CITY OKS ALCOHOL SALE RESTRICTIONS AFTER PROMISING TO AID GROCERY STORES »
BEVERLY HILLS BANS TRICK-OR-TREATING TO STEM VIRUS SPREAD »
AP-NORC POLL: AMERICANS CRITICAL OF TRUMP HANDLING OF VIRUS »
After a 2-hour discussion and public comment from residents from throughout Fresno, the City Council passed the Responsible Neighborhood Market Act on a 6-1 vote. Council Member Mike Karbassi was the only member to vote no. “Thank you to the youth of our city and our residents and everybody who called in today,” city council President Miguel Arias said after the final vote was tallied. The act is the result of 22 months of study and meetings in an effort to reduce the number of beer, wine and liquor merchants in the city. Karbassi and council member Garry Bredefeld expressed concern the act adversely drive up the price of an alcohol license to the point where a grocery store wouldn’t be able to afford to open in one of the city’s grocery deserts. Earlier in the meeting, the council adopted a plan to waive impact fees through 2022 for new grocery stores opening in underprivileged areas. Council Member Luis Chavez will immediately take the lead on forming an advisory committee to the grocery store municipal code in an effort to build on current incentives to attract more grocery stores to underserved areas.

**Responsible Neighborhood Market Act**
Starting in 30 days, changes at the city level will include:

- Obtaining and retiring other ABC licenses in order to obtain a new license or upgrade a current one. The number of existing permits that would need to be acquired by a new alcohol retailer would depend on the square footage of the retailer’s store.

- Changing the distance one retailer can operate from another from 500 feet to 1,000 feet.

- Changing the distance alcohol retailers must be from “sensitive” locations from 500 feet to 1,000. Sensitive locations include schools, parks and drug treatment centers.

- Limiting signage and advertising in the store and on the exterior.

- The stricter rules for obtaining a CUP will remain as long as the ratio of retail alcohol licenses exceeds one for every 2,500 residents. According to city staff, Fresno currently has double that number of licenses.

**Putting Bad Operators on Notice**
“I also want to take this opportunity to put on notice those bad operators,” said city council member Luis Chavez. “I’ve been keeping a list in my district of about, you know, five or six of them. The city of Fresno is not going to tolerate that anymore.”
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...
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groups ringing doorbells, digging into buckets of delicious candy create a risk of spreading COVID-19," Dr. Mark Ghaly, the state’s top health official, said Tuesday. Such activities will also complicate contact tracing if virus cases occur, he said.

October 14, 2020 | AP News

BEVERLY HILLS — The city of Beverly Hills has banned trick-or-treating this Halloween to try to prevent spread of the coronavirus. The action was taken in an urgency ordinance approved by the City Council Tuesday night. The ordinance bars trick-or-treaters from going house to house or car to car, which is described as "trunk or treating."

People also may not provide candy and other Halloween treats to any person outside their own household. People are prohibited from spraying shaving cream on others, except inside their own homes. Licensed barbers are exempted so they may shave customers.

California has not enacted a statewide restriction on Halloween

The city is also banning pedestrians and vehicles from certain streets on Oct. 31, excluding residents.

"While I know this is disappointing news, especially to our children, we believe this is the responsible approach to protect the health of the community," Mayor Lester Friedman said in a statement.

California has not enacted a statewide restriction on Halloween but is strongly discouraging traditional activities and urging families to plan alternatives including virtual celebrations. "The whole act of going door to door and groups ringing doorbells, digging into buckets of delicious candy create a risk of spreading spreading COVID-19," Dr. Mark Ghaly, the state’s top health official, said Tuesday. Such activities will also complicate contact tracing if virus cases occur, he said.

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HALF MOON BAY — Being cooped up at home due to the pandemic paid handsomely for a Minnesota horticulture teacher who used the extra time to constantly water and feed a massive pumpkin that won this year’s Half Moon Bay pumpkin contest.

Travis Gienger, of Anoka, Minnesota, spent a lot of his free time in the pumpkin patch in his backyard, watering his plants up to 10 times a day and feeding and fertilizing them at least twice each day. Gienger, 40, then drove his gargantuan gourd for 35 hours to see his hard work pay off at the 47th World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off in Half Moon Bay, south of San Francisco, where his winner came in at 2,350 pounds (1,066 kilograms).

“It was nerve-wracking because with every bump on the road I kept thinking, ‘is it going to make it?’ And then finally it got weighed, it was the last one, and oh, my gosh, it’s been incredible!” Gienger said.

Gienger, a landscape and horticulture teacher at Anoka Technical College, has been growing...
WASHINGTON — Less than three weeks from Election Day, majorities of Americans are highly critical of President Donald Trump’s handling of both the coronavirus pandemic and his own illness, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The survey also shows that few Americans have high levels of trust in the information the White House has released about Trump’s health. Initial accounts of the president’s condition were murky and contradictory, and the White House is still refusing to say when the president last tested negative for COVID-19 before his infection became public. Trump’s illness and hospitalization has refocused the critical final stretch of the presidential campaign on the pandemic, which has killed more than 216,000 people in the United States this year.

Democratic challenger Joe Biden has sought to make the election a referendum on the Republican president’s handling of the virus, arguing that Trump has mismanaged the pandemic and cost Americans lives. The AP-NORC poll suggests many Americans agree with that sentiment, with 65% saying Trump has not taken the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S. seriously enough. The poll, which was taken a week after Trump disclosed his own COVID-19 diagnosis, also shows that 54% of Americans disapprove with how the White House handled the episode. The Rev. Joseph Wiseman, a 49-year-old registered Republican and Biden supporter from Wichita, Kansas, is among them. Wiseman said he was turned off by the president’s “cavalier attitude” toward the pandemic and what he saw as Trump’s “disregard for the health and well-being” of people around him who were exposed to the virus at White House events, as well as when the president drove in a vehicle with Secret Service agents to greet supporters during his hospital stay.

The President Was Eager to Return to Campaigning in Part to Send a Message

Trump spent four days at a military hospital just outside Washington, where he was treated with an aggressive drug regimen. On Sunday, his doctor said he was no longer contagious, and he’s returned to the campaign trail this week, holding rallies in battleground states across the country. The president was eager to return to campaigning in part to send a message to Americans that they should not allow the virus...
Earth sweltered to a record hot September last month, with U.S. climate officials saying there's nearly a two-to-one chance that 2020 will end up as the globe's hottest year on record.

Boosted by human-caused climate change, global temperatures averaged 60.75 degrees (15.97 Celsius) last month, edging out 2015 and 2016 for the hottest September in 141 years of recordkeeping, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Wednesday. That's 1.75 degrees (0.97 degrees Celsius) above the 20th century average.

This record was driven by high heat in Europe, Northern Asia, Russia and much of the Southern Hemisphere, said NOAA climatologist Ahira Sanchez-Lugo. California and Oregon had their hottest Septembers on record. Earth has had 44 straight Septembers where it has been warmer than the 20th century average and 429 straight months without...
MOSCOW — A trio of space travelers blasted off to the International Space Station on Wednesday, using for the first time a fast-track maneuver that allowed them to reach the orbiting outpost in just a little over three hours. NASA’s Kate Rubins along with Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov of the Russian space agency Roscosmos lifted off as scheduled Wednesday morning from the Russia-leased Baikonur space launch facility in Kazakhstan for a six-month stint on the station. For the first time, they tried a two-orbit approach and docked with the space station in just a little over three hours after lift-off. Previously it took twice as long for crews to reach the station. Aboard the station, they were welcomed by the station’s NASA commander, Chris Cassidy, and Roscosmos cosmonauts Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner, who have been aboard the complex since April and are scheduled to return to Earth in a week.

Speaking during Tuesday’s pre-launch news conference at Baikonur, Rubins emphasized that the crew spent weeks in quarantine at the Star City training facility outside Moscow and then on Baikonur to avoid any threat from the coronavirus. “We spent two weeks at Star City and then 17 days at Baikonur in a very strict quarantine,” Rubins said. “During all communications with crew members, we were wearing masks. We made PCR tests twice and we also made three times antigen fast tests.”

‘We’re Planning to Try Some Really Interesting Things’

She said she was looking forward to scientific experiments planned for the mission. “We’re planning to try some really interesting things like bio-printing tissues and growing cells in space and, of course, continuing our work on sequencing DNA,” Rubins said. Ryzhikov, who will be the station’s skipper, said the crew will try to pinpoint the exact location of a leak at a station’s Russian section that has slowly leaked oxygen. The small leak hasn’t posed any immediate danger to the crew.

“We will take with us additional equipment which will allow us to detect the place of this leak more precisely,” he told reporters. “We will also take with us additional improved hermetic material which will allow to fix the leak.” In November, Rubins, Ryzhikov and Kud-Sverchkov are expected to greet NASA’s SpaceX first operational Crew Dragon mission, which is bringing NASA astronauts Mike Hopkins, Victor Glover and Shannon Walker, and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Soichi Noguchi to...
LONDON — Northern Ireland on Wednesday introduced the tightest COVID-19 restrictions in the United Kingdom, closing schools, pubs and restaurants to slow the spread of the virus. The move came as England’s new three-tiered system of restrictions took effect, with the northwestern city of Liverpool facing the most severe measures. Authorities in the city said hospital services were already heavily stressed by virus patients and decried pictures of partiers filling the streets as bars closed ahead of a local lockdown. The restrictions in Northern Ireland include a two-week closure for schools and a four-week shutdown of pubs and restaurants, except for takeaway orders.

The announcement came after talks among political parties in the region’s power-sharing government that stretched from Tuesday night into Wednesday morning. “This is not the time for trite political points,” First Minister Arlene Foster told lawmakers at the regional assembly in Belfast. “This is the...”

GERMANY TO GIVE $662 MILLION IN AID TO HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

BERLIN — Germany has agreed to provide more than a half billion euros to aid Holocaust survivors struggling under the burdens of the coronavirus pandemic, the organization that negotiates compensation with the German government said Wednesday.

The payments will be going to approximately 240,000 survivors around the world, primarily in Israel, North America, the former Soviet Union and Western Europe, over the next two years, according to the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, also referred to as the Claims Conference. With the end of World War II now 75 years in the past, Holocaust survivors are all elderly, and because many were deprived of...