Business is a dicey business. There are so many paths that lead to failure, not the least of which is history: Downtown Long Beach used to be full of blacksmiths, feed stores and saddle-makers, which ultimately failed when there was no longer any use for their services. Other businesses simply fall from consumers’ favor for any number of reasons—not keeping up with the times and trends, less-than-stellar customer service and, especially in these modern times, the difficulty of retail to grapple with e-tail.

It’s not common for a business to endure all the paths to closure over a span of decades. In this issue, the Business Journal celebrates many of the Long Beach businesses that have survived at least 40 years and continue to serve residents of the city and beyond.

We have tried to be as complete as possible, and we apologize for any omissions. If you own or know about a local business that’s been around since at least 1981, drop us an email to brandon@lbbj.com.
The Long Beach Unified School District is the fourth-largest district in terms of enrollment in the state, according to the California Department of Education, with schools dating back to the late 1800s. Most of the district’s schools have served students for decades, with many being built in the 1950s or earlier. In 2008, the district began a $2.7 billion endeavor to bring its outdated facilities into the 21st century. The $1.2 billion Measure K was approved in 2016. Both bond measures were approved by more than 70% of voters.

The key focuses of Measure E are to repair and update facilities that were built 60-70 years ago, introduce new technologies to enhance students’ learning environments they need to succeed.”

steady progress has been made with Measure K, funding over the last 12 and a half years to build, renovate and improve schools. The funding was even used to construct new schools: the Nelson Academy, which opened in 2012, and McBride and Browning high schools, which opened in 2013 and 2017, respectively.

In January, the district celebrated the first of 136 projects through the final phase is planned to be completed by the end of 2023. Phases 8 through 15 include an additional 45 projects. The completion of all 136 projects through the final phase is planned to be completed by the end of 2023. Phases 8 through 15 include an additional 45 projects. The completion of all 136 projects through the final phase is planned to be completed by the end of 2023. Phases 8 through 15 include an additional 45 projects. The completion of all 136 projects through the final phase is planned to be completed by the end of 2023. Phases 8 through 15 include an additional 45 projects.
Black and Latino boys are struggling to succeed in school—a local nonprofit is working to change that.

By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

It was a small number that prompted Everett Glenn to start BOSS, the Business of Student Success program, six years ago: 72.8%. That’s the percentage of male African-American students in Long Beach public schools who graduated high school without meeting the requirements to enroll in the state’s public university.

Glenn, a lawyer by training and the first Black attorney to work for Long Beach’s city attorney’s office from 1996 to 2016, was shocked. “I’m not the kind of guy to find out systems that year.”

He knew many of the students in Long Beach public schools who graduated high school without meeting the requirements to enroll in the state’s public university had potential, but they were facing challenges that made it difficult for them to succeed in school.

“Many of these students struggle to close the achievement gap here in Long Beach today,” Glenn said. “It’s not inherent,” he noted. “Nobody thought it was important to try to inspire them.”

Glenn started BOSS in 1969 and 1970, when and before it was a summer camp with roughly 20 boys in attendance to an educational and career support program serving 200 students.

“Every summer, our program has grown from two to five to 10 to 20,” Glenn said. “It’s been a gradual increase, but it’s been a steady growth.”

BOSS participants Marcus Fraser, left, and Andrew Ponce work on a race car set to compete as part of the STEM component of the in-person camp in 2019. Photo by William Byers.

Today, BOSS serves about 200 Black and Latino boys, and it’s still growing. “We’re trying to reach as many boys as possible,” Glenn said. “We’re trying to reach all the boys who need help.”

In the 2018-2019 school year, 66% of BOSS participants had a grade point average of 3.0 or above, compared to 42% of all male African-American and Hispanic students in grades 6-8.

In 2020, 66% of BOSS participants had a grade point average of 3.0 or above, compared to 42% of all male African-American and Hispanic students in grades 6-8. The LBUSD data, Glenn said, shows the impact this approach can have on students who are struggling.

“Some people who come out have never touched a cell phone,” Glenn said. “They get frustrated.”

The program offers one-on-one tutoring, and it also makes one-on-one tutoring easier. “It’s easier to find a tutor now,” Glenn said. “It’s easier to find the time to do it.”

The restrictions of the pandemic, Glenn said, presented obstacles but also opportunities. “We have more students willing to participate, some of whom wouldn’t have been able to travel to Long Beach,” he said. “It also made one-on-one tutoring easier.”

“We don’t have to travel to make it available,” Glenn said. “We can connect with students in their homes. So we were actually able to increase our engagement.”

Glenn said: “Nothing replaces in-person, but you can still take advantage.”

By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

Furnished with a few desks, office chairs and unpacked boxes, the Project Rebound office in the basement of CSULB’s University Center is still a work in progress. But to the program’s staff, this space is the culmination of years of hard work.

CSULB is one of five campuses that received funding from the state university system to start new chapters of Project Rebound, a program set up to help formerly incarcerated students succeed in academia and beyond.

“It’s a huge step forward,” said Irene Sotelo, the project coordinator. “It’s a huge step forward for incarceration reform.”

Sotelo said she has been nothing short of impressed by the nonprofit’s work.

“The work that they’re doing, the passion with which they do it is top notch. You can see it in the young people that they serve,” Aldridge said. “You can see that someone has had an impact on how they think about life.”

Glenn, an Inglewood native and former UC San Diego baseball player, said he’s glad to see an organization like BOSS laying the groundwork to help young Black men succeed, especially in his industry.

“For a company like ours and an individual like me, who works in sports and entertainment, I see the impact that Black people have in those industries,” he said. “It’s great to see that the challenges facing Black boys are being addressed.”

During the pandemic, BOSS—like everyone else—had to find new ways to engage with the students it serves. To do so, the nonprofit offered a virtual speaker series featuring Black professionals from a variety of industries and weekly check-ins with academic coaches for each individual student.

The restrictions of the pandemic, Glenn said, presented obstacles but also opportunities. “We have more students willing to participate, some of whom wouldn’t have been able to travel to Long Beach,” he said. “It also made one-on-one tutoring easier.”

“I don’t have to travel to make it available,” Glenn said. “We can connect with students in their homes. So we were actually able to increase our engagement.”

Glenn said: “Nothing replaces in-person, but you can still take advantage.”

By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

Founded in 1967 by San Francisco State University Professor John Irvin, Project Rebound has nearly tripled. Last fall, the Long Beach chapter had a cohort of 12 students. This year, that number stands at 30 students so far.

“I think it’s going to be substantial,” State University Professor John Irvin, Project Rebound was set up as a way to funnel ex-offenders from the criminal justice system into CSU schools.

Between 2016 and 2020, Project Rebound students had a recidivism rate of 0%, according to the university system, compared to the statewide average of 50% of offenders who are convicted of a crime again within three years.

Project Rebound members also have a higher student retention rate than CSU’s population overall, meaning more students in the program returned to campus after their first year.

“We bring that level of maturity that outscores the traditional student,” said Robert Ortiz Archila, who had been incarcerated but is now a graduate student assistant with the newly founded chapter. “Because we are especially accountable, we are able to make the difference.”

Their experiences have made incarcerated students resourceful too, Archila noted. “We bring that level of maturity that we’re talking about real life.”

In the area of academic achievement, the program is showing results. According to data from the Long Beach Unified School District, students in the program outperformed their peers in several areas, including attendance and grade point average.

“The program’s impact has been significant,” Glenn said. “It’s been a gradual increase, but it’s been a steady growth.”

“Some people who come out have never touched a cell phone,” Glenn said. “They get frustrated.”

That’s where Project Rebound, a majority of whom have been incarcerated themselves, come in. “We understand how it feels,” Sotelo said.

“The work that they’re doing, the passion with which they do it is top notch. You can see it in the young people that they serve,” Aldridge said. “You can see that someone has had an impact on how they think about life.”

CSULB program helps formerly incarcerated people prepare for success.

Irene Sotelo, program coordinator, and Robert Ortiz Archila, senior graduate student assistant, head Project Rebound, which helps formerly incarcerated students navigate college and a career at Cal State Long Beach. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

Since receiving official approval from the university in July 2020 and enrolling the first cohort in the fall, participation in Project Rebound at CSULB has nearly tripled. Last fall, the Long Beach chapter had a cohort of 12 students. This year, that number stands at 30 students so far.

“I think it’s going to be substantial,” James Binnall, a formerly incarcerated person and current assistant law professor at Cal State Long Beach, said. “We bring that level of maturity that outscores the traditional student.”

Binnall is a former law student who has been incarcerated but is now a graduate student assistant with the newly founded chapter. “Because we are especially accountable, we are able to make the difference.”

Their experiences have made incarcerated students resourceful too, Archila noted. “We bring that level of maturity that we’re talking about real life.”

Irene Sotelo, program coordinator, and Robert Ortiz Archila, senior graduate student assistant, head Project Rebound, which helps formerly incarcerated students navigate college and a career at Cal State Long Beach. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

Archila said. “One each, teach one.”

The investment is well worth it, Archila noted. “Eventually, we’re going to come out—prison, jail, whatever—and we’re going to be your neighbors,” he said. “So there’s an investment for public safety in investing in formerly incarcerated people. You’re investing in a better tomorrow.”

Irene Sotelo, program coordinator, and Robert Ortiz Archila, senior graduate student assistant, head Project Rebound, which helps formerly incarcerated students navigate college and a career at Cal State Long Beach. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.
Eloy Oakley, former head of LBCC, to advise Biden administration on higher education

Eloy Oakley
File photo.

CSU Chancellor

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CSU Chancellor

Continued from page 7

led the largest public university system in the nation with a student population of close to half a million.

But Castro said in a recent interview that he had a lot of help, both from campus presidents and others within the CSU, and from the community at large, including Mayor Robert Garcia, who recently hosted a reception to welcome Castro to Long Beach.

The 54-year-old Castro is adjusting to beach life after moving from his hometown of San Francisco, where he had served as president of the CSU in the San Joaquin Valley. He came with his wife Mary and 10-year-old son Jesus, named after Castro’s father, a farmworker who immigrated to the United States from Mexico. Castro has two older children: Isaac, 34, who’s a doctoral student at UC Santa Barbara (following in his father’s footsteps studying higher education policy), and Lauren, 28, a project engineer at a solar company.

He and his wife recently bought a home in Bixby Hill, adjacent to Cal State Long Beach.

“Seeing the campus every day is a good reminder of why I’m doing this,” he said.

His goals, he said, include diversifying the faculty ranks and providing more assistance to students who otherwise may not be able to attend college.

Castro, the son of a single mother who worked as a seamstress, was a first-generation college graduate himself, earning a bachelor’s degree in political science and a master’s degree in public policy from UC Berkeley, then a Ph.D. in higher education policy and leadership at Stanford.

Being the first chancellor of color is “very meaningful to me,” he said.

“Higher education made an enormous difference in my life. … America needs more leaders from all backgrounds.”

And Castro said his tenure will include leading the CSU to a new place—change spurred by a pandemic that had an enormous impact on the way people live, work and gather. The CSU scrapped in-person learning in March 2020, moving all classes online.

Like other learning institutions, the CSU had to immediately figure out a way to get students the technology and other assistance they needed to succeed, run faculty on virtual learning and implement procedures to prevent the virus from spreading on campus.

Before the pandemic, about 10% of learning throughout the CSU was online; this coming fall, about 40% of classes will remain virtual, he said. By fall 2022, Castro expects a “new equilibrium” of about 30% online, 70% in-person instruction.

“We’ve come a long way,” he said, “and we’ve learned a lot.”

He also plans to continue initiatives begun before his time at the helm of the CSU, including the Graduation Initiative 2025 to get more students through college in four years, and is launching new ones, such as the CSUCCESS program to provide technology and other assistance to students who need the help.

Despite the dark start to the year, one of the bright spots at the start of Castro’s tenure has been the state budget. Castro said he got a text message from the governor this spring letting him know the state was going to fully restore the CSU budget.

“I thought, ‘Oh, I read that right,’” he said. “That was a huge development.”

Not only did the state restore the budget thanks to a better-than-expected financial picture, but increased the CSU budget by $185 million in general funds, said he got a text message from the governor this spring letting him know the state was going to fully restore the CSU budget.

“I thought, ‘Oh, I read that right,’” he said. “That was a huge development.”

Not only did the state restore the budget thanks to a better-than-expected financial picture, but increased the CSU budget by $185 million in general funds, along with $32 million in one-time funds for infrastructure projects and deferred maintenance.

The CSU also received close to $2 billion in funding from the Federal American Rescue Plan this spring that will, in part, supplant one-time grants to students in need. This turned out to be the best CSU budget in nearly 40 years, Castro said. He said he intends to put the money to good use for the benefit of the CSU, knowing that “education will provide more opportunity to improve higher education policy and help millions of American families.”

“Part of the role of the Community College Board of Governors is to make sure that this call to service is a recognition of the work our system is leading.”

Castro’s new assignment starts July 26.

Eloy Oakley served as superintendent-president of Long Beach City College for nine years, when he helped create Long Beach College Promise, which helps connect Long Beach’s primary, secondary, junior college and university systems to improve graduation rates among Long Beach residents. The program has spurred similar programs around the state and country.

Castro’s new assignment also oversees policy, fiscal and advocacy matters for the 116-college system that serves roughly 2.1 million students.

Q&A: LBCC Superintendent-President Mike Muñoz talks racial equity, easing campus tensions and more

Mike Muñoz assumed the role of interim superintendent-president of Long Beach City College in March. He is pictured on campus, Thursday, July 15, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

EDUCATION

Long Beach Business Journal • July 27, 2021

EDUCATION

Long Beach City College Interim Superintendent-President Mike Muñoz previously served as vice president of student services and assumed his current role in March.

BRANDON RICHARDSON:

Students have not been in person since last spring. Correct?

MIKE MUÑOZ:

We have had some courses that have been offered face-to-face; what we call our essential courses, essential labs. So that would be nursing, culinary, welding—everything that’s considered our essential courses, face, what we call our essential courses, previously served as vice president of student services and assumed his current role in March.

BRANDON RICHARDSON:

What’s the state of things on campus currently? What are students looking forward to? What are they not looking forward to?

MIKE MUÑOZ:

One of the things that students really did well is … build systems and responses that would look a little bit different than the negative impacts. For example, we were quickly able to identify that there were students who were struggling with technology barriers. So we built a student aid application. When students log on, there’s a widget where they can identify themselves in need of additional support. They can identify whether they need technology support, transportation support, housing support, food support as well as mental health support. We were quickly able to scale—we’re talking thousands of students—to connect students with grocery gift cards and housing support. We’ve also been able to support students with hotspots and Chromebooks.

I love talking about the faculty and the staff and everything that the people did. We had people driving sewing machines and dropping them off at students’ houses so they could get through the course. If you don’t own a sewing machine, and there are very expensive to go out and purchase, how are you going to be successful?

Continued on page 8
President Mike Muñoz
Continued from page 5

"I was recently hiring … a faculty member for welding. In the interviews, all the candidates commented on our facilities and our equipment. These are people who work in industry full time and they all said they don’t even have access to this. It’s a little intimidating. It’s amazing that our students are getting access to this type of technology and equipment. These are people who work in industry full time and they all said they don’t even have access to this. It’s a little intimidating."

MM: At this time, we are preparing to start our process this fall for updating our strategic plan. The strategic plan will guide the college for the next six years. It’s our North Star. It’s really important because the strategic plan should drive all other planning processes for the college. We have a strategic plan task force that’s been formed for fall semester.

And finally, an area I’m really committed to is advancing our racial justice and equity work. We have the framework for reclassification and we recently received $30 million from philanthropist and author MacKenzie Scott for our work on racial justice and equity. We’ve had some significant gains in the last three or four years and we’ve done some very innovative things. We were recognized with a Seal of Excellence for our equity work in serving Latinx students.

Many of us experienced the racial awakening in the wake of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and we’re really committed to addressing some of these longstanding barriers that many of our students of color have faced.

BR: Where’s the school at in the process of finding a permanent superintendent-president?

MM: The college will be moving forward with a nationwide search. I will potentially be a candidate but I’m not engaged with the hiring process. That’s something that will be handled by human resources and the board president.

BR: Over the past two years, have there been very public tensions among some of the board of trustees, as well as between certain board members and your predecessor, Reagan Romali. What impact do these tensions have on the institution?

MM: I do feel like we’re in a much better place. If you’ve followed our recent board meetings, I think we’ve seen some of those tensions decrease. In the last few months our board took some bold steps and adopted a set of board meeting rules. I facilitated a very honest conversation with the board about how we can work better together. And I think we’ve seen that—our meetings aren’t going to 11 p.m. anymore. Even when there’s disagreements amongst the board members, it doesn’t feel as intense as in previous months. I think that they’re really starting to come together and be cohesive.

BR: Is there anything that we did not touch on that you would like to add?

MM: For so long, so many people have worked so hard at this college without a spotlight. When you work at LBCC, you see passion, you see people … bring their entire heart and soul to the institution, and they work so hard every day to create this amazing student experience.

Continued from page 6

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Education

LBUSD Bonds
Continued from page 3

Projects that are in progress include HVAC installations at Bryant, Princ, Mark Twain, Cahuenga, Robinson, Hughes and Wilson. These projects also include utility infrastructure, accessibility and fire alarm upgrades, as well as new windows, ceiling repairs and technologies such as audio-visual systems.

Identical to a project that was completed at Millikan in January, construction is underway on Lakewood High’s new track and field facility. The project is slated for completion in August and includes an all-weather field, synthetic track and water cannons (used to water turf fields before practices and games to reduce injury during play) with coaches’ boxes. The bleachers and commentators box will be repainted and the PA system is to be updated. The field also will receive a new scoreboard and track equipment.

Upgrades to Wilson High’s historic administration building and HVAC installation, are expected to be completed by late summer with the ability to take the kitchen and dining areas to follow in August. All other buildings are to receive new HVAC, flooring, lighting and paint by next summer.

"We’re grateful for all of the adjustments that our Facilities professionals have made to ensure the health and safety of workers while,” Baker said, "preparing schools and classrooms for students’ return."

LBUSD board elects Juan Benitez as president

By MIKE GUARDABASCIO / Reporter

A year after a controversial reorganization of the Long Beach Unified School District’s Board of Education, the board unanimously voted for Board Member Juan Benitez to serve as its president for the upcoming school year, with Board Member Megan Kere selected to continue as vice president.

Last year, Kere had nominated Benitez to be president but the motion went without a second, and Diana Craighead was elected president of the board for the 2020-21 school year, a move that drew criticism from within and from outside the district.

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Juan Benitez smile after joining the LBUSD school board on Monday, July 16, 2021. Photo by Drew A. Kelley

LBUSD Bonds

- LBUSD board elects Juan Benitez as president
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Benitez
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Last year, Kerr said she was “deeply disappointed” her colleagues did not support her nomination of Benitez, and prominent community members including Mayor Robert Garcia and State Sen. Lena Gonzalez agreed with her. In a letter, they criticized the board for passing over Benitez who, is Latino, in a district that predominantly serves Latino students.

This year, newly-elected Board Member Doug Otto quickly seconded Kerr’s motion to nominate Benitez. There were no other nominations, and Benitez was quickly confirmed with a unanimous vote.

“I want to thank Ms. Craighead for serving as president of our board during an extremely challenging year,” Benitez said. “You took some punches, you handled them always with grace and I think it earned our district in your service. I want to thank my colleagues for your vote of confidence.”

Tuesday also marked a return to the board’s normal chambers at the LBUSD headquarters.

Otto remarked that he was happy to be back in action in the building, and said, “I’m pleased we went through a successful reorganization of our board. Sometimes these things aren’t easy.”

Board Member Erik Miller nominated Kerr to remain as vice president, and Otto seconded the nomination, which was followed by a unanimous vote.

Some of the issues last year was over the fact Benitez had been serving as the vice president; typically the board’s VP goes on to serve as president in the next year.

LBUSD Superintendent Jill Baker thanked Craighead for her leadership during the pandemic and said she looked forward to working with Benitez and Kerr, also noting that Kerr was recently appointed to the executive committee of the Council of the Great City Schools, an influential coalition of the nation’s urban school districts.

Board hires new communications officer

After a sometimes-critical audit of its communications apparatus from the National School Public Relations Administration, the LBUSD pledged to hire more communications staff a few months ago. The audit found that the district had a lot of room for improvement in the way it communicates with the community, and on Monday evening the board approved the hire of Justin Grayson to serve as the district’s new chief communications and community engagement officer.

The board approved the hire unanimously, with several board members thanking Baker for making it a priority to improve that aspect of the district. Grayson has previously public education experience working with the Riverside Unified School District and most recently was a public relations manager for Amazon.

Grayson’s contract begins on Aug. 17.

Trades Classes
Continued from page 9

power sources, like hybrid or electric cars.

The pandemic also put a damper on job and internship opportunities for students. Both Long Beach Transit and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, who normally offer internships to LBCC students, significantly reduced operations, shutting students out.

But it also presented an opportunity for current and aspiring mechanics and other trade students, Ling said. “During times of layoffs or unemployment, that’s the best time to retool and sharpen your sword as a student.”

When in-person classes resumed in June 2020, students were eager to return. That momentum has continued. This spring, enrollment numbers were up 9% from the previous year, which saw the last cohort to enroll prior to the pandemic. According to Ling, there were no reported cases of coronavirus among students, a result of increased safety measures like social distancing and ramped-up cleaning protocols. “It worked,” he said. Ling is confident that students are well prepared for the job market, despite the interruption in hands-on training, in part because some students were more engaged in virtual schooling than they may have been in a traditional classroom setting.

“A lot of the students were really receptive to the new types of media,” Ling said of the virtual classes, which went beyond the usual PowerPoint presentations and included videos and other online resources to bring educational content across. “I would get a lot more emails and text messages.”

Whether employers will recognize that and give this year’s graduates the same consideration as those in pre-pandemic years remains to be seen. “It’s going to be interesting to see how that plays,” Ling said, adding that in the end, their practical skills will be graduates’ best calling card. “The proof is in the pudding: can you fix the car or not?”

South Coast Shingle Co. celebrates 75 years in Long Beach thanks to ‘good customers and faithful employees’

South Coast Shingle Co. celebrates 75 years in Long Beach thanks to ‘good customers and faithful employees’

By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

For decades, the South Coast Shingle Company has been a family affair. A few years after the company was founded in 1946, Sam Riddle came on as bookkeeper. At the time, the roofing material supplier was located on 11th Street near Redondo Avenue.

The company outgrew that facility and moved up to its current home in North Long Beach on South Street near Cherry Avenue in 1963. “This was out in the boondocks then, all oil property,” said Ross Riddle, 72, Sam’s son and now president and CEO of South Coast Shingle.

Ross and his brother Larry, 68, grew up around the business, going to work with their dad on Saturdays, helping around the yard. In 1981, while attending Long Beach City College and then Cal State Long Beach—ultimately receiving a bachelor’s degree in business management—Ross joined the South Coast team as a full-time employee. Larry came on board nine years later and is now CFO.

South Coast Shingle sells all things roofing and masonry to contractors and homeowners. Hundreds of choices of shingles and tiles, bricks, stone, gravel and the accessories necessary on the job from protective equipment to ladders and shovels.

The business is tailored toward homeowners, which makes up about two-thirds of business, Ross said, because seasoned roofers and commercial project managers already know what they are looking for. The store is open to the public so they can get one-on-one assistance to learn about more options than a roofing company typically would present to them at home.

“A roofer doesn’t have time to sit with a homeowner and tell them all the options. The business is tailored toward homeowners, which makes up about two-thirds of business, Ross said, because seasoned roofers and commercial project managers already know what they are looking for. The store is open to the public so they can get one-on-one assistance to learn about more options than a roofing company typically would present to them at home.”

“As a roofer doesn’t have time to sit with a homeowner and tell them all the options.”

Text driver Paulea Banas, 40, changes the brake pads on his cab during an automotive class at Long Beach City College, Tuesday, July 20, 2021. Banas is taking classes at the community college so he will have the ability to repair his own vehicle or, at the very least, know if a mechanic is trying to take advantage of him. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

South Coast Shingle Co., a roofing supply company celebrating its 75th year in Long Beach. Riddle began working for the company 53 years ago, Friday, July 16, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.
SnugTop has been manufacturing hard-top truck-bed covers in Long Beach for 62 years. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Santa Fe Importers has been serving residents and businesses out of its deli and wholesale facility for 74 years. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

A staple of the Long Beach bar scene, the V Room is celebrating its 87th anniversary this year. Photo by Cheantay Jensen.

HISTORIC LONG BEACH COMPANIES
California Swaging supplies parts for aircraft, cars, even NASA spacecraft

By CRYSTAL NIEBLA / Reporter

Since 1947, California Swaging & Cable Products Co. has been manufacturing cable assemblies for military and commercial aircraft, helicopters, missiles, parachutes, military ejection systems and even space vehicles. In fact, cable assemblies from California Swaging fielded the Apollo 11 capsule’s parachutes that made a successful reentry to Earth possible.

“Some can be made in minutes, some will take longer, maybe an hour,” she said about working with cables. “And sometimes even an hour just to get set up for it. The length, the size are just major contributors. It just all depends.”

Because the company works with government agencies such as the military, Yoder said that she could not go into detail about their clients or the frequency of the products they sell. Yoder said clients can contact the company for 38 years. Before working for decades, many of South Coast Shingle’s family, many of South Coast Shingle’s employees have worked for the company for decades. Jimmy Killen, 56, has been with the company for 38 years. Before working for South Coast, Killen said he was making pizzas and attending Long Beach City College. When he dropped out of school, he said his brother, a roofer, told him it was time he got a “real job” and introduced him to Ross.

At first, Killen was sweeping the yard and doing manual jobs. He worked his way up to driver and then was yard supervisor for about 15 years. Now, after a stint in sales, Killen is the general manager of the Long Beach store.

“We're pleased to be as successful as we've been and we owe it to our good customers and faithful employees.”

By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

A year plus into the pandemic, much has changed for Long Beach residents and businesses. Bars and restaurants have fully reopened, employees are trickling back into offices and conventions are expected to return next month. But as life returns to normal — barring interruptions from emerging coronavirus variants — the Long Beach Historical Society continues to be a record of life under lockdown and the reopening process in the face of a crowdsourced archive fed by survey submissions.

“There are some very, very interesting stories,” said Julie Bartolotto, executive director of the historical society.

One that stuck out to her in particular was a submission from a psychotherapist, who said that, unlike before, none of her patients cancelled their appointments during the pandemic — a possible indication of the level of stress people were experiencing as a result of the public health crisis.

“We're pleased to be as successful as we've been and we owe it to our good customers and faithful employees.”
Supply chain challenges continue to cause delays, forcing some companies to reduce freight into San Pedro Bay ports

By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

Supply chain issues impact businesses and consumers alike. Businesses experience higher costs and shipping delays that could lead to product shortages. Mirroring those hurdles, consumers see more “out of stock” notices rise, and prices must wait longer for their online purchases to arrive.

Continued supply chain challenges at the San Pedro Bay ports, the busiest port complex in the United States, has spurred such issues for businesses—and individuals—findings some like Levi Strauss to reevaluate their freight movement.

“We’re shipping most of our product into the U.S. through the Long Beach East Coast,” said Todd Bergh, senior vice president and CFO at Levi Strauss. During a July 8 earnings call, specifically addressing ongoing challenges at the Port of Long Beach. “Only about 20% of our U.S. freight is coming through the West Coast ports due to delays, opting instead for East Coast ports and more expensive air freight.”

While the reduction or loss of some freight, the San Pedro Bay ports have been the first choice for many shippers since they are the most direct route from the Asia markets, according to data from the PMSA. After a brief reprieve that saw delays fall to just over three and half days, the port’s delay times are back up to about 4.8 days, with 23% of containers waiting longer within the complex.

“The pandemic has definitely played a role in the congestion—that was a drop in volumes in Q4 2020 when the pandemic began affecting Asia, and operations came to a halt,” Alvarenga said. “It resulted with blank sailings, vessels stranded in the middle of the ocean with nowhere to go, items stuck in warehouses that weren’t being purchased, etc.”

The second quarter of last year saw demand skyrocket for various items due to the pandemic, including personal protective equipment, home office supplies, equipment, hygiene items, home improvement items and more. Alvarenga said. “What we are seeing this year is a wave of uncertainty kept the supply chain struggling. Now that volumes have begun to stabilize, the industry is preparing for the back-to-school and holiday seasons.”

“Our expectation for the second half [of 2021] is there could be challenges, but we’re going to be outfighting more,” said Alvarenga.

Airfreight is significantly more expensive than shipping by sea due to the capacity limitations of aircraft and the volume a ship can carry. But sea freight prices from Asia into the U.S. and Europe have soared over the past year, now $573 to 40-foot container from Shanghai to Los Angeles—a 26% increase from a year ago—according to a Bloomberg report. Beneficial cargo owners (companies such as Levi Strauss) don’t typically publicly announce when they have ports or regions but Alvarenga said its likely others have pulled back out of West Coast ports due to the delays, opting instead for East Coast ports and more expensive air freight.

“These are some of the options as Long Beach weighs the long-term costs of owning a century-old steel ocean liner.”

And all of the plans come with a significant price tag, ranging from $155 million to retire the ship, to roughly $500 million to move the vessel and build a new dry dock, according to a report from city-owned engineering firm Moffatt & Nichol.

Long Beach has owned the Queen Mary as a tourist attraction since 1967, but long-term plans for the ship and its various operators that have struggled to make a profit.

The latest operator filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in January and the city this month took control of the Queen Mary when former leaseholder, Urban Commons Queen Mary, walked away from the lease after the ship received no qualified bidders at bankruptcy auction.

Long Beach now has complete control of the ship for the first time in more than 50 years, and with it comes tough decisions about the future of the ship and how much to invest in the Queen Mary to keep it viable under the uncertainty of the pandemic.

The City Council in a special meeting July 20, did not make immediate decisions into the costs for several options. The city is working to determine funding sources while assessing the feasibility of transferring control of the ship to the Harbormaster’s department or moving it to a new location.

“The options for the Queen Mary’s future include preserving the ship in place for a one-time cost of $25-$50 million, with ongoing costs of $3 million annually for more than 25 years. City officials said this option is costly up front, but those costs could be offset by tourism revenue.

Dry docking is the most expensive option, with costs ranging from $200-$500 million, but it’s most long-term solution, with the ship expected to last at least another 100 years, officials said.

Another option is to “retire and recycle” the ship or turn it into an artificial reef for costs ranging from $405 million to $100 million, but the city would lose the chance for future revenue, officials said.

Counselman Rick Richardson said he liked the dry dock option as it provides the most potential to preserve the ship and develop the surrounding land.

“We have the opportunity to create major jobs in the community,” he said.

Counselman Suzie Price asked to push forward with exploring the possibility of having the Queen Mary designated as a national landmark, as the Statue of Liberty, which would provide federal funding.

Mayor Robert Garcia noted that the city still has much to consider.

“It’s an historic landmark not just for our community but for the country,” he said. “The amount of history is something that is being celebrated and preserved.”

Moffatt & Nichol in the coming weeks is expected to release a detailed structural integrity report on the Queen Mary that will have more information on the ship’s condition.

By KEILY PUENTE / Reporter

Should the Queen Mary be preserved in place or moved and dry docked? Could it be dismantled and scrapped, or turned into an artificial reef?

For the past year, cargo volumes at the San Pedro Bay ports, the busiest port complex in the United States, has spurred such issues for businesses—and individuals—findings some like Levi Strauss to reevaluate their freight movement.

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The City’s total budget is $3 billion, much of which is tied up in operations at the Harbor Department, Long Beach Airport, Water Department offices, among others. Known as the general fund, is what the city has to spend on much of the services that directly impact families, schools, police, fire and recreational programs.

The $350 million proposed general fund in 2022 is over $51 million less than the current year, and officials were facing an approximate $10 million deficit—equivalent to about 45 full-time city jobs, City Manager Tom Medda said July 16.

The general fund, however, was bolstered by roughly $315 million in one-time funds officials were counting on from the American Rescue Plan. It remains unclear, however, whether the federal government will place any requirements or restrictions on the relief funding.

The draft budget released Friday must still undergo public hearings and vote from city council before being approved in September.

Here are five key things to watch as budget deliberations unfold over the next several weeks.

Federal and state funds

The city is pruning in favor of a balanced budget on millions that it expects to receive from the federal government, even approving a spending plan for the relief funds last March. A significant chunk of those funds about $76.7 million, will be used to fix the projected budget deficit from the city’s 2021-22 budget, and to refill the city’s depleted reserve funds.

“There is nothing more important than that,” the mayor said. “If we had another opportunity to do that, we’d be able to meet that crisis.”

No matter what the city does with the Queen Mary, it won’t be cheap, new reports say

By KEILY PUENTE / Reporter

A mask mandate runs out in Los Angeles in June 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

City staff may finalize decisions on the future of the Queen Mary during a study session before the Long Beach City Council, Tuesday, July 20, 2021. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

Long Beach releases $3 billion budget; here are 5 key takeaways

By MELISSA EVANS / Managing Editor

Ships pick up containers at the Port of Long Beach’s Pier G, Thursday, June 10, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

By JEREMIAH DOBRUCK / Reporter

What are Long Beach’s new masking rules?”

Long Beach instituted a new mask mandate that requires everyone to wear a mask whether you’re vaccinated or not. This time, though, it applies only to indoors, and not—always there was a handful of exceptions and sometimes confusing details. But what mostly boils down to this: If you’re inside, and it’s not at someone’s private residence, wear a mask. But what it mostly boils down to is this: If you’re inside, and it’s not at someone’s private residence, wear a mask.

The city’s new health order, which went into effect July 17, has all the mask-related details—no in “all indoor public settings.”

Continued on page 19
Public hearing on proposed water, sewer rate hikes slated for August

By JASON RUIZ / Reporter

Long Beach Water Department customers can expect an increase in their monthly bills if a proposed rate hike for water and sewer service is approved later this year by the City Council. The department said that the proposed 8% increase for water service and 10% for sewer rates will result in an 8% increase for water service and 10% for water and sewer service is approved By

Garner said it’s safe to say that water related services could continue to get more expensive across the board as resources are strained. While Long Beach has not asked customers to reduce their usage, it may have to if the water situation in the region doesn’t improve over the next few months, he said. Long Beach gets about 60% of its water from groundwater sources helping to maintain relatively low costs to customers, and increasing its ability to tap into underground sources could give it more independence from any federal or state mandated water restrictions.

“We don’t need to do our efforts to justify these rates in order to see what we’re doing with these rates in that by applying to capital improvement programs, improving our groundwater abilities we’re gaining independence,” said Commissioner Bob Shannon. “By gaining independence we’re avoiding the effects of the drought.”

The 8% increase this year, he said, will likely be the first in a series of rate increases over the next few years needed to bring the department’s operating reserves back up to the city’s minimum reserve level of about $30 million. A presentation given to the board by a state-run show projected rate increases for the next five years. Under an 8% increase scenario for water service, the department projects it would have to increase rates in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 fiscal years as well. The sewer rates could also be raised by 4% in 2023 and 2024 with an additional increase in 2025, according to the presentation, which showed that smaller increases this year could have meant larger increases in the following years. Between the water and sewer fund the department has projected around a $11.6 million structural deficit.

While the meeting is currently planned to be held in person, the timing of it could be affected by the indoor mask mandate, and if things continue to go backward to the point where an online meeting is the only option, it could require the department to send out a new public hearing notice, which could restart the clock, Garner said. The hearing is slated to begin at 7 p.m. Aug. 26 at the Long Beach Groundwater Treatment Plant at 2950 Redondo Ave.

Budget

Long Beach has already received or will receive over $49 million in federal and state funding related to the coronavirus and its effect on the economy, much of which is tied to previously approved programs to help renters with back rent, or is dedicated to specific parts of the city like the airport, homeless services and COVID-19 testing and contact tracing. City officials said they will also direct about $64 million to support businesses and promote economic inclusion, among other things. A total of $10 million will be used to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including providing basic resources for families, homelessness, housing and language access.

Measure LS

Long Beach voters in November approved Measure LS, which doubled the city’s general tax on business licensing for oil production to 30 cents per barrel. The revenue—this year about $3.1 million—is to be used generally for community, health and climate change. Modica said the officials have proposed using $10.636 to establish a Youth Fund that will provide grants and other resources for young people, close to $15,000 for community health programs, $240,000 for the city’s efforts to study climate change and devise ways to adapt.

Measure A

Money from the sales tax increase approved by voters in 2015 next year includes: 2.5 million to keep fire Engine 17 in East Long Beach in service for at least another year 2.2 million for neighborhood “safe streets” programs $13.6 million for upgrades to public safety communication technologies

City of Long Beach Bid Opportunities

TITLE

BID NUMBER DUE DATE

Engineering Design Svcs. for the Cathodic Protection Impel. of Recycled Water Sys. RFP (REQ-2020) 07/06/2021

ITB T21-072 07/29/2021

Subscription, and Services 10 Signalized Locations on Coyotes Street RFP R7-172 07/30/2021

Sanct Fe Ave Synchronization Enhancement R-7183 08/02/2021

LBWD Professional Security Services RFP 08/02/2021

Third-Party Amts Support Contract RFP RFP 02-2018 09/16/2021

Red Car Greenlight Public Art Project RFP RFP 02-18 09/03/2021

Band and Secure Services ITB ITB 09/20/2021

As-Needed Services RFP RFP 04-18 10/07/2021

Rectangular Flushing Beacon (RFB) RFP RFP 2016-099 12/05/2021


Park Operators & Concessions ITB RFD1-083 07/07/2021


CITY OF LONG BEACH BID OPPORTUNITIES

Art on the exterior of Compound by artist Tavares Strachan, You Belong Here (Blue #1), 2019. Photo by Laure Joilet.
You’ve got a million bucks! Big deal. Everybody’s got a million bucks. Hundreds of homeowners in town could liquidate their assets and be millionaires. Homeless, sure, but never millionaires.

And then they could turn their lives around and buy a million-dollar house. Again, big deal. The entirety of the east side of town, from Belmont Shore all the way to the Hawaiian Gardens border, is blanketed with million-dollar homes—homes that are listed between $1 million and $1.25 million. That is, homes that are listed between $1 million and $1.25 million.

You go to LA, $4 million is nothing. The sprawling 7,730 square-foot house next door, the 72 Place parking lot—so, plenty of space for five cars.

The home includes a 45-foot open-waterfront view and spectacular sunsets. And it certainly hasn’t deteriorated in the first time he heard about a Long Beach. Realtor Keith Muirhead, now with Long Beach architect Ed Kellingworth in 1956, is its rooftop deck which is a glistening chandelier and a grand staircase leading to the second floor. You’d feel like a slob if you were not what you’d consider a laid-back beach pad. You can see a price cut of a million, though. The owners of what could still be million-dollar market.

You've got a million bucks? Big deal. The city has already been on the market for going on 6 months. The health order doesn't specify what venues, public gatherings, and businesses that are not subject to masking requirements at this time. The order also includes the standard carve-out for workplace venues that are conducted in basically every mask mandate. People exempt from wearing masks are:

- Kids under 2 years "very young children must not wear a mask because of the risk of suffocation," the order says.
- Anyone with a disability, medical condition or mental health condition that would cause them to be harmed by wearing a mask or who can't remove a mask without someone else's help.
- People who are hearing impaired and unable to communicate with people who are not wearing a mask.
- People for whom wearing a mask would cause an unreasonable risk at their workplace.

When will the mask mandate end? The health order doesn’t specify any expiration date for the new rules, but it does point to a few factors that will influence officials’ decision-making process.

The order says its purpose is to use the “least restrictive” measures to control COVID in Long Beach. And to judge what those measures should be, health officials will look at data like the local COVID case rate, hospitalizations, deaths, the percentage of people testing positive for the coronavirus, the number of people vaccinated against COVID-19, and the number of fully vaccinated people who still get sick from the disease. For now, at least some of those indicators are headed in the wrong direction. When Long Beach instituted its mask mandate, the case rate was 7.5 per 100,000, according to a statement from the city. By July 30, Long Beach reported its case rate had almost doubled since then to 15.4 per 100,000.

Vaccination rates in the city have also slowed significantly, with only 479 first doses administered last week compared to 896 during the first week of June and 2,690 during the first week of May.

Overall, 57.9% of Long Beach residents are vaccinated with at least one shot, according to the city’s COVID-19 data dashboard (https://covid19data.lacity.org). That amounts to about 75% of all adults in the city and 67.9% of everyone over 12, which is the current age-eligibility cutoff for the vaccine.

How will it be enforced? As with all COVID-19 health orders, violating the new mask mandate can be a misdemeanor, but Long Beach has rarely pursued enforcement to that point. The city has focused on enforcing the mask rules on businesses, not individuals.

Bars, restaurants, offices or other businesses that don’t comply with mask mandates or post the required signage may be subject to escalating fines and fees. In some cases, the city has even revoked health and business permits.

To be in compliance, businesses—or anyone else hosting members of the public indoors—must:
- Require all patrons to wear masks for indoor activities, regardless of their vaccination status; and
- Post clearly visible and easy to read signage, with or without an employee present, at all entry points for indoor and outdoor settings to communicate the requirements for patrons.

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Family, friends of the late Mark Bixby tour new bike path named in his honor

By SEBASTIAN ECHEVERRY / Reporter

A newly painted pedestrian and bicycle path atop the recently built bridge at the Long Beach port was officially inaugurated as the Mark Bixby Memorial Bicycle Pedestrian Path during a private event Saturday, July 17, in honor of the longtime champion of cycling and member of one of the city’s founding families.

Although the path is not yet open to the public, the Freddies—Bixby’s cycling group—were the first to ride their bikes across the expanse. Family, friends and some Long Beach city officials were taken up in golf-carts to tour the three resting points dotting the bridge.

Bixby was killed in a plane crash at the Long Beach Airport in 2011 along with four others. The legacy he left behind and his passion for community bike paths helped Long Beach planners make a way for the bike path on the newly named Long Beach International Gateway Bridge that was completed last year to replace the Gerald Desmond Bridge.

Bixby’s wife, Theresa Bixby, his widow, said naming a bike path in her husband’s name was fitting, giving his cycling athleticism and love of sharing the sport with the community.

“It’s a great honor and tribute to him,” she said. "His daughter, Kirra Bixby, said she looks forward to the day she can ride her bike on the path, too."

The Bixby family is considered one of the founding families of Long Beach. Historically, they owned large acres of farmland at Rancho Los Cerritos and Rancho Los Alamitos where they raised sheep and cattle. Descendants of the family were instrumental in shaping Long Beach over the years. Mark took up that same leadership ambition to help develop the city’s Bicycle Master Plan and founded the Long Beach Bike Festival.

More construction is expected to take place over the next several months before cyclists and joggers can use the bike path. A connector bridge from Ocean Boulevard to the bridge is currently under construction.

Kerry Gerot, the port’s communications director, said construction on the connecting bridge will take at least a year and a half.
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