

LOCAL NEWS

# Acquitted Colonies defendant Mark Kirk said impact of case will have long-lasting consequences



Mark Kirk, a former top San Bernardino County official, discusses the impact the Colonies corruption case had on him and his family.

By **JOE NELSON** | Press-Enterprise

February 5, 2018 at 11:35 am



Mark Kirk remembers one of the longest nights of his life: May 9, 2011 — the night before he surrendered himself to authorities at the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office.

Facing criminal charges in connection with a far-reaching bribery case involving a wealthy developer and some of the county's top officials, Kirk, and his wife, Erin, braced themselves for what was about to come.

"I put my 6-month-old daughter to bed that night, not knowing when I was going to see her again," said Kirk, 43, a former chief of staff for former county supervisor Gary Ovitt. "There were lots of tears, but not with her. We kept it together for her. There's no explaining that to a 6-month-old."

The following day, Kirk, Rancho Cucamonga developer Jeff Burum, then county Supervisor Paul Biane, and former Assistant Assessor Jim Erwin were arrested and jailed in what prosecutors called an elaborate bribery scheme involving a \$102 million legal settlement the county paid to Rancho Cucamonga developer Colonies Partners LP, of which Burum is a co-managing partner, in November 2006.

More than six years later, on Aug. 28, 2017, following an 8-month trial in San Bernardino Superior Court, Kirk, Burum and Biane were acquitted on all charges, found "not guilty" by a jury of their peers after about a day of deliberation. A month later, Erwin's jury announced it was "hopelessly deadlocked," and prosecutors subsequently dropped the case, citing "witness problems" they felt were "unresolvable." Erwin had a separate jury because certain evidence against him was not admissible against the other defendants.

Despite their vindication, the damage to the former defendants had been done and was irreversible.

"The trial's over, but the effects of what these guys did is not over," Kirk said during a recent interview at his Hesperia home. "It was wrong what they did, and that's got to stop. As long as they're allowed to continue to do what they do, no one is safe."

## LEGAL ACTION

Kirk, as well as the other former defendants, are demanding compensation for the financial hit they took following their arrests and the eight-year legal battle that followed. Since Kirk's, Burum's and Biane's acquittal and Erwin's case being dismissed, all but Biane, as well as Colonies Partners, have filed claims with the county alleging malicious prosecution and that the county failed to indemnify them in the criminal case. Damages sought top \$100 million. Federal civil rights lawsuits may follow.

Erwin was the first out the door, filing a [\\$25 million](#) claim on Nov. 1, 2017. Colonies Partners followed, filing a \$45 million claim on December 14, followed by Kirk on Dec. 18 with a [\\$35 million claim](#). And on Jan. 30, Burum filed his [claim](#) but did not specify a monetary figure in damages.

Burum claims he lost “tens of millions of dollars” in failed development deals and also lost salary from dismissals on various boards of directors because of damage to his reputation. The alleged damages extend over a period of about 20 years, Burum’s claim states, from civil actions and a land seizure at a development site in the late 1990s through the conclusion of the 10-month criminal trial last year. He is seeking both punitive damages as well as actual losses.

The county rejected Kirk’s claim on Jan. 31, the Colonies Partners claim on Jan. 26, and Erwin’s claim on Dec. 14.

The vindicated former defendants also want to see reforms to state laws, especially how the grand jury process works, a process the former defendants claim was exploited by prosecutors to their advantage and that resulted in their indictment.

“The way the (prosecutors) manipulated the grand jury process is unethical and immoral,” said Kirk during a recent interview at his Hesperia home. “I’m shocked at how brazen they were. These were some pretty powerful people they chose to violate their rights.”

The former defendants allege prosecutors manipulated grand jury testimony and relied on the false testimony of several witnesses, including former Assistant Assessor Adam Aleman, former Assessor and Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus, and county Supervisor Josie Gonzales, to land the indictment. Defense attorneys maintain they were not allowed to present their side, as the grand jury process precludes that.

Prosecutors with the District Attorney’s and state Attorney General’s offices have declined to comment. District Attorney spokesman Christopher Lee maintains it would be inappropriate due to ongoing legal matters related to the case. Postmus has yet to be sentenced and may [withdraw his March 2011 guilty plea](#) in connection with the Colonies case and for crimes he committed at the Assessor’s Office in 2007 and 2008, including misappropriation of public funds.

Postmus testified during the trial that he felt intimidated by district attorney investigators, who he believed were pressuring him to provide them information that fit their narrative of the case. He also testified he never felt he was bribed for approving the Colonies settlement in 2006, when he was chairman of the county Board of Supervisors, nor that there was ever a quid pro quo.

An admitted methamphetamine addict who says he was at the peak of his addiction at the time of the Colonies settlement, during his time as county Assessor, and during the Colonies investigation, Postmus says he has been clean and sober since 2012. He has retained a new lawyer and is due back in court April 27.

## **DAMAGES**

Kirk said his arrest cost him his \$136,000-a-year job as chief of staff to former county Supervisor Gary Ovitt. Obtaining employment after that was scarce. Once a credentialed math and science teacher, Kirk could no longer teach. He said he had to cash out his retirement to cover his attorney fees.

“I thought I would go back to teaching, which would be a good source of income while we fought the litigation, but the state of California would not clear my fingerprints because I had felonies pending,” Kirk said.

Prior to going to work for the county, Kirk taught eighth-grade math at Pinon Mesa Middle School, in Phelan, from 1999 to 2001. Prior to that, he taught seventh and eighth-grade math at the now-defunct Victor Valley Junior High in Victorville.

Following his arrest, the best Kirk could do was getting work as a tutor at Sylvan Learning Center in Victorville. He also started his own political consulting company, Paidea Group, but struggled because he had to inform clients about his criminal case.

“I always tried to be upfront about that, and two-thirds of the time it was a dealbreaker,” Kirk said.

His acquittal in August hasn't made things any easier. Kirk said he has since been on 30 job interviews for government jobs, but was either rejected or did not get any callbacks.

“The financial impact of this was catastrophic, and there's nothing we can really do to mitigate that,” said Kirk. “There are real, tangible losses associated with this. It's not as bright now as it was because a lot of doors have been shut. I think this is something that will always be there.”

Meanwhile, Kirk said he continues to pound the pavement, looking for his next opportunity, but he said his career in politics is essentially over, given the irreversible damage the Colonies case did to his reputation. He said if he returns to teaching, he would like to teach high school biology, math or both.

## **NEW LIFE**

But with Kirk's losses have come tender moments and priceless joys, like having time now to walk his daughter to school every day.

"In the past three years, there's probably been a dozen times I didn't walk my daughter to school," said Kirk. "That's the highlight of my day."

Since his arrest and in the eight years that have since passed, Kirk said he has forged friendships with former fellow defendants Burum, Biane and Erwin. In 2014, he said he celebrated his 40th birthday at Biane's Rancho Cucamonga home.

He recounted a story about Burum, and his loyalty to Kirk, Biane and Erwin while briefly incarcerated at the Central Detention Center in San Bernardino in May 2011.

"While in jail, my understanding was his wife had bail all arranged for him, and Jeff refused to post bail and leave until all of us posted bail. So he was the last one to leave, even though he was the first to have the means to post bail," said Kirk.

"He says to me, 'I'm going to be the last to leave here. I'm not leaving until the rest of you go.' That may not sound like a big deal, but when you don't know how long it's going to be and you know your family and your kids need you, that's a heck of a statement."

Kirk said Burum also refused to have his electronic ankle monitor removed until he, Biane, and Erwin had their monitors removed.

"I have tremendous respect for those guys. The integrity they showed was inspiring," said Kirk.

### **WEATHERING THE STORM**

Kirk said faith and commitment kept his family together through the last eight years, and a lot has changed in that time.

His daughter, Audrey, now 7, was only six months old when Kirk was arrested and charged. Kirk's wife, Erin, an adjunct music professor at Victor Valley College, gave birth to a son, Leland, in June 2014. He is now 3.

Kirk said he and Erin had serious discussions about whether it was responsible to have another child while he was facing criminal charges.

"It's a tough conversation to have," said Kirk. "We asked ourselves, 'Do we want to give these people that kind of control over our lives?' And the answer was a resounding 'no.'"

Kirk said his church family has been a pillar of support through it all. He and his family were attending Victor Valley Christian Church at the time of Kirk's indictment, and members of his congregation provided meals, childcare, and of course, prayers during the family's ordeal.

The Kirks subsequently started attending New Hope Community Church in Apple Valley, where an opportunity opened for Kirk to minister to a youth group composed of middle school and high school-aged teens.

"Whatever we needed, and then some, both churches, they stepped up immensely for us," said Kirk. "Without them, it would've been exponentially more difficult."

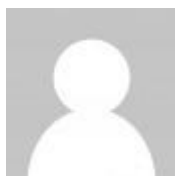
Kirk said, despite the support and comfort provided by family and church, moving on in the wake of Colonies will be difficult.

"It's going to be a long, long process to get to the point where this is really over. I don't know if this is a six-month process, a year-long process, a 5-year process. I don't know how long it's going to be before a sense of normalcy returns," he said. "We've been traumatized by this. It's going to take us awhile to recover from it."

"I don't know how we managed it all, but by the grace of God, we made it through," Kirk said. "We realized this was a season, and it would eventually end."

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**Joe Nelson**

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# Police: Probation officer's arrest connected with grand theft probe of San Bernardino business

By **BEATRIZ E. VALENZUELA** | [bvalenzuela@scng.com](mailto:bvalenzuela@scng.com) | San Bernardino Sun  
February 6, 2018 at 8:21 am



A December grand theft investigation at a San Bernardino business led to the arrest of a [San Bernardino County probation officer](#) and her husband late last month, San Bernardino police said Tuesday.

“It was unrelated to the probation department,” said Lt. Mike Madden.

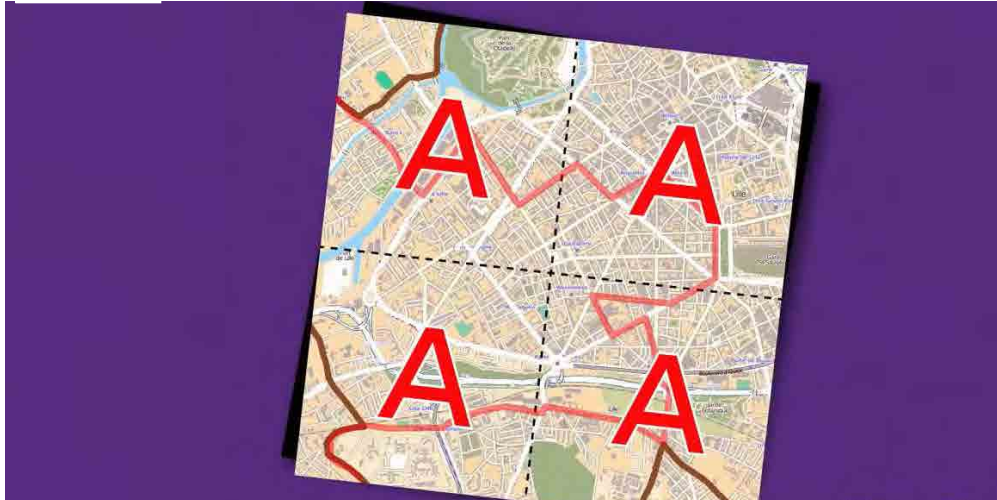
Police said they would not comment further on the active investigation.

Teneka Shrell Grant, 46, was arrested by San Bernardino police on suspicion of grand theft Jan. 31 at 175 W. 5th St. in San Bernardino, which is the address for the probation department's main office, booking records indicate.

Her husband, Eric Hayes, 47, was arrested at the couple's San Bernardino home after firearms were found in the house, according to police. Hayes is a felon and cannot be in possession of any firearms. Both posted bail several hours after their arrests, records show.

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County probation spokeswoman Stephanie Roque said that Grant has been placed on “administrative leave pending investigation.”

She declined to answer questions about the arrest or what Grant's responsibilities were in the department.

As of Tuesday, there were no charges filed against the couple in connection with the case.

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**LOCAL NEWS**

**San Antonio Heights resident  
announces bid for San  
Bernardino County Supervisor  
Janice Rutherford's seat**



Upland resident Kenneth Petschow, pictured here behind the controls of an American Airlines jet, announced his run Monday for San Bernardino County Supervisor Janice Rutherford's seat.

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By **JOE NELSON** | [jnelson@scng.com](mailto:jnelson@scng.com) | San Bernardino Sun  
February 5, 2018 at 5:29 pm



A member of the San Antonio Heights Association announced Monday he is running against incumbent Janice Rutherford for her seat on the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors.

Kenneth Petschow, 54, of San Antonio Heights, an unincorporated area in the foothills north of Upland, said the annexation of his city's fire department by the county and a \$158 tax imposed on residents as a result, without a vote, was one of the reasons he decided to run.

"I was very unhappy with the situation that happened here," Petschow said in a telephone interview Monday.

A pilot for American Airlines and former president of the San Antonio Heights Association, Petschow aims to strengthen transparency in local government and bring his constituency in the Second District together to "achieve cohesive growth and prosperity for the community."

The county's Second District includes the cities of Rancho Cucamonga, Upland and Fontana and the communities of Crestline, Lake Arrowhead, Devore and Lytle Creek.

"Key issues I see as critical to the well being of this county, and ones that I believe we can drive impact and positive change on, include economic development and a balanced county budget," Petschow said in a statement Monday.

Although Petschow says Rutherford has led strongly during her two terms as supervisor, he said it is time for change and a "fresh approach."

"My priority will be to build on the significant efforts of previous supervisors and drive an agenda for strengthening the utility services so vital to our county, and ensuring the community is deeply involved in the revitalization of these programs," he said in his statement.

Rutherford, elected in November 2010, will be running for her third term. She said in a telephone interview Monday she will kick off her re-election campaign at 3:30 p.m. Feb. 15 at the Auto Club Speedway in Fontana. In her more than seven years as supervisor, Rutherford said she has helped make government more transparent and accountable and helped tighten the budget, among other things.



San Bernardino County Supervisor Janice Rutherford is seeking a third term in office. Her re-election campaign kicks off on Feb. 15.

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“I think anyone who has observed the county notices a complete turn-around in how the county is operated, both financially and ethically,” Rutherford said. “We have also refocused the county’s budget on the core functions of county government, and we’ve also made progress in economic development.”

If re-elected, Rutherford said she wants to focus on the high concentration of poor people in the county.

“We have too many people in San Bernardino County living in poverty, and we’ve got to find ways of getting more families on the ladder to middle class,” she said Monday.

Additionally, Rutherford said the county has significant infrastructure and public safety needs. She said she is eager to get the Lake Gregory dam repaired, to see that the county invests in road projects, job growth and economic development, and that more deputies fill the streets and county jails, especially the understaffed High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto.

“We’ve got to keep working towards all those things,” she said.

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Tags: **Top Stories IVDB**, **Top Stories Sun**




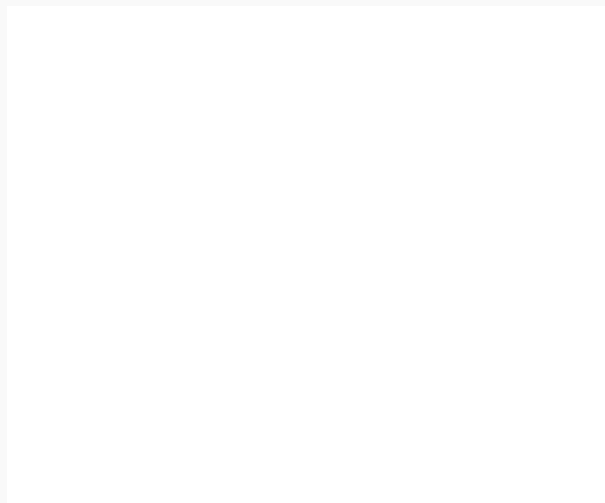
LOCAL NEWS

# Fontana donut shop regular buys \$20 million winning SuperLotto Plus ticket



Miss Donuts & Bagel, a neighborhood shop in Fontana, sold the \$20 million winning SuperLotto Plus ticket. Ling Goun, the shop owner, said a regular is the lucky winner. (Photo by Brian Whitehead, The Sun/SCNG)

By **BRIAN WHITEHEAD** | [bwhitehead@scng.com](mailto:bwhitehead@scng.com) |   
San Bernardino Sun  
February 5, 2018 at 1:44 pm



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Every morning, hungry regulars walk out of Fontana's Miss Donuts & Bagel with breakfast.

One familiar face recently walked out with a Lottery ticket worth \$20 million.

The California Lottery reported Saturday that Miss Donuts & Bagel, a 4-year-old shop off Sierra Avenue, sold the winning SuperLotto Plus jackpot ticket. Owner Ling Goun said Monday he knows who purchased the ticket, but declined to identify the newest multimillionaire.

Goun did say, however, that he was happy for his regular customer and for his shop, which he hopes sees a bump in business from the news.

Miss Donuts & Bagel sold \$255,169 in winning Lottery tickets in 2016, according to a sign in the shop's window.

Saturday's prize will be hard to top.

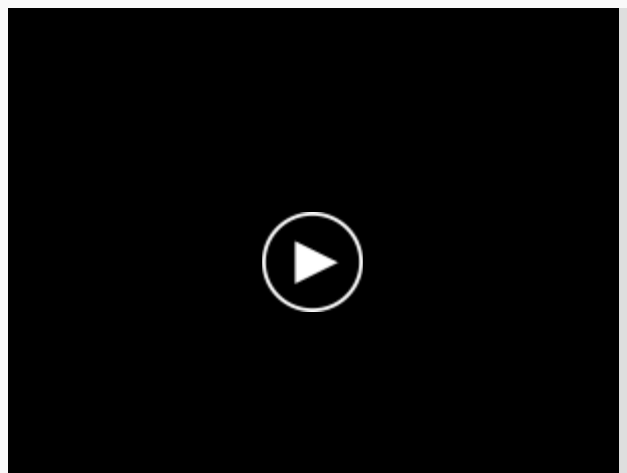
The winning numbers were 10, 29, 41, 45, 46, with 10 as the Mega number. The odds of winning the SuperLotto Plus jackpot are about 1 in 42 million.

After the numbers were announced Saturday, the store was notified it had sold the precious ticket, said Goun, who was home at the time. An employee called Goun with the news.

Within 24 hours, California Lottery officials had hung a banner and assorted signage around the shop.

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“Millionaire made here: Are you next?” the promotional material reads.

Gene Ripley, 86, walks into Miss Donuts & Bagel as many as three times a week. Rarely does he leave without trying his luck at a scratchcard or a Lottery ticket.

Monday, Ripley sat inside the shop, scratching away, a ticket for the evening’s Lottery drawing at his side.

Fifty dollars the Bloomington resident won his first go-round, a pittance compared to the handful of \$1,000 winners he’s purchased from Miss Donuts & Bagel over the years.

While interest in buying Lottery tickets from his shop hasn’t risen considerably since Saturday’s announcement, Goun said he is hopeful “it’ll go up

a whole lot” going forward.

Tags: [Top Stories PE](#), [Top Stories Sun](#)

## Brian Whitehead

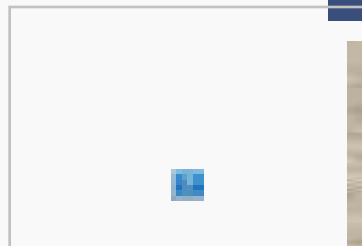
Brian Whitehead covers San Bernardino for The Sun. Bred in Grand Terrace, he graduated from Riverside Notre Dame High and Cal State Fullerton. For seven years, he covered high school and college sports for The Orange County Register. Before landing at The Sun, he was the city beat reporter for Buena Park, Fullerton and La Palma.

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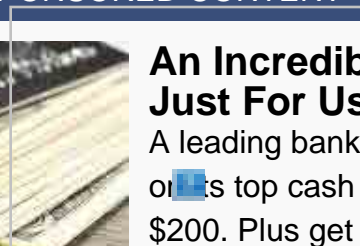
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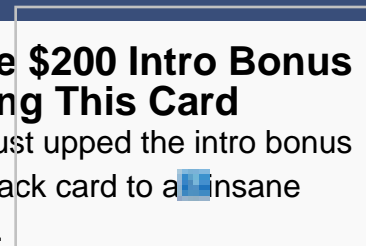
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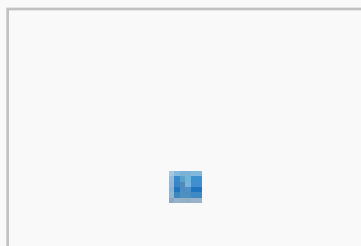
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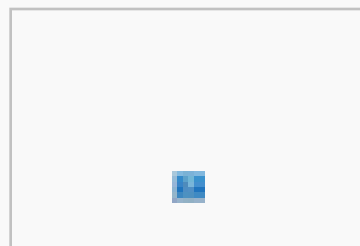
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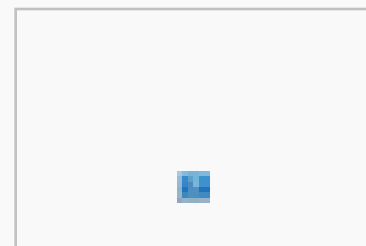
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# A history of Ft. Irwin: After a year of research, Kenneth Drylie set to release new book

By Davina Fisher / For the Desert Dispatch

Posted Feb 3, 2018 at 7:00 AM

Updated Feb 5, 2018 at 8:38 AM

With chapters spanning the early years of Ft. Irwin, 9/11 and Hollywood visitors, Kenneth W. Drylie's "The National Training Center and Fort Irwin" depicts the history of the U.S. Army's activity in the Mojave Desert.

Releasing on Feb. 26, the book can be pre-ordered online at Amazon and at Arcadia Publishing.

"The book is a history of the U.S. Army in the part of the Mojave Desert that is now the National Training Center and Fort Irwin. It uses many historical photographs to tell the story of the men and women who have called the NTC home," Drylie said. "The main periods covered in the book are from President Roosevelt setting aside 1,000 acres of desert for the Mojave Anti-Aircraft Range in 1940, through the transition to the U.S. Army Desert and Armored Combat Training Area to the opening of National Training Center and current operations there."

Drylie says Arcadia Publishing contacted him after he produced the 25th anniversary video several years ago and it seemed like a good fit. He spent a year researching and locating the photographs for the book.

"Author Kenneth Drylie is the current public affairs specialist assigned to the NTC. He has published extensively on military history, produced a film on the first 25 years of the NTC, and worked as a government contractor, photographing Army training and events," said Arcadia Publishing marketing specialist Sarah Haynes.

Drylie is an Army veteran with over 30 years of service as an active duty soldier, Army reservist, National Guardsman, and Department of the Army civilian. He was introduced to the rigors of training at the NTC while a senior non-commissioned officer in the California Army National Guard. He began his full-time employment at Ft. Irwin as a government contractor in 2003. In 2005, he joined the staff of the Ft. Irwin Public Affairs Office.

Drylie says he and his cousin, Gary "Griz" Drylie, author of the "City of Hesperia," plan on doing book signings at Barnes and Noble sometime in March.

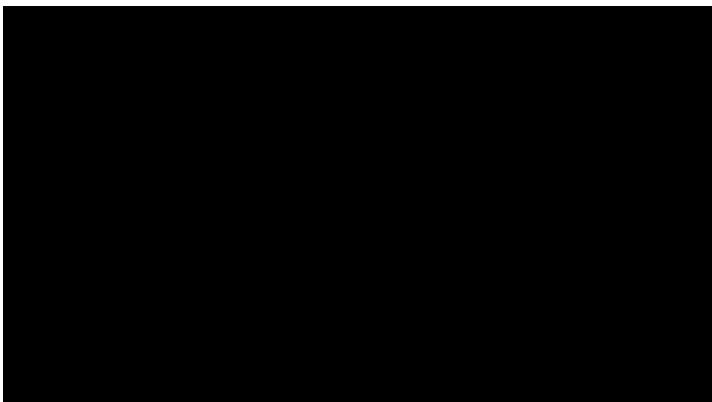
To pre-order a copy of "The National Training Center and Fort Irwin," search for the book online on Amazon or Arcadia Publishing's websites.



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NEWS

# Victorville prison staffing cuts put guards, public in jeopardy, union leader says



(File photo, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

About 120 vacant jobs at the federal prisons in Victorville are expected to be lost in 2018 as the government cuts staffing nationwide. (File photo, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **BRIAN ROKOS** | brokos@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

February 5, 2018 at 6:20 pm

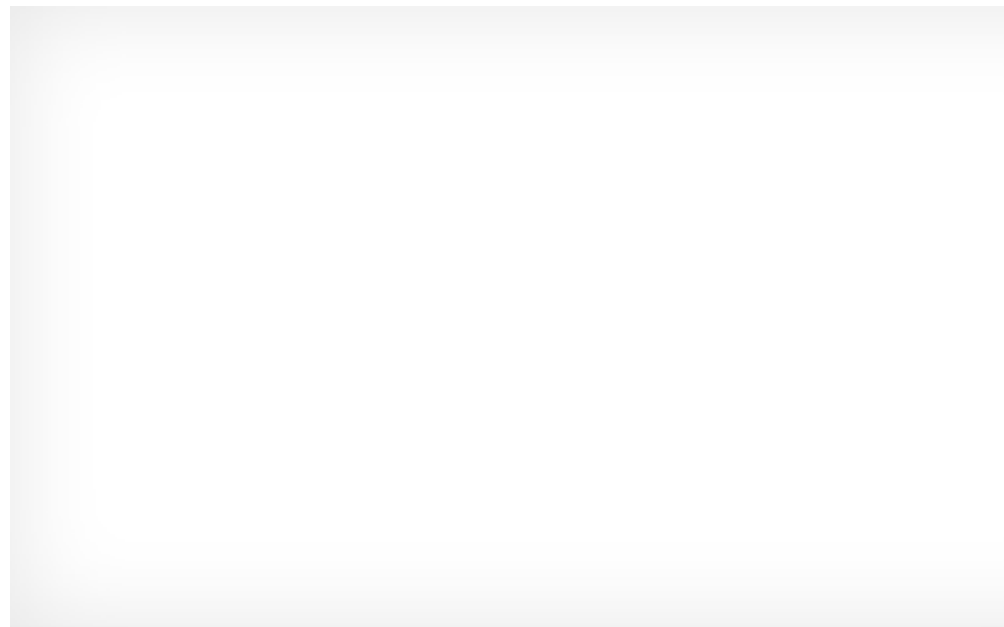


The head of the union that represents employees at the federal prison in Victorville said he plans to carry to Washington next week his concerns that nationwide staffing cuts will endanger the safety of guards, inmates and the public.

John Kostelnik, who has already spoken with [Rep. Paul Cook, R-Apple Valley](#), said he has lined up 14 appointments with lawmakers.

The Bureau of Prisons announced in late January that it is reducing its staff by 11.95 percent by not filling vacant positions. That means 120 jobs at the Victorville prison that are unfilled because of a hiring freeze will remain empty, Kostelnik said.

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A bureau spokesperson said in an emailed statement that the agency does not believe the cuts will affect anyone's safety, and that staffing levels are being lowered in response to a 16 percent reduction in the federal prison population since 2013.

“They continue to say we are going to be fine and no one's in jeopardy, but we are very much in jeopardy,” Kostelnik, a case manager, said in a phone interview.

Kostelnik said the bureau's 2018 budget could call for additional cuts, which he believes would result in actual layoffs.

The Victorville Federal Correctional Complex includes one maximum-security prison, two medium-security prisons and one minimum-security camp that together house about 3,600 prisoners, [according to the complex's website](#).

Kostelnik said there are about 1,000 staff members, about 400 of whom are correctional officers. That doesn't account for those who are out on military or injury leave, Kostelnik said. Additionally, officers may be on vacation, out sick or working off-site for a reason such as accompanying an inmate to the hospital.

The result is that at any one time, there is one officer inside the prison walls for about every 125-130 inmates. Only one of the seven guard towers is staffed, he said. Those factors make the prison more susceptible to violence and escape attempts, he said.

“Outside of that, we operate in a dysfunctional way,” Kostelnik said, explaining that the bureau considers prisons at 100 percent staffing if they have 88 percent of the jobs filled.

Kostelnik said the reduced staffing will affect the ability to rehabilitate prisoners with educational and skills classes.

“If they aren't active, they become disciplinary issues. When they are released in the community, living next door to you, all they know is drugs and the fighting and the violence that occurs when they don't have the programming,” Kostelnik said.

The bureau, in its statement, said the prisons are not understaffed.

“We are currently eliminating several thousand vacant authorized positions. These positions have been identified by the Department of Justice and Congress to be eliminated as part of an effort to ‘rightsize’ the BOP-authorized staffing levels in light of the significant decrease in the inmate population we experienced over the last four years,” the statement said.

As of Feb. 1, there were 183,587 federal inmates, the bureau's website says.

In 2013, the federal inmate population peaked at 219,298, and the number was over 200,000 every year between 2007 and 2015.

Some federal inmates are in private prisons. President Donald Trump has been criticized for ordering public prisons to identify more inmates who can transfer to the for-profit institutions. According to Newsweek, one of the companies that runs private prisons contributed \$250,000 to Trump's campaign and another \$475,000 to his inauguration fund.

The bureau, asked for comment, said, “We aim to maximize the use of the privately operated secure facilities under contract to house low-security criminal aliens to most efficiently use the taxpayer dollar and to maintain the lowest possible levels of crowding in federal low-security institutions.”

Victorville is the only high-security federal prison in Southern California. There is a low-security prison at Terminal Island in San Pedro, and Los Angeles and San Diego have federal detention centers where defendants awaiting trial are housed.

Tags: [public safety](#), [Top Stories PE](#), [Top Stories Sun](#)



BRIAN\_ROKOS

## Brian Rokos

Brian Rokos writes about public safety issues such as policing, criminal justice, scams, how law affects public safety, firefighting tactics and wildland fire danger. He has also covered the cities of San Bernardino, Corona, Norco, Lake Elsinore, Perris, Canyon Lake and Hemet. Before that he supervised reporters and worked as a copy editor. For some reason, he enjoys movies where the Earth is threatened with extinction.

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## Victorville City Council meeting: What to watch

By Staff reports

Posted Feb 5, 2018 at 12:38 PM

Updated Feb 5, 2018 at 12:38 PM

VICTORVILLE — The City Council will meet for its regularly scheduled meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday inside council chambers at City Hall, 14343 Civic Dr. Notable items on the agenda include:

- Award of \$53,200 contract to California Surfacing for the resurfacing of basketball courts in eight city parks
- Approve purchase and sale agreements for three properties totaling \$172,976 as part of ongoing right of way acquisition for the Green Tree Boulevard Extension project
- Amend and extend a month-to-month contract with James Mathew ‘Mat’ Fratus, not to exceed \$75,000 in total, to increase the scope of his duties as an advisor to a city-run fire department
- Receive and file a report from City Attorney Andre de Bortnowski on Council members’ roles and duties when engaging in communications with members of the public and/or community groups

Council meetings can be viewed live online or later watched as archived versions on the city’s website, [ci.Victorville.ca.us](http://ci.Victorville.ca.us).



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LOCAL NEWS

# Crowd lines up at midnight for Cracker Barrel's first day open in Victorville



Jose Olives serves guests Friday during a preview of Cracker Barrel Old Country Store in Victorville.

By **FIELDING BUCK** | fbuck@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise



PUBLISHED: February 5, 2018 at 2:00 pm | UPDATED: February 5, 2018 at 2:48 pm

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Fans of Cracker Barrel Old Country Store started

gathering at midnight in a Victorville shopping center to be the first customers at the chain's first California restaurant.

[Cracker Barrel](#) is a combination family restaurant and retail store with locations across the U.S. The Victorville store pushes the total up to [649 locations](#) in 45 states, according to representatives.

By the time the doors opened, there were 150 people in line for the restaurant, which seats 180 people. By 6:30 a.m., there was an hour wait time, Janella Escobar, director of corporate communications, said in an email.

At noon, the wait was 2½ hours.

Escobar said [Momma's Pancake Breakfast](#) was one of the popular items on the menu.

“Normally, I would be able to identify how many guests have been served. However, we are currently so busy that we are unable to pull that stat.”

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The new Victorville Cracker Barrel will be this couple's 649th visited and this is their favorite thing to order

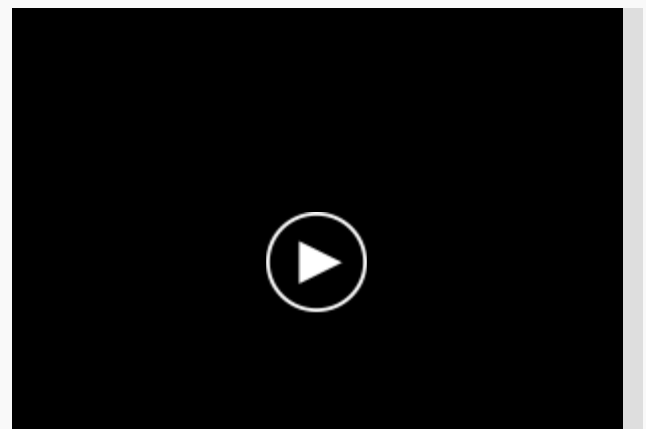
Photos: Sneak peek of Cracker Barrel's first Southern California restaurant opening in February

celebrated its grand opening on Friday with a ribbon-cutting and food service for invited guests.

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Cracker  
Barrel





The store doesn't plan any further opening celebrations, but it expects to move a lot of pancakes. According to its website, the chain sells 57 million a year.

Cracker Barrel is at 11612 Amargosa Road. Guests can get on an online wait list or place a to-go order by calling 760-244-0010.



More videos:



Tags: [restaurants](#), [Top Stories Sun](#)

## Fielding Buck

Fielding Buck has been a business reporter since 2014 with a focus on logistics, supply chain and GIS. Prior experience includes extensive entertainment reporting. He loves photography and dogs and lives in San Bernardino

NEWS > CRIME

# Adelanto deputies search for tomahawk-wielding Stater Bros. robber

By [GAIL WESSON](#) | gwesson@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

February 5, 2018 at 9:27 pm



Deputies are searching for a man who pulled out a tomahawk and threatened to kill a Stater Bros. manager who was trying to stop him from stealing groceries Sunday morning in Adelanto.

The suspect is described as a white male, 25 to 30 years old, 5-foot-9, 150 pounds, with a shaved head. He was wearing a yellow beanie, green hoodie jacket and shorts, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said in a news release.

Just before 7:30 a.m. Sunday, the suspect left the Stater Bros. in the 14100 block of Highway 395 without paying for about \$150 in merchandise, sheriff's officials said.

The store manager followed him into the parking lot, and when the manager got to within about 15 feet of the suspect, the man turned around brandished a tomahawk, the release stated. He ran away before deputies arrived.

Anyone with information is asked to call Deputy Kevin Riberich at the Victor Valley Sheriff's Station at 760-552-6800. Tipsters who wish to remain anonymous may contact WeTip at 800-782-7463 or [www.wetip.com](http://www.wetip.com).

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### Gail Wesson

Gail Wesson has covered news for The Press-Enterprise for decades, mostly in Riverside County, with occasional forays across the county line. Datelines on her stories span the county – from the state agricultural inspection station in Blythe, to the Circle in Corona, the Stringfellow Acid Pits in Mira Loma, Temecula before there were traffic signals and to the highest point in the county, Mount San Jacinto. Most of her time has been spent covering local governments or how county, state or federal government affects communities. Breaking news, from floods to wild land fires and the consequences of disasters, watchdog reporting, criminal courts coverage and environmental explainers on water rights/supply issues and why bald eagles and San Bernardino kangaroo rats should be saved are icing on her news cake.

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BREAKING

## Tuskegee airman to share his story during Black History Month

14 hrs ago

Crafton Hills College will be hosting a special presentation from Lt. Col. Robert Friend, one of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen, at noon on Wednesday, Feb. 7, in observation of Black History Month.

Robert (Bob) J. Friend was born in Columbia, South Carolina on Feb. 29, 1920. Friend demonstrated early interest in airplanes by reading magazines stories about flying in World War I and building models that actually flew. During one of Charles Lindberg's flights around the world Lindberg advised our government that in Europe, especially Germany, people were being taught to fly. The United States decided to keep pace and instituted a program called Civilian Pilot Training, CPT. Friend, who was a sophomore at Lincoln University, in Oxford, Penn., applied for participation and earned a private pilot's license in 1939/40.

At that time the U.S. Army was not accepting applications for military flight training for non-whites. However, at the insistence of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and others, a program was established at Tuskegee, Ala. to determine if non-whites could learn to fly the then considered complex tactical aircraft of the U.S. Army.



Friend applied in October 1942 and was accepted as an air cadet in the program. Upon receiving his wings as a military pilot, Friend was commissioned as a second lieutenant and following several weeks of transition into tactical aircraft was assigned to the 332nd Fighter Group which was to be stationed in the European Theatre of Operations.

Friend became the primary wing-man to Col. Benjamin O. Davis, Commander of the 332nd Fighter Group. They first flew the P-47 but flew P-51s for almost two years until the end of World War II.

Friend also served as operations officer for the 301st squadron and was the last operations officer of 332nd fighter group.

Friend continued his education by obtaining a degree in astrophysics under the Air Force Institute of Technology, and many other specialized management courses, including the UCLA graduate business school, and the US Air Force Program Management Course, Special Weapons School and Air War College.

After retiring from the Air Force, Friend became the assistant to the president for Fairchild Stratus Companies in Manhattan Beach, Calif., overseeing the design and production of space products for the space shuttle.

In his third career, he is currently executive vice president for the Stanford Mu Corporation in Los Angeles which is a company that produces primary space components for the International Space Station and other satellite systems.

Friend has been involved in research and development activities for over 50 years and is responsible for formulating, monitoring, evaluating and controlling programs and projects for scientific and technological application to meet USAF Special Weapons Fire Control Systems and Major Missile Systems strategic and tactical requirements.

Friend is a master bridge player who is well known and respected nationally, and competes in national tournaments in his spare time.

He also spends his time traveling to different events to speak about his time as a pilot with the Tuskegee Airmen Red Tails, and participates in events with Ride 2 Recovery. This group supports all veterans who are coming home and helps with getting them back on the right road.

Friend resides in Irvine, Calif. He has eight children and numerous grand, great-grand and great-great grandchildren.

- Earned private pilot's license in 1940
- Applied to Army Air Corps in October 1942
- Deployed to Ramitelli, Italy as a member of the 332nd Fighter Group
- Flew heavy bomber escort missions in the P-47 for one month and flew the P-51 from July 4, 1944 till the end of World War II
- Flew 142 missions in the P-51 Mustang
- Served 30 years in the Army Air Corp. (Air Force) and retired in 1972
- Degree in astro physics, graduate from UCLA's Business School
- Works four days a week as a consultant for The Stanford Mu Corporation, an aerospace company in Los Angeles.
- 1 of 15 Surviving Red Tail Pilots.
- Recipient of Congressional Gold Medal (2007); Distinguished Flying Cross, Presidential Unit Citation, Bronze Star with Flying Cross; three Distinguished Service Medals and an Air Medal.

## LOCAL NEWS

# Fontana woman nearing trial in 60 Freeway wrong-way, DUI crash that killed 6



Olivia Carolee Culbreath of Fontana, shown here speaking with Daniel Perlman, one of her lawyers, February, 25, 2015, was in court Monday for a preliminary hearing. A readiness hearing has been scheduled for March 12 in Los Angeles. (Photo by Walt Mancini/Pasadena Star-News)

By **MONICA RODRIGUEZ** |



[morodriguez@scng.com](mailto:morodriguez@scng.com) | Daily Bulletin

PUBLISHED: February 5, 2018 at 6:21 pm | UPDATED: February 5, 2018 at 6:37 pm

LOS ANGELES >> The case of a Fontana woman accused of driving drunk and the wrong way on the 60 Freeway nearly four years ago and causing a crash that killed six people is getting closer to going to trial.

[Olivia Carolee Culbreath](#), 25, was in Los Angeles County Superior Court in downtown Los Angeles Monday for a preliminary hearing and is expected to return March 12 for a readiness hearing, according to an email from the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Media Relations Bureau.

During a readiness hearing, defense attorneys and prosecutors will report to a judge how close they are to being ready to go to trial and can set a date to begin the trial.

On Feb. 9, 2014, Culbreath allegedly drove a Chevrolet Camaro east on the westbound 60 Freeway, the California Highway Patrol said. She was traveling at speeds approaching 100 mph when she was in a wrong-way, head-on crash in Diamond Bar, the CHP said.

Prior to the crash, [Culbreath had allegedly been drinking](#).

Her car crashed head-on into a sport utility vehicle, the CHP reported. Another vehicle subsequently crashed into the SUV.

Culbreath's sister, Maya, 24, of Rialto, and Kristin Young, 21, of Chino, were passengers in Culbreath's car and died in the crash.

Four Huntington Park residents were traveling in

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the SUV and were all thrown from the vehicle. The four victims were Gregorio Mejia-Martinez, 47, Leticia Ibarra, 42, Jessica Mejia, 20, and Ester Delgado, 80.

11

What Ontario International Airport is doing to improve foreign travelers' experience

12

Adelanto deputies search for tomahawk-wielding Stater Bros. robber



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## Monica Rodriguez

Monica Rodriguez covers Pomona for the Daily Bulletin.

[Follow Monica Rodriguez @PomonaNow](#)

### FROM AROUND THE WEB

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LOCAL NEWS

# This is how the Inland Empire played a part in the space race with satellites still in orbit



Photo by Joe Blackstock

Some of the buildings of what was the Grand Central Rocket Co., a space pioneer that operated in Mentone in the 1950s. Today the facility is a mixed-use industrial park.

By **JOE BLACKSTOCK** |  
February 5, 2018 at 10:42 am



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Racing far above us today and every day for years to come is Vanguard I, the oldest bit of man-made space debris — it's been up there since the



## Eisenhower administration.

That, and a second Vanguard satellite that followed, are testaments to the innovation of a little-remembered Inland Empire firm that got them up there in the first place.

On a dead-end street in Mentone is the site of the Grand Central Rocket Co. where hundreds of employees once developed solid rocket fuel and engines. Their efforts helped the U.S. pick itself up after the shock of the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, in 1957.

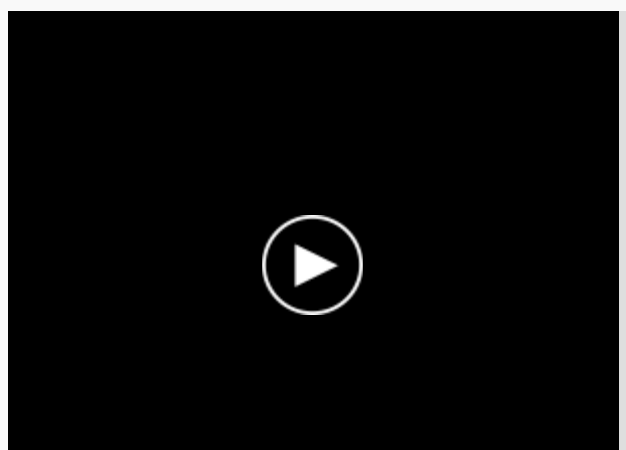
Grand Central was the creation of one of the leaders in American space technology, Charles E. Bartley, who at one time worked on solid-state rocket fuel projects at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Canada Flintridge. In 1952, he broke away to start his own company designing solid-fuel rockets and doing testing in remote areas of the San Fernando Valley.

Early on, he got backing from C.C. Moseley, owner of Grand Central Airport in Glendale, the Los Angeles area's first real airport. He guaranteed a series of loans for Bartley's start-up company, which took the same name as the airport. Moseley is also known for establishing, among other things, the Cal-Aero Academy that trained thousands of World War II flyers at today's Chino Airport.

As his work expanded, Bartley needed a more remote site for his experimentation, and San Bernardino County officials showed him land not far from the Santa Ana River just northeast of Redlands. He opened up work there in 1954, and three years later his plant was already a major

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player in aerospace activities, according to the Redlands Daily Facts of Oct. 21, 1957.

On March 17, 1958, Vanguard I became the U.S.'s second successful satellite and the first to use solar power. The grapefruit-sized satellite has since made more than a half-million 134-minute orbits, accompanied by its third-stage rocket built by Grand Central.

The company later produced the third-stage rocket of Vanguard II, sent into orbit early in 1959 and did the first weather observations from space. It also remains in orbit with its Mentone-prepared third-stage.

Neither of the Vanguards are speaking to us any more — they both ran out of battery power and stopped transmitting data in the 1960s. But experts say they'll remain up there for perhaps another two centuries, monuments to the early days of space technology.



More videos:



The Vanguards followed Explorer I, America's first successful satellite launched 60 years ago last Wednesday, Jan. 31. It used Grand Central rocket fuel to power its second-, third- and fourth-stage engines.

But these successes all trailed the Oct. 4, 1957 launch of Sputnik, which severely wounded American pride. A Vanguard was hurriedly set up at Cape Canaveral on Dec. 6 but it blew up on the pad. Grand Central had provided the second and third stage rockets, but not the first-stage booster that exploded. It would be a month and half later when Explorer I finally made it to orbit.

Through all of this, the Mentone plant was busy with many aerospace projects, sometimes awakening nearby residents with loud noises and explosions. A San Bernardino Sun article on Nov. 5, 1955, said Grand Central officials reassured residents about the "sharp roaring noise" followed by a few sparks observed two days before. It emphasized that it was "part of a 'routine test' and nothing to worry about."

That wasn't the case the night of Sept. 5, 1958, when unknown amounts of solid fuel propellant suddenly exploded, killing two men and destroying the factory's Building 12. The Sun the next day said these were the fourth and fifth deaths in the previous 26 months from explosions at the plant.

In 1961, the company was sold and later became

## the Lockheed Propulsion Plant.

It was in the spotlight again on Feb. 20, 1962, with the flight of John Glenn, the first American to orbit the Earth. Lockheed in Mentone built the escape rocket attached to the top of Glenn's Friendship 7. The escape rocket, which was never needed, gave Glenn and later astronauts a way to separate their capsules from the main rocket at launch if things went awry. It was jettisoned just after each takeoff.

By 1975, Lockheed announced plans to close the Mentone plant, which then went through various hands and uses. Today it is a mixed-use industrial park.

Groundwater under the site was discovered to be contaminated with various solvents used in the aerospace industry, apparently from the Grand Central/Lockheed operations. Lockheed has spent millions in the cleanup.

Today, the fenced site at the end of Crafton Avenue offers no hint of the monumental role it played in history. All we have is the knowledge that every two hours two products of the plant are doggedly completing one orbit after another until perhaps the 23rd century.

## Valentine's Day dinner

It'll be a truly historic occasion Wednesday, Feb. 14, when the Etiwanda Historical Society holds its Valentine's Day dinner.

It will be a chance to dine in the historic Chaffey-Garcia House, 7150 Etiwanda Ave., Rancho Cucamonga. Cost for the three-course dinner is

\$150 per couple with funds raised aiding the society's efforts to make needed improvements to the nearby Isle Garcia House.

Make reservations at 909-239-5610 or [theetiwandahistoricalociety@gmail.com](mailto:theetiwandahistoricalociety@gmail.com)

*Joe Blackstock writes on Inland Empire history. He can be reached at [joe.blackstock@gmail.com](mailto:joe.blackstock@gmail.com) or Twitter @JoeBlackstock.*

Tags: [Top Stories IVDB](#), [Top Stories PE](#), [Top Stories RDF](#), [Top Stories Sun](#)

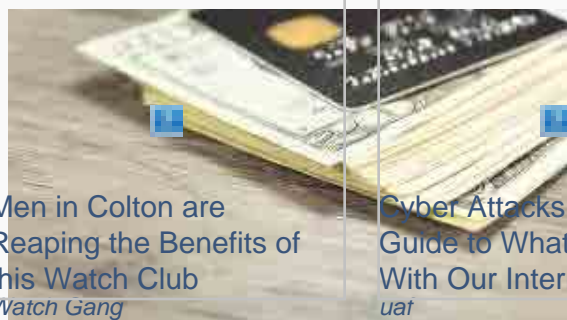


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LOCAL NEWS

# Riverside County public safety agencies grappling with deficits



File photo

Several Riverside County public safety agencies are struggling to overcome deficits in the current fiscal year.

By **CITY NEWS SERVICE** |

PUBLISHED: February 5, 2018 at 2:57 pm | UPDATED: February 5, 2018 at 3:06 pm



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Several Riverside County public safety agencies are

struggling to overcome deficits in the current fiscal year — with the sheriff’s red ink impacting operations — but the reserve pool is sound and revenues are generally in line with original estimates, a county report states.

“It is crucial that each department look inward and be innovative as we move ahead,” county CEO George Johnson said in an introduction to the 2017-18 midyear budget report set to be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Feb. 6. “I am confident our leadership will continue to embrace change, maintain fiscal discipline and transform Riverside County to become a higher performing, effective and efficient organization.”

According to the Executive Office, the county Sheriff’s Department, District Attorney’s Office and Public Defender’s Office are seeking to shrink multimillion-dollar structural spending gaps.

Additional cost pressures are weighing on the Riverside University Health System and the Department of Probation.

Sheriff Stan Sniff signaled [deepening concern](#) about the roughly \$30 million deficit he’s trying to pare down, mostly through attrition — or not replacing personnel when they retire, resign or are dismissed.

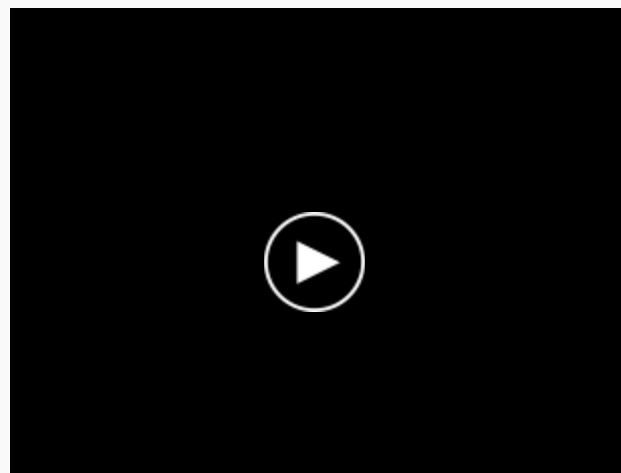
“Attrition impacts all areas of the department,” according to the mid-year report. “The sheriff reported that this is the second consecutive fiscal year the department is required to balance its budget shortfalls through attrition.

“Although the department (has) realized some

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savings, they continue to see higher overtime costs due to attrition of staff,” the narrative continued. “The sheriff (is) also incurring a significant amount of unplanned, and therefore unbudgeted, retirement payouts.”

Sniff has repeatedly complained that slashing patrol operations in unincorporated communities is his principal means of reducing costs. That’s resulted in a dramatic drop in available personnel to respond to calls in a timely way.

“The sheriff stated ... further degradation in staffing levels needs to stop and not plummet any lower, and planning is needed now to find appropriate funding to repair damage to the public safety net that has already taken place,” according to the report.



More videos:





District Attorney Mike Hestrin is working to contain a \$4.7 million deficit. According to the county's top prosecutor, changes in state law, including Propositions 63 and 64, are chewing up staff time and extending workloads, without commensurate funding from the state. Prop 63 was a gun control measure that imposed restrictions on ammunition purchases and some firearms components. Prop 64 legalized recreational adult use of marijuana.

Public Defender Steve Harmon has a \$1.5 million shortfall and said he is holding off on adding "mission-important positions" until it's known whether more money may be available. The agency is entirely dependent on general fund appropriations.

The Riverside University Health System, the centerpiece of which is the county hospital in Moreno Valley, is staring into a \$15 million hole in the current fiscal year. According to officials, the hospital is not receiving adequate federal and state reimbursements for indigent care, and detention healthcare costs — the treatment of inmates — are an increasing burden.

The county is under a federal consent decree to expand physical and psychological health services at a cost of about \$44 million a year.

The Executive Office raised the prospect of a [budgetary shortfall in the Department of Probation](#), which has managed to solve financial problems through attrition in recent years. However, the agency may not be able to exercise

that option further without risking functionality, officials said.

One of the bright spots in the budget report included a cash carryover from the 2016-17 fiscal year that will reduce the claim on reserves, which should end 2017-18 above \$180 million. The board's mandated floor for the reserve pool is \$150 million.

Projections showed property tax revenue increasing 5.5 percent, as expected, with sales and use tax rising 3.5 percent.

Officials said a "targeted" hiring freeze remains in effect for most departments, requiring agency heads to seek Executive Office approval before trying to add staff.

Work is also underway to automate the Department of Purchasing's tracking methods to lower costs, while the Department of Human Resources is involved in a reorganization to save money, too, according to the Executive Office.

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City News Service

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## Report: California is failing its children

By Rene Ray De La Cruz

Staff Writer

Posted Feb 5, 2018 at 4:19 PM

Updated Feb 5, 2018 at 4:19 PM

VICTORVILLE — An eye-opening report by Children Now reveals that nearly two-thirds of California babies are born into low-income households.

The Golden State is falling short in supporting the healthy development of the nearly 9 million children who live in the state, according to the 2018 California Children's Report Card that was released by the nonprofit group.

The reports focuses on 62 percent of the 1.5 million infants/toddlers from California families who are born in low-income households.

These children are less likely to have access to high-quality health and education services needed to reach their full potential, which ultimately undermines the success of the state's economic and civic future, the report said.

The report calls on California's leaders to create public policy change to scale innovative, high-impact programs, and secure resources and reforms to provide equitable opportunities from the very start of a child's life through young adulthood.

Kevin Mahaney, healthy community director for St. Joseph Health, St. Mary, said several local agencies are working to improve the health of children and youth in the High Desert and throughout San Bernardino County.

"We live in a challenging region, but we have many groups that are fighting for the health, safety and lives of these children," said Mahaney, who praised the work done by groups like the First 5 California, Apple Valley Unified School District, Community Health Action Network (CHAN), Valley Star Crisis Walk-In Center and several others.

Last year, CHAN sponsored a "Health & Safety Resource Fair" aimed at serving children and families residing in the "underserved" communities of the High Desert, said C.J. Page, CHAN's executive director.

Representatives from several agencies, including St. Joseph Health, St. Mary, San Bernardino County Public Health Nutrition, Molina Healthcare, California Highway Patrol, PhRMA and the Rose of Sharon were at the fair.

“We’re doing all we can to help feed our needy families and their children,” said Victor Valley Rescue Mission Volunteer Coordinator Jeremy George. “There are many groups and churches in the High Desert that sponsor education programs and food pantries, but the need is overwhelming in several areas, including education, medical and safety.”

The report grades the state on its current ability to support better outcomes for children on 25 key education, health and child welfare areas, from early childhood to higher education systems.

Children Now President Ted Lempert said the low grades for supporting California’s babies is especially alarming. The grades include a D+ for infant and toddler care, a D for child abuse and neglect prevention, a C- for developmental screening, and a D+ for home visiting.

The state was granted an A grade in only one area — Health Insurance. Approximately 97 percent of children are now covered by health insurance in California.

“The state is failing our youngest kids, allocating far too few resources to the critical and formative early years,” said Lempert in the report. “High-quality services are out of reach for many struggling families.”

The average cost of child care exceeds the cost of tuition at University California schools, while only 3 percent of California families have access to home visiting programs and fewer than one in four babies receive pediatrician-recommended developmental screenings.

“Yet these early services are critical for kids’ overall success,” Lempert said. “Disparities in achievement and opportunity open early in children’s lives and, once present, are more difficult to resolve and more likely to persist throughout childhood and adulthood.”

Lempert said his group is proud that California has committed to insure every child in the state, and will continue to fight against threats to undercut that commitment.

### **2018 California Children’s Report Card highlights:**

- There are only enough licensed child care spaces for 25 percent of children

- Only 40 percent of all 3- and 4-year-old children attend preschool
- California ranks 40th in student performance in math
- California ranks 42nd in student performance in science
- Low-income children have higher rates, over 55 percent, of chronic absence from school
- Over 400,000 infants are born preterm, making them susceptible to health/learning difficulties
- Due to poor access, more kids end up in the ER for chronic health conditions
- Mental illness is the No. 1 reason California kids are hospitalized
- Only 50 percent of children receive recommend annual dental visits
- Only 2 percent of California schools have school-based health centers
- More than 20 percent of California's kids are food insecure
- One in 100 children are confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect

“In a relatively high-tax state known for innovation, it is unacceptable that we are failing to be a high investment state when it comes to early childhood, K-12, higher education and other needed supports for kids,” Lempert said. “California needs to reset its priorities and put kids — and our collective future — first.”

The California Children's Report Card is available at [www.childrennow.org](http://www.childrennow.org).

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## MARKETS

# How Are Cities Paying Their Bills? With Fees on Trash, Parking, Sewers and 911 Calls

From Chicago to Danville, Ill., why residents are paying higher fees for mundane services



Chicago increased penalties for parking violations between 2012 and 2014 as the city chips away at its pension liabilities and bond debt. PHOTO: BRIAN SORG

By *Heather Gillers and Sarah Chaney*

Feb. 6, 2018 5:30 a.m. ET

Scranton, Pa. is turning to an unlikely source for fiscal strength: garbage.

The distressed city in northeastern Pennsylvania began charging residents a \$300 annual fee in 2014 to collect their trash, up from \$178. That 68% increase has since raised millions for Scranton, one of the many steps being taken to restore the former coal-mining hub to solid financial footing after decades of decline.

Cash-strapped American cities are increasingly asking their residents to pay higher amounts for mundane services as they struggle to pay for mounting pension obligations, cover costly infrastructure improvements and replace revenue depleted by the last recession. Bills are rising for everything from parking tickets and 911 calls to sewer service and trash pickup.

In 73 U.S. cities, fees and fines increased by a collective \$182 million in 2017, according to financial reports analyzed by Merritt Research Services. That annual tally is up 11% since the last financial crisis in 2008.

Fees are expected to go even higher because of recent changes at the state and federal levels. New tax legislation passed last year by Congress caps the amount of local property and income taxes Americans can deduct from their federal tax bills, making local tax increases more costly for residents and thus politically difficult for elected officials.

Thirty four states have also placed separate limits on local government tax or spending increases, according to the National League of Cities. In California, tax increases by local governments must be approved by a vote of residents.

“What’s left? Basically what’s left are charges,” said Andrew Reschovsky, a professor emeritus of public affairs and applied economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “I think the future probably holds more fee increases.”

Cities began turning to more fees and fines following the 2008 financial crisis, which eroded property and sales tax revenues due to pullbacks in housing values, employment and consumer spending. Revenue from property taxes, sales taxes and income taxes moved higher in recent

years as the economy rebounded but the total collected from those categories in 2017 was still below 2008 levels, according to data from the National League of Cities.

Revenue from fees, on the other hand, was 14% higher in 2015 than in 2009, according to a study of 150 cities conducted by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. In 2017, 42% of city CFOs said their towns had raised fees, more than the 27% who said they had raised property tax rates and 8% who reported sales tax increases.

In California, more than a dozen city fire departments are now charging hundreds of dollars for ambulance calls and more for ambulance rides. Long Beach, Calif. began imposing a \$250 fee for service calls in 2016 on top of the existing \$1,300 to \$1,900 for a ride. The ambulance call fee brought in \$1.6 million that year and \$2.2 million in 2017, the finance director said.

One small Midwestern town, Danville, Ill., is raising its fees for a specific purpose: to chip away at more than \$100 million in liabilities owed to police and fire department retirees. The city of about 30,000 first attached a \$2 a month “public safety pension fee” to residents’ sewer bills in 2014 and in December pushed that charge to \$22.25 for those in single-family homes.

Danville Mayor Scott Eisenhauer said the city took this step because it no longer had enough to make its required pension payments without devoting less to firefighting, police, parks, street repairs and code enforcement. “That’s what we could no longer afford to do—diminish our services because the pension obligation had increased so dramatically,” he added.

Those who pay the higher fees aren’t always pleased with the new demands. In Scranton, a property owner filed lawsuits over the \$300 trash-collection fee and a fee for landlords, arguing the fees were higher than needed to pay for the services. The plaintiff alleges that Scranton has collected roughly \$5 million more in garbage fees the past two years than it needs to run its Bureau of Refuse.

Scranton Mayor William Courtright said the fees are meant to cover the cost of collecting trash and supervising rental properties, not to generate revenue for other purposes. “Public safety and sanitation are the two most expensive endeavors of municipal government,” he said in an email.

In Chicago, a city also struggling with massive pension liabilities as well as a mountain of bond debt, officials increased penalties for parking in a disabled zone and other violations between 2012 and 2014 and increased the fee for removing a car boot in 2016. The city also increased property and water-sewer taxes as part of a larger plan to improve its finances.

A city spokeswoman said Chicago reduced its “structural budget gap” by 66% in the last four years “without raising a single parking ticket fine amount.” She added: “While revenue is an outcome of parking enforcement, it is not the driver of our enforcement actions.”

Some public policy experts say the Chicago increases are causing hardship for certain residents. One resident, Vincent Heard, said in court documents he had accumulated about \$11,000 in debt tied to parking tickets, speeding tickets and red-light violations when he filed for chapter 13 bankruptcy in September 2015.

Mr. Heard now makes monthly payments of \$225 as part of his bankruptcy repayment plan. That, he said, is a challenge given his earnings of about \$600 to \$700 a week as a taxi driver.

“It’s like I’m just working to pay tickets,” Mr. Heard said.

**Write to Heather Gillers at [heather.gillers@wsj.com](mailto:heather.gillers@wsj.com) and Sarah Chaney at [sarah.chaney@wsj.com](mailto:sarah.chaney@wsj.com)**

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# Deputy director escorted out of City Hall after homeless person was swept up with the trash



Crews from the San Diego Environmental Services department clean up a stretch of 17th Street in downtown San Diego in this 2016 file photo. (Peggy Peattie / San Diego Union-Tribune)



By **Jeff McDonald**

FEBRUARY 5, 2018, 5:00 PM

- The deputy director of the San Diego Environmental Services department was terminated after a homeless person was scooped up by a city crew and tossed into a garbage truck.
- Officials say “appropriate” action was taken in response to the near-death incident.
- City plans other changes to make sure such a thing never happens again.

A senior official of the Environmental Services department was escorted out of City Hall on Friday, days after The San Diego Union-Tribune reported that city workers mistakenly placed a homeless person into the back of a trash truck during a December cleanup effort.



Angela Colton, 42, who rose to the rank of deputy director in the Environmental Services office during a 17-year career with the city of San Diego, declined to discuss her departure from City Hall when reached Monday.

In a statement, city spokeswoman Katie Keach said, “Appropriate disciplinary action has been taken.”

Colton had been a key official in charge of the city’s response to the spate of homeless encampments and tents that have cropped up throughout downtown San Diego and elsewhere in recent years.

During a so-called abatement three days before Christmas, city workers clearing a stretch of Commercial Street east of Petco Park placed a tent filled with bedding and other material into the back of a city garbage truck.

Moments before work crews were about to activate the truck’s hydraulic compactor, a person began screaming and waving their arms to alert code-enforcement officers that they were inside the heap of material, the Union-Tribune reported on Jan. 27.

City officials told the Union-Tribune that the victim was able to climb out of the truck to safety but wandered away before they could identify or interview the person. Officials also could not say if the victim was a man or a woman.

According to her profile on the LinkedIn social networking website, Colton earned a bachelor’s degree in planning from Cal Poly Pomona in 1998 and a master’s degree from San Diego State University in public administration three years later.

She was hired as a financial analyst in 2000 and rose through the ranks at City Hall before her departure on Friday. Colton was paid \$129,800 in 2016, according to the online Transparent California database.

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L.A. NOW LOCAL LA TIMES

# O.C. cities and the county must prove homeless crackdown is not discriminatory, judge says



By ANH DO  
FEB 05, 2018 | 7:00 PM



Feedback

A homeless encampment along the Santa Ana River in Anaheim last month. Orange County officials are clearing the county's largest homeless encampment, but a judge has now asked for proof that the government agencies aren't criminalizing homelessness. (Gary Coronado / Los Angeles Times)



The cities of Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Orange and the County of Orange must appear in court next week to prove that their anti-camping ordinances are not being used to criminalize the homeless camped along the Santa Ana River trail, according to a federal judge.

U.S. District Judge David O. Carter has set a Feb. 13 hearing in a lawsuit filed on behalf of people threatened with eviction.

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-oc-homeless-20180205-story.html>



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"The court is concerned that persons who leave or are evicted from the riverbed may subsequently be cited by defendant cities under those cities' anti-camping or anti-loitering laws, even though those persons may not be able to find a shelter or other place to sleep," Carter wrote in his request, released Sunday.



Many of the more than 500 living in the encampment have disabilities or suffer from trauma that make it difficult for them to stay in small, high-traffic areas such as shelters, according to advocates who sued on their behalf.



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Officials at the Elder Law and Disability Rights Center, [who filed the lawsuit](#) against the cities and the county, are seeking a temporary restraining order that would halt the removal of the homeless, a process [that started Jan. 22](#).



Since then, the Orange County Sheriff's Department, along with parole officers and public works crews, has been a steady presence at the encampment, urging residents to pack and prepare for a move. They have arrested individuals for parole violations, but so far, not for trespassing, says Brooke Weitzman, co-founder of the Elder Law and Disability Rights Center.

"People do want to comply" with the removal order, she said. "It's not that they want to be doing anything wrong. They just have nowhere to go."

Orange County not only lacks affordable housing or temporary housing that could offer shelter to the homeless, but those being referred to area armories find that those facilities are operating on limited hours, Weitzman said. "It's desolation all around."



At the hearing, she will represent seven homeless individuals from the riverbed along with representatives of the Orange County Catholic Worker, a group helping the poor get access to housing and social services.



Carter wrote in his ruling that when all sides meet in court, he is open to input from organizations helping military veterans or those providing housing or protection for abused women. He's asking participants to bring information on "the number and circumstances of any citations issued or arrests made" under the cities' and county's anti-camping and anti-loitering laws since Jan. 1.

Many among the homeless, such as Laura Kasten, who grew up in Fullerton, tell outreach workers that when they're "finally kicked out," they may resort to local parks or "anywhere I can set up my stuff."

"I'm frozen," Kasten said. "I don't know where to begin because ultimately, it's not about our belongings. We can find more discarded things. It's about being treated with respect and to them, we're throwaways."

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### Anh Do



Anh Do covers Asian American issues and Orange County news. A second-generation journalist, she has worked at the Dallas Morning News, the Seattle Times, the Orange County Register and Nguoi Viet Daily News. Do, born in Saigon, is a graduate of USC who also studied international relations in London and Spanish in Mexico City. Apart from words, she's passionate about all things canine, spending 24 years volunteering in dog rescue.

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LOCAL

# Judge to hear arguments in clearing of OC homeless encampments



The fate of homeless encampments along the Santa Ana River in Orange County may come down to whether a federal judge decides there are alternative places in the county for homeless people to sleep. [JILL REPTUGGLE](#)

**Jill Reptogle** February 5, 2018

The fate of Orange County's largest homeless encampment is still murky two weeks into the county's effort to clear it out. A federal judge over the weekend declined to immediately grant a temporary restraining order that sought to delay the eviction but called for a hearing to discuss the matter next week.

Lawyers representing homeless individuals argue that their clients would have nowhere to go if removed from the riverbed. They contend residents of the encampment would be subject to violating surrounding cities' anti-camping and anti-littering laws if they move elsewhere. They say the county's emergency shelter options are inadequate and inappropriate for many of the homeless people camped out by the river.

Carol Sobel, one of the lawyers representing homeless people, said, for example, that one of the plaintiffs has a night job and doesn't return to central OC until around 2 a.m. Most shelters don't allow people to check in so late.

Orange County officials began last month to clear the estimated 500 to 1,000 people camped along the Santa Ana River bike trail in the central part of the county. The county argues that it can no longer delay maintenance in the area, which is a flood control channel, and says the encampments are a health hazard for the homeless and all Orange County residents.

It hasn't yet forced anyone to leave, though sheriff's deputies have arrested more than 40 people for crimes including outstanding warrants.

In the county's rebuttal to the request for a temporary restraining order, it noted that workers had collected more than 2,200 hypodermic needles and about 400 pounds of human waste from the riverbed since January 22, when the clearing work began.

The county's lawyers also argued that there are shelter options for anyone in the riverbed who wants them, but most people have refused services. The county's homeless czar, Susan Price, wrote a declaration supporting the county's position.

"My experience in working with homeless people leads me to believe that the individuals residing in the riverbed are seeking to live 'off the grid' and are seeking to avert the perceived structure and rules that are common in accessing the resources available," Price wrote.

She said letting the encampments remain could "foster long term homelessness, while providing alternatives and promoting accountability in public spaces may encourage encampment dwellers to exercise options to engage for assistance."

Whether the judge halts the clearing of homeless encampments may come down to whether he agrees that there are, indeed, alternatives. A hearing in the case is set for Feb. 13.

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**Answer Sheet** • Analysis

# And now, online teacher training for active shooters in schools, courtesy of the Department of Homeland Security

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By **Valerie Strauss** February 5 at 5:40 PM

It's early February 2018, and already this year there have been at least 14 incidents in schools with guns, some of them deadly. If the number surprises you, it may be because some of these events have gotten little coverage in the news because they have become sickeningly routine.

That, in fact, is what Katherine W. Schweit, a former senior FBI official and the co-author of a [study](#) of 160 active shooting incidents in the United States, recently told the [New York Times](#): “We have absolutely become numb to these kinds of shootings, and I think that will continue.”

With active shooting situations in schools no longer uncommon, the Department of Homeland Security is now offering online training for teachers and first-responders to prepare for such a disaster — right on their computers.



0:00 / 2:42

The available training is explained in a video on the [department website](#) called “Enhanced Dynamic Geo-Social Environment (EDGE) Virtual Training Revisited,” which explains a free computer-based training tool that includes a virtual school environment for multiagency training for active shooter incidents. It was first [reported by the Times, here](#).

Such training had been available depicting an active shooter in a 26-story hotel, according to Milt Nenneman, project manager of First Responders Group for the Department of Homeland Security. Now, there’s a simulation in a large school, which has an auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium and a lot of classrooms.

Training is offered for teachers, staff and administrators, he said, which “will allow schools and law enforcement to train to a response without disrupting the students and be able to train repeatedly.”

The training can be done on computer.

“Virtual training doesn’t replace actual hands-on training,” Nenneman said, but will “augment” it.

[A release by the department](#) said the training video was built on the Unreal gaming engine, which powers interactive video games such as Mortal Kombat, BioShock and Batman: Arkham City.

“EDGE allows responders to collaboratively role-play complex scenarios in a virtual environment, improving coordination and communication while mitigating injuries and loss of lives,” the release said.

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# Crops May Contribute More to California's Smog Than Previously Thought



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By **Molly Peterson** □  
FEBRUARY 5, 2018

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New research from UC Davis finds a sneaky contributor to the state's smog problem rising from the floor of the Central Valley: California's crops are emitting polluting nitrogen oxides, up to 10 times as much of those gases as previously thought.

State regulators blame nitrogen oxides, also commonly known as NOx, for health problems and even deaths. Over decades, the California Air Resources Board and scientists have

***'In California we love and respect our agricultural sector. We hope we can***

worked to inventory NOx gases. Most often, those pollutants are connected to burning fossil fuels, tailpipes and smokestacks.

Agriculture is another source of nitrogen oxides. Fertilizers add nitrogen to soil; what plants don't use gets digested by microbes, and soil and air conditions can intensify that process. A [study published](#) in "Science Advances" finds that those emissions may make up 25 to 41 percent of the state's total.

"We have been able to make big strides in improving air quality in cities," says National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellow Maya Almaraz, the study's lead author. "But we're just not seeing those changes happen as quickly in rural areas, which we think might be because we have this sort of undetected source in those areas."

In the past, the state Air Resources Board has used satellites and local field studies to characterize the pollutant. Almaraz and her team relied on new and different methods, including soil calculations and data collected by low-flying planes to create their calculations.

The new results differ sharply from the current state air pollution inventory, last updated in 2013, which has put farm-based NOx pollution at 3.8 percent.

***help find solutions for environmental health and agricultural production, too.'***

— **Maya Almaraz, UC Davis**



A California Regulator's Curious Crusade to Remake the Clean Air Act



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A farmer plows a field on Aug. 11, 2004, near the town of Arvin, southeast of Bakersfield, California.  
(David McNew/Getty Images)

“These numbers seem to be quite a bit different from our prior understanding,” says Bart Croes, head of research for the California Air Resources Board. “So we’re going to take a close look at their methods and see if we need to adjust our understanding.”

But Croes says he has questions about the new study’s methodology. “When we look at satellite data, it shows that the remaining hot spots of pollution in California are, as you’d expect, our major cities,” he says. “So that seems to align with the prior understanding that we have, that cars and trucks and other urban sources are responsible for the pollution we need to control.”

Almaraz and Croes both acknowledge uncertainties in measuring

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the pollutant in farm fields. The microbial process that produces nitrogen oxides is a pulsing, complex one, dependent on multiple factors including fertilizer application, temperature, air and soil moisture.



Is Air Quality in the Bay Area Getting Worse?

Almaraz and her co-authors point out that their results are on par with agricultural emissions described in other studies for Europe and the Midwest.

“Looking back we realize, oh, of course, perhaps it isn’t as surprising as we first thought that we’re getting these large soil emissions of NO<sub>x</sub>,” Almaraz says. “We’re seeing this elsewhere in the world, and it was just a matter of time before we looked at it in California.”

The study’s results may have longer-term implications for California farmers. Regulations aimed at cutting smog have for decades been largely focused on mobile sources, like cars and trucks, and major stationary sources, like refineries. California already incentivizes less-polluting farming practices and promotes strategies to cut emissions from crops, such as through slow-release, efficient fertilizing practices.

Those strategies may not be enough going forward. Almaraz points out that a growing population is likely to demand more produce — which means farm-related emissions may grow in significance.

“In California we love and respect our agricultural sector,” she says. “We hope we can help find solutions for environmental health and agricultural production, too.”

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# The Forgotten Renewable: Geothermal Energy Production Heats Up In The Mojave

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 [ww2.kqed.org/science/2018/02/05/the-forgotten-renewable-geothermal-energy-production-heats-up-in-the-mojave/](http://ww2.kqed.org/science/2018/02/05/the-forgotten-renewable-geothermal-energy-production-heats-up-in-the-mojave/)

Three and a half hours east of Los Angeles lies the Salton Sea, a manmade oasis in the heart of the Mojave Desert. It was created in 1905, when a canal broke and the Colorado River flooded the desert for more than a year. The Sea became a tourist hotspot in the 1950's, perfect for swimming, boating, and kayaking. But now, people are coming here looking for something else.

Jim Turner is the chief operating officer of Controlled Thermal Resources, an energy company from Australia. On a hill overlooking the Salton Sea, he points out a patch of land that will someday house his company's first power plant, named Hell's Kitchen.

"We're standing on top of what is probably the most robust geothermal resource in the United States," he explains.

Geothermal energy uses the earth's natural heat to create electricity. While there are several different ways to accomplish this, the most common is to take super-heated water from geothermal hot spots and pipe it to the surface. It then turns into steam and spins a turbine, which generates electricity.

It's completely renewable, and generates clean energy around the clock, unlike wind and solar.

"You think of renewable energy as a house, solar is the roof and the wind is the walls," says Jason Czaplá, principal engineer for Controlled Thermal Resources. "But geothermal's the foundation, and what California did is it built the walls and the roof, but on wild, windy days it blows too much rain on the roof [and] that house falls down. Well, the Salton Sea is this opportunity for California to fix that."

The company wants to develop 1,000 megawatts of electricity here over the next decade. They say that could power about 800,000 homes. And for a state that's aiming to get half its electricity from renewable sources, that's no small number.

"Our development coincides with the state's target, 2030 being the ultimate goal getting to 50 percent," says Czaplá. "And our goal is to build up that 1,000 megawatts and help them increase the renewable energy portfolio."

Colin Williams, a geothermal expert at the U.S. Geological Survey, published a report in 2008 in which he explained that there are untapped geothermal reservoirs throughout the American West.

The report also elaborated on a developing technology that could drastically increase the amount of power the Earth can provide, called enhanced geothermal systems.

In order for a reservoir to be able to provide geothermal energy, it has to have three things: heat, water, and permeability. In other words: hot, wet rock, with enough fractures in it to allow water to pass through. Enhanced geothermal systems is the process of taking areas with only one or two of

those conditions – hot, dry rock with very little fractures, for example – and altering it to satisfy all three conditions. That could mean cracking underground rock to allow more water to pass through, or inserting water into the rockbed to be heated.

Williams says scientists and engineers are still working on the technology for enhanced geothermal systems, but if they are able to make it a reality, that could potentially open up thousands of megawatts of energy potential from new reservoirs. And that could someday take from the country's current 3,000 megawatts of geothermal energy production to almost 500,000.

"To put that into perspective," Williams says, "the entire electric power generating capacity in the United States is about a million megawatts."

So if there's that much clean energy just waiting in the ground, what's taking so long?

Allyson Anderson Book directs the American Geosciences Institute, a nonprofit network of geoscientists around the country. She says that geothermal energy has been historically overlooked as a renewable energy source, to the point that it is sometimes referred to as the "forgotten renewable."

Book says there are social and technical challenges that have kept geothermal from becoming a major player in the energy field. The technology is complex, and plants are expensive to build.

"There's a lot of different factors that play in," Book says. "And so the Department of Energy right now is spending a lot of time and energy in something called the FORGE project."

The FORGE project is an Energy Department initiative that would create a dedicated test site for exploring enhanced geothermal systems. Currently, the proposed test site is in Fallon, Nev., where Sandia National Laboratories plans to set up a field where scientists can experiment with new geothermal technology. The idea is, if they can make enhanced geothermal systems a reality, then geothermal energy production around the country would skyrocket.

But back at the Salton Sea, Controlled Thermal Resources isn't waiting on new technology — it's hoping to exploit what's already there.

In his office in El Centro, Calif., CEO Rod Colwell plays an aerial video of the southern end of the Salton Sea, where the Hell's Kitchen plant will go. It's still in the permitting stages, and it's going to cost a lot of money – around a billion dollars. But if it's successful, Colwell plans to build more. He hopes to build enough plants to be able to produce 1,000 megawatts of electricity, which could power about 800,000 homes. And with California looking to phase out its use of fossil fuels, that's no small number.

"Particularly in California," Colwell says, "we will not be able to import any carbon-fired energy after 2025. So it's important that geothermal is that integral value in the mix."

Geothermal's got a long way to go. But Colwell and others are betting that new technology and the demand for clean energy will someday bring this forgotten renewable to the forefront of clean power.

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# The Towers Came Down, and With Them the Promise of Public Housing

Former residents of Chicago's Cabrini-Green were thrown into a system that increasingly leaves the poor to fend for themselves.

By BEN AUSTEN FEB. 6, 2018

**O**n a December morning in 1989, amid a snowstorm, Annie Ricks let her third-oldest son, Cornelius, stay home from middle school. For months, she and her eight children had been sleeping on the floors of relatives' apartments or in the lobby of the Cook County Hospital. She had lived on Chicago's West Side, within the same few blocks, since moving there as a 10-year-old from a segregated mill town in Alabama. But her West Side apartment and every belonging in it had burned in a fire. Without a fixed address, she stopped receiving the public-assistance checks that had helped stretch what she earned in a factory molding plaster figurines.

When she considered the fact of her predicament, it simply didn't make sense: *Annie Jeffery Ricks was homeless?* At 33, she'd been providing since she was a teenager. Her children were well fed and neatly dressed, their hair combed and cut and braided. The girls as well as the boys played basketball, and Ricks volunteered in their classrooms and attended their games. She had never before considered public housing and knew nothing of Cabrini-Green's reputation — that it had entered the pantheon of proper names of the scariest places in urban America. But she had put in an application and couldn't wait any longer. She told Cornelius they were going to get their apartment that day and walk the seven miles to Cabrini-Green in the snow.

Ricks was shown a 15-story plain box of a high-rise, a giant filing cabinet with a facade the color of cigarette-stained teeth. The elevators were out of order, the stairwells dark. Built in stages beginning in the 1940s on Chicago's Near North Side, Cabrini-Green consisted of barracks-style rowhouses and 23 towers. When Ricks arrived, more than a third of the 3,600 units were vacant. The Chicago Housing Authority said it couldn't afford to do the repairs to ready them for occupancy, and not just at Cabrini. The C.H.A. had a stock of 42,000 apartments, but the number in use had fallen to fewer than 33,000.

The vacant fifth-floor apartment Ricks entered looked like a crypt. Plywood covered the windows. The kitchen cabinets dangled or were missing altogether. Ricks surveyed the surroundings, counting four bedrooms. There was a full bathroom on one side of the unit and a half bath on the other. The front room was large enough for a dining table and a sofa, and it was connected to the kitchen, which (she checked) had a working stove and refrigerator. The ceilings were high, the walls made of seemingly indestructible cinder block. Ricks had freckles that wandered the bridge of her nose and reached her high cheekbones, which now sharpened to points as she smiled. What she saw looked like a home.

Ricks lived at Cabrini-Green for the next 21 years. She worked as a teacher's aide in the local schools that most of her own (eventual) 13 children attended. She babysat, ran an after-school program and served free lunches out of the field house by her high-rise. She moved her aging mother in with them, and Ricks's grown children found jobs in construction, home health care, retail and at a new residential complex built atop the old Madison Street "skid row," an area refashioned into the "West Loop." Ricks didn't leave Cabrini after one of her nephews was hit with several bullets through her apartment window — his heart stopped twice before he survived. She stuck it out as the city demolished every other public-housing high-rise in Chicago not reserved for the elderly, including all the towers at Cabrini-Green save hers. After the start of this civic remodeling, in 1999, Mayor Richard M. Daley said that breaking up the severe concentrations of poverty of high-rise public housing would finally imbue long-neglected neighborhoods with vitality; the mostly black residents who lived there in social and economic isolation would be able to reap the rewards of the resurgent city. "I want to rebuild their souls," Daley declared. But Ricks believed her soul was doing all right on its own. She refused to go, in 2010,

even as every neighbor remaining in her building took whatever replacement housing was offered them. She outlasted them all. “I’m the last woman standing,” Ricks liked to declare.

Ricks held firm to a belief that if she followed the rules, if she kept up her part in an agreement, then she was entitled to all that was promised her. Her three youngest children — Reggie, Rose and Raqkown — were still on her lease, along with two of her nearly 40 grandchildren. She wasn’t in her apartment illegally, she contended. She paid her rent on time. No one caught her with drugs or guns. So how could the C.H.A. just assign her a new unit? But the city took her to court, and a federal judge gave her 10 days to vacate the building. That was that. “I had to go,” she conceded. “Either that or be homeless again.”

As it had the day she arrived at Cabrini-Green, snow covered the ground on the December morning in 2010 that she left. A crowd of reporters jostled the last high-rise tenants of what had been the city’s and the country’s most well-known public-housing project. “An inglorious end to an infamous era,” as one news outlet put it. Another described Cabrini-Green as “the housing development that came to symbolize the squandered hope of them all.” Deonta Ricks lugged a cardboard box filled with his mother’s most prized possessions: the trophies he and his siblings had won for basketball tournaments and perfect attendance and the one he was awarded for being valedictorian of the school that was still there, an empty field away. The Cabrini-Green neighborhood, only a few blocks west of the ritzy Gold Coast, had a new library and police station, new shopping and upscale housing. The school, too, had been renamed and given a makeover, and it now served only those students who tested in, ranking it among the best elementaries in Illinois. Rose, then 17, rolled a suitcase with a “Route 66” sticker on it. “I’ve been here basically my whole life,” she said. “Like it’s hard leaving when you’ve got so much memories of it. You knew everyone. You felt safe.”

When the trophies were stowed and the furniture loaded onto a truck, Annie Ricks ducked into a sedan the same off-white color as her high-rise. The car spun its wheels on the snow and gained traction, and she was gone.

**The fate of** public housing in America — its rise, much of it in the form of towers like Cabrini-Green, and its fall as those towers came down — is the story of urban poverty as an unsteady political priority. In his first year as president, in 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt created the federal Housing Division, as part of the Public Works Administration. The P.W.A. built the country's first 51 public-housing developments, including three in Chicago. By then the shortcomings of the for-profit real estate market were evident in eviction riots, in sprawling homeless encampments and in cities overflowing with mile after mile of cheap, decrepit frame dwellings. In segregated black neighborhoods, where families were excluded from competing for housing on the open market, the conditions were more dire. Without government intervention in some form, private developers and landlords were never going to build or maintain anywhere near enough homes for the urban poor. Like other New Deal assistance programs — relief for farmers, aid to senior citizens through Social Security, food stamps — public housing treated poverty as a widespread social and economic injustice that the country was obligated to right. The subsidy was also intended to help jump-start the economy by rebuilding moribund cities and creating jobs. In 1937, Congress passed more extensive legislation, establishing a federal housing agency; Chicago and other cities formed their own housing authorities to operate the program locally. “I see one-third of a nation ill housed, ill clad, ill nourished,” Roosevelt announced that year. “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”

Then, as now, the idea of government-run housing was maligned as anticapitalist and socialist; it clashed with a national ethos wrapped up in visions of the frontiersman and the self-made entrepreneur. When the Housing Act of 1937 was being debated, it was opposed by real estate trade groups and property owners' associations, by builders, suppliers, the U.S. Chambers of Commerce and the departments of the Interior and the Treasury. Although the subsidy was reserved for only stable families with modest incomes — the “deserving poor” — the ceiling on what qualifying residents could earn was said to discourage hard work, acting as a sap on initiative and pluck. Ayn Rand's “The Fountainhead” dramatized the backlash against Roosevelt's call for a deeper social contract of shared responsibility: The hero of the 1943 novel is an architect of a public-housing complex who becomes enraged

when he returns from a trip to discover that his bare-bones high-rise has been compromised to include “the expense of incomprehensible features” like balconies, a gymnasium, extra doorways and decorative brickwork. In an act portrayed as a valiant defense of his convictions, he dynamites the entire building. Maybe most telling, the same Depression-era legislation that funded the first public-housing complexes also created the federally insured private home loan. With this revolution in home financing, buyers were able to put down as little as 10 percent of a house’s cost and pay off their mortgages in small increments over an unprecedented 30 years. Even today, the federal government devotes three times as much each year to mortgage-interest deductions and other subsidies to the speculative real estate market — essentially public housing for homeowners — than to the entire annual budget of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The first public-housing developments were often simple and unadorned brick rowhouses or duplexes. They were required to be built to minimum standards, so as not to compete with the private rental market, and the overall populations were diverse, in part because federal rules dictated that public housing couldn’t change the existing racial makeup of a neighborhood. In the 1950s, cities began to build massive complexes of clustered towers encircled by plots of land closed off to through streets. It was a purity of modernist city planning, influenced by the avant-garde “towers in the park” urban reimagining of the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier. The density and nearly identical stripped-down designs of the high-rises were also believed to cut down on costs while meeting greater demand.

“It’s almost like I died and went to heaven,” one of the first tenants of a development in Chicago recalled years later. J.S. Fuerst, the former head of research and statistics at the C.H.A., collected this testimonial and dozens of others like it from early occupants of the agency’s properties for a 2003 book titled “When Public Housing Was Paradise.” Even though these were low-income communities of thousands of people crammed together on isolated plazas, many families still found a modest home to be somehow divine after the damnation of the cold-water flats they left behind. There, they had been afraid of fires and sickness and eviction. Public housing, by contrast, was new and orderly. All the families went through a screening process. The buildings had teams of janitors on call around the clock. Groundskeepers maintained the gardens and lawns. There was a city agency

responsible for answering calls. The C.H.A.'s first executive director, Elizabeth Wood, worried not that the new developments might be too large and come to define an area as low-rent, but rather that they wouldn't be large enough to counteract the damaging effects of poverty and disrepair around them. "If it is not bold," she said in 1945, "the result will be a series of small projects, islands in a wilderness of slums beaten down by smoke, noise and fumes."

Across the entire country, a majority of public housing remained in low-rises; there were eventually more than 3,000 local authorities, most with fewer than 500 units. But large housing "projects" came to dominate urban landscapes and symbolize for many the unruliness and otherness of the "inner city" in decline. The towers-in-the-park design was only ever partly to blame. In Chicago, as elsewhere, high-rise developments were built intentionally in neighborhoods that were already segregated racially; rather than apportioning the working poor across a number of areas and helping to diversify cities, public housing had the effect of solidifying racial and economic boundaries in superblocks detached from the street grid, in towers of concrete and steel. Yet they were also perennially underfunded and perilously mismanaged. The developments were allowed to deteriorate as maintenance and repairs lagged. And as the broader fortunes of cities declined — diminishing populations and disappearing jobs, spiking poverty and crime and drug use — public housing bore the worst of those effects.

Soon, those same broad trends were used to justify abandoning the basic democratic idea of providing shelter for all. In 1972, when the 33 Pruitt-Igoe towers in St. Louis began to be imploded a mere 18 years after the complex fully opened, the televised image, with its mushrooming cloud of dust and debris, defined the popular notion of the public-housing experiment: It needed to be destroyed.

For other cities, demolition still remained a political and practical impossibility. In previous decades when slums were cleared, those displaced were sent into public housing. Now where could tens of thousands of people from the projects be sent? But the aversion to social safety-net programs only came to root more deeply in the American mainstream. After retaking Congress in 1994, Republicans said they planned to scrap the federal housing agency entirely. President Clinton, promoting his cuts to the welfare system and proclaiming "the era of big government is over,"

pre-emptively reorganized HUD. The agency promised to “infuse market discipline” into public housing. The anti-urban impulse that had sent middle-class families to the suburbs had reversed itself, and young professionals were flocking to city centers near their jobs and one another.

In 1990, Chicago’s population started to tick up for the first time in 40 years; the area surrounding Cabrini-Green added 4,000 white residents during the previous decade, and vacant lots that had sold for \$30,000 a few years earlier were being snapped up for five times that amount. As the fortunes of cities changed once again, public housing experienced a new pressure. HUD began to award municipalities tens of millions of dollars in grants to tear down their public-housing high-rises and replace them with much smaller developments that mixed public-housing families with higher-income renters and market-rate owners. Proposals to preserve some of the towers, filling in the cleared land around them with a variety of housing types, were rejected. Many low-rise developments in rejuvenating areas were targeted as well. A majority of the relocated public-housing residents were given Section 8 vouchers to rent from landlords in the private market. Nationwide, 250,000 public-housing units have been demolished since the 1990s. Atlanta, Baltimore, Columbus, Memphis, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Tucson — just about every American city got in on the action. But no city knocked down as many as Chicago.

**The C.H.A. moved** Annie Ricks six miles away, to Chicago’s South Side, into Wentworth Gardens, a low-rise public-housing development built just after World War II. Since then, Wentworth had become sandwiched between the 14 lanes of the Dan Ryan Expressway and the parking lots for the White Sox baseball stadium. The only place nearby to buy groceries was a gas station and liquor store on the far end of the complex. But the units were modernized, and Ricks’s four-bedroom had a new kitchen and bathroom. Her apartment was on the second floor of a three-story walk-up, part of attached buildings that formed a horseshoe around a shared courtyard. In her living room, she hung photos of her family, three pictures of President Obama and a couple of prayers and rules: “Men don’t wear hats in the house.”

Ricks wanted to remain upbeat about the move. But when violence broke out at her new home, the longtime Wentworth residents said it was the fault of the newcomers, the outsiders from Cabrini-Green, a number of whom had been moved

there. An elderly woman announced for Rose to hear that she didn't like the Cabrini people and wanted them gone. When Reggie and Raqkown tried to play basketball at the courts beside their apartment, the guys there threw elbows and fists, trying to turn the game into a brawl. A group of boys jumped Reggie in the courtyard. Other former Cabrini residents who ended up there had guns pulled on them. "People at Wentworth think you're stepping on their turf," Ricks said. "This is not your turf. This is C.H.A.'s turf. You can't run me from my home. Because I do pay rent."

She often made the trip to visit her friends at the remaining strip of rowhouses at Cabrini-Green. She went to the jazz concerts held in the nearby park. Like many relocated families, she felt safer in the vestiges of the old neighborhood. When Raqkown, Ricks's youngest, left his high school most days, he traveled to the field house at Cabrini. The principal at the neighborhood elementary school said two-thirds of his students were former Cabrini families who took the bus and train long distances to get there. Several Cabrini-Green Facebook pages formed, people reporting job opportunities and business ventures, sharing words of inspiration and announcements of deaths in the Cabrini family. Oftentimes a post showed a photo of one of the disappeared high-rises — "Who can say what building this is?" — leading to long threads of competing memories.

On an airless Saturday night in the summer of 2012, Ricks stepped outside into the Wentworth courtyard. She'd been confined to her apartment all day taking care of grandchildren and wanted to relax. She set up a small table, placing atop it a transistor radio and a can of bug spray. She popped open a bottle of iced tea she bought at the gas station and tuned the radio to a gospel station. Then she was startled by screaming in the distance. She recognized the voice before she saw him: Reggie. He came racing toward her out of the darkness with Raqkown sprinting beside him. A mob of men were at their heels. Her sons dashed past her and up the stairs to their apartment, their pursuers rushing past as well. Rose, who was inside, opened the door for her brothers, and the Wentworth guys charged in behind them, colliding into her. Ricks ran up the stairs after them. "Home invasion!" she cried.

In the cramped apartment, one invader knocked a television off the wall and stomped his foot through it. They pushed over a chest of drawers and threw chairs. Reggie, who was bleeding from his head, lifted a cooking pot off the stove and swung



it to fend off blows. Rose armed herself with a mop. Their mother usually carried a fist of keys with her, and she now punched with it. She held the aerosol can of bug repellent as well, and she sprayed it into any face close by. “I’m just going to say it like this,” Ricks said later that night, “we did whatever we had to do to get their asses out of our house.”

For the next two weeks, Ricks stayed with a son in the Cabrini rowhouses. One of her older daughters put up Reggie and Raqkown. Rose moved in temporarily with another sibling in the western suburbs. A social-service provider asked Ricks if she wanted to go to a shelter. She didn’t. A shelter wasn’t any place to live. “That’s like giving up,” Ricks said. With the home invasion, her old stubbornness returned. No way was she going to be cheated out of a four-bedroom again. Not this time. She was going to keep her family together.

She put in for a transfer to a different C.H.A. development along the lakefront, and she documented every time she phoned the agency to get an update. She checked in with a pro bono lawyer who agreed to take her case, asking when she should expect to move.

“Just trying to get them to confirm that you’re eligible to be on the wait list for a four-bedroom,” he told her.

“So how long will that be?”

“I wish I knew. I think they’ll respond to me. I’ll bother them until they do. I think this is going to be taken care of. It’s not going to be done quickly.”

“It should be quickly, because you’re my lawyer,” Ricks said.

“I may be a lawyer; however, I’m not a magician.”

She ended up cutting ties with him. He’d been emailing the C.H.A. since July, but three months later, her situation remained the same. “I’m not prejudiced,” she said. “But if I’d have been white, he’d have moved me the very same day. He doesn’t have to live in Wentworth Gardens, in the ghetto, as they say.”

**Across the highway** from Wentworth Gardens, the 28 towers of the Robert Taylor Homes had stretched in a narrow band for two miles, looming in groups of three like sentinels for almost 50 years. But the entire housing project was torn down by 2007. The cleared land remained vacant. Unlike the Cabrini-Green site, the area couldn't attract the higher rents or the sale of market-rate apartments to support a new mixed-income development. Mixed-income replacement buildings did offer public-housing families a better place to live. But the restrictions on entry excluded many, and interactions within the buildings were often tense. Most of all, the blended populations and low densities (as well as the crash of the housing market, which put a halt to most construction) meant they met just a small percentage of the need. In Chicago today, fewer than 3,000 public-housing families live in one of the mixed-income complexes.

Many more families were like the Rickeses, people who went from run-down public housing to rehabbed public housing, albeit still in areas of concentrated poverty. The same proved true for those who moved with a voucher. The C.H.A. currently oversees 16,000 units of occupied public housing, more than a third of which are designated for the elderly, and 47,000 vouchers in the private market. The combination of the two exceeds what the agency's total supply of housing was in the '90s. Nationally, the number of families using a Section 8 rent subsidy has doubled over the last 25 years, to 2.3 million. In theory, a voucher gives a family the choice to live anywhere. But the rents the federal government pays to Section 8 landlords are generally not enough for a home in a diverse neighborhood with strong schools and low crime; most landlords taking vouchers aren't in "opportunity" areas but in poor and racially isolated ones not so different from the razed government-run high-rises. In 2003, an independent monitor of the C.H.A.'s first years of relocations offered a bleak assessment: "The result has been that the vertical ghettos from which the families are being moved are being replaced with horizontal ghettos, located in well defined, highly segregated neighborhoods."

The families that were dispersed from Chicago's demolished public housing have been blamed for the city's recent surge in gun violence, as well as for crime in the suburbs, the greater Midwest and even parts of the South. Several studies have shown that C.H.A. residents did not spread disorder wherever they settled, as if they carried an infectious disease. But these families were moved primarily to areas of

Chicago that were already hollowed out of population, schools, occupied homes, jobs and resources. In South Shore, which took on more Section 8 renters than any other neighborhood in the city, 3,700 apartments were caught up in foreclosures, one out of every five rental units. The problems of concentrated poverty and isolation, which the demolitions were supposed to solve, persisted — and relocated families now found themselves in strange territory without their former support networks. People in public housing had, by necessity, bartered services, shopped together, shared food, stepped up when a neighbor lost a loved one. Annie Ricks's oldest daughter, Kenosha, left Cabrini-Green when she was in her 20s and moved with her family to a block on the West Side. "I've been out here almost a decade, and I know three or four of my neighbors," she told me recently. "They from the projects,' people say. But they don't know me. They weren't raised how we were raised. We were raised to stick together. If you're a neighbor, you let the next neighbor know what's going on. They don't do that out here."

Developments like Cabrini-Green did in fact need to be made safer and more livable, and maybe even torn down. But the public had an obligation as well to ensure that those who lived there didn't lose out when the high-rises were replaced. Virtually no new public housing has been built in the country in decades. There's still a stock of over a million units nationwide, down from a peak of 1.4 million. Much of it is at risk. A HUD-commissioned study in 2010 found a \$26 billion backlog in repair and maintenance needs, a figure estimated to have ballooned since then to more than \$50 billion. Each year, some 10,000 to 15,000 units are lost solely because of neglect. The New York City Housing Authority had long avoided the failings that troubled authorities in other big cities. Towers in New York are the norm; maintenance and management remained strong, and high demand for housing allowed for renters with a greater range of incomes. But the city's 2,500 buildings, home to 400,000 New Yorkers, now need \$17 billion in unmet repairs. The problem is often worse in small cities and less-urban areas, because there is no other supply of low-income rentals once dilapidated public housing is shuttered. HUD, rather than trying to replenish its dangerously insufficient capital fund, submitted a 2018 budget that would slash it by another two-thirds.

All of this comes amid an affordable-housing crisis that is as urgent as it is unheeded. Today, only one of every five families poor enough to qualify for a housing

subsidy actually receives one. A quarter of all renters nationwide pay more than half their income in rent. Families are forced to make harmful choices between rent and food, doctor's visits and education costs. In their search for what public-housing agencies had promised as the minimal requirement of a "decent, safe and sanitary home," the poor have been pushed farther from the economic activity and opportunities of city centers. The current head of the Chicago Housing Authority, Eugene Jones Jr., has envisioned a remedy, albeit an unlikely one, coming in the form of an infrastructure bill that would fully fund housing assistance, coupling the subsidy with the wraparound services — health care, day care, job training and transportation — that residents need to thrive. "I'm not a Republican, but we're trying to transform our residents out of public and assisted housing," Jones said. "The end game is that you're moving off subsistence." It's a noble goal. But there simply is no adequate supply of housing at that next step up. In 2014, when the C.H.A. opened a lottery just to make it onto the waiting list for either a voucher or public-housing unit, 280,000 families entered their names, a quarter of all the households in Chicago.

Around the old Cabrini-Green and other expensive urban real estate markets, close-cropped towers are again being built. These are high-end private developments, although they occasionally set aside a number of subsidized apartments for an allotted period of time in exchange for tax breaks and building rights. The common sentiment is that the people who can afford the luxury high-rises have created their own good fortune; the generous government benefits they receive are rightfully earned. For those in Wentworth Gardens or Chicago's distant South Side or any impoverished neighborhood in the country, no political will exists anymore for the government to step in and transform the blocks that have been left to decline. Affordable-housing advocates are by no means pushing for a return to large public-housing high-rise developments, but some have noted that a few towers mixed in here and there with the luxury condos wouldn't stand out.

There are calls to again mobilize the country's resources. The Bipartisan Policy Center has endorsed a universal voucher program that would guarantee rental assistance to the country's 11.4 million extremely low income households. Several studies by the Urban Institute and other research organizations show that such an endeavor would recoup much of its cost in reduced homelessness and also ease

health problems and other consequences of instability that are ultimately paid for by governments. Several organizations in recent years have proposed tax credits for cost-burdened low-income households. And a bill introduced numerous times by the Minnesota congressman Keith Ellison sets out to cut the mortgage-interest deduction for wealthier homeowners and use the \$200 billion in savings over 10 years to close the affordable-housing deficit. Congress did, in fact, cut the mortgage-interest deduction as part of last December's tax bill, though by much less than low-income housing proponents had wanted. The savings went not to creating affordable housing but to offsetting the tax benefits that Republicans doled out to corporations and the wealthiest Americans. Seventy years into our test as a country to provide housing for those who have too little, we are hardly any closer to passing.

**Annie Ricks was** out walking one night, venturing from Wentworth Gardens, when a burning pain shot through her left foot. She soon developed calluses on her heel. Then she couldn't put any weight on the foot. An emergency-room doctor said she had diabetes and needed surgery. The recovery was supposed to take less than a week, but Ricks got an infection at the hospital. She had trouble eating and lost weight, the sharp bones of her cheeks never more pronounced. "I need to laugh sometimes instead of cry," she said. "If I'm going to cry, it won't get me out of Wentworth Gardens." But then she came down with pneumonia. She was relocated to another hospital and intubated. She couldn't talk or smile. Her daughters complained that the staff ignored their mother because she lacked insurance and relied on state medical assistance. They said the nurses failed to turn her properly, pointing to the holes forming in their mother's back. The family contacted a malpractice lawyer they heard about on television, who asked them repeatedly if there had been a bed fall, because that would be a "slam dunk." No, they told him, there hadn't been a fall, and he stopped returning their calls. Then on Nov. 16, 2014, with her family gathered around, Annie Ricks died. She was 58. "You walk in with a sore foot, and you never leave," a daughter said bitterly.

Rose and her toddler daughter remained in the apartment at Wentworth Gardens. Her brothers slept there less and less frequently. With their mother gone, their lives became more itinerant. They stayed with girlfriends or with other siblings scattered around the city and the surrounding suburbs. Wentworth hadn't become any safer for them. Reggie, in his early 20s, was arrested there after another fight. A

group of guys at the development pounced on Raqkown and broke a bone in his neck. But it wasn't clear where they would be better off. Raequonn Ricks Williams, a 19-year-old relative, was shot on the West Side, one of the 762 people murdered in Chicago in 2016. Reggie and his mother had squabbled before her death. He'd been turned down at more than a dozen job interviews, and Annie Ricks berated him for giving up. He racked up arrests. "When Reggie left Cabrini, he felt his whole family was gone," Kenosha said of her younger brother. "His immediate family plus everybody he was in, like, preschool with."

Rose left finally for an apartment building 25 blocks farther south. She had got her daughter into a school near there, and she had also come to feel haunted at Wentworth, always expecting to see her mother emerge from one of the bedrooms. Back in 2014, at her mother's funeral, Rose had been unable to speak through her tears. A hundred former Cabrini-Green residents showed up at the West Side church to pay their respects. Rose's siblings talked about their mother's stubbornness, her determination to provide for them: "What she didn't have, she made sure we had it," one said. Reggie said he didn't care that he had a terrible singing voice, and he started in on an R. Kelly song: "Dear Mama, you wouldn't believe what I'm goin' through/But still I got my head up just like I promised you." Kenton, Ricks's fourth of nine sons, said they all learned from her example. "Be strong, take care of the kids, take care of family," he repeated. She made them all better people. "She'd do anything for anybody," he said. "She was just love."

Ben Austen is a frequent contributor to the magazine. He last wrote about Chicago after the Laquan McDonald case. This article is adapted from his book "High-Risers," to be published this month by Harper.

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