

Friday, January 9, 2026 A Fortunado Publication in conjunction with Countywide News Service 10808 Foothill Blvd. Suite 160-446 Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730 (951) 567-1936

Hesperia's Residents & Politicians Diverge With Regard To City Manager's Competence

Flooding in at various locations throughout 73.4-square mile Hesperia over the holidays, scores of the city's residents say, has betrayed that the city's infrastructure deficit, legacy of corruption and managerial incompetence continues as a reality into the Third Millennium, 71 years after the modern communities founding, 37 years since its incorporation as a municipality and three years

following the city's hiring of a woman city officials said would be able to overcome the greed and neglect of the men who had been entrusted with running municipal operations previously.

In contrast to the time of Rachel Molina's appointment as city manager when Mayor Brigit Bennington in her first go-round as mayor leapt to her defense when it was suggested Molina did not have the experi-

ence or mettle to handle the challenges the county's most physically problematic cities presents, Bridget remained silent as resident after resident expressed anger, disappointment and frustration with City Hall's inability to provide its citizens with the most rudimentary of modern necessities and municipal services.

No city official was willing to contest what the city's residents and

others have been saying for more than forty years: that the county local agency formation commission acted prematurely and irresponsibly in allowing Hesperia to incorporate as a city.

Hesperia is marred by what is, hands down among all 22 cities and two incorporated towns in San Bernardino County, the most intensive of infrastructure deficits. That deficit came into being with the transition

from historical Hesperia to modern Hesperia in 1954 and has never relented, as the one-time town that has now grown into a city of 103,000 has never been able to overcome a reflexive and prideful embrace of size, growth, self-importance and politicians ready to personally advance and profit by assisting those fleecing their constituents.

On April 22, 1954, while he was See P 2

Elkadi Said To Be Leaving As Ontario International Airport Chief Executive

Reports are circulating that Atif Elkadi, the chief executive officer at Ontario International Airport since 2022, will be leaving that post no later than March.

While the airport's chief information officer, Charles Miwa, has declined to clarify Elkadi's status, one of its contract public spokesmen, Steve Lambert, said that reports of Elkadi's imminent departure was merely a manifestation of Elkadi being the target of a headhunting firm that was looking to fill a top managerial position at another major airport in Southern California during an posit the has The airport

There are a multitude of indicators that Elkadi, who began at Ontario International in November 2017 as the facility's deputy chief executive officer and stepped into the top spot at the airport four years and four months later, is on his way out as the top administrator at the airport or has already departed.

Though the airport's official website yet identifies Elkadi as the chief executive officer with the airport and the Ontario International Airport Authority, early this week word emanating from the headquarters airport headquarters located at 1923 East Avion Avenue in Ontario was that he was on the brink of departing as chief executive officer, and that his leaving is to be finalized no later than March. There were further unverified indications that he had already left.

On Wednes- See P 2

Feds Say SBC Law Enforcement Let 2 International Drug Dealers Slip Away In December

A San Bernardino County law enforcement agency allowed two international drug dealers who were utilizing a big rig semi-truck and their assumption of the roles of interstate truck drivers as a cover for their operation to slip through their fingers, according to the United States Department of Homeland Security.

On January 3 at

around 1:30 p.m., an Indiana state trooper made a routine stop of a blue International semi that was headed from Joplin Missouri to Richmond, Indiana for a standard Department of Transportation compliance check on I-70 near the 41-mile marker in Putnam County. In the vehicle were two Indian nationals residing in California, Jasveer Singh, 30 of Santa

Clara, and Gurpreet Singh, 25 of Fresno. According to Indiana State Police, while the trooper was speaking with the driver, he detected "criminal indicators," after which a police canine brought to the scene alerted to possible drugs inside. This was used as probable cause to search the truck.

Inside the sleeper berth, according to Indi-

ana State Police, troopers found 309 pounds of cocaine.

On January 4, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on January 4 lodged arrest detainees for both Jasveer Singh and Gurpreet Singh, characterizing them as "two criminal illegal aliens from India."

Both Singhs were issued commercial drivers licenses issued by the State of California.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, "Jasveer Singh illegally entered the U.S. on March 21, 2017 near Otay Mesa, California. He was arrested on December 5, 2025 for receiving stolen property in San Bernardino, California. ICE See P 3

Sophisticated Theft Ring Making Off With Cars In The Dead of Night

A sophisticated car theft ring, apparently based in Los Angeles County, has been operating well across county lines into San Bernardino County, stealing cars generally in the dead of night. Targeted by the thieves are late model luxury cars and Toyota and Chevrolet trucks.

The operations involve

what can be described as a scout vehicle which seems to be spotting the vehicles to be taken and reconnoitering to determine that the circumstance for a quick hook-up and getaway can be effectuated, whereafter a tow truck arrives to execute an efficient and speedy expropriation and instantaneous departure. Some of the See P 3

Civil Liberties Advocates Decry Local Police Agencies' Intensifying Reliance On AI-Based Data Analysis

Local law enforcement agencies' growing reliance on artificial intelligence-based data reduction and presentation programs is alarming civil liberties advocacy groups.

In recent weeks and months, the Redlands and Rialto police departments have renewed and intensified their existing contracts with Axon En-

terprise Inc. to replace and expand their body-worn camera programs, digitized evidence storage, logging, retrieval, sharing and management systems, add new digital evidence capabilities and outfit them with drone surveillance equipment and operational technologies and virtual reality applications.

At present, the Bar-

stow, Chino, Colton, Fontana, Montclair, Ontario, Redlands, Rialto and, San Bernardino, Upland police departments have Chino contracts with Axon as does the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

Both the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department and the San Bernardino See P 2

A sophisticated car theft ring, apparently based in Los Angeles County, has been operating well across county lines into San Bernardino County, stealing cars generally in the dead of night. Targeted by the thieves are late model luxury cars and Toyota and Chevrolet trucks.

The operations involve

what can be described as a scout vehicle which seems to be spotting the vehicles to be taken and reconnoitering to determine that the circumstance for a quick hook-up and getaway can be effectuated, whereafter a tow truck arrives to execute an efficient and speedy expropriation and instantaneous departure. Some of the See P 3

foot Stater Bros. Market at 16904 Main Street, opened in 2012, and a 19,732 square feet Stater Bros. Market at 14466 Main Street.

The savings the corporation will make in shuttering Store #97 will be devoted and the resources there diverted, the corporation said, "towards initiatives and projects that provide

greater long-term benefits."

According to the company, all 62 employees working at the 15757 Main Street location are being offered continuing employment at other Stater Bros. stores, where they will retain their current positions, seniority and pay scales.

Just as Stater Bros., which began as See P 3

State Bros. Reducing Its Presence On Main Street In Hesperia From 3 To 2 Stores

The Stater Bros. Market at 15757 Main Street, which opened more than 44 years ago and is one of three Stater Bros. grocery stores all located on Main Street in 103,411 population Hesperia, will close later this month.

"This store will permanently close on Sunday, January 25, 2026. We apologize for the

inconvenience," according to a sign outside the store, which is referred to as Store No. 97 by the San Bernardino-based company.

Hesperia was home to three Stater Bros. markets, all located on Main Street.

According to the company, now headed by CEO Greg McNiff and Executive Chairman

Peter Van Helden, who was until last September the CEO, the lease on the 29,120 square feet of space where the store has been functioning continuously since 1980, is set to expire, and it does not make financial sense to continue to operate at that location and perpetuate the lease arrangement when there is a 56,586 square