

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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DOWNTOWN

Live Well Advance Celebrates the Power of Partnerships

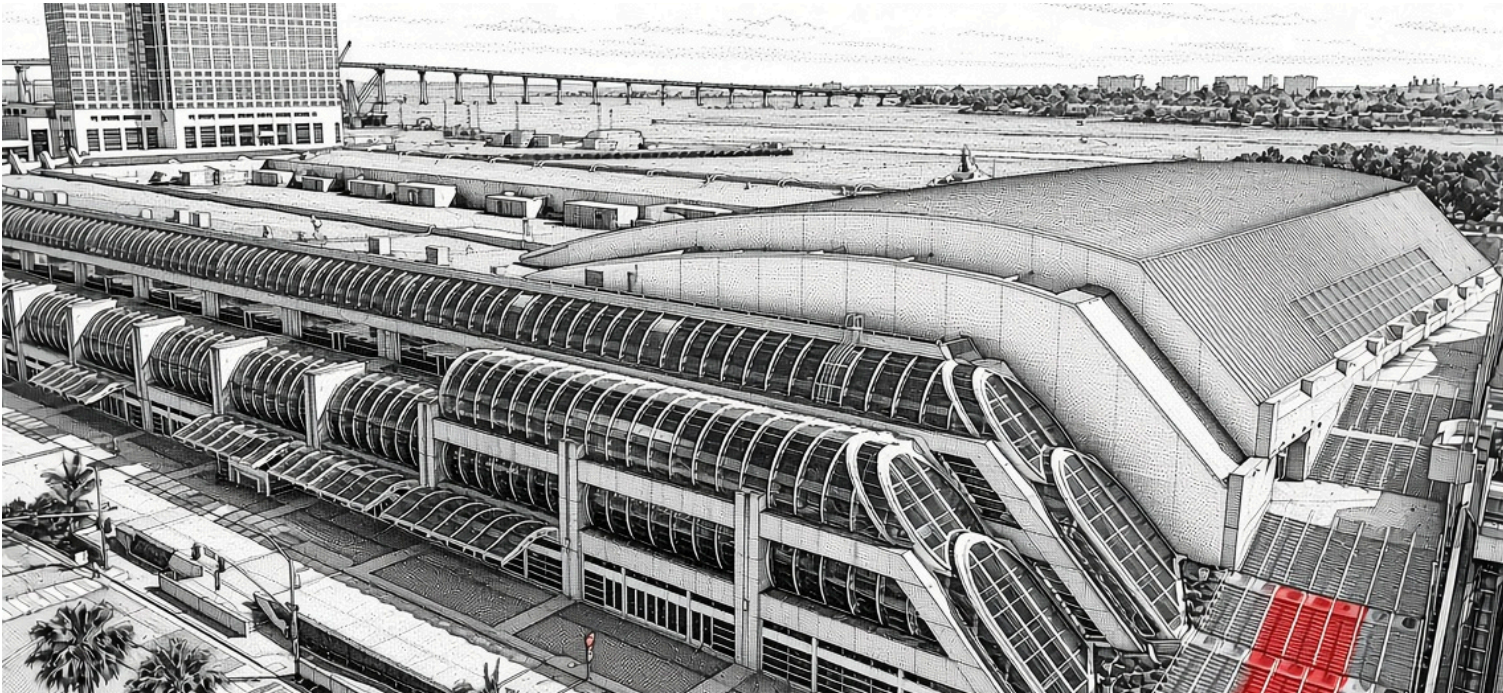


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Focusing on the power of partnerships and youth mental health, the ninth-annual Live Well Advance Conference & School Summit drew nearly 2,000 people on Nov. 21 to an all-day event at the San Diego Convention Center.

Thousands of partners and stakeholders spent the day networking, sharing information and best practices. Issues big and small, but all of importance, were discussed in depth during breakout sessions. The keynote panel discussion focused on the rapidly evolving social media environment, its effects on students, educators and families, and where changes to technology to protect youth might be headed.

Each year these Live Well Advance conversations breathe life into new ideas, programs and services that foster a more healthy, safe, and thriving San Diego region.

The cost-free event was presented by the County of San Diego, the San Diego County Office of Education, Alliance Healthcare Foundation and sponsored by the Prebys Foundation, California Schools VEBA, VEBA Elev8 Online Schools, Learn4Life High Schools, Rady Children's, Blue Shield Promise Health Plan, AARP, and First 5 San Diego.

County of San Diego news release · Nov 25, 2024



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COUNTY

Be Like Santa, Double-Check Your Receipts

Break out your wallets and purses—but protect them too—the holiday shopping season is back!

The holiday season is the perfect time to remind everyone to remember to always, always double-check your receipts to make sure you're not accidentally overcharged by faulty cash registers and price scanners.

The holidays are definitely the shop-shopping-est time of the year. And even though online buying has gotten huge, most of us are still heading off to our local stores to buy stuff. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's E-Commerce Second Quarter 2024 report , online sales made up 15.2% of all retail sales. That means most of us are still going to, and spending money in, shopping malls and stores.

The County's department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures inspects more than 1,420 local businesses and 21,400 price-scanning devices every year to make sure customers are being charged accurately. That includes scales that charge for items by weight, and other price-setting equipment.

And every year, even the best businesses have occasional overcharges.

In 2024, between January and October, 19% of every business inspected—nearly one out of every

five—had overcharge errors. And the average overcharge was \$1.52. An extra buck-and-a-half doesn't sound like much. But even tiny overcharges can add up to make big dents in your wallet or purse, especially during the holiday shopping season.

So, take a lesson from Santa! Check your receipts; check 'em twice. That will help make sure your holiday season is merry and nice.

Here are some other tips to help you shop smartly and safely:

Always verify receipts and immediately notify store management of any price discrepancies.

Stores are required to display the price of an item, as you are buying it, before the transaction is complete. Watch the display screen as your items are scanned.

Take sales advertisements with you when shopping to verify prices.

Know that stores cannot legally charge more than their lowest advertised, posted or quoted price.

Plan ahead. Start watching for store sale flyers, flea markets, garage sales, clearance sales, etc.

Comparison shop with at least five different sources for the best values.

Don't buy everything at once. Establish a spending plan and timetable to buy what you need over several weeks or months to take full advantage of future sales and true bargains.

Download and use the County's Tell Us Now app to contact Agriculture, Weights and Measures, or call AWM at 1-888-TRUE SCAN (1-888-878-3722) or email to wm.awm@sdcounty.ca.gov to report overcharges you can't resolve with a store.

For more information, go to Agriculture, Weights and Measure's Consumer Protection webpage . And you can check out our archived video about scanner inspection program .

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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Be Like Santa, Double-Check Your Receipts

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COUNTY

County Offices to Close for Thanksgiving

All public San Diego County offices, family resource centers, libraries and animal shelters will be closed Thursday, Nov. 28 and Friday, Nov. 29 for Thanksgiving holiday.

Law enforcement, emergency animal control response, and other essential services will continue through the holiday.

County parks, campgrounds and neighborhood day-use parks remain open 365 days a year. However, the following locations will be closed Thursday and Friday:

4S Ranch Recreation Office only (all parks will be open)

Valley Center Community Hall and Adams Park Pool

Camping reservations can always be made online at the County’s Online Camping Reservations web page , but the Department of Parks and Recreation’s reservation phone line will not be staffed during the holiday.

Parks is extending Thanksgiving with Green Friday encouraging people swap shopping plans for outdoor experiences, including free family-friendly activities at County parks. Learn more about the various Green Friday activities .

All County public health clinics will be closed Thursday and Friday.

County animal shelters will resume their regular business hours on Saturday, Nov. 30. All County offices will resume normal business hours Monday, Dec. 2.

County of San Diego news release · Nov 21, 2024

COUNTY

Organic Carrots Linked to E. Coli Outbreak

County Public Health officials are asking people to throw away organic carrots tied to a nationwide E. coli outbreak . The implicated carrots are organic, whole bagged carrots and baby carrots sold under multiple brands by Grimmway Farms.

One person in San Diego who consumed the carrots became ill from the same strain of Shiga Toxin producing E. Coli (STEC) that is part of a multi-state outbreak. Thirty-nine people infected with the outbreak strain of E. coli have been reported from 18 states. Fifteen people have been

hospitalized, and one person has died.

E. coli can cause severe stomach cramps, diarrhea and vomiting, often within three to four days. The STEC found in the carrots can cause hospitalization and even death. Grimmway Farms has issued a nationwide recall . The carrots are likely no longer in stores for sale but may be in your home.

“If you or a loved one are feeling sick, contact your doctor as soon as possible,” said Ankita Kadakia, M.D., interim County public health officer. “The Shiga toxin producing E. Coli bacteria can cause serious kidney problems that require hospitalization, so it is important to get care promptly.”

If you think you purchased affected carrots, do not eat them. Throw them away and wash any containers or surfaces that touched the carrots with hot soapy water or in the dishwasher. Make sure to also wash your hands with soap and water after handling the carrots or container.

County of San Diego news release · Nov 26, 2024

COUNTY

It’s the Ship-Shipping-est Time of the Year; Don’t Pack a Pest!

It’s the ship-shipping-est time of the year! And you want to make sure you’re not sending someone you love something nobody wants—a harmful pest.

The holiday season is back. It’s the time when many of us are personally mailing and shipping packages and gifts to faraway family and friends. Or maybe even traveling to deliver presents and bring back home gifts in return.

It can happen. The gifts you send or receive could be carrying hitchhiking pests or plant diseases that could potentially damage the County’s \$1.66 billion agricultural industry and our local environment.

Here’s how. That homemade wreath you brought home from your favorite aunt could be carrying spongy moth eggs. Or that citrus you picked from your backyard to send to a friend could be carrying “citrus greening”—huanglongbing—a destructive citrus disease. Or the beautiful fruit basket you and the kids made from scratch to send to a friend could be hiding mealybugs.

Every year San Diego County’s Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures inspectors—human

and detector dogs—work hard to stop the spread of invasive pests. From exotic fruit flies to the emerald ash borer, glassy-winged sharpshooter and South American palm weevil.

And you can help. Just follow these simple guidelines:

If you’re traveling—whether it’s out of state or out of the country—leave what you find behind. Don’t bring home a keepsake clipping from your grandmother’s holiday wreath, or those bulbs you found in Florida. And don’t bring home or avocado leaves from Mexico, or any citrus branches, leaves or stems from anywhere.

Don’t transport any fresh, raw, uncooked and untreated foodstuffs. That goes for seeds, beans, nuts, rice, dried fruit, decorative greenery, untreated wood items, animal products or soil from almost any foreign country.

If you are traveling and think you may have accidentally packed some plant or animal item away? Declare them when an agricultural inspector asks you if you have anything in your luggage.

For more information about harmful insects, plant diseases, Agriculture, Weights and Measures and everybody’s role in protecting our local environment and agriculture, visit the department’s Insect and Plant Disease Information webpage .

County of San Diego news release · Nov 26, 2024

COUNTY

County Hears from More Than 2,100 People on Impacts of Tijuana River Valley Sewage

A federal survey asking San Diegan who live, work or play around the Tijuana River Valley and South San Diego County closed with more than 2,150 responses received, exceeding the goal of 2,000 participants.

The Assessment of Chemical Exposures (ACE) survey covered how the pollution impacted people’s lives. Results will be compiled by the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and shared in the coming months.

The information collected within the surveys includes anecdotal stories about changes to everyday life, along with to physical and mental health, and will be used to determine what steps can be taken to address the sewage crisis with local, state and federal partners.

“The information from the

survey is important to informing what needs to be done to address the sewage crisis,” said Dr. Ankita Kadakia, County Interim Public Health Officer. “We are so grateful to everyone who took the time to share their stories. It’s clear that not only physical health but also mental health has been impacted by these ongoing sewage issues.”

The County opened the ACE survey on Oct. 21 in partnership with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry which is a federal public health agency within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It followed the CDC’s Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response or CASPER , a household survey focused on the Imperial Beach and Nestor communities that took place the weekend of Oct. 17.

To generate interest in the survey, County teams did outreach at community events, through social media and newsletters, and with its partners in schools, businesses, health centers and community organizations.

More information about the Tijuana River Valley sewage crisis is available on the County website , health information surround odors and water contamination and a report that shows recent trends of gastrointestinal illness and asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease symptoms in the South San Diego area.

Mental health resources are available for anyone feeling emotionally affected by the Tijuana River Valley sewage crisis through the San Diego Access Crisis Line by calling 1-888-724-7240 or 988.

County of San Diego news release · Nov 25, 2024

COUNTY

County Celebrates National Adoption Month with 31 Families

The County’s Child and Family Well-Being Department (CFWB) hosted its annual Adoption Day Party Friday at the Juvenile Courthouse to celebrate National Adoption Month.

Each November dozens of children and their new parents celebrate officially becoming a family. This year 31 families finalized the adoption of 36 children.

One of those families is Raymond and Riccree Soriano, who adopted three-year-old Parker.

“I couldn’t sleep last night... This overwhelming feeling of oh my god this is really it,” Raymond said.

Tissues and tears, cheers of celebration and moments of embrace throughout the event illuminated how much love surrounds these children.

“When we were signing our paperwork and saw his name, what his new name is going to be, that’s when it just was oh my gosh, this is really happening... he’s finally ours,” Riccree said of her son Parker.

The couple started fostering Parker when he was four months old and were overjoyed when the adoption became official.

Information about becoming a resource parent is available at SDCares4kids.com .

Family strengthening is a pillar of the 1-year-old CFWB. Focused on providing prevention and support services, the new Child and Family Well-Being Department started its transformation in July 2023, combining the First 5 Commission and what was then called Child Welfare Services.

In its first year of operation, the department reduced the number of children in foster care by nearly 12 percent. For children placed into foster care, 44 percent found a home with relatives, a 10 percent increase over the previous year.

The department continues to evolve and work with the community and experts to identify how to best serve families. This includes developing a Community Response Guide and continuing efforts related to the Child Care Blueprint .

County of San Diego news release · Nov 25, 2024

COUNTY

Community Celebrates Butterfield Trails County Park at Open House

County officials and community members gathered last week to kick off a new park project in Valley Center at Butterfield Trails County Park.

The community took a tour of the 60-acre property, located at 27765 Valley Center Road, planted trees and engaged in activities.

Last year, the County Board of Supervisors approved the purchase of the Butterfield Trails Ranch to create a public park for the Valley Center community. The land is now managed by the County’s Department of Parks and Recreation.

Earlier this year, funds were set aside for site

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY (CONTINUED)

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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Community Celebrates Butterfield Trails County Park at Open House
inspection and community outreach to decide the future use of the park and meet the needs of the community.

“The County of San Diego builds parks in the vision of the community. We take pride in building parks that reflect the essence of each community,” said Jake Enriquez, Region Manager at County of San Diego.

The sale of this park land was also made possible in

part with a \$2 million donation from The Manuel Arango Foundation.

“We thank you for investing in this charming Valley Center community that will last for generations. Valley Center families are forever blessed with your kindness,” said Laurie Gonzalez, Rincon

Tribal Council Member.

In the coming months, Parks and Recreation will be reaching out to the community with invitations to public meetings, surveys and other events where you can learn more about the park project, suggest amenities and share feedback

on proposed designs. For more information, visit sdparks.org.

Watch: Video of Butterfield Trails County Park:

County of San Diego news release · Nov 25, 2024

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy



BUSINESS
Volunteers Needed to Evaluate IRS Business Tax Account
The IRS Taxpayer Experience Office is looking for volunteers to participate in focus groups about the online Business Tax Account self-service tool. The purpose of the sessions is to get feedback about account access and

authorization processes. Volunteers must be a chief executive officer, officer, partner, shareholder, Designated Official (DO) or someone who can legally bind their organization for the entity types below. No extensive tax law knowledge is required, and the focus groups will not include policy, technical or legislative issues.

Volunteers need to register by noon ET the day before the session of their choice. To register, email txo.share.with.us@irs.gov with this information:

Subject Line: Focus Group

Volunteer – Business Tax Account

Contact information including email address and phone number

Desired focus group date and time (choose one)

Focus groups are limited to 12-participants. Selected volunteers will get a confirmation email with a Microsoft Teams meeting link from txo.share.with.us@irs.gov.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Nov 26, 2024

BUSINESS
Small Business Resilience Workshop
The Small Business Resilience Workshops are part of the Chamber’s Small Business Series, designed to empower small businesses with the tools and resources they need to thrive in today’s ever-changing landscape.

The Chamber’s last Small Business Resiliency Workshop of the year took place on November 20 th and featured local, state, and federal experts who provided invaluable insights and guidance on a variety of topics aimed at enhancing

the resilience and success of small businesses. Attendees heard from the California Office of the Small Business Advocate, the National Federation of Independent Business, and the County’s Office of Labor Standards and Enforcements.

Remember : Small Business Saturday is November 30 th , just in time for holiday shopping! Support your local businesses and shop small. Information about Small Business Saturday can be found here.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Nov 20, 2024

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



Celebrating partnerships with your money
THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

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COMMENTARY

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

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
The Thanksgiving Cook-Safely Quiz is Back!

Warm up the kitchen! Thanksgiving, our biggest day of feast is back.

And if you’re cooking, the last thing you want to do is serve your family and friends plentiful platefuls of salmonella, listeria or other dangerous bacteria.

Those sickening things can be carried by your turkey, stuffing, vegetables, salads and desserts—if you’re not prepping, cleaning and cooking right.

Fortunately, there are some simple rules to keep you and everyone else happy and safe. Bone up on them by taking our annual Thanksgiving safe-cooking quiz! See how safe you are.

Some companies have now created turkeys you don’t have to thaw before cooking. But many of us are still doing it the old-fashioned way. So, do you know the right way to thaw frozen meat?

OK this is simple. When you bring home your frozen turkey, just leave it out on the counter. After a couple of days, when the outside is mushy-soft, you’re good to go and ready to cook!

You can do this a lot faster. Just run it under hot water! Until the outside is mushy-soft.

Thawing is overrated. That’s what cooking is supposed to fix, right?

Please, PLEASE. Plan ahead and let meat defrost in your refrigerator. Meats, poultry and fish should be defrosted in the fridge. If you’re cooking a big turkey, you should allow at least 24 hours for every five pounds in weight.

Answer: D. If you picked A, B or C, please get a pizza instead. Thawing meat in the

refrigerator is absolutely the best and safest method. That’s because a refrigerator allows meat to thaw slowly and evenly, rather than leaving parts of defrosted meat to stand at room temperature where bacteria can multiply exponentially.

Note: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) says that you can also thaw meats in cold water. But —and this is important—the water must be cold, under 40 degrees, and should be changed every 30 minutes to keep it cold. Thawing in the fridge is easier!

How often should you wash your hands and cutting boards when preparing food?

Washing hands and cutting boards? Whenever you feel like it; it’s no big deal.

Always during food prep; before prepping vegetables and always after cutting or working with raw meat, fish or poultry.

After you pet the dog—or the cat. Or pick up the kids.

After you sneeze, blow your nose or have to run to the bathroom.

The answer is B, C and D; but mainly, “OFTEN!”

Answer: Definitely E. You should wash your hands and cutting boards before and after everything in B, C and D, and pretty much as often as you can in the kitchen. Handwashing is always a key part of safe cooking. Harmful bacteria, from E. coli to salmonella and staphylococcus aureus, as well as viruses, can be removed from people’s hands through proper handwashing .

Here are just a few other things you should wash your hands after doing: coughing, handling money, eating, drinking and playing with your cell phone or video games.

Should you rinse off fruits and vegetables?

Again, this is totally unnecessary and time-consuming. They wash them at the supermarket, right?

Wash ‘em. You should definitely rinse fruits and vegetables with cold water. It will remove lingering dirt that can carry bacteria.

If you’re wearing clean clothes, wiping them off on your shirts or pants will do.

Never wash them. It will wash all the flavor away.

Answer: B. Definitely wash ‘em. Rinsing with cold water cleans off dirt and other contaminants (think germs , not minerals...). But don’t wash them with detergents or soap, even dishwashing soap. You could end up eating residues from those cleaners if they’re absorbed by fruits and vegetables.

Why should you keep raw meats and meat products separated from fruits and vegetables when cutting them up or preparing them?

Meats and vegetables. They just really don’t get along. Last thing you need is a food fight on your cutting board.

Don’t separate them; keep them together. In fact, let those veggies soak for a while. Marinading makes everything better.

Because raw meats, meat products and blood can carry bacteria like E. coli and salmonella that can contaminate fruits and vegetables—and make people sick.

Answer: The correct answer is C. Cross-contamination is one of the most common causes of food-borne illness according to the USDA. That is, the transfer of harmful bacteria from one food—particularly raw meats, poultry and shellfish—to other foods. When preparing food, you need to keep raw

meats and their juices away from fruits, vegetables and all ready-to-eat foods.

Note: If you can, use separate cutting boards for meats and produce. If you can’t use separate cutting boards, wash yours with hot, soapy water after using them on raw meats and before using them to cut fruits and vegetables. Or use your cutting board to chop vegetables first, then use it to prepare your uncooked meat, then wash it with hot, soapy water.)

Is the “five-second rule” real? Can you eat something you’ve dropped on the floor if you pick it up in less than five seconds?

It’s actually the five-MINUTE rule. As long as nobody trips over it, you can let it sit there for a while before you eat it.

Man, my pets eat stuff off the floor all the time and they never get sick. Nothing can contaminate your food in less than five seconds. Pick it up quick and blow on it.

You really shouldn’t eat anything you’ve dropped on floor. The “five-second rule” is NOT real.

Answer: C. Eating food off the floor is OK for the pets, but NOT people. Truth is, almost any contact is long enough for food to be contaminated by bacteria that can be found on the ground or in your house. According to Rutgers University , bacteria can transfer from a surface to food in less than one second!

And finally , for the umpteenth year in a row, here’s our favorite cook-safely quiz question. Like Thanksgiving itself, it is an annual institution.

What is the Danger Zone? And what does it have to do with Thanksgiving dinner?

YOUR kitchen if you didn’t

get any of the previous questions right!

The Danger Zone is the point during dinner where if eat another bite you won’t have any room for dessert!

C’mon! There’s only one Danger Zone! Top Gun! Tom Cruise! Kenny Loggins! Sing it with me! “Highway to the DANGER ZONE! Riiiide in—to the DANGER ZONE!”

Nope, the real Danger Zone is the range of temperatures between 40 degrees Fahrenheit and 135 degrees Fahrenheit— temperatures where bacteria can grow like crazy in foods, doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes.

Answer: D; it’s definitely D. With all due respect to Top Gun, the real “ Danger Zone ” is that range of temperatures between 40 degrees and 135 degrees Fahrenheit that allows bacteria to breed exponentially—not a good thing. If hot foods cool or cold foods heat up enough to enter that zone, your food can become a bacteria-fest. And you, your family and friends can end up getting sick. So, keep hot foods safely heated with chafing dishes, preheated steam tables, warming trays, slow cookers and ovens. Place cold foods in containers on ice, or in the fridge. And refrigerate leftovers as soon as you can, but definitely within two hours.

So there! Now you’re an expert. But if you’re still interested, you can get more information about food safety tips at FoodSafety.gov’s “ Food Safety by Types of Food ” webpage, or by calling the USDA’s Meat and Poultry hotline at 1-888-674-6854.

So, be safe. Cook safe. And keep the safe-giving in your Thanksgiving!

County of San Diego news release · Nov 21, 2024

SAN DIEGO NEWSLINE

The news, every day.

Downtown, City Hall, the County, the courts and the regional economy — updated daily, with every past print edition in our archive.

sandiegonewsline.com