

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

Postcards Sent to Registered Voters for November Special Election



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

The San Diego County Registrar of Voters office sent over 2 million postcards to the County’s registered voters listing their voting options for the Nov. 4 special election .

Every active registered voter will receive a ballot in the mail and will have three options for returning their ballot: by mail, to one of the Registrar’s official ballot drop boxes or at any vote center. Voters can expect to receive their ballot the week of Oct. 6, giving them nearly a month to mark their ballot and return it by the final day of voting on Nov. 4.

Voters throughout the state will decide whether to adopt Proposition 50, an amendment to the State Constitution related to redistricting. You can learn more about the proposition on the California Secretary of State’s website .

Voters who reside in the City of Poway’s Council District 2 will have an additional question on their ballot. Poway District 2 voters will decide whether to remove their elected representative on the city council from office. Only voters living in Council District 2 are eligible to vote on this contest. If you’re not sure whether you live in the district, you can look it up at sdvote.com .

Early voting begins Monday, Oct. 6, at the Registrar of Voters office in Kearny Mesa , located at 5600 Overland Ave., San Diego. The Registrar’s office will be open 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 at home and return your voted ballot through the mail – no postage needed – or drop it off at any of the Registrar’s official ballot drop boxes starting Tuesday, Oct. 7, through Election Day, Nov. 4.

If you want to vote in person, take advantage of early voting. Starting Saturday, Oct. 25, select vote centers located around the county will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Starting on Saturday, Nov. 1, all vote centers will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. On the final day of voting, Nov. 4, all vote centers, official ballot drop boxes and the Registrar’s office will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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

County of San Diego news release · Sep 5, 2025



Illustration from a photo by Cleveland National Forest US Forest Service · Wikimedia Commons, Public domain

COUNTY

Time to Get Fire Prepared

A wind advisory issued by the National

Weather Service for the San Diego mountains and high desert areas is in effect through early Wednesday. Emergency officials remind everyone to review their Personal Disaster Plans.

People are encouraged to take four steps to help prepare yourself and your loved ones in the event of a wildfire or any emergency.

Review, update or create a Personal Disaster Plan for your home and family with important information you may need in the event of an emergency. A template is available at AlertSanDiego.org in 12 languages, with an additional disaster plan for people who may need assistance.

Register your cell phones for emergency alerts notifying communities of an emergency affecting your community.

Create an Evacuation Go-Kit and a Shelter-in-Place Kit including items for your pets. A checklist is available on AlertSanDiego.org.

Practice evacuating your household. The goal is to evacuate in 15 minutes or less.

The disaster plan template and supply lists for evacuation and sheltering are also available when you download the SD County Emergency app for free.

County of San Diego news release · Sep 9, 2025

COUNTY

More Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile Virus

Mosquitoes collected recently in routine monitoring in the City Heights and Skyline neighborhoods in the City of San Diego have tested positive for West Nile virus.

The detections prompted County officials to remind people to use the County’s “Prevent, Protect, Report” guidelines to keep mosquitoes from breeding and to protect themselves from mosquito-borne illnesses.

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

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More Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile Virus

To help reduce mosquito activity in the City Heights and Skyline neighborhoods, the County’s Vector Control Program will be inspecting and treating mosquito breeding sites and conducting follow-up mosquito trapping in the areas.

The new detections are in addition to ongoing West Nile virus activity in Rolando and La Mesa that was previously reported in July. Although mosquito numbers are down in those areas, County Vector Control continues to routinely monitor mosquito activity, offer mosquito inspections to residents and act to reduce mosquito breeding.

There have been no reported human cases of West Nile virus in San Diego County this year.

However, the virus remains a potentially deadly threat, because it can be transmitted to humans by several types of mosquitoes if they feed on an infected bird and then bite people.

Some people who become infected can suffer symptoms including headache, fever, nausea, fatigue, skin rash, or swollen glands. But in rare cases, West Nile virus can make people extremely ill

and even kill them.

Protecting against mosquitoes is always important in San Diego County. The recent detections of West Nile virus serve as reminders that the public can help prevent mosquito-borne illnesses by continuing to follow the County’s “Prevent, Protect, Report” guidelines. Those include finding and dumping out standing water around homes to keep mosquitoes from breeding.

Dump out or remove things around homes that can hold water—whether from rain or sprinklers. Those things can include plant saucers, rain barrels, buckets, garbage cans, toys, old tires and wheelbarrows. Mosquito fish, available for free by contacting the Vector Control Program, may be placed in backyard water sources such as stagnant swimming pools, ponds, fountains and horse troughs to control mosquito breeding.

Protect yourself from mosquito-borne illnesses by wearing long sleeves and pants or put on insect repellent when outdoors. Use an insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, 2-undecanone or IR3535. Make sure screens on windows and doors don’t have holes and are secured to keep insects out.

Report possible mosquito activity and dead birds

Report increased mosquito activity, unmaintained green swimming pools and other mosquito-breeding sources, as well as dead birds—crows, ravens, jays, hawks and owls—to the County Vector Control Program by calling (858) 694-2888 or emailing vector@sdcountry.ca.gov.

Go to San Diego County’s “Fight the Bite ” website to learn how to prevent and protect against West Nile virus and mosquitoes.

For more information about West Nile Virus, go to the County Health and Human Services Agency’s West Nile virus webpage .

County of San Diego news release · Sep 8, 2025

COUNTY
County Celebrates Opening of Village View County Park in Fallbrook

The County held a grand opening event this past week for the new Village View County Park in North County.

Located at 831. E. Fallbrook St. in Fallbrook, CA, the new park sits on a hillside overlooking the rolling hills of the San Luis Rey River Valley and features amenities that make it a destination for residents of all ages.

This 6.8-acre park offers an all-wheel skatepark, picnic

and adventure play areas, two dog parks for large and small dogs, multi-use paths, an ADA-accessible restroom and a multipurpose field.

“This park reflects years of community-driven design and collaboration,” said Jason Hemmens, Director of the County’s Department of Parks and Recreation. “From the skatepark to the play areas and the gathering spaces to the interpretive signs, every element was shaped by local input to make sure Village View truly meets the needs of Fallbrook residents.”

The skatepark, one of the most anticipated amenities, pays tribute to Fallbrook’s agricultural roots with a signature avocado-shaped bowl, plus rails, ramps, and obstacles that challenge both first-time skaters and seasoned pros.

“This park is more than an outdoor space,” said Supervisor Jim Desmond, who represents the County’s fifth supervisorial district where the park is located. “It’s a long-term investment in the health, safety, and happiness of our community. It’s a space where neighbors can come together, kids can grow, and the natural beauty of Fallbrook is celebrated every day.”

Residents can learn more about the park and upcoming programs by visiting sdparks.org/VillageView

Courts · Transit · Public safety

County of San Diego news release · Sep 4, 2025

COUNTY
San Diego’s Jewel on the Bay, the County Administration Building

The year was 1938. Walt Disney’s classic “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” filled movie theaters. France invented the ballpoint pen. Dupont discovered Teflon. Thomas Jefferson’s visage replaced the buffalo on the five-cent piece. The U.S. created “National Doughnut Day.”

And San Diego opened the County Administration Center! The “Jewel on the Bay.”

Like Snow White, the County Administration Center is still a classic — a work of art and the home of San Diego County’s government.

It’s a place where visitors flock to snap pictures and marvel at the architecture. And where the public comes to get married, get passports, get birth and marriage certificates and watch the democratic process in action at County Board meetings.

Want to learn even more about our County Administration Center and its history? Just watch the video !

County of San Diego news release · Sep 4, 2025

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy



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

BUSINESS

From the Desk of Veronica Perondi – September 2025

The National Community Leadership Collaborative recently shared results from a survey collected from ten years of alumni across ten leadership organizations. It reaffirms what many of us already know: community leadership programs change lives and they change communities.

97% gained information that helped them better understand the issues impacting their community

91% diversified their network by building relationships with classmates and other leaders in their community

89% believe their

participation in the program benefits their community

85% grew their confidence to drive positive change in their community

77% grew their ability to communicate with people across differences

71% have become active in new or deeper ways in their community (board service, volunteerism, running for public office, and other types of civic or philanthropic engagement)

69% learned skills that helped them be more effective in formal and informal leadership roles

At a time when division feels increasingly normalized and budget cuts are forcing many organizations to make hard choices, these results are a reminder: investing in leadership – especially community leadership – is not a luxury. It’s a necessity. And programs like LEAD are proof.

Community leadership programs exist in nearly every city across the country, united in their missions to connect, educate and prepare

people to make a difference in their communities. I recently attended the Legacy and Community Champions panel hosted by the Burnham Center for Community Advancement that featured a conversation across generations. One panelist was asked what makes a good leader. Part of the answer was a willingness and desire to keep learning.

That desire to learn is evident in our incoming Impact 2026 cohort, which started their journey this past Friday. This marks our 46 th cohort and you can meet the newest class here .

Community and leadership may be broad concepts, but community leadership is a distinct and vital practice. At the end of the day, we are all humans seeking connections, seeking meaning and looking for ways to make a difference. An that is what drives lasting, positive change.

Next week we celebrate those who’ve turned this idea into action at our 23 rd annual Visionary Awards . If it’s not already on your calendar, I hope you’ll join us

to celebrate.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Sep 1, 2025

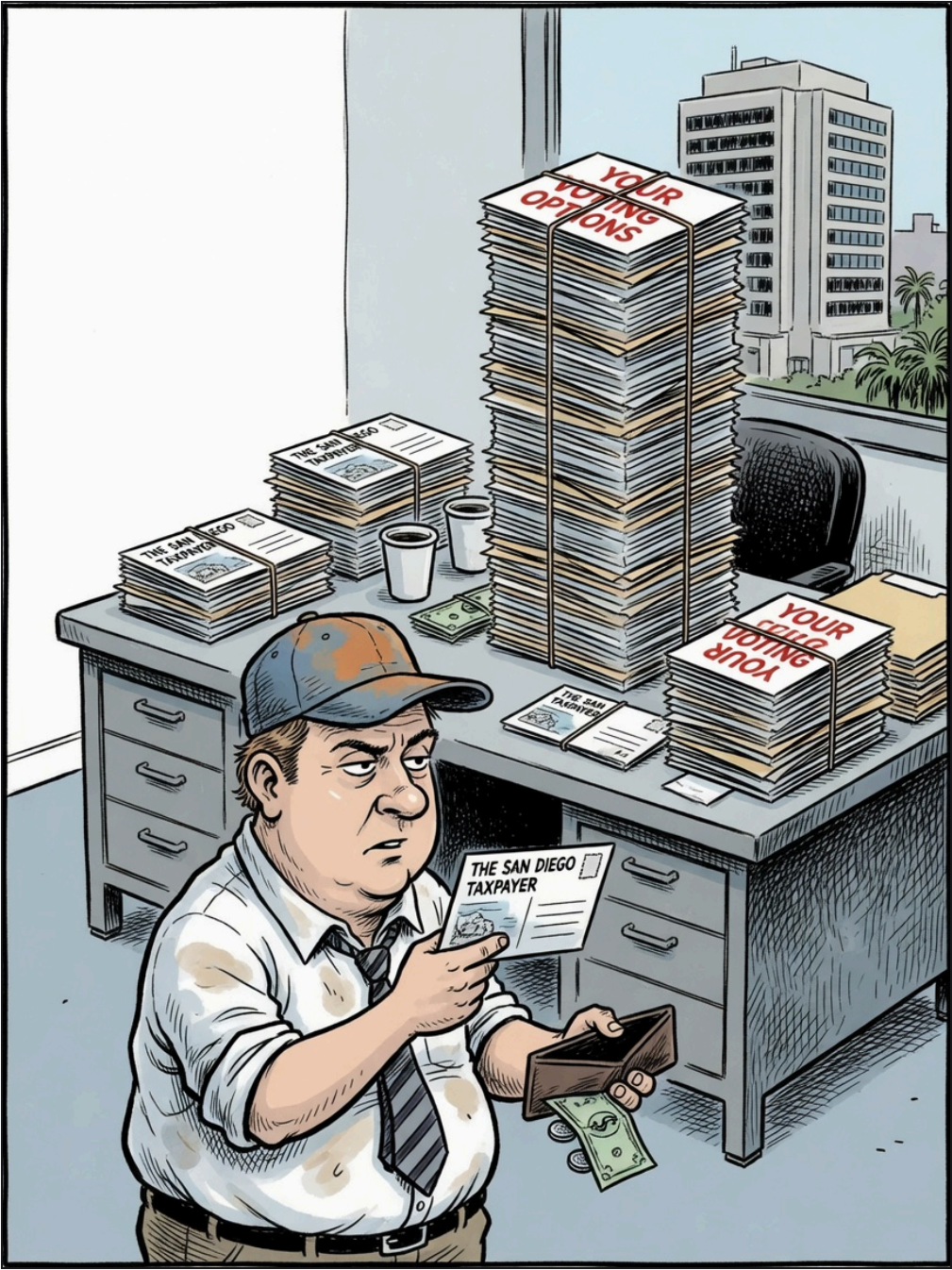
BUSINESS
Meeting with CBP Commissioner Rodney Scott

Last week, the Chamber met with recently appointed CBP Commissioner Rodney Scott alongside some of our partners including the Small Business Development Center. Our business community elevated ongoing priorities such as advancing border efficiency, continued investment in technology, and fully staffing our air, sea, and land ports of entry. Board members Eduardo “Lalo” Acosta, VP of R.L. Jones Customs Brokers, and Ernesto Bravo, President, TECMA West Division, stressed the need for clear and timely communication on tariff implementation which impact local businesses of all sizes and across industries. The Chamber is part of monthly stakeholder meetings with CBP Director of Field Operations for San Diego

Sidney Aki and team, and we appreciate our partnership and communication channels which help inform our outreach efforts.

This past month, tariffs were implemented to over 90 countries ranging from 10% to much higher. Some countries like South Korea, the European Union, and Japan have reached trade deals with the U.S. yet have not been fully exempt from tariffs. Other countries like Mexico and China were able to negotiate a 90-day extension to further negotiate trade deals that benefit both parties. Canada, on the other hand, was one of the first to receive tariffs on non-USMCA goods, while still working with the federal administration on a trade deal. Chamber President and CEO, Chris Cate participated at a press conference with Rep. Scott Peters and Rep. Sara Jacobs to highlight the economic impact that tariffs have on regional businesses and supply chains.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Aug 25, 2025



Postcards list your Nov. 4 options

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

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

COMMENTARY
California Policy Center Argues State Spends \$137 Billion on Schools but Sees Only Minimal Academic Gains

The California Policy Center contends that despite a 65 percent increase in education funding over the last decade and a drop in enrollment, academic performance has improved only slightly, while teachers unions oppose the group’s proposed reforms.

With California schools now back in session and the state’s budget approved, the California Policy Center is asking what taxpayers and parents are actually getting for the enormous sums spent on public education.

In its latest analysis, the Center notes that the 2025-26 state budget allocates \$137.6 billion for Transitional Kindergarten through 12th grade. That figure exceeds the entire federal budget for the Department of Homeland Security, which stands at \$122.5 billion for fiscal year 2025.

The Center writes that education spending has grown 65 percent over the last decade. California’s K-12

budget in 2015-16 was \$83.2 billion. Adjusted for inflation, that amount would equal roughly \$110 billion in today’s dollars, yet actual current spending has climbed well beyond that level.

At the same time, the state is educating fewer children. The Center’s review comparing the 2014-15 and 2024-25 school years shows public school enrollment dropped from about 6.2 million students to 5.8 million, even after adding Transitional Kindergarten and growth in charter schools enrolling more than 182,000 students.

As a result, per-pupil spending has soared. Ten years ago, the average was \$12,284 per student. Last year, it reached \$23,000 — an 87 percent increase, according to the Center.

Lance Christensen, Vice President of Education Policy at the California Policy Center, argues that these higher expenditures have not produced the academic improvements families expect. “Parents in California have long believed that more spending in their children’s classrooms will lead to higher academic results,” Christensen says. “Teachers

unions have convinced many elected officials — from local school boards to the legislature — to believe this myth.”

The Center points to results from the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. In 2023-24, 47 percent of students met English Language Arts standards and 35.5 percent met math standards. A decade earlier, those figures were 44 percent and 33 percent, respectively. The Center describes the improvement as slight and not proportional to the spending surge.

Comparisons with other states reinforce the Center’s point, it says. Massachusetts spends slightly less per pupil at \$21,885 yet substantially outperforms California in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math. Even lower-spending states such as Idaho, at about \$10,000 per pupil, and Montana, at \$13,500, posted better results in those subjects and grades, according to the Center.

Christensen continues: “But the data tell a different story. While money is helpful in educating our children, it’s important to have curricula that work, and to avoid the

radical instruction that California families have had to put up with for too long.”

The Center maintains that California needs greater accountability for tax dollars, a renewed emphasis on academic fundamentals, the ability to remove underperforming teachers, expanded school choice, merit-based policies, and a shift of resources away from bureaucracy and toward instruction.

Yet the state’s influential teachers unions stand in the way of these changes, the Center argues. It urges parents to support its efforts by informing teachers about their right to opt out of unions, monitoring local school board spending, and considering alternatives such as public charter schools.

The commentary concludes that weakening the power of teachers unions is essential to opening the door for meaningful education reform in California, according to the Center.

Sheridan Karras is research manager and Parent Union Coordinator for California Policy Center.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Sep 4, 2025

COMMENTARY
Public Sector Unions Fuel Progressive Dominance, Undermining Prosperity

Edward Ring argues that government employee unions, with their steady flow of dues and concentrated power, create an uneven political battlefield that entrenches progressive policies at every level of government.

Public sector unions form the foundation of progressive political strength across the United States, according to Edward Ring of the California Policy Center.

The Center estimates that more than 7 million public employees belong to unions nationwide, representing 32 percent of all government workers. By comparison, an equal 7 million private-sector workers are unionized, but that accounts for just 6 percent of that workforce.

This disparity gives public-sector unions far greater influence than their private-sector counterparts, Ring writes. The imbalance is

Continued on page 4

COMMENTARY (CONTINUED)

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

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Public Sector Unions Fuel Progressive Dominance, Undermining Prosperity

especially pronounced in progressive strongholds like California, where 58 percent of public employees are union members versus only 11 percent in the private sector.

California’s public sector unions collect nearly \$1 billion in dues each year, the Center reports. While that sum may not rival national campaign war chests, Ring emphasizes that corporate and billionaire contributions are often episodic, split between parties and rarely reach local races.

Union funds, by contrast, flow continuously and overwhelmingly back progressive candidates and causes at every level of government. This creates a structural advantage that local politicians ignore at their peril.

Ring recounts a conversation with a former mayor of a medium-sized Southern California city who

described the choice bluntly: accept \$1 million in independent expenditures from local government unions or watch them spend the same amount to defeat him. Few businesses or grassroots groups can match that spending year after year.

The consequences extend far beyond city halls. Local elected officials serve as a “farm team” for higher office, Ring explains. City council members and county supervisors often advance to state legislatures and Congress, and in California, 75 percent of state legislators are progressives who “almost without exception” owe their victories to public-sector union support.

Progressives now hold majorities, and often supermajorities, on the governing boards of the state’s largest cities, counties and school districts, according to the Center.

In a recent interview, Ring said that if he were “king for a day” he would outlaw public-sector unions. The remark drew a thoughtful response from a California firefighter and union leader

who otherwise agreed with Ring’s views but questioned the idea.

Ring acknowledges that abolishing the unions is politically unrealistic, especially in California. Instead, he sees an opportunity for realignment from within. Many rank-and-file members, he suggests, do not share the progressive ideology of their leadership.

The challenge, Ring writes, is that progressive policies favoring bigger government align with unions’ institutional incentive to expand membership and dues revenue. More regulations require more regulators; more benefits require more administrators.

As a result, “failing programs and intrusive regulations that harm the general population actually constitute success for these government unions,” according to Ring. He concludes that public-sector unions “are waging war on American prosperity and freedom.”

The short-term solution, he argues, lies with union members themselves. They

must reject their leadership’s progressive agenda, prioritize the broader public interest and advocate for limited government that allows a competitive private sector to thrive.

Ring offers a specific example involving California firefighters, whose union has allied with extreme environmentalists. He contends that progressive policies over the past 40 years have crippled the state’s commercial logging industry, contributing to catastrophic wildfires.

Firefighters, Ring writes, lack a direct economic incentive to reverse this trend. Yet in the interest of public safety, the environment and their own mission, they should break with “extreme environmentalist orthodoxy” and push for restored timber harvests at 1980s levels.

Responsible, science-based logging would reduce fire risk, help endangered species and generate jobs and tax revenue, he maintains. Instead, the firefighters’ union has marched in solidarity with the United

Teachers of Los Angeles, whose agenda Ring describes as extremely progressive.

Ring urges the firefighters to align instead with loggers and mill workers and to distance themselves from all progressive extremists—whether in education or forest management. “That would be a good start,” he writes.

Edward Ring is director of water and energy policy at the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013. He is the author of “Fixing California: Abundance, Pragmatism, Optimism” and “The Abundance Choice: Our Fight for More Water in California.”

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Sep 4, 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 sandiegonewslines.com.

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