



**SacRT Holiday Bus Returns to Spread Cheer**

PAGE 3

**Speech Language Pathologist and Dog Help Students**

PAGE 3



# AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

VOLUME 20 • ISSUE 24

Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale & Sacramento County

DECEMBER 19, 2025

**SEE INSIDE**

**FEEES TO BUILD NEW HOMES AVERAGE \$109,000**



PAGE 4

**ENHANCED AVIATION PROGRAM COMING TO SAC CITY COLLEGE**



PAGE 5

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION PARTNERS WITH HEALTH NET**



PAGE 10

## The Village Lights Up for Christmas



Ryan and Erica Frith pose with children Sofia and Gavin in front of Erica's tree.

**Story and photos by Judy Andrews**

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - The Village of Fair Oaks is shining bright with a stunning 34-foot-tall holiday tree displayed at Plaza Park. Hundreds gathered on Dec. 4 to witness the lighting of the tree at the 42nd annual Christmas in Fair Oaks Tree Lighting.

Visitors of all ages marveled at the sights, sounds and beauty of the night as the park transformed into a magical setting, complete with artificial snow and all the sparkling elements of a memorable evening.

Kids especially loved having their photos taken with Santa and Mrs. Claus,



The "snow" was a fun touch for kids.

Elsa from Frozen and the Grinch himself. Festivities also included entertainment from members of the Bella Vista High School Jazz Ensemble, the Festival of Trees display, holiday crafts and kids' activities, community vendors and more.

Presented by the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District and the Fair Oaks Chamber, this annual Tree Lighting tradition has brought smiles and joy to the community for decades. Visitors were excited to see the event return to the village this year after the park's five-year hiatus for renovations.

"Having the Tree  
*Continued on page 2*

## Contesting Traffic Tickets Made Easier

**Sacramento Superior Court News Release**

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento Superior Court is launching a new innovation designed to make contesting eligible traffic tickets faster, easier and more convenient for the public.

Beginning Dec. 11, 2025, Sacramento County residents have access to the Judicial Council's expanded MyCitations platform, which now features "Online Trial by Declaration", a fully digital way to contest infraction citations without ever stepping foot in a courthouse.

This new tool allows individuals with certain traffic tickets to submit a written statement and upload supporting documents online. Judicial officers will review the submitted materials and issue rulings through the system. Decisions will then be emailed directly to the individual contesting the citation.

"We are excited to offer a streamlined, user-friendly option that gives our community greater flexibility and accessibility," said Brenda Allen, Director of Operations at the Carol Miller Justice Center, where traffic cases are processed.

"The ability to contest a ticket online - on your schedule - helps remove barriers and enhances access to justice for everyone."

"Request an Online Trial by Declaration" is the newest module in the MyCitations suite, designed for infraction violations that do not require a personal appearance in court. With a simple step-by-step process, users can explain what happened, attach evidence and submit everything electronically. A judge then reviews both the defendant's and the issuing officer's statements before making a determination.

Use this tool if: you were issued a ticket for infraction violations only; you want to contest the violation (plead not guilty) and complete your trial online; the due date to address your ticket has not passed; and your ticket or courtesy notice does not require a mandatory court appearance.

Do NOT use this tool if: you have already appeared in court, and/or you have already been sentenced, fined or paid your ticket, and/or have an active ability to pay petition.

The Online Trial by Declaration feature is also available for Amador, Imperial, Nevada, San Francisco and Siskiyou counties.

The Online Trial by Declaration portal is available on the Sacramento Superior Court's website at <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/traffic/citations-contesting>.  
asp. ★

## Thunderbirds to Return

**California Capital Airshow News Release**

**MATHER, CA (MPG)** - The California Capital Airshow, in partnership with Sacramento County and the City of Rancho Cordova, recently announced that the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds will headline the 2026 California Capital Airshow, returning to Mather Airport on Oct. 10 and Oct. 11.

This milestone event will mark the airshow's 20th anniversary and a celebration of America's 250th birthday, promising an unforgettable weekend of aviation excellence and community pride.

The world-renowned Thunderbird jet demonstration team will take to the skies over Sacramento with their signature precision, power and patriotism, highlighting the incredible skill and dedication of the U.S. Air Force. Their performance will lead



California Capital Airshow crowds are always dazzled by the Thunderbirds' performances. The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds return next year to the highly-anticipated airshow. Photo courtesy of California Capital Airshow

an extraordinary lineup of military and civilian aviation talent, immersive ground displays and hands-on STEM experiences for all ages.

"This will be one of the most spectacular shows in our 20-year history," said Darcy Brewer, Chief Executive

Officer of the California Capital Airshow (CCA). "We're honored to welcome the Thunderbirds back to inspire and thrill audiences while we celebrate two major milestones: CCA's 20th year and America's 250th. There's so much more to come and this is just the

beginning."

Additional performer announcements, featured attractions and new fan experiences will be shared in the months ahead.

A limited number of tickets will go on sale through the California  
*Continued on page 3*



Scan our QR Code for a direct link to our online edition!

PRSRTD STD.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
CARMICHAEL, CA  
PERMIT NO. 350  
OR CURRENT  
POSTAL CUSTOMER

# The Village Lights Up for Christmas



Jana Dudley and daughter, Audrey, enjoy attending this holiday tradition with its festive touches like the small lit candles.



Tony Massoud and Crystle Sanchez donned festive attire for the occasion.



The crowd shared 'oohs and ahhs' in unison with the lighting of the tree.



Even the Grinch had a good time.

*Continued from page 1*  
Lighting event back in the village gives it a hometown 'Hallmark' vibe that we love," said Erica Frith. She and her husband, Ryan, own California eBikes in Fair Oaks.

"The snow-making machines were the icing on the cake and made the evening feel magical," Frith said.

Erica entered her own tree into this year's Festival of Trees Contest and took first place. The couple was spotted with their two children, Sofia and Gavin, and other family members taking photos at her beautifully decorated four-foot-tall tree.

Fair Oaks resident Jana Dudley and her daughter Audrey, who was visiting from out of town, came out to celebrate.

"We've attended most of the tree lighting ceremonies over the past 14 years," said Jana. "I love seeing it back in the village again and looking forward to creating new memories. The small lit candles are always a charming touch that makes this event



Members of the Bella Vista Jazz Ensemble provided live music.

extra special." Attendees Tony Massoud and Crystle Sanchez arrived decked out in festive attire. Tony and his dad, Munir, own the Fair Oaks Coffee House and Deli across the street from the park.

"It's great to see life return to the village with all the families out and kids playing," said Massoud. "It reminded me of how the village used to be before the park closed, with everyone gathering in the heart

of town." This year's Christmas in Fair Oaks Tree Lighting in the village touched hearts, rekindled memories and created new family traditions that will be cherished forever.

**NORTHRIDGE DENTAL**

**DENTAL IMPLANTS - THE BEST OPTIONS FOR MISSING TEETH**

— ALL TREATMENT PERFORMED IN ONE LOCATION FROM START TO FINISH —

 <b>DENTURE TO IMPLANT</b> Removable	 <b>FULL ARCH BRIDGE TO IMPLANT</b> Fixed
 <b>SINGLE IMPLANT</b> Fixed	 <b>ALL ON FOUR</b> Fixed
 <b>IMPLANT BRIDGE</b> Fixed	<p>Call today to schedule your <b>Free Consultation</b> with an Xray</p> 6600 Madison Ave Suite 4B, Carmichael, CA 95608 (916) 944-1197 www.nrd916.com

**BEST OF FAIR OAKS 2025**

**Go & Vote online!**  
BestofFairOaks.com

**Nominations Open**  
**Voting Starts Nov. 13**

**CONTEST RULES**  
Business must be located in Fair Oaks or be a Fair Oaks Chamber member. All votes must be cast online at **BestofFairOaks.com**

**ONLY ONE VOTE PER CATEGORY PER PERSON.**  
All voting entries must have complete information or the votes will not be counted.  
Best of Fair Oaks winners will be presented at this year's **You're Invited!**

**TICKETS ARE EXPECTED TO SELL OUT FAST**  
Don't miss your chance to attend the 10th annual "Best of Fair Oaks" event. This year's event will be held:

**Where:** North Ridge Country Club, 7600 Madison Ave, Fair Oaks  
**When:** Thursday January 15, 2026  
**Cost:** Contact the Fair Oaks Chamber of Commerce for detail  
**FairOaksChamber.com** or call 916-967-2903

**916-944-1197**

## SacRT Holiday Bus Returns to Spread Cheer and Support Foster Youth



SacRT is proud to launch the 2025 Holiday Bus today, offering fare-free rides and festive cheer across the Sacramento region throughout the month of December. Photo courtesy SacRT

### Sacramento Regional Transit News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) is proud to launch the 2025 Holiday Bus today, offering fare-free rides and festive cheer across the Sacramento region throughout the month of December. This year, SacRT has partnered with Stanford Sierra Youth & Families, a local nonprofit dedicated to empowering foster youth and families, to raise awareness and support for children and teens in need.

The Holiday Bus will operate on a different route each day starting Dec. 1 through Friday, January 2, 2026, and is free to ride. Riders are encouraged to “pay it forward” by donating to Stanford Sierra Youth & Families via the onboard farebox or QR code.

“The SacRT Holiday Bus is a joyful tradition that brings our community together,” said Henry Li, SacRT General Manager/CEO.

“This year, we’re honored to partner with Stanford Sierra Youth & Families to support foster youth and families across our region. We invite everyone to ride, donate, and help us spread holiday cheer while making a meaningful impact.”

#### Upcoming Holiday Events

In addition to daily bus service, SacRT

is using the Holiday Bus to help spread the word and raise awareness at local community events throughout the season.

SacRT and Stanford Sierra Youth & Families will host a special “Stuff the Bus” donation drive to collect new, unwrapped toys, games and clothing for foster youth. Holiday characters, hot chocolate and festive fun will be part of the celebration. The special event takes place 8 a.m. to noon Dec. 6 at Rancho Cordova Certified Farmers’ Market at Sunrise Station.

The SacRT Holiday Bus will roll through downtown at 10 a.m. Dec. 13 as part of the annual Santa Parade, bringing holiday magic to thousands of spectators.

“We are thrilled to partner with SacRT this holiday season,” said Dr. Laura Heintz, CEO of Stanford Sierra Youth & Families. “Every donation collected through the Holiday Bus campaign helps us provide stability, support, and joy to the youth and families we serve during a time that can be especially difficult. Together, we can make the holidays brighter for those who need it most.”

The SacRT Holiday Bus travels on a different SacRT bus route every day between Carmichael, Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento. For the schedule and more details on events featuring the Holiday Bus, visit [sacrt.com/HolidayBus](http://sacrt.com/HolidayBus). ★

## Speech Language Pathologist and Dog Help Students Succeed



Nadia Pella and Halo have built a strong bond with a common goal of uplifting students' confidence in their speech. Photo courtesy of San Juan Unified School District

### By San Juan Unified School District Staff

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - For 16 years, Nadia Pella has supported students across the San Juan Unified School District as a speech language pathologist. From early childhood education to high school, Pella’s experience with communication development and the challenges that students face has grown extensively.

Pella found her place at Harry Dewey Fundamental Elementary School, where she was introduced to her new colleague (and friend), Halo, a trained facility dog provided by Canine Companions.

Fast-forward five years, Pella and Halo have built a strong bond with a common goal of uplifting students' confidence in their speech.

“Students who might otherwise be reluctant to participate in therapy are actively seeking out opportunities to work on their communication skills because Halo is part of the experience,” Pella said.

Facility dogs, such as Halo, are trained to perform tasks, such as opening doors and picking up items. Students practice basic vocabulary by requesting Halo to

bow, speak or even tug to open the prize drawer.

“The social interaction she provides gives students authentic reasons to communicate, which is especially powerful for those who've lacked language models at home,” said Pella. “The fact that Halo responds to their communication reinforces that their words have power and meaning.”

The biggest challenges that Pella has identified among students were language deprivation and a lack of confidence. Pella has witnessed the effect that Halo has had on students who face these challenges.

“Halo’s presence often shifts their focus from frustration to curiosity and connection. This creates windows of opportunity where we can build the foundational language they need to express wants and needs, ultimately reducing the behaviors that stem from communication barriers,” said Pella.

At San Juan Unified School District, staff such as Pella and Halo ensure that all students have the resources and opportunities that set them up for academic success. ★

# Thunderbirds to Return

Continued from page 1

Capital Airshow’s website in 2026. Fans can gain special access to performer announcements and discount tickets by becoming an AIR SHOW INSIDER®

online at [CaliforniaCapitalAirshow.com](http://CaliforniaCapitalAirshow.com).

The California Capital Airshow is a nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring the past, inspiring the future and giving back to the community.

In partnership with the City of Rancho Cordova, Sacramento County and countless sponsors and volunteers, California Capital Airshow has awarded more than \$600,000 in scholarships and

introduces thousands of students annually to careers in aviation, aerospace and STEM.

For more information, visit online at [www.californiacapitalairshow.com](http://www.californiacapitalairshow.com). ★

# LOCAL ARREST RECORDS

Find out what's happening in your local area

Arrest Logs updated daily

AMERICANRIVERMESSENGER.COM

## PAYROLL and HR Support

### \$299 a month

Only available for businesses with up to 10 employees

# 916-760-7227

**PINNACLE**  
EMPLOYEE SERVICES  
HR | Payroll | Benefits

## Single Again

Make the rest of your life the best of your life!

### Are You Single Again?

SingleAgain.com is a website dedicated to helping people put their lives back together again after divorce, separation or the loss of their spouse.

Visit us today at [SingleAgain.com](http://SingleAgain.com)

# AM 1380

## THE ANSWER

NEWS. OPINION. INSIGHT.

# Sacramento's Best Talk

AM1380TheAnswer.com

# Fees to Build New Homes Average \$109,000

## BIA Calls on Local Governments to Lower Fees, Improve Affordability

### North State Building Industry Association News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Fees builders must pay to local governments in order to build a new home in the Sacramento region now average \$109,000 per home – and a new analysis shows that fees have hit the point where many proposed new home projects may not be built.

The study, conducted by Economic & Planning Systems (EPS) for the North State Building Industry Association, found that the fees charged for homes on standard-sized lots have risen by 25 percent since 2020.

Fees on homes on smaller lots – generally homes that can be profitably sold at lower prices – have risen by 15 percent since 2020 to an average of \$90,000. These rising fees are an important factor in reduced housing affordability, said Tim Murphy, the Building Industry Association's president and CEO.

"High fees mean that only higher-priced homes can be profitably built, which adds to the region's growing housing affordability crisis," Murphy said. "But the study shows that rising fee burdens have reached the point where some projects may not be feasible."

"Housing production in our region is already far below levels needed to meet the need for new housing. Rather than adding to the cost to build, our partners in local



"High fees mean that only higher-priced homes can be profitably built, which adds to the region's growing housing affordability crisis," Murphy said. "But the study shows that rising fee burdens have reached the point where some projects may not be feasible." Photo courtesy Freepik

governments need to carefully evaluate their fees and keep them as low as possible."

The study analyzed a comprehensive set of projects underway in Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado and Yolo counties. The Economic & Planning Systems study found that fees totaling between 15 percent and 20 percent of a home's sale price poses potential feasibility problems, while fees exceeding 20 percent may cause challenges. Fee ranges for six of the 16 higher density projects studied were at or above 20 percent, while two others were reaching that level.

"Homebuilders recognize that

they must pay their fair share for infrastructure needed to accommodate growth," said Clifton Taylor, president of Taylor Builders and the Building Industry Association's 2025 President.

"But the fees many jurisdictions are charging have gotten to the point where many projects simply won't pencil out," Taylor said.

"For our members to continue building the new homes the region needs, this study shows that jurisdictions need to be thoughtful and careful about how they set their fees, and that the total fee burden needs to be evaluated both in

terms of absolute dollar amounts and as a percentage of the finished home value."

Fees for new homes on standard-sized lots average \$125,000 in El Dorado County jurisdictions (up 30 percent from five years ago); \$114,000 in Yolo County communities (up 15 percent), \$109,000 in Sacramento County jurisdictions (up 24 percent); and \$95,000 in Placer County communities (up 17 percent).

Murphy noted that many local jurisdictions do work hard to keep their fees justified and affordable, and some have reduced fees

when studies show their levels were excessive.

"Builders and local officials all recognize that the region is in the middle of a worsening housing crisis that can only be resolved by finding ways to reduce costs and speed the development process to bring the supply of housing more into line with the demand," Murphy said.

Jamie Gomes, managing director at Economic & Planning Systems (EPS), and the lead analyst on the report, said while impact fees are an important tool for local jurisdictions to help fund expanded infrastructure and utilities, the impacts of the fees need to be considered as well.

"Higher than average impact fee burdens are usually only sustainable in higher-income developments or communities, where home prices may be unattainable for many buyers," he said. "High costs and fee burdens eliminate the ability to hit lower home prices that are attainable to broader household income ranges. That's why fees should be carefully evaluated."

Economic & Planning Systems is a land economics consulting firm that provides municipalities, developers and builders with realistic assessments of the feasibility of projects and works with local governments throughout the West in preparing development impact fee nexus studies and impact fee comparisons. ★

# Probation Chiefs Elect President and Executive Officers

### Chief Probation Officers of California News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) has selected its executive leadership team for 2026, naming Chief Esa Ehmen-Krause of Contra Costa County as President, Chief Izen Locatelli of Mendocino County as Vice President, and Chief Tamika Nelson of San Diego County as Secretary/Treasurer.

"California's probation departments are built on a balance of accountability and opportunity, helping those ready for change while protecting the communities we serve," Chief Ehmen-Krause said.

"It is a privilege to serve alongside the dedicated leaders of this association. I look forward to strengthening partnerships, advancing effective practices and supporting the incredible work happening in counties across the state."

Chief Ehmen-Krause, who has served as Chief Probation Officer in Contra Costa County for the last five years, will



Pictured from left are 2026 CPOC Slate of Officers Chief Tamika Nelson (San Diego), Chief Esa Ehmen-Krause (Contra Costa) and Chief Izen Locatelli (Mendocino). Courtesy photo

guide the association during a period of continued evolution in California's public safety landscape. She brings more than two decades of experience in youth services, community-based interventions and system reform.

Her leadership background includes advancing major reform initiatives as Assistant Chief Probation Officer in Alameda County, as well as earlier

roles within the Indiana Department of Corrections' Division of Youth Services. In Indiana, she earned recognition for implementing the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Performance-based Standards model and developing strategies to safely reduce youth facility populations.

"Chief Ehmen-Krause is a collaborative, thoughtful, and forward-thinking

leader," said 2025 Chief Probation Officers of California President and San Joaquin County Probation Chief Steve Jackson. "She brings people together to support better outcomes for our communities, an approach that will serve both the association and communities across the state."

The Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) is an association of all 58 counties with a shared identity as law enforcement leaders. Chief Probation Officers of California is committed to a research-based approach to public safety that promotes positive behavior change.

Their leadership guides policy and practice in prevention, community-based corrections, secure detention for youth, and direct human services. Chief Probation Officers of California aims to prevent crime and delinquency, reduce recidivism, restore victims, and promote healthy families and communities.

For more information about The Chief Probation Officers of California, go to [www.cproc.org](http://www.cproc.org). ★

## Sierra Health and United Way Launch Match for Meals

### Match For Meals News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - As local food banks' resources are stretched thin to serve record numbers of people experiencing food insecurity, Sierra Health Foundation and United Way California Capital Region are launching the Match for Meals campaign.

All donations made through Match for Meals until Jan. 31, 2026, will be matched up to \$300,000 by the two organizations to benefit Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, Interfaith Food Bank of Amador County, El Dorado County Food Bank, Feeding the Foothills in Placer County and Yolo Food Bank. To donate, visit [www.MatchForMeals.org](http://www.MatchForMeals.org) or text Match4Meals to 41444.

Sierra Health Foundation will match donations up to \$200,000, and the local United Way will match donations up to \$100,000.

The announcement was made recently at a press conference at Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, which supports more than 110 local agencies, including food pantries, community meal sites, senior centers, schools and nonprofits.

On average, nearly 320,000 people rely on Sacramento Food Bank's 200 distribution sites each month. In October, the food bank broke a 49-year record, serving more than 372,000 people.

Across the state in 2024, food banks distributed more than 950 million pounds of food and served more than 6 million people per month, according to the California

Association of Food Banks. Currently one in five Californians – almost 9 million – experience food insecurity.

"When one in five Californians is struggling to put food on the table, we are reminded that hunger isn't just a statistic, it's a reality for our neighbors, our friends and our families," said Dr. Dawnté Early, president and CEO, United Way California Capital Region.

Sierra Health Foundation is a private philanthropy investing in and serving as a catalyst for ideas, partnerships and programs that improve health and quality of life in Northern California and the San Joaquin Valley. Learn more: [www.sierrahealth.org](http://www.sierrahealth.org).

United Way California Capital Region has been a driving force across the region for more than 100 years, listening, responding and taking comprehensive action to meet local needs. From advancing youth opportunities to strengthening local communities and investing in families' financial security and health, United Way mobilizes communities to build a future where everyone can reach their full potential.

Working across Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties, the local United Way provides books and literacy tutoring, addresses housing and food security, leads the region's largest tax preparation initiative, works with foster youth across school districts, launched the region's first guaranteed income program and leads the Community Schools initiative in West Sacramento. Learn more: [www.YourLocalUnitedWay.org](http://www.YourLocalUnitedWay.org). ★

## CAL FIRE Transitions to New National Emergency Reporting System

### CAL FIRE News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) announced recently that fire departments across the state are beginning the transition to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS)—a secure, cloud-based platform built to modernize how emergency incidents are reported and analyzed.

Departments across the country are onboarding to NERIS as part of a phased national rollout led by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T), and the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), part of Underwriters Laboratory (UL) Research Institutes. NERIS is replacing the 40-year-old National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), and will provide local agencies with timely data tools, location-based analytics, and flexible options for incident reporting at no cost to departments.

"Modernizing emergency data collection is a critical step toward strengthening public safety," said Chief Daniel Berlant, California State Fire Marshal. "By utilizing NERIS, we are giving our departments better tools to protect our communities, manage resources effectively, and make informed decisions backed by current data."

The National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) offers several key features designed to support public fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies. The platform provides zero-cost access

for all public fire and EMS departments, ensuring that every agency can take advantage of its capabilities without financial barriers.

NERIS also prioritizes local data ownership, allowing departments to maintain full control over their records and information. Its GIS-based reporting tools deliver location-specific insights that support better planning and decision-making.

In addition, the system includes actionable dashboards that enhance operational awareness and performance tracking. To make adoption easier, NERIS offers streamlined onboarding, complete with help desk support and training tools.

Departments can begin the onboarding process today by visiting the NERIS website. The process includes account setup, administrator access, and records management system (RMS) integration, if applicable. "NERIS is purpose-built for today's fire service," said Steve Kerber, Executive Director of FSRI. "It's based on research and feedback from the field, and it delivers actionable information that improves emergency response and supports long-term planning and resourcing at the local, state, and national levels."

CAL FIRE – OSFM encourages all departments to complete onboarding as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition. The current national data platform, NFIRS, will be formally decommissioned on January 1, 2026. For additional questions or technical support, departments can contact the NERIS Help Desk or the CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal directly. ★

# Enhanced Aviation Program Coming to Sacramento City College

Story and photos by Nathan Felix Valencia

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Representative Ami Bera gathered with leaders of the Los Rios Community College District, Sacramento County and regional aviation on Monday, Dec. 8 at the Modern Aviation Terminal Building to recognize Sacramento City College's (SCC) progress toward becoming an enhanced Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI).

Pending the final approval by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Sacramento City College would be one of only two institutions in the nation to have dual certification for students to train for both tower and en route air traffic control.

This major milestone gives students a chance to complete the Federal Aviation Administration training in Sacramento instead of needing to travel to Oklahoma City where the Federal Aviation Administration Academy is located, providing students with benefits while attending school and a chance to be hired upon graduation.

Adjunct Professor in the Air Traffic Department at Sacramento City College Sean Tener said, "We are helping California advance their economic growth by providing education and training that continuously contributes to the work force."

Lower costs, local training and the opportunity to use financial aid towards their careers are some of the benefits students enrolled in Sacramento City College's enhanced aviation program receive.



Sacramento City College Student Karyme Perez talking about new enhanced aviation programs at Sacramento City College.

Students are also given a chance to make personal connections with their instructors. They are given three semesters to absorb the needed information from the same instructors at Sacramento City College, while the academy gives the students only four months to learn the information from multiple instructors.

Representative Ami Bera said, "It's incredibly important that we

have well trained aircraft controllers keeping us safe and confident in the skies."

Bera understands how important it is to have air traffic controllers as he flies back and forth across the country on a weekly basis, especially during the government shutdown.

With the shutdown and the shortage of controllers there are some instances where cargo needs to divert to Reno or the

Bay before being transported to Sacramento.

Karyme Perez, who is in the Air Traffic Control Program at Sacramento City College, said, "The government shutdown made me even more motivated as a student. Seeing how much this affects us as a nation and the shortage of the controllers that are needed right now, I feel students like me are even more motivated to be able to do this



Adjunct Professor Sean Tener in an interview with CBS at the Dec. 8 event recognizing Sacramento City College's progress toward becoming an enhanced Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI).

career and help out the community."

Upon approval from the Federal Aviation Administration, the opportunity to pursue a career in aviation is going to be more accessible than ever before. ★

## GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

### Come and Experience God's Amazing Grace

Come grow with us at Grace Baptist Church where the Old Time Gospel Message is still preached and God-Honoring music is still sung. Grace Baptist still stands on the Principles, Doctrines and Separation, found and taught in The Bible.

**PASTOR CHARLES CARTER**

6724 Palm Avenue, Fair Oaks, CA 95628

(Located one block South of Madison; just East of Dewey)

### SERVICE SCHEDULES

<b>Sunday Schools</b> (All Ages) - 9:45 am	<b>Sunday Worship</b> 11:00 am	<b>Sunday Evening</b> 6:00 pm	<b>Wed. Evening</b> 7:00 pm
---	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION (916) 967-3915 WWW.GBCFAIROAKS.NET

We are your neighbors

# nextdoor

AMERICAN RIVER  
**Messenger**

Stop by for a visit

[nextdoor.com/page/american-river-messenger](http://nextdoor.com/page/american-river-messenger)

Be a part of something important

## Local Writers Wanted

We are looking for local Freelance Writers to provide great coverage.



Call us today at 916-773-1111



**Publisher, Paul V. Scholl**

American River Messenger is a member of Messenger Publishing Group

To submit your articles, information, announcements or letters to the editor, please email a Microsoft Word file to: [Publisher@mpg8.com](mailto:Publisher@mpg8.com).

Be sure to place in the subject field "Attention to Publisher". If you do not have email access, please call us at (916) 773-1111.

## AMERICAN RIVER Messenger

Serving Fair Oaks, Orangevale and Sacramento County since 2006

It is the intent of the *American River Messenger* to strive for an objective point of view in the reporting of news and events. It is understood that the opinions expressed on these pages are those of the authors and cartoonists and are not necessarily the opinions of the publisher or our contributors.

The *American River Messenger* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or materials. The entire contents of the *American River Messenger* are copyrighted. Ownership of all advertising created and/or composed by the *American River Messenger* is with the publishing company and written permission to reproduce the same must be obtained from the publisher.

Subscriptions should be mailed to: *American River Messenger*, 2508 Garfield Ave., Suite A, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Subscription rate is \$39 per year in Fair Oaks and Orangevale. The *American River Messenger* is published twice-monthly. Call 916-773-1111 for more information.

We are proud members of these newspaper associations.



Protect and Heal your whole family with Affordable Chiropractic Memberships

All-inclusive monthly memberships from \$35-\$55 per visit. CALL or TEXT us today!



We now offer **MASSAGE THERAPY** by experienced practitioners  
**NEW PATIENT SPECIAL \$50 FIRST HOUR**

- Improves mobility, maintains flexibility
- Family owned and operated
- 25+ years experience serving the community
- Affordable memberships - plan for your health
- All inclusive - services and therapies
- Relieves pain from head/back/neck/sciatica

## AMERICAN RIVER CHIROPRACTIC

2280 Vehicle Drive, Suite 110  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

916-776-6362

[americanriverchiropractic.com](http://americanriverchiropractic.com)

CALL or TEXT today!

# 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](mailto: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 earnings test no longer applies after you reach your full retirement age.

Now, regarding retiring overseas, be aware that Social Security has limits or 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](http://www.ssa.gov/international/payments_outsideUS.html)

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org). ★*



## 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.*

*(c) 2025 by King Features Synd., Inc.* ★

# 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](http://www.asce.org) or [www.infrastructurereportcard.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://calkids.org) today to check eligibility and claim their CalKIDS Scholarship. ★

# CALL A PROFESSIONAL

**SLS**  
**Superior Landscape Services**  
 Landscaping and Maintenance

- Sprinkler Repair/Install • Pruning
- Mowing/Trimming • Fertilizing

Insured  
 Lic#794551

(916) 728-5812 • Cell (916) 761-0999  
 Dave Cochran Owner • dave\_SLS@surewest.net

**Jose's Landscape Maintenance**

- ✓ General Lawn Service
- ✓ One Time Clean Ups
- ✓ Lawn Aerate
- ✓ Dethatch
- ✓ Sprinkler Repair

**Call Jose at 916-991-6923**

Gen. Bus Lic # 32014-01649 \ Spe Bus Lic # 12016-00134

**AFFORDABLE TRENCHLESS & PIPE LINING**

Install a Water/Electric line under your existing driveway!

**SEWER PROBLEMS? WATCH OUR VIDEO.**  
[www.ydig.com](http://www.ydig.com)

**We're #1 in the #2 business**

Off (916) 488-1215 Lic #754886

**SMOOT LANDSCAPING**

- Drought tolerant landscape
- Low voltage lighting
- Garden renovations
- Concrete and stone
- Consultations available

Celebrating 45 years

**916.454.1300**

[www.SmootLandscaping.com](http://www.SmootLandscaping.com) • Contractor License #633224

**TRACTOR SERVICE**

- Mowing • Rototilling
- Discing • Scraper/Loader

Call  
**(916) 991-8431**

**GREENWAY TREE SERVICE**

Specializing in Expert Tree Pruning, Tree Removal & Stump Grinding

Free Estimates  
 Competitive Prices

Licensed and Insured

**(916) 224-9750**

**Mary Shyer**  
 Neighborhood Dog Walker

Email: shyermary9@gmail.com  
 Phone: (916) 281-9442  
 Rover: [www.rover.com/sit/marys07242](http://www.rover.com/sit/marys07242)

**Rio Linda Eye Care**

Laser Surgery • Eye Glasses • Contact Lenses  
 • Eyewear for Computer Users

**Dr. William Fleischmann**  
 (916) 991-8444

Saturday Appointments Available  
 6716 RIO LINDA BLVD., SUITE B, RIO LINDA

**RESTORE YOUR FLOOR HARDWOOD FLOORING**

Revive • Restore • Refinish

Hardwood, Laminate, and Vinyl

- Sand & Finish
- Repairs
- New Installations
- Recoating

New Installation & Repairs  
 Family Tradition Since 1957  
 Lic. #794448

[sacramento hardwood.com](http://sacramento hardwood.com)  
 1.800.725.3320 916.342.6596

**Rewired To Read**  
 Reading & Spelling Specialist

[rewiredtoread.com](http://rewiredtoread.com)  
**916-664-6805**

LeAna Spletstoeser AA, AS, M.A.  
 26 Years Experience

**FULL RANGE OF FLAT ROOFING SERVICES**

**RPA FLAT ROOF**

- New Construction • Leak Repairs
- Waterproofing • Top-Grade Materials
- Experienced • Reliable • Honest Pricing
- Excellent Customer Service

We take pride in completing every project on time and to the highest standards.

**Call Today! (916) 267-5026**

**RestoreYourHome.com**  
 Quality, Service and Craftsmanship  
 John W Rouse III

**Kitchen • Bath • Home**

kitchens, baths, home renovations, interior home remodeling, windows, doors, floors, cabinets, tile, countertops, electrical, plumbing, finish carpentry

**916.342.6596 • johnflooring@aol.com**

# Local Classifieds Advertise in your local community newspaper Call 916-773-1111

**Clubs**

**JOLLY HOOKER FISHING CLUB**

Our fishing interests are Trout, Kokanee, Salmon, and Strippers

Monthly Breakfast Meetings  
 2nd Friday of the Month  
 Opens 7 am,  
 Breakfast 8 am.

**Rancho Cordova Elk's Lodge**  
 11440 Elks Circle.

Contact Steve Milanovich  
 (916) 761-6513

Make sure to leave a message.  
 Join us, we look forward to meeting you.

**Hall Rentals**

**VFW Post 6158**

8990 Kruithof Way,  
 Fair Oaks, CA

**916-966-1663**

[vfw6158.org/rent-our-hall/](http://vfw6158.org/rent-our-hall/)

**Hall Rentals**

Event hall for rent. 2,800 sq. ft. Coffee bar. Plenty of parking. Saturday and Sunday. \$500. 5809 Gibbons Dr. (916) 470-7323. (11/7/25)

**Help Wanted**

SK Hynix NAND Product Solutions Corp DBA Solidigm has an opening in Rancho Cordova, CA for SW Eng. Dsgn & dvlp op systms. MS reqd. Salary: \$124,592-\$178,690. Telecom may be permit. When not telecomm, must rprt to wrk site. To apply email resume to HRresumes@solidigm.com & ref job#8612763 (12/05/25)

**Kp International MARKET**

Many Positions are Available. Please no phone calls. Apply in person.

10971 Olson Dr.  
 Rancho Cordova,  
 CA 95670

Keep It Local!

**Health/Wellness**

**XOSIALX** – Get Social. Be EXCEPTIONAL XILERATE is redefining energy for everyone. It provides an authentic, jitter-free boost that appeals to both regular energy drink users, and those who may have avoided them due to artificial ingredients or harsh effects. FREE TO JOIN. [www.canderson.xosialx.com](http://www.canderson.xosialx.com) (TFN)

**We Support Our Military**

**Landscaping**

**CREATE YOUR PARADISE**

Winter Yard Cleanups, Complete Landscape Design/Installation, Sprinkler System Installs/Repairs, All Types Concrete Work, Fence Installation, Retaining Walls- All Types, Drainage Systems-all types, Landscape Lighting, Residential/commercial

American Landscape Design & Installation. Est 1987  
 American Construction & Property Maintenance Company

WE ACCEPT VISA & MASTER CARD  
**(916)612-0776**  
 Lic#690968

**Landscaping**

**YARD SERVICE**

**ONE-TIME CLEANUP**  
 Mow, Weed, Prune & Haul  
**NEED:** Landscaping bark?  
 Gutters cleaned?  
 Light fence work?  
 CALL 916/205-9310  
 or 916/627-9000/

**Music Lessons**

**Guitar Lessons**

Beginner to Advanced . \$20/ half-hour; \$30 full hour. 916-507-6658, freddiebbalbert@gmail.com (12/31/2025)

**Roofing**

**BERNARDINO ROOFING**

Roofs, Repairs, Maintenance, Dryrot, Gutters, Family Operated. BBB MEMBER!

\*\*\*FREE ESTIMATES\*\*\*  
**SENIOR DISCOUNTS**  
 Lic.#817945 43 Years Experience  
**916.920.0100**  
[www.bernardinoroofing.com](http://www.bernardinoroofing.com)

Advertising Works!

**Tree Service**

**BP TREE SERVICES LLC.**

TREE & STUMP REMOVAL  
 TREE TRIMMING/ SHAPING  
 FREE ESTIMATE  
 10% OFF WITH THIS AD  
 Insured. Workman's comp. Arborist

**916-722-6321**

[BPTreeServices.com](http://BPTreeServices.com)  
 VISA / MASTER CARD  
 California Contractors Lic #1036031

Advertise in your local community newspaper  
 Call (916) 773-1111

# LOCAL ARREST RECORDS

CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS

Find out what's happening in your local area at...

[AMERICANRIVERMESSENGER.COM](http://AMERICANRIVERMESSENGER.COM)

ARREST LOGS UPDATED DAILY

Be a part of something important  
 Help bring the local news to Your Neighborhood

We are looking for families who want to deliver the local newspaper in your neighborhoods.

Provide great customer service to our readers every Thursday/Friday.

Make money as a family effort by working together to get the job done.

Earn money to pay those growing monthly bills.

Must have a valid California drivers license and current auto insurance. Previous newspaper delivery experience a plus but not required.  
 \*Delivery must be completed by an adult.

**Call 916-773-1111**

**MPG**

# COMICS & PUZZLES

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



## Out on a Limb

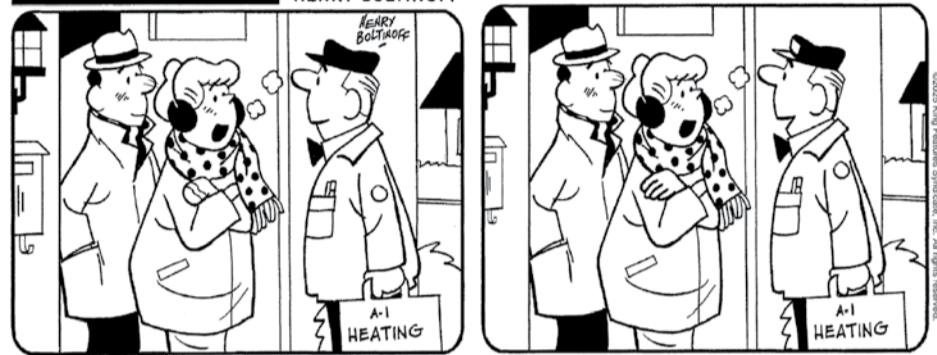
by Gary Kopervas



## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



## GRIN THE BEAR IT

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



N	A	A	C	P		I	M	P		B	L	A	H				
E	L	G	A	R		B	O	A		W	A	I	V	E			
A	G	A	V	E		I	O	N		I	N	F	E	R			
T	A	R	I	F	F	S		D	O	D	G	E	R	S			
			L	A	O			C	A	N	E						
O	A	F			B	O	L	A		E	N	T	R	A	P		
S	N	A	P			L	O	R	D		S	H	A	V	E		
M	O	K	E			S	O	L	E	S		A	L	A	R		
I	R	I	S	H			P	O	E	T		W	E	I	R		
C	A	R	T	E	R			A	P	E	S		S	L	Y		
					L	I	E	D			N	H	L				
F	O	R	G	O	O	D			G	O	O	D	A	L	L		
U	B	O	A	T			U	S	A			F	O	L	I	O	
R	E	A	L	S			C	I	G			A	P	O	R	T	
L	Y	R	E					E	R	A			R	A	T	E	S

## STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • YEAR-IN-REVIEW

### CLUES

- ACROSS**
- W.E.B Du Bois' org.
  - Rascal
  - Ho-hum
  - "Pomp and Circumstance" composer
  - Tropical constrictor
  - Forgo
  - Tequila source
  - + or - atom
  - Reason by deduction
  - "Trade war "weapon," pl.
  - \*2025 MLB World Series winners
  - \_\_\_-tzu
  - C&H crop
  - Dunce
  - Western necktie
  - Catch in a snare
  - Ginger cookie
  - Master of his castle
  - Use a razor
  - British slang for donkey
  - Arch and ball locations
  - Winglike
  - March celebrants
  - \*Arthur Sze, 2025 Laureate
  - Dam-like structure
  - \*Beyoncé's "Cowboy \_\_\_," 2025 Grammy winner
  - King Kong and Curious George, e.g.
  - Like a fox
  - What Pinocchio did
  - \*Florida Panthers won this org.'s '25 championship
  - \*"Wicked: \_\_\_"
  - \*Late environmentalist and chimpanzee expert
  - German submarine destroyer
  - \*2025 Ryder Cup loser
  - Manuscript sheet
  - Brazilian coins
  - Roll-your-own one, for short
  - To the left, on a boat
  - Pilot's stunt
  - Spring event
  - Pneumonia symptom, pl.
  - Be of use
  - \*Blue Origin's 2025 singing passenger
  - Boll weevil, e.g.
  - \* \_\_\_ Seek
  - Shorthand typist, for short
  - Serfs
  - 2016 Olympics host, for short
  - Ram's horn at a synagogue
  - Draw a conclusion
  - Parkinson's disease drug
  - Roll up
  - Heed
  - Lion sound
  - Dorothy's last name
  - \*Lady of "The Mayhem Ball"
  - Tons (2 words)
  - Lira, pl.
  - Land parcels
  - \*Gary Oldman received this honorific in 2025
- DOWN**
- At room temperature, bar order
  - Algae, sing.
  - Petri dish filler
  - Raise trivial objections
  - Ready to be assembled
  - Avian wader
  - Farm sound
  - China's goodwill " \_\_\_ diplomacy"
  - Collision, onomatopoeically speaking
  - \*Taylor Swift's "The \_\_\_ of a Showgirl"
  - Affirm solemnly
  - Third-person possessive pronoun
  - Makes broader
  - Why do they fall in love?
  - \*Aryna Sabalenka's seed
  - Auto contents
  - Pertaining to osmium
  - \*2025 Academy Awards Best Picture winner

CROSSWORD													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
13						14			15				
16						17			18				
19					20			21	22				
			23				24						
25	26	27		28	29			30	31	32	33	34	
35			36		37			38		39			
40					41			42		43			
44				45		46				47			
48				49		50			51		52		
				53		54			55		56		
57	58	59	60					61			62	63	64
65						66	67			68			
69								70			71		
72								73			74		

SWITCH & GET \$25

Off First Month of New Service! USE PROMO CODE: GZ590

Consumer Cellular

CALL CONSUMER CELLULAR 888-804-0913

© 2023 Consumer Cellular Inc. For promo details please call 888-804-0913

**Classified Advertising**

Sell Your Stuff! Reach 1000's of Readers Every Week!

**MPG**

916.773.1111

2	9	8	1	4	7	6	5	3
5	4	3	2	6	8	7	1	9
6	1	7	3	9	5	2	4	8
3	6	1	9	5	2	4	8	7
7	5	4	8	3	1	9	2	6
8	2	9	6	7	4	5	3	1
9	7	2	4	8	3	1	6	5
4	8	5	7	1	6	3	9	2
1	3	6	5	2	9	8	7	4

WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS

**MPG**

**SUDOKU**

Call today and receive a FREE SHOWER PACKAGE PLUS \$1600 OFF

**SAFE STEP WALK-IN TUB** 1-855-576-5653

	9			4				5	3
	4		2						
6								4	
			9		2	4	8		
7				3					6
	2	9	6		4				
	7								5
1	3				2		6	9	
									7

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.

# Students Show Continued Increase in Academic Achievement

## Chronic Absenteeism Continues to Fall

By MPG Staff

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY REGION (MPG)** - The California Department of Education on Nov. 13 released the 2025 California School Dashboard and new DataQuest files, reporting improved outcomes across all major indicators of student success.

The state's graduation rate reached 87.5 percent, the highest level since the Dashboard launched in 2017 and an increase of 4.5 percentage points over that period. Officials said the gains were stronger among several student groups, including Pacific Islander students, who saw a 4.1 percentage point increase. African American students improved by 3.5 percentage points. Long-term English learners gained 3.3 percentage points, foster youth improved by 2.8 percentage points and students with disabilities improved by 2.7 percentage points.

College and career readiness also improved. The state reported that 51.7 percent of graduates were prepared for college and career, an increase of 3.1 percentage points. The share of students completing the A-G course requirements rose to 53.9 percent. These requirements represent the minimum set of courses needed for admission to California's public universities.

Chronic absenteeism among students in transitional kindergarten through eighth grade continued to fall. The statewide rate declined to 17.1 percent,



Chronic absenteeism among students in transitional kindergarten through eighth grade continued to fall. Photo by RDNE Stock project

down more than 10 percentage points from its peak of 30 percent in 2022. The drop from 2024 to 2025 was one percentage point. State officials said the slowdown in the improvement rate shows that more targeted efforts will be needed to reengage families and students who remain chronically absent.

Academic performance also showed modest improvement, consistent with results released in October from statewide assessments.

For the first time in the Dashboard's history, all indicators appeared in the yellow or green categories, which signal

improvement across both current performance and year-over-year progress.

State leaders said the positive trends reflect major investments in TK-12 education, including initiatives such as community schools, expanded learning programs, universal school meals and literacy coaches.

"Seeing modest improvement on every Dashboard indicator should encourage us to deepen our investments in every child's progress," State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond said in a statement. He said he was encouraged by reduced achievement gaps but added that more

work remains.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said the results show progress but emphasized the need to continue expanding support for students and educators.

"The more we can invest time, energy, and resources into our kids, the better their future can be," Newsom said.

State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond said the outcomes demonstrate continued recovery from the pandemic. She cited rising graduation rates, stronger college and career readiness, and improved academic performance. She added that significant work

remains to sustain and accelerate progress.

The California Department of Education noted that many districts across the state showed substantial gains, which officials said highlight how targeted investments can advance student achievement. The 2024 Budget Act included \$133.8 billion for K-12 education, the highest per-pupil state funding level in California's history.

California has also expanded access to transitional kindergarten for thousands of four-year-olds and added \$215 million to the Literacy Coaches and Reading Specialists Grant Program, which supports early literacy programs and interventions for students who need additional help.

The California School Dashboard is a central component of the state's accountability system and includes data on graduation, suspensions, test scores, English learner progress, college and career readiness, chronic absenteeism and local indicators.

Alongside the Dashboard, the California Department of Education released several DataQuest reports for the 2024-25 school year. These include four- and five-year graduation rates, suspension and expulsion rates, chronic absenteeism data, absenteeism by reason, stability rates, and homeless student enrollment.

More information on the Dashboard is available on the California Department of Education's website at [cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardresources.asp](https://cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardresources.asp). ★

## DA Thien Ho Launches 'The People vs. The Golden State Killer'

## Community Foundation Partners with Health Net



Following the remarks at the Nov. 12 "The People vs. the Golden State Killer" book launch, attendees participated in a lively Q&A session and book signing, celebrating both the release of the book and the culmination of decades of investigative work. Photo courtesy of D.A. Thien Ho

### Books Forward News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho celebrated the launch of his new book, "The People vs. the Golden State Killer," at the Sacramento Central Library's Tsakopoulos Library Galleria on Nov. 12.

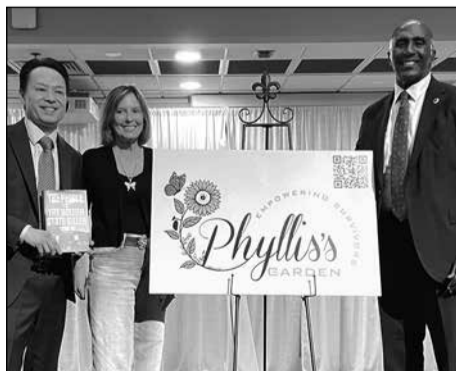
Released on Nov. 11, the book achieved #1 New Release status on Amazon.

The memoir offers an extraordinary look at the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of Joseph James DeAngelo, one of the most notorious serial killers in U.S. history. Unlike most accounts, Ho's book centers on the survivors, investigators and prosecutors, highlighting their courage and perseverance while honoring the resilience of victims' families.

"Too often, the spotlight stays on the monster. I wanted to shift the focus to the heroes: the survivors, the investigators and the prosecutors who never gave up. They are the soul of this case," said Ho.

At the Nov. 12 event, Ho shared behind-the-scenes stories from the case, offering insights into both DeAngelo's criminal mind and the process of seeking justice.

Ho also highlighted the critical use of investigative genetic genealogy, which allowed investigators to trace distant relatives through public DNA databases and identify DeAngelo after decades. This breakthrough not only solved one of California's most infamous cold cases but has transformed how law enforcement



"The People vs. the Golden State Killer" is now available nationwide at major retailers and online. Photo courtesy of D.A. Thien Ho

tackles unsolved crimes nationwide.

"Justice, for me, was not just a sentence; it was a sense of peace for the survivors who carried these scars for decades. I came to this country as a refugee fleeing violence. To now serve as the elected district attorney and bring one of the nation's most brutal serial predators to justice was full circle. It is deeply rewarding to know that the work we did, including the breakthrough use of genetic genealogy, will have a lasting impact."

Following the remarks, attendees participated in a lively Q&A session and book signing, celebrating both the release of the book and the culmination of decades of investigative work.

"The People vs. the Golden State Killer" is now available nationwide at major retailers and online.

For more information, visit <https://www.thienho.org/>. ★

### Sacramento Region Community Foundation News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento Region Community Foundation has activated its Sacramento Region Emergency Relief Fund in response to an urgent and immediate community crisis - severely strained food banks that are struggling to serve an increasing number of local families facing serious food insecurity.

With food banks and pantries throughout the region already stretched alarmingly thin, local nonprofits report sharp increases in food requests due to inflation, lingering effects of the pandemic, and the SNAP interruption that created a tipping point for many families already on the edge of financial instability.

What originally started as a \$100,000 grant grew by an additional \$30,000 boost from Health Net, bringing the total to \$130,000, demonstrating the powerful impact that pooled contributions of all sizes can make.

"At Health Net, we know that strong communities start with access to healthy food," said Amber Kemp, vice president of Medi-Cal Strategy, Execution, and Engagement. "This funding allows us to partner with local organizations to ensure families have the resources they need to thrive. Together, we're building healthier neighborhoods and a brighter future for all."

Grants designed to provide immediate relief will support key local food assistance providers throughout the region. These one-time grants will help food assistance providers serving children, seniors and working families across the Sacramento region. The six organizations receiving immediate emergency funding from this grant include Elk Grove Food Bank



In response to an urgent and immediate community crisis - severely strained food banks that are struggling to serve an increasing number of local families facing serious food insecurity. Courtesy photo

Services, Orangevale-Fair Oaks Food Bank, Rancho Cordova Food Locker, River City Food Bank, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services and Twin Lakes Food Bank.

"This is absolutely the right investment to make at this critical moment in time," said Kerry Wood, CEO of the Sacramento Region Community Foundation. "With the foundation's focus on health equity and the dire food situation faced by hundreds of thousands of local families, we are committed to standing with our nonprofit partners on the frontlines of hunger relief. Our region's families cannot wait for long-term solutions when the need is this urgent and immediate."

Established by local donors in 2005, the Sacramento Region Emergency Relief Fund is designed to provide swift and strategic response to local emergencies, such as the food crisis happening now. Over the past two decades, the fund has provided emergency support for COVID-19 response, wildfires and other regional crises. The fund is fueled by community donations, allowing philanthropic people and partners across the region to pool resources and respond collectively when emergencies strike. ★

This latest grant continues a legacy of responsiveness, addressing an exceptional situation where immediate action is needed but is just the beginning. The foundation encourages community members to join this critically important effort to keep food on the table of local families by donating online to the Sacramento Region Emergency Relief Fund at [sref.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=1787](https://sref.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1787).

"While philanthropy alone cannot solve food insecurity, collective generosity can make a world of difference in ensuring that families have food and support during this crisis and beyond," added Wood.

This grant is in alignment with the foundation's continuing efforts to address food insecurity. In fact, the Foundation also recently committed \$1 million over three years to address food insecurity in Yolo County, combining short- and long-term strategies for sustainable food access. Over the past week, foundation fundholders have also increased granting to support food banks and pantries throughout the region.

More information about the Sacramento Region Community Foundation and charitable giving can be found at [www.sacregef.org](https://www.sacregef.org/).

Since 1983, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation has awarded more than \$275 million in grants and scholarships on behalf of local people, families and businesses, and through its flagship program, to grow charitable giving in the capital area Big Day of Giving. The center of philanthropy in the capital area, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation's mission is to lead, serve, and inspire enduring philanthropy for a just and vibrant Sacramento region. Learn more at [www.sacregef.org](https://www.sacregef.org/). ★

# 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.

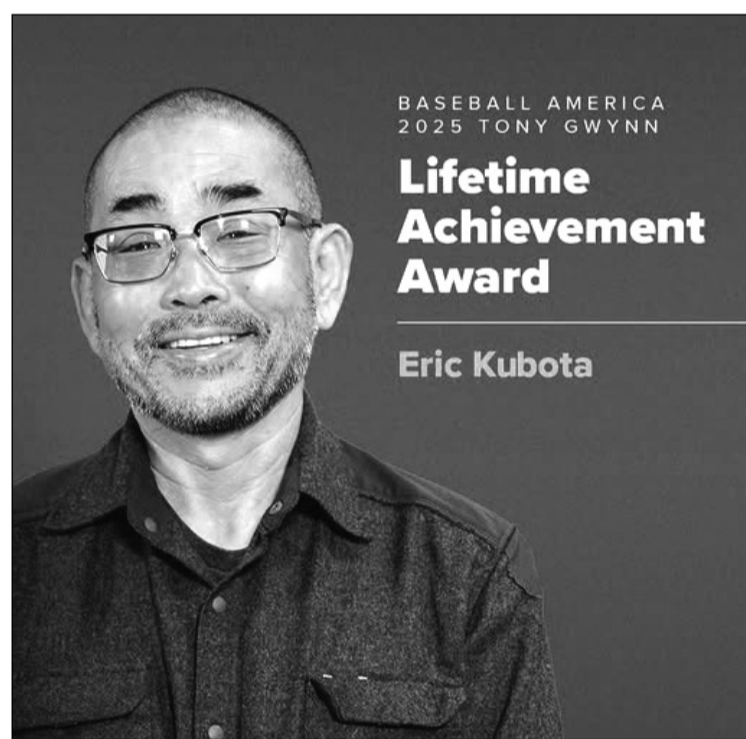
Kubota began his baseball career in June of 1984, while he was an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley, spending the better part of six seasons working in the A's media relations department. In November of 1989, he joined the baseball operations staff as an assistant director of scouting, 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



BASEBALL AMERICA  
2025 TONY GWYNN

Lifetime  
Achievement  
Award

Eric Kubota

# 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 Abraham 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. ★

# 4 Steps to Wrap Christmas Presents Like a Pro

# Tips to Get Your Home Ready for Holiday Hosting



Get those perfect presents ready for the big day with this simple step-by-step wrapping guide. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

Whether you're planning a cozy dinner with friends or a full-blown holiday gathering, preparing your home for guests doesn't have to be stressful. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

**FAMILY FEATURES** - Opening presents on Christmas morning is the highlight of the holidays for many, but getting the gifts ready to put under the tree can be a real chore.

use scissors to cut neatly for a clean, polished look.

Get those perfect presents ready for the big day with this simple step-by-step wrapping guide:

### Fold Crisp Edges and Smooth Surfaces

Start by folding one side of the wrapping paper over the gift and secure it with tape. Then repeat with the opposite side, ensuring the paper is smooth across the surface of the package. For the edges, fold in the sides and create a triangle at each corner. Fold the triangle up against the side of the gift and secure it with tape. Repeat this process on the other side.

### Gather Your Materials

Having everything prepared beforehand can make the wrapping process smoother and more enjoyable. Before you start wrapping, gather wrapping paper, scissors, tape, bows, ribbons and gift tags. If you want to go beyond traditional methods, use fabric instead of paper for a reusable and eco-friendly option. Also be sure to clear a nice, flat surface to work on whether that's the kitchen table or the living room floor.

### Add Bows, Ribbons and Tags

Once your gifts are wrapped, add the finishing touches. Bows, ribbons and tags can add a personal touch and elevate the presentation of gifts. Choose ribbon that complements the wrapping paper and tie it around the gift in a neat bow, or simply attach a premade bow to accent the package. You can also decorate the wrapping paper with stamps, drawings or stickers for a personalized touch. Finally, attach gift tags to ensure each present gets to the proper recipient.

### Measure and Cut Gift Wrap

To ensure your gifts look professionally packaged, measure and cut the appropriate amount of wrapping paper for each gift. Place the gift box (or item itself) in the center of the wrapping paper and pull the paper up around the sides to see how much you need. Once you've measured,

Find more tips and tricks to simplify the holidays at eLivingtoday.com. ★

**FAMILY FEATURES** - Whether you're planning a cozy dinner with friends or a full-blown holiday gathering, preparing your home for guests doesn't have to be stressful. With a little organization and a few simple steps, you can create a space that feels warm and welcoming, allowing you to focus on what really matters: spending time together.

so you're not scrambling later.

### Refresh Guest Spaces

If visitors will be staying overnight, prep sleeping areas by changing the sheets, fluffing the pillows and stocking extra blankets. Thoughtful touches like fresh towels, water bottles and a charging station can make guests feel at home.

### Declutter and Deep Clean

Start by refreshing high-traffic areas, including the living room, kitchen and bathrooms. Clear off counters and coffee tables, dust surfaces, vacuum carpet, mop tile or hardwood and wipe down glass or mirrors.

### Create a Functional Flow

Think about how guests will move through your home. Designate areas for food, drinks, games and mingling, arranging furniture to encourage conversation. If you're expecting a large crowd, add extra seating options.

### Tidy Up the Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of many gatherings, meaning it's important to clear both refrigerator and counter space to make room for food, drinks and serving dishes. Before guests arrive, ensure your oven, microwave, dishwasher, garbage disposal, coffee maker and other appliances are working properly. Don't forget to stock essentials like paper plates, silverware, napkins, ice and paper towels

### Add Seasonal Touches

For seasonal warmth, swap out throw pillows, add greenery and candles or hang a wreath or other decorations. Scattering cozy blankets and simmering a pot of cinnamon and citrus on the stove can also help create a warm, inviting atmosphere.

Visit eLivingtoday.com for more tips and guidance to get your home ready to welcome guests. ★

## KP International MARKET

FOOD COURT NOW OPEN  
Come Enjoy the Flavors of the World

1718 1920 21 22 23  
10971 Olson Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670  
916.853.8000

Market: 7 Days: 8am - 9pm  
Food Court: 7 Days: 11am - 7:30pm  
Korean/Mex/Viet: 7:30pm last call  
Chinese/Japanese: 7:00pm last call

---

### KP KARAOKE SPECIAL

Sun-Thu Come before 6pm (Valid Time)  
Fri-Sat Come before 5pm (Valid Time)

<p><b>For 6 people \$115.00</b> + Gratuity</p> <p>3Hours Karaoke + Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 2 Main Dishes (12 inch) + 1 Drink (12 oz)</p> <p><b>For 12 people \$210.00</b> + Gratuity</p> <p>3Hours Karaoke + 2Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 4 Main Dishes (12 inch) + 1 Drink (12 oz)</p> <p><b>For 14 people \$230.00</b> + Gratuity</p> <p>3Hours Karaoke + 2Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 4 Main Dishes (12 inch) + 1 Drink (12 oz)</p>	<p><b>For 18 people 295.00</b> + Gratuity</p> <p>3Hours Karaoke + 3Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 6 Main Dishes (12 inch) + 1 Drink (12 oz)</p> <p><b>For 28 people \$395.00</b> + Gratuity</p> <p>3Hours Karaoke + 3Pizza + Pitcher Soda + 6 Main Dishes (12 inch) + 1 Drink (12 oz)</p>
---	---

Dishes To Choose From

---

### FROZEN & FISH DEPT

<p><b>Frozen White Shrimp 30-40 2 lb</b> REG. \$14.99/EA <b>\$8.99/ea</b></p>	<p><b>Imitation Crab Sticks 1.1 lb</b> REG. \$8.99/EA <b>\$3.99/ea</b></p>
---	--

---

### WEEKLY MEAT SPECIALS

<p><b>Cross-Rib/Shoulder Roast Boneless</b> <b>\$4.99/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Beef Ribeye Roast - Bnls</b> <b>\$9.49/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Chicken Thigh Bnls/Sknls</b> <b>\$1.79/lb</b></p>
<p><b>Pork Loin Roast Boneless</b> <b>\$2.49/lb</b></p>	<p><b>St. Louis Ribs</b> <b>\$3.49/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Pork Tenderloin</b> <b>\$3.49/lb</b></p>

---

### WEEKLY HALAL SPECIALS

<p><b>Chicken Thigh Bnls/Sknls</b> <b>\$1.99/lb</b></p>	<p><b>New Zealand Lamb Shoulder Chop Bone-In</b> <b>\$5.99/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Cross Rib/Shoulder Roast Boneless</b> <b>\$4.99/lb</b></p>
---	---	--

Advertiser items good at KP International Market - Rancho Cordova location ONLY. We reserve the right to LIMIT QUANTITIES. Not responsible for TYPOGRAPHICAL OR PICTORIAL ERRORS. All advertised items are SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. Sorry NO RAINCHECKS. PRICES EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 17 - DECEMBER 23, 2025.

### FRESH PRODUCE

<p><b>Yukon Potato 5 lb Bag</b> <b>\$2.59/bag</b></p>	<p><b>Fairy Tale Pumpkin</b> <b>69¢/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Italian Squash Fancy</b> <b>99¢/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Bartlett Pear</b> <b>79¢/lb</b></p>
<p><b>Russet Potato 10 lb</b> <b>\$1.99/bag</b></p>	<p><b>Papaya Mexican</b> <b>99¢/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Satsuma Mandarin 4 lb Bag</b> <b>\$2.99/bag</b></p>	<p><b>Taiwan Cabbage</b> <b>89¢/lb</b></p>

---

### AMERICAN/HISPANIC GROCERY

<p><b>Hershey's Choco Bars 1.45-1.85 oz</b> <b>\$1.00/ea</b></p>	<p><b>El Mexicano Pinto Beans 29.8 oz</b> <b>\$1.99/ea</b></p>	<p><b>Alexandria Hardwood Charcoal 16 lbs</b> <b>\$15.99/ea</b> +TAX</p>	<p><b>Rice A Roni Chicken &amp; Beef Flavor 6.8, 6.9 oz</b> <b>\$1.69/ea</b></p>
<p><b>Shultz Mini Twist Pretzels 16 oz</b> <b>\$1.39/ea</b></p>			

---

### ASIAN GROCERY

<p><b>Dragonfly Jelly Sticks 35.2 oz</b> <b>\$7.49/ea</b></p>	<p><b>Chaokoh Coconut Water 1 liter</b> <b>\$2.49/ea</b></p>	<p><b>Purefoods Corned Beef (w/ juice) 12 oz</b> <b>\$2.99/ea</b></p>	<p><b>Fiji Ocean Mackerel 15 oz</b> <b>\$5.99/ea</b></p>
<p><b>Daily Farmer Condensed Creamer 13.4 oz</b> <b>\$4.39/ea</b></p>	<p><b>Daily Farmer</b> <b>\$0.99/ea</b></p>		

---

### EUROPEAN GROCERY

<p><b>Damia Assorted Soft Candy 850 gr</b> <b>\$6.99/ea</b></p>	<p><b>Sadaf Raw Wildflower Honey Comb 400 gr</b> <b>\$9.99/ea</b></p>	<p><b>Sadaf Green Lentils 680 gr</b> <b>\$2.49/ea</b></p>	<p><b>Yubileymoye Traditional Cookies 403 gr</b> <b>\$3.99/ea</b></p>
<p><b>Sadaf Special Blend Earl Grey Tea 100 TB</b> <b>\$9.99/ea</b></p>			

---

### EUROPEAN DELI

<p><b>Cracked Pepper Turkey Breast</b> <b>\$12.49/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Columbus Black Forest Ham</b> <b>\$9.19/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Sicilian Style Olives</b> <b>\$6.99/lb</b></p>	<p><b>Zesty Garlic Olives</b> <b>\$6.39/lb</b></p>
--	--	--	--

---

### FROZEN & FISH DEPT

**Indian Mackerel 2 lb**  
REG. \$6.99/EA  
**\$4.99/ea**

### HOUSEWARE

<p><b>PAON SEVEN EIGHT HAIR COLOR (KIT ONLY)</b> <b>\$8.99/ea</b></p>	<p><b>ELECTRIC RICE COOKER (5.5 CUPS)</b> <b>\$5.49/ea</b></p>	<p><b>ELECTRIC RICE COOKER (10 CUPS)</b> <b>\$5.99/ea</b></p>
<p><b>KAIZEN WOK PAN 30 CM</b> <b>\$16.99/ea</b></p>	<p><b>ELECTRIC BBQ GRILL</b> <b>\$39.99/ea</b></p>	

Advertiser items good at KP International Market - Rancho Cordova location ONLY. We reserve the right to LIMIT QUANTITIES. Not responsible for TYPOGRAPHICAL OR PICTORIAL ERRORS. All advertised items are SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. Sorry NO RAINCHECKS. PRICES EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 17 - DECEMBER 23, 2025.