



**Democratic race**  
Obama seeks focus on end of primary campaign **A5**

**Summer travel**  
Find out the top 10 places to hear the best of America's music **Inside**



**One more to go**  
Big Brown wins the second leg of the Triple Crown at the Preakness **D1**



# PRESS DISPATCH

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**Inside today**



## Hundreds detained during al-Qaida sweep

Nearly 1,000 people have been detained in a sweep to break al-Qaida in Iraq's sway in Iraq's third largest city, Mosul, but many of the fighters have fled to nearby areas, where troops are hunting for them.

See page A3

## School districts may add bonds to ballot

Three local school districts, along with Victor Valley College, are considering placing bonds on the November ballot.

See page B1

## Gunman wounds three at festival

A man with a semiautomatic rifle opened fire at a church festival Saturday, wounding his ex-wife and two bystanders before several festival-goers grabbed him, wrestled his gun away and held him for police.

See page B8

**Coming Monday**



## Scooter sales up

Scooters can pay for themselves in fuel-savings over one to three years.

**Sunny**

HIGH 92°  
LOW 59°

More weather information/D8

**Index**

BUSINESS	C6
CALIFORNIA	B8
CLASSIFIEDS	E8
COMICS	Inside
CROSSWORD	C5
DEAR ABBY	C8
EDITORIALS	B4
FEATURES	C1
HIGH DESERT	B1
LOTTERY	A2
MOVIES	C5
OBITUARIES	B2
SCOREBOARD	D7
SPORTS	D1
WEATHER	D8



8 SECTIONS  
120 PAGES

Page edited by Mike Lamb



Photos submitted by Dan Elliott

Emergency crews respond to a tour-bus crash on eastbound Interstate 40 on Saturday. One person was killed and several passengers were injured. The bus was on its way to Laughlin, Nev.

## Bus crash kills one

### Twenty-one passengers injured near Ludlow

LUDLOW (AP) — A charter bus overturned Saturday on a Mojave Desert freeway, killing a woman and injuring 21 other people, authorities said.

Faith Creer, 31, was pronounced dead at the scene, according to a report from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's and Coroner's Division. Several other passengers were moderately to severely injured and some were airlifted to area hospitals.

The bus was heading to the gambling town of Laughlin, Nev., when it crashed about two miles east of the town of Ludlow shortly before 11 a.m., said Tracey Martinez, a spokeswoman for the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

"There were no other vehicles involved," she said. "It did not roll over but it did land on its side."

A woman was flung from the bus and died, she said. Eight other people received severe injuries and 13 had minor to moderate injuries.

The driver was among the injured, who were all adults.

The crash happened on Interstate 40. Helicopters and ambulances were called to take the injured to hospitals, and the interstate's eastbound lanes were closed.

Martinez said the bus had picked up its passengers at the



Rescue personnel move a passenger injured in the tour-bus crash on Interstate 40 near Ludlow on Saturday.

Fox Hills Mall in Culver City. The bus is owned by Royal American Tours & Charter of Glendale.

According to the company's Web site, Royal American was founded in 2002 and provides transportation for "event plan-

ners, tour operators, employers, casino trips, hospitals, universities, park districts, senior centers, private groups and also individuals."

It was not immediately clear

**BUS CRASH/A8**

## \$95 million fumbled at Foxborough

By BROOKE EDWARDS  
Staff Writer

VICTORVILLE — The city of Victorville's venture into the electric power business has cost \$95 million and the Foxborough cogen power plant has yet to produce a single kilowatt of electricity.

City officials are now trying to sell off the outdated equipment that sits collecting dust, and to repair mistakes in the plant's original designs.

They are also preparing to connect the plant to the state's energy grid, defying the entire reason Foxborough was developed.

The city wanted to generate low-cost electricity to attract industry and jobs to the city with the plant, located on east Nisqualli Road. Instead the project's costs soared, almost quadrupling from initial projections.

"Having been newbies in the

Editor's note: This is the first in a two-part series on Victorville's energy projects. Read more in Monday's Daily Press. To see related documents, go to [www.VVDailyPress.com](http://www.VVDailyPress.com).

electricity and utilities business, there were some bumps in the road," Councilman Bob Hunter said. "But they are working themselves out at this point."

In 2004, city officials said Foxborough's price tag would be \$22 million of Redevelopment Agency funding. But when City Council members were asked recently if they could estimate the total amount that has now gone into Foxborough, only Councilman Mike Rothschild hazarded a guess: \$70 million.

An April 9 e-mail obtained by the Daily Press from Inland Energy's Wayne Sawyer to Mayor

**FOXBOROUGH/A7**

## Showing off



Sarah Alvarado / Staff Photographer

Darleen Peabody, 10, of Hesperia Highlighters 4H, prepares to auction off her Reserve 4H Grand Champion market calf during the Junior Livestock auction at the San Bernardino County Fair on Saturday. Today is the last day of the fair. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for children.

## County to offer targeted informational workshops

By RYAN ORR  
Staff Writer

HESPERIA — A workshop Thursday will be targeted toward men and women who have lost jobs in the industries of construction, manufacturing, mortgage or finance.

San Bernardino County has been one of the worst hit regions in the state, said Curt Hagman, chairman of the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board. So much so that the county received \$341,000 in special funding from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's discretionary funds to help get laid-off workers back into the workforce.

"These are very targeted workshops for those industries," Hagman said.

There will be a workshop Tuesday in San Bernardino, Wednesday in Rancho Cucamonga and Thursday in Hesperia, Hagman added.

The workshops will be informational and the funds will

be used to help follow-up with clients and allow them to continue to use the resources to find employment.

"We only have a specified amount of times to use these funds," said Sandy Harmen, executive director of the Workforce Investment Board.

The workshops will provide information to laid-off workers about which industries are in need of employees, which skills transfer to other industries, retraining, lifestyle changes and financial planning. There will also be counselors on hand with information about how to talk to your families about job loss.

The workshops will also provide tips on marketing job skills to achieve employment, as well as help with resumes.

The local workshop will be held from 1 to 5 p.m. Thursday at the Hesperia Library, at 9650 Seventh Ave.

For more information, call 949-8526.

## Construction industry hit hard

Approximately 15,000 jobs lost in San Bernardino and Riverside counties

By TOM RISEN  
Staff Writer

After California lost more jobs in construction than any other industry this March, the Victor Valley has been hit hard as residential construction jobs become scarce.

People who took up residential construction in the area during the housing boom are trying to find commercial construction jobs or other lines of work, such as Rudy Cortez, owner of RTC Construction in Victorville.

"There were big companies doing big residential construction projects in the High Desert and that completely stopped," Cortez said. "We're transitioning from residential to commercial and most of our work is down the hill. We're still doing some residential work, but not much."

As of March, approximately 15,000 construction jobs had been lost in San Bernardino



Daily Press file photo

Victor Valley construction workers are being hit hard by the decline in the housing market. Some construction workers have left town rather than find new construction work after the end of the housing boom.

ally over 10 years," Smith said. "This is about my fourth go-around. I don't know how long this one will last or how bad it will get."

Smith said this downturn part of the cycle is always bad because construction workers are sometimes caught living beyond their means.

"I told my guys in 2006 that this wouldn't last and nobody believed me," Smith said. "When construction is good, workers go buy a new truck.

"This is a cyclical thing, usu-

**CONSTRUCTION/A8**

**HIGHLIGHTS OF INVESTIGATION**

The Daily Press waded through thousands of pages of city documents while investigating Foxborough. Here are some additional highlights:

- An e-mail from Inland Energy consultant Wayne Sawyer discussed ways to distract the Daily Press from its "witch hunt" to find out the true amount sunk into Foxborough. He suggests feeding the paper six positive stories related to the city's energy projects, including unveiling a code-name "Phoenix" plan to correct Foxborough. The president of Inland Energy Buck Johns responded: "I like all of this ... and feel certain the three incumbents up for election would likewise!"
- Another Sawyer e-mail sent last February discusses plans to change the chemical re-agent used at Foxborough from ammonia, citing concerns over potential odor issues. "... even one event at FCF could be a major problem - think NUTRO! Just the fact that the city has a choice at FCF of a more benign re-agent storage solution at FCF is fodder for the lynch mob at Spring Valley Lakes currently taking legal action relative to NUTRO."
- Kimberly Cox, another Foxborough staffer, sent an e-mail to the plant's assistant manager Dana Wellborn asking why he had advised keeping unused equipment: "We have not utilized this equipment since April and I feel that it would be prudent to return. The monthly rental is \$1,000 so we have paid \$7,000 in rental costs without any usage."
- In February, Foxborough director Glen Casanova wrote in an e-mail the city agreed to process a payment for equipment at \$250,000. "However, we are trying to work through the most appropriate way to do so without additional City Council approval. ... Any way we can go ahead and get the thing on the road?"
- An e-mail from Sawyer to Wellborn discussed selling off equipment purchased for the original plans at Foxborough. Sawyer said the offer he received from Florida-based Turner EnviroLogic would represent a loss of approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000. Rather than face the loss, Sawyer recommended the city keep the equipment in its inventory.
- In another Sawyer e-mail, on "communication and control issues" at Foxborough last March: "... failure to get this addressed is costing the city \$thousands/week."

**Foxborough: City says changes in state policy part of problem**

From A1

Terry Caldwell and City Manager Jon Roberts stated the city has spent upwards of \$95 million "on 'Foxborough development efforts' w/o the main plant (FCF) completed or functional (much less deemed a 'worthy investment')."

A financial document obtained by the Daily Press confirms the \$95 million figure, showing cost overruns would amount to \$5 million more than the \$90 million bond the city took out to pay for Foxborough.

The city attributes much of the price increase and delay in construction to changes in state policy, requiring at least 20 percent of all energy produced in California to be renewable by 2010. To meet this standard, the city dumped original plans for gas-fired combustion turbines and the temporary generators providing energy until the plant was completed.

"The equipment we had was good for the moment we bought it," Rothschild said. "It was cost effective and fit what we needed in that moment in time. Regulatory issues came up after that we couldn't anticipate."

The city is now buying more temporary generators — though this time to run on biodiesel — and staff is trying to sell off the older equipment.

Glen Casanova, director of the city's utilities, would not confirm whether any of the old equipment has yet been sold, saying the city is still in negotiations with potential buyers. He said income from these sales will show up on the next budget, and that it will replace a "big chunk" of the city's original investment.

Aside from start-up costs, the utility has also shown a deficit of \$4.5 million to more than \$8 million in operating revenue each year since its generators were first fired up in 2005. The city has borrowed from the general fund to make up this shortfall.

Casanova said the city knew the project would lose money initially.

Rothschild said Foxborough will go revenue-positive in approximately two more years, which he said is longer than they'd hoped.

Much of this shortfall in

revenue is due to Nutro dog food plant — which draws energy from the plant along with AmeriCold — not using as much energy as they'd originally requested. Rothschild said this is because they have permits to fire up three cycles, but because of the odor problems they've had, the city has held them to one.

An e-mail from Sawyer to Wellborn last April said, "Nutro loads are nowhere near what had been projected (had they been, they would have melted some cable by now)."

This is due to another misstep, reportedly made by the city's original design and consulting firm, Carter & Burgess. There's pending litigation between the city and the design firm.

"A wrong part was purchased," Councilwoman JoAnn Almond said, "and the thing has basically been sitting there collecting dust."

Sawyer's message said there were rudimentary design errors with undersized conductors purchased for the planned co-gen plant, which would produce energy and convert excess heat

into steam. Casanova would not say that he wouldn't recommend the council hire Carter & Burgess for the city's next project.

Former plant manager Wayne Campbell may also have been held responsible for some of these errors, as Casanova replaced him in August. Another e-mail from Sawyer mentioned Campbell getting out of control near the end of his tenure as manager.

The city is now looking into connecting to the state energy grid through Southern California Edison, which will reduce the annual deficit by \$5 million, according to another e-mail from Casanova.

This is a complete turnaround from the plant's original purpose, which was to attract businesses by staying off the state's grid and providing electricity at a 10 percent discount over Edison.

While they haven't yet made a final decision, Rothschild said he's confident the plant will eventually be on the grid.

Brooke Edwards may be reached at 955-5358 or at bedwards@vvdailynews.com.

**Council, city staff hopeful Foxborough will successful**

By BROOKE EDWARDS  
Staff Writer

VICTORVILLE — While the cost of Foxborough has gone some \$73 million over the original cost estimate, all of the Victorville council members and city staff involved with Foxborough remain confident that the project will be a productive investment in the near future, as the value of renewable energy skyrockets.

Here's what they are saying:  
• Mayor Terry Caldwell said investing in Foxborough was the right decision in terms of job creation, though he couldn't say the number of jobs the utility has brought to Victorville.



CALDWELL

"That was the motivation, that was the primary reason for getting involved in providing energy: To bring jobs to the city of Victorville. In that context, I would say that it has been very successful."

Caldwell went on to say, "If you're talking a strict statistical analysis, we have a ways to go before we can get a financial return on our investment. We clearly have not achieved that yet. But we are going to deal with that Foxborough issue and make it right."

• Councilman Bob Hunter said, "It's always been my thought that the project is a great project."

He said the city is already seeing a return on their investment.

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"You can't quantify that kind of project just in terms of dollars."

• Councilman Rudy Cabriales said, "When we started this venture, we knew it was a long-term venture."

He said he's confident the city will eventually reach its goals with Foxborough in attracting more businesses, though it's now on a longer time frame than first projected. "We're going through a slump right now," Cabriales said, "but we'll get there eventually."



CABRIALES

• Councilwoman JoAnn Almond said information on the plant's status is not as readily available as she would like. "I know we've doubled our expected cost," she said.



ALMOND

She wants to take a hard look at where the city is at with Foxborough when

the council evaluates next year's budget in June.

• Councilman Mike Rothschild said he's the one who pushed the idea of city-



ROTHSCHILD

owned utilities to begin with, in looking at whether there was any way to deliver electricity without going to the grid.

In retrospect he said, "It's been expensive, because it's not the most effective way to generate electricity."

Now, he said the city will real-

ize more revenue from intercon-

necting to the state's energy

grid with Southern California

Edison.

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