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Easing transition for foster youth

Stakeholders group devises work plan in pursuit of funding

By JOE GIOVANNETTI
DAILY REPUBLIC

FAIRFIELD — In the same way it takes a village to raise a child, attempting to solve the problem of preparing foster youth in

Solano County for emancipation has been a collaborative effort.

When youth in foster care turn 18, they are released from the system and into adulthood. They're on their own.

But many of the more than 4,000 foster youth aging out of California's foster care system every year are unprepared to survive independently, according to a 2007 study by Sonja Lenz-Rashid, an assistant profes-

sor in the School of Social Work at San Francisco State University.

Solano County officials and foster care workers decided to do something about that trend.

They have met monthly

since January to develop a work plan that outlines services to improve the county's foster care system in seven key areas: education, job training, housing, financial assistance, Independent Living Skills Programs, permanency and personal asset development.

The Transitional Aged

Youth Stakeholders have completed the plan and an application to earn outside funding from the California Connected by 25 Initiative, a collaborative effort of five foundations assisting transitional age youth in obtaining the support and services

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Brad Zweerink/Daily Republic

Mike Flores, an archeologist with Solano Archeological Services, shakes dirt through a screen while working at the site of an American Indian burial ground on Suisun Valley Road.

UFW tries recruiting farm workers in Mexico

By GARANCE BURKE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HURON — Weary of waiting for Congress to overhaul the nation's immigration laws, the United Farm Workers is marching forward with a plan to recruit Mexican laborers to pick crops on U.S. farms.

The union's efforts to import temporary workers under an existing government program follows similar moves by lawmakers in Arizona and Colorado, who are also trying to create new pathways to bring in foreign field hands without approval from Washington.

This month, UFW President Arturo Rodriguez signed an agreement with the governor of the Mexican state of Michoacan to help recruit local residents to apply for temporary jobs on U.S. farms, all of which would be covered under union contracts.

Thousands of people from the central Mexican state already harvest strawberries, oranges and other crops in the U.S.

Under the new pact, government field staff in Michoacan will distribute information on U.S. labor protections, especially in rural towns known for sending a large number of their residents north. In exchange, the union will negotiate contracts with U.S. growers willing to guarantee that legal workers' rights will be respected on both sides of the border, UFW International Director Erik Nicholson said.

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Uncovering the past

Dig in Rockville unveils remnants of valley's Indian past

By IAN THOMPSON
DAILY REPUBLIC

ROCKVILLE — For the past four months, behind the tan tarps next to the Tower Mart, a settlement containing the remains of Solano County's first residents was respectfully excavated.

Under the watchful eye of a Cortina Rancheria representative, archaeologists have quietly uncovered part of a Patwin settlement estimated to be 2,100 years old.

Given the number of fire pits, remains and other artifacts discovered, the Rockville Road site was part of an extensive settlement that encompassed much of Suisun Valley until the last

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Survey: Doing without adds up to weaker economy

By JEANNINE AVERSA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Monique Blake won't be shopping for new clothes. William Acosta got rid of his cell phone. Paula Rockwell put off buying a home.

In ways both large and small, Americans are doing without. Squeezed by high prices for gasoline, food and other products, worried about their jobs and rattled by talk of a recession, people are hunkering down.

Each person's decision to

give up something and trim spending can collectively carry crucial implications for the economy.

Personal spending accounts for the single-biggest chunk of gross domestic product, which measures national economic activity. Because of that, people's behavior is important in determining whether the country will survive the economic turmoil or fall victim to it.

Sixty percent of the public say they are now less comfortable about making a big-ticket financial commit-

ment, such as buying a home or a car, than they were just six months ago, underscoring their more circumspect behavior, according to the RBC Cash poll conducted by Ipsos, an international polling firm, in early April. A year ago, 48 percent said they were less comfortable about making a major purchase.

BIGresearch, a firm that tracks consumer behavior, said 53.6 percent of people they polled focused more on what they needed, rather than what they wanted, during their shopping trips over

the last six months.

"It's more about cutting back rather than cutting out. Like taking your family to Pizza Hut versus Applebees," says Marshal Cohen, chief retail analyst at NPD Group, a consumer and retail research firm.

Clothing stores, furniture and home furnishing retailers, electronics and appliance stores, building materials and garden supply places, and health and beauty shops were among the merchants who saw their sales drop in March, according to a recent

government report on retail sales around the country.

"I don't shop for clothes and other stuff. I just wear what I have," says Blake, 27, of Clanton, Ala.

Pam Goodfellow, a senior analyst at BIGresearch, says the frugality has put more of a focus on "smart shopping and bargain hunting. People are picking up fewer items to complement what they already have."

Shoppers are tightening the belt in the face of a num-

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— Marshal Cohen, chief retail analyst at NPD Group, a consumer and retail research firm

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WEATHER



Breezy with plenty of sunshine. High of 82, low of 50. Page B8

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