



## La Quinta coach Caleb Gervin stepping down after 2 years

SPORTS, 1B

# The Desert Sun

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## Budget proposal: \$59M for CSU Palm Desert campus

Allocation approved by legislature, heads to governor's desk for review

**Sherry Barkas and Julie Makinen**  
Palm Springs Desert Sun  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A proposed state budget that includes \$59 million to build a student center at the Cal State University San Bernardino campus in Palm Desert is on its way to California's governor for his input.

"This is not a done deal," Assemblymember Chad

Mayes, I-Rancho Mirage, told The Desert Sun. "What it means is that the Senate and Assembly have come to an agreement on what their priorities are and what their budget looks like," Mayes said.

Gov. Gavin Newsom could make revisions — including reducing, increasing or nixing the funds altogether — before sending the proposal back to lawmakers.

There will be additional budget hearings within

the Legislature, which has until June 15 to submit a revised budget for Newsom to sign.

"I'm very, very optimistic, but we can't claim success yet," Mayes said.

Mayes and Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, D-Coachella, had requested \$79 million for the student center. The two local legislators were joined by Coachella Valley civic and economic leaders when they held a press conference in April at the CSU Palm Desert campus to announce they were pushing for the

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People listen Thursday during a Friends for Frank Bogert press conference to request that the Bogert statue be moved to the Village Green Heritage Center in downtown Palm Springs. PHOTOS BY TAYA GRAY/THE DESERT SUN

## A home for Bogert?

Group touts downtown site if bid to halt removal fails

**Paul Albani-Burgio**  
Palm Springs Desert Sun  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Members of the Friends of Frank Bogert gathered in downtown Palm Springs on Thursday to call for the controversial statue of the former mayor to be relocated to the city-owned Village Green Heritage Center should a judge decline to block the city's plan to remove it from City Hall.

The press conference came one day before the Riverside County judge is expected to consider whether to bar the city from

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Members of the group Friends of Frank Bogert gather in downtown Palm Springs for a press conference on Thursday — one day before a Riverside County judge will likely consider whether to bar the city from moving the statue to a storage facility.

## Acrisure Arena hits milestone; GM targets Dec. 16 for first concert

**Andrew L. John**  
Palm Springs Desert Sun  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The first concert at Acrisure Arena is being targeted for mid- to late-December, with Dec. 16 as a possibility, multiple arena officials said Thursday, amid the latest major milestone of the venue's 18-month construction timeline.

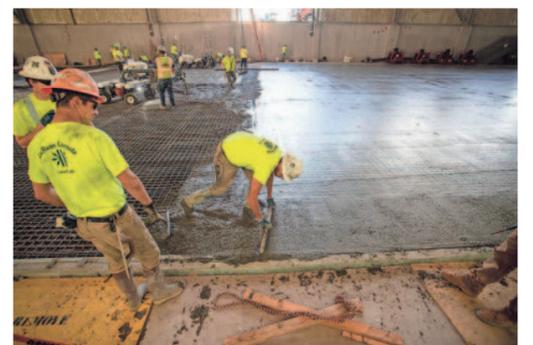
More details on dates and performers are expected to be announced around Labor Day.

"We are shooting for a mid- to late-December opening," Acrisure Arena general manager John Bolton said. "Nothing official to announce yet."

Concrete began pouring into the arena Iceplex around 3 a.m., Thursday in what is being described by AECOM Hunt construction as a significant step as the project pushes toward completion later this year.

The Iceplex, the adjoining practice rink connected

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LaRusso Concrete employees pour and smooth concrete for the new Iceplex at Acrisure Arena in Thousand Palms on Thursday. The arena may have its first events in December. TAYA GRAY/THE DESERT SUN

MORE INSIDE PAGE 3A



### Lithium deal announced

Electric vehicle maker Stellantis will buy lithium produced at Salton Sea by Controlled Thermal Resources. COURTESY IMAGE

USA TODAY

### OPEC+ will lift output

The OPEC oil cartel and allied producing countries including Russia will raise production by 648,000 barrels per day in July and August, offering modest relief for a global economy. 16A

### COVID hospitalizations surpass 100 in county

Riverside County hospitalizations have returned to the triple digits once again for the first time since mid-March. There were 104 patients reported on Wednesday, up 13 from Friday. That number also includes eight individuals in intensive care. 2A

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# Oil wells

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was hissing and emitting high levels of methane over Memorial Day weekend was safely depressurized on May 30. The agency has identified another well owned by the company showing high pressure readings, and is working to gain access to the site where the well is located. Six other wells are showing low-level methane leaks, and CalGEM is evaluating options to ensure the leaks are

quickly fixed. Over the weekend, the company appealed CalGEM's emergency order to permanently plug and decommission these wells and 17 others. Sunray has also appealed a CalGEM order to address problems at five oil fields across central California, saying in a letter that it has addressed many of the problems. Idled wells are a burgeoning problem in California's century-old oil fields. A state study concluded two years ago that taxpayers could be saddled with more than \$1 billion in cleanup costs if operators walk away from their responsibilities to properly plug and abandon

them. A report released Thursday by a consumer advocacy group and a coalition of environmental justice groups concludes costs associated with the industry to the state could top \$10 trillion by 2045. Industry advocates say locally produced oil is vital, and is done under some of the strictest regulations in the world. Janet Wilson is senior environment reporter for The Desert Sun, and co-authors USA Today's Climate Point newsletter. She can be reached at [jwtilson@gannett.com](mailto:jwtilson@gannett.com) or [@janetwilson66](https://twitter.com/janetwilson66) on Twitter



**Leaking and idle oil wells near homes and an elementary school in the Morning Star neighborhood in Bakersfield.** KYLE FERRAR/FRACTRACKER/CALGEM WELLFINDER

# Budget

Continued from Page 1A

appropriation of funds in the 2022-23 state budget. "Let's fight like hell" to get these funds, Mayes said during the event, emphasizing that getting the student center funded was his top priority. Garcia said there is still time to advocate for the full \$79 million, and the two assembly members will continue their fight. "I think that it's not done until it's done," Garcia said. "Given that we have a small window to continue to advocate for the rest of the money, that's what we'll do in the coming days," Garcia said, and encouraged local leaders and residents to help by continuing to call and email their support to him and Mayes. "I feel very good that leadership in both houses, the Senate and the Assembly, have listened to our outcry that we need this investment for our region and for purposes of greater access to education and economic development diversity," Garcia said.

## Campus would be a 'game-changer'

Palm Desert and Coachella Valley

leaders have been working toward a standalone campus for more than 25 years on 168 acres of land donated to the state by the city. Palm Desert Mayor Jan Harnik was excited to hear the proposed budget includes \$59 million for a student center, and now hopes the appropriation will win the governor's support, as well. "This is a game-changer," Harnik said. "This is a future changer for our valley." Elected officials from throughout the Coachella Valley have long said a standalone campus would mean a greater ability to serve historically under-represented minorities, low-income and first-generation students. The nearest four-year campuses are at least 40 miles away, including the home campus of Cal State San Bernardino. A standalone campus also would help to build a diversified economy, said Joe Wallace, president and CEO of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership. In 2020, CVEP and the City of Palm Desert created a partnership to advocate for expanding the CSU San Bernardino campus in Palm Desert. The nonprofit organization Priority One Coachella Valley was formed and seeded with \$100,000(??) from the City of Palm Desert to continue the push for a

standalone campus. "This is a perfect example of how focused regional actions can make things happen that have profoundly positive impacts," Wallace said. "Securing the funding for a student center will transform the CSU Palm Desert campus into a fully functional college campus that can accommodate 4,000 students," Wallace said. **A vision started 36 years ago** Cal State San Bernardino classes were first offered in Palm Desert starting in 1986 in temporary classrooms on the College of the Desert campus. In 2002, classes were moved to 168 acres of land donated to the state by the City of Palm Desert with the intention that a standalone Cal State University Palm Desert would one day be built. To date just 18 acres of the site have been built out to include three academic buildings and a 300-seat theater, all constructed with local philanthropic dollars. The infrastructure is in place and environment impact report completed years ago, making the site build-ready for expansion. The planned two-story 23,700-square-foot student center can hold up to 4,000 students and will include a tutoring/mentoring center, career center,

expanded campus library, group study space, cross cultural center, bookstore, food services, student health center and a recreation and wellness center. With costs rising, it is unknown how much the center will cost to build, and what additional funds will be needed, but Harnik said she will do all she can to find that money. "What it is to me is motivation, and it's a start," she said to getting the rest of the money needed and the center built. "With everything that has happened with costs and prices and labor in these last couple of years, I'm not sure anyone knows what the actual cost will be. But I know \$59 million is well on the way to where we need to go," Harnik said. Mayes can be reached through his district office at 41608 Indian Trail Road, Suite D-1, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270, (760) 346-6342. Garcia's offices are at 48220 Jackson St., Suite A3, Coachella, CA 92236, (760) 347-2360, and 1101 Airport Road, Suite D, Imperial, CA 92251, (760) 355-8656. Desert Sun reporter Sherry Barkas covers the cities of La Quinta, Indian Wells, Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert. She can be reached at [sherry.barkas@thedesertsun.com](mailto:sherry.barkas@thedesertsun.com). Follow her on Twitter [@TDSsherryBarkas](https://twitter.com/TDSsherryBarkas)

# Obituaries

## Robert Leon Lehow

**INDIAN WELLS** - Robert Leon Lehow, 85, was born on January 19, 1937, and passed away on May 18, 2022. He resided in Palm Desert, California and was preceded in death by his wife Patricia Ann Lehow. They were married for 58 years.

TODAY'S OBITUARIES AND DEATH NOTICES			
Name	Age	Town, State	Death Date Arrangements
*Lehow, Robert Leon	85	Indian Wells	18-May Forest Lawn Mortuary
*Rasmussen, John Dennis	84	Palm Desert	20-May Trident Society

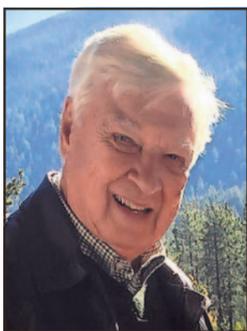
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Obituaries appear in print and online at [www.desertsun.com/obituaries](http://www.desertsun.com/obituaries)

Goodbyes hurt the most when the story was not finished.



## John Dennis Rasmussen

**PALM DESERT** - Our most beloved John Dennis Rasmussen, known as Jack to friends and family, peacefully passed surrounded by his family on May 20, 2022. He fought the hard fight against a cancer that eventually took him from us but it never took the sparkle from his eyes, his charm, his intellect, his enduring adoration of his wife, or his love of family, and friends. Jack is survived by his wife Janet (Jan) and their children Elizabeth, Karen, Abigail (h. Jeffrey), Sarah, and Benjamin (w. Milissa); grandchildren Kirstin (h. Daniel), Andrew, Jack, Jessica, Tyler, Trevor, and Sydney; and great-grandchildren Avery and Elise. He was preceded in death by his parents John and Blanche Rasmussen, siblings Dale Rasmussen and Lois Leaverton, and grandson Matthew Puckett. Born to John and Blanche Rasmussen in Goldfield, Iowa, on August 20, 1937, Jack, his brother Dale and sister Lois were raised on the family farm. He attended elementary school in a one room schoolhouse and told stories of riding to school on the handlebars of Dale's bike. He graduated valedictorian from Renwick High School in 1955. Jack graduated with honors from the University of Iowa in three years and then on to medical school. He met and married Janet Foster in 1958 and soon started their family. After completing his internship in 1963, he and Jan quickly moved to San Pedro, CA, where Jack served his country for two years in the Public Health Service. Then back to Iowa with Jan and their now 4 daughters to set up his medical practice in Fort Dodge. He served this community as a general practitioner for 6 years. In 1971, Jack, Jan, and family relocated to Seattle for a two-year anesthesia residency where they also welcomed the birth of their last child and most cherished son, Ben. Then to Sacramento, CA, where he practiced anesthesia at Mercy San Juan Hospital for 15 years. In 1987, Jack expanded his medical practice by completing a



fellowship in Pain Management at the University of Washington. Jack, Jan, and Ben relocated to Palm Desert, CA in 1989, where he practiced Anesthesia and Pain Management at Eisenhower Medical Center. Dr. John Rasmussen completed his 40-year medical career in 2002. An adventurous soul, he and Jan had many good times over the years with their family; skiing, sailing, biking, hiking, camping, golfing, and traveling the world. One highlight and personal achievement was climbing Mount Rainier in 1974. A voracious reader and lifelong learner he studied history and languages (Latin, French, German, Spanish, Danish). He shared a love for knitting with his daughters, enjoyed birding, and cheering for the University of Iowa Hawkeye football team. In 2022 he fulfilled a lifelong dream of viewing California Condors flying free in the wild. His retirement years in Palm Desert included frequent contributions to the editorial page of the Desert Sun, support for Desert ARC where both his son (Ben) and Ben's wife (Milissa) attended program, trips to Idyllwild, hiking San Jacinto with Ben, relaxing in the pool, lots of golf and Desert life with Jan and friends. Blessed with a wicked sense of humor, Jack loved to tweak and shock family, friends, and coworkers. He loved a big laugh, loved to tell stories, and loved to find the humor in everyday life. He leaves behind a lifetime of memories filled with laughs and adventures. At the core of Jack were his values to love, care and protect his family. He worked hard to provide and show his love for all. His altruistic nature and desire for social equality moved him to champion the under-represented and underserved. He instilled these values into his children; love and care for family, help those who are in need, and belief that each individual has value to be protected and loved. Jack's life will be celebrated with family and friends Fall 2022. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the For Your Independence (FYI) Supported Living Services at Desert ARC ([Desertarc.org](http://Desertarc.org), in Memory of John Rasmussen).

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