

The San Bernardino County Sentinel

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Documents Implicate DA Ramos In Extortion And Kickback Scheme

By Mark Gutglueck

The surfacing of long-buried criminal court documents indicates San Bernardino County District Attorney Mike Ramos withheld crucial information from a panel of Superior Court judges and county lawyers who provided the county board of supervisors with a persuasive recommendation to give



Mike Ramos

attorney Earl Carter and his law firm an exclu-

sive \$20 million contract to perform indigent defense work at all of the county's courthouses.

The documents in question pertain to Carter's conviction in a criminal case, the details of which are so explosive their public airing would very likely have precluded Carter from obtaining the contract. Additionally, Ramos failed



Earl Carter

to inform the panel that oversaw the competi-

tion for the contract that Carter had not disclosed the conviction to the State Bar, an omission that could have resulted in Carter's potential disbarment.

Instead, Ramos provided Carter with a letter of recommendation, which was submitted to the indigent defense contract competition panel, providing part See P 2

Ontario Seeks Commitment To Gold Line Extension

Touted as a forward-looking regional planning agency, San Bernardino Associated Governments is chartered to serve as the transportation agency for all of San Bernardino County. All 24 of the county's city's have representatives, in the form of the mayor or a city

County Set To Sue Architect And Engineer Over Adelanto Jail Project Overruns

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors on April 22 directed county counsel to file a lawsuit against the two architectural and engineering firms county officials deem responsible for a major portion of the \$29 million construction cost overruns on the county's Adelanto Detention Center.

The construction

bill on the project was originally slated at \$90,951,937, but after a total of 29 change orders and contract amendments, the price zoomed to \$120,419,790.

Moreover, the total price tag on the project, including engineering, architectural, licensing and inspection costs, has reached \$145,451,910, which was \$25.45 mil-

lion more than the \$120 million projected to be the project's overall price including a ten percent cost overrun contingency when it was approved in 2010.

The facility, located on 9438 Commerce Way in Adelanto, was formerly privately owned and run as a 706-inmate capacity institution known

as Maranatha Prison. It was sold by its owner, the Moreland Family Trust, to the county in April 2005 for \$31.2 million. The expansion added 1,392 new beds to the existing capacity of the jail.

Prior to the public session of Tuesday's board meeting, the supervisors discussed le-

gal issues pertaining to misfeasance on the part of those responsible for the design of the project with County Counsel Jean-Rene Basle. Upon emerging from those closed door deliberations, Basle disclosed that the board had authorized his office to prepare litigation against Los Angeles- See P 5



Paul Leon

council member, on its board, and each of the county's five separate supervisors are likewise voting members of the panel, known by its acronym, SANBAG.

There is a degree of difference among government officials, however, in just how forward looking into the future the agency should be. A case in point is the extension of the Gold Line, which civic officials on the west end of the county are championing and which the remainder of the county's officials, expressed through the prioritization of project planning by SANBAG, are somewhat less enthusiastic about.

The Metro Gold Line is the real and conceptual extension of what was once an entirely-Los Angeles County undertaking, the Pasadena Blue Line, which was later rechristened the Pasadena Metro Gold Line. After a fitful progression, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, known as Metro, committed enough plan- See P 8

Baca Cites Experience And Seniority In House Return Bid



Joe Baca

Less than two years after he left Congress following his defeat by sister Democrat Gloria Negrete-McLeod in the

35th Congressional District, Joe Baca is vying to return to the House of Representatives in the 31st District.

After serving nearly 13 years in Congress, in 2012, Baca was blindsided by more than \$3.7 million that was provided to Negrete-McLeod through a political action committee controlled by Republican New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, which funded a hard-hitting See P 6

Ivanpah Solar Plant Owner To Pay \$202K Up Front & Then \$187K Annually For Fire Protection

First Solar LLC, the owner and operator of the Ivanpah Solar Project in the northeast corner of San Bernardino County, will pay the county a one-time fee of \$202,000 and at least \$187,000 per year thereafter to secure fire protection service for the solar plant from the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District.

Tempe, Ariz.-based First Solar Inc.'s 2.6 square mile Stateline Solar Project, which is

to be located just west of the California/Nevada border near Primm, Nevada in the Ivanpah Valley, will utilize mirrors to focus the sun's rays on a heating tower to run a steam turbine, thereby yielding roughly 223 megawatts, adequate electricity for 82,800 households.

According to a report dated April 22, 2014 by Greg Devereaux, the county's chief executive officer and Mark

Hartwig, the county fire chief/fire warden, "This revenue agreement will mitigate the impacts on fire and emergency services generated by the Ivanpah Solar Project by requiring a one-time capital contribution of

\$202,000 and an ongoing annual operations and maintenance contribution to the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District in the amount of \$187,000 (with an an- See P 8

SB Mayor Davis Hires Campaign Manager As Office Chief Of Staff

The San Bernardino City Council has signed off on Mayor Carey Davis' hiring the same public relations firm that he used to coordinate his mayoral campaign to serve in the capacity of his chief-of-staff.

MICA-PR, which is led by Michael McKinney, will receive \$62.50 per hour to serve in the capacity of mayoral chief of staff. McKinney

served as Davis' campaign manager in his fall campaign and again during the February run-off. Since Davis was sworn in, he has been serving as Davis' unofficial chief-of-staff.

In addition to running Davis' campaign, McKinney headed up last year's successful campaign to recall city attorney James F. Penman and councilwoman



Carey Davis

Wendy McCammack. Though McCammack was recalled in Novem-

ber, she was simultaneously on the ballot as a candidate for mayor, garnering 3,091 votes or 24.03 percent for first place. Davis, who placed second in that contest with 3,023 votes or 23.5 percent, qualified for the February run-off, in which he prevailed over McCammack. McKinney has worked on more than 200 political campaigns in various capaci-



Michael McKinney

ties, including serving as campaign chairman and key advisor See P 7

Is DA Extorting One Of His Political Backers? *from front page*

of the basis upon which the panel's recommendation and the ultimate decision to award the contract to Carter and his firm was based.

Documents on file with the California Secretary of State and the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters Office show that Carter and his firm have donated a total of \$124,600 to district attorney Mike Ramos since 2004.

At its March 11 meeting, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, in the words of County Chief Executive Officer Greg Devereaux, approved an agreement with Inland Defenders "to provide adult indigent defense services in an amount not to exceed \$8,000,000 annually and \$20,000,000 total over the 30-month term of April 1, 2014 through September 30, 2016 with two additional one-year options if in the best interest of the county."

The board's decision stepped over five other law firms that submitted bid proposals for the work, which included providing what is known as criminal conflict defense in all four of the

county's judicial regions.

Competing with Carter's firm, which had submitted bids for all four regions under the name Inland Defenders, were John Burdick, under the name Contract Defenders; Greenline Partners, headed by attorneys Daniel Greenberg and Raj Maline; Victorville-based attorney Robert Ponce; the law firm of Brown, White and Newhouse; and the law firm of Skipper, Singer & Associates.

Inland Defenders was substantially underbid by two of its competitors for the contracts. With regard to the contract for representation of the North Desert Judicial District, Inland Defenders, which tendered an annual bid of \$1,847,880, for the work was underbid by both Greenline Partners, which bid \$1,347,840, and Robert Ponce, who bid \$1,500,300.

On the East Valley portion of the contract, Inland Defenders bid \$3,085,680, which was \$943,200 more than Greenline's bid of \$2,142,480.

Despite its higher bids, Carter's firm was given the contract.

Conflict representation for a defendant without the financial means to hire an attor-

ney to represent him/her comes about when the crime he/she is charged with involves [an] other defendant[s] of likewise modest financial means who is represented by the public defender's office, which is dedicated to providing a defense to the county's accused who are without the wherewithal to retain an attorney on their own. In those cases where one or more of the defendants is contending or may contend that he/she is being accused of a crime actually committed by his/her codefendant[s], a separate attorney is needed to prevent one defendant from being exploited by the defense put on by the other defendant.

Defense attorneys, including private attorneys, those employed by the public defender and conflict defenders, are the professional and procedural adversaries of prosecutors. For that reason, Mike Ramos' advocacy for Carter during the conflict representation contract competition provoked consternation among many who were aware of it. A copy of the Ramos letter of recommendation, written last November, soon leaked out, resulting in a minor scandal within the San Bernardino County

legal community. The Sentinel has obtained a copy of that letter. It reads, in part:

"I have been the district attorney for the county of San Bernardino since 2003. We have the largest criminal caseloads in the state and I can say that our law and justice partners, including the defense bar, work hard at being efficient and seeking justice in our criminal courts. Mr. Carter's defense attorneys' work is no exception. These attorneys do not shy away from jury trials and are tough advocates for their clients, according to my attorneys who work with them and against them on a daily basis... One may wonder why the district attorney is writing a letter for indigent defense attorneys, but it's basic. They are tough, yet fair and ethical advocates as we seek justice for victims while protecting the rights of the accused."

By late December 2013/early January 2014, the panel that had been selected by San Bernardino County Chief Executive Officer Greg Devereux to evaluate the conflict criminal defense competitors, consisting of Superior Court judges Annemarie Pace and John Vander Feer as well

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as chief assistant county counsel Michelle Blake-more and deputy county counsel Phoebe Chu, were leaning in favor of Carter and his firm. A flap ensued, however, after it was learned that on January 2, 2014 Inland Defenders was permitted, by fax, to submit to the county a revised fee schedule, merely one day before the intent to award was declared. That opportunity to revise its bid was not provided to any of the other competitors. Nor were any of the competitors other than Carter's firm given an opportunity to see the other firms' sealed bids.

On January 31, prior to the board of supervisors ratifying the competition panel's recommendation, Greenline Partners submitted a letter of appeal in which the firm charged there was "faultiness [in] the evaluation process" or "biases" on the part of the evaluators and/or county officials. Ponce also dissented.

This resulted in what San Bernardino County spokesman David Wert said was a "delay" in the approval as a multitude of issues pertaining to the Carter firm and the evaluation process were supposed to be subjected to another round of scrutiny. That delay entailed pushing the board's consideration of the contract approval from February 11 until ultimately, March 11. On that later date, the board, based upon the panel's final recommendation and given assurance that all of the issues regarding Carter and his firm had been examined

and resolved in his and its favor, signed off on the awarding of all four regional criminal conflict defense contracts to Carter's firm.

Within the last fortnight, however, documentation demonstrating that Ramos withheld, both before Greenline's challenge and thereafter, pertinent information relating to Earl Carter has surfaced.

In December 1985, the then-38-year old Carter was arrested by Riverside Police and charged with engaging in lewd activity in a public restroom at Fairmount Park.

The Riverside County District Attorney's Office filed charges against him, case number 165599. Rather than endure a public trial in which the sordid details of the charges against him would be given an open airing, Carter, through his attorney Virginia Blumenthal, entered a guilty plea to the charge for which he had been cited, 647 (a) of the penal code, lewd conduct in public, paying a \$350 fine. He was placed on probation, which required that he stay out of Fairmount Park and undergo counseling.

A member of the California Bar since 1975, Carter was required by law to disclose to the bar his conviction.

According to an employee at the Los Angeles office of the California Bar, however, Carter did not disclose his conviction to the California Bar. A woman who identified herself only by her first name, Frances,

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Gooch Says She Offers Continuity Of Representation In The 31st District



Lesli Gooch

Lesli Gooch said she is running for Congress because "I want to con-

tinue what I have been doing my entire career, advocating for the people of the 31st District. I have learned how to get things done. I have been working over a decade on behalf of Inland Empire families. We have been fighting and winning matters dealing with economic growth. I am running for Congress because I don't want to see our hard

work stopped because Congressman Miller is retiring. I believe it is important to continue to work on behalf of Inland Empire Families. I do not want to see the next representative of the 31st District advocate or vote for policies that will be harmful to this area. My candidacy is all about getting things done for the Inland Empire."

Miller, the Repub-

lican incumbent in the 31st District, is not seeking reelection. Gooch and two other Republicans, Ryan Downing and Paul Chabot, are competing against four Democrats – Eloise Gomez Reyes, Danny Tillman, Pete Aguilar and Joe Baca – to see who will next represent the district, which includes the cities of Rancho Cucamonga, Loma Linda,

Grand Terrace and portions of Fontana, Colton, Rialto and San Bernardino and the community of Muscoy.

Gooch said she had gained valuable experience as Miller's legislative assistant, staff director of the committees he chaired or cochaired and as his senior policy director. Miller was the chairman of the Committee on International

Monetary Policy and Trade.

"From my experience I know it takes two things to grow the Inland Empire's economy," Gooch said. "We need an expansion of the construction industry and we need exports and trade. We need to create jobs and grow our economy. Economists fore-

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Walker Hails Office Modernization As Reason To Retain Him As Treasurer-Auditor

Larry Walker, the incumbent county treasurer and tax collector, who is also the county's auditor and controller, said he believes the county's voters should return him to office because of his demonstrated ability in leading those departments and his record of accomplishment.

Walker, who was on the board of supervisors

representing the county's Fourth District from 1986 until 1998, ran for the position of auditor-controller-recorder in 1998. He was reelected to those consolidated posts in 2002, 2006 and 2010, at which point the elected position of county treasurer/tax collector had been folded into the function of the auditor-controller's office. The



Larry Walker

position of county recorder, which Walker

had previously held, was moved over to the county assessor's office.

"I am running again because we have a great staff, 300 employees who are doing a great job," Walker said. "They are supported by a great senior staff and together we are continuing to improve and evolve the organization and improve customer service. We

are developing systems of accountability and improving the electronic systems so we can provide better service and reduce costs. I am excited about and enjoy the things we are doing to make that service available to the public and I am now asking the voters to keep me in that position."

As to his overall pri-

orities in the next four years, Walker said, "There are challenges to each specific part of the office, but we are building on success. The treasurer's office has been doing an award winning comprehensive annual report, which actually was being produced before I was in office. We are now attempting to

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Big Bear Mayor Obernolte Crusading Against Overregulation In 33rd District Run

Big Bear Mayor Jay Obernolte said his campaign for California Assembly in the 33rd District is a push toward righting the state's over-regulated business climate.

Obernolte said he was

prompted to seek state office "mostly because of my kids. Twenty-five years ago I started a videogame development company in my dorm room. We developed games, creating them, designing them, doing

the programming, art animation and sound. We made games that are compatible with consoles such as Nintendo, Plays Station, Wi and for hand held devices, such as iPhone. My company, FarSight Studios, now has 25 full time employees up here in Big Bear. My children have aspirations of their own and they have confided in me that they one day want to start businesses of their own, and grow them as I did, so they can have jobs, and an income for their families. But I realized that with the toxic business environment we are in, even if they work as hard as I did in the last 25 years, they would not be able to succeed because of the business environment and the overregulation in the state of California. That is why I am running. We need more business experience in Sacramento. That is what convinced me to run."

Of the major issues facing the 33rd District, Obernolte said, "Our primary problem is economic. We need more jobs and better paying jobs. We have way too many unemployed and

underemployed. People are struggling. We need to improve the business environment in California and in the 33rd District specifically, so more businesses come here and we create jobs. We need business here. We should be creating better paying jobs rather than driving them away, which is what we are doing now."

Obernolte said he would be able to work on the problem "through business experience. We need people in Sacramento who know what it is like to shepherd a business thorough upturns and downturns. We need them to understand how stifling the business climate is in California. We need legislators who know what it is like to be on your knees on Thursday night praying because you do not have enough money to cover payroll on Friday. We need lawmakers who understand that businesses face a lot of issues."

There are other issues, Obernolte said, but he maintains that "If we solve the economic problems, a lot of the other difficulties will be eliminated."



Jay Obernolte

Turning to the challenges to the state beyond the limited confines of the 33rd District, Obernolte said the major focus, "on the state level, should be preserving Proposition 13. I am appalled there have been recent attempts to chip away at the taxpayer protection provisions of Proposition 13. I find particularly galling the way we are attempting to modify Proposition 13 to increase the tax on business property. We are sending a message to businesses that they are no longer welcome in California. What I would like us to do is stand firm and protect Proposition 13."

Proposition 13 was an amendment of the Constitution of California passed by voters and enacted in 1978 that de-

creased property taxes by assessing property values at their 1975 value and restricting annual increases of assessed value of real property to an inflation factor, not to exceed 2 percent per year.

With regard to other major state issues, Obernolte said, "We need a meaningful rainy day fund to protect the state against further economic downturns. I think the governor and legislature are being irresponsible with the current surplus. We cannot rely on deficit spending. We need to close the budget deficit and when the opportunity to do so presents itself we should pay down the debt rather than spend it on programs."

A Republican, Obernolte said he recognizes the disadvantage his party faces in the overwhelmingly Democratic state, but expressed a belief that a sober assessment of the means available to fiscal conservatives can be the basis for formulating an effective strategy for effectuating change.

"It is clear that no

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Obernolte from page 3

matter who is elected, no one will become master of the universe once they go to Sacramento," Obernolte said. "I find it troubling that others in this race are making promises and commitments about what they will do that they will

not be able to keep. To succeed, it will take patience and perseverance, someone who over the years in office will gain the needed seniority and respect to deal with the problems facing the state. Solving the problems for the people in the 33rd District is going to require establishing relationships in Sacramento.

It will entail more than just voting. It will require planning, patience, cultivating relationships and respect, perseverance, experience and execution. "

Obernolte said he believes he possesses the requisite traits to be the most effective representative of the constituents in the 33rd District.

"I have by far the most business experience," he said. "I am in the best position to fight against the overregulation of business that is stifling the economy of our state. As a two term mayor of Big Bear, I have the legislative experience to go into an environment where I am a member of minority party and still

get things done for my constituents."

A graduate of Edison Computech High School in Fresno where he was valedictorian, Obernolte attended Cal Tech, obtaining a Bachelor's degree in engineering and applied science. He then obtained his master's degree in computer science from UCLA. He is mar-

ried with two sons. Prior to his elected service on the Big Bear City Council, he was a member of the board of the Big Bear City Airport District. He has been endorsed by the Republican Central Committee, the San Bernardino County Young Republicans and the National Tax Limitation Committee.

Walker from page 3

build on that success and turn out a 16-page popular summary of that report to make the county's financial information more accessible to the average person."

Walker continued, "We have eliminated a lot of inefficiencies and have replaced parts of the system that have lived past their usefulness. We are trying to provide more timely financial information to the board to allow it to make better decisions as well as to make the public more aware. In terms of past accomplishments, I initiated the idea when I ran in 1998 to have a fraud abuse hotline. I put that in place about a year-and-a-half after I took office, giving an opportunity for any employee or member of the public to express concerns about possible taxpayer abuse. I have worked to give proper accounting of all of the county's financial issues, from the very simple to the very complex. I believe I have had a positive impact on building up the county's internal audit function and we are constantly looking at

priority areas in terms of potential risk in an effort to keep us on the straight and narrow. We have built a process where on an annual basis, we measure risks by looking at the financing and investment activities of the county and judge the inherent risks. Some activities carry with them an inherently higher risk and we prioritize so that when we are going to audit we make sure we are looking at the inherently high risk activities as much or more than the low risk activities. We have a prioritization in our audit plan."

Walker said, "The overall theme of what we do is service to the county's constituents. That is something we have worked hard to build into every aspect of what we do, to make sure the taxpayers get the information they need, that we have processes they can use which are accessible and that we have policies in place that give the same answer to taxpayers asking the same questions. We are constantly looking at ways across the board to enhance services and save money. We are committed to making information system improvements that allow us

to achieve savings and increase customer service."

Walker is being opposed in this year's election by Ensen Mason, a certified public accountant and former member of the Victor Valley Union High School District Board of Trustees, who has since moved to Redlands. Walker rejected the rallying cry of Mason supporters who advocate infusing the four consolidated county posts with new blood.

"Any argument between 'new blood' and experience should question whether the experience is continuing to move in a positive direction of accomplishment and is the 'new blood' capable of understanding what the issues are," Walker said. "In the 16 years I have been here I have worked hard and on a continuous basis to find ways to improve the system. I did not just

rely on how well the system was working and that everything was ok. I have worked 16 years to push the system that was largely based on paper filings to one that is 97 percent electronic payments. I moved the recorder's office when I had it, from one that was an entirely paper system to one that is a majority electronic system."

Of Mason, Walker said, "I don't know much about him. He appears to have spent a few bucks on a billboard in the Victor Valley. He was apparently elected to the Victor Valley High School Board in November 2010 but did not serve an entire term on that board."

Walker sought to deflect criticism about his willingness to take on the treasurer and tax collector duties while simultaneously serving as auditor and controller, which some have sug-

gested are incompatible assignments that allow Walker, as auditor controller, to serve in the capacity of providing key oversight of his function as treasurer.

"That issue was taken on not only by our county counsel but county counsels throughout the state and the state legislature," Walker said. "My opponent may bring this up as an issue, but the criticism is simply wrong. Our county was not the first to combine the treasurer with the auditor controller. It is clearly allowable. People may question these policies for individual counties, but it is no different than combining the coroner's office with the sheriff's department. It is done increasingly in situations where you have a similarity of duties and a need to save money. The county saved a million dollars on an annual

basis as a result of the consolidation. If my opponent wants to run on an issue from 2010 in 2014, on an arrangement that was put to rest four years ago, he has the option of running that kind of campaign."

Walker, who was raised in Chino and attended Chino High School, obtained his bachelor's degree in social science from UC Irvine and his law degree from UCLA Law School. He was admitted to the bar in 1976 and practiced law for ten years in the areas of real estate, contract litigation, and family law. He was in the Naval Reserves, serving in the JAG Corps. He was on the city council from 1978 until 1980, and then was Chino Mayor from 1980 until 1986, when he was elected to the board of supervisors. He is married with three children.

Gooch from page 3

casting what is to happen in our state economy see a lot of real opportunities for growth. We have to take advantage of having all of the logistics at our disposal. We have goods coming from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. We need to take advantage of that. We need to support construction, which is another area where we can see growth. We need commercial and

residential housing in the future. Part of a strong economy is balancing the budget to make sure government is not over-regulating businesses which are responsible for job creation. There was more regulation coming out of Washington, D.C. this year than any year in the federal registry. That regulation is killing the opportunity to grow and create jobs."

Gooch continued,

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Gooch from page 4

"Another major issue in the 31st District is that in order for jobs to be created, we need a work force that is skilled for the current economy. I know of vacancies locally, ones involving \$40 per hour jobs, but the work force here is not trained to fill those. We need to figure out how best to grow the economy to match our work force with available jobs. We need to make the education system provide the training so we can bring in

skilled workers who can fill those jobs."

Gooch said good legislation and policy aimed at improving the situation with regard to national challenges redounds to the betterment of local areas such as the 31st District.

"It all works together," she said. "I saw through my work as the staff director with the International Monetary and Trade Committee that improvements to our ports will make companies located there

more competitive and that when companies are competitive the economy improves. Consumers around the world want to buy American products but our taxes and regulations put on American goods price us out of reach. We need to stop doing that to be competitive in the global economy. We clearly have some significant foreign policy challenges we need to face. We need to make sure we handle threats to our national security in the right way.

I am concerned this [the Barack Obama] administration has not performed in the right way."

Congress needs to rethink and revisit the issue of health care, Gooch said. "The question is: with the Affordable Care Act are we taking a step in the wrong direction." Gooch said. "Is this approach actually making health care less affordable than in the past? This upside down approach is hurting more than it is helping. We have to make sure con-

sumers can choose their doctors and afford the level of care they want."

Gooch said she represents the best choice among candidates in the 31st District because "There are important things going on in Washington, things that are not a job for amateurs. People are tired of waiting for competent leadership. Congressman Miller was a bright light in a dysfunctional Congress. We were able to go in there and did things and got things done. We

were able to pass policies so that companies could export goods and create jobs. That takes experience and commitment. I am the leader the people of this district are looking for. I have a PhD in how Congress works. I am a listener. I have been addressing those problems throughout my career. We need someone in Washington who can deliver. In Congress you have show horses and you have workhorses. We need a workhorse.

Continued on Page 6

County Authorizes Suit Over Adelanto Jail Construction

Overruns from front page

based Hellmuth, Obata & Kassebaum and Jacobs Engineering Group.

The firm of Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum, Incorporated, based in Culver City, was originally given a \$4,466,000 contract to provide architectural service on the project. Nine amendments later, Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum's contract has reached \$10,438,396, an increase of \$5,972,396.

It was stated that both Hellmuth, Obata & Kassebaum and Jacobs were the parties

responsible for design flaws that resulted in inadequacies with the fire sprinkler and smoke detection and evacuation systems that entailed millions of dollars in additional construction costs, all of which were paid to Bellevue, Washington-based Lydig Construction, the general contractor on the project.

In December 2010 the county awarded a \$90,951,937 contract to Lydig Construction as the low bidder, after making a finding that the bids received from S.J. Amorosa Construction Co., Inc. of Costa Mesa, California and Flintco of Folsom, California to be non-responsive.

Among the contract amendments that followed were the fifth one approved by the board of supervisors on February 23, 2013, in order to accommodate state fire marshal-mandated changes to the smoke control evacuation and automatic fire sprinkler systems, increase in number and size the heating ventilation and air conditioning structural roof supports as well as make further modifications mandated by the state fire marshal and various other agencies, providing Lydig with another \$2,472,388 enhancement to the contract.

On May 21, 2013 the county made a sixth

amendment to Lydig's contract, this time relating to labor and materials for the revision of the smoke control systems and fire protection systems, to, in the words of county director of architecture and engineering Carl Alban, "convert the specified fire smoke dampers to smoke dampers as part of the revisions to the smoke control system" in the amount of \$5,063,392.

On June 25, 2013, the board of supervisors approved an eighth amendment to the contract in the amount of \$6,004,736 to cover labor, materials, labor impacts and acceleration costs related to the revision of the smoke control systems and fire

protection systems, a portion of the cost of which was covered with Amendment No. 6.

On August 6, 2013, the board approved an eleventh amendment, providing Lydig with \$709,533 for the installation of a third electrical service necessary to increase the available power for providing capacity for future upgrades of the facility; the installation of a fire booster pump to ensure the proper flow and functioning of the fire protection systems; the expedited procurement and delivery of smoke control panels and supervisory panels necessary to achieve the scheduled project completion date; and the relocation of smoke detectors in the dormitory sleeping areas as required by the Board of State and Community Corrections.

On November 11, 2013 the board approved a twelfth amendment to the contract for \$415,952 to add twenty-seven dampers to the smoke evacuation ductwork, modify the glazing stops at master control, install fire wrap to ducts and dampers at specified locations and separate the dry zones at the housing units.

On December 17, 2013 the board of supervisors approved a thirteenth amendment in the amount of \$304,450 for modifications to the electrical service yard, fire sprinkler system isolation in the support building and constructing foundation and adding position indication

valve and monitoring devices for the fire booster pump, relocating fire/smoke dampers, revising exhaust duct risers in the center core of the housing units and adding a control module to the master control fire shutter.

On March 25, 2014, the board of supervisors approved the fourteenth change order on the project, one for \$336,682 to cover the cost of correcting overcurrent issues, improvements to water facility operations, balancing of the smoke control system, perform load bank testing of the generators and to carry out various corrective work.

Prior to a lawsuit being filed, county representatives will meet with corporate officers of both Hellmuth, Obata & Kassebaum and Jacobs to ascertain if a settlement short of litigation can be forged.

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Gooch from page 5

I am the candidate who can do that and hit the ground running right away. Look at my track record. It is clear we have solved problems.”

Gooch said she represents a transcendence over politics as usual.

“If people are looking for a candidate who will be a rubber stamp for Nancy Pelosi or John

Boehner, I am not the right person for that,” she said. “I am a candidate who will advocate for the people of the 31st District. I am the candidate of smaller government, one who will reduce taxes and big, liberal government, who will stop the expenditure of wasted tax dollars in the name of the economic stimulus. I will not contribute to

the gridlock in Washington. That is not why I am running. My intent is to solve problems and move us forward. I am not one of those who will not know what is in the bill she is voting on. I wrote bills and I know how the people are represented in the legislation that goes through.”

Gooch graduated from Arlington High School in Riverside and

attended UC Riverside before transferring to the State University of New York at Brockport, where she obtained a degree in political science. She subsequently qualified for a graduate fellowship at the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center at the University of Oklahoma where she earned a Ph.D. in political science with a focus

in congressional studies, public policy, and public administration.

Along the way she did internships with the clerk of the U.S. Supreme Court and New Jersey Congresswoman Marge Roukema. She was hired by Miller in 2003 to serve in his office, eventually becoming his senior policy advisor and legislative director. In 2007 she went to

work for the county of San Bernardino Housing Authority, including representing the county in Washington. She subsequently represented two non-profit housing entities and returned to Miller’s staff in 2011. Married, she has two children and four grandchildren.



Baca from front page

attack campaign against Baca in the final month before the November 2012 election.

Incumbent Gary Miller is not running for reelection in the 31st District, where he and another Republican, Bob Dutton, defeated four Democrats in the 2012 open primary, despite the 41 to 33 percent Democratic registration advantage in the district. This year, Baca is joined by three other Democrats – Eloise Gomez Reyes, Danny Tillman and Pete Aguilar – and three Republicans – Lesli Gooch, Paul Chabot and Ryan Downing – in the sweepstakes to represent the 31st in Washington, D.C.

Baca insists it is his decades-long experience as both a state and

federal legislator and his seniority in Congress, together with his proven ability to bring home the bacon that separates him from his six competitors.

“It matters who we send to Congress,” Baca said. “I am a veteran in both senses of the word. I am a military veteran and a veteran of Congress. On day one I will be able to regain my seniority and I will be the only representative from San Bernardino County with any seniority to speak of and the only one with the experience and knowledge needed to obtain funding for our district and direct grant money here. Gary Miller is the last Congressman from our county with any seniority, and he is leaving. Obviously, you cannot be effective in Washington without seniority. I was number three on the agricultural

committee before I left and I will be number two on the same committee if I return. When I was there before, I developed the knowledge and ability to be effective. I brought in \$40 million to fight hunger. I was effective, out of knowledge and compassion. At one point, a long time ago, I was on welfare. Because I know the stigma that accompanied using food stamps, I changed that to EBT cards. I knew what it was like to stand in lines with no dignity. I can get right back in there and go to work again.”

Knowing the legislative ropes, Baca said he can facilitate the passage of what were once called pork barrel bills to deliver funding to local districts by using the new legislative methodology consists of earmarks.

Baca was in the Cali-

fornia Assembly from 1992 until 1998 and then was elected to the California Senate. While he was in the State Senate, he won a special election to replace former Congressman George Brown, who died in office in 1999.

He has proven himself in steering funding back to serve his constituents, he said.

“I brought in \$540 million in stimulus money,” he said. “Just before I left, I brought in \$175 million in appropriations money. We fixed highways with that money, the 210, the 215 free-ways, the Pepper Street off-ramp, the Cypress off-ramp, the extension of the 219, the sbX Bus system in San Bernardino. I brought in another \$32 million for the railroad crossing in Colton. Most of the infrastructure money was fund-

ing that was earmarked for this area specifically. Freshmen congressman could not do that. Many times, freshmen cannot even speak in committee. Your effectiveness is based on seniority. Those who advance to chairs do so based on seniority. The other six candidates can talk about what they want to do, but they are not going to be able to fix Washington, D.C. Business is done there now as it has always been done. No freshman is going to go there and change that, much less change the attitudes of the 434 other Congressman. There are rules: cloture, rules where you have to have 50 votes to bring legislation forward, filibuster tactics that both parties use, ploys that neither side will give up because of the power it brings them. I understand these things. Seniority plays

an important part, that and experience. I have the advantage of seniority and experience. I will use earmarks to bring funding home. If I can’t use earmarks on a particular bill, there is still a grant process where I can help out. These are things the others can talk about but you need experience to make it work. There is pressure on both sides of the aisle. I have been bipartisan, working right down the middle. That’s why the Democrats sometimes do not support me. I believe in what is best for America, which most of the time comes down to being right in the middle. I have been effective on getting my legislation voted on and approved in both houses.”

In sizing up what he considered to be the major issues in the campaign, Baca said, “The issues for the district are jobs and the economy. We need to bring manufacturing jobs into the area. Much of the infrastructure is here. We have the roads and highways. We have to do more to bring in manufacturing jobs rather than distribution jobs. Manufacturing is pivotal. We need to put incentives and tax breaks into legislation to create economic development. The other issue is education. We have to make sure we receive the best K through 12 education and then make sure higher education is affordable so our students can go to community college or state college and universities and not be in debt for the rest of their lives. They need to be able to go to

Continued on Page 7

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SB Mayor Hires Campaign Manager As Chief Of Staff from front page

with regard to strategy. The hiring of MICA-PR generated controversy, with some questioning the firm's qualifications for serving in a managerial role, given its nature as a public relations firm. San Bernardino, as a charter city, infuses the mayor with greater managerial authority than is the case in general law cities, such that the mayor and his chief-of-staff have authority that rivals that of the city manager. Ironically, Davis has called for charter reform, in particular doing away with a provision that guarantees that the city's safety employees—police officers and firemen – be paid at a rate comparable to firefighters and police in ten comparatively-sized California cities. There are other potential

areas for reform being contemplated, including reducing the authority of the mayor and his chief of staff. MICA-PR's contract is set to run through November, at which point those potential charter reforms will likely have been submitted to the voters. When Davis earlier floated the proposal to hire MICA-PR to serve as chief-of-staff, the San Bernardino police union railed against it, suggesting Davis was searching for a means to make “a gift of public funds” to pay for his campaign's outstanding debt to MICA-PR and McKinney. That proposal was temporarily rescinded but was brought back this week. McKinney previously served on the staff of two congressmen and was also a vice president in charge of governmental affairs with the Lewis Group of Companies. His contract, which does not specify his duties, has a not-to-exceed limit of \$100,000. The contract does not state what MICA-PR's job criteria as chief of staff are.

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County Social Services Leaving Carousel Mall

The county of San Bernardino's Children and Family Services Division will pull up its stakes in the Carousel Mall in Downtown San Bernardino at the end of next month. On March 29, 2005 the board of supervisors approved a ten-year lease agreement with two five-year options to extend for 28,892 square feet of office space at 128 Carousel Mall, Building G, in San Bernardino for use by the Children and Family Services Division. The original term of the lease was from September 1, 2005 through August 31, 2015. In the nine years since the lease was originally executed, the board has approved two amendments reflecting ownership changes from Placo San Bernardino, LLC, to the Redevelopment

Agency of the city of San Bernardino to the San Bernardino Economic Development Corporation. Because of the dissolution of the RDA, the San Bernardino Economic Development Corporation transferred title to Carousel Mall, LLC, a California limited liability company, on December 19, 2011. The city of San Bernardino has acquired management and control of the property on behalf of the Carousel Mall, LLC. At the direction of the city of San Bernardino, the county of San Bernardino has been tendering rental payments to the city of San Bernardino as successor agency for the redevelopment agency of the city of San Bernardino on behalf of the Carousel Mall, LLC. The original lease

provided for \$624,067 in tenant improvements to be amortized over the initial ten-year term ending August 31, 2015. Upon early termination, the lease states that any unamortized tenant improvement costs will be due the landlord. The county has found another location for the San Bernardino office of the Children and Family Services division at 1094 South E Street. According to Janet Lowe, the assistant director of the county's Real Estate Services Department, the county has agreed to a lease of the South E Street property “and we anticipate the tenant improvements will be completed by the end of May.” This week the board of supervisors approved a third amendment to the lease agreement with

Carousel Mall, LLC to reflect a change in ownership effective December 19, 2011, modify the 90-day right to terminate provision of the lease to provide for 40-days' notice to terminate effective May 31, 2014, and specify that \$78,008 will be due the landlord for early termination of the lease which is the amount of unamortized tenant improvement costs for 28,892 square feet of office space in San Bernardino for Children and Family Services. Upon the board's approval of that amendment, the director of the County Real Estate Services Department delivered a 40-day termination notice on April 22, 2014 to terminate the lease agreement effective May 31, 2014.

Baca from page 6 school and become productive citizens and contribute back to society, as leaders and workers and as taxpayers. We are not getting our fair share of federal dollars back to the state of California. Another issue is affordable health care. We have to make sure the health care we provide is affordable. People should be allowed to choose the plan they want and not be penalized. If this means extending the deadlines, then we should do it. We need to make sure that prescription drugs are


affordable. We have to protect Social Security and Medicare. We cannot have those two things privatized. We have to protect our veterans. They have done so much to protect us, we have to make sure we take care of them when they come back and their spouses as well. We have to see about providing housing for our veterans who are homeless. We need to deal with infrastructure. We need additional funding for highways and freeways, which improve the quality of life and the quality of the air. The railroad funds

I brought in made it so trains aren't just idling and polluting the air. We need less pollution and more transportation. The Inland Empire is the hub of transportation in Southern California. San Bernardino International Airport is right at the logical end of the Alameda Corridor and the Gold Line. We should be moving goods through the ports and past San Bernardino and up the Cajon Pass. The transition of Rialto Airport into a developed area will bring jobs in here.” Turning to the purview of Congress beyond

the local area, Baca said, “At the national level, there are so many issues. The Voting Rights Act is one. Another is comprehensive immigration reform. That is local and national. Everyone else is come lately on this issue and they talk about comprehensive immigration reform but I was always outspoken about the need for immigration reform legislation. Housing is an important issue. The American Dream is to own you own home. We should control interest rates at the national level. We can't let Wall Street control interest rates. We have to be responsible in terms of reducing fraud in our social assistance programs. That does not mean we do not have social programs, but where the taxpayers are being cheated, either by individual recipients, or counties or states, we need to cut out fraud and abuse and make sure those federal government dollars are used in accordance with how those programs were proposed and approved.” Baca said he felt the

need to set the record straight following the negative advertising blitz he endured at the hands of Negrete-McLeod utilizing Bloomberg's money. “They lied,” he said. “They said I was in favor of putting guns in the hands of criminals and felons and the mentally ill. That was not true. I believe in sensible legislation to ban assault weapons and clips and require background checks. I think there should be background checks on those who purchase weapons at gun shows. But I do believe the American people have the right to bear arms. I believe any regulation needs to be done within the framework of the Second Amendment. They told even worse lies about me when they said I was in favor of polluting our water. No one is in favor of polluting our water. I am not. There was never any legislation passed calling for the polluting of water. I worked, tirelessly, to get over \$75 million for the cleanup of perchlorate from our groundwater.

Those ads on television did not depict me accurately. I implore the voters to examine my record before they cast their votes this year and that they not rely on the misrepresentations of fast talking political consultants.” Baca attended Barstow High School and Barstow Community College and served in the U.S. Army from 1966 until 1968 with the 101st Airborne and 82nd Airborne divisions. He completed his A.A. degree at Barstow Community College and then attended U.C. Davis and then UCLA, obtaining a B.A. in sociology with a minor in kinesiology. He subsequently worked as a counselor at UCLA and then was employed by General Telephone, which merged with ConTEL and later became Verizon. He was elected to the San Bernardino Community College District Board in 1979 and unsuccessfully vied for state assembly twice before he was elected in 1992. He and his wife Barbara have four children.



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Gold Line*from front page*

ning and construction funding to the project to extend the rail line from downtown Los Angeles to Pasadena and now to Azusa, where a station there will open in late 2015 or early 2016.

Metro has undertaken a study for extending the system to Claremont/Montclair and wants to look even beyond that to undertaking a \$950 million extension to Ontario Airport. Ontario municipal officials, in particular, are enthusiastic about that latter possibility. Ridership at Ontario International Airport is down and, in the words of Ontario Mayor Paul Leon, "giving more than two million people in the

San Gabriel Valley the opportunity to just step on the train to Ontario Airport and then get off and fly hassle free without having to battle traffic or worry about parking, we think, is the way to go. It's the wave of the future."

When Montclair and Ontario officials pushed SANBAG last year to undertake studies on the extension, SANBAG, which as a whole considers the extension of the Metrolink commuter line to Redlands and the double-tracking of the Metrolink lines near Upland, Claremont, and Fontana to be more important rail projects than the Gold Line, balked. Moreover, SANBAG considers the Gold Line extension a low prior-

ity because it sees little prospect that funding for it will come available from any sources anytime soon.

Leon is so convinced that the Gold Line extension would be of benefit to the city he represents that he managed to obtain an appointment to the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority Board of Directors as the city of South Pasadena's appointee. In addition, Ontario city councilman Alan Wapner, who represents Ontario on SANBAG, also was given an appointment to Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority Board of Directors as a non-voting member, as the SANBAG liaison.

Leon told the *Sentinel* it is a challenge getting SANBAG to see the Gold Line extension in the same terms he does for a variety of reasons, including the lack of funding, competing priorities, and the sheer inertia of needing to line up so many personalities and political jurisdictions to proceed. Yet he is convinced that bringing the Gold Line to the airport is worthwhile and he emphasized the need for advanced planning so that the project can be expedited once the funding becomes available.

"I am speaking for myself, without having talked to my council, but I can say that there is a desire by the city of

Ontario to have the Gold Line terminate at Ontario Airport or in as close of proximity to it as possible. We want to have the full support of SANBAG in accomplishing that goal. I believe the future of Ontario and the future success of the airport is in concert with not only us obtaining ownership and management of the airport but having the Gold Line there. Saying how soon that can happen is very difficult since the financing is something leaders outside of the city have to agree to, not only SANBAG but the federal government."

Leon said that SANBAG deprioritized expending any money for studying the Gold Line

extension and then revisited the issue, "giving it the same priority as most other down the road bus or rail line projects. Montclair stepped up and said they would make a \$3 million loan to get the study done."

Leon said it is hard for the public to understand the value of doing studies – which can cost millions of dollars – when there is no money to actually complete such projects available.

"The value is that years and years can go by with no funding there, but if you have an off-the-shelf plan that is ready to go when the funding does materialize, then you can move forward and not have to

*Continued on Page 10***Solar Project Fire Protection***from front page*

nual employment cost index adjustment). This solar project will generate property and sales tax revenue for the coun-

ty. Up to fifty percent of the one-time capital payment will be offset by any sales and/or use tax generated from the Ivanpah project and paid to the county, resulting in a minimum one-time capital contribution pay-

ment of \$101,000 to the fire protection district. Additionally, a portion of the ongoing operation and maintenance contribution will be offset by annual property tax and/or possessory interest tax revenue. It is es-

timated that the county will receive a minimum of \$112,200 annually in property and/or possessory interest tax revenue from the Ivanpah Solar Project, resulting in an estimated annual minimum payment to the San

Bernardino County Fire Protection District from First Solar LLC in the amount of \$74,800."

As a condition of certification of the Ivanpah Project, the California Energy Commission required First Solar LLC to

negotiate with the county to determine the funding of capital and operating costs for fire protection and emergency response impacts created by the Ivanpah Project.

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DA Extorting Backer? from page 2

because she said her organization has a policy of not releasing the last names of its employees, said Carter had failed to make the required disclosure. "It does not appear he reported any kind of conviction with us," Frances told the *Sentinel*.

Under Section 6068 (o) of California's Business and Professions Code "It is the duty of an attorney to report the conviction of the attorney, including any verdict of guilty, or plea of guilty or no contest, of a felony, or a misdemeanor."

A little more than a decade and a half after his conviction, Carter had acceded to become a relatively successful attorney, practicing in several counties throughout California, but with much of his work concentrated in the Inland Empire. In 2004, he began investing in the rising legal and political career of Mike Ramos, a Hispanic Republican who two years previ-

ously had ousted Dennis Stout, another Republican, as district attorney in San Bernardino County. Simultaneously Carter and his firm were making substantial contributions to other San Bernardino County politicians as well.

Documents on file with the county registrar of voters' office show that Carter, together with his recently deceased law partner Jim Spring, and his law firm, Carter, Spring, Shank & O'Connor, have made \$88,500 in political donations to all five current county supervisors, including \$38,000 to Gary Ovitt, \$32,050 to Josie Gonzales, \$12,750 to Janice Rutherford, and \$1,500 each to both Robert Lovingood and James Ramos. The *Sentinel* has not tallied the amount of his and his law firm's contributions to four other supervisors who have served in the last decade – Bill Postmus, Paul Bi-ane, Brad Mitzelfelt and Neil Derry.

Carter obtained a return on that political investment. His firm, Carter Spring Shank &

O'Connor obtained the criminal conflict defense contracts for two of the county's four regions, with an \$18.75 million contract to represent defendants in the East Valley as well as a \$12 million contract to represent defendants in the county's North Desert Region through December 31, 2013.

Through all of that advancement, Carter's criminal history and his conviction remained, for the public and most but not all government officials, a buried secret.

In one quarter, however, Carter's past was known. The district attorney's office had access to NCIC – the National Crime Information Center, the database run by the FBI and the U.S. Justice Department – and JDIC – the California Department of Justice's Justice Data Interface Controller Network. Moreover, the district attorney's office is a beneficiary of the agency-to-agency privilege by which law enforcement agencies, in this case itself and the Riverside County District At-

torney's Office and the Riverside Police Department, share information.

Prosecutors with the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office found themselves in court going up against Carter or members of his law firm on an almost daily basis. While the board of supervisors was conferring the lucrative conflict criminal defense contracts on Carter's firm, Ramos remained silent about Carter's conviction, and his failure to inform the California Bar about it, which is itself a violation of Section 5057(o) of the California Business and Professions Code.

Throughout his silence, Ramos came to rely upon Carter, Carter's partners and his law firm for making substantial contributions to his electioneering fund, donations that flowed in from Carter or his law firm at \$2,500, \$5,000, \$7,000 or \$10,000 a pop. On April 12, 2004 Carter made a \$2,500 donation to Ramos's campaign fund. The same day, Jim Spring, Carter's partner, made a \$2,500 donation

to Ramos, as well. On August 11, 2004, Spring provided Ramos' campaign fund with \$5,000. On May 6, 2005, Carter and Spring wrote checks to Ramos' campaign fund, each for \$5,000. Seventeen days later, on May 23, 2005, Carter and Spring again provided Ramos' campaign fund with another \$10,000, consisting of matching \$5,000 checks. Fourteen months later, on July 21, 2006, Ramos received another \$10,000 from the duo, again in the form of \$5,000 checks. A year later, on July 13, 2007, Carter and Spring upped the tribute they paid to Ramos, each providing his campaign fund with a \$7,000 check. On May 27, 2008, Jim Spring donated \$14,000 to Ramos' campaign fund. On June 9, 2009, Carter and Spring each wrote separate \$5,000 checks to Ramos' campaign fund. Two months later, on August 1, 2009, the law firm of Carter Spring, Shank & O'Connor provided a \$10,000 check to Ramos' campaign fund. On January 1, 2010, Carter Spring

Shank & O'Connor gave Ramos' campaign fund another \$10,000. On May 21, 2010, Sean O'Connor, one of Carter and Spring's law partners, wrote Ramos' campaign fund a \$5,000 check. On May 18, 2011, Carter Spring Shank & O'Connor donated \$2,500 to Ramos' campaign fund. On February 29, 2012 Carter Spring Shank & O'Connor donated \$2,500 to Ramos' campaign fund. On September 20, 2012, Carter Spring Shank & O'Connor donated \$2,500 to Ramos' campaign fund.

As time went on, the stakes grew higher until just a few years ago, Carter cemented his position as the most prosperous of defense attorney's plying their trades at San Bernardino County's courthouses. Beginning in 2004, Carter had secured for his firm the first of what would be a series of criminal defense conflict representation contracts that would pay him and his firm at least \$50.75 mil-

Continued on Page 11

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San Bernardino County Coroner Reports

Coroner Case #701403205 -- At 12:47 PM on 04/23/2014, Baker Ambulance and the California Highway Patrol responded to a traffic accident on Morningstar Mine Road and Cima Road in the rural area of Nipton. When paramedics arrived on scene they found Lonnie R. Larson, a 76 year old male resident of Sacramento, unresponsive in the roadway with obvious traumatic injuries. They confirmed him dead at the scene. Larson had been a helmeted motorcyclist who was ejected from his motorcycle. The accident is under investigation by the California Highway Patrol. [04242014 0111 CN]

Coroner Case #701403069 -- At 04:33 hours on 04/18/2014, Linda Ann Harrell, a 53 year old resident of Adelanto, was traveling westbound on Palmdale Rd. approaching Bellflower St., in Adelanto, on a 1987 Yamaha motorcycle. The driver of a silver 2007 Chevrolet truck was traveling southbound on Bellflower St. The driver of the truck pulled out in front of Harrell causing her to collide with the driver side of the truck. Harrell was confirmed dead at the scene. The San Bernardino Sheriff's Department is investigating the collision. [04192014 0642 CN]

Coroner case #701403070 -- at 7:57 PM on 04/18/2014, San Bernardino Police Department officers responded to a 911 call for suspicious circumstances the 3100 block of Cajon Blvd, in San Bernardino. Officers found a 51 year old Black male with trauma to the upper body. The man was confirmed dead on scene of his injuries at 8:10 PM. The decedent's name will be released pending notification of the next of kin. An autopsy will be completed to determine the cause of death. San Bernardino Police Department Homicide is investigating the incident. [04192014 0126 CN]

Coroner Case #701402827 - On 04/17/2014 around 5:35 P.M., paramedics and law enforcement responded to a traffic collision on Interstate 10 west of Cedar Ave., in Bloomington. When emergency personnel arrived they found Bruce Parchcorn, a 54 year-old resident of Hesperia, dead from injuries sustained in the collision and was pronounced dead by San Bernardino County Fire Department paramedics at 6:05 A.M. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the collision. [041714 1645 SY] Correction: The incident occurred at 5:35 A.M. on 4/17/14. [041814 0734 SY]

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

Is DA Extorting
One Of His Political
Backers? from page 9

lion dollars. Initially, Carter had to share the conflict representation spoils with other firms. By last year, Carter had a monopoly on the con-

flict representation in two of the county's four regional divisions, both the East Valley and the North Desert Region. The law firm of David Goldstein at that time did conflict representation in the West Valley region of San Bernardi-

no County and attorney John Burdick had the most modest of the conflict representation contracts, being paid \$1.875 million for his work in the East Desert region. Last September, when the county undertook to renew the contracts

countywide through a request for proposals process, Carter jockeyed into position to seize an absolute monopoly of the county's conflict representation work. He and his firm submitted proposals on all four regional contracts. Despite

being underbid by two of its competitors, Carter's firm managed to convince the selection panel to give it the nod. After word of the competition panel leaning in favor of Carter's firm for all four contracts leaked out and Greenline Partners and

Ponce raised their objections, the board hesitated in rubberstamping that selection and initiated what was supposed to be a review of the selection process and its criteria and the qualifications and bona fides of the

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Gold Line
from page 8

do that study and get in line with other projects,

some of which are less valuable and less important," Leon said. "The overall process takes a

long time. You need to actually start to plan before the money comes available. You stay ahead

of the curve that way." Leon said advance planning by this generation is needed to allevi-

ate problems future generations will otherwise face. "Government has to

be visionary and look 50 to 100 years into the future so we don't find ourselves in the position where we are in the Inland Empire when it comes to improving the major traffic arteries and public transportation we are now dependent on and which are inadequate. It is a Herculean task of building freeways that are bigger and fatter nowadays. If the freeway system had been planned out in the 1930s and 1940s with an understanding of what was to come 75 years later, we would not be in the fix we are now. We need to think in terms of public transportation that will serve 5 million people, not today and not even tomorrow. The Gold Line is absolutely necessary for the future. But realistically, it is not something that will serve me or my generation. It will be my grandchildren, who are toddlers now, and their children who will be the ones that will be the commuters lining up at its turnstiles."

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Is DA Extorting One Of His Political Backers? *from page 10*

competitors. As that review was under way, the county missed its earlier goal of ratifying the contract with Carter's firm at the February 11 board of supervisors meeting. Two days later, as the continuation of Carter's firm's status as the county's preeminent conflict representation contractor hung in the balance, Carter on February 13, 2014, made a \$4,100 donation to Ramos' campaign fund, the maximum a single donor can make under the county's recently enacted campaign finance limitation ordinance.

David Wert, the county's official spokesman, who in February told the *Sentinel* that the approval of the contract had been delayed at that point because the county was intent on "thoroughly" reexamining the contract award process and the various competitor, this week told the *Sentinel* that neither county CEO Greg Devereaux nor the competition panel knew about Carter's conviction, either at the earlier stages of the contract competition or later, when the reexamination of the panel's tentative decision was under way. Nor did Ramos inform Devereaux or the panel, consisting of two of the county's superior court judges and two members of county counsel, about Carter's conviction, Wert said.

"We never heard about that," said Wert.

Wert said the request for proposals contained language that

required applicants to disclose civil judgments or criminal convictions but that Carter was able to sidestep that specific requirement because the county was seeking information with regard to criminal convictions relating to financial crimes occurring within the last decade.

"That would not have covered" Carter's conviction, Wert said, since it was not "within the last ten years." Nor did it involve "financial fraud or misconduct," Wert said.

Wert was less exact about state regulations that require contract holders with public agencies to disclose criminal convictions in the course of the contract application process and he acknowledged that Carter's failure to disclose his conviction to the state bar could result in complications with regard to his ability to fulfill the contract. Nevertheless, the possibility that Carter's failure to disclose his criminal conviction might result in his being disbarred, Wert said, was "too long a road to look down."

As to Ramos' comportment, Wert indicated reluctance to pass judgment on his having militated in favor of Carter during the contract competition, given that the district attorney is an independently elected official outside the direct oversight of the county administrative office and the board of supervisors. "I don't know that what the district attorney does in terms of sending out recommendations or accepting campaign contributions is even something the board

Efforts to protect San Bernardino County's bobcat population have moved ahead, including the enactment of legislation last year which bans the trapping of the majestic creatures or the harvesting of their pelts in and around Joshua Tree



National Park and the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve.

At present, state officials are awaiting the outcome of a survey of



the entire state of California's bobcat numbers to determine whether the Fish and Game Commission should set further restrictions on bobcat trapping permits.

Farmers and keepers of livestock have for centuries engaged in an effort to suppress the bobcat population, offering bounties on the animals, which are opportunistic predators. The bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) is a North American mammal of the cat family Felidae, which most often preys

upon available rabbits and hares, small rodents and deer. If chickens are available, bobcats will voraciously feast upon them and will attack and kill foxes, minks, skunks, dogs, goats and sheep. Bobcats have been credited with being responsible for roughly 11,000 sheep killings nationally every year, or 4.9% of all sheep predator deaths, though bobcat predation in this venue may be misattributed since bobcats have been known to scavenge on the remains of livestock kills by other animals.

Concern had been growing for years over human predation of bob-

cat. They often cover the trap with sticks or

signed by Governor Jerry Brown in October



brush and accentuate the baiting process with a piece of meat, mimicking the bobcat's practice of hiding away portions of larger animals it cannot finish in one sitting.

Popular nowadays are long-spring traps or coil traps, or a homesteader or rear door trap which is designed to capture the bobcat without injuring it or its pelt.

A watershed event occurred in January 2013 when Joshua Tree resident Tom O'Key found a bobcat trap on his prop-



erty just outside Joshua Tree National Park. The trapper claimed he thought he had placed his device on public land.

As a result, Richard Bloom of Santa Monica sponsored Assembly Bill 1213. Which was passed into law and

2013. In signing the bill Brown called for a bobcat survey to determine the appropriateness of more inclusive bans.



The law went into effect on January 1, 2014, establishing a no-trapping zone around Joshua Tree National Park and within the Big Morongo Preserve, require the Department of Fish and Wildlife to amend its regulations to "prohibit the trapping of bobcats within, and adjacent to, the boundaries of a national or state park, monument or preserve, national wildlife refuge and other public or private conservation area identified by for protection."

The bill also codified as illegal to trapping bobcats on private lands without the written consent of the property owner.

of supervisors can address," he said. He then sought to downplay the effectiveness of Ramos' letter of recommendation.

"I have serious doubts whether the evaluation panel considered the recommendation from the district attorney," Wert said.

While acknowledging that Ramos left other county officials in the dark about Carter's conviction, Wert refused to

be drawn into commenting on the charges swirling around the county seat to the effect that the awarding of the conflict representation contracts for the county's four geographical regions had been tainted by extortion and kickbacks.

"What the DA might have known since he had had access to the data base that contained that information before he wrote that recommendation... is not something

the county is going to get involved in," Wert said.

In the last week, an electronic file containing copies of the documents pertaining to Carter's arrest and conviction have circulated widely throughout the county. Given the previous publicity about the hefty political contributions that Ramos has received from Carter, members of the legal community have been openly remarking about the ap-

pearance of an extortion and kickback scheme involving them.

Sharon Caldwell, a long time deputy prosecutor with San Bernardino County serving under Ramos for the last eleven-and-a-half years who just retired, said she was aware of the speculation about Ramos extorting Carter in exchange for political donations.

"I don't buy it," Caldwell said of the ex-

Continued on Page 12

California Style

Spring Abounding

Spring week has come and gone and flowers and skirts are here. It's time



show must go on. With that said, the hemlines have come into play and the skirt is ready to play its role this season. Be it



to take it all in beginning with color and the plants that are exploding all over the place. Easter is gone now but the fashion



long or short hems, it all depends on what you're comfortable in. Skirts are always a fun part of the season. They can

be paired with sandals, heels and cute tops too. Some nice accessories that will come in handy with the skirt is a cute hat



and a tunic. This spring



is going to be hot and exciting. Enjoy fashion life renewed in spring!



"Before you leave the house, look in the mirror and remove one accessory." —Coco Chanel

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 Copyright Grace Bernal all rights reserved

Is DA Extorting One Of His Political Backers? *from page 11*

tortion allegations, although she did say she believed Ramos accepting the money was tantamount to taking kickbacks. "There is no need for extortion here," Caldwell said. "This is a good ol' boy thing. People are giving him [Ramos] way too much credit. Earl gives him money and he makes sure good

things go to Earl. It's that simple. I think it is inappropriate for the DA to be making a recommendation for him. I think it is inappropriate for Earl to be making those contributions. It is absolutely appalling that if you have enough power and money you can buy the DA., but as far as him [Ramos] knowing about Earl's history and agreeing to be quiet about it, I would never believe it." Robert Ponce, who underbid Carter's firm for the conflict repre-

sentation contract in the North Desert region, said he was troubled by the one-sidedness of Ramos's letter to the evaluation committee. "It is remarkable that he would write a letter about someone who was competing for the contract and not mention that he was convicted," Ponce said. "I would be interested in what the state bar would say about the elected district attorney taking that kind of money from someone who is in an adversarial

role and then writing a letter of recommendation for him." Ponce said that Carter was "brilliant when it comes to garnering influence" and he called the donations he and members of his firm had made to Ramos "another example of money being placed in the right hands." When queried by the *Sentinel* about Carter's provision of hefty political donations to Ramos and Ramos' authoring of the letter of recommendation, Laurie Levenson, a former assistant U.S. Attorney who is now a law professor at Loyola Law School, said, "The appearance of it is troubling. It gives the appearance of impropriety because by making those donations, he [Carter] looks as if he is currying favor with the district attorney. Although it may be permitted, I don't think it is ethical." A relationship of the type Carter and Ramos have developed can compromise the processes of justice, Levenson said. "Even if with this letter all the DA is saying

is this is a zealous adversary who performs his job ethically and well, the impact is this may have helped him get the contract," she said. "From my perspective you want both sides to be independent, zealous advocates and you don't want the defense lawyer pulling any punches and you don't want the DA providing better deals to the defense attorney's clients because the defense attorney is making

contributions to the prosecutor." Carter declined to respond to questions about why he felt compelled to donate to Ramos' political fund in the amounts that he and his law firm have. Both Ramos and his official spokesman, Christopher Lee, spurned the *Sentinel's* effort to engage them on the topic of the district attorney's relationship to Carter.

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