

## Track stars leap into action at state meet

SPORTS | Page C1



## Swimmer will raise money for disabled

Jeff Jardine, LOCAL NEWS | Page B1



# The Modesto Bee

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75 CENTS



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**Cal Fire firefighters watch** for hot spots as the wind continues to blow at the scene of the Hunters fire near Lake McClure in Mariposa County on Wednesday. Firefighters doubled the containment of the wildfire Wednesday to 40 percent.

## Hunters fire reaches 40% containment

NEW MAPPING DATA SHOWS BLAZE HAS BURNED 677 ACRES IN MARIPOSA COUNTY

By RAMONA GIWARGIS  
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AND PATTY GUERRA  
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Firefighters doubled the containment of the Hunters fire Wednesday. In the morning, it was reported at 20 percent contained, but by

8:30 p.m. it was at 40 percent.

Also, the area reported burned dropped by nearly half, from an early estimate of 1,300 acres to Wednesday night's number: 677. That's because in the initial stages of a wildfire, it's hard to accurately tell what's been consumed, Cal Fire spokesman Daniel

Berlant said. "Today, we were able to GPS map it," he said Wednesday night, which resulted in the more accurate - and much smaller - number.

In an email Wednesday morning, Berlant said, "We made good progress overnight, but with the fire burning near the steep river drainage, there is still a lot of potential this fire could continue to burn. This morning, our crews will strengthen  
**FIRE** | Back page, A10

### TODAY'S SCOOP

#### NATION

**Maya Angelou was a diva of American culture:** an actress, singer, dancer, film director, essayist and Pulitzer Prize-nominated poet, whose mainstream magnetism led her to write verses for Hallmark and recite a poem at the 1993 inauguration of President Bill Clinton. **Page A3**

#### LOCAL NEWS

**Stanislaus County is seeing an uptick** in whooping cough cases, consistent with a statewide count. The Health Services Agency has confirmed 23 people in the county have suffered from the illness this year. **Page B1**

#### BUZZ

**Hunter Jamison is a marathon man.** Jamison joined Teens Run Modesto, a marathon training program, in eighth grade because he wanted to earn his gold trunks, the highest recognition in Prescott Junior High's PE program. However, as training ramped up, Jamison realized he liked running and he had a shot at breaking the school record during the Modesto Marathon in March last year. **Page D1**

#### OPINIONS

**President Barack Obama** is right that it is time to end the combat mission in Afghanistan and bring our troops home. The plan he announced Tuesday will accomplish that by the time the next president takes office. **Page A8**

#### STATE

**As budget negotiations reach their final weeks** in the state Capitol, state Senate leader Darrell Steinberg is pressing for more spending to treat mental illness among inmates and people being released from prison. **Page B5**



#### INSIDE

Buzz **D1**  
Classified **C6**  
Comics **D4**  
Crossword **D3**  
Horoscope **C6**  
Lottery **B2**  
Obituaries **B4**  
Opinions **A8**  
Sports **C1**  
Television **C6**  
Work & Money **A7**

Sunny, breezy

88 | 57

Complete forecast **Page B6**



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## Mom beats long odds to be teacher



Chaidez, center, tries out some geometry interlink cubes on her four daughters.



Debbie Noda dnoda@modbee.com

**Veronica Chaidez** is graduating with a teaching credential from Stanislaus State today after overcoming many obstacles.

## Stan State grad will walk stage for first time

By NAN AUSTIN  
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**TURLOCK** - California State University, Stanislaus, will honor more than 2,200 graduates today and Friday in three ceremonies.

Walking in a freshly unwrapped robe for her first trip across a graduation stage will be one student who beat long odds to earn her credential as a high school math teacher.

Veronica Chaidez was good in math. Not a natural, she said: "It was the one subject my parents could help me in." Her parents had never gone beyond elementary school, and to this day don't see the point in going to school, she said.

In junior high, they encouraged her to quit school and get a job. "You could be an extra income. That's the way they thought," she said. It was only the threat of a truancy fine that forced them to send her back to school.

"I was the epitome of an at-risk



**Chaidez listens** to professor Viji Sundar, Chaidez's mentor, as they select some geometry teaching devices to better engage students.

teen," Chaidez said. She had a baby at 14 but kept studying at Elliott Continuation High School. In her senior year, she left school for good, or so she thought.

As a condition of receiving welfare, however, she went back and got a GED. "Again, I was told to go to school, not because school was important or to make me better. I never really understood what it could do for me," Chaidez said.

Then came a decade of working what she calls dead-end jobs and co-owning a small business with her brother. But the work held no challenge and no inspiration for her four daughters. "I'm just making ends meet right now," she recalls saying to her brother. "What am I going to tell my kids?"

She enrolled in Modesto Junior College, intending to go into social work. **MOM** | Back page, A10

## Water panel: Ask for well info

WILL SUGGEST FARMERS' DATA BE VOLUNTARY

By GARTH STAPLEY  
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Hoping not to alienate farmers, a water committee on Wednesday softened well-data recommendations going before Stanislaus County supervisors in two weeks.

Rather than requiring that well owners provide groundwater pumping information, the Water Advisory Committee is suggesting that people volunteer key data. Also, the information must be obscured before sharing it publicly, the committee agreed.

Committee leaders congratulated the 21-member body for meeting a goal of roughing out an action plan in three months.

"People said we wouldn't get anywhere and we're getting somewhere," said Terry Withrow, a county supervisor guiding the committee.

Wayne Zipser of the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, the committee's chairman, said, "We became united in trying to solve a problem." He referred to fears of environmental catastrophe from too much pumping to counter drought and to feed millions of almond trees on the county's northeast end.

The recommendations are not binding, meaning supervisors can change them in a final version. Four of the five supervisors are farmers.

Hydrogeologist Ray Kabanow noted that no one knows how much water is in aquifers throughout the county. "If we don't know exactly what we have, we don't know what we can take safely," he said.

The county's newly hired water resources manager, Walter Ward, had asked for stronger well-data rules, saying reliable numbers are crucial to addressing groundwater needs. Anticipating resistance from committee mem-  
**PANEL** | Back page, A10

## City Council recall petitions OK'd for circulation

**City Councilman Dave Cogdill**

represents Modesto's District 6.



**FOES OF COGDILL, KENOYER MUST GET SIGNATURES TO GET ON BALLOT**

By KEVIN VALINE  
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The clock has started ticking for two residents trying to remove City Council members Dave Cogdill and Jenny Kenoyer from office over their votes on Modesto's future.



**Jenny Kenoyer** serves as the councilwoman in Modesto's District 5.

registered voters in each council district to qualify the recall for the ballot.

Recall proponents will need at least 3,363 signatures in Kenoyer's 5th City Council District, which encompasses north-central Modesto, and 3,184 signatures in Cogdill's 6th District, which encompasses northeast Modesto.

Fifth District resident John Holsinger is leading the effort

against Kenoyer, and 6th District resident John Walker is leading the effort against Cogdill.

"I'm going to work my backside off," Walker said, adding that he has asked shopping centers for permission to set up tables to gather signatures, will be walking neighborhoods to gather signatures and will be recruiting  
**PEITITIONS** | Back page, A10