

Supervisors win jail authority

Judge says Fresno Co. controls funding, spending.

By Kurtis Alexander
The Fresno Bee

A judge on Thursday settled the long-running power struggle between Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims and the Board of Supervisors, handing the supervisors wide authority to manage the Sheriff's Office.

In a 37-page decision, Fresno County Superior Court Judge Mark Snauffer ruled that county supervisors control not only how much money the sheriff gets, but how the sheriff spends her

money.

Mims sued the supervisors in 2010 for interfering with her command when they ordered her to pour more money into the jail — to prevent layoffs of 23 correctional officers.

While that issue no longer is relevant, Thursday's ruling gives the Board of Supervisors a clear edge in future policymaking. The case has been widely watched, even outside of Fresno County, as a test of where the lines of authority lie between the two indepen-

dently elected offices.

Supervisor Henry Perea hailed the ruling as a mandate for the Board of Supervisors to get more involved in the sheriff's operations, particularly at the jail.

"Whatever we allocate to the jail, dollars will not be allowed to be shifted out now without our authority," he said. "This is key to eliminating or reducing early prisoner release."

The jail has been a flashpoint for the county as jail floors have closed in the wake of budget cuts and dozens of inmates are released early each day. Both the

Board of Supervisors and the sheriff have blamed the other.

Mims has pushed the supervisors for more money to maintain the jail, but she hasn't received it.

Her dispute with the board surfaced in February 2010 when she chose to use her limited funds to preserve patrol deputies, instead of correctional officers as the board had wished.

While the question of who controls the sheriff's purse strings was never at issue, how much say the Board of Supervisors has over her spending was.

See **LAWSUIT**, Page A11

HIGH-SPEED RAIL

Hwy. 99 work likely to wait

Shifting of highway in Fresno may be in 2014.

By Tim Sheehan
The Fresno Bee

SACRAMENTO — Work to shift part of Highway 99 through central Fresno to make way for high-speed train tracks may not begin until at least early 2014.

That's the official expectation after the California High-Speed Rail Authority voted Thursday to approve an agreement with Caltrans for moving the

2.5-mile stretch of the highway between Ashlan and Clinton avenues.

The agreement, worth up to \$226 million, calls for Caltrans to work as a contractor for the rail authority. The state highway agency will be responsible for design and construction to nudge the highway over by about 100 feet to accommodate new high-speed train tracks between the highway and the adjacent Union Pacific Railroad freight tracks.

But motorists should not expect that work to snarl traffic on that portion of Highway 99 anytime soon, authority CEO Jeff Morales said.

"Construction on the actual relocation of 99 is probably at least 18 months to 24 months off," Morales said Thursday. "What will be happening in the next few months is some of the preliminary work — the design work, the right of way, dealing with the businesses along the route."

Thomas Fellenz, the authority's chief counsel, said Caltrans expects to subcontract the con-

See **RAIL**, Page A7

SUMMER GAMES LONDON 2012

Ramirez 'still our champ'

Lightweight boxer's Olympic dreams are dashed, but he remains the pride of Avenal.



IVAN SEKRETAREV/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Uzbekistan's Fazliddin Gaibnazarov, right, reacts after defeating Avenal's Jose Ramirez on Thursday in London. Ramirez's Olympics are over.

AVENAL — Community pride, technology and crushed Olympic dreams 5,400 miles away intersected Thursday at a movie theater rebuilt from the ashes of a 2003 fire that gutted this downtown.

The smell of popcorn greets hometown fans of Olympic boxer Jose

Ramirez when doors to the beautifully restored Avenal Theater and Event Center are unlocked about 1 p.m.

After loading up on movie snacks, about 75 fans make their way to the same room where City Council meetings are held. Before the big bout, they impatiently endure a team handball match between Iceland and Sweden.

The question: When will CNBC show Ramirez's bout against Uzbekistan's Fazliddin Gaibnazarov in London's ExCel arena?

Lupe Chavez knows when the bout will begin and doesn't wait for the cable network's delayed broadcast. He exits the theater, whips out his cell phone and connects to live coverage of the bout while standing on a Kings Street sidewalk.



Paola Zenteno, left, shouts as she and others watch Jose Ramirez in the third round of his Olympic boxing bout, which was shown at the Avenal Theater and Event Center on Thursday. ERIC PAUL ZAMORA/THE FRESNO BEE

MORE INSIDE

Ramirez's loss caps off a tough day for U.S. boxers; Phelps tops Lochte in duo's last duel, **Page B1**

MORE ONLINE

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Ramirez — touted as America's best pro prospect — inexplicably gives away the first round to his shorter but quicker opponent and fails again to impress judges in the second round. Trailing 12-5, the pride of Avenal punishes Gaibnazarov in the final round but loses 15-11.

There are no second chances in

Olympic boxing. It's win or go home. Hopes are buoyed or dashed in 9 minutes or less.

Chavez, who works in construction and is a longtime youth football coach, protests the outcome.

"No way it was that score," he says. Will he tell anyone the result?

See **McEWEN**, Page A11

N.Y. Fed audits stash of gold bars

By Andrew Tangel
Los Angeles Times

NEW YORK — For decades, the U.S. government has stashed gold five stories beneath Manhattan in a vault under the Federal Reserve's fortress near Wall Street.

Or has it? Some conspiracy theorists suspect that the billions of dollars' worth of bullion might have been looted in a dramatic heist, a la the movie "Die Hard: With a Vengeance." Others claim that the gold has been used in a shadowy government transaction, or swapped with gold-painted bars. It's even caught the attention of politicians like Rep. Ron Paul and members of Germany's parliament.

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dealsaver

Apple of Eden Salon: \$45 for long, flirty eyelash extensions (\$90 value)

See A5 for details.



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CHATTER BOX

Romney: Put up or shut up

Mitt Romney demanded Thursday that Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid back up the story he's been passing around this week that an investor with Romney's old firm, Bain Capital, has told him Romney didn't pay any taxes for 10 years. **Page A9**

Online: Gather ideas for weekend fun at fresnobee.com/seven or planitfresno.com

Jackson explains disappearance

The mystery of Michael Jackson's mother's disappearance was clarified Thursday with the release of court papers that said she was kept from communicating with outsiders while at a resort. **Page A8**



TODAY'S FORECAST

Sunny and hot

High 104

Low 68

AQI: Unhealthy for some, 111
Details: Weather, B10

Online: fresnobee.com/weather

