



La Nueva Voz

The New Voice, a Bilingual (English/Spanish) Publication
Pomona's *only* community newspaper!



Pomona Chamber of Commerce



Member

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District Attorney Hochman swears in Pomona's Chief Ellis as president of L.A. County Police Chiefs' Association

Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman appeared at a Pomona City Council meeting this month to officially "swear in" Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis as the new president of the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association for the coming year.

He became the first Pomona police chief ever to lead the county-wide association.

"I was just humbled and honored to be selected by the chiefs for this position," Ellis said. "I'm going on my seventh year as a police chief, and you can imagine the things we've had to deal with

in that time, everything from COVID to the fires last year regionally."

"So, relying on this group as a new chief, especially just to learn best practices, the collaboration, the cooperation amongst these agencies, I know you don't see it, but we talk constantly about how to best keep not only L.A. County but our individual cities safe," Ellis said.

"And this group, especially at the beginning, was huge to me," he added. "So, it's an honor to be in the chair for 2026 to handle that."

The association's general



Los Angeles District Attorney Nathan Hochman, at left, administers the oath of office in the Pomona City Council Chambers to Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis who has been chosen by his peers to serve as president of the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association for the coming year. He is the first Pomona police chief to serve in that position.

foster collaboration, professionalism, and mutual support in the shared responsibility of public safety."

The president is selected by the chiefs themselves, "by the peers who understand the demands of leadership and the weight of that responsibility."

"Chief Ellis is highly respected by his peers," Tiedemann said, adding that about 20 police chiefs were in the audience for the Feb. 2 installation.

He said Hochman's participation "underscores the essential partnership between law enforcement leadership and the justice system."

Ellis officially started work as president last month. He served as first vice president and second vice president over the last two years.

Ellis, a 26-year veteran of the Pomona Police Department and the 22nd chief of police, started his law enforcement career with the Orange County Sheriff's Department in 1997. He joined the Pomona department in 1998, rising through the ranks of police officer, corporal, sergeant and lieutenant. From 2011 through 2019, he served as a captain and held command assignments leading the

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L.A. County District Attorney Hochman tells Pomona councilmembers major crime dipped last year in his first year in office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman, in Pomona to swear in Police Chief Mike Ellis as president of the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association, told Pomona city councilmembers that homicides in the county are at a "multi-decade low" along with "double digit decreases" in other criminal categories in what he called "a nice start."

Hochman took the opportunity of his visit this month to present his "2026 Public Safety Vision for L.A. County."



Los Angeles District Attorney Nathan Hochman

He said he was sworn in on Dec. 3, 2024, and immediately went to work tackling a "trust issue that had developed in the preceding four years between my predecessor and his own prosecutors, law enforcement, victims and the public."

"And in actually changing the direction of the district attorney's office, the lodestar, the north stars that we held to, is that we were going to go ahead and follow the facts and the law and nothing else," he said, "no additional po-

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counsel Scott Tiedemann told councilmembers that swearing in their new president in front of the police chief's city council – a tradition abandoned during the pandemic – "reflects an essential principle – effective law enforcement leadership is grounded in partnership, particularly with the elected officials and communities that they serve."

He said the association, comprised of all 45 police chief executives of the 45 independent cities in Los Angeles County, "exists to

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Investigative Services Division and the Operations Division.

He became deputy chief in 2019 and was appointed chief of police in 2020.

Ellis holds a master's degree from the University of San Diego in law enforcement and public safety leadership, and is a graduate of the Delinquency Control Institute at USC.

He has implemented effective proactive crime-fighting strategies, has institutionalized community partnerships and engagement programs, and is focused on the ongoing modernization of law enforcement.

Ellis is a member of Kiwanis International and has served on the board of directors for the YMCA.

He strives to promote a professionalism and transparency focused on reducing crime and disorder, building the community, and improving the quality of life for everyone, according to the association web site.



Some of the nearly two dozen police chiefs in the audience for Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis' swearing in as president of the L.A. County Police Chiefs' Association join Ellis, District Attorney Nathan Hochman and members of the Pomona City Council for a group photo.

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval and members of the city council presented a special certificate to Ellis marking the occasion.

"This distinguished appointment reflects his exemplary leadership, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to public service," the certificate read. "Through his service with the association, he continues to elevate the standards of law enforcement throughout Los Angeles County

(and) his dedication to collaboration, innovation and community safety serves as an inspiration to your peers and the communities you serve."

The Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association was incorporated as a 501(c)4 organization in 1999. It focuses on advancing the science and art of police administration and crime prevention in Los Angeles County, coordinating the implementation of law enforcement efforts by local law enforcement leaders, and developing, teaching and disseminating professional law enforcement practices.

It maintains numerous partnerships with community organizations including Los Angeles Crime Stoppers, We-Tip, the Independent Cities Association, the Los Angeles Interagency Metropolitan Police Apprehension Crime Task Force, the California Police Officers' Association and others.

Editor's Note: In addition to everything else, as a side note, Ellis handled one of Pomona's largest demonstrations ever – the George Floyd "Black Lives Matter" protest and march by some 400 demonstrators through the streets to the outside of the Pomona Police

Department – on Saturday, May 30, 2020 – when he had been on the job as police chief for only five weeks and organized the department's response on only several days' notice. The protest was peaceful and no arrests were made the day of the incident, although one arrest was made three days later for allegedly breaking windows at a Starbucks and in the offices of then-State Sen. Connie Leyva at Mission Boulevard and Garey Avenue. The story was reported in the June 25, 2020 La Nueva Voz and is available at www.lanuevavoz.net under "Past Issues."



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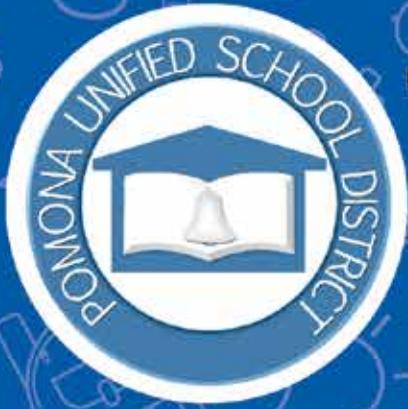
Eagles Lodge
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Photo by Chara Swodeck

HISPANIC CHAMBER NOW OPEN AT MINERVA'S -- It was two recognitions for the price of one ribbon last month when the Pomona Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the grand opening of a new location of the Pomona Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, now inside Minerva's Flowers and Craft at 146 E. 3rd St., Suite B, Pomona. The event also recognized Minerva Hernandez' 30 years in business and 15 years operating Minerva's Flowers. From left are Heidi Ortega, director of Downtown Pomona District; Pomona Chamber Executive Board member Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz; Chamber Ambassador Domenica Carrillo of On Time Photo Booth Rentals and her son, "honorary" Chamber member Kobe Carrillo; Chamber Board member Daniela Franco of Metro Event Center; Pomona City Councilmember Debra Martin; Chamber Past Board Chair Nef Cortez (at rear) of Re/Max Galaxy in Diamond Bar; Minerva Hernandez; Pomona City Councilmembers Victor Preciado and Nora Garcia; Minerva's son, Richard Martinez, also of Minerva's Flowers and Board member of the Pomona Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Minerva's granddaughter, Kylie Martinez; Sophia Siqueiros, representing Congresswoman Norma Torres; Alejandro Ibarra, representing State Sen. Susan Rubio; and Pomona Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles. For more information, visit the web site at cdchdvp.com.



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MOVING BACK INTO THE EBELL -- Historical Society of Pomona Valley members and volunteers spent two days this month and last moving back into the Ebell Museum after a fire during building renovations in September 2024 forced everybody -- and everything -- to move out while work was completed. Most of the historic artifacts had already been moved off site when the fire broke out. Pictured moving boxes back in are, from left, volunteer Alejadrina Arizmendi-Ramirez and former Historical Society Board member Kim Moore. And pictured setting up tables and shelves is Historical Society member and volunteer Andy Hoder, at left, and former Historical Society Board member John Clifford. The newly refurbished Ebell Museum is located at 585 E. Holt Ave., Pomona.



Photo by Renee Barbee

Pomona Leadership Network accepting applications

Do you care deeply about the future of children and families in Pomona? Founded by the Pomona Community Foundation, the Pomona Leadership Network (PLN) is accepting applications for its 2026–2027 cohort, a year-long leadership development program focused on strengthening early childhood systems from prenatal to age 5.

PLN is designed to build a strong, connected pipeline of community leaders in Pomona including parents, caregivers, educators and residents whose lived experiences are critical to shaping policies, programs, and services that support young children and families. Rather than focusing only on theory, PLN emphasizes hands-on civic engagement and real-world practice to accelerate the learning experience.

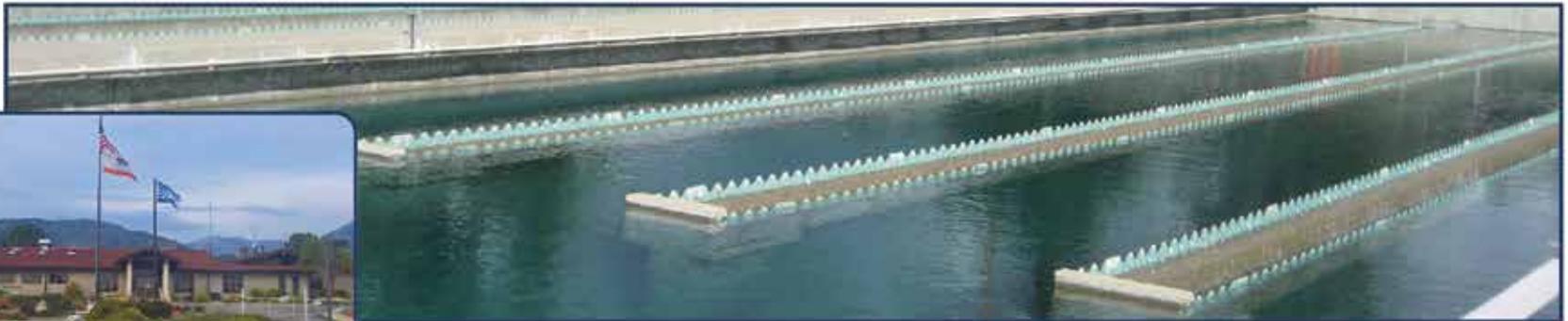
Participants in the 2026–2027 cohort will take part in a hybrid program that includes a weekend retreat, monthly learning sessions, peer-led learning opportunities, and a final group project. The program culminates with group presentations and graduation in May 2027. To support participation, ac-

cepted applicants will receive an \$800 stipend.

Through PLN, participants gain practical skills in advocacy, public speaking, collaboration, and systems change. They learn how local decisions are made – and how to influence them – by actively engaging in boards, advisory committees, public meetings, and collective community projects. The program is designed to help participants build confidence, strengthen relationships, and show up effectively in spaces that shape funding, services, and outcomes for children up to age 5.

PLN is open to all community members. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to apply, especially those who want to use their lived experience to advocate for early learning, childcare, and family well-being. Community residents who may not have prior policy or leadership experience also are welcome – the program provides the tools and support needed to get started. Early childhood educators, nonprofit professionals, and others working in the prenatal-to-age-5 field will

PLN accepting applications... pg. 12



THREE VALLEYS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT More than 75 Years of Reliable Water

Three Valleys Municipal Water District is a wholesale water agency and treatment facility that was established by a vote of the people in 1950. Originally, called the Pomona Valley Municipal Water District, the name was changed in 1981 to better reflect the areas served including the Pomona, Walnut and eastern San Gabriel Valleys. Three Valleys provides water to 13 customers covering a service area of 133 square miles.

Recently Three Valleys celebrated its 75th anniversary honoring the district for its achievements throughout the decades. The District helps educate the public and our communities about our water resources through water conservation messaging and educational tours of our treatment facility. We host additional educational events during the year through our tri-annual Leadership Breakfast meetings where we address topics that impact the water industry and important updates and decisions regarding water.



Our mission is to supplement and enhance local water supplies to meet our region's needs in a reliable and cost - effective manner. By focusing on water conservation and preserving our water resources we are ensuring that future generations can enjoy the benefits of a more sustainable world.

Website: threevalleys.com

Events: threevalleysmwd.eventbrite.com

State Sen. Rubio joins Police Oversight Commission effort to partner with local police

State Sen. Susan Rubio, participating this month in a special Pomona Police Oversight Commission community meeting “Working together: Community Rights and Police Responsibilities,” called the partnership between the Pomona Police Department and the commission “so important.”

“When both the community and law enforcement understand the framework governing these encounters, it supports safety, clarity and mutual respect,” she said.

Pomona Police Capt. Deon Brown, of the department’s special services division, addressing the issue of police funding, told local residents that the department today has 15 positions frozen, seven unfunded and is “short” another seven.

He said the informational meeting was an attempt to address growing fear and concerns among some members of the community, adding that the police department recognizes trends and highly visible incidents that produce varied reactions.

Brown said it is “important for the community to know (what is expected) to build trust and strengthen the relationship with the people they serve and foster transparency.”

Because of that, the meeting was designed to educate the public about “safe and lawful interaction.”

“Our role is purely educational – we aim to provide a clear overview,” he said, adding that recent events and loss of life in Minnesota “have had a national impact.”

Even so, he said the presentation was intended to remain focused on local understanding.

For example, he emphasized Pomona police do not enforce federal immigration laws but remain focused on public safety, strengthening community trust, and serving all residents of Pomona regardless of immigration status.

Brown said the department complies with the California Values Act (Senate Bill 54) which, effective since 2018, prohibits state and local law enforcement agencies from

using resources for federal immigration enforcement, limiting cooperation with ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement), and preventing police from inquiring about immigration status.

It aims to foster trust between immigrant communities and authorities, ensuring safety in public spaces like schools and hospitals.

The event, held twice this month in a morning and evening session and presented by both members of the Pomona Police Department and the Police Oversight Commission, provided an educational overview of law enforcement responsibility and community rights.

Both were presented in English and Spanish.

Participants at the community meeting in addition to Rubio included Pomona City Councilmembers Lorraine Canales and Debra Martin, members of the police department’s internal affairs division, Corporal Jeff Hayward of the department’s community programs unit, and Capt. Ryan Rodriguez of the department’s operations division.

Pomona’s Police Oversight Commission was created to establish and promote accountability, trust, community service, rights, responsibility, and protocol for when citizens contact police, become the subject of a traffic stop, when officers show up at a resident’s home or when citizens otherwise interact with local officers.

It was established through a voter-approved charter amendment (Measure PO) in November 2022 following earlier city-initiated efforts to increase police accountability.

Meetings chaired by Pomona resident Eunice Russell are held at 6:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of every month in the Pomona City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Editor’s Note: This story is based on information gathered by Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz who attended the first of two community informational meetings.

‘Circle of Chairs’ to discuss DEI at dialogue on race at Pitzer College

The 31st “Circle of Chairs” interracial and intergenerational dialogue on race – the second session on the topic “Should DEI D-I-E?” – will be held next month on the Pitzer College campus in Claremont.

The program format is designed to provide a safe space for people to discuss topics that might be regarded as difficult or controversial about what is challenging about DEI and what is of benefit about DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion).

The Community Engagement Center at Pitzer College is hosting the event at the Gold Student Center, just north of 9th

Street at Claremont Boulevard (enter 9th Street from the north part of Claremont Boulevard because of closures).

The event, which is free and open to the public, is scheduled from 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, in the Pitzer College Gold Student Center Multipurpose Room (second floor), at 1102 Pitzer Svc. Rd., just north of 9th Street (use East Mesa Parking Lot).

Partnering organizations include NAACP-Pomona Valley Branch, National Council of Negro Women-Pomona Valley

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litical agenda, no predetermining that there were going to be certain crimes or criminals that were off limits.”

“I got rid of that, and what I’ve been able to do in the last 13 months is to focus on the 180,000 criminal cases that the district attorney’s office prosecutes,” Hochman added. “And what has been an absolute pleasure is to reestablish that trust and partnership with law enforcement.”

He said his office has been able to work “hand in glove” with many of the police chiefs who were in the council chambers in support of Ellis “to basically hold criminals accountable and do it in a smart, common-sense way that was lacking in the prior years.”

His goal, he said, is for criminals to understand that their goal is “ultimately not to put them in jail, but to deter them from committing the criminal conduct in the first place, saving a whole lot of victims in the process.”

Hochman said his office has prioritized six areas that he said he learned were impacting safety in the community on a day-to-day basis – residential burglary, orga-

nized retail theft, homeless crime, hate crimes, human trafficking and fentanyl poisoning.

“These crimes were, in large part, starting to tear apart the fabric of our various communities,” he said, “and we have made strides and we recently got the 2025 statistics from both the L.A. (County) Sheriff’s Department and LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department). And we’re going in the right direction.”

He called it “a nice start.” “One year to the next is a start, two years is better, three years, we started to establish a new baseline, and if we can get to four years, now you’re showing the consistency I’m looking for,” he said.

As an example, he said when he was elected to office in 2024, voters also passed Prop. 36, which was dedicated to go after chronic and repeat thieves “because in order to trigger the felony instead of the misdemeanor under Proposition 36 for a theft, you had to have two or more prior convictions for theft.”

He said about 10 percent of the people were committing about 50 percent of the crimes, and those

often were chronic and repeat offenders, with the same people almost daily stealing just under \$950, maintaining misdemeanor status.

“But what happened with Proposition 36 is that I was able now to partner with local law enforcement . . . (which was) now empowered to arrest them for a felony,” he said.

“In 2025 countywide, we prosecuted more than 2,000 Proposition 36 felony theft cases against these chronic and repeat offenders,” he said. “And it’s starting to make a difference, because now the criminals are understanding that there’s no more lack of accountability.”

“You’re going to get arrested, and it’s not just arrest in the morning, you’re out by the afternoon – you’re going to go through the system (and) now the judges are going to deal with you on a felony basis,” Hochman said.

“And they have the power to put you in state prison,” he added.

He also focused on human trafficking which, he said, is called “modern day slavery” in which young girls and boys are being

“stripped of all their rights that make them in any way a functioning person.”

“It turns out that you have one of these corridors here in Pomona on Holt Avenue,” he said. “We have them all over the county . . . Figueroa Boulevard in Downtown L.A., Sepulveda Boulevard in the Valley, Long Beach has a corridor, Compton has a corridor, Koreatown on Western Avenue has a corridor.”

Hochman said he started working with regional task forces in the county last year and “what you will see in the next year . . . we’re going to amp it up.”

“The traffickers and pimps, you got your warning . . . we’re going to put you in state prison for as long as I possibly can,” he said, referring to the “supply side of the problem.”

But he’s also going after the de-

mand side of the equation as well – “those are the sex buyers, I call them exploiters, they’ve also been called ‘Johns.’”

“We’re going after them as well – we’re going to be bringing felony, not misdemeanor prosecutions,” he said, adding that cases will be prosecuted by his office rather than local city attorneys’ offices.

For the sex workers themselves, “we’re going to do our best to get them counseling services – you have great counseling services in this community alone.”

“We need to pair them up and break that spiral or bond between the sex worker and the pimp, because very often that’s a psychological, even a physical, emotional (bond) and it even involves being drug addicted,” he said.

Hochman said Los Angeles is a

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Photos courtesy of Pomona Unified School District ANNUAL SARAH ROSS SCIENCE FAIR WINNERS -- A total of 137 students in grades six through 12 from 16 schools participated in last month's annual Pomona Unified School District Sarah Ross Science Fair at the Village at Indian Hill. Winners and honorable mentions go on to the 76th Los Angeles County Science and Engineering Fair. Pictured receiving her honorable mention award is Griffin Srisukontha, a sixth grader at Pomona's Decker Elementary School. From left are Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles, Pomona Unified School Board member Patricia Tye, Deputy Supt., Educational Services, Lilia Fuentes, Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman, Garey High School teacher Anne Gariador, Srisukontha, Mary Francesco of Pomona Unified's Pantera Elementary School in Diamond Bar, and Board members Tamara Gonzalez and Arturo Jimenez.



NEED TIPS ON GROWING OR COOKING? -- Two students decided the Sarah Ross Science Fair was a good time to take a look at comparing "Growing Plants Indoors or Outdoors" and "Bake it or Break it," a scientific study of which type of flour works best in chocolate chip cookies. And they both won honorable mentions for their efforts. Pictured, from left, are Ethan Leal and Analea Hadassah Ramirez, both sixth graders at Pomona Unified's La Verne Science and Technology Charter School in Pomona.



TROPHIES FOR THE WINNERS -- Trophies at last month's Sarah Ross Science Fair were lined up and ready to go. Pomona Unified School District elementary schools participating

in the annual event included Armstrong, Arroyo, Decker, Golden Springs, Lincoln, Lopez, Madison, Pantera, Ranch Hills, Roosevelt, Vejar and Westmont. Others participating were Ganesha High School, La Verne Science and Technology Charter School, Cortez Mathematics and Science Magnet School and Kellogg Polytechnic Elementary School.



SCIENCE FAIR PROJECT ON WAYS TO BEAT DEHYDRATION -- Skyler Cardona, a sixth grader at Pantera Elementary School in Diamond Bar, explains his project to a volunteer judge. Cardona took a look at the efficacy of a simple hydration system to help kids remember to drink more water.



Photos by Renee Barbee SIP & PAINT DAY WITH THE POMONA OPTIMISTS -- The Optimist Club of Pomona sponsored an "Eat, Paint & Sip Mimosas" fundraiser last month at the dA Center for the Arts in Downtown Pomona. Theme of the event was "Valentines." Pictured at the easel is Pomona City Councilmember and Optimist Club member Debra Martin, demonstrating her usual creativity. Also pictured representing the Optimist Club are, from left, Fernando Meza, treasurer; Hugo Molina and Ruby Jung (seated); Sonia Molina, president; Blanca Rodriguez, member; and M. Joyce Bakersmith, secretary.



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Newsom plan will align state education policies at all levels

Gov. Newsom – as part of his proposed state budget – last month unveiled a new education governance concept designed to help foster alignment of state education policies from early childhood through college – an idea that is being received with cautious optimism both locally and statewide.

The concept has been billed as a proposal to improve support and oversight of California’s schools by moving responsibility for managing the Department of Education into California’s executive branch and strengthening the role of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to make it all possible.

It would involve implementation of long-standing recommendations to strengthen the state’s education governance system.

“California can no longer postpone reforms that have been recommended regularly for a century,” Newsom said in a news release. “So, we are going to modernize the governance system by unifying the policy-making

state board with the Department of Education that implements those policies.”

“And we’re empowering the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to help align our education policies from early childhood through college . . . reforms (that) will bring greater accountability, clarity and coherence to how we serve our students and schools.”

The plan, part of this year’s budget proposal, would implement recommendations of the state legislature’s 2002 report “California’s Master Plan for Education” to help eliminate a ‘fragmented set of entities with overlapping roles that sometimes operate in conflict with one another, to the detriment of educational services offered to students,’ the news release said.

The concern first was raised by the legislature in 1920.

Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles said his district welcomes the governor’s focus on improving California’s education system and will

State education policies... pg. 13



POMONA CHAMBER RIBBON CUTTING AT CANANI COFFEE -- Pomona Chamber of Commerce officials, Downtown Pomona District officials and Pomona City Councilmembers helped cut the ribbon last month to officially open Canani Coffee in Downtown Pomona. From left are Pomona Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles, Chamber Board member Frank Guzman of Pomona Valley Pride, Downtown Pomona District Director Heidi Ortega (at rear), owners Manhal and Basima Dawabi, Pomona City Councilmembers Victor Preciado, Lorraine Canales, Debra Martin and Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole (at rear), Pomona Chamber Board member Daniela Franco of Metro Event Center, Chamber Executive Board member Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, "honorary" Chamber member Kobe Carrillo, his mom and Chamber Ambassador Domenica Carrillo, of On Time Photo Booth Rentals, Chamber Executive Board member Jim Dale of Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, and back row, from left, Chamber Ambassador Frank Carrillo of On Time Photo Booth Rentals, Chamber Past President Nef Cortez of Re/Max Galaxy in Diamond Bar, and Tracy Evanson Norwood and her daughter Essence Guss, of Healed Women Heal. The beautifully furnished brand new coffee shop, featuring all the best popular coffee drinks, soft drinks, pastries and more, is located at 101 W. Mission Blvd., Suite 106, Pomona (at Garey Avenue). For information, call (909) 326-1351.

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GRAND OPENING FOR SOSPEO -- Pomona Chamber of Commerce officials and members of the Pomona City Council participated in a ribbon-cutting and grand opening ceremony this month for Sospeso. In addition to a new cafe, the new offering soon will include a market, a counseling center, a thrift store and possibly even a teaching kitchen, according to a spokesperson. The cafe was expected to be open in early March. Pictured, from left, are Mandy West, community outreach manager; Joseph Antonelli, founder; Daniel Antonelli, digital solutions; Sandra Antonelli, co-founder; Nick Antonelli, cafe manager; Bereket Antonelli, market manager; Brandi Lara, cafe team member; Sarah Antonelli, general manager; Audrey McDonald, cafe team member; and Faye Navarro, cafe team member. Not pictured are cafe team members Diego Sevilla and Sophia Wright. Sospeso, part of the Living Hope Foundation, a non-profit based in Chino Hills, is located at 290 E. 2nd St. in Downtown Pomona.

Services held for Richard Cortez Alvarez

Funeral services were held this month for educator Richard Cortez Alvarez, who died last month at his home in Pomona. He was 91.

A native of what was then Cucamonga, he grew up the youngest in a family of itinerant farm workers and lived in Pomona his entire life. At Pomona High School, he met Laura Zeckendorf, and the two were married in 1957.

Alvarez, a U.S. Army Korean War veteran, continued his education on his return at Mt. SAC, University of La Verne, and Cal State University Fullerton, where he earned a master's degree in fine arts.

He taught at Garey High School and then for 25 years at Mt. SAC. He grew up attending Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Pomona and later became a parishioner at St. Madeleine Catholic Church after starting his own family.

Alvarez is survived by his wife, Laura, children Alicia Keetle (Dave), Anita Diaz de Leon (Robert), David Alvarez (Joe DiStefano), and Lydia Alvarez (Jeffrey Johnson), six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Donations can be made to the Richard Alvarez Memorial Scholarship Fund @pomnacatholicschool.factsmgtadmin.com/give/ or by telephone at (909) 623-5297, ext. 305.

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Photo by Renee Barbee

LATINA / LATINO ROUNDTABLE OPEN HOUSE -- Members of Pomona's Latina / Latino Roundtable held an open house last month in their new location at 545 W. 2nd St., Pomona. Posing for the La Nueva Voz camera at the event are, from left, Gabriela Lara, Roundtable community engagement coordinator; Francisco Sola, Roundtable member; Olga Rojas, Roundtable member; Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado; Roundtable President Lidia Manzanares; Roundtable Board member John Nolte (at rear); Roundtable Board member Joshua Swodeck; Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales; Russell Jaragui, Roundtable member; Roundtable President Emeritus Dr. Jose Calderon; and Rose Calderon, Roundtable member. The organization's mission is improving the quality of life and advancing socio-economic justice for the Latino community and those facing similar barriers through advancing education, leadership development and civic participation.



GRAND NATIONAL ROADSTER SHOW WINNER -- Pictured is a 1932 Ford roadster, owned by Nicole Baird, crowned winner of the "America's Most Beautiful Roadster" award in ceremonies this month at the 76th annual Grand National Roadster Show at Pomona's Fairplex. The car was built by Squeeg's Kustoms and won in a field of nine contenders, taking home a \$12,500 prize and being immortalized on a 9.5-foot-tall perpetual trophy. Baird is a descendant of the Ford Motor Co. family. Dennis Troggio's 1955 VW Karmann Ghia was awarded the 2026 Al Slonaker Memorial Award in a field of 13 contenders. He also took home a \$12,500 prize.

Major crime dipped... from pg. 6

"fantastic county."

"This city is a vital part of this county, and what goes on in Pomona, you know, good will reverberate throughout the county, and bad I need to deal with," he said.

Hochman said his office includes 800 prosecutors and added that the county – if it was a state – would be the eighth largest state in the U.S.

"And so I've got an incredible commitment from the thousands of law enforcement officers, including your incredible chief here, to dedicate the resources nec-

essary to take it to the criminals and make sure that . . . your public safety is number one," he said.

Hochman told councilmembers they have their own work to do as city councilmembers.

"But me and the chief and all the chiefs here, we'll take care that public safety for you," he said.

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval told Hochman it was the first time in memory the county's district attorney appeared at a Pomona City Council meeting.

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Downtown Pomona celebrates the “Year of the Horse”

By Caleb Lee and Mia Manzo-Natividad

Editor’s Note: The following story was written by eighth graders Caleb Lee, a student at Lorbeer Middle School, and Mia Manzo-Natividad, a student at Lexington Elementary School, as part of their participation in the national “Realize the Dream” program, a call to perform 100 million hours of service by the 100th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King’s birth in 2029, in keeping with King’s legacy of service.



Pictured are Pomona Unified School District students presenting scrolls they made to Pomona City Council members and PUSD school board members in ceremonies this month in Downtown Pomona.

Schools throughout Pomona Unified School District are participating in the program.

Lunar New Year is one of the most important cultural celebrations across many Asian communities, marking the beginning of a new year based on the lunar calendar. While the specific traditions vary by culture, such as Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean celebrations, the holiday often focuses on family unity, and good fortune for the year ahead. Historically, the celebration dates back thousands of years, rooted in agricultural cycles and seasonal changes that signaled the arrival of spring. Over time, it evolved into a vibrant festival filled with symbolism and cultural meaning.

Many Lunar New Year customs are centered on prosperity. Families often clean their homes before the holiday to sweep away bad fortune and decorate with red banners and lanterns since red symbolizes happiness and protection. Traditional foods also carry meaning, such as dumplings for wealth and fish for abundance. The giv-

ing of red envelopes, or “hong bao,” filled with money is another tradition, especially for children, symbolizing blessings and good luck. Lion dances (wu shi), fireworks (bian pao), and cultural performances add excitement and help bring communities together to celebrate their pasts and hope for the future.

This year, the Lunar New Year celebration in Pomona helped bring together families, organizations, and local leaders for a joyful community event. Among the participants was a booth representing Pomona Unified School District supporting the “Realize the Dream” initiative, which focuses on educating students on service learning and strengthening community connections. The booth was organized and run by a student leadership team, Lorbeer Middle School’s California Junior Scholarship Federation officer team, as well as the countless volunteers varying from many different schools who volunteered their time to engage visitors, share resources, and promote the impor-

ance of service.

Following Dr. King’s legacy was a very important thing to do during the Lunar New Year celebration. Students were able to continue his word by helping out in their community, writing letters to senior citizens and having the opportunity to display the beauty of Lunar New Year. After hearing King’s speech, students concluded King would want people of other cultures to celebrate happily with each other no matter how different they may be.

Through “Realize The Dream,” students wanted to continue the message of helping others and serving their community. They shared information about Community Connect Pomona, which helps families find resources like food support, health services, and educational programs. Being at the event helped students celebrate culture while also helping people learn about ways they can get support and support one another more, all helping foster a better sense of community in Pomona.



Courtesy photo



Photos by Renee Barbee

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION IN DOWNTOWN POMONA

It was the “Year of the Horse” in Downtown Pomona this month (on Valentine’s Day this year) as an annual Lunar New Year celebration got under way in Shaun Diamond Plaza, all sponsored by the Downtown Pomona District. Included were traditional Chinese dancers and music, plenty to eat and plenty of gift ideas for that special someone. Pictured (top photo) with two organizers of the event are, from left, Pomona’s Dr. Huu Dinh Vo, President of the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley, State Sen. Susan Rubio, Linda Mok (one of the organizers), an unidentified volunteer, Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales and Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval. Also getting into the fun (bottom photo) are Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles, at left, and Pomona Unified Board members Arturo Jimenez and Dr. Roberta Perlman.

PLN accepting applications... from pg. 4

find value in building cross-sector connections and bringing new skills back to their organizations and networks.

Participant needs including childcare, transportation, language access, and technology will be considered to reduce barriers

to participation in the program.

Applications are due by Feb. 28. Applicants must live or work in Pomona.

For more information and to submit an application, visit pomonacommunityfoundation.org/pln.

Circle of Chairs... from pg. 5

Section, Baha’i Community of Claremont, Claremont Friends Meeting, Pilgrim Place Diversity Group, and the Ecumenical Center for Black Church Studies.

Circle of Chairs is an alliance of diverse individuals and organizations devoted to growing “The

Beloved Community” by training facilitators and convening interracial, intergenerational and multi-ethnic dialogues to foster understanding and reconciliation.

For information, contact Rev. Natalie Shiras at nshiras@mac.com.

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State education policies... from pg. 9

review the proposal in detail.

“Pomona Unified remains focused on meeting the needs of our students, families, and educators,” Knowles said in an e-mail response to a request for comment from La Nueva Voz. “We appreciate

the governor’s focus on improving coherence and accountability in California’s education system and recognize the importance of ongoing conversations about how governance structures impact schools and classrooms.”

“As the state considers potential changes, we look forward to reviewing the proposal

in detail and engaging in thoughtful dialogue to ensure that any reforms strengthen support for school districts while preserving local decision-making and responsiveness to community needs,” Knowles added.

The California School Boards Association, in its own news release, went a step further pointing out that Newsom’s proposal echoes arguments CSBA has made in the past to reform the state’s education apparatus.

But the group in its prepared statement cautiously added “an examination of the bill language is required before CSBA can endorse this proposal.”

“The association has consistently called for increased state-level accountability and a more cohesive education system aligning the governor, legislature and state agencies around a single goal – driving overall student performance and closing the achievement gap,” the statement said.

“The governor’s proposal validates this approach and shows the administration shares a similar diagnosis of the problem, although its solution is not as comprehensive as CSBA’s prescription,” the statement continued.

Beyond transforming the role of the state superintendent of public instruction, “California needs a state-level operations and support plan that establishes a dashboard for evaluating the effectiveness

State education policies... pg. 19



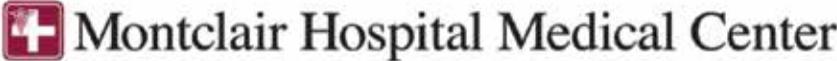
Photo by Renee Barbee

BINGO! -- Members of the Pomona Host Lions Club hosted a fundraiser BINGO game last month at First Christian Church of Pomona. All proceeds were for Lions charities including free books for first graders and monthly feeding the homeless. Pictured carefully marking their BINGO cards (at least until the La Nueva Voz photographer stopped by) are, from left, Pomona volunteer Brenda Schultz and Iso Nakasato of Athens Services.



Photo by Renee Barbee

ANNUAL DONOR WALL RECOGNITION -- Members of the Pomona Public Library Foundation held their annual donor wall recognition this month honoring 19 new additions who have contributed to the library over the past year. Foundation Board President Bree Devones Hsieh also announced that Megan Gearhart, a former Pomona Public Library board of trustees president, has been selected to serve as the board's first part-time executive director. She will "assure (the foundation's) ability to meet institutional goals and . . . protect its institutional memory," Hsieh said. Foundation members also celebrated their 2024 "gala" honoree, The Community Engagement Center at Pitzer College, and their 2025 "gala" honorees, Paul Knopf and Estela Ballon, by unveiling two new commemorative tiles on the fountain in the "Foundation Atrium." Pictured from left in front of the donor wall (fashioned as a reminder of the pre-computer library card catalogs) are State Sen. Susan Rubio (presenting a certificate), Hsieh and Gearhart.





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Supervisor Solis, Supt. Knowles honored by Pomona's Youth and Family Club

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis, honored last month at Pomona's Fairplex along with Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles with "Golden Partner" awards presented by the Youth and Family Club of Pomona Valley, told supporters that events happening across the country are having an impact on "children and families who are suffering because they're frightened, frightened sometimes of our own government."

"We have children that aren't showing up to school or parents who are afraid to allow their children to go to childcare services or even attend . . . church because they're frightened about what might be there waiting for them," she said.

"And this is a reality because one of the first ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids that occurred happened right here in the city of Pomona," Solis added. "And I'm not proud of that, but I am hurting with you and with our families."

"And that is not lost on me tonight, especially because of what



Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles, honored for his leadership and support of youth and families, accepts his "Golden Partner" award. Looking on is Diego Lopez, a student at Pomona's Alcott Elementary School, whose hand was used clasped with Knowles to mold the award, pictured at far right.

we see playing out in other parts of our country and in Minnesota," she said. "I pray that that doesn't happen here, but it's going to take all of us really being strong and steadfast and strong in our convictions and our faith and our values and taking care of our families and our children."

Solis said it is important to ensure that "our elderly and everybody is aware that they all have rights."

"We have a responsibility to

protect them all as well," she said, adding that the San Gabriel Valley "has been through a lot."

"We heard stories about COVID and the pandemic, and not all of our cities have fully recovered from all of that, and now we're seeing unleashing of other things that are to come, cutbacks in many of our programs, healthcare, the Affordable Care Act, childcare, senior care, Medi-Cal, Medicaid, EPA



L.A. County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis receives her "Golden Partner" award at last month's Club Expo Event 2026 event. The Youth and Family Club of Pomona Valley recognized Solis and Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles for their leadership and support of youth and families. Pictured, from left, are Solis, 'The Club' Board member El Monte City Manager Alma Martinez, and 'The Club' Board chair David Perez of Valley Vista Services. A club spokesperson said Martinez has long been a supporter of the organization and has served on the board for the past year. She also helped organize the event. Martinez' children introduced Solis. At the podium is Nathan Swanson-Martinez and, seated, his sister, Isabella Swanson-Martinez. They spoke of how supportive Solis has been of their mom, and Isabella said Solis has been an inspiration to her, adding that she aspires "to be someone like Hilda, to be so compassionate and so prideful in the work she does."

(U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), everything," she said.

Solis reminded the audience she was a political science major at Cal Poly Pomona, but that she

remembers memorizing the Bill of Rights in the fourth grade which, she said, proclaims "that we have protections as citizens, more than

Solis, Knowles honored... pg. 16

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Pomona Should Retire the Word “Landlord”

Words frame debates. In housing, they shape policy, public perception, and behavior. In Pomona where rent control and rental housing regulation have dominated civic discussion for years the language used by city leaders and their consultants matters more than ever.

Real estate professionals have long understood that words can exclude or offend, even when no harm is intended. Fair housing laws exist to guarantee access to housing regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, familial status, or disability. As awareness of inclusion has grown, so has the responsibility to use language that reflects it.

Recently and almost overnight the real estate industry replaced the outdated term “master bedroom” with “primary bedroom,” recognizing that words carry history and implication. The change was simple, practical, and effective.

Yet one antiquated term remains deeply embedded in rental housing discourse.... landlord.

Residential rental property owners assume significant financial and legal risk to provide homes for residents who cannot afford or choose not to buy. They invest capital, maintain aging housing stock, and comply with increasingly complex regulations. Despite this, the word “landlord” is routinely used in public meetings, ordinances, staff reports, and consultant presentations in ways that imply exploitation, indifference, or hostility. That framing is inaccurate and harmful.

“Landlord” is a relic of a feudal system that no longer exists. It does not describe a modern, heavily regulated housing provider operating under state and local law, subject to inspections, rent caps, relocation mandates, audits, and enforcement actions. It certainly does not reflect the reality of housing in Pomona, where small and mid-sized owners provide most of the rental homes.

Ironically, Pomona has hired outside companies, at considerable public expense, to consult on rent control and other rental housing policies. These consultants present themselves as experts in housing equity and fairness, yet they continue to rely on the very term that fuels division. When paid advisors repeatedly use “landlord” in reports and public presentations, they reinforce an outdated narrative that frames housing providers as adversaries and obstacles rather than stakeholder partners and participants in solutions.

Language shapes perception. The continued use of the word “landlord” hardens that narrative. It discourages cooperation, undermines trust, and makes constructive dialogue more difficult, especially at a time when Pomona needs reinvestment in its aging housing stock. Vilifying language does not lower rents, improve habitability, or protect tenants. It simply poisons the conversation.

This is not an argument against tenant protections or enforcement. Accountability matters. Fair housing matters. Habitability matters. But accuracy matters too. A term that misrepresents an entire group undermines serious policy discussion and replaces problem-solving with rhetoric.

Words shape outcomes. If Pomona wants cooperation, investment, and sustainable housing policy, it must stop relying on language that belongs to another century.

It is time to retire the word “landlord” in all city publications, documents and ordinances and replace it with a more accurate term... **rental housing provider.**

Mark A. Warren
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Mark@bmrrentals.com

Solis, Knowles honored... from pg. 14

just residents, but we are people of this beautiful God-given country.”

“And I feel very, very strong about the need for us to understand . . . what that means, our government, our constitution, equal rights under the law, equal treatment and respect for the rule of law,” Solis said. “And I hope that the children that come through this club will



“The Club” Chief Executive Officer Victor Caceres, at left, and past board president Mike Schaub, of Social Model Recovery Systems, master of ceremonies, share the podium last month at Club Expo Event 2026 honoring L.A. County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis and Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles. The event, with more than 200 people in attendance, raised more than \$115,000 – the highest fundraising total to date, according to a spokesperson. It was held at The Avalon at Pomona’s Fairplex.

learn about that and what it takes for people to come together and have a democracy that represents everyone and doesn’t shut the door on anyone because of their ability to pay, how they look, how they speak, or wherever they come from.”

“Nobody should have to go through that,” she said, adding that the evening was an occasion to celebrate.

“I don’t want to be Debbie Downer – I want to say that there are a lot of good things that will continue to go on, and part of it is for our young people, for their future, for their youth, and for their careers,” she said.

As an example, she pointed to the Esperanza Hill Regional Park, being built on the site of the former Puente Hills landfill, once the largest landfill in the country, which – because of her legislation while serving as a state senator – was closed, bringing to an end its impact on homes and schools.

She said what will be the largest regional park in Los Angeles County in the last 30 years is expected to open this fall including, among other resources, an Environmental Justice Center to edu-

cate today’s youth.

“I want to make sure that the youth of this club get to go and see it, feel it, and be a part of it,” she said, “and to know what it means . . . (and) what impacts a landfill has, good and bad.”

Solis mentioned the “Mini Mariachis” from the dA Center for the Arts who performed in the Los Angeles County Hall of Administration in December when Solis again was appointed chair of the Board of Supervisors.

“We have talented young people,” she said. “And... it means so much for us to let their family members know, their parents know, too, that there are a lot of beautiful things that our society, our educational system, as well as clubs and organizations like this can offer for our youth and for economic well-being and investment.”

Youth and Family Club Past President Mike Schaub, of Social Model Recovery Systems, who introduced Knowles, also a “Golden Partner” award recipient, said Knowles believes in The Club.

“When somebody really believes in the best interest of the children, we can trust these people – that’s important,” Schaub said.

Speaking to Knowles, he said he “took a chance.”

“You looked at The Club along with your team and said, you know what, we trust you,” Schaub said. “And tonight, as we honor you, I just want to let you know, in the best interest of the children in this community and the young adults of this community, your trust went a long way – the ripples in the pond are amazing, and our board thanks you.”

Knowles, who thanked Solis “for everything that you do for the community,” said The Club deserves support from the community.

The event, which filled Avalon at Pomona’s Fairplex, included young people from The Club showcasing their work with exhib-

its and games.

“When you look at what the kids were doing back there, they were engaged, they were safe, they were building confidence, and man, that is a powerful thing,” Knowles said. “You’re going to watch these kids grow up and become future leaders.”

He added that he served in human resources for 13 years and had an opportunity to hire more than 350 former Pomona students who are now working as teachers, counselors, administrators, para-educators or in food service.

“I wanted them to start – and once they start their job, I have a conversation with them (asking them) what are you going to do next,” he said, adding that if their goal was to work in administration, he told them they needed to start working on an administrative

credential.

“So, you have to continue supporting the kids, and The Club needs our help to do that,” Knowles said.

He added that Pomona is a community that comes together as it did during COVID.

“I can call anybody in this room . . . (and) if we have a family that’s struggling, they’re homeless, we can call people,” he said. “This community works together, and I don’t always see that in other communities. So, this makes this a special place.”

“And so, we have to protect institutions in the community like The Club, and we’re doing some phenomenal things,” he added. “Our kids are going to Berkeley, they’re going to USC, UCLA. But The Club still needs us.”

“Even though we’re all indi-

viduals, we are part of a team,” Knowles said, adding that his award was really for his team, his board, “for all the people that I work with that make these things happen.”

The Youth and Family Club of Pomona Valley, originally founded as The Boys Club of Pomona in 1964, has served more than 100,000 young people, with more than 14,000 youth benefiting from its programs in the past year alone.

Core program areas include the arts, career development, sports and fitness, leadership and technology, in addition to after school programs at Pomona Unified School District schools throughout the community, homework help, field trips, summer day camp and more.

The Club’s Board chair is David Perez of Valley Vista Services.

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National 'Day of Action' anti-ICE protests come to Pomona

Multiple anti-ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) protests – mostly locally by the younger set, high school and college students – began popping up in Southern California last month and into this month.

Many were follow-ups to a nationwide ICE Out of Everywhere National Day of Action on Friday, Jan. 30.

The demonstrations were part of a nationwide “no work, no school and no shopping” day of action.

In Pomona, the Friday demonstrations appeared to be an all day event with a couple of hundred demonstrators centered outside Pomona City Hall at Garey Avenue and Mission Boulevard. Others were centered outside Los Angeles City Hall with larger crowds attracting mainstream media – both newspapers and television.

And as interesting as the news of the demonstrations themselves were the comments by local officials – from Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval to Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis.

“The youth in Pomona and across our country are taking to the streets to voice their anger at ICE and their love for their communities,” Sandoval said in an e-mail after La Nueva Voz reached out for a comment after the Friday action. “Youth are the soul and conscience at this precarious moment.”

“They know when something is wrong and can see the inhumanity

and injustice that is happening around them,” he added. “And so they speak up! It is something we should all find inspiring and uplifting.”

Solis echoed the sentiment in a news release.

“As national day of action demonstrations take place across Los Angeles County, I stand with residents demanding ICE out of our communities and an end to federal actions that continue to inflict fear, trauma and harm on families,” she said.

“The recent murders of Renee Nicole Good and Alex Pretti in Minnesota, Keith Porter in Los Angeles, and several others across the nation and within detention facilities are an alarming reminder of what happens when federal enforcement is carried out without care or accountability,” Solis added. “Every day, masked men are seizing residents from homes, workplaces, and public spaces. Parents are afraid to leave home. Workers are afraid to show up.”

“Across Los Angeles County, families are left with one unbearable question – ‘Am I next?’” she said. “This is not public safety. It is state-sanctioned intimidation led by the Trump administration that tears families apart and destabilizes communities.”

Solis urged everyone taking part in the demonstrations to protest peacefully and to stay



ANTI-ICE PROTESTS COME TO POMONA

-- Anti-ICE demonstrators in Pomona joined thousands nationwide last month in a national "Day of Action" event encouraging participants to declare "no work, no school and no shopping." Pictured are protestors lining all four corners on Friday, Jan. 30, outside Pomona City Hall at Garey Avenue and Mission Boulevard.



informed on their rights.

“Nonviolent action has always been a powerful force for change,” she said. “Los Angeles County proudly stands alongside immigrants and families impacted by reckless federal immigration enforcement,” she said.



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Gold Line board awards \$60 million design contract for Metro A Line Claremont extension

The Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority unanimously voted last month to award a six-year, \$60 million design and engineering services contract for the Claremont extension of the Metro A Line light rail system to the engineering firm of Parsons Transportation Group, Inc.

Three companies were evaluated in a competitive bidding process, according to a Gold Line news release.

The contract will include designing all elements of the 2.3-mile light rail extension from its current level of about 30 percent completion to “approved for construction” drawings. Parsons has led design teams for each phase of the project for the past 25 years, with the existing rail line now operational from Union Station in Los Angeles to Pomona.

In a related move, Gold Line officials this month released a comprehensive report by Kleinhenz Economics, a leading economic research firm, showing the economic impact of the Claremont extension over its seven years of design and construction will generate more than \$1.13 billion in economic output, support more than 4,700 jobs and produce more than \$481 million in labor income.

In addition, construction activity is expected to generate more than \$154 million in tax revenues, including more than \$20 million in revenues for Los Angeles County.



OPTIMISTS STUDENTS OF THE MONTH -- Members of the Optimist Club of Pomona honored their "students of the month" for October and November last month during awards ceremonies at the Village at Indian Hill. All students are sixth graders at Pomona's Lexington Elementary School. From left are Optimist Andy Quinones, Optimist Vice President Devynn Michele Stein-Marquez, President Sonia Molina, October winners Sophia Franchesca Anenias and Dylan Paul Gomez, Optimist Secretary M. Joyce Bakersmith (at rear), November winner Ronald Duran, and, at rear, Optimists Pomona Unified School Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman, Pomona City Councilmember Debra Martin, and Pomona Unified Supt. Darren Knowles. Not pictured is November winner Diego Camacho.

Photo by Renee Barbee

Help 14-year-old 'Little Free Library' with repairs, upgrades!

That “little free library” on McKinley Avenue – one of the first to be built in the Pomona area – is celebrating its 14th anniversary in August and its owners are seeking the public’s help in revitalizing it.

Maria Velasquez told La Nueva Voz the little library, now actually two small structures to have room to serve as a “little Pomona pantry,” has been recognized by Congresswoman Norma Torres, among others, for its role in both promoting literacy and supporting residents of the area.

Her picture is even permanently included as one of 56 residents – past and present – included in the “Power of Pomona is People” exhibit at the new Pomona Gold Line station in North Pomona.

In addition to books, the “little free library” -- that “take a book, leave a book” concept in cities across the country and around the world – has been a

distribution point for La Nueva Voz for the past five years.

“We’re planning to repaint the library, shifting from the current dedication to the late children’s author Eric Carle’s ‘Very Hungry Caterpillar,’ to a new mural featuring Charles M. Schulz and the Peanuts gang,” she told La Nueva Voz. “This fresh look will breathe new life into our space and inspire even more community engagement.”

She said it it is being painted



Artist and muralist Cheyne Ellett, hard at work on upgrades at the Little Free Library on McKinley Avenue, shows La Nueva Voz what goes into the makeover in the library upgrade.



DONATIONS NEEDED FOR 'LITTLE FREE LIBRARY' -- One of Pomona's oldest little free libraries -- and one with two cabinets, one for books and the other for canned food items -- is in need of repairs. There's even a GoFundMe site. Pictured in the July 2021 La Nueva Voz is creator Maria Velasquez with artist Cheyne Ellett. Velasquez also is pictured next to her likeness at the new Pomona Gold Line station in North Pomona.



by local Pomona artist Cheyne Ellett.

She hopes to raise \$600 to cover the costs of paint, repairs, solar lights and supplies to strengthen the structures. And the work is already under way.

“Any extra funds will go toward purchasing books and food for the pantry, further supporting our community,” Velasquez said. “Thank you so much for considering a contribution. Your support means the world to us and will help keep our library and pantry thriving for years to come.”

Her “little free library” is in front of her house at 414 W. McKinley Ave., Pomona. She has set up a “GoFundMe” account at <https://gofund.me/65bdb3ccb>.

Velasquez said she saw another little free library in Ontario years ago and was inspired to build one of her own. She added that the late David McElwain, credited with building the little free library program in Pomona, did so after he saw hers.

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State education policies... from pg. 13

of the state's systems and policies and provides clear goals, benchmarks and timelines for how state agencies will better assist local educational agencies in accelerating the performance of struggling student groups," it said.

"CSBA stands ready to partner with the administration to build a nation-leading reciprocal accountability model, one where the state is as accountable for student outcomes as the school districts and county offices of education it oversees," the statement concluded.

Others had similar reactions expressing their cautious support.

"California's education governance system is complex and too often creates challenges for

school leaders," said Dr. Edgar Zazueta, executive director of the Association of California School Administrators. "As responsibilities and demands on schools continue to increase, educators need governance systems that are designed to better support positive student outcomes."

"ACSA welcomes the governor's proposal, as it elevates this important conversation and supports a thoughtful examination of governance and accountability," he added. "Any efforts to improve coherence at the state level should be informed by the perspectives of school leaders and educators working closest to students.

And Yolie Flores, president and

CEO of Families in Schools, said her group applauds the governor "for recognizing the urgent need to strengthen education governance."

"For too long, a fragmented and inefficient system has limited schools' ability to partner meaningfully with families and has created barriers to equitable student success," she said, adding that "thoughtful, systemic reform is essential to ensuring that every child thrives."

California continues to prioritize support for TK-12 public education, with a focus on accelerating learning and prioritizing equity, according to the governor's news release. The 2025 Budget Act provided \$137.6

billion in total TK-12 education funding – the highest per-pupil state funding ever for California students.

Under Newsom's leadership, the state has invested \$4.1 billion one-time Proposition 98 general fund allocations in community schools and administered grants to support nearly 2,500 schools, one in every four schools in the state, in adopting the "community

schools" model for schools that address issues such as chronic absence and persistent achievement gaps through supports for family engagement, regular student attendance, and well-being.

This year for the first time, California students are being screened for reading challenges in grades K-2 to better assess potential support needed for long-term literacy success.



Photo by Renee Barbee

TOASTING THEIR OUTGOING PRESIDENT AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY -- Board members of the Historical Society of Pomona Valley take a break during a board meeting this month in the Ebell Museum ballroom to toast their outgoing president, Deborah Clifford, who stepped down this month. Clifford served as co-president with the late Mickey Gallivan in 2017 and then served alone for the past nine years. Mike Schowalter was installed as the new board president this month and Benny Ayala was installed as vice president. Board members pictured, clockwise, from bottom left, are Ayala, his wife, Gloria Ayala, Donna Manzanares Otero, Alice Gomez, Schowalter, John and Deborah Clifford, Jay Munns, and Carson Bennett. Not pictured and taking the photo is board member Renee Barbee. Also not pictured is Alex Martinez.



HISPANIC CAUCUS -- Members of an entire laundry list of Democratic caucuses this month held a very chilly rally outside Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) headquarters in Washington, D.C., this month to demand the firing of U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem. Members called out ongoing ICE abuses including their allegations of the murders of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, violations of due process, inhumane detention conditions, and the lack of meaningful accountability. Pictured at the microphone is Congresswoman Judy Chu of Pasadena, chair emerita of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. Congresswoman Norma Torres of Ontario, a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, is pictured at right. Other Democratic caucuses represented at the event were the Congressional Black Caucus, the Democratic Women's Caucus, the New Democrat Coalition and the Congressional Progressive Caucus.



NEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD -- Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole, at right, swears in board members of the Historical Society of Pomona Valley this week for their 2026-2027 term. Pictured, from left, are Carson Bennett, Alice Gomez, President Michael Schowalter, Renee Barbee, Jay Munns, Vice President Benny Ayala, Gloria Ayala, and Cole.



Photo by Renee Barbee

CLIFFORDS HONORED ON THEIR RETIREMENT -- Deborah Clifford, retiring as president of the Historical Society of Pomona Valley since 2017, and John Clifford, stepping down as board secretary, are honored with certificates from State Sen. Susan Rubio at this week's annual meeting at the Ebell Museum of Pomona History in Pomona. Presenting the certificates was Neha Upadhyaya representing Rubio. The event also marked the Historical Society's 110th anniversary and the restoration of the Ebell Club. The Pomona-based organization is the oldest historical society in California.

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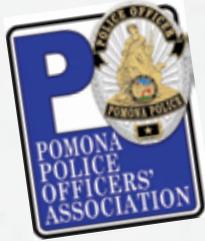
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Desde el escritorio de Jesse Cárdenas Presidente, Asociación de Oficiales de Policías de Pomona (PPOA)

Al comenzar el año 2026, me siento honrado de servir una vez más como Presidente de la Asociación de Oficiales de Policía de Pomona (PPOA). Tras haber dedicado más de dos décadas al servicio de este departamento y de nuestra comunidad, me enorgullece trabajar junto a los hombres y mujeres comprometidos que portan la placa de Pomona cada día. Nuestros oficiales hacen de la seguridad y el bienestar de esta comunidad su misión; no solo cuando están de servicio, sino también en la manera en que viven, hacen voluntariado y crían a sus familias.

Todos los días, los oficiales de policía de Pomona trabajan arduamente para brindar un servicio de excelencia, actuar como buenos administradores de los recursos públicos y fortalecer la confianza entre las fuerzas del orden y la comunidad a la que servimos con orgullo. La nueva mesa directiva de la PPOA está comprometida a fortalecer nuestras alianzas con los miembros de la comunidad, los líderes de la ciudad y la administración del departamento.

Mientras los votantes se preparan para un año decisivo de decisiones locales, nuevos liderazgos y prioridades en evolución, quiero asegurarle a nuestra comunidad que la misión de los miembros de la PPOA de Pomona sigue siendo clara: mantener a todos los residentes y visitantes seguros, independientemente de su origen o estatus migratorio.

Para los miembros de nuestra comunidad que puedan ser indocumentados, quiero darles mi palabra: los oficiales de policía de Pomona tienen prohibido hacer cumplir las leyes federales de inmigración. Tenemos prohibido participar en acciones del Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas (ICE) y tenemos prohibido preguntar sobre el estatus migratorio de víctimas, testigos o sospechosos. De conformidad con la ley del estado de California y la política del departamento, el enfoque de los miembros de la Asociación de Oficiales de Policía de Pomona es y siempre será la seguridad pública, no la aplicación de leyes migratorias. Ningún recurso de los contribuyentes locales se utiliza para la aplicación de leyes migratorias, y nadie debería tener miedo de pedir ayuda. Nuestra labor es proteger a las personas.

Pero que no quede ninguna duda: si cualquier oficial de policía, alguacil, agente federal, agente de ICE o cualquier PERSONA solicita ayuda, la Policía de Pomona responderá para restablecer el orden, devolver la paz y garantizar la seguridad pública.

Respondemos a cualquier llamado de auxilio. Trabajamos para prevenir la violencia armada y detener el abuso. Nos enfrentamos al acoso y luchamos para poner fin a la trata de personas y la explotación sexual en Pomona.

Nuestra misión es sencilla: mantenerle a usted y a su familia a salvo. Como Presidente de la PPOA, espero trabajar juntos para construir una comunidad más segura, más fuerte y más unida en 2026 y en los años venideros.

Atentamente,
Jesse Cárdenas
Presidente
Asociación de Oficiales de Policía de Pomona (PPOA)