



Studies in the News

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Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

CA continues exploring alternatives to incarceration

ECONOMY

Report underscores CA's green energy industry successes

EDUCATION

Using technology to improve adult education

EMPLOYMENT

Graduates engaging in labor market, companies falling short

ENVIRONMENT

Natural and man-made infrastructure can maximize coastal resilience

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

CA receives "F" for government spending transparency

LAO's guide to the CA state sales tax

HEALTH

Suicide rate among black children nearly doubled since 1993

HUMAN SERVICES

Federal programs play a central role in reducing rural child poverty

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Connectivity: CA public libraries to receive broadband by 2020

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

***Alternatives to Incarceration in California.* By Brandon Martin, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Apr. 2015. 10 p.**

http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_quick.asp?i=1146

"Three-plus years after implementing a major realignment of its public safety systems, California continues to face pressure to reduce both its prison and jail populations. California relied on some alternatives to custody-based punishment before realignment but it has been expanding its use of others.... The evidence suggests that the effectiveness of both incarceration and community-based supervision depends on a number of factors, including the rate of incarceration in a given community, the offender characteristics, and the nature of the response to violations during and after supervision.... [I]ntensive data collection on county implementation efforts can help the state identify the community-based strategies that produce the best outcomes."

ECONOMY

California Green Innovation Index—International Edition. Next 10. May 17, 2015. 102 p.
<http://next10.org/international>

“California’s clean-technology industry attracted more venture capital in 2014 than any other state or country, \$5.7 billion. While the industry endured a boom and a bust during the last decade, investment is growing again, rising 153% from 2013.... Critics of the drive to green California’s economy have often warned that the effort could send energy bills soaring in a state that typically has some of the country’s highest electricity rates and gasoline prices. The report found, however, that the average monthly residential electricity bill in California declined 4% between 1993 and 2013 when adjusted for inflation, probably due to more energy-efficient homes and appliances.” (SFGate, May 17, 2015).

EDUCATION

Learning for Life—The Opportunity for Technology to Transform Adult Education: Part 1—Interest in and Aptitude for Technology. Tyton Partners. Mar. 26, 2015. 30 p.
http://tytonpartners.com/tyton-wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Learning-for-Life_The-Oppty-for-Tech-to-Transform-Adult-Education_March-20151.pdf

Nearly one in six U.S. adults have low literacy skills, and close to one third possess low numeracy skills. In the past 10 years, educational technology applications have played a part in nearly all pre-K-12 and postsecondary areas, but have largely bypassed the adult education market. This report outlines survey research into the uses of instructional technology in the U.S. adult education field to determine administrators and practitioners interest in, aptitude for, and current use of technology-based education resources.

EMPLOYMENT

Are You the Weakest Link? Strengthening Your Talent Supply Chain. By Katherine LaVelle, et al. Accenture. May 12, 2015. 8 p.
<http://www.accenture.com/us-en/Pages/insight-2015-accenture-college-graduate-employment-research.aspx>

Of the 2,003 college graduates surveyed, more are being encouraged to choose science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) majors. Many are surveying the job market before choosing a major and report planning to stay in their first job for at least three years. “What these graduates are likely to find in the job market, however, often falls well short of those ideals. High percentages of recent graduates report they are underemployed; salaries are low; graduates are not being offered learning experiences that advance their careers.... [E]mployers’ lack of commitment and investment in entry-level jobs makes them the weakest link in the chain.” This report makes recommendations to employers based on insights from recent college graduates.

ENVIRONMENT

“Future of Our Coasts: The Potential for Natural and Hybrid Infrastructure to Enhance the Resilience of Our Coastal Communities, Economies and Ecosystems.” By Ariana E. Sutton-Grier, et al. *Environmental Science & Policy*, vol. 51 (Aug. 2015) pp. 137-148.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1462901115000799>

Researchers with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recently conducted a meta-analysis of reports and peer-reviewed studies on the effectiveness of combined natural and built infrastructure (hybrid approaches) to protect coastal communities from flooding and coastal erosion. Built infrastructure includes artificial barriers such as dikes and seawalls, while natural infrastructure can include marshes, reefs, and beaches. The results of the study highlight the benefits of combining both natural and man-made components to create a “living shoreline.” Although some areas require directly built protections to minimize the impacts of storms and climate change, where possible, it pays to take advantage of a natural ecosystem’s ability to maintain itself.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Following the Money 2015: How the 50 States Rate in Providing Online Access to Government Spending Data. By Phineas Baxandall, et al. CALPIRG Education Fund, et al. Mar. 18, 2015. 70 p.
http://calpirgedfund.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/Following%20the%20Money%202015_0.pdf

“Every year, state governments spend hundreds of billions of dollars through contracts for goods and services, subsidies to encourage economic development, and other expenditures.... In 2015, all 50 states operated websites to make information on state expenditures accessible to the public and these web portals continue to improve.” This report evaluates state transparency websites using three criteria: comprehensive, one-stop, and one-click searchable and downloadable information. “California receives the lowest score ... weighed down primarily by bureaucratic fragmentation of its information.” The report discusses opportunities to improve transparency.

Understanding California’s Sales Tax. The Legislative Analyst’s Office. May 2015. 24 p.
<http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2015/finance/sales-tax/understanding-sales-tax-050615.pdf>

“California’s state and local governments levy a tax on retail sales of tangible goods.... This report begins with an overview of California’s sales and use tax. It then provides more details about which transactions are subject to this tax, the variation in tax rates across the state, the distribution of revenue among state and local governments, and revenue growth over the last few decades.” The report concludes with an analysis of the reasons driving the unevenness of use tax compliance and strategies the state employs to collect use tax.

HEALTH

“Suicide Trends Among Elementary School-Aged Children in the United States From 1993 to 2012.” By Jeffrey A. Bridge, et al. *JAMA Pediatrics*, vol. 169, no. 5 (May 18, 2015) 5 p.
<http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2293169>
(Available at the California State Library)

“The purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics and recent trends of suicide in US children aged 5 to 11 years inclusively by using 20 years of national mortality data from January 1, 1993, to December 31, 2012, the most recent year for which data were available.... [S]uicide ranked 14th as a cause of death among black children aged 5 to 11 years in 1993 to 1997 but increased to ninth in 2008 to 2012. For white children, suicide ranked 12th as a cause of death in 1993 to 1997 and 11th in 2008 to

2012.... Our findings suggest questions about what factors might influence increasing suicide rates among young black children.”

HUMAN SERVICES

***Opportunity for All: Fighting Rural Child Poverty.* Office of Management and Budget. May 2015. 44 p.**

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/rural_child_poverty_report_final_non-embargoed.pdf

“[P]overty in rural areas fell by nearly half between 1967 and 2012, compared to about one-quarter in urban areas. Federal programs have played a central role in this decline, and this is especially true for rural child poverty.... The Federal tax and transfer system, including programs like refundable tax credits, Social Security, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and housing assistance lifted about 9.0 million rural people out of poverty in 2013, including about 1.6 million children.... Programs like Social Security and SNAP have profound impacts on the well-being of the poorest rural children, reducing rural child deep poverty by nearly one-half and about 30% respectively.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***Lighting Up Libraries: High-speed Broadband in California Public Libraries. An Update on the First Nine Months.* By Greg Lucas. California State Library. Apr. 2, 2015. 36 p.**

https://www.library.ca.gov/lds/docs/LightingupLibraries_HighspeedInternetReport_150424.pdf

“Recognizing the important role libraries play in workforce development and the state’s education system, the Brown administration is bringing 21st Century digital service to more than one-third of California’s 1,112 libraries, beginning July 1. Through an appropriation approved by Governor Brown and lawmakers in the current budget, libraries will be joining the same broadband network linking the University of California, the state university system, community colleges, and a growing number of public school districts.” This report summarizes efforts to date to increase bandwidth and decrease monthly service charges associated with high-speed broadband access at public libraries throughout California. (*Press Release*, May 28, 2015).

About *Studies in the News*

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