



CATCHING A WAVE



Roughly 3,000 UC San Diego students and 6,000 spectators were at RIMAC Field on Saturday for the first major night commencement in school history, with keynote speaker former Vice President Al Gore. Comparatively few attendees wore or showed political messages despite pointed campus tensions after Chancellor Pradeep Khosla directed a pro-Palestinian encampment be dismantled in May. **Story, A2. MEG MCLAUGHLIN / U-T**

Questions arise about practices of e-bike operation

Pedal Ahead target of 3 investigations, including state DOJ criminal probe

By Jeff McDonald & Tammy Murga

The operator of an electric bike program aimed at reducing car trips and greenhouse gas emissions is the subject of at least three investigations, including a criminal probe being conducted by the California Department of Justice.

Pedal Ahead, which has been awarded millions of dollars from public agencies across San Diego County and the state, was removed as administrator of the e-bike initiative launched two years ago by the San Diego Association of Governments.

The management change came after questions were raised about participation reports Pedal Ahead filed with the regional planning agency known as SANDAG after receiving a grant worth approximately \$440,000.

“The pilot program is currently under review to ensure the consultant was meeting its contract requirements,” SANDAG said in a statement. “This review started on February 15, 2024.”

The nonprofit, which was listed as delinquent by the state Attorney General’s Office until last week, also is the subject of an ongoing California Air Resources Board probe, according to documents obtained by The San Diego Union-Tribune.

A spokesperson for the state air board declined to comment on the internal investigation but said in a statement that Pedal Ahead was awarded \$10 million in 2022.

The nonprofit subsequently was set to be paid an additional \$3 million, although most of those funds have yet to be turned over, the spokesperson said.

“Pedal Ahead is receiving payment as work is completed, which to date has been around \$1 million that has been focused on program readiness,” Air Resources Board spokesperson Lys Mendez said by email.

The San Diego nonprofit was restored to its current status last week, days after the Union-Tribune asked state and SANDAG officials

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City’s budgeting for 2 homeless shelter sites is only a beginning

Path forward for Kettner warehouse, H Barracks full of unknowns

By Blake Nelson



The H Barracks property would provide a place for homeless people to sleep in their cars. The door has been left open to erect tents as shelters. **KRISTIAN CARREON / FOR THE U-T**



The San Diego City Council hopes to convert a vacant warehouse on Kettner Boulevard into the city’s largest-ever homeless shelter. **NELVIN C. CEPEDA / U-T**

After hours of testimony, multiple news conferences, marathon closed-door meetings and angry protests from residents, the San Diego City Council finally agreed with the mayor to direct millions of dollars toward a pair of projects that could offer varying levels of shelter for the region’s growing homeless population.

Does this make the two initiatives a done deal? Nope.

At the same time, several existing shelters are slated for closure. Will the city definitely and quickly lose access to hundreds of beds? Maybe.

The council’s approval Tuesday of a \$2.15 billion budget includes funding to help Mayor Todd Gloria fulfill a pledge to create 1,000 new beds for homeless residents while simultaneously marking the start of an uncertain period for the region’s overtaxed shelter system.

Top of mind is the empty warehouse by Kettner Boulevard and Vine Street. The council did budget \$6 million to renovate the structure so it could potentially hold 1,000 people. But before any money changes hands, those same leaders must approve a lease.

Council members met again in private Monday morning to discuss a number of issues, including

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Hundreds of vacancies on S.D. city and county panels

Unfilled spots can hobble missions, delay work

By Jeff McDonald & Emily Alvarenga

Nearly 7 percent of political appointments across the San Diego County government are vacant, either because the terms expired, they were abandoned by seat holders or they are languishing while elected officials ponder fresh nominations.

And persistent vacancies on San Diego city boards and commissions are even more widespread, with nearly one in five positions available for public appointment vacant, an analysis by The San Diego Union-Tribune has found.

Both of the sprawling bureaucracies rely on an army of civic-minded

volunteers to perform much of the legwork that elected officials and department heads consider in their everyday decision-making.

And the hundreds of vacancies across every sector of the city and county governments have prompted delays in policymaking, enforcement and land-use planning, among other routine duties, interviews and records show.

Sometimes board vacancies are more than an inconvenience.

The county Citizens’ Law Enforcement Review Board, for example, had to cancel its meeting last Tuesday due to the lack of a quorum.

It was not the first time the civil-

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8 Israeli soldiers killed in attack in Gaza

Deadly blast comes in southern city of Rafah, a Hamas stronghold

By Jack Jeffery

JERUSALEM — An explosion in southern Gaza killed eight Israeli soldiers, the military said Saturday, making it the deadliest attack on Israeli forces in months.

The attack, coming more than eight months into a grinding war that shows few signs of ending soon, was likely to fuel new calls for a cease-fire by Israeli protesters. It also came as the government confronts widespread anger over exemptions from military service for young ultra-Orthodox men.

Israel launched an air and ground invasion of Gaza in response to an Oct. 7 cross-border attack by Hamas and other militants that killed some 1,200 people and took 250 others hostage. The Israeli offensive has killed over 37,000 Palestinians. It also has unleashed a humanitarian disaster in Gaza, where over 80 percent of the population has been displaced and Israeli restrictions and ongoing fighting have hindered efforts to bring in humanitarian aid, fueling widespread hunger.

Saturday’s explosion took place in Rafah, a southern city that Israel has identified as Hamas’ last major stronghold. It sent in ground troops to the city in early May and has given no indication when the operation will end.

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K.C. ALFRED / U-T

BUSINESS

Bayfront RaDD development faces hurdles

The project that comprises six downtown blocks of the former Navy Broadway Complex, IQHQ’s bayfront Research and Development District (RaDD), and its lender are facing a rough leasing market as construction nears completion. **C1**

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