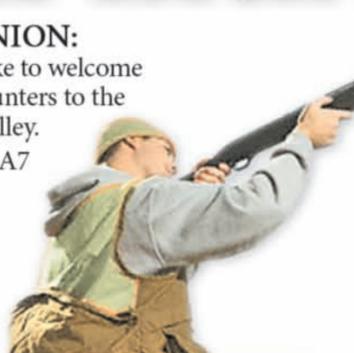


# IMPERIAL VALLEY PRESS

**OPINION:**  
We would like to welcome the dove hunters to the Valley.  
► A7



**REGION:**  
Toastmasters gain public-speaking courage in this supportive group atmosphere.  
► A4



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THE IMPERIAL VALLEY'S SOURCE FOR NEWS

## THAT HURTS



TODD KRAININ PHOTO

Cruz Sanchez, who is diabetic, says he used to rely on Bel-Mar Medical Transportation for a variety of services, from paperwork to door-to-door pickups.

### Lack of budget hurts service

By ERIC GALVAN  
Staff Writer

Cruz Sanchez sat in his wheelchair Tuesday afternoon talking about the "great" services provided by Bel-Mar Medical Transportation services.

"They'd come pick me up, drop me off, get me from inside my house, they'd help with paperwork," the 54-year-old with diabetes said. "They provide a great service."

Bel-Mar also used to take Sanchez to San Diego for doctor's appointments, but now because of a lack of a state budget, Bel-Mar is unable to provide that service.

"Now, I have to look for someone else to take me," Sanchez said.

Since June the state hasn't adopted a budget and in turn has affected businesses such as Bel-Mar.

Manuel Beltran, head of Bel-Mar, said 90 percent of his patients that utilize Bel-Mar for its transportation services use Medi-Cal. And because there is no state budget, Beltran said no payment is coming from Medi-Cal.

Without payment Beltran has had to lay off eight employees, about half his staff, and has had to cut services by only transporting those who use walkers and wheelchairs, like Sanchez.

Because his service is run through the state, Beltran said mandates may change on who is allowed to use the service and he said soon his service might only be provided to those who use wheelchairs.

"When 70 percent of our clients use walkers and not wheelchairs, that's going to hurt us even more," he said.

It's not at that point yet,



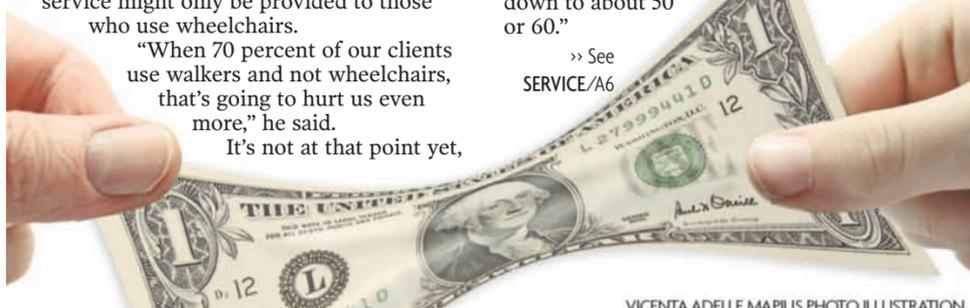
TODD KRAININ PHOTO

"What's the result of no state budget? We don't get paid for two months," says Manuel Beltran, head of Bel-Mar Transportation in El Centro.

but he said even now things are getting difficult just in running the business.

"We used to transport more than 100 patients a day," Beltran said. "Now, we're down to about 50 or 60."

» See SERVICE/A6



VICENTA ADELE MAPILIS PHOTO ILLUSTRATION



TODD KRAININ FILE PHOTO

Rep. Bob Filner talks about border issues at a media event in Calexico on Aug. 17, 2007.

### Filner awaits roll call vote

► DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION:

Filner will be in attendance to hear Barack Obama accept the nomination.

By BROOKE RUTH  
Digital Media News  
Editor

The Imperial Valley's congressman, Rep. Bob Filner, said he will witness first-hand the historic moment when Barack Obama becomes the first African-American presidential nominee for a major political party.

Filner, D-Chula Vista, will be at the Democratic National Convention in Denver until Thursday. Early Thursday

evening Filner will be present for the roll call that will make Obama's candidacy official, and later that evening Obama will accept the nomination, Filner said.

Filner, who is a superdelegate, declared his support for Obama after the last primary June 3, which "helped to put him over the top," he said.

Filner said he was neutral through the whole primary race

» See FILNER/A6



AP PHOTO

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton prepares to address the Democratic National Convention in Denver on Tuesday.

### Hillary salutes Barack Obama

► STATEMENT:

Did not include whether she will seek formal roll call when nomination is awarded.

DENVER (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton summoned millions of voters who supported her in the primaries to send Barack Obama to the White House Tuesday night, declaring in a Democratic National Convention speech that the man who defeated her "is my candidate and he must be our president."

In a prime time address, the former first lady added, "We don't have a moment to lose or a vote to spare."

The packed conven-

tion floor became a sea of white "Hillary" signs as the New York senator strode to the podium, and thousands of Democrats cheered as she took a pre-speech sip of water.

While her prepared remarks included a full-throated endorsement of Obama, she did not indicate whether she would have her name placed in nomination or seek a formal roll call of the states when the nomination is awarded

» See CLINTON/A6

### District still unhappy with Senate bill

► SALTON SEA:  
Question over legislation language.

By BRIANNA LUSK  
Special to this  
Newspaper

Questions continue to linger for Imperial Irrigation District board members about the language of a Senate bill involving the Salton Sea and whether the water

transfer agreement is being breached.

Senate Bill 187 cleared the state Senate last week and will distribute \$47 million for the first phase of habitat restoration and studies on air and water quality at the Salton Sea.

But some IID board members said that without a spelled-out reference to the Salton Sea restoration's ties to the 2003 Quantification Settlement Agreement, the state continues to cir-

cumvent its liability at the plagued inland sump that was once an oasis in the desert.

"This is not substantive language," said IID Legal Counsel Jeff Garber. "It doesn't change anything."

At a special meeting to discuss the issue Tuesday, the board reviewed the impact the change could have on the QSA — a 75-year agreement that transfers water from Imperial County to the coast. Sen. Denise Moreno

Ducheny, D-San Diego, who authored SB 187, said IID officials not only knew about the change but were part of the water districts that requested it.

The omissions make direct reference to the Salton Sea noting "restoration of the Salton Sea is an essential element of the Quantification Settlement Agreement."

IID Director Mike Abatti said if the language is insignificant there

» See IID/A6

#### — DEATHS —

Leo Fernandez, 46  
Brawley

» See Obituaries, A6

#### — VIEWPOINT —

The hardcore right wing of the Republican Party reminds me of a school mate.

» See A9

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VOLUME 108 NUMBER 111  
TO SUBSCRIBE 337-3456