

LPJUSD mountain residents cast votes on Measure N

by Cooper Bowen
Editor-in-Chief

Voters residing in the Loma Prieta Joint Union School District (LPJUSD) decided on the fate of Measure N at the ballot box on Nov. 3. A vote in favor supported the authorization of a seven-year extension of an existing 164 dollar annual parcel tax; if the measure passes, it will continue to generate an estimated \$328,000 per year for academic programs at Loma Prieta Elementary School and C.T. English Middle Schools.

Measure N is an extension of Measure H, which voters approved in 2013 and will expire after the 2020-2021 school year. As such, its passage would not lead to a tax increase for mountain residents, and senior citizen homeowners who are 65 years or older are eligible for an exemption from the parcel tax through a "simple application process" accessible on the district's website.

This measure comes amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which has gutted the school district's already strapped-for-cash budget. Notably, instead of receiving funding directly from the state, the district chooses to be funded based off local property taxes; this provides the district slightly more money, around 70,000 dollars, than the state would. Still,

LPJUSD still receives less funding per student than the national average.

All funds raised through the measure would be legally obligated to remain in the district and directed entirely towards school instructional and educational needs, with none of the funds being spent on administrator salaries. Within the district, these funds would be used to "maintain outstanding



RISE AND SHINE: The sun beams on the hills behind C.T.

core academic programs in reading, writing, math, history, and science, retain highly qualified and experienced teachers, [and] prepare Loma Prieta and C.T. English students to thrive in a rigorous high school environment."

Support Mountain Schools, the organization backing Measure N, argues that the measure is a common-sense initiative: "Good schools are the foundation of any healthy, thriving community and are part of what makes our community a desirable place to live. [They] also create continual demand for housing, which stimulates the local economy and keeps property values high in our area. Investing in local schools is a wise investment in the quality of life for everyone in the community," the organization states on their website.

A two thirds majority (66.67 percent) is required for Measure N to pass. As of Nov. 10, officials had counted 1897 votes in favor (65.85 percent) and 984 votes against (34.15 percent). The race has not yet been called.

In an email sent out to all Loma Prieta families on Oct. 7, 2020, LPJUSD Superintendent Lisa Fraser noted that the district would face "potential budget reductions of \$400K should Measure N fail." Furthermore, "even if Measure N is successful," the district



GET SCHOOLED: C.T. English remains empty amid COVID-19.

would still be forced to make "reductions of \$100K which will be needed to eliminate the deficit and maintain a 12 percent reserve."

Fraser emphasized: "The passage of Measure N is critical to meeting our fiscal goals while also preserving current programs and services."

(Sources: LPJUSD, Support Mountain Schools, BallotPedia, KQED)

CA selects state lawmakers

by Lexi Kupor

Public Relations Manager

On Nov. 3, Californians voted to fill 20 out of 40 total State Senate seats and all 80 two-year-term State Assembly appointments.

In Los Gatos' State Senate District 15, Democrats Ann Ravel and current Santa Clara County Supervisor Dave Cortese competed in one of the closest races in the California legislature this year. The candidates fought for the open seat of Democrat Jim Beall, who is ineligible for re-election due to term limits.



courtesy wikimedia commons

PUBLIC SERVANT: Beall smiles in his official photograph.

As of early Nov. 10, Cortese leads Ravel by about nine percentage points, with nearly three quarters of votes having been counted, and is on track to defeat Ravel for the seat, which represents nearly 1 million residents across the South Bay. Cortese stated on his Facebook page that this election marks "the biggest and toughest campaign" he has experienced. "There's just so much to work on...things

are moving fast but I am eager to dive in there and start working on things," he stated to KRON4.

Going into the election, the State Senate consisted of 29 Democrats and 11 Republican seats. All State Senate incumbents won their primary elections earlier this year.

In State Assembly District 28, which encompasses Los Gatos, Democratic incumbent Evan Low defeated Republican candidate Carlos Rafael Cruz with nearly 75 percent of the vote. This will mark Low's fourth term since winning his first general election in 2014, when he defeated Republican Chuck Page.

The majority of State Assembly incumbents won re-election, and all those in uncalled races as of Nov. 10 are on track to defeat their opponents, many with similarly large margins. Nearly every election consisted of a Democrat vs. Republican candidate race, despite several exceptions including Libertarians James Just and Starchild, Independents Sara Brink and incumbent Chad Mayes, and Green Party member Margaret Villa. All aforementioned candidates lost their races with the exception of Mayes, whose race has not yet been decided as of Nov. 10, though Mayes does maintain a slight lead.

This year, California recognized 233 State Assembly candidates, six fewer than 2018. In March, voters participated in 36 total contested primary elections. Two out of the 28 incumbents running in the primaries — Republicans Tyler Diep and William Brough from Districts 72 and 73, respectively — experienced defeat; this marks the first year since 2010 in which an incumbent lost a primary election. Eight incumbents did not file for re-election.

This November's results will play a significant role in shaping state policy and determining the ideological makeup in Sacramento for years to come.

(Sources: Ballotpedia, NYT, Mercury News, FOX Los Angeles, KRON 4)

SVO addresses racist ad

by Jordan Chan

News Editor

The Silicon Valley Organization (SVO) dissolved its political action committee on Nov. 2 in an attempt to restore the organization's reputation after receiving backlash from a racist campaign ad posted on their website. Former CEO Matt Mahood apologized, taking full responsibility for the incident, and he resigned a few days prior to the committee's dissolution along with three other board members. Mahood announced, "That image and messaging does not represent who I am as a man, a father, a husband or community leader... I also know that the image and messaging does not represent the values of our members or the SVO Board of Directors."



courtesy wikimedia commons

FALL FROM GRACE: SVO drew criticism for racist image.

In response to the incident, as well as due to some of the SVO's past mistakes, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County and multiple other nonprofits

cut ties with the SVO and denounced the SVO's racist behavior. Head of Catholic Charities Greg Keplerfe stated, "I cried when I saw it because in all of my 31 years in social services [I have never] seen such blatant racism from a business organization."

The ad in question depicts black men surrounded by tear gas or smoke taking part in what seems to be a riot. Words across the picture read, "Do you really want to sign onto this?" The ad was an attack against candidate Jake Tonkel from San Jose City Council District 6 and his alleged support for defunding the police. It supported incumbent Dev Davis, who claimed no involvement in the posting of the ad. She declared, "My first reaction was shock and horror in seeing a racist image."

This is not the first time people have called out the SVO for controversial advertising. The SVO has darkened the skin tone of Latino council members in previous ads they posted. SVO Executive Vice President Madison Nguyen apologized for the culturally insensitive mistakes made by the organization in the past, as well as the most recent incident.

Although Mahood took responsibility for the incident, he said that it was a result of a mistake made by someone else on the SVO team while other leaders suspected an outside web administrator. The organization hired a third party investigator to find out who posted the image and how it wound up on their website. The SVO told the press that the results of this investigation will go up on their website, and they discussed them at a news conference on Nov. 10. They also discussed internal and external plans to change the organization and form a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board. (Sources: San Francisco CBS, Mercury News, SVO, San Jose Inside, San Jose Spotlight)

LGMSPD arrests Dana Wright in active sexual assault case

by Sasha Ryu

Editor-in-Chief

On Tues., Nov. 3, the Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department arrested a 35-year-old man named Dana Joseph Wright on a one million dollar warrant. Wright, a Bodega Bay resident, is suspected of sexually assaulting, battering, and unlawfully restraining a minor.



courtesy flickr

BEHIND BARS: The SCC Main Jail rises in downtown San Jose.

In both 2018 and 2019, the department investigated nine sexual assault cases. Wright's case is the seventh sexual assault investigation that the LGMSPD conducted in 2020.

According to the LGMSPD's latest press release, on Sun., Oct. 18 at approximately four in the afternoon, a teenage girl was walking through a neighborhood on Benedict Lane when a man sexually and physically assaulted her before fleeing on foot to a vehicle parked in a nearby lot.

Based on security camera footage, the man had his hair in a bun at the time of the incident. He was also wearing "a black t-shirt, shorts, and hiking shoes." In the weeks that followed, the department released a police sketch based on the images the cameras were able to capture. These sketches, paired with surveillance videos of the suspect's tan 2000s Mercedes Sprinter van were ultimately what led local law enforcement to Wright.

In conjunction with the Marin County Sheriff's Office Auto Theft Task Force, the LGMSPD identified the van by its model and unique markings and found that Wright, the owner of the vehicle, matched the description of their suspect. After making this discovery, officers located and arrested Wright 80 miles north of Los Gatos in the city of Novato.



courtesy lgmspd

WRIGHT'S WRONGS: Police arrested Wright on rape charges.

Currently, the Santa Clara County Main Jail holds Wright on "charges of 289(a)(1)(c) PC - Sexual Penetration by Force or Violence and 243.4(a) PC - Sexual Battery and Assault While Unlawfully

Restrained." If a jury finds Wright guilty of both of these charges and moves to punish him to the fullest extent of the law, his maximum sentence would be 14 years, and he would be fined a total of 10 thousand dollars.

In an interview with El Gato News, LGMSPD Public Information Officer, Sgt. Jamie Field commented: "Anytime we [locate a suspect], it's very relieving to know that they're not out there potentially hurting anyone else. Earlier today, I spoke with [Detective, Sgt.] Erin Lunsford, who supervised the detectives who worked on the investigation. For him, on a personal level, this was a tough case. At first, we only had a sketch [of the suspect,] and a vehicle image and description. Thankfully, with the assistance of the Marin County Sheriff's Office... we were able to... locate, arrest, and transport Wright to the [SCC] Main Jail. We hope this will aid towards the start of the healing process for the victim."

The LGMSPD is presently conducting follow up related to the investigations on this incident and asks anyone with any information that could be helpful to the case to contact the department at (408) 354-8600.

(Sources: LGMSPD, Patch, CBS, Mercury News, Town Clerk's Office)