

Bassett Apparently Felled AT FUSD By Vicious Political Crosscurrents

By Mark Gutglueck

It appears that Superintendent Randal Bassett is on the outs with the Fontana Unified School District and its board after nearly five-and-a-half years in the district's top administrative spot.

Officially, the district is maintaining that Bassett is yet in place. But Bassett, who normally occupied a prominent spot on the board dais during public meetings and served as the host and face of the district



Randal Bassett

under normal circumstances, was absent from a marathon board meeting that began on Wednesday night but stretched into

the wee hours of Thursday morning as the board deliberated in an extended closed session with regard to the termination of an undisclosed district employee. Upon the board adjourning back into open session after the executive session that was conducted outside the sight or hearing of the public, Bassett had been replaced by the district's superintendent of business services, Ryan DiGiulio. As of Thursday and extending until Fri-

day, June 8, Bassett was not functioning from his office at district headquarters.

No fewer than three district staff members, one of whom functions at the highest level, insisted to the *Sentinel* that Bassett is no longer running the district. Bassett was ironically felled, the *Sentinel* was told, by his own efforts over a period of half of a decade in which he slavishly worked to please multiple masters.

In the end, bitter, sharper and deepening political divides between those masters, including an ultimate master to whom Bassett did not officially answer but whom he dared not disappoint – Fontana Mayor Acquanetta Warren – led to Bassett's demise.

Bassett's ascendancy to the superintendent's post was an outgrowth of the Warren political machine's once-ironclad grip on the district. His descent was paralleled

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55 Municipal Posts Up For Election In November Race

In November, 63 municipal posts throughout San Bernardino County will be up for election.

One of those positions, a council seat in Victorville, is not currently occupied. There are two existing and filled positions on the Colton City Council which are to be consolidated into two others on that panel following the November election and will thereafter cease to exist, as the Colton City Council, which now stands at six council members and the city's mayor, will be reduced to four council members and the mayor.

While a handful of incumbents countywide will probably not seek reelection, it is anticipated that the vast majority of those in office who must stand for reelection to retain their positions will do so. With the exceptions of Wade Evans, who was appointed last year to the Needles City Council to succeed Tim Terral; Perri Melnick, who was appointed to the Big Bear Lake City Council in July 2021 to replace Mayor David Caretto; Keron Jones, who was appointed to the Adelanto City Council in June 2021 to replace Gerry Hernandez; Walt Pocock, who was appointed to the Chino City Council in May 2021 to replace Mark Hargrove; Karla Perez who replaced Joe Baca Jr. on the Rialto City Council in 2020 after he was elected to the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors; Corysa Martinez, who was appointed to replace her late mother Trisha Martinez on the Montclair City Council in November 2019; and Brigit Bennington who was appointed in October 2019 to succeed her political rival Jeremiah Brosowski after he was removed from office, those who must face the electorate this year were elected or reelected to the office they hold in the November 2018 election.

In Chino Hills, See P 3

Gómez Reyes Pulls Plug On Legislation To Regulate Warehouse Development

Assemblywoman Eloise Gómez Reyes' legislative effort to regulate warehouse development locally has stalled out.

Assembly Bill 2840, which was authored by Gómez Reyes (Democrat-47th District) will not be considered in this year's legislative session because of what those opposed to it said were uneven elements in its makeup.

Gómez Reyes said she had elected to withhold the bill at this time because of "concerns around maintaining the integrity of the bill after committee-proposed amendments."

Gómez Reyes, the Assembly majority leader, introduced AB 2840 in March. If passed in its original form, it would have required local governments, when approv-

ing new logistics projects of 100,000 square feet or more, to impose a 1,000-foot buffer between those projects and homes, schools, health care centers, playgrounds and other places especially at risk from air pollution bound diesel trucks.

AB 2840 would also have required a "skilled and trained workforce," as defined by the state

Public Contract Code, to build warehouses. The bill also called for "local residents" to be entitled to a set percentage of jobs once the warehouse opens.

The California Chamber of Commerce and the Fontana Chamber of Commerce opposed the bill.

AB 284 "exacerbates California's existing supply chain problems,"

Adam Regele, CalChamber senior policy advocate, said publicly.

The bill ignored "California's robust environmental laws and regulations which already redress and fully mitigate all significant impacts from warehouse development," Regele said. California and Southern California in particular, Regele insisted, "need more ware-

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Third & Fourth Most Prolific County Trash Haulers Change Positions With Chino Hills Franchise Shift

With the advent of July, Waste Management Inc. is coming in to establish itself as Chino Hills' franchised trash hauler, displacing Republic Services, which was formerly known as Taormina Industries.

The changeover from Republic represents by some estimations a healthy realignment in the complicated dynamic and balancing of

influence related to refuse handling in what is the largest county geographically in the United States, involving a business that traditionally throughout the United States is intertwined with the mob, gangsters and racketeers.

At the same time, there is concern that the city evinced favoritism in awarding the franchise, which went to a

service provider with a demonstrated history of using questionable methods, including bribery and intimidation, to advance its standing in the industry.

San Bernardino County has for the most part managed to sidestep some of the worst elements of underworld culture that coexist with many of the companies that dispose of

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Hawk Previously Unseen In Joshua Tree National Park Now There

A zone-tailed hawk was observed for the first time in Joshua Tree National Park in May.

The zone-tailed hawk, known by its scientific name, *Buteo albonotatus*, is a medium-sized hawk native to deserts and other warm and dry areas of the Americas. A sleek raptor that can be found year-round in various regions of South America and in the U.S. during the spring

and summer, the zone-tailed hawk is visually similar to the turkey vulture, which in the United States is a common scavenger.

Because its plumage, flight style and broad black wingspan resemble that of the turkey vulture, it sometimes blends into groups of vultures. Unlike the turkey vulture, which does not actively hunt live prey

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Barstow's Once-Quaint But Deteriorated El Rancho Motel Lost In Suspicious Fire

The once quaint but more recently significantly delapidated historic El Rancho Motel in Barstow was largely destroyed in what officials say was a suspicious fire on Tuesday, July 5.

The Barstow Fire Department raced to the scene at 112 East Main Street around 9:35 p.m. and was later joined by units with Fort Irwin Fire

Corps and the Victorville Fire Department. Concerted efforts to douse the flames were made. The fire raged for a good 50 minutes after the arrival of the first responding engine to the three-alarm fire. The conflagration was eventually knocked down, but not before nearly three-fourths of the rooms at the motel were fully engulfed and de-

stroyed.

There was no immediate indication that the fire was deliberately set, but arson investigators have been combing the wreckage, searching for clues. The circumstances leading up to the fire might suggest that the motel's ownership, based on the deeply troubled nature of the operation and the issues that complicated the

prospect for the motel to again become a profitable concern, had reason to see El Rancho destroyed.

The 75-year-old motel, which was built by Cliff Chase in 1947, was constructed in part with wooden railroad ties from the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad, which gave the place an old-fashioned but pleasant appearance when it was new. The railroad

ties served as something of a tribute to Barstow's historic role as a major railroad town in California in the late 1800s. Later, Barstow was a significant outpost on the National Trails Highway, and then an important stop along Route 66 when it was established in 1926.

While not built to the same standard as many luxurious hotels

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After Years Of Complying With Directives From The Warren Political Machine, Bassett Seems To Have Reached The End Of The Line With FUSD Board *from front page*

by the waning control Fontana City Hall, which is yet dominated by Warren, now exercises at the district. Nevertheless, Warren still exercises control over two-fifths of the school board. It appears that as the power struggle between the city's divergent political factions intensified, an atmosphere evolved in which Bassett's continuing tenure as superintendent is no longer viable. As the factions never allied with Warren are now examining the action the district took under Bassett's administration that were forced upon him by the Warren team's previous command over the district, Bassett now finds himself scapegoated for those policies that are no longer operative.

Bassett is not an academic but rather a technocrat. After completing college more than 27 years ago, he went into the education field not as an educator but as someone who handled the nuts and bolts of running an organization on the business side, handling issues relating to finance and communications technology.

In 2016, he went to work with the Fontana School District, initially as a functionary in the realm of business services and technology. He steadily moved up the managerial ranks to become the associate superintendent of business services and the district's chief technology officer.

Meanwhile, Warren, who had a degree in political science and was employed with City of Upland, in 2002 was appointed to a position on the Fontana City Council to fill out the two years remaining on Councilman Mark Nuami's term as councilman when he was elected mayor that year. Running as an incumbent, Warren won election to the council in her own right in 2004 and then re-

election in 2008. In 2010, Warren vied successfully for mayor, assembling relatively quickly thereafter a ruling coalition on the city council which solidified the power of her political machine. At once, the Warren Machine expanded its effort to control all political issues in Fontana and become a conspicuous wedge of influence over business and other community institutions, not the least of which was the Fontana Unified School District.

Despite Fontana having a demographic profile that strongly, on paper, favored Democrats, Warren, a committed Republican, worked with her party as well as with members of the construction and development industry to cultivate financial resources in the form of political contributions which she utilized to thwart the political ascendancy of strong Democratic candidates in the Fontana community while simultaneously pushing the candidacies of her fellow Republicans. Where established Democrats succeeded in Fontana, Warren on occasion sought to befriend them, in some cases by providing electioneering funds to keep them in office and thereby try to co-opt them. In some cases, this worked. Despite the fact that under California's election code, local races are considered nonpartisan, in San Bernardino County, all political races are strongly influenced by party politics. Ultimately, despite demographics that should have favored the Democrats, Warren's political skill allowed her to establish ruling coalitions on the city council. Beginning early on, Warren worked to establish a 3-to-2 majority of Republicans over Democrats on the city council and by 2018, three of her four colleagues on the council were members of the GOP, such that including her vote the Republicans had a 4-to-1 majority in Fontana, despite the fact that 53,886 of the city's 108,380 voters, or 49.7 percent, are registered as Democrats while 21,854 or 20.2 percent are registered Republicans, which is less than the 25,006 or 23.1 percent who express no party preference. The remaining 7 percent of the

city's voters are members of more obscure political parties. Despite there being nearly two-and-a-half Democrats for every Republican in Fontana, under Warren's leadership, 80 percent of the city council is Republican.

Warren sought and succeeded in asserting dominance over the school board. In 2012, during her second year as mayor, Warren surveyed the city's political landscape, seeking vulnerabilities in the Democratic ranks. At that point, she set her sights on two of the members of Fontana's Democratic leadership, those being school board members Leticia Garcia and Sophia Green. A recall effort against the two was initiated in July 2012, culminating in the successful recall of both on July 16, 2013.

From that point forward, Warren asserted tremendous influence over the school district. For Warren supporters, the mayor's efforts were seen as a benign influence, one that sought to establish traditional Republican values in the community's primary educational institution. Others, however, questioned Warren's true motivation, believing she had ulterior motives. Some alleged she was using the school board as a recruiting ground for politicians who would adhere to her policy and philosophy dictates. Others believed she was misusing her influence to intensify what was an already-established aggressive development policy in the city. The district over the decades had accumulated substantial property, upon which 30 elementary schools, seven middle schools/junior highs, five high schools, two alternative high schools and a single adult high school had located their campuses. In addition to those campuses, the district had other properties for housing equipment and where potential future campuses might be located. According to her critics, Warren had designs on some of those properties, which she wanted the district to declare as surplus and sell off to her political supporters who were looking to snatch it up at a rock-bottom price and develop it, in many cases as warehouses, at a

handsome profit. To those critics, Warren was working at cross purposes to the best interest of the community. At some future date, they predicted, the school district would have need of that property to construct more schools. But by the district selling that property, the opportunity to put that land to a beneficial educational use was being lost, they said, and carried with it the further disadvantage that the district would have to pay a substantial amount of money in the future to purchase property, at an escalated and inflated cost, to obtain land for those future campuses. In this way, Warren's detractors said, she betrayed herself as being more dedicated to helping those bankrolling her political career by pouring money into her political coffers than the residents she was elected to represent.

One of Warren's political associates was Jesse Armendarez, a successful real estate broker, who like Warren was a Republican. Armendarez was not reluctant to donate money to Republican candidates, such as Warren, and Republican causes. It turned out that Armendarez had political ambition of his own. Warren took Armendarez under her wing, serving as something of a political mentor to him. With Warren's assistance, Armendarez was elected to the Fontana Unified School Board in November 2014. Two years later, again with Warren's assistance, Armendarez successfully vied for the Fontana City Council.

Notably, however, upon being sworn into office as a member of the city council in December 2016, a month after his electoral victory, Armendarez, in seeming defiance of not only tradition and standard political protocol but California law as well, refused to resign from his position on the school board, seeking to serve in both posts. Under the doctrine of incompatibility of offices, Armendarez was entitled to serve either as a member of the Fontana City Council or as a member of the Fontana Unified School District board, but he could not hold both positions simultaneously. Nevertheless, that is what

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he did in December 2016 and then into January 2017.

In 2013, then-Superintendent Cali Olsen-Binks had departed to serve as the superintendent in the Yucaipa-Calimesa School District and was replaced in November 2013 by Dr. Leslie Boozer. Boozer, however, departed in July 2016 to take on the superintendent's position in the Northern Central California community of Dublin.

Upon Boozer's departure, the school board had promoted Bassett into the position of interim superintendent while the district contracted with the Cosca Group to undertake a search/recruitment for Boozer's replacement. Relatively soon after Bassett had moved into the acting superintendent's role, Warren satisfied herself that he would make a suitable superintendent and that he would prove amenable to her dictates. The Cosca Group, however, was being methodical in its recruitment, interviewing and vetting of candidates, and would not allow itself to be stampeded into making an early recommendation. By the time the Cosca Group had completed its rankings and recommendations of those competing for the position, which included Bassett, the 2016 election season had unfolded and proceeded to its conclusion. It was not until December 14, 2016, which was the day after Armendarez's December 13 swearing in as city councilman, that the Cosca Group presented its findings to the school board. It had been both Warren's and Armendarez's hope that the board would be able to come to a quick

agreement, based upon the rankings of the candidates presented by the Cosca Group, to hire Bassett as the district's full-fledged superintendent. While there was a general impression that Bassett was a good fit or perhaps, given his lengthy history with the district and his institutional knowledge, the best fit for the district, the board held off on making the appointment that night, primarily because the agenda for that meeting did not clearly specify that a hiring decision was to be made during the course of the meeting, and appointing anyone as superintendent on the spot could be construed as a violation of the Ralph M. Brown Act, California's open public meeting law. Instead, the district scheduled a hearing to decide on whether the board should ratify an employment contract with Bassett for its meeting on January 18, 2017.

So intent was Warren that Bassett should be hired as the superintendent that she was not willing to risk Armendarez resigning from the school board at that point, which would have reduced the school board to four members, thus creating a possibility that Bassett might not be confirmed as superintendent. Armendarez, having already taken up a position on the Fontana City Council, asserted that California did not clearly designate being a council member and a school board member in overlapping jurisdictions as incompatible. He carried on as if he could remain as a member of the school board.

What Armendarez was

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Burro Population In Reche And San Timoteo Canyons Threatened By Equine Virus

An untold number of burros in the Reche Canyon Area stretching between San Bernardino County and Riverside County have contracted a respiratory illness believed to be equine influenza that is decimating their population.

For years, the burros have lived at large in the wildland foothills stretching from Reche Canyon in Colton over to San Timoteo Can-

yon in south Redlands and ultimately meeting up with Moreno Valley in Riverside County and the area near Box Springs Mountain and along Pigeon Pass Road. Residents have tolerated them, though they on occasion have gone into the roadway, where they represent a traffic hazard. Scores of the donkeys have been killed over the years when struck by vehicles. On the River-

side County side of the divide, DonkeyLand, a nearly 2,000-acre sanctuary and rescue center manned by volunteers has offered care for the beasts.

There was an outbreak of equine influenza in the area in and around Reche Canyon, Box Springs Mountain and Pigeon Pass Road earlier this year.

In June, there was what was believed to be another outbreak of the

disease.

“Several herds in different jurisdictions have been dropping dead without any time to help save them,” a posting on the DonkeyLand website states. “Their symptoms have all been the same, from foaming or bubbles from the mouth, dripping noses, coughing or showing severe symptoms of heavy labored breathing. DonkeyLand has two deceased wild burros be-

ing tested. Preliminary findings are suggestive of equine influenza, [with] more testing for confirmation to follow as we wait for the final report and we will keep you posted.”

The posting continues, “In the meantime, please take protective measures. Remember the wild burros have water sources and natural springs in the hills. We ask everyone to please contact your local ani-

mal control if you find a sick burro, as well as if you find a deceased body. They will tag it and have the body removal service immediately pick it up. It is very important to have these bodies removed as soon as possible to prevent spreading disease to any healthy animal eating the carcass. This is a public health risk and risk of serious outbreak.”

-M.G.

Trash Haulers Have Captured Municipal Franchises In Part Through Purchasing Influence With City Officials *from front page*

domestic, commercial and industrial trash, and tales of bodies ending up in the waste stream buried in the region's landfills are relatively rare. There have been along the way, nevertheless, efforts at influencing politicians and government

officials in illicit ways that reflect poorly on the trash hauling industry, certain companies, the politicians who are in their pockets and the politicians who are not taking bribes but tolerate their colleagues who do. In January, Republic Industries, the nation's third largest trash hauler, suffered what in the overall scheme of things was a minor setback for it when the city elected to terminate the franchise arrangement with the company as of June 30. Had it kept

the contract with Chino Hills, San Bernardino County's ninth largest city population-wise, Republic would have been able to continue its claim as a major player in the county's garbage industry. When 2022 began, Republic had franchises with two of the county's 22 cities – Chino Hills and Colton, and two unincorporated communities in the eastern Mojave Desert. The loss of the Chino Hills contract erodes Republic's standing and influence in San Bernardino County, per-

haps compromising its ability to expand its presence therein. At present its trash hauling services in San Bernardino County extend only to the aforementioned Colton and along the Colorado River and Vidal Junction.

Capturing the Chino Hills franchise represented a coup for Waste Management, Inc, which is the largest and by some accounts the most politically connected of all trash companies in the United States.

At one point, some

three decades ago, Waste Management had a larger presence and a far more significant position in San Bernardino County than it does at present. To some degree, it lost that vaunted advantage because of its use of heavy-handed tactics and efforts toward political influence that fell flat or were so patently obvious that the politicians company officials were seeking to influence could not comply with granting the company's requests because doing so would poison those

officials' reputations.

Waste Management has been the City of Chino's franchised hauler for more than four decades. Until 2001 it had the trash handling franchise in Upland, but lost that in a bidding competition with Burrtec Waste Industries. In the early to mid-1990s, Waste Management, in conjunction with the Santa Fe Railroad, was on a trajectory to land an exclusive right to excavate what was touted as the

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Elected Officials In 22 Of The County's 24 Municipalities To Stand For Election In November *from front page*

San Bernardino County's westernmost city, Ray Marquez in District 1, Peter Rogers in District 2 and Brian Johsz in District 4 must seek reelection or step down from the council in December.

In Chino Second District Councilman Walt Pockock and Third District Councilman Mark Lucio are up for election this year.

In Upland, Councilwoman Janice Elliott must run for reelection to remain as councilwoman in the Second District, Carlos Garcia must seek reelection to remain as the Third District councilman, and Rudy Zuniga must face the Fourth District's voters to extend his incumbency.

In Montclair, Mayor John Dutrey, Councilwoman Corrysa Martinez and Councilman Bill Ruh must face their city's voters to remain in office.

In Ontario, Mayor Paul Leon and Councilmen Alan Wapner and Jim Bowman, who were elected at large in

2018, must stand for reelection this year to remain on the council. While the city has signaled its intention to move to by-district elections, it will not be doing so until 2024. Consequently, the council contests in November will be the last such at-large elections in the city's 130-year history.

In Rancho Cucamonga, Mayor Lloyd Dennis Michael along with District 2 Councilwoman Kristine Scott and District 3 Councilman Ryan Hutchinson are standing for reelection this year.

In Fontana, Mayor Acquannetta Warren, District 1 Councilman Phil Cothran Jr. and District 4 Councilman John Roberts are slated for an electoral challenge this year.

In Adelanto, Mayor Gabriel Reyes and council members Steevonna Evans and Keron Jones are up for election.

In Rialto, incumbents Ed Scott and Karla Perez are due to run for election in November.

In Colton, the city's seven-member city council is set to contract to five members in this year's election, going from a council with members in district one through six and a mayor elected at large to a four-member coun-

cil with a mayor elected at large. That change was effectuated with the passage of Measure R in 2018.

To accommodate the changes made by Measure R, at Colton's November 2020 election Districts 3, 5 & 6 held contests, but for a two-year term only. Districts 1, 2 and 4 were not up for election in 2020.

Mayor Frank Navarro, who was elected in 2018, appears purposed to seek reelection.

David Toro who was elected to a four-year term in District 1 in 2018 and Earnest Cisneros, who was elected to a four-year term in District 2 in 2018, will need to run against one another and any other candidates who crop up this year in the new District 1 to remain on the council.

Councilmember Kenneth Koperski, who was elected to a two-year term in District 3 in 2020, must run for election in the newly drawn District 2 to remain on the council.

Fourth District Councilman Luis Gonzalez, who was elected to a four-year term in 2018, and Sixth District Councilman Isaac Suchil, who was re-elected to a two-year term in 2020, are running against one another

to represent the new District 3.

Councilman John Echevarria, who was elected to a two-year term in 2020, will need to run for election in the newly-created District 4 this year to remain on the city council.

In Grand Terrace, Mayor Darcy McNaboe and Councilman Doug Wilson and Councilman Jeff Allen are due to seek reelection.

In Hesperia, Second District Councilman Bill Holland, Third District Councilman Cameron Gregg and Fourth District Councilwoman/Mayor Brigit Bennington are scheduled to run for office once more.

In Victorville, Mayor Debra Jones will need to seek reelection this year if she is to remain on the council. She will be running in the city's newly formed District 2. The other member of the council who was elected in 2018 and would be up for election this year, Rita Ramirez, was removed from the city council last year by a majority of her colleagues on the basis that she was no longer living in the city. The remaining members of the council have been unable to agree upon appointing her replacement.

In Highland, the terms of District 2 Councilwoman Anaeli Solano and District 4 Councilman John Timmer are due to end later this year.

In Apple Valley, the at-large terms of Kari Leon, Scott Nassif and Curt Emick will end. The town is going to district elections beginning this year, by which a council representative for the newly-created Districts 3 and District 4 will be chosen and a mayor, elected at large, will be voted into office. In 2019, the council had created a district map with five districts. The changeover to four districts was made earlier this year. It has not been made clear how the map change will impact the eligibility of Leon, Nassif and Emick in this year's election.

In Redlands, Councilwoman Denise Davis in the city's District 1 and District 3 Councilman Paul Barich, who is currently serving as mayor, are up for reelection. A race will also be held in the city's Fifth District, where Paul Foster was reelected to the council four years ago. Foster resigned, effective early this year, and was replaced by Mick Gallagher. Gallagher has said he will not run to remain in office.

In Yucaipa, David Avila is scheduled to seek reelection in District 1 while Greg Bogh, who faced no opposition in District 2 in 2018, must seek reelection to remain on the council.

In Barstow, the terms of District 1 Councilman Tim Silva and District 2 Councilman James Noble will elapse this year.

In Big Bear Lake, Perri Melnick, Randall Putz and Rick Herrick are up for reelection.

In Yucca Valley, James Schooler in District 1 and Merl Abel in District 3 will need to get the endorsement of their constituents to remain on the town council.

In Twentynine Palms, Dan Mintz, the incumbent in District 3; Karmollette O'Gilvie, District 4's councilwoman; and McArthur Wright, the city's District 5 councilman, are due for reelection in November.

In Needles, Mayor Jeff Williams and Councilmen Ed Paget, Wade Evans and Zachary Longacre need to run for reelection to remain as members of the seven-member council of San Bernardino County's smallest and easternmost city.

-M.G.

Assemblywoman Gómez Reyes Withdraws Bill That Would Impose Further Warehouse Regulations *from front page*

houses to spur the economy and alleviate critical supply chain issues. Supply and distribution chains across California are a matter of vital statewide importance.”

Because of its placement on the route between the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and the rest of the country, which includes the 10 Freeway and the 215 Freeway as well as rail lines, the Inland Empire has seen a boom in the construction of warehouses, distribution centers and other logistics-related facilities over the past 16 years.

Gómez Reyes’ district includes Bloomington, Colton, Grand Terrace, Fontana, Muscoy, Rialto and part of San Bernardino.

There are 3,013 warehouses in San Bernardino County. In Ontario alone, there are 289 warehouses larger than 100,000 square feet. Reportedly, there are 142 warehouses in Fontana larger than 100,000 square feet.

Fontana has been so aggressive in building warehouses over the last ten years that the city’s mayor, Acquanetta Warren, is known by those who both oppose and favor warehouse development as “Warehouse Warren.” Last year, California Attorney General Rob Bonta sued Fontana over its affinity for warehouses, forcing the city into a settlement that calls for far greater regulation of the construction of logistics facilities in the city of 208,393.

In Chino there are 118 warehouses larger than 100,000 square feet, 109 larger than 100,000 square feet in Rancho Cucamonga and 75 larger than 100,000 square feet in San Bernardino. Since 2015, 26 warehouse project applications have been processed and approved by the City of San Bernardino, entailing acreage under roof of 9,598,255 square feet, or more than one-third of a square mile, translating into 220.34 acres.

After Ontario, Fontana, Chino, Rancho Cucamonga and San Bernardino, the city in San Bernardino County with the next largest number of warehouses of more than 100,000 square feet is Redlands, with 56, followed by Rialto with 47.

Increasingly, some elected officials, local residents and futurists are questioning whether warehouses constitute the highest and best use of the property available for development in the region. The glut of logistics facilities in the Inland Empire has some thinking their numbers are out of balance. In refuting the assertions of the proponents of warehouses that they constitute positive economic development, their detractors cite the relatively poor pay and benefits provided to those who work in distribution facilities, the large diesel-powered semi-trucks that are part of those operations with their unhealthy exhaust emissions, together with the bane of traffic gridlock they create.

Gómez Reyes, while acknowledging the logistics industry represents limited economic benefits to the region, maintains intensified warehouse construction carries with it environmental hazards that bring those benefits into question.

Gómez Reyes said she believes legislative discretion is called for at this time. She said she is “looking at other opportunities to address the issue of warehousing next to sensitive recep-

tors such as schools and homes,” which she will look into “during the remainder of this legislative session, as well as in future ones.”

AB 2840 was supported by environmental groups and environmental justice organizations, including residents of Fontana who did not want more logistics centers built in their community. Nevertheless, the bill ran head on into stiff opposition from economic development advocates.

“I made the difficult decision to hold AB 2840 in the Senate Governance and Finance Committee,” Gómez Reyes said. “This legislation would have put in place a 1,000-foot buffer between 100,000-square-foot-or-larger warehouses and sensitive receptors, which included schools, daycares, and homes. It was also specifically tailored to Riverside and San Bernardino counties, given the proliferation of warehouses that we’ve seen in the Inland Empire, and our dubious status as having some of the poorest air quality in the country.”

Gómez Reyes said she was grateful to those who had supported her effort in pursuing the legislation.

Nevertheless, accord-

ing to a letter from Fontana Chamber of Commerce President Phil Cothran, AB 2840 would have harmed the prospect for generating more jobs locally in terms of construction, supply chain management, logistics, development and the transportation industries tied into distribution centers.

“Our area has worked hard for decades, if not centuries, to assure that Inland Southern California can produce jobs and grow businesses by supporting goods movement through rail, truck and trailer transport, the ports, and education programs that build a workforce,” Cothran wrote in a letter he sent to Reyes in May. “AB 2840 strips all local governments across California of their zoning and land use authority, ignores California’s robust environmental laws and regulations applicable to this type of development and exacerbates existing supply chain problems and rising inflation plaguing California by making it harder and more expensive to develop these types of projects.”

Cothran asserted that existing laws and regulations “already require qualifying logistics-use projects and warehouses

to comply with a long list of local, state and federal environmental laws” and that AB 2840 “would stop job creation and limit our local commitment to provide for a good quality of life for all.” He said, “[E]xisting law already forces new projects or the expansion of an existing facility to undergo the most rigorous environmental analysis and mitigation measures in the country.”

In stating she would yet pursue comprehensive regulation pertaining to warehouse development, Gómez Reyes said she believed Cothran was overstating his case. She suggested there are yet gaps in the environmental regulations applied to warehouses.

“I want to be clear that my intention has never been to stop development,” she said. “We did not move forward despite an offer to put in place a moratorium on warehouse development in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties for a full year. I decided not to accept this proposed amendment of a one-year moratorium because I am looking for true solutions for those most harmed. I know we can find that solution and ensure our families in the Inland Empire are protected.”

-M.G.

Waste Management, Nation’s Largest Trash Hauler, Looking To Reestablish Itself In San Bernardino County *from page 3*

world’s largest landfill at a location in the Mojave Desert between Amboy and Cadiz in San Bernardino County’s vast desert outback, to which trash from Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura and western San Bernardino County would be hauled. That plan, known as Rail-Cycle, foundered however, and Waste Management failed in other endeavors in San Bernardino County, such as capturing the contract to manage the county’s multiple landfills and obtaining the trash hauling franchises in the cities of Colton and San Bernardino when those municipalities dissolved

their sanitation divisions in 1996 and 2015. Waste Management yet has the trash disposal franchise in Chino and the unincorporated communities of Trona, Kramer Junction, Red Mountain, Boron, Windy Acres and Four Corners in San Bernardino County. With the addition of the Chino Hills contract, Waste Management has now reestablished a firm toehold in San Bernardino County, concentrated at its extreme southeast corner. Having now gone from the county’s fourth-largest to third-largest refuse handler, it is anticipated it will attempt to make further inroads in obtaining some of the franchises held by the two most active trash companies in the county, Burrtec Industries and Athens Services.

At present, Burrtec has plum franchises in

the six largest of San Bernardino County’s 24 cities – San Bernardino, Fontana, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Victorville and Rialto. The company also has franchises in ten of the county’s other municipalities – Apple Valley, Twentynine Palms, Yucca Valley, Yucaipa, Adelanto, Upland, Grand Terrace, Highland, Montclair and Barstow. Additionally, it is the franchised garbage handler in the unincorporated San Bernardino County communities of Amboy, Angeles Oaks, Yermo, Victorville, Valley of Enchantment, Twin Peaks, Arrowbear, Baker, Barton Flats, Bloomington, Blue Jay, Skyforest, Silver Lakes, Cedar Glen, Cedarpines Park, Cima, Crestline, Daggett, Del Rosa, Devore, Dumont Dunes, El Rancho Verde, Forest Falls, Fort Irwin, San

Antonio Heights, Running Springs, Nipton, Oak Glen, Newberry Springs, Mount Baldy, Mountain Pass, Halloran, Helendale, Hinkley, Kelso, Lake Arrowhead, Lenwood, Landers, Lucerne Valley, Ludlow and Mentone.

In addition, Burrtec was, from 2001, when it took over from Norcal, until 2013 when it lost the contract with the county, the operator/manager of the county’s landfill system.

Burrtec had obtained that contract in some degree on the basis of county officials’ assumption that, as the county’s most prolific garbage hauler, the company would divert much or all of that trash into the county’s landfills, generating money for the county in the form of tipping fees. By 2010, however, the county was

concerned that Burrtec, which owns and operates two landfills in Riverside County, was diverting the lion’s share of the trash it picked up locally to Riverside County, thereby depriving San Bernardino County of revenue.

The county in 2013, after seeking to cajole and wheedle Burrtec into channeling significantly more of the trash picked up in the county into the county’s dumps and failing, opted against extending Burrtec’s contract to run its landfills and put the contract out to bid.

Burrtec joined with two companies – Athens and Waste Management – in bidding on the contract. At issue in those bids was more than the cost those companies would charge to operate, manage and maintain the county’s waste disposal

system, consisting of five active landfills and nine transfer stations. Also considered under the county’s analysis was the amount of revenue each of those companies could generate into the county in the form of tipping fees at the landfills. Athens is the largest trash hauler in Los Angeles County and has trash hauling franchises in Riverside and Orange counties as well.

Burrtec provided the lowest bid – \$15.8 million – for the task of operating the landfills. Athens and Waste Management bid \$16.687 million and \$17.2 million, respectively. The county gave the nod to Athens because that company was able to guarantee that it would import into the county’s landfills 800,000 tons of municipal solid waste

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Zone-Tailed Hawk Spotted In The East Mojave's Joshua Tree National Park *from front page*

and feeds primarily on carcasses, the zone-tailed hawk is an active hunter. Ornithologists believe the zone-tailed hawk adroitly mimics the turkey vulture in an effort to fool their prey. The small animals upon which a hawk might feast can be and apparently are lulled into a state of complacency because they know that

turkey vultures will not attack them. Thus, hidden among the scavengers, zone-tailed hawks are ignored by those upon whom they intend to dine. Having spotted its prey and waiting until the right moment, a zone-tailed hawk will launch its attack, abruptly going into a steep and high-speed dive, taking its kill by surprise.

Zone-tailed hawks feed upon small terrestrial tetrapods of all types – amphibians, reptiles, lizards, iguanas, small mammals

such as raccoons, opossum, mice and rats.

The mating season of the zone-tailed hawk varies geographically but is almost always in the first half of the year. During breeding season, the hawks will construct large nests, consisting of a bulky collection of sticks, and twigs lined with green leaves, usually built at or near the top or in the main fork of a tree, generally 25 to one hundred feet above the ground. The female will lay between one and three

white eggs, often marked or streaked with brown, which hatch in roughly one month, 28 to 35 days. While the female incubates, the male will hunt and return to the nest with food for his mate. One bird, generally but not exclusively the female, will stay with the young, while the other hunts. Eventually both birds will leave to hunt, and within about six to seven weeks the young birds will take flight.

The traditional range for the zone-tailed hawk

stretched from South America through Central America and into Mexico, with rare appearances north into the Southwestern U.S., including southern Arizona, New Mexico, California and Texas. According to U.S. Park Service, zone-tailed hawks have been expanding northward over the last few decades and have been spotted, though extremely rarely, as far north as Virginia and Nova Scotia.

On May 13, in the Lost Palms Oasis, a zone-

tailed hawk was spotted on a wildlife camera. That was the first confirmed sighting in Joshua Tree National Park.

There are more than 250 different species of birds that have been recorded in Joshua Tree National Park, which blends two distinct desert ecosystems, those being the Mojave and the Colorado. The vast majority of birds known to frequent the park are not there year-round but are migrants and vagrants.

-M.G.

Time & Finally Fire Spell Doom For Barstow's El Rancho Motel *from front page*

throughout the country, Chase's El Rancho Motel offered comfortable accommodations to those traveling through the desert. Early references state the motel consisted of 100 rooms, which a few years later were said to have increased to 150 rooms.

By 1959, brochures again reference 100 rooms. That literature touted each unit as having a private bath.

Photos from that era depict a swimming pool in the center of a parking lot surrounded by units which featured clay Spanish-style roofs. For the first decade of its incarnation, it served the public. By the 1960s, there were only limited vacancies available to travelers, as the Santa Fe Railroad had reserved the lion's share

of its units for its workers who overnights in the city. Later, with the decline of Barstow as a major railroad center, the motel became for a time a residence for senior citizens. Later, large numbers of its units were converted to permanent residential units.

Tuesday's fire was not the first to wreak major damage to El Rancho.

El Rancho Restaurant was at one time an intrinsic element of the motel.

The restaurant was located between the motel office and the street. It was rebranded as the Cedar Restaurant and Travel Store in later years. In May 2011 it caught fire and was completely destroyed.

An important part of the original motel was its towering, 100-foot high neon sign, which made a bright display that featured "El Rancho Motel" an unmissable element of Barstow's night skyline.

The sign was part of the original construction and was built by the Electrical Products Corporation and installed in 1947. It was restored in 1994.

The deterioration of the motel was a sad reality that sunk in gradually.

Those included problems with electricity and plumbing, vermin, bedbugs, fleas and rowdy residents and guests.

The penultimate death knell came with action by Barstow's code enforce-

ment division, which first red-tagged individual rooms, then the entirety of the motel or rooms connected together. The specific code violations pertained to electrical outages and sewage system failures. The entire motel was declared unsuitable for human habitation more than two months ago.

Tuesday's fire appears to have been the final nail in the motel's coffin.

-Mark Gutglueck

Five Years Ago, Armendarez Defied Convention & The Law To Make Sure Bassett Was Installed As Warren's Man To Oversee The School District *from page 2*

doing went against the advice of then-Fontana City Attorney Jeffrey Ballinger and Fontana Unified School District General Counsel Mark Thompson, both of whom said that he was out of step with the "incompatibility clause" contained in California's Government Code and that simultaneous holding of a position on a school board and city council where the borders of the district and city are congruent, coterminous, common or overlap constitutes the holding of incompatible offices and is a violation of Government Code Section 1099.

Two of the school board's members – Mary Sandoval and Jason O'Brien – objected to Armendarez's intransigence, while members of the community were preparing to go to the California Attorney General's Office to initiate a quo warranto

proceeding which would ultimately, they said, force Armendarez to give up either his council post or his school board position. In the meantime, and until such a remedy could be applied, Thompson said, Armendarez had the school district over a barrel because under California's Government Code and Elections Code, a position held by a duly elected official cannot be vacated until the officeholder officially resigns, even though elsewhere in the Government and Elections Code the holder of incompatible offices forfeits the prior office he holds upon entering the second elected office.

Even though Fontana's city attorney was both privately and publicly counseling Armendarez and Warren that Armendarez had to give up his school board position, Warren encouraged Armendarez to stand firm. Despite all of the grumbling and contretemps going on around him, Armendarez continued to serve as both a councilman and school board member until January 18, 2017, at which point he voted, together with board members Matt Slowik and Peter Garcia,

to hire Bassett, with Sandoval and O'Brien voting in opposition. Thereupon, Armendarez resigned.

In this way, Bassett came into office beholden not only to Armendarez, Slowik and Garcia, all of whom were members of Warren's political machine, but Warren as well. Over the years, in response to Warren's dictates, ones which were conveyed quietly and out of public view, Bassett did his best to comply with them. In time, Garcia, like Armendarez, was promoted by Warren and elected to a position on the Fontana City Council, where he is now a member of her ruling coalition. At present, there are two members of Warren's political machine serving on the city council – Joe Armendarez, who is Jesse Armendarez's brother, and Adam Perez.

At the same time, the board currently boasts three members – Mary Sandoval, Marcelino "Mars" Serna and Jennifer Quezada – who do not automatically fall into Warren's camp.

This year, Warren is scheduled to seek reelection for the third time as mayor. So, too, must Mary

Sandoval, Adam Perez and Mars Serna seek reelection to the school board. Riding on the outcome of the three school board races is whether Warren and her political machine will be able to reassert full control over the school board – meaning having members of her political machine lay claim to at least three of the five school board positions. In practical terms, this means having Perez gain reelection and dislodging either Sandoval or Serna from office and filling that position with someone aligned with Warren.

Warren is one of the most prolific political fundraisers in San Bernardino County. The latest documentation relating to Warren's political campaign war chest available to the *Sentinel* shows that as of December 31, 2021, Warren had \$252,584.53 in her campaign coffers. It is believed that she has boosted that amount at present by nearly \$100,000 going into the upcoming political season. Warren has demonstrated a past pattern of dispensing her own political money to other candidates she has endorsed. It is thus anticipated that this year

she will, in addition to carrying out an aggressive reelection campaign on her own behalf, assist Perez in his reelection bid while seeking to shore up the electoral effort of yet unidentified alternate candidates to Sandoval and Serna for the school board.

The Republican Party and its various arms, including Republican donors and the San Bernardino County Republican Central Committee, have not been shy in the past about supporting Republican candidates for local office in San Bernardino County, including those for school board, despite the official and ostensible nonpartisan nature of local races. In the past, Democrats have not been as energetic or generous in making sure that candidates for local office who identify or affiliate as Democrats are equally well supplied with campaign money, which the late Assemblyman and California State Treasurer Jess Unruh called "The mother's milk of politics." More recently, however, both San Bernardino County-based and Fontana-based Democratic Party activists have become aware of the degree to which they have

been out-coordinated and outthrust by local Republican Party functionaries, including Warren. The greater efficiency of the Republicans has included efforts by Phil Cothran Sr., a successful Fontana-based insurance agent who over the last three decades has been a major donor to the Republican Party and Republican candidates. Cothran is credited with having been a key Warren backer. In 2021, Cothran acceded to the position of chairman of the San Bernardino Republican Central Committee. His son, Phil Cothran Jr., was elected to the Fontana City Council in 2018 with the backing of Acquanetta Warren, after which he became a member of Warren's four-member ruling coalition. He is up for reelection with her this year.

Over the last several years, Bassett has complied with directives given to him on high that emanated from Warren, many of which involved action that was not officially prompted by any official-recorded direction or suggestion from members of the school board and which was initiated

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San Bernardino County Government Officials Have A History Of Accepting Bribes From Refuse Handling Corporations In Exchange For Granting Franchises *from page 4*

and processed green material per year during the 10-year term of the contract, which will bring gross revenue to the county in the amount of approximately \$22 million per year. Burrtec was able to guarantee solid waste importation that would provide the county with annual tipping fees at its landfills that were substantially less than that offered by Athens, at \$6.3 million.

Despite its primacy as a trash hauler in Los Angeles County, Athens has no municipal franchise in San Bernardino County.

Questions emerged over the latest competition and bidding process for the Chino Hills trash hauling franchise.

Vying for the contract, which pertained to supplying service to Chino Hill's 85,081 population, its roughly 22,000 households and its businesses were Republic, Athens Services, Waste Management, Burrtec Waste Industries, Valley Vista Services, Ware Disposal, and a joint venture involving Urbaser and American Reclamation. In the first round of the competition, Valley Vista Services, Ware Disposal, and Urbaser/American Reclamation all underbid Republic, Athens, Waste Management and Burrtec. Urbaser/American Reclamation was, essentially, the low bidder for the franchise contract, having agreed to deliver comprehensive trash service to the city's customer base for \$8.075 million annually. Ware was the second lowest bidder at \$10.084 million, and Valley Vista had the third lowest bid at \$10.257 million. Nevertheless, the city's trash hauling advising consultant, HF&H, told the council it should only

consider the bids from Waste Management at \$10.582 million, Athens at \$11.242 million, Republic at \$12.885 million and Burrtec at \$13.483 million. This was because, HF&H said, Waste Management, Athens, Republic and Burrtec had proven track records in the Southern California Market.

Somewhat paradoxically, according to HF&H, the consideration that Urbaser/American Reclamation, Valley Vista and Ware were going to charge less than the other four companies indicated they were not as suited and less qualified for the franchise. HF&H and city staff, focusing on the consideration that the Chino Hills franchise would represent a far larger percentage of Urbaser/American's, Valley Vista's and Ware's revenue in Southern California than it would for Waste Management, Athens, Republic and Burrtec, implied that the Urbaser/American Reclamation, Valley Vista and Ware bids were unrealistic ones. While Councilman Ray Marquez did not buy that reasoning in November 2021, city council members Art Bennett, Cynthia Moran and Peter Rogers did, and Urbaser/American Reclamation, Valley Vista and Ware were eliminated from the running. Then-Mayor Brian Johsz, who is employed by Athens Services, did not participate in the discussion or vote relating to the trash franchise contract.

Thereafter, in the second round of competition, Athens Services said it was prepared to offer the city's residents and businesses trash hauling services in the first year for a total rate revenue of \$10,508,000. Waste Management projected a total rate revenue higher than what it had previously at \$10,676,000. Burrtec's and Republic Services' costs were well off that mark at \$12,452,000 and \$12,725,000 respectively. Athens Services also proposed the lowest basic per household rate for the city's residents, at \$25.80 per month. Waste

Management came in at \$26.25. Republic Services, which was at that time charging Chino Hills residents \$25.02 per month for the service being provided, proposed increasing the monthly rate to \$26.45. Burrtec's proposed monthly charge to residents was nearly off the chart, at \$31.44 per month.

Ultimately, the city council bypassed Athens as the low bidder and went with Waste Management by a vote of 3-to-1, with Rogers dissenting.

The rejection of the four lowest bidders for the Chino Hills franchise was only the latest intimation of impropriety and influence peddling relating to which trash hauling companies are going to profit and by how much throughout San Bernardino County.

Refuse handling companies and their employees are historically among the most reliable and some of the largest donors to the political war chests of the county's politicians. While denials are made that those donations are intended to purchase influence, circumstances suggest otherwise. It is noteworthy that trash hauling companies and their employees generally do not make donations to politicians who are not in a position to engage in the decision-making process relating to trash handling franchises and their donations almost universally are provided to politicians who have supported the awarding of franchises to them or the company they work for.

The atmospherics surrounding the decision-making process relating to trash hauling contracts in San Bernardino County has historically ranged from the merely unethical to the outright criminal.

In the early 1990s Norcal Waste Systems, Inc. had a contract with San Bernardino County relating to trash and refuse handling at the county's landfills. Kenneth James Walsh, a vice-president of Norcal, in 1994 began negotiations with the county re-

lating to Norcal assuming control over and full management of the county's landfills, representing an up-rating of the company's contract from roughly \$18 million per year to more than \$40 million. In 1994, Norcal hired San Bernardino County's former chief executive officer, Harry Mays, under whom the county had entered into the original contract with Norcal, as a consultant. Mays thereafter arranged for the provision of bribes to his successor at the county, James Hlawek, and then pressured him to induce the county to provide Norcal with a more comprehensive landfill management contract. Thereafter, Mays and Hlawek devised for themselves further personal financial gain from the new Norcal contract. Mays negotiated a more lucrative consulting agreement with Norcal in January 1995. The revised contract provided that Mays and his company, Bio-Reclamation Technologies, Inc., were to receive a \$1 million fee when the county approved the Norcal contract, plus additional payments if Norcal's revenue increased through the issuance of bonds to finance landfill closures. Mays agreed to split Bio-Reclamation Technologies' fees 60 percent to 40 percent with Walsh. Hlawek's share of the payoffs was quantified by prosecutors as \$227,000.

During 1995, Hlawek used his authority and influence as county administrative officer and chairperson of the county's negotiating committee to obtain county approval of the Norcal contract. Among other things, Hlawek convinced the county board of supervisors to award the contract without competitive bidding. The county board of supervisors, led by then Supervisor Jerry Eaves, approved the Norcal contract on September 12, 1995.

From 1995 to 2000, the County paid Norcal more than \$200 million. During the same period, Norcal paid \$4.2 million to Mays and Bio-Rec-

lamation Technologies under their consulting agreement and Bio-Reclamation Technologies, in turn, paid more than \$1.1 million to companies owned by Walsh. Hlawek, in statements to the FBI, intimated bribes had been paid to Eaves, but was not able to quantify those.

Rail-Cycle, a proposed joint venture between Waste Management Inc. and the Santa Fe Railway to haul 21,000-tons of garbage per day produced in Southern California to a 4,900 acre landfill to be established at a location just off the Santa Fe line at Bolo Station east of Amboy in the Mojave Desert was abandoned after reports of bribes being conveyed to Eaves and another member of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, Marsha Turoci, and the simultaneous release of the so-called Miller Report compiled by former San Diego County District Attorney Ed Miller. The Miller Report cataloged Waste Management's history of unlawful activity in expanding its operations, including intimidation, extortion and bribery of public officials. The Rail-Cycle debacle and the Miller Report precipitated a contraction of Waste Management's presence in San Bernardino County in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In 1997, the so-called McDonald Report, written by former Riverside County Deputy District Attorney Mark McDonald, detailed the manner in which Burrtec had offered a superior franchise proposal to take on the trash hauling assignment in Colton when that city closed out its municipal sanitation department in 1996, only to be outmaneuvered by Taormina Industries, which was subsequently absorbed by Republic. According to McDonald, through "gifts," donations and other gratuities "tantamount to bribery," Taormina induced then-Colton Mayor George Fulp and councilmen Don Sanders and Abe Beltran to award the contract to Taormina, de-

spite an evaluation done by city consultant R.W. Beck and its principal, Richard Tagore-Erwin, which delineated how the Burrtec service proposal in the franchise bid was superior in all particulars to that provided by Taormina.

In 2015, when San Bernardino shuttered its sanitation division, Waste Management dropped out of the competition to obtain the county seat's trash hauling franchise early in the process, leaving the field to Burrtec and Athens. Both companies made comprehensive proposals, which were subject to vetting and evaluation by then-City Manager Allen Parker, then-Community Development Director Bill Manis, and then-Public Works Division Supervisor Chris Alaniz. Before that evaluation was completed, evidence of Burrtec's violation of the competition protocol emerged, as the company came into contact with a number of city officials and employees other than the three – Parker, Manis and Alaniz – and the city consultants – Andy Belknap and Richard Tagore-Erwin – designated as those with whom the competitors were permitted to communicate. In particular, then-City Councilman John Valdivia, who is now the city's mayor, made pointed requests of both competitors for campaign money, going so far as to specify that he wanted \$10,000 from each. Athens, adhering to the competition protocol and believing such a donation could be construed as a bribe, did not comply with Valdivia's request. An evaluation of the franchise proposals carried out by Belknap and his company, Management Partners, using ten-year cost and revenue projections, demonstrated that in terms of revenues coming into the city, Athens offered the best proposal, and that based upon Athens' salary and employee benefits and profit-sharing arrangement, the city's sanitation division employees who were to be

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becomes Public Record upon filing. s/ JAGROOP SINGH, OWNER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: JUNE 30, 2022 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/Deputy Notice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the

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date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 et seq., Business and Professions Code).

Public Notices

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FBN 20220006299
The following person is doing business as: IN-DIOS-SERVICES. 4424 HEATHER CIR CHINO, CA 91710 COUNTY OF SAN BER-

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NARDINO SAN BERNARDINO DANIEL SANCHEZ 4424 HEATHER CIR CHINO, CA 91710. The business is conducted by: AN INDIVIDUAL. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: JUNE 23, 2022 By signing, I declare that all infor-

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mation in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing. s/ DANIEL SANCHEZ, OWNER Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: JUNE 30, 2022

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I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/Deputy Notice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this

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Keen Competition Between Multiple Trash Haulers Has Kept Any Single One From Fully Dominating The San Bernardino County Market *from page 6*

absorbed by the franchise holder would fare better as Athens employees than as Burrtec

employees. The council, however, prompted in large measure by Valdivia and relying on a

report attributed to then-Public Works Director Bill Manis which was in actuality written by Alaniz, defied the advice of then-City Manager Allen Parker, who recommended granting the franchise to Athens, and awarded the contract to Burrtec.

Subsequently, Alaniz was hired by Burrtec into a senior management position.

At present, Burrtec remains as the primary trash hauler in San Bernardino County. Nevertheless, Athens holds the prestigious position of

managing the county's landfills and Waste Management, Inc has made a major stride in reasserting itself as a player within the county's trash handling industry. Next year, when it is anticipated that all three will compete to see which

gets the county landfill managing contract for the next decade, there will perhaps be some clarity as to which is best, at least for the time being, at wielding influence among the county's governmental elite.

-Mark Gutglueck

Officially, District Maintains Bassett Is Yet Superintendent *from page 5*

prior to any vote taken by the school board. In some cases, the district divested itself of properties which were once intended for use as school campuses or district facilities that ended up in the hands of developers who were intent on converting the land to warehouses. One such property was located near Primrose Avenue, another at Arrow Highway and Citrus Avenue, along with one at Maple Avenue and Foothill Boulevard. Allegations surfaced that in at least one case, a district property was acquired by the Water of Life Church, with which Warren is associated, under an arrangement that allowed the church to realize a profit when it unloaded the property to an entity ready to develop the property. Allegedly, Warren, through her control of the city council, which has ultimate land use authority in Fontana, has been able to guarantee the developability of those properties subsequent to their sale by the district.

It was reported to the *Sentinel* that Bassett took whatever actions he did in complying with the directives that came down from Warren with an assurance that the mayor's domination of the school board would provide him with a layer of protection. At present, however, it appears that Warren only has reliable control over two of the board votes.

A further report received by the *Sentinel* is that Bassett has recently fallen into disfavor with Perez. Perez for some time has been gunning to have the school district's chief of police, Lee Powell, ter-

minated. Bassett did not acquiesce to the pressure to fire Powell, the *Sentinel* is informed. Rather, Bassett allowed a complaint Powell filed with the district related to treatment he had been accorded by Perez to be processed by the school district's assistant superintendent of people, Douglas Staine. The investigation of the claim ended with Staine entering a determination sustaining the complaint, the *Sentinel* was informed. Additionally, when Powell's attorney, Linda Scott, moved to take Bassett's deposition, consisting of sworn statements provided as answers to questions posed to him by Scott, the superintendent did not make, the *Sentinel* is reliably informed, a denial of Powell's allegation that he was being targeted by Perez.

For a confluence of reasons, Bassett this summer found himself in the most vulnerable position he has ever been in since he moved into the superintendent's role.

On the agenda for this week's July 6 board meeting were three items to be discussed in closed session, consisting of a discussion of labor relations, personnel matters and a conference with the district's legal counsel pertaining to existing litigation.

Upon adjourning into that closed session, the board remained behind closed doors where its deliberations were out of the sight and earshot of the public for what was an uncommon amount of time. The board emerged, briefly, to address the public and take a vote as

to whether it should resume further closed-door discussions and extend the meeting until 2 a.m. By a vote of 4-to-1, with Sandoval dissenting, the board elected to return to its closed session. The board thus spent more than four hours in private discussions, the exact and full nature of which were undisclosed. Upon emerging for a second time from its closed session, Ryan DiGiulio, the district's associate superintendent for business services, had taken Bassett's position on the dais. At that point, Quezada, as the board president announced, "The board did take action in closed session. The board took action to terminate permanent certificated employee number 4167, effective May 27, 2022. The motion was made by Board Member Perez, seconded by Vice President Armendarez, and carried a 5-0 vote."

The following day, the *Sentinel* was contacted and informed that Bassett had been terminated.

The *Sentinel* initiated an effort to confirm the report. After a review of the available board meeting video, material and information, the *Sentinel* inquired with the district as to whether permanent certificated employee number 4167 was Bassett. The district declined to identify permanent certificated employee number 4167.

The *Sentinel* contacted the district office, seeking to make contact with Bassett. The *Sentinel* was informed that Bassett was not present on the district premises.

The *Sentinel* contacted numerous district employees, using various means. Three district employees, after obtaining assurances

of anonymity, stated that Bassett was no longer serving in the capacity of superintendent. One of those, who functions at the senior level of the district and has direct and constant access to Bassett, said he had been terminated by the board, but said it was possible that the terms of Bassett's departure were yet up in the air.

The *Sentinel* redoubled its efforts, reaching Clarissa Trejo, the district's executive director for marketing, communications and engagement. Trejo insisted that Bassett was yet serving in the capacity of superintendent.

Trejo acknowledged that the board had been engaged in an extended closed session the previous night, but said, "That discussion was about making an adjustment to his contract," Trejo said. "The board had previously provided raises to all teachers, certificated personnel and classified personnel for the 2021-22 school year. The board met in closed session to consider the same increase for the associate superintendent and the superintendent. That all took place in closed session, not in open session. No action was taken."

Asked directly if the board had discussed terminating Bassett, Trejo said, "There has not been any conversation I am aware of related to his termination. I don't know where that information is coming from."

The *Sentinel* asked Trejo if the claim filed by Powell and the district's inability to dispose of it had boiled over into discontent with Bassett's performance that had resulted in resolve to remove him as superintendent. She said the board's discussion

on Wednesday evening and early Thursday "were not related to any claims of action."

The *Sentinel* inquired about the district's sale of property and whether either unauthorized sale of land or recommendations from Bassett that the district divest itself of certain properties had antagonized the board.

"That [selling district property] is not something the superintendent has the authority to do," Trejo said. "A sale of land would go through the proper channels. The superintendent would not be able to do engage in a sale, which would go through our business services department and would have to be ratified in advance."

Confronted with the statements made by district employees indicating Bassett is out as superintendent, Trejo at that point indicated the *Sentinel* was not the only means through which reports and rumors to that effect were being aired, saying, "I just met with associate superintendent of people. He confirmed there is no change in the employment status of the superintendent."

After the *Sentinel's* interaction with Trejo, further reports bounded in to indicate Bassett had been separated from the district. The *Sentinel* sought direct explanations from all five members of the board, inquiring through their district offices and directly by means of calls to their personal or business phones.

The *Sentinel* made multiple phone calls to Michael Garcia, the district's director of family and community engagement.

"The board did have

an agenda item regarding the superintendent's contract," Garcia said in a responding text message. "No action was taken, and his employment status has not changed."

Neither Trejo nor Garcia explained why DiGiulio had assumed Bassett's role during the open session of the meeting on July 6 and into the morning hours of July 7, and neither would offer an explanation of why Bassett was not in his office at the district on July 7 and July 8.

Multiple calls made directly to Bassett's cell phone, clearly outlining the reports of his termination and asking for clarification, were not returned.

Despite Quezada's assurance she would return a call seeking her input, she had not responded to the *Sentinel* by press time. Neither did Armendarez nor Perez respond to the *Sentinel's* inquiries.

The *Sentinel* spoke briefly with Sandoval, who said she and the remainder of the board had been instructed to make no public statements regarding Bassett and his status with the district. She said any substantive response by members of the board relating to Bassett would be a violation of the Brown Act.

Serna told the *Sentinel*, "I serve all the community, and in trying to be ethical and moral and respectful, I am not prepared to make a statement at this time. I do understand that things need to be told and given in an accurate manner. In due time I will be ready to speak, just not right now, while I'm in on the ground floor, so to speak, of a political effort, and it is not the right time. I hope you can respect that."