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The Desert Sun

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2013

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HEALTH CARE

Health gaps found among LGBT

Valley survey: Most are insured, in good health, but stress markers high

By Victoria Pelham
The Desert Sun

Most participants in a recent, first-of-its-kind survey of the health of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population in the Coachella Valley rated

their health as "good," "very good," or "excellent," and almost all had health insurance. But the study also found significant health needs.

More than half of the LGBT participants had been diagnosed with one or more mental

health disorders, and about 40 percent had experienced some emotional, mental or behavioral problems that worried them in the past year, rates much higher than the general population but in keeping with limited statewide and national data, the sample showed. Forty-one percent had received a depression diagnosis, compared with 8 percent of the general valley population, 36 percent with anxiety

compared with 6 percent, and 10 percent with a panic disorder, compared with 3 percent of the general public.

"It's just historically this has been an underserved population that has been discriminated against and stigmatized; it's what's called minority stress," said Jill Gover, director of counseling at the LGBT Community Center of the Desert. "When you've got discrimination and

you have a population that's stigmatized you have much higher mental health needs."

"It's chronically stressful to live and survive in an environment that's not welcoming," she said.

Palm Springs has a large population of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, estimated at 40 to 60 percent of

Please see LGBT, A2

ENERGY

Activists, industry look to future

Coachella Valley's role in renewable energy field key focus of summit

By K Kaufmann
The Desert Sun

PALM SPRINGS — The topics covered ranged from federal energy policy — still nonexistent — to sustainable local composting, but the messages emerging from Friday's Southern California Energy Summit all touched on a few central themes.

A goal of an electric system run 100 percent on renewable energy is doable and a necessity if California is to regain its place as an international leader in green power — and that means developing a flexible, diverse and intelligent energy system.

"We have everything we need to shift to 100 percent, and it's just a matter of having a plan," said actress and environmental activist Daryl Hannah in the day's most impassioned presentation. "People want energy that does not endanger their water resources, that doesn't endanger air quality. We need to make sure the infrastructures and paradigms we set up are in the interest of us having a world we can live and thrive in, and we

Please see ENERGY, A11



A group of students from Desert Mirage high school gets a look under the hood of an electric car at the Southern California Energy Summit in Palm Springs on Friday. JAY CALDERON/THE DESERT SUN



Daryl Hannah speaks with The Desert Sun at the Southern California Energy Summit in Palm Springs on Friday. JAY CALDERON/THE DESERT SUN

"If food waste were a country, it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter on the planet. Having a community-based, mandatory composting system would get carbon out of the atmosphere and build nutrient-rich soil."

DARYL HANNAH, Actress, environmental activist

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN



Sen. Barbara Boxer discusses the Affordable Care Act and the standoff with Republicans over federal spending during a news conference in Washington on Monday. AP

Valley's officials forgo pay as dispute rages on

By Raju Chebium
Desert Sun Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — California Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, both millionaires, plan to give away the money they earn during the partial federal shutdown.

On the other hand, the Coachella Valley's congressman — a relative pauper — won't get paid until Uncle Sam resumes normal operations but will eventually accept a salary for the period when much of the government was closed.

Unlike 800,000 federal employees who began taking unpaid leave on Oct. 1, members of Congress are exempt from fur-



Feinstein

Please see PAY, A11

MORE INSIDE

On Capitol Hill: Prospect for quick end to shutdown is remote. **A3**
Wildfire risk: Officials say shutdown won't hinder firefighting efforts if needed. **A4**

Company linked to PC mogul buys KMIR

By Barrett Newkirk
The Desert Sun

PALM DESERT — A company tied to computer mogul Michael Dell is purchasing the Coachella Valley's NBC affiliate television station and its sister station.

Journal Broadcast Group announced Friday it had

agreed to sell KMIR-TV and My 13 KPSE-LP to Virginia-based OTA Broadcasting LLC.

Approval of the sale by the Federal Communication Commission will be delayed because of the partial government shutdown. Craig Marrs, general manager for the two stations, said the process could take months and that no prob-

lems with federal approval were anticipated.

Until the sale is finalized, the station will remain under the control of Journal Broadcast Group. No staffing or programming changes are anticipated once the sale is completed, Marrs said.

OTA Broadcasting already owns stations in San Francisco,

Seattle and New York City. It's linked to Dell, the founder of the computer manufacturer that bears his name, through one of his other companies, MSD Capital Management.

"From what we understand, Michael is a very forward-looking guy," Marrs said. "The

Please see KMIR, A11

GOOD MORNING

Say "I do" to this weather

90° 65°

- Abby **D7** Obits **B5,6**
- Bridge **H2** Opinion **B7**
- Comics **D6** Puzzles **H2**
- The Deuce **C2** Starwatch **B5**
- Lottery **B5** Today in History **B5**
- Movies **D7** Weather **E8**



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INSIDE TODAY'S PAPER



MAKING THEIR PITCHES

More than 70 businesses displayed their wares and services during a glorious day at a Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce expo. **B3**

GOLDEN GOVERNOR

Jerry Brown is set to become California's longest-serving governor next week. **A5**

HOT STUFF

Chili cookoff expected to bring more than 1,000 to the valley next weekend. **E1**

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Energy

Continued from A1

aren't only beholden to the bottom line.

"This is not stuff that is a day-dream. This is something we can do," she said.

Hannah led a roster of speakers somewhat thinned out by last-minute cancellations caused by the federal government shutdown, but still well-stocked with state and business energy leaders who drew an audience of about 500 attendees to the Palm Springs Convention Center.

The federal budget impasse kept U.S. Rep. Raul Ruiz, D-Palm Desert, another keynote speaker, in Washington, D.C., while Jim Kenna, state director of the largely closed-down U.S. Bureau of Land Management, also had to cancel.

The remaining speakers focused mostly on Southern California's energy future as plans emerge to replace the 2,200 megawatts of power from the closed San Onofre nuclear power plant, develop renewable projects at the shrinking Salton Sea and look beyond the state's mandate to produce 33 percent of its power from renewables by 2020.

Michel Florio, a member of the California Public Utilities Commission, laid out the scope of the challenge.

"We are looking at a 100-year-old industry being transformed in one or two decades," he said. "The electric grid is one of the most complex machines created by human beings. It has to be balanced every second. We've had programs for energy efficiency, for demand response, for solar and for other renewables for a number of years. What we're looking at is bringing all these together in a system that can manage supply and



People attend the Southern California Energy Summit in Palm Springs on Friday. JAY CALDERON/THE DESERT SUN



Keynote speaker Daryl Hannah makes her presentation at the Southern California Energy Summit on Friday. JAY CALDERON/THE DESERT SUN

demand."

In replacing the power from San Onofre, the state will need to avoid overdependence on natural gas by backing up intermittent wind and solar power

with a combination of resources, he said. Rooftop solar, often referred to as distributed generation, and energy storage should be in the mix.

"We need to steer distributed

generation to places on the grid where it has the highest value," he said.

But Patrick Lee, senior vice president with the Southern California Gas Company, said that natural gas, and particularly biogas, could add to the state's energy diversity and move toward cleaner transportation.

"Over the last 12 months we have seen a lot of announcements, people are committing fleets to natural gas," he said. "Biomethane, if run through a generation power plant can produce energy just like wind or solar. There are multiple ways for us to produce renewable energy."

For consumers, the new grid also will provide "intelligent delivery" of energy services, from thermostat and pool-pump control to remote energy audits, said Mark Wallenrod, director of demand side management for Southern California Edison.

"Intelligent delivery uses a common platform to reach cus-

tomers," he said. "It will enable us to push data from meters to customers in a way that makes sense to customers and push out solutions. We want to bundle (services) even further to reach customers in ways we haven't reached them before."

Hannah advocated a more grass-roots, community-oriented approach to tackling energy problems and climate change.

"If food waste were a country, it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter on the planet," she said.

"Having a community-based, mandatory composting system would get carbon out of the atmosphere and build nutrient-rich soil."

Coachella Valley leaders are still figuring out how to best position the region to take advantage of the coming trends and changes.

Robert Hargreaves, attorney for the Salton Sea Authority, envisions the sea's increasingly exposed shore line — caused by evaporation and a decline in irrigation runoff — as a possible test bed for different renewable technologies.

"We'll set up half a dozen plots, invite manufacturers and developers," he said. "If you've got something that might work as the sea recedes, we can start testing to see how it handles the difficult environment."

Wesley Ahlgren, chief operating officer of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, wants to see the valley recruit businesses and "thought leaders" from outside the area to help develop its profile as an innovation center where "we don't make the solar panel, we make it better."

He was most heartened by the conference's message of engagement.

"I thought 'green, renewable' was getting stale," he said. "I think it's looking at new opportunities."

KMIR

Continued from A1

company is made up of people who are interested in the next generation of digital products yet at the same time are excited about acquiring the operation here in Palm Springs."

While Palm Springs is a much smaller market for OTA, Marrs said the company was excited to be acquiring its first station affiliated with one of the four major television broadcast companies.

Nielsen Media Research ranks Palm Springs as the 148th largest television market in the country with more than 154,000

television homes, according to Journal Broadcast Group.

KMIR and My 13 had been cut off to many valley homes this summer during a contract dispute between Journal Broadcast Group and Time Warner Cable that ended last month. The stations eventually returned to Time Warner subscribers but on different channels.

Terms of the sale were not disclosed. Calls and emails sent to OTA after business hours Friday were not returned.

Marrs said talks between the companies began when OTA approach Journal Broadcast Group with an interest in purchasing the stations.

In a news release, executives

with the two companies expressed confidence the stations would continue as a service to valley residents under new ownership.

"We sincerely appreciate the dedication of our talented team in Palm Springs and their continued development of our television stations over a number of years," Steven Smith, chairman and CEO of Journal Communications, said in the release.

"We look forward to serving the Palm Springs market, as well as welcoming the employees of KMIR and KPSE to the OTA family," Bill Tolegin, CEO of OTA, said in the release.

Reach Barrett Newkirk at (760)778-4767 or barrett.newkirk@thedesertsun.com.



KMIR news anchors Elizabeth Beaubien, left, and Gino LaMont are seen on set at the TV station's Palm Desert studios during an Oct. 12, 2012, congressional debate. The NBC affiliate and sister station KPSE, My 13, have been sold to OTA Broadcasting LLC.

RICHARD LUI, THE DESERT SUN

Pay

Continued from A1

loughs and will continue to get paid once a month as usual unless they tell congressional administrators to hold on to their pay. Lawmakers last got paid on Sept. 30, so they haven't missed a paycheck yet.

According to their aides, Feinstein will donate her pay to the Consortium of Catholic Academies; Boxer will give it to charities that support veterans and women's health.

Only eight members of Congress are wealthier than Feinstein, who was worth an estimated \$42 million last year, according to the Capitol Hill news-



Ruiz

paper Roll Call. Boxer was worth between \$1.2 million and \$5.5 million in 2012, according to her financial disclosure records. Ruiz's filings for last year show he was worth between \$86,000 and \$565,000. In an interview in July, the son of migrant workers said he has \$125,000 in outstanding student-loan debt and can't afford to pay it off as early as he'd like and continue to support family members.

Rank-and-file members of the House and the Senate are paid \$174,000 a year.

Ruiz, a freshman Democrat from Palm Desert, told House

officials to put his salary in an escrow account until the shutdown ends, according to his spokesman, Michael Ford.

"He believes that if (members of) Congress cannot do their job, they should not get paid," he said, adding that Ruiz supports legislation denying shutdown pay to lawmakers.

Boxer has a proposal that would do just that.

The Rancho Mirage Democrat said Thursday she's working to broaden support for legislation she and Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., introduced in January to deny lawmaker pay during shutdowns and debt defaults. A similar Boxer bill passed the Senate in 2011 but stalled in the Republican-led House.

The first shutdown in 17

years began Tuesday, after Congress failed to pass a temporary funding measure for the new fiscal year.

Republicans refuse to pass a budget bill unless Congress agrees to rework, delay or repeal President Barack Obama's signature health-care law. The stalemate continued on Friday, four days into the shutdown.

About two-thirds of the 2.1-million-strong federal workforce has to show up to work to maintain national security and to protect people and property. Social Security and Medicare payments are still being made. But the rest of the workforce has been sent home indefinitely and the employees won't get paid unless Congress passes a bill awarding retroactive pay.

The House is expected to vote on such a bill, and Obama has signaled his support of the measure.

Like most senators, Boxer and Feinstein have furloughed half to two-thirds of their staff, closed their Washington and state offices and suspended constituent services. Acting on the advice of Senate lawyers, senators have retained just enough staff to help them legislate, aides say.

But House lawyers have told members that staff can be kept on the job as long as they're deemed essential.

Like many other House members, Ruiz is open for business and has, in fact, extended office hours in the 36th Congressional District.

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