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smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

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Santa Monica implements rental registry and updated building codes in 2026

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

The city of Santa Monica is launching several new regulations in 2026, headlined by a comprehensive rental unit registration system and updated building safety standards that take effect Jan. 1.

The rental registry ordinance, unanimously approved by the Santa Monica City Council in November 2025, requires all landlords to register their rental units with the city — extending to single-family homes, duplexes, condos, accessory dwelling units and any buildings not already under rent control. The mandate is intended to help Santa

SEE **NEW LAWS** PAGE 11

Wildland firefighters open to respirator use, UCLA study finds

MAAZ ALIN
SMDP Staff Writer

Wildland firefighters are willing to wear respirators and other protective breathing equipment despite concerns the devices could hinder their ability to fight fires safely, according to new research from UCLA.

The study, published in the journal Annals of Work Exposures

SEE **FIREFIGHTERS** PAGE 7

More than 5,500 toxic sites face flood risk from rising seas, study finds

MAAZ ALIN
SMDP Staff Writer

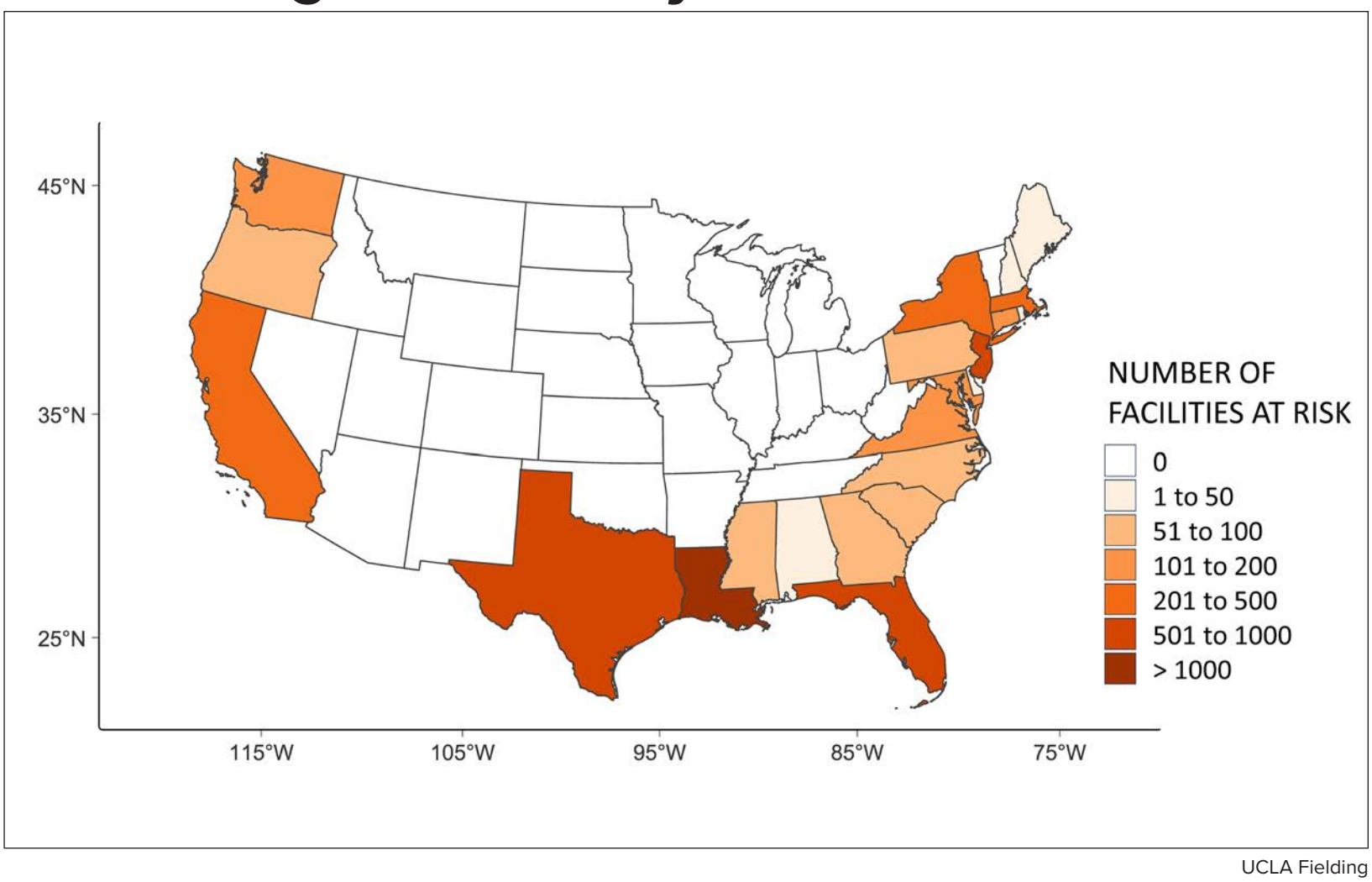
More than 5,500 hazardous sites across the United States are projected to be at risk of coastal flooding by 2100, with poor and marginalized communities facing disproportionate danger, according to new research..

The peer-reviewed study, led by University of California scientists and published in Nature Communications, warns that rising sea levels will flood facilities handling sewage, toxic waste, oil and gas, and other industrial pollutants if heat-trapping pollution continues unchecked.

"Flooding from sea level rise is dangerous on its own — but when facilities with hazardous materials are in the path of those floodwaters, the danger multiplies," said Dr. Lara Cushing of UCLA's Fielding School of Public Health.

The threat is heavily concentrated in seven coastal states — Florida, New Jersey, California, Louisiana, New York, Massachusetts and Texas — which account for nearly 80% of the hazardous sites at risk by century's end.

SEE **CALIFORNIA** PAGE 8



UCLA Fielding

STATES: The threat is heavily concentrated in seven coastal states: Florida, New Jersey, California, Louisiana, New York, Massachusetts and Texas.

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Controversial developer defaults on Promenade loans

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

Leo Pustilnikov, a developer who has clashed repeatedly with Santa Monica city officials over downtown governance and housing projects, has defaulted on a $37.5 million loan connected to retail property on Third Street Promenade, according to Los Angeles County records.

Entities connected to Pustilnikov and partners Ely Dromy and Eli Taban are past due on approximately $39 million as of early November for the five-story, 30,000-square-foot property at 1315 3rd Street Promenade, which houses Holey Moley, a mini golf and cocktail bar. The Real Deal was the first to report on the default.

The default comes as downtown faces mounting challenges. The Santa Monica City Council unanimously approved a comprehensive realignment plan recently aimed at restoring public safety, revitalizing the downtown core and achieving fiscal stability by 2028, marking what officials. At the time, officials said it was a pivotal moment for the city's recovery from years of pandemic-era decline.

The multi-year framework responds to concerns including rising homelessness, deteriorating public spaces, declining tourism revenues and a projected $29.6 million structural deficit by fiscal year 2026-27. The plan will deploy $60 million in previously allocated reserves to fund immediate investments in public safety, capital improvements and organizational capacity while pursuing new revenue streams to balance the city's operating budget.



SMDP Photo

DEFAULT: The building is owned by Leo Pustilnikov who has defaulted on his loan.

However, it is still in the nascent stages of implementation and hasn't prevented some sour economic news this month.

In a separate default, the Pacific Investment Management Company and the Witkoff Group fell behind on a loan topping $400 million tied to The Park Santa Monica, a 249-unit luxury apartment complex at 500 Broadway, according to The Real Deal.

County records show the project was financed with a $324 million loan in 2021, with the balance later increased to $405 million in November 2024. The note matured in July and had climbed to approximately $439.5 million as of last month when accrued interest and late charges were included.

Pustilnikov has been a controversial figure in Santa Monica real estate and civic affairs. In September, he and Jon Farzam filed a lawsuit against the city and its council challenging the removal of six directors from Downtown Santa Monica Inc., the nonprofit that manages the downtown business improvement district.

Pustilnikov and Farzam, both former DTSM board members, argued in their Los Angeles Superior Court filing that the City Council violated the organization's bylaws and California nonprofit law when it removed board members and installed interim appointees.

The July removals followed a memo by Councilman Barry Snell and Councilmembers Dan Hall and Caroline Torosis citing "growing concerns regarding the lack of transparency and accountability." Mayor Lana Negrete was the sole opponent, questioning the emergency justification.

Pustilnikov claimed the removals were retaliatory, stating directors had raised

SEE **DEFAULT** PAGE 4

A learning community that never stands down.

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Pacific Oaks COLLEGE



New 2026 laws are among the first of their kind to tackle climate change, drunken driving

Tourists celebrating the new year in Hawaii could become the first to be taxed to address the consequences of climate change.

In Utah, people who party too heartily — and get caught driving drunk — could be among the first to have their driver's licenses striped red with the label: "No Alcohol Sale."

And motorists in Georgia could become the first to display their patriotism via the stylings of President Donald Trump with a special "America First" vehicle license plate.

The first of the year brings with it a variety of new state laws, including some that appear to contain first-of-their-kind policies, programs or procedures.

Here's a look at some of the new laws taking effect:

THE FIRST TOURISM TAX FOR THE EARTH

Many cities and states impose special taxes on hotel stays and vacation rentals. Hawaii will become the first state to hike its tourist lodging tax specifically to help cope with the effects of a changing climate.

State officials hope to use the proceeds from the additional 0.75% daily room rate tax for projects like replenishing sand on eroding beaches or removing invasive grasses similar to those that fueled a deadly wildfire on Maui in August 2023. Officials estimate the so-called "Green Fee" will generate nearly $100 million annually.

"As an island chain, Hawaii cannot wait for the next disaster to hit before taking action. We must build resiliency now," Democratic Gov. Josh Green said while signing the legislation earlier this past year.

'ID PLEASE' — NO MATTER YOUR AGE

Utah's already strict alcohol laws are getting even stricter. As part of a new law intended to keep alcohol away from some people convicted of drunken driving, restaurants and bars will be required to check the identification of every customer, regardless of age, before serving or selling them alcohol.

People convicted of "extreme driving under the influence" — defined as a blood alcohol content of at least 0.16% or one of several other factors — must surrender their driver's licenses. Any replacement ID will bear a prominent red stripe on the front alongside the words, "No Alcohol Sale." Judges also will have the discretion to impose the restriction for lesser offenses, and anyone wanting to shun booze can voluntarily obtain a red-striped ID.

"While this isn't completely bulletproof in terms of ensuring that somebody that's alcohol-restricted isn't going to drink, it just makes it more difficult for them," said Republican state Rep. Steve Eliason, sponsor of the legislation.

STATE-BRANDED INSULIN FOR SALE

California is targeting high prescription drug prices by getting into the business itself. It will become the first state to sell affordable insulin under its own label.

The sales come nearly three years after Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a partnership with the nonprofit Civica to sell state-branded generic drugs at lower prices. The "CalRx" brand of insulin pens will be available at a recommended price of $11 per pen, or a maximum of $55 for a five-pack.

Newsom also signed legislation this past year that will require large health insurers to start capping insulin copayments at $35 per month.

A MINIMUM WAGE TOPS $17 AN HOUR

An annual inflationary adjustment will raise Washington's statewide minimum wage to $17.13 an hour, making it the first state to exceed the $17 threshold.

Others aren't too far behind. The statewide minimum wage will rise to $16.94 an hour in Connecticut and $16.90 and California.

Some cities will have even higher minimum wages. The rate will rise to $21.30 an hour in Seattle and $21.65 in its suburb of Tukwila, Washington.

At least a dozen states will have minimum wages of $15 or more, including new rates set by voter-approved ballot measures in Missouri and Nebraska. By contrast, 20 other states still follow the federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour.

PATRIOTIC PLATES FOR THE ROAD

New specialty vehicle license plates in Georgia will display an image of the American flag with the words "America First." The plate will cost $90 the first year and $55 to renew, compared to $20 yearly for a standard license plate.

The new license plate gives people an opportunity to "show your support for President Trump and his movement with every mile you drive," said Republican state Sen. Steve Gooch, who sponsored the legislation.

"No other state has passed it," Gooch said. But "I predict other states will copy our legislation next year."

Several other states also are introducing new patriotic license plates timed to the nation's 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Michigan will have a new red, white and blue license plate. South Carolina will have a liberty flag plate with the words, "Where the Revolutionary War Was Won." Pennsylvania got a head start on the celebration earlier this year, printing a "Let Freedom Ring" license plate featuring the Liberty Bell.

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press. Lieb reported from Jefferson City, Missouri. Associated Press writers Jeff Amy in Atlanta; Matthew Brown in Billings, Montana; Jennifer Kelleher in Honolulu; and Trân Nguyễn in Sacramento, California, contributed to this report.

SEND YOUR NEWS TO THE EDITOR
Santa Monica Daily Press editor@smdp.com



Weather

Friday: Showers likely, mainly between 10am and 4pm. Cloudy, with a high near 61.
Friday Night: Showers likely, mainly after 10pm. Cloudy, with a low around 56.
Saturday: Showers likely. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 60.
Saturday Night: A chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 53.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2026/01/02	Fri	01:11 AM	2.15	L
2026/01/02	Fri	07:34 AM	7.08	H
2026/01/02	Fri	3:00 PM	-1.88	L
2026/01/02	Fri	9:33 PM	3.88	H
2026/01/03	Sat	02:03 AM	2.04	L
2026/01/03	Sat	08:21 AM	7.12	H
2026/01/03	Sat	3:43 PM	-1.89	L
2026/01/03	Sat	10:16 PM	3.99	H
2026/01/04	Sun	02:53 AM	1.95	L
2026/01/04	Sun	09:07 AM	6.91	H
2026/01/04	Sun	4:26 PM	-1.67	L
2026/01/04	Sun	10:59 PM	4.09	H
2026/01/05	Mon	03:45 AM	1.91	L
2026/01/05	Mon	09:53 AM	6.47	H
2026/01/05	Mon	5:07 PM	-1.27	L
2026/01/05	Mon	11:42 PM	4.18	H
2026/01/06	Tue	04:39 AM	1.95	L
2026/01/06	Tue	10:39 AM	5.82	H
2026/01/06	Tue	5:45 PM	-0.73	L
2026/01/07	Wed	12:25 AM	4.27	H
2026/01/07	Wed	05:37 AM	2.02	L
2026/01/07	Wed	11:27 AM	5.01	H
2026/01/07	Wed	6:22 PM	-0.09	L
2026/01/08	Thu	01:10 AM	4.36	H
2026/01/08	Thu	06:44 AM	2.09	L
2026/01/08	Thu	12:19 PM	4.14	H
2026/01/08	Thu	6:57 PM	0.60	L
2026/01/09	Fri	01:58 AM	4.44	H
2026/01/09	Fri	08:13 AM	2.04	L
2026/01/09	Fri	1:26 PM	3.31	H
2026/01/09	Fri	7:32 PM	1.27	L
2026/01/10	Sat	02:49 AM	4.54	H
2026/01/10	Sat	10:02 AM	1.71	L
2026/01/10	Sat	3:14 PM	2.70	H
2026/01/10	Sat	8:12 PM	1.87	L

Daily Lottery

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lottery web site at http://www.calottery.com

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 12/29
11 19 34 48 53
Power#: 21
Jackpot: 45 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 12/26
9 19 31 63 64
Mega#: 7
Jackpot: 138 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 12/27
6 9 33 37 40
Mega#: 22
Jackpot: 15 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 12/29
1 8 13 17 20

Daily 3
Draw Date: 12/29
EVENING: 8 5 0
Draw Date: 12/29
MIDDAY: 2 8 7

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 12/29
1st: 02 - Lucky Star
2nd: 01 - Gold Rush
3rd: 11 - Money Bags
Race Time: 1:47.53

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Santa Monica Daily Press

Santa Monica Daily Press

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Furniture	Travel	Commercial Lease	Services	Health and Beauty	Obituaries
	Vacation Rentals	Real Estate	Computer Services	Fitness	Tutoring

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25SMCP00630. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, Santa Monica Courthouse, 1725 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Petition of Patricia Ann Leedy-Kahn for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner Patricia Ann Leedy-Kahn filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Patricia Ann Leedy-Kahn to Tish Ann Leedy-Kahn. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/23/2026, Time: 8:30 AM, Dept: K. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 12/10/2025. Lawrence H. Cho, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026, 01/09/2026

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25STCP02338. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 111 North Hill Street, Room 118, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Petition of QIRAN WANG and HUAYI WEI for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner QIRAN WANG and HUAYI WEI filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: OLIVIA WEI to OLIVIA TSUN. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/03/2026, Time: 8:30AM, Dept: 95, Room: 539. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 11/24/2025. VIRGINIA KEENY, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25STCP02340. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 111 North Hill Street, Room 118, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Petition of YANG ZHANG for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner YANG ZHANG filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: JAKE CHENG ZHANG to ANDREW ZHANG. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/23/2026, Time: 8:30AM, Dept: 45. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 06/25/2025. VIRGINIA KEENY, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25STCP02338. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 111 North Hill Street, Room 118, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Petition of QIRAN WANG and HUAYI WEI for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner QIRAN WANG and HUAYI WEI filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: OLIVIA WEI to OLIVIA TSUN. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/03/2026, Time: 8:30AM, Dept: 95, Room: 539. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 11/24/2025. VIRGINIA KEENY, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25STCP02335. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 111 North Hill Street, Room 118, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Petition of YUN MA and CHUNLIN YANG for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner YUN MA and CHUNLIN YANG filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: ALAN JUNHAO PENG to ALAN YUNYI YANG. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/23/2026, Time: 8:30AM, Dept: 45, Room: 529. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: JUN 25 2025. VIRGINIA KEENY, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25SMCP00652. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 1725 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Petition of Holly Elisabeth Verner for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner Holly Elisabeth Verner filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Holly Elisabeth Verner to Holly Elisabeth Michaels. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/30/2026, Time: 8:30 AM, Dept: K. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 12/19/2025. Lawrence H. Cho, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026, 01/09/2026, 01/16/2026.

HOURS MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:00am - 5:00pm
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COMMUNITY NEWS

Los Angeles

Bank of America Commits $10 Million for Wildfire Recovery

Bank of America announced $10 million in zero-interest loans to Community Development Financial Institutions to support housing, nonprofit facilities and small business assistance as Los Angeles continues rebuilding from the Eaton and Palisades fires.

Three west coast CDFIs will manage the disaster recovery funding.

Clearinghouse CDFI will finance property acquisition or single-family home development by nonprofit partners. The organization will also provide capital to small businesses for rebuilding expenses exceeding insurance proceeds and operational resumption funding.

Genesis LA makes loans supporting homeownership, economic development and nonprofit facilities in Altadena and Pasadena. The organization is working with Altadena stakeholders to acquire vacant lots for redevelopment, coordinating with nonprofit developers and local residents to rebuild multiple homes simultaneously and help businesses rebuild storefronts.

Pacific Community Ventures' RESTORE LA Fund offers no-fee loans of $10,000 to $100,000 at 3% interest for small businesses. Funding can replace damaged property or equipment, support worker retention or payroll expenses, and address other recovery needs. Businesses receive pro bono technical assistance and access to PCV's climate resilience lending program.

"Having extensive experience supporting clients and communities through various disasters over the years, Bank of America is uniquely positioned with the expertise, capital and connections to support LA's next chapter," said Raul Anaya, head of Local Markets Strategy and president of Bank of America Los Angeles.

As the nation's largest private CDFI investor with $2 billion in loans, deposits, capital grants and equity investments across more than 250 CDFI partners, Bank of America previously allocated capital for disaster recovery in Asheville following Hurricane Helene and Texas Hill Country after flooding.

> Having extensive experience supporting clients and communities through various disasters over the years, Bank of America is uniquely positioned with the expertise, capital and connections to support LA's next chapter
>
> - Raul Anaya, head of Local Markets Strategy and president of Bank of America Los Angeles

The investment builds on the company's ongoing relief efforts, including its recently announced Rebuild Solution for qualifying mortgage clients. The bank will rebuild destroyed financial centers in Altadena and Pacific Palisades.

Bank of America has distributed $3.5 million in philanthropic grants to local nonprofits for fire and business support, plus thought leadership and employee volunteerism to foundations and nonprofits.

More information is available at https://about.bankofamerica.com/en/making-an-impact/la-rebuild.

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF

DEFAULT

FROM PAGE 2

concerns about the city meeting baseline service responsibilities. "DTSM directors were raising concerns about the City meeting its baseline service responsibilities — obligations the City now admits it cannot afford," he said. "Instead of addressing the problem transparently, the City chose to remove directors and destabilize DTSM at a critical moment."

Pustilnikov has also been at the center of controversies involving housing projects on Ocean Avenue. Over Thanksgiving, city officials scrambled to respond after approximately 30 people were moved into 413 Ocean Avenue, a building Pustilnikov previously earmarked for mental health housing.

When city staff investigated, they discovered an unpermitted residential facility operating without proper permits, a certificate of occupancy or a business license. The building had undergone modifications including room divisions that raised concerns about electrical work and fire safety.

City officials said Pustilnikov, who has a lease for the building, told them he was pursuing a new transitional housing use but did not disclose that operations had already begun. The city issued a notice to vacate and an administrative citation to the property owner.

The building was one of two properties Pustilnikov had previously targeted for a controversial mental health housing program. Los Angeles County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath eventually terminated that proposal, citing broken community trust.

DTSM manages the downtown business improvement district with a $10 million annual budget funded primarily by special assessments. The organization is governed by a 13-member board with six members appointed by the City Council, six elected by downtown property owners, and one seat reserved for the city manager.

editor@smdp.com

COMMUNITY NEWS

SMMUSD

School District to Purchase Property for Franklin Elementary Expansion

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education voted Dec. 18 to purchase property adjacent to Franklin Elementary School for campus expansion.

The district will acquire 814 25th St. in Santa Monica for $2.8 million, using one-time funds from its Capital Outlay Projects Budget. The purchase is not funded by general operations or voter-approved bonds, including Measure QS.

Franklin Elementary's campus is half the size recommended by the California Department of Education for its current enrollment. The school serves 631 students, down from a 2015 peak of 831, but enrollment is projected to reach 752 by 2030.

> The District welcomes the opportunity to expand Franklin's footprint and offer an improved long-term educational environment for the betterment of student learning
>
> - Carey Upton, district chief operations officer

"The District welcomes the opportunity to expand Franklin's footprint and offer an improved long-term educational environment for the betterment of student learning," said Carey Upton, district chief operations officer.

Under the purchase agreement, the current resident will occupy the house through November 2027. District staff will evaluate how the property can best serve the school's needs before presenting recommendations to the Board of Education.

The board approved the current Franklin Campus Plan on May 15, along with the California Environmental Quality Act environmental impact review.

Construction's first phase begins in June 2026, when a temporary field and parking lot will be built to accommodate construction of a new transitional kindergarten and kindergarten complex. The new complex and playground are scheduled to open in January 2028.

The existing preschool will be demolished to create a staff parking lot. A new playing field is scheduled for completion in summer 2028.

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SMMUSD

Santa Monica-Malibu School District Appoints Transportation Supervisor

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District has appointed Crystal Gonzalez as its new transportation supervisor, effective Dec. 1.

Gonzalez brings more than 10 years of experience in school transportation services, dispatch operations, staff training and customer support to the position.

She most recently worked at the Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency, where she started as a school bus driver in 2009 before advancing to dispatcher in 2015. In that role, she prepared weekly operational reports, managed route and fuel data, supported performance analysis and conducted onboarding for new hires. She also served as a primary communication link between drivers, staff and families.

Gonzalez is bilingual in English and Spanish and holds a Commercial Class A driver's license with passenger, school bus and doubles and triples endorsements. She also maintains CPR and first aid certifications.

Her expertise includes GPS and route planning systems, database and record management, and digital workflow tools. She previously represented colleagues on the California School Employees Association Negotiations Team, participating in labor relations and contract discussions.



Courtesy photo

APPOINTMENT: Crystal Gonzalez brings more than 10 years of experience in school transportation services, dispatch operations, staff training and customer support to the position.

"I'm excited for the opportunity to join SMMUSD and be part of a team that makes such a meaningful impact," Gonzalez said. "I bring several years of dispatch experience, strong organization skills and a commitment to clear communication."

Superintendent Dr. Antonio Shelton praised Gonzalez's qualifications and leadership abilities.

"She has a strong record supporting student safety, staff coordination and effective communication," Shelton said. "Her qualifications and leadership will help strengthen our transportation services for students across Santa Monica and Malibu."

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Unleash the hounds! And terriers and lapdogs. The American Kennel Club adds 3 breeds

They're ready to embark on 2026.

Three more dog breeds joined the American Kennel Club's roster of recognized breeds at the end of the year, making them eligible for many U.S. dog shows and likely increasing their visibility to the pet-loving public.

One of the newcomers is a terrier named for a U.S. president. Another is a toy dog from Cold War-era Russia. The third is a centuries-old French hunting hound. Here's a closer look:

THE BASSET FAUVE DE BRETAGNE

The stats: 12.5 to 15.5 inches (32 to 40 centimeters) at the base of the neck; 23 to 39 pounds (10.5 to 17.5 kilograms)

The topline: A hardy, sociable, compact hound that can hunt all day — and needs mental and physical activity.

The pronunciation: bah-SAY' fove deh breh-TAHN'-yeh

The translation: Fawn-colored, low-set dog from Brittany

The history: Versions of these coarse-coated, tan-hued hounds go back at least as far as 16th-century French aristocratic circles. The breed has been championed in the U.S. in recent years by Cindy Hartman, a South Carolina service dog trainer who brought a pair of fauve puppies back from France in 2001. She has since trained and placed about 20 fauves as medical alert dogs for people with diabetes, she said.

The quote: "They're wicked smart, and so if you're wanting a dog that's just going to lay around all day long, a fauve is not for you," Hartman said. "But yet, when challenged mentally and physically, they're happy to come in with you and curl up on the sofa for the evening."

THE TEDDY ROOSEVELT TERRIER

The stats: 8 to 14 inches (20 to 36 centimeters) at the base of the neck; 8 to 25 pounds (3.5 to 11 kilograms)

The topline: A solid, energetic small canine that will rid your barn of rodents, alert you to strangers, do dog sports — or just entertain you with its antics.

The history: Originally seen as a short-legged variant of the rat terrier, these dogs were deemed a breed of their own in 1999. The breed was named for President Theodore Roosevelt because of his fondness for dogs, including terriers.

The quote: "They know how to get you to laugh," says Cindy Rickey of Waynesville, North Carolina, the secretary of the American Teddy Roosevelt Terrier Club. While many terrier breeds are known for being independent-minded, her Teddy competes in obedience. "They're terriers, no doubt about it, but they also have this tremendous desire to please," she explains.

THE RUSSIAN TSVETNAYA BOLONKA

The stats: Up to 10¼ inches (26 centimeters) at the base of the neck; 7 to 9 pounds (3 to 4 kilograms)

The topline: A sweet but clever little companion that wants playful interaction, not just snuggling (though it likes that, too).

The pronunciation: zvit-NEYE'-ah boh-LON'-kah

The translation: Russian colored lapdog

The history: The breed was developed in Soviet-era Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) after World War II as a pet for apartment dwellers. American fans have been working to establish bolonki (the proper plural) in the U.S. since the early 2000s.

The quote: "Having a bolonka is like having a 3-year-old kid running around your house. ... They can enjoy their time lying on the couch with you, but you've got to be prepared to play with them and keep them entertained," says Denise Dang of Oklahoma City, the secretary of the Russian Tsvetnaya Bolonka Club of America. Owners also need to care for a thick, wavy coat that's low-shedding but can get matted. Even if it's cut fairly short, a bath every couple of weeks is wise, Dang says.

THE BIG PICTURE

The AKC recognizes 205 breeds, including these three newcomers. Fanciers of many others — though, as yet, no "doodles" or other popular poodle hybrids — have voluntarily entered a pipeline that takes years of breeding, documentation and consensus-building.

The club doesn't limit the number of breeds it might eventually recognize. Spokesperson Brandi Hunter Munden says it's not "adding dogs indiscriminately," but rather providing "an established framework for growth, breed standards, competition and education in the U.S."

THE CONTROVERSY

Animal-rights activists have long deplored dog breeding and the AKC for supporting it, and the criticism hardened this year into a lawsuit over the health of French bulldogs, pugs, dachshunds and Chinese shar-peis. The group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is seeking a court order to stop the AKC from continuing to promulgate the current "standards," or ideal characteristics, for those breeds.

PETA accused the kennel club of providing "blueprints for the breeding of deformed, unhealthy dogs."

The AKC denies the allegations and has asked a court to dismiss the case, calling the suit frivolous. The club said it "has been — and remains — firmly committed to the health, well-being and proper treatment of all dogs."

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

City of Santa Monica

Holiday Tree Collection

December 26th – January 31st

Here's how you can prepare your natural tree for a second life as mulch and compost:

- Remove all decorations such as tinsel, lights, and stands.
- Place your tree curbside or in the alley next to your waste containers for automatic pick-up between Dec. 26th and Jan. 31st. Do not leave trees in parking lots or parks. No 311 request required.

Please note that flocked trees (trees with synthetic snow) cannot be turned into compost and mulch due to the synthetic materials used in the artificial snow and will be collected as trash. If you purchase a natural tree, we encourage you to not apply flocking.

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After quiet off-year elections, Democrats renew worries about Trump interfering in the midterms

If history is a guide, Republicans stand a good chance of losing control of the House of Representatives in 2026. They have just a slim majority in the chamber, and the incumbent party usually gives up seats in midterm elections.

President Donald Trump, whose loss of the House halfway through his first term led to two impeachments, is trying to keep history from repeating — and doing so in ways his opponents say are intended to manipulate next year's election landscape.

He has rallied his party to remake congressional maps across the country to create more conservative-leaning House seats, an effort that could end up backfiring on him. He's directed his administration to target Democratic politicians, activists and donors. And, Democrats worry, he's flexing his muscles to intervene in the midterms like no administration ever has.

Democrats and other critics point to how Trump has sent the military into Democratic cities over the objections of Democratic mayors and governors. They note that he's pushed the Department of Homeland Security to be so aggressive that at one point its agents handcuffed a Democratic U.S. senator. And some warn that a Republican-controlled Congress could fail to seat winning candidates if Democrats reclaim the House majority, recalling Trump's efforts to stay in power even after voters rejected him in 2020, leading to the violent attack by his supporters on the U.S. Capitol.

Regarding potential military deployments, Ken Martin, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, told The Associated Press: "What he is going to do is send those troops there, and keep them there all the way through the next election, because guess what? If people are afraid of leaving their house, they're probably not going to leave their house to go vote on Election Day. That's how he stays in power."

MILITARY TO THE POLLS, OR FEARMONGERING?

Democrats sounded similar alarms just before November's elections, and yet there were no significant incidents. California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a frequent Trump antagonist who also warns about a federal crackdown on voting in 2026, predicted that masked immigration agents would show up at the polls in his state, where voters were considering a ballot measure to counter Trump's redistricting push.

There were no such incidents in November, and the measure to redraw California's congressional lines in response to Trump's efforts elsewhere won in a landslide.

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said the concerns about the midterms come from Democratic politicians who are "fearmongering to score political points with the radical left flank of the Democrat party that they are courting ahead of their doomed-to-fail presidential campaigns."

She described their concerns as "baseless conspiracy theories."

Susie Wiles, Trump's chief of staff, denied that Trump was planning to use the military to try to suppress votes.

"I say it is categorically false, will not happen. It's just wrongheaded," she told Vanity Fair for an interview that was published earlier in December.

DNC litigation director Dan Freeman said he hasn't seen an indication that Trump will send immigration enforcement agents to polling places during the midterms, but is wary.

He said the DNC filed public records requests in an attempt to learn more about any such plans and is drafting legal pleadings it could file if Trump sends armed federal agents to the polls or otherwise intervenes in the elections.

"We're not taking their word for it," Freeman said in an interview.

STATES, NOT PRESIDENTS, RUN ELECTIONS

November's off-year elections may not be the best indicator of what could lie ahead. They were scattered in a handful of states, and Trump showed only modest interest until late in the fall when his Department of Justice announced it was sending federal monitors to California and New Jersey to observe voting in a handful of counties. It was a bureaucratic step that had no impact on voting, even as it triggered alarm from Democrats.

Alexandra Chandler, the legal director of Protect Democracy, a group that has clashed with Trump over his role in elections, said she was heartened by the lack of drama during the 2025 voting.

"We have so many positive signs we can look to," Chandler said, citing not only a quiet election but GOP senators' resistance to Trump's demands to eliminate the filibuster and the widespread resistance to Trump's demand that television host Jimmy Kimmel lose his job because of his criticism of the president. "There are limits" on Trump's power, she noted.

"We will have elections in 2026," Chandler said. "People don't have to worry about that."

Under the Constitution, a president has limited tools to intervene in elections, which are run by the states. Congress can help set rules for federal elections, but states administer their own election operations and oversee the counting of ballots.

When Trump tried to singlehandedly revise election rules with a sweeping executive order shortly after returning to office, the courts stepped in and stopped him, citing the lack of a constitutional role for the president. Trump later promised another order, possibly targeting mail ballots and voting machines, but it has yet to materialize.

DOJ VOTER DATA REQUEST 'SHOULD FRIGHTEN EVERYBODY'

Still, there's plenty of ways a president can cause problems, said Rick Hasen, a UCLA law professor.

Trump unsuccessfully pushed Georgia's top election official to "find" him enough votes to be declared the winner there in 2020 and could try similar tactics in Republican-dominated states in November. Likewise, Hasen said, Trump could spread misinformation to undermine confidence in vote tallies, as he has done routinely ahead of elections.

It's harder to do that in more lopsided

SEE **ELECTION** PAGE 8

FIREFIGHTERS

FROM PAGE 1

and Health, comes as California faces an increasing number of wildfires that spread from open spaces into populated areas. The research surveyed firefighters across California who respond to wildland and wildland-urban interface fires.

"One of the key things that we found in our study is that firefighters were not fundamentally opposed to the idea of respiratory protection in wildland settings," said Dr. Rachael Jones, a co-author and professor at UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. "They are all very well aware of the health hazards and want protection but have reasonable concerns about how respirators might impact the ability to perform their jobs safely."

The International Agency for Research on Cancer classified occupational firefighting exposures as carcinogenic to humans in 2023. Wildland firefighters face exposure to particulate matter, toxic gases, metals and volatile organic compounds, among other hazardous materials.

Studies have documented declining respiratory function among wildland firefighters across shifts and fire seasons, as well as symptoms including coughing and eye irritation.

Jones said smoke contains known carcinogens including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, benzene and formaldehyde, plus irritants like nitrogen dioxide and acrolein that affect the eyes, nose and respiratory tract.

"Many of the exposures to individual chemicals in smoke are below legal exposure limits for workers, but the mixture clearly poses a health risk," Jones said.

The UCLA researchers interviewed firefighters ranging from early-career personnel to fire chiefs from departments that respond to wildland fires. They found most participants supported using respiratory protective devices in specific scenarios such as mop-up operations and prescribed burns, though fewer endorsed their use during high-exertion tasks like cutting fire lines.

Firefighters expressed concerns that respirators could increase fatigue and reduce comfort, communication, mobility and situational awareness — all critical factors in dangerous firefighting conditions.

"The most important message is that firefighters want to be engaged in the development of improved respirators, and policies about how they will be used, so that they can be confident the devices will prevent exposure inhalation hazards — without increasing other risks on the job," Jones said.

The research was motivated by efforts from California's Division of Occupational Safety and Health to develop regulations requiring respiratory protection in at least some wildland firefighting contexts.

Jones said most firefighters preferred flexibility or guidance rather than prescriptive regulations and wanted input in developing any potential rules.

"Generally, regulations are most effective when they require a control that is practicable and supported by the workers being affected," Jones said. "The key to a successful regulation is giving firefighters an opportunity to try out the respirators so they feel comfortable and confident that they can do their jobs safely and effectively."

The study focused on air-purifying respirators and powered air-purifying respirators. Researchers concluded these devices can become standard equipment for wildland firefighters, particularly with state-level regulatory support.

While the research was not specifically related to the January 2025 Los Angeles County wildfires, Jones noted that video footage from those fires showed firefighters engulfed in smoke without respiratory protection.

"I think the public may have been surprised by the footage of firefighters responding to the Palisades and Eaton fires — engulfed in smoke, but without any respiratory protection," Jones said.

The researchers identified resistance to change in the fire service as a potential barrier to adoption but said evidence of respirator effectiveness and usability, including training opportunities and design improvements, could facilitate the transition.

California's wildland firefighting involves multiple agencies, with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection typically serving as lead agency. CAL FIRE has more than 12,000 full-time and seasonal personnel.

The study was supported by the University of California Office of the President Climate Action SEED Award.

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FIREFIGHTERS: The research surveyed firefighters across California who respond to wildland and wildland-urban interface fires.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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CALIFORNIA

FROM PAGE 1

Much of the danger is already inevitable due to past emissions. Researchers project nearly 3,800 hazardous facilities will face flood risk as soon as 2050, regardless of future climate action.

The study examined 23 U.S. states with ocean coastlines plus Puerto Rico, analyzing projections of floods with a 1% annual chance of occurring — commonly called 100-year flood events — under both high and lower emissions scenarios.

DISPARITIES IN RISK

Beyond identifying at-risk toxic sites, the research reveals stark demographic patterns in who lives nearby. Under a high emissions scenario, neighborhoods with one or more at-risk facilities have higher proportions of renters, households in poverty, Hispanic residents, linguistically isolated households, households without vehicles, seniors and non-voters compared to neighborhoods without such facilities.

"This analysis makes it clear that these projected dangers are falling disproportionately on poorer communities and communities that have faced discrimination and therefore often lack the resources to prepare for, retreat, or recover from exposure to toxic floodwaters," Cushing said.

The methodology was developed with input from public health experts and community leaders in coastal areas.

ROOM FOR ACTION

Despite the grim projections, the authors note that moderate cuts to climate pollution could reduce the number of at-risk sites by more than 300 by the end of the century.

"Coastal communities, including underserved groups, that are working to fortify their resilience to climate change need access to critical data and resources to plan for the future," said Dr. Rachel Morello-Frosch of UC Berkeley's School of Public Health, a co-author of the study.

Morello-Frosch emphasized the need for policy action: "There is a clear need for disaster planning and land-use decision-making, as well as mitigation strategies to address the inequitable hazards and potential health threats posed by sea level rise."

CALIFORNIA'S RISK

California ranks fifth nationwide for sites at risk. In Los Angeles County, the South Bay region faces the heaviest impact due to its concentration of industrial and hazardous waste sites plus oil infrastructure near the coastline.

Cushing noted that aggressive greenhouse gas reduction remains critical for long-term risk reduction. She said investments in clean energy, pollution prevention and community resilience — along with regulatory changes requiring sea level rise consideration in remediation and emergency plans — could help mitigate contaminant releases during floods and natural disasters.

The researchers acknowledged limitations in their analysis, including potential errors in facility location databases and an inability to examine groundwater upwelling or factor in increasingly frequent and intense storms, which may mean actual risks are higher than projected.

The study was funded wholly or in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

maaz@smdp.com

ELECTION

FROM PAGE 7

contests, as many in 2025 turned into, Hasen noted.

"Concerns about Trump interfering in 2026 are real; they're not frivolous," Hasen said. "They're also not likely, but these are things people need to be on guard for."

One administration move that has alarmed election officials is a federal demand from his Department of Justice for detailed voter data from the states. The administration has sued the District of Columbia and at least 21 states, most of them controlled by Democrats, after they refused to turn over all the information the DOJ sought.

"What the DOJ is trying to do is something that should frighten everybody across the political spectrum," said David Becker, a former Justice Department voting rights attorney and executive director of the Center for Election Innovation & Research. "They're trying to use the power of the executive to bully states into turning over highly sensitive data — date of birth, Social Security numbers, driver's license, the Holy Trinity of identity theft — hand it over to the DOJ for who knows what use."

'VOTER PROTECTION' VS 'ELECTION INTEGRITY'

Voting rights lawyers and election officials have been preparing for months for the midterms, trying to ensure there are ways to counter misinformation and ensure state election systems are easy to explain. Both major parties are expected to stand up significant campaigns around the mechanics of voting: Democrats mounting what they call a "voter protection" effort to monitor for problems while Republicans focus on what they call "election integrity."

Freeman, the DNC litigation director who previously worked in the DOJ's voting section, said his hiring this year was part of a larger effort by the DNC to beef up its in-house legal efforts ahead of the midterms. He said the committee has been filling gaps in voting rights law enforcement that the DOJ has typically covered, including informing states that they can't illegally purge citizens from their voter rolls.

Tina Barton, co-chair of the Committee on Safe and Secure Elections, a coalition of law enforcement and election officials who advise jurisdictions on de-escalation and how to respond to emergencies at polling places, says interest in the group's trainings has "exploded" in recent weeks.

"There's a lot at stake, and that's going to cause a lot of emotions," Barton said.

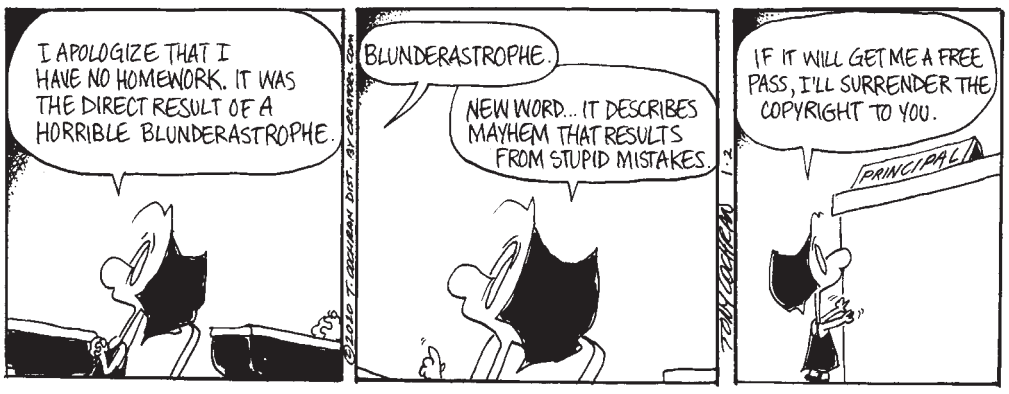
By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press. Associated Press writers Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio, and Ali Swenson in New York contributed to this report.

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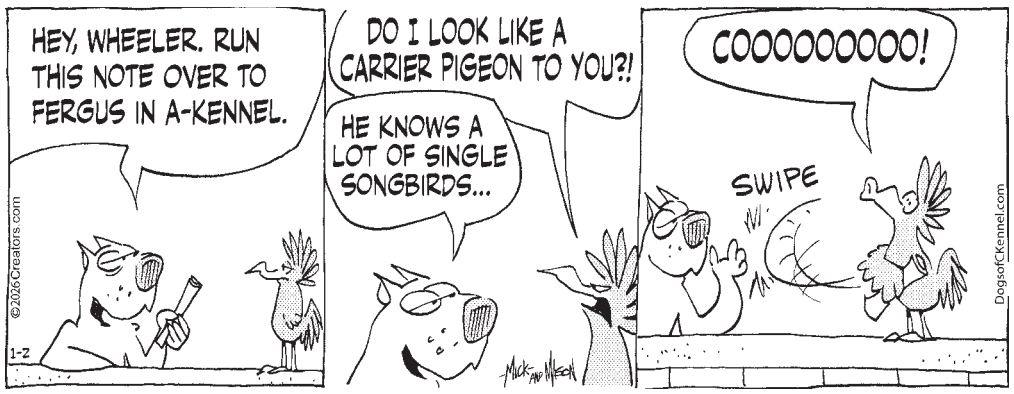
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



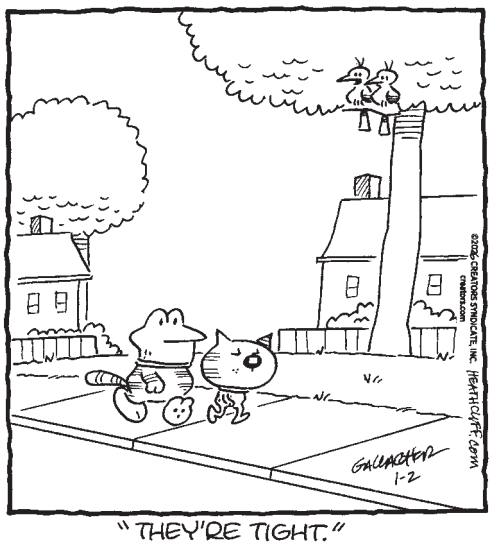
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



"THEY'RE TIGHT."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated below. Find the listed words in the grid. (They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once.) Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 16 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

© australianwordgames.com.au 6808

Learning to drive

P	D	D	E	E	P	S	S	M	A	S	H	T	S	S
I	B	I	K	E	S	E	O	P	C	K	S	E	M	E
N	F	A	X	L	E	T	B	C	A	E	E	I	A	R
S	R	K	R	S	O	U	U	O	R	S	R	E	J	Y
B	L	O	N	R	P	T	S	R	S	E	S	N	N	T
S	A	O	H	A	F	A	H	E	N	A	N	G	E	R
D	I	N	O	I	T	A	R	T	S	I	G	E	R	U
E	R	I	L	T	V	S	E	E	F	D	N	E	B	L
S	T	C	E	P	X	E	N	E	L	G	C	O	P	E
C	T	S	D	P	R	A	C	T	I	S	E	R	P	S
E	F	E	L	F	L	T	I	N	A	C	H	O	K	E
N	E	L	P	O	U	B	E	P	F	L	L	P	A	R
T	A	D	A	P	W	E	I	V	L	I	M	M	V	O
I	R	I	S	T	A	L	L	I	C	U	P	N	I	O
I	N	J	U	R	Y	T	H	E	S	S	G	L	G	F

Amps	Engine	Jams	Rest	Tank
Anger	Expect	Keen	Rims	Tappets
Axle	Fail	Lanes	Road	Tools
Bend	Fear	Lift	Roof	Trial
Bikes	Fees	Motor	Rules	Turn
Brake	Flat	Oil	Seatbelt	Tyre
Bush	Free	Pass	Slow	Utes
Cars	Fuel	Pins	Smash	View
Choke	Hill	Plug	Spare	
Cope	Horn	Police	Speed	
Core	Idle	Practise	Stall	
Descent	Injury	Registration	Sump	

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 2)

Welcome to your Year of the Glorious Detour. The plan changes, and the reroute is destiny. You'll stumble into opportunities meant for you long before you thought you were ready. Finances stabilize with a clever new habit you adopt almost accidentally. More highlights: a friendship that becomes a chosen-family anchor, three professional showcase moments and a getaway that shifts how you see the world. Leo and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 14, 30, 28, 9 and 22.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). It won't be necessary to meet anyone halfway because people want what you want. So you'll have effortless compatibility -- the kind where you just understand each other and don't have to compromise.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The day asks for forgiveness, especially of yourself. Carrying old blame into a new year is like wearing too many coats for the weather. Shed it. You've learned what you needed to know, and today you are brand new.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Forget about mistakes of the past. Compassionate integration is the way. Take the lesson, close the chapter and let the ghosts linger in history where they belong. This new day is for the living.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Don't worry so much about timing. You're not behind. It's impossible to know other people's process, so don't bother comparing. You're headed toward good things, and nothing can keep you from your destiny.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Outdated identities no longer fit? Just drop them. You don't owe loyalty to other versions of yourself. Your self-definition is allowed to change with the times, with your circumstances and according to your latest expectations.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). They say knowledge is power, but today highlights the more accurate truth: knowledge is potential power. Application is everything! The insight you pick up will be a treasure just as soon as you figure out how to use it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll find yourself lit up by a podcast or conversation that feeds your mind in a way real-life people haven't lately. It'll remind you that your people are out there, even if today they're voices through speakers.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You may feel like hiding your creativity until it's "ready," but that will slow you down. What if you opted for playful experimentation instead? Make messy drafts, weird notes and unfinished scenes, and let the process be joyful instead of secretive.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). People tend to do what's easy for them. Those who do more aren't necessarily working harder; they just have more skill or strength. What looks impressive is still easy for them. Those are the ones to hire, befriend and learn from.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You put people first, and everything good comes from that choice. Relationships bring you opportunities that no one could have predicted. Bonus: When you're busy making magic for others, your own life feels magical.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Emotional downsides such as embarrassment, rejection or temporary discomfort will be quickly overcome and are worth risking if the upside is money, opportunity, relationships, reputation or progress.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You'll have one moment where you think, "Wow, I'm actually proud of how I handled that." Whether it's a boundary, a decision or a tiny act of self-respect, it'll feel like a small but unmistakable shift into your next era.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

L	U	N	G	■	C	A	P	■	T	I	R	A	D	E
U	S	E	D	■	R	I	O	■	E	V	E	N	E	D
C	H	A	P	T	E	R	S	■	N	E	S	T	E	D
Y	E	P	■	U	P	B	E	A	T	■	T	I	D	Y
■	R	O	T	T	E	N	■	T	A	P	E	■	■	■
■	■	L	E	O	■	B	R	O	C	A	D	I	N	G
C	R	I	E	R	S	■	A	L	L	Y	■	C	O	O
H	O	T	S	■	E	A	G	L	E	■	S	E	N	D
U	S	A	■	R	A	R	E	■	S	H	A	D	E	S
M	A	N	D	A	T	O	R	Y	■	E	R	A	■	■
■	■	■	O	P	U	S	■	O	W	N	I	N	G	■
B	E	A	M	■	R	E	A	G	A	N	■	C	A	N
A	R	T	I	S	T	■	G	U	Y	A	N	E	S	E
L	I	O	N	E	L	■	U	R	N	■	A	R	E	A
D	E	M	O	T	E	■	A	T	E	■	P	S	S	T

Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

5	1	9	3	8	2	6	4	7
7	4	2	9	5	6	1	3	8
3	8	6	7	4	1	2	5	9
8	9	7	2	6	4	5	1	3
4	2	1	5	7	3	8	9	6
6	5	3	8	1	9	4	7	2
9	7	8	4	2	5	3	6	1
2	6	4	1	3	7	9	8	5
1	3	5	6	9	8	7	2	4

					1			7
1		8		7				9
	3		4		9	5		
3		1		5				4
	5		2		4		3	
7				9		8		6
		2	6		8		7	
9				1		6		5
4			9					

Newsday Crossword

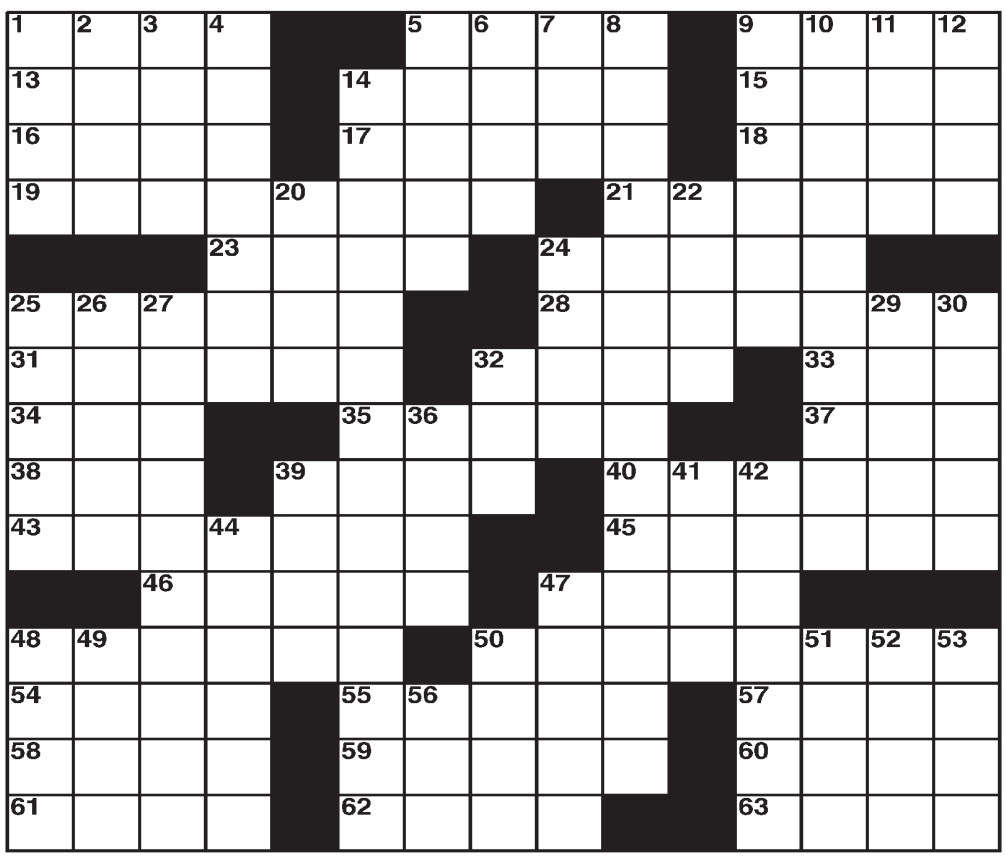
TURNDOWNS by Guilherme Gilioli
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Minor anomaly
5 Cellphone protector
9 Social media user labels
13 Subtle vibe
14 Twilled cotton
15 Novelist O'Brien
16 Police procedure
17 Lacked
18 Printer part
19 Metaphors for forgotten history
21 Wetlands waders
23 Debtor's condition
24 Resort on Lake Geneva
25 No small favor
28 Grassy, for instance
31 How chili may be brought
32 "Made up" thing
33 Facility at Heathrow
34 Lyrical lines
35 Tot's cone topper
37 With 50-Across, very briefly
38 Johann's "you"
39 Tall and thin
40 Wasn't upstanding
43 Tart citrus
45 Table leaves, e.g.
46 Way up high
47 Leave off
48 Cylindrical sweet
50 See 37-Across
54 Tattered attire
55 Net sales
57 Nike alternative
58 Lundi __ (NOLA parade day)
59 Italy's "Supreme Poet"
60 Canadian diver
61 Submit to
62 Military band participant
63 Oral subtlety

DOWN

1 Minstrel versifier
2 Type of beach bash
3 ID scanner target
4 Lo mein cousin
5 Knee-ankle connector
6 Isn't sincere
7 Country quarters
8 Zilch
9 Four of a kind
10 Workout by-product
11 Tiny buzzer
12 Comes out with
14 Trattoria entrée
20 Nectar source
22 Encircle
24 Mean business
25 Push higher
26 Forster novel setting
27 Food for catfish
29 More than double a 9-Down
30 Fly catchers
32 Jan. honoree
36 "What am __ getting?"
39 First of 14 popes
41 Noah ancestor
42 It covers a lot of ground
44 Vacant, as stares
47 Sofa + chairs + table
48 For this reason
49 Runner's fuel
50 Second starter
51 Sautéing staple
52 Griffin, in part
53 Word turned in the four longest Down answers
56 Small flap



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01/02/26

MORE OF STAN'S CROSSWORDS! Play FREE from Stan's archives of Easy, Hard and Sunday puzzles at: tinyurl.com/stan-newman-crosswords

NEW LAWS

FROM PAGE 1

Monica enforce state renter protection laws and local tenant protection ordinances.

While details such as registration fees will be determined later, the ordinance imposes penalties of up to $200 per unit per month for non-compliance. Beginning Jan. 1, 2027, landlords who fail to register a rental unit will be prohibited from collecting rent until they comply.

The registry will collect information on tenancy, including reasons tenants move out, to help enforce California's rent cap and just-cause eviction rules under AB 1482.

Santa Monica is also updating its construction standards effective Jan. 1, formally adopting the 2025 California Building Standards Code along with local amendments focused on seismic resilience and fire safety. The city's amendments concentrate on earthquake-resistant design and "home hardening" measures to reduce wildfire hazards, including provisions for fire-resistant materials and buffer zones around homes.

The upgraded codes include at least one new addition related to home hardening within 5 feet of structures to prevent fire spread. The standards will apply to new construction and significant remodels.

Parking Rate Changes Take Effect Jan. 12

Santa Monica will implement new public parking rates effective Jan. 12, designed to simplify pricing and encourage longer downtown visits.

Downtown parking structures will transition from a nine-tier pricing model to a three-tier model. While pricing varies by structure, parking for the first 30 minutes — previously the first 90 minutes — is free, with costs increasing at the three- and five-hour marks.

Most visitors who park for three hours or more will pay less than they currently do for the same period. The maximum daily rate to park longer than five hours will decrease or remain flat, while the cost of a monthly parking permit is being reduced 20%. The city is offering discounted rebates for business owners to purchase 90-minute validations for $1.50 each.

Hourly parking in beach lots and parking meters will increase by an average of $0.25 to $2. Discounted rates remain for seniors and those with disabilities. Flat-rate beach lots will increase by an average of $2 to $5 but remain among the least expensive waterfront parking in Southern California.

Starting Jan. 12, parking transactions using credit cards will include a fee to cover transactional costs. Transactions by cash or check will not incur fees.

"This new rate structure responds to the needs of visitors, residents, business owners and the city by making the pricing structure simpler and more straightforward, while reducing costs for many who park for three hours or more in our downtown structures," said Department of Transportation Director Anuj Gupta.

The City Council approved the new rate structure in August and adopted it Oct. 28 as part of the city's Realignment Plan. The measure is expected to generate up to $9 million annually in revenue for community programs and services.

A detailed chart of updated parking rates is available at santamonica.gov.

STATEWIDE CHANGES

California's minimum wage increases to $16.90 per hour Jan. 1, up from $16.50. New labor laws bolster worker rights, including allowing gig drivers for companies like Uber and Lyft to unionize while remaining contractors. Employers can no longer claw back training costs or bonuses if an employee leaves early, and starting in February, employers must give new hires written notice of their rights.

Single-use plastic bags are now completely banned at stores. Previously, California allowed thicker "reusable" plastic bags, but all plastic carryout bags are outlawed effective Jan. 1. Food delivery apps must refund orders that never arrive or are wrong, with human customer service required if automated systems fail.

To improve healthcare affordability, insulin costs will be capped at $35 per month for a 30-day supply for health plans regulated by the state. The "Curl Act" prohibits toxic chemicals in hair relaxers linked to cancer or reproductive harm. Large employer health plans must now cover infertility treatments like IVF regardless of marital status or sexual orientation.

Renters will see new protections in 2026. Landlords must provide a working stove and refrigerator in any new or renewed rental agreement signed in 2026 or later. Landlords cannot evict a renter for nonpayment of rent if the tenant's Social Security checks were delayed or halted through no fault of their own.

Gun safety law is now stricter. Firearms kept at home must be stored securely in a locked container or with a trigger lock whenever they're not in the owner's immediate control. An unlocked gun could lead to misdemeanor or felony charges.

Local authorities are now allowed to lower speed limits in school zones from 25 mph to 20 mph. All electric bikes in California must have a red rear reflector or light at all times. New safety standards for e-bikes, e-scooters and their lithium batteries take effect, with retailers barred from selling non-compliant devices.

Social media platforms must make it easy for users to delete their accounts and personal data. The California Privacy Protection Agency will launch a one-stop online portal in January where consumers can request all data brokers to delete their personal information. AI chatbot providers must warn minors when they are interacting with a bot, not a human, and ensure the bots can't encourage self-harm.

Companies that do business in California with over $500 million in annual revenue must publicly report their greenhouse gas emissions, including both direct emissions and those from their supply chains and product use.

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FRIDAY | JANUARY 2

DRUNK THEATRE: THE WILDEST IMPROV COMEDY SHOW!

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Santa Monica Playhouse 1211 4th St, Santa Monica. A comedian takes five shots of whiskey in a row and tries to perform an improvised play with five sober comedians. What could go wrong?! Drunk Theatre is the entirely improvised, unpredictable, and crazy comedy show that'll kick your weekend into overdrive. Reserve your spot now as limited seating and space is available. Visit: https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/drunk-theatre-the-wildest-improv-comedy-show-/15793351/2025-12-26T08

BRUNCH FRIDAYS WITH LIVE MUSIC IN OUR GARDEN PATIO!

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tiato Kitchen & Venue 2700 Colorado Ave Santa Monica. Our newly launched Brunch Fridays just got vibey-er! Every week enjoy great eats, summer libations, and a featured music artist on our beautiful garden patio! So come toast to summer with our uniquely crafted brunch menu including our Turmeric Spiced Cloud Egg dish, Smoked Gouda Scramble with Smashed Ube, Vietnamese French Toast, along with Mama An classics such as Famous Garlic Noodles, Shaken Beef, and Seafood Egg Fried Rice! And of course, it wouldn't be brunch without bottomless mimosas & summer punch bowls, so grab your brunch crew and enjoy the fair along the beautiful backdrop of Al fresco dining. RESERVE NOW. Visit: https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/brunch-fridays-with-live-music-in-our-garden-patio-/14639006/2026-01-02T11

STAR STORIES WITH MISS SANDY

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. West Los Angeles Regional Library 11360 Santa Monica Boulevard Los Angeles. STAR Stories With Miss Sandy Children are invited to share the joy of storytelling and reading with our special STAR volunteer, Miss Sandy. Come three times and take home a free book. Visit: https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/star-stories-with-miss-sandy/15607291/2025-12-26T14

LIVE MUSIC FRIDAYS AT THE SURFING FOX

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. 120 Colorado Ave CA Contact Info (424) 214-1830 matt.sedgwick@candrpr.com Visit thesurfingfoxsm.com to view menus and learn more Santa Monica. Erinn Alissa performs acoustic folk pop with her guitar Friday nights at The Surfing Fox. Enjoy a night of live music, tasty bites, and Foxtails! Visit: https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/live-music-fridays-at-the-surfing-fox/14385252/2025-12-26T18

SATURDAY | JANUARY 3

DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET - SATURDAY MARKET

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Santa Monica Farmers Market - Arizona Ave and 3rd Street Arizona Ave and 3rd Street Santa Monica. Santa Monica Farmers Markets create thriving, vibrant communities that are inclusive, connected, and diverse by promoting the prosperity of California farmers and small food businesses, preservation of the agricultural arts and sustainable food systems. The Saturday Downtown Farmers Market is open from 8:00am to 1:00pm, year-round and operates rain or shine. May be closed for selected holidays. Visit: https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/downtown-farmers-market-saturday-market/13357377/2025-12-27T08

SANTA MONICA FARMERS MARKET - VIRGINIA AVENUE PARK/ PICO BOULEVARD

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Virginia Avenue Park 2200 Virginia Ave Santa Monica. The family market in the heart of the Pico neighborhood's Virginia Avenue Park! Enjoy one of Santa Monica's farmers markets, widely considered to be among the best on the west coast and featuring field-fresh produce, hundreds of kinds of vegetables, brilliant cut flowers, breads, cheeses, delicious foods, live music and more. Visit: https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/santa-monica-farmers-market-virginia-avenue-park-pico-boulevard/12382447/2025-12-27T08

DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Hosteling Intl. 1436 2nd Street Santa Monica. Join the Santa Monica Conservancy's Downtown Walking Tour. Discover downtown Santa Monica's architectural gems, history, and culture. From Art Deco to Victorian and Romanesque Revival, you'll explore the various styles that fill the streets of Santa Monica. Explore downtown's diverse architectural heritage, including Bay Cities Guaranty Building, El Miro Theater, Georgian Hotel, Gussie Moran House, Keller Block and more! The Downtown Walking Tour is FREE for Conservancy members, FREE for guests staying at Hostelling International, and $10 for the general public. Visit: https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/downtown-walking-tour/15830816/2026-01-03T10

BEGINNER REFORMER PILATES AT GOOD BODY PILATES STUDIO

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Good Body Pilates Studio 3229 Pico Blvd. Santa Monica Good Body Pilates Studio Santa Monica. Start your Saturday feeling strong, centered, and energized with our Beginner Reformer Pilates Class at Good Body Pilates Studio, taught by expert instructor Kylie. This group class is perfect for those new to Pilates or anyone looking to reconnect with the fundamentals in a welcoming and supportive environment. No experience necessary! Located in the heart of Santa Monica on Pico Boulevard, right across from Trader Joe's, our boutique studio is surrounded by great local coffee shops and restaurants, making it the perfect place to kick off your weekend. Plenty of metered parking available on Pico Blvd, and both metered and free street parking available on Urban Ave. Visit: https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/beginner-reformer-pilates-at-good-body-pilates-studio/16094481/2026-01-03T10

SUNDAY | JANUARY 4

SANTA MONICA AIRPORT ANTIQUE MARKET

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Santa Monica Airport 2800-3200 Airport Ave Santa Monica. Noted as One of the Top Ten "Flea Markets' in America, visit the Santa Monica Airport Antique Market, a fun outdoor (and dog-friendly!) marketfull of many great dealers with furniture, antiques, collectibles, art, vintage clothes, jewelry, rugs and much more. A destination for decorators, designers, boutique owners, families with their friendly dogs and collectors of all ages. Shop for ancient to antique, Victorian to Mid-Century, from vintage to the eccentric. Our dealers bring; shabby chic, architectural salvage and industrial furniture, paintings from listed European and American artists, original vintage prints, posters and lithographs, estate jewelry, vintage to couture fashion, books, candelabras, outdoor furniture and garden accessories, rugs from around the world, tribal and African art, sculpture and beads, exotic plants and more. Located next to the Museum of Flying. Occursevery 1st and 4th sunday of every month. Visit: https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/santa-monica-airport-antique-market/15831601/2025-12-28T08


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