IndyCar championship to be decided at Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach

Jim Michaelian, president and CEO of the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach stands on the track ahead of race weekend, the first since April 2019, Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Article on page 3
I am thrilled to announce the hire of Hayley Mungia, who began leading coverage of the Long Beach Business Journal Monday, Sept. 20.

Mungia most recently worked as a reporter covering Long Beach city hall, business and politics for the Press-Telegram, a publication of Southern California News Group. She has won multiple state awards for her coverage, including first-place for land use reporting, from the California Newspapers Publishers Association.

A native of Austin, Texas, she graduated from New York University and has worked at publications including the Jerusalem Post, The Week Magazine and FiveThirtyEight.

She has extensive knowledge about Long Beach and its diverse business community, as well as state and regional politics and trends that directly impact the local community.

The Long Beach Business Journal, which has published biweekly editions since March 1987, begins a new chapter with Hayley’s arrival.

Since taking over ownership of the journal from George Economides in February 2020, parent company Pacific Community Media has invested new resources into the journal’s staff, which is working to reflect the look and feel of the publication—while also remaining true to its roots as a critical source of information for the local business community.

With that goal in mind, we are launching a survey of our readers, and we invite you to tell us what you think about the Long Beach Business Journal and what changes you’d like to see as we embark on this new chapter.

Visit this link to fill out our survey: https://lbpo.st/SURVEY.

— Melissa Evans
Managing Editor
RACE WEEKEND SCHEDULE*

**Friday, Sept. 24**
7:30 AM Spectator gates open
9-9:20 AM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge practice
9:45-10:45 AM IMSA practice
12:30-1 PM Stadium Super Trucks practice
12:55-1:25 PM IndyCar Series practice #1
2:45-3:15 PM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge qualifying
3:45-4:15 PM IMSA qualifier & Race #1
7:30 AM Spectator gates open
7:30-10:45 AM Stadium Super Trucks race #1
10:45-11:15 AM Global Time Attack competition #2
11:10-11:30 AM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #1
11:30-11:45 AM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #2
11:45 AM IndyCar pre-race ceremonies begin
12:38 PM “Drivers, Start Your Engines!”
12:39 PM IndyCar warm up

**Saturday, Sept. 25**
6:45-8:15 AM Formula D Super Drift Challenge competition #1
4:45-5:15 PM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #3
6:15-6:35 PM Super Drift Challenge practice
6:45-8:15 PM Stadium Super Trucks race #1
10:45-11:15 AM Global Time Attack competition #2
11:10-11:20 AM IndyCar practice #2
11:25-11:40 AM Mothers Exotic Car Parade
11:40 AM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #2
11:45 AM IndyCar pre-race ceremonies begin
12:38 PM “Drivers, Start Your Engines!”
12:39 PM IndyCar warm up
1:30 PM IMSA race pit set up
6:00 PM IMSA Qualifying #1
7:30 AM Spectator gates open
10:45-11:15 AM Global Time Attack competition #2
11:10-11:20 AM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #2
11:30-11:45 AM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #3
11:45 AM IndyCar pre-race ceremonies begin
12:38 PM “Drivers, Start Your Engines!”
12:39 PM IndyCar warm up
2:06-3:46 PM IMSA Sportscar Grand Prix of Long Beach (100 minutes)
3:45-4:50 PM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #3
4:30-5:00 PM IMSA Qualifying 2
5:30-5:50 PM Super Drift Challenge practice
5:30-6:45 PM Concert on Terrace Fountain Stage featuring Vince Neil
3:30-4:4 PM Stadium Super Trucks race #2
4:00-5:30 PM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #4
4:30-5:00 PM IMSA Qualifying 3
5:30-6:00 PM Super Drift Challenge practice
5:30-6:45 PM Concert on Terrace Fountain Stage featuring Vince Neil

**Sunday, Sept. 26**
3:50-4:20 PM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #5
7:30 AM Spectator gates open
7:30-9:30 AM IndyCar warm up
10:10-10:25 AM Global Time Attack competition #2
10:45-11:15 AM Historic Formula Atlantic Challenge race #2
11:10-11:20 AM IndyCar practice #1
11:25-11:40 AM Mothers Exotic Car Parade
11:45 AM IndyCar pre-race ceremonies begin
12:38 PM “Drivers, Start Your Engines!”
12:39 PM IndyCar warm up
1:30 PM IMSA race pit set up
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4:30-5:00 PM IMSA Qualifying 3
5:30-6:00 PM Super Drift Challenge practice
5:30-6:45 PM Concert on Terrace Fountain Stage featuring Vince Neil

*Time schedule subject to change without notice

**Drivers**

**JOSEF NEWGARDEN**
Team: A.J. Foyt Enterprises
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Nashville, Tennessee

**WILL POWER**
Team: Team Penske
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Nashville, Tennessee

**SCOTT MACLAUGHLIN**
Team: Chip Ganassi Racing
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Woongjin, South Korea

**SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS**
Team: A.J. Foyt Enterprises
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Woongjin, South Korea

**DANIEL KELLETT**
Team: Acura NSX Hot Laps
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Woongjin, South Korea

**GRAHAM RAHAL**
Team: Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing
Engine: Honda
Hometown: Long Beach, California

**ED JONES**
Team: Dale Coyne Racing
Engine: Honda
Hometown: Long Beach, California

**HELIO CASTRONEVES**
Team: Team Penske
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Monterrey, Mexico

**CONOR DALY**
Team: Andretti Autosport
Engine: Honda
Hometown: Long Beach, California

**ALEX PALOU**
Team: Chip Ganassi Racing
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Barcelona, Spain

**SCOTT DIXON**
Team: Chip Ganassi Racing
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Auckland, New Zealand

**FELIX ROSENQVIST**
Team: Meyer Shank Racing
Engine: Honda
Hometown: Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

**PATO O’WARD**
Team: A.J. Foyt Enterprises
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Stouffville, Canada

**CAR #4**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Team Penske
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Christchurch, New Zealand

**CAR #3**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: A.J. Foyt Enterprises
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Nashville, Tennessee

**CAR #2**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Chip Ganassi Racing
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Nashville, Tennessee

**CAR #1**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Andretti Autosport
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Nashville, Tennessee

**CAR #10**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Chip Ganassi Racing
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Barcelona, Spain

**CAR #9**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Chip Ganassi Racing
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Auckland, New Zealand

**CAR #7**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Meyer Shank Racing
Engine: Chevrolet
Hometown: Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

**CAR #5**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing
Engine: Honda
Hometown: Long Beach, California

**CAR #18**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing
Engine: Honda
Hometown: New Albany, Ohio

**CAR #45**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing
Engine: Honda
Hometown: New Albany, Ohio

**CAR #29**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Andretti Autosport
Engine: Honda
Hometown: Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

**CAR #27**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport
Engine: Honda
Hometown: Toronto, Canada

**CAR #26**
Car: Chevrolet
Team: Andretti Autosport
Engine: Honda
Hometown: Toronto, Canada
New logistical challenge for race organizers this year: COVID-19

By MELISSA EVANS / Managing Editor

The city’s largest event takes a massive amount of logistical planning, but this year’s Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach brings a new challenge for organizers: navigating new regulations to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Long Beach adopted a stricter health order in late August as cases of the virus, spurred by the delta variant, began to rise. The order requires face coverings at outdoor mega events, but organizers: navigating new regulations to prevent the spread of COVID-19, are singling out the Grand Prix in also covering its COVID-19 restrictions and abandoned its color-coded system of determining what can open based on case rates and other indicators.

But after June, COVID-19 cases again began to rise, with health officials blaming the prevalence of the more-contagious delta variant, the lifting of restrictions and the lag in vaccinations among eligible groups. The Grand Prix was initially the only mega event branded with the vaccination or negative test requirement, which city officials said in a statement was due to the fact that the Grand Prix is so large, and draws many people from out of state. But on Sept. 15, a new rule was adopted that will mandate this for all large mega events outdoors, beginning in October. The state and city are also mandating this requirement for indoor events over 1,000 people.

The Grand Prix Association has had to bring in extra staff, at extra cost, though Michaelian declined to give specifics on finances for the race. This added expense comes a year after the race was canceled in mid-March 2020, when grandstand events were already being assembled along Shoreline Boulevard. “We had to take everything down with no revenue,” Michaelian said. Organizers pushed the 2021 race as far into the IndyCar season as possible, hoping the prevalence of the virus would wane.

That appeared to be happening in mid-June, when the state lifted most of its COVID-19 restrictions and abandoned its color-coded system of determining what can open based on case rates and other indicators. But after June, COVID-19 cases again began to rise, with health officials blaming the prevalence of the more-contagious delta variant, the lifting of restrictions and the lag in vaccinations among eligible groups.

When the city erected its stricter health order on Aug. 18, the race had shut up to 35.5 per 100,000 residents, up from less than one case per 100,000 residents on June 15.

That case rate has since edged downward, with officials hoping the recent spike has peaked and is waning. As of Wednesday, Sept. 15, the city’s case rate was 23.8.

“Because of that, we’re able to proceed as planned,” said Jim Michaelian, president and CEO of the Grand Prix Association.

When of a new challenge for race organizers this year: COVID-19.

Grand Prix back to the streets of Long Beach every year since 1975, is a track that never a championship. The inaugural event was Formula 5000 on Sept. 28.

The city hosted its first Formula One race in April 1976, a time slot the city has occupied every year since.

Formula One raced in Long Beach until 1984 when Championship Auto Racing Teams came to the city. CART ran until its final race in 2008, after which IndyCar took over.

Over the years, the grand prix association has introduced new events and attractions to draw in a larger and more diverse crowd. The 2021 race weekend is bringing back many crowd favorites, including Robby Gordon’s Super Trucks, drifting, IMSA, a music concert, the family fun zone, the lifestyle expo and the exotic car show.

This year, race weekend will include a Global Time Attack competition. The goal of GTA is to achieve the fastest single lap over the course of the weekend. Drivers do not navigate the course wheel-to-wheel, instead starting laps only one by one.

“We’re already looking to provide a wider variety of events during race weekend,” Michaelian said. “We want a variety—different look, different sound, different visage.”

Looking ahead to the 2022 season, Long Beach will revert to its original slot with the race running April 8-10, according to Michaelian. This year’s race association will have a quick turnaround to prepare for next year, which Michaelian says is an advantage.

“We’ll already be in operational mode. It gives us more momentum out of this event,” he said. “We’ll be contacting our sponsors, clients and ticket buyers shortly after the race is over.

But before they can think about 2022, the organization has to get through the upcoming race, which is exceeding all expectations, Michaelian said. Based on early ticket sales, he said projections put attendance only about 10% below previous year. Despite the coronavirus protocols in place, which include proof of vaccination or negative test, and masking, fans are lined up.

“It’s a combination of things. Part of it is we’re witnessing a championship race,” Michaelian said, noting there will be two victory ceremonies—one for the race and one for the season. “Many of the other thing is a lot of people have not attended a motor race in Southern California for a long time.”

“When we’re trying to work this out,” he added, “is to bring the Acura Grand Prix back to the streets of Long Beach in a manner that is very similar—maybe even better—than we had back on our track the year before.”

Global Time Attack brings supercharged cars to Grand Prix to race against the clock

By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

When Cole Powelson came to the Long Beach Grand Prix for the first time as a mechanic on the Ferrari race team in the late aughts, he immediately fell in love. The atmosphere and the high-level race “just blew my mind,” Powelson said. “I knew I had to be a part of that. I had to be a driver.”

A little over a decade later, Powelson will finally race the streets of Long Beach as a competitor in the Global Time Attack challenge, a new addition to the Grand Prix program, in which drivers compete for the fastest lap time over the course of the weekend.

This is such a big deal for us,” said Global Time Attack Director Jason Durehirt, who has been working for years to bring the event to Long Beach. The time attack concept originated in 1990s Japan, where drivers first began competing in timed laps, driving mass produced cars—not vehicles specifically made for racing—on the Tsukuba circuit in the country’s Northeastern Kanto region.

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Continued from page 3

Global Time Attack brings supercharged cars to Grand Prix to race against the clock

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Super Street Magazine, an industry publication Durehirt worked for in the time, was the driving force behind bringing the concept to the U.S. in the early 2000s, in an effort to create more content for readers to follow. In 2004,
The first time attack race was held at Buttonwillow Raceway Park, 28 miles outside of Buickfield. There were some changes made to the original Japanese rules, in part to allow American cars to compete, but the main provisions remained the same: mass produced cars, no restrictions on modifications increasing the vehicle’s power or aerodynamic properties and a set design to avoid wheel-to-wheel racing in favor of timed laps.

“What makes it special is it’s a real low-barrier entry,” Dienhart said.

Drivers don’t need a special license required for traditional wheel-to-wheel racing, which is expensive and takes a year to learn. And, perhaps most importantly, mass produced cars make the race affordable to prospective drivers and fans alike—with some making the jump from one to the other.

“Even though some of them look like race cars, they’re not,” Dienhart said.

Together, will make all the difference.

The cars that hit the track in time attack races are much more affordable than those competing in other races, such as the Grand Prix’s IndyCar and IMSA competitions. While those cars start at $250,000 (not counting tens of thousands of dollars worth of trackside support), entry level cars for the Global Time Attack competition start in the $20,000-$30,000 range and don’t require a professional trackside support team.

But that doesn’t mean that time attack cars don’t require support, though it often comes from friends, family members and partners. Dienhart said.

“You rarely see a successful time attack program with just a driver—it’s usually a team effort.”

Over the years, the time attack racing community has grown and formed a supportive, if still competitive, network of drivers and race teams.

For Karin Pestonik, another competitor in this year’s Global Time Attack event in Long Beach, participating in time attack racing was a way to heal after her father’s death left her struggling to work as a trackside mechanic for big teams.

“Part of the appeal was the opportunity to drive a Honda $200, a car she owns and competes with some of her father’s memories of her father, and one that’s rarely seen in traditional races.

“This was a way back into my normal life,” Pestonik said.

The Honda that Pestonik will compete at the Grand Prix will be her Honda S2000.

“Time Attack are any less impressive in time attack racing was a way to heal after her father’s death left her struggling to work as a trackside mechanic for big teams.”

“You just gotta ride the wave, right?” Pestonik said. “You just gotta roll with it.”

As the general manager at Yard House, Pestonik said.

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“This was a way back into my normal life.”

When the car reaches the coast, the lilt of screaming high-performance engines will produce the perfume of burning rubber.

A week’s worth of engine noise and sandpapering tires will fill the air with a sweet bouquet of an 85% ethanol fuel blend peppered with the perfunctory of burning rubber.

The new, Energy Resources rebate program!

The new, Energy Resources rebate program!

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Imagine a carbon neutral power plant that produces just three things: electricity, hydrogen and water.

Energy Resources and Toyota are working together in developing an ambitious natural gas fuel cell facility in the Long Beach Port. This power plant will produce enough electricity to completely power Toyota’s port facilities.

The potential opportunity to compete in a race as a driver is one many in the industry hope to get, but few are prepared to attempt, said fellow driver Powelson.

“It’s only the truly accessible form of motorsports still left in the U.S. where a working-class individual can build, prepare a car and take it to the national stage.”

After training as a car mechanic at age 16, using his time off at a dealership to work as a trackside mechanic for big races and eventually starting his own shop where he repairs cars and drivers for competitions, Powelson was in disbelief when Dienhart told him that he was invited to participate in the race.

“It’s come full circle, where this year I get to enter as a competitor, not just as a mechanic,” he said. “I get to drive a circuit that I fell in love with years ago.”
More flights, more passengers: Long Beach Airport financially ‘strong,’ officials say

By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

With passenger volumes through Long Beach Airport continuing to recover after being decimated by the pandemic and airlines utilizing more daily flight slots, officials say the small, municipal airport is well-positioned for a solid 2022.

“Over the last several months, activity has gradually increased and remained strong over the summer,” Claudia Lewis, bureau manager for finance and administration, said, adding that Long Beach Airport is currently operating at about 23% below pre-pandemic levels.

During August, 101,255 passengers flew out of Long Beach Airport, according to recently released data. This is a slight decrease from about 115,000 in July, which was the airport’s best month since the onset of the pandemic, she said. The August dip can be attributed to a softening in air travel demand as the peak summer season passes and the rise of the delta variant of the coronavirus, Lewis said. And Long Beach was not alone. National air travel declined from over 63.17 million passengers in July to fewer than 57.5 million in August, according to TSA data.

Two-thirds of the airport’s revenue comes from passenger fees assessed on each commercial airline ticket sale, according to Lewis. When the pandemic struck, that revenue stream all but dried up for several months and the ongoing return to “normal” has been slow.

Early in the pandemic, passenger traffic plummeted. April 2020 saw 97% fewer passengers than the same month the year before. In 2019, nearly 1.8 million travelers flew through Long Beach Airport—7% more than the roughly 2.02 million in 2018. Estimated at about 1.2 million passengers, projections for 2021 are more than double that of 2020. And 2022 is expected to be even better, with airport officials anticipating 1.5 million passengers to fly out of Long Beach.

Thanks to millions of dollars in relief grant funding throughout the pandemic, the airport is entering the 2022 fiscal year—which begins Oct. 1—with a “strong financial standing,” Lewis said.

The funding—along with cost

Airport concessions sales pick up as travelers return

By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

Neck pillows and water bottles, coffee to go or a glass of wine before boarding—as passengers return to Long Beach Airport, shops and restaurants supplying them with travel essentials and amenities are opening back up.

After months of nearly zero traffic, losing a majority of the shops and restaurants at the airport to completely close during the height of the pandemic, all but two have reopened. With hundreds of passengers boarding planes to Maui, the Bay Area and Vegas, a sense of normalcy is returning, but a labor shortage and SouthWest’s takeover as the airport’s main airline spell some uncertainty for future months.

“We’re back on track,” said Kuldip Johal, general manager of dining operations at LGB with Paradies Lagardère, which runs a majority of the airport’s stores and eateries.

While Johal declined to share specific numbers on the recovery of revenue, she said they were on track with the return of passenger volumes, which were at 71% of pre-pandemic levels, according to data released by the airport in August. Prior to the pandemic, terminal concessions brought in millions of dollars, according to a 2019 economic impact study that counted $16.7 million in gross revenues in the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Staff is returning as well. According to Johal, Paradies has been able to bring back 60-70% of its staff, with 35 employees currently working at its LGB businesses.

One of the biggest challenges for the restaurants managed by Paradies has been a shortage of workers, especially cooks, that has troubled the hospitality industry nationwide. To make up for...
Some airport improvements under construction, the future of others remains in limbo

By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

The first projects of the highly anticipated Phase II Terminal Area Improvements at Long Beach Airport are scheduled to be completed in the spring, but the timeline for other projects remains uncertain following the financial toll of the pandemic officials say.

The municipal airport’s new ticketing building and adjoining checked-baggage inspection system facility are on track to open to travelers sometime in the first quarter of 2022, according to Operations and Maintenance Bureau Manager Ron Reeves. About 90% of framing for the ticketing facility is finished and the building overall is about 50% complete, he said.

“This will be the entryway for departing passengers when they come in,” Reeves said. “It is going to be opening and inviting.”

The building will feature about 30 ticketing kiosks where passengers can check in for their flights, Reeves said. The kiosks will be state-of-the-art touchscreen machines, he added, explaining that airport officials have learned from the pandemic. The machines also will be for common use, meaning passengers can use any kiosk regardless of which airline they are flying on.

The building also will include 21 self-service baggage drops that can be utilized by any airline by simply changing the display screen based on demand. Behind the scenes of the ticketing facility will be offices and meeting rooms, along with offices for the various airlines that operate out of Long Beach.

The ticketing building pairs with the checked-baggage inspection system, or CBIS, and the facility and the two will open at the same time. When luggage is checked in the ticketing building, conveyor belts carry them into the CBIS where they are screened prior to being loaded onto their respective aircraft. Combined, the ticketing and CBIS facilities cost $42 million to construct, which was a full order amid the pandemic that saw revenue streams stall for months as travel plummeted. However, with millions of dollars in federal and state relief grants, the airport was able to continue work on the projects.

A third project, the new baggage claim area, is in the demolition-phase. An existing structure has already been torn down and the site is being cleared for grading and a slab. However, further work on the $15 million

Concessions Sales
Continued from page 12

the missing hands in the kitchen, the company is shifting kitchen staff between restaurants in accordance with flight schedules, and has modified its menu by removing prep-intensive items. Burgers and salads stayed, along with house-made sandwich and cocktail choices, but have been temporarily suspended.

“It’s tough to hire right now,” Johal said. “To attract new workers, the company is currently offering referral bonuses for existing employees who bring in friends or family to join the staff.”

Samantha Argosino, owner of Little Brass Cafe, one of the few passenger-serving businesses at the airport not managed by Paradels, said she also found it challenging to staff up once traffic began to pick up again in March, with some potential employees worried about the risk of infection.

“The airport being a hub, there’s this impression that it’s a more dangerous place,” Argosino said.

As for many businesses, the past 18 months have been a period of constant adjustment for Argosino and her husband, who co-own the cafe located in the main terminal of the airport before it closed to check-in.

Argosino said the pandemic has cost her business $75,000 in lost revenues so far. In order to stay afloat, they turned the cafe into a mini grocery store and later added a retail table with specialty items, gifts and souvenirs, which she expects to become permanent moving forward.

“We got creative,” Argosino said.

“That’s the spirit of a lot of business owners: It’s always going to be hard, it’s going to be tougher—but it’s going to be okay.”

In addition to the continued impact that emerging variants of the coronavirus may have on travel, the long term effects of JeffLe’s departure in October of last year are another factor businesses at and around the airport are watching closely.

“JeffLe brought us a lot of customers,” said Apple Alfonso, operations manager at Bliss, which offers valet services at the airport. With Southwest taking over the role as Long Beach’s main airline in the middle of the pandemic, Alfonso said her company is still adjusting to the change in travel patterns that entailed. Southwest picked up 17 slots relinquished by the New York-based JetBlue, bringing its total of allocated flights to 34. Currently, the airline is flying all 34 slots on Sundays, with weekdays averaging 24-25 flights.

Flights to and from Hawaii, currently served by Southwest and Hawaiian Airlines, are especially promising for the valet business, Alfonso said. With these routes gaining popularity as leisure travel returns, so are multi-day bookings for valet and parking services.

“People love the Long Beach Airport,” Alfonso said. “They love how easy the access is.”

Flight schools are seeing record enrollment as pilot shortage looms

By ALENA MASCHKE / Reporter

At Ace High Aviation, located on the eastern perimeter of the Long Beach Airport, the flight school’s four training planes are taking off 24 hours a day. Still, owner Sam Reynolds is finding it hard to keep up with the demand for flying lessons.

“It’s never been like this,” Reynolds said. “I’m turning away students. I have a long list of people waiting to start.”

With travel restrictions limiting the pool of potential passengers, many airlines severely reduced their flight schedules during the pandemic. But that hasn’t kept prospective pilots from flocking to flight schools, which have seen record enrollment in recent months. Now, as restrictions loosen, airlines are ramping up flights again, creating record demand for commercial pilots.

After the number of flight hours at his school dropped to nearly zero in April 2020, business today is the strongest it’s been since his school opened in 2010, Reynolds said. Young students especially are coming to the school, he noted, as remote schooling left them more time in invest in preparing for a potential commercial aviation career.

Despite a reduction in flight hours early in the pandemic, Reynolds said the amount of hours flown was down only 5% by the end of 2020, compared to the previous year, after bookings made a strong return in the fall. This year, he’s expecting the amount of hours serviced by his school to double compared to pre-pandemic numbers.

Other flight schools are reporting a similar trend.

Andy Patel, owner of Airmen Flight Training, saw his cohort of students increase tenfold after he moved the school from Chino to Long Beach last fall. Career-minded students have taken notice of increased hiring efforts by airlines, Patel said, driving demand for
**Improvements**
Continued from page 12

Long Beach City Council approved a budget increase in February 2020, bringing the total to $108.24 million. However, increasing construction costs, including skyrocketing lumber and steel prices exacerbated by the pandemic, could mean a larger price tag in the end. Reeves emphasized that the improvement projects do not equate to an expansion of the number of flights the airport offers. Long Beach Airport is regulated by a noise ordinance that only allowed 51 daily flights. More flights can be added based on annual noise reviews but that will not even be an option until the end of fiscal year 2022, according to airport staff.

Regardless, the improvements promise a bright future for the small airport and especially those traveling to the public. All these projects were originally expected to be completed by 2022. However, a new timeline has yet to be determined.

Other future projects under phase two include a rental car ready-return lot, a ground transportation center and terminal roadway improvements. The overall project was initially projected to cost $80 million. The Long Beach City Council approved a budget increase in February 2020, bringing the total to $108.24 million. However, increasing construction costs, including skyrocketing lumber and steel prices exacerbated by the pandemic, could mean a larger price tag in the end. Reeves emphasized that the improvement projects do not equate to an expansion of the number of flights the airport offers. Long Beach Airport is regulated by a noise ordinance that only allowed 51 daily flights. More flights can be added based on annual noise reviews but that will not even be an option until the end of fiscal year 2022, according to airport staff. Reeves emphasized that the improvements promise a bright future for the small airport and especially those traveling to the public. All these projects were originally expected to be completed by 2022. However, a new timeline has yet to be determined.

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**Employment Opportunities**

**RNs in ICU, Med Surg/Tele, Behavioral Health, Case Management, Emergency Dept.**

**Charge Nurse in Med Surg/Tele**

**Wound Care RN**

**Infection Preventionist/Employee Health**

**Behavioral Health Manager**

**RN Informatics, Resource RNS**

**Public Safety Officer**

**Quality Clinical Acupuncturist, Quality Coordinator**

**Mental Health Workers, CNAs, Unit Secretaries**

**Business Office Clerk**

**Pharmacist, Pharmacy Tech, CLS**

**Plant Engineer**

**Rad Tech, CT Tech**

**Added Benefits:**

We have sign-on, referral bonus, retention and pandemic crisis pay. (Restrictions apply)

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**Parking Instructions:**

From PDI, turn on Termino, Quick Left on Community Way Park on the Parking Structure and walk towards the hospital building towards the Physician/Staff Entrance on the left.

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**Flight Schools**
Continued from page 13

**Flight Lessons.**

“It was all over the news that flight crews were canceling flights because they didn’t have pilots,” said Bosco Cheddoula, a flight instructor at Airman. “They knew: Now is the time to start.”

Commercial pilots are highly sought after, as many current pilots are nearing the mandatory retirement age of 65. According to FAA data supplied by the Regional Airline Association, nearly half of today’s qualified pilots will reach mandatory retirement age within 15 years, and about 13% will be required to retire within five years.

The pandemic has exacerbated this shortage, with scores of pilots opting for early retirement. Roughly 5,000 pilots accepted early retirement offers when airlines severely reduced flights as a result of the pandemic, aviation consultant Kit Darby told industry publication Travel Weekly.

“(Airlines) had this huge problem all of a sudden. Yeah, there’s not many flights, but also their crew is vanishing,” Reynolds, of Aero High Aviation, said.

Now, as passenger numbers pick up again, airlines are scrambling to staff up, offering aggressive financial incentives to attract recent graduates.

Cost is one of the major barriers for prospective pilots looking to obtain their commercial licenses, with a sticker price of around $80,000, plus licensing fees. And prices are only expected to go up, largely driven by an increase in insurance rates and the value of popular training aircraft like the Cessna 172.

“It’s getting pretty out of hand,” Reynolds said of the cost of training. This is where airlines are jumping in. To combat the current shortage, they began offering a range of financial incentives, from five-figure tuition reimbursements to bonus packages of up to $150,000, paid out over the span of a pilot’s career.

But cost is not the only barrier. The reduction in commercial flights during the pandemic has created a bottleneck for students looking to obtain the flight hours necessary to become certified as a commercial pilot.

“Looking at FAA’s database of the newly issued pilot certification records, 2021 YTD production is way down compared with pre-covid years,” Faye Milahey Black, president and CEO of the Regional Airline Association said in an email, calling the shortage a “big national issue that is poised to get worse without intervention.”

Commercial pilots need a minimum of 1,500 flight hours to become certified, which many complete as an interim step to becoming a commercial pilot. In recent months, resumes of students looking to become instructors have started piling up, he added. “I have 30 resumes that I didn’t even get the time to look through.”

But despite the challenges, the current need for pilots is a win for flight schools and students alike, especially as airlines ramp up operations and passengers return to terminals.

August has been a record month for flight schools, said Michael Arnold, director of marketing with ATP Flight School, which operates 69 schools nationwide, including one in Long Beach. In the past 30 days, 50-60 ATP graduates hired across the country were hired by regional airlines, a hiring rate exceeding pre-pandemic levels, according to Arnold.

“When we look at the pilot shortage, we see an opportunity for our students,” Arnold said. 

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A small, private plane takes off from Long Beach Airport, Friday, Sept. 10, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

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**Less noise, fewer fines at Long Beach Airport could lead to reduced services at city libraries**

By SEBASTIAN ECHEVERRY / Reporter

Long Beach libraries have recently purchased yearly subscriptions of multiple online platforms from Spanish-language learning courses to homework help for kids, but those services could be reduced or even eliminated in the years to come now that a supplemental source of funding has departed from Long Beach’s airport.

Starting in 2010, the airline jetBlue had agreed to pay fines after continuously violating the city’s noise ordinance, which governs the airport’s noise-diluted arrivals and commercial flight activity between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

The settlement agreement meant that hundreds of thousands of dollars were sent every year to the Long Beach Public Library Foundation. The foundation then sent the money to Long Beach Library Services for it to purchase online programs and books for people to use.

Then the airline departed from the airport in October and expanded services at Los Angeles International Airport.

The airport’s June 2021 month

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**Flight Schools**

Continued from page 13

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A construction worker cuts exposed rebar on the future site of Long Beach Airport’s new baggage claim area, Friday, Sept. 10, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

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A construction worker walks past tattered plans of the new ticketing lobby at Long Beach Airport.

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**Join Us at Our Community Hospital Long Beach Job Fair**

**Sept 22 & 29**

9am - 3pm

**Location:** Education Pavilion

1720 Termino Ave, Long Beach, CA 90804

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**Long Beach Public Library Foundation.** The foundation then sent the money to Long Beach Library Services for it to purchase online programs and books for people to use. Then the airline departed from the airport in October and expanded services at Los Angeles International Airport. The airport’s June 2021 month.
Quieter Noise Level
Continued from page 15

Williams said services like the library’s new Spanish-language online VIP Learning program will most likely be kept. She added that officials understood that the JetBlue money wouldn’t last forever.

“We knew it was coming,” Williams said. The library’s current budget to purchase books and learning programs is $677,000. Williams estimated that JetBlue’s fine money averaged between $30-$32 million in its reserve fund, meaning it could operate for between 330 and 352 days without incoming revenue, a metric for possible ordinance updates, she added.

“Airport Surcharges” line item. About $2,100 outlined in the usage guidelines, which has boosted daily flights, the purse strings have loosened slightly. The hiring freeze has ended, with multiple positions being filled in recent months and more on the way, particularly in the operations division. Lewis said. The hiring is necessary as activity picks up, she added. Many are working to get their lives and jobs back on track.

Continuing from page 12

A man waits for his luggage at Long Beach Airport's baggage claim area, Monday, Sept. 13, 2021. Photo by Brandon Richardson.

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About 43 flights depart the airport every Sunday currently, Lewis said. With an expected onslaught of holiday travelers, Lewis estimates the airport will see 44-46 daily flights every day in December.

Noise generated by airport operations is monitored and evaluated each year and the noise ordinance is sometimes updated with an increased number of flight slots if noise levels have decreased. While 2021 data will still be evaluated, it will not be used to make any decisions related to the ordinance, Lewis said.

The reimbursement of the usage rule means 2022 data can once again be a valid metric for possible ordinance updates, she added.

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“The airport has weathered this incredibly challenging time,” Director Cynthia Giudry said. “Long Beach Airport has demonstrated our financial resiliency and will continue to adapt to whatever comes our way.”

More Flights
Continued from page 12

50% to 80% of their daily capacity. But as of Sept. 12, Southwest Airlines, the dominant carrier in Long Beach following JetBlue’s departure last year, is flying its full 34 daily slots, including new destinations such as Chicago Midway, St. Louis and Hawaii.

“This is the first time that they’ve flown their full flight slot allocation ever, so it’s exciting for the airport,” Kayenkoff said. “Southwest has been a great business partner,” Lewis added.

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More Flights
Continued from page 12

containment efforts such as furloughs, a hiring freeze, delaying non-critical capital projects and deferring non-essential discretionary spending—allowed the facility to close out fiscal years 2020 and 2021 with no deficit while continuing major capital improvement projects. Lewis said. Throughout the pandemic, three critical airlift projects were completed and work continues on portions of the Phase 2 terminal improvement project.

The overall airport budget for 2022 is just over $50 million for operations, debt services and capital improvements, according to the city’s recently approved budget. Revenue, meanwhile, is expected to be just over $60.2 million for a nearly $10.16 million windfall for the airport fund. The airport’s proposed operating budget for 2022 is just over $32 million. The facility is expected to close out the 2021 fiscal year with $30-$32 million in its reserve fund, meaning it could operate for between 330 and 352 days without incoming revenue, a metric called “days cash on hand,” according to Financial Services Officer Mary Chhey.

Flight Slots
Airlines that operate in Long Beach are allocated a certain number of daily flight slots, with a maximum number of flights out of the city limited to 33 based on the noise ordinance that regulates the facility. Long Beach carriers are required to fly each slot 85% annually or risk losing the slot.

The usage rule was suspended amid the pandemic, as carriers around the world grounded many planes for containment efforts such as furloughs, a hiring freeze, delaying non-critical capital projects and deferring non-essential discretionary spending—allowed the facility to close out fiscal years 2020 and 2021 with no deficit while continuing major capital improvement projects. Lewis said. Throughout the pandemic, three critical airlift projects were completed and work continues on portions of the Phase 2 terminal improvement project.

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We don’t have beds staffed': Local hospitals grapple with nationwide nurse shortage

By BRANDON RICHARDSON / Reporter

Long Beach nurses are being pushed away by other hospitals with pay as high as $2,500 per shift, with local officials scrambling to keep staff by offering signing bonuses and other perks.

This all comes amid a nationwide nurse shortage as coronavirus surges push some health systems to their limits.

California has suffered a nursing shortage for decades, which has only been exacerbated by the pandemic, and the poaching attempts from other cities and states have forced Long Beach facilities to offer incentives such as a per-shift bonus simply for showing up to work.

“Because we don’t have frontline nurses, we don’t have beds staffed,” said Ocampo, chief clinical officer at Community Hospital Long Beach.

“Patients are being held in the ER, waiting for a bed in the intensive care unit or medical-surgical unit because it’s being overrun,” Ocampo said.

At any given time, Community Hospital, which reopened in January when COVID-19 cases were surging, is operating with anywhere between 50% to 60% supplemental nurses (frequent nurses who are sent by agencies upon request). Ocampo said.

However, many agencies have new contracts requiring higher wages as contractors continue in some areas of the state and across the country, Ocampo said.

Nurses are being paid premiums to work in areas where the virus is extremely high, including Texas and Florida, Dr. Tony Garcia, chief nursing officer at St. Mary Medical Center and Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, told CalMatters. Along with most Southern states, Texas and Florida are experiencing severe surges in new cases and deaths, according to CDC data.

The Southern states’ seven-day new case rate per 100,000 residents range from about 170 to 725, California’s rate, meanwhile, is 134 as of Sept. 6. However, due to the state’s large population, California has the second-highest number of positions posted for nurses, exceeded only by Texas, Aya Healthcare Vice President of Client Account Management Sophia Morris told CalMatters.

Aya is one of only a few that remain open, according to the California Health Department of Public Health. Aya has agreed to pay up to $145 per hour for Aya’s intensive care unit nurses and more if the facility needs them through a K-Vision contract.

At Community Hospital, Ocampo’s nurses have received offers of $2,500 per shift to work in San Diego, from agencies only offering $30 or more per week, she said.

“They just aren’t crazier,” Ocampo said.

“Local nurses are being pulled out of their community. They will call off a shift they are scheduled for to go work for higher pay.”

Community Hospital recently put in place a program that includes a per-shift bonus to incentivize nurses to show up to their shifts, Ocampo said. Additionally, the hospital is offering signing bonus, referral bonuses and retention bonuses, she added.

Ocampo declined to give the dollar amounts for these incentives.

St. Mary Medical Center and Long Beach Memorial officials confirmed they are also offering incentives such as signing, referral and shift bonuses, but declined to offer details about what those bonuses are or how many supplemental staff have been brought on.

Officials said they have sufficient staffing to meet demand.

Nurse recruitment and retention is critical as patient volumes have increased dramatically over the last few months, Ocampo said, noting a 30% increase at her hospital.

Scripps Health, which has five hospitals and 28 outpatient clinics in the San Diego area, told CalMatters it is serving nearly 20% more patients than it did prior to the pandemic.

“Like hospitals across the country, patient volumes have increased,” Tony Garcia, chief nursing officer at Memorial, said in an email, noting the delta variant is a factor in the strain on staffing resources.

“In addition to an increase in unvaccinated COVID-19 patients, we are seeing a higher volume of patients with other conditions than we normally do this time of year.”

At St. Mary, patient volumes increased 5% during July and August, according to Gloria Carter, vice

With billions in backlogged work, Long Beach officials could look to bonds to fix city streets

By JASON RUIZ / Reporter

Long Beach has nearly $4 billion in unfunded and undereorted projects, repairs, and investments that need to be made in city streets, buildings and other assets and the city is now on federal and state funding, or new bonds and taxes to help finance them.

The City Council held a study session Sept. 7 to learn about the funding gap and potential revenue sources it can pursue to slow the deterioration of city streets and buildings and complete legally mandated improvements to city sidewalks brought on by a settlement in an ADA lawsuit. The latter will require a total of 3,350 new ramps to be installed over the next 13 months, something that will be prioritized over sidewalk repairs.

Long Beach also owes billions in city employee pension contributions, rent stabilization, stormwater protection and the looming question of what to do with the Queen Mary.

But the focus at the study session was on one of the largest expenses the city has: street and alley repairs. Public Works Director Eric Lopez estimated the total needed to fix city streets at $1.77 billion, which is the level of funding needed to bring the city’s average pavement condition index score to 85.

The index rates streets in the city on a scale of 1 to 100, with the highest score representing a street in excellent condition and the lowest being a street that has failed and needs to be completely reconstructed, the most costly kind of street repair.

The cost to repair an excellent street is about $2 per square foot while a poor or very poor street can cost $37 to $38 per square foot.

The citywide pavement condition score is 88 with just 13% of streets being considered “excellent” and 5% of the city’s streets being rated “fair to marginal” or worse.

Lopez said that the city needs to spend about $18 million annually to maintain the current street conditions but the city has instead spent around $33 million annually on street repairs and paving, leading to the city’s backlog of poor and very poor streets climbing to 26%.

“You definitely don’t want to be over 20%,” Lopez said.

The council could decide on whether to issue bonds to help speed up the rate of street repairs, something that was floated in November as a way to make cuts to other services to pay for the debt service. Medica said it’s something the council will look at early next year.

City Manager Tom Medica said that bonding can provide short-term benefits but could require the council to make cuts to other services to pay for the debt service. Medica said it’s something the council will look at early next year.

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Long Beach extends parklet program through June 2022


Photo by Brandon Richardson.

TLD Law is excited to announce its 60th Anniversary in 2021!

In celebration of our 60 years in business, we will be supporting six charities throughout the year, in honor of each decade. The 60th charity we would like to highlight is Free Arts, an organization that uses art to restore hope, resilience and self-esteem in children ages 5-18 in Los Angeles who have experienced abuse, poverty, neglect and/or homelessness.

FREE ARTS

www.tldlaw.com

The on-deck sail at the Long Beach Container Terminal at Middle Harbor, Thursday, Aug. 19, 2021.

Photo by Brandon Richardson.

Long Beach set a record when 65 container ships were anchored off the coast waiting to enter the complex, according to the Marine Exchange of Southern California.

“In order to stay on top of this cargo, ports will need to adapt,” Cordaro said. “We will need to find the long-term solutions that will satisfy consumer demand, increase efficiency at the ports and reduce costs for our customers.”

High volumes of empty containers moved through the port continued, increasing 197% to 280,794 compared to the same month last year.

Although consumer demand softened in August compared to July, overall retail sales last month were about 18% above pre-pandemic levels, according to port officials. These sales bumps have been driving increased goods movement as retailers replace inventory.

“Here we are still waiting, and as a property owner, we have talked to MARAD, we made that statement, and that has cost us money. When the project is eligible for future funding, we will ask if the federal agency is going to meet state requirements, and calls requesting for comment,” Lee Wilson, property owner of property owners are still concerned, expressing growing discontentment as the timeline drags out.

The port needs federal approval because it is receiving about $16 million through the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Erickson said in an email the project is eligible for future funding from the federal government intended to pay for construction.

“We’ve lost, by my estimation, at least a year on what the original plan was, and that has cost us money. When we talked to MARAD, we made that apparent to them,” Erickson said. The port has asked if the federal agency could expedite their review.

MARAD did not respond to emails and calls requesting for comment.

The city’s Public Works department proposed the extension, saying outdoor dining has not only helped businesses survive pandemic restrictions but has also become popular with customers. The extension includes businesses

rail Project

Continued from page 39

As it stands, the EIS circulated the US for review and is now preparing the final EIS and record of decision on the project, Port of Long Beach Deputy Chief Harbor Engineer Mark Erickson said at a recent meeting.

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The port in December 2016 first released its draft Environmental Impact Report to meet state requirements, followed by a final EIR approval by the Board of Harbor Commissioners in January 2018, according to the port.

The first arrival, departure and loading of the trains will occur within the extended period, according to the city.

An extension of the project to 2032, according to the port.

“This is one of the few things that is really happening on the commercial waterfront in Long Beach,” said at a recent meeting.
end of the year. “It’s the only business corridor that has numerous homes within just a few feet of businesses,” Price said. “The impacts are felt at a much deeper level.”

Residents from Belmont Shore lodged complaints that some parklets on Second Street were creating quality of life issues like urinating in public and loud music and conversations disrupting their home lives.

“They said they were happy to support restaurants during the pandemic when inside-dining bans crippled businesses, but “that time is over,” they said. Several business owners along the corridor challenged that stance, stating that many of their customers still prefer to eat outside for a variety of reasons, including COVID-19.

“Of course we’re not out of the woods yet,” said Ryan Homan, who co-owns Saint & Second. “We hear there are indoor vaccine mandates coming in different areas and we’re very concerned about that and we have quite a bit invested in our parklets.”

Rebecca Hinderer, co-owner of Let’s Yak About It, said she was appalled to hear that residents had suffered because of some of the parklets on the corridor but said that the pandemic is not over until masks are allowed to come off and everyone feels safe doing so.

“I had a very slow morning in our inside today, but there was a 15-minute wait for my parklet,” Hinderer said.

Development of 84 townhomes in North Long Beach wins approval

BY SEBASTIAN ECHEVERRY / Reporter

The Long Beach Planning Commission this month unanimously approved construction plans for 84 townhomes and retail space at the intersection of Atlantic Avenue and South Street in North Long Beach.

A group of developers from Brandywine Homes and the LAB Holding is hoping to break ground for the mixed residential and commercial project, called Rhythm Long Beach, in a 3-acre 2-story lot in front of Michelle Obama Library in March or April.

The buildings are designed to be three stories tall with 27 two-bedroom units and 57 three-to-four-bedroom units with a two-car garage for each unit. The project will also create 3,000 square feet for commercial growth on Atlantic Avenue.

Shaheen Sadeghi, chief operating officer at LAB Holding, said they assisted Brandywine Homes with assisting Brandywine Homes with the project in order to help reactivate business along the Atlantic Avenue corridor between the 8th and 9th Council Districts that make up North Long Beach.

“This project is the beginning and the catalyst for revitalizing the corridor in the area,” Sadeghi said.

The 84 townhomes are expected to be priced at $500,000 and up, according to the planning documents.

While the project mostly centered around a commercial space, the proposal also included a 1,900 square-foot footprint than the Retro Row location for people to enjoy. The 1,900 square-foot footprint than the Retro Row location for people to enjoy.

“Little Coyote, opened its second location in East Long Beach Sept. 8, according to an announcement made on the business’s Instagram account.

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Season tickets starting at $110
All performances begin promptly at 8PM
at the Long Beach Terrace Theater
November 13, 2021
Opening Night! Beethoven Symphony No. 7

February 5, 2022
Silver-Garburg Piano Duo

March 12, 2022
The Firebird Suite

April 30, 2022
Pepe Romero returns!

June 4, 2022
Scheherazade

Season tickets starting at $95
All performances begin promptly at 8PM
in the Long Beach Arena Pacific Ballroom
October 23, 2021
Windborne's Music of Queen

December 18, 2021
Holiday POPS with the Camerata Singers

February 12, 2022
The musical legacy of Chicago

March 26, 2022
Paul Shaffer Presents

March 26, 2022
Aretha Franklin, a tribute to the Queen of Soul

May 21, 2022

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