

Rams rebound
as top five
shifts below
Seahawks

SPORTS, 1B



VENTURA COUNTY
STAR

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

GOP senator demands probe into Trump’s son

Seeks answers on Russian oligarch-backed wedding bash

Zachary Schermele
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – A Republican senator is demanding a congressional investigation into one of President Donald Trump’s sons after a Russian oligarch bankrolled his private island wedding party in the Bahamas in May.

The blistering criticism from Sen. John Curtis, R-Utah, represented a striking departure from the GOP’s general reluctance to wield its congressional oversight powers to meaningfully scrutinize the president’s family. Earlier in September, Donald Trump Jr. and his new wife, Bettina, confirmed what they called an “extraordinarily

generous wedding gift” from their “dear friend” Umar Kremlev, the president of the International Boxing Association, an organization that has been criticized for its ties to the Russian government. The investigative news outlet ProPublica reported on Sept. 14 that Kremlev spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on wedding-related expenses for the

couple, including renting out a private island and footing the bill for a fireworks show. In a social media post that same day, Bettina Trump denied any impropriety, arguing that “generosity doesn’t automatically come with an agenda.” “Sometimes a wedding gift is simply a wedding gift,” she wrote. Curtis said he was alarmed by the

See PROBE, Page 2A



Linnea von Wissmann poses on Sept. 18 with the swordfish she bought at auction. The fish was removed from its 31-year-old rooftop home in a demolition project at Oxnard’s dilapidated Fisherman’s Wharf. PHOTOS BY TOM KISKEN/THE STAR

Swordfish watched Oxnard’s
wharf die, regain hope of new life

Tom Kisken
Ventura County Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

Bud Smith was obsessed with swordfish. The self-made developer and real estate tycoon who became one of Ventura County’s wealthiest residents would go out on the ocean as often as possible in the 83-foot yacht named for his favorite drink, The Dry Martini. Pilots who were friends scouted the fast-moving swordfish that often span 8-feet long and weigh more than 300 pounds. Smith and others on the yacht harpooned them from platforms on the bow.

“He had purple fever,” said Smith’s sometimes fishing partner Marc Hermann, using the phrase spawned by the color of the fish as they emerge from the ocean. “Once you get into swordfishing, it’s in your blood.” Smith was so enthralled he and Carlos Coella, his right-hand man and marina dockmaster, decided a fiberglass swordfish with a real bladed bill should sit atop a high-profile building at Fisherman’s Wharf. Smith built and owned the businesses in the then bustling shopping and maritime village at Oxnard’s Channel Islands Harbor.

See SWORDFISH, Page 8A



Workers at Oxnard’s Fisherman’s Wharf demolish structures on Sept. 14 in a project designed to lead to the opening of a Karls Village in 2028.

Ventura eyes
X Games
return for
2027 events

Wes Woods II
Ventura County Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

The X Games could return to Ventura in June 2027 as part of the X Games League. The Ventura City Council approved a resolution to provide up to \$250,000 annually in city event support for the X Games League in 2027 with an option to extend support in 2028. The measure was approved 6-0 in the consent calendar, which is typically reserved for non-controversial items. No council members or members of the public spoke on the item. Councilmember Rryn Schumacher was absent. “Bringing X Games League to Ventura would build on our legacy as an action sports community while creating meaningful benefits for local businesses, residents and visitors,” said Ventura Mayor Jeannette Sánchez-Palacios in a text message after the meeting. Marlyss Auster, the president and CEO of the tourism bureau Visit Ventura, said that event details are still being worked out. “We’ve had an incredible partnership with X Games in Ventura, and we’re working hard to bring them back to our community,” she said in an email.

When would the X Games take place? The event would be set for June 25-28, 2027, at the Ventura County Fairgrounds, according to a Sept. 22 staff report. Organizers also intend to hold an event in Ventura in late June 2028, though dates have not been determined. The fairgrounds last hosted the X Games in 2024 and 2023. “As in years past, this item provides a show of financial support for the event’s return to Ventura,” said City Manager Bill Ayub in a text message. In the previous two years of X Games, the city offered \$250,000 in

See X GAMES, Page 2A



Looking to
Make a Move?
Find Your Dream
Home Here.



Call, Scan, or Visit
888-620-8813
addressUSA.com



Scan to discover your dream home and start your journey.

