Statewide 1 percent sales tax hike goes into effect today

Hike will affect a host of consumer goods

By BAYLEE BROWNING

Research holds promise for diabetics

By ANGEL PACIFICO

Local businesses apply for new building signs

By MARIK WHITAKER

California's water-delivery system

Congressmen push for more water for state’s farmers

Seek emergency exception to endangered species act

By KEVIN FERING

A Porsche is shown at a dealership in Santa Barbara. The cost of a new car will increase thanks to a 1 percent, statewide sales tax hike that goes into effect today.

In Santa Barbara County, the increase will be from 7.75 percent to 8.75 percent. The hike will be in effect until July of 2011 or 2012, depending on whether voters approve Proposition IA, the Budget Stabilization Act, in a statewide election on May 19.

In 2007, a federal judge ordered federal and state water agencies to reduce the amount of water they pump to the delta. The districts that would be impacted are the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley and the delta itself, which has lost over half its water.

Ralph Hart, Secretary of Suisun, said the amount of water in his district is nearly 20 percent and is going to decrease further. The delta is considered the "Dust Bowl of the West." More water is needed for the health of the delta, the heart of California's water-delivery ecosystem.

Speaking before the House Natural Resources Committee, several of the state lawmakers called on the federal government to help fund the delta. Hart said a "significant" amount of money would be needed in the state, which has a lack of water.

Ralph Hart, who represents the Stockton area and the San Joaquin Valley's lack of water, said that they were a matter of attention. On the state's grid, the political grid and the water grid.

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