

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

Live Well San Diego Celebrates 600th Regional Partner

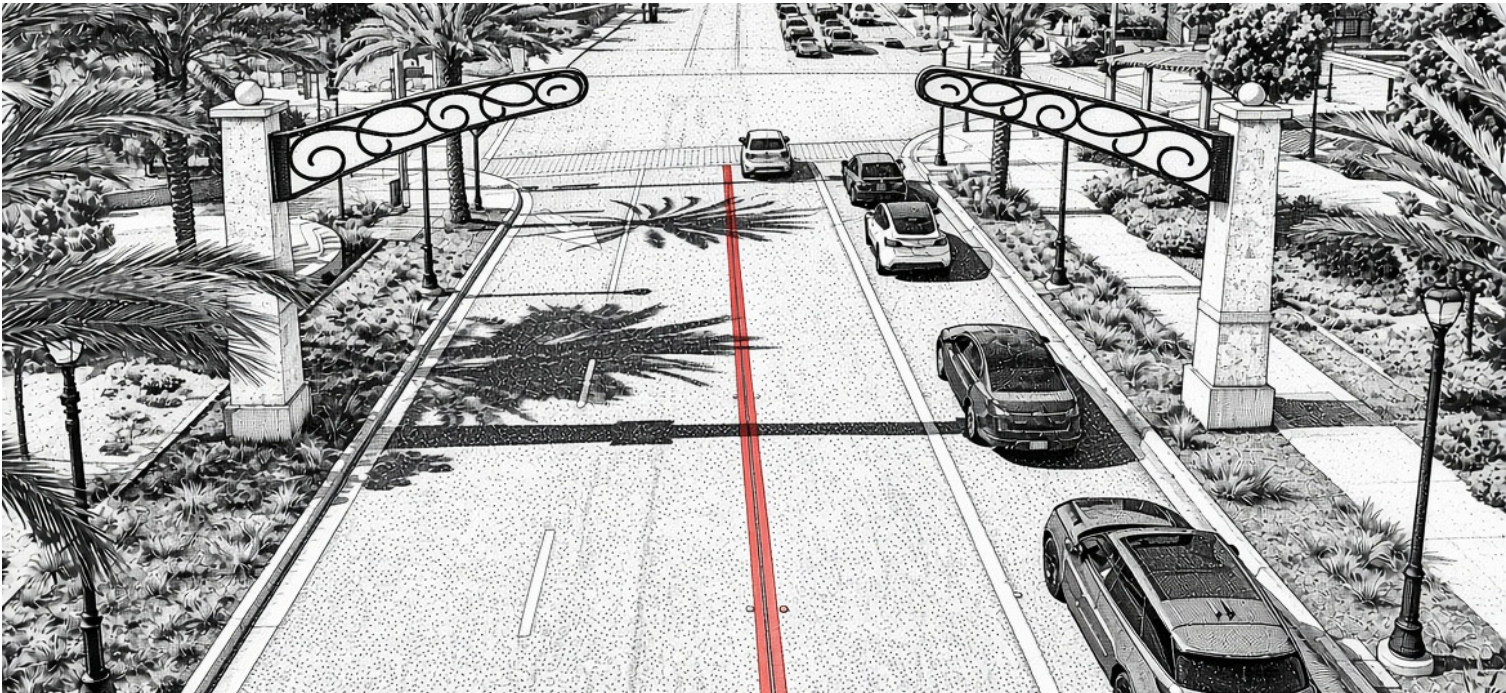


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The City of Vista has just become the 600th recognized partner in a regional collective of local organizations, businesses and governments working together to create a better quality of life for all San Diego County residents.

Established in July 2010, Live Well San Diego is a vision for a region that is building better health, living safely and thriving.

Among the 600 recognized partners are 39 school districts, education organizations, local government agencies, businesses, sports teams, media, non-profits and faith-based organizations.

“We recognize that government alone can’t solve complex issues surrounding health, housing and community supports,” said Kimberly Giardina, County deputy chief administrative officer for the Health and Services Agency. “Lasting change requires the strength of many in our region coming together to make a bigger impact on those we serve. After years of partnership, I am excited to welcome the City of Vista into this incredible collective vision.”

Live Well San Diego’s impact is reflected through ten indicators that demonstrate increases in life expectancy, quality of life and high school graduation and decreases in crime rates and the proportion of the population living in poverty.

Additionally, efforts in support of the Live Well San Diego vision have driven a 13% reduction in the number of deaths associated with preventable health threats from 2007 to 2022.

The City of Vista, Vista Community Clinic and the County partnered on the Healthy Cities, Healthy Residents program, a County-funded effort focused on improving public health through community engagement and policy development. It resulted in more sidewalks being created in the community, helping families and children to be more active and stay safe. It also, importantly, created a model for community engagement in the region.

Recognizing the City of Vista as the 600th Live Well San Diego partner is not just a milestone — it’s a reflection of a shared commitment to healthier, safer, and thriving communities. Each new partner strengthens the foundation of this regional vision, underscoring the vital role of cross-sector collaboration to support all County residents.

Learn more about Live Well San Diego online and read the Annual Impact Report .

County of San Diego news release · May 28, 2025



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COUNTY

Voter Information Pamphlets Go Out to Registered Voters for District One Special General Election

Voter information pamphlets are on their way to over 370,000 registered voters in the County of San Diego’s First Supervisorial District for the July 1 special general election .

The pamphlets contain information on voting options, election deadlines, candidate statements and more. It also includes a sample of what your official ballot will look like. Additionally, voters can find a list of official ballot drop boxes and vote centers inside their voter information pamphlet or online at sdvote.com .

Voters may also look up their pamphlets online with the View Voter Information Pamphlet (Sample Ballot) tool at sdvote.com.

If you signed up to get your voter information pamphlet electronically, you should have received an email giving you the same information and a link to your pamphlet.

Voters who want to be among the first to see their pamphlet every election can sign up to receive all future pamphlets electronically. Voters who take this option will no longer receive a paper copy in the mail but will get an email when the pamphlet becomes available online.

Registered voters in District 1 will

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

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Voter Information Pamphlets Go Out to Registered Voters for District One Special General Election

receive a ballot in the mail the week of June 2. The official ballot packet will include an “I Voted” sticker, voting instructions and other important election information.

The person elected will fill the district’s vacant seat for the remainder of the current term that ends in January 2029. Only those who live in the district can vote in the election.

District 1 runs from the Pacific Ocean to the Otay and San Miguel mountains in the east, and from Barrio Logan in the north to the U.S./Mexico international border on the south. The district includes the cities of Chula Vista, Imperial Beach, National City and some communities within the City of San Diego, including Barrio Logan, East Village, Golden Hill and more. It also includes the unincorporated areas of Bonita, East Otay Mesa, Lincoln Acres, Sunnyside, La Presa and parts of Spring Valley.

If you’re not sure if you live in District 1, you can look it up at sdvote.com .

Learn more about voting in the District 1 special general election at sdvote.com or call (858) 565-5800 or toll free at (800) 696-0136.

County of San Diego news release · May 23, 2025

COUNTY

County Hosts First Budget Open House Since Numbers Released

Editor’s Note: Budget hearings are scheduled for 9 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 3. This reflects an update to the previous schedule when the evening hearing was scheduled for June 9.

Residents had a chance to learn about the County’s \$8.62 billion recommended budget during an open house Thursday at the County Operations Center.

This was the first open house to take place since the budget was publicly released on May 1.

Residents learned what services the County provides, how the budget was created, where funding comes from and saw some proposed numbers for budget priorities.

Those priorities include housing and homelessness, behavioral health, public safety, infrastructure, support for vulnerable populations and environmental sustainability. The open house also featured budget information on roads, parks and libraries.

Staff members were on hand to answer questions and visitors could also give their written feedback on the budget.

The family-friendly open house provided an opportunity to visit adoptable animals, meet a park ranger with a live owl, see emergency vehicles and take part in other activities.

A third budget session with the same information as the open house will be held virtually on Zoom at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 28.

If you would like to attend, register at Engage San Diego County . You can also request language and accessibility services.

Budget hearings will take place before the Board of Supervisors at 9 a.m. and on 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday June 3.

The Board is scheduled to hold deliberations and adopt the budget on June 24. The adopted budget takes effect July 1.

County of San Diego news release · May 23, 2025

COUNTY

Tour the New Public Health Lab

The County’s new, state-of-the-art public health lab is ready for a grand opening celebration and the excitement is unmistakable . The \$93 million facility features cutting edge technology inside a beautiful building with modern design and commissioned public art.

The public health lab plays a critical role in protecting the health of all San Diegans by monitoring, detecting and responding to public health concerns. The lab handles testing, surveillance and is a source of diagnostic information to prevent and control infectious diseases, environmental hazards, and other public health threats. The public health lab expects to conduct about 50,000 tests annually.

The new lab will also serve as the home for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Lab for both San Diego and Imperial Counties and will offer hands-on training for the next generation of microbiologists.

If you’re wondering what it looks like inside, here is a sneak peek.

County of San Diego news release · May 28, 2025

COUNTY

TB Exposures Reported at Two Local Shelters

County Public Health is working in close collaboration with Father Joe’s Villages and the San Diego Rescue Mission to notify residents, employees and volunteers who may have potentially been exposed to tuberculosis (TB) at the Father Joe’s Villages Paul Mirabile Center (PMC) and the San Diego Rescue Mission South County Lighthouse.

The dates of potential exposure at Father Joe’s Villages

Paul Mirabile Center are from Feb. 14, 2025 to March 18, 2025, and from April 6, 2025 to May 7, 2025. Dates of potential exposure at the San Diego Rescue Mission South County Lighthouse are from March 28, 2025 to April 11, 2025.

There is no evidence of an outbreak at this time or that previously announced exposures at shelters operated by Father Joe’s Villages are related to the above-mentioned exposures.

TB is an airborne disease that is transmitted from person-to-person through inhalation of the bacteria from the air. The bacteria are spread when someone sick with TB coughs, speaks, sings or breathes. People with frequent and prolonged indoor exposure to a person who is sick with TB should get tested.

People experiencing homelessness are at increased risk for TB for a variety of reasons. These include a higher risk for exposure to another person with active TB in large congregate settings, challenges regarding access to healthcare and the presence of certain medical conditions that may be more common and/or severe among people experiencing homelessness.

In San Diego County, most people who are diagnosed with TB have not been recently homeless, however the rate of the disease is much higher among people who have experienced homelessness compared with the general population.

“Symptoms of active TB include persistent cough, fever, night sweats and unexplained weight loss,” said Sayone Thihalolipavan, M.D., MPH, County Public Health Officer. “Most people who become infected after exposure to tuberculosis do not get sick right away. This is called latent TB infection. Some who become infected with tuberculosis will become ill in the

future, sometimes even years later, if their latent TB infection is not treated. For people who think they may have been exposed, blood tests and skin tests are an effective way to determine an infection.”

Effective treatments are available to cure people who are sick from active TB. It is especially important for people with symptoms of active TB and those who are immunocompromised to see a medical provider to rule out active TB disease and to discuss treatment.

People who test positive for TB but who don’t have symptoms of an active case should get a chest x-ray and talk to a medical provider, as they most likely have a latent TB infection. People in this situation are infected with TB, but the infection is essentially dormant or “sleeping.” Taking medicines for latent TB infection can cure the infection and keep these people from getting sick later.

The number of people diagnosed with active TB in San Diego County had decreased since the early 1990s when more than 400 cases were reported annually. After decades of declining, TB cases have begun to rise since 2020.

In 2020, there were 193 TB cases, 201 in 2021, 208 in 2022, and 242 in 2023. In 2024, a total of 247 people were reported with active TB disease in San Diego County.

An estimated 175,000 people in San Diego County have latent TB infection. Of these, 5 to 10 percent are at risk of developing active TB disease if they go without preventive treatment.

People who would like more information on this potential exposure should call the County Tuberculosis Control Program at (619) 692-8621.

County of San Diego news release · May 27, 2025

BUSINESS



BUSINESS

Chamber Policy Team in Action at the State Level

The Chamber joined two new statewide coalitions this month : Calibrate and the Protect our Health Care Coalition . Calibrate is a coalition of business, labor,

consumer, and civil rights organizations calling for a practical, balanced approach to California’s zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate. The coalition supports California’s clean transportation leadership but believes the transition must align with consumer demand, infrastructure readiness, and market realities , not arbitrary government deadlines , which is in line with the Chamber’s support of environmental and climate focus policies that take into great consideration the economic realities of our region. The Chamber also joined the

Protect our Health Care Coalition, an advocacy group focused on the successful implementation of Prop 35, which the Chamber was a strong supporter of last year. The coalition formerly operated as the Coalition to Protect Access to Care during the Prop 35 campaign, which the Chamber was also a member of throughout 2024.

The IPA team had the opportunity to fly to Sacramento to advocate for member and regional priorities. Justine Murray, Executive Director, stood next to AT&T in support of AB 470, a bill looking to ensure

all Californians have access to fast, affordable communications. Myriam Mendoza, International Business Affairs Coordinator, joined Hispana’s Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) Latina Action Day to advance budget bills on continuous coverage for children under the age of six, and funding for the Social Entrepreneurs for Economic Development initiative which aims to support immigrant entrepreneurs. She also just graduated from HOPE’s inaugural Regional Institute Leadership program.

The Chamber team also met with the Governor’s

Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to elaborate on collaborative efforts to sustain trade growth in the state. This included a briefing on the Chamber’s recent delegation to D.C. and meetings with the Department of State and Department of Commerce. Likewise, GO-Biz shared a collection of resources that can help businesses navigate tariffs, optimize operations, and remain competitive in the global market. They also highlighted the importance of remaining engaged on Section 232 investigation

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BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

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Chamber Policy Team in Action at the State Level

concerns, for which the Office of U.S. Trade Representative holds public comment on as they investigate the effects of steel imports on national security. Other topics of conversation included events to promote trade and binational partnerships with Mexico and Canada.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · May 23, 2025

Meeting with TJ Secretary of Economic Development

The IPA team met with the Secretary of Economic Development (SEDETI) for the City of Tijuana, Pedro Montejo, to advance collaborative efforts that elevate our

binational region’s economic growth and global competitiveness. Secretary Montejo has previously joined Chamber efforts including last year’s annual delegation to Mexico City, where he shared an overview of the city’s vision under the new administration which had taken office just a few days prior.

Secretary Montejo shared initiatives that the city has recently implemented such as the expansion of San Ysidro’s Fast Lane operations to 24 hours, seven days a week (only through Ready Lane). This will facilitate border crossings for cross-border students, individuals with medical appointments, and business travelers. The city is also working on improving green spaces across the land ports of entry, and the repair of concrete barriers at San Ysidro to improve visibility

and security. Other efforts include amplifying the Fast Lane All Traffic at the Otay Mesa land port of entry to reduce border wait times. Operational hours for Otay Fast Lane are from Monday to Thursday from 6am-10pm, Friday starting 6am and closing Monday 10am. For students, however, operational hours are from Monday-Friday 6am-4pm, Saturday’s from 12:00am-10am.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · May 23, 2025

TIANGUIS TURISTICO

The largest annual tourism event in Mexico, Tianguis Turistico, was hosted in our region last month and the Chamber had the opportunity to represent San Diego in a series of events. Not only was this a first for a northern state to host, but the first

binational tourism event promoting CaliBaja as a two-nation destination.

The weeklong event started off with elected officials from both sides of the border inaugurating “Ventana Mexico” at Liberty Station on May 26th, including Governor of Baja California Marina del Pilar Avila Olmeda, Mexico’s Secretary of Tourism Josefina Rodriguez, Baja Secretary of Tourism Miguel Aguiñiga, and San Diego and Tijuana Mayors Todd Gloria and Ismael Burgueño. That weekend, 28 Mexican states shared their music, art, and information on various tourist attractions.

Then, Chamber staff, including Interim President and CEO Jessica Anderson and VP of International and Public Affairs Kenia Zamarripa, traveled south of the border to the inauguration ceremony where they

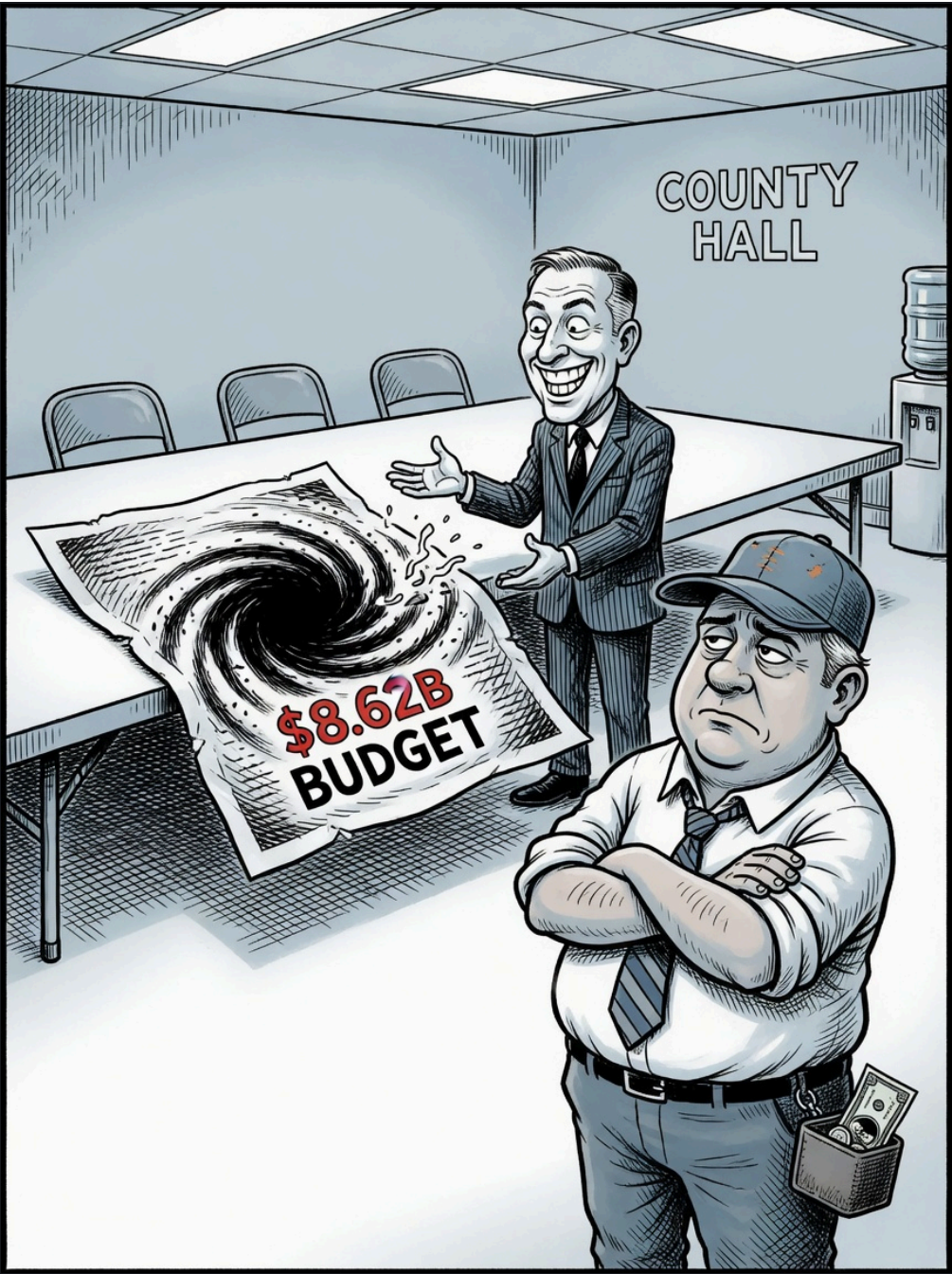
connected with key leaders from Mexico’s federal, state, and local governments, including Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Juan Ramon de la Fuente, Secretary of Tourism, Josefina Rodriguez, and Economic Development Business Council, Altagracia Gomez Sierra.

Tianguis Turistico has taken place annually since 1975 yet concluded its event in Baja California with an economic spillover of 1,380 millions pesos (\$67 million dollars) and breaking the Guinness record for the largest attendance. Over 1,700 buyers participated in this event, of which 42% were from the U.S. and Canada, and 49% resulted in direct sales.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · May 23, 2025

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



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COMMENTARY

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

COMMENTARY

San Diego Faces Ballooning Pension Debts While Cities Eye Higher Taxes, Argues Moorlach

Moorlach argues that local governments should renegotiate pension and post-employment benefit plans instead of burdening residents with repeated tax increases.

John Moorlach, senior fellow and director of the California Policy Center’s Center for Public Accountability, questions whether California cities can control spending or if residents must continually foot the bill through higher taxes.

Moorlach notes that San Diego County’s population fell by 0.7 percent in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, as residents moved to other states. During that period, fiscal health was mixed across the county’s cities, with half improving their positions and half worsening.

The most striking development, according to Moorlach, is the city of San Diego’s unrestricted net deficit, which expanded 13 percent to reach

\$2.5 billion. He attributes this growth to two main factors: operational expenditures that topped revenues by \$171 million — \$13.3 million worse than the prior year — plus an additional \$292 million increase driven largely by pension liabilities that rose \$720 million.

Moorlach recalls that nearly 25 years ago the city earned the nickname “Enron-By-The-Sea” for poor financial transparency. He writes that at least San Diego now discloses details in its annual comprehensive financial report.

Moorlach argues that the unfunded accrued actuarial liabilities, known as UAALs, have been kept artificially low for years through optimistic assumptions about future pension investment returns. He explains that public employee unions have pushed for high assumed rates of return to justify larger salary demands for members.

When unions control the city councils, Moorlach writes, the result is fiscally catastrophic.

Lowering the assumed rate of return increases the UAAL, which in turn raises required annual pension contributions. Those higher payments then squeeze funding for salaries and other services.

In response, unions press for ballot measures to raise sales taxes, and city managers, also facing stagnant pay, support the idea. Moorlach writes that city council members find unanimous internal support for a sales tax rate increase. Nearly one-third of San Diego County cities are now considering new taxes rather than addressing the underlying growth in UAALs, he argues.

Moorlach points out that half of the county’s 18 cities still charge the base sales tax rate of 7.75 percent. Others have already hiked rates: three cities—El Cajon, Oceanside, and Vista—charge 8.25 percent, La Mesa levies 8.50 percent, and five cities—Chula Vista, Del Mar, Imperial Beach, National City, and Solano Beach—collect 8.75 percent. He illustrates that a \$10,000 furniture purchase incurs \$775 in tax in San Diego but \$875 in Del

Mar.

The commentary draws parallels to statewide practices. Moorlach criticizes Sacramento’s supermajority for repeatedly raising the gas tax instead of reforming Caltrans, which he calls one of the nation’s least efficient transportation departments. He describes similar patterns with water rates, electricity charges for solar users, trash fees and the higher fast-food minimum wage imposed by Governor Newsom and legislators.

Moorlach asks why more cities cannot be like Coronado. He observes that half the county’s cities would show positive unrestricted net positions if not for Encinitas’s \$1.7 million reduction. Del Mar returned to positive territory after receiving \$3.5 million in sales and use tax, representing 16.5 percent of its total revenue.

Vista recorded \$17.9 million in surplus revenue, improving its unrestricted net position by \$19 million and surpassing Poway. Moorlach writes that cities making extravagant financial promises to powerful public employee

unions now struggle under the weight of those liabilities.

Moorlach urges local leaders to negotiate changes to pension and other post-employment benefit plans before pursuing sales tax hikes. He writes that when public employee unions are running a “gravy train” city, its residents will be left taking the hit on their personal household budgets.

Moorlach asks why elected officials cannot treat public dollars with the same care that families use for their own budgets and why taxpayers should serve as a crutch for their poor fiscal management.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · May 22, 2025

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

Newly Acquired 540 Acres Supports Conservation, Habitat and Species Protection

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors recently approved the purchase of about 540 acres of property in North County for \$5.1 million to expand its conservation efforts.

Located within a designated conservation area in Santa Ysabel, the land will expand an existing 6,900-acre preserve slated to protect habitat for sensitive species including the mountain lion, mule deer, Stephens’ kangaroo rat and Engelmann oak.

“Our team is very proud of this new addition to our

parks system, as it strengthens San Diego County’s solid reputation for protecting natural resources and species that will be enjoyed for generations,” said Parks & Recreation Director Jason Hemmens.

The property is directly adjacent to the existing preserve and provides connectivity to public lands to the north.

In addition to supporting the County’s Climate Action Plan and General Plan Update goals, it enhances biodiversity and provides flood control benefits and protection of water quality.

The estimated annual cost to manage the land is \$186,000, which is included in

the FY 2025–26 CAO Recommended Operational Plan.

County of San Diego news release · May 27, 2025

COUNTY

VIDEO: Santee Homeless Court Pop Up Event

Community resources pop-up events bring essential services directly to people experiencing homelessness and have become an important part of the County’s homeless outreach strategy. These events, held twice a month, are key opportunities for engagement, service delivery, and legal support in locations chosen based on community need and city requests.

Pop ups that include Homeless Court usually draw the most participants. At these events, attendees can get support in resolving legal issues including outstanding warrants and DMV holds on driver’s licenses or vehicle registration. Once those issues are cleared, participants can immediately apply, on site, for Calfresh or other benefits they may have previously been restricted from receiving.

This County Homeless Court model of outreach is so successful it is now being replicated in other communities. Those include Orange County and Santa Clara County, which have now held two pop ups, while Savannah,

GA is working on its second event. San Bernardino County is visiting this month to learn how the real-time warrant clearing process works.

Pop up events are possible due to the collaboration between the Public Defender, District Attorney, multiple County departments, community-based and non-profit organizations and individual cities and businesses.

Event locations are chosen by need and through requests from host cities and communities. From two per year in 2021, they now are generally being held twice a month throughout the region.

County of San Diego news release · May 28, 2025

SAN DIEGO NEWSLINE

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