

Free Trial
E-mail
Delivery
Available
See
Page 8

The San Bernardino County Sentinel

News of Note
from Around the
Largest County
in the Lower
48 States

Friday, March 5, 2010 • A Fortunado Publication in conjunction with Countywide News Service • 10808 Foothill Blvd. Suite 160-446 Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

Investigators Looking Into Arrowhead Regional's Operations

Allegations of malpractice, licensing shortcomings, operational and managerial miscues and substandard accounting practices at the county hospital are the focus of separate inquiries by federal and state agencies, the *Sentinel* has learned.

The *Sentinel* was unable to ascertain whether a rumored survey of the hospital's operations by auditors working at the

behest of the board of supervisors is actually underway.

The issues being looked into include current practices as well as those extending back nearly a decade at the Colton-based facility, which is known as the Arrowhead Regional Medical Center.

The sharpest focus is that on the administrative action of Dev GnanaDev, who is both



the current medical director of Arrowhead Regional as well as its head of surgery. GnanaDev also happens to be the

president of the California Medical Association.

Some of the suspected problems at the hospital originated at a level well

below that of GnanaDev and involved several instances of medical malpractice and faulty diagnoses. Others have been attributed to GnanaDev directly.

One known case, the *Sentinel* is informed, elicited the interest of federal investigators and involved a thirteen year old girl who had suffered a dislocated neck. Physicians and staff failed to adequately See P 4

Lawyer Given Blank Check

SAN BERNARDINO—The county board of supervisors on March 2 authorized the law firm hired to recover damages the county suffered as a result of former county assessor Bill Postmus's mismanagement of his office to go beyond its previously set half-of-a-million dollar spending limit.

On January 27, 2009, the Board of Supervisors approved retaining the services of John C. Hueston, of the firm Irell & Manella, LLC, as special counsel regarding administrative actions and civil actions in connection with the investigation and possible removal from office of assessor Bill Postmus pursuant to Article II, section 6 of the County Charter.

Even after Postmus resigned as assessor in February 2009, the board allowed Hueston to continue with his investigation and the preparation of a report on the matter that was eventually delivered to the board of supervisors.

On May 12, 2009, the board authorized the initiation of civil litigation against Postmus and five other defendants, Rancho Cucamonga city councilman and former assessor's office intergovernmental affairs liaison Rex Gutierrez, former assistant assessors Adam Aleman and Jim Erwin, former assessor's office taxpayer advocate Gregory Eyler, and political consultant Mike Richman. That lawsuit sought See P 3

Neighbors Want Old St. Mark's Moved Back Downtown

UPLAND—Last weekend board members of the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center association attempted, and failed, to convince residents of the 18th Street neighborhood that surrounds the Old St. Mark's church to accept modifications to the association's 13-year-old conditional use permit,

which limits the scope of activities at the chapel.

Old St. Mark's Church, the original Episcopal Church in Upland, was constructed at the corner of Euclid Avenue and F Street in 1911. In 1965, the building was moved to its current location at 525 West 18th Street after the congregation, which now meets

at the church located on 16th Street, outgrew the picturesque facility.

Initially, the property upon which the old church was relocated was intended to be developed into a municipal park and the building into a museum or historical exhibit. But that grand plan never came to fruition. The building

languished on timbers for several years, only to be damaged by an arsonist. Eventually it was installed and refurbished. Today it is a church without a congregation and an economic challenge to the Chaffey Community Cultural Center's board of directors. To date, the directors have been unable to develop a suc-

cessful business plan.

In the early 2000s, the city elected to sell off the majority of the park property to a developer, who sought, and gained, an entitlement to develop the property into single family homes. Homes are currently under construction there.

The Chaffey Communities Cul- See P 6

State, County & Fontana Sharing Bridge Costs

County officials this week advanced \$9.5 million from the county's redevelopment agency to its department of public works to fund the acquisition of property for the I-10/Cherry Avenue bridge project in the county area of Fontana.

On April 10, 2008, the California Transportation Commission included a plan to replace the existing five-lane Cherry

Avenue bridge over I-10 with an eight-lane bridge, add one additional lane on all four ramps of the interchange, improve the Cherry Avenue/Valley Boulevard intersection, and widen the existing Cherry Avenue Bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad from four lanes to eight lanes in the commission's program of projects for the states Trade Corri- See P 2

Needles Hospital Working Toward Retiring Debt

NEEDLES—Operations at the Colorado River Medical Center are lurching ahead, despite lingering financial challenges.

David Selman of the Camden Group, who is serving as the interim chief executive officer for the hospital, has made financial reports available that chart both disappointing and encourag-

ing numbers. The very existence of the reports is considered to be a positive development, since comprehensive numbers with regard to the financial operations there have not been available at all since the city took on ownership of the facility in April 2008.

The financial reports covering fiscal years 2009 and 2010 along

with Medicare and Medi-Cal cost reports were provided to the hospital's board of trustees on February 18.

According to the Camden Group's Bill Wachs and Jo Convis, the prospect of the hospital collecting a significant portion of the money yet owed to it from early to mid fiscal 2009 is dimming. See P 7

Sheriff Takes Public Administrator's Role from Auditor

The county this week transferred six public administrator division positions formerly contained within the auditor controller recorder's office to the Sheriff's Department.

The action was taken as part of the reorganization and consolidation of four of the county's departments.

On January 12, 2010,

the board of supervisors approved the reorganization of the county's fiscal division, which was at that time justified as a means of enhancing public service, while generating cost savings and operational efficiencies. That reorganization includes the elimination of the treasurer as an elected position and the consolidation of the

treasurer-tax collector's office with that of the auditor/controller-recorder effective in December 2010, the consolidation of the public administrator with the sheriff/coroner effective February 25, 2010, and the transference of the county recorder's function to the assessor's office effective January 3, 2011.

Pursuant to the ac-

tion approved by the board of supervisors this week, the county's supervising deputy public administrator, three currently employed deputy public administrators, a vacant deputy public administrator slot and an office assistant were moved from the auditor controller's office to the sheriff's department.

The annual salaries

for the five positions total \$660,940, which does not include benefits, medical coverage and deferred compensation for those individuals.

The action by the board authorized the auditor-controller/recorder/treasurer/tax collector to transfer the remaining budgeted appropriations and revenue from the treasurer-tax See P 2

The San Bernardino County

Sentinel

Published in San Bernardino County
A Fortunado Publication in conjunction with
Countywide News Service

Call (909) 946-0900

**to provide news tips or learn of locations
where a copy of the paper can be obtained**

10808 Foothill Blvd., Suite 160-446
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
SBCSentinel@yahoo.com
909-287-5043

**Covering issues of public interest
throughout the largest county in the lower 48
states is distributed at various locations in:**

San Bernardino, Redlands, Loma Linda, Lake Arrowhead, Grand Terrace, Colton, Fontana, Rancho Cucamonga, Upland, Ontario, Mountclair, Chino, Hesperia, Victorville, Lucerne Valley, Newberry Springs, Baker & Needles

Subscription to the hard copy version of the Sentinel are available at a rate of \$4 per month, \$18 per six months, and \$30 per year

For prompt delivery
Send a check payable to

The San Bernardino County Sentinel
10808 Foothill Blvd. Suite 160-446
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

Read the Sentinel on the Web!
www.sbc sentinel.com

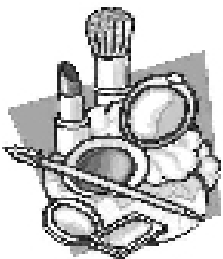
For the time being
A free PDF version of the Sentinel is
available via e-mail

E-mail your request to:
SBCSentinel@yahoo.com

Please include your name and city of residence

Inland Empire Make-up Artist

Jeneka Romero, Registered



**Weddings, Proms or
any Special Event**
(909) 628-8436

Se Habla Espanol!

Frank Guzman Attorney at Law

Former Prosecutor, Western State University of Law Graduate
Handling all manner of criminal defense from DUI to Capital Murder
Over 24 years in practice
Over 200 jury trials

(951) 274-9798 (P)
(951) 274-9036 (F)

3633 10th Street Riverside, CA 92501

Bridge Costs

from front page
dors Improvement Program.

According to Granville M. Bowman, the county's director of public works, "These improvements will enhance turning maneuverability, increase vehicular stacking capacity, alleviate traffic congestion and improve mobility at this location, which has become impacted due to 10 years of rapid growth in the industrial and commercial sectors."

On September 9, 2008, the board of supervisors approved a project baseline agreement between the California Department of Transportation, also known as Caltrans, the California Transportation Commission, the county transportation agency, known as the San Bernardino Association of Governments (SANBAG) and the city of Fontana that committed all parties to provide the required documents and reports in order to receive Trade Corridors Improvement Funds, estimated at \$30,773,000. Also as a stipulation to receive funds, the county, SANBAG, and the city were required to allocate local funds for the project.

On October 7, 2008, the county's redevelopment agency entered

into an agreement with the county department of public works, for various public improvements. The county department of public works identified several projects, including the bridge project, which the county redevelopment agency provided \$3.9 million to for the completion of design and engineering phases.

In addition, on June 23, 2009, the board of supervisors approved a cooperative agreement with Caltrans in which the county committed to managing the right of way functions to include all appraisal, acquisition and relocation tasks necessary for the project. The agreement also stated the funding of this effort would be part of a separate future agreement between SANBAG, the county, and the city of Fontana, which is currently being negotiated by the parties.

The department of public works, which is now acting as the lead agency, must have the necessary funding on hand in order to initiate the right-of-way activities and to keep the project on schedule. The project has a mandatory right-of-way certification date of April 1, 2011. If the mandatory certification date is not met, the project is at risk of los-

ing approximately \$31 million of state funds. "Timing is critical as the right-of-way activities are expected to take over a year to complete," stated Bowman. "Therefore the county's real estate services department must initiate the acquisition process immediately."

The county has estimated it will require roughly \$9,503,000 to finalize the acquisition of the requisite property. Under the terms of a study completed by SANBAG, the fair share cost of the right-of-way phase was to be funded by \$2,157,000 from the county, \$6,139,000 from SANBAG and \$1,207,000 from the city of Fontana. However, the county department of public works, through county redevelopment agency funds, over-contributed approximately \$2.7 million for the design and engineering phases on behalf of SANBAG and the city of Fontana. Therefore, the cooperative agreement reflects a credit to the county department of public works for its over-contribution and shows \$3,908,000 being put up by the State Transportation Improvement Program, \$1,949,000 being put up by the city of Fontana and \$3,646,000 being put up by SAN-

BAG.

The draft cooperative agreement indicates that the county department of public works will be reimbursed after costs have been incurred by the parties involved. While the project will be ongoing, the county stands the risk of not being fully reimbursed for the right-of-way acquisition activities and will therefore be unable to use county redevelopment agency funds for the construction phase or for other community redevelopment agency improvement projects managed by the county department of public works. The \$3,908,000 of the funding for this phase available from State Transportation Improvement Program funds will only be released upon the completion of work. The remaining amount of \$5,595,000 is due from the city and from SANBAG; however, these two reimbursement sources are potentially at risk if the governing bodies of those respective agencies do not approve the cooperative agreement.

The city of Fontana has an incentive, however, in approving the agreement in that the bridge improvements will facilitate ground access to the Fontana Speedway.

RUSD Contemplating Retirement Incentives to Fix \$18 Million Shortfall

RIALTO--Rialto Unified School District officials prognosticate they will suffer an \$18 million shortfall over the remainder of the current fiscal year and the two that will follow it.

A financial gloom has descended over the district office as superintendent Harold Cebrun

is preparing to guide Rialto's schools through rocky fiscal sledding brought on by governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed budget allotments for fiscal year 2010-11 that include reducing by \$7 million the money to be provided to the district.

Cebrun intends to keep parents in the district apprised of the district's fiscal picture, form a committee of board members, admin-

istrators and teachers and hold informational and decision-making workshops to arrive at a formula that will allow the district to sustain itself over the next three years.

Some layoffs appear to be inevitable. One tentative plan is to offer retirement incentives to the most experienced teachers in the district who, because of their seniority, pull the highest salaries. Critics have

already begun to harp on such an approach as wrongheaded, since all teachers who have taught in Rialto for nine years will be given more than three-quarters of their annual salary - 82 percent - to simply not teach. Over 220 teachers are eligible for the retirement incentive.

Another 300 classified - i.e., non teaching employees, are eligible for retirement on the same terms.

Administrator from front page

collector/public administrator to the sheriff/coroner's department.

The public administrator in San Bernardino County is responsible for managing the property of persons who have died without an appointed ex-

ecuter or estate administrator. Currently, the public administrator's office is the protector of \$4 million in estate assets.

County Libraries Now Allow Credit Payments on Fines

The county has approved the addition of terminals at the county branch libraries that will allow patrons to use credit cards in paying overdue fines and other usage fees.

The county library collects approximately \$1.2 million annually in overdue fines and fees for a range of services including overdue library materials, DVD rentals, and use of public access printers. Payment of these fines and fees is currently accepted in cash at branches or by the use of patron established PayPal accounts over the internet. PayPal allows pa-

trons to setup payment methods such as credit/debit card or checking accounts that are verified by PayPal prior to a transaction occurring. This diminishes the risk of non-payment to the library.

As part of its business plan to improve customer service and reduce staff costs, the library has implemented EnvisionWare, a self-checkout kiosk system. Since implementation began in 2006-07, the library has added approximately 36 self-check stations in 13 branches. EnvisionWare contains a component which would allow pa-

trons to pay fines and fees, including payment for DVDs, at the self-checkout stations without staff involvement.

Currently if patrons learn fees are due, they must leave the self-check station and go to a circulation desk to pay before they can check out additional materials. Pursuant to the approval of the county board of supervisors, the library has initiated an option of allowing patrons to conveniently pay their fines and fees using a credit card via EnvisionWare at self-checkout stations or on the Internet. While this new option

will allow the direct use of credit cards as a method of payment in branches without the use of a PayPal account the library will continue to offer the option of paying via PayPal for the convenience of patrons preferring to use that method. PayPal software is not compatible with EnvisionWare, necessitating a separate credit card process through Bank of America. This process will include a function allowing the library to reconcile transactions and receipts. The library will receive regular statements to reconcile transactions

and all receipts will be deposited in a merchant account with Bank of America.

Reconciliation functions will have minimal staff impact due to the use of consolidated reports including transactions generated in all participating library branches.

The library currently generates approximately \$33,000 annually from credit card payments, although that amount has increased annually as patrons have become familiar with the process.

It is anticipated that this total will significantly increase when

payments can be made directly at a self-check point due to the added convenience.

It is estimated that the additional credit card payments generated annually will initially be approximately \$25,000, with transaction and bank account fees of approximately \$3,000 annually.

The current method offered using PayPal has resulted in an estimated annual cost of \$3,000 in fees but the cost of that method of receiving payments is expected to drop as people move to the use of the EnvisionWare kiosk method of payment.

Blank Check

from front page

recovery of damages due to the fraudulent expenditure of public funds. Hueston, because of his familiarity with the case, was retained to handle the litigation. On June 2, 2009, the board of supervisors approved the first amendment to this contract to raise the contract amount to \$500,000. All of the defendants are actively defending and have filed demurrers and other motions requiring significant research, document preparation and ongoing court appearances.

As of March 2, the county had paid the Irell & Manella \$448,946.18 for Hueston's work.

The board this week elected to continue with the lawsuit against Postmus and the other five, and to continue utilizing Hueston as the lead attorney in the case. He is being assisted by county counsel.

Essentially, the board indicated it is prepared to pay an unlimited amount of money to Hueston to see the case through.

"Due to the uncertainties of the ongoing litigation, the specific financial cap for this contract has been removed," county counsel Ruth Stringer told the board in a report related to the agenda item pertaining to the extension of Irell & Manella's services to the county. "The contract

will be closely monitored by county counsel and the county administrative office. The proposed contract amendment will be funded out of the litigation budget unit, which provides funding for outside counsel services and other litigation related expenses."

By removing the spending cap the board will not be required to consider future spending expenditures on the law firm's work in open session.

County officials indicated that the county may end up spending more on legal fees paid to Irell & Manella than the county will actually recoup from the six defendants.

This prompted community activist Edwin Snell to request that the board rethink its action.

"As is noted in your staff report, you have already increased the contract amount on John Hueston's contract to \$500,000," Snell said. "County counsel is now

recommending that the contract amount be increased. I commend you for wanting to get to the bottom of the Postmus scandal. But there has to be some way of doing that without throwing good taxpayer money after bad into this. No one doubts he did bad things to this county. We would all love to see the homosexual coterie that Mr. Postmus had running fully exposed for what it is. But is that worth the half million we have already spent? And how much more are we going to spend? Another half million? Another million and a half? When it is all done, how much money are you going to recover? How much money does Bill Postmus have at this point? He's already spent all of his money on methamphetamine and ecstasy and Chippendale lap dances down at the gay bars in Orange County. There is nothing left to recover from him."

Rancho Computers, Inc.



Custom Laptops
Custom Desktops
Web Design
Digital Surveillance Systems

8188 Rochester Ave, Suite B
Rancho Cucamonga, CA
info@ranchocomp.com

(909) 466-0600 (t)
(909) 438-6430 (c)
(909) 466-0667 (f)

Read the Sentinel online at
www.sbcsentinel.com

Coast-to-Coast Metal Finishing Corporation

Specializing in metal finishing, powder coating and custom designed lighting fixtures for both indoor and outdoor use.

Proprietor Gil Bernal has 25 years experience in all phases of metal finishing and decorating and personally manages his own foundry.

All Products made entirely in the USA

(626) 282-2122

ASN Depot, Inc.

"Technology Made Easy"



- Custom Notebooks
- Custom Desktops
- Website Development
- Virus & Spyware Removal
- Laptop Repairs
- Desktop Repairs
- Wireless Network Set-up
- DSL Set-up
- Digital Surveillance Systems
- Spy Cameras
- Night Vision Cameras
- Media Center PCs
- Kitchen Entertainment Systems
- Digital Picture Frames

3580 Grand Avenue, Suite N
Chino Hills, CA 91709

(866) 477-3225 (toll free) (909) 548-0545 (office) (909) 910 6717 (mobile)
www.asndepot.com salman.nasir@asndepot.com (email)

Arrowhead Regional
from front page

recognize or diagnose the condition, resulting in the child becoming permanently paralyzed. The medical staff further stands accused of having lied to the parents about the situation.

Questions have been raised as well about non-medical issues, specifically fiduciary ones in the hospital's operations. One area under examination is billing and potential fraud with regard to descriptions of services rendered and billing procedure. Another pertains to a major conflict of interest GnanaDev is said to have participated in under the authority of former county administrative officer Mark Uffer. Uffer signed off on GnanaDev negotiating with his own medical group, Arrowhead Regional Surgical Group, Inc., for the provision of services to the county hospital. Uffer was the director of Arrowhead Regional prior to his 2004 elevation to the post of county administrative officer.

GnanaDev's apparent conflict of interest has resulted in the manifestation of specific problems at the medical center which have gone unredressed.

In December, the Center For Medicare Services launched an investigation, the *Senti-*

nel has learned, on the strength of a call to the state of California about shortcomings in the care of a patient. And while no final report of that accreditation body's inquiry has been delivered, it is known that the investigators were notified there had not been peer review with regard to some practices and that a free discussion of treatment modalities and protocols had been discouraged by GnanaDev.

You shouldn't hide things," said one hospital employee. "If you bring it out and you take corrective action you're okay. Some don't want to be embarrassed, so nothing is done to change or fix things. It is now catching up with them."

Furthermore, GnanaDev's comportment has come under question with regard to a situation in which another surgical service provider wrote a complaint about the Arrowhead Regional Surgical Group's activities. GnanaDev's reaction, according to one well placed source, was to threaten to cancel the contract of the complaining entity. Specifics with regard to this incident, the *Sentinel* was told, were kept from the board of supervisors.

At one point, a hospital employee, concerned that GnanaDev's dual role as head of surgery and medical director represented a circumstance

under which the issue could not be dealt with in a forthright manner, approached the hospital's director, Patrick Petre.

"Patrick, who doesn't like confrontation and is afraid of Dev, ignored it," a source employed at the hospital told the *Sentinel*. "Later on, he [Petre] said he never heard about it."

Another hospital employee explained the issue thusly: "GnanaDev controls Arrowhead Surgical Services. He runs it and operates it. Theoretically he reports to himself and he negotiated his own contract."

The Arrowhead Community Surgical Group's contract, a copy of which has been obtained by the *Sentinel*, designates the group as the provider of the directors of some of the hospital's departments, including general surgery, including trauma, otolaryngology, burn surgery, oral surgery, neurological surgery, plastic surgery, ophthalmologic surgery and transplant surgery.

According to employees at the medical center, other administrators and higher-ups there have engaged in questionable practices.

A scandal that is looming just below the surface of public consciousness, one employee, said, consists of inadequate supervision and oversight in the emergency room.

It has been said that chief financial officer Frank Arambra has been

using non-medical criteria in dictating the hospital's emergency room admissions policy.

"The CFO has been telling the emergency room doctors which patients to admit and which ones they can't," said one employee.

"Residents are running the emergency room," said another employee. "They are letting physician assistants do whatever they want. The nurses are up in arms."

Allegations of mis- and malfeasance in the department of behavioral health have also surfaced. Specifically, patients, who by law are not to be kept in restraints for more than six hours, were in some cases physically immobilized by straps or other bindings for as long as four months, the *Sentinel* has been told. These restraints were maintained even while the patients were eating and showering. In some cases, after family members lodged a complaint the restraints were removed. In other cases, where no family members were present to take note of the practice and even in some cases where family members did, the restraints were not removed.

"Some patients were tied to a bed for months on end," one employee at the medical center told the *Sentinel*. "It's like an image out of a horror movie."

Guillermo Valenzuela, the medical center's

associate medical director and the president of the county medical society and chairman of the women's health division, and Rodney Borger, the chairman of the county medical society, were derided by some medical center employees as having been too subservient to GnanaDev. It is known that both Valenzuela and Borger recently approached supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt and sought to reassure him about the sufficiency of operations at the hospital, arguing that there is no need for substantial changes in the way the facility is being run.

Valenzuela is a registered lobbyist and there have been reports of irregularities in the methods GnanaDev and those in his orbit have utilized in seeking to keep the county board of supervisors from bringing its authority to bear to change policies at the hospital.

Two county hospital employees told the *Sentinel* that GnanaDev has made a practice of directing those with whom he is professionally associated to put up money, which he then forwards to the electioneering funds of various supervisors in an effort to curry favor with them. A recurrent report from those working at the hospital is that at least three of the members of the board of supervisors as well as members of their staffs and families have been provided with medical care at the medical center to which they were not entitled.

"I can tell you there were some county VIPs who were given treatment at the hospital they were not supposed to get," said one employee. "Because of who they were - members of the board or their people - they were moved to the front of the line. They were never billed or the bills disappeared. This was improper because this was outside the scope of the medical plan and the mission of the hospital to provide quality care for all citizens regardless of their ability to pay. I know at one time hospital staff

was talking about a clinic that was to be devoted to county employees."

The provision of the free medical service to members of the board of supervisors, the *Sentinel* was told, appeared to be one means by which GnanaDev had prevented the board from holding GnanaDev and other administrators at the hospital accountable for their actions.

"That free medical care to the supervisors was not reported on their [California Form] 700s," a hospital employee said.

California Form 700s are statements of economic interest that must be filled out by California public officials, including those in elective office. The hospital employee suggested that the failure of the county supervisors who had received medical care at the county hospital to disclose that free care on their Form 700s provided GnanaDev with blackmail material by which the medical center's officials were able to limit a critical evaluation of the medical center's function.

On the non-medical end, there is overwhelming evidence that billing for services at the hospital was done improperly. In one of the divisions at the hospital, billings were delayed for over two years. This was hugely problematic, since most insurance companies do not accept bills that are more than two months delinquent and Medicare will not accept billings that are more than one year old.

"This came about because someone wasn't doing the work that was supposed to get done," a county hospital employee said. "At one point there was two years' worth of work that had just piled up. At that point it was too late to bill the insurance companies and too late to bill Medicare or Medical. In some cases they did bill the patients."

When one county employee assigned to tracking certain phases of the hospital's billing set to *Continued on Page 5*

Founders Scholarships
Available to Early Oak Valley College Applicants

Oak Valley College, a residential campus, nestled into the San Bernardino Mountain Wilderness, offers a curriculum based in the liberal arts, with courses in the sciences, humanities, business, management, and entrepreneurship.

The college offers two majors, **Business and Public Affairs**. Business majors may work in private firms. Public Affairs majors may work in non-profit organizations, media relations, ministry, government or social services.

Classes are small and taught by **Christian professionals** at the institution of higher learning, located 30 minutes east of Highland, CA.

Merit and need-based scholarships are available. Founders Scholarships of \$5,000+ will be given to those who apply early.

Contact Kimberly Toole, admissions officer at (909) 965-2247 or ktoole@oakvalleycollege.org.

Free online application to Oak Valley College can be submitted at www.oakvalleycollege.org.

TURF TURNER

- Disking
- Field Disking
- Lawns
- Fields
- Vineyards
- Roto-tilling
- Weed Mowing
- Gardens
- Hillsides
- Citrus Groves

(909) 489-8873

Cookie Lee
Jewelry

Serving the Inland Empire
Alma Jimenez (909) 919-4370

Board Seeking Authority to Appoint County Schools Superintendent

SAN BERNARDINO—The San Bernardino County Board of Education is inching toward asking the county's voters to change the position of the county superintendent of schools from an elected post to one filled by appointment.

"I believe we either need an appointed superintendent and take the politics out of the county office or we do not need an elected county board," David Stine, a 21-year county schools board member, publicly declared on March 1.

David Stine said his "frustration" with the current arrangement was not a reflection on current county schools superintendent Gary Thomas. Saying his remarks should not be construed as "an attack on our current superintendent or any superintendent," Stine said it was still his "opinion that there are limited powers for the county board."

Part of the dilemma for the county board of education in this regard, Stine said, is that the board is unable to propound its vision for regional education throughout the county's 33 school districts "since the superintendent is elected, [and] he independently is the employer of record and makes



all personnel decisions with no checks or balances and does all collective bargaining without any input or influence from the board."

The county superintendent of schools, as an elected official, has power that exceeds the power of the county board, an elected body. In local districts, the arrangements are that the board members are elected and the school district superintendents are hired at the discretion of the board and are answerable to the board.

Stine suggested the local school board arrangement is superior to the countywide system, which provides the board with about a quarter of a million dollars in spending authority and the superintendent with control over his office's \$350 million budget.

"County superintendents... have absolute power," said board member Gil Navarro, who said he will seek a resolution that could be brought up for the board to vote on as early as May 3 calling upon the board of supervisors to approve a countywide election measure that if passed will alter the county superintendent of schools position from an elected to an appointed one.

Supreme Court Shoots Down Erwin's DA Recusal Request

The California Supreme Court last month turned down former San Bernardino County assistant assessor Jim Erwin's request to override an appellate court decision that the San Bernardino County district attorney's office has no conflict in prosecuting the criminal case it has lodged against him.

In November, San Bernardino County Superior Court Judge Duke Rouse, in response to a motion by Erwin's attorney, Rajan Maline, ruled that there is no conflict of interest or bias on the part of district attorney Mike Ramos with regard to Erwin.

Maline alleged that Erwin's previous political affiliation with Ramos together with action he had taken while he was chief of staff to county Third District supervisor Neil Derry to reduce the district attorney's office's budget as well as Erwin's knowledge pertaining to numerous extramarital affairs Ramos had engaged in with district attorney's office employees and other women with whom his position of prosecutor had brought him into contact constituted a potential conflict and/or animus toward the defendant. Rouse rejected Maline's citation of evidence for the mo-



The California Supreme Court turned down former San Bernardino County assistant assessor Jim Erwin's request.

tion as unproven hearsay and further denied a request for an evidentiary hearing at which the relationships alleged could be explored in detail.

Erwin appealed Rouse's decision to the Fourth District Court of Appeal in Riverside, which in December refused to consider the question. Erwin and Maline then took the matter up to the state Supreme Court.

With all of his avenues of demonstrating bias on Ramos' part exhausted, Erwin now faces the prospect of being taken to trial on ten felony charges of

perjury and offering false or forged documents relating to his failure to declare on income reporting documents he filed in 2008 relating to gifts he received from developer Jeff Burum in 2007.

Last week, the district attorney's office together with the state attorney general filed an additional nine felony counts against Erwin, accusing him of taking part in a bribery and extortion conspiracy scheme that also allegedly involved Burum.

Erwin has pleaded not guilty and denied wrongdoing.

Arrowhead Regional from page 4

work on that assignment, in fewer than seven hours she found over \$1 million worth of services to patients to whom no bills for service had been posted. In scores of cases, billings for operating room services went out in a way that only one of every four units was posted. An unofficial internal tally of operations showed that in one year there was a \$10 million shortfall in operating room billing.

The same informal audit of the hospital's operations turned up fraud or lack of follow-through in the 10-11 program, through which the county seeks reimbursement for services rendered to

illegal aliens.

There were reports in late February that the board of supervisors was considering bringing in a consultant to examine the medical center's operations. The *Sentinel*, however was unable to confirm that such an effort was ongoing.

The examination of the hospital's operations by the Health Care Facilities Accreditation Program run by the American Osteopathic Association, the Center for Medicare Services or federal investigators could result in the medical center losing its ac-

creditation, meaning the hospital would no longer be eligible to care for Medicare patients.

At press time, the *Sentinel's* efforts to reach Petre and GnanaDev at the medical center were not successful.

DESIGNER SUIT OUTLET

Save up to 70%



Suit Special

- 3 Suits
- 3 Shirts
- 3 Ties
- 3 Belts
- 3 Pairs of Socks

all for **\$299.⁹⁹**

Wool Feel Suits

11819 Foothill Blvd.
Rancho Cucamonga

(909) 581-0755

Open 7 days
10 am - 7 pm

We do all kinds of alterations for men and women

Get a unique perspective on San Bernardino County politics!

Visit ieopolitics.com

Green Life Tree Service

- Tree Trimming
- Tree Thinning
- General Clean-Up

- Tree Topping
- Fruit Pruning
- Hauling

Expert, Reasonable, Reliable, Quality Work
at a Competitive Price



Ask for John
(909) 532-3330

Read the Sentinel online

www.sbcsentinel.com

St. Mark's from front page

tural Center association serves as the benefactor to the Ada Cooper Museum and shares much of its membership with the Upland Historical Society. In 1997, the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center association did obtain from the city of Upland a conditional permit to operate Old St. Mark's Church as a ceremonial forum where up to three weddings and/or funerals were held each week. The proceeds from these ceremonies, which were restricted to concluding no later than 8 p.m. and host no more than 125 attendees, were used to support the Ada Cooper Museum.

In the fall of 2008, the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center association's board applied for a modification to the conditional use permit granted in 1997, seeking permission to host up to six events per week that would accommodate as many as 175 people and allow for the dispensing of alcohol, in the form of beer and wine, and the serving of meals, accompanied by music. The hour to which the events could continue was extended to 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 10 p.m. on Sunday.

On December 17, 2008, two of the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center association's board directors, Mike Stevens and Max Williams, succeeded in convincing the Upland

Planning Commission, to grant the conditional use permit modification, despite the protests of eleven nearby residents. The measure to allow the serving of alcohol and the other intensifications of use passed by a 4-0 vote.

A group of residents, represented by attorney James Reiss, filed an immediate appeal on December 31, 2008 within the allotted deadline for appeals despite the encroaching holiday season, seeking to nullify the planning commission's decision.

Those involved in the appeal questioned the wisdom of allowing alcohol at the site, less than 400 feet from Pioneer Junior High School.

An energetic effort to galvanize the public against the modification of the conditional use permit ensued, including the printing and distribution of 8,000 leaflets that inveighed against the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center's plan to operate the chapel as a banquet hall.

More than 200 residents turned out at the February 9, 2009 council meeting when the hearing on the appeal was scheduled, filling the entire seating capacity of the meeting chambers and leaving dozens standing in the aisles as the meeting was to begin.

In the face of the show of opposition, Stevens, the president of the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center, with-

drew the application.

Earlier this year, in January, the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center association again applied for a modification of the existing original conditional use permit. This time the association sought a modification that did not include the serving of alcohol but asked for a substantial expansion of the frequency of use - seven days a week - together with extending the hours of operation until 10 p.m. and boosting the crowd capacity to 175 people.

That proposal was to be heard by the planning commission on January 27, 2010.

Alarming for many residents, the city used the same nomenclature for the modification to be reconsidered by the planning commission on January 27 as the modification considered by the planning commission on December 17, 2008 - conditional use permit 97-10 modification No. 1

This led to the widespread suspicion that some sort of bureaucratic sleight of hand was being orchestrated, whereby the previous modification - including the provision of alcohol - would be approved. Others who did not believe the city could legally make such a switch, nevertheless felt the expansion of the facility's hours, attendance and days per week would pave the way for another modification in the future that would include the serving of alcohol.

Reiss was again retained and 38 residents, including a 13-year-old student at Pioneer Junior High, which borders the property upon which Old St. Mark's Church sits, turned up at the January 27 planning commission hearing to protest the modification.

But as occurred 11 months previously, Stevens at the last minute withdrew the application.

This left over three dozen residents more than a little miffed when planning commission chairman Mark Tundis prevented those who had come from registering their complaints. Tundis first cut off those seeking to give their input during the public comments section of the meeting that preceded the actual hearing for the modification item on the agenda. Tundis told those that approached the public lectern that statements regarding Old St. Mark's Church could only be provided during that portion of the meeting devoted to the proposed modification. After the public comments session was concluded, he then announced that the modification proposal hearing was being postponed, again thwarting those that wished to weigh in with regard to the matter from being heard and prompted one middle aged man in attendance to apologize the the 13-year-old girl for the government's action in preventing her from participating in the democratic process.

Last Saturday February 27, a number of those whose efforts at expression had been abridged on January 27 showed up at Old St. Mark's Church for an informational hearing being put on by Stevens and other members of the Chaffey

Communities Cultural Center board. Stevens' intention was to explain to the members of the surrounding neighborhood that the Cultural Center Foundation faced financial challenges. The church does not have a regular congregation, Stevens told those that had assembled, and as such must pay property taxes. The combined monthly expenses for the church and the Ada Cooper museum runs to \$5,000 per month, board members said. A contract with a company that had previously regularly used the chapel for wedding ceremonies had elapsed, Stevens said, so that currently the association was looking to expand the frequency and hours of operations at Old St. Mark's through the proposed conditional use permit modification. The increase in the intensity of use would allow enough wedding ceremonies to be held to generate money that would allow the association's financial responsibilities to be met.

Stevens said that the neighborhood should accept the intensification of use because the association was engaged in activity that was of benefit to the community and that the Ada Cooper museum furthered the historical education and appreciation of the area's school children.

He asserted that the chapel was in place on 18th Street prior to the construction of many of the homes in the area and that as such, the association had a right to utilize it as the association saw fit. He criticized the recent circulation of fliers which warned that the requested conditional use permit modification was a prelude to resurrecting the effort to serve alcohol out of the chapel.

"The city would never allow that to happen," Stevens said.

Stevens' assertions provoked anger and consternation among those in attendance.

It was pointed out that the city had indeed approved the dispensing of alcohol out of the facility on December 17, 2008. Stevens reluctantly acknowledged that the association had indeed sought a conditional use permit that included the alcohol element but that the association had done so only because the caterer that was to provide meals at the facility had made the request to do so to make its operation profitable.

"We made a mistake," Stevens said. Pointedly, however, he did not make a pledge, in the face of requests that he do so, to renounce permanently any designs on the serving of alcohol out of the facility.

Others took issue with Stevens' assertion that the presence of the chapel on the property prior to the construction of many of the homes in the area in some fashion gave the association license to utilize the property as it saw fit, irrespective of the impact it had on the ambience of the neighborhood.

The interchange between Stevens was informal, without those participating identifying themselves.

"Your financial problems aren't my problem and they are not my family's problem and they are not my neighbors' problem," one of the participants told Stevens.

Another one of the participants, a police officer, questioned several of the association's board members, ascertaining that at least three of them did not live in *Continued on Page 7*

Read all about the intrigue in San Bernardino County political scene at inlandpolitics.com on the worldwide web.



FAST-FIX



Jewelry and Watch Repair

Ring Sizing - Chain Repair - Watch Repair - Watch Batteries
 Restringing - Stone Replacement - Eyeglass Repair - Bracelet Repair
 Engraving - Engravable Items - Earring Accessories

Victoria Gardens, Next to JC Pennys

7872 Monet Avenue Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739

(909) 646-7200 Telephone

(909) 646-7221 Fax

PRO SMOG CENTER

One Stop Smog, Brake, Lamp Certification and Repair

Tune ups, Fuel Injections Settings, Carburetor Adjustments, Electrical Work

Fair Prices • Honest Answers • Quality Work

201 S. Wineville Avenue, Unit K
 Ontario, CA 91761
 (909) 390-2234

Mon. - Fri. 8 am to 6 pm
 Saturday 8 am to 4 pm
 Sunday Closed

Adelanto Fed Pen Warden Indicted

The warden of the 1,500-inmate Federal Correctional Institution I in Adelanto was indicted March 3 on charges he divulged confidential information while blogging on an Internet corrections forum and subsequently lied about it to investigators.

Scott A. Holencik, 45, was charged in a federal grand jury indictment with two felony counts of making false statements and four misdemeanor counts of disclosing confidential government information.

The indictment was returned by a grand jury functioning out of the U.S. District Court in Riverside.

If convicted of all charges, he faces a maximum sentence of 14 years in federal prison.

There are two key elements to the case. The first involves Holencik's alleged postings to a Web site, prisonofficer.org, under the name "VIMshooter" last summer. The second is the substance of his responses to questions posed to him by investiga-

tors with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General last November.

When the investigators asked Holencik if he made several postings to the Web site, he denied doing so or knowing of the name VIMshooter.

In the postings, VIMshooter made specific reference to two ongoing criminal investigations relating to activity within the prison. One investigation touched on an inmate gambling ring that had links to Las Vegas

casinos through a prison guard. The other related to a murder within the facility perpetrated by an inmate.

VIMshooter posted to prisonofficer.org, with regard to the killing "The weapon used has been recovered" and that "There is excellent video footage that clearly identifies the inmate."

Previously, WIMshooter, in blogging about the gambling ring, stated the guard "was running a gambling ticket for the inmates, making trips to

Vegas to place their bets."

Holencik denied to investigators that he was VIMshooter or knew the actual identity of VIMshooter.

Lying to a federal investigator is categorized as a crime.

Holencik's status with the Bureau of Prisons is unclear.

There was no indication that he had been fired but he was not available at Federal Correctional Institution I for comment.

Needles Debt from front page

The hospital failed to make billings for much of the service it rendered that year. Medicare and Medical do not normally honor billings that are more than a year delinquent. Insurance companies often do not honor billings that are late more than two months.

Wachs said the 2010 fiscal year figures are more promising and that the hospital's cash flow is beginning to normalize. Because of improvements in the hospital's billing procedure, the debt the hospital has accrued in the last 23 months is beginning to be paid down.

There were contradictory indications. By one measure the hos-

pital is still showing a loss of about \$50,000 per month. That includes the structured remuneration of past debt, however. On the other hand, cash in-flow is radically increasing, with cash collections in December totaling \$880,342. The hospital's account payable balance has been reduced from \$1.12 million to \$321,865. Selman said it is possible the hospital will erase its outstanding debt by July and will be operating at a profit by August.

According to Rod Phillips, a certified public accountant brought in by Camden, despite the tardiness of the hospital's billings, Medicare yet owes the hospital money. In this way the hospital's debt will be further reduced.

Barstow Mayor Charged with Battery

The district attorney's office has charged Barstow Mayor Joe Gomez Jr. with sexual battery, based upon an incident that took place on December 18, 2009.

Gomez was not taken into custody, but made arrangements to attend his arraignment scheduled for April 9, 2010.

Only limited information about the alleged crime has been made available. Allegedly, Gomez was in attendance at an alcohol-fueled get-together in an unincorporated area at the outskirts of the city when, according to the complaint filed by the district attorney's office, he willfully and unlawfully touched an intimate part of a woman against her will "for the specific purpose of sexual arousal, sexual gratification and sexual abuse."

The victim, while not identified by name, was said to be the wife of a law enforcement officer. The charge

against Gomez is listed as misdemeanor, such that if convicted, he will not be forced to leave office.

If convicted, Gomez would be jailed for a maximum of six months and be fined up to \$2,000.

Gomez did not respond to calls for comment. In a brief public declaration at February's first council meeting, he said he was innocent and that he intended to "defend myself vigorously against this false allegation."

Gomez, 51, has been on the city council since 2004 and has served in the capacity of mayor since 2008. He was divorced 13 years ago and as a single parent raised three of his children into adulthood. He is now engaged to Marjorie Hernandez. Gomez and Hernandez together have eight children and eight grandchildren, according to the city of Barstow's Web site.

St. Mark's from page 6

Upland and that two of them, while residing in Upland, lived in neighborhoods well removed from 18th Street. "You don't live here," he said. "We do. If you are looking to expand the use here, you are going to have a fight on your hands."

One of the attendees made that point that the problem in large part consisted of poor land use planning on the part of the city and the

city's decision to sell off the park land, that had served as a partial buffer, for residential development.

Several of the neighborhood residents then suggested to Stevens that the church be moved back to historic downtown Upland, from whence it came, where the intensification of use the foundation envisions for the old church would not have a negative impact on its surroundings.

Stevens was insistent

that this would be unworkable because the funding to make the move was not available.

The residents countered him, pointing out that the removal of the church would create several vacant lots, which could then be sold to a residential developer to finance the moving of the church. Others suggested that the placement of the church on property already designated for redevelopment in the downtown district near the Upland Metro-

link Station would fit in with the city's efforts for revitalization and historic preservation.

The meeting ended with several residents vowing further opposition to the association's effort to intensify the use of the chapel if it remained on 18th

Street and Stevens' offer to recruit two members of the neighborhood to serve on the association's board. Stevens suggested that neighborhood workshops be held at which details with regard to a conditional use permit modification be hashed

out, but some members of the neighborhood voiced skepticism over such a venture, insisting that any workshops be held under the aegis of the city rather than the Chaffey Communities Cultural Center.

All Work Guaranteed **Free Estimates**

JC Landscaping

- *Sprinklers
- *Cement Work
- *Wood Fences
- *Walk Way
- *Patios

- *Sodding
- *Brick Planters
- *Block Walls
- *Driveways
- *Hauling



(909) 578-2215 cell
(909) 574-4675 home



KCAA
NEWS • 1050 AM • TALK
RADIO

"Now 7:00am - 9:00am Monday - Friday
Only on KCAA 1050-AM"

Tune in to the station that leaves no listener behind
KCAA 1050-AM!
Advertise your company or product on KCAA 1050-AM.
Call the KCAA business office
Victor Dominguez at 909-865-8497
Our web site is www.kcaaradio.com.

Southern California Style Inland Empire Make Up Artist

Inspired by the drama department at Pomona Catholic High School, Jeneka Romero developed an affinity for makeup when she decided to take on behind the scenes work as the hair and makeup coordinator of the department. Upon graduation from high school she attended Elegance Academy for Makeup Artists in Hollywood and has been a certified makeup artist for more than four years. Jen has worked for Lancome and Kiehls. She has developed her own style when it comes to applying makeup and is very passionate when it comes to her makeup consultations. I have used her talents on many occasions and have to admit the end result is a great one.

Gifted with this art, she is full of makeup suggestions and ideas. Her favorite word is hydration and insists the key to a successful makeup day starts with

By Grace Bernal



proper face wash, toner and a moisturizer with SPF. A good moisturizer is a must, especially for active lifestyles and constant commuters. Moisturizers provide hydration and help even out your skin as well as protect your skin from the sun. Jen offers some great tips on high and low end cosmetics which are as follows: L'Oreal is a very competitive cosmetic line and is constantly upgrading their products. They offer a great 14 hour wear foundation priced at around \$14 as well as some great skin care products which start at around \$17. Lancome carries many skin care products which sell for about \$45, as well as their ever popular Tint Idole which is an oil free 14-hour wear

foundation with SPF with moderate coverage and sells for about \$42. This foundation works great with the mineral translucent powder which sells for about \$36. Also concealer brighteners are a hot trend out on the market right now.

Jen offers a one hour makeup lesson/consultation for a fee of \$25. She has worked with brides, bridesmaids, photo shoots, sweet sixteens, proms and many other special occasions and her prices are reasonable. She can work with any skin color and type and isn't afraid to blend colors. Jen loves to make people feel good. This young lady has an awesome personality when it comes to customer service. If you are ever in need of a sweet professional makeup artist in this area she is sure the one to call.

To schedule a consultation with Jeneka Romero call (909) 628-8436

Highland, SB & County Rehabing Pacific

The city of Highland, the city of San Bernardino and the county of San Bernardino have forged an agreement to share the estimated \$2,467,230 cost of rehabilitating the pavement on Pacific Street, between Perris Hill Park Road and Victoria Avenue. The proposed project is located within the Cities of San Bernardino and Highland.

According to Granville M. Bowman, the county's director of public works, the existing asphalt concrete paving on Pacific Street, between Perris Hill Park Road and Victoria Avenue has deteriorated and is in need of rehabilitation. Since 34 percent of this road segment of Pacific Street is located within the jurisdiction of the County, 23.3 percent of it is located within Highland, and 47.7 percent is located within San Bernardino's city limits, each agency has agreed to participate in the proposed project.

In accordance with

the proposed cooperative agreement, Highland, as lead agency, will administer the design and construction phases of the project. Additionally, Highland will advertise, award and initially fund the construction of the project. The project cost, which includes project development and construction, is estimated to be \$2,467,230. The project development costs will be shared proportionately by the parties, based upon the project jurisdictional area and the construction costs will be shared based upon where the work occurs.

The county's share of the project cost is estimated to be \$830,045 (33.6%), and Highland's share is estimated to be \$581,397 (23.6%) and San Bernardino's share is estimated to be \$1,055,788 (42.8%). In the event that the project's lowest bid exceeds the \$2,467,230 amount agreed upon, but is within 25 percent of that amount, then High-

land may award the contract. The board of supervisors this week authorized the director of public works to approve up to a 25 percent increase in the contract amount.

The county and San Bernardino will reimburse Highland upon project completion, with the exception of the provision stated in paragraph 2.3 of the agreement, which obligates San Bernardino to pay for the county's share of project costs in addition to its share of project costs should the unincorporated area of the county related to the project area be annexed during the term of this agreement. The agreement may be cancelled by either party upon thirty days written notice prior to award of the construction contract.

The city of Highland approved this Agreement on November 19, 2009 and the city of San Bernardino approved the same agreement on December 21, 2009.

EXCEL TOWING

- We specialize in private party impounds
- Removal of abandoned and junk vehicles
- Local and long distance towing - autos and trucks
- Lock-outs/Jump Starts/Tire Changes

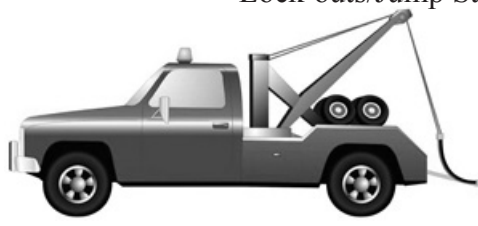
24 Hour

Dispatch Service

All Major Credit Cards Accepted

10% off

on service calls for mentioning this ad



(909) 944-5662

9495 Ninth Street, Suite G Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

Try Anti-oxident Rich Vemma!

The All-natural Caffeine and Processed Sugar Free Energy Drink.

Vemma blends the most recent science and nature's finest ingredients to form a complete and delicious once-a-day liquid supplement that provides you with everything you need and more to kick your health and energy levels into overdrive.

Developed by a physician with a background in both Eastern and Western medicine,

Vemma unites the antioxidant-rich power of mangosteen — a fruit used for centuries by Asian health practitioners for its nutritional benefits — with rich plant-source minerals, organic glyconutrient-rich aloe vera and decaffeinated organic green tea along with a full spectrum of antioxidant vitamins to create the most powerful liquid antioxidant nutrition program anywhere! The Vemma Nutrition Program™ consists of Essential Minerals® and Mangosteen Plus™. We believe so strongly in this combination that we offer a 100% money-back, risk-free, empty-bottle guarantee. While there are many juice products on the market to choose from today, most offer very little in terms of critical vitamins and minerals. So why take a juice product and a vitamin/mineral supplement? With Vemma, you get it all! Remember...if it doesn't say Vemma, it's just juice.

Order by calling (949) 413-8507

Ask for Dave, your Southern California Vemma Distributor

The Sentinel is Available Via E-mail!

Faster, cleaner and all weather dry

To obtain your free electronic version, all you have to do is contact us at 909-946-0900 or SBCSentinel@yahoo.com and provide us with your email address, name and city of residence.

We will then make sure you obtain a copy of the Sentinel that can be downloaded and read right at your home at your convenience on your computer screen.

-ZYTAC Painting

Call for FREE ESTIMATES

Ramon Venegas

764 N. El Dorado

Ontario, CA 91764

(951) 712-9173

Se Habla Espanol

^Residential

^Commercial

^Industrial

^Exterior

^Interior

Licensed and Insured

Lic. # 884285

If you have had a 730 evaluation or counseling done by a man named Dr. Roy W. Bradbury through the courts please email us at infoeval77@yahoo.com