

VOL. 3 ISSUE 1

# COUNTY CROSSROADS

Official Newsletter of  
the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors

## A Year in Review and the Year Ahead

CHAIR SONNY DHALIWAL, DISTRICT THREE

I'm honored to serve as your Board Chair for 2026.

Just one year into my first term, I'm grateful for the trust my fellow Supervisors have placed in me. Coming from city government in Lathrop, I know that good governance starts with listening to residents and delivering results for working families.

This past year, the Board has invested more than \$200,000 directly in programs that matter—expanding Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, supporting our Boys and Girls Clubs, offering Camp Hope scholarships to victims of childhood trauma, and funding youth symphonies. Education and opportunities change lives.

We re-invested over \$300,000 to complete the American Legion Hall 249 remodel. Our veterans deserve nothing less.

The BeWell Campus groundbreaking in French Camp marks a turning point for mental health and substance abuse treatment—practical solutions that improve lives and reduce strain on emergency services.

As part of the Delta County Coalition, we successfully pushed back against the Governor's Delta Tunnel fast track. This fight continues.

Looking ahead: our new County Morgue opens soon. We'll celebrate America's 250th anniversary. And we'll keep working to bring living-wage jobs here so families can work close to home, spend less time commuting, and keep our communities affordable.

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## News of Note

- [San Joaquin County Takes Action to Strengthen Wildfire Preparedness](#)
- [Supervisor Sonny Dhaliwal Elected Board Chair for 2026](#)
- [San Joaquin County](#)
- [Board of Supervisors Approves New Agreement to Strengthen Public Safety and Retain Critical Legal Staff](#)

## Public Works Bike Diversion Program

We are proud to share an update from the Solid Waste Division on its ReBicycle Diversion Project, an ongoing effort to reduce waste and give new life to discarded bicycles. Since 2010, the program has kept bicycles out of the waste stream, encouraged reuse and repair, and expanded access to reliable transportation across San Joaquin County.

The Lovelace Transfer Station collects bicycles delivered for disposal year-round. A partnership with Robby's Bikes provides affordable parts that support repairs and extend bicycle life. In 2025, the Lovelace team prepared approximately 82 bicycles for community distribution.

Donations included bicycles for the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office holiday toy drive, along with deliveries to the Mary Graham Children's Foundation, the Child Abuse Prevention Council, and Stockton World of Faith Christian Center. Six bicycles were donated to the Micke Grove Park Easter event in Lodi.

The program also supported a University of the Pacific engineering project by providing bicycle parts for a student project to design a bicycle that grows with a child. The ReBicycle Diversion Project continues to reduce waste while investing in local families, education, and community well being.





# A Win for Common Sense - Delta Tunnel Update

VICE CHAIR STEVE DING, DISTRICT FOUR

On New Year's Eve, the Third District Court of Appeals handed the Delta a decisive victory. The court ruled that California lacks legal authority to issue billions in bonds for the Delta Tunnel without explicit legislative approval. This is not a technicality—it is a fundamental reaffirmation that major projects affecting our communities cannot be engineered in backrooms by bureaucrats.

As lead Supervisor of the Delta Counties Coalition, I could not be prouder of what San Joaquin County accomplished alongside four other Delta Counties. We fought this battle because rural communities deserve to be heard when decisions affecting our future are made. And we won.

Last year, San Joaquin County launched an aggressive outreach campaign to stop the tunnel from being fast tracked in Sacramento. We made it clear that our agricultural way of life and our water security were not negotiable. Lawmakers listened. Under Senator McNerney's unwavering leadership, proposed legislative shortcuts were pulled back. That effort set the stage for this court victory.

The Third District Court also agreed with us that the Department of Water Resources overstepped its authority by calling this massive conveyance project a mere "modification" of the State Water Project. Anyone in the Delta knows better. The tunnel would reshape land use, threaten local water reliability, harm fragile ecosystems, and burden ratepayers—all without delivering promised water benefits to the communities most affected.

San Joaquin County and our coalition partners invested more than \$750,000 in legal fees to defend the Delta. The state's reckless legal strategy—pursued despite knowing they lacked authority—forced us to spend taxpayer money to enforce the law ourselves. We are now seeking reimbursement. That cost will likely grow if the Department of Water Resources pursues further appeals.

Let that sink in: California forced rural counties to spend three-quarters of a million dollars defending the rule of law because state officials refused to follow it from the start.

I believe public resources should fund real solutions to California's water challenges—practical projects that improve reliability while protecting communities and preserving the agricultural heritage that feeds this state. The tunnel is none of these things. It delivers no new water, offers no long-term fix, and places the entire burden on the Delta.

Rural and agricultural communities have been told for too long that decisions affecting our future will be made without our input, in offices far from the communities impacted. I serve on the Delta Counties Coalition because San Joaquin County farmers, families, and small towns deserve a seat at that table.

This court ruling is a pivotal moment. Sacramento still speaks of the tunnel as inevitable. But confidence shaken by a major legal defeat is not the same as inevitability. The state must now pause and honestly reconsider whether this project is lawful, wise, or aligned with California's broader goals for sustainable water management.

The Delta Counties Coalition will continue fighting for science-based solutions that respect both the law and the people who live where the water flows. California can meet its water security needs without sacrificing the Delta.

This victory belongs to every farmer, family, and advocate who refused to accept that Sacramento's will was inevitable. This is what happens when communities stand together. This is what common sense looks like.





## Board Decides Against Safe Camping Site, Maintains Focus on Long-Term Solutions

At its January 13 meeting, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to cease development of a Safe Camping Site at the former Oakmoore Golf Course after learning construction would cost over \$11 million with \$4 million in annual operating expenses. Staff was asked to continue developing plans to move existing county departments to the site, in keeping with the property's original purpose.

While the safe camping concept represented innovative thinking, changes in funding and building code requirements that prohibited tent use in cold weather substantially increased costs beyond original estimates.

The County remains committed to sustainable, accountable solutions addressing root causes of homelessness. San Joaquin County recently invested \$3.5 million in the Gospel Center Rescue Mission expansion, and continues partnering with cities throughout the County on permanent supportive housing and shelter operations. The SJ CARES program provides comprehensive case management linking individuals to services, and the SJ BeWell Campus is now under construction to provide additional mental health and substance abuse services.

The decision reflects our commitment to responsible stewardship, ensuring taxpayer dollars support proven, long-term solutions that deliver measurable results for our most vulnerable residents.

## Storm Readiness - SJ Ready Sign Up

Winter storm season is here, and heavy rain can quickly overwhelm roads, neighborhoods, and power systems. When every second counts, having the right information at the right time can make all the difference. Residents are encouraged to stay connected to trusted emergency updates from law enforcement, fire, EMS, local cities, and the County through SJReady Alerts.

Preparedness starts at home. Take time now to create a family emergency plan that accounts for the unique needs of every household member, including children, seniors, and pets. Identify evacuation routes, choose safe meeting locations, and agree on how you will communicate if normal services are disrupted. A plan built in calm moments is invaluable during a storm.

Emergency supply kits are equally important. Each family member, including pets, should have enough supplies to last at least 72 hours. Include non perishable food, water, flashlights, portable phone chargers, personal hygiene items, and important documents such as insurance policies and family photos.

Emergency alerts, family planning guides, and supply checklists are available at [www.sjready.org](http://www.sjready.org).





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