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FEBRUARY 13, 2012

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SERVING THE COACHELLA VALLEY SINCE 1927

Road work backs up I-10 for hours

By Keith Matheny
The Desert Sun

Sunday saw the desert's version of Carmageddon.

Traffic out of the Coachella Valley was backed up for about 25 miles on westbound Interstate 10 from the Banning-Beaumont area to beyond the North Indian Canyon Drive exit in North Palm Springs for much of the afternoon and evening Sunday, as a daylong traffic nightmare caused by unexpected Caltrans pothole repairs extended from morning into night.

A California Highway Patrol dispatcher in Indio who declined to give her name said Caltrans work crews filling potholes on the freeway encountered problems "quite a bit

larger than expected."

"They deemed it necessary to avoid a safety hazard to continue lane closures and road work through the day today," the dispatcher said.

The I-10 was down to one operating lane in both directions in the Cabazon area at times Sunday. Eastbound lanes opened around 4 p.m., improving traffic flow back into the Coachella Valley from the west. But the westbound side remained a bumper-to-bumper crawl for miles, both on the freeway and on side roads as motorists attempted to escape.

Caltrans finished its work and opened all westbound lanes around 9:30 p.m. Sunday, a Highway Patrol dispatcher said. Motorists stuck in the traffic jam told sto-

ries of chaos.

David Fleason of San Pedro was returning from a trip to Twentynine Palms. He got on the westbound I-10 off State Route 62 around 12:30 p.m. He made it to the State Route 60 exit, about 30 miles to the west, more than four hours later, at 4:45 p.m.

"People were driving in both of the emergency lanes because they were tired of waiting," he said. "People were blocking them to prevent them from taking advantage of the rest of us. I saw many heated arguments between drivers over this."

Fleason said he also saw "multiple fender-benders."

"People were urinating and defecating on the side of the road in plain view — how

Please see TRAFFIC, A8

RICK SANTORUM ON ...



Proposition 8

"Obviously we stand with the people of California. I don't know how a constitutional amendment can be unconstitutional. It doesn't make any sense."

Gay couples adopting

"I think we need to give children the best opportunity in America, and that is to have a mother and a father."

Catholic Church insurance providing contraception

"When people to come work for a Catholic organization, it's not a surprise who they're working for."

Being a 'severe' conservative

"I'm very comfortable in the positions I hold. I've thought about them. This is not something I come to because, you know, it's where you need to be today. It's how I see this country and the experiences I've had."

Santorum airs views during his valley visit

By Marcel Honoré
The Desert Sun

INDIAN WELLS — With his presidential campaign booming, but desperate for cash, former Republican senator Rick Santorum paid a surprise visit to the Coachella Valley this weekend.

Santorum, who aims to upend rival Mitt Romney as the eventual Republican nominee, was scheduled to attend a private fundraiser at The Vintage Club in Indian Wells on Sunday after he attended morning Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Palm Desert.

Santorum's Indian Wells visit comes two weeks after billionaire conservatives Charles and David Koch and their supporters also met in the mid-valley city — a small yet affluent Republican stronghold. The Kochs and their supporters had rented the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa for their annual conference and pledged \$100 million to unseat President Barack Obama.

On Sunday, Santorum discussed his outspoken views and his campaign with The Desert Sun and local television news media after Mass at Sacred Heart. Here are some highlights.

QUESTION: How do you feel about the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' decision overruling Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage?

"Obviously we stand with the people of California. I don't know how a constitutional amendment can be unconstitutional. It doesn't make any sense."

Santorum said his strong stance against same-sex marriage should not be viewed as "bigoted or intolerant."

"You hear so much about the intolerance from the left of the right, but in fact it's the opposite way around."

Santorum said same-sex marriage proponents want the institution to include something more than "history and tradition and reason would dictate." Those proponents should not be considered "bigots" or "haters" because they hold views counter to his own, he added.

Please see Q&A, A8

THE ANNENBERG RETREAT AT SUNNYLANDS

A PLACE FOR PEACE

Ceremony draws dignitaries to retreat intended to be West Coast 'Camp David'

By Sherry Barkas
The Desert Sun

RANCHO MIRAGE — It's a place where nations at odds can come together to bridge their differences, a place where world peace isn't an idealistic dream but a true possibility.

That's what local and national dignitaries called The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands on Sunday, when the children and grandchildren of Walter and Leonore Annenberg joined about 300 invited guests to dedicate the new center.

A clear blue sky, lush green golf course and lake where ducks quietly paddled about served as a serene backdrop for speakers who called the Annenberg estate a place where world unity could be achieved by following what speaker Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy deemed "The Sunnylands Principles" of tolerance, respect and commitment to freedom.

"Freedom is more complex than personal rights," Kennedy said. "Human freedom"

Please see RETREAT, A8



Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy receives a standing ovation after his speech Sunday during the dedication ceremony for The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands in Rancho Mirage. The 200-acre estate is being hailed as the "Camp David" of the West Coast, where politicians and dignitaries can meet to talk about policy. PHOTOS BY CRYSTAL CHATHAM/THE DESERT SUN



Marine Corps Col. George Aucoin salutes during the National Anthem and presentation of colors on Sunday during the Sunnylands dedication ceremony.



An American flag hangs from the pavilion, which is filled with invitation-only guests, at The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands.



The University of Southern California Trojan marching band performs during the dedication ceremony.



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ing their employees to get contraception directly from their insurance at no extra premium?

"There really is no change here. Most of the large Catholic organizations are self-insured ... The second part is that someone is going to pay for this ... (Religiously-affiliated groups) are buying insurance from a company that is now required to

sire — cultural desire as well as personal, I'm sure, to protect someone might affect the mission and the mission capability. So there are a lot of reasons why women in frontline combat, in an infantry-type position, is not best for the country as far as to complete missions."

Your campaign has surged amid a recent stream of so-

servative. Can you define a severe conservative for me? I think, you know, if you're not comfortable with the language then it's clear. I'm very comfortable in the positions I hold. I've thought about them. This is not something I come to because, you know, it's where you need to be today. It's how I see this country and the experiences I've had."

RETREAT

Continued from A1

means rights of citizens acting in concert to shape their own destiny."

Each generation must remember they are the trustees of the future, he said.

"One must be more powerful, not less, than the previous generation," said Kennedy, who may be the deciding vote should California's Proposition 8 come before the Supreme Court. The same-sex marriage ban ruled unconstitutional by the California Supreme Court could be appealed next to the Supreme Court.

Sunday's hourlong dedication ceremony, followed by brunch and tours of the home, grounds and meeting center, capped four days of events marking the opening of the estate to the public and the new retreat center.

Among the local and national dignitaries attending Sunday's event were Assemblyman Brian Nestande, Riverside County Supervisor John Benoit, all of Rancho Mirage's City Council members, plus elected officials from nearly every city in the Coachella Valley.

Music was provided by the Cathedral City High School Symphonic Band and Lions Pride Chamber Singers. The program ended with a performance by the University of



The Cathedral City High School Lions Pride Chamber Singers perform Sunday. CRYSTAL CHATHAM/THE DESERT SUN

Southern California Trojans marching band.

The Annenbergs created their estate, tucked behind the landmark pink walls on the corner of Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra drives in 1966, seven years before Rancho Mirage became an incorporated city.

It's fitting that the retreat be dedicated on Abraham Lincoln's birthday, Geoffrey Cowan, president of the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnyslands, said in his welcome speech.

In his inaugural address, Lincoln called on all Americans to bring out the angels within to find a more perfect world, Cowan said. That's what the Annenbergs hoped would be achieved at the retreat.

They wanted the retreat to be known as "a place for small meetings that make this a better world," Cowan said.

Rancho Mirage Mayor Dana Hobart said the retreat will boost area tourism by bringing worldwide recognition to the city.

"It's hard to imagine a conflict too involved that can't be solved here at Sunnyslands..." Congressman David Dreier said.

Wallis Annenberg, Walter Annenberg's daughter and president of the Annenberg Foundation, was "ecstatic... to see it all come together like a rebirth."

"It's a joy for all of us involved," she said.

Rep. Mary Bono Mack, R-Palm Springs, wanted to attend, but was unable because her daughter, who lives in Washington, D.C., is due to give birth to her first child any time, said Mary Perry, spokeswoman for The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnyslands.

TRAFFIC

Continued from A1

could they not?" he said. "People were pulled off to the side of the road sleeping in their cars."

Fleason said he became particularly angered when he reached the construction zone.

"It was one crew working at a lazy pace with many people standing around —

Angeles area to catch a flight.

"I missed my plane to Europe, and it cost \$1,200 to book the later flight," he said.

Zien also described a scene out of the Mad Max movies.

"Thousands and thousands of frustrated, irate and bewildered motorists on their way to be late for everything," he said.

"Drivers (were) driving ev-

poor notice and poor organization?" he said. "Whoever is running this show is very stupid or very uncaring."

The California Highway Patrol around 5 p.m. reported motorists going in the wrong direction on eastbound lanes and on exit ramps at Apache Trail in Cabazon in efforts to leave the freeway.

Kevin Wahlstrom of Palm Desert also made the eastbound I-10 trek at about



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