



Cannabis microbusiness planned in Temescal Valley

June 3 public hearing set for Planning Commission agenda

An application for a **Conditional Use Permit (CUP)**, for a cannabis business in Temescal Valley is set for a **public hearing** at 9 a.m., **Wednesday, June 3** before the **Riverside County Planning Commission**. If eventually approved by the county **Board of Supervisors**, the business would operate at **23215 Temescal Canyon Road**.

River Releaf is the applicant seeking the permit for a “microbusiness” allowing not only retail sales but also indoor cultivation, manufacturing, and the distribution of cannabis.

The proposed location, an 8,565-square-foot, two-story building, is in a small business park where Dawson Canyon road dead-ends into Temescal Canyon Road. The building sits on 0.43 acres owned by Temescal Valley residents **James and Christie Koontz** and is the location of their former **Top Notch Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning company**.

In the building, 1,500 square feet would be devoted to retail, 4,500 square feet for cultivation, 1,580 square feet for distribution and 985 square feet for manufacturing. There also would be areas for storage, office, employee breakroom, lobby/reception and restrooms.

It’s unclear but the Koontz property might be in escrow and being sold to River Releaf. Unlike the applicants of all prospective development projects in Temescal Valley, River Releaf has demonstrated no community outreach to either the **WeAreTV Development Committee** or the **Municipal Advisory Council**.

The microbusiness would have three security guards and operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Business hours for retail sales would be from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. and the cultivation, distribution, and manufacturing components from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m.

BACKGROUND

While California voters legalized marijuana use in 2016, the **Prop 64** ballot measure gave local governments the authority to decide whether to allow cannabis commerce in their jurisdictions.

Illegal marijuana grows and dispensaries have plagued the unincorporated areas for many years, with residents living adjacent to the activity repeatedly seeking relief from the county. When Prop. 64 passed, county officials decided to legalize cannabis businesses in the unincorporated areas to better control the criminal activity.

Riverside County moved cautiously in deciding how to regulate such commerce, and spent months researching trial and error experiences in other state, county and city jurisdictions further



23215 TEMESCAL CANYON ROAD: River Releaf would operate from this building, the location of the former **Top Notch Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning business**.

along in the process. The Board of Supervisors in October 2018 approved a hefty ordinance governing the permitting process and regulations for cannabis operations within the unincorporated areas.

At the same time, the board made the decision not to tax the enterprise but requires all businesses to have a **Development Agreement** whereby funds are paid to the county to cover the cost of enforcement efforts against illegal operators. The agreement also spells out a “public benefit” – funds for additional public safety services, infrastructure improvements or enhancement programs to be used or given only to the community in which the business is located.

WHY DECISION NOT TO TAX

The decision to not tax cannabis sales was made based on what could be a risky and costly gamble. Even though the businesses would be located only in unincorporated areas, the decision to tax would require a ballot measure for all registered voters in the county. Countywide elections are expensive and having no indication whether the vote would pass, the Board decided the cost of the election was not worth the risk.

Once the cannabis ordinance was approved and to prevent a rush by potential businesses seeking permits, the first year the county only allowed permitting for 69 businesses – 24 retail, 15 microbusinesses and 30 cultivation. Potential businesses were asked to submit a Request for Proposal that went through an extensive screening process and were ranked on a point system. 119 proposals were submitted; 69 were chosen to advance to the next step in the permitting process.

River Releaf was one of the 69 businesses, the only one in Temescal Valley, and now must gain county approval for a CUP and obtain a state cannabis license. Only one of the 69 potential

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

County planners give The Highlands a thumbs up

The county **Planning Commission** earlier this month voted to recommend approval of the second phase of **The Highlands at Sycamore Creek** to the **Board of Supervisors**.

This phase – on 57.3 acres located south of Kingbird Drive and east of Towhee Lane – includes 79 single-family homes, a 3.95-acre nature park, a 6,657-square-foot passive park and two retention basins.

Lot sizes range from 4,050 to 10,300 square feet, with the average lot size for the 79 homes being 6,000 square feet. Larger lots will be located on the exterior of the project with smaller lots in the center. These are the smallest lot sizes for the 110 homes eventually planned for The Highlands' property, owned by the **Wayne Kiley Family**, long-time Temescal Valley residents.

The first phase was approved last year – 16 single-family homes on 8.1 acres with an average lot size of 8,800 square feet. A 0.75-acre pocket park and trails also were approved. The final phase, yet to be submitted for approval, calls for 15 single-family homes built on 34 acres with average lot sizes of 13,300 square feet.

The Highlands will provide recreational opportunities for all Temescal Valley residents. A new public trail is planned to connect to the trail at the county's **Deleo Regional Sports Park** and continue to **Kiley Park**, the almost 4-acre nature park approved in the second phase. This park will have vehicle parking and is within walking distance to the trailhead of the **Indian Truck Trail** in the Cleveland National Forest. To deter vandalism, criminal activity and homeless encampments, the park will have no restrooms.

Additionally, the Kiley Family donation of 56 acres to the county's **Regional Conservation Authority** for wildlife preservation guarantees that nothing can ever be built on that acreage.

A builder has not been selected for The Highlands which will have a homeowners' association. Residents will have the opportunity to comment on the development at a yet-to-be announced public hearing before the Board of Supervisors.

RCTC OKs Traffic Relief Plan; will not seek half-cent sales tax

The **Riverside County Transportation Commission** adopted the final **Traffic Relief Plan** earlier this month and decided not to place a new half-cent sales tax measure on the November ballot to fund many of the projects outlined in the document.

The plan, over a year in the making, identifies \$8.8 billion in infrastructure improvements throughout the county – from highway and rail to local roads, that cannot be financed by the current Measure A half-cent sales tax.

A funding measure could be submitted to voters in a future election, but in the meantime, the plan “will serve as a foundation for upcoming efforts to secure state and federal funding for infrastructure to boost Riverside County's economy,” according to an RCTC news release.

View the plan: <https://trafficreliefplan.org/>



KILEY PARK: An almost 4-acre nature park in The Highlands plan would have trails connecting to the existing trail at Deleo Park and public parking spaces within walking distance to the Indian Truck Trail in the Cleveland National Forest.

CANNABIS MICROBUSINESS ... FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

businesses has applied for and obtained a county permit although there are five, including River Releaf, on the June 3 agenda.

The Board recently voted to do away with the Request for Proposal process as the county moves into the second year of allowing cannabis commerce. Now potential businesses must only apply for a CUP with a Development Agreement.

The approval of the River Releaf Development Agreement also is on the June 3 agenda. The amount of the annual **Public Base Benefit Payments** is calculated by a dollar amount per square foot based on the type of usage: \$16 a square foot for retail, \$4.50 for indoor cultivation, \$4 for manufacturing and \$3 for distribution.

Using this formula, River Releaf would pay the county **\$52,930** annually with a 2 percent rate increase each year. Also paid to the county annually would be a **Commercial Cannabis Activity Public Benefit** of **\$66,162.50** with an annual increase of 5 percent. The Public Benefit funds can only be used here.

If the Planning Commission votes to recommend approval of the River Releaf application to the Board of Supervisors, the next step would be a public hearing before the Board. It is unknown when that would occur.

Because the June 3 meeting is a public hearing, comments on the project can be emailed, prior to the hearing date, to county planner **Russell Brady** – rbrady@rivco.org

Melissa Melendez sworn in as 28th District senator

Former Assemblywoman **Melissa Melendez** has been sworn into office after winning a special election to fill former state **Sen. Jeff Stone**'s unexpired term representing the **28th Senate District**.

Melendez, a Republican, in the May 12 run-off election defeated Democrat **Elizabeth Romero**, a member of the **Riverside County Board of Education** and assistant vice chancellor at **UC Riverside**. With about 50 ballots yet to be counted, Melendez garnered 105,565 votes to Romero's 84,943.

Stone resigned his senate seat Nov. 1 to accept a position with the Trump administration. Melendez on Nov. 4 announced she would pursue Stone's unexpired term instead of seeking re-election to her **67th Assembly District** seat.

Gov. Gavin Newsom called a special election to coincide with the March 3 primary. Melendez and Romero finished first and second, respectively, out of five candidates on the ballot. The run-off was necessary because Melendez did not receive 50 percent plus one of the vote. The May 12 election was staged by mail-in ballot because of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders.

Five candidates in the March primary sought Melendez's former assembly seat. The top two vote-getters were Democrat **Jerry Carlos** with 40,112 votes and Republican **Kelly Seyarto** with 31,057. The two will face-off in November's general election.

Local calls for sheriff service, crimes show decrease in April

Lt. Donovan Brooks, formerly with the **Lake Elsinore Sheriff's Station** but recently transferred, provided statistics on Part I crimes that occurred here during **March** and **April**.

Part I crimes include serious felonies and property crimes; Part II crimes are non-serious felonies and misdemeanors.

The station received **303 calls** for service from Temescal Valley during April – 30 fewer calls than received in March.

Twenty-two calls in March were for Part I crimes: **17** in April. There were no homicides for the two-month period. Here is the breakdown:

Assaults – 2 in March and 2 in April.

Burglaries – 3 and 3.

Grand/Petty Theft – 13 and 8.

Rape/Sex Crime – 0 and 1

Robbery – 0 and 1

Vehicle Theft – 3 and 2.

Theft from Vehicle – 1 and 0.

There were **11 arrests in March** – 1 felony – domestic abuse, and 6 misdemeanors including 2 warrants, simple battery, restraining order violation and public intoxication.

April saw 4 arrests – all felonies – outstanding warrant, battery, domestic abuse, and parole violation.

Vandalisms reported for March and April were both at **5**.

Disturbing the Peace calls numbered **33** for March and **29** for April.



I SOLEMNLY SWEAR: Former Assemblywoman **Melissa Melendez** takes her oath of office from Sheriff **Chad Bianco** in Sacramento on **May 18**. Next to her is husband Navy Cmdr. **Nico Melendez**.

Carlos, a **Lake Elsinore** resident and chairman of the city's **Public Safety Advisory Commission**, is a former deputy sheriff and police chief for the **Riverside Community College District**. **Seyarto**, a **Murrieta** resident, is a **City Councilman** and retired firefighter.

By choosing not to seek re-election to the assembly, Melendez cuts her state legislature tenure short by two years. California term limits only allow legislators to serve a total of 12 years. That equates to six two-year terms in the assembly, three four-year terms in the senate or a total of 12 years for any combination of both.

Melendez was first elected to the assembly in 2012, now giving her four more years before she terms out. Because Stone's term will expire in 2022, she cannot seek another full four-year term of senate service.

She took the senate oath of office in Sacramento on May 18 and chose Riverside County **Sheriff Chad Bianco** to administer the oath.

CENSUS COUNT COUNTS!

By 1st DISTRICT SUPERVISOR KEVIN JEFFRIES

Do You Count? How and where your federal dollars are spent depends a lot on how many people occupy a particular community, city or county.

The boundaries of congressional districts, and state senate and assembly districts also depend on those numbers. Even the individual boundaries of city council wards, school boards, water board directors and County Supervisors depend on the population counts that come from completing your U.S. Census questionnaire.

Unless you want to have more of your federal tax dollars shipped to other states, or other parts of our own state, be sure to get counted. It only takes a few minutes to complete the online questionnaire at:

www.census.gov

What's up at Tom's Farm?

Folks are curious about all those rocks and boulders lining the south parking lot at the Farm. As reported in the last newsletter, in February an application for a conditional use permit had been filed with the county to facilitate a sizable expansion project at Tom's Farm.

If approved, the expansion will be done in phases but cannot begin until flooding issues on the 45-acre property are resolved. And, that's what the rocks are for, according to owner **Sunny Hwang**. When Coldwater Creek that runs along the backside of the property dries up, the rocks will be placed as riprap to better control the flooding and erosion problems.

The **Farmer's Market** and **Cheese & Wine Shoppe** currently are open. The furniture store is being remodeled and should reopen sometime in June. Due to a lack of business and the coronavirus, no date has been set for the reopening of the bar and grill, and hamburger restaurants.

It's a good time to get outdoors; add milkweed to your garden

By **TRACY DAVIS**
Chairman, Milkweed to Monarch Project

During this pandemic, I have been viewing several webinars hosted by **Monarch Joint Venture** and **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**. I found the titles "Monarchs in the Rough," and "Research Reports from the Field: Western Population Research," very fascinating.

They explain the science behind the decline in monarch populations. The western population from last week is not yet uploaded to the archives.

Get outside and garden during the self-isolation and add native narrowleaf milkweed to your yard. Temescal Valley's **7 Oaks Nursery** has many plants available in 1-gallon and 4-inch pots.



Make sure you add nectar flowers to attract the adult butterflies to your newly planted milkweed. The monarchs feed on the nectar and lay eggs on the milkweed – the only plant eaten by monarch caterpillars.

The next largest aid in improving the monarch population is to stop pesticide use. The weed killers kill milkweed AND the insecticide kills the caterpillars -- organic insecticides included. Once you stop using pesticides in your yard, you find that birds and lizards take care of most unwanted pests.

View the posted webinars at Monarch Joint Venture. It's a Minnesota-based conservation group so not all the milkweed sources are applicable to our southern California climate.

[Monarch Conservation Webinar Series](#)



MORE THAN A ROCK PILE: These boulders will soon line Coldwater Creek to prevent flooding and erosion.

Superior Court seeks citizens to serve as civil grand jurors

The **Riverside County Superior Court** is now accepting applications from qualified citizens interested in being nominated to serve as **civil grand jurors** from **Sept. 1, 2020** through **June 30, 2021**.

Duties include but are not limited to investigating the operations of county government, researching matters of civic concern, and inquiring into public offenses. More specifically:

- To act as the public's watchdog by investigating and reporting upon the affairs of local government.
- To weigh allegations of misconduct against public officials and determine whether to present formal accusations requesting their removal from office.
- To review and act upon letters or complaints from citizens of Riverside County.



Grand jurors receive a per diem, plus mileage, to defray expenses. Additional information about volunteering for the civil grand jury and the application can be found here:

[Information for Prospective Grand Jurors](#)

[Grand Jury Application Form](#)

Applications must be postmarked by **June 26, 2020**, and submitted to:

Superior Court of California, County of Riverside, Jury Services Division, P.O. Box 400, Riverside, CA 92502

CORRECTION ...

An error was made in the March 2020 newsletter. The documents submitted to the county by GOCO Hospitality for the Glen Ivy Hot Springs Resort expansion were misstated. Only a Specific Plan had been submitted. We regret the error.

COVID-19 Resources

HERE'S WHAT'S NOW OPEN: Plus short-term vacation rentals



INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS

CORONA-NORCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

<https://bit.ly/2QZMopW>

LAKE ELSINORE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

<https://www.leusd.k12.ca.us/>

CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

Parents, please take a moment to read our weekly newsletter and complete the Fall 2020-21 Return to School Survey.

www.cnusd.k12.ca.us/coronavirus



RIVERSIDE COUNTY CORONAVIRUS WEB PAGE

This page has all the latest information – data, numbers, statistics, resources, news releases, videos and more, and is updated daily:

<https://www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus>

RIVERSIDE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT FACEBOOK PAGE

ARE YOU A BUSINESSOWNER?

<https://rivcoccsd.org/covidbizhelp>

ARE YOU UNEMPLOYED?

<https://www.rivcoworkforce.com/COVID-19Resources.aspx>

ARE YOU A STRESSED?

<https://www.rcdmh.org/Coronavirus>

County of Riverside Coronavirus Information Line Dial: 2-1-1

General information -- no medical advice

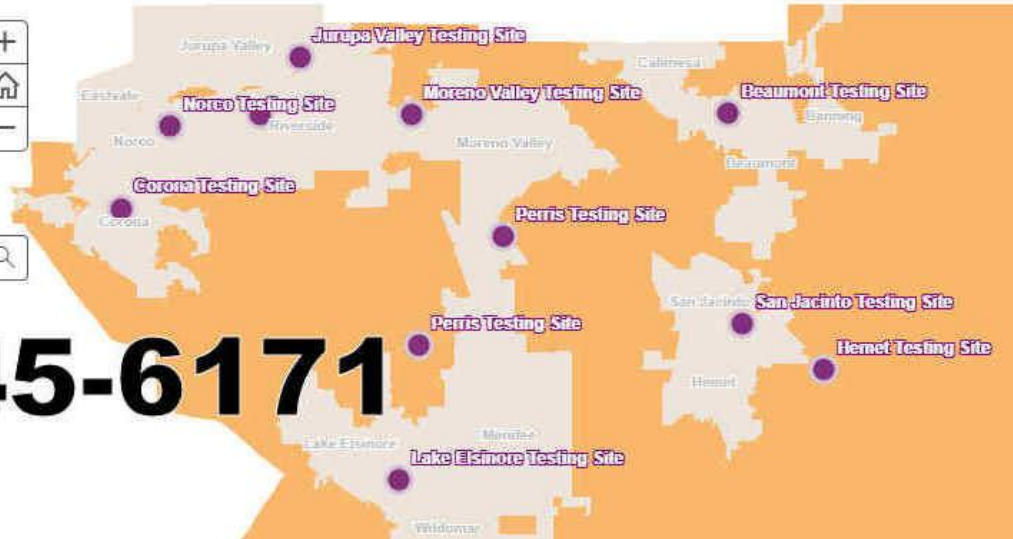
COVID-19 Testing Locations

Testing Locations

What You Need to Know

FAQs

Make an appointment. Click on a location on the map for more information.



800-945-6171



Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 Testing

Cathedral City @ 33520 Date Palm Drive

Corona @ 921 S. Belle Avenue

Indio @ 46350 Arabia Street (Drive-thru)

Lake Elsinore @ 500 Diamond Drive (*Make appointment online: www.projectbaseline.com/study/covid-19 or call 800.945.6171)--Drive-thru

Moreno Valley @ 21401 Box Springs Road

Perris @ 18700 Lake Perris Drive (Drive-thru)

Riverside @ 6115 Arlington Avenue
(Closing: May 30; Drive thru)

Riverside @ 5261 Arlington Avenue
(Opening June 2; Drive-thru)

San Jacinto @ 790 S. State Street



Beaumont @ 390 Oak Valley Parkway

Desert Hot Springs @ 12-800 W. Arroyo Drive

Hemet @ 43935 Acacia Avenue

Jurupa Valley @ 5293 Mission Blvd.

Mecca @ 91391 66th Avenue

Norco @ 3737 Crestview Drive

Perris @ 21565 Steele Peak Drive

Temecula @ 41000 County Center Drive

Appointment required.
Call **800.945.6171.**

Appointment required. Call
888.634.1123 or visit
<https://lhi.care/covidtesting>.



Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

Riverside University Health System – Behavioral Health supports the behavioral health and wellbeing of Riverside County. We realize that news of the outbreak of an infectious disease can raise concerns and increase the stress of everyday life – even though the location of the outbreak may be far away, and you fully understand that there is a very low risk of getting sick. These are very normal reactions and these concerns can become larger if you have family and friends in parts of the world experiencing the outbreak or if you know of people who are doing extensive travel.

It is important to remember that you need to care for your own physical and mental health at times like this – and that support and resources are available if you feel a need for help or talk to someone.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP COPE WITH EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

1. Manage Your Stress

- Stay informed. Refer to credible sources for updates on the local situation.
- Stay focused on your personal strengths.
- Maintain a routine.
- Make time to relax and rest.

2. Be Informed and Inform Your Family

- Become familiar with local medical and mental health resources in your community. Attend community meetings for resources/education.
- Avoid sharing unconfirmed news about the infectious disease to avoid creating unnecessary fear and panic.
- Give honest age-appropriate information to children and remember to stay calm; children often feel what you feel.

3. Connect with Your Community

- Keep contact with family and friends.
- Join community and/or faith groups.
- Accept help from family, friends, co-workers and clergy.
- Reach out to neighbors and friends with special needs who may need your help.

4. Reach Out and Help

- If you know someone affected by the outbreak, call them to see how they are doing, and remember to keep their confidentiality.
- Consider an act of kindness for those who have been asked to practice social distancing, such as having a meal delivered or offering to drop off homework at their doorstep.
- Locate and volunteer at a charity or organization near you.
- Encourage friends and family to get involved with you.

5. Be Sensitive

- Avoid blaming anyone or assuming someone has the disease because of the way they look or where they or their families come from.
- An infectious disease is not connected to any racial or ethnic group; speak up in kindness when you hear false rumors or negative stereotypes that foster racism and xenophobia.

Consider seeking professional help if you or a loved one are having difficulty coping.

Be Proactive!

1. Stay informed with information from credible sources.
2. Stay connected with friends, family, and community groups.
3. Help others in need by volunteering and donating time and resources to trusted organizations.
4. Keep a positive attitude

Resources

- [Call 2-1-1](#) referrals for health and social services
- Behavioral Health CARES Line (800) 706-7500
- Substance Use CARES Line (800) 499-3008
- [24/7 Mental Health Urgent Care](#)
 - Riverside (951) 509-2499
 - Palm Springs (442) 268-7000
 - Perris (951) 349-4195

Riverside University Health System - Public Health

www.rivcoph.org/

or call 2-1-1 for more information

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condition

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Allowance
Program**

1-866-431-3517

For more information on these programs please visit:
socialgas.com/assistance



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Programs are funded by California utility customers and administered by Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas®) under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON also has Customer Assistance Programs:
<https://www.sce.com/safety/coronavirus>



Park Guidelines

Under the guidance of Riverside County Public Health and Emergency Services, RivCoParks asks that you adhere to the guidelines below in an effort to protect public health and slow down the rate of transmission of COVID-19.

DOs

Observe Social Distancing

6 feet required at all times

Cover your Face

Go Fishing

Go on a Hike

Ride your Bike

Walk your Dog

Ride your Horse

Read a Book

Go Birding

DON'Ts

Gather in Groups

Visit if you are Sick

Have a Barbeque

Enter Closed Areas

Play on the Playground

Work out using Park Equipment

Leave your Trash

Use Splash Pad

Use Shelters or Picnic Equipment

Any areas where social distancing cannot be maintained due to excessive crowding will be closed again.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT
Serve on the 2020-2021

Riverside County Civil Grand Jury

- **Ensure that county, city and local government agencies operate responsibly, legally, and ethically.**
- **Improve local government with your recommendations.**
- **Respond to citizen complaints about local government.**
- **Assure that our local tax dollars are spent wisely.**
- **Evaluate conditions at our county's jails and prisons.**

Information: www.riverside.courts.ca.gov or 951-777-3644

Application deadline: June 26, 2020



Qualifications:

1 yr. Resident of Riverside County • U. S. Citizen • 18 or older

Knowledge of English • Sound judgment and character

Daily stipend plus mileage and parking

The role of a Grand Jury differs substantially from that of a trial jury. It is a fulltime assignment. Duties of the Civil Grand Jury include: To act as the public's watchdog by investigating and reporting upon the affairs of local government; weigh allegations of misconduct against public officials and determine whether to present formal accusations; review and act upon letters or complaints from citizens of Riverside County. Jury members take the oath of office on June 26, 2020, meet four days per week in downtown Riverside, and serve for one year. Grand Jury proceedings are closed to the public.