By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

Across Long Beach, museums have reopened their doors to visitors, dance crews are rehearsing and actors are returning to the stage. As the arts return after a year of pandemic restrictions, so does millions in auxiliary spending, from ticket sales to dinner reservations.

Arts are a major economic driver across the country, but especially in California. Pre-pandemic, the arts and culture sector was a $919.7 billion industry for the country, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, surpassing economic powerhouses like construction, transportation and warehousing, and tourism. In California, it made up 7% of the state’s GDP.

The pandemic has hit the arts and culture sector hard. Restrictions on large gatherings meant artists and the institutions that host them had nowhere to perform or present. But with the crisis also came unprecedented financial support, especially from the federal, state and local governments.

“When you can’t access something, when it’s lost to you, you realize how much you need it,” Julie Baker, executive director of the statewide advocacy group Californians for the Arts, said of the likely reason behind the outpouring of financial support.

When charities shifted their focus to emergency relief efforts, governments and private donors stepped in, distributing funds at “historic” levels, Baker said.

Now, advocates hope to keep the momentum going, even as museums, theaters and concert halls reopen. Currently, all signs are pointing in that direction. Museums, theaters and other cultural institutions have been allowed to reopen at full capacity, although those hosting 1,000 or more spectators at a time must require negative test results or proof of vaccination from visitors, a policy enforced by the city. Smaller venues can decide to do so at their discretion, and some, like the Long Beach Playhouse, are planning to do so. Attendees are required to wear masks indoors, regardless of their test results or vaccination status.

Meanwhile, the funds keep coming. After granting over $8.4 billion to shuttered venues, as well as hundreds of millions in arts funding provided by the 2020 CARES and 2021 American Rescue Plan acts, the federal government could soon allocate $300 million in direct grants and commissions to creators nationwide.

The Creative Economy Revitalization Act, which takes inspiration from a New Deal era program that supported the arts group's gain momentum with public, private support

City’s 2022 budget to use $43.3M to continue business support programs

By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

Using federal funds, the Long Beach 2022 budget will continue various programs that support local businesses impacted by the pandemic that began last year, including grants, fee waivers, technical support, eviction protection and more.

First through the CARES Act and now the American Rescue Plan, Long Beach has received hundreds of millions of dollars in funding from the federal government to facilitate economic recovery after the COVID-19 recession. The money allowed the city to kickstart programs through its Long Beach Recovery Act to assist businesses that lost millions in revenue due to forced closures and stay-at-home orders.

“We recognize the entrepreneurial spirit of Long Beach,” Business Operations Bureau Manager Johnny Vallejo said. “Small businesses are less able to weather the storm, less able to manage some of the economic impacts of the pandemic.”

Due to financial hardships, city officials faced a budget deficit they were unable to close.

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Bridge Point warehouse in North Long Beach nears completion

By SEBASTIAN ECHEVERRY / Reporter

Bridge Industrial, an acquisition and development firm that specializes in industrial real estate, will soon celebrate the grand opening of Bridge Point Long Beach, a massive, 415,320-square-foot Class A warehouse situated in the industrial district of North Long Beach.
By SEBASTIAN ECHEVERRY / Reporter

A multi-city construction project to reimage Artesia Boulevard in Southern California is expected to break ground this winter.

The once-in-a-generation investment—as one Long Beach official put it—includes $20 million to repair the road, install more street lights and crosswalks and upgrade a bike-only lane and other pedestrian-focused improvements across Compton, Long Beach, Cerritos and Paramount and other gateway cities.

City planners believe the improvements will also positively impact businesses north along the corridor, specifically in North Long Beach, where business development has been lacking in previous years.

The new highrises that have broken ground north of the city’s skyline in recent years show that developer interest has mostly been focused in Downtown Long Beach, but in the last three years there’s been a growing interest in North Long Beach.

Tom Carpenter, vice president of Frontier and board member of the Uptown Business Improvement District, believes the upcoming updates will open the way for more private investments.

Frontier Real Estate Investments is one of the new developers pioneering private development in North Long Beach. Most recently, the company opened the Uptown Commons, a contemporary retail center with restaurants, a coffee shop and a bank. “It further enhances that whole area, which is a plus for us,” Carpenter said. “We always hoped that when our project came in that it would spur other projects and just raise the bar for everybody.”

Carpenter added that a lot of investor attention in North Long Beach has mostly concentrated on Atlantic Avenue, another major road that runs from north to south.

Current business development there focuses mostly on leasing, including townhomes and ends and lots led by developer LAB Holdings, known for the Anti-Mall retail center in Orange County.

“There’s always been a lot of things to talk about for Atlantic; I’d say there’s been less to talk about on Artesia,” Carpenter said.

While housing developments are expected for Atlantic Avenue, the market on Artesia Boulevard caters toward a growing need for local amenities such as restaurants and coffee shops.

“When we look at different amenities that were lacking in the area, we were really confident that those uses would do really well in this site just because that area is underserved,” Carpenter said. “Alongside financial support from local governments and the private sector, the ability for more housing and business growth is really taking off in conjunction with the proposed road improvements will pave the way for more business growth in the area.”

The city council voted in November 2020 to approve the first phase of a rezoning policy specifically for North Long Beach, called the UPLAN, which went into effect this year.

Phase one changed zoning requirements on Atlantic Avenue and Artesia Boulevard to be more uniform. Before the update, Councilman Rex Richardson said it was common to see a “hodgepodge” of businesses and residential buildings placed next to each other. Motorists driving down Artesia might see a gas station next to an auto repair shop next to a depot.

Richardson said the rezoning change should address those irregularities.

“It created different standards for parking, mixed-use; different standards for medical offices—all of those are built into the zone,” Richardson said. “That helps set the stage for the private realm.”

The investment into Artesia’s redevelopment will also increase lighting in the area, Richardson said, to keep the streets well lit throughout the night for potential shoppers and other pedestrians.

Between the support from local leaders, policy changes and interest from private developers, business growth on Artesia Boulevard still faces a fair share of challenges.

Carpenter said Artesia Boulevard is mostly broken into small parcels as opposed to large swaths of vacant land available for large-scale developments. “It’s much more difficult to come in with larger projects that clean up large portions of it, so it’s going to take some time,” he said.

For business owners who are already preparing for the upcoming construction.

Joe Gomez, 59, waits for a bus on Artesia Boulevard in North Long Beach, Wednesday, Sept. 1, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

How Artesia Boulevard’s reconstruction will boost business growth

By SEBASTIAN ECHEVERRY / Reporter

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For business owners who are already preparing for the upcoming construction.

Joe Gomez, 59, waits for a bus on Artesia Boulevard in North Long Beach, Wednesday, Sept. 1, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.
Fernando Valladares stands outside his seafood restaurant Portside Fish Co. in North Long Beach, Thursday, Aug. 26, 2021. Photo by Sebastian Ecenvery.

Growing up in El Salvador, Fernando Valladares watched his family cook dishes he would later recreate. Watching his family sparked an interest in Valladares to learn more about cooking. As a child, Valladares continued to honor his family tradition through Portside Fish Co., a new seafood restaurant that officially opened this spring in North Long Beach.

Continued on page 9

Construction crews are wrapping work on a 415,320-square-foot, Class A industrial building at 2400 Artesia Blvd. in North Long Beach, Wednesday, Sept. 1, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Crews broke ground in 2019 to clean up contaminated soil that was left behind from operations of the previous refinery. Williams said crews removed over 6,000 tons of soil.

“It was a huge investment that we had to make to carefully take down all the infrastructure, take out all of the contaminants,” Crosner said. “It was a monumental effort to take down what was there.”

The new facility is modern, sets a new standard for architecture and aesthetics on Artesia Boulevard and is a new gateway to the Paramount Boulevard industrial corridor,” Richardson said. “It paved the way for more local jobs for our residents and modern regulatory standards to clean our air.”

Long Beach, like cities and counties across the state, is undergoing a redistricting process that will determine political lines for the next 10 years. However, because Census data has not been turned over to the city and its Independent Redistricting Commission, what will happen in the city is still a matter of speculation.

Districts are required to be more or less even in population by law, with a 10% deviation allowed between individual districts.

Preliminary data from the United States Census Bureau showed that the city’s population grew by about 4,500 people, 2,000 more than what was projected in the 2015-2019 American Community Survey. There are also concerns that Los Angeles County could have been undercounted in neighborhoods that are majority renters, Asian, Latino and those with widespread poverty.

Where those population increases and decreases happened could determine what districts shrink and which ones grow larger. The 9th District was already the city’s most populous (53,828 as of 2010) and was projected to grow by another thousand residents, which could mean that its territory could shrink.

A map run north through the intersection of South Street and Atlantic Avenue, crossing from the city’s 8th District to the 9th, Wednesday, Sept. 1, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Wednesday showed that the 9th District was one of two districts that likely will have to reduce its population to comply with redistricting.
‘Good eats’: Mr. Fries Man brings gourmet fries to North Long Beach

By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

The sound of french fries sizzling in scalding hot oil while the scent emanating from the fryer hangers heavy in the kitchen of a small, triangular building in North Long Beach where Mr. Fries Man employs—all clad in black—pile mounds of meat, cheese and sauces on a bed of fried-p的确是土豆。The franchise restaurant that serves up gourmet fries on Artesia Boulevard in North Long Beach is a family affair, owned and operated by Deonata Douglas, 31, her mom Yolanda Cooper, her surrogate brothers Jordan, 25, and Devin Green, 33, and Carman Capiti, 30, and their mother Nichole Rosso.

“It’s been going well,” Douglas said, noting that previous tenants of the building only lasted months, including the most recent occupant, Tik’s Lei Hawaiian Kitchen. “But I believe we’ll be here for years and years to come.”

Mr. Fries Man menus is both basic and anything but. The business sells french fries hand cut at a time. But what goes on top of those fries sets it apart. Protein toppings include the standard chicken—grilled or fried—with various sauces, such as barbecue, ranch and Buffalo as well as the gourmet stuff, “Smack” sauces.

Douglas said he hires from within the immediate community, even reaching out to the Long Beach neighborhood association’s chili cook off or coordinating garage sales. To break that up would be “devastating,” she said.

Douglas said the roughly dozen associations that exist in the district have turned to advocating, and often completing projects, as a unit for things like street cleanups and projects like the Hamilton Loop, a new greenbelt along the W. freeway. But they also come together for much simpler things like promoting one association’s chili cook off or coordinating garage sales. To break that up would be “devastating,” she said.

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Portside joins independent restaurants Main Chick Hot Chicken, Oi Asian Fusion and Shomi Noods: Ramen Bar that have set up shop at the Uptown Commons retail space on Atlantic Avenue and Artesia Boulevard. Valladares is a bonafide chef. He studied culinary arts at Le Cordon Bleu in Pasadena. For 11 years, he worked multiple kitchens and at luxury hotels including Hilton, Charlie Palmer restaurant at South Coast Plaza before it closed and St. Regis at Dana Point. He worked under Scott Conant, a renowned chef and a judge on the Food Network’s show “Chopped,” in Beverly Hills.

A passion to develop different plates and cuisines from multiple culinary backgrounds drove Valladares to open his own restaurant. He teamed with Andy Nguyen, food restaurant entrepreneur, to establish four restaurants, Portside being his most recent investment.

“The community has been nothing but amazing to us,” Valladares said about placing a stake in North Long Beach. “We get regulars coming in here all the time saying, ‘We’ve been waiting for something like this.’”

Portside offers customers Baja-style eats, including tacos and burritos packed to the brim with shrimp, fish, chicken or steak. There’s also a selection of cocktails and beers that customers can enjoy at the restaurant’s bar top or outdoor patio. Valladares is hoping to expand Portside’s menu to include Cajun-spiced plates, something he says is popular in North Long Beach.

So far, Valladares said his business is growing and the support of local customers is helping him ride a wave of success, but there was a chance that Portside in North Long Beach could have never existed.

The Long Beach location is Valladares’ second Portside. He first opened one at a food hall in Irvine in 2017. In March of 2020, his lease for the restaurant came to an end, and the pandemic began to squeeze local businesses.

“That was the story of everyone in the pandemic,” Valladares said. “Everyone was hurting bad for business.”

Colleagues in the industry closed their businesses and some believed the pandemic would be over in a few months, Vallardes said.

“As a business owner I saw my world crumbling down because all I have are restaurants,” Valladares said. “It puts you in a sense of alert, like, what’s the next step, what are you going to do?”

His luck then took a turn for the better when he received an email from a company in Compton that specialized in developing COVID test kits. The company offered to pay Vallardes for catering services for lunch. It was only a one-time gig, Vallardes said, and the order called for just 15 meals. But as time went on, those 15 meals grew to 30, then 60, Vallardes said.

Eventually, Vallardes moved into a kitchen in the company’s office building and was cooking breakfast, lunch and dinner for the staff that was working long hours to develop more COVID tests.

The catering opportunity generated enough revenue for Vallardes to rehire his employees and to open two Portside locations, one in Glendora and the other in North Long Beach.

He attempted to open the restaurant in the winter of 2020, but a spike in virus infections and hospitalizations made it difficult to celebrate with a grand opening. The restaurant quickly shifted to take-out and partnered with DoorDash and GrubHub.

As the vaccine became available and COVID restrictions lessened, Valladares reopened Portside, this time to great success.

The Uptown Commons offers an open-space dining patio similar to other food halls such as SteelCraft, which integrates naturally into Portside’s open bar.

“Portside Fish Co. continued from page 4

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“‘We’re catering to this side of Long Beach, giving people a taste of what we got,’” Valladares said. •
Boys and Girls Club of Long Beach member performing at a recent gala for the club. Photo courtesy of the Boys and Girls Club.

From $1,000 to $60 million: Long Beach Community Foundation celebrates 25th anniversary

By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

The Long Beach Community Foundation is celebrating its 25th anniversary and a significant increase in the charitable assets it has been managing in recent years.

Started with a modest $1,000 investment by co-founder Jim Worsham and his wife in 1996, the foundation has grown to manage over $60 million in charitable assets as of last year, granting a total of $29.5 million to charitable organizations across the country since its inception.

‘I’m really proud of what we have now,’ Worsham said.

Most recently, the foundation issued grants to 80 local nonprofits from its Coronavirus Relief Fund totaling $1.34 million, which went to supporting emergency relief such as food drives, mental health resources and rental assistance.

The fund was started as a general disaster relief resource in 2020 with an initial $2.5 million investment from the city—launching just in time for one of the biggest disasters in recent history, the coronavirus pandemic.

Having the fund set up already allowed the foundation to start taking in donations and allocating money right away, avoiding the “panicked fire drill” that comes with having to set up an assistance program in the middle of a crisis, said president and CEO Marcelle Epley.

“The first thing people want to do in an emergency, in a disaster, is help,” Epley said. As soon as the state announced a state of emergency, she said, donations flooded in.

Community organizations like the Boys and Girls Clubs of Long Beach, which has received several rounds of grant funding from Community Foundation, were tasked with providing support and resources to young people like helping children navigate virtual schooling.

Students served by the club were volunteering with overworked home instructors; trying to balance education and lack of access to homework help. Grant funding from the Boys and Girls Club Foundation helped provide technology, meals and tutoring to local students.

“It was very valuable, especially at this time,” said Donald Rodriguez, president and CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Long Beach.

“It makes a difference in the lives of school children,” Worsham said.

One of the biggest challenges of managing the community relief fund was the amount of applications the foundation received, and ensuring that the work being funded was aligned with the priorities of the fund, which focused on providing direct relief to the community.

Performing arts groups gear up for live performances

By CHEYANNE JENSEN / Reporter

After nearly a year and a half since their stages went dark, Long Beach performing arts are gearing up for live audiences once again.

The city’s leading performing arts groups, including Long Beach Opera, Long Beach Camerata Singers, International City Theatre, Long Beach Playhouse and Musical Theatre West have all announced new programming for their 2021-2022 seasons.

But how those companies are approaching their return and what those experiences might entail for audiences could vary with a rift of the variant, a more contagious strain of the virus, has complicated matters.

With concert halls such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s Walt Disney Concert Hall now requiring patrons to show proof of vaccination to attend, it’s still unclear whether local Long Beach companies will follow.

At present, only the Long Beach Playhouse is requiring patrons to provide proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test prior to attendance. Despite already requiring a full vaccination status for its staff and volunteers, company president said he wanted to add this extra level of protection as a security buffer.

“At first our thoughts were if everyone is masked, then we’re fine. But delta has changed things,” Long Beach Playhouse President Madison Mooney said. “We’re going to be adulating that our patrons and volunteers feel more secure.

But other performing arts groups with stages and auditoriums in fall and spring 2022—such as the Long Beach Camerata Singers and Long Beach Opera—aren’t making any concrete decisions just yet, noting it’s too soon to say. LBO’s season begins in March 2022. Long Beach Camerata returns to the stage for an outdoor show commemorating Sept. 11.

“At this point, everything is changing practices from day to day in terms of protocols for audiences. So, we’ll just do what’s necessary, and what’s required at the time,” said JanHover, president of the Long Beach Camerata Singers. The Long Beach Symphony has not announced a return season.

“We are closely monitoring the COVID health crisis and look forward to announcing our 2021-2022 Classical and Pops season plan as soon as possible,” Long Beach Symphony president Kelly Lacourse said in a statement.

Despite hesitancy by some groups to define safety protocols for their audiences, leading performing arts centers have implemented strict health mandates within their respective companies.

Long Beach Camerata, Musical Theatre West, Long Beach Playhouse and International City Theatre have all required their staff and performers to be fully vaccinated during auditions and rehearsals.

“Our staff is all fully vaccinated just by choice. And I would say 99% of the artists are already choosing to be vaccinated,” LBO’s general director and CEO Jennifer Rivers said.

In Long Beach and Los Angeles County, people are required to wear masks while indoors regardless of their vaccination status. Theatre audiences were masked and seating spaced apart according to guidance for performances of International City Theatre’s Comeback, “Cleanly Related” but could be removed.

“We are skipping rows and seats because it’s a bit live, we’ve got some people coming back and we want to make sure that they really feel safe,” said ICT President cecil Hyatt.

But many artists and arts organizations had already anticipated the challenges the pandemic placed on their limited ways to engage their audiences.

The Los Angeles Artist Census, a research project founded in 2019 to assess the economic realities of artists in Los Angeles County, found that many local artists suffered from unemployment, were burdened by debt and dealt with unpredictable income in a county where the cost of living doesn’t allow for much financial wiggle room.

Dance companies and other arts organizations that have traditionally relied on independent contractors to perform in their shows were affected by AB 5, a new state law that tightened rules for employment, forcing many to keep a smaller, full-time staff instead of a roster of contractors.

The pandemic deepened its burden, Suarez said. “In addition to not being able to fully have the staff that they wanted because of AB 5, now they couldn’t perform.” As a result, they may have a harder time making it through, she added.

Other arts organizations and venues have already begun their comeback and seen successes. Roughly 1,900 guests attended the Long Beach Camerata of Music reopening party, according to Executive Director Ron Nelson, and visitors have kept coming since.

The arts movement, which reopened on April 1, was shouldered with the “we didn’t shift to virtual programming to the same extent as other arts and cultural organizations. Instead, the remaining museum staff focused on applying for grants to rely on independent contractors to perform in their shows were affected by AB 5, a new state law that tightened rules for employment, forcing many to keep a smaller, full-time staff instead of a roster of contractors.”

The museum currently has a full schedule of exhibitions through 2023 and membership increased by 25% ahead of the reopening.

There’s no substitute for seeing and engaging artwork in person, Nelson said. “I think we’re real, the thing is still the thing,” he said, especially for students who take class trips to the museum. “It sticks with them and is very, very meaningful.”

New, emerging coronavirus variants, however, may put a damper on the reopening process. Nelson said he’s “not expecting cultural institutions like this to be forced to close their doors again, he said and reassuring the situation.

“It concerns me,” the museum director said.

At the Museum of Latin American Art, President and CEO Lourdes Ramos said she’s not too worried about the impact potential closures may have on the museum at the moment. “It’s unpredictable,” Ramos said. “But if that becomes the case, we have already the experience.”

The museum heavily shifted to engaging arts enthusiasts online when the pandemic struck, offering virtual tours led by volunteer docents and Zoom talks with artists through its MOLAAA+ECA program.

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Thousands attend first convention back in Long Beach, more to come this fall

By Reporter

The security measures have reassured the event was safe to attend, said Katrina Acers, a project administrator with Sacramento-based consulting firm Momentum, which focuses on campaigns around water, energy, transportation and manufacturing technologies. “I was a little nervous about it, but I felt safe,” Acers said. Building personal connections with potential clients or partners in the transportation sector is key to her company’s work, which has been more difficult to achieve through virtual interactions alone, she said. “There’s more opportunity for that type of organic connection in person.”

On the entertainment side of the center, the emerging delta variant has slowed bookings slightly, according to Assistant General Manager John Brown. But overall, he said, bookings have been “not bad, all things considered,” and ticket sales have been strong. 

Upcoming shows by comedians Bill Burr and Louis C.K. are sold out or nearly so, according to Brown, and ticket sales for the Distinguished Speakers series are “doing well.” The only hold out despite the coronavirus have been international acts, Brown, many of whom said they were concerned they wouldn’t be able to enter the U.S. due to travel restrictions. While other cities, including those in the European Union, have opened their borders to vaccinated or tested Americans, the U.S. has yet to do so.

International City Theatre

After 18 months, resident professional theatre company ICT is returning for its 36th season with family-drama “Closely Related Keys.” Written by multiple award-winning Los Angeles-based playwright Wendy Graf and directed by Sandra McClain, the play is set in the weeks after the 2001 Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and follows the life of an up-and-coming corporate attorney who discovers she has an Iraq half-sister.

“The has been broken, each in her own way, and they come from opposite, seemingly irreconcilable worlds,” said artistic director dire. “As they search for a way forward based on the little they know about each other, perhaps there’s a lesson for the rest of us during this time.”

“Closely Related Keys” will run Thursday – Sunday at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. from Sept. 12.

Camerata Singers

Closing out its annual season is The Long Beach Camerata Singers, a choral group that has performed around the world and has been praised for its “luminous” and “charming” sound.

For the holiday season, Camerata will be performing the world premiere of “STIMMUNG.” The immersive opera experience will feature a live performance of the Pulitzer prize-winning opera “Habanera” by German composer Otl Aicher at Marine Stadium Park on Sept. 11. The show will be a collaboration between the Long Beach Camerata Singers and performing arts groups across the board described in planning at the prospect of returning to live shows.

“During the 18 months we did four virtual productions,” de la Torre said. “But you know, it’s just not the same thing as being there and acing it live and having that shared experience with so many others, because that’s what theatre is.”

But some, like Long Beach Playhouse, are considering contingency plans should the city return to more stringent COVID-19 restrictions.

“If we have too many reasons to cancel productions or postpone we hope to still be able to offer online digital programming,” Mooney said. Still, however tenuous, “the what’s out there.”

Long Beach Camerata Singers

Long Beach Camerata Singers’ first major return performance, “9/11 Remembered,” will be outdoors at Marine Stadium Park on Sept. 11. The show will be a scaled-up version of their “Front Porch Concerts” series the company launched in August last year, with 12 singers instead of a quartet and directed by Grammy-winning director James K. E. and associate conductor Tammi Alderman.

The show commemorates the 9/11 terrorist attacks for its 20th anniversary this year.

The Camerata Singers first indoor performance is the “Return to Stage” Gala event on Oct. 1 at Terrace Theatre in Downtown. Traditionally, the gala was held before the group’s first seasonal performance, but this year, they’re doing things a little differently. The event will honor Councilman Rex Richardson, the Long Beach NAACP and The California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ) with the Reel/O’Neill Arts and Leadership Award. Director Bass will also speak about Camerata’s upcoming Peace Project concert on Nov. 14. The evening will culminate with an intimate performance from a selection of the Camerata Singers.

The first “official” seasonal performance of the Camerata Singers is Nov. 14, and the season will run through the month of December. The show is titled “Peace Project.”

The Camerata Singers will also perform “Northern Lights,” a concert with performances from a selection of the Long Beach Camerata Singers.

The Long Beach Playhouse is at 5021 E. Ocean Blvd. The Beverly O’Neill Theater is at 3301 E. Seaside Way.

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Performing Arts

Cocktail from page 10

Long Beach Opera

After bringing in new artistic director James Darragh in March followed by the recently appointed music director Christopher Rountree, Long Beach Opera is primed to present its most innovative season yet.

The season kicks off March 22, with performances of Karlheinz Stockhausen’s capella opera, "STIMMUNG." The premiere opera will be staged in what was formerly the Fresh and Easy grocery store at the City Place shopping mall in East Village. Since the grocery store clouded, the Long Beach Opera will transform the building into a “mágical kitchen” where the audience will experience the six performances as if they’re virtually preparing a meal for the audience over the house-long duration of the piece, a press release explained.

Performances are scheduled for March 19, 20, 26 and 27. On April 23 and 24, LBO will be taking over the Art Theatre Long Beach with theuppgraded performance of the film “Quandaries” produced by Derez Acon with music by Giuseppe Verdi’s opera “La Traviata” and “Don Carlo” and Carlisle and Willibald Gluck’s “Orfeo ed Euridice.” The show will screen the 235-minute film, followed by a second screening without the audio with a live soundtrack played out with “so we’re calling disrupting the sounds.”

In May, LBO will present a new production of George Frideric Handel’s “Giustino” reinvented by artistic director James Darnell, conducted by Christopher Roundtree with an adapted score by composer Shelley Washington. The location of the show on May 22, 23 and 28 is to be determined.

Finishing off the season is a new production of the Pulitzer prize-winning opera, “Central Park Five,” directed by CSULB alum Desean Terry, recognized by many as the star of Apple TV+’s “The morning Show.”

“I’m very excited to host him for his first opera,” Terry said. “It’s really exciting direction for opera to take, to bring in different cultures and letting them enter this art form which can often seem like a little exclusionary.”

LBO is still working to finalize a location for the show slated for June 18, 19 and 20.

THE ARTS

‘This is for everybody’: New Cal State museum nears completion

By CHANTAY JENSEN / Reporter

Despite the new 15-year period of public exhibitions and construction, the university has embarked on an ambitious renovation and expansion project that it hopes will solidify its place as a cultural and community beacon.

Through heavy machinery, caution tape, piles of wood and other building materials are still scattered throughout the museum, the project is nearly complete – at least the interior space, which are largely finished except for a collection of works by Canadian painter, muralist and printmaker Rita Letendre.

The secondary Mini Gallery will show the artist’s work, which will have multipurpose uses. The university hopes to double its educational outreach and for its recipients of the Getty Marrow Undergraduate Internship from two interns to five. The program trains young college students of color for museum careers.

The effect of this programming has a direct impact on many levels, according to the university’s director.

The museum director said he and his team focused on ways to build community and improve usability. “Every choice we made was to support programming,” Prindle said. “There are no no-vanity spaces,” he said.

The Kleefeld museum wasn’t designed to look or feel like a museum where millions might rub elbows with other millions. It’s a space meant to be the “people’s museum,” an idea, Prindle said, that has been muddled since the inception of France’s Louvre Museum in the 18th century.

“It [the Louvre] was designed for everyday people. Napoleon was trying to convince France that art is for everybody. And so, making art for everybody is at the heart of everything we do,” Prindle said.

“That notion that they need to be these sacred, quiet spaces is not part of the original idea. This [museum] is for everybody. As everybody, they sincerely mean it.

“Spaces will be available in every room, an important touch for people who are used to being segregated for long periods of time. Extended evening and weekend hours improve access. Color enhancing Enchroma glasses will be available for people experiencing color blindness. That information lab will be available with materials that youth and adults can use. They built genderless restrooms and added a women’s nursing room.

And, the Kleefeld will be the only museum in the city that does not charge for admission.

“As long as I’m director, this museum will be free,” Prindle said.

The university hopes to double its endowment to $1 billion by the end of 2024, Prindle said – a lofty goal, but if accomplished, would permit the university to invest in more projects and educational outreach at scale.

Greater endowment funds could permit the university to expand its programming, resources and services, notably achieved with LED lighting throughout and solar panels to be installed on the expansion’s roof.

A total of $25 million is being used for construction, but not all of that is going to the museum project. The budget is shared with a separate but simultaneous expansion of Walter Pyramid. The motif will continue the museum’s dedication to the museum’s Main Gallery, Mini Gallery, education laboratory, Community Gallery, and culminates in a trip to the museum.

The field trip portion has been put on hiatus since the pandemic.

“The effect of this program has been profound,” Prindle said, and they’d like to increase this.

“We know that it takes only one visit for a child who has no family that has gone to college, to imagine themselves here and then to go college, it has a direct effect, we see direct corollaries,” Prindle said. “Kids who visit campus museums end up going to college.”

Continued from cover

However, Vallejo said the loss should not

lost one full-time equivalent employee.

example saw its budget increase less

last year, particularly fire and police,

and state relief funding. Some city

only able to offset thanks to federal

grants to pay off debt incurred

and personal service businesses also are

breweries, bars, nonprofits, fitness and

locally owned, independent restaurants,

pandemic, including up to $25,000 for

nonprofits of all types impacted by the

program is still being formed but may

options to and from these areas. The

micro- and public-transit pilot program

businesses and workers.

Economic inclusion

impact the department.

he said. “Local businesses are the

backbone of our economy and we

all know how hard they’ve had it

throughout the pandemic. That’s

important to dedicate resources to

assisting them”

Direct support

In all, 15 programs that provide
direct support for businesses are funded
using nearly $20.85 million. Numerous
grants are available for businesses and
nonprofits of all types impacted by the
pandemic, including up to $25,000 for
locally owned, independent restaurants,
breweries, bars, nonprofits, fitness and
personal services. Nonprofits, fitness
and personal service businesses also are
eligible for up to $25,000 grants.

Businesses and nonprofits can see
the grants to pay off debt incurred
during the pandemic, pay fixed costs
and utilities, pay rent, rehire employees
and buy startup inventory. The amount
of each loan is based on the company’s
revenue, size and number of employees.
For nonprofits, up to 25% of grant funds
may be used for unreimbursed
organizational expenses.

For other businesses impacted by the
pandemic, grants of up to $10,000 are
available for the same use and based on
the same metrics.

If businesses and nonprofits are
able to demonstrate negative financial
impacts caused by the pandemic, they
may qualify for a grant to pay off existing
debt or defund business license fees,
inspection fees, utilities and other
city-permitted permits through 2021.
The city has allocated $2.8 million to the fire
weaver program.

Other direct support funding or
programs businesses may qualify for
include eviction protection support,
expedited permitting, monies for
outdoor dining and parklets, board
removal and beautification.

COVID-19 protection

The largest single allocation of funds is $13 million for COVID-19
protections for service-sector businesses and
nonprofits, according to LA County’s
Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity,
these monies will be used for testing,
epidemiology support, contact tracing and
epidemiologic reporting to “help protect
service-sector businesses, nonprofits,
workers, customers and visitors.”

Testing is available for businesses and
workers.

Transit pilot program

The 2022 budget also includes a
micro-transit and micro-mobility transit
program to increase foot traffic along the
city’s major thoroughfares such as
portions of Atlantic Avenue, Anaheim
Street, and Artesia and Long Beach
boulevards and others.

“We want to make it as easy and
safe for people to get out to business
corridors as possible,” Vallejo said, noting
recent spikes in the cost or ridesharing.

The $1.6 million allocation will
allow the city to provide micro-transit and
micro-mobility transportation options
to and from these areas. The program is
either being formed or may include
shuttles, bike share, e-scooters, according
to Public Works Mobility
Programs Officer Fern Nano.

These various support systems for
the business community would not
have been possible without federal
assistance, Vallejo said, but they have
been and will continue to be crucial.

“Based on feedback we’ve gotten
from our business community, we
played an important role in keeping them open
throughout the pandemic,” Vallejo said.
“If these programs were not available,
the struggle for our local businesses
would have been exponentially bigger.
They’ve been absolutely critical.

Krisada Chapman takes a selfie with her kids Logan and Owen before boarding the Carnival Panorama in Long Beach, Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Cruises are back and guests, crew
are ready for a ‘new adventure’

By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

Excited passengers of all ages were anxious to board Carnival Cruise Line’s Panorama in Long Beach late last month, marking the end of 17 months due to the pandemic. The historic was so monumental, Carnival hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony ahead of passenger embarkation on Aug. 21.

“We know everyone is eager to get
back to fun and get on board,” Carnival President Christine Duffy said during the ceremony. “We’re thrilled to be back sailing again.”

Since July, Carnival has restarted seven ships in Florida and Texas, Duffy said. In late July, Carnival began sailing to Alaska out of Seattle.

Panorama’s seven-day venture—
the first cruise to sail out of California
since the pandemic began—will carry
passengers along the Mexican Riviera,
including stops in Puerto Vallarta,
Manzanillo and Cabo San Lucas. During the ceremony, Duffy introduced the Measing family

of Huntington Beach, who were on the Panorama’s inaugural voyage in 2019 and who recently traveled abroad the Mardi Gras, Carnival’s newest ship that sails out of Port Canaveral in Florida.

Wesley Meusing cut the ribbon before the family board the ship ahead of the other passengers.

“After a long 17 months, it’s just
time to be back on a ship,” Wesley
said, adding that he was most looking
forward to the food and the SkyRide, a
suspended bicycle course that gives riders
unique views of the ship and ocean.

Johnny and Dala Phillips, a married
couple from Reno, said Saturday’s
cruise will be their fifth. The pair were
looking into setting up a trip prior to
the pandemic but when the virus began
dominating headlines in the spring of
last year, they decided to hold off,
Dala said.

“The vaccine makes me feel safe,”
Dala said. “I’m happy to get out and
enjoy life.”

To protect the crew and passengers, Carnival has implemented extensive coronavirus protocols, including proof of vaccination for the vast majority of guests and regular testing for others. The ship’s entire 1,400-member crew is fully
covid-19 vaccinated, according to the company.

All passengers, regardless of
vaccination status, must present a
negative COVID-19 test result from
within three days of embarkation.

Unvacinated guests must take another
test prior to embarkation and a third 24
hours into the voyage if the cruise is
longer than four days.

The Panorama is one of Carnival’s
newest vessels and can accommodate
4,088 passengers but is operating at
about 75% capacity, according to

Krisada Chapel takes a selfie with her kids Logan and Owen before boarding the Carnival Panorama in Long Beach, Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Passengers wait to board the Carnival Panorama in Long Beach for the first time in 17 months, Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

photography by Heather Mackie

U.S. Treasury loosens rules for rental assistance program as billions remain unspent

By JASON RUIZ / Reporter

The U.S. Treasury has issued new
guidance in hopes of speeding up
the distribution of billions of dollars in
rent relief funds that continue to
stagnate across the country as eviction
motions creep closer to their
expiration dates.

The Treasury’s new rules
for applicants could make it easier to apply
and speed up how fast they’re processed.
Tenants can now self-attest to things like
household income, risk of homelessness or
financial hardship, which previously
required documentation.

States and cities can soon start
distributing portions of billions to
landlords and utility providers in
anticipation of applications being
approved, make additional payments to
landlords who take on “hard-to-
house” tenants who have been evicted
or experienced homelessness in the past
year, and also pay assistance for
operations at previous addresses.

The announcement from the
Treasury came the same week that the
U.S. Supreme Court struck down
a national eviction moratorium program,
which means any further extension would
have to come from Congress. Local
protections for renters in Los Angeles County expired at the end of September.

The New York Times reported
that just $1.5 billion of the $46.5 billion
that was allocated to states has been
distributed to landlords or their tenants
who are behind on their payments due to
the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Long Beach, a city official
announced it was resuming its program after
closing it July 11. The city received an additional

Buy a piece of controversial history: Restoration site for sale at $2.3 million

By TIM GRIFFIN / Columnist

The building that housed the
shuttered Restoration Hardware store in any number of “Law & Order” episodes is ripped from headlines, but take mark on Aug. 17. Listed at $2.3 million, the site will soon be

The restaurant’s former owner, Dana Tamer, found herself in the

Continued on page 21
**Virgin Orbit to be publicly traded on Nasdaq following merger**

**By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter**

Small satellite launch company Virgin Orbit is preparing to go public, announcing Aug. 23 it will merge with a special purpose acquisition company, or SPAC, to list on the Nasdaq stock exchange by the end of the year.

The Long Beach-based aerospace company is combining with NextGen Acquisition Corp. II, which values Virgin Orbit at $3.2 billion. Net loss is currently traded as NGCA on the Nasdaq but once the merger is completed later this year shares will convert to VORB.

“The Virgin Orbit team has proven its ability to create new ideas, new approaches and new capabilities,” founder Richard Branson said in a statement. “I'm very excited we are taking Virgin Orbit public. It's another step towards making it easier and cheaper to work today to build space technology that will positively change the world.”

The deal is expected to raise $465 million for Virgin Orbit, including $50 million in cash from the trust account and $100 million through a private investment in public equity, orPIPE, paid by Boeing, AE Industrial Partners and others. The funds are meant to further scale Virgin Orbit's operations to meet increasing demand, according to the announcement.

Over the next two years, 35% of proceeds are expected to be used to accelerate research and development, 15% to accelerate manufacturing capabilities and 25% for space solutions development and increased capability to support customers and vehicles. A company spokesperson told the Business Journal that much of the investment will be profitable by 2024, with estimated capital expenditure and depreciation and amortization, or EBITDA, expected to be $220 million that year. For 2021, the company expects to have $15 million in revenue in an EBITDA loss of $156 million.

“Right now, what we know is that we're not able to keep all the half a billion dollars that are eligible to be applied,” De La Torre said. “But just as importantly we want those dollars to be used as intended and completed the applications to prove that they're usable.”

De La Torre said that while the city has smaller help from the city this year because some of the federal funds has been used up, the city has only approved a fraction of the $64 million the city had requested.

“We're continuing to encourage all those city and county programs and service providers that are eligible to apply,” De La Torre said. “We're seeing a lot of interest in those funds and the city has been working with the county and city on what are eligible.”

One sector was hit by the pandemic, especially real estate businesses like property owners and residents of the prioritized improvement district, which would see landlords paying annual fees along with property owners and residents of the prioritized improvement district, which would see landlords paying annual fees along with

**Rocket Lab (RLK) is now public and trading on the Nasdaq stock exchange**

**By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter**

Rocket Lab, a Long Beach-based aerospace and launch services provider, went public Aug. 25 on the Nasdaq stock exchange.

The company merged with Vector Acquisition Corporation, a special purpose acquisition company, or SPAC. Vector's shareholders approved the merger in a special meeting on Aug. 20. Under the ticker RLK, the company debuted on the market at $11.50 per share but quickly dropped to a low of $9.90. The stock has climbed since but remains below the $10.70 during the day trading.

“Despite a lot of negative headlines around space, Rocket Lab is well positioned to make a significant contribution in commercial and government-sponsored space industry innovation,” Vector CEO Alex Shpak said in a statement. “We are confident in Rocket Lab's viability to deliver outstanding performance and reliability to drive long-term value for shareholders.”

Before expenses, the merger netted Rocket Lab approximately $377 million, the company announced Wednesday. The funds came from Vector's trust account and private investment in public equity, or PIPE, pool that closed concurrently with the merger.

The proceeds are expected to accelerate the “organics and inorganics” growth of the company, though it was unclear what that would mean for the company beyond efforts to modernize its vehicle.

“Virgo will start working today to build space technology that will positively change the world,” Branson said. “The deal is expected to raise $465 million for Virgin Orbit, including $50 million in cash from the trust account and $100 million through a private investment in public equity, or PIPE, paid by Boeing, AE Industrial Partners and others. The funds are meant to further scale Virgin Orbit’s operations to meet increasing demand, according to the announcement.

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\textbf{Cruises}
\texttt{Continued from page 17}

Chief Communications Officer Chris Chrinios, who said the company expects that percentage to increase in the coming months.

Carnival is a major economic player in Long Beach, generating millions of dollars in passenger fees, hotel room stays, and restaurant and retail spending. The Miracle will resume Carnival’s short cruise runs in September and the Radiance will round out the Long Beach schedule later this year after $200 million in renovations.

Shana and Nick Terpolilli, a married couple from Ventura, said they had three cruises delayed due to the pandemic. Carnival gave the couple vouchers for shows and onboard credits for postponing their vacations, Nick said.

“The past 17 months we have been dogs,” Shana said. “Finally getting on the boat for seven days after no vacationing is amazing.”

The couple went on one cruise out of Miami last month and have their third scheduled for October going to Europe.

Panorama Captain Luca Lazzerino has been with Carnival for 29 years, serving as a captain for the last 11. He first came to Long Beach in 2005 and most recently spent six years as the captain of the Miracle before assuming command of the Panorama.

Lazzerino said as captain he spends three months at sea, followed by three months at home, a rotation that continued throughout the pandemic as the ship carried crewmembers around the world. Even when docked at its home port, the ship must be manned at all times, he said, adding that the crew has been minimal with no passengers to look after.

“We keep the ship in the best condition possible just to be ready for this day,” Lazzerino said. “To see all the crew on board is amazing—a fantastic feeling. We are full of energy and happy to start again on this new adventure.”

Since cruises have returned, the CDC has begun tracking new coronavirus cases, or suspected cases, abroad every vessel operating in the U.S. Each ship is designated either green, orange, yellow or red, which indicate whether or not the CDC is investigating cases or if operations must be halted. The Panorama is currently in the second-most serious yellow tier, meaning the CDC is investigating. If it enters the red, future cruises would be delayed.

\textbf{Water, sewer rate increases head to City Council for final approval}
\texttt{by JASON RUIZ / Reporter}

After a brief hearing Aug. 26 inside the Long Beach Groundwater Treatment Plant, the city’s water commissioners approved rate hikes for water customers in Long Beach that are expected to bring small increases to monthly bills.

Water department officials say the rate increases, 13% for water service and 30% for sewer, will help stabilize the department’s reserves and pay for new wells and investments in the city’s aging network of pipes.

The increases are anticipated to increase a typical residential water bill by about $5.39, according to the department.

Long Beach Water Department General Manager Claro Garside said earlier this year that the move will cost residents money but could save them money in the long run as well as gain more independence from imported water that could face more price volatility as drought conditions persist.

While the water department received over 760 protests to the rate hikes, just four people spoke at Thursday night’s hearing, with some expressing concerns that the hikes are ill-timed because of the pandemic.

The protest needed a majority of the city’s 90,000 water accounts to block the rate increases from going forward.

Water Commission Board President Frank Martinez sympathized with the speakers but supported the motion to send the rate increases on to the City Council.

“I know it’s been a difficult year for all of us, and I’m very empathetic of the plight that people are going through, but the costs are the costs,” Martinez said.

The department was projecting a $6 million combined deficit between its water and sewer funds and said it needed to raise rates to cover those expenses and make critical improvements in the city’s water network.

Long Beach currently imports about 40% of its water with 50% coming from groundwater and the remainder being recycled water that the city uses for parks and golf courses.

The department hopes to become more dependent on local groundwater by increasing production to 65% while reducing imported water to just 15%, according to a department document.

Anatol Falagan, assistant general manager of the water department, said it would help break the city’s dependence on more expensive imported water.

The water commission voted 4-0 in late June to approve the rate increases and Thursday’s hearing was required by Proposition 218, a California law that limits agencies from charging more than the cost of providing services like water.

Earlier this week, the City Council took the first of two votes to approve

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\texttt{By TIM GROBATY / Columnist}

The priciest bit of semi-vacant land in Long Beach currently for sale is in escrow, according to its listing agent.

The land, which includes the shuttered Long Beach Cafe and its large parking lot at 615 E. Ocean Blvd., is a rare bit of land still available on the desirable stretch of the boulevard in Downtown’s East Village Arts District.

According to listing agent Janet Neman of Kidder Mathews, the buyers intend to build a mixed-use development on the site, just west of The Current Apartments and on the same block as the 31-story Shoreline Gateway luxury apartment complex.

The 18,235-square-foot lot includes the 3,852-square-foot building that housed the Long Beach Cafe, which closed last September after 32 years due to COVID-19.

The property is located in the Downtown Plan development district, which was created to bolster housing development in the area. It is zoned LB PD-30, which is the highest density zoning in all of Downtown Long Beach, and it allows increased floor-area ratios and height limits for new development projects including mixed-use, residential and retail, according to Neman.

Specifically, the property is in an area that allows a height limit of 240 feet, and when utilizing incentives and bonuses, the site allows for an increased height limit of 500 feet, which could accommodate a building in excess of 40 stories.

The pending sale puts the 5,649-square-foot sole remaining undeveloped waterfront lot on Naples Rivo Alto Canal back on top as the most expensive vacant land for sale in Long Beach. Listed at $54 million, the Naples land has been on the market for nearly three and a half years.

\texttt{By VINCE NEIL / Columnist}

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\texttt{Lifestyle Expo and Family Fun Zone}
\texttt{Mother’s Exotic Car Padock}
\texttt{Saturday night concert featuring legendary rocker}
\texttt{presented by Acura and ASMI Global
A rendering of The Aster courtesy of the city of Long Beach.

Resauration

Continued from page 21

Tanner’s determination to serve customers when most often followed the closure order was both loudly cheered and just as loudly condemned by the ever-opposing forces of those who believe in the harsh reality of science and those who insist that the coronavirus-related restrictions were and continue to be a needless and Draconian attack on business, if not glorious freedom.

Either way, now it can be yours for a bit over two million and, listing Realtor Julie Ayora assures, if you’ve got any lingering legal problems and fines that Tanner still faces in her ongoing court battle with the city.

Facing thousands of dollars in fines and fees, 20 misdemeanor charges, and the threat of eviction for refusing to comply with some coronavirus rules and then continuing to operate after the city pulled her health permit, Tanner finally closed Resauration in April.

In addition to the restaurant space, the property for sale includes a Spanish-style four-plex which currently holds three tenants. This vacant unit, says Tanner, is being held for the moment to serve as a place to show prospective buyers what the other three are like, as well as a possibility for the buyer to occupy in order to qualify for a Small Business Administration loan.

The building is defined as a prime spot. At 2702 E. Fourth St. It’s a few blocks east of King5 Row project, but it’s an increasingly cool stretch of Fourth that is fast becoming an extension of the popular row, with recent additions of popular shops like Quiso Bread next door at 2710 E. Fourth, and across the street, the Coffee Drunk, at 2701 E. Fourth.

The site is likely to continue serving as a restaurant, and it’s ideally set up to function as one, at least so long as it’s a restaurant, and it’s ideally set up to function as one, at least so long as COVID-19 and its delta variant don’t bring further restrictions.

“A monster selling point for a restaurant is the fact that it has a huge patio in the back,” said Ayora. Tanner had estimated the patio at 1,400 square feet.

The working section includes two kitchens, the second serving as a prep kitchen behind the main one.

The Aster to bring 218 apartments to Downtown in third quarter 2023

By BRANDON RICHARDSON / reporter

Construction is underway on The Aster, a 218-unit mixed-use development on the southwest corner of East Broadway and Long Beach Boulevard in Downtown Long Beach.

The building permit for the project by Rainbreeze-Evergreen, LLC was issued July 29, according to Long Beach Development Services spokesman Richard De La Torre. Work quickly began with heavy machinery and steel beams on site.

The eight-story building will include market-rate studios, one- two- and three-bedroom apartments and 7,922 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor. The project will feature a host of resident amenities, including a fitness center, swimming pool and spa, a barbecue area, co-working space, a roof-top lounge and an 11,600-square-foot courtyard.

The Aster also will include 316 parking stalls, according to the developer.

“We are excited to have recently broken ground on The Aster, another high-quality residential and retail development in Downtown Long Beach,” Rainbreeze Partners Director of Development Richard Price said in an email.

The project is very close to three other developments such as the five-story, 34-room boutique hotel next door. Other projects include the eight-story, 199-unit Broadway (previously The Inkwell) at East Broadway and The Promenade North, and the Broadway Block, which features 435 units in two buildings—a 23-story high-rise and a seven-story mid-rise. Like the Aster, the two residential projects include ground-floor commercial space for restaurants, shops or services.

W.E. O’Neil Construction is the general contractor for the project that was designed by architect Carrie Johnson. Newport Beach-based M3 Landscape Architecture designed the project’s landscaping.

The Aster is slated for completion in the third quarter of 2023, Price said.

“Downtown Long Beach and nearby East Village [Arts District] are dynamic, vibrant neighborhoods,” Price said, “and Aster will be a great new addition and at the heart of the action.”

Water, Sewer Rate

Continued from page 21

the city’s fiscal budget Tuesday, and is expected to adopt the new rates at its Sept. 7 meeting when it formally adopts the department’s proposed rate increase.

Mike Murchison, a lobbyist for rental property owners, said he was personally opposed to the rate increases but added that his clients, who own thousands of rental properties across the country, should be given credit for the actual number of accounts they pay for.

“Most landlords pay the majority of properties in Long Beach,” Murchison said. “And the city is examining this, and it’s definitely a concern. As far as a general judgment, they’re going to pay the same amount.”

The higher rates in Long Beach were proposed before the federal government declared a water shortage on the Colorado River for the first time in history. The shortage could affect Long Beach and the 25 other member agencies of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which imports water from the Colorado as well as the Sacramento area.

The District issued a “water supply alert” the day after the federal government’s announcement of the shortage, which calls on its members to reduce water usage through public awareness campaigns to decrease outdoor watering, prohibit the washing of cars at home and requiring restaurants to only serve water on request.

If the shortage worsens the District could move to a “water supply allocation” which would implement higher rates to member agencies for increased water usage.

Metropolitan General Manager Adel Hagekold said it was “time together as a state to address the crisis” in a statement announcing the water supply alert earlier this month.

“The reality is that climate change will accelerate these challenges, which will require us to think differently, and innovate ways to adapt— we must build on our process in conservation and water efficiency to meet the needs of our customers,” Hagekold said.

The new Long Beach water and sewer rates go into effect Oct. 1.

Donations to the program can be mailed to the branch address. For more information, email us at mnaacp@gmail.com.
Thank You to Our Workers

To our Harbor Department staff, longshore workers, truckers, rail workers, terminal staff, construction workers, law enforcement and public safety partners – to all the men and women who work at the Port of Long Beach – thank you for your dedication and for making us the Port of Choice. Happy Labor Day!

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