



ROUND TWO



VS



TICKETS



GAME 3 TUE MAY 5, 7PM
ACRISURE ARENA

GAME 4 THURS MAY 7, 7PM
ACRISURE ARENA
*IF NECESSARY

The Desert Sun

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DESERT HOT SPRINGS



This site off Varner Road in Desert Hot Springs, just north of Interstate 10, will soon host a 1.16 million-square-foot warehouse. Traffic on Interstate 10 can be seen in the distance and Mt. San Jacinto is in the background. JAY CALDERON/THE DESERT SUN

1.1 million-square-foot warehouse coming soon

Ani Gasparyan

Palm Springs Desert Sun | USA TODAY NETWORK

Plans for a large cannabis development along Interstate 10 in Desert Hot Springs have been cancelled, and the project could now become a 1.16 million-square-foot distribution warehouse.

This change comes at a time when the cannabis industry is struggling with issues that include a saturated market and high costs. Several Coachella Valley cities, Desert Hot Springs included, have enacted tax cuts and other methods in an attempt to help keep cannabis businesses afloat.

On Tuesday, April 21, the city council unanimously approved amendments to the project that allow it to switch from cannabis to logistics. This included an addendum to its environmental impact report and changes to its specific plan.

The city approved the original iteration of the project, known as the Desert Land Ventures Specific Plan, in 2018. It is located on about 123 acres of vacant land north of Interstate 10, and about half a mile west of the

intersection of Palm Drive and Varner Road. A 653,000-square-foot Amazon warehouse, which opened in October 2025, is also nearby.

Desert Land Ventures was going to be a mixed-use cannabis development with up to about 1.2 million square feet for cannabis cultivation. It also planned to have almost 360,000 square feet in commercial retail space, which could've included a hotel and dispensary.

But Newland Capital Group, the applicant, submitted the necessary applications to amend it in September 2024. It had been under city review since then, until the recent council vote.

Renamed as the DHS Varner Road Specific Plan, the updated project includes logistics space of up to 1.5 million square feet. It plans to have a roughly 1.16 million-square-foot distribution warehouse on 83.3 acres, stormwater control on 11.6 acres and open space/conservation on 28.5 acres.

Construction is set to begin on Friday, May 1 and it plans to start operating in 2028, according to a planning report.

The NBA's G League is coming to the desert

Shad Powers

Palm Springs Desert Sun | USA TODAY NETWORK

Well, desert sports fans, we've got something new to learn about: the NBA G League.

Just as we were starting to feel proud of ourselves for knowing how the American Hockey League works, along come the Coachella Valley Lakers to give us a new fun homework assignment.

The arrival of the Los Angeles Lakers' G League team was something that had been discussed loosely for more than a year, but came together quickly in the past month, according to John Page, the Senior VP of Oak View Group and Acrisure Arena. It helped that the Lakers — the big-league ones — have played in the valley before.

"Over a year ago, I had some initial discussion just kind of following the success of our (2024) preseason

games, and we talked about loose ideas about the concept and what would make sense and then just kind of tabled it. And then it picked up really in earnest just three or four weeks ago," Page said. "We had some discussions about what the model would look like, how it would work, kind of understanding what their needs would be from a player perspective, practice facility, etc. There's still a lot of details to work out, but they certainly believe in the Coachella Valley, as do we, and having yet another tenant team I think is huge for us and huge for all the residents here."

As members of "all the residents here," it's time for us to learn about the G League together, and though we won't see our Coachella Valley Lakers in action until November, it's never too early to start brushing up. Let's dive in.

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CALIFORNIA

NOAA: State could see above average heat this summer

Sarah Moore and James Ward

USA TODAY NETWORK

California is likely to see normal precipitation and hotter-than-average temperatures over the summer months, from June to August, according to the National Weather Service's recently released long-range forecast.

NWS meteorologists issued their national precipitation and temperature outlook for June through August on April 16, calling for "equal chances" for above- or below-normal weather.

Here are the seasonal maps showing probable conditions across the U.S. for summer 2026.

What does 'equal chances' mean?

An "equal chances" forecast does not mean conditions will be exactly average everywhere. Instead, it reflects uncertainty in large-scale climate patterns, according to the National Weather Service.

"Sometimes an 'equal chances' forecast means there are no strong influences in the climate system that favor one outcome over another," NOAA forecasters explain. "Other times it means there are competing influences, and forecasters can't say which is more likely to win out."

In practical terms, that means California could still see heat waves, cool spells or short bursts of heavy rain, but no persistent statewide trend is favored months in advance.

How much rain does the National Weather Service forecast for California this summer?

California has "equal chances" to see above-, near- or below-average chances for rain this summer.

"Sometimes an 'equal chances' forecast means that there are no strong influences in the climate system that would favor one outcome over another, so

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California marine heat wave: What changes at the beach, beyond, 2A

Lady A
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CALL TO ACTION



A CASA volunteer is often the most consistent adult in a foster child's life once social workers and attorneys have moved to other cases. LI ABASOV/PEXELS.COM

Coachella Valley foster children need advocates.

Can you help?

Sharon Morris Special to The Desert Sun | USA TODAY NETWORK

When a child is removed from their home due to abuse or neglect, they enter the foster care system, and life as they know it is turned upside down. A judge now makes all the decisions that affect their life — from where they go to school to when they can see a doctor and whether or not they can participate in sports or other activities. Judges do this with the help of hardworking attorneys, social workers, and — most importantly — Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA, volunteers.

Last year in Riverside County, 431 of these incredibly special community members stepped up and provided life-changing advocacy for a child in foster care. However, nearly 6,000 children will have to navigate the foster care system in Riverside County this year all on their own. Voices for Children is the sole provider of CASA volunteers for the Riverside County court system. There are currently 187 children who need CASAs, and that number is growing every day. Dozens of those children are in the Coachella Valley. Can you help?

What a CASA does

The job of a CASA volunteer is to be the voice of a child, getting to know them one-on-one and advocating for their needs to the court, to their schools and in their community. The best CASAs build a trusting relationship with their case child so they can learn about their hopes and needs and then relay these in detailed court reports to a judge every six months — or even alert other professionals in the child's life, such as their attorney, social worker, teachers, medical providers or foster parents.

Why are CASA volunteers so critically important for children in foster care? Judges, attorneys and social workers are doing their best for every child they work

for, but they are stretched thin. A social worker may juggle a caseload of 25-35 families, while lawyers support 100-150 children each and judges oversee 500-700 cases.

Meanwhile, a CASA volunteer works with only one child or sibling set at a time. They often become the most consistent adult in these children's lives once social workers and attorneys have moved to other cases. CASAs are often the only adult that is not paid to be there for them, and many children are more willing to open up to CASAs for this exact reason.

Judges say that CASA volunteers can make the difference between a child thriving or simply existing as a number during a traumatic time in their lives. "Social workers give me the black-and-white outline of who a child is and what their needs are," a judge once told me. "CASAs are the ones that color in a full picture of the child, so I can make the best decisions possible in their case."

While I serve as Riverside County managing director for Voices for Children, I wasn't always in a leadership role. In fact, I began as a CASA volunteer 15 years ago, advocating for a young girl in foster care. When I learned in separate conversations with her teacher, social worker and foster parents that she seemed unable to focus at school, I suggested she might have trouble

seeing the board and therefore couldn't follow along in class. In my court report to the judge presiding over her case, I recommended we get her to an eye doctor. She turned out to need glasses — and her school performance immediately improved once she had them.

What you can do

May is National Foster Care Awareness Month, a perfect time to find out what you can do to support children in foster care. Consider becoming a CASA. Visit speakupnow.org to sign up for a volunteer information session to get more information on what it takes to navigate this incredibly rewarding volunteer position.

You don't need any special experience or job qualifications. You just need to have a little time each month — probably less than you spend watching your favorite TV show — and a heart for helping children. We sincerely hope some of you reading might find it in your hearts to become a CASA and speak up for a child in foster care.

Sharon Morris is the Riverside County Managing Director for Voices for Children, a nonprofit that recruits, trains, and supports community volunteers who become Court Appointed Special Advocates to youth in the foster care system.

Brothers

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arships.

Brothers of the Desert became a nonprofit in 2020 and has since generated more than \$20,000 in scholarships to LGBTQ+ and Black students in the Coachella Valley.

The nonprofit's supportive arms stretch deep into other arenas as well, such as faith schools; the Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast, which it attends yearly; and OneFuture Coachella, which strives to ensure students succeed in college and career, thereby enhancing the local workforce.

"We're big into that because one of the issues we have in our community in terms of building wealth and education is that oftentimes young people don't know what's available to them in terms of professions," Lanier said. "When we

think of the medical profession, two things come to mind, doctor and nurse. But there's so many other things within the medical profession, especially research. We don't have the right number of people of color within health research."

That means when new research is done, it oftentimes excludes communities of color.

"We certainly need more people to be involved in health research," Lanier said. "Our program helps connect these individuals with information while they're still in secondary schools, because after that, sometimes it's just more challenging."

Introducing students to as many options as possible is vital, which is why Lanier is quick to circle back to the nonprofit's scholarship programs.

"We've been using the funds in a big way to make systemic changes in terms of building wealth because of the wealth disparities here," he said. "Many young-

er adults haven't had a leg up or the advocacy to really help them through attending a university.

"So, we like to be in touch with our grantees to let them know there are other options for them, as opposed to taking a break or pausing their schooling. It helps with making better judgment calls."

Moving forward, Lanier would like locals to learn even more about the nonprofit.

"There was a void in the Coachella Valley for Black gay men," he said. "And we like to fill that void. Isolation is the No. 1 issue. I joined the organization during the pandemic, which was another period of isolation, and it was isolation that started the organization, and it's the reason why it's important going forward in 2026, because right now, things are very tough for everyone."

One thing he wants to steer locals toward are the nonprofit's sponsored

monthly sessions with Black men called The Barbershop, a discussion group where men can bring up and discuss various topics.

"Sometimes, we don't talk about the important things enough," Lanier said. "We don't express feelings and we don't feel that there is a venue where we can do that safely. We've created one and it really does help people make better decisions, whether it's health-related or about wealth or retirement. It's important to feel empowered."

For more information, visit brothersofthedesert.org.

The Inland Empire Community Foundation works to strengthen Inland Southern California through philanthropy. We are proud to manage the Brothers of the Desert Scholarship Fund. To learn how you or your organization can establish a fund at IECF, contact our Charitable Giving Team at giving@ie-gives.org, or visit iegives.org for more information.