

TODAY'S NEWSMAKERS



Mocny

ROBERT MOCNY

The director of the US-VISIT program will be at San Francisco International Airport on Monday to announce the beginning of the 10-fingerprint collection at San Francisco International Airport. The Department of Homeland Security program will eventually require that all international travelers have all 10 fingerprints scanned — up from the two that have been required. SFO is one of the first nine airports to start the new program, which launched in November at Washington Dulles International Airport.

GAVIN NEWSOM

The mayor Friday called for The City's rainy-day reserve funds to be made available to the San Francisco Unified School District. The district, which faces a \$40 million cut in funding under the current proposed state budget, could receive \$30 million from the fund. "We will not let our public schools suffer because of poor fiscal planning at the state level," Newsom said in a prepared statement. The funding still requires the approval of the Board of Supervisors.

MARCOS CAMPOS REYES

The 22-year-old Daly City resident received a sentence of 50 years to life for the June 2004 fatal shooting of alleged Sureño gang member and Salvadorean immigrant Luis Fuentes, who was with his 6-year-old son when he was shot six times at 24th and Hampshire streets. District Attorney Kamala Harris announced Friday that Superior Court Judge Jerome Bensen handed down the sentence Thursday. Reyes, an alleged Norteño gang member, was convicted of second-degree murder on July 2.



Harris

Library shuts doors, readies for next chapter

Bernal Heights branch latest to be upgraded in plan for widespread improvements

By Will Reisman
Examiner Staff Writer

With an infusion of new funding approved by voters in November, The City's branch library improvement program is moving forward, although minor delays have held up the expected opening of some of the restored branches, according to library officials.

Today, the 70-year-old Bernal Heights Branch Library is closing for a \$5.7 million makeover that is scheduled for completion by early 2010.

Two other branch libraries also are in the midst of improvement projects — Richmond and Portola — and renovation work is in the finishing stages for the Noe Valley branch, which is scheduled to reopen March 8, according to library officials.

For the last six years, work has predominantly been funded through a \$106 million improvement bond approved by voters in 2000, which promised that 19 branch renovations and four full construction projects would be completed by 2009.

Planning setbacks and debt have troubled the program, which at one point was suffering a shortfall in



The Bernal Heights Branch Library is expected to reopen, completely renovated, by early 2010. — Cindy Chew/The Examiner

funds of more than \$40 million.

In November, voters secured the future of the facilities-improvement program when they approved an initiative that expanded the Library Preservation Fund, allowing The City to issue debt secured by or repaid from the fund, which is supported by taxpayers.

Mindy Linetzky, program administrator for the Branch Library Improvement Program (BLIP), attributes the plan's early setbacks to inexperience and high construction costs.

"Really, no one had any expe-

rience scheduling a project of this magnitude," Linetzky said. "But I think if you look at the last year, our planning has been much improved."

Other construction projects in the works include a brand new library building to replace the existing Ingleside Branch, which will begin on Feb. 15, according to Linetzky. And on March 1, the Eureka Valley branch will close its doors for renovation work that is scheduled to be completed by September 2009.

The Richmond Branch, which began construction in June 2007, is

expected to reopen in the summer of 2009 and the Portola Branch, which has been closed since August 2007, is expected to return to service by spring of 2009, Linetzky said.

Renovations completed to date include the Marina, Sunset, West Portal and Excelsior branches. A new library was also built at Mission Bay.

wreisman@examiner.com



Bay Area's 211 call service expands to seven counties

By Will Reisman
Examiner Staff Writer

The United Way of the Bay Area's 211 program, a call-center program that links local residents with health and human service agencies, will expand its coverage from three Bay Area counties to seven, according to the organization's officials.

Already present in San Francisco, Santa Clara and Alameda counties, the call service will now include coverage in Marin, Napa, Contra Costa and Solano counties, United Way spokeswoman Maria Stokes said. The formal expansion will start Monday — or 2/11.

The United Way first introduced the 211 program to the Bay Area in March 2006 in San Francisco. According to Stokes, the average rate of monthly callers using the service has grown from a "couple of hundred" during the program's initial stage.

Stokes attributes the service's growth to personal relationships developed between callers

By the numbers

The 211 service is run by United Way and links residents to health and human service agencies

- » **1,560:** Number of calls in January
- » **3,500:** Number of health and human service agencies callers are linked to in the Bay Area
- » **10:** Years ago the service was started in Atlanta
- » **75:** Percent of the country's population it now serves
- » **3,000:** Average daily callers the service received in San Diego during the recent wildfires
- » **300:** Average daily callers the San Diego service received before the wildfires

Source: The United Way

and representatives.

"Every time someone calls they're hearing a live person's voice, and I think that's important," Stokes said. "We have trained specialists avail-

able 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is not the yellow pages or the Internet, there are real people here, and that makes a big difference."

Service categories covered under 211 range from education and training, to drug and alcohol treatment and disaster planning. Callers are directed to a mix of nonprofit health organizations and city agencies, Stokes said.

During the San Diego wildfires, the number of daily callers using 211 there rose, an important precedent to consider if an earthquake hits the Bay Area, Stokes said.

"This service will definitely play a key role in relieving 911," Stokes said.

Stokes said the service works with San Francisco city agencies, including Mayor Gavin Newsom's 311 program, to direct callers to the best available resource.

"This is definitely a partnership program," Stokes said. "We offer some different services than The City, but we are always quick to direct users to that service if necessary."

wreisman@examiner.com

THE 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW

Leon Leyson

The man born Leib Lejzon was the youngest of the Jewish Holocaust survivors employed by Oskar Schindler during World War II, a story later immortalized in the film "Schindler's List." Leyson began working in Schindler's enamelware factory in 1943 at just 13 years of age. Though his two older brothers died during the Holocaust, Leyson's parents, sister and another brother survived because of Schindler's efforts. Leyson will speak Sunday at 5 p.m. at the Congregation Chevra Thilim on 25th Avenue. The lecture is free. To attend, R.S.V.P. to sfshul@yahoo.com.

It has been 60 years since you worked for Oskar Schindler. What are your memories of the man? I have many vivid memories of Schindler. He would come by after parties and stop and talk to me. Occasionally he would order me double rations of food.

Is it cathartic speaking about your experiences in the Holocaust? You would think so, but each time it still as difficult as the first time. My whole extended family was murdered by the Nazis. I never spoke of my experiences until the movie "Schindler's List" came out.

What was your reaction when "Schindler's List" was released? When I went to the showing, I couldn't believe how authentic it was. Being filmed on location, it depicted real people.

What do you take out of being the youngest survivor on Schindler's list? In some ways, I regret not remembering more of the people older than I. I was young, and very fortunate to be hired. Everyone's story is so important from that time; I wish I could remember them all.

— Will Reisman

