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Kern County Coroner's Office Identifies East Kern Homicide Victims

By Patti Orr
The Kern County Coroner Office has identified 2 East Kern County homicide victims that were found on September 10th and September 11th; the first victim was found in Rosamond and the second victim was found in the Boron area behind Love's Travel Stop.

The first victim who was found in the 1800 block of Sandra Way in Rosamond on September 10th has been identified as 22-year-old Eric Castillo of Rosamond; according to the Kern County Sheriff's Department on September 10th at approximately 3:00 AM, Mr. Castillo was shot by another person in the 1800 block of Sandra Way in Rosamond. Kern County Fire Station #15 and Hall Ambulance out of Rosamond were called to the scene and the victim was pronounced deceased. The Kern County Coroner's Office will be conducting an autopsy to confirm the cause and manner of death and the victims' relatives have been notified.

The second victim, who was found in the open desert approximately 2 miles north of Boron Ave Frontage Road in Boron has been identified as 25-year-old Larry Gene Christy Jr. of Tehachapi; according to the Kern County Sheriff's Department on September 11th just before 7:00 PM, Mr. Christy was found deceased in the desert, the sheriff's department reports it's unclear at this time when or where Mr. Christy received his fatal injuries. The Kern County Coroner's Office is conducting an autopsy to determine the cause of manner of death and Mr. Christy relatives have been notified; homicide detectives were called out to both incidents and are now investigating their causes.

Kern County Sheriff's Department and the Kern County Coroner's office are asking anyone with information on either one of these incidents to contact them at 1-661-861-3110 or through the Secret Witness Hotline at 661-322-4040.

OHV reviews monthly report

Inge Elmes, OHV Manager

Events
Labor Day weekend saw few visitors as the weather was extreme. There was a total of 35 visible campsites. Staff looks forward to cooler weather and will be preparing for Columbus Day.

Operations
Park Aide positions were filled and trained for the season. Borax Bill Park Station will be open every weekend, Fridays 10am -

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20th Annual Randsburg Old West Day

By Patti Orr
RANDSBURG - Hundreds of people traveled to Randsburg for the 20th annual Randsburg Old West Day which was held on Sat. Sept. 17th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the mining town of Randsburg. Families brought their children and pets to the annual event for food, fun and live music. The weather was very pleasant for the days activities as several hundred people came to enjoy the sites and sounds of the old west era of Randsburg.

The event started off with an all you can eat pancake breakfast which was served from 8 - 11 a.m. at the Opera House and parade line-up began just after 9 a.m. in a designated area at the Santa Barbara Church. The Burroughs Band kicked off the event by playing the National Anthem in front of the Rand Museum as the parade started which was just after 10 a.m.

Staff event members kept busy throughout the day with parking as well as making sure everything went smoothly. They even helped folks back to their vehicles by giving "rides" to those who had to park up on the hill above the event.

Downtown Randsburg was lined with food vendors, live music and a car/motorcycle show; all the businesses who participated and dressed in costumes from back in the days of the "Gold Rush" were eligible to enter the costume contest; also appearing for the event was the American Legion Riders from Chapter #221 and the Antelope Valley Chapter of H.O.G. motorcycle clubs and the famous

100-year old Soda Fountain at the General Store. The highlight of the event was the "street gunfight" between the Randsburg Lawmen and Wild West Outlaws in front of the White House Saloon which took place at 10:30 a.m., 12 noon and 2 p.m. As the event wound down; Mr. E's Banjo played next to The Joint at around 5 p.m.

Randsburg Old West Day is sponsored by the Rand Desert Museum and is held on the third Saturday in September of every year. Donations are taken at the museum throughout the year to fund the annual event along with proceeds from various merchants; Randsburg celebrated its 125 years of being a town back in 2019.

Here's a brief history of Randsburg; three prospectors who discovered gold near the present site of Randsburg discovered the Rand Mining District in 1895. The mine they discovered was at first called the Rand Mountain Mining Company and later became the Yellow Aster Mining and Milling Company. The area was named Rand after the famous Witwatersrand Mining area of South Africa and quickly boomed; by 1897 an estimated 2500 people were living in the district. In 1898, the Randsburg Railroad reached what is now Johannesburg and served as a supply center for the Searles, Panamint and Death Valley mines. In 1903, Tungsten was discovered in an area south of Randsburg which is now Atolia (named after Atkins and Degolia the two men who developed the mines) but quickly died out after

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PHOTO BY PATTI ORR

Bales of hay are used for sitting along Main Street during Randsburg Old West Days and many folks take advantage of this.



PHOTO BY PATTI ORR

Outlaws gunned down by Old West lawmen in Randsburg.

Council Hires New City Manager

Special to the Mojave Desert News

California City Council members hope this time they have found the magic formula in a quest to hire a City Manager.

Last week the council tapped Jim Hart, a veteran of city government, to lead the city as an interim City Manager. The hiring was unanimous.

Hart has served most recently for the last seven years as a consultant and interim city manager with his last duty being in Barstow.

He has also served as city manager in Adelanto, Rancho Santa Margarita and Twentynine Palms.

His first day of employment with California City was Monday.

Interim City Attorney Victor Ponto detailed Hart's contract as:

Maximum of 960 total hours of employment.

An hourly wage of \$86.54 per hour.

No benefits.

In person office hours Monday-Thursday

He will have the ability to work remotely on Friday.

Hart's contract is month to month and can be terminated by either party with a 30 day notice or when the city hires a permanent city manager.

Mayor Jeanie O'Laughlin said Hart was not "here

to just be a body" but rather to "keep us moving forward."

Hart in turn said Twentynine Palms "shares a lot of the challenges California City does at this time."

"I'm a person who that looks outside the box," Hart said in referencing his 40 plus years in the business. He also noted he has a lot of contacts in the business and can meet and talk about opportunities for California City.

Hart also said while he was at Twentynine Palms he created Economic Development Council with community leaders and businesses to lead an effort to grow the economic foundation of business.

Firm to Analyze California City Fees

Special to the Mojave Desert News

In an effort to recoup costs for services provided by the city California City Council by a vote of 4-1 approved a measure to hire Clear Source Financial Consulting to conduct a fee study. Outgoing councilman Nick Lessenevitch was the dissenting vote.

The study will be due back to the council by February and at that time members will decide to implement the new fees in 60 days or wait until the 2023-24 fiscal year beginning in July.

Staff report indicated

the costs of city doing business went up during the Pandemic since the last time fees were analyzed and adjusted. Then City Manager Doug Dunford told the council it was not known when the last fee study was done but indicated one should be done every five years.

Among the fees to be studied are business licenses, animal control, garage sale permits, architectural reviews, recreation classes, fire inspections and facility and park rentals.

Exempt from the review are the areas of Dial-A-Ride, police fines, housing or Tierra del Sol golf course which Dunford

says are set by "market values or federal requirements."

However, the consulting firm will study what fees are not being charged but should be to cover city costs. Dunford pointed out that California City's building fees will be further defined to provide additional data and costs.

Dunford said the firm will be adding more fees than they city has now.

Mayor Jeanie O'Laughlin pointed out the study will provide the background and data but the council will reserve the right to set the fees.

California City, Rosamond & Mojave get state library funds

News release

Building Forward Library Infrastructure Grant Program for Kern County Library Branches

We're absolutely thrilled to announce Kern County has been awarded \$12.8 million in California State Library funding from the Building Forward Library Infrastructure Grant Program with no County match. This allocation will be used to benefit 17 of our branches, with the largest allocation going to Beale Memorial Library at more than \$2.9 million.

This funding will support critical infrastructure improvements that will aid in the overall library experience for children and families. Particularly, as temperatures soared and school was out of session, our libraries provided refuge for our community's most vulnerable. It is vital our libraries are equipped with the resources to continue to provide these quality-of-life services year-round.

"The Library Department is thrilled to receive over \$12.8 million for addressing life safety and other critical maintenance projects within 17 of our public libraries. The County is committed to supporting their libraries, and this award is a significant investment to library

infrastructure," said Andie Sullivan, Director of Kern County Libraries.

Other improvements include making Kern County libraries safer with added security, more accessible with ADA upgrades, and cleaner with needed air quality improvements. This investment will help Kern County libraries continue their crucial roles of providing safe and educational spaces for children and families throughout our many communities.

Please see below a full list of Kern County libraries that were awarded funding:

- Beale
- Holloway Gonzales
- Wilson
- Rosamond
- Ridgecrest
- Southwest
- Baker
- Lamont
- California City
- Delano
- Kern River Valley
- Wasco
- Taft
- Arvin
- Frazier Park
- Mojave
- Rathbun

For more information, please contact Ally Soper at (661) 308-6805.

EKCRCO Native Plant Presentation & Sale

Presentation

When: Sat., Sept. 24, 2022 - 11:00 AM-12:15 PM, Coso Room
Where: Maturango Museum, 100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest
Speaker: Emma Lynch, BLM Natural Resource Specialist
What: Learn about Mojave Desert plants for sale on Oct. 29.

Sale

When: Saturday, Oct. 29, 2022
Where: Desert Empire Fairgrounds, 520 S. Richmond Rd., Ridgecrest. Enter livestock entrance, Gate D.

Sponsored by Eastern Kern County Resource Conservation District • www.ekrcd.org, ekrcd@gmail.com

