

Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

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A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits
Donations Accepted Edition No. 355 Thursday, May 21, 2020

Supes balk at hiring new health officer

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

In a closed session meeting that took place at the end of the May 19 board meeting, the board of supervisors determined not to hire Dr. Joseph Iser as the county's interim public health officer, as had been announced by the county's executive office on May 5, but to instead appeal to the State of California for mutual aid.

According to county CEO Carmel Angelo, that means the county will ask the state either to find the county a qualified public health officer or a person with the

Read the rest of
Health officer
Over on Page 13

Supes to consider repeal of county pot ordinance

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
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Although blocked and rebuffed by board of supervisors Chair John Haschak, Second District Supervisor John McCowen on Tuesday succeeded in setting a date for discussing what would possibly be his most far-reaching agenda item yet – a proposal to repeal Mendocino County's cannabis cultivation ordinance.

After a long and, at times, acrimonious discussion, a board majority compelled a reluctant Haschak to agree to schedule consideration of the item for June 10. Voicing support for the move were

Read the rest of
Repeal
Over on Page 6

Updates from Willits city manager

Forrest Glycer
Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

In an eventful week of changes for the shelter-in-place rules for Mendocino County and the State of California, Willits City Manager Stephanie Garrabrant-Sierra has put up several updates on the city's website and Facebook page regarding what it all means for local residents and businesses.

In late breaking news Wednesday, the city manager posted: "Today [May 20] the City of Willits held a surveillance testing at the Senior Center. This

Read the rest of
Updates
Over on Page 6



Above: Willits Frontier Days will be different this year, unfortunately, as needing to postpone the regular 4th of July activities is necessary for remaining in compliance with the federal, state, and local guidelines and orders. A rodeo is hoped to be held in October, if able by then, and will allow Willits Frontier Days to keep its title of "Longest Continuous Running Rodeo in California."

Willits Frontier Days makes hard decision

WFD board cancels parade and other annual events to be health code compliant, still hopes to hold October rodeo

"Nothing hurts me worse than to not have our regular 4th of July," said Willits Frontier Days past president and long-time festivities participant Lee Persico. "I've been riding in the parade every year since I was 6 months old, that's 84 years. But this year, it's just going to have to be different."

Persico shares sentiments with the entire Willits Frontier Days board who had to make the hard decision last week at their May board meeting to go ahead and cancel the parade, hometown celebration, horse show, carnival, anthem contest and other usual activities in order to remain compliant with the health codes and local, state and federal guidelines.

The rodeo, however, has been officially postponed, allowing the group to hope things change enough in 2020 to allow the Ranch Rodeo event, usually held in October, to take place, and therefore keeping the coveted "Longest Continuous Running Rodeo in California" title accurate.

"This is not what any of us want, or wanted to have to do," said Marcy Barry, current Willits Frontier Days vice president. "But we have to. We have to remain compliant under the order, and we will not jeopardize our future events, the use of the grounds, or our ability to get insurance or permits to try and force this to happen this year. It's a real bummer, but it is just what we have to do."

Ignoring the in-place orders and guidelines could put the future of the events entirely at risk. No agency is going to go along with disobeying the orders, and without issuance of a Caltrans permit to close the road, or ABC license to serve alcohol, or general liability insurance for the grounds, and staff, spectator and contestant safety, Willits Frontier Days could be sued into oblivion for any number of probable problems ... and that's just not wise or reasonable.

"It's not just Willits who is experiencing these event cancellations," reminded Persico. "This event is a massive draw for people all around the state and country, and bringing them here to all be close to one another during this time is irresponsible. There's not even motel rooms available for people to stay in if they did come, they're closed too. I am a part of several horseback trail riding groups who are out in the open, camp out, don't see others for days on end, and even those events are being cancelled."

Persico went on to point out how all of the other state rodeos, events, and fairs have also been cancelled for several of the same concerns shared by the board of Willits Frontier Days.

"The Olympics have even postponed," said Persico. "It would be pound wise and penny foolish to buck the system and try and hold an event during this time. The potential for someone to come here, get people sick, and the lawsuits that would follow made the board have no choice but to reluctantly take this hard position. No other big events are being put on – people need to pay attention to what's going on elsewhere and realize that this is for the best interest of all involved."

"We want to do what we can to get the community open as fast as we can," said Barry. "Part of this is cancelling this year's 4th of July events. We were very careful to say 'postpone' as far as the rodeo was concerned, however, we all want to ensure our title remains for the longest rodeo, but we just can't hold the rest of the events at this time."

In the highly unlikely event that things somehow drastically change come July 4, and everyone will be able to congregate without restrictions, the amount of advance planning needed to take place to put all 17 Willits Frontier Days events together is impossible at the last minute. A decision had to be made now.

Forging ahead and being charged for insurance policies, agreements with stock contractors, purses for the rodeo events, ordering buckles, a Sweetheart saddle, printing a program, buying radio time, not to mention mundane things like securing port-a-potties and dumpsters, all takes money that would not be recouped without an event.

"It would be like writing a check and throwing it into the wind," said Persico. "It would be a huge waste and hit to the bank account, especially without alcohol sales at or ticket sales in advance of the events."

The actual 4th of July isn't cancelled, remember. This year will just involve a different way to celebrate the holiday. Have a barbecue at your home. Visit the cemeteries and learn about the veterans who lived in the area and served our country. Make a donation to the American Legion. Make a video to stream of your family raising an American flag and saying the Pledge of Allegiance in unison. Send off your voter registration card. Bake an apple pie.

We can all get through this as a community. It's a strange year. True. But if we can all please take a breath, calm down, be nice to one another, do what's asked of us and try and follow the rules, hopefully it will all be over sooner than it would have been able to be otherwise ... and that's really what's everyone wants.

City Council talks enforcement of COVID rules

Forrest Glycer
Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

At the May 13 Willits City Council teleconference meeting, Willits Police Department interim Chief Gregory Allen spoke at length about enforcement of shelter in place and social distancing rules in Willits.

He emphasized that the department has been utilizing a strategy of education and communication with businesses and others in the community thus far, and avoiding issuing citations or

Read the rest of
Rules
Over on Page 15

'Unique' graduation is on at WHS

Joanne Moore
Reporter
joanne@willitsweekly.com

Willits Unified's school board met virtually via Zoom on May 13 – taking care of business in uncertain times.

Graduation is on at Willits High School, and it's going to be a one-of-a-kind Willits event worthy of future generations' history books.

What the next school year will look like financially and physically is a complete unknown.

And some things go on as usual. People retire, school buildings get taken care of, contract negotiations between the district and teachers are ongoing, and the school bond measure that lost by eight votes in March will be on the ballot again in November. This time, though, the local

Read more of
Graduation
Over on Page 10

County launches new COVID-19 testing site in Ukiah

Submitted by the
Mendocino County
Executive Office

Following Governor Gavin Newsom's recent announcement to add more than 80 COVID-19 community testing sites across the state to focus on underserved communities, Mendocino County will launch one testing site at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds in Carl Purdy Hall, at 1055 North State Street, in Ukiah.

The new testing site will open Saturday, May 23, and that first day will be

Read the rest of
Testing
Over on Page 6



WEEKEND POPCORN!

Friday & Saturday
4:00-8:00pm at The Noyo Theatre
Ask for Drinks & Candy Too
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What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

Departed veterans honored with flags

To the Editor:

The American Legion, Willits Post 174 will not be conducting Memorial Day (May 25) ceremonies at our local cemeteries. We will be honoring our departed veterans with the placement of grave flags on Saturday, May 23. The flags will be "taken down" prior to sunset on Monday, May 25.

Roger Ham, Willits American Legion

Virtual Sober Grad

To the Editor:

"Coming to you live from the Community Center in downtown Willits, the Virtual Sober Grad Party for the Class of 2020!"

That's right, we cannot have the traditional Sober Grad Party because of COVID-19 and the need for social distancing. However, we still have funds that we have earned thus far which need to be distributed to the Class of 2020, so we are having a virtual party to be held on Thursday, June 4.

The final time frame is yet to be determined although it will happen in late afternoon extending into early evening. We will be broadcasting live from a YouTube channel where the grads and all interested parties will be able to watch us draw tickets for cash and gift card prizes.

The plan is for graduates to "sign in" so their names can be placed in the drawings to be held. Grads will receive an email with instructions about when and how to sign in. Basically, grads will need to reply to the email; for those who do not have access to the internet a phone number will be provided. Letters are also going to be mailed via the post office to the parents of all graduating seniors.

Additionally, there will be more information in both local newspapers next week. We want the word to get out so no graduate will miss out on the opportunity to win checks and/or gift cards. Every grad who "signs in" will receive a \$50 check and their

Sober Grad T-shirt. For those who came to meetings and/or helped with fundraisers their checks will be \$70.

After all of the drawings are completed we will have a drive-through at the Community Center where the bags with the T-shirt and the graduates' winnings will be handed through the window. No one is allowed to get out of their vehicles at any time per instructions from the City of Willits.

We would like everyone to know that Sober Grad is still accepting cash and/or gift card donations to help with this project. Because of the coronavirus, we were unable to have our two biggest fundraisers: the Tri-Tip Dinner and the Ducky Derby. Consequently, we were unable to meet our fundraising goal of \$25,000.

We understand that this pandemic has impacted some people and businesses negatively. However, if you are able to donate a \$25 or \$50 gift card or a check for any amount we will be able to pass that on to a graduate. Whatever amount you can donate will be greatly appreciated by Sober Grad and *definitely* by the graduates.

Donations can be sent to Ruth Dell'Ara, treasurer, 15300 Seadrift Avenue, #122, Caspar, CA 95420-0118 or to Joyce Waters, secretary, P.O. Box 126, Willits, CA 95490. Thank you.

Joyce Waters,
for the Sober Grad Committee

Willits Senior Center seeks new members

To the Editor:

The mission of the Willits Senior Center is to reaffirm the dignity and value of the older adults in our community by providing an opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities, share talents and experiences, and to socialize with one's peers. It is of the utmost importance for us to promote an appropriate level of independence, yet to prevent isolation, loneliness and a lack of purpose. Our goal is to enhance the quality of life for all seniors throughout the

greater Willits area and to enable them to remain living independent lives for as long as possible.

As a 501 © 3 public charity it is critical we secure funding in order to accomplish our mission. One way we generate income is through membership fees.

Our goal is to increase our membership from 500 to 600 members. You can help us reach our goal by filling out the membership form and becoming a new member or by renewing your membership if you are an existing member.

For all of the non-senior members of our community, we would deeply appreciate you supporting the senior center by becoming members now. Whenever people have unmet needs, they usually end up at our doorstep. It's only after being a recipient of one of the many important services we provide that people get a clear understanding of how important a resource the senior center is to our community.

Look for the double-sided membership form inserted into this edition. Please take the time to read it. One side of the flyer highlights membership benefits, programs and services. The other side is the membership form for you to fill out.

You can also make a donation by visiting our website at www.willitsseiorcenter.com. Thank you.

Richard Baker, director,
Willits Seniors Inc.

'Plant a row' for the food bank

To the Editor:

Willits Community Services and Food Bank is an "essential service" that must remain open to the public for food distribution hours during the COVID-19 quarantine. The food bank continues to serve hungry families and individuals in the Willits area.

We are experiencing an increase in numbers served. Some food shortages have begun, and we are able to get most of those items in bulk from a variety of sources

at this time. All staff and volunteers are careful to follow the COVID-19 prevention protocol while at the food bank.

The generosity of the Willits community and from those beyond has been amazing. We hope to continue to provide food and some additional supports to our clients for the near future.

Local gardeners helped last summer by bringing in a total of approximately 3 tons of produce that was given out to hungry people. For those with room to plant surplus organic greens, carrots, squash, melons, beans, peas and more to share with the food bank, thank you!

Your efforts help food-insecure community members to stay healthy during this world pandemic, thereby keeping our community healthy and strong. Thanks to all who shop and drop off what is needed. Your efforts are sincerely appreciated. Be well,

Ruthanne Volz, executive director,
Willits Community Services
and Food Bank

WHS Quarantine Magazine

To the Editor:

I teach two sections of senior creative writing at Willits High School. I am very excited to announce the completion of their literary publication, The Quarantine Magazine. Students worked especially hard this term, and because of the extraordinary circumstances of these last months, much of their writing reflects their struggles.

I am so impressed by the creative work they have done and how many have emerged as up-and-coming poets and storytellers. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to teach this class and have such talented and dedicated writers as my students, especially since I am retiring in June.

You can find a .pdf of the magazine on the Willits High School website and Facebook page.

Please join me in congratulating Willits High School seniors on their accomplishments!

Jill Walton, Willits

Willits Senior Center Lunch

Drive-Thru & Walk-Up Meals

Available 12 to 1 pm, outside the Willits Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road; \$5 per meal, Monday through Friday.

Home Meal Delivery

Call 459-6826 the day before needed to schedule home meal delivery; \$5 per meal, Monday through Friday. Delivered throughout Willits.

Thursday, May 21: Kielbasa, Peppers and Onions over Rice

Friday, May 22: Chicken Bacon Ranch Wrap

Monday, May 25: Closed for Memorial Day

Tuesday, May 26: Chicken & Amish Noodles

Wednesday, May 27: Meatloaf

Thursday, May 28: Beef Enchiladas

Friday, May 29: Turkey Dinner

Transportation for seniors: Call 459-5556 to schedule. Pick up and drop off for grocery shopping, banking, doctors' appointments.



Above: The disc golfers stand at a safe distance – Brandon Long, Curtis Beaudry, Kyle Powell and Tom Brown. At right, above: Kyle Powell tries a long disc golf putt. At right: The disc golf foursome social distances as they cross the bridge.



Reopen for Recreation

Brooktrails Golf Course offers golfers and disc golfers a chance to get exercise, fresh air and fun under the redwoods

California and Mendocino County are slowly emerging from the more restrictive shelter-in-place measures initially imposed to fight the spread of COVID-19, allowing more of the activities – including outdoor recreation – that benefit residents.

The multi-steps approach to reopening still involves caveats and restrictions, testing how the citizens work within the new rules prior to further opening these opportunities.

The Brooktrails Golf Course is one of those recreational business that is able to operate in a safe and sane manner. People can coexist outdoors in the clean air as long as they observe social distancing, which is not difficult to accomplish in that setting.

On Friday, May 8, Marcus Newby, the manager of the Brooktrails course, after multiple requests from golfers and disc golfers, and after Stage 2 of California's reopening was announced, opened the course with several restrictions.

"We decided to re-open after pressure from golfers and disc golfers," explained Newby. "We got a feeling that we might as well just do it before there is a golfer revolt. The determining factor was a meeting I had with Tamara Alaniz, general manager of the Brooktrails Township, who said 'Open it up, and let's see how it goes.'"

"All golf courses in California are open to some degree at this point," Newby said. "It's easy to socially distance on a golf course. Governor Newsom stated that the state was allowing it and left it up to the individual counties."

Brooktrails Township manager Alaniz Read the rest of Recreation Over on Page 11 told Willits Weekly that the township is

At right, above: Golfer Dean Wise with his gopher friend. At far right, above: The cups are raised as part of the "no shared equipment" policy. At right: A map of the combined golf and disc golf courses at the Brooktrails Golf Course. Below: Georgine Hutz, left, and Barbara Oberkirch make their way to the next hole. At bottom: The striking beauty of "golf among the redwoods."



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Third District Supervisor's Report

May 2020

By Supervisor John Haschak

I want to say thank you to all the many people who are following the public health order. It is not easy for anyone. By following the order, you are providing not just for your own safety but also for our communities.

Mendocino County has been able to keep our infection rates very low. Sonoma County is dealing almost 400 cases.

While this pandemic is a public health crisis, it is important that we respect differing points of view. My viewpoint is that we should keep the politicians out of the medical scientific

The Rules: **LETTERS**

Letters & Commentaries: Email letters to willitsweekly@gmail.com. Letters focusing on Willits and Third District issues, activities, events and people have priority. Willits Weekly prints letters from residents of Willits and the Third District only. To encourage a variety of voices, Willits Weekly limits letter publication from any one writer to once every four weeks.

Typed letters can be sent to Willits Weekly, P.O. Box 1698, Willits, CA 95490, but email is preferred. Letters and commentaries must be submitted with a name, address and phone number, although only the author's name and city of residence will be published. No letters from an anonymous source will be published, although a request to withhold the writer's name will be considered.

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Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

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Willits Weekly's
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

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AEROBIC	FITNESS	PHYSICAL
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BODY	HEART	RESPIRATION
CARDIOVASCULAR	INTENSITY	STRENGTH
CHECK-UP	ISOMETRIC	STRETCHING
COMPOSITION	LIFESTYLE	TRAINING
ENDURANCE	MEDICATIONS	WEIGHT
EXERCISE	MUSCLES	WORKOUT

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CLUES ACROSS

1. It's now called Experian
4. You can draw it
7. Very fast aircraft
10. Go quickly
11. Fifth note of a major scale
12. Biochemical abbreviation
13. Make somebody laugh
15. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
16. City in NE Morocco
19. Colorless gas
21. NE football player
23. A snake is one
24. Small spot
25. Inform
26. Republic of Ireland
27. Large statues
30. Documents about an individual
34. Helps little firms
35. Namibia's former name
36. Large insects
41. Thirsty
45. A well-defined track or path
46. One who utilizes

47. Plant-eating mammals (abbr.)
50. Not in tip-top shape
54. Alternate names
55. A part of a broadcast serial
56. City in central Italy
57. LOTR actor McKellen
59. Trees provide it
60. Men's fashion accessory
61. Type of screen
62. Snakelike fish
63. Possesses
64. Whens you aim to get there
65. Tooth caregiver

CLUES DOWN

1. Hit heavily
2. Italian rice dish
3. Some are cocktail
4. A citizen of Israel
5. Read-only memory
6. Passed by
7. Northern diving ducks
8. References
9. Iranian language
13. Swiss river
14. Woman (French)
17. Gov't department

HOW TO SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICE LOG

May 11 to May 17

By Danya Davis, Willits Weekly

The officers of the Willits Police Department handled **158 incidents** in this seven-day reporting period.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

May 11

5:10 am: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious person in the 800 block of South Main Street.

12:01 pm: Officers initiated a missing person investigation in the 100 block of Northbrook Way.

12:14 pm: Officers responded to a report of trespassing near the intersection of South Humboldt Street and East Mendocino Avenue and issued a warning.

12:25 pm: Officers responded to a report of trespassing in the 200 block of Bittenbender Lane and issued a warning.

3:39 pm: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping in the 100 block of West Van Lane and issued a warning.

4:07 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 100 block of Margie Drive.

6:51 pm: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious person near the intersection of School Street and West Mendocino Avenue.

8:49 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 800 block of South Main Street.

9:04 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 300 block of Creekside Drive.

11:54 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 500 block of South Main Street.

May 12

11:10 am: Officers responded to a report of harassment in the 100 block of East Commercial Street.

3:40 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1700 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

4:17 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1400 block of South Main Street.

4:26 pm: Officers responded to a report of trespassing near the intersection of Barbara Lane and Railroad Avenue and issued a warning.

6:40 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1400 block of South Main Street.

6:41 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 500 block of South Main Street.

May 13

12:14 am: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

10:11 am: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 700 block of South Main Street.

9:19 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 300 block of Holly Street.

May 14

12:28 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 300 block of North Street.

3:56 pm: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious person near the intersection of Railroad Avenue and East Valley Street.

5:24 pm: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping near the intersection of East Valley Street and Railroad Avenue and issued a warning.

7:24 pm: Officers responded to a report of illegal camping near the intersection of

State Street and North Humboldt Street.

9:45 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 100 block of North Main Street.

May 15

2:33 am: Officers responded to a domestic disturbance in the 1200 block of Magnolia Avenue.

9:46 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 200 block of Sherwood Road.

12:40 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of East Commercial Street.

2:02 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 200 block of East Valley Street.

2:47 pm: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 1100 block of South Main Street.

5:48 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

6:35 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 400 block of East Valley Street.

6:46 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 100 block of East Commercial Street and issued a warning.

7:49 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1600 block of South Main Street.

May 16

5:25 am: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 200 block of East San Francisco Avenue.

2:19 pm: Officers initiated a fraud investigation in the 1200 block of South Main Street.

3:15 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1500 block of South Main Street.

4:56 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1400 block of South Main Street.

5:18 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation near the intersection of South Humboldt Street and East Valley Street.

9:29 pm: Officers responded to a report of trespassing in the 1000 block of South Main Street.

May 17

3:46 am: Officers responded to a disturbance near the intersection of Madden Lane and Pearl Street.

1:31 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 1100 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

1:55 pm: Officers responded to a disturbance in the 1700 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

2:33 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 1700 block of South Main Street.

4:50 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 100 block of East Commercial Street and issued a warning.

9:29 pm: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of Holly Street.

10:17 pm: BRITTON, Talon James (24) of Willits was contacted in the 600 block of South Coast Street following a report of suspicious activity. He was arrested pursuant to 148 PC (Resisting Arrest), 3056 PC (Violation of Parole – to remain under legal custody and return to prison), 647 (H) PC (Loitering), and on misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct (alcohol).

Man shot in the back, woman struck with baseball bat at Covelo party

Submitted by the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office

On May 17, 2020 around 3:56 am, the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office received a 911 call about a shooting in the 100 block of Tabor Lane in Covelo. Initial reports indicated that an adult male, 55 years of age, had been shot, possibly with a shotgun in the lower back. A short time later MCSO dispatch was advised there was a second victim, an adult female, 21 years of age, who had been struck with a baseball bat.

These two victims were transported by a Covelo Volunteer Fire Department ambulance to the Dos Rios area where they met responding deputies. At that location the adult female victim refused to cooperate with the investigating deputies and the adult male, who was suffering a gunshot wound, was unable to provide a statement. They were later transported to Adventist Health Howard Memorial in Willits for treatment.

As the deputies were talking to the

Read the rest of
Covelo Over on Page 6



Photos by Mathew Caine

At left: Thirty-five-year residents of the Willits area, Charline and John Ford in front of their sign painted with their silhouettes. Above: Bandit, who helps guard the property but has a tendency to run off on adventures, is tied up in a cozy spot. Below: Charline Ford holds up packages of meat from the John Ford Ranch booth at a past winter Willits Farmers Market. Further below: The Fords' personal garden grows in their backyard. At bottom, left: A freezer full of beef waits for distribution. At bottom, right: The entrance to the ranch exhibits the beauty of Little Lake Valley.

John Ford Ranch
Raising quality beef with integrity in the Little Lake Valley

Thirty-five years ago, John and Charline Ford settled in the Little Lake Valley. Having emigrated from his family's ranch in Humboldt County, the ranch that his great-grandfather had homesteaded in 1868 and that he still owns and operates, John brought with him generations of knowledge about the raising and processing of cattle.

Add to that all that he has learned in his tenure in the Willits area, and he has been able to create a product of the highest quality, a product recognized in the area for its singular natural value. Any discussion of the beef-ranching business in Willits must, by necessity, include at least a mention of the John Ford Ranch. They have built a reputation on quality, honesty and neighborliness.

It hasn't always been easy for the couple. There were several lean years where Charline's salary as a teacher at Willits High School was a necessary supplement to the family income, times when several of the herd died or caught diseases, times when they thought their herd might drown from the excess rains (their cows had to swim some miles to safety).

"We've been through some years when it was pretty tough sledding," said John Ford. "In fact, if she, Charline, hadn't been teaching school we probably wouldn't have made it. God's been good to us. We've had a lot of luck. I'm fortunate enough to be smart enough. I try not to make the same mistake twice, but I have.

"My grandfather told me," Ford continued, "you're never gonna do nothing until you go broke at least twice. Then hopefully maybe you'll figure it out." It's not the money. It's just the willingness to stay with it and know that you're doing a good product. My grandfather, who died when I was 16, also told me: 'Quality sells in any market. Don't compromise your quality because when you compromise your quality, you compromise your integrity.'"

Through it all, the Fords have managed to keep both their integrity and their sense of humor. Charline Ford wears her warmth with a lovely smile that instantly invites you into her world. John, on the other hand, exudes the tough exterior of a man who has spent his life in physical labor and in the company of livestock and other cow people. His humor comes to the surface in anecdotal stories, sly quips, and a covert smile. He mixes this humor with years of knowledge and wisdom, and the confidence of a man who has seen and experienced almost everything in his world of ranches and livestock.

Read the rest of
Beef Over on Page 11



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T and T TOWING

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24-HOUR RADIO DISPATCHED TOWING

victims, a vehicle approached that might have had persons involved but it turned onto the Laytonville-Dos Rios Road, heading for Laytonville. Deputies were about to catch up with the vehicle and initiated an investigative traffic stop. Two persons were temporarily detained but later released after they denied being involved in the assault.

Due to the nature of the assault, MCSO detectives were contacted to assist in the investigation. They responded to the hospital, where they found both victims being uncooperative. The investigation showed that at a property on Tabor Lane, that houses multiple related family members, a large party had occurred. During this party several females, perhaps related, became involved in a physical altercation where one person claimed the other had struck her with a baseball bat.

Additional relatives, from another residence, were alerted and came outside, possibly to intervene in the altercation. During this intervention several rifle shots were fired, with the 55-year-old male being struck by one round in the lower back. All persons interviewed denied knowing who had fired the weapon and the weapon was not located in the search of the lot or the residences.

Due to the suspects, victims and witnesses being uncooperative, no arrests were made and the case is currently under investigation. The victims were in stable condition and are expected to recover.

was a joint effort between the city, the Senior Center and county Public Health. We tested approximately 75 to 100 people. These were first responders, employees, people experiencing homelessness, and a few others. Next Tuesday, we are going to try to arrange other testing for the general public at the hospital. This is still being locked down as more information emerges."

One message Garrabrant-Sierra has made clear in all her posts is that the city fully intends to follow the orders of the county and state in loosening shelter-in-place restrictions, and has no intentions to apply any stricter rules on the businesses or people in Willits.

Some of the new "Stage 2" rule changes were officially put into place by the county in an order issued by Mendocino County Public Health Officer Noemi Doohan on May 8, more changes were added on May 15, and Doohan told the board of supervisors Tuesday she's planning to issue another revised order soon, on Friday, May 22 or soon thereafter.

Garrabrant-Sierra said in an email to Willits Weekly on May 18 that the city's plans are to fully implement those changes in Willits as they are rolled out by the county and state.

"We are following the county's orders because it is the right thing to do and it is a violation of state law to violate an order of the county health official," she said. "The city is free to pass more stringent regulations, however the council has not done that, nor have they considered anything more stringent. I urge people to look to our website or to the city's official Facebook page for what the city is actually doing. There is a fair amount of rumor-mongering out there, which is unfortunate."

"We appreciate all the businesses that have worked so hard to comply with this order and who are struggling in this difficult time," she said in a May 15 update on the city website. "We are all hoping and expecting that further loosening will happen very soon."

As reported previously in Willits Weekly, most of the city parks are now open with social distancing restrictions applied (no large groups, no sports activities, no playground equipment use allowed, etc.).

"We have been mowing our fields for the public use in conformance with the public health officer's order," said Garrabrant

open to the public for testing from 7 am to 7 pm. After the initial launch day, the regular hours for public testing will be Tuesday through Saturday from 12:30 to 7 pm.

This new testing site is provided through a partnership with OptumServe, the federal government health services business of Optum, a leading health services innovation company.

Testing will be by appointment only. Mendocino County residents can make an appointment online at <https://lhi.care/covidtesting>. Those without internet access can make an appointment by calling 888-634-1123.

"I would like to thank Senator McGuire and Assemblyman Wood for all their assistance," said Carmel Angelo, Mendocino County CEO. "Our representatives, and the public that responded to our 'Call to Action,' were instrumental in our accessing OptumServe testing. Now we can meet our state-mandated testing numbers."

"This testing site will help Mendocino County dramatically increase testing needs for individuals who have had limited access to COVID-19 tests up until now," said Dr. Noemi Doohan, Mendocino County public

Sierra in the update. "Pursuant to the order, the soccer field, dog parks, Haehl Creek Park are mowed and open. The two Little League fields are open with signage."

"We are working on starting children's swimming lessons as soon as we can," she continued. "We are also working on strategies to open the skate park in a manner that would comply with the county public health order. We so appreciate that the public has been using facilities in accordance with the rules. We know that these are difficult times and we all want to get out and play! Our hope is that soon, we will!"

Garrabrant-Sierra noted that the May 15 order allowed dog grooming and landscaping businesses within the county to potentially open up. She also talked of some of the upcoming shelter-in-place changes that are expected.

"The two areas left in Stage 2 (2.5) include retail for in-store shopping and some restaurant dining," she said. "There is going to be a 'five step process' for retail to re-open. West Company is working with the board of supervisors ad hoc to put together a 'self-certification' for businesses to re-open."

In her May 13 update, Garrabrant-Sierra said that the five step process is "pursuant to state mandate" and is "for risk assessment and prevention strategies."

"The West Company is actively assisting businesses in this process, and we encourage them to work with West on this," she said. "We post everything that West is offering on our website and on our Facebook page. Dr. Doohan says that she is currently working on a toolkit for businesses to assist them in their re-opening and to help answer questions."

For restaurants who will reopen, she said some of the requirements will be "a touchless payment system, no salt and pepper shakers or condiments for communal use, and silverware would be individually given out, not laid on the table."

She said the city encourages people with questions regarding details of the public health orders to contact Mendocino County's COVID-19 call center at 707-234-6052.

The City of Willits page with COVID-19 information, including these updates from the city manager, is at www.cityofwillits.org/268/COVID-19-Information.

health officer. "We're thrilled to partner with the state and OptumServe to help ensure our communities are healthy, while also helping meet the local and statewide testing goals."

OptumServe has extensive expertise in rapidly deploying and setting up healthcare services and has worked closely with the military under the leadership of former Army Surgeon General and retired Lieutenant General Patty Horoho, RN.

"OptumServe is honored to assist California in expanding COVID-19 testing for residents," OptumServe CEO Horoho said. "We are bringing our full commitment and capabilities to serve Californians, including extensive experience conducting large community health events."

"Thanks to Mendocino County and to OptumServe for the collaboration to make these testing sites possible," said Charity Dean, M.D., assistant director of the California Department of Public Health. "We're working together as part of the state's Testing Task Force to ensure regions with the greatest need have access to tests, and these sites are going to be a major component in reaching our testing goals."

supervisors Carre Brown, Ted Williams and McCowen. Fourth District Supervisor Dan Gjerde had minutes earlier expressed support for a proposal to schedule the item for June 2.

An addendum to his supervisor's report explained what McCowen wants to do and why he wants to do it.

"The current cannabis cultivation program is difficult for applicants to navigate, cumbersome for staff to administer, and results in a dual permitting system that imposes additional financial and bureaucratic burdens on applicants with little, if any, additional benefit to the regulated community, the general community, the county, or the environment," McCowen wrote.

"Applicants must currently navigate a maze of complicated state and local regulations that are often duplicative but sometimes conflicting. The board has previously expressed an interest in streamlining the cannabis cultivation program. Instead of tinkering with what has proven to be a difficult regulatory system, the board is encouraged to go in a new direction. In broad general terms, the proposal is to focus the county's attention more on where cannabis is grown and let the state regulate how it is grown," he continued.

"Cannabis cultivation tax revenue, as documented by Exhibit A to the May 5 budget update, is one of the few revenue streams related to local economic activity that is meeting projections," McCowen wrote. "With additional program participants, legal cannabis cultivation can help provide revenue that is critically needed to support county services."

McCowen's addendum offered a 12-point plan to revolutionize cannabis cultivation in this county. Under his proposal, the supervisors would repeal Section 10A.17, the cultivation ordinance, and regulate cultivation as a land use activity through the county's zoning code.

"Mendocino County would no longer issue permits for cannabis cultivation per se, but would issue zoning clearances, administrative permits or use permits regulating land use pursuant to the Zoning Code with environmental review (CEQA) taking place on a site-specific basis (instead of regulating how cannabis is grown, the county would focus on where it is grown)," the proposal reads.

"As a condition of the land use permit from the county, the applicant would be required to apply for, obtain and comply with a state permit to cultivate cannabis; applicants for state permits would be deemed to be in good standing by the county; applicants would no longer apply for a cultivation permit from the county, pay application and renewal

fees, navigate the complexities of two different permit programs with different definitions, interpretations and permit types," McCowen wrote.

"Repeal of 10A.17 and regulation of cannabis through the Zoning Code with site-specific environmental review may streamline the current cumbersome process by removing potential conflicts with the California

Department of Fish and Wildlife that have kept the county program (and applicants) in an extended state of limbo," McCowen explained.

McCowen enumerated other provisions that are not included in this brief review of his proposal. McCowen's report and full proposal can be found as part

of agenda item 6a at this link: <https://mendocino.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4408193&GUID=09555B64-14EB-48ED-9919-2E43BB4727B5>

Haschak repeatedly tried to thwart McCowen's effort. At the outset of the day's meeting, he announced that he was pulling McCowen's proposal off the agenda, stating that it ran counter to the board's earlier agreement that the board would limit items that it would consider during the COVID-19 pandemic only to the minimum necessary business and to those items that were not controversial.

McCowen insisted that the board chair does not have the authority to pull an agenda item that another supervisor has requested to be put on the agenda, and for which staff has said that there is both time to consider and ability to prepare for. McCowen said that in this case, Planning and Building staff would not have to prepare for the item at all and that Clerk of the Board staff had cleared the item for consideration on either May 26 or June 2. McCowen claimed that Haschak had pulled McCowen's item off the agenda "unilaterally."

Haschak repeatedly asked the board to agree to schedule a special board meeting in July to discuss two proposals which he had brought forward through the cannabis cultivation ad hoc committee, of which he is the sole member, due to McCowen's abrupt resignation from the ad hoc in early January.

Haschak's issues were, first, a proposal to make permits for legacy cultivators run with the land, rather than the individual and, secondly, a proposal to expand permitted cultivation area in the Phase 3 part of the county's cannabis program to 22,000 square feet on Upland Residential and Rural Communities Zoning Districts. This was part of the proposal that Haschak had brought to the board of supervisors on February 25.

As he was wrapping up his supervisor's report, Haschak stated his intention to ignore McCowen and to go forward with his own plan. "I still propose that we have a special cannabis meeting," Haschak said. "I think that going for July would be ambitious. And I talked with staff yesterday, and it didn't seem that doing that would cause any problem, we would be able to get it done for the growing season for 2021."

"And so I would like to recommend that we do July 14 and have this special meeting. Hopefully the COVID-19 crisis is behind us somewhat, and we can work on some of the technology issues and we can make sure that the public is informed about what we're doing, because this is a very controversial issue. So I am going to put that forward. I am going to work with the CEO to come up with a meeting that will meet everyone's expectations."

McCowen argued that Haschak was acting illegally, and Haschak told McCowen that he was out of order. McCowen asked Haschak to poll the board. Haschak agreed to do so, and found that McCowen's suggestion had support, not only from himself and Fifth District

Supervisor Williams, who has many times spoken against the current cannabis cultivation ordinance, but also from First District Supervisor Brown.

Deputy Clerk of the Board Jenelle Rau said that it would be very difficult for county staff to schedule a special meeting for June 2 to consider McCowen's proposal. Therefore the date of June 10 was chosen, which, as it happens, is the second day of the board's deliberations for creating the 2020-21 county budget.

Supes delay start date for 'new' pot growers

On May 5, the board of supervisors voted 3-2 to move the start date of Phase 3 of the county's cannabis program to April 1, 2021.

Phase 3 is the long-awaited phase that will allow "new" cannabis cultivators to apply for and secure a permit to grow cannabis in this county. "New" cannabis growers, according to Mendocino County, are those who can't provide they were growing cannabis in-county before January 1, 2016.

Mike A'Dair

Reporter
mikea@willitsweekly.com

The beginning of Phase 3 has been moved several times. Most recently it was scheduled to begin on July 1, 2020.

Certainly at least part of the reason why staff and a majority of the supervisors wanted to move the beginning of Phase 3 into 2021 is that the board of supervisors, and the ad hoc committee on cannabis cultivation, has requested that some significant changes be made to the guidelines and regulations governing Phase 3.

These changes included a proposal that site inspections after the first year of a permit would no longer be mandatory, that LiveScan readings are no longer required for a county permit, and that applicants no longer need to submit a signed, approved lake and streambed alteration agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in order to qualify for receiving a permit from Mendocino County.

In addition, Supervisor John Haschak has proposed that Phase 1, or "Legacy" cultivation permits, will now go with the land, and not with the applicant. Haschak also proposed that the area limitations for both Phase 1 and Phase 3 programs be expanded, in some cases up to 1 acre.

On February 25, 2020, which was before the COVID-19 shutdown hit California, the board of supervisors



Wagging Tails

Pooches get some get some much-needed playtime as Willits dog park reopens

Saturday was sandwiched between rainy days at the end of last week. It was a perfect day for gardening, walks, and other outdoor activities including taking one's rambunctious dog friends to the reopened dog park in Willits.

Ree Slocum

Features Writer
willitsweekly@gmail.com

The City of Willits has been busy preparing for the relaxed Stage 2 COVID-19 orders in the recent weeks so they could re-open some of the city parks. The city manager posted a May 15 update that included new information about the city parks at <https://cityofwillits.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=152>. They've mowed the parks' fields for public use, and the soccer field, two Little League fields, Haehl Creek Park, and the dog parks are open as of last Friday, May 15.

Mother and daughter, Jackie Thurber and Tori Troum, who live in Brooktrails, took the family dogs to the Frank Grasse Dog Park on Saturday. At that point, they were the only people in the dog areas.

The dogs and humans were happy to be back in the spacious "big dog" enclosure they frequented before it was closed during the coronavirus shelter-in-place orders. The dogs were exuberant about being able to run unleashed, chasing one another and burning off playful energy.

Troum said Scout, her dog, is a shy, 18-month-old Dalmatian, and Hunter, who used to be her dog, is now the family dog. He's an 8-year-old sweet pit bull-boxer mix.

The two women shared some of their experiences at the dog park before the COVID-19 shutdown. It seems the dog park was a bit different back then than it was Saturday. "Sometimes there were four or five dogs here," Thurber said. "People would sit and talk while the dogs are running around together. Hunter's not an aggressive dog, so it's OK to let him do that. I just have to ask [other people] how their dog is."

Both have had good experiences with the dogs and their owners at the park,



Photos by Ree Slocum



At top, left: An attractively designed sign for the Frank Grasse Dog Park. At top: It took some time to settle both ants dogs enough to take this photo of them and Tori Troum at the dog park on Saturday. Above, left: Signs describing the current rules for opening the dog park are posted just outside the gates of both sections of the park. The part of the sign that requires all users to wear masks at the dog park will be reworded sometime this week. Above, right: For safety, there are two entry gates to each of the dog parks. Each patio brick has a donor's name etched in it. At left: Rules for the dog parks are located inside the first gate. Below, left: Scout, the Dalmatian, left, and Hunter, the pit bull-boxer mix, have fun at the big dog park last Saturday. Below, right: Troum's 18-month-old dog, Scout, is still in training to come when she calls.



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Pg. 7



Demetri Novoa



Taylor Pardue



Britney Patel



Ariel Reyes



Anthony Rodriguez



Nayeli Rodriguez



Leticia Sanchez



Luis Sanchez



Brandon Schmidt



Zoe Schoonmarker



Jett Seaton



Owen Sebastian



Logan Simms



Savannah Southwick



Micah Stamps

Watch for the rest of the graduate photos next week in Willits Weekly!

Willits is Senior Strong

See all of the Willits High School senior photos showcased together in the windows at J.D. Redhouse, thanks to a partnership with senior class photographer, Maureen Moore



Cheyenne Paulson



Kylei Polen



Paul Quintero



Ryan Reed



Tony Rodriguez



Yesenia Rodriguez



Joliana Rosado



Kaitlyn Rose

Willits Charter School Graduates



charter schools will share in the proceeds should it pass.

And more.

But first, back to graduation.

"I came up with a graduation plan that I think will work," Superintendent Mark Westerburg told the board. "It will be kind of fun ... certainly unique ... I think it will be a good experience for the kids.

"It'll be pickup trucks [with the graduate in the truck bed and family in the cab] going around the track ... and Mike [Colvig, Willits High principal] will be out in the center of the football field as kind of a traffic cop, and he'll be speaking ... presenting the graduate," said Westerburg.

As each truck pauses in front of a Willits High School sign backdrop, a picture of the graduate in cap and gown will be taken. "Then we hope to take – I wouldn't call it a parade – I'd call it more of a processional –

through town and then past the other three schools," said Westerburg.

The June 5 event will be "live streamed on Facebook and YouTube" and will probably also be hard to miss even if you aren't online. "My guess is it's going to be really loud," said Westerburg. "We have Hal [Wagenet] doing the sound, so we're going to have a really loud, quality sound system."

Each graduate has also received a yard sign, courtesy of the Willits Rotary Club, according to Rotary Club member and trustee Jeanne King.

It's a celebratory end after a difficult final semester, during which the disruption of all things normal took its toll on everything, including academic progress.

Recognizing this, the board discussed at some length Westerburg's support for changing the way high school grades would be given from a letter grade to a credit/no credit designation; unless a student went "above and beyond," in which case an A or B would be appropriate.

Westerburg told board members that board policy allows that, "when you're in an alternative learning situation, credit/no credit is always an option.

"Obviously our kids are in an alternative learning type situation," he said. "And Mike [Colvig] and I felt fairly strongly that we need to reward kids who are doing everything they should and give them the A or B grade."

School President Alex Bowlds wondered whether the board could do "something ... to force the [credit/no credit] issue," and Westerburg explained that this was beyond the board's authority, though he said "teachers should be in agreement on this ... it makes sense.

"One of the unique things about this issue is that there's actually a lot of legislation about the board and administration not being able to influence a grade," he said. "It's kind of a unique area to protect the teacher's right to give a grade."

Bowlds pointed out that "all the state colleges and UC colleges are basically

giving everybody a pass, accepting credit/no credit across the board." "It's almost universal across the country," agreed trustee Bob Colvig. "Colleges are going to accept pass/fail for spring semester."

In the end, Westerburg indicated he would "write Mike [Colvig] a formal note to say 'make sure our staff is following the guidelines' ... although he acknowledged that "if [teachers] choose not to, it's probably a fight we're not going to do very well on."

"I would support doing exactly that," said Bowlds.

Discussion turned from doing the best with a difficult present to what to do in the face of an uncertain future.

"People ask me all the time about the fall and reopening," Westerburg said. "We have absolutely no idea.

"I know that people are nervous and upset and asking questions about what's going to happen; what are we going to do?" he said. "It's really too early to answer those questions.

"I'm putting together a group of people ... some teachers, some administrators, some support staff, to just sit down and try and figure out what are our best options and what kind of creative ideas are out there," he said. "Essentially we have to follow whatever rules they come up with, but at this point we might want to do 'if this happens, we do this. If this happens we do this, and what would it look like?'"

The uncertain future also includes uncertainty over how much funding there will be to pay for whatever next year's school year ends up being. "I'm deeply concerned about what our budget is going to look like next year," said Bowlds.

"I wouldn't get real excited about what [Governor Newsom's new budget] says, because it's going to have multiple revisions," said Westerburg. "I think the basic premise is that the state is \$18 billion under what they need, and so it's going to have some impact on everybody.

"The board, probably at the next meeting, is going to have some emotion about having a summer layoff potential and will have to pass that resolution," he said. "We need to do that to make sure that we can survive the financial storm.... We've got to plan for the worst and hope for the best. And that's part of planning for the worst."

Part of that plan will also include placement on the November ballot of a slightly revised version of last March's Measure G, the school general obligation bond that failed to pass by a margin of 8 votes.

"The only thing we've changed is the fact that we've also included the Willits Charter. We're doing an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with them to make them part of it – for a portion of it," said Westerburg. "Their demographics are ... our high school is much larger and their high school is very small compared to their elementary. A lot of those kids are still coming to Willits Unified. So they have a vested interest in our facilities as well."

The new bond measure will be the same as Measure G with respect to the total amount requested, \$17 million, and also the built-in flexibility to accommodate local economic realities in terms of when and how much to draw of that amount or even whether a draw should happen at all.

"We have the latitude to, because we're not building anything new, we can

Read the rest of **Graduation** *Over on Page 13*

LEGAL NOTICES

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WW268
Fictitious Business Name Statement
2020-FO0253
The following person is doing business as Sage Healing, 10 Brookside Drive, Willits, CA 95490.
Registered owner: Cassie Lynn Mansfield, 10 Brookside Drive, Willits, CA 95490.
This business is conducted by an individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A.
Statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on May 4, 2020.
/s/ Cassie Mansfield
Publication dates: 05/21, 05/28, 06/04, 06/11/2020

WW269
CITY OF WILLITS PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE TO BIDDERS
PROJECT NO. 2020-01
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Sealed bids for: The work shown on the project plans entitled: **CITY OF WILLITS PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT PROJECT PLANS** for: **2020 Slurry Seal & Pavement Preservation Project - Project No. 2020-01**
This project includes slurry sealing, striping, crack sealing, and traffic control for various streets within the City of Willits for an amount not to exceed \$210,000.
IN
City of Willits, County of Mendocino, State of California &
The work described in specifications books entitled: **CITY OF WILLITS - BID BOOK & TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS CITY OF WILLITS - PROPOSAL PACKET CITY OF WILLITS - AWARD PACKET** for: **2020 Slurry Seal & Pavement Preservation Project - Project No. 2020-01**
IN
City of Willits, County of Mendocino, State of California **will be received by a designated representative, of the City of Willits, County of Mendocino, State of California, until the hour of 2 p.m., June 17, 2020, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud in the City Council Chambers, of the City of Willits, located at 111 East Commercial Street, Willits, California.**
CITY OF WILLITS: s/Cathy Moorhead, Deputy City Manager/City Clerk
DATED: 05/20/20
Publication Date: May 21, 2020



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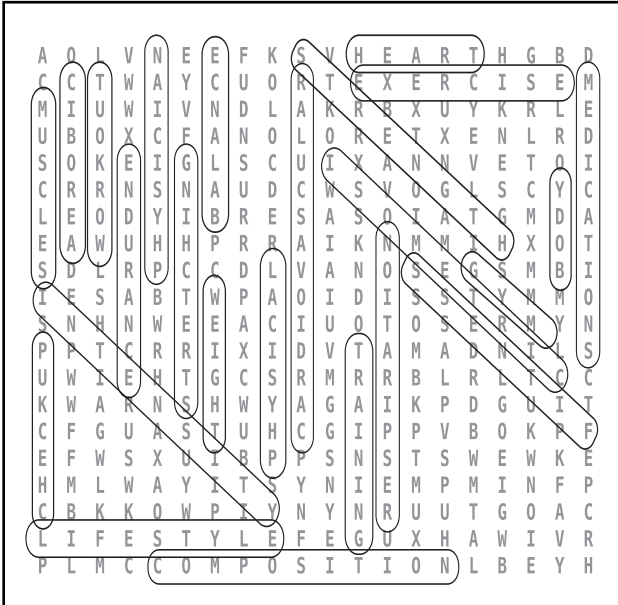
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For the last few weeks, business has been almost too good. The pandemic and the slowing of processing in the factory plants have created a demand for the Ford Ranch homegrown beef, and people are getting used to the quality. They are noticing the difference between lovingly grass-raised beef and the hastily processed supermarket beef that is churned out all across the country.

"People have just been calling us non-stop," Charline mused. "It took us awhile to get into the rhythm of it. But it's been wonderful. John just took three head up to be butchered. We're kind of down in stock. Much of our stock is already spoken for. We have a lot of people who want 'em, but they have to go on the waiting list because we don't want to tell someone they can have and then not be able to deliver."

John doesn't like what he sees happening to the meat industry. "The industry's gotten so far removed from producing meat the way it should be," he said. "They produce factory farm stuff now. They kill it and stuff it in a Cryovac bag. They say it ages in the bag, but it doesn't. Ours all hang for 15 to 20 days before we package it, depending on how much 'bark' or 'rind' they have on them. That adds to the flavor because it's a natural way. That flavor is the aging process.

"A lot of the pre-packaged meat," he said, "in the stores when they package it, they shoot nitrous oxide into the bag to give it shelf life. That's why everything we sell is frozen and wrapped in butcher paper."

He speaks of the natural way he raises and feeds his cows. "We don't even use fertilizer. We let the cows do it. We use rotational grazing. You let the cows eat all of an area, and then you let it rest for 25 to 30 days. Everything grows back, and your good grasses will always outdo your bad grasses. My grandfather taught me that 60 some-odd years ago.

"There's a lot of work to this," John shared, "but the most rewarding thing is that people come up and say, 'We're so thankful that you're doing this because I haven't tasted meat like this since I was a little kid.'"

John Ford beef is available at the Ukiah and Willits farmers markets all year, and the Fort Bragg market from May to October. Their meat is available at Mariposa Market in Willits and Ukiah Natural Foods, Ukiah Brewing, and Alley Grill in Ukiah.

In Willits, 101 Drive-in, 101 Burgers and More, and Buster's Burgers all serve John Ford beef. John Ford Ranch offers the "Rancher's Choice Pack" for special order and pick up, with a variety of 11 cuts as well as 25-pound boxes of ground beef. They can be reached at 459-5193 or jcford@saber.net.

glad to see that outdoor recreation is possible to do safely and in compliance with the county directives.

"Marcus was really interested in making sure that he could re-open safely, abiding by social distancing requirements," Alaniz said. "He knows most of the people who come to the course and trusts them to comply with the distancing. Hopefully, in the next phase, he'll be able to open up the golf shop with limited occupancy, extra cleaning and sanitizing.

"It's been a challenge but the course is looking better than ever. He was able to get quite a bit done during the closure. We are here to support him. Most of the time it's family members or close friends golfing together."

Alaniz added that the trails are still open in Brooktrails as it would have been time- and cost-prohibitive to try to close all the trails down. There have been no complaints about any social distancing problems on the trails.

The first day it opened, the golf course was inundated with golfers itching to get back to their much-loved pastime which they had been missing for a couple months, tired of sheltering in place, and needing physical activity and fresh air. "When we first opened, we started out allowing only twosomes with face masks on the course. We loosened it to foursomes," Newby said. "Many of our older players were having issues with the face masks out on the course. We believed that they really didn't need them out in the open as long as they distanced.

"With two sports [golf and disc golf] being played in the same area, we were beginning to get congested up here

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Due to health concerns in Mendocino County, John Ford Ranch will be taking meat box orders (not individual package orders) for pick-up: Rancher's Choice Box - 50 pounds: steaks, roasts, and ground beef. Still \$325 (\$6.50 per pound). Hamburger Box: 25 pound box of hamburger in 1 or 1.5 pound packages: \$150. Natural ranch-raised grass fed beef, no hormones or antibiotics. Call 459-5193 to arrange pick-up. Leave a message, and we'll call back.

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I'll be back to help you with your Alterations and Sewing Needs when it is safe to do so. Barbara the Seamstress

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Willits Food Bank open

Willits Community Services & Food Bank is still distributing food, following COVID-19 safety provisions, to hungry families and individuals in the Willits area, with an increase in numbers served. The front office at 229 E San Francisco Ave is closed to the public, but the back door area is open for food distribution on Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 4:30 pm. "For those with room to plant surplus organic greens, carrots, squash, melons, beans, peas and more to share with the food bank, thank you!" Info: 459-3333; financial donations to WCS can be mailed to 229 E. San Francisco, Willits CA 95490.

in the front with discers and golfers. That's what made me decide to do four. There were too many people waiting.

"We ended up with a sheriff's deputy coming down to speak with us because there were some complaints. We'd been having so much vandalism and theft that we had been in constant contact with the department over the whole lockdown. We had grown a relationship with a few of the sheriffs. The guy that came down is the one I had worked with the most. He observed how we were operating and what was going on. He was appreciative of our precautions and procedures."

Newby believes that the Willits community should not be lumped in with the conditions imposed on the larger cities, due to the lack of density of the population. He believes that the response and adherence to the rules of the golfers shows "that our community is ready. We're being lumped in with the cities rather than being treated like a small isolated town. There are way too many rules and stipulations for the sheriffs to handle, especially in Brooktrails where they have one patrol car."

By necessity, and as per the health order for golf courses, there are rules and regulations to which the players must adhere. No one is allowed in the clubhouse, and the grill is closed until Newby and his wife, co-manager Jaclyn, can better gauge the demand for that service. They don't want to over-purchase supplies. However, canned drinks are available for the golfers. Another precaution is the actual holes on the course which do not have flags that need to be pulled out. Rather the cups are raised above the grass surface and need only be touched by the ball.

The Brooktrails Golf Course, 24860 Birch Street, is an asset to the community, with a great reputation among the golfers and disc golfers who share the space. They appreciate the beauty of the surroundings, the redwood trees, the layout, and especially the care taken with the greens. Reservations are required: 459-6761.

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Dorothy Roediger holds her 2020 Ruby Award Certificate.

Congrats |

Willits Soroptimists announce 2020 Ruby Award winner, Dorothy Roediger

Submitted by the Willits Soroptimist Club

The Willits Soroptimist Club is pleased to announce that Dorothy Roediger has been named its Ruby Award winner for 2020. The Ruby Award was named in honor of the first Soroptimist Federation president, Ruby Lee Minar.

This award honors women who are making extraordinary efforts on behalf of other women and who provide exceptional service to their community.

Roediger was born and grew up in the Los Angeles area. She married Gene, her husband, in 1966. She has a son and daughter, as well as six grandchildren and 10 great-grandkids. They moved to Willits in 1974, where she worked as the office LVN for Dr. Adams and then Dr. Dawson. Roediger also did home nursing, and, from 1979 to 1989, worked for the Willits Post Office.

On a personal note, Roediger says one of her most memorable experiences was taking their sailboat and cruising up and down the western U.S. coast and exploring Alaska.

Volunteering for our community has always been very important to Roediger throughout her time in Willits. She has helped out with fundraising events for the Willits Rotary Club and Roots of Motive Power as well as working on local elections. Roediger has dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort at the Willits Senior Center, where she has volunteered in all departments and continues to serve as secretary on the Willits Senior Center Board of Directors.

The Willits Soroptimist Club is proud that women like Dorothy Roediger are being recognized for their dedicated service to our community. She is a strong and caring individual who steps up to whatever is needed with no expectation of reward or recognition.

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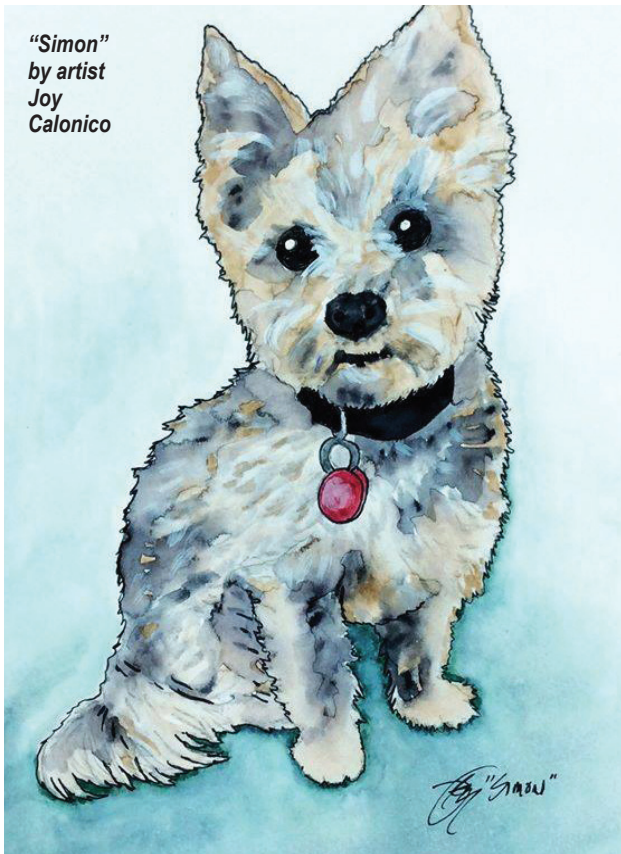
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"Simon" by artist Joy Calónico

Portraits for Pets deadline announced

"We have selected an end date for our Portraits for Pets virtual fundraiser," Kether Sprague, board president for the Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County, announced on Monday. Thus far, the online fundraiser has raised \$17,243 for the non-profit and has returned hundreds of digital custom artworks to donors through Facebook.

Sprague noted that all photos must be submitted on the Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County's Facebook fundraiser post, or to their email: hsmc@pacific.net by

Sunday, May 24 by 11 pm, to be considered for artwork to be used for the fundraiser.

HSIMC will then take the rest of the month of May to ensure all submitted photos have art work completed and posted back to the Facebook page.

"Thank you very much for supporting the life-saving work of the Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County," said Sprague.

— Maureen Moore



Sweet Mr. T

Meet the new guy around these parts named Mr. T. This poor guy was found on his own wandering around Anderson Valley for a few weeks. He was starving and covered in ticks. Luckily a concerned citizen decided to help him out. His finder took great care of him for a few days prior to bringing him to us. Mr. T is a medium mixed-breed guy who is around 8 years old. He is a little shy at first, but is still as sweet as can be. He was lucky to score a foster home for a few days where we learned he is dog-social, doesn't mind cats, seems to be house-broken, is quiet, and loves to snuggle up with you under some warm blankets. What more can you ask for? If Mr. T sounds like a perfect match for you give us a call!

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County is open Wednesday through Friday from 1 to 5 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm, by appointment only, for intakes, adoptions and fostering: Call 707-485-0123 for information or any questions. Visit "Humane Society for Mendocino County" page on Facebook to see available dogs and cats, and visit www.mendohumanesociety.com to learn more.



Big Bolt

Bolt is a very handsome and big guy who's 2 years old and 102 pounds. At the shelter, he is pretty mellow by German shepherd standards.

Bolt is easy to walk on leash and didn't jump on anyone once during the evaluation. Bolt lived with other dogs, but he was uncomfortable with Princess, another shelter guest, when they met her during his evaluation.

Princess is an energetic dog, and seemed to be a lot for Bolt to take in at that moment. A mellow canine friend in his new might be fine, but Bolt will need to meet any potential roommates before his adoption. Bolt didn't play with toys!! He was a little afraid of the tennis ball, so toys may not be his thing!

While Mendocino County's COVID-19 order is in place, the Mendocino County animal shelters in Ukiah and Fort Bragg are closed to the public, but you can still adopt and foster a dog or cat! To learn more about available pets, visit www.mendoanimalshelter.com/. If you are interested, call Amy at the Ukiah shelter at 467-6453 or Jennifer at the Fort Bragg shelter at 961-2491 / 961-2526 with any questions.

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The rest of Graduation

From Page 10

control our request for what we ask for," said Westerburg. "If the economy is not rebounded up to where we need it to be to, we can hold off or ask for less. We do not have a limit on the number of draws we can do or the amount of that draw.

"We need to put it back on the ballot. If we don't, it's two years from now before it can go back on. And two years from now, even if it passed, you're going to be three years out until you're really fixing stuff and get revenue," said Westerburg. "I'm just not sure a couple of the facilities are going to make it three more years without that."

"I'll be the first one to agree," said Bowlds, who then pointed out "some interesting language" in the bond. "If the bond passes and the economy is still not good enough for us to issue bonds, we are able to go ahead and spend general fund money on the repair project in the anticipation of selling bonds," he explained. "And then we can come back and use the proceeds from the bonds to make the general fund whole again if and when we actually issue bonds."

Trustee King expressed her concern that, "with the economy having tanked because of COVID-19 and all the restrictions on business and people not being able to go to work ... I'm not sure people are going to be willing to vote for a bond even if they want to support schools."

"I don't disagree with that," said Westerburg. "The only issue is, three years from now is too late." "Mark is correct," said Bowlds. "If we wait until two more years down the road, some of these projects we've got may be overwhelming by then, and the costs ... are just going to skyrocket."

The board voted 4 to 1 to put the bond measure on the November ballot, with trustee Paula Nunez voting no. Amidst all the general indeterminacy of the meeting, there were matters of a more routine nature. Westerburg acknowledged five new retirees, and thanked them for "the great jobs" they did: Jill Walton, English teacher since 1999; Lenore Hansen, speech and language teacher since 1989; Priscilla Dodd, special education teacher since 2013; Denise Wise, special education teacher since 2007; and Patty Dalton, school counselor since 1997.

He also had good news when it came to school buildings. "Maintenance and custodial, they're all killing it. We're getting a ton of stuff done," he said. Willits Teachers Association president Tessa Ford announced the WTA's award of four scholarships for dependents of its members and a California Teachers Association magazine's recognition of three local educators.

The scholarships will go to Krystal Kammer, Daisy Barrett, Emily McKay and Micah Stamps.

California Educator magazine recognized Cim and Douglas Case and Kelly Case-Brackett, as a family that has "made inspiring students a priority for generations."

Ford's final news was less sanguine; the association's "negotiating team ... decided to reject" the district's contract proposal, so "we're going to be back at the bargaining table."

Since last Thursday two new COVID-19 cases have cropped up in Mendocino County, bringing the case number to 15.

Case number 14 was confirmed last Friday, May 15, and was the result of a religious service for internet streaming that took place on Sunday, May 10, at the Assembly of God Church in Redwood Valley. One of the attendees had COVID-19 but did not know it; as a result, two other people contracted the disease. Two of

The rest of Growers

From Page 6

attempted to grapple with these proposals. The best it could do was to approve the three more modest changes and to vote 5-0 to reconsider the two more far-reaching proposals for some unknown date in the future.

As a result, Mendocino County Chief Planner Julia Acker-Krog told the supervisors that it would be wise to reschedule the beginning of Phase 3 until April 1, 2021.

"We still have yet to receive the final direction from the board on the changes to Phase Three," Acker-Krog said, "We have to do the required CEQA work that is connected to these changes, and we have to conduct the necessary public hearings. The date is the minimum necessary to allow staff to adequate time to make the changes to Phase 3," she said.

Haschak proposed leaving matters alone and allowing the program to begin on July 1, 2020, as scheduled.

Acker-Krog told the board that staff had concerns about doing that. "We do have some concerns with opening Phase Three as it is currently written throughout the ordinance," Acker-Krog said. "If the regulations are to change throughout that period, how are we to handle applications that come in under the old Phase 3 program, and if there's a new Phase 3, then how do we handle those?"

Fifth District Supervisor Ted Williams pointed out that with the proposed postponement of Phase 3, and with the current closure of Phase 1 to new qualifying applicants, Mendocino County would have no place for cannabis growers who are still growing on the illegal market, but who would like to enter the legal market, to apply for a permit.

Williams asked Acker-Krog how long it takes for either a minor use permit or a major use permit, which are required to accompany a cultivation permit in many of the zoning districts in Phase 3, to be processed. Acker-Krog said that it usually takes between six and eight months for those permits to be processed.

Williams pointed out that would mean, if the start date for Phase 3 were pushed back to April 1, 2021, and if cultivation permits cannot be issued until either a minor and/or major use

The rest of Health officer

From Page 1

necessary qualifications and education to act as a public health officer for a pre-arranged and agreed-upon period of time.

The county's outgoing interim public health officer, Dr. Noemi Doohan, told the board of supervisors on Tuesday that she still intends to leave her position with the county on June 4. Doohan does have a contract with the county that states she will work as a consultant through December 31 of this year.

Iser could probably legitimately be called a controversial figure. A quick scan through Google showed reports from KLAS-TV in Las Vegas that were published near the date of his retirement as public health officer of the Southern Health District of Nevada on January 3, 2020, in which several people who were interviewed said disparaging things about him.

Some said that he rarely came to work. One person said that he directed his secretary to move his door to make it look like he was at work, when he wasn't. The same article said that he had previously ordered an employee of his to create two non-profit companies for his personal use.

In spite of these knocks, Doohan praised Iser on Tuesday morning and urged the supervisors to hire him. "Dr. Iser came to my attention because Kat DeBurgh, who is executive director of the Health Officers Association of California, told Dr. Iser — who is highly regarded at the level of our state — told Dr. Iser that there was an opening and urged him to apply, as well as Karen Smith, who was the former health officer director for the entire state of California under Governor Brown, and is currently working, not only for Google, but also for us and for the County of Santa Clara as a consultant.

"Both Dr. Smith and Kat DeBurgh, who are exceptional leaders in the state of California for public health, recommended Dr. Iser to me, as well as Dr. Gary Pace, the Lake County health officer. I consider it an incredible great fortune that Dr. Iser is ready to re-locate and be our public health officer," Doohan said."

Two new cases in county

Since last Thursday two new COVID-19 cases have cropped up in Mendocino County, bringing the case number to 15.

Case number 14 was confirmed last Friday, May 15, and was the result of a religious service for internet streaming that took place on Sunday, May 10, at the Assembly of God Church in Redwood Valley. One of the attendees had COVID-19 but did not know it; as a result, two other people contracted the disease. Two of

permit are approved, that cannabis growers in Phase 3 will not be able to grow a legal, permitted crop until 2022.

Williams asked Planning and Building Director Brent Schultz for a solution, and Schultz asked Acker-Krog if she thought it might be feasible to put all hands on deck to come up with a workable program for Phase 3 by September. Acker-Krog said it wasn't possible.

First District Supervisor Carre Brown moved the proposed motion, McCowen seconded and it was approved 3-2, with Haschak and Williams voting no.

County secures cannabis equity funding

On April 20, Mendocino County announced that it had secured a \$2.2 million grant from California Governor Gavin Newsom's Office of Business and Economic Development for use in starting and funding a Cannabis Equity Program for Mendocino County.

The money will be used to establish the framework of the program, which will then work to distribute funds to be used for tiered or waived fees, application assistance, assistance for small business development, technical assistance for road maintenance programs, loans and grants for the purpose of assuring regulatory compliance, employment training, and mitigation of environmental impacts of cannabis cultivation.

For information about the program, interested people are asked to call Planning and Building Services Director Schultz at 234-6650.

Current cannabis numbers

According to the Department of Planning and Building Services, numbers of cannabis permits remains roughly the same as they have been for the past two years. A total of 227 permits have been issued over the past year, and another 25 permits have been approved but have not yet been picked up, for a total of 252 currently active permits. A total of 110 permits have expired, and 98 expired permits have been renewed.

Altogether, since program inception, the cannabis unit has received 1,429 permit applications for Phase 1 cultivation. The department has issued 362 permits (the current

the three people live in Lake County; the third lives in this county and becomes a Mendocino County statistic.

According to information released by the county on Saturday, May 16, one of the people from Lake County was hospitalized. The other two people, including Mendocino County's 14th case, are isolating in their homes. In a May 18 update, the county announced: "The church has since announced on social media that the pastor of the church has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

If individuals have recently visited the Assembly of God church in Redwood Valley, or have come in contact with individuals involved in the live stream service production on Mother's Day, we encourage you and your close contacts to get tested for COVID-19."

On Monday, May 16, Doohan confirmed that there is now a 15th confirmed case of COVID-19 in Mendocino County. This case is a male between the ages of 35 and 49 from the Ukiah Valley, and is in isolation. The source of infection for this 15th case is still under investigation at this time, and a thorough contact tracing is in process by Mendocino County Public Health.

May 15 shelter-in-place revision

Last week Governor Newsom issued directives that relaxed the state's guidelines for local shelter-in-place orders. As a result, on Friday, May 15, Doohan released another revised public health order which reflects Newsom's changes.

This health order continues to expand the roster of those types of businesses that are allowed to conduct regular business, with the incorporation of social distancing and other precautions.

Those business types include laundromats, dry cleaners, other laundry services, auto repair shops, car washes, landscapers, pet grooming, and dog walking.

Also included are businesses for which service provision may necessitate entry to private residences or community facilities, but for which social distancing can still be maintained, such as residential and janitorial cleaning services, HVAC services, appliance repair persons, electricians, plumbers, other mechanical tradespersons, handypersons, and general contractors.

Following the guidance coming down from Sacramento, this expanded list of permitted business types does not include personal care services that require close contact such as hair

number of 252 plus the 110 expired permits); 158 applications have been withdrawn; and 92 have been denied.

The department is still sitting on 882 permit applications, with 858 of those waiting for permits, agreements or approvals from one or more state agencies. Just 24 applications need only county approval before a permit can be issued.

Some thought that direction from the board of supervisors on February 25 that a written statement from the Department of Fish and Wildlife that an applicant had applied for a lake and streambed alteration agreement could be considered tantamount to a finalized LSAA, and that county cultivation permits could be issued upon receipt of that proof, with applicants having to submit the LSAA when obtained, would speed up the permit process and would help to break up the permit logjam.

But the logjam persists. The direction from the board did not change the operative county cultivation ordinance. "The ordinance is the ordinance. We have to work with the ordinance," said Director Schultz said recently.

Schultz noted that COVID-19 has caused Planning and Building Services to close its front desk, and not having a front desk has dramatically reduced the number of people who are actively working on their permits.

"Everybody likes coming to the counter, and a lot of people like to pay us with cash. So COVID has impacted our process in our cannabis unit," Schultz said.

Schultz said the unit has not been sending many inspectors out into the field to look at growing operations due to the virus. "If we think they will have to go into a building to inspect, we don't send them. If we think they won't have to go into a building, and if it is critical to getting an application processed, we will send them."

Acting Cannabis Unit Program Manager Megan Duckett said that she and her staff have been working on processing paperwork, filing applications, working with applicants about their applications, and processing requests for relocation of operations and reassignment of permits.

and nail salons.

Another revised health order coming

On Tuesday, May 19, Doohan told the supervisors that, again following in the wake of Governor Newsom, who released a second wave of changes to his guidelines last week, she will be releasing a sixth revised shelter-in-place public health order soon.

When asked when the latest anticipated order might come into effect, Mendocino County Public Information Officer Sarah Duckett said it could come out as early as Thursday, May 21 or as late as next Tuesday, May 26.

The timing will depend on how long it takes the State of California to approve the "attestation" paperwork needed for Mendocino County to move on to the next stage in reopening. Duckett said the county's attestation was submitted on Tuesday, and it usually takes between one and three days to be approved. "We are just waiting," Duckett said.

The new order will allow the county to proceed to Stage 2.5 of Governor Newsom's Resiliency Roadmap, which will allow in-store retail and limited in-house restaurant dining. When the latest revised shelter in place order is released, it will be found on the county website's "Health Order" page at www.mendocinocounty.org/community/novel-coronavirus/health-order.

The ability of the county to proceed to Stage 2.5 is the result of the fact that Doohan completed the attestation, which is required by the state's Department of Public Health. On May 12, Doohan told the board that it would take her two weeks to finish the document, but she in fact finished it a week early.

Business re-opening guidelines

Fourth District Supervisor Dan Gjerde told supervisors on Tuesday that county staff has almost completed work on a new webpage called COVID-19 Business Reopening Plans. The webpage will offer concise information about best safety practices for a variety of business types, some that have been operating, and some that should be able to open soon.

According to Gjerde, the information comes from discussions facilitated by the West Company and also from state and Mendocino County sources.

According to Duckett, the webpage will be published on Thursday. It will appear online on the county's webpage at https://www.mendocinocounty.org/business/business-resource-for-covid-19.

Mendocino College

CONGRATULATES
OUR 2020
GRADUATES!




www.mendocino.edu

Mendocino College celebrates 2020 graduates

Submitted by Mendocino College

Mendocino College is finding ways to celebrate its 2020 graduates in light of shelter in place restrictions, which have forced the postponement of this year's commencement ceremony, originally scheduled for May 22.

In April, a survey was sent to all graduating students to gather input about how best to move forward given the situation. The overwhelming response from students was that they preferred to postpone the ceremony until large gatherings are allowed, instead of hosting a virtual ceremony.

"We felt it was imperative to hear from graduating students about how they wanted to be celebrated during this special time in their lives," said Mendocino College Interim Superintendent/ President Eileen Cichocki.

"I am deeply sorry that our commencement ceremony will not be able to proceed as planned. Commencement is my favorite day of the year, it is a culmination of the college mission and so rewarding to see students celebrating their tremendous achievements with their families, friends, and faculty who supported them along the way. I look forward to celebrating with our students when large gatherings are once again allowed."

For some, graduation is a milestone that marks the end of a chapter. For others, it is symbolic of everything they have overcome. According to Gabriel Baca who is graduating this semester with an Associate of Science in Mathematics for Transfer and an Associate of Arts in Political Science for Transfer: "The commencement ceremony is the day that students' hard work pays off; celebrating

alongside graduating friends and seeing the joyous tears in their families' eyes makes all that stress and those tireless nights of studying worth the sacrifice."

Thanks to the Mendocino College Foundation, students are being gifted a \$50 dinner voucher to be used on May 22 at a select group of participating local restaurants throughout the district. This will allow students to celebrate the actual day of graduation with a meal at home while at the same time supporting local restaurants during this time of reduced business.

"Public health and safety do come first, so I am thankful that I can still mark the occasion with my family while we wait for that glorious celebration. I think the graduate lawn sign and dinner voucher are great ways for the college to help keep that spirit of achievement and recognition alive," says Baca.

The Mendocino College Foundation has also provided funding to place banners throughout the district, including over State Street in downtown Ukiah, as well as yard signs for students to post in front of their homes to boast their achievements. There will also be a listing of all 2020 graduates in a special magazine published by the Ukiah Daily Journal that will be circulated in both Lake and Mendocino counties.

According to Mendocino College Foundation Board President Tom Dow: "The Foundation is honored to provide financial support towards this year's commencement activities. Now more than ever, it's important that we sufficiently honor and recognize our 2020 Mendocino College graduates."

Grateful Gleaners
Annual Plant Sale

Plan Your Victory Garden



The forecast is for warm, sunny weather, so come peruse the many plant and seed offerings on
Sunday, May 24
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
From Willits Main St, turn onto East Valley at the Post Office, then left onto Humboldt Street. Follow the plant sale sign to 130 Tuttle Lane.
FOR YOUR SAFETY, CURRENT HEALTH DEPT. PROTOCOLS WILL BE OBSERVED!





Grateful Gleaners Annual Plant Sale now set for May 24

Submitted by the Grateful Gleaners

The Grateful Gleaners Annual Plant Sale, postponed last weekend due to rain, is now set for Sunday, May 24. "The forecast is for warm, sunny weather, so come peruse the many plant and seed offerings – Plan your Victory Garden!" The sale is at 130 Tuttle Lane (turn onto East Valley at the Post Office, then left onto Humboldt Street, and follow the plant sale signs. 10 am to 4 pm. "For your safety, current Health Department protocols will be observed!"



Above: During the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order, MCHC dental staff members take extra precautions to provide emergency treatment for a patient.

MCHC Health Centers supports community dentists and their patients to reduce the spread of coronavirus

Submitted by MCHC Health Centers

MCHC Health Centers is safeguarding community dentists by providing emergency care to their patients in Ukiah, Willits and Lakeport during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order.

When the statewide shelter in place began, dental offices throughout California were asked to reduce their practices to emergency services only. Most dentists complied to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and to avoid using personal protective equipment needed for those on the front lines of the pandemic. When community dentists did open their offices to treat dental emergencies, they could not avoid putting themselves and their employees at some risk.

MCHC Dental Director Dr. Navneet Mansukhani explained: "At MCHC, we were already minimizing staff and patient exposure by continually disinfecting the health centers, and employees were already using personal protective equipment. Plus, our dental staff was already coming in to work every day with the skills and equipment to care for patients, so offering emergency dental care to other dentists' patients just seemed like the right thing to do, regardless of whether we are paid for the care. As soon as the shelter in place ends, we'll send patients right back to their regular dentist."

Dentistry is one of several essential health services MCHC offers. MCHC is a patient-centered medical home where patients can receive all their basic health care in one location, including medical, dental, behavioral health, and some specialty care. As such, MCHC has remained open throughout the shelter in place.

According to MCHC CEO Scott McFarland, MCHC has a history of community partnerships. "We are so fortunate to have such a strong, community-focused team," he said. "I'm proud of our dental department for reaching out to support our community dentists and their patients during these challenging times."

Mansukhani encourages patients with dental concerns to contact their regular dentist for a consultation and potentially, a referral to MCHC for emergency treatment. Once the shelter in place is lifted, MCHC will route all patients back to their private dentists.

For dentistry and other services, MCHC is currently providing some treatment on site and some treatment via telehealth, which involves consultations via secure video conferencing. Dental services are currently limited to those involving acute infections or essential follow-up care, including for children.

MCHC is open during regular business hours with modified services at all four sites: in Ukiah at Hillside Health Center and Dora Street Health Center, in Willits at Little Lake Health Center, and in Lakeport at Lakeview Health Center. All MCHC health centers accept Medi-Cal, Medicare, Covered California insurance, and other insurance. Learn more at www.mchcinc.org.

The rest of **Rules** | *From Page 1*

other such forms of punishment.

He said that overall the experience has been challenging for the WPD, but interactions with community members have been largely positive.

"Everybody has been wonderful," said Allen, who began working as Willits chief of police in early March. "I have personally contacted businesses, and they were very, very happy to comply.... And I just think it's very, very important that we acknowledge and thank them for their patience and their cooperation. And we don't want to ever be put in a situation at the Willits Police Department where we would have to confront and fight our very own businesses. So thank you everybody for your cooperation."

Prior to Allen speaking, City Manager Stephanie Garabrant-Sierra explained that while the city has been told by the County of Mendocino to reference potential shelter-in-place infractions to county code enforcement to determine if they are non-compliant, enforcement measures for any infractions by those in Willits is then put back into the hands of the WPD.

Allen said he and the WPD will continue to strive to avoid the use of punishments like citations moving forward.

"We know that this is a confusing and challenging time," he said. "Specific to our businesses, as we move forward, of course our first response, I feel as a police department, is community education. So I've been working closely with the [Willits Chamber of Commerce] – we've been contacting individual businesses."

"We acknowledge that this is a very, very difficulty time for businesses," he continued. "We have a great business community, and we're just asking everybody for voluntary compliance."

Garabrant-Sierra did note there had been some complaints received of some in the city not following the social distancing guidelines in the county orders, and warned that the WPD could face tough decisions in the future of deciding whether to issue citations. She asked the council for some direction on the matter.

Chief Allen spoke first saying: "I want to reiterate that what we've been doing is community education. We've been listening to the business owners, and we're hoping for voluntary compliance with these issues. It would be very, very unfortunate in my view if we had to write citations for businesses within our own city."

"And we're trying to do this very objectively, very fairly, we're trying to educate people. But the problem exists that if one or two businesses decide that they're not going to follow the order when the rest of our businesses in town who are having the same challenges are following these directives, then it's very easy for people to point to the police department, and say that we're playing favorites and that type of thing. We want to avoid that situation."

There was a lengthy discussion among the council after Chief Allen's remarks, with councilmembers Greta Kanne and Saprina Rodriguez saying they were against citations being considered as an option to use against local businesses, many of whom are already struggling mightily.

"I'm very uncomfortable with the idea of the city issuing any kind of citations or strict enforcement on our local businesses if they are not in compliance," said Kanne. "I think that the way we have to look at this whole situation right now is a balance. Public health is of course important. Protecting our health care system is of course important, but our local businesses are suffering unduly."

"The small businesses in our community – the salons, the bars, the gyms, the movie theater – are taking the brunt of the economic impact," she continued. "While places like WalMart and Costco are open and full and not enforcing social distancing,

and selling non-essential goods. And I just think that there is a high level of frustration that businesses in our community are absorbing the hit. And to think that our city would actually enforce that with citations or some kind of firmer actions is really mind-boggling to me," she said.

"So I understand you're in a very difficult position of walking that line. I appreciate very much the education tactic, trying to work with the business community. I think that you're doing a very good job of having that be the first approach. I personally would be uncomfortable if it escalated beyond that."

Her comments, which Rodriguez said she was in "full agreement" with, prompted Mayor Gerry Gonzalez to assert that they were suggesting the city should not enforce a state law – a tactic which he was clearly against.

"I've spent years enforcing the law," said Gonzalez, former longtime police chief of the WPD. "And I'll be honest with you – I probably would've resigned as police chief if I was told by the council not to enforce a law.... I would hate to be the guy having to enforce this, but ... if I did enforce it I would hope my city would back me."

Rodriguez responded that she didn't feel it was a "black and white issue" in terms of legality, and pointed out that the city has a cannabis ordinance, despite the fact that cannabis is technically still illegal under federal law.

"I still stand [firm] that I'm not comfortable with anybody receiving a citation," said Rodriguez. "I think that we're not in a situation where we have COVID-19 running rampant in our community, and education is sufficient."

Vice Mayor Larry Stranske weighed in that he agreed with Gonzalez and Strong about adhering to enforcement rules, saying, "Public safety is my priority right now."

Strong had said previously that while the difficulties local businesses are facing is heartbreaking to her, "the health of the community has to be the first priority, and that means following the guidelines and the protocols that have come down from Public Health and from the state."

Garabrant-Sierra said she would take that 3-2 majority opinion as direction for the city and WPD to continue with it's current strategy in enforcement.

"So what I'm hearing for now is that the city staff is not being told to not enforce a law, which I am obviously happy to hear," she said. "We are going to try to educate and give people leeway, but to the extent that I am told by the county that a certain action of an individual or a business is violation of the order, our police chief will be enforcing that."

Kanne and Rodriguez also both urged that the city open up parks and other facilities more quickly any time the county issues updated orders allowing it.

Kanne said that she was hearing an increasing "sense of frustration" among community members, who "have been cooped up now for two months."

"A lot of people are recognizing there's a tremendous difference between our region and more populated regions to the south of us," she said. "And so there is a growing sense that we need a little more regional specific freedom here, opening of some access.... I guess I would just ask that the city recognize that there is a pent-up demand for these facilities that our community pays for."

Garabrant-Sierra and Public Works Superintendent Kenan O'Shea responded that they have been trying to get the facilities open quickly following county orders allowing it, but do need to make the proper preparations such as mowing the grass and putting up signage with social distancing rules. (Most of the city parks are now open from 7 am to 7 pm daily, although playground equipment is still off limits.)

O'Shea also noted: "When you open something up, you essentially flip a switch,

and you have to see how the public reacts and make sure that everyone is following the order and that everybody is safe, because that's our primary concern."

"So please put the message out there for people to use the appropriate fields that are open, and to use them in compliance," he added, "so that we can continue as the order changes – and we move into the other phases of the 'Reopen California Roadmap' – that we can open other fields and facilities as time allows.... We appreciate everybody's patience. I know everyone's getting antsy. It's spring, the weather's nice, we all want to be outside."

Garabrant-Sierra pointed out that the county health orders which loosen shelter-in-place restrictions always include stipulations that any open facilities must still allow for all social distancing protocols.

She also warned that the city violating a county health order could "jeopardize our potential for COVID funding" from the state.

Kanne asked for clarification about use of fields at public schools in the city, saying she had heard from members of the community who had been given "stern warnings" by WPD officers to leave the school grounds after attempting to get some outdoor time with their kids at the fields.

Garabrant-Sierra responded that she would inquire as to whether the Willits Unified School District had any intention to open up the fields, since they held the authority on that decision.

In a May 20 email response to a Willits Weekly inquiry, Garabrant-Sierra gave an update saying, "I talked to [the WUSD], and they said that [the school fields] are not barricaded, but people do need to follow the orders and do social distancing and not do anything that the [county] order prohibits."

Relinquishment approved

The city council approved the relinquishment of Main Street last week from the state, meaning that ownership of the public right-of-way in downtown Willits will soon be officially handed over to the city along with all state-owned facilities there.

Caltrans representative Cathy McKeon said that all that's left now is approval by the California Transportation Commission, along with some final bits of maintenance, which she expected to all be completed by July 1.

"I think it was one of the most successful transitions in downtown improvements that I have ever seen," said McKeon.

The relinquishment agreement was originally signed by the city and state of California in January of 2012 as construction of the Highway 101 bypass was set to begin, so the approval by the council last week marked a significant milestone of an arduous eight-year saga for Willits.

In her agenda summary report, city manager Garabrant-Sierra summed up the accomplishment this way: "This is the final step in a long, at times turbulent, but ultimately very successful process to relinquish the heart of downtown to the city," she said. "Considering the nature and location of the work that was done, the efforts made by Caltrans, Granite Construction, and their associated subcontractors, to minimize disruption of the community were extraordinarily successful."

"The cooperative effort between the contractors, Caltrans, city staff, and the community has been recognized by the state and has received an Excellence in Partnering Award for the second straight year," she continued. "This is, in large part, due to the extreme patience and cooperation of the community, the importance and uniqueness of which cannot be overstated."

At the council meeting, Garabrant-Sierra gave thanks to former Public Works Superintendent Bill Wilson, who passed away recently.

"One person who I wish could be here is Bill Wilson," she said. "I know he was sort

of our point person in this entire process. And I'm just sorry he couldn't be here for this day. I know he worked really really hard to make sure this went right, and kudos to Bill."

Councilmember Strong asked about who would now be held liable – the city or the state – if the retaining wall that was constructed near the bottom of Sherwood Road failed at some point in the future. She pointed out that there had been some problems with similarly constructed walls near the south ramps of the 101 bypass.

City Attorney Jim Lance said his understanding was that if there was a wall failure due to "poor construction or non-compliance with standards or a design defect" on the part of Caltrans, that they would be held liable, even after the relinquishment.

Garabrant-Sierra did note that the design had been analyzed and approved by a city engineer, and they were confident in the work.

In her agenda report, she stated that all the maintenance tasks that the state agreed to "have been completed to the satisfaction of city staff and all requirements made of the state in the attached agreement have been fulfilled."

O'Shea said that the Public Works Department is getting ready for the changes that will ensue once the city is officially responsible for all Main Street upkeep.

"Our department's looking forward to it," he said. "We'd like to get working on it and get it looking presentable and assume responsibility for it. So we're ready for that phase. We have begun to brace ourselves for that reality, because that's going to increase our workload quite a bit. It's going to be a pretty heavy impact."

"And we would like to hope that the council would be open to maybe the idea of back-filling some vacancies so that we can give it the attention it's going to require," he added. "But we can handle it, and we're looking forward to it."

Wastewater testing

Garabrant-Sierra informed the council that so far the city's efforts to get the local wastewater effluence tested for the presence of COVID-19 have not been successful.

She said that Stanford University, which had initially expressed interest in testing in the Willits area, had then decided to go with a city closer to their campus.

She and staff also inquired into the program Lakeport recently used for testing, which was run through MIT, but were told that Willits wasn't eligible for that program.

She added that they're continuing to pursue other avenues for effluence testing, but haven't found anything yet.

Outdoor dining permits

Gonzalez asked Community Development Director Dusty Duley during the meeting about the potential to streamline the process for allowing restaurants in the city to acquire outdoor dining permits.

He felt this could be helpful to some local dine-in businesses that will be opening once the county allows it, and trying to comply with social distancing rules that remain in place.

Duley responded that the city has a relatively cheap process to apply for outdoor dining, with just a \$150 application fee.

He added that the presence of Assistant Planner Michelle Johnson on the city staff should help make the city able to quickly process the applications, though things like ADA compliance and other liability issues will always have to be addressed.

"I think staff's going to be very anxious to try and help out if we get some of those requests from some of our local businesses," said Duley.

MendoLake Food Hub now delivers twice-weekly to Willits residents

Submitted by MendoLake Food Hub

As grocery shelves sometimes sit empty, the MendoLake Food Hub has redoubled its efforts to keep fresh, local, nutrient-dense food on local tables. In response to an outpouring of consumer need and interest, the Food Hub, once only available to wholesale buyers, now sells directly to buyer's clubs and individuals.

According to Caroline Radice, manager of the Food Hub: "Never before has our work been so important. In times like these – when uncertainty upsets the daily rhythms and health of our communities – we are called to deliver on that call to action. We have a long history of rallying during times of crisis and coming together as a community.

"Just today at the Food Hub," Radice continued, "we talked to a 73-year-old with health issues, who was excited to receive a delivery of fresh produce to her door so she didn't have to go out to "face the palpable stress and craziness of going out for groceries."

The online Food Hub, www.mendolakefoodhub.com,

is open twice a week for orders, Sundays (for Tuesday delivery) and Wednesdays (for Friday delivery). There is a \$35 minimum order for deliveries within the City of Ukiah or \$65 minimum for the greater Ukiah valley, and for Willits. Neighbors can set up a joint drop-off point and collaborate.

For those outside of these areas or for any additional questions, please contact the Food Hub directly by calling the office at 707-467-3238 or emailing orders@mendolakefoodhub.com. Please note that the Food Hub staff is working remotely and that it could take 24 to 48 hours to return messages.

In addition to the local fresh produce that the Food Hub is known for, a variety of items, such as whole wheat flour, rice, eggs, bread, olive oil, walnuts, spices, and much more, are also available for purchase and delivery. Please visit www.mendolakefoodhub.com on a sales day (Sundays or Wednesdays) to see the full offering.

"The Food Hub," explained Radice, "provides an essential service connecting our neighbors to healthy, local produce grown in their proverbial backyard. As folks stock their

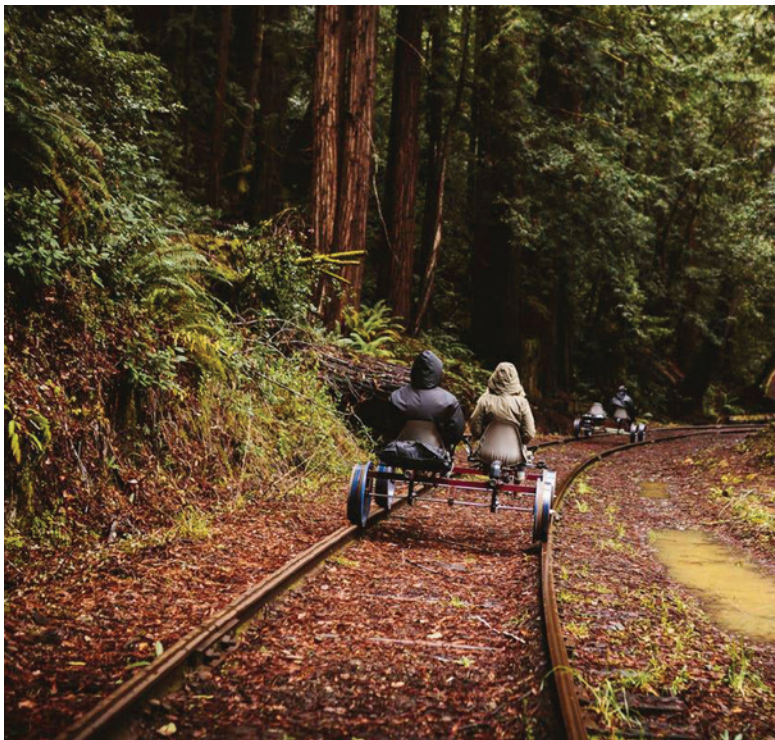
pantries and fridges with food purchased through the Food Hub, they are also supporting our local economy.

"Local farmers need our support," she added. "They are feeling the economic hit of their regular customers – restaurants, schools and businesses – shuttering their doors. I encourage everyone to purchase one item on their shopping list locally in a show of solidarity with our farming community in this trying time."

Thanks to grant funding from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the MendoLake Food Hub started operating in 2015 as a program of North Coast Opportunities with the mission of increasing the economic viability of local farms and increasing local food access in our community. They do this by providing farmers access to a shared sales and distribution network which serves wholesale buyers like grocery stores, schools and restaurants (and now buyer's clubs and individuals in feasible delivery locations). All of their farmers are "certified producers" (this means that they grow what they sell), and they're "approved sources," so they follow stringent food safety practices.



Above, left: A couple enjoys the unique experience of rail biking together (note that riders are required to wear facial coverings during their trip at this time). Above, right: Rail bikes, like these seen here, are now running out of the Skunk Train's Fort Bragg depot for local riders. Below: Although the Skunk Train is not operating, the rail bikes are available for guided trips along Pudding Creek Estuary near Fort Bragg. At bottom: A group of rail bikes makes its way along the tracks that usually carry the Skunk Train.



Skunk Train rail bike tours out of Fort Bragg, available for local riders

The Skunk Train is excited to announce the reopening of their rail bike trips out of Fort Bragg. With the recent update to the Mendocino County shelter-in-place order, which allows certain activities for people residing within 50 miles, the Skunk Train is now able to offer excursions for local riders.

The Skunk Train is operating the rail bikes out of the Fort Bragg depot. From there, a guide will lead the groups through majestic redwood groves along the Pudding Creek Estuary, where sightings of osprey, blue herons, and other wildlife are common. The destination is Glen Blair Junction, where the riders can rest for 30 minutes before heading back to Fort Bragg. The trip is roughly 1.5 hours.

The recumbent bikes seat two people and are attached to the train tracks. The riders then pedal just like on a normal bicycle. According to the Skunk Train website: "This trip is suited for riders of all skill levels. The railbikes include an optional motorized assist, to help you up the return grade, or simply to allow you take a breather during your ride."

The trips are limited to six bikes (a maximum of 12 riders), observing social distancing of at least 6 feet, and requiring facial coverings (at this time) during the trip. With the local discount, the price is \$40 per bike (accommodates two riders).

The Skunk is running at least a couple rail bike excursions every day, with up to four trips on weekend days. Visit www.skunktrain.com/railbikes/ for more information regarding times, restrictions, and making reservations.

This report was based on posts on the Skunk Train's Facebook page and website.



“

We’re all made for more

”

Now there are more ways to take control of your health without leaving home.

Meet your doctor – or any doctor – with a virtual visit. Manage your family’s entire health needs through your personal online health hub. It’s all quick, easy and secure, from the healthcare professionals you already trust. We offer more ways to manage your health, so you can enjoy more convenience and more connection.

To learn more about managing your health virtually, visit AdventistHealth.org/CareAnywhere. To schedule an appointment, call 833-AH-Wellness (833-249-3556)

