

## Quick TAKES

### Live well, prosper

New Year greetings to Champion readers from Champion advertisers. Page A10

### Park still opposed

A power transmission line would not be welcome in Chino Hills State Park, an official says. Page A10

### Challenge falls short

The state Supreme Court dashes Chino's hopes of keeping its redevelopment agency going. Page B3

### Cut rate for fines

California courts offer a discount to delinquent traffic ticket holders. Page A10

### Sign on the line

A proposed new charter school needs parents to commit to enroll their children. Page B3

### Run, catch, hit, throw

The year in Chino Valley sports. Pages C1-3

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## Candy in their wake



Champion photo by Josh Thompson

Several children grab candy thrown from parade participants at the annual Chino Hills boat parade Dec. 23 along Peyton and Boys Republic drives and Eucalyptus Avenue in Chino Hills. More than 5,000 people attended the event, and 60 boats took part.

## Law reprieves unlicensed drivers from instant tow

By Josh Thompson

Beginning Sunday, Jan. 1, police in California will no longer be able to tow a car at a sobriety checkpoint solely because the driver is unlicensed. The new law is among nearly 750 for 2012.

Authored by Assemblyman Gil Cedillo, D-Lincoln Heights, the new law states unlicensed drivers will be able to keep their cars if they are sober and can find a licensed driver to drive the car away from the checkpoint.

Assemblyman Cedillo said the law was proposed after officials in Bell, a largely Hispanic city near Los Angeles, raked in big fees from unlicensed drivers at checkpoints.

Chino Hills Police Department Chief Bill Lenew said officers will follow the law.

"What it comes down to is rea-

sonableness. If there is another way to find the vehicle a way back home by someone else in the car who is properly licensed, or a licensed driver who can come pick up the car, then the car will be able to leave as long as the car is not being left and it becomes a public hazard," he said.

Chino and Chino Hills police departments hold several sobriety checkpoints a year, and officers are not just looking for drunk drivers. They also require motorists to produce a valid license.

Some other new laws for 2012:

•Children under the age of 8 must be buckled into a car seat or booster seat in the back seat. Older children who are not tall enough for the seat belt to fit properly must ride in a booster or car seat. The previous law required that children remain in a booster seat until the age of six or

until they weighed 60 pounds.

•Out-of-state Internet retailers must collect California sales tax on transactions if the retailer has a presence in the state. This will begin July 1.

•Employers can no longer request credit reports for job seekers unless they are working or seeking work in a financial institution. The law exempts anyone who has access to people's bank or credit card account information, social security numbers and dates of birth; has access to an employer's proprietary information or trade secrets, signs a check, credit card, financial contract or transfers money for an employer; and who has access to more than \$10,000 cash or is a manager in certain industries.

•Californians will no longer be able to openly carry handguns, loaded or not.

## The year that was

Chino, Chino Hills find themselves locked in struggles with the state, Edison

The parade of 200-foot electric towers that marched across the pristine Chino Hills, changing the view in the historic Chino Valley, dominated the front pages of the Champion in 2011.

Chino Hills' year long fight against Southern California Edison's heavy duty clean energy power lines ended with a plus and a minus. The plus was the willingness of members of the newly reconstituted state Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to personally visit the site, after ordering Edison to pause and submit alternative routes.

The negative was the refusal of the state Supreme Court to consider the Chino Hills appeal of lower court rulings adverse to the city.

A second major story involved the law vs. abused pets. After being convicted by a jury in January, the Priceless Pets rescue operators, Charles and Lisa Price went to jail for five days in late November for violating probation by keeping too many dogs and not getting a building permit for a shelter.

In February, the Prices face new charges for keeping unlicensed dogs. Priceless Pets opened "The Orphanage" for dog adoptions in December in Gordon Ranch Marketplace to avoid further trouble at their English Road ranch.

With an increase in public support, Chino Hills cleared the BAPS Hindu temple for higher spires, which had delayed the project because of earlier opposition.

Chino Hills joined Chino on the national Best Cities for Youth honor roll.

The newest Chino Hills city councilman, Art Bennett, was appointed mayor. Charter councilwoman Gwenn Norton-Perry, the city's first mayor



Champion photo by Marianne Naples

Southern California Edison subcontractors construct a lattice tower on Eucalyptus Avenue in Chino Hills between Calle Barcelona and Calle Miramar in October. The tower remains unfinished because the CPUC halted work on the project the next month.

who served in that position four times, announced she would not seek reelection in 2012, leaving Ed Graham as the only founding member.

Both Chino and Chino Hills grew more than neighboring communities in the last decade, according to the 2010 census count. Chino, with 77,783, increased 16.1 percent. Chino Hills' count was 74,799, an increase of 12 percent. The census led to redistricting of voting districts, which next November will result in some congressional and legislative changes for Chino Valley.

In Chino, where the incumbents

have indicated they plan to run again, the city council spent the last half of the year awaiting the outcome of court action against two state budget-rider bills that abolished redevelopment agencies, then set up a means for cities to keep them operating — for a price.

Chino decided to retain its RDA, at a cost of more than \$7 million the first two years. Then, in late December, the state Supreme Court issued a ruling that affirmed the state's authority to abolish the agencies and struck down the rider bill that offered a means to keep the agencies operating.

## Oxford stays in business

Unanimous school board renews charter for 5 years

By Brenda Dunkle

Oxford Preparatory Academy students, parents and staff members danced on the charter school's Chino campus Thursday night after the school board unanimously renewed OPA's charter for five years.

In the weeks leading up to the special board meeting, rumors had circulated that the board would not renew Oxford, even though the charter school had the highest score in the Chino Valley and the county on state academic tests administered last spring.

Board members said they received hundreds of emails and calls from Oxford supporters, but that was not what determined their vote.

"By law, the legislature has removed all personal bias from our decision," newly appointed trustee Dave Black said. "Our personal opinions don't count. Even if we didn't receive a single phone call or email, if the superintendent said OPA is compliant, we have to approve."

Superintendent Wayne Joseph said the school district had several problems with the first draft of the petition submitted by Oxford, requesting the five-year renewal. The superintendent said he and OPA executive director Sue Roche and OPA administrator Jason Watts met several times over the last few weeks to come to a resolution. Mrs. Roche said she worked on the negotiations even while visiting China during OPA's holiday break.

Mr. Joseph said a letter he sent to Mrs. Roche this fall, explaining the district's issues was not meant to raise alarm. He said OPA's growth in the last two years means the district has to ask more questions in its role as the monitoring agent for the charter.

The school board originally approved the OPA charter in January 2010 and the school opened that September. It now has 1,075 students in its K-8 program and 800 students on a waiting list.

Trustee Fred Youngblood, speaking by telephone from Savannah, Ga., during the meeting, said he would have voted against the renewal, based on the first draft of the petition. He commended Mr. Joseph for working with OPA administrators to get the renewal request in order.

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One major casualty in Chino was the city's hoped-for cultural arts center.

Chino Valley school officials spent the year coping with lower state revenues and declining enrollment. After cutting approximately \$26.67 million from the next four years' budgets and laying off more than 250 in June, the school board prepared for more cuts in early 2012, including high school counselors, school nurses, the elementary music program, elementary assistant principals, and home-to-school transportation. The district ended the year anticipating a \$4.2 million shortfall by 2013-14.

Charter schools were in the news. Oxford Preparatory Academy, a K-8 public charter in Chino, received renewal for five years. Supporters of a new Neighborhood Arts & Sciences Academy wait to hear in January if their K-8 school will be approved. Oxford parents rallied vigorously to support their school's renewal, which the board approved Thursday night.

Revelations of sexual misconduct by staff members against students brought home the problems of this widely spotlighted crime. The board approved a policy in June that would define inappropriate conduct between employees and students.

The Chino Valley fire district opened two stations in Chino, No. 7 at 5980 Riverside Drive in September and a new No. 1 at 5078 Schaefer Ave.

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## Holiday schedule

Chino Hills city hall and Chino Hills city yard are closed until Tuesday, Jan. 3. Staff will be on call to respond to emergencies at 364-2860.

McCoy Equestrian Center will be closed New Year's Day. McCoy will be open from 8 a.m. to noon today (Dec. 31) and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Jan. 2,

city will be closed New Year's Day.

Because the New Year's holiday falls on Sunday, trash collection will not be affected in Chino. Trash service in Chino Hills will be delayed one day.

The post office will be open and mail will be delivered today. Post offices will be closed and no mail

Tuesday, Jan. 3, as will classes at St. Margaret Mary Catholic School, Cornerstone Christian School, New Hope Christian School, Loving Savior Lutheran School, Heights Christian Schools, and Ontario Christian Schools.

Oxford Preparatory Academy, a charter school in