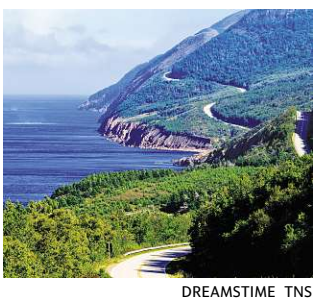




DREAMSTIME TNS

10 national parks to explore in Canada, where nearly half the country is forest.

In today's paper
LOCAL: Hundreds of scarecrows invade county for annual festival. **3A**



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THE TRIBUNE

Meathead Movers to pay up to \$6M to settle age discrimination lawsuit

BY KAYTLYN LESLIE
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Meathead Movers will pay up to \$6 million and commit to reviewing its hiring practices as it finally settles a longstanding age discrimination lawsuit with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, according to court documents filed this week.

After an expensive, nearly decade-long legal battle with the federal government, the CEO of the San Luis Obispo-based moving company — once known for its “student athlete” branding — said he’s eager to finally be able to move on.

“We are pleased to have resolved this case without any admission of wrongdoing, allowing us to return our full attention to what we do best: supporting our employees and serving our customers,” CEO Aaron Steed told The Tribune in a statement Tuesday. “We appreciate the new administration’s constructive approach in reaching this resolution, and we look forward to continuing to work productively and in good faith with the EEOC.”

“Since day one at Meathead Movers, we sought out to hire the very best moving teams, regardless of their age, gender, or anything else,” he continued. “We remain fully committed to building a workplace that reflects our values of hard work, integrity, giving back and growth.”

EEOC representatives did not immediately respond Tuesday to a request for comment on the proposed settlement.

WHY WAS SLO MOVING COMPANY ACCUSED OF AGE DISCRIMINATION?
Meathead Movers spans se-

SEE LAWSUIT, 3A

The federal government shut down. How does it affect SLO County?

BY CHLOE SHRAGER
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The federal government shut down at midnight Tuesday after Congress failed to strike a deal on funding, leaving vast numbers of federal workers

across the country either furloughed or working without pay. Essential services like mail, Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security checks and airport travel will likely remain in place — though with potential delays — but other services may be

affected as federal workers like food inspectors and park rangers are temporarily unable to work. Moreover, President Donald Trump has indicated he may pursue more mass layoffs during the shutdown, permanently downsizing the federal work-

force even after the shutdown comes to an end. The last shutdown took place under Trump’s first term and lasted for 35 days — the longest in over four decades.

How will this shutdown impact San Luis Obispo County? So far, the SLO County Regional Airport has said its day-to-day operations will continue on as normal, but a number of federal offices in the county may see impacts in the coming days or weeks, depending on how long the shutdown lasts.

As for ending the shutdown, that is up to Congress to come to an agreement on the health insurance subsidies that are

SEE SHUT DOWN, 5A



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Chevron Environmental Management Co. spokesperson Jeff Moore stands next to the Soil Management Area at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes on Oct. 1, 2025. It’s designed to store contaminated sand from the former Unocal oil field, which is in the midst of a 30-year cleanup.

How a 30-year oil cleanup is restoring Central Coast dunes

BY STEPHANIE ZAPPELLI
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These days, coyotes, mountain lions and even, once, a black bear, roam through a former oil field at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex.

Once the site of an 8-million-gallon oil spill, Chevron and its team of nine contractors have removed much of the pollution and restored many of the ecosystems on the scenic coastal property.

Now, with the end of 30 years of cleanup in sight, on Sept. 16, Chevron has signed an agreement to donate 2,700 acres of the property to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service when the restoration project is complete in about three to five years, Chevron Environmental Management Company lead public affairs adviser Jeff Moore said.

“We’re really excited,” he said.

The 2,830-acre oil field, which dates back to the late 1940s, was built on the ancestral lands of the yak ti’u yak ti’u yak ti’u Northern Chumash Tribe.

The land is home to the red-legged frog, the western snowy plover, the La Graciosa thistle and 26 other special status species.

It is Chevron’s second-largest environmental remediation project in the

“OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE AN AMAZING TRANSFORMATION IN THE ENVIRONMENT.”

Chevron Environmental Management Company lead public affairs adviser Jeff Moore

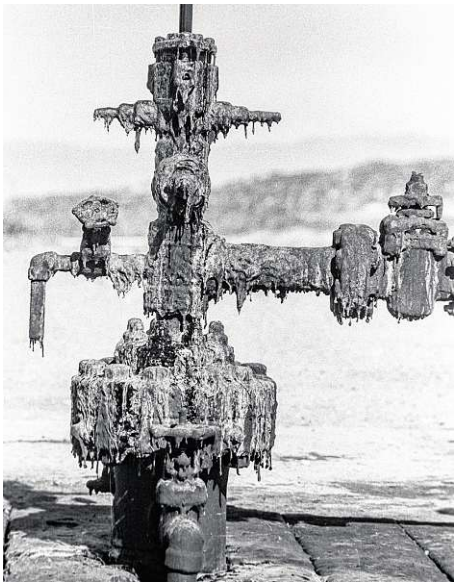
United States, and the company has invested hundreds of millions of dollars into the cleanup so far, though Moore declined to share a more specific dollar amount.

“Over the past 30 years, we have been able to achieve an amazing transformation in the environment,” Moore said. “We’ve gone from a time when there were oil wells producing on the beach, to now, where we’ve taken those locations, we’ve remediated those sites, and now there’s flourishing wetlands. We’ve recreated foredunes and really restored the habitat here in a very special place on California’s Central Coast.”

SAND DUNES, GROUNDWATER POLLUTED WITH 8 MILLION GALLONS OF OIL

Oil production began on the coastal dunes in 1947.

From 1949 to 1994, Union Oil Co. of California operated as many 240 oil wells on a 2,830-acre property at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes south of Oso



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The Unocal oil field at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes was shut down in 1994 because a chemical used to help extract the asphalt-like oil product was contaminating nearby areas. Here, the oil field is seen operating on Jan. 19, 1989.

Flaco Lake in the southwestern-most corner of San Luis Obispo County.

The crude oil was so viscous that it hardened like asphalt at ambient temperatures. Starting in the 1950s, Unocal pumped a kerosene-like oil called diluent into the extraction wells to thin the crude oil.

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