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Creating a community destination: Airport to seek operator for long-vacant former restaurant inside historic terminal building

By Brandon Richardson

For more than three years, travelers, aviation enthusiasts and residents alike could gather on the second floor of the now-historic terminal building at Long Beach Airport for a bite to eat and a drink while watching aircraft arriving and departing with beautiful sunsets as the backdrop.

The restaurant opened within the terminal building—designed by William Horace Austin and Kenneth Smith Wing—in 1944. Then, it was called The Clouds Restaurant and Bar.

The space went on to become The Prop Room. Though airport staff aren’t sure when the name change occurred, the restaurant had the moniker at least as far back as the 1980s.

Then, in 2018, The Prop Room became Legends of Aviation, which ultimately shuttered in 2014.

“It is such a special, unique and historic space,” airport spokesperson Kate Knehoid said. “It is a beloved restaurant. I have run into people within the last year who’ve been wandering around [the airport] looking for the restaurant space.

The space has sat empty for nearly a decade, sometimes used for airport staff meetings, but the city is hoping to recapture its previous magic. As early as May, the city is expected to release a request for proposals, or RFP, for the former restaurant space as well as other concession opportunities at the airport, according to Commercial Development Director Oliver Dale Worsham.

The RFP will also seek operators for small retail spaces on the ground floor of the terminal building as well as a new, 1,000-square-foot pre-security concession stand just north of the terminal, Worsham said.

This will not be the first RFP the airport has put out for the former restaurant space since Legends closed. Worsham said there have been two RFPs issued over the past nine years.

“And there’s been various interest in it,” he said. “We do two or three RFPs for people that are interested every year.”

While past RFPs and tours have been less than fruitful for the space, Worsham thinks this time around will be different for one main reason: the long-vacant airport terminal and recreation of the historic terminal building is currently underway and will be completed by early next year. Work on the historic terminal has been underway for years. Any new operator would likely fully remodel the restaurant space, Worsham noted, which would then be shut down for a year and turn up crews seismically retrofitting the building.

“It was hard to get someone to commit to something they knew was going to be closed for a year,” Worsham said. “Now, that won’t be the situation.”

Additionally, the second-story space previously looked out over the checked baggage screening area—not a particularly enticing view. That operation, however, has been moved behind the new ticketing lobby and the courtyard will be open and activated with a meet-and-greet area as a result of that change.

The new baggage claim area, slated to be completed this year, continued on page 7

Business Journal stub

Creating a community destination: Airport to seek operator for long-vacant former restaurant inside historic terminal building

By Kat Schuster

Three-second cafe fan favorite, Philz Coffee, set up shop in Baby Knolls more than five years after the chain opened its first Long Beach location in Belmont Shore.

The shop was expected to open March 22 at 3850 Atlantic Ave., after the building underwent some construction. The Philz sign went up on March 3, Blair Cow, executive director of the Baby Knolls Business Improvement Association told the Business Journal.

Previously, Boutique Andyzicc occupied the storefront moving a few doors down to 3932 Atlantic Ave.

The cafe first opened in San Francisco’s Mission District in 1988 and was among the pioneers of the specialty pour-over and sustainable bean movement that has become increasingly easier to find over the years. The chain is also responsible for helping to champion the cold coffee and cold brew craze.

The beloved Bay Area cafe first made landfall in Southern California in 2014 when it set up shop in Santa Monica. In 2016, Philz arrived in Belmont Shore and has since become a bustling hub for the neighborhood, where remote workers and students on laptops are a frequent sight.

Philz is where you can essentially design your ideal cup of coffee by choosing a blend, temperature and brew. If you’d like your cream and sugar mixed (the baristas generally do this for you).

From dark blends like Ether, with notes of cocoa and cherry, to the famed latte Mint Mojito (yes, this is still a coffee drink), there are around 20 different blends and coffee creations to choose from. If it’s a late-nighter you’re after, you won’t find it at Philz. Although, the menu does have the Tequila, a specialty coffee blend, as “perfect” for late drinkers.

Philz Coffee opens a second location in Long Beach

Philz Coffee opens a second location in Long Beach

— 3
How a hot-pink neon beacon spawned a Long Beach Subculture: Fourth Street’s Retro Row

By Kat Schuster

When Carmen Santillan and her husband Mike Simms faced the unique challenge of feeding 200 people at the top of a mountain in 2016, they ended up with a vegan recipe for traditional Mexican street food that continues to mystify those who bite into their tacos today. Almost overnight, their Cena Vegan taco stand was drawing long, snaking lines when it appeared on the streets of Highland Park in 2016. After garnering success and a faithful following in Highland Park, Santillan and Simms debuted in Long Beach on March 14 within Partake Collective, a ghost kitchen dining hall in the East Village.

But first, back to the mountaintop. About seven years ago, Simms, a volunteer forest ranger for LA County, was able to dream of uncovering historic ruins tirelessly to help him achieve his goal. About seven years ago, Simms, a volunteer forest ranger for LA County, was able to dream of uncovering historic ruins tirelessly to help him achieve his goal.

Preparations are underway for Long Beach’s largest event, the Acura Grand Prix, a weekend that draws upward of 200,000 attendees to Downtown.

Last year, when the event returned to its typical April time slot for the first time since 2019, over 188,000 people attended the weekend festivities, a number the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach President Jim Michaelian suspects could be topped this year, based on current sales numbers.

“We’re actually trending slightly ahead of where we were last year, which, if that continues on, certainly is a strong indicator that this year’s event will be just as or even more successful than it was last year,” said Michaelian. “We’re very delightfully about the way sales have been going to far.”

The Grand Prix, which is renowned for the 48th year from April 14 to April 16, is an opportunity to showcase Long Beach, Michaelian said.

Between the 500 media partners who report on the race, along with a substantial social media effort, the Grand Prix demonstrates the growth and development of Long Beach over nearly 50 years, Michaelian said.

According to Michaelian, the Grand Prix produces about nine hours of television coverage, which is shown both nationally and internationally, and for the second year in a row, the headline IndyCar race will be shown on NBC.

“This is significant both for its viewership and for the opportunity for viewers to see what Long Beach has to offer, from the Port of Long Beach and Shoreline Village, to the Pike, the city skyline and more,” Michaelian said.

The Grand Prix generates a significant economic impact both for the region and for Long Beach—according to the most recent data, about $84 million is generated for the region, while $33 million is produced for Long Beach. Of that, $53 million, $700,000 in tax revenue goes into the city coffers, and the event creates the equivalent of about 350 full-time jobs, according to Michaelian.

“Quite frankly, a vast majority of the people here will be glad to tell you how many times they’ve come to this event,” said Michaelian, who estimates that about 75% of attendees have been to the Grand Prix in the past. “I think that’s a very positive indicator of what they experienced and what they anticipate the following year is going to provide in terms of...”

Continued on page 11

Cena Vegan arrives in Long Beach

By Kat Schuster

Cena Vegan debuted in Long Beach on March 14 in Lincoln Heights and Whitter, Cena Vegan debuted in Long Beach on March 14 in Lincoln Heights and Whitter, Cena Vegan debuted in Long Beach on March 14 in Lincoln Heights and Whitter.

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Continued on page 11

Alexander Rossi comes down Shoreline Drive followed by Pato O’Ward during the 47th annual Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach.

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Kitchen Lingo Books brings culinary culture and history to Fourth Street with ‘seasoned’ volumes

Matt Miller, owner of Kitchen Lingo Books, does inventory inside his new culinary bookstore on Fourth Street.

By Kat Schuster

Matt Miller, owner of Kitchen Lingo Books, does inventory inside his new culinary bookstore on Fourth Street with ‘seasoned’ volumes.

When Matt Miller opened a used book, he often finds it interesting when it is not only well-loved and marked with underlined passages, but when it comes to the pen marks within old cookbooks, his perspective shifts.

Kitchen Lingo Books, Miller’s newly opened culinary bookstore on Long Beach’s Retro Row, offers what he describes as “seasoned” rather than “used” cookbooks. These books—and their highlighted recipes and tagged pages—are time capsules, he says.

A former restaurant, food writer and former Long Beach Post contributor, Miller opened the doors to Kitchen Lingo for a soft opening on March 11.

Just a few days later, he told the Post that he was, quite literally, up to his ears in books. He had just gotten a huge shipment of texts covering everything from foraging edible weeds to learning how to grow koji (that’s a fungus used for a spectrum of culinary purposes).

Among the stacks, he plucked a particularly “seasoned” copy of The New York Times Cookbook by Craig Claiborne. Not only had its likely original owner written inside most of the pages, detailing their own edits and versions of the recipes inside, there were photographs, neatly preserved between the pages, of a dinner party they had thrown with the dishes they were preparing using that book.

“I had to dig a key to get, with everyone dressed up,” Miller said. “You don’t see that in an old thumbed-through copy of Grapes of Wrath.”

Miller said he’s still heavily steeped in the process of building his inventory to the standard of what he envisions.

“I hope to build up an enormous collection of things that are out of print, that are collectible and rare and funky and different, along with a huge collection of new really interesting titles,” he said.

Miller moved to Long Beach 10 years ago after leaving the scene of the local culinary event at the shop, which will gather food writers, chefs and others in the industry to have an intimate discussion on a chosen topic while seated at a long dining room table.

While quite a few well-known food writers and chefs have already expressed interest, Miller said he has yet to mark a date or begin his search for food and food-related topics.

In his youth, Miller notes, he’s yet to announce a grand opening date. For now, he’s open most days from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. stocking his shelves and meeting those who happen to stroll in.

“I hope to create a community of people, and meet a community of people that are really interested in food,” he said. “Not just as, ‘I want to go to a restaurant, snap a picture and post it to Instagram,’ but people who are really interested and want to talk about it.”

Kitchen Lingo Books is now open in the heart of Retro Row at 2116 Fourth St. Miller’s tentative operating hours will be Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Work is still underway to get the historic Queen Mary shipshape, but officials expect to reopen for tours within weeks, said Steve Caloca, the ship’s new general manager.

By Alicia Robinson

Work is still underway to get the historic Queen Mary shipshape, but officials expect to reopen for tours within weeks, said Steve Caloca, the ship’s new general manager, said March 15.

Caloca told board members of the Long Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau that tours will start in April, and later that month he hopes to open lodging and restaurants on the ship.

According to the bureau’s discussion calendar, in fact, he’s scheduled a discussion on a chosen topic while seated at a long dining room table.

One of the first opportunities for members of the public to see the ship in person is scheduled for March 20, when the vessel will be open for a “ship cruise” that will include a tour and a chance to buy tickets to a future event.

During the cruise, the ship will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the last tour leaving at 3 p.m. Tickets are $35 for adults, $25 for children ages 3 to 12, and free for children under 2. Groups of 15 or more can purchase tickets at a discounted rate of $30 per person.

The cruise will feature a buffet lunch and a cash bar, and guests will have the opportunity to explore the ship’s decks, cabins, and other areas.

Prior to the cruise, the Queen Mary will be open to the public for a series of special events, including a “Mardi Gras” themed party on March 15 and a “Valentine’s Day” special on March 17.

In addition to the cruise, the Queen Mary will also be open for a series of special events, including a “Mardi Gras” themed party on March 15 and a “Valentine’s Day” special on March 17.

During these special events, guests will have the opportunity to explore the ship’s decks, cabins, and other areas, and to participate in a variety of activities, including live music, dancing, and photo opportunities.

The Queen Mary is scheduled to reopen for tours on April 1, with more dates expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

“Tours will probably be the first thing,” he said, adding that right now, “there’s so much work that’s being done getting the ship on the water.”

In December and January, the city opened the Queen Mary to a limited number of visitors for a tour of the ship. The tour was free and open to the public.

Caloca said that after the CVB board meeting that specific dates for reopening various parts of the vessel. It was the first opportunity for members of the public to see the ship in person since the vessel was taken out of service in March 2020 due to the pandemic.

The vessel remained closed throughout the pandemic as officials determined the ship would need tens of millions in repairs to remain functional and above water, other previous operations deferred maintenance for years.

In 2022, the city took over ship operations after the hired operating company gave up the lease in a bankruptcy proceeding.

Some of the repair work has been performed over the past year or so, but city leaders face tough decisions about the future of the historic ocean liner, which is estimated to need nearly $300 million in funds to remain a safe and viable tourist attraction.
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Southwest announces nonstop flights from Long Beach to Portland, Boise

By Brandan Richardson

Southwest Airlines continues its recent string of new routes out of Long Beach Airport with the announcement on March 23, 2023 of service to Portland, Oregon, and Boise, Idaho, beginning Oct. 7. The nonstop flights will depart Long Beach Saturdays and Sundays.

Since June of last year, as it continues with its focus on nonstop flights at the small municipal airport, Southwest has announced more than a dozen new destinations, including nonstop to Nashville, New Orleans, Salt Lake City, Orlando and Kansas City. Last fall, the air carrier announced service to Colorado Springs, El Paso and Albuquerque, which begin this summer.

With so much traction from Reece’s suggestions, other businesses, including another one of our own, our Southwest route to Portland is in effect. We’ve fly nonstop between Long Beach and the Pacific Northwest,” said Mayor Ben Richardson. “These new weekend routes provide additional, valuable connectivity between both regions, with travelers from the Northwest looking for an easy gateway to Southern California.”

The Portland route is Southwest’s first to the Pacific Northwest out of Long Beach. JetBlue previously provided the route before it exited Long Beach in October 2020.

Since arriving in Long Beach in 2002, with four flights per day, Southwest has quickly grown to be the airport’s leading carrier. It holds 45 of the airport’s 58 daily flight slots—the maximum number of flights allowed on each day per a strict city noise ordinance.

The other flight slots are held by Delta Air Lines (7), Hawaiian Airlines (4), Alaska Airlines (4), Spirit Airlines (3), United Airlines (2), Virgin America (1), and UPS (1). These flight slots recently relinquished by American Airlines, which is leaving the airport completely, have yet to be reallocated, according to airport staff.

Flights are allocated based on a waitlist, which currently includes, in order, Canadian airline Swoop, Utah-based startup Breeze Airways, Hawaiian Airlines and Southwest. Swoop, Breeze and Hawaiian have recently passed on their available slots, further solidifying its position as the airport’s top carrier.

Combined, Long Beach carriers offer nonstop service to 24 destinations, more than any other airport in Southern California.

“We love seeing our route map fill up with more and more exciting destinations, and this new weekend nonstop link with the Pacific Northwest is a very welcome addition to the service Southwest offers daily in these markets,” airport Director Cynthia Guidry said in a statement. “Our convenient and energizing airport now connects you to even more great places.”

Grand Prix entertainment

Apart from the headlining Indy 500 race, the weekend includes a sports car-championship, a Super Drift Challenge, Robby Gordon’s SPEED/UTV Stadium SUPER Tracks, the Historic Formula 1 Challenge and the Forchse Carrera Cup North America. Attendees can also enjoy off-track activities such as a Lifestyle Expo in the Convention Center, a Ring of Chaos concert and numerous food vendors, which will increase in variety this year, including more healthy options—based on feedback from previous guests.

“This is supposed to be a family-friendly event,” Michaelian said. “It lends itself to having family come together and bringing your youngsters and get them acclimated to what racing is all about in the Downtown streets of Long Beach.”

This year’s race event also incorporates a theme: “Southern California’s 200-MPH Beach Party,” which will be reflected in not only advertising and social media, but also in the presentation of the track through its colors and other references to beach life, Michaelian said.

“What we’re trying to do is build on this thematically, to build on this whole concept that this really is a three-day entertainment vehicle featuring the idea of a beach party, and we are working very hard to see what we can do about solidifying the relationship between the event and our customers,” Michaelian said.

This year, attendees will also be able to use an improved website and an app that will alert them of upcoming events throughout the weekend, such as an autograph session or concert. Additionally, for the first time, Acura Grand Prix merchandise will be available throughout the year, not only during the event weekend.

“This will be our 48th year of conducting this event, and the only way you have that kind of longevity is to make sure that you exceed people’s expectations year after year after year,” Michaelian said.

“We’re hoping that by the time we get done with the race on the afternoon of April the 30th, as people are leaving the facility, they give us a thumbs-up and say, ‘You know what? Great show, loved it. We’ll be back next year,’” Michaelian added. “If we’ve been able to do that, it’s a safe and entertaining manner, then we’ll have achieved our goal.”

Tickets range from $50 for Friday general admission to $155 for three-day admission with reserved seating on Saturday and Sunday.

For questions about the Long Beach Grand Prix, please call (562) 455-3331 or email info@grandprixlongbeach.com. To purchase tickets, visit www.grandprixlongbeach.com or call 888-684-1234.
Continued from page 10

shoes at a much lower price. 

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Assistance League of Long Beach

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productions such as “Mad Men” and the film industry, helping to dress

call Retro Row. She also regularly

the ‘20s and up in pristine condition.

threads of a spectrum of styles from vintage clothing. In her shop, you can

in “dead stock,” untouched or unworn

garments from the ‘60s up to the

Meow Vintage

La Bomba — 2222 E. Fourth St.

Dar Hayes has been working at La Bomba on Retro Row for 22 years, so she

knows a thing or two about what her customers and after. Recently, vintage sunglasses, cut-off shorts, Pendletons, cowboy boots, Harlequin pants, bell bottoms, mom jeans and vests have been hot commodities.

The shop, which opened in 1996, has garments from the ‘80s up to the ‘90s available to try on. Hayes says the younger folk were pulling ‘90s dresses on like yoga pants, so new and rare were never reserved for the online store.

Plus, she says, if you ever feel like swimming through a pile of clothing like Strange McDuck (no, really), the shop hosts its pile sale on Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. You can find dresses, T-shirts, leather jackets and more for reduced prices.

“It’s pretty inexpensive but you have to do the work,” Hayes says. I myself did the work and clinched a purple 1960s gown for $12. It’s one of my closet staples.

Long Beach Vintage Etc. — 772 Pine Ave

Neatly tucked in the heart of Downtown, this is an emporium you could really get lost in, so be sure to arrive with plenty of time to spend. The 7,000-square-foot shop is brimming with 19th-century and mid-century modern furnishings, clothing and kitsch, “for good measure,” according to its website.

Far Out! — 2002 E. Fourth St.

If you’re scouting Retro Row for dresses of the long, loud and frowny sort, you won’t have to look far (sorry). Far Out!, boasts an assortment of blikky-you-name-it garments fit to own the stage or better yet, to strut the sidewalk.

Plus, the staff is always friendly and willing to give you feedback on whatever style you decide to brave that day.

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Plus, the staff is always friendly and willing to give you feedback on whatever style you decide to brave that day.
The company has roughly 750 employees, the vast majority of which are now on unpaid leave as the company works to secure additional funding.

By Brandon Richardson

Nearly all of Virgin Orbit’s roughly 750 employees went on administrative leave after the company passed operations on March 15 amid financial struggles. CEO Dan Hart told employees they would be on unpaid leave during an all-hands meeting at the company’s Long Beach headquarters that afternoon, February 22. Patch confirmed to the Business Journal that a senior leader at the company is awaiting Federal Aviation Administration clearance to fly. Patch noted that staff has not been furloughed. “All employees remain active,” Patch said. “Company leaders remain in place for all employees, and those on leave can use sick leave and/or paid time off, Patch said. Only essential support staff will continue working, Patch said. Hart told staff the pause is intended to give the company time to finalize a new investment plan, an employee familiar with the meeting told the Business Journal. An update is expected to be given to employees sometime next week, Hart said.

In November, the company disclosed $242 million in cash on hand at the end of the third quarter. While the company saw $30 million in revenue, it reported an adjusted earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (commonly referred to as EBITA) loss of $44 million.

Over the last four months, the company has raised $35 million in unaired convertible and senior secured convertible notes from an investment arm of Virgin Group. The company has not announced when it would report its fourth quarter results. Virgin Orbit went public on the Nasdaq at the beginning of last year with a share price of $10 at the opening, however, the share price has steadily declined until reaching $1.04 Wednesday. Shares tumbled another 37.5% by the morning of March 16, reaching a new low of 85 cents.

In 2020, Virgin Galactic turned into a newly built facility in Long Beach, the Douglas Park industrial complex. Two years later, the operation transitioned to Virgin Orbit, a new branch dedicated to orbital rockets, which Virgin Galactic continues to operate outside of Long Beach.

In a decision to make Long Beach its home marked the beginning of the city’s resurgence as a hub for aerospace innovation. The city’s aerospace economy has grown quickly in the years since and now includes Rocket Lab Spaceport, Relativity Space and Vast Space. The city has since added another new launch system that sees its LauncherOne rocket deployed from under the wing of its modified Boeing 747 aircraft, Cosmic Girl.

Following four successful missions that delivered 33 satellites to orbit, the company experienced its first mission failure in January. Dubbed “Start Me Up,” the mission was the first orbital launch from the United Kingdom and the company’s first international effort. The rocket reached space, but a fuel filter became dislodged, causing the second stage to shut down.

“Like any launch today, Virgin Orbit has faced a lot of hurdles,” Hart said. “And we’re humbled that the mission failure only compounded the firm’s financial woes.

In a meeting at the company’s Long Beach headquarters in January, Patch said the company said its investigation into the mission failure, dubbed “Malfunction 22-1,” was ongoing. Changes have been integrated into its second stage, Hart said. The company is awaiting Federal Aviation Administration clearance to fly.

Relativity scrubs launch of 3D-printed rocket once again

By Brandon Richardson

After a rollover of dollars and rents, Long Beach-based Relativity Space scrubbed the first launch of its 3D-printed rocket, Terran 1, for the second time in one week.

“Thanks for playing,” the team’s launch director said after announcing an automated abort at T+49 seconds on March 16 due to a fuel pressure issue in the second stage.

The launch window for the mission delayed, “Scoot Away, Human Fail,” opened at 1 p.m. EST, but Relativity faced a series of hitches—one to wait out high upper-level winds and another due to a boat being too close to the launch site, among others—and a first abort due to an issue with the stage separation automation less than one second before launch.

The team quickly assessed the impact and determined a second abort would be possible, resetting the clock for a new fifth window of 4 p.m. EST—the very same afternoon as the launch window.

Saturday’s attempt was Relativity’s second launch attempt with Terran 1, the mission also faced several holds. The launch was ultimately scrubbed due to an issue with the methanol-liquid natural gas fuel pump in the rocket’s second stage.

Missiones being scrubbed is not uncommon, especially when it comes to a company’s first, nor is it an indication that a successful flight is not imminent. Nasa’s historic Artemis 1 mission was scrubbed twice before the Space Launch System—the most powerful rocket on Earth—blew off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida in November of 2022.

A new launch date for the Terran 1 mission, which is 85% 3D printed by mass and was manufactured in Long Beach, is set to take place on Wednesday, March 22 during a 4.7 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. window.

New York-New Jersey continues to outperform Port of Long Beach

By Brandon Richardson

The Port of Long Beach continues to trail behind New York-New Jersey in the battle to be the second busiest container port in the U.S. While Long Beach had its slowest January since 2019, the Port of New York-New Jersey recorded its third busiest January on record.

The East Coast port moved 845,490 20-foot equivalent units—the standard measure of a shipping container—while the Long Beach figure represents a 14.8% decrease from January 2021 and a 5.1% decrease from December 2022, which was an all-time record.

The Long Beach port, however, did see a 5.2% increase from December 2022. New York-New Jersey saw an 8% decrease from its record-setting 2022 January, but a 3.5% increase from January 2019. Like Long Beach, the East Coast port saw a 5% increase in cargo from December to January.

“The Port of New York and New Jersey has proven to be reliable and resilient through the past few years, and our deep relationships and collaboration with all links in the regional supply chain are providing what shippers and retailers need, which is keeping that volume in our gateway,” Port Department Director Reetham Rahnemey said in an emailed statement to the Business Journal. “We have been in discussions with many importers that shifted volume to us from elsewhere and are committed to keeping that volume in our gateway.”

The Port of Los Angeles continues to hold the top spot as the busiest container port in the U.S., having moved 2,358,045 TEUs on January. The figure, however, represents a 14.5% and 19.2% decrease from 2021 and 2022, respectively—the two busiest Januarys in the port’s history.

From December to January, the Port of Los Angeles saw a 4.5% decrease.

The falling-off of container volume at the West Coast ports comes after the unprecedented backlog of ships and containers that began in late 2020 and lasted through late 2022. The oversaturated supply chain saw ships waiting up to two weeks for their turn at berth and containers languishing on decks—also sometimes for as long as two weeks.

The backlog pushed shippers to divert cargo to Gulf and East coast ports, away from the West Coast. The backlog has since been resolved, but labor negotiations between the union representing more than 22,000 West Coast dockworkers and the association representing shippers and terminal operators continue with virtually no public update, as both parties agreed only to send a small blackbox. The old contract expired almost nine months ago, and the upcoming talks continue to cast a shadow of uncertainty over port operations, particularly as two of the busiest ports in the country—Long Beach and LA—cargo movement through Long Beach continued to fall off in February, with southbound moves climbing 345,075 TEUs, according to data recently released by the port. The figure marks a 3.5% decrease from February 2021, and is only marginally higher than February 2020, which was impacted by the coronavirus shutting down factories and terminals in China.

New York-New Jersey has not yet released its January 2023 numbers. In addition to the uncertainty surrounding labor negotiations, a decrease in consumer spending on goods as well as Chinese factories closing for Lunar New Year are keeping cargo volumes down, port staff said.

While cargo volume through the Port of Long Beach is important, 33% of port operations are run by the Port of Los Angeles, Executive Director Mario Cordero said during a press conference last week that it is not the only metric by which ports should be judged.

“It’s also about what we exemplify, not only to the community, our neighborhood, our stakeholders,” Cordero said. “It’s about a big component. Environmental social governance is a big factor for Long Beach. And that’s why I believe we are the No. 1 port.”

A semi-truck drives through the ITS terminal, which was recently expanded, at the Port of Long Beach.

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The Long Beach port terminal has been expanded, allowing it to handle larger ships. The terminal has recently expanded, allowing it to handle larger ships. The terminal has recently expanded, allowing it to handle larger ships.

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The new project currently has about 23 youth involved, in addition to the sixth-through-eighth grade program, which has another 22 students.

Adding an additional group for younger students, who are just starting to develop the ability to sing and understand music concepts, was particularly important for DeWitt, he said.

While nearly all of the high schools in the Long Beach Unified School District have choirs (apart from magnet schools), DeWitt seemed surprised that about seven middle schools do not have choirs. At the elementary school level, there are no choirs while music teachers visit schools, it is fairly limited, DeWitt said.

“There’s more of a need that at least there than at the older level,” he said.

According to DeWitt, arts schools typically take a checklist compared to athletes and STEM offerings, particularly since Proposition 3, which passed in 1998 and public schools are funded, is being debated.

During the youth program, students are exposed to music, along with reading, along with the music teachers visit schools, it is fairly limited, DeWitt said.

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By Jason Ruiz

LBCC superintendent-president says college has to transform post-COVID

After the COVID-19 emergency officially ended, Long Beach Community College District Superintendent-President Mike Muñoz was preparing to give his first post-pandemic state of the college address, which, on March 7, highlighted an institution that may have been permanently transformed over the last three years.

Like almost every other element of everyday life, COVID-19 changed over the last three years. Superintendenc-President Mike Muñoz stands at the school’s Pacific Coast Campus.

Expanding services
those needs the college wants to provide now include housing. It’s started to make inroads into conversations that could lead to building affordable housing for its students. Muñoz said LBCC applied for a $40 million grant in January that could allow it to build a 400-unit student housing project near Veterans Stadium. The status of that application could be announced in the summer.

A fully-funded bond measure that could have rehabbed the stadium and added 18 additional student housing in its parking lot before the Board of Trustees opted not to put it on last year’s ballot is not necessarily dead, Muñoz said.

The college is also in “exploratory” talks to build a satellite campus in North Long Beach near the Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library, something that could also include housing. The college could also look into public-private partnerships to build housing.

Downtown architecture firm gets creative to fill vacant office space

By Alicia Robinson

After the coronavirus pandemic changed the nature of work, likely forever, some business owners rushed to move out of spaces that were now too big for a staff that was partly or largely remote.

Not Studio One Eleven’s Alan Pullman. The founder of the full-service architecture and design firm instead got together with colleagues to figure out how they could use the extra space in the cavernous former department store that is their home in Downtown Long Beach.

The result of their brainstorm was Long Beach Urban Lab, a collaborative and social space that can host nonprofits and small businesses, discussions and lectures and more. The 25,000-square-foot building’s high ceilings and open floor plan feel spacious, and it also holds several smaller conference rooms, offices and collaborative spaces.

“We have to see to it—and we knew we could make something out of it,” Pullman said.

The office can accommodate about 10 people, but while some come in daily (including Pullman), others work Downtown two or three days a week, and others only show up when necessary, so even on the busiest days, the building is only about 6% to 7% full, Pullman said.

Studio One Eleven already shares its offices with KDC, another planning and design firm, and it’s the process of shifting its workers around to make room for Urban Lab ventures. Coming in April are a pop-up retail shop by Maso Apothecary and artist-in-residence Marco Ybarra Jr.

Ybarra, who creates everything from drawings to large installations, said he hopes to be a sounding board, someone architects and designers can come to when they’re working out a problem, but he also wants to stay open to learning from them.

The idea of the residency came at the exact time for Ybarra—his Wilmington studio was flooded twice in sixteen months by broken water mains. He’d recently learned to be part of a future exhibition at the Long Beach Museum of Art, so it seemed like all signs were pointing to the city, Ybarra said.

His approach to the residency—which will include “office hours,” artist talks and Ybarra just contemplating, planning and executing art projects—is based on “how can I be a resource, that kind of energy, bring in ideas and really be a listener too,” he said.

Pullman said bringing in a working artist is a pace with his larger effort to reimage Studio One Eleven’s office space and make it an engaging, active place people want to be in.

“What artists bring is a different energy, bring in ideas and really be a sounding board,” Pullman said. “It’s really always trying to stay open to learning from them.

“We’re really always trying to think differently about how we can create an environment that is a better place for people and connects with people.”

Continued on page 21

City approves $50M loan application for affordable housing project

By Jason Ruiz

Long Beach is applying for a $50 million loan from the state that could be used for an affordable housing project tour St. Mary Medical Center along with a variety of street and pedestrian improvements near Downtown.

The City Council voted to approve the application when they commented on March 7. The funding would go toward a project by AMCAL Multi-Housing Inc. that would build 104 units of affordable housing at the site of the First Lutheran School at the corner of 14th Street and Linden Avenue. AMCAL is looking to develop a $2.1 million project that would include a one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units, all of which would be reserved for low-income households once the project opens. AMCAL also developed the 123-unit La Ventana affordable housing project at Pacific Coast Highway and Long Beach Boulevard.

The largest share of the project would be dedicated to one-bedroom units ($3,000), 30 two-bedroom units ($3,200) and 31 three-bedroom units ($3,700). After the mix of the four-story building proposed to replace the Lutheran school, which would be demolished if the project moves forward.

Most of the units would be set aside for low-income households, which federal guidelines define as $1,920 for a family of four in Los Angeles County. Eleven units each will be distributed to very low-income ($35,500 for a family of four) and extremely low-income households ($53,750 for a family of four). One unit will be reserved for an on-site manager.

While the city is applying for the funds, it won’t be due for paying them back if the project is not completed. AMCAL has agreed to indemnify the city.

Development Services Director Christopher Koontz said that he was confident if the application is successful that the project would move forward, calling it an important development that would improve the lives of the people who get to live in it.

“We don’t have a lot of projects with large family units, and these are really critical to stabilizing people’s lives and being able to concentrate on raising their families and raising their kids, and then health, instead of worrying they’re going to pay their rent,” Koontz said.

Long Beach is requesting funding Contained on page 21

Thomas K. Creel / Business Journal

A $285 million bond measure that could have rebuilt the stadium and added additional student housing in its parking lot before the Board of Trustees opted not to put it on last year’s ballot is not necessarily dead, Muñoz said.

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Continued on page 21
Veterans in Long Beach can now access a “one-stop shop” for services, as the VA Long Beach Healthcare System celebrated the grand opening of its new resource center, the VA Long Beach Healthcare System celebrates the grand opening of its new resource center, a “one-stop shop” that offers numerous services to veterans.

“The one-stop shop, I mean, they’ve just nailed it,” veteran Steven Grove told the Business Journal.

While he said he has received “really good care” at the Long Beach VA Medical Center for about 15 years, and considers the facility “a second home,” Grove added, “you never knew for sure where anyone was going to be.”

A veteran looks at the event program during the grand opening of a new resource center at the Tabor Rahm VA Medical Center.

“The VA Long Beach Healthcare System celebrates the grand opening of its new resource center, a one-stop shop that offers numerous services to veterans.”

“I’ve taken so many veterans, maybe 600 veterans to all the facilities, and this one, they address exactly what their needs are,” Grove told the Business Journal.

“I have all my doctors here, and all of my appointments are here,” Corral added. “And I make it a high point of telling the veterans to come here.”

“The VA Long Beach Healthcare System will be one of the few VAs with an on-site resource center.”

“We’ve been wanting to do this for about five or six years, and we finally have the space to do this,” said chief experience officer Dustin Thompson during the event.

In addition to the medical center, the health care system includes community-based outpatient clinics in Anaheim, Laguna Niguel, Santa Ana, Santa Fe Springs and Villages at Calafia in Long Beach.

“We do things that other health care systems simply don’t do,” Thompson added. “It’s why we exist. It’s why we’re here.”

Apart from the range of services offered, the resource center is conveniently located near a parking lot, a cafeteria and retail store, the VA Long Beach Healthcare System director Wall Dannenberg said.

The VA Long Beach Healthcare System celebrates the grand opening of its new resource center, a “one-stop shop” that offers numerous services to veterans. The VA Long Beach Healthcare System celebrates the grand opening of its new resource center, a “one-stop shop” that offers numerous services to veterans.

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In high school, as DeWitt fell more deeply into music, it helped him avoid many problems that some of his peers faced, he said.

While singing in the Cal State Long Beach university choir as a student, DeWitt had the opportunity to travel to New Zealand and Australia for seven and a half weeks. “It deepened my friendships with people in the choir. It gave me experiences that I never would have had otherwise,” DeWitt said. “That tour changed my life. I just want to give kids maybe not seven and a half weeks, but I want to give them those opportunities.”

In October, 10 of the nonprofit’s older singers had the opportunity to sing with the USC Chamber Chorus. “When the USC Chamber Singers started singing, they were standing behind our kids — our kids’ eyes just widened to the size of saucers,” DeWitt said. “They were just blown away, they’d never experienced anything like that. So those are the moments that for me keep me going through this because it’s just — we know we’re doing it for kids. And to actually see that reaction in them is what makes it all worthwhile.”

The Long Beach Youth Chorus is kicking off its first tour this year with a trip to San Diego in May, but a long-term goal for the organization is to eventually tour internationally. “It gives choristers a kind of sense of personal autonomy and confidence. It expands their worlds a little bit and also creates really meaningful opportunities for even deeper friendships and relationships within the chorus,” DeWitt said. “When you sing in the choir, you have this sense of being part of something that’s bigger than yourself and you’re an integral part of it, but to then take that on the road — it just really deepens that experience for singers.”

Registration for the next Long Beach Youth Chorus begins in May.

Commercial Burglary

Hole Môle workers that morning encountered shattered glass from the front door and discovered three tablets and a phone had been taken, employee Rene Pozos said. “It’s crazy,” Pozos said, adding that another Holé Môle location was broken into last month. For Buchanan, it was the first burglary at her Seventh Street location — something she relocated from the East Village to get away from.

The thieves appeared to have picked the lock on the front door, then used a filing cabinet to haul away the phones and tablet she uses to talk to customers and book appointments, plus a cash register with small change in it and power tools.

A case of grooming clippers and blades — the tools of Buchanan’s trade — was missing too. “I cried when I saw that,” she said, but added that police found it dumped around the corner and returned it to her after taking photos and dusting for fingerprints.

Buchanan estimated her losses around $1,200 and said Long Beach police officers who responded were attentive, thorough and polite. But she’s not sure how much the department can do to prevent more burglaries, which she thinks may be the result of drug addiction driving people to desperation. “I do want small business owners like me to understand, you’re not safe,” she said.

“If it can happen to me, it can happen to you. Just be prepared.” Staff writers Brandon Richardson and Fernando Max Garcia contributed to this story.

Commercial Burglary

Continued from page 16
JOIN US as the Aquarium of the Pacific celebrates its 25th Anniversary with new exhibits, events, and programs highlighting the remarkable natural world right outside our door. Journey through a re-imagined Southern California/Baja Gallery highlighting fascinating local animals and marine habitats. Discover colorful reefs, kelp forests, and sea grass beds as you meet a pod of lobsters, an octopus, deepwater fish, and more. Hear about the local species we are saving, how we plan to rebuild California’s coastal wild, and unique ways we are connecting our community to the healing power of nature and our deep blue ocean. And be the first to learn about our exciting vision for the future. The celebration begins May 26, 2023.