

# Willits Weekly

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Thursday, July 2, 2015



## City passes deficit budget

Zack Cinek

Reporter  
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Council members voted 4-0 at their last meeting to approve a new city budget for the 2015-2016 fiscal year that began Wednesday.

Council members Larry Stranske, Madge Strong and Ron Orenstein voted for the budget. Councilwoman Holly Madrigal was absent from the meeting.

In the budget, spending in the city's general fund exceeds revenue by \$48,745 and leaves that fund with about \$2.4 million in working capital as projected.

The previous budget was passed with a \$138,849

Read the rest of **City** |  
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## School board approves \$17.9 million budget

Mike A'Dair

Reporter  
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Without discussion, Willits Unified School District trustees approved a \$17.9 million budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year Wednesday evening. The vote was 4-0, with board member Christopher Neary absent. The final budget figure was \$1.2 million more than was spent last year.

The district is entering its second year of a rebuilding phase. Superintendent Patricia Johnson either has hired or is planning to hire 23 new staff members, including replacements for retiring staff as well as people to fill new positions.

If all goes according to

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## Covelo man held in pot grow killing

Sheriff's deputies arrested 66-year-old John Ross, Sr. of Covelo on suspicion of shooting a Ukiah man to death Monday evening at a Refuse Road home in Round Valley.

The shooting reportedly occurred just before 7 pm in the 22000 block of Refuse Road, sheriff's Lt. Greg Stefani reported, at a "marijuana grow site consistent with medical marijuana requirements."

Deputies responding to the scene received "multiple reports identifying the suspect as ... Ross," Stefani said. Ross had been

Read the rest of **Ross** |  
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Photo by Maureen Moore

Above: Willits Brass, one of the two performers selected to sing the National Anthem during the 2015 Willits Frontier Days Main Street Parade. Members include, from left: Sheryl Gard-McFadden, Tom Allman, Eduardo Brito, Dan Church and Jim Church.

## Willits Frontier Days Special: National Anthem Singing Contest

There was a large turnout of singers hoping to be chosen to sing the National Anthem for the 2015 Willits Frontier Days events during the annual contest held last Sunday at the rodeo grounds.

The judges – Kera Colvard, Johnetta Thomen, Jeanette Turner and John Turner – heard each of the entrants perform, and after much deliberation, two winners were selected: Willits Brass and Natalea Pires.

"The Willits Brass band's rendition was a new twist and really amazing," explained Colvard. "They did their own thing, and we're really excited to have something out-of-the-box and different for this year."

Willits Brass will play the National Anthem to open the



Natalea Pires, who will sing the National Anthem at the 2015 rodeo events.

Main Street Parade on July 4. Band members include Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman on tuba, Jim Church on trombone, Dan Church on baritone, Eduardo Brito on trumpet, and Sheryl Gard-McFadden

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Below: All the singers who competed at the 2015 contest, including, from left: Brandi Cameron, Joey Kroh, Tom Allman, Sheryl Gard-McFadden, Dan Church, Jim Church, Lillian Hardy (front) Natalea Pires, Cadence Zanola (front), Michaela Figini-Myers, Laney Hendry (front) and Kelley Labus.

Photo by Maureen Moore



## Tri-county pot raids net 86,500 plants

A four-day marijuana eradication operation on private lands in the heart of Northern California's "Emerald Triangle" uncovered extensive damage to

North Coast streams as well as netting more than 86,500 marijuana plants.

Last week's raids – carried out by Mendocino, Humboldt and Trinity county sheriff's deputies – marked the largest pot eradication operations since 2011's "Operation Full Court Press," a six-county action that destroyed some 630,000 plants in Mendocino National Forest, Sheriff Tom Allman said at a press conference on the raid Friday.

In addition to the plants, almost \$9,000 in cash, several firearms and thousands of pounds of dried pot, were confiscated from the area – where Mendocino, Humboldt and Trinity counties meet – by 30 to 40 sheriff's deputies assisted by state Fish and Wildlife officers.

Read more of **Pot** |  
Over on Page 5



## Fires in Covelo

Sunday afternoon

Jennifer Poole

Editor & Reporter  
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Multiple fires broke out in Covelo Sunday afternoon, with the first fire, at Highway 162 and Cemetery Lane, reported at 1:01 pm. Official information has it that one home, three barns and several other small outbuildings were completely destroyed by the fire. But locals say two families lost their homes, with others displaced who'd been living in one of the barns. No one was injured, although some vehicles were burned.

Read the rest of **Fires** |  
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## Higher city pool rates take effect

Zack Cinek

Reporter  
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Higher charges for summertime swimming went into effect Wednesday at the city pool. Willits City Council members voted at the end of last month to increase rates.

At the time of the hearing, pool staff was already busy. The pool's first round of swim lessons were booked, and new instructors were coming by off-the-clock to prepare for the season, Pool Manager Jacob Stubberfield said.

For help in setting new rates, the city examined pool fees in Fort Bragg, Ukiah and at the KOA campground, City Manager Adrienne Moore said.

Read the rest of **Pool** |  
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## 'Vague' road map for county mental health services approved

William Cutlip

Reporter  
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The Mendocino County Mental Health Advisory Board approved the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Components Plan at a June 23 special meeting in Ukiah. The 83-page document will serve the board and the county as a road map for mental health services during fiscal year 2015-2016.

The board took comments from members regarding the contents of the plan,

Read the rest of **Services** |  
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## Willits Frontier Days Special: Community Art Project

The display of wooden boots outside of J.D. Redhouse was a big draw during Thursday's Hometown Celebration and proved to be a good fundraiser, too. Interested persons bid, silent-auction style, on the decorated wooden cutouts, and have already earned a total of \$700 for Willits Frontier Days, the non-profit organization that runs the Fourth of July events. First-, second- and third-place boots were chosen in four categories: Local Business, Individual, Youth, and Local School. First-place winners won ice cream or fudge from J.D. Redhouse. The top four boots will be on display for all to see at the Willits Frontier Days Rodeo Grounds.

In the Local Business category, first place went to Cat's Meow, second place to Picaro Pets, and third place to Mazahar. In the Individual category, first place went to Hanna Willoughby, second to Leda Dudley, and third to Grandma and Madison. In the Youth category, first place went to Sylvana Senerchia and second to Ella and Kaitlyn. In Local School category, first place went to Blake Leslie, second to Cheyenne Lang, and third to the Willits Elementary Charter School (Kristen, Aiden, Orion).

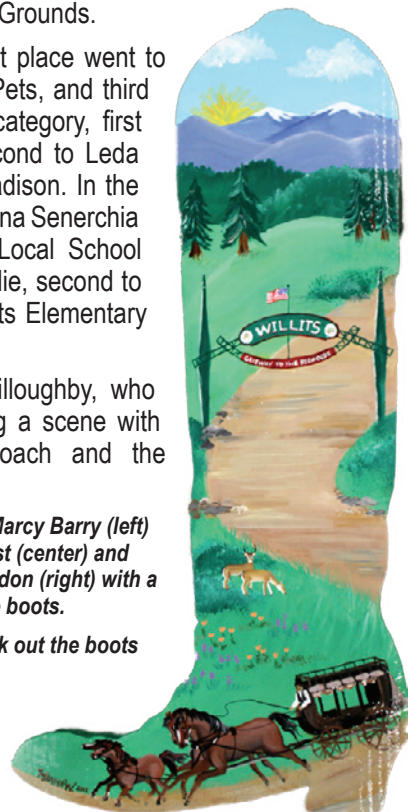
The overall winner was Hanna Willoughby, who entered a hand-painted boot featuring a scene with her great-great-grandfather's stagecoach and the Willits Arch.

At left, top: Willits Frontier Days President Marcy Barry (left) stands with J.D. Redhouse's Jake Whitehurst (center) and Willits Frontier Days Vice President Tylor Yaden (right) with a check for money earned from the sale of the boots.

Left: Hometown Celebration attendees check out the boots on display Thursday.

Right: The boot decorated by Hanna Willoughby that won the individual and overall categories.

Photos by Maureen Moore



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## Willits Frontier Days Special: Horse Show & Gymkhana

Riders of all ages showed off their riding skills during the Willits Frontier Days Gymkhana on Saturday and Horse Show on Sunday.

Participants in different age groups worked hard to earn points in each class, hoping for the overall high score and to be the winner of the coveted high point awards.

For the gymkhana, high point in the 12 and under group went to Hazel Cooke and Poppy, and reserve to Madison Forrester and Maggie. In 13 to 17, high point went to Carlie Scarbery and Roanie. In 18 and over, high point went to Jennifer Seymour and Sizzle, and reserve went to Carmen Coleman and DJ.

Gymkhana high point winners received a saddle pad with leather corners custom made by Mary Ann Underhill. Reserve winners received a headstall and rein set outfitted with silver pieces. Every contestant also received a rope halter donated by Hennessy Funds.

"We would like to thank WFD President Marcy Barry for her help organizing the event, announcer Maureen Scarbery and event secretary Chris Ceresa, Fred Barry and Billy Rutler for preparing the arena and cooking our lunch, Leslie Cooke for running the gate, and Sarah Mayfield and Carrie and Jeff Andrade for their help with arena setup," said gymkhana coordinator Kathryn Baechtel.

For the horse show, Noah Willoughby and Buster won the 12 and under high point award, and reserve high point went to Samantha Arms and Diamond Dutch. Lijja Lamkin and First Class Encounter won high point in the 13 to 17 age group, and Carlie Scarbery and Sir Ozzwald won reserve. In 18 and over, high point went to Allison Ross on Loki.

A complete list of results is available online at www.WillitsFrontierDays.com/events. — Maureen Moore



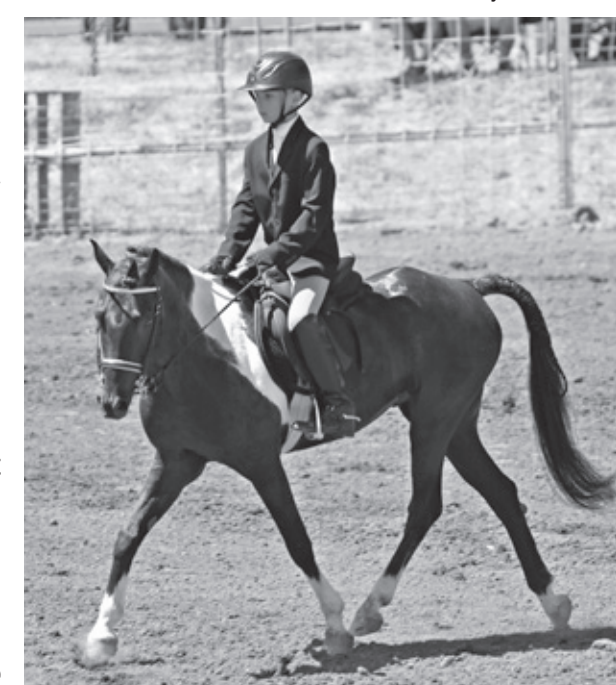
Above, left: Riders who won awards at the 2015 Gymkhana, from left: Madison Forrester, Hazel Cooke, Carlie Scarbery, Jennifer Seymour and Carmen Coleman.

Photo by Kathryn Baechtel

Above, right: Danielle Barry and Rebel weave through poles at the gymkhana.

Below: Noah Willoughby rides his horse Buster during the horse show.

Photos by Maureen Moore



## FRANK R. HOWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

# Celebrating Willits Frontier Days



IN 1925 the Willits Development Association began discussing the need for a modern hospital. Working with the American Legion Post #174, they sponsored an old fashioned celebration on the 4th of July. The proceeds were designated for the building of a Willits Community Hospital. Charles S. Howard, owner of a nearby ranch (and 10 years later the owner of the famed racehorse Seabiscuit), was the first Grand Marshall of the Frontier Days Parade. Just two months before the second annual Frontier Days, Charles Howard's 15-year-old, Frank R. Howard, was injured in a serious automobile accident. Because of the seriousness of Frank's injuries, he was unable to save him without a hospital or emergency equipment. The loss of his son moved Charles Howard to donate a generous sum of \$42,000 for the construction of Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital. Today Charles Howard's legacy and vision for providing Willits with advanced, state-of-the-art health care continues as we open our new Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital at the end of the year!



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At top, from left: Dalli Fonsen rides during the judging. Caitlyn Forrester gives the judge her answer. Thais Reed during her horsemanship pattern. Above: The 2015 Willits Frontier Days tiara. Below: The three contestants prepare to start the arena judging portion of the contest.

Photos by Maureen Moore and Keely Ahders



## Willits Frontier Days Special: Sweetheart Judging; in the arena

The second half of the Willits Frontier Days Sweetheart contest judging took place Sunday during the horse show event.

The three contestants, Dalli Fonsen, Thais Reed and Caitlyn Forrester, demonstrated their riding skills and equestrian knowledge during the "in arena" portion of the judging.

The girls performed a Horsemanship Pattern – a series of memorized moves and commands around the arena - showing control of their mounts and an understanding of riding terms and equestrianship. They then answered questions from the judges: Nicole Persico Kunka, Riata King and Chris Ceresa. They were asked to dismount from their horse and to re-mount, as well as remove and replace their horse's bridle. They finished the judging with their Queen Run.

Scores from the "arena" judges will be added to scores from the Poise and Personality contest held last weekend. Those scores will be added to the girls' ticket count numbers, and the winner of the 2015 title will be announced Thursday, July 2. Come wave to the new Sweetheart during Friday's CCPRA rodeo, Saturday's Main Street Parade and CCPRA Rodeo, and Sunday's Junior Rodeo.

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