

# Housing drives state, national economy growth

BUSINESS ■ A8



# Pope Francis finishes joyful visit to U.S.

SECOND FRONT ■ B1



# Annual Streets of Lancaster Grand Prix ends

SPORTS ■ C1

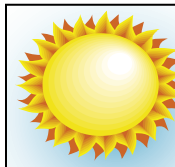


**Monday**  
**September 28, 2015**  
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# Antelope Valley Press

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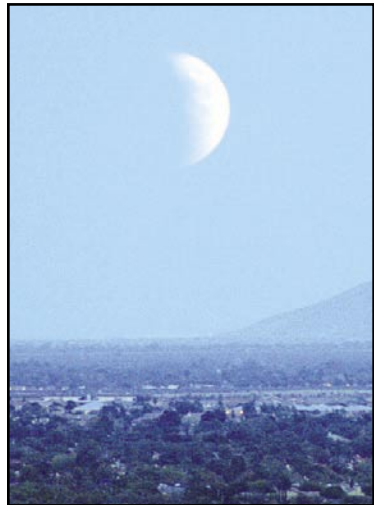
## TODAY'S OUTLOOK



Sunny. Highs in mid-80s to mid-90s. Lows in mid-50s to mid-60s.

WEATHER: C6 LOTTO: B1

## NEWS YOU NEED



### AV sees eclipsed blood moon through clouds

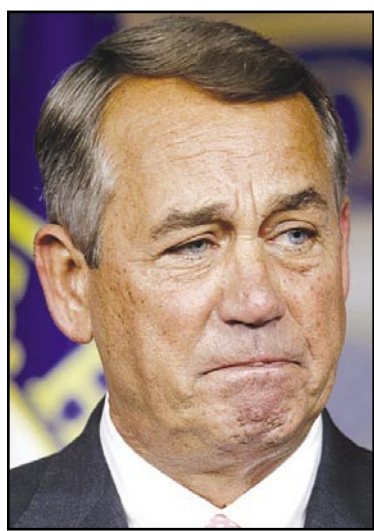
A supermoon coincided with a lunar eclipse Sunday evening. For Antelope Valley residents who caught a glimpse through bands of thin clouds, the moon rose already partially in eclipse. The sight was called a supermoon because the moon was in its closest proximity to Earth, appearing up to 14% larger. **Page A3**

### When should you keep sick child from school?

For working moms and dads, a child's unexpected illness can be anything from a minor irritant to a job killer. So how sick should your child be before you consider keeping your child home from school? **Page A10**

### Ryan, Jones propel Atlanta past Cowboys

Matt Ryan and Julio Jones kept Atlanta rolling by connecting for two touchdowns, while Devonta Freeman ran for 141 yards and three scores Sunday, and the Falcons won 39-28 over Dallas, which failed its first test without Tony Romo and Dez Bryant. **Page C1**



### Boehner labels some in GOP 'false prophets'

House Speaker John Boehner warned Sunday against "false prophets" in his own party making unrealistic promises, saying his resignation had averted a government shutdown this week but not the GOP's broader battle over how to wield power. **Page B1**

### Iraq agrees to share its info on Islamic State

Iraq's military said Sunday it will begin sharing "security and intelligence" information with Syria, Russia and Iran to help combat the Islamic State group, a move that could further complicate U.S. efforts to battle the extremists without working with Damascus and its allies. **Page B1**

### Duck boat in crash didn't have advised fix

A Seattle duck boat that collided with a charter bus last week, killing five people and injuring dozens, did not have an axle repair that was recommended for at least some of the amphibious vehicles in 2013, the National Transportation Safety Board said Sunday. **Page B1**

# Senior of the Year finalists shine

## Winner to be revealed during expo on Oct. 15

Valley Press

LANCASTER — Five seniors with rich and enriching depths of life experience and extensive community volunteer credentials are finalists for Senior of the Year at the annual Senior Expo presented by High Desert Medical Group.

Lynn Francom, Jim Harris, Rosemarie King, Audrey Miller and Jean Philley were picked from among nominees by High Desert

staff and the Antelope Valley Press, which is a co-sponsor of the award.

The Senior of the Year will be announced during the 25th anniversary of the Senior Expo presented by High Desert Medical Group. Featuring a talk by country superstar and best-selling health author Naomi Judd, the event will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 15 at the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds, 2551 West Ave. H. Admission is free.



FRANCOM



HARRIS



KING



MILLER

The theme for the event this year will be "Tell us 'bout the good ole days."

The Senior of the Year and Veterans Community Service award ceremonies begin at 11 a.m. Judd will speak at 1 p.m., with an autograph signing following her ap-

pearance.

A free lunch will be provided for seniors age 62 and older between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in the courtyard between the H.W. Hunter and Van Dam pavilions, courtesy of the city of Lancaster. The finalists are:

### Lynn Francom

There was a time when Lynn Francom absolutely could not tell you what she did for a living: She was working on the B-2 stealth bomber program.

When she came out of the top secret sector, she shifted almost immediately to supervision of the senior meal program at the Antelope Valley Senior Center. She retired from supervising the meal program in September 2013. After a two-week vacation, she returned as a volunteer at the senior center, and she is still at it, said her nominator, Sonia Larane.

"She is always available to help in any area that is needed," Larane

See SENIOR on A5

# Keeping an eye on students



Iritrak Corp.

**IRIS SCANNER** — The Iritrans scanner, developed by Iritrak Corp., identifies students getting on and off school buses by the patterns in the irises of their eyes. The system will alert the bus driver if

a child tries to get off at the wrong bus stop or if a student is still on the bus after the last stop on a route. Parents will receive a text message when their child boards or exits a bus.

By JULIE DRAKE  
 Valley Press Staff Writer

LANCASTER — Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency will begin a limited field test of a new student identification and real-time school bus tracking system that its developer says can prevent a tragedy like the Sept. 11 death of a 19-year-old special needs teenager who was locked in a parked school bus in a Whittier parking lot for hours.

The Iritrans system developed by Iritrak Corp. is a binocular-like device that scans the irises — the colored part — in a child's eyes when he or she boards and exits a school bus. That sends the child's identification information

## Field test of system to track pupils on buses

to a "cloud" server.

"As we check kids as they get on, we have a record of whether or not they got on or got off, and that's real time," AV Schools Transportation Agency headquarters with CEO Morris Fuselier said. "We know where kids are, and that's always a challenge."

Parents will receive a text message when their child boards or exits a bus. They also can log on to a website app to check on

their child's status.

No student data is kept on the school bus. If a device is stolen, there is no student information on it, and officials can track it via GPS.

"There's no names, addresses, phone numbers and pictures, although there could be if the district wants that," John DeVries, Iritrak president who also developed the system, said during an interview.

The Iritrans system will alert

the bus driver if a child tries to get off at the wrong bus stop. After the driver reaches the end of a daily route the driver "ends" the route on the Iritrans mobile device. If any student hasn't exited the bus the device will notify the driver both visually and audibly to recheck the bus.

The system will allow AV Schools Transportation Agency officials to see which students are on a bus as well as provide the bus' location.

"We want their kids, and parents want their kids, safe. There are a whole bunch of different ways to do that," Fuselier said.

Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency will test **See STUDENTS on A4**

# Parris mum on vacant position

By ALISHA SEMCHUCK  
 Valley Press Staff Writer

LANCASTER — When City Council members meet Oct. 13, the seat recently vacated by former Councilman Ron Smith is expected to be occupied by their newest colleague — whose identity is still a mystery.

Mayor R. Rex Parris knows the answer, but his lips are tightly sealed. Parris told the public, at the last council meeting, that the newest member will be introduced at the next session. But, he didn't divulge any more details.

When asked by the Antelope Valley Press for a name, Parris said nothing.

When asked for a clue, Parris said nothing.

When asked the gender and age — young or old — again Parris maintained his silence — all the while smiling.

He did tell say that the person he picks will be someone smarter than him.

Parris agreed that whenever issues impacting this nation are raised, the United States seems always to be painted as Caucasian, African-American and Hispanic — as if no other ethnic groups exist.

Parris concurred that Chinese, Japanese, people from India and Native Americans tend to be left out of the talks.

The current council is three Caucasian men, all at least 60, and one African-American woman, in her mid- to late 40s.

Parris, a native of Lancaster, was first elected mayor in 2008.

Like Parris, Ken Mann won his council seat in 2008. He has been re-elected by voters ever since then. He has resided in Lancaster nearly his entire life.

Vice Mayor Marvin Crist was **See POSITION on A5**

# Rail authority considers tunnel route study

By CHARLES F. BOSTWICK  
 Valley Press Editor

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST — U.S. Forest Service officials are considering whether they will let the California High-Speed Rail Authority bore four-inch-diameter holes up to nearly 2,800 feet deep in the mountains between Acton and Tujunga as part of the study of a tunnel route that would skirt Acton, Santa Clarita and the northern San Fernando Valley.

High-Speed Rail Authority officials want to drill five to eight holes to investigate the condition of rock far below the surface, the pressure that groundwater is under there, the boring resistance underground, earthquake faults and other factors that could

affect tunnel construction for route alternatives proposed to burrow beneath the San Gabriel Mountains between Palmdale and Burbank.

"Besides the construction and design issues that are dependent upon groundwater conditions, the long-term preservation of groundwater resources is also a significant objective for the tunnel design and construction," high-speed rail officials said in a 53-page report on the proposed drilling for the tunnel route feasibility study. "Rock mass conditions will also govern the rate of tunnel advancement, the method of tunneling, and the temporary and final engineered support system. Rock loads and squeezing ground will influence tunnel lining design and thick-

ness. Tunnel displacements at an active fault intersection will require planning and special design of lining systems for timely repair of the tunnel lining and realignment of the HSR track."

Forest service officials sent out notices last week asking for comments on the drilling proposal, and noted that they are seeking comments only on the drilling as part of the feasibility study into the tunnel route, not on the tunnel route itself or on any other routes.

The proposed drill sites are among the steep ridges south of Soledad Canyon, between Mount Gleason and Little Tujunga Canyon, according to maps made available by the Forest Service.

Six of the possible drill sites are on dirt roads — Santa Clara Divide Road, Mendenhall Ridge Road, Kagel Truck Trail and Gold Creek Road. One is about 650 feet from Santa Clara Divide Road near the Forest Service North Fork Saddle station and helicopter landing sight. The last is on a ridgetop fire break north of Santa Clara Divide Road and proposed to be accessed by helicopter.

"The Forest Service is aware of the public interest regarding any high-speed rail alignment through the Forest," the Forest Service notice said. "At this point in the application process, we are seeking comments only on the feasibility study, not the selection or construction of any route under the forest."

See RAIL on A4

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 ANNIE'S MAILBOX A10  
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**SUPPORTING GAYS**  
 The Rev. John McNeill, an openly gay Roman Catholic priest who publicly pressed the church to welcome gay men and lesbians, died Tuesday. **Obituaries B3**

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 A special good morning to Valley Press subscriber Ruth Horner of Littlerock

