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EXCLUSIVE REPORT

'OBSCENE' PAYCHECK



Centinela Valley superintendent's compensation of \$663,000 comes as state wants more transparency

By Rob Kuznia
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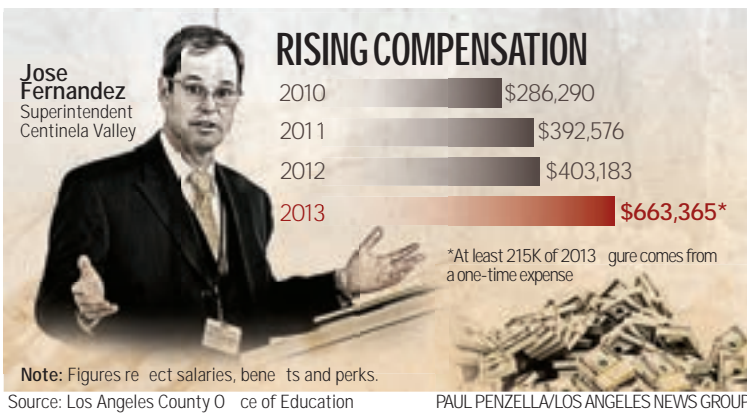
The superintendent of the Centinela Valley high school district negotiated a contract so loaded with out-of-the-ordinary perks that he managed to amass more than \$663,000 in total compensation last year.

Documents obtained by the Daily Breeze from the Los Angeles County Office of Education show that although Jose Fernandez had a base pay of \$271,000 in the 2013 calendar year, his other benefits amounted to nearly \$400,000.

On top of that, the district just over a year ago provided Fernandez with a \$910,000

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WATCHARA PHOMICINDA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

HEALTH

Flu hits younger, heavier adults

Pattern echoes 2009 season when H1N1 also was prominent

By Susan Abram
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A large percentage of American adults hospitalized with influenza so far this year were obese, a pattern seen in 2009, but is unusual when compared to other flu seasons, federal health officials said.

As of Jan. 25, at least 43 percent of all those hospitalized with influenza across the nation were considered obese, which is defined as having a body mass index of 30 or higher.

At one point in January, the percentage of those hospitalized who were obese had hit 46 percent, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Health researchers saw a sim-

FLU » PAGE 5



RICK SFORZA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Flu season has been here for several weeks now, affecting all ages. A large percentage of American adults hospitalized were obese.

After the fires ... New life

The Colby Fire charred nearly 2,000 acres, but creates an ecological rebirth. Now nature springs up from the ashes.

By Steve Scauzillo
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Act one of a Southern California wildfire features walls of flames, flying embers, dense smoke and charred rubble.

Most residents aren't aware of the drama's delayed second act starring fire followers.

These can be dormant wildflowers resurrecting as rudimentary stalks, popping up from black ash and turning into show-stopping pallets of purples, fuchsias and yellows. Or they can be opportunistic black-backed woodpeckers, house wrens and flycatchers feasting on a fresh array of insects, or furry-tailed mule deer grazing on new-growth grasses sprung

NATURE » PAGE 5

Ann Croissant celebrates a year seeing that the endangered thread-leaved brodiaea plant is sprouting after the Colby Fire. Croissant's husband, Gerald, is at center and L.A. County Fire Department Capt. Alex Haua is at right, examining the plants.



Fire followers

Some plants do better after a fire. Botanists call these fire followers. Some well-known Southern California plants included in this list are:

- 1 Fire poppy:** Tall, skinny stems with a single delicate four-pronged flower, usually orange (the color of fire). It is native to California.
- 2 Popping through:** A patch of thread-leaved brodiaea grows back after burned from the Colby Fire in Glendora in January.
- 3 Snapdragon:** Tall stalks of dotted flowers in many colors. The fire followers are of the species: Antirrhinum, coulterianum and nuttallianum.
- 4 Lupine:** Common in disturbed chaparral and coastal sage scrub, this columnar plant features cupped or spiked arrays of flowers of blue, purple and sometimes pink.
- 5 Golden eardrops:** (Ehrendorferia chrysantha) — Blue-green stems, 3 to 5 feet tall, with bright yellow, aromatic flowers whose petals turn down.

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