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FRIDAY,
July 16,
2010

BREAKING NEWS ONLINE AT WWW.MERCEDSUNSTAR.COM



Aviators' Cusick dominates Seals on pitching mound.

SPORTS, PAGE D1

REAL ESTATE: Foreclosure crisis still rages.

LOCAL, PAGE B1

MEDICAL CARE

Mercy Foundation comes through in tough times

The organization raised \$5 million for equipment.

By CAROL REITER
creiter@mercedsun-star.com

When the Mercy Medical Center Foundation started to raise money for the new hospital three years ago, it had a goal of raising be-

tween \$4 and \$5 million. Then the economy went in the tank.

The foundation had originally hoped to get the money raised in two years. But with the bad economy, it took three years.

And the foundation exceeded its goal. "The community came

through and we raised \$5.4 million," said Jim Cunningham, president of the foundation. There are about 1,500 people involved in the campaign in various ways, with about 20 people on the board.

Most of that money went to help get the emergency department at the new hos-

pital up and running, according to Lisa Wegley, director of the foundation.

"It cost more than \$8 million to just build the emergency room," Wegley said. In its entirety, the hospital cost more than \$260 million.

One expense in the ER

SEE HOSPITAL, PAGE A4

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

SETBACKS, GAINS IN FIGHTING VIOLENCE

Annual report paints picture of campus progress.

By JAMIE OPPENHEIM
joppenheim@mercedsun-star.com

A report documenting the 2009-2010 student safety issues within the Merced Union High School District showed a mixed bag of successes and failures compared with the previous school year.

Student discipline cases involving violence, drugs and expulsions increased this past year in the seven-campus district.

The district did have some victories.

The number of students punished for gang-related behaviors, bullying and vandalism, as well as the number of days students were suspended decreased by 5 percent.

This past school year there were 46 more fights than the previous year and there were 20 more disciplinary cases dealing with drugs and alcohol, according to the report.

Kelly Bentz, MUHSD

program administrator for child welfare and safety, said at a board meeting Wednesday that more students were caught selling drugs on campus this past year than in previous years.

In a lot of these cases, the drugs were prescription medications, she added. And many of the students involved in drug-related offenses were sophomores.

Since 2007, the number of drug and alcohol offenses has increased from 155 to 258.

George Sziraki, MUHSD assistant superintendent of educational services, said he wasn't sure why the numbers increased.

Most of the cases involving drugs or alcohol had to do with kids coming to school intoxicated or students in possession of illegal drugs on campus, he added.

Aside from this past year's spike, violence on

SEE VIOLENCE, PAGE A4

A hot job in Le Grand



SUN-STAR PHOTO BY LISA JAMES

Fermin Rosas finishes laying irrigation hoses in a cornfield along Le Grand Avenue and Burchell Road in Le Grand on Thursday afternoon. Rosas and his crew, who began their workday at 6 a.m., worked through the heat of the day enduring temperatures of 101 degrees. Expect triple-digit temperatures over the next few days as the thermometer will continue to climb over the next few days.

OFF THE 99

A look at Merced through eyes of young people

Sun-Star staff

The world as seen by Merced's adult leaders is often different from the reality lived by teens and young adults, who in some cases must watch their backs on streets that are anything but safe.

The gap between how life

is lived by young people and the adults with the power is wide.

One of the main priorities mentioned by Merced County's leadership is public safety.

And much treasure is

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>>> **RADIO:** Hear the show on KYOS 1480 AM on Saturdays at 6:05 p.m. and Sundays at 6:30 a.m.

>>> **ONLINE:** You can always catch the show online at www.mercedsunstar.com/offthe99.

CRIME

Man says he was shot while walking on street

By VICTOR A. PATTON
vpattson@mercedsun-star.com

A 30-year-old man was injured early Thursday after being shot in the 1700 block of Loughborough Drive, Merced police reported.

Nobody has been arrested. Police responded to the scene shortly after 1:30 a.m. and found the victim, Gregory Leon of Merced, bleeding from his upper torso and right arm, according to Lt. Bimley West.

The victim was conscious, saying he was approached on the sidewalk by three unidentified black men. One of the three pulled a gun and fired several times. The group ran

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QuickTake

News outside Merced County

SENATE RACE: Democrat Barbara Boxer, pictured, will begin the defense of her U.S. Senate seat with a massive financial advantage over her Republican challenger. See page A3

GOVERNOR'S RACE: California's largest nurses union holds a protest outside the Bay Area home of Republican gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman. See page A3

OLIVE OIL: Many of the olive oils sold in the United States are not the top grade, extra oils their labels claim to be, according to a lab study. See page A3



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MAP: See where in the world Merced County agricultural exports are being shipped. <http://www.mercedsunstar.com/multimedia>

WEATHER

Sunny and hot today; clear, mild tonight. High of 103, low of 70.

CONTACT US

Contact the newsroom at (209) 385-2457 with a tip or story idea.

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COMING TOMORROW

Look for continuing coverage of the battle for the Claret Jug at St. Andrews, Scotland.

