



Studies in the News

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Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Web technologies may help update the criminal justice enterprise

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Social Security at 80: A survey of popular opinion

ECONOMY

CA drought will cost state an estimated \$2.74 billion

ENERGY

Study looks at relationship between energy use and population growth

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages—initial results from Berkeley

HEALTH

Sharing behavioral health information in CA

HUMAN SERVICES

CA has the highest WIC coverage rate in the nation

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

San Francisco-Oakland tops list of poorly maintained highways

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Using Future Internet Technologies to Strengthen Criminal Justice. By John S. Hollywood, et al.
RAND. Aug. 2015. 32 p.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR928.html

“Future World Wide Web technologies commonly labeled as being part of Web 3.0 and Web 4.0 could substantially change how the criminal justice enterprise operates. These ... include Semantic Web technologies, intelligent agents, and the Internet of Things. In September 2014, RAND conducted an expert panel for the National Institute of Justice to discuss how the criminal justice community can take advantage (and reduce the risks from) these emerging technologies.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Social Security 80th Anniversary Survey Report: Public Opinion Trends. AARP. Aug. 2015. 44 p.
http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/econ/2015/social-security-80th-anniversary-report.pdf

“According to a national survey of adults 18+, Social Security remains a core part of Americans’ retirement security, and is popular across generations and political affiliations. The survey also continues to find that Americans want to live independently; and that challenges around saving for retirement underscore the importance of the program for future generations.... While the majority (74%) of adults of all ages say they are well informed about the way Social Security works, nearly three in four (73%) do not know that Social Security will be able to pay benefits at reduced level when the Social Security Trust Fund is exhausted.”

ECONOMY

Economic Analysis of the 2015 Drought for California Agriculture. By Richard Howitt, et al.
UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences. Aug. 17, 2015. 31 p.
http://news.ucdavis.edu/search/news_detail.lasso?id=11281

“The UC Davis team used computer models and the latest estimates of surface water availability from state and federal water projects and local water districts. They forecast several drought-related impacts in the state’s major agricultural regions for the current growing season.... The direct costs of drought to agriculture will be \$1.84 billion for 2015. The total impact to all economic sectors is an estimated \$2.74 billion, compared with \$2.2 billion in 2014. The state’s farmers and ranchers currently receive more than \$46 billion annually in gross revenues, a small fraction of California’s \$1.9 trillion-a-year economy.... Net water shortages of 2.7 million acre-feet will cause roughly 542,000 acres to be idled—114,000 more acres than the researchers’ 2014 drought estimate. Most idled land is in the Tulare Basin.”

ENERGY

Socio-Economic Instability and the Scaling of Energy Use with Population Size. By John P. Delong, et al. PLoS ONE. June 2015. 12 p.
<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0130547>

“We evaluated the relationship between energy use and population size for countries with long records of both and the world as a whole to assess whether energy yields are consistent with the idea of an increasing carrying capacity. We find that on average energy use has indeed kept pace with population size over long time periods. We also show, however, that the energy-population scaling exponent plummets during, and its temporal variability increases preceding, periods of social, political, technological, and environmental change. We suggest that efforts to increase the reliability of future energy yields may be essential for stabilizing both population growth and the global socio-economic system.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

The Incidence of Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages: The Case of Berkeley, California.
By John Cawley, et al. National Bureau of Economic Research. Working Paper No. 21465. Aug. 2015. 46 p.

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w21465>

(Available at the California State Library)

This paper estimates the extent to which taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are passed through to consumers in the form of higher retail prices. It compares prices from Berkeley, California, where voters passed a ballot measure instituting this tax in November, 2014, to prices in the city of San Francisco. A tax on SSBs is seen as a way to combat the high prevalence of obesity and related diseases, with consumers reducing consumption as prices rise. On average, less than half of the tax was passed on to consumers. The authors note a couple of study limitations, including the small geographic size of Berkeley, the higher incomes of residents and the relative newness of tax implementation.

HEALTH

Fine Print: Rules for Exchanging Behavioral Health Information in California. By Deven McGraw, et al. California HealthCare Foundation. July 2015. 23 p.

<http://www.chcf.org/~media/MEDIA%20LIBRARY%20Files/PDF/F/PDF%20FinePrintExchangingBehavioral.pdf>

“This report describes the legal framework for sharing behavioral health information in California, under both state and federal law. It also profiles initiatives in San Diego and Alameda Counties and by Inland Empire Health Plan (A Medi-Cal managed care plan operating in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties) that enable some sharing of behavioral health data for care coordination, and explores the initiatives’ replicability in other settings.”

HUMAN SERVICES

The WIC Program in California. By Monica Bandy. Public Policy Institute of California. July 2015. 2 p.

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/jtf/JTF_WICJTF.pdf

This fact sheet outlines California’s WIC, the federally funded Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. WIC has “the highest coverage rate in the country and was well above the national rate of 63.1%.... In California’s 2014 fiscal year, 32.4% of all young children received WIC. Enrollment levels varied considerably across counties. The largest shares of children receiving WIC benefits lived in Kern (49.6%), Yuba (47.6%), Merced (47.0%), and Los Angeles (46.1%) Counties. Relatively fewer children participated in Placer (11.0%), Marin (12.5%), and Orange (15.1%) Counties.... Because Latinos comprise the largest share of California’s low-income young children, they make up the highest percentage of WIC recipients.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Bumpy Roads Ahead: America's Roughest Rides and Strategies to Make Our Roads Smoother.
TRIP. July 2015. 33 p.

http://www.tripnet.org/docs/Urban_Roads_TRIP_Report_July_2015.pdf

"In this report, TRIP examines the condition of the nation's major urban roads, including pavement condition data for America's most populous urban areas, recent trends in travel, the latest developments in repairing roads and building them to last longer, and the funding levels needed to adequately address America's deteriorated roadways.... More than a quarter of the nation's major urban roads are rated in substandard or poor condition, providing motorists and truckers with a rough ride and increasing the cost of operating a vehicle." San Francisco—Oakland area leads Top 25 urban regions with 74% of major roads and highways in poor condition.

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