

# Local & Region

## QUOTE OF NOTE

"Nature's beauty is always amazing to see."

Aaron Lopez, on Monday's "blood moon" total lunar eclipse

**QUESTIONS?** Contact Local Content Editor Richard Montenegro Brown at [rbrown@ivpressonline.com](mailto:rbrown@ivpressonline.com) or 760-337-3453.

## DEAR PROBE

What do you want to know?

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**Q** The recent birthday of Cesar Chavez has inspired me to speak out about the injustice conveyed upon the workers of the Campesinos Unidos Head Start program. I am outraged that as a part of a federal program employees have not received a raise in about five years, our last raise being 50 cents. A year ago all Campesinos Unidos Inc. staff were called to a meeting in which we were asked to take out a loan from our hard-earned 401(k) retirement fund to donate to the company. In that meeting it was revealed that money was being misused by the company; in one case we were told that one of the directors received a \$900 mileage check when they are always using company cars. Our wages are very close to that of the minimum wage and we are constantly being asked to get our bachelor's degree. For that pay I will never finish paying off my student loans. I am very saddened by this situation because I know that all of the teachers that work for this program still work there because they love working with children. — Falling behind, Holtville

**A** Raises for Campesinos Unidos's Head Start employees are determined by Congress, not CUI, said director Jose M. Lopez. Nonetheless, employees had received cost-of-living increases in three of the past five fiscal years, he said. The sequestration of fiscal year 2012-2013 resulted in no raise, while the 5.95 percent wage increase of fiscal year 2009-2010 would drop considerably to .72 percent in fiscal year 2011-2012. The employees' 1.37 percent raise in fiscal year 2013-2014 is also await-

ing final authorization from the Head Start administration, Lopez said.

Like many other nonprofit organizations CUI has had to often rely on donations from the general public, including its employees, on a continual basis, Lopez said. While it is true that employees have been asked in the past to donate to the organization, no administrator had suggested that staff dip into their 401(k) reserves, he said. What likely happened is that a fellow staff member offered up such an idea at the meeting in question, Lopez

said.

As for the \$900 mileage check, CUI has no record of such a check being issued to directors or staff, he said. Governmental funding agencies annually monitor and audit CUI and an external audit is also conducted. Audits include all programs and fiscal activities, including fundraising activities. To date, nothing suggesting questionable spending practices have been noted, Lopez said.

The Head Start Act of 2007 enacted changes for teaching staff requirements in the program,

which mandated all teachers have a baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood; or, a baccalaureate or advanced degree and course work equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children, Lopez said. Also, promoting educational growth and career development has always been a part of CUI's philosophy, he said. On many occasions, CUI has reimbursed cost of books and tuition to employees and have accommodated employees' work schedules for school

attendance, Lopez said.

As paltry as those raises may seem, they are better than nothing, which is what a good deal of people have had to contend with during this drawn-out recession. Also, there are not a whole lot of people out there who could even point to 401(k)s of their own. If the Probe writer truly wanted to take a page from the Cesar Chavez handbook, they could do better than writing to Congress may have been more appropriate. Chavez himself may have even organized a strike.

BRAWLEY CITY COUNCIL

## City declares emergency

BY KARINA LOPEZ  
Staff Writer

**BRAWLEY** — After a series of major breaks occurred to iron water pipelines along south Western Avenue last week, the City Council decided to declare the incident an emergency at its regular meeting here Tuesday night.

The breaks took roughly 13 hours to repair and warranted the replacement of about 150 feet of cast iron pipe with PVC pipes at the cost of \$60,000.

The funds to correct the changes will be split among the fiscal year 2013-2014 Budget Water Distribution Fund 501- Repair and Maintenance Services, Budget Water Distribution Fund 501- Repair and Maintenance Services and Budget Gas Tax Fund 211 - Repair and Maintenance Services.

The four major breaks to the waterline, which is one of the oldest in the city, were the cause of a Supervisory Control Acquisition system malfunction at the city's water treatment plant.

The malfunction caused the distribution pumps to fluctuate the pressure in the water distribution system, which in turn caused the breaks and the water shutdown to businesses in close proximity to the break, as well the closure of street traffic from G Street to Main Street.

"The cast iron pipelines corrode over time and based on soil conditions, they can suffer external or internal breaks and material problems such as we're experiencing," said Yazmin Arellano, public works director.

### Meeting glance Here are three additional items from Tuesday's meeting:

**1** A group of seniors from Brawley Union High School announced plans to organize a 5K run and 1-mile walk to benefit a young Holtville girl suffering from a form of bone cancer. The Fight Like a Princess Glow Run is set for April 26 at Warne Field with registration beginning at 7 p.m. and the race beginning at 8 p.m.

**2** The city had a proclamation declaring the week of April 14 -19 National Library Week and Telecommunications Week.

**3** Yazmin Arellano, public works director, informed the council the state Department of Transportation had inspected the intersection at Highway 86 and Panno Road and had made its recommendations to the city. The city was asked to make a series of changes that will delay the opening of the road until further notice.

In addition to closing portions of streets, the pipeline breaks caused long water exposure to the asphalt causing soft spots in the street, Arellano explained.

"Most of the asphalt in that area deteriorated to the point of needing replacement," Arellano said.

The fixtures to the affected street areas were completed on Tuesday, Arellano said.

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## Valley gears up for Easter weekend

BY KARINA LOPEZ  
Staff Writer

Local cities are gearing up to host their respective Easter egg hunts beginning on Thursday and running through Sunday afternoon.

A majority of the events are free and open to the public with the egg hunt activity open to certain ages depending on the event.

Heber will kick off the Easter activities with an egg hunt and free movie on Thursday at Tito Huerta

Park with a majority of other events occurring Saturday.

Sunday at the Heber Dunes will be the third annual Discover Easter Island Eggstravaganza.

The event begins at 7 a.m. with a fun run, walk or hop followed by an egg hunt, helmet-decorating activity and a remote control ATV race.

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## A FRESH LOOK AT HISTORY



An artifact is carefully removed from the plastic bag it was placed in years ago after it was collected and now being placed in museum-quality bags to further preserve the collection during the curating process at the Imperial Valley Desert Museum on July 6. ERIC MILLER FILE PHOTO

## Permanent exhibit in the works for Desert Museum

BY JULIO MORALES  
Staff Writer, Copy Editor

Patrons will have the chance to travel eons back in time and a year into the future at the Imperial Valley Desert Museum this Saturday, when it debuts a series of artistic renderings related to its soon-to-be built permanent exhibit, titled "Land of Extremes."

The permanent exhibit is the culmination of three years of planning that involved the input of local archaeologists and geologists, among many others. Construction on the long-awaited exhibit is expected to begin in May, said museum director Neal Hitch.

"The event is really a chance for the public and museum members to get a glimpse of what's coming," he said. "It's a great time to come see what's is going to happen in the next year."

The permanent exhibit will have three components to it, and will feature an archaeological collection, as well as displays highlighting the region's indigenous people and its unique and dynamic geological landscape.

Since its inception, the museum has strived to present collections of artifacts that originate from the Valley and that would remain in the Valley. Its focus has been a "seamless integration," whereby cultural and geological artifacts are presented in a complementary manner, Hitch said.

"It's hard to look at the landscape and Native American culture and the collections we have without seeing all that as one thing," Hitch said.



An artist's rendering of the soon-to-be-constructed "Land of Extremes" permanent exhibit is shown in this undated picture. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE IMPERIAL VALLEY DESERT MUSEUM

The museum had received federal approval in December to curate collections of artifacts recovered from projects developed on Bureau of Land Management land within the Valley.

In March the museum had also received a collection of artifacts from an archaeological company working for San Diego Gas & Electric, whose Sunrise Powerlink was recently completed on BLM lands in the Valley in June, Hitch said.

Estimated costs for the exhibit are expected to run between \$750,000 to \$1 million, with 60 percent of that already secured, Hitch said. The majority of the funding was provided by the Ocotillo Wind Express project, with some also coming from SDG&E, he said.

### If you go

**What** Desert Museum reception  
**Where** Imperial Valley Desert Museum  
**When** 5:30 to 9 p.m. Saturday  
5:30 – catered reception by Juniors Catering  
6:30 – Manzanita bird singers  
6:45 – brief presentation  
7:10 – "First People Kumeyaay" Screening  
8:00 – "First People Kumeyaay" second screening

Hitch readily admits that renewable energy projects have had some controversy concerning archaeology, and that most Native Americans would like to see artifacts left where they are.

SEE MUSEUM | A7