

# The Daily Independent

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Serving the Indian Wells Valley since 1926

## VFW, American Legion given key to city

By Jessica Weston  
For the Daily Independent

Vice Mayor Solomon Rajaratnam on Nov. 16 presented the key to the city to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Ship 4084 and American Legion Post 684.

Rajaratnam said he wanted to bestow symbolic keys to Ridgecrest — the city's highest honor — on organizations that serve veterans.

"Last week we celebrated America's veterans for keeping this country the land

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VFW members from Ship 4084 pose with council members Nov. 16 at the Ridgecrest City Council meeting after Vice Mayor Solomon Rajaratnam presented VFW members with the key to the city. PHOTOS BY JESSICA WESTON FOR THE DAILY INDEPENDENT



Members from American Legion Post 684 pose with council members Nov. 16 at the Ridgecrest City Council meeting after Vice Mayor Solomon Rajaratnam presented American Legion members with the key to the city.



Nick and Carol Coy, chairpersons and founders of the Ridgecrest Veteran Advisory Council, were invited to serve as the grand marshals of the 53rd Annual Children's Christmas Parade to be held Dec. 10. DARLA A. BAKER/THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

## IWVGA hears plans on pipes to import water

By Michael Smit  
For the Daily Independent

(This story first appeared on [ridgecrestca.com](http://ridgecrestca.com) Nov. 18)

Plans are advancing for importing water into the Indian Wells Valley. At its Nov. 9 board meeting, the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority heard a presentation on three proposed pipeline paths to get that water into IWV.

The presentation was given by Provost & Pritchard, a consulting group IWVGA contracted to perform this imported water pipeline alignment study. Jeff Davis—principal engineer with Provost & Pritchard—presented the study to the IWVGA board.

Davis told the board that while there were many paths they investigated for the pipeline, they've narrowed it down to three proposed paths which each carry their own positive and negative aspects. These three paths cross different regions of IWV, and are therefore titled the West Alignment, the Central Alignment, and the East Alignment.

Geography is one of the main factors Provost & Pritchard had to consider in these alignment studies, as these pipelines must receive water from the area of California City and then get that water to IWV while navigating the Rand and El Paso mountains.

While geography is important, it is not the only factor to consider. For example, Davis mentioned the value of building the pipeline along paths where power availability and other infrastructure already exists, while also

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## 'Peace, Love & Joy' theme for Children's Christmas Parade

By Darla A. Baker  
The Daily Independent

It will be a holly, jolly Christmas this year as the Ridgecrest Elks Lodge #1913 will again treat the city to its 53rd Annual Children's Christmas Parade to be held Saturday, Dec. 10.

Bundle up the kids and head downtown for a little Peace, Love & Joy which is this year's theme of the parade.

The parade will step off at 9 a.m., and will feature children-themed floats with music and dancing.

"We have about 50 entries this year," said Jan Bennett, Elks Lodge secretary. "A little more than we had last year, but a little less than when the pandemic disrupted everything."

Chosen to lead the parade this year are Nick and Carol Coy, founders of the Ridgecrest Veterans Advisory Council, who will serve as grand marshals.

"I was overjoyed," said Nick after learning he and Carol were selected to do the honors as grand marshals. "They asked to serve once before, but we were already scheduled to

be out of town. They offered it to us again and we took it."

Nick said of his wife's reaction to hear they had been chosen grand marshals, "She was really jazzed about it."

Nick is a retired Navy veteran who served from 1968 to 1971. He and Carol have been married for 38 years.

According to Parade Co-Coordinator and Lead Knight Kim Zurn, the Coys were selected based on the service they offer to our local veterans,

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## Elections: How California could count every vote faster

By Alexei Koseff and Sameea Kamal  
CalMatters

For more than a week after the Nov. 8 election, control of the U.S. House of Representatives remained undetermined. All eyes had turned to more than half a dozen uncalled races in California when, on Wednesday, the Associated Press projected victory for Rep. Mike Garcia in his Los Angeles-area district, finally handing Republicans a slim majority in the new Congress.

As tense days ticked by without resolution, political pundits across the country once again lamented why the vote count takes so long in Califor-

nia, while conservatives resurfaced concerns that late-arriving ballots and slow results exposed Democratic efforts to steal close races.

In reality, the extended count, which will take a month to finish, is a consequence of California's shift to overwhelmingly voting by mail, a convenience that requires several additional steps of verification by local officials once ballots arrive.

Though election experts in California say there are several ways the state could potentially speed up the tally, there is little urgency to prioritize them. With policymakers focused instead on improving accessibility, participation

and security, the waiting game seems here to stay.

"Democracies are not meant to be efficient. They're built on a foundation that every person's vote matters," said state Sen. Steve Glazer, an Orinda Democrat who leads the Senate committee on elections. Instant answers, he said, are not more important than ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the results.

Glazer added that no one has ever raised serious concerns with him about the speed of vote counting.

"The current hysteria generated by some is a lot of bunk that feeds their ideological agenda to the detriment of trust in our democracy," Glaz-

er said. "Is there a way to make it faster? Yes, there is. Is it worth the price, the cost?"

### Mail ballots slow the tally

The crawling pace of election results in California — with updates dribbling out day by day — stems from changes in how people vote over the past two decades. The state implemented no-excuse absentee voting in 2002, which during the coronavirus pandemic became a system where every active registered voter is mailed a ballot. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a law last year making that permanent.

Some experts point to additional factors, including the

sheer size of California and its independent redistricting process, which creates more competitive races where the outcome cannot be determined as quickly.

But the timeline is fundamentally driven by mail ballots, which simply take longer to count than those cast at a polling place on election day.

A recent analysis by the nonprofit California Voter Foundation found that, in November 2004, when fewer than a third of voters cast mail ballots, nearly 81% of voters were counted within two days of election day. By comparison, in the June primary this year,

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Weather: Sunny  
Today: 68/44 Thanksgiving: 70/47

Full Forecast A5  
Blockbuster A6

Record Sports A5  
B1

Comics Classified A4  
B4

