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LOGO HAS \$56 MILLION BRT INVESTMENT REVERSED BUS FREE-FALL?

February 7, 2019 | Myles Barker

Nearly a year after the launch of Bus Rapid Transit, what conclusions can be drawn about the \$56.2 million upgrade to Fresno's mass transit system? For starters, frequent riders praise it. So does Mayor Lee Brand. "It's a great compliment to our overall transit strategy, especially because it provides a faster and more convenient option for those who don't want or don't have to drive," says the mayor. Fresno City Councilman Steve Brandau, who opposed the creation of BRT along the Blackstone and Kings Canyon corridors, remains a critic.

"The whole bus system helps a few people, and Bus Rapid Transit is just a slice of the bus system," the councilman says. "I don't see it as transformational." In addition, the future of mass transit is murky with technology offering a broad array of possibilities.

"It's a great compliment to our overall transit strategy, especially because it provides a faster and more convenient option for those who don't want or don't have to drive." — Mayor Lee Brand

Shared Autonomous Vehicles will be here in the

next 10 to 20 years, says Aly Tawfik, director of the Fresno State Transportation Institute. "The cost of an autonomous taxi can be as cheap as a bus and people will start using them and will stop using buses," Tawfik said. "It is not expected to happen anytime soon, so I think our BRT system is safe for now."

But there is one thing many agree on: With the automated kiosks often broken, up to 25 percent of riders are boarding for free. "I don't know if (the kiosks are) a good idea anymore," says bus driver Al Munoz, who is president of the transit union. "Eventually, none of them will work." Now let's take a ride and explore BRT — where it runs, how it was built, the system's goals, and what the future might hold.

Significant Drop in Ridership Before BRT

Supporters set ambitious goals for Fresno BRT when it was **first proposed more than a decade ago**. "The overall vision of the BRT Master Plan is to demonstrate how improved efficiency, speed, and service can attract new

transit ridership, improve customer satisfaction, and benefit the broader community by providing a quality of service similar to light rail systems through the use of bus technology," said the authors of a 2008 report from the Fresno Council of Governments.

Fresno, like many other cities across America, has seen its transit use fall in recent times. Nationally, **ridership has**

declined by about 7% over the past 10 years. Fresno's drop was significantly more severe. Between 2010 and 2017, FAX ridership **fell 45 percent**, from nearly 18 million annual passenger trips to fewer than 10 million. FAX officials point to bus **fare increases in 2011** and slower service times on some routes as contributing factors.

"The whole bus system helps a few people, and Bus Rapid Transit is just a slice of the bus system. I don't see it as transformational." — City Councilman Steve Brandau

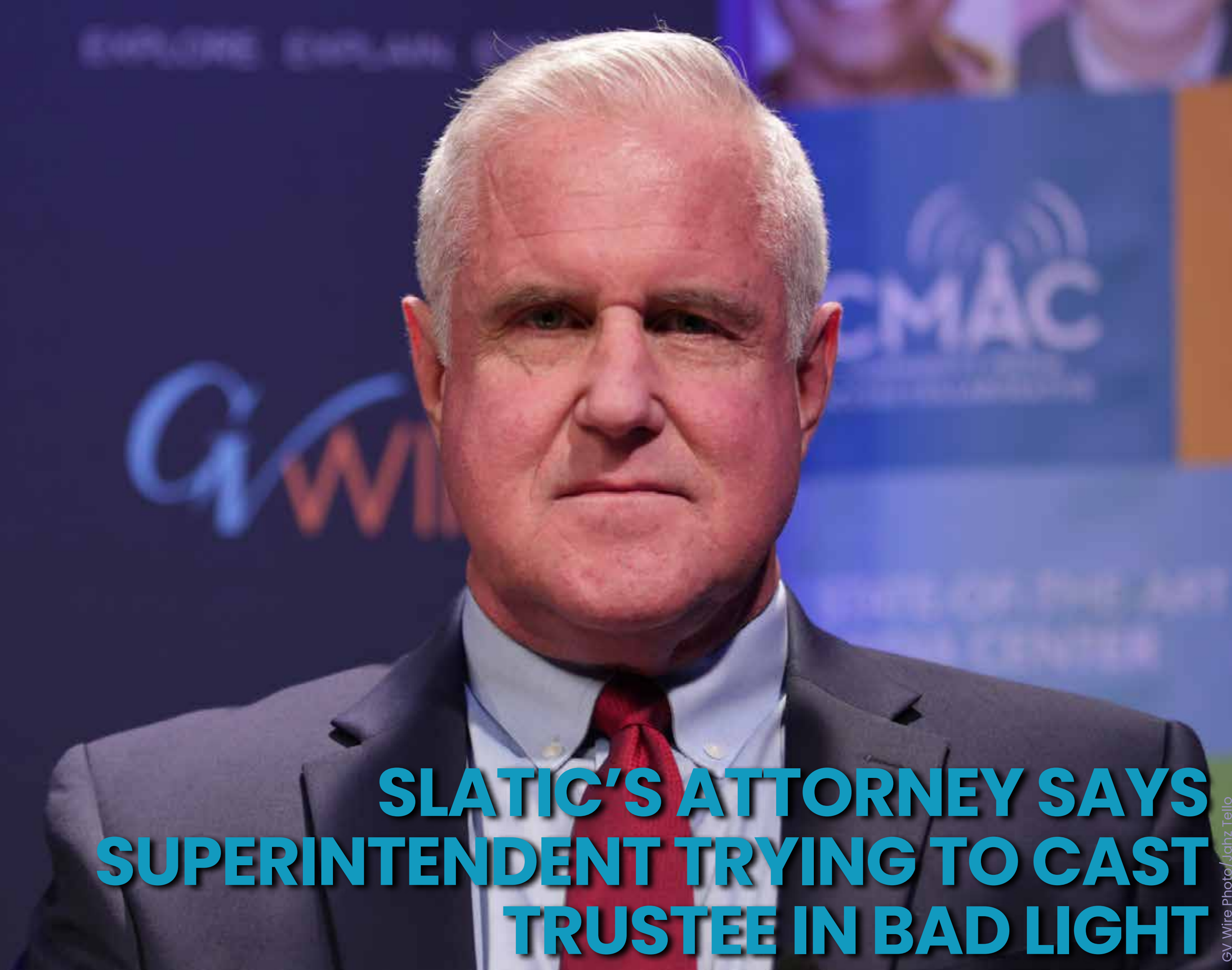
Slight Rebound After BRT Debut

In 2018, following the introduction of BRT service, Fresno FAX ridership rose slightly overall, adding nearly 75,000 passenger trips. "It's got great ridership right now," said Fresno transportation director Greg Barfield about BRT. "But we want to see more folks experience the Q." Formally named FAX Q, a fleet of dedicated BRT buses provides service along a 16-mile route, primarily on Blackstone Avenue and Kings Canyon Boulevard. The buses run every 10 minutes during morning and afternoon peak hours and every 15 minutes midday. The service has achieved a 97% on-time record since it began in February 2018. **Bus frequencies on other FAX routes** range from 15 to 30 minutes, with significantly longer wait times during evenings and weekends on some routes.

Faster Boarding and Fewer Stops

The BRT system accomplishes a higher level of service through fewer route stops, faster boarding, and traffic signal prioritization. The design of the BRT system also largely avoids the use of bus-bay cutouts along the route. This means buses remain in their lane of travel...

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SLATIC'S ATTORNEY SAYS SUPERINTENDENT TRYING TO CAST TRUSTEE IN BAD LIGHT

GV Wire Photo/Jahz Tello

February 1, 2019 | Bill McEwen

The attorney representing embattled Fresno Unified trustee Terry Slatic says that Superintendent Bob Nelson is trying to tarnish the trustee's reputation because Slatic's aggressive efforts to improve the district are "ruffling feathers." In an interview with GV Wire on Friday afternoon, attorney Charles K. Manock said that Nelson prematurely approved the release of a security-camera video depicting a confrontation between Slatic and a Bullard High School student on Jan. 11. The video didn't include audio of the incident, which has received prominent media attention and sparked much public debate about the actions of Slatic and the student. Manock further said that a letter written by Nelson to the district board, [which was leaked to The Fresno Bee](#), "cherry-picked" email correspondence between the superintendent and the trustee to cast Slatic in a bad light.

Attorney: Video 'Doesn't Speak for Itself'

"It is unfortunate that the video was released without a full investigation," Manock said. "If you are releasing a video, along with that, you are speaking to the public and allowing the pub-

lic to view a case before you have all the facts. I believe once all the facts are known my client will be totally exonerated." Following the video's release, Nelson said, "I think that video speaks for itself, I encourage folks to watch that video so that they can draw their own conclusions from what they see, right there." Countered Manock: "Because crucial to any video evidence is audio ... by its very nature, it doesn't speak for itself."

District Won't Comment Again Until Probe Is Finished

District spokeswoman Amy Idsvoog said Friday that Fresno Unified officials would have no further comment about the confrontation "until the investigation is completed." A request for comment left on Nelson's voice mail wasn't returned prior to publication Friday.

Slatic: Family 'Crushed' by Social Media Attacks

Slatic accompanied Manock to Friday's interview and spoke about social media attacks on himself and his family. "I'm the father of four. My daughters are twenty-three, twenty-two. My boys are 19 and 18 as of tomorrow. Been married for...

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CITY AUDIT UNCOVERS PROBLEMS WITH GRANITE PARK BOOKKEEPING

February 7, 2019 | David Taub

A public-private partnership that helped turn a city eyesore into its fulfilled vision of beautiful sports fields may have hit a snag. A city audit says the non-profit company hired to run embattled Granite Park had a number of accounting irregularities. The audit stopped short of stating it found anything nefarious. However, it made a host of recommendations to improve the company's bookkeeping practices. Central Valley Community Sports Foundation operates Granite Park through a contract with the city.

Additionally, the group receives a \$150,000 a year city subsidy (for 10 years) for operation and maintenance. The sports facility includes fields for recreational activities, including baseball/softball, soccer, and volleyball. The audit came as a result of CVCSF asking the city to double its subsidy last year. The nonprofit is led by Fresno developer Terance Frazier. CVCSF signed a 25-year lease for the 20-acre city-owned property in 2015. "CVCSF's management of Granite Park identified a...

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GV Wire Photo/Jahz Tello

YOU WON'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH SNOW IS FALLING IN THE SIERRA

February 5, 2019 | Myles Barker

Snow continues to blanket the Sierra Nevada and the foothills, shutting down schools Tuesday, making travel treacherous, and offering the promise of irrigation water for Valley farmers. The National Weather Service in Hanford says this latest series of winter storms had produced 5 to 6 feet of Sierra snow in five days through Monday.

In addition, much of the Sierra now has snow depths of more than 100 inches. Hail fell Tuesday in and around Fresno and was captured on [video](#) by GV Wire's [Jamie Ouverson](#) and on social media. Shortly before 1 p.m. Tuesday, the NWS issued a winter storm warning for the Sierra from Yosemite to Kings Canyon and the Tulare County mountains. The warning covered the communities of Camp Nelson, Giant Forest, Lodgepole, and Johnsondale. Predictions call for up to 4 more feet of snow with winds gusting up to 70 mph along the Sierra crest. The NWS also issued a winter storm advisory at 12:57 p.m...

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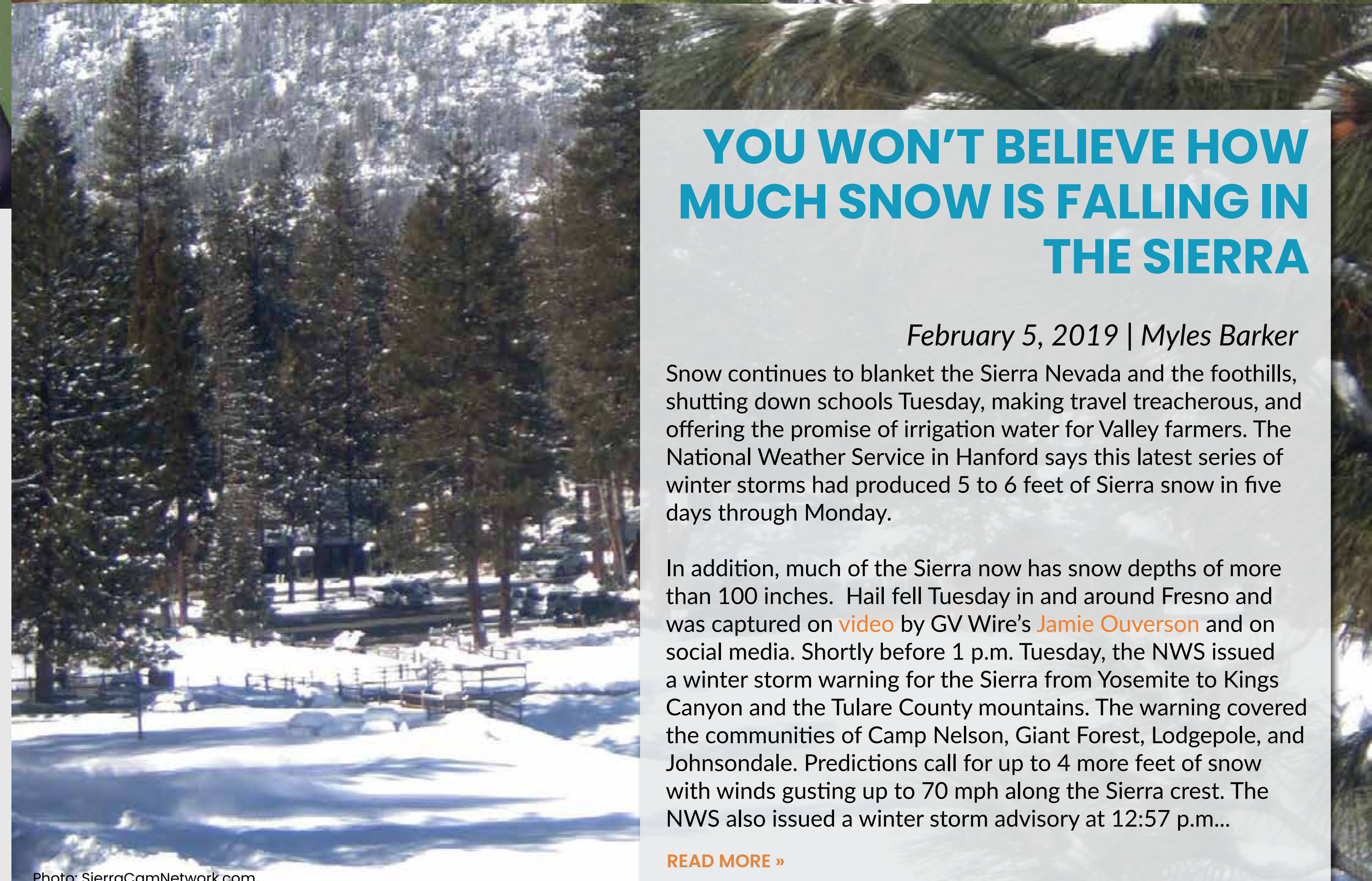


Photo: SierraCamNetwork.com



STATE HOW CALIFORNIA GOT TOUGH ON GUNS

February 5, 2019 | CALmatters

The modern American gun debate began on May 2, 1967, when 30 protesting members of the Black Panther Party marched into the California Capitol with loaded handguns, shotguns and rifles. As photos of

In the years since, California's progressive politicians have layered on restrictions while gun owners and manufacturers continue to try to find their way out of them.

gun-toting radicals from Oakland hit front pages across the country, many Americans were shocked to see who was embracing the Second Amendment.

In California, as in most states at the time, there were few restrictions on carrying loaded weapons in public.

That soon changed. The Panthers' efforts to "police the police" already had led Republican Assemblyman Don Mulford to propose legislation to ban the "open carry" of loaded firearms within California cities and towns. After the Panthers showed up in the Capitol, his bill sailed through and was signed by then-Gov. Ronald Reagan. (Yes, that Reagan). I

t's hard to say which now seems more unlikely: that two dozen revolutionaries could legally stroll into the state Assembly chamber with semi-automatic rifles, or that a Republican governor would champion stricter gun control. In the years since, California's progressive politicians have layered on restrictions while gun owners and manufacturers continue to try to find their way out of them.

The battle continues. New Gov. Gavin Newsom denounced "a gun lobby willing to sacrifice the lives of our children to line their pockets." A National Rifle Association spokesman predicts the Trump-altered Supreme Court means "winter may very well be coming for gun laws in California." So while Newsom and the Democratic Legislature try to add new restrictions, gun advocates are going to court to overturn existing ones.

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How Strict Are California's Gun Laws Compared to Other States?

California has a reputation for being tough on guns. That reputation is well-earned. Researchers at Boston University have counted 109 California laws that in some way restrict "the manner and space in which firearms can be used." They include regulations on dealers and buyers, background check requirements, and possession bans directed at certain "high risk" individuals.

By their count, no other state out-regulates California when it comes to sheer quantity of rules. And we've held that top spot since at least 1991, the year the researchers started counting. The Giffords Law Center To Prevent Gun Violence, a gun control advocacy group, awarded California its only "A" grade in its 2017 state gun law scorecard.

"There are not a lot of As out there," said Ari Freilich, the organization's California legislative affairs director. "California has driven the conversation nationally." In contrast, Guns and Ammo magazine labeled California the 5th worst state for gun owners. (Washington D.C. was the top jurisdiction, followed by New York.)

California Pattern: Tragedy, Legislation, Repeat

The story of how California became, according to many, the state with the nation's most restrictive gun laws has largely followed a familiar pattern: alarm or tragedy, then a legislative response.

Getting Specific: What Are California's Gun Rules?

Guns laws cover the who, what, where, when and how of buying, selling, lending, leasing, storing and firing guns. By national standards, California law is strict on just about all of these points.

CALmatters.org is a nonprofit, nonpartisan media venture explaining California policies and politics.



SEN. HURTADO'S FIRST BILL AIMS TO HELP ASTHMA SUFFERERS

Photo: Shutterstock

February 6, 2019 | Myles Barker

Low-income Central Valley residents suffering from asthma may gain access to resources to help manage the chronic lung disease. Newly elected state Sen. Melissa Hurtado (D-Sanger) has introduced her [first piece of legislation](#) in [Senate Bill 207](#), which aims to expand asthma prevention services to low-income families.

The legislation is significant. The Valley has the highest asthma rates in the nation with 1 in 6 children suffering from the disease. In addition, the California Department of Education says that asthma ["is a leading cause"](#) of missing school. Jane Banks, the director of health services at Fresno Unified, said

that is definitely the case district wide. Although students with controlled asthma are able to obtain a high-quality education as any other child would, Banks said the narrative isn't quite the same for those with uncontrolled asthma.

"Students with uncontrolled asthma miss more time at school because they are at appointments, have more emergency visits and hospital stays and do not feel well enough for class," Banks said. Banks said it is important that such students work closely with their providers to develop an asthma action plan. "This will allow them to spend more time in the classroom," Banks said. SB 207 is the second attempt at...

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Photo: Facebook

WRONG-WAY DRIVER KILLS FRESNO POLICE OFFICER PHIA VANG

February 5, 2019 | GV Wire

Fresno police have identified veteran officer Phia Vang, 48, as one of the victims in a double fatal traffic collision that occurred early Monday evening at Freeway 180 and McCall Avenue. Vang was driving home from work at about 5 p.m. when a wrong-way driver struck Vang's vehicle head-on. The driver of the wrong-way vehicle also died in the collision, which is under investigation by the California Highway Patrol.

A Fresno Police Department news release described Vang as a "well-loved officer" who had worked all over the city during his 26 years with Fresno PD. His assignments included the Multi Agency Gang Enforcement Consortium, neighborhood policing in the Northwest District, and patrol duty in the Southeast, Northwest and Southwest districts. At the time of his death, Vang was assigned to the Fresno Area Express unit. Vang is survived by his wife, three sons, and a...

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SEN. DODD PROPOSES CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE WARNING CENTER

February 6, 2019 | CALmatters

After four consecutive years of catastrophic wildfires, Napa Democratic Sen. Bill Dodd wants to establish a California wildfire warning center that would allow officials to turn off power and better position firefighting crews during extreme heat and high winds. "It would give us more tools in trying to make sure this doesn't happen again," Dodd told CALmatters as he introduced legislation Monday.

The bill, SB 209, calls on the California Public Utilities Commission, the Office of Emergency Services and Cal Fire to work together on monitoring fire weather and to make threat assessments. The center would partner with investor-owned utilities as they install weather-monitoring equipment. The hope is to be able to identify high winds and dangerous conditions before a wildfire breaks out. SB 209 is just one of several wildfire prevention proposals being introduced this session. Dodd is also carrying SB 190 to improve local government...

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Mike Eliason/Santa Barbara County Fire Department via AP, File



Doug Mills/The New York Times via AP, Pool

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SHADE: PELOSI SMIRKS, DISMISSES TRUMP

February 6, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — So President Donald Trump blew through House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's customary introduction before his State of the Union speech. Who cares? Not Pelosi, who was the white-clad backdrop to every Trump word uttered during his first address to a joint session of Congress under divided government. With a smirk and an eye-roll, she set the tone for the new lawmakers who flipped the House from Republican control and elected her to lead them.

Postponed a week, the evening began without the customary opening of the speaker pounding the gavel, calling the chamber to order and presenting the president. Pelosi stood at the lectern behind Trump, gavel on the desk in front of her, apparently ready to perform the task as her Republican predecessor, Paul Ryan, had

"Oh yes that clap took me back to the teen years. She knows. And she knows that you know. And frankly she's disappointed that you thought this would work. But here's a clap."

— Pelosi's daughter, Christine

done before. But instead of allowing the introduction, Trump began delivering his speech. Pelosi, second in line to the presidency, sat. Had she been offended, asked Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y. in a Wednesday meeting?

"Who really cares," she replied, according to an aide in the room granted anonymity to discuss the private session of House Democrats. "I do want to applaud our entire caucus for the decorum. I thought you were very, very respectful of the office that he holds, respectful of the position that we have." But not necessarily the man who occupies that office, a distinction Pelosi has suggested throughout Trump's presidency.

Pelosi Set the Tone Even Before Trump Spoke

A year ago, she privately counseled Democrats to stay out of the way of Trump being "his slobbering self." In the Oval Office in December, she maintained a respectful stance but warned Trump: "Don't characterize the

strength that I bring." And afterward in another private meeting, Pelosi said Trump's demand for a southern border wall is a "manhood thing" — a comment immediately leaked to the media. Then there was Pelosi's invitation to deliver the speech, her suggestion that he postpone it because of the shutdown, and her formal dis-invitation. When Trump capitulated to a deal that reopened the government until Feb. 15, Pelosi re-issued the invitation to the House chamber, her control of the event established.

"If there is going to be peace and legislation there cannot be war and war and investigation." — President Donald Trump

Pelosi set the tone even before Trump spoke. When he arrived on the dais, she looked the president in the eye and applauded, pointing her hands at him even as she made them clap. As soon as he looked away, she did, too — and smirked. "Oh yes that clap took me back to the teen years," tweeted Pelosi's daughter, Christine. "She knows. And she knows that you know. And frankly she's disappointed that you thought this would work. But here's a clap." The moment signaled Pelosi's example to the Democrats she leads and who helped flip the House from Republican control. It came after she forced him to agree Jan. 25 to reopen the government with zero dollars for his border wall. Throughout the address, she threw her special brand of shade at Trump — an eye roll here, a chuckle there — even as she raised a hand to shush outbursts of groaning among the Democrats who flipped the House from Republican control.

At one point, when Trump saluted the record number of women serving in Congress, Pelosi stood and gestured to the sea of new lawmakers dressed in white on the Democratic side of the aisle. They leapt to their feet, pointed to each other and high-fived. Pelosi stood and reached out with both hands to acknowledge them. Pelosi applauded Trump's mentions of a strong military...

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Ralph Shearer Northam



Alma Mater: Virginia Military Institute
Interest: Pediatrics
Quote: There are more old drunks than old doctors in this world and all I will have another beer.

Eastern Virginia Medical School via AP

BLACKFACE SCANDAL SPOTLIGHTS DEEPLY EMBEDDED RACISM IN US

February 4, 2019 | AP News

When Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam refused to resign last week, he did so in the shadow of a Capitol built by a founding father and a slave owner, in the former seat of the Confederacy still wrestling with what to do about statues that honor those who fought to preserve slavery.

The 35-year-old photo on his yearbook page of a person in blackface and another person in a Ku Klux Klan robe has brought about a stunning reversal of fortune in Northam's political career and laid bare for the nation just how deeply racist behavior remains interwoven in American culture,

institutions and politics. In rejecting calls to step down, the 59-year-old white son of Virginia came across to many African-Americans as displaying a sense of white privilege.

"What we have learned over the last 24 hours along with all the incidents of the last two years brings front and center the need for this nation to deal with the question of race once and for all," NAACP President Derrick Johnson said in an interview Saturday. "Because we have (President Donald) Trump in the White House, who has created a political landscape of intolerance and racial hatred, this has exposed a...

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH: CELEBRATING ANIMATOR FLOYD NORMAN

February 4, 2019 | GV Wire

Floyd Norman is an award-winning animator and in 1956 became the first African American hired by Walt Disney. In 2017, he was named the **Ford Freedom Award** scholar for his efforts to improve the African American community and the world at large.

The previous year, **the documentary movie** "Floyd Norman: An Animated Life" profiled a remarkable career of challenges and triumphs. In 2007, Norman received the prestigious Disney Legend award, which recognizes people who have made extraordinary and integral contributions to The Walt Disney Company. Norman's pioneering work has appeared in family favorites such as "Sleeping Beauty," "The Jungle Book," "Mulan," "Robin Hood," "Toy Story 2," and "Alvin and the Chipmunks." Norman also worked with animation companies Hanna-Barbera and Pixar. After Walt Disney's death in...

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Photo: YouTube

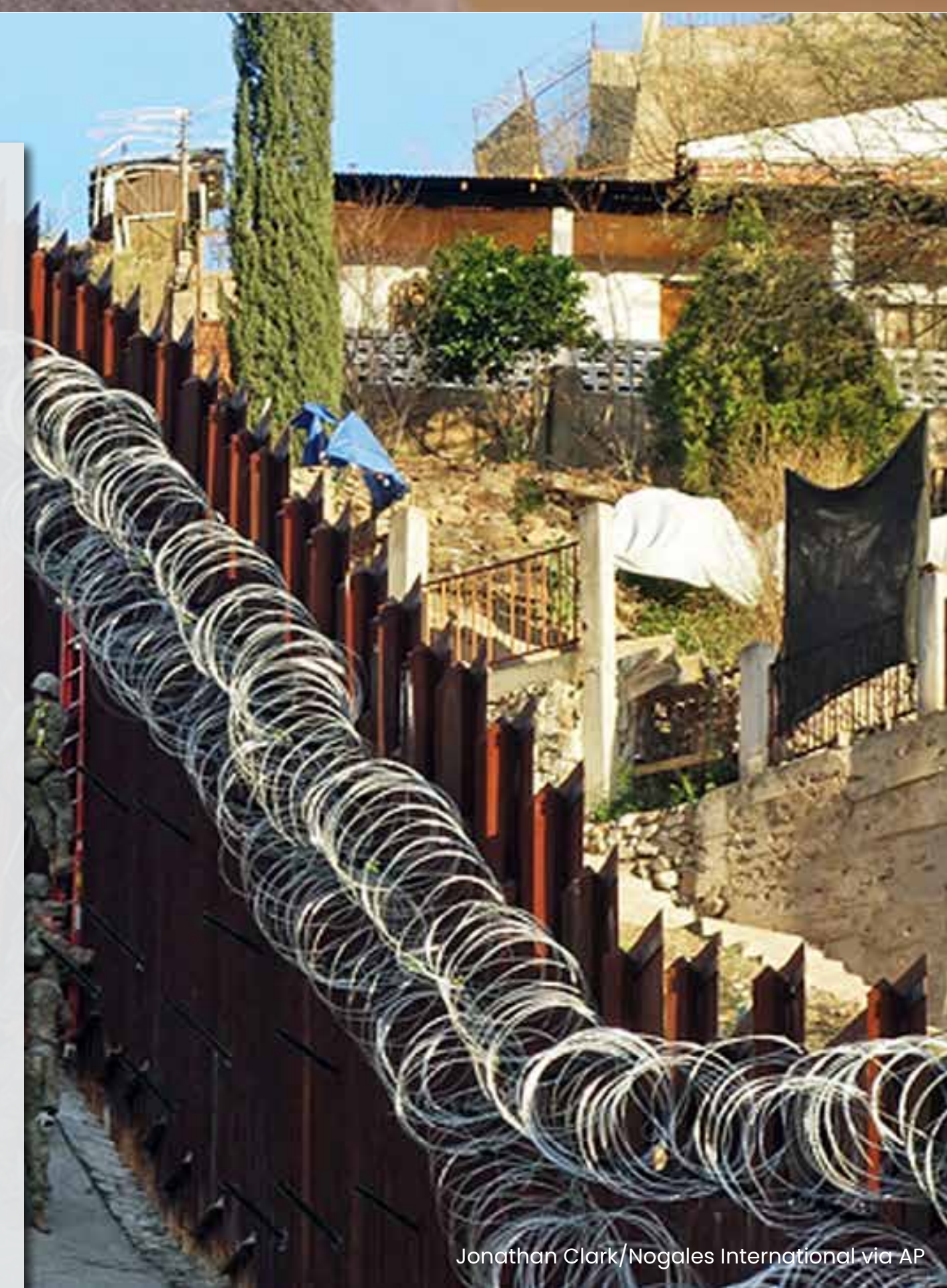
ARIZONA CITY OFFICIALS DECRY NEW RAZOR WIRE ON BORDER FENCE

February 6, 2019 | AP News

NOGALES, Ariz. — Officials in a small Arizona border city are decrying the installation of new razor wire that now covers the entirety of a tall border wall through downtown. The city council in Nogales, which sits on the border with Nogales, Mexico, is set to consider a proclamation Wednesday night condemning the use of concertina wire.

The vote comes after reports that U.S. military troops installed more horizontal layers of the wire along the downtown border fence over the weekend, and a day after President Donald Trump highlighted border security in his State of the Union address. Photos published by the Nogales International show six rows of concertina wire stacked along the approximately two-story. Nogales, a city of about 20,000 people, is a fraction of the size of the Mexican city, but its economy is largely reliant on Mexican shoppers and cross-border trade. Illegal crossings in that area have...

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Jonathan Clark/Nogales International via AP



AP Photo/Hasan Jamali

WORLD

SAUDI STUDY: MILLENNIAL JIHADIS EDUCATED, NOT OUTCASTS

February 7, 2019 | AP News

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A study by a Saudi research center is challenging the notion that jihadi fighters are necessarily disenfranchised and lacking opportunity, with its lead researcher saying Thursday that a new generation of Saudi militants are relatively well-educated, not driven purely by religious ideology and show little interest in suicide missions.

The 40-page study, published by the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies in conjunction with the International Center for the Study of Radicalisation at King's College in London, looked at 759 Saudi recruits who joined the Islamic State group mostly between 2013 and 2014. That's roughly a third of the overall number of Saudis who fought in Syria. The data was drawn from leaked Islamic State group entry documents. The Saudi Interior Ministry previously said that

"That actually was the point when the first wave of Saudis travelling to Syria started to happen. So, I think instability, war and violence certainly plays a major role when it comes to the specific Saudi context."

— Researcher Abdullah bin Khaled Al-Saud

2,500 Saudis had gone to Syria in the years before the kingdom criminalized fighting abroad in early 2014.

Only Tunisia sent more foreign fighters. Subsequently, the kingdom was the target of numerous IS group attacks that killed

dozens of people, as well as in Kuwait.

Researcher Abdullah bin Khaled Al-Saud said the fighters were neither loners nor social outcasts but appear to have been motivated by the heightened sectarianism that began to color the 2011 Syrian revolution as it slid into armed conflict.

A turning point came when the Iranian-backed Shiite Hezbollah group decisively committed to join the conflict in May 2013 to defend the Syrian government against the mostly Sunni Muslim resistance. "That ac-

tually was the point when the first wave of Saudis travelling to Syria started to happen," Al-Saud told The Associated Press. "So, I think instability, war and violence certainly plays a major role when it comes to the specific Saudi context."

Saudi Students Given Religious Education in Schools

In contrast, issues of disenfranchisement, poverty and criminal pasts factored heavily in IS fighters hailing from European countries like France, Belgium and the U.K., to name a few. An AP analysis of some 3,000 leaked IS documents had found that most of the recruits hailing from a range of nationalities, or around 70 percent, came with only the most basic knowledge of Islam — the lowest possible choice on the forms. This created fertile ground for the indoctrination of recruits in line with the group's extremist interpretation of Islam.

The Saudi study released this week, however, found that among Saudi recruits a little more than half said they had basic knowledge of Islam. Much of the rest claimed to have intermediate and advanced religious knowledge. This was somewhat expected given that all Saudi students are given religious education in schools, according to the study.

"Still, the Saudi contingent's religious fluency should not be exaggerated: 58 percent of Saudi (fighters) acknowledged that they had only basic knowledge of the religion of Islam, and only eight percent claimed to be 'knowledge seekers,'" the report stated. Unlike fighters from Europe, where many were high school dropouts or unemployed, the Saudi recruits were relatively well educated. Close to 340 had a high school-level education, around 60 had a diploma of some kind, close to 120 had university degrees and five held postgraduate degrees. "This data demonstrates that the Saudi contingent does not consist of educational underachievers, which can lead to the argument that they were...

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FORMER MEMBER OF DUTCH ANTI-ISLAM PARTY BECOMES A MUSLIM

Photo: ad.nl

February 6, 2019 | AP News

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — A former Dutch lawmaker who had been fiercely critical of Islam has become a Muslim. Joram van Klaveren was a lawmaker in the Party of Freedom, led by Dutch anti-Islam populist Geert Wilders, from 2010 to 2014.

He made headlines and raised eyebrows in the Netherlands this week after announcing his religious conversion in interviews connected to a book he has written titled “Afvallige,” the Dutch word for Apostate. Wilders was surprised, saying “it’s like a vegetarian going to work in a slaughterhouse.” Van Klaveren could not immediately be reached for comment

Wednesday. His publisher says his conversion came as Van Klaveren, who was brought up as a Protestant, was researching a book that was intended to be critical of Islam.

“With this book, we hope to contribute to getting rid of the many misconceptions about Islam and prevent polarization in our society,” said Mohamed Ben Hammouch, chairman of the book’s publishing house.

News of Van Klaveren’s conversion comes a year after Arthur Wagner, a member of the hard-line Alternative for Germany party, declared he had converted to Islam. Wagner’s party’s...

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IRAN BEGINS MARKING 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

February 1, 2019 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran on Friday began celebrations to mark the 40th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution that toppled the U.S.-backed shah, overturned 2,500 years of monarchical rule and brought hard-line Shiite clerics to power. The climactic events that year — from revolutionaries in the streets of Tehran to blindfolded American hostages in the U.S. Embassy hostage crisis months later — not only changed Iran’s history but also helped shape today’s Middle East.

The festivities start every year on Feb. 1 — the day Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned home from France after 14 years in exile, to become the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Across Iran, sirens wailed from trains and boats, while church bells tolled at 9:33 a.m. — the exact time that Khomeini’s chartered Air France Boeing 747 touched down 40 years ago at Tehran’s Mehrabad International Airport. The festivities, known as the “Ten Days of Dawn,” conclude on Feb. 11, the date Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi’s...

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AP File Photo

FEARS GROW: 1/3 OF UK FIRMS CONSIDER MOVE ABROAD OVER BREXIT

February 1, 2019 | AP News

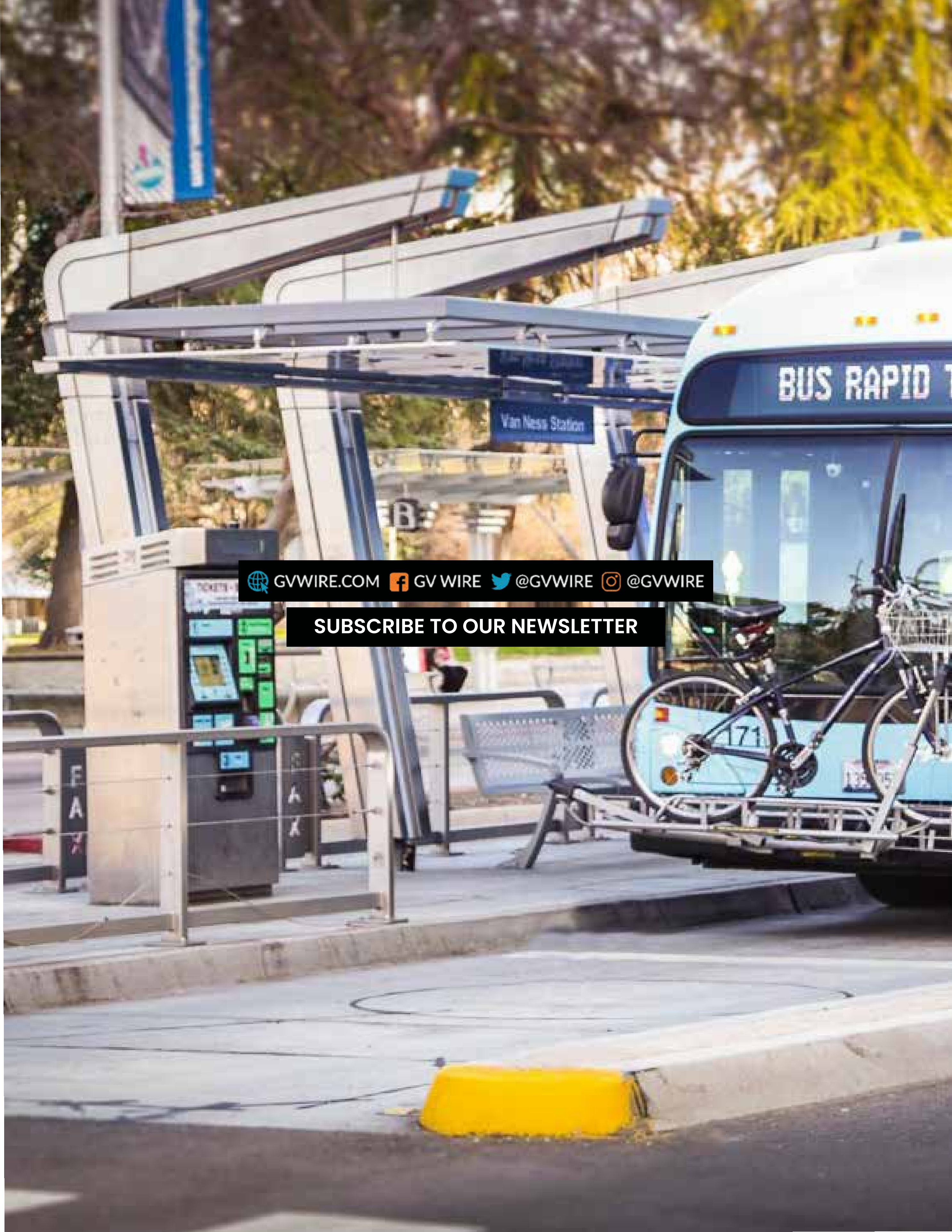
LONDON — Nearly a third of U.K. firms may shift their operations abroad because of Britain’s looming departure from the European Union, a survey of 1,200 company directors suggested Friday, as the political stalemate over a Brexit deal heightened jitters among businesses.

The survey by the Institute of Directors, an employers’ group, found that 16 percent of businesses already had relocation plans while a further 13 percent were “actively considering” a move. The group said while headlines have focused on big companies, less notice has been given to smaller U.K. businesses and their plans to relocate. Institute interim director Edwin Morgan said smaller firms typically have tighter resources and for them “to be thinking about such a costly course of action makes clear the precarious position they are in.” U.K. lawmakers voted this week to send May back to Brussels to seek changes to the divorce agreement. But the...

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AP File Photo



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