

Quarterly Community Issues

2021: October - December

KQNC 6:04 am– 6:06 pm Weekdays

10-7-21: CAPRADIO COMMUNITY POLL: OPEN SPACE FOR WILDLIFE AND FARMING

Over ninety percent of respondents living in six Sacramento area counties said they felt very strongly or somewhat strongly that wild spaces for plants and animals be protected. A similar percentage felt the same about farmland. Elizabeth Reid-Wainscoat of the Center for Biological Diversity says the Sacramento region does have a lot of natural space... but only a small portion is safeguarded from development. “Protecting open space is especially important as growth continues in the Greater Sacramento Area.” Reid-Wainscoat says local planners could consider urban greenbelts going forward, which would encourage development to build up, instead of out. That could help mitigate wildfire risk, too, she says. “Because often the sprawl development is in high fire hazard zones, and the more development we do there, the more fire risk we have there with ignition and larger fires.” California natural resource planners are still mapping out the 30 by 30 plan, which strives to conserve 30% of the state’s land and waters by the year 2030.

10-20-21: CAPRADIO INVESTIGATION: CALIFORNIA HIRES TRUMP BORDER WALL CONTRACTOR

California has turned to an unusual partner for COVID-19 response: The same company that built former president Donald Trump’s border wall along the state’s southern border. The no-bid, 350-million-dollar contract has frustrated immigration advocates and community health care leaders. State government reporter Scott Rodd has this Cap Radio investigation.

10-25-21: HISTORIC STORM/DROUGHT RELIEF

MIKE: This is CapRadio News, I’m Mike Hagerty. Much of the regions was drenched from the storm that hit the Sunday into Monday. To start, there was historic rainfall. And, for many, a bit of a sigh of a relief, that maybe, just maybe, the storm made a dent in both the drought and fire season. Here to talk about all of that is CapRadio’s Scott Rodd. Hi Scott, so where are you?

SCOTT: Mike, remember couple of months ago, I talked to you from this location, bone dry, Caldor Fire, now there’s a ton of water flowing. What a difference a historic storm event can make.

MIKE: Scott, have you talked to anyone as you’ve been walking and driving around?

SCOTT: Yes, I met Bryce Lovell....evac’d for 3 weeks during Caldor Fire...He talked about how important it is to be prepared--for fires and mega-rain or snow storms--in these rugged parts of the Sierra.

10-26-21: STORM UNHOUSED

After strapping down their reinforced tent in the shadows of the W-X Freeway... Kirsten Bolles pulled out her phone to check on the overnight weather conditions.

KIRSTEN: “And the first thing that popped up on my phone was the notification for a news article that the Ironman Triathlon had been canceled due to weather, and I had just finished ringing out my coat.”

The irony that one of the most grueling races in the country was called off because of the same storm the couple had to sleep in...

KIRSTEN: "we laughed for probably five minutes. I get it. But oh my gosh, the irony."

Kirsten and her husband Chris weren't alone along the freeway. Tents lined the city-designated Safe Ground Campsite from 5th to 8th street... Some sitting atop pallets, others in flooded waters. While many slept in similar conditions throughout the area... others were lucky enough to get a spot in one of the city or county's respite centers. But even that escape from the elements was short-lived.

CHRIS: Our entire existence is putting out fires right now. Exterminating problems and catastrophe. You can't ever get ahead at that point.

Kirsten and Chris say their problem isn't getting housing... it's PAYING for it... along with their medical bills.

11-3-21: COVID CASES RISE IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY JAIL

Jael Barnes says her husband has been held at the Sacramento county jail for two years awaiting trial... In that time, she says he's fallen ill.

BARNES: My husband went into that facility with nothing but severe anxiety, but now he has asthma, he has contracted COVID twice, he has COVID as we speak and is vaccinated, but still is sick due to his breathing problems.

Barnes says her husband was moved to solitary confinement after testing positive for COVID-19, and not given adequate protection, like a mask.

Advocates say they've heard from people inside the jail that conditions are not sanitary and are exacerbating the spread of COVID-19.

Sacramento County health officials say one man died of COVID-related complications.

Corinne McIntosh Sako is with the Mobilize for Mental Health Coalition. She says the handling of the virus is inhumane.

SAKO: Not receiving medical care, being deprived of testing, deprived of access to soap and toilet paper and other basic cleaning supplies. Not only is this a public health crisis, this is psychological harm being done.

County supervisors are asking the inspector general to look into procedures for intake, quarantine and virus tracing at the jails.

11-8-21: COVID/NEW SAC BUSINESSES

Escape Rooms force teams to solve a series of challenges. For Neo's owners, opening a business that requires people to be in the same room became their challenge.

Co-owner Acme Lee says they've adapted.

Acme: "We'll jump over whatever we need to and make all kinds of twists and turns in order to make this work."

He says there may be some advantage to not having a track record.

Acme: "Because we don't know what way things are supposed to be or how things are supposed to go."

Sacramento State business professor Jesse Catlin says the pandemic disrupted some business models and created others.

Jesse Catlin: the business models might not have made a whole lot of sense pre-pandemic or would have been a little bit harder to maybe to sell.

According to the US Chamber of Commerce, some of the small businesses seeing the strongest pandemic demand include used car dealers, delivery services and drive-in movie theaters.

11-19-21: HATE CRIMES RISE:

The report shows crimes against the AAPI community have continued to rise. The non-profit Stop AAPI Hate says the organization has collected over 10 thousand incidents of anti-Asian hate across the country from March 2020 to September of this year. Cynthia Choi is the co-founder of Stop AAPI Hate. Choi says the newest numbers show certain trends - like higher incidents of hate crimes against AAPI women.

CHOI: And we are seeing a pattern where members of the Asian American community largely have been subjected to verbal harassment that's had a devastating impact on our community. The latest report estimates about 1 in 5 Asian Americans in the U.S. has now experienced a hate crime.

12-13-21: PANEDEMIC PREVENTION

Masks will be required for everyone in public — vaccinated or not — from December 15 through January 15. The state's top health official, Dr. Mark Ghaly, says California's case rates have increased 47 percent since Thanksgiving, and new rules are aimed at quelling further spread as more people gather for holidays.

GHALY: We are proactively putting this tool of universal indoor masking in public settings in place to ensure we get through a time of joy and hope without a darker cloud of concern and despair. Unvaccinated people who attend large events are already required to show proof of a negative test. But Ghaly says now, depending on the type of test, it can't be older than 24 or 48 hours. Additionally, travelers are asked to get tested within 3-5 days of returning home.

12-14-21: HONORING SACRAMENTO AREA NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBE

The city's only federally recognized tribe, Wilton Rancheria, said a prayer and sang some traditional Miwok songs outside City Hall ahead of the official council vote. Sage sticks were burned and taketa's hit to punctuate their chanting. Wilton Rancheria member Mary Tarango thanked the City Council for taking this step in honoring the tribe and its ancestors.

12-14-21: SNOW RECORD

The record of 179 inches in the month of December has stood since 1970. Early in the weekend, there was some optimism it might be topped. But lead scientist and station manager Andrew Schwartz says snowfall in the last 24 hours shattered it outright.