

Community Briefs



BU10 WIN SILVER CHAMPIONSHIP

The El Segundo BU10 Prospects travel team won the Silver Championship of the NSSSA Baseball Columbus Day Classic. Back Row (L-R): Mason Bemis, Joey Hansen, Manager Jeff Prihoda, Ethan Mito, Ryan Carey. Middle Row (L-R): Chuck Nelson, Isaiah Horton, Michael Flores, Christian Velasquez, Ryan Daues, Christopher Penna. Front Left: Nico Celestial. Photo provided by Troy Bemis. •

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Boys Water Polo overpowers Torrance 11-1



Senior Beau Blacksten on a shot attempt. Photos by Shelley Kemp, www.kemp.photorelect.com



Beau Blacksten hold off defender as he prepares to pass to Max Reynolds as he drives to the net.



Junior Jeff Allison on defense.

Halloween Safety Tips

Provided by Brian Evanski,
Lieutenant

The El Segundo Police Department reminds everyone that Halloween can be a fun holiday but it can be potentially dangerous. Here are some tips to keep parents and trick-or-treaters safe during Halloween:

Try to trick-or-treat when there is still light outside.

Wear a costume that is fire resistant and makes it easy to walk, see and be seen.

Masks can obstruct your vision so consider using facial make up instead.

Use a flashlight if you are out at night.

To avoid tripping, walk from house to house instead of running.

A parent or responsible adult should always

accompany young children.

Never enter a stranger's house.

Only cross the street at corners and do not cross mid-block between parked cars.

To keep homes safe for visiting trick-or-treaters, remove anything that visitors could trip over such as garden hoses, toys, bikes and lawn decorations.

Examine your candy at home before consumption. If in doubt, throw it out!

Keep pets away from all candy. Chocolate, which contains theobromine, can be poisonous to pets causing nerve damage and even death.

Restrain pets so they do not inadvertently jump on or bite a trick-or-treater.

The El Segundo Police Department hopes everyone has a fun and safe Halloween! •

MEPS

from front page

and office complex is located on a previously fallow industrial parcel just west of Sepulveda Boulevard. It replaces a facility at 5150 Rodeo Drive deemed no longer capable of meeting the military's mission. Among the chief reasons cited for the move to El Segundo were the city's proximity to Los Angeles International Airport, the presence of Los Angeles Air Force Base and the community's pro-military reputation. Property owner Mar Canyon Grand, LLC (Mar Ventures of Plaza El Segundo and Edge at Campus El Segundo is the developer) has leased the site to the U.S. Government for 15 years.

Initial approval for the MEPS was not a slam dunk, however. Discussion of the project spurred one of the longest public hearings in years as nearly two dozen speakers addressed the El Segundo Council during a meeting in late July 2008. Two-thirds of the speakers said they supported the project because of its aesthetic pluses, minimal security risks and the community's civic duty to support the military's efforts. While not condemning a MEPS in El Segundo in general, most of the project's opponents said they thought the chosen site was too close to residential neighborhoods, a concern that prompted two of the five Council members not to vote in favor of it. Others worried about the community becoming too military-oriented, the potential for protesting at the site or the prospect of unsupervised youths enjoying a last night of freedom on the town.

Those worries may have turned out to be unfounded. "We're getting along well with everyone," said MEPS Assistant Operations Officer Captain Daniel Goldsmith, who indicated that there have been no complaints thus far. One likely reason is that recruits are sequestered in the facility from before the crack of dawn to late afternoon before promptly hopping on a bus and heading out of town to a hotel on Century Boulevard. Applicants are not allowed to leave the MEPS building once they arrive and typically stay in the area only one night. However, many applicants do end up returning at a later date as part of the delayed entry program. "We're trying to reduce the number of visits per session," Goldsmith said. "After the physical and qualifying test, it could be a number of months before they are shipped out for training. For example, a high school student might take the exam at the beginning of school year and then get shipped out after graduation."

Of the 65 similar stations across the continental United States, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, the Los Angeles MEPS is the busiest, with about 1,500 applicants (60-70 a day) going through its doors on a monthly basis. According to its press information, the Los Angeles MEPS over the course of a year

administers over 20,000 medical examinations and medical inspections, 20,000 enlistment aptitude tests, and another 24,000 career exploration aptitude tests for high school students a year. Annually, about 9,000 recruits enter the armed forces through the facility. "Ours is the highest volume, which means more of the applicants and future service members will come through our doors than any other single place," said Goldsmith. The percentage of applicants who actually make it into the military is also high since the recruits are pre-screened.

The station itself is staffed for 62 personnel, of which only 10 are from the armed forces with the rest made up of Department of the Army civilian workforce. Roughly one-third of the staff total consists of medical personnel. Another 47 military members representing the five recruiting services also maintain offices in the facility.

According to Goldsmith, the applicants come from all over, ranging from as far east as Bakersfield, as far north as Fresno and as far south as San Diego. "Each has a personal recruiter who must drive to wherever the applicant lives to pick them and deliver them to the hotel," Goldsmith said, adding that most of the recruits are from outside the local area. "I don't see too many applicants from El Segundo." One thing he is seeing: Older applicants. With the Army's higher age limit, enlistees in their mid-30s have become increasingly more common.

Speaking of enlistment, recent Pentagon stats confirmed that this is the first time in 35 years (since the end of the draft and Vietnam era) that all military branches have met or exceeded their recruitment targets. The economy is one of the main reasons cited, as civilian jobs are harder to come by these days.

"As unemployment goes up, military recruitment tends to do well, even though these people are virtually assured they will be going to war," Goldsmith said. A recent *Washington Post* article also pointed out that the quality of recruits has markedly improved, with 95 percent of active-duty recruits holding high school diplomas and only 1.5 percent scoring in the lowest acceptable category on the standard qualifications test.

While keeping a low profile in town and a streamlined operation, MEPS won't simply disappear under the local radar. "We want to be involved in the community," Goldsmith said. One of the outreach ideas is to talk at an upcoming Rotary Club meeting. As for its new El Segundo digs, staff is reportedly "ecstatic" to be here. "We love the area, the proximity to commerce and the restaurants," Goldsmith said. "It's a much nicer environment to be in. Our personnel go running or ride their bikes down Grand Avenue. Everyone likes it." •

