

CALIFORNIA

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Henry's Tacos: Customers line up for one last meal at the Studio City taco stand. **23**

Obituary: Reddit founder Aaron Swartz was an Internet folk hero and activist. **27**

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Photographs by RICK LOOMIS Los Angeles Times

HARRISON SCOTT takes in the view along the historic Ridge Route, which has been closed to most vehicle traffic since washouts in 2005. Scott has a key to the gate and a crew of workers to do repairs, but they say Forest Service rules are blocking their efforts.

Ridge Route group's rough go

Historic road's preservationists can't seem to get around Forest Service

By BOB POOL

The roadblock facing Harrison Scott and his aging band of volunteers as they try to preserve the Ridge Route north of Los Angeles isn't just the heavy steel gate across the historic paved roadway that was the first to link Northern and Southern California.

As Scott tells it, it's also the U.S. Forest Service, which technically owns the two-lane road that was created by horse-drawn scrapers in 1914 across ridge tops dotting the Sierra Pelona mountain range north of Castaic.

The Ridge Route's place in California history is well-documented. Some experts say its construction prevented the state from being divided in two at the Tehachapi Mountains.

Others say it brought tourism that helped fuel Los Angeles' 1920s boom and served as a vital trade route until the three-lane Highway 99 — dubbed the Ridge Route Alternate — opened nearby in 1933. That highway in turn was replaced in the 1960s by the I-5 Freeway.

For history buffs willing to tackle its 697 curves, the original Ridge Route remained open to [See Ridge, A24]



MIKE SIMPSON and Harrison Scott open the gate that blocks access to the road. The nonprofit Ridge Route Preservation Organization would like to see it reopened to the public.

L.A.'S RACE FOR MAYOR

Forum targets housing plans for city

Garcetti vows to end homelessness. Perry points to affordable housing she has gotten built. Greuel focuses on accountability.

By MAEVE RESTON

At a time when many residents are grappling with foreclosures and rising rental costs have far outpaced growth in their incomes, the three top Los Angeles mayoral candidates promised Friday to make housing policy a central focus for their administrations.

City Councilman Eric Garcetti renewed his ambitious pledge to end homelessness in Los Angeles, rather than "manage it."

Councilwoman Jan Perry said she would try to replicate citywide her achievements getting affordable housing units built in the disparate communities of downtown and South L.A.

And City Controller Wendy Greuel argued that her experience as a former federal housing administrator, as well as an aide to former Mayor Tom Bradley on housing and homelessness issues, would help her expand L.A.'s share of housing funding to reach a broader spectrum of city residents.

Little was left to chance at Friday night's forum, which was limited to candidates who had gathered \$1 million in campaign contributions by a September deadline. The event was organized by the Housing for a Stronger Los Angeles coalition and held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

The candidates were briefed on the questions in advance. There were few, if any, disagreements as they answered questions from Raphael Bostic, a housing economist at USC. All of the candidates, for example, said that they were committed to restoring the city's Housing Trust Fund to \$100 million and that they would have a deputy mayor devoted to housing issues.

Though there was little [See Forum, A25]



MICHAEL ROBINSON CHAVEZ Los Angeles Times

LEMONS AT A FARM in Moorpark are encased in ice. Growers have been up all night since Thursday.

Cold keeps citrus growers awake

Freezing temperatures threaten \$1-billion lemon, orange, grapefruit crop.

By JASON FELCH

It's edging toward midnight and John Gless is keeping a wary eye on the thermometer as he patrols his family's 450 acres of citrus orchards outside Hemet. The temperature hovers

just above 30 degrees as he maneuvers his Ford F-250 pickup through the dark canyons between 18-foot trees of Valencia and navel oranges.

A few degrees colder, as the forecast predicts, and the millions of dollars of citrus dancing in his headlights will start to freeze.

"You worked hard all year to get your crops, and there's a chance you'll lose it all tonight," said 29-year-old Gless, a fourth-generation citrus farmer. "I think there's a good chance it's

gonna freeze."

Gless and citrus farmers like him across the state have been up all night since Thursday, when arctic winds began pushing down a cold front that threatens the \$1 billion in oranges, lemons, tangerines and grapefruit still on trees in California, the nation's largest producer of fresh citrus.

A high-pressure zone sitting off the Pacific Coast has channeled a blast of cold air from the Gulf of Alaska down the backbone of the [See Cold, A25]

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