



# Union-Tribune

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EDUARDO CONTRERAS U-T FILE

Bees are an important element to creating the biodiversity that exists in San Diego County, attracting tourists for its natural beauty and supporting a variety of crops that boost the agricultural industry.

## S.D. HOPING TO SOOTHE THE STING OF BEES' DECLINE

City commits to becoming a Bee City USA, creating more habitats for pollinators and avoiding pesticides to boost population

BY DAVID GARRICK

San Diego may soon have more rooftop green spaces and community gardens as part of a new campaign to boost the shrinking population of local bees, which serve as crucial pollinators needed to sustain agriculture and ecotourism.

The city is the largest in the nation to become a Bee City USA, a designation that requires creating new habitats for pollinators, adopting policies that prevent habitat destruction and revising pest management plans to use pesticides only as a last resort.

"Bee City USA is not just a designation, it's a commitment to biodiversity, pollinators and reducing harmful pesticide use," said City Councilmember Joe LaCava, who spearheaded efforts that culminated with council approval Aug. 1.

San Diego is among more than 150 cities that have made such commitments since an environmental

conservation nonprofit called the Xerces Society created the Bee City program 10 years ago. The only other local city to have adopted the designation is Encinitas.

It's a major boon for bees, which are declining in population worldwide, to have San Diego added to the list of places committed to conservation and community awareness, said UC San Diego ecology professor James Nieh.

"This is a biodiversity hot spot containing a greater diversity of life than any other county in the continental U.S.," said Nieh, noting that San Diego County also has the greatest number of plant and animal species threatened by extinction.

Nieh said the loss of pollinators can kill off many native species of plant, allowing invasive species that increase wildfire risk to flourish in the city's canyons and on its hillsides.

SEE BEES • A7

## COURT SUPPORTS LIMITS ON ABORTION MEDICINE

Appellate panel ruling sets stage for review by U.S. Supreme Court

BY PERRY STEIN, ANN E. MARIMOW & RACHEL ROUBEIN

A federal appeals court said Wednesday that it would restrict access to a widely used abortion medication after finding that the federal government did not follow the proper process when it loosened regulations in 2016 to make the pill more easily available.

Food and Drug Administration decisions to allow the drug mifepristone to be taken later in pregnancy, be mailed directly to patients and be prescribed by a medical professional other than a doctor were not lawful, a three-judge panel of the conservative U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit ruled.

Mifepristone will remain available for now under existing regulations while the litigation continues, in accordance with a Supreme Court ruling this spring. The Justice Department said it will go to the Supreme Court to appeal Wednesday's decision, which only partially upheld a lower-court judge's ruling in favor of a coalition of antiabortion challengers.

If the Supreme Court allows the appeals court's ruling to stand, the abortion pill would still be available in the United States, but it would be more difficult for patients to get it.

"In loosening mifepristone's safety restrictions, FDA failed to address several important concerns about whether the drug would be safe for the women who use it," Judge Jennifer Walker Elrod wrote in Wednesday's opinion. "It failed to consider the cumulative effect of removing several important safeguards at the same time."

Erin Hawley, an attorney for the group that challenged mifepristone, said the ruling is a "major victory." SEE ABORTION • A8

## STUDY FINDS CANCER ON RISE AMONG YOUNGER AMERICANS

Trend most pronounced among women and those age 30 to 39

BY LINDSEY BEVER

Most cancers in the United States are found in people age 65 and older, but a new study shows a concerning trend: Cancer among younger Americans, particularly women, is on the rise, with gastrointestinal, endocrine and breast cancers climbing at the fastest rates.

A study published Wednesday in JAMA Network Open showed that while cancers among older adults have declined, cancers among people younger than 50 have increased slightly overall, with the largest increases among those age 30 to 39.

"This is a population that has had less focus in cancer research and their numbers are getting bigger, so it's important to do more research to understand why this is happening," said Paul Oberstein, director of the Gastrointestinal Medical Oncology Program at NYU Langone's Perlmutter Cancer Center, who was not involved in the study.

If some younger people have an increased risk of cancer, as they age, the concern is that their cancer risk may propagate, Oberstein said. "If we don't understand what's causing this risk and we can't do something to change it, SEE CANCER • A8



NELVIN C. CEPEDA U-T

People walk past an encampment near Petco Park on Wednesday. San Diego began a camping ban late last month in the effort to reduce the number of people living on the streets.

## MONTHLY REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS SHOWS NUMBERS CONTINUE TO GROW

Demand for housing outstrips available units for San Diegans in need

BY BLAKE NELSON

First the good news. Last month, more than 800 homeless people countywide were successfully connected to some form of housing.

But nearly 1,200 simultaneously became homeless for the first time.

The newest monthly report from the Regional Task Force on Homelessness repeats a grim trend: The crisis is growing faster

than it can be contained. Said another way, about 7 people were housed for every 10 that lost a place to stay in July.

That growth has corresponded with many leaders taking a harder line against encampments. San Diego began enforcing its camping ban late last month, Poway launches a similar effort today and Chula Vista may soon follow suit.

And while the problem intersects with a range of issues, including addiction and mental illness, a new nationwide study by the real estate company Home Bay found a "clear correlation between a lack of affordable housing and high rates of homeless-

ness." That analysis adds to a growing body of research that says expensive cities tend to have more people on the street.

The median price for a house, condo or townhouse sold in San Diego County recently rose to \$835,000.

The task force's report also noted that almost 4,200 people signed up for some form of assistance and 835 got in line for housing last month.

Of those who found a home, 250 were seniors, meaning they were at least 55 years old. There were 82 families, more than 100 veterans and nearly 70 people in their late teens or early 20s.

SEE REPORT • A6

## SANDAG TO MOVE HQ TO TOWER BEING BUILT DOWNTOWN

Agency signs lease for 87,308 square feet of space at West building

BY JENNIFER VAN GROVE

San Diego's lead transportation agency has settled on a new downtown headquarters to accommodate its hybrid workforce and host public-facing board meetings.

Last week, the San Diego Association of Governments signed a lease for 87,308 square feet of space at West, the downtown skyscraper at 1011 Union St. being erected by developer Holland Partner Group. The agency signed a 15-year lease, paying roughly \$4.15 per square foot.

"It made sense financially. It made sense functionally. It's by the Santa Fe (Depot Train) Station, so we practice what we preach. It's new and very suitable to our staff," said Hasan Ikhrata, the executive director of SANDAG. "And at the end of the day, we're saving the public money."

Although the price per square foot is higher than what the agency is paying at its current building, the new lease terms were more favorable than those being offered at comparable downtown buildings and SANDAG is leasing less space, he said. SEE SANDAG • A6

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