



Summer • 2022

**KVPR News wins
regional Murrow
awards, Golden Mikes**

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**Punjabi family plants
the seed for an entire
community**

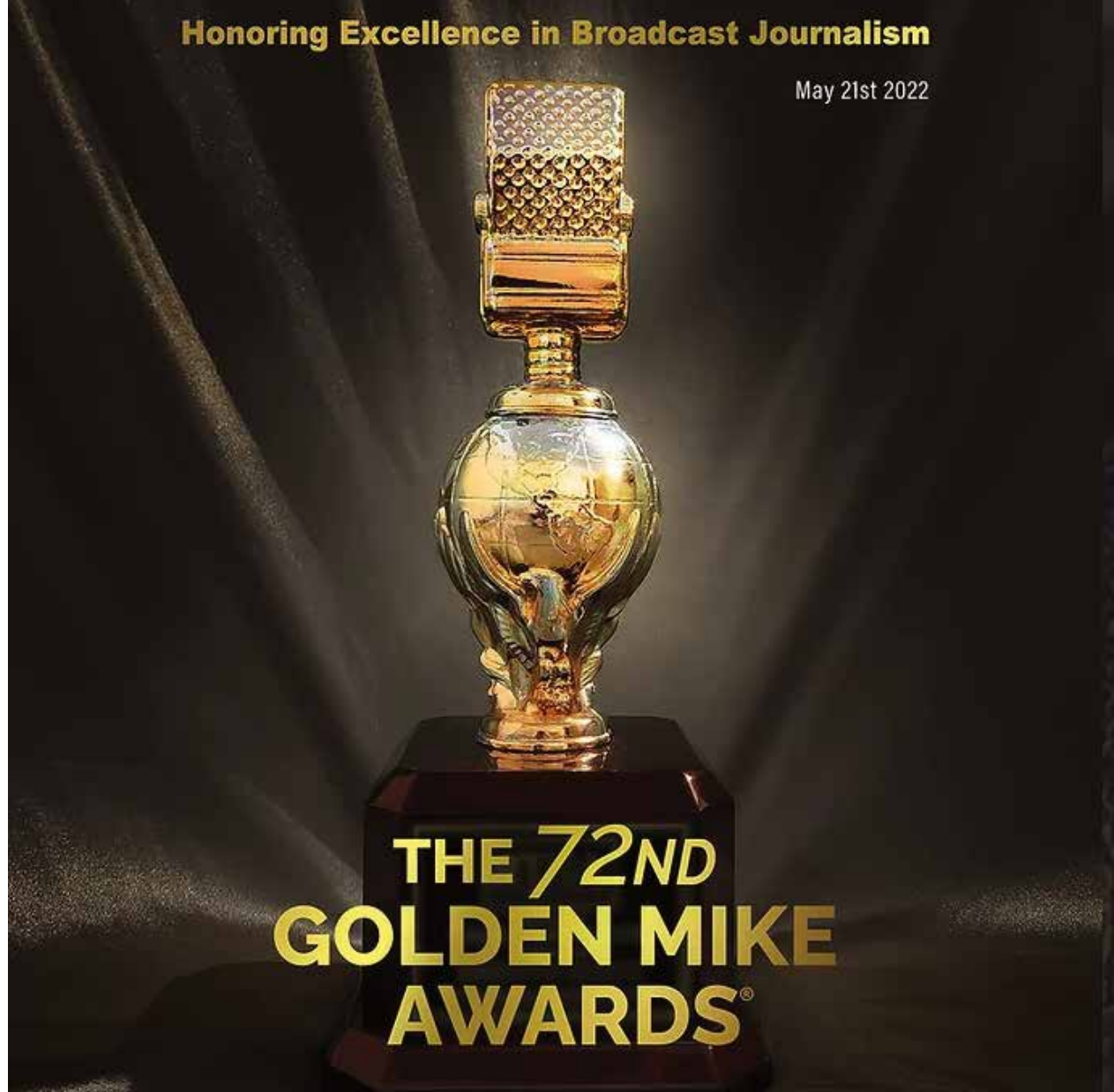
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**Oil town grapples with a
green future**

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**Francis Lam, host of
The Splendid Table**

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KVPR podcasts, news reporting honored with 2022 Golden Mike Awards

KVPR's hit podcast Escape From Mammoth Pool was among the five station honorees at the recent Golden Mike Awards in Los Angeles. The 72nd awards event, hosted by the Radio Television News Association of Southern California, is among the most respected honors for broadcasters in the region.

Escape From Mammoth Pool received honors in the "Best Podcast Feature Reporting" category. Another KVPR podcast "COVID-19 This Week: San Joaquin Valley" was honored with the award for best continuing

coverage. KVPR's program "Valley Edition" also won the award for "Best Talk Show or Public Affairs Program."

Other station honorees included KVPR News Director Alice Daniel for her reporting on a multi-generational Parlier family's experience with COVID-19, winning the award for "Best Individual Writing." KVPR reporter Kerry Klein won honors for "Best Investigative Reporting" for her coverage of COVID-19 deaths among the patient population of Coalinga State Hospital.

All of the station's awards came in Division B, which is reserved for small newsrooms in Southern California.



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KVPR Classical - FM 89.3 HD2
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NOTES FROM THE TOP

by Joe Moore, *President & General Manager*

Weekends give us all the opportunity to recharge, refresh and relax after a busy week. It's no different in the world of public radio, and recently we've made some changes to refresh our weekend schedule to better serve you and your weekend routine. Highlights include an extra hour of Weekend Edition on both Saturday and Sunday mornings, as well as additional broadcasts of Wait Wait Don't Tell Me, and new shows like Hidden Brain, The Splendid Table, Reveal and Freakonomics. We're excited to bring these new programs to our air, joining recent additions like the BBC Newshour to better serve you with the news and information content you're looking for. At the same time, we're also strengthening the lineup of KVPR Classical, with the addition of Sunday Baroque to our HD-2 service in the Fresno/Clovis area on FM 89.3 HD-2 and worldwide on the KVPR App, KVPR.org and connected devices.

While we're welcoming new programs to our air, we're also welcoming two talented journalists who both grew up in the San Joaquin Valley to the KVPR news department, Esther Quintanilla and Joshua Yeager. Joshua will be in a new position as a Report For America Corps reporter based in Bakersfield, covering health and environmental issues for us in Kern County. In recent years, Joshua has been reporting on similar issues for the Times-Delta in Visalia. Esther will be based in Fresno County and will focus on a beat covering diverse communities. She grew up in Bakersfield, got her undergraduate degree from UC Merced and graduate degree from USC, and will be contributing to our work with the Central Valley News Collaborative. Esther's role had previously been filled by reporter Madi Bolanos, who in June was hired as the new statewide host of KQED's The California Report. While we're sad to see Madi leave KVPR's newsroom, we're excited to have her continue her career in public media and know that we'll continue to hear her on KVPR weekday mornings.

In the last issue of KVPR Magazine, we featured a cover story about the launch of our new podcast The Other California. Since that issue went to print, our team has completed the project, bringing listeners 11 episodes of stories and conversations about our valley and the people who call it home. If you haven't already done so, I strongly encourage you to give it a listen, as it's one of the finest and most thoughtful projects KVPR has ever produced. Throughout the podcast, host, executive producer and KVPR News Director Alice Daniel discovers the rich human stories that fill the San Joaquin Valley's small towns, from Taft to Huron, Woodlake, Chowchilla and beyond. I guarantee even people who have lived in the Valley their whole lives will learn something new, and walk away with a different understanding of what makes our region and the people who live here special. You can listen to The Other California wherever you get your podcasts or find it online at: KVPR.org/TOC

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ON THE COVER: Francis Lam, host of the Splendid Table.

KVPR PROGRAMS

MUSIC

For a listing of our music selections, visit KVPR.org or contact the station.

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA This weekly broadcast offers a unique format that illustrates the fascinating stories found inside the music. Tuesdays at 8pm.

CLASSICS ALL NIGHT with Peter Van De Graaff Host Peter Van De Graaff plays sweet and soothing selections. Listen weekdays from 10pm to midnight, and Saturday from 11-midnight.

CLASSICAL 24 Timeless classical music. 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on KVPR Classical digital stream.

CONCIERTO Music by Spanish and Latin American composers is alternating with classical favorites performed by Hispanic artists. Hosted by Frank Dominguez and presented in Spanish and English. Saturdays at 9pm.

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC Recorded performances of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Wednesdays at 8pm.

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC Recorded performances of the New York Philharmonic hosted by Alec Baldwin. Mondays at 8pm.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY Recorded performances of the San Francisco Symphony. Thursdays at 8pm.

SUNDAY BAROQUE This program celebrates the current wealth of recorded Baroque music. Now on KVPR Classical digital stream, 9am to noon.

SUNDAY NIGHT JAZZ Hosted by KVPR's David Aus with jazz classics to new recordings. Sundays from 9pm to midnight.

INFORMATION

1A Daily talk program from WAMU and NPR, exploring issues in a changing America, and encouraging you to "speak freely." Hosted by Jenn White, weekdays from 9am-11am.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED News magazine from NPR. Weekdays 3:30pm to 6:30pm. Weekends 5pm-6pm.

BBC NEWS HOUR Live from London, the BBC offers an update on the top global news every day at 1pm.

THE CALIFORNIA REPORT This statewide newscast is heard weekday mornings at 6:50am and 8:50am. The California Report Magazine, a half-hour news magazine program, is heard Fridays at 6:30pm.

FORUM A statewide look at the issues facing California, hosted by KQED's Mina Kim. Weekdays at 2pm.

FRESH AIR WEEKEND Hosted by Peabody Award-winning Terry Gross. Saturdays at 10am.

HERE AND NOW News and features from NPR and WBUR in Boston. Mondays through Thursdays 11am to 1pm.

LEFT, RIGHT & CENTER A fast-paced hour of smart, witty, and serious talk that takes on the week's front-page issues. Saturdays at 6pm.

LATINO USA Hosted by Maria Hinojosa. English language news and culture program from a Latino perspective. Saturdays at 3pm.

MARKETPLACE Business news with host Kai Ryssdal. Weekdays at 3pm, rebroadcast Monday-Thursday at 6:30 pm.

MORNING EDITION National and international news from NPR. Weekdays from 3am to 9am.

REVEAL Produced by the Center for investigative Reporting, Reveal goes deep into the pressing issues of our time. Hosted by Al Letson. Sundays at 12pm; Mondays at 7pm.

SCIENCE FRIDAY with Ira Flatow. Talk about science and the environment. Fridays 11am to 1pm.

WEEKEND EDITION The Saturday and Sunday edition of NPR's most popular news program. Weekend mornings from 5am to 10am.

STAR DATE Weekdays at 6:19am and 10:00pm.

TALK & ENTERTAINMENT

THE ARTS HOUR Cultural highlights and interviews from the week. Hosted by Nikki Bedi. Sundays at 6pm.

FREAKONOMICS Host Stephen J. Dubner uses an economic lens to explore the hidden side of everything. Saturdays at 2pm.

HIDDEN BRAIN Explore the forces that drive human behavior with host Shankar Vedantam. Sundays at 11am.

INTELLIGENCE SQUARED U.S. Global thought-leaders challenge conventional wisdom and each other on a range of topics. Sundays at 8pm.

IT'S BEEN A MINUTE Casual conversations about the connections between pop culture and current events. Saturday 4pm-5pm.

THE MOTH True stories told live, from professional and amateur storytellers based in New York. Tuesdays and Sundays at 7pm.

THE PULSE Stories from the intersection of health and science. Hosted by Maiken Scott. Sundays at 2pm.

THE SPLENDID TABLE Conversations about cooking, sustainability, and food culture. Hosted by Francis Lam. Sundays at 3pm.

TED RADIO HOUR Innovative ideas from the world's top thinkers. Sundays at 4pm and Fridays at 7pm.

THIS AMERICAN LIFE Hosted by Ira Glass. Themed stories with a unique focus on our everyday experiences. Wednesdays at 7 pm, Saturdays at noon.

THROUGHLINE NPR's weekly program about history, dedicated to the idea that the past is always present. Thursdays at 7pm.

TRAVEL WITH RICK STEVES Explore with travel expert and author Rick Steves as he talks with friends from around the globe. Saturdays at 8pm.

WAIT WAIT...DON'T TELL ME! Join host Peter Sagal for this fun-filled hour of mind-stretching fun, based on the week's news. Saturdays at 11am and 7pm; Sundays at 10am.

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or on your favorite connected device.**

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SUMMER 2022 AUDIOWEEK

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
12 am								12 am
1 am				BBC WORLD SERVICE				1 am
2 am								2 am
3 am								3 am
4 am								4 am
5 am								5 am
6 am				MORNING EDITION				6 am
7 am	WEEKEND EDITION						WEEKEND EDITION	7 am
8 am								8 am
9 am								9 am
10 am				1A				10 am
11 am	WAIT WAIT...DON'T TELL ME						FRESH AIR WEEKEND	11 am
Noon	HIDDEN BRAIN			HERE AND NOW		SCIENCE FRIDAY	WAIT WAIT...DON'T TELL ME	Noon
1 pm	REVEAL						THIS AMERICAN LIFE	1 pm
2 pm	BBC NEWS HOUR			BBC NEWS HOUR			BBC NEWS HOUR	2 pm
3 pm	THE PULSE			FORUM			FREAKONOMICS	3 pm
4 pm	SPLENDID TABLE			MARKETPLACE			LATINO USA	4 pm
5 pm	TED RADIO HOUR			ALL THINGS CONSIDERED			IT'S BEEN A MINUTE	5 pm
6 pm	ALL THINGS CONSIDERED						ALL THINGS CONSIDERED	6 pm
7 pm	THE ARTS HOUR			MARKETPLACE		THE CALIF. REPORT	LEFT, RIGHT AND CENTER	7 pm
8 pm	THE MOTH	REVEAL	THE MOTH	THIS AMERICAN LIFE	THROUGHLINE	TED RADIO HOUR	WAIT WAIT...DON'T TELL ME	8 pm
9 pm	INTELLIGENCE SQUARED U.S.	NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC	CHICAGO SYMPHONY	LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC	SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY	SPECIAL PROGRAMMING	TRAVEL WITH RICK STEVES	9 pm
10 pm							CONCIERTO	10 pm
11 pm	SUNDAY NIGHT JAZZ			CLASSICS ALL NIGHT			CLASSICS ALL NIGHT	11 pm

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In 1970, Harjit Samra, second from the right, and her husband believe they were the first immigrants from India to move to Livingston. From left to right: she's standing with her grandson Gurshan Samra, daughter-in-law Amarjit Samra, granddaughter Harleen Samra, and son and former Livingston Mayor Gurpal Samra.

KERRY KLEIN / KVPR

When this Punjabi family moved to Livingston in 1970, they planted the seed for an entire community

BY KERRY KLEIN – KVPR

Gurpal Samra became the mayor of Livingston almost by accident. “My brother got a parking ticket,” he said.

It was 1997, and the ticket, which Gurpal said was given to his brother by mistake, was worth \$10. He tried to contest it, first with the chief of police, then the city council. “They wouldn’t listen, so I said I’m going to fix their wagon and run for council,” he said.

Gurpal was elected to the Livingston city council in 1998. He never did manage to toss out his brother’s ticket. But in one of his first acts in office in this Merced County city, he ended the system that allows mayors to be appointed by the city council, instead putting the vote

up to residents. Then he ran for that office, too. "That's how I became the first elected mayor in Livingston," he said.

That was in 2002. Gurpal would alternate between the city council and mayor's office for the next 18 years. Affable and warm, he shared this story from a cushy couch illuminated by the blue light of a fishtank in his living room. "In order to be an elected official, it helps to be a people person," he said. "And I think I'm a people person."

In 2020, just before he retired as mayor, Gurpal was instrumental in getting information to the public about a deadly COVID outbreak at the town's biggest employer, a Foster Farms chicken processing plant. The company initially concealed the fact that nine employees had died.

Politics was never Gurpal's end-game, however, especially in the U.S. He wasn't born here. He's a Sikh from the Indian state of Punjab, and by the time he became mayor, the city had known Indians for only 30 years. "Here we are, immigrants from India, moving to Livingston. And to have the Livingstonians allow us, especially me, the opportunity serve them in an elected position—if that doesn't tell what the community is like, I'm not sure what else will," he said.

As a relative newcomer, Gurpal's run in city politics might seem brave, but he will never admit that. He feels he knows real bravery, and that was modeled to him by his parents. Fifty years ago, they left behind everything they knew and moved here, to Livingston, where no one else looked like they did. "It was only four Indians here," he said, "my father, my mother, my brother and myself."

Gurpal was nine, his brother seven. "If that doesn't show courage, I don't know what does," he said. "When you've got to move to a different country and don't even know anything about it, it's courage."

Gurpal's father, Sarwan Singh Samra, died in February. But his mother, Harjit Samra, lives with her son and his family. And the 87-year-old still remembers the move. "When we came here, it was nice but we were scared because there was nobody to talk to," she said in Punjabi.

In 1970, back in Punjab, Harjit and her husband were farmers. They didn't have a bad life, but they wanted more opportunities for their sons. Word had gotten to them that an Indian family had found well-paying jobs at that Foster Farms chicken processing plant and had made a home near Livingston, in the community of



TOP: For 22 years, from 1998-2020, Gurpal Samra worked in city politics as either mayor or city councilmember of Livingston.

KERRY KLEIN / KVPR

BOTTOM: Harjit Samra's husband, Sarwan Singh Samra, died earlier this year.

KERRY KLEIN / KVPR

Winton. So they crossed the ocean to try it out. Just two days after arriving, the two parents found themselves on the assembly line, cutting and packaging chickens—even though they were vegetarians. “I did not like working in the beginning,” she said. “First three days, I didn’t eat at all.”

They’d both end up keeping those jobs for more than 25 years. They’d process chickens at night, and by day they were farm workers picking peaches. Eventually they bought a house, then a farm, then began renting houses as landlords. They prospered. They told friends and family back home about Livingston, who would make the same move and then tell other friends and family.

Today, Gurbal estimates Punjabis make up nearly a fifth of the town – thousands of farmers, farmworkers, truckers, and business owners. They built two Sikh temples known as Gurdwaras. And Harjit got to watch as her sons grew up, went to college, and became active members of their community. “I wouldn’t give anything up for what I have now,” she said.

Now, two more generations of Samras are thriving. Gurbal has three kids, all in their 20s, and a one-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter he Facetimes with every night.

Gurbal’s youngest daughter, Harleen, is 21, and is studying to be a psychologist. Unlike her parents and

grandparents, she and her siblings never had to work the fields or process chickens. “I don’t think I could handle it, which is kind of embarrassing to say, but I feel like it’s kind of the sacrifice they made,” she said. “They did that so that me and my siblings wouldn’t have to.”

Harleen is grateful to study Spanish, to work at a makeup store, and to go to college, among other opportunities. And she knows it’s all because her grandparents took a leap into the abyss by coming here with no certainty about their future. “I feel like I’ve lived such a different life that I can’t even imagine that,” she said.

None of this would have been possible without another story of courage, however, and that is by Harleen’s mother, Amarjit Samra. Her marriage to Gurbal was arranged in 1994. He had been living here for decades, but she had only ever known India. She was in her 20s and had gone to college there. Coming here was a giant leap for her as well, and she was scared. “And nervous too, my family not here, nobody, I’m lonely,” she said.

For 20 years she was a stay-at-home mom. Her first job was also at Foster Farms, then she recently left it for something new. Now, she works early mornings at a laundromat, and in her free time she’s teaching herself Spanish so she can communicate with some of the town’s other immigrants. She actually nodded off while I spoke to her husband. “You’re talking, I’m sleeping here,” she laughed.

Amarjit misses her family in India. She’s been back to visit only once. Still, she says she’s at home in Livingston, straddling the line between Western and Indian cultures. She made sure her kids learned Punjabi and went to the Gurdwara, and she’s so excited about having a granddaughter. “She hugs, kisses, flying kisses,” she laughed. “She’s so cute.” Amarjit is making sure that she learns Punjabi, too.

This story is featured in the Livingston episode of The Other California, KVPR’s podcast all about small towns in the San Joaquin Valley. Find The Other California wherever you listen to podcasts.



Today, Indians in Livingston, mostly Sikhs from the state of Punjab, number in the thousands.
KERRY KLEIN / KVPR

This pumpjack is one of many pieces of drilling equipment that's been transformed into monuments on street corners throughout downtown Taft.

KERRY KLEIN / KVPR



In Kern County, an oil town grapples with a green future

BY KERRY KLEIN – KVPR

It's a Friday night in Taft, a small Kern County city perched in the dusty hills southwest of Bakersfield, and there's a standoff in front of the old Fox Theater: Think cowboy boots and 10-gallon hats, a sheriff's posse wearing gold stars, and bandits clad in black. "Let's make sure those guys ain't sneaking in on us anywhere around here," the sheriff says slyly. Within seconds, however, gunfire rains out from all sides. "Let's get 'em, boys!" someone shouts.

But the bullets are blank, and the whole shootout is a game. It's a preview, in fact, of an Old-West-themed festival that happens here every five years in October.

It's called Oildorado.

"It's just a really good time for everybody to get together and promote the town's history and the oil industry," said Bryan Sellman, who's playing the sheriff.

A little over a century ago, this city was built directly on top of Midway-Sunset, the state's most productive

oilfield, after an exploratory well released 9 million barrels of oil into the sky and surrounding hills. The so-called Lakeview Gusher still remains one of the largest oil spills in the country's history, but at the time, it revealed a vast untapped resource lying under the middle of the state. It also reportedly inspired the Hollywood movie *There Will Be Blood*.

Today, the city's economy is still built on oil. Walk down the street from Black Gold Brewing Company and you'll pass monuments of drilling equipment on every corner. There's even a replica pumpjack just outside the Best



Western. Taft is ground zero for California's oil industry, the seventh largest in the country, which pumps more than \$100 billion into the state economy and provides more than 300,000 jobs.

Locals who've come out to watch the Oildorado preview feel everything in this town owes its existence to the stuff. "It made me who I am. I grew up here, oil raised my family, gave me an education," said public relations expert Chris Lowe. "It's in your toothbrush, in your floss...in your basketballs and soccer balls," said dental hygienist Julie Ortlieb. "Oil means everything," said city councilmember and school district executive Josh Bryant. "Oil is a way of life."

But that way of life is in question. In an effort to reduce climate-forcing emissions, Governor Gavin Newsom has committed to halting all in-state petroleum production by 2045, and has already promised to ban new hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") permits by 2024.

For so long, Taft has embraced its history as an oil town. Now, locals worry about what a green future could mean. "Taft is very upset by what's going on in Sacramento," said Renee Hill. A former city councilmember, she now sells antiques and flowers on the city's main drag, and on big nights like these she rolls a fire pit out front. She loves this town of 9,000. "I'm a Taft girl," she said. "My dad was a doctor here, I grew up here."

But a future without oil? That might be progress for the climate, but it's hard for Hill to imagine. "Taft'll shrivel," she said. "I can't fathom what we'll do for ourselves."

California's relationship with oil is complicated. Because of the carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere by the combustion of fossil fuels, Newsom and other state leaders have made the petroleum industry a major target for climate change-related reductions. "Consider this," Newsom said in his March 2022 State of the State address. "Our nation-leading climate investments...will ensure that other innovations will surely follow not by re-creating the 20th century, by extracting more oil, but by extracting new ideas, drilling for new talent by running our economy on a carbon-free engine."

Public health, too, is a concern. Tailpipe emissions from gasoline-fueled vehicles consistently prevent many of the state's air basins from meeting federal air quality standards, and a series of oil seeps in 2019, not far from Taft, fueled concerns about water and air contamination near the state's oilfields.

TOP: Taft Mayor Dave Noerr stands in front of the Taft Oilworker Monument, unveiled as part of the city's centennial celebration in 2010.

KERRY KLEIN / KVPR

MIDDLE: KERRY KLEIN / KVPR

BOTTOM: Les Clark is director of the Independent Oil Producers' Alliance.

KERRY KLEIN / KVPR

But the industry's economic benefits are also very real. It's not just the billions of dollars in county tax revenue, the tens of thousands of well-paying jobs, or even the millions in oil property taxes that fund Taft's schools.

"The producers and the companies that are a part of it are much more than employers, they're community partners," said Mayor Dave Noerr, standing downtown at a massive bronze statue of an oil derrick and roustabouts carrying wrenches and ropes. A slender man in jeans and a paisley button-down, Noerr points out that oil companies support community events and workers mentor high school students in a local college prep program. "They have their fingerprints on every beneficial program that takes place in this valley as well as in this community," he said.

In Taft and beyond, residents know it. In early 2020, a record number of people crowded county offices in Bakersfield for a chance to speak at a board of supervisors meeting in which higher-ups from the Newsom administration had come to discuss the petroleum industry. The Bakersfield Californian estimated more than 1,000 residents showed up, many wearing hats and signs reading "Make Oil Great Again." A meeting that would have normally lasted two hours dragged on for more than six.

One speaker was Les Clark, who refers to Newsom as "Governor Nuisance." He's a long-time oilman in Taft who now leads the Independent Oil Producers' Alliance. "I don't like it...I think it's foolishness for people to think that they're going to do away with fossil fuel," he said in an interview after the meeting.

Foolish is a theme. Some of the \$65 million the state proposes to support the industry in transition would train displaced workers to abandon wells. Mayor Noerr calls that an absolute insult, because the industry's already been doing that for years.

Similarly, Fred Holmes, the owner of a small Taft oil producer, argues that planning to ditch California's petroleum is just an example of not-in-my-backyard-ism (NIMBYism). Without significantly curtailing demand for fossil fuels, he says, we'll be exporting the industry, and likely to countries with fewer environmental protections and civil rights. "Us citizens, including yourself, we're not going to give up our energy," he said. "Are you going to give up your energy? No, you're going to support Saudi Arabia."

Kern County may produce 70 percent of the state's oil, but did you know it's also the state's largest producer

of renewable electricity? It's home to a quarter of our solar and more than half of our wind power, according to data provided by the California Energy Commission. "We power the rest of this state," Mayor Noerr proudly proclaimed at last November's Kern County Energy Summit in Bakersfield.

But as Noerr told me later from his office, those solar and wind farms just don't create as many jobs as oil and gas. "That lip service about replacing the jobs that are being lost is just that, it's lip service," he said. "Those jobs, and the economic impact to local communities, are just as intermittent as the energy they produce."

This story is featured in the Taft episode of The Other California, KVPR's podcast all about small towns in the San Joaquin Valley. Find The Other California wherever you listen to podcasts.



On the outskirts of Taft, the West Kern Oil Museum holds a replica of one of the longest standing wooden oil derricks in California.

KERRY KLEIN / KVPR



A legacy of learning: higher education helps Avenal siblings return to their hometown roots

BY SOREATH HOK- KVPR



The inside of the Veterans Memorial Hall echoes with the crack of pool balls. Groups of players are clustered around billiard tables, pool cues in hand.

In another corner, a caller leads a game of Loteria or “Mexican bingo” as players stare intently at the colorful cards in front of them.

Avenal’s city manager, Antony Lopez is here to meet with a city councilmember to see how the senior and nutrition program is going. But before he has his meeting, he directs me to one end of the Bingo table where a woman is knitting.

He introduces me to Donna Curty who worked hard to get Avenal incorporated back in 1979. She started a petition, which turned into a ballot initiative. “But we won by 70 votes,” she says smiling.

Donna was also part of the committee that brought the state prison to Avenal. A lifelong resident, the 86-year-old remains engaged in her community. “There she goes, complaining again,” she jokes.

She didn’t think the city was improving quickly enough until Antony was hired. “I see he’s making changes and I’m glad to see that,” she says.

Antony was first hired as an associate planner with the city. But once the former city manager announced her retirement, Antony saw an opportunity to step up to the

TOP: Avenal’s city manager, Antony Lopez stands outside the historic downtown theater.

SOERATH HOK / KVPR

MIDDLE: Lopez siblings show off their school banners: (Left to right) Francisco, Leticia, Antony

role. In fact, to prepare he went back to school, earning a masters in public administration at USC before starting his new role in October 2020. During the height of the pandemic, he led the effort to make Avenal one of the most highly vaccinated cities in Kings County - 73% of residents are fully vaccinated.

Antony says this role as city manager is one of the most challenging opportunities he's had. "I think what surprised me the most is just how much the community does care," he says. Economic development is a major area of improvement. Residents want to see more businesses come into town. "My job here is to grow and develop a city I'd be proud to raise a family in," Antony says.

Back in his city office, Antony is met by his two older siblings who also live in Avenal. Their parents, who both immigrated from Jalisco, Mexico, were farm workers. Their father died about five years ago, but their mother still lives in Avenal and the siblings all reside on the same block. The family is close-knit, and driven, especially when it comes to education. "I think we've all just kind of try to set our own paths. But we've all kind of ended up being kind of in the same realm, regardless," he says laughing.

His older brother Francisco graduated from Yale. His sister Leticia graduated from Wellesley and Antony from Georgetown. All three were Avenal High School valedictorians.

The Lopez siblings are part of a younger generation of Avenal natives taking leadership roles in their community. It's the first thing Francisco noticed when he moved back last year during the pandemic. "A lot of my high school friends are either now teachers or principals," Francisco says.

Francisco had lived in Phoenix and was most recently in the Bay Area, but then a great opportunity at a community college in nearby Coalinga brought him home. "I'm working at West Hills and that is just kind of an amazing luck for all of it to kind of work together," he says.

He now works as West Hill's director of special grants, overseeing the National Farmworker Jobs Program that gives training and career support to farmworkers.

Unlike Francisco, Leticia returned to Avenal right after college in 2007. "It wasn't necessarily my plan. I planned to come and be here for 2-3 years max, and then leave, go back to the Bay Area or LA," she says.

But she found a job opportunity in Hanford at Adventist Health, where she now works as director of grants. The family works together to connect each other to opportunities and resources.

And it was a Valley opportunity that exposed all the siblings to some of the country's top universities. It's called the Ivy League Project, and Francisco says it helped him pave the way for Leticia. "I was a trailblazer in a lot of ways, but I was also just bumping my head into doors and trying to figure things out," Francisco says.

Leticia, meanwhile, blazed her own trail as the first woman in her family to go to college. She also took part in another college program that allowed students to attend Berkeley for the summer. She was only 14 so her parents were reluctant to let her go. "The culture is different. they didn't like me being alone and living in this house with people they don't know," she laughs.

But it was the kind of challenge she needed, she says. "Exposure is really important. I always tell people, if you have a chance to do this, do it. Especially if it's free. Especially if it's going to take you outside that box."

Education is what allowed the siblings to leave Avenal to discover new ideas and places, but it's also what brought them back to invest in their hometown.

This story is featured in the Avenal episode of The Other California, KVPR's podcast all about small towns in the San Joaquin Valley. Find The Other California wherever you listen to podcasts.



Francisco Lopez graduation photo at Yale.
COURTESY ANTHONY LOPEZ

The Splendid Table: a show for life's appetites

KVPR listeners can now hear *The Splendid Table*
Sunday afternoons at 3



Francis Lam

A culinary, culture and lifestyle program, *The Splendid Table* has hosted our nation's conversations about cooking, sustainability and food culture for over two decades, introducing listeners to generations of food dignitaries. Listeners can expect a modern, multicultural snapshot of the food world – exploring different cultures, cuisines and ideas, as well as the small personal stories that come out of the expansive world of the table. Francis Lam took over *The Splendid Table* from long-time host Lynne Rossetto Kasper in 2018.

As a former restaurant cook, Francis can handle virtually any food query and loves taking listener's calls. He is keenly interested in people and their stories and believes that one of the keys to understanding people better is to learn what they cook and how they eat. His resume extends to judging Bravo's hit show, *Top Chef Masters*, a spinoff of *Top Chef*, and serving as an *Eat* columnist

for *The New York Times Magazine*. In addition to hosting *The Splendid Table*, Francis is Editor-at-Large at Clarkson Potter, a division within Penguin Random House that is a leader in cookbook publishing.

In 2016, Lam won a James Beard Award and two International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP) Food Writing Awards for his column in *The New York Times Magazine*. Over the past decade, his writing has been recognized with numerous awards from both organizations, including a James Beard Award in 2014 and IACP Bert Greene Awards for Food Journalism in 2010 and 2014.

The oldest of three children, Lam grew up in the suburbs of New Jersey, where he says his parents commuted to Chinatown every day, so that "their kids could live in a house with a lawn." His career and life have taken him from Portland, Ore., to Biloxi, Miss., with stints in Michigan, Wyoming, Maine, as well as Hong Kong. A music aficionado, Lam is a self-proclaimed karaoke expert and admits that football is his "one, true, complicated love" and that "if you can talk food and football, you can have a conversation with anyone in America."

Lam graduated first in his class at the Culinary Institute of America and holds a bachelor's degree in Asian Studies and Creative Writing from the University of Michigan. He lives with his family in New York City.





THE OTHER CALIFORNIA

LISTEN WHEREVER YOU GET YOUR PODCASTS

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In memory of Richard Unruh
from the KVPR Board of Directors & Staff

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In honor of the marriage of
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from Lynn Gorman

In honor of David Aus
by Fred Aus

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Alice Daniel



Soreath Hok

KVPR wins three 2022 regional Edward R. Murrow Awards

The Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) has awarded KVPR three prestigious 2022 Regional Edward R. Murrow Awards. KVPR reporter Soreath Hok received two of the honors, in the categories hard news and investigative journalism, while KVPR News Director Alice Daniel won the award for best writing. The winning entries include a report about Fresno's homelessness crisis, an investigation into shortcomings of distance-learning in Madera, and the profile of a Pulitzer Prize winning Fresno author.

All of the station's awards were in the small market radio division, in a region spanning California, Nevada and Hawaii. The regional award winners will go on to compete for national Murrow Award honors. This is the fourth year in a row that KVPR has won Regional Murrow honors.

KVPR's winning stories include:

Hard News: Fresno Homeless Encampment Grows After Highway Displacement; City To Decide On Funding - by Soreath Hok

Investigative Reporting: Distance-Learning Investigation: Shortfall In Student Engagement Despite High Attendance Numbers - by Soreath Hok

Excellence in Writing: Fresno writer Diana Marcum's second travel memoir revolves around Blue Morpho Butterflies and Belize - by Alice Daniel

The RTDNA writes about the Murrow Awards on its website:

"Among the most prestigious awards in news, the Murrow Awards recognize local and national news stories that uphold the RTDNA Code of Ethics, demonstrate technical expertise and exemplify the importance and impact of journalism as a service to the community. Murrow Award winning work demonstrates the excellence that Edward R. Murrow made a standard for the broadcast news profession. RTDNA has been honoring outstanding achievements in electronic journalism with these awards since 1971."

Hidden Brain helps curious people understand the world, and themselves.

KVPR listeners can now hear Hidden Brain
Sunday mornings at 11



Shankar Vedantam
JAMEY STILLINGS

Hidden Brain host and Executive Editor Shankar Vedantam has been reporting on human behavior and social science research for more than 25 years. In 2010, he published a book further exploring these topics and introducing the idea of “the hidden brain.”

What, exactly, is the “hidden brain”? This is a term Shankar created to describe a range of influences that manipulate us without our awareness. Some aspects of the hidden brain have to do with mental shortcuts or heuristics; others are related to errors in the way memory and attention work. Some deal with social dynamics and relationships. The “hidden brain,” in other words, is a metaphor, much like the “selfish gene.” Just

as there are no strands of DNA that shout, “Me first!” no part of the human brain is disguised under sunglasses and fedora. By drawing a simple line between mental activities we are aware of and mental activities we are not aware of, the “hidden brain” subsumes many concepts in wide circulation: the unconscious, the subconscious, the implicit.

An exploration of these ideas can be heard every week on the Hidden Brain podcast and radio show. Shankar and NPR launched the podcast in 2015, and it now receives millions of downloads per week, and is regularly listed as one of the top 20 podcasts in the world. The radio show debuted in 2017 and is heard on more than 400 public radio stations across the country.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Find more events at kvpr.org

**DUE TO COVID-19 IN-PERSON EVENTS MAY HAVE CHANGED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION.
PLEASE CONSULT EVENT ORGANIZERS AND OUR ONLINE CALENDAR FOR CURRENT INFORMATION.**

JULY

THEATRE/DANCE

24 Thru 7/3 **Wrinkles**
Stars Theatre Restaurant, 1931 Chester Ave., Bakersfield bmtstars.com

MUSIC

26 Thru 7/1 **Summer Music Camp 2022**
Fresno Pacific University, 1717 S. Chestnut Ave. fresno.edu

EVENTS/EXHIBITS

14 **Respite by The River: reading by Michael Meyerhofer, music by Lark**
San Joaquin River Parkway, 11605 Old Friant Road, Fresno riverparkway.org

23 **Day Hike: Little Devils Postpile**
Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite National Park yosemite.org

30 **Summer Movie Series: The Lion King**
The Bakersfield Fox Theater, 2001 H Street thebakersfieldfox.com

THEATRE/DANCE

1-24 **Someone Save My Baby, Ruth! Or Foil that Villain!**
Golden Chain Theatre, 42130 Hwy 41, Oakhurst. goldenchaintheatre.org

14 Thru 9/11 **Sister Act**
Roger Rocka's Dinner Theatre, 1226 N. Wishon Ave., Fresno rogerrockas.com

7-16 **Madera Theatre Project: Harvest Moon**
Madera County Arts Council, 424 N. Gateway Drive, Madera maderaarts.org

MUSIC

22 **Music on the Green: Blue Skies Trio**
Art Park, Downtown Mariposa mariposaartscouncil.org

EVENTS/EXHIBITS

Thru 28 **Sequoia Sunset Walk**
Giant Forest Museum, Sequoia National Park sequoiaparksconservancy.org

4 **Art Hop**
Arte Américas, 1630 Van Ness Ave., Fresno arteamericas.org

25 **Respite by The River: reading by David Borofka, music by Suite 121**
San Joaquin River Parkway, 11605 Old Friant Road, Fresno riverparkway.org

25 **Art After Dark**
Bakersfield Museum of Art, 1930 R Street, Bakersfield bmoa.org

AUGUST

THEATRE/DANCE

19 Thru 10/16 A Man For All Seasons
2nd Space Theatre, 928 E. Olive Ave., Fresnogcplayers.com

MUSIC

13 Concerts for a Cause: Javier Colon
Camp Tuolumne Trails, 22988 Ferretti Road, Grovelandtuolumnetrails.org

20 An Evening with Jesse Cook
World Records, 2815 F Street, Bakersfieldshopworldrecords.com

21 Yosemite Jazz Train: Hiroshima Trio
Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad, 56001 CA-41, Fish Camp.ymspr.com



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At San Joaquin Valley dairies, methane digesters face scrutiny even as they fight climate change

BY KERRY KLEIN

Digesters that capture methane from manure have been shown to be one of the state's most cost-effective tools for fighting climate change, but community advocates warn the emissions savings don't make up for the harm that dairies pose to nearby communities.

Steve Shehadey's family has been in the dairy business for a long time – more than half a century. You may even be familiar with his uncle's operation, Producers Dairy in Fresno.

"I'm third generation, I've got a daughter who's interested who's probably going to be fourth generation," Shehadey said.

Shehadey's dairy in the nearby city of Kerman, called Bar 20, is one of his family's newest. It's so modern it produces not just milk, but also electricity, and that powers electric vehicle chargers owned by carmaker BMW. That technology, whisper-quiet and housed in a complex of metal boxes about the size of two 18-wheelers side-by-side, is called a fuel cell.

"From the fuel cell it goes into the electric grid, it interconnects with PG&E," Shehadey said. "So extra power goes straight into the grid for everybody to use."

Fuel cells are typically powered by chemical reactions between hydrogen and oxygen. At Bar 20, however, those reactions are driven not by hydrogen but manure. Specifically, the methane coming off of manure.

Cow dung is responsible for about a quarter of the state's emissions of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that's around 25 times as potent as carbon dioxide. Cow burps are a major methane source, too.

At Bar 20, the methane for the fuel cell is supplied by a facility called an anaerobic digester, which processes manure and captures the gases it emits. Here's how it works: Manure that would typically be stored in an open lagoon is instead funneled into a lined and covered basin, which at Bar 20 is the size of 40 Olympic swimming pools.

"You definitely want a wetsuit, not recommended at all for swimming in," joked David Wilbur, a vice president with California Bioenergy, the company that installed the digester, as he, Shehadey and others gave me a tour.

The methane, which puffs up the cover like a balloon, is captured and siphoned off to the fuel cell, where it's converted to electricity. Other manure components are reused, too: The liquids are filtered and used for irrigation onsite, while solids are recycled as livestock bedding.

Do digesters pose dangers to San Joaquin Valley communities?

Digesters around California are estimated to have already prevented more than a million tons of emissions. But as they've advanced, the state – and the Shehadeys – have found themselves fending off criticism of the technology, despite the fact that the state touts it as one of California's most cost-effective climate-change-fighting tools.

"If you can clean air and produce renewable power for the state, especially as we're converting to more



KERRY KLEIN / KVPR

usages for electricity, it seems like a great solution,” said Shehadey.

Digesters are a fast-growing business. In 2015, the state had funded six of them. By 2020, that number had skyrocketed to 117.

But that growth is what worries community advocates. Dairies with digesters receive financial credits for the emissions they capture through a state program known as the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) that works much like cap and trade. But advocates are calling on state air officials to stop offering LCFS credits for digesters.

One of their arguments is that the state’s emissions calculations are inaccurate and lead to inflated estimates of digester-related methane reductions. Another is that by monetizing manure, digesters incentivize dairies to expand their herds. That, in turn, leads to concerns about growing water contamination, odors and other air pollution that could harm nearby communities. Not to mention the fact that cow burps — which are estimated to contribute nearly as much of the state’s methane emissions as manure — are not captured by digesters.

“Any program that actually incentivizes the creation of methane and also the perpetuation of the unequal kind of local and regional burdens of dairies is problematic,” said Phoebe Seaton, co-founder of the non-profit Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability and co-author of a petition submitted to state air officials in October to remove dairy digesters from the LCFS program.

Recent data to confirm herd size is hard to come by, and the industry says the idea of manure driving dairy growth is hogwash. Still, Seaton questioned whether taxpayers should be footing the cost of a technology with such imbalanced local and statewide impacts, even though there’s an urgent need to address our methane crisis.

“The state is responsible for creating this policy framework that is continuing to dump on communities in the San Joaquin Valley,” she said.

In response to the petition, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) denied the request to immediately drop digesters from the LCFS program but agreed to hold workshops to discuss the issue. Matthew Botill, who oversees climate change programs with CARB, maintains that his agency’s emissions reductions calculators are accurate, and that digesters are essential to achieving our climate goals.

“On a broad basis, dairy digesters reduce greenhouse gas emissions more cost-effectively than alternative strategies,” he said.

Digesters are critical to climate change fight, proponents say

Botill and other air officials estimate that meeting the state’s climate goals would require constructing another 200 digesters by 2030. But Michael Boccadoro, a lobbyist and executive director of the non-profit Dairy Cares, warns that losing emissions credits would kill those projects, which could in turn export our environmental challenges elsewhere.

“Dairies won’t be able to get the projects built. Cows end up on U-Hauls and they end up moving to another state where the problem is going to be exacerbated,” he said. “So, less regulation, less efficient production, higher methane, higher global warming.”

For some dairies, credits amount to millions of dollars each year. “A hypothetical 3,000 milking cow dairy supplying transportation fuel could generate approximately \$3.5 million in annual LCFS credit value,” reads a recent CARB report.

Boccadoro, however, points out that’s not the cash cow it sounds like: Engineering firms, developers, and other companies involved in building and running digesters all get a slice of those profits, too. In fact, according to Boccadoro, some dairy operators don’t share any of those profits, except for a fee per head of cattle for providing manure as a feedstock.

According to Steve Shehadey, the Bar 20 digester and fuel cell cost \$13 million. The prospect of annual credits did grease the wheels, but he’s got his eye on other existential threats, too. From his perspective, drought, water restrictions, and the rising costs of energy and fertilizer make that income a matter of survival.

“There’s only so many ways to make money on a dairy,” he said. “It’s your milk price, your beef price and your manure now. And so how can you maximize each area of your dairy?”

With such a high price tag, he suspects it’ll be a while before he sees any return on his investment.

This story is part of the Central Valley News Collaborative, which is supported by the Central Valley Community Foundation with technology and training support by Microsoft Corp.

NPR names Juana Summers as new host of All Things Considered

BY NPR MEDIA RELATIONS

NPR has named Juana Summers as the new host of *All Things Considered*, NPR's flagship evening news magazine and the daily news podcast *Consider This*. *All Things Considered*, carried by 825 public radio stations nationwide, is the most listened-to, afternoon drive-time, news radio program in the country. Summers joins Ailsa Chang, Mary Louise Kelly, Ari Shapiro and Michel Martin rotating through host duties across both shows. You can hear *All Things Considered* on KVPR Mondays-Fridays from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.



"In my work as a political correspondent, I spend a lot of time talking with young people about the country and the world that they are inheriting. It's made me think about the future of our audience, and the

opportunities that we have to grow," said Summers. "I'm excited to become a part of the *All Things Considered* team, and to play a role in introducing a new, diverse generation of listeners to the blend of powerful storytelling, accountability journalism and culturally relevant conversations that you can only find on NPR."

"Juana emerged as the top candidate after a rigorous national search that included both internal and external candidates - propelled by her authoritative reporting expertise, her versatile journalistic talent, and her drive to explore and interrogate the most challenging questions of the moment," added Sarah Gilbert, NPR's Vice President for News Programming.

Prior to joining NPR, Summers has covered politics for outlets like Politico, CNN, The Associated Press and The Kansas City Star. She previously covered Congress for NPR and got her start in public radio at KBIA in Columbia, Mo. Summers served on the Board of Directors of the Online News Association from 2012 to 2014 and was a fellow at Georgetown University's Institute of Politics and Public Service in 2016.

NOTES FROM THE TOP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Sadly, *The Other California* will be Alice Daniel's last major project for KVPR. Alice will be leaving the station later this summer and moving with her family to Ireland for the next year, where her husband has a Fulbright fellowship at the University of Limerick, and where one of her sons will also go to university. We're excited for Alice and her family for this new chapter, and we are currently working to recruit our next news director. With this transition underway, Valley Edition will go on hiatus this summer. We're going to take this opportunity to reboot and retool our strategies for delivering our award-winning local news content on both broadcast and digital platforms. We want to build on the success of our recent projects like *Escape From*

Mammoth Pool and *The Other California*, and find new ways to share our local daily news, in-depth reports and insightful interviews with current and future listeners. Despite this change, you'll continue to hear our award-winning local reporting within KVPR's Morning Edition and *All Things Considered* and on KVPR.org over the summer and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe A. Moore".

jmoore@kvpr.org • 559-862-2481

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