

LONG BEACH
BUSINESS JOURNAL

An edition of the Long Beach Post



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

ExLabs CEO Matthew Schmidgall, left, and Chief Science Officer Miguel Pascual are pictured inside the company's headquarters just south of Long Beach Airport. The new company is developing a spacecraft that will first be used to clear space debris, with the ultimate goal of mining asteroids.

Space junk removal, asteroid mining tech startup calls Long Beach home

By Brandon Richardson

Tens of millions of pieces of space junk have accumulated around Earth after more than six decades of humans launching objects out of the atmosphere—expanding our litter problem into the cosmos. A new Long Beach startup, however, is looking to help tackle that issue on its way to achieving grander plans of mining

asteroids for resources.

After about two years of planning, ExLabs was officially co-founded last year by CEO Matthew Schmidgall and Chief Science Officer Miguel Pascual, both of whom live in Long Beach, as well as Chief Financial Officer Freyr Thor last year.

“We’re developing technology for object capture and control,” Schmidgall told the Business Journal. “Initial utilization for that ... is cleaning up space debris. Our long-

term goal is to scale that technology to deep space resource acquisition.”

The company is still in its infancy, with only 11 employees and a small office space inside the Aeroplex building on the south end of Long Beach Airport. The company flew under the radar until its operational launch in March, when hiring began and the team jumped right into the design and testing stages for its vehicle, dubbed Arachne, which Schmidgall described as a “big space

arcade claw.”

The vehicle itself will be a base satellite bus designed by ExLabs, which will have standard guidance, navigation and control systems. The robotic claw will sit on top of the vehicle as a payload, Schmidgall said. When the system approaches an object in space, the claw will wrap around it, allowing thrusters to guide it into a new orbit.

Schmidgall said the company plans to move into prototype

Continued on page 4

LONG BEACH
BUSINESS JOURNAL

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

PRSR STD
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Los Angeles, CA
 PERMIT NO. 447

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

of Long Beach








LIZ CHENEY
February 1, 2024

DR. LISA GENOVA
February 19, 2024

THOMAS FRIEDMAN
May 9, 2024

GOLDIE HAWN
September 21, 2023

DR. MOOGEGA COOPER
October 12, 2023

H. R. MCMASTER
April 1, 2024

Live at the Terrace Theater!
www.speakersla.com | 310.546.6222

ORDER TODAY!

Subscriptions: (562) 553-3391
subscriptions@lbbj.com
Editorial: (562) 655-7678
editor@lbbj.com
Advertising: (562) 912-0161
info@lbbj.com

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

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

Facebook: longbeachbusinessjournal
Twitter: lbbizjourn
Instagram: longbeachpost

Editor **Hayley Munguia** // Advertising Director **Andrea Estrada** // Visuals Editor **Brandon Richardson** // Assistant Editor **Kat Schuster** // Columnist **Tim Grobaty** // Reporters **Laura Anaya-Morga, Caitlin Antonios, Fernando Haro Garcia, Jake Gotta, Cheantay Jensen, Tess Kazenoff, Brandon Richardson, Alicia Robinson, Jason Ruiz, Jackie Rae** // Lead Graphic Designer **Candice Wong** // Graphic Designer **Chanel Villanueva** // Publisher Emeritus **George Economides**

The Long Beach Business Journal is a publication of Pacific Community Media. The Business Journal is published every other Tuesday. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is strictly prohibited unless otherwise stated. Opinions expressed by perspective writers and guest columnists are not necessarily the views of the Long Beach Business Journal.

Sign up at LBBusinessJournal.com

monday morning coffee & **Biz Brief**

FREE email newsletters about issues, events and meetings for the week.

Monday Morning Coffee is sent out at 7 a.m., and BizBrief is news of the day, sent out Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

As Virgin Orbit collapses, Rocket Lab expands in Long Beach



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Rocket Lab Chief Financial Officer Adam Spice walks past a decommissioned Electron rocket while giving a tour of the company's Long Beach headquarters.

By Brandon Richardson

With the metaphorical ashes of Virgin Orbit's collapse still smoking, Rocket Lab has stepped up to further solidify its position as Long Beach's preeminent space company, buying up millions of dollars in assets from the now-defunct firm that will allow for an expedited expansion.

"Every day we wake up and realize how difficult this is—space is hard," Rocket Lab Chief Financial Officer Adam Spice told the Business Journal during a recent tour of the company's headquarters.

"As sad as it is to see an entrepreneurial endeavor not work out for all the people involved, it happened to be a pretty good coincidence for us," he said. "What they had is stuff that we needed, and it's located two blocks down the road."

Virgin Orbit filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in April, days after announcing it would lay off 675 employees because it failed to secure additional funding. Most of those employees had already been on unpaid leave for weeks.

In late May, Virgin sold off over \$35 million in assets to various space firms up and down the West Coast, including Rocket Lab and Vast here in Long Beach.

Rocket Lab placed the winning bid of \$16.1 million for Virgin Orbit's Douglas Park headquarters

as well as much of the equipment in it, which Spice said would have cost upward of \$100 million if it were bought new. On top of that, Spice noted that, once ordered, it can take over a year to receive these complex pieces of equipment such as large 3D printers and state-of-the-art milling machines.

"For every one [piece of equipment] we have here, there might be five over there," Spice said, comparing his company's headquarters to the old Virgin Orbit facility. "I think they took a 'Jurassic Park, spare no expense' approach."

The company's current headquarters, which includes office space as well as manufacturing operations, is about 60,000 square feet, Spice said. The former Virgin Orbit building—one of the oldest at Douglas Park—is more than twice the size at 140,000 square feet.

The Long Beach expansion will allow the company to further compartmentalize its operations across its various facilities. As it is, the headquarters factory floor is where the company builds out its avionics and propulsion systems—Electron's Rutherford engines and Neutron's Archimedes engines.

The Rutherfords are then sent to Rocket Lab's New Zealand facility, where they are integrated into the Electron rockets. The company has a facility under construction near its Virginia launch complex, where the Archimedes engines will be sent for

Continued on page 5



In May, youth between the ages of 13 and 26 voted in the first citywide participatory budget process, beginning with a voter fair on May 2. Nineteen summer programs were on the ballot, and seven were ultimately selected to receive funding.

Tess Kazenoff / Business Journal 9

Aerospace Industry 3

As Virgin Orbit collapses, Rocket Lab expands in Long Beach 3

Commercial air travel at Long Beach remains above pre-pandemic levels 4

High school students learn about aviation through LBUSD, airport partnership 5

NASA taps Long Beach's Vast for space station development collaboration 6

Newswatch..... 7

Khmer Kickboxing gym to relocate after 36 years, making way for new homeless shelter 7

Hotel workers strike in LA for higher pay; no picket lines seen in Long Beach 9

Youth programs to get funding in first citywide budget project 9

City water rates likely to increase 9% this year 10

Stormwater capture project near El Dorado Park could be built by 2026 10

Workers protest Kroger-Albertsons 'mega-merger' saying it would result in store closures, layoffs and price increases 11

Commission reconsidering Dolly Varden demolition 12

A \$4M stunning Park Estates Mid Modern with a brain to match its looks..... 13

73 affordable housing units could be coming to East Long Beach 15

Long Beach's only Pavilions grocery store is now a Vons 16

Ports of Long Beach, LA to get more than \$600M to boost efficiency and air quality 18

Food 19

Van Leeuwen Ice Cream opens shop at 2ND & PCH 19

Local chef to be featured on Netflix's 'Five Star Chef' 20

Pickle Banh Mi opens in Cambodia Town 20

Are sno-balls ice cream? Yelp says yes—and named Fluffy's some of the best 21

Demystifying olive oil 21

MARK SCHNEIDER
HAND-MADE FINE JEWELRY

Sea Life Bracelet
14K yellow gold
\$7,950

Original Design by Mark Schneider ©

Free parking in our lot!

562-526-0856
245 Promenade N
Downtown Long Beach
www.markschneiderdesign.com

Commercial air travel at Long Beach remains above pre-pandemic levels



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

A Southwest Airlines plane makes its final approach into Long Beach Airport.

By Brandon Richardson

For the third consecutive month, commercial air travel in and out of Long Beach Airport in May was above pre-pandemic levels, newly released data shows.

In May, a total of 308,870 travelers flew into and out of the small municipal airport, a 1.2% increase over the same month in 2019. The passenger volume marks a staggering 2,570% increase from May 2020, when travel all but vanished as the coronavirus spread around the world.

“As we enter a busy summer travel season, passenger traffic is heating up at Long Beach Airport,” Director Cynthia Guidry said in an emailed

statement to the Business Journal. “We’re excited to continue seeing a positive trend in visitorship that exceeds pre-pandemic levels.”

Commercial air travel nationwide, meanwhile, continues to trail 0.52% behind pre-pandemic levels, according to data from the U.S. Transportation Security Administration. Last month, TSA recorded just under 74.2 million travelers passing through U.S. airports, compared to nearly 74.6 million in May 2019.

Back in Long Beach, commercial air travel from January through May is 1.3% ahead of the same period in 2019, data shows. For the first five months of the year, 1,426,284 people traveled through the airport, compared to 1,408,017 people four years ago.

The recovery for the airport was years in the making. It first surpassed pre-pandemic passenger volumes in March, which saw traffic 2.3% higher than the same month in 2019. The trend continued in April with volumes up 2.1%. ■

ExLabs

Continued from cover

development by the end of the year. The company expects to send components into space for testing in early 2025, with the first debris capture mission sometime in 2027.

“We don’t know when we would be launching an asteroid capture mission,” Schmidgall said. “But we intend to do that by the end of the decade if all goes well.”

“It’s a win-win,” Schmidgall added, noting the company can “do good and clean up the mess that is being made” while it hones its technology for future endeavors.

Since the late ’50s, humans have successfully launched over 6,300 rockets and put more than 14,450 satellites into Earth’s orbit, according to the European Space Agency. During that same time, there have been more than 630 explosions, collisions and other unplanned events that have caused objects to split apart or fragment.

As a result, there are more than 32,500 objects 50 centimeters or larger that have been cataloged and are being tracked by the Combined Force Space Component Command at Vandenberg Space Force Base. According to ESA, there are more than 131 million smaller man-made objects, including paint flecks, that could still do tremendous damage as they hurdle more than 15,600 miles per hour through space.

Because the ultimate goal of ExLabs is to be able to maneuver much larger asteroids, the focus of debris removal will be on the largest 10% of objects, Schmidgall explained, including rocket bodies and old scientific equipment.

The reason for the focus on larger pieces of debris is two-fold,

Schmidgall said: those objects pose the greatest risk to other satellites and spacecraft, which is dangerous as human occupation of space increases; and it will allow the technology to be more easily scaled up for asteroids.

“We’re building a vehicle that will be the largest spacecraft on the market,” Schmidgall said, noting it would be four or five times larger than the next largest vehicle they know to be in development. He noted the first vehicles will be about one-third the size of ExLabs’ endgame.

Ultimately, Schmidgall said the company has the ambitious goal of creating a 100-ton vehicle, which would only be able to launch aboard SpaceX’s Starship and Blue Origin’s Blue Glenn super heavy lift rockets, both of which are still in development.

The plan is for the massive craft to carry out deep space missions for resource acquisition, moving asteroids into stable orbits to allow for the extraction of various minerals such as iron, nickel, iridium, palladium, platinum, gold and magnesium.

Mineral mining off-world is an important step that must be taken to preserve life on Earth, Schmidgall said.

“Removing as much resource extraction terrestrially as we can is the biggest shift that we can possibly make as human society to turn the clock back on environmental destruction,” Schmidgall said. “We see that as a core initiative and we want to align with people who see that as well.”

To help bring its vision to fruition, ExLabs is leveraging government and commercial contracts as well as private venture capital funding, Schmidgall said. Earlier this month, the company announced a \$1.7 million contract from SpaceWERX,

the innovation arm of the U.S. Space Force, to accelerate the development of autonomous capture and acquisition technology.

“We’ve been very strategic in how we’re approaching fundraising,” Schmidgall said. “We’re not taking contracts that are defined by these agencies. We define the technology, so we’re able to develop [it] the way we want.”

“We don’t want to give away the company to folks that are looking for more short-term gains,” Schmidgall added.

ExLabs is a welcome addition to the Long Beach space scene, especially after the implosion of Virgin Orbit—the first small satellite launch company to call the city home. Mayor Rex Richardson said that, despite Virgin Orbit’s collapse, numerous companies remain motivated to push forward with Long Beach serving as a space hub.

“We have to grow our economy,” Richardson said, adding that it is great when companies such as Rocket Lab and Relativity Space decide to uproot and move to Long Beach. But innovation must also be fostered at home, he said, noting ExLabs’ foundation in the city.

“We’re on the ground floor of something really special here,” he said of ExLabs.

Schmidgall, who has lived in Long Beach for almost a decade now, said he and Pascual love the city and are excited to grow their company as part of the city’s burgeoning space economy. Part of that growth includes expanding into a 20,000-square foot manufacturing facility near some of the city’s other space firms, he said—hopefully by the end of the year.

“We’ve got our eyes on a particular building that is quite unique, and it would serve our interests pretty well for the next two

years of development,” Schmidgall said, noting the firm would move out of its Aeroplex space.

The small staff is currently spread across the U.S., with members of the team residing in Colorado, Florida and Oregon, but Schmidgall said as ExLabs expands, its focus will be hiring local—growth that is expected to really kick in in the first half of next year. Once manufacturing of components and prototypes is underway, Schmidgall said ExLabs will have around 75 employees.

The company already is in talks with nearby learning institutions to establish local hiring programs. With the industry rapidly growing in the city, there is high demand in Long Beach for space sector jobs, Schmidgall noted, which makes it an ideal area to headquarter ExLabs as it plans for the distant future.

“This is a multi-generational initiative and projects company,” Schmidgall said. “We see our responsibility here as setting up the foundation of an organization that is going to be here well beyond us.”

“There’s really not a need to try to race to what others may consider finish lines,” Schmidgall added. “It’s a long endeavor and it’s going to take a lot of technology development, a lot of time.” ■



Courtesy of ExLabs

An early rendering of the Arachne space vehicle in development by Long Beach-based ExLabs. The company will use the vehicle first to clear space debris and then to mine resources from asteroids.

High school students learn about aviation through LBUSD, airport partnership

The collaboration will see students from elementary to college learning about the aviation industry in a “unique” and hands-on way through various externships, internships and other programming.

By Brandon Richardson

Over a dozen students at Cabrillo and Jordan high schools learned about various aviation careers as part of a partnership between Long Beach Unified School District and Long Beach Airport.

Only 13 students across the two schools were selected out of



Courtesy of Long Beach Airport

Student Aariya stepping into plane for a Young Eagles program flight.

60 applicants to take part in the airport’s first Careers Taking Flight Externship Program, which is meant to give them a competitive edge in the sector in the future.

“Long Beach’s deep-rooted

connection to the aviation sector, which contributes to our local economy, has always been a source of pride for our city,” Mayor Rex Richardson said in a statement.

During the 40-hour program,

Rocket Lab

Continued from page 3

Neutron construction.

In addition to launch services aboard its Electron rocket (and Neutron in the future), the company has its space systems division, which focuses on the design and construction of spacecraft for other companies and organizations. Space systems also is located within the company’s headquarters.

The bulk of engine manufacturing and assembly will be moved into the new, larger Long Beach facility, which will allow Rocket Lab to expand its space systems division at its headquarters, Spice said.

Acquisitions are the fastest and easiest way for companies to become vertically integrated, Spice noted. Rocket Lab has acquired four companies—one prior to going public in 2021 and three since. Going public generated over \$700 million for the company, Spice said, which allowed for rapid expansion through acquisitions.

But the influx of revenue has an even more important role: funding the development of the firm’s larger launch vehicle, Neutron, which will be a direct competitor with SpaceX’s popular Falcon 9.

Rocket Lab has planned for 15 Electron launches this year, with six

down and the next slated for July 14. Next year, the plan is to scale up to 20 Electron missions as well as the first Neutron launch sometime in the fourth quarter, Spice said.

When asked if there is a possibility that Rocket Lab would move into the super heavy lift vehicle space to compete with SpaceX’s Starship and Blue Origins New Glenn, Spice said “never say never,” but said Electron and Neutron should be able to accommodate the majority of the launch market over at least the next 10 years. If demand soars for a larger vehicle class, the company will evaluate its prospects down the road, he added.

The company currently churns out one rocket every 18 working days, Spice said. At any given time, there are about 10 rockets in various stages of production inside the New Zealand facility.

“Our goal is to be able to have a few spare rockets,” Spice said. “But we’ve not yet been able to get there because the demand has been such that customers are consuming everything we can build.”

It is not a simple task for Rocket Lab (or any space company) to scale up production, Spice said, noting that the work requires highly trained technicians and engineers.

In addition to space and equipment, the Virgin Orbit breakdown provided Rocket Lab dozens of new employees as well as multiple contracts

previously awarded to the failed company, Spice said.

With operations across the U.S., in New Zealand and in Canada, Rocket Lab has between 1,500 and 1,600 employees—about 250 of whom work in Long Beach. For perspective, Spice said he joined the company in May 2018 as its 134th employee.

When asked about the local space sector in the wake of Virgin Orbit’s very public downfall, Spice said he does not think launch services is going to be an area that will have “lots and lots of players,”

which took place over five days last week, the students learned about the job duties, pay and credentials required for more than a dozen careers at airports, airlines, the Transportation Security Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration and the business aviation sector, according to an announcement June 26.

Students who completed the program received a \$500 incentive payment and were offered a free exploration flight on the final day through Chapter Seven of the Experimental Aircraft Association’s Young Eagles program. Since its inception in 1992, the Young Eagles program has given more than 2 million young people, ages 8 to 17, the chance to fly in a general aviation plane.

“This program will lead to bright opportunities and rewarding careers for these students, and we thank our partners for their participation and engagement in helping us inspire tomorrow’s aviation professionals,” airport

Continued on page 6



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

A Rocket Lab employee works inside the company’s Long Beach headquarters.

NASA taps Long Beach's Vast for space station development collaboration

Through its Space Act agreement, Vast is collaborating with the space agency on the technology and operations required for its microgravity and artificial gravity stations.

By Brandon Richardson

NASA is partnering with seven U.S. companies, including Long Beach's Vast, for the development of technology for future commercial and government needs beyond Earth's atmosphere, the agency has announced.

The space agency will assist the companies in their various efforts not with funding, but by providing technical expertise, assessments, technology and data through the

Collaborations for Commercial Space Capabilities-2 initiative.

"It is great to see companies invest their own capital toward innovative commercial space capabilities, and we've seen how these types of partnerships benefit both the private sector and NASA," Phil McAlister, director of commercial spaceflight at NASA, said in a statement.

Through its Space Act agreement, Vast is collaborating with the space agency on the technology and operations required for its microgravity and artificial gravity stations. The company has plans to launch the world's first commercial space station, Haven-1, as early as 2025.

Haven-1 is the first step toward Vast realizing its ultimate goal of developing a 100-meter-long, artificial-gravity space station capable of hosting more than 40 people at a time.

"[We have] requested input on a wide variety of topics, ranging from radiation cancer risk mitigation to micrometeoroid and orbital debris simulation to trace contaminant control," President Max Haot said

in an email to the Business Journal. "We will also have access to their subject matter experts for more free-ranging, long-term technical exchanges, as well as use of their testing facilities such as their laboratories and large-scale thermal vacuum chambers."

The collaboration will not speed up Vast's launch timeline, which is ambitious, Haot noted. But it provides a "significant risk reduction" and will make it easier to hit those deadlines, he said.

Other NASA collaborations include:

- Integrated commercial space transportation development with Blue Origin.
- Autonomous and robotic capabilities for commercial science research and manufacturing in low Earth Orbit with Northrop Grumman.
- Commercial low Earth orbit ecosystem development, including next-gen space transportation, in-space infrastructure and facilities for human presence with Sierra Space.
- Dragon improvements and Starship development with SpaceX.
- In-space servicing technology called the Autonomous Maneuvering Unit (AMU) and the Astronaut Assist-AMU for

commercial services and mobility in low Earth orbit with Special Aerospace Services.

• Self-assembling, single-launch, large-scale orbital platforms for in-space research, manufacturing and astronaut missions as well as welding, cutting, inspection and additive manufacturing technology for large-scale in-space fabrication with ThinkOrbital.

• NASA selected the proposals by evaluating their relevance to the agency's goals and NASA's own ability to provide resources, as well as the feasibility of each project, the agency stated.

The agency's support of a low Earth orbit economy is meant to boost education and job growth in science and engineering, according to a statement, as well as spur economic growth with the creation of new space markets.

"The companies can leverage NASA's vast knowledge and experience, and the agency can be a customer for the capabilities included in the agreements in the future," McAlister said.

"Ultimately, these agreements will foster more competition for services and more providers for innovative space capabilities." ■



A rendering of Vast's Haven-1 space station.

Courtesy of Vast

High School Aviation

Continued from page 5

Director Cynthia Guidry said in a statement.

Last month's summer externship was the first in the newly established program, which include numerous offerings to provide students from elementary through college with opportunities to learn about the basics of the industry as well as general knowledge about the airport and its partners, the announcement stated. Future programming also will include paid summer internship for high school students, which is expected to launch next summer.

Tours and guest speakers for the recent externship program were provided by Aeroplex Group

Partners, Atlantic Aviation, the Federal Aviation Administration, FlightSafety International, SoCal Jet Services, Southwest Airlines, Swinerton Builders and the Transportation Security Administration.

Michelle Thomassian, administrator for the school district's business engagements and strategic partnerships, described the hands-on, paid programming as "unique."

"We are beyond grateful to the airport for taking such a collaborative and student-centered approach to workforce development," Thomassian said in a statement. "The [district's] business partner community is instrumental in empowering and preparing our brilliant students to get their dreams off the ground." ■

Khmer Kickboxing gym to relocate after 36 years, making way for new homeless shelter

By Tess Kazenoff

After 36 years in its Cambodia Town location, the Long Beach Khmer Kickboxing Center will soon have to relocate.

The current space located on Anaheim Street and owned by the Long Beach Rescue Mission, will be utilized for the organization's expansion of its homeless shelter services.

"I mean, naturally, we're not gonna like it, you know, but it's just a part of life," said trainer and co-owner Ron Smith on the upcoming relocation, which is expected to be Aug. 1. Smith has been with the gym since 1991. "We have to deal with it ... so we can move and continue on."

The gym has two "very promising" possible locations in mind, both of which are also located in Cambodia Town, Smith said, noting that the city, as well as the



Thomas R. Cordova / Business Journal

Continued on page 15

The Long Beach Khmer Kickboxing Center will be moving from its Anaheim Street location after 36 years, to make way for a shelter for unhoused men with disabilities.

CITY OF LONG BEACH Bid Opportunities

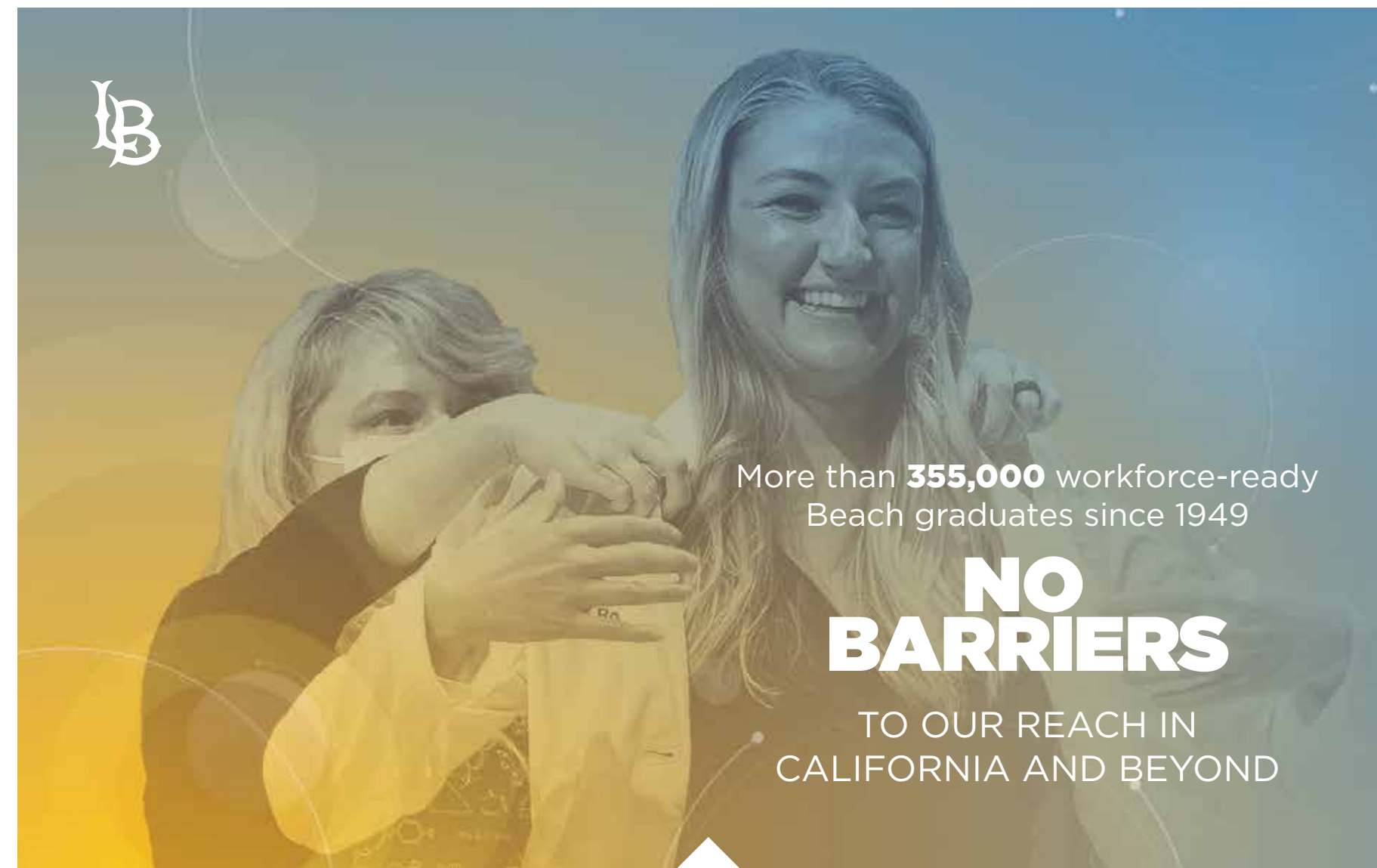
Title	Bid Number	Due Date
Professional Lab Services	UD-23-117	07/12/2023
One (1) Service Rig	WD-23-070	07/13/2023
Machine Shop Tools, Materials and Supplies	UD-23-119	07/14/2023
2028 Olympics Planning	CM-23-261	07/14/2023
WD-06-23 Emergency On-Call Water and Sewer	UD-23-118	07/17/2023
Provide Engineering Design Services for the Water Main Improvement Project POF-01	WD-23-110	07/18/2023
Power Take Off Parts and Repair	UD-23-120	07/20/2023
R-7209 Crest Alley Improvement Project	PW-23-286	07/20/2023
Water Main Lining Pilot Project MC-5174	UD-23-115	07/26/2023
Software and Implementation Solutions for Mobile Field Service	TI-23-211	07/28/2023
Mobile Field Services Solution for Environmental Services Bureau	TI-23-210	07/28/2023

Bidder Registration
To receive notifications of bid opportunities, register with the city, and download additional bid details, visit www.longbeach.gov/purchasing.



Auto Lien Sale Auction

3111 E. Willow Street July 18 & Aug 1, 2023
Long Beach, CA 90806 Registration & Viewing:
(562) 570-2828 8:00 A.M. - 9:50 A.M.
<http://www.longbeach.gov/autoauction>



More than **355,000** workforce-ready Beach graduates since 1949

NO BARRIERS

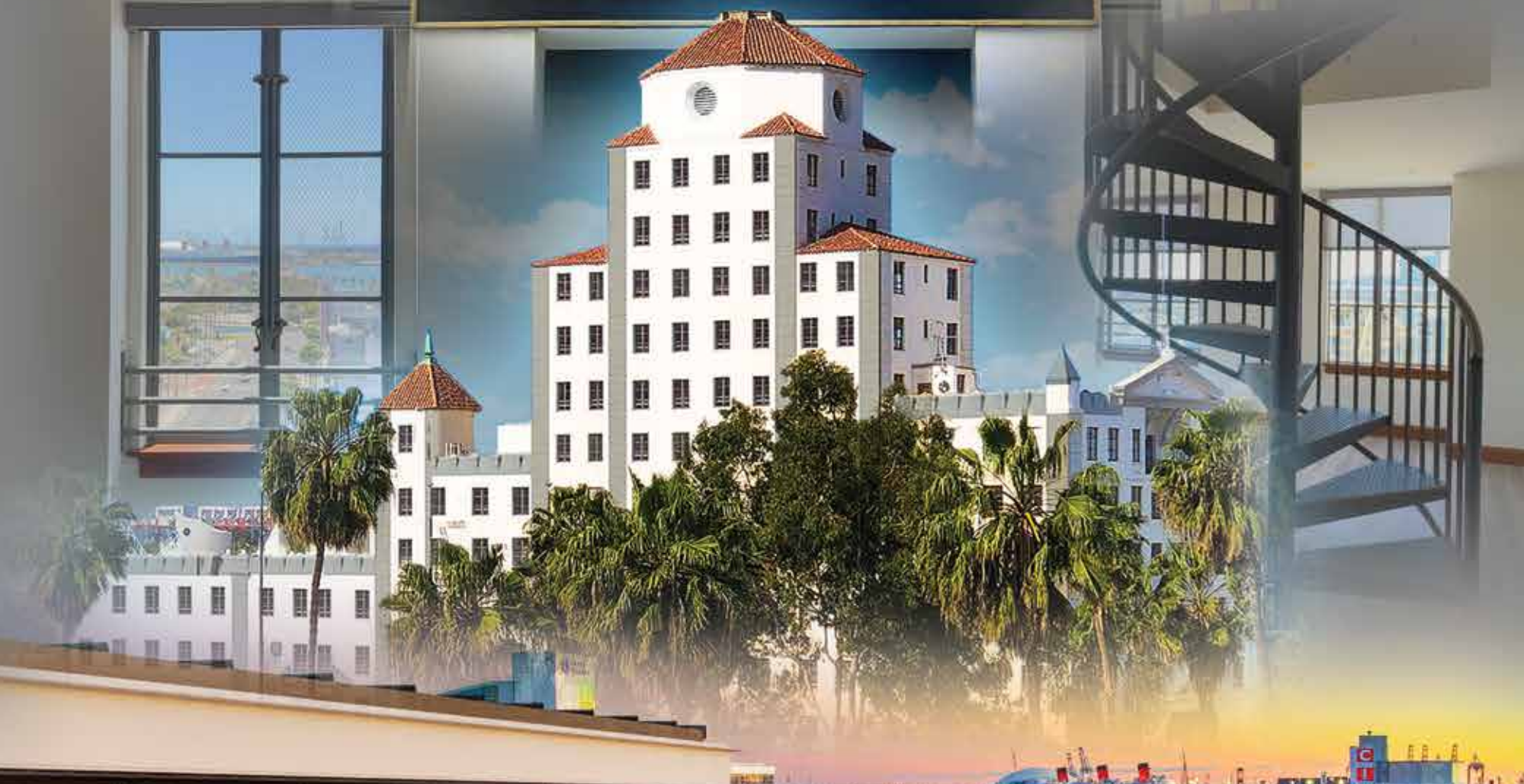
TO OUR REACH IN CALIFORNIA AND BEYOND

California State University, Long Beach

csulb.edu

LIVE A HISTORIC LIFE

OCEAN CENTER BUILDING
110 WEST OCEAN BLVD.



OCEAN CENTER LONG BEACH

NEW LUXURY APARTMENTS AT LONG BEACH'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS ADDRESS



The Ocean Center has been a city treasure for almost a century. Now restored and revitalized with a blend of classic and contemporary styling, the historic building is reopening as Long Beach's preeminent residential complex - featuring 80 luxury apartments with over 40 varying floor plans. It offers a truly unique urban living experience on Ocean and Pine in the heart of downtown, just steps away from the best the city has to offer in dining, shopping, and entertainment.

MAKE THIS LEGENDARY LANDMARK YOUR NEW HOME

NOW LEASING

STUDIO • 1-BEDROOM • 2-BEDROOM • PENTHOUSES

OCEANCENTERAPARTMENTS.COM

562.203.1394 • OceanCenter@Conam.net • 110 West Ocean Boulevard, Long Beach, CA 90802

Hotel workers strike in LA for higher pay; no picket lines seen in Long Beach

Negotiations were underway at dozens of Southland hotels represented by Unite Here Local 11, including three Long Beach hotels, ahead of Fourth of July.

By Kat Schuster

Thousands of hotel workers across Southern California walked off the job during the busy Fourth of July holiday week to demand higher wages, pre-pandemic staffing, better medical insurance and long term benefits.

Three of the hotels that could've been targeted by the strike were in Long Beach: Hotel Maya, Hyatt Regency Long Beach and Centric Long Beach, but picket lines had not materialized in the city as of the morning.

Representatives of the local hotels said in statements on July 3 that operations had not been



Striking hotel worker Tayra Dehart joins a rally outside the Intercontinental Hotel. Damian Dovarganes / Associated Press

disrupted by Unite Here Local 11's strike announcement.

The status of negotiations was unclear at the Hyatt and Centric Long Beach, which agreed in April to raise pay by \$4 an hour, from \$22 to \$25, for non-tipped positions. That six-month contract also granted employees free family health insurance and guarantees that the hotel will be staffed at pre-pandemic levels.

Representatives of Unite Here Local

11 couldn't immediately be reached for comment, but in April they praised the deal made with the two Long Beach hotels, saying they hoped that it would set the industry standard.

A statement from the Hotel Maya, meanwhile, said union employees remained on the job July 3. In the event that a strike materializes, the hotel will remain open with non-union staff and management, according to a statement from Greg Guthrie, general manager of

Hotel Maya. Officials at all three Long Beach hotels said they remain willing to continue negotiations with the union.

The July 1 announcement of a strike came the day after the contract expired between Unite Here Local 11 and 65 major hotels in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

On June 8, 96% of the union's members approved a strike authorization, which included the three Long Beach hotels.

The union, which represents some 15,000 workers in Southern California, announced on June 30 that its members could strike at any moment during the holiday weekend, disrupting one of the busiest weekends for the tourism industry.

While Long Beach remained quiet ahead of Fourth of July, workers in Los Angeles began picketing early the morning before the holiday, with many marching on sidewalks in front of hotels, waving signs, chanting and banging drums, according to footage from the scene.

Workers, including cooks, room attendants, dishwashers, servers, bellhops and front desk agents, earn \$20 to \$25 an hour. The union is demanding an immediate \$5 an hour raise and an additional \$3 an hour in the following years of the contract.

Continued on page 11

Youth programs to get funding in first citywide budget project

By Tess Kazenoff

Youth between the ages of 13 and 26 who live, work, learn or play in Long Beach have selected the recipients of \$300,000 of Measure US funds, following the first citywide participatory budget process.

Participatory budgeting, known as PB, is a democratic process that empowers residents, in this case youth, to decide how to spend public dollars. While over the years, there have been initiatives to introduce the PB process to various districts across Long Beach, this was the first citywide process.

The awardees, seven local organizations, will utilize their portion of the funds for summer programs, which align with the goals set in place in the Long Beach Youth and Emerging Adults Strategic Plan: to focus on community care, housing, health and wellness, and transportation.

The recipients are:
• California Families in Focus (Community Care), \$70,000 — "I



Youth voted for seven local organizations to receive a portion of \$300,000 Measure US funds, which will be used for youth summer programs. Tess Kazenoff / Business Journal

Continued on page 16

City water rates likely to increase 9% this year

By Jason Ruiz

Long Beach utility customers will likely see their bills increase this year after the Utilities Commission approved a 9% increase for water usage during a special meeting on June 26.

The increase would add about \$5.13 to the average single-family household's bill starting Oct. 1, which is when the city's new fiscal year starts.

The rates, though, are subject to a public hearing that is tentatively scheduled for the last week of August. A majority of accountholders would have to object to the rate increase to block it from going forward.

If a majority of accountholders don't object, the City Council is expected to approve the department's budget and the new rates along with the city's budget sometime in September.

The vote was part of the commission's approval of the budget for water, sewer and gas. There are no proposed increases for sewer or gas services.

Department officials said increasing rates was necessary to help fund projects that will provide access to cheaper groundwater to residents in the future, and also to build up the department's emergency reserves, which are currently a fraction of the roughly \$30 million the department set as a goal for emergency repairs and operations.

Commissioners voted against a staff recommendation to raise rates by 10%, saying they were uncomfortable with a double-digit rate increase for customers, some of whom may still be dealing with economic struggles brought about by pandemic income loss.

Brandon Walker, the Utilities Department's director of finance, said the vote was the most recent tough decision that the commission would have to make after it both opted to freeze fines and shutoffs during the pandemic, something that has affected the financial health of the department, and voted to send over \$30 million back to ratepayers in 2022.

"It's kind of cheesy, but it could allow our children and grandchildren to pay an affordable rate in the future," Walker said of increasing rates to help fund the department's ability to access more groundwater.

The department is starting an ambitious few years of improving groundwater infrastructure, something that has been made more expensive by persistent inflation.

But department officials believe projects that could shore up existing wells and potentially establish new ones to make West and North Long Beach less reliant on increasingly expensive imported water could be beneficial to customers in the long run.

The vote was held during a special meeting on June 26 after the commission deferred acting on the budget last week because of a last-minute request from city hall to help fund the city's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, which was adopted in August.

Utilities Department General Manager Chris Garner said that that the city asked multiple departments for about \$837,000 for the CAAP in the coming fiscal year, and the water utility's share was \$139,000.

That figure is being reevaluated, according to Garner, and could be smaller by the time the council adopts the full budget in September.

Regardless of how much the Utilities Department must pay toward the CAAP, water rates are protected by state law from rising above what it costs a utility provider to deliver the service, though that includes the costs of the infrastructure and projects that go toward providing water.

To comply with that law, the city will have to identify how it's going to spend the money it gets from higher rates—and how it benefits water ratepayers.

As for funding the CAAP, Deputy City Attorney Rich Anthony said the uses for those funds could range from repairs to the department's trucks made at the city-owned fleet facility to investments in water storage or other drought resiliency projects the city is looking to construct. But whatever it is, Anthony said there would have to be clear link between the funds put toward the CAAP and how water customers benefit from it.

Another undetermined element of the budget is how much the department will transfer out of its gas fund to the city's general fund at the end of the year. While the Measure M litigation stopped similar transfers from the water and sewer funds, gas was exempted from a court ruling that said the water and sewer fund transfers were unconstitutional.

The transfer can be as large 12% of the revenue in the gas fund, and currently the department is budgeting for about \$13.9 million, or 10%. Department officials said the transfer won't happen until the end of the next fiscal year and could be bigger or smaller depending on how the year plays out. ■

Stormwater capture pools could be built in El Dorado Park by 2026

By Kat Schuster

A stormwater capture project in East Long Beach that would help protect local waterways, boost the city's water supply and create a usable recreational area is expected to be completed by late 2026, city

The identified drainage area generates around 1,200-acre-feet of runoff every year that comes from homes, streets and freeways during the rainy season.

"We've seen the storms that we recently experienced and you can see there was a lot of water coming down the rivers and channels, and

"It really comes down to the need to reduce pollutants that are entering our rivers and beaches. We're creating this opportunity to develop an area and create a usable open space for the city of Long Beach and its residents."

- Oliver Galang, Engineer at Craft Water

officials announced in late June.

Construction on the El Dorado Regional Stormwater Capture Project is expected to begin in 2025 near the Long Beach Water Reclamation Plant along Willow Street, across from the El Dorado Nature Center, according to a plan presented by the Public Works Department at a community meeting on June 28.

The project, which is still in the design phase, would require the construction of three vegetated ponds capable of storing more than 3.3 million gallons of rainwater captured from a drainage area that spans 2,874 acres and includes Long Beach, Cerritos, Hawaiian Gardens, Artesia, Norwalk and Lakewood.

"It's a collaborative effort by the cities with Long Beach leading this effort," said Oliver Galang, an engineer with Craft Water, a design consultant that was contracted for the project.

Continued on page 14



The site of a proposed stormwater capture project south of Willow Street near the El Dorado Nature Center in East Long Beach.

Workers protest Kroger-Albertsons 'mega-merger' saying it would result in store closures, layoffs and price increases

By Kat Schuster

Dozens of grocery workers gathered in front of the Ralphs grocery store in Marina Pacifica on June 30 to protest a "mega-merger" of grocery giants Kroger and Albertsons, a move they say would be detrimental to both workers and customers.

Workers and advocates say the merger between the nation's largest grocers would monopolize the market, result in the closure of many stores and spur an estimated 5,750 layoffs. They also say that it would result in a rise in prices for consumers who are already struggling in the face of inflation.

"This deal is a disaster for customers," said Yvonne Wheeler, president of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. "Kroger wants us to believe that if this merger goes through, that prices will go down. Now, we know that's not true. When has Kroger ever cared about its

Continued on page 18



Hector Pereida speaks into a megaphone while at a rally against the proposed Kroger-Albertsons merger.

Hotel Workers

Continued from page 9

In the face of a dire housing crisis, the union also seeks to create a hospitality workforce housing fund. Swaths of those working in Los Angeles County say they are commuting from more affordable areas like Apple Valley, Palmdale, California City and Victorville.

"Our members were devastated first by the pandemic, and now by the greed of their bosses," Unite Here Local 11 Co-President Kurt Petersen said in a statement put out by the union. "The industry got bailouts while we got cuts. Now, the hotel negotiators decided to take a four-day holiday instead of negotiating. Shameful."

Attorney Keith Grossman of Hirschfeld Kraemer, one of two firms representing the hotel coalition, told the New York Times that the hotels have offered raises of \$2.50 an hour in the first 12 months and \$6.25 over four years. He said housekeepers at unionized hotels in Beverly Hills and downtown Los Angeles, who currently make \$25 per hour, would get a 10% wage increase in 2024 and make more than \$31 per hour by January 2027.

"If there is a strike, it will occur because the union is determined to have one," Grossman told The New York Times.

City News Service contributed to this report. ■

Anchor Your Financial Future with Us!

INTERNATIONAL CITY BANK

A Division of UNITED BANK

Come See the Difference Our Expert Bankers Make!

Paula Wihongi
Community President
562-436-9800 ext. 5207

Janet Nelson
VP, Community Development Officer
562-436-9800 ext. 5207

Member FDIC

icb.biz

4TH ANNUAL
LONG BEACH COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE COUNCIL

CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

JULY 31, 2023
OLD RANCH COUNTRY CLUB
SEAL BEACH

LBCREC
LONG BEACH COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE COUNCIL

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.LBCRECGOLF.COM

BENEFITING FISHER HOUSE
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

PLATINUM SPONSORS
CLUNE CONSTRUCTION
Business Finance Capital

MEDIA SPONSORS
LBBJ **LBP**

SCAN TO REGISTER.

NEWMARK **Casado Real Estate Inc.** **TMC**



Thomas R. Cordova / Business Journal

The Dolly Varden Hotel could be demolished to make way for a new multifamily building.

Commission reconsidering Dolly Varden demolition

The architect of the hotel is unknown and its connection to Art Deco design was called “very modest” and “almost undiscernible” in the consultant’s report.

By Jason Ruiz

The Dolly Varden Hotel in Downtown Long Beach is headed for another vote on whether to demolish the building to make way for a new housing development after the Cultural Heritage Commission was told June 27 that the building was not eligible for historic designation—although its sign is.

Planning Commissioners put off a vote in May to allow a developer to remove the historic sign and put it into storage while a new 141-unit housing project was built in favor of reassessing the historic nature of the 93-year-old building itself, something that had been done in the past with the conclusion that it was not historic.

A new analysis performed by a city consultant found the same. While the hotel is built in an Art Deco style, survived the 1933 Long Beach earthquake and offered baths in every room, something uncommon at the time, it is not eligible for historic status, the report said.

“The hotel itself is not known to have made a significant contribution to other broad patterns of local, regional, state, or national culture and history at the time of its original construction, or during the ownership of Leland F. Dolley

through his death in 1935,” Susan Wood, a senior architectural historian the city hired as a consultant, concluded in her report.

Wood said she looked at historic maps, building records, ancestral records of Dolley, business records of the builders and other documents to gauge the historic nature of the building.

Wood’s report concluded that Dolley, a small business owner who died in 1935, was “significant adjacent” and not a big contributor to the city’s history. The architect of the hotel is unknown and its connection to Art Deco design was called “very modest” and “almost undiscernible” in the report.

Rumors that the Bixby family or Dolly Varden the performer were somehow tied to the building’s history were not substantiated, Wood said June 27.

Commissioners said June 27 that they appreciated the update but questioned if the sign would lose its historic value if it was to be placed atop a new building, with a different purpose: long-term housing.

They also spent considerable time discussing the two murals on the north-facing wall of the hotel that were installed in 2015, the inaugural year of POW! WOW! Long Beach, which has recently rebranded to “Long Beach Walls.”

“I have serious heartburn of any action that we could take that would destroy an artists’ work without their permission,” said Commissioner Amy Bodek, who requested the additional analysis of the building in May.

The commission is now expected to hold a vote on the sign’s removal, which could allow the construction project to move forward, in late July. But questions over if there is any contract stipulating how long those murals were supposed to remain in

Continued on page 14

COLUMNIST: TIM GROBATY

A \$4M stunning Park Estates Mid-Modern with a brain to match its looks

Well over a million dollars have been spent modernizing the house, and it shows in every room.

It’s a bit of a task for a property to crack the Top 10 Priciest Homes in Long Beach list if it’s located a long walk from the ocean.

But a home in Park Estates’ prestigious Estates section, a neighborhood-within-a-neighborhood of some 58 larger-than-average homes built on larger-than-average lots in the heart of Park Estates, is now the sixth most expensive home currently listed for sale in Long Beach at \$3.995 million.

In the late 1940s, even as Naples and the Peninsula were emerging as the high-dollar neighborhoods in Long Beach, Park Estates was designed to be among the most luxurious parts of the city’s brand-new east side.

Developer Lloyd Whaley, who oversaw most of the east side’s booming growth in the late 1940s and on into the 1960s, set aside the land, located in a somewhat wobbly triangle formed by Atherton Street, Bellflower Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway, for his exclusive Park Estates where homes were sold for \$20,000 to \$30,000 and more, double or triple the price for the \$10,000 average for his homes in Los Altos.

To help him fine-tune the layout of the acreage, Whaley hired Leon Deming Tilton, a national authority on civic planning who was nearing

in the end of a career that included co-creating a master plan for Westwood Village, serving as a chief planner for Santa Barbara County and planning director for San Francisco, to work out an overall community plan.

In addition to hiring Tilton, who died in 1949 at the age of 58, Whaley commissioned several established and emerging architects to design houses in Park estates. Besides Paul Revere Williams, who had a hand in designing Whaley’s own residence on a three-acre lot on Bryant Drive, architects whose works can be found in the Plaza include Edward Killingsworth, Richard Neutra, Kenneth Wing, John Lautner, Paul Tay and George Montierth.

Rivaling some of those architects’ designs is the current listing by Realtor Lauren Coombs at 1440 La Perla Ave.

The four-bedroom, three-and-a-half bath home was built in 1956—almost by definition a Mid-Century home—and a fairly traditional one until another famed architect, Jonathan Glasgow of Long Beach’s Interstices, gave the house a thorough upgrade and transformation in 2016 (Glasgow died in July 2021).

Large concrete pavers lead you to the front of the house and into a private courtyard with Brazilian Ipe wood decking. Once through the front door, you’re in the foyer, separated from the livingroom by a sleek set of dozens of tall vertical Ipe wood slats creating an airy hallway.

Well over a million dollars have been spent modernizing the house, and it shows in every room.



Courtesy of Tea Tree Product

A thoroughly updated Mid-Century Modern home in the Estates section of Park Estates is on the market for \$4 million.



Courtesy of Tea Tree Product

Vertical wood beams create a foyer separating the living room from the entry.



Courtesy of Tea Tree Product

The La Perla Avenue home’s swimming pool, spa and patio.

Reach Long Beach while supporting local journalism.

YOUR AD HERE

ADS@LBPOST.COM
(562) 912-0161
LBBJ.COM/ADVERTISE

LONG BEACH
BUSINESS JOURNAL

Stormwater Capture

Continued from page 10

be given on what animals will use that habitat, but it is the goal of the project to have a positive impact on the natural habitat within the site," according to Lan Pham-Jenkins, an administrative analyst for Public Works.

The site will also offer some sort of recreational use for residents, but it is unlikely that the space will be open for casual public use. More likely, the nature site will be accessible through guided tours and educational programming.

According to early project plans, one option would have been to access the site from the El Dorado Nature Center by entering through a tunnel beneath Willow Street, but that idea has been nixed.

Instead, the only way to access the site will be through a service road, which is used by the city maintenance workers, Southern California Edison, the Long Beach Fire Department and other contractors, according to Meaghan O'Neill, a community services supervisor for Public Works.

"So, opening this area up for regular public use on just like a



A slide from a city presentation shows the location of the proposed stormwater capture project.

walking basis is probably not going to be feasible, which is why guided tours and things that are staffed by our park naturalists would probably be the most optimal to get the public out to explore this site," O'Neill said.

An estimated cost for the construction of the site is still being developed and will be part of the city's application for Measure W funding, which will be submitted at the end of July, Pham-Jenkins said.

The countywide tax dollars are reserved for clean-water infrastructure projects.

City officials hope to finalize the design within the next year, but before they do, another public meeting will likely be announced. ■

Dolly Varden

Continued from page 12

place and if the developer will have those artists reinstall the same or similar murals remain unanswered.

The murals are not historic, and it's unclear if the commission could require the developer to include artwork from specific muralists for the project to move forward. Other POW! WOW! murals have been painted over in the past.

Ryan Caldera, a senior project manager for Studio One Eleven, the firm designing the housing project, said his team has reached out to the

artists through an intermediary and that the developer is open to working with them.

"From our perspective, we definitely want to incorporate their art into the new development," Caldera told the commission. "Our intention is to definitely have them incorporated in."

The 35-room hotel was completed in 1930 by Dolley, a local real estate developer, who hired the Barton Bros. construction company to build the structure that boasted a "bath in every room" from its illuminated rooftop sign.

City planning staff told the commission June 27 that an application had been submitted to adaptively reuse the building and to convert the rooms

into micro-units, but requirements for open space and other financial hurdles eventually derailed that proposal.

The sign is expected to be placed on top of the new housing development that is focused on providing smaller, more affordable units Downtown. The sign was designated as historic by the city in 1995 in part because of its a "visual landmark" that "recalls a time when apartment hotels without amenities were common in Downtown."

"It is a visually prominent feature both during the daytime and at night because of its neon," the report said. "Its design and materials embody a typical 'thirties' stylistic character."

In May, Caldera said that it would

feature micro-units in addition to the 16 affordable units required by city law to be set aside for low-income households.

The micro-units would feature built-in storage and furniture, which could make it easier for people looking to live in smaller, more affordable units in Downtown to navigate tighter living quarters, Caldera said.

About 78% of the proposed units would be between 380 square feet and 440 square feet. The Dolly Varden sign would be placed back on top of the seventh story of the proposed building, where people traveling down Pacific Avenue in Downtown would be able to see it illuminated in blue and red after construction is completed. ■

73 affordable housing units could be coming to East Long Beach

By Jason Ruiz

A 73-unit affordable housing project could be coming to the Bryant neighborhood in East Long Beach, as the city is in talks with Linc Housing to develop the site that was previously a county mental health center for youth.

The Long Beach Community Investment Company voted June 21 to extend an exclusive negotiating window with Linc Housing, a nonprofit affordable housing developer, to acquire the property at 4151 E. Fountain St. The property is located in a cul-de-sac just east of Bryant Elementary School.

Linc originally proposed two housing scenarios, one that would have created 85 units for senior residents, and another that would provide fewer units that are larger and more suited for families. Given the site's location near an elementary school, Linc is moving forward with the family-centered design, which would provide a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units as well as one manager unit.

Suny Lay Chang, Linc's president and chief operating officer, said in an email that there is a great need for affordable housing in the city and this project could address a major gap for both families and those with disabilities.

"We know families thrive when they live in stable, affordable housing near good schools, grocery stores, parks and public transportation," Chang said in a statement. "This housing aligns with Linc's mission to build communities and strengthen



An old county mental health facility could be demolished to make way for affordable housing units near Bryant Elementary School in Long Beach.

"We know families thrive when they live in stable, affordable housing near good schools, grocery stores, parks and public transportation. This housing aligns with Linc's mission to build communities and strengthen neighborhoods for people underserved by the marketplace."

- Suny Lay Chang, President, CEO at Linc

neighborhoods for people underserved by the marketplace."

A quarter of the units would be reserved for tenants with special needs. The units would be rented to people earning between 30% and 70% of the area's median income, which is about \$35,750 to \$83,416 for a family of four.

The existing building would be demolished to make way for the new housing units, and Fountain Street would be connected to Wehrle Court, according to conceptual drawings submitted to the city.

Other amenities expected to be included in the project are vegetable gardens, patios and play

areas for children.

While the project site was not included in the city's Housing Element, a document where the city outlined where future development could happen, it is near several parcels that were. The state pushed cities including Long Beach to identify more parcels in "high resource" areas with access to parks, good schools and other amenities.

Long Beach has a goal of creating over 26,500 new housing units by 2029, and almost 11,200 of those units are supposed to be built for low- and very-low-income households.

It's not a certainty, though, that the project will be built. Linc is still trying to secure funding for the project as well as tax credits that could help with the cost of construction.

Linc is applying for a \$22 million loan from the state, and if it's awarded, it would then apply for the tax credits in 2024. A Linc spokesperson said that if all the funding is secured, construction could begin in early 2025 with an expected completion date of mid-2026.

The purchase price of the land from the city has not been determined, but it could be set at the site's appraised value. The commission is expected to vote on an agreement sometime in 2024 if funding is secured by Linc to move forward with the project.

Linc already has three properties in Long Beach, including a 40-unit supportive housing project "Bloom at Magnolia and Spark at Midtown, a 95-unit affordable housing development in Central Long Beach.

It's also proposed to transform the Seventh Street Armory building in Downtown into a 64-unit affordable housing site for seniors. ■

Khmer Kickboxing

Continued from page 7

United Cambodian Community, were helpful in the process of scouting out new locations.

Staying in Cambodia Town is a priority for the gym, Smith said. Its founder Oum Ry, who trained in Cambodian kickboxing, a martial art called Pradal Serey, was a kickboxing champion prior to establishing the center in 1987.

At the age of 23, Ry became a national champion in Cambodia, and for 15 years he toured Southeast Asia and won over 250 fights, according to the Khmer Kickboxing website. Ry went on to become an international champion in 1972, and remained active until 1975 when the Khmer Rouge took control of Cambodia, according to the gym's recent Instagram post.

After surviving and escaping the genocide, Ry settled in Long Beach

where he opened the gym, which is now known as the oldest Southeast Asian kickboxing school in Southern California, the post reads.

"He even taught me," Smith said. "I want to keep the Cambodian tradition going because of him."

Over the years, the kickboxing center has become a city institution, and has produced numerous champions who have gone on to tour in locations across the world, from China, Japan, Romania, Guatemala, Hawaii and Mexico, Smith said. "We really was in the fight game for real," he said.

Particularly for some of the younger people who have come through the kickboxing center, who were "leaning towards the gangbanging side," the gym created a new pathway, Smith said.

"Some of them went to college, some of them got their degrees ... I've seen them come in as kids and leave as adults, and now they have families," Smith said. "The gym gave the young ones different avenues,

instead of just running the streets."

As for what's in store for the future of the current kickboxing center location, the entire strip mall will be transformed into a shelter space, said Long Beach Rescue Mission executive director Jeff Levine.

The Long Beach Rescue Mission purchased the building around nine years ago or so, and in January 2022, began examining the space as a potential location for a 15-bed shelter for men with disabilities, Levine said.

The organization's Samaritan House on Pacific Avenue, which also serves men, was built in the late '80s, and doesn't meet the ADA requirements that exist today, with only two beds on the ground floor for those with disabilities, explained Levine.

The new Anaheim Street space, known as Hosanna House, will be wheelchair accessible.

"We turn men down every day who can't get up and down the stairs," Levine said.

According to the city's most

recent homeless count, 20.8% of people surveyed reported having a developmental disability, while 24.5% said they have a physical disability.

Levine estimated that the Rescue Mission is a couple weeks away from finalizing the permitting process with the city, which will allow renovations on both the building and parking lots to begin later this year, he said.

Although there is a great need in the community for more resources serving the city's unhoused, it's unfortunate that the Khmer Kickboxing Center will have to relocate as a result, Levine said. The organization tried to provide as advanced notice as possible, and has not charged rent during this time, he said.

"Our posture as an organization isn't to put people out on the street, our long-term business owners and staples— we've tried to approach this in the most loving way we can while meeting community needs, and organizational needs," Levine said. "We want good for them, that's our heart." ■

PLATING // PRECISION GRINDING // NDT

AVIATION REPAIR SOLUTIONS

Aviation-Repair.com

1480 Canal Ave.
Long Beach, CA 90813

(562) 437-2825



Long Beach's only Pavilions grocery store is now a Vons

The rebranding included store upgrades such as a new self-checkout area and the moving of the floral department, as well as an expanded wine selection.

By Brandon Richardson

The only Pavilions grocery store in Long Beach has been transformed into a Vons.

"We have been proud to serve the Long Beach community since 1988,

and we will continue to be there for our neighbors as we celebrate the grand opening of our new Vons store," Albertsons Companies, which owns both the Pavilions and Vons brands, said in an emailed statement to the Business Journal.

The reason for the rebranding was not disclosed by Albertsons, but one employee, who asked to not be named because they were not authorized to speak to the media, said the company thought Vons would "better suit the communities of Long Beach and Lakewood."

The store did not close during the transition, and the roughly 120 employees remain, the worker said.

In addition to the exterior signage, some improvements and rearranging was done inside the store, including a new self-checkout area. The floral



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

Albertsons Companies, one of the leading grocers in the U.S., has converted the Spring Street Pavilion store into the Vons brand, both of which are owned by the grocery giant.

department was also relocated for an easier and more convenient customer experience, the company stated.

"We are continuously looking to improve the shopping experience for our loyal customers," the

statement continued. "We've also added more variety to our wine department and revamped our merchandise selection based on feedback taken from our Long Beach shoppers." ■

Youth Budget

Continued from page 9

Matter 2" is a nine-week summer program for youth ages 13 to 21 that focuses on shedding light on bullying and suicide prevention. Youth will receive group mentoring by professionals who will share their life stories and tips on coping with issues affecting them and will also participate in a variety of entrepreneur workshops and other social activities.

- Casa Youth Shelter (Housing), \$60,000 — "It's on the Casa" is a six-week program in Central Long Beach, where participating youth will be connected to essential resources like housing, basic needs and incentives and will take part in fun activities that support their success, including mindfulness sessions, counseling and life skills workshops.

- Devotion Fitness (Health and Wellness), \$20,000 — The "Sunset Boxing and Wellness" program will offer 12 weeks of beginner friendly boxing, yoga and sound bath lessons for emerging adults ages 18 to 26. Devotion programs help young adults navigate life by building community, alleviating stress and improving physical health, while providing an affirming space to exercise.

- M.O.R.E. Mothers (Health and Wellness), \$56,892 — M.O.R.E. Mothers' "Summer full of Art" program aligns with positive youth development by providing 8 to 13-year-olds a supportive environment to grow, learn and develop through art. Designed for youth with all abilities, the program will teach awareness, acceptance, community-building and life skills

and will culminate in a showcase exhibit to help build confidence and encourage young people to use their voice.

- Jazz Angels (Health and Wellness), \$7,608 — The "Summer Jazz and Much More" program engages youth ages 11 to 17 both socially and musically. Participants will learn how to play jazz in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment. Along with practice and preparation for a community performance, the program will also center around recognizing and providing youth with access to and

that participants have access to the resources necessary to obtain their driver's license.

- spcaLA (Community Care), \$21,500 — "spcaLA Friends for Life Summer Camp" will involve youth ages 14 to 17 who reside in the 90804, 90805 and 90813 zip codes. Participants will engage in dog training, cat care, games and activities as well as an expanded curriculum around anger identification, conflict solving, empathetic choices, anti-bullying and kindness towards others.

The Invest in Youth Coalition,

like they are a part of the solution."

Project proposals were initially submitted by local youth-serving nonprofits in March. Of the 60 ideas submitted, 19 were selected by youth budget delegates and were placed on the ballot.

"The fact is that youth know what they want and what they need," said Angel Macias, CEO and founder of California Families in Focus in a statement. "If we keep creating programs, projects, events and activities without youth participation, we will only be assuming that we (adults) know what they want or need ... Our youth are smarter than we give them credit for and we must learn to listen and provide what they ask for."

The 10-day voting process took place in May, beginning with a voter fair at Long Beach City College. Voting locations were placed at high schools, teen centers and public libraries throughout the voting week, with online voting also available.

"By involving (youth) in decision-making processes like participatory budgeting, we're not just handing them a microphone; we're creating a whole new dimension where their ideas, concerns, and aspirations take center stage," said Alba Danely, founder and CEO of Our Generation Cares, in a statement.

"So, get ready to witness a revolution," said Danely. "It's time to pass the torch to these young visionaries and watch as they ignite a fire that will shape our world for years to come. Together, we'll build a future that not only embraces their ideas but celebrates them with open arms."

Additional information on the awardees and their programs can be found at longbeach.gov/youthfund. Those interested in participating in any of the summer programs should reach out directly to the organizations. ■

"So, get ready to witness a revolution. It's time to pass the torch to these young visionaries and watch as they ignite a fire that will shape our world for years to come. Together, we'll build a future that not only embraces their ideas but celebrates them with open arms."

- Alba Danely, Founder, CEO of Our Generation Cares

knowledge about mental health care.

- Our Generation Cares (Transportation), \$64,000 — "Ignition to Independence: Car and Driver 101" will take a comprehensive approach to increasing access to safe and affordable transportation for youth and emerging adults by bridging the gap in driver's education access, regardless of socioeconomic background. With classroom instruction, practical driving lessons using a real-car-driving simulator and a loaner vehicle for youth to take the DMV test, this program ensures

anchored by Khmer Girls in Action, and in partnership with the city of Long Beach, the Long Beach Office of Youth Development and The Nonprofit Partnership, facilitated the youth participatory budget process.

"The PB process was a great way to remove barriers and allow people to participate who may otherwise not be able to vote," said Lupita Gutierrez, chief operating officer of Casa Youth Shelter in a statement. "I hope this type of voting can be used in other areas, like schools so students, staff and parents can feel

CLUB STUDIO



FITNESS IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN

STATE-OF-THE-ART GYM & BOUTIQUE STUDIOS
BOX / CS4 / RIDE / HOT YOGA / REFORM / REBOUND
CRYOTHERAPY & RECOVERY LAB

Introducing the next era of elevated fitness.

A cutting-edge workout experience that brings 33,000 square feet of first-class amenities, boutique fitness classes, and a premium wellness center together in one gym.

JOIN THE VIP WAITLIST >

Get the best rates before opening!



LONG BEACH –
MARINA PACIFICA
6310A E. Pacific Coast Highway
Coming Soon



Ports of Long Beach, LA to get more than \$600M to boost efficiency and air quality

By Alicia Robinson

State grants totaling \$1.5 billion, including more than \$383 million for the Port of Long Beach and \$233 million for the Port of Los Angeles, will help smooth out snags in the supply chain and also reduce air pollution, officials said on July 6.

Projects the funding will help pay for include zero-emission vehicles and equipment at the Port of Long Beach, expansion of a chassis and cargo container storage facility at the Port of Los Angeles, and road improvements and upgraded train crossings for ports up and down the California coast.

"These grants will produce

major benefits in the form of increased jobs, greater economic opportunity and cleaner skies in the years ahead," Port of Long Beach Chief Operating Officer Noel Hagegaba said at a press conference announcing the funding.

Officials estimate the funding will help create or retain as many as 20,000 jobs.

Some of the Long Beach port's money will go to a new on-dock rail facility so more cargo can be moved by trains rather than trucks, zero-emission locomotives, and the creation of a grant program to retrofit or replace tugboats and other harbor vessels to reduce pollution.

California State Transportation

Agency Secretary Toks Omishakin said that while the funding won't cover the full cost of every project, it will put them in a better position to compete for federal infrastructure dollars.

"It's going to modernize piers, wharfs and docks, expand capacity and improve port efficiency, provide zero-emission terminal equipment, expand truck battery charging and hydrogen fueling locations, improve critical grade separations and grade crossings, and further active transportation at or around the ports," said Omishakin.

Standing on the helipad atop the port's command center, officials recalled how in November 2021—with the port clogged and ships backed up into the harbor—Gov. Gavin Newsom pledged to address supply chain bottlenecks in both the short and long term.

Newsom "kept his promise, and that promise was to invest in goods movement, to invest in California ports and to invest in the sustainable

development of our quest to address the climate change issue," Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero said.

Other projects receiving some of the state funding include rail line improvements in the San Fernando Valley, rail crossing separations in Riverside and Santa Ana, zero-emission cargo handling equipment for the Port of Hueneme, and modernizing the terminal at the Port of Oakland. ■



Alicia Robinson / Business Journal

California State Transportation Agency Secretary Toks Omishakin announces \$1.5 billion in state grants to improve goods movement and reduce emissions at California ports.

Van Leeuwen Ice Cream opens shop at 2ND & PCH

Long Beach's store is one of only nine Van Leeuwen brick-and-mortar shops in California.

By Caitlin Antonios

The wildly popular Van Leeuwen Ice Cream brand unveiled its brick-and-mortar store within Long Beach's 2ND & PCH mall on June 29.

The shop started from humble food truck beginnings in New York, but it was at the forefront of the artisanal ice cream boom, which launched the company into a nationally recognized brand.

The grand opening offered \$1 scoops from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., a free tote bag for the first 50 guests and exclusive merchandise. Pete Van Leeuwen, who co-founded

the company with his brother Ben Leeuwen and with Laura O'Neill, was also at the opening.

Long Beach's store is only one of nine Van Leeuwen brick-and-mortar shops in California, the rest being around L.A. It will replace Ample Hills Creamery, which closed earlier this year.

The brand also has a food truck in L.A., which is generally on Abbot Kinney most weekends. And of course, the company's monochromatic packaging makes them easy to spot at local grocery chains like Whole Foods and Sprouts, where pints are sold.

The brand made a name for itself with its French ice cream crowd-favorite flavors like marionberry cheesecake and BIGFACE coffee affogato (note: Van Leeuwen ice cream uses twice as many eggs as standard ice cream, meaning, according to the FDA, they have to call it French ice cream). The company's vegan ice cream has also become popular for a dairy-free alternative.

Van Leeuwen Ice Cream is located at 6400 Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 140. ■



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

An employee drops sprinkles onto a double-scoop ice cream waffle cone at the Van Leeuwen location at 2ND & PCH.



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

A woman walks past Van Leeuwen, a New York-based ice cream shop, at 2ND & PCH ahead of its opening.



Brandon Richardson / Business Journal

An employee scoops ice cream at the new Van Leeuwen location at 2ND & PCH.

Grocery Merger

Continued from page 11

customers and its employees and the workers here?"

Since the merger was announced in October 2022, elected officials, grocery workers and their union representatives have been fighting to stop the \$24.6 billion deal. In Southern California, Kroger owns Ralphs and Food 4 Less, but if it successfully merged with Albertsons, they would also acquire Vons and Pavilions.

"What they care about is corporate greed," Wheeler said. "When inflation was at its highest, when we were all forced to spend more money at the grocery store because of the pandemic, did Kroger look out for low income communities? Absolutely not."

The "Stop the Merger" coalition, which is led by more than 100 organizations, is urging the Federal Trade Commission to block the merging of the two grocery conglomerates.

"We already have a social system that is tattered," said Judy Wood, who has worked for Albertsons in Orange as a cake decorator for 36 years. "And so with that social system, if you take 5,700 workers that now no longer have health care and you throw them out ... that's a big big threat."

For Wood, showing up to the protest was about fighting for job security, especially for younger workers.

"I have a lot of seniority, so I would probably be the last to go, but it's really not about us. It's really about our younger generation that



Alex Corona holds his sign during a rally in front of a Ralphs grocery store at Marina Pacifica.

are 25 to 30 years old and coming into the workforce, and need to have good, decent jobs for people to actually take care of themselves and their families," Wood said.

Terri Mondor, a cashier who has worked for the Ralphs company since 1982, said the merger would create a monopoly and eliminate fair competition.

"Communities will lose their stores, be forced to shop elsewhere further away or get food delivery, which they may not be able to

afford," she said. "It's just not good for anybody."

Albertsons and Kroger operate more than a dozen stores in Long Beach and Lakewood.

The two largest grocers in the nation have denied claims that they would close any stores or lay off employees if the deal went through. Alternatively, they have said the consolidation of these stores would bring prices down.

In an emailed statement, Kroger said, if the deal goes through, it would

invest \$500 million to lower prices, \$1 billion to raise wages and broaden its selection of fresh products.

"Kroger will not lay off any frontline associates or close any stores, distribution centers or manufacturing facilities as a result of this merger," a spokesperson said in an email.

"Kroger has asked us to trust them," Joni Ricks-Oddie, District 9 councilmember, said during a speech in front of the store. "I drive by the Food 4 Less at South and Cherry every day that they closed in retaliation to hero pay. Our City Council passed hero pay to reward workers working through an unprecedented pandemic, putting their lives on the line, and the response from Kroger was to close a store in a community that needed it the most."

"So I'm gonna say that Kroger has not earned that trust over these many years," she said.

Ricks-Oddie also raised concerns about the food insecurity that already plagues the city.

"In North Long Beach, we already face a lack of access to affordable quality groceries, diminishing ... competition will make a bad situation much worse," she said. "Because Kroger would no longer need to compete with Albertsons, consumers likely will pay more for groceries. This would translate directly into the quantity and quality of food that families can put on their table."

Ricks-Oddie, who is a statistician, said she recently agreed to help facilitate a grant that will fund research into the lack of access to healthy food for pregnant women.

"And here we are in a situation limiting communities' access to quality, healthy foods. That is unacceptable." ■

WORKING HARD



SO YOU GET TO BRAGG



BRAGGCOMPANIES.COM

(800) 4CRANE-1

CONNECT WITH US



Local chef to be featured on Netflix's 'Five Star Chef'

By Caitlin Antonios

Long Beach local chef Raquel Fleetwood, founder of Catered by Raquel, will compete as one of only seven contestants in a new global cooking competition set in the United Kingdom called "Five Star Chef," which will air in the U.S. on Netflix later this month.

A teaser of the show includes Michelin-starred chef Michel Roux Jr., resident chef of London's high-end Langham hotel, on the hunt for the next "unknown chef, a hidden gem," who will have the chance to bring their fine-dining concept to the hotel's Palm Court restaurant.

Like most cooking competitions, Roux, along with pastry chef Ravneet Gill and restaurateur Mike Reid, will assign weekly challenges to the contestants from around the world until one is left standing. The added twist is that contestants will also have to pitch their

restaurant concepts.

And while the show will be about the cooking, the five-star experience is just that — an entire experience. That premise should align perfectly with Fleetwood, who built Catered by Raquel on the idea that catering should be an upscale dining experience.

Fleetwood was raised in a Puerto Rican household and has over 15 years of experience as a caterer and private chef. She started cooking at the age of 3, after begging her grandmother to teach her how. On the show, Fleetwood's dishes will showcase diverse, elevated Puerto Rican cuisine.

"My passion for upscale Puerto Rican cuisine stems from a deep desire to put our culinary heritage on the map," Fleetwood said in a statement.

The show is currently airing there on Channel 4, but it will be available for local audiences on Netflix on July 14. ■

Pickle Banh Mi opens in Cambodia Town

By Caitlin Antonios

Since she was a child, My Nguyen has worked with her mom. So taking on the challenge of helping her mom, Du Ng Dong, and her aunt, Oanha Dong, in opening the newest location of Pickle Banh Mi in Cambodia Town—their first outside of Orange County—is not something new.

"My mom, my whole life, is an opportunist," Nguyen said. Her mother, leaning on her

(ban [up tone] - mee [down tone]) shop, decided to sell, Dong took over operations to prevent any competition.

"My mom said, 'Let's take it over, learn a new skill and protect the business,'" Nguyen said. That type of fortitude is typical of her mom's mindset. "In America, everyone thinks you move and get the American dream. But if you don't work, you get nothing."

When the Dong sisters decided to open the first Pickle Banh Mi in Garden Grove in 2018, the menu was

"I really want (my mom and aunt) to be recognized. There were a lot of nos before a yes. It's not easy to get a lease when you have no experience and a language barrier. As we get older, we have to be our parents' voice."

— My Nguyen, Pickle Banh Mi operator

Catholic faith, has jumped at entrepreneurial pursuits that came her way over the 30 years she's been in the food industry after immigrating from Vietnam.

Dong and her family moved to Orange County from Seattle in the '80s, and were able to sponsor their whole family, bringing Nguyen's aunt to California about 20 years ago.

Dong worked as a seamstress and a picker in strawberry fields before turning to food service. In Orange County, Dong set up shop selling bánh cuốn (ban [up tone] - cone [down tone]), a thin steamed rice flour wrapping with various fillings like pork and vegetables, in a plaza. The plaza only allowed two food businesses, so when the other business, a popular bánh mì

a love letter of sorts.

A bánh mì sandwich has a few key elements: a French baguette, French-style mayo, pâté (think meat spread), meat and some sort of pickled veggie, Nguyen said.

The history of the sandwich itself is a mixing of cultures — a product of French colonization. So as the sandwich continues to evolve and change, everyone does it their own way.

"Pickle wouldn't be what it is without my mom and her sister and the community," Nguyen said. "It's a group effort."

The recipes are crafted over decades of learning from others and putting their own spin on it. One of the most popular items at the Long Beach location is the bò filet xào, which takes from a

Continued on page 22



Caitlin Antonios / Business Journal

Customers order lunch at Pickle Bahn Mi on Anaheim Street.

Are sno-balls ice cream? Yelp says yes—and named Fluffy's some of the best

The beloved New Orleans-style shaved ice shop opened in 2021, serving 70+ flavors including ones you'll probably only ever find there — stuffed cheesecake, piña colada and butter popcorn.

By Caitlin Antonios

Long Beach has one of the best ice cream shops in the country, according to Yelp. But there's a catch: It doesn't sell ice cream.

To celebrate National Ice Cream Day (coming up on July 16 this year), Yelp has published its Top Ice Cream Shops of 2023 list, and Long Beach own's Fluffy's Sno-Balls clinched

fifth place.

While the beloved New Orleans-style shaved ice shop doesn't sell ice cream, the frozen treat falls under Yelp's "ice cream shop" label, and the sno-balls are so good, according to Yelpers, they made the top 5 list.

The shop opened in 2021, serving 70+ flavors including ones you'll probably only ever find there — stuffed cheesecake, piña colada and butter popcorn. New Orleans-style shaved ice is distinct because of its fine, fluffy texture, unlike typical snow cones. Flavors at Fluffy's Sno-Balls can also be made sugar-free.

Fluffy's Sno-Balls came in fifth nationally and was the top-ranked California ice cream shop. A second location will open soon in Los Angeles.

"This is such a huge distinction, I'm so honored," founder and co-owner Kevyn Lee-Wellington said in an Instagram post thanking customers and staff. Lee mentions a customer appreciation day will happen soon in thanks.

Lee-Wellington was also recently



Thomas R. Cordova / Business Journal

The flavored syrup is poured to make New Orleans Snowballs.

announced as one of the recipients of the inaugural 2023 National Pride Grant, which invests funds in LGBTQIA+ businesses in the United States. Over 700+ applications were submitted this year.

Yelp frequently puts out themed Top 100 lists, and this is the second list put out for ice cream shops. Businesses that were identified as falling under the "ice cream" category were ranked by Yelp using both total volume and ratings of reviews from Jan. 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, among other factors.

As of the publication of the list, Fluffy's Sno-Balls came in with 428 five-star Yelp reviews.

Other Southern California shops that made the cut include No. 9 Confetti Italian Ice & Custard in Costa Mesa, No. 13 Deep Barrel Roasters & Creamery in Norco, and No. 32 Scoops On Tap in Covina. Tea Master Matcha Cafe & Green Tea Shop in LA came in at 56, Classics Malt Shop in San Diego right behind and Bobboi Natural Gelato in La Jolla at 59.

Fluffy's Sno-Balls is located at 1208 Long Beach Blvd. ■

Demystifying olive oil

By Caitlin Antonios

For thousands of years, olive oil was simple — sunburn? Olive oil. Light a lamp? Olive oil. Roast some beef? Olive oil.

Yet in recent years, the narrative around olive oil has become filled with half-truths, confusion and industry watchdogs that pay very close attention to what is said about the multi-billion-dollar global industry.

And it's just getting bigger and more confusing. The industry is projected to be worth about \$18 billion by 2030, propelled by the skyrocketing popularity of Mediterranean cuisine and attributed health benefits of the oil, according to Business Fortune Insights.

Here in Long Beach, brothers Josh and Nate Mardigian have founded Nuvo Olive Oil. They got into the olive oil business after discovering their family owned a 125-year-old olive grove up north. No one was taking care of the trees, and they even considered razing them to sell the land, but the brothers took up the mantle to restore the farm.

They met award-winning Italian master miller Gianni Stefanini and started the journey of producing

their own award-winning olive oil and olive oil-based products. Part of the journey has been educating customers on those many confusions surrounding the product. Their tasting room can be found in Lakewood Village.

I spoke with the Mardigians and experts in the industry to clear the air and understand how it's made and how to know what to buy.

What it is

Olive oil is the fat separated out from olive paste and water. Olives are a fruit, which means they're a seasonal product, usually harvested roughly between October through January, with some variations depending on climate, location and, of course, type of olive.

There's a lot of discussion in the culinary world and the diet/health world about seed oils (a topic for further discussion in a future Demystifying). While the seed is an important element in the process of making olive oil, it is not a "seed oil." The paper thin skin of the olive, the meat and pit (bone) are all necessary to make the oil.

Extra virgin olive oil, commonly known as EVOO, is the highest category of virgin oil, which means it's been processed mechanically (not chemically) without any heat

Continued on page 22



GENERATIONAL COMMERCIAL IN
A+ LOS ALTOS

- Generational asset owned by one family for 40+ years.
- IHOP (19 yrs) + national tenants and 20+ yr service tenants.
- Best suburban household income in Long Beach.
- Close proximity to CSULB and 37,000+ students.
- Call for Details | Scan for Info

centennialadvisers.com | 562-269-4844



SCAN FOR INFO



Wellspring, a newly built, affordable apartment community in Long Beach, is accepting applications!

1BR, 2BR, 3BR. Monthly rents range from \$874-\$1110 for 1BR, \$1049-\$1616 for 2BR, \$1203-\$1859 for 3BR.

Applications for the 47 units will be available starting 9AM July 11th through 5PM August 1st. We encourage you to apply on-line at www.wellspring-apts.com. To apply in person stop by our office located at 2338 E Anaheim St. Suite 105 M-F 9AM-5PM. All pre-apps will be randomly ordered. Units available with ADA features. Long Beach live/work preferences apply to some units. Income and other restrictions apply. Rents subject to change. Section 8 welcome. EHO.

To speak with a leasing agent, call our office at (562) 579-2024. For 24HR info, call +1-949-688-1358 or visit www.wellspring-apts.com.

Olive Oil

Continued from page 21

and complies with a minimum standard.

EVOO is evaluated by three attributes: fruitiness, bitterness and pungency. To be considered “extra virgin,” oil must meet both a chemical and sensory (taste, smell, etc.) standard.

These standards, however, can be confusing—and can vary between locations, said Javier Fernandez-Salvador, executive director of UC Davis’ Olive Oil Center.

In California, the majority of olive oil produced in the state is extra virgin. However, other parts of the world also produce virgin olive oil, refined olive oil, pure olive oil and so on.

How it happens

The Mardigians gave me some insight into how their Nuvo Olive Oil is produced. They begin collecting their olives up north at sunrise.

“As soon as you pick (the olive), it starts oxidizing,” Nate Mardigian said. For producers, that means the time is ticking to get oil into bottles and into customer hands as soon as possible—olive oil is not a product that gets better with age.

Their miller, Stefanini, uses a giant mixer to separate the paste and

water from the fat after they’ve been crushed and cleaned.

Unfiltered olive oil could look cloudy, and there are plenty of debates among producers on the different schools of thought for both the filtered and unfiltered approaches. For the Mardigians, the extra step (and money) it takes to filter their oil is worth extending its shelf life.

What to buy

The best way to buy olive oil is to read the fine print. First, look at the harvest date if one is listed, not an expiration date.

The California Olive Oil Council says extra virgin is best used within 18 to 24 months of the harvest. Nuvo Olive Oil does not sell their oil 18 months past their harvest date (although they’ve never really encountered an issue of having bottles in stock past 18 months of harvest, they said). Nuvo bottles range from \$12.99 to \$39.99, depending on size.

Their bottles have a California Olive Oil Council seal, which means their oil has been tested chemically by a third-party lab and passed, and a sample was also sent to the council for a sensory evaluation. Certain extra virgin olive oils from brands including Kirkland Signature Single Estate, Cobram Estate, and Williams Sonoma were also granted seals.

Cobram Estate’s classic extra

virgin olive oil retails at \$17.99, while Williams Sonoma’s is \$38.95 for the same size.

To receive a seal from the North American Olive Oil Association, oils must be tested and met the International Olive Council standard for olive oil (again, standards vary). The seal can be found on extra virgin olive oils and other types of olive oil and include familiar brands like Filippo Berio, Goya and Whole Foods brand oils.

Once the bottle is open, how long it will last will again depend on various factors. The North American Olive Oil Association gives olive oil a short timeline, suggesting to only buy bottles you can finish within eight to 10 weeks after opening. The Mardigians give a rough estimate of one year after opening a bottle.

Pro tip: Light can affect the shelf life of extra virgin oil, so storing it in a cool, dark space is important.

Also look for specific sourcing. “If you make wine, you’re making it from a specific type of grape. You don’t make wine from wine. Well at the grocery store, you’ll often see ‘Ingredients: Extra Virgin Olive Oil,’” Josh Mardigian said. “How do you make olive oil from olive oil?”

Bottles that list the specific olive variety and have detailed information about the olive grove can lend confidence that the olive oil is well sourced. Some bottles may say they’re from a specific region, but looking at the fine print may show that the oil comes from multiple countries making it harder to track, the California Olive Oil Council says on the buying tips of its website. The North American Olive Oil Association

points out multiple countries listed could be for flavor profiling purposes, so it’s really up to the consumer.

Know what you want to use it for

For the Mardigians, Nuvo’s early harvest extra virgin olive oil (meaning oil made from olives while they’re still green) has a more bitter, peppery flavor and is best used for finishing dishes or on fresh produce in a salad dressing.

Their all-purpose extra virgin (made from olives during the later part of the harvest) tends to have a more mellow flavor that’s great for bread dipping, baking and cooking. Yes, cooking.

One of the great myths with olive oil that’s developed in recent years is that you can’t cook with it.

The source of that myth comes from the fact that olive oil is thought to have a lower smoke point than some other types of oils—but as long as you know the smoke point and don’t need the oil to heat up beyond that, it’s fine to cook with. Olive oil smoke points range from 347 degrees to 464 degrees, according to the UC Davis Olive Center. The Mardigians used 425 degrees as their baseline for good, fresh oil.

Some olive oils are infused with other ingredients that can be great for meals and, for Nuvo Olive Oil, the company’s flavorings (like blood orange or basil) are pressed in with late harvest olives.

Pro tip #2: Infused oils cannot be labeled extra virgin, according to the USDA.

This is part of a new “Demystifying” series, where we look at intimidating aspects of the food world and break them down. Up next: wine. ■

FOR LEASE - 2 INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS
LONG BEACH, CA 90813



2033 W. COWLES ST.	2055 W. COWLES ST.
SIZE: +/- 11,730 SF	SIZE: +/- 10,000 SF
GL DOORS: 2 - 16' X 20'	GL DOORS: 2 - 16' X 20'
CLEAR HEIGHT: 25' - 35'	CLEAR HEIGHT: 25' - 35'

- Neighboring Metal Buildings
- May be leased together, totalling 21,730 SF
- Heavy Power
- Formerly used for aerospace manufacturing
- West LB Industrial Hub

For more information:

JOHN EDDY CBC Blair Executive Vice President T: 562.685-5440 O: 562.548.7422 BRE #01006806 JEddy@cbclair.com	PATRICK MICHEL CBC Blair Vice President T: 323.594.0284 O: 562.548.7414 BRE #01924800 Patrick@cbclair.com	COLDWELL BANKER COMMERCIAL BLAIR
--	---	--

Pickle Banh Mi

Continued from page 20

Peruvian staple, lomo saltado-style beef, and mixes it with Vietnamese flavors.

For classic sandwiches, look to items 1 through 11 on the menu. For Pickle’s take on premium bánh mì sandwiches (like the bò filet xào), items 12 through 16 are where to find them.

The opening has received a warm welcome from the community. The family retained some employees from the previous bakery that closed, meaning locals will still see some familiar faces.

“People in Long Beach love pâté,” Nguyen said. “Extra, extra pâté.”

And if sandwiches aren’t your thing, there’s also rice dishes that are reminiscent of what the family used to eat growing up. For example, the number 22 rice plate includes fork-tender braised pork belly with a perfectly jammy soft-boiled egg, rice and pickled veggies.

“At first, they were like, ‘Why would we put this on the menu?’

This is so normal,” Nguyen said. But the motivation was just that — kids aching for food they grew up with and being able to get it at a place like Pickle. Fast, easy, but wonderfully made.

The sisters are constantly thinking of recipes, testing new things, their minds working overtime to research new flavors and concepts. The Long Beach location has a slightly smaller, more narrow menu than their other locations, but it’s also a test of what future Pickles could look like as a more express type of service.

“I really want (my mom and aunt) to be recognized. There were a lot of nos before a yes. It’s not easy to get a lease when you have no experience and a language barrier,” Nguyen said. “As we get older, we have to be our parents’ voice.”

The restaurant has been in its soft opening phase since April, with a full grand opening to be planned after final construction is approved by the city.

Current operational hours are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily.

Pickle Bahn Mi is located at 1171 E. Anaheim St. ■

Summer Cruises



PRESS-TELEGRAM
BEST
GRUNION GAZETTE
READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Private Dinner Cruises
Premium Bar
Port Tours
Team Building

All-Inclusive Pricing makes
Planning the Easiest
Part of the Trip!

The Best Destination for
Your Next Best Occasion
is with Spirit Cruises.



429-D Shoreline Village Drive
Dock 9
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 495-5884
spiritmarine.com



The Future Arrives Here

The Port of Long Beach is innovating by testing and deploying the latest technology – new digital infrastructure to improve cargo tracking and electric yard equipment and trucks as we head to zero-emissions operations.



Port of
LONG BEACH
THE PORT OF CHOICE