



# The San Diego Union-Tribune

\$3.00 | SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2025 | SANDIEGO UNION TRIBUNE.COM

THE CITY IS OWED MORE THAN \$260 MILLION IN DELINQUENT PARKING TICKETS AND OTHER DEBTS...



## WILL SAN DIEGO EVER COLLECT THE MONEY?

By Kristen Taketa  
UNION-TRIBUNE

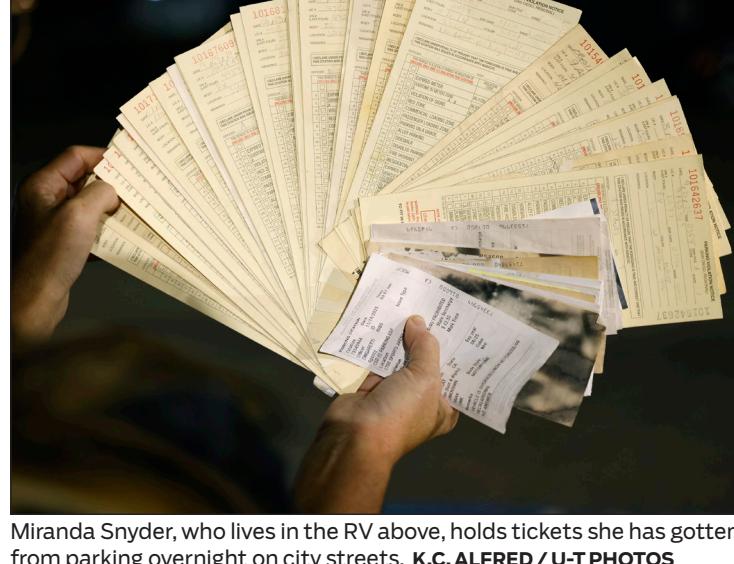
Miranda Snyder is struggling to pay \$1,154 for six parking tickets she has incurred since July for leaving her RV — the only home she can afford — parked on San Diego city streets and lots overnight.

The city doubled the fines she owes for four of them because she didn't pay them on time. She said she has asked the city for weeks for a payment plan. She hasn't heard back.

The city's parking citation payment website also tells her that her RV could be towed for five of her citations. So during the 12 hours every day that she's out working as an accountant, she fears she could come home from work and find her RV gone — with her dog and three pet rats inside.

"I'm... just praying every day that my RV will be there," Snyder said. "I'll go through hell to make sure that they're OK."

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Miranda Snyder, who lives in the RV above, holds tickets she has gotten from parking overnight on city streets. K.C. ALFRED / U-T PHOTOS

## A warning sign? San Diego tourism slows

Hotel stays are declining, overall visitation is flat, and more of the same is expected next year

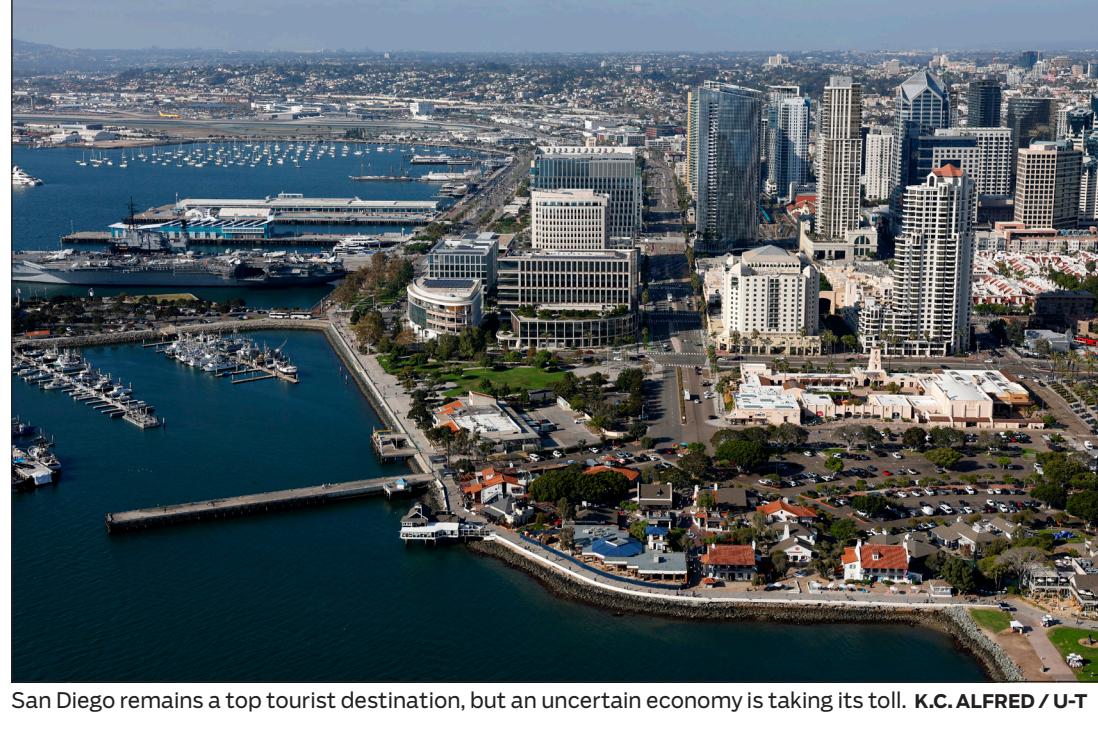
By Lori Weisberg  
UNION-TRIBUNE

Steve Pinard's Action Sport Rentals normally does a relatively brisk business renting out paddleboards, Jet Skis and power boats to vacationers at his Mission Bay locations, but given the grim numbers he has seen this year, he's hoping to just break even in the coming year.

In a move to quickly juice end-of-year sales, Pinard offered a special promotion Thanksgiving week of 20% off all rentals. And for next year, he expects he'll have to launch promotions every holiday, something he says he's never done before.

"This year, compared to 2024, I'm down about 17, 18%," Pinard said of his six rental locations, including one at San Diego Bay. "There's definitely fewer tourists, and they're certainly not spending."

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San Diego remains a top tourist destination, but an uncertain economy is taking its toll. K.C. ALFRED / U-T

## Trump declares Venezuela airspace is closed

U.S. warns it could target drug-related sites inside country

By Helene Cooper & Julian E. Barnes  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump warned airlines and pilots on Saturday that the airspace near Venezuela was closed, ratcheting up what his administration has characterized as a war against drug cartels.

In a post on social media "to all airlines, pilots, drug dealers and human traffickers," the president wrote that the airspace "above and surrounding Venezuela" should be considered "closed in its entirety."

Trump did not go into further detail in his post, but it came after he warned Thursday night that the United States could "very soon" expand its attacks on boats thought to be carrying drugs in the waters off Venezuela to targets inside the country. The U.S. boat strikes have killed more than 80 people since early September.

As president of the United States, Trump has no authority over Venezuelan airspace. But

See AIRSPACE on Page A5

## Midway Rising not sweating ruling to cap height

Developer bets on state density bonus law to carry project

By Jennifer Van Grove  
UNION-TRIBUNE

A recent court order directing the reinstatement of the 30-foot height limit in San Diego's Midway District would seem to stop short a development team's plan to remake the city's sports arena site with thousands of apartments and a replacement venue in buildings that tower over the restriction.

But the ruling's net effect on the megaproject may only amount to a short-term, bureaucratic delay. That's because the Midway Rising team believes it has something more powerful on its side: California's density bonus law.

"Midway Rising is moving forward as planned under state density bonus law that encourages affordable housing development," said Jeff Meyer, a spokesperson for the development team. "We have full confidence in this transformative redevelopment and look forward

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## TOP WORKPLACES

Discover who made the U-T's 2025 survey

In today's edition, find a special section that displays those companies named as the top places to work in the Union-Tribune's annual survey of large, midsize and small companies throughout the region. INSIDE



San Diego FC's Anders Dreyer lies on the ground after losing Saturday's game. MEG MC LAUGHLIN / U-T

## MLS WESTERN FINAL

SDFC falls in conference final; epic first year ends

At a sold-out and stunned Snapdragon Stadium, San Diego FC fell to Vancouver Saturday night in the MLS Western Conference final, ending its inaugural season. At game's end, fans paid a heartfelt ovation to the MLS expansion franchise that tallied 19 wins in its first year. DI

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**A PATH FORWARD** STEVEN P. DINKIN

# A Thanksgiving lesson in the power of curiosity

Thanksgiving is a uniquely American paradox: a holiday built on gratitude and togetherness that is adored for the food and maligned for the table drama, practically in the same breath.

As it turns out, Thanksgiving is also the most Gen Z of holidays.

Generation Z includes people born between 1996 and 2010, meaning they're 15-29 years old. And according to Resy, an online reservation company, 90% of Gen Zers surveyed like sitting at shared tables — more than other generations by far.

Resy concluded that in this era of digital fatigue, young people are craving these "in real life" experiences. Half of respondents said they've had interesting conversations "with someone I otherwise wouldn't have" while dining at a communal table.

Sure, Thanksgiving is a little different — and typically not a table full of strangers — but in my own unscientific study on Thursday, Gen Z (my nieces and nephews) was well-represented and highly engaged. I didn't see a single phone on the table.

My Gen Z daughter hosted a gathering of

friends, and friends of friends, to celebrate the holiday. It's gained international popularity, according to The Guardian: 42% of Gen Z living in the U.K. said they have attended or hosted Thanksgiving dinner, while 16% said they would do so for the first time this year.

The desire of this generation to build real-life community goes beyond their dining preferences. It shaped and stoked the campaign to elect Zohran Mamdani as mayor of New York City.

Writing in The New York Times, Emma Goldberg and Benjamin Oreskes described it this way:

"Addicted to their screens, strapped for cash, spiritually unmoored and socially stunted by the pandemic, young New Yorkers needed a reason to get out of the house. They found it in Zohran Mamdani's mayoral run."

The campaign was as much about socializing as mobilizing. There was a scavenger hunt, a soccer tournament, do-it-yourself Mamdani merchandise ("merch") parties, and \$5 beer nights where supporters could gather to debrief, after knocking on doors.



New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani speaks after his meeting with President Donald Trump at the White House on Nov. 21. **EVAN VUCCI / AP**

Mamdani joined the revelry and hyped up the crowds.

As Goldberg and Oreskes observed, "the social buoyancy of his campaign wasn't just for show. Young people turned up and voted." Nearly 100,000 of them cast early ballots, lowering the median age of this voting bloc from 55 in 2021 to 50. And turnout overall was 84% higher than in 2021, a level of participation not seen since 1969.

I've written on occasion about the seminal book by Robert Putnam called

"Bowling Alone," which was first published 25 years ago. Putnam examined the slide in U.S. electoral participation in the decades since 1960. He correlated the decline in voting to a decline in civic engagement — especially "cooperative" forms of behavior, like serving on committees or attending political rallies.

Presciently, Putnam wrote, "This disjunctive pattern of decline — cooperation falling more rapidly than self-expression — may well have encouraged

the single-issue blare and declining civility in contemporary political discourse." When "Bowling Alone" was published in the year 2000, the major platforms that propelled social media into the mainstream had not yet launched.

Clearly, the Mamdani campaign understood: Political success often comes from giving people a reason to gather — true, it seems, across generations.

At the National Conflict Resolution Center, we talk about curiosity as a salve that can heal all sorts of divides — especially when it stretches us beyond preconceived ideas. I saw this in action at a recent NCRC staff retreat, where we conducted an exercise called "Generation Exploration."

Each person joined one of four groups based on age. As we discussed the events that influenced us, it was easy to see how they shaped our work styles and preferences. For example, Generation X (ages 44-59) was the first cohort to grow up in a society where two working parents became the economic and social norm; these independent "latchkey kids" can find it difficult to collaborate.

And while all of us were affected by the pandemic, Gen Z experienced the most profound disruption. Their struggles with social isolation and disconnection occurred at a critical time for developing identity and relationships. It made the transition into the workforce — and in-person interactions — a challenge.

But Gen Z craves (rather than loathes) the opportunity to be shoulder-to-shoulder with other people. A shared purpose, like electing Zohran Mamdani, spurs action. This generation is anything but lazy, as the stereotype would have you believe.

I learned that by being curious.

It's like Thanksgiving dinner. You should try Aunt Linda's cranberry relish, even if you think you won't like it. You may be surprised.

*Steven P. Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC), a San Diego-based organization that is working to create innovative solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncrconline.com.*

## Carlsbad may outlaw e-bikes for riders under 12



Teenagers on e-bikes go for a ride in Carlsbad. **CHARLIE NEUMAN / FOR THE U-T**

**By Phil Diehl**  
UNION-TRIBUNE

CARLSBAD — E-bike riders would have to be at least 12 years old under an ordinance to be considered Tuesday by the Carlsbad City Council.

Chula Vista, Coronado, Poway and San Marcos have adopted similar ordinances this year to prohibit e-bikes for children under 12. Final approval of one in Santee is expected in December. In most cities, the enforcement begins with warnings and can lead to fines for children and their parents.

Carlsbad's Traffic Safety and Mobility Commission voted in September to recommend the City Council's approval. Before its meeting, the commission received more than 550 comments on

e-bikes, most in favor of the age restriction and other additional regulations.

Cities statewide are beefing up e-bike laws as part of a pilot program that took effect this year under Assembly Bill 2234, sponsored by Assemblymember Tasha Boerner, D-Encinitas. It sunsets Jan. 1, 2029.

Bicycle injury accidents have risen sharply since e-bike sales spiked with the start of the pandemic in 2020. E-bikes are especially popular with young people, who are involved in most of the accidents.

"Adolescents are at the center of this problem," said Carlsbad police Lt. Jason Arnotti in May, adding that younger children have less developed judgment and are more likely to be injured in accidents.

Carlsbad declared a local traffic emergency after two bicycle fatalities in 2022. Since then, the city has increased regulations and expanded enforcement and street safety improvements, such as better bike lanes and crosswalks.

The city was among the first in the region to pass e-bike laws in 2022, when it prohibited them on public sidewalks, drainage ditches, culverts, channels, athletic courts or gyms.

The ordinance approved in mid-2022 requires riders to take care and reduce speed when necessary. They can't carry passengers on the handlebars or rear bike racks not specifically made for additional riders. On trails less than 5 feet wide, the rider must get off and walk the bike within 50 feet of a pedestrian.

The city's injury accidents involving bicycles of all types peaked at 59 in 2023, then declined as the changes began to take effect.

The California Air Resources Board helped boost e-bike sales with an incentive program that in 2024, after some delays, offered rebates of up \$2,000 to help qualified recipients. The board reported it was swamped with about 150,000 applications for the first 1,500 vouchers.

A second round of rebate vouchers was distributed early this year, and again the response was overwhelming. Late this year the board voted to end the program and to place the remaining money available into a similar program offering incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles.

## Marines and Navy from region to begin huge training exercise

**By Gary Robbins**  
UNION-TRIBUNE

A massive training exercise involving thousands of Marines from California and Arizona will get underway Monday under the direction of Camp Pendleton's 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

Navy bases in San Diego will also participate in Steel Knight, a two-week effort designed, in part, to certify Pendleton's 5th Marine Regiment for deployment to Darwin, Australia.

The regiment will spend six months in Darwin as a forward-positioned crisis response task force that trains with the Australian military. This is part of a long-standing partnership between the U.S. and Australia to jointly



Camp Pendleton Marines drill in March as part of Assault Combat Vehicle training. **MINDY SCHAUER / SCNG**

protect their interests in the Indo-Pacific.

Steel Knight also tests the ability of the Navy's and Marines' air-and-ground forces to carry out missions together.

The 3rd Marine Air Wing from Marine Corps

Air Station Miramar will be among the units participating in the exercise.

Pendleton officials said that the general public, especially in North County, might notice increased military activity over the next two weeks.

## ZOO

From Page 1

### and San Diego Zoo Safari Park?

**A:** "In the morning, if I come into the zoo and I get some time to walk around before opening ... it's just wherever I go. When I think about the middle of the day, when it's busy, (I like) going over to Denny Sanford Wildlife Explorers Basecamp and just experiencing the families, seeing the families connect. That just warms my heart to see that and feel that and know that we're engaging in a different way ...

"If I think of other places within the zoo, (there is) walking across the bridge, which is something that was constructed under my term here ... the bridge that goes across toward the polar bears and the other side. Walking across that, you get some really long views. I get to look at Africa Rocks, I get to look down below at pandas, and it just gives me a different perspective from that point of view and angle.

"As far as the Safari Park, there's Walkabout Australia that is a new location in the last six or seven years. It is a wonderful place where you get to engage and walk along the paths, and there's no barriers between you and the species that you see in there. So it just brings a different flavor and a different viewpoint. That's another space that was constructed during my time here."

### Q: What challenges do you see ahead?

**A:** "I would say our challenges are no different than any other tourism organization in the state or really in the country. Just lining up with the tourism trends, which are flat at this point. A tad bit up for California, possibly, but we are looking at somewhat flat growth year over year in '25 and

possibly a little bit into '26. I'm on the San Diego Tourism Authority board and (am) its past chair now ... We spend a lot of time talking about the tourism trends ...

"For San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, it is really understanding what those trends are and how they impact us. And so if we don't have the same growth model we've had in past years, it is just running an efficient business and making sure that we are keeping our priorities straight ... International travel is down, it has been down since COVID from some of the countries."

### Q: What are the next big things planned at Safari Park and the zoo?

**A:** "There's the Denny Sanford Elephant Valley project that will be opening up early next year at the Safari Park. That also has a Mokutano House, which is a two-story dining destination at the base of the Elephant Valley, so you'll be able to sit at the restaurant, whether it is downstairs or upstairs, and be able to look out over

an amazing view of the elephants, almost eye level to eye level. A view like nothing else, a view really like what mimics what you'd see in Africa if you were there ...

"At the zoo right now, because we are spending a lot of time and effort on the Safari Park and Elephant Valley, it is really about us transforming experiences — so whether it is Nighttime Zoo, Jungle Bells, HalLOWeen — it is really us enhancing those experiences and making them different and unique for next year's visit. And then we have pandas that have only been here a year, so there's a large population that still needs to come and see the pandas."

### Q: How did the first year of the panda loan work out?

**A:** "It has been a little over a year of being here, and I can't attribute pandas (to) direct attendance, but we've had a wonderful year here since they've been here. I think the other

value of having the pandas here is just for us to be able to share the cultural experience in seeing the pandas and also our ability to tell long-form stories about the conservation efforts that we do on behalf of pandas ... We've had billions and billions of impressions on stories related to pandas ...

"The pandas have thrived in their habitat. We have had great collaboration with our Chinese colleagues. The pandas from a (health) standpoint are doing extremely well, they are thriving — and I would say the community and outreach and support has been incredible."

### Q: What are your top priorities now that you're president/CEO?

**A:** "It is the people and the culture, continuing to follow our organizational priorities, which haven't changed — which is our financial house and making sure that there's stability, world-class experiences and making sure you are coming here ... that you are getting the experience you imagined. Being a world-class conservation organization, and a leader in conservation space — and a leader means sometimes following and a leader means leading when you need to, so bringing collaboration together. You pull all those together, and it creates a plan for the future ...

"I'm working that plan with the team. But it is also listening to the team. So as a new CEO, I'm spending the next two and a half months or longer, actually, to have listening circles, listening to the team because that will also help formulate the future for us."

## Today in history

**SUNDAY, NOV. 30**

### ON THIS DATE

**1782:** The United States and Britain signed preliminary peace articles in Paris for ending the Revolutionary War; the Treaty of Paris was signed in September 1783.

**1936:** London's Crystal Palace exhibition hall was destroyed by a massive fire.

**1993:** President Bill Clinton signed the Brady Bill, which required a five-day waiting period for handgun purchases and background checks of prospective buyers.

**1999:** An estimated 40,000 demonstrators clashed with police as they protested against the World Trade Organization as the WTO convened in Seattle.

**2004:** "Jeopardy!" fans saw Ken Jennings end his 74-game winning streak as he lost to real estate agent Nancy Zerg. Years later, Jennings became the host of "Jeopardy!"

**2012:** Israel approved the construction of 3,000 homes in Jewish settlements on occupied lands, drawing swift condemnation from Palestinians a day after their successful bid for recognition by the United Nations.

**2013:** Actor Paul Walker, star of the "Fast & Furious" movie series, was killed in a single-car crash north of Los Angeles; Walker's friend Roger Rodas, who was driving the car, also died. Walker was 40 years old.

**2018:** Former President George H.W. Bush, a World War II hero who rose through the political ranks to the nation's highest office, died at his Houston home at the age of 94; his wife of more than 70 years, Barbara Bush, had died in April.

**2024:** Syrian insurgents took over most of Aleppo, the country's largest city, facing little or no resistance from government troops. The

insurgents would capture the capital of Damascus days later in December as President Bashar al-Assad fled the country, ending his family's decadeslong rule.

### TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS

Director-actor Woody Allen is 90. Director Ridley Scott is 88. Historian-screenwriter Geoffrey C. Ward is 85. Director Terrence Malick is 82. Playwright David Mamet is 78. Actor Mandy Patinkin is 73. Singer Billy Idol is 70. Historian Michael Beschloss is 70. Comedian Colin Mochrie is 68. Actor-director Ben Stiller is 60. U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem is 54. Singer Clay Aiken is 47. Actor-director Gael García Bernal is 47. Actor Elisha Cuthbert is 43. Actor Kaley Cuoco is 40. Model Chrissy Teigen is 40. Chess grandmaster Magnus Carlsen is 35.

*The Associated Press*