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TODAY'S WEATHER
93/57
 FORECAST | B6



Battle at the Border racing returns
 B1

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 ANSWER | A4

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Students star at STEM Night



Wilson Junior High School eighth-graders Abigail Dudley, Ulises Aguirre and Zion Moreno laugh as they show off their "Arm of the Future" robotics project at the El Centro Elementary School District STEM Night. CHELCEY ADAMI PHOTOS

Mock trial students honored

BY KARINA LOPEZ
 Staff Writer
 IMPERIAL — Since the beginning of the school year, dozens of students from local high schools have dedicated their time to learning about the judicial system, preparing opening statements and closing arguments in anticipation of the mock trial season.
 While the season has now come and gone, the students had one final opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments during the annual Mock Trial Awards Banquet held at Frank Wright Middle School here on Monday night.
 The banquet recognized the most outstanding performances from throughout the season, with some students taking home multiple medals at the end of the night.
 SEE TRIAL | A6

- Glow in the Park 5K and Fun Run**
 WHEN 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 27
 WHERE Bucklin Park, El Centro
- Anti-Gang Awareness Family Health and Outreach Fair**
 WHEN March 28: 7:30 a.m. 5K run/1-mile walk and sports clinics; 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Opening Ceremonies and entertainment and information booths
 WHERE Imperial Valley College, 380 E. Aten Road, Imperial
- Jazzercise Mom and Me Class**
 WHEN 5 p.m. March 26; 9 a.m. March 28
 WHERE Ricochet Indoor Trampoline Park, 450 W. Aten Road, Imperial
- Free medical, dental and vision screenings**
 WHEN 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 28
 WHERE Calexico High School, 1030 Encinas Ave. Calexico

SMILE OF THE DAY
 "Because I came to the fair with my dad."
 Faviola Ornelas, 6, Calexico



Wilson Junior High School seventh-graders Sergio Lopez and Jacob Campos check out a robotics project at STEM Night.

BY CHELCEY ADAMI | Staff Writer
 Projects like a robotic arm, interactive chain reaction assemblies and even a disassembled PlayStation controller pulled students further into the worlds of science, technology, engineering and math during the inaugural El Centro Elementary School District STEM Night on Tuesday.
 Wilson eighth-grader Xavier De Anda meticulously set up his Rube Goldberg chain reaction project, which completes a simple task using very complex steps.
 "It took a lot of time, but it ended up actually working," he said proudly.
 While he researched other similar projects, De Anda made his "totally original" and collected parts for it from around the house, putting it together with "lots of help from a glue gun."
 Projects like this "helps (students) learn how to think differently than just sitting in a schoolroom working on tests and doing normal homework," he said. "It allows us to be more active than just writing on a piece of paper and makes us think more creatively and use our imagination."
 SEE STEM | A6

Rainfall drops amid drought

BY ALEJANDRO DÁVILA FRAGOSO
 Multimedia Editor
 Precipitation in the Colorado River has dropped by 20 percent this year, as the river continues on a 15-year-long drought, Imperial Irrigation District staff told the board Tuesday.
 The Colorado River provides water to nearly 30 million people in seven states and hundreds of counties, including Imperial. This means that climatic fluctuations in the Colorado River Basin have profound effects on water resources in the Western United States. IID staff informs the board on Colorado hydrology reports on a regular basis.
 SEE RIVER | A7

ECRMC threatened with boycott, litigation

BY RICHARD MONTENEGRO BROWN
 Local Content Editor
 An attorney representing the Imperial Valley Coalition for Life accused the El Centro hospital board of numerous open meeting law violations and threatened litigation Tuesday, while coalition members informed the board it would go forward with a boycott of the hospital.
 The demands are simple, coalition members indicated: rescind a transfer agreement made between the hospital and Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest that clears the path for abortions to be performed at Planned Parenthood's Clinic.
 "The businesses, the citizens and the churches are feeling very neglected," said David Gibbs, an attorney for Alliance Defending Freedom, a faith-based legal group representing the coalition.
 "And they're all for litigation, they're all for boycotts," he said. "They're all for getting new board members, City Council members. They want some action."
 The transfer agreement nor how it came to pass was part of the public agenda for Tuesday's monthly meeting. Rather, the accusations and threats came as part of the public comment portion of the meeting.
 Gibbs reiterated the claims made in a letter delivered March 16 to the El Centro Regional Medical Center Board of Trustees outlining what Alliance Defending Freedom claims are five violations of the Brown Act.
 The Brown Act is California's open meeting law that details how elected or appointed officials presiding over governmental bodies do business.
 Gibbs believes the Brown Act violations make the agreement invalid and the responsibility lies with the city-owned hospital board to make it right. He acknowledged a city ordinance that divorced the City Council from governing the hospital.
 Meanwhile, a number of local pastors warned the board that a boycott of the hospital is coming if the transfer agreement is not undone.
 SEE ECRMC | A7

OBITUARIES | A6-7

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