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## Maddy Events

**Maddy Forum** -- The Maddy Forum, a weekly half-hour program focusing on issues of interest to the San Joaquin Valley, airs Saturday at 1 p.m. and Sunday at 11 a.m. on 90.7 KFSR radio. It also is available on the [KFSR Web site](#) and iTunes.

**Maddy Political Insider** – The Maddy Political Insider, which can be heard on the Alan Autry Show on KYNO Radio 1300 Tuesday at 10:30 a.m., will be on hiatus for the month of December.

**Maddy Institute on Facebook and Twitter** – To learn about Maddy Institute activities (e.g. *The Maddy Report* tv show, *The Maddy Forum* FM radio/podcast, *The Maddy Political Insider* AM radio show, *The Maddy Associates' Luncheons*, the *Maddy Legislative Intern Program*), become a fan of the Maddy Institute on Facebook or log on to <http://twitter.com/MaddyInstitute>. And if you have a Facebook or Twitter account, please add us and follow us!

## Political Briefs

**CD 19: Denham seeks support as potential challengers mount** -- As more Republicans seriously consider a run for George Radanovich's congressional seat -- including Tracy Republican Richard Pombo, a former congressman himself -- supporters of Jeff Denham are scrambling to shore up backing for the Atwater state senator's candidacy. [Fresno Bee political notebook](#); [Modesto Bee article](#)

**CD 19: Denham's millions won't help congressional run** -- State Sen. Jeff Denham has \$1 million dollars, but nowhere to spend it -- at least not on himself. The Atwater Republican worked for many months raising money for his lieutenant governor campaign, before changing gears to run for the Assembly. He [changed his mind](#) again Tuesday, declaring for the congressional seat of the retiring George Radanovich. [Fresno Bee political notebook](#)

**AD 32: Couch steps in, maybe, to race** -- In a season of thrilling political races, Bakersfield's pulse just got quicker: David Couch, city councilman, is considering a run for state Assembly. So is Olympic swimmer Gabe Woodward. Couch, 51, and Woodward, 30 -- both Republicans -- confirmed they are seriously mulling entering the 32nd District race. [Bakersfield Californian article](#)

**California's political highs and lows of 2009** – The entire nation knows that California, the Bay Area in particular, is a political hotbed, and 2009 didn't disappoint. Here are some of the top state and local stories as the decade drew to a close. [Contra Costa Times article](#)

**Prop 8 campaign documents ruling reaffirmed** – A federal appeals court reaffirmed its ruling Wednesday that allowed sponsors of California's ban on same-sex marriage to withhold campaign strategy documents from gay rights advocates who are seeking to overturn the ballot measure. [San Francisco Chronicle article](#)

**Going up? California may increase license plate fees** -- Californians would pay an additional \$18 per year to license their cars under a proposal that has taken a step toward the ballot. Secretary of State Debra Bowen has approved for signature gathering the proposal that would also grant free admission to all state parks to surcharged vehicles. [Central Valley Business Times article](#)

**State to expand sobriety checkpoint program** – California traffic safety officials will pump \$8 million this coming year into an aggressive drunken driving program with a controversial focus: [sobriety checkpoints](#). [Sacramento Bee article](#)

## News Briefs

### Top Stories

**Sierra snow below average, despite California storms** – California's first snow survey of the winter showed the Sierra snowpack below normal Wednesday despite a series of storms that has drenched much of the state and pleased ski resort operators. [AP article](#); [Stockton Record article](#); [San Francisco Chronicle article](#)

**State's Healthy Families program gets funding** – The state's financially troubled Healthy Families insurance program got a much-needed infusion of money Wednesday when federal officials granted the state's request for \$12.5 million to cover 16,500 immigrant children lawfully residing in [California](#). [Sacramento Bee article](#)

**Valley air board, AG differ on limiting emissions** – The Valley air board this month adopted California's first guidelines for greenhouse-gas reduction on new development, but the state Attorney General's Office questions whether they will hold up in court. At the heart of the argument: How can government set a local limit for emissions that are causing a worldwide problem? [Fresno Bee article](#)

### Economy

**Judge to rule today on Fresno firefighter furloughs** – A Fresno County Superior Court judge said he will decide today whether to temporarily halt the furlough of Fresno city firefighters. [Fresno Bee article](#)

**New jobless claims unexpectedly drop** – The number of newly laid-off workers filing claims for unemployment benefits dropped unexpectedly last week, the Labor Department reported today, a sign the job market is healing as the economy slowly recovers. [AP article](#)

**Hiring outlook for 2010 is grim** – 2010 will not be the year the hiring floodgates open. Although certain sectors of the economy are showing signs of a thaw, employers say they plan to tread carefully in the coming year, and those that are hiring say they will wait until the second half to fill jobs. [LA Times article](#)

**Met's lawyer: 'Absent a miracle, it's over'** -- The Fresno Metropolitan Museum's likely demise will set in motion a long and complex process designed to pay off debts exceeding \$5 million. And it all could begin within a week or two. [Fresno Bee article](#)

**Merced County's economic woes hit hard in 2009** – Merced County was pummeled in 2009 with a continued decline in home values, massive cuts in state spending and the dubious on-and-off distinction as foreclosure capital of the country. [Merced Sun-Star article](#)

**Year in Review: Tulare County economy ebbed and flowed** -- As it was throughout the Central Valley and elsewhere, the big Tulare County story of 2009 was a terribly depressed economy. [Visalia Times-Delta article](#)

### Education

**Kern district says no to Obama charter school** -- Kern High School District trustees on Wednesday unanimously shot down a petition for a proposed charter school named after our nation's president. All five board members rejected the idea of Barack H. Obama Leadership Academy based on district input that it did not meet California Education Code standards for the establishment of a charter school. [Bakersfield Californian article](#)

### Environment/Energy

**More than 200 alternative energy projects proposed in California** -- There are 244 renewable energy projects proposed in California, according to a list provided by the governor's office. While the bulk of the largest would-be power generators are massive solar projects in the California desert, there are many wind projects also on the list, with Kern County being a favored location. [Central Valley Business Times article](#)

**PG&E customers will start the new year with rate hikes** -- PG&E customers will start the new year with an increase in their electricity bills. Regulators with the California Public Utilities Commission earlier this month approved the hikes, which go into effect Jan. 1. The increases will vary in size depending on which rate category a customer is in, but a household that had a \$164.15 monthly electric bill can now expect to pay \$172.29. [San Jose Mercury News article](#)

**State finds extra \$3 million for port truckers, but angry drivers say it's too little, too late** -- State air regulators found an extra \$3 million Wednesday to help more Port of Oakland truckers buy new diesel filters for their rigs, but that did not stop more than 450 independent drivers from filing a lawsuit to block a state-mandated emissions deadline that will put them out of work on New Year's Day. [Oakland Tribune article](#)

### Health and Human Services

**H1N1 vaccine clinics coming to Stanislaus** – Stanislaus County residents can roll up their sleeves for an H1N1 flu shot at either of two mass vaccination clinics planned in the next two weeks. [Modesto Bee article](#)

### Land Use/Housing

**A harrowing year for housing** – This turbulent year in real estate departs with the drama of profound distress alongside the good fortune of thousands now living in their first houses. [Sacramento Bee article](#)

### Other Areas

**Bill McEwen: Don't get mad about Fresno jokes... just win** -- The year ends, as many before have, with Fresno chasing its tail. The late-night comedians are getting laughs by poking fun at us and we are doing what we always do: getting our backs up, over-analyzing and behaving as if being a punch line is something new. [McEwen column in Fresno Bee](#)

**Atwater's City Hall filled with controversy, contention** – The last year of this century's first decade was anything but boring for the city of Atwater. The year was characterized by a mixture of stories,

including a special election, Cal Fire's contract, a wastewater bond and the Gary Frago e-mail affair.

[Merced Sun-Star article](#)

**Michael Fitzgerald: Here's to 2010, but it may not be any better** – Good riddance, 2009. Goodbye to a dismal year in which hundreds of Stockton homes were repossessed and so was a beloved Stockton mummy. A year of budget crises, business closures, layoffs, municipal decline, civic disillusionment and angst. [Fitzgerald column in Stockton Record](#)

**Kern gets two new judges** -- Susan M. Gill, a mental health litigation expert in the county counsel's office, and Jose R. Benavides, a civil and family law sole practitioner who was raised in Arvin, were appointed to Kern County judgeships by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. [Bakersfield Californian article](#)

## Editorial Roundup

**Fresno Bee** – Here's hoping next year is [better than this one](#).

**Merced Sun-Star** – Parents need to [help kids get in shape](#).

**Modesto Bee** – On this final day of 2009, we put our spotlight on some of what — and who — [did well and not so well](#) in our region during the past year.

**Sacramento Bee** – Next year, let's [party like it's 2011](#).

**Stockton Record** – The year ends on [a deadly spree](#) in Stockton; There's plenty that citizens can do to make sure that calendar page turns to 2010 [in a safe manner](#).

**Visalia Times-Delta** – Good riddance to old year, [bring on the new](#).

## Upcoming Events

- The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley's PreK-12 Education Work Group will hold its second annual Exemplary Practices in Education conference on the California State University, Fresno campus on Wednesday, Jan. 20, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Information: Dr. Walt Buster, (559) 278-0388 or [wbuster3036@comcast.net](mailto:wbuster3036@comcast.net), or Dr. Marcy Masumoto, (559) 304-2190 or [mmasumoto@csufresno.edu](mailto:mmasumoto@csufresno.edu).

**The Kenneth L. Maddy Institute at California State University, Fresno was established to honor the legacy of one of California's most principled and effective legislative leaders of the last half of the 20th Century by engaging, preparing and inspiring a new generation of governmental leaders for the 21st Century. Its mission is to inspire citizen participation, elevate government performance, provide non-partisan analysis and assist in providing solutions for public policy issues important to the region, state and nation.**

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