

Stay Safe, Smart for the Summer

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft

We face some environmental challenges in the coming months, but nothing as daunting as what we experienced with COVID-19.

If we take the challenges of drought, potential power outages, and fire danger as seriously as we did COVID, we'll weather this storm, too.

"We're in a drought, the driest year on record," according to Doug Linney, Alameda resident and President of the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) board of directors.

EBMUD is asking users to reduce water usage by 10 to 15%. Linney joined my June 11 Mayor's Town Hall to provide tips for conserving water.

He recommends repairing leaks, taking shorter showers, replacing lawns with drought-resistant landscaping.

EBMUD is offering rebates to support water-efficient gardens — up to \$2,000 for residential users, and \$15,000 for commercial customers. Visit ebmud.com for more information on saving water, and to download a rebate application.

"As temperatures rise, we may experience rolling blackouts," says Ann McCormick, President of Alameda's Public Utility Board which oversees our municipally owned electric utility, Alameda Municipal Power (AMP).

McCormick, another Town Hall guest, explained that AMP is part of the state power grid and must comply with requests from the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) which manages electricity supply and demand on the state's high-voltage power lines.

Rolling blackouts will last one to one and one-half hours,

and AMP will alert customers ahead of time.

You can help reduce the chance of power outages by conserving energy when demand is highest, between 4 PM and 9 PM. Run major appliances and charge EV's before or after those hours; keep your home cool by closing blinds and shades during the day.

Also avoid using mylar balloons whose metallic coating conducts electricity and can cause a short circuit, power surge, or fire when they come in contact with power lines. Visit alamedamp.com or call 510-748-3900 for more information and to sign up for Alerts.

"California's fire season is now year-round, and smoke from wildfires impacts air quality," says Alameda Fire Department Division Chief Mike Williams.

Williams advised Town Hall listeners to prepare for emergencies ahead of time: have three days of food and water per resident, medications, and food for family pets; keep one N95 mask per resident in your home for protection from smoke; have an air purification system to use when air quality is poor.

On "Spare the Air" days, remain inside with doors and windows closed, and don't use wood-burning stoves or barbecues. Stay hydrated in hot weather. Watch the entire Town Hall at www.youtube.com/cityofalameda.

There won't be a 4th of July Parade this year, but Alameda Recreation and Parks Department is holding a city-wide "Porch of July" decorating contest, which also includes yards, front windows, and vehicles.

Enter to win cool prizes, or
MAYOR: Page 9



Richard Bangert

Building 360 was constructed in 1953, four years before the first satellite orbited the Earth, and when the Navy was still using propeller-driven seaplanes for reconnaissance.

Astra Expanding at Point

Rocket manufacturer to renovate massive Building 360

Richard Bangert

Everything is looking up at Alameda Point rocket manufacturer Astra. Contracts to launch small satellites are up, partnerships are up, and capital investments in the company are up. And now the company is ready to expand its facility.

Astra is headquartered at 1900 Skyhawk Street in Building 360, next to the Main Street Soccer Field. The building was formerly used for repairing propeller and jet engines and is still owned by the Navy due to groundwater contamination that is undergoing remediation.

Astra renovated the southern portion of the building in 2018 and 2019 under a license agreement with the City of Alameda to begin manufacturing rockets. Its rocket engines are tested in a facility across the street that was formerly used by the Navy to test jet engines.

In April 2021, the company received the go-ahead from the Navy and regulators to finish renovating Building 360 to expand rock-

et production. On May 25, the city issued a building permit for the northern portion of the 180,000 square-foot building.

What does Astra do? Astra was formed to economically launch small satellites into low Earth orbit from virtually anywhere. A parking lot would suffice, if properly licensed. Astra's rockets are constructed from aluminum, rather than more expensive carbon fiber, and are small enough to be loaded into a shipping container and easily transported to a launch site.

An "Astra Rocket Factory Tour" video of Astra's manufacturing and testing facilities at Alameda Point can be viewed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/BKWG4RMgcgY>

Where's the money coming from? Astra's merger with investment company Hologic earlier this year made available \$300 million for operations and expansion. The merger also means Astra becomes a publicly traded company on the NASDAQ stock exchange. Astra currently has contracts for 50 launches valued at \$150 million.

One of its contracts is with NASA to launch small satellites to observe

tropical cyclones. Another source of contracts will be with Planet Labs, which operates the world's largest constellation of imaging satellites.

Why does Astra need regulatory approval to renovate a building? Due to the ongoing remediation of groundwater under part of Building 360, a monitoring plan for indoor air was required during renovation of the building to ensure safety of the workers.

In the plan approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), and the California Water Board, the EPA and DTSC spelled out specific vapor detection devices that they wanted used during the renovation, among other things.

The renovation will include demolishing and replacing the roof, updating utilities, windows and doors, and sealing the floor with a special vapor barrier paint to prevent solvent vapors from entering the building.

What about the Surplus Lands Act? The California Surplus Lands

ASTRA: Page 9



Alameda Police Department

Police and fire department members investigate what caused this automobile to rollover on Monday, June 28.

Collisions Plague City

Ekene Ikeme

A rollover collision Monday, June 28 prompted the closure of Buena Vista Avenue between Chapin Street and Charles Street, according to APD. Police were urged residents to use alternative routes for their morning commute.

The cause of the collision hadn't been determined. APD said. No other details were immediately available.

Vehicular Homicide

A man was arrested after the vehicle he was driving fatally struck a man at the intersection of Walnut Street and Lincoln Avenue Sunday, June 27.

Michael Williams, 30, was arrest-

ed and charged with gross vehicle manslaughter while intoxicated after his vehicle collided with the unidentified victim just before 10 p.m. Upon arrival, officers found the unresponsive man lying in the road with major injuries, according to a report from the Alameda Police Department (APD).

The victim died at the scene. Williams remained at the scene and was taken into custody. He was also charged with a DUL.

Members of APD's Major Accident Investigation Team and the Violent Crimes Unit were called to take over the investigation.

Williams is being held at Santa Rita Jail in Dublin. His arraignment was held on Tuesday, June 29.

Council to Review McKay Center

Ekene Ikeme

City Council will hold a public hearing to discuss Historical Advisory Board's (HAB) decision to approve a resolution to demolish six buildings at the Alameda Federal Center site at its July 6 meeting.

The council will consider a "Call for Review" of HAB's decision to approve the demolition of two main buildings and four accessory buildings at Alameda Point Collaborative's (APC) request on May 6. APC wants to use the site to build the McKay Avenue Wellness Center.

The buildings in question are located on a 7.5-acre parcel near the intersection of McKay and Central avenues. The wellness center would occupy 3.65 acres of the 7.5-acre site.

The site once housed Federal Government offices. In 1978, the center was included in Alameda's Historical Buildings Study List. It stated that there was potential historical merit, but further study was required. In 1996, a historical evaluation of the property, commissioned by the General Services

Administration (GSA), an independent agency of the United States Government, concluded that the site was not eligible for the list because there had been so many alterations and demolitions on the property. HAB's based its decision to approve the Certificate of Approval for demolition was based on GSA's analysis.

On May 17, Councilmembers Trish Herrera Spencer and Tony Daysog filed a Call for Review of HAB's decision. According to Alameda Municipal Code Section 30-25, final decisions of HAB may be called for review by two councilmembers.

Several of the arguments for the call for review were posted on the meeting memorandum with a counterpoint from city staff. One argument stated there were steps to nominate the property for the National Register of Historic Places. City staff, however, claims the National Register nomination process is administered by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). In 2003, SHPO con-

firmed GSA's report. A GSA Historic Preservation Officer wrote to city staff on May 3 saying, "recent actions don't warrant reopening the nomination process."

Another argument stated that demolition of the building would take advantage of voters who voted in favor of Measure A in the April 2019 Special Election. The measure reaffirmed the council's decision to rezone the McKay Avenue area from Federal Facilities to Office and to remove the Government Combining District Designation. On the ballot language for Measure A, the plan was to reuse the existing buildings. However, city staff said Measure A does not compel the applicant to reuse or demolish buildings on the property, or prohibit the demolition of buildings.

APC plans to build a wellness center that will provide various forms of medical services, assisted living and supportive care for senior and homeless individuals.

City Staff is recommending council approve the demolition of the buildings.

INSIDE

HOMETOWN NEWS
Fire Wire Page 2
Police Blotter Page 5
 All the doings of Island safety & law personnel

GARDENING
Benefiting Birds Page 3
 Using your garden to stem the tide of losing birds

DEVELOPMENT
Helping Kids Page 11
 Free and confidential support a phone call away

ALAMEDA'S TOWNS
Take a tour Page 12
 Dennis Evenosky sets the stage for a historical journey

CONTENTS

HOMETOWN NEWS... 2
THE CITY PAGE... 3
OPINION... 4
POLICE BLOTTER... 5
CLASSIFIED... 6
FUN IN THE SUN... 9
ALAMEDA HISTORY... 10

Alameda Sun is a publication of Stellar Media Group, Inc. 3215J Encinal Ave. Alameda, CA 94501
Locally Owned, Community Oriented
News: (510) 263-1470
Ads: (510) 263-1471
Fax: (510) 263-1473

Visit us Online at
www.AlamedaSun.com
 Like or Friend us on Facebook
 Follow us on Twitter at AlamedaSun

Alameda Sun Almanac

Date	Rise	Set
Today	5:51	20:35
July 2	5:51	20:35
July 3	5:52	20:35
July 4	5:52	20:35
July 5	5:53	20:34
July 6	5:53	20:34
July 7	5:54	20:34

Three Towns Make One City



Joseph Lee Painting

To celebrate the 1864 completion of the San Francisco & Alameda Railroad, A. A. Cohen commissioned Joseph Lee to create two paintings. This one features Bird's Hotel with Cohen's first train on the wharf in the distance. This area became Woodstock, one of three towns that became part of the City of Alameda 8 years later. See the companion painting and read about all three towns on page 12.

PRRST STD
 US POSTAGE
 PAID
 OAKLAND, CA
 PERMIT #789

Alameda Sun
 3215J Encinal Ave.
 Alameda, CA 94501