

Daily Pilot

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2020 // Now including Coastline Pilot and Huntington Beach Independent // dailypilot.com

No Orange County Fair this summer

The board votes unanimously to cancel the event, which was slated to run in Costa Mesa July 17-Aug. 16. The last time it was canceled was during WWII.

BY SARA CARDINE
AND FAITH E. PINHO

With a unanimous vote and barely a half-hour of discussion, the Orange County Fair & Event Center board decided to cancel the 2020 OC Fair in Costa Mesa because of the coronavirus.

The fair was scheduled to take place from July 17 to Aug. 16. But because of Gov. Gavin Newsom's guidelines for physical distancing, the board decided the fair, which last year brought nearly 1.4 million attendees, would not be able to accommodate its usual operation while preserving public health.

"It breaks my heart, it really does," Director Robert Ruiz said. "But at the end of the day ... we don't know what this is going to look like in two months from now, in six months from now. I would hate for an outbreak of the pandemic to come back during fair time. The number one priority for us is the safety and the well-being of the public."

The OC Fair followed the lead of other fairs across the state, including the San Diego County Fair, which postponed its main event until next year. The OC Fair, which began in 1890, was last canceled during World War II, from 1942 to 1947.

The month-long fair was expected to generate more than \$36 million in revenue through Aug. 31, including \$11 million in ticket sales and \$12.9 million in carnival and concession purchases, according to financial documents provided by fair officials.

A total cancellation of events and refunding money already put forth by prospective visitors and vendors could amount to a loss of nearly \$12 million in proceeds, said fair spokeswoman Terry Moore.

"We're very focused on finan-

See **Fair**, page A4



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

A WOMAN carries a giant stuffed elephant that she won in the ring toss during the Orange County Fair in Costa Mesa in 2014. The fair board voted unanimously to cancel the 2020 fair in light of the coronavirus.

Too crowded or OK? Perceptions vary

Several OC beaches are open, but local officials may revisit that access after seeing the number of visitors last weekend.

BY HILLARY DAVIS, ANDREW TURNER, MATT SZABO, JULIA SCLAFANI, LILLY NGUYEN AND VERA CASTANEDA

If it were business as usual, Huntington Beach High School junior Evan Bain would be working out with his school wrestling team.

But students were sent home in mid-March as part of sweeping stay-at-home measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus, so he had to take a different approach to fitness.

Bain, who also enjoys surfing, started going to the beach about a mile from his home three or four times per week. Although he reports the waves have not cooperated, he has been doing solo workouts on the sand, predominantly sprints.

He was out for his usual workout Saturday when he saw the crowds of people itching to get out of the house as temperatures climbed and statewide stay-at-home orders stretched past a month.

"You could barely see the sand towards the water, there were so many people," Bain said. "Everyone's been inside, right? They're all so cooped up, and the weather hit the 90s over the weekend. Everyone, I guess, just put quarantine on pause, got on their swimsuits and ran to the beach."

"They closed the parking here at Huntington, so I'm assuming a lot of the people are local, but if they weren't, they'd have to walk further. Maybe to some of those people, it's worth it to walk half a mile just to get parking because they closed all of the parking garages, the parking lots, even the parking on the street."

California is a shifting patchwork of locally controlled beach closures — notably, Los Angeles County beaches are closed but

See **Beaches**, page A2



Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

THOUSANDS OF beachgoers enjoy a warm, sunny Saturday on the sand in Huntington Beach amid state-mandated stay-at-home orders.

Beach access unchanged in Newport, but parking tightened

BY HILLARY DAVIS

Newport Beach will not close its beaches.

Visitors will find even less parking and more police and lifeguard presence, but they will nonetheless have access to the sand and surf, a split City Council decided Tuesday.

The council voted 5-2 after four hours of discussion to maintain access, two days after a heat wave sent tens of thousands of weary, cooped-up Cali-

fornians to the beach after more than a month of stay-at-home orders to stem the spread of the coronavirus. Jeff Herdman and Joy Brenner were the dissenters.

"I absolutely vote no and wage an active protest from my district for not implementing these protections for them," said Brenner, whose district includes Corona del Mar State Beach, a popular destination in times of pandemic and not.

Mayor Will O'Neill said the city needs to seize more educa-

tional and enforcement opportunities, but "we truly can trust the vast majority of people to do the right thing."

"We clearly have to remind some people to do the right thing and for the people who don't want to do the right thing, then they ought to be acquainted with our Newport Beach Police Department," he said.

The council received more than 1,000 emails in two days after announcing that it would

consider strict beach or road closures in light of the weekend turnout, with pleas to remain open outnumbering pro-closure messages nearly two to one.

Access proponents said people were maintaining personal buffers, and that the public beaches belong to everyone as an opportunity for stress relief and fresh air.

Closure proponents suggested restricting parking and beach ac-

See **Newport**, page A2

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

3 NEW DEATHS REPORTED IN ORANGE COUNTY DUE TO COVID-19

Dr. Clayton Chau will take over as head of the Orange County Health Care Agency, which has reported a total of 42 coronavirus-related deaths in the county. **PAGE A2**

Newport Beach's Jim Gray to run for president

BY DAVID C. HENLEY

Longtime Newport Beach resident Jim Gray, who was born in Washington, D.C., 75 years ago, hopes to return to the U.S. capital early next year and take up residence in the White House.

"That's because I expect to become the Libertarian Party's candidate for president and defeat Donald Trump and Joe Biden in the Nov. 3 general election," said Gray, a leading figure in the Libertarian Party and former Orange County Superior Court Judge, Navy officer who served in combat during the Vietnam War, Peace Corps teacher in Costa Rica and Daily Pilot columnist.

The upcoming presidential election will be Gray's fourth endeavor to represent the Libertarian Party at the national level. He was unsuccessful in 2004 in defeating incumbent California Democrat U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, in 2012 when he was the Libertarian vice presidential candidate in the race against incum-



JIM GRAY, shown at his Newport Beach home last week, believes there's a chance he can become the 46th president of the United States.

Don Leach
Staff
Photographer

ent President Barack Obama and Vice President Biden and in 2016 when his party selected another vice presidential candidate to run against the ticket of Donald Trump and Mike Pence.

The Libertarian Party had ini-

tially planned to hold its national convention to choose its presidential and vice presidential candidates in Austin, Texas, during Memorial Day weekend on May 23-25, Gray said.

"But due to the rest-in-place,

social distancing, travel and other restrictions imposed by the coronavirus pandemic, we may have to cancel the Austin event and hold the convention via tele-

See **Gray**, page A3