

# SOUTH COUNTY Briefings:

JULY 2010



South County Economic Development Council

## Rapidly Growing Food Cluster Driving Jobs and Economic Growth in South County

### *Otay Mesa is Home to 38 Firms Specializing in Food Manufacturing and Distribution*

South County Economic Development Council (SCEDC) recently released a food manufacturing and distribution industry study that highlights this South County cluster's positive economic impact. The study not only reveals the economic perspective but provides a road map for business leaders and organizations to cultivate the ever-growing food manufacturing and distribution industry in South County.



**The food manufacturing and distribution industry is growing in South County. Currently, the region has generated more than \$184 million in economic activity from this cluster.**

"This study is our gateway to recruit food manufacturing companies and to build on this growing industry," said Cindy Gompper-Graves, CEO of SCEDC. "We will leverage business incentives such as tax savings advantages through the Enterprise Zone Program and Foreign Trade Zone to attract these companies. Additionally, we will maximize the economic impact of the food manufacturers by looking for local suppliers and service providers to support this industry and create business-to-

business connections. The findings will assist SCEDC and its constituents in stimulating business investments and job growth in South County."

In the south San Diego region, the food manufacturing segment comprises 175 firms and approximately 5,050 jobs. The Otay Mesa food manufacturing segment employs approximately 1,000 employees, which equates to more than \$41 million in payroll.

"These companies are creating jobs in South County," San Diego City Council President Ben Hueso said. "When you look at the outflow of employees in the mornings going north on Interstate 5 and Interstate 805, out of San Diego, it is obvious we need jobs in South County so we can retain that skill set here and citizens can enjoy a better quality of life with less time spent on the road."

In addition, this industry cluster is generating nearly \$184 million in economic activity for the San Diego region. Most of the food manufacturing activities on Otay Mesa are concentrated in tortillas, frozen foods, baked goods, and cheese and dairy products.

"The food cluster study recognizes the synergy that exists when businesses locate in a submarket that offers excellent labor force participation, as well as State Enterprise and Foreign Trade Zone tax benefits, and an inventory of available properties," said Linda Greenberg, commercial real estate agent, Colliers International Real Estate. "The study is a valuable tool in attracting other food-related businesses to the Otay Mesa area."

The study also reveals that the wholesale distribution segment is growing  
*(continued on page 6)*

## Port of San Diego Moves Forward on Bayfront Development

After nearly a decade of planning, the Port of San Diego and city of Chula Vista have given the go-ahead for the development of the Chula Vista bayfront, one of the largest planned waterfront developments in the state and one that promises an economic boost to the city and region.

The culmination of the multi-year effort came at a special joint hearing on Tuesday, May 18, when the Port, the Chula Vista City Council, the city's Redevelopment Corporation and the Chula Vista Planning Commission took several actions, marking the completion of all local approvals before the project moves for considerations by state agencies.

Central to the actions was the certification of the 12,000-page Environmental Impact Report by the Port and city, and adoption by the Board of Port Commissioners of an amendment to the Port's Master Plan for the Chula Vista planning efforts, and adoption by the city

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## What's Inside?

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## Elevated Toll Road Will Connect San Ysidro Border Crossing to Playas de Tijuana

– By *Flavio Olivieri*  
Executive Director DEITAC

An elevated four-lane toll road linking the San Ysidro border crossing with Playas de Tijuana is coming soon to Tijuana. An alternative to the Ensenada Toll Road, the new road called El Segundo Piso, will be built directly above Avenida Internacional, the main route from the border to Playas de Tijuana. Running parallel to the International Border fence, the toll road will offer U.S. visitors direct access to Baja California's coastline, help alleviate travel fears for residents and tourists and provide a more secure route by avoiding the traffic-ridden streets below.

The city has opted not to use taxpayer funds for the \$200 million project, selecting a Mexico City-based consortium to build it, in exchange for the right to operate it for 30 years and collect tolls.



***The new overhead road will bypass the congestion of Avenida Internacional and provide direct access from the International Border to Playas de Tijuana.***

Mario Escalante, commercial director for one of the two groups in the consortium, Union Presforzadora, said the road will include closed-circuit cameras and other security features. Escalante said construction is expected to begin within two months, with completion in about two years. The toll will be about \$2 and it will

apply in both directions. Escalante said the consortium is studying the possibility of a discount program for frequent travelers, but no decision has been reached.

According to city officials, the elevated toll road will be far less costly than building another road through the neighborhoods just south of the border fence. Close to 70,000 vehicles use Avenida Internacional each day in both directions. Studies show that about 25,000 drivers a day would use the new toll road. Based on these figures, El Segundo Piso has the potential to generate \$18.2 million in toll revenues annually.

Locals and tourists alike visit Playas de Tijuana for the water sports such as surfing, bodyboarding and kayaking as well as the Monumental bullring and Arts and Culture House attractions. The borough is also home to the Tijuana campus of the Universidad Iberoamericana as well as major commercial and entertainment centers making it a popular place to spend the day.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By **Bill Clevenger**, South County Economic Development Council

First and foremost I wish to express my appreciation for your vote of confidence in electing me as the President of South County Economic Development Council (SCEDC). During this tough economic recession, I can think of nothing more important than assisting our companies in their efforts to remain in business, grow and provide more job opportunities for the people of South County.

On behalf of all of the members, I want to express our appreciation to Rosa Lopez Gonzalez, past president of SCEDC. Rosa took the helm of the SCEDC during one of the worst economic times in our nation. Her commitment to assisting the existing business community during these tough times was evident in the many accomplishments of the SCEDC, including its business outreach program, the loan program and the several companies that the SCEDC assisted in bringing to South County. However, what many people do not know is that Rosa's commitment extends beyond what she does for our organization. For example, Rosa took it upon herself to host Enterprise Zone workshops for small businesses at her office. For her undying commitment to our business community,

strong commitment to the South County and for her year of service as SCEDC president, the county of San Diego, the city of Chula Vista and Congressman Bob Filner presented Rosa with proclamations at our recent annual meeting. Congratulations Rosa and thank you for your service.

I look forward to continuing on the path she laid in pursuing excellence for the SCEDC and the entire South County region. During this next year, I will be calling upon our membership for input, to utilize your expertise and help spread the word about the bright economic future that awaits South County. Together, we need to recognize opportunities for development, capitalize on our strengths and assist each other in growth. Thank you, in advance, for your forthcoming assistance as we build our binational region with the boundless economic opportunities that await.



## COUNTY

### County of San Diego Creating Jobs, Pumping up Local Economy By Reinvesting in Facilities

— By Supervisor Greg Cox

Creating jobs and boosting the local economy has been one of my top priorities during this recent economic downturn. One way the county of San Diego is doing that is by putting its money where its mouth is — replacing old, inadequate facilities and, as a result, spending money that will positively impact local jobs and businesses.



**Supervisor Cox stated that San Diego County is putting people to work to replace our aging infrastructure.**

In recent months, the county has created thousands of jobs by spending hundreds of millions of dollars to replace aging infrastructure. Here is a partial list, along with their economic impact.

**County Operations Center:** The county is replacing an outdated, inefficient campus of buildings that is more than 40 years old. This campus will be more energy efficient and provide better access for the public. Cost: \$188.5 million for the first phase and \$120 million for the second phase of the project, anticipated to begin at the end of this year. Jobs created: the project currently employs 300 to 350 per day on site, and 25 to 30 architects, engineers and specialty technicians.

**Medical Examiner/Forensic Center:** The county last year opened a new, state-of-the-art 84,000-square-foot facility that can accommodate the region's needs in a large disaster. The County Veterinarian will be in the

same building so that the lab will be able to respond quicker to human and animal threats like avian flu and West Nile virus. Cost: \$85 million. Jobs created: 120 to 140 on site per day.

**Las Colinas Women's Jail:** Plans are moving forward to replace the aging Las Colinas Women's Jail with a 1,216-bed facility. Cost: \$308 million. Jobs will be created, but the numbers are yet to be determined.

**County Libraries:** This summer, the county expects to break ground on a new library in the community of Lincoln Acres. Cost: \$1.8 million. Jobs will be created, but the numbers are yet to be determined.

The county of San Diego is putting people to work. By paying cash for the Medical Examiner/Forensic, the county, saved \$142 million in financing costs. By utilizing cash financing instead of debt financing, taxpayers will save \$125 million on the first phase of the County Operations Center project and hundreds of millions of dollars on other projects.

The county is known for its fiscal discipline and has earned some of the highest credit ratings of any urban county in the nation.

## NATIONAL CITY

### Aquatic Center Coming to Pepper Park

The Community Development Commission of National City recently signed a 30-year lease with the Port of San Diego to build a new aquatic center at Pepper Park. This summer, National City will apply for a \$3.1 million state construction grant to build the aquatic center in Pepper Park located adjacent to the Sweetwater River Channel.



**The new aquatic center at Pepper Park will bring a myriad of recreational and educational offerings to the Chula Vista waterfront.**

The aquatic center will provide recreational and educational offerings to the community

such as lessons in kayaking and sailing and environmental classes for children and adults.

The 5,500-square-foot construction site is large enough for indoor and outdoor facilities. Plans for the aquatic center call for public art, large glass windows and community space for meetings or receptions. The existing restrooms will be demolished and relocated to the new facility.

An aquatic center of this caliber has been a long overdue goal for National City since 2004. Several temporary facilities were installed in the Pepper Park parking lot six years ago. The Port District will vote on the lease terms during the next commissioner meeting.

## IMPERIAL BEACH

### American Legion Planning \$7.5 Million Dollar Housing Project For Veterans

The city of Imperial Beach has plans to enhance its community by supporting veterans through an affordable housing mixed-use development. At the Imperial Beach City Council meeting in May, officials agreed to enter into exclusive negotiations with Hitzke Development Corporation. The plan under discussion calls for the demolition of the American Legion hall and its small apartment complex on Palm Avenue and replacing it with a 21-unit affordable-housing project and new organization hall. According to city officials, the veteran's housing project will be a first for the city.

Mayor Jim Janney, who proposed the idea, said that plans are in the very early stages but that the project has the city's support. He said the three veterans organizations in town all need support, but the American Legion post is near the city's gateway on Palm Avenue and would benefit the entire community.

"This is good for the American Legion and a good catalyst project for Palm Avenue," Janney said. "We've worked on our backyard, which is the beach, and now we have to work on our front yard."

Building plans include 18,720 square feet of new construction divided between a 15,120-square-foot housing section and the 3,600-square-foot American Legion hall. The total cost for the project is estimated at \$7.5 million and,

# REGIONAL ROUNDUP

*(continued from page 3)*

if plans move forward, the building could be completed in fall 2012. According to reports, the developer has requested financial assistance in the way of \$3.8 million from the city's Redevelopment Agency.

City officials are giving top priority to veterans for the affordable housing opportunity, but American Legion must also make the apartments available to everyone because of public funding used for the project. The new American Legion hall will be used for fundraising dinners, meetings and other gatherings.

## CHULA VISTA

### USD's Center for Education for Policy and Law Conducts Chula Vista University Research Phase

The proposed university in Chula Vista is beginning a vital research phase in planning in what would be South County's only four-year university. The university is planned to be on 335-acres in the Otay Ranch area of Chula Vista. The city is collaborating with the University of San Diego's Center for Education for Policy and Law (CEPAL) to conduct a study that will make recommendations for the next step of the project.

"The study is a higher education analysis of the variables that exist in the city and county in regards to the demand for a South County university," stated Denny Stone, economic development manager for the city of Chula Vista.

In this study, CEPAL will assist the city of Chula Vista by providing research in specific critical areas that need to be addressed to achieve the overall goal of establishing an institution of higher learning in Chula Vista. The research findings are also intended to be used for the recruitment of a higher education partner and potential funders for the new campus.

The multi-faceted research program will explore such topics as determining the criteria and procedures necessary to establish a four-year university and identifying the tools that other California communities have used to attract and establish an institution of higher learning in recent years as well as communities that have failed to do so.



***South County's long-time dream will soon be one-step closer to creating a Chula Vista University, the first four-year college in the region.***

The study will also take a closer look at the population of the South Bay. The study will explore the college-going rates of South Bay high school students, as well as determine the growth of the South Bay student population. It will also take a closer look at existing institutions of higher education in San Diego and identify who is underserved.

"The views of people in the South County are a very important part of this research process," stated Stone. "The study will ascertain the views of the key leaders at local and regional, public and private postsecondary intuitions about the establishment of a four-year university in Chula Vista."

The study will conclude at the end of this summer. The recommendations will be analyzed by the city council and then South County will be one-step closer to the dream of a four-year university in Chula Vista.

## CORONADO

### Three Lighting Proposals Considered for Coronado Bridge

The 40-year-old Coronado Bridge may have a bold new look in time for its 50th birthday in 2019. In June, The Port of San Diego unveiled three lighting plans to add decorative illumination to the 2.1-mile curved expanse stretching over San Diego Bay.

These finalist plans came from Peter Fink who is proposing dramatic pillar lighting; Kahn / McInerney Associates / ARUP with its plan that uses wind turbines as art and energy, and the Bideau Company that came forward with a plan for zigzagging lights on the outside roadway

faces. According to veteran architect Robert Mosher, who helped design the bridge more than four decades ago, the Coronado-San Diego bridge was designed with a lighting plan in mind.

After weighing in on community opinion, the selection committee will make a recommendation on lighting to port commissioners in early August. Commissioner Lee Burdick said the \$4 million to \$5 million project could be put on hold if the port can't raise that amount from private donors and foundations. The port has spent \$50,000 on the initial design for what commissioners hope will be a signature art piece.



***Final designs for the Coronado Bridge lighting project.***

## SAN DIEGO

### Governor's Office Designates San Diego as an Innovation Hub

With innovation at the forefront of the state's economic recovery, the Governor's Office of Economic Development recently announced the designation of San Diego as the latest state-certified Innovation Hub. The iHub Initiative, which already boasts six regional hubs, seeks to advance the state's national and global economic competitiveness by stimulating regional partnerships, economic development and job creation around research clusters, according to Joel Ayala, director of the Office of Economic Development.

Launched in March 2010, Governor Schwarzenegger's iHub Initiative provides a platform for research clusters, start-up companies, government entities, business groups and venture capitalists by leveraging assets such as research parks, technology incubators, universities, and federal laboratories to foster innovation and job creation statewide. For decades, San Diego's research corridor has served as a springboard for technological and entrepreneurial business development that helps generate and transform innovative ideas into viable products and companies. The experience San Diego will bring to the table as a flourishing iHub is expected to be a tremendous asset to the statewide network.

The San Diego iHub will focus on the convergence of three clusters: mobile health, biofuels, and solar energy and energy storage.

"For years, the San Diego innovation economy has proven to be very effective in leveraging the region's geographic, research and workforce strengths to support business creation and innovation," stated Director Ayala. "San Diego's participation in this forward-thinking initiative strengthens the state's innovation network and positions the region for further growth in the national and global arenas."

*Bayfront (continued from Page 1)*

of amendments to its General Plan and Local Coastal Program.

Before the project can proceed, the Port, city and Pacifica Companies, a partner in the waterfront development, must gain approval from both the State Lands Commission and the California Coastal Commission. The Port is expected to seek State Lands Commission approval of a critical land exchange with Pacifica Companies this fall. In 2011, the Port and city will ask the California Coastal Commission to approve amendments to the bay front master plan.

Envisioned is the redevelopment of 556 acres along the community's waterfront that will include a 1,500- to 2,000-room resort and conference center, three smaller hotels ranging from 250 to 750 rooms, 1,500 residential condominiums, including affordable units, a mix of office and commercial uses, and scenic gathering spaces around the harbor. Parks, public promenades and bike trails are envisioned throughout the entire bay front. Central to the plan is the protection and restoration of sensitive habitats, protection of wildlife and

expansive open space -- 238 acres in all -- that will include a signature park, nature trails and bike paths.



***The Chula Vista bayfront masterplan will redevelop 556 acres along the waterfront and will include a resort and conference center, three smaller hotels, residential condominiums, office and commercial space and outdoor spaces.***

The bay front development is projected to generate \$1.3 billion for the regional economy over a 20-year period, including more than \$11.5 million in annual tax revenues. A new, major resort hotel and conference center could create more than 2,000 permanent jobs and more than 6,500 construction jobs.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Atlantis Group LLC  
Frida's Restaurant  
Musick, Peeler & Hickman  
La Maestra Community Health  
Dental Office Plaza Fiesta  
Bonita Business & Professional Association  
Bensoussan Estate Services  
Health Without Borders  
San Diego Aluminum Products  
Bricehouse Kobey LLC  
CleanTech San Diego  
Torrey Pines Bank

## Save the Date

The 20th Annual Economic Summit will be held Sept. 17, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mark your calendars as this is one event you will not want to miss! Nationally recognized keynote speakers as well as the ever-popular elected officials panel will be event highlights. Table sales are under way. Contact (619) 424-5143 or via email at [cindy@southcountyedc.com](mailto:cindy@southcountyedc.com) to make a reservation.

## SANDAG Report Shows Positive Future Progress For South County

While the recession has slowed growth in the San Diego region and South County, this effect is only short term. Long-term growth will continue throughout the region and will be marked with an ever-changing population and redefined concept of who and what is San Diego, according to Beth Jarosz, senior analyst with the SANDAG 2050 Regional Growth Forecast.

"It is important to think about our future and the way the economy will change our lives forever," said Jarosz. "Not only the way of transferring communication and technology will be changed, but the area's economic index will change too by the constant growth of an aging population, and a boost in both the job market and housing industry."

Today, more than half of all San Diegans are born outside of California. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 45 percent of San Diegans were born in California while the other 55 percent were foreign born, natives born outside the United States, or natives born in the United States but not in California. However, these numbers are set to change over the course of the next 40 years. Future projections indicate a majority of San Diegans will be born in-state. The growing amount of in-state births will rise from approximately 45,000 in 2010 to 55,000 in 2050. While domestic and international migration has fluctuated greatly over the past 40 years, they will level off by 2020 and remain at those current levels through 2050.

The population expected to show the largest increase in growth is that of 60-year-old and older bracket. Statistics from the SANDAG report show that in the entire San Diego region this population was approximately 3.13 million in 2008, and it is expected to increase to 4.38 million by 2050. Comparatively, in the South County, this population was approximately 461,800 in 2008, and is expected to grow to 699,300

by 2050.

Likewise, with the aging of the baby boom generation, the amount of deaths in San Diego will more than double from the current 10,000 deaths per year to 45,000 deaths per year by 2050.

Currently there are 145,632 jobs in the South County. This figure is expected to increase to 264,054 by the year 2050. Much of this growth will be seen east of state Route 125 and in the state route 54 / 125 corridor.

The 2050 housing projection anticipates some 210,210 dwellings needed, up from 146,092 dwellings available in the current year. The southern portion of the SR-125 corridor as well as south of SR-54 will be

the areas of highest concentration of new housing in the South County.

In summation, future trends for both the San Diego region as well as the South County show a growing population with the largest growth in the aging population sector.

*Food Cluster (continued from Page 1)* in Otay Mesa. Currently, there are 283 firms in the San Diego region that offer wholesale food distribution services and provide 4,700 jobs. Approximately 30 wholesale food distribution firms are located on Otay Mesa and employ approximately 460 workers.



***The South County food manufacturers comprise approximately 5,050 jobs, which equates to more than \$41 million in payroll.***

The leading companies in the cluster include Cantare Foods, Circle Foods, Delimex and S & S Bakery. Several of the firms in this industry cluster are located in the Otay Mesa community primarily due to the availability of industrial space, affordable price of land and proximity to the international border. According to the study, many of the firms in the cluster obtain their produce from suppliers in Baja California and western Mexico and sell it to wholesalers in the United States. However, products such as meat, pork and poultry are purchased from suppliers in the U.S. and exported to northern Mexico for distribution. Another reason cited by the food manufacturers was the Foreign Trade Zone and the Enterprise Zone that offer tax incentives to companies locating in South County.

A copy of the study can be found at [www.SouthCountyEDC.com](http://www.SouthCountyEDC.com).

## Save the Date

The Elected Officials Reception will be held Sept. 23 from 4 to 6:30 p.m. To be held at the Coronado Promenade, the event is sponsored by the city of Coronado, Port of San Diego and SCEDC. RSVP to (619) 424-5143 or [cindy@southcountyedc.com](mailto:cindy@southcountyedc.com)

## Working Committees of the SCEDC

**Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**Marketing and Membership**  
**Workforce and Education**  
**Loan & Finance**  
**Public Policy**

For more information or to join any of these committees, contact:  
South County Economic Development Council  
phone 619-424-5143 fax 619-424-5738  
[Cindy@southcountyedc.com](mailto:Cindy@southcountyedc.com)

## SCEDC Hosts Community Leaders Spotlight

In June, the SCEDC hosted the Community Leaders Spotlight event. SDG&E's new leadership of Jessie Knight Jr., CEO, and Mike Niggli, president and COO, spoke about the company's position in San Diego and goals for the future. An open expo allowed visitors to learn about SDG&E's Energy Resource Plan and how it will benefit the South County while meeting SDG&E experts in the areas of energy, efficiency, the environment and emergency preparedness. Attendees could also get information on programs and services available to residents and businesses.



**Mike Niggli, SDG&E president and COO, and Jessie Knight Jr., SDG&E CEO, are joined by Cindy Gompper Graves, SCEDC CEO, at the Community Leaders Spotlight event.**

## New Board of Directors and Officers Welcomed

The SCEDC is proud to announce its 2010 to 2011 Board of Directors and officers.

These individuals have pledged their leadership to help us reach our goals of improving and enhancing the South County's and border region's economy, image and quality of life, while heightening public awareness of Southern California's most desirable location to live, work and dream.

## 2010-11 SCEDC Board of Directors

Honorable Ben Hueso City of San Diego	Bill Clevenger, GEOCON
Honorable Dukie Valderrama S.D. Unified Port District	Flavio Oliveri, DEITAC
Honorable Greg Cox County of San Diego	Alfonso Ruiz Padilla, CDT Tijuana
Honorable Ron Morrison City of National City	Virgina Partridge Project Design Consultants
Honorable Jim King City of Imperial Beach	Pablo Velz, Sharp Hospital
Honorable Pamela Benssousan City of Chula Vista	Scott Alevy, Triology
Honorable Barbara Denny City of Coronado	Christine Moore, AT&T
Rosa Lopez Gonzalez, Union Bank	Jim Janney, O.A.P. Packaging
Norma Hernandez, Education Liaison	Greg Hulsizer, Southbay Expressway
Scott McMillin, McMillin Communities	Tony McCune, McCune
Ileana Ovalle, Cox Communications	Chrysler/Jeep/Dodge
Richard D'Ascoli, PSAR	Janine Pairis, Southwest Strategies LLC
Raj Chopra, Southwestern College	Steve Miesen, Allied Waste
Angelika Villagrana San Diego Regional Chamber	Joe Ellis, Solidus Property
Jim Neal, Parsons Brinckerhoff	Doug Paul, Paul Design Group
Ahmad Solomon, Sempra	Hector Vanegas, SANDAG
Dan Biggs, Designed Internet Solutions	Pete Mabrey, Scripps Mercy Hospital
Bill Tunstall, Business Liaison	Shannon Brown
	Brown Marketing Strategies
	Ricardo Macedo, Security Business Bank
	Scott Parker, Vibra Bank
	Dale Ganzow
	San Diego Business Journal

## 2010-11 SCEDC Officers

Bill Clevenger, President
Greg Hulsizer, First VP
Christine Moore, First VP
Bill Tunstall, Second VP
Norma Hernandez, Second VP
Richard D'Ascoli, Secretary
Ricardo Macedo, Treasurer
Rosa Lopez Gonzalez, Past President

# U.S. Open Sandcastle Competition to Celebrate 30th Anniversary

The U.S. Open Sandcastle Competition, the largest sandcastle-building contest in the United States, is celebrating its 30th milestone anniversary this summer. In honor of the occasion, a new category has been added to the competition. The new category, Creative Castles, Classic California, will be added to the amateur competition and calls for sand creations that capture all things representative of that classic California beach feel and experience.

“Imperial Beach is known as ‘classic Southern California,’ and, after 30 years, the competition has become part of a Southern California tradition,” said Debbie Longley, committee chairperson for the USOSC. “This year, we are encouraging people to re-create their favorite classic Southern California memories.”

The USOCS features two days of castle-building fun. On Saturday, Aug. 7, the kids take to the sands in the Kids 'N Kastles competition. Amateurs and professionals compete on Sunday, Aug. 8, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to create life-size sand masterpieces. In addition to the action on the sand, a street fair on Seacoast Drive offers spectators the opportunity to check out more than 140 vendors. On Pier Plaza stage, local bands will provide entertainment throughout the weekend. The street fair will be open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

The event that started out with 30,000 attendees has grown to attract 325,000 over a three-day weekend. The competition began in 1980, when a group of Imperial Beach residents formed a committee to host the first event after being inspired by a similar competition in their sister city of White Rock, British Columbia. Since then, the competition has helped to put South County on the

map by attracting tourists not only from San Diego County and Southern California, but also attention nationwide and internationally.

Admission to the festival is free. The U.S. Open Sandcastle Competition is a nonprofit event with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the Boys and Girls Club of Imperial Beach. For more information, visit [www.usopensandcastle.com](http://www.usopensandcastle.com).



**After 30 years of dedication to sand lovers the U.S. Open Sand Castle Competition is celebrating with a new category. Photo credit: Brett Alan Photography.**

*The South County Economic Development Council is funded in part by grants from the cities of Chula Vista, Coronado, Imperial Beach, National City and San Diego, the County of San Diego and the Port of San Diego and our members.*

[www.southcountyeconomic.com](http://www.southcountyeconomic.com)

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## BRIEFINGS:



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