WATER, ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER AT FRESNO STATE WINS $50,000 »
NEWSOM CALLS FOR KEEPING 30% OF STATE LAND OPEN »
TRUMP HAILS VIRUS TREATMENT, SAYS HE’S READY TO DO RALLIES »
There was an early morning Zoom celebration heard around at least a few homes in the Valley Wednesday. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced selections for the prize portion of the Energy Program for Innovation Clusters, and a team from Fresno was one of the winners. The Water, Energy and Technology Center (WET Center) at Fresno State won $50,000.

The EPIC prize seeks to recognize the most innovative and impactful incubators focused on developing strong regional innovation clusters for energy-related technology and entrepreneurship.

WET Center
“We’ve been working for the past 4 or 5 years to create an innovation cluster around energy technology in the Central Valley,” WET Center program manager Helle Petersen tells GV Wire℠ by Zoom. The center is not funded by Fresno State so they rely on grant money to deliver their programs to the Valley.

“We’ve been able to identify some gaps that are limiting the impact we’d like to see energy entrepreneurs even further,” says Petersen. She says they want to fill those gaps to make the Valley even more competitive around the commercialization of innovative energy technologies.

$50,000 Prize
The Department of Energy gave out a total of $1 million dollars among 20 organizations throughout the country.

“We’re going to use this program (prize money) to bolster our capacity as a team,” said Petersen. “For the most part, we don’t charge money for the programs we offer (to companies) because we have access to grant funding that allows us to help many entrepreneurs and innovators at no cost.”
Citing a rise in violent crime, Fresno police chief Andy Hall announced on Wednesday the formation of a city-wide violent crime suppression task force. Posting on Facebook, Fresno police said, “In the month of September alone, our community has suffered 104 shooting incidents and 12 murders.” The department pointed to changes in criminal justice policy as the key factor.

“The implementation of $0 bail, state-wide early release from prisons, and revolving doors at our local jail has caused this city’s violent crime to more than double from previous years.” the department’s message said. “This lack of accountability has caused a surge in gang activity in our City.” The post also noted, “Since $0 bail and early releases were implemented in April, Fresno has seen a 126 % increase in shootings and 55 % increase in murders.”

The department said 80% of the homicides this year have been gang motivated. Police say they’ll use every tool at their disposal to hold those accountable for violence in the community. This will include high visibility patrols in crime stricken neighborhoods and federal prosecution for specific gun crimes. The post said Hall and District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp have...
LOS ANGELES — Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an executive order Wednesday to protect nearly a third of California’s land and coastal waters in his latest effort to fight climate change that he has blamed for recent record-breaking wildfires. He directed state agencies to pursue actions that will use the state’s lands and waters to absorb climate-warming carbon from the atmosphere.

Newsom, who made the announcement in a walnut orchard 25 miles outside of Sacramento, said innovative farming practices, restoring wetlands, better forest management, planting more trees and increasing the number of parks are all potential tools. The goal is part of a larger global effort to protect 30% of the Earth. California is the first state to join 38 countries that have made similar commitments, Newsom said.

“Thirty by 2030 is the mandate,” Newsom said. “California, as the fifth-largest economy in the world, needs to flex its muscles, needs to assert itself, and to advance that cause, not only as it relates to its global impacts but hopefully jump-start similar efforts in other states across this country.”

While more than half of California land is owned by the state or federal government, the U.S. Geological Survey estimates that only 22% of lands is currently considered protected.

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This is the second major climate change directive from the governor since a string of massive wildfires broke out in mid-August. Fires have burned a record amount of land this year, mostly across Northern California, killed 31 people, destroyed nearly 9,000 homes, businesses and other structures, and produced massive amounts of air pollution. Last month, Newsom directed state regulators to come up with rules to ban sales of new gas-powered passenger cars and trucks by 2035. He said that plan will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35%.

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Newsom Said This Latest Effort Would Build on the State’s Legacy of Protecting Open Space

The automobile announcement was criticized by the White House. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s chief questioned the legality of the move. Newsom said this latest effort would build on the state’s legacy of protecting open space, the environment and biodiversity...
COUNTY SAYS CREEK FIRE VICTIMS CAN STAY IN RVS ON PROPERTY AS THEY REBUILD HOMES

October 7, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

Fresno County residents whose homes were destroyed or damaged in the Creek Fire have new housing options available as they return to rebuild what they lost.

They can now live on their properties for the next six months in recreational vehicles or “tiny homes” under a temporary measure approved Tuesday by the board of supervisors. Two of the short term dwelling units are allowed per residential parcel and they must be self-contained with onboard water, power and waste systems, the county said. The rule applies to motor homes, travel trailers, truck campers, and camping trailers, according to a county document. A “moveable tiny house” with no more than 430 square feet of living space is also permitted.

The Creek Fire started September 4th, is 49% contained. It has so far burned 328,595 acres. According to Cal Fire, it’s the single largest wildfire in state history and has destroyed 856 residential, commercial and other structures to date. Another 71...
WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Thursday that he is ready to hold campaign rallies and he credited an experimental drug treatment with helping his recovery from COVID-19, although there is no way for the president or his doctors to know whether the drug had any effect. “I’m feeling good. Really good. I think perfect,” Trump said during a telephone interview with Fox Business, his first since he tested positive. “I think I’m better to the point where I’d love to do a rally tonight,” Trump said adding that he no longer thinks he’s “contagious at all.”

Trump did not indicate where or when he might have contracted the virus, saying only, “If you’re anywhere around this thing you can catch it.” But he mentioned a recent Rose Garden event announcing his new Supreme Court nominee and a meeting with military families. He said family members often want to get up close to him and “kiss” and “hug” him. “I can’t say ‘Back up. Stand 10 feet’ away,” Trump said. Trump credited the drug treatment with helping his recovery and suggested his diagnosis could be a “blessing in disguise” in the nation’s battle against the pandemic. In a White House video posted Wednesday evening, Trump said his illness had shed light on an experimental antibody cocktail that he tied to his improved condition. Seemingly sensitive to the fact that his treatment course has been far more comprehensive than the care received by average Americans, he promised to swiftly get the drug approved for broader use — and distribute it for free — even though he does not have the power to order that himself. Questions continue to swirl about the trajectory of Trump’s recovery and when he might be able to return to normal activities, including campaigning, less than four weeks before Election Day. The video marked Trump’s first appearance before a camera — albeit a White House-operated one — in nearly two days. The White House has released only limited details about his condition and treatment, leading to questions about what lies ahead for Trump.

It’s Not the First Time the President Has trumpeted an Unproven Treatment Trump received an experimental antiviral cocktail made by Regeneron through a “compassionate use” exemption, a recognition of the above-and-beyond standard of care he receives as president. The safety and effectiveness of the drug have not yet been proven. And there...
WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell slightly last week to a still-high 840,000, evidence that job cuts remain elevated seven months into the pandemic recession.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department said the number of people who are continuing to receive unemployment benefits dropped 1 million to 11 million. The decline suggests that many of the unemployed are being recalled to their old jobs. But it also reflects the fact that some have used up...
JAKARTA, Indonesia — Tasmanian devils, the carnivorous marsupials whose feisty, frenzied eating habits won the animals cartoon fame, have returned to mainland Australia for the first time in some 3,000 years. "Seeing those devils released into a wild landscape — it’s a really emotional moment," said Liz Gabriel, director of conservation group Aussie Ark, which led the release effort in partnership with other conservation groups. The 11 most recently released devils began exploring their new home once they were freed from round, white cages at the nearly 1,000-acre Barrington Tops wildlife refuge in New South Wales state, about 120 miles north of Sydney.

Tasmanian devils, which were once called Sarcophilus harrisii or "Satanic flesh-lover," went extinct in mainland Australia before the arrival of Europeans. Scientists believe the introduction of carnivorous dingoes, a surge in the indigenous human population, and a devastating dry season caused by a prolonged El Nino caused the devil to migrate to present-day Tasmania, said University of Tasmania ecologist Menna Jones. "I think any one of those three factors alone probably wouldn’t have caused extinction — but the three of them together likely caused the devil to become extinct on the mainland," she said.

Experts Question Whether the Introduction Would Have That Hoped-for Level of Impact

In response, researchers established an insurance population of cancer-free devils in wild-type enclosures in Australia’s island state of Tasmania. But the releases in July and September are the first time the squat mammals — all of which have tested negative for the contagious cancer — have been released on the mainland. "For now, the devils released this year and those expected to be released in coming years won’t go into the wild just yet. Instead they will receive supplementary feedings and be monitored by remote cameras, with some devils tagged with GPS trackers to learn more about how they adjust in their new environment," Gabriel said.

Devils have been protected in Australia since 1941, and conservationists have worked to bolster their populations for years, citing their importance as top predators who can suppress invasive species — like foxes and feral cats — and in turn protect smaller species and biodiversity. One of the biggest blows to conservation efforts came in the 1990s when a communicable cancer called devil facial tumor disease — which passes between devils through their bites while mating and causes large tumors that prevent them from eating — reduced the population from some 140,000 to as few as 20,000.
ARMENIA SAYS CATHEDRAL SHELLED IN CLASHES WITH AZERBAIJAN

YEREVAN, Armenia — Armenia accused Azerbaijan on Thursday of shelling a historic cathedral in the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, where nearly two weeks of heavy fighting has killed hundreds of people.

The Holy Savior Cathedral, also known as the Ghazanchetsots Cathedral, suffered interior and exterior damage, according to the state-run Armenian Unified Infocenter. Media reports said some children were inside the cathedral in the town of Shusha at the time of the shelling, and although they were not wounded, they suffered from stress after the attack. Built in the 19th century, the cathedral suffered significant damage during ethnic violence in 1920. It was restored after fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in the 1990s and is part of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Azerbaijan’s Defense Ministry denied attacking the cathedral, saying its army “doesn’t target historical, cultural, especially religious buildings and...”

October 8, 2020 | AP News

LYON, France — French police have arrested 61 people suspected of involvement in a vast child pornography network, including at least three people who raped children on camera, officials said Thursday. Among the suspects are several who work in jobs that put them in contact with children, such as teachers, religious leaders and city hall officials, according to Eric Bérot, head of the French police agency overseeing the operation.

They were arrested in coordinated operations in 30 regions of France between Monday and Thursday, based on months of investigation of child pornography shared on peer-to-peer networks online, Berot told The Associated Press. French investigators...

October 8, 2020 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — Iranian state TV said the country has hit its highest number of daily deaths from the coronavirus, with 239 new fatalities reported on Wednesday. The report quoted the spokesperson of the country’s health ministry, Sima Sadat Lari, as saying that the 239 died since Tuesday. Iran has in the past had 235 daily deaths.

The latest death toll brought the total number of fatalities to 27,658. The ministry spokesperson said healthcare professionals recorded 4,019 new confirmed cases since Tuesday, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in Iran to 483,844. Lari said 4,274 patients are in critical conditions and that 397,109 have recovered so far. The Islamic...