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A look at health inspection ratings in Merced County

BY ANDREW KUHN
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Three Merced County businesses received “good” ratings when they were visited by Merced County Division of Environmental Health inspectors between Sept. 3 and Sept. 8. One of the facilities inspected received a perfect score.

Businesses that accumulate zero to six violation points during an inspection receive a “good” rating. A rating of “satisfactory” is given to businesses that accumulate seven to 13 points, while businesses that accumulate 14 points or greater, receive an “unsatisfactory” rating.

Violations recorded by inspectors can range in severity from minor to major. Major violations are “violations that are very likely to get people sick” and those violations must be corrected immediately or the business, or parts of the business must close until the issue is corrected, according to the Merced County Division of Environmental Health. If a business fails an inspection, a reinspection is required to take place at a later date.

The Merced County Division of Environmental Health said violations that are considered to be minor are “violations that are likely to get people sick but does not require the location to close.”

The latest businesses inspected include:

Raley's Store #309 Merced-Starkbucks Kiosk, located at 3550 N. G Street in Merced received a “good” rating with one violation point on Sept. 3.

- During the final inspection, an ice machine was not installed. When the machine is

SEE INSPECTION, 2A

What high-speed rail can do with \$1B a year from state

BY ERIK GALICIA
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Months after the feds began trying to defund it, California high-speed rail on Saturday obtained a \$1 billion annual financial commitment through 2045 from the state.

That means California's High-Speed Rail Authority can consider the project's initial Central Valley route fully funded — even if it doesn't recover the \$4 billion the Trump administration pulled from it in July.

The commitment could also determine high-speed rail's ability to attract private capital, as investors want to see a project with a strong state backstop before putting their money in.

“This agreement demonstrates that Californians are standing up to the Trump Administration's backward-thinking obstruction and choosing instead to invest boldly in the future,” the rail authority said in a statement Wednesday,



CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

An artist's rendering depicts a high-speed rail train rolling through the southern San Joaquin Valley.

when the deal was first announced.

The money will come from California's Cap-and-Trade program, now called Cap-and-Invest, which was set to expire

in 2030 but was extended through 2045 by the state's Legislature on Saturday. The program generates public dollars from companies that buy credits at state auctions to off-

set their greenhouse gas emission.

Since its introduction in 2012, the program has provided \$7.9

SEE HIGH-SPEED RAIL, 4A



Google Maps screenshot

California City Correctional Facility in eastern Kern County photographed in December 2015. Federal authorities are planning to open California's largest U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center at the site of the former privately-operated state prison.

State's largest ICE detention facility has 500 detainees

BY MELISSA MONTALVO
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California's largest immigration detention center has already filled up with 500 detainees since it quietly opened two weeks ago, according to a California City official.

Immigration advocates and lawyers say Tennessee-based private prison operator CoreCivic flouted state laws and California City municipal code in its rapid pursuit to open the 70-acre detention center. The remote, Antelope Valley facility in eastern Kern County began receiving detainees at the

2,560-bed facility in late August though California City has yet to approve CoreCivic's operating permits.

Community groups also raised concerns about living conditions in the facility and described a chaotic opening with unexpected transfers from other Kern County detention facilities and delays in fulfilling detainees' medication.

The facility's speedy opening reflects the federal government's furious push for mass deportations and a record-level number of people in ICE detention. Local immigration advocates intensely oppose the facility and said it would lead to

more community arrests. They also accuse California City officials of not being transparent about the site's reopening process.

California City Mayor Marquette Hawkins has repeatedly said there isn't much the city can do to stop the project. The project is also expected to bring hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in revenue to the city.

Hawkins confirmed the city's permitting process is not yet complete. He said he didn't find out the CoreCivic facility had opened until he received word from an immigration lawyer.

“The fact that they [CoreCiv-

ic] opened — that's on them,” Hawkins said of the pending permits.

He toured the California City Immigration Processing Center on Tuesday morning with representatives from CoreCivic and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He confirmed that there were 506 detainees as of his Sept. 9 visit.

“We walked around the facility, we looked at services provided,” he said.

Ryan Gustin, senior director of public affairs for CoreCivic, said in a statement “we take seriously our obligation to ad-

SEE ICE, 4A

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