

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

Federal Government Shut Down Delays CalFresh Benefits



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The federal government shut-down that began on Oct. 1, 2025, will now delay CalFresh benefits being issued regardless of whether a budget deal is reached this week.

The length of the delay for people to receive November benefits is unknown at this time. It will depend on when the government re-opens and the amount of time to restart the federal funding of benefits.

CalFresh beneficiaries who have a balance on their EBT card from prior months will still be able to use their benefits on Nov. 1 and after.

CalFresh is the federal food assistance program known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and also commonly referred to as EBT or Food Stamps. CalFresh benefits are 100 percent federally funded.

The County understands this is a difficult situation and will share more information about November CalFresh benefits as soon as possible.

“Because the federal government failed to pass a budget, shutting down operations nationwide, CalFresh benefits will not be reloaded on Nov. 1,” said Board Chair Terra Lawson-Remer. “Governor Newsom has deployed the National Guard and directed additional funding to food banks to help families keep food on the table. The County of San Diego and the State of California are working together to support families through this crisis, and anyone who needs help should call 2-1-1 or

visit 211sandiego.org.”

People can stay informed by checking both the County's CalFresh website, and the BenefitsCal website for updates. CalFresh beneficiaries can check their balance by calling the number on the back of the EBT card.

To provide additional support and information on food resources to impacted CalFresh beneficiaries, the County's Self-Sufficiency Services Access Customer Service Call Center — 1-866-262-9881— will be open Saturday, Nov. 1, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The federal government shut down began Oct. 1, 2025, because Congress has not passed a new funding bill. CalFresh is a federal program, managed by the State and administered by counties.

Benefits are fully funded through the federal government. Without new funds, the federal government cannot continue funding CalFresh benefits.

The County of San Diego is encouraging local CalFresh beneficiaries to access local food resources. Information on food resources is available through the 211 San Diego webpage or by calling 211 San Diego.

Additional resources including, food banks and pantries located throughout the region can be accessed using the Feeding San Diego interactive map or San Diego Food Bank interactive map .

In San Diego County, about 395,000 individuals in nearly 240,000 households receive

CalFresh benefits, based on their income . For example, a family of four must make less than \$5,360 a month to qualify.

At this time, CalWORKs benefits for the month of November 2025 are not impacted.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 28, 2025

COUNTY

Share Your Input: Help Shape the County's Emergency Operations Plan

Attention residents, businesses, and community organizations, your feedback is needed to help shape how the region responds to disasters, especially if you want the County to consider specific community needs.

An online survey is available for community members and organizations to share their perspectives and experiences.

The County's Emergency Operations Plan provides a framework for how the region will respond to major emergencies and disasters – like a wildfire, earthquake, flood, or other emergency.

The plan is updated every four years to include current risks, community needs, changes in how we respond, new tools and technology, and lessons learned from previous disasters.

Community members are encouraged to share their feedback early so it can be reviewed and incorporated into the next plan update.

Community members are encouraged to visit the County's Engage San Diego County website to:

By sharing your experiences and ideas, you help the plan reflect the needs, values, and priorities of everyone in San Diego County.

To participate, visit Emergency Operations Plan | Engage San Diego County .

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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Share Your Input: Help Shape the County’s Emergency Operations Plan

County of San Diego news release · Oct 27, 2025

COUNTY

Starting Saturday, Select Vote Centers Open for November Special Election

You don’t have to wait until Election Day to vote in person. Voters can take advantage of early voting at nearly three dozen select vote centers starting Saturday, Oct. 25. The centers are located around the county and will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

On Saturday, Nov. 1, additional vote centers will open for a total of 68. All the 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.

There are fewer vote center locations for this special election, so if you wait until Election Day to vote, you should expect long lines.

You can visit any vote center in the county. Find a location near you at [sdvote.com](#) .

Vote centers have replaced polling places and provide more services . You can:

Vote in person or drop off a mail-in ballot

Vote using an accessible ballot marking device

Receive assistance and voting materials in multiple

languages

Register to vote or update your voter registration and vote on the same day

Voters can use a touch screen to make their selections on ballot marking devices . When finished, the voter will print out the official ballot, review it, place it in a secrecy sleeve, and hand it to a poll worker to insert it in the ballot box to be counted at the Registrar’s office. The ballot marking device does not store, tabulate or count any votes.

Remember that campaigning or electioneering within 100 feet of a vote center or official ballot drop box is not allowed. This includes the visible display or audible dissemination of information that advocates for or against any contests on the ballot. Additionally, an individual may not circulate any petitions, including those for initiatives, referenda, recall or candidate nominations.

Don’t delay! If you have been holding onto your ballot, act now and vote from the comfort of your home. Sign and date your return envelope, seal your completed ballot inside and return it by mail or at any of the Registrar’s over 140 official ballot drop boxes .

The Registrar’s secure stand-alone drop boxes feature the Registrar’s logo along with the County seal and are labeled “Official Ballot Drop Box.” Find one close to you through the Registrar’s online locator map or inside your voter information pamphlet .

Check each location’s hours of operation before heading out at [sdvote.com](#). All will close at 8 p.m. on Nov. 4.

The sooner the Registrar’s office receives your ballot, the sooner it is processed for the first release of election night results.

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 in the California Voter Information Guide .

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 Poway’s 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](#) .

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

County of San Diego news release · Oct 24, 2025

COUNTY

Safely Dispose of Prescription Medications This Saturday, Oct. 25

The San Diego County Sheriff’s Office is urging people to check their homes and collect unused or expired prescription medications and

turn them in on National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

People can anonymously drop medication off at one of nine Sheriff’s locations, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and help prevent misuse, accidental poisoning and the risk of medications ending up in the wrong hands. No sharps or needles will be accepted. Other drop-off locations are available around the county.

Prescription drugs can include pills containing opioids like oxycodone, antibiotics, and other medicines which can be dangerous if they end up in illegal markets.

In 2024, 541 people died from opioid overdoses in San Diego County as can be referenced in an Overdose Surveillance Dashboard that pulls together data from across the county.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has a list of 31 locations around the county that are open this Saturday to drop off unwanted prescription medications including the following San Diego County Sheriff’s Offices:

Alpine Sheriff’s Station – 2751 Alpine Boulevard, Alpine

Encinitas Scripps Hospital – 354 Santa Fe Drive, Encinitas

Fallbrook Sheriff’s Substation, 388 East Alvarado St., Fallbrook

Imperial Beach Sheriff’s Substation – 845 Imperial Beach Boulevard, Imperial

Beach

Lakeside Sheriff’s Substation, 12365 Parkside St., Lakeside

Ramona Sheriff’s Substation at Albertson’s, 1459 Main St., Ramona

Rancho San Diego Sheriff’s Station, 11486 Campo Road, Spring Valley

San Marcos Sheriff’s Station – 182 Santar Place, San Marcos

Valley Center Sheriff’s Substation, 28201 N. Lake Wohlford Road, Valley Center

San Diego County offers more than 200 disposal locations open year-round. Check the DEA’s Every Day is Take Back Day website or County interactive map to find a disposal site near you.

Medications can’t just be thrown out or flushed; you need to dispose of them safely and responsibly so they don’t pollute streams or other bodies of water or get picked out of your trash.

Substance use treatment resources and support services are available by calling the local San Diego Access and Crisis Line at 888-724-7240 or 988.

These resources are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can provide help in over 150 languages.

In April of this year, the DEA held a National Prescription Drug Take Back Day and collected 310 tons of medications around the country.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 23, 2025

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy



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BUSINESS

Local Advocacy Efforts

The San Diego City Council’s Rules Committee voted to advance a proposed June 2026 ballot measure that would impose a \$5,000-per-bedroom annual tax on short-term vacation rentals across the city. Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera is promoting the measure as a way to raise additional revenue amid budget

challenges and to free up more housing for San Diegans. The Chamber strongly opposes this costly experiment, which will not solve the housing crisis or address the rising cost of living facing working families. Instead, it would harm our local economy, deter tourism, and penalize San Diegans who rent out short-term vacation homes to supplement their income or operate as small business owners.

Ahead of the meeting, Chamber President and CEO Chris Cate spoke at a press conference outlining these concerns, and Executive Director of Public Affairs Justine Murray testified before the Committee, warning

of the measure’s economic impact on residents and small operators. The proposal will return to the Rules Committee before advancing to the full City Council in March for potential placement on the ballot. The Chamber thanks our members and San Diego residents who showed up in force to oppose this measure, and extends appreciation to Councilmember Raul Campillo for his “no” vote against this tax increase.

The San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce strongly opposes the proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$25 for entertainment event vendors in County parks. The Chamber has strongly

opposed the measure, noting it would dramatically increase costs for event producers, staging companies, and nonprofits, making it harder to host community festivals, charity walks, and cultural celebrations that contribute to San Diego’s local economy and tourism. Many of these events rely on small vendors, volunteers, and limited budgets, and such a mandate would force them to cut jobs, reduce hours, or relocate to neighboring counties with lower costs. Executive Director of Public Affairs Justine Murray spoke in opposition to the proposal to raise the minimum wage at the County Board of Supervisors on October 21 st ,

the County to prioritize compliance with existing laws and pursue alternative safety measures rather than advancing an industry-specific wage increase that undermines the region’s economic and tourism goals. Ultimately the measure passed 4-1, with County Supervisor Desmond voting no. We will continue to monitor this effort as it moves forward at the County, and thank Supervisor Desmond for his “no” vote against another industry-specific wage mandate effort in San Diego.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Oct 27, 2025

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AROUND CALIFORNIA

Statewide news

CALIFORNIA

El Cajon Remains Lone California City Sharing License Plate Data to Aid Crime Fighting

City officials defend continued participation in nationwide law enforcement network against Attorney General Rob Bonta's lawsuit.

Taxpayers and residents of El Cajon have a stake in effective policing that keeps stolen vehicles off streets and tracks down missing children or human trafficking victims before they disappear across borders, city leaders say.

El Cajon stands as the final California municipality still exchanging automatic license plate reader information with out-of-state agencies, according to city leaders.

The technology flags vehicles tied to stolen cars, serious felonies or endangered people, triggering immediate alerts to 911 dispatchers and patrol officers for rapid response.

Officials say the system proves most effective when departments pool information across jurisdictional lines, a practice that has operated for decades through methods such as lookout bulletins, direct calls and shared vehicle details.

Bonta's office has pressured nearly every local government in the state to halt reciprocal exchanges with agencies beyond California, leaving El Cajon isolated in the national safety network, according to the city.

City representatives insist

they do not share any data with federal immigration authorities in order to comply with the law.

Blocking information at the state border stops California departments from learning when criminals from other states enter local neighborhoods to target residents, officials argue.

The attorney general filed suit claiming the city breaks a provision of Senate Bill 34, passed in 2015.

That statute declares "a public agency shall not sell, share or transfer ALPR information, except to another public agency, and only as otherwise permitted by law," the city notes.

The bill defines "public agency" as "the state, any city, county, or city and county, or any agency or political subdivision of the state or a city, county, or city and county, including, but not limited to, a law enforcement agency," according to the source text cited by El Cajon leaders.

El Cajon leaders say they are not sure how the attorney general interprets that language as prohibiting their current data practices.

During an October 3, 2025, press conference, Bonta admitted there is no evidence supporting his claims, according to the city.

The attorney general has cited unrelated topics including immigration, abortion and gender-affirming medical procedures to justify the action, none of which connect to public safety, city officials stated.

"California Attorney General Rob Bonta was elected to uphold the law, not to rewrite it to fit a political agenda," the city maintains.

El Cajon has chosen to continue focusing on safer streets, fewer stolen cars, protecting victims of human trafficking, returning at-risk youth and missing elderly home, and protecting police officers and communities, city leaders say.

"Public safety should never be a partisan issue. It is the most basic responsibility of government," according to the city.

San Diego Newsline · Based on reporting by California Globe · Oct 28, 2025

CALIFORNIA

California CDL Scandal Deepens as Illegal Alien Truck Driver Causes Fatal Ontario Crash

A second deadly collision involving an undocumented immigrant granted a commercial license by the state has prompted a federal probe, raising fresh taxpayer and safety concerns over lax vetting of commercial drivers.

California's practice of issuing commercial driver's licenses to illegal immigrants came under renewed scrutiny after a 21-year-old undocumented truck driver from India crashed into slow-moving traffic on the 10 Freeway in Ontario, killing three people and injuring four.

Jashanpreet Singh, who entered the country illegally and was released by federal

authorities in March 2022, was driving a semi-truck that police say was speeding and under the influence when it slammed into several vehicles without braking. The chain-reaction wreck left three dead at the scene.

According to multiple ICE sources, Singh is in custody with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department on suspicion of DUI causing great bodily injury and gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated. ICE has lodged a detainer request.

The crash follows a similar August incident in Florida in which Harjinder Singh, another illegal immigrant who obtained his commercial license from California after failing a driving test 10 times in Washington state, made an illegal U-turn on a turnpike. That collision killed three South Florida residents.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced in September that his agency had uncovered nationwide abuse in which some states issued CDLs and regular licenses to criminal aliens without checking legal status. "States are letting them remain valid months or even years beyond a driver's legal status," Duffy said.

Duffy added that "Current federal rules are allowing unsafe, unqualified drivers on American roads. States are ignoring the law and failing to issue licenses properly." He has already withheld \$40 million from California for failing to enforce English-language requirements and

warned another \$160 million is at risk if the state does not comply with U.S. Department of Transportation rules.

Fox News reported that federal investigators are examining how Jashanpreet Singh obtained a California commercial license. U.S. Attorney Bill Essayli told Fox that investigators suspect Singh might have been under the influence of a stimulant and faces vehicular homicide charges.

An audit found California issued one in four commercial driver's licenses to non-citizens. The state has issued 62,000 driver's licenses to illegal drivers, though it remains unclear whether that total reflects only California or includes other states that also grant licenses to undocumented immigrants.

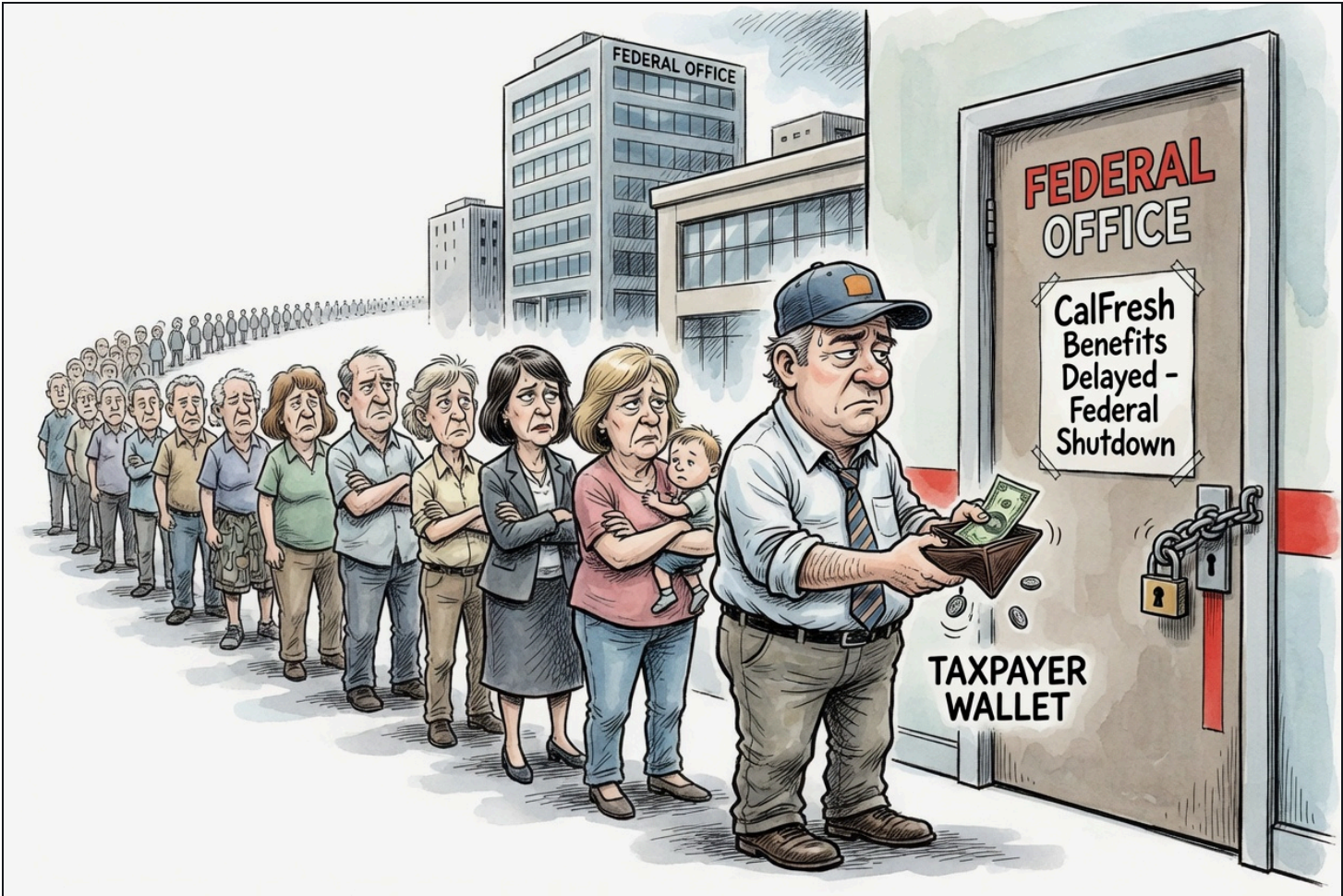
Gov. Gavin Newsom blamed the federal government for issuing a work permit to Singh, claiming it had nothing to do with the state driver's license. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has sued California and Washington for issuing commercial licenses to illegal immigrant truck drivers.

ICE sources confirmed Singh was caught and released at the California border by the Biden administration before later obtaining the CDL that allowed him to operate a commercial vehicle. Victims of the Ontario crash have not yet been publicly identified.

San Diego Newsline · Based on reporting by California Globe · Oct 23, 2025

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



Federal shutdown delays food aid for locals

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

California Union Targets Billionaires With New Ballot Tax Measure

The SEIU is sponsoring a one-time 5% tax on wealth over \$1 billion; the measure's sponsor claims it would not cause an exodus, but critics argue it could trigger a flight of high-net-worth residents and harm the state's budget.

The Service Employees International Union is once again using the ballot initiative process to target a specific group for additional revenue.

After unsuccessful attempts in 2018, 2020 and 2022 to pass measures aimed at dialysis providers, the union has now set its sights on the state's roughly 200

billionaires.

The SEIU is sponsoring the proposed "2026 Billionaires Tax Act," which recently appeared on the Attorney General's website. The measure would impose a one-time 5 percent tax on individual net worth exceeding \$1 billion.

Although the tax would be calculated based on 2026 wealth, it would apply to anyone who lived in California in 2025, a provision designed to make it harder to avoid.

Billionaires have significant resources to challenge the tax in court, meaning its constitutionality would face rigorous legal tests.

Supporters of the measure claim that because it is a one-time levy rather than an annual tax, it would not prompt

billionaires to leave the state. This distinguishes it from repeated federal wealth tax proposals advanced by figures such as Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

But critics quickly identified a problem with that reasoning on the social media platform X: if the state can successfully impose a wealth tax once, it could repeat the process in future years.

As a result, billionaires would likely depart California if the measure passes. Some might even leave simply if the proposal qualifies for the ballot, given the SEIU's demonstrated persistence with its repeated attacks on dialysis providers.

Such an exodus could create a serious budget crisis. Billionaires contribute a disproportionate share of

California's general revenue, so losing them would reduce funds available for a wide range of public services.

Under the proposal, revenue from the tax would go into a special fund, with 90 percent directed toward healthcare spending and the remainder allocated to K-12 education.

If billionaires relocate, the state's general fund would face shortfalls in areas such as law enforcement, corrections, higher education and other priorities not covered by the special fund.

Such concerns matter less to the SEIU. The new healthcare dollars would benefit providers that employ more SEIU members, who would then pay increased union dues, enabling union leaders to develop the next ballot

measure aimed at extracting revenue from a targeted group.

The union's strategy amounts to a continuing "shakedown" that risks driving away the very people who help fund California's public services.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Oct 24, 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

Vegetables Sprout in New \$1.67 Billion County Crop Report

Agriculture values rose by just over 1% to \$1.67 billion, and vegetable and vine crops thrived in San Diego County's Annual Crop Report released today.

The new Crop Report , which covers the 2024 growing season, showed the county's list of Top 10 crops changed slightly from the previous year, with "Vegetables, Other" jumping over lemons into fifth place, just behind avocados.

The Top 10 list was once again dominated by three crops. They were led by "Bedding plants, Color, Perennials, Cacti & Succulents," which has ranked number one since 2021, when it supplanted the former number one and now perennial number two, "Ornamental Trees & Shrubs." Coming in third for the sixth straight year was "Indoor Flowering and Foliage Plants."

Those three top crops alone produced just over \$1.08 billion in value. That equaled nearly 65% of the county's total agricultural value, growing on just 3.4% of the total acreage devoted to agriculture.

The Crop Report identifies seven main Crop "groups." Four of those suffered decreases in 2024. Nursery & Cut Flower Products and

Fruit & Nut Crops both suffered slight percentage decreases in the new report. Field Crops, and Apiary Products — bee products — registered double-digit percent decreases.

However, three of the seven Crop Groups registered increases, including significant jumps in two.

Livestock & Poultry increased 12.13%, from roughly \$86 million to nearly \$97 million. And Vegetable & Vine Crops increased by 26.13%, from roughly \$89 million to just over \$113 million.

The jump in the Vegetable & Vine Crops group included the single crop that had the highest percentage increase, "Vegetable, Other," which jumped 31.1%, from roughly \$75 million to over \$98 million.

Avocados, perhaps the county's most famous crop, remained in fourth place on the Top 10 Crop list, registering \$99,383,191 in value.

The County's Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures (AWM) compiles the Crop Report every year and posts it online. The report provides a yearly look at the local agriculture industry that remains a staple of the region's economy despite challenges. Those include climate change, the region's continuing drought, invasive agricultural pests, and increasing financial pressures such high input costs — fuel/energy, supplies,

machinery and fertilizers.

AWM supports the agricultural industry in numerous ways. It inspects and intercepts invasive agricultural pests like the Mexican and Mediterranean fruit flies, light brown apple moths, and Asian citrus psyllids. It certifies agricultural exports. It also regulates pesticide use, verifies organic produce, inspects farmer's markets and conducts safety training for agricultural fieldworkers.

Other notable information from the Crop Report:

The 12% increase in Livestock & Poultry was due to the increased values of most Livestock & Poultry Products, which include milk, eggs and chicken.

Apiary Products were valued at \$3,497,675, a 26% decrease from last year. The decrease is mainly due to a 47% drop in Honey and Beeswax production, caused by slightly decreased prices and inconsistencies in rainfall. Pollination dropped 6% as there were fewer colonies used for these services and stagnating pollination fees.

The overall value of Citrus decreased by 2%, along with a 5% decrease in acreage. Citrus crops that increased in value included Kumquats, Oranges, and Tangerines & Tangelos, which rose by roughly 19%, 9%, and 2%, respectively. All other citrus varieties saw declines in value, driven by a combination of reduced acreage and lower

yields, and contributing to the overall decrease in the Total Citrus category value.

County of San Diego news release · Oct 29, 2025

COUNTY

Have You Checked Your Mood Recently?

Every October, the County reminds San Diegans to ask themselves how they're feeling as part of Check your Mood, an initiative to promote mental health screenings.

Check Your Mood encourages residents to take a quick online self-assessment to determine whether they are experiencing normal levels of stress and are being mindful of their mental health. The assessment is not diagnostic, but a great way to help monitor mood and overall emotional well-being.

While October serves as a reminder, behavioral health professionals recommend people perform a mental health check-in year-round.

People who experience mental illness like depression are not alone. The national Department of Health and Human Services says one in five U.S. adults experiences a mental illness each year.

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

Symptoms of depression can include lack of energy,

sadness, loss of interest in activities that previously brought joy, and trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.

Self-care tips like connecting with friends and family, going for a walk outside, mediating, eating health nutritious meals and listening to music and dancing can help.

No-cost resources are available to help people experiencing a mental health challenge that can affect thinking, emotions, behaviors or mood.

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

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

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

County of San Diego news release · Oct 28, 2025

The news, every day. sandiegonewsline.com