

SOLANO/STATE NEWS

IN BRIEF

Fairfield woman ejected from vehicle, dies

VALLEJO — A Fairfield woman died Saturday night after she was ejected from her vehicle in an accident on Interstate 80, California Highway Patrol officials said.

Michelle Bonifacio, 26, was driving eastbound on Interstate 80 near American Canyon Road when her 1994 Lexus struck the center divider. Bonifacio was thrown from her vehicle into a construction site.

Bonifacio was not wearing her seatbelt at the time of the accident. She suffered fatal injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene, according to CHP.

Authorities do not know if alcohol or drugs were a factor in the accident, which is still under investigation.

Man killed outside Sacto light-rail station

SACRAMENTO — Authorities are investigating a fatal shooting at a light-rail station that resulted in the death of a 28-year-old man.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Department says Ricky Bufford was in a car on Saturday night at the light-rail station with two women and a 5-year-old boy. Witnesses say Bufford's car was parked in a loading zone at the station when another man approached and shot Bufford after the two exchanged words.

Authorities says Bufford was driven to a nearby gas station where witnesses tried to help him. Paramedics arrived and pronounced him dead at the scene.

The sheriff's department says no suspect has been identified.

Sheriff's detectives investigate jail death

SACRAMENTO — The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office reports that an inmate facing murder and domestic violence charges has died in his jail cell.

According to a statement from the sheriff's office, deputies at the Sacramento County Main Jail found the inmate unconscious and not breathing at 3:30 a.m. Saturday. The inmate was declared dead shortly before 4 a.m.

Sheriff's detectives are now investigating and the corner's office will determine the cause of death.

Authorities released few details about the man. They will release the name of the inmate after notifying his next of kin. The man had been held in jail since November 2005 on charges related to the death of his wife.

Pair of quakes strike off north coast

EUREKA — A pair of minor-to-moderate offshore earthquakes have struck the northern California coast, but there are no reports of any damage or injury.

The U.S. Geological Survey says in a revised preliminary report that the first quake had a magnitude of 5.1 and struck at 2:27 a.m. Sunday at a depth of about 11 miles.

It was centered some 41 miles southwest of Eureka and 208 miles northwest of Sacramento.

The second was a magnitude-4.1 quake that struck one minute later farther south about 40 miles west of Santa Rosa and 74 miles northwest of San Francisco at a depth of about 3 miles. Sheriff's dispatchers in the nearest affected counties of Humboldt and Sonoma say they have received no word of injuries or damage.

Report calls for major SFPD overhaul

SAN FRANCISCO — A broad study of San Francisco's police force is calling for department-wide changes that would shake up everything from how the chief is hired to how officers may use force.

The new 313-page report recommends a major overhaul that experts say would bring the department closer to the cutting edge of best police practices.

The city paid independent researchers \$400,000 for the top-to-bottom review following controversies over officer-involved shootings and the use of force.

The study says the department should train officers to use Tasers and restrict when they may shoot at moving cars.

Investigators: Fake federal agents invade home

LOOMIS — Placer County sheriff's investigators are searching for six men they say posed as federal agents and invaded a Loomis home to steal medical marijuana.

According to the sheriff's department, the men entered the unlocked home Saturday night and ordered the occupants to lie on the floor. The department said in a release that at least one of the men had a gun.

Authorities said the robbers bound the occupants with duct tape and stole between 10 and 20 pounds of marijuana before fleeing in a vehicle. Investigators had no leads on the identities of the men.

Student sentenced over morphine-laced beer

SANTA CRUZ — A Santa Cruz graduate student has pleaded no contest to heroin possession after police said they found morphine-laced beer in his garage.

Chad Renzelman said he used "a handful" of dried poppy pods to flavor a batch of homemade beer in August.

The organic chemistry student at the University of California, Santa Cruz said he extracted opium from the poppies, which he then converted to morphine.

— Staff, wire reports



Chris Jordan/Daily Republic

The Suisun City Historic Waterfront Business Improvement District recently had a 65-foot-high sign painted on a water tank north of Highway 12 to promote the city's downtown.

Suisun City strives for visibility

Water tank sign is novel attempt to attract attention

By IAN THOMPSON
DAILY REPUBLIC

SUISUN CITY — The waterfront district is not visible from Highway 12, but the city is doing what it can to get commuters to take a look.

And once they look, the city and its merchants association hope the commuters will stop to shop and dine.

A series of projects is under way in hopes of attracting more attention to the heart of Suisun City.

A week ago, the Suisun City Historic Waterfront Business Improvement District had a 65-foot-high blue sign painted on the water tank just north of Highway 12 to extoll the waterfront's attractions.

Suisun City Hall is within two months of getting new highway signs from Caltrans that will let drivers know they are approaching the entrances to the downtown.

Plans for two 14-foot-high monuments featuring a ship's captain at the steering wheel of a stylized vessel are in the works to be built

at both entryways to the city.

These are all part of the plans to make Suisun City and its downtown waterfront more than just a passing blur to an estimated 2.8 million cars that use Highway 12 each year.

"A lot of people who commute who don't know what they are commuting through," said Garry Rowe, president of the Historic Waterfront BID. "That is the challenge of letting them know we have a waterfront with dining and shopping."

Efforts to get Suisun City more visibility is "the No. 1 priority," Mayor Pete Sanchez said.

City Councilman Mike Segala wryly said a previous Caltrans sign that stated what services the downtown offered had a nasty habit of getting knocked down by drunk drivers. Caltrans' replacement signs did little more than simply announce the city.

New Caltrans signs, which the city lobbied to get, will show dining, picnicking and boating services are available. They are expect-

ed to be erected before the end of the year.

"We needed to get our own identity back on Highway 12," Segala said, who adding the numbered designation to the off-ramp exit sign "puts us on a lot of maps."

Rowe expects to get about five years of use out of the eye-catching water tank sign before the tank's owner, the Solano Irrigation District, may tear it down.

"It looks great," said Sanchez, who had suggested the BID's sign be even bigger than it is and be more colorful to attract attention. "We have something that tells people where we are."

Getting passing drivers to notice the waterfront is difficult because there aren't a lot of advertising opportunities along Highway 12, Rowe said.

These latest efforts and plans for the monument sculptures will help.

Walking neighborhoods during his election campaign, City Councilman Mike Hudson said he realized some Suisun City residents were so used to driv-

ing to Fairfield that they didn't even realize Suisun City had a downtown.

"It's part of our commitment to the businesses there to get them visibility," Hudson said.

"We want people to know there is a downtown area," City Councilman Sam Derting said. "Too many people have come along Highway 12 and wondered how to get to downtown."

The BID's biggest goal is getting all the development done and giving people reasons to come, Rowe said.

The waterfront -- with successful restaurants such as La Cabana, Joy of Eating and Athenian Grill -- has already attracted more people.

Completion of the business hotel next summer just across Lotz Way from Highway 12 and its own signs will be an additional boost to drawing passing motorists' attention, Rowe said.

"The waterfront is a jewel and we want to show people it is a place to go," Segala said.

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Options for replacing coal are few, costly

By TOM HENRY
TOLEDO BLADE

Efforts to curb greenhouse gases that cause global warming have sparked interest in new technologies, rejuvenated pleas for energy conservation, and resulted in development of co-generation projects in which steam from one industrial facility is captured and used to generate electricity at another.

But when it comes to replacing coal-fired power plants that are the country's biggest source of greenhouse gases, there are not many viable options.

At least for now. Although wind power is the fastest-growing form of energy production, it commands less than 1 percent of the national market. At best, the goal is to someday reach a 6 percent market share.

Renewables diversify the energy mix and complement

other sources of power by providing clean kilowatts.

Some even offer added benefits beyond a megawatt or two of electrical power, such as those that make use of garbage and methane gas.

But they'll never replace baseload sources of power unless someone invents a way of capturing the electricity they produce and storing it for when it is needed later. Baseload is the minimum amount of power that a utility or distribution company must make available to its customers.

But an inescapable obstacle is a supply of reliable, around the clock energy. A certain amount of power has to come from baseload sources that produce it. And, with today's technology, those continue to be mostly coal-fired power plants, nuclear plants, hydroelectric plants, and plants that operated off natural gas.

The nuclear industry has promoted itself as a carbon-neutral panacea for climate change, hiring onetime Greenpeace activist Patrick Moore and former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman as celebrity spokesmen. Both have touted nuclear as a way to generate more electricity without making global warming worse.

Nuclear plants don't emit greenhouse gases if you look only at operations.

But there's one huge caveat the industry's chief lobbyist group on Capitol Hill, the Nuclear Energy Institute, doesn't like to talk about:

Tons of greenhouse gases are emitted in the mining of uranium and the subsequent milling and packing of it into reactor-core fuel rods. And tons of greenhouse gases are emitted in the construction phase of nuclear plants, which require more concrete and steel than almost any other structure.

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