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NEW WAY TO WASH
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Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS ISSUE

Taking care of business

Chamber joins countywide business lobbying group

BY MELODY HANATANI | Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN, L.A. The Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce is hoping to have its voice heard in Sacramento, joining more than 44 business organizations across Los Angeles County in the formation of a lobbying group.

Business leaders announced on Tuesday the creation of the Los Angeles County Business Federation (BizFed), kicking off a new coalition that represents the interest of more than 70,000 businesses and the 1.2 million people that they employ.

The chamber, which represents close to 1,000 businesses in Santa Monica, is one of the founding members and will have a hand in setting the advocacy agenda for the coalition. The

director of government affairs for the chamber, Samantha O'Neil, will serve on the coalition's board of directors.

"The coalition is bringing all the voices together," O'Neil said. "The more people, the stronger the voice, the easier it is going to get heard."

The issues near and dear to the business community here cut across jurisdictional lines, matters such as congestion and parking, public transportation and workforce housing, O'Neil added.

Currently, the various business organizations and chambers individually have their own lobbyists. In Santa Monica, the chamber has been a supporter of causes like the Exposition Light Rail and Subway to the Sea and issues related to sustainability.

The new coalition brings together all of those different voices into one loud shout.

"We are bringing all these diverse businesses together to talk about the same issues and to advocate for jobs, growth and creating a better community in Los Angeles," O'Neil

said. "We know that improving communities (has) improved the business environment as well."

To join, organizations have to pay anywhere from \$100 to \$500, depending on their revenue, according to BizFed's Web site.

The new organization is meant to give more lobbying power to the larger business community in the county, both emulating and countering other advocacy groups, including one of the most powerful in Los Angeles — unions.

While the group is a response to how organized some of the other groups are, it isn't just about labor unions, O'Neil said.

"We look at that model and say it's working for them why not try it for us as well," she said. "Los Angeles County is so diverse just in space and types of different businesses and types of problems and solutions out there, it's good to get them in one room and advocate for them."

Maria Elena Durazo, the executive secretary-treasurer for

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Photo courtesy SMC

SMC student group discovers unknown species of spider

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

DEATH VALLEY When Luis Suarez spent a hot September afternoon collecting every ant and spider in sight, the college sophomore did so with aspirations of being the Christopher Columbus of entomologists, hoping to come across a bug whose species was undiscovered.

The long shot of an opportunity came true for Suarez and his fellow Santa Monica College classmates earlier this month when they learned they had picked up an undiscovered species of jumping spider.

"I was hoping it would happen because the (National Park Service) told us that it hasn't happened before in Death Valley and there's always a possibility to discover a new species," Suarez said on Tuesday. "I was looking everywhere ... in the weirdest places, like under bushes."

The environmental studies student was among the more than 30 SMC students that participated in Professor William Selby's one-unit field studies course in the fall semester, spending a three-day weekend in late September studying the geologic history of Death Valley.

As part of the trip, the students spent one afternoon assisting the National Park Service (NPS) in its efforts to catalogue all the plants and animals in Death Valley, picking up nearly every living creature they saw crawling across the sand.

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BEING EXTRA CAREFUL: SMC student John Speargas uses an 'aspirator,' a device that allows a person to suck up small animals and safely deposit them into a glass or plastic vial without hurting them and without the need to handle the creature.



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Waterless car wash makes a splash

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE Using water to rinse off car wash solution is so yesterday, especially in Santa Monica.

City Hall is awaiting word on whether the Metropolitan Water District will award an estimated \$123,000 grant that would be used to purchase waterless car wash products to clean off its fleet of automobiles as well as vehicles for the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

"As part of the Sustainable City Plan, we're supposed to reduce water by 20 percent by 2010," said Kim O'Cain, the water resources specialist for City Hall. "My sole job is to save water."

The announcement of the grants is expected to come in April, O'Cain said.

One of the contenders who hopes to supply City Hall is Los Angeles-based Lucky Earth Inc., which developed a chemically-free waterless car wash, creatively called "Waterless."

If City Hall wins the grant in the spring,

the product will also be offered to the Santa Monica Lexus and Toyota dealerships, both of which have expressed interest in sustainability and in greening their businesses, O'Cain said. All of the public schools in Santa Monica will also have access to the product, which would be encouraged for school car wash fundraisers, O'Cain said.

Mar Vista couple Jeff and Lisa Peri developed the concept for the Lucky Earth car wash more than a year ago when they learned their oldest daughter Kayla was chronically ill with high fevers because she

was sensitive to chemicals. The couple removed all chemicals from their home and started looking for a car wash product that was also chemical free.

"We decided to start making our own product for our own personal use and I asked my husband to find something waterless," Lisa Peri said. "I was kind of half joking but my husband Jeff found tons of products that were waterless but all had chemicals."

The Peris enlisted the help of a scientist

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL Threat was a hoax

The lockdown of Lincoln Middle School Tuesday afternoon was the result of a hoax, police and school officials said.

A caller, reportedly a female juvenile, reported that someone with a gun was on the campus near the end of the school day, but police set up a perimeter, searched the area and determined the report was bogus.

Lincoln students were escorted by police and school staff off campus to a staging area at the corner of Euclid Street and California Avenue. They were then released to their parents.

"The lockdown and the dismissal progressed smoothly," Tim Walker, deputy superintendent of SMMUSD, said in a press release issued Tuesday night. "District administration was at the site, and communication was sent to all parents of Lincoln Middle School and John Adams Middle School by an automated dialing system."

"The collaborative efforts between the police, PTA, site and district staff focused on the safety and security of students and staff," Walker wrote. "School will be in open tomorrow and additional staff will be on both sites to assist any children who require support to deal with the events of this afternoon."

"The District is thankful that no one was injured during the events of today and we will use this incident as a learning opportunity to ensure that all of our schools are even more prepared for any crisis."

DAILY PRESS



TOUGH GOING

Santa Monica Rugby Club's Kelly Serfoss (center) fights off several members of the L.A. Rugby Club during a victory on Saturday. The team is 3-0.

Photo courtesy Cortney Crego



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Photo courtesy SMC

PROUD STUDENTS: A group of 30 SMC students took part in Professor William Selby's (right) one-unit field studies course during the fall semester, spending a three-day weekend in late September studying the geologic history of California's Death Valley.

Students wait for species to be catalogued

FROM SPIDER PAGE 1

The specimens, which included more than 300 ants and 21 spiders were sent to an entomologist in New Mexico who recently notified Selby that among the bugs was a spider whose species has not yet been identified.

Out of the 11 species of ants picked up, one has never been seen before in the United States, said Susan Teel, the director of the California Mediterranean Research Learning Center, an NPS program that works with Selby's field courses every semester.

According to experts, there are more than 40,000 species of spiders that have been identified, approximately 3,000 of which can be found in the United States.

Selby, who has offered the field courses at the college for more than 20 years, said on Tuesday that it is often university researchers and graduate students that typically discover new species, not community college students.

"It's often university researchers discovering new species all the time and there are millions of species on the planet we still haven't catalogued or identified so you can see our goal is mainly education," Selby said referring to the intent of the one-unit field course. "We don't do as much research at a community college ... so it's a little bit more unusual for us to go out and be able to collect a new species."

Three different groups of students each ended up collecting the unidentified spider species, the specimens were found at 4,000, 9,000 and 10,000-foot elevation, Teel said.

"The fact that the students were part of the discovery adds a level to the learning experience," Teel said. "You just can't duplicate that."

It could take years before the spiders are assigned a species name and properly identified in scientific publications. The students could have a say in the name of the spider species, however, Suarez said it hasn't crossed his mind.

melodyh@smdp.com

Couple develops waterless wash method

FROM WASH PAGE 3

and after a month and a half of tweaking, they came up with "Waterless."

The product contains two different types of coconut, which emulsifies the dirt while the silicone encapsulates it into small balls, Peri said. The residue is wiped off with a microfiber towel, leaving the car free of new scratches.

The product had its retail debut in the Santa Monica Whole Foods store a few months ago.

Lucky Earth plans to open a waterless car wash across the street from the Santa Monica Airport on Bundy Drive next month, accommodating up to eight cars at one time. The car washes will range from \$20 to \$30, depending on whether a

customer wants an interior detail.

One percent of all proceeds from the sale of "Waterless" go to Heal the Bay.

Before unveiling "Waterless," Lisa Peri introduced the product to City Hall officials and even demonstrated it on the Santa Monica Pier last summer.

"My feeling was if the city wasn't willing to at least say they thought the technology was good, why would the average person trust it," Peri said.

O'Cain said she was skeptical of the product at first but was surprised by the results.

"It looked like it had been detailed," she said.

melodyh@smdp.com



Photo courtesy Lucky Earth Inc.

TESTING IT OUT: A group from Lucky Earth Inc. demonstrates the new product at Santa Monica Beach this past summer.

current life, leisure & the arts
Friday just got a whole lot more entertaining