



Same-Sex Weddings Beginning in California

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County clerks around California began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples Monday at 5:01 p.m. Pacific time, as opposition groups prepared to gear up campaigns to nullify those marriages at the November ballot box.

In Beverly Hills, Rabbi Denise Eger of Congregation Kol Ami officiated Monday at the ceremony of the first gay wedding at the Beverly Hills City Hall, between Robin Tyler, 66 years old, and Diane Olson, 54.

In Oakland, a couple lined up at 10 a.m. Monday to try to become the first gay couple in the city to receive a marriage license.

The couples are typical of many same-sex couples who plan to marry following a landmark decision by California's Supreme Court to strike down a ban on such marriages.

The weddings will generate \$684 million over three years for California's economy, predicts the Williams Institute, a think tank on sexual-orientation law at the University of California at Los Angeles's law school. But the social impact — and the impact on the nation — is expected to go far beyond the economy.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom performed a private ceremony in his City Hall office Monday for longtime lesbian activists Del Martin, 87, and Phyllis Lyon, 84, who have been together for more than 50 years. Alameda County offered extended hours from 5:01 p.m. to 8 p.m. at its Oakland office to deal with an anticipated rush of same-sex couples.

County clerks will begin issuing same-sex marriage licenses in earnest Tuesday. San Francisco City Hall is booked for a week and expects to issue 250 licenses a day. The Los Angeles County Clerk headquarters in Norwalk plans to set up 12 marriage stations alongside a covered waiting area with 500 chairs. It is a ramped-up version of what the county prepares for on Valentine's Day, says acting Los Angeles county clerk Dean Logan. Mr. Logan says he expects to see thousands of local and out-of-state couples show up at the headquarters.

San Diego County plans expanded hours and a new telephone-appointment line. Gregory Smith, the San Diego assessor-recorder-county-clerk, says he expects to issue around 200 marriage licenses Tuesday — nearly three times as many as usual.

Churches and other venues were gearing up, too. Nearly all of the weekends until the fall are booked for wedding ceremonies at the Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church in Pasadena, where 10 gay couples will be wed this summer.

In West Hollywood Park, a popular location for city events that was chosen for its beauty, couples were planning to line up Monday evening to secure a spot in line for six marriage cabanas set up for civil ceremonies, said Tamara White, a West Hollywood official.

Rose Greene and Helena Ruffin will be among them. Together for 16 years, Ms. Greene, 61, and Ms. Ruffin, 50, will head to West Hollywood Park at 8 a.m. Tuesday to stand in line. A friend — a retired judge — will officiate. Then they'll head to a small restaurant for celebratory mimosas. "We've been waiting to do this for so long that we don't need all of the pomp and circumstance," says Ms. Greene.

Some opposition groups said they will be speaking about limiting marriage to between a man and a woman Tuesday but aren't organizing mass protests. Brian Brown, executive director of National Organization for Marriage, California — a sponsor of the November ballot measure seeking to make same-sex marriage unconstitutional — said he will be speaking in San Diego about the issue but he didn't want to upset individuals who are marrying Tuesday. Protesters did show up outside San Francisco City Hall Monday night, one with a sign that read: "Jesus said to go and sin no more."

Both sides are raising money for the fight over the November ballot measure. Supporters of the initiative have said they anticipate raising between \$10 million to \$20 million for that fight, according to Geoff Kors, executive director of Equality California, a group fighting the November initiative. Gay-rights activists have vowed to match them dollar for dollar.

In Sonoma County, Chris Lechman, 37, and Mark Gren, 42, received a marriage certificate just after 5:00 p.m. Monday from County Clerk Janice Atkinson — 15 years to the day after the two met.

"We already looked at ourselves as married, but we're very happy that the state is going to recognize us as equals with our [straight] colleagues and co-workers and friends," Mr. Lechman said.

Stu Woo contributed to this article.