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The Modesto Bee



Survey notes issues Modesto cares about

BY TREVOR MORGAN
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A survey issued by Modesto in late September revealed that homelessness, public safety and

transportation are the most important issues for residents. Housing affordability and the economy also ranked high.

The survey — which interviewed 400 residents from Sept. 30 to Oct. 7 — also detailed how

people feel the city is handling these issues and provided some insight into how they feel about Modesto in general.

There were several issues of high importance that Modestans felt unsatisfied with how they

are being handled. Residents also disagree with how the city should expand and grow.

Nearly a third (31%) of respondents rated their trust in the city's government as low, while 22.8% rated their trust as high. A large majority (59%) felt they aren't getting their money's worth for the amount they pay in local tax dollars. Additionally, about half (50.5%) disagree that the city is responsive to the priorities of its residents, while 42% agree.

Overall, however, an overwhelming number of residents

(84%) believe that quality of life is either good or fair. The same goes for whether people believe Modesto is a good place to live. And about half (51%) were satisfied with the services provided by the city

HOMELESSNESS

The issue held the largest percentage of any issue. A point in time count done in January showed the number of homeless people in Stanislaus County generally didn't change in the

SEE SURVEY, 4A



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Stockton resident Carolyn Tahod delivers flowers Monday to a memorial at the Lucile Avenue building just outside the city of Stockton where a mass shooting took place over the weekend.

Father says teen son killed in Stockton mass shooting

BY DARRELL SMITH
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Devastated families are grasping for answers after the birthday party mass shooting in Stockton on Saturday night that left four people dead, including three children. Meanwhile, the hunt for the killer — or killers — continues, with the FBI issuing a \$50,000 reward for information that leads to an arrest.

"I can't live with the fact that I couldn't save my son," said Patrick Peterson. His 14-year-old son, Amari, of Modesto, was killed in the shooting. Peterson's 9-year-old daughter was also injured, but escaped by fleeing out a back doorway and climbing a fence to safety, he said.

Peterson and paramedics tried desperately to save Amari's life before the teen was



Family photo

Amari Peterson, 14, shown in an undated family photo, was killed in the mass shooting near Stockton on Saturday.

rushed to a nearby hospital where he was later pronounced dead.

"I can't believe I'm talking about my son in the past tense," Peterson told The Bee

in a telephone interview from the family's Modesto home.

"I have all these pictures of him, smiling," he said before sobbing. "I feel so hurt. I feel so bad. I just want my baby back. It's going to hurt me to the core."

Details continue to emerge from a shocked Stockton days after the shooting that also killed an 8-year-old, a 9-year-old and a 21-year-old, and wounded 11 others. The shooter or shooters remain at large as San Joaquin County and Stockton authorities are calling on anyone with any information to come forward.

Among the dead, an 8-year-old child identified as an elementary school student in the Stockton Unified School District, one of three children killed in the shooting at the Lucile Avenue banquet hall. Stockton Mayor Christina Fugazi said a parent of the child worked in the school district, according to Bay Area News Group.

"We are deeply saddened to learn that one of the victims of

SEE SHOOTING, 3A

Water deadline for Stanislaus resort extended 3 months

BY KEN CARLSON
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A potential date for shutting off water deliveries to Diablo Grande in western Stanislaus County has been extended to March 31 as officials express optimism about negotiations with Kern County.

The Western Hills Water District was facing a Dec. 31 shutoff date as it and the Kern County Water Agency considered proposals for a new water transfer agreement.

The Kern water agency board approved the three-month extension at a meeting in November. It provides Kern officials more time to respond to a counterproposal from Western Hills, according to communications cited by Western Hills.

The Kern County Water Agency, some 200 miles from Diablo Grande, had threatened to stop water deliveries June 30 if the financially troubled Western Hills district did not resume payments for an annual 8,000 acre-feet allocation.

Kern extended the deadline to Sept. 30 and later said it would continue deliveries through Dec. 31 if Western Hills came up with money to make monthly payments. Residents at the 600-home Diablo Grande resort have been charged about \$700 a month for water service since July, which has provided the money for payments to Kern.

A previous developer at Diablo Grande stopped making payments to Kern for the annual water transfers in 2019. A more affordable agreement with the Kern agency, allowing purchases of smaller amounts of water, would allow Western Hills to lower the monthly residential rate.

SEE WATER, 3A

Best pizza in Stanislaus County 'proportioned perfectly'

BY DOMINIQUE WILLIAMS
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The best pizza in Stanislaus County can be found at a little to-go kitchen on Yosemite Bou-

levard in Modesto, according to voters.

Luigi's Pizza has been in business since 1997. Its ownership has been passed down through generations of the Warda family.

Currently, the shop is run by Jennifer Warda and her son, Anthony. They've been the owners since 2021.

It won the second contest in our "best of Stanislaus" series with 117 of 208 votes. Gold

Dust Pizza came in second place with 42 votes.

Readers say the pizza shop is "consistent" and has "amazing crust." Also noted was that the restaurant cooks its pies in an "old-fashion" brick oven.

"Luigi's Pizza just hits different," Julia Perez wrote during the nomination period of the contest. "Every bite feels like comfort, like a warm little re-

SEE PIZZA, 4A



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