

Changing Of The Literal Guard In Ontario Highlights The Depth Of Its Corruption

Follow the money. Among San Bernardino County's 24 municipalities, Ontario, in terms of its governmental operations, is far and away the wealthiest entity in the 20,105-square mile jurisdiction, the largest geographic county in the United States, an expanse larger than New Jersey, Delaware, Connecticut and Rhode Island combined.

Ontario through all of its funds is projected

to expend in 2025-2026 \$1,234,792,270

The county's next four best fiscally endowed cities in descending order are Fontana, which has projected an overall expenditure budget for Fiscal Year 2025/26 of \$395 million; the City of Victorville, which in 2025/26 is anticipating \$387.7 million in expenditures; the City of San Bernardino, which in June saw its city council approve the county

seat's 2025/26 budget including a total operating budget of \$348.7 million; and the City of Rancho Cucamonga, which expects to expend throughout Fiscal Year 2025/26 \$321,399,159 on its operations.

Thus, Ontario boasts a budget that is larger than the sum of the next three largest cities in the county.

Ontario is not a newcomer to civic affluence. Its position as the city in

the county with the most money pouring into its coffers extends back for nearly two generations, when in the mid-1980s it surpassed San Bernardino to the top of heap by succeeding in becoming the most aggressive collector of tax revenue among what were then 17 incorporated cities in the county. Historically, going back to the late 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century, San Bernardino, the county's

first city to incorporate, had been where the action was, followed to a lesser degree by Ontario, Redlands and Colton, the fourth, third and second cities in the county to incorporate, respectively in 1891, 1888 and 1887. Ontario throughout the late 19th Century and virtually all of the 20th Century was the mercantile center of the western extension of the county. Nevertheless, it and the nearby cities **See P 2**

Amid Litigation Threats, 29 Palms Planning Commissioners Lukewarm Toward Solar Plant

Mystery and clarity, conversely, attended both of the Twentynine Palms Planning Commission meetings held this month.

What emerged from both meetings was that a predominant number of the city's residence are opposed to E-Group Solar's proposal construct solar power field on roughly 172 acres between Canyon Road and

Noel's Knoll Road.

Shrouded in ambiguity is whether the E-Group Solar is on the verge of suing the city or has threatened to sue the city if approval of the project is not given. While there are indicators that is the case, city officials have given no confirmation that the company or its principals will resort to litigation if the project is denied.

While the planning commission generally meets on either the first or the third Tuesday of the month, this month it met on both February 3 and February 17.

The commission's agenda for the February 3 meeting made no explicit mention of the solar power project. Nevertheless eight residents showed up at the meeting chamber to ad-

dress the commission, and the gist of their comments pertained to the E-Group plan. The items specified on the agenda were ones that were not publicly discussed or dealt with by the commission, consisting of a matter or matters rarely considered by the planning commission, the potential of litigation. Under California's open public meeting law, pub-

lic panels/governmental board are in most cases required to meet in public subject to a published or posted agenda. Exceptions to that exist when the topic of discussion extends to personnel matters, labor negotiations, security matters, providing instructions to real property negotiators and conference with legal counsel regarding pending litigation-**See P 3**

Specter Descends Over Chino As Serial Rapist's Release Nears

There is a degree of alarm with regard to the upcoming release of a serial rapist/child molester, particularly in Chino, where he is currently imprisoned.

David Allen Funston, now 64, was actively involved in luring, kidnapping and assaulting girls in the Sacramento area, some as young as four

and five years old, in the 1990s.

Funston's crimes intensified in terms of frequency and seriousness in a two-year period beginning in 1995. According to prosecutors and testimony and evidence presented at his trial, he would children playing outside their homes in the Sacramento **See P 3**

Conservatives Accuse Officialdom Of Siding With Liberal Conservationists On Desert Off-Road Use

A concentrated sheriff's department patrol effort that led to the ticketing of nearly four dozen off-road vehicle operators last month was followed two days later by a federal judges ruling barring off-highway vehicles from over 2,200 miles of the west Mojave Desert.

Some off-road enthusiasts, who emphasized

that they are strong supporters of both the Trump Administration and law enforcement generally say they feel betrayed. The proximate timing of what occurred in late January was suspicious, they say, and an indication that the liberal forces that dominate Sacramento and state government have made inroads on the offices

of federal institutions in California.

On Saturday January 24, 2026, what was described as a "massive" social gathering of dirt bike riders and all-terrain vehicle owners and their machines took place at the Juniper Flats Off-Highway Vehicle [OHV] Area near Deep Creek Road and Artistic Alley in Apple **See P 3**

Yuhaaviatam Nation Defraying Pacific Village Housing Campus Improvements

After receiving a \$3 million grant from Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation in December, San Bernardino County is advancing critical enhancements at the Pacific Village housing campus using innovative designs to transform both indoor and outdoor spaces into environments that are consistent with the region's Indigenous heritage to foster

healing, wellness and connections.

In June 2025, the county began construction on Phase II of Pacific Village in Highland, California. Phase II will expand the campus into a wellness-centered environment that will provide vital housing, treatment and wraparound services for some of the county's most vulnerable residents. Phase

II includes 58 permanent supportive housing units, 30 of which are dedicated to very low-income older adults, along with 32 recuperative care beds for individuals leaving hospitals, a substance use disorder facility with 16 beds, and the continuation of eight interim housing units from Phase I.

"We are grateful to Yuhaaviatam of San

Manuel Nation for their generous support of this vital project," said Board of Supervisors Chairman and Third District Supervisor Dawn Rowe. "This critical funding will assist us in creating a supportive and healing environment so our residents can get the care they need to thrive and maintain long-term stability."

The enhancements

will include outdoor gathering areas, adding furnishings to housing units and the Recuperative Care Center, and constructing a multi-use pavilion with shaded seating and flexible space for group therapy, cultural programming and recreation. Additionally, the funds will be utilized to install healing gardens with shaded seating and rest areas, **See P 5**

Upland Solons Give Up On Ploy To Save Burrtec Big Bucks With Tax Roll Lien Switcheroo

Upland city officials ran into a buzzsaw this week when a wide cross section of city residents revolted at an effort to benefit one of the city council's most generous political donors by close to \$300,000 per year through the transfer of billing on residents' utility payments to the county tax roll.

The matter is fraught with a multitude of political and legal issues, the latter of which have both civil and criminal implications.

What has emerged is the remarkable degree to which the mayor and four members of the city council either disregarded or were entirely unaware of specific restrictions pertaining to not just the revamping of the city's billing methodology, but conflicts of interest involving the primary architect of the change. Perhaps the most startling revelation was that the city for an unknown period of time has – essentially in secret – been billing residents for a "service" City Hall made a binding agreement to discontinue charging for more than two decades ago.

Tied up in the controversy is the relationship between City Hall and the city's franchised trash hauler, Burrtec Industries.

The marriage of Upland and Burrtec is a storied one.

Ed Burr, with a single trash truck, went into the trash hauling business in 1954. Over the next 25 years, he, with the assistance of others **See P 2**