

Santa Barbara Happenings



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The Problem with the Federal “Inflation Reduction” Act

Most people understand that getting rich on wages is difficult and wealth is achieved through owning and lending. Savings accounts are not the only way for people to save money.

Increasing value of assets functions as a savings for Americans, but capital gains taxes cut into those savings, which is a detriment to middle-class wealth growth. Capital gains taxes should therefore be cut to zero

The idea that lowering capital gains taxes only helps the super-rich is misguided and counterproductive.

A tax code that punishes success is at odds with human nature because it incentivizes people to shield their income.

The fastest and best way to raise revenue in a market economy is to remove incentives to shelter income.

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Denise Hippach and Stephen Foley Named County Superior Judges

Gov. Gavin Newsom has named two judges to the Santa Barbara Superior Court, leaving only one vacancy in North County.

Stephen Foley has served as a Court Commissioner for the past four years and previously served as Supervising Deputy District Attorney in Santa Barbara from 2004-2018. The Democrat Foley was elected to fill Judge James Voysey.

Hippach was been the deputy Attorney General in Idaho from 2016-18 and has served as Senior Deputy Counsel at the Santa Barbara County Counsel's office since 2018. The Democrat is filling the vacancy left by Judge James Herman.

Judge Timothy Staffel's vacancy still remains.

City Council Shuts Down Vacation Rental Proposal

The Santa Barbara City Council struck down a proposed plan to allow vacation rentals in single-family neighborhoods was shot down. Advocates of vacation rentals conceded the plan was inadequate, and the Planning Commission has been asked to create a new one.

Vacation rentals are only allowed in hotel areas, but despite this, homeowners are illegally running rentals and not paying transient occupancy taxes. In response, the City wanted to allow vacation rentals across the City but with more strict enforcement.

The proposal would also have required vacation rental owners to reside in the house they are renting which was opposed by owners in the City.

Homeowners in areas with vacation rentals have complained about loud noises, music, and parties and are opposed as well.

The Planning Commission faces a challenge to create a proposal to work with the interests of vacation rental homeowners and the rest of citizens and homeowners.

Highway 101 Corridor Expansion

The federal government has given \$75 million to help the large Highway 101 Corridor Project to add a third lane from Santa Barbara to Carpinteria. Construction has taken several years on the section between Carpinteria and Summerland, and CalTrans will be expanding the project to create a lane between Santa Barbara and Montecito.

The recent federal infrastructure bill provided more capital for the program and gave the \$75 million at 4.02% interest. The loan will help CalTrans and Santa Barbara County Association of Governments provide cash flow to and leverage Measure A dollars.

The added lane would provide major relief to the traffic congestion between Santa Barbara and Ventura for commuters and travelers. There will also be a carpool lane in each direction. Parallel projects

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on surface streets near the highway are also happening simultaneously.

Court Ruling on Homeless Not Expected to Make Impact

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office has said a recent ruling protecting homeless rights will not change anything about Santa Barbara's policies. The ruling reaffirmed the right for homeless not to be penalized for sleeping on public property in violation of municipal ordinances.

People are allowed to sleep outside if no beds or homeless shelters are available. Illegal camping ordinances in Santa Barbara are already in line with the decision according to the Sheriff.

1% of Santa Barbara's population is experiencing homelessness, and officials point out that working to prevent homelessness has reduced the need for loitering enforcement by the Sheriff's Department.

Santa Barbara's ordinance excludes sleeping outside from its prohibited camping ordinance and no changes to the ordinance are expected after the ruling.