

San Diego Newsline

Downtown San Diego news — the budget, public safety, business, and the civic life of America's Finest City

WHAT'S NEWS

COUNTY

150 Official Ballot Drop Boxes Open for November Presidential General Election

COUNTY

Ballots Go Out to Registered Voters for Presidential General Election

COUNTY

County Expanding Mental Health Care Through Recuperative Care Beds

COUNTY

County's Aging Roadmap Highlights Needs of Growing Population

COUNTY

Volunteers Fan Out in Sewage Impacted South County Neighborhoods

BUSINESS

Member Spotlight: Thousand Branches Wellness

BUSINESS

From the Desk of Veronica Perondi – October 2024

INSIDE

Downtown, City & County — 2
Business — 2
Cartoon — 3
Commentary — 3

COUNTY

150 Official Ballot Drop Boxes Open for November Presidential General Election



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Starting Tuesday, Oct. 8, registered voters can return their mail ballot for the November Presidential General Election to any one of 150 official ballot drop boxes located around the county.

Mail ballots for the County's 1.9 million registered voters are expected to arrive this week.

What do the Registrar's official ballot drop boxes look like?

The Registrar's official ballot drop boxes are red, white and blue and feature the Registrar's logo along with the County seal. All boxes are labeled "Official Ballot Drop Box" and made from high grade, heavy gauge stainless steel.

Each official ballot drop box is designed to prevent physical damage and unauthorized access to mail ballots. The boxes feature double-locking access doors, anti-pry door jambs and other anti-theft construction measures. The Registrar's ballot retrieval team is responsible for collecting ballots inside the box.

How do I return my ballot to an official ballot drop box?

Mark your ballot, seal your completed ballot inside your return envelope, date and sign your name on the return envelope, and return it in the mail or to one of the Registrar's official ballot drop boxes around the county. Remember, your signature is required for your vote to count.

Out of the 150 official ballot drop boxes, 118 are located outdoors and are open 24 hours a day up until 8 p.m. on the final day of

voting, Nov. 5. The thirty-two remaining boxes are located indoors and only available when the facility where they are housed is open. Visit sdvote.com to check the location list or the locator map for each facility's hours of operation before heading out to return your ballot.

Early voting began Monday at the Registrar of Voters office located on the County Operations Center campus in Kearny Mesa. Hours run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Starting Saturday, Oct. 26, you can vote in-person at any one of 39 vote centers . They'll be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

On Saturday, Nov. 2, over 200 locations will be available. The vote centers will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Nov. 4. On the final day of voting, Nov. 5, all vote centers and official ballot drop boxes will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

With a significant number of contests on the ballot, the voting process may take longer than usual. The Registrar's office recommends using early voting options to avoid long lines. You have the option of casting your ballot by mail, at an official ballot drop box or at any vote center around the county.

If you plan on voting in person, be prepared. Read your pamphlet and mark your selections on the sample ballot in advance. When you go inside the voting booth at the vote center, you can refer to your choices on the sample ballot

to conveniently mark your selections on your official ballot.

You can find an official ballot drop box or vote center near you inside your voter information pamphlet or you can look it up online at sdvote.com.

Learn more about voting in the November Presidential General Election at sdvote.com , or call (858) 565-5800 or toll free at (800) 696-0136.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 8, 2024

COUNTY

Ballots Go Out to Registered Voters for Presidential General Election

Over 1.9 million ballots are on their way to the County's registered voters for the November Presidential General Election . Voters should receive their ballots the week of Monday, Oct. 7. The official ballot packet will also include an "I Voted" sticker.

With a significant number of contests on the ballot, the voting process may take longer than usual so the Registrar's office recommends voting early.

You can vote from home and return your ballot through the mail – no postage needed – or to any of the Registrar's official ballot drop boxes starting Tuesday, Oct. 8 through the final day of voting Tuesday, Nov. 5.

Remember to sign and date your return ballot envelope. You must sign your return envelope for your vote to be counted.

Voters who return their ballot through the U.S. Postal Service can track it by signing up for "Where's My Ballot?" .

You can vote in person when early voting begins Monday, Oct. 7 at the Registrar of Voters office in Kearny Mesa . Hours run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Continued on page 2

DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

Courts · Transit · Public safety

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Ballots Go Out to Registered Voters for Presidential General Election

Monday through Friday.

Additional options to vote in person will begin Saturday, Oct. 26 with the opening of 39 vote centers . They will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

On Saturday, Nov. 2, over 200 vote centers will be open. All of the locations will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Nov. 4. On the final day of voting, Tuesday, Nov. 5, all vote centers and official ballot drop boxes will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

If you plan on voting in person, be prepared. Read your pamphlet and mark your selections on the sample ballot in advance. When you go inside the voting booth at the vote center, you can refer to your choices on the sample ballot to conveniently mark your selections on your official ballot.

You can find a vote center or an official ballot drop box near you inside your voter information pamphlet, or you can look up your pamphlet online with the View Voter Information Pamphlet (Sample Ballot) tool at sdvote.com.

Learn more about voting in the November Presidential General Election at sdvote.com , or call (858) 565-5800 or toll free at (800) 696-0136.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 4, 2024

COUNTY

County Expanding Mental Health Care Through Recuperative Care Beds

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors has accepted a \$12.4 million grant from the state and approved using \$8 million in other funds to expand access to mental health services.

The grant from the state’s Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program will fund

16 recuperative beds along with renovations to a building that will become a new County Substance Use Residential and Treatment Services facility in National City. It will also fund another 33 new recuperative care beds at other treatment centers.

The 16 recuperative beds at the substance use residential and treatment program will provide short-term housing for adults in substance use treatment to recover after being discharged from an acute care setting. Acute care facilities are higher security spaces providing round the clock care with constant supervision while the short terms beds help patients transition back into the community.

“Recuperative care is a key service within our behavioral health continuum,” said Dr. Luke Bergmann, director of County Behavioral Health Services. “Patients with behavioral health conditions are five times more likely to have physical health challenges and are at higher risk of homelessness than those without. Recuperative care enables patients with behavioral health and other challenges to be safely discharged from hospital settings and put on a path towards recovery.”

The increase in recuperative care beds is also expected to serve people experiencing homelessness who are transitioning out of crisis and into more stable, long-term housing solutions.

The 33 new recuperative care beds create more access to mental health services through a community-based care model. They are part of the County’s expansion of short-term community-based care services that includes six Crisis Stabilization Units with one more under construction.

For more information about behavioral health services, go to County Behavioral Health department’s webpage . For

more about the County’s Crisis Stabilization Units, visit the CSU webpage.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 8, 2024

COUNTY

County’s Aging Roadmap Highlights Needs of Growing Population

The County’s Board of Supervisors recently received an update on the Aging Roadmap, which serves as the County’s framework for creating supportive and inclusive communities where people of all ages and abilities have broad and equitable opportunities to thrive.

Today, more than 710,000 people 60 years of age and older live in San Diego County and that number is expected to grow to 820,000 over the next five years.

Originally released in 2019, the Aging Roadmap is updated yearly using feedback from community members, surveys and those who work with or serve the aging population.

“The feedback we get from the community is really important to us,” said Jennifer Bransford-Koons, County Aging & Independence Services (AIS) Director. “It tells us whether we are reaching people with the right services in a way that is accessible to them so that they can age well and thrive.”

The 2024 Aging Roadmap Annual Update covers program highlights including:

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), AIS’ largest program provides help with personal care and household chores for older adults and adults and children living with disabilities. Last fiscal year, from July 2023 to July 2024, the program grew by almost nine percent to 42,000 people due a growing population of older adults and more outreach efforts to promote the program.

The Tech2Connect program helped more than 600 IHSS participants stay connected with others and find mental health resources during the last fiscal year. The program offers participants tablets with internet connection and training on how to use the technology. Similarly, the Digital Inclusion Program also provided 340 older adults with tablets and education.

To increase access to social opportunities to more older adults, AIS worked with County Parks and Recreation to host intergenerational activities like pickleball, cooking classes and holiday festivals for more than 1,350 people. Nine intergenerational gardens are also being created across the county.

The San Diego County No-Cost Transportation Program for Older Adults provided more than 20,500 one-way trips to older adults last fiscal year. Access to safe, affordable and reliable transportation is crucial for older adults to maintain independence, be able to get to the services they need and stay socially connected.

Overall, the County has provided training to thousands of area doctors on dementia best practices. There are more than 98,600 residents in the region older than 55 years old living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias . More patients are being screened for cognitive impairments than ever before.

The Caregiver Support Program helps people who care for a family member or loved one. It provided 466 training workshops to teach family caregivers new skills. Additionally, the program provided 11,500 hours of respite care that allowed caregivers to tend to other life needs.

To promote the safety of older adults and people with disabilities, Adult Protective Services (APS) did more than 20,000 investigations. APS also continues a media

campaign to increase awareness of elder abuse and where to report it.

To prevent falls and injuries, the Dignity at Home Fall Prevention Program gave out more than 320 fall prevention kits with home safety items.

People with questions or those who want to learn more about the programs and services available for older adults can call the AIS Call Center at 1-800-339-4661 or visit the AIS website.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 4, 2024

COUNTY

Volunteers Fan Out in Sewage Impacted South County Neighborhoods

Teams of volunteers hit the streets in South County this week to hand out information about an upcoming community health assessment related to the sewage pollution in the Tijuana River Valley.

The volunteers stopped by about 6,000 households living near the polluted river valley to drop off information explaining the survey process that will be led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at the end of October.

This type of information gathering is known as a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response or CASPER . It is designed to provide a front-line perspective of the health concerns and lifestyle impacts the sewage spills and odors are having on the community.

The information collected will help local leaders better understand the health concerns and needs of the community and plan next steps in the ongoing response.

Learn more about South Region Health Concerns .

County of San Diego news release · Oct 4, 2024

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

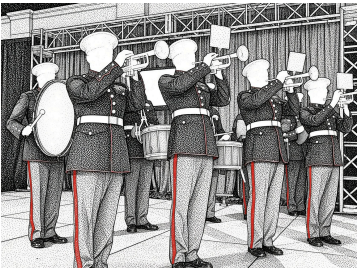


Illustration from a photo by Pattymooney · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

BUSINESS

Member Spotlight: Thousand Branches Wellness

Thousand Branches Wellness is proud to be a new member

of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, and we are thrilled to connect with the local business community. As the first of many standalone outpatient mental health and wellness clinics opening across the country, our brand-new facility is centrally located in beautiful Mission Valley. We provide exceptional, evidenced-based general mental health care to teens (ages 12 and up), adults, active-duty military, veterans, and their families.

Our services include Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), Individual, Family and Couples Therapy, and Medication Management-both in-person and virtually. We cover a range of mental health needs, from anxiety and depression to trauma, PTSD, and more. We utilize evidence-based practices such as Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

and Seeking Safety to ensure the highest standard of care with the hope of long-term healing.

As a member of the Chamber, we look forward to building strong connections within the business community and exploring opportunities to partner together in addressing the mental health needs of San Diego. Our mission is to make mental health care accessible and compassionate . We accept most commercial

insurances, including Tricare and VA Community Care Network.

If you or someone you know needs support, please call our 24/7 assessment line at 619.202.8586 – we’re here to help out whenever you need it.

We invite you to follow us on social media to stay updated on our latest offerings and initiatives.

Continued on page 3

BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2
Member Spotlight:
Thousand Branches
Wellness

San Diego Regional Chamber of
Commerce news release · Oct 7, 2024

BUSINESS
From the Desk of
Veronica Perondi –
October 2024

I am still riding the high from the Visionary Awards! I’ve heard such incredible feedback about the venue, the weather and the atmosphere created by all who attended. It was a pleasure to meet so

many of you for the first time and share both my story and the vision for LEAD. It was truly an inspirational night, reminding me how grateful I am to be a San Diegan and to work in this community.

During my speech, I shared a video highlighting the innovation and collaboration that LEAD fosters. I’ve heard so many impactful stories about relationships, ideas, and programs that have been created from connections through LEAD, and I wanted to share one of them. Lydia Bartell (22), Vice President of Bartell Hotels and Cristina

Alfaro, Ph.D. (22), Associate Vice President of International Affairs and Professor of Multilingual and Global Education at San Diego State University, met during their Influence program. Their connection led to the creation of an English as a Second Language Course with an Emphasis on Hospitality. Lydia and Cristina shared their story in this video , and we also get to hear from Ivan Castro, a student of the program.

What inspires me and excites me most about the opportunities with LEAD isn’t

just the professional growth that occurs within the programs, it’s the connections formed and the ideas that spring from them. LEAD is the biggest connecting mechanism in town; it breaks us out of our industry silos and taps into the creativity that happens when two minds collaborate to create lasting impacts in our community.

When I talk to people about why LEAD is so important, and what sets it apart from other professional development programs, I emphasize that LEAD is a

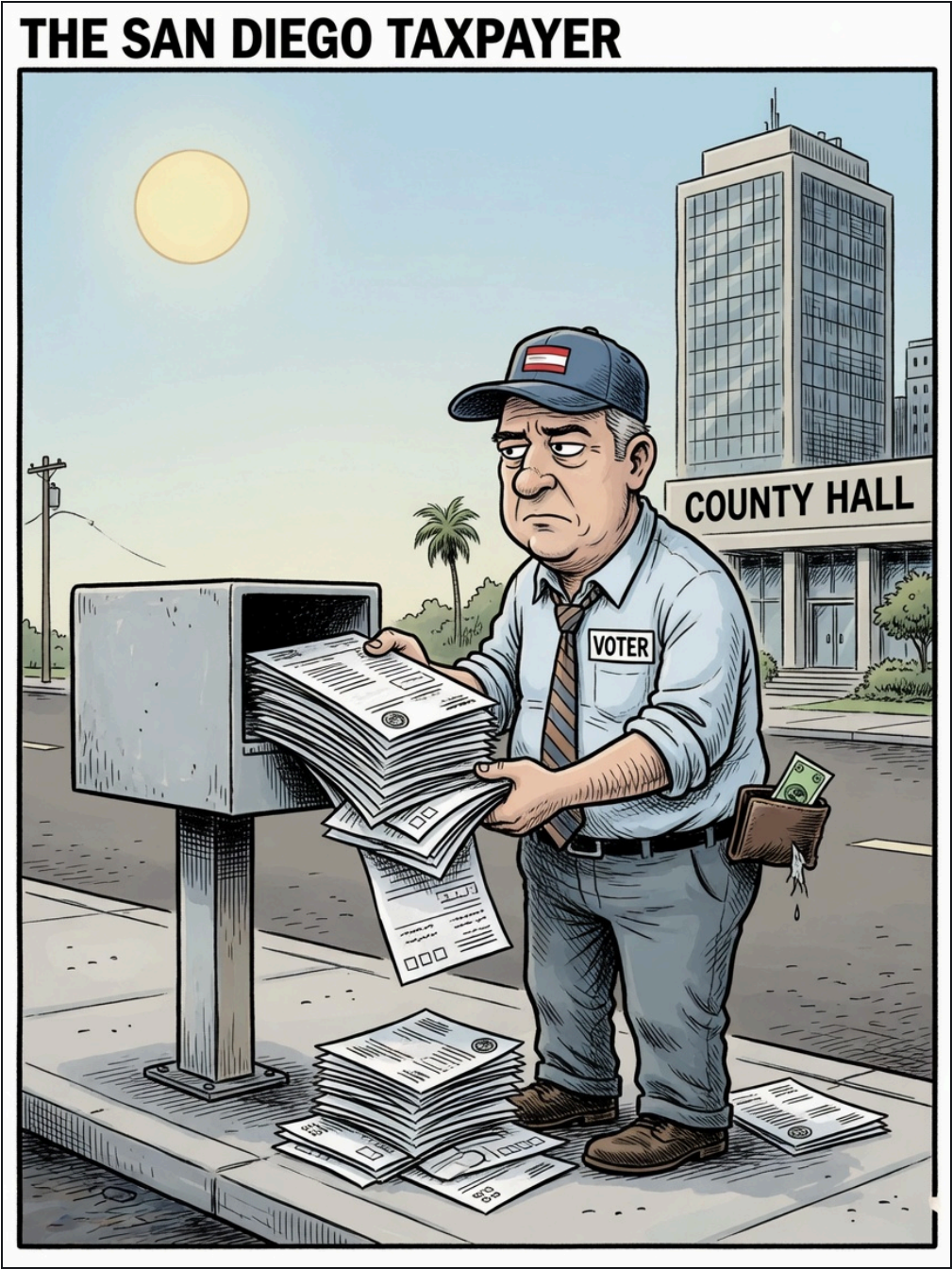
shared experience for participants, fostering community and civic engagement. As one of our Impact speakers said at the last seminar, “creative collisions and conversations can lead to incredible innovations”.

As we look ahead to the coming year and welcoming a new class of graduates, I encourage you to make the most of the connections you’ve established through LEAD.

San Diego Regional Chamber of
Commerce news release · Oct 4, 2024

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



Over 1.9 million ballots on the way

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

Opinion — the views of the writers named, not news reporting

COMMENTARY
California Policy
Center Introduces New
Tool to Monitor Local
Government Finances

The organization aims to boost transparency and accountability by grading cities, counties and school districts on their fiscal management.

SACRAMENTO — The California Policy Center has rolled out an interactive Local Fiscal Health Dashboard designed to let residents, analysts and

officials keep tabs on how well California’s cities, counties and school districts handle their money.

According to the Center, the new online resource assigns each government body a letter grade from A to F along with a risk level labeled low, moderate or high for potential budget troubles.

The California Policy Center argues that this dashboard fills an important gap created when the state auditor stopped publishing its own high-risk local

government tracker last year.

Lance Christensen, the Center’s vice president of government affairs, said the public needs straightforward ways to demand openness from leaders. “The public should have access to the tools necessary to ensure government budgets are transparent and government officials are held accountable,” Christensen stated.

He added that residents must not let leaders hide unpleasant budget realities.

The Center explains that its dashboard draws on publicly available annual financial statements that local governments must file to receive federal money. These reports supply the numbers needed to judge overall performance and to spot worrisome patterns.

Among the key measures examined are reserve levels, debt loads, cash availability, income changes, retirement costs and overall financial position. The Center notes that California faces more

than \$1.6 trillion in unpaid obligations at state and local levels, with many communities carrying heavy unfunded pension debts.

The California Policy Center points out that a surprising number of localities turn in their required annual reports late or not at all. Out of 482 cities, 56 had not delivered their 2023 statements by the time of the launch, representing 11.62 percent. In total, 169 cities, counties and school

Continued on page 4

COMMENTARY (CONTINUED)

Opinion — the views of the writers named, not news reporting

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

California Policy Center Introduces New Tool to Monitor Local Government Finances

districts still owed 2023 filings.

Even more troubling, the Center reports that 26 of those delinquent governments are nevertheless seeking voter approval for tax hikes or new bonds that would add \$534.6 million in fresh borrowing.

Christensen emphasized the danger of deciding budgets without up-to-date information. “When cities

don’t turn in their fiscal reports on time, city officials have to make important budget decisions without the data they need,” he said. He continued that it is “even worse” when lagging jurisdictions pursue higher taxes and bond measures.

As of mid-November the Center adjusted its reserve scoring so that the top mark now goes to entities holding unrestricted reserves equal to 32 percent of general-fund spending. This shift has altered some grades and altered the lists of strongest and weakest performers.

The California Policy Center says its grading system relies on ten financial indicators, including pension funding ratios and other post-employment benefit liabilities. The underlying approach was shaped by researchers at the Hoover Institution and adapts the former state-auditor model to fit available data.

In addition to the dashboard, the Center has published a guide to help local leaders improve budget forecasting and tackle emerging problems before they grow severe.

The organization maintains that timely, clear financial data is essential if elected officials, journalists and citizens are to understand how communities compare and whether troubling trends are developing.

By making these assessments available, the California Policy Center hopes to encourage stronger oversight and more responsible decision-making across California’s local governments.

Ultimately the Center warns that without greater scrutiny, too many

communities risk sliding toward fiscal crisis while leaders delay or obscure the true state of their books.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Oct 9, 2024

ABOUT THIS PAPER

San Diego Newsline covers downtown San Diego first — City Hall, the Gaslamp Quarter, East Village, Little Italy, Barrio Logan and the waterfront — and the county around it. Every item names its source; read the originals and our standards at sandiegonewsline.com.

MORE NEWS

Downtown, City & County

COUNTY

County Reports First Locally Acquired Dengue Case

The County is investigating the first ever case of locally acquired dengue. The Escondido resident who became sick with dengue did not travel to an area where the mosquito transmitted illness is common. No additional locally acquired cases have been identified at this time.

To protect the public’s health and keep mosquitoes from potentially spreading the dengue virus, County Vector Control began spraying this weekend for mosquitos at about 170 homes in Escondido. Treatments started on Friday and will continue through Thursday, Oct. 10.

Dengue is a tropical viral disease that is not commonly found in the United States. Since the invasive Aedes mosquitoes were first detected in San Diego County in 2014, there had been no locally acquired case of dengue until now.

People who travel to countries where dengue is common can get infected with dengue through mosquito bites. So far this year, there have been 49 cases of travel-related dengue in San Diego County.

“While the risk of widespread transmission of

dengue remains low in San Diego County, County Public Health and Vector Control are working closely to respond quickly to prevent mosquitoes from spreading the illness in this area,” said Dr. Ankita Kadakia, County interim public health officer.

The arrival of locally acquired dengue in San Diego County is not a surprise. Los Angeles County recently reported five cases of locally contracted dengue this year. Long Beach and Pasadena had their first cases of locally acquired dengue in late 2023.

Vector Control did similar treatments in Oceanside in September and in the Mount Hope area of San Diego in July of this year. Both of those treatments were initiated as a precaution to prevent potential local spread of dengue due to travel-associated dengue cases and the high numbers of Aedes mosquitos in the neighborhoods.

Dengue is spread by mosquitoes , when a mosquito bites an infected person and then feeds on another person.

It can take four to seven days for someone who is bitten by a mosquito infected with dengue to start feeling symptoms. Dengue can be determined by a blood test that can be discussed with a healthcare provider.

The most common

symptoms are fever, chills and any of the following: aches and pains (eye pain, muscle, joint or bone pain), nausea, vomiting, and rash.

Symptoms can be moderate and last two to seven days. Most people recover after about a week. However, symptoms can also become severe, be deadly, include shock and respiratory distress, and can require hospitalization. There are no specific medicines to treat dengue.

“Fight the Bite” – How to Prevent and Protect Yourself from Mosquitos

Day-biting Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, also known as “ankle-biters,” are the primary transmitter of dengue. These mosquitoes like to live and breed around people, often in yards and in small amounts of water.

Dump out, drain, or remove any items inside and outside of homes that can hold water, such as plant saucers, rain barrels, buckets, garbage cans, toys, old tires, and wheelbarrows. Mosquitofish, available for free at locations throughout the county , may be used to control mosquito breeding in backyard standing water sources, such as unmaintained swimming pools, ponds, fountains, and horse troughs.

Protect yourself from mosquito-borne illnesses by

wearing long sleeves and pants or use insect repellent when outdoors.

Use insect repellent that contains EPA-approved ingredients like DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535.

Make sure screens on windows and doors are in good condition and secured to keep insects out.

County Mosquito Control Efforts Underway

Trained County technicians are working to reduce the number of adult mosquitoes that can spread dengue by applying AquaDuet, a pesticide approved for use by the Environmental Protection Agency, using ultra-low-volume backpack sprayers in focused areas and trucks to apply the product to a wider part of the area .

The County began by informing neighbors and leaving doorhangers at homes in the treatment area Friday. Treatment boundaries along with additional information can be found on Vector Control’s adult mosquito control webpage . The treatment product is low risk to people and pets and dissipates in roughly 20 to 30 minutes. People in the area can avoid or minimize their exposure to the pesticide by taking simple steps:

Stay inside and bring pets indoors if possible

Close doors and windows,

and turn off fans that bring outdoor air inside the home

Wash any pet food and water bowls that were left outside during the treatment

Cover fishponds to avoid direct exposure

Rinse fruits and vegetables from your garden with water as you normally would before cooking or eating

Wipe down or cover outdoor items such as toys and barbecue grills

Beekeepers and those with insects kept outdoors are encouraged to shelter hives and habitats during treatments. Beekeepers registered with the County’s Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures can request to receive advance notice when a pesticide that may affect bees is applied to blossoming plants in their areas.

You may resume normal activities 30 minutes after the treatment

For more information about mosquitoes go to San Diego County’s “Fight the Bite” website.

For people in the affected area, County Public Health staff are on site in the Escondido community today and tomorrow and available to answer questions and provide information about dengue.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 6, 2024

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