

# The San Bernardino County Sentinel

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

Friday, June 20, 2014 A Fortunado Publication in conjunction with Countywide News Service 10808 Foothill Blvd. Suite 160-446 Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730 (909) 957-9998

## County Fire Department's Bid May End AMR's 33-Year Ambulance Monopoly

A confluence of events and circumstances has put the status quo of one of San Bernardino County's major franchise contracts in doubt, as county officials contemplate ending the 33-year-long hold one company has had on the exclusive provision of ambulance service in the nation's most expansive county.



**Mark Hartwig**

Since 1981 American Medical Response,

and its several corporate predecessors including Mercy Ambulance, has been the county's ambulance service provider. Its current ten-year contract is coming to an end. County Chief Executive Officer Greg Devereaux and the board of supervisors have not yet decided on whether to simply extend the contract as it is and continue to lock out

all other competitors in the 20,105-square mile county, renegotiate the franchise contract or put the contract up for bid.

The board of supervisors, per se, will not be making that decision, but will need to ratify it after the board's members, acting in another capacity, pass judgment. In actuality, major policy decisions with regard

to the county's emergency medical services are made by ICEMA, of which all five supervisors are board members. ICEMA is an acronym for the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency, which serves Inyo, Mono and San Bernardino counties.

A myriad of factors is militating against American Medical See P 2

## 29 Palms Brings Takata In As Temporary City Manager



**Andrew Takata**

TWENTYNINE PALMS—Twentynine Palms has lured Andy Takata, the former Yucca Valley town manager and Banning city manager who is currently serving as the interim city manager in Calexico, to temporarily replace recently fired city manager Joe Guzzetta.

Takata will officially begin as Twentynine Palms interim city manager on June 24, and be paid \$100 per hour for his services.

He was offered the position on a unanimous city council vote, four weeks after Joe Guzzetta was terminated on May 13 by a unanimous vote of the council, slightly less than a year after he assumed the city manager position. Guzzetta, the former director of the Joshua Basin Water District, was provided with a one-year severance package by the city, such that he was essentially paid two years' salary for one year of work.

Guzzetta replaced Richard Warne, who was likewise terminated by the city council in April 2013 just one month shy of his two-year an- See P 9

## Series Of Miscommunications, Misunderstandings & Errors Led To Dunn's Exodus

The events that led to the resignation of Upland City Manager Stephen Dunn were a comedy of errors, miscommunication, misunderstandings and rash acts that were exacerbated by the secrecy surrounding the process in which most or all of the parties involved were unsure of or had no inkling of the actions of the others, the

*Sentinel* has learned.

Though no clear consensus to remove Dunn as city manager ever emerged organically among the city's five ultimate decision makers, i.e., the city council, events transpired in such a way as to make Dunn's exodus a fait accompli. There were multiple levels of irony in the string of events, including the

consideration that legal requirements which exist as part of the government code intended to protect public employees, together with other restrictions on the open exchange of information or a dialogue between the council members, worked against Dunn's continued tenure as city manager.

In the end, Dunn's



**Stephen Dunn**

intemperate reaction to the admittedly awkward

and aggravating circumstance he was put in resulted in three members of the council concluding that his remaining as city manager was no longer tenable.

On May 27, when Mayor Ray Musser announced Dunn's pending departure at the end of that evening's city council meeting, a full two weeks after his See P 4

## CVUSD Opts For Reduced Class Size As ESL Strategy



**Andrew Cruz**

The Chino Valley Unified School District will dispense

with its earlier contemplated plan of using tutors and instructional coaches to improve the academic performance of its students whose first language is not English and will instead reroute funding to reduce class size.

At play is \$3.8 million the school board had earlier agreed to set aside as part of its Local Control See P 9

## Trailing Aguilar By A Mere 209 Votes In 31st District Race, Gooch Seeking Recount



**Lesli Gooch**

The supporters of 31st Congressional District Candidate Lesli Gooch will pursue a recount

after the posting of the certified election count that found her trailing the second place finisher by 209 votes.

Under California's open primary arrangement, the two top finishers in the June primary election face each other in the November General Election.

Gooch, a Republican, polled 9,033 votes or 16.96 percent. Another Republican, Paul Chabot,

was the top vote-getter, with 14,163 votes or 26.6 percent. Pete Aguilar, a Democrat and the best financed candidate in the seven-candidate field that competed on June 3, captured 9,242 votes or 17.36 percent.

The 31st District leans Democratic, with 42 percent of the district's voters registered as Democrats and 33 percent registered as Republicans. De- See P 11

## Secret Survey Questions Elicit Concern Over Push Polling Tactics In Tax Vote

Concern is growing that Upland city officials are using a survey of city residents to maneuver around the provisions of state law aimed at preventing taxpayer money from being used to promote a ballot measure.

To guide it in redressing its financial problems, the city of Upland last fall created a fiscal crisis management task force which cataloged a

host of cost savings and revenue enhancement options. One of those options the city is now contemplating is the imposition of a half cent sales tax coupled with an increase in business fees.

To put the city sales tax regime in place, approval of the tax by the city's voters must take place. City officials favoring the tax hope to place a ballot measure

before the city's voters in November during the general gubernatorial election.

In April, the city council voted to appropriate \$75,000 from the city's general fund reserves for the dual purposes of engaging a firm to survey city residents about their support for the potential sales tax and business license tax measures and to engage

the services of a public relations firm to assist staff in providing the public with what city manager Stephen Dunn called "accurate and correct information on many of the task force recommendations that will be addressed over the next 12 months."

The city intends to pay \$27,000 for the survey and \$48,000 for the public relations cam-

paign. It has been disclosed that there would be no bidding on the contract to lobby the public with regard to passing the half percent sales tax and other city revenue enhancement or cost cutting moves and the contract would be conferred upon the 20/20 Network, a communications firm specializing in media and community relations, See P 5



## New Ownership At Yuciapa's Best Lumber

Rod and Denise Pugh have purchased Best Lumber of Yucaipa from former owner Margie Duval.

The new management of the business was commemorated in a ribbon cutting with the Yucaipa Valley Chamber of Commerce on May 22.

Duval is to serve as a consultant to the Pughs, who currently reside in



Rancho Cucamonga, during the next 12 to 18 months.

The first telling change to the store following the ownership

transition is the introduction of a product line from Hawkeye Industrial Solutions.

Hours of operation at the store, located at 34789 Yucaipa Blvd., will remain 7:30 a.m. through 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday.

### Possible County Fire Bid On Ambulance Contract *from front page*

Response retaining its exclusive – and very lucrative – status as the sole licensed ambulance provider in the vast unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County and in Inyo and Mono counties as well.

Known by its acronym AMR, American Medical Response has proven over the last three decades to be a major

donor to the political war chests of members of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. AMR's primacy in the jurisdiction the supervisors rule has led to the perception that a pay-to-play ethos dominates San Bernardino County. A series of scandals and political corruption prosecutions aimed at San Bernardino County politicians, including ones that resulted in convictions, have incentivized rebidding the franchise contract to end the un-

seemly appearance of a single, and politically well-connected, company enjoying a monopoly that has moved into its fourth decade.

Simultaneously, the county fire department finds itself faced with both challenges and opportunities to meet those challenges by, perhaps, flexing and expanding its authority and service capability into the areas previously dominated if not entirely controlled by the private sector, namely emergency medical

support.

Last year, the cities of Victorville, Hesperia, Apple Valley and Adelanto resurrected a more-than-20-year-old proposal to unify their police and fire services and the four municipalities sprung for putting up \$200,000 collectively to determine the feasibility of creating unified police and fire services under the aegis of a public safety joint powers authority involving all four municipalities.

For law enforcement

### The San Bernardino County

## Sentinel

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service, Adelanto pays the county \$4,706,459 to have the sheriff's department serve as its police department, which features 28 sworn and non-sworn employees. Apple Valley is now paying \$11.255 million to have the county sheriff provide a 71-employee presence of both sworn and non-sworn personnel, vehicles, equipment radio and dispatch. Hesperia pays \$12.77 million

for the sheriff's department to serve as that city's law enforcement provider. In Victorville, the city is paying \$19,417,318 annually to the sheriff's department under its contract with them to provide law enforcement services.

Under its contract with the San Bernardino County Fire Department, Adelanto pays \$3,117,634 per year for a force that consists of one battalion chief, six fire captains, six engineers, six firefighter/paramedics and one paid call firefighter.

The Apple Valley Fire Protection District is an entity that is independent from the town and currently functions on an annual budget of \$7.72 million.

Hesperia expends \$8,253,243 annually on fire protection service, including a contract with the San Bernardino County Fire Department and maintaining the vehicles and facilities of the Hesperia Fire Protection District.

Victorville's budget for its fire department, which is also a division of the county fire department, is \$13,643,541.

The study was undertaken to determine if the cities could save money and perhaps enhance services by pooling their financial resources and creating a valleywide public safety district with police and fire divisions, and terminating their contracts with the fire and sheriff's departments of San Bernardino County.

Depending on what

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# Glimpse Of SBC's Past

## Homemade: Our Prehistoric and Historic Arrowweed Homes

By Ruth Musser-Lopez

June 20, 2014 Believe it or not! As extraordinary as it may seem, our county is the home of a little known and apparently quite sturdy and long-lasting home construction technology that does not require metal

or nails and surprisingly involves the use of a native arrowweed for the walls. The technology is credited to our San Bernardino County local Native Americans, the Pipa Aha Macav (People of the River)—the Mojaves. Reportedly,

in 1910, it was adapted by Euro-Americans, the Tryon Family in Needles, who stretched the technology to the limits, creating a large, long standing, three-story frame structure using what appears to be arrowweed rods or wattle for walls, located at the end of "Dead Dog Road" which eventually became one of the busiest intersections in town, River Road and K Street, a block from the bridge crossing over into Arizona.

In our county, along the lower Colorado River where it often forms dense impenetrable thickets, Pluchea seri-

dwelling as well as for wattle or rod-shaped lath in the walls.

The colorfully dressed Mojave women in calico skirts, who sold bead necklaces, decorated clay dolls and vessels at the Needles train depot during the late 1800s and the first half of the 1900s may have returned to traditional homes such as the "wattle and daub" dwelling shown at right made of arrowweed rod wall frames covered over with a clayish river mud and roofed with arrowweed thatch. These homes were mainly occupied in the winter; partially subterranean, they were naturally insulated

evidence that arrowweed was used for the wall support framework, the diameter of the horizontal wall rod frame material roughly matches the

javes" numerous photographs of "pole and mud" dwellings taken along the banks of the Colorado River that had been archived at the Mu-



"The House at the end of Dead Dog Road" once called "the desert's largest house" with 22 rooms and four bathrooms, is a three-story frame structure incorporating what appears to be arrowweed rods for the wall support. Built by Claude Burton Tryon and wife Ana, construction commenced in 1910 and took four years thus these photos taken on March 9, 1911 and the Spring of 1912 would have only been one and two years into construction.



A recent 2014 photograph of the same dwelling depicted to the left shows green paint; it has thus been known locally as "The Big Green House" at least since the 1980s. It is unknown exactly when the plaster was applied to the arrowweed wattle—but sometime before 1963 when a new owner painted it and installed a tin roof. The roof is now asphalt shingle. Instead of the end of the road, the house is now located on one of the busiest intersections in Needles at the intersection of "K" Street and Needles Highway/River Road near the bridge crossing the river into Arizona.

cea, commonly called arrowweed was used by the Mojave for rancheria type home construction long before the arrival of Euro-Americans in the 1700s.

Mojave winter homes were partly subterranean which allowed for natural insulation against the cold of winter. The walls of the upper portion of the dwelling were built of the rhizomatous evergreen shrub, the arrowweed, harvested from the surrounding riparian shorelines and backflows of the Colorado River. Arrowweed, characteristically straight and strong, was commonly used in prehistoric times for arrow shafts and for thatching the roof of

and easier to keep warm than the Euro-American Victorian style homes downtown Needles with all of their "gingerbread" trimmings.

The Tryon property has repeatedly changed hands over the years and recently in the past several months, the new owner Needles Mayor Edward Paget has sought information about the property and showed to me the photos of the house being constructed circa 1910 saying that the house is built of arrowweed.

Though tests were not available to prove that arrowweed is actually behind the green plaster walls in the Tryon structure, providing some

Image of a Coast Line Southern Pacific Railroad (S. P. R. R.) post card "673" with caption simply stating "Indian Huts, Mojave Desert, California." In 1877, Southern Pacific tracks from Los Angeles crossed the Colorado River at Yuma, Arizona when the Southern Pacific purchased the Houston and Texas Central Railway. The Yuman or Quechan further south on the river in Imperial County are closely related to the Mojave; both speak a dialect of the Yuman language. Location of the photograph is uncertain but it represents the traditional structural technology used by prehistoric Yuman speaking tribes along the banks of the lower Colorado River.

diameter of the arrowweed used in the various wattle and daub structures shown in the images provided here as well as the diameter of the arrowweed being collected and carried by Mojave

Smith describes the

Smith describes the



Gerald A. Smith published the above photograph in "The Mojaves" reprinted by the San Bernardino County Museum in 1971 with a caption reading "Mohave woman carrying arrowweed for a new house or for making a storage basket." Smith credits the image to Museum of American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York.

women in the historic photo image above.

In the 1970s, Gerald A. Smith of the San Bernardino County Museum worked with Fort Mojave tribal chairman Llewellyn Barrackman in providing an ethnographic documentation of the prehistoric past life ways of the Aha Macav. He included in his publication, "The Mo-

winter house as this: "They were rectangular in shape and covered with a sloping roof. A shed-roofed structure projected from the front of the house to form a portico or covered porch. Large cottonwood logs were used for the frame and for the horizontal beams of the houses.

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## Comedy Of Errors & Miscommunication Led To Dunn's Demise As City Manager from front page

employment separation agreement was signed and thirteen days after it was approved as to form by city attorney Kimberly Hall Barlow, the story behind what had occurred remained shrouded in mystery. Over the last three weeks, the Sentinel has pieced together the events that led up to and resulted in Dunn's departure.

Dunn, who in early 2011 was promoted from his position as finance director to serve as first acting and then actual city manager in the wake of the suspension of former city manager Robb Quincey in the wake of fallout from the events preceding the indictment of former Mayor John Pomierski, long enjoyed the support of the city council.

Among his early acts as city manager was the discharging of four of the city's department heads and the cutting of 25 staff positions at City Hall. That prompted a campaign of anonymous letters sent to the city council, community leaders and the press attacking Dunn on a multitude of issues personal and professional. The council did not accede to the calls, stated both directly and indirectly in the letters, for Dunn's dismissal. Through more than three years in his function as city manager, the city council had Dunn's back.

What might be seen as a major turn toward Dunn's demise as city manager occurred in February when Dunn, who had been working for three years with a salary and benefit package significantly below what was provided to his predecessor Quincey, asked for a raise. The city council, which is struggling with the city's beleaguered financial condition, deliberated with regard to his request and turned him down.

The following month the council initiated

Dunn's routine annual review. After a first closed session discussion, the review was delayed for two weeks while the council undertook to fill out written forms providing their individual rankings of Dunn's performance. Dunn's contract ran through June 2015 and his continuing tenure seemed assured.

Nevertheless, legal prohibitions against the council members communicating with regard to official city business in any forums outside of the public or closed door sessions of the council led to a degree of uncertainty as to the outcome of the review. In particu-



**Debby Stone**

lar, councilwoman Debby Stone, who was close to Dunn in part because of their shared membership in the Rotary Club, was Dunn's greatest champion on the council. The advent of Dunn's job review, which was routine in nature but followed closely upon his turned-down request for a raise, seems to have been misinterpreted by her as a preparatory move toward terminating him.

In reality, at that point only councilman Glenn Bozar held any significant reservations about Dunn's management of



**Glenn Bozar**

the city, and he clearly lacked the political muscle, i.e., the accompanying votes, to force Dunn out. Stone, however, because of the spotty communication afforded the council under the rule

of law, perceived that Musser and perhaps even Filippi and Brandt might join with Bozar to hand Dunn a pink slip.

Actually, Filippi was solidly behind Dunn, Brandt was philosophically and temperamentally opposed to making any drastic personnel changes at City Hall, and



**Gino Filippi**

Musser, though smarting from some public criticism leveled at him by the city manager, felt obliged to keep Dunn in place at least until his contract expired some 15 months thereafter. Because of her misgivings about the others' intentions toward Dunn, however, Stone balked at completing the written evaluation form relating to Dunn, possibly because she believed the delay would forestall any action the council might take toward terminating him.

Ironically, this suspension of the delivery of what would most cer-

tainly have been on balance a positive review for another two weeks had the exact opposite effect of what Stone intended. At that point, Dunn appears to have misinterpreted his review having been held in abeyance for nearly a month as, at best, hesitation at or strong differences over giving him a positive review, or at worst, a sign that he was about to be cashiered. Intemperately and ill-advisedly, he issued a memorandum stating he was taking, on his own initiative, a leave of absence.

This caught the council by surprise and Musser interceded to convince him to return to work at once. Nevertheless, the council's review of his job performance



**Ray Musser**

languished, and Dunn at one point cleared his office of his personal effects, sending a signal that he anticipated being fired.

Word of the contretemps between the city manager and the city council at that point wafted beyond the confines of City Hall. Though statements were made for public consumption to the effect that whatever misunderstandings that occurred had been cleared up, that the long delayed job review had been concluded in Dunn's favor and that Dunn was now back at the city's helm and coolly in command of municipal operations, a crucial milestone in the Dunn drama had been eclipsed. The council was now faced with negative publicity - negative publicity for the city and negative comments vectored their way by some of Dunn's supporters.

Despite efforts to make it appear as if City Hall was back to functioning as normal, the tension that existed behind the scenes of power in the City of Gracious Living was palpable.

With his future seemingly hanging in the balance and suspended by the slimmest of threads, Dunn inexplicably escalated the crisis, doubling down and demanding that in order for him to remain as city manager, a member of the city council - thought to be Bozar - would need to

resign.

That threw Upland City Hall into full blown crisis mode. Councilman Brendan Brandt, whose previous Sphinx-like support of Dunn had long been the key to Dunn's continuing viability as city manager, was jolted by Dunn's histrionics. Yet another corner had been turned, with Brandt having been pushed over the edge.



**Brendan Brandt**

Shortly thereafter, Dunn was overheard demanding that the city council fire him, knowing full well that his resignation would excuse the city from having to fulfill all payments due to him under his contract and that being terminated would trigger the requirement that the city pay him the full \$192,768 due him during the final year of that contract. By the second week of May, a consensus among Musser, Brandt and Bozar that the city would best be

*Continued on Page 5*

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## Concern Over Possible Push Polling from front page

branding, strategic planning and crisis management headed by Steve Lambert and Tim Gallagher. Lambert is the former editor of the Inland Valley *Daily Bulletin*, the most widely circulated daily newspaper in Upland.

In early May, Lambert and Gallagher huddled with Dunn for a strategizing session. The precise details of what was discussed are not publicly known, though a central subject was enhancing the prospect that the sales tax initiative will pass.

The firm that will be conducting the resident polling with regard to the sales tax has not been identified. Councilman Glenn Bozar was the sole member of the city council to vote against the \$75,000 expenditure in April because, he said, “I don’t think it is necessary and it is an unwise use of public funds.” At the June 9 council meeting, Bozar pressed Dunn to provide the council with the language that is to be contained in the survey questions. Dunn turned down Bozar’s request.

Even before Bozar’s request was made there was some level of concern in the community about what direction the city would be going in with the survey and its lobbying campaign. As the task force was undertaking its deliberations

late last year, a number of vocal city residents began advocating against any tax increases, asserting that past decisions by the city council have conferred upon city employees salaries and benefits that are too generous and which are leaving the city in the position of having to pay exorbitant pensions to employees upon retirement. In recent months the ranks of those voicing this concern have grown and they are calling for a renegotiation of the employment contracts with municipal employees to reduce ongoing and future operating costs and pension obligations before residents are called upon to cover those costs in the form of new taxes.

Bozar’s request of Dunn on June 9 appeared aimed at determining whether reports that the survey’s purpose was being suborned to further the public relations campaign relating to having the tax initiative passed were accurate. Ostensibly, the survey is being conducted to determine if city residents would be likely to pass the tax. Placing the measure on the November ballot would cost the city somewhere in the neighborhood of \$20,000. So, before going to that expense, Dunn and the city council wanted to determine whether seeking that approval would be an exercise in futility. What has been suggested, however, is that the 20/20 Network had a hand in formulating the form of the questions to

be asked in the survey, blending into the questions suggestions that would “push” those responding to the survey toward a preconceived answer, i.e., that they are inclined to support the tax measure. Poll results to this effect would then be used to persuade the council to not only put the tax measure on the November ballot, but would be used in the public relations campaign to be put on by the 20/20 Network to convince voters to support the measure, some have suggested.

Dunn’s refusal to provide Bozar or his colleagues with the survey language heightened already lingering suspicions that the survey to be carried out would be a “push poll.”

California’s Political Reform Act prohibits public financing of campaigns. In addition, Gov. Code Section 8314 and Penal Code Section 426 prohibit the use of public resources, such as office equipment, staff time, consultants or government-paid contractors or personal for campaign or political purposes.

Government Code Section 54964 prohibits an officer, employee or consultant of a local agency from expending or authorizing the expenditure of any local agency funds to support or oppose a ballot measure or a candidate.

Reached by the *Sentinel* this week, Dunn said the survey would likely be conducted “beginning next week.” He said

the form of the questions had been set but was awaiting “review by the city attorney.”

Dunn said that upon his authority as city manager none of the members of the city council were being given prior access to the polling questions because he did not want any advance disclosure of the questions that would skew the survey results. He said he was not going to comply with Bozar’s request to see the poll questions “because we don’t want the council to share them with anyone. We don’t want the question out in the public domain before the survey takes place.”

When the subject of the concern over the questions’ form and that they might contain language exhibiting a favorable disposition toward the proposed tax proposal was broached, Dunn abruptly ended the interview and did not clarify whether the 20/20 Network had any input with regard to the formulation of the survey questions. Nor did Dunn entertain questions about whether the survey was intended to provide a scientific analysis of voter attitude toward the proposed tax or, in the alternative, whether the survey had been designed as a “push poll.”

City attorney Kimberly Hall Barlow was unable to provide any clarification on the language to be used in the survey questions. While she said she was sensitive to the perception that the

survey could be used to influence voters with regard to the contemplated tax proposal, she said it was within the purview of city management to withhold the questions to be asked and their precise wording from full public disclosure until the survey is completed.

Pressed about what the city would be driving toward in conducting the survey, Barlow said, “I think what the city council wants is an unbiased survey of its residents.” Barlow acknowledged, however, that members of the council had not been provided with the survey questions to make that determination for themselves.

Queried on whether the city could withstand a legal challenge by a resident or citizens seeking disclosure of the survey wording ahead of the survey being conducted, Barlow indicated the city would be able to do so.

Mayor Ray Musser told the *Sentinel* this week that it was his understanding the city manager and the firm doing the citizen polling are “not going to let us see them [i.e., the survey questions]. I’m not sure where I am on that. I don’t want to at this point throw Steve Dunn under the bus. I think it would be wise that we at least know what they are. I guess he is afraid we will influence [the survey results] in some shape or form. I would like to know if it is normally the case that the city council in a city where a survey is being

conducted doesn’t get to see the questions beforehand.”

Councilman Gino Filippi, who has given indirect indication that he supports the city sales tax concept, told the *Sentinel* “I am comfortable with the direction Stephen wants to go. I have not seen the questions but assume I would approve of them. This council has a tendency to micromanage and I don’t endorse that. I trust Stephen Dunn and I trust the level of professionalism of the firm he has selected to do the work. He is the hired executive and he hired a professional team to complete this. I am satisfied with that.”

Councilman Brendan Brandt told the *Sentinel*, “I think the our [the council’s] function is to direct policy and not micromanage every aspect of the city manager’s job and I have confidence in Stephen Dunn that he will manage the polling in a fashion so that we get the data we need as a council to decide whether the sales tax issue should go on the ballot. At the end of the day the questions will come out and if they are deemed to be too biased, that will be part of the analysis of whether we have valid data. I don’t want to get into the drafting of the actual questions. I have taken no position as to whether we should put this issue out to a vote.”



## Miscommunication Led To Dunn’s Departure from page 4

finished with Dunn had formed. On May 13, a separation agreement had been drawn up and it was signed by both Dunn and Musser.

Dunn, whose primary line of municipal operations expertise is finances, agreed to assist the city in finalizing its 2014-15 budget before departing on June 30.

This week, the coun-

cil hired Martin Lomeli, the former city manager of La Verne, to serve as interim city manager most likely until November, by which point the city hopes to have hired Dunn’s permanent replacement.

Filippi offered up a wistful post mortem of Dunn’s managerial tenure.

“I supported him from day one,” Filippi said. “We had going on three-and-a-half years of working closely to-

gether. We came in almost a month apart. I took the oath as councilman on December 13, 2010 and he was asked to accept a promotion from finance director to the position of acting city manager in January 2011. I have always had positive relations with him and looked to him for guidance. I think he did an excellent job. I did not support his leaving. I do not know, exactly, what he was thinking toward the end there. The

road has not been easy for him. He entered [the position of city manager] at a difficult time and so much upset. The mixed signals the council was sending and the actions being taken by three of them and the divisiveness probably created insecurity in Stephen. I’m speculating. I know he was working very hard to lead the city and trying to push through his own recommendations and those of the fiscal task force. I think he

grew very frustrated going through delays.”

The end stage was particularly harsh, Filippi said. He said he could not describe what set of events proved to be the final straw. “You would have to ask the three members who wanted him to not continue,” Filippi said. “Three of the council voted to provide him an exit agreement. Obviously, he accepted it and the majority of the council provided it. I can’t tell you

what happened in closed session.”

Filippi concurred that a whole series of misunderstandings, miscommunications and mistakes precipitated Dunn’s departure, which Filippi said at this point is irrevocable. “I didn’t want that,” Filippi said. “Stephen’s on his way to retirement. I hope he is satisfied with that. I am now looking toward working with Marty Lomeli.”



County Fire Interested In Ambulance Franchise

from page 2

conclusions the decision-makers in Adelanto, Apple Valley, Hesperia and Victorville come to, San Bernardino County's sheriff's and fire departments may or may not retain their current contracts in the Victor Valley. Thus, the county fire department faces the potential prospect of seeing its contract with three of the county's cities being terminated.

In the meantime, sources have told the *Sentinel*, San Bernardino County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig is on the verge of making an energetic proposal that would intensify the level of service his agency provides while simultaneously providing revenue to the county and his department by shifting emergency medical transportation away from the private sector.

Hartwig, a paramedic firefighter who rose through the ranks of the county fire district and then spent six years with the Rancho Cucamonga Fire District as a battalion chief and deputy fire chief before he was selected as county fire chief three years ago, is seeking to convince Devereaux and the board

of supervisors to allow county fire to put non-fire suppression personnel, i.e., emergency medical technicians and paramedics, on ambulances owned and operated by the county and have the county assume authority to provide ambulance and paramedic service in all of the county transport areas now franchised to AMR.

One estimate was that through this program the department could generate a \$50 million revenue stream per year that could then be reinvested in fire protection programs throughout the county.

A report received by the *Sentinel* is that Hartwig's proposal has so alarmed American Medical Response's corporate officers that they have offered to pay the county an annual \$30 million exclusive franchise fee if the county will simply reject Hartwig's proposal and essentially extend the current arrangement for AMR to continue operating for ten years.

Thus, if the county accedes to AMR's offer, Hartwig and the fire department would avoid the level of activity associated with converting the fire department's current operations to accommodate county-wide emergency medical

transport. At issue is how the county would use the \$30 million per year to be put up by AMR and whether all of that money, or at least a substantial amount of it, will be routed to the fire department to augment current operations within it.

To ascertain the authenticity of these reports, the *Sentinel* went directly to Hartwig, who said that it is inaccurate to state his department has made a formal bid on the emergency medical transport function for the county.

"We don't have a proposal," Hartwig told the *Sentinel*. "The current emergency medical services contract will be up soon and while they are negotiating an extension what I am attempting to find out is does it make sense for the fire district to bid on it. We are the second largest ambulance provider in the county. We run about 20 ambulances a day depending on time of year. It is not like we would be entering into a business with which we are not familiar. We will position ourselves so if the county chooses to put it out to bid, we can take a look to see if it makes sense for us to make a bid."

Whether his department would operate its ambulances in just unincorporated areas of

the county or whether it would cross over into covering areas that fall within the city limits of the county's 24 municipalities, Hartwig said, "all depends on how the bid is written. ICEMA would write it [the bidding parameters] and we would determine our interest based on what is in the bid, if in fact they put it out to bid. The board may just renegotiate it or continue the contract as it is."

Hartwig stopped far short of confirming that his department could generate \$50 million a year through the provision of ambulance service to paying customers.

"I'm not sure where you got those numbers," he said, adding that his department has yet to make a calculation to estimate the revenue that could be realized through taking on the emergency medical transport franchise. "To determine what revenue could be available would be a simple exercise where we would take our current transport fee, multiply it by the number of calls, multiplied by our collection rate and then subtract our costs. That is the way we would figure out how much net revenue would be available. At this point, I don't know if it makes

sense to bid. There is some federal finance participation (FFP) money available to us from Medicare for performing medical emergency transportation. Medicare has started to reimburse public agencies for certified public expenditures. If people are discussing large revenue figures, that is likely because there is new Medicare financing available to public agencies delivering healthcare and transport. Through the new program the fire department is collecting about \$800,000 per five thousand transports. County Fire has collected that revenue for the last three years. Once you figure out how many transports there are in the county and you determine what the reimbursement per transport is, then you can figure out how much all of this is worth."

Hartwig said he did not believe that as a potential competitor in the bid process the county fire department would have a leg up on any others bidding.

"I don't think it gives us any leverage," he said. "The county has the responsibility to provide ambulance service countywide except in those areas where prior to June 1, 1980 ambulance service was already being provided by

some other jurisdiction. In this county that means everywhere but Rialto and Hesperia."

Hartwig said he is giving careful consideration to his and his department's options, but said no decision or commitment has been made, primarily because he does not have all of the information required to make such a decision and it is not yet clear whether the county will put the ambulance franchise out to bid.

"If it is advantageous for the fire district and those that we serve, and bidding takes place, then absolutely, we would bid," he said. "We know what our costs are. We don't know what the revenue, or potential revenue, is. It is safe to say county fire is in a holding pattern until we find out what ICEMA and the county board of supervisors will do. County Fire is the second largest provider of medical transportation in the county. The county is the largest provider of pre-hospital care in San Bernardino County. If we could streamline the service and provide a revenue stream, reduce the costs for the users of medical service and provide better service for the taxpayers, sure, we would be interested on bidding."

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Glimpse from page 3

Arrow weed was used for the roof thatch, and over this a covering of river mud was added. Some of the houses were called mud and wattle houses because the walls

smoke hole, the door was the only opening. Most of the fires for cooking were built outside of the houses. The people spent most of their lives outdoors or in the shade of their ramadas.”

Having different



Gerald A. Smith published the above photograph in “The Mojaves” reprinted by the San Bernardino County Museum in 1971, with the caption “Mohave pole-and-mud house along the bank of the Colorado River. Smith credits the image to Museum of American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York.

made of logs and arrow weed, were filled solid with mud from the river

dwellings for winter and summer was not uncommon for the Mojave since



A Needles vicinity, arrowweed wattle and daub, rancheria type Mojave home with adjacent ramada. Please help identify the gentleman on the left. Photo copyright by Ruth Musser

sands. The houses were constructed on sandy soil and were from twenty to thirty feet square. The roof was very strong, and the Indians spent much time on top of the houses. There were no windows, and, with the exception of the

seasonal flooding of the Colorado River forced evacuation of the river bottom farm land. For insulation and warmth, the winter house was made by excavating soil a few feet deep and building a cottonwood pole beam frame with

arrowweed wattle and daub walls, and a roof of arrowweed thatch as Smith described above.

The Tryons large three story dwelling is also partially subterranean but apparently they did not take a lesson from the Mojaves and instead built a winter style home on the Colorado River floodplain. According to a 1981 account published in the Needles Desert Star, when the Medleys owned the property dur-



Modernized with window openings, a ghostly pole frame with arrowweed wattle and daub walled house could still be found in the Needles area, at Snider Ranch (near where the Avi Casino is today) circa 1983 when this image was photographed by Ruth Musser with Bob Lopez. We got married the next year, 1984. Thirty years later, we recovered this photo from our file for this story. Upon seeing it my husband, Bob, sadly announced, “It’s gone now—maybe burned. Photo Copyright by Ruth Musser

ing the period of 1947 through 1951 it was reported that the basement was often unusable due to frequent flooding. Davis Dam was completed in 1951 creating Lake Mohave and channeling the Colorado River through the Mohave Valley at the east perimeter of Needles, thus controlling the river flow and for the most part eliminating floods.

Smith asserts that several families, ten to thirty individuals, could live together in an arrowweed winter house. If someone died during

the winter in the house, it might be burned down along with the individual’s personal property. In the summer, people moved to be close to their farm lands on the river bottom where crude sheds were erected to provide protection from the sun while tending the crops.

The “pole and mud” or “wattle and daub” technology using arrowweed was still alive and well at the turn of the

reckless period in the wild west. The gold mines at Oatman were performing at full blast and Needles was, at the time, a hub of gold mining activity servicing Oatman and was also the center of transportation across the desert and up and down the river. During the prohibition and the “roaring 20s” Needles became what could be called “bootlegging central” as well, with whiskey stills and hide outs at surrounding springs. Evidence of an underground tunnel, now collapsed, has been reported which obscure thoroughfare is said to have once connected the Tryon basement with the business district around the railroad depot and is said to have been used to make unnoticed approaches and quick escapes to and from a reported brothel and whiskey supply. After World War II, the Tryons apparently moved on, reportedly selling the house and property to the Medley Family. The property changed hands numerous time over the years that followed.

It is unknown exactly when the plaster was applied to the arrowweed wattle—but sometime before 1963 when a new owner painted it and installed a tin roof. The structure has had a coat of green paint at least since 1980 when I moved to Needles and it has over the years become locally referred to as “The Big Green House.”

In the early 1980s there was an attempt to

commercialize it, and a new owner turned the first floor into a clothing apparel shop, “Clouds of Clothes,” with plans to open a bar and restaurant later. New windows, floors and woodwork were to have been installed, but the enterprise was short lived. During the 1980s, new markets were booming on the Arizona side of the river where sales tax isn’t as high, thus out competing markets on the California side. That pattern has continued even into the present day.

The “Big Green House” property, a block away from historic



Arrowweed growing along the banks of the lower Colorado River today.

Route 66, continued to change hands with the latest transaction being a sale by Anthony “Tony” Frazier, a Needles city council member, to the new proud owner, Mayor of Needles, Dr. Edward “Ed” Paget and his wife Jan. Believe it or not, it may be safe to say that the beloved doctor-mayor, who has been actively looking to develop roadside attractions in Needles along Route 66, now owns what may become the biggest tourist attraction in Needles of all: “The arrowweed ghost brothel and secret tunnel.”




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## County Passes \$4.8 Billion 2014-15 Budget Amid State Cutbacks & Union Concessions

The board of supervisors on June 17 unanimously adopted a \$4.8 billion balanced budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year that begins on July 1.

"The budget is geared toward achieving the Countywide Vision, while reflecting the county's ongoing struggle to cope with a deep economic downturn and dramatic and continuing increases in pension liabilities," said county spokesman David Wert.

The coming year's budget is \$165.2 million smaller than the current budget and closes a \$21 million gap between projected ongoing revenues and expenses without using reserves to cover

ongoing expenses. The gap was fueled primarily by \$12 million in federal and state takeaways and the need to come up with \$9.7 million to cover the costs of AB 109 state prison realignment.

The budget fills the gap mainly through anticipated concessions from labor union members. Those concessions consisted of union members agreeing to pick up 7 percent of their retirement previously paid by the county, as well as accepting up to a 50 percent reduction in annual promotional increases.

"If for any reason those concessions do not materialize, the only alternative will be to make deep and drastic cuts to

other county programs," Wert said.

County Chief Executive Officer Greg Devereaux described his staff's effort to bring the Board a responsibly balanced budget as "two steps forward, one and a half steps back."

At the board of supervisors meeting at which the budget was ratified, Devereaux said, "Our employee groups to date, other than one exception, have all have ceded to that request and have entered into contracts. They helped maintain the services levels in this county from dropping to the point where we thought they would have jeopardized our underlying economy."

The San Bernardino Public Employees Association, which represents 12,000 county employees, on May 29 tallied its members' votes with regard to a contract previously submitted to the association by Devereaux. That contract at that point failed to gain ratification. Two days after the board's vote to approve the budget, five association bargaining units approved Devereaux's latest contract offer. One unit, the Professional Unit, rejected the contract.

The association vote came during a period of unrest and agitation by the Service Employees International Union Local 721, which is seek-

ing to decertify the San Bernardino Public Employees Association as the union representing San Bernardino County employees.

Wert said of the budget passed this week, "The economy has improved and revenues are slowly on the rise. However, it will take the county several more years to recover from the recession, which put the county behind in funding infrastructure, pensions, and basic services."

Wert said the economic downturn forced the county to make 47-percent cuts in non-public safety services such as parks, museums, and Registrar of Voters;

get many employees to agree to forgo raises and fund their share of retirement contributions; and eliminate funding for community projects.

Wert said some needs have gone unmet, including jail staffing, adequate law enforcement patrol and Code Enforcement in unincorporated areas, roads and other needed infrastructure, and funding for worn out vehicles and other equipment.

The budget leaves 84 percent of the recently built 1,392 High Desert Detention Center expansion unstaffed and unused. The county did set aside \$11.5 million for maintaining 222 beds at

*Continued on Page 12*

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**Reducing Class  
Size In Chino  
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*from front page*

Accountability Plan for so-called instructional coaches whose assignments would have involved mentoring teachers in the best methods to reach students with limited English skills.

The proposed overall budget for meeting instructional and performance mandates imposed by the state through the implementation of Chino Valley's Local Control Accountability Plan is \$26 million. Intrinsic

to the plan is how the district will deal with students facing atypical academic challenges either because of language or social barriers, such as low family income or placement into guardianships or foster homes. The action plan is in the final stages of the draft process, and has been met with some level of resistance by various stakeholders, including some teachers and some parents. Some had suggested that the entire plan be scrapped and redrafted from scratch.

Andrew Cruz ap-

peared to be the school board member most supportive of those questioning the wisdom of the Local Control Accountability Plan as previously drafted.

At last week's meeting at Woodcrest Junior High in Ontario, the school board stopped short of throwing the entire Local Control Accountability Plan out wholesale, but acknowledged the suggestions of some of the more than 700 district parents, more than 600 teachers and over 30 students made both verbally and in writing had not been fully as-

simulated into the plan.

An agreement to revamp the plan to eliminate the reliance upon instructional coaches

in favor of reducing class size by upping the ratio of teachers to students was enunciated, with what district

officials hope will be a final draft of the plan ready for approval by the district board's June 26 meeting.

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**Takata Takes Helm  
In 29 Palms** *from front page*

niversary with the city. He too was given one year's worth of pay to depart, so he was in effect paid with three years' salary for two years of work.

Takata is to relieve

finance officer Ron Peck, who has been serving as acting city manager since Guzzetta was fired.

No commitment to Takata was made beyond having him in place as temporary city manager who will work at least 20 hours per week was made,

and it is not known whether he will be in the running to compete among those candidates being considered for the full-time city manager's post. That selection process could take up to six months.

Takata was with Yucca Valley from 2004 to 2010, and

Banning from 2010 until February. He has been in Calexico since last month. Two weeks ago, the Calexico City Council voted to extend Takata's contract as interim city manager there, staking him to a six month contract running until November 30. Reached

at Calexico City Hall on June 16, however, Takata told the *Sentinel*, "I never signed the contract. I am just on a short term assignment here and I leave Thursday [June 19]."

Takata said he is situated to be able to fill the Twentynine Palms position relatively eas-

ily. "I live in Banning and I have a house in Yucca Valley," he said.

Takata said he will "work forty hours a week until I get up to speed and then probably 20 hours a week after that."



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# San Bernardino County Coroner Reports

Coroner Case #701404575 - On 06/15/2014 at 2:35AM, dispatch received a 911 call regarding an individual walking on the train tracks. The caller believed the individual was struck by the train. Officers responded and Jose Octavio Espiritu a 16 year old resident of Barstow was found deceased near the tracks. Railroad police and the San Bernardino County Sheriff departments are also investigating the incident. An autopsy is pending. [06162014 1045 JK]

Coroner Case #701404591 - Back on 06/11/14 at about 4:54 PM, Robert Dale Brown, an 81 year-old resident of Fontana, was travelling eastbound in the 17200 block of Marygold Ave. in Fontana in his Dodge 2500. For unknown reasons, Brown lost control of the vehicle, struck a parked vehicle and then struck a wall in that neighborhood. He was transported to the Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Fontana for treatment. On 06/15/14 at 6:50 PM, Brown succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced dead. The Fontana Police Department, Major Accident Investigation Team is investigating the collision.

Coroner Case #701404561 - At 10:05 PM on 06/13/2014, San Bernardino police officers were called to the 900 block of 2nd St., in San Bernardino. Police and paramedics arrived to find Cathy Silvey, a 29 year old resident of San Bernardino dead at the scene. The incident is also under investigation by San Bernardino Police Department Homicide Detail. An autopsy is pending. [061414 1500 JK]

Coroner Case #701404553 - At approximately 11:15 AM on 06/09/2014, The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department deputies responded to 911 calls of an aircraft down at The El Mirage Dry Lake recreation area. When rescue personnel arrived on scene, they found Sebastian Grewal, an 8 year-old resident of Frasier Park, CA, with trauma to the head and upper body. Grewal who had been a passenger in the aircraft, was transported to Loma Linda University Medical Center via air ambulance. On 06/13/2014, Grewal died from injuries sustained in the crash. The San Bernardino County Sheriff Department and the National Transportation Safety Board are also investigating the accident. [061414 1500 JK]

Coroner Cases #701404523 & #701404524-- On 06/12/2014 at approximately 4:50 p.m. Ontario Police Officers responded to the 900 block of North Duesenberg Drive for a possible apartment burglary in progress. While at the location, officers learned of possible shots heard in the area. Officers located 40 year old Rialto resident Jose Rodriguez, an apartment maintenance worker, with upper body trauma and he was pronounced at the scene. 57 year old Gary Bell of Ontario was located on another floor of the complex with upper body trauma and also pronounced dead at the scene. Ontario Police Department is investigating this incident. [061314 1341 SY]

Coroner case #701404493 - On 06/11/2014 at about 12:30 p.m. deputies from the Victorville Police responded to a report of a shooting at a residence in the 16000 block of Desert Sand Road. Deputies arrived and found Gloria Guzman, a 17 year old resident of Victorville, had been transported to an area hospital by family members. Guzman was pronounced dead at 2:00 p.m. The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Homicide Detail is investigating this incident. [061214 1514 SY]

Coroner case #701404447 - On 06/10/2014 at 7:44 A.M., Colton Police Department received a call for a man with a gun. Officers arrived at the 2300 block of Steel Road and contacted Michael V. Gutierrez, a 31 year old male resident of Southgate. An officer-involved shooting occurred. Gutierrez was pronounced dead at the scene. San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Homicide Division is investigating the incident. [061214 1128 SY]

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### Gooch Seeks Re-count

*from front page* spite that, two years ago the seat was captured by Republican Gary Miller, who won after he and another Republican, Bob Dutton, captured the most and second most votes in the primary. They bested four Democrats in that race, including Aguilar, the mayor of Redlands. In this year's primary race, four Democrats and three Republicans competed.

Gooch, who was a staffer in Miller's office, was endorsed by him, the Redlands Tea Party Patriots and the San Bernardino County Republican Central Committee. Despite Republican hopes that she and Chabot could capture the two top spots in the race and perpetuate the GOP's hold on the 31st District despite the Democratic registration advantage, the early unofficial, late unofficial and certified official election results showed her close but yet behind Aguilar.

Gooch was damaged by a vitriolic campaign against her that was waged by Chabot, a ploy which steered the lion's share of the district's Republican vote his way but ultimately had the effect of allowing Aguilar to capture second.

Among those indicating the Gooch campaign would seek a recount were Tea Party activist and Gooch supporter John Berry and Gooch's campaign manager Jeff Stinson.

An analysis of the results in several of the district's precincts reflected voting patterns that were at odds with the Gooch campaign's expectations given the demographic and historic voting patterns there. The recount, which will be paid for by the Gooch campaign, will begin with and concentrate on those suspect precincts. If significant shifting of the counts take place in those precincts, the recount will be widened.

A recount is permitted under state law. Nevertheless, the posted certified results are now considered final and can only be overturned by a certification of different numbers reflecting a different result as a consequence of the recount. That recount will be done manually.

San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters Michael Scarpello and his staff already performed a one percent manual audit of all of the county's election results, finding that all results were verified.

By Diane Dragotto Williams

With striking jet-black upperparts and throat, the Spotted Towhee makes a color



statement as it inhabits open, shrubby, thick undergrowth in forest edges, and overgrown fields. Normal habitat is dry thickets, brushy tangles, chaparral, canyon bottoms, and even shrubby backyards. Actually a large sparrow with a thick, pointed bill, their flight wings are spotted and striped with brilliant white, and white bellies. Their warm rufous flanks match the dry leaves they spend their time hopping around in leaf litter. Females have the same pattern, but are warm brown where males are black. In flight, white corners flash on their black tail. Juveniles are brown with two white wing bars and darker brown streaking on the upperparts and underparts.

Pacific Coast birds deliver a fast or slow trilling song, and a whiny, cat-like mew call that is a slurred nasal "guee". In the spring, males climb into the shrub tops, and elevated perches to sing their buzzy songs. Early in the season, males spend their mornings singing their hearts out,

trying to attract a mate. Male towhees have been recorded spending 70 to 90 percent of their mornings singing. Almost as soon as they attract a mate, their attention shifts to other things, and they spend only about 5 percent of their time singing.

Spotted Towhees use a two-footed, backwards-scratching hop called "double-scratching" looking for food, then they pounce on anything they've uncov-



Photo by Beedie Savage

ered. They also climb into lower branches to search for insects and fruits. During conflicts between two towhees, you may see one bird pick up a piece of twig, bark, or leaf and carry it around as an indication of submission. Disturbed or alarm-calling towhees flick their wings while perched, sometimes flashing the white corners in the tail. Towhees can fly long distances, but more often make short, slow flights between patches of cover.

In the breeding season, Spotted Towhees eat

mainly insects including ground beetles, weevils, ladybugs, darkling beetles, click beetles, wood-boring beetles, crickets, grasshoppers, caterpillars, moths, bees, and wasps. Arthropods such as millipedes, sowbugs, and spiders are also eaten, and even small lizards and snakes. In fall and winter, they eat acorns, berries, and seeds including buckwheat, thistle, raspberry, blackberry, poison oak, sumac, nightshade,

clump of grass, a log, or the base of a shrub



to conceal their nests against. The female builds the nest beginning with a framework of dry leaves, stems, and bark strips. She lines this with an inner cup of fine, dry materials such as grasses, rootlets, pine needles, and hair. The finished nest is about 4 inches across, with an inner cup of about 2 inches across and about 2 and a half inches deep. Ground nests are built into depressions so that the nest rim is at the soil surface or only slightly above it. But occasionally nests can be built up to 12 feet high in a tree. But the most unusual behavior of this bird is when females divert predators by scurrying from the nest in the manner of a small rodent to distract an intruder!



brown or creamy white, with flecks and dots of purple, red-brown or gray. Towhees often choose fairly exposed areas over sites deep inside a thicket, but within these areas they find a

*Wildhaven Ranch is a wildlife sanctuary in Cedar Glen that gives programs to the public by appointments only. Bears, Bobcat, Coyotes, Deer, Eagles, Falcon, Hawk, Owl and Raccoons are seen "up close and personal" in guided tours. For reservations, call (909) 337-7389.*

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# California Style Peacock Revolution

By Grace Bernal

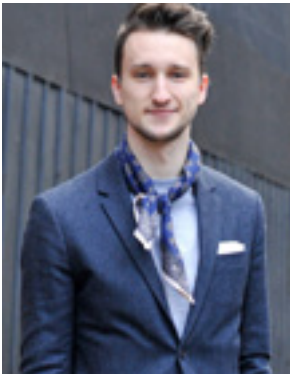
It is time to strut in hot summer San Bernardino County. The gals are in their Maxi dresses and long skirts and are looking good as they soak up the sun in swimsuits and hats. But, unless I



tailored clothes. Check out Saks Fifth Avenue's men's wear section. All the details are there and it looks phenomenal on the streets.

am mistaken I think the first regimen is the new peacock revolution in men's clothing. After decades, man does it again. It's the new generation, of course, bringing in details and splendor with

Also check out against-nature.com. It's tailored for a whole new generation of men. Men are the ringleaders and Dominic Spanno is the man that began it all. He is still tailored and looks



sharp and old enough for the young. The ties that men are wearing

are refreshingly hot, too and why not? It's summer! Whatever summer brings, it's marvelous to see what's happening in men's wear. Thank you to the men who continue to dare greatly in this fashion revolution.



*"Dress up your sportswear and dress down your formal wear."*  
- Luciano Barbera

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## County Passes Budget from page 8

the jail, while deferring full staffing at the facility until 2019. The High Desert Detention Center will accept the major brunt of the impact of

the state's prison realignment, which has rerouted thousands of what would otherwise have been prison-bound inmates into county jails "Ideally, we would have been staffing that jail today. We need those

jail cells today," Devereaux said. In addition, there are \$117.1 million in county assets, including vehicles, computers, and machinery that are now beyond their useful life and there is no funding

to replace them. The county did a severe round of belt-tightening, consisting of a 50 percent cut to all non-public safety general fund departments and elimination of funding for community projects. The budget manages to build up county reserves, but reserves will only be at 13.8 percent, which is well below the 20 percent mandated by county policy. Healthy reserves are essential to maintain the county's

good credit rating and are necessary to fund large projects and to cover unexpected expenses. "When we have an earthquake we will need this pot of money available," Devereaux said.

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