

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

New County Treasurer-Tax Collector Takes Oath of Office



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

A new Treasurer-Tax Collector for the County of San Diego was sworn in Tuesday.

Lawrence (Larry) Cohen took the oath of office during a Board of Supervisors meeting as his wife and three sons looked on. Cohen was appointed to fill the position after former Treasurer-Tax Collector Dan McAllister retired on Aug. 2.

Cohen most recently served as the Chief of Staff to Congressman Juan Vargas who sits on the House Financial Services Committee. For over five years, Cohen has acted as chief advisor in supporting Vargas' work on the committee which oversees banks, pensions and federal securities legislation.

In the private sector, he worked for Millipore Sigma where he managed a \$30 million business line and was responsible for profit and loss performance, investment strategies and contract negotiations.

Cohen has a master's in business administration from Strayer University in Washington, D.C. where he received training in finance and management skills and he holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of California, San Diego.

The selection process to appoint a new Treasurer-Tax Collector began during a public hearing on Sept. 30. The Board of Supervisors narrowed down a pool of 11 qualified applicants to four finalists. The Supervisors also called for an informal community meet-and-greet on Oct. 30 so the public could get to

know the candidates.

At a second public hearing on Nov. 4, the Supervisors held four rounds of voting before selecting Cohen for the role.

Cohen will serve as the County's Treasurer-Tax Collector until the current term ends on Jan. 4, 2027. An election will determine a successor for the following four-year term.

The Treasurer-Tax Collector's office collects more than \$9.1 billion in property taxes every year. The office also collects the transient occupancy tax and the cannabis business tax from businesses in the County's unincorporated area.

The treasury side of the office manages the County investment pool, which ranges in size from \$10.2 – \$18.8 billion in assets on an annual basis. The Treasury is also the paying agent for all 42 school districts in the region.

Additionally, the office handles the Deferred Compensation Program for County employees and has oversight of the County's \$2.7 billion Deferred Compensation Program: 401(a), 457(b) + Roth Plan versions.

It also reconciles internal payroll reports, approves wires, oversees program activities, education and works closely with payroll, Human Resources and the record keeper.

County of San Diego news release · Nov 18, 2025

COUNTY

County Awarded \$900,000 Grant to Support Careers in Health and Human Services

The County has been awarded a

\$900,000 grant to help facilitate collaboration between the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and partner organizations. The funding will be used to drive a coordinated, regional approach to develop the health and human services workforce in San Diego County.

The grant, which was accepted by the Board of Supervisors today, is from Health Career Connection (HCC), a national nonprofit working to expand opportunities for students of diverse backgrounds and inspire a new generation of health leaders. The grant is part of the Regional Health Workforce Initiative supported by HCC and funded by The California Endowment's Social Bond.

Building a diverse, competent and engaged health and human services workforce is a priority for HHSA. San Diego County faces a worsening health and human services workforce shortage due to workers getting older and retiring or leaving for other jobs, this has particularly impacted the behavioral health workforce.

According to a 2022 San Diego Workforce Partnership report , the region needs to double its workforce by 2027.

Beyond behavioral health, there is a persistent demand for other licensed professionals, including nurses, therapists and social workers.

The new HCC grant funds will support the Live Well Center for Innovation and Leadership , a County academic-practice partnership with San Diego State University (SDSU) and its expansion to include California State University San Marcos (CSUSM). It also complements current HHSA initiatives, led by Behavioral Health Services and Public Health Services, to drive meaningful progress in workforce development across the region.

One component of the grant will

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

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County Awarded \$900,000 Grant to Support Careers in Health and Human Services

expand career-connected learning by offering internships and providing unique, hands-on cross-training opportunities for SDSU and CSUSM students to help bring more diverse, qualified workers to the County and other regional health and human services careers.

A national model in academic-practice partnership, the Live Well Center for Innovation and Leadership, was the first of its kind in California when it launched in 2022.

“These investments will facilitate collaboration between our university partners, other academic institutions, HHSA departments, contractors and community organizations to support a regional approach for health and human services workforce development in San Diego County.” said Carey Riccitelli, Director of the HHSA Department of Strategy and Community Engagement. “Stronger and coordinated career pathways mean more students will go on to serve in essential roles as social workers, public health nurses or in public health to support the residents of our region.”

Learn more about the Live Well Center for Innovation and Leadership on the Live Well San Diego Website.

County of San Diego news release · Nov 18, 2025

COUNTY
Old Globe Actors Perform for Probation Youth
Young men and women at

Probation’s Youth Transition Campus were treated to a special traveling production of “Julius Caesar,” a William Shakespeare tragedy on political conspiracy and civil war.

The Globe for All Tour, a distinguished community outreach ensemble from the Old Globe Theatre, recently performed in-the-round for about 45 youth, teachers, therapists, and staff.

“All-in-all, the youth loved the event and remarked they had never seen a performance done so well and would love to see more,” said Probation Division Chief Mike Whatley.

Afterward, youth had a chance to ask questions and discuss the themes of the play with the actors. This included performers discussing what a day in the life of a performer was like and learned about apprenticeship opportunities and acting classes.

Enrichment programs and opportunities for youth, such as this one, help support the long-term success of youth. Justice-involved youth have frequently experienced trauma or instability in their lives and these arts experiences expose them to new possibilities, interests and art as a therapeutic outlet.

San Diego County Probation also has a partnership with the La Jolla Playhouse that includes a week-long theater technology camp for participating youth in the summer. Theater teachers and technical staff lead the students through rigorous standards-based coursework that includes making props, scenery and pieces of the sets. They also learn lighting design, costume design and special effects makeup.

Participants can earn course credit and a certificate of completion from the La Jolla Playhouse. Both can be listed on the student’s resume to support a career in theater or other professional goals.

County Probation is dedicated to helping justice-involved youth grow, heal, and build better futures.

County of San Diego news release · Nov 19, 2025

COUNTY
County, Tri-City Celebrate Grand Opening of Psychiatric Facility

With a countdown, the snips of seven pairs of scissors and a ribbon fluttering to the ground, completion of the new Psychiatric Health Facility in Oceanside was celebrated on Thursday.

The grand opening marks the opening of the first County-funded inpatient psychiatric health facility in the region and brings much needed services to residents in the North County.

The single-story building will offer 16 beds for inpatient short-term psychiatric care and plans to care for 350-500 patients each year. Psychiatrists, therapists, nurses and peer support will help stabilize and treat patients. The average stay is expected to run five to seven days.

The \$27.6 million medical facility was jointly funded by the County and the Tri-City Healthcare District. The Healthcare District operates the Tri-City Medical Center.

The 13,560 square-foot structure sits on the western edge of the Tri-City Medical Center campus.

The County and the medical center worked together to

plan and design the new facility. A long-standing behavioral health care provider for the County, Exodus Recovery, will operate it.

The facility adds to the spectrum of specialty services that the County provides to address behavioral health in the region and includes Mobile Crisis Response Teams and a Crisis Stabilization Unit in Vista and Oceanside .

The state-of-the-art facility was built to meet silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. The building includes:

Energy-efficient HVAC and lighting systems

Durable, sustainable materials designed for safety

Dayrooms with natural light to support healing

The facility will begin accepting patients in December. Learn more at the County of San Diego’s website .

County of San Diego news release · Nov 13, 2025

COUNTY
See How County Public Works is Ready for the Storm

Take a look at how the County of San Diego is prepared to handle our upcoming storms in the unincorporated areas. Crews are ready to respond with heavy equipment, asphalt for potholes and fiber rolls to prevent erosion that can disrupt roads in the unincorporated areas.

County crews actually work all year round to inspect and clear culverts and inlets that deflect water from roads, trim trees and sweep roads. With the expected rains, they are also prepared to respond to the weather, including providing 24-hour coverage as

Courts · Transit · Public safety

needed through the days and nights. They also have snowplows ready to deploy at the County’s higher elevations, even though current weather forecasts do not expect temperatures to drop to snow-inducing levels. Read more about how the County is prepared and find links to where to find free sandbags .

County of San Diego news release · Nov 13, 2025

COUNTY
County Offices to Close in Observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday

All public San Diego County offices, family resource centers, libraries and animal shelters will be closed Thursday, Nov. 27 and Friday, Nov. 28 for the Thanksgiving federal holiday.

Law enforcement, emergency animal control response, and other essential services will continue through the holiday.

County parks, campgrounds and neighborhood day-use parks remain open 365 days a year. However, the following locations will be closed Thursday and Friday:

4S Ranch Recreation Office only (all parks will be open)

Camping reservations can always be made online at the County’s Online Camping Reservations web page , but the Department of Parks and Recreation’s reservation phone line will not be staffed during the holiday.

All County public health clinics will be closed Thursday and Friday.

All County offices will resume normal business hours Monday, Dec. 1.

County of San Diego news release · Nov 19, 2025

BUSINESS

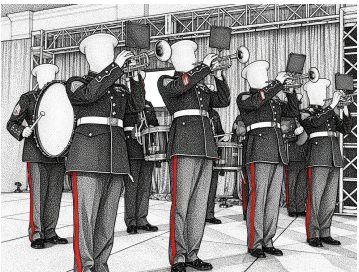


Illustration from a photo by Pattymooney · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

BUSINESS
Support our Region | San Diego Regional Chamber Holiday Food Drive

As the holiday season approaches, we are pleased to invite you to join us in making a meaningful difference in our community. The San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce and LEAD San Diego are proud to launch our Holiday Food Drive in support of the Jacobs & Cushman

San Diego Food Bank .

We invite all Chamber members, current LEAD San Diego participants, and alumni to participate. Bring your appetite for altruism and join a food drive that embodies the spirit of San Diego: caring, collaborative, and committed to the community.

The most needed food items include: Canned Chicken & Tuna, Dry & Canned Beans, Cereal, Rice, Peanut Butter, Nuts & Seeds, Canned Soup, Canned & Dried Fruit, Canned Vegetables, Powdered Milk, and Infant Formula. View the full list here .

Bring Donations to These Upcoming Events! NOTE: ticket may be required for event attendance

Upcoming Chamber Board

Meeting – November 20

International Tribute Awards – December 10

Or drop off your donation any time at our office location at 402 W. Broadway #1000 San Diego, CA 92101

Thank you for helping us feed our neighbors, strengthen our community, and uplift San Diego!

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Nov 17, 2025

BUSINESS
Member Spotlight – IKEA San Diego

Transform Your Workplace with IKEA San Diego and the IKEA Business Network

At IKEA San Diego, we believe that a better everyday life starts not just at home—but at work too. That’s why

we’re proud to offer the IKEA Business Network, a free loyalty program designed specifically for businesses of all sizes. Whether you’re furnishing a startup office, upgrading a retail space, or designing a cozy café, our program helps you create inspiring, functional environments that support productivity and well-being.

As a member of the IKEA Business Network, you’ll enjoy a wide range of exclusive benefits tailored to meet your professional needs:

Interior design services to help you bring your vision to life

Planning and consultation support from our expert coworkers

Flexible delivery options to suit your schedule

Online training resources to empower your team

Access to your purchase history for easy reordering and budgeting

And yes—a free hot drink every time you visit our store!

Plus, members receive special discounts on select IKEA products, making it easier to furnish your

workspace with stylish, sustainable solutions—without breaking the budget.

Joining is simple and free. Visit IKEA San Diego or sign up online to start enjoying the perks of the IKEA Business Network today. Let us help you build a better life at work—one space at a time.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Nov 12, 2025

AROUND CALIFORNIA

Statewide news

CALIFORNIA
Federal Audit Forces California to Revoke 17,000 Illegally Issued Commercial Driver Licenses
Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy announced that the California DMV admitted to illegally issuing the licenses to dangerous foreign drivers, prompting action to cancel them.

California transportation officials have acknowledged issuing thousands of commercial driver licenses without meeting federal standards, leading the U.S. Department of Transportation to require cancellation of all 17,000 affected documents.

Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy said the revocations follow an audit by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration that exposed

widespread problems in the state’s program for non-domiciled commercial licenses.

The audit found systemic policy, procedural and programming errors that allowed the improper issuance of the licenses to foreign drivers, according to the Transportation Department.

More than one in four of the sampled non-domiciled commercial driver license records in California failed to comply with federal regulations, the audit determined. That included cases where licenses extended beyond the expiration of a holder’s work permit.

Notices are now being sent to the 17,000 license holders informing them their credentials no longer satisfy federal requirements and will expire in 60 days.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is

demanding that California conduct a full review of its non-domiciled commercial licenses so auditors can confirm every invalid document has been canceled and the underlying problems corrected.

"After weeks of claiming they did nothing wrong, Gavin Newsom and California have been caught red-handed. Now that we’ve exposed their lies, 17,000 illegally issued trucking licenses are being revoked," said Secretary Duffy.

Duffy added, "This is just the tip of the iceberg. My team will continue to force California to prove they have removed every illegal immigrant from behind the wheel of semitrucks and school buses."

The developments come after two recent fatal crashes involving truck drivers who

held California-issued commercial licenses.

In one incident, a driver later identified as having failed his commercial test 10 times in Washington state before receiving a California license was involved in a deadly collision on a Florida turnpike.

In Southern California, another commercial driver holding a state-issued license was behind the wheel in a chain-reaction crash on the 10 Freeway that killed three people and injured four others.

Gov. Gavin Newsom stated the license cancellations stem from violations of state law but offered no further details, according to reports.

The federal pressure extends beyond the license audit. The Transportation Department previously announced it is withholding

more than \$40 million in funds from California after the state failed to meet English Language Proficiency standards for commercial vehicle operators.

California Highway Patrol officials had earlier indicated they would not adopt the federal language requirement.

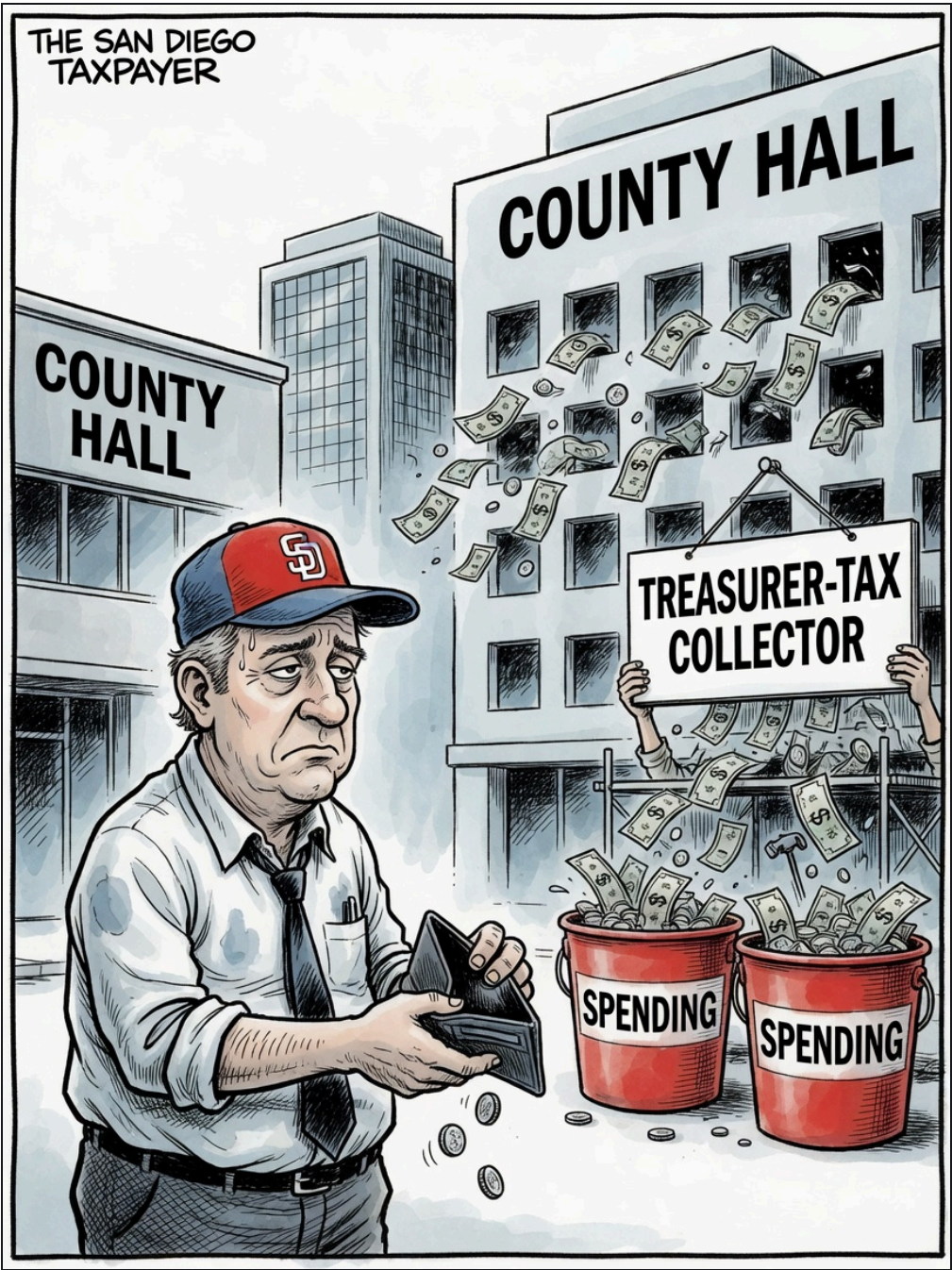
The ongoing oversight aims to ensure unsafe drivers are kept off roads used by families, commuters and school buses across the state and nation, according to Secretary Duffy.

Federal officials indicated the current actions represent only the initial findings from a broader nationwide review of non-domiciled commercial licensing programs.

San Diego Newsline · Based on reporting by California Globe · Nov 13, 2025

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



New boss, same empty wallet.
THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

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COMMENTARY

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

COMMENTARY

Overregulation in California Stifles Business and Drives Up Living Costs, Argues Policy Expert
Edward Ring of the California Policy Center contends that excessive rules from multiple government layers hinder abundance, favor big corporations and make everyday goods more expensive for residents.

The rising cost of living has ignited heated discussions across the country, often shaped more by feelings, political views and differing economic ideas than by practical solutions.

In his commentary, the director of water and energy policy at the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013, offers a straightforward view drawn from those influences: abundance brings prices down, while deregulation makes abundance possible.

The opposite is also true. Scarcity pushes prices higher, and overly strict rules lead to that scarcity.

Regulations tend to strengthen large companies at the expense of smaller startups that could otherwise

help reduce costs through competition.

The biggest factors in everyday expenses are the price and supply of energy and water, since cheap access to them affects the production cost of nearly all other items.

To illustrate the challenges of operating in the state, lists of oversight bodies compiled by an anonymous small business owner whose work involves earthmoving and trucking operations are provided.

This company must answer to 18 federal agencies. Ten of them perform routine inspections, and eight collect fees.

Those federal entities include the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Bureau of Reclamation, among others.

The piece questions why so much additional state supervision is needed on top of federal rules, noting that many other states maintain lighter oversight and enjoy lower living costs as a result.

California adds another layer with 33 state and county agencies for this business. Of

those, 21 conduct regular inspections and 22 collect fees.

State bodies named include the Air Resources Board, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, Caltrans and the Department of Water Resources.

County requirements cover entities such as the Air Pollution Control District, the Hazardous Waste Program, the Building and Planning Department and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Dealing with this volume of bureaucracy consumes significant time and money, but the real difficulty lies in understanding and following the rules, the business owner says.

“Every government agency comes and goes with the complexity of its regulations and the ability of meeting those requirements. Quite frequently it is the competing regulations between Federal, State and County that are most difficult to decipher, which one do I follow, which one supersedes the other,” the owner is quoted as saying.

Many mandates also strike the owner as unreasonable, particularly demands from the State Air Resources Board

that force replacement of equipment and motors used fewer than 200 hours per year.

Larger firms can absorb these costs by buying new machinery for use in California while shifting older units to states like Arizona. Smaller operators lack that flexibility.

Insurance presents another hurdle, with the owner reporting difficulty obtaining competitive rates and sometimes receiving only a single quote for heavy construction coverage in the state.

These burdens fall hardest on small enterprises and deter young entrepreneurs from launching ventures.

The owner observes that compliance now demands so much daily effort that it cannot be handled after regular work hours as in previous generations.

“I like to tell people thinking of starting a business that 50 percent of your work is going to be paperwork,” the owner states.

The result is that California has become “over-regulated, over-litigated, and over-taxed,” prompting many to leave or abandon plans for new businesses.

While politicians from both parties increasingly speak of the need to deregulate, proposed changes remain narrow, such as easing rules for dense housing while keeping growth boundaries or supporting renewable power while restricting traditional energy sources.

There is little discussion of easing water regulations at all.

Without broad deregulation, political talk of fostering abundance amounts to little more than “posturing for cameras, and pandering for votes.”

In the face of these obstacles and with no clear relief ahead, the persistence of the state’s small businesses deserves recognition.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Nov 14, 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.

SAN DIEGO NEWSLINE

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