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In the sci-fi thriller 'Dark Matter,' Joel Edgerton battles through parallel worlds.

In today's paper **BUSINESS:** State approves hotly contested electricity rate change. 9A



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FOUNDED 1857 VOL. 312, NO. 131



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THE SACRAMENTO BEE

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Deficit remains a mystery ahead of Newsom's latest budget

BY LINDSEY HOLDEN
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California Gov. Gavin Newsom is expected to unveil an updated state budget on Friday

showing a huge budget deficit that's likely to trigger painful spending cuts — a shortfall that appears to have grown during the past few months.

State lawmakers must produce a balanced budget by the

time the new fiscal year begins on July 1. The governor in January estimated the state would face a \$38 billion deficit.

Budget-watchers now anticipate that number has likely grown as revenue totals have

been lower than Department of Finance projections.

Newsom could use several strategies to get the number down. He could include plans to tap the state's reserve fund. He will likely factor in the \$17 bil-

lion in savings he and legislative leaders agreed to last month. He could cut spending, or find ways to collect more revenue.

In April, the governor, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, D-Hollister, and Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg, opened up budgets from 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 to find \$1.6 billion in immediate spending "solutions," or cuts, delays and other money-saving strategies.

SEE NEWSOM, 7A



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In a packed council chamber, locals show their support Wednesday for the relocation of the Sacramento Zoo to Elk Grove during an Elk Grove City Council meeting.

Elk Grove officially approves relocation of Sacramento Zoo

BY MARCUS D. SMITH
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A state-of-the-art zoo is coming to Elk Grove after a marathon City Council session culminated in a 4-1 vote to approve construction of the \$302 million project.

The Elk Grove City Council approved the proposal late Wednesday night, capping

nearly four years of discussion, planning and negotiations to relocate the Sacramento Zoo from Land Park, where it has been since 1927. The approval came at the end of the five-hour meeting.

Councilman Kevin Speasewas the lone "no" vote, saying the project needed more taxpayer oversight.

Dozens of people filled the City Council chambers and

cheered the historic vote for what the city projects could bring a million visitors per year to Elk Grove and generate an estimated \$249 million in jobs to the region over the next five years.

The planned development of 103 acres will include a dedicated 65 acres for the zoo near Lotz Parkway and Kammerer Road, west of Highway 99 near Sky River Casino.

The move will allow growth for more animal exhibits and larger spaces for expanded habitats. Officials say the new zoo will become home to more than 400 different animals and will feature a 23-acre African savanna that will showcase rhinos, giraffes, lions and cheetahs.

The new zoo's main facility

SEE ZOO, 8A

First cases of 'zombie' disease in California deer detected

BY CHRIS BIDERMAN
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A deadly disease that has ravaged deer in other parts of North America was found for the first time in California this week.

According to the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, chronic wasting disease was detected in two deer after samples were examined Monday, marking the first time the fatal disease has been found in deer or elk in the state.

The samples came from one deer that was found dead from unknown causes near Yosemite Lakes in Madera County and another deer that was struck and killed by a vehicle near Bishop in Inyo County.

"The disparate locations of these two detections indicate that CWD has probably been present in California for some time, since the incubation period can be months to years," state wildlife officials said in their announcement Tuesday. Experts said the disease can take as many as two years to develop once an animal is exposed. Once infected, the disease is fatal.

Chronic wasting disease, sometimes known as "zombie deer disease," is a contagious infection similar to bovine spongiform encephalopathy, better known as mad cow disease, that attacks the nervous system and disproportionately affects deer, elk and moose in the wild and captivity.

It does not affect humans, global health officials say, though experts say keeping it out of the food chain is a priority.

STOPPING SPREAD, ELIMINATING DISEASE IS CHALLENGING

Since its discovery in 1967 in a Colorado herd, the disease has been found in 34 states and five Canadian provinces. Officials said the disease had been detected in California previously, though not in deer or elk.

If left unchecked, the disease could decimate black-tail and mule herds along the Sierra Nevada foothills or reach the coastal prairie mountains — areas where many of the state's half-million deer live, according to the latest population estimates in 2017.

Signs of the disease among animals include weight loss, clumsy movements, drooling, excessive thirst, urination and

SEE ZOMBIE, 6A

Bodies of missing climbers found on Mount Whitney

BY ISHANI DESAI
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Two climbers died after going missing while hiking on Mount Whitney, California's highest peak, authorities confirmed to The Sacramento Bee.

The hikers were identified by the Tulare County Sheriff's Office as Andrew Niziol, 28, a resident of South Lake Tahoe, and Patty Bolan, 29, who had just completed her doctoral studies in physics at UC Davis. Niziol and Bolan, who appeared to be dating, were outdoor

enthusiasts and had taken a long-term hiking trip around the state.

Six days before their Mount Whitney trip, the couple hiked and snowboarded around Mount Shasta but were unable to summit the Northern California peak due to high winds, according to social media posts.

"Adventure buddy appreciation post," Niziol wrote in an Instagram post on May 2. "We may not have made it to the peak due to weather (this time), but it still was a great time on

SEE CLIMBERS, 6A



Instagram

Andrew Niziol and Patty Bolan pose for a photo at Mount Shasta in an image posted to Instagram on May 4. The couple's bodies were found five days later on the north face of Mount Whitney after the couple went missing.



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