

The Modesto Bee



Patterson candidates focus on water treatment plans

BY KEN CARLSON
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Two candidates for Patterson City Council cite their qualifications and eagerness to make a difference for this city of more than 25,000 in western Stanislaus County.

Chinyere Nnodim Jack was appointed to the District B seat in August after Jessica Romero resigned. Jack served two terms

on the Stanislaus County Board of Education, resigning to accept the council position. District B includes the central and southern portion of the city.

Carlos Ortega, a UC Berkeley graduate, has prepared for public office by participating in the Stanislaus Community Foundation NextGen On Board program and serving on the board of Love Stanislaus County.

In other contests, Councilmember Carlos Roque is running unopposed for another term in District D (east Patterson). Voters also will decide who serves as mayor for the next two years.

Incumbent Mayor Michael Clauzel has worked as a sergeant for the San Francisco Sheriff's Office. He is challenged by Councilmember Gabriela Hernandez.

City Council members recently considered the censure of Clauzel because of his temper-



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Patterson City Hall in Patterson on July, 29, 2025.

ament in interactions with city staff, but the council decided on a reprimand in a 3-1 vote, with Roque voting "no."

WATER TREATMENT IS PRIORITY FOR APPOINTED INCUMBENT

Nnodim Jack, 56, said she has the knowledge for city service.

SEE PATTERSON, 4A



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Both paved and unpaved trails follow Dry Creek in Modesto. The dirt trails, popular for nature walks, birdwatching and mountain biking, get down much closer to the creek.

Modesto trail collision kills dirt biker, injures another

BY DEKE FARROW
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A 66-year-old man dirt biking with others Wednesday night on the Dry Creek Trail was killed in a head-on collision with another rider, the Modesto Police Department reported.

The second rider, a 48-year-old man, suffered moderate injuries and was taken to a hospital for treatment, according to a Facebook post by the Police Department.

The report of the crash was received at about 9:50 p.m. It

occurred on the trail behind the 900 block of Edgebrook Drive when a group of people was riding between Moose and Thousand Oaks parks.

Witnesses quickly began rendering aid, including CPR, until officers arrived and took over lifesaving efforts, the MPD post

says.

The 66-year-old male was pronounced dead at a hospital. His name is being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

A longtime proponent of recreational use of the Tuolumne River and Dry Creek trails, who spoke with The Bee, said he's been aware that people use the parks after dark, "a lot of times not necessarily positive use."

Motorized dirt bikes are not allowed on the trails at any time, he noted. But their use there has

SEE COLLISION, 2A

Judge rules against adult trial in juvenile shooting case

BY DEAN J. CONDOLEO
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A Stanislaus County judge found that nearly every factor used to determine whether Christopher Daniel Jones should be prosecuted as an adult weighed in favor of transferring him out of juvenile court.

Jones, now 22, was 16 when 14-year-old Maria Juarez was killed in the Dec. 26, 2020, shooting. He was later found

responsible in juvenile court for his role in the shooting, which also wounded two other people.

The crime was extraordinarily serious. Jones had an escalating history involving firearms. Previous attempts at rehabilitation had not prevented further criminal conduct. And the judge found Jones played a substantial role in the December 2020 shooting that killed 14-year-old Maria Juarez and wounded two other people.

But one question ultimately prevented the transfer: Could Jones still be rehabilitated before the juvenile justice system lost jurisdiction over him?

The prosecution had not proved otherwise, Superior Court Judge Ruben A. Villalobos determined.

"The Court cannot find by clear and convincing evidence that the youth is not amenable to rehabilitation while under juvenile jurisdiction," Villalobos wrote in a seven-page

ruling. "Therefore, the motion to transfer is denied."

The ruling, signed Sept. 4, 2025, provides the most detailed explanation yet for why Jones — who was 16 at the time of Juarez's killing — remained in juvenile court rather than facing prosecution as an adult.

The Bee obtained the ruling after petitioning the juvenile court for access to records in Jones' normally confidential case.

The case concluded in August, when Superior Court Judge Annette Rees committed Jones to Stanislaus County's Secure Youth Treatment Facility. She set a four-year baseline

SEE JUVENILE, 4A

Newsom condemns ICE operations as 'fear campaign'

BY DARRELL SMITH
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The Trump administration is launching waves of ICE immigration operations across California over the next 45 days, the Washington Examiner reported this week. Gov. Gavin Newsom blasted the statewide raids weeks before November's midterm elections as a "campaign of fear."

Dubbed internally as "Operation Safe California," the Examiner reported, the enforcement began several days ago in the San Diego area, with Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials ordering its field agents to arrest all immigrants they meet, criminal history or not.

The operation has not been publicly announced, but was met with fiery reaction from Newsom. He accused the White House of stoking fear in the state's immigrant communities as millions of Californians prepare to head to the polls.

According to the Examiner, an unnamed source told the newspaper that ICE officers were "told to go after anybody, they can pick up anybody."

Immigrant rights groups in Northern and Central California have reported increased sightings of ICE activity. On Monday, a father was arrested at a

SEE OPERATIONS, 4A



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