INSIDE: Does affordable housing stand a chance in Coronado? OPINION PAGE 4

THE CORONADO NEWS

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South Bay wastewater treatment plant boosts capacity by 10M gallons

An original two-year plan to expand the treatment plant was expedited to 100-days, and was completed on Aug. 28

BY MADELINE YANG
The Coronado News

Aug. 28 marked 100 days since the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a fast-tracked expansion of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the binational agency said on Aug. 27 that it intends to test the project's completion instantly.

On May 20, the two agencies launched a plan to increase the treatment of sewage flows at the South Bay plant by 10 million gallons per day (mgd) in 100 days, increasing the plant's capacity from 25 mgd to 35 mgd.

This project was originally estimated to be completed in two years, but the presidential administration accelerated the project to be completed

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FILE: The South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, pictured here, now can process 10 more mgd of sewage. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

NEW BRACHYTHERAPY PROGRAM AT PALOMAR HEALTH

After 10 years in his naval career, Bear (left) decided to switch into medicine. *Photo provided by Mitsy Bear.*

Navy veteran oncologist to lead Palomar Health's brachytherapy program

Jon Bear, who retired from the Navy in 2024 after 26 years of service, is now a radiation oncologist leading a new chapter at Palomar Health's Cancer Institute: high-dose rate brachytherapy for prostate cancer

BY KATIE MORRIS
The Coronado News

For 10 years, Dr. Jon Bear flew F-18s for the U.S. Navy, including 19 combat missions in the opening days of the Iraq War.

"We needed to be precise, we needed to get everything done on target and on time," the Coronado resident said. "That precision really carried over."

Bear, who retired from the Navy in 2024 after 26 years of service, is now a radiation oncologist leading a new chapter at Palomar Health's Cancer Institute: high-dose rate brachytherapy for prostate cancer.

The program, set to launch Sept. 16, will be the only one of its kind south of UCLA.

Brachytherapy, at its simplest, is the act of placing a radioactive source directly inside a tumor. The effect is twofold: it allows physicians to deliver extremely high doses of radiation precisely where they're needed, while sparing surrounding tissue.

"The dose-limiting factor for radiation is not the cancer — you can kill any cancer if you give enough radiation — it's the normal tissue," Bear said.

Unlike external beam radiation, which passes through healthy structures on its way to the prostate, brachytherapy positions the source against the

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Tijuana River 'hotspot' is the source of airborne pollutants

Investigators say hazardous gases found in the Tijuana River, like hydrogen sulfide, affect air quality at a regional scale in a peer-reviewed study

BY JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

In a new study that tracks air pollution, researchers confirmed a definitive link between the alarming levels of toxic gas in South County and the untreated sewage and wastewater that enters the Tijuana River from Mexico.

Scientists found high concentrations of hydrogen sulfide and hundreds of toxic gases in the air, originating from untreated waters in the Tijuana River, posing a county-wide environmental and public health crisis. The study, which analyzes measurements from last August and September, identified a riverine hotspot on Saturn Boulevard as the primary source of malodors residents have raised concerns about.

The study's lead investigator, Kimberly Prather, is an atmospheric chemist at UC San Diego's Scripps Oceanography and the Department of Chemistry. Prather said this is a pretty big discovery, considering the project intended to understand the connection between water and air quality, something that has never been done before.

"This study reveals a direct airborne pollutant exposure pathway — from contaminated rivers into the air we breathe," said Prather. "For the first time, we've shown that poor water quality can profoundly degrade air quality, exposing entire communities to toxic gases and other pollutants."

The study, published on Aug. 28, is co-authored by Prather and Benjamin Rico of UC San Diego, Kelley C. Barsanti of the National Science Foundation's National Center for Atmospheric Research, William C. Porter and Karolina Cysneiros de Carvalho of UC Riverside, and Paula

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this week

7 • Sunday

Art in the Park is scheduled to take place in Spreckels Park on June 15 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. More than 50 top artists in San Diego County, in every genre, will display their artwork, providing the community the chance to converse directly with the artists.

9 • Tuesday

Crafty hour is slated at the Coronado Public Library at 6:30 p.m. on Sept. 9. Participants will recreate the art of prominent Californian artist Dorr Bothwell. A varied artist, Bothwell was considered a part of the Bay Area Surrealist artist scene and has paintings, drawings, collages and prints in notable museums throughout the world.

The program is for anyone over the age of 18, and registration is recommended because space is limited. Walk-ins will be accommodated as space permits. Register at coronado.librarycalendar.com.

12 • Friday

On the second Friday of each month, the library hosts a tween takeover. On Sept. 12 at 3:30 p.m., kids can participate in making custom flannel pillows using a cut and knot technique. The program is geared for kids aged 8-13.

CONTACT US

For news tips, story submissions and letters to the editor, contact Editor Sofie Fransen at sofie@thecoronadonews.com or 619-990-8465.

To advertise contact Ad Executive Braeden Stegman at braeden@numbersix.com

THINGS TO DO

Jeremy Kurtz-Harris will kick off the Coronado Public Library's autumn concert series on Sept. 5. *Photo provided by Jeremy Kurtz-Harris.*

Autumn Concert Series kicking off Sept. 5

Coronado News staff

The Coronado Public Library has a different musician scheduled to perform each Friday at 1 p.m. from Sept. 5 and through Oct. 31, as part of its 13th annual Autumn Concert Series.

The first concert on Sept. 5 will feature a performance by Jeremy Kurtz-Harris, principal bassist for the San Diego Symphony, in the Winn Room at 1 p.m. He'll perform classical works inspired by folk music, world music, and more on the double bass.

Kurtz-Harris has appeared with the San Francisco Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Australian Chamber Orchestra.

This year, the following musicians are scheduled to play: Nico Hueso (viola), Lori Bell (lyrical flyte), Vania Pimentel (Brazilian music on piano), Lesi Mei (classical piano), Phil Dannels (classical piano), Sophie Weber (classical cello) and Robert Wetzel (guitar fantasy through the centuries).

All concerts are free due to the support of the Friends of the Coronado Public Library.

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Libby

PAWS of Coronado

Meet Libby, a 2-year-old female Shepherd mix weighing 31.8 pounds, with a gentle soul and a heart full of potential.

She's a bit shy at first and may take a little time to warm up, but with patience, kindness and a calm environment, Libby begins to show her sweet and loyal nature.

Once she trusts you, she's incredibly affectionate and eager to be by your side. Libby is looking for someone who will give her the time she needs to feel safe — and in return, she'll blossom into a loving, devoted companion who will be a truly wonderful dog.

All animals at PAWS are spayed/neutered, microchipped, vaccinated and up to date on flea prevention. Adoptions are by appointment only. If you are interested in adopting Libby or other pets, please visit pawsofcoronado.org.

Meet Libby, the pet of the week. She's at PAWS of Coronado and is looking for her forever home. See all adoptable animals: Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera, and tap on the link. *Graphic/photo provided by PAWS of Coronado.*

Enjoy Life Without Hip and Knee Pain

Are you ready to get back to an active life, but hip or knee pain is slowing you down? Learn about the latest surgical options at this free webinar presented by Sharp HealthCare.

Hear from a board-certified orthopedic surgeon about advanced treatments, including Mako robotic-arm assisted surgery, available at **Sharp Coronado Hospital**. This type of surgery allows doctors to precisely target joints damaged by arthritis while preserving healthy bone. You can also get answers to questions from our team of experts.

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Webinar: Advanced Treatments for Hip and Knee Pain
Tuesday, September 30, 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Link provided upon registration

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OPINION

Does affordable housing stand a chance in Coronado?

The city recently voted on an increased in-lieu fee for developers who don't set aside a percentage of their units for affordable housing, but it could have unintended consequences

The city lists 12 properties in Coronado that are set aside for affordable housing, a few of which are along Orange Avenue. *File photo.*

The Editorial Board

You know what they say: location, location, location.

That term is a house hunting must that at one point or another, every Coronado resident successfully marked off their checklist while searching for a dream home.

As anyone who has braved the tough housing market knows, that list is full of give and takes, pros and cons, and compromises. For many locals, they made the choice to spend a hefty price in exchange for a spot that promises a good lifestyle. And let's be honest, the numbers are steep.

As of Sept. 2, there were 140 homes for sale in Coronado, ranging from $899,000 to $37.5 million, with a median listing price of $2.9 million, according to Realtor.com. To rent a one-bedroom apartment, Zillow reports a range of $1,650 to $12,000, with an average price of $4,579 per month. Zillow also records that rent in Coronado is 89% higher than in San Diego, where the average price for a one-bedroom is $2,424.

It's no secret that housing options – especially affordable ones – are getting harder to come by.

So put that scene up against a nationwide affordable housing crisis, and you'll wonder how low-income housing even stands a chance.

At this moment, there are a number of properties in the community slated as affordable housing options, with rent capped at below-market rates according to different income categories per San Diego County's median income metrics. The city's website lists 12 properties (with varying unit openings) set aside for lower-income tenants.

To try to bring more options to the table, Coronado city leaders recently passed an increased in-lieu fee. Developers of multi-family complexes are required to pay this fee when they choose not to cap rents at below-market rates for 20% of their units. The goal? For the city to use this money to fund future low-income projects.

The fee has stayed at a flat rate of $7,000 per unit since 1993. Even after 30-plus years, the city has collected a measly $1.7 million. Really?

The new fee is set at $25 per square foot, with $10 increases each year until 2029 (making it a $55 fee per square foot four years from now). To understand that comparison better, by 2029, it will cost around an additional $113,000 in fees for a 2,054 square-foot dwelling.

The increase looks good on paper, as it contributes to the end goal of putting more money in the affordable housing bucket. But it begs the question, will builders take the bait?

Arguably, developers would choose instead to build a single-family home, instead of a 2-4 unit project, to avoid dropping huge sums of money on development fees. That would leave the city in exactly the same spot – with more market-rate single family homes and no additional affordable units.

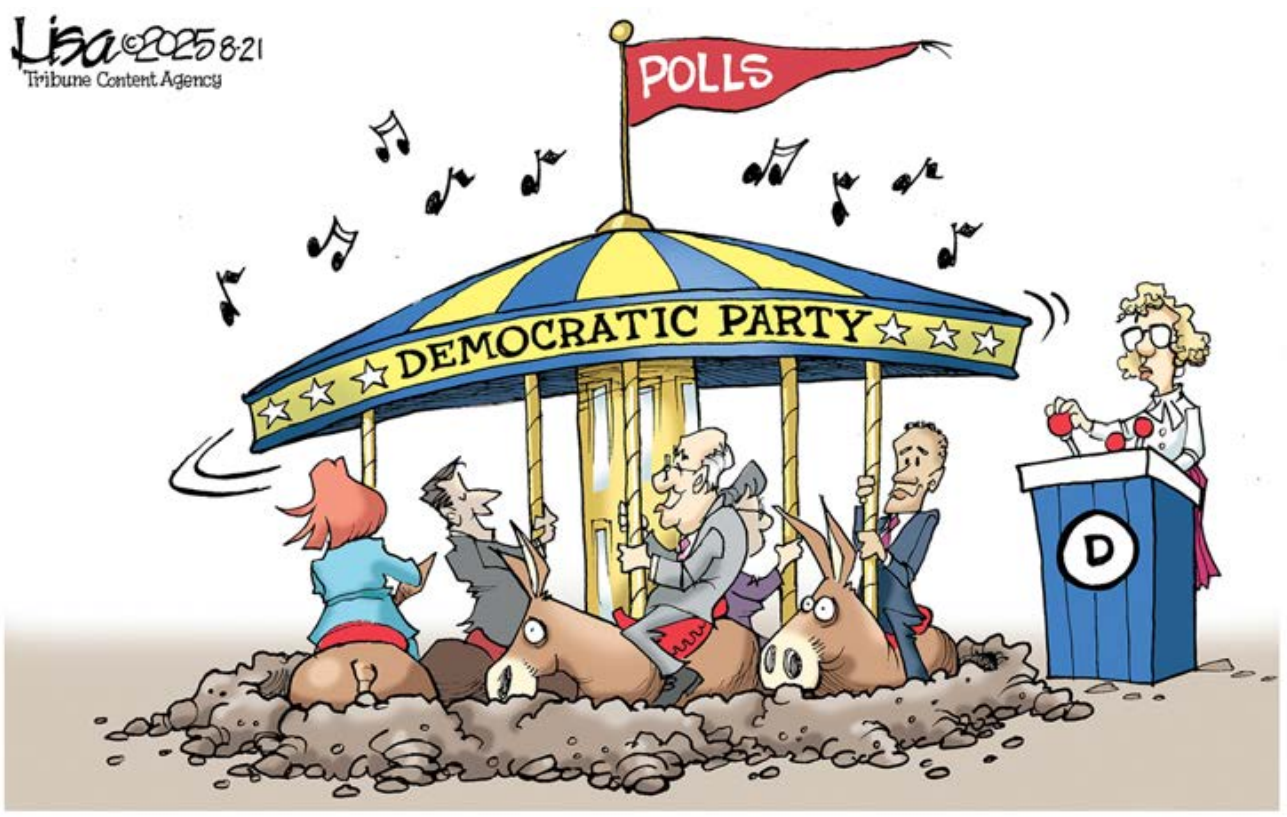
On top of that, the projects would not be contributing money to the city's affordable housing fund since the fee only applies to multi-family developments.

The fee increase could be counterproductive to actually producing more units at reduced costs.

In a fight between two developers – one who's paying more money to help the affordable housing crisis and one who's finding a loophole to reduce costs – my money's on the latter.

The Coronado News accepts letters to the editor. Submit letters, no longer than 400 words, to newsroom@thecoronadonews.com.

LISA BENSON



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FORK FIRST WITH LILLY

Clayton's features a horseshoe counter, wrapping around the heart of the restaurant. *Staff photo by Lilly Corcoran.*

Review: A lunch so good a cracked tooth didn't stop me

Welcome back to Fork First with Lilly, a column highlighting the plates and places shaping Coronado's food scene

BY LILLY CORCORAN
The Coronado News

In 1938, Gerry's Coffee Shop opened on 979 Orange Ave. In 1952, it was sold and renamed Clayton's Mexican Takeout. It was acquired again in the 2000s and since then, the owner opened Clayton's Bakery and Bistro, a French-inspired vertical, down the street. But no matter what it has gone by, the restaurant has stood the test of time.

Walking into Clayton's Coffee Shop is like stepping back in time. I was immediately greeted with a row of vintage milkshake machines, red vinyl seating and a jukebox, nailing the Americana diner aesthetic. "Everybody Wants to Rule the World" by Tears for Fears blared over the speakers – not a detail was overlooked.

The menu consists of diner classics with malted shakes, burgers, a variety of fried items, soups and an all-day breakfast.

I was eager to guzzle down a greasy meal... maybe a little too eager. I started with the Dreamcicle Milkshake, a blood orange and vanilla icecream mix. Like every great diner, they gave me the metal cup with the extra shake. To eat, I ordered The Dewey sandwich, a grilled cheese with grilled onions and Thousand Island sauce on challah bread along with a side of onion rings.

It came out quickly, and it was marvelous. Each slice of challah was an inch thick and sauce oozed out of the sides. The pile of onion rings sat before me, so large it was nearly daring me to eat them all. A bead of whipped cream, stained pink by a sprinkle, melted down the side of the frosted glass housing the citrusy milkshake.

Happily, I accepted the challenge and began to eat. My blissful afternoon was cut short when I bit down at the wrong angle and my upper front teeth caught my lower front teeth. Crack. ****. The blood rushed from my head as I reached for my two front teeth. I was greeted with two teeth shaved down the front, enamel as sharp as a razor.

"You taking a break or slowing down sweetheart?" asked the waitress.

Trying to remain conscious, I nervously chuckled and replied that I was filling up quicker than I anticipated. I felt my once ghostly-white face turn red.

After some phone calls, Google searches and some desperate Reddit consulting, I learned no serious damage had occurred and it was a topical chip.

Any sensitivity to temperature is a concern. I took a big gulp of my milkshake to check. No sensitivity. I took another sip to be sure.

Any severe pain is a concern. I shrugged and took another bite of my sandwich. A dull pain yes, but nothing unbearable. The onion rings bore the same results.

Slowly and diligently I began to take more bites. Ultimately, I did have to get the rest packaged up since I was in a great deal of discomfort, but the fact I ate through two chipped teeth seems to be a significant testimony to Clayton's Coffee Shop. I plan to go back, once I resolve my current circumstances, with a vengeance and an empty stomach.

Clayton's Coffee Shop is located on Orange Avenue and is open seven days a week from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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CORONADO

Sharp Coronado Hospital announces national recognition award

Sharp Coronado is a recipient of the 2025 Lantern Award

Coronado News staff

Sharp Coronado Hospital is a recipient of the Lantern Award. *Photo provided by Sharp HealthCare.*

The caregivers and staff at Sharp Coronado Hospital's emergency department have been nationally recognized.

The emergency department at Sharp Coronado Hospital is a first time recipient of the 2025 Lantern Award, recognizing leadership, education, advocacy and research in emergency medicine. Sharp Coronado is among 96 emergency departments in the country to receive the award.

"Receiving the Lantern Award is an incredible honor and a well-deserved recognition of the emergency department at Sharp Coronado," said Marla Poston, director of patient care services at Sharp Coronado, in a statement. "It reflects the heart, skill and dedication of our amazing team — the nurses, physicians, emergency department techs and other colleagues, who make our emergency department such a special place."

In the past, Sharp Coronado's emergency department has been recognized for its sepsis response innovation, human trafficking awareness and response, workplace violence prevention and staff safety, and its innovative high utilization group pilot program.

The hospital is also nationally recognized for providing high-quality care, with awards from the American Heart Association for stroke care and certification as a Primary Stroke Center by The Joint Commission, as well as designations from Planetree International for delivering patient-centered care.

"Our team is dedicated to creating a healing environment where every individual feels seen, heard and cared for," Poston added. "We consistently work to exceed national benchmarks for clinical quality and patient experience. From the moment a patient walks through our doors to the time they leave, our goal is to provide timely, safe and personalized care."

"Receiving the Lantern Award is an incredible honor and a well-deserved recognition of the emergency department at Sharp Coronado."

- Marla Poston, director of patient care services at Sharp Coronado

CORONADO

Recent increase in door-to-door solicitors unsettles residents

BY LILLY CORCORAN
The Coronado News

Residents in Coronado have reported a recent uptick in door-to-door salesmen and solicitors on local social media pages, ranging from selling cable TV to pest control, and it is becoming harder for residents to ignore.

"I do feel an increase in solicitors in this area. I've seen it," says resident Chelsea Palmer.

Some residents have taken to a Coronado Facebook page to share their encounters, reporting information like company names and suspicious behavior.

Palmer discussed her recent encounter with door-to-door solicitors in the Facebook group: "I'm honestly not a big Facebook person but the only reason I posted that comment was because it happened twice in one day."

Resident John Coolidge had a recent and unsavory run-in with a solicitor. Coolidge had to ask the solicitor to leave three times, even after citing the municipal code explaining why the solicitor was acting unlawfully. Each time the solicitor returned and wouldn't say the name of the company he worked for with Coolidge.

"Some [solicitors] are really nice, I don't have a problem with them, but this guy I asked to leave three times," says Coolidge, "They are getting pretty aggressive."

Coronado residents voice concerns about door-to-door salesmen on social media. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

This isn't a new issue for Coronado either.

"Our communications center receives a couple of complaints regarding solicitors each month," says Lea Corbin, Coronado Police Department's public information officer.

Coronado's municipal code states that it is unlawful for a person to go onto a private, residential property if it has a "no-soliciting" sign displayed.

Corbin said solicitors must obtain a permit from the City of Coronado to go door-to-door.

There are exemptions for: Civic groups, service clubs or social organizations, persons renting two or fewer residential dwelling units, casual workers such as babysitters, tutors, music teachers and the like. Businesses that are exempt from paying fees or taxes to a municipal corporation by the statutes of the State of California or the U.S., are also waived from getting a license.

Part-time Coronado resident Derik Mundt used to train college students as door-to-door salesmen in the San Diego area. Mundt explains that they are trained to not have business cards or fliers because statistically the residents will very rarely try to contact the salesman.

"Each person wore a lanyard with our permits," Mundt says, "Legally if someone has a visible no soliciting sticker by their door or somewhere in clear sight you cannot knock on the door."

"People are apprehensive," says Palmer, "There is a lot of conjecture about what's really behind it, and I hope it's not paranoia but some people think that they are casing places."

Casing refers to the act of scouting out a location, with the intent to come back later and commit a crime, such as burglarizing a house.

"That's why we have a small community and we look out for each other," says Palmer.

Tips for residents from Corbin:

- You're not obligated to open the door for anyone you don't know.
- You can speak through a doorbell camera or through the closed door if needed.
- Never give out your name, phone number, or details about who else lives in the home.
- Post a "no soliciting" sign on your property. If you don't have one, consider putting one up. It legally deters many door-to-door solicitors.
- If the person refuses to leave or acts suspiciously, call the police department at (619) 522-7350 or 911 if you feel it's an emergency.

Contact: lilly@thecoronadonews.com

Navy veteran oncologist to lead Palomar Health's brachytherapy program

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tumor itself, minimizing collateral damage.

The process

The process is both technically intricate and, for patients, straightforward.

After an initial consultation — often following a conversation with a urologist — patients undergo imaging and, in some cases, molecular testing to help guide treatment.

On the day of the procedure, they arrive early, are placed under anesthesia and in a lithotomy position, Bear described.

Guided by an ultrasound, he threads slender catheters through the perineum and into the prostate, usually 16 or 17 in total, depending on the size of the gland. A CT scan follows, allowing his team to map, with millimeter accuracy, how radiation will be delivered through each catheter.

From there, Bear said, the room is cleared. A shielded machine dispatches a tiny iridium-192 source through the wires, into the prostate, and then safely retracts it back again. The patient is never radioactive.

The entire process — from anesthesia to discharge — takes three to four hours.

"It's outpatient," Bear said. "Most men are up and walking the next day, sometimes playing golf."

According to the American Cancer Society, most external radiation treatments for prostate cancer require daily sessions, five days a week, for several weeks at an outpatient center. In contrast, high-dose brachytherapy is typically completed in one to four short treatments over two days.

A randomized trial in 2023 found that men with intermediate- and high-risk prostate cancer who received a low-dose-rate brachytherapy boost were far less likely to experience disease progression than those treated with dose-escalated external beam radiation (85% vs. 67%).

A team effort for advanced care

Behind the procedure at Palomar Health lies a small army: urologists, anesthesiologists, nurses, physicists, radiation therapists, scrub techs and front desk staff, more than a dozen people in total.

Dr. Jon Bear shows Congressman Scott Peters (left) one of Palomar Health's linear accelerators on August 19, 2025. *Photo provided by Palomar Health Cancer Institute.*

For Bear, who once led a division of 48 mechanics aboard a carrier, the team structure is familiar.

"If I do my best and take care of the people who work for me, they're going to meet me more than halfway every single time," he said. "That's the same in medicine."

Palomar's investment in brachytherapy is part of a larger expansion that includes two state-of-the-art linear accelerators, which enhance precision during external-beam radiation therapy. The technologies are complementary. External beam radiation covers broader areas, while brachytherapy delivers concentrated boosts.

Some patients, particularly older ones with heart or lung conditions, may be better suited to external beam therapy alone. Others, especially with aggressive prostate cancer, may receive a combination of both.

The program will begin with prostate cancer, but Bear said he envisions it expanding to gynecological malignancies such as cervical and endometrial cancers, and eventually to lung and gastrointestinal tumors.

Wherever the cancer is, the principle is the same: put the source as close to the tumor as possible, and shorten the course of treatment from weeks to days.

A veteran himself, Bear still works closely with the VA Medical Center-San Diego, and North County's new program means men won't need to travel to Orange County or beyond for advanced prostate cancer care.

"Taking care of veterans is near and dear to my heart," he said. "This keeps them close to their families, their support networks."

Congressman Scott Peters, who visited Palomar Health Aug. 19, has advocated for expanding access to such therapies, pressing for research funding and insurance reforms to make advanced cancer care more equitable.

Bear, who trained at the National Cancer Institute before coming to Palomar, said that progress depends on both: cutting-edge equipment and the political will to ensure patients can access it.

In conversation, Bear often returns to the idea of teamwork — the camaraderie of the cockpit, the operating room and the clinic.

"When I was a pilot, it was a team effort," he said. "It's the same here. Nurses, techs, executives — everyone has put in so much effort to launch this program."

For Bear, the parallels between flying combat missions and fighting cancer are not merely rhetorical; both demand precision, adaptability and the ability to remain composed under pressure.

Yet the stakes of his current mission feel more intimate.

"I'm looking forward to the huge impact [this will have] on our community," he said. "Patients won't have to travel as far anymore to get this great treatment; it's going to be in their own backyard."

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South Bay wastewater treatment plant boosts capacity by 10M gallons

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in just 100 days – by Aug. 28.

The day prior to that time marker expiring, the IBWC confirmed at a San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board meeting that it would finish the 100-day fast track plan as scheduled, and begin increasing capacity by five mgd.

According to Principal Engineer Ramon Macias of the IBWC, it is expected the full 10 mgd will be tested in two-to-five weeks.

"What we want to do is make sure that we start the process and incrementally start getting the flows in so that we can fine-tune the system and make sure what we're predicting is actually happening," Macias explained.

This project was in partnership with the U.S. EPA, whose administrator, Lee Zeldin, commented saying that the Trump administration was committed to delivering a permanent 100% solution to the people affected by this crisis, and "that's exactly what they're going to get."

"Just four months after I personally surveyed the environmental devastation in San Diego, seeing the polluted waterways, closed beaches and smelling the foul air, we've delivered this critical expansion years ahead of schedule," Zeldin said in a statement. "Protecting human health and the environment is our first priority at EPA, and no American should have to worry if the air they breathe or the beaches they visit are safe."

Also at the Aug. 27 meeting, the Water Quality Control board accepted a revised cease-and-desist order on the IBWC, which functions as a legal permit allowing the treatment plant to process the extra 10 mgd.

The order is necessary in the absence of an amended National Pollutant Discharge Eliminations System permit, and it will allow for the accelerated expansion as long as the IBWC meets requirements and schedules.

"The water boards are not in the tradition of permitting things that are not up to the standards the state of California embraces," said Celeste Cantu, chair of the Water Quality Control board.

With accepting the revised cease-and-desist, the boundary commission must comply with effluent limitations, remedial actions and preventative actions listed in the order, such as updating and implementing protocols with Mexico in order to make sure the average monthly effluent flow rate doesn't exceed 35 mgd.

This follows a memorandum of understanding that was signed between Mexico and the United States at the end of July, signaling both countries' agreement to complete all sewage related projects by the end of 2027. Mexico also agreed to enter into a new minute order with the United States by the end of the year.

"I think this is a major agreement," Mayor John Duncan said during a Coronado City Council meeting on Aug. 19. "I'm very happy that it has happened. I'm impressed by it."

Council member Mark Fleming reported on Aug. 19 that the South Bay plant was receiving around 24.8 mgd of flow, which is just under the previous treatment capacity of 25 mgd. Council member Amy Steward noted that this is the dry season, so flows aren't as high.

With the increased 10 mgd added to the SBIWTP, it should account for some of the increased flows that will come in during the rainy season.

However, although recently rehabilitated, there is still 27 mgd of untreated effluent seeping into the Pacific Ocean from the Mexican treatment plant at San Antonio de los Buenos (SAB), Fleming said. The updated plant is equipped to treat 18 mgd of sewage.

There is also 5 mgd of flow going through the Tijuana River, which means there is a total of 75 mgd of sewage circulating through all sewage infrastructure – 24.8 mgd at the SBIWTP, 45 mgd through SAB and 5 mgd at the river.

It is estimated that half of the flow at the river is sewage.

Contact: madeline@thecoronadonews.com

County Supervisor Joel Anderson advocates for the expansion of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant at the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board meeting on Aug. 27. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

Map of air quality sampling sites. The red pins indicate hydrogen sulfide sampling locations. Blue pins indicate volatile organic compounds sampling locations. The red box shows the river crossing hotspot at Saturn Boulevard, identified with community input as the major source of odors. *Credit: Benjamin Rico/UC San Diego.*

Tijuana River 'hotspot' is the source of airborne pollutants

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Stigler-Granados of San Diego State University.

"Our results validate the community voices that have been saying that air quality near the Tijuana River has been a problem for many years," said Rico, the study's lead author who is an atmospheric and analytical chemistry doctoral candidate.

Air concerns

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) health survey conducted last fall found that more than half of 189 households report the sewage crisis has negatively affected their quality of life, worsened health conditions, and increased stress levels about what they agree is a worsening crisis.

Apart from untreated sewage, millions of gallons of untreated industrial waste containing heavy metals and harmful chemicals have for decades entered the Tijuana River from maquiladoras, or manufacturing facilities in Mexico, and eventually enter the Tijuana River Estuary and Pacific Ocean.

A winter season study in 2023 found that 76% of airborne bacteria can be traced to the Tijuana River, said Prather.

Another UCSD study published earlier this year found illicit drugs, drug metabolites, and chemicals from tires and personal care products in water and aerosol samples taken during the winter in 2020 across San Diego shorelines, from Imperial Beach to Coronado and La Jolla.

Prather, who also co-authored that study in May, said the former study focused on the aerosolization of ocean spray and chemicals that people are breathing as a result during the winter season, also known as the rainy season from November through March.

On the contrary, the new study focuses on the toxic gases and aerosol measurements in the same region during the summer, or the river's dry-season from June through September, when minimal flows are expected.

This year American Rivers, an environmental advocacy organization, named the Tijuana River the No. 2 most endangered river in the nation following its listing as No. 9 in 2024.

"It's not a river at this point," said Prather. "Most of this is actually industrial waste and raw sewage that's making its way through the community. … When it's concentrated, even though the volumes are less, that sounds better, but to the air, it's actually worse. We see far more pollution in the air under these concentrated conditions."

According to the study, humans inhale about 11,000 liters of air daily, which is significantly more than the 2 liters of (usually filtered) water people drink.

This points to inhalation as the primary exposure pathway for many water-derived pollutants.

"This study offers a real-world example of how pollutant exposure can extend well beyond the banks of a contaminated river or waterway," says the study. "The health impacts of pollutants and pathogens transferred from heavily contaminated waters into the atmosphere remain a substantial and largely unaddressed gap in our understanding."

A 'hotspot' identified on Saturn Boulevard

Data from the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District shows more than 200 complaints were submitted daily by the community last summer.

"A sharp increase in community odor complaints indicates that the riverine hotspot — characterized by high dry-season flows (low dilution, untreated sewage) and elevated turbulence — was active by July 2024," the study says.

This is why Prather and her team decided to go down and take a look at what was in the air, she added.

"Odors are linked to gases. And the gas that we focused on initially was hydrogen sulfide gas, which is that rotten egg smell that you get when you're near sewage," said Prather.

The study says researchers focused on hydrogen sulfide (H2S) — a toxic gas and key sewage tracer — and other hazardous gases like volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says VOCs are human-made chemicals that are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids and may have short- and long-term adverse health effects.

The researchers collected samples using monitoring stations across five locations including: Border Field State Park, the community of Nestor in the City of San Diego, a Tijuana River site at Saturn Boulevard, the Tijuana River Estuary, and a coastal site at Imperial Beach.

The first two air sampling sites were hydrogen sulfide sampling locations, while the remaining three sites sampled volatile organic compounds.

The scientists set out to measure hydrogen sulfide beginning at Border Field State Park, near the U.S.-Mexico border, but input from South Bay residents informed researchers about a "riverine hotspot" on Saturn Boulevard.

The study describes the hotspot as the only visibly turbulent portion of the Tijuana River on the United States side of the border. This information led to the Nestor sampling site.

Researchers found that hydrogen sulfide levels at Border Field remained below the state's exposure level limit of 30 parts per billion — California's one-hour ambient air quality standard of 30 parts per billion — throughout a 24-hour period beginning at 6 p.m. on Aug. 24. Meanwhile, hydrogen sulfide levels exceeded the state threshold from 6 p.m. to 12 p.m. on Sept. 7-8 in Nestor.

The study says high wastewater flows and low winds led to nighttime hydrogen sulfide peaks, reaching 4,500 parts per billion in summer 2024.

"This level is too high for chronic exposures as 30 parts per billion is already associated with headaches, nausea, respiratory symptoms and other adverse health effects, particularly among vulnerable populations," said Stigler-Granados, associate professor and chair of Environmental Health in SDSU's School of Public Health. "Framing this as merely an odor issue dangerously understates the real public health risks of repeated exposure to toxic gases at such concentrations."

The study detected hundreds of other gases in addition to hydrogen sulfide, but scientists say work is needed to measure the concentrations of these other gases to determine if they exceeded these exposure limits.

"We show here that while hydrogen sulfide is an excellent marker of the sewage impacting area residents, there are multiple sources of waste entering the Tijuana River and a multitude of other hazardous gases that area residents are potentially inhaling," said Barsanti, who led the analysis of additional gases detected at the site.

Proximity to the hotspot led to much higher hydrogen sulfide levels, particularly due to low-wind, stagnant-air nighttime conditions, says the study, "further confirming the Saturn Boulevard riverine hotspot as the primary source region driving local emissions of (hydrogen sulfide) and other airborne pollutants."

Sept. 10

The Tijuana River saw unprecedented high river flows throughout the dry-season in 2023 and 2024.

The study says the river had 40 to 80 million gallons per day in 2024 due to an infrastructure failure at PBCILA.

On Sept. 10, 2024, scientists say the river was diverted, which means the flows were kept on the Mexico side with wastewater being diverted to the San Antonio de los Buenos Wastewater Treatment Plant and released into the Pacific Ocean at Punta Bandera.

After this, the river's flow was less than 5 million gallons per

» Continued on next page

Tijuana River 'hotspot' is the source of airborne pollutants

» Continued from previous page

day, reducing concentrations of hydrogen sulfide by 95%, but levels still peaked at night.

"People hike here, … they horseback ride here. They know it smells bad, but they weren't aware that if they start feeling certain symptoms, they should get help," said Prather, noting new signs from the county that inform the public about hydrogen sulfide in the area. "People are being made more aware of this issue and it's finally being acknowledged and addressed. So this is a really positive step forward."

Binational environmental leaders recently signed a memorandum of understanding on behalf of the U.S. and Mexico.

Among over one dozen actions to be included in a new minute by the end of this year is to "develop a Tijuana water infrastructure master plan to ensure that sufficient water infrastructure is planned and constructed commensurate with anticipated population growth."

The study says communities on both sides of the border will continue to bear the health burden of this preventable crisis without urgent interventions.

Prather said air quality measurements are ongoing, but funding limitations could prevent future work.

Researchers are now conducting a research study in San Diego County to better understand how the air quality is impacting people's sleep in the South Bay area. Interested participants can learn about the survey at: https://bit.ly/yoursleepucsd.

Scientists say culverts, the tunnel-like pipes transporting wastewater below Saturn Boulevard, cause high turbulence that exacerbates water-to-air transfer of toxic wastewater pollutants in the Tijuana River.

Contact: julieta@thecoronadonews.com

Staff photo by Julieta Soto.

MILITARY

Change-of-command for USS Tulsa

DVIDS

Cmdr. Samuel A. Moffett was relieved by Cmdr. Blake M. Wanier as commanding officer of the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Tulsa Gold crew during a change-of-command ceremony held at Naval Base San Diego on Aug. 22.

During Moffett's time in command of the Tulsa Gold crew, he led the Tulsa through a 13-month ship repair availability in Portland, Oregon, and embarked with his crew on USS Jackson, USS Mobile, and USS Kansas City.

During the ceremony, Roman awarded Moffett the Meritorious Service Medal for his superior accomplishments.

"The ship is always important, but it is the sailors that really matter," said Moffett. "Take care of the crew and the mission will follow. That principle guided every decision I made while in command."

The Tulsa is homeported in San Diego as a part of Littoral Combat Ship Squadron One. Littoral combat ships are fast, optimally manned, mission-tailored surface combatants that operate in near-shore and open-ocean environments.

Capt. Jose Roman, commodore, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron One, center, presides as Cmdr. Blake Wanier, left, relieves Cmdr. Sam Moffett, right, as the commanding officer of the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Tulsa Gold crew during a change-of-command ceremony held at Naval Base San Diego on Aug. 22. *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kassandra Alanis.*

Carrier Strike Group 15 conducts change-of-command

DVIDS

Carrier Strike Group 15 (CSG-15) held a change-of-command ceremony at U.S. 3rd Fleet headquarters at Naval Base Point Loma on Aug. 28.

Rear Adm. Justin A. Kubu, a native of Anderson, South Carolina, relieved Rear Adm. Kevin M. Kennedy, a native of Gloucester, New Jersey, to become the 79th commander since the group's establishment in 1930.

"When I assumed command of CSG-15 in April 2024, we faced an evolving strategic landscape that demanded innovation, excellence and unwavering commitment to warfighting readiness," said Kennedy. "What this incredible team delivered exceeded every expectation and has set the gold standard for naval training across the Pacific Fleet."

Vice Adm. John Wade, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, right, Rear Adm. Kevin M. Kennedy, commander, Carrier Strike Group 15, center, and Rear Adm. Justin A. Kubu, prospective commander, Carrier Strike Group 15, render honors during a CSG-15 change-of-command ceremony held at the Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet headquarters on Aug. 28.

Photo by Petty Officer First Class Brandon Roberson.

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SPORTS

Chargers aim for deep playoff run in Jim Harbaugh's second season

Associated Press

Expectations

A deep playoff run in coach Jim Harbaugh's second season. He rebuilt the roster and coaching staff while transforming the team's culture and reputation in his return to the NFL, which resulted in a playoff appearance.

Now, a team that hasn't won the AFC West since 2009 is looking to compete for the division title. The Chargers will try to bounce back from the twin blows of losing left tackle Rashawn Slater for the season and new running back Najee Harris' eye injury, which kept him out of action during camp.

New faces

RB Najee Harris, G Mekhi Becton, TE Tyler Conklin, DL Da'Shawn Hand, CB Donte Jackson, C Andre James, DL Naquan Jones, QB Trey Lance, LB Kana'i Mauga, CB Benjamin St-Juste.

Key losses

CB Eli Apple, LB Joey Bosa, WR DJ Chark, RB J.K. Dobbins, RB Gus Edwards, WR Simi Fehoko, DT Poona Ford, DE Morgan Fox, CB Kristian Fulton, TE Hayden Hurst, G Brenden Jaimes, S Marcus Maye, C/G Sam Mustipher, LB Nick Niemann, WR Josh Palmer, LB Shaq Quarterman, LB Chris Rumph, CB Asante Samuel Jr., T Foster Sarell, TE Stone Smartt, QB Easton Stick.

Strengths

Justin Herbert threw just three interceptions last season, the fewest in the league, and now he gets a second year in the same system. Harbaugh's preference for the running game has taken pressure off Herbert while allowing the 27-year-old to grow.

He'll be handing off to upgraded talent in Harris and rookie Omarion Hampton, and both have proven durable. Harris was a 1,000-yard rusher in four straight seasons for Pittsburgh, while Hampton ran for nearly 3,000 yards and 30 TDs in his final two years at North Carolina. Receiver Ladd McConkey set franchise records with 82 receptions for 1,149 yards as a rookie and built a rapport with Herbert.

Veteran linebacker Khalil Mack and defensive back Derwin James Jr. led a unit that set a franchise record for fewest points allowed per game last season. Defensive coordinator Jesse Minter, who came with Harbaugh from Michigan, guided a unit that was among the league's best in his first NFL season.

Weaknesses

How the team makes up for the loss of Pro Bowler Slater is a key question for the offensive line. The defensive line took a hit with the loss of Poona Ford to the Los Angeles Rams and will look much different. Teair Tart leads the group, but there is a need for someone to complement him and keep the defensive unit from being a shortcoming.

The team faces a tougher schedule than in past seasons, including opening against Super Bowl runner-up Kansas City in Brazil and facing Super Bowl champion Philadelphia at home on Dec. 8. However, the Chargers can take confidence from their two losses to the Chiefs last season by seven and two points.

Camp development

Slater's season-ending knee injury forced Trey Pipkins III to move to starting right tackle while Joe Alt, coming off a stellar rookie year, moved to left tackle. RG Mekhi Becton missed three weeks of practice with an undisclosed injury, putting his immediate playing status in question. QB Trey Lance showed an upside in preseason play to become Herbert's backup.

Fantasy player to watch

Until Harris returns, Hampton is expected to be the focus of the run game with his explosive playmaking ability. He was taken in the first round of the draft and has huge upside.

FILE - Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert (10) passes against the Los Angeles Rams during the first half of an NFL preseason football game, Saturday, Aug. 16, 2025, in Inglewood, Calif. *AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill,File.*

FILE - San Diego FC midfielder Chucky Lozano, second from right, and teammates celebrate after his goal against the Seattle Sounders during an MLS soccer match Saturday, April 5, 2025, in San Diego. *Meg McLaughlin/The San Diego Union-Tribune via AP, File.*

Playoff-bound San Diego FC has hopes for more in an already strong first season

Associated Press

As the first team this season to secure a spot in Major League Soccer's playoffs, San Diego FC is still looking to pile on as many points as possible.

The playoffs aren't the expansion team's only goal.

Clinching a berth in 28 games, San Diego is the fastest expansion team to reach the playoffs since the 2009 Seattle Sounders did it in 29. SDFC secured its spot with a scoreless draw at home on Aug. 23 against the Portland Timbers.

SDFC is also in a tight race for the Supporters' Shield for best regular-season record. Currently sitting at 53 points, the Western Conference leaders are a point behind the East's Philadelphia Union.

No expansion team has ever won the Supporter's Shield. San Diego is also on pace to set the points record for an expansion team, surpassing LAFC's 57 in 2018.

"Of course, qualifying for the playoffs, it's amazing and it's a nice accomplishment for the team. And to do it so early, it's also nice," midfielder Anders Dreyer said. "But we're still aiming with six games left to keep getting a lot of points."

Dreyer is making a case for the season's most valuable player, with 13 goals and a league-leading 17 assists. The team's first signing, Mexican international Hirving "Chucky" Lozano, has eight goals and eight assists.

"I think our feeling is right now that we are in the playoffs. So now the first step is complete and we are in a position where I feel like we can hold our chest high and say we want to go for it all," midfielder Jeppe Tverskov said. "I think we have proven ourselves. I think we are confident. I think we still have a lot of respect for all the games that are in front of us, but I also feel like if we are confident and play the way we've done the whole season ... I don't see why we shouldn't be able to compete with all the rest of the teams."

San Diego is unique among the league's teams. It is owned by Egyptian billionaire Mohamed Mansour and the Sycuan Tribe, the first Native American tribe in the United States to have an ownership stake in a professional soccer team.

Mansour also owns the Right to Dream Academy, a development academy which started in Ghana in 1999 and has since spread to Denmark, Egypt and the US. San Diego's Right to Dream Academy and first-team training facility sits on Sycuan tribal land in El Cajon, California.

Coach Mikey Varas said the team's success starts at the top.

"When there's clear vision, as players or staff or as a club, you have a target to reach for, and then you hire the right people, and you sign the right players, people who are overachievers. Now they have that target, and then you get enough people who want to go beyond that target, then you have the potential for something special to happen," Varas said. "But it's absolutely no guarantee. We can't take for granted the season that we're having because we've put a lot of hard work in."

Chargers' Najee Harris returns to practice after July 4 fireworks mishap and could play in opener

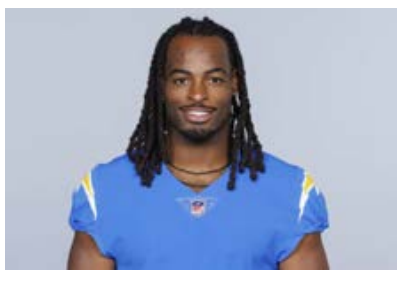
Associated Press

Najee Harris practiced on Aug. 27 for the first time since the Los Angeles Chargers running back injured his eye in a July 4 fireworks mishap.

The team activated him from the non-football injury/illness list, making him eligible to play in the Chargers' season-opening game against Kansas City in Brazil on Sept. 5.

Coach Jim Harbaugh said Harris was a "possibility" to play in the opener, which would keep alive his streak of never missing a game in his NFL career.

Harris sat out all of the team's training camp practices. He walked laps at practice from Aug. 2-12 and then worked off to the side with a trainer. He was on the field for individual drills on Aug. 27.



FILE - This is a 2025 photo of Najee Harris of the Los Angeles Chargers NFL football team. *AP Photo,File.*

Harris is expected to team with rookie Omarion Hampton in what Harbaugh hopes is an improved running game. Harris rushed for 1,000 yards in each of his first four seasons with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Linebacker Junior Colson will miss the entire season as the result of shoulder surgery after getting hurt in the preseason, Harbaugh said. He was placed on injured reserve on Aug. 26.

"It's a setback, but you can't really play linebacker on one shoulder," said Harbaugh, who coached Colson when both were at Michigan. "We'll get it fixed. He'll attack the rehab and be back."

The Chargers on Aug. 27 signed linebacker Del'Shawn Phillips a day after releasing him and placed cornerback Eric Rogers on injured reserve. He sprained an ankle in a preseason win over New Orleans on Aug. 10.

Long snapper Josh Harris will miss at least the first four games after getting hurt in the team's final preseason game last weekend. The Chargers added long snapper Rick Lovato to their practice squad Wednesday. He was part of Philadelphia's two Super Bowl-winning teams.

SPORTS

Organizers propose moving 2028 Olympic diving to Pasadena for estimated $17.6M savings

Associated Press

Organizers of the 2028 Summer Olympics want to move the diving competition from Los Angeles to nearby Pasadena.

LA28 organizers said on Aug. 27 the proposed relocation would accomplish up to $17.6 million in combined savings and revenue growth. They said the move would address athlete safety concerns and reduce "operational complexities" in the Exposition Park zone south of downtown.

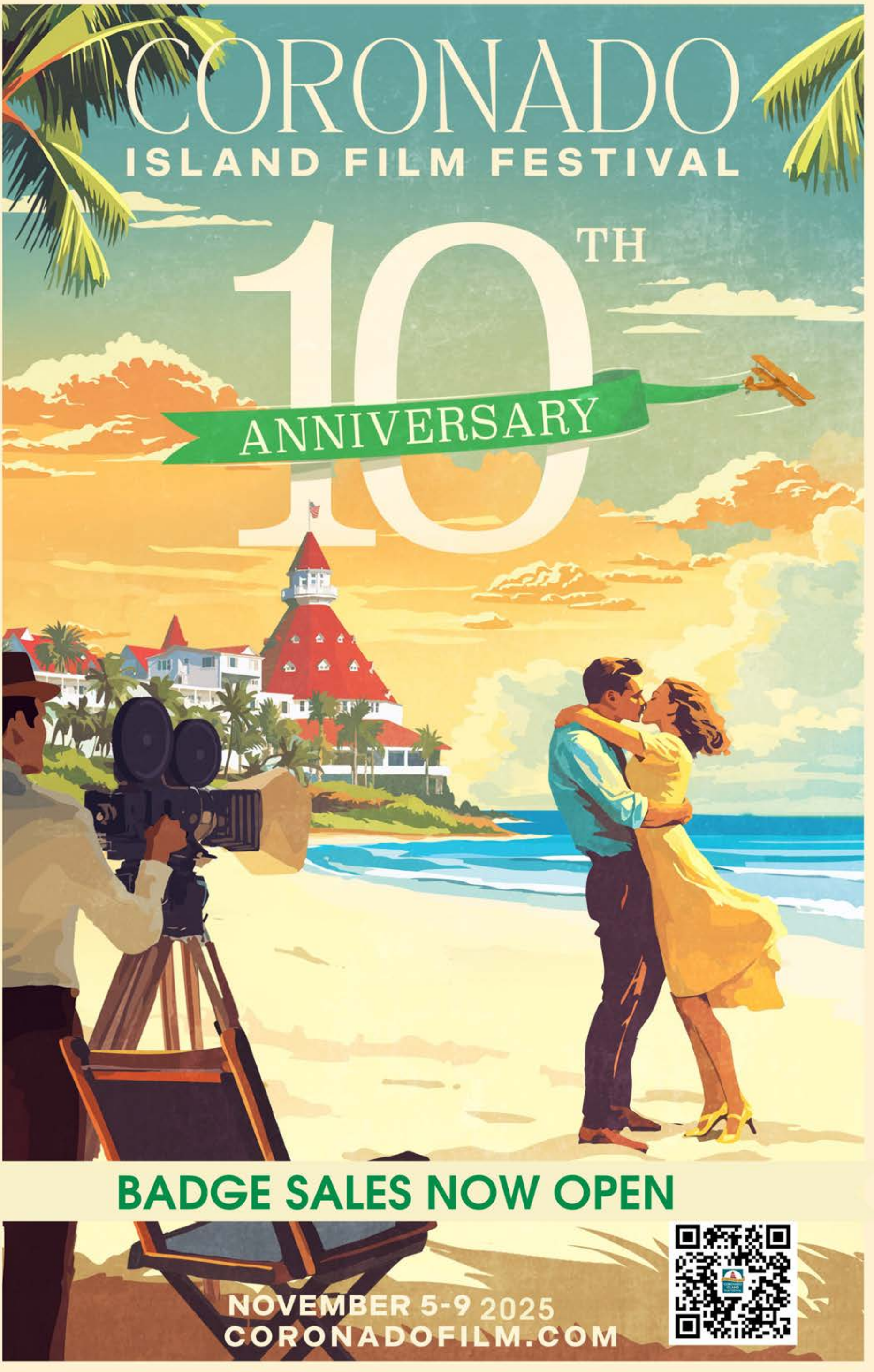
The pool used in the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics, located near the University of Southern California campus south of downtown, was originally chosen to host diving in 2028.

Now, LA28 organizers want to move the event to the Rose Bowl Aquatics Center, located south of the Rose Bowl stadium, which will host the semifinals and finals of men's and women's soccer.

Organizers said the new location requires fewer improvements, provides more athlete amenities and spectator seating and, most importantly to their goal, significant revenue increases and cost savings for the overall games budget.

The Rose Bowl Aquatics Center opened in 1990. It hosted the final practices of the 2000 U.S. Olympic swimming and diving team and the U.S. national diving championships were held there in 2008.

The Los Angeles City Council ad hoc committee on the 2028 Olympics voted on Aug. 27 to move the venue relocation proposal to the full City Council for a vote at a later date.



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SPORTS

Why Cadillac F1's American dream doesn't include an American driver

Associated Press

Formula 1's newest team began its quest to expand the grid with a plan to become a true American team that featured a driver representing the red, white and blue.

Yet when Cadillac F1 finally unveiled its inaugural lineup it was Valtteri Bottas and Sergio Pérez, drivers from Finland and Mexico, respectively.

Michael Andretti started this project in 2021 with plans to put IndyCar driver Colton Herta of California in the seat: American driver, American team, American car and an American engine. But Andretti was bought out by Dan Towriss of TWG Global, and TWG Motorsports owns this team.

Towriss said in May at the Miami Grand Prix there remains a desire to get an American driver in one of the seats, but only when one is ready. Herta doesn't have the super license required to compete in F1, Towriss noted, and a new team learning a new car requires experienced and steady drivers.

Few believe Cadillac will be competitive out of the gate, so it was necessary to go with drivers willing to set their egos aside for the sake of building a program. Bottas and Pérez don't have seats this year, and both said they were willing to sacrifice wins and even points to be part of a project as monumental as what Cadillac is trying to do in expanding the F1 grid to an 11th team next year.

"The more I was talking to the Cadillac team, the more it became apparent that this is what excites me," Pérez said. "It's not going back to the grid with a regular team to fight for wins and podiums, it's a project itself."

FILE - Colton Herta prepares to drive during qualifications for the Indianapolis 500 auto race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indianapolis, May 17, 2025. *AP Photo/Michael Conroy, File.*

Bottas was not a subtle suitor and even made a social media video two months ago captioned "Do we like this seat?" and gave a tour of a Cadillac. Shortly before the announcement dropped on Aug. 26, he posted an image of himself in a tuxedo, on a surfboard, waving an American flag and carrying a green can. It wasn't AI, either: behind the scenes footage showed the surfboard being towed by a small craft, Bottas once even losing his balance and falling into the water.

"We don't need to prove anything to anyone, so we get to put team first," said Bottas. "That's what we're here for and that's probably one of the biggest reasons why we were the chosen ones. We're competitors, we're going to drive as fast as we can. We want to perform the best we can. But we have very clear priorities on this project."

The American dream

Cadillac F1 does hope to have a driver from the United States as part of its lineup, but who knows how long it could take.

Herta has been trying to earn enough points in IndyCar to secure the super license, but four seasons have passed since this began and he still doesn't have one. Now there's speculation Towriss may move him to F2, an idea Herta and Towriss both declined to address.

"Oh boy, I don't really have any comments for any of that stuff, to be honest," Herta told AP.

Herta, who turns 26 early next year, began the IndyCar season saying he wasn't even sure he wanted to go to F1 because he loved his IndyCar team so much. Now he won't even talk about it, so perhaps there's still a desire to eventually get him on the F1 grid.

Either way, Cadillac team principal Graeme Lowdon said the team plans to field cars in F1's feeder series' eventually, as well as a young driver program. Towriss already supports Sebastian and Oliver Wheldon, the young sons of the late Andretti driver, Dan Wheldon.

Don't rule out the possibility of Sebastian Wheldon, a Floridian who turns 17 next year and currently races internationally.

But, all parties insisted, there is no rush, only an awareness that there is hope Cadillac will some day field an American driver.

"We know from feedback from fans that fans would love to see an American driver in an American team with an American engine, as well," Lowdon said. "These things are all things that could well happen. I see no barrier to seeing that combination in the future."

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