

Rustic retreat recalls old Palm Springs



Many golfers still in hunt at British Open



The Desert Sun

SATURDAY, JULY 16, 2011

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CVEP hopes to convince CareFusion to stay here

Firm plans to consolidate operations in Minnesota

BY DEBRA GRUSZECKI
The Desert Sun

Thomas Flavin, chief executive of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, hopes to meet with CareFusion Corp. executives on Monday to see what can be done to keep its ventilator assembly plant in Palm Springs.

"I'd like to talk them out of it, but I don't think it's realistic," he said.

The San Diego-based company plans to shut down the Palm Springs light-manufacturing facility in 18 months and begin transferring its production lines to a sister plant in Plymouth, Minn.

The Palm Springs plant will be sold, and 270 workers displaced.

"I'd like to see what the real issues are," Flavin said. "They've announced consolidation, but I suspect some of our California competitiveness issues have impacted this decision."

California ranked 49th among U.S. states for its business climate in a 2011 Tax Foundation report.

It also is one of the most expensive spots in the country to do business.

Please see CAREFUSION, A6

Google it, and you may not remember it

Study finds easy access to search engines alters brain's storage pattern

BY LISA M. KRIEGER
San Jose Mercury News

SAN JOSE — A new study confirms it: Google is altering your brain. More precisely, our growing dependence on the Internet has changed how — and what — our brains choose to remember.

When we know where to find information, we're less likely to remember it — an amnesia dubbed "The Google Effect" by a team led by psychologist Betsy Sparrow of Columbia University.

Goodbye, soul-searching; hello, facts-at-fingertips.

The finding, published in Friday's issue of the journal *Science*, doesn't prove that Google, Yahoo or other search engines are making us dumber, as some have asserted. We're still capable of remembering things that matter — and are not easily found online, Sparrow said.

Rather, it suggests that the human memory is reorganizing where it goes

Please see GOOGLE, A6

New home market down but not out



MICHAEL SNYDER THE DESERT SUN

Workers frame new homes on Friday at Escena in Palm Springs. After a lull in construction, the development is bustling with construction activity.

Local experts see renewed interest in new construction

BY MIKE PERRAULT
The Desert Sun

Of 4,800 houses sold during the first five months this year across the Coachella Valley, only 160 were newly built.

That may come as little surprise as buyers continue to gravitate toward bargain existing single-family homes or scarf up deals on foreclosures and other distressed properties.

The reality for new-home builders, however — whether smaller firms such as Jeff Fidler Construction or big names like DR Horton, Lennar or KB Home — is that it can be tough to compete.

The median price — half sold for more, half for less — was roughly \$200,000 this spring for homes across the valley, San Diego-based real estate information firm DataQuick Information Systems reported.

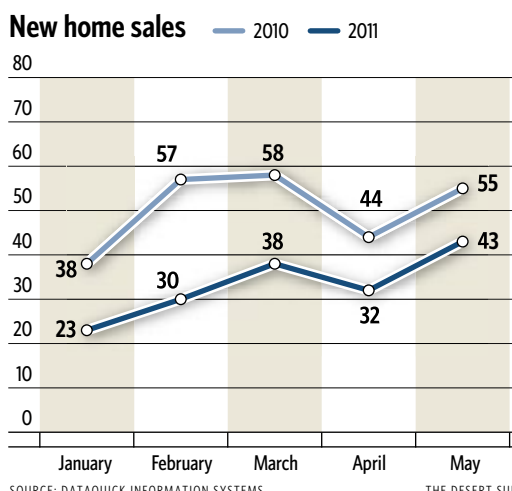
The median price for new homes, though, was \$238,000 to \$294,000.

In addition to having to meet more stringent energy efficiency and other requirements, new-home builders pay out some \$40,000 in environmental mitigation, permitting and other fees before a single shovel is

Please see HOMES, A2

New home sales down in 2011

New home sales in 2011 are still a very small portion of overall home sales in the Coachella Valley, and sales are down considerably from 2010, when federal and state tax incentives helped stimulate new home sales.



Bono Mack

Lewis

Tax vow by Republicans threatens negotiations

But Bono Mack has 'open mind' on debt ceiling talks

BY PAUL C. BARTON
Desert Sun Washington Bureau

Reps. Mary Bono Mack and Jerry Lewis are among the California Republicans who have signed an anti-tax-increase pledge promoted by activist Grover Norquist, which some see as an impediment to resolving the looming debt-ceiling crisis.

Bono Mack of Palm Springs and Lewis of Redlands are among 17 other Republicans in the 53-member House delegation from California who have signed the pledge.

The pledge is so specific that the signatories rule out considering any increase in tax revenue even if it comes from eliminating deductions and credits.

President Barack Obama has proposed to Republicans the elimination of several such tax breaks as part of a "grand bargain" on revenues and spending cuts. The deal would cut trillions of dollars from the deficit over the next decade and authorize a temporary increase in the nation's borrowing authority by Aug. 2, preventing a government default on Treasury bond payments and other obligations.

Business and financial leaders increasingly warn that such a default, even if it is brief, could cause an upheaval in world economies. But some Republicans say there is no crisis and that the government has plenty of money to pay its bills.

The statement that Norquist asks members of Congress to sign — known as the Taxpayer Protection Pledge — says:

"I pledge to the taxpayers of the district and to the American people that I will:

■ "ONE, oppose any and all efforts to increase the marginal income tax rates for individuals and/or businesses.

■ "TWO, oppose any net reduction or elimination of deductions and credits, unless matched dollar for dollar by further reducing tax rates."

Numerous political analysts this summer have pointed to the pledge as boxing in Republican lawmakers and keeping them from striking the kind of deal with the White House possible in previous decades.

"A generation ago, Republicans would have given their eye teeth to get a deal like the so-called 'grand bargain,' with trillions in spending cuts and some reasonable limitations on Social Se-

Please see BONO MACK, A2

Debt showdown

Obama pressing for "something big" in debt ceiling talks. A2

INTODAY'S PAPER

Road construction woes

Construction at an I-10 overpass was expected to delay drivers at night this week. Instead, it's causing problems that may require months of patience. B1

Advice	D7	Lottery	B6
Bridge	H6	Movies	D7
Classified	H1-6	Obituaries	B6
Comics	D6	Opinion	B7
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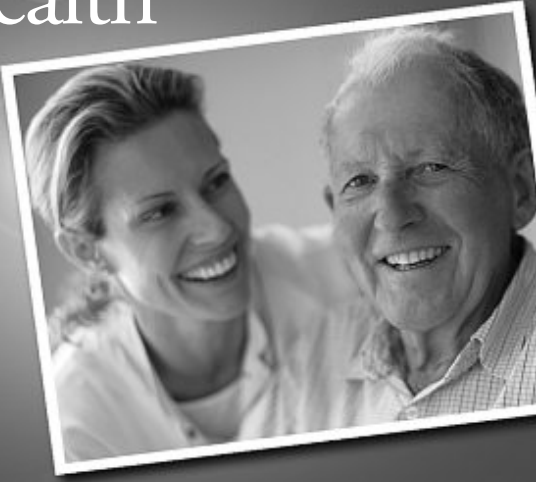
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CAREFUSION: Plymouth offered no incentives for the move

Continued from A1

Flavin said. "That's a pretty distinct disadvantage," he said. "When it comes to manufacturing, the situation is exacerbated — so much regulatory control."

Minnesota's rank by the Tax Foundation, though, is only slight better at 43rd.

Plymouth community development director Steve Juetten said no incentives were extended to CareFusion. It's quality of life, he said.

Officials of the third-largest suburb of Minneapolis-St. Paul ranked at the top of Money magazine's "America's Best Places to Live" in 2008.

"We happen to be positioned well in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. We have good school districts and good housing — for executive and those needing affordable homes," Juetten said. "We can support an entire workforce, without people having to travel too far."

That, combined with a change of seasons, draws people and companies to Plymouth, he said.

John Raymond, community and economic director for Palm Springs, said the city will work with CVEP, the county and others to see what might be done to keep CareFusion here, find another division to fill the spot and work with displaced employees.

He said the bad news is the plant announced its intent to leave. The good news is the consolidation will take roughly 18 months.

"That gives us a chance to see what we can do to keep a presence here," he said.

City incentives helped keep then-Bird Medical Technologies in Palm Springs in 1998, when



OMAR ORNELAS THE DESERT SUN

CareFusion in Palm Springs announced this week it would close its local operations and consolidate in Plymouth, Minn.

it said it would relocate its \$10 million ventilator manufacturing company.

Fees were waived for an expansion, Raymond said of the plant property most recently assessed at \$3.9 million.

Five years ago, the venture that was owned by another corporate entity moved its professional engineers to Yorba Linda, Raymond said.

That's the danger, he said.

Because CareFusion is publicly traded, decisions made at the city level can be complicated or undone in corporate board rooms at any time, Raymond said. "I've been in cities where entire corporations closed in a day."

For the Monday meeting, Flavin said he also wants to learn what can be done to stay competitive.

"We need to understand if there was something that could have been done locally that might have prevented this," he said. "We need to set up a business visitation program fo-

cused on the top employers, so we can keep those communication lines open."

Some outgoing employees may not have to look as far as Minnesota for a job.

One company in Orange County is considering hiring some CareFusion folks from the Coachella Valley.

Newport Medical Instruments in Costa Mesa on Friday put out word it is looking to fill four open spots — two senior manufacturing engineering positions, and two sales positions.

Suzette Matsufuji of Newport Medical said the company of 150 people makes ventilators, too, and the skills for these products are highly technical.

"Finding someone with ventilator experience is hard to come by," she said. "These are sophisticated, lifesaving devices we're talking about."

Debra Gruszecki covers tourism, CVEP and Indian gaming for The Desert Sun. She can be reached at Debra.Gruszecki@thedesertsun.com or (760) 778-4643.

GOOGLE: Outsourcing 'search' from our brains to computers

Continued from A1

for information, adapting to new computing technologies rather than relying purely on rote memory. We're outsourcing "search" from our brains to our computers.

"We're not thoughtless empty-headed people who don't have memories anymore," Sparrow said. "But we are becoming particularly adept at remembering where to go find things. And that's kind of amazing."

In a series of four experiments at Columbia and Harvard, Sparrow and her team found that students are more likely to recall a trivial fact if they think it will be erased from the computer — and forget it if they're assured it will be there.

Similarly, the team proved that people are better at re-

membering where to find facts, rather than the facts themselves. The students, they found, recalled the names of files where information was stored, rather than the information itself.

This creates a mental dependency on instant access to information, the team noted.

No wonder the loss of our Internet connection feels like losing a friend, they wrote. Once we become reliant on a huge reservoir of information, it feels uneasy to be away from it, she said.

"We must remain plugged in to know what Google knows," the paper concludes.

But in many ways, this is no different than humans' age-old reliance on the "group memories" shared by friends, families and tribes, noted Sparrow and her colleagues at the University of Wisconsin and Har-

vard University.

We may not recall our aunt's birthday, the name of a high school teacher or who gave us that nice bottle of wine — but someone we know does.

"We all have these people in our lives who know certain things. And we dip into what they know, when we need it," said Sparrow. "We allow them to be responsible for it."

"I really think we are using the Internet the way we used to use people," she said.

While Google said it could not comment on the premise of the paper, spokesman Gabriel Stricker said, "Search is how Google began, and we're constantly working to improve it. Search can always get better and faster at helping you find what you want, when you want it, where you want it."

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