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TIME TO SHOW DEL PASO SOME LOVE

Reopening businesses need neighborhood support

BY DEBBIE ARRINGTON

Del Paso is North Sacramento's Main Street, a reflection of its vibrant and diverse neighborhood. Many of its businesses have survived generations. Others are new additions and a part of Del Paso's future.

All of them are struggling now as we cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

Like all of California, Del Paso Boulevard felt the impact of the pandemic, particularly in the shutdown of hundreds of local businesses. Now, those businesses need their community's help as they reopen and attempt to get back on their feet.

"A few restaurants are doing dine-in, a lot are doing take-out," said Raef Porter, Executive Director of the Del Paso Boulevard Partnership, which promotes local businesses and development. "Other businesses are starting to open; each week, more and more and more, which is great."

During the shutdown, the Partnership worked with the North Sacramento Chamber of Commerce to help any way they could. That included distributing face masks for our business' employees from the State of California, helping businesses apply for city and federal stimulus money, as well as

helping local businesses navigate this new normal.

"Most business are now in Stage 2 (of reopening)," Porter said. "Salons and barber shops should be the next businesses to reopen."

About 300 businesses are part of the Del Paso Boulevard Partnership, which

"If you want businesses to survive and a vibrant Del Paso Boulevard, people need to come shop and dine."

Raef Porter
Executive Director, Del Paso Boulevard Partnership

represents an area of North Sacramento stretching from Highway 160 to just west of El Camino Boulevard.

The mood among these businesses is hopeful but careful, Porter noted. "People want to get open, but they're being very cautious about it. People are excited to finally

be able to reopen, but they want to do things the right way."

To continue to flatten the COVID curve, businesses are taking precautions including new cleaning protocols, encouraging face masks and offering curbside service.

One idea that's gaining traction is moving more restaurant seating outdoors, another strategy to lessen the spread of coronavirus.

"It's Farm-to-Fork al Fresco," Porter said. "Outdoor dining attracts people. It helps create a welcoming atmosphere and a more vibrant business area. We're now thinking, how can we do that Boulevard-wide?"

To encourage this move outdoors, the Partnership is increasing security, cleaning up graffiti and power washing sidewalks. This clean-up also helps alleviate an old problem that predates the pandemic – safety concerns.

"The best way to deal with safety concerns is to attract more people as much as possible," Porter said. "Homeless sleeping on the sidewalk is a visible sign that a corridor is not an activated, vibrant area. But we've been working hard to provide a better sense of security."



Prancing on Del Paso Boulevard, the statue of 1886 Kentucky Derby winner Ben Ali reflects Del Paso's past. Owned by James Ben Ali Haggin, Rancho Del Paso was home to the world's largest thoroughbred horse farm. Photo by Anne Stokes

Why support Del Paso businesses? It makes for a more livable neighborhood. Benefits range from more dining and shopping options, greater access to needed services, bringing back local jobs and increasing sales tax revenue.

How can you help your neighborhood businesses continue to serve Del Paso for years to come? Shop local, eat local and support your neighbors.

Said Porter, "If you want businesses to survive and a vibrant Del Paso Boulevard, people need to come shop and dine."

HAPPY TO HELP CUSTOMERS

Grocery Outlet reaches out to nonprofits, while Schiff Estate Services shifts to online sales

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

As the only supermarket on Del Paso Boulevard, Grocery Outlet has been a magnet for locals since it opened in 2018. One bonus: The chain is known for its discounted brand-name merchandise.

When the March 19 stay-at-home order was announced, and grocery stores were included on the list of essential businesses, the market was immediately flooded with customers.

"Everybody was unsure about how long the lockdown would last, so they were buying essentials just in case," says Mie Yang, co-owner with husband Sean Wellons.

"Some customers were upset over things we can't control, like being low on toilet paper and cleaning supplies, but we haven't had any serious issues," she says.

Quite the opposite. "So many customers thank us for being open and coming to work every day," Yang says. "Their feedback has been amazing."

As it turns out, Grocery Outlet helped solve one problem that no one anticipated: The closure of nonessential businesses strangled the bulk-food supply chain for many community nonprofits that help feed the underprivileged. Also, all those who lost their jobs because of the pandemic were suddenly among those in need. So, the nonprofits turned to Grocery Outlet for their supplies, benefiting from its low prices.

"We feel grateful our doors were open so they could continue to help people," Yang says.

Among the organizations that shopped the store were the Hope Center, the Roberts Family Development Center, the Neighborhood Wellness Foundation, Hmong

"So many customers thank us for being open and coming to work every day. Their feedback has been amazing."

Mie Yang
Co-owner, Grocery Outlet

Youth and Parents United and the Calvary Christian Center.

"What's amazing is the amount of help we have in this community, and the number of individuals willing to go above and beyond," Yang says. "While everybody else was at home, these people came out to help families in crisis."

Adapting to change

Before the pandemic, Schiff Estate Services specialized in organizing and running estate sales, liquidating the contents of homes by inviting the public in to open houses.

They also accommodated people who were unable to hold estate sales by moving the contents of their homes into their massive Schiff Estate Sale Building on Del Paso Boulevard and selling it there.

That part of the business model is still in place, and an in-store visit opens the door to thousands of items, from original art and antiques to cabinets and cameras, at prices much lower than new.

"Things have changed as estate sales have partially shut down," says Danyelle Petersen, co-owner with business partner Gary Schiff, both credentialed appraisers.



SCHIFF ESTATE SERVICES

Danyelle Petersen and Gary Schiff of Schiff Estate Services saw estate sales dry up during the COVID lockdown, but not the need to liquidate estates. Photo by Anne Stokes
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GROCERY OUTLET

Grocery Outlet stayed open during the pandemic response, helping both customers and nonprofits, say co-owners Sean Wellons and Mie Yang. Photo by Melissa Uroff
2308 DEL PASO BLVD. • 916-561-2355 • WWW.GROCERYOUTLET.COM

"We're doing limited days and hours by appointment, but we do plan to hold our first in-house estate sale toward the end of July."

Petersen and Schiff have "ramped up our online presence" at www.estatesales.net, posting photos, descriptions and prices of merchandise, and keeping their customer base informed about new arrivals by email.

Customers can now look at merchandise

online and buy it then or there, or make an appointment and come to the store to purchase it.

"One gentleman was bored sitting at home, saw an item he liked, called and came down, and spent \$2,000," Petersen says.

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WHATEVER YOUR APPETITE, THEY'RE READY TO SERVE

King Cong Brewing Co. and Stoney's Rockin' Rodeo welcome patrons

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

Once again, you can grab a table on the sprawling patio at King Cong Brewing Co., admire the murals and choose from 16 beers on tap or some in cans to go along with that bahn mi sandwich or pizza.

Or how about a heap of smoked St. Louis-style pork ribs or a tri-tip sandwich at Stoney's Rockin' Rodeo, with down-home country music as a backdrop?

These are just two of the restaurant-bars along Del Paso Boulevard that have opened since Sacramento County reinstated in-house dining services — with a hearty side of safety restrictions, of course.

On March 19, the executive order to stay at home came just as King Cong owner Cong Nguyen was in the midst of initiating his brewery's program to can and distribute its beers.

"We had beer in fermentation tanks and suddenly had to switch from kegging any of it for draft to packaging it in cans," Nguyen says. "It turned out that about 80 percent of our to-go curbside sales were canned beer, though we did have a full to-go menu."

The process allowed Nguyen and brewmaster John Anaya to accelerate their canning program, distributing four-packs of 16-ounce cans to

"Our opening symbolizes progress on the boulevard and a sense of normalcy and hope for everyone."

Cong Nguyen
Owner, King Cong Brewing Co.

stores and markets throughout Sacramento.

"Through this whole process, we've strengthened our brand awareness and online to-go presence since mid-March," Nguyen said. "I'm hoping we can maintain that and strengthen our company as a whole."

King Cong Brewery is "the heart and soul of Del Paso Boulevard," Nguyen says. "Our opening symbolizes progress on the boulevard and a sense of normalcy and hope for everyone."

Country bar expands

Stoney's Rockin' Rodeo owner Kevin Lutz and his team "were poised for an awesome 2020" when the pandemic turned the world upside down.

Lutz had expanded the interior of his landmark country nightclub-saloon, built a new façade, and

purchased the property next door for further expansion. "We'll have one of the best outdoor seating areas in Sacramento, but it's on hold for now," he says.

Like so many other dining venues, Stoney's transformed to the curbside takeout-delivery model in March. But he was well-prepared when the announcement finally came that allowed dine-in services. Helping was the Paycheck Protection Program he received. "The loan has given us an opportunity to figure out how to keep the business open," Lutz says.

Stoney's has defined what a country bar should be since opening in 2007. One signature is its line-dancing program, drawing overflow crowds from as far away as the Bay Area.

"We have a lot of people missing dancing," Lutz says, but the Texas two-step is sitting it out for the time being. "We're really learning how to be a restaurant and move on that," Lutz says. "When everything is safe in Sacramento, maybe we can have that dance floor staked out again."

Lutz looks at the situation as "as a pause in life," he says. "We'll figure out how to get through this."



KING CONG BREWING COMPANY

King Cong Brewing Co. packaged its beer in cans, which proved popular for curbside sales. Photo by Anne Stokes

1709 DEL PASO BLVD. • 916-514-8041
WWW.KINGCONGBREWING.COM



STONEY'S ROCKIN' RODEO

Stoney's Rockin' Rodeo was "poised for an awesome 2020" before the pandemic hit, says owner Kevin Lutz. The landmark country nightclub-saloon has just finished major renovations. Photo by Anne Stokes

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FURNITURE FOR THE HOME, 'FURNITURE' FOR THE EYES

Casa Bella Galleria and That Guy Eyewear serve the community in very different ways

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

I can't think of anything you might need for your home that we don't have," says Shane Curry of Casa Bella Galleria. He and his wife, Rhoda Santamaria-Curry, are co-owners of the full-line furniture store, which they opened 16 years ago.

Their inventory runs a gamut from living room, dining room and bedroom sets to lamps, art and décor.

"We've worked to position ourselves with a lot of American-made products, (many from) California and Oregon," says Shane Curry.

"We're optimistic that as the stores reopen, things are going to be better than before."

Shane Curry
Co-owner, Casa Bella Galleria

Much of that inventory is built with sustainably harvested hardwoods such as maple and oak, with finishes that are free of volatile chemicals. Pieces are upholstered in eco-friendly, proprietary fabrics. "Frankly, American-made furniture is a better product," Curry says.

Casa Bella Galleria is known for its low prices, partly enabled by low overhead and

tight margins. "We're the tenant in our own building," Curry points out.

"You don't have to spend a fortune to get a well-made product that will last," he says. "I've never had a customer come back and say, 'Oh, I saw this for less somewhere else.' If you do find (the same item) for less within four months, we'll match the price and give you back 5 percent of what you paid us."

As for Del Paso Boulevard continuing to open up, Curry says, "We're optimistic that as the stores reopen, things are going to be better than before."

Optometrist coming soon

Dennis Peterson is an optician with a mantra. "Glasses are a fashion statement," he says.

His optical shop, That Guy Eyewear, an essential business during the pandemic, demonstrates his point. It looks more like an art gallery with its dramatic décor and striking displays of more than 1,500 designer and refurbished vintage eyeglass frames in a wonderland of colors and styles.

Beyond that is Peterson's commitment to community. "We want to reach out and provide eye-care services to the underserved and children," he says.

A major piece of that is scheduled to happen by mid-July, when an optometrist plans to join Peterson on site to conduct routine eye exams.

"All the pieces are in place for that to happen," Peterson says. "This is not really a high-volume type of business. But when



THAT GUY EYEWEAR

As an essential business, That Guy Eyewear stayed open during the pandemic. Photo by Anne Stokes

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CASA BELLA GALLERIA

Owners Shane Curry and Rhoda Santamaria-Curry specialize in American-made furniture at affordable prices. Photo by Melissa Uroff

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you can book 10 to 15 patients a day, that immediately changes things in so many ways, (including) staffing and walk-in traffic.

"There's nothing else like us around here."

As a group of children will soon discover. "We'll be bringing kids over for eye exams" through the Roberts Family Development Center, which assists underserved families, says Peterson.

Not to overlook the eyeglass frames part of the business. A basic pair of glasses with single-vision lenses sell for \$69, and bargain-priced close-out frames are part of the inventory.

"I think this will be one of the most viable businesses on the boulevard once our optometrist is in place," Peterson says.

BEAUTIFYING SACRAMENTO WALLS — AND PETS

Never Board and Graffiti For Good create murals while
Del Paso Grooming keeps dogs looking good

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

Like so many businesses along Del Paso Boulevard, Never Board Graphics Company is a family affair.

“We’re designers and graphic artists first who own a print house, and we work as a partnership,” says co-owner John Blair, who shares ownership with wife Ten and their son, Finn.

These days, much of their daily business is digital and focused on printing and shipping labels, stickers, decals, banners and signage. An

“We like to promote small business in the area, so we tend to work with local companies.”

John Blair
Co-owner, Never Board Graphics Company

in-house retail gallery featuring local artists is on hold.

“We like to promote small business in the area, so we tend to work with local companies (including) King Cong Brewing Co. and Woodlake Tavern,” Blair says.

The Blairs also produce and promote fine art in a big way through their nonprofit Graffiti For Good. “Never Board is the way we’re able to do Graffiti For Good,” Blair says.

Graffiti For Good channeled the creative energy for the murals that

decorate many of the boulevard’s buildings, including the amazing one on the King Cong Brewery building. It references the 1963 Japanese release “King Kong vs. Godzilla.” John Blair painted that one himself.

“We had eight murals go up last year, through Wide Open Walls, and another 10 go up on the boulevard,” he says. Wide Open Walls is a non-profit whose mission is to celebrate public art.

Part of Graffiti For Good’s program is the open-source back wall of the Sacramento News & Review building, the one facing an alley.

“The wall gives local muralists and artists a space to paint,” Blair says. “It constantly gets whitewashed and we paint over it. It’s a way for people to spend time at their craft, beautify an area and have a safe space to practice their art.”

By its very nature, street art involves social distancing, which dovetails with the Blairs’ eventual goal of an art festival.

“We’re really pushing the SN&R back wall, which was the first graffiti wall in Sacramento,” Blair says. “We hope to have an event in the alley and SN&R parking lot when (it’s safe). That’s what we’re most excited about – people coming out to paint and congregate with other artists.”

Grooming is an art form

There were more than 400 voicemails waiting for co-owner-operator Butch Kizzia and wife Heather when they

reopened their Del Paso Grooming salon. All were from dog owners anxious to have their pets trimmed and styled.

What about cats? “We don’t do cats anymore; they’re too dangerous,” Butch Kizzia says.

As opposed to a nervous 80-pound dog? “I would put my money on the cat any day,” he says.

Del Paso Grooming was a pet grooming shop for about 14 years before the Kizzias bought it four years ago.

“Grooming truly is an art form,” Kizzia says. “I’ve seen people who didn’t have any artistic talent and they didn’t do too well with the overall look of the dogs.”

Typically, the Kizzias will handle from eight to 12 dogs a day, but “we have an employee who can do that number by herself,” he says.

Part of their pandemic safety protocol is for customers to call from their cars when they arrive for their appointments.

“We go out into the parking lot and pick up their dogs,” he says. “Doing that is a lot better for our senior customers especially. The dogs get excited going into the shop, or they don’t want to go in at all, so it’s best to greet our customers at their cars. It’s something we might continue to do in the future.”

Anything else? “Make sure your puppies have their shots.”



NEVER BOARD

Never Board co-owners John and Ten Blair work with several other small businesses along Del Paso Boulevard. Their nonprofit, Graffiti For Good, produced many of the murals that decorate local buildings.

Photo by Anne Stokes

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FARM-TO-FORK GOES AL FRESCO

Sidewalk dining options come to Del Paso Boulevard

BY DEBBIE ARRINGTON

Enjoying good food or beverage in the open air; what better way to make the most of a Sacramento summer evening?

Expect open air dining and drinking options to increase in the coming months as Del Paso Boulevard restaurants and other venues move tables outside as part of new COVID-19 precautions.

Outdoor dining not only takes advantage of pleasant warm evenings, it's safer for customers. Experts say coronavirus has a much lower risk of transmission outdoors.

Many local restaurants already have embraced the region's Farm-to-Fork movement, offering locally grown or produced food and beverages. Making the most of Sacramento's good weather adds another layer of appreciation.

“Expect to see lights, tables and diners out and about on the Boulevard soon.”

Raef Porter
Executive director, Del Paso Boulevard Partnership

“We call it ‘Farm-to-Fork al Fresco,’” says Raef Porter, Executive Director of the Del Paso Boulevard Partnership.

With the help of the Partnership, businesses are cleaning up sidewalks in anticipation of setting up tables and chairs. Others are opening impromptu patios in former parking spaces.

Leading the way in Del Paso's outdoor migration are Stoney's Rockin' Rodeo, Southpaw Sushi, and King Cong Brewing Co.

“We're going to be working with other restaurants to expand the program,” Porter says. “But expect to see lights, tables and diners out and about on the Boulevard soon.”



Ready for a cold one? King Cong Brewing Co. welcomes customers outdoors.



With a new street-side patio, Stoney's Rockin Rodeo is among the first Del Paso Boulevard restaurants that will offer al fresco dining. Photos by Anne Stokes

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Woodlake Tavern currently may be closed to customers, but its kitchen hasn't stopped cooking. The days during the COVID pandemic shutdown may have been among the busiest for the Del Paso Boulevard landmark restaurant.

“We've made **2,800 to 3,000 meals a day** for needy families in Sacramento,” says Woodlake Tavern partner and executive chef Deneb Williams, who also serves as board chair of the Del Paso Boulevard Partnership. “We never missed a beat.”

Woodlake Tavern was one of about **30 local restaurants** that took part in the **Great Plates Delivered program**, which supplies seniors and people at high risk of COVID-19 with **nutritious meals** so they don't have to leave home. The program is orchestrated by the City of Sacramento.

“It kept all of our staff working during the entire pandemic,” Williams says.

In addition, Williams teamed with other Sacramento restaurateurs to create **Family Meal**, a similar program that **provides meals** for needy families. Family Meal includes Mulvaney's B&L, Canon, Binchoyaki, Camden Spit & Larder and Allora, which Williams also co-owns.

“As hospitality professionals, we partnered with five other restaurants and founded Family Meals,” Williams says. “I'm incredibly proud of what we've done. We wanted to see what we could do to give back. It's been an amazing transformative experience.”

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!



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700 Darina Ave.
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916-649-8040

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1810 Del Paso Blvd.
916-921-0103

BEST BUDGET INN

986 El Camino Ave.
916-925-7502

BEST CLEANERS

2201 Del Paso Blvd.
916-929-4172

BEST DONUTS

2501 Del Paso Blvd.
916-641-1443

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2422 Del Paso Blvd.
916-692-8305

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2213 Del Paso Blvd.
916-333-2732

BOULEVARD LAUNDRY

2503 Del Paso Blvd.
916-274-4147

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1217 Del Paso Blvd.
916-583-1138

BURLY BEVERAGES GIFT SHOP & TASTING ROOM

2014 Del Paso Blvd.
916-333-3879

CARL'S JR

899 El Camino Ave.

CASA BELLA GALLERIA

1511 Del Paso Blvd.
916-921-0434

CECIL'S AUTO BODY

259 Arden Way
916-922-0263

CELLULAR KINGZ

289 Arden Way
916-333-4616

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920 Del Paso Blvd.
916-568-3237

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863 Arden Way
916-641-8226

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1121 Del Paso Blvd.
916-662-4715

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973 Arden Way
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916-568-7381

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916-904-6183

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916-889-5743

RED STAR BATTERIES

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916-317-8719

ROYAL PRESTIGE

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916-646-5477

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2200 Del Paso Blvd.
916-924-7988

SACRAMENTO NEWS & REVIEW

1124 Del Paso Blvd.
916-498-1234

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1309 Del Paso Blvd.
916-923-1443

SHELL GAS

2400 Del Paso Blvd.
916-927-2521

SHIFT COFFEE HOUSE

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916-999-0601

SO-CAL SPEED SHOP

1715 Del Paso Blvd.
916-924-9744

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283 Arden Way
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1616 Del Paso Blvd.,
916-550-2600

STEAM CLEANERS, INC.

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STONE'S ROCKIN' RODEO

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SACRT TRAINS TO GET LOW-PROFILE UPGRADE

Sacramento-built light rail vehicles part of system-wide modernization

by Debbie Arrington

Light rail service in the Sacramento region will soon get a major upgrade, making riding the train easier and more accessible than ever. At the same time, this modernization supports local jobs: The new light rail vehicles will be built in Sacramento, too.

Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) recently announced the purchase of 20 low-floor light rail vehicles, with the option to purchase up to 76, from local manufacturer Siemens Mobility, Inc. Valued at about \$100 million, that deal marked the first time in 20 years that SacRT had bought new vehicles for its aging light rail fleet.

Funding for that purchase came from the Transit and Intercity Rail Capitol Program (TIRCP) and Proposition 1A to modernize the light rail fleet. The first cars from that deal are expected to be delivered in 2022.

Shortly after the late April announcement of this 20-vehicle purchase, SacRT received more money to buy more new light rail vehicles. Through TIRCP, the California State Transportation

Agency awarded SacRT \$23.6 million towards purchase of another eight low-floor vehicles and station improvements to accommodate the new cars.

As a first step, SacRT will convert 29 stations, with a plan to convert all stations as funding becomes available, for the new low-floor cars. Along with the vehicle purchases, these renovations represent the beginning of SacRT's system-wide modernization.

“The new modern low-floor cars will also help reduce traffic congestion and inspire new riders to get onboard.”

Steve Hansen
Board chairman, Sacramento Regional Transit District

Electric-powered and emissions-free, Siemens' S700 light rail trains feature low-level boarding at every doorway, wider aisles, spacious seating and larger windows for better light and a better view. Besides being wheelchair and stroller friendly, the new cars also



Siemens Mobility of Sacramento will build new low-floor light rail vehicles to replace aging cars in Sacramento Regional Transit District's system. What will it look like? Here's an example of the S700 low-floor light rail vehicle by Siemens Mobility of Sacramento.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SACRT

offer more storage for bicycles and luggage. With improved reliability, the new cars will be quieter and more spacious, offering a smoother and more comfortable ride.

“These new light rail cars

Hansen, SacRT board chairman and Sacramento city councilman. “(For our) growing region, the new modern low-floor cars will also help reduce traffic congestion and inspire new riders to get onboard.”

With no emissions, the light rail cars also help cut greenhouse gases and reduce air pollution. That's a plus for communities in the Sacramento region; commuting is made easier while also helping the environment.

“Our region needs good news amid this COVID-19 crisis,” said Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg. “This investment by SacRT in modernized infrastructure to serve our economy and meet our carbon neutral goals is most welcome.”

For more details and routes, visit www.SacRT.com.

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Deneb Williams

*Board Chair, Del Paso Boulevard Partnership
Executive chef and partner, Woodlake Tavern*

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Find out more about the Del Paso Boulevard Partnership, a Property and Business Improvement District (PBID) in the City of Sacramento. Del Paso Boulevard Partnership in Old North Sacramento provides our business district with private security, graffiti removal, street cleaning, marketing and more.



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