

LONG BEACH BUSINESS JOURNAL

AN EDITION OF THE LONG BEACH POST



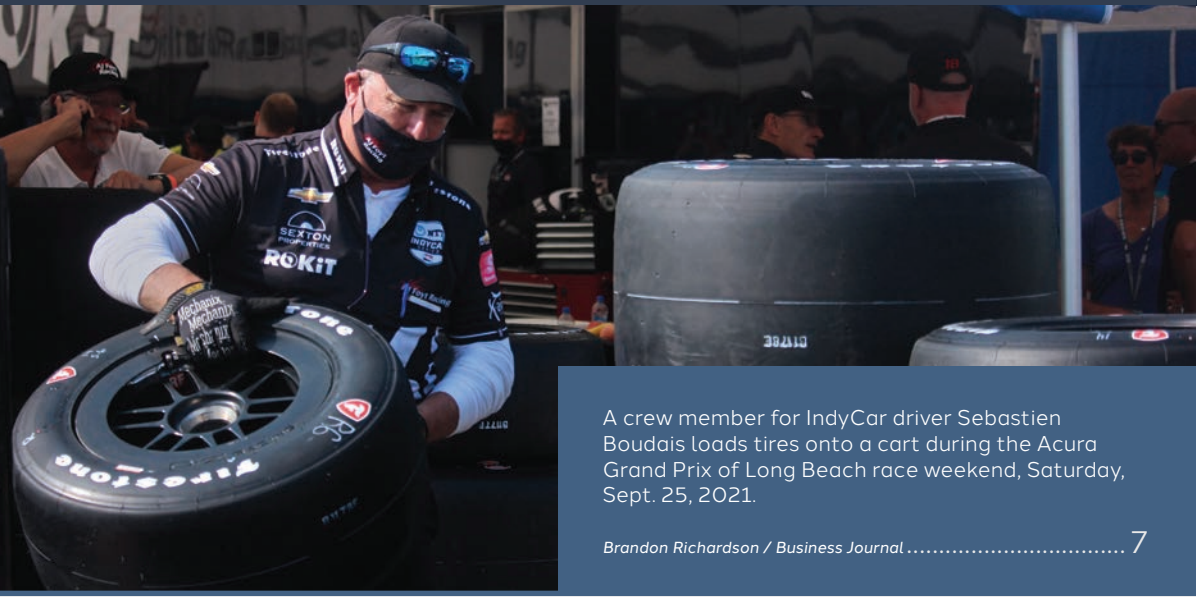
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Historic F1 returns to Long Beach

Story on page 3

James Hunt goes airborne during the 1977 Long Beach Grand Prix. It is one of the circuit's most famous crashes.
Courtesy of the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach



A crew member for IndyCar driver Sebastien Boudais loads tires onto a cart during the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach race weekend, Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021.

Brandon Richardson / Business Journal 7

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Long Beach Business Journal
211 E. Ocean Blvd., Ste. 400
Long Beach, CA 90802

Editorial Deadline:
Two weeks prior to publication. Email press releases to editor@lbbj.com.
Advertising Deadline:
Wednesday prior to publication.
See editorial calendar at
lbbusinessjournal.com/advertise.

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Formula One roars back into Long Beach with historic race featuring cars from 1970s, '80s

This will only be the second historic F1 race held in Long Beach. The first was about a decade ago, and was the first time F1 cars were in Long Beach since the series left after 1983.

By Brandon Richardson

When Patrick Long was 11 years old, he made his way from Agoura Hills to the Long Beach Grand Prix. Already a long-time race fan, Long recalled trying to sneak into the pit area to see his heroes ahead of the race.

"I've been at Long Beach ever since," Long told the Business Journal, noting that eventually his own 19-year racing career brought him to the event as a competitor.

"Lots of starts there over the years and always love racing in front of a home crowd," Long said. "I have lots of family and friends there."

Previously at the Long Beach event, Long has raced IMSA, Grand-Am and GT World Challenge. This month, at 41 years old, Long will return to the iconic street circuit for a race between historic Formula One cars, the majority of which are older than Long himself.

Long will be driving the Williams FWo8-07, famously driven during the 1983 F1 season by Keke Rosberg. With that car, Rosberg won the Monaco Grand Prix.

While the Long Beach race has nearly four decades with IndyCar under its belt, the event got its start with Formula racing. The inaugural event in September 1975 was a Formula 5000 race, Grand Prix Association of Long Beach President and CEO Jim Michaelian recalled, which served as a proof of concept for the circuit before F1 came to town the following spring.

F1 raced in Long Beach from 1976 through 1983. During that final event, Rosberg started in the No. 3 position driving the same Williams-Ford car that would go on to win in Monte Carlo. In the West Coast street race, however, Rosberg would have a much different race.

During Lap 25, Rosberg came inside on Patrick Tambay, who started in the No. 1 position, as the pair approached the track's unforgiving hairpin turn—the last turn of the circuit. Rosberg's car went under Tambay's, the latter of



Courtesy of the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach

Formula One cars speed through the streets of Downtown Long Beach during the 1979 Long Beach Grand Prix.

which did a full 180-degree turn with at least two tires off the track. Both cars were retired from the race.

For the last decade, Michaelian said the three-day race weekend has featured historical races of different types. As with all races, he said the purpose is to attract different demographics that may not be interested in the main IndyCar race. In the case of the historic races, he said they attract older race fans who were watching the cars when they were new.

But when it comes to historic F1, Michaelian said there is another draw: new fans who were swept up by the recent wave of F1 popularity in the states. (As of a few years ago, the U.S. hosted one F1 race, Michaelian said. As of the end of this year, it will have three.)

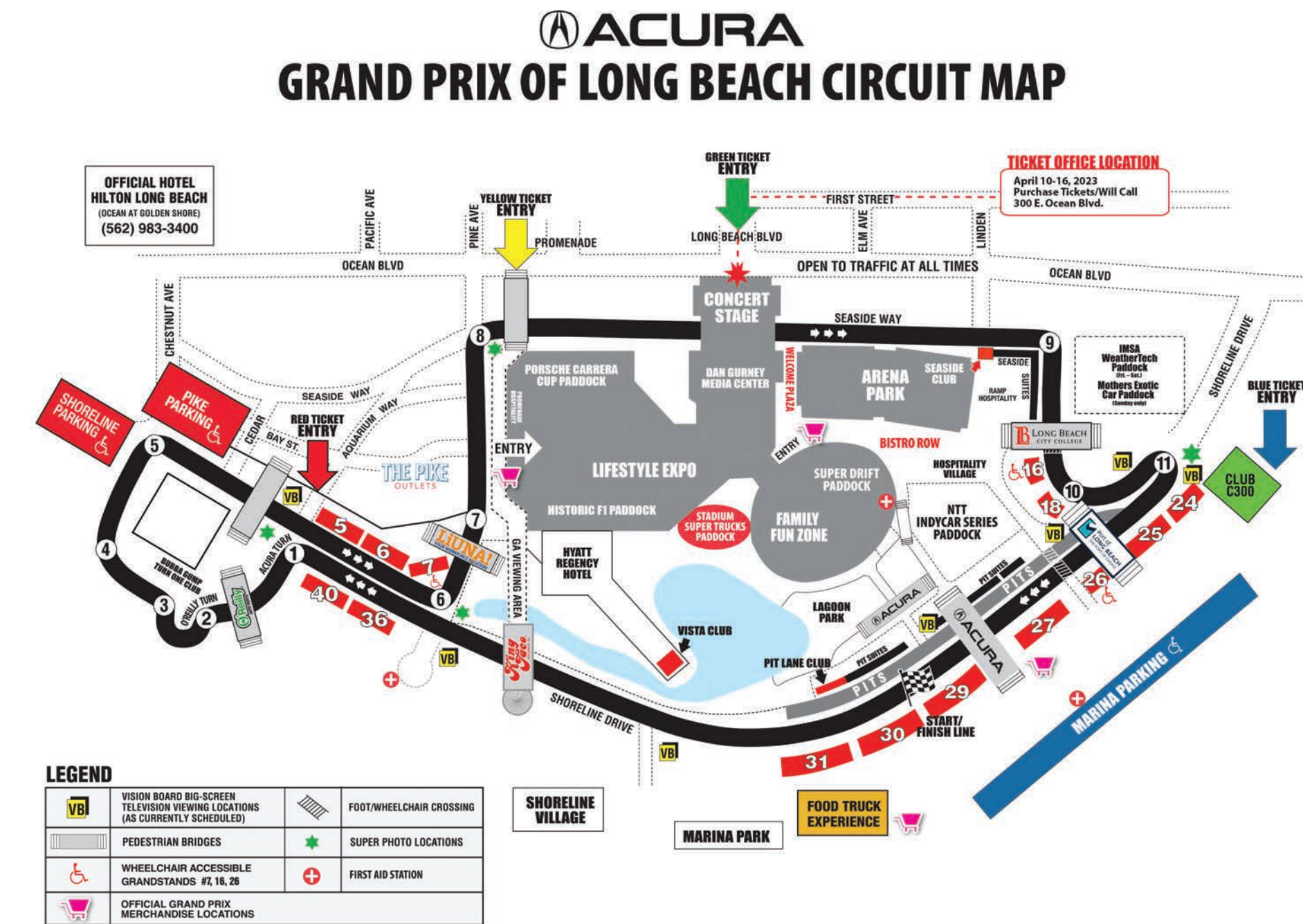
"It's an opportunity to connect their newly found interest in Formula One, as it exists today," Michaelian said, "with a look back at some of the predecessor cars that were involved in a series back in the '70s and '80s—most of which ran here on the streets of Long Beach during that time."

Of the 21 historic cars slated to run over the two 20-minute races (one Saturday, one Sunday) through the Historic Motor Sports Association headed by Chris Vandergriff, only four did not compete at the Long Beach Grand Prix in their heyday, having predated the event's origin.

Michaelian said F1—past and present—is attractive to gearheads and car people because of the variety. As opposed to IndyCar, which requires

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RACE WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Time schedule subject to change without notice

FRIDAY, APRIL 14

7:30 AM	Spectator Gates Open
7:45-8:15 AM	Porsche Carrera Cup Practice #1
9-10 AM	IMSA Practice #1
10:15-10:35 AM	Historic F1 Practice #1
11:15-11:55 AM	Porsche Carrera Cup Practice #2
12:10-12:30 PM	Stadium Super Trucks Practice #1
12:45-2:30 PM	IMSA Practice #2
3-4:15 PM	NTT IndyCar Practice #1
4:30-5 PM	Porsche Carrera Cup Qualifying
5:10-5:55 PM	IMSA Qualifying
6:30-8:30 PM	Super Drift Challenge #1
6:30-8:30 PM	Fiesta Friday Starring Boombox Cartel

SATURDAY, APRIL 15

7:30 AM	Spectator Gates Open
7:45-8:05 AM	Historic F1 Practice #2
8:45-9:45 AM	NTT IndyCar Series Practice #2
11:20-11:40 AM	Historic F1 Challenge Race #1
12:05-1:20 PM	NTT IndyCar series Qualifying & Fast 6
1:30-2 PM	IMSA Pre-Race
2-4 PM	IMSA SportsCard Grand Prix (100min)
4:30-5 PM	Stadium Super Trucks Race #1
5:15-5:55 PM	Porsche Carrera Cup Race #1
6:30-8:30 PM	Super Drift Challenge #2
6:30-8 PM	Kings of Chaos w/ Special Guests Presented by Acura

SUNDAY, APRIL 16

7:30 AM	Spectator Gates Open
9-9:30 AM	NTT IndyCar Series Warm-Up
10:45-11:05 AM	Historic F1 Challenge Race #2
11:10-11:20 AM	Acura NSX Hot Laps
11:25-11:40 AM	Mothers Exotic Car Parade
11:45 AM	NTT IndyCar Series Pre-Race
-12:45 PM	
12:35 PM	"Drivers, Start Your Engines!"
12:45-3 PM	Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach (Round #3 of the NTT IndyCar Series - 85 Laps)
3:30-4 PM	Stadium Super Trucks Race #2
4:20-5 PM	Porsche Carrera Cup Race #2

DRIVERS

(R) — Denotes Rookie of the Year candidate

Car	Driver	Hometown	Car Name	Team
2	Josef Newgarden	Nashville, Tennessee	Hitachi	Team Penske
3	Scott McLaughlin	Christchurch, New Zealand	Sonsio	Team Penske
5	Pato O'Ward	Monterrey, Mexico	Arrow McLaren	Arrow McLaren
06	Helio Castroneves	Sao Paulo, Brazil	AutoNation/SiriusXM	Meyer Shank Racing
6	Felix Rosenqvist	Värnamo, Sweden	Arrow McLaren	Arrow McLaren
7	Alexander Rossi	Nevada City, California	Arrow McLaren	Arrow McLaren
8	Marcus Ericsson	Kumla, Sweden	Huski Chocolate Chip Ganassi Racing	Chip Ganassi Racing
9	Scott Dixon	Auckland, New Zealand	PNC Bank Chip Ganassi Racing	Chip Ganassi Racing
10	Alex Palou	Barcelona, Spain	The American Legion Chip Ganassi Racing	Chip Ganassi Racing
11	Marcus Armstrong (R)	Christchurch, New Zealand	Ridgeline Lubricants Chip Ganassi Racing	Chip Ganassi Racing
12	Will Power	Toowoomba, Australia	Verizon Team Penske	Team Penske
14	Santino Ferrucci	Woodbury, Connecticut	AJ FOYT RACING / SEXTON PROPERTIES	AJ Foyt Enterprises
15	Graham Rahal	New Albany, Ohio	United Rentals	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing
18	David Malukas	Chicago, Illinois	HMD Trucking	Dale Coyne Racing with HMD
20	Conor Daly	Noblesville, Indiana	BitNile.com	Ed Carpenter Racing
21	Rinus VeeKay	Hoofddorp, Netherlands	BitNile.com	Ed Carpenter Racing
26	Colton Herta	Valencia, California	Gainbridge	Andretti Autosport w/ Curb-Agajanian
27	Kyle Kirkwood	Jupiter, Florida	AutoNation	Andretti Autosport
28	Romain Grosjean	Geneva, Switzerland	DHL	Andretti Autosport
29	Devlin DeFrancesco	Toronto, Canada	EVTEC	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport
30	Jack Harvey	Bassingham, England	Kustom Entertainment	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing
45	Christian Lundgaard	Hedensted, Denmark	Hy-Vee	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing
51	Sting Ray Robb (R)	Boise, Idaho	biohaven	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR
55	Benjamin Pedersen (R)	Copenhagen, Denmark	AJ FOYT RACING / SEXTON PROPERTIES	A.J. Foyt Enterprises
60	Simon Pagenaud	Montmorillon, France	AutoNation/SiriusXM	Meyer Shank Racing
77	Callum Ilott	Cambridge, England	Juncos Hollinger Racing	Juncos Hollinger Racing
78	Agustín Canapino (R)	Arrecifes, Argentina	Juncos Hollinger Racing	Juncos Hollinger Racing

CITY OF LONG BEACH

Bid Opportunities

Title	Bid Number	Due Date
Strategic Planning Consulting Firm	TI-23-194	04/11/2023
Property Tax Consulting Services	FM-23-227	04/11/2023
Const. Mgmt. Svcs. for Spinnaker Bay Drive Water Main Replacement Project - Phase 2	WD-23-059	04/12/2023
Spinnaker Bay Drive Water Main Replacement Phase 2 (WD-04-22)	WD-23-058	04/12/2023
Provide Technology Waste Svcs. at No Cost and Provide Battery Waste Svcs. to the City	TI-23-200	04/13/2023
ReEntry Achievement Program	HE-23-213	04/13/2023
R-7207 Long Beach Police Training Academy Project 3005010029	PW-23-221	04/13/2023
Terminal Dome Cleaning	ED-23-204	04/18/2023
Software & Implementation Solutions for Customer Self-Service Web Portal for Utilities	TI-23-202	04/25/2023
Enterprise Land Management & Permitting Consulting Services	TI-23-201	05/04/2023

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2 racers shatter stereotypes as they prepare for the Acura Grand Prix

Katherine Legge and Sheena Monk are competing together this season, but they hope the impact of seeing two female drivers on the same team will go beyond racing.

By Jackie Rae

The racing world is no stranger to the stereotype that it's a "man's world."

Katherine Legge and Sheena Monk, though, are proving that stereotype wrong as they compete together this season—including at their next stop, the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

While their partnership for this season seems, in retrospect, as if it were destined, the two came to the sport through very different paths.

Legge is seasoned in the racing world and began racing go-karts at the age of 9 in England. She went on to compete in various races throughout Britain but did not compete in a full season until she came to the United States in 2005.

Her first race in the States was the Long Beach Grand Prix—and it was also her first victory. Her winning debut not only catapulted her career, but it also made her the first woman to win a developmental open-wheel race in North America.

Sheena Monk, meanwhile, is a true newcomer to the sport, having just begun her racing career in 2017. The following year, Monk sat in her Wayne Taylor Racing Lamborghini, ready to start the 2018 Lamborghini Super Trofeo North American race. Her driver coach at the time? Katherine Legge.

Six minutes into the race, Monk was in a violent head-on collision that left her with four pelvic fractures, a broken sacrum and four broken ribs. Despite doctors' orders, Monk returned to the track just seven months after the crash, saying, "This is not going to stop me. I'm doing what I love. I'm doing what I always wanted to do."

Although Monk was determined to keep pursuing her lifelong dream, she wasn't sure whether she'd be racing in the 2023 season.

But after a random call between Legge and Monk, when the two



Teammates Sheena Monk and Katherine Legge are competing during the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship during the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach race weekend.

realized that neither had racing plans for this season, the thought of working together just came naturally.

"I do, from the bottom of my heart, believe that everything happens for a reason when it comes to things like this. And I think this happened for a reason," said Legge.

That reason manifested under the name the Gradient Racing team, and Legge hopes that seeing two female racers on the same team will have an impact that goes beyond racing.

"The number of women that we come across in this sport that are just out to be the best woman or not supportive of other women is mind-blowing," said Legge, adding, "they judge us differently because we're women. It's worse with a lot of the women than it is

with the men."

Legge and Monk are hoping their partnership can serve as an example to help change that mindset. As they continue to go through the season with their friendship, respect, professionalism and success on full display, they intend to show the world what women can do when they operate in full support of one another.

That support doesn't have to come in the form of racing. Monk also wants women to know there are several seats that women can fill in the sport that are not in the driver seat.

"Maybe you might not want to drive the car," she said. "But if you love science and you love data, then there is a place for you there

as well."

Serving as an example to other women is a goal, but the main focus right now is training to win the Long Beach Grand Prix on April 14.

Neither driver will be able to test the track before the Grand Prix weekend, and they will instead use a simulator for their training. Legge is confident her partner will do well on the Long Beach course because of their similar driving styles. The similarity is a true advantage for Monk, who has never been on a street circuit before and is relying heavily on the coaching and experience Legge has to offer.

It's clear these women will have no problem motivating each other, as they both believe that if you're passionate about something and truly believe, "you can do anything."



Katherine Legge wears a headset trackside.



Sheena Monk sits behind the wheel of her IMSA sportscar.

Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach goes green

By Tess Kazenoff

This year's Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach, racing into Downtown from April 14 to April 16, will be the event's greenest year yet, with sustainability at the forefront of both the Grand Prix and its racing partners' efforts.

"Sustainability has been a major focus of ours," said Grand Prix Association of Long Beach President and CEO Jim Michaelian. "We recognize the fact that not only as an event, but also in conjunction with our sanctioning bodies or vendors, we needed to do something fairly dramatic in terms of addressing this whole issue of what the sport is doing in terms of a sustainability effort."

This year's initiatives are a result of two or three years of planning and execution, Michaelian said, and some notable green initiatives include:

- All water from Grand Prix sponsor Pepsi will be served in 100% recyclable aluminum bottles with a BPA-free liner, while sodas will be served in aluminum cans. Single-use plastic bottles are no longer used at the Convention Center or the Grand Prix racetrack.
- Fans will be able to refill their own water containers with filtered, city-sourced water through the City of Long Beach's "Quench Buggy."
- Specialized bins around the track will collect recyclable materials such as aluminum cans, plastic and cardboard.
- In conjunction with Safety-Kleen, the Grand Prix recycles oil and petroleum waste from the race cars.
- The Long Beach Convention Center, home of the Lifestyle Expo, generates over 725 kilowatts of power each day from solar panels and has a "cool roof," new LED lighting which saves more than 62 kilowatt hours annually. Motion sensors are used throughout the facility. Restrooms, meanwhile, use low-gallon-per-flush models, and there are more than 50 recycle bins.
- The Acura Grand Prix encourages race fans to take advantage of Long Beach Transit, Metrolink and the Metro A Line, as well as GoActive LB Hub, where they can safely park and rent bikes, or fans can use taxis or rideshare apps. The official drop-off point is on First Street between Elm and Long Beach Boulevard.

Apart from the Grand Prix's efforts, the racing organizations themselves have also made substantial green efforts, Michaelian said.

This will be the most sustainable season in IndyCar Series history, as the series and its teams continue to work to develop renewable

technologies. This year includes the first use of Shell's 100% renewable race fuel and continued use of renewable diesel for all IndyCar team transporters supporting the series.

After a debut last August in the Big Machine Music City Grand Prix in Nashville, Tennessee, Firestone Firehawk's plant-based race tires with a green sidewall, made from

sustainable guayule rubber, will also expand to all street circuit races.

"That's the first step in an attempt on behalf of Firestone to recognize the fact that there needs to be a reduction in the use and byproduct of having a carbon base, regular, normal tire used in racing," Michaelian said. "That's a big step for them, and we'll see how it transpires over the year, but if it

works well on the street circuits, we'll see if there's adaptation for regular racing circuits."

One of the most substantial efforts in the sports car series can be seen with IMSA, Michaelian noted. New Grand Touring Prototype cars require the double-stinting of racing tires, which currently contain more than 25% sustainable materials, greatly reducing the sets of tires used

Continued on page 11

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Long Beach to host red carpet premiere of the CW's '100 Days to Indy' in Terrace Theater



Courtesy of IndyCar

A premiere of the CW's "100 Days to Indy," a TV show modeled after the popular "Drive to Survive" Formula One program, will premiere at the Long Beach Terrace Theatre ahead of the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach

By Kat Schuster

The drivers of the NTT IndyCar Series will walk the red carpet in Long Beach on April 12 for the world premiere of docuseries "100 Days to Indy," just a few days before the 2023 Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach officially kicks off.

From race tracks in St. Petersburg to Long Beach, the series chronicles a competitive journey for the drivers revving up for one of the largest single-day sporting events in the world, the Indianapolis 500, coming up on May 28.

The event, which is presented by CW Sports and VICE, will be free to guests who RSVPed before March 31.

"We think that fans will have a really cool opportunity to visit the footprint of the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach just before the weekend starts," Kate Davis, director of communications for IndyCar, told the Business Journal.

Fans will see 2022 Indianapolis 500 champion Marcus Ericson arrive on the red carpet as well as other Hollywood stars of the CW Network, who will attend the event inside the Long Beach Convention Center's Terrace Theater that evening.

The premiere will mark a rare star-studded event for the city and for the Acura Grand Prix, which has

"The idea was to really bring Hollywood to the Grand Prix versus the opposite way and hosting something in the L.A. basin. And the Terrace Theater at the Long Beach Convention Center was the perfect way to do just that."

- Kate Davis, Director of Communications for IndyCar

transformed a portion of Downtown into a racetrack for the past 48 years.

"The idea was to really bring Hollywood to the Grand Prix versus the opposite way and hosting something in the L.A. basin," Davis said. "And the Terrace Theater at the Long Beach Convention Center was the perfect way to do just that."

That evening, fans, producers and drivers will get a first look at the documentary series, which was produced by Peske Entertainment and VICE Media Group.

"I think it just made sense to have it here at the racetrack, since it's concerning IndyCar and IndyCar races on the streets of Long Beach," said Chris Esslinger, the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach's director of communications.

"100 Days to Indy" will officially premiere on the CW Network on April 27.

"...the production team behind 100 DAYS TO INDY has been working tirelessly to capture the

powerful stories of these incredible drivers as they compete at death-defying speeds to be the best of the best," said Brad Schwartz, president of entertainment at the CW Network, wrote in a statement on Feb. 17.

The soiree will be a spectacle in Long Beach, to say the least, as a "100 Days to Indy" show car will be displayed in front of the convention center as drivers and stars arrive on the red carpet at 5:30 p.m.

The screening will take place at 7 p.m. and will be followed by a Q&A featuring the NTT IndyCar Series drivers and executive producers.

The following drivers will be in attendance and will all be competing in the Grand Prix:

- **Team Penske:** Two-time IndyCar Series champions, Will Power and Josef Newgarden and Scott McLaughlin of Team Penske.

- **Team Andretti:** Romain Grosjean, Colton Herta, Kyle Kirkwood and Devlin DeFrancesco will be in attendance.

- **Chip Ganassi Racing:** Marcus Ericson (2022 Indianapolis 500 winner)

- **Meyer Shank Racing:** Simon Pagenaud (2019 Indianapolis 500 winner)

- **Arrow McLaren IndyCar team:** Pato O'Ward and Felix Rosenqvist. And that list is likely to keep growing, Davis said. ■

Historic F1

Continued from page 3

all drivers to use the same chassis and one of two different motors, F1 is a breeding ground for innovation that results in different car silhouettes and one-of-a-kind engines.

When these historic cars are roaring around the track, Michaelian said the sounds will be unlike anything modern race fans hear today.

“They were not turbocharged, so the sounds that emanated from them were magic to most people who were listening to them,” Michaelian said. “Each one of those different power plants had a different song to ‘em.”

“They are unadulterated, pure internal combustion engines at their full song,” Michaelian said, adding that watching these historic cars in Long Beach again will bring back “a great deal of very positive memories.”

This will only be the second historic F1 race held in Long Beach, Michaelian said. The first was about a decade ago, and that was the first time F1 cars sped through Downtown Long Beach since the series left after ’83.

Long, who got his racing start in

go-kart racing, said he is excited to drive for Erich Joiner, who now owns the historic car. But Long’s connection to the car goes deeper than his love of the sport and its history.

“Keke was a mentor of mine in go karts, and I was a mechanic for his son Nico, who went on to be Formula One world champion,” Long said.

Long retired from professional racing at the end of 2021 but remains a frequent historic racer, including prototypes and Trans-Ams. During the 2022 Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach, Long won both historic IMSA GTP Challenge races in a 1988 Porsche 962.

This will, however, be Long’s first historic F1 race, though he has driven this particular car, as well as modern F1 cars, before, he said.

“F1 is the pinnacle of our sport and Williams (team) and Rosberg are such icons from that period,” Long said. “I am very honored.”

He did speculate on his chances to win the race, noting that it’s a full grid with “a lot of quick drivers” and “a lot of varied technology and different eras of the Formula One cars.”

“I hope to put on a great show and infect and educate the youth with all of the Formula 1 hype that there is,” Long said. “It should be a good time.” ■

Boombox Cartel, Kings of Chaos to headline Grand Prix evening stages



Thomas R. Cordova / Business Journal

Mark McGrath, lead vocals, performs with Royal Machines at the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach Saturday, April 9, 2022.

By Tim Grobarty

Southern California natives Boombox Cartel and Matt Sorum’s rock supergroup Kings of Chaos, will reign on the evening stages Friday and Saturday in the 2023 Acura Grand Prix lineup of activities.

Los Angeles-based DJ act Boombox Cartel will headline the return of Fiesta Friday, April 14. Then, the all-star rock collective Kings of Chaos will headline the Saturday night concert on April 15.

Boombox Cartel

Blurring the lines between electronic and hip-hop with Latin influences, internationally recognized Mexican American producer act Boombox Cartel has risen the ranks as an unparalleled force in the world of dance music.

“I’ve always been super passionate about cars and race cars,” said Americo Garcia, the music producer and live DJ also known as Boombox Cartel. “It’s been a part of my life since I was a kid, going to rally races in Mexico and being a mechanic growing up. Living in L.A., I’ve met so many cool people who share the same love for motorsports. Whenever I have a break from touring, I try to catch some Formula 1 races, most recently in Austria and Austin. It’s so special that two of my favorite things will be coming together for the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach—music and racing.”

The Boombox Cartel name spread quickly in 2015 after Jack Ü played “B2U” at Hard Fest and shortly after, every major artist was playing it live. Following the success of “B2U” came the hit single “Supernatural” with Quix and Anjulie, and in 2017 Boombox Cartel released his highly anticipated debut EP “Cartel,” featuring innovative tracks “Alamo”

and “Jefe.”

The high-energy show will take place at approximately 6:30 p.m. on the plaza in front of the Long Beach Performing Arts Center adjacent to the Long Beach Convention Center and is free to Friday race ticket holders. Space at the plaza is limited and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Kings of Chaos

The band, established by Guns N’ Roses drummer Matt Sorum, features a revolving lineup with special guests at their performances. The Long Beach lineup is scheduled to include vocalists Corey Taylor (Slipknot, Stone Sour), Corey Glover (Living Colour), Lzzy Hale (Halestorm) and Rome (Sublime), along with guitarists Gilby Clarke (Guns N’ Roses), Billy Duffy (The Cult), Vernon Reid (Living Colour), Brent Woods (Taylor Hawkins), bass guitarist James LoMenzo (Megadeth) and drummer Sorum.

Sorum, who was born in Long Beach, brought the Kings of Chaos to the Grand Prix in 2017 for a 90-minute show featuring hits from the various members’ bands.

The show will begin at approximately 6:30 p.m. on the plaza in front of the Long Beach Performing Arts Center. The concert is free to all Saturday Grand Prix ticket holders.

Grand Prix tickets start at \$38 for Friday general admission that gives access to the show, Lifestyle Expo, all racing events plus unreserved seating in all grandstands. Tickets for Saturday’s race start at \$77 for general admission, and a three-day ticket that includes prime Saturday and Sunday reserved seating in grandstand upper levels costs \$175.

Fans can select and pay for their Grand Prix seats, parking and paddock passes online at gplb.com. Ticket orders can also be placed by calling the toll-free ticket hotline, 888-827-7333. ■

Sustainability

Continued from page 7

during the course of the season.

This year, all Grand Touring Prototype cars will use a hybrid powertrain system coupled with internal combustion engines using a VP Racing Fuels blend that increases from 60% sustainable content initially. Eventually, the fuel will be 100% sustainable, greatly reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions.

“That’s a major investment on behalf of the series, on behalf of the teams, and it represented a large step in terms of the technological elements involved with sportscar racing,” Michaelian said.

Plus, the IMSA Konica Minolta Business Center as well as its at-track business transporter have solar panels that power the units while also providing plug-in Level-2 charging for IMSA’s OEM partners and their vehicles used on site for Hot Laps, media events, product launches and official safety vehicles, among other applications.

While sustainability measures have certainly gained momentum this year, Michaelian said that efforts will be ongoing, and that the Acura Grand Prix is constantly examining

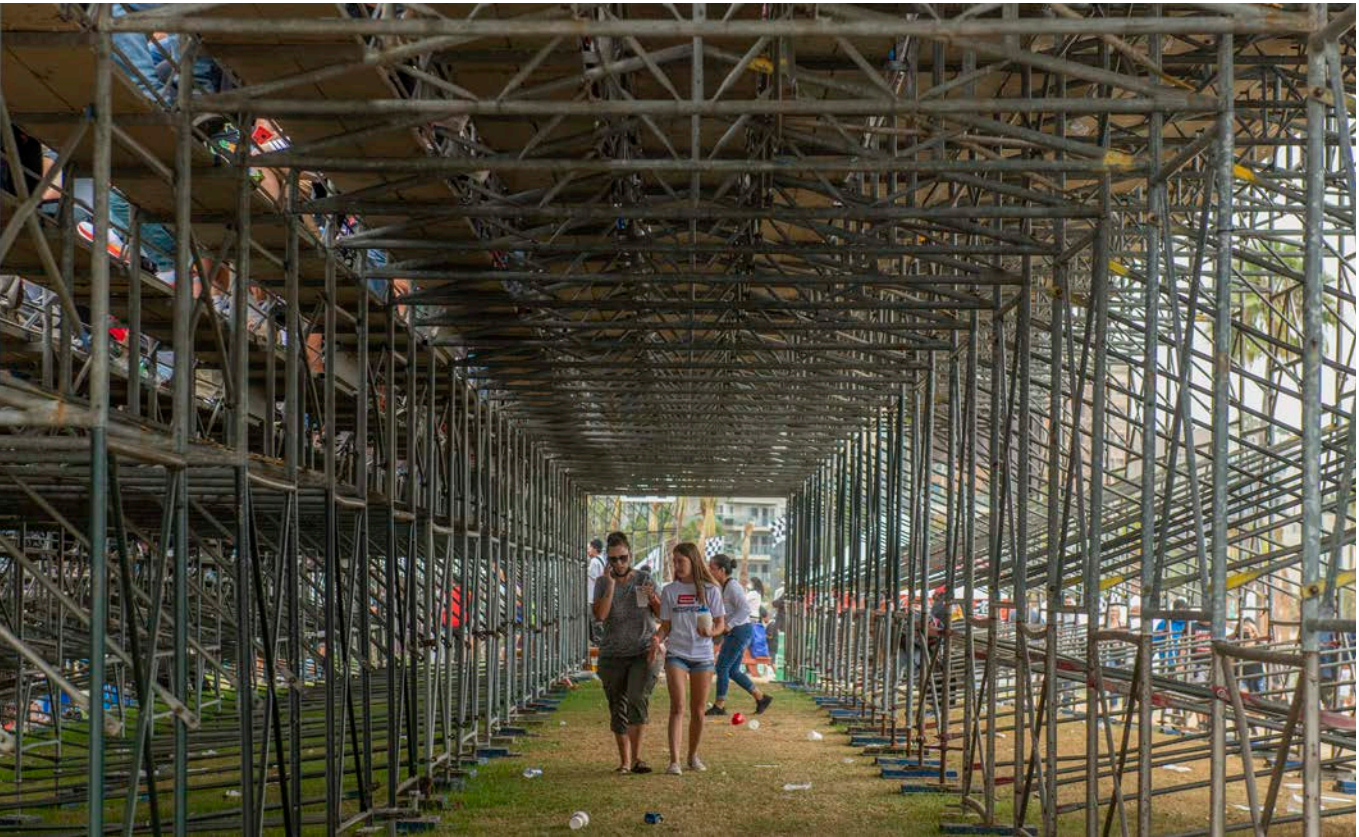
what initiatives are forthcoming and can be adopted.

For instance, next year, in 2024, IndyCar will be utilizing a combination of hybrid and gas-powered engines, “so for two years

in a row we’ll be introducing a major racing series with hybrid systems,” Michaelian said.

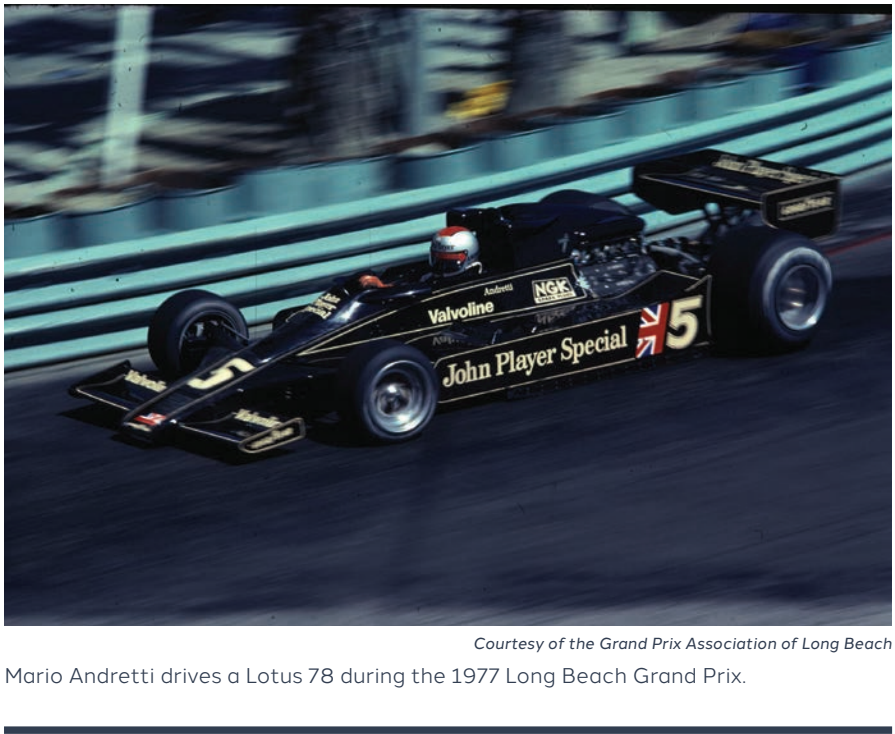
“This is not an ending of the conquest,” he said. “There will be new measures being introduced

every year by a variety of our partners, which we’re very delighted that they’re all beginning to focus on this key element in terms of how we make this event more environmentally friendly.” ■



Thomas R. Cordova / Business Journal

Plastic bottles, cups and other trash litter the ground under the grandstands during the 2021 Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach.



Courtesy of the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach

Mario Andretti drives a Lotus 78 during the 1977 Long Beach Grand Prix.

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The fourplex on Cedar Avenue and Sixth Street is site of the former Cedar House program, which served abused children and their families.

Listing photo

COLUMNIST: TIM GROBATY

Building where Cedar House ruled is on the market for \$1.55M

The home is not called the Cedar House anymore, even though that’s where it calls home: at 605 Cedar Ave. in the Willmore City Historic District. While the district does indeed feature several impressive historic residences, its two neighbors to the north are decidedly non-contributing multi-family condo units built in 1955.

Perhaps because of its proximity to a pair of unspectacular buildings, the stately Craftsman-style fourplex at 605 Cedar looks rich in history, in the they-don’t-make-them-like-that-anymore sort of way.

The four rental units in the building are generously sized by today’s often diminutive micro-studio standards, each has two bedrooms and one bath with upgraded kitchens and bathrooms as well as their own laundry rooms. The current residents are paying less than \$2,000 a month, though the buyer of this property will have two vacant units with Austin Zahn, the listing agent, projecting those may fetch as much as \$2,600 a month.

The property is listed at \$1.55 million.

In its early days, the fourplex had the usual sort of Long Beach tenants, no one of any particular note save for the 1920s when a Mattie Josephine Lewis used the house for her speech therapy classes for youngsters, or, as it was quaintly termed, for “nervous and backward children.” She came to Long Beach after spending years teaching in Detroit at the Lewis School for Stammerers.

The house on Cedar became the Cedar House in 1974, when the organization of that

name was founded and began its work with the prevention and treatment of child abuse, renting the entire house for its 24-hour non-residential treatment program.

Cedar House became the model program to be replicated throughout Los Angeles County for a community-based treatment of child abuse, in which the organization’s staff of marriage, family and child counselors and social workers worked with the children and their families through individual and group therapy and other services in the attempt to keep families together rather than spinning the child off into the warren of foster care.

Cedar House was beloved in the community and was the recipient of fairly robust donations as well as volunteers. It survived until the building was sold in 1987 and subsequently merged with Sarah Center, which focused on women’s abuse, and became today’s For the Child organization.

“We rented the entire house,” recalled Freda Hinsche Otto, who was Cedar House’s administrative director and still remains active in community causes.

“It wasn’t residential, but one of our women stayed in the house full time, which was nice because it gave the place a more homey feel. There was always a pot of coffee on and soup was always simmering in the kitchen, so the place smelled wonderful. You could sit around the coffee table and chat or people could just relax in a chair.”

In 1981, Otto told the LA Times in an article about Cedar House, “I think what we are doing here is going to set a precedent for the rest of the country.

Establishing a domestic, nurturing environment for abusing parents and their children has been untried in the field. It’s controversial and out of the ordinary, but it works.”

The house, with its impressive architecture and large, welcoming front porch, still gives off a pleasant vibe, even with traffic on Sixth Street roaring by.

“It’s funny that it’s for sale now,” said Freda. “We tried for years to buy it, but the owner wouldn’t give it up.”

It’s a different owner now, held by a group of investors who are, obviously, willing to give it up for a price. And even if you can’t afford the million-and-a-half price tag, you might take a shot at renting one of the units when they come up. ■



A large room at 605 Cedar Ave. leads to another sunny sitting room.

Listing photo

Virgin Orbit to lay off 85% of workforce after failing to secure additional funding

The Long Beach-based small satellite launch company announced it would layoff 675 employees in a March 30 U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filing, subsequently informing staff during an all-hands meeting the same day.

By Brandon Richardson

Virgin Orbit, the space firm that kicked off Long Beach’s aerospace resurgence, filed a report March 30 announcing it would lay off 675

employees, 85% of its workforce, after failing to secure funding.

CEO Dan Hart announced the company would cease operations “for the foreseeable future” during an all-hands meeting on March 30, according to CNBC, which first reported the story.

Representatives for Virgin Orbit did not immediately respond to multiple requests for comment from the Business Journal.

“We have no choice but to implement immediate, dramatic and extremely painful changes,” Hart said in audio obtained by CNBC, adding that this would be “probably the hardest all-hands that we’ve ever done in my life.”

Severance packages, including cash payments and benefit extensions will be provided to all laid off employees, Hart reportedly told staff. The company also will provide support in finding new positions including a “direct pipeline” to jobs at Virgin Galactic, CNBC reports.

“As quickly as possible, I am convening an emergency meeting with our city team, workforce development staff and space industry employers to see how we can come together to keep our workforce strong and amazing talent here in our city,” Mayor Rex Richardson said in a statement.

Long Beach will activate the Rapid Response Team from Pacific Gateway, the city’s workforce development arm, once details are confirmed with the company, a city statement said. The team will work with Virgin Orbit to ensure affected employees know the resources available to them as well as assist them in obtaining unemployment benefits and connect to other job opportunities within the city.

In partnership with the California Employment Development Department, the team will host federally funded sessions designed to help employees get back to work as quickly as possible, Pacific Gateway Executive Director Nick

Schultz said in an email to the Business Journal March 30.

“The Pacific Gateway team will present on accessing reemployment services both in-person and virtually; including resume development workshops, one-on-one job search assistance, direct referrals to local aerospace companies, and retraining with funding up to \$7,500 through the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act,” Schultz wrote.

The city did not have advance notice of the layoffs, spokesperson Kevin Lee confirmed with the Business Journal. The situation is reminiscent of Gulfstream’s departure from the city in 2020. The company announced that it would leave Long Beach, taking about 700 jobs with it, blindsiding city leaders.

According to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filing, the severance will be paid for through the \$10.9 million sale of a senior secured convertible note to Virgin Investments Limited,

Continued on page 18

Salon Benders may be forced to relocate from Fourth Street when lease ends in May

By Tess Kazenoff

Salon Benders founder Jessie Santiago had been in love with the Depression-era coffee pot-shaped building on Fourth Street since she first moved to Long Beach about 10 years ago, and she knew it was the perfect home for the beauty and wellness hub that she envisioned—a space that was inclusive, LGBT-centered, trauma-informed and sustainably focused.

Over the past five years, as Santiago has worked to revitalize the historic space, Salon Benders has made a name for itself in the community with its offerings of trauma-informed beauty and wellness services. But due to an expected rent hike amid an ongoing recovery from the pandemic, Salon Benders will likely have to relocate from its Fourth Street home in the coming months.

Revitalizing a neglected space and a change in ownership

Before Salon Benders opened its doors, the historic landmark building had been on the verge of



Long Beach resident Sean Devereaux gets a haircut from Salon Benders founder Jessie Santiago.

Tess Kazenoff / Business Journal

being condemned to demolition, and Santiago quickly got to work breathing new life into the location.

From practically gutting the inside to make it functional, touching up paint and maintaining the space around the building, including creating a gazebo in the back for outdoor haircuts during the

pandemic, work has been ongoing to revitalize the long-neglected structure.

Santiago quickly discovered that the work would largely be left to her and her team—the landlords, who do not live in Long Beach, expressed very little interest in assisting with any improvements, she said.

“It was just always such a hassle to get anything that we need,” Santiago said. “So we just stopped asking.”

Santiago began to explore the possibility of purchasing part of the property, including the coffee pot building as well as the backlot, with hopes of building on to allow for expanded services.

The owners seemed receptive to the idea, and Santiago was in the process of setting up paperwork and discussing it with lawyers. But then the pandemic hit, and in 2021, the owners sold the property.

The first owners had been hands-off, and the new owners similarly made it clear that they wanted nothing to do with the building apart from collecting rent, Santiago said.

Like many small businesses throughout Long Beach, the Salon Benders property is owned by investors from outside of Long Beach, Santiago said.

“They don’t care that that building is one of the most special buildings in all of Long Beach,” Santiago said. “We love it, and we wanted to preserve it, and we still want to preserve it, but honestly, it’s

Continued on page 17

Labor leaders celebrate \$110M for supply chain worker training campus

By Brandon Richardson

A novelty-sized check for \$110 million was presented to Long Beach and Los Angeles port officials by state leaders on March 24, reaffirming funding toward the nation's first facility devoted to training supply chain workers for current and future jobs, which will be located within the San Pedro Bay ports complex.

The facility will be located on 20 acres of Port of Los Angeles property adjacent to the Port of Long Beach's Pier A West, making it easily accessible to both complexes. The campus will provide a centralized location for attracting, recruiting, training and retraining dockworkers, truck drivers, warehouse employees and other essential logistics workers.

"The state-of-the-art campus will be the first of its kind in this nation, helping keep the West Coast ports competitive, efficient and sustainable," Chad Lindsay, vice president of the Pacific Maritime Association, which represents shippers and terminal operators, said during the event.

"These up-skill and re-skill programs will prepare workers for the jobs of the future, providing

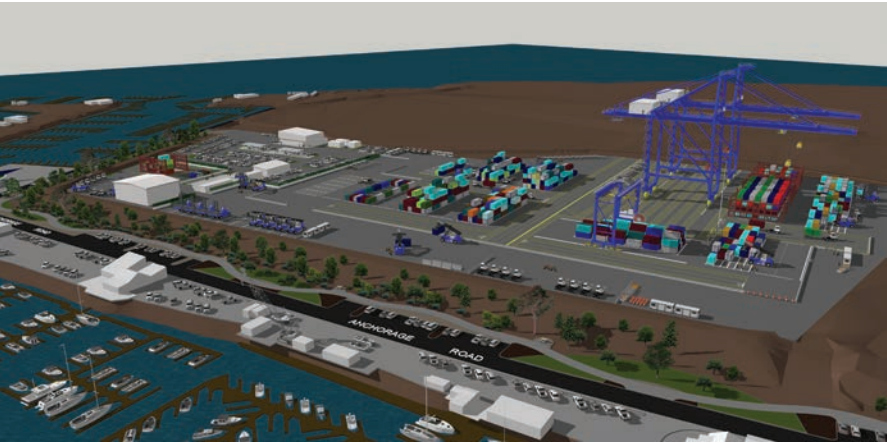
the specialized training they need to keep pace with evolving technologies and equipment in this fast-changing industry," he added.

International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 13 outgoing-President Ramon Ponce de Leon noted that the campus is modeled after an existing facility in Canada.

The new center comes as the contentious topic of automation at port terminals continues to dominate discussions among port employers and labor groups. Ponce de Leon, for his part, said the union recognizes the need to protect the environment but that it should not come at the expense of thousands of jobs.

Ponce de Leon recalled conversations with Mark Jurisic, whom he ran against for his position, about the future of dockworkers in the face of advancing technology. The two agreed a decade ago that a training center was crucial to preserving those jobs.

"If there are no jobs, we're on the streets," Ponce de Leon said of Local 13, which represents over 8,000 members. "Going forward, there should be a national strategy not only for environmental needs, but for economic and environmental needs. People need to be working."



A rendering of the Goods Movement Training Campus, a joint venture between the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles as well as dockworkers and their employers to train and retrain workers for current and future jobs.

To that end, Ponce de Leon said all the players—from the state Legislature and port officials to PMA and the union—have been working together to make this project a reality.

"We are humbled and thankful and grateful for ... everybody involved in putting this thing together," Ponce de Leon said.

Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero commended the ILWU for its "determination" and "wherewithal" to push the project forward.

The campus is expected to open by 2029, according to port officials.

Early estimates on the project, which includes ship-to-shore gantry cranes and other equipment for training purposes, put the total cost around \$150 million, according to Port of LA spokesperson Phillip Sanfield. The final price tag, however,

is expected to be higher, he added.

The \$110 million from the state will be allocated across three fiscal years, starting with the current cycle and followed by the next two consecutively. Additional funding includes \$15 million from the PMA as well as \$40 million from the Port of LA—pending harbor commission approval, port Executive Gene Seroka noted during the event.

"This project is the key to the future of the economy for the state of California and this nation," Cordero said. "As we continue to invest in the future of goods movement at this port complex and continue to balance supply chain challenges, while accelerating the deployment of zero-emission technologies and furthering the framework of 24/7 operations, we have a responsibility to support training that will create jobs, not eliminate jobs." ■

CEO of Jewish Long Beach, Alpert Jewish Community Center announces resignation

Zackary Benjamin helped guide Long Beach Jewish through the pandemic and an integration with Alpert Jewish Community Center.

By Tess Kazenoff

Jewish Long Beach and the Alpert Jewish Community Center CEO Zachary Benjamin has announced plans to resign when his contract expires at the end of June.

Benjamin initially announced his resignation in an emailed newsletter on March 10, the Press-Telegram previously reported.

Benjamin first joined Jewish

Long Beach in 2019, as the organization was completing a merger with the Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Long Beach and West Orange County.

Prior to his role as Jewish Long Beach CEO, Benjamin's career spanned over 10 years in Chicago, based largely in business development with large trade organizations, before he decided he wanted to apply his skills in service of the Jewish community, he told the Business Journal.

Benjamin went on to lead the Jewish Federation of New Mexico in Albuquerque for four years prior to taking on his role in Long Beach.

"Jewish identity and Jewish culture were always central to who I am," Benjamin said. "And it's always been critically important to me to do what I can to ensure that Jewish identity continues for generations to come."

Transitioning into the role of CEO of a newly merged

organization was "a fantastic challenge," Benjamin said.

"My philosophy is that change is always ripe with opportunity," Benjamin said. "And this was a Jewish community, an organization that committed itself to evolving for the future and for the long term."

Navigating the challenges of restructuring the organization prepared Benjamin for what was to come—the pandemic, plus a second merger, this time between Jewish Long Beach and Alpert Jewish Community Center.

"There hasn't been what I would consider a typical day, since Day One in the role, and that's a good thing," Benjamin said. "Each day, each month has brought challenges. Some have been predictable. Some have been altogether unexpected—but having now helped guide this agency and community through two mergers and a global pandemic, it's been a tremendous growth experience and learning opportunity."

Reflecting on his past four years heading the organization, Benjamin recalled how Jewish Long Beach was able to quickly pivot to address critical needs during the pandemic, from providing remote learning resources to delivering food and basic supplies to vulnerable and isolated community members.

"We have had to be far more nimble and adaptable than I think any of the three precursor agencies had ever needed to be before starting, certainly with the first merger, but then when the pandemic hit, really re-imagining ourselves first as a lifeboat for the Jewish community, in the organizations that we serve," Benjamin said.

In January 2022, Benjamin was named CEO of the newly-integrated Jewish Long Beach and Alpert JCC. The second merger, which was completed last year, was accomplished in just two-and-a-half years, and involved significant restructuring, a process that normally takes three to seven years,

Continued on page 22

Amid banking uncertainty, Farmers & Merchants Bank remains a 'safe haven,' CEO says

Mismanagement and interest rate hikes led to two of the biggest bank failures in U.S. history in March, but at Long Beach-based Farmers & Merchants, it's business as usual.

By Brandon Richardson

Two of the largest bank failures in United States history occurred days apart in March. Those failures, combined with a UBS takeover of Credit Suisse that the chairman of UBS described as "an emergency rescue," have led some media outlets

to describe the current uncertainty as a "banking crisis."

But Farmers & Merchants Bank CEO Daniel Walker said the closures are not indicative of systemic issues, and that the Long Beach-based regional bank remains a "safe haven" for its account holders.

Founded in 1983, Silicon Valley Bank grew to become the 16th largest bank in the U.S. with about \$209 billion in assets. On March 10, SVB failed spectacularly due to mismanagement, interest rate hikes and a subsequent run. Two days later, Signature Bank, with \$110 billion in assets, was ordered to close by regulators.

SVB invested heavily in long-dated U.S. government bonds, many of which were purchased when interest rates were unprecedentedly low. The bonds are closely tied to interest rates, so when rates increased, bond prices fell.

After plummeting to nearly zero at the start of the pandemic, where it

sat for two years, interest rates began to rise sharply from 0.08% in March 2022 to 4.83%—a more than 5,937% increase—as of March 20, according to macrotrends.net.

As Walker points out, interest rates were bound to increase, but the pace at which the Federal Reserve has hiked rates also is unprecedented.

"Those types of interest rate movements are very rough for banks," Walker said. "Zero to 5% in such a quick period of time is damaging to a bank's portfolio."

Such rapid increases do not allow for banks to sell their investments and reinvest without substantial losses. SVB management, however, did make missteps that led to its demise, he added, noting that bank failures have not become widespread, which indicates other institutions—such as F&M—are taking the hikes in stride.

In fact, SVB received numerous

warnings from regulators dating back as far as October 2021, Federal Reserve Vice Chair for Supervision Michael Barr said during a U.S. Senate hearing Tuesday.

"The [bank's] risk model was not at all aligned with reality," Barr said. "This is a textbook case of bank mismanagement."

Senate Democrats, including Elizabeth Warren, are now pointing to the Trump administration's 2018 gutting of the Dodd-Frank Act, which was implemented in 2010 as a direct result of the financial collapse that led to the Great Recession. The 2018 rollback increased the threshold for which banks would be under strict Federal Reserve oversight to \$250 billion in assets, which exempted SVB.

Warren and other Democrats have drawn a direct line from the 2018 rollbacks to the SVB collapse. Earlier this month, Warren and Rep. Katie Porter introduced a bill to repeal the rollback and bring the oversight

Continued on page 19

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World’s 1st 3D-printed rocket shows proof of concept in historic mission

While the rocket successfully launched, the second stage experienced an anomaly after about five minutes of flight, ending the mission.

By Brandon Richardson

What started as an idea scribbled on the back of a Starbucks receipt culminated in the world’s first 3D-printed rocket reaching max q, or maximum dynamic pressure condition on the evening of March 22.

After two scrubbed missions earlier this month, over 38,500 people watched via livestream as Long Beach-based Relativity Space’s Terran 1 rocket, which is 85% 3D-printed by mass, blasted off from Launch Complex 16 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station at 8:25 PDT.

It reached max q—a critical point in a launch, as it signifies the moment at which the rocket is under maximum mechanical stress—at T+1:24, to the cheers of ground control.

“Terran came ready to play today,” Arwa Tizani Kelly, technical program manager for Relativity, said during a livestream when max q was achieved. “We just completed a major step in proving to the world that 3D-printed rockets are structurally viable.”

At about T+2:51, the team announced stage separation and second stage ignition. After about five minutes of flight, however, the second stage experienced an anomaly, ending the mission.

Details on the anomaly are not available, but an investigation will be conducted, the company announced.

Ahead of the launch, the livestream commentators stated that, while the company hopes to reach orbit, the main purpose of the March 22 mission was to prove that 3D-rocket flight is viable and to gather data for the further development of the company’s Terran R.

“Today’s flight data will be invaluable to our team as we work to further improve our rockets,” Tizani Kelly said.

The March 22 mission, dubbed “Good Luck, Have Fun,” would have been the first time a venture-backed space company reached orbit on its first flight attempt, according to Relativity. Other



Relativity Space’s Terran 1 rocket, which is 85% 3D printed, blasts off from Launch Complex 16 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station Wednesday, March 22, 2023.

local firms, for example, took two or more attempts for a successful mission: SpaceX’s Falcon 1 took four launches to reach orbit with a dummy payload, while Virgin Orbit’s LauncherOne and Rocket Lab’s Electron both were successful on their second attempts, deploying 10 and three satellites to orbit, respectively.

Terran 1 also would have been the first methalox-propelled rocket to reach orbit, according to Relativity.

This was the company’s third mission attempt, with two previous launches scrubbed. The March 8 attempt was scrubbed due to fuel temperatures in the rocket’s second stage. The March 11 attempt was aborted less than one second before liftoff due to a stage separation automation issue. The team quickly recycled the rocket for a second attempt, but the mission was again scrubbed at the end of the launch window due to a low fuel pressure in the rocket’s second stage.

The Terran rocket was not carrying a customer payload. Instead, a 3-pound, 6.5-inch-diameter metal disc—the first item 3D-printed by the company—was loaded into the nose cone. The item was a failed test print.

The company’s two-stage Terran 1 rocket measures in at 115 feet tall with a diameter of 7.5 feet. Powered by nine of Relativity’s Aeon 1 engines, the rocket is designed to carry payloads of up to 3,261 pounds to a low-Earth orbit of 190 miles

above the planet’s surface or nearly 2,000 pounds to a sun-synchronous orbit of 310 miles.

The second stage of Terran 1 is outfitted with one AeonVac engine.

While 3D printing is not new to the aerospace industry, having been used to quickly generate various parts for rockets, Relativity has taken the technology to the next level. The Terran 1 launched March 22, which was manufactured in Long Beach, was 85% 3D-printed, and the company has plans to take that up to 95%, meaning the rocket has 100 times fewer parts than traditional rockets.

The remaining 5% of the rocket would be components such as wiring that don’t lend themselves to be printed.

To create the world’s largest 3D-printed object, Relativity first had to develop the world’s largest 3D printer. Dubbed Stargate, the printer is now on its fourth iteration, with the largest 4th Generation model coming online late last year. Rather than printing vertically like other 3D printers, the latest Relativity machine prints horizontally.

The older models already printed faster than the industry standard, but the 4th Generation prints 7 to 12 times faster, the company has stated. Fewer components and faster production timelines should lead to cheaper launches in the future, according to the company.

Relativity Space was founded in 2015 by Tim Ellis and Jordan

Noone in Los Angeles. During a pre-recorded video, Ellis recalled the duo brainstorming their space company concept on the back of a Starbucks receipt.

“3D printing is the future,” Ellis said. “I really feel so lucky that we live in a special time where we actually have the tools, the momentum and the ability as a company and as an industry leading humanity’s future in space.”

Before the rockets, the team had to revolutionize 3D printing, he noted. “Some of the early prints look like piles of metal, so we really had to refine the technology,” Ellis said. “Those early days were a lot of hard-won battles.”

The firm joined Long Beach’s burgeoning space economy in the summer of 2020, taking up residence in a newly constructed 120,000-square-foot building in the Pacific Edge industrial park at East Burnett Street and Redondo Avenue.

One year later, however, to accommodate its growth strategy, the company signed a 16.5-year lease for the former Boeing C-17 Globemaster III assembly facility, a sprawling 93-acre site that includes a 1.1 million-square-foot hangar. The buildout of the new company headquarters is ongoing, but portions of the space are already occupied by employees and equipment.

Relativity retained its Pacific Edge facility in addition to its new headquarters.

Since moving to Long Beach, the company has grown from around

Salon Benders

Continued from page 13

completely out of our hands at this point. And there’s nothing that we can do to try to keep that space in special hands.”

Property owner Gabriel Martin Perez confirmed that communication has been minimal with Santiago, and that he typically does not “deal with tenants at all.” He said that Santiago reached out in 2021 about potentially splitting up the property, which he was not interested in doing because it would impact the property’s value, and the property is part of his investment portfolio.

Perez said that he was unaware of any issues that Santiago was encountering. While Perez was notified by the property manager that Salon Benders’ lease would be up in May, there have been no discussions regarding rent increases. As he owns properties in various cities, he is unclear what the market rate is, and his property managers typically assess each property’s market cost, Perez said.

“We’re always open to communicating, but the whole purpose of me having a property manager, is to not have to deal with it,” said Perez.

While the property is seen as an investment for Perez, he said it is important to have tenants that maintain the property.

“We want to make sure we have the right tenants in place, but we rely on the property manager to give us that information,” Perez said. “If she’s doing a great job, we’d be happy to keep her.”

Rising affordability concerns in the 2nd District

While it is unclear what Salon Benders’ new rent will be come May, according to Santiago, it has been made clear that they are paying under market rate.

“It’s kind of sad, because I’m pretty sure that we’re gonna have to let it go,” said Santiago. “But we’re kind of in a big question mark right now.”

There is no limit to how much landlords can raise rent on small businesses, and business owners are often left with no protection, Santiago said.

This isn’t the first time Santiago has had to battle a sharp rent increase; while Salon Benders was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, she had to hire a lawyer to renegotiate her lease, when the previous owners tried raising rent from \$2,000 a month to \$3,500.

“We could barely pay what we were paying because we had no income—literally none,” Santiago said. “We were completely shut down.”

All of her savings were spent surviving the pandemic restrictions, and it has been nearly impossible to

catch up since then, Santiago said. “Every haircut that I do goes directly back into the business so that we can pay for our bills and pay for our employees,” Santiago said. “We haven’t been able to take a salary since COVID.”

Although her previous plans to purchase the Salon Benders building were thwarted, Santiago still hopes that purchasing a building will be possible, and she is currently examining loan and grant options.

However, if Santiago is able to purchase a property, it likely won’t be anywhere near the 2nd District due to an increasing lack of affordability, she said.

“The people who have been here for a really long time are really slowly getting priced out and being pushed more north, because those are the places that we can continue to afford and run our businesses,” said Santiago, who can no longer afford to live near her business in the 2nd District and has since moved to Wrigley.

The issues facing Salon Benders are not unique—small businesses throughout Long Beach have found it difficult to sustain themselves for similar reasons, and turnover has become common, she said.

Most people who can afford to purchase anything in Long Beach are larger developers from outside of Long Beach, who do not understand the community, Santiago said.

“Small businesses should be able to thrive, even if they don’t own the building, because so many of us don’t have the resources to be able to do that,” Santiago said.

According to Santiago, apart from grappling with landlord issues, Salon Benders and the surrounding area has been neglected by local government and by the city, making it even more difficult for businesses to sustain themselves.

Unlike Retro Row farther down Fourth Street, and many other areas throughout the city, Salon Benders and the roughly 15 businesses between Alamitos and Orange avenues are not located within a business improvement district, and as a result, receive very little support, Santiago said.

From a lack of a city trash can, a crosswalk or available parking, plus coping with crime, business owners in the area are left to look out for one another, said Santiago.



A few members of the Salon Benders team, from left: Kai, Rach Fishbough, Jessie Santiago and Fig Bailey sit in the shop.

A representative from the Business Development Bureau did not respond to an interview request, nor did Councilmember Cindy Allen, who represents the area.

“I’ve done so much to uphold that building, and have done so much to bring beauty and a name to that space in that corner,” Santiago said. “When we’re trying to uphold and keep our community true to who we are, true to our roots, but we’re constantly getting pushed out and pushed out and pushed out—I almost don’t want to speak up anymore. I just kind of want to be left alone.”

A community space

Despite the obstacles, Salon Benders has worked to carve out a space in the community with its inclusivity-focused care. Apart from offering hair care, it has become a hub for beauty and wellness services, including reiki, oracle readings and somatic trauma therapy.

“I noticed that they asked for consent, which is so new to me in a salon,” said Long Beach resident Julia Leung, a first-time Salon Benders customer.

“Long Beach feels like this community that’s its own little world,” Leung added. “People who live here deserve that type of service, and it makes Long Beach a really special place because of the way the small businesses are run.”

Sean Devereaux, a Long Beach resident of about 26 years, and who has been going to Salon Benders since November, never saw the space activated by a business until Salon Benders came around.

“It enriches everybody’s experience to have a space like this,” Devereaux said.

For 10 years prior to first visiting Salon Benders, Devereaux had cut his own hair, partly due to not feeling welcomed in most hair grooming spaces.

“This was such a charming building in an area that really could benefit from some investment in

small businesses and the city,” Devereaux continued. “And Salon Benders is just such a beautiful manifestation of all of that.”

According to Santiago, change will only come by giving marginalized business owners a chance to own property—and a chance to thrive.

“If we don’t get to stay here and leave our mark here and have some kind of power in the districts that we have worked so hard to improve upon, we’re going to get pushed out and representation is just going to look less and less like Long Beach,” Santiago said.

Although Salon Benders may not be on Fourth Street this time next year, Santiago remains hopeful for the future of her community-centered business.

Apart from creating an inclusive space for customers, Santiago said she hopes to be a part of the solution for young beauty professionals entering the industry, many of whom are women, people of color and people who haven’t had access to higher education—with hopes of eventually renting out affordable space to other beauty professionals to work together in a trauma-informed environment.

Despite all of the challenges that Salon Benders has encountered in its five-year lifespan, particularly in the last couple of years, Santiago is hopeful.

“I am resilient. I come from resilient women. I come from a background of complete poverty and homelessness,” Santiago said. “And you know what? If I can survive that, then I can survive this, and I believe that this is just part of my path.”

“I believe by the grace of the universe and being able to continue to find the silver lining here, and continue to find my allies—people who really, really want to help, not just say they want to help ... I think that we’re going to be OK,” Santiago added. “I don’t think it’s going to be easy. But I hope it does get easier.” ■



Julia Leung looks in the mirror after getting a haircut from Rach Fishbough at Salon Benders.

Long Beach, LA County unemployment continued to rise in February

Despite the increase, February marked the first time in three years that Long Beach had a lower unemployment rate than Los Angeles County as a whole.

By Brandon Richardson

The unemployment rate in Long Beach and across Los Angeles County continued to rise for the second month in a row in February, according to data released by the California Employment Development Department on

March 24. The city’s unemployment rate increased from 5% to 5.2% from January to February after dipping to a four-year low of 4.4% in December. In February, the city’s labor force grew by 2,500 people, while the number of employed residents grew by only 1,800. As a result, the number of unemployed residents grew from 11,500 to 12,200 month-over-month. The county, overall, saw the same trend, with labor force growth pacing ahead of employment, resulting in the number of unemployed residents increasing from 246,000 to 265,200. The county’s unemployment rate grew from 4.9% to 5.3% month-over-month. This is the first time in at least three years that Long Beach has had a lower unemployment rate than the county, according to state data.

Continued on page 21

Virgin Layoffs

Continued from page 13

the investment arm of Sir Richard Branson’s empire, which is wholly owned by the Virgin Group. In its filing, the company stated it expects to incur about \$15 million in charges, including “\$8.8 million in severance payments and employee benefits costs, and \$6.5 million in other costs primarily related to outplacement services and WARN Act exposure.” Under the WARN Act, U.S. corporations with 50 or more employees are required to provide 60-day notices before mass layoffs. Virgin Orbit went public on the Nasdaq at the beginning of last year with a share price over \$8. The stock has steadily decreased since and reached a low of just 15 cents per share as of March 30. On March 16, the company placed nearly all of its roughly 750 employees on unpaid administrative leave as it sought funding. On March 27, CNBC reported that late-stage deal talks with Texas-based private investor Matthew Brown for \$200 million fell through. Virgin Galactic first took up residence in a new building in the

Douglas Park industrial complex in 2015, marking the beginning of Long Beach’s space boom. In 2017, the facility transitioned to Virgin Orbit, a new branch dedicated to small satellite launch, while Virgin Galactic continued operations elsewhere. Since Virgin’s move into the city, Long Beach’s space sector has exploded, and it now includes Rocket Lab, SpinLaunch, Relativity Space and Vast Space. “There are a lot of space industry opportunities here in Long Beach, and we are committed to seeing Space Beach grow and thrive,” Richardson said. Virgin Orbit developed a new launch system that is deployed from under the wing of a modified Boeing 747, rather than standard land-based launches. The company celebrated four successful missions that put 33 satellites in orbit before its first failure in January of this year. The recent launch, dubbed “Start Me Up,” was the first international mission for Virgin Orbit and the first orbital launch from United Kingdom soil. The rocket reached space, but a faulty fuel filter became dislodged, shutting down the second stage. The company has not yet released its full investigation into the failure. ■

Banking

Continued from page 14

threshold back down to \$50 billion in assets. As for F&M, Walker noted that during a recent examination, regulators said the local bank is “doing the right things.” F&M has enough diversified assets on hand that it is not being damaged by interest rate hikes, he added. Farmers & Merchants was founded in 1907, and its 116 years of service was made possible through careful and responsible growth, said Walker, whose family established the bank four generations ago. He noted the current executive team collectively has hundreds of years of banking experience. “We have plans of action for these types of situations. So when they come about, we know exactly ... how we’re going to proceed,” Walker said. “These are the things that experience does.” SVB and Signature Bank were the second- and third-largest bank failures in U.S. history, respectively, but bank failures are not exactly uncommon. During the Bush administration between 2001 and 2008, 50 banks failed—half of which happened in his last year as the Great Recession ramped up. During President Barack Obama’s tenure, 495 banks failed—most during his first three years amid the Great Recession and the beginning of recovery. The Trump administration saw 16 banks fail with combined assets worth more than \$6.36 billion—a figure notably eclipsed by the combined \$319 billion in assets between the two failures so far under the Biden administration. Like every other bank, Walker said F&M invests as much money as it can, using the returns to provide

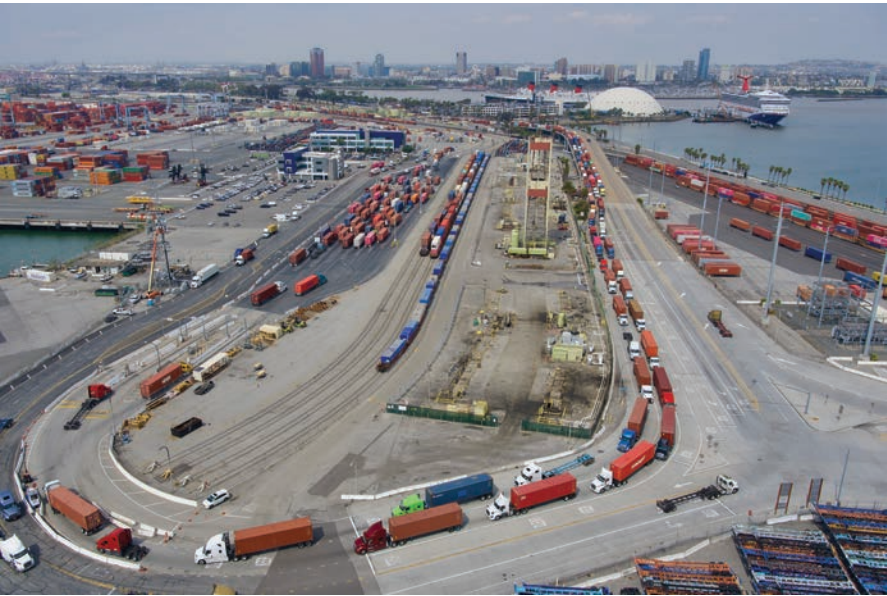
personal and business loans. The difference between F&M and the failed institutions is diversifying investments, loaning responsibly and not focusing operations on select high-value customers, as was the case with SVB. F&M, for its part, ranks within the top 100 out of over 4,000 U.S. banks, with total assets coming in at just under \$12 billion, Walker said. The regional bank’s primary accounts, however, are not large tech firms and startups but rather tens of thousands of families and small business owners. When uncertainty loomed around SVB, the bank suddenly faced customers withdrawing \$42 billion in a single day with plans to withdraw another \$100 billion—far more money than the bank could secure on a day’s notice, NPR reported. “They had a handful of depositors with a tremendous amount of deposits inside their bank,” Walker said of SVB. “Those depositors all of a sudden were in need of their deposits. And that caught SVB by surprise.” With the diversity of customers and investments as well as plans of action in place, Walker said F&M is safe from such a scenario: “Everyday people, everyday businesses, everyday activity—we’re the bank that is the safe haven.” Being a safe haven in the wake of two massive bank failures has its perks. Walker noted that F&M has seen a surge of new customers leaving other institutions for the Long Beach-based bank, mostly through referrals. F&M’s focus on community has ensured that customers remain as loyal to the bank as it is to them, even during what some consider a “turbulent moment,” Walker said. “Our priorities are set so that we are a safe bank, a strong bank,” Walker said. “Protecting our depositors’ funds is a sacred trust to us. And that’s what we do every day.” ■

Dockworkers are using breaks to spur delays at San Pedro Bay ports, employers claim

By Brandon Richardson

Dockworkers at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles are taking their unpaid lunch breaks at the same time, rather than staggering them, which is causing delays at two of the busiest container ports in the country, according to the Pacific Maritime Association. Past labor contracts between the association, which represents shippers and terminal operators, and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union have included a provision that gives employers the right to assign staggered lunch breaks to ensure there are always workers available, according to a statement from the PMA. “Beginning last week, ILWU Local 13 has stopped complying with that contract provision,” the statement from mid-March reads. The work action began March 15, the association stated. The most recent contract between the groups expired on July 1 of last year, over two months after negotiations began for a new agreement. The parties remain at the bargaining table nine months

later with no announcement of an impending agreement. The union, for its part, did not deny or confirm the allegations or comment as to why workers would take their breaks together. “The ILWU-PMA contract allows dockworkers to take a lunch break just like everyone else,” Willie Adams, ILWU International president, said in a statement. The ports of Long Beach and LA declined to comment. Early on, the PMA and ILWU agreed to a media blackout but stated no slowdowns, stoppages or lockouts were expected. Shutting down terminals for two hours each day, however, could be construed as a slowdown or stoppage. The PMA stated terminals at LA and Long Beach are effectively closed from 12-1 p.m. and 10-11 p.m. each day, causing “significant delays.” Because there is no approved contract in place, the association stated it does not have the ability to enforce the now-expired staggered lunch break clause. Adams noted that longshore workers continue to move cargo every day as agreed upon. “Terminal operators, however,



Trucks line up to enter ITS Terminal at the Port of Long Beach Friday, March 17, 2023. Photo courtesy of the Pacific Maritime Association

open and close their gates at will, and limit their hours of operations when they are supposed to be open around the clock – 24/7,” Adams said. “Longshore workers have proven that they are the most reliable part of the supply chain.” The union noted that terminals are operating at 75% capacity due to the recent decline in containers moving in and out of the twin ports. The ongoing negotiations are one of the causes attributed to the dwindling container volumes at the San Pedro Bay ports, with shippers diverting cargo to East and Gulf coast ports to mitigate the effects should a strike occur. The loss of market share was

enough that Long Beach lost its long-held rank as the second-busiest container port in the country to the Port of New York and New Jersey. Los Angeles held on to the No. 1 spot for 2022 but last month was outperformed by Long Beach. The union also stated there are “more than adequate” appointments available for pickups, which it claims are underutilized by as much as 60-80%, outside the lunch hour. “It should be noted that trucks line up outside the terminal gates year-round for various reasons,” the union stated, “but the employer highlights these lines during negotiations in an effort to influence public opinion.” ■



The Farmers & Merchants headquarters in Downtown Long Beach. Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

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100 employees to over 1,000. The company has plans to continue growing to 1,100 employees and invest nearly \$320 million by the end of the 2025 tax year..

With March 22’s mission under its belt, the company can move on to additional Terran 1 missions as well as the first launch of its Terran R rocket, expected some time next year. Relativity announced the Terran R, a larger 216-foot-long, 16-foot-wide rocket, in the summer of 2021.

Terran R is comparable to SpaceX’s Falcon 9, which is the most widely utilized commercial launch vehicle on the market. Like the Falcon 9, the Terran R is designed to be reusable and is expected to be capable of carrying over 44,000 pounds to low-Earth orbit. Unlike the SpaceX craft, however, the Terran R will be 3D printed like the Terran 1, which, in theory, will eventually make it a cheaper option, according to the company.

The private venture-backed company has raised over \$1.3 billion in capital to date. Despite this being only its first launch, Relativity already has dozens of contracts with the likes of NASA, the Defense Innovation Unit, OneWeb and Iridium worth more than \$1.65 billion. ■



Thomas R. Cordova / Business Journal

Shanda Laurent stands with her employees at her newly opened third location of Louisiana Charlie’s at Mother’s Beach.

Louisiana Charlie’s opens at Mother’s Beach

By Kat Schuster

A long-vacant, standalone waterfront eatery on Mother’s Beach sprang back to life in late March, now open as Louisiana Charlie’s—the family-owned Louisiana-style Cajun restaurant that has been a staple in

Shoreline Village for nearly a decade.

The hexagon-shaped beachside cafe has remained dark since it closed as Mom’s Beach House just before the pandemic.

Along with the Shoreline Village location, owners Shanda and Eric Laurent also operate a second Louisiana Charlie’s in San Diego. But their third location within the beachfront Naples neighborhood will offer a new twist: Guests can choose from a total of three menus, two of which stray from the Southern family recipes they’re known for.

In addition to dishes that come from both sides of the couple’s parents and grandparents across Louisiana, the Laurents will also offer a traditional beach concession menu (think hamburgers, hotdogs) and a Mexican food menu.

“We have a cotton candy machine, popcorn—your regular concession stuff, with a little Louisiana on the side,” Shanda Laurent told the Business Journal.

“Someone asked us yesterday, ‘You have Mexican food?’... And they said, ‘How is that on the Bayou?’ I said, ‘I don’t think you’ve been to Louisiana in a while.’”

After Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005, hundreds of Mexican troops rolled into the U.S. to help feed and bring medical aid to Americans in need.

“There was a lot of work to rebuild, and some settled there,” Laurent said. “So, Louisiana now has a lot of Mexican food.”

While the couple behind Louisiana Charlie’s will provide both the Cajun food and the more traditional concession stand options, they decided to bring in some outside help for the Mexican food offerings.

“You know, who doesn’t like a taco? But we wanted it to be authentic,” Laurent said.

Laurent was able to find two

people who operated Mexican food stands in Long Beach before the pandemic put them out of business. Now, they work from the Mother’s Beach location.

For Laurent, cultural authenticity has always been front of mind. It’s why she spent four years working in the kitchen at the first Louisiana Charlie’s in Shoreline Village, and it’s why she’s found herself back in the kitchen at Mother’s Beach. It took two years to entrust her chefs with certain recipes she learned from her grandmother and mother.

“Jambalaya, etouffee, things like that, you can give a recipe to and a trained chef should be able to cook it correctly,” she said. “But when you’re talking collard greens and yams—it’s a matter of taste and sight.”

The Laurents first stepped into the food world in 1981, when they opened their stand, Rick’s Burgers, in Watts, across the street from Markham Middle School. Now, Laurent says they’ve fallen in love with beachside communities, which is what drew them to yet another waterfront location at Mother’s Beach.

The idea for the expanded menu options for the Mother’s Beach location came about as a way to include more options for families and children spending their day at the beach. Laurent also wondered whether Cajun food would work well at the beach.

“That’s why this menu is a little different,” Laurent said. “However, I would say a great majority—and I’m talking maybe 80, 90% of the neighborhood—I guess they were already aware of Louisiana Charlie’s Downtown, and they really want this type of food.”

At Shoreline Village, the most popular dish is catfish. At the San Diego location, it’s jambalaya. So far, Laurent said they’ve been selling a lot of gumbo at Mother’s Beach.

Louisiana Charlie’s, at 5715 Appian Way, is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day. ■

Unemployment

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Only twice since the beginning of 2020 has the city had the same unemployment rate as the county.

In January 2021, the gap in the city and county employment rate grew to 1.5 percentage points, when Long Beach had a rate of 14.2% compared to the county’s 12.7%.

Despite the shake-up, Long Beach unemployment remains higher than 57% of the county’s cities and census areas. Ten of those areas—Charter Oak, Cudahy, Culver City, East LA, Glendale, Hawthorne, Maywood, Norwalk, Rowland Heights and Val Verde—now have the same rate as Long Beach.

Private education and health services led all sectors, gaining 12,400 jobs in February, according to the EDD. Health care and social assistance saw an increase of 6,100 jobs, and leisure and hospitality posted an increase of 12,200 jobs split between accommodation and food services, and arts, entertainment and recreation.

Despite an unusually wet start to the year, construction saw the third-largest month-over-month growth, adding 4,800 jobs, the EDD noted.

Trade, transportation and utilities, on the other hand, saw a loss of 2,600 jobs. Transportation, warehousing and utilities, and retail trade losses of 1,300 and 2,200 jobs, respectively, were offset by a gain of 1,300 jobs in wholesale trade.

At the state level, meanwhile, unemployment increased from 4.6% to 4.8%, according to the EDD. The California Center for Jobs and the Economy stated nonfarm jobs showed strong gains of 32,300 jobs. Overall, nonfarm jobs were 1.7% ahead of the pre-pandemic peak in February 2020.

The number of employed California residents, however, has essentially been level since May of last year, the center stated.

As of February, the state has recovered all of the jobs lost in March and April 2020 as a result of the pandemic, according to an analysis by Beacon Economics. Over the past year, the state increased payrolls by 2.8%, compared to national payrolls increasing 2.9%.

The state labor supply crew by 21,200 in February, according to Beacon, but remains 1.3% below February 2020.

“California’s labor market has performed well so far this year, but there continues to be more job openings in the state than there are workers to fill these positions,” said Taner Osman, research manager at Beacon and the UC Riverside Center for Economic Forecasting. “The labor shortage that employers are facing continues to be a stubborn drag on job growth in the state.” ■

Queen Mary tours return in April; hotel to open in May, operator says

Staff Reports

Queen Mary tours finally reopened April 1, while hotel rooms on the ship will be available to book starting May 12, the vessel’s operator has announced.

Tickets for the Glory Days Historical Tour, Steam & Steel Tour and Haunted Encounters Tour went on sale March 28, and hotel stays can be booked online now for the month of May.

“It is so exciting to finally welcome visitors back onboard this historic landmark,” Mayor Rex Richardson said in a statement. “We have worked tirelessly to protect the ship’s safety, preserve its rich history and bring it back to life. These tours are just the beginning of a larger phased reopening plan and we look forward to sharing more details of the ship in the coming months.”

In December and January, the city opened the Queen Mary to a limited number of visitors for tours of a few specific parts of the vessel. It was the first opportunity for members of



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

After being closed to the public for over three years, the historic Queen Mary ocean liner has reopened four tours, with hotel room openings expected next month.

the public to be on board since the ship closed 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, after previous operators deferred maintenance for years.

In 2021, 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 will face tough decisions about the future of the historic ocean liner, which is estimated to need nearly \$300 million in fixes to remain a safe and viable tourist attraction. ■

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CEO Resignation

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Benjamin added.

“We came out the other end with brand new governance models and structures, and a staffing structure that allows us to address our core functions and mission more directly, more efficiently and with greater impact than ever before,” Benjamin said. “Looking at the landscape of similar organizations around the country that have undergone similar metamorphosis, I firmly believe that we have a model that’s at the very vanguard of what an organization like this can achieve, and I think is going to stand the test of time, long after I step away.”

Over time, as Benjamin was tasked with guiding his organization through a pandemic and through an integration with Alpert Jewish Community Center, he found that his job description had shifted from its initial goal, which was to lead the reimagined Jewish Long Beach while setting long-term goals and visions.

“There came a point starting some months ago and coming to more clarity earlier this year, that ... the incredible team of professionals that we’ve assembled here and myself really have created this airplane,

theoretically speaking, as we’re flying it,” Benjamin said. “There came a point in recent months, where I felt that my charge here was coming to an end—that we had, in fact, built a strong, innovative, efficient and, most importantly, an impactful structure.”

“I think part of leadership is understanding when it’s time to step back and let others take the mantle of leadership,” Benjamin added. “I came to the conclusion that it was time for me to step back and let someone else fly this incredible, incredible entity that we’ve created.”

Benjamin plans to remain fully involved until his contract expires on June 30, ensuring a smooth transition, he said.

As it will not be feasible to find a permanent replacement by July 1, the organization plans to appoint an interim CEO in the meantime, said board president Richard Marcus. The organization has taken initial steps toward launching that search, and Marcus expects a formal search process is likely to begin next month.

Marcus noted that the newly integrated organization has reached a natural transition point, as it shifts from a creation stage to an implementation stage.

“Zach is brilliant, he really is, and

honestly, I’m very sad he’s leaving,” Marcus said. “But I understand that he took a look at this and said, ‘Now is a point where I transition what I will do in my job. Do I want to do that? Or do I want to choose something else?’”

Benjamin has not decided what his next professional endeavor will be, although there are a number of potential opportunities that he is exploring, he said.

“I don’t have my next adventure locked in yet—I think most importantly, the ulterior motive in stepping away was to be a little more present for my family, also to be a little bit kinder to myself, prioritize my own mental and physical health, so those are my short-term priorities,” Benjamin said. “But in the medium-term, I’m committed to staying in the public sector, and at the right time will determine what and where my next role will be.”

As Jewish Long Beach and Alpert Jewish Community Center shifts into its next chapter, Marcus’ hopes for the future will include building upon the organization’s strategic plans and continuing to innovate in ways that will better serve the organization and community.

Future strategy will be guided by a recently-completed comprehensive Long Beach

Jewish community study, the first of its kind conducted since the 1950s. Marcus expects that the organization’s next strategic plan will be voted upon in May, and it will allow the organization to accomplish what it couldn’t as three separate organizations, he said.

“The opportunities of a merged organization are just phenomenal,” Marcus said.

Benjamin hopes that the activities, engagement and impact of the organization will continue to extend beyond the walls of its building, while remaining a hub and “heart and core” that can evolve to meet the needs of both the Jewish and broader community, he said.

“I envision an organization that’s the central address for Jewish communal advocacy in the 15 municipalities that we serve, that if a mayor’s office or an elected official or civic leaders, school district needs the temperature of the Jewish community on any item, that phone of whoever sits in this office, that rings,” Benjamin added, “and that we are limited only by our imagination, and that that imagination is able to produce a bold reality that we’ve only begun to dream about currently and over the course of the last few years.” ■

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