

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

29 Official Ballot Drop Boxes Open for District One Special General Election



Illustration from a photo by Edward O'Connor (hober) · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0

Starting Tuesday, June 3, registered voters in the County of San Diego's First Supervisorial District have the additional option of returning their mail ballot for the July 1 special general election to any one of 29 official ballot drop boxes located around the district.

Mail ballots for the district's 370,000 registered voters are expected to arrive this week. Some voters may have received theirs over the weekend.

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 the County's Supervisorial District 1, you can look it up at sdvote.com

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 district. Remember, your signature is required for your vote to count.

The Registrar's 29 official ballot drop boxes are open 24 hours a day up until 8 p.m. on the final day of voting, July 1. Visit sdvote.com to check the location list or the locator map to find a location near you.

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, June 21, District 1 voters can vote in person at any one of seven vote centers . They'll be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. until the final day of voting, Tuesday, July 1, when 13 vote

centers will be open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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 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 · Jun 3, 2025

COUNTY Ballots Go Out to Registered Voters for District One Special General Election

Over 370,000 ballots are on their way to registered voters in the County of San Diego's First Supervisorial District for the July 1 special general election .

Registered voters should receive their ballot the week of Monday, June 2. Some voters may receive theirs this weekend. The official ballot packet will also include an "I Voted" sticker.

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.

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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Ballots Go Out to Registered Voters for District One Special General Election

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

Early voting begins Monday, June 2 at the Registrar of Voters office in Kearny Mesa . Hours run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, the Registrar encourages voters to take advantage of the convenience of voting by mail.

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 around the district starting Tuesday, June 3 through the final day of voting Tuesday, July 1.

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? ”.

Additional options to vote in person will begin Saturday, June 21, with the opening of seven vote centers . They will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. until the final day of voting, Tuesday, July 1, when 13 vote centers will be open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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 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 30, 2025

COUNTY County’s Recommended Budget Hearing Begins Tuesday

A public hearing on the County’s recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2025-27 will get underway on Tuesday, June 3.

It will begin with a budget presentation at 9 a.m., followed by public comments on the budget before the Board of Supervisors’ regular legislative session gets

underway.

The budget hearing will continue at 5:30 p.m., giving the public another opportunity to comment. Please note that people who would like to comment may speak at only one of the two budget sessions tomorrow. The evening session was originally scheduled for June 9, but the date changed to June 3. For information on how to participate in person, by phone or online, visit the Clerk of the Board’s website .

The County released a balanced, \$8.62 billion recommended budget on May 1 that prioritizes vital services and the region’s needs while addressing funding challenges.

It is an increase of \$85.8 million or 1% over the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Adopted Budget.

Ongoing challenges include slowing tax revenues, rising costs, uncertainties about the economy and unknown changes in upcoming state and federal funding.

Despite these uncertainties, the recommended budget is designed to protect core services for residents in the region and continues investments in issues important to San Diegans.

The balanced budget limits spending compared to recent years and prioritizes mandated programs as well responsibilities in the unincorporated area where the County delivers services similar to a city.

The operational plan shows a decrease in recommended staffing, 190 fewer positions or 0.9% less than last fiscal year for a total recommended staff of 20,281.25. The County reduced staffing through attrition, eliminating some vacant positions and streamlining some operations.

The budget continues to invest in housing, homeless solutions and behavioral health.

It leverages new funding opportunities to invest more than \$100 million in behavioral health resources, supporting long-term recovery through community-based treatment, prevention and alternatives to jail and emergency rooms.

And it helps more than 1 million San Diegans who need access to safety net programs that are critical to ensuring people and families have the food and support they need, programs such as CalWORKs, Medi-Cal and CalFresh.

It increases investments in

public safety, with additional funding to provide care for youth and adults in our custody, deploy more ambulances and to support programs such as Alternatives to Incarceration and job training, mental health and substance use disorder treatment. It also establishes a Community Engagement Unit in the Office of Emergency Services.

The budget shows the County’s commitment to environmental sustainability. And the current recommended budget protects current hours and locations at parks and libraries.

The County budget touches nearly everyone in the region in some way and is shaped by public input throughout the year.

Regionally, County government provides services like:

Criminal prosecution, detention facilities and emergency preparedness

Food and restaurant inspections, and beach and bay water monitoring

In the unincorporated area, County government provides things a city government would typically do like:

Some cities also contract with the County to provide services.

Nearly half of the County’s funding comes from the state and federal government but that money must be used for certain programs. The rest comes from property taxes, fees for services and other sources.

You can learn more about the recommended plan by reviewing an executive summary or the full recommended budget plan .

The Revised Recommended Budget will be released June 12, incorporating feedback received from the budget hearings and community input. Budget deliberations and adoption are scheduled June 24.

See how you can watch, listen and participate .

The meetings will take place in room 310 at the County Administration Center located at 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101.

Spanish language translation services for public speakers are available at Board meetings.

Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Korean, Persian (including Farsi, Dari), Somali, Spanish, Tagalog (including Filipino), and

Vietnamese translations of the overall proceedings are also available upon request at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Contact the Clerk’s office at (619) 531-5434 or email PublicComment@sdcounty.ca.gov .

The live stream broadcast online may be delayed by 45 seconds or more depending on the service and your internet connection.

Agenda Web Stream (Available live and archived several hours later)

County YouTube Channel (Closed captions available)

Cox South Channel 24 or Cox North Channel 19

Call in to (619) 531-4716 for a listen-only line to the live Board meeting while it is in session.

Online: Submit your feedback on the budget at Engage San Diego County’s budget page before public hearings formally end on June 12.

By phone: To speak during the live meeting by phone, fill out the Board of Supervisors tele-comments form and submit it before the meeting starts. After submitting the form, you will receive instructions on how to call in to the meeting.

County of San Diego news release · Jun 2, 2025

COUNTY Cool Zones Open with Summer Approaching

With summer just around the corner, the County of San Diego opened its annual Cool Zones program June 1, giving people free, cool, air-conditioned places to beat the heat when they need it.

The program is expected to run to Oct. 31, giving people more than 80 places around the county to seek shelter when the temperatures soar.

The Cool Zones program was created nearly 25 years ago. It was designed to give free, safe access to air-conditioned shelter during extreme heat to the people who need it most—older adults, people with disabilities and people with health concerns.

Cool Zone sites include the County’s 33 branch public libraries , teen and senior centers in County parks and other city, public, private and volunteer organizations and places around the county.

A current list of all the Cool Zone sites , their hours, addresses and phone numbers is posted on the County’s Cool Zones website. The site also includes an interactive link

that lets people search for Cool Zone sites by location, ZIP code, organization and what animals are allowed.

Extreme heat can be especially dangerous for the elderly and children. Everyone is recommended to shelter in cool places when the temperatures get too hot. Working or exercising outside on a hot day or staying inside a hot space for too long can cause heat-related illnesses. Those can range from cramps to exhaustion and heatstroke, a condition when the body can no longer control its temperature.

Signs of heatstroke or exhaustion include having an extremely high body temperature, 103 degrees or higher, dizziness, nausea, confusion and headache. Anyone suffering these symptoms should call 9-1-1 and be cooled off immediately.

County of San Diego news release · Jun 3, 2025

COUNTY Girls Draw Inspiration from STEM

Two girls from County Probation’s Youth Transition Campus had the chance to get inspired by all things involving science, technology, and math.

The 5-hour long Girls in STEM Igniting Passion, Engineering Tomorrow event was put on by the Society of Women Engineers on a recent Saturday at Wilson Middle School in San Diego.

It was a day of discovery, connection and inspiration for those who attended and provided opportunities to connect with STEM professionals.

“There was a role model presentation, where we heard from inspiring women in STEM who are leading change and innovation,” said Senior Probation Officer John Durment. “We also engaged in speed-mentoring, connecting youths with mentors in fun, fast-paced conversations to ask questions and gain valuable insights.”

The girls also participated in hands-on activities including driving robots and a group activity where they had to build a bridge using popsicle sticks.

County Probation works to help justice-involved youth grow, heal, and build better futures, and that starts with safety, fairness, and trust for everyone involved.

County of San Diego news release · May 29, 2025

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BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

BUSINESS

Member Spotlight: 1st Century Bank

1st Century Bank , a division of MidFirst Bank, the largest privately owned bank in the nation, has settled into its permanent offices in San Diego. The move marks a significant milestone for the bank's expansion across Southern California, underscoring its commitment to building a long-term presence there. 1st Century Bank's reputation for its exceptional service model has established it as a trusted partner for local businesses and individuals seeking personalized financial solutions.

At the core of 1st Century Bank's success is a team of seasoned professionals

dedicated to providing white-glove service. This tailored approach to banking has gained more in popularity with businesses and individuals who require more than transactional interactions from their financial institutions. Clients often mention the personalized focus and direct access to a banker when expressing their satisfaction with 1 st Century Bank.

1st Century Bank's goal is to continue fostering relationships with the local community and further support the financial needs of its clientele. As the bank continues its expansion across Southern California, its commitment to exceeding client expectations remains the priority. Through

exceptional service and customized solutions, 1st Century Bank is committed to building lasting relationships and empowering clients' success.

To learn more about the financial services offered by 1st Century Bank, please contact our San Diego team at 619.376.4000 or visit <https://www.1cbank.com/san-diego> .

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · May 29, 2025

BUSINESS

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

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



Bigger budget, same old song

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

California Policy Center Warns State’s Policies on Middle Class Serve as National Cautionary Tale

The organization argues that special interests have engineered high costs and regulations that squeeze working families, expand dependency, and enrich elites and government.

California has effectively launched an assault on its middle-income residents, according to the California Policy Center. The organization argues that powerful special interests are advancing an economic approach that divides society into a small group of wealthy elites and a dependent underclass, leaving little room for those who simply work and pay their own way.

The Center writes that this system relies on making everyday living prohibitively expensive for ordinary households while crafting regulations so complex that only massive corporations can manage them. Officials justify these measures as necessary responses to the climate emergency and the pursuit of social equity.

While the Trump interregnum slowed similar trends

elsewhere, the California Policy Center says the state continues pushing forward without pause. Wealthy individuals remain largely unaffected by high costs and enjoy the state’s natural attractions. Those with very low incomes often stay because generous public assistance programs provide a standard of living far above what they might have known elsewhere.

For everyone in between—the taxpayers who cover their own expenses without subsidies—the environment is openly hostile, the Center contends. Census Bureau figures show more than 8.5 million people have left California since 2010. In 2023, 690,000 departed; 818,000 left in 2022 and 841,000 in 2021. No other state has experienced comparable long-term population loss.

These departures amount to people being driven out, the California Policy Center maintains. Median home prices in the state now approach \$788,000, more than double the \$361,000 national figure. Gasoline costs about \$5 per gallon locally versus \$3 elsewhere, and the Center predicts the price will climb as refineries quit production under regulatory pressure.

Electricity rates stand at roughly 30 cents per

kilowatt-hour—twice the U.S. average. The Center notes that restrictions on housing, energy and water infrastructure, pushed by environmental advocates and their backers, explain much of the disparity. Doubling the cost of land and power inevitably raises the price of nearly everything.

Rather than easing these burdens, state lawmakers have responded with increased spending on aid programs. Between 2010 and 2020, inflation-adjusted per-person government expenditures more than doubled. Governor Newsom’s proposed 2025-26 budget of \$322 billion works out to \$8,173 per resident, up from \$4,696 in 2011 dollars. The Center asks whether schools, crime, homelessness or housing affordability have improved as a result.

Middle-class Californians bear the burden through elevated living costs they cannot escape and through higher taxes that support expanding public programs. The California Policy Center offers the example of an independent contractor earning \$100,000 who takes on extra work. Once state, federal and payroll taxes are applied, the marginal rate on additional earnings can reach 46.6

percent—substantially higher than the roughly 37 percent faced in states without California’s income tax and cost structure.

Sales taxes in Los Angeles County reach 9.75 percent. A household spending \$2,000 monthly on goods would pay an extra \$2,340 each year. Even with the state’s 1 percent property tax rate, a typical \$900,000 home generates \$9,000 in annual taxes. For the average worker earning \$68,917, the Center says homeownership is an impossible dream and paying for gasoline and electricity is a hardship.

The Center attributes the situation to a governing alliance of public employee unions, environmentalist billionaires, nonprofit organizations and large corporations that benefit from heavy regulation. These groups, it argues, fund politicians who advance their priorities, resulting in a growing bureaucracy and protected industries that profit from elevated prices.

Media outlets, largely shaped by union-influenced universities, reinforce the prevailing narrative, according to the California Policy Center. Although 40 percent of voters consistently oppose the dominant political bloc, the remainder have been

influenced by what the Center calls one of the nation’s most effective political operations, which uses fear-based messaging on climate, race and other issues.

Only those who bought homes long ago or inherited them can live modestly in the state today, the Center observes. Others either work constantly with little to show for it or turn to government support. The California Policy Center warns that the same special interests—unions, funded nonprofits and favored corporations—are aligned in their goals and seek to replicate this model nationwide, having already succeeded in eliminating California’s middle class.

Americans elsewhere should recognize the danger this approach represents, the Center says.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · May 30, 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

COUNTY

County Public Health Lab Celebrates Grand Opening

The County’s new state-of-the-art Public Health Lab officially opened its doors after a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the County Operations Center (COC) in Kearny Mesa on Thursday.

The two-story facility measures 52,000 square feet, three times larger than the old, cramped and outdated building on Rosecrans. Once a shopping center and dating back to 1965, it hadn’t been designed to house a lab. The structure was closed due to its aging infrastructure.

The new facility creates space for nearly 90 employees and contractors who will test for infectious diseases like COVID-19, Respiratory Syncytial Virus known as RSV, flu and other diseases.

They will also test for food and water safety, animal rabies and dangerous pathogens like anthrax.

In addition to these services, the expanded lab will

conduct whole genome sequencing and test for tuberculosis.

County microbiologists and other staff worked with builders to make sure the lab would meet their needs, and state and federal guidelines.

As a result, the new building provides a safe, secure facility with improved workflows, flexible spaces for large pieces of equipment, storage and the ability to scale up for any future public health emergencies.

Biosafety-Level (BSL) 3 Bioterrorism Lab

Tuberculosis (TB) Prep and BSL-3 TB Labs

The lab expects to conduct about 50,000 tests annually.

The new facility will also serve as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Laboratory Response Network Lab for San Diego and Imperial Counties.

A survey on space needs at the COC campus led the way to construction.

Recognizing that COVID-19 changed the way some people

work, the survey looked at teleworking schedules, hoteling spaces and future growth of the existing campus departments. Results showed staff could be consolidated into three of the four existing office buildings.

With careful planning and some remodeling work, 12 departments consolidated into three office buildings.

The reshuffling allowed 570 Public Health Services employees who were formerly at the Rosecrans building to move into the vacant four-story, 150,000-square-foot building on campus.

In avoiding the \$150 million cost of building a replacement for the health services complex, the County was able to construct the public health lab and a six-level parking garage nearby.

The \$32.5 million parking structure was completed last year, adding 725 spaces and 237 electric vehicle charging stations. Roof solar panels were installed to offset part of the lab’s energy use.

The lab’s groundbreaking

took place in October 2023. The facility reflects the architecture on the rest of the campus but differs slightly to differentiate it from the other buildings. Like each building, the site features its own public art and artifact displays.

The lab was built to platinum LEED standards which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Standard Design. The structure is expected to become the County’s 71 st LEED certified building.

The building features solar panels, saves energy with natural lighting, conserves indoor and outdoor water use, and saved landfill space through the recycling of demolition and construction waste materials.

Construction also reduced embodied carbon by 23% and refers to emissions made in the manufacture, transport, use and disposal of building materials. In this case, the building used low-carbon concrete, steel and metal panels.

Throughout the region, the County has achieved several

sustainability milestones:

11 Zero Net Energy buildings that produce more energy than the building consumes in a year

16 MW of solar energy installed at County sites – providing 20% of the County’s total electricity demand

47% reduction in greenhouse gases from County operations since 2010

The lab and the parking structure mark the sixth phase of the COC Campus Master Plan. In 2008, the Board of Supervisors authorized the plan to rebuild and centralize a wide range of County operations in one place – the 47-acre campus in Kearny Mesa.

Since that time, campus buildings that had outlived their useful lives were destroyed and replaced with new, modernized and environmentally friendly facilities.

See below for the list of major campus construction projects:

County of San Diego news release · May 29, 2025

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