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Naval Postgraduate School (U.S.)

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NPS IN THE NEWS

Weekly Media Report – Nov 29 - Dec 5, 2022

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EDUCATION:

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(Navy.mil 2 Dec 22) ... MC2 Lenny Weston

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ALUMNI:

[Ecuadorian Navy: Ready to Face New Maritime Challenges](#)

(Diálogo 29 Nov 22)

Rear Admiral John Merlo León assumed command of the Ecuadorian Navy on August 21, 2022.

Prior to his appointment, Rear Adm. Merlo was commander of Naval Operations and head of the First Naval Zone in Guayaquil. He was also a naval advisor to the Ministry of Defense, head of the XVII Antarctic Expedition, Ecuador’s Defense attaché in Italy, and director of the **Naval Postgraduate School**, among other high-ranking military positions.



[Tighten the Earned Income Tax Credit](#)

(Texas Insider 2 Dec 22) ... David R. Henderson, Hoover Institution at Stanford University

When you hear that something is refundable, you probably think that means that someone gets a refund on something he or she paid. But the IRS and even economists who study tax policy don't mean that at all. By "refundable," they mean that someone gets a payment even if he or she paid nothing in the first place... Moreover, the program is rife with fraud. Interestingly, Hilary Hoynes, an economics professor at the University of California, Berkeley, wrote an article in 2014 calling for an expansion of the EITC without ever mentioning fraud. Around that same time, Professor Hoynes gave a talk at the **Naval Postgraduate School**, where I was an economics professor. In her talk, she defended the EITC and didn't mention fraud then either. However, in Q&A, she readily admitted that many recipients of EITC funds got them fraudulently. What would you expect from a program that one can benefit from simply by filing a false tax return and receiving a check from the U.S. Treasury? Not all of the mistakes are fraudulent. But the Government Accountability Office estimated that the error and fraud rate between 2016 and 2020 averaged 24 percent.

[Governor Little Appoints Kirk Wille as Gem County Commissioner](#)

(Idaho Press 2 Dec 22)

Governor Brad Little announced Friday his appointment of Kirk Wille as Gem County Commissioner... Wille sits on the board of directors for the Gem County Chamber of Commerce, Gem County Economic Development Foundation and is a trustee to Valor Health. He formerly served on the Gem County Senior/Community Center and is a Staff Judge Advocate for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4900. After attending the Marine Corps University in Quantico, Va., Wille received his Bachelor's from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, his Master's from the **Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, Calif., and his Juris Doctorate from the University of San Diego School of Law.

[Sanders Announces Appointments to Head Public Safety, Emergency Management Offices](#)

(Swark 5 Dec 22)

Governor-elect Sarah Huckabee Sanders today announced her intention to nominate Captain Mike Hagar as the next Secretary of the Department of Public Safety. Additionally, Sanders announced that she will appoint Hagar to serve as Director of the Division of Arkansas State Police concurrently. Sanders also said that the current Secretary of Public Safety has agreed to remain the Director of the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management... A.J. has a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Management and a Master's of Public Administration. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and attended the **Naval Postgraduate School** Center for Homeland Defense and Security's Executive Leadership Program. When not working, A.J. spends time with his wife, three children and four grandchildren. He also enjoys fly fishing.

[Two New Directors Join OMWD's Board](#)

(Coast News 5 Dec 22)

Matthew Hahn and Marco San Antonio were sworn in Dec. 5 as the newest members of Olivenhain Municipal Water District's Board of Directors. Hahn and San Antonio were chosen by voters in the Nov. 8 election to represent OMWD's Division 4 and Division 1, respectively... Hahn has resided in San Diego since 1993. He is a US Navy veteran with over 30 years of service and received his executive master of business administration from **Naval Postgraduate School**. He also holds a bachelor's degree from the University of St. Thomas. Mr. Hahn has worked for a Fortune 500 company for over 18 years in environmental compliance. He takes over the Division 4 seat from Kristie Bruce-Lane.

UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS:

Dec 6: [NPS Defense Energy Seminar](#)

Dec 6: Fall Quarter Pre-Graduation Awards Ceremony

Dec 8: Faculty Awards Ceremony

Dec 15: NPS/Stanford Partnership Signing Ceremony w/Secretary of the Navy

Dec 15: Hall of Fame Induction for Admiral Cecil Haney w/Secretary of the Navy

Dec 16: Fall Quarter Graduation, Secretary of the Navy Commencement Speaker



EDUCATION:

Fellowship Connects NPS Information Warfare Students to NIWC Pacific Needs

(Navy.mil 2 Dec 22) ... MC2 Lenny Weston

Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific (NIWC-PAC) selected five U.S Navy and Marine Corps students from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) for the prestigious NIWC-PAC Fellowship. These warrior-scholars are directly connecting their education, ideas and research to fleet information warfare (IW) force design objectives in support of the capabilities necessary to counter adversary forces, improve command and control across the fleet, and to persistently cover the maritime battlespace for decision advantage.

The partnership between the two organizations provides a direct connection between the alignment select NPS research efforts with NIWC-PAC focus areas, advancing the impact of NPS education and research programs in IW for the U.S. Navy and DOD. In addition, the partnership lays the groundwork for future technical and project management assignments for NPS graduates at NIWC-PAC.

"The NIWC-PAC Fellowship at NPS supports our warrior scholars in their thesis research," said Dr. Kevin Smith, NPS Vice Provost for Research. "This support helps provide awareness of some NPS research activities to NIWC-PAC, and serves to promote collaboration between our organizations. It also provides an opportunity for NPS warrior scholars to engage with one of the Navy's premier Naval Research and Development Establishment (NR&DE) warfare centers, highlighting the value of warfare center activity in support of the fleet, and the Fleet Marine Force."

"The fellowship is about showcasing the naval-relevant education and defense-unique research that is done at NPS," added J.D. Morrison, NIWC-PAC liaison to NPS.

NIWC-PAC Fellowships last 6 to 18 months, depending on the type of research. They allow NPS students to work closely with their thesis advisor and a mentor from the Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) who will guide them in their research. These interactions not only provide networking relationships that students can use throughout their time at NPS, they also foster long-term professional associations that can last a career.

"This partnership allows NPS students to produce a higher-quality research product in support of NIWC initiatives, and therefore, provide the DOD with more relevant research," said U.S. Navy Lt. Matt Coleman, current NPS student and one of the five selected for the fellowship. "NIWC personnel are the subject-matter experts in their fields ... Having a mentor working with us here at NPS has already been a great asset to my research efforts, and that expertise will continue to prove very useful to my research."

Coleman's research focuses on a control system for the Wreck Interior Exploration Vehicle (WIEVLE), a foot-wide spherical autonomous underwater vehicle developed by previous students at NPS that provides a scalable, modular and expendable effects-delivery mechanism designed for operations within confined spaces, littoral, entanglement-prone or deep-sea extremes.

Another recently-selected NIWC-PAC Fellow, U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Ryan Helm, is using his opportunity to conduct geospatial data analysis research to support infantry leaders' mission planning. Helm plans on developing a prototype for the Android Team Awareness Kit (ATAK) to conduct field testing at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., in December.

"Warfare is both art and science. We can leverage new technologies and methods to rapidly optimize the science, while freeing human cognitive load to focus on decision trade-offs and the art of warfare," Helm said.

For these new fellows, Smith says, this is a great chance to showcase how NPS' defense-focused, naval-unique education and research coupled with the innovative, technological expertise of NIWC, can enhance the student experience and maximize the impact of their work.

"This partnership provides NPS faculty and students access to NIWC-PAC's capabilities and engineering personnel," explained Smith. "Likewise, this partnership offers NIWC-PAC engineers and researchers access to NPS expertise and the operational experience of its warrior scholars, which is highly valued throughout the Naval Research and Development Establishment."



"The NIWC Fellowship is an avenue for students to attain research funding on campus," added Coleman. "In addition to providing their expertise and mentorship, the partnership offers student researchers access to testing facilities and resources that are simply not available at NPS."

For these warrior scholars, it provides an opportunity to see their hard work and dedication to the DOD go beyond an idea. It offers them a chance to develop their innovative solutions and become better innovation leaders.

"These projects are published. They're sent to DISA [Defense Information Systems Agency] and to the library, and for far too many of them, that's the last time anybody's going to hear about them," said Morrison. "What we're hoping is that, by connecting the research to ongoing developmental projects at a lab-like network, there will be greater chances of that work being used in a larger sense rather than becoming a dust collecting binder on a library shelf."

Since its establishment in 1994, the NIWC-PAC and NPS partnership has awarded an impressive 215 student fellowships.

In addition to the selection of Helm and Coleman, additional NIWC Fellows selected with this cohort include U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Marianna Luporini, and Lts. Ashley Dodd and Jacob Dwyer. Their studies and applied research at NIWC-PAC contributes directly to the development of innovative warfighting solutions and naval leaders educated to employ them.

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FACULTY:

Navy Professor Finishes Strong in 'Jeopardy!' Tournament

(Military Times 29 Nov 22) ... Jonathan Lehrfeld

For \$1,000: This **Naval Postgraduate School** associate professor is not your average military academic.

Answer: Who is Dr. Sam Buttrey?

For one, he has an uncanny resemblance to comedian Steve Martin. He also just finished a second impressive run on the iconic American quiz gameshow "Jeopardy!"

Buttrey earned a \$50,000 prize for his third-place finish in this year's Tournament of Champions, which was televised from Oct. 31 to Nov. 21 and hosted by former "Jeopardy!" champion Ken Jennings. Amy Schneider, from Oakland, California, won the tournament's grand prize of \$250,000, while Andrew He from San Francisco took home \$100,000 for his second-place finish.

"Honestly, I think I would have been pretty satisfied if I'd won just the first game, but of course I'm excited to have made it to the finals," Buttrey said in a statement.

"This most recent tournament was a special delight because I had watched the other competitors play. So it was neat to go up against them and see how I could do."

In addition to Buttrey, the Tournament of Champions field of 21 included five "super-champions" who accrued 10 or more gameshow wins, all contestants with four or more wins since 2020, the winner of the National College Championship tournament and two "second chance" qualifiers.

After scoring wins in the first two rounds, Buttrey advanced to the finals following a victory over contestant Matt Amodio, who owns the third-longest winning streak (38 games) in "Jeopardy!" history behind Jennings and Schneider.

Buttrey joked in a video interview with the **Naval Postgraduate School** Foundation about a plan to fake a number of injuries to distract his fellow competitors, but in the end, it was his excellent dance moves on the Alex Trebek stage that earned him more attention.



Buttrey qualified for this year's Tournament of Champions thanks to his win in last year's inaugural Professors Tournament, which aired last December and earned him a grand prize of \$100,000. He started a scholarship at California State University, Monterey Bay with over half of those winnings.

The win last year also scored the associate professor from the NPS' Operations Research department some jokes from his celebrity look-alike on social media.

"All of us at NPS are tremendously proud of Sam for winning the inaugural 'Jeopardy!' Professors Tournament last year and for his deep run this year into the finals of the Tournament of Champions," retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau, the NPS president, said in the release.

"Sam's success reflects his — and all of our faculty and staff's — deep dedication and service to our men and women in uniform studying here at NPS, preparing them as warrior-scholars to go back to the fleet and joint force to lead and make a difference in the defense of our nation."

With the tournament over, Buttrey is now back at work, preparing for finals and graduation before the holidays. He has not yet heard directly from a certain comedian, however.

"I haven't heard from Steve Martin, and at this point I don't really expect to, but I hope he'd be as amused as I am by the reactions of all the people noticing a certain similarity," Buttrey said.

"And I'm glad that I was able to give off an exuberant vibe in the middle of this fairly stressful situation. I think people reacted to seeing me having fun, and I'm happy for that."

[Navy professor finishes strong in 'Jeopardy!' tournament \(militarytimes.com\)](https://www.militarytimes.com)

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Club Q Shooting Referenced in National Terrorism Advisory Bulletin

(KKTV 30 Nov 22) ... Jack Heeke

In a bulletin release today by the Department of Homeland Security The Department directly referenced last week's shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs.

In a bulletin release today by the Department of Homeland Security the department directly referenced last week's shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs.

The National Terrorism Advisory System releases these reports roughly every six months to update the public on the terror threats facing America. Today's release said in part...

"Some domestic violent extremists who have conducted attacks have cited previous attacks and attackers as inspiration. Following the late November shooting at an LGBTQI+ bar in Colorado Springs, Colorado—which remains under investigation—we have observed actors on forums known to post racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist content praising the alleged attacker."

I spoke with Dr. Erik Dahl, a national security expert with the **Naval Postgraduate School**. He tells me this behavior is sadly common.

"Tragically. Frustratingly. After just about every major terrorist attack or mass shooting you'll find some individuals on social media or some other place praising the shooter."

He adds that terrorists and terrorism are changing.

"What we have unfortunately seen in recent years is two different things. One is the rise of the domestic terrorism threat. Not as much of a foreign inspired Isis, Al-Qaeda type threat, although that still exists, but more of a threat by people who are typically U.S citizens who are motivated by a wide variety of hatred. "

He tells me that legally, intelligence agencies have less liberty to survey U.S citizens as opposed to foreign agents.

"The issue is that our federal agencies and also our state and local agencies are limited in what they can do in terms of monitoring U.S persons. You and me. On social media."

But he also acknowledges that allowing government agencies to survey their own population is a slippery slope with a troubled history.



“I think we need to have a national conversation about what authorities we want to give to our government and essentially what civil liberties we might want to give up a little bit of. There is no easy answer.”

“We’ve seen that sort of “mission creep” in the pass back during the cold war in the 60s and the 70s. When the CIA, the FBI, just about every three letter agency in Washington was found to have overused their intelligence capabilities to do things like monitor and survey on Martin Luther King. Those kind of things.”

Dahl says that these solo acts of domestic terror have unfortunately become more ever-present, and while he doesn’t want people to overreact to this release, he wants them to take it seriously.

“This doesn’t necessarily mean that there is a new threat tomorrow. But we also don’t want to under-react. We need to realize that these threats continue, in Colorado Springs you know it only too well.”

He hopes that in the future the country can solve the pressures and forces which drive people to committing these heinous acts of violence.

“We need to take actions against threats before something happens, before something explodes. In law enforcement, and civil services in this country experts have recognized for years now that we need to take that approach as well. Left of boom.”

[Club Q Shooting Referenced in National Terrorism Advisory Bulletin \(kktv.com\)](#)

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Why the War on Fossil Fuels is Causing Chaos

(Yahoo! Finance 5 Dec 22) ... Rick Newman

Climate change is a real and urgent problem. More than a century of carbon emissions is warming the planet and causing floods, droughts, fires and other cataclysmic events that are killing people, threatening livelihoods and upending economies.

But the war on fossil fuels that are the source of those carbon emissions is causing its own forms of chaos.

Oil, natural gas and other types of carbon-based fuel will be essential for decades, yet the pace of investment in future capacity is declining in the United States and other western nations, and chronic shortages are becoming likely. There’s plenty of carbon in the ground, but energy firms no longer want to risk the long-term investments required to get it out.

“The world is experiencing the worst energy crisis since World War II,” Brenda Shaffer, a professor at the **Naval Postgraduate School**, said at a recent conference sponsored by the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank. “The factors contributing to this are long-term underinvestment in oil and gas, public finance denial of investment in fossil fuels, market design and energy policies around the world.”

The transition to renewables and low carbon energy that U.S. and European policymakers are pushing is necessary. But the bridge from fossil fuels to renewables is missing a few spans, which could mean energy shortages and skyrocketing prices until green energy is widespread.

While many governments are creating strong incentives to adopt renewables, they’re not safeguarding supplies of the fossil fuels that meet 80% of the world’s energy needs today. And renewables aren’t coming online fast enough to offset the shortfall of oil and natural gas. That’s why energy markets were getting tight even before Russia’s Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine sent prices spiking. Many analysts now think energy markets will remain tight — and prices high — for the next several years.

In advanced economies, costly energy will likely slow growth and perhaps contribute to recessions. In the developing world, energy shortages may worsen famines and trigger catastrophe.

The problem may not be obvious. Oil and gasoline prices have moderated recently, and new supplies from producers such as Venezuela could bring further relief. But this is a false sense of normalcy. Once China recovers from ongoing COVID shutdowns, demand for oil will strengthen and prices will go back up, maybe by a lot. The energy war between Russia and the west continues, as well, and a drop in Russian oil exports could also push prices up. American releases of oil from the US national reserve are due to end



soon, further tightening supply. Self-imposed limits on western production will make the United States and Europe more dependent on other nations that prefer high prices over ample supplies.

The 2022 energy crisis persists in other parts of the energy sector. There's a shortage of diesel, which is pushing the price of the fuel that powers long-haul trucks and farm machinery close to record highs. US natural gas prices this year have hit the highest levels since 2009, which was before the fracking boom that brought vast new supplies online. That means expensive heat and electricity this winter. In Europe, nations including the U.K., Italy, Spain, Germany and France are spending more money to mitigate the energy crisis and subsidize consumer energy bills than they devote to their military budgets, according to research firm Tellurian.

Here are some of other unwanted and unforeseen consequences of the premature retirement of fossil fuels:

The resurgence of coal. A shortfall of natural gas for electricity generation in the United States, Europe and other parts of the world is forcing utilities to burn more coal—the dirtiest of all fossil fuels—and to a lesser extent, oil. Natural gas is the cleanest-burning fossil fuel, with fewer emissions than coal or oil. But the blockage of new pipelines and drilling in some areas is keeping supplies tight, pushing prices up and forcing utilities to find cheaper alternatives.

“During the past decade, the anti-natural-gas campaigns have put gas into the basket with oil and coal,” Shaffer said at the Dallas conference. “Extreme policy against natural gas doesn't lead to more consumption of renewables, but to higher consumption of oil and coal.” She points out that many existing utilities can easily switch their feedstocks from gas to coal or oil without any public notice, especially in Europe.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) expects the global demand for coal to reach an all-time high in 2022, largely because of the rising cost and scarcity of natural gas. Coal prices have doubled from pre-COVID levels, reviving an industry many thought was headed for extinction. “We're seeing coal come back on the market,” Paul Dabbar of Columbia University said at an October energy conference sponsored by the university. “The odds are emissions are probably going to head in the wrong direction this year as a result of energy security going backwards.”

Natural gas production in the United States—now the world's largest provider—has also flatlined since 2019, following a decade-long production surge triggered by new fracking technology. The Appalachian Basin stretching from New York to Alabama is one of the largest natural gas reservoirs in the world, but at least five pipelines that could transport that gas to American consumers and to U.S. export terminals have been blocked.

Nobody protests the building of a natural gas pipeline because they want utilities to burn more coal, yet that's what is happening.

An American energy shortage. The United States is the world's largest oil and natural gas producer, yet some parts of the country are likely to endure soaring prices and even rationing of the energy required to stay warm this winter. Residents of the Northeast are most vulnerable, because there aren't enough pipelines bringing gas there from other parts of the country. The Northeast can import gas by ship, but seaborne gas prices have soared as Russia shut off gas pipelines to Europe and those nations looked for new sources. The ancient 102-year-old Jones Act essentially prevents cheaper seaborne shipments of American gas from Gulf Coast ports. Some Northeast consumers use heating oil as an alternative to gas, but those prices have skyrocketed because heating oil is similar to diesel, which is scarce because of tight refining capacity, a ban on Russian diesel imports, and a variety of other factors.

Some Americans enjoy abundant energy and cheap prices, but Northeasterners may as well live in a different country.

The growing leverage of autocratic energy producers. It's in Europe's and America's interest to become less dependent on oil and gas from undemocratic suppliers such as Saudi Arabia and Russia. Yet government and market pressure to curtail drilling in democratic nations gives autocratic fossil-fuel providers more leverage, not less. Unlike the Biden administration, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf petro-states control domestic energy production and can direct investments required to secure future output. In the United States, by contrast, drillers are reluctant to produce more because they fear a future



profitability crunch once renewables take over. The president can ask them to drill more, but he doesn't control the private sector the way OPEC autocrats rule their nationalized oil industries.

"Who's going to be the last man standing in terms of who invests in fossil fuels?" Helima Croft of RBC Capital Markets said at the Columbia energy conference. "It's going to be a small number of Gulf producers. We are still going to have to make asks of these countries when we need more oil."

An energy advantage for China. American and European consumers pay the global price for oil. China pays less. That's because China doesn't participate in sanctions against Russia and Iran, and is therefore able to buy their energy products at a discount to global prices. "China has access to cheaper oil than any competing economy," Shaffer said at the Dallas Fed conference. If that persists, it will give China—America's top economic rival—an important cost advantage in key global industries just as the Biden administration is ratcheting up guardrails against China's future domination. China could also become an oil and gas refining powerhouse if western economies continue to discourage oil and gas investment.

What's Next?

President Biden and other green-energy advocates argue that the widespread adoption of renewable energy will solve these sorts of problems. Sun and wind captured on US territory will reduce the need for foreign energy. The plunging cost of renewable technology can make some forms of green energy cheaper than fossil fuels. Cornering the market for the next generation of energy technology will boost the US economy for decades.

That's may all be true—in the future.

But the energy economy is massive, involving trillions of dollars of infrastructure devoted to the carbon fuel over the last hundred years. It can't change nearly as fast green-energy advocates would like. There will be permitting and logistical problems building green-energy transmission and storage infrastructure, just as there are barriers to building oil or gas pipelines today. Some green-energy technologies won't pan out. And some of the minerals needed, such as lithium, nickel and cobalt, come from China, Russia or other nations unfriendly toward the United States and the west, raising the same problem as relying on Saudi Arabia or Russia for oil.

Even with aggressive adoption of renewables, carbon fuel will remain dominant for decades. Research firm Energy Intelligence estimates that global demand for oil will grow, not shrink, until about 2030. Then demand will plateau for awhile, only beginning to decline by the late 2030s. Larry Fink, CEO of investing giant BlackRock, said recently that "we're going to need hydrocarbons for 70 years."

"We've underinvested," Abhi Rajendran, director of oil markets research for Energy Intelligence, said at the Dallas Fed conference. "We're underwater on the supply side. It's a recipe for higher prices. It's going to be a bumpy couple of years. We've been talking about consigning coal to the dustbin of history, but coal continues to boom, and oil's going to be no different."

Climate activists are pressuring banks and investing firms to blacklist oil and gas firms, prompting investing titans such as Steve Schwarzman of Blackstone (BX) and Larry Fink of BlackRock (BLK) to warn that the pullback is happening too soon and too fast. At the same time, American drillers are changing their business models after years of poor financial performance. For a decade leading up to 2020, the U.S. fracking boom brought vast new supplies onto the market, which kept oil and gas prices low. But low prices and too much supply hammered oil and gas profitability, culminating in massive losses when the 2020 COVID downturn struck.

There were more than 600 oil and gas bankruptcies between 2016 and 2021, with busted firms defaulting on more than \$321 billion in debt. Exxon Mobil (XOM) alone lost \$22 billion in 2020. Investors and shareholders who bore those losses now want a much faster return on investment, especially given efforts to shut the whole industry down. "The investor demands that we prioritize returning capital to our investors who gave us that capital in the first place," Hellen Currie, chief economist for ConocoPhillips, said at the Dallas Fed conference. "This capital discipline mindset is now entrenched, and it's why we don't see more rigs or frack crews going to work."

None of this is an argument to give up on combating global warming or transitioning to renewables. If anything, there's a case for a faster and more aggressive transition. The IEA estimates it will take \$2



trillion of global investment in green energy every year to limit global warming to the standing goal of a 1.5-degree Celsius increase by 2050. Actual investment only totals around \$750 billion per year, which is why that goal is probably unrealistic. (“1.5 is dead,” the Economist declared recently.)

The Inflation Reduction Act that Biden signed in August includes about \$400 billion in green-energy investments, including incentives that could generate far more in private investment. But one measure that fell out of that bill was a permitting-reform measure backed by Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, which would speed federal approval for both carbon and green-energy projects. Industry officials say faster approvals are desperately needed, given that the time it takes to get a permit for a typical energy project now exceeds the time it takes to build it, according to Tellurian. State and local permitting requirements sometimes derail projects, too, which is why the Manchin bill would put new limits on the legal challenges local communities can bring.

Biden, meanwhile, has threatened punitive action against U.S. oil and gas firms if they don’t increase production, such as banning exports or asking Congress to impose a windfall profits tax. Biden is probably bluffing, since doing either of those things could have the unintended effect of reducing production and pushing prices higher, not lower. But the threat itself, no matter how hollow, may be counterproductive, since it adds to Wall Street’s concerns about government hostility toward the industry, and squeezes the availability of financing even more.

'All of the above'

In 2014, President Barack Obama unveiled an “all of the above” energy strategy that promoted “environmentally responsible” oil and natural gas production along with renewables, nuclear power and other emerging technologies. “The simplest solution was Obama when he said ‘all of the above,’ Sarah Emerson, managing principal at ESAI Energy, tells Yahoo Finance. “We’re going to need it all, because the energy sector is so much bigger than anybody realizes.”

The basic principle for assuring a smooth transition from fossil fuels to renewables is to make sure there are ample supplies of all types of energy for as long as they’re needed.

Some climate activists favor policies that make fossil fuels more expensive, reasoning that costlier oil and gas makes renewables cheaper by comparison. One flaw in that logic is that fossil fuels and renewables are nowhere near interchangeable. Consumers in Massachusetts can’t import solar power from Arizona if heating oil gets too expensive. They just have to pay more and endure the consequences. The real-world substitution of coal for natural gas also highlights the classic risk of well-meaning policies that produce unintended consequences.

“What we’ve lost over the course of the last decade has been balance,” former Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette said at the Columbia energy conference. “Agreements tend to start with a climate focus, but we can’t focus on that exclusively. It has to be balanced with the needs of the consumer and the prices we’re seeing in the marketplace. It’s important that we think about increasing the supply of all forms of energy.”

Natural gas, more than oil, could be the most potent stabilizing force during the transition to renewables.

At the Dallas Fed energy conference, Toby Rice, CEO of energy firm EQT, which operates in the Appalachian Basin, said the United States could more than double natural-gas production if pipelines and other infrastructure were in place to get gas to end users. Natural gas is the leading source of fuel for electricity production in the United States, and more gas would mean cheaper power for millions of households. It would also provide further relief for European nations trying to live without Russian supplies. Gas is “the biggest energy security blanket for Americans,” Rice said. “Get some pipelines built and U.S. oil and gas operators will step up.”

Gas is also part of the green-energy transition itself. Since wind and solar power aren’t always available, expanding their use on the grid requires a reliable “base load” that’s there if the sun isn’t shining or the wind isn’t blowing, and natural gas is the most appropriate fuel for that. “There’s this idea that if you use more renewables you use less natural gas,” Brenda Shaffer of the **Naval Postgraduate School** said in Dallas. “But it’s exactly the opposite. If you don’t commission enough natural gas, you can’t use enough renewables.”



Sarah Emerson of ESAI highlights hybrid automobiles as an example of how the transition to renewables has veered off-course. Hybrids, which have both a gas engine and an electric motor, grew popular from 2000 to 2015 as they offered the best fuel economy on the road with the reliability of a gas-powered engine. But most automakers have now dropped hybrids in favor of fully electric cars, even though EVs are expensive, the charging network is underdeveloped and most automakers don't even turn a profit on EVs yet.

"Tell me why we abandoned hybrids," Emerson says. "The original policy was let's get to 45 miles per gallon, but hybrids got shunted aside because we got obsessed with EVs. People said, 'We can't have hybrids because we want to get rid of gasoline.' But it might have been better to have another 10 years of hybrids and maybe then 10 years of EVs."

Biden has tacitly acknowledged the need to secure more fossil-fuel supply. In October, the Energy Dept. said it plans to replace roughly 200 million barrels of oil released from the national reserve this year when the market price hits \$70 per barrel or so. The government will also sign long-term contracts guaranteeing that price, which is unusual. The government normally refills the reserve at the spot price, with no advance notice of its purchase plans. Guaranteeing a price is meant to signal to producers that they can increase supply, knowing there will be at least one major purchaser buying at a price that lets them turn a profit.

But subtle signals may not be nearly enough to convince investors to finance big new fossil-fuel projects or producers to launch new battles with permitting authorities. And there are no signs of a truce in the war on fossil fuels. "There is not really a whole lot being done to fix the fact that we have underinvested, and plan for the fact that demand is going to go up," Abhi Rajendran of Energy Intelligence said at the Dallas conference.

"I don't," he added, "expect a whole lot to change."

Consumers will bear the collateral damage.

[The war on fossil fuels is causing chaos \(yahoo.com\)](#)

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ALUMNI:

Ecuadorian Navy: Ready to Face New Maritime Challenges

(Diálogo 29 Nov 22)

Rear Admiral John Merlo León assumed command of the Ecuadorian Navy on August 21, 2022.

Prior to his appointment, Rear Adm. Merlo was commander of Naval Operations and head of the First Naval Zone in Guayaquil. He was also a naval advisor to the Ministry of Defense, head of the XVII Antarctic Expedition, Ecuador's Defense attaché in Italy, and director of the **Naval Postgraduate School**, among other high-ranking military positions.

Rear Adm. Merlo spoke with Diálogo about his challenges and the operations that contribute to the national fight against narcotrafficking, among other topics.

Diálogo: What is your biggest challenge?

Rear Admiral John Merlo León, commander of the Ecuadorian Navy: The biggest challenge as commander of the Navy is related to the complexity of today's world, the speed with which scenarios change, and the capability that military forces, in this case the naval force, must have to clearly understand the ends to be achieved, the expertise necessary to establish the ways to reach those ends, and the tactical capabilities indispensable to fulfill the mission. In short, to combine ends, ways, and means in fragile scenarios, full of uncertainty, non-linear, and incomprehensible.

Therefore, part of this challenge lies in the purposes that the navy of a maritime country like Ecuador should have, and consequently make the greatest effort to promote our country's maritime vision. Ecuador must be understood geopolitically as a State that possesses in its territorial waters great opportunities for its development, for its progress, for the welfare of present and future generations. It is



therefore crucial to consolidate substantial aspects for the present and future of the country such as Ecuador's Antarctic Policy and the National Maritime Strategy, which will contribute to strengthening the national position in the international arena, as well as to articulate in an integral way maritime management and to advance with clearly defined objectives toward the consolidation of Ecuador's ocean politics vision.

However, it must be taken into account that all this wealth and opportunities that Ecuador has in the sea, is threatened by different elements, each with different characteristics, ranging from environmental pollution; illegal unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) with the presence of foreign flag fleets lurking in our waters; to one of the biggest scourges that our country faces at the moment, narcotrafficking. This wide range of elements forms a system that must be analyzed and understood in its magnitude since it demands an integrated and integral action of all the components of the Ecuadorian State, and consequently, in the naval field, to determine the best way to act with units adequately equipped and ready to fulfill their mission.

Therefore, it is important to execute the projects planned for the Navy and it is one of the objectives of my administration, which starts with a substantial premise: The Ecuadorian Navy is one; together, surface units, submarines, naval aviation, marine infantry, coast guard, with our logistics, personnel, and educational support bodies constitute the National Maritime Authority and we will be up to what our maritime Ecuador needs.

In this sense, the management of the Navy General Command is oriented toward three lines of action:

- Institutional strengthening to efficiently provide the services that citizens expect from their Maritime Authority.
- Watch over the resources at sea through an Operational Force with oceanic capacity that guarantees sovereignty, integrity, and security in the aquatic spaces.
- Promote the strengthening of our country's maritime vision through integrated maritime management tools, such as the National Maritime Strategy.

These lines of action are sustained transversally by an essential element for the development and future of our Navy: the strengthening of institutional values, such as honor, discipline, loyalty, and honesty.

Diálogo: The Ecuadorian Navy's operations contribute to the national fight against narcotrafficking. What kind of combined and joint operations do you carry out to achieve success?

Rear Adm. Merlo: The Ecuadorian Navy doctrinally classifies maritime operations into naval operations, maritime security, and protection operations, operations in support of State action, and international cooperation operations.

In relation to this question, maritime security and protection operations are carried out within the scope of the Maritime Authority and fulfilling the role of Maritime Police, under the attributions of the Coastal State, Flag and Port Authority, granted by both international conventions and national laws, especially the Organic Law of Navigation, Management of Maritime and River Safety, and Protection of Aquatic Spaces.

One of the purposes of this type of operations is the neutralization and fight against illicit activities, such as IUU, smuggling of goods and hydrocarbons, illicit trafficking of migrants, common crime, terrorism, extraction of underwater heritage, and illegal exploitation of marine resources. The latter is one of the main threats against the security and protection of Ecuador and against which the data on the number of captures made demonstrate the magnitude of the work carried out and the efficiency of our operations.

Within the framework of regional cooperation in the fight against narcotrafficking, the Ecuadorian Navy participates annually in [the Colombian Navy-led] combined multinational operation Orión, in which information is exchanged and alerts are received with intelligence to apprehend vessels transporting controlled substances within our maritime jurisdictional spaces. This operation includes the participation of the National Police and the Attorney General's Office, since it seeks to act both on land and at sea and to have judicial support in the prosecution processes.

Likewise, as part of the binational cooperation with the United States in the fight against narcotrafficking, during 2022 a combined operation dubbed Octopus [Pulpo] was launched, aimed at



increasing permanence at sea, causing surprise effect on vessels involved in narcotrafficking, improving logistics support, in addition to taking advantage of surveillance capabilities through radars, long-range drones, and liaison with naval exploration aircraft, both national and foreign. In addition, PASSEX operations have been carried out with U.S. Coast Guard vessels, exchanging information and knowledge, as well as training in procedures for visits and inspections.

Diálogo: One of the Navy's missions is to counter illegal fishing. What progress are you making in the fight against this scourge?

Rear Adm. Merlo: On the high seas, in areas close to the Ecuadorian insular exclusive economic zone (EEZ), a fleet of foreign-flagged ships that carry out fishing activities is present periodically. This fleet is made up of some 300 vessels, among them industrial fishing boats, reefer-type factory ships for processing and storing fish, and tankers for refueling.

The Ecuadorian Navy permanently monitors and controls this fleet. When the fleet is up to a distance of about 300 nautical miles from Ecuador's EEZ, we use various satellite monitoring and referencing systems, such as CLS, Sea Vision, Skylight, and Dark Vessel Detection to obtain information on the vessels position, trajectories, to get satellite images on request, satellite radar information, detect vessels that turn off their automatic identification system (AIS) devices, and analyze suspicious behavior.

When through this constant monitoring it is determined that these ships are approaching between 300 and 100 miles outside the EEZ, naval units including air and naval exploration units, are deployed to act directly on the threat.

It is important to point out that we act against this threat in coordination with the Foreign Ministry, so much so that a buffer zone of 100 miles has been agreed in meetings between the Foreign ministries of Ecuador and China, so that when there are ships of that flag, they do not cross those limits.

In the event that a vessel is detected entering the EEZ, we carry out inspection procedures and the vessel is apprehended, for which the capabilities of both personnel and assets are constantly being improved in order to carry out the respective prosecution, as was the case of the Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999 vessel in 2017.

In 2018, Ecuador launched at the regional level a proposal for the multinational exercise called GALAPEX, which aims to improve interoperability between navies of the region to combat illegal activities in jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional waters, such as organized crime, narcotrafficking and related crimes, IUU fishing, and marine pollution, in addition to providing humanitarian assistance to the countries of the region, so as to contribute to regional governance and the protection of common maritime interests. This proposal was materialized in 2019, through virtual exercises with several participating countries. During the XXX Inter-American Naval Conference of 2022 in Lima, Peru, the Ecuadorian Navy proposed to participating countries to carry out this exercise periodically, which was accepted for its future execution.

Diálogo: How does the reincorporation of the coast guard vessel Isla Floreana help in the fight against illicit activities?

Rear Adm. Merlo: The unit was handed over to the Coast Guard Command by the Logistics General Directorate on June 10, 2022, and as of that date it has carried out various maritime security and protection operations, both in continental and insular jurisdictional waters, and we have intensified patrols in sectors where there have been high rates of criminal activities, among them theft of outboard motors, contamination of merchant ships, and assaults on vessels.

To carry out these operations, the Coast Guard Command has made an operational design for the unit to be present and guard fishing areas, merchant traffic, and coastal navigation, at different times and sectors, carrying out statutory inspections to control and verify compliance with navigation safety regulations and identify vessels suspected of conducting illegal activities.

The unit has also participated in search and rescue (SAR) operations in continental and insular waters in response to reports of missing artisanal fishing vessels, people at sea, and maritime accidents with positive results. Likewise, the unit has carried out SAR exercises with simulated evacuation of injured persons with Ecuadorian Navy helicopters.



At present, it carries out operations especially in the insular region to counter narcotrafficking, prevent and neutralize IUU fishing, carry out surveillance and control within the Galápagos Marine Reserve, and participate in SAR operations.

Diálogo: What are some advances of the Naval Aviation Command for the success of naval operations?

Rear Adm. Merlo: Naval Aviation is a pillar of the operational scheme for naval operations. The coordinated work of all air and naval exploration means to provide a clear tactical and operational panorama has been and is essential for the success of operations, for which rotary-wing, fixed-wing, and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) units work in a permanently coordinated manner.

The Ecuadorian Navy is one and together Naval Aviation, Surface Units, Submarine Units, Marines, and Coast Guard form a solid system that acts and will always act to protect and provide security to our maritime interests.

Diálogo: What kind of operations are being carried out on the rivers bordering Colombia and Peru to confront criminal organizations?

Rear Adm. Merlo: In this regard, it's important to point out that the Navy guarantees the success of operations to confront these threats through an operational scheme that, based on an analysis taking into account space, force, and time, directs its efforts to fulfill its mission. In this context, together with surface, submarine, naval aviation, and coast guard units, the Marines play an important role as part of the operational maneuver, highlighting their professionalism in carrying out riverine operations and special operations with satisfactory results.

In border rivers, maritime security and protection operations are carried out with the means assigned to Port Captaincies and Naval Checkpoints, i.e., with shallow draft speedboats. These operations include river patrols to carry out inspections and statutory controls of all vessels navigating the border rivers. Likewise, inspections of vessels and cargo are carried out upon arrival and departure. All this is supported by operational intelligence to neutralize illicit activities such as narcotrafficking, oil smuggling, arms smuggling, and common crime.

Additionally, and specifically, in the southern sector, indirect protection is provided to vessels in the shrimp, fishing, and merchant sectors through the "Safe Routes" system, which consists of river patrols of the canals during these vessels' transit times.

Diálogo: How do you collaborate with other navies in the region and with the U.S. to strengthen your capabilities?

Rear Adm. Merlo: The Ecuadorian Navy participates annually in the Meeting of Regional Northern and Southern Border Commands, where the border situation of each country is analyzed and we establish understandings, especially to exchange information and intelligence on common threats, as well as to coordinate and cooperate in the face of maritime emergencies, among the commanders of Naval Units, Port Captaincies, and River Control Posts deployed on the common border.

The Ecuadorian Navy also collaborates with other navies in the region through agreements and memorandums of understanding for cooperation in the fight against transnational crimes, exchange of vessel information, investigation of maritime accidents, Port State inspections, marine environment preservation operations, human resources training, cooperation in the fight against IUU fishing, and support with technologies applied to maritime traffic surveillance.

As mentioned above, within the maritime security and protection operations, we carry out combined PASSEX type operations, especially with U.S. Coast Guard vessels, within the jurisdictional maritime areas, in which the capabilities of each of the participating means are combined, especially in maritime surveillance, information exchange, training, and training of the crews.

An agreement is in effect for cooperative air and naval surveillance of vessels engaged in narcotrafficking and related illicit maritime activities, which consists of carrying out operations with surface and coast guard means, as well as with U.S. government aircraft, in which military personnel from the Ecuadorian Navy and National Police are embarked, in order to detect vessels engaged in illicit activities and proceed to their apprehension.



Diálogo: On the Navy’s Twitter account, it says: “Keep informed through official accounts, fake news results in disinformation!” What actions are you taking to strengthen capabilities in information operations to counter disinformation and fake news?

Rear Adm. Merlo: The Ecuadorian Navy permanently monitors different sources of information, among them social networks, to determine the existence of this type of fake news aimed at disinformation.

The analysis of this information allows us to define the corresponding response based on different variables that are analyzed as part of the existing doctrine in order to eliminate or reduce the effects of these messages.

Additionally, considering the dynamics of this type of situations, the Ecuadorian Navy is committed to strengthen its response capabilities through the training of its personnel in information operations, the corresponding doctrinal review, and consequently the reorganization of its structure to act adequately and effectively.

Our institution, the noble Ecuadorian Navy, always navigates the course, having as a guiding light service to our citizens, updating its procedures, ensuring every day that its capabilities are improved with firmness, transparency, courage, and honor to fulfill our mission.

[Ecuadorian Navy: Ready to Face New Maritime Challenges - Diálogo Américas \(dialogo-americas.com\)](http://americas.com)

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Tighten the Earned Income Tax Credit

(Texas Insider 2 Dec 22) ... David R. Henderson, Hoover Institution at Stanford University

When you hear that something is refundable, you probably think that means that someone gets a refund on something he or she paid. But the IRS and even economists who study tax policy don’t mean that at all. By “refundable,” they mean that someone gets a payment even if he or she paid nothing in the first place.

That issue comes up when one examines the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC.) As Cato Institute economist Chris Edwards points out, of the \$71 billion of the EITC given to 27 million people in 2021, \$69 billion, or almost all, was “refundable.” That is, it was given to people who paid no income tax. The EITC is almost wholly a welfare-spending program, not a tax-cutting program.

The basic idea of the EITC, which started in 1975, was to draw lower-income mothers into the labor force by subsidizing their employment. But to keep the cost to the government from being bigger, the subsidy was phased out as women’s labor income grew. Thus, for workers whose earnings rose above the point where the subsidy began to phase out, the program actually discouraged work.

It still does. In 2021, a single mother with two children and earning \$19,520 lost \$210.60 for every additional \$1,000 of earned income, and this continued until her earnings exceeded \$47,915. That’s like adding 21.06 percentage points to her income and payroll tax rates. If she lived in a state with high marginal tax rates, her overall marginal tax rate exceeded 40 percent!

The program expanded in 1986, 1990, 1993, and 2009. It now provides benefits even to workers without children. Edwards notes that benefits were \$16 billion in 1990 and rose to \$71 billion in 2021, all measured in 2021 dollars. The number of recipients more than doubled, rising from 12.5 million in 1990 to 27 million in 2021.

Moreover, the program is rife with fraud. Interestingly, Hilary Hoynes, an economics professor at the University of California, Berkeley, wrote an article in 2014 calling for an expansion of the EITC without ever mentioning fraud. Around that same time, Professor Hoynes gave a talk at the **Naval Postgraduate School**, where I was an economics professor. In her talk, she defended the EITC and didn’t mention fraud then either. However, in Q&A, she readily admitted that many recipients of EITC funds got them fraudulently. What would you expect from a program that one can benefit from simply by filing a false tax return and receiving a check from the U.S. Treasury? Not all of the mistakes are fraudulent. But the



Government Accountability Office estimated that the error and fraud rate between 2016 and 2020 averaged 24 percent.

The federal government is bloated. How about, as Edwards suggests, reducing the EITC expenditure by reducing benefit levels and narrowing eligibility?

[Tighten the Earned Income Tax Credit | texasinsider | texasinsider.org](#)

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Governor Little Appoints Kirk Wille as Gem County Commissioner

(Idaho Press 2 Dec 22)

Governor Brad Little announced Friday his appointment of Kirk Wille as Gem County Commissioner.

Wille, of Sweet-Montour, is an attorney at High Rock Law, PLLC, where he has practiced in several areas of law since 2017. He is the owner and founder of Cowboys Chophouse, Inc., a steakhouse in Emmett, and the former owner of Gem County Motorsports, LLC. He is a decorated Commissioned Officer of the United States Marine Corps, where he served for two decades.

Wille sits on the board of directors for the Gem County Chamber of Commerce, Gem County Economic Development Foundation and is a trustee to Valor Health. He formerly served on the Gem County Senior/Community Center and is a Staff Judge Advocate for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4900. After attending the Marine Corps University in Quantico, Va., Wille received his Bachelor's from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, his Master's from the **Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, Calif., and his Juris Doctorate from the University of San Diego School of Law.

Wille, a Republican, will replace current District #1 Commissioner Bryan Elliott, who resigned effective November 4. Wille will complete the remainder of Elliott's term, which ends in 2024.

Wille told the Messenger Index he was "honored to be nominated and appointed and look forward to serving the citizens of Gem County for the next two years."

He says he doesn't have a particular agenda to bring with him to the office.

"I learned in the military that you need to spend a lot of time early just listening and that's where I'll start."

[Governor Little appoints Kirk Wille as Gem County Commissioner | Local News | idahopress.com](#)

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Sanders Announces Appointments to Head Public Safety, Emergency Management Offices

(Swark 5 Dec 22)

Governor-elect Sarah Huckabee Sanders today announced her intention to nominate Captain Mike Hagar as the next Secretary of the Department of Public Safety. Additionally, Sanders announced that she will appoint Hagar to serve as Director of the Division of Arkansas State Police concurrently. Sanders also said that the current Secretary of Public Safety has agreed to remain the Director of the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management.

"Captain Mike Hagar is the right person to help me build a safer, stronger Arkansas as the incoming Secretary of Public Safety and Director of State Police," Sanders said. "As violent crime is on the rise and deadly, illegal drugs are flooding our communities, now more than ever we need a strong, experienced leader who will be tough on crime – and I am confident that Captain Hagar is that person. His proven leadership throughout his 26 years of service with Arkansas State Police makes him the clear choice to help me protect all Arkansans from harm. Our state also must be fully prepared to deal with any emergency to protect our citizens, and AJ Gary has done a great job as Director of Emergency Management, which is why I am pleased he has committed to staying on in that capacity. I look forward to working with both individuals in the years ahead."



“Arkansas has a serious crime problem, and I am ready to get to work on day one addressing it,” Hagar said. “Governor-elect Sanders has the right vision to bring safety back to our communities, and I’m honored that she has chosen me to be the next Secretary of Public Safety and leader of the brave men and women who make up the Arkansas State Police.”

“I’m looking forward to joining the Sanders Administration and continuing to ensure that our state is always prepared for the next disaster or emergency,” Gary said. “The men and women who make up ADEM are the best, and I am excited to continuing leading this critical division.”

Captain Mike Hagar biography:

Captain Mike Hagar is currently the captain of Troop A, Highway Patrol Division – the largest field command in the state – and has more than 26 years of service with Arkansas State Police.

As the Troop A Captain, he oversees a staff of more than 70 commissioned and non-commissioned personnel while coordinating with other law enforcement agencies. He also currently serves on the Arkansas State Police Association’s executive board.

Prior to commanding Troop A, Captain Hagar served on the Executive Protection Detail for more than 14 years – rising in the ranks from trooper to captain. As Captain, he supervised all operations regarding the security of the Governor of Arkansas, immediate family, and the Governor’s Mansion Grounds, coordinated all logistics for the Governor’s domestic and international travel, and evaluated threat assessments. In 2016, he was elected to the Executive Board of the National Governor’s Security Association.

For 10 years, he served concurrently on the ASP SWAT team serving high risk arrest / search warrants and finished his tenure with the rank of Entry Team Leader and Assistant Tactical Commander. He also spent three years as a sergeant at the ASP Training Division coordinating all training responsibilities for Troop School.

Captain Hagar has received multiple official commendations for exceptional service, including a Legislative Citation of Merit for Service Beyond the Call of Duty and the Trooper’s Cross with Valor for actions taken during an armed confrontation with a suspect during a hostage situation.

Captain Hagar received his Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. In 1995, he graduated from the Little Rock Police Academy and in 2012, he graduated from Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command, Session #332. He currently resides in Conway.

AJ Gary biography:

Governor Asa Hutchinson appointed A.J. Gary as Secretary of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) on August 3, 2022, with administrative responsibilities for the State’s public safety agencies: Commission on Law Enforcement Standards & Training, State Police, Division of Emergency Management, Crime Information Center, and Crime Lab. The Crime Victims Reparations Board and Fire Prevention Commission are also under his purview.

A.J. serves concurrently as DPS Secretary, Director of the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management (ADEM), and State Homeland Security Advisor – each by governor’s appointment. He serves on numerous committees, including Arkansas Safe Schools, Infrastructure Planning Advisory Committee, Governor’s Cyber Advisory Council, Arkansas Governor’s Earthquake Advisory Council, Chair on the Arkansas Levee Task Force, Chair on the Arkansas 911 Board, Governors Homeland Security Advisors Council (GHSAC) Executive Committee, and on the board of directors for the Central United States Earthquake Consortium.

He is a retired police chief, serving over 28 years with the Conway Police Department. During a break in his law enforcement career, A.J. was the Chief Security Administrator for Air Transport International LLC, an international FAA Part 121 air carrier. In this capacity, he was responsible for all international and domestic security related issues involving the airline, including flight and cabin crew security training, facility security, and TSA and FAA regulatory compliance.

A.J. has a Bachelor’s Degree in Organizational Management and a Master’s of Public Administration. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and attended the **Naval Postgraduate School** Center for Homeland Defense and Security’s Executive Leadership Program. When not working, A.J. spends time with his wife, three children and four grandchildren. He also enjoys fly fishing.



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Two New Directors Join OMWD's Board

(Coast News 5 Dec 22)

Matthew Hahn and Marco San Antonio were sworn in Dec. 5 as the newest members of Olivenhain Municipal Water District's Board of Directors. Hahn and San Antonio were chosen by voters in the Nov. 8 election to represent OMWD's Division 4 and Division 1, respectively.

Additionally, Neal Meyers will complete the remaining two-year term representing OMWD's Division 5. Meyers was originally appointed as a director in 2021 to fill the term of the previous Division 5 director that resigned from the board. He ran unopposed in the Nov. 8 election.

"We are happy to welcome these new voices to the Board of Directors," stated OMWD Board President Larry Watt. "Each individual brings unique knowledge and experience to support OMWD's commitment to serving present and future customers with reliable, cost-effective, and high-quality water."

Hahn has resided in San Diego since 1993. He is a US Navy veteran with over 30 years of service and received his executive master of business administration from **Naval Postgraduate School**. He also holds a bachelor's degree from the University of St. Thomas. Mr. Hahn has worked for a Fortune 500 company for over 18 years in environmental compliance. He takes over the Division 4 seat from Kristie Bruce-Lane.

San Antonio is a lifelong Encinitas resident, former firefighter, and business owner. He takes over the Division 1 seat from Robert Topolovac, who passed away in October and was the then-longest-tenured board member at OMWD.

Meyers has resided in OMWD's service area Division 5 since 1993. He began practicing law in 1984 in North County, and represented many private clients and public agencies during his career. He received his juris doctor from the University of San Diego, and also holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo where he concentrated on local government.

The newly elected directors Hahn and San Antonio will serve four-year terms ending in December 2026. Director Meyers will finish the remaining term of office ending December 2024.

[Two new directors join OMWD's board - The Coast News Group](#)

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