

Willits Weekly

Online & Print

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A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

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Thursday, July 30, 2020



County can afford full Measure B project

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

The Measure B Committee was given information at its July 22 meeting which showed that, even with an economic recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Mendocino County will be able to afford the full Measure B facilities build-out, will be able to afford to staff and operate those facilities, and will, in addition, be able to provide some mental health services that the county is not providing now.

However, committee members were not able to discuss the ramifications of that information at last week's meeting.

This is because, after a cursory reading of the operational feasibility report by Measure B Project Manager Alyson Bailey, committee Chair Donna Moschetti steered the committee into receiving a scheduled presentation by architectural firm Nacht and Lewis on the architectural plans for the proposed crisis residential treatment facility.

"I am going to omit any comment from the

Read the rest of
Measure B
Over on Page 6

County to work on vegetation abatement ordinance

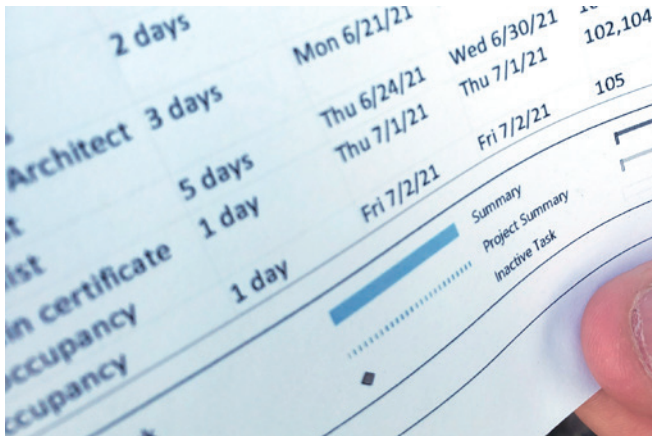
Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

During last week's meeting, the board of supervisors voted unanimously to direct First District Supervisor Carre Brown to work with the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council to begin the process of crafting an ordinance addressing hazardous vegetation abatement on land in the unincorporated part of the county.

The rest of the board was in warm support of Brown's proposal. Second District Supervisor John McCowen connected lack of vegetation management to fire danger, and Fourth District Supervisor Dan Gjerde told his colleagues on the board that the vegetation management / fire danger nexus was "a problem on the coast as well, even on the west side of the highway."

According to the agenda report: "A hazardous vegetation and rubbish abatement ordinance can require property owners to remove combustible fuel within the unincorporated areas of the county. Under such an ordinance any

Read the rest of
Abatement
Over on Page 6



Above, from left: Fred Russell, construction manager and consultant for design on the new firehouse. The completion date for occupancy on the new firehouse is Friday, July 2, 2021. Marty Walsh, superintendent for the general contractor for the firehouse project, ACGC. Below: The fire chief, and the rest of the crew, can't wait for the new firehouse to be built.



Photos by
Maureen
Moore

Breaking Ground

Little Lake Fire Department project gets underway, with crews starting work on new firehouse on Monday, July 27

"We're starting!" said Little Lake Fire Chief Chris Wilkes, as he watched the giant excavator take scoops of dirt out of the lot and dump them into the awaiting Bud Garman Construction truck. "The details are all worked out for the project, everything's cleared and finished, and we have a projected occupancy date of July 2, 2021."

Maureen Moore
Graphics & Photographress
maureen@willitsweekly.com

A little less than a year from now seems so soon to have the impressive structure up and standing where just a dirt lot sits now, but Wilkes noted it's full steam ahead with the crew from ACGC, the general contractor for the job, and also, with the help expediting the process from the City of Willits.

"I really want to express my thanks to the city and the staff



Above: Little Lake Fire Department's supporters, staff and volunteers pose together in front of what will eventually be the new Little Lake Firehouse, including, from back row, left: Michelle Schnitzius, Aaron Branscomb, Tony Madrigal, Skip Lucier, Nancy Stipe, and Tom Herman. Front row, from left: Mike Neely, Chris Wilkes, Eric Alvarez, John Thomen, and Cooper Wilkes. Below, left: A Bud Garman Construction truck gets loaded with dirt from the old firehouse. Below, right: Tony Madrigal, left, and Chris Wilkes, right, show the tentative calendar schedule for the new firehouse.



Willits care home reports positive COVID test

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One person has tested positive for the coronavirus at Redwoods Manor Care Home, located on South Main Street in Willits. It is not known if that person was a staff person or a resident. All residents and staff were reportedly tested for the virus on Wednesday morning.

Mendocino County Public information officer Sarah Dukett said Wednesday afternoon the county would issue a press release about the positive test at Redwoods Manor later that day; however, no press

Read the rest of
Positive
Over on Page 15

Supes to establish Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
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At a board meeting held on July 21, after hearing a strong presentation from nine leaders of the Latinx (Hispanic) community in Mendocino County, plus a presentation from a professor from UC Davis, the board of supervisors voted unanimously to implement many of the requests from the Mendocino Latinx Alliance.

The motion to do so came from Second District Supervisor John McCowen.

Those requests were 1.

Read the rest of
Latinx
Over on Page 6

First Tuesday food distribution August 4

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

Redwood Empire Food Bank will be back in Willits next week for their first Tuesday of the month "all ages" food distribution at the ballfields parking lot on East Commercial Street. Hours are from 9:30 am to noon, on Tuesday, August 4.

Anyone and everyone whose family could use some extra food is welcome. There's no advance signup required, or income limits.

The Santa Rosa food

Read the rest of
Food
Over on Page 4

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

Thank you

To the Editor:

This letter is a big "Thank You" to the medical teams of REACH Air Ambulance and Howard Memorial Hospital.

On May 9, I was on my daily walk up by the airport when I tripped and fell, resulting in a compound fracture of my right wrist. A REACH nurse, Jeff, was there and saw it happen. He summoned his partner, Marisa, and together they got me up and walked me around the corner to my duplex (I could not boost myself into his truck) and drove me to the hospital.

They were with me every second until I was admitted to the hospital. Dr. Jeremiah Dawson was on call that morning, and after I was admitted he and his wonderful medical team performed surgery. During my three-day stay I could not have asked for better care. All who attended to me were so caring and compassionate. And a plus was, the food was great!

Again, thank you REACH nurses, Jeff and Marisa, and Dr. Jeremiah Dawson and his team, and the hospital staff for a stay that showed so much concern and caring for their patient.

Kay Wright, Brooktrails

Don't throw out cannabis ordinance

To the Editor:

Some on our Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, like most of the elected officials in the United States, seem to make their decisions based only on money. Who will make how much and what's in it for me?

Never mind that this single-minded policy has brought our planet to the brink of disaster, with our forests on fire and microplastics in our children's blood, let's just pay lip service to all that nonsense about environmental catastrophes and get on with business.

Right now a significant and growing portion of the business in our county is governed by Chapter 10A.17 of the Mendocino County Code, the cannabis cultivation ordinance. And Supervisor John McCowen (District 2), apparently joined by Supervisor Ted Williams (District 5), wants to throw out the environmental protections provided by that ordinance and, as Supervisor McCowen stated in his proposal on the board's June 10 agenda, focus on where marijuana is grown and not on how it is grown.

And, if Supervisor McCowen has his way, it could be grown in any amount anywhere in the vast rolling hills of Mendocino County zoned as rangeland. Pesticides and fertilizers in our streams and rivers? Never mind. Increased fire threat on our tinder-dry hillsides? No problem.

Mendocino County voters considered just such an unregulated approach to cannabis cultivation in 2016 when Measure AF was placed on our ballots; we voted it down by substantial majorities in every supervisorial district. Now Supervisors McCowen and Williams are running interference for their big-time grower buddies and trying an end run around our 2016 vote.

The county spent about a year crafting our present cannabis cultivation ordinance that provides for legalized cultivation with strong environmental protections. About 300 small, "legacy" operators have complied with the ordinance, received their permits, and paid their fees and taxes. Under the proposed unregulated plan, their future would be uncertain in the gold-rush atmosphere Supervisor McCowen would create.

Granted, the present version of the cannabis cultivation ordinance is far from perfect, but it would be a serious

mistake to throw out this baby with the bathwater. County staff is overburdened, and the resources for enforcing the ordinance are inadequate. To remedy this, the county needs to put the folks who labored to write the present ordinance back to work to revise and finetune it rather than replace it with the wide-open gold-rush approach proposed by Supervisor McCowen and the big-time growers eager to invade our rangelands.

If you agree with me, you need to let the board of supervisors know. As near as I have been able to determine, Supervisor McCowen's proposal will come back before the board at its meeting on August 4.

Unfortunately, I cannot be sure of that date. When I called the phone number listed on the board's website and asked when the item would be back on the agenda, I was told that I could not find out until the Friday before the Tuesday meeting when it would be discussed. Squawk as I might, that was the best answer I could get.

It seems the board prefers to go about its business without us looking. But I will be looking, and I hope you will too. Our cannabis cultivation ordinance may seem insignificant compared to the monumental problems facing our planet, but preserving it is something we can do right here to protect our little corner of the Earth. Let's do it. You can email the supervisors at bos@mendocinocounty.org.

Josef Knight, Willits

Thank you

To the Editor:

Give a big round of applause for these local volunteers!

The Grange has the good fortune of community support in revitalizing the South Garden plot (corner of School and Pine).

You may have already noticed this Local Food Security Demonstration Garden – which was renewed with much hard work and inputs by community members Chris Martell and Peggy Daniels. Beautiful and healthy squash, calendula and other plants are now flourishing.

A further thank you to Jane Camp for carrying on the daily maintenance through the end of season.

A special shout-out to Grange member Mike Adams for creating a smart fence.

We hope to maintain and improve this area over time with enough support.

Please let the Grange office know if you have offerings of support or help: 459-9716.

Annie Waters, chaplain, Little Lake Grange, No. 670

Fully embracing distance learning

To the Editor:

To me, a hoping grandpa, it is quite surprising the school board had not announced a month ago, that due to: pandemic(s), possible wildfires, PG&E shutdowns, extreme climate changes, possible lack of our buildings' ability to fulfill their intended purpose either now or in the future ... to ensure education in the district ... we are fully embracing digital distance learning.

Then perhaps: Over these last months, seeing the continuing danger "crowd gathering" is to our society right now and perhaps in the future, we have been working to set the standard for digital distant learning. Such as working with community college online classes as text books, and other such resources, we are devising a curriculum for our district that meets state standards.

We are considering the interface of teachers with software that does not require corporate access to our students and their personal information. Pod groups as a digital class. Teaching aids which assist parents etc., who work questions and curriculum understanding. The district may have to contract with designers to organize and carry out this task. The future is now.

I would not have sent my children to any brick and mortar life now ... perhaps after January 2021 ... I'm not counting on it then though. The data shows more community spread in certain age groups than others. Sadly, that spread is now reaching more children than earlier in the spring.

It is sad for many of us to think of this change that our culture and community have had and enjoyed for generations. This is just another educational tool ... the digital classroom is like the county emergency center ... it will be necessary occasionally, now and in our future, and should be there workable and useable when needed. We must start. We will make it work. It ensures our future....

David Pollin, Willits

THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

July 2020

By Supervisor John Haschak

Mendocino County is now on the state watch list for coronavirus since our numbers of cases and deaths are increasing rapidly. I along with everyone I talk to is tired of this new normal. Please reach out to those who might need a phone call, words of encouragement, or a personal connection.

The Crisis Hotline is 1-855-838-0404 and always open. Mendocino County's warmline (472-2311) is still available Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm, to those who just need to talk with someone. As the saying goes: We are all in this together.

I want to express my appreciation to the Willits, Ukiah and Fort Bragg Chambers of Commerce and especially Ron Moorhead for creating the Mask Up Mendocino program. This is a grassroots people-to-people program that will provide education and outreach to the community.

It will be a collaborative effort between the business community and the county. There will be radio ads, volunteer ambassadors, written materials, and more provided throughout the county. Supporting our local businesses while maintaining the community's health is the goal. This is another example of what can be done when we work together.

At the July 21 board of supervisors meeting, we had a presentation on health disparities in our county. This was a new version of a presentation I had been working on with leaders of the Latinx communities which was scheduled for March but got postponed due to the onslaught of COVID-19. Our public health officer and CEO contacted me asking that we go ahead with the presentation due to the fact that almost 60 percent of the positive cases in Mendocino County are in the Latinx community.

I will be working with CEO Angelo and the Latinx community to ensure that the county is doing all that it can to ensure that materials are available to all in our community and that a task force be formed to look at equity, diversity and inclusion. These are certainly worthy goals in these times.

Dr. Andy Coren has been named as the new public health officer. He is a long-time family physician in Ukiah. Dr. Coren speaks Spanish which should help with some of the above mentioned issues. He is well-respected in the local medical community and has worked with Dr. Doohan in setting up the residency program at Ukiah Valley Medical Center. He will be starting as soon as possible as he transitions into this new role.

Changes to the cannabis program are on the agenda for August 4. The cannabis department provided an update on interactions that the county has had with CalCannabis and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. I know that this was incomplete and certainly didn't address how a new program based on land-use process would be implemented and what would be the implications for all of our communities. At this point, there are many more questions than answers.

Covelo lost three center-of-town buildings on July 19 to fire. Arson is suspected. Sheriff Kendall and I had a town hall-style phone conference on July 22 with residents of Covelo. Concerns about illegal cannabis grows and economic development are top of the list issues. I look forward to working with the civic-minded people of Round Valley as we all try to create a better future.

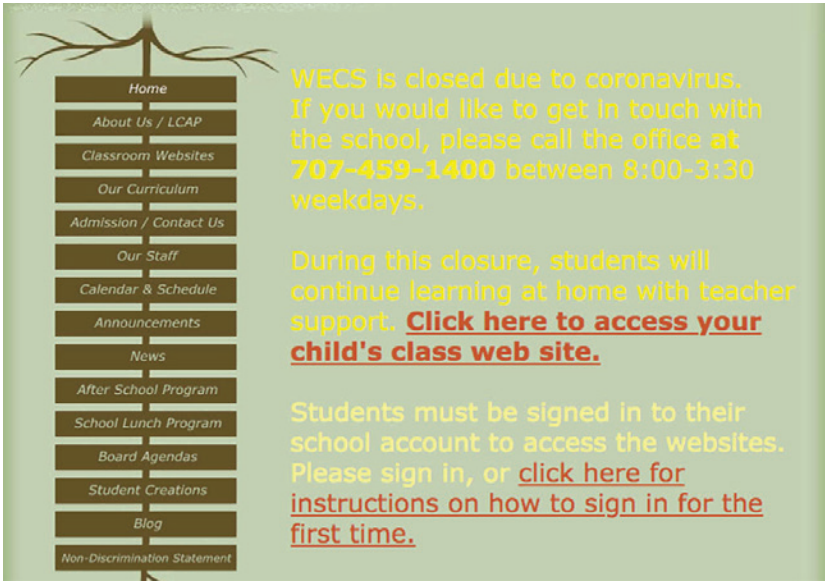
Take care and stay well. As always, you can reach me at haschakj@mendocinocounty.org or 707-972-4214.

Do you want to submit a letter to the editor?

It's easy. just email us yours:
willitsweekly@gmail.com



Above, from left: The Willits Charter School sign reminds students and passersby to wear a mask. WCS second-grade students participate in a Zoom class during the last school year. Construction on the new gymnasium / auditorium continues and will hopefully be ready when the students return. Below: The Willits Charter School website facilitates the finding of online lessons and the latest information.



From a Distance

Willits charter schools make plans to ensure the new school year will be a positive experience for all

Last March, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, everything changed. Businesses closed. Socialization became a unique challenge amidst the shelter-in-place orders. Finances took a hit. People were cautious about leaving their homes and interfacing with others. The wearing of masks and distancing became the new normal. And the schools had to shut their doors, before the end of the school year.

Innovative educators devised ways to deliver lessons to the students, haphazard and experimental at first, they soon discovered what methods worked and which failed to reach the young minds and keep them engaged during a time when "normal" was becoming an antiquated concept. They managed to finish the school year and basically complete the courses as well as possible, although many of the trappings of school life had to be shelved for the time being.

Now it is time for a new school year. Utilizing the knowledge gained from the hastily devised distance-learning protocols of the previous year, the schools are now planning to offer a more robust and well-plotted system of delivering education to the students, while at the same time keeping them engaged and excited about their futures. Positivity and teacher involvement are key in the process of "normalizing" the school experience, even as the students are sheltered in their homes.

The two local charter schools, Willits Charter School and the Willits Elementary Charter School, have come up with lesson plans and creative ways to bring the school experience into the home.

"We expect that distance learning will be much more successful than last year," explained Jennifer Lockwood, director of the Willits Charter School. "We have been afforded the time necessary to come up with a clear plan. We want to go into this year prepared and ready to adjust as we go along. We were fortunate to receive Chromebooks from the California Department of Education."

She explained that WCS is working on making sure that all students have internet access, either at home or at various "hotspots" throughout the valley and in Brooktrails.

Teachers at both schools are returning three weeks early from their vacations to begin orientation and to receive on-demand training for distance learning provided for free online by the Fresno County Office of Education.

"Teachers will be creating grade-level websites," Lockwood continued, "a unified weekly planner, and begin lesson planning using a combination of pre-recorded videos and incorporating Google Meets."

"We're going to be doing a much more dynamic type of program than we were doing during the crisis springtime," said

Read the rest of
Distance | Over on Page 11

Willits Weekly

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photography by maureen moore

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Willits Weekly's
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

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RENOVATE & REPAIR WORD SEARCH

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CLUES ACROSS

- Central processing unit
- Military action
- How electricity gets to train carriages (abbr.)
- Unsafe
- Of (French)
- Autonomic nervous system
- Type of bean
- Accuse formally of a crime
- Promote
- Type of lava
- Meat from a deer
- Herbaceous plants
- Potato state
- Helsinki neighborhood
- Sports officials
- Shout wildly
- Reptile genus
- Frocks
- Born of
- N. Scandinavian indigenous people
- Poultry cage
- Aquatic insect genus

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- Ad ___: tirelessly repetitive
- Item
- Produce
- Seedless raisin
- Bond in a third party's control
- Legendary character — Finn
- Space station
- Note at the end of a letter
- In a way, contradicted
- Midway between northeast and east
- Bears important traffic
- Brooklyn hopster

CLUES DOWN

- Presides
- Artist's tool
- On a higher floor
- Commercial
- Something to watch
- Chased
- Commercial producers

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42. Ad ___: tirelessly repetitive

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The rest of
Measure B
From Page 1

committee or from the public [on the operation feasibility report] and allow Nacht and Lewis to give their presentation," Moschetti said. Nacht and Lewis immediately began their presentation.

The presentation was a "virtual walk-through" of a computer's two-dimensional rendering of the architectural plans for the facility. After looking at the impressive presentation, committee members voted to recommend to the board of supervisors that the board authorize beginning the construction phase of the CRTF project.

Committee members were told that if they did not vote to recommend commencement of construction, that the county would lose the \$500,000 grant from the state's California Health Facilities Financing Authority. By the time the vote was taken, which was nearly 4 hours into the meeting, committee members Tom Allman and Jed Diamond had left the meeting.

The truncated committee ended up voting to recommend that the board of supervisors direct Bailey and the Measure B team to go forward with CRTF construction. The vote was 8-1 in favor, with Allman and Diamond absent. Fifth District committee representative Ross Liberty cast the lone dissenting vote on that issue.

Operational Feasibility Report

Prior to receiving the Nacht and Lewis report, County Auditor Lloyd Weer presented his estimate of revenues that are expected to flow from the Measure B tax. Weer estimated that the hit taken by tax flow due to COVID-19 would be 17.65 percent in fiscal 2020-21; a 14.7 percent reduction in 2021-22; and an 11.7 percent reduction in 2022-23.

Weer estimated that total revenues for construction of facilities over the first five years of Measure B, which cannot exceed 75 percent of total revenues, would be \$29.2 million. The part of Measure B revenues that are to be dedicated to providing mental health services, which can be no lower than 25 percent of all Measure B revenues, are \$9.7 million, for a total of \$38.9 million.

When asked later by Willits Weekly why the post-COVID revenue total is actually higher than the November 2017 revenue estimate of \$38 million, Weer stated it was because of the strong economy in 2018 and 2019.

"By the time we started getting Measure B tax proceeds, in April of 2018, the economy had a lot more growth in it than we had anticipated when we did the estimate," Weer said. "We were on our way to \$40 million. And so, when COVID hit, we came down from that trajectory to the \$38.9 million figure."

Measure B Project Manager Alyson Bailey and Mendocino County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Director Jenine Miller reported on costs for the three facilities components of the county's Measure B project, a crisis residential treatment facility, a psychiatric health facility, and the regional training center in Redwood Valley.

Bailey said the CRTF, as currently envisioned by Nacht and Lewis and as supported by the committee at that month's meeting, will cost \$3,759,378 to build. Bailey estimated the PHF will cost \$20,178,285 to build, assuming that the project is built from scratch and that it is a deluxe building.

In her written report, Bailey noted that her own estimates might come in lower, writing: "With the economic recession, we can expect costs in the manufacturing, construction, and real estate to decrease, creating a potentially less expensive project

than what has been estimated."

Bailey also noted in the same report that it might cost \$17 million to renovate the old Howard Hospital in Willits. "Renovating a building to create a PHF in a rural area (such as Mendocino County) can cost between \$400 to \$650 per square foot in comparison to a new facility at an estimated \$1,122 per square foot," Bailey wrote.

"Another measuring or estimation device calculates \$500,000 per bed. For instance, the 27,000-square-foot former Howard Hospital building may cost up to \$17 million to renovate (or \$630 to \$650 per square foot), while a 16-bed facility may cost approximately \$8 million to renovate according to the \$500,000 per bed model. This excludes some soft costs including the cost of equipment and operations."

Bailey also said that the regional training center will likely come in at \$516,195, which is some \$69,000 less than was allocated for the project.

Miller provided a written report detailing what it might cost to operate a CRTF. She wrote that the annual cost of operating an eight-bed CRTF would be "approximately \$1.1 million." She broke that total down into what would be covered by MediCal, and what would be covered by Measure B.

For an eight-bed facility, where six beds were occupied 256 days a year, MediCal would play \$530,504 and Measure B would have to pay \$569,496. If all eight beds in the facility were occupied 256 days a year, MediCal would pay \$707,338 and Measure B would have to cover \$392,662. If all eight beds were occupied 365 days a year, MediCal would pay \$1,008,507 a year, and Measure B would pay \$91,493.

In discussing whether to ask the supervisors to authorize beginning the construction phase of the CRTF, committee member Ross Liberty argued that it was not be a wise move, until the committee knows whether or not there will be an operator for the facility.

Miller argued that currently the county pays \$1.1 million a year in hospitalization costs for mental health patients. She said that if the CRTF diverted just 25 percent of those patients out of hospitals and into the CRTF, that would save the county \$775,000 a year.

"If the operating budget is \$1.1 million a year, you are almost all the way there," Miller said.

Miller also gave a quick review of the operational costs associated with running a PHF. She wrote that the cost for running a 16-bed facility is between \$5 million and \$7.9 million a year, but then added that the cost to the county, or to Measure B, would be zero.

"Due to the MediCal payment regulations for psychiatric facilities, projected costs will vary widely based on the type of facility that contracts for the services," she wrote. "Behavioral Health and Recovery Services recommends that the county contract with a 16-bed facility to ensure maximum MediCal reimbursement, and include the \$1 per month lease option to minimize the facility costs, thereby reducing the funding required by Measure B to maintain financial stability.

"BHRS would also suggest that the committee consider a contractor that will work with other counties such as Lake and would also serve clients with private insurance and Medicare, to maintain occupancy rates, thereby reducing operating costs. If the facility is operated similar to other private facilities, no additional funding from Measure B would be required," Miller wrote.

Mental health services

The first half of the four-hour July 22 Measure B meeting was dedicated to consideration of funding for several supplemental

mental health services, which were recommended to the committee by the Kemper Report ad hoc committee. Each of the recommendations were approved by the full committee.

The committee voted 9-2 to recommend to the board of supervisors that the board allocate \$1.3 million to provide seed money for some type of housing for mental health patients on the coast.

The committee voted 6-3 (with 2 abstentions) to recommend to the board of supervisors that it direct the Behavioral Health and Recovery Services director to contract with a local mental health organization to provide education, awareness and support to the community on mental health issues, in part to reduce the stigma of mental illness. The motion called for the supes to allocate \$350,000 a year, for four years, for this.

The committee voted to ask the supervisors to approve spending \$260,000 a year, for four years, to defray the expenses of the county's mental health services provider, to provide "after-care" to those mental health patients who have been released from hospital, and whose insurance, unfortunately, does not cover after-care.

This suggestion was approved unanimously. The county's mental health provider is currently Redwood Quality Management Company, but the county is proceeding with putting out a request for proposals for the service.

The committee also unanimously approved asking the supervisors to allocate \$40,000 a year of Measure B money, for four years, to create a pilot project between the mental health division and the Sheriff's Office, to establish mobile mental health crisis teams, that would travel countywide, trying to help folks who are in a mental health crisis. These teams would consist of one sheriff's deputy and one mental health worker.

The bottom line

Because Chair Moschetti curtailed discussion on the operational feasibility study, the committee was unable to discuss whether or not the county can afford to construct both a CRTF and a PHF and provide additional mental health services, within the constraints of the \$38.9 estimated Measure B revenue.

However, when one adds up the numbers presented by Project Manager Bailey, the result shows that the county will be able to afford the full build-out of the project. Adding together \$20.2 million for the PHF plus \$3.8 million for the CRT, plus \$516,000 to purchase and remodel the regional training center, yields \$24.5 million.

Costs for providing mental health services would include the cost of running a CRTF which could be \$500,000 a year for two years, or \$1 million. Adding in the committee recommendations for the additional mental health services, including \$1.3 million for housing, \$1.4 million for community education, \$1 million for after-care, and \$1.6 million for the mobile mental health crisis team, would yield total services costs of \$6.3 million.

Adding to that staffing costs of \$3.3 million for architectural services from Nacht and Lewis for the CRTF and the PHF, plus \$400,000 for the project manager for three years, plus \$300,000 for the administrative assistant for two years (a rough estimate for a full-time, temporary employee) plus \$50,000 for a quarter-time administrative assistant for three years, yields \$4.05 million for staffing costs.

Adding together costs for facilities (\$24.5 million) plus services (\$6.3 million) plus staffing (\$4.05 million) gives a total project cost, for the first five years, of \$34.85 million. Subtracting that from the total projected revenues of \$38.9 million, leaves the committee \$4.05 million in additional funds.

The rest of
Latinx
From Page 1

to translate the county's Emergency Response Plan into Spanish; 2. to provide all information in both English and Spanish; 3. to add California-certified interpreters to the annual county budget; 4. to allocate enough time so that the same information is provided in both Spanish and English; 5. to create an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force; and 6. a recommendation that each supervisor should host a bilingual public forum in his or her district to receive feedback on county services.

McCowen's motion directed staff to create the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, and then directed the task force to work on the other requests. His motion was amended by Fourth District Supervisor Dan Gjerde, who asked that the motion also direct board Chair John Haschak to work with the CEO to start strategizing on how to quickly implement the Latinx Alliance's requests. McCowen accepted Gjerde's amendment, and it was passed unanimously.

The Mendocino Latinx Alliance was represented by Roseanne Ibarra, who formerly was executive director of First 5 Mendocino and who is currently director of Community Integration with Adventist Health Mendocino County.

The alliance includes representatives from the Ukiah Vecinos en Accion (Ukiah), La Coalicion Latina de la Costa de Mendocino (Fort Bragg), the South Coast Latino Coalition (Gualala and Point Arena), Nuestra Alianza de Willits (Willits), Sueno Latino (Anderson Valley), the Spanish language newspaper, Al Punto, and Mendo Latino, a radio show in Spanish which is broadcast on a local radio station.

UC Davis Professor Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola offered a Power Point-type presentation which highlighted the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the Latinx community. He noted that the Hispanic community comprises the largest racial minority in California, with 38.9 percent of the population. Yet, it has suffered 43.1 percent of COVID-related deaths.

Among people who are between the ages of 18 and 34, 45 percent of that cohort is of Hispanic or Latinx racial background. The Latinx cohort suffers 61.8 percent of the deaths from COVID-19 among that age group.

The statistics get even worse among the next age group up, those who range from 35 to 49 years of age. Among that group, people of Hispanic descent represent 41.5 of the state's population, and have 77.6 percent of COVID-19 deaths among that age group.

Aguilar-Gaxiola explained why Latinx people are more likely to contract COVID-19 and why they are more likely to die from the disease than whites. Hispanic people are more likely to have underlying health problems, such as diabetes, asthma, hypertension and obesity, he said.

They are more likely to be uninsured, more likely to work in service industries, more likely to live in households where it is more difficult to socially distance, they are more likely to work in jobs where they cannot telework, and they are more likely to take public transportation.

Members of the Mendocino Latinx Alliance shed light on more reasons why the virus is disproportionately impacting Hispanics. Loreto Rojas, an academic who lives in the town of Mendocino, told the supervisors that people from her community simply don't trust the government.

"People don't feel they really are heard," Rojas said. "The same about the idea that they don't have access to the real information. They are very afraid of being tested. They don't know if COVID is real, or, they are afraid that they are going to be turned over to the hands of the law. Some are undocumented and live really in the shadows, and it's a very difficult situation for them."

Rojas said that many Latinx people that she has spoken to recently have attempted to get information over the phone from county government, but they don't get calls back.

Javier Chavez, who is a community liaison person with Redwood Coast Medical Services on the south coast area, said that one of the problems is that Hispanic people often don't have medical insurance.

"They don't have health insurance," Chavez said. "So, if they test positive, they are afraid of medical costs, especially if they are not working much."

Alliance member Keily Becerra lambasted the county for having taken so much time between Supervisor Haschak's initial scheduling of the meeting, which was to have happened in March, and the date that the meeting actually happened, July 21.

"The lack of communication, the lack of outreach, should not be a reason for so many people in our community to be infected," Becerra said. Becerra said the county ought to work with the churches as a way to create trust.

Brenda Moreno-Sanchez urged the county not to create a "language line." Moreno-Sanchez said that doing so would not provide trust.

Miranda Ramos asked for "linguistically competent communication."

After the presentation by Professor Aguilar-Gaxiola and alliance members, Chair Haschak turned things over to the supervisors. Supervisor McCowen praised those who participated in the presentation and urged his colleagues on the board to adopt as many of their requests as possible, as soon as possible.

"This is a good place to start on, How do we correct some of the systemic ills in our society?" McCowen asked.

The rest of
Abatement
From Page 1

parcels that are not fully compliant with the ordinance's standards, including partially cleared parcels, can be abated by the county most likely at a significantly higher cost than a land owner hiring a private contractor.

"Overall," the report continued, "an effective ordinance can ensure greater due diligence and encourage greater compliance by property owners to clear hazardous properties; and additionally provide the county with the tools needed to adequately recover its costs for abatement."

The report also notes that "county fire departments and CalFire may have the ability to notify noncompliant property owners, but lack the authority to abate privately owned lands. Local residents then turn to the county for enforcement."

It is critical, the report concludes, "for the county to have the ability to prevent hazardous conditions to protect public health and safety on rural lands within its jurisdiction prone to wildfires." The report notes that grant funding may be available to write such an ordinance.

When McCowen asked when it would be coming back to the board for an update, Fifth District Supervisor Ted Williams said it would be coming back, "when Supervisor Brown is ready."

Brown said her plan is to work with the Fire Safe Council to evaluate options for ordinance language. She will bring several of the best options back to the board for further evaluation, and then the board will hand off the best option or combination of options to county counsel staff who will create a new ordinance on hazardous vegetation abatement for Mendocino County.



Above, from left: Natalie Niderost of the Ukiah FFA poses with her lamb, Chops. Willits 4-H's Kaleb Whitehurst and his 265-pound market-ready Duroc hog, Marge. Willits FFA's Danielle Barry, left, who holds her twin breeding-entry ewe lambs, Apple and Mouse, gets help from fellow FFA'er Mattea Butler, right, who holds Barry's market lamb, Simba. Below, left: Willits 4-H's Cheyenne Dusky and her crossbred barrow Caspen, who weighs in at a freezer-ready 260 pounds! Below, right: Willits FFA's Jaden Doak holds Easy E., her 1,275-pound market-ready steer. "I have raised animals for the past 11 years," said Doak. "This is my sixth and final year raising a steer. It has been rewarding and a great experience. Thank you for your support."



Virtual Auction

Redwood Empire Fair and Mendocino County Junior Livestock Auction replaces paddles with keyboards for online bidding event for local livestock August 7 and 8

Youth exhibitors for the Mendocino County Junior Livestock Auction at the Redwood Empire Fair just aren't going to be having the same sort of fair experience this year. The auction, like most all other events, has required a distance-friendly alternative to take place in 2020, but exhibitors will still be allowed to show and sell their sheep, hogs, goats, steer, chickens and rabbits – just digitally.

Exhibitors have submitted photos of themselves with their animals and have prepared digital presentations

to load onto the auction site www.sconlinesales.com where the public is welcome to bid, and purchase their animals, just like the traditional ringside experience.

The sale will open on Friday, August 7 at 8 am, and bidding will close on Saturday, August 8 at 3 pm. To bid: Go to www.sconlinesales.com. Click on any of the species tabs. Click "register to bid." Register for an account. Log in on August 7 and 8 to bid.

For more info, call 462-FAIR or see poster below.

– Maureen Moore



At left: Willits FFA's Samantha Arms and her lamb Albey, who is 7 months old and weighs 130 pounds.

Below, from left: Callie Brown from the Willits FFA smiles with Rocky, her 1,400-pound market steer. Ukiah Shamrock 4-H's Garrett Weaver smiles with his pen of three of White New Zealand rabbits. Mason Vawn of the Long Valley 4-H shows off her market lamb, King.



Above: Willits 4-H's Whitley brothers, Stephen, left with his steer, Ben, and brother Jimmy and his steer, Gunther, right, show their COVID-approved bovine fashions.

HOW TO BID

2020 Redwood Empire Fair Jr Livestock Auction

5 EASY STEPS

- 1: Go to sconlinesales.com
- 2: Click on any of the Species Tabs
- 3: Click Register to Bid
- 4: Register for an Account
- 5: Log in August 7 & 8 to bid.

LOT #11 8-11

Time Remaining: 35:35min

Current Bid: \$250

Notes

Calendar Listing

Payment

ADD-ON

SALE OPENS AUGUST 7TH AT 8 AM - SALE CLOSES AUGUST 8TH AT 3 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 707/462-3884

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Jam, salsa and more!

Martha Stewart, LOOK OUT! Nicole Basler is coming for the title of supreme domestic goddess, and if her peach-processing skills are any indication of her trajectory, she's well on her way to victory. Basler turned a trunk load of boxes of peaches into pantry staples she and the family will enjoy for months to come. Fire roasting some of the peaches, "right on the gas burner until all sides turn blackened like a pepper, then the skin peels right off!" added to their flavor before their destiny to become canned peaches, salsa, a crisp, a pie and, of course, jam. "If you haven't tried canning, dooo it!" Basler says. "It's so rewarding!"

— Maureen Moore

Photos by Nicole Basler



Peachy Party

Celebrate the summeriest of stone fruits while they're at the height of their juicy and sweet perfection



Cobbler Crumble Crisp

Whatever you want to call it, make it and enjoy it cold out of the fridge with a spoon the next day for the ultimate experience

For an 8-inch pie tin, wash about five free-stone peaches, slice in half, remove the pits and cut each peach half into about 10 pieces and place into a bowl.

Over the top of the peaches, sprinkle a few tablespoons of cornstarch, and a heaping quarter cup of brown sugar, and the same of white sugar. Add a dash or two of vanilla, and a dash – or two – of dark rum, and the juice from half of a freshly squeezed lemon.

Mix together and pour into a pie tin. In a food processor or bowl, combine a cup of flour, a half-cup of white sugar, a half-cup of brown sugar, a tablespoon of cinnamon and a dash of salt. Ground nuts of any variety or even oats can also be added for additional crunch.

Chop up one stick of cold or even frozen butter and work into the dry mix until it's crumbly and combined – mostly.

Scoop loose spoonfuls over the peaches, leaving the topping fluffy and not packed down. Cover all the peaches, being careful to add some to the sides, too.

Bake in a 350-degree oven until topping is browned and peaches are bubbly. Best to do this on top of a cookie sheet so the juices won't make a mess in the bottom of the oven. Allow to sit on the counter and cool – this is a MUST to allow the contents to set and not turn into soup. Just walk away for several hours. Your patience will be rewarded.

— Maureen Moore



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PIC-COLLAGE



Above: Nicole Basler's peach salsa includes tomato, jalapeño, cilantro, Meyer lemon juice, lime juice, red onion, and peaches. "Fast, easy, and sooo good!" she says. Below: Jars of jam and canned peaches in Basler's kitchen. At right: Genevieve Workman, owner of Deep Roots Kitchen, made this beautiful "Garden Focaccia" with sourdough starter and lots of veggies.



Basic Sourdough Focaccia

Submitted by Genevieve Workman of Deep Roots Kitchen



Ingredients:

- 50 g starter
- 375 g water
- 20 g honey
- 500 g all-purpose flour
- 9 g salt
- 45 g (3 T) olive oil

• Whisk starter, honey, water together in a large mixing bowl. Add in flour, salt. Mix with hands until incorporated. Cover bowl with a damp towel; let rise overnight on counter.

• Oil sheet pan. Flop dough into pan, lift and flip so both sides are coated with oil. Leave the blob to rise on the pan until puffy, about 2 hours.

• Preheat oven to 425°

• Stretch dough into rectangle; dimple (press fingers into dough until they touch the bottom)

• Add any toppings, press into dough (this helps them not to burn)

• Bake for 25-30 minutes

This can also be done in a 13x9 casserole dish, bake for 30 minutes

Care-A-Van in Willits on August 19

Since the county reopening in June 2020, Mendocino County's Care-A-Van has been conducting spay & neuter surgery events in the outlying areas of Mendocino County.

Due to the recent surge in COVID-19 cases within Mendocino County, Animal Care Services has reassessed the Mobile Caravan Spay & Neuter program and determined that in the best interest and safety of all our employees and citizens that future mobile caravan

Madam LaPurr

Meet the beautiful Madam LaPurr!! Miss Madam is a senior girl who was found wandering on her own. We believe she is around 12 years old. We would love to get her into her forever home for her to spend her golden years in. Miss Madam is a very sweet gal who LOVES to talk. She seems to always have a story to share with you. She is cat social as well, and wouldn't mind sharing her home with a friend. If you would love to make this girl yours, you may fill out an application at mendohumanesociety.com.

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.

Adorable Mandy

Meet our super special senior gal, Mandy. She is around 10 years old. Mandy just arrived from a hoarding case, we have no idea what her past looked like, but we are ready to write her a new future! Mandy is heartworm positive, so she is going to get some much-needed medical care right away. We would love to get Mandy into her forever home to recover, rather than a kennel. Don't worry we will fully cover her treatment This adorable girl deserves to find a forever home to spend her golden years in. Could this be with you? We would love to talk to you if it is! You may apply to love Mandy at mendohumanesociety.com

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.

spay & neuter surgery events will be held in the clinic at the Animal Shelter located at 298 Plant Road, in Ukiah. Schedule information will be posted at the "Mendocino County Care-A-Van" Facebook page.

However, the scheduled Care-A-Van date for Wednesday, August 19 at J.D. Redhouse in Willits is still set to take place. Citizens are requested to show up between 8 and 9 am that morning and adhere to social distancing practices. For questions or to sign up for an appointment, call 707-513-7604.



Congrats | 50 year anniversary Janna and Mike Boomer

Congratulations to Janna and Mike Boomer who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on August 8. The pair was married in 1970 and built their home here in Willits where Mike was born and raised. The couple have one son, Jeff, who lives in Nevada, three grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.



Current Job Openings:

Administrative Assistant
Deputy Sheriff-Coroner I/II
Eligibility Specialist II/III
Staff Assistant I – Extra-Help
Staff Assistant II
Vocational Assistant

For a complete list of current job openings and to apply:

www.mendocinocounty.org/government/human-resources

EOE

The rest of
Distance | From Page 3

the after-school projects coordinator at Willits Elementary Charter, Jessica Clark. "Teachers and staff are receiving a lot more training on how to utilize the tools that are available and how to do outreach to the families. I'm doing videos for my students. A special puppet will be my sidekick."

Clark also plans to create boxes of materials for the students to pick up at the school or have delivered to their home. She will be available for phone or Zoom calls if students need to chat or need help with an activity.

"It's one of the biggest challenges I think I've ever faced in my teaching career," shared Clark. "It's forcing me to think outside of the box to make sure that we have the support for some of the little people I adore most in the entire world."

Billy Hetherington, at the Willits Charter School, has a unique set of challenges: "For me, personally, being an electives teacher, I was unsure of what that was going to look like for me, but seniors need elective credits to graduate, so I will be teaching an elective class. I'm trying to create a way to wrap all three of my elective classes into one: student leadership, theater arts, and radio broadcast."

His plan is to center the elective class around a radio broadcast. "I want to capture the youth voice on this whole pandemic thing," explained Hetherington. "They're just being told, this is what is happening and this is how you're going to deal with it." I think there is some valuable input that can be gained from their perspective.

Hetherington believes distance learning could be a good thing because the students will have to figure out what learning style works best for them. It may be more difficult without the pressure from teachers and peers to push them to do well, but "it will give them the freedom to concentrate on themselves and how they can get the most out of this," he concluded.

Willits Elementary Charter will be providing instruction in Spanish, art, music, PE as well as the core subjects: reading, writing, math, social studies and science, according to Charlene Bredder, Willits Elementary Charter director. "We will implement a 'flipped classroom' model," she said, "where students watch a short video of the teacher and a new concept."

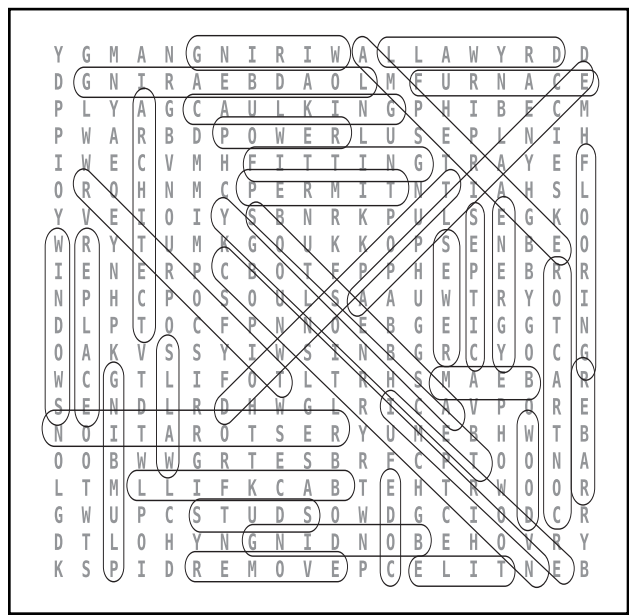
The kids will then take that knowledge and meet in small Zoom groups to practice and see how well they understand the concept. Tutoring and extra help will be available for students needing extra assistance.

Becky Button, independent study coordinator, feels that there will be opportunities opening up in the new learning paradigms, incorporating what has been learned by trial and error last school year.

"At WECS," said Button, "we noticed that the students responded really well to online music and art Zoom lessons. They enjoyed singing from their living rooms, even playing recorders and ukuleles and doing art tutorials in Spanish. We plan to include more of these online lessons this fall to keep students engaged and having fun."

Button is considering creating mixed grade-level groups for students that need the same lesson. "Fourth-graders could review multiplication skills by joining a third-grade Zoom, while higher-level readers in first grade could practice reading with second-graders," she said.

Teachers and administrators at the charter schools learned last year that distance learning has its obvious disadvantages, but having had the time to actually plan a curriculum this year, they are hoping that online instruction can have advantages as well. Through video lessons and Zoom classrooms, they plan to keep students engaged and doing their lessons by instilling fun into the learning. It's also an opportunity for the kids to see their friends and teachers face-to-face, albeit online, in a novel mode of communication, approaching some form of normative pre-pandemic life.



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LEGAL NOTICES

WW278 Fictitious Business Name Statement

2020-F0342
The following person is doing business as 3 Pronged Attack, 32 Fort Bragg Road, Willits, CA 95490.

Registered owner: Omar Sisemore, 32 Fort Bragg Road, 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 July 1, 2020.

/s/ Omar Sisemore

Publication dates: 07/09, 07/16, 07/23, 07/30/2020

WW280 Fictitious Business Name Statement

2020-F0348
The following person is doing business as Monkey Wrench Mens and Womens Wear, 150 8A S. Main St., Willits CA 95490.

Registered owner: Shannon Germann, 24401 Sherwood Rd., 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.

FBN statement renewal filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on July 7, 2020.

/s/ Shannon Germann

Publication dates: 07/23, 07/30, 08/06, 08/13/2020

WW282 Fictitious Business Name Statement

2020-F0358
The following person is doing business as T & N Market, 1250 South Main Street, Willits CA 95490.

Registered owner: Swamikrupa 1986 Inc., 1250 South Main Street, Willits CA 95490.

This business is conducted by a corporation.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on July 10, 2015.

FBN statement renewal filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on July 16, 2020.

/s/ Trikamil T. Patel, President

Publication dates: 07/30, 08/06, 08/13, 08/20/2020

WW281 Fictitious Business Name Statement

2020-F0336
The following person is doing business as Camomoto, 1435 Hueltt Place, Willits CA 95490.

Registered owner: Jean Hanamoto, 1435 Hueltt Place, 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.

FBN statement renewal filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on June 25, 2020.

/s/ Jean Hanamoto

Publication dates: 07/30, 08/06, 08/13, 08/20/2020

The rest of **Curbside** | From Page 5

His secret to success? "There's early bulbs, mid-blooming, and late-blooming bulbs. If it's cool, in the 60s, some years I see blooms at the end of January. Towards the end of February, I hit the peak. There's hundreds and hundreds and hundreds," he enthused and added, "As soon as it gets warm and once it's about 80 degrees, the tulips only last a day or two."

He doesn't leave the bulbs in the ground because of moles and gophers. When the season's over, he digs them up and stores them in a cool, dry place to be planted next year. Then he starts planting hundreds and hundreds of gorgeous flowers.

There's a mere two-year-old, delightful garden that can be seen behind the south corner house at Maple and Pine streets. Shana Byrne and Peggy Weber transformed a backyard space from a tangle of blackberries into an area with spacious pathways around stock-tank raised beds and in-ground beds.

The couple divides the work. Weber is a skilled carpenter while Byrne is passionate about growing things. Byrne believes in interplanting vegetables with flowers, "to make the beneficial insects happy" and enjoys experimenting. She transplanted a volunteer mullein plant in her own garden from the Commonwealth Garden where she volunteers. It's a beautiful plant with a tall spike of yellow flowers.

Because of COVID-19, Byrne has stayed home and spends more time in the garden getting it the way the couple has imagined. "It's satisfying for me. It's visually beautiful and I just like being out here!" she claimed.

The Little Lake Grange has a small but viable community garden that can be seen on Pine Street. It's been worked on in the past few years. Right now, it's being watered by a neighbor but really needs someone who will love it and breathe new life between the winter squash plants and into the future. If that's you, please text Annie for more information at 707-889-2449.

From victory gardens in the 1940s to local food security and COVID-19 in 2020, having a home garden is still important, and not only for some of the best food available. As Byrne expressed about their experience, "To walk out into the cool morning and connect with the plants, the soil and pollinators, is sustaining us spiritually and emotionally. Especially at this time."



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"Falliday" (Fall and Holiday) Photo Sessions

Holiday cards might be more useful this year than ever before! Make sure that you can mail your well wishes to friends and distant family if social distancing regulations are still tightly in place. Local photographer, Maureen Moore, is happy to schedule sessions now through mid-November to get your images ready for cards. Outside settings, a long lens and mask wearing by the photographer will help put everyone at ease - and keep everyone safe! Schedule now while dates last! 707-972-7047 or email maureengetsmail@gmail.com

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Stay Safe

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

Willits Food Bank Open

Willits Community Services & Food Bank continues to distribute 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. Homegrown produce donations to share with the food bank are welcome. Info: 459-3333; financial donations to WCS can be mailed to 229 E. San Francisco, Willits CA 95490.

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Fruit Group Coordinators

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Ukiah, Redwood & Potter Valley: Deanna 391-7736
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7	3	4	1	8	9	2	5	6
4	8	7	5	9	6	1	2	3
9	5	3	2	1	8	7	6	4
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8	2	9	4	5	7	6	3	1



Photos by
Eric H. Pham
Photography

Neowise from Red Hill

Eric Pham catches comet shooting over Willits

"With all this [COVID] craziness, I didn't bother to take pictures of the comet," said photographer and City Nails salon co-owner, Eric Pham. "Later, I started seeing local people sharing the pictures so I was inspired and decided to go for it."

Pham noted he planned for higher ground, choosing to get the excellent vantage point of the sky and some city lights offered from the lookout point out Red Hill.

"I applied some methods to capture the Milky Way and the comet," explained Pham. "I exposed for 20 seconds, and then did some light painting with my phone to light up foreground in the darker areas. Just some little clouds and the new moon made the stars and comets so vivid for the 10 pm shot. The warm summer night on July 22 made it even better to be outside to capture this."



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The rest of
Firehouse | From Page 1

for all the hard work in getting this project expedited through," said Wilkes. "There is so much that needed to happen to get it moving and make things work, and we really appreciate all that everyone has done to make it happen so quickly."

Even the contracting company was helping get the ball moving. Wilkes noted that they received their notice to start work, which allotted them a 10-day window to start, back on Thursday, but they were "ready to rock" and happy to break ground on the corner of Humboldt and Commercial just a few days later, on Monday.

While the construction company ACGC is the general contractor on the job, Wilkes noted the department's hope for local workers and companies to get to work on the project, too, something Wilkes said was hopefully possible as things progressed in the project. He noted his pleasure to already see Bud Garman Construction and WIPF dump trucks taking away some of the approximately 32,000 cubic yards of dirt on day three of the project.

The dirt removal or "over excavation" is the first step of the project, removing the fill 3 to 4 feet down to reach a more desirable type of ground on which to add the base rock and more to make the new firehouse compliant with the Essential Services Act. This ensures buildings like the firehouse will be able to better withstand earthquakes, wind and more with an extra-stable foundation.

Plans for the new firehouse will include reorienting the structure to allow the five new apparatus bays to exit out onto Humboldt Street, instead of East Commercial Street, like before. The office and lobby, however, will still have East Commercial frontage.

The old firehouse's bays were smaller than standard, making any new apparatus required to be custom-built to fit into the confined space. The new, standard-sized glass-front bays of the new structure will allow for standard-size equipment to be purchased – at a lower cost, since there won't be specialization required to make them fit.

The new space won't have any frills – "no, no swimming pool or anything like that," joked Wilkes – but will make it so that the crew can work easily and effectively in

a safe and comfortable environment.

Currently, the crew is operating out of the substation located on Baechtel Road, which, Wilkes noted was going better than he expected.

"The firefighters have done a great job planning and operating out of one station," explained Wilkes. "They worked well together, deciding on who takes what, the order of things, how to all flow together to make sure we can run smoothly. We haven't had any lapse in response time. It's gone great."

While the visuals for the outside colors are being kept a surprise for now, the exterior of the metal building will be part paint, and part rock facade, modeled after another California firehouse they liked.

This station will be dubbed "54" and will have the large numbers displayed proudly on the front and side.

A large, 600-pound brass bell, sitting 3 feet wide at the base (and eventually shined back to its original glory) will be displayed at the new firehouse, and is a bell that already has a great Willits history.

"The Willits Fire Bell is from the bell collection that used to be at the old Babcock house on the corner of Humboldt Street and East Mendocino Avenue," said Wilkes. "Roots of Motive Power received it eventually, and we received notification that we would be able to have it hang at the firehouse because it was once the community fire bell that hung on the corner of Wood and School streets. It was there for anyone to ring in case of a fire."

Wilkes said they spent time trying to track down the full provenance of the bell, and discovered that it was made in San Francisco sometime between 1890 and 1900, but that the records for it had been burned in a fire during the 1906 earthquake.

"Even though the Willits Fire Bell is still actually a part of the Babcock Bell Collection," explained Wilkes, "We are being allowed to prominently display the bell at the community's new Station 54. We're very pleased!"

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

Community Foundation offers COVID relief grants to nonprofits

**Submitted by the Community
Foundation of Mendocino County**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Community Foundation of Mendocino County has established a multi-sector COVID-19 Relief Program that encompasses support for individuals and families, small businesses, and non-profit organizations in Mendocino County. Our communities rely on the many non-profit organizations for basic needs, arts and cultural opportunities, caring for the environment, and so much more.

However, these critical organizations are already experiencing financial and programmatic impacts due to the pandemic and correlating financial crisis. The Community Foundation aims to help non-profits adapt and pivot to the changing social and economic conditions through COVID-19 Non-Profit Relief Grants, a component of the Foundation's Non-Profit Relief Program.

The Non-Profit Relief Grant program is now open and accepting applications. Applications for the first round of funding will be due on August 28, 2020. Grants will be made to eligible Mendocino County 501c3 organizations in the following three areas: adaptation, operations and preservation.

• Adaptation grants will assist organizations to adopt new technology or pivot programs to adjust to new demands. This could include, but is not limited to, equipment, technology or software to change program-delivery methods; improvements in physical plants to accommodate social-distancing requirements; pilot projects that pioneer new methods or programs in response to current circumstances; training for staff in utilizing new technologies or protocols; or personal-protective equipment for staff or clients.

• Operations grants will assist

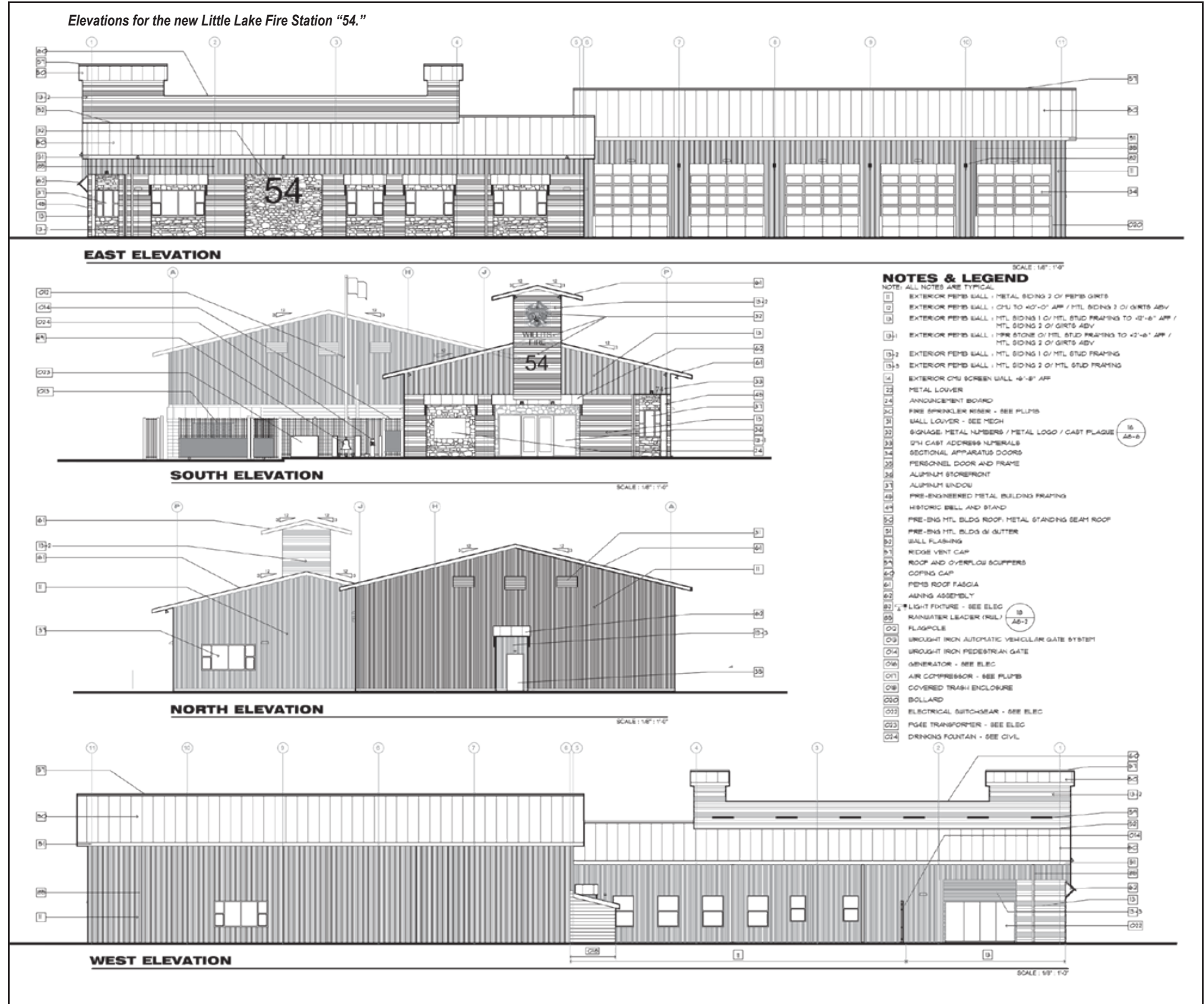
organizations with fixed operational costs impacted by COVID-19-related facility closures.

• Preservation grants will assist organizations of social, cultural or historical importance to preserve their legacy into the future. Grants could include, but are not limited to, archiving records or organizational history; consultants to support key board or staff transitions; supporting new methods of volunteer recruitment; or assistance for merging or closing organizations to ensure that the legacy of the work is maintained.

The Non-Profit Relief Program provides: non-profit relief grants to mitigate some of the unique difficulties faced by the non-profit sector in Mendocino County as a result of the pandemic; technical assistance mini-grants for Zoom licensing; community conversations to convene the non-profit sector on pandemic-related issues; and an interactive webinar series through the Community Foundation's Executive Director Leadership Institute on non-profit leadership.

To learn more about Non-Profit Relief Grants, or to apply, visit: www.communityfound.org/grants-scholarships/nonprofit-relief/. To learn more about all elements of the Non-Profit Relief Program, visit: www.communityfound.org/covid19/covid19-nonprofit-relief-program/.

The Community Foundation, located at 204 South Oak Street in Ukiah, is a countywide nonprofit organization that administers permanent charitable funds established through gifts and bequests from individuals, families, businesses, and other organizations. The Community Foundation has also provided community leadership on COVID-19 relief, fire recovery, Census 2020, and the broadband alliance. For more information, visit www.communityfound.org or call 707-468-9882.



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At top, from left: Culinary herbs like this sage come from the Mediterranean and are adapted to dry summer heat. They make a great choice for a waterwise planting. Navajo tea plants closely resemble garden flowers like coreopsis, but it is a wildflower from the desert that makes an anti-inflammatory tea. It requires minimal water. Roses are deep-rooted and long-lived landscape plants, especially the heritage varieties. This is Rosa gallica, the Apothecary's Rose, which is centuries old.

Above, from left: Once established, four-o'clocks are very resilient in drought. Their secret is a large underground tuber. After the first season of growth, the plant survives drought by using water stored in the tuber. Vegetables require more water than many landscape plants. A small, well-watered and fertile plot will give you more food than a large garden that is stressed. Don't be afraid to pull some plants to make the others thrive. California poppies have a long taproot that helps them survive a long dry season. Given just a little supplemental water they will rebound all summer.



At left: These columbine leaves show the yellow edges that mean chronic dehydration.



At left, below: These bush beans are growing too thickly and can't get enough water. Removing some plants will make the bean patch more productive.

Photos by Jamie Chevalier

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The rest of
Positive | From Page 1

release had been issued by 8 pm Wednesday evening, so no further details are available.

County placed on state watch list

On Saturday, July 25 Mendocino County was formally placed on the state's watch list. This is a distinction which can place additional restrictions on businesses.

In Mendocino County's case, however, being placed on the watch list brought with it few additional changes, as Public Health Officer Noemi Doohan had already issued a new local health order, which imposed watch list restrictions on the county, in anticipation of the state's action.

Doohan's most recent health order went into effect at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, July 24; the county was placed on the watch list on July 25.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has said private and public schools in counties on the watch list are required to use distance learning. Schools cannot open in-person classes until their county has been off the watch list for 14 consecutive days.

Pandemic updates

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread in Mendocino County. As of 6:30 pm Wednesday evening, the county has had 293 cases of COVID-19. Of that total, 223 cases have been released from isolation; 59 are in isolation; five COVID-19 patients are in local hospitals; none are currently in an intensive care unit in the county; and six people in this county have died from the disease.

Looking at disease statistics along racial lines, 175 of the 293 cases are among people of Hispanic descent; 45 among whites; 18 among American Indians; two are African American; 46 decline to report their ethnicity; and six are classified as "other."

Looking at the disease from a regional perspective, 202 cases are in the Ukiah valley; 39 are in the north county; 36 are in the north coast; 12 are in the south county; and four are from the south coast.

Looking at the disease as broken up into age cohorts: 11 cases have been among people between the ages of 0 and 5; 17 cases between ages of 6 and 12; 27 people between the ages of 13 and 18; 90 people between the ages of 19 and 34; 68 people between the ages of 35 and 49; 45 people between the ages of 50 and 64; and 35 people who are 65 or older.

There have been a total of 17,180 COVID-19 tests done in this county. As of Wednesday evening, the results of 2,280 of those tests are pending.

State to send contact tracers

Doohan and county CEO Carmel Angelo held an online press conference on July 24. It was quite lengthy, as it included a general update in Spanish from 3 to 3:30 pm, answer to emailed questions from the public (filtered and relayed by Public Information Officer Sarah Dukett) from 3:30 to 4:30 pm, and a press conference from 4:30 to 5:30 pm.

Angelo said she had asked the state to send bilingual people who could assist with contact tracing in the Hispanic community, and the state had agreed to do so. Angelo said that the contact tracers would be in place by August 1.

Doohan said she had managed to secure an Abbott ID Now machine for Mendocino County, and that she had directed the machine be sent to the Coast Community Clinic in Fort Bragg. Doohan said having that machine in Fort Bragg would help with outbreak testing on the coast. She said Abbott machines are good for testing people who are symptomatic, or for outbreak testing. They are not as reliable in surveillance testing, Doohan said, which is aimed at asymptomatic people.

Doohan was asked several questions about community spread. She was asked if there is community spread on the north coast, and she said, "We have community spread in our entire county." Later she was asked if she intended to redesign the data dashboard to give the zip code of various cases. She said: "COVID is everywhere in the county. People should assume it's in your community."

She was asked several questions about tourism. She said that she has no plans to shut down tourism. A few minutes later she said she has no plans to shut down lodging in this county. "I put in a lot of guidance to mitigate the spread of the disease in my health orders," she said.

She was asked what her plans would be when Dr. Andy Coren becomes the county's health officer. She said she would continue working at her other job, which is assistant director of the Scripps Chula Vista Family Medical Residency program.

Dr. Coren was also present for the teleconference. He spoke in Spanish and English. He told viewers what his main goal as the county's public health officer is going to be. "My main intent is to bring the community together, the businesses, the religious groups, the schools, so that all communication is open, above board.

"We're gonna get through this thing together," Coren continued. "And that's really what it's gonna take.... It's working with people, and people working with each other, being creative and innovative. It's people doing what we need to do, with this virus spreading around our community."

Willits Senior Center Lunch

Drive-Thru & Walk-Up Meals

The Willits Senior Center is continuing to provide drive-thru, walk-up and delivered meals, now that inside dining has been shut down again by the state. Call 459-6826 for more info.

Drive-thru and walk-up meals are still available 12 to 1 pm, Monday through Friday. Pickup is outside the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. All Senior Center meals are currently \$5.

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, July 30: Western Bacon Cheeseburger

Friday, July 31: Turkey Dinner

Monday, August 3: Turkey and Noodles

Tuesday, August 4: Fish Sandwich

Wednesday, August 5: Country-Fried Steak

Thursday, August 6: Grilled Chicken Salad

Friday, August 7: Polish Sausage

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

Applications now open for Leadership Mendocino

Applications are now open for Leadership Mendocino Class XXVIII. Leadership Mendocino is working hard to convene a safe in-person cohort this year. If you would like more information or to apply, contact Holly Madrigal hmadrigal@ncoinc.org or visit LeadershipMendocino.org

Below are some comments by Leadership Mendocino Class XXVI member Stefanie Chen-Welch on her experience.

When I joined Leadership Mendocino I really had no idea what I would glean besides learning some useful information about the county. It isn't a "leadership" class per se, but rather a networking platform to meet other pragmatic members of the community. It sounded like a crash course in Mendocino County, and I wanted to know it all.

The first day I met all of my classmates and noticed how diverse we all were in our interests, passions, work, history, and ancestry. Leadership Mendocino provided an equitable setting where everyone's voice was heard, and sharing stories and experiences were encouraged. A setting where everyone's eyes and ears were open was conducive to creating extremely meaningful dialogue that still resonates with me to this day.

I thought I would learn facts and tidbits of history, maybe impress the locals with my knowledge from Leadership Mendocino, but no, what I gained was so much more. I immediately was plugged into a network for jobs, community organizations, opportunities, and given a platform to express myself, watch others do the same, and form relationships based on our passions.

It was empowering beyond measure; the feeling of being seen and heard and sharing each other's endeavors felt like we were building together, whereas when I was alone with my ideas and passions, I felt stagnant. Leadership Mendocino provided me a racetrack and I sprinted, and found that I could still accomplish anything with teamwork and connections.

I am grateful every day for Leadership Mendocino. Leadership Mendocino was the most copacetic networking organization I have joined in Mendocino County. Leadership Mendocino has an Alumni program that still keeps me and other alumni engaged. I regularly talk with my fellow classmates, too; they're friends, they're my network, and someone from class will always have solid advice. Cheers to the Class of Twenty-Six, aka the best class ever!

Mendocino Cannabis Alliance launches summer membership drive

Submitted by the Mendocino Cannabis Alliance

The Mendocino Cannabis Alliance launched its summer membership drive last week. Having emerged as the cannabis trade association in Mendocino County, MCA invites the entire Mendocino cannabis community to join in the effort of creating a sustainable future where all local cannabis businesses can thrive.

A trade association is a voluntary association of businesses organized on a geographic or industrial basis to promote and develop commercial and industrial opportunities within its sphere of operation; to voice publicly the views of members on matters of common interest.

MCA is already working directly with the county on the many issues that plague our cannabis program. The more local voices that are involved in the conversation, the more effective MCA will be at fully understanding and advocating on behalf of the full spectrum of cannabis business needs.

In addition to representation at the local level, members of MCA get access to a suite of benefits, including a vendor discount program, inclusion in our member directory, the ability to be elected and run for leadership positions in the organization, and more. At the state level, MCA, along with four other regional trade associations, is partnered with Origins Council to advance cannabis-policy advocacy.

In the face of current challenges, especially at the county level, MCA's board and committee members have put enormous effort into advocating for reforms to local cannabis policy and development initiatives, such as the cannabis equity program.

At present the local cannabis program presents significant challenges for existing licensees and barriers to entry for those interested in entering into licensing. Now, more than ever, we must come together and build a stronger membership base to help craft policies that will serve the best interests of every sector of our industry.

Businesses or individuals interested in getting involved with MCA can get more information at www.mendocannabis.com/join/.

The Mendocino Cannabis Alliance serves and promotes Mendocino County's world-renowned cannabis cultivators and businesses through sustainable economic development, education, and public-policy initiatives.

COLUMN | MEDICARE NOTES

Taking action to protect America's nursing home residents against COVID-19

By Seema Verma, administrator, U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Nursing homes have become ground zero in the coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19, pandemic, with outbreaks causing high rates of illness and death among vulnerable residents living together in close quarters.

That's why the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has taken a series of aggressive actions over the last several months to protect nursing home residents against the spread of this new coronavirus.

We understand how terrifying these outbreaks are for nursing home residents and their families, and how essential it is for them to know what is going on inside nursing homes.

So, we acted accordingly. Beginning in May, CMS required nursing homes that participate in Medicare and Medicaid to inform residents, their families, and their representatives within 12 hours of when a single confirmed COVID-19 case is reported, or when three or more residents or staffers develop respiratory symptoms within 72 hours of each other.

Residents, families, and their representatives also must be given weekly updates or be told by the end of the next day each time a subsequent COVID-19 case is confirmed and/or three or more residents or staffers develop respiratory symptoms within 72 hours of each other.

Nursing homes also must include information about what actions they're taking to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission, and inform residents and their families about how those actions will change normal operations in the nursing home.

But we didn't stop there. We also developed a system so the public could quickly and easily access data reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the prevalence of COVID-19 at every CMS-certified nursing home in the country. This information is now publicly available in a searchable database that allows people to look up individual nursing homes and see how many COVID-19 cases and deaths, among both residents and staffers, have been reported there. This new system of national reporting for nursing homes is unprecedented.

The data can be found at our Nursing Home Compare website, www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/search.html. CMS will update the data weekly and take enforcement action against nursing homes that do not report the required information. About 15,400 nursing homes nationwide are certified to accept people enrolled in Medicare or Medicaid.

The Nursing Home Compare website features a Five-Star Quality Rating System to rate nursing homes, with one star indicating the lowest overall quality of care and five stars indicating the highest. Early analysis of reported COVID-19 data shows that facilities with a one-star health inspection rating were more likely to have larger numbers of COVID-19 cases than facilities with a five-star health inspection rating.

In March, CMS and the states suspended standard inspections of nursing homes and began looking specifically for violations of infection control and prevention rules. We also provided a focused infection-control survey tool for nursing homes to do self-assessments to ensure they were taking necessary steps to protect their residents against COVID-19.

CMS is providing additional support and technical assistance to low-performing nursing homes through its "quality improvement organizations." QIOs are composed of health quality experts and clinicians with experience in helping healthcare providers to improve the quality of care for people with Medicare. CMS directed QIOs to focus their efforts on providing education and training to all nursing homes in the country.

Finally, CMS recently provided state and local officials with recommendations on phased re-openings of nursing homes in their areas, including when and under what circumstances to allow visitors.

Visits from family and friends are generally restricted at nursing homes now to help control and prevent the spread of the virus, except in compassionate care situations. We understand how hard it is to be separated from loved ones, especially elders, for so long.

But as nursing homes meet certain criteria, they may be in a position to allow visitors again. Our guidelines recommend that visitation be allowed in Phase 3 with screening and additional precautions, including social distancing and hand hygiene (e.g., use of alcohol-based hand rub upon entry). We also recommend that all visitors wear a cloth face covering or facemask for the duration of their visit.

You can read more about the reopening guidelines here: www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-30-nh.pdf

Be assured that CMS will use every tool at its disposal to protect the health and safety of America's nursing home residents.

Seema Verma is administrator of the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. You can always get answers to your Medicare questions by calling 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227).



Seema Verma, administrator, U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.



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