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# Times Standard

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**CRISIS IN EUROPE**

## Russia's onslaught continues amid talks

**Ukraine:** projected optimism ahead of another scheduled round of talks

By **Andrea Rosa**  
*The Associated Press*

**KYIV, UKRAINE** » Russian forces destroyed a theater in Mariupol where hundreds of people were sheltering Wednesday and rained fire on other cities, Ukrainian authorities said, even as the two sides projected optimism over efforts to negotiate an end to the fighting.

There was no immediate word on deaths or injuries in what the

Mariupol city council said was an airstrike on the theater. Satellite imagery from Monday showed the word "children" written in large white letters in Russian in front of and behind the building, the Maxar space technology company said.

In Kyiv, residents huddled in homes and shelters amid a citywide curfew that runs until Thursday morning, as Russian troops shelled areas in and

**UKRAINE** » PAGE 5



PAVEL DOROGOY — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Damaged vehicles and buildings is seen in the Kharkiv city center in Ukraine.

**Crisis:** Zelenskyy pleads for more US help in speech to Congress

By **Lisa Mascaro and Aamer Madhani**  
*The Associated Press*

**WASHINGTON** » Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy summoned the memory of Pearl Harbor and the Sept. 11 terror attacks Wednesday in an impassioned video plea to Congress to send more help for Ukraine's fight against Russia. Lawmakers stood and cheered, and President Joe Biden later announced the U.S.

is sending more anti-aircraft and anti-armor weapons and drones.

Biden also declared Russian President Vladimir Putin is a war criminal, the day after the Senate unanimously asked an international investigation of Putin for war crimes in Ukraine.

In a moment of high drama at the Capitol, Zelenskyy livestreamed his speech to a rapt audience of lawmakers on a giant screen, acknowledging from the

**CRISIS** » PAGE 3

**HUMBOLDT COUNTY**

## AUDITOR: LATE REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED BY DEADLINE



CONTRIBUTED BY ESTHER KENNEDY

Humboldt County Auditor-Controller Karen Paz Dominguez speaks to reporters about financial issues in the county government in front of the county courthouse.

By **Sonia Waraich**  
*swaraich@times-standard.com*

An overdue audit is set to be submitted by a Wednesday deadline imposed by the state, the county auditor-controller says, but issues remain that put taxpayer funds at risk.

Though the State Controller's Office did not verify whether the 2019-2020 financial transactions report had been submitted by publication time Wednesday, county Auditor-Controller Karen Paz Dominguez said that was the plan. Paz Dominguez told reporters and members of the public issues still remain with the county's finances that put

taxpayers' money at risk.

"This county organization cannot move forwards by going backwards," Paz Dominguez said. "We can't keep passing the buck to future generations because we, as an organization, don't want to do the hard work today. That's why I'm announcing my candidacy for re-election."

Last month, the county Auditor-Controller's Office received a letter from state Attorney General Rob Bonta threatening legal action and a \$5,000 fine if the 2019-2020 report was not submitted within 20 days. That deadline was on Wednesday.

County supervisors met in closed session to discuss an

anonymous November letter from the heads of county departments and other county staff expressing frustration with Paz Dominguez's failure to submit the report. The employees' letter indicated they would be willing to pursue legal action against the auditor-controller and supervisors if the issues weren't remedied.

At a March 1 meeting, Paz Dominguez said the failure to submit the report on time was not solely the fault of her office, which department heads accused of having poor communication. Paz Dominguez said the issue was with department heads being uncooperative and accounting functions being de-

centralized.

Paz Dominguez also brought up issues with having adequate funding and staffing for her office to do its job well, along with instances of potential fraud and abuse.

"In 2017, when I used my three minutes of public comment time to communicate to the board that the Auditor-Controller's Office was woefully understaffed and unable to complete its duties," Paz Dominguez said Tuesday, "I did so with the understanding that we were not fulfilling our sacred obligation and contract with the public."

This has been an issue for

**AUDIT** » PAGE 3

**EUREKA**

## Study: Old Town, downtown parking largely underused

By **Mario Cortez**  
*mcortez@times-standard.com*

Vehicle occupancy in downtown Eureka's street and off-street parking spaces is well below both max capacity and a statistical threshold, a study presented to the Eureka City Council at this week's regular meeting shows.

The study conducted and brought by the Pleasanton-based transportation consulting firm TJKM shows off-street parking weekday occupancy, on-street parking weekday occupancy and overall weekday parking occupancy in the August 2021 period is far below the 80% to 90% target rate, with 85% set as a threshold. This holds true even during peak visiting hours to the city's historic center.

"Your parking weekday occupancy did not get higher than 60% for the most part. Obviously, your midday, 12-to-2 p.m. time frame was when your parking was most utilized during the weekday," TJKM senior planner Mark Doty told the council during the presentation.

The study records overall weekday peak hour occupancy at 49%, with an on-street parking occupancy rate of 48% and a 34% public parking lot occupancy rate. Peak hour parking occupancy in private parking lots was the only category in which the study recorded rates above the 85% threshold, with an 88% occupancy.

Weekend peak hour rates were even lower, with a 25% occupancy rate and an on-street parking occupancy of 29%. Public and private parking lots, which see weekend peak hours from 6 through 8 p.m. saw usage rates of 28% and 11% respectively.

As Doty pointed out, COVID-19 restrictions did impact parking rates in 2021, with displayed data from 2016, 2017 and 2019 showing higher weekday off-street parking occupancy rates than 2021. Parking rates did increase from 2016 through 2019, with peak usage around 70% for off-street parking during peak hours.

"We wanted to make sure that we were utilizing data from previous years to maybe give us a better understanding of what (parking was like) there," he said.

The findings are consistent with previously reported pre-pandemic parking trends in the

**PARKING** » PAGE 3

**Daily Average Mauna Loa CO2:**

Week beginning on March 6: 418.51 ppm  
 Weekly value from 1 year ago: 417.20 ppm  
 Weekly value from 10 years ago: 393.54 ppm

Last updated: March 16, 2022

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Mauna Loa Observatory has been monitoring CO2 levels since 1958



**COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS**

Global cases: 462.6M  
 Global deaths: 6,055,959  
 U.S. cases: 79.6M  
 U.S. deaths: 967,704  
 Updated: March 16, 1:15 p.m.  
 Source: Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 dashboard

**BUSINESS**

▲ Dow Jones 33,544.34. (+599.10)  
 ▲ S&P 500 4,262.45. (+89.34)  
 ▲ Nasdaq 12,948.62. (+367.40)

**THROWBACK THURSDAY**

**Samoa Athletic Club forms in March 1922**

Nearly 100 people signed up as club members at the gatherings. The club planned to focus on baseball first **PAGE A2**