



Late December Storms Deliver Much-Needed Water Supply

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THE NEWS

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VOLUME 45 • ISSUE 2

Serving Rio Linda, Elverta and Sacramento County

JANUARY 9, 2026

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$x + y = 67$


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Icy Fundraiser

Aquaknights Polar Plunge Returns

By Ornella Rossi

RIO LINDA, CA (MGP) - Brave swimmers and bundled-up spectators alike are invited to take part in a chilly community tradition returning this winter as the 2nd Annual AquaKnights Polar Plunge splashes back onto the calendar.

The fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Rio Linda High School Pool, 6309 Dry Creek Road. Check-in begins at 12:30 p.m., with the plunge set to start promptly at 1 p.m. The event is open to all ages, with an entry fee of \$5 per person. No pre-registration is required, and walk-ups are welcome. Payments will be accepted in cash or through Venmo on the day of the event.

Participants can choose to take the icy dip or stay warm on the pool deck, but everyone attending will contribute to the cause. All proceeds from the event will go directly toward supporting the Rio Linda AquaKnights Swim Team and its program needs.

Organizers are encouraging community members to bundle up, bring friends and family, and help make this year's plunge "bigger, colder and more fun" than the inaugural



The AquaKnights Swim Team is a recreational program based in Rio Linda that participates in the Valley Foothill Competitive Aquatics League. Photo courtesy of the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District

event. The Polar Plunge is hosted by the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District in partnership with the Rio Linda AquaKnights.

The AquaKnights Swim Team is a recreational program based in Rio Linda that participates in the Valley Foothill Competitive Aquatics League. Operated through the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District, the team serves youth ages 5 to 18 and groups swimmers by age and ability.

The program is open to swimmers with or without prior team experience, provided they can independently swim one length

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All proceeds from the event will go directly toward supporting the Rio Linda AquaKnights Swim Team and its program needs. Photo courtesy of the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District

Dave Tamayo Elected SMUD Board President



SMUD's Board of Directors elected Dave Tamayo as President of the Board, effective Jan. 1, and running through December 2026. Photo courtesy of SMUD

SMUD News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - SMUD's Board of Directors elected Dave Tamayo as President of the Board, effective Jan. 1, and running through December 2026. President Tamayo was elected to the SMUD Board in 2014. He represents Ward 6, which includes Meadowview, Oak Park, Parkway, Airport and Valley Hi neighborhoods.

Tamayo has lived in the Fruitridge Manor neighborhood of south Sacramento since 1989, where he raised his family and has long been active in community affairs. He has led efforts to establish science programs and gardens in local schools, co-founded his neighborhood association and successfully advocated for public parks, affordable housing and urban infill.

Tamayo has served on a number of public boards and commissions, including the South Sacramento Planning Advisory Committee, the Sacramento Parks and Recreation Commission, the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District and the California Structural Pest Control Board. He also has served on the boards of the non-profit Sacramento Mutual Housing Association, Sacramento County Alliance of Neighborhoods, California Stormwater Quality Association and the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council.

Tamayo worked as an environmental scientist for Sacramento County for 30 years. He is recognized as a public policy leader in protecting natural resources by effectively influencing state and federal environmental regulations. He wrote the County storm water pollution ordinance, co-founded the region's River Friendly Landscaping Program and helped create local, statewide and national integrated pest management programs.

Tamayo has also served

Continued on page 4

County Opens First Community Garden



Garden plots at Gibson Ranch Regional Park are now open for reservation for Sacramento County residents. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Sacramento County Regional Parks is proud to announce the opening of its first community garden at Gibson Ranch Regional Park, now open for plot reservations. This new community space invites residents of all gardening experience levels to grow fresh produce, share knowledge and build connections in a beautiful outdoor setting.

Located within the scenic 355-acre Gibson Ranch Regional Park, 8556 Gibson Ranch Park Road, the garden includes 48 20' x 20' plots, with designated space for 12 raised accessible beds that will be built as plots are reserved. All gardening is organic, with water access and community areas designed to support year-round stewardship and sustainable practices.

"Community gardens connect people to the land, to healthy food and to each other,"

said Liz Bellas, director of Sacramento County Regional Parks. "We're excited to welcome residents to this beautiful new space where neighbors can learn, grow and cultivate not just plants, but community."

Plot registration opened Dec. 1, and Sacramento County residents receive priority. Remaining plots may be offered to non-residents if space allows.

Whether you're an experienced gardener or trying it for the first

time, the Gibson Ranch Community Garden offers a unique way to spend time outdoors, grow your own food and help nurture a shared resource that benefits the entire community.

For more information and to register for a garden plot, visit the Community Garden at Gibson Ranch Regional Park page on the Sacramento County Regional Parks website, <https://regionalparks.saccounty.gov/Pages/default.aspx> ★

Students in California Struggling Most with Math

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“There are strong patterns among the subjects that students are struggling with the most. Most of the subjects fall under either the STEM or languages category. Some of the hardest school subjects to

“Regardless of what subject you or your child is struggling with, there is always support available. If you need help beyond what online resources may be able to offer, hiring a part-time tutor can be the perfect solution. Tutors are typically experts in their chosen area and can provide specialized, high-quality support to improve grades and understanding of the subject.” ★

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THE NEWS

Established 1983 ... The best little paper in these parts!

Serving Rio Linda, Elverta and Sacramento County

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Subscriptions should be mailed to *The Rio Linda News*, 2508 Garfield Ave., Suite A, Carmichael, CA 95608. Subscription rate is \$42 per year within Rio Linda, Elverta, Sacramento County, \$72 outside Sacramento County.

The *Rio Linda News* is published weekly.
Call (916) 773-1111 for more information.

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Late December Storms Deliver Much-Needed Water Supply

California Department of Water Resources News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Department of Water Resources (DWR) recently conducted the first snow survey of the season at Phillips Station. The manual survey recorded 24 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 5 inches, which is 50 percent of average for this location.

The snow water equivalent measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of the Department of Water Resource’s water supply forecast. Statewide, the snowpack is 71 percent of average for this date.

Today’s results are welcome news for water managers who rely on the statewide snow surveys to make water supply decisions for the year ahead. California’s statewide snowpack had been lacking in early December with above-average temperatures and very little storm activity. Recent storms have turned that around and provided a significant boost to the snowpack and the state’s water supply.

“The dry conditions and warmer temperatures in early December delayed our snow-building season, but the return of storm activity, especially in the last week, helped to build a solid base for this year’s snowpack,” said Angelique Fabbiani-Leon, State Hydrometeorologist for the Department of Water Resources.

“Thankfully, the recent storms that reached the state were cold enough to provide necessary benefits for the snowpack and our water supply. While California is in a better position now, it is still early in the season and our state’s water supply for this year will ultimately depend on a continued cadence of storms throughout winter and early spring.”

The Department of Water Resource’s electronic readings from 130 stations placed throughout the Sierra Nevada indicate that the statewide snowpack’s snow



An aerial view in the morning of fog partially covering the San Joaquin River and Webb Tract Island (Left) in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, located in San Joaquin County, California. Photo taken Oct. 30, 2025. Courtesy photo

water equivalent is 6.5 inches, or 71 percent of average for this date, compared to 115 percent on this date last year.

On average, the largest snow-producing months in the Sierra Nevada are January, February and March. Drought and flood always marked the California climate, but extreme whiplash between wet and dry is becoming more pronounced, not just year to year but often within the same season or month.

“It’s great to see so much fresh snow in the Sierra following a relatively dry December,” said Department of Water Resources director Karla Nemeth.

“More than any other factor, the rain and snow that falls in these critical winter months dictates how much water can be delivered to Californians and farmland statewide. We make the most of



Department of Water Resources staff check snow levels at the January 2020 snow survey. Courtesy photo

what Mother Nature delivers with advance planning that enables Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations and groundwater recharge.”

Major reservoirs statewide are

currently 123 percent of average thanks to recent precipitation on top of three consecutive years of above-average snowpack conditions.

On average, the Sierra

snowpack supplies about 30 percent of California’s water needs. Its natural ability to store water is why the Sierra snowpack is often referred to as California’s “frozen reservoir.” Data from these snow surveys and forecasts produced by the Department of Water Resource’s Snow Surveys and Water Supply Forecasting Unit are key factors in determining how the Department of Water Resources manages the state’s water resources.

The Department of Water Resources conducts four media-oriented snow surveys at Phillips Station each winter near the first of each month, January through April and, if necessary, May. The next survey is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 3.

For California’s current hydrological conditions, visit <https://cwww.water.ca.gov>. ★

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Stick a Fork in California: Gov. Newsom’s Proposed Retroactive Billionaire Tax

IRS Study shows California is losing a taxpayer every minute to states like Florida, Texas, and North Carolina

By Katy Grimes, California Globe

(CALIFORNIA GLOBE) - California Governor Gavin Newsom is pushing a retroactive billionaire tax targeting the roughly 220 billionaires residing in California in 2025, ignoring that these individuals are the most financially mobile and can live anywhere. Expecting them to remain in the state as if they will happily and willingly hand over even more of their wealth surely must be facetious.

SEIU is sponsoring the “2026 Billionaires Tax Act.” The measure, recently listed on the Attorney General’s website, would impose a one-time 5% tax on individual wealth exceeding \$1 billion, Marc Joffe wrote for the Globe this week. He explains the measure and more:

Although the tax would be levied based on 2026 net worth, it would apply to billionaires who resided in California in 2025, so theoretically it could not be avoided. Of course, billionaires are well equipped to defend themselves in court, so the constitutionality of this unprecedented tax will be rigorously tested.

Proponents assert that the measure would not cause billionaires to flee the state because of the one-time nature of the tax. Unlike federal wealth taxes floated by Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, the SEIU tax would not be

applied each year.

But the flaw in this argument is obvious: if the state could impose a wealth tax once, it could do so again and again. So, yes, billionaires might well leave if this measure passes.

Why are California businesses and residents fleeing the once-Golden State in droves? We’ve asked and answered this question many times.

California has been bleeding residents and their tax revenue for many years with moves to states with no income tax or very low income tax: Florida, Texas, Arizona, Idaho, Tennessee, South Carolina, Nevada, and even Washington State.

California’s own Chevron Oil Company moved its headquarters to Houston, Texas from San Ramon, CA where it has been based since 1879, one of the biggest businesses to flee the Golden State. Chevron is in good company joining X/Twitter, Space X, Oracle, Hewlett Packard, Charles Schwab, and Toyota Motor North America, Nissei America, Inc., The Joe Rogan Experience, Gordon Ramsay North America, The Rubin Report, to name just a few of the businesses leaving California because of the state’s leftist/Marxist politics and regulatory environment.

Yet Gov. Newsom and Democrats are doubling down and still gouging taxpayers and businesses with some of the highest taxes,

fees and draconian regulations in the nation.

“Despite the towering deficit, Newsom and the Democratic Party continue to spend wildly on a boondoggle bullet train and to engage in last-minute redistricting to gerrymander the state further,” Jonathan Turley writes. “They have also moved to extend Medi-Cal to illegal immigrants at a massive cost to the budget. Newsom is also pushing ahead with a Commission to pay reparations to black citizens.”

Turley reports on just how bad California is:

“A study of IRS data by the National Taxpayers Union Foundation which found that California is losing a taxpayer roughly every minute, as states like Florida, Texas, and North Carolina attract new residents due to lower taxes and higher standards of living.

In comparison, Florida gains a new taxpayer every 2 minutes and 9 seconds while Texas gains one every 2 minutes and 53 seconds.

The result has been a bonanza for Florida, which is now collecting \$4 billion more per year for its budget.

The states losing taxpayers at the fastest rate are California, New York, and Illinois. Here is the rate of loss:

California: every 1 minute and 44 seconds; New York: every 2 minutes and

23 seconds; Illinois: every 6 minutes and 4 seconds; Massachusetts: every 11 minutes and 38 seconds; New Jersey: every 14 minutes and 14 seconds.

In 2023, we asked Why Did 352 California Companies Flee to Other States in Three Years? Here’s why: Low-to-no income tax states gained \$391 billion from California during 2018 to 2021, coinciding with Gavin Newsom’s election as governor.

As Economist Art Laffer and Chapman Economics Professor James Doti correctly said not long ago, Gov. “Newsom doesn’t appear to see is the deleterious long-term effects of a highly progressive tax system. Case in point: The ‘one-percenters’ who pay 50% of the tax are voting with their feet by leaving California in droves.”

They explained that the ten states with the lowest income taxes including Florida and Texas, gained a cumulative net inflow from all Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) classes of \$391 billion from California during the entire 2018 to 2021 period. Note that 2018 was the final year of Democrat Governor Jerry Brown. Gov. Newsom ran for governor in 2018 and was elected. He took office January of 2019, so the 2019-2021 belongs to Gov. Gavin Newsom.

“The 10 states that ranked the highest in income taxes

— California, New York and New Jersey are in this group — lost a cumulative net inflow in AGI of \$391 billion. The fact that the 10 states with the lowest income taxes gained in AGI the same amount as the loss in AGI for the 10 states with the highest income taxes is not a coincidence.” ...

Where did these companies go?

Most went to Texas. Here’s why:

“Texas offers a combination of unique competitive business advantages that no other state can claim: a business-friendly climate—with no corporate or personal income tax—along with a highly skilled and diverse workforce, easy access to global markets, robust infrastructure and a reasonable regulatory environment,” Texas Governor Greg Abbott said when he recently announced that another major California business was moving to Texas.

“California-based Ruiz Foods is moving its corporate HQ to Frisco,” he said. “With an unrivaled business climate and skilled, diverse workforce, Texas is America’s #1 economic destination....”

Newsom might find that lowering tax rates results in higher rather than lower tax revenues, as the Laffer Curve has shown time and time again.

“The Laffer Curve showcases the intricate relationship between tax

rates and government revenue, a concept popularized by economist Arthur Laffer in 1974. This theory posits that both excessively high and low tax rates result in reduced tax revenues, suggesting that tax cuts can potentially enhance revenue collection.”

“As drawn, the Laffer Curve shows that at a tax rate of 0%, the government would collect no tax revenue, just as it would collect no tax revenue at a tax rate of 100% because no one would be willing to work for an after-tax wage of zero.

Turley has a new book coming out, Rage and the Republic: The Unfinished Story of the American Revolution, in which he explains “there is a common myth that the top five percent of this country do not ‘pay their fair share.’ However, putting that debate aside, the question is whether it will produce more revenue than it costs the state in the long run. As these politicians campaign on clipping the “fat cats” who are not paying their fair share, many are likely to follow the exodus to lower tax states with greater fiscal discipline.”

Turley concludes, “what is clear is that Democratic states are not showing any greater fiscal discipline as they careen toward budget meltdowns.”

And to think that Gavin Newsom is running for President on this atrocious record... ★

Homeowners Could Qualify for Grants for New Roofs and Fire Safety

By Levi Sumagaysay, CAIMatters.org

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Some homeowners in areas of California with high wild-fire risk could eventually get money for new roofs or to build fire-resistant zones around their properties under a new state law that went into effect Jan. 1.

The Safe Homes grant program is designed to help low- and middle-income homeowners with fire mitigation. People who qualify could use grants to create 5-foot ember-resistant zones around properties, also known

as Zone Zero, as required by law in some areas. The program will also contribute toward costs for fire-safe roofs.

The state’s Insurance Department, which is responsible for implementing the program, is working out the details around eligibility, the amount of and the distribution of grants. It is now developing an application portal that it hopes to have ready by March, said Michael Soller, spokesperson for the department.

The insurance department will be handling all the details of the grants, said Mike Dayton, chief

of staff of Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, the Los Angeles-area Democrat and chair of the Assembly Insurance Committee who wrote the law, and has so far secured \$3 million in the state budget to get the program started.

Soller said homeowners who have policies with admitted insurance carriers or the last-resort FAIR Plan and who live in high-risk areas will have to meet income limits set by the state housing department to be eligible for the grants, whose amounts have not been determined. Communities, cities and

counties with mitigation projects could also apply for grants.

He also said the insurance department plans to advocate for additional and ongoing funding for the program.

Another source of funding could be the federal government, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Soller said. But Gov. Gavin Newsom recently tried to meet with FEMA to talk about disaster aid related to the Los Angeles County fires and was unsuccessful.

Also, two Californians in Congress have proposed

legislation that would establish a federal grant program and tax credits for mitigation. U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson, a Napa Democrat, and Doug LaMalfa, an Oroville Republican, have introduced their bill for the past two sessions, but it has not made it to a floor vote.

The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection recently extended the finalization of rules regarding Zone Zero buffers around properties to the first half of next year. The rules are expected to take effect for existing homes in 2029. ★

Senate Republicans Unveil Their Priorities for Californians

Sen. Roger Niello News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Californians are paying more and getting less. Even as the state is on track to collect more taxpayer money in the near future, the return on investment for core services continues to decline. The problem is not a lack of money, but years of bad spending priorities. With an \$18 billion deficit on the horizon, California Senate Republicans unveiled their budget priorities to get back to basics, ensure results, and improve the quality of life for all.

“If financial literacy will soon be a requirement for high schoolers, perhaps it should be a requirement for legislators too,” said Senator Roger Niello, Vice Chair of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee. “Essentially, our budget is a house of cards. One wrong move and the whole thing comes down. In addition to putting the basics first, the state needs to look at the programs it’s already funding and make sure they’re an effective and sustainable use of tax dollars.”

“The world’s fourth-largest economy should not feel like a third-world country,”

said Senate Republican Leader Brian Jones. “But year after year, Governor Newsom and the progressive legislature continue to lose the plot. It’s not their job to waste your money on whatever feel-good cause-of-the-day they deem worthy. It’s their job to fund public safety, support essential services, and hold government accountable.”

In their letter, Senate Republicans called for the budget to focus on lowering housing costs for renters and helping more Californians buy homes, keeping Californians safe from crime and wildfires,

supporting hospitals and access to care for rural Californians, eliminating fraud in Medi-Cal and other assistance programs, investing in water and emergency services for disasters and droughts, funding for UC and CSU so students can afford to stay and learn in California and supporting job creators by reducing the Unemployment Insurance debt burden placed on them.

To read the full letter, visit <https://src.senate.ca.gov/sites/src.senate.ca.gov/files/Caucus%20Budget%20Letter%20-%20Senate%20Republican%20Caucus%20Budget%20Priorities.pdf>. ★

Dave Tamayo Elected SMUD Board President

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in an advisory capacity to the University of California Integrated Pest Management Program, US EPA Office of Pesticide Programs, California Department of Pesticide Regulation and the National Pest Management Association. Prior to working for the

county, he owned a wholesale seafood business in San Francisco and was an electrician and a whitewater rafting guide.

Tamayo holds a bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of California, Berkeley and a master's degree in entomology and nematology from the University of

Florida, Gainesville. In his spare time, he enjoys birding, gardening, beekeeping, whitewater rafting and kayaking and learning to speak Spanish.

About SMUD

As the nation’s sixth-largest, community-owned, not-for-profit electric service provider,

SMUD has been providing low-cost, reliable electricity to Sacramento County for more than 75 years. SMUD is a recognized industry leader for its innovative energy efficiency programs, renewable power technologies and for its sustainable solutions for a healthier environment.



In 2024, SMUD’s power supply was about 62% carbon free, which is largely influenced by the weather and amount of hydroelectricity produced. SMUD’s goal is to completely eliminate carbon in its electricity production by 2030 while maintaining

reliability and keeping rates among the lowest in California — on average, 50% lower than its neighboring, investor-owned utility. For more information on SMUD’s Zero Carbon Plan and its customer programs, visit smud.org. ★

Rising Heat Leads to Minimal Losses for California Processing Tomatoes



Truckloads of tomatoes are transported through traffic and higher temperatures with minimal losses, research shows. Photo courtesy of UC Davis News

By Emily C. Dooley, UC Davis News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - California’s \$1 billion processing tomato industry is highly efficient and likely will be able to withstand higher temperatures and traffic congestion with minimal postharvest losses, according to research conducted at the University of California, Davis.

The research, published in the American Journal of Agricultural Economics, analyzed 1.4 million truckloads of tomatoes transported from thousands of farm fields to processing facilities between 2011 and 2020.

“It’s rare that we find an example where climate change is expected to have a negligible effect,” said Sarah Whitnell, who led the research as a postdoctoral scholar at UC Davis and is now at University of Western Australia, Perth.

“Ultimately, the supply chain is a well-oiled machine. The losses are relatively small, and while temperature does increase them, it’s not by a huge amount.”

Researchers matched each truckload to California state highway traffic data and hourly temperatures, which ranged from 48 degrees to 108 degrees Fahrenheit. They compared truckloads of tomatoes from the same field and same growing season: for example, one traveling at 5 a.m. when temperatures are cooler and traffic is light with one travelling at 5 p.m. when the opposite is true.

The best-case scenario was when cool temperatures coincided with heavy traffic. The worst-case scenario was hot temperatures combined with heavy traffic. When it’s hot, slow traffic speeds cause trucks to spend more time at

damaging temperatures. “If you have this magic scenario where temperatures are cool but there is traffic, you actually have the lowest losses,” Whitnall said. “This is because faster speeds cause vibrations that can increase damage in fresh produce.”

Comparing best- and worst-case scenarios, the share of soft, split or squished tomatoes doubles from about 1% to 2%. This equates to modest losses, the researchers also found.

The findings show that California’s processing tomato industry is highly efficient and could be a model for others, said senior author Tim Beatty, who is chair of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Davis.

“Most supply chains aren’t nearly as efficient as the California supply chain, so what this says is if you’re a very efficient supply chain, you can mitigate the losses associated with climate change,” Beatty said. “It says that adaptation is possible to really reduce loss past the farm gate.”

Eighty-four cents of every farm dollar is generated after the product leaves a farm, but most climate change research has focused on how growing is affected. This research looks at that second stage and was possible because of comprehensive public data and detailed transport, tonnage and quality data supplied by industry, Beatty said.

“We know very little about the effects of climate change once product leaves the farm gate,” he said. “I think this paper is one of the very first to actually tackle that.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative supported this research. ★

Icy Fundraiser



The Polar Plunge is hosted by the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District in partnership with the Rio Linda AquaKnights. Photo courtesy of the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District

Continued from page 1
of a 25-yard pool. Beyond competition, the team emphasizes skill development, sportsmanship and teamwork in a supportive environment.

According to the AquaKnights, participation helps children build lifelong swimming skills while offering safe and

enjoyable challenges both in and out of the water. Family involvement is also a key component of the program, with parents and guardians playing an essential role in assisting with swim meets and team events throughout the season.

Community members interested in learning more

about the Polar Plunge, the recreation district or the AquaKnights Swim Team can find additional information at the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District website at <https://www.rleparks.com/> through the team’s page at <https://www.gomotionapp.com/team/recncrleakca/page/home>. ★

Sacramento Valley Conservancy Launches Vernal Pool Stewardship Program

Sacramento Valley Conservancy News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Valley Conservancy (SVC) is proud to announce the launch of its Vernal Pool Stewardship Program, a community-driven effort to protect some of the region’s most rare and ecologically important landscapes through hands-on stewardship, education and volunteer engagement.

Sacramento Valley Conservancy is entrusted with the protection and stewardship of more than 8,000 acres of vernal pool preserves in Sacramento County, including 3,300 acres of rare vernal pool wetlands in Rancho Cordova and the surrounding area. These seasonal wetlands support unique plants and wildlife found nowhere else, and play a critical role in water quality, flood management and regional biodiversity.

As part of the Vernal Pool Stewardship Program, Sacramento Valley Conservancy will host a series of “Trash Dash + Vernal Pool Education” outings at Sacramento Valley Conservancy-managed preserves. These events invite community members to help remove trash and invasive plants to support these delicate and unique habitats while learning about the importance of vernal pools and how pollution affects nearby creeks and waterways.

Vernal pools are one of California’s most threatened ecosystems, with over 90 percent of vernal pool habitats destroyed.

“This new program aims to increase interest and understanding of these incredibly special and vulnerable ecosystems that many Sacramentians are unaware of,” said Kelly Hopkins, executive director. “We’re excited to build upon our existing education and recreation programs by continuing to expand our partnership with Splash.”

“Vernal pool ecosystems may be small, but these beautiful, diverse



resources provide a wide array of important ecosystem functions. Bringing the community together to steward these sensitive ecosystems will hopefully foster an appreciation for our local natural resources that will help them endure for future generations,” said Eric Kellegrew, Sacramento Valley Conservancy Stewardship Director.

“Stewardship starts close to home. When volunteers come together to care for the vernal pools in their own neighborhoods, they build a shared sense of responsibility for the places that connect our communities,” said Danny Whitaker, Sacramento Valley Conservancy Stewardship Specialist.

“By joining the Vernal Pool Stewardship Program, we can protect Sacramento’s rare wetlands through hands-on cleanup and education. Together, neighbors restore fragile ecosystems, safeguard water quality, support wildlife, inspire awareness, and build lasting community stewardship for these irreplaceable landscapes locally,” said Mark Baker, Sacramento Valley Conservancy Stewardship Specialist.

The Vernal Pool Stewardship Program received seed funding for three events in early 2026 through a combination of private donations, a grant from the Sacramento County Stormwater Quality Program, and in-kind partnerships, which will be leveraged to recruit volunteers, support

educational programming, and kick-start the new program. Business sponsorships are available for a single service day or for program sustainability, with opportunities for employee engagement and collaboration.

Community members, volunteers, and organizations interested in participating or sponsoring are encouraged to learn more at: <https://sacramentovalleyconservancy.org/vpsponsor/>

The first Trash Dash + Vernal Pool Education event is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 17 at the Kiefer Landfill Preserve. RSVP at: <https://sacramentovalleyconservancy.org/event/vpsd-20260117/>

Additional dates are tentatively scheduled for Feb. 21 and March 14, locations to be announced.

Founded in 1990, the Sacramento Valley Conservancy’s mission is to preserve the beauty, character, and biodiversity of the Sacramento Valley landscape by protecting and stewarding natural and working lands, and scenic open spaces for the benefit of current and future generations. From oak woodlands to vernal pools and river corridors, Sacramento Valley Conservancy collaborates with willing landowners and community partners to preserve the lands that sustain wildlife, provide local food, and offer outdoor recreation and education. Sacramento Valley Conservancy is a nationally accredited land trust and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. ★



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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



On Dec. 27 the Sacramento Kings treated the hometown fans to a post-Christmas treat with a stirring 113-107 victory over the visiting Dallas Mavericks. It was a reminder that although Dallas is a notable team with playoff intentions, the Kings have the talent to match up nightly with any team in the NBA. They have demonstrated this repeatedly, but the conundrum has been a complete lack of consistency as it relates to game over game results.

Why, you ask? The singular question that begs for an answer.

Injuries have played a role to be certain, but every NBA club must contend with injuries.

If I had to answer this question as honestly as I could, I would turn to the one player on this year's squad that has the greatest impact and that is none other than Domantas Sabonis. Over the past 3 ½ seasons Domantas hasn't just led the NBA in rebounding and double-doubles, he's been the singular stabilizing influence on a team that needs a leader like none-other. Sabonis' nightly consistent reinforcement of the fundamentals in playing the paint the old-fashioned way, gives every player on the floor a boost of confidence.

Domantas has a motor that just won't quit, and his enthusiasm for the game of basketball is simply contagious. Players want to play with this guy, and former King Jonas Valanciunas was vocal in his admiration for Sabonis and his desire to play alongside the Kings big man.

Unfortunately, the Kings did not value the talent that Valanciunas brought to the floor and allowed him to walk out the back door. Denver did not hesitate to provide their multiple MVP center Nikola Jokic with a resplendent backup, and Valanciunas has thrived this season in his new role.

The number one problem the Kings have had to face this season is not having Domantas on the floor, and their record shows it. 8 wins in 35 contests matches the worst start for an NBA season in the Sacramento Kings franchise history, and this is not a record you want to be a part of. Getting Sabonis back on the floor will be the first step in establishing what this year's team really is, but the Kings face a real dilemma.

GM Scott Perry is making noises that this year's team is about to receive a complete face lift, and Domantas Sabonis name has been mentioned or at least rumored in possible trade rumors. That would be mistake of herculean proportions.

Breaking news, the grass is not always greener on the other side.

Do you not remember what the organization did just one year ago when it inexplicably sent face of the franchise DeAaron Fox to the San Antonio Spurs?

DO NOT trade Domantas Sabonis. Draw a line in the sand, NOW, and build around a player that gets fans on their feet every game!

Stop trading away talent that makes other NBA teams stronger such as Davion Mitchell, DeAaron Fox, Issac Jones, and Boston Celtic starting center Neemias Queta. Yes, Neemias Queta, that the Kings had the good sense to draft 39th overall in the 2021 NBA draft and then send him to the G league where he thrived.

Fans saw something in this raw rookie and gave him more votes than any other King when it came to All-star voting that season.

The front office saw things differently and waived Queta in August 2023, and he was immediately scooped up by the Boston Celtics. Signed to a 2-way contract, Queta went on to help Boston win and NBA championship that same season and has since worked his way up to become this year's starting center. In the recent 120-106 loss to the Celtics, Queta provided the Kings with an up front and personal look at why their decision to let him go should have been reconsidered. Queta held down the paint efficiently all night, while posting 13 points, 5 rebounds, and 3 big blocks.

Simply stated, the Sacramento Kings must stop giving away valuable NBA talent and find someone in the organization that can effectively grade players and determine who is and who is not a viable NBA player.

Stay tuned Kings fans because Domantas will hopefully return soon, and then we can see what this team can do with a true NBA center on the floor.

Happy New Year Kings fans and by all means do not give up hope! ★

New Year May Entertain Political Junkies, but Sluggish Economy Deserves the Spotlight



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

As the new year begins, there's no shortage of political trends to keep Californians preoccupied, entertained or perhaps appalled — particularly the state's transcontinental feud with President Donald Trump.

There is Gov. Gavin Newsom's all-but-announced campaign for president, centered on his self-appointed role of resistor-in-chief to Trump. As Newsom continues to troll Trump this year we may learn whether it continues to advance Newsom as a White House frontrunner or becomes tiresome and off-putting.

As 2025 ended Axios, a news website, reported that Newsom's potential rivals are ratcheting up efforts to undermine his bid, arguing that, as a California progressive, he's unelectable.

Another point of political fixation is Newsom's successful effort to gerrymander California's 52 congressional seats to help Democrats recapture control of the House in 2026. Whether it works is a question hanging over his presidential ambitions.

Still another is the campaign to choose a successor to Newsom. It so far has attracted a large contingent of Democrats without, as yet, a clear leader. There's a theoretical possibility that with as many as a dozen Democrats in the field, the

two Republicans could finish first and second in the June 2 primary and face each other for the governorship in November, despite the GOP's very weak standing among voters.

This year's election cycle also promises to be another showdown of moneyed interests via dueling ballot measures, with those either increasing or decreasing taxes at the top of the heap.

While political junkies can feed their habits this year, the more profound issue that faces California will be its moribund economy.

Newsom often brags that California's \$4 trillion economy, were it a nation, would rank fourth in the world. However, it has seen zero net job growth since the COVID-19 pandemic ended and recently has experienced employment shrinkage.

More than a million Californians in the labor force are jobless and the state's unemployment rate, currently 5.6%, has been the highest or near the highest of any state for several years.

Employment doldrums have affected even the state's hallmark sectors, most obviously Southern California's withering film and TV production industry and the Bay Area's high technology concentration.

The latter has almost single-handedly propped up the state's economy and generated a huge portion of tax revenues, but layoffs have proliferated as artificial intelligence is increasingly employed — a syndrome that also affects Hollywood.

Stubborn, or even increasing, unemployment makes it more difficult for state and local governments to cover their budget deficits — thus underpinning the

thrust for tax increases on state and local ballots. The sluggish economy also hampers efforts to improve two of the state's most pressing socioeconomic issues, its highest-in-the-nation poverty and homelessness levels.

Even Californians who have homes and jobs are feeling the economic pinch. Combining economic data with polling results, the Public Policy Institute of California recently discovered rising economic angst among California residents.

"California is one of the largest economies in the world, but many working Californians do not feel economically secure (and) they struggle to pay their bills, save for the future, and balance the demands of work and daily life," PPIC reported, adding that polling data "indicate that pessimism about future economic opportunity has become even more pervasive amid recent economic volatility."

As he shifts into presidential campaign mode, Newsom has every reason to keep bragging about the state's economy. But those running to replace him and state legislators should make 2026 the year to recognize that California has serious problems, to bore into the underlying causes and to do what they can to once again make California thrive.

History tells us that taking prosperity for granted —think Detroit — is an invitation to economic ruin.

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

My Wife Believes She Can Get a Spouse Benefit While I'm Still Alive; Can She?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: A friend of my wife told her, and she believes, she could receive a Social Security benefit based on my SS benefit that I'm currently receiving while I'm still alive. I told her she could only receive spouse survivor benefits. Is there any truth to what she now believes? Would you settle this issue for us please? Thank you.

Signed: Uncertain Husband

Dear Uncertain Husband: Well, surely don't want to get in the middle of your martial discussion, but I'll be happy to explain Social Security's rules about your wife's eligibility for spousal benefits while you are both still living. And just for awareness for both of you, the rules about spousal benefits are one of the most confusing areas of Social Security.

Per Social Security's rules, a spouse (e.g., your wife) can receive a "spousal boost" from you — while you are still living — if the SS retirement

benefit she is personally entitled to at her full retirement age (FRA) is less than 50% of the SS retirement benefit you are (were) entitled to at your FRA (full retirement age amounts are used to calculate living spouse benefits, regardless of when each of you actually claimed your Social Security).

So, if your FRA entitlement benefit amount is more than twice your wife's FRA entitlement benefit amount, she can, indeed, get a "spousal boost" from your record while you are both still living. The spousal boost is added to her own SS retirement amount and will be based on the difference between her FRA entitlement and half of your FRA entitlement. Thus, in this discussion, your wife may be correct - she may be able to get a spousal boost from you while both of you are living, depending on how your personal FRA retirement amounts compare. The best way for your wife to find out is to contact Social Security on 1.800.772.1213 to inquire, and if she's eligible, also make an appointment to apply for her spousal benefit.

And to clarify your wife's options as your possible widow, a surviving spouse can also get a survivor benefit if their marital partner passes away, but only if the deceased spouse's current benefit (at death) was more than the surviving spouse is already

receiving. The surviving spouse receives the higher amount, instead of their own smaller Social Security retirement benefit.

But here is an important thing to know: Whenever any Social Security benefit (including a spousal or surviving spouse benefit) is claimed before the recipient's full retirement age, the payment amount is permanently reduced (both spousal and survivor benefits do not reach maximum until the recipient's full retirement age). And just to complete the picture for survivor benefits, a surviving spouse is also entitled to a one-time, lump-sum death benefit of \$255 if their marital partner dies, in addition to any other benefit they are entitled to.

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For elements of the anti-Israel right, it's a time when everything old is becoming new again. So, a half-century-old theory that the Jewish state deliberately attacked the USS Liberty during the Six-Day War has renewed currency.

Conspiratorial-minded influencers hostile to Israel, like Tucker Carlson and Candace Owens, have promoted the notion, and it was a topic of discussion at the recent TPUSA conference. One speaker said that the official explanation "doesn't feel like it's good enough," and floated his own wild speculation (involving the complicity of LBJ).

The fact is that the devastating Israeli attack on the Liberty, killing 34 and wounding 171, was a woeful case of mistaken identification. The series of faulty judgments that led to the incident is so grievous that, taken altogether, it is, indeed, nearly incomprehensible. Yet, when operating with incomplete information in a shooting war, such accidents happen all the time. The Israelis apologized immediately upon realizing their ghastly mistake and offered restitution.

On June 8, 1967, the 6th Fleet was keeping its distance from the hostilities in the Six-Day War, fought between Israel and Egypt, Syria and Jordan. The USS Liberty, a spy ship, had come within 13 nautical miles of the Sinai coast, though. It requested a de-

No, the USS Liberty Incident Wasn't Israeli Treachery

stroyer escort, which was denied, and orders to the Liberty to withdraw about 100 miles from the front were delayed in a communications tangle.

That morning, an ammunition dump ignited in the coastal city of El-Arish in the Sinai, and the Israelis (wrongly) believed the location had been shelled by Egyptian ships. The Israeli navy spotted the Liberty heading toward Egypt and (wrongly) concluded it had been one of the attackers. Two Israel Mirage jets saw no identifying markings on the Liberty (a later U.S. inquiry speculated that the flag might not have been visible for lack of wind) and strafed the ship. More Israeli jets napalmed the Liberty.

The absence of return fire puzzled the Israelis, who paused to ensure they weren't hitting an Israeli vessel. Assured it wasn't one of their own, they renewed the assault.

Still uneasy, they looked for identifying markers again. They saw no flag, but made out Latin, not Arabic, letters on the hull. That strongly suggested the vessel wasn't Egyptian.

Yet, a squadron of Israeli torpedo boats determined that the Liberty's silhouette matched an Egyptian supply ship. A request for identification from the Liberty received no affirmative reply.

The Liberty's captain ordered his men not to shoot at the torpedo boats, but one gunner briefly fired and there were further discharges from exploding ammunition. Believing

they were taking incoming from an Egyptian ship, the torpedo boats requested permission to fire and got reluctant assent. A torpedo slammed into the Liberty, blowing a hole 24 feet tall by 39 feet wide and killing more than two dozen sailors.

Eventually, an Israeli torpedo boat picked up a raft from the Liberty with U.S. naval markings and the Israelis realized their tragic error. They apologized instantly to U.S. naval attaché Ernest Carl Castle, and an Israeli helicopter attempted to take him out to the Liberty (the effort was foiled by darkness). The Israeli torpedo boats offered assistance to the Liberty, which was rebuffed.

As Michael Oren points out in his history of the Six-Day War, none of the common conspiracy theories makes sense. There was no way that Israel -- desperate for U.S. support and wary of Soviet enmity -- was going to make an act of war against a friendly superpower. Nor did Israel need, as is sometimes posited, to hide its gains in the Sinai from the U.S., or its plans to hit Syria. It hadn't executed Egyptian POWs, so that didn't justify a murderous cover-up, either.

Both official Israeli and U.S. investigations determined that the attack was a friendly fire incident, but for Israel and the Jews in the current environment, the truth is no defense.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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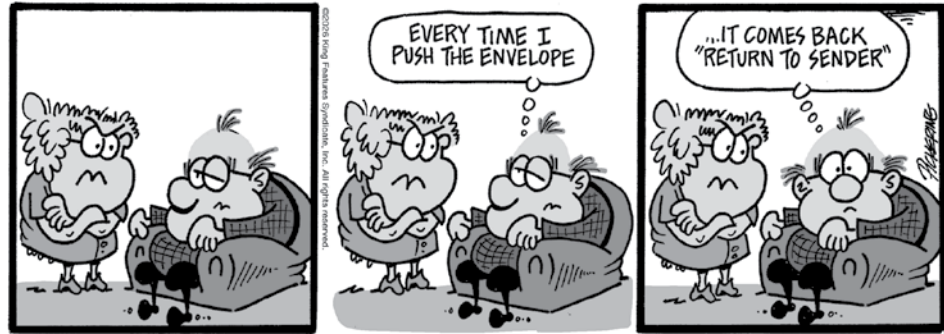
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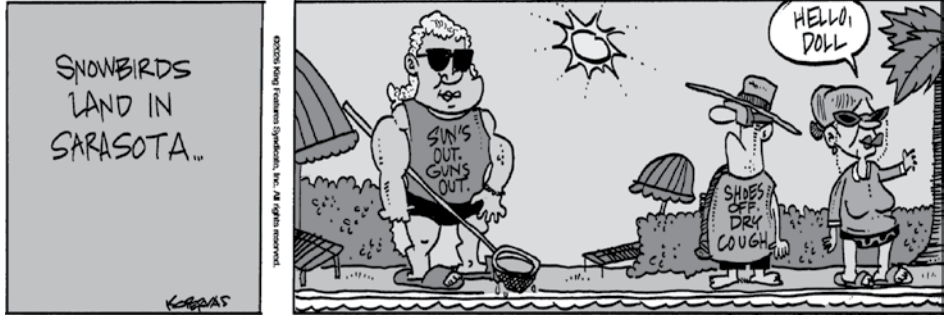
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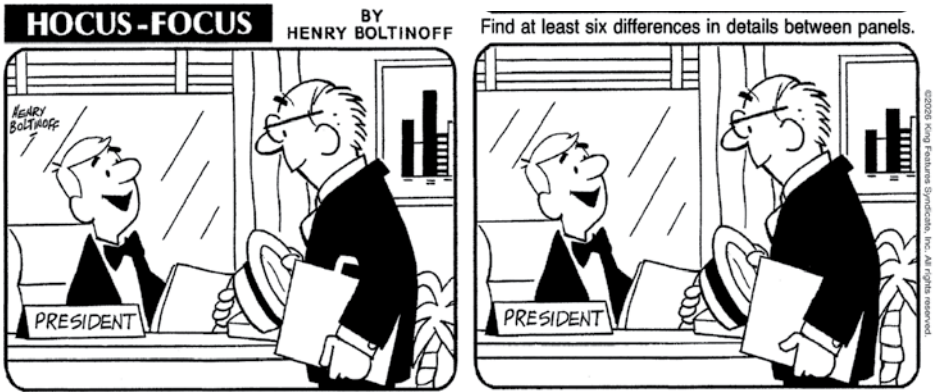
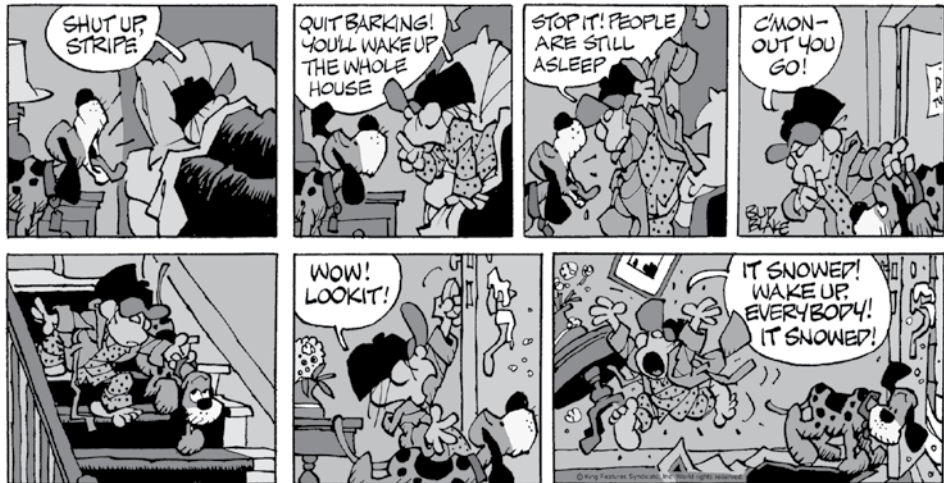
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1. Inundated
6. Word before humbug
9. Jim Carrey's 1994 disguise
13. Rough, as in voice
14. Kimono sash
15. Misrepresent
16. Do like ivy
17. Go for the bronze?
18. Poem of lament
19. *Grammy nominee Bad Bunny's first language
21. *KPop Demon Hunters' nominated song
23. Sought at crime scene
24. Lord's worker
25. Rob Manfred's org.
28. Jab, in speech
30. *____.com Arena
35. Rowboat engine, pl.
37. ____ gum, ingredient
39. Cowboy's cry of joy
40. Big attraction
41. Spring holiday honoree
43. Live bait
44. Daytime moth
46. Puerto follower
47. Finger move
48. Colonnade
50. Invitation letters
52. "Zip it!"
53. Trash bag brand
55. Polar helper
57. *Lady Gaga's nominated album
60. *Tyler of CHROMA-KOPIA, with The
64. Prejudiced one
65. Busy one
67. Do penance
68. Approves
69. Make a mistake
70. Sans-____ font
71. "I, Claudius" role
72. Jack and Jill did this
73. Changes to a manuscript

DOWN

1. Parentheses, e.g.
2. "Star Trek" speed
3. Away from port
4. Not be frugal
5. What TikTokers are often doing
6. This and that
7. Legal grp.
8. Door holder
9. Mix together
10. Away from wind
11. Leo or Libra, e.g.
12. *Wonder's "Songs in the ____ of Life," Album of Year (1977)
15. Where bats are?
20. Eurasian goat-like antelope
22. Middle-earth dweller
26. Pelican or albatross, e.g.
25. Person in an ad
26. One of Florida Keys
27. Health food pioneer of liquid aminos fame
29. *Nominated "Drop Dead Years" comedian Bill ____
31. Swerves
32. Sound units
33. Synagogue scroll
34. Zing or pizzazz
36. *Justin Bieber's nominated song
38. Fabled fliers
42. Red one, send somebody over!
45. Unalienable ones are in the Declaration of Independence
49. Draft pick
51. Give satisfaction
54. Spot for prehistoric fly
56. Doomed
57. *MCA, Ad-Rock and ____ D, Grammy-winning Beastie Boys
58. Culture-growing turf
59. Walk-the-dog toy
60. What concerning and discernable have in common
61. *Nine-time Grammy-nominated Amos
62. Fonzie's comeback: "Sit ____"
63. Whistle blowers
64. *____lver of SABLE, fABLE fame
66. Historical period

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Republic FC Adds Two Local Standouts on USL Academy Contracts

Sacramento Republic FC News Release

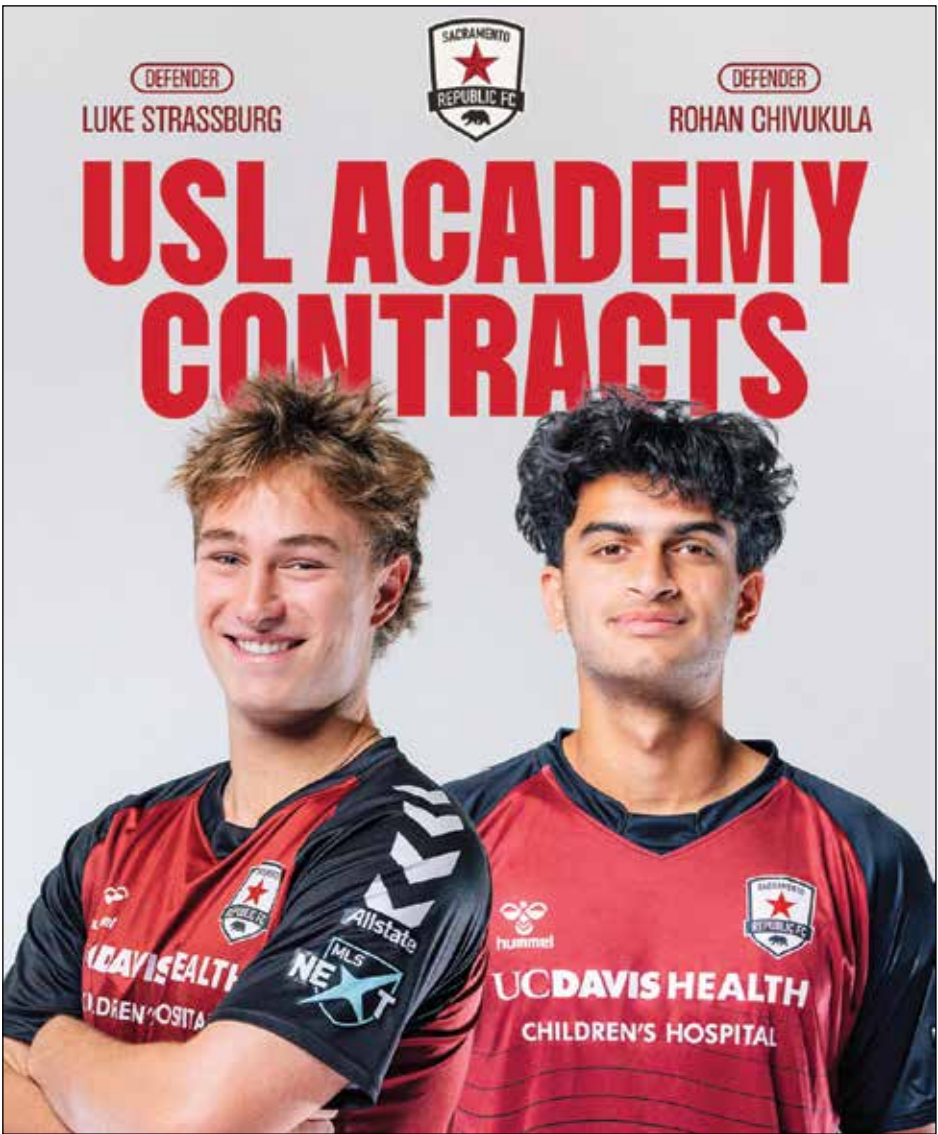
SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Republic FC announced Dec. 19 the addition of academy players Luke Strassburg and Rohan Chivukula to the club's first team roster. The defenders have signed USL Academy contracts, pending league and federation approval and will be eligible to play in first team matches in 2026.

"These signings reflect the strength of our pathway and commitment to developing local talent," said Republic FC Head Coach Neill Collins. "Bringing academy players into the first team environment prepares them for the next level and we have no doubt that Luke and Rohan will continue to represent the academy well during training camp and throughout the season."

Strassburg and Chivukula both currently play for Republic FC's U-19 academy team, which has opened up the 2025-26 campaign with an impressive 9-1-1 record.

Eighteen-year-old Rohan Chivukula joined Republic FC's academy in 2024 to take the next step in his development. He quickly became a key piece of the U-19's backline and in Chivukula's first year, the squad posted an overall record of 16-3-3 and won the Northwest Division of MLS NEXT before advancing to the Round of 32 in the postseason. The Folsom High School graduate previously featured for El Dorado Hills Soccer Club and Sacramento United, and will play at the collegiate level for American University in the fall of 2026.

Strassburg is a longtime member of the Indomitable Club. The Elk Grove native joined at the U-13 level in 2020



Strassburg and Chivukula both currently play for Republic FC's U-19 academy team, which has opened up the 2025-26 campaign with an impressive 9-1-1 record. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

and has since featured in every age group in the last five years. He has been a part of some of the top teams

in club history, reaching MLS NEXT Cup each season. During the 2023-24 season, Strassburg and the U-16

team went undefeated in 29 straight games from September in April, and in 2025 his U-17 team claimed three wins in the MLS NEXT Cup Playoffs to advance to the Semifinals – the best finish by a Republic FC squad since 2022. He has also received multiple invitations to U.S. Soccer ID camps and training camps. Prior to joining Republic FC, Luke played for the San Jose Earthquakes' youth academy and Sacramento United. He has committed to play at San Diego State in the fall of 2026.

USL Academy contracts allow academy players the chance to train and compete with the first team in professional matches while retaining their NCAA eligibility. Since its inception in 2015, Republic FC's Academy has created a strong, local pipeline of youth players ready for professional-level competition, with over 40 players earning the opportunity to join the first team on USL Academy contracts and over 25 going on to sign professional contracts with Republic FC or other clubs. In 2024, players from Sacramento's youth academy combined for 80 gameday roster selections, 56 appearances, and over 3,000 minutes.

Republic FC's 2026 season officially kicks off on March 7 when the club hosts FC Tulsa at Heart Health Park. Season ticket memberships are on sale now, offering a range of benefits including discounts on merchandise and access to exclusive fan experiences, as well as priority seat selection in the new Republic Stadium at The Railyards. For more information, or to purchase a membership today, visit SacRepublicFC.com/Memberships. ★

Sacramento State Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento State head coach Alonzo Carter named several assistant coaches and staff personnel to his staff, it was announced Dec. 30. The hirings include offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau, defensive coordinator Adam Clark, associate head coach Angus McClure and general manager Jon Osterhout. Carter also retained Kris Richardson as the offensive line coach/run game coordinator, Bobby Fresques as the quarterbacks coach/pass game coordinator and Josh Brown as the safeties coach. In all, the staff will feature over 300 years of cumulative coaching experience.

Kiesau has served as the offensive coordinator at Fresno State, Boise State and Auburn during his lengthy collegiate career. He spent the past three seasons as an offensive quality control coach at Florida.

His offensive staff will include Richardson and Fresques who return for their eighth year with the program and have seen the team qualify for the NCAA FCS Playoffs four times. Richardson has mentored several FCS All-Americans, including current Tennessee Titan Jackson Slater. This past season, his group paved the way for a rushing attack which ranked third in the FCS with 365.4 rushing yards per game. In his time leading the Sacramento State quarterbacks, Fresques has guided FCS All-Americans Kevin Thomson and Asher O'Hara, as well as Jake Duniway and Carson Conklin.

Former Sacramento State offensive lineman and assistant coach Angus McClure will return to campus as the associate head coach and work with the offensive line. Since leaving Sacramento



Sacramento State head coach Alonzo Carter named several assistant coaches and staff personnel to his staff. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State Athletics

State, McClure has had stints at Nebraska, Buffalo, UCLA, Nevada and Kansas.

Eric Scott will serve as the team's wide receivers coach. Scott has spent the last two seasons as the head coach at West LA Junior College. Prior to taking that position, Scott was the wide receivers coach and passing game coordinator at San Jose State from 2021-23 where he worked alongside Alonzo Carter.

On defense, Adam Clark will come to Sacramento State after leading the defense at Northern Arizona for the past two seasons. In his first season, NAU ranked second in the Big Sky and 12th in the FCS in interceptions. The unit also led the league in pass defense and was second in total defense.

Brown will shift to coach the safeties in 2026 after leading the team's linebackers this past season. During the year, he overcame several injuries to his position group to have three players rank among the top five on the team in total tackles.

That included Oscar Moore who led the team with 69 total stops. Brown has also coached at McNeese, UTEP, Hawaii, Nevada, Cal Poly, Kansas and Arizona State during his career.

Kenwick Thompson will coach the linebackers and brings experience as an FCS defensive coordinator as well as a position coach at the P4 level. Thompson was the defensive coordinator at Florida A&M in 2025 and was previously on Jeff Tedford's staffs at Cal and Fresno State as well as stints at San Jose State, Vanderbilt, East Carolina, UNLV and UAB.

Dakari Monroe will follow Carter from Arizona to Sacramento State and will coach the Hornet corners. Monroe was a defensive graduate assistant for the Wildcats the past two seasons and helped the team advance to the Trust & Will Holiday Bowl against SMU. He played four seasons at San Jose State where he twice led the team in interceptions before a stint with the Kansas City Chiefs.

Milo Austin will serve as Sacramento State's special teams coordinator. Austin has held the same role at Elon since 2022 where he has coached an FCS All-American kicker, punter and kick returner. He has also been the special teams coordinator at Texas Southern, Delaware State and Morehead State.

The team's personnel efforts will be led by former Sacramento State All-American Jon Osterhout who returns to campus as the general manager following a great career as the head coach at American River JC. With the Beavers, Osterhout led the team to an 88-39 overall record and took the team to seven postseason appearances, including six trips to the state playoffs. Osterhout was a four-year starter for Sacramento State on the offensive line where he garnered All-America honors while leading the way for Charles Roberts' record-setting rushing efforts.

Chris Parry, who has been on staff since 2019, will continue to serve as the assistant general manager. Parry has been a part of player evaluation, roster construction and scholarship management during the program's run of success since his arrival.

Record-setting receiver Otis Amey has been named the director of player development. Amey was an All-American for Sacramento State and still owns nearly all the career receiving records. Following his time as a Hornet, he played with the San Francisco 49ers as well as stops in the Arena League and UFL.

Kenny Macklin will remain at Sacramento State and take the position of Chief of Staff. CJ Pollard will also return as the Director of Recruiting.

The additions are the first to the staff for Carter who became the 14th head coach in school history on Dec. 15. ★

A's Agree to Terms with LF Tyler Soderstrom

Athletics News Release

LAS VEGAS, NEV (MPG) - The Athletics have agreed to terms with left fielder Tyler Soderstrom on a seven-year contract through the 2032 season with a club option for 2033, the club announced Dec. 29.

Soderstrom batted .276 with 25 home runs, 93 RBI and an .820 OPS in 158 games last season with the A's after combining

to hit .204 with 12 home runs, 33 RBI and a .636 OPS in 106 games over his first two seasons. He began the season as the A's starting first baseman, moved to left field (where he had not played professionally) when Nick Kurtz was promoted on April 23, moved back to first base while Kurtz was on the injured list from May 25 to June 8, and returned to left field after that. Soderstrom had a team-leading 93 RBI, which were the most

by an A's player 23 years old or younger since Eric Chavez had 114 in 2001. He had 11 outfield assists, which tied for third in the majors, and ranked fourth among left fielders in defensive runs saved (10).

Soderstrom is a .250 career hitter with 37 home runs, 126 RBI and a .754 OPS in 264 games in three seasons in the majors. He was the A's first round selection in the 2020 First-Year Player Draft out of Turlock High School

and was primarily a catcher in his first pro season in 2021. The 24-year-old left-handed hitter split his time between catcher and first base in 2022-23, played mostly first base in 2024 and saw his most action in 2025 as an outfielder.

Soderstrom is one of three players under contract through at least the 2028 season, when the A's are scheduled to open their new ballpark in Las Vegas. He joins Lawrence Butler, who inked

a seven-year deal through the 2031 season with a club option for 2032 on Mar. 10, 2025, and Brent Rooker, who signed a five-year contract through 2029 with a club option for 2030 on Jan. 23, 2025. ★

