

Lawndale Tribune

AND LAWNDALE NEWS

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Giving Lawndale Middle School Students Vision for the Future



It was quite a spectacle in front of Jane Addams Middle School after 41 students recently received free eyeglasses. Photo and Content Provided by Lawndale Elementary School District

New Year Means Changes for Hourly Workers, Drivers

By Rob McCarthy

The state's lowest-paid workers will get a raise on Sunday when the minimum wage moves to \$10.50 per hour, and it won't stop there. Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill in March making California the first state to commit to a \$15 minimum wage. The first 50-cent jump kicks in on January 1 and affects businesses with 26 or more employees. Smaller businesses are being given additional time, though all businesses eventually will pay the same rate.

The law calls for another 50-cent raise in 2018, followed by a \$1 per hour jump annually until 2022. Once the minimum wage reaches \$15 for small business, the rate will rise annually with inflation.

The Governor has the power to suspend an annual increase if the state is projected to run a deficit or the economy sputters. Brown called the gradual increase in the minimum wage a "careful and responsible" approach that leaves the Governor flexibility to ease the burden on employers should the economy slow unexpectedly over the next five years.

This is the third consecutive year that California has raised the minimum wage. It increased to \$9 in 2015 and \$10 this year. A full-time worker making minimum wage will earn \$21,840 this year.

The federal poverty level for a family of four is \$24,300, and the federal minimum wage is \$7.25--though a federally contracted worker in California would make the higher \$10.50 per hour under the law.

Along with the higher hourly rate, minimum wage earners are awarded paid sick days--though that provision of the law won't begin for another year. When the \$15 hourly minimum takes effect sometime next decade, full-time workers will earn \$31,200 per year and have three paid sick days.

Filling the Retirement Gap

Take-home pay isn't the only employment issue for hourly workers in the state. An estimated seven million people don't have a workplace retirement savings plan because

their non-covered employers don't offer one. A voluntary program for non-covered employers who want to save for retirement starts in 2017.

The bill's author, Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon, said he pushed for creation of the California Secure Choice Retirement Savings Trust to provide retirees the same opportunity for financial security at retirement that millions of Californians enjoy as a job perk.

"Nearly seven million of our workers, who help make California the sixth largest economy in the world do not have access to a retirement savings plan at their place of employment, and after a career of working tirelessly they are forced to retire into poverty when their bodies give out," Leon said.

Much like the minimum wage law, the retirement-saving program would be phased in to give smaller employers more time to set up automatic payroll deductions for employees who choose to participate. Businesses with 100 employees have 12 months after the plan opens enrollment to create a payroll-deposit system for non-covered employees.

The minimum contribution level is three percent of wages in the Secure Choice Retirement Savings Trust, and like employer-sponsored plans the participants can have more deducted as their incomes rise and they approach retirement age. There is no liability to employers or the state, and the monies in the plan will be invested for long-term growth in a diversified, managed portfolio.

Nearly 50 percent of middle-income workers are at risk of entering poverty when they retire, according to statistics. The average American's Social Security payment is \$1,341 per month.

Affecting Your Ride

While some people will be making more in 2017, California drivers will be paying \$10 more in vehicle registration fees in the new year. The Department of Motor Vehicles also received the okay to collect \$5 more to renew, transfer or duplicate a personalized license plate, and \$10 more for a newly issued one.

The state is requiring the ridesharing

companies, including Uber and Lyft, to conduct more thorough background checks on its drivers starting Sunday. While the enhanced passenger protection for riders won't be in place before New Year's Eve, every ridesharing business in the state will face penalties of up to \$5,000 for hiring or contracting with drivers who are registered sex offenders or have been convicted of committing dangerous crimes--including assault and battery, domestic violence or driving under the influence--within the past seven years.

Taxi services are not covered by the stricter background checks. Ridesharing is a popular option for people who don't want to drive themselves and need to get somewhere quickly. While Uber is the name most people know, Lyft is the other big player in this alt-driving industry.

Passengers arrange for rides on short distance using a smartphone app to hail a driver to a pickup location. The ridesharing companies have insisted they are a ride-matching service--not a transportation company to shield themselves from liability in case of a crash or act of violence.

California lawmakers have made it clear through this new law that the responsibility for protecting passengers lies with Uber and Lyft even if their drivers are classified as independent contractors. Attacks on passengers by drivers are infrequent, and everyone seems to agree the majority of drivers are competent and professional. This new bill aims to keep it that way.

A few other driving-related changes in the law that South Bay residents should know about going into the new year include more restrictions on cellphones. No longer can drivers hold their cellphones while driving for any reason other than to call 911. The new restrictions also include tablets, laptops and any wireless device. This loophole-closing law was detailed in the Herald in a December 8

Weekend Forecast

Friday
AM Showers
59°/53°



Saturday
AM Showers
57°/47°



Sunday
Mostly Sunny
57°/48°



See Change page 8

PETSPETS **Pets** PETSPETS

Wowser Schnauzers



Pinkie

We are looking for volunteers to help with our pet adoption fairs which are held every Saturday at the Petco located at 537 N. Pacific Coast Highway, Redondo Beach 90277, from noon-3:30 p.m. If you are interested in volunteering and can commit to at least one Saturday a month, please contact us at info@msfr.org. You can also visit all of our Miniature Schnauzers & Friends rescues at the adoption fair or check out our website, www.msfr.org. If you have any questions about a particular dog's availability, you can email us at info@msfr.org.

Schnauzers! Bet you can't adopt just one! From all the folks and furry kids at Miniature Schnauzers and Friends, we'd like to thank everyone for helping us find homes for our "orphans" and wish everyone a happy holiday season.

"Are you looking for an elegant, reserved, mature lady to be your adoring and quiet companion? If so, look no further. I'm **Pinkie**, an eight-year old, female, purebred Miniature Schnauzer. Sadly, my elderly owner could no longer care for me--so one of her relatives took me to an LA County shelter and left me. I'm a shy, reserved lady with a docked tail, natural ears and gorgeous eyes. I've had a vet exam and a dental, which left me with eight less teeth but I feel absolutely wonderful. I'm a bit on the larger side, weighing about 17 pounds, but I'm still able to fit on your lap and I have many years left to give to a family who can appreciate and love me. I was really hoping to find my forever family to spend Christmas with since it's the first time I've ever been without a family for this special time of year. Well, if

not for Christmas, how about starting off 2017 with a lot of love and companionship for you and a home for me?"

If you are interested in Pinkie, please email info@msfr.org for more information.

"They call me **Corky** and I'm a six-year old, female, purebred Miniature Schnauzer. I was confiscated with eight other dogs and we all ended up at an LA County shelter. Most of the other dogs were adopted directly from the shelter, but my buddy Russell and I needed rescuing...so I stepped MSFR. Lucky for Russell, he found his forever home several months ago. But as for me--well, I haven't been so lucky. When I was rescued, in addition to being a stinky, matted mess, my eyes were all crusted over due to an untreated dry eye condition, and my teeth were so bad that even I didn't want to be around me. The rescue folks, who by the way are very savvy, suspected that I had bladder stones and they were right! One procedure took care of the stones, the neutering and a dental, which resulted in the removal of 15 teeth. Looking good and feeling even better than I look, but I will have to remain on eye drops to keep my eyes clear and on Rx dog food to prevent reoccurring stones. I'm just a bit of a gal, only 12 pounds, and I'm cute as a button with my natural plume of a tail. I get along great with other dogs and I'm very affectionate. So I ask, 'Why am I still here and feeling sad and lonely?' The holidays are no time to be without a family to love and be loved in return. I still have hope that the new year will bring me luck in finding my forever



Corky



Donny

family. I know you're out there and once we meet, you'll never regret making me a part of your family."

If you're interested in Corky, please email info@msfr.org for more information.

"Hi there, my name is **Donny** and I'm a lovable, 17-pound, five-year old, male, purebred Miniature Schnauzer who has had a pretty eventful life. One night I was out for a stroll, and the next thing I knew I was in an LA County shelter. I was told that I ended up there after sustaining some nasty injuries when a car hit me. Since I was a stray and injured, I wasn't going to be adopted--so I was very

lucky to be rescued by the MSFR folks. They took me to their vet, who took x-rays and found that that I had several fractures in my pelvis. The surgery, on February 10, to repair my pelvis required a plate and six screws. I have completely recovered from surgery and am now on a mission to find my forever home. My visit to the groomer has transformed me into quite a good-looking guy. My eyes and my natural tail are my best features, but my sweet temperament is what will win you over."

If you are interested in Donny, please email info@msfr.org for more information.

"Naming me **Holly** seemed most appropriate since I wandered off with my friend during the holiday season and ended up at an LA City shelter. He was very lucky and was adopted by the public. Unfortunately, I wasn't quite so lucky. When I was examined at the shelter, they found blood in my urine--so I was confined to the medical ward. Not a fun place for a four-year old, female, purebred Miniature Schnauzer. I was so lonely and the public couldn't even come visit me, so I was feeling pretty hopeless. Then the MSFR folks heard about me and came to my rescue! Their veterinarian examined me and determined that I just had a bladder infection that was totally curable with antibiotics. Things are definitely looking up for this 18-pound gal with an adorable face. I get along great with other dogs and am a real sweetie pie. Now, I just need to find my forever home to make the new year a great one!"

If you're interested in Holly, please email info@msfr.org for more information. •

Happy Tails



Congratulations to **Eugene**, who found his forever home in time for Christmas! His new "parents" had dogs when they were children but not as adults, so this will be their first dog as a family. When Eugene met their seven-year old daughter, he was so gentle and sweet with her that we believe he came from a home with children. It was just second

nature for him to make friends with her. With the holidays upon us, everyone will be home for the next few weeks...so his new sister will be able to dote on him and everyone will share in the love. What a perfect time to make Eugene a member of the family! We wish them a very happy holiday season a long, happy life. •

Change

from front page

article titled "The Hands-Free Device Every Driver Needs."

Drivers are prohibited from driving a motor vehicle while holding and operating a handheld wireless telephone or a wireless electronic communications device unless it's mounted on the windshield, the dashboard or the center console without hindering the driver's view of the road.

A driver may only touch his phone or other device to open or close an app with a swipe of a finger or a touch of a button. GPS devices installed in car are exempt from the tough new hands-free cell phone law for drivers, which targets a national epidemic of distracted driving. Highway deaths and injuries are rising again after a 50-year decline, and cell phones are a big part of the reason why.

Child safety seats: A new requirement says that children 2 and under must be strapped in a rear-facing child seat unless the child weighs 40 pounds or more or is 39 inches taller or more.

Accident reports: A driver involved in a motor-vehicle collision must report the crash

to the DMV if the damage to property is \$1,000. Fewer minor collisions and fender benders will need to be reported under the financial limit, which currently is \$750.

Vehicle safety recalls: A car dealer or car rental company cannot loan or rent any vehicle that is under a manufacturer's recall. Companies have 48 hours after receiving a recall notice to pull the car from their fleets. The one exception is for licensed dealers or rental companies with fleets of 34 or fewer loaner or rental vehicles. The DMV can suspend or revoke a vehicle dealer's license if they break the law.

Motorcycle lane splitting: Driving a motorcycle between rows of stopped or moving vehicles is legal in the state, and riders and drivers need to watch out for one another. The California Highway Patrol will develop educational guidelines about lane splitting for the safety of motorcyclists, drivers, and passengers. Expect the California Drivers Handbook to add a section soon with some suggestions for drivers and riders about safe passage in the aisle. •