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The Fresno Bee



CA drought over, but Fresno, Valley farmers still need rain

BY ROBERT RODRIGUEZ
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It's a rare site to see the U.S. Drought Monitor Map show California without a drought, or even abnormally dry conditions. That hasn't happened for a quarter-century.

A growing snowpack and above-average rainfall is credited for lifting the state out of the dreaded drought status. The last time the drought map showed no drought was December 2000.

Perhaps no other state in the nation has been more impacted by drought than California. Dry conditions have resulted in devastating wildfires and caused billions of dollars in losses to San Joaquin Valley farmers and their surrounding communities.

"To know it's been 25 years since no part of the state shows any symptoms of a drought is pretty remarkable," said Ryan Jacobsen, chief executive officer of the Fresno County Farm Bureau.

And while that may be a relief, Jacobsen also sees the bigger picture.

"By no means is this a reflection of things to come," said Jacobsen, an almond and wine grape grower. "The drought monitor is really looking at just localized conditions, you know, then and there."

State Climatologist Michael Anderson said the state doesn't use the U.S. Drought Monitor as an "indicator, and it's not an official drought-free declaration."

Anderson called it a "snapshot" in time of current conditions.

"As we've seen in past years, California can go quickly from wet to dry conditions, and we are expecting dry conditions to return through the rest of January. This will have an impact

SEE FARMERS, 2A

CA investigated Fresno State Foundation in 2011

BY ERIK GALICIA
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The Fresno State Foundation recently found to have risked fraud with poor financial controls in 2024 was also included in a 2011 probe by the California Department of Justice into "misdirected donations" and other allegations against the university's auxiliary organizations.

In 2011, the state sent a letter to John Melikian, then-legal counsel for the Foundation, with the results of the state's investigation into the issues concerning the Foundation, but also the Fresno State Athletic Corporation and the Fresno

State Association. All three organizations operate independently of the university as nonprofits but control large amounts of money for university operations.

The nonprofits were accused of misdirecting donations to the university's athletics department. Association board members were accused of approving a no-bid contract. Both the Foundation and Association were accused of violating the California Public Records Act.

The investigation found no merit to the accusations about the no-bid contract or records act violations. But the probe

SEE CA, 8A



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Debbie Adishian-Astone, former Fresno State vice president for administration and CFO, gives the welcome message during the grand opening of The Square at Campus Pointe on Friday, July 17, 2015.



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Travelers make their way through an expanded security checkpoint, which was officially unveiled to the public during a ceremony at Fresno Yosemite International Airport on Wednesday, April 23, 2025.

Fresno airport unveils \$150 million expansion project

BY BROOKE BAITINGER
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Fresno Yosemite International Airport just celebrated a "major milestone" with the opening of its new terminal expansion — the biggest one in its nearly 80-year history.

The completion of Concourse B marks the final phase in the FATForward terminal expansion project, a \$150 million facelift that includes an upgraded security checkpoint and new dining options.

The project was aimed at delivering "an enhanced travel experience for passengers flying through FAT," the airport said in a Dec. 19 news release.

Nearly 2.7 million travelers passed through the airport in 2024, The Fresno Bee previously reported, marking the fourth consecutive year of growth for the airport.

The Fresno airport is one of the the best small airports in the country, and the only one of its kind in California, according to USA Today readers.

Here's what's in store for

travelers at the newly-revamped airport:

SEE HISTORY OF FRESNO YOSEMITE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Commercial flights started at the Fresno airport, formerly known as Hammer Airfield, in 1948. The U.S. Army Air Force used the site during World War II.

Since then, the airport has undergone several major renovations aimed at expanding and modernizing the space to accommodate business and lei-

sure travel, according to its website.

"In 2002, the second-level concourse was constructed with six passenger jet loading bridges and spacious passenger boarding areas," the airport said on its website.

The Fresno airport opened a state-of-the-art federal inspection station in 2006 to receive its first international flight from Guadalajara, Mexico, and renovated its terminal in 2008.

The airport remodeled its

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