

PUBLIC SECTOR NEWS

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events and to become members of the organization. Each spring the Friends of the Palm Springs Library hosts an Annual Book Sale with proceeds to benefit the Library. The first night of the sale is open to members only (with memberships sold at the door), and the remaining days are open to the public. This year's sale will take place in the J.C. Frey Building adjacent to the Library from March 29 through 31. Call for times at (760) 668-8838.

"We are in need of gently-used books, CDs and books on tape," explains Chris Seidel, president of FOPSL. "Many of these donated materials are put into the library collection, and save the library from having to purchase them. The rest are sold in our daily and online sales, as well as in the Annual Sale."

Members of the public are invited to join the Friends on a bus ride to the L.A. Times Festival of Books on Saturday, April 20, 2013 from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Festival of Books has become the largest and most prestigious book festival in the country, attracting more than 150,000 book lovers each year. The bus will board at ACT-Tours, located at 1301 N. Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs. Drinks and snacks will be provided, with lunch on your own at the festival. The cost is \$50 for members and \$70 for non-members. Space on the bus is limited, so reservations are strongly encouraged.

WORKSHOP: HOW TO WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN

SCORE, the national nonprofit that counsels America's small businesses, is holding a workshop entitled, "How To Write A Business Plan That You and Stakeholders know Where You Are Going." The workshop is from 6 – 8:30 p.m. at SCORE'S Palm Desert office at the Whitewater Building at 43-100 Cook Street, Suite 104. To register, visit www.scoreCV.org and click on workshops or phone (760) 773-6507. The cost for this workshop is \$25.

Topics covered include: Create a Detailed Business Road Map, Financial Performance Measuring Tool, Gain Knowledge to Aid Decision Making, Analyze Risk and Develop Alternatives, Develop a Marketing Plan, Create a Financial Plan and Formulate the Management Team. The presenter Dave Parkinson has extensive experience in all aspects of entrepreneurship including as founder of two successful business ventures each reaching over \$25 million in annual sales. In addition, he has served on numerous private and public service boards including a New York Stock Exchange company.

SCORE is a nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and helping small businesses start, grow and succeed nationwide. SCORE is a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration and has been mentoring small-business owners for more than 40 years. SCORE offers low-cost workshops for business entrepreneurs. Local business experts conduct training across a variety of relevant subjects including starting and financing a business, business plans, marketing, human resources and much more. For a list of Workshops offered by the Coachella Valley chapter visit: <http://www.scorecv.org/workshops>.

RIISING HEALTH CARE AND EMPLOYEE COSTS CROWDING OUT STATE FUNDING OF MOST OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

California Common Sense (CACS) has released a report analyzing how the State's proposed budget has changed since 2007-08, which was the last time a California governor proposed a balanced budget. Revenue expected for 2013-14 is \$10.8 billion greater than revenue expected for 2007-08, but funding for most services is expected to be lower due to growing health care and employee costs. Governor Brown recently called for a special Legislative session to address the state's rising health care costs.

"Think of the State's proposed budget as a pie. Compared to 2007-08, the overall pie is larger, but Social Services, K-12, Universities, Courts and other services are now smaller slices," said Autumn Carter, executive director of CACS. "On the other hand, Health Care Services, Employee salaries, Retirement benefits and Debt Service are all larger slices."

Among the reports findings, despite higher revenues, proposed State spending on some areas is significantly lower in 2013-14 than in 2007-08: Social Services (-14%), Universities (-14%), Courts (-16%), and Transportation (-31%). Proposed spending on other areas is materially higher in 2013-14 than in 2007-08: Health Care Services (+62%), Employee Compensation (+16%), Retirement Benefits (+25%), and Debt Service (+24%). Special Funds, which derive their revenues largely from fees and to which more than 50% of the state's employee compensation and benefits costs are allocated, are now responsible for 30% of state spending as compared to 21% in 2007-08. State spending on K-12 Education is expected to be no higher than in the 2007-08 proposed budget. CSU tuition has doubled, and UC tuition has more than doubled. Vehicle registration fees increased 68%, annual park pass fees increased 56%, and court filing fees increased 36%. General obligation and retirement benefit debt has grown substantially—55% and 25%, respectively.

NEW ROUNDABOUT IMPROVES TRAFFIC SAFETY IN MECCA

Riverside County's newest roundabout is providing drivers a safer, more efficient and smoother flow through Mecca's main intersection at Fourth Street and Hammond Road. Supervisor John J. Benoit is welcoming the public to attend the ribbon cutting of the Mecca

roundabout to be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, which will feature the unveiling of a decorative entry monument mural with the Mecca community logo.

"Roundabouts are gaining popularity in Southern California because they improve the flow of traffic and increase safety, and this intersection was ripe for one," said Supervisor John J. Benoit. "The roundabout greatly enhances the primary entrance into Mecca, a community that has seen a dramatic transformation as a result of \$55 million in county investment."

The single-lane roundabout keeps traffic moving efficiently around a central island, without stop signs or traffic signals. The design requires merging drivers from Fourth Street and Hammond Road to yield to drivers in the circulating roadway of the roundabout.

The roundabout is the reconfiguration of a complex four-way intersection adjacent to a railroad crossing. The roundabout accommodates the estimated 9,000 daily vehicles and peak-hour traffic of more than 1,200 vehicles. This entry is used by residents, agricultural businesses, commercial trucks and tourists traveling to the Painted Canyon.

The roundabout accommodates oversized vehicles, including commercial trucks common to this agricultural community, with a truck apron that allows the trucks' rear wheels to ride up on a raised section of stamped concrete around the central island.

The aesthetic entrance to Mecca is also improved with palm trees, some landscaping, decorative walls, an entry monument installed as part of the project as well as new street lights. The \$2.945 million project was funded by \$2 million in Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Funds, with the remainder by redevelopment.

Since 2003, Riverside County has invested \$54.6 million in public works to increase access to public services and revitalize the community of Mecca. Major improvements include the Family Service Center and Community Health Clinic and Mecca Community Library, Riverside County Sheriff's Office, Mecca Boys & Girls Clubhouse and Mecca Fire Station #40.

The investment also includes \$10.8 million in new street, sidewalk, curb and gutter improvements constructed in three phases of the Downtown Street Revitalization Project.

HARC LAUNCHES COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

HARC (Health Assessment Resource Center) is launching the third community health needs assessment of the Coachella Valley this month. HARC is a nonprofit organization located in Palm Desert created in 2006 to fill the need for objective, reliable research regarding the health of the Coachella Valley communities.

HARC conducted the first assessment of community health in 2007, and then a second in 2010. The data from 2007 and 2010 are provided free of charge on the HARC website, www.harcdata.org. A wide variety of local organizations utilize this data, including nonprofits, county and city government, universities, hospitals and private businesses, among others. This data helps organizations make a case for grant funding, develop targeted programs and prioritize health needs in the community. In fact, local organizations that cited HARC data in their funding requests have received over \$4.7 million to fund local programs in the Coachella Valley. These numbers continue to grow and provide crucial data for programs that provide needed services for our community, including feeding homebound seniors, providing counseling for school children, and providing free HIV/AIDS testing.

Now the time has come for data collection for the third survey. The survey is conducted via telephone interviews of adults across the Coachella Valley, in both English and Spanish. Because HARC strives to make sure this data represents the entire population of the Coachella Valley, it is extremely important the individuals from all walks of life participate.

Kent State University, a contractor working with HARC, will begin calling Coachella Valley residents in January, and continue to do so until April 2013. Each telephone survey takes approximately 23 minutes to complete. The survey covers important aspects of health and wellness, such as access to health care, chronic illness, mental health, preventative screenings and health behaviors, among others. By also assessing demographic information, HARC is able to determine not only health needs, but also health disparities between groups.

HARC board President, Glen Grayman, M.D. said, "The 2013 needs assessment will not only help produce the most current, reliable and statistically valid data available today, it will also help health care professionals better understand the relative progress or setbacks that have occurred within specific categories."

He goes on to say, "Armed with the baseline data gathered in the previous two Community Health Monitors, this updated study gives us an opportunity to identify trends over a period of time with key metrics."

Community participation is extremely important to the success of this survey. So please, if you receive a call from Kent State University on behalf of HARC, take the time to answer the call and respond to the questions. By participating in the survey, you will be contributing to improving the health of our community.

The results of the 2013 survey will be shared with the community in early 2014, and available for all online at www.harcdata.org.