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Merced D.A. candidate Silveira ousts incumbent, it's Gray vs. Duarte for Congress

Alanis leads Self, Condit in Assembly race; Supervisor Silveira, five others re-elected without opposition, Superintendent Tietjen fends off challenger

By Justin Collins, Reporter

As of June 23, 2022, the Merced County Elections Office had posted the latest results for the June 7th primary election showing all of the county's 278 precincts had been reported and all the county elections have been decided.

The top two candidates in each

race for state and federal office will move on to face off each other in the general election in November.

County Races

There was a serious shake up in the race for District Attorney, with the incumbent Kimberly Helms Lewis significantly behind challenger Supervising Deputy District Attorney

Nicole Argabright Silveira. Silveira led by nearly a two to one margin with 66.56% of the vote compared to Lewis' 33.16% of the vote on election night. The gap has since increased to 69.4% for Silveira to 30.3% for Lewis, a difference of 11,474 votes as of the Thursay update. A write-in candidate received 77 votes or 0.026%.

Steve Tietjen, County Superintendent of Schools, has won the primary for his re-election with 58.15% of the vote, defeating challenger Alberto Lopez Velarde who garnered 41.85% as of the Thursday update.

County Supervisor Scott Silveira, no relation to the new D.A., who represents District 5 including Los Banos, ran unopposed as did Sheriff-Coroner Vernon Howard Warnke, Assessor-Recorder Matt May, Auditor-Controller Lisa Cardella-Presto, Treasurer-Tax Collector Karen Adams and District 3 Supervisor Daron McDaniel.



Nicole Argabright Silveira defeated her boss to win the race for Merced County District Attorney. Source: Silveira campaign

State Legislature

In the State Assembly District 22 race, Juan Alanis (R) has a commanding lead with 49.23% of the vote followed by Joel Gutierrez Campos (R) with 15.4%, Jessica Self (D) with 15.07% and Chad



Assemblyman Adam Gray leads in the race for Congress and will face farmer John Duarte in November. Sources: Silveira campaign website, Gray official, Duarte campaign Facebook page.



Congress

Due to the redistricting that took effect this year, Los Banos is now part of the new 13th Congressional District, which means that Jim Costa is now running to represent a different district, and that our district is open. Our current State Assemblyman, Adam Gray (D), took first place in the open primary in Merced County and was carrying 37.69% of the vote followed by fourth-generation farmer John Duarte (R) who obtained 27.75%. But according to the California Secretary of State's website, throughout District 13, Duarte is leading Gray 34.3% to 31.0% of the vote. The two will face off in November.

Condit (D) with 13.9% in the county. However, throughout the district Alanis is beating Self 36.6% to 26.9%, Condit is trailing with 20.3% and Campos with 12.7% of the vote as of June 23.

In the newly redrawn State Senate District 14 race, incumbent Anna Caballero (D) has the most votes in Merced County with 48.23% of the vote followed by Amnon Shore (R) with 46.17%. But districtwide, Caballero has 52.0% to Shore's 42.0% of the vote as of June 23.

This story will be updated on our website as results continue to come in. Allen D. Payton contributed to this report.

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Our Lady of Mount Carmel celebrating 89th Anniversary July 17 1933 – 2022

The Society of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is extending a warm invitation on the occasion of the 89th Anniversary of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Celebration. The Celebration Mass, featuring classic Italian hymns, will be on Sunday, July 17, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. in St. Joseph Catholic Church in Los Banos.

The Feast Day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is July 16 when she appeared to Saint Simon Stock on July 16, 1251, after he returned to his native England. He had a strong desire to join the Carmelite hermits who lived on Mt. Carmel, but they were forced to migrate to Europe due to Christian persecutions. Our Lady of Mount Carmel gave St. Simon the gift of the Brown Scapular, a sign of salvation, a safeguard in danger and a pledge of Mary's special protection.

New members will be invested with the Brown Scapular. For more information on membership, contact Tracey at 826-0903.



Triduum Mass Schedule – St. Joseph Church

Thursday, July 14 - 6:30 p.m.
Rosary/7:00 p.m. Mass
Friday, July 15 - 6:30 p.m.
Rosary/7:00 p.m. Mass
Saturday, July 16 - 3:30 p.m.
Rosary/4:00 p.m. Mass (Feast Day)
Sunday, July 17 - 10:30 a.m.
Rosary/11:00 a.m. Mass/5:30 p.m.
Benediction

St. Joseph Catholic Church is located at 1621 Center Avenue.

In Memoriam: former long-time Los Banos teacher Iona Klinoff passes at 90

In Loving Memory

Iona Mae (Beck) Klinoff, age 90, passed away in Bakersfield, CA on Monday, June 6, 2022 of heart failure.

She was born on the family farm in Littleport, Clayton County, Iowa, the sixth of eight children to Clarence and Mollie Beck.

Iona was passionate about education. In elementary school, she wrote a paper about her teachers, speaking very highly of them. Iona graduated from Littleport IA, in a class of three. She became a teacher herself while in Iowa, then Minnesota, then spending the majority of her career at Los Banos Elementary School, from which she retired.

She and her husband Jack then went to Mexico City for one year to teach English and one year in Guatemala City.

It was during the years in Los Banos that she and her family spent countless weeks camping with Sierra Club members. They would hike, sleep in tents, and sing songs like "John Jakob Jingleheimer Schmidt", around open campfires while observing the constellations at night.

Still not done with teaching, Iona and Jack moved to Tucson, AZ and continued teaching English to employees at their favorite Asian restaurant after hours. Iona was preceded in death by her husband of 56 years, Jack Klinoff, in 2007.

Children include: Jackie Sproul (Rose Naughton), Kathy (Lionel) Gill, Robert (Helen) Klinoff, Penny (Rick) Baker.

Grandchildren: Gwendolyn (Todd) Williams, Perry Greer, Timothy (Satoko) Gill, Jennifer (Travis) Pierce, Desiree (Nick) Ingalls.

Great Grandchildren: Clayton, Savannah, Andrew, Kevin, Scott, Hajime, Ian, and Logan.

Iona has a sister-in-law, and many nephews and nieces in Iowa. She also has a sister-in-law and nieces and a nephew in Texas.

She will be remembered often, especially when a family member bakes her wonderful Monster Cookies, or looks up at the clear night sky.



Iona Mae (Beck) Klinoff with her husband Jack.

Los Banos Downtown Association to Light up the Sky for 4th of July Celebration Saturday, July 2

With biggest fireworks show in the county!

By Los Banos Downtown Association

The Los Banos Downtown Association is proud to present the 2nd Annual 4th of July Celebration on Saturday, July 2, 2022, starting at 1:00 PM at Henry Miller Plaza located at 600 H Street in downtown Los Banos.

The event features carnival rides, food vendors, arts and crafts vendors, beer booths, live musical performances, and of course the spectacular fireworks show at night. This event is expected to attract thousands of Los Banos residents and others from neighboring towns.

Vendor Space Available

If you offer arts and crafts, we want YOU to be a vendor at this year's 2nd Annual 4th of July Celebration. Call 209-710-9022 or visit our office in downtown Los Banos at 907 6th Street to reserve a booth space. The event is less than three weeks away, so hurry and reserve your spot!

Thank You Sponsors

The Los Banos Downtown Association would like to thank our major sponsors The Morning Star Company, Coldwell Banker Kaljian and Associates, Mid Valley Disposal, and Sutter Health Hospital Los Banos for their generous donations and for helping make this memorable event possible.

For more information about this event and upcoming events presented by the Los Banos Downtown Association, follow us on social media. Facebook: @Los Banos Downtown Association Instagram: @losbanosdowntown.

The Los Banos Downtown Association

Light up

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Saturday, July 2, 2022

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SCAN ME

LBHS, from p.1

those who received honors and awards.

Following the traditional processional of Pomp and Circumstance, followed by the National Anthem performed by the Senior Choristers, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Senior Class Officers, President Alexis Carlucci, Vice President Paige Smith, Treasurer Antonio Miramontes Andrade and Secretary Allyson Felix.

Waltman introduced special guests, Los Banos Unified School District Chief Academic Officer Sean Ritchey, Board President Anthony Parreira, and Trustees Margaret Benton and Gene Lieb, who joined him on the stage.

Speaking first, the principal, whose son, Tyler was one of the graduates said, "I've had the unique privilege of watching a lot of you grow up and I've loved every single minute of our time together on campus."

"Two words embody the Class of 2022, fun and friendship," he stated. "Sometimes a little too much fun. You brought the fun the first day you stepped on campus as seniors."

"In the midst of all the fun... take yourself seriously. Take your dreams and aspirations seriously," Waltman challenged the students.

"Remember, once a Tiger always a Tiger. Tiger pride," he concluded to cheers from the graduates.

Student speakers included Valedictorians Carlucci and Smith, followed by another speech by

Carlucci as the Senior Class President. "Wow. Valedictorian," Carlucci said. "I've always dreamed of getting valedictorian since I was a little girl... even before I actually knew what the word meant or what it took to actually get here. It's an absolute honor and it's a privilege and I take pride in all the work it got to get here."

She then thanked her parents, friends and teachers, "who helped shape my life thus far."

"More importantly, I'd like to give thanks to myself," Carlucci continued. "I don't give myself a lot of credit. But after the countless amounts of stress, the sleepless nights, the long days, the endless amounts of hard work and dedication, the 12 AP classes I had to take to get here, it feels good, really good to say that it paid off in some way shape or form."

"Life is so much more than high school. It really is only four years of my life," she stated. We're going to get away from this small town, go on doing bigger things, greater things, hopefully striving to make the world a better place."

Smith encouraged her classmates saying, "What a roller coaster it's been. We have to give ourselves a pat on the back because we went through things no other generation will be able to relate to. From distance learning to going hybrid, and finally getting back in person, we can truly say we've done it all."

"Through it all we had to master the courage and confidence to make it to the other side," she continued. "By sitting her, tonight we can proudly say that we did it."

"Most importantly, always remember the courage you built up within yourself over the past four years," Smith said. "It will be one of the best qualities you can have as it may help you through the bad days and see to it



that you will thrive on the good ones."

"Remember to always have faith in yourself. Congratulations, Class of 2022. We did it," she concluded.

Carlucci returned to the stage, who reminded her classmates that she was also their freshman, sophomore and junior class president. "Congratulations to all of us for all of the accomplishments that got us to this point," she stated, then spoke of what the class did during their four years on campus.

Citizenship Awards were then presented by Trustee Benton to a male and female student chosen by the faculty. Kaylee Perreira and JohnPaul Vander Poel each received a savings bond donated by the VFW Post 2487 and American Legion Post 166.

The California Scholarship Federation Lifetime Members who have achieved academic excellence, announced by CSF Advisor Kelly Todd, were President Paige Smith, Vice President Anissa Sanchez, Sheila Adame, Kate Aragona, Hailie Benetti, Gianna Dahlgren,

Allyson Felix, Gemma Fregoso Flores, Petrina Gilardi, Treasurer Emely Guzman, Elijah Habon, Kylie LaLonde, Juliana Love Liwanag, Gary Lu, Lizbeth Madrigal, Diana Meza, Antonio Miramontes, Valerie Ortiz, Victoria Paolini, Victor Regalado, Sydney Robertson, Davina Rosales, Emma van Loben Sels, Erin Vierra, Tyler Waltman and Angelica Warren.

After Dr. Ritchey proclaimed the class qualified having met all the state and school district requirements and Board President Parreira accepted the class, the graduates received their diplomas. Los Banos Mayor Tom Faria was one of the two who announced the graduates.

"I don't mean to sound corny. But I never expected to be in this position, and I am extremely grateful," she said.

"It's the small things that matter. It's the small things we're all going to miss," Sanchez stated. "From the bottom of my heart, I want to say how proud I am of every single one of you sitting in front of me, right now... that just walked across the stage."

"No matter where you're going, we'll always have a piece of each other within ourselves," she continued.

"To the Class of 2022, I'm rooting for you, and I always will be," Sanchez said. "Go out into the world and be great. But most importantly, be happy."

"There's a big difference between living and existing. I hope you all choose to live," she concluded.

Sanchez was then joined by the Senior Class Officers to lead the turning of the tassels. That was followed by many of the graduates tossing their caps into the air and hugging each other. Their families and friends in the stands cheered, then joined them on the field for photos and more hugs.

See the Los Banos High School Class of 2022 graduation video on YouTube.

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LBPD, PAL host Sober Grad Night at Jungle Jim's

Class of 2022 grads from all high schools in Los Banos enjoyed a night of bowling, Lazer Tag, arcade games and snacks. Photo by Allen D. Payton

PHS, from p.1

COVID-19 pandemic. Parents, siblings, relatives, and friends proudly cheered from the sidelines as their graduating students marched through the Panther Tunnel, and out to the stage.

The ceremony began with a moment of silence to commemorate past and present students and staff who passed away, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Azelya Irean Talavera. The singing of the National Anthem by Nadily Escobar and Jacob Rogers (who earned the National School Choral Award in May) was accompanied by the Pacheco High School Band.

A welcome address was then given by Senior Class President, Ashley Rayann Bernal followed by an inspirational speech given by another graduate, Emma Janae Bettencourt. In the speeches they spoke about the triumphs, challenges, and bonds formed throughout their academic journey, but something else mentioned marked the significance of this graduation. Students reminded us that until this school year, they hadn't seen their fellow classmates since their



Senior Class President Ashley Rayann Bernal speaks to the grads as Vice Principal Amanda Sanchez looks on. Photo by Allen D. Payton

sophomore year.

California Scholastic Federation Lifetime Members Melony Hernandez, Yoxelyn Hernandez Chamu, Aaliyah Nicole Lucas, Celina Marie Martinez, Isabella Danielle Nocon, Sandra Juliette Orozco Preciado, Raquel Pineda, Diana Alondra Quintero Garcia and Abigail Isaura Villa, were then honored

by Principal Daniel Sutton and CSF Advisors, David Curry and Jeffrey De la Cruz. Citizenship Awards were presented by LBUSD School Board Trustee Marlene Smith. Vice Principal Amanda Sanchez then introduced Principal Sutton who offered his message to the graduates remotely as he was unable to attend the ceremony due to a case of COVID.

This year was the first year back since the pandemic, and masks and social distancing rules for public schools only ended a few months prior. Students and other guest speakers seemed relieved and happy to be able to attend and host a "normal" graduation.

The Pacheco High School Class of 2022 Valedictorian was Dereck Zahil Rubio and the Salutatorians were Rhianna Nicole Gumboc Irao and Jasmin Ramos and each gave inspiring and encouraging speeches. Rubio Irao ended hers with, "we are Panther strong" to cheers from her classmates. Ramos spoke in

Spanish for part of her speech to which some of the students cheered and shouted, "Si se puede," meaning "yes, we can." Rubio was the final student speaker saying, "an adventure of four years has come to an end" and "be proud of the people you've become... our journey doesn't end tonight."

Superintendent Dr. Mark Marshall issued his proclamation that each of the graduates had met the requirements of the State of California and the Los Banos Unified School District to graduate. The diplomas were then presented by members of the school board.

Following the turning of the tassels, led by Class President Bernal, the graduates cheered and many tossed their caps into the air.

Watch the video of the graduation on the NFHS Network website.

Allen D. Payton contributed to this report.

No contest pleas in \$300k Los Banos restaurant embezzlement case – Woman swindled six investors

The Merced County District Attorney's office announced on May 25, 2022, while appearing before Merced County Superior Court Judge David Moranda in the Los Banos Courthouse, Robin Ruth Recla, aka Robin Berard, entered no contest pleas to embezzlement and filing a false tax return, both felonies. Ms. Recla admitted to swindling approximately \$300,000 from six Los Banos investors. She also failed to claim the profits on her income tax return.

In 2018, the group of investors pooled their funds and created an L.L.C. with the intent of creating and opening a restaurant in the Los Banos area. Ms. Recla was selected to manage and direct the project, but investors learned there were problems when they were notified by their bank that the business accounts were overdrawn.

An investigative team comprised of an investigator from the state Franchise Tax Board Criminal Investigation Bureau, Commander Justin Melden with the Los Banos Police Department, and Merced County D.A. Investigator Moses Nelson worked diligently to trace the financial transactions exposing Ms. Recla's behavior. The coordinated, year-long investigation uncovered Ms. Recla's personal use of nearly all of the funds, including \$159,273 in checks written to herself and her withdrawal of \$24,900 in cash from automated teller machines. The investigators determined Ms. Recla also used the investors' funds for personal travel and the purchase

of personal items like furniture.

Ms. Recla will appear in front of Judge Moranda on August 17, 2022 for sentencing. In the past, embezzled amounts as high as the amount involved in this case would have resulted in a larger prison sentence. However, changes in the law now mean the longest possible sentence Ms. Recla faces is two years and eight months in prison. Also, with the passage of AB 109, known as realignment, Ms. Recla's sentence in most cases would result in a Penal Code, Section 1170(h) local prison sentence.

Local prison sentences in Merced County are in nearly all cases served on the Sheriff's Supervised Release Program, referred to commonly as ankle monitor. However, because investigators and the Merced County D.A.'s Office appropriately pursued and prosecuted the acts of tax evasion, any prison sentence issued in this case must be served in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Ms. Recla's no contest plea was not the product of a negotiated plea and she entered an open plea to the charges, meaning that the court has all options available up to the maximum allowable by law.

At the sentencing hearing in August, attorneys for both sides will present arguments to Judge Moranda advocating for a sentence they believe to be in the interest of justice. Deputy D.A. Travis Colby is handling this case for the Merced County District Attorney's Office.

California State Parks Adventure Pass available for 4th Graders and families

Hey, fourth graders! Are you ready for an adventure?

The California State Park Adventure Pass is just for you. See how you can visit some of the most amazing parks in the country with your family and friends—for free.

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Los Banos Community Center - 645 7th St.

OPEN GYM HOURS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Councilmember Jones issues statement on firing of city manager

By Justin Collins, Reporter

Following the firing of Los Banos city manager Josh Pinheiro, Wednesday, June 15, District 1 Councilmember Brett Jones issued the following statement on his Facebook page Saturday, June 18.

"It is with great regret to say the City Council voted with a 3-2 split vote to unjustly terminate the City Manager. Council Members Deborah Lewis, Refugio Llamas and Mayor Tom Faria voted to dismiss the City Manager. In my opinion, for no logical or rational explanation from the three elected officials that voted.

When Council hired the City Manager we didn't want a 'Government Man'. Our goal was to find someone that was going to work in the City's best interest and not their own self promotion. We wanted a City Manager that would get out of the office and engage with our citizens and stakeholders. We wanted a City Manager that would take back control of City Hall and raise the moral and instill a culture that employees could take pride in.

We had found the right person for the job. Someone that was not afraid to roll up their sleeves and dive right into the challenging issues that all previous City Managers hid from.

Besides all the day-to-day tasks, here are just a few of the accomplishments our City Manager did for the City that previous City Managers overlooked or ignored.

- Allocated \$1,000,000 to rebuild the dilapidated animal shelter.

- Allocated \$1,000,000 to local small businesses through the RAD Card program.

- Allocated funding to build pickleball courts. A fast growing sport in our community.

- Allocated funding to trim City owned trees. Our City owned trees have been severely neglected for many years.

- Allocated funding to rehab the gun range for our Police Department including funding to construct restrooms at the gun range so that our Officers won't have to drive all the way back into town every time they need to use the restroom.

- Allocated funding for a tone splitter in our Fire Department's radio system. This will prevent unnecessary distractions for our firefighters and allow them to be better rested for when emergencies call.

- Allocated funding for new scoreboards at the little league fields at Colorado Park. These scoreboards have not worked for years.

- Provided additional funding for the rehab at the Ag Sports Complex. This will allow the baseball fields to be regraded along with other upgrades.

- Allocated funding for an additional mechanic at Public Works. We have been an average of two months behind on our fleet maintenance including our vital police cars.

- Allocated funding for deferred maintenance and capital improvements on our City buildings.

- Beautified landscaping at Pacheco



District 1 Councilman Brett Jones from his official Facebook page

Park and in many other areas of Los Banos.

- Created a partnership with the Los Banos Unified School District to refurbish the Basketball courts on 7th and Pacheco.

- Spent time with our Police Officers as well as our Firemen. Made it a point to go on at least one ride-along a month.

The City Manager was in numerous conversations with commercial developers in bringing businesses into town, along with developing key pieces of land that have sat vacant for many decades. I've personally sat in on some of those conversations and heard these commercial developers say how happy and impressed they are, and how exciting it is to work with a City Manager that was so proactive. These commercial developers stated that they do not have this kind of positive experience in many of the cities they currently do business in. It was rare for them to get

any responses let alone any engagement from other City managers.

He worked 60+ hours a week including nights, weekends and holidays when he was only contracted for 40 hours a week.

He was working on building moral and a positive culture within the City. Moral, culture, vision and a mission have always been missing from this City.

Amazingly the two council members that voted to terminate the City Manager's contract also voted earlier that evening approving the City Manager's outlay on the City's budget for this fiscal year – a historic budget at that. Mayor Tom Faria was absent for the regular session meeting, but there was no questions, no complaints nor any opposition received from him regarding the City's budget. It would appear the City Manager was doing a good job.

Imagine owning a professional football team that's in the playoffs on its way to the Super Bowl and you fire the head coach because you don't like the plays he's giving to his team.

Plain and simple our City Manager was caught in a political crossfire.

There was no rational logic to the vote. It was based purely on emotion without a single thought given to the repercussions that will follow. Because of the vulnerability these three City officials left the City in, along with their lack of secession planning to move this City forward, I have absolutely zero confidence in the leadership of our Mayor Tom Faria, Council Member Deborah Lewis and Council Member Refugio Llamas. It is completely inexcusable what they did.

Councilmember Lambert also issues statement on firing of city manager

By Justin Collins, Reporter

Following the firing of Los Banos city manager Josh Pinheiro, last Wednesday night and the issuance of a statement on Saturday by District 3 Councilmember Brett Jones of the mayor and two council members who voted in favor, District 1 Councilmember Kenneth Lambert issued the following statement on his official Facebook page on Tuesday, June 21. It, too is critical of the three who voted to fire Pinheiro.

Lambert wrote:

"To the Residents of Los Banos,

I am absolutely appalled and embarrassed of what transpired this past "Closed Session" Council Meeting. I do NOT agree with this decision.

Our direction for hiring Josh Pinheiro was that we wanted a seasoned leader without all the excuses that government employees are quick to give for things not getting done. We needed someone who was strictly about the well-being of Los Banos; someone that had a vision for our City's economic outlook and the mindset on how to get us there.



District 3 Councilman Kenneth Lambert from his official Facebook page.

For once we had a City Manager that got out from behind his desk to see the issues first hand. The City Manager was excelling at doing the job we desperately needed. At our June 15th Council Meeting, we passed the City's budget by unanimous vote with the biggest City improvement plan that this City has ever seen. This was all lead by the City Manager with the help of the department

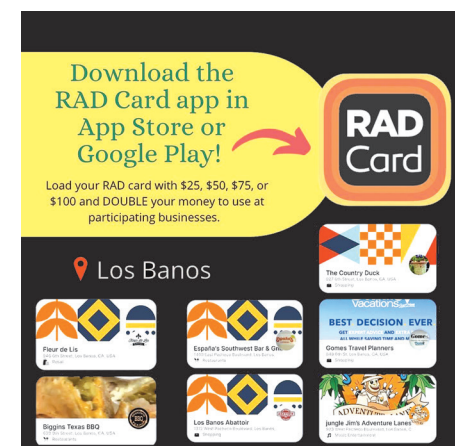
heads, finally working together for a common goal.

The vote to terminate the City Manager last week came from Council Members Refugio Llamas, Deborah Lewis and Mayor Tom Faria. Their vote was purely out of emotion with no justified reason, no thought or logic given to the repercussions this would have on our City and Residents moving forward.

For once in this City, our Residents were seeing a positive change for our community and Council Members

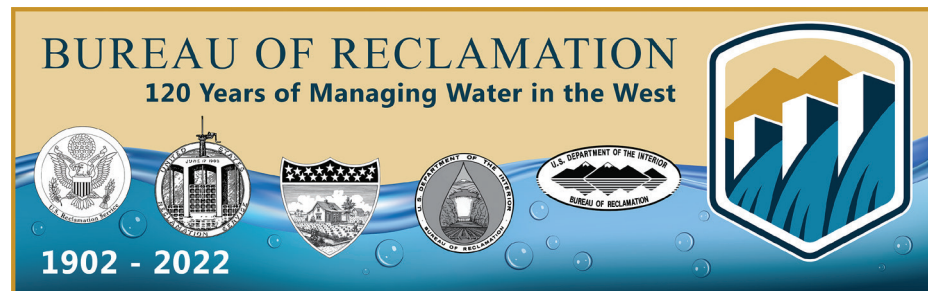
Refugio Llamas, Deborah Lewis and Mayor Tom Faria RIPPED THAT AWAY FROM YOU, THE TAX PAYER, without any concern for the outlook and well-being of Los Banos. The vote to terminate Josh Pinheiro was unfair and without cause.

We need our Residents to come forward at our next in-person Council meeting on July 6th at 6:00 PM to voice their frustrations and demand an explanation from Council. City Hall is located at 520 J Street in Los Banos."



Bureau of Reclamation commences 120th Anniversary with groundbreaking of B.F. Sisk Dam seismic safety project – Will not increase capacity, could take 10 years

Held at San Luis Reservoir during 60th anniversary year of President Kennedy's appearance to begin dam construction in 1962



By Ana M. Valdovinos, Reporter

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) commenced their 120th anniversary on June 17, 2022, at San Luis Reservoir with a groundbreaking for the B.F. Sisk Dam Modification Seismic Safety Plan project. The day also recognized the 60th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy stepping foot on top of the hill on August 18, 1962, to begin construction of the massive dam project that continues to benefit the Central Valley's people, agriculture, wildlife refuges and waterways to this day.

The safety project is Reclamation's most monumental since the 1978 Safety of Dams Act. The billion-dollar endeavor received an investment of \$100 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed by President Biden earlier this year. Reclamation will be reconstructing the B.F. Sisk Dam and many others for seismic events and to minimize any risk to the public.

Speakers for the event included Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton, Assistant Secretary of Water and Science Tanya Trujillo, Reclamation California-Great Basin Regional Director Ernest Conant, California Department of Water Resources Karla Nemeth, and California State Water Resources Control Board Vice Chair Dorene D'Adamo.

The event helped "kick off a years' worth of celebration with the Bureau's legacy of managing water of the west," said Touton. "The work being done here funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is emblematic of our commitment of modernizing water infrastructure. So,

it is fitting to break ground here once again and to invest in our infrastructure and in the future of California."

Established in 1902 by President Theodore Roosevelt's administration and renamed in 1923, the Bureau of Reclamation continues to reliably deliver clean water and power to meet multiple requests and adapt to public needs. The Bureau maintains 487 dams, manages 338 reservoirs, and operates 53 hydroelectric power plants. Delivering more than 10 trillion gallons of water to about 31 million American people.

While remaining optimistic about the historic drought and the hardships of California due to climate change,

"This project symbolizes the state working with the Federal Government, the local communities working with the state, this program is unique. There is no other project in the history of the United States where a state has put such a large contribution to the development of its own resources, and where the national government has joined with the State. This has brought your state to be the pioneer in the United States in the field of development and conservation of our natural resources. California, in this area, is number one and it has helped make possible the San Luis project which joins all of us together as co- and equal partners." President John F. Kennedy at San Luis Dam Groundbreaking Ceremony, August 18, 1962.

Commissioner Touton and the USBR bring contemporary resources to the Central Valley. The BF Sisk Modification Project stands as an example for that. This \$100 Million project will add safety features and critical water supply deliveries for farmers, ranchers, and wildlife refuges. Also, helping the system better adapt to the changing climate.

In March 2022, the Department of Interior publicized the \$100 million investment in the B.F. Sisk Dam



Assistant Secretary of Water and Science Tanya Trujillo, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton, California Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth, California-Great Basin Regional Director Ernest Conant, and California State Water Resources Control Board Vice Chair Dorene D'Adamo and others turn shovels of dirt for the ceremonial ground-breaking to begin construction on the B.F. Sisk Dam seismic project on Friday, June 17, 2022. Photo by Ana Valdovinos

Modification project as part of the president's infrastructure package for a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation's infrastructure. The Infrastructure Law provides a total of \$500 million available throughout the country for critical dam safety projects and B.F. Sisk is the first beneficiary. These projects must follow through to mitigate the changes in climate for the future hope of clean water.

"We must work together to secure a future in which adequate supply of water is a reality instead of a vision," said Commissioner Touton.

"We are standing on the shoulders of so many leaders of a previous generation

it. But it won't store anymore water," Conant added.

Henry Garcia, the Project Manager who will be doing the hard, tedious work, shared about increasing the height of the dam.

"In order to raise the dam by 10 feet, we need to work on the downstream section, the slope wash area," he stated. "We'll need to excavate the bad material that we aren't satisfied with and build it back. There is a section of spillway that is exposed. We are going to create a tunnel and put material over that. The reason is there is another slope washes that is much bigger on the other side of the first spill way."

"That is the first three years of construction alone out of 10 years," said Garcia. "After the first three contracts are completed, the fourth contract will be the additional 10-foot raise."

The benefits of the total 20-foot increase in the dam's height will be additional water storage for the downstream. The years of 2017-2018 was the last time that the glory hole was overflowed.

California Department of Water Resources spokesperson, Maggie Macias was asked if the 20-foot expansion will allow for storing any additional water and not just a safety measure. She responded, "The groundbreaking event on June 17th was for the Sisk Dam Safety of Dams Modification Project that will modernize the dam to reduce seismic risk by including downstream shear keys and buttress as well as raising the dam to add extra freeboard to address settlement that could occur in the event of a major earthquake. This project does not include increasing the reservoir's capacity (water storage)."

"There is another project that the Bureau of Reclamation is currently studying. It is the B.F. Sisk Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project," Macias explained. "This expansion project is being investigated by the Bureau and might include a 10-foot raise and increase in reservoir capacity."

Additional information for the project can be found here: <https://sldmwa.org/sisk-project/>

who thought about California's future, had a vision for a California's future and executed on that," said DWR Nemeth. "An extreme drought that is really on the road to a different climate for the western United States, and herein California."

The water in the San Luis Reservoir serves the communities around it. The safety plan will provide clean water for everyone in the Valley. It will bring good jobs to the region, and it really shows the investment of our infrastructure to continue supporting the industries here and the agriculture

Asked how long the efforts on the project had been under way he responded, "It started about 15 years ago looking for the seismic problems to see if there was any. Then we figured out the problem and how to fix it."

Conant is hoping for the project to be done before the 10-year mark. He has hopes to make the dam safer and modified quickly and efficiently before any large impact.

"The Safety of Dams project is rebuilding the dam and putting new material in the back of it then raising

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