

RETAIL Trends

Noteworthy from our advertisers

Harbor Freight Tools now open in the Miramar/Kearny Mesa area

Tool time just got a lot more affordable. Harbor Freight Tools, the nation's largest discount tool retailer, recently opened its newest location at 8400 Miramar Road, Suite 140, in San Diego.

On Saturday, April 2, a grand opening celebration was held, featuring a ribbon cutting hosted by the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce and a donation presentation to Rebuilding Together San Diego of more than \$1,000 in much-needed tools and supplies.



The new Harbor Freight Tools store on Miramar Road in San Diego.

"We are very excited to be opening the fifth Harbor Freight Tools store in San Diego County, and delighted by the warm welcome the Kearny Mesa and Miramar communities have shown us," said Eric Smidt, CEO of Harbor Freight Tools. "Harbor Freight continues to grow significantly by consistently earning our customers' business each and every day with high-quality tools at ridiculously low prices, combined with superior customer service."

Harbor Freight's donation to Rebuilding Together San Diego will help the non-profit organization with their April 30 National Rebuilding Day projects; renovating nine homes with approximately 1,000 local volunteers donating their time and hard work to help low-income homeowners with repair needs.

"We are overwhelmed by the generosity of Harbor Freight Tools' donation," said Pamela Thorsch, Executive Director of RTSD. "We are so very grateful to Harbor Freight and are excited about their expanded presence in San Diego."

Harbor Freight Tools is a national leader in selling high-quality tools at "ridiculously low prices." With a lifetime guarantee on all hand tools and a reputation for outstanding customer service, Harbor Freight Tools is a favorite with contractors, government agencies, schools and manufacturing companies, as well as with tool enthusiasts and do-it-yourselfers who want a top-quality selection while still being value-conscious.

Stocking over 7,000 items in categories that include automotive, shop equipment, air and power tools, outdoor equipment, compressors, welding, and woodworking tools, the retailer now has five locations in San Diego County: San Diego/Miramar, Chula Vista, El Cajon, Escondido, and Oceanside. For more details, visit www.harborfreight.com.

Great deals await shoppers as Big Lots celebrates grand opening today in Encinitas

Big Lots, the nation's largest broad-line closeout retailer, continues to grow with its newest location opening today at 333 North El Camino Real, Encinitas. The grand-opening celebration begins today at 9 a.m. with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and donation of \$2,500 made to Flora Vista School.

At the new 24,000 square-foot Big Lots in Encinitas, customers will find thousands of products available, from everyday consumables to seasonal goods, home decor, electronics, toys, and one-time closeouts other stores just can't match. Big Lots also offers great values on a full assortment of brand-name furniture and Serta mattresses.

Big Lots stores are designed so customers can easily find the brand-name products on their shopping list. Big Lots stocks merchandise that typically sells for 20 to 40 percent less than discount stores and up to 70 percent below traditional retailers.

"At Big Lots, our easy-to-shop stores and unbelievable deals have been big hits with customers for more than 40 years and we are thrilled to bring that same successful concept to a new group of shoppers," said Rob Claxton, senior vice president of marketing for Big Lots.

The new Encinitas Big Lots, located at 333 North El Camino Real in Encinitas (92024), is just one of 90 stores the retailer plans to open in 2011.

For more information, visit www.biglots.com.



A Better Solution In Home Care, Inc. celebrates 10 years of helping seniors

A Better Solution In Home Care, Inc. is celebrating over 10 years in San Diego County, providing hourly and live-in care for seniors when they need support to remain independent. In celebration of this noteworthy milestone, A Better Solution In Home Care, Inc. is offering \$50 off your first week of service, as well as discounted 12-hour rates. Additionally, they have recently partnered with Alert San Diego to provide Med-Alerts to their clients.

"We are proud to be one of the innovators of 'supervised home care,' where the client's services are monitored by field and office staff at no extra charge," explained Lia Smith-Pratt, CEO of A Better Solution In Home Care, Inc., who began her career 25 years ago as a caregiver working in skilled facilities and home care agencies in San Diego caring for seniors.

After working for several agencies, she realized that the competitive nature of the market had made it more difficult for seniors to find a suitable caregiver. In 2001, she opened A Better Solution, Inc., providing agencies with carefully chosen and screened caregivers to help them provide a better quality of service. In 2004, A Better Solution, Inc. began serving its own clients with the same standards and efficiency that they had provided to other agencies.

From housekeeping to companions to skilled personal attendants, A Better Solution In Home Care Inc. offers responsible, reliable care. "There is no need too small for our staff and we are on call to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, working to fill your needs," says their website. They offer different levels of care and pricing strategies for short- and long-term goals. Each case is assessed individually, so it's best to call for information and price quotes.

"At a time where home care companies are a dime a dozen, and elder abuse is on the rise, A Better Solution is a Certified Employer by the American Board of Home Care, as well as a CAHSAH Certified Agency, which means that our agency has met the highest standards for quality of service, and clients can be guaranteed that a caregiver from A Better Solution has been not only trained and knowledgeable, but has been criminally cleared and physiologically tested for in-home care," she said.

"We have been known for our economical rates, and our ability to provide care within 2 hours of the first request, and to have one of the largest skilled staff (over 200 caregivers) in San Diego County," said Smith-Pratt, who also serves as the Chair of the San Diego Imperial County Regional Home Care Council and on the CAHSAH Private Duty Committee.

"We value our community and represent our seniors in every aspect of our business," she added.

To learn more about A Better Solution In Home Care, Inc., call (619) 585-9011, or visit www.absihc.com, which offers client comments, tips for selecting home care and more.



Lia Smith-Pratt, CEO of A Better Solution In Home Care, Inc.

BAJA • Adventurer from El Cajon called first stretch of his journey 'Navy SEAL Hell Week'

FROM B1

months and 18 days later, he completed his trek by reaching the Cabo San Lucas police station. He was joined in Cabo by two of his three daughters and grandchildren.

Younghusband's two dogs already were in San Diego, sent back early in the trip. But Don-Kay survived the trail, as did Solo, a stray dog who joined the man and his burro on the fourth day of the trip.

Each night, Solo dug a hole in front of Younghusband's tent and protected him. She often chased coyotes from the camp.

The adventure was not without incidents.

Younghusband struggled out of the gate. He called the first stretch "Navy SEAL Hell Week" as his 3-year-old donkey and pet dogs kept wanting to turn around. He fractured his right elbow three days into the trek and had to work one-handed for weeks as it healed. One night he camped in the mountains below Tecate and felt the ground shake. He was at the epicenter of an earthquake.

Another time he ran out of water in one of Baja's more remote regions and was forced to activate his emergency beacon. Later, he was robbed of his pesos, the equivalent of about \$600, by

a Mexican citizen who was hiding from police.

It all came with invaluable life lessons for a former El Cajon policeman.

"I learned a lot of things about myself," Younghusband said. "One little saying that I picked up along the way is that fear is the destroyer of dreams. You will never realize your dreams if you have fear."

Younghusband developed a love for Baja when he visited it as a youth, and maintained a powerful drive to return.

After reading all four of Lemon Grove resident Graham Mackintosh's adventure books about Baja, including one that detailed Mackintosh's journey from Tecate to Loreto with a burro, Younghusband decided to hike the length of Baja with his own burro.

Mackintosh served as a consultant before the trip and visited Younghusband a couple of times during the trek.

"I watched it grow, and I knew he was committed, do or die, really," Mackintosh said.

There were many contrasts between Mackintosh's adventure in the early 1980s and the late 1990s and what Younghusband encountered on his trip.

The biggest difference was the Internet and how

web visitors followed Younghusband through daily updates from his GPS device and posts from Americans living in Baja along his route. One member on bajanomad.com updated a map daily and showed where Younghusband was at all times.

Younghusband lost 43 pounds, most of it in the first two months.

He took more than 2,700 photos with his digital camera.

Most of the equipment he took wore out. His tent's zippers broke, and he fought bugs after that. One of his boots blew out a seam, and he developed a blister before repairing it.

He learned to lighten his load. By the time he was done, he had only essentials. Along the way he stopped at caches of food, water and whiskey he planted before the trip. Most had been torn up by coyotes.

"The water and whiskey are all that they didn't get," he said.

As Younghusband reflects on his trip, he already is planning a return to Baja.

"I'm proud of myself for staying so focused for so long," Younghusband said. "I really didn't want it to end."

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MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTACK ON CANDIDATE

WENDY FRY • U-T

IMPERIAL BEACH

A man accused of attacking a Sweetwater Union High school board candidate at a Jack in the Box on Oct. 24 pleaded guilty Wednesday to a felony charge of battery with serious bodily injury.

Andrew Fisak, 26, faces up to four years in state prison. He is scheduled to be sentenced at 1:30 p.m. on June 6 by South Bay Superior Court Judge Kathleen Lewis.

Andrew Valencia, who was running for a seat on the school board at the time, told sheriff's deputies he was jumped by two men about 1:30 a.m. at the restaurant at 890 Palm Ave. in Imperial Beach.

Fisak told authorities he hit Valencia after hearing some offensive words from him.

Valencia's mouth was badly gashed and several teeth were broken during the assault.

Video surveillance of the altercation indicated a verbal dispute occurred before the attack, according to a lieutenant with the Sheriff's Department who saw the footage.

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HABITAT Jacob to meet with fire victim in question

FROM B1

soph LaRussa, chairman of the board of directors, also could not be reached for comment because he was traveling.

In a statement provided by a spokeswoman for the organization, LaRussa said, "San Diego Habitat for Humanity is ready to cooperate fully with Jacob's office and will provide any information they request."

Jacob said she planned to reach out to and meet with the fire victim in question, Bates and District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis in the coming days. Steve Walker, spokesman for the District Attorney's Office, said it takes requests from elected officials "very seriously."

"Any time a county supervisor raises a red flag, the office is glad to speak with them and find out whether there is any merit to opening an investigation," Walker said.

Jacob said listening to the allegations sounded a bit like déjà vu, referring to the scandals over the last decade. The Red Cross raised nearly \$400,000 from residents moved by images of the 2001 Alpine fire, but spent only about \$6,000 to help fire victims. Officials then tried to sanitize the internal audit that validated the victims' claims.

In 2007, Jacob asked the County Counsel's Office to review an investigation into Episcopal Community Services after prosecutors declined to file criminal charges, largely because the organization eventually paid its debts and didn't attempt to keep money meant for the poor.

CLEARING THE AIR



Ami Barnes holds Vivian as Rancho Santa Fe Battalion Chief Bret Davidson applies one of the respirator kits donated Thursday by the Helen Woodward Animal Center to 12 fire rescue crews in North County. The kits are used by animals suffering from smoke inhalation. CHARLIE NEUMAN • U-T

FIRE PITS • To save beach icons, city aims for partnership with tourism-related organizations, San Diego Foundation

FROM B1

last week when Mayor Jerry Sanders proposed removing them to help fill a \$56.7 million hole in the city's \$1.1 billion operating budget.

To give people like Cheeseman the chance to keep using the fire pits, the city is working to create a public-private partnership with the San Diego County Hotel Motel Association, the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the San Diego Foundation, the organization that facilitated a \$260,000 anonymous donation that kept fire pits on the beaches two years ago.

The discussion kicks off with those groups and Councilman Kevin Faulconer meeting today to determine the best way to raise the money.

Ideas under consid-

eration include a beach cleanup event and mixer to collect money to keep the pits in place through summer.

An Adopt-A-Firepit program is also on the list of possibilities for long-term fundraising.

Namara Mercer, executive director for the hotel-motel association, said the group starting talking with Faulconer last year about how to keep the fire pits in place when Sanders suggested cutting them to save money.

Much of the current \$120,500 in annual maintenance costs came from the San Diego Foundation, which gave \$90,000. The rest is paid for out of council members' budgets and private donations.

This year, the effort will include members of the hotel-motel association be-

cause the fire pits are a big revenue generator for San Diego's hospitality industry, Mercer said.

"At any of those (hotels) along Mission Bay, you can just walk out of your room onto the beach and be able to have a fire, make s'mores and have your kids out there for a hot dog roast," she said. "That's amazing. You can't do that in a lot of cities."

Faulconer said the pits mean even more than tourism revenue for the city. They're part of a community effort to preserve the quality of life in San Diego, he said.

The councilman acknowledged that asking for private donations may be difficult to swallow for some residents who have already been asked to maintain services that the city used to do, such as the

cleanup of palm trees in some residential areas.

"In these budget times, we have to be creative and look for public-private partnerships to keep these services going," he said.

Councilman Carl DeMaio said the idea of a San Diego beach without a fire pit shows just how tight the coming budget will be.

"As a symbol, it is perhaps one of the best ones that illustrates just how bad our financial crisis is," he said. "It's only a little bit of money in comparison to everything else, but it's on the chopping block."

The hotel-motel association's beach cleanup fundraiser and mixer is set for May 12 at the Catamaran Resort in Mission Beach.

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