



Local News RoundUp

September 30, 2013

BANKRUPTCY

[Stockton Releases Bankruptcy Plan; CalPERS Payments Unaffected \(*Sacramento Bee*\)](#)

The bankrupt city of Stockton vowed Friday to continue making all its required pension payments to CalPERS even as it forces its Wall Street creditors to accept less than full payment on their debts. In its closely watched bankruptcy plan, released late Friday afternoon, the city said it will “honor its obligations to fund employee retirement benefits under the CalPERS pension plan.”

PENSIONS / EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

[Cal City Council Reaches Pact with PD \(*Mojave Desert News*\)](#)

The California City Council approved a new contract for its police department last week. It was not a unanimous decision, with the Council voting, 3-2.

[Both Sides Cry Foul in Mendocino County Labor Talks \(*Ukiah Daily Journal*\)](#)

County of Mendocino administration and the union that represents the vast majority of its workers have once again both filed claims against each other asserting illegal practices in labor negotiations. The county and the Service Employees International Union, Local 1021, filed claims with the state Public Employment Relations Board in 2011 and again this year, each claiming the other party used unfair labor practices.

[Report: Cities Face Grave Pension Deficits \(*Washington Post*\)](#)

Most of the 50 local governments with the largest pension debt have worker retirement liabilities that are greater than their annual tax revenue, according to a new report from the credit-rating firm Moody's.

[Oxnard's Former Finance Director Files Claim Against City \(*Ventura County Star*\)](#)

Oxnard's former finance director has filed a claim against the city seeking \$3,400 a month in supplemental retirement pay. Oxnard's former city manager, interim city manager and public information officer have also filed claims in the last year.

[Burbank City Council OKs Contract Change \(*Burbank Leader*\)](#)

The City Council on Tuesday signed off on changes to City Manager Mark Scott's contract after discovering — contrary to what officials thought when he was hired — that he doesn't fall under the new employee pension system, and thus would cost the city more money than originally anticipated.

EDUCATION

[Schools Could Suspend STAR Testing \(*Mojave Desert News*\)](#)

Test scores are needed to evaluate how a student is progressing, but what happens when what a school is teaching does not coincide with what may be on that test?

That could be the problem in the coming year for schools in East Kern and many other districts in California and around the county.

WATER

[Dan Walters: Finally, One California Water Deal Gets Done \(Sacramento Bee\)](#)

The capture, distribution and pricing of water are densely complex and infinitely controversial matters, because their impacts extend into so many other aspects of life.

[Council Due to Decide on Fluoride Issues on Tuesday \(Davis Enterprise\)](#)

After months of community debate on water fluoridation, the City Council has the task Tuesday of determining whether the cavity-fighting compound should be added to the city's drinking water supplies.

LEGISLATION

[Brown Signs Bill Boosting Sacramento Arena Plans \(Associated Press\)](#)

Gov. Jerry Brown on Friday signed a bill intended to help plans for building an NBA arena in downtown Sacramento while also aiding some other urban development projects throughout the state that face environmental challenges.

HOUSING

[Dick Spotswood: Does Transit-Oriented Housing Really Work? \(Marin Independent Journal\)](#)

Much of the debate about the Association of Bay Area Governments' Plan Bay Area centered around one core principle. That's the contention that building high-density housing adjacent to transit lines will cause higher transit usage, in turn curbing global warming-causing carbon emissions.

Other than the oft-heard "everyone knows" that high-density housing and transit usage are linked, proof is in short supply. It does work in big-city New York and some regional central cities including San Francisco. The dilemma is that there's little data confirming that the claimed housing-transit nexus makes sense in suburbia or smaller cities.

[Measure D Sides Spar Over Impact of Project \(Palo Alto Weekly\)](#)

Opponents and proponents of Measure D all say they are in favor of more senior housing in Palo Alto. What they clashed on during Saturday afternoon's debate was whether senior housing is what the measure is really about.

If approved by the voters in November, the measure will uphold the City Council's zone change last June of land at the corner of Maybell and Clemo avenues, which would enable the nonprofit Palo Alto Housing Corporation to build a 60 units of senior housing and 12 market-rate homes on the orchard site.

REVENUE & TAXATION / FINANCE

[Mobile Food Trucks: Food to go with a Side of Sales Tax \(Sacramento Bee\)](#)

With the mobile food truck industry revving up in California, sales tax is becoming a sizeable issue. In the past three years, the number of licensed mobile food operators jumped more than 45 percent, with an estimated 4,000 statewide, according to the State Board of Equalization. At the same time, the amount of annual sales tax forked over by food truck owners is getting heftier, hitting \$12.2 million in 2012.

REDEVELOPMENT

[Town to Receive RDA Loan Repayments \(Paradise Post\)](#)

The Town of Paradise is on track to be about \$1.2 million richer, but it will take at least a decade to get the full payoff. The money will come from three loans that were invalidated when the state's Redevelopment Agencies were dissolved in 2012.

[Glendale City Leaders Scramble to Control Properties \(Glendale News-Press\)](#)

As the state moves to liquidate the assets of dismantled community redevelopment agencies, Glendale officials are looking to put some storefronts in the Exchange and other city-owned properties up for sale but are fighting to retain control of the Alex Theatre, Museum of Neon Art and a park in the middle of the Americana at Brand.

ENVIRONMENT

[State Agency Seeks Input on Climate Risks \(San Luis Obispo Tribune\)](#)

The California Natural Resources Agency on Monday will host a meeting in Sacramento to get public input on how the state should prepare for climate risks.

REPORTS & STUDIES

[52% Want Bullet Train Stopped, Poll Finds \(Los Angeles Times\)](#)

A majority of voters want the California bullet train project stopped and consider it a waste of money, even as state political leaders have struggled to bolster public support and make key compromises to satisfy critics, a USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times poll found.

CITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

[Mountain View City Council Favors Turning Recently Acquired Property into Public Open Space \(San Jose Mercury News\)](#)

The city council voted 6-1 Tuesday to turn the densely wooded property into public open space. Council members also agreed to use it as a site for the Immigrant House, a historic 400-square-foot cottage that was moved earlier this year to make way for a development in downtown.

HOMELESSNESS

[Giving Homeless Veterans the Permanent Shelter They Need \(Los Angeles Times\)](#)

Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychological diagnoses end up living in the streets because they're too disabled to seek help, advocates have long argued.

The answer, they say, is permanent supportive housing, with medical, mental health and substance abuse treatment wrapped on-site around vets' residential complexes. Bureaucratic inertia and neighborhood opposition have stalled development of this type of housing, officials said.

CITY SERVICES

[Clovis Food-Scrap Recycling Program Off to Slow Start \(Fresno Bee\)](#)

Clovis is trying to keep food waste out of its landfill to extend the life of the landfill, but that's not the only reason. Food scraps buried in a landfill generate greenhouse gases, such as methane, that go into the atmosphere. Scientists say food scraps cause about 20% of greenhouse gas emissions from landfills and methane is 21% more dangerous to the environment than vehicle emissions.

PUBLIC SAFETY

[Sheriff's Office Interested in Grant to Build Minimum-Security Barracks \(Bakersfield Californian\)](#)

Kern County supervisors will on Tuesday debate the wisdom of applying for a new \$77.3 million state grant that could be used to rebuild the crumbling minimum-security barracks at Lerdo Jail.

The county has previously committed to taking \$100 million to build a new 800-bed medium-maximum security wing at Lerdo, which will require Kern to pay for the remaining cost of the facility — at least \$10 million — and staff it for the next 25 years at a cost of \$20 million annually.

CITY ORDINANCES

[San Jose Rethinks Fireworks Ban \(Contra Costa Times\)](#)

In the four years since budget cuts doused San Jose's city-sponsored Fourth of July fireworks show, the streets have been erupting with black-market holiday pyrotechnics.

Firefighters and cops say they're deluged with complaints but spread too thin to do much about the hordes igniting illegal firecrackers and bottle rockets. San Jose leaders now are weighing ideas including lifting the city's long-standing ban on state-approved "safe and sane" fireworks, hoping that might dampen interest in more dangerous illegal rockets and explosives.

IN OTHER CITY NEWS

[Shasta Lake Pens Letter to Bureau of Reclamation Outlining Concerns Over Raising Shasta Dam \(Redding Record Searchlight\)](#)

The city's concerns include traffic, water, tourism, outreach and other pending projects in the area.

[Local Economic Programs Awarded Federal Funding \(Santa Maria Times\)](#)

Four Central Coast nonprofit economic programs have been awarded funds totaling almost \$2 million through the U.S. Department of Treasury's Community Development Financial Institution Fund. The grants will allow increased lending and investments in low-income and economically distressed communities, said Congresswoman Lois Capps, D-Santa Barbara, who announced the awards.

[Riverside: City Attorney to Lead Statewide Attorneys Group \(The Press-Enterprise\)](#)

Riverside City Attorney Gregory P. Priamos has been tapped to lead a statewide organization that plays a major role in advising municipal attorneys on the latest developments in municipal law. The move is the latest in a series of leadership posts for Riverside officials.

Priamos, who has been Riverside city attorney since 2001, was elected president of the city attorneys department of the League of California Cities on Sept. 19. He previously served in 2012-13 as the department's 1st vice president and, before that, 2nd vice president.

[Local Governments Rose Slightly During Recession \(Pew/Stateline\)](#)

Debates about the right size of government raged during the Great Recession, as shrinking revenue squeezed budgets at every level. But over the last five years, the total number of governments increased slightly, according to the U.S. Census of Governments, a five-year count of every unit of government in the country.

[Santa Clara Resident Resist Plan to Close Downtown Post Office \(San Jose Mercury News\)](#)

Residents are pushing back against a proposal to close Santa Clara's historic downtown post office -- part of the U.S. Postal Service's effort to cut costs -- and move services to a building 2 miles away.