



East Sacramento News

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Bringing You Community News For Over 30 Years

APRIL 24, 2026

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THE PING PONG BALLS ARE COMING



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Vintage Shop Ends Nearly Two-Decade Run



Owner Cheri Malkasian and her partner, Michael Toupe, stand behind the counter inside Summer Porch in East Sacramento.

Story and photos by Eric Schucht

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - A shop in East Sacramento was bustling as customers came for good deals and goodbyes. Summer Porch: Vintage Living closed at the end of March. Owner Cheri Malkasian has sold antique furniture, dishware and other

decor for over two decades. She is now ready to retire or at least lighten her workload.

While the storefront she has occupied since 2008 will be empty soon, Malkasian plans to continue selling online. She wants to leave on a good note and take the happy memories with her.

"I'm feeling pretty good right

now, just because I think it's time," Malkasian said from behind the register. "This sounds kind of corny, but I always leave when the party's still fun, and I can still move."

Before the shop, Malkasian was a stay-at-home mother who was involved in a family accounting firm. Her love of vintage wares stemmed

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What's Next for I Street Bridge Replacement Project?



The city released an update on the I Street Bridge Replacement Project, noting higher-than-expected costs for delays but reaffirming it as a top priority, with construction now expected to begin in 2027. Photo courtesy of City of Sacramento

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Construction bids for the I Street Bridge Replacement Project came in significantly higher than expected last week, prompting city officials to reassess costs and next steps for the long-planned project.

The city received proposals from three nationally recognized contractors, with bids ranging from about \$398 million to \$517 million. Construction of the new bridge was estimated to cost \$300 million.

Flatiron Dragados Constructors, Inc. submitted the lowest bid at approximately \$398.5 million, almost \$100 million higher than the city's projected cost.

City officials said construction costs across the industry have been influenced by factors such as supply chains, labor markets and broader economic conditions and that further outreach with contractors will help clarify the specific drivers behind the bids.

The higher-than-expected costs mean the project is no longer on track to begin construction this summer, as previously anticipated.

Since 2012, the city and its partners have advanced the project through design, environmental clearance, funding coordination and permitting, leaving it ready to move forward once funding challenges are addressed.

"At this point, it's truly shovel-ready," said Assistant City Manager Ryan Moore. "If we don't move forward from here, it would be extremely difficult to get a project like this back to this stage in the future. This project

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Eagle Presentation Inspires Retired Teachers

Story and photos by Stephen B. Clazie

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - California Retired Teachers Association (CalRTA) State Capital Division 5 President Christi Campo welcomed wildlife photographer Susan Maxwell Skinner to the division's general spring meeting at Sierra 2. Skinner presented a slideshow and spoke about the nesting of bald eagles on the lower American River.

Skinner first discovered the species along the American River Bike Trail near Folsom in 2016 and followed a nesting pair over 10 years documenting the growth of their family. With wingspans reaching up to seven feet, the eagles have become a powerful symbol of wildlife in the area.

"Our bald eagles don't migrate; they stay in the region all year," Skinner said.

This was the first time they'd been recorded here.

"You can tell from my accent that I am an immigrant," Skinner told the audience. Originally from New Zealand, she became a naturalized American on March 29, 2017.

Skinner explained differences between male and female eagles, noting that females are larger and have a different head shape. She also pointed out that, at the time of its discovery, this couple was nesting closest

Continued on page 2



Susan Maxwell Skinner flexes her own muscles from toting a Canon camera with a 600mm lens, while standing in front of a slide showing an eagle carrying a branch. "It's astonishing what they are able to haul," said Skinner.

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Join the Movement: Make a Difference This Big Day of Giving

ACC Senior Services News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - For more than 53 years, ACC Senior Services has been a cornerstone of support for older adults across the Sacramento region, helping seniors live with independence, dignity and a strong sense of belonging. On Thursday, May 7 our community will come together once again for Sacramento's Big Day of Giving, a powerful 24-hour movement that uplifts local nonprofits and the people they serve.

In 2025, the Sacramento region raised more than \$13 million in support of more than 800 nonprofits. This year, with more than 900 organizations participating, the need (and the opportunity to make an impact) is greater than ever.

Big Day of Giving is especially meaningful for ACC, as it is our largest annual fundraiser.

of local seniors face challenges such as social isolation, limited transportation, physical and language barriers, and rising living costs. Through

compassionate care and practical programs, ACC helps to bridge these gaps.

In the past year alone, more than 4,000 older adults received vital support through ACC's Home and Community-Based Programs, while hundreds more benefited from culturally responsive care across ACC's residential communities.

From transportation to medical appointments and wellness classes to social activities and caregiver support, ACC ensures seniors remain active, connected and valued



From transportation to medical appointments and wellness classes to social activities and caregiver support, ACC ensures seniors remain active, connected and valued members of our community. Photo courtesy of ACC Senior Services

members of our community. This work is only possible because of the generosity of supporters like you.

Big Day of Giving is your opportunity to make a direct, local impact. A gift of any size can help a senior access essential care, find connection and maintain independence. It's neighbors supporting

neighbors, right here in Sacramento.

ACC will mark the day with a lively on-campus (7334 Park City Drive) celebration featuring food sales (teriyaki chicken bowls, kalua pork sliders, Japanese curry), live music and a four-hour livestream "telethon" sharing powerful stories from those whose lives have been

touched by ACC.

Every act of generosity strengthens the safety net for older adults in our region. Join ACC Senior Services on the Big Day of Giving in building a community where every senior is supported and valued.

Learn more or give at accsv.org/bdog or bigdayofgiving.org/accseniorservices. ★

Eagle Presentation Inspires Retired Teachers

Continued from page 1

to Sacramento in recorded history for its species.

"They are fantastic parents," Skinner said. "We could all learn so much from them. Momma and Papa share all domestic duties; they're very much a family. Their pantry is always full, and the new hatchlings eat every 30 minutes or so."

Skinner added with a laugh, "The mates build a home, and then they make a baby."

Their nesting material includes pine needles, containing the same disinfecting element originally used to make Pine-Sol cleaner. Pine-Sol was originally made with pine oil when it was introduced in 1929, though modern versions no longer contain it. The eagles, however, still line their nests with pine needles, helping to maintain a clean environment.

During the past 10 years, Skinner has spent countless hours observing the birds during breeding season, sometimes standing in one spot for up to 12 uninterrupted hours. Using a Canon camera with

a 600mm lens, she captures strikingly detailed images. The lens alone weighs more than six pounds, making handheld photography especially challenging.

"The sharpness of her photos is unbelievable," attendees noted, as Skinner displayed images of a mother eagle feeding a 2025 eaglet and another carrying a branch, demonstrating the bird's ability to lift up to a third of its body weight.

Smiling, Skinner flexed her arm and joked, "Big lenses; they weigh a ton."

Lens weight does not include camera body. Shooting without a tripod requires strong stabilization techniques.

Skinner also spoke briefly about her late husband, Sacramento bandleader John Skinner, who died a year after she became a U.S. citizen. A Vietnam War veteran and U.S. Air Force pilot, he later flew for Flying Tigers and Federal Express. While at home, he led the John Skinner Band. Susan was his singer.

Skinner's image of "Momma" eagle feeding a 2017 eaglet captured a moment

that still excites her. In that year, local schoolchildren named the first two eaglets "Poppy" and "Peekaboo."

"It was wonderful to see these eagles with their first babies," Skinner said, "and incredible to watch those tiny chicks grow to full size in just 12 weeks, then learn to fly."

Each year, she has witnessed a new generation of eaglets make debut flights before establishing lives of their own.

Another slide showed an eagle carrying a branch.

"It's astonishing what they are able to haul," said Skinner.

Skinner's talk included a demonstration of eagle vocalizations.

"Some are harsh," she said. "Some are sweet. They chat with a big range of sounds."

Through her photography and dedication, Skinner continues to bring attention to the increasing numbers of this raptor species on the American River, offering both education and inspiration to



Susan Maxwell Skinner shows the audience of California Retired Teachers the An American River Family photo cards.

observers.

The bald eagle is one of the most well-known symbols in United States history, embodying freedom and the American dream. For this local photojournalist, and naturalized American citizen, that dream has been fully realized. ★



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Big Day of Giving

Nonprofit Breaks Ground on \$16.5 Million Food Market in River District



Alchemist Community Development Corporation CEO Sam Greenlee speaks at a groundbreaking ceremony on April 9 in Sacramento. From left are Sacramento Mayor Kevin McCarty, U.S. Rep. Doris Matsui, Greater Sacramento Economic Council president and CEO Barry Broome and River District executive director Devin Strecker.



From left, Barry Broome, Kevin McCarty, Doris Matsui, Devin Strecker and Sam Greenlee break ground on the Alchemist Public Market on April 9 at the River District in Sacramento.

Story and photos by Eric Schucht

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Politicians, entrepreneurs, journalists and others met at a dirt lot surrounded by warehouses on April 9 in Sacramento's River District. The crowd assembled for a groundbreaking ceremony for a project that will help transform this area north of the Grid from an industrial area into a residential one.

The Alchemist Public Market has been six years in the making, with about \$15.5 million raised for its construction.

Once completed next year, the facility on the 0.82-acre lot at 341 N. 10th St. will consist of two main buildings, according to an economic report published in April.

The first building will house a 3,700 sq. ft. all-electric commissary kitchen shared by entrepreneurs who will use it to prepare food for catering events, pop-up markets

or packaged products. Up to seven businesses could use the space at one time. There will also be a cafe with coffee, grab-and-go meals, beer and wine and locally made goods.

The second building will house office, meeting and classroom space. Planned community uses include a mobile library, a voting center, health screenings and resource fairs. The central courtyard will feature four permanent vendor stalls called pods and four all-electric food trailers, one of which will be reserved for pickup orders from several businesses. This area will also be home to a weekly outdoor farmers market with up to eight vendors.

The project creator is the Alchemist Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit founded in 2004 that operates several food-related programs, including several farmers' markets and The Alchemist Kitchen, which provides business training.

Participants in the Kitchen program will be able to use the facilities at the new public market. The goal is for them to grow their business out of the space and eventually move elsewhere.

At the groundbreaking, Alchemist CEO Sam Greenlee told the crowd the project originated in June 2020. At that time, the plan was to convert a historic property in Old Sacramento into a centralized location for the nonprofit. The scope was expanded as funding was secured from institutions including Columbia Bank, Sutter Health, the city, the state and the federal government.

"It was a big, fragile idea from a small nonprofit, and the idea could have died quickly if we didn't find people and institutions willing to courageously support the vision," Greenlee said.

Devin Strecker, executive director of the River District, was another guest

speaker. He spoke on the growing need for projects like this in the area, and said, "The questions I get asked most by my fellow residents are, 'When will we get a coffee shop?' Where will we have somewhere to buy groceries, not in bulk?' 'And when will we get somewhere new to eat?' Well, with the Alchemist Public Market, I can answer all those questions... as soon as this is built."

The other three guest speakers were Barry Broom, who is the president and CEO of the Greater Sacramento Economic Council, along with Sacramento Mayor Kevin McCarty and U.S. Rep. Doris Matsui.

McCarty said when it comes to bringing people together through food and supporting entrepreneurs, this project "checks all the boxes."

Matsui praised Alchemist, saying, "Their work exemplifies how a community partner

can raise the floor for our neighbors and the up-and-coming entrepreneurs," and "I can't be prouder of what is happening in our own backyard." Several participants in Alchemist's business incubator, who will sell at the public market once completed, operated booths at the groundbreaking.

One of them was Dante Williams, owner of Black Coffee Roastery. He operates an espresso cart in Rancho Cordova, and his coffee will be for sale at the cafe at the public market. He said the new community kitchen will be a resource many small business owners like himself wouldn't have access to otherwise.

"It's amazing. The space is going to be a wonderful opportunity for entrepreneurs to be able to highlight, showcase their businesses, be able to make some money, as well as a space to prep," Williams said. He called the River District "an up-and-coming

area," and he was "excited to see how it comes to fruition and develops."

The air at the groundbreaking smelled of freshly baked bread coming from a booth operated by Corrin McKellips of Sacramento, owner of Warm Nuts & Hot Buns. She has been in business for about a year and will operate out of one of the food pods at the public kitchen, which she called "fantastic."

Other vendors included Jerk Street Tacos, owned by Ramon and Nikki Chester; Nacho House, owned by Danielle Green and LaKrisha Kelley; and Sugar Coated Cupcakes, owned by LaQueanya Henry.

Henry started her business in a food cart and has since expanded into a storefront in the Tahoe Park neighborhood. She will have a trailer at the public market. She said, "It's a great opportunity, more than anything, for small businesses in the area." ★

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Pork Tenderloin Boneless **\$3.49/lb**

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New Housing Generates Billions Annually in Sacramento Region

Analysis shows homebuilding boosts local economies, supports jobs and delivers long-term revenue streams to governments

**North State BIA
News Release**

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- New home construction in the greater Sacramento region is a powerful economic driver that generates billions of dollars in income, supports tens of thousands of jobs and delivers more than \$1 billion annually to local governments, the North State Building Industry Association (BIA) reported today.

Four reports analyzing the impact of the more than 10,000 homes and apartments built between June 2024 and June 2025 in Sacramento and Placer counties found that homebuilding generates \$4.51 billion in local income, \$1.29 billion in taxes and fees for local governments, and 45,738 jobs.

“For decades, critics have claimed that housing doesn’t pay for itself,” said BIA President and CEO Tim Murphy. “This analysis shows that new housing not only pays its fair share of fees — and then some — but also generates



Sacramento region is a powerful economic driver that generates billions of dollars in income, supports tens of thousands of jobs and delivers more than \$1 billion annually to local governments. Photo courtesy Freepik

significant economic activity and long-term revenue for local governments.”

A BIA report last year found that area local governments collect an average of \$109,000 in fees per new single-family home, costs that are ultimately passed on to buyers

and limit housing production and affordability.

The new findings suggest that high development fees and regulatory barriers — including lengthy approval timelines, litigation and growth restrictions — can constrain housing supply and reduce

the long-term economic and fiscal benefits for local communities.

“If local governments reduced excessive fees and streamlined the approval process, they would not only improve affordability, but also see greater long-term economic returns,” Murphy said.

That’s because in addition to the one-time impacts of construction, the reports found that new housing continues to generate economic benefits well after homes are built. On average, homes constructed during the study period will produce annually over the next decade \$638.3 million in local income, \$226.7 million in local taxes and 7,663 jobs.

In addition, Murphy noted that housing is important beyond just the numbers because it provides needed shelter and builds community.

The analysis was conducted by the National Association of Home Builders using its economic impact model, which incorporates data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Census of Governments. The reports evaluated homebuilding activity in Sacramento and Placer counties and its regional impacts across the four-county Sacramento-Roseville-Folsom metropolitan area, which also includes El Dorado and Yolo counties. ★

‘Not Your Lab Rat’ Campaign Addresses Youth Nicotine Addiction



The “Not Your Lab Rat,” aims to reduce nicotine addiction among young adults and prevent the initiation of vaping and use of other modern nicotine products. Photo courtesy of the California Department of Public Health

By MPG Staff

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has launched a new statewide public health campaign, “Not Your Lab Rat,” aimed at reducing nicotine addiction among young adults and preventing initiation of vaping and other modern nicotine products.

The campaign focuses on Californians ages 18–24, a group experiencing persistently high rates of nicotine vape use, more than twice the rate of the general adult population. It also targets the growing trend of “poly-nicotine” use, where nearly 25% of users consume more than one nicotine product.

“The tobacco and nicotine industry wants young adults to believe their products help with stress and anxiety, but the science shows the opposite – it deepens depression and amplifies mental health struggles,” said CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer, Dr. Erica Pan.

CDPH notes that nicotine is highly addictive and can harm brain development, cardiovascular health and mental well-being. It is also linked to increased depression, anxiety and other mental health challenges creating a cycle where users may rely on nicotine for relief but experience worsening symptoms over time. Many newer products, including vapes and nicotine pouches, can contain higher nicotine levels than traditional cigarettes.

The campaign was funded through

California’s share of a \$462 million multistate settlement with JUUL Labs, which addressed allegations that the company targeted youth through marketing and violated laws related to advertising, competition, and privacy. California Attorney General Rob Bonta said the settlement funds are being redirected toward prevention efforts to counteract those harms.

“Not Your Lab Rat” will run through December 2026 and will appear across television, streaming platforms, social media, radio, out-of-home advertising, video content and college campuses. The campaign aims to reshape perceptions of nicotine, increase awareness of health risks, and encourage quitting among current users.

It features two main creative messages: “Your Body, Their Experiment,” which highlights known health risks such as lung damage, stroke, and worsening depression; and “Upper Decky,” which focuses on nicotine pouches and emphasizes that many long-term health effects remain unknown due to their recent introduction to the market.

CDPH is also directing Californians to free cessation and support services. Residents can access quitting tools through Kick It California, kickitca.org/, including a quit app, text coaching and counseling services. For mental health support, individuals can contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, <https://www.988california.org/>, or use the Soluna app, <https://solunaapp.com/>, for confidential resources. ★

CDFW Urges Public to Leave Baby Deer Alone



It is both illegal and unethical to feed deer and keep deer in your personal possession. Photo courtesy of California Department of Fish and Wildlife

**California Department
of Fish and Wildlife News Release**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Late spring and early summer are peak times for California’s deer herds to give birth to fawns, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is issuing a reminder to well-intentioned residents and visitors to not interact with the baby deer – even if they find one that appears to be abandoned or hungry.

Adult female deer regularly stash their fawns in tall grass or brush for as long as a day while they are out foraging for food.

“Every year we receive calls from concerned individuals and families about fawns and other young wildlife that appear to be abandoned or in distress,” said Jeff Stoddard, Wildlife Program Manager from CDFW’s Northern Region. “Our direction most often is to stay clear of the animal so the mother feels safe to return and so your presence does not attract unwanted attention to the fawn by people or other animals. In almost every case, the mother returns after dark or when it appears quiet and the mother feels safe to do so.”

Each year, CDFW and wildlife rehabilitation facilities are called to assist with fawns that have been removed from the wild by local residents and those recreating outdoors.

The fawns lack the survival skills their mothers would have taught them and cannot be released back into the wild. Long-term captivity in zoos or other wildlife sanctuaries is unlikely due to limited space availability. Consequently, the fawns are often euthanized.

Only a limited number of wildlife rehabilitation facilities are permitted to accept fawns. Due to disease concerns, it is not recommended to move fawns outside of their home county. If a fawn is found on a road or another dangerous location, it is often better to use a towel or blanket and move the animal a short distance to suitable vegetation and allow it to reunite with its mother. A doe will not abandon her fawn merely because it has been touched by a person.

It is both illegal and unethical to feed deer and keep deer in your personal possession. Both crimes are misdemeanors, each subject to penalties of up to \$1,000 and/or six months in jail.

Learn more about the dangers and consequences of feeding deer by visiting https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_WM2WznzQY.

To report an injured, sick or suspected orphaned fawn, contact your local CDFW regional office directly. Visit wildlife.ca.gov/Regions. ★

NFIB Details Benefits of 20% Small Business Tax Deduction Becoming Permanent in California

**National Federation of
Independent Business
News Release**

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The

National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the nation’s leading small business advocacy organization, released a new report outlining the economic benefits and massive tax savings the 20% Small Business Tax Deduction will bring to the 4.3 million small businesses in California now that it has been made permanent. The report also details several other federal tax relief wins that were signed into law.

Additionally, California is projected to gain 141,000 new jobs annually over the next 10 years if the deduction remains in place, including an annual GDP increase of \$9.8 billion for the first decade and \$20.2 million per year beyond 2035.

“Call Tax Day a day for celebration and someone is likely to summon the orderlies to escort you back to your room, but this year’s Tax Day is worth positively commemorating for the historic accomplishment Congress achieved in making the Small Business Deduction a permanent feature of the tax code, instead of letting it

expire at the end of last year,” said John Kabateck, state director for NFIB in California. “It’s important to remind everyone that more than 80% of small businesses are organized as pass-through entities for federal tax purposes and report their business earnings and expenses on their personal income tax forms. The Small Business Deduction allows them to keep more of their hard-earned money and decide how to reinvest it back into their business.”

Since 2017, the Small Business Tax Deduction has allowed small businesses to deduct up to 20% of their business income. This has

empowered them to grow, hire, invest in their employees, and give back to their communities. Without action by Congress, this essential tax deduction was set to expire at the end of 2025.

After being passed by Congress, President Trump signed legislation on July 4, making the Small Business Tax Deduction permanent. This permanent tax relief means America’s small businesses can use more of their hard-earned money to support their business and employees instead of sending it to their state and federal government. It also provides certainty and levels the playing field for small

businesses against their large corporate competitors.

Keep up with the latest California small business news at www.nfib.com. Follow us on X @NFIB_CA and on Facebook @NFIB.CA.

For over 80 years, NFIB has been advocating on behalf of America’s small and independent business owners, both in Washington, D.C., and in all 50 state capitals. NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven association. Since our founding in 1943, NFIB has been exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses and remains so today. For more information, visit nfib.com. ★

Get Ready for California's 2026 Primary

Your Questions About Voting, Answered

By CalMatters Staff
CalMatters.org

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Where do I vote? Am I registered to vote? Does everyone get a ballot in the mail? Get the answers to your election day questions ahead of California's June 2 primary election.

How do I vote? Does everyone get a ballot in the mail? Yes. Under state law, vote-by-mail ballots are sent to every active registered voter.

When will I receive my mail-in-ballot? Counties will begin mailing ballots May 4.

How do I return my mail-in ballot? Mail it to your county elections office; to be counted, ballots have to be postmarked on or before June 2 and received by election offices by June 9. Drop it off at a ballot drop box, vote center or polling location anywhere in the state. Ask someone you trust to do it for you, but that person can't receive payment for doing it.

Can I vote in person? Where is my polling place or vote center? Yes, although mailing your ballot as soon as possible is the best way to get your vote counted fast. You can find out where to vote in the following ways. Visit <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>, text "VOTE" to GOVOTE (468-8683), call the secretary of state's hotline at (800) 345-VOTE, check your county Voter Information Guide or contact your county elections office

If you live in one of 30 counties, you'll have increased options, including as many as 10 days of in-person early voting.

How do I register to vote? Am I registered to vote? You can check the secretary of state's website (<https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>). You'll need to enter your name, date of birth and either your California driver license, identification card number or the last four digits of your Social Security number. If you don't have those available, contact your county elections office or the secretary of state via email or phone at 800-345-8683.

If you've changed your name since the last time you voted, or if you moved and didn't notify the Department of Motor Vehicles or U.S. Postal Service, you may have to register again. If you haven't voted in several consecutive general elections, your registration may have been canceled.

How do I register? Visit <https://registertovote.ca.gov/>. You'll need the same information as above.



Where do I vote? Am I registered to vote? Does everyone get a ballot in the mail? Get the answers to your election day questions ahead of California's June 2 primary election. Photo courtesy Freepik

If the DMV has your signature on file, you'll be able to complete the process online. If not, you'll need to print, sign and mail your completed application to your county elections office. You can also pick up a paper application at elections offices, any DMV office and at many post offices, public libraries and government offices. You'll be contacted when your application is approved, or if you need to provide more information.

What happens if I miss the voter registration deadline? The last day to register online for the primary election is May 18. If you are registering or re-registering less than 15 days before May 18, you must complete same-day voter registration and request your ballot in person at your county elections office or polling location.

How do I change my political party if I'm already registered? You'll need to re-register to vote.

What if I need help with voting? What if I need voter information in a language other than English? The secretary of state's office has voter instructions in the following languages: Spanish, Hindi, Chinese, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese. Your county elections office may offer additional languages.

When will I receive my voter guide? The statewide voter

information guide will be available online by April and will be mailed to voters later that month.

What am I voting on? The June primary election is the first opportunity for Californians to choose which candidates will appear on the general election ballot in November. Unlike some other states, California's primaries are nonpartisan, so the top two vote-getters in each race will advance to the November election, regardless of political party.

The ballot is packed with state and federal races, most notably the race to succeed Gov. Gavin Newsom, who is term-limited and cannot run for reelection. In addition to the governor's race, voters will be asked to choose candidates for Congress, the state Legislature and a slate of statewide offices including insurance commissioner and treasurer.

Can I leave work to vote? Yes. California requires time off for voting if employees don't have enough time outside work hours. You can take as much time as you need, but employers are only required to pay for a maximum of two hours. Employers may require advance notice. The time off must be at the beginning or the end of your shift. Employers are required to post a notice about this 10 days before a statewide election.

How can I track my ballot?

Visit california.ballottrax.net/voter/ to register for California's BallotTrax tool, where you can check your ballot status and opt in to receive email or text notifications.

Is my ballot safe? Yes, voting by mail or dropping your ballot in an approved drop box is a safe and efficient way to vote. Fraudulent voting is uncommon and incredibly difficult given California's strict voter verification procedures. Mail-in ballots will only be sent to voters whose address and identity have been verified by county election officials. Their vote will only be counted once those officials verify that the voter's signature on the envelope matches the one on file.

You can find more information about California's election and voting process on the secretary of state's website. The office takes any allegations of election fraud seriously. Anyone can submit a complaint using the following form sos.ca.gov/elections/publications-and-resources/voter-complaint.

What if I have special circumstances? What should I do if I marked my ballot wrong, or otherwise messed it up? If you haven't turned it in yet, you can exchange your mail ballot for a new one at an elections office, ask an election official at the polling place for a new ballot, or

vote using a provisional ballot. If you have mailed or turned in your ballot, there's no way to fix it. Contact your county elections office for a new ballot.

What if the signature on my ballot doesn't match the one on file? County election officials check the signatures on the return envelope against signatures on your voter registration card to make sure no one tries to improperly cast your ballot. It still remains confidential; the ballot is separated from the envelope before it is counted.

Voters with ballots with missing signatures or ones that don't match are notified and given an opportunity to correct the problem before the election is certified.

What happens if I don't receive my ballot? Contact your county elections office.

Help! I dropped off my ballot to a drop box in the wrong county. Don't worry – the county will pass it on to the correct elections office.

I forgot to detach the stub from my ballot. Can I open the sealed envelope and reseal it myself? You can, but the secretary of state's office recommends contacting your local county elections office. They'll ultimately be processing your ballot, and they can offer the best guidance on whether you should reopen it or just leave the stub attached. ★



Election Information

June 2, 2026, Statewide Direct Primary Election

Vote Early and Vote by Mail



May 4 Ballots begin to arrive by mail. Official Ballot Drop Boxes are now open.



May 18 Close of registration. Register today!



May 23 11-Day Vote Centers open through Election Day.



May 30 All Vote Centers open through Election Day.



June 2 Election Day! Last day to turn in your ballot.

Vote Early! Don't wait for Election Day.

Take advantage of early voting and avoid the lines! You can return your ballot in the mail, at any Official Ballot Drop Box, or at any Vote Center. No postage is necessary.

Track your Ballot!

Sign up for "Where's My Ballot?" with BallotTrax, a free ballot-tracking and alert system. It is available to all voters who wish to track the status of their Vote by Mail ballot from printed to accepted. Scan the QR code or visit www.wheresmyballot.com



Vote Early! Vote by Mail.

Police Chief Lester Announces Retirement After 32 Years' Service

City of Sacramento News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Police Chief Kathy Lester has announced her retirement after 32 years in law enforcement. Her final day as chief of police will be May 15.

"After 32 years in law enforcement, I have made the decision to retire," said Lester. "Serving the Sacramento community has been the honor of my career. This decision comes at the right time for me and my family, and I look forward to the next chapter."

"I'm proud of the progress we've made over the past several years: reducing violence, strengthening partnerships and building strategies that are making a difference. We've made real progress; we didn't just hold the line; we turned a corner."

"The department is in a strong position today, and I wanted to ensure that before making this decision."

Lester also expressed support for City Manager Maraskeshia Smith.

"We have worked closely together, and I have full confidence in her leadership and in the direction of the organization moving



Pictured is Sacramento Police Chief Kathy Lester, who has announced her retirement after 32 years in law enforcement. Photos courtesy of City of Sacramento



Sacramento Deputy Chief Zachary Bales will serve as interim police chief following the retirement of Police Chief Kathy Lester, whose final day is May 15.

forward," Lester said.

Smith thanked Lester for her service.

"Chief Lester has dedicated more than three decades to public service and has led the Sacramento Police Department with professionalism, integrity, and a strong commitment to community safety," Smith said. "Under her leadership, the department has made meaningful progress in reducing violence and strengthening partnerships across our city. I appreciate Chief Lester's leadership and her commitment to ensuring a strong and stable transition for the

department."

To ensure continuity of operations, Smith will appoint Deputy Chief Zachary Bales as interim chief of police, effective upon Lester's retirement.

"I am confident in Interim Chief Bales' ability to lead the department and ensure continuity during this transition," Smith said. "He brings experience, leadership and a deep understanding of this organization and community."

Additional information regarding the recruitment process for the next chief of police will be forthcoming. ★

Vintage Shop Ends Nearly Two-Decade Run

Continued from page 1

from her grandmother, who owned a Victorian home in Nevada City with a basement and attic full of antiques. On her website, Malkasian wrote: "To me Vintage never goes out of style it just gets better!"

In 2005, Malkasian started selling antiques and decor at vendor markets and supplying merchandise to other stores. She opened her own shop a few years later. The name Summer Porch references her grandmother's old home with its wrap-around porch and her first business venture, stocking the back porch of another shop in the area.

Because of the Great Recession, Malkasian said, "it was a big jump into something iffy." But the business proved successful. She loved curating her own space and inventory.

"Everything that I sell here, I use in my life, and if it doesn't pass my test, it doesn't come in," she said. It was enjoyable work, but the store always lingered in the back of her mind, even in her off time. She's now ready to relax but kept it going all these years out of love for her customers.

"You don't get rich doing this," Malkasian said. "I could have closed my shop a long time ago. But every time I would get to that point, [customers said] 'Oh no, don't close.'"

Judy Adams of Nevada City was one of many longtime customers who made a pilgrimage to Summer Poch to say goodbye. On that day, she was shopping while accompanied by her Yorkshire Terrier named George. Adams previously sold ribbons and greeting cards. She met Malkasian while both were tabling at



Summer Porch, a vintage shop in East Sacramento known for its antique furniture, closed its doors April 1 after nearly two decades in business.

vendor markets and soon became good friends. How does Adams feel about the store closing?

"It kind of makes me sad, really. It's just hard to know I won't see her as much," Adams said. But she will continue to shop from Malkasian online because it meets her needs. "If I need a little gift, I always find something here."

Jessica Rueppel of Granite Bay also stopped by Summer Porch that day. She discovered the shop after visiting the flower store next door and has been a devoted customer ever since.

She called Summer Porch "fun, creative, unusual," and is a fan of the homemade crafts Malkasian makes.

One of her favorite purchases were handmade decorative paper cones, which she uses as a dining table centerpiece around Easter. After Malkasian

scales back her business, Rueppel said her work will become more collectible and cherished, as fewer original pieces will be made and sold moving forward.

"I'm sad, but happy for Cheri," Rueppel said. "Because now she can move on to something more in her life. But as a shopper, I'm going to miss the store, because I will not find these wonderful things anywhere else."

Malkasian's wares can be found for sale on her own website, ShopSummerPorch.com, and on the digital marketplace Chairish.com. She wants to deliver locally to keep in touch with customers. But first, she'll take a little break to rest and relax.

"This store has meant a lot to a lot of people, but it's also meant a lot to me," Malkasian said. "So, I just want people to know I'm gonna miss them." ★

What's Next for I Street Bridge Replacement Project?

Continued from page 1

remains a priority for the city and our regional partners as we work through funding challenges and move it forward."

The replacement bridge will feature 12-foot shared-use paths for pedestrians and cyclists, wider travel lanes to accommodate buses and emergency vehicles, and improved connectivity to trails and regional destinations.

The existing I Street Bridge, built in 1911, will remain in place and be converted into a bicycle and pedestrian-only crossing on its upper deck.

City staff are expected to recommend rejecting the current bids due to the cost gap and returning to the market after refining bid documents and conducting outreach with contractors to better

understand market conditions.

That work will include coordination with the Sacramento Transportation Authority, regional partners and Caltrans, along with evaluating potential adjustments to the project's scope. Existing financing plans remain in place and will continue to guide the project as staff refine next steps.

An updated timeline is expected, with a potential construction start likely pushed into 2027 due in part to environmental work windows that limit in-river construction.

Even with the delay, officials noted the project remains fully designed and permitted: a position that would be difficult to replicate if the project stalls for an extended period. ★

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ABOUT TOWN

Walk on the Wildside

Saturday, May 16, Beach Lake Park – This exciting event highlights local conservation efforts and the restoration of native habitats, showcasing the incredible diversity of flora and fauna that call the Bufferlands home.

It's a unique opportunity to learn about wildlife protection, engage with experts, and experience firsthand the beauty of the Central Valley's natural treasures. Entry and parking are FREE. Details at sacsewer.com/wow

Area Museum Experiences

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

Aerospace Museum of California – “The Force Takes Flight: Open Cockpit Day,” May 2.

Guests will have the rare opportunity to explore select aircraft up close, climb inside, ask questions, and experience what it's like to sit in the cockpit, while interacting with members of the Central California Garrison of the 501st Legion, a nonprofit costuming club known for its screen-accurate recreations inspired by

the beloved space saga. Details at aerospacemuseum.org.

California Museum – “Kokoro: The Story of Sacramento's Lost Japantown,” extended through April. Featuring rare family photographs drawn from the personal collections of community members, the exhibit documents the memories at the heart of a once-thriving downtown community devastated first by forced removal during World War II and again by redevelopment in the 1950s. Details at californiamuseum.org.

Sacramento History Museum – The Museum and the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians are excited to present Mómti Market on Saturday, May 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free and family-friendly, the market will take place in the Museum in Old Sacramento and be filled with artisan-made goods crafted by talented California Native artists offering items for purchase such as jewelry, baskets, cultural art and graphic art. Details at sachistorymuseum.org.

California Automobile Museum – Veterans' Memorial Day Car Show, May 25. Join us for a day of classic cars, camaraderie, and honoring our veterans and military personnel who died in

service to their country.

Sunday Drives: The third Sunday of every month, enjoy a free ride (with paid museum admission) in one of the museum's many beautiful cars from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There's no better way to enjoy history than to experience it firsthand down the streets of downtown Sacramento. Details at calautmuseum.org.

California State Railroad Museum – Purple Silk Youth Orchestra, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday, May 9. This multisensory experience features live musical performances. Guests of all ages will enjoy traditional Chinese instruments and Chinese folk dances performed by students throughout the museum.

The Chinese Railroad Workers' Experience offers visitors a view of the Chinese workers who built the western portion of the nation's first Transcontinental Railroad. Marginalized by history, the Chinese workers were more than a nameless group of laborers. Details at californiarailroad.museum.

Crocker Art Museum – “Rebels with La Causa: Royal Chicano Air Force Art and Activism, 1970–1990” explores the expansive production and creative impact of the Royal Chicano Air Force (RCAF), one of the Chicano Movement's most prolific and impactful artist collectives.

Beginning in 1970 at Sacramento State, the group produced individual artworks and group murals, as well as posters for educational, cultural, and political activities.

The RCAF's transformation into a broader collective not only initiated an explosion of Chicano art exhibitions, literary events, performances, and community celebrations, but expanded civic and political engagement.

While RCAF posters served as

announcements for these wide-ranging activities, their multicultural aesthetics, subject matter, and strategic humor redefined Chicana/o art, as well as the history of art and activism in the United States. Details at crockerart.org.

Leland Stanford Mansion State Historic Park – Photography Month Sacramento - Eadweard Muybridge Tours, every Sunday and select Saturdays in April. See the groundbreaking work of Muybridge, whose innovative techniques revolutionized the art form. Delve into his mesmerizing motion studies and iconic landscapes, while discovering the rich cultural heritage housed within the opulent walls of this historic landmark. Details at parks.ca.gov/?page_id=489.

SMUD Museum of Science and Curiosity Laser Concert Series – K-Pop Demon Hunters, Fridays and Saturdays in May. Pink Floyd, May 8 and 9. This immersive music experience, paired with spectacular full-dome lasers, is the best way to listen to your favorite artists outside of a live performance. Details at visitmosac.org.

Elks Lodge 6 Calendar of Events

Mother's Day Brunch/Ritual, 8:30 a.m.-11 a.m. Sunday, May 10.

Larry's Birthday Bash, with Ophir Prison Band and Dyana & the Cherry Kings, 5:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Thursday, May 14. No charge.

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

Karaoke Nights, Thursdays and Saturdays, 7 p.m.

Martial Arts, Monday 5 p.m.

Pickleball, Monday, Wednesday, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.; Thursday, 4:30-7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 4-7 p.m.

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

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Downtown Sacramento Partnership Announces 2026 Concerts in the Park Lineup



Concerts in the Park Returns for its 33rd season on May 1, bringing nine weeks of free live music to downtown Sacramento. Photo courtesy of Downtown Sacramento Partnership

Downtown Sacramento Partnership News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Downtown Sacramento Partnership unveiled the lineup for its highly anticipated Concerts in the Park series, marking the return of free live music in downtown Sacramento on Friday evenings beginning May 1.

A cornerstone of the region's summer calendar, the concert series continues to showcase a mix of nationally touring artists and local favorites, further energizing Sacramento's growing music scene.

Reflecting the strong reception to last year's earlier schedule and condensed format, Concerts in the Park will once again run as a nine-week series in Downtown Plaza Park (910 I St). Gates will open at 6 p.m., with performances concluding at 9:30 p.m.

The 2026 season will also spotlight expanded genre programming, including the addition of Latin Night and Juneteenth Night.

"Over the past few years, we've seen just how much enthusiasm there is for programming that reflects the diversity of our city," said Events Manager of Downtown Sacramento

Partnership Amelia Chew.

"That demand has only continued to grow, and we're incredibly excited to expand our programming for Concerts in the Park this season with our Latin Night and Juneteenth Night. Our goal has always been for Concerts in the Park to feel welcoming and representative of the community we see every day in Sacramento, and this year's lineup builds on that commitment in a meaningful way," Chew added.

Now in its 33rd year, Concerts in the Park remains free to attend, a deliberate choice that reinforces the event's role as an inclusive gathering

space for residents, workers and visitors alike. As downtown Sacramento continues to evolve, the series serves as a vibrant hub where community members can connect, celebrate and share in a collective experience.

The 2026 lineup features a dynamic mix of artists spanning genres and audiences, including Edgehill (indie) on Opening Night,

Andrea Bejar (Latin pop) on Latin Night, and The Temper Trap (indie rock) and Kid Ink (hip-hop) on Juneteenth Night.

A detailed lineup with more information about Concerts in the Park is available at downtown-sac.org/downtown-sac-experiences/concerts-in-the-park.

A production of Downtown Sacramento

Partnership, Concerts in the Park is proudly sponsored by Dignity Health, Donaghy Sales, Office of Traffic Safety presented by CalTrans, Xfinity, BeatBox, Zen Garden Wellness, Lime, Republic Services, Fox40 and Audacy.

For more information about downtown Sacramento, visit DowntownSac.org. ★

Midtown's Historic Pioneer Church for Sale



The 100-year-old sanctuary is home to the congregation that was the first church formed in Sacramento during the Gold Rush in 1849. Photo courtesy of Pioneer Congregational United Church of Christ

Pioneer Congregational United Church of Christ News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The historic Pioneer Congregational United Church of Christ's sanctuary and office building are for sale.

Located at 2700 L St., across from Sutter's Fort, the 100-year-old sanctuary is home to the congregation that was the first church formed in Sacramento during the Gold Rush in 1849.

In person Sunday worship services continue at 10 a.m., with streaming services offered at the church's website, pioneeruucc.org.

The property is a two-story, 19,400-gross-square-foot church facility in Midtown. It has a large Fellowship Hall featuring a full

theatrical stage, a commercial kitchen, several offices that house a health clinic, and meeting space for bible study and several AA groups. Turton Commercial Real Estate is representing the church.

According to Pastor Bo Bocock, "We are still operational during this trying time. Sadly, our congregation was aging, then COVID hit, that affected our loss of membership. Pioneer Church continues its Sunday services in an incredible sanctuary rich with history and devotion that they don't want to leave, but that sanctuary has a seating capacity of at least six times their membership base, and they feel it is time for another group to have the opportunity to utilize the building to its maximum potential." ★

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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



The Ping Pong Balls Are Coming

Yes, the NBA regular season is over, and our hometown ballers are once again watching from the sidelines.

With a grand total of 22 wins the 2025-26 season turned out very different from what the Sactown faithful envisioned.

Within a couple of weeks, the ping pong balls will determine the order of the upcoming draft, and as the Dallas Mavericks can attest, anything is likely to happen.

The Kings franchise and fans collectively will hold their breath, as anything can happen when it comes to the first five picks.

Without a doubt the Kings will get a high draft pick, but the real question is, how high.

Experts and pundits from all corners believe we're looking at one of the deepest drafts in many years, and that bodes well for Sacramento.

But what can we take away from a season bereft with disappointments.

For one thing we can look forward to a starting unit at the start of next season that is 100 percent healthy, and hope that the first-round draft choice in the upcoming draft makes an immediate impact. Something like De'Aaron Fox did when he became one of the best point guards in the history of the Kings franchise.

And what should we make of Keegan Murray after a season of injuries? Will this talented wing man once again return to a consistent 3-point shooter as he was in his rookie year just four short seasons ago?

Keegan had an amazing rookie season followed by one head scratching season after another as his 3-point shooting declined year after year.

Keegan set an NBA rookie record by recording 206 3-pointers, and Sacramento fans thought this was just the beginning.

Sadly, although Keegan shot an amazing 41 percent from beyond the arc, he would not accomplish this again. In the following three seasons Murray shot 35 percent, 34 percent, and in an injury shortened 2026 a dismal 27 percent.

So, will the real Keegan Murray please stand up. The Kings will in all likelihood hold onto Murray and resist trade offers, as his value has slipped just as his percentage has.

The real question is can this talented player

return to form and show Kings fans that his rookie year was no fluke.

I believe he can and he will.

Zach Lavine has received considerable criticism for his drop in 3-point shooting this year as well, but the question is can Zach return to normal next season and provide Murray with someone that carry spread the floor.

Once again, I believe that's exactly what Lavine can do, and if he does, and Domantas Sabonis can stay healthy, look out western division, because here comes the Kings.

We don't know what GM Scott Perry is thinking of, and whether he will keep this group together, but we honestly never had a real opportunity to see this group play together.

Let's not forget that DeMar DeRozan is one of the most talented mid-range shooters in the league, and like Zach Lavine, can open the floor for others.

The point guard position is once again the conundrum it has been since the departure of DeAaron Fox, and we must wait and see if the draft will provide front court help or perhaps the point guard the Kings have been looking for.

Devin Carter and Nique Clifford had moments this past season, but neither has made the statement that says the point guard for the future has arrived.

Not to be forgotten is the arrival and surprisingly so of Dylan Cardwell and Precious Achiuwa. Both players acquitted themselves admirably, and Kings fans will be watching to see if one or both can take that next step in their NBA career and become a force to be reckoned with.

A lot to chew on for the Sacramento faithful, and opinions are all over the board, but for my money I hope that Scott Perry looks hard before he leaps.

There is a lot of talent on this team right now, and the real question is whether they can gel.

A winning franchise is much closer than last season's 22 wins would make you think, so say your prayers Kings fans and keep your fingers crossed.

We are one impact player from watching a playoff team so keep your eyes on those ping pong balls and let's all root together! ★

Candidates For Governor Ought to Get Serious About These Pressing Issues



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

Eric Swalwell's abrupt departure from the campaign for governor due to revelations about sexual transgressions leaves nine men and women remaining as serious contenders for spots on the November ballot.

So far their campaigns have produced a scattershot of positions and promises that have only occasionally touched on California's real world issues. However, by sheer coincidence, there's been a recent flurry of think tank reports and articles on those issues that should be required reading for would-be governors and moderators of forums to question the candidates.

In no particular order:

Schools

The Public Policy Institute of California delved into the worrisome lack of academic achievement among in California's public schools. It notes that in state tests just 49% of students met or exceeded state standards in English language and 37% in math.

Results of federal tests were even less satisfactory, with only 29% of fourth-graders and 28% of eighth-graders proficient in reading and 35% and 25%, respectively, in math.

Mississippi, long a laggard in academic skills, got serious about raising reading

comprehension by adopting phonics. California, after years of political debate, finally semi-adopted phonics, although not completely requiring it. An article in Atlantic magazine reveals that in Mississippi, just adopting phonics was not enough; statewide mandates, coupled with state oversight, were needed to make phonics work — a suggestion maybe California needs to follow suit.

Jobs

Outgoing Gov. Gavin Newsom loves to brag about California's \$4 trillion economy but rarely mentions the darker side — several years with virtually no job growth. The Public Policy Institute of California digs into that stagnation and reports, "Job gains have been limited to a few key sectors like health care and local government, while stock market gains have been driven by AI. Unemployment has not increased much in the past two years, though it remains higher than in 2022 and above almost all other states.

"One major challenge for the next governor will be providing expensive services like health care to a growing older adult population while the share of workers shrinks," PPIC says.

The conservative Pacific Research Institute plows the same economic ground in a report. "The data shows that California's economic challenges are no longer theoretical — they are measurable and worsening," said Wayne Winegarden, one of the report's authors. "The state's weak job growth and shrinking private sector signal that California is at a crossroads. Without meaningful policy reforms, the gap between California and the rest of

the country will continue to widen."

One aspect of California's economic sluggishness is an outflow of workers due to its sky-high living costs. Another report from the Public Policy Institute of California says the state has seen a net loss of nearly 1.3 million people since 2020. The outflow, coupled with a record low birth rate, makes California especially reliant on immigration for new workers, which in turn is affected by turmoil in federal immigration policy.

Homes

A study by UC-Berkeley's California Policy Lab delves even further into the state's loss of population to other states, citing high living costs, especially for housing, as the prime factor.

It notes that "in 2012 the state's median household income was roughly sufficient to qualify for a mortgage on a mid-tier home, but it now falls substantially short of the level needed to qualify for even a bottom-tier home."

However, those who abandon California more easily become homeowners due to much lower prices and see improvement in their overall financial wellbeing.

This is not an exhaustive catalogue of California issues that the campaigns for governor should address. Water supply and homelessness also need attention, as well as the insurance crisis and the state's chronic budget deficits. But these reports are a good start for serious debate.

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

Must I Set Up a Social Security Account to Enroll in Medicare?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I turn 65 this November 2026. Someone told me I need to set up a Social Security account at least 3 months ahead of time before applying for Medicare for the first time. I do not intend to take any Social Security benefits until, perhaps, age 67 or later. Please advise and thank you. **Signed: Looking Ahead**

Dear Looking Ahead: You don't technically need to "set up" an online SSA account to enroll in Medicare, but it would be more efficient to do so. We always recommend creating your online "my Social Security" account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount well before you are ready to claim your Social Security benefits. That's because you can monitor your projected Social Security benefits to help you decide when to claim, but it also facilitates other things you might need to do at the Social Security

Administration (such as claiming your SS retirement benefits online and enrolling in Medicare online).

As for Medicare, you can enroll in Medicare up to 3 months before the month you turn 65, and you can contact the Social Security Administration by phone up to 3 months prior in order to schedule an appointment to enroll over the phone (call 1.800.772.1213 to make the appointment). You can enroll via telephone, even if you don't have your "my Social Security" online account set up. However, an advantage to creating your personal online Social Security account is that you could then enroll in Medicare online as described at this link: www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up. And you can, as you wish to do, enroll only in Medicare without also taking your Social Security benefits at this time.

I want to also make you aware that if you are still working and have "creditable" healthcare coverage from your employer ("creditable" is an employer group plan with at least 20 participants), then you can delay enrolling in Medicare until your employer coverage ends (thus saving the usual Medicare Part B monthly premium). When your employer's

healthcare coverage ends, you will enter a Special Enrollment Period during which you can enroll in Medicare without incurring a Late Enrollment Penalty.

Finally, please be aware that whenever you claim your Social Security benefits, you will be automatically enrolled in Medicare Part A (inpatient hospitalization coverage) and Part B (coverage for outpatient medical services). Since there is a monthly premium associated with Medicare Part B (but not with Part A), you can choose to decline Part B if you are still working and covered by your employer's creditable healthcare plan, until your employer's healthcare coverage ends.

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As far as showdowns between popes and secular leaders go, President Trump versus Pope LEO hardly rates.

Pope LEO hasn't forced Trump to come see him and stand for three days in the snow, the way Pope Gregory VII did to Henry IV, the Holy Roman Emperor, in 1077. Nor has he issued an interdict, a tactic favored by Pope Innocent III, against the United States.

On the other hand, Trump hasn't sacked Rome and forced the pope to submit to his will, in a repeat of Emperor Charles V's 16th-century gambit against Pope Clement VII.

It's still been a remarkably testy exchange between Pope LEO and Trump over the Iran war. The president of the United States -- stung by the pontiff's criticisms of his decision to launch the war and his ensuing rhetoric -- has denounced Pope LEO in his characteristic terms, all but saying that His Holiness "doesn't have what it takes."

It's easy, meanwhile, to interpret LEO as taking veiled shots at Trump. "Enough with the idolatry of self and money!" is not an unusual sentiment for a Holy Father, but who can be certain he didn't have our guilt president in mind when he said it in a homily the other day? A pope who doesn't

Trump vs. the Pope

rebuke a president of the United States for threatening to bring a foreign civilization to an end isn't doing his job, yet it's important to understand that the Bible is not an injunction for pacifism, and it doesn't entail a condemnation of the Iran war.

The Bible presents a realistic view of the inevitability of human conflict. As Ecclesiastes says, there is "a time for war, and a time for peace." In the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel or Kings, it is often a time for war. The key question is whether or not a war is righteous -- the difference between Israel, say, prevailing in the Battle of Deborah, or seeing the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem.

On Palm Sunday, Pope LEO cited Isaiah 1:15 for the proposition that God doesn't listen to the prayers of those who wage war: "Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood." The context of this verse, though, is the injustice and corruption of the people of Judah -- in other words, their self-abasement.

It makes no sense, as a broader matter, to cite Isaiah as an injunction against waging war or evidence that God pays no heed to the prayers of those who fight. Later in the book, King Hezekiah of Judah prays for God's help in stopping an Assyrian army threatening Jerusalem, and 185,000 Assyrian soldiers are struck down. Jesus preaches love

and mercy, of course, but that is not a warrant for pacifism. The great Christian thinkers St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas gave us just war theory, reconciling Christian ethics with the existence of evil in the world and the necessity of warfare. According to this view, which is embraced by the Catholic Church, a war can only be fought for a just cause and has to be waged in keeping with moral standards, minimizing harm to civilians.

Pope LEO has wrongly made it sound as though no war can possibly be just, and regardless, his opposition to the Iran war isn't dispositive or binding on anyone else.

The pontiff might consider that Trump first talked of attacking Iran when the regime was in the midst of slaughtering thousands of protesters in the streets, and if the current government fell and gave way to one with more respect for the rights of its people, it would be a boon to Iranians and a large step toward a safer and more peaceful region.

Trump's wild threats are understandably anathema to Pope LEO, but they don't define the Iran war or change the fact that the Bible portrays warfare as a tragic fact of human existence. Yes, as Isaiah says, they shall beat their swords into plowshares, but not yet.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. (c) 2026 by King Features Synd., Inc. ★

WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS

Lund Construction Selected to Build Critical Public Infrastructure for Republic FC Soccer Stadium

Sacramento Republic FC News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento Republic FC announced April 2 the selection of Lund Construction to build the public infrastructure surrounding the Club's new soccer stadium at the Downtown Sacramento Railyards. As part of its agreement with the City of Sacramento, Republic FC is responsible for delivering the streets, utilities and public amenities that will connect the stadium to the surrounding neighborhood, laying the physical foundation for one of the most transformative developments in the city's history.

Lund Construction's scope of work includes new and improved streets, sidewalks, a paseo, water and sewer infrastructure, storm drain systems and a new public bike trail. The work will create a connected, walkable public realm around the stadium and provide the backbone infrastructure for the broader buildout of the 31-acre plot that will also include a new neighborhood for the region.

"With groundbreaking behind us, the focus now turns to execution and that's exactly why we chose Lund Construction," said Pegasus Development CEO Art Zargaryan. Pegasus Development is leading the entire project for Wilton Rancheria and Republic FC. "Their decades of experience building infrastructure throughout the region and their firsthand knowledge of this site, make the team at Lund Construction a strong pick to help us accelerate our plans for a transformative neighborhood and stadium project."

Kevin Lund, president of Lund Construction added, "For more than 65 years, Lund Construction Co. has played a meaningful role in shaping the infrastructure



Republic FC's new downtown home will be the biggest pro sports and entertainment venue in the region and will serve as the anchor for a new neighborhood that will help double the size of Downtown. Rendering courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC



Lund Construction's portfolio throughout the Sacramento area encompasses complex joint trench systems, multi-utility coordination, and large-scale infrastructure delivery. Rendering courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

of the Sacramento region. At the heart of our work is a simple belief: strong communities are built by dedicated people. That principle continues to guide everything we do. We are honored to contribute to the future home of Sacramento Republic FC and proud to partner with the

Wilton Rancheria Tribe. It is a privilege to help build projects that will serve and strengthen this community for generations to come, and we remain committed to delivering that work with integrity, respect, and lasting pride."

Lund Construction's portfolio

throughout the Sacramento area encompasses complex joint trench systems, multi-utility coordination, and large-scale infrastructure delivery, reflecting the technical depth and operational capacity this project requires. Lund Construction has successfully executed a

range of projects demonstrating Lund's capability to handle large-scale, high-stakes assignments efficiently. The team's experience includes civil and utility infrastructure work within the Railyards district, navigating the site's distinctive environmental and logistical conditions. That firsthand familiarity with the site's complexities informed the RFP evaluation and distinguished the Lund Construction team.

Republic FC's new downtown home will be the biggest pro sports and entertainment venue in the region and will serve as the anchor for a new neighborhood that will help double the size of Downtown. Vertical construction on the site will begin later this year, with the stadium on track to open in 2028. Fans can secure their spot in the region's largest venue by placing a deposit at 20KStadium.com. ★

Women's Tennis Adds Italy's De Matteo for 2026-27



Francesca De Matteo has committed to continuing her academic and athletic career with the Hornets beginning with the 2026-27 season. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State Athletics

Sacramento State Athletics News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento State head women's tennis coach Sophie Breault announced April 14 that Francesca De Matteo has committed to continue her academic and athletic career with the Hornets beginning with the 2026-27 season.

"We are thrilled to welcome De Matteo to our Hornet family," Breault said. "She brings so much passion and energy to her game, along with a strong competitive mindset. De Matteo possesses a well-rounded, all-court game in singles and is also an outstanding doubles player, adding valuable depth to our lineup. She will be a fantastic addition and we expect her to make an immediate impact as we compete for Big West Conference championships."

A native of Naples, Italy, who attended the G. Mazzini secondary school is the second signee for the program this year, joining South Africa's Jessica Schilz, who officially committed to Sacramento State back in November.

Over the last two years, De Matteo has earned a spot in the prequalification rounds for the Internazionali BNL d'Italia in both

singles (2025) and doubles (2026) at the Foro Italico in Rome, a tournament that features some of the top international players and is known as one of the premier clay-court tournaments in the world.

She reached the final in singles in one of the prequalification tournaments in 2025 and won a doubles championship in another one of the events alongside her partner in 2026.

De Matteo, who has been ranked as high as No. 905 in the ITF junior rankings, also received a wild card for the Internazionali Femminili di Tennis Città di Caserta in both 2024 and 2025, an yearly event that features some of the top up-and-coming talent and established players on the International Tennis Federation circuit.

Among her best results during her juniors career, she has reached the semifinals in singles of a pair of J5 events in Dakar and Croatia and another semifinal of a J60 tournament in Dakar.

In doubles play, she claimed a title at a J5 tournament in Cyprus and reached the final three times of tournaments in Bari, Paola, and Livorno in her home country.

In addition, De Matteo has also represented Italy as part of the national team for European Summer and Winter Cups in 2019 and 2020. ★

Eight Aggies Named to the MPSF All-Academic Team

UC Davis Athletics News Release

DAVIS, CA (MPG) - Eight UC Davis gymnasts have been named to the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation All-Academic Team, showcasing their skills in competition and in the classroom.

Student-athletes are named to the MPSF All-Academic team based on a specific set of criteria, all of which the eight Aggies successfully met to earn the honor.

To qualify, a student-athlete must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or higher, be at least a sophomore academically, and have completed one full academic year at the institution prior to the season in which the award is received. In addition, the student-athlete must have participated in at least fifty percent of the institution's competitions in their respective sport.



Student-athletes are named to the MPSF All-Academic team based on a specific set of criteria, all of which the eight Aggies successfully met to earn the honor. Photo courtesy of UC Davis Athletics

The group of Aggies is made up of four sophomores, one junior and three seniors.

UC Davis MPSF All-Academic Team Members include McKenna Knecht, Cady Chiu, Avery Marshall, Amelia Moneymaker, Jehaan Poonja, Milla Gideon, Alana Kim and Avah Reichow. ★

Nique Clifford Presented with the 2026 Community Crossover Award

Sacramento Kings News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Ahead of the April 10 game, the Sacramento Kings honored rookie Nique Clifford with the 2026 Community Crossover Award presented by Kaiser Permanente. In his first NBA season, Clifford was recognized for his outstanding commitment on and off the court, as well as his meaningful impact in the Sacramento community.

Clifford has quickly made his presence felt beyond basketball through hands-on community engagement. During the holiday season, he fulfilled wish lists for five local families affiliated with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Sacramento. He provided gifts, holiday dinners, Kings tickets and signed memorabilia, creating memorable experiences for participating youth and their families. His efforts reflect a genuine dedication to uplifting underserved communities and building lasting connections with Sacramento families. Clifford's willingness to give his time and resources has made an immediate and positive impression throughout the region.

Beyond the holidays, Clifford participated in several Kings community events, including Eat Like a King, Kingpin Classic and Season Ticket Member parties. His engagement with underserved youth, connection with fans and continued community involvement reflect his commitment to making a lasting impact.

On the court, Clifford has shown strong promise in his rookie campaign, bringing energy, versatility and a team-first mentality to every game. His work ethic and poise continue to establish him as a valuable contributor for the Kings.

The Community Crossover Award, established in 2003, honors a Kings player who exemplifies excellence both on and off the court. Previous recipients include Chris Webber (2003), Vlade Divac (2004), Peja Stojaković (2005), De'Aaron Fox (2019), Domantas Sabonis (2023) and Malik Monk (2024, 2025). Clifford now joins this distinguished group, continuing the organization's tradition of celebrating players who make a meaningful difference in the community. The complete list of honorees can be found by visiting nba.com/kings/history-community-crossover-award. ★