

**Taking a Bow**  
MJC to honor deaf student  
LOCAL NEWS B-1

**Country Believer**  
Darius Rucker in Stockton  
SCENE

# The Modesto Bee

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## Today's Scoop

**HAVING THEIR SAY**  
Nearly 200 people turned out at Tenth Street Plaza on Thursday to help Modesto chart its course over the next three years. **Page B-1**



**APPETITE TO INVEST**  
Shares of full-service restaurants are leading other consumer-discretionary companies, a sign investors are betting Americans will spend more on dining out. **Page A-9**

**FULBRIGHT SHINES**  
Pitcher Kaleb Fulbright threw the first no-hitter in Enochs High history on Thursday, fanning nine in a 6-0 win over Modesto. **Page C-1**



**CAR TAGS TROUBLE**  
State auditors reported problems in how California agencies collect and spend money from certain specialty license plate funds, including the loss of more than \$22 million in revenue. **Page A-7**

**PLEAS IGNORED**  
Forty-six senators thumbed their noses at the public by blocking an expansion of buyer background checks Wednesday, caving to the gun lobby and eyeing their political futures. **Opinions, Page A-10**

**RAIL SUIT SETTLED**  
Madera and Merced counties dropped their environmental lawsuit challenging the first section of the high-speed rail project after reaching a settlement Thursday. **Page B-1**

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TODAY'S DEAL  
Take your deal at Versailles Salon & Spa. Get this deal today at [dealsaver.com/modesto](http://dealsaver.com/modesto). See ad on Page A-3.

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## Texas town reeling after huge blast

Crews comb debris for survivors, bodies

BY NOMAAN MERCHANT AND JOHN L. MONE  
The Associated Press  
WEST, Texas — Rescuers searched the smoking remnants of this farm town Thursday for survivors of a thunderous fertilizer plant explosion, gingerly checking smashed houses and apartments for anyone still trapped in debris while the community awaited word on the number of dead.

Initial reports put the fatalities as high as 15, but later in the day, authorities said they had a more accurate estimate and refused to elaborate. More than 160 people were hurt. A breathtaking band of destruction extended for blocks around the West Fertilizer Co. in the small community. The blast shook the ground with the strength of a small

Stanislaus official: No such threat in area

BY MARIJKE ROWLAND  
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After the massive Texas fertilizer plant blast, Northern San Joaquin Valley agencies said they feel prepared to handle hazardous materials accidents in the region. Modesto Regional Fire Authority Chief Gary Hinshaw said the county does not have a facility that could cause the scope of damage that happened in West, where

54,000 pounds of potentially dangerous and volatile anhydrous ammonia gas was stored. "I don't believe we have anything in the magnitude of what happened here," Hinshaw said. "And most of our facilities have very good safety plans in place. I think our past history of not having those kinds of events are a pretty good indicator of the safety record of industry in

## REMEMBERING BOSTON



An estimated 300 people gathered in East La Loma Park in Modesto on Thursday afternoon for the Remember Boston run, to unite and show support for fellow runners affected by the bombing at the Boston Marathon. Above, Alex Shoob of Modesto, foreground, and others bow their heads in a moment of silence and prayer for the victims. Shoob ran Monday's marathon. Two bombs exploded near the finish line, killing three people including an 8-year-old boy and injuring nearly 200. Most of the Remember Boston participants on Thursday ran three miles, one for each of the people killed. See [www.modbee.com](http://www.modbee.com) for a photo gallery.

## Officials release photos of suspects

Cathedral overflows during victims' service

BY LESLEY CLARK AND CHRIS ADAMS  
McClatchy Newspapers  
BOSTON — Federal officials on Thursday unveiled photographs of two people they consider suspects in connection with Monday's bombing at the Boston Marathon and asked the public for help identifying them. "Somebody out there knows these individuals as friends, neighbors, co-workers or family members," Richard DesLauriers, special agent in charge of the FBI's Boston field office, said during an eight-minute briefing at 5:20 p.m. "Though it may be difficult, the nation is counting on those with information to come forward and provide it to us."

The 11 photos on the FBI's web-  
SEE PAGE A-3, BOSTON



Obama speaks at a service for victims of the Boston attack. The FBI on Thursday released photos of 'Suspect One,' far left, in black cap, and 'Suspect Two,' in white cap. SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

## Thirteen indicted in suspected \$3M drug ring

BY PATTY GUERRA  
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Authorities Thursday unsealed a federal grand jury indictment charging 13 people, eight of them from Modesto, in a drug-trafficking conspiracy that authorities say brought in more than \$3 million. The case is unusual, said Lauren Horwood, spokeswoman for the United States attorney's office, because of the amount of money generated and the sales of drugs across

state lines. On April 11, a federal grand jury returned a 29-count indictment charging the defendants with conspiracy to manufacture, distribute, and possess with intent to distribute controlled substances — oxycodone, hydrocodone and marijuana — and conspiracy to structure cash transactions in order to avoid federal currency reporting requirements. U.S. Attorney Benjamin B. Wag-

ner announced in a news release that the indictment names the following defendants: Sarith Chim, 45; Sdey Chim, 40; Chanrath Yim Yath, 33; Chanrou Yath, 28; Phally Thach, 31; Raeb Chou, 23; Say Eng, 64; and Loc Huu Chau, 49, all of Modesto; Iris Stephanie Garcia, 24, of Lathrop; Chantha A. Chim, 42, of Murrieta; and Washington residents David Ruem, 31, of Tacoma; and Phary Chim, 30; and Cindy Comilang, 29, of Kent.

Most of the suspects have been arrested; four appeared in court on Thursday. Authorities still are looking for Sarith Chim, Thach, Loc Huu Chau and Raeb Chou. According to the indictment, from October 2008 to April of this year, the defendants got prescriptions for oxycodone, hydrocodone and medical marijuana cards from a doctor in Modesto and recruited other people to do the same in re-

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## MID, TID could merge

Chairman of Modesto district open to idea; Turlock also intrigued

BY GARTH STAPLEY  
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The intriguing idea of merging the Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts is resurfacing, this time with the MID board chairman's support. "I think it could save us in the long run," Nick Blom said Thursday. "We are duplicating a lot of administrative stuff (and other functions). Maybe if we work together, it could be done more efficiently."



Blom's counterpart, Michael Frantz, said he's willing to take a look, but would go along only if consolidating would help TID customers. The concept emerges from a volunteer advisory committee working on recommendations for improving the MID's canal system. The committee will present its second progress report at an MID board meeting Tuesday; the merger is included in items that might make it in a final report to be presented in coming weeks.

The seven-member committee will present cost estimates for system upgrades totaling \$106 million.

That's close to the \$115 million estimate in a previous study by California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. The advisory panel was created partly to verify needs cited in the Cal Poly study, in the wake of a huge dispute last year over the idea of selling water to San Francisco.

Proponents said the district could spare the amount to be sold by capturing water that is now wasted because of inefficiencies in the aging system. The advisory panel estimates that upgrades could save

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