

Ag conference set to provide look at future of industry

BY JOHN COX
jcox@bakersfield.com

Change is coming to Central Valley agriculture one way or another.

Whether it's driven by regulations, shifting weather patterns or new financial opportunities, how well local growers fare — along with the businesses, nonprofits and government agencies that support and benefit from their work — may depend on how well all parties anticipate and prepare for what's ahead.

Help is coming from a free, daylong event taking place

Thursday online and in person at Fresno State that will share insights by participants ranging from academics and subject-matter experts to valley farmers large and small.

The event is expected to touch on key topics now in play, from above- and underground water storage, evolving pest management strategies, changing crop mixes and upcoming policy decisions on how inevitable fallowing of farmland will or won't promote alternative land uses like wildlife habitat, carbon management and renewable energy.

Kern County will be represented at the conference, not only through the overall involvement of Cal State Bakersfield, but more directly by one of its professors, ag-economics specialist Aaron Hegde. He will lead a five-person, hourlong panel focusing on the future and current state of farming in the Central Valley, with an emphasis on production-side impacts of climate change.

California's top ag official, Karen Ross, will be there, too, delivering the day's keynote address. Last week, she and Hegde took time to offer previews of their comments

during separate interviews with The Californian.

Hegde, chairman of the university's economics department and co-director of its Grimm Family Center for Agricultural Business, said one lesson sure to come through Thursday is that certain crops, like table grapes, will become harder to grow in the valley. Also, less water will be available to support farming in general, partly because of pumping restrictions resulting from California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, he added.

But the discussion will go

deeper and wider than that, he said: Food safety will be a topic, as will shifts being forced on the state's ag industry by the European Union's growing concern about pesticides generally and anti-fungal aflatoxins in particular.

Growing preference for organic farming and a push for greater sustainability in ag production raise concerns about global food insecurity, Hegde said, because of their potential to cut production. He said similar fears arise from the



Ross



Hegde

Please see **AG | A4**

A marathon effort



PHOTOS BY ROD THORNBURG / FOR THE CALIFORNIAN

Runners kick off the Bakersfield Marathon near the Kern County Museum. **More photos at Bakersfield.com.**

Brisk, partly sunny day brings out host of determined athletes to city streets

THE BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN

Hundreds of runners finished the Bakersfield Marathon on a route that took Sunday's participants on a loop through downtown and near the Panorama Bluffs. They were cheered on by countless onlookers and volun-

teers as they raced back to where they started at the Kern County Museum.

The unofficial winners were Ken Cicchini for the men's at 2:47:40, and Jing Xie for the women 3:37:38, according to RunSignUp.com.



A Bakersfield Marathon runner returns to the finish line Sunday.



Runners head down Panorama Drive near the start of the marathon.



Bakersfield Marathon women's winner Jing Xie gets her medal near the finish line.



Mayor Karen Goh welcomes the runners.

Bakersfield is coming for blighted lots, in the name of housing

BY JOHN DONEGAN
jdonegan@bakersfield.com

After failing to win bids earlier this month on 16 dilapidated properties deemed a nuisance to residents, the city of Bakersfield is considering option B: How to help out those who did buy them?

It's a position the city has apparently never found itself in before, because as far as anyone can remember, it has never tried to become so directly involved. But its frustrations are not new.

In recent years, more properties considered derelict and abandoned have festered throughout the city's urban core, especially in Ward 2.

"Chronic nuisance properties are problematic for a lot of reasons," Vice Mayor and Ward 2 Councilman Andrae Gonzales said. "They create a negative externality for the whole neighborhood, making it less safe. And we get a lot of complaints from residents."

Please see **VACANT | A3**

WAR
Ukraine demands UN call emergency meeting over Russian nukes in Belarus
NATION & WORLD | A6

CYBERSECURITY
Lawmakers want to ban TikTok, but young people demand to keep it
NATION & WORLD | A6

MARCH MADNESS
San Diego State men muscle past Creighton, make first Final Four
SPORTS | B1

Dogs subject to alleged abuse in Kern find happy, healthy home in Texas

BY ISHANI DESAI
idesai@bakersfield.com

The images contained in a search warrant filed in Kern County Superior Court are as startling as they are brazen: A muzzled gray pit bull looks down as someone swings a baseball bat at its mouth.

Last month, Kern County Animal Services rescued two dogs that were reportedly beaten — a gray pit bull named Chiquita and Apollo, a white husky. A neighbor captured video of the person allegedly hitting the dogs in the mouth with a bat, then sent the footage to authorities, according to the search warrant.

Kern County Animal Services took possession of the dogs and treated

VIDEO

Kern County Animal Services created a video of the dogs:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boMoYLadCdM>

their wounds, department Director Nick Cullen said. He noted the dogs continued to react fearfully to sudden movements because of apparent emotional trauma.

"These four dogs are going to experience that trauma for some time," Cullen added.

Slowly their true personality has

Please see **DOG | A3**



Indica, now called Sza, sweetly pokes out her tongue as she spots her new home in Texas.

COURTESY OF CINDY MARABITO

Fritos/CHEETOS

6.5oz-9.25oz

2/\$9

Cheetos

Flavor Twists

On the Border

Fritos

Flavor Twists

On the Border

PRICES GOOD THRU 4/24/23

FASTRIE

We're On Your Way!

7 52575 00003 8

PRICE: \$1.25

CONTACT US

Subscriber services:

661-246-3936 or customer@bakersfield.com

To report a news tip:

661-395-7384, 800-540-0646 or local@bakersfield.com

OUTSIDE TODAY

YOUR COMPLETE FORECAST | A9

HIGH

65

LOW

44

AIR QUALITY

53 | Moderate

INSIDE YOUR CALIFORNIAN

Advice.....B4

Classifieds.....B7

Comics.....B5

Horoscopes.....B5

Lottery numbers.....A2

Nation & World.....A6

Obituaries.....A5

Opinion.....A10

Puzzles.....B5, B6, B8

Sports.....B1

Television.....B4

Today in History.....A4