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CENTRAL COUNTY

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TIMES WATCHDOG
AN EYE ON YOUR PUBLIC AGENCIES

Peralta district leader on way out

■ Community colleges won't renew contract of embattled Harris

By Matt Krupnick

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Elihu Harris will depart as chancellor of the Peralta Community College District when his contract ends in June.

Peralta trustees on Tuesday night declined to extend Harris' contract and said they would immediately begin searching for a replacement. The board's new president, Trustee Abel Guillen, declined to discuss the reasons for the decision.

Harris, the former Oakland mayor and state legislator, has been the subject of increased criticism from trustees and employees since July, when the Bay Area News Group published a series of articles examining questionable decisions by the chancel-

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Plan won't save schools, officials say

■ Budget can't 'protect education' as governor promised, critics argue

By Theresa Harrington

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Although Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger crowed about protecting education when he released his budget, he failed to mention a \$1.5 billion cut planned for next year along with a decreased cost of living adjustment.

"I question the statement he is protecting public education with his proposal," said Joe Ovick, superintendent of the Contra Costa County Office of Education.

A San Mateo County school leader was more succinct.

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COVERAGE OF QUAKE'S AFTERMATH / MORNING REPORT

HAITI LIES IN RUINS



RICARDO ARDUENGO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

People search for survivors, above, in the rubble of a collapsed building Wednesday in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, one day after a magnitude 7.0 earthquake. Below, Maxine Berlangier, 7, weeps for her aunt and uncle during a meeting of Bay Area Haitian immigrants at a Novato church.

Bay Area residents fear for their loved ones

By Matt O'Brien

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OAKLAND — Stunned by news of a catastrophic earthquake in Haiti, a small but close-knit community of Haitian immigrants in the Bay Area has sought information about family and friends but found little comfort as lines of communication remain down.

"I'm getting calls from other Haitians asking me, 'What have you heard? What have you heard?'" said Pierre LaBossiere, of Oakland, president of the Haiti Action Committee advocacy group.

LaBossiere was able to reach two friends in the capital, Port-au-Prince, who were safe but one said his home had collapsed. The conversation ended when the phone line went dead. LaBossiere has been un-

able to reach relatives.

Oakland resident Paulette Galithe said she has already heard about acquaintances who were killed. She was praying for better news about her closest relatives.

"I have everybody there — nine brothers and sisters. Last night I didn't get any sleep at all," she said.

She and her husband, pastor of Oakland's Equator Faith Mission, said they were also searching for news from the Fontamara neighborhood of Port-au-Prince where they have a home and sister church.

"(Friends) told us there are 10 people who have died in the neighborhood where we have a house," she said. "They can see they are dead, but they are still under (the

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JEFF VENDSEL/MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

IN BUSINESS



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

APOLOGIES FOR RECESSION

Top Wall Street banking officials being questioned by a special commission apologize for taking the risks that led to the economic downturn that spread from the United States to most of the globe but said the moves had seemed appropriate.

BAY AREA TRANSIT IN TROUBLE RUNNING ON EMPTY LAST OF A FIVE-PART SERIES

The fix? Culture shifting gears

■ Region lags behind others in providing options to commuters

By Mike Rosenberg

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For Bay Area transit agencies to emerge stronger from their plight, extensive changes will be required, likely including new taxes and a shift in the way commuters travel and leaders plan cities.

Experts, politicians, commuters

and others interviewed for this series offered many ideas that could spur ridership and help public transit providers crawl out of budget holes. But there is doubt that the region can muster the political will to make the solutions happen.

There are deep-seated problems to overcome: The Bay Area has lagged behind the nation in boosting residents' transit options, and taxpayers are not getting nearly as many services despite what they pay.

During the past 11 years, na-

tional transit carriers beefed up service by 38 percent, compared with 16 percent in the Bay Area, according to the Transit Sustainability Project. Accounting for inflation during that time, Bay Area transit costs soared 52 percent but agencies attracted just 7 percent more riders. Meanwhile, national transit costs jumped 60 percent but ridership climbed 32 percent.

To reverse this course, several experts say land use and planning

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