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Marin Independent Journal

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SAN QUENTIN

Condemned inmates get chance to leave death row



PHOTOS BY ERIC RISBERG — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. FILE

An inmate walks along the east block of death row at San Quentin State Prison. A program required by the passage of a 2016 ballot initiative will allow some condemned inmates to transfer to other high security prisons.

Pro-execution ballot measure set stage for prison transfers

By Don Thompson
The Associated Press

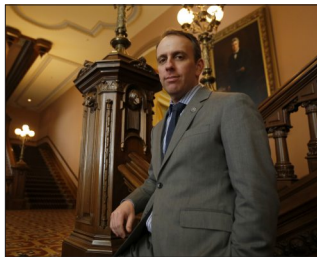
More than 700 condemned inmates on death row at San Quentin State Prison soon will have a chance to transfer to one of eight state prisons, a move a former district attorney termed "a slap to the face" of victims.

ers narrowly approved four years ago to try to speed up executions.

The state hasn't executed anyone since 2006 but voters have continued to back the death penalty even as they reduced many drug and property crimes from felonies to misdemeanors and allowed for the earlier parole of thousands of inmates.

The voluntary transfers from the all-male death row to other high-security prisons could benefit condemned inmates not only with more freedom and a change of scenery, but provide an opportunity to participate in rehabilitation and work programs.

Former San Bernardino District Attorney Mike Ramos, co-chairman of the Proposition 66 committee that backed the 2016 initiative, said this isn't what voters intended when 51% favored quicker executions by assigning more lawyers to trial court judges.



Assemblyman Marc Levine, D-San Rafael, is lobbying legislators to put a new measure on the November ballot asking voters to end capital punishment.

year that he said would last as long as he is in office. Criminal Justice Legal Foundation legal director Kent Scheidegger, who helped write Proposition 66, said proponents didn't intend to coddle condemned inmates.

INMATES » PAGE 2

TUOLUMNE TO KERN COUNTY

Drought conditions returning to state

Nearly 10% of California now given that designation, US report says

By Paul Rogers
Bay Area News Group

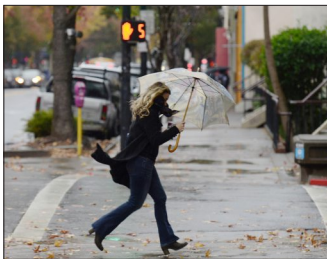
Driven by weeks of unusually dry weather, the federal government on Thursday classified parts of California as back in a drought for the first time since last year.

Altogether, 9.5% of the state's land area is now in a moderate drought, with forecasts showing no rain in most of the state for at least the next 10 days. The area classified as being in moderate drought Thursday was in the Central Valley, covering roughly 10 million acres from Tuolumne County to Kern County.

day was in the Central Valley, covering roughly 10 million acres from Tuolumne County to Kern County.

That's the most since Feb. 12, 2019, when 10.5% of California's land area also was in a moderate drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, a weekly report put out by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

DROUGHT » PAGE 2



SHERRY LAVARS — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL
A woman tries to stay dry during a downpour in downtown San Rafael in November.

MARIN COUNTY

Sheriff's program falls short on privacy

State: License plate readers not fully meeting 2016 law

By Richard Halstead
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The Marin County Sheriff's Office is among four California police departments that have been found lacking in their use of automated license plate readers by California Auditor Elaine Howle.

In a review released Thursday, Howle wrote that the agencies have failed to fully implement a 2016 state law designed to protect privacy.

The readers photograph drivers' license plates at various points throughout a police department's jurisdiction. The department then stores that information and uses it to find stolen cars, people wanted for crimes or to seek out witnesses and missing persons.

The audit found Fresno and Marin share data from their automated license plate readers (ALPRs) with hundreds of entities while Sacramento shares its data with more than a thousand entities across the country. Auditors found no evidence the agencies always know who was accessing the data.

"We are concerned that unless an agency conducts verifying research, it will not know who is actually using the ALPR images and for what purpose," the auditors wrote.

A statement released by the sheriff's office Wednesday said, "The Marin County Sheriff's Office is appreciative of the work done by the California State Auditor's Office in relation to the audit of the ALPR system. We have taken the recommendations by them into consideration."

Marin County Deputy Counsel Kerry Gerchow said the sheriff's department uses a third-party vendor to manage its software, and that vendor shares the information with law enforcement agencies that have been approved by the FBI.

PRIVACY » PAGE 2

SEVEN STRATEGIES

Marin supervisors approve suicide prevention plan

By Richard Halstead
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The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved the "Marin County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan," a document that details revealing statistics along with potential ways to reduce county's suicide rate.

"Marin residents face the highest rates of suicide among all Bay Area counties," Dr. Jei Africa, Marin County's director of behavioral health, told supervisors Tuesday. "And certain groups are disproportionately affected by suicidal thoughts and behaviors, including adult men, youth, LGBTQ residents, people of color and veterans."

Marin not only has the highest suicide rate in the Bay Area, it has the highest rate among all metropolitan counties in California, according to the plan. Between 2015 and 2017, 14.1 people per 100,000 died of suicide in Marin County, well above the state average of 10.7 during the same period.

The report notes the role of the Golden Gate Bridge, which draws people from outside the county for suicidal jumps.

SUICIDE » PAGE 4

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Bar: Trump tweets make it 'impossible' to do job

Attorney General William Barr said that the president's tweets "make it impossible for me to do my job." PAGE A6



ASIA

Virus cases surge after China revises tallies

China is reporting 254 new deaths, a spike in virus cases of more than 15,000, after it applied a new system. PAGE A12

BUSINESS

- Dow Jones 29,423.31 (-128.11)
S&P 500 3373.94 (-5.51)
Nasdaq 9711.97 (-13.99)

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