

San Jose mobile home park manager advised city on rent increase  
**SEE PAGE 6**



Congressman secures millions of dollars for Silicon Valley projects  
**SEE PAGE 10**



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## School district to cut dozens of jobs amid outcry

East Side Union High School District faces insolvency

By William Bellou  
Publisher

The East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) school board recently voted to approve staff layoffs affecting personnel dedicated to student mental health, well-being, and safety.

Despite concerns from the community regarding the potential impact on vulnerable students, the board passed a resolution, cutting 41 full-time classified positions at their January 22, 2026 board meeting. Also, on the agenda at the next upcoming board meeting, is the possible cutting of some certified positions.

See *SCHOOL CUTS*, page 6



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## San Jose mayor Mahan jumps into governor's race

By Keith Menconi  
*San José Spotlight*

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan has joined the race for California governor, putting to rest months of will-he-won't-he speculation about his gubernatorial ambitions.

"We need to stand up for our rights, for our freedoms and for our neighbors. We need to use the tools we have at hand to protect our democracy," Mahan posted on social media. "One tool is the law. The other tool is our results. We have to use both. That's how we fix California."

Over the past two years, even as Mahan has taken steps to extend his statewide political profile, he has downplayed rumors that he is seeking higher office, consistently stating he remains focused on his duties as mayor.

However, in recent weeks Mahan



San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan is running for California governor. File photo.

signaled his thinking had changed, teasing on several TV news appearances that he would soon announce his decision on a possible run. Then last week, *San José Spotlight* reported that residents received a text poll gauging support for Mahan, adding yet another sign of growing momentum for an attempt at the governor's mansion.

Mahan has said he is stepping into the race because he has not been satisfied with any of the other candidates' plans to address issues like homelessness, housing affordability or crime. He has made his own track record

tackling those challenges in San Jose central to his campaign pitch.

Mahan has already received an endorsement from South Bay Congressman Sam Liccardo, who also backed Mahan during his 2022 bid to succeed Liccardo as San Jose mayor.

"Leading one of California's largest cities tests you in ways few jobs do," Liccardo said in a statement. "Sacramento needs a leader who has governed under pressure, balanced a budget and delivered results. That's San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan."

Mahan's forays into statewide poli-

itics have already laid some of the groundwork for his burgeoning campaign. Over the past two years, he has made frequent TV appearances up and down the state, often picking policy fights with Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Late last year, he launched his own 501(c)(4) political advocacy organization known as Back to Basics with his former chief of staff at the helm. The organization is intended to build a statewide political coalition around Mahan's policy agenda. In December, Mahan hosted several gubernatorial candidates at a homeless housing site in San Jose, pressing for their buy-in to the city's strategy focused on rapid expansion of temporary homeless shelters.

But with just four months left to go before the June primary election, Mahan's candidacy faces a daunting uphill climb.

The already crowded candidate list includes East Bay Congressman Eric Swalwell, former Orange County Congresswoman Katie Porter, former state Controller Betty Yee, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, former U.S. Secretary of Health and

See *RACE*, page 5

## Proposed state budget short-changes Santa Clara County

By Sean Eastwood  
*Times Media staff writer*

Gov. Gavin Newsom is not shielding Silicon Valley counties from federal cuts to public health care. Instead, they question whether he's effectively enabling the president's agenda.

Governor Newsom's January budget message prioritizes fiscal prudence over new spending initiatives — including those designed to safeguard counties from potential funding losses for Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and other social safety net programs to protect the state's financial position amidst concerns about deficits.

Newsom's approach comes despite an unexpected \$42 billion revenue increase, which has mitigated the state's previously projected \$3 billion shortfall for the current year.



California Gov. Gavin Newsom speaks during a campaign event on Proposition 50, which passed by a wide margin on Nov. 4, 2025. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

County officials and statewide policy experts express concern that Newsom's proposal compels local governments to manage the repercussions of H.R. 1, former President Trump's significant spending bill, which is expected to reduce county hospital and social services funding by an estimated \$1 billion annually. Should the Governor's plan be adopted during this summer's budget negotiations, counties may have

to absorb the full costs of care for their most disadvantaged populations, increasing the risk of public hospital closures.

The proposal has drawn criticism from observers who note a perceived disconnect between Newsom's public opposition to federal policy changes and the practical effects of his budget recommendations. "Not only is the

See *SHORTCHANGED*, page 5

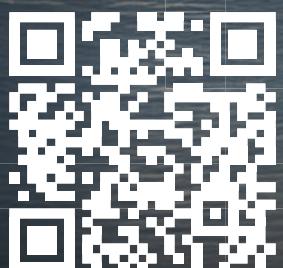
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# State of the City address is Feb. 7

By William Bellou  
*Publisher*

**S**an Jose Mayor Matt Mahan will deliver his State of the City address downtown on Feb. 7, timed to the Super Bowl LX festivities for maximum attention.

Mahan is expected to highlight San Jose's progress in areas such as homelessness, public safety, and collaboration with Santa Clara County, the San Jose Sharks, and PG&E—relationships that have improved significantly since he took office.

The event features a morning service project downtown, with activities like painting the old Greyhound Bus station and improving Guadalupe River Park trails.

At noon, Mahan's speech will take place on the San Pedro Square entertainment stage, leveraging existing infrastructure to save costs. He also intends to address ongoing challenges, particularly housing affordability, citing issues like rising construction costs.

With national attention on the South Bay during Super Bowl weekend, Mahan wants to underscore San Jose's leadership and achievements, encouraging residents to take pride in their city.



Mayor Matt Mahan is expected to highlight San Jose's progress in areas such as homelessness, public safety, and collaboration with Santa Clara County.



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## Times Local News

**Race***Continued from page 1*

Human Services Xavier Becerra, former Assemblymember Ian Calderon, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and billionaire Tom Steyer.

Recent internal polling from Porter's campaign placed the Southern California politician as the leading Democratic candidate with 14% support, followed by Swalwell with 11%, according to POLITICO. Mahan trailed in the middle of the pack with 5%.

"Voters have not been very excited about the field, quite frankly," Sacramento-based Democratic strategist Steven Maviglio told San José Spotlight. "It's been the not-ready-for prime time players."

With no clear frontrunner yet emerging, Maviglio said, the race remains wide open.

"I think it'll shake up the field quite a bit. The mayor has his own lane in this race," Maviglio said.

Mahan has taken a number of policy positions that have put him at odds with other California Democrats, including his vocal support for Proposition 36, the tough on crime 2024 ballot measure. But those same positions could help Mahan win support from voters who have grown frustrated with establishment Democratic leadership.

"More of them are likely to be interested in somebody like Mahan than any of the other major candidates," Larry Gerston, a professor emeritus of political science at San Jose State University, told San José Spotlight. "So he could put together a combination of moderate Democrats and independents and do much better in that fractured primary than a lot of people might think."

Democrats make up roughly 45% of registered voters in California, while no party preference voters represent 25%, according to 2025 figures compiled by the Public Policy Institute of California. Meanwhile, just more than 22% of state voters are registered Republicans.

Locally, Mahan has managed to consolidate strong support from the South Bay business community over his three years in office. At the same time, some of his policies — including efforts

to shift homeless dollars away from permanent housing to temporary shelter expansion — have alienated local progressive groups. In addition, a series of clashes between Mahan and local unions over wage negotiations have strained relations with San Jose's labor coalition.

John Tucker, a senior representative with AFSCME Local 101, which represents San Jose public employees, said Mahan's campaign raises questions about his commitment to his day job as mayor.

"From inside City Hall, it's felt for a long time like San Jose was being treated as a steppingstone and not a long-term commitment for Matt," Tucker told San José Spotlight. "This run looks a lot less like a sudden decision and more like 'the plan all along.'"

In contrast, South Bay business leaders have been quick to voice support for Mahan's candidacy.

Ahmad Thomas, CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, issued a statement Thursday morning applauding Mahan's announcement. Meanwhile, lobbyist Victor Gomez said he expects his political action committee, Silicon Valley Business PAC, to contribute to Mahan's campaign.

"California definitely needs a Democrat that's going to lead in a very pragmatic way," he told San José Spotlight. "I think that's what people are going to be looking for this upcoming election."

In making his announcement, Mahan claimed credit for a number of encouraging trends in San Jose, including a drop in the city's unsheltered homeless population and an uptick in new housing projects. But his critics argue these accomplishments have been overblown.

"Mahan's leadership of San Jose is no model for the state to follow," Maria Noel Fernandez, who leads the Silicon Valley Rising Action advocacy group, told San José Spotlight. "As rent, utilities and child care costs skyrocket, he has offered working families Band-Aids instead of real solutions."

Meanwhile, at least some local political figures are still making up their minds about Mahan's candidacy.

"We've worked well together on issues of homelessness, neighborhood blight removal, urban renewal and transportation infrastructure, such as the BART extension," state Sen. Dave Cortese told San José Spotlight. "I'm eager to hear more about his ideas

for the state and how he'd collaborate with me as a state senator."

To succeed, Mahan will also need to break out of the local media bubble that historically has made it difficult for San Jose politicians to succeed in statewide politics. The city, California's third largest, has never produced a competitive candidate for governor in its modern history.

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**Shortchanged***Continued from page 1*

governor's budget message not proactive—it's not even reactive. It's basically non-responsive to H.R. 1," stated County Executive James Williams in comments recently made to San José Spotlight.

Administration finance officials counter these critiques, asserting that the state budget is structured to account for and absorb the added costs resulting from H.R. 1, without shifting additional burdens onto local governments.

According to Department of Finance spokesperson H.D. Palmer, H.R. 1 is expected to cost California an additional \$1.4 billion next year, with \$1.1 billion related to Medi-Cal. However, Palmer emphasized the state's limited capacity to assume all new health and social service restrictions imposed by recent federal legislation.

Federal policy will reduce Medi-Cal coverage for approximately 200,000 individuals, including undocumented immigrants, asylum beneficiaries, and others in non-citizen categories beginning in October of this year.

Palmer explained that providing full-scope Medi-Cal for these groups would require an additional \$1.1 billion annually—beyond the state's current ability to commit, given projected budget gaps of nearly \$3 billion in the coming year and \$22 billion the subsequent year. He also noted that affected individuals will remain eligible for emergency and pregnancy-related coverage.

Williams criticized the Governor's proposal for what he views as insufficient leadership amid ongoing threats to healthcare access in California. He stressed the importance of collaboration between counties, the Legislature, and the administration to pursue more proactive

solutions.

In late 2023, county leaders successfully advocated for a five-eighths-cent sales tax increase, projected to generate \$330 million annually to help offset the financial impact of H.R. 1. Nevertheless, officials acknowledge that even with the additional revenue, cuts to public hospital systems—the second largest in California—remain likely.

Public hospitals, including those in Santa Clara County, represent about 6% of all hospitals statewide but provide over half of all trauma and burn care, according to the California Association of Public Hospitals. These facilities also train nearly half of California's new doctors, underscoring their critical role in the state's healthcare infrastructure.

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) has echoed many of Williams' concerns and is especially focused on several aspects of Newsom's budget proposal. Among these are the removal of approximately \$233 million for In-Home Supportive Services recipients with increased care needs, and a reduction in Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention funding from \$1 billion to \$500 million. Additionally, cities and counties are still awaiting the distribution of \$1 billion in allocated funds from 18 months prior.

District 4 Supervisor Susan Ellenberg, recently elected CSAC president, emphasized her commitment to advocating for adjustments to the Governor's budget that better support California's counties.

Ellenberg says we need to improve communication between state lawmakers and local leaders responsible for implementing legislative directives, noting, "The Legislature functions as lawmaking bodies, and we are the service implementers directly facing our clients every day."

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## Times Local News

**School Cuts***Continued from page 1*

The approved 41 classified full-time equivalent positions eliminated are as follows: Clerk Typist II (Wellness Centers) ("FTEs") 11, Warehouse Worker (2), Custodian (7), Parent and Community Involvement Specialist (PCIS) (13), School-Community Liaisons (3), Personnel Technician II (1), Skilled Trade Worker: Electrician (1), Clerk Typist II (1), Vending Technician (1), Director of Purchasing (1).

One can view ESUHSD video board meetings on YOUTUBE and hear public speakers, including students, parents, teachers and others.

The approved reductions, totaling approximately \$6.5 million according to the teachers' union, will also eliminate many full-time positions, including counselors, social workers, campus safety advisers, as well as several wellness center clerks, parent outreach coordinators, special education teachers, and others. These certificated cuts will be presented and voted upon by the board at a future board meeting.

Jack Hamner, President of the East Side Teachers Association, noted that 70 percent of district students are English language learners, homeless, foster youth, or from low-income backgrounds, making continued access to support services essential. "These children have significant needs and require robust support systems," Hamner stated.

Layoffs were prompted by the district facing financial insolvency and the necessity to reduce \$16 million from the 2026-27 budget to address a \$25 million deficit. With these cuts, the shortfall for the upcoming year is expected to decrease to \$9 million.

Superintendent Glenn Vander Zee explained that the district first identified serious fiscal challenges in 2020 but temporarily avoided layoffs through one-time state and federal funding totaling between \$210 million and \$230 million, an early retirement incentive saving \$11 million, and a parcel tax generating \$6 million over five years.

**Is California's funding system unfair and flawed?**

In many cases, schools benefitting from higher property tax revenues are less affected by absentee rates.

Vander Zee believes that California's school funding model, which bases allocations on daily attendance rather than enrollment, requires significant reductions to maintain financial stability. He stated, "California's funding system is fundamentally flawed, disadvantaging East Side students."

Due to this funding formula, ESUHSD district receives roughly \$12,000 per student, which is substantially less than what other Santa Clara County districts receive, ranging up to \$24,000 per student. Vander Zee remarked, "Despite marked voter support, extensive cost-cutting measures, and supplemental state funding, our students stand to lose critical supports next year."

Although the board unanimously endorsed the staff reductions, two members were assigned to a committee to explore alternative budget adjustments aimed at minimizing layoffs. The committee will present recommendations next month before the board's final decision, in accordance with California law requiring notification of school staff about potential layoffs by March 15.

During more than three hours of public comments, many students, parents, and staff advocated for retaining counseling and related services.

Students described counselors and social workers as integral to their academic success and well-being, providing resources such as clothing and bus passes and serving as trusted adults within the school environment. Addison, a student at Evergreen Valley High School, emphasized, "These positions are essential, not extra."

Roberta Cabigas, an adviser at James Lick High School, characterized her role as vital to students' sense of safety and ability to learn, managing duties from student attendance and support to crisis

intervention. She indicated that post-layoff, she might be responsible for up to 1,100 students across multiple campuses.

District social workers, counselors, and safety advisers expressed concern that the reductions threaten the viability of wellness centers—facilities expanded in recent years to provide student mental health services. Following the pandemic, California invested billions into youth mental-health initiatives, including the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative and the Community Schools Partnership Program.

According to Vander Zee, government funds enabled the district to hire additional mental health professionals to support students after the pandemic. The workforce reductions align with broader regional challenges, as districts across the Bay Area confront large budget deficits and must consider program cuts, staff layoffs, or school closures to remain fiscally viable.

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) is currently facing a severe financial crisis, with a projected deficit for the 2026-27 school year estimated around \$50 million to \$78 million, reduced from earlier \$100 million forecasts. To avoid state takeover and bankruptcy, the district is implementing severe budget cuts, including potential school closures, staff reductions, and a hiring freeze, following years of deficit spending and declining enrollment, while Alum Rock Union and Franklin-McKinley School Districts resorted to school closures last year to address shortfalls.

**ESUHSD Superintendent Vander Zee and school board member Herrera voiced the opinions at a ESUHSD special board meeting held January 13, 2026**

"...let's kind of hit the highlights, right? And then that'll give us an opportunity for people, if there's just questions generally about the budget itself, like where these numbers are. What we will be presenting tonight is the list of, at this point, of the proposed cuts. It's preliminary. It's still in draft form, but I think, out of fairness and respect for our colleagues that it's fair for people to start to get a sense of what that's looking like and a little of the rationale not behind it."

"Two years ago, we (ESUHSD) would receive our base funding for a pupil at about \$12,000 per pupil in our system. It's \$12,000 to get \$12,000 to educate, keep the lights on, get the bus to get over there and back. uh make sure that there's quality qualified educators running into them all day long and working with them and to provide any additional support as necessary in a district only 12 minutes from here. Students in that district are funded at a rate of \$14,000 per student."

So just imagine if we had \$2,000 more per student across our 20,000 students; how our conversation would be so different tonight. Just 18 minutes away there's a district at which those students are funded at \$18,000 per student. \$6,000 more per student that we could be investing in. Two minutes away from them... it's \$21,000 per student. That's \$9,000 more per student than on the East Side. And in a district about 30 minutes from here, it's \$24,000 per student. Twice the rate of investment. Twice the rate.

Investing the same amount in one kid as the state is investing in two of our students here in the East Side. And so that is something that we started to fight against last year when we supported Senate Bill 743 to start equal, to start an initiative to equalize funding. *That must change because it's times like this where our students are going to feel the impact of just a funding disparity, not just within the state, but within the county.*

... as we sit here tonight is that the proposed cuts for next year to take action on this year has gone from \$26 million to \$16 million. A reduction in \$10 million, the same reduction amount that we cut last year and do not have to make the \$5 million reduction next year. A totally different situation financially. totally different reality for like on the ground what that looks like after cuts and

being able to provide services and have people, qualified staff or our students to interact with daily. But it still means cuts. And as a principal, I need more, and more. My kids need more. My students need more. My staff needs more."

**Board member Herrera comments:**

"...10 years ago, we put off laying people off because there were reserves for different reasons, but where we are now is so different. Fiscal oversight people are really putting the pressure on. We are one step away, even a half-step away from

the county, taking over the district's finances if we do not get our fiscal house in order without any little magic tricks or ways of getting around things. We are now in a position where the revenue and the expenditure need to match up and the projected reserve needs to hold up over a three-year cycle. If we avoid these decisions, they'll be done for us. The county will come in, take it over, and do whatever it needs to do to balance the budget, whether we agree with it or not as a board. It's literally that serious of a situation."

## San Jose mobile home park manager advised city on rent increase

**By Joyce Chu***San José Spotlight*

**S**an Jose officials are set to vote on a policy that would increase rent for residents living in mobile home parks. But internal emails show the city favoring input on the proposal from a mobile home park manager.

Emails shared with San José Spotlight show Housing Department employees asking Ryan Jasinsky, property manager of mobile home park company owner Brandenburg, Staedler & Moore, to provide feedback on the draft policy that would increase rent for residents by up to 10% whenever a mobile home is sold. Jasinsky represents the company and other park owners on the Housing and Community Development Commission. The company owns eight mobile home parks in San Jose, including Mill Pond, Mountain Springs and Quail Hollow.

The San Jose City Council is set to vote on the policy Tuesday.

The emails date back to September 2025, before the draft policy was published on the commission's Nov. 13 agenda for commissioners to weigh in. Other commis-



Western Trailer Park in San Jose is among 58 mobile home parks across the city protected by a rent control policy. File photo.

sioners said they didn't get a chance to shape policy as Jasinsky did.

"What I feel is betrayed," Commissioner Daniel Finn, who represents mobile park residents and lives in a mobile home, told San José Spotlight.

Emails dating as early as Sept. 21, 2025 show Housing Director Erik Soliván asking Jasinsky to do a "page turn" on the draft policy to get feedback. In that same email, he asked to set up a meeting with Jasinsky.

Jasinsky sent another email to Soliván and Eviction Prevention Manager Emily Hislop on Nov. 5 providing input on the policy language of the rental increase.

Jasinsky did not respond to a request for comment.

When San José Spotlight asked Soliván if he met with any other commissioners, he said he offered to schedule a meeting with Finn twice to review the draft with him. Finn canceled both times, Soliván said.

## Santa Clara County could charge for property value appeals

**By Brandon Pho***San José Spotlight*

**S**anta Clara County homeowners have the power to challenge how much they pay in property taxes every year. But it could start costing hundreds of dollars to appeal.

County leaders are considering charging single-family home and condo owners \$290 to appeal the county assessor's determination of their property's value, which in turn determines the taxes homeowners pay on their property. The \$290 fee will also apply to owners of townhomes and multifamily properties with four homes or fewer, as well as agricultural land and vacant land appeals.

County leaders are also proposing a non-refundable \$675 charge for appeals on commercial, industrial and multifamily apartment properties with more than four homes. They argue the appeals process is

taking up time and resources that the county budget doesn't have as it absorbs massive federal funding losses. If approved, the new fees would bring in \$3.4 million in revenue per year — largely covering the \$3.5 million cost to run the assessment appeals program annually.

The recommendations moved forward Tuesday in a unanimous vote by the county Finance and Government Operations Committee. The proposal will go before the Board of Supervisors for final approval at a later date.

It's part of a broader county effort to rethink the fees officials charge for certain public services — and squeeze every dime the county can to grapple with its structural budget deficit.

"In response to unprecedented federal budget cuts, county administration is actively reviewing fee structures across programs to ensure effective cost recovery," County Executive James Williams told San José Spotlight. "Our recent study confirmed that a reasonable, fair fee structure based on appeal type will make the program financially self-sufficient and significantly reduce reliance on the general fund, freeing up dollars for critical, at-risk services."

*See APPEALS, page 8*

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## Times Local News

**Appeals***Continued from page 6*

Acting Assessor Greg Monteverde — who filled the role of Assessor-elect Neysa Fligo — said his office wasn't involved in this request. The county clerk handles assessment appeals.

"The Assessor's Office did not propose this fee, nor are any of the assessor's costs included in it," Monteverde told San José Spotlight.

The county is looking at the fees to clamp down on another emerging problem.

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Santa Clara County is considering charging homeowners when they appeal the appraised value of their property. File photo.

Officials said the appeals process is being gamed and monetized by third parties who convince property owners it's cheaper to file appeals on their behalf. County leaders said these third parties generally collect a fee regardless of whether the savings result from a formal appeal or informal review and proactive reduction. These appeals have risen from 315 in 2019 to 2,623 in 2025, according to the county.

"It's a mechanism that has been taken advantage of due to the fact that this county is one of the counties that does not have assessment appeals fees," Williams said at the meeting. "The huge volume increase creates on its own significant burden that impacts the system's collective ability to timely dispense with actual assessment appeals being brought forward by people acting on their own behalf or who have chosen to retain an agent with some actual conscious effort."

Cupertino Mayor Liang Chao has been a vocal opponent of making residents shoulder the burden of the county's budget recovery efforts. She campaigned against Measure A, a five-eighths-cent sales tax increase approved by voters in November. The county has said it will use the revenue to protect its hospitals from federal spending cuts, though funds aren't specifically earmarked for that purpose.

Chao isn't entirely opposed to charging for property value appeals. Other counties collect fees for assessment appeal applications — Los Angeles County charges about \$50 and San Francisco County charges \$120.

"While introducing fees makes sense, jumping from \$0 to full cost recovery ... seems too aggressive," Chao told San José Spotlight. "A more prudent approach might be to start with 50% cost recovery while also exploring opportunities for cost reductions."

Chao also called for a comparison with other counties' fees before adopting a full cost recovery model.

Michael Gordon, president of the Santa Clara County Association of Realtors, is voicing a higher register of alarm. He said charging homeowners to challenge their property tax assessment is "fundamentally unfair."

"The assessment appeals process is a core county function that is already funded by taxpayers, and imposing an additional fee amounts to double taxation on residents who are simply exercising their right to ensure their home is assessed accurately," Gordon told San José Spotlight. "At a time when housing affordability is already under pressure, this proposal risks discouraging legitimate appeals and shifts the county's budget problems onto homeowners who may already be overpaying."

Property owners receive yearly notice of their assessed value in June. Most appeals are filed between July 2 and Sept. 15 and residents usually receive their final tax bill in October. Other appeals come year-round based on various activities and supplemental assessments.

County Clerk Curtis Boone said the county takes proactive measures to find relief for property owners every year. That includes a computer-assisted mass appraisal system to find homes that merit a value reduction.

Residential property owners can also request an informal review by the Assessor's Office before filing an appeal, allowing residents to bring new information that might affect the assessment and come to a quicker resolution.



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## Nothing Bundt Cakes chain just voted America's favorite for 2nd year in a row

By William Bellou  
Publisher

Technomic and Nation's Restaurant News have named Nothing Bundt Cakes as America's favorite food brand for the second year in a row.

The chain sells an array of Bundt cakes in different sizes and flavors, and bumped Ruth's Chris Steakhouse out of the number one spot last year.

The top 10 were rounded out by some old favorites like Ruth's Chris, Jersey Mike's, and The Capital Grille, as well as multiple coffee chains.

Perhaps what keeps people so infatuated with the chain is that they're always rolling out new flavors in time with the changing seasons, from thoughtful holiday flavors to limited-time collabs with big brands.

Nothing Bundt Cakes earned high marks for service and hospitality, ambiance, food, and convenience. Currently, the chain has 800 locations nationwide and is understandably reveling in the announcement.

"Every day, our teams pour care, creativity and passion into every bakery visit, and it's thanks to their dedication—and the loyalty of our guests—that we've received this recognition," said CEO Dolf Berle. "We're



proud to help people find a reason to celebrate every day, whether it's a small act of care for themselves, a thoughtful surprise for a friend or sharing joy with family and colleagues."

Shockingly, the top 10 favorite chains mostly comprised coffee chains, including 7 Brew Drive Thru Coffee, Scooters Coffee, and Dutch Bros Coffee, in addition to Honey Baked Ham Co., Ruth's Chris, and Jersey Mike's.

In addition to Buy One Bundtlet, Get One FREE offer, available this month, the chain is hosting a VIP sweepstakes where three winners will receive a trip to Dallas for a behind-the-scenes visit to the chain's headquarters and Bundt Labs. You can enter online for your chance to win using this link: <https://tinyurl.com/mvp3pzne>

"We're proud to be a part of the brand for 15 years," said Debbie Koelbl, owner of Nothing Bundt Cakes in Evergreen located at 2721 Aborn Rd, Ste 10. "Our focus...high quality delicious cakes, excellence in guest service and support to our local community. Our team member Lisa says it best: My personal motto is to "Maximize The Joy" with "Over The Top" service, during outside sales visits and in the bakery!"



San Jose Congressman **Sam Liccardo** speaks in Washington, D.C. He has secured nearly \$14 million in funds for projects in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Photo courtesy of Liccardo's office.

## Congressman secures millions of dollars for Silicon Valley projects

By Brandon Pho  
*San José Spotlight*

**D**ysfunction and federal funding cuts in Washington, D.C., aren't stopping one Silicon Valley lawmaker from getting money into his district.

Congressional District 16 Rep. Sam Liccardo — San Jose's former mayor — announced a nearly \$14 million infusion of federal cash into San Mateo and Santa Clara counties on Thursday. In Santa Clara County, that means affordable housing, flood protection, fire infrastructure and homeless service projects can move forward in San Jose, Mountain View, Palo Alto and Campbell.

Liccardo called the funds a "modest indication" of a larger shift underway in the governing halls of D.C.

"Republicans finally sat down with Democrats to craft these appropriations bills, rather than bulldozing a partisan bill against Dem opposition, as in the past," Liccardo told San José Spotlight. "This reflects the GOP's growing awareness that they're losing the public the longer they tether themselves to (President Donald) Trump's wagons. I will continue to push to expand the fracture between the president and his party with initiatives that have broad appeal to all

Americans."

The money comes from the congressional Community Project Funding pipeline — an avenue for shaping how federal discretionary dollars are spent locally. Congressmembers submit certain funding requests for projects in their district to the Appropriations Committee, which evaluates the submissions for legal and ethical compliance. The House passed a bipartisan funding bill incorporating these requests Thursday, amounting to \$10 million secured for Liccardo's district. That's on top of the \$3.2 million he secured earlier this month.

That includes \$2 million for a San Jose program that secures low-interest financing to make affordable rental housing climate-resilient, through work that includes seismic retrofits. Another \$2 million will go toward Mountain View's Evelyn Avenue affordable housing project, a five-story development with 143 permanent affordable apartments for low-income households.

Another \$1.1 million will go to Mountain View's efforts to improve flood protection and environmental management of a sensitive coastal waterway, the Charleston Slough tide gates, and flood risk for Mountain View and neighboring Palo Alto.

Palo Alto will receive \$850,000 to construct a modern fire station. Campbell will get \$250,000 for a project aimed at improving walkability, bicycle and transit access, and street conditions in downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods.

"Project funding for this important improvement will greatly improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle safety at a heavily used intersection in downtown Campbell," Campbell City Manager Brian Loventhal said in a statement on Liccardo's funding announcement.

Los Gatos will also get \$200,000 for a van to deliver mobile navigation services to people experiencing homelessness throughout the West Valley.

"Meeting the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors with dignity, care and creativity is how communities like Los Gatos make real progress on homelessness," Los Gatos Mayor Rob Moore said in a statement. "The crisis of homelessness is one of the defining challenges of our time. The West Valley mobile navigation van provides a solution that brings critical services directly to people where they are."



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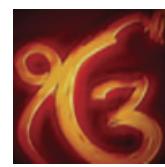
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