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East Sacramento News

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End Run Around the Rules

California lawmakers: 'any flavor of affordable housing you could possibly want'



A patchwork of bills are giving housing developers and local governments more options to reduce red tape for housing projects.

BY BEN CHRISTOPHER, CALMATTERS.ORG

CALMATTERS (MPG) - You may not have seen the headlines (there weren't any). You may have missed the raucous debate (there wasn't much of one). But with the end of the legislative session last week, California is now on the verge of laying down a welcome mat for most major affordable housing projects across the state.

That's not because of a single bill, but a patchwork of current and former legislation that, taken together, "basically covers any flavor of affordable housing you could possibly want to build," said Linda Mandolini, president of Eden Housing, an affordable housing development nonprofit.

Homes designated for low-income occupants, like all housing projects, face a gauntlet of potential challenges and hold-ups that add to the already exorbitant cost of affordable housing in California. Those hurdles include lawsuits filed under the wide-ranging California Environmental Quality Act, extensive public hearings and other forms of opposition from local government.

Now, affordable housing projects — in most places and most of the time — may soon be exempt from all that, fitted out in a suit of procedural armor made up of some half a dozen bills and laws.

A bill now sitting on the governor's desk would cover up one of the last chinks in that armor. Assembly Bill 1449, authored by two Democratic Assemblymembers, David Alvarez of San Diego and Buffy Wicks of Oakland, would exempt certain affordable apartment developments from review under CEQA. To qualify, projects would have to be located in dense urban areas, set aside each unit for someone earning less than 80% the area median income and abide by stricter labor standards, among other requirements.

Though modest and technical sounding, that's unusually broad for new construction in California.

"I do think it's gonna be very consequential but it's kind of flown under the

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Sacramento Blankets for Kids Readies for Holiday Giveaway



Kids love Beanie Babies, so SBSK is asking for donations of new or "almost new" Beanie Babies as well as Joann's fleece blanket kits (48 x 60). Photo courtesy of SBSK

By Claire Gliddon, SBSK

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Every September, Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids (SBSK) picks as many of the lowest-income elementary schools they can and finds out how many kindergarteners they have. Then volunteers make double fleece blankets (about 40" x 60") for ALL of them, and a little fleece pouch with a Beanie Baby in it to go with each blanket.

Through this act of generosity, SBSK gives these blankets to children as gifts right before Christmas break. Some of these kids live in their cars or in places without heat! And this is ALL they get for Christmas. It is wildly popular with the teachers and the kids! Spread the word, too!

SBSK has been doing this for 10 years and we hope to continue doing it, as long as they can get Beanie Babies. In 2022, SBSK gave out over 2,200 blankets and Beanie Babies in their Kindergarten Project! SBSK is always looking for new volunteers to make blankets all year round for children in need. SBSK is asking for donations of Joann's fleece blanket kits (48 x 60) all year long. SBSK is asking for donations of new or "almost new" Beanie Babies all year long.

If you'd like more information about SBSK, please go to www.sacblankets4kids.com and sign in! No pressure, no timelines, no meetings...just people who enjoy crocheting, knitting, quilting, sewing, making no-sew blankets and helping a whole lot of children at the same time.

SBSK is a nonprofit organization that serves children in need from infants to 18-year-olds. They do this all year long! But the Kindergarten Project is their "special" project of the year. ★

Women's Empowerment Receives $25K from Kaiser for Unhoused Women and Children

By Kristin Thébaud, Thébaud Communications

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Women's Empowerment has received $25,000 in new support from Kaiser Permanente to help Sacramento women experiencing homelessness during the ongoing housing crisis. Kaiser is supporting Women's Empowerment's work to empower unhoused women with economic opportunity so they can keep their families healthy.

"Kaiser Permanente has been one of our most steadfast supporters over the years, and we are grateful for their continued investment in our work as we find new ways to help women overcome homelessness during the prolonged housing crisis in Sacramento," said Lisa Culp, executive director, Women's Empowerment.

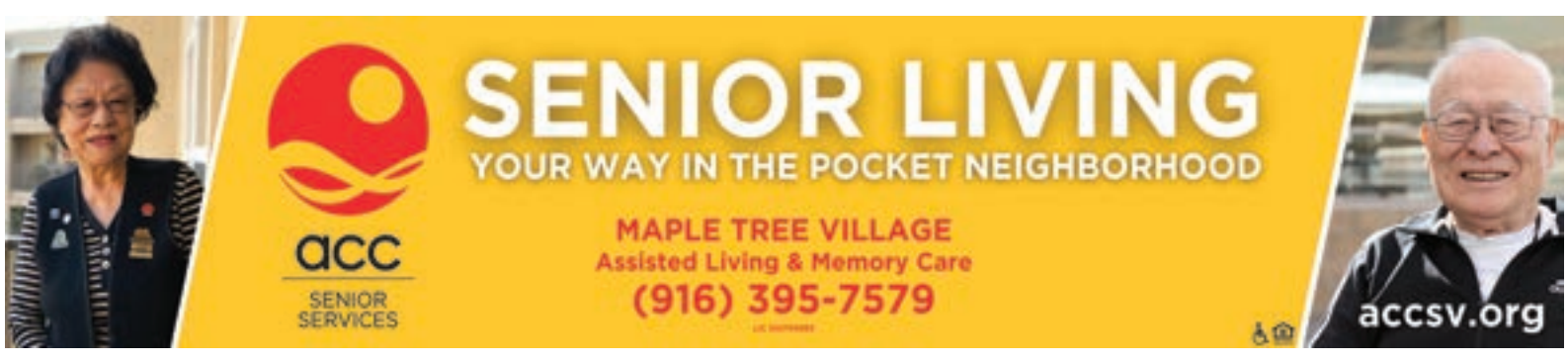
Women's Empowerment provides a two-month employment-readiness and empowerment program, paid job training, childcare and support services so women and their children can break the generational cycle of homelessness. Women's Empowerment offers the most comprehensive job-readiness program in the Sacramento area designed specifically for women experiencing homelessness and their children.

The grant from Kaiser will fund Women's Empowerment's work with unhoused women in Sacramento to ensure they have a wide range of tools to secure quality jobs and careers that lead to a livable wage and safe home for their families, including job training and support groups for women who have experienced domestic violence or substance use.

"We're proud to support Women's Empowerment and its efforts to reduce homelessness and increase access to steady jobs in the Sacramento area," said James (Jay) L. Robinson III, senior vice president and area manager for Kaiser Permanente Sacramento and South Sacramento. "Providing access to safe, stable housing and opportunities for employment are part of Kaiser Permanente's commitment to improve the health of the communities we serve."

Last year, 121 Women's Empowerment graduates secured employment or enrolled in paid training or education. Since 2001, 1,837 women have graduated from the program with their 3,894 children. Women's Empowerment is funded through private donations from the community and grants. To make a donation: Womens-Empowerment.org. ★

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Meals on Wheels Seeks Volunteers

By Tamara Warta



Gladys and Jean enjoy a meal together at the Meals on Wheels sponsored All Seasons Cafe. Photo courtesy of Meals on Wheels by ACC

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - When COVID-19 hit our world, many businesses and organizations were paused or shut down completely, never to reopen. For some that were fortunate enough to survive, bouncing back after such an event hasn't been simple. While the shutdowns may now seem like ancient history to many people, non-profit organizations in particular are still recovering. One such local group is Meals on Wheels by ACC Senior Services.

Meals on Wheels is a well-known national organization, and locally it's quite known as well. The group helps keep seniors in their homes and communities by providing nutritious meals, safety net services, social contact, and community resource information. Sacramento Valley's Meals on Wheels division alone is home to 126 routes that deliver meals all throughout the region – stretching all the way out through the delta, as well as 13 congregate programs where seniors can go eat at a cafe and socialize.

According to Michelle Bustamante, the operations manager of the Sacramento Meals on Wheels division, they adjusted during the pandemic by switching from hot delivered meals to frozen meals that arrived with little to no face-to-face contact. And now, they are aiming to work their way back up to their full meal distribution services pre-pandemic.

"We need volunteer drivers," said Bustamante. "We are still looking to convert four routes back [to hot meals with face-to-face contact] and need drivers."

Meals on Wheels also has several programs outside of its home meal delivery service. All Seasons Cafe is an in-person restaurant-style space.

"It is for people who are more mobile and can get out and want to go have lunch with peers," Bustamante explained. "It's an opportunity for them to socialize."

While All Seasons Cafe currently has 13 locations, they are looking for one more. Meals on Wheels currently does not have a Citrus Heights location. They are urgently seeking anywhere with a commercial kitchen and enough space for seniors to congregate. These cafes typically take place in community centers, senior centers, or in senior apartment complexes. With each lunch hosting 20-90 folks each meal, Bustamante hopes to raise awareness of the need and find a willing partner so they can serve the seniors of Citrus Heights.

With the holidays quickly approaching, Meals on Wheels will also again host Project Warm Wishes, which distributes gifts to seniors served by their organization. Both fun and functional items are appreciated, including toiletries, small household items, blankets, gloves, and amusements like adult coloring books and magazines.

"We just want to make sure those people know that they're not forgotten and are cared for," Bustamante said about the holiday project, which is completely delivered by volunteers.

Project Warm Wishes starts in mid-October and donations are accepted through December 8. Used items are not accepted, but brand-new donations are enthusiastically welcomed.

One other very special program operated by Meals on Wheels? Animeals. Through this, they deliver food to roughly 200 cats and dogs throughout Sacramento County. After it was discovered that some home-bound seniors were sharing their meals with their animals to get by, the group realized the need and took action. Most of the pet food or the funding for the program are donated.

"Pets are more than just animals – they are family to many of our seniors," says Bustamante.

From cafe workers to route drivers, all of Meals on Wheels' volunteers receive a background check and go through a training program. When Bustamante asked how volunteers are chosen and implemented, she mentioned that both individuals and groups like churches and service clubs apply. The goal is to plug people in where their heart is.

"The initial onboarding is done online nowadays, and we meet up with a volunteer and find out what their availability is and what they would like to get out of volunteering."

Volunteers are greatly needed at Meals on Wheels in Sacramento, and any adult with a passion to help can get involved. While help for the organization comes through various sources including Community Block Grants, city funding, private donors, and the Agency on Aging (Area 4), volunteers are still very difficult to find at times.

Meals on Wheels currently has a waitlist for seniors needing services, and the more volunteers they can train and recruit, the smaller that waitlist gets. Those hoping to get involved can contact Michelle Bustamante at (916) 444-9533 or by emailing mbustamante@mowsac.org ★



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Four Sacramento Luminaries Join Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera Board of Directors

Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera News Release



Lora Painter. Courtesy photo



Lars Gjerde. Courtesy photo



Jennifer Harris. Courtesy photo



Adam Marszal. Courtesy photo

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera (SP&O) received a fresh injection of board leadership last week with the election of four new members to the Board of Directors. The four new members, who include journalist Lora Painter of ABC10, arts advocate Lars Gjerde, Sacramento State administrator Jennifer Harris, and corporate leader Adam Marszal, begin their tenure immediately.

"SP&O is honored to have these four experienced business and community volunteers join our Board of Directors," said SP&O President Sheree Meyer. "Our board has a track record of tremendous success, as our recent accomplishments demonstrate, but with these new members sharing their passion and knowledge, SP&O is poised to reach even greater heights."

The new board members join the board at a time when the SP&O is on a trajectory of growth and success. SP&O's recently completed 2022-23 season ended with a chorus of unprecedented achievements, including a reliable and growing subscription base, sold out performances and, since 2015, over $10 million in gifts and sponsorships made to the Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera and the Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera Foundation.

Lora Painter anchors weeknights at 5, 6, & 11 p.m. for ABC10. The California native has a master's degree from New York University in Broadcast News & Documentary, and a Bachelor's Degree in Communication from California State University San Marcos. She has two Emmy nominations for anchoring and writing and has twice received a "Best Anchor" award from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters. Lora has been a board member of the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts and continues to be a member of its Asian Art Advisory Council. She is a former professor at Anyang University in South Korea. She is also an accomplished singer and plays several instruments including piano and clarinet.

Norwegian native **Lars Gjerde** earned his doctorate in organ from the Eastman School of Music. During his church music career, Lars taught, led choirs and orchestral musicians, and created events to support charities. He engaged in regional leadership through the American Guild of Organists. Lars later earned his Nurse Practitioner degree from Yale University and is now a Nurse Practitioner Supervisor at UC Davis Medical Center. A recent Chapter President of the California Association for Nurse Practitioners and Chapter Dean for the American Guild of Organists, Lars is thrilled to serve the visionary board of the Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera.

Jennifer Harris is the Associate Vice President of Budget Planning and Administration at Sacramento State University. A Sacramento native and Sac State Alumna, Jennifer has worked in a variety of fiscal management and oversight roles with the State of California, including the California State Auditor's Office, the Department of Finance, and CalPERS. Jennifer credits her love of classical music to her elementary school violin teacher who took her to hear the Camellia Symphony Orchestra perform. She is excited to help support classical music and opera in our community, and in particular increasing youth access to and appreciation of music.

Adam Marszal was born and raised in Carmichael, CA and currently serves as the CEO of his family's petroleum company and commercial real estate business. He takes pleasure in being involved in organizations and different causes in Sacramento. In his free time, Adam enjoys golfing and being with his wife, Maggie, and their two daughters, Lucy and Blair. Adam's interest in music stems from his time in Jesuit High School's choir as a teenager. ★

End Run Around the Rules

California lawmakers: 'any flavor of affordable housing you could possibly want'

Continued from Page 1

radar," Alvarez said. His explanation why: "The politics of where Californians are and certainly where the Legislature is — we want to see results. We want to see housing being produced."

Taken together with a handful of other bills and current laws, said Mark Stivers, a lobbyist with the California Housing Partnership, which co-sponsored AB 1449, the new legislation "effectively make it possible for affordable housing providers to develop nearly all viable sites in California by-right and exempt from CEQA review."

Speeding up approval for these projects comes with a trade-off. Environmental justice organizations, labor unions and various opponents of new development see CEQA as a vital tool to weigh in on what gets built, where and under what terms.

"Our communities rely heavily on CEQA to be able to get more information about proposed developments that might be contributing to further pollution," said Grecia Orozco, a staff attorney with the nonprofit Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment.

Local activists also often flood the public meetings of city councils and planning boards to pressure elected officials to block unpopular projects or extract concessions from developers.

Whether AB 1449 and a handful of similar bills become law is now up to Gov. Gavin Newsom. Supporters have reason to be optimistic. The Newsom administration is pushing local governments to approve an unprecedented 2.5 million additional homes by 2030, he called the CEQA process "broken" and in the spring he rolled out a package of bills aimed at speeding up environmental challenges to projects — though housing was not included.

He has until Oct. 14 to sign or veto the bills now sitting on his desk.

The Alvarez-Wicks bill isn't the first legislative effort to grease the skids for new affordable housing.

Two others, both authored by San Francisco Democratic Sen. Scott Wiener, would force local governments to automatically approve apartment buildings in housing-strapped parts of the state and most affordable housing projects on the properties of houses of worship and nonprofit colleges, so long as they comply with a list of zoning, affordability and labor requirements.

A third piece of legislation by San Jose Democratic Sen. Dave Cortese exempts the decision by local governments to fund affordable housing projects from environmental challenges, too. Newsom already signed it.

Still awaiting the governor's pen are a handful of bills that make it more difficult to stall housing projects through environmental lawsuits in general. That includes a bill by Sen. Nancy Skinner, a Berkeley Democrat, that would make it easier for courts to toss out environmental challenges they deem "frivolous" or "solely intended to cause unnecessary delay." Another by Assemblymember Phil Ting, a San Francisco Democrat, would give local officials a deadline by which to approve or deny a project's environmental review.

The Ting proposal was fiercely opposed by many environmental activists and the State Building and Construction Trades Council, an umbrella group that represents many unionized construction workers. The bill would also make it more difficult for courts to award legal fees to groups that sue to block projects through CEQA.

J.P. Rose, a staff attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity, which regularly brings such suits, called that provision "the largest weakening of CEQA in recent history."

The fact that this long list of bills passed the Legislature — some by healthy margins — amounts to a notable political shift, said Christopher Elmendorf, a law professor at UC Davis who advised Ting on the bill.

"I think it illustrates that a sea change is underfoot in how people are starting to think about these environmental review laws," he said, though he noted that the shift in California is still modest compared to those underway in other states.

Earlier this year, the Washington legislature nearly unanimously passed a law to exempt virtually all new urban housing from that state's environmental protection law.

Many of the California bills build on a law passed last year that streamlines affordable housing construction along commercial corridors.

In cobbling together the law, its author, Wicks, struck a compromise: In exempting certain housing projects from environmental challenge and other local hurdles, developers would pay workers a higher minimum wage, provide them with health care benefits and abide by other stricter labor standards. That trade was the key to winning the support of the state carpenters' union and breaking up a legislative logjam that had stymied housing production bills for years.

It also provided a template for Wiener's two streamlining bills this year, along with the Alvarez-Wicks CEQA exemption proposal.

"That really laid the foundation for those of us who did work in the housing space this year," said Alvarez.

"Our communities rely heavily on CEQA to be able to get more information about proposed developments that might be contributing to further pollution."

Not every pro-housing advocate or CEQA critic is so content with the bargain.

"A lot of these bills help a little," said Jennifer Hernandez, a land use attorney at the law firm Holland & Knight, who has catalogued CEQA challenges to housing projects for years. But she notes that swapping out the threat of environmental litigation with higher payroll expenses just replaces one cost with another.

In practice, she said, these exemptions are only likely to clear the way for substantial new housing construction in higher cost areas where developers can make up the difference by charging higher rents to non-subsidized residents. "You really need premium rentals to pay for those higher labor standards," she said.

But for many affordable housing developers, it's still a trade worth making.

"You've got really strong laws, clear exemptions, and an attorney general who's willing to step up and say you got to build it," said Mandolini with Eden Housing, who has been working on housing in the state for more than two decades. "This is the best it has been in California…If this had all existed 20 years ago, we might have built a lot more housing a lot faster." ★





Dave Ramsey Says

Helping Take Care of Mom

Dear Dave,

My mother-in-law is 85, and she's had some health setbacks recently. The family got together with her, and as a group, we decided it was time to sell her property and move her into an apartment at a nice senior living facility. She should see a little over $300,000 from the sale of her house. Aside from that, she has about $10,000 in a savings account. The problem is, she'll only receive $2,100 a month in Social Security, and rent at the facility is $2,600 per month. Plus she loves making donations to charities. With interest rates where they are, is a CD ladder a good place to put the money to help her cash flow expenses in the future?

– Ed

Dear Ed,

If this were my mother-in-law, I'd want her to do better than a CD (certificate of deposit) ladder. Even with the deficit between her Social Security income and the cost of rent, she'll only need to see $6,000 a year from the investment to make up the difference. And plus, she's 85. Even if she got nothing in terms of interest, the chances of her burning all the way through her nest egg before she dies are almost zero. I know the thought of her passing away isn't pleasant, but it's something you have to take into consideration.

As far as the charities go? Right now, she's the charity. Maybe not in the traditional sense of the word, but it's time for mom to come first. Only the strong can help the weak. I didn't let my toddlers carry our newborn. And when it comes to money, you've got to have the financial strength—the free and clear assets—to carry others. Take care of your own household first. That's her responsibility at this point.

Ed, you're not going to mess this up unless you put the money in crypto, or something stupid like that. If you want to do some high-yield savings as a part of it, that's fine. If it were me, I'd probably end up investing some of it too. Here's the thing: Overall, if you could make 8% on it, that's $2,000 a month, and it lasts indefinitely. That's not even touching the principal. But like I said before, even if you make nothing on it, just divide $6,000 into $300,000. See what I mean? It's probably going to last as long as she does.

Of course, there may be some other medical bills, and you'd probably want her to have a life other than just paying bills. That's why I'd like to see that extra $2,000 a month happening. It would provide a little cushion. And there may be a few other little things from time to time the family would have to pick up, but that's not unusual in a situation like this.

You all can make this work for her. Just don't be super aggressive, but don't be super conservative either.

– Dave

**Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national best-selling author, personal finance expert and host of "The Ramsey Show." He has appeared on "Good Morning America," "CBS This Morning," "Today," Fox News, CNN, Fox Business and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for the company Ramsey Solutions.* ★

SacRT Awarded $4.4M for Infrastructure Projects

SacRT News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) is thrilled to announce that it has been awarded a total of $4.4 million in state grant funding for three projects aimed at enhancing transportation infrastructure and addressing climate change impacts within the Sacramento region. These grants underscore SacRT's commitment to sustainable and accessible transit options across the region.

The grant awards are as follows:

Strategic Growth Council Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Grant - $3.2 Million This significant grant funding will enable SacRT, in partnership with Bridge Housing, to make critical improvements to eight bus stops and fund platform modifications at the Arden/Del Paso Station on the Blue Line, ensuring that it meets the height requirements for the deployment of new low-floor light rail trains.

These enhancements will improve the overall transit experience for riders while contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, as part of the AHSC award, BRIDGE Housing will transform the vacant land and unoccupied buildings at 440 Arden Way into a vibrant mixed-use development including 124 affordable homes. The ground floor will include a commercial childcare center available to residents of the broader neighborhood, a resident services suite, community room, and a multipurpose room, surrounding a courtyard with playgrounds and community gardens.

Caltrans Climate Adaptation Planning Grant - $730,209 In a collaboration effort with the City of Sacramento and SacRT funds were secured to address the impacts of climate change. The project involves a comprehensive multi-hazard risk assessment of transportation systems, the development of adaptation solutions, and the creation of a prioritized list of transit projects using a multi-criteria analysis.

Ultimately, this initiative will lead to the integration of climate change adaptation strategies into the capital improvement process, providing both the City and SacRT with actionable efforts to reduce climate change impacts on our transportation infrastructure.

Caltrans Climate Adaptation Grant - $470,000 SacRT, in partnership with the City of Elk Grove, has received funding to further plan and conceptual design for extending the Blue Line light rail and/or bus rapid transit from the city of Sacramento to the city of Elk Grove. This project encompasses an existing conditions report, alignment and station location recommendations, ridership projections, technical analysis, traffic modeling, and station area plans.

The collaboration, supported by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), will engage various stakeholders and involve extensive community participation, ensuring that the project aligns with the needs and aspirations of the community.

"These grants mark a significant milestone in our efforts to enhance transit accessibility, increase housing and reduce our region's carbon footprint," said SacRT General Manager/CEO Henry Li. "We are committed to delivering sustainable and innovative solutions that will not only improve transit services but also contribute to a greener and more resilient future for the Sacramento region."

SacRT is the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) Outstanding Public Transportation System of the Year award recipient in North America for accomplishment and innovations in public transportation, the 2022 and 2019 national TSA Gold Standard Security Award recipient for the highest standard of excellence, and the 2021 and 2020 national APTA Rail Safety Gold Award recipient for its multi-faceted and innovative approach to reducing crime and fare evasion. SacRT operates approximately 82 bus routes (fixed-route, dial-a-ride and microtransit); 43 miles of light rail serving 53 stations; and ADA paratransit services all within a 440-square mile service area throughout Sacramento County, which includes service in the cities of Sacramento, Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom and Rancho Cordova. April 1, 2023, marks SacRT's 50th anniversary of operation, celebrating our five decades of historic milestones.

"The City of Elk Grove annexed its transit services with SacRT in 2021 to improve regional connectivity and to expand a high-capacity transit solution into the city of Elk Grove," said Elk Grove Mayor and SacRT Director Bobbie Singh-Allen. "As Elk Grove grows with more mixed-use higher density housing projects, I am excited to see the partnership with SacRT ensure efficient and reliable transit is being incorporated."

"As the region prepares for the impacts of climate change, I am thrilled the City of Sacramento and SacRT are partnering on adaptation and resiliency solutions," said SacRT Vice Chair and Sacramento City Councilmember Rick Jennings. "These funds will reduce climate change impacts on our transportation systems and promote health, safety and mobility."

"BRIDGE Housing is proud to partner with SacRT on 440 Arden Way," said BRIDGE Housing President & CEO Ken Lombard. "This high-impact investment supports our shared goal of bringing this community alive with 124 affordable homes and supportive services near high-quality transportation, education, and jobs to support our residents and their neighbors to thrive."

These grants showcase the dedication of SacRT and its many partners in making transit more efficient, accessible, and environmentally responsible. SacRT is excited to embark on these transformative projects and looks forward to working closely with the community to bring these initiatives to fruition.

For more information about these projects, visit www.sacrt.com/apps/projects/. ★

Oriental Fruit Flies Detected in Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release



Bactrocera dorsalis, the oriental fruit fly, can enter the state is by "hitchhiking" in fruits and vegetables brought back illegally by travelers. Photo Courtesy of Martin Hauser/California Department of Food and Agriculture

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner, in cooperation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture, have initiated an extensive survey and eradication plan in response to the detection of nine male oriental fruit flies (OFF), Bactrocera dorsalis, near the city of Rancho Cordova and the American River Parkway in Sacramento County.

The initial detection was confirmed on Sept. 12, 2023. The detections were made as part of our coordinated pest prevention system that protects our agriculture and natural resources from invasive species, with early detection as a key component to successfully eradicating an infestation before it can become established.

The extensive survey, also known as a delimitation survey, consists of multiple oriental fruit fly traps at prescribed densities going out 4.5 miles in each direction from the oriental fruit fly detection sites. These nine OFF will trigger a quarantine, which will be announced shortly by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Following the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), agricultural officials use "male attractant" technique as the mainstay of the eradication effort for this invasive species. This approach has successfully eliminated dozens of fruit fly infestations in California. Trained workers squirt a small patch of fruit fly attractant mixed with a very small dose of Spinosad, a natural pesticide made by a soil bacterium and approved for use on organic crops, approximately 8-10 feet off the ground on street trees and similar surfaces; male fruit flies are attracted to the mixture and perish after consuming it. The male attractant treatment program is being carried out over an area that extends 1.5 miles from each site where the oriental fruit flies were trapped.

While fruit flies and other invasive species that threaten California's crops and natural environment are sometimes detected in agricultural areas, the vast majority are found in urban and suburban communities. The most common pathway for these pests to enter the state is by "hitchhiking" in fruits and vegetables brought back illegally by travelers as they return from infested regions of the world or from packages of home-grown produce sent to California. Help protect California's agricultural and natural resources; please don't pack a pest when traveling or mailing packages.

"Invasive non-native fruit flies are serious pests for California's agricultural industry and backyard gardens," said Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner Chris Flores. "These recent detections remind us that we need to remain vigilant in protecting our agricultural and natural resources. When traveling abroad or mailing packages to California, we urge the public not to bring back or ship fruits and vegetables as they are pathways for oriental fruit flies and other invasive species entering our state."

The oriental fruit fly is known to target over 230 different fruit, vegetable and plant commodities. Important California crops at risk include grapes, pome and stone fruits, citrus, dates, avocados, tomatoes and peppers. Damage occurs when the female fruit fly lays her eggs inside the fruit. The eggs hatch into maggots, which tunnel through the flesh of the fruit, making it unfit for consumption.

The oriental fruit fly is widespread throughout much of the mainland of southern Asia and neighboring islands, including Sri Lanka and Taiwan, and it has invaded other areas, most notably Africa and Hawaii.

Federal, State and County agricultural officials work year-round, 365 days a year, to prevent, deter, detect, and eliminate the threat of invasive species and diseases that can damage or destroy our agricultural products and natural environment. The efforts are aimed at keeping California's natural environment and food supply plentiful, safe and pest-free.

Residents with questions about the project may call the Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner's office at 916-875-6603 or the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Pest Hotline at 1-800-491-1899. ★

Masai Giraffe Loses Calf Shortly After Giving Birth

Sacramento Zoo News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Zoo is saddened to share that Masai giraffe, Amirah, lost her calf on Monday, September 4th shortly after giving birth. Amirah, a first-time mother, had a routine and successful gestation and delivery, but unfortunately the calf was not viable. Veterinary staff from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine as well as members of the Zoo's giraffe care team were on site throughout the birth to observe and assist if needed. Amirah is healthy and continuing to do well under the observation of animal care and veterinary staff and will be back with the rest of the giraffe herd soon.

"I am beyond proud of our Zoo staff and their commitment to the animals we care for here at the Sacramento Zoo," said Melissa McCartney, Senior Manager of Animal Care and Veterinary Health Services at the Sacramento Zoo. "While the loss of any animal is heartbreaking to our zoo family, we are grateful for the support of our community as we continue the important work of protecting wild giraffes and providing exceptional care to the giraffe herd at the Sacramento Zoo. On behalf of the Zoo's animal care and vet teams, we are appreciative of everyone's compassion as we process this loss."



Masai giraffe Amirah lost her calf on Monday, September 4th. Despite this, the first-time mother is doing well. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Zoo

In addition to Masai giraffe, Amirah, the Sacramento Zoo is currently home to three other female Masai giraffes (including two young giraffes born in 2020 and 2023), one male Masai giraffe, and one female reticulated giraffe. The Zoo is one of 34 institutions managing 138 Masai giraffes in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) population. The Zoo partners with and supports the Wild Nature Institute (WNI), a field research organization studying Masai giraffe demographics and the African Savanna ecosystem. This partnership with WNI is critical to giraffe research and conservation efforts in Africa. ★

ABOUT TOWN

In September, the Midtown Farmers Market Celebrates Farm-to-Fork Month

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Always in Farm-to-Fork style and celebrating the 10th season of the popular and thriving Midtown Farmers Market, the Midtown Association has plans for deliciously fun activations in September with more than 200 vendors along with special demos, activities, enhanced Second Saturday programming sponsored by Five Star Bank, and more. Plus, voting is nearing the end for the 2023 America's Farmers Market Celebration competition with the Midtown Farmers Market currently in the lead for first place in California (4th in the Pacific Region and 29th in the nation). Market enthusiasts are encouraged to cast their vote for the Midtown Farmers Market now through September 18 via this link.

Proudly presented by Sutter Health and always bursting with fresh fruit, produce, gourmet or locally made products and artisan goods, the open-air market is available year-round with spring/summer hours in effect from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. through October. In September, activities at the Midtown Farmers Market will highlight market vendors every weekend, have a special live art demonstration on Second Saturday and spotlight Library Card Sign-Up Month with two visits from the Sacramento Public Library plus offer a special Kids' Story Time on the last Saturday of the month.

A schedule of just some of the fun and free activations and demonstrations happening in September at the Midtown Farmers Market includes the following:

Saturday, September 30:

8 a.m. to 1 p.m. – On-site sponsor promotions and giveaways from Sac Republic FC in Producers Plaza and SMUD in the Market Square (while supplies last)

10 a.m. and 12 p.m. – Pl is offering a curd making demonstration on Savory Street

10 a.m. – In celebration of Library Card Sign-Up Month, a special Kids' Story Time is provided by Bookhaus in the Market Square

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - Live music by DJ Bimes in the Market Square

Owned and managed by the Midtown Association, the Midtown Farmers Market continues to grow and evolve to reflect the dynamic and eclectic tastes of the surrounding neighborhood. Spanning five city blocks, the Midtown Farmers Market lies in the heart of Midtown at 20th & K Streets. More detailed information about the Midtown Farmers Market plus a regularly updated market map are available at www.midtownfarmers-marketsac.com.

In addition to offering numerous public transportation options, Midtown Sacramento is walkable and bike/scooter/car-share friendly with plenty of parking available in nearby garages plus various lots throughout Midtown. Also, a complimentary bike valet is available at the Midtown Farmers Market through September courtesy of Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates (SABA). For additional transportation information, visit www.easeintomidtown.com. For more information about Midtown Sacramento in general, special events and activities, and the Midtown Association, please visit www.exploremidtown.org or follow on social media – Facebook at www.facebook.com/exploremidtown/ and @ExploreMidtown on Instagram and Twitter.

Midtown Association: The mission of the Midtown Association (MA) is to create a center for culture, creativity, and vibrancy in Sacramento's urban core. For more information about MA, call 916-442-1500 or visit www.exploremidtown.org.

Old Sacramento Waterfront's K Street Activated

With fun & free entertainment and pop-ups on weekends through september.

SACRAMENTO, CALIF. (August 31, 2023) – As part of a new pilot program, Downtown Sacramento Partnership is pleased to announce K Street at the Old Sacramento Waterfront will be car-free to allow for fun and free activations on the historic street on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. through September. Building on the success of other slow streets programs such as Al Fresco dining, Old Sacramento Waterfront is opening the space from Second to Front Streets for pedestrians, bicyclists, and shaded areas to sit so the community can watch or play games such as checkers and corn hole, and enjoy live music performed by talented local musicians.

"One of the highlights of the past few years is that cities all over the world, including Sacramento, have had opportunities to experiment with recalibrating our public realm to best serve the people who enjoy them," said Scott Ford, Economic Development Director of Downtown Sacramento Partnership. "This pilot program prioritizes the pedestrian and creates a dynamic central plaza in the heart of Old Sacramento Waterfront, enhancing our guest experience while providing an opportunity to enjoy active transportation from DOCO to the Sacramento River."

By opening K Street for entertainment and pop-ups, an opportunity is created that provides the community to experience Sacramento's original commercial district in an entirely new way. In addition, Old Sacramento Waterfront merchants have an opportunity to utilize the space to connect with customers as they enjoy a lively atmosphere. As an example, Stage Nine Entertainment is planning to activate K Street for a 30th Anniversary weekend celebration on the final weekend of the month.

This new activation is made possible from funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) designated by the City of Sacramento to install removable street bollards which provide enhanced pedestrian safety and help create additional space for passive recreation and social collisions for residents and visitors alike.

The program would not be possible without the support of the City of Sacramento and the Department of Public Works, a national leader in dynamic, curbside management and efficient mobility solutions through www.SacPark.org.

For more information about the Old Sacramento Waterfront please visit www.OldSacramento.com and for more about the Downtown Sacramento Partnership, visit www.DowntownSac.org.

Sacramento Area Museums Showcase Region's Farm-to-Fork Roots All Year Long

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (August 28, 2023) – The Greater Sacramento region is rich with popular museums and destinations that offer diverse and enriching experiences for individuals, families, residents, and visitors alike. Given the critically important role agriculture continues to play in the region, many local museums offer special exhibits, experiences and activations that highlight ever-enduring Farm-to-Fork connections. A sampling of some of the Farm-to-Fork offerings at local museums includes the following:

California Agriculture Museum – Woodland is home to an entire museum focused on agriculture, filled with a unique collection of harvesters, wheel and crawler-type tractors, combines, trucks, art, artifacts, rotating interactive exhibits and much more. In all, the museum tells the history of Farm-to-Fork, dating back to the Gold Rush era and how the industry evolved from horse drawn to steam driven to fuel powered machines to harvest and transport California's bounty.

California State Railroad Museum & Foundation – A Fruit Growers Express refrigerated rail car is on permanent display inside the Museum's Roundhouse. Museum visitors can explore this historic rail car and exhibit, "Farm to Fork: A Public History," and learn about how refrigerated rail cars enabled California farmers, growers, and producers send farm-to-fork freshness all over the country. Visitors can step inside the historic Fruit Growers Express rail car to see how the ice-cooled rail cars transported produce and built an agricultural system that exports more wealth than the California Gold Rush. Plus, the popular weekend excursion train, Sacramento Southern Railroad – currently on pause due to an important rail repair project – runs on the historic Walnut Grove Branch Line. This rail line transported pears, asparagus, celery, seeds, and other products from the Delta communities to markets nationwide.

Sacramento Children's Museum – Young visitors hungry to learn about fresh food have a variety of options at the Children's Museum, including at the miniature Leo's Market and Leo's Food Court (a miniature market of food carts), about bees and honey with the in-house beehive, and an interactive train table highlighting Sacramento's agricultural landscape in miniature, complete with mini livestock. Plus, the Children's Museum will be at the Farm-to-Fork Festival (September 22-23) sharing vegetable stamp printing with visitors.

SMUD Museum of Science & Curiosity – MOSAC's interactive exhibits bring the story of water to life, demonstrating how our region is working together to conserve this natural resource for now and future generations. The "Water Challenge" exhibit lets museum visitors actively shape a watershed's flow, create a tune for saving water at home, and choose between local or non-local foods to buy based on how everyday decisions impact conservation efforts — all while learning about the environmental footprint along the way.

Utility Exploration Center – The City of Roseville's Utility Exploration Center (UEC) is a testament to the region's commitment to sustainable living and resource conservation. Nestled in the heart of a region renowned for its Farm-to-Fork movement, the UEC acts as an educational hub, encouraging residents and visitors alike to delve into the intricacies of energy and water conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable practices. By fostering an understanding of how we use and preserve resources, the UEC underscores the importance of our agricultural roots.

For more information about upcoming activities offered by Sacramento area museums, "like" them on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/SacMuseums, follow them on Instagram and Twitter @SacMuseums or visit the user-friendly website at www.SacMuseums.org.

Friends of Sutter's Fort Announces Exciting Line-Up of Special Events and Activations Happening this Fall

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Friends of Sutter's Fort, in partnership with Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, is proud to present a series of family-friendly events and activations this fall highlighted by holiday themed movies, an all-ages concert, and adventurous self-guided evening tours by flashlight or lantern light.

A schedule of fall activities presented by Friends of Sutter's Fort includes the following:

Films with Friends on Saturday Evenings, October 21 and December 2

Continuing a series of popular "Films with Friends" outdoor movie screenings, two holiday themed movies will be shown on the exterior wall of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park at 26th & L Streets. Movies include Disney's "Coco" on October 21 and "Elf" on December 2. Movie-goers are encouraged to bring blankets and chairs, and friendly dogs (on leash) are welcome; no alcohol is allowed. Movie goers can also choose to support Friends of Sutter's Fort by purchasing a Films with Friends Fun Pack for $50 with all proceeds benefiting efforts to bring more community events and activations to Sutter's Fort. Friends Fun Packs are available to order in advance at www.suttersfort.org and on-site at the event (if and while supplies last). For more information about Films with Friends, please visit www.suttersfort.org/event/films-with-friends.

Sunset & Strings Jamboree on Thursday Evening, October 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Featuring the Rock Bottom Boys – performing for the first time within Sacramento city limits – the community can experience and enjoy and all-ages musical event with energizing three-part harmonies, homespun vocal styling, boot stomping music, and well-seasoned showmanship. This live musical event is a fundraiser to support future field trips and educational opportunities at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park. For tickets to Sunset & Strings Jamboree, please visit https://suttersfort.ticketspice.com/sunset-strings-jamboree.

Flashlights & Friends After Hour Tours – Friday, December 1 from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

For those seeking fun and adventure in a unique space, Flashlight & Friends may be just the ticket. The holiday themed evening provides an opportunity to explore Sutter's Fort Historic Park like never before – by flashlight or lantern light (guests can bring their own or purchase them on-site). The self-guided tour experience is family friendly and includes live music, games, and treats for event attendees. For tickets and/or more information about Flashttps://suttersfort.org/event/flashlights-friends/

The special events and activations support the nonprofit Friends of Sutter's Fort to help provide upcoming programming such as field trips and future events at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park.

For those interested in visiting inside Sutter's Fort State Historic Park (that is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily), all Fort admission fees will be waived for the duration of a major roof replacement and seismic stabilization project that is currently underway. Visitors can observe the rehabilitation project firsthand and tour the Central Building, which remains open.

Friends of Sutter's Fort

Friends of Sutter's Fort is a 501c3 charitable foundation. As a state park cooperating association, we collaborate with California State Parks at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park to preserve and protect historic structures, and artifacts, and to engage visitors of all ages. For more information, please visit www.suttersfort.org. ★

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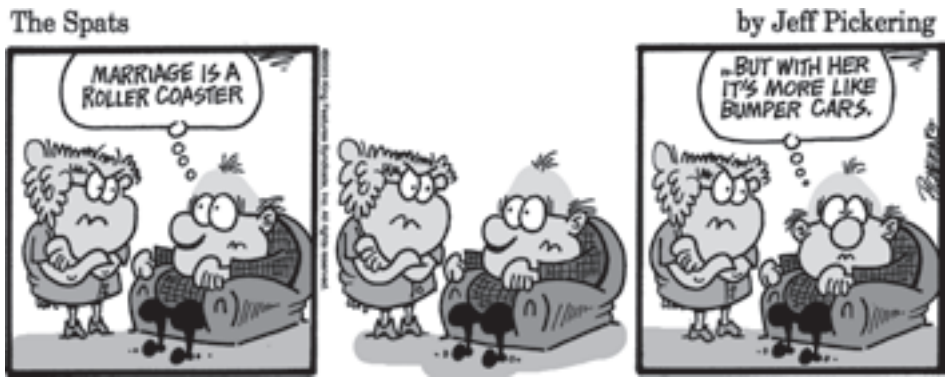
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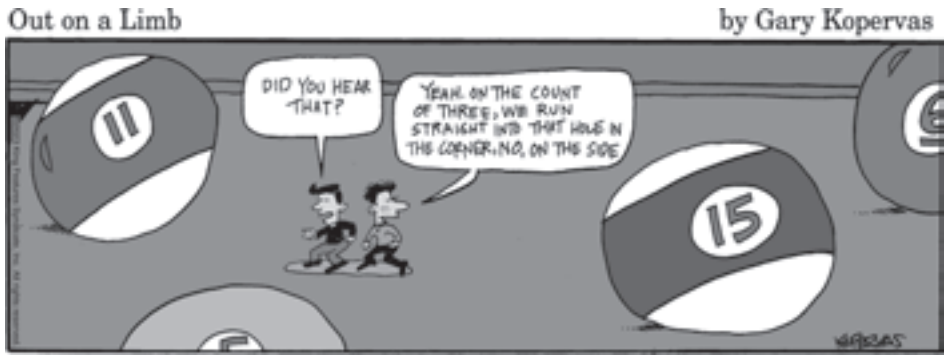
The Spats by Jeff Pickering



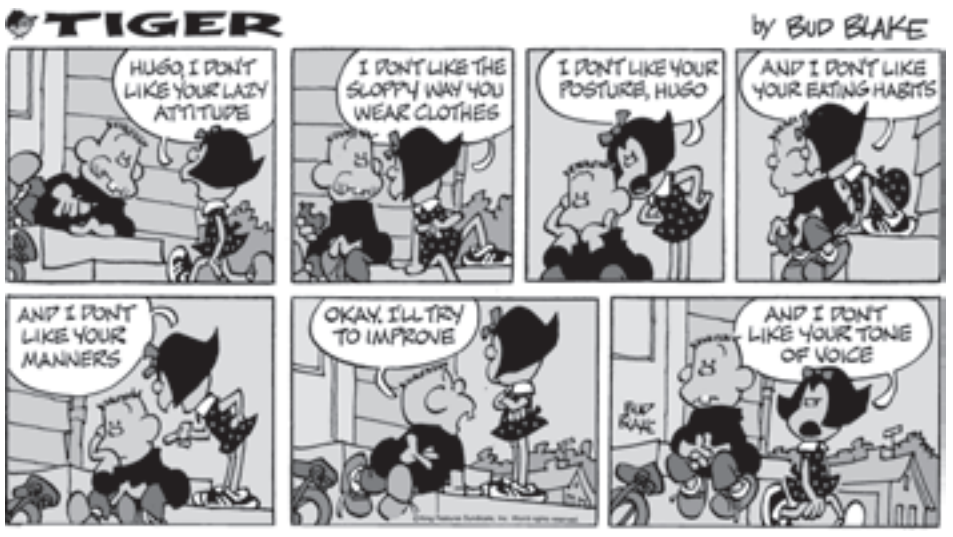
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CLUES

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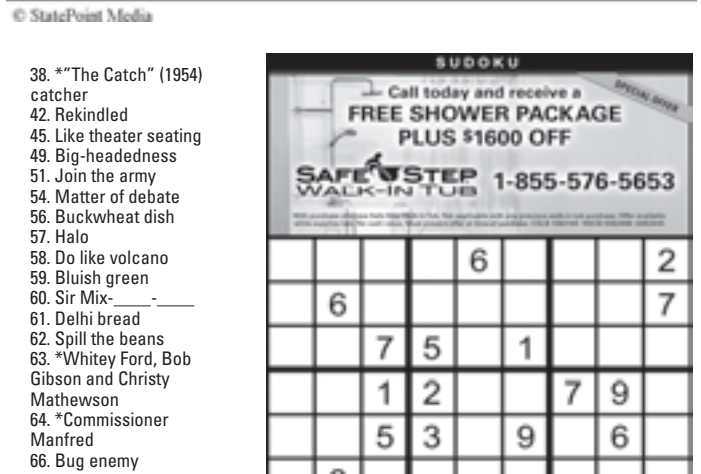
1. In the middle of
6. "____, the Beloved Country"
9. Start of "The Night Before Christmas"
13. Anoint
14. *"...three strikes, ____'re out, at the old ball game"
15. Capital of Egypt
16. *Yanees owner, George ____brenner
17. Mandela's org.
18. Back street
19. *Walk-off move (2 words)
21. *One of MLB countries
23. Start an engine
24. Salvador Dali's muse
25. Old French coin
28. Select
30. Pass, as time
35. Antonym of is
37. Rumpelstiltskin's weaver
39. Virgo's brightest star
40. Snack, in Spain
41. Rose oil
43. *Yogi Berra - 295 PA, e.g.
44. *Player's representative
46. Eyelid affliction
47. Shade of beige
48. *a.k.a. Mr. October
50. Small island
52. In the know
53. Part of armor
55. Octopus' defense
57. *Last year's World Series winners
60. *Ronald Acu a Jr.'s home base
64. Indian monetary unit
65. Sun, in Mexico
67. ____ Asimov
68. Artemis' companion
69. E.T.'s craft, acr.
70. Shelf material
71. Cry like a baby
72. Young newt
73. Shermans, in World War II

DOWN

1. It starred Alan Alda from 1972-1983
2. Digging, so to speak
3. Think
4. More like a fox
5. Madagascar's hedgehog-like animal
6. Printer cartridge color
7. *Guidry, Cey or Gardenhire
8. New Mexico's state flower
9. Samoan money
10. *____ card
11. Length times width
12. Tofu ingredient
15. Lock sites
20. Soft palate hanger
22. Kind of beer
24. Speech organ
25. Fretted instrument
26. a.k.a. People of the Middle Waters
27. Remove pegs
29. Auction portions
31. Cathedral recess
32. *____ clock
33. Close call
34. Relish (2 words)
36. NASA's orange drink
38. *"The Catch" (1954) catcher
42. Rekindled
45. Like theater seating
49. Big-headedness
51. Join the army
54. Matter of debate
56. Buckwheat dish
57. Halo
58. Do like volcano
59. Bluish green
60. Sir Mix-____-____
61. Delhi bread
62. Spill the beans
63. *Whitey Ford, Bob Gibson and Christy Mathewson
64. *Commissioner Manfred
66. Bug enemy

CROSSWORD

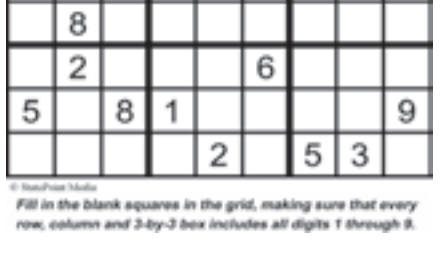




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MPG CNPA CIRCULATION VERIFICATION COUNCIL

Metro-PAC Endorses Steve Hansen for Mayor



Steve Hansen, 2024 candidate for City of Sacramento Mayor. Photo courtesy of T-Rock Communications

By Traci Rockefeller Cusack, T-Rock Communications

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee (Metro-PAC) announced on September 22, 2023, their strong endorsement of Steve Hansen for Mayor in the City of Sacramento's 2024 mayoral race.

With deep experience as a former Sacramento City Councilmember, Hansen is best suited to move the City of Sacramento forward. Hansen is committed to focusing on meaningful change to combat the homeless crisis through partnering with Sacramento County on mental health services, enhancing public safety, proposing bold steps to increase housing stock, with an overall approach of dignity and respect for all. For the people of Sacramento and the business community, the clear choice is Hansen who has years of experience in City Hall, effectively working with the public and private sectors to create meaningful economic opportunity for the people of Sacramento.

"The City of Sacramento is at a tipping point. We can look around and see that what we are doing is not working. We need a bold leader who is willing to partner with all parties to address the challenges, motivate others to engage, and put a strategy together to move our city in a new direction," said Chelsea Minor, Chair of the Metro-PAC. "Steve has always been a champion of economic growth, recruiting and retaining businesses and helping our region prosper. He is the leader we need to take our City in a new direction."

With a win rate of 87% in the 2022 election cycle, the Metro-PAC is a known game changer in the momentum of local elections.

Formed in 1985, the Metro-PAC elevates the policies of the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, the voice for business in the six-county region, whose members drive the economy of the capital region forward and provide jobs for more than 100,000 community members.

In the last four years, the Metro Chamber has been the leading voice for small business in ensuring businesses had the funding, resources, and advocacy needed to survive the pandemic and come out stronger.

Core to that strategy is endorsing candidates for state and local office through the Metro-PAC that understand both the unique needs and impact of our small businesses on both our economy and cultural fabric.

The Metro-PAC endorses candidates that understand and value the important role of our business community and actively seek to engage and partner with them during their terms.

For a complete list of Metro-PAC endorsements, please see www.metrochamber.org. ★

CDPH Recommends All Californians Stay Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccine

CDPH Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Following federal approval of the updated COVID-19 vaccine and recommendations for the upcoming winter respiratory virus season, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is recommending all Californians stay up to date on the vaccine and get the updated shot when available.

For renewed protection against severe illness, hospitalization and death, all Californians 5 years and older should receive one dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine, as long as it's been 2 months or more since their most recent dose. Getting vaccinated may also minimize your symptoms if you do become infected so you can return to your daily activities more quickly. Recommendations for younger children depend on the number of doses received previously.

CDPH strongly urges vaccination for individuals who are at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19 due to advanced age or underlying illness as this is the group of individuals most vulnerable to severe disease and the worst outcomes.

"Staying up to date on the COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to keep your immunity strong and protect yourself and others from severe illness, hospitalization, and death," said CDPH Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Tomás Aragón. "As we enter the winter season, it is crucial that all individuals remain up to date with vaccinations when they're eligible, including flu, COVID-19 and RSV."

WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED

•Everyone Age 5 and Up: Everyone 5 years of age and older, regardless of previous vaccination, is eligible to receive a single dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine as long as it's been at least 2 months since the last dose.

•Younger Children and Infants: Infants and younger children, 6 months through 4 years of age, who have previously been vaccinated against COVID-19 are eligible to receive one or two doses of the updated vaccine. The timing and number of doses depends on the previous COVID-19 vaccine received.

•Unvaccinated Younger Children and Infants: Unvaccinated infants and younger children, 6 months through 4 years of age, are eligible to receive three doses of the updated Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or two doses of the updated Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

WHEN & HOW TO SCHEDULE YOUR UPDATED COVID-19 VACCINE: Initial supplies of updated COVID-19 vaccine are expected in California in the coming weeks. For added convenience, COVID-19, flu, and RSV vaccines can all be administered in the same visit. Schedule a vaccine appointment by visiting MyTurn.ca.gov or contacting your local pharmacy or health care provider.

HOW TO PAY FOR A COVID-19 VACCINE: COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be free for most Americans through their health insurance plans, including Medi-Cal and regular health care providers.

The CDC's Bridge Access Program will provide limited quantities of COVID-19 vaccines to uninsured and underinsured adults through December 2024. The Vaccines For Children (VFC) program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children (18 and younger) who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay.

CDPH'S VIRUS PREVENTION TIPS: The best defense against COVID-19 and other winter viruses starts with good prevention. Follow these five tips to protect yourself and others:

•Stay Up to Date on Vaccines: Vaccines reduce the chances of infection and are the best defense to limit severe illness and death. COVID-19, flu, and RSV vaccines will all be available for this winter season.

•Stay Home if You're Sick, Test for COVID and Treat if Needed: Staying home when you're sick slows the spread of COVID-19, flu, RSV, and even the common cold. If you have symptoms, test for COVID-19 and contact your doctor immediately to seek treatment. Treatments work best when started right after symptoms begin.

•Consider Wearing a Mask in Indoor Public Places: Wearing a mask significantly reduces the spread of respiratory viruses, especially in crowded or poorly ventilated spaces.

•Wash Your Hands: Frequent handwashing with soap and warm water, for at least 20 seconds, is an easy and very effective way to prevent getting sick and spreading germs.

•Cover Your Cough or Sneeze: Remember to cough or sneeze into your elbow, your arm, or a disposable tissue to help prevent the spread of winter viruses. Wash or sanitize your hands and dispose of your tissue after.

For more information visit www.cdph.ca.gov ★

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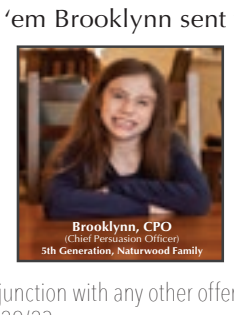


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