

Pastor lays out his real estate strategy

■ Investing and developing for ‘long term’
By PAUL MILLER

A LOT of people are curious about Patrice Pastor, who has only occasionally appeared at permit hearings for his local development projects. But when a community group in Pebble Beach asked him to be the speaker at one of its lunch meetings this week, the real estate developer from Monaco not only accepted, he provided a wide-ranging overview of his company’s vast real estate activities and outlined his goals for Carmel, where he has acquired numerous properties and has a large project underway.

“We know how to build, we know how to develop, and we know how to build both modern and classic,” Pastor said Wednesday at the Inn at Spanish Bay, launching a slideshow of more than a dozen high-end projects his firm, J.B. Pastor & Fils, has completed in Monaco over the last 15 years — ranging from ultramodern office towers, to luxurious apartments, to old-style five-star hotels.

The prince likes it

His latest project, appropriately named Mareterra, or “sea land,” which opened in December, occupies a prime spot on the Monaco shoreline — one that didn’t exist until Pastor and a group of investors spent \$1.4 billion to create 15 acres of filled land between the Monaco harbor and a popular beach. Designed by an array of prominent engineers and architects, the whole project, which includes

housing, retail and a generous amount of public gardens and promenades, cost \$2.4 billion to complete, Pastor said. So impressive is the Mareterra project, especially for a tiny country like Monaco, its website includes an endorsement from Prince Albert II, the country’s monarch.

But things in Carmel are on a totally different scale, Pastor said, and his vision here is also completely different



Along the Monaco waterfront stands Patrice Pastor’s magnificent \$2.4 billion development, Mareterra, which opened in December.

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Panetta blasts Trump speech

By KELLY NIX

THE LEGISLATIVE agenda outlined by President Donald Trump in Congress Tuesday will weaken the U.S. economy, leave American families without crucial services, jeopardize national security and isolate the country from the rest of the world, Democratic Rep. Jimmy Panetta said this week.

In a lengthy speech on the floor of House of Representatives, Trump discussed tariffs, shuttering government agencies and saving tens of billions of taxpayer dollars, boasted about the immigration crackdown at the southern border and claimed he would rescue the economy.

“My fellow Americans, get ready for an incredible future because the golden age of America has only just begun,” Trump said, addressing a joint session of Congress. “It will be like nothing that has ever been seen before.”

‘Divisive rhetoric’

Panetta, who lives in Carmel Valley, was highly critical of the speech, calling it “more of the same divisive rhetoric that ignores the reality facing hardworking Americans.”

“I was disappointed again, but not surprised, that President Trump failed to unify Congress with any bipartisan solutions to the many pressing issues that we face as a nation, including the high cost of living for working families, inflation, immigration reform, trade, and national security policies,” Panetta told The Pine Cone Thursday.

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Rep. Jimmy Panetta (far right) with Democratic Party leadership during President Donald Trump’s speech to Congress Tuesday. At left is former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

County sues over federal funding, ‘sanctuary’ law

By KELLY NIX

MONTEREY COUNTY has joined a lawsuit to challenge the Trump administration’s efforts to stop sending federal funds to cities and counties with “sanctuary” policies that help protect undocumented immigrants. The county estimates it has received almost a half-billion dollars from the feds in the last two years, so the stakes are high.

The California Legislature, controlled by the Democratic Party, OK’d a statewide sanctuary law in 2017 that prohibited state and local law enforcement agencies from participating in federal efforts to deport immigrants who are illegally in the country.

Big bucks

When Republican President Donald Trump took office in January, however, he signed an order to ensure — to the “maximum extent possible under the law” — that jurisdictions with sanctuary policies that “seek to interfere with the lawful exercise of federal law enforcement operations” do not get federal funds.

On Monday, county officials announced they had joined a lawsuit challenging what they called the Trump

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Feds look to derail California’s bullet train

By CAITLIN CONRAD

A BOONDOGGLE, “the train to nowhere,” the “little engine that couldn’t” — California’s still-nonexistent bullet train has earned a lot of not-so-nice nicknames over the years, and now the Trump administration is threatening to pull the plug on federal funding for the endeavor.

Speaking at Union Station in Los Angeles last week, U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced his department is launching an investigation into the project. The review will examine what’s gone wrong with high-speed rail in the Golden State before the feds sign off on another \$4 billion for the train.

“Today we are severely — no pun intended — off track,” said Duffy.

In 2008, California voters signed off on Proposition 1A, which promised them a completed bullet train from San Francisco to Los Angeles by 2020 for a price tag of \$33 billion. It was supposed to travel at 200 mph, zipping

passengers from the S.F. Bay area to Southern California in three hours. That never happened. Instead, the reality is 60 miles of completed guideway — not to be confused with railway — for a planned 171-mile section from Merced to Bakersfield.

Accountable for \$4 billion

The \$4 billion in additional federal funding was approved by the Biden administration, but President Donald Trump is threatening to halt the funds over allegations of project mismanagement.

Duffy told reporters the new administration intends to determine whether California is living up to its federal funding agreements

“We can’t just say we’re going to give money and then not hold states accountable to how they spend it,” said Duffy. “The Trump administration is going to take a look at whether this project is worthy of continual investment.”

The transportation secretary had to speak loudly over the shouts of a pro-rail crowd that gathered at the station to protest his visit. Demonstrators held signs with slogans like, “Warning: high-speed rail may cause progress,” and,

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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY GETS CONTENT REVIEW

■ Too restrictive for us, council says
By LILY PATTERSON

THINK TWICE before you like or comment — or maybe just pretend those features don’t exist, if you’re a member of the Carmel City Council.

A unanimous decision at Monday’s special meeting spelled revision for the city’s proposed social media policy. You won’t see Carmel-by-the-Sea on Facebook, Instagram or X until councilmembers approve changes to a rule which would have essentially banned them from responding to city social media posts.

The resolution, presented March 3 by administrative analyst Emily Garay, highlighted social media as a tool for “effective, reliable and responsible government,” citing 2023 Pew Research Center data for social media use among U.S. adults. Sixty-eight percent say they use

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“Feed me,” this little hummingbird seems to be telling its human caregiver. SPCA Monterey County is nurturing the infant and two others, including one the size of a jellybean, until they are old enough to be released to their natural environment. See page 11A.