

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

National Voter Registration Day Highlights Easy Ways to Register or Update Voter Information



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It's National Voter Registration Day. The San Diego County Registrar of Voters is urging eligible residents, especially first-time voters, to register to vote or update their voter information to ensure they receive their mail ballot for the Nov. 3 Gubernatorial General Election .

Registering is quick and easy. Voters can register online or request a paper application by calling 800-696-0136 or emailing rovmail@sdcounty.ca.gov .

Voters can also register today at these County Library branches:

4S Ranch: 10433 Reserve Drive, noon to 4 p.m.

Imperial Beach: 810 Imperial Beach Blvd., 12:30 to 6:30 p.m.

La Mesa: 8074 Allison Avenue, noon to 3 p.m.

Lemon Grove: 3001 School Lane, 1 to 3 p.m.

First-time registrants must provide either their California driver's license or state ID number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number. After registration is verified, California voters are not required to show ID when voting in person.

Registered voters should confirm their mailing address and other details by checking their registration status online . Mail ballot packets for the November election will be sent the week of Oct. 5.

Will be at least 18 years old on or by Election Day

Are not currently in state or federal prison for a felony conviction

Have not been found mentally incompetent by a court

Anyone who has moved, changed their name, or is new to San Diego County should re-register to vote.

County of San Diego news release · Sep 15, 2026

COUNTY

County Outlines Readiness Efforts Ahead of a Strong El Niño Season

With strong El Niño conditions expected to bring heavy rain to the region, County officials detailed new storm-readiness and flood prevention efforts at Tuesday's Board of Supervisors meeting.

The Board approved recommendations to receive the County's El Niño and severe weather preparedness update and directed staff to develop a countywide Severe Weather Community Preparedness Resource Hub and outreach strategy.

Supervisors also asked the Chief Administrative Officer to return Oct. 6 with a preparedness plan for unincorporated communities hit hard by the January 2024 floods. The plan will include the status of nine sites previously impacted by flooding, first-day response actions and assistance options for families with limited financial resources.

Meteorologists forecast longer, more frequent storms from October through April. Low-lying neighborhoods face the highest flood risk, along with threats of coastal erosion, landslides and debris flows.

Residents can now access the County's updated El Niño information hub on Alert San Diego , which includes

preparedness tips, expected impacts and County tools to help you stay safe.

The January 2024 floods prompted a comprehensive review of emergency planning and response. Updates include refreshed emergency plans, expanded training, increased staffing, designated emergency response roles and strengthened coordination with trusted community partners.

The County also launched a new Engagement Division within its Office of Emergency Services to expand community outreach and preparedness education.

The County has increased the number of employees trained to respond to emergencies. More than 1,200 County employees now hold dedicated emergency roles and receive annual refresher training and exercises to support multi-day storm operations. All County employees are Disaster Service Workers and may be called upon to assist during a major weather event or other emergency.

The County also coordinates closely with 18 cities, tribal nations, state agencies and federal partners to ensure a unified regional response when local resources are strained.

Protecting Infrastructure and Essential Services

County departments are prepared to maintain critical services and reinforce infrastructure during storms. Roads, drainage channels and culverts are being inspected and reinforced to reduce flood risks.

County Public Works maintains nearly 2,000 miles of County roads and operates 13 maintenance stations providing 24/7 storm response. For storm-related road issues, residents can call 877-684-8000.

Residents are encouraged to manage drainage, maintain gutters, stabilize

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

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County Outlines Readiness Efforts Ahead of a Strong El Niño Season

slopes and use County readiness tools.

Nearly 40 County and CAL FIRE stations offer free sand and sandbags. Locations and hours are available on AlertSanDiego.org/ElNiño .

The County is using data to identify older adults who may need additional support during severe weather, expanding inclement weather shelter options for people experiencing homelessness and partnering with community-based organizations to share information in multiple languages.

Know Your Risk, Get Information, Make a Plan

Residents can take three simple steps to prepare for El Niño:.

Know Your Risk: Use the County’s Know Your Hazards tool to check flood, landslide or other storm-related risks in your neighborhood.

Get Information: Sign up for AlertSanDiego emergency notifications and download Genasys Protect to receive real-time alerts and evacuation information.

Make a Plan: Create a family emergency plan , identify evacuation routes and assemble a go kit with essential supplies .

More tips and local resources are available on the County’s El Niño information hub on AlertSanDiego.org .

County of San Diego news release · Sep 15, 2026

COUNTY

New Substance Use Treatment Center Will Expand Care in South Bay

County officials celebrated a major behavioral health milestone today with the ribbon cutting for a new Substance Use Residential & Treatment Services (SURTS) center in National City. When the \$29 million facility opens this fall, it will be the first in the County to integrate substance use treatment and recuperative care services for adults under one roof.

The center adds 73 residential treatment beds and 16 recuperative care beds, significantly expanding access to timely substance use treatment and safe recovery options in South Bay.

Residential treatment beds will offer 24 - hour care for people with substance use disorders while the recuperative care beds will provide short-term medical support for people recovering from illness or injury who have no safe place to heal. Some

patients with co - occurring conditions may receive both services.

“ This Substance Use Residential & Treatment Services center will help smoothly connect people to the treatment they need,” said Jennifer Bransford-Koons, interim director of County Behavioral Health Services. “Instead of leaving the hospital after overdose or injury and managing their next step in care, they can receive in one place the type of extended support that will help reduce future emergency room visits, lower the risk of relapse, prevent homelessness and decrease overall healthcare costs.”

The center is expected to serve about 503 people each year through residential care and provide recuperative care for approximately 167 annually. Services include withdrawal management, medication management and care coordination. Located near Paradise Valley Hospital, the facility will receive referrals directly from the medical center as well as from other places.

The operator will be New Creation Behavioral Healthcare Foundation.

The building was designed to support healing, with shaded outdoor areas, trellises and garden planters, and calming indoor spaces with acoustic treatments and soft lighting. It also meets patient accessibility needs.

Renovations to the previously vacant County building included upgraded mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems plus modernized kitchen, laundry, dormitory and office areas. The center uses all - electric systems, supporting the County’s decarbonization goals.

Strengthening The Behavioral Health Continuum of Care

The new SURTS facility adds 89 beds for Medi - Cal beneficiaries and supports smoother transitions back into the community. This infrastructure investment is part of the County’s ongoing work to expand behavioral health services for the region’s nearly 900,000 Medi-Cal recipients .

Recent Behavioral Health Continuum of Care additions include a Crisis Stabilization Unit in El Cajon , a Psychiatric Health Facility in Oceanside , a South Bay Crisis Stabilization Unit and expanded Mobile Crisis Response Teams for K - 12 schools . Upcoming projects include a Children’s Crisis Residential Care facility in Kearny Mesa, an Acute Psychiatric Hospital in Santee and the Behavioral Health

Wellness Campus in the Midway district.

County of San Diego news release · Sep 14, 2026

COUNTY

County Public Health Leaders Stress Fall Vaccinations to Prevent Severe Illness

The County rolled out a new influenza vaccination dashboard this week, just as flu shots hit clinics and pharmacies across the region. The interactive tool lets you track flu, COVID-19 and RSV vaccination rates—and it is updated weekly to help you stay informed.

The County urges everyone to get their vaccines this Fall. Aligning with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the West Coast Health Alliance, the message is clear: protecting yourself helps protect your family and community.

Experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Family Physicians agree—vaccines are the most effective defense against hospitalizations, deaths, community spread and strain on healthcare systems.

Infants, young children, older adults, pregnant people, residents of group settings, and close contacts of vulnerable people.

Healthcare workers, whose protection ensures critical community resilience.

Visit your health - care provider or MyTurn.ca.gov to schedule your vaccine.

If you are uninsured or underinsured, you can visit a public health center.

“These recommendations are rooted in current science, including safety and efficacy,” said County Public Health Officer Sayone Thihalolipavan, MD, MPH. “Let’s protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities by getting vaccinated.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explains vaccine ingredients and the importance of childhood immunizations on its website .

County Public Health is dedicated to keeping communities safe, healthy and thriving through access to vaccines and slowing disease spread.

County of San Diego news release · Sep 11, 2026

COUNTY

County Crews Keep Things Moving

Every year, before, during and after the rainy season, County teams inspect, clear

and maintain thousands of drainage culverts in the unincorporated area. With a strong El Niño season predicted shortly, this work becomes even more important.

Currently, the County is investing \$4.5 million to replace 53 culverts as part of 90 miles of its road resurfacing program. County road crews also perform routine street sweeping, tree trimming, and repair potholes.

Residents in the unincorporated area can report concerns with County infrastructure and roads through the Tell Us Now app available for free in your App store.

To keep you safe and mobile, County Public Works currently manages:

County of San Diego news release · Sep 14, 2026

COUNTY

The Mira Mesa Epicentre is Back!

The County of San Diego, in collaboration with the City of San Diego and community members, officially opened the newly renovated Mira Mesa Epicentre .

Over 300 people attended the event, which featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony showcasing the talents of nearby Mira Mesa High School students. Hosted by 91X morning show and music director Rick Savage, the event featured an opening by the Mira Mesa High School drumline and cheer squad, plus performances by the dance team, choir, and local alternative rock band Blaargh!.

“I am so proud to have championed this project with the city of San Diego to bring a valuable public space back to life,” said Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer, who represents the County’s third supervisorial district where the facility is located. “Now, once again, the Epicentre will serve as a place where people from all walks of life can connect and enjoy meaningful activities for many years to come.”

The renovated facility features a music room, game room, demonstration kitchen, garden area, multi-functional pickleball and basketball court, flexible study and work areas, and rentable community space. A wide array of programs and services will be offered for youth and adults and will also serve as the headquarters for the County’s SD Nights teen program.

“This space is one-of-a-kind and holds a great deal of nostalgia for the community,” said Jason Hemmens, Director of the County Department of Parks and Recreation. “We’re looking

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forward to providing student and community-led programs that will help create new and lasting memories for both today’s youth, and for those that grew up visiting the Epicentre in their youth.”

Located at 8450 Mira Mesa Blvd. in San Diego, CA, the new facility sits in the heart of Mira Mesa, near the community park and senior center, and across the street from Mira Mesa High School.

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

County of San Diego news release · Sep 11, 2026

COUNTY

County Opens Villa Serena II, Expanding Affordable Housing in North County

The County of San Diego this week celebrated the grand opening of Villa Serena II, a new affordable housing community on 339 Marcos Street in San Marcos, giving more families a safe and stable place to call home.

Villa Serena II adds 63 affordable apartments for households earning at or below 60% of the area median income . Five homes are reserved for people in the No Place Like Home program who need behavioral health support and are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

With the completion of Villa Serena II, the combined Villa Serena community now offers 148 affordable homes, increasing family-focused housing options in North County. Developed by National CORE , the new three-story building includes one-, two- and three-bedroom homes plus an on-site manager’s unit.

The County supported the project with more than \$6.6 million in funding and 15 Project Based Vouchers.

Residents can access onsite services through the Hope through Housing Foundation, including programs that promote youth success, financial stability and health and wellness. County Behavioral Health Services works directly with property management to provide Housing First, Harm Reduction and Trauma-Informed Care, ensuring residents receive support that meets their needs.

Villa Serena II earned LEED Gold certification for energy-efficient design, drought-tolerant landscaping and solar panels that offset most of the community’s energy use. The site is close to public transit, grocery stores, parks, a medical clinic and the San Marcos Civic Center Station, giving residents

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY (CONTINUED)

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County Opens Villa Serena II, Expanding Affordable Housing in North County
convenient access to daily necessities and community resources.

Since 2017, the County has invested more than \$330 million in affordable housing. Through surplus County land and financing through the Innovative Housing Trust Fund, the County has helped create more than 3,900 new homes, with nearly 2,200 more now in development.
Explore the County’s interactive dashboard for details

on the County’s affordable housing inventory and visit the Housing for All Hub for services, resources, and property information through its Affordable Housing Map .
County of San Diego news release · Sep 11, 2026

COUNTY
There’s Still Time to Meet Your Work Requirements
October is the first month some CalFresh recipients could lose their benefits for not meeting new federal work requirements.
Since June , certain adults must complete at least 20

hours per week, or 80 hours per month, of work, volunteer service or education activities to stay eligible.
Recipients receive three months of benefits at the start of their renewal period to give them time to get connected with qualifying activities.
About 1,700 County residents are at risk of losing their benefits Oct. 1 if they don’t respond to the County by the end of September with proof they met the requirements or qualify for an exemption.
If someone misses the deadline, they can reapply. To

regain benefits, they must complete 30 consecutive days of qualifying activities. They will be reviewed annually after that.
Activities that count toward Work Requirements:
Work activities, like a job or self-employment
Job training, including the CalFresh Employment & Training (CFET) program
County staff can help residents identify qualifying activities and connect them with job, training and education opportunities.
Volunteer time counts, including helping at food

banks, schools or places of worship. The County also offers an optional volunteer hours form to make reporting easier.
For help, call the Access Customer Service Call Center 1-866-262-9881. Customers should also keep their contact information current online at BenefitsCal.com to avoid missing key updates .
CalFresh is California’s version of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps, providing nutritious food to those in need.
County of San Diego news release · Sep 16, 2026

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy



BUSINESS
Member Spotlight: Autism Society San Diego
For 60 years, Autism Society San Diego has been a trusted source of connection, support, and community for autistic individuals and their families across the region.

What began in 1966 as a small, determined group of parents has grown into one of San Diego’s most active and impactful autism-serving organizations — offering year-round programs, monthly services, and a welcoming community built on inclusion, dignity, and belonging.
This summer, Autism Society San Diego proudly celebrated the 25th anniversary of their Surf Camp program, a beloved San Diego tradition that has introduced thousands of autistic youth to surfing, adaptive aquatics,

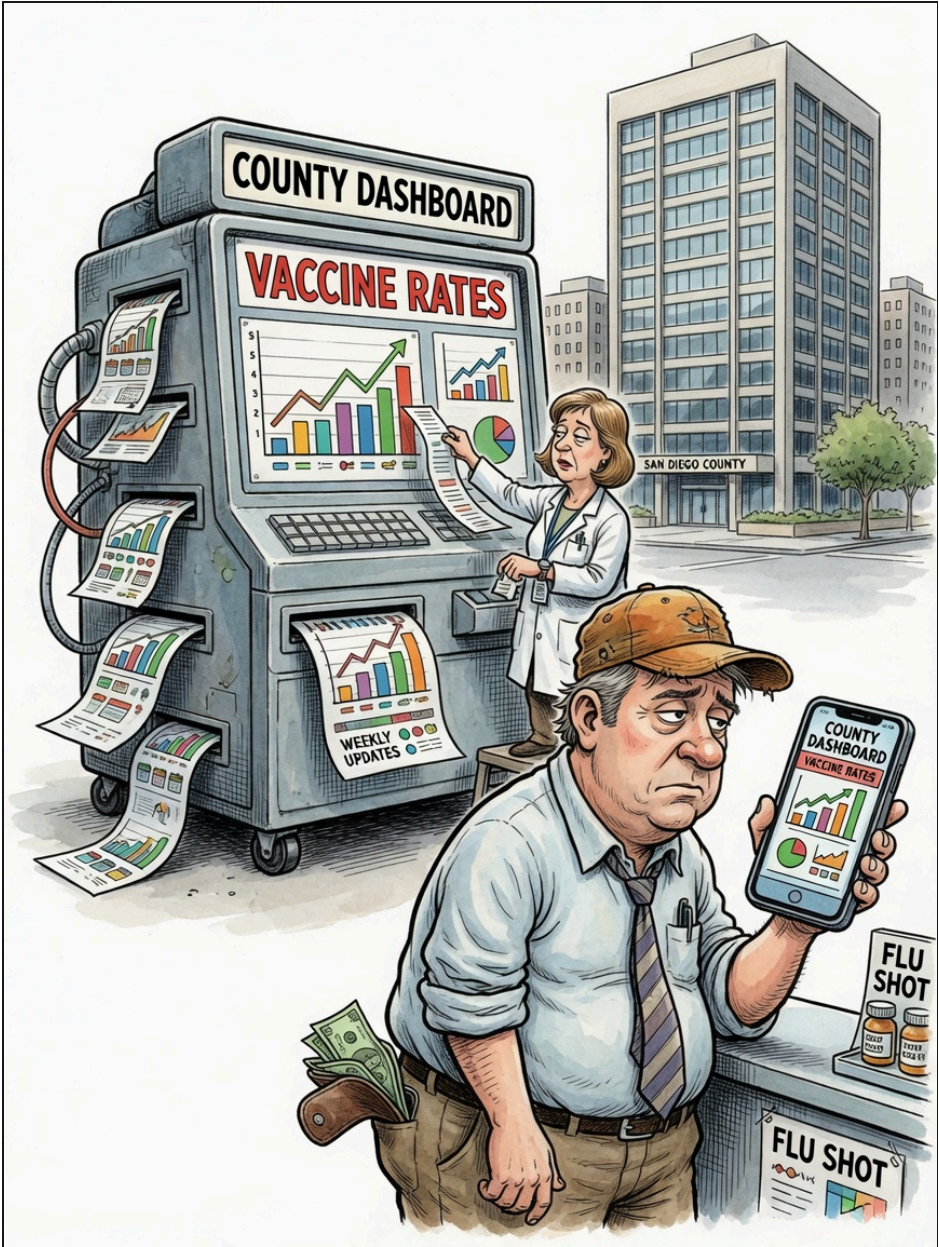
and drowning-prevention skills. Surf Camp is more than a week at the beach — it’s confidence-building, independence-boosting, and life-changing for participants and their families. Parents often share that watching their child ride a wave for the first time is a moment they will never forget.
Beyond Surf Camp, Autism Society San Diego provides monthly support groups, family meet-ups, adult social gatherings, aquatics programs, and community education designed to meet

families where they are. These services ensure that individuals of all ages have access to safe spaces, peer connection, and resources that strengthen the autism community year-round.
As they celebrate their Diamond Anniversary, Autism Society San Diego invites the San Diego community to join them for their 60th Anniversary Diamond Gala on October 3, 2026 . This milestone event will honor six decades of service, recognize the families and community partners who have

shaped their journey, and raise critical support to expand programs for the next generation.
Their work is possible because of the unwavering support of the San Diego region — its families, businesses, volunteers, and partners who believe in creating a more inclusive future.
Learn more at: www.autismsocietysandiego.org
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Aug 30, 2026

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



New dashboard tracks vaccination rates to prevent severe illness

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

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

COMMENTARY

Court Allows Conditional Parental Notification Policy for Chino Valley Schools But Bars Mandatory Disclosures Absent Request

A San Bernardino County judge partially granted and denied a motion to dissolve an injunction on the district's parental notification policy after the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Mirabelli v. Bonta*, prompting advocates to say the legal fight continues.

SAN BERNARDINO — The legal battle over whether California schools must inform parents about their children's gender transitions at school is continuing after a

partial court ruling this week.

In a bench ruling Tuesday, San Bernardino County Superior Court Judge Michael Sachs granted in part and denied in part a motion by Chino Valley Unified School District to dissolve a 2024 injunction that had blocked the district's original parental notification policy.

The decision came after the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Mirabelli v. Bonta*.

Judge Sachs determined that Chino Valley Unified can adopt a future policy requiring schools to disclose information to parents about a child's gender transition if the parent affirmatively requests the information or objects to the school

withholding it.

The judge ruled, however, that the district cannot implement a policy that would require schools to notify parents of a student's gender transition when the parent has not inquired or raised an objection.

Emily Rae, president of the California Justice Center, argued the motion in court.

“We’re disappointed but not surprised by the court’s ruling, but this fight is far from over,” Rae said.

Rae added that “The U.S. Supreme Court made clear in *Mirabelli* that California schools cannot keep secrets from parents.”

Rae also stated that “Chino Valley remains committed to

defending parents’ constitutional rights.”

Rae, who is representing the district along with co-counsel Advocates for Faith and Freedom, indicated that the organizations will evaluate their options once the court issues its written ruling in the coming days.

Rae is simultaneously handling a related appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, seeking to invalidate AB 1955 — the state law that bars parental notification policies.

Arguments in that case are pending the Ninth Circuit's decision in *City of Huntington Beach v. Newsom*.

Sonja Shaw, board president of Chino Valley Unified

School District, said, “Parents have an absolute right to know what’s happening with their child at school.”

Shaw added, “We won’t stop fighting for parents’ constitutional rights.”

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Sep 15, 2026

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

National Increase in Reported Human Rabies Exposures

Last Sunday, Safari Park employees found a dead bat, which later tested positive for rabies at the County Public Health Lab.

This was the 43 rd rabid bat identified countywide this year, twice the number of the previous year, which was a record high of 21.

“We are getting more reports, leading to more bat testing and more positive rabies results,” said County Public Health Officer Sayone

Thihalolipavan, MD, MPH. “It is imperative that people respect the space of wildlife and do not touch them for the safety of animals and people”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued put out a national health alert Thursday warning of rising human rabies exposures across the country.

“From July through August 2026, CDC received 17% more rabies-related inquiries than during the same period in 2025, including reports of mass exposure events (e.g., involving more than one person). During this time frame, CDC also received reports

from at least eight state health departments of increased rabies PEP use,” PEP is rabies post-exposure prophylaxis, which is medical care that prevents someone from developing rabies after being exposed.

The most recent rabid bat was found outside near the Mombasa Restaurant at the Safari Park at 11:30 a.m. on Sept. 6. The bat had already died and was not part of the park's animal collection. No human contact has been reported.

R a bies risk on occurs when a person has direct contact with the bat, including

touching, holding or being bitten,

Anyone who had direct contact with this bat should call the County’s Epidemiology unit (619) 692-8499.

Respect the space of wildlife, do not touch bats or any wildlife.

If you have direct contact with a bat, wash the area with soap and water and seek medical advice.

Rabies symptoms can take weeks to months to appear. Once symptoms begin, the disease is almost always fatal. Prompt treatment before

symptoms start is highly effective.

Bats are an important part of our local ecosystem. Local species help control insects, including mosquitos, and some pollinate plants while feeding on nectar. They are most active around sunset, when residents are most likely to see them.

For more information about bat testing and rabies in San Diego County, visit the rabies dashboard on the County’s website.

County of San Diego news release · Sep 11, 2026

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