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MIDWAY DRILLER

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Thursday, July 8, 2021

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Photo by Doug Keeler/Midway Driller

Hundreds of people flocked to Franklin Field for the annual Fourth of July fireworks show and other activities Sunday night. See page A6 for a full page of photos from the event.

Major heatwave to bake Taft area

Another major heatwave is about to envelope the region, bringing record threatening heat to both the Taft and Southern San Joaquin Valley.

Taft had already gone through nine straight 100-degree or hotter days and endured a major heatwave two weeks ago,

but another streak of extremely hot weather is going to hit by the end of the week.

The National Weather Service has already issued an excessive heat watch for the entire southern San Joaquin valley and said it expects to upgrade

Continued on page A2

Shell reportedly wants out of Aera

Shell Oil wants to pull out of Aera Energy LLC, the news agency Reuters is reporting.

According to Reuters, four people said Royal Dutch Shell has informed Exxon Mobil of its intent to leave the joint venture for oil production in California.

Reuters said Aera produces about 125,000 barrels of oil and 32 million cubic

feet of natural gas each day, or about 25% of the state's oil and gas production.

Aera was formed in 1997 and is headquartered in Bakersfield. It has producing fields in Kern County including North and South Belridge, Midway Sunset, Lost Hills, Cymric, and McKittrick.

It also produces in other parts of the state.

DRILLER NOW UNDER LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Publisher's Pen—

This week marks a new beginning for the Taft Midway Driller – Private family ownership with associated local owners.

John Watkins and wife Lynda effective July 1 purchased the Midway Driller and the Ridgecrest Daily Independent. Previously they obtained ownership of Scenic 395 Magazine and the Mojave Desert News. Collectively they also own five websites.

Joining in the local ownership is Alicia Bishop and Doug Keeler, both longtime Driller employees.

"It was an opportunity of a lifetime to purchase the two newspapers. With the purchase we rededicate our effort toward even more local news. We have a lot of plans, but I want to caution nothing happens overnight," Watkins said.

Additional staffing will be hired for local news and sports.

--John Watkins, publisher/co-owner

City postpones 1% tax increase vote

By Doug Keeler
 Midway Driller Editor
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The Taft City Council voted Tuesday to delay playing a ballot measure to add a one percent sales tax to raise money to replace lost funding for city services.

The council was going to consider a motion to vote to place it on the Sept. 14 ballot for the recall election targeting Gov. Gavin Newsom, but decided there isn't enough time to do it right.

"There are substantial challenges to the timeliness of being able to get this on the ballot," Mayor Dave Noerr said.

"I think it is in the best interest of the council and the citizens of Taft to withdraw it."

The city would prefer to hold the election when it is consolidated with another election to save money.

City Clerk Yvette Mayfield said a consolidated election costs the city about \$6,000.

A special election for this measure only would cost more money.

The measure will be back on the ballot a future date, possibly the June primary in 2022.

City officials say a sales tax increase is needed to replace funding lost when the state

Continued on page A3

County homicide rate leads state

By Jessica Weston
 Ridgecrest Daily Independent

Over the past few years Kern County has had the highest murder rate in California, said District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer.

"We bear the dubious distinction . . . in the last few years we have the No. 1 homicide rate per capita in California," Zimmer told the Rotary Club of China Lake last week.

Kern County topped the list with 11.1 homicides per 100,000 people for 2018, Zimmer said. The next highest was Humboldt County with 8.1. San Bernardino county clocked in at No. 9 with 5.8 and Los Angeles was tenth with 5.5.

Zimmer took over as DA in 2019. In that year, the rate dropped down to 9 per 100,000, she said. "It was the

Continued on page A3



STARTING THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021

West Side Family Health Care will open at

7:00 am Monday - Friday

Holiday and weekend hours will remain 10:00 am - 9:00 pm

NEW HOURS



West Side Family Health

100 E. North St. Taft, CA 92363

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