

Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

Online & Print
Willits Weekly
A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits
Donations Accepted Edition No. 436 Thursday, January 27, 2022

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City council honors Edie Ceccarelli

The Willits City Council at their meeting this week celebrated Edith Ceccarelli's 114th Birthday with a special proclamation "to acknowledge and honor you as you turn 114 years young. We would officially like to recognize that you have had the privilege of celebrating the most Birthdays in Mendocino County."

Edith Recagno Keenan Ceccarelli, who was born February 5, 1908, in Willits, is among a handful of the oldest people living in the United States and is considered the oldest California resident living who was born in the Golden State.

The city council proclamation noted the community would be helping Willits' famed super-centenarian celebrate her special day with a drive-by parade on Saturday, February 5.

Read the rest of **Edie**
Over on Page 11

Sheriff's Office reports new COVID outbreak at jail

By Lt. John Bednar, for MCSO

January 21, 2022 – The Mendocino County Jail has had an outbreak of COVID-19 amongst the inmate population and staff.

The Sheriff's Office has continued to utilize personal protective equipment for jail staff as well as abided by all mandates and direction from the Centers for Disease Control, Cal-OSHA and the Mendocino County Public Health officer.

Despite our best efforts, COVID-19 cases are on the rise in the jail. Some of the difficulties in preventing the spread are the open-air design of the aging jail facility, the constant turnover of inmates in custody, and the rise in COVID-positive arrestees being brought into the facility.

In the last two weeks, the jail has seen 62 cases of COVID-19 among the inmates. Several inmates have recovered in custody, while some others have been released by the courts and returned home to finish their isolation period.

The current number of cases in the jail is 45.

As part of the safety procedures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the jail, all incoming arrestees are tested upon entry into the facility. Once booked into custody, arrestees are

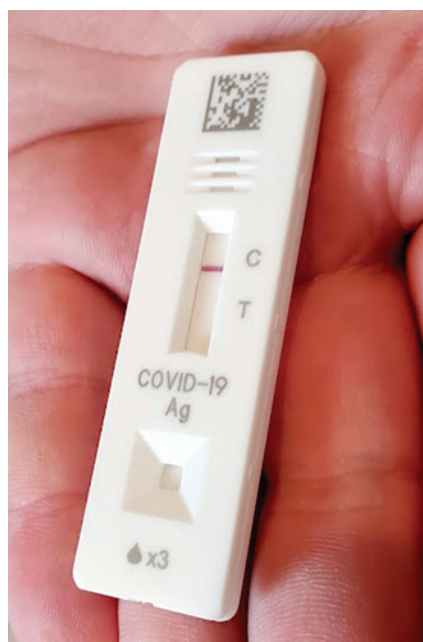
Read the rest of **Jail**
Over on Page 10



At top: David Robi, letter carrier for the United States Postal Service, will be one of those out delivering COVID tests to the residences of those who order. Above: The USPS will help get free tests out to homes free of charge.

Below, left: Home tests are simple to use and include a swab, solution and test pad. Photo by Matthew Jennison

Below, right: A line only by the "C" symbol indicates a negative COVID result.



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Supes fund new PHF facility in Ukiah

Forrest Glyer
Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

On Tuesday the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors approved a plan to spend just over \$19.5 million on the construction of a lockdown psychiatric health facility (PHF) on Whitmore Lane in Ukiah.

Once completed, the location will be the only PHF in the county, alleviating the need to send people out of the county who are assigned to be in such a facility, a problem which the county has dealt with for many years.

While previous discussions of turning the building on Whitmore into a PHF unit focused on just renovating the roof, for this new plan the entire building

Read the rest of **PHF**
Over on Page 10

Case numbers up in latest COVID surge

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
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COVID case numbers have dramatically increased over the past three weeks, Mendocino County Public Health Officer Andy Coren told the board of supervisors Tuesday. "We're reaching 141.5 cases per 100,000 per day in our county," Dr. Coren said, "which is almost three times our [previous] highest daily rates during this pandemic."

He noted, as he has before, these numbers were from "PCR tests only, but we know that there are hundreds more positive rapid antigen tests at the schools and at home. The test positivity [rate] is up to 22.5 percent."

Hospitalizations also accelerated last week, Coren said, "with 20 in Mendocino hospitals today, and no ICU beds available." He added that the local hospitals and skilled nursing facilities are being "severely challenged by nursing shortages due to the outbreaks and attrition."

He announced Mendocino County "currently [has] seven outbreaks ... and several clusters under watch."

Coren updated the total number of deaths attributed to COVID in Mendocino County to 113 local residents, "and that number will increase over the next

Read the rest of **COVID**
Over on Page 10

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Above, from left: The final incarnation of the Little Lake Firehouse is an eye-catching sight. The engine bay is finally filled with equipment that is ready to go out on calls. At right: Administrative Assistant Michelle Schnitzius and Little Lake Fire District board member Skip Lucier pose for a photo in the turnout room.

Settled In

Little Lake Firehouse is finally occupied and ready to respond to emergencies – now it just needs a new chief

After years and years of plans, attempted bonds, architectural concepts, and a ton of red tape, Willits finally has a working, up-to-date, functional firehouse. This state-of-the-art edifice is designed to last at least 50 years and provide the citizens of Little Lake Valley with advanced safety, rapid response, and the ability to meet a plethora of emergencies.

All it needs now is a fire chief and at least a couple more full or part time firefighters on the payroll. According to Skip Lucier, board member of the Little Lake Fire District, the new chief will be chosen, hopefully, in March or April. In the meantime, the trio of administrators and firefighters will continue to respond to calls and handle the paperwork involved with the process. Administrative Assistant Michelle Schnitzius, Deputy Chief John Thomen, and Training Chief Eric Alvarez are the current full-time paid staff and are absorbing the duties of chief until the replacement for the departed chief, Chris Wilkes, can be found.

Having recently moved in, with the generous assistance of 101 Trailers who lent them a trailer, the crew has moved their equipment and paperwork to the new location at 74 East Commercial Street, the site of the old dilapidated, leaky firehouse that had stood as city hall, the police department, the jail, and the fire department for many years in the history of Willits. Their current challenge is finding the proper spaces for the equipment, organizing for

efficiency and quick deployment, and finding the mostly minor glitches in the construction and design, as can be expected in a new building.

From her brightly sun-lit office in the front of the building, Schnitzius spoke about what remains to be done in the process of claiming the building as their own. "I imagine we'll be finding little things that need to be fixed or adjusted for the next year or so," she said after explaining how her desk doesn't quite fit the space and blocks off the window. But, "overall, everything has been amazing," she said with obvious relief that the construction was finally done and they could get out of the secondary station on Baechtel Road.

"We had some computer issues," she continued, referring to some difficulties connecting their server. "We're still getting that worked on. Some things were done incorrectly. It's much better now. I think it's working, but the last couple weeks the phone lines weren't functioning well, so we weren't getting the calls. The emergency calls come in no matter."

Schnitzius, Thomen and Alvarez are looking forward to speaking with the new chief candidates to see which one would be the better fit for the "family." "The search for a new chief is proceeding," said Schnitzius. "We're just taking our time


Read the rest of Firehouse Over on Page 13

Photos by Mathew Caine




At right, from top: Deputy Fire Chief John Thomen already has his office looking lived in. A well-equipped kitchen is available to the firefighters and some civic groups. The view from above the engine bay. At far left: Administrative Assistant Michelle Schnitzius stands at the entrance to her front office. At left: A young birthday firefighter gets to sit in the cab of one of the tenders.

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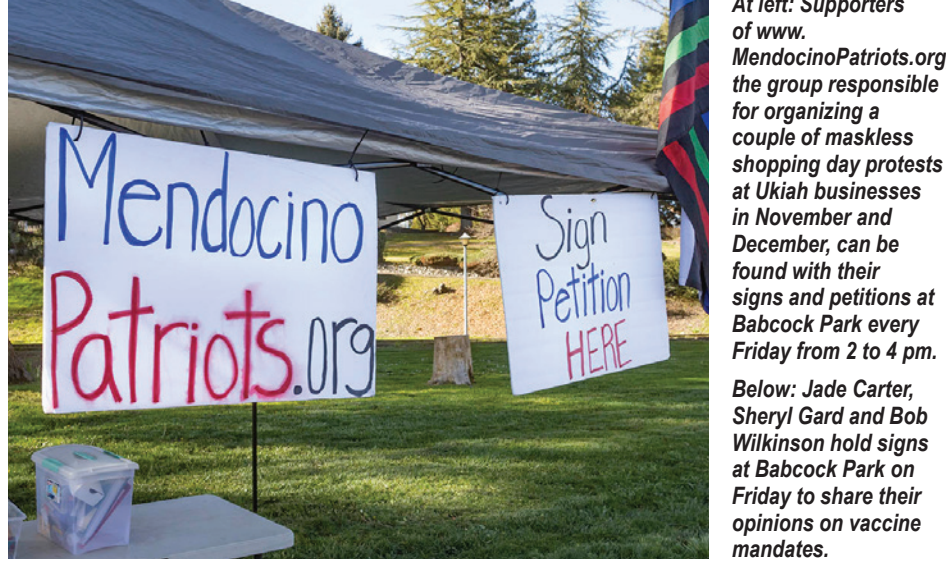
Community members hold up signs at Babcock Park to show their opposition to COVID-19 mandates

Every Friday, from 2 to 4 pm, they can be seen at Babcock Park, holding their signs that espouse their opposition to vaccine mandates and their love of personal freedom to make their own choices relating to masking and inoculations. They are a small group, but judging from the number of supportive honks from passing cars, they enjoy a measure of appreciation from the community.

"This is about freedom to choose," said organizer Jade Carter. "I honestly don't care if you're vaxxed or unvaxxed. The point is,

like my sign says: freedom to choose." However, in speaking with the four or five participants and the websites which they offer, they do not believe in the efficacy of or the statistics that can be found about the effectiveness of preventative measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.

They are, however, quite willing to speak without animus with anyone who wishes to engage in conversation. In addition to the Babcock Park location in front of the old Howard Hospital, they can be seen in front of the Ukiah courthouse from 4 to 6 pm on Fridays after they are done in Willits.



At left: Supporters of www.MendocinoPatriots.org, the group responsible for organizing a couple of maskless shopping day protests at Ukiah businesses in November and December, can be found with their signs and petitions at Babcock Park every Friday from 2 to 4 pm. Below: Jade Carter, Sheryl Gard and Bob Wilkinson hold signs at Babcock Park on Friday to share their opinions on vaccine mandates.



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Above, left: Jade Carter, Sheryl Gard and Bob Wilkinson hold signs, greet passers-by, and let their opinions on vaccine mandates be known. Above, right: Erin peeks out from behind two of her signs.

Photos by Mathew Caine

SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

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will be demolished and then rebuilt in order to more easily conform to the strict codes and regulations required of a PHF.

The supervisors unanimously approved the plan after hearing a presentation from Nacht & Lewis consultant Eric Fadness whose company had done a feasibility study of the location, as well as input from County Behavioral Health Director Janine Miller and General Services Agency Director Janelle Rau.

After going over a few different options, both Miller and Fadness agreed that the best plan moving forward was "Option 2" – to demolish and then rebuild the facility.

Fadness said they had come to this conclusion after meeting and discussing the different options with community stakeholders, County Behavioral Health, the Mendocino County Executive Office, General Services Administration Facilities and Fleet Division, and other consultants including LACO, AECOM and the Telecare Corporation.

For the other possibilities presented, "Option 1" was to partially remodel and renovate the Whitmore building, which Fadness gave an estimated price tag of around \$19.1 million.

"Option 3" was for the county to seek out another property for a PHF unit, which Fadness said could eventually cost \$22 million, though he acknowledged that they did not yet have a specific site to use for that plan.

He said that for Option 2, which the board approved Tuesday, the project should take about 38 months to complete.

The 16-bed PHF property is around 13,000 square feet in size, which will include a "buffer" area along the outside of the building to provide some space between the facility and the neighbors nearby.

"The benefit of not using the entire property is you provide buffers around the property," said Fadness, "and especially with psychiatric health facilities that's important to maintain buffers from the public ways. And not only for controlling sound, but also to keep people away from the building – sight and sound separation."

Director Miller also mentioned another benefit of having such a large amount of space, saying that it could accommodate court hearings for patients if necessary.

"We added space knowing that our court wanted to be able to potentially do online or in-person court at the facility and not have to have individuals brought to the court," she said.

Following a suggestion by Miller, the supervisors agreed that the facility should be built to function as a "Super PHF," meaning that Medicare patients will be accepted there, in addition to those on MediCal and private insurance.

Miller said that allowing for Medicare patients would add to the operational costs, but she felt it would be worth it in order to provide service to as many people locally as they could.

Funding from Measure B, the Mental Health Treatment sales tax measure passed by county voters in 2017, will be the primary source of funding for both the construction and operational costs of the project.

The Whitmore Lane building was purchased by the county in August of 2020 using \$2.2 million of federal CARES Act funding, with the intended purpose of initially having it available as a quarantine center during the COVID pandemic.

However, the building was soon found to need major roof repairs and other

upgrades.

The building there was constructed in 1965, and Fadness cited numerous problems in his report which would need upgrades to function as a PHF if the county chose to just remodel.

In addition to the roof leakage and poor drainage due to its flat design, the report said the building would need a "complete replacement of all building systems due to age," as well as changes to make the building compliant with the American Disabilities Act.

It also would need changes to assure "fire and life safety," including switching out the windows to "impact resistant glass," removing "ligatures" and adjusting fixtures to "reduce suicide risk."

Third District Supervisor John Haschak asked if wouldn't be wiser to pursue the option of finding a different location for a PHF in the county, and use the Whitmore Lane building for something it could be more easily retrofitted for.

The Whitmore location currently has a license to be used as a "skilled nursing facility," but with their vote on Tuesday the board agreed to relinquish this license and move towards creating a PHF there.

"Part of the consideration that was given in the stakeholders team were the timelines," GSA Director Rau said in response to Haschak. "And the timeline to acquire a property or some other type of property that would be suitable for this would again extend the timeline that we're looking at to build it. You're looking at relatively the same timeline for construction, but for site acquisition you could be anywhere from 6 to 12 months to find the right site that would meet all of the requirements. So that was a considering factor when we were looking at each of these potential options."

Fadness put an even longer timeline on finding a new location and building a PHF there, saying it could push the project's finish date to "up to 60 months" in total.

In addition to the timeline, the report from Nacht & Lewis listed some other criteria used to choose the best option moving forward for the PHF. These included "community impact, constructability, functionality, cost effectiveness, maintainability, sustainability and risk of cost increase."

Board of Supervisors Chair Ted Williams said the risk of the costs increasing was one of the reasons he was voting in favor of the plan.

"I'm going to support this because it may not be a perfect plan, but if we kick this down the road and continue studying, our Measure B savings will be eroded away by inflation," he said. "And I don't want to get us in that position where we can [only] afford two-thirds of a PHF. It looks like this is a project we can afford, and I think the community wants to see action. They want to see the facility constructed and open, and see the board making the most of their tax dollars."

Haschak asked Miller about how certain the board could be that the project was affordable using Measure B money.

Miller responded that the budget they put forward was essentially a four-year plan, paying for the construction of the PHF as well as some of the initial service costs, at which point the county could reevaluate whether the Measure B funds and money received through the various insurance types would continue to pay for the operation costs.

"We're estimating that we'd need \$1.5-\$2 million to augment the additional funding through what we would receive through insurance costs," she said of the four-year

plan. "The construction costs I think we're fine on. I think we have a deep amount of money sitting there...."

"The service costs were where we really wanted to make sure we could long-term fund the project, and that was our biggest concern when we looked at it from a budget perspective."

The board unanimously approved moving forward with constructing the new facility at Whitmore Lane, and Second District Supervisor Maureen Mulheren said she hoped that the community seeing a properly functioning PHF would alleviate some of the "not in my backyard" attitudes that many seem to have towards such mental health facilities.

"I just really wanted to thank the team for working on this," she said. "I understand that there's still a lot of questions that we might have, but our community has really been expecting this and wanting this to move forward. I especially appreciated the Option 3, and the conversation that I'm sure the stakeholders had about NIMBYism and what that looks like in our community. And what I really hope is that after this facility is built and people see it operating functionally that that – along with all the other work that Measure B is doing, the Measure B Committee, and that [the National Alliance on Mental Illness] is doing, and that our Behavioral Health Department is doing – we can try to reduce some of the stigma that comes with mental illness."

"And I hope that as the facility is being built out, we can continue to have those community conversations about how necessary this is," she continued. "And I really appreciate the idea of having a Super PHF because we know that not only people who have MediCal have mental illness, and that is another huge stigma reduction that we need to have in this community. So I just wanted to say I appreciate all of the work that's gone into this proposal."

CEO vs CEO

With the county Chief Executive Officer Carmel Angelo set to retire in March, on Tuesday the board discussed the possibility of switching over to a county advisory officer (CAO) model once she retires.

However, after some discussion, the supervisors decided to push the decision off for a month while they evaluate which model would be best for the county.

While the differences between having a CEO or CAO can be subtle in language, generally a CEO is given more leeway than a CAO to take action while overseeing the various departments in the county.

For example, under the proposed CEO ordinance put forth to the board on Tuesday, a county CEO can "appoint, transfer, discipline, suspend or dismiss, as appropriate, any non-elected department head who is not required to be appointed by the Board of Supervisors, after meet and confer with the Board of Supervisors."

The CAO ordinance, on the other hand, states that the job of that position is to "evaluate departmental and other requests of the Board of Supervisors," and to "assist the Board of Supervisors with the board's responsibility to recruit, appoint and evaluate board-appointed department heads in conformity with board policies and procedures."

Haschak said that from what he's gathered public opinion in the county is on the side of switching to the CAO model, but he still was uncertain of what would help the board and county government function best.

"I think that when we look at this, if we

ask the public what they would want, they'd probably vote 90 percent for a CAO," he said. "Whether that's the correct way to go or not, that's something that we need to decide. I think what the public really wants is to know the relationship between the board and the CEO or CAO and the department heads, and to make sure that the public will be being heard and that the county is doing what the public wants. And so how do we make that relationship between those entities as responsive as possible?"

"As far as a CAO, if the board were to evaluate and hire and fire all the department heads, we would be spending a lot of time on that," he continued. "And we wouldn't be able to do the public work that we need to be doing. I think a lot of that is better left to a CEO or some administrator who's going to handle that better than we do as a five-member body."

First District Supervisor Glenn McGourty said that he had worked with both a CEO and CAO model, and felt that either could work well depending on the approach.

"The CEO vs. CAO system isn't really as important as the kind of relationship you have with the person who is paid to lead the county," he said. "And that's absolutely critical that you have someone you can trust and you can work with well.... I don't think that one system is inherently better than the other, but I feel like this is a good point because we'll have the opportunity for new leadership. This is a good time for us to carefully evaluate what we're going to do and have a really good discussion with the board about where we want to be and where we want to take Mendocino County government," he said.

"And ultimately we want to be responsive to our constituents," McGourty continued. "We want to be able to help them when we have an issue, we want to be transparent so everything is out in the open. I think we're all tired of all the criticism we get and all the gaslighting about how we're not responsive, and we don't run our own county government."

"And I think the other thing we're missing is a public information channel that allows us to really control the discussion sometimes when things are kind of careening out of control in the court of public opinion. I think we need to take a more assertive and affirmative approach to communicating what's actually going on."

Mulheren and CEO Angelo both said they supported the county continuing with a CEO model, but in the end the board went with Haschak's suggestion to delay the vote.

"Why don't we bring this back in about a month?" asked Haschak. "And we look at the [organization] chart, we look at the [Office of Emergency Services], we look at the Clerk of the Board and how it might fit into whichever way we go with the CAO/CEO.... So I would say let's look comprehensively at what we're doing and bring that back as an agenda item in about a month."

Fourth District Supervisor Dan Gjerde said he was OK with this move, pointing out that the board had taken action to appoint county Assistant CEO Darcie Antle as temporary CEO on March 20 once Angelo retires, so there wasn't as urgent of a need to make a decision on the matter.

Angelo had originally planned to retire in October, but decided to do so sooner due to a serious illness of a family member.

She has been the CEO of Mendocino County since 2010, and worked as the county's director of Health and Human Services since 2007.

U.S. Forest Service: 'Confronting the Wildfire Crisis'

USDA Press Release – On January 18, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Forest Service Chief Randy Moore launched a comprehensive response to the nation's growing wildfire crisis – "Confronting the Wildfire Crisis: A Strategy for Protecting Communities and Improving Resilience in America's Forests."

The strategy outlines the need to significantly increase fuels and forest health treatments to address the escalating crisis of wildfire danger that threatens millions of acres and numerous communities across the United States.

The Forest Service will work with other federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior, and with Tribes, states, local communities, private landowners, and other partners to focus fuels and forest health treatments more strategically and at the scale of the problem, based on the best available science.

The strategy highlights new research on what Forest Service scientists identified as high risk "firesheds" – large, forested landscapes with a high likelihood that an ignition could expose homes, communities, infrastructure and natural resources to wildfire. Firesheds, typically about 250,000 acres in size, are mapped to match the scale of community exposure to wildfire.

The Forest Service will use this risk-based information to engage with partners and create shared priorities for landscape-scale work, to equitably and meaningfully change the trajectory of risk for people, communities and natural resources, including areas important for water, carbon and wildlife.

The groundwork in this new strategy will begin in areas identified as being at the highest risk, based on community exposure. Additional high risk areas for water and other values are being identified. Some of the highest risk areas based on community exposure include the Pacific Northwest, the Sierra Nevada Range in California, the front range in Colorado, and the Southwest.

The strategy calls for the Forest Service to treat up to an additional 20 million acres on national forests and grasslands and support treatment of up to an additional 30 million acres of other federal, state, Tribal, private and family lands. Fuels and forest health treatments, including the use of prescribed fire and thinning to reduce hazardous fuels, will be complemented by investments in fire-adapted communities and work to address post-fire risks, recovery and reforestation.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides nearly \$3 billion to reduce hazardous fuels and restore America's forests and grasslands, along with investments in fire-adapted communities and post-fire reforestation. Funds will be used to begin implementing this critical work.

In the past 20 years, many states have had record catastrophic wildfires, harming people, communities and natural resources and causing billions of dollars in damage. In 2020, Coloradans saw all three of their largest fires on record. The running 5-year average number of structures destroyed by wildfires each year rose from 2,873 in 2014 to 12,255 in 2020 – a fourfold increase in just six years.

"The negative impacts of today's largest wildfires far outpace the scale of efforts to protect homes, communities and natural resources," said Vilsack. "Our experts expect the trend will only worsen with the effects of a changing climate, so working together toward common goals across boundaries and jurisdictions is essential to the future of these landscapes and the people who live there."

"We already have the tools, the knowledge and the partnerships in place to begin this work in many of our national forests and grasslands, and now we have funding that will allow us to build on the research and the lessons learned to address this wildfire crisis facing many of our communities," said Moore. "We want to thank Congress, the President and the American people for entrusting us to do this important work."

The Forest Service remains committed to sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of all of America's forests. Visit the Forest Service website to view the full strategy: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Confronting-Wildfire-Crisis.pdf>

Caltrans approves use of low-carbon cement to help combat climate change

Submitted by Caltrans HQ, Sacramento

Caltrans announced this week it is approving the use of low-carbon cement to help reduce the carbon footprint of California's transportation system. By advancing the use of portland limestone cement (PLC), Caltrans' road construction and maintenance projects can generate less carbon dioxide – the primary greenhouse gas contributing to global warming and climate change – with the same high performance standards at a slightly lower cost.

"Using low-carbon cement can cut Caltrans' concrete-related carbon dioxide emissions annually by up to 10 percent," said Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin in the January 25 press release. "This is a big step in supporting California's efforts to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045."

Cement is typically produced by mining, grinding and heating limestone in industrial kilns to temperatures as high as 2,820 degrees Fahrenheit (1,550 degrees Celsius). The process alters the rock's chemistry and creates "clinker" – the basic component in nearly all types of cement – but also generates large quantities of carbon dioxide. PLC contains less clinker.

In 2017 alone, Caltrans used 325,000 tons of cement to upgrade the state highway system. Switching to low-carbon cement has the potential to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 28,000 tons a year – the equivalent of removing more than 6,000 cars off the road.

Caltrans expects that the reduced energy needs associated with PLC production will make the cost similar or slightly less when compared to regular cement.

The new low-carbon cement standards are based on Caltrans-funded research conducted at Oregon State University, which concluded that PLC is equally suitable for Caltrans' construction projects as ordinary cement with a reduced carbon footprint.

Throughout the review process, Caltrans worked closely with its partners at the California Air Resources Board and industry experts and stakeholders, such as the California Construction and Industrial Materials Association and the California Nevada Cement Association, to draft the new standard specifications.

In 2010, Caltrans changed its concrete standard specifications to increase the use of sustainable alternatives in transportation projects, an initiative that helped spur a shift in concrete production throughout the state. Caltrans will continue to work with the California Air Resources Board to reach the state's goal and achieve net-zero emissions from the cement sector by 2045.

The rest of

Memorial

From Page 2

newly minted chaplains who had met at the Army Chaplains School, were on the ship with approximately 900 military and crew heading to Europe for their first assignment.

After the torpedoing of their ship, the chaplains stayed on deck to offer comfort and help to those they were shipping over with. They gave their

places on the lifeboats, gloves and life vests. They were seen on deck praying together as the ship's bow lifted into the air and then slid under the water.

All of our community are invited to attend this memorial service. Light refreshments will be served after. COVID protocols as outlined by the county will be in place.

To join in the parade – all are welcome – here is the route: Go straight at stop sign of Haehl Creek Drive and Grove Street. Then take a left on Grove Street. and continue to Edie's address of 414 Grove Street. which will be on your right hand side.

Help celebrate by driving through with a decorated car (signs, streamers, balloons, flags). Wave as you pass her house to wish her a Happy Birthday!

This event is hosted by the Holy Spirit Residential Care Home and the Frank R. Howard Foundation.

PROCLAMATION

A 2022 Proclamation of the Willits City Council

RECOGNIZING

Edith Recagno Keenan Ceccarelli

As ‘114’ Years Young

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of the Willits City Council to acknowledge and honor you as you turn 114 years young. We would officially like to recognize that you have had the privilege of celebrating the most Birthdays in Mendocino County. Born in Willits, California on February 5th, 1908; and

WHEREAS, the community of Willits join you in helping you celebrate your special day with a drive-by parade on February 5th. This will be a truly memorable event, as friends and loved ones extend their love, respect, and honor you on your special day. Your lifelong love of people has enriched all those whose lives you have touched over your lifetime; and

WHEREAS, at the age of 114 you continue to “wine” and dine, dress to the nine’s, and love the sounds of the big band music each and every day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Saprina Rodriguez, Mayor of the City of Willits, along with Vice Mayor Greta Kanne, and Council Members, Larry Stranske, Gerardo Gonzalez, and Madge Strong, do hereby extend our collective heartfelt congratulations to you Edie Ceccarelli in wishing you a very Happy Birthday.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Seal of the CITY OF WILLITS to be affixed this 26th day of January, 2022.

SAPRINA RODRIGUEZ, Mayor

ATTEST: City Council of the City of Willits

The rest of

Boule

From Page 3

about strategies, getting excited by people's plays, and telling or hearing pétanque tales.

Through the years the group has had many different people join and create teams to play on the Willits' pétanque terrain across from the skate park. "We had the Boules Boys, the Snap Dragons, and the Boulini Sisters with Jean Chavez, Donna d'Terra and Nancy McHone," told Schindel. The current group calls themselves the Willits Boules.

These friends and seasoned pétanque players have been at it for a long time and continue to sharpen their throws and strategies while immersing themselves in the fun of pétanque. Each person has at least one skill and strategy that makes them a valuable player. Their teams seem to be randomly chosen, yet each player knows the skill sets of the others. It seems they try to be evenly balanced, which enriches everyone's experience.

Schindel showed a new sign: "VIENS ET JOUE" – "Come and Play" which pretty much sums up the tone of the current Willits Boules team.

For more French words and pronunciations and so much more, do give pétanque a try, especially if you like boule games. See you there!

The Willits Boules meet every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday at 2 pm. The playing field is located on Commercial Street across from the Willits Skate Park. Call Tim Gregory for updated times and more information: 707-318-9189.

The rest of

Wellness

From Page 2

How is it, that we can mean something with every ounce of our being and even take steps toward creating positive change only to lose motivation and revert right back to our old ways?

Let me share a little secret about motivation to change. Ambivalence is defined as “the state of having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone.” As you can see, it's a normal part of the change process.

When a person struggles with a substance use disorder, the process is the same. They want to change and they think about changing. They swear up and down they'll never use again, only to find themselves intoxicated by the end of the day.

Change is not a linear process, but rather it is an unkept, messy, zigzag of an ordeal. However, there are definite stages where a person is marked to have distinct behaviors and activities. It goes as follows:

Precontemplation: I have no idea I have a problem. This behavior has not caused me to consider the need to change.

Contemplation: I'm beginning to think this behavior might be problematic. People in my life seem to mention it to me, but I'm not ready to do anything about it.

Preparation: This is the research phase – seeing what resources are available and identifying budgeting options.

Action: In the case of the gym, we're signed up and going. Maybe we even researched personal trainers. For a person with substance use, they might have attended a recovery meeting or engaged with a doctor.

Maintenance: When a person finally hits their stride and the new behavior feels like second nature, they have entered the maintenance stage. This is the space where new habits become ingrained and integrated into one's being.



Above: Several patrons enjoy dine-in lunch at the Senior Center on Monday.

Photos by Mathew Caine

Assistance Needed

Now that the Willits Harrah Senior Center is open again for lunch, exercise classes, and support programs, they are in desperate need of volunteers

The Willits Harrah Senior Center, at 1501 Baechtel Road, is open, as much as is safe and reasonable. A dine-in lunch, from 12 to 12:45 pm, is now being served, with tasty and healthy fares in an easily distanced manner, with the requirement that attendees be vaccinated.

Mathew Caine
Features Writer
mathew@willitsweekly.com

Other services that can be accessed are the Housing Assistance Program under the experienced eye of Francis Niedermeyer and the Outreach Program with Serena Alexi. Exercise class is every morning at 9 am with simple chair exercises. All are done with the utmost caution and realization of the current COVID status and protocols. Alexi is currently working with the Willits Chamber of Commerce, through the sponsorship of the Mendocino Community Foundation, to provide and train isolated seniors with computer tablets through which they can connect with friends and family.

In addition, the facility is available for rental for safely run events. Zoom support groups include the Physical Challenges Support Group and the Parkinson's Support Group. The computer lab will be available as soon as the center can find a volunteer to teach the class.

The previously scheduled bingo event has been cancelled for now due to lack of the ability to provide safety protocols for the gathering. The pancake breakfast may revert to a drive-through meal. Details will be announced soon.

The Senior Center is in need of volunteers to be able to continue providing as many of their excellent services as possible during these trying times. For those who have the time, energy and desire to be of service, please call 459-6826 to speak with one of the staff.

COLUMN | AT THE MOVIES

'West Side Story'

The Story: Steven Spielberg's remake of the brilliant Leonard Bernstein musical. It's usually



Dan Essman
Columnist

described as "Romeo and Juliet" in the New York ghetto, a corner of the City

trashed by time, social neglect, ethnic strife, and gang warfare. Young Tony (Angel Elgort), of Polish descent, is an earnest young man recently out of prison and trying to escape his membership in the Jets, an Anglo street gang. Maria (Rachel Zegler) is a beautiful and innocent young woman from Puerto Rico. Her brother Bernardo is proud and macho, he leads the Sharks, a Puerto Rican gang.

There's a big noisy party. It's there that Tony and Maria see each other for the first time across the crowded dance floor. Love at first sight, and "sorry, not sorry" to everyone and

anyone telling them "No. Puerto Ricans and Anglos can't mix. Can't love."

My Thoughts: What a flick! True love versus bonehead racism. This is a great story with famous love songs of longing and hope. Spielberg's dynamic camera and editing goes way beyond primo to: So good you just gotta be kidding! Angel Elgort can dance. So graceful. So athletic. And Rachel Zegler sings "One hand! One heart!" liltily. And with such hope and pathos.

Even knowing the movie's end was inevitable, I wanted, somehow, that it would be different. Of course, no. But this new version proved to me that a brilliantly made, rippingly sad love story still can make me weep in the dark at the movie house. Proved I ain't dead. It's a great feeling.

Parents: Two hours and 30 minutes of song, dance, anger and violence, and especially romantic love. And you know your kids. What they will enjoy. Special note: There is a brief but difficult scene of a woman being threatened by a street gang.

Willitsian Daniel Essman prefers his reality attenuated by the wisdom of the imagination.



Above, left: Senior Center chief cook Nancy Middleton prepares the lunch fare behind the "open" sign. Above, right: Bill Barker volunteers by serving drinks at the Senior Center lunch. Below: Monday's lunch was an artistically presented wet burrito.



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