

San Diego Newsline

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

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COUNTY

Sweetwater Riverbed Outreach Provides Homeless Fresh Start



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People experiencing homelessness and living in the Sweetwater Riverbed area have new hope for permanent housing. A state grant for \$5.1 million and the collaborative work between the County, the City of Chula Vista, National City and California Department of Transportation has led to greater homeless outreach, increasing numbers of people transitioning into housing and regular clean-up opportunities.

The Sweetwater Riverbed includes an area in South County parallel to Interstate 805 nicknamed, “The Jungle.” Moving people out of the riverbed means safer, cleaner and healthier living conditions and a chance at a fresh start.

The grant is part of the state’s \$240 million dollar Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) to help local jurisdictions resolve encampments. It is the second ERF grant awarded to the County’s Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities to lead this multi-agency work in our riverbed areas.

Since January, 91 people have transitioned from the San Diego Riverbed to emergency housing and in July, moves to permanent housing began. 10 people have left emergency housing for permanent housing in the past three months.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 15, 2024



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COUNTY

Leaving San Diego Riverbed for a New Home

Some of San Diego’s largest riverbed encampments are showing signs of progress and hope. A County partnership with the City of San Diego, City of Santee and California Department of Transportation is prioritizing homeless outreach and immediate shelter for people living in the riverbed area.

The County received a \$17 million grant from the state’s Encampment Resolution Fund last fall to resolve encampments in the riverbed by helping people experiencing homelessness find safe and stable housing, connect to supportive services and to clean up the area.

With the new funding, the County’s Department of Homeless Solutions & Equitable Communities began expanding outreach efforts to an estimated 300 people experiencing homelessness living along the riverbed.

Since January, 91 people have transitioned from the San Diego Riverbed to emergency housing and in July, moves to permanent housing began. 10 people have left emergency housing for permanent housing in the past three months.

The compassionate work in the riverbed is changing lives and providing safer, cleaner and healthier living conditions for people who are unhoused.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 11, 2024

COUNTY

County Invites you to Check Your Mood

When was the last time you asked yourself “ How are you feeling? ” It’s something we ask others all the time but less often do we ask the same of ourselves. The County’s Check Your Mood Day is an opportunity to do just that.

Every year during Mental Illness Awareness Week, the County invites the community to get screened for depression and assess their mental health as part of Check Your Mood Day , celebrated the first Thursday of the first full week of October on National Depression Screening Day. This year’s local observance is Oct. 10.

A quick online self-assessments is a simple way to check whether you are experiencing normal levels of stress. While these assessments are not diagnostic, they are a great way to help monitor your mood and overall emotional well-being.

“Checking in on your mental health is just as important as getting your blood pressure checked or seeing your doctor for an annual physical,” said Luke Bergmann, Ph.D., director of the County Behavioral Health Services. “Check Your Mood Day is a great reminder that mental health plays a critical role in overall wellness. It’s an opportunity to take a moment to become more aware of how you’re feeling and evaluate whether some of the things you may be experiencing like poor appetite, having a hard time concentrating or having low energy are connected to emotional distress. If that’s the case, there are steps people can take to get support for their mental health.”

People who experience mental illness like depression are not alone. The Department of Health and Human

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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County Invites you to Check Your Mood

Services says one in five adults in the United States experiences a mental illness each year.

Despite how common it is, many people do not know what they are experiencing is a mental illness. Others suffer in silence out of fear of being stigmatized.

Symptoms of depression vary but include lack of energy, sadness, loss of interest in activities that previously brought joy, and trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.

Resources are available to help people experiencing a mental health challenge that can affect thinking, emotions, behaviors or mood.

The County’s 30-Day Mental Wellness Practice , is a free and friendly way to engage in daily self-care activities like developing a nighttime routine, trying a new recipe, calling a loved one, doing a one-day digital detox, coloring or watching the sunset.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health challenge, call the San Diego Access and Crisis Line at 1-888-724-7240 or 988. Calls are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week by experienced counselors, and offer help in more than 200 languages.

The County’s Up2SD.org and OwnYourMindset.org websites also have resources for adults and youth to take control of their mental health.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 10, 2024

COUNTY

No Tricks, Just Pet Treats

County shelter pets are trick or treating for homes early this year and they will wear nearly anything for treats! Adoptable pets dressed up as a “harey” witch, a lettuce vampire, two wiggly jack-o-lanterns, a slobbery-kissy fairy, King Meow II, a rootin,’ tootin’ cowboy and a “dreaded” pirate.

Add “fun-kin spice” to your spooky season by adopting or fostering one or more of County shelter pets. To sweeten the deal, County Animal Services is offering a Halloween treat to all: Free pet adoptions, if you mention that you saw our costumed animal ambassadors on a County site.

All animals adopted from County shelters will be spayed or neutered, have vaccinations, a microchip and a one-year license for dogs in the service area.

Please visit County Animal Services’ Adoptions page and browse the “bootiful” animals that will make your heart pound with love. Currently, the shelters have cats, dogs, pigs, guinea pigs, roosters, along with a rabbit, a tortoise and a chinchilla available now. Animal Services staff recommend that people pick out a second and third choice too, just in case your first choice is already chosen by another person.

If you’re not sure, consider fostering a pet to see if it is a good fit, or just to give him or her a break from the shelter environment. Pets benefit tremendously from being in a home environment and learning how to be part of a family. All basic care supplies such as food, leash, and bedding, are included as part of the program.

Walk-in hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday at both the South Shelter, 5821 Sweetwater Road in Bonita, or the North Shelter, 2481 Palomar Airport Road in Carlsbad.

County Animal Services is committed to the safety and welfare of animals and the community. Through education, adoption, and compassionate care, it works to provide homes for adoptable animals while promoting responsible pet ownership.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 10, 2024

COUNTY

San Diego County Annual Report Shows Community in Action

The County works with the community to address the region’s challenges and together, we are getting results.

You’ll see our achievements in the County’s Fiscal Year 2023/24 Annual Report released Thursday.

The report shows how we’re moving forward in areas that affect all of us in some way – affordable housing, homelessness, behavioral health, public safety, justice reform, environmental sustainability, healthy and safe communities, and equity.

“In coming together, we achieved more than any of us could alone,” said Chief Administrative Officer Ebony Shelton. “That unity, and the collective impact it brings, is making a difference in the lives of people throughout the region and positions us to deal with any challenges that may come our way.”

The County worked with its partners to help more people across the region move into affordable housing. Ten

affordable housing developments opened this last fiscal year and 17 more are in the works. The County has invested \$314 million into affordable housing since 2017.

The Shallow Rental Subsidy Program expanded to help more low-income seniors avoid homelessness. A \$500 a month subsidy goes to their landlords allowing these seniors to stay in their homes.

In just one year, nearly 1,000 unhoused veterans were permanently housed as part of the Leave No Veteran Homeless initiative. The County and over a dozen regional partners worked together to make it happen.

The Board of Supervisors also approved nearly \$4.5 million to expand its Mobile Crisis Response program. It uses behavioral health experts rather than law enforcement to respond to non-violent situations where people are experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

Some people experiencing a behavioral health crisis were admitted to Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs) where a calm space allows them to become stable. The County has six CSUs around the region and broke ground on its 7 th in July.

County Fire celebrated the opening of the East Otay Mesa Fire Station last October and the Sheriff’s Office took delivery of two new state-of-the-art helicopters. One will fight fires and the other will primarily act as a patrol helicopter.

Phase 2 of the Youth Transition Campus was completed and is now fully operational. The campus incorporates justice reform into detention facilities for young people. For adults who are leaving jail, a resource hub is in the works to help them reenter the community.

One Safe Place , the North County Family Justice Center, helps trauma survivors with much needed services. Plans are now underway to open a second location in the South Bay.

The County is investing \$500,000 to implement the Uplift Boys & Men of Color initiative . It will connect at-risk youth with wrap-around services, trauma support systems and workforce development opportunities.

The Equity Impact Grant Program gave ten nonprofits \$100,000 grants each and another ten are under evaluation. The program helps small, nonprofit organizations address inequity in areas like housing, health, education and public safety. The County

is adding another \$2 million over two years to expand the program.

The County updated its Climate Action Plan for unincorporated communities. The plan outlines how the County, residents and businesses can reduce greenhouse gases, wildfire risks and protect the natural environment.

The County also added more open space, planted thousands of trees, increased the number of electric vehicles in its fleet and built more charging stations.

Construction began on a new state-of-the-art public health lab that will serve the entire region. The facility will open next spring.

And the Southeastern Live Well Center opened its doors. The community played a central role in its creation. The County’s sixth Live Well Center offers food and nutrition assistance, family strengthening services, financial and employment assistance, public health, behavioral health, child support, restorative justice, services for older adults and people with disabilities, and military and veterans’ services.

Two libraries expanded last year, and a new branch is planned for Casa de Oro. Two parks opened: Four Gee Park in 4S Ranch and the County’s first equestrian park in Lakeside. Three other parks around the region are in the works.

To see the full Annual Report, go to the County’s Annual Report webpage.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 10, 2024

COUNTY

County Agriculture Blooming Again in New Crop Report

San Diego County releases its 2023 annual Crop Report showing totals and trends in local agriculture. So, what tops the list?

Nursery & Cut Flower products were 71% of the total agricultural value, followed by Fruit & Nuts group that included crops such as avocados and citrus.

Bedding Plants, Color, Perennials, Cacti & Succulents continue to reign supreme for the third year in a row, bringing in a total of \$396,623,341, which is 24% of the total value of agriculture production in the county.

The second most valuable group is Ornamental Trees and Shrubs, valued at \$383,114,393, equaling 23% of the region’s overall agricultural production value.

The report also shows total

production is \$1.66 billion in value, which is about \$120 million less than 2022. This change is mainly due to the drop in value of Bedding Plants, Color, Perennials, Cacti & Succulents.

The report gives a yearly snapshot of agriculture’s contribution to the region’s economy, despite longstanding challenges like the region’s inclement weather, rising water costs, wildfires, freezes and pests.

Did you know San Diego has 4,031 farms, 94% of which are family farms? It ranks 6th in the United States for the number of farms and has the most number of small farms in the state. San Diego County ranks No. 1 in Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod in California and No. 2 in the United States.

Even though the Crop Report covering the County’s 2023 growing season shows value declined, it also had some positive changes. The groups this year that thrived were Field Crops, Apiary Products and Forest Products.

Apiary Products were valued at \$4,749,866, a 47% increase from last year. The increase is mainly due to an increase of 264% in Honey and Beeswax production, caused by an increase in rainfall. Pollinations dropped 8% because there were fewer colonies used for these services.

Field Crops’ value increased to \$4,489,288, which is 14% higher than last year. The growth in the group’s overall value was mainly due to Field, Other, which increased by 44% in value due to an increase in acres.

The groups Nursery & Cut Flower Products, Fruit & Nut Products, Vegetable & Vine Crops and Livestock & Poultry decreased in value. This drop was due to lower acreage, demand of products, and prices.

Other highlights from the report, compared to last year, include:

The value of Apples spiked by 73% due to higher profits as growers reported a recovery from last year’s 52% drop due to poor weather.

The overall value of Citrus increased by 5% compared to last year despite a 3% decrease in acres. All Citrus crops except Oranges increased in value. Lemons and Kumquats both rose by 21%, while Tangerines, Tangelos rose by 10%. The Citrus value growth is due to increased prices.

Fruit & Nut Crops’ value decreased to \$292,644,242, a 4% drop from the previous year, due to decreased acres

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY (CONTINUED)

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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County Agriculture Blooming Again in New Crop Report and prices

The value of Avocados decreased due to lower acreage, production, and prices.

The value of Grapes, Wine increased by 36% due to growth in production and acres.

Vegetable & Vine Crops’ value decreased to \$89,665,332, a 31% drop from last year. This decrease was mainly due to a 34% drop in the value of Vegetables, Other. However, there was an increase in the value of Squash by 12%. The drop in value for this group is due to decreases in acres.

The value of Nursery & Cut Flower Products dropped by 3% to \$1,177,552,435. Other, Cut Flowers & Bulbs had the biggest drop in percentage in this group which was 18%. The drop is due to a decrease in acres and reduced sales.

Last year, the County certified 8,924 shipments of plant material, including fruits and vegetables, to 46 countries. The top issued certificates of goods grown in San Diego and exported in the United States, included: Ornamental Trees & Shrubs, Cacti & Succulents and Tomatoes.

The report provides crop information and highlights the many diverse programs that the County’s Department of Agriculture, Weights and

Measures (AWM) implements to support the food supply, agricultural trade, public health, consumer confidence and a sustainable environment.

AWM applies state regulatory programs to detect, control and remove harmful insect pests, plant diseases and weeds, which is just one of the many programs the department undertakes and can be read about in the report.

Last year, AWM inspectors stopped 20 snail and slug infestations and 121 plant diseases. The County also has a Detector Dog Team Program. The dogs checked shipments at parcel facilities and found:

88 pests that damage crops

and landscape plants.

313 packages that were in violation of state pest exclusion laws out of which 44% were incorrectly marked.

In 2024, the San Diego region experienced extraordinary rains, flooding events, and mudslides. These events placed heavy burdens on regional communities and local agricultural operations. Regional damage estimates are projected to be \$90 million.

AWM took part in Emergency Operations Center meetings to help with regional emergency efforts. Twelve AWM staff worked a total of 674 hours as Disaster Service Workers. AWM performed verification visits

to 26 operators who submitted damage reports. These damages totaled \$664,000 to livestock and crops, agricultural infrastructure, and lost wages.

Many agencies and organizations worked together to ensure a supportive recovery. AWM is honored to be a part of this community and to support San Diego agricultural operations in times of need.

The County compiles the Crop Report each year and publishes it online . There is also an integrated Microsoft Translate feature to read the report in many languages.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 11, 2024

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

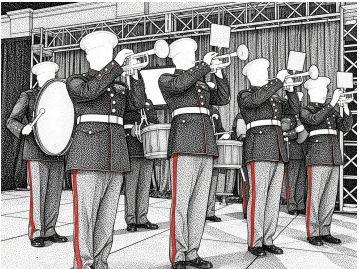


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BUSINESS

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.

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.

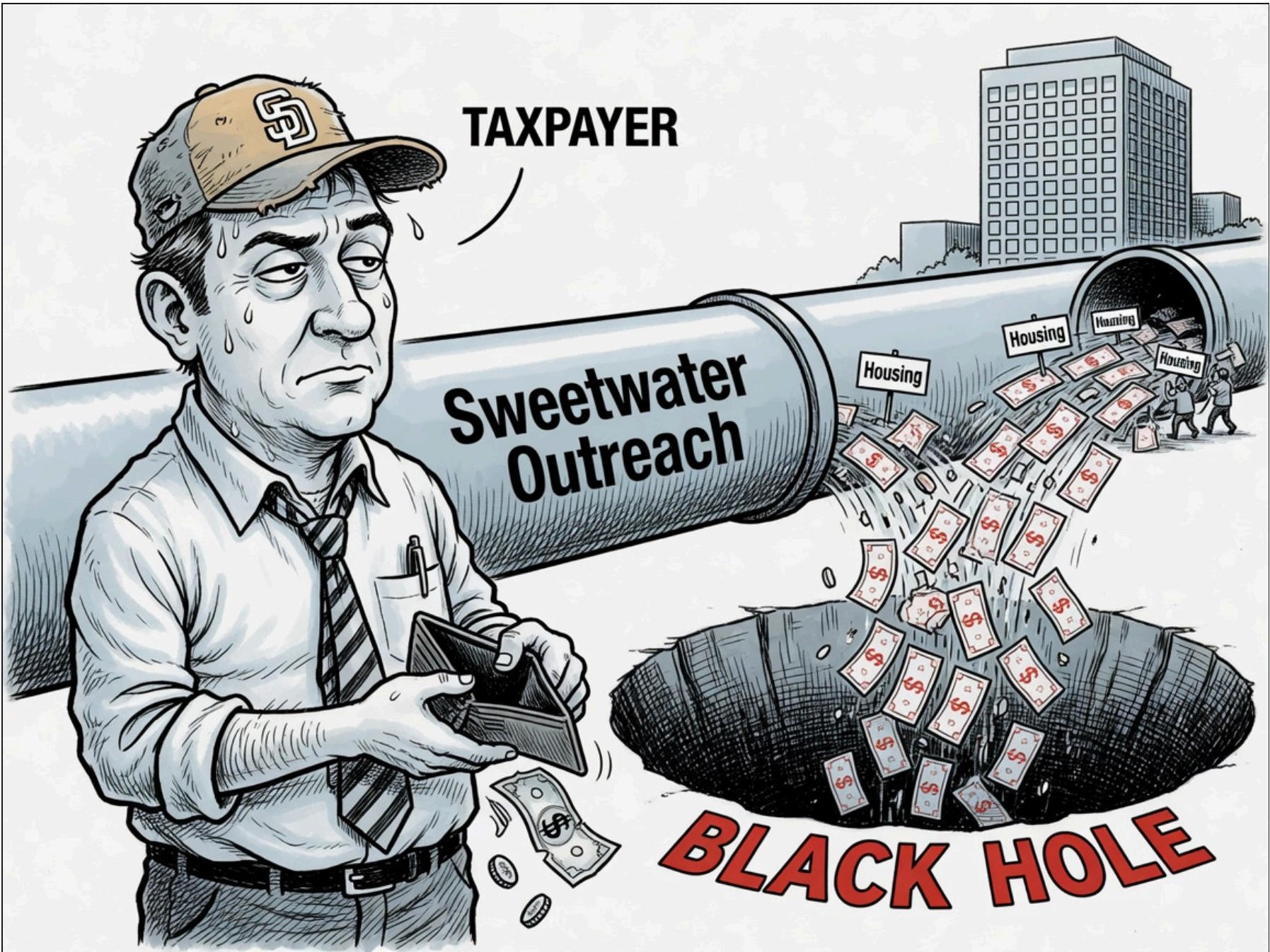
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Oct 4, 2024

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Another multimillion-dollar 'fresh start' down the same old hole

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

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

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

SAN DIEGO NEWSLINE

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