktie

30. Catch in a snare

35. Ginger cookie

37. Master of his castle

39. Use a razor

40. British slang for donkey

41. Arch and ball locations

43. Winglike

44. March celebrants

46. *Arthur Sze, 2025 Laureate

47. Dam-like structure

48. *Beyoncé's "Cowboy ___," 2025 Grammy winner

50. King Kong and Curious George, e.g.

52. Like a fox

53. What Pinocchio did

55. *Florida Panthers won this org.'s '25 championship

57. *"Wicked: ___"

61. *Late environmentalist and chimpanzee expert

65. German submarine destroyer

66. *2025 Ryder Cup loser

68. Manuscript sheet

69. Brazilian coins

70. Roll-your-own one, for short

71. To the left, on a boat

72. Orpheus' instrument

73. Geological time period

74. They are cut by Federal Reserve

DOWN

1. At room temperature, bar order

2. Algae, sing.

3. Petri dish filler

4. Raise trivial objections

5. Ready to be assembled

6. Avian wader

7. Farm sound

8. China's goodwill "___ diplomacy"

9. Collision, onomatopoeically speaking

10. *Taylor Swift's "The ___ of a Showgirl"

11. Affirm solemnly

12. Third-person possessive pronoun

15. Makes broader

20. Why do they fall in love?

22. *Aryna Sabalenka's seed

24. Auto contents

25. Pertaining to osmium

26. *2025 Academy Awards Best Picture winner

27. Faquir, alt.spelling

29. Pilot's stunt

31. Spring event

32. Pneumonia symptom, pl.

33. Be of use

34. *Blue Origin's 2025 singing passenger

36. Boll weevil, e.g.

38. * ___ Seek

42. Shorthand typist, for short

45. Serfs

49. 2016 Olympics host, for short

51. Ram's horn at a synagogue

54. Draw a conclusion

56. Parkinson's disease drug

57. Roll up

58. Heed

59. Lion sound

60. Dorothy's last name

61. *Lady of "The Mayhem Ball"

62. Tons (2 words)

63. Lira, pl.

64. Land parcels

67. *Gary Oldman received this honorific in 2025

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CROSSWORD

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

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Pinnick and Cofield Named FCS Football Central Freshman All-Americans



UC Davis Football Freshman Caden Pinnick finished the season ranked among the best quarterbacks in the nation and was named Big Sky All-Conference. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics



Defensive back Drew Cofield was one of two freshmen to be named FCS Football Central Freshman All-Americans. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Football

UC Davis Athletics News Release

DAVIS, CA (MPG) - Following impressive freshmen campaigns by Caden Pinnick and Drew Cofield, the pair of UC Davis football freshmen have earned FCS Football Central Freshman All-American honors as announced today.

Pinnick (redshirt freshman), who became only the second Aggie quarterback to throw for five touchdowns in an

NCAA playoff game, finished the season ranked among the best quarterbacks in the nation and was named Big Sky All-Conference.

While Cofield is one of two true freshmen in the nation to make every start at cornerback, stepping in and making an immediate impact in the UC Davis secondary. Entering the game, Pinnick ranked nationally third in passing efficiency, fifth in total passing touchdowns

and yards per pass attempt, eighth in total touchdowns, ninth in completion percentage and 10th in passing yards per game.

With 11 starts under his belt, Pinnick has racked up 2,804 passing yards, 29 passing touchdowns and with a line of 211-for-304 the Aggie quarterback is completing his passes at 69.4 percent.

And on the ground, Pinnick has added rushed for 411 yards and added three touchdowns on the ground. Cofield has

made every start this season, playing nearly every snap all season at one of the toughest positions in sports.

With 12 games in his pocket, Cofield has collected 32 total tackles, 2.0 tackles for loss and he's broken up a team-high nine passes. The Aggie freshmen has made 28 solo stops, and he's snagged two interceptions along the way making his presence known to every offense faced this season. ★

Eric Kubota Wins Tony Gwynn Lifetime Achievement Award

Athletics News Release

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - A's Director of Scouting Eric Kubota has been named the winner of the Tony Gwynn Award, a lifetime achievement award presented annually by Baseball America for the greatest contributions to the game.

Kubota, who is entering his 41st season with the A's, has served as Director of Scouting for the past 24 seasons. During his tenure, the A's have drafted and signed 114 players who have reached the majors.

Among those players, 18 have been named All-Stars, three have been named American League Rookie of the Year, four have won Gold Glove Awards, and three have won Silver Slugger Awards. Hitters drafted under

Kubota have combined to record 14,896 hits and 2,190 home runs, while pitchers have collected 425 wins, 521 saves, and 6,143 strikeouts.

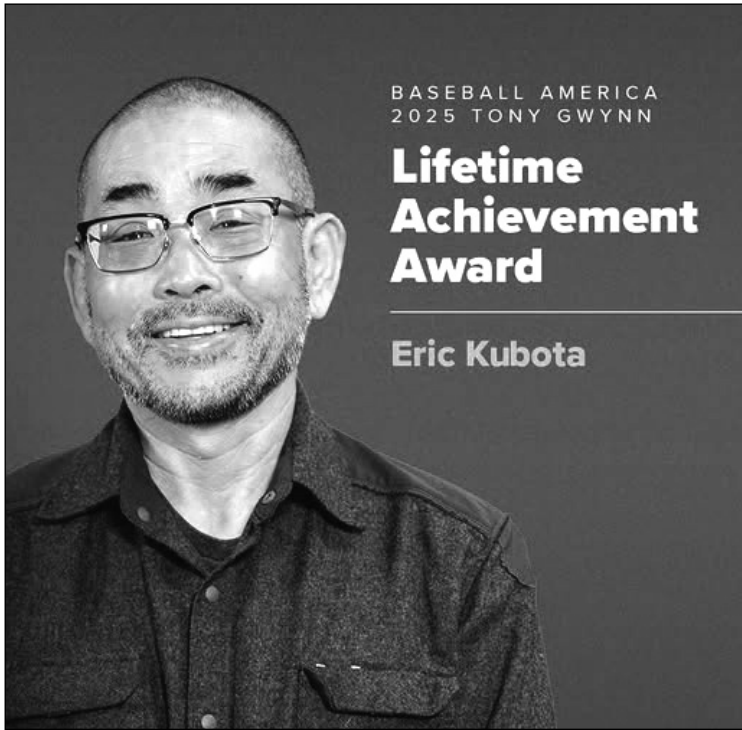
Kubota began his baseball career in June of 1984, while he was an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley, spending the better part of six seasons working in the A's media relations department. In November of 1989, he joined the baseball operations staff as an assistant director of scouting, and he was elevated to Pacific Rim coordinator in November of 1996, where he acted as a liaison between the A's and Asian baseball teams in addition to his scouting duties in Northern California and Hawaii.

Prior to assuming his current position, Kubota served as

the club's supervisor of international scouting for three seasons, overseeing the scouting staff and player evaluations in the Dominican Republic and Venezuela. In January 2014, he was honored as Scout of the Year by the Santa Clara County Hot Stove Committee and in 2022 he was named the Scout of the Year by the Scout of the Year Foundation.

Kubota graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. He and his wife, Karen, have two children. ★

Kubota, who is entering his 41st season with the A's, has served as Director of Scouting for the past 24 seasons. Courtesy photo



Sacramento State Announces Change

Sacramento State News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Brennan Marion announced Dec. 5 that he will resign as the head football coach at Sacramento State to become the offensive coordinator at Colorado.

"I want to thank Coach Marion for his leadership during this past season," Director of Athletics Mark Orr said. "We look forward to continuing the success of Sacramento State football and will begin a national search for our next head coach immediately."

Marion was hired as the 13th head football coach in school history on Dec. 21. During his time with the Hornets, he secured the top-ranked recruiting class in the Football Championship Subdivision twice. This past season, the team finished



Brennan Marion announced Dec. 5 that he will resign as the head football coach at Sacramento State. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State

with a 7-5 overall record and was 5-3 in Big Sky Conference games for sole possession of fourth place. Sacramento State ended the regular season ranked third in the Football Championship Subdivision with 262.6 rushing yards per game and averaged 33.8 points per game.

"I love Luke Wood and

Mark Orr," Marion said. "They gave me the opportunity to live my dream as a college head football coach and they provided me with every resource to succeed. I'm grateful to the Sacramento community and University for embracing my family. Lastly to my team, I love our players and staff. They restored the pride in Sac State football through a lot of adversity and our relationships will last a lifetime. Thank you Sacramento State!"

Sacramento State is one of just 12 Football Championship Subdivision programs to win at least seven games in five of the last six seasons. During that time, the team made four National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Football Championship Subdivision Playoff appearances and was ranked in the top 25 for 50 weeks. ★

A's Select Ryan Watson in Major League Rule 5 Draft

A's select three pitchers in minor league portion

Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Athletics selected right-handed pitcher Ryan Watson from San Francisco in the Major League portion of the Rule 5 Draft, the club announced Dec. 10. In addition, the Athletics' selected right-handed pitchers Abel Mercedes, Darlin Pinales and Jorge Marcheco in the minor league portion of the Rule 5 Draft.

Watson, 28, was signed to a minor league contract by Baltimore in 2020 and was traded to the Giants on Aug. 9, 2024, for cash considerations. He is 24-17 with a 4.14 earned run average (ERA) in 157 games, including 34 starts, across five minor league seasons.

Mercedes, 23, posted a 2-0 record with a 4.35 ERA across 30 relief appearances for Single-A Fayetteville during the 2025 season to go along with 66 strikeouts and 48 walks in 41.1 innings pitched. Overall, Mercedes is 6-12 with a 5.60 ERA across five minor league seasons.

Pinales, 23, was 1-3 with a 5.90 ERA across 35 relief outings for Single-A Visalia during the 2025 season with 56 strikeouts, 32 walks and a .217 opponents batting average. Overall, he is 10-11 with a 5.64 ERA, adding 229 strikeouts and 186.2 innings pitched over five minor league seasons.

Marcheco, 23, went a combined 5-7 with a 4.36 ERA between High-A Tri City and Double-A Rocket City during the 2025 season. He totaled 84 strikeouts, 23 walks and a 1.13 walks and hits per inning pitched (WHIP) across 27 games (12 starts). Overall, he is 23-23 with a 3.99 ERA spanning five minor league seasons.

Additionally, catcher Daniel Susac was selected from the A's organization by Minnesota in the first round of the Major League Phase of the Rule 5 Draft. In the minor league portion, catcher Abrahan Gutierrez was selected by New York-AL (second round).

Susac was drafted by the A's in the first round (19th overall) in the 2022 First-Year Player Draft. He hit .275 with 19 doubles, 18 home runs and 68 runs batted in (RBI) for Triple-A Las Vegas during the 2025 season. Across four minor league seasons, the 24-year-old right-handed hitter has recorded 65 doubles, 39 home runs and 195 RBI.

Gutierrez, 26, was signed by the A's to a minor league contract on Dec. 4, after he was released by the Pittsburgh Pirates organization on Aug. 5. Across parts of eight minor league seasons, he batted .261 with a .346 on-base percentage, including batting .250 with a .333 OBP in 28 games with Triple-A Indianapolis this season. ★