

The San Bernardino County Sentinel

News of Note
from Around the
Largest County
in the Lower
48 States

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Widely Seen As A Vestige Of The Pomierski Regime

Upland's Public Employee Pension Share To Increase By \$1.5M In 2014-15

The city of Upland's bleak financial outlook has grown even worse after the state's public employees' retirement system informed city officials that the pension rate the city can anticipate paying in the upcoming fiscal year will rise by \$1.5 million.

Last month, Upland City Manager Stephen



John Pomierski

Dunn said his city was

on the verge of bankruptcy and after having engaged in a series of fiscal gymnastics to balance the current 2013-14 budget, the city will require at least \$3.5 million in additional revenue annually to continue to provide city residents and businesses with the same level of service the city is currently provid-



Stephen Dunn

ing.

As of last month, Dunn said, the city's general fund is hard-stretched to cover Upland's bare operating expenses. Funding for street repairs, equipment and vehicle maintenance, post-employment benefits, equipment replacement, economic development and solutions to the city's See P 7

Gomez Reyes Blasts Democratic Tilt Toward Aguilar In Endorsement Process



Eloise Gomez Reyes

Eloise Gomez Reyes, a lawyer and longtime

Democratic Party activist who is vying for Congress in the 31st Congressional District, has decried what she identified as unfair endorsement processes being used by local Democratic clubs to favor another Democrat in the race, Redlands Mayor Pete Aguilar.

Reyes, Aguilar and

fellow Democrats Danny Tillman and Joe Baca are vying to unseat Republican incumbent Gary Miller in the 31st, which stretches from Rancho Cucamonga to Redlands.

Miller captured the Congressional Seat in the 31st in 2012 through a combination of factors that offset the Democratic Party's 41 to 33.7

percent registration advantage in the district.

Gary Miller, who had represented the 42nd district in northeast Orange, southeast Los Angeles and southwest San Bernardino counties before the reapportionment that followed the 2010 Census, opted out of running against fellow Republican Ed

Royce in the newly-drawn 39th District and instead declared his intention of seeking the voters' nod in the newly drawn 31st District.

In the 31st, four Democrats – Pete Aguilar, Justin Kim, Rita Ramirez-Dean, and Renea Wickman – sought election last year, as did Miller. In ad- See P 4

Needles Plan Approved As Past Stalks Manager

NEEDLES — The Needles City Council on November 12 signed off on a proposal by its new city manager, Rick Daniels, to utilize a firm he vouched for, Development Management Group, Inc., to provide economic development



Rick Daniels

consulting for the city. Meanwhile, the city in Riverside County from which Daniels recently departed, Desert Hot Springs, expedited a declaration of fiscal emergency as a last ditch effort to stave off bankruptcy. That declaration came November 19, one week after Daniels made his successful pitch to the Needles City Council to hire Development Management Group.

This summer, the Needles City Council, which for years has struggled with a stagnating local economy, gambled on hiring Daniels, whose apparent success in allowing Desert Hot Springs to spring back from a previous bankruptcy filing in 2001 and undertake an impressive array of public works and infrastructure improvement projects impressed them.

Daniels, who had spent most of his career in the private sector, including a prolonged tenure as an executive with Waste Management, Inc., held only one public sector See P 2

Trash Franchise Extensions Deadline Pushed To July

Burrtec Waste Industries' hold on its position as San Bernardino County's primary refuse hauler may have slipped yet further last week when the county board of supervisors acceded to the county's solid waste management division's request that it be given an extension on the time it has to notify the companies that hold trash hauling franchises in 20 service areas in



Gerry Newcombe

unincorporated areas of the county that it will terminate those arrangements and put See P 5

Chino Second SB County City To Equip Police Officers With Body Cameras

Chino PD will become the second police department in the county to outfit its officers with body cameras, which will make video recordings of their interaction with the community during patrol and routine operations.

Rialto was the first city in San Bernardino County and among the first cities nationwide to arm the entirety of its street police force with

the miniaturized devices. The cameras, worn on the uniforms, belts or eyeglasses of the officers are distinct from vehicle cameras, which have been in vogue with many police departments for a decade or more.

As of September 1, body cameras became standard issue equipment with all of Rialto's police officers.

On November 19, the Chino City Council vot-

ed unanimously to authorize the expenditure of \$295,825 to purchase 100 Taser Axon Flex on-officer video recorders and related equipment.

According to police chief Miles Pruitt, "The Chino Police Department currently equips its field personnel with digital audio recorders to record contacts with the public for use in court proceedings, report prepara- See P 6

Bill Allots 154,663 Acres In The Mojave Desert To Marines For Training

TWENTYNINE PALMS—The full U.S. Senate this week took up legislation that will advance the Navy's request to expand the Marine Corps' military training grounds into Johnson Valley and Wonder Valley.

The Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee last week approved the proposed Military Land Withdrawals

Act, and a Senate vote on it is anticipated soon.

The bill allows for military use of public lands in Johnson Valley and Wonder Valley, as well as land in Imperial and Riverside counties and Montana for military training exercises.

The bill sets aside 154,663 acres in San Bernardino County for training, extending to a 36,755-acre "shared-use"



area in Johnson Valley, to be available both to the military and the public in Johnson Valley. Under the provisions

of the bill, the Secretary of the Interior would be able to close public lands when deemed necessary for military or public

safety or national security.

The Department of the Navy maintains the land heretofore unused by the military in the Mojave Desert is needed for training exercises that aren't possible on the existing Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center grounds. The Marine Corps envisions training exercises that would involve a Marine See P 7

Alejandro Named Assistant County Schools Chief

Ted Alejandro, the assistant superintendent of business services within the office of the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, has been elevated to the position of deputy superintendent, a newly-created post.

There was immediate speculation that Alejandro's promotion was part of an effort to groom him to become the next San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools.



Ted Alejandro

Last month, San Bernardino County Superintendent Gary Thomas announced he will not

seek re-election next year after six years of overseeing programs for the county's public schools. Thomas ran successfully for the position in 2010 after he was appointed to the post in August 2008 to finish the term of his predecessor, Herbert Fischer.

Alejandro, a graduate of Cal State San Bernardino, has worked in public education for more than 25 years, including having been as-

sistant superintendent of business services for the Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District, which serves students in both San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

In the new position, Alejandro will continue to oversee business services and will stand in for Thomas on issues relating to the office's authority over all public county schools and the more than 414,000 students who attend them.

Needles Council Accepts Daniels' Economic Development Plan from front page

management post before he was hired as Desert Hot Springs city manager. As an outgrowth of his involvement in the waste hauling industry, he founded a company in the late 1990s, Mine Reclamation Corporation, with which he proposed to operate a land-fill within the abandoned Eagle Mountain Mine next to Joshua Tree National Park, into which he proposed depositing

millions of tons of trash from Los Angeles County transported to the site by train. The venture was dropped when the Supreme Court ruled against the environmental certification for the plan. Along the way Daniels had assumed the position of president and CEO of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, a consortium of business owners, financiers and developers. From that position he obtained the post of top administrator with the Salton Sea Authority. It was his experi-

ence in this public sector position that he used to leverage obtaining the Desert Hot Springs city manager position.

While with Desert Hot Springs, one of the poorest cities in the state, Daniels pulled a seeming rabbit out of his hat, undertaking infrastructure improvements that previously seemed beyond the city's means, including paving 34 miles of city streets. He then undertook to build a municipal Health and Wellness and Aquatic Center. The cost of that project ran to \$20 million, however. Dan-

iels' spending spree has ultimately left Desert Hot Springs with an intractable debt in the form of more than \$30 million in delinquent bonds and an ongoing yearly operation cost at the health center of more than \$1 million.

Nevertheless, it was Daniels' can do attitude, unfettered by the restrictions that typically attend the attitudes of public sector managers that so attracted the Needles City Council.

Daniels benefited from the perception that he maintained connec-

tions within the business community and political figures in Southern California, contacts that Needles city officials hope can be utilized to spur investment and economic development in the Needles area.

This summer, a city manager search committee, consisting of council members Linda Kidd, Jim Lopez and Tom Darcy was formed, and it undertook to lure Daniels, one of the highest paid city managers in the state of California with a total annual compensation package in Desert Hot Springs that exceed-

ed \$300,000, to Needles. Despite the fact that Needles has a budgeted range for the city manager position of \$129,000 to \$132,000 per year and was actually paying its acting city manager, David Brownlee, an annual salary of \$99,728.72, the search team offered, and Daniels eventually accepted, an initial salary of \$197,000 per year with annual increases of \$10,000 and a benefit package that provides \$9,000 per year toward his retirement fund and \$13,500 for his family's medical, dental and vision coverage. The package granted him retirement eligibility at the age of 55 (a milestone he has already eclipsed), with a pension equal to 2 percent of his maximum salary times the number of years he has worked for the city.

Unbeknownst to the search committee, Daniels was actually desperately seeking to depart Desert Hot Springs, as two council members were gunning to fire him and were in search of a crucial third vote to ensure his exodus.

In April, Daniels sought to leave Desert Hot Springs, applying for the position of county administrator in Clackamas County in Oregon. He was selected as one of three finalists in the competition for that post and as the interview process advanced, Daniels maintained a cover story to the effect that he was merely vacationing in Oregon, where he was raised and attended college. At the final

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GLIMPSE OF SBC'S PAST

Skiing SBC 1930s Style: Claim Your Slope & Install Your Rope

By Ruth Musser-Lopez

Ski lifts are a relatively new invention but the way downhill skiing has become such an important winter sport here, you would think that sport skiing had been around San Bernardino County forever. In reality, skiing, as a sport was slow to catch on in Southern California because traditionally the region's attraction was the sun, surf and palm trees—not the sun, surf and snow.

An ancient ski found in an archaeological deposit near Moscow, Russia dates skiing at 7000-8300 years ago, but it wasn't until 1936 that the distinction of the first ski lift chair ever went to Sun Valley, Idaho, not southern California where the population is. Josef "Sepp" Benedikter, the Austrian recruit-

ed to help install the lift, eventually did come to San Bernardino County to open a ski lift here... but not until after World War II. Before that, during the 1930s and 40s the name of the game was rope tows and in retrospect the theme seems to have been Claim Your Slope & Install Your

Rope.

Contrary to what the word "depression" implies, apparently people were not so depressed to give up their fun during the Great Depression. That little economic disruption during the 30s and World War II during the 40s did not thwart interest in inexpensive

diversionary recreation or "cheap thrills." Improved roads and the Model T Ford made it possible for people to easily reach our county's mountains and as early as 1924 they were skiing at Fish Camp (Snow Valley). During times of economic hardship as in the 1930s, resourceful people of San Bernardino County claimed their slope and installed a rope--tow ropes, that is--making a nickel, dime or buck by repetitiously pulling people up the slope in anticipation of the thrilling descent.

Actually, according to the Pacific Rim Snow Sports Alliance "The 30s and 40s saw an explosion of skiing with small ski areas, using rope tows, springing up all over. In Big Bear Valley, these areas

were spread out from Moonridge on the east to the Upper Mill Creek on Skyline Drive near Bluff Lake on the west...

was installed in San Bernardino County...at Big Pines in 1929, now Mountain High Resort near Wrightwood, Cali-



Big Bear Mountain started with a rope tow at Moonridge in the 1930s. Photo courtesy of California Ski Library, Ingrid Wicken collection as shown at www.pacificrimalliance.com



Big Bear Mountain's 1938 sling lift. Jack Northrop developed the first ever sling lift at Fish Camp (Snow Valley, Running Springs) in the 1930s. Photo courtesy of California Ski Library, Ingrid Wicken collection as shown at www.pacificrimalliance.com

By the 1930s, skiing took off largely because of the ski jumping craze that had taken over the country." The first jump in southern California

fornia (pacificrimalliance.org).

Sling lifts were the next best thing. A little

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Daniels Unveils Needles Plan Just As Desert Hot Springs Declares a Fiscal Emergency from page 2

stages of the Clackamas County selection pro-

cess at the end of June, it appeared that Daniels had the job and it then became known to the Desert Hot Springs City Council's members that he was gearing up to leave Desert Hot Springs. Daniels' move

to Oregon fell through, however, when Donald Krupp, one of the other two finalists, was given the county administrator's post in July.

Meanwhile, the risky economic policy Daniels had quarterbacked in Desert Hot Springs was beginning to catch up with the city. In addition to the delinquencies in more than \$30 million in bond payments, Desert Hot Springs was seeing losses in other failed ventures, such as the \$250,000 in taxpayer funds Daniels ventured in 2010 to lay the ground for and promote a music festival that never came off. Though he initially said the city would recover the money from the concert series' promoter, the city never did so.

In June, city finance director Terrence Beaman resigned after a lengthy dispute with Daniels with regard to Daniels' proposal to utilize \$4 million in city reserves to cover a \$4 million deficit. After the municipal and financial management consulting firm Urban Futures assessed Desert Hot

Springs' economic condition, it concluded the city was in a deteriorating financial state that would lead to insolvency within 12 to 24 months.

In looking past those blemishes on Daniels' record, the Needles City Council committed to hiring Daniels on a three year contract commencing September 16.

Two months after he officially moved into the position, Daniels offered the Needles City Council a proposal that he said could turn the city around financially.

The first step, Daniels said, is the hiring of Development Management Group, Inc., for economic development consulting services at a cost of \$7,000 per month to run through the end of the current fiscal year on June 30.

Development Management Group's hiring will be coupled with ten further actions to augment the identification of businesses that would be amenable to locating in Needles and an active recruitment effort to bring those entities to town.

Daniels said his ten step plan for Needles'

economic rejuvenation consists of creating a single coordinated business improvement strategy involving the Needles Downtown Business Alliance, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation; tending to the city's cleanliness and appearance; intensify law enforcement efforts to drive down the crime rate; attracting tourists; encouraging a population increase through new residential growth; increasing local health-care options and services; bringing in tax-producing business; making businesses aware of Needles' extraordinarily low energy rates; reinforcing the quality of education in the local school district; and doing the same at the Needles Center of Palo Verde Community College.

Development Management Group will devote much of its business recruitment effort to putting together information packets about the city and providing them to potentially interested businesses.

Daniels predicted Development Management

Group's efforts will bear fruit that will justify extending the arrangement into fiscal year 2014-15.

Needles councilman Jim Lopez told the *Sentinel* that neither he nor his council colleagues had dwelled on the circumstance in Desert Hot Springs. "I don't know anything about that city," Lopez said. "A lot of California's cities are going through tough times right now. When the state of California pulled RDA [Redevelopment Agency] authority it killed a lot of economic development."

Lopez's reference was to 2011 legislation that dissolved all municipal redevelopment agencies. "It killed California cities when the state yanked those RDAs and it put a lot of cities out there in major debt. I don't know anything about what went on before in Desert Hot Springs. We wish Desert Hot Springs the best."

Despite that, Lopez said he "absolutely" continues to have faith in Daniels. "The entire council does," he said.

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Upland Council Backs Negotiating Fire Admin Merger With Montclair

The Upland City Council in a 4-1 vote this week directed city manager Stephen Dunn to finalize through further consultation and negotiation with Montclair City Manager Edward Starr the merging of the two adjoining cities' fire departments' administrations. The action was taken in the anticipation

that the departments' managerial merger can take place early in 2014 and that the department's common service boundaries can be eliminated by next July and that the departments can potentially be consolidated entirely at some point in the future.

The Montclair council

has already indicated it is amenable to the administrative consolidation in principle. Upon the finalization of the current plan relating to administration, which both cities have already agreed will be undertaken as a two-year pilot program, its terms will be brought back to both

city councils for a vote to approve the arrangement.

Upland and Montclair first broached the concept of merging their fire departments in 1993, Upland Fire Chief Rick Mayhew said.

In 2012, both Upland and Montclair were casting about for a way to re-

duce their respective fire protection costs. At that time the city of Upland contemplated outsourcing options for its fire department, including considering contracting with the city of Ontario, the California Division of Forestry or the county of San Bernardino for fire protection service.

Upland also approached Los Angeles County to see if its fire department would provide it with a fire service proposal. Los Angeles County turned Upland down because the California Division of Forestry, also known as Cal Fire, and

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Gomez Reyes Calls Democrats Promotion Of Aguilar Unfair from front page

dition, another Republican, Bob Dutton, joined the fray in the 2012 primary. Despite the seven percent Democratic voter registration advantage in the 31st, simple mathematics hurt the Democrats as their vote was divided four ways, while the Republican vote was split two ways. Dutton and Miller proved to be the two top vote-getters and under California's open primary arrangement wherein the two top vote-getters qualify for a run-off in the November general election regardless of party affiliation, the contest came down to a race between Republicans Miller and Dutton. Miller prevailed in that race.

Intent on preventing a repeat of that debacle, Democrats are seeking to discourage an internecine war within their ranks that depletes the party's energy and unity. An early strategy among national party leaders has emerged in which they are seeking to have the party coalesce around Aguilar, who received the greatest number of votes among the Democratic candidates in the June 2012 primary. In this way, last May the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee selected Aguilar as one of five candidates nationwide to be included in its Jumpstart Program, which is intended to assist early-emerging Democrats seeking to unseat incumbent Republicans deemed to be vulnerable. Party leaders

convinced California's two senators, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, to endorse Aguilar. Party donors, inside and outside California, were encouraged to provide him with campaign cash. In September, in a rare if not unprecedented move, the Redlands Area Democratic Club endorsed Aguilar. Normally, party clubs hold off on making endorsements until after, in some cases well after, the filing deadline for a particular office is closed, giving all potential candidates an opportunity to make the case for their candidacies. The Redlands Area Democratic Club's action defied that tradition. In reaction to the Redlands club's move, the state Democratic Party adopted new rules and bylaws that called for Democratic clubs holding off until after the final filing date for office to ensure that no candidates are left out of the endorsement evaluation process.

Yet so intense was the pressure to promote Aguilar, four more Democratic clubs – the West End Democratic Club, the East Valley Democratic Club, the Helen L. Doherty Democratic Club, and the Stone-wall Democratic Club – on November 16 announced their support for Aguilar, in defiance of the new rule.

On November 19, Reyes wrote to the California Democratic Party and its chairman, John Burton, complaining that she had been excluded from the endorsement process and that the endorsement votes by those four clubs announced November 16 "appear

to have been held without notice and with apparent disregard for the democratic process. I was never contacted by any of the four endorsing clubs prior to their votes being held. I was neither informed of their upcoming votes, nor was I invited to address the members of their clubs alongside the other candidates in this race."

Reyes said a "conflict of interest" had developed by which party higher-ups were using their influence to push Aguilar's candidacy forward by foreclosing other candidates from making a case for themselves within their own party structure. She said this was strongest at the level of the county central committee.

"I have recently heard from the leadership of

several area Democratic clubs that members of the San Bernardino County Democratic Central Committee have personally delivered the message to their membership that the local Democratic clubs should follow the lead of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee by issuing their endorsements for Pete Aguilar. This would be a clear violation of the California Democratic Party bylaws, which state that central committees should work "to protect the integrity of the endorsement power by precluding other entries from representing themselves as purveyors of a Democratic Party endorsement. This conflict of interest has clearly influenced the integrity of the Democratic Party

endorsement process in our race. All of the candidates running for this seat have not been given a fair chance to earn the endorsements of the local Democratic clubs. The institutional bias and lack of transparency in the endorsement process have disempowered several of the Democrats running for this congressional seat and, most importantly, it has disenfranchised members of our local Democratic clubs as well as area voters."

Ironically, the stam-pede to line up a bevy of early endorsements of Aguilar is aimed less at Reyes, who has been the most vocal in protesting it, than at Baca, a former Congressman in the heavily Democratic-leaning 42nd and 43rd Congressional districts,

who was voted out of office last year in a race in which he faced another Democrat, Gloria Negrete-McLeod, in the newly-drawn 35th Congressional District. Baca lost that race after Negrete-McLeod's campaign was infused with \$3.8 million in donations from a political action committee controlled by Republican New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, which paid for a \$2.3 million television advertising blitz during the last week of the campaign which included negative hit pieces that trashed Baca on his record as well as upbeat mailers that lionized Negrete-McLeod for her service in the California legislature.

Baca, who was in Con-

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No-Bid Contract Extension Raises Questions Of Conflict In Water District

Scheduled action by the Yucaipa Valley Water District next week has resurrected questions about a potential conflict of interest involving at least one of the district's board members.

The Sacramento-based lobbying firm Platinum Advisors currently holds a no-bid contract with the water district for the provision of representation in the state capitol.

On December 4, the Yucaipa Valley Water District's board of directors is set to renew a five-year contract with Platinum Advisors at a cost of \$60,000 annually. The total value of the contract renewal is \$300,000, with the arrangement to last through 2018.

The board of directors did not consider any competing lobbyists.

The alleged conflict-of-interest consists of the familial relationships between two of the board

members and one of the more prominent employees of Platinum Advisors.

The board members of the Yucaipa Valley Water District are Jay Bogh, Bruce Granlund, Lonni Granlund, David Leja, and Kenneth Munoz.

Bruce Granlund is the brother of Brett Granlund. He is also board president. Lonni Granlund is the ex-wife of Brett Granlund and the vice president of the board.

Brett Granlund, a former assemblyman, is an employee of Platinum Advisors. Platinum Advisors owner Darius Anderson has long touted Brett Granlund as a key member of his staff, valuable for his intimate knowledge of legislative processes and his familiarity with Southern California, in particular San Bernardino and Riverside counties, in

which his district, when he was a member of the Assembly, was located. Brett Granlund was given a prominent position on the profile portion of Platinum Advisors' website, where the experience and talents of the firm's various lobbyists were laid out.

Like many other local governmental agencies Platinum Advisors has contracts with, Yucca Valley Water District's account is handled by Brett Granlund.

Curiously, as of November 20, Brett Granlund's profile on the Platinum Advisors website was removed.

Anderson and Brett Granlund were unavailable to explain why Brett Granlund's profile was taken down. His name yet appears on company stationary.

The water district was unapologetic about employing a company which employs a blood

and marital relative to two of its directors.

"District staff believes it would be prudent to continue our investment in an annual contract with Platinum Advisors to protect the financial and political interests of our ratepayers. The schedule of compensation for the contract is based on a contract that avoids an annual escalation of the retainer," according to a district memorandum relating

to the contract renewal signed by Anderson and Yucaipa Valley Water District General Manager Joe Zoba. According to that memorandum, Platinum Advisors will "work with the district to develop policy arguments and a rationale that can be presented to the Legislature and the Executive Branch to justify the position of the Yucaipa Valley Water District, [provide] direct lobbying [of] the Legis-

lature on behalf of the Yucaipa Valley Water District on prevention of property tax shifts, track... legislation introduced or amended and inform... the Yucaipa Valley Water District staff of legislation that effects the interests of the Yucaipa Valley Water District [and] perform... other necessary and appropriate services which may include, but not be limited to, person-

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Trash Franchises from front page

the contracts out to bid

At the dawn of 2013, Burrtec was the undisputed leader of trash handling companies in the county. It held a twelve-year running contract for managing the county's landfill system in addition to being the franchised trash hauler in 16 of the county's 24 incorporated cities. In addition, it had the trash hauling franchises in 34 of the county's unincorporated communities. It had solidified that hold over the years by virtue of being a leading donor to the political campaigns of county as well as municipal elected officials in the region.

In April, however, after a competitive bid process, the company lost its \$17 million per year contract to run the county's landfills, being eclipsed by Los Angeles County-based Athens Services.

It has since moved to consolidate its hold on its existing contracts, all of which are already protected by "evergreen"

clauses, which extend those franchise contracts automatically for a given set of years. In most cases those contracts are locked in for at least five years and in some cases for as long as ten years per the evergreen arrangement.

In the case of the franchises for the unincorporated county areas, those contracts are locked in for eight years, meaning that upon notification of the county's intent to put the franchise contract out to bid, Burrtec will keep the franchise for eight more years.

Earlier this year, county public works director Gerry Newcombe became concerned about the terms of service contained in the trash hauling franchise contracts in the county's unincorporated communities, in particular with regard to income haulers are now able to derive from handling and selling recyclable materials and how that income could be translated into cost savings for the haulers' customers.

The current "ever-

green" clauses with the trash hauling franchise holders allow the county to give a notice of nonrenewal during a six month period every two years. As the June 30, 2013 deadline for 20 of those franchise agreements approached, however, Newcombe was looking to instill changes into the franchise terms that had not been effectuated.

"Staff determined that changes to the franchise agreements were necessary to better serve county residents and obtained board approval to extend the notice period to January 31, 2014, while those changes were discussed and negotiated with the haulers," Newcombe wrote in a report to the board of supervisors for their November 19 meeting.

Of the 20 franchises in question, Burrtec holds 13 of them. Though Newcombe said "Staff expects to finalize negotiations," and "County staff and the franchised waste haulers have been working diligently since July to prepare an amendment to address these vari-

ous county concerns," he indicated he had not reached agreement with the trash haulers. "While significant progress has been made, negotiations will not be finalized in time to properly notice and conduct the required public hearing before January 31, 2014." He requested that the board "authorize an extension from January 31, 2014 to June 30, 2014 in which a notice of non-renewal can be issued by the county to the franchised solid waste haulers."

The board granted Newcombe's request.

Thus, Burrtec Waste Industries' grip on County Franchise Area 2 involving the sphere of the cities of Montclair and Upland; on County Franchise Area 5 involving the sphere of the city of Fontana; on County Franchise Area 6 involving the community of Bloomington; on County Franchise Area 9 involving the El Rancho Verde community near Rialto; on County Franchise Area 10 involving Devore and the sphere of the city of San Bernardino; County Fran-

chise Area 11 involving the sphere of the city of Loma Linda; County Franchise Area 12 involving Mentone, Oak Glen, the sphere of the City of Redlands, Mountain Home and Angeles Oaks; County Franchise Area 16 involving Crestline, Running Springs, Lake Arrowhead, Green Valley Lake, and Blue Jay; County Franchise Area 19 involving the spheres of the city of Victorville, town of Apple Valley and the city of Adelanto, Landers and Lucerne Valley; on County Franchise Area 22 involving the unincorporated area northwest of the City of Adelanto; County Franchise Area 23 involving the sphere of the city of Barstow and Lenwood-Hinkley; County Franchise Area 24 involving Yermo, Daggett and Newberry Springs; and on County Franchise Area 25 involving Joshua Tree, the sphere of the Town of Yucca Valley, and Morongo Valley is being tested as competitors will be able to enter competing proposals for servicing those areas. So

too will USA Waste of California, which serves County Franchise Area 3 involving the sphere of the city of Chino; Cal Disposal Company, which provides service to County Franchise Area 8 involving Muscoy, South Cajon Pass, and the sphere of the city of San Bernardino; CR&R Waste Services, which has contracts for County Franchise Area 15, involving the Wrightwood community and County Franchise Area 20, involving Phelan, Pinon Hills, and the sphere of the city of Adelanto; Big Bear Disposal, which serves County Franchise Area 17 involving Fawnskin, Baldwin Lake and Lake Williams; Advance Disposal Company, which serves County Franchise Area 18 involving Spring Valley Lake, the unincorporated areas of Hesperia and Apple Valley; and Benz Sanitation, which hauls trash in County Franchise Area 21 involving Trona, Windy Acres, Four Corners, and the Red Mountain all be subject to potential competition.

Reyes Objects
from page 4

gress for 13 years, is not without resources. In addition to bringing name recognition to the political table, he possesses, as a former member of Congress, indirect and residual political clout, together with an insider's knowledge of issues and alliances, which he is working assiduously to bring to bear. An independent poll taken in September showed Baca ahead of the other

Democratic candidates in the race, though all of the Democrats tallied behind Miller.

On September 25 and 26, Political USA conducted a survey of 2,559 votes in the 31st District, determining that Miller was the choice of 28 percent, Baca received the support of 20 percent, Aguilar was the choice of nine percent, Tillman had seven percent and Reyes was favored by six percent. Nearly 29 percent were undecided

or showed no preference. A poll carried out by Public Policy Polling at the behest of MoveOn.org, a Democrat-affiliated organization, shows that 48 percent of the district's voters would vote

in favor of any Democrat running against Miller and that 13 percent of the remaining voters are undecided, while Miller has firm support from 39 percent of the district's voters.

Potential Conflict
from page 5

al contact with key interest groups and political leaders, building coalitions of support groups, and attending appropriate issue meetings."

Government Code Section 1090 prohibits elected government officials from having an interest in any contract in which they have a personal financial interest.

Needles City Manager
from page 3

"Needles has a real strong council and we are behind our city manager 100 percent. We are going through union negotiations and he is working on economic development. The city council runs our city. The city manager brings ideas to us. He is moving us forward in a positive direction."

Lopez dismissed any

suggestion he and the other members of the city manager recruitment committee had been hoodwinked into hiring Daniels. "We are happy to have him here," Lopez said. "He is a perfect fit for us. We did our due diligence. We have a seven person council, six council members and the mayor. We are all very strong and positive. There is no backbiting with decisions we have made."

Chino Outfitting Officers With Video Cameras
from front page 2

tion and review, complaint investigations and internal reviews. These recordings have proven extremely beneficial to field personnel, the police department and the community as a whole as they help increase the level of professionalism and transparency in regards to police interactions with the public.

"With the rapid evolution of portable video recorders, technology now allows for field personnel to capture video and audio of their field encounters," Pruitt continued. "While technology has long existed which al-

lows for the installation of video recorders in police vehicles. The benefits of such systems are limited due to the fact they only capture events which occur directly in front

of the vehicle, while ignoring the many encounters field personnel engage in and away from their vehicles. Over the past few years, the police department has monitored the evolution

of video camera technology. The department recognizes the critical importance on-officer video plays in modern law enforcement and its ability to help the department provide the increased levels of service anticipated from new development in the city of Chino."

Pruitt elaborated, "In today's world, the prevalence of surveillance cameras and cellular phone cameras often results in short video clips that fail to capture the full scope and nature of any given event. This often leads to incomplete video clips showing police personnel in an unfavorable light. On-officer video counters this problem by providing video recordings which tell the story from the officer's perspective."

According to Pruitt, the system the city is purchasing is a superior product to other body cameras.

"The Taser Axon Flex system has a 30-second pre-event buffer that captures video for the 30 seconds prior to the offi-

cer activating the recording function, effectively allowing for

officers to reach back in time and record critical events which happened before the officer could activate the system," Pruitt said. "Over the last two years, the police department has been involved in the testing and evaluation of various on-officer video solutions. In an effort to identify the best solution for the department's needs, each potential solution was evaluated using the following criteria: portability, video/audio quality, ease of use, mounting options, video management capability, pre-event recording capabilities, cost of purchase and maintenance, and vendor

profiles and sustainability. Staff tested the three leading systems and concluded the Taser Axon Flex camera and the Evidence.com media storage solution were ideally suited to the needs of the department. The Axon Flex Camera provides multiple mounting options, records high quality video/audio, is small and lightweight, has pre-event recording (30 seconds), is reasonably priced, and is manufactured by a leading law enforcement technology manufacturer with a strong history of quality and success."

Pruitt said the Axon Flex system goes hand-in-glove with the data storage system the city will purchase with it.

"The Evidence.com

system provides a secure and seamless cloud-based storage solution requiring only internet access to upload the video/audio files to Taser's secure, encrypted servers," Pruitt said. "Furthermore, the Evidence.com system has been court tested and is currently in use by numerous police agencies, including the Rialto Police Department.

Finally, the Evidence.com platform provides robust access control and accountability while having no physical on-site storage requirements."

Pruitt said that "As new residential, commercial and industrial development continues to come online in the city, the police department is anticipating a corresponding increase in calls for service. Deployment of the proposed on-officer video system will help the department and its officers meet these increased service needs through higher productivity and enhanced customer service."

The projected cost to implement this project is \$295,825. Taser International of Scottsdale, Arizona manufactures the product.

The city will pay \$73,238 for 100 of the cameras, and \$166,200 to Evidenc.com for data storage. One year of maintenance comes with the purchase of the cameras and the city will pay \$33,728 for an additional two years of maintenance. Tax and shipping on the cameras will run to \$22,659.

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County Unemployment Rate Dipped Slightly In September & October

San Bernardino County's unemployment rate declined to 9.4 percent in October, according to data released Friday by the California Employment Development Department (EDD). That compares with an 8.7 percent unemployment rate for the entire state of California in September and October. The state rate declined from 8.9 percent in August.

San Bernardino County's employment rate has lagged well behind the rest of the country for the last six years. In September, the U.S. unemployment was 7.2 percent. It increased to 7.3 percent in October.

Upland/Montclair Fire Administration Merger *from page 4*

LA County Fire have an agreement that Cal Fire will not come into Los Angeles County to seek contracts and Los Angeles County has agreed not to go into San Bernardino County or Orange County for contract agencies.

In Montclair, officials previously gave serious consideration to the outsourcing of that 36,664-poulation municipality's fire department, specifically the concept of dissolving the department in favor of contracting with the San Bernardino County Fire Department or the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

In April 2012, Dunn and Starr resurrected the long dormant discussion of a cooperative agreement between the cities they oversee with respect to fire protection. The need for cost reductions in all phases of municipal operations in virtually every city in the state has grown over the last six years

as a lingering economic downturn has reduced revenues available to cities. Upland and Montclair have been no exception to that trend, and Montclair has been particularly hard hit by the stagnating economy. As a result of the state of California's shuttering of municipal redevelopment agencies throughout the state, toward the

end of the 2010-11 fiscal year, Montclair laid off 10 employees as part of its effort to make up for its loss of redevelopment money. Throughout much of 2010-11, one of the Montclair Fire Department's paramedic units was parked and the paramedics functioned from the department's remaining engines, which stayed in service.

Over the last year-and-a-half, what was a 27-fire-fighter department has lost three positions to attrition, and has not filled those vacancies, making up for the manpower shortage with overtime. In September 2012, Starr, in a cost-cutting move that saved the city nearly half a million dollars a year in wages and

Continued on Page 9

CalPERS Hits Upland With \$1.5M Increase *from front page*

growing homeless problem has been entirely depleted. The general fund accounts for most of the city's services. It funds 73 activities related to the basic function of municipal government. Dunn said.

In October, Dunn said that the only alternative to drastic service cutbacks consisted of revenue enhancement, most specifically a tax that would need to be approved by a majority of the city's voters. To emphasize his point and support his case, Dunn referenced a 2012 auditor's opinion from the certified public accounting firm Mayer Hoffman and McCann and Stan-

dard and Poor's intended downgrading of the city's credit rating. Mayer Hoffman and McCann said there are serious questions with regard to the city's solvency to the point that in a short while "it will be unable to continue as a going concern." According to Standard and Poor's, the city, which has already been downgraded from an AA credit rating to an A+, is in danger of seeing its credit rating eroding even further. A municipality's credit rating directly impacts the interest rate it must pay when borrowing money.

To balance the city's current \$39 million budget, Dunn said Upland's entire municipal operation is borrowing heavily from rapidly evaporating reserves, while relying on income from two of the city's

enterprise funds which remain in the black, its water and sewer service funds.

This sobering assessment was made before the California Public Employees Retirement System, known by its acronym CalPERS, informed Upland that based on its payroll, the city will need to up its annual contributions to the retirement fund pool by a whopping \$1.5 million. Dunn this week told the *Sentinel* that Upland is currently paying \$6.5 million to CalPERS annually, "based upon budeted payroll and the CalPERS rate. That reflects a 36 percent increase for our general employees and a 29 percent increase for our public safety employees. Earlier this year we were informed CalPERS was changing their actuarials

and I ran some numbers. That showed we could expect a rate increase of at least \$500,000 or as much as \$2 million. It turns out it was closer to \$2 million," Dunn said.

Although other cities are being hit with pension rate increases as well, Upland finds itself behind this financial eight ball in no small measure because of the growth of its staff during the last decade as well as concessions made to the city's employees' bargaining units during the tenure of former mayor John Pomierski, who was heavily supported by all of the city's employee unions. Under Pomierski and his hand-picked city manager, Robb Quincey, the city increased salary and benefit packages for employees markedly. Subsequently, Pomierski was indicted by a

federal grand jury for his involvement in a political corruption scheme that involved his taking bribes in exchange for using his influence as an elected official to forge backroom deals and arrange favorable outcomes for individuals and businesses with projects or applications being processed at City Hall. Pomierski pleaded guilty and is now serving a sentence in a federal penitentiary. Quincey has been indicted and charged with three felony corruption charges, including unlawful misappropriation of public money, gaining personal benefit from an official contract, and giving false testimony under oath. He has pleaded not guilty and is maintaining his innocence.

This complex of circumstances has led to

open expression by some Upland residents that the runaway labor and pension costs that are plaguing Upland are vestiges of the ethos of public trust violations that occurred under Pomierski and Quincey. The implication is that employee contract terms favorable to Upland's city employees were given to bind those employees to the mayor as part of an understanding and arrangement which allowed Pomierski's depredations to take place. One outgrowth of that perception is a reluctance on the part of at least some of Upland's residents to impose on themselves any municipal tax that will be used to pay for the perpetuation of generous pensions for retired city employees.



Senate Bill Would Expand Marine Combat Training Zone *from front page*

Expeditionary Brigade-sized unit, comprised of

about 15,000 Marines and a full complement of land and aviation equip-

ment and vehicles. Those exercises require that elements of the force be well removed from other elements, including being beyond visual range. The exercises are likely to involve a coordinated attack or effort at vectoring disparate forces to a single location, involving precise location finding and timing.

The Navy had intended to use an even larger area in the Mojave, but reduced its request in compliance with public input and protests.

The expansion in the Military Land Withdrawals Act would prohibit public access to

roughly half of the land now available for off-road use in Johnson Valley. The shared-use provision turns over to the military the area so designated for two months out of the year, during which time the Secretary of the Navy has exclusive management authority for the land so maneuvers can be held. The Secretary of the Interior would have authority over the property for the balance of time.

Congressman Paul Cook, who represents the area and was a Marine colonel, promoted an alternate version of the act that was appar-

ently less acceptable to the Navy than the draft now before the Senate. His recommendations were not included in the Senate bill, which will upon passage become a part of the National Defense Authorization Act.

While Cook pursues rivaling legislation from his position in the House of Representatives, a circumstance could develop where conflicting language in the two bills could result in a bicameral conference committee being formed to hash out the differences.





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Historic County Ski Lifts

from page 3

bit of an evolutionary adaptation from simply hanging onto the rope with one's gloved hands and being pulled up the hill. "In the mid-1930s, Jack Northrop—who went on to found the aviation giant Northrop Corporation—designed and built what was probably the first sling lift in Southern California at Fish Camp (Snow Valley), according to 'Skiing in Southern California' by Ingrid P. Wicken. The new lift was a huge improvement over the uncomfortable and difficult rope tows of the time. Skiers using the sling lift grabbed onto a triangular bar, leaned back and were hoisted up the mountain" (posted in DiscoverIE.com).

Ultimately, the chair lift was the destined "summit" in the evolution of ski technology. Developer W. Averill Harriman lured Sepp Benedikter from his native Austria to help design the runs when Sun

Valley, Idaho's chair lift was opened in 1936 and he was the first person to ride the world's first chairlift there. Six years later, in 1942 just beyond our county's border near Wrightwood, Lynn Newcomb, Sr. of Los Angeles county's Mt. Waterman, boasted the first chairlift in Southern California, supplementing his rope tow installed in 1938.

Snow skiing was brought to a near standstill at the outbreak of World War II. The government curtailed the use of metals except for the war effort, and the first ski lift in San Bernardino County wasn't installed until after the war. After the war things changed, particularly in southern California where the baby boom and east-to-west immigration brought urban expansion, massive population increases and a huge void to fill in the area of recreational diversions, entertainment for students and workers during their off hours. Winter sports, like snow took off in a flurry.

In January of 1947,

the first chair lift in San Bernardino County was installed at Wrightwood, then the Blue Ridge Ski Area, now Mountain High West. It became the third in California, and only the fifth chairlift in all of the United States.

In 1948, Benedikter began clearing trails at a neighboring ski area in Wrightwood, called Holiday Hill (now Mountain High East). By 1949, Benedikter was operating a little rope tow at Holiday Hill. In 1950, with financial backing from John Steinmann, he built a 5,800-foot long double chairlift, almost twice the length of any other lift in Southern California at the time.

Once work began on the chairlift, Benedikter cleared all the runs and built the towers from timber hewn from Holiday Hill's slopes. The chairlift was ready to operate in December 1950, but Holiday Hill and its first chairlift became the object of litigation and conflict. Steinmann bought out Benedikter in late 1951 and the Stein-

mann family would go on to own and operate the area for nearly 30 years.

The first chairlift in the Big Bear Area was

Village. Colloquially, it became known as Lynn Lift but was later sold and renamed Snow Forest. In 1981, the Lynn Lift was dismantled and



Nov. 24, 2013 shot of the Mt. Baldy Notch (top) and historic lift towers installed in 1952.

built in 1949 by Judge Clifford Lynn at the south end of Pine Knot Boulevard in Big Bear

replaced by a 3,000 foot long triple chair with a 600 foot vertical rise. Snow Forest was closed

permanently in 1992 when "the Forest Service pulled the permit so no one else could take over the ski area" according to Paul Herrick, a former ski school instructor there.

Mt. Baldy's vintage towers at lifts 1 and 3 were installed by Harwood Developments and placed in operation in 1952. They are now over 50 years old and considered historic antiquities.

At the time, Ringer Chairlifts installed a state-of-the-art feature--the double swivel chair. It was designed to automatically move the chair out of the way of the riders. Riders were supposed to be able to simply stand up when unloading with no need to immediately ski away. Though it would seem that the design was user friendly, it was not as intuitive as one might think. Instead of waiting for the chair to move away, instinctively people would attempt to jump away from the unloading area as soon as possible and appar-

Continued on Page 10

Scott Markovich Candidate for Assembly District #33

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Redlands Commits \$4M Toward \$9.4M In Improvements At Two Intersections

The Redlands City Council last week committed \$4 million in city money toward the rehabilitation of two of the more substandard of the city's major intersections.

All told, \$9.4 million, including the city's share, \$4.5 million from San Bernardino

County's Transportation agency known by its acronym SANBAG and a \$1 million state grant will be used for long-deferred improvements to the intersections at Redlands Boulevard and Alabama Street as well as Redlands Boulevard and Colton Avenue.

The city council on

November 19 awarded a contract for the project to All American Asphalt, though the city must yet purchase additional right-of-way for the project to move forward as planned. Initiation of the project is also dependent upon coordination with Southern California Edison.

The intersection improvement designs have been on the drawing board since 2003.

Traffic engineers are calling for the realignment of the Redlands and Alabama intersection to eliminate a 22-foot offset across the intersection and accommodate additional turn lanes.

The Redlands and Colton intersection will be transformed to a "T" intersection and Alabama will be expanded by three lanes. A traffic signal will be added, along with lighting, storm drains and an alteration of the railroad track and crossings to meet with future

passenger rail service demands.

City engineers said the intersections were among the city's most hazardous, particularly the one at Redlands Boulevard and Alabama Street.



Upland & Montclair Inch Toward Fire Admin Merger from page 7

benefits, elevated police chief Keith Jones to the position of director of public safety and gave fire chief Troy Ament his two-week severance notice. In June of this year, police captain Michael deMoet was appointed to the position of director of public safety, following Jones' retirement. deMoet continues to function in the role of Montclair fire chief.

In April of this year, Dunn, Starr, Mayhew and Jones resolved to explore merging administrative staffs and dissolving the fire service boundaries between the two cities. That discussion continued when de Moet succeeded Jones. The agreement as formulated thus far has the support of both cities' firefighters and their unions.

According to Starr, the Upland firefighters will remain Upland city employees and the Montclair firemen will remain as Montclair city employees. Upland, which boasts a population of 73,732, pays its firefighters higher wages and provides slightly better benefits than Montclair fireman receive. According to Starr, because Upland has twice as many fire stations as Montclair, roughly one-and-a-half times as many firemen, and operates a helicopter, Upland will pick up 64 percent of the command level and accompanying administrative costs under the arrangement, while Montclair's

share will be 36 percent.

At present the city of Upland employs 36 full time firefighters staged out of four fire stations. Montclair fields 24 firefighters and operates out of two fire stations. Upland currently has six full-time and one part-time administrators. Montclair has five full-time administrators. Effective upon the merger, both departments will have 10 full-time and one part-time administrators.

Mayhew will transition into being fire chief of both departments, and will be answerable to the city councils in both cities through each

of the city managers. He will oversee the separate budgets for both departments. There is to be a 67 percent to 33 percent split in the cities' defraying of his compensation, with Upland picking up the lion's share of that responsibility. The departments will share three battalion chiefs as well as a fire marshal. Each city will retain a deputy fire chief who will not be part of the command sharing.

Starr said the two cities should achieve an initial \$260,000 combined annual savings by merging the administrative functions. "My understanding is the sav-

ings for Upland are in the \$160,000 to \$180,000 range," Starr said. "This could well impact on their overtime costs. In Montclair, we are projecting \$120,000 savings in overtime costs. There may be savings we have not fully calculated."

Starr said the gist of the savings will consist of the economy of scale realized with the elimination of costs netted with the consolidation of the battalion chief and fire marshal functions. Upland will see further savings in that Montclair will "pay a share of the Upland fire chief's salary." Moreover, he said, Montclair will "initially

pay for two of the three battalion chiefs."

Once the terms of the deal are formulated in writing, the Upland City Council could vote on ratifying them at its December 9 meeting and the Montclair City Council could vote on the matter at its December 16 meeting.

On November 25, Upland Councilman Glenn Bozar was the lone vote against giving direction to go forward with the merger negotiations with Montclair, stating he wanted to delay consideration of the move to ensure that the consolidation of the administrative function of

the departments would not interfere with cost reduction measures Upland may consider early in 2014, which could potentially involve fire department outsourcing.

The Upland City Council also approved canceling the fire department's existing dispatch service arrangement with the city of Ontario to instead contract with the San Bernardino County communications center in Rialto, which was recently retrofitted with a state of the art dispatch system.



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San Bernardino County Coroner Reports

Coroner Case #701308634 - On 11/26/2013 at 4:36 PM, Consuella Elois Elliott, a 55 year-old female, resident of Apple Valley, was driving a 1999 Lexus south-bound at the transition roads of the I-15 and I-215 in Devore, when her vehicle left the roadway and overturned. Paramedics responded and pronounced her dead at the scene. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the incident. [112613 2230 EM]

Coroner Case #701308611 - On 11/25/2013, at 1:51 PM, officers with the California Highway Patrol were dispatched to the area SR 38, in Angeles Oaks to investigate a single vehicle traffic accident. Upon arrival they found that Kevin Gender, a 33 year-old male, resident of Big Bear, had been traveling northbound SR 38 at an unknown speed when his vehicle left the roadway. Emergency personnel responded and pronounced him dead at the scene. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the incident. [11262013 0120 EM]

Coroner Case #701308591 - On 11/24/2013 at 5:25 PM, 42 year old Lorenzo Rodriguez was struck by a hit and run vehicle while standing at the front curb of his residence on the 10900 block of Locust Avenue in Bloomington as he emptied rubbish into the trash can. San Bernardino County Fire Department paramedics pronounced him dead at the scene. California Highway Patrol is investigating this collision. [11242013 2323 EM]

Coroner Case #701308572 - Back on 11/16/2013, at about 9:05 AM, officers from the San Bernardino Police Department (SBPD) responded to the 700 block of west 40th Street in San Bernardino to investigate reports of a man down. When they arrived, they found Theodore Stratton, a 55 year-old transient resident of San Bernardino, suffering from upper body trauma. On 11/23/13, at 10:12 PM, Stratton succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced dead at a local hospital. The San Bernardino Police Department Homicide Unit is investigating the death. An autopsy will be conducted later this week to determine the exact cause of death. [112413 1745 TC]

The Coroner Reports are reproduced in their original format as authored by department personnel.

Historic County Ski Lifts

from page 8

ently found themselves entangled with the chair. Ringer Chairlifts went out of business just two years later. The chairs were upgraded in 1975. Lack of snow, law-suits, health, safety and environmental issues, operating costs, etc. took its toll on the lively infant San Bernardi-

no County ski indus-try of the 30s and 40s. The Pacific Rim Snow Sports Alliance (“Alli-ance”) created a list of now “Lost Ski Areas” where ski operations have closed. Snow For-est and others in the Big Bear Lake region are on that list, which includes: Magic Mountain, Hap-py Hill Ski Tow, Upper & Lower Mill Creek, Swiss Tow, Snow White,

March Field Army Air Base Recreational Fa-cility, Lone Star Tow, StillWell’s, Little Sibe-ria, Park Board Area, Crystal Ridge Hill, Rebel Ridge, Swiss Ski Bowl, Keller Peak, and Lagomita Lodge’s 1947, 1,200 foot tow. In the Wrightwood area, six made it to the “Lost Ski Areas” list: Big Pines Camp, Seven Springs, Movie Slope,



On a San Bernardino County ski lift. Photo Courtesy: MtHigh.com

Santa Monica Ski Club, Pepperdine Ski Club, Whittier Ski club. At Lake Arrowhead, the Blue Jay operation and

the Harmon sling lift and rope tows that had opened in 1947, are now “Lost Ski Areas.” In Running Springs Keller Peak, Camp O’Ongo

Ski Tows, and two sepa-rate tow rope areas, one operated by Howard Martin and the other by Lloyd Soutar, got listed. Not enough snow in Fawnskin resulted in the Grout Creek Ski & Rec-reation Area closure. Actually lack of snow forced the closure of many of the small ski areas during the 1950s and 60s, when there were many dry winters.

Continued on Page 11

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Ski Lifts from page 7

Larger ski areas were threatened by the climatic change as well. According to the Alliance, in 1958, Chuck Smith of Rebel Ridge Ski Area, began experimenting with making snow and proved that snowmaking was an economically viable solution for the area. Tommi Tyndall of Snow Summit, was the first to install mechanical snow making equipment extensively.

Our county boasts at least five commercially operated ski resorts with operating ski lifts in the winter and use mechanical snow making equipment to supplement the base pack. These have beginner, low intermediate, intermediate and advanced skier slopes (check websites for percentages). In the San Gabriel Mountains we have the Mt. Baldy Ski Lift near the town of Mt. Baldy in San Antonio Canyon on the southern aspect of the range. Mountain High and Ski Sunrise are located on the northern aspect of the range near Wrightwood. In the San Bernardino Mountains we have Snow Summit (Big Bear), Big Bear Mountain (Big Bear) and Snow Valley (Running Springs). Not intended to be a comprehensive history here is a rough, brief description of each but remember to check the website for operation status to see which trails and lifts are open at any one time.

Mt. Baldy (Mt. Baldy): The closest ski chair lifts to the Los Angeles metropolis are at Mount Baldy. It's a beautiful drive up San Antonio Canyon north of Upland and lovely

hairpin curves. The ski area is also said to be the "largest and steepest resort in Southern California;" it includes 800 acres, spans 3 mountains at a peak elevation of 8,600 feet and includes a 2,100 foot vertical drop has 4 lifts, 26 trails and runs and a lodge with dining. www.winter.mt-baldyskilifts.com

Mountain High and Ski Sunrise (Wrightwood): Mountain High touts itself as the most popular of Southern California ski resorts. It is a consolidation of a number of nearby ski slopes. Blue Ridge, Holiday Hill, Ski Sunrise (formerly Table Mountain). Ski Sunrise is one of the few upside down resorts—you drive to the top of the mountain, ski down. Mountain High uses Ski Sunrise for teaching and snow play. Cool interactive map switches between resorts, dining and other features, 11 lifts, 3 moving carpets, 60 trails. www.mthigh.com

Big Bear Mountain (formerly Goldmine—in Big Bear): marketed as a snowboarders paradise. Features 198 developed acres, 12 mountain lifts, 4 mountain peaks, highest elevation 8,805 feet, 1,665 feet of vertical drop and 17 ride-able miles. Lodging and dining. www.bearmountain.com

Snow Summit (Big Bear): marketed as family oriented. Has 240 ski-able acres, 31 trails, 14 lifts some high speed, including quad, triple, and double chairs plus 3 moving carpets. Peak elevation is 8,200 feet with a vertical drop of 1,200 feet and 18 skiable miles. This resort features "Fun Zones," one with beginner terrain features and

By Diane Dragotto Williams

The largest North American game bird, the wary Wild Turkey, is the ancestor of the domesticated, farmyard bird that graces our Thanksgiving tables! A non-migratory bird, Meleagris Gallopavo, is swift and pow-



erful in flight but only for short distances, then it glides expertly after several wing beats. Normally weighing from 8 to 14 pounds, it has been recorded up to 30 pounds with a length of 37 to 46 inches, and a wingspan of 4 to 5 feet.

Distinguished with its own conservation society, the National Wild Turkey Federation has protected this bird since 1973, and operates a special Western Habitat Program called Guzzlers For Gobblers. And speaking about vocalizations, this avian has many! Not only is its gobble heard up to a mile away, but

also is easily imitated, with many turkeys responding to it, especially females. Hens and jakes (immature males) will yelp to communicate. And when the male is serious about courtship, he will make a low-pitched drumming sound to attract mates. Then there

is clucking, purrs, putts, whines, kee-kees and, of course, cackles!

Its powerful muscular gizzard can grind up the hardest of food, and the omnivorous diet includes nuts, seeds, large insects, frogs, lizards and fruit. A forager, it prefers woodlands and grasslands with pastures, fields, orchards and marshes. Roosting in trees for the night, its predators are bobcats, coyotes, cougars, and eagles. No wonder the Wild Turkey will kick, bite and ram its attackers, as it has little chance against such formidable opponents. Nesting in



Vintage Mt. Baldy Ski School. Photo courtesy of California Ski Library, Ingrid Wicken collection as shown at www.pacificrimalliance.com

jibbing structures, another with intermediate and advanced jumps and jibs. Lodging and dining www.snowsummit.com

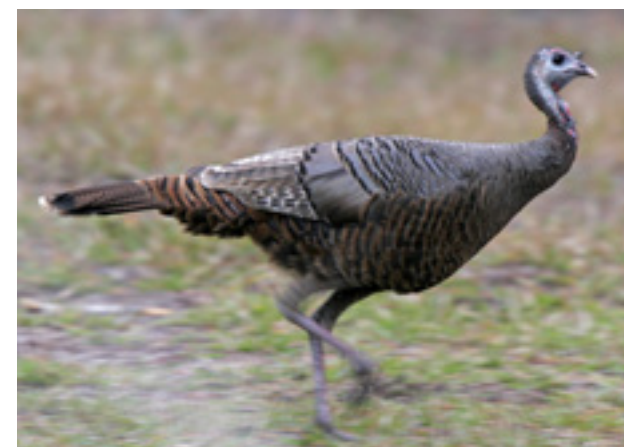
Snow Valley ("Fish Camp"/Running Springs) One of our largest resorts. Peak elevation 7841 feet, 13 chair lifts and an 80 foot "conveyor," numerous runs, ski school, dining. www.snow-valley.com

Thanks to the ski resorts web pages, Wikipedia, DiscoverIE

County Wildlife Corner The Wild Turkey

shallow dirt depressions under shrubs, lined with leaves and grass for a clutch of 8 to 14 eggs, its young are threatened by raccoons, opossums, skunks, foxes, raptors and snakes.

With bronze iridescent plumage of 5000 to 6000 black and dark brown feathers, giving it a coppery sheen and edged with white at the tip of its wings, the Wild Turkey is quite colorful. Long reddish-yellow and gray-green legs, a fleshy object over the male's beak, called a snood, red wattles under the beak, a long, dark, breast tuft, and a bare blue and pink head round out the fa-



miliar look of this National holiday symbol. In spring, each male struts its stuff in his own clearing with tail feathers spread in a glorious fan, head back, wings dragging, while uttering mating calls.

In a letter to his daughter in 1784, Benjamin Franklin preferred the Wild Turkey as our National Bird declaring it to be more respectable

than the Bald Eagle that sometimes steals fish from the diligent osprey. Although Franklin never publicly voiced opposition to the Bald Eagle, we are grateful that this worthy avian won over the turkey!

As we celebrate our forefather's freedom from anarchy that led to our rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, let us also be thankful for the lowly wild turkey who (according to historical accounts wasn't even part of the first Pilgrim's feast) has become not only a favorite of hunters, but also, a delicious traditional meal during our holiday

season!

Wildhaven Ranch is a wildlife sanctuary in the San Bernardino Mountains specializing in educating the public about wildlife in our ecosystem. Visit them at www.wildhavenranch.org or call for tours at (909) 337-7389.



and the PacificRimAlliance.org for some of the historic facts and figures above. and thanks to the predicted week-end storms in our local mountains which are to provide our ski resorts with a new dash of snow to cover the 3 to 4 inch base they received in the 3-day snowstorm last week.

Now open and ready for holiday skiing and with the price of gasoline trending downwards, anticipate snow-

boarders, skiers, tobogganists, tubers and zip line enthusiasts to use their spare savings to take advantage of SBC's +5000 foot high slopes.

Reprints of this article are available from the Archaeological Heritage Association (AHA) by contacting Ruth@RiverAHA.org. Donations will assist AHA in continuing to provide informative historic overviews such as this.

California Style Winter Warmth

By Grace Bernal



By this time, the Thanksgiving aftermath is done with and you probably have all your Christmas shop-



ping out of the way, too. You're probably wondering what you're going to wear this winter season. You should know by now that we dress according to the weather here in Southern California. Therefore, don't fear



the cold temperatures. Snuggle up in warm sweaters, coats, hats, scarves, and boots this season. You should also know that these warm accessories come in all colors and styles. It's



time to have fun and 'tis the season for your holiday wardrobe with these festive and warm accessories. Because, fashion is meant to be fun, en-



joy this holiday weather with style. Have fun and enjoy the weather this season has to offer.



As always, if there's anything you need, I'd love to hear from you: Greygris@aol.com or visit my page I Love Your Style on Facebook Copy-right Grace Bernal all rights reserved



"Style is an expression of individualism mixed with charisma. Fashion is something that comes with style." -John Fairchild



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