

## Prostitution Near County & SB City Government Headquarters Targeted

On Wednesday, April 29, the San Bernardino Police Department carried out what many considered to be a long-overdue operation to interrupt and definitively shutter vice activity at the spot which serves as the world's primary window on not just the county seat but San Bernardino County as a whole.

Exit 44a off of the I-215 Freeway brings travelers to the very heart of San Bernardino,

which is encapsulated in the California Department of Transportation sign heralding "5th Street" and "Civic Center," along with the symbol for Route 66. That attracts those who have come from other areas of the United States who might want to see the storied and historic local for its own sake and reputation. The In-N-Out Burger, Starbucks, Sonic Drive-In, Del Taco, Panda Express and 7-Eleven

that are all prominently visible along the first two blocks on the east side of the freeway also serve as an inducement for travelers to exit there.

Very close by, less than a full city block north of 5th Street and south of 6th Street, at the northwest corner of H Street and the minor arterial Spruce Street West is the Sunshine Hotel at 570 North H Street.

The Sunshine Hotel, like the Golden Star

Inn, located roughly an eighth of a mile west at 658 5th Street, is a motel that has been upgraded by the hospitality venue booking industry as a variously-rated two-star or three-star "hotel," but which more than a generation ago had become a contact point between those in the illicit street drug-selling trade and a venue for prostitution as much as a place for travelers to spend the night. The presence of

the Sunshine Hotel and the Golden Star Inn at the gateway to San Bernardino, both between four and seven blocks away from San Bernardino City Hall, the Guatemalan and Mexican consulates and six and eight blocks from the campus for the San Bernardino County's government center/administrative headquarters and both of San Bernardino County's historic and primary courthouses, **See P 3**

## Homeless Numbers Dip Second Straight Year Amid Questions Over Tallying Accuracy

A multitude of factors both benign and pernicious resulted in the government's official survey of the total number of homeless throughout San Bernardino County this year reflecting a decline for the second straight year.

There are grounds, based on the methodology, circumstance, secrecy and politics surrounding the tallying to

question the accuracy of both the basic and comparative numbers arrived at. Nevertheless, the San Bernardino County 2026 Point-in-Time Count conducted this year on January 22 stands as the most comprehensive and meaningful effort to obtain an understanding of the extent of a primary social problem plaguing not only local communities but the region, state

and nation.

Though the 21,105 square mile county saw an overall reduction of more than tree percent in the number of visible homeless this year over last, the primary attrition took place place, essentially, in the county's East, Central and West Valleys, while some of the High Desert communities north of Cajon Pass experienced in-

creases in their homeless populations.

The homeless count and subpopulation survey has been commissioned, i.e., mandated, by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, referred to by it acronym HUD, since 2003, requesting that local homeless continuum of care systems carry out the counts of homeless individuals

and families during the last 10 days of January or first ten days of February in order to receive Housing and Urban Development grant funds.

Annual Point-In-Time Count provides a snapshot of the county's homeless population, which enables officials to track progress toward reducing homelessness and ensure resources are being directed to

**See P 2**

## Sheriff's Gang & SMASH Detail Intensify Operation Consequences To Arrest 76 And Recover 76 Firearms

Between April 13 and 19, investigators with the Sheriff's Gangs/Narcotics Division led targeted crime suppression efforts as part of Operation Consequences.

The gang suppression unit, together with combined forces with the San Bernardino County Probation, the California Highway Pa-

trol, Homeland Security Investigations and the San Bernardino Police Department to obtain search warrants that were ultimately served on April 17.

Additional support came from the Rialto, Ontario, Montclair, Colton and Barstow police departments, as well as the California Depart-

ment of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Division of Adult Parole Operations and the Federal Bureau of Investigation

Simultaneously. San Bernardino Movement Against Street Hoodlums (SMASH) Street Enforcement Team (SET) personnel from the Sheriff's Specialized Enforcement Division **See P 3**

## Hou Kidnapping Investigation Goes National & International

Both Interpol and the FBI have joined the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's investigation into the disappearance of Naiping Hou, the father of cryptocurrency mogul Wen Hou, the Sentinel has learned.

Suspects in Naiping Hou's 2025 disappearance include personages

inside and outside of both California and the country, including foreigners who may have come into California under false pretenses and identities in December 2024 and initiated contact with the then-74-year-old in Rancho Cucamonga in what was apparently a successful effort to gain his trust before **See P 3**

## Ontario Chaffey Showband To Perform Western Music At Gardner Spring March 16

Ofland Hotels has given up on its plan, for which it was given an entitlement last July by the Twentynine Palms City, to construct what it had described as a luxury eco-resort near the entrance to Joshua Tree National Park.

Ofland, which is headed by Charles Tate and Luke Searcy and at that time was based in

Houston Texas, on July 22, 2025 obtained the city council's approval to build 100 guest cabins and 25 units of employee housing along with two lodges, a swimming pool and spas, recreational areas, playgrounds, restaurants and a bar on 42 acres at the center of a 152-acre site within the Indian Cove District on the north side of Twen-

tynine, just off Highway 62.

The council's action was taken in the context of city staff's support of the proposal as well as a non-binding recommendation by the 29 Palms Planning Commission the previous month that the city council give the project go-ahead. At both the planning com-

mission and city council hearings for the undertaking, there were significantly more residents voicing opposition to Ofland's plan, which required a zone change from residential to tourist commercial, a general plan amendment and a conditional use permit to be allowed to proceed, than there were residents speaking in favor of it.

Notefully, the city council in making its decision utilized a far less exacting environmental certification process than it could have when it gave approval to the Ofland resort. Under the California Environmental Quality Act, an examination of the environmental impacts of a project must be made. Some discretion is left to **See P 5**

## Fontana Solons Pass The Cost Of Past Graft On To Future Southridge Homeowners

Bribes and kickbacks vectored to Fontana's former city manager nearly two generations ago will continue to haunt the city's residents well into the future, including hundreds or even thousands who have yet to move into the community.

The Fontana City Council on March 10 unanimously adopted a resolution to establish a Mello Roos community facilities district within the long-existent Southridge community in the city's southwest quadrant. That action was the followed with confirming action by the entirety of the council at its April 14, 2026 and April 28, 2026 meetings. The council's action, in creating the municipal subdivision labeled it City of Fontana Community Facilities District No. 117 (Southridge), and authorized it to levy a "special tax" within the boundaries of the community facilities district for the purpose of financing certain public facilities and services.

Community services districts, particularly those created under the auspices of the Mello Roos Act and the Marx Roos Act, are areas within a larger city or county subject to "special taxes" in addition to property tax that is normally borne by property and/or homeowners in those jurisdictions. The tax districts established by cities, counties, school districts, or other local agencies to fund public infrastructure and services such as roads, schools, parks, **See P 3**

## Homeless Numbers Increased In The Desert But Came Down In The Valleys, Official January Survey Found *from front page*

areas that need it most. The annual count is crucial for securing grant funding to assist individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

This year's effort was carried out jointly by the San Bernardino County Homeless Partnership, the San Bernardino County Office of Homeless Services, and the Institute for Urban Initiatives, augmented by staff members from 23 of the county's 24 municipalities, law enforcement agencies, nonprofit agencies, faith-based organizations, county departments and especially the San Bernardino County Innovation and Technology Department, using approximately 574 community volunteers to serve as counters. The cities and towns provided space for training and deployment. The San Bernardino County Innovation and Technology Department (ITD) developed maps used by field teams.

In addition to cataloging as homeless those families and individuals registered as homeless by virtue of having been admitted into a homeless shelter within the county, those carrying out the count defined the homeless as "an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning: (i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings."

The sheltered count included residents of emergency shelters and transitional housing programs throughout the

county who slept in these facilities during the night of January 21 through the early morning of January 22,

2026.

The unsheltered count was conducted on Thursday, January 22, 2026, beginning at 6:00 a.m.

A total of 3,718 adults and children were counted as experiencing homelessness during the 2026 Point-in-Time

Count and Survey. This represents a decrease of 119 persons or a negative 3.1 percent compared to the 2025 Point-in-Time Count, in which

3,837 persons were recorded. A comparison of the 2025 and 2026 counts shows, 119 fewer persons were counted in 2026; 188 fewer unsheltered persons or a negative 7.1 percent were counted in 2026 compared to 2025, and 69 or 5.7 percent more sheltered persons were counted in 2026 compared to 2025.

In Adelanto there were 49 total homeless counted, 11 more than the 38 counted in 2024. In Apple Valley there were 37 homeless counted, 19 more than the 18 counted last year. In the unincorporated county area of Arrowbear, there were no homeless, one less than the single person counted last year. In Barstow there were 196 total homeless counted, 40 more than the 96 counted last year. In the unincorporated county area of Big Bear City/Sugarloaf there were 16 homeless, three more than the 13 counted last year. In the municipality of Big Bear Lake there were 18 total homeless counted, 14 fewer than the 32 tallied last year. In the unincorporated county areas of Bloomington/Crestmore, 16 total homeless were counted in January, two fewer than the 18 tallied in Bloomington/Crestmore last year. In the unincorporated county areas of Blue Jay and Cajon Canyon there were no homeless counted, no change from last year. In the unincorporated county area of Cedar-

pines Park there were five homeless, four more than was the case last year.

In Chino there were 29 total homeless counted, 14 more than the 43 counted in Chino last year. In Chino Hills there were ten total homeless counted, seven more than the three counted last year. In Colton there were 203 total homeless counted, 25 more than 178 homeless in Colton last year. In the unincorporated county area of Crestline there were 13 total homeless counted, seven more than the six counted last year. In the unincorporated county area of Devore there were no homeless counted, the same as were counted last year. In Fontana there were 470 total homeless counted, 106 more than the 364 counted there last year. In Grand Terrace there were five total homeless counted, one more than the four counted last year. In Hesperia there were 80 total homeless counted, ten more than the 70 counted last year. In Highland there were 71 total homeless counted, 19 fewer than the 90 counted last year. In Joshua Tree there were 18 total homeless counted, four fewer than the 22 counted last year. In Lake Arrowhead there were two homeless, two more than last year. In the unincorporated community of Landers there were four homeless counted, no change from the four counted last year.

In the unincorporated community of Lenwood there was a single homeless individual, one more than last year. In Loma Linda there were fifteen total homeless counted, four fewer than the nineteen counted last year. In the unincorporated community of Lucerne Valley there were no homeless counted, two fewer than last year. In the unincorporated community of Lytle Creek there were no homeless counted, reflecting no change from the zero homeless found there last year. In the unincorporated communities of Mentone/Crafton there were no homeless, unchanged from last year.

In Montclair there were 55 total homeless counted, up by 17 from the 38 there last year. In the unincorporated community of Morongo Valley there were no homeless, the same as was the case last year. In the unincorporated community of Muscoy there were 11 homeless present, representing no change from last year. In Needles there were six total homeless counted, half of the dozen that were there in 2025. In Ontario there were 298 total homeless counted, one more than the 297 counted last year. In the unincorporated communities of Phelan and Piñon Hills there were no homeless subsisting there, down by two from the two living there last year. In Rancho Cucamonga there were 101 total homeless counted, nineteen fewer than the 120 encountered there last year. In Redlands there were 134 homeless counted, a dozen fewer than the 146 counted in 2025. In Rialto there were 44 homeless within its city limits, ten fewer than the 54 homeless counted last year. In the unincorporated community of Running Springs there were four total homeless counted, matching precisely the number – four – living there last year. In the county seat, the City of San Bernardino, there were 1,172 homeless, 1,535, a reduction of 363 from the 1,535 total homeless counted in the county's largest city population-wise last year. Of note is that last year, a separate tally of the homeless living in the unincorporated area surrounding San Bernardino was not carried out. This year, that area was included in the tallying and was listed among the areas canvassed and had an entry included in the totals for the county as a separate place. The number of homeless counted in the San Bernardino Unincorporated Area this year was 55.

In the unincorporated community of Skyforest there were two home-

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less counted, a doubling of the single homeless person counted last year. In Twentynine Palms there were 24 homeless counted, a significant drop of 62 from the 86 homeless counted there last year. In the unincorporated community of Twin Peaks there were no homeless counted, representing no change from last year. In Upland there were 99 homeless counted, an increase of 32 over the 67 homeless in the City of Gracious Living last year. In the unincorporated community of Valley of Enchantment, where there were seven homeless counted in 2024, the number of destitute increased by four to eleven this year. In Victorville, the number of homeless in the city fell diminished by seven from the 448 counted in 2025 to 441 this year. In the unincorporated community of West Cajon Valley there were no homeless, just as last year. In the unincorporated community of Wonder Valley, there were, as was the case last year, no homeless known to be living there. In the unincorporated community of Yermo there were no homeless counted, a repeat of the circumstance last year. In Yucaipa there were five homeless counted, down by eleven from the sixteen there last year. In Yucca Valley the number of homeless there increased by four, from 42 on January 23, 2025 to 46 on January 22, 2026.

The lower numbers of homeless in the cities of San Bernardino and

Yucaipa are a carryover from a trend that began in 2025 and which was aided by developments in 2024.

On June 28, 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court entered a ruling in the case of City of Grants Pass v. Johnson, which essentially erased the protections under the law that the homeless had enjoyed as a consequence of the 1962 case of Robinson v. California and the 2018 case Martin v. Boise. In Robinson v. California, the Supreme Court held that the Eighth Amendment prohibits criminalization of a status, as opposed to criminalizing criminal acts, in striking down a California law that criminalized being addicted to narcotics. By extension, this applied to being homeless, such that it made applying traditional vagrancy laws difficult, problematic or even impossible, such that someone could not be prosecuted for being homeless. In Martin v. Boise, the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that city officials in Boise, Idaho, could not enforce an anti-camping ordinance whenever its homeless population exceeds the number of available beds in its homeless shelters. Since the Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal to that case in 2019, it became binding precedent within the Ninth Circuit. With its ruling in the matter of the City of Grants Pass v. Johnson, the Supreme Court in one fell swoop undid the restrictions that had applied in the Western

*Continued on Page 4*