



Studies in the News

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

"Reducing Crime by Shaping the Built Environment with Zoning: An Empirical Study of Los Angeles." By James M. Anderson, et al. *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, vol. 161 (Feb. 2013), pp. 699-755.

<http://www.pennumbra.com/issues/article.php?aid=385>

In this study, the authors explored the idea of changing a community's zoning and shaping its built environment in order to reduce crime. They examined the effect of zoning on crime rates using 205 blocks in eight relatively high-crime neighborhoods in Los Angeles County and found that commercial-

and residential-zoned areas were associated with lower crime rates than commercial-only zoned areas. One conclusion was that mixing residential-only zoning into commercial blocks may be a means to reducing crime.

ECONOMY

***The Monterey Shale & California's Economic Future.* Price School of Economic Policy, University of Southern California, et al. 2013. 81 p.**

http://www.communicationsinstitute.org/SHALEREPORTFINAL130228_v9.pdf

“The purpose of this report is to conduct an objective and economically sound assessment of the net benefits and costs of the increased use of hydraulic fracturing in California, especially with regard to the production of oil from the State’s Monterey Shale Formation. In carrying out this assessment, this report addresses two primary questions relating to whether California should consider expanding the use of hydraulic fracturing in the production of oil from the Monterey Shale.”

***The Hidden Cost of Offshore Tax Havens: State Budgets Under Pressure from Tax Loophole Abuse.* By Jordan Schneider, et al. U.S. PIRG Education Fund. Jan. 2013. 29 p.**

http://www.uspirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/USPIRG_State_Tax_Havens_0.pdf

“\$7.15 billion. That’s the tax burden shifted by wealthy residents and multinational corporations to Californians. We have rules to thwart such gaming of the system, but they lack teeth. Tax havens let billions vanish into thin air.... It is estimated that tax havens cost the 50 state governments \$39.8 billion in 2011.... The report ... analyzed various official reports to come up with its numbers. The authors concluded that multinational corporations accounted for \$26 billion of the total, individuals the other \$13.8 billion. California, with 12% of the nation’s population, sustained 18% of the losses because of its concentration of very wealthy people and multinational companies.” (*The Sacramento Bee*, Feb. 17, 2013).

EDUCATION

***How Teachers Are Using Technology at Home and in Their Classrooms.* By Kristin Purcell, et al. Pew Research Center. Feb. 28, 2013. 108 p.**

http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_TeachersandTechnologywithmethodology_PDF.pdf

“A survey of 2,462 Advanced Placement (AP) and National Writing Project (NWP) teachers finds that digital technologies have helped them in teaching their middle school and high school students in many ways. At the same time, the internet, mobile phones, and social media have brought new challenges to teachers.” This survey discusses the impact of cell phones and other devices on the learning process, for both teachers and their students, in various socioeconomic and urban settings.

EMPLOYMENT

***Unemployment Rates Are Projected to Remain High for Whites, Latinos, and African Americans Throughout 2013.* By Algernon Austin. Economic Policy Institute. Feb. 25, 2013. 8 p.**

<http://www.epi.org/publication/unemployment-rates-whites-latinos-african-americans/>

“The unemployment forecast for 2013 is stagnation: For whites, Latinos, and African Americans, year-end 2013 unemployment projections show essentially no improvement from the high levels that prevailed at the end of 2012. However, this prognosis may prove overly optimistic, as poor policy choices by Congress could easily worsen the economic outlook.”

ENERGY

America's Energy Resurgence: Sustaining Success, Confronting Challenges. Bipartisan Policy Center's Strategic Energy Policy Initiative. Feb. 2013. 188 p.

<http://bipartisanpolicy.org/sites/default/files/BPC%20SEPI%20Energy%20Report%202013.pdf>

The Strategic Energy Policy Initiative, a project of the Bipartisan Policy Center and led by a diverse 20-member energy board, released a report detailing policy recommendations to build on U.S. energy abundance and efficiency gains. "Over the last year and a half they have been deliberating on policy options to diversify energy production, improve energy productivity through cost-effective energy efficiency, accelerate innovation and technology improvements, and improve energy policy governance and accountability. The consensus-based recommendations are aimed at all relevant policymakers – state governments, Congress, Executive Branch agencies and local utilities."

ENVIRONMENT

Region 5 - Ecological Restoration Implementation Plan. U.S. Forest Service. Jan. 2013. 156 p.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/landmanagement/?cid=stelprdb5409054>

"In March 2011 the Pacific Southwest Region of the U.S. Forest Service released a statement of its Leadership Intent for Ecological Restoration, which laid out the Region's guiding vision and goals for its stewardship of wildland and forests for the next 15-20 years. This plan reflects the Regional leadership's current thinking on how the Leadership Intent will be implemented." U.S. Forest Service Region 5 covers California and Hawaii. The restoration implementation plan will affect how the USFS manages the 18 national forests located in California.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Online Voter Registration: Impact on California's 2012 Election Turnout, By Age and Party Affiliation. UC Davis Center for Regional Change. Mar. 2013. 5 p.

http://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/projects/ccep-policy-briefs/UCDavis_CCEP_Brief_4_Online_Voter_Turnout_Final.pdf

"The implementation of California's online voter registration system has raised expectations for the potential changes new online registrants would bring to the state's electorate. Instituted only a little over a month before the close of registration for the 2012 general election, large numbers of Californians registered online, making up 4% of the state's current registered electorate. Despite its initial success, some analysts questioned whether online registration would actually create more voters - whether online registrants would actually turnout to vote. Utilizing California's voter records, we examined the following key questions surrounding the impact of online voter registration on the 2012 November election.

HEALTH

Local Food Prices: Effects on Child Eating Patterns, Food Insecurity, and Overweight. By Taryn W. Morrissey, et al. Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Mar. 2013. 5 p.

<http://www.irlp.wisc.edu/publications/fastfocus/pdfs/FF16-2013.pdf>

According to experimental work, children tend to decrease their consumption of healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables when the cost goes up. Between 1997 and 2003, the cost of real restaurant meals and fruits and vegetables rose, while the price of snack foods and sugar-sweetened beverages trended downward. This report examines how food prices relate to weight and food insecurity outcomes during early childhood in both lower- and higher-income families.

HOUSING

Renovation in America: Findings from the 2013 Houzz & Home Survey. Houzz and Edge Research. 2013. 9 p.

<http://info.houzz.com/rs/houzz/images/Houzz%20%26%20Home%202013%20Report.pdf>

Despite a tenuous economy, a recent survey finds American homeowners planning home renovations for aesthetic purposes rather than adding home value. Of the 100,000 respondents, 86% cited “improving the look and feel” of their homes over “increasing home value” as reasoning for redecorating or remodeling. While many are undertaking projects on their own, 58% plan to hire contractors to do the work.

HUMAN SERVICES

Lost Dollars, Empty Plates: The Impact of CalFresh Participation on State and Local Economies. By Tia Shimada. California Food Policy Advocates. Feb. 2013. 33 p.

<http://cfpa.net/CalFresh/CFPAPublications/LDEP-FullReport-2013.pdf>

“According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), California ranks last among all states for participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The low rate of participation harms state and local economies as well as low-income Californians.... CalFresh benefits are fully federally funded. The federal government also funds 50% of CalFresh administrative costs, with the state and counties contributing the remaining 35 and 15%, respectively.... But CalFresh benefits do more than help individual Californians. USDA has shown that every dollar in SNAP expenditures generates \$1.79 in economic activity. In addition to helping households meet their nutritional needs, CalFresh benefits exert a multiplier effect that stimulates the economy.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

California High-Speed Passenger Rail: Project Estimates Could Be Improved to Better Inform Future Decisions. By Susan A. Fleming, et al. Government Accountability Office. GAO-13-304, Mar. 28, 2013. 90 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/653401.pdf>

“The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) met some, but not all of the best practices in GAO's *Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide* (Cost Guide) for producing cost estimates that are accurate, comprehensive, well documented, and credible.... GAO found the Authority's ridership and revenue forecasts to be reasonable ... [and that] the travel-demand-modeling process used to generate these forecasts followed generally accepted travel-demand-modeling practices.... GAO also found limitations in the Authority's benefit-cost analysis of the project that could limit its usefulness to decision makers. Finally, GAO found that construction of the high-speed rail project will not eliminate the need for additional improvements to meet future statewide-travel demand, but current statewide-transportation assessments and planning have given little consideration to this issue.”

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