
**Central Valley Business Times, November 14, 2009, article entitled,
"Major Ruling in Delta Smelt Case"**



Buttons

Print

Close

Saturday News Briefs

STOCKTON

November 14, 2009 12:01am

- **Federal judge makes new ruling in Delta water/smelt case**
- **SoCal bank fails**
- **A workers comp fraud guilty plea**
- **And more....**

Major ruling in Delta smelt case

The federal Bureau of Reclamation may have to reconsider whether cutbacks in pumping fresh water out of the San Joaquin-Sacramento Delta to protect the Delta smelt are worth the human environmental costs, under a ruling handed down Friday by U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Wanger in Fresno.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said the smelt, a minnow-like fish that lives only in the Delta, had to be protected. The Bureau of Reclamation then cut water deliveries to customers in the Central Valley.

Severe restrictions of water deliveries have been blamed for fields lying fallow this year and rising unemployment rates on the west side of the Valley.

But the Bureau of Reclamation failed to prepare a critical Environmental Impact Statement and thus violated the National Environmental Policy Act, the court says.

The impact of Friday's decision is expected to become more clear when the court conducts a remedies hearing on Nov. 24.

-oo0oo-

Southern California bank fails

Pacific Coast National Bank of San Clemente was closed last night and its assets sold to Sunwest Bank of Tustin, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency says.

The two branches of Pacific Coast National Bank will reopen on Monday as branches of Sunwest Bank. Depositors of Pacific Coast National Bank will automatically become depositors of Sunwest Bank, says the FDIC, which says it will continue to insure the deposits.

Checks drawn on the bank will continue to be processed. Loan customers should continue to make their payments as usual, the government says.

As of Aug. 31, Pacific Coast National Bank had total assets of \$134.4 million and total deposits of approximately \$130.9 million.

-oo0oo-

Business owner pleads guilty to worker's comp fraud

Mark Anthony Correnti, 50, of Auburn has pleaded guilty to trying to defraud the federal government over workers compensation insurance.

Since 1989, Mr. Correnti received disability payments under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act for a back injury that he suffered as a civilian employee for the United States Navy. To remain eligible for the benefits, disabled employees must provide medical and factual evidence to establish the essential elements of their disability claim and file an annual report of earnings.

But Mr. Correnti falsely certified that he was not involved in or earning any income from any business although he was the owner of Safe N Sound Storage, a boat and recreational vehicle storage business in Auburn.

Mr. Correnti got more than \$250,000 in disability payments to which he knew was not entitled because of his involvement with Safe N Sound Storage, says Assistant U.S. Attorney Kyle Reardon, who prosecuted the case.

-oo0oo-

Home sales rebounding a lower price points, say Realtors

Reduced home prices and the first-time home buyer tax credit have helped dramatically boost the lower end housing market, according to a residential market update, the National Association of realtors says.

Lawrence Yun, National Association of Realtors' chief economist, says home sales continue to be dominated by lower priced homes with nearly 70 percent of homes sold in September priced below \$250,000.

One reason for the boost in sales in the lower end housing market is the homebuyer tax credit, he says. According to NAR data, first-time buyers currently account for nearly 45 percent of all homebuyers.

"The housing market has become much more active at the lower end," says Mr. Yun. "The \$8,000 home buyer tax credit has significantly helped the market and is having its intended impact of stimulating home sales, decreasing high home inventory levels and helping to stabilize home prices."

According to Mr. Yun's figures, sales of homes priced below \$100,000 are up 22.5 percent from a year ago. Sales in the upper end market are still slow, however; homes priced above \$500,000 are up only 4 percent from last year.

-oo0oo-

State checks out a new librarian

Stacey Aldrich has been appointed state librarian for the California State Library.

"Stacey is truly an expert in her field and California is lucky to have her as the state librarian," says Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in announcing the appointment. "She's the perfect person to maintain the excellent quality of services and access to accurate and up-to-date information Californians expect and receive every time they visit our library."

Since February, she has served as acting state librarian for the California State Library and previously served as deputy state librarian from 2007 to 2009. Ms. Aldrich was assistant director of the Omaha Public Library from 2005 to 2007, branch chief of public libraries and state networking at the Maryland State Department of Education from 2002 to 2005 and senior associate of Coates and Jarratt in 2000.

The California state librarian is tasked with overseeing the collection, preservation, generation and dissemination of a wide array of information. The California State Library, a California public research institution, provides information for elected officials, state employees and the general public. The librarian ensures that the State Library remains the central reference and research library for state government and the legislature and provides technical assistance to, and outreach programs for, California's public libraries as well as directing state and federal funds to support these libraries.

-oo0oo-

Grant will enhance Hispanic education programs in the region

Efforts to improve Hispanic education in the region and raise awareness of post-graduate degree programs that prepare future education leaders are getting a boost from a \$230,000 U.S. Department of Education grant awarded to California State University, Stanislaus.

The Stanislaus Association of Hispanic Research project funded by the grant will provide resources that create learning communities composed of CSU Stanislaus Doctoral Community Advisory Board members, faculty mentors, community educational leaders, and students. It will focus on providing an emphasis on research and participation in the Educational Leadership Doctorate program launched at CSU Stanislaus in 2008, according to Teacher Education Professor Juan Flores who coordinated the successful application.

In addition to promoting development of school leadership at the K-12 and college levels through post-graduate study, the project will develop programs featuring speakers, educational programs and presentations, mentor programs, and opportunities to attend relevant conferences.

-oo0oo-

Labor and Workforce Development Agency get new chief

Victoria Bradshaw has been appointed secretary of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

As secretary of LWDA, Ms. Bradshaw will oversee the governor's efforts to spur development of the green economy and green jobs as the state tries to pull out of the Great Recession.

Since 2008, Ms. Bradshaw has served as deputy chief of staff and cabinet secretary in the Office of the Governor. Prior to that, she served as secretary for the LWDA from 2004 to 2008, and served as undersecretary and acting secretary from 2003 to 2004.

LWDA coordinates labor and employment programs for workers and businesses throughout California. The departments and boards within the agency offer state disability and unemployment insurance benefits, support workforce training and apprenticeship programs, enforce labor and occupational safety laws, oversee the state's workers' compensation program, mediate public sector contract disputes and report California's monthly unemployment rate.

Copyright ©2009 Central Valley Business Times
No content may be reused without written permission
An online unit of BizGnus, Inc
All rights reserved