Museum shows COVID’s harsh impacts on Pacific Islanders

By Christian May-Suzuki

One of the first things you see inside the Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum is the frame of a wooden house set up in the middle of the museum’s small gallery. The house’s interior is adorned with stones, traditional cloths and other distinctive pieces of furniture that come from islands you probably didn’t even know existed.

But possibly the most unique thing about it is the set of words carved onto the ground of the museum floor, just in front of the house’s entrance: “ask permission.”

Those words aren’t directing visitors to the curator or the staff, but to the ancestors who made the objects on display. No, museum-goers don’t literally have to ask permission. But the message asks visitors to take a moment to show respect and appreciation not just for the piece itself, but for the work put into it long ago and the life of the materials that went into its creation.

This approach and appreciation for the museum’s artifacts—which the facility calls its “ancestor pieces” as a sign of respect—is what defines the small museum at 695 Alamitos Ave., directly across the street from the Museum of Latin American Art.

The PIEAM is small and can be easy to miss if you aren’t looking for it. But that is fitting, in a way, considering the areas the artwork represents. Pacific Islanders generally trace their families back to Polynesia, Micronesia, or Melanesia, as well as a few major islands outside of those chains. Many of those islands are small enough for your eyes to skip right past on a map or a globe.

There are some well-known and larger places, like Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, that are considered Pacific islands, but most of the 1,778 islands are small, like the Crown Islands and Guam, where current museum director and curator Fran Lujan was born. The average size of the Pacific islands, according to the Asia Oceania Geosciences Society, is 171 square kilometers, smaller than Catalina Island.

This has led to many islands being overlooked or entirely forgotten, Lujan says, and the PIEAM’s mission is to ensure that these islands are represented and their traditions are not forgotten.

“No one is too small to count,” she said.

The PIEAM was founded by Dr. Robert Gumbiner, the namesake for Gumbiner Park that is directly across the street from the museum.

Southwest aims to bring more business travel to Long Beach amid new demand

By Brandon Richardson

Compared to leisure, business travel has taken longer to recover after COVID-19 essentially shut down airports to everything except essential travel in early 2020. The first quarter of this year, however, has seen a significant uptick in a return to business travel, according to Southwest Airlines executives.

Leisure travel out of Long Beach has made a strong comeback over the past two years, according to city data. In March of this year, about 136,600 people traveled through the small municipal airport, down only about 6% from the roughly 145,200 people who traveled through in March 2021.

Shuttle pilot program coming to business districts near Downtown, Belmont Shore

By Christian May-Suzuki

Tourists and residents alike will soon have an easier way to navigate some of Long Beach’s busiest areas.

A micro-transit shuttle pilot program is on track to kick off this summer in the Belmont Shore/Alamitos Bay and Downtown/Alamitos Beach neighborhoods. The program will provide two separate services: a fixed route and another that is essentially on-demand. The number of stops and their locations have yet to be determined, but those decisions will be made with input from the public and the local business associations.

The program aims to reduce the number of car trips that are under 3 miles long. For those that still need to drive, the program will help connect less used parking lots to areas with more activity.

Another goal of the program is to assist businesses in the area recovering from the economic impacts of the
Casino Point Dive Park holds trove of life and mysteries for Catalina visitors

By Christian Moy-Suzuki

By the time Lisa Beach first explored the world below the ocean’s surface, she wasn’t sure a career in diving was even possible for her. While Beach’s grandparent’s purchased homes on Catalina Island that she often visited as a child, she never envisioned herself spending much of her time underwater. It wasn’t until well into her adulthood, after years on the mainland working as an IT technician, that she got in the water to explore the secrets beneath its surface.

“I was 50 when I started and I was in terrible shape,” Beach said over the phone. “I had a total desk jockey job and I was out of shape.” She says she discovered her love for the ocean one day in January 2002, while out exploring Catalina Island with her son. “I was a total desk jockey and I was in terrible shape,” Beach said over the phone. “I had a total desk jockey job and I was out of shape.” She says she discovered her love for the ocean one day in January 2002, while out exploring Catalina Island with her son.

She did not start her life in love with the ocean, but her son was a different story. He decided to pursue a career as a dive professional, which led Beach to move to Catalina, where her son could have as much exposure to the water as possible.

Still, it took a decade of her son trying to convince her before Beach finally agreed to go on her first dive in November 2012. It was a moment that drastically changed the trajectory of her career and her life.

She now works for Diving Catalina, where she takes people on guided dives and teaching dives.

“Early on, divers just had to walk down the rocks and jump in the water,” Beach said. “It’s just really gorgeous down there.”

The idea for a park was first discussed in the ‘50s, when the area’s submarine diver turned to the project in 1962. It was a moment that Beach says was a change that drastically changed the trajectory of her career and her life.

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Long Beach Airport is one of the few city departments that is, for the most part, self-sustaining, financing projects and staffing primarily through passenger fees as well as state and federal grants. On occasional occasions, however, bonds have been sold to expedite high-ticket items. And during its emergence of COVID-19. After two new bond series. These bonds financed a total of $6.5 million in debt service payment of $5.4 million through final maturity. Combined, the bonds will have an average annual debt service payment of $6 million through 2023, before falling to $4.5 million through final maturity. Airport debt service is typically paid for through passenger fees but throughout the pandemic, airport revenue plummeted. Most flights were grounded and passenger volumes fell upward of 70%, slashing revenues to practically nothing. The airport was able to continue paying its debt service in large part thanks to the CARES Act and 2021 American Rescue Plan Act. The new bonds will pay off the remaining debt service for the 2019 and 2020 bonds as well as provide $5.1 million in funding toward the airport’s capital improvements program. The third series of bonds would help pay for the airport cash flow. “When I die, I know my ancestors will ask me, ‘Did you share?’” Lujan said. “If the island came to the United States for graduate school, she ended up staying longer than expected, when she left her medical school. Although she enjoyed her time in Long Beach, her heart has stayed with her homeland.” Lujan said she also has a special place in her heart for her island of Yap in Micronesia in 1994. The museum had to adapt its material to an online platform. “We really had to learn how to use QR codes,” Lujan said. The result was “Pasifika Transmissions,” an exhibit featuring nine artists indigenous to one of the many Pacific islands. These artists each used a different ancestor piece, ranging from a sling stone from the Mariana Islands to a pahu—a drum-like instrument originating from several Polynesian islands. “It was always a way to the Pacific islands in the 1960s and has become more involved with the island of Guam through business in the 1970s, where his appreciation for the culture of the island grew.” He established a precursor to the PFEAM—the Ethnic Art Institute of Micronesia (EIAM)—on the island of Yap in Micronesia in 1994. The museum had an initial mission to Long Beach’s successor: to connect its Long Beach museum until he died in 2009. The museum opened in October 2010, and Lujan became its curator in 2019. The PFEAM highlights communities in the Pacific islands through the promotion of their art and traditions. As the only museum in the United States, U.S., to be entirely dedicated to the preservation and promotion of American Samoa, the PFEAM feels a unique duty to share her heritage in the most genuine and appreciated form possible. “The [outlook] reflects steady passenger recovery trends as well as prudent financial and debt management throughout the pandemic,” according to Fitch. “While exposures remain with regard to traffic and revenue improvement, the progress in activity volumes led by Southwest Airlines service support suggests lessened fiscal strains, with the airport better positioned to receive metrics to levels consistent with current rating levels.”

Natalia Rodriguez, 5, walks through “Lukal Dukuluk,” an art installation by Boky Agura Alofa, at the Pacific Island Ethnol: Art Museum. The installation includes dozens of paper grass flowers, which Alofa says convey flowers given to someone they care about.

City sells $130M in bonds for airport upgrades

As the new bond funding is crucial to pay the principal and interest on those bonds. When the older bonds were issued with a 30-year maturity, airport spokeswoman Marlene Arroyo said, “When the island came to the United States for graduate school, she ended up staying longer than expected, when she left her medical school. Although she enjoyed her time in Long Beach, her heart has stayed with her homeland.” Lujan said she also has a special place in her heart for her island of Yap in Micronesia in 1994. The museum had to adapt its material to an online platform. “We really had to learn how to use QR codes,” Lujan said. The result was “Pasifika Transmissions,” an exhibit featuring nine artists indigenous to one of the many Pacific islands. These artists each used a different ancestor piece, ranging from a sling stone from the Mariana Islands to a pahu—a drum-like instrument originating from several Polynesian islands. “It was always a way to the Pacific islands in the 1960s and has become more involved with the island of Guam through business in the 1970s, where his appreciation for the culture of the island grew.” He established a precursor to the PFEAM—the Ethnic Art Institute of Micronesia (EIAM)—on the island of Yap in Micronesia in 1994. The museum had an initial mission to Long Beach’s successor: to connect its Long Beach museum until he died in 2009. The museum opened in October 2010, and Lujan became its curator in 2019. The PFEAM highlights communities in the Pacific islands through the promotion of their art and traditions. As the only museum in the United States, U.S., to be entirely dedicated to the preservation and promotion of American Samoa, the PFEAM feels a unique duty to share her heritage in the most genuine and appreciated form possible. “The [outlook] reflects steady passenger recovery trends as well as prudent financial and debt management throughout the pandemic,” according to Fitch. “While exposures remain with regard to traffic and revenue improvement, the progress in activity volumes led by Southwest Airlines service support suggests lessened fiscal strains, with the airport better positioned to receive metrics to levels consistent with current rating levels.”

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Long Beach's waterfront hotels find their own paths to stand out

By Christian May-Suzuki

One of the biggest perks that come with Long Beach is in the name: being on the beach. For tourists who are looking for the full waterfront experience, there are several hotel options in the city, each providing its own vibe for guests.

Whether you want a comfortable luxury hotel or something unique and adventurous, there are several choices around Long Beach’s coast. Here’s a look at three different hotels on the water and how their owners try to stand out from the crowd.

Dockside Boat and Bed has been a resident of the city’s Rainbow Harbor for over 20 years, giving guests a resident of the city’s Rainbow Harbor, $260-$495 per night. Dockside Boat and Bed provides a similar level of service to what one would expect from a traditional hotel, from having a check-in service to greet people at the start of their stay to the fluffy white towels with the sheets and daily housekeeping to keep the boats clean and fresh. While there is no room service, the business is able to provide a continental breakfast for its guests thanks to a kitchen on its houseboat, where Harris-Ryskamp and her staff control the operation of the hotel.

“It’s about giving them the authentic boat experience, but also making sure it’s very similar to a hotel experience,” Harris-Ryskamp said. “The boat’s biggest enemy is neglect…so we’ve had 365 days of the year.”

Dockside Boat and Bed is one of Belmont Shore Inn’s key selling points. Potted plants and sunlight to create the Belmont Shore Inn environment. Potted plants and large glass windows to utilize sunlight to create the Belmont Shore Inn environment. Potted plants and large glass windows to utilize sunlight to create the Belmont Shore Inn environment. Potted plants and large glass windows to utilize sunlight to create the Belmont Shore Inn environment.

Comfort is an important part of supplementing the overall experience at Dockside Boat and Bed, but it’s capturing the feeling of being on the water that attracts people to the hotel. Once people stay for the first time, Harris-Ryskamp says 70% return within three years. “They can smell the sea as soon as they hear the seagulls,” Harris-Ryskamp said. “They love that experience.”

Belmont Shore Inn, 3346 E. Ocean Blvd., $179-$409 per night

One of Belmont Shore Inn’s defining characteristics is its proximity to the beach, even compared to other hotels in a city with “beach” in its name. General manager Karen Patel says that they are not able to technically call it a “beachfront property,” but being within spitting distance of the sand is enough for such a technicality to not matter. “It’s literally a one-minute walk,” Patel said of the inn’s distance to the beachfront.

Patel and his family hope to project. He said creating a modern design that utilizes the sun to capture a beachside boutique feel in a key part of the identity that Patel and his family hope to project. He said creating a modern design that utilizes the sun to capture a beachside boutique feel in a key part of the identity that Patel and his family hope to project.

“Beachfront” is a little bit different and unusual, kind of a unique experience for the customers and for travelers,” he said. “It has a ‘beachy vibes’ feeling to it.”

A guest exits The Belmont Shore Inn after checking out.

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that one of the city’s most important goals is to provide a comforting and welcoming feel in their guest rooms.

“We can say that is a home away from home,” he said. “and everyone has a home base in Long Beach.”

Hotel Maya, 700 Queen Mary Dr., $224-$25 per night
As a Hilton resort with more space and resources, Hotel Maya can go to greater lengths to promote its image. Unlike many boutique hotel experiences like Dockside Brunt and Red and the Belmont Shore Inn, Hotel Maya can take measures beyond the amenities it provides to show its identity to the world.

“We strive to celebrate the Mayan culture...with things that we do and entertainment that honors the Mayan people,” Hotel Maya Director of Sales and Marketing Allison Lesser said by phone. The hotel puts on an overarching community event each year to help craft and establish this image in the public eye. This year’s campaign has a series of animals coming into the hotel for both hotel guests and local visitors to enjoy. Animals play a key role in Mayan culture, and the hotel has worked to bring in several of the most revered species in the culture every month, including a monkey, a hawk, a parrot and a macaw.

Having the resources to put on these kinds of events is a feature generally reserved for the biggest hotels, and Hotel Maya takes full advantage of that ability. This event is hosted alongside a meal provided by one of the hotel’s other identities—defining features and the one Lesser and her team may be the most proud of its restaurant.

Fuego is the restaurant at Hotel Maya, which serves Latin-style food and hosts a full-service bar at the hotel. Lesser says that Fuego was built not just to complement the hotel, but to serve as a place to attract people all on its own.

“For the most part, we don’t go to a hotel for food unless it’s an outsourced restaurant with a top chef,” Lesser said. “We happen to have a restaurant that is a destination itself, and it is a critical part of the hotel.”

The concept behind Fuego, Lesser said, was designed to tie into the Mayan theme of the hotel.

“It was conceptually created that way [i.e.], one of the largest amenities that we do have within the city that we’re able to market to customers and guests as well as locals,” Lesser said.

“Once they’re here, and they see the beautiful views and taste the food and experience the service—that keeps them coming back.”

Even as one of the largest hotels in the city, Lesser says she knows that there are plenty of people that still don’t even know of Hotel Maya or Fuego’s existence.

“It’s really too early to tell at this point,” she said. “Once they’re here, and they see the beautiful views and taste the food and experience the service—that keeps them coming back.”

Cambodian flags and confetti fill the air during the 14th Annual Cambodian Town Parade and Culture Festival.

FROM THE EDITOR: HAYLUNG MUNGUIA

Cultural events can help boost Long Beach’s recovery—so the city will help pay for them

Cultural events like parades and food festivals were among the many economy-boosting and community-building activities that had to take a pause during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic—and Long Beach officials are hoping their return can help bolster the city’s recovery.

To that end, officials have announced that some funding from the Long Beach Recovery Act—the city’s plan guiding how to spend the more than $200 million state and federal aid it has received since the start of the public health crisis—can be used to help pay for those events.

The idea of using that money for special events started with the City Council earlier this year, when the panel approved an item from Councilmember Al Austin that asked city staff to look into whether there could be a permissible use of the funds.

“I think it’s only right to look at opportunities to support some of these cultural events that really define our city,” Austin said at the time. And now, it appears, Long Beach has a plan to do just that. Meredith Reynolds, the special deputy city manager for recovery events in a memo earlier this month that the city will reconvene the Property Activation Grant Program within the LRBA to offer.

• Eight grants of up to $25,000 to nonprofits for large citywide cultural events, with funding available to offset special event permits and fees.
• Seven grants of up to $15,000 to nonprofits for city-supported cultural events, with funding available to offset special event permits and fees.

-800-914-4562
Bureau Manager Ron Reeves told screen facility. Construction about what the airport has to offer facility, including the new ticketing Airport. Representatives from tech, travel managers from various travel, Southwest once again invited “But we’re very excited about what fall now going into June,” Harvey said, build up in March, April, May and those on the tour. 

Sonja Free, director of client services for TravelSolve, the largest California-based travel agency, said the firm’s clients—which of whom are corporate travelers—are going to “love the new Long Beach Airport.” It was always a great airport as far as convenience—quick check-in, accessibility, etc., she said. “Now with the upgraded facilities, it’s going to be even better now.”

June marks the sixth anniversary of Southwestern operations out of Long Beach. The air carrier started at the airfield with five flights to the Bay Area but with the departure of JetBlue in 2020, the Texas-based airline quickly became the leader in the city. Later this year, Southwest will add a total of 12 daily flights of the airport’s 52 slots, Harvey said. “The original facility has so much charm,” Harvey said. “But we just put a lot of capacity on an airport. The airport absolutely had to make a lot of capacity on an airport. That growth will benefit business travelers significantly. Harvey said. Aside from expanded food and beverage, and movie and show offerings, the carrier is upgrading onboard Wi-Fi to be fast enough as well as adding USB A and C ports at every seat. “People want to be productive, they want to knock out that email,” Harvey said. “And they want to watch movies, they want to live stream their shows. We need to... support that.”

Casino Point

Casino building. Others, like Dining Catalina, are smaller operations without a brick-and-mortar location. Even though these operations are mobile and don’t have some of the resources, there is no shortage of customers for them to attend to. Despite Beach’s recent start, she says she is closing in on having done 1,500 dives for various purposes, many of them being with customers at Casino Point. For Beach, diving has become more than just a new way to explore. It has been a place for her to exercise and get back into shape, which she says she enjoys doing without sweating through diving. It has become a place of empowerment, where she can look to help all sorts of families experience something special.

But mostly, it has become a place for her to escape the busy world above the surface and dive into a new one that is peaceful and quiet.
Planning Commission approves 75-unit housing development near Downtown Long Beach

By Christian May-Suzuki

Another large-scale housing development has been given a green light in Long Beach. The Planning Commission unanimously approved a six-story, 75-unit residential project at its May 19 meeting. The project site, 923 and 927 Long Beach Blvd., comprises two adjacent lots on the west side of Long Beach Boulevard between Ninth and 10th streets. At 16 feet tall, it falls far below the 35-foot maximum height required for new construction in the area. It will measure 110 feet in width and 150 feet in depth, with no setback from the street at the currently vacant 16,500-square-foot project site.

Units will be split between studio, one and two-bedroom units, with four of those units being designated for low-income housing as part of the conditions for approval. Among the 75 total units, there will be 11 studio and two-bedroom units each, with the remaining 55 designated as one-bedroom units.

Current plans show that the four affordable units will consist of three one-bedrooms and one studio, but Commissioner Jane Templin said during the May 19 meeting that the mix of affordable units offered should be more balanced, likely meaning a two-bedroom unit should be included. City staff said they would look into that idea.

Plans for the project include three levels of subterranean parking that will have 104 spots for the building. Bike storage and charging for electric vehicles will also be provided, as city regulations require. The first floor will have five units alongside a lobby, meeting room, fitness room and laundry room. Floors two through six will each have 14 units each, and the second floor will have an open courtyard at its center alongside its units. The 1,159-square-foot courtyard will include a play area for kids, and residents can also enjoy the outdoors on a 1,650-square-foot rooftop deck.

The building itself will include a modern glass facade and a design that maximizes natural light coming into the building. A stone veneer will also be built along with balconies on some units to add depth to the flat building design.

Downtown housing grows, but business optimism slows

By Christian May-Suzuki

Downtown Long Beach continues to expand as it bounces back from the COVID-19 pandemic. The area saw a solid improvement to its housing stock and added a variety of new businesses—particularly restaurants, personal services, and general retail—but lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to an uncertain outlook from Downtown business owners on the overall economic future of the city, state, and country.

In its 2022 Economic Profile, released earlier this month, the Downtown Long Beach Alliance highlighted the development of 96 new housing units in the Downtown area as a major accomplishment last year. The total represents a more than 46% increase from 2020. There are also over 650 units currently in planning or under construction in the area.

The 271-unit Volta on Pine and the 357-unit Shoreline Gateway were the only additions to the Downtown housing market in 2021, but the DLBA anticipates the completion of several projects that will increase Downtown Long Beach’s housing

Long Beach rolls out COVID relief programs

By Kelly Puente

Long Beach last year received more than $60 million in federal COVID relief aid to address fiscal issues and urgent needs in the community, but a year later, the majority of those funds have yet to be spent as the city said it was waiting for clear federal guidelines. Now, with federal guidance in place, Long Beach in recent months has rolled out a flurry of direct assistance programs under the Long Beach Recovery Act.

But with many of those programs still in the application period, it could be weeks or months before some residents and small businesses get help. And with no direct federal oversight of how it rolls out the programs, Long Beach officials will have to hold themselves accountable for timelines and funding.

City officials said the holdup was due in part to the city carefully planning more than 80 programs under the Long Beach Recovery Act to reach businesses and communities that need it the most.

“Our City Council asked us to be really intentional about the design of these programs so that we are meeting the equity and collective impact,” said Meredith Reynolds, a deputy city manager who is leading planning more than 80 programs under the Long Beach Recovery Act. But with many of those programs still in the application period, it could be weeks or months before some residents and small businesses get help. And with no direct federal oversight of how it rolls out the programs, Long Beach officials will have to hold themselves accountable for timelines and funding.

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**Downtown Long Beach Alliance could see expanded boundaries with 10-year renewal**

By Brandon Richardson

The Downtown Long Beach Alliance, the long-time property business improvement district of the area, is up for renewal this year, which could bring with it an expanded boundary and additional fees for property owners, according to city documents.

The PBID has operated in Downtown since 1995 when it was approved for a term of five years, which has subsequently been renewed for two 10-year terms in 2003 and 2012. And earlier this month, the City Council approved a plan for a 10-year renewal that includes potentially expanding the district’s boundaries to the north and south.

The northern boundary along Pacific Avenue currently ends at Sixth Street, while the boundary up Pine Street continues up to Eighth Street. The new boundary would continue along Pacific Avenue to Eighth Street.

“It’s about continuity of service,” Andrew Metoyer, DLBA’s director of economic development and policy manager for the DLBA, said in a phone interview. The only property owners that are part of the DLBA are [other] property owners who have reduced those assessments.

South of Ocean Boulevard, the current boundary does not encompass any of the waterfronts that fall under the DLBA’s purview and the boundary would expand to include much of the Rainbow Harbor area—specifically the port and the area near the Aquarium of the Pacific along the waterfront to Shoreline Village, which is not included in the update.

Restaurants along the waterfront from包括 Hosters, Chilis, Outback Steakhouse, P.F. Chang’s, California Pizza Kitchen, Tokyo Wako and Q Smokehouse as well as walking paths along the water, would also be included in the DLBA’s service area.

“[Expanding] to the waterfront, it’s still about continuity of service, but it’s more about [our] ambassadors interact with [our] visitors and customers,” Metoyer said. “Whether for convention or conference, or just here on vacation, it’s a way to provide hospitality services, engagement, and direct folks to explore more of Downtown.”

- Austin Metoyer, DLBA Economic Development and Policy Manager

The outcome of the vote will be announced before the board meeting on Tuesday. If passed, the organization would be approved to operate from Jan. 1, 2023, through Dec. 31, 2032. The DLBA would need to begin the renewal process two years prior to the end of its current term. The improvement district’s annual budget is funded through property assessments fees paid by owners. On average, property assessments are about 3.5%, according to city documents. The assessments for city-owned property ranged from a high of between $600 and $900 in 2021 to a low of $475 in 2023, according to city staff.

The new boundary would continue along Pacific Avenue to Eighth Street, extending its existing boundaries as well as potentially including more of the Rainbow Harbor area—specifically the port and the area near the Aquarium of the Pacific along the waterfront to Shoreline Village, which is not included in the update.

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Herb Pedestrians navigate the streets of Downtown Long Beach.

**Housing Grows**

Community news page 1

By Christian May-Suzuki

The Port of Long Beach has more than tripled the area it describes as a "service area," and businesses within the area are now being charged a rate known as a "assessment," which is used to fund DLBA programs, projects, and services.

The Port of Long Beach sees busiest April on record

By Brandon Richardson

Many rocket manufacturers use 3D-printing technology to create components for space vehicles, and have been doing so for years. But only one company has thus far built upon the technology to create the first fully printed rocket. Long Beach-based Relativity Space.

As of May 24, developer and leadership of Relativity, founder Tim Ellis could be realized as early as June 1, the firm announced this month. The firm completed its first fully 3D-printed stage on April 28. The test fire—which marked the first time a 3D-printed stage has undergone a full-duration mission—demonstrated it can deliver payloads.

“A stage two full-duration MDC is a milestone in stage development,” the company said in its announcement. “It proves that all key stage subsystems (including the engine, structures, fluid systems, avionics and software) can operate in flight-like conditions.”

Relativity also completed acceptance testing for all nine Aeon 1 engines staged one for one of the rocket’s engines. The company completed its first full-duration mission cycle of the Aeon, which ran for 360 seconds, last January.

Both stages will now be shipped to Relativity’s launch pad, LC-6, at SpaceX’s Spaceport in Deland, Florida.

In light of its recent successes, Relativity Space’s first-ever fully 3D printed rocket could blast off as early as this week

By Brandon Richardson

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COLUMNIST: TIM GROBATY

Waterfront living in Long Beach is high-price, high-risk

There’s little that’s more enjoyable than living on the waterfront with its fresh sea breezes and eternally awesome views. Although that’s just so long as the water behaves itself and doesn’t climb up to invade your property, potentially destroying it or otherwise making it unusable. That sort of encroachment should be of increasingly greater concern to residents in seashore communities as well as homeowners hankering for panoramic (and expensive) views of the ocean, where worst-case scenarios forecast severe flooding due to sea-level rise caused by climate change over the next few years. And worst-case has become the most likely scenario in the near future because, frankly, little has been done to curb climate change or forestall rising sea levels.

Still, wealthy buyers appear to have little concern about the likelihood of sea-rise havoc. Mansions and oversize beach houses in Naples and on the Peninsula remain some of the most coveted properties in Long Beach, and Realtors are still moving them at a good clip, especially the most coveted properties in Naples and the Peninsula.

There’s some concern. People ask a lot of questions, but houses on the Peninsula and Naples are still selling. It’s still a seller’s market,” said Keith Muirhead. He admitted that the price cut is a little low. —he has a Naples home that was listed at $10 million and was reduced to “well into the $8 million mark,” but price cuts aren’t unusual when you get above the $3 million mark. “And anyway,” said Muirhead, “where on the California coast can you buy a house on the beach for these prices?”

Realtor Spencer Snyder is even less concerned. “I don’t hear people worrying about it,” he said. “I don’t hear people saying they’re not buying a house because of the danger of sea-level rise.”

There are a couple of homes on the Peninsula’s boardwalk on Seaside Walk, both with spectacular and unimpeded ocean views from the third floor. These luxury apartments on the boardwalk at 6605 E. Seaside Walk. This four-bedroom, six-bath house weighs in at 4,880 square feet with a $5 million price tag (I exaggerate $4,999,000). It’s literally steps from the beach and a few more to the water’s edge. It has tons of windows, as you would hope and expect with its views from the living areas and, well, from everywhere except, perhaps, from the 4,880-square-foot capacity wine closet. It’s got an ultra-professional kitchen, decks for entertaining or sunbathing and a flood risk factor of 9 out of 10. Furthermore, due to placement in a high-risk FEMA flood zone, flood insurance is required to obtain a mortgage from a federally regulated or insured lender, though you can always pay cash, which isn’t unusual among big-ticket buyers.

Another beautiful property is just down the boardwalk at 6519 E. Seaside Walk. This towering, three-story, 4,600-square-foot home, listed by Realtor Crystal Glenning, has six bedrooms and eight bathrooms, though some of those are taken up by a three-bed, three-bath luxury apartment on the ground floor (sorry about the form), which you can rent out for a tidy sum, or use it to store additional relatives. The upper floors are pretty spectacular, and let’s go ahead and stipulate that it has fantastic views. Again, this one has a flood-risk factor of 9, which should perhaps be of chief concern to the lower-floor apartment dwellers. I wouldn’t sign a 10-year lease.
Gold’s Gym on Pine to close after 35 years, relocate to Pike Outlets

By Brandon Richardson

After 35 years, Gold’s Gym on the corner of Pine Avenue and Fourth Street in Downtown Long Beach is slated to close its doors next year, with the company relocating to the Pike Outlets down the street. Real estate firm JLL recently announced its Senior Vice President Ken Shishido represented the fitness company in a lease agreement for 30,000 square feet at the outlet mall. The space consists of two stories adjacent to the Nike Factory Store—directly across Bay Street from the Hyatt Centric hotel and Shoreline Drive from the Aquarium of the Pacific parking structure.

The new gym is expected to open mid-2023.

Gold’s Gym was founded in 1965 by Joe Gold and has nearly 700 locations, mostly franchises, worldwide. For over three decades, brothers Angel and Willy Baros, CEO of the SoCal Group, respectively, have pushed the fitness company’s mission throughout the region. The SoCal Group consists of nearly two dozen locations. The group purchased the Long Beach location from its previous owner in 2018.

“From the beginning, [we] had plans to either completely gut and renovate the aging gym or move to a new location to satisfy the changing needs of our members,” said Angel. He added, “...we are not the space they ever having a tenant. At 35,000 square feet, the current space is actually larger than the Pike location. The layout of the new space, however, will make the facility feel more spacious than the Pine Avenue location.”

“As we progress into our fourth decade of business,” Angel said in a statement, “my brother and I look forward to growing our business once again as we bring Gold’s Gym’s experience yet to the residents of Long Beach, seeking to revolutionize the way members will achieve fitness goals.”

Officals celebrate grand opening of Shaun Lumachi Innovation Center in Downtown

By Christian May-Suuki

After years of planning, a new facility with state-of-the-art amenities for small businesses has finally opened in Downtown. Together with Long Beach City College and BLANKSPACES—a company that runs a network of small business coworking centers in Los Angeles—the city of Long Beach celebrated the grand opening of the Shaun Lumachi Innovation Center earlier this month.

Located at 350 Pine Ave., at the corner of Pine and Third Avenue, the two-story city-owned property will serve as BLANKSPACES—operated coworking space that will also provide LBCC-based resources and programs. Offerings at the 4,888-square-foot facility include the International Business Accelerator, which offers business advising services and workshops designed to help entrepreneurs start their companies with an international approach.

The accelerator is one of several in the city, and it is run out of LBCC’s Small Business Development Center. The Innovation Center is part of a larger effort across Los Angeles to provide small business owners the tools they need to be successful through workshops and other programs.

“Long Beach City College looks forward to offering training programs and counseling through LBCC’s Small Business Development Center to the entrepreneurs who will utilize this space,” said Long Beach Community College District Superintendent-President Mike Murphy said in a release announcing the opening.

Several improvements were made to the Innovation Center prior to its opening, including a new facade, strengthened modern work and meeting spaces, and the re-servicing of an important elevator. “I am thrilled about the renovations made to the facility which will support collaboration, spark creativity and advance innovation in small business entrepreneurship,” Councilmember Mary Zendejas said. “The Innovation Center will bolster inclusion and equity for underrepresented businesses by providing resources, programs and technical assistance through the SBIR.”

The opening comes following a series of planning and improvements after the city forecasted a drop in LBCC and BLANKSPACES in 2019. Construction delays were compounded by COVID-19 pandemic, officials said.

The council decided to accept the partnership, former city councilmember Lena Gonzalez proposed the center—then named the Small Business Development Center—be renamed the Shaun Lumachi Innovation Center. Lumachi co-founded the Long Beach Post in 2007, and showed vigorous dedication to the city through his work as a community leader. Lumachi died in 2011 in an automobile accident in Florida.

“We’re proud to rename the former Small Business Development Center in honor of Shaun Lumachi, who was both a leading innovator in our community and an amazing friend and mentor of mine,” Mayor Robert Garcia said.

“This is a fitting recognition and will continue Shaun’s legacy of service for years to come.”

Appeal for Sprint Nationals permit heads to hearing officer

By Joe Ruiz

The fate of the 2022 Sprint Nationals Race in Long Beach, which was denied its permit earlier this year due to safety concerns, is now headed to an administrative appeal hearing after the City Council voted last week to send the issue to a neutral arbitrator.

City officials say the current layout of the race that has been held at Marine Stadium for over 70 years creates safety issues for drivers and for race fans who could be hit by out-of-control vessels. Former racers and event organizers have objected to the idea that the race can’t be carried out safely, and Ross Wallach, president of the Southern California Speedboat Club, has pledged to make changes to the race’s layout, like not letting encapsulated boats race with open-cockpit control in the 2022 race—as the basis for denying the permit last year. John “Jay” Hart, 37, and Greg Duff, 36, died in crashes in 2021 and 2022, and city officials say that the current layout of the race has been held at Marine Stadium for over 70 years creates safety issues for drivers and for race fans who could be hit by out-of-control vessels.

Wallach’s appeal, filed in April, noted that both fatal accidents included encapsulated boats and open-cockpit boats colliding with one another, that a decision could be issued after the City Council voted, but it could happen as late as October after the summer season. Wallach requested that a decision be issued before the original planned August 7 race weekend.

The appeal was sent to the Office of the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) on May 31, which typically occurs within 30 days of the appeal. The ALJ will review the appeal and issue a decision. It’s possible that a decision could be issued after the scheduled August 7 race weekend. Wallach said that “it’s going to be tied up to the extent that it can’t happen.”

The penalties include suspension of up to six months for refusal to comply and possible separation at any time if the employee is fired. The penalties include suspension of up to six months for refusal to comply and possible separation at any time if the employee is fired.

Epidemiologists have been saying for months that an employee vaccine mandate is a critical public health measure.

“Citizens deserve to know that if they call 911, the men and women responding to the call are vaccinated,” said Andrew Noymer, an epidemiologist at Long Beach State University who is also a member of the Biden administration’s Department of Health and Human Services.

The city’s vaccine mandate requires city employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and have proof of vaccination on file by mid-June.

Newspaper

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Long Beach and Lakewood Starbucks stores become 1st to unionize in Southern California

By Laura Anaya-Morga

A Starbucks store in Long Beach and another in Lakewood have successfully voted to unionize, becoming the first two stores to do so in Southern California. They have joined two stores in Santa Cruz, which voted to unionize earlier this month, to be the first in the state.

Starbucks baristas gathered on May 13 to watch over Zoom as a member of the National Labor Relations Board tallied their votes. They had been anticipating this moment since they filed their petition on March 7. Cheers rang out as the votes came overwhelmingly in favor of a union. At the Long Beach location on Redondo Avenue and Seventh Street, employees voted 10 to 0. At the Lakewood store on 113th and Lakewood Boulevard, 24 voted in favor of a union; there was only 1 no vote. The two stores are part of a group of 21 stores in four Southern California locations that were unionized in March.

The two stores have joined a list of other Starbucks locations that have successfully voted to unionize. In California, 20 stores have petitioned for a union. At the Long Beach location near Lakewood Boulevard, 24 votes were cast. These included unfair scheduling and feeling disrespected. His visit inspired a second Long Beach store in Belmont Shore to petition for unionization.

After the meeting, Schultz wrote in a letter to Starbucks employees, “I do not believe in division, conflict and disunion—which has been a focus of union organizing—benefits Starbucks or our partners.”

As union activists say they will work to negotiate fair contracts, 666 across the country that feel left behind and vote to unionize. At the Long Beach store, baristas did not respond to a request for comment about its tactics at the Long Beach store.

There have been accusations of unfair tactics at other stores across the country. Federal labor regulators at the NLRB filed a complaint earlier this month accusing Starbucks of unfair labor practices, union-busting efforts, retaliation, unlawful threats and surveillance at stores in Western New York.

The Starbucks corporation has repeatedly expressed its opposition to unionizing and criticized organizers for causing division among Starbucks and its employees.

Last month, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz visited the Long Beach area to hold a “collaboration session” with baristas from nearby stores, employees left saying they felt disrespected. His visit inspired a second Long Beach store in Belmont Shore to petition for unionization.

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Beginning in 2021, the city of Long Beach, located in the Los Angeles region, has seen a few significant events that have shaped its economic landscape.

In January 2022, a new restaurant called Steelhead Coffee opened on the corner of Redondo Avenue and Seventh Street, next to a popular acai bowl business, Koolberry. Steelhead Coffee is a small business that features a unique menu of handcrafted coffee drinks.

The coffee shop is known for its unique approach to coffee, offering a variety of creative and customizable drinks. They also serve a selection of delicious pastries, including some gluten-free options. With its welcoming atmosphere and friendly staff, Steelhead Coffee has become a popular spot for locals and tourists alike.

In addition to its coffee offerings, Steelhead Coffee also hosts regular events and live music performances, making it a hub for the local community. The shop's menu includes a variety of espresso drinks, including lattes, cappuccinos, and even a seasonal pumpkin spice latte during the fall.

Perhaps the most exciting event of 2022 was the opening of a new high-end restaurant called Burger Monster in the former location of a well-known burger joint. Burger Monster is known for its fresh, locally sourced ingredients and a diverse menu that caters to a range of taste preferences.

The restaurant has received glowing reviews for its innovative menu items, such as the “Dracula” and “The Wolf Man” burgers. The menu also includes a variety of vegetarian and gluten-free options, making it a welcoming space for everyone.

Another significant event of the year was the opening of a new eatery called Steelcraft Long Beach. This restaurant offers a modern dining experience with an extensive menu that includes international dishes, artisanal bread, and a wide selection of craft beers and wines. Steelcraft is located in the heart of downtown Long Beach, just a stone’s throw from the city’s famous longboard culture.

Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, Long Beach has continued to thrive, with a strong focus on economic development and community engagement. The city’s commitment to supporting local businesses and fostering a vibrant sense of place has been clear, and it looks to build on this momentum as it moves forward into the future.
**Unemployment in Long Beach has reached pre-pandemic levels after its ninth consecutive month of decline, according to data released earlier this month by the California Employment Development Department.**

The city’s unemployment rate dropped from 5% in March to 4.8% last month, which is the same rate as February 2020. The city’s labor force, however, consists of about 10,000 fewer people than prior to the pandemic, the state data show. Similarly, the number of employed residents is down by just over 10,000.

Long Beach’s labor force in April dipped from 243,800 to 243,700 people. The number of employed residents in the city similarly decreased from 243,700 to 243,600.

In February 2020, the labor force and number of employed residents was 243,400 and 232,100, respectively.

The countywide unemployment rate also has reached pre-pandemic levels, now at 4.9%.

While unemployment in Long Beach continues to drop, the city is still trailing behind nearly 85% of the county’s other cities and census areas, according to state data. Of the 14 cities and areas, only 40 have a higher unemployment rate.

Three cities—El Segundo, Hawthorne and Pico Rivera—have the same unemployment rate as Long Beach.

Unemployment statewide is 5.8%, down from 4.2% in March.

"Labor supply remains the biggest constraint to job growth in the state," Tamar German, research manager at Beacon Economics and the Center for Economic Forecasting, said in a statement. "And as employers seek to ramp up employment during the seasonally strong summer months, worker scarcity will continue to place upward pressure on wages in the state."

Statewide, the largest job gains continue to occur in the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. Leisure and hospitality lost payroll gains in April with the addition of 201,700 jobs, according to a Beacon report. Professional, scientific and technical services, government, retail, transportation, wholesale, and utilities, administrative support, manufacturing and information saw strong gains.

"Construction posted significant losses through April, declining payroll by 13,200, according to the LA Times," German said.
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