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Monterey businessman in Israel as rockets rain

By CAITLIN CONRAD

A PROMINENT Monterey businessman found himself stranded in Israel last week when the war with Iran shut down all commercial air travel in and out of the



PHOTO/COURTESY DAVID ARMANASCO

David Armanasco with a Bedouin guide in Jordan after evacuating from Jerusalem. Armanasco was part of a tour group that had to repeatedly shelter from Iranian rocket attacks.

country.

David Armanasco, owner of Armanasco Public Relations, was traveling with a tour group outside of Jerusalem on Friday, June 13, when Israel launched its blistering attacks on Iran, which responded with hundreds of missiles. He'd hear his first rocket interception just hours later.

Armanasco's group had returned from sightseeing to their hotel in central Jerusalem when air raid sirens sounded just before midnight, prompting them to move to the underground bomb shelter.

"I got to the second floor and I heard this 'kaboom,' and it was a rocket that blew up somewhere, not that far away," said Armanasco.

Intercepting

Fortunately, the explosion he heard was Israel's Iron Dome intercepting a missile before it landed. The intricate defense system is not perfect — Iranian strikes that have found their targets have killed at least 24 people and wounded hundreds of others in Israel. When Armanasco first heard the sirens, he thought it was a drill, but at the sound of the first blast, he knew it was no rehearsal.

"That put a whole new feeling in my mind and my body," said Armanasco.

The hotel's bunker two floors below ground level provided shelter not only for the hotel's guests, but for neighbors in nearby apartments. The tour group found itself sharing the space with everyday Israelis and their pets. Locals told the visitors to download the Red Alert app that night. The smartphone application provides real-time alerts when rockets, mortars or missiles are fired into Israel.

"That night, that app and sirens went off a couple more times, and you get in bed and start falling asleep, about an hour-and-a-half later, all of a sudden, your phone is buzzing, you're hearing sirens, you get up and go downstairs

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Foundation damage at Haseltine Court to be fixed

Who pays still in dispute

By MARY SCHLEY

MORE THAN six years after it was damaged, work to repair the foundation of an apartment complex at Fifth and Lincoln is about to get underway.

One apartment at the complex has been uninhabitable ever since a contractor working on a subsequently abandoned project at Dolores and Fifth dug underneath — causing damage that left the unit unsafe to inhabit and forced its tenant out. But an ongoing battle with an insurance company has stuck the complex's owner, The Carmel Foundation, with the bill, at least for now, according to executive director Kim Stemler.

Major excavation

"The Carmel Foundation is about to start shoring up our Haseltine Court property that was damaged and red-tagged in the Pit excavation," she said this week.

The 16,000-square-foot area behind the complex



PHOTO/COURTESY KIM STEMLER

Excavation underneath the Haseltine Court complex in 2019 led to 6-inch cracks and made one of its apartments uninhabitable.

came to be known as The Pit after its former owner, Leidig Draper Properties, undertook major excavation and started building a parking garage as part of a large mixed-use project but then ran out of money. Work stopped there in March 2019, and later that year, foundation representatives, as well as those at the Carmel Art Association to the south, reported the extensive digging had damaged their properties.

While the Lincoln Street complex, which houses low-income seniors, suffered cracking and settling, the art association reported cracks in some of its gallery floors

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C.V.roundabout construction set to commence

\$3.8M project will take nine months

By CHRIS COUNTS

MOTORISTS CAN expect delays over the next nine months due to the construction of a roundabout at Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade which is set to start Monday.

The project is expected to cost taxpayers about \$3.8 million. Construction will be limited to weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

"Motorists will see traffic control measures," the county announced this week. "But because the project will be done in phases, two-way traffic will be allowed at all times."

On its website, the county announced it will "make every effort" to keep people informed about the traffic impacts. Regular updates will be posted on Facebook and X.

What needs to be done?

"The project includes widening Laureles Grade and Carmel Valley Road at the east and northwest corners of the existing intersection," the county reported. "However, it will not add lanes or increase the intersection's capacity. Medians will also be constructed on Carmel Valley Road to the northwest and southeast of the proposed roundabout, as well as on Laureles Grade to the northeast."

Council OKs fire map but is unsure what it will mean

By MARY SCHLEY

THE CARMEL City Council earlier this month approved an ordinance adopting the California Fire Marshal's map of the town's fire hazard severity zones — as it was basically obligated to do — but what it means for homeowners and how the numerous requirements it triggers will be implemented remain unclear as a committee works to figure it out.

Based on data compiled by Cal Fire, the new map designates 278 acres within Carmel city limits as "very high fire hazard severity zone," 110 acres as "high," and 100 acres as "moderate," while the rest of the city, mostly at the south end and including part of Mission Trail park, is not considered to have an elevated level of fire danger. The map replaces the one adopted in 2011.

When the council got its first look at the map in May and pondered its impacts, it decided to form a committee to research the issue. The group consists of city administrator Chip Rerig, councilman Hans Buder, Mayor Dale Byrne, planning director Anna Ginette, new public works director Ken Wysocki, Monterey Fire Chief Andrew Miller and Carmel Police Cmdr. Todd Trayer.

"We're in the homework stage and gathering information," Rerig said, including touring heavily wooded Pescadero Canyon and Mission Trail park, where volunteers and city crews have been removing unwanted vegetation.

Rules, rules

Planning director Anna Ginette said at the start of her June 3 presentation that she'd received several questions about the new hazard zones and the rules they could trigger.

State law requires anyone who "owns, leases, controls, operates or maintains an occupied dwelling or occupied structure in, upon, or adjoining a mountainous area, forest-covered land, shrub-covered land, grass-covered land, or land that is covered with flammable material" and is designated as a very high fire hazard severity zone to create defensible space.

Homes in that zone and in the wildland-urban interface

See **FIRE MAP** page 30A

Wildfire prevention in a city where trees are sacred



RENDERING/TAMC

An artist's rendering showing what the roundabout at Laureles Grade and Carmel Valley Road will look like when it's done early next year.