



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

INTERSTATE 215 cuts through Mead Valley, left, and Perris. Mead Valley has an estimated 2,000 square feet of warehouses per person.

Despite decree, tainted water persists

Recent EPA mandate does not address lead risk from indoor pipes in Los Angeles' public housing complexes.

BY TONY BRISCOE, IAN JAMES AND REBECCA PLEVIN

Days after the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency visited a Los Angeles public housing project with lead-contaminated water, the agency ordered drinking water systems nationwide to replace every lead pipe within 10 years.

"We've known for decades that lead exposure has serious long-term impacts for children's health. And yet, millions of lead service lines are still delivering drinking water to homes," EPA Director Michael Regan said.

But in Los Angeles — where the discovery of contaminated water in public housing in Watts has shocked officials — the EPA mandate is unlikely to result in immediate change.

When Regan joined Mayor Karen Bass on a visit to the 700-unit Jordan Downs complex this month, he suggested the brain-damaging element could be from household plumbing — a critical risk in older homes.

It's a possibility that highlights the difficulty of eliminating the threat of lead in California drinking water.

Although the new EPA rule targets lead service lines connecting homes to water mains, it doesn't address plumbing inside the building that can still pose a risk, such as lead soldering, brass fixtures and interior mains.

"If you can outlaw lead in fuel, for God's sake, why can't we outlaw lead in drinking water?" asked Timothy Watkins, president of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. "And

[See Water, A8]

'Where does it stop?' Spread of warehouses threatens rural lifestyle

Riverside County leaders ponder erasing zoning barrier in Mead Valley

BY REBECCA PLEVIN

MEAD VALLEY, Calif. — Seen from above, the industrial-scale warehouses straddling Interstate 215 where it intersects Mead Valley shimmer like a sprawling lake of white concrete boxes.

In this unincorporated Riverside County community, the big-box distribution hubs responsible for fulfilling online shopping orders have long been contained to a substantial strip west of the freeway. Burlington, Living Spaces and FedEx are among nearly 50 warehouse properties located here, cap-

italizing on Mead Valley's easy access to rail and freeway corridors.

Beyond this strip, though, Mead Valley residents embrace a rural lifestyle. People here raise horses and livestock; most streets are lined with gravel trails, rather than sidewalks, to accommodate riders on

horseback. Besides the new Farmer Boys restaurant near the freeway, the community has few local businesses other than gas stations, feed stores and plant nurseries.

As e-commerce exploded during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, more distribution centers rose along

the freeway, bringing more trucks to local roadways. Still, there was an understanding that, beyond the clearly delineated industrial zone, Mead Valley residents could maintain their solitude and sweeping views, in exchange for shouldering a disproportionate share of an

[See Warehouses, A7]

Harris' record as prosecutor defies labels, some say

Those who worked with her find nuanced approach never fit into a political box.

BY KEVIN RECTOR

At every step of her political career, Kamala Harris has faced the same question: What sort of prosecutor was she?

As a former San Francisco district attorney and California attorney general, the vice president has been called both "soft" and "tough" on crime. She has been labeled a progressive and a moderate. At times, she and her supporters have

added to the debate by leaning into one narrative or the other, depending on the office she sought.

Now, as Harris' record as a prosecutor looms large in the presidential race, many voters say they don't know what she stands for, and that her opponent, former President Trump — a felon who talks tough on crime — seems more willing to go after criminals.

In a statement to The Times, Trump campaign national press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Harris was "soft on murderers, gun criminals, and drug dealers" and "helped destroy California."

According to more than a

[See Harris, A6]



DAMIAN DOVARGANES Associated Press

CALIFORNIA Atty. Gen. Kamala Harris speaks at a 2014 human trafficking symposium in Los Angeles.



TAYLOR COOLEY

THE 60-ACRE Cool Patch Pumpkins corn maze in Dixon, Calif. Some people approach a hokey seasonal activity as they would an Olympic race.

Ears to the ground for this Guinness-record corn maze

Over the years, labyrinth in Solano County has served as an experiment in human psychology

BY JESSICA GARRISON | REPORTING FROM DIXON, CALIF.

Deep inside one of the world's largest corn mazes, where the tri-tip sandwiches and soft-serve ice cream purchased at the concession stand have become but a memory and all that can be seen in any direction are dirt paths and dead-end walls of green plants whispering in the breeze, people tend to reveal themselves.

From humble beginnings with a notvery-impressive pumpkin patch two decades ago, a farming family in this Solano County town decided to move into the corn maze game, hoping to have some seasonal fun and earn a little extra cash.

And then, fueled by corny ambition and creative use of Excel spreadsheets, the Cooley family of Dixon went big. Really big.

Their Cool Patch Pumpkins corn maze has caused traffic backups on Interstate 80. It has prompted a frenzy of 911 calls to the Solano County Sheriff's Department from people who find themselves lost in the labyrinth. It has twice earned a Guinness World Record as the world's largest corn maze. And in doing so, it has become "a big part" of the farm's

[See Ears, A8]

Dodgers-Mets Game 6 coverage

Read about Sunday night's NLCS result at latimes.com/sports and in our Playoffs Extra at latimes.com/enewspaper.

Release of Israel reports probed

Classified assessment by the U.S. of a plan to attack Iran was posted on Telegram messaging app. **WORLD, A3**

Ski resort fights blaze with snow

As Bridge fire encroached on Mountain High, crews deployed snowmaking machines. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather
Sunny and warm.
L.A. Basin: 87/61. **B6**

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