

Thanksgiving Travel Expected to Increase in California

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We Wish Our Readers A Happy Thanksgiving

Placer Sentinel

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Toys for Tots Brings Holiday Cheer



Some of the toy donations made by attendees at the third annual Toys for Tots Car Show on Saturday, Nov. 7.

Story and photos by Sara Jackson

ROCKLIN, CA (MPG) - The holiday spirit arrived early in Rocklin as car enthusiasts, families and community members gathered for the third annual Toys for Tots Car Show, combining a love of automobiles with the season of giving.

Held Saturday, Nov. 7, in the parking lot of Sportsman's Warehouse, the family friendly event brought together vehicles of all makes and models while helping kick off the annual holiday toy collection season.

According to Event Organizer, Nancy Peacock, the Toys for Tots Car Show has grown bigger and bigger each year. This was the second year hosting the event at Sportsmans Warehouse. The first year was held at Bass Pro Shops.

"A lot of people always do it in Sacramento, and the guy that I actually work with for Toys for Tots says that I'm the only one that does it out here," Peacock said.

The event offered something for everyone, from automotive displays and live music to food trucks, local vendors and special appearances by two familiar holiday and entertainment favorites.

One of the attractions was Lightning McQueen, the popular race car character from Disney-Pixar's animated film Cars. The appearance added a playful touch to the event, particularly for younger visitors who came to enjoy the festivities with their families.

Santa Claus also made a special appearance, bringing an early dose of Christmas cheer to the celebration.

Now in its third year, the Toys for Tots Car Show has become an opportunity for local automotive enthusiasts to come together for a charitable cause while sharing their passion for cars and trucks.

Unlike shows limited to certain vehicle categories, the Rocklin event welcomed all makes and models, allowing participants to showcase a variety of vehicles.

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Placer County Expands Mental Health Support for Veterans

Placer County News Release

GRANITE BAY, CA (MPG) - Placer County is expanding access to mental health services for veterans and military families through a new partnership with a local nonprofit.

The county's Veterans Service Office is partnering with Hearts Landing Ranch to provide Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) and learning for eligible veterans, active-duty service members, guard and reserve members and their dependent spouses and children.

Funded through a California Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Behavioral Health Outreach grant, the program provides trauma-informed support that complements traditional mental health services and helps participants build trust, emotional regulation, communication skills and healthy relationships.

"Many veterans face barriers to seeking traditional mental health treatment, even when they know they could benefit from support," said Steve Johnson, the county's veterans service officer. "This partnership creates another path to healing, helping veterans and their families connect with services in a setting that feels welcoming, supportive and accessible."

The program will be delivered by mental health professionals and Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association-certified (EAGALA) facilitators through eight-week cohorts. Participants will receive an intake evaluation, eight therapy sessions and an exit assessment. Sessions focus on ground-based interactions with horses and are designed to support trauma recovery, trust-building and personal growth.

Hearts Landing Ranch is recognized as one of only 22 programs in the United States to earn the EAGALA Military Designation.

The Placer County Veterans Service Office connects veterans and their families with benefits, resources and supportive services throughout the county. County officials say the new program offers an additional option for veterans who may be reluctant to engage in a traditional clinical setting. The partnership is expected to serve up to 80 participants over the next two years.

"This program is about meeting veterans where they are and creating opportunities for connection and healing," said Hearts Landing Ranch executive director Donna Eckwortzel. "My father is a 25-year Navy veteran, having served in Vietnam. I am honored to partner with the county to support those who have served our country and their families." ★

Placer County Animal Services Center Celebrates 10 Years of Saving Lives

Story and photos by Sara Jackson

AUBURN, CA (MPG) - On Nov. 9, the Placer County Animal Services Center celebrated its 10th anniversary, marking a decade of accomplishments in animal welfare, community involvement and emergency response.

Since opening in 2016, the center has found homes for 13,566 animals, reunited another 7,082 with their owners and maintained a live release rate of 92.3 percent, exceeding the 90 percent benchmark commonly associated with no-kill shelters.

The anniversary celebration also included $10 pet adoptions, a special promotion continuing throughout November.

"We're really celebrating a vision that began many years ago, when this facility opened with a commitment that really stretched across multiple boards of supervisors and county leaders and staff members, community partners, including our very own and former supervisor, Jim Holmes. I really believe the last decade has demonstrated the government operated shelters really can be innovative, passionate, and fiscally responsible as well as successful," Placer County Supervisor Shanti Landon said.



Volunteers, community members and County officials gather to celebrate the Placer County Animal Services Center's 10 year anniversary on Monday Nov. 9 in Auburn, CA.

The 29,500-square-foot, LEED Gold-certified facility replaced an outdated shelter built in the 1970s. Designed to improve animal care and accommodate the region's growing needs, the center increased housing capacity by approximately 80 percent for dogs and 75 percent for cats.

The modern facility features climate-controlled kennels with radiant floor heating and cooling,

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Placer County Animal Services Center Celebrates 10 Years of Saving Lives

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improved veterinary services, behavior assessment areas and outdoor exercise spaces.

Natural lighting, fresh air, noise reduction and improved disease control were also incorporated into the design to create a healthier, less stressful environment for animals, visitors and employees.

But the center's mission extends far beyond finding homes for abandoned and stray animals.

One of its most important roles has been providing emergency shelter and assistance during natural disasters, particularly wildfires.



One of the center's dogs that are available for adoption. Through the whole month of November, the Placer County Animal Center is offering donations at $10.

Built with twice the emergency animal capacity of its predecessor, the facility includes a 2,250-square-foot barn, paddocks and pasture space to accommodate livestock and other farm animals displaced during evacuations.

During the 2022 Mosquito Fire, animal services personnel worked closely with the Placer County Office of Emergency Services to rescue, transport and shelter animals threatened by the flames.

Over a two-week period, staff and partnering organizations cared for more than 500 animals, including household pets and livestock.

The center also provided assistance during the River Fire, demonstrating the importance of having a facility equipped to respond when animals and their owners face emergencies.

Community involvement has played an equally important role in the center's success.

"We have had some significant donations from community members where they have seen the new facility and thought, 'okay, what can I donate that would take this to the next level?' And so, community members have built a couple of shade structures in our exercise yard. So, in the hot summers heat, animals can get in the shade. They have donated to purchase an x ray machine on site so we can do more medical diagnostics here, which is less stressful, faster, obviously for the animals. And then recently, our donations have purchased some really high quality cat enrichment furniture so our cats can stay healthy and happy," Animal Services Program Manager Katie Ingram said.

More than 150 volunteers have contributed over 150,000 hours during the past decade, helping support animal care and shelter operations.

Partnerships with local cities, county departments and animal welfare organizations have further expanded the center's ability to serve animals throughout the region.

Enhanced veterinary services and spay and neuter programs have also helped improve treatment standards and reduce overall kitten intake.

The center's 10-year milestone reflects a shared vision among county leaders, the Board of Supervisors, employees, volunteers and residents who recognized the need for a modern animal services facility.

What began as an effort to replace an aging shelter has become a community resource dedicated to animal welfare, public safety and compassionate care.

As the center enters its second decade, its mission remains unchanged: protecting vulnerable animals, strengthening the bond between pets and people, and providing a place where animals can find safety, care and a second chance.

"I would speak for any shelter. I don't think any shelter can do what they do, but especially us, we can't do what we do without a community of people that are willing to give an adoptable shelter pet a second chance," Ingram said.

Ingram goes on to say, "The vast majority of the animals that come here are social and they are healthy and they are either trained or they are very trainable. They're great animals that come through our door. And people that give rescue animals a chance, I think, experience that. And so, our goal is to always encourage people to think about the shelters, think about the rescues first, because there are amazing dogs and cats that are waiting for the second chance." ★

Toys for Tots Car Show Brings Holiday Cheer

Continued from page 1
For automotive enthusiasts, the gathering offered an opportunity to admire vehicles, exchange stories and appreciate the work that goes into maintaining and displaying them.

The event also featured a friendly competition, with Top 5 Awards presented at the conclusion of the show.

While the vehicles were a major attraction, the event's larger purpose was to support Toys for Tots and encourage community participation in the holiday toy collection effort.

The charitable program focuses on bringing Christmas gifts to children in need, making the car show an opportunity to combine entertainment with generosity.

Throughout the event, visitors could enjoy live music while browsing booths operated by local vendors. Food trucks provided additional options for attendees looking to grab a bite while taking in the festivities.

Raffle prizes and a 50/50 drawing added another element of excitement, giving participants opportunities to take part in activities beyond the vehicle displays.

The combination of automobiles, entertainment and holiday activities helped create a setting designed to appeal to visitors of different ages and interests.

For families, the appearances by Santa Claus and Lightning McQueen offered attractions beyond the cars themselves. For vehicle owners, the show provided an opportunity to participate in a community event centered on a worthwhile cause.



The third annual Toys for Tots Car Show was held Saturday Nov. 7 in the parking lot of Sportsmans Warehouse in Rocklin.



It was a big turn out for the third annual Toys for Tots Car Show. Lots of toys donated by attendees on Saturday, Nov. 7.

Events such as the Toys for Tots Car Show demonstrate how shared interests can bring residents together while drawing attention to charitable efforts during the holiday season.

With its third annual gathering, the Rocklin event continued its tradition of combining automotive enthusiasm, family entertainment and community involvement.

As the holiday toy collection season gets underway, the show served as a reminder that giving back can take many forms, including an afternoon spent celebrating cars, community and the spirit of Christmas.



Disney Pixar's Lightning McQueen made an appearance at the Saturday, Nov. 7 third annual Toys for Tots Car Show.

The event brought together the excitement of a car show and the generosity of the holiday season, placing community participation at the heart of the celebration.

"It's all about having fun and helping these kids," said Peacock. ★

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Foresthill Protection Plan Partners Celebrate First Phase Completion

Placer County News Release

AUBURN, CA (MPG) - After nearly two years of collaboration among Tribal leaders, local agencies, landowners and community partners, Placer County's Regional Forest Health Division, Sierra Business Council and Indigenous Futures Society will host a community gathering to celebrate the Foresthill Divide Community Protection Plan and look ahead to its implementation.

The event, scheduled Nov. 18 at Owl Creek in Foresthill from noon to 2:30 p.m., will bring together the Foresthill Divide community, wildfire protection agencies, land stewards and Tribal partners to reflect on the planning process and explore how the community can continue working together to build wildfire resilience and a healthier relationship with the land.

At the heart of the effort has been government-to-government engagement with the Colfax–Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe and an ongoing effort to integrate Tribal ecological knowledge into community wildfire resilience planning. That work has been complemented by engagement with a collaborative of wildfire protection agencies and the broader Foresthill Divide community.

The resulting Foresthill Divide Community Protection Plan provides a framework for how future wildfire resilience projects will be evaluated, prioritized and advanced.

"This process has been about more than developing a list of projects," said Sarah Isabel Moe, project lead from Sierra Business Council. "It has been about building relationships, listening to different forms of knowledge and creating a framework for making decisions together. The work we've done with Tribal partners, agencies, landowners and the community gives us a stronger foundation for protecting the Foresthill Divide while caring for the forest."



Participants will have an opportunity to build relationships with the Tribe, agency and community partners working to protect the Foresthill Divide and explore how cultural fire practices can contribute to wildfire resilience and forest health. Photo courtesy of Placer County

The final community gathering in the project's plan development phase will celebrate the inclusive planning process while creating space for participants to consider what comes next.

Participants will have an opportunity to build relationships with the Tribe, agency and community partners working to protect the Foresthill Divide and explore how cultural fire practices can contribute to wildfire resilience and forest health. They will also learn how the framework developed through the Community Protection Plan will guide the future project pipeline, and what's coming next in phase II.

Experience a cultural burn led by the Tribe and learn firsthand about the role of cultural fire in caring for the landscape

If weather allows, the cultural burn will provide an opportunity for participants to experience cultural fire as an active land stewardship practice and to better understand its potential benefits for forest health, ecological resilience and community protection.

"This is an opportunity to come together not just to mark the completion of a plan, but to celebrate the relationships that made the work possible," Amanda Brenner, Placer County forest health coordinator said. "We hope people leave with a deeper understanding of the land, the value of Tribal stewardship and a shared commitment to continuing this work together."

The event is open to Foresthill Divide residents, landowners, community members, agencies, Tribal partners and others interested in wildfire resilience and traditional ecological land stewardship.

The Foresthill Divide Community Protection Plan is led by Placer County's Regional Forest Health Division in collaboration with Sierra Business Council and Indigenous Futures Society, with participation from the Colfax–Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe, wildfire protection agencies, landowners and community partners.

As the Regional Forest Health Division looks ahead to implementing projects identified in the plan, it intends to pursue a broader environmental review for them through a California Vegetation Treatment Program, or CalVTP, that would allow them to move forward more quickly than if they were permitted individually. Division staff anticipate additional community outreach after securing a contract for environmental support services to seek that review. ★

Thanksgiving Travel Expected to Slightly Increase in California Compared to Last Year

This year's forecast projects 81.5 million people will leave town for the holiday nationwide

AAA Northern California News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Less people are expected to travel this Thanksgiving across the country, bringing to an end a three-year streak of record Thanksgiving travel that began in 2023. AAA projects nearly 81.5 million people will travel at least 50 miles from home for Thanksgiving between Tuesday, Nov. 24 and Monday, Nov. 30. This year's domestic travel forecast represents a 0.1% decline which is about 121,000 fewer travelers.

In California, AAA expects about 11 million people to travel over the 6-day holiday weekend, representing a 0.6% increase in the number of people across the state.

"Thanksgiving represents quality time with family and friends, and for many people that requires traveling to see loved ones," said Doug Johnson, spokesperson for AAA Mountain West Group. "After three years of record highs, the number of travelers is slightly lower partly because of higher travel costs. But travelers won't notice much of a difference on the roads and at the airports, since projected volumes remain near record levels."

While road trips and flights will experience a decline this year, all other modes of transportation including cruises will be on the rise.

Thanksgiving Travelers by Mode of Transportation

By Car: AAA projects roughly 9.6 million Californians will travel by car, a 0.5% increase from 2025. Nationwide, 72.9 million people will travel by car for the Thanksgiving holiday, a slight drop from last year when 73.1 million travelers took road trips. This year's projected decrease is due in part to record high gas prices. The months of August, September, and October set new monthly records at the pump, and November could also do the same. The national average on Thanksgiving Day has never been above $4 per gallon. The highest Thanksgiving at the pump was in 2022 at $3.58. For most holiday travelers, driving remains the cheapest and easiest way to get around. Nearly 90% of Thanksgiving travelers are expected to hit the road. AAA encourages drivers to have their vehicles inspected by a trusted auto repair shop to ensure they are road trip ready.

By Air: AAA projects more than 1.1 million Californians to fly to their destination for the holiday. Nationwide, 5.96 million travelers will take domestic flights for Thanksgiving, a 0.2% decrease over last year. According to AAA data, travelers are paying 15% more for roundtrip domestic flights, averaging $800 per ticket.

By Other Modes: AAA projects more than 322,000 Californians, and 2.6 million people nationwide will take buses, trains, and cruises, representing a 4.1% increase from last year.

The Tuesday and Wednesday before the holiday and Sunday and Monday following the holiday will be the busiest days on the road. Drivers should consider hitting the road in the morning hours to avoid traffic congestion as the worst times for travel will be in the afternoon and early evening hours.

Leaving your vehicle parked at an airport or in a driveway while traveling can slowly drain your battery. Cold weather can also impact your battery as frigid temperatures can reduce the amount of power needed to start the engine. AAA Northern California sees a 15% increase in battery service calls around Thanksgiving.

To protect your vehicle from battery failure AAA Northern California recommends:

Keep your battery clean by scraping away any white, crusty corrosion from your battery. This cleaning is included with the AAA Mobile Battery Service.

Fill up your fuel tank at least half way and drive the vehicle weekly.

Use a trickle charger: If you are traveling without your car, hook it up to a battery tender or trickle charger to maintain a healthy, slow charge. These are available for roadside purchase through most Fleets and ICS Mobile Battery Service providers.

Turn off accessories, start with your radio, heater, headlights and seat warmers before you turn off the ignition so the battery doesn't have the extra load when you start it next. ★



AAA projects more than 1.1 million Californians to fly to their destination for the Thanksgiving holiday. Photo by JESHOOTS-com and Pixabay



Popp Talk

With Mary Jane Popp

Thanksgiving Fact or Fiction

Let's take a look at some of the stories we hear about the Pilgrims, like who they were and how they lived. First of all, they didn't call themselves Pilgrims. They called themselves "Saints" and "First Comers." Of the 102 people on the Mayflower, only 50 were so-called Pilgrims. The others were members of the Church of England who had signed on simply as laborers, soldiers, or those who were looking to gain property in the "New World."

MYTH In pictures and pageants we see them in black and white clothing with buckled shoes and top hats. **FACT**. They didn't wear buckled shoes. The myth that they dressed like this stems from the popular clothing style of the day in England. They didn't wear buckled hats either. They simply wore much cheaper leather laces to tie up their shoes and hold up their pants. They also didn't wear only black and white. Their common garb was quite colorful. They only wore black and gray on Sundays. The rest of the time they wore heavily dyed clothing in many colors that could be achieved with natural dyes. Here's an example, a Pilgrim by the name of Brewster left his clothing in his will to someone. Here's what he left… "one blew cloth suit, green drawers, a violet clothe coat, black silk stockings, sky blew garters, red grosgrain suit, red waistcoat, tawny colored suit with silver buttons." Seems pretty bright to me.

Then came the meal both Pilgrims and Native Americans ate. Turkey and all the fixins' right? **MYTH**. Yes, wild turkey was on the menu but what about mashed potatoes? **FACT**. Dream on. At the time that first Thanksgiving happened, most Europeans had never even seen a potato. Same goes for the Native Americans. Corn was likely on the menu, but mushy, turned into a thick porridge that you can slurp down with a spoon. **MYTH**. It was all turkey and corn. **FACT**. Turkey, venison, lots of lobsters and other seafood even eels and mussels, and all the vegetables that they had planted from onions, beans, spinach, lettuce and other greens was on the menu. **MYTH**. Had to have pumpkin pies. **FACT**. Pilgrims liked pumpkins. But they hollowed them out, filled them with milk and honey to make a custard, and then roasted the orange orbs in hot ashes. No pies! They were out of luck because you need butter and wheat flour. They didn't have much of either.

MYTH. They loved cranberry sauce. **FACT**. By fall of 1621, Pilgrims were essentially out of sugar. So, no cranberry sauce. It was a new little berry to them. Native Americans made dyes out of cranberries. **MYTH**. It was called Thanksgiving. **FACT**. That first get together was in fact a harvest festival celebrated in October not November. They were just grateful to be alive as half of their company died during the first bleak winter.

Let's face it, we have so much to be thankful for…family and friends, good eats and lots of football. ★

HAPPY THANKSGIVING AND BLESSINGS TO ALL!

PCSBA Announces 2026 Trustee of the Year

Placer County School Boards Association News Release

ROCKLIN, CA (MPG) - The Placer County School Boards Association (PCSBA) is pleased to recognize the 2026 Trustee of the Year: Greg Holt, President, Auburn Union School District Board of Trustees.

"Placer County is proud to be a leader in education across California, and that leadership starts with the dedication of our locally elected school board members," Placer County Superintendent of Schools Gayle Garbolino-Mojica said. "Greg's thoughtful service and commitment to collaboration have helped guide his board through challenging decisions while keeping students and the district's future at the center of every conversation."

Holt has served as president of the Auburn Union School District Board of Trustees for the past four years and is a graduate of the California School Boards Association's Masters in Governance program. He has helped shape the district's educational priorities, including curriculum adoption and efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism, while staying connected with local service clubs, veterans groups and community organizations to share the district's vision for the future.

"On behalf of the Placer County School Boards Association, I'm proud to congratulate Greg Holt, unanimously selected as the 2026 Trustee of the Year," PCSBA President Jessica Spaid said. "His thoughtful leadership, dedication to students and commitment to his community have made a lasting difference in Auburn Union School District and across Placer County. This recognition is truly well deserved."

As we celebrate this year's Trustee of the Year, PCSBA also extends appreciation to all nominees for their commitment to students, families and educators.



Holt has served as president of the Auburn Union School District Board of Trustees for the past four years and is a graduate of the California School Boards Association's Masters in Governance program. Photo courtesy of Placer County School Boards Association

Jon Fenske, Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District; Marla Franz, Roseville Joint Union High School District; Cris Hennessey, Tahoe Truckee Unified School District; Rob Kanngiesser, Ackerman Charter School District; and Bob Sinclair, Sierra Joint Community College District.

The Placer County School Boards Association is a countywide organization representing locally elected public school district and community college district governing boards throughout Placer County. PCSBA supports strong school boards, promotes student success, provides professional learning and networking, and honors trustees for their service. It is affiliated with the California School Boards Association and serves as an active unit within the statewide network of school board leadership. ★

NTCA Board of Directors Makes Recommendations for TOT Funding



Seven programs will be brought to the Placer County Board of Supervisors for continued funding consideration. Photo designed by Magnific

North Tahoe Community Alliance News Release

NORTH LAKE TAHOE, CA (MPG) - At their November meeting, the NTCA Board of Directors supported the TOT Advisory committee's motion to recommend ongoing funding for seven proven local housing and transportation programs. If approved by the Placer County Board of Supervisors at their December meeting, the expenditure would include up to $18,186,634 in Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) funds generated by overnight visitors who stay in local hotels or short-term rentals to be invested over the next three years.

"A broad coalition of local residents who volunteer their time on the TOT committee and the NTCA Board of Directors selected the projects that have been recommended for ongoing funding because of their proven impact on our community," NTCA president and CEO Tony Karwowski said. "Continuing funding for these programs will help address two of our community's top priorities – workforce housing and transportation."

The recommended programs, associated with the TOT-TBID Dollars at Work Program 2026 Ongoing Proven Program Cycle, include Workforce Housing Case Management and Direct Assistance Program (Sierra Community House) - $1,797,635 through June 30, 2030; Lease to Locals (Placer County) - $1,500,000 through June 30, 2030; Workforce Housing Preservation Program (Placer County) - $3,000,000 through June 30, 2030; Launchpad (Placer County) - $4,000,000 through June 30, 2030; North Tahoe Workforce Vanpool (TNT-TMA) - $1,107,500 through June 30, 2030; TART Connect Expanded Services (Placer County) - $3,884,638 through June 30, 2029; and Park and Ride (TNT-TMA) - $2,896,861 through June 30, 2030.

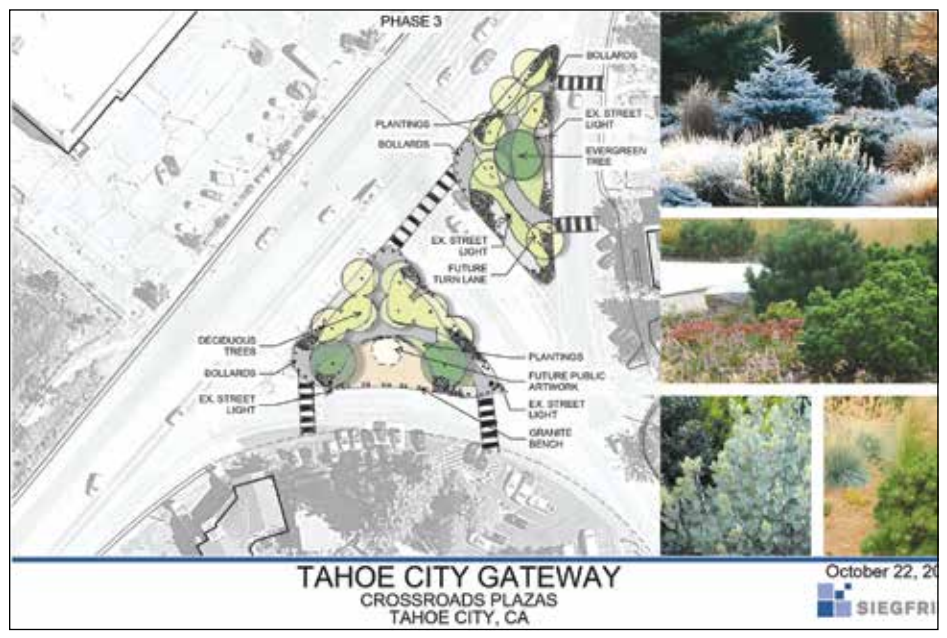
Through the Ongoing Proven Program Cycle, only local housing and transportation programs that have demonstrated effective outcomes quality for longer-term (three to five year) funding. In total, eight programs applied.

To improve accountability, NTCA and Placer County staff will propose to the Board of Supervisors that funded programs receive an annual budget for each fiscal year (until June 30, 2030), and that all allocated funds must be spent within the fiscal year for which they are awarded.

Learn more about the NTCA and its work to invest tourism-generated funds in support of community priorities at www.northtahoecommunityalliance.com. ★



Community Input Sought for Wye Gateway Enhancement Project



The design work will be completed by Siegfried Engineering, a firm that has extensive experience designing community spaces that are both functional and meaningful and has an office in Truckee. Photo courtesy of Siegfried

Tahoe City Downtown Association News Release

TAHOE CITY, CA (MPG) - To create a welcoming western entrance to Tahoe City, the Tahoe City Downtown Association is leading an effort to restore and beautify the Wye at State Routes 89 and 28, with community input being sought to help shape the final design.

"Transforming the most prominent intersection in downtown Tahoe City into a welcoming sustainable gateway that reflects our community's mountain character will enhance the experience for everyone," Katherine Hill, TCDA executive director said. "It will also strengthen local pride and support economic vitality by encouraging visitors to want to stop and explore our local businesses."

A total of $100,000 in TBID funds generated by tourism have been allocated by the NTCA and the committees it convenes in support of the project. The design work will be completed by Siegfried Engineering, a firm that has extensive experience designing community spaces that are both functional and meaningful, and has an office in Truckee.

"I am thankful for the opportunity to continue working with TCDA to help make Tahoe City even more charming," said Seth Warren, civil engineer and principal at Siegfried. "I had the chance to collaborate with the TCDA team while serving as Placer County's project manager for the Fanny Bridge revitalization. During that time I came to fully appreciate the community's patience, volunteer spirit, and eagerness to beautify this key gateway. We look forward to partnering with TCDA and the community to deliver the wye enhancements!"

Siegfried brings expertise in civil engineering, structural engineering, geotechnical engineering, surveying, landscape architecture, grants and outreach and construction administration and management. The company takes a collaborative approach to bring ideas to life and is focused on making spaces that are welcoming, functional and accessible for everyone.

The project's design will reflect Tahoe's natural beauty through the incorporation of native plants, trees, granite boulders and stone, and prioritize water conservation, sustainability, snow tolerance and low maintenance. It will also incorporate space for future public artwork and leverage local partnerships and donated materials to maximize available funding.

Community members are invited to attend a public meeting Wednesday, Dec. 2 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Tahoe City Public Utility District Board Room or on Zoom to review design concepts and share feedback.

Final design and permitting is anticipated in the winter or spring of 2027, with installation subject to permitting and construction schedules in the summer or fall of 2027. Learn more at visittahoecity.org/wye. ★

Giles Named Offensive Player of the Year

Five Hornets Listed on Men's Soccer Honor Roll

Sacramento State Athletics News Release



Sacramento State senior Zac Giles was named The Big West Offensive Player of the Year. Photo courtesy of Sacramento State

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento State senior Zac Giles was named The Big West Offensive Player of the Year and earned a spot on the first team while four other Hornet players were named to the league's postseason honor roll as voted on by the head coaches and announced on Nov. 6.

Giles becomes the first-ever Sacramento State men's soccer student-athlete to be named the top offensive player in The Big West and joins Midfielder of the Year Paul Geyer (2017) and Freshman of the Year Benji Kikanovic (2018) as major award winners in the league since the Hornets joined the conference in 2012.

The Lincoln, Calif., native is also the first Sacramento State player to be named player of the year in any conference since Ernesto Carranza took home the award in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation in 2009.

In also earning a spot in the all-conference first team, Giles became only the seventh Hornet to earn that honor in the program's Big West era, joining Donovan Sessoms (2024), Austin Wehner (2022), Cylus Sandoval (2017), Geyer (2017), Chimdum Mez (2014) and Matt Linenberger (2012).

Joining Giles on the honor roll is junior midfielder Hiroshi Yang on the second team, Sean Battistessa and Nick Strangio on the honorable mention team, and newcomer Adrian Alvarenga on the league's all-rookie team. The group represents the most All-Big West honorees for the program since Sacramento State placed five on the all-conference team and had three more on what was then known as the all-freshman team.

Enjoying a storybook senior season, Giles finished with 11 goals and five assists for 27 points, putting 39 of his school single-season record 72 shots on goal. A three-time Big West Offensive Player of the Week and two-time National Team of the Week selection by Top Drawer Soccer, Giles finished the regular season atop The Big West in shots, shots per match (4.24), shots on goal, shots on goal per match (2.29), goals, points, and points per match (1.59), while finishing tied for fifth in assists.

He set a school Division I era single-match record with four goals in a 5-1 win at CSUN on Oct. 24 for his first career hat trick, while his eight points in that contest were tied for the most in a single match in school history. Giles wrapped up the year ranked tied for eighth on the single-season list in goals and tied for seventh in points while adding school single-season records in points per match (1.59) and shots.

Yang finished third on the team with 12 points thanks to four goals and four assists, ranking second on the team with 39 shots and 17 on goal. He netted his first goal of the season — and the first for the team in 2026 — in the season-opening win over UC Davis, then added a brace against UC Riverside (Sept. 23) and the team's opener against Cal State Bakersfield (Oct. 3).

Two of his assists came in a 4-2 victory over Pacific and added helpers against UC San Diego (Oct. 14) and CSUN (Oct. 24). One of his two goals in the win over the Highlanders was selected as the No. 9 play of the day in ESPN SportsCenter Top 10 plays.

Battistessa finished second on the team with 14 points on six goals and two assists, staring 16 of the team's 17 matches. The Fair Oaks, Calif., native also scored in the regular season opener against UC Davis and added a three-point performance in a win over UC San Diego (Oct. 14). He also scored against San Jose State (Sept. 6), Pacific (Sept. 17), UC Santa Barbara (Sept. 30) and Cal State Bakersfield (Oct. 3).

Strangio was a mainstay on the back line for the Hornets in 15 starts while adding a pair of goals against Saint Mary's and CSUN, while Alvarenga joined him in his rookie season, collecting a pair of assists in the process against UC Santa Barbara and Gonzaga.

All four all-conference honors were the first of their respective careers, while Alvarenga gave the Hornets a representative on the league's all-rookie team for the third consecutive season and became the 17th Hornet freshman to be recognized overall. ★

Memo Rodriguez and Lee Desmond Named to USL Championship All-League Teams

Sacramento Republic FC News Release



Midfielder Memo Rodriguez earned a spot on the All-League First Team and defender Lee Desmond was named to the All-League Second Team on Nov. 10. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Republic FC

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Nov. 10, USL Championship announced the 2026 All-League Teams. Republic FC was represented twice among the top players from the season, with midfielder Memo Rodriguez earning a spot on the All-League First Team and defender Lee Desmond named to the All-League Second Team.

"Memo and Lee have been invaluable to our success this year – both on and off the pitch – and we're incredibly proud to see them deservedly recognized as All-League players," said Republic FC President and General Manager Tim Holt. "Both play an important role in setting the standard for our club, and their leadership remains key as we continue our postseason push."

Rodriguez led the league's midfielder corps with 16 goal contributions and played a key role in Sacramento's stellar form in the second half of the campaign. After suffering an injury early in the season, he worked his way back into form and scored his first goal for Republic FC on July 25. A week later, he recorded three assists in a 5-0 win over Sporting Club Jacksonville.

In Week 30, Memo led the Indomitable Club past New Mexico United with a two-goal, one-assist performance that earned him Player of the Week honors. He then went on to play a massive part in Republic FC's 13-game undefeated streak to close out the regular season, posting nine goal contributions in the final six matches. He earned recognition consistently throughout the year as a six-time Team of the Week honoree and finalist for October Player of the Month.

Team Captain Desmond has earned his first selection to the All-League Second Team after posting his best single-season performance since joining Republic FC in 2022. The 31-year-old centerback was on the pitch for all but 45 minutes of the regular season and led the team with 150 clearances and 159 duels won, while maintaining an 84% passing accuracy. With Desmond anchoring the backline, Sacramento posted double-digit clean sheets for the fifth consecutive year and conceded just 28 goals to lead the Western Conference. He also contributed on the other end of the pitch with two goals, including one in his monumental 400th career appearance on Aug. 1. ★

Kamaria Charlo Named Hawk of the Week

Consumnes River College News Release



Women's basketball student-athlete Kamaria Charlo has been named the CRC Athletics Hawk of the Week following an impressive two-game stretch that helped the Hawks extend their season-opening winning streak to 4-0. Photo courtesy of Consumnes River College

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Cosumnes River College women's basketball student-athlete Kamaria Charlo has been named the CRC Athletics Hawk of the Week following an impressive two-game stretch that helped the Hawks extend their season-opening winning streak to 4-0.

Charlo delivered a standout offensive performance throughout the week, totaling 42 points, six rebounds, five assists and seven steals across wins over Feather River College and College of San Mateo.

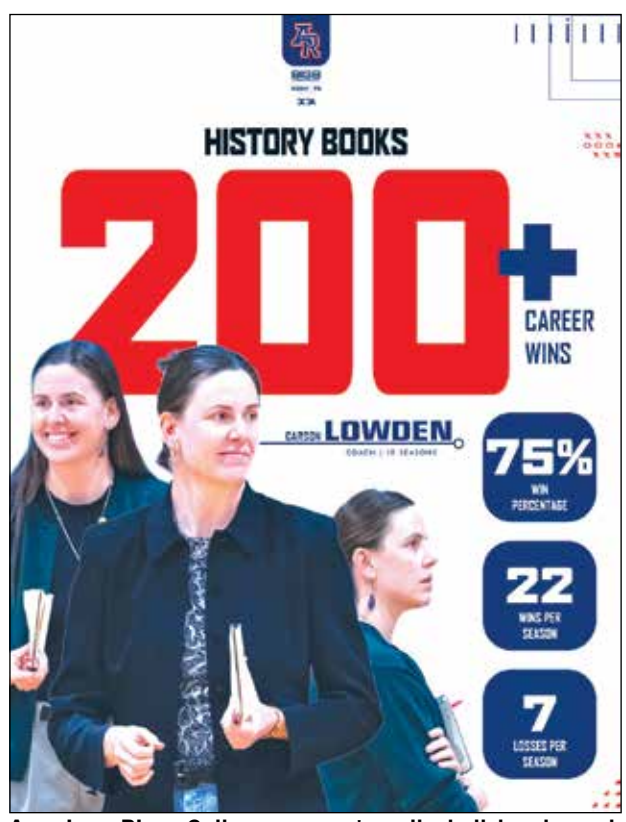
In the Hawks' 60-44 home victory over Feather River on November 5, Charlo finished with 11 points, five rebounds, three assists and three steals, contributing on both ends of the floor as Cosumnes River earned the win at Clark Court.

She followed that performance with a career-best offensive showing against College of San Mateo on November 7, pouring in 31 points to help the Hawks secure a convincing 79-53 road victory. Charlo shot 12-of-23 from the field, including an impressive 6-of-12 from beyond the arc, while adding four steals and two assists.

Her six three-pointers and 31-point performance highlighted a dominant road effort as the Hawks closed out the week with consecutive victories, remaining undefeated at 4-0 to open the season. ★

Lowden Secures Historic 200th Career Win as Beavers Dominate

American River College News Release



American River College women's volleyball head coach Carson Lowden secured her 200th career victory in a win over Diablo Valley. Photo courtesy of American River College

PLESANT HILL, CA (MPG) - American River College women's volleyball head coach Carson Lowden secured her 200th career victory in spectacular fashion, leading the Beavers to a commanding 3-0 sweep on the road against Diablo Valley College.

The historic milestone underscores Lowden's elite tenure at American River College, where she has built the Beavers into a perennial powerhouse. Her squad left no room for doubt on the Vikings' home court, executing a flawless game plan to earn the sweep in straight sets.

The Beavers asserted their dominance from the opening serve, controlling the tempo and keeping Diablo Valley out of system. ARC took the first set 25-17 before putting on a masterclass in the second and third frames, capturing them 25-10 and 25-9 respectively. ★

Lake Tahoe Invites Everyone to Shift to 'Tahoe Standard Time'

Lake Tahoe Stewardship Council News Release

LAKE TAHOE, CA/NV (MPG) - This winter, everyone who plans to spend time in Tahoe is encouraged to switch to "Tahoe Standard Time" on their approach and throughout their stay in the region. The invitation offered by Lake Tahoe communities is to slow down and embrace an easier pace to get more out of the Tahoe experience.

What does "Tahoe Standard Time" mean?

"Every place has its own customs, its own rhythms, its own way of life. Tahoe is no different," said Nettie Pardue, managing director of the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council. "We're just naming it. 'Tahoe Standard Time' is in the same time zone, it just means what so many already know — that the best of Tahoe can only be experienced when we embrace an easier pace. It's not a rule, but it's how we love and protect Tahoe, and it's our vibe. We want to share it with everyone who spends time here, and invite them to embrace it alongside us."

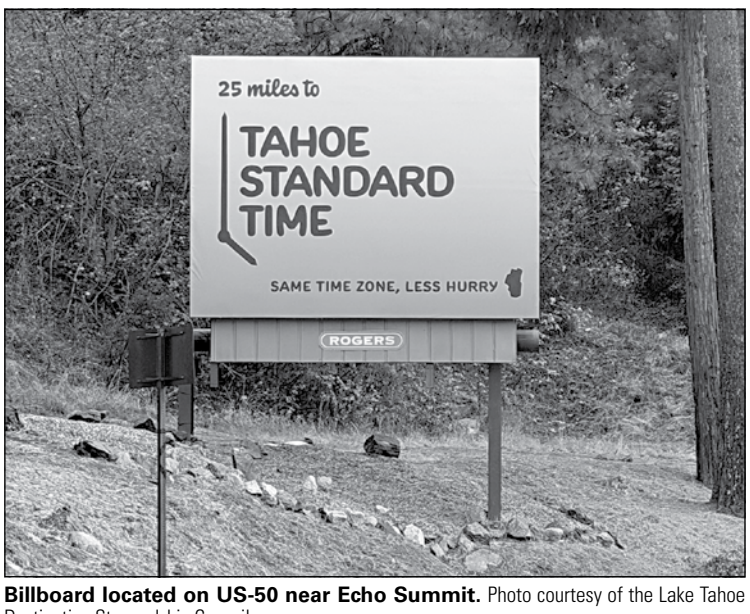
To the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council partners who are part of this movement, the opportunity is to help everyone learn what locals know — that slowing down is the fastest way to a great day in Tahoe.

How do locals embrace the winter? Plan ahead and arrive ready.

Knowing what's ahead and being prepared always makes for a better day in the mountains. This includes checking road conditions, the weather forecast, snow report, and considering what to wear if conditions change. It can also mean leaving more time to get places, going earlier or later, or knowing if parking reservations are required in advance.



Embracing an easier pace offers simple ways to get around, arrive ready, and get more out of the Tahoe experience. Photo courtesy of the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council



Billboard located on US-50 near Echo Summit. Photo courtesy of the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council

Check the Caltrans QuickMap (chain controls, closures), Nevada roads (chain controls, closures), National Weather Service (storm outlook) and The snow report (OpenSnow)

The easiest way to get around in the winter is by letting someone else do the driving. Many ski areas require parking reservations on weekends and holidays, so taking the bus, riding free Park and Ride ski shuttles, and carpooling with friends is always preferred to sitting in traffic.

How do I get around? Plan your trip around Lake Tahoe in the Transit app: free buses all around the lake. For free on-demand rides, like Uber, use TART Connect in North Tahoe/Truckee or Lake Link in South Lake Tahoe. Park & Ride ski resort shuttles

Many resorts and hotel properties also offer shuttle services, so check your favorite resort, lodging property or Visitor Information Center for details.

Tahoe has a lot to offer and much more than can be experienced in a single day, or a weekend. To have big adventures, keeping them close to where you're staying is the easiest way to slow down, enjoy a less hurried stay, and develop a deeper connection to Tahoe.

Learn more at tahoestandardtime.org, and share the pace by showing a friend how Tahoe does it. ★

Cinema at the State Presents 'Solo Mio'

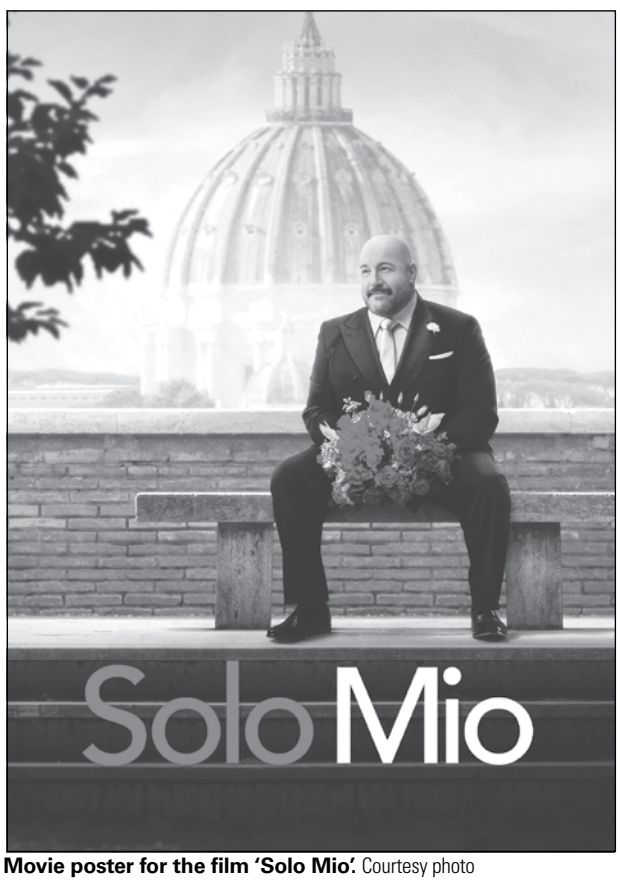
Auburn State Theatre News Release

AUBURN, CA (MPG) - When a wedding disaster leaves a groom stranded and heartbroken in Rome, a determined local and a few meddling couples help turn his ruined honeymoon into an adventure that he never expected. Kevin James (King of Queens) stars in this roantic comedy sponsored by Vintique Showroom.

After Matt's dreams of a picturesque Italian wedding are shattered when his fiancée leaves him at the altar, he embarks on his planned honeymoon across Italy alone, immersing himself in the country's vibrant culture, food and beauty, meeting Gia along the way.

'Solo Mio' will premiere at the Odd Fellows Lodge on 1226-1/2 Lincoln Way in Auburn on Thursday, Dec. 3 at 7 p.m. with doors opening at 6 p.m. Tickets are $15 for adults and $12 for seniors and kids 11 and under. Tickets include a $2 fee.

To purchase tickets visit AuburnStateTheatre.org or call 530-885-0156. ★



Movie poster for the film 'Solo Mio'. Courtesy photo

Buy a Tahoe License Plate and Ski at Any Tahoe Area Resort for Free



New Tahoe license plate fees are $50 in California and $61 in Nevada. Photo courtesy of The Tahoe Fund

Tahoe Fund News Release

INCLINE VILLAGE, NV (MPG) - With early season snowfall already dusting Lake Tahoe area ski resorts, now is the time to get a free lift ticket to use this winter. California and Nevada drivers who purchase a new Lake Tahoe license plate through the "Plates for Powder" program will receive a free lift ticket to one of 15 participating Tahoe downhill or cross-country ski areas to be used during the 2026-27 winter season, while supplies last.

"Since 2011, the 'Plates for Powder' program has generated funds from plate sales and renewal fees that have come back to Lake Tahoe in the form of hiking and biking trails and watershed restoration projects," Tahoe Fund CEO Amy Berry said. "It's a great way for California and Nevada drivers to show their love for Tahoe while also supporting important environmental projects."

The nonprofit Tahoe Fund has organized the program since its inception, with the proceeds directed by the California Tahoe Conservancy and Nevada Division of State Lands. Some of the projects supported by the program include the demolition of the former Motel 6 in South Lake Tahoe to make way for wetland restoration and recreation improvements, grants to provide outdoor experiences in Tahoe for underserved communities, and the newly completed Tunnel Creek Singletrack Trail on Tahoe's east shore.

"The generosity of the ski areas, skiers and snowboarders that make this program possible is incredible," Jason Vasques, executive director of the California Tahoe Conservancy said. "The funding that the Lake Tahoe license plates generates directly benefits our work to restore and enhance the natural and recreational resources in the Tahoe Basin for everyone to enjoy."

New Tahoe license plate fees are $50 in California and $61 in Nevada. The annual renewal fee is $40 in California and $30 in Nevada. Personalized plates are also available for additional fees.

Participating ski areas include Boreal Mountain Resort, Diamond Peak, Heavenly Mountain Resort, Homewood Mountain Resort, Kirkwood Mountain Resort, Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe, Northstar California, Palisades Tahoe, Royal Gorge, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Soda Springs, Sugar Bowl Resort, Tahoe XC, Tahoe City Sports Park and Tahoe Donner Cross Country.

Learn more about how to purchase a plate and redeem the complimentary lift ticket or trail pass at tahoeplates.com. Some restrictions apply. ★



Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl

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Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris

Three Things

By V.G. Harris

Do the Sacramento Kings fans want to see a winning team? Of course they do, but most think that this season is already a lost one. That is not true and if the Kings can cure three things expect a turnaround.

Number one: A change in leadership and culture has to happen as soon as possible. The offense is old and predicable and opposing teams are taking advantage of it every night. The players are putting forth a diligent effort, but the mission is not one everyone understands, and that is essential to having a winning team.

Number two: The 3-point shot is a miscarriage of justice on both ends of the court. On offense the Kings don't get nearly enough open looks and as a result don't shoot as many 3's as the competition on a nightly basis. On the defensive end the Kings simply don't know how to guard the 3-point line and the combination of these two glaring faults is a recipe for disaster.

Number three: Sacramento must develop a culture of winning, or they are in jeopardy of mishandling Darius Acuff Jr.'s rookie season. Yes, Darius is doing well in most respects, but when asked by reporters about the difference between college and NBA ball, Darius replied it was the losing. He has been used to a culture of winning from the time he was in high school, and for the first time he's faced with something he doesn't know how to fix.

Coach Christie has had a preseason and a dozen games to find a combination of FIVE players that can work as a team and compliment each other, and all the Sacramento fans see are different lineups every night. Combine that with lack of a culture or a collective effort in how to plant the flag, and it's no wonder the Kings have managed one win to date.

It's obvious to everyone in the arena that something has to change, and in witnessing last nights contest against the mighty Oklahoma City Thunder, it was hard to watch a normally controlled Domantas Sabonis losing his composure and nearly getting a technical foul for language. I can't remember a time that I've seen Domantas so upset, and it's a direct result of the constant losing.

Many pundits and fans alike have said the Kings don't have the horses, but there is more than enough talent on this team to get the job done.

Do they need to add more talent? Of course they do, and I have no doubt that GM Scott Perry will do exactly that.

In the meantime, is it possible for the organization to not broadcast to the entire world what they are trying to do. By now the NBA has clearly got the message that due to expensive contracts the Kings would like to move both Domantas Sabonis and Zach Lavine. Stop it!

Successful trades happen when you play your cards close to the vest, and that is not something that the Kings are good at doing.

How about celebrating the virtues of Domantas and Zach and picturing them for the leaders and all-stars that they are. Both are playing well and are legitimate leaders on this team.

Zach was out in Sunday's game against the Thunder due to an illness, but his 3-point shooting has been an asset, and he is expected back soon.

Sunday's game saw Nique Clifford on the floor but not in a Sacramento Kings uniform. Traded to the Thunder just days ago for two second round draft choices, the Kings brought an end to a project that never took off.

Sadly, the 24th pick in the 2025 draft never gave the Sacramento Kings what they were looking for, and I give Scott Perry recognition for finally realizing that and making room for players with a future on this team.

Maxime Renauld will be back from injury soon, but with the acquisition of seven-foot Mason Plumlee, it is likely his playing time will be impacted. Like Nique Clifford, Renauld has had a tepid impact overall, and his future lies in all probability in a back up role, whether on the Kings roster or elsewhere.

Pay attention Kings fans to the three things the Kings need to accomplish and post your thoughts on my website at thekingskorner.com.

All the best! ★

By Emptying Death Row, Newsom Broke a Promise and Disregarded the Will of Voters



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

Gov. Gavin Newsom's decision to commute the death sentences of 548 inmates just weeks before he leaves office is the latest episode in California's 70-year-long political, legal and philosophical debate over capital punishment.

It also adds complexity, because Newsom's unilateral efforts to stop executions violate promises he made while running for governor to honor voters' support of the death penalty.

While Newsom's actions might bolster his standing among center-left Democratic voters in a potential presidential campaign, a Pew Research Center poll in August found 68% of Americans see the death penalty as justified for those who commit murder. That's 6 percentage points higher than the support in a 2021 poll.

A little history: California adopted capital punishment about when it became a state in 1850, but initially executions were done by counties. The state took over in 1893, and since then 514 people have been put to death, according to state records.

Serious efforts to abolish California's death penalty date from the 1950s, when Caryl Chessman, dubbed the "Red Light Bandit," faced execution for a series of robberies and sexual assaults — but no murders — in the 1940s and became a symbol for death penalty opponents.

Chessman's fate finally landed with Democratic Gov. Pat Brown, who personally opposed capital punishment. In 1960, on the eve of Chessman's execution, Brown's 21-year-old son, Jerry, pleaded for a reprieve and urged him to seek legislative repeal. The elder Brown agreed but the Legislature balked, and Chessman was executed on May 2, 1960.

During the 1970s, California's death penalty underwent a dizzying series of legal and political moves — sometimes in effect, sometimes not, depending on the latest decree from the state Supreme Court, action by the Legislature or ballot measure.

Voters had the last word in a 1978 pro-death-penalty ballot measure. However, Jerry Brown, who had become governor, appointed several members of the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Rose Bird, who consistently rejected death sentences. Voters ousted Bird and two other justices in 1986.

Executions resumed in the 1990s, and there have been 13 since. The last was triple murderer Clarence Ray Allen in 2006.

In 2012 and again in 2016, voters rejected ballot measures to repeal the death penalty while passing a 2016 measure aimed at speeding up capital punishment appeals.

Enter Newsom, who was elected lieutenant governor in 2010 and obviously wanted to become governor. In 2016, when asked about the death penalty by the Modesto Bee, Newsom said he would "be accountable to the will of the voters" if elected governor.

"I would not get my personal opinions in the way of the public's right to make a determination of where they want to take us," he said.

While campaigning in 2018, Newsom said he didn't "want to get ahead of the will of the voters" and wanted to "give the voters a chance to reconsider."

However, shortly after inauguration in 2019, Newsom issued a moratorium on executions but ducked questions about asking voters to repeal capital punishment, which would have been the honorable way to proceed. Instead he waited until the final weeks of his governorship to commute death sentences, subject to state Supreme Court ratification of some cases.

"I take this action because I firmly believe that state-sanctioned killing is incompatible with California's values, undermines the foundation of our legal system, and diminishes each of us," Newsom said in an open letter. "I know we cannot execute people in our imperfect legal system and remain true to our core values, first among them justice and human decency."

Newsom insists he respects voters, "but the constitution also gave every governor clemency authority, and that power exists for moments when law as applied cannot be squared with justice. For me, this is that moment."

The authority he cites was aimed at righting perceived injustices on a case-by-case basis.

Newsom's blanket clemency distorts that process, thumbs his nose at California voters and dishonors victims of horrendous crimes and their grieving families.

We'll learn whether it also impacts his presumed presidential ambitions.

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

I Got an Overpayment Notice from Social Security; What Should I Do?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I received a letter from Social Security saying they overpaid me $12,703 in SS benefits. The letter said "We reduce Social Security benefits if you receive a government pension. We reduce benefits by two-thirds of the amount of your pension. Your benefit is less than two-thirds of the pension. For this reason, we cannot pay you."

FYI, I do receive a pension based on work not covered by Social Security taxes. My problem is that I don't fully understand this. This could be correct, but it doesn't seem right to come back wanting money I didn't ask for. I appreciate your time in getting back and letting me know if there is anything else I could be doing, or if they are entitled to go ahead and get the SS payments back. Thanks. ***Signed: Confused about Owing Social Security***

Dear Confused: From what you have shared, it appears that Social Security has determined that you were subject to a rule called the "Government Pension Offset" (GPO). FYI, the GPO was a provision which reduced Social Security spousal and/or survivor benefits for anyone who had a "non-covered" government pension (that is, a pension earned without contributing to Social Security). It's likely that SS paid you full benefits, but that the GPO should have reduced (or eliminated) the benefits they paid, had they known about your "uncovered" government pension. And that is likely the source of the $12,300 overpayment notice you received.

However, the GPO rule was repealed in January 2025 and no longer applies. In other words, those who have a "non-covered" government pension (a pension earned without contributing to SS) are now no longer subjected to reduced benefits under the GPO. The repeal legislation also provided for retroactivity back to January 2024, so the notice you received from Social Security was probably referring to SS benefits you received prior to 2024. If that is the case, then the notice you received is likely accurate and would need to be repaid. However, if the notice is referring to spousal or survivor benefits you received after December 2023, then it would be in error.

The best way to find out would be for you to file an appeal to Social Security, e.g., a "Request for Reconsideration" (form SSA-561), which will cause an independent review within Social Security to see if you are, indeed, required to repay those SS benefits, or whether you should pay something less (or nothing at all). Just remember that when you actually received the SS benefits in question is the key factor – if you had a non-covered government pension while receiving SS spouse or survivor benefits before 2024, then the overpayment notice you received is likely valid. If not, an appeal as I described above should resolve the issue for you.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (http://amacfoundation.org/services) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). ★



Britain owes no one an apology

When is the Muslim world going to apologize for its slave raids in Central and Eastern Europe that made off with millions of captives? Not any time soon, we can assume, since no one is asking it to apologize, and presumably no one ever will.

The same isn't true in the U.K., where there is a hot debate over whether the country should apologize for its participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade in what would be a stark expression of double standards and Western guilt.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham, whose contemporary Labour Party has a taste for self-abasement, wants to have "difficult conversations" over such an apology, and says that it's "the patriotic thing to do." He is "offering a structured dialogue with those affected by the trans-Atlantic slave trade," never mind that Britain abolished the trade more than two centuries ago.

It's perverse for the U.K. -- pressured by Caribbean countries within the Commonwealth -- to consider a formal apology, given that slavery was a universal phenomenon and Britain had an honored role in snuffing it out.

The ancient Egyptians embraced slavery, and so did the Greeks and Romans. Often, enslavement was the price of military defeat in the ancient world. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, the Byzantines, the Vikings and Central Asian societies all relied on slave labor.

They weren't alone; the institution spanned every type of society. Historian Stewart Gordon notes that Ethiopia's legal code in the mid-13th century "recognized slaves as central to the economy and defined the acquisition and holding of slaves as the natural order of things." In the 16th century, he writes, Ethiopia "was a full slave society."

The trans-Atlantic slave trade couldn't have operated without the participation of West African rulers, who took slavery for granted before European slavers showed up and continued the practice after they left.

Something that's almost never mentioned in the debate over accountability for slavery is that North African slave traders enslaved enormous numbers of white Europeans between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Also inconvenient to an anti-Western narrative is that, as James Walvin writes in his "A Short History of Slavery," "Islamic societies were characterized by the widespread and generally unchallenged use of slavery. Indeed, slavery was commonplace throughout Arabia well before the rise of Islam. But as Islam spread between the eighth and 15th centuries, and especially to black Africa, it extended and confirmed the commonplace use of slavery and slave trading."

As part of the so-called Arab slave trade, more than a million slaves were taken from East Africa in the 19th century, and the flow continued apace into the 20th century. According to Gordon, "Perhaps the last large-scale movement of East African slaves to the Middle East was in the 1920s."

As for Britain, beginning in earnest in the 17th century, it became a central cog in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, an industrial-scale enterprise of stomach-turning cruelty. Its ships transported millions of slaves, while the plantation economies of its Caribbean possessions depended on slave labor.

Then, in an extraordinary triumph of morality over unjust profit-making, William Wilberforce and his fellow abolitionists convinced British society to abolish the slave trade and eventually slavery itself. If the institution of slavery was very old, the influence of this Christian-driven attitude to human rights was new. The British went further than simply turning their back on slavery, and used their navy to suppress the slave trade and their diplomatic sway to push other countries to give up the trade as well.

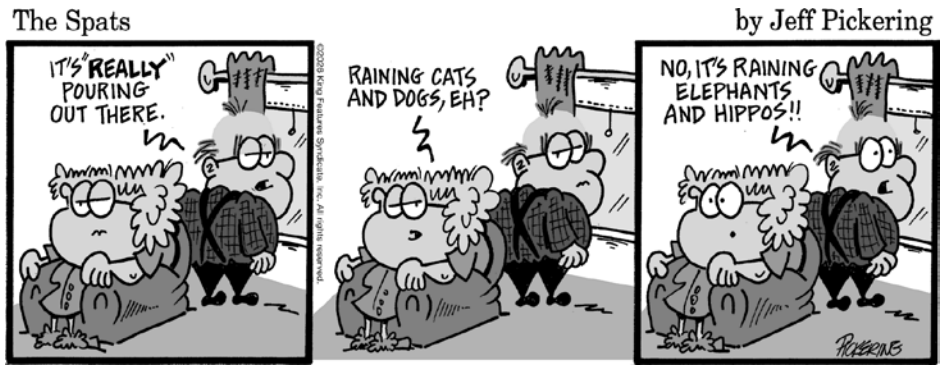
At considerable cost to itself in terms of military effort and financial resources (it paid off Spain, for instance), the U.K. did much more than its share to make abolition the international norm, on top of its other outsized contributions to the creation of the modern world. Rather than contemplating a groveling apology, the attitude of the U.K. should be: "A simple 'thank you' will suffice."

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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COMICS & PUZZLES

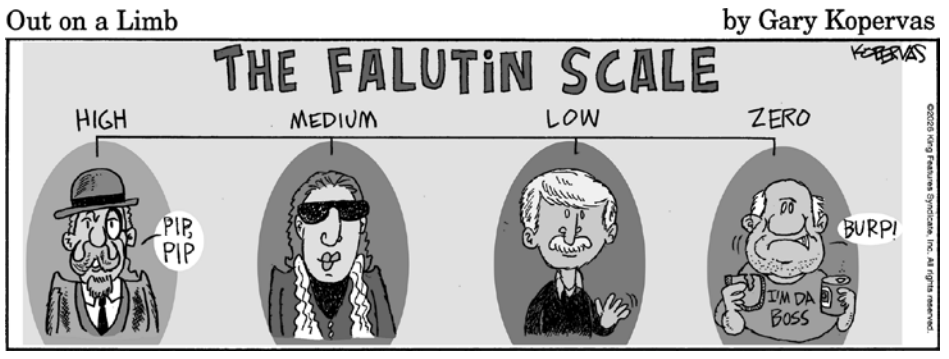
The Spats by Jeff Pickering



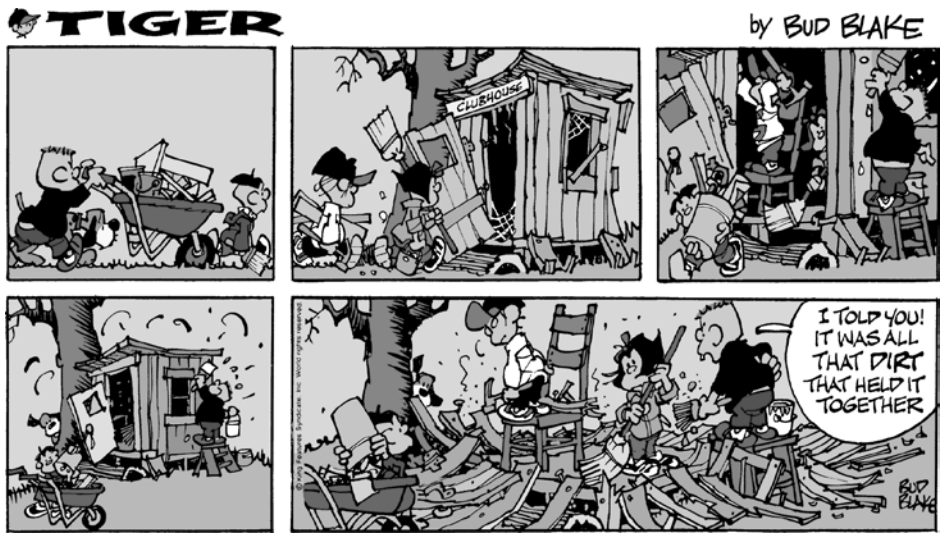
Amber Waves by Dave T. Phipps

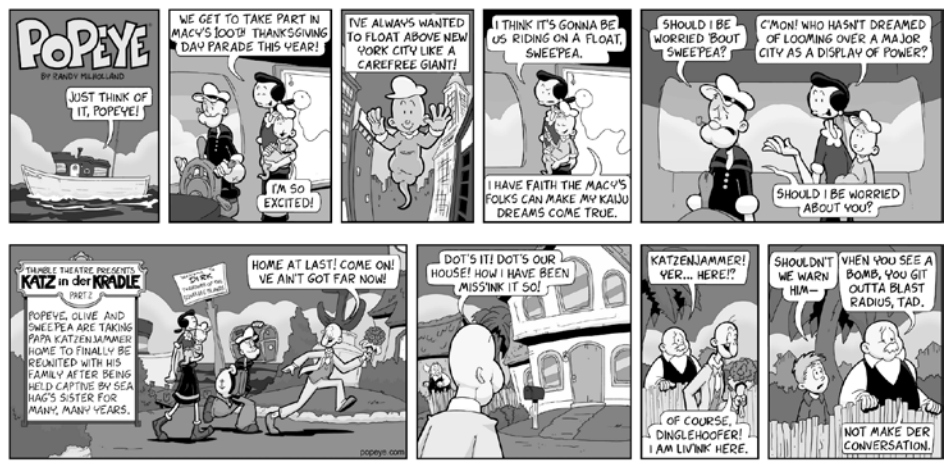


Out on a Limb by Gary Kopervas

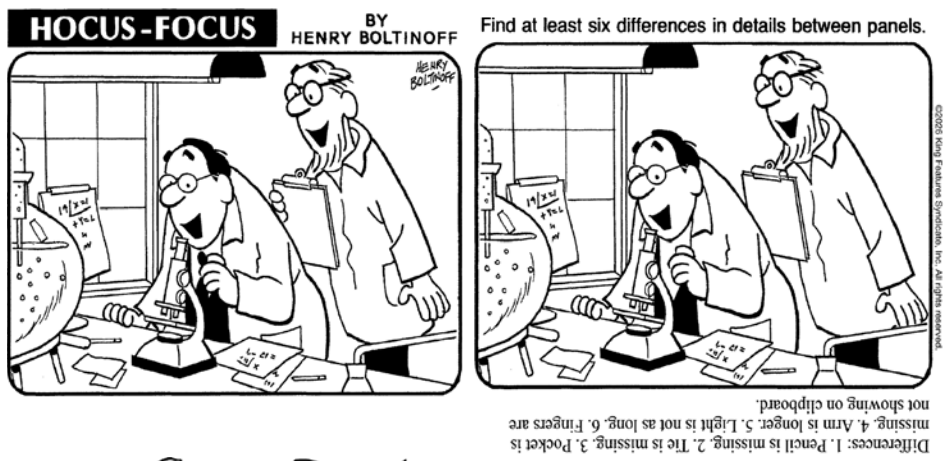


TIGER by Bud Blake





HOCUS-FOCUS by Henry Boltinoff



Differences: 1. Pencil is missing. 2. Tie is missing. 3. Pocket is missing. 4. Arm is longer. 5. Light is not as long. 6. Fingers are not showing on clipboard.

Grin and Bear It by Lynn Johnston



"We've had a few minor problems ... misdemeanors, mostly."

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps





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CLUES

ACROSS
1. Had, with thou
6. Not NFC
9. Sinbad's seven
13. Intense
14. George Gershwin's brother
15. Exclamation of regret, arch.
16. *Speed ____ in the 1960s cartoon
17. Neither's partner
18. Aggressive
19. *Electric-type Pokemon
21. *The Sailor Man
23. Grazing field
24. *Marge to Homer
25. Amazon's entertainment acquisition, acr.
28. Ocean motion
30. Remote
35. Miscellany
37. Narc's unit
39. Russian money
40. "Atlas Shrugged" author
41. Adam Sandler's "____ Gems"
43. One of three square ones
44. More true
46. Do like goo
47. Hindu dress
48. Approvals
50. Express complaint
52. Witch's work
53. Location
55. Cow chew
57. *Road Runner's nemesis
60. *"Peanuts" protagonist
64. Young eel
65. "He ____ and drank the precious Words..."
67. African antelope
68. Tarnish
69. Message in a bottle, acr.
70. Plasters, as on a ship
71. Puts two and two together
72. Emergency responder, acr.
73. Hollywood director Lubitsch

DOWN
1. "Jack and the Beanstalk" strings
2. Popular smoothie berry
3. *Donald or Baby Huey
4. *What Gru does to the moon
5. Three-line poem
6. Japan's indigenous people
7. To's follower
8. Carpus, pl.
9. Uncontrolled swerve
10. "Piece of cake!"
11. Advil target
12. Limit, to some
15. Come into view
20. Kind of #5 Down
22. Mosquito enemy!
24. Wilkommen, in U.S.
25. *Grandson of Rick Sanchez
26. Sunlight interference
27. Subtraction sign
29. *Pet of Bedrock City
31. Eggnog spiker, pl.
32. West African spiritual practice
33. Bell-bottoms bottom
34. *Cat of silent animation era
36. Lyric poems
38. Anis-flavored aperitif
42. Mold a mind
45. Vacation location
49. Use a chair
51. Subtlety
54. Bug
56. Laundromat device
57. Clothed
58. "Metamorphoses" poet
59. Strong desires
60. What access and recess have in common
61. Been in bed
62. Bodily disorders
63. NYC coast
64. 7th letter of Greek alphabet
66. *Jerry's scheming pursuer

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Former Elementary School Finds New Purpose as Sheriff's Training Academy



The former Rock Creek Elementary School has been transformed into the temporary home of the Placer County Sheriff's Office Regional Training Academy.

Story and photo by Sara Jackson

AUBURN, CA (MPG) - A former elementary school in Placer County has found a new purpose, trading classrooms filled with young students for a training ground where future law enforcement officers will learn the skills needed to protect their communities.

The former Rock Creek Elementary School has been transformed into the temporary home of the Placer County Sheriff's Office Regional Training Academy, marking a significant milestone in law enforcement education throughout Northern California and Placer County.

The academy is the first new regional Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certified academy to open in California in more than 20 years.

Approved by the Placer County Board of Supervisors on March 10, the facility officially welcomed its inaugural class on Aug. 17, when 30 recruits representing nine Northern California law enforcement agencies reported for training at 6 a.m.

The academy was established in response to growing demand for law enforcement training throughout the region over the past five years, as existing facilities struggled to accommodate the need for additional officers.

"There's been a major amount of retirements that have taken place, so that's just natural attrition. There was a lot of people leaving the career in law enforcement around the time of COVID, and hiring was stalled because of all of that, too. That created a struggle for law enforcement, but now interest is super high. We have a lot of applicants, anytime we open it up. A lot of law enforcement agencies are seeing that interest. But now there just needs to be the space to train them because it's a long process. And the academy is just the first step," Sheriff's Office Communications Manager Elise Soviar said.

Rather than constructing an entirely new facility, county officials repurposed the former elementary school, converting 11 classrooms into realistic, scenario-based training environments.

There is a lot of classroom instruction learning about penal codes and all of the laws associated with that. There is also a physical side to the recruits' education that include scenario rooms like a mock gas station, or a convenience store.

"We really tried to think through all of the different things that the recruits might encounter in the real world to give them that actual training. It's incredibly important to the Sheriff's office, and should be to law enforcement as a whole, to maintain physical fitness throughout the duration of their career. They do have PT every single day here at the academy. And then there are also physical testing that happens as well," Soviar said.

The classrooms now provide opportunities for recruits to encounter situations similar to those they may face in the field, requiring them to assess potential threats, exercise sound judgment and make split-second decisions under pressure.

> **The academy is the first new regional Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certified academy to open in California in more than 20 years.**

The academy's intensive 24-week program includes approximately 950 hours of instruction, combining traditional classroom education with physical conditioning, tactical exercises and hands-on training.

Throughout the program, recruits are continually evaluated through written examinations, practical exercises and physical performance standards.

Emphasis is placed on leadership, accountability, discipline and the ability to remain composed in challenging situations.

The academy serves both agency-sponsored and non-sponsored recruits, providing a valuable pipeline for law enforcement agencies seeking qualified officers.

Instructors from the Placer County Sheriff's Office lead the program, with additional support from the Roseville Police Department and Nevada County Sheriff's Office.

Through a partnership with Sierra College, recruits can also earn approximately 30 college credit units while completing their academy training.

The inaugural class is scheduled to graduate Jan. 28, 2027.

Although Rock Creek Elementary provides an immediate solution to the region's training needs, it is intended to serve as an interim facility until the permanent Sierra College Regional Public Safety Training Center is completed.

The planned 50-acre center will be located in western Placer County, northwest of Fiddyment Road and West Sunset Boulevard, near Highway 65 and Placer Parkway.

Sierra College purchased the property from the Western Placer Waste Management Authority for $1.1 million following approvals by both governing boards in February 2025.

The proposed training center will feature an emergency vehicle driving course, tactical village, training tower, shooting ranges, maneuvering areas and specialized classrooms.

Unlike the temporary academy, the permanent facility will accommodate law enforcement officers, firefighters and emergency medical services personnel, allowing multiple agencies to train together.

Plans call for approximately 110 annual law enforcement training openings, along with 45 firefighter and 17 emergency medical services openings.

The project is partially funded through Measure E, a $350 million bond approved by voters in 2018, and involves collaboration with local public safety agencies and organizations, including the FBI, CAL Fire and Sacramento State.

By providing training closer to home, the new center aims to reduce regional dependence on facilities outside Northern California.

For now, the transformation of Rock Creek Elementary represents an important first step in expanding local public safety training and preparing the next generation of officers to serve their communities. ★

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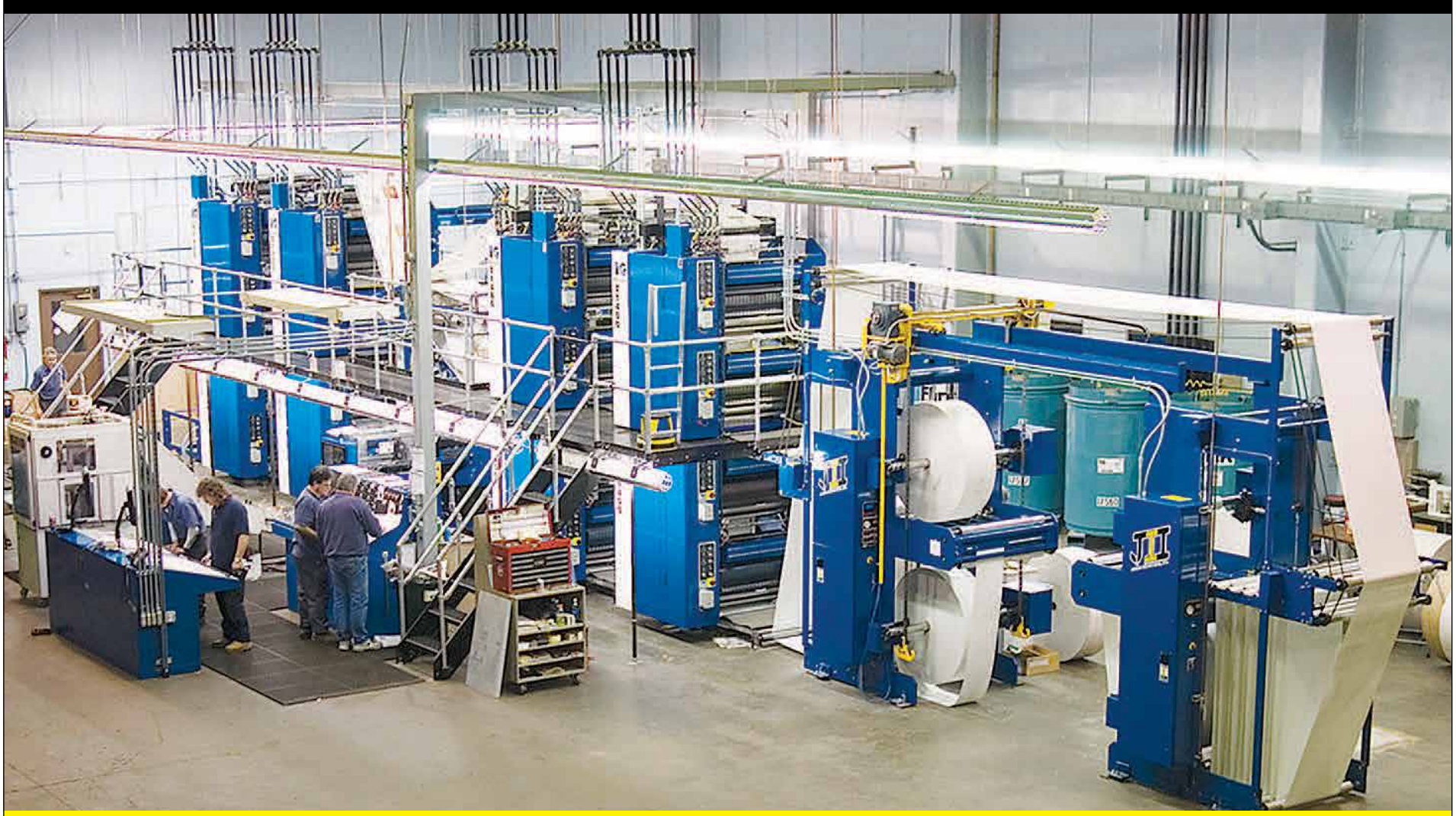
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