



Santa Paula Times

Friday
Weather Forecast



Sunny
High 66°F
Low 43°F

The Community Voice of Santa Paula

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Coronavirus cases climb to four in SP

By Peggy Kelly
Santa Paula Times

Wednesday's report for Ventura County revealed 20 new cases of COVID-19 from the day before, for a total of 263 cases countywide. The announcement of the increase — and one more virus-related death — brought comments from the county's top medical officer about the importance of people staying home to worship this weekend.

The April 8 report also showed the rise of cases believed to be community-acquired, now at more than half of the cases, at 142.

Ventura County Public Health Officer Dr. Robert Levin said during Wednesday's briefing that health and other officials, including law enforcement, "want our community to be safe and stay safe at home during this critical emergency," and that with religious holidays being celebrated, worshippers should follow the lead of their churches by staying home for livestreamed services.

"A church is not an essential business," under the state and county's stay-at-home orders prompted by the pandemic, "for the purpose of defeating this virus. While I know faith is essential to many of us, it is not an essential business," Levin said.

He noted that churches throughout the world are holding services via "virtual platforms" with the goal of protecting lives.

Unmentioned by Levin was the Rev. Rob McCoy, who officially resigned from the Thousand Oaks City Council Saturday evening, hours before he held Palm Sunday Communion with members of his Newbury Park-

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Capt. Tony Salas (right, with plaque), a Santa Paula native, is honored as Ventura County Fire Department Battalion 5 Firefighter of the Year at the 24th annual Ventura County Fire Department Awards ceremony held Feb. 27 in Camarillo. Fire Division Chief Gary Monday (from left), Supervisor Kelly Long, Supervisor Bob Huber, Supervisor Linda Parks and VCFD Chief Mark Lorenzen are among those congratulating Salas.

Tony Salas recognized as VCFD B5 Firefighter of the Year

By Peggy Kelly
Santa Paula Times

A native Santa Paulan was recognized as the Battalion 5 Firefighter of the Year at the 24th annual Ventura County Fire Department Awards Ceremony, held Feb. 27 in Camarillo.

The Ventura County Fire Pipes & Drums were featured during the program, which included District 3 Supervisor Kelly Long and Ventura County Fire Department Chief Mark Lorenzen.

Capt. Tony Salas, a Santa Paula native, started his fire career in January 1980 as a high school cadet, and became a reserve firefighter the following year at Santa Paula Station 12, according to Fire Division Chief Gary Monday.

"Tony was hired as a Ventura County firefighter in 1984 and promoted to fire engineer in 1990, then became a fire captain" six years later.

During his career, Salas has worked on numerous assignments, including rescue

squads, HazMat units, ladder trucks and brush engines. He has responded to numerous notable incidents, including four of Ventura County's largest wildfires, the Alaska Airlines crash, the Sealcliff train derailment and the Fillmore Seneca oil well fire.

Salas was also in the first engine of thousands that responded to the Thomas Fire, at the time the largest wildfire in modern California history.

Monday said Salas has also "participated in numerous programs and cadres in his career — Jr. Fire Marshal Program, CPR instructor, SCBA Cadre, CISD member and PIO," among others.

"Tony is an extremely humble person and has been involved with the department for his entire career. When the district annexed the city of Santa Paula into our Fire Department, Tony was part of the transition team. His knowledge of Santa Paula was invaluable for the administrative and operational procedures.

"Tony," Monday added, "has come full

circle now that he is working back in Santa Paula where his fire service started. When Tony's fire service career started, he truly wanted to help people when they needed it most, giving back to the community he serves."

Monday said Salas wanted to recognize the late Ventura County Fire Department Battalion Capt. Bob "Hoppy" Mumford, "who introduced Tony into the fire service.

He said he is thankful that both of his parents are still living and their continued guidance has been invaluable.

"His wife, Irene," has been with Salas since his fire career began. "Tony didn't have a driver's license when he became a cadet and Irene would drive him to and from" his duty.

Salas was also Firefighter of the Year in 1995.

Monday noted, "Tony shares this award with his parents, Sam and Anita, his brothers, Sam Jr. and Dan, his wife, Irene, children Kathleen and Carolyn, as well as his niece, Ofelia."

Delicious meals are essential

By Peggy Kelly
Santa Paula Times

Pizza and Mexican food, it seems, are essential, even during a pandemic. Gary Zapparelli admits he was surprised at the flood of customers for his Zapparelli's Pizzeria when it opted to stay open for delivery and take-out, while Rick Araiza of the family-owned La Cabana said his phone has been ringing off the hook with people wanting to know when the restaurant will reopen.

People want what they want, and eating is about all you can — or, some cases, want to do — during the imposed stay-at-home orders.

Most restaurants in the Santa Paula area are open for take-out and/or delivery, following the state-ordered tight restrictions that came at 12:01 a.m. March 18 in reaction to COVID-19.

Prior to that, restaurants had been able to stay open with limited seating, but, as the virus spread, the decision was made to further lessen interactions among the public.

Araiza said the family closed the restaurant, founded in 1974, temporarily to redo the parking lot, among other improvements.

But, in the interim, "We've been getting tons of calls" about when La Cabana will open for take-out.

"We're going to try it with a limited menu, some of our customers' favorites," said Araiza, who noted that it has been hard on the La Cabana team to be closed, and how he is looking forward to rehiring.

"We miss our customers," said Araiza. "We really are more like a family," serving generations of Santa Paulans.

La Cabana is expected to open next week, for something else on Araiza's plate, which includes being the city's mayor

Restaurants: Continued to Page 2

Mufflers mute, Main Street empty: COVID-19 puts brakes on Cruise Night

By Peggy Kelly
Santa Paula Times

Come the first Friday in April, mufflers were mute, no colorful classic cars shined in the sun, and there were plenty of places to park on Main Street.

The COVID-19 fallout meant the 22nd year of Cruise Night, set to kick off April 3, was not going to happen that night and probably not for the rest of the season, which runs through October.

Sponsored by the Santa Paula Police Officers Association and the Chamber of Commerce, the event has been coordinated by retired Santa Paula Police Department sergeants Henry Aguilar and Dave Anderson.

Cruise Night started with a single block closed and grew into a blocks-long party, with East Main and some side streets lined with classic cars of every ilk. The only requirement is that the vehicles must be pre-1975.

The display grew from 10th to Seventh streets, drawing thousands of visitors and hundreds of participants from throughout the Tri-Counties and Los Angeles.

"So far," said Aguilar, "I think we're done for the year. This would have been the 22nd, but everything is so unpredictable, we don't know" from one day to the next what the situation will be.

Anderson "already had the bands" that are a big attraction at Cruise Night, bringing visitors to Santa Paula and the historic downtown where restaurants and shops benefited, Aguilar said.

"With 90% of our people who participate being 60 and above,



Photographer Larry Spoerlein was awarded First Place for Photography of Transportation at the 2008 Ventura County Fair with his picture of Cruise Night at Mill and Main streets. Spoerlein, a resident of Ventura, enhanced the photo with Adobe Lightroom.

we know everybody misses it. We miss it," but the risk of spreading the coronavirus is too high, Aguilar added.

Anderson said the duo had to

make a tough decision by calling off the 22nd annual year of the car show. "We didn't really want to go for the whole season, but it would be too much hassle to put them

together at the last minute" after the threat of the virus diminishes.

"We're not happy about it," he added, "but it was the best thing; we're not going to let this slow us

down. Hopefully, the virus will be past and gone at that point" of a new season "and we won't have any worries."

"Worry" is the last word one

"So far, I think we're done for the year. This would have been the 22nd, but everything is so unpredictable, we don't know" from one day to the next what the situation will be.

— Henry Aguilar, retired police sergeant

would connect to Cruise Night — every month a social occasion and cause of celebration surrounded by Santa Paula's unique business district used so often in film and television shoots.

Each month, photographers and videographers would also flock to Cruise Night for its picture-perfect cars, people and buildings. Santa Paula High School class reunions at times are scheduled to coincide with Cruise Night for a strong dose of nostalgia.

"We're going to miss all the people this season and we're looking forward to getting back to it," said Anderson. "All the out-of-town participants are pretty disappointed. ... Santa Paula Cruise Night has become something they really look forward to."