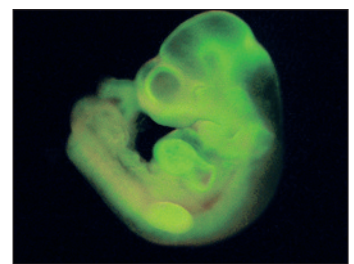


Scientists discover simple method for testing stem cells that does not involve human embryos



Santa Barbara uses 3-point scoring touch to beat Buena in Channel League boys basketball victory

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



OUR 158TH YEAR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2014

17 California communities running out of water

Most too small to finance backup water supplies, repair equipment

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN JOSE — Seventeen rural communities in drought-stricken California are in danger of running out of water within four months, according to a list compiled by state officials.

Wells are running dry or reservoirs are nearly empty in some communities. Others have long-running problems that predate the drought.

The communities range from the area covered by the tiny Lompico County Water District in Santa Cruz County to the cities of Healdsburg and Cloverdale in Sonoma County, the San Jose Mercury News reported Tuesday.

Most of the districts, which serve from 39 to 11,000 residents, have too few cus-

Please see **WATER** on A5

Much-needed snow bound for parched Sierra

ASSOCIATED PRESS

RENO, Nev. — As much as 2 feet of snow is possible atop the Sierra today as the first significant storm in nearly two months blows in none too soon for a drought-stricken region where wildfire threats are unseasonably high.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection announced earlier this week it has hired 125 extra firefighters in Northern California and extended seasonal firefighting forces in Southern California because of the dry winter conditions.

Please see **SIERRA** on A5



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

A man searches for coins in the middle of the Russian River in Healdsburg.

Battling Obamacare

Southern California college faces appeal after winning contraceptive mandate injunction

By ZACH NOBLE
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

They've won an important battle, but for Thomas Aquinas College, the war rages on.

The Catholic college gained an exemption from Affordable Care Act requirements that employee health insurance plans provide contraceptives and abortion-causing drugs, but the legal victory was short-lived — the college received notice this week that the government is appealing the decision.

"The government is trying to have the courts define what is religious," said John Quincy Masteller, general counsel for the college in Santa Paula.

Thomas Aquinas is one of many organizations fighting the Department of Health and Human Services in court. From the Oklahoma-based craft chain Hobby Lobby to Roman Catholic charities, all are claiming that by forcing their employee health insurance plans to cover contraceptives, the government is violating their religious liberties.

Unlike many of those other organizations, Thomas Aquinas won an exemption from the contraceptive requirements when Judge Amy Jackson issued an injunction shielding the college late last year.

"(The contraceptive mandate)



MIKE ELIASON/NEWS-PRESS

John Quincy Masteller, general counsel for Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, expects the battle over contraceptive coverage under the Affordable Care Act will end up before the U.S. Supreme Court.

compel(s) the organization to take affirmative steps — to do something — that is in conflict with the tenets of its faith," Judge Jackson wrote in her Dec. 20 ruling. "And therefore, defendants are enjoined from enforcing the mandate against Thomas Aquinas College."

What did Thomas Aquinas have that

other religious organizations didn't?

The college was ahead of the curve, said Anne Forsyth, director of college relations.

Experience working with California law had prepared Thomas Aquinas to handle Affordable Care Act requirements, Mrs. Forsyth said.

"We sought a way to be in compliance with the law while honoring our own consciences," she said.

The college became self-insured, under the auspices of the Reta Trust, and effectively dodged having to provide contraceptives to its employees.

Please see **COLLEGE** on A5

Avelina Winery to move

Funk Zone loses high-profile tenant

By GABE SAGLIE
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

After just four months in business, one of the Funk Zone's most high-profile wineries is moving out.

Avelina Winery, which opened its doors Sept. 20, closed abruptly this week.

But "it's a good thing," owner and winemaker Christian Garvin, 39, told the News-Press.

"I'm taking the Avelina concept to North County," potentially Lompoc or Buellton, where he plans to set up a winemaking facility and store under sole ownership, Mr. Garvin said.

Avelina's departure leaves a 3,000-square-foot space in the Anacapa Project, the thriving complex that includes The Lark Restaurant, Les Marchands wine bar, Guitar Bar and a handful of brewery, winery and distillery businesses.

But Mr. Garvin said a new retail business is already in line to take over "within the next 45 days."

Avelina quickly became a trendy wine tasting venue, but it doubled as a winery. The facility filled the winery's own production needs, making 9,000 cases of wine a year, as well as Mr. Garvin's other wine ventures, including making and bottling private label wines.

"We got to the point where we were making too much wine for the space" he said. "There were times when 75 percent of the room was taken up by pallets, stacked high. Customers could barely get in.

"The rent didn't justify using the space that way. That

"It's like all the artists who used to have studios here. I'm moving my studio to make room for retail."

Christian Garvin owner, Avelina Winery

Please see **WINERY** on A5



STEVE MALONE/NEWS-PRESS

A "closed" sign greets visitors at Avelina Winery in the 100 block of Anacapa Street.

Commander: VAFB relies on community

By NORA K. WALLACE
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Although Vandenberg Air Force Base has an estimated economic impact of \$1.7 billion, launches satellites worth hundreds of millions of dollars into space and employs scores of uniformed and civilian people, its commander said Wednesday that none of that's possible without the help of the surrounding communities.

Speaking to a gathering of the Lompoc Valley and Santa Maria Valley chambers of commerce, Col. Keith Balts said Vandenberg needs its local relationships even more as it

heads into the year facing fewer resources and cuts in uniformed personnel.

"The relationship we have outside the gate is so important," Col. Balts said. "My goal here is to find ways to improve that, never degrade it, maintain it, improve it as much as I can. We need it, love it."

He added later, "We couldn't do it without you."

During the annual 30th Space Wing commander's speech, Col. Balts outlined the role of the classified installation, spoke about budgetary constraints and ended with a posi-

Please see **VAFB** on A5

Col. Keith Balts, commander of the 30th Space Wing at Vandenberg Air Force Base, speaks Wednesday to members of the Lompoc Valley and Santa Maria Valley chambers of commerce.



BILL MORSON/NEWS-PRESS

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Classified	C6-8
Comics	D4

Crossword	D2
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Lottery	A2

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Nation/World	B1-5
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Sports	C1-5

Sudoku	D2
TV	D5
Voices	A6-7
Weather	B8

Mostly cloudy
Coast: 65/47 Inland: 64/42
COMPLETE FORECAST B8

Dow Jones 15,738.79 (-189.77)
Nasdaq 4,051.43 (-43.53)
GAS PRICES BUSINESS B6



Assembly to tackle teacher pensions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO — Assembly Speaker John Perez said Wednesday that the Legislature will try this year to find a way to start paying down California's massive unfunded liability for teacher pensions, which makes up the largest portion of the state's deficit and is estimated as high as \$80 billion.

"Further delays only mean further costs and further exposures for the state's general fund," said Mr. Perez, D-Los Angeles.

The solution should include payments from the state, school districts and individual teachers, he said.

Mr. Perez and Assemblyman Rob Bonta, a Democrat from Alameda who is chairman of the Assembly Committee on Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security, announced that the committee would hold hearings starting in February. But they provided few details about a proposal.

Gov. Jerry Brown said he doubted a legislative solution was likely this year.

Bill restricts government use of drones

By DON THOMPSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO — California would establish what supporters say are some of the nation's strictest standards for the use of drone aircraft by government entities, under a bill approved Wednesday by the state Assembly.

AB1327 would require law enforcement agencies to obtain warrants except in certain emergencies. It also would require that government agencies notify the public when they intend to use drones and that data collected by unmanned aircraft be destroyed within six months.

Public agencies would be prohibited from arming their drones.

The measure passed, 59-5, and it now goes to the Senate.

"The future of aviation is unmanned," said Assemblyman Jeff Gorell, R-Camarillo, an intelligence officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve who said he is familiar with drones from a tour in Afghanistan. The Federal Aviation Administration estimates that more than 30,000 drones will be flying over the United States within the next two decades, helping with everything from fighting criminals and wildfires to aiding farmers and perhaps delivering packages.

Law enforcement could use drones, under the bill, if they obtain warrants based on probable

cause that a crime is being committed. They could bypass the warrant if there is an imminent threat to life or to help emergency workers deal with traffic accidents, to inspect state parks and wilderness areas for marijuana grows, or to detect wildfires.

Other public agencies could use drones for purposes other than to collect criminal intelligence, but they would be barred from sharing the data they collect with law enforcement agencies without a warrant. When warrants are obtained, the bill requires law enforcement to minimize the collection of images of people, places or things that are not allowed by the warrant.

It also allows local governments to adopt even stricter rules.

"We need to establish clear rules and policies to protect the privacy of Californians," said Assemblyman Steven Bradford, D-Gardena, who co-authored the bipartisan bill with Mr. Gorell and Assemblyman Bill Quirk, D-Hayward.

Mr. Quirk said the bill would help local governments and law enforcement agencies that are uncertain what is and is not illegal when using drones. For instance, law enforcement could use drones to aid in pursuing a fleeing vehicle, he said, but could not position one overhead to peer into what otherwise would be private areas without getting a

warrant.

The bill addresses only the public agencies' use of drones, while a separate pending measure by Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Los Angeles, is intended to protect Californians' privacy from commercial or privately operated drones.

Mr. Gorell said it is the product of more than a year of negotiations. However, it is opposed by several of the state's law enforcement organizations, which he said want the same rules as apply currently to manned aircraft.

The American Civil Liberties Union withdrew its objections after the bill was amended, but the California State Sheriffs' Association said there is no need for separate restrictions on the use of drones beyond existing privacy protections under the U.S. Constitution's Fourth Amendment, which outlaw unreasonable searches and seizures.

The sheriffs' association also objected to the requirement that drone data be quickly destroyed, noting that criminal investigations often take considerable time. The bill allows data to be kept indefinitely if its collection was authorized by a warrant or if it is evidence.

"They're not willing to accept the paradigm shift," Mr. Gorell said of law-enforcement opponents. "This is a technology that we in California need to embrace."

'This is a case of religious liberty'

COLLEGE
Continued from Page A1

Other organizations that object to contraception on religious grounds can use a regulatory "accommodation" to distance themselves from contraceptive coverage, though their employees still have access to contraceptive care — the organization itself just doesn't directly pay for them.

"The accommodation plays out differently in an insurance context versus a self-insurance context," explained Mr. Masteller.

In Thomas Aquinas' case, the regulations would force the school to actively seek an administrator who would pay for contraceptives and so, Judge Jackson ruled, the regulations infringe upon the college's religious liberty.

Despite the self-insured trust precedent and Judge Jackson's ruling, the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor and Treasury are pressing the issue with an appeal.

"This case is not about access to contraception," said Mr. Masteller. "This is a case of religious liberty."

"The Obama administration has clearly reduced 'freedom of religion' to 'freedom of worship,'" Mrs. Forsyth added. "But our faith impacts our daily lives. We don't leave it at the church door."

Mrs. Forsyth said Thomas Aquinas does offer contraceptives for "approved medical reasons," such as endometriosis. The college simply doesn't offer contraceptives for the purpose of preventing pregnancy, per Catholic doctrine.

She added that none of the col-

lege's 78 employees had ever, to her knowledge, complained about the lack of contraceptive coverage.

If Thomas Aquinas eventually loses the court battle, Mrs. Forsyth said, the costs of non-compliance will be enormous.

"We could end all coverage for all of our employees, provide no health care, and pay \$96,000 a year (in fines)," she said. "But if we were to continue providing health insurance without coverage for contraception, sterilization, and abortion-causing drugs, we would face penalties of \$100 a day for each of our 78 employees — or \$2.85 million a year."

The appeal will be heard in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, and Mr. Masteller said it's unlikely an opinion will be issued until after the court's summer recess, unless the process is sped up.

"Millions of people have a huge public interest in this case," Mr. Masteller said. "The court may expedite oral arguments."

While the government appeals the injunction won by Thomas Aquinas, the college's co-plaintiffs on the original case, the Archdiocese of Washington and Catholic University of America among them, will be appealing the fact that they did not win similar protections, Mr. Masteller said.

"I think most people following this case expect it will end up before the Supreme Court," Mr. Masteller said. "There's just too much at stake."

The HHS did not respond to a request for comment.

email: news@newspress.com

Base to host several key launches this year

VAFB
Continued from Page A1

outlook for changes this year.

Col. Balts, 43, assumed command of the wing last May after a year's deployment to Southwest Asia. He previously served for almost two years as vice commander of Vandenberg, which primarily launches rockets into polar orbit and tests intercontinental ballistic missiles.

He spoke to about 125 people, including elected officials, business owners, educators, retirees and service members interested in hearing about the 99,000-acre base.

Backed by a slide show, the commander showed the audience the success and work of the previous year, from launches to participation in local parades, deployments and beach cleanups.

"As a career space operator, sometimes we get focused on the technology, the rockets and booms," Col. Balts said. "But it's the men and women on base who make all this happen."

Vandenberg has tallied 1,900 launches "and counting" since the first Thor was launched in December 1958. Next month will mark the 55th anniversary of the first polar orbiting satellite launched from Vandenberg, "Discover 1."

"The history behind the heritage is something that matters," the commander said.

Though he did not provide the au-

dience with details about the launches planned for this year, Vandenberg will host key NASA launches in July and November; a Defense Meteorological Satellite Program launch in April and the WorldView 3 Earth observation satellite for DigitalGlobe sometime in the summer.

Base spokeswoman Robin Jackson said nine launches are tentatively planned this year.

Vandenberg also is expecting the return from space of the X-37 "space plane," a classified mini-space shuttle that has been orbiting the Earth since Dec. 11, 2012.

It is expected to return to Earth by landing on the base's almost three-mile-long runway. A date has not been disclosed.

As glowing as he was about the base and its mission, Col. Balts said its workers will need to be more innovative. Vandenberg has 2,700 military personnel and 1,300 civil service workers, along with about 2,800 contractors and 3,000 military dependents. An estimated 8,000 military retirees live in surrounding communities.

"The number of people hasn't changed, though we're getting thinner," Col. Balts said.

With the sequestration last year meaning a 24 percent cut in the base budget, Col. Balts mentioned cuts in services, the discontinuance of awards programs, civilian furloughs, closure of the base theater and the cutting of a contract for

civilian security personnel at the entrance gates, which are now being staffed by uniformed personnel.

"When it comes to people, the story's going to be a little different this year," he warned.

The Defense Department's "force management programs," will mean some major leadership challenges and personal angst for those making choices about leaving the military, either voluntarily or through mandated departures, as the government tries to reduce the numbers of uniformed personnel.

"That's going to affect the base," Col. Balts said, mentioning "holes" in the workforce that will have to be accommodated. "It's going to be a challenge and we've got to work through that."

Following the speech, Bob Hatch, president of the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce, told the commander, "All of us are extremely grateful to you."

Santa Maria Mayor Alice Patino said her father was stationed at Vandenberg when it was Camp Cooke Army Base and she feels an affinity toward the military.

"Santa Maria should interact more with the base than we do," Ms. Patino said. "We need to see what gaps we can fill in. We need to be supportive. Sometimes we forget."

email: mwallace@newspress.com

'We ... were making too much wine for the space'

WINERY
Continued from Page A1

space was made for humans, not for boxes."

While he insists he's happy with the move, Mr. Garvin admits that it speaks to an adjustment in the Funk Zone persona.

"Five years ago, this was an industrial space, and now it's a retail and entertainment space," he said. "It's like all the artists who used to have studios here. I'm moving my studio to make room for retail."

Mr. Garvin has been making, selling and promoting wines in Santa Barbara County since the late 1990s, when he worked at Fess Parker Winery and joined a fellow UCSB grad to found Kahn Winery.

He launched Oreana Winery in the Funk Zone 10 years ago, in a former tire shop, with a similar setup to Avelina's.

"But we had a big parking lot there," he said, which eliminated overcrowding.

Mr. Garvin sold Oreana to winemaker Danny Miles last summer, ahead of Avelina's grand opening.

Avelina will continue to focus on Santa Barbara County-grown Italian wines, including pinot grigio, sangiovese and nebbiolo.

Progress of Mr. Garvin's move to North County will be updated at www.avelinawine.com and through his email, Christian@avelinawinery.com.

email: news@newspress.com

More communities expected to be added to list

WATER
Continued from Page A1

tomers to collect enough revenue to pay for backup water supplies or repair failing equipment, the newspaper reported.

A storm expected to drop light and moderate rains on Northern California won't help much.

The list of vulnerable communities was compiled by the state health department based on a survey last week of the more than 3,000 water agencies in California.

"As the drought goes on, there will be more that probably show up on the list," said Dave Mazzera, acting drinking-water division chief for the state Department of Public

Health.

He said state officials are discussing solutions such as trucking in water and providing funding to drill more wells or connect rural water systems to other water systems.

Lompico County Water District, in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Felton, has just 500 customers and needs nearly \$3 million in upgrades to its water system.

"We have been unable to take water out of the creek since August and well production is down, and we didn't have that much water to begin with," said Lois Henry, a Lompico water board member.

Ms. Henry said the district may soon have to truck in water.

In Cloverdale, where 9,000 get water from four wells, low flows in the

Russian River have prompted the City Council to implement mandatory 25 percent rationing and ban lawn watering. The city raised water rates 50 percent to put in two new wells, which should be completed by July.

"Hopefully we'll be able to get through the summer and the development of this project will pay off," City Manager Paul Caylor said.

Residents of urban areas for the most part have not felt the effects of the drought so far.

Other areas on the state list include small water districts in Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, Kern, Amador, Mendocino, Nevada and Placer counties.

Tractor incident victim identified

LOS OLIVOS A Solvang man who was killed last week when a tractor tipped over at a ranch has been identified as Gregory Michael DeLeon, authorities said.

The ranch owner hired the 54-year-old to do some work at the property off Ballard Canyon Road, Kelly Hoover, Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department spokeswoman, said in an email.

The property owner, who found the victim unresponsive and the tractor on its side, reported the incident at around 4:15 p.m. Friday.

"The tractor tipped over and the victim was struck and fatally injured by the tractor," Ms. Hoover said.

The sheriff's Coroner's Bureau is investigating and foul play isn't suspected, she said. Cal-OSHA also responded but didn't take the case because it didn't meet criteria for an industrial accident.

Determination of the official cause and manner of death is pending toxicology and other lab results, Ms. Hoover said.

— Angel Pacheco

Moderate storm 'will help' snow water content

SIERRA
Continued from Page A1

to Lake Tahoe's elevation — about 6,200 feet — today and to the valley floors by tonight.

Snowfall could total up to 2 feet above 8,000 feet, with a foot or more above 7,000 feet. Between a half-inch and an inch of rain is expected in the greater Reno-Sparks area and Carson City. Foothill locations could get an inch or two of snow.

"This is only a moderate storm by Sierra standards. But considering we haven't had any storms for the last few weeks, it's a pretty big deal," National Weather Service me-

teorologist Zach Tolby told the Reno Gazette-Journal.

As of Tuesday, snow water content was 12 percent of normal in the central Sierra and 5 percent of normal in the northern Sierra, according to the California Department of Water Resources. The Lake Tahoe Basin's snowpack was measured at 19 percent of normal, while the Truckee River Basin's snowpack was 11 percent.

"Right now we are seeing conditions we would typically see in August," Cal Fire spokesman Daniel Berlant told the Tahoe Daily Tribune.

"We definitely are on track to be the third-driest year on record, if not

the driest year on record if things don't change. That will translate into some pretty serious fire conditions this season if we don't see some relief," he said.

The snowpack atop Donner Summit where U.S. Interstate 80 crosses the Sierra southwest of Truckee, Calif., is the lowest it has ever been at this time of year in records dating back to the late 1800s, Mr. Tolby said.

"We're definitely in uncharted territory. These are some of the driest conditions the Sierra has seen in recent recorded history," he said. "This one storm isn't going to make a large dent in the drought conditions, but it will help."

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