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Museum of Latin American Art visitors view artwork by migrant children recently held at the Long Beach Convention Center. Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021. Photo by Crystal Niebla.

ARTS GROUPS GAIN MOMENTUM WITH PUBLIC, PRIVATE SUPPORT

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

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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

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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.

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North Long Beach and The Arts

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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

A multi-city construction project to reimagine 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 repave 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 business growth along the corridor, specifically in North Long Beach, where business development has been lacking in previous years.

The new highrises that have broken through 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, has first-hand experience investing in the North Long Beach market—particularly on Artesia Boulevard—and believes the upcoming updates will pave the way for more private investments.

Frontier Real Estate Investments is among 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 housing, including townhomes and multi-use lofts led by developer LAB Holding, famously 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 looked 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 adoption of new zoning policies in conjunction with the proposed road improvements will pave the way for business growth in the region.

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 duplex.

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 more difficult to come in with larger projects that cleans up large portions of it, so it’s going to take some time,” he said.

For business owners who are already on Artesia Boulevard, some have

expressed mixed feelings about the upcoming construction.

John Yim, owner of Louisiana Fried Chicken, said he doesn’t think the improvements will have much of an impact on his business, which is popular among local residents.

That indifference for the development comes from Yim’s 16 years of operating his restaurant at the same shopping center on Artesia Boulevard and Myrtle Avenue and feeling like not much has changed.

In 2014, there were improvements to Artesia Boulevard, though most of the heavy work took place on the border of Compton and Long Beach. Those developments took two months to complete and cost \$1.2 million from Proposition C funds. The city of Compton paid a prorated portion of \$130,000, which pales in comparison to the proposed road improvements coming this year.

Deonta Douglas, owner of gourmet french fries restaurant Mr. Fries Man on Artesia Boulevard, opened his franchised store in May. Douglas said he is in favor of the road developments if the city can mitigate the potential of increased traffic as construction crews tear up the road, since that could deter customers from shopping at his restaurant.

Richardson said city planners are working to phase the construction in segments, adding that work near Yim’s restaurant and Douglas’s french fry spot would be prioritized and quickly completed.

“If they make it like they said, then I think it will bring out the community to walk more,” Douglas said. ■



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Fernando Valladares stands outside his seafood restaurant Portside Fish Co. in North Long Beach, Thursday, Aug. 26, 2021. Photo by Sebastian Echeverry.

Portside Fish Co. drops anchor in North Long Beach, bringing Baja-style seafood fare

By SEBASTIAN ECHEVERRY / Reporter

Growing up in El Salvador, Fernando Valladares has always been surrounded by seafood. His grandfather was the captain of a fishing boat, and his uncles worked the lines as fishermen. At home, his family would dice up ceviche or cook up a steaming pot of caldo de camarones. Watching his family sparked an interest in Valladares to learn more about cooking. At 31, Valladares continues to honor his family tradition through Portside Fish Co., a new seafood restaurant that officially opened this spring in North Long Beach.

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Bridge Point

Continued from cover

The Long Beach Planning Commission approved the development in 2019 as a project that would decommission a parcel of land that previously housed a petroleum refinery equivalent to roughly 13 football fields. After three years of construction, towering clerestory glass exteriors can be seen by motorists driving through the Artesia and Paramount intersection where the warehouse is located. Lease negotiations are underway to secure a tenant for the building, but due to the nature of the ongoing negotiations the company cannot publicly disclose who the potential tenant will be, said Heather Crossner, Bridge Industrial’s senior vice president of development. A statement from media relations firm Antenna Group on the Bridge Point Project said the building was pre-leased prior to its completion in August to a “leading transportation and logistics provider of choice for the U.S. Postal Service for its warehousing and distribution operations.” The undisclosed company will begin its occupancy in September and is seeking to hire several hundred new employees, according to the media firm. Those logistics and transportation services will take place at a strategic point in the city because of the warehouse’s proximity to the 91 and 710 freeways and the Port of Long Beach, Kevin Finnigan, Bridge Industrial director of acquisitions and leasing, said. “There’s so many people that want to occupy in the South Bay market and there’s so few buildings under construction,” Finnigan said. “That creates a good supply and demand factor.” The warehouse features 61 truck parking spaces and an office layout expandable to 40,000 square feet. There are environmentally sustainable features as well, such as 100 parking spaces for electric vehicles and charging stations as well solar panels installed along the roof of the warehouse. Tuckley Williams, Bridge Industrial’s development manager, said construction crews first were tasked with taking down portions of the previous refinery’s infrastructure. 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 the soil. “It was a huge investment that we had to make to carefully take down all of the infrastructure, take out all of the contaminants,” Crossner said. “It was a monumental effort to take down what was there.”



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.

The introduction of the new warehouse also serves as a bookend to private development on the eastern industrial side of Artesia Boulevard, a stretch of road that has recently seen retail development on its western end. Councilman Rex Richardson said the completion of the project could bring more jobs and set a standard for other industrial developments moving forward. “The Bridge Point project has transformed the site of the Edgington Refinery, an outdated petroleum operation that has stood in North Long Beach for more than 75 years,” Richardson said. Richardson, who sits on the South Coast Air Quality Management District board, said the new warehouse will have to run on cleaner, sustainable sources of energy thanks to a mandate the board passed in May. The policy, known as the Warehouse Indirect Source Rule, imposes requirements on facilities seen as “indirect sources” of pollutants because of the emissions from trucks and other vehicles operating there. The rule applies to warehouses greater than 100,000 square feet, which includes Bridge Point Long Beach. “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 paves the way for more local jobs for our residents and modern regulatory standards to clean our air.” ■

North Long Beach leaders hope South Street remains the southern border of its collaborative community

By JASON RUIZ / Reporter

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



A man runs 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.

populous (53,828 as of 2010) and was projected to grow by another thousand residents, which could mean that its territory could shrink. A memo posted by the city on Wednesday showed that the 9th District was one of two districts that likely will have to reduce its population to comply with redistricting

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# ‘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 hangs heavy in the kitchen of a small, triangular building in North Long Beach where Mr. Fries Man employees—all clad in black—pile mounds of meat, cheese and sauces on a bed of deep-fried potatoes. The franchise restaurant that serves up gourmet fries on Artesia Boulevard in North Long Beach is a family affair, owned and operated by Deonta Douglas, 31, his mom Yolanda Cooper, his surrogate brothers Joron, 25, and Devin Green, 31, and Carlton Capiti, 30, and their mother Nichole Reaves.

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

The Mr. Fries Man menu is both basic and anything but. The business sells french fries handfults at a time. But what goes on top of those fries sets it apart. Protein toppings include the standard chicken—grilled or fried—and steak but also the more opulent shrimp and crab options.

“We wanted to bring the community ... the gourmet stuff,” Douglas said. “You can’t go anywhere and just get crab or steak as a topping.”

Sweet, hot, sweet and spicy, creamy and tangy, creamy, creamy and spicy, sweet and tangy, sweet and spicy—the sauce combinations at Mr. Fries Man are seemingly endless. The restaurant features nine sauces, including classics such as barbecue, ranch and Buffalo as well as a mango habanero, honey garlic, lemon garlic and jalapeño ranch. The menu also includes the enigmatic sweet and tangy “Hello” and sweet and spicy “Smack” sauces.

Douglas’s favorite plate is the chicken



Co-owner Deonta Douglas holds up a plate of fries topped with fried chicken and multiple sauces outside his Mr. Fries Man franchise in North Long Beach, Friday, Aug. 27, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

and shrimp with both lemon garlic and Buffalo sauce. The customer favorite, meanwhile, is the crab and shrimp plate with lemon garlic sauce, he said.

The owners are from Los Angeles but gravitated toward Long Beach when they began searching for a location to open their restaurant, Douglas said. They were not focused on any particular part of the city, having looked in other neighborhoods such as the Traffic Circle area, but ultimately decided the price was right in North Long Beach.

Though they did not seek out the area, Douglas said North Long Beach has been a great fit for the business and Mr. Fries Man has quickly established itself as having a community-focused mentality. When it comes to staff, Douglas said he hires from within the immediate community, even reaching out to nearby Jordan High School to offer students jobs.

“For the students, we show them the ropes,” Douglas said. “This is life—you get a job, you have bills to pay and this is

how you go about it. We get them going in the workforce.”

The Mr. Fries Man team was out at the recent Jazz Festival at Houghton Park in North Long Beach, spreading the word about the restaurant, including its 10% student, military and first-responder discount, Douglas said.

“We’re trying to get a better attachment with the community,” he said. “We’re here to coexist. We’re part of the community.”

After riding a wave of success selling food out of their home kitchen, the original Mr. Fries Man was founded in Gardena by Craig Batiste and his wife Dorothy in February 2017. Three successful years later and the Batistes decided to franchise out their business concept. Since signing their first franchisee in June 2020, the couple has signed on dozens of locations, including the Long Beach shop.

Devin Green, who worked on the concept with Batiste in the early days, evolving it from nachos to fries, opened the USC shop before the family launched the Long Beach space, Douglas said. Now, the family is moving forward with opening an Arizona location, he added.

“We’re here so people can feel at home and comfortable, and be able to come and get some good eats,” Douglas said. “I see it working out. We love the people and the people love us, and it’s great being able to get closer to the community.”

Mr. Fries Man is located at 1009 E. Artesia Blvd. ■

## South Street

*Continued from page 5*

rules that require districts’ populations to be as equal as possible.

The city uses a 10% deviation with districts drawn so they are within 5% of the “ideal” population figure that would give every district the exact number of people. The 9th District is currently projected to be 5.3% above that ideal number.

Mazza said that 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 91 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,” Mazza said.

“Can you imagine having to deal with two different City Council people?” Mazza said. “It’s already hard enough to deal with the city.”

The North Long Beach neighborhood associations aren’t the only ones in the city asking for the commission

to consider their communities when drawing lines later this year. The Los Cerritos Neighborhood Association to the south is hoping it can be made whole again after the 2010 redistricting process split its membership in two. In Central Long Beach the city’s Cambodian population is asking the commission to consolidate their voices into one district, instead of the four they’re currently split into.

North Long Beach neighborhoods have taken on a frontier-type approach to solving community issues after decades of being overlooked by the city, a perception that still persists for some.

Jeff Rowe is president of the Nehyam Neighborhood Association, which was formerly known as “Grant,” but was changed to the Tongva word for “friend.” Rowe is also the president of the North Long Beach Neighborhood Alliance, an umbrella group where associations meet to discuss common interests and how they can move together to act on community consensus.

Rowe said the groups will be meeting to talk about the future of the 9th District and which associations might be lost if the new district line creeps above South.

Neighborhood boundaries are just

one of the criteria that the redistricting commission will consider when drawing maps this fall when it tries to reconfigure the city’s districts to account for the roughly 4,000 people the city has added to its population over the past decade. Rowe said that South Street should be treated like a topographic feature, the fourth criteria on that list.

“That’s our river, that’s our mountain range,” Rowe said.

Dan Pressburg has lived in the Deforest Park Neighborhood for over 40 years and his historic home, and the parkway that is soon to be named after him, sit just feet from the 8th District boundary.

In that time the community has come together to collaborate on a number of projects including the Deforest Wetlands and even the Pressburg Parkway. Pressburg recalled the effort that went into clearing the head-high weeds that drew all kinds of wildlife to the neighborhood that included a tractor to clear the area, white fencing from the city’s redevelopment agency, boulders donated from the Port of Long Beach and trees planted by the city.

However, it was the people who had the vision and pushed for it to happen, Pressburg said.

Pressburg said he’d prefer that the

line shift farther south, if anything, but if his house shifts into a new district he’ll try to work with associations to the south, but it will take a lot of work to build the kind of culture that already exists in the 9th District.

“It would be like creating a new wheel,” Pressburg said. “It would just take a lot of time.”

Rowe said that the associations plan to meet to discuss contingency plans if it appears that their district could change shape and require all or parts of a neighborhood to be drawn out of the 9th District.

The meeting will provide an opportunity for the different neighborhoods to think over options that it could present to the commission to consider when they do draw maps, something it’s scheduled to start doing in October.

Rowe said the groups would like to keep what they have but they also understand the issues of equity and not watering down the political voices of people in the city. They’ll try to eliminate options they really don’t like and focus on more palatable ones, but whatever decision the groups come to will have to be a consensus

“We’ll overcome,” Rowe said. “That’s what we do.” ■



Co-owner Deonta Douglas drizzles sauce over a fried-chicken plate at Mr. Fries Man in North Long Beach, Friday, Aug. 27, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.



Javonn Murphy, 26, adds a second layer of cheese to an order of chili-cheese fries at Mr. Fries Man in North Long Beach, Friday, Aug. 27, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

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Karina Gonzalez, manager cook for Portside Fish Co., prepares a shrimp burrito, Thursday, Aug. 28, 2021. Photo by Sebastian Echeverry.

## Portside Fish Co.

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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.

"We're catering to this side of Long Beach, giving people a taste of what we got," Valladares said. ■



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Students participating in distance learning at the Boys and Girls Club of Long Beach. 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 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 \$25.9 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 89 local nonprofits from its Coronavirus Relief Fund totaling \$1.34 million, which went to supporting emergency relief such as food drives,



Boys and Girls Club of Long Beach member Christine experimenting with liquids with different viscosities during a STEM-learning activity at the club. Photo courtesy of the Boys and Girls Club.

mental health resources and rental assistance.

The fund was started as a general disaster relief resource in 2020 with an initial \$2,500 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 Club of Long Beach, which has received several rounds of grant funding from Community Foundation, were tasked with addressing unprecedented needs, like helping children navigate virtual schooling.

Students served by the club were struggling with overcrowded home environments, food insecurity and lack of access to homework help. Grant funding from the Community 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. “It does make a difference in the lives of children here in Long Beach.”

One of the biggest challenges of managing the coronavirus relief fund was the amount of applications the foundation received, and ensuring that the work being funded 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 **CHEANTAY 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 now with a rise of the delta 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 Long Beach companies will follow.

At present, only the Long Beach Playhouse said it will require patrons to provide proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test prior to attendance. Despite already requiring a full vaccination status for its staff and volunteer performers, the company said it 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. “So we’re going to be adding that so our patrons and volunteers feel more secure.”

But other performing arts groups with shows slated for late fall this year 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 do so. LBO’s season begins in March 2022; Long Beach Camerata returns this year with an outdoor show commemorating Sept. 11.

“At this point, everything is changing practically 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 Jan Hower, 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 plans as soon as possible,” Long Beach Symphony president Kelly Lucera said via email.

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

Long Beach Camerata, Musical Theater West, Long Beach Playhouse, Long Beach Opera 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 Rivera said.

In Long Beach and Los Angeles County, people are required to wear masks while indoors regardless of their vaccination status. Theater audiences were masked and seating spaced apart according to household for performances of International City Theatre’s comeback play, “Closely Related Keys.”

“We’re skipping rows and seats because this is the first time people are coming back and we want to make sure that they really feel safe,” said ICT President Caryn Desai, who prefers her name in lowercase. “People were very respectful of the rules and of each other. That was a good sign and helped everyone feel secure in venturing out—many for the first time.”

As an extra precaution mandated by their unions, ICT has also tasked a COVID safety officer, a person not involved in the production, to be on duty at every rehearsal and production checking temperatures, reinforcing mask-wearing, providing hand sanitizer and requiring production to sign off on a daily safety declaration.

Despite the unforeseen complications,

*Continued on page 13*



Forced off the stage by the pandemic, an ensemble of four Long Beach Camerata Singers—a soprano, alto, tenor and bass—perform a 45-minute set on the lawn of a home. Photo by Tish Camp courtesy of Long Beach Camerata Singers.

## Arts Momentum

*Continued from cover*

likes of John Steinbeck and Zora Neale Hurston, was proposed to Congress by Reps. Leger Fernandez, D-Santa Fe, and Jay Obernolte, D-Hesperia, earlier this month and will soon be introduced in the Senate.

In California, the recently approved state budget allocates over \$600 million to various programs supporting the arts, including \$50 million for grants to help small nonprofit performing arts organizations with workforce development, \$150 million to live venues and similar businesses, and \$238 million in funds for local arts institutions and programs.

Locally, the city of Long Beach is hoping for the first year of significant revenues from a new 1% tourism tax to be shared by the Convention Center and local arts organizations.

The tax measure was adopted in March 2020 and went into effect on July 1 of that year, but because of the decrease in tourism as a result of the pandemic, revenue was much less than initially projected. In FY 2022, the city is anticipating \$2 million in Measure B funds, half of which would go to a group of 10 local arts organizations, including the Long Beach Museum of Art, the Long Beach Opera and the Long Beach Playhouse.

“We’ve had a lot of great successes for our visual artists and performers,” said Griselda Suarez, executive director of the Arts Council for Long Beach. And, she added, “the city has continued with their commitment to help the arts and culture sector.”

But many artists and arts organizations had already faced challenges before the pandemic limited their ways to engage with spectators.

The Los Angeles Artist Census, a research project founded in 2019 to assess the economic realities of artists in LA County, found that many local artists suffered from employment insecurity,



Bill Grisolia, executive director of the Long Beach Blues Society, performs with the New Blues Festival All Stars, during a free concert at Cesar Chavez Park, Saturday, Aug. 28, 2021. Photo by Stephen Carr.

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 their woes, 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 have seen successes. Roughly 3,000 guests attended the Long Beach Museum of Art reopening party, according to Executive Director Ron Nelson, and visitors have kept coming since.



Shirley Harris, left, and Marty Green dance during the free Blues for All Concert at Cesar Chavez Park, Saturday, Aug. 28, 2021. Photo by Stephen Carr.

The art museum, which reopened on April 1, was closed for most of 2020 and 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 grant funding to stay afloat and planning for a return to in-person programming once the pandemic subsided.

“It was a lot of damage control initially, then it became more strategizing,” Nelson said. 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 artworks in person, Nelson said. “For me, the real 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. While Nelson said he’s not expecting cultural institutions like his to be forced to close their doors again, he said he’s monitoring the situation.

“It concerns me,” the museum director said.

At the Museum of Latin American Art, President and CEO Lourdes Ramos said she isn’t too worried about the impact potential closures may have on the museum’s programming.

“It’s unpredictable,” Ramos said. “But if that became the scenario, we already have the experience.”

The museum quickly shifted to engaging arts enthusiasts online when the pandemic struck, offering virtual tours led by volunteer docents and Zoom talks with artists through its MOLAA En Casa program.

As it began rebuilding its staff in recent months, multimedia skills became a more important criterion for new hires than ever. Tech equipment purchased during the pandemic, in part supported by a grant from the Ahmanson Foundation, will

still come in handy as the museum plans to continue much of its virtual programming even now that visitors have started to return.

“This is the new normal,” Ramos said.

Suarez of the Arts Council agreed. “I think that part of technology is here to stay,” she said, noting that some people may feel uncomfortable with in-person gatherings for some time to come. “There’s going to have to be a combination—I don’t think it’s ever going to go away,” she said.

Despite all the hardships the pandemic has brought for artists, organizations and cultural institutions, there have been some welcome surprises as well.

Bill Grisolia, executive director of the Long Beach Blues Society, said the restrictions on indoor, in-person events have created opportunities for other forms of engagement to take on a more prominent role.

Last year in April, Grisolia started live streaming performances from his Bluff Park home on Facebook, one song per day, for 100 days. He participated in open mic sessions with a group of musicians in Melbourne, Australia and struck up a collaboration with the Valencia Blues Society in Spain.

Locally, the Blues Society kicked off a series of free, outdoor concerts under the mantle “Blues for All” at Cesar Chavez Park in the Willmore neighborhood. “The community has just been outstanding in their response,” Grisolia said. “It’s just been a great blessing all around.”

Whether new coronavirus variants force businesses and arts institutions to close again, or vaccination efforts succeed in curbing the spread, many arts organizations and individual artists will continue to require support to make it through, said Baker of Californians for the Arts.

“This is an incredibly resilient and, for lack of a better word, creative industry,” she said. “The hope is that we’re going from relief to recovery.” ■









Museum director Paul Baker Prindle exits the Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum while it's under construction at Cal State University Long Beach, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

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

By **CHEANTAY JENSEN** / Reporter

Despite its near 50-year presence, world-class exhibitions and decade-long policy of free admission, the Cal State Long Beach University Art Museum long struggled to attract more visitors.

But in June 2020 the university embarked on an ambitious renovation and expansion project it hopes will solidify its place as a cultural and community beacon.

Though heavy machinery, caution tape, pallets of wood and other building materials are still scattered throughout the museum, the project is nearly complete—at least the interior spaces, which are largely finished except for cosmetic details and furniture.

On Oct. 15, Clark Construction Group will turn over the new museum, renamed the Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum, to the university—right on schedule.

“We’ve had fewer delays than a normal project does,” CSULB museum director Paul Baker Prindle said. “We’ve been really lucky.”

The university will use that time to prepare for the museum’s public opening on Feb. 12, where CSULB students and the public at large can expect more art, programming, resources and educational spaces.

The renovations will add 4,000 square feet, more than doubling the exhibit space. Most of that space, 3,000 square feet, is dedicated to the museum’s Main Gallery that will be built with moveable walls, allowing for multiple exhibitions at a time.

New additions will bring the museum’s

total square footage to 11,000, including new outdoor gardens and seating areas, and will feature a state-of-the-art education laboratory, a reading and archives room, office spaces, a visitor’s lobby and reception area, a retail shop, a temperature-controlled storage vault and three permanent gallery spaces, some of which will have multipurpose uses.

Visitors can expect three new exhibitions once the museum officially reopens in February. The first exhibition inside the Main Gallery will feature abstract paintings by Los Angeles-based artist Linda Besemer.

“We’re going to look at almost 30 years of her work,” said Amanda Fruta, public affairs and communication specialist for Kleefeld museum.

The secondary Mini Gallery will show a collection of works by Canadian painter, muralist and printmaker Rita Letendre. And inside the Community Gallery, Impasto landscape paintings by Torrance-based artist Hung Viet Nguyeng.

Finishing the exterior and outdoor spaces of the museum will be the final stages of the renovations. Pfeiffer Partners Architects designed the expansion’s facade and roof with triangular points, a nod to the nearby Walter Pyramid. The motif will continue through a near-15-foot-tall diamond offset glass vestibule at the museum entrance.

A landscape of native and water-wise plants will decorate the outdoor garden. This choice aligns with a prominent factor in the building’s design: sustainability. The museum is nearly complete with LEED Silver standards, notably achieved with LED

lighting throughout and solar panels to be installed on the expansion’s roof.

A total of \$24 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 renovation to the neighboring Horn Center, now in the process of retrofitting and converting its computer lab and undergraduate advising center into 10 classrooms and two lecture halls.

Renovations to the Horn Center are state-funded, while private donations are footing the bill for the museum. Its greatest benefactor is the museum’s new namesake, artist Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld, who donated \$10 million, as reported by the Daily 49er.

Her contribution also inspired a

separate, smaller gallery inside that will feature a permanent collection of her works. The 521-square-foot-room will be outfitted with cozy features including a barrel ceiling, maple hardwood flooring, and a custom-built light fixture designed to emit a soft, glowing effect.

Prindle calls it the heart of the museum for its central location inside and for its prospective community purposes, with poetry readings, wellness programs and opportunities for “quiet and loud hours.” These will help foster a message of welcome and inclusivity, Prindle said, as the artist has always tried to accomplish with her philanthropy.

“Carolyn’s mission is to inspire and support people creatively,” he said.

In designing the new museum, Prindle said he and his team focused on ways to build community and improve usability.

“Every choice we made was to support programs. There are no fluff spaces, no vanity spaces,” he said.

The Kleefeld museum wasn’t designed to look or feel like a museum where millionaires might rub elbows with other millionaires. 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 foundation of museums,” he said.

“This notion that they need to be these sacred, quiet spaces is a corruption of the original idea. This [museum] is for everybody.”

And by everybody, they sincerely mean it.

Seating will be available in every room, an important touch for people who struggle to remain standing for long periods of time. Extended evening and weekend hours improve access. Color enhancing Enchroma glasses will be available for people experiencing color blindness. Their education lab will be available with materials that youth and adults can use. They’ve 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



Museum director Paul Baker Prindle stands outside the Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum while it's under construction at Cal State University Long Beach, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.



A worker sands and polishes the concrete floor during the renovation of the Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum at Cal State Long Beach, Aug. 27, 2021. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

an admission fee.

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

The university hopes to double its endowment to \$6 million 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 recipients of the Getty Marrow Undergraduate Internship from two interns to five. The program trains young college students of color for museum careers.

There are several naming opportunities available at the museum that would directly benefit the endowment, including the Main Gallery, Mini Gallery, Community Gallery, education laboratory and the outdoor garden on a 10-year



A worker lays carpet outside one of the entrances of the Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum while it's under construction at Cal State University Long Beach, Monday, Aug.30, 2021. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.



Museum director Paul Baker Prindle stands in one of the many rooms of the Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum while it's under construction at Cal State University Long Beach, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

contract. The most expensive of those is \$200,000, Prindle said.

The CSULB “Plugged-In Program” is the museum’s largest art outreach and educational program. It reaches about 1,500 fourth-graders and high school students and offers, among many things, arts digital programming, docent visits, and culminates in a trip to the museum. The field trip portion has been put on hiatus since the pandemic.

The effect of this programming has a profoundly positive effect on its students and campus, 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 go to college, it has a direct effect, we see direct corollaries,” Prindle said. “Kids who visit campus museums end up going to college.” ■

## Convention

*Continued from page 12*

do the same.

“Had this delta variant not popped up, we would have seen a few more shows in the fall,” Braun said. Still, classic shows like the Nutcracker and Disney on Ice are returning, and bookings for next year have continued to come in, with promoters expecting the pandemic to subside by then, he noted.

Bruce Solar, the agent responsible for former BeeGees member Brian Wilson, whose performance on August 30 kicked off the return of concerts and shows to the convention center, said the concert was booked at a time when people felt optimistic and expected the pandemic to end soon, before the emergence of the delta variant.

Despite the pandemic’s changing

path, and a resurgence of cases, the organizers decided not to move the show, but implement increased security measures like requiring proof of vaccination or a negative test, before those were required by state and city orders. The band even cut off access to the backstage area, with anyone who wanted to enter having to undergo an on-site rapid test before doing so.

“It’s not a younger band,” Solar said. “But even if it was a younger band, we would have taken the same precautions.” Given the new infection risk associated with the delta variant, “you still gotta be careful,” he added.

Despite the added safety measures, only four out of roughly 2,000 ticket holders asked for a refund and there were few no-shows, according to Solar. The crowd was just excited to be there, he said. “It was a very successful show.” ■



Long Beach Health Department employee Isabella Romo hands an attendee of the Advanced Clean Transportation Expo a ticket for entry after verifying his vaccination status, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021. Photo by Alena Maschke.

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People eat breakfast on Jongewaard's Bake n Broil's outdoor patio in Bixby Knolls, Wednesday, Sept. 1, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

\$43.3M

Continued from cover

only able to offset thanks to federal and state relief funding. Some city departments' budgets saw significant budgetary increases when compared to last year, particularly fire and police, which increased \$9.25 million and \$14.97 million, respectively.

Eight other departments saw budget increases of about \$1 million or more.

Numerous other department budgets, meanwhile, remained relatively flat, increasing or decreasing less than \$500,000. Economic Development, which includes Vallejo's bureau, for example saw its budget increase less than \$140,000.

Despite the slight increase, the department, which oversees dozens of programs, initiatives and assets, also lost one full-time equivalent employee. However, Vallejo said the loss should not

impact the department.

"I believe we will be able to administer these programs effectively," he said. "Local businesses are the backbone of our economy and we all know how hard they've had it throughout the pandemic. So it'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 use 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 unrestricted 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 or delinquent business license fees, inspection fees, utilities and other city-related permits through 2021. The city has allocated \$2.8 million to the fee waiver 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.

Economic inclusion

Over \$7.6 million of the budget is dedicated to economic inclusion, including \$3 million for the creation of investment funds for planning, development, establishment and coordination of special economic zones in areas most impacted by the pandemic. The funding would go toward community outreach, business planning, small business coordination, arts and culture, housing development, private sector investment attraction and more to address economic impacts exacerbated by COVID-19.

Addressing the digital divide is prominent in this section, with \$1.8 million for community-based organizations to provide Chromebooks, hot spots, and technical assistance for

businesses and residents adversely impacted by the pandemic. These monies also fund training for small businesses with online customer generation, activation and payment processing.

Other initiatives and programs include project labor agreement community outreach, training and work placement for youth in high-need communities, and the expansion of the interactive workforce development platform WorkLB.

Technical assistance

The smallest dollar amount allocated for business-related recovery is \$500,000 for technical assistance. This fund will allow for the expansion of BizCARE Call Center, which supports nonprofits, small businesses and displaced workers with assistance regarding city, state and federal grant guidelines, health orders, loans, personal protective equipment acquisition and more.

The monies also will fund an "economic equity analysis" from research organizations that will track economic recovery strategies to mitigate racial impacts of the coronavirus recession and report back to the community.

COVID-19 protection

The largest single allocation of funds is \$13 million for COVID-19 protections for service-sector businesses and nonprofits. Funded through the LA County 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."

This includes free testing for businesses and workers.

Transit pilot program

The 2022 budget also includes a micro- and public-transit pilot program to increase foot traffic along the city's major commercial corridors 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 rideshares.

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 still being formed but may include shuttles, bike share, e-scooters, according to Public Works Mobility Programs Officer Fern Nueno.

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 afloat 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." ■



Kristina Chapman takes a selfie with her kids Logan and Gwen 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 cruiseless months due to the pandemic.

The hiatus 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 are 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 set sail out of California since the pandemic began—will carry passengers along the Mexican Riviera, including stops in Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan and Cabo San Lucas.

During the ceremony, Duffy introduced the Meursing family of

Huntington Beach, who were on the Panorama's inaugural voyage in 2019 and who recently traveled aboard the Mardi Gras, Carnival's newest ship that sails out of Port Canaveral in Florida. Wesley Meursing cut the ribbon before the family boarded the ship ahead of the other passengers.

"After a long 17 months, it's just awesome 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, Johnny 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 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. Unvaccinated 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 4,008 passengers but is operating at about 75% capacity, according to

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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 moratoriums 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 bulk payments 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 arrears for unpaid rent at previous addresses.

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

The New York Times reported that just \$5.1 billion of the \$46.5 billion that was allocated to states has been distributed to landlords or their tenants who are behind on their rents due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In August, Long Beach announced it was reopening its program after closing it July 11. The city received an additional

Continued on page 19

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

By TIM GROBATY / Columnist

The building that housed the shuttered Restauration, which like any number of "Law & Order" episodes is ripped from headlines, hit take market on Aug. 17, listed at \$2.3 million.

The restaurant's former owner, Dana Tanner, found herself and her establishment in the midst of trouble and controversy at the end of 2020 and into 2021 when she continued to openly operate her business at the height of COVID-19's spread, when new cases in Long Beach were approaching 5,000 per week.

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A woman walks by And Then and The Better Half Boutique, both open for business in Bixby Knolls, Wednesday, Sept. 1, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.





Rocket Lab founder and CEO Peter Beck, center, and employees celebrate the company's first day of being publicly traded on the Nasdaq. Photo courtesy of Rocket Lab.

# Rocket Lab (RKLB) is now public and trading on the Nasdaq stock exchange

By **BRANDON RICHARDSON** / Reporter

Rocket Lab, a Long Beach-based manufacturer and launch service 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 at an annual general meeting on Aug. 20.

Under the ticker RKLB, the

company debuted on the market at \$11.50 per share but quickly dropped to a low of \$9.80. The stock has climbed since but remains below \$10.70 during the day's trading.

"As a leader in democratizing access to space, Rocket Lab is well positioned to capitalize on exciting opportunities in commercial and government-sponsored space industry innovation," Vector CEO Alex Slusky said in a statement. "We are confident in Rocket Lab's ability to deliver outstanding

performance and reliability to drive long-term value for shareholders."

Before expenses, the merger netted Rocket Lab approximately \$777 million, the company announced Wednesday. The funds came from Vector's trust account and a private investment in public equity, or PIPE, round that closed concurrently with the merger.

The proceeds are expected to accelerate the "organic and inorganic" growth of the company, though it was unclear what implications that would

have on Rocket Lab's Long Beach footprint and workforce. The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The influx of cash also will drive the development of Rocket Lab's Neutron rocket, an eight-ton payload class reusable spacecraft, and support potential future expansion into space applications that would enable the company to deliver data and services from space, according to the announcement.

"Our team is motivated by the enormous impact we can have on Earth by making it easier to get to space and to do incredible things there," Rocket Lab founder and CEO Peter Beck said in a statement. "We are excited to be making that a reality by embarking on our next chapter as a public company."

Beck will continue leading the combined company, while Slusky will join the board of directors.

Founded in 2006 by New Zealand engineer Peter Beck, the Rocket Lab became a U.S. company in 2013, setting up its headquarters in Huntington Beach. In 2017, the firm launched its first rocket. Since then, Rocket Lab has launched 21 of its Electron rockets, delivering over 100 satellites to orbit.

Rocket Lab's most recent launch on July 29 included the successful delivery of Monolith, a U.S. Space Force satellite. The Monolith delivery came months after a failed mission carrying two Earth-observing satellites for geospatial intelligence firm BlackSky.

The firm relocated to Long Beach at the start of 2020 and has announced a host of new missions, including its first beyond Earth's orbit to the moon and to Mars through contracts with NASA.

"We've simplified space, making it easy and affordable for companies, scientists, governments and entrepreneurs alike to get their ideas to orbit," Beck said. "I am thrilled to declare space open for business." ■



A woman walks by Urban Pacific's urban town house project at 1491 Atlantic Ave., Thursday, Aug. 19, 2021. Photo courtesy of Virgin Orbit.

## 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. NextGen 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 milestone for empowering all of those working today to build space technology that will positively change the world."

The deal is expected to raise \$483 million for Virgin Orbit, including \$383 million of cash in a NextGen trust account and \$100 million through a private investment in public equity, or PIPE, led 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% each for space solutions development and increased mobility with additional launch vehicles. A company spokesman told the Business Journal that much of the investment is likely to stay within its Long Beach facilities but that there have been talks of expansion outside the area.

"An incredible talent pool, supportive local government, a strong list of

aerospace suppliers—Long Beach has everything a growing aerospace company like Virgin Orbit requires," spokesman Kendall Russell said in an email. "It's proven to be a fantastic home base for our operations and we expect Long Beach to be our corporate home for some time."

Virgin Orbit's existing shareholders include Branson's Virgin Group, Mubadala Investment Company as well as management and employees, all of which will roll 100% of their equity into the combined company, according to the announcement. Existing Virgin Orbit shareholders are expected retain ownership of 85% of the company.

Virgin Orbit has about \$300 million in active contracts, \$1.3 billion in active proposals and \$2.3 billion in identified opportunities ranging from national security through the U.S. Air and Space forces, civil enterprises such as NASA and commercial missions through private companies, according to a company presentation.

"We've built Virgin Orbit in order to change the business of satellite launch and to open space for everyone, globally," CEO Dan Hart said in a statement. "Our success in launch has driven the business forward and now we expect this investment will enable us to build on our R&D efforts and our incredible team. We are driving innovation with world-class design and advanced manufacturing capabilities, our unrivaled mobility of launch, and our exciting space solutions services."

The company anticipates being profitable by 2024, with estimated earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, or EBITDA, projected to be \$229 million that year. For 2021, the company expects to have \$15 million in revenue with an EBITDA loss of \$156 million.

Revenue, however, is forecasted to grow an average 166% every year

through 2026, from \$15 million this year to over \$2 billion, according to Virgin Orbit. National security and defense contracts are expected to make up the lion's share of revenue growing to \$838 million by 2026.

"We are delighted that our search for a great company, with strong organic growth in a large and growing market, disruptive technology and a world-class management team has led to our partnership with Virgin Orbit," NextGen co-founders George Mattson and Greg Summe said in a joint statement. "The space economy is developing rapidly and Virgin Orbit is well positioned to benefit through its ability to competitively launch at any time, from any place on Earth, to any orbit and inclination."

In 2015, Virgin Galactic took up residence in the newly constructed Douglas Park industrial complex adjacent to Long Beach Airport. Two years later, the site was announced as the headquarters of Branson's latest venture, Virgin Orbit. In the four years since its founding, the company has developed the world's first air-launched satellite delivery system.

Space vehicle launches have been land-based for more than six decades, ever since the USSR successfully launched Sputnik 1 into orbit in 1957. Virgin Orbit uses a customized Boeing

747, dubbed Cosmic Girl, as a mobile launch site that deploys the company's LauncherOne system—a fully reusable first stage vehicle—while flying 35,000 feet above sea level.

Because missions can be flown out of any existing airfield around the world, Virgin Orbit has the ability to bring launch capabilities to dozens of nations that have space agencies and satellite industries but no domestic launch sites such as the United Kingdom and Brazil.

Virgin Orbit's first attempt to reach space failed in May 2020 after the LauncherOne engine shut down prematurely due to a breach in a high-pressure fuel line carrying cryogenic liquid oxygen. On Jan. 17, the company successfully reached space for the first time, delivering a payload of nine small satellites to orbit. Five and a half months later, Virgin Orbit successfully delivered seven more satellites to orbit.

"Virgin Orbit is a game changer for the small satellite launch and space solutions industry and its listing is expected to be yet another milestone in its continuing success story," Abdulla Shadid, an executive director at Mubadala, said in a statement.

"Our investment in Virgin Orbit since its inception is a reflection of our confidence in the company's ability to carve out a leading role in this sector." ■

## U.S. Treasury

*Continued from page 17*

\$13 million in aid, bringing its total to \$64 million. However, the city had only allocated \$13.8 million through July 31, according to Treasury data.

Rick De La Torre, a spokesperson for the city's Development Services department, which is administering the program, said that the city has received over 14,000 applications but had only awarded money to 1,783 landlords or utility providers as of the last week of August.

"It will remain open until all the program funds are exhausted," De La Torre said of the timeline for the program that the city had previously stopped taking applications for multiple times.

De La Torre said one of the biggest factors in the slow distribution has been missing documents but that applicants can download attestation forms that can be used in place of traditional documents used to prove income and the amount of past-due rent.

"Right now, what we know is that we're continuing to encourage all those that are eligible to apply," De La Torre said. "But just as importantly we want those who have submitted partially completed applications to complete the application process."

De La Torre said that while the city has only approved a fraction of the \$64 million it has to help renters, about \$60 million in aid has been requested by renters and landlords.

A report from the Treasury Department tracking agencies' use of

federal funds from the first Emergency Rental Assistance Program allotment showed varying degrees of success across California. Cities like San Jose (\$30.4 million), San Diego (\$42.3 million) and Los Angeles (\$118.3 million) have moved significant funds into the hands of renters.

Others like Oakland (\$12.9 million), Anaheim (\$10.4 million) and Santa Ana (\$9.9 million) have allocated smaller amounts. Part of the Treasury Department's announcement this week noted that agencies not distributing the funds fast enough could have their funds "recaptured" by the federal government and given to other cities and counties.

A Treasury spokesperson said that the department has not determined a spending threshold that a city would have to meet to hold onto its funding. The department has the authority to begin reclaiming unused funding starting Sept. 30, but the spokesperson said that the department prefers that each jurisdiction use its full amount of funding.

If funding is recaptured from a city or county it would apply only to the first allocation the federal government made in 2020. Long Beach received multiple allocations from the government including \$21 million in May, the month the program launched, and \$13.1 million earlier this month in addition to the nearly \$30 million it received in 2020.

The speed in which Long Beach has helped households has increased over the past few months. While helping just 33 households in May, Long Beach saw that increase to 428 in June and 1,462 in July, the last month that data was available from the Treasury. ■

## Council approves \$200K gap funding for Bixby Knolls business association

By **BRANDON RICHARDSON** / Reporter

The Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association is set to receive \$200,000 in gap funding as part of a \$1.3 million spending package unanimously approved by the City Council on Aug. 24.

The spending package was advanced to the council by the Budget Oversight Committee, which voted unanimously on the item Tuesday ahead of the council meeting. The three-member committee includes councilmen Al Austin and Roberto Uranga, whose districts include the entirety of the Bixby Knolls community.

"We stated our case, we showed the value of what we do for our members of this community and citywide," association Executive Director Blair

Cohn said. "It's a sigh of relief."

The one-time monies out of the city's general fund also will go toward a vision plan for the city's COVID-19 memorial, the city's fireworks taskforce, speed mitigation on residential streets, LBPD's helicopter air support unit and more.

For the last decade, the Bixby Knolls association has received \$200,000 annually from the city as the successor agency of the Redevelopment Agency. The contract for that funding expires in September and, following a particularly challenging 18 months due to the coronavirus, the future of the organization was uncertain.

Cohn said the gap funding will sustain the association through the next year as it examines ways to become self-sustaining. The group already has begun

reaching out to businesses along Orange Avenue from Wardlow Road to San Antonio Drive in an effort to expand its boundaries and bring in new members.

Other options on the table include increasing the annual membership fee and creating a property business improvement district, which would see landlords paying annual fees along with business owners.

The association provides services that benefit not only business owners but also property owners and residents of the community, including private security, landscaping and street cleanups, facade improvements and a number of social clubs. The group also hosts concerts, popup events and the popular First Fridays street fair, among other things.

Since the news of the association's dire financial situation was made

public, the community has pulled together and donated thousands of dollars. Because many neighborhood residents have voiced an eagerness to continue supporting Cohn and the association, he said there has been talks about creating a "community member" designation for those who want to provide financial support monthly or annually.

But for now the association's purse strings remain tight, Cohn said, noting that the city's budget does not take effect until Oct. 1. He said he still must work out with the city the mechanism for how the funding will work—a lump sum given to the group or the monthly reimbursement of expenditures.

"So we're not counting our money yet," Cohn said, "but it will help us breathe a little bit." ■





Wesley Meursing and his family were selected to cut the ribbon ahead of passenger embarkation, Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Cruises

Continued from page 17

Chief Communications Officer Chris Chiames, 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-based fleet 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 slugs,” 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 Lazzarino has been with Carnival for 28 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.

Lazzarino 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 kept the ship in the best condition possible just to be ready for this day,” Lazzarino 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, aboard 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. ■



The Long Beach Cafe lot is fenced off after the closure of the business. The lot has been sold to a developer. Photo by Thomas R. Cordova.

Long Beach Cafe property on Ocean Boulevard, listed at \$6.25M, is in escrow

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

Bldv., 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 35-story Shoreline Gateway luxury apartment complex.

The 18,233-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 \$4 million, the Naples land has been on the market for nearly three and half years. ■

Water, sewer rate increases head to City Council for final approval

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, 8% for water service and 10% 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 Chris Garner said earlier this year that the move will cost residents money but could save them money in the long run as the city works to 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 concern 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 investments 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

Continued on page 22

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Construction has begun on the 218-unit Aster development on the southwest corner of East Broadway and Long Beach Boulevard. Thursday, Aug. 26, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

## 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 Raintree-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 studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments and 7,292 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 rooftop 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,” Raintree 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, 189-unit Broadstone (previously The Inkwell) at East Broadway and The Promenade North, and the Broadway Block, which features 432 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 MJS 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.” ■



A rendering of The Aster courtesy of the city of Long Beach.

## Resauration

*Continued from page 17*

Tanner’s determination to serve customers when most others 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 Julio Ayora assures, it’s free of 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 Restauration in April.

In addition to the restaurant space, the property for sale includes a Spanish-

style four-plex which currently holds three tenants. The vacant unit, says Ayora 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 definitely in a prime spot. At 2702 E. Fourth St. It’s a few blocks east of Retro Row proper, but it’s an increasingly cool stretch of Fourth that’s fast becoming an extension of the popular Row, with recent additions of popular shops like Gusto Bread next door at 2710 E. Fourth, and across the is 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 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 1,000 square feet.

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



Dana Tanner, left, owner of the now-defunct Restauration, speaks with customers, Sunday, Jan. 24, 2021, three months before she shut down the restaurant. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

## 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 budget.

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.

“The number adds up to the majority of properties in Long Beach,” Murchison said. Garner clarified that even if a landlord pays for the water and sewer services for an entire 40-unit building, state laws require the department to treat it as one account.

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 Hagekhalil 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 double down on our investment in local water supplies, including recycled water and stormwater,” Hagekhalil said.

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

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The Long Beach Branch NAACP’s Talent Search & Development program provides scholarships to assist in the purchase of musical instruments, lessons, talent showcases, trips and interaction with established artists. Andrea Correa, past program participant, is pictured here.



Tatiana Tate, pictured here with Long Beach saxophonist Alvin Hayes, Jr., is a past participant in the Long Beach Branch NAACP ACT-SO Program for contemporary instrumental music. She has performed at a multitude of local and national events including the NAACP Image Awards.



Alexandria Edwards, Discovery of the Arts program scholar, plays her flute. The program offers an introduction to the fine and performing arts for local youth through field trips, guest artists and free tickets to performances.

Donations to the program can be mailed to the branch address. For more information, email us at [mnaacp@gmail.com](mailto:mnaacp@gmail.com).



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